

The
EARTHMOVER

1943-1945

CROSS PA EIGHTY-SEV

N O R T H

T R O P I C O

WAKE IS.

MARIANAS ISLANDS

SAIPAN

TINIAN

GUAM

ENIWETOK

CAROLINE ISLANDS

MARSHA

E Q U

CHINA

SEA OF JAPAN

YELLOW SEA

TOKYO

EAST CHINA SEA

RYUKYO RETTO OKINAWA

IE-SHIMA

FORMOSA

BONIN IS.

IWO JIMA

VALCANO IS.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

LUZON

MANILA

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

MINDANAO

YAP

PALAU

CELEBES SEA

NETHERLANDS

INDIES

NEW GUINEA

RABAU

TREASURY STIRLING

BOUGAINVILLE

TULAGI

GUADALCANAL

SOLOMON ISLANDS

ELLICE IS.

SANTA CRUZ IS.

INDIAN OCEAN

ARAFURA SEA

CORAL SEA

NEW HEBRIDES FIJ

NEW CALEDONIA NOUMEA

LOYALTY IS.

A U S T R A L I A

TASMAN SEA

NEW ZEALAND

SOUTHERN OCEAN

120°E

140°E

160°E



PACIFIC TOUR THE WITH SEABEES

SAN FRANCISCO

U. S. A.

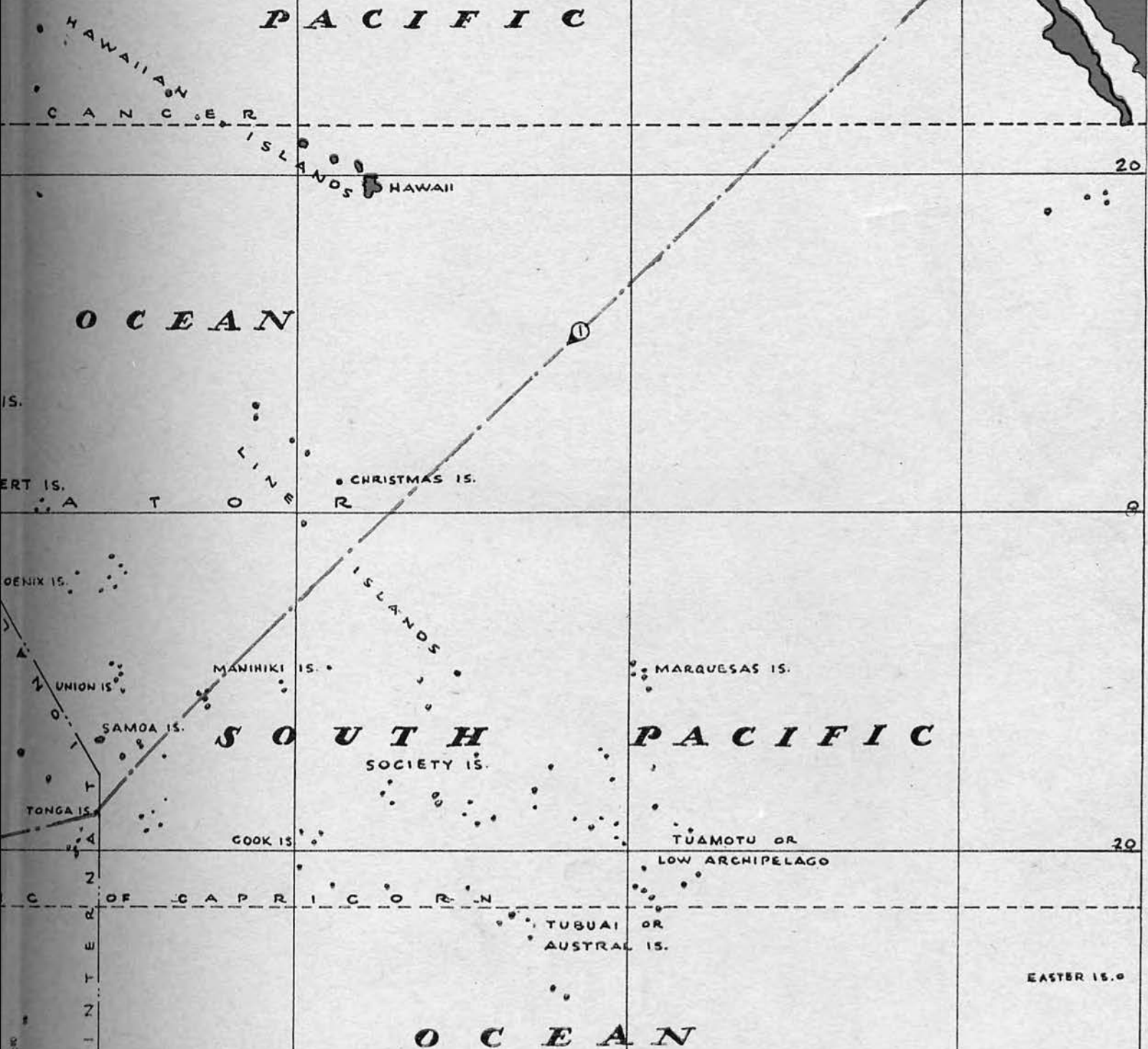
CAMP ROUSSEAU
LOS ANGELES

PACIFIC

OCEAN

SOUTH PACIFIC

OCEAN



Property of
NFEC Historian's Office

160°W

140°W

120°W

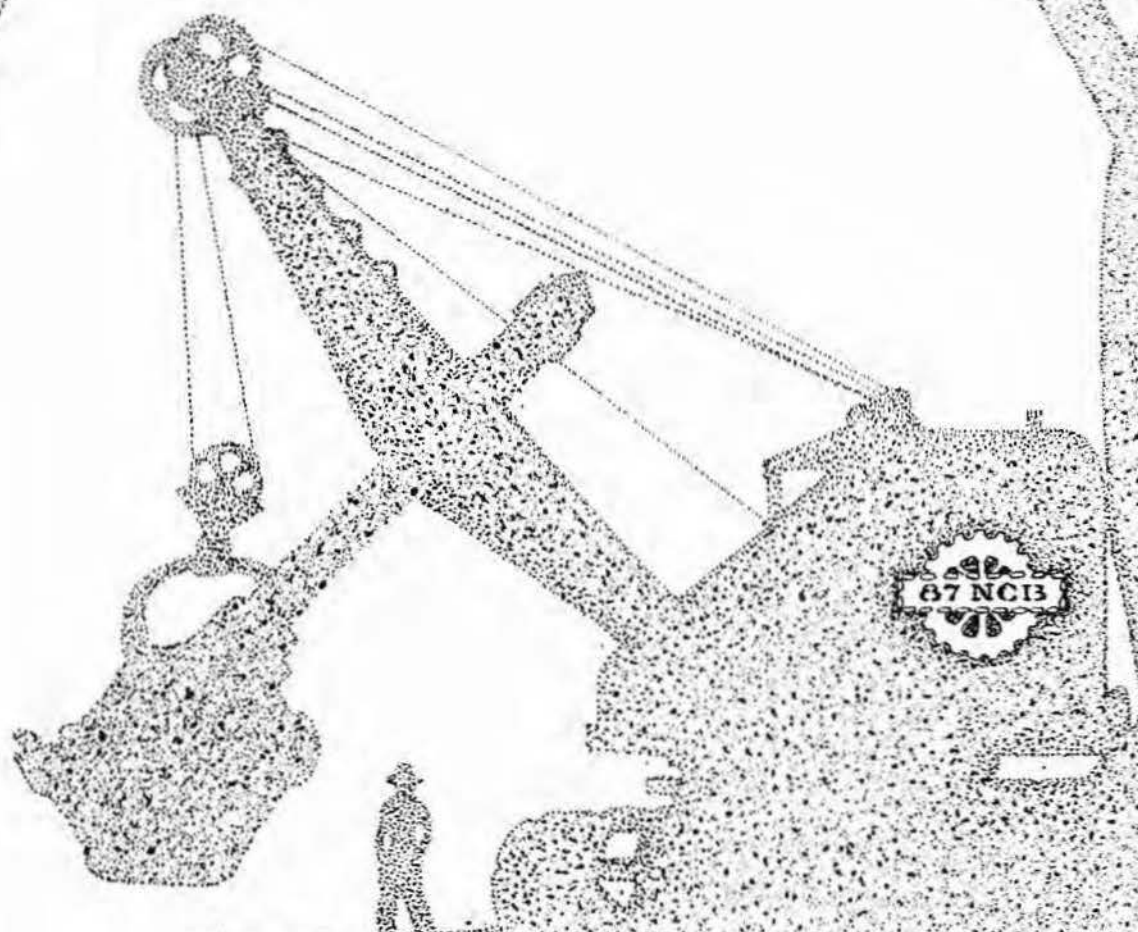
AA. COMPETIELLO
C.C.M. USNR

WE ARE THE AIRFIELD MAKERS,
WE KNOW WHAT SWEATING MEANS;
WE ARE THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS
OF THE EARTH—FOREVER, IT SEEMS.



□ THIS BOOK IS THE PROPERTY OF □
EIGHTY-SEVENTH U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

The **EARTHMOVER**



A CHRONICLE OF THE 87TH SEABEE BATTALION
IN WORLD WAR II

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FOREWORD



This volume is essentially the overall story, in log form, of the 87th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion—a hard-working Seabee outfit, which did everything asked and expected of it from the Solomons through war's sudden end on Okinawa. It is, of course, no better or worse than the approximately 1,300 officers and men who carved out its multiple achievements with their sweat, blood and, at times, even tears.

This trip book has been designed to cover the period between 20 February 1943 and 9 October 1945—a span of approximately 31½ months. Unfortunately, no pictures were taken between 9 October and 7 November when the remaining 361 men finally embarked for the States in their twenty-seventh month overseas. The photographer and assistants had all gone home. The story of the tour has been purposely kept vague or general so that each man might be free to relate his version of the sequence of events as he saw them.

This publication has been prepared for the men of the 87th, their families and friends and is not intended for general publication or circulation. Moreover, the opinions expressed in this volume are those of the editors and their staff and are not intended to reflect those of the Navy Department or the service at large.

Every reasonable effort has been made to keep the written portions of this trip book as objective as possible. And an honest effort has been exerted throughout to make the book as factually accurate as existing facilities for assembling and checking information would permit.

However, conceived and launched just prior to leaving New Caledonia and finished in foxholes and amid post-war confusion on Okinawa, the job, a spare-time project until 12 August 1945, was accomplished under just about the worst circumstances imaginable.

At its best, THE EARTHMOVER could never hope to depict the overall impact inflicted on each man during the several years spent on these far-flung Pacific islands, but the editors herewith submit it as a fair resume of the 87th's role in World War II.

In Memoriam



✓ JOHN SHORT HURLEY

Carpenter's Mate, First Class
Camp Endicott
22 May 1943

✓ BLAKE DEARL MUSSELMAN

Seaman, First Class
Stirling Island
12 January 1944

✓ EDWIN "E" OSTMAN

Seaman, Second Class
Mono Island
29 October 1943

✓ ARTHUR FRANKLIN NAPPEN

Seaman, First Class
Stirling Island
12 January 1944

✓ FRIEND HAROLDBYRNE SMITH

Carpenter's Mate, First Class
Stirling Island
17 December 1943

ROY "A" GOLDBERG ✓

Seaman, Second Class
Stirling Island
14 January 1944

EDWARD JOHN BURNS ✓

Seaman, First Class
Stirling Island
12 January 1944

✓ LYLE ORESTUS MARTS

Carpenter's Mate, First Class
Stirling Island
27 February 1944

DONALD FRANCIS FITZGERALD ✓

Seaman, First Class
Stirling Island
12 January 1944

JOHN FRANCIS PHILLIPS ✓

Carpenter's Mate, First Class
New Caledonia
10 September 1944

✓ DALE STREIT ANDERSON

Carpenter's Mate, Third Class
Okinawa
24 August 1945

DEDICATION

This history of one deeply grateful Seabee battalion is dedicated to the inspired American, British and Canadian laboratory heroes who won for the Allies the fearful International race for Doomsday with their timely invention of THE ATOMIC BOMB—thereby enabling us to climb out of our Okinawa foxholes; changing the impending invasion of Japan from a potentially gory blueprint to a bloodless occupation; saving countless thousands of lives; ending the greatest and most terrible of all wars; and hastening our return to normal life many months ahead of general expectations.

This volume is further dedicated to these unsung scientists with the hope and prayer that this new dimension of military and political power will somehow free all peoples of the burden of war in The Atomic Age, and that the cataclysmic explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaka may have closed the era of man's inhumanity to man.



RICHARD RAY COOK

COMMANDER, CEC, USNR
Second Officer in Charge

Commander Richard R. Cook relieved Comdr. Robert Easterly as Officer in Charge of the 87th Naval Construction Battalion at Saipan on 29 March 1945. He continued in command until 9 September 1945, when he received orders to return to the States for release to inactive duty.

Comdr. Cook was awarded the Legion of Merit by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz for meritoriously leading the construction forces under his command to the early completion of airfields and installations during the Okinawa campaign.

Comdr. Cook reported for active duty on 20 January 1943. He received indoctrination training at Camp Allen and was eventually transferred to Camp Peary. Here, he served as Officer in Charge of D-8 Area until ordered as Officer in Charge of the 99th Battalion.

He embarked for the Pacific with the 99th in October, 1943, and served at Johnson, Kawai, Hawaii, and the Palau Islands. In December, 1944, he was returned to the States for medical treatment at Duke University Hospital.

Prior to entering World War II, Comdr. Cook had completed 22 highly successful years in the competitive construction game. He owned and su-

pervised two private construction companies, specializing in all types of heavy building and earthmoving.

Born 6 March 1893, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, Comdr. Cook's first full-time employment, at the age of 10, was as a messenger boy for Westinghouse Air Brake Co. He later worked for Westinghouse Electric Company on heavy electric railway construction for four years. For the ensuing six years, he was employed as electrical supervisor with the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railway Co.

In May, 1917, he enlisted in the Navy and saw a year of service in France as Electrician's Mate, Second Class in Naval Aviation. Discharged in January, 1919, he returned to his former position for another year. He then moved to Huntington, West Virginia, where he worked as a general highway superintendent for a year before entering the construction field for himself.

Comdr. Cook was originally married in 1921 and is the father of two daughters, both now in college. He entered into a second marriage with Miss Lois Champion on 18 January 1945, only a short time before sailing for his second Pacific tour.



JAMES DOUGLAS

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, CEC, USN

Second Executive Officer—Third Officer in Charge

Lieutenant Commander James Douglas reported to the 87th Naval Construction Battalion on 12 July 1945, relieving Lt. Comdr. Edward A. Flynn as Executive Officer. He assumed command as Officer in Charge when Comdr. Cook was returned to the States in September. In October, when the battalion received orders to inactivate, Lt. Comdr. Douglas was assigned temporary duty as OinC of the 112th Seabees.

He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz for his meritorious services during the Okinawa campaign.

Born in Uvalde, Texas, on 1 October 1914, Lt. Comdr. Douglas received his elementary education in the public schools of Texas. His Naval career started when he was appointed to the U. S. Naval Academy, from the state at large, in 1934. He graduated "with distinction" in 1938, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree and a commission as an ensign in the line.

He first reported for duty aboard the U. S. S. SALT LAKE CITY in June, 1938, and in December of that year, he was transferred to the U. S. S. WICHITA.

In 1940, Lt. Comdr. Douglas was selected for the Navy post-graduate course in Civil Engineering and sent to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute,

Troy, New York. Here, he received his Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree in May, 1942, and his Master of Civil Engineering degree in April, 1943.

After graduation from Rensselaer, Lt. Comdr. Douglas reported to Camp Bradford, Little Creek, Virginia, as OinC, Battalion "X," and was later transferred to Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia, as head of the CPO School.

In December, 1943, he left the States and reported to the 9th Naval Construction Regiment at Attu in the Aleutians. In February, 1944, he was transferred to Adak with the 6th Regiment and in May, 1944, he was appointed Assistant District Public Works Officer there.

Lt. Comdr. Douglas returned to the States in December, 1944, and after the usual leave, was assigned as Survey Officer on the staff of Commander Construction Troops for the Okinawa operation. He served in this capacity until transferred to the 87th Seabees.

Lt. Comdr. Douglas married Miss Sarah Bisset in July, 1941. They have one daughter. He is a member of Chi Phi social fraternity and Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi and Chi Epsilon, honorary fraternities.



ROBERT EASTERLY

COMMANDER, CEC, USNR

First Officer in Charge

Commander Robert Easterly was ordered as Officer in Charge of the 87th Naval Construction Battalion on 23 February 1943, at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. He remained with the battalion through 19 months of overseas duty and was relieved as Officer in Charge by Comdr. Cook at Saipan on 29 March 1945.

Upon return to the States, Comdr. Easterly was designated head of the Administrative Department of the Civil Engineer Corps Officers School at Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island, where he served until release from active duty in September, 1945.

On 18 July 1945, the King of the British Empire, on behalf of the New Zealand Government, made Comdr. Easterly an Honorary Officer of the Military Division of the British Empire for his services as Officer in Charge of the 87th Seabees when the unit was operating with New Zealand forces in the Treasuries in 1943-44.

Comdr. Easterly reported to the Bureau of Yards and Docks for active duty in the U. S. Naval Reserve on 11 November 1940. On 23 November 1940, he was transferred to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he served on the staff of the Resident Inspector of Naval Materials as Officer in Charge of Construction, supervising building facilities at the Northern Pump Company.

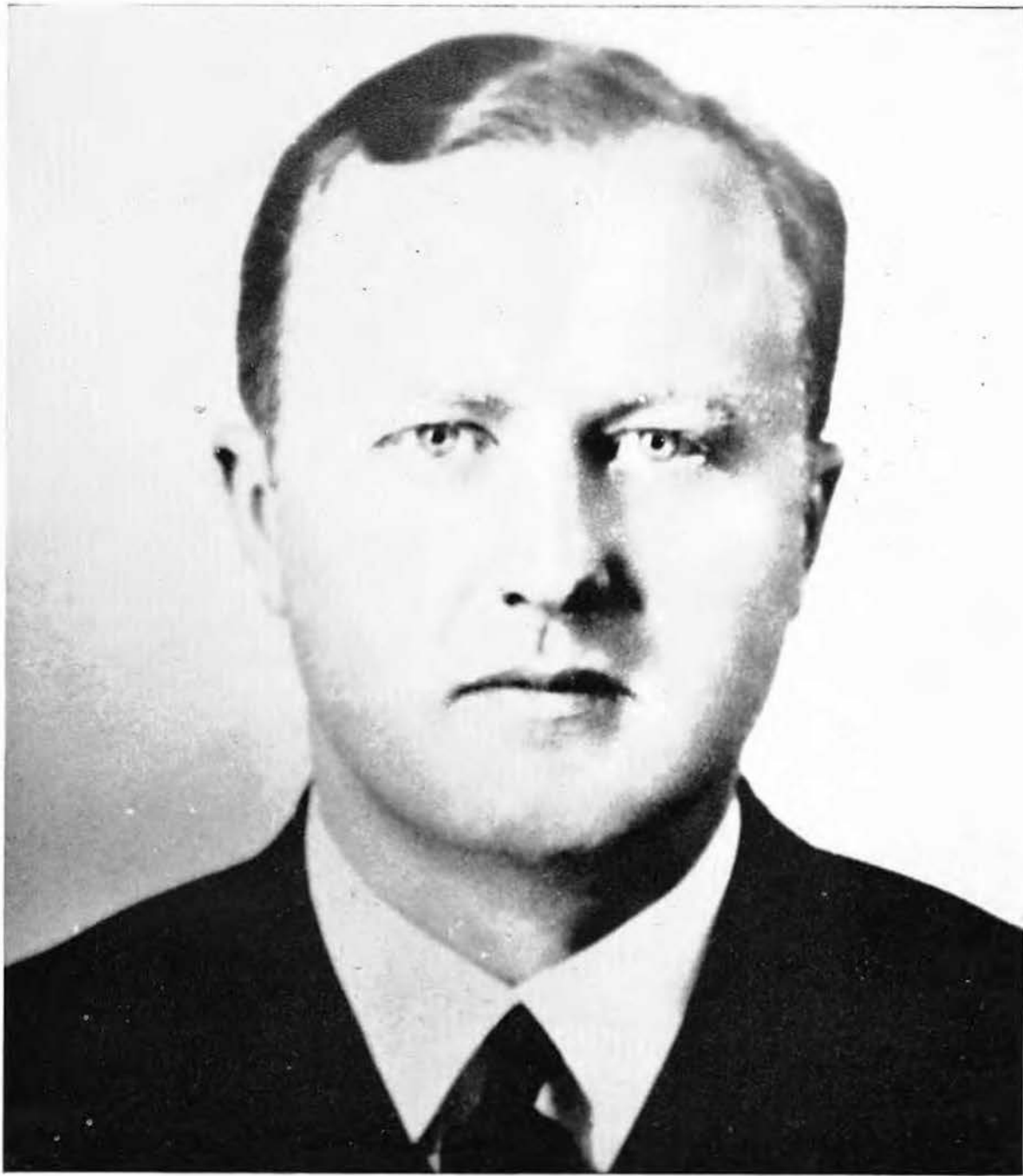
Comdr. Easterly was born in Rochester, New York, on 21 September 1905. He graduated from East High School, Rochester, New York, in 1923. He then entered Union College, Schenectady, New York, and for three years took Civil Engineering.

In 1927, he transferred to the College of Civil Engineering, University of Michigan, and graduated in 1929 with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

While in college, he was a member of the Phi Gamma Delta social fraternity, as well as the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Webb and Flange Society, both honorary senior civil engineer societies. Comdr. Easterly married in 1930.

From graduation in 1929 until 1938, Comdr. Easterly was employed by the Detroit Edison Company and assigned to checking and designing structural steel for power plants, boiler houses and other types of construction.

He then accepted a position with the Strand Steel Corporation in 1938 and worked there as Assistant Chief Engineer until he was called to active duty in the Naval Reserve.



EDWARD ALBERT FLYNN

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, CEC, USNR
First Executive Officer

Lieutenant Commander Edward A. Flynn reported to the 87th Naval Construction Battalion as Executive Officer on 23 February 1943 at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. He served with the battalion for 23 months overseas and was relieved by Lt. Comdr. Douglas at Okinawa on 12 July 1945.

Lt. Comdr. Flynn was commended by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, and authorized to wear the Commendation Ribbon, for meritorious conduct in the performance of his duties as Executive Officer of the battalion during the Okinawa campaign.

Upon his return to the States, Lt. Comdr. Flynn was assigned duty in Chicago on the staff of the Superintending Civil Engineer, Area V.

In December, 1941, Lt. Comdr. Flynn, while still a civilian, was called to the Bureau of Yards and Docks, in Washington, and assigned as an assistant in the Priorities and Expediting Division.

He was soon commissioned a lieutenant (junior grade) and transferred to Chicago as Officer in Charge of the Bureau of Yards and Docks Field Expediting Office there. In this capacity, he was responsible for expediting materials and equipment being manufactured in the 9th Naval District for Navy contracts.

In June, 1943, his office was absorbed by the Superintending Civil Engi-

neer, Area V, but his duties remained the same until he was ordered to Camp Allen, Norfolk, Virginia, for duty with the Seabees.

Lt. Comdr. Flynn was born in Xenia, Ohio, on 17 February 1910. He graduated from Xenia High School in 1926, Philips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, in 1927, and then attended Dartmouth College, graduating in 1931.

For the next three years, he attended Yale University, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1934. After graduation, he spent a year traveling and studying architecture in 14 European countries. He is unmarried.

Upon returning to the States in 1936, he accepted a position with the architectural firm of Rapp and Meacham, Cincinnati, Ohio, and in July, 1935, went to Cleveland for a position with Edward G. Read, Architect.

In November, 1937, he joined the architectural firm of Garfield, Harris, Robinson and Schafer in Cleveland as a designer and associate architect on various projects, including state institutions, housing projects and commercial buildings.

He continued with this firm until called to Washington for assignment with the Bureau of Yards and Docks.

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CAMP PEARY WAS ACID TEST FOR BOOTS



THAT DAY it all started found Civilian Fred Roberts, who was soon doing boot with the 87th at Camp Peary, being interviewed by a yeoman in the recruiting station at Memphis, Tenn. This day became a milestone in Fred's life.



"YOU'LL BE SORRY!" Fred Roberts and contingent of fellow sufferers from the Mid-West, arrive at Williamsburg for "delivery" to Capt. J. G. Ware at Peary. Soon they'll be hearing the familiar razz greeting every Seabee remembers.



SIX MORE WEEKS of this and the raw civilians reporting to Peary (above) will be ready for still more of same at Endicott and Rousseau. This was a familiar scene around Magruder about the second day of boot.



MUD ALL THE WAY UP was a depressingly familiar scene around Peary throughout boot days. They were building the sprawling camp when the boots arrived in February and it was still mushrooming when the 87th left in April.



LIBERTY, discussed and dreamed of for past six weeks, becomes an exciting reality for these future 87th warriors entraining at tiny Williamsburg station for Richmond and other points in early April, 1943. This fabulous 60-hour week-end liberty was first time off for

these boot "graduates" since they first encountered Peary's mud on or about 20 February. The 87th had not yet been formed. Easily recognized are: Ben Saeger, Nick Volpe, Dale Riggins, Jim Ferron and "Barney" Greenwood.

BOOTS READY FOR ANYTHING AFTER PEARY MUD

Toward the end of February, 1943, octopus-like Camp Peary, situated in the heart of Virginia's swamplands, was the sole remaining boot camp for all incoming Seabees.

To the green ex-civilians who first entered "Swamp Peary," the induction area was a nightmare of knee-deep mud, confusing orders, shouts and the incessant cry—YOU'LL BE SORRY!!!—from every dungaree-clad, would-be old timer. A hectic day of processing was the unhappy lot of all fladgling Seabees. Everything was strictly "on the double" from daybreak to "Taps."

The first item was the issuance of gear—a sack full of clothes, bedding and miscellaneous items, which had to be stenciled before leaving Small Stores. A haircut—right to the bone—was followed by a gruesome ID photo. A final physical check-up and the cutting of the last link with home—cramming civvies into a cardboard box for mailing.

The business of allowances, allotments and government insurance was then taken care of with almost alarming dispatch, along with an interview regarding qualifications and experience. This roughly comprised the first day in service.

The now official boots were moved into a new area where the mud was even deeper. Each platoon of 25 men was assigned an instructor—their guide and mentor for the six-week boot period.

Two platoons were crowded into each wood-and-tarpaper barracks, which was heated by two pot-bellied stoves. Those having bunks near the stoves sweltered from the almost unbearable heat; all others froze, notwithstanding the paa-coats, watch caps and two sets of heavy woolies they wore to bed.

The first item of military training was close-order drill, carrying dummy rifles made of gas-pipe. The initial efforts in these maneuvers were largely comical, many learning for the first time the difference between their left and right foot.

Extended-order drills through the snowy woods of Virginia was another grueling test. After the first few mud-baths, the men learned the trick of choosing a soft, dry spot when the command—HIT THE DECK!!!—was given.

Technical training courses and lectures on first-aid, hygiene and special weapons afforded many a tired boot an opportunity to catch up on sleep lost on guard duty or fire-watch.

The men were slowly picking up new nautical expressions to be used for years to come: mates, decks, bulkheads, chow-down, gear, secure the detail, etc. Slowly, but surely, they were growing salty!

Sick Bay did a land-office business handing out arm-paralyzing shots of various descriptions. These only added to the already perilously low physical condition of the frequently fever-ridden mates. Eventually, long rows of barracks were quarantined when cases of scarlet fever and smallpox began cropping up.

There was a duty day every fourth day when men took over various camp details. Irrespective of age or rating, they were assigned to such sundry tasks as KP, guard duty, head-cleaning, hauling coal for the barracks stoves, or the most dreaded detail of all—swamp-clearing "Captain's Party!"

It wasn't long before the boots began to sense the full importance of mail in their daily lives. Letters were read hungrily for news of the outside world, which only so recently had been HOME.

Soon, the forthcoming 60-hour week-end liberty became the main topic of conversation. When the "Great Day" finally arrived and the fed-up boots were privileged to flee the stifling confines of Captain Ware's "university," the majority took a special train to historical Richmond.

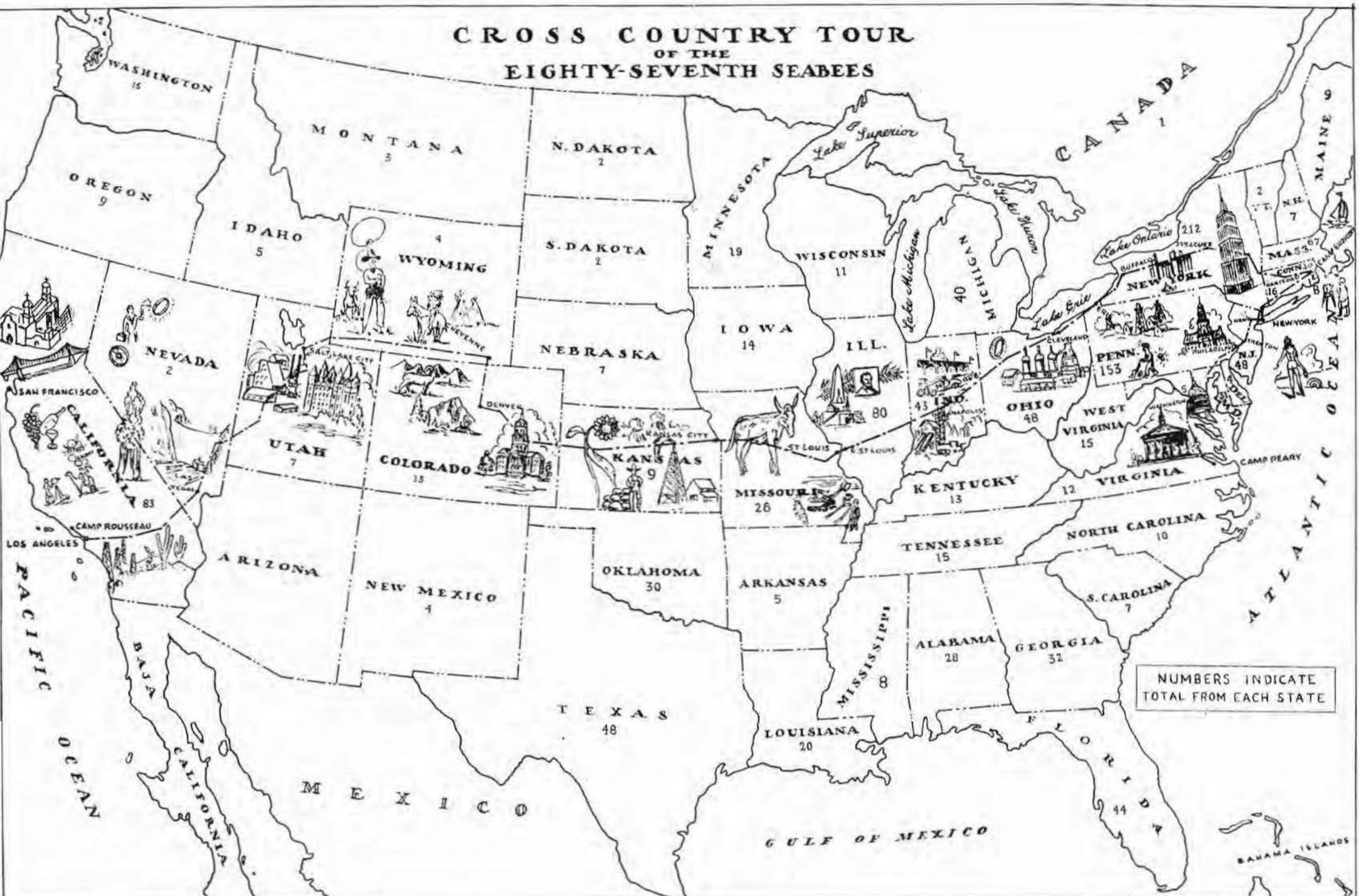
Others roamed around beautiful Colonial Williamsburg or excursioned to nearby shrines like Jamestown or Yorktown. A few of the more daring made flying visits home, going as far north as New York and Connecticut.

Back at Peary, the "refreshed" men awaited assignment. On 13 April, the 87th Battalion was formed in B-8 area. The station paper, BEELINES, announced the news.

After three of the most tumultuous days in any man's experience, during which orders, bulletins and scuttlebutt raced with equal confusion through the hectic area, the men found themselves at the railway station of the brand-new spur-track leading out of camp. Station Force band turned out in full strength to give the first outfit to use the spur an official send-off.

Once aboard the rickety day coaches, with still no definite clue as to their destination, the men, at least, knew they were no longer "boots." They were now the 87th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion—and on their way!!

CROSS COUNTRY TOUR OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SEABEES



NUMBERS INDICATE
TOTAL FROM EACH STATE



A BATTALION IS LAUNCHED at Camp Endicott on 14 May 1943 when Capt. Fred Rogers, commanding officer of NCTC, Davisville, presents 87th Seabees with their colors at a full dress review. Here, the ranking official and reviewing party (including

Skipper Robert Easterly—third in file) march between opened ranks as bolts are smartly opened and closed. Although formed at Camp Peary, the 87th left Virginia before this formal ceremony could be arranged. This was another important milestone.

CAMP ENDICOTT INTERLUDE HIGHLIGHTED BY COMMISSIONING

The exhausted men rubbed their sleepy eyes as the crummy day coaches pulled into Davisville, Rhode Island. Tired and hungry from their 18-hour trip from Virginia, the travelers showed only meager interest in Camp Endicott. It was 17 April 1943.

The most noticeable change from Camp Peary were the huge two-story barracks. These warm buildings, plus the asphalt roads and grassy plots, made the camp seem like a paradise compared to mud-packed "Swamp-Peary."

Assigned barracks in FG area, the men were immediately turned over for advanced military training. Long hikes over the rolling countryside, extended order, bayonet and weapons were topped off by the commando course, reputedly the toughest anywhere.

Newly issued '03s were zeroed in at Sun Valley Range. Many returned with titles of marksman, sharpshooter and expert. Others sported puffed lips and bruised shoulders.

Technical training men took up advanced courses. Groups of 20-mm. AA trainees shot hell out of the sleeves at Newport, returning with tall tales of their exploits.

On 14 May, the battalion was reviewed and officially commissioned by Captain Fred F. Rogers, Commanding Officer of Camp Endicott. Liberty every fourth day and a 36-hour pass every other week-end found the men prowling far and wide. Nearby cities like East Greenwich, Providence and Pawtucket attracted most sightseers.

Excellent stage presentations such as "Junior Miss" and Ada Leonard's Girl Revue and performers like Akim Tamiroff vied with a wide choice of movies as entertainment.

Ship's Stores offered anything from beer to a fancy pair of earrings. These large buildings also housed bowling alleys, pool and ping-pong tables, canteens, gymnasiums and libraries.

THE BULLDOZER announced the first 87th death, John Hurley, CMIc, died 22 May of scarlet fever. THE PEEPSIGHT, first and only 87th newsheet, was born, survived several issues and collapsed.

The long-awaited nine-day embarkation leave began 27 May and found everyone east of the Mississippi scurrying for home. Everyone welcomed the brief respite from Camp Endicott's grating public address system. The 87th never had another one.

Westerners took the long chance and held their fire, hoping the scuttlebutt concerning North Africa was wrong. It was! All hands returned from leave 6 June.

On 13 June, the battalion was marched through the crowded camp streets to the waiting Pullmans.

Now, California and the Pacific war didn't seem nearly so far away!



THE MOMENT. Lt. Comdr. Robert Easterly hands Albert Printz the battalion colors, which have just been passed to him by Mrs. Easterly. She received them from Capt. Rogers. The battalion stands at "Present, Arms!" as history is made.



EMBARKATION PARTY at Huaneme featured elaborate cake baked by Chief Ted Plantz (center, between Chief "Jack" Smeltzer and Lt.(jg) W. E. Mannix). Book-shaped colored lettering told 87th story in log form through 23 August.



CHOW HALL SERENADE. Resplendent in natty dress blues, 87th military band plays for Embarkation Party as "secured" mates stick around after an all-out chow. Band is directed by Chief Norman Grier, former member of prominent name bands.



THE STAFF. Battalion staff officers group around Comdr. Easterly (promoted 26 July) for a last formal shot before donning tropical togs they will wear in the Pacific. Lt. Comdrs. Flynn (CEC) and Osgood (MC) flank the Skipper.



"LAST ONE, BOYS—until you start taking the really big ones overseas." Mates file through the 87th's Sick Bay for last shot before shoving off for "Island X." Both ships are in and it's now or never.



GEAR. Seated on his empty foot locker at Port Huaneme, Carpenter A. L. Davis lays out a few miscellaneous articles he feels he may need over-



GUEST HOUSE. Men, unable to leave camp since unit is secured for shipping out, meet loved ones for last time night of 27 August. Lonesome



CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME! The crowded GREYHOUND bus marked LOS ANGELES is loaded with 87th Seabees primed for their final Stateside fling prior to embarking on their 27-month tour of the Pacific. Other than buying and packing for the voy-

age, the main concern of all hands during the gay Hueneme period was LIBERTY. Nothing else really mattered and the men—partially guessing the future—tore out for L. A., Hollywood and other equally outlandish fun centers at every opportunity.

HUENEME IS SPRINGBOARD FOR FINAL STATESIDE FLING

"Sunny" California greeted the rail-weary 87th a bit soberly as the long trains from the East slid into Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, 19 June 1943. It was, in fact, one of those days filled with what the local chamber of commerce excuses as "heavy precipitation!" The weather, however, was incidental.

As the men filed stiffly into their area, they were momentarily cheered by the presence of snug quonset huts, which were to house only ten men each, thus affording comparative privacy after the teeming barracks of Peary and Endicott.

The trans-continental ride from Rhode Island to California was managed in smooth style. It seemed more like a cross-country, sight-seeing tour than a troop movement as the three sections wandered through 14 states. At St. Louis and Kansas City, the men had seen the awesome effect of raging flood waters. The Rockies and the Great Salt Lake, the colorful deserts, huge cities and tiny hamlets—all the vast, sweeping panorama of America—had kept the men rubber-necking between endless card and crap games.

To relieve the cramping monotony, the men were periodically allowed to leave the trains and stretch their limbs at odd water-stops. However, due to close guarding by battalion chiefs and SPs, the mates were often mistaken for German prisoners of war!

In some cities, magazines, books and newspapers were hoisted aboard by sympathetic townspeople. Many publications were inscribed with the names and addresses of the donors and pen-pals were thereby acquired.

Food served in dining cars was of excellent quality, but nowhere near the quantity to which Seabees are accustomed. Despite the life of ease, the men were bored and eager to reach California. Six days in a Pullman are too much.

The California summer climate proved a revelation to most who expected a semi-tropical atmosphere. Nights were cool and everyone slept under blankets.

A rapid re-introduction to military training was given by Marine instructors. The hard-baked clay of Ventura County proved unyielding when the men were on field problems. A new firing range provided a variety of targets for all weapons from pistols to mortars. AA men traveled to San Diego to fire at moving targets.

"The Battle of Mugu" found the attacking 87th shooting hell out of the imaginary enemy—and themselves, too!—with blank ammunition. The pseudo-beachhead ended in a hilarious fiasco, necessitating a repeat performance a few days later.

A test invasion alert and blackout routed the men out of the warm bunks at 0300 one morning to take up defensive positions in their assigned sector. Next noon found some "defenders" still sleeping soundly in the fields!

When the battalion's equipment was drawn and set up in a motor pool, a nucleus of transportation men was formed to maintain the machines.

The palletizing detail hammered for a month, crating the supplies in warehouses for shipment overseas.

The liberty-hounds were, at last, in their element. Los Angeles and Hollywood were only a short ride by bus. The famous Hollywood Canteen and night clubs and dance halls—like the Palladium, Florentine Gardens and Earl Carroll's—provided just about everything.

Santa Monica, Long Beach and Ocean Park afforded bathing facilities and amusement parks. Name bands like Kay Kyser and Alvino Ray gave sparkling performances right on the base.

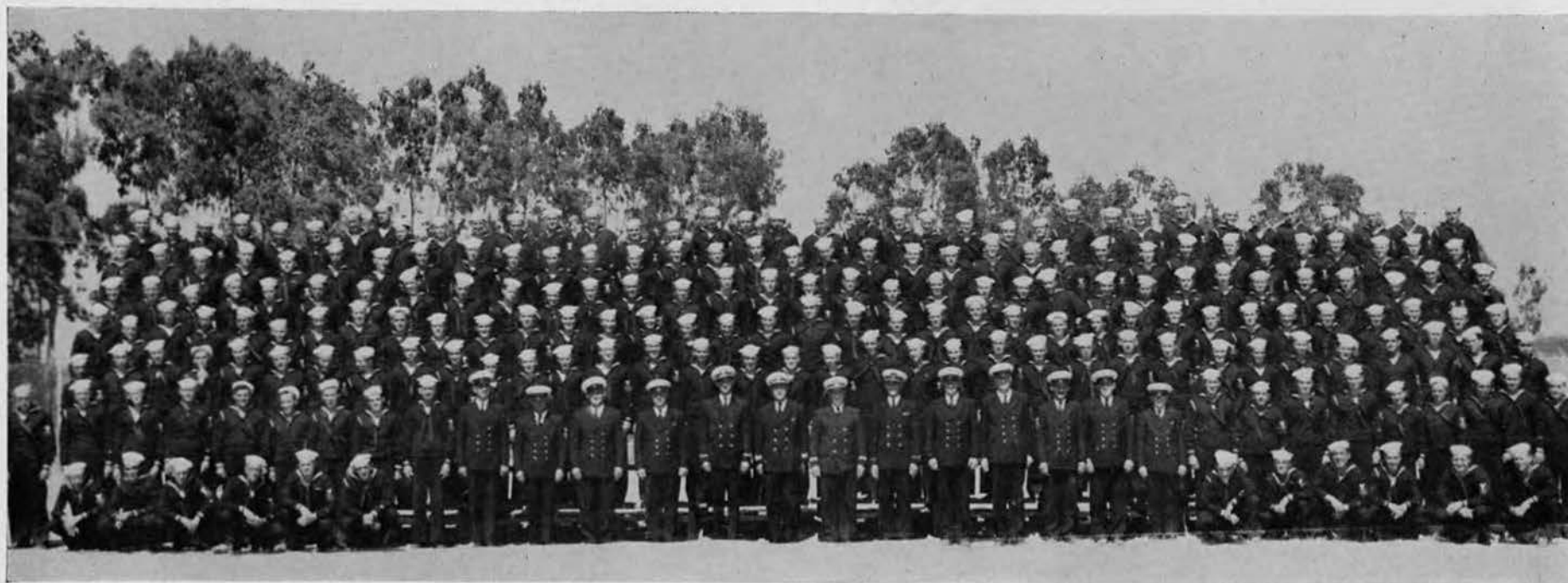
Nature lovers even journeyed to distant Sequoia National Park to view California's famed giant redwood trees. Hitch-hiking was easy. There were ample cars and gas in California despite stringent rationing elsewhere!

The first increase in ratings were announced effective 1 July. Eighteen new chiefs were created. The battalion was "wedded" to ACORN 12 on 3 July. The "happy" occasion was celebrated at a barn party and toasted with beer.

Units were continually moving in and out of Hueneme while the 87th restlessly marked time. Finally, on 23 August, the battalion was secured. The men, at last, were shocked out of their Stateside lethargy when it became known that the S.S. ROBIN WENTLEY and the S.S. COMET were at the dock and being loaded around the clock. (None of this news made the Camp Rousseau newspaper, SEABEE COVER-ALL!)

All hands knew the 10-week California lark was suddenly at an end. Soon, they would be leaving "The Land of Make-Believe" for the realistic Pacific world where no quarter was asked and none was given.

BATTALION COMPANIES

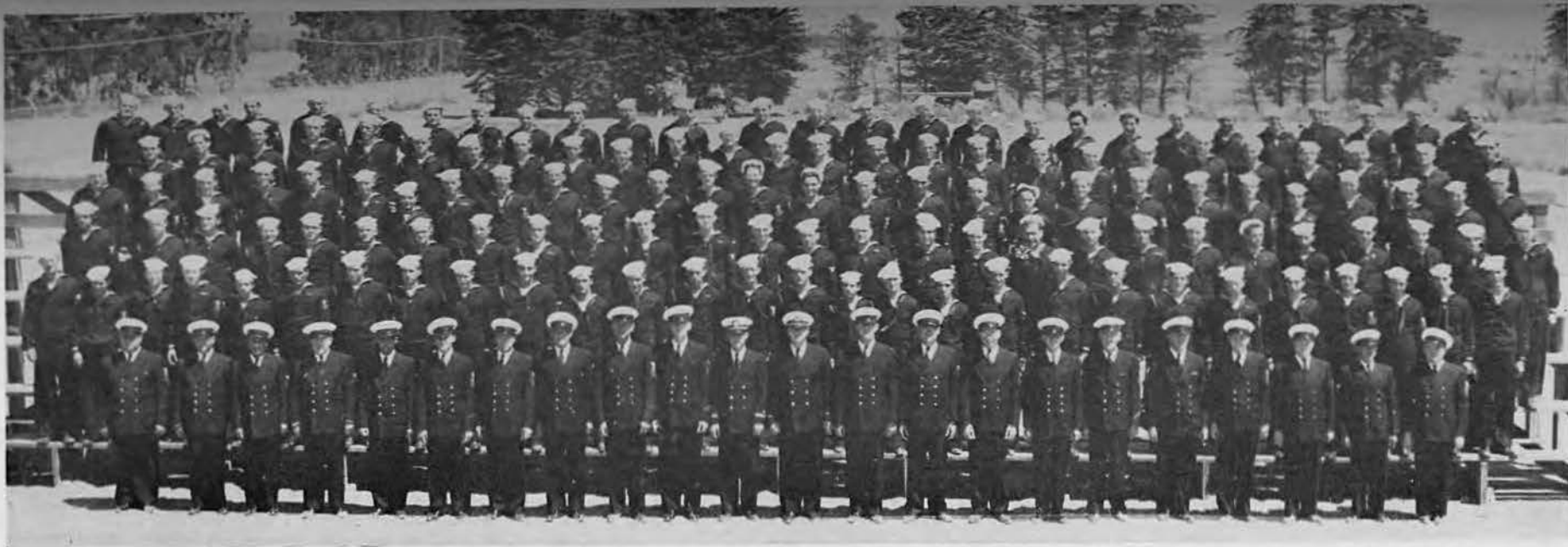


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COMPANY A gets a full page in this volume because these men, along with an engineering unit from Headquarters, carried the ball for the 87th in the Treasury Islands invasion in October, 1943. Commanded by Lieut. Charles E. ("Pete") Turn-

bull (fifteenth from left, first row, standing), Co. A eventually had one winner of the Silver Star and three wearers of the Commendation Ribbon. Aurelio Tassone, Flc (thirteenth from right, fourth row) was only battalion member to win the Sil-

ver Star. Two members gave their lives in the Treasury Islands, Edwin Ostman, S2c (ninth from right, second row) became missing in action during the invasion and Roy Goldberg, S2c (eighth from left, third row) died by strafing on 14 January 1944.



HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, with its two officers (dead center) and a potent array of 20 CPOs, was naturally the most maligned unit of the battalion, but it could be exceedingly useful, at times, to the other companies. The engineering contingent of Headquarters accompa-

nied Co. A on the Treasury invasion in the fall of '43 and laid out Stirling Field in the jungles. Commanded by Lieut. Louis D. Spaw, Jr., "Big City Hall" harbored such groups as: yeomen, storekeepers, photographers, barbers, tailors, cooks, bakers, laundrymen, pharmacist

mates, engineers (surveyors and draftsmen), MAAs, armorers, mailmen, censors and malaria control. When the battalion was realigned into divisions at Banika, Headquarters Company became Headquarters Division.



COMPANY B was the battalion unit where there was never a dull moment. Commanded by Lieut. Oscar N. Kulberg (fifteenth from left, first row, standing), Co. B compiled quite a colorful history, especially at Hue-nerre. In fact, it was such an unusual history that about

eight of the boys were unable to break away in time to catch the S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY. This company lost four men overseas. Two, Eddie Burns, Sic (tenth from left, fourth row), and Blake Musselman, Sic (thirteenth from left, third row), were bomb victims on Stirl-

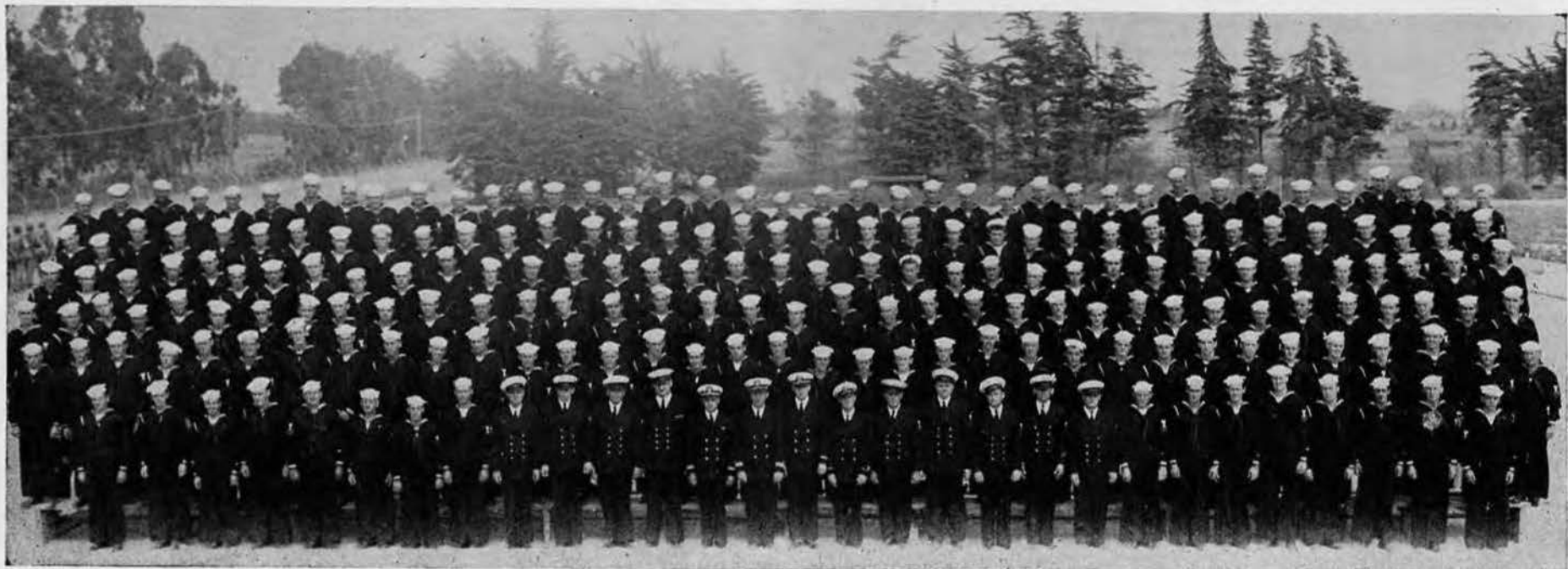
ing. John Phillips, CM1c (ninth from right, top row), died aboard the U. S. S. NAOS at New Caledonia, while Dale Anderson, CM3c (third from right, top row), was killed in a quarry accident on Okinawa.



COMPANY C, under the command of Lieut. Estill E. Sparks (sixteenth from left, first row, standing), was known as a good liberty outfit and Stateside liberty was just about the choicest morsel to dangle before a mate's eye. Company C lost two men overseas, both

deaths occurring in line of duty on Stirling. The first, Friend H. Smith, CMlc (fourth from left, top row), was killed in an accident at the tool-sharpening shop, while Lyle Marts, CMlc (ninth from right, third row), died of pneumonia. A notable absentee from above

picture is Chief Charlie ("Uncle Charlie") Moers, then Company CPO and later the colorful "Protector of S Division" on Stirling. It was Chief Moers' second overseas tour.



COMPANY D, composed primarily of chiefs and seamen, was under the command of Lieut. William L. Whyte, Jr. (fourteenth from left, front row). Company D was kept on its toes by Company Chief Emil ("Uncle Slug") Schaefer (twelfth from left, front row), who had an

endless series of tales to relate relative to his first overseas tour with the Second Battalion in early '42. Company D also lost two men overseas, both killed by the same bomb on Stirling. These mates were: Arthur Blumstein, Slc (fourth from left, second row), and

Fitzgerald, Slc (seventh from right, second row). Two company chiefs, Claude Brown and Jack Ormiston (tenth and eleventh from left, front row), were appointed to warrant rank overseas.



OUTWARD BOUND
(A Port Hueneme Water Color)

S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY



28 AUGUST 1943



THE BAND PLAYED ON. Not even the 87th's rollicking military band could dispell the somber gloom that memorable August morning. The battalion is shown marching from Camp Rousseau to Dock No. 4. Headquarters Company follows the band.



NO BAG INSPECTION. California's celebrated sun wilted even the sturdiest, barrel-chested Seabee as the long, tedious morning of waiting slowly spent itself. Mates have grounded bulging duffelbags containing bedding and are awaiting loading orders in nearby shade.



FINAL CONFERENCE. Comdr. Robert Easterly, original 87th skipper, and Lt. Comdr. Herbert Nash, ACORN 12 executive officer, confer near gangway with Comdr. Roy Darron, ACORN OinC, as embarking continues. Left, Chief Lauren Merriam and Yeoman "Bill" Hemp help check musters.



NOTHING LEFT BEHIND. Two sturdy 87th Seabees, Paul ("Sarge") Tompkins and Harold Waldron, literally groan from bow to stern as they grimly hoist duffelbags, plus full field-packs and complete combat gear, and head for the WENTLEY's challenging gangway.



THE LAST MILE. Members of Company B, loaded to maximum capacity, ascend tricky knee-buckling gangway to board transport after being mustered at Personnel table. Left to right: "Russian" Daytner, Eugene Goldie, Artie Hansford, F. K. Jones and Wilbur Lake.



DOWN THE HATCH! Having surmounted the "obstacle course" of the ship's gangway (only with a helping hand in many instances!), mates are shown entering hatchway to go below in search of bunks they are to occupy for next 33 days.



"THAT FREEDOM SHALL NOT PERISH . . ." There was no turning back at this stage of embarkation. Figuratively, the fabulous South Pacific lay just over the horizon. The long-dreaded twenty per cent (overseas "bonus" pay) was no further away than the mouth of Port Hueneme's harbor. Loaded in pack-mule fashion,

mates determinedly stumble toward cheerless S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY as zero hour for departure nears. Well over two eventful years were to elapse before these men would re-enter "The Land of Plenty."

28 AUGUST 1943—A DAY TO REMEMBER!

Eyes, heavy with sleep, and in many cases looking grotesquely misplaced under shaved skulls, focused with extreme difficulty on timepieces, which read in the general vicinity of 0400.

Scattered shouts went ripping through the area to the effect that someone should kill the blankety-blank bugler, and most heads were hastily withdrawn into the delicious warmth of well-tustled sacks. Came depressing realization! The bugle was proclaiming the arrival of EMBARKATION DAY—28 August 1943!

The day anticipated with mingled dread and excitement for the past six months had finally materialized. Then, the flurry of last minute packing. No matter how carefully a fellow's field-pack had been put together the night before, it still had to be repacked; otherwise, the confusion would have been incomplete!

The still-warm beds had to be rolled and coaxed into duffelbags that apparently were designed for carrying handkerchiefs, and then rushed to various loading points in the camp area where they were soon picked up by Station Force trucks and hauled to the Port Hueneme dock.

Hurriedly-gulped breakfasts! The inevitable and eternal hut-policing! Detachment of eight men who the night before had been involved in a regrettable rumpus in the 87th area. And through it all raced the staff of all military life—SCUTTLEBUTT!

Then, loaded beyond human belief, the men were formed by companies to await the battalion's own well-rehearsed band, which escorted them by units to the dock—"The Last Mile"!!!

The day had begun gray and somber, but before arriving dockside all hands were completely miserable beneath the scorching California sun. The mates were truly dragging bottom.

At the dock, more confusion presented itself in the form of a Naval dispatch, which ordered five battalion officers detached. It took more than a bit of Seabee ingenuity to have that order rescinded. The old "Can Do" spirit really buzzed across the country to Washington via telephone before the order was finally cancelled.

With groans—and before the amused, lucky few who were to sail the following day on the S. S. COMET—duffelbags were heaped upon

already overburdened backs to be carried up the WENTLEY's gangway. Sympathy radiated from the ACORN 12 and Casual Draft personnel who stood by awaiting their turns to go aboard.

Camp Rousseau Station Force personnel added their sadistic bit to the situation by holding up the line while they checked each man off the muster. They apparently wanted to make certain that no one would be inadvertently—or otherwise—left behind to possibly crowd them out of their comfortable Stateside billets.

The famed "obstacle course" at Camp Endicott was mild compared to the WENTLEY's gangway. Many required helping hands before reaching the top. Just how diminutive chaps like Zane Raudibaugh and Joe Beaver ever made it will remain a mystery for all time.

NOW HEAR THIS! NOW HEAR THIS!! was the preliminary greeting offered as weary bodies were urged across the unfamiliar decks and down ladders into the depressing bowels of the ship. GO BELOW AND STAY BELOW!!!

The rest of the time before sailing was spent in stretching aching muscles, trading for the best bunks, unpacking bedrolls, acknowledging the presence of the pangs of hungry, cursing the fact that the ship's heads were not to be used in port, rehashing last night's telephone conversation with the little lady across the nation, and indulging in a bit of secret speculation—Where?—Why?—How long?

Bewildered dogs were furtively released from ingenious hiding places—Archie ("Red") Reynolds' "Devil" and her squirming family of three from a ventilated handbag—Jack Alexander's frisky fox terrier, "Whiskey," made it aboard somehow—"Tippy," who had succeeded "Shadow" as official battalion mascot for foreign duty, was left behind to sail next day on the COMET. The first casualty of the embarkation occurred when one of "Devil's" puppies lost its life in the titanic struggle of being smuggled aboard ship.

At approximately 1630, the word was excitedly passed that the gangway had finally been secured and some of the more venturesome mates sneaked topside for a farewell, nostalgic glimpse of the "Land of the Free" before the great ship was given to the sea.



ON HER OWN. The jam-packed ROBIN WENTLEY begins to nose out of Port Hueneme's snug little harbor under its own throbbing power as tug casts off lines and snorts back to port. The familiar Hueneme shoreline may still be seen at fairly close range. Few en-

listed men witnessed this scene as they were kept below until harbor was cleared. Lack of chow since pre-dawn breakfast prompts spud-peelers (left) to ignore this historic moment in favor of an early supper.

ANCHORS AWEIGH

EIGHTY-SEVENTH GETS LAST
LOOK AT THE STATES FOR
WELL OVER TWO YEARS
AS ROBIN WENTLEY
HEADS TO SEA

The majority guessed "Somewhere in the South Pacific" and some correctly forecast the seething Solomons, but on 28 August 1943 the 87th's legendary "Island X" may well have been any one of a thousand landspecks in the far flung Pacific.

Amid the spirited playing of "Anchors Aweigh" by the battalion band, the big ship cast its moorings. The few wives, sweethearts and friends at the receding dock waved their last fond farewell as the S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY nosed out of the Port Hueneme harbor on her maiden voyage as a transport.

The Stars and Stripes were almost immediately struck from the ship's towering mast. Enemy submarines had been reported lurking not too far off the California shore. The waters off the West Coast, even then, were most certainly no "Shangri-La."

The unescorted WENTLEY adopted a zig-zag course as the tiny Coast Guard cutter turned back five miles out and the inevitable seasickness swept the ship. Soon men and their GI pails became inseparable.

All hands knew the long voyage away from home had, at last, begun when a voice—long to be remembered—blared: THIS SHIP IS NOW PROCEEDING TO SEA! YOUR BASE PAY HAS BEEN INCREASED BY TWENTY PER CENT! I CONGRATULATE YOU!!!

GOODBYE, AMERICA! Last view of Port Hueneme harbor as the outward bound transport gathers ever-increasing speed. Shown are a 20-mm. anti-aircraft gun, a stack of liferafts and, incidentally, a number of the battalion's budding "characters."

ESCORT HEADS BACK. Sleek Coast Guard cutter blasts farewell at five-mile limit and the WENTLEY is strictly on its own. Land has disappeared entirely. Ravenous hunger inspires spud-peelers to heroic efforts.



“ NOW HEAR THIS! NOW HEAR THIS!! ”

Still manned by its Merchant Marine crew and carrying approximately 1,700 crowded passengers, the ex-cargo liner, S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY, had its hands full on its first voyage as a troopship.

As further proof of its recent reconversion, it boasted a "regular" Navy armed guard and two antagonistic Marines as a police force. With all this as a starter, the ex-banana boat was hardly "a happy ship."

Down in the gloomy holds, landlubber mates went through all the known tortures of embryonic sailors. For the most part too exhausted to leave their bunks for fresh air, they lay fully-clothed, cursing the Navy, the Japs, the Pacific and the mate in the next bunk who always seemed to have his feet in their face.

The next morning found the men in an even more dejected state with headaches, nausea and a complete distaste for food. Ship's rail was almost solidly lined with men—some to sea for the first time the lonely sight of an empty, limitless ocean; others for a more practical, but a far more unpleasant purpose.

Details were immediately assigned—KP in all its repulsive phases, guard duty, gun and sentry watches, head-cleaning and deck-swabbing. It was alleged the WENTLEY had more guards and sentries than the U. S. Treasury Building!

The most coveted assignment was the break-out crew. This group had to break out all fresh and canned foods for the troop mess. This gang always found willing help—especially when canned peaches and pineapple were scheduled for the menu!

Passengers were served meals twice a day. The chow-line was exhausting. The troop mess was the hottest spot aboard ship. Four chiefs were stationed there, apparently to make sure no one enjoyed the meals. They pushed the mates in, and after a few mouthfuls, they pushed them right out again.

Men began sleeping on deck in the most ingeniously hidden spots to find relief from the oppressively airless holds. These hideouts had to be well concealed for the Marine "Gestapo" took fiendish delight in herding passengers below deck on the stuffiest nights.

The able troop commander, Lieut. B. A. Feiber, made full use of the powerful PA system. At all hours day and night, the monotonous dullness was shattered by his strident: "NOW HEAR THIS! NOW

HEAR THIS! ALL PASSENGERS GO TO YOUR BUNKS, GET IN YOUR BUNKS AND STAY IN YOUR BUNKS!!

The monotony of the journey finally produced in the men a dreary physical inertia. Sleeping and trying to forage some food or juice became favorite pastimes. Any seat in the shade was a priceless possession. A pair of shorts became standard uniform as men found laundering with salt water an arduous task.

Entertainment was organized. Some men had energy enough left to box. Chief Norman Grier got the mike away from the troop commander long enough to play some popular requests on a record-player every day. Unsuspected 87th talent put on a variety show, featuring singing and instrument-playing over the air. Impromptu jam sessions held on deck by a few musicians each night were a highlight.

Most anticipated feature of the day was the news broadcast given at 1100 by ACORN 12 Chaplain Cyril R. Kevanagh. Italy surrendered during the voyage and all Italian-Americans aboard were welcomed by their buddies as Allies! Each passenger was invited to write certain letters and thus the fledgling 87th met overseas censorship.

Meanwhile, the WENTLEY zig-zagged on her tiresome journey. Only once did she stop—to repair her boilers. After an uneasy hour of waiting, a feeling of relief swept over the men when the familiar throbbing was once more detected. She had presented an easy target on the calm sea.

The owners of watches were kept busy turning their timepieces back as the ship forged westward. As it crossed the International Date Line—completely skipping 11 September—the now salty Shellbacks saw their first land since leaving the States. It was Tonga-Tabu. A British float-plane dipped low over the WENTLEY, and apparently satisfied by the signals, flew casually away.

Two days from the initial destination, an inquisitive American destroyer pulled close for a "pow-wow" in code around midnight, but it slunk away after a brief exchange of blinkers.

As New Caledonia appeared out of the sea, the mates took a new lease on life. It has been a tedious 6,080-mile trip from Hueneme, but not without certain merits. As their first voyage on a troopship, it had really made each man appreciate his forfeited civilian status.

HAIL, THE GANG! Their ravenous hunger temporarily satisfied by first meal aboard ship, sweat-drenched mates escape the WENTLEY's stifling galley to topside (Hatch 5) for reviving breath of sea-breeze and initial session of scuttlebutt. Men seated and

reclining on full vegetable crates wear bulky, kapok life-jackets and filled canteens in accordance with ship's rigid orders. One game has been resumed, "Whiskey," one of a half dozen dogs smuggled aboard, is held by his master, Jack Alexander.



"A CLEAN SHIP IS A HAPPY SHIP"



STUD OR DRAW! Perpetual card games of every imaginable type dominated the recreational scene topside. When not playing, men read, talked or slept in meager shade, or marveled at flying fish, leap-frogging porpoises or spouting whales along ship's rail.



SEABEE COWBOY. The long, monotonous voyage unearthed much unknown and unsuspected talent in the battalion's own ranks. Chief Vic Cedarstaff, Cripple Creek, Colorado, entertains fellow passengers with intricate rope tricks he learned as a boy from western cowpunchers.



GRUDGE FIGHT. Extremely crowded quarters aboard the transport resulted in inevitable disputes between shipmates. Here, two feuding Seabees settle their quarrel in the approved manly manner to the delight of their buddies. Such bouts were, of course, rigidly supervised.



IN THE EVENING. John J. Arbolino, Brooklyn, entertains an audience aboard ship with the ever-popular "squeeze box." Requests, as usual, were for the old favorites men had known as civilians. Disinterested mate (right) continues his reading.



"PIPE 'EM DOWN!" Every day was crew wash-day at sea. Intense equatorial heat throughout journey made frequent laundering essential. Here, Charlie Johnson, Comer, Georgia, "pipes down all scrub and wash clothes" at mid-afternoon.



SWEAT BOX. Battalion galley personnel stood regular watches throughout the cruise despite the galley's unbearable heat. Chow, as always, was of prime concern to all hands. "Freddy" Vachon (left) and Arnold Shoup are preparing hot dogs and soup.



PACIFIC SUNSET. Typical of all sunset scenes aboard the armed transport were solitary mates leaning thoughtfully against the ship's rail, most likely contrasting in their unsettled minds those last fleeting months in sunny California with the perils looming ahead

at journey's end. Usually, the lonely men talked in pairs or in larger groups, but sooner or later almost every man found himself alone with his thoughts. (See story below).

ALONG THE RAIL

LONELY, UNCERTAIN MATES
CONSIDER THE FUTURE AS
ANOTHER LONG DAY ENDS

Of the thousand and one ways the men passed the 33 days and the 7,180 miles between California and their initial staging destination, none compared with the wistful dreaming done along the ship's rail.

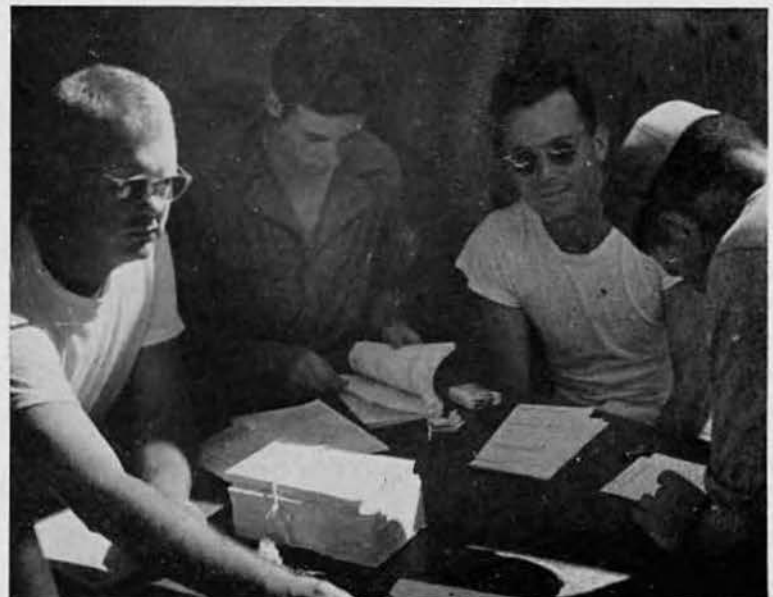
In daytime, staring out into the vast panorama of sea and sky, and at night, viewing the rhinestone sky and ebony sea, studded with millions of tiny, phosphorescent jewels, men would pause and think.

They would see themselves, caught up in the maelstrom of a global war, being whisked away from family, wife or sweetheart, plunged into the Indefinite, unable to turn back and powerless to foresee what the future held.

Only the rushing swish of the somber ocean made reply.



"HAIRCUT, MISTER?" "Weary Willie" Williams, Hazlehurst, Georgia, one of three battalion tonsorial artists, gives Lt. Comdr. Edward A. Flynn, Cleveland, original 87th "exec", a spine-tingling hair-trim at sea. Open-air shop did land-office business.



BUSINESS AS USUAL. Battalion administrative units continued to function aboard ship. Here, a semi-annual MAQ renewal is being executed by one of the 87th crew as Yeomen Bill Hemp, Tom Peiffer and Jack Knowles see the job well done.



HEAR YE! HEAR YE! Neptunus Rex, Ruler of the Raging Main, and his Royal Bride preside over hilarious, tail-warming session of Royal Court as the WENTLEY crosses the Equator on 5 September. Most unworthy "Pollywog" (left) bends to kiss Royal Baby's hairy belly as a Royal Paddler begins to lay the wood on the victim's already scarlet posterior. Royal Barbers (right, in white jackets) await hapless Pollywog to administer free equatorial scalping.

87TH BECOMES SHELLBACK BATTALION AT EQUATOR

An ominous tenseness swept over the bored men as Davy Jones and his rollicking pirates boarded the S.S. ROBIN WENTLEY at sunset the day before the 87th Seabees crossed the Equator in the fall of 1943.

The WENTLEY's captain surrendered unconditionally to this most worthy emissary of Father Neptune, and Davy immediately piped the attention of all hands over the PA system.

Landlubbers aboard quaked in their boots as the booming voice of Davy (Chief Emil Schoenke) was wafted throughout this clean—but definitely unhappy—ship! Even to the lower 'tween decks, the deep, guttural tones of Davy's voice penetrated, rousing the mates with his blood-curdling message of fire and brimstone.

The distinguished emissary declared in no uncertain terms that the ship was now entering the hallowed domain of Neptunus Rex, Sovereign Ruler, King of Kings, Undisputed Master of Sky, Wind and Water, Flesh, Fish or Fowl, Both East and West, in Latitude 00000 Degrees.

He then summoned all "Shellbacks" to report at once to his quarters amidships, and instructed all others in the lay of the land. "Pollywogs," former landlubbers of the butcher, baker and candlestick-maker variety, were to appear before His Majesty's Court the following day and explain their blasphemous trespassing of his sacred sea.

All Shellbacks were immediately pressed into service after they had furnished irrefutable proof of having previously crossed "The Line."

During the long evening, mates who offended by rude remarks or improper actions in the presence of Neptune's emissaries were hauled into the Inner Sanctum of the midshiphouse and given a short induction ceremony to teach them the proper attitude in the presence of royalty.

Marcelino ("Bobo") Escobedo, among many, returned therefrom a chastened man—minus hair and in its place a liberal coating of potassium permanganate. The mates were tremendously impressed by what they saw.

The timid Pollywogs squirmed in their canvas hide-outs and made themselves as inconspicuous as possible. They also felt longingly of their profuse locks and tried to get some sleep before tomorrow's looming ordeal.

Before the night was over, however, a number of officers and chiefs were given a thorough processing to see if they were fit to serve

on the "Misery Line" next day. The well known deputy from Emporia, Kansas, Chief Gomer Ralph, ("Hopalong Cassity") Jones, and his Oklahoma sidekick, Chief Owen ("Awful") Lawson, were given some really special treatment. However, this pair more than made up for it the following day as many an unsuspecting mate learned to his sorrow.

Such sights the 87th had never seen before or since. Heading the all-star cast in "The Pollywog Parade" were Ensign Cal. Winters and Chief Paul ("Lister-Bag") Vater, both attired in infant apparel and wearing the cutest baby caps. The mates rolled in the aisles!

Next day, 5 September, Davy and his swashbuckling pirates escorted Father Neptune and his train to the throne room atop Hatch No. 4.

The uniform of the day was skivvy shorts as the Royal Sheriff and his motley deputies broke out all Pollywogs under hatches and the long, hilarious court session began. Neptune's police were like all police since time immemorial—they used their clubs with the greatest enthusiasm.

Each manjack was tried individually—and fairly!! From Comdr. Robert Easterly to Seaman George Filmico, their offenses were loudly proclaimed by the Royal Scribes. After an examination by the Royal Doctor, the "just" sentence of "Guilty!!" was invariably pronounced by the Royal Judge. Then, the cringing Pollywog was taken in tow by the Royal Bodyguard, Bos'n's Mate Frank Rychlak, and led past numerous attendants and flunkies where the imposed sentence was carried out in full measure.

The Royal Paddlers then took the sweating Pollywogs in hand and laid to with the venomous ambition to beat all traces of the landlubber from their smarting posteriors.

The wails had little effect on the activities of the Royal Barber, Chief William J. ("Sully") Sullivan, as he dispensed "free" haircuts in full, clean swipes of the clippers.

Some of the mates were privileged to kiss the Royal Baby's hairy belly before being tossed into the canvas tank to the Royal Bears—a playful group whose main interest was to handle the mates in such a manner that they would be thoroughly cleansed with sea-water, both inside and out.

Fire hoses, squirting powerful streams of salt water, completed the rinsing process and the bewildered initiate, now cleansed of all sins of a landlubber, found himself a fit subject of Neptunus Rex—a thorough, sea-going Salt, at last!!



WHAT PRICE GLORY? Final stage of the boisterous Shellback initiation was the free-for-all dunking of the bewildered Pollywog into the salt-water tank by the rough-and-tumble Royal Bears. Dunking continued until the confused victim yelled "Shellback!" three times in

rapid succession. Only then would the initiate be freed and pronounced a qualified Shellback. The new "veteran" (if able) began immediately to assist with indoctrinating his shipmates still running the gauntlet for their baptism of fire.

ANYTHING ELSE, FELLOWS??? Slightly bewildered, John W. Gottschall (both arms extended) emerges from the salty "drink" a full-fledged Shellback, but unwisely asks his erstwhile "tormentors" if perchance they have overlooked any form of medieval torture. Mean-

while, the relentless Royal Bears continue to dunk protesting Pollywogs like mad (right). Chiefs Gomer Ralph Jones and Ted Marienthal (lower left) are on verge of turning ship's high-pressure hose on Shellback Gottschall by way of a very salty retort.



SHELLBACKS SHOW "GOLD BRAID" POLLYWOGS NO MERCY



ROYAL SHERIFF. Flaunting huge star of authority and acting on secret orders direct from Neptunus Rex, Royal Sheriff and motley deputies depart from Royal Court in search of "Gold Braid" Pollywogs. The long-deferred hour of reckoning is at hand.



"GUILTY OR GUILTY?" First officer apprehended by the search party is Pollywog Edward A. Flynn, 87th's second in command, who prematurely smiles as gleeful Royal Scribes extoll formidable list of outlandish charges against the "exec" before the fireworks commence.



"THE OLD MAN." Not even the Skipper escapes the Shellback dragnet as veterans comb the WENTLEY from bow to stern for high-ranking victims as the initiation reaches its zenith. Here, Pollywog Robert Easterly, original 87th OinC, takes the hurdles as: (left) he prepares to kiss the

Royal Bride's "undimpled" knee; (center) bends to osculate the beaming Royal Baby's uninviting belly; (right) parts company with hair he can ill afford to lose at hands of vengeful Royal Barbers.



A HOUSE DIVIDED. Eager Royal Bears attempt to snatch Lt.(jg) Louis D. Spaw, Jr., Houston, Texas, from Royal Barbers even before scissor-happy tonsorial artists can finish dispoiling young 87th officer's neatly-groomed locks.



AT THE VORTEX. Hilarious enlisted Shellbacks turn powerful ship's hose (more salt water) on group of battalion officers as "The Braid" flee dunking tank at end of initiation ceremony. Mates roar unanimous approval along sidelines.



DESIGNED FOR FRAMING. Arriving at the initial staging destination, all hands were presented with ornate, tropical-colored Shellback certificates. Reproduced above is the certificate of "Sam Salt", Seaman, Second Class, a fictitious mate, who is the proto-

type of all worthy Shellbacks in the Pacific. These attractively lettered documents, duly signed by Neptunus Rex, Ruler of the Raging Main, and Davy Jones, His Majesty's Scribe, became bona fide proof of having crossed "The Line" with all appropriate ceremonies.

"CROSSING THE LINE" OLD AS THE SEA

The uproarish ceremonies of "Crossing the Line" are of such ancient vintage that their source is—for all practical purposes—lost. Therefore, the ritual may well be as old as the Seven Seas.

According to history, vessels of all nations—whether sailing in the warm Mediterranean or in the frosty North Atlantic—held certain ceremonies when they sailed over a particular latitude. And even to this day, ships of all nations still have one ritual in common when crossing the Equator, Latitude 00000, the mythical home of Father Neptune, Sovereign Ruler of All Seas.

No one has presented concrete evidence, as yet, but savants consider it logical to assume that these ancient rituals on salt water were, at first, religious rites, then medieval testing of human courage or initiation into hardy seamanship, and finally, as today, an uproarish party to break the unrelieved monotony of a long voyage.

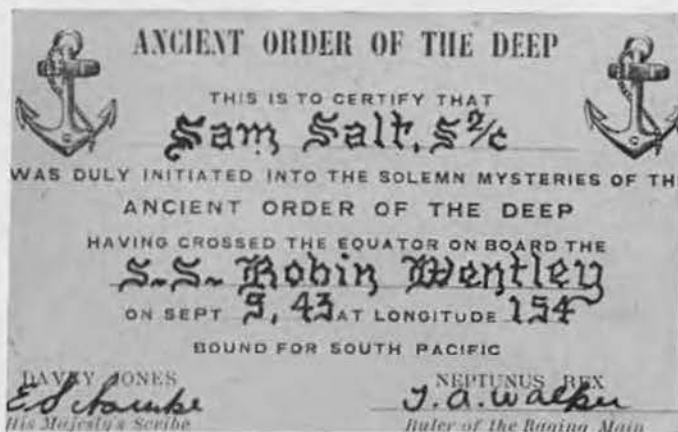
One thing is certain: the anticipation, the terrible punishments imagined, the wholesome fun experienced and the memories stored away make this day an outstanding one forever.

And the certificates received as proof of having crossed the Equator become documents of priceless sentimental value.

They not only prove the owners have sailed "deep water,"

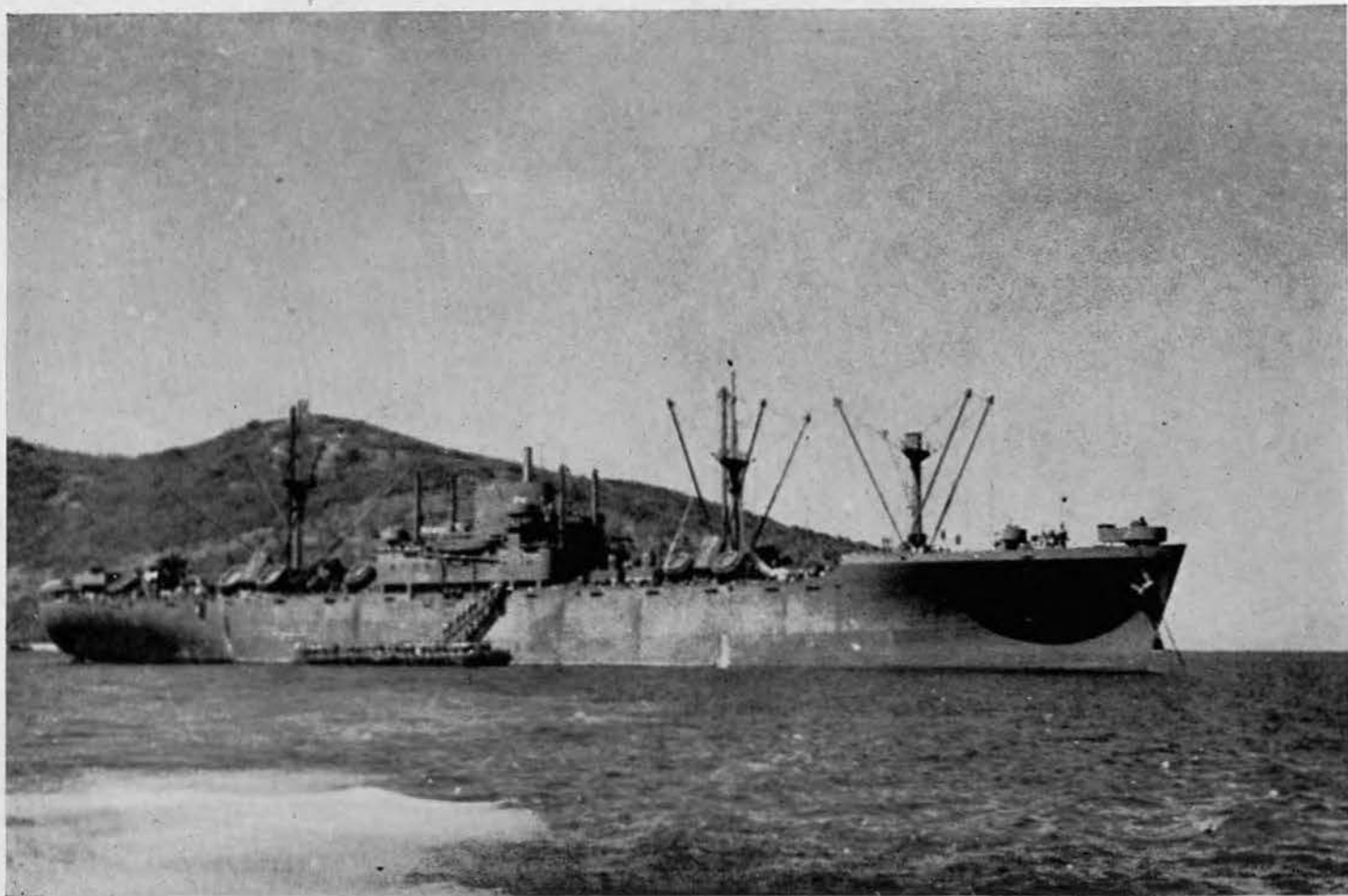
but it also distinguishes them from their less fortunate "shallow water" fellowmen who have not had the opportunity of "Crossing the Line."

And thus it was with the 87th.



PROOF. Reproduced above (again in favor of "Sam Salt") is the official Shellback membership card. Carried by all worthy Shellbacks, this card is especially valuable in recrossing the Equator. Lacking this proof, a second initiation would be inevitable.

87TH REACHES NOUMEA IN 17 DAYS

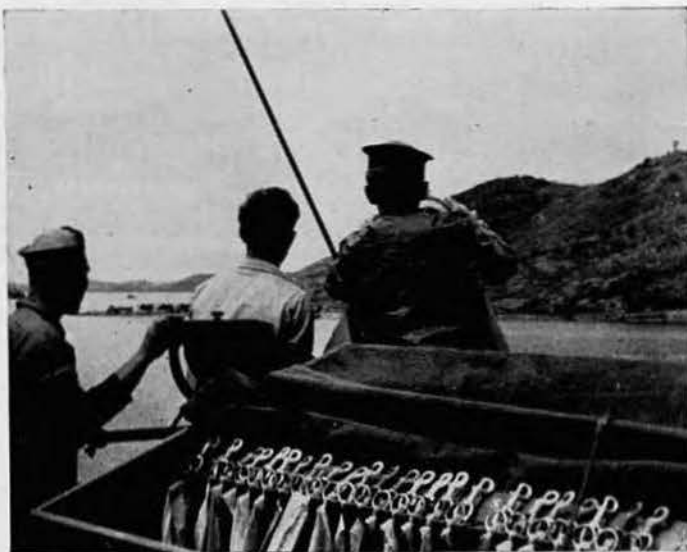


"DON'T FENCE ME IN." New Caledonia was a most welcome sight on 14 September after 17 routine days at sea. Ocean-weary mates are shown unloading from the WENTLEY onto huge pontoon barges for a shore party at SHANGRI-LA TERRACE. Here, the

sturdy transport rested from its maiden voyage as a troopship for 12 days in the well-protected Noumea harbor before the 87th finally received its staging orders.



FIRST LAP COMPLETED. The WENTLEY slowly noses into Noumea's calm outer harbor before anchoring. All hands crowd ship's rail for eager first glimpse of New Caledonia's picturesque capital. This panoramic view was taken from the midshiphouse.



SHIP TO SHORE. Battalion signalmen are shown sending a blinker message to a shore installation as the WENTLEY lays over. Signalman Third Class Ralph M. Ormsby (right) controls blinker. Ship's signal flags are in open gear locker behind group.



"OH, GIVE ME LAND, LOTS OF LAND . . ." First 87th group to pay visit to legendary SHANGRI-LA TERRACE crosses Seabee-built footbridge across ocean inlet en route to popular Navy Playground. Chief Commissary Steward "Jack" Smeltzer, Des Moines,

Iowa, examines sign pointing toward recreation area as shipmates hurry past. Black native shepherds, attending grazing flocks along slope of nearby hills, are first foreigners most mates have seen outside the States.

NEW CALEDONIA IS BATTALION'S FIRST FOREIGN LAND

Noumea, the lazy, colorful capital of Free French New Caledonia, was the first port of call for the war-bound 87th Seabees.

Rail space, more so than ever, was at a premium as the sea-weary 87th struggled for a better view of bustling Noumea harbor with its intricate military installations. The anchor was scarcely taut before Skipper Easterly and aides were en route ashore to learn the destiny of the outfit. It was 14 September 1943.

Meanwhile, there was nothing for the men to do aboard ship except repeat the monotonous pattern of the previous 17 days at sea. The blistering heat from the semi-tropical sun immediately became a major problem. All hands sweltered from a lack of sea-breeze and the near-blinding reflections of the sun from the iron decks.

The first day was singularly uneventful. The monotony, however, was momentarily relieved by the arrival of Noumea's port director, who welcomed the WENTLEY and her perspiring human cargo to New Caledonia.

The first shore party for Shangri-la Terrace, the Navy's famed Coral Sea playground, was hurriedly formed the next day and shoved off amid record confusion.

Accumulated mail was taken ashore and battalion mailmen eventually returned with the first letters received overseas. Jubilant one moment, the men were equally crestfallen the next when it was learned there was no mail from home—only a few inter-island letters from GI friends in the South Pacific.

Suddenly, the battalion became souvenir-conscious. Everyone went all-out for any kind of memento to mail home. An urgent call swept the ship for those with a speaking knowledge of French. Soon Chief Ona J. Deroche and Rosaire ("Frenchy") Terroux were en route to Noumea as official souvenir "procurers."

This team returned loaded with such items as French coins, post cards, picture folders, silk handkerchiefs, etc. The "cache" was rationed through Ship's Store, but demand so exceeded supply that additional excursions were promptly ordered.

The battalion's cargo ship, the COMET, carrying four officers, twelve enlisted men and "Tippy," arrived. Meanwhile, all hands were paid a flat \$5.00 to boost morale. It was a great sub-scare tale the COMET gang related when they taxied over for pay.

With the officers and chiefs going ashore virtually every day, the mates began to clamor for a visit to "The Enchanted City." Eventually, inspection parties were arranged that took sizeable groups into Noumea and out among the various Seabee battalions encamped near the city.

Others saw the sights as members of the touring 87th military band, which played three well-received engagements. The Malaria Control group got ashore by attending a specialty school. Finally, in sheer desperation, all hands who had otherwise missed, began seeking a berth on Ensign R. J. Saugling's daily garbage-disposal detail which passed through the fabulous city twice each day. Never before or since had this odorous job been held in such esteem!

Those who got into Noumea found an amazing melting pot of all nationalities, dirty and almost unbelievably crowded with the servicemen of all Allied nations, native Kanakas, immigrant Javanese and assorted Orientals. One trip, as a rule, was sufficient!

Soon, unrelieved monotony set in aboard ship as Shangri-la Terrace became less appealing and the inspection trips were permanently cancelled due to one man's questionable conduct in town. The bored, restless men fished and watched passing ships from the rail by day and gazed in starry-eyed disbelief at Noumea's brilliantly-lighted skyline far into the night. This all-out illumination was in stark contrast to West Coast regulations. Not even passing battlewagons or carriers jampacked with warplanes stirred the men to any noticeable extent. The harbor was literally a maze of all types of warships, all awaiting convoy orders for the raging Solomons.

Suddenly, without warning, everything seemed to happen. Comdrs. Easterly and Darron, the unit skippers, left Noumea by plane for the initial destination. The ditch-digger, "Old Faithful," was hoisted aboard and the otherwise indifferent men correctly envisioned slit trenches and foxholes just ahead. All hands were ordered to commence taking the repulsive, yellow atabrine tablets after their meals. And when the Malaria Control boys began lecturing in each hold, everyone knew it was to be the Solomons!

On the twelfth day in harbor, 26 September, just as many were beginning to suspect the outfit might spend most of the war in New Caledonia, the anchor was weighed, the great engines quickened their tempo and the S.S. ROBIN WENTLEY joined up with a convoy bristling with armed might and headed for trouble.

MATES FROLIC AT SHANGRI-LA TERRACE



SCENIC PAUSE. The man found walking over hilly terrain an exhausting ordeal after 17 days of inactivity at sea. Here, advance group catches quick breath to marvel at eye-filling scenery after long climb before proceeding to the playground proper.



THE OLD SHELL GAME. Lt.(jg) L. D. Spaw, Jr. and Lieut. W. C. Reilly (left) and two unidentified mates search for seashells washed ashore along SHANGRI-LA's interesting Coral Sea beaches. Here, the men first learned of tropical cateyes.



INTERNATIONAL PASTIME. Quickly tiring of battling ocean breakers, swimmers switch to the inevitable baseball games played on diamonds laid out by Noumea-based Seabees. The outcome of these impromptu contests was of little significance. The exercise was the thing.



WHALE BONE. Everett Covey (left) and Eugene Brown obligingly display a mammoth whalebone they have found along a hidden beach. Covey points out a most unusual colored line near center of trophy as Brown gropes for an explanation.



RED HOTS! Battalion cooks exhibit armfuls of king-size hot dogs they are preparing to serve hungry shore party following several hours of intensified recreation. Left to right: Johnny Miller, John ("Boston") Lane and Frank Goodrich, Jr.



CHOW DOWN! General view of special mess area at well-planned Navy playground shows starved mates wolfing picnic chow brought ashore from transport. The usual chow-line automatically forms (left) beneath shade of eucalyptus trees near thatched huts.



"PREPARE FOR ACTION!" Bulging with irreplaceable cargo and highly-skilled personnel, the WENTLEY is well protected by warships through the Coral Sea upon heading for final destination. A regular 87th gun crew unlimbers a 20-mm. weapon—"just in case!"



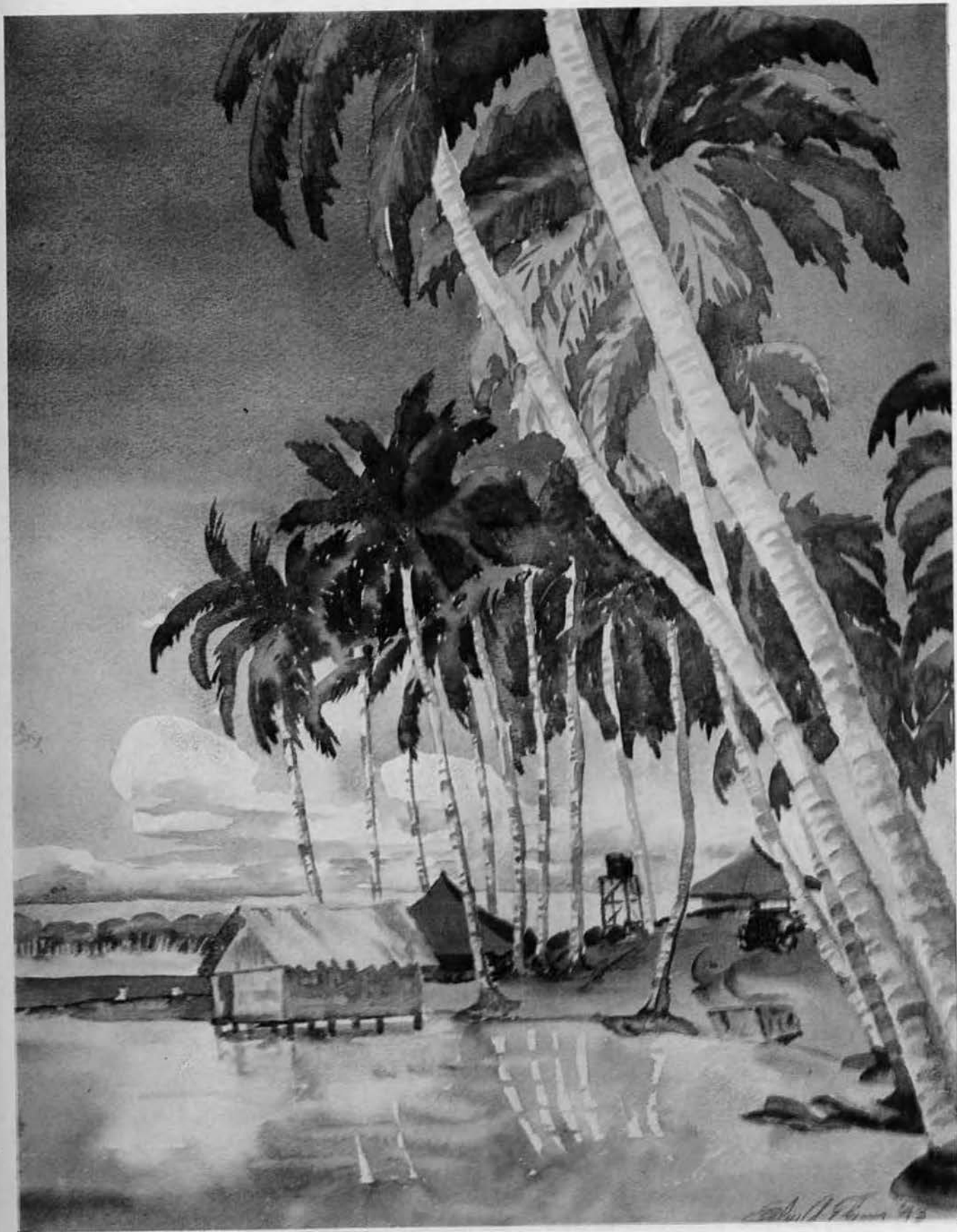
JAP MENACE. Members of still another battalion gun crew tune up for possible brushes with a crafty enemy as the transport penetrates deeper into the Jap-infested Solomons. John ("Dutch") Dietz (left) and Lister Harrell (right) take battle stations.

33 - DAY VOYAGE ENDS AT BANIKA



THE DESTINATION! More than a month after leaving Port Hueneme, the weary, land-hungry 87th finally gaze with mixed emotions upon their initial destination—recently Jap-blasted Banika Island of the Russells group (British Southern Solomons). The apparently endless journey suddenly termi-

nated on a quiet Thursday afternoon (30 September). Battalion engineers estimated the height of the low-lying mountain range at 1,000 feet and the towering cloud-bank at between 6,000 and 7,000 feet. The 100-mile sea voyage from Guadalcanal to Banika had been made in a few hours.



SOUTHERN SOLOMONS
(A Banika Water Color)



BANIK A, RUSSELL ISLANDS



CAPITOL HILL. The 87th Administration area, complete with post office (extreme right), reposes peacefully in this shady coconut grove. From these tents all orders and directives were issued during the hectic days of the battalion's first staging operation.



SCRUB DOWN, FORE AND AFT. Chief Yeomen Herman Pack, Lauren Merriam and Bill Getz take advantage of a tropical downpour to wash up and cool off. GI buckets placed strategically around the tent catch the precious fluid for future use.



STUDY IN BROWN. The interesting natives of Pavuvu Island, just across from Banika, would seldom pose for the camera without some form of remuneration. Besides a love of "folding money" and trinkets, they were noted for an extremely high birthrate.



"WET CANTEEN." James B. Austin, Jr. smiles approvingly as his pet parakeet, "Shorty," knocks off for "the pause that refreshes." This colorful bird became quite tame, accompanying the battalion to Stirling, and was later killed.



SUNDAY. Chaplain Ernest T. Marble, original 87th "padre," conducts services in the shade of the palms. Tarps stretched between trees form flimsy shelter for chapel. Worshippers use coconut logs for seats. Lieut. Estill Sparks (left background) meditates.



ALL CLEAR. Pharmacist Mates Fred Colby and Gaylord Hold remove a "patient," Archie ("Red") Reynolds, from roomy Sick Bay dugout after a simulated air alert. This sturdy shelter, built to accommodate 16 beds, was reinforced by heavy timbers and sandbags.



CLEAN 'EM UP! One of the many problems confronting the fledgling 87th during its early staging period on Banika was the necessity of keeping mess gear clean. Lack of proper sterilization caused many unnecessary cases of dysentery. To offset this condition,

blacksmiths and welders displayed typical ingenuity in converting 55-gallon drums into hot water washing tubs. Later battalion mess halls had built-in sculleries. Above, men stand in the long line to wash gear for next meal.

BATTALION STAGES AT BANIKA FOR INVASION

As the setting sun slid behind the wooded mountains of Pavuvu, the men aboard the WENTLEY were confident there would be no beachhead on Banika that night. To their chagrin, however, a fleet of LCMs chugged alongside and all hands were ordered to clamber aboard—gear and all. The loaded WENTLEY apparently offered too good a target for roving Jap bombers.

Ashore, at last, the men felt their way gingerly along the pitch-black road. A heavy scent of lush tropical vegetation surrounded them. They were finally in the heart of the fabled Solomons!

The long line of burdened men were led off the main road into a huge coconut plantation. This was the bivouac area. Coconuts strewn over the grassy plot provided supper that night and dysentery in the morning. Wild cows wandered through the area all night, parakeets screeched and toads hopped from body to body. Consequently, no one slept.

The first morning ashore featured K rations for breakfast. This was the beginning of a long series of rations—some hot, some cold—aliqually unpalatable.

Unloading of the WENTLEY began immediately and continued around the clock. As the lone dock was occupied, the transport remained in mid-stream and was laboriously unloaded with pontoon barges. The first night ashore had emphasized the previously unsuspected virtues of life aboard ship and all who could slept and ate there.

The COMET arrived on schedule with the bulk of the equipment and the remainder of the men. Fortunately, she was able to tie up at the pier where the rolling stock was unloaded, serviced and put to work immediately.

Ten days after landing, the main camp area was completed. The site was near the end of the bomber strip and overlooked picturesque Renard Sound. The set-up was strictly a temporary one—installations as makeshift as practical. Sand provided a deck for the chow hall; the men's tents were set on bare grass.

For a month tropical downpours provided the only bathing facilities. The climate was most oppressive—hot, damp and still. All hands suffered from heat-rash. Flies infested the camp by day; mosquitoes took over at night. The mosquito bar became every man's best friend.

The ditching machine picked up at New Caledonia speedily dug fox-

holes all over the new camp area. Although alerts were frequent and long, action was so light that the men soon disregarded the siren entirely and acquired the highly-dangerous habit of sleeping through everything.

The battalion set to work building a badly-needed highway around Renard Sound, thereby gaining first-hand knowledge of the two main features of Pacific construction—mud and coral.

Then, 18 October brought news that aroused the entire camp. Company A and the engineering unit of Headquarters Company had been suddenly alerted, issued Marine combat gear and were being moved back to Guadalcanal. The camp was agog with rumors and speculation for weeks.

The task of whipping the remaining bulk of the battalion into shape continued unabated. To make for a more flexible working unit in forward areas, the old company system was junked and the battalion was reorganized into divisions according to job specialties.

Soon the men began searching the island for amusement. The 35th Seabees operated a movie; the Marines would trade anything for coveralls; the natives wanted only United States cash for their cheap grass-skirts and trinkets. The nearby airstrip from which MAG 21 was sending its Ventura bombers to soften up Vella LaVella, Munda and Bougainville for invasion was a constant source of diversion.

The newsworthy invasion report from Lieut. C. E. Turnbull, OinC of Company A, to Comdr. Easterly had a sobering effect, yet it gave the men a new feeling of pride in their outfit. Tassone had buried a pillbox and a dozen Japs, Ostman was missing in action. Bodine had been severely wounded, food was scarce and wearing apparel was badly needed. The 87th, at least, in part, was finally in the thick of the fight.

When word came to secure, the men were ready. Three LSTs were quickly loaded to capacity. A Thanksgiving dinner of turkey provided a most welcome respite from the tasteless rations.

A rear echelon of 50 men and four officers—slated to shove off along with the ACORN 12 days later—was dockside to see the bulk of the 87th depart.

At sunset, on 26 November, the heavy LST ramps went up, the "box-cars" backed slowly out into the stream and the convoy headed north from OUCH (operation code name for Banika) into the gathering darkness.

STAGING AREA WAS CONSTANTLY CHANGING SCENE



SWAMP WATER. The 87th water point was built on the edge of a dismal, overgrown swamp, which contrasted strangely with the orderly rows of trees on the rest of the island. Many nearby trees were being strangled by cannibal vines.



CALL OF THE WILD. Geno Federico, "The Mighty Atom," imitating legendary Tarzan, abandons his truck for a more thrilling ride. Using a stout jungle vine, he gets an unusual view of the gorge—and the thrill of a lifetime.



A PUBLIC HEAD. This picturesque edifice, built by native labor, serves an elementary purpose in the South Seas. Palms grow right to the water's edge in this scenic gem, which would suffice as a backdrop for a Dorothy Lamour opus.



"OPEN WIDE, PLEASE." Lieut. Lawrence Pearlman, original 87th dentist, works over Lewey Lands, who braces both feet against gear locker in anticipation of a job in a sensitive spot. ACORN 12 pharmacist mate, D. H. Blanchard, assists.



LOG ROLLING. Chief Vic Cedarstaff supervises construction of one of the many blockhouses built around the island for ammunition and dynamite storage. Heavy coconut logs were plentiful, of course, but their pulpy texture made them heavy and difficult to saw.



PONTOON BARGES. Anchored at Yellow Beach are five of the pontoon barges assembled by Chief Norman Grier and crew, which were originally intended for the Vella LaVella invasion. However, plans were changed and they remained at Banika for ship unloading.



ON TARGET. Vernon Jacobson welds on a section of pontoon. Seabees had put pontoons to many ingenious uses, but none more unusual than this unit. Upon completion, this one will serve as an oven for the bakers.



OUTDOOR OVEN. The finished oven is well insulated with sandbags to maintain the high temperature necessary in good baking. Despite its unusual appearance, the oven successfully provided the always hungry 87th with all-essential bread and cake.



MUD. Even giant bulldozers sometimes bog down in tropical mire. Here, Tom Hutson rescues "Chet" Wlostoski and his stuck 'dozer from the muck. Huge fills in swamp made this road project a stiff proving ground for both men and equipment.



KEEP 'EM ROLLING. The 87th Motor Pool kept stock rolling day and night. Light-duty machine shop (left) reveals all stalls full. Center, parked trucks and jeeps await attention. Equipment had to be thoroughly serviced after 33-day ocean voyage.



HOMEMADE SHOWER. Daily rains caused many individual showers to be erected. These consisted of tarps stretched between the trees and drums for the storage of water. Lt. (jg) "Bill" Hart makes use of shower set in hollow tree trunk.



"QUICK HENRY, THE FLIT!" Barrett Sumrell, SK2c, makes the rounds with insect killers. Inside CPO Mess, "Freddy" Yachon, SC3c, has just received his weapon. As usual, flies quickly became a nuisance, but constant use of insecticide made life bearable.

MAN VERSUS NATURE AMID TROPICAL SPLENDOR



BREATHTAKING. Taken from a spot high above Banika's orderly plantations, this sweeping panorama of land, sea and sky shows Sunlight Channel and Pavuvu Island. The distant mountains (background) are those of Guadalcanal, 60 miles away. (Taken with infra-red film.)



THE LURE. From the 87th's camp, looking across quiet Renard Sound, was often seen this incomparable view of nightfall. Boat-landing (center) was beehive of activity during daylight hours. Beauty such as this, however, was usually lost on homesick mates.



TEAR IT DOWN. Mates are shown in the final stages of packing for Treasury push. The tent city has disappeared and only clotheslines and washstands remain. Final clean-up of staging area was accomplished by rear echelon of 50 men.



PAPER-EATER. "Ginny," owned by Archie ("Red") Reynolds, does her part in the camp clean-up. This goat was one of three captured and taken to Stirling. "Ginny" later ate map in Comdr. Easterly's office and was deported to Mono.



SHOVEL OPERATORS. To leave camp perfectly clean, "shovel operators" level off tent decks constructed of logs and coral. Left to right: Charlie Suojanen, Carl Knudsen, Lee Oakley, Robert Bowman, Alexander Cudney and Chaplain Ernest Marble.



STANDING BY. Mates wait for trucks designated to transport them dock-side. Packed bags and oiled pieces may be seen everywhere. Realizing the going "Up Front" would be tough, the men were nevertheless anxious to leave Banika behind.



CATSKINNER. J. B. McLelland backs his loaded carryall through the yawning doors of LST 343. Heavy equipment went on the well deck, while trucks and jeeps were parked topside. Frank Keker (left foreground) calmly reads "Superman."



TIME OUT. A lull in the loading occurs and men flop wearily. Lockers, their own bags and even fuel drums serve as temporary seats. GI buckets seen in many of these shots are strictly a trademark of Seabees moving up to forward areas.



THREE OF A KIND. LSTs with doors open, wait for their load of men and materials. Truck in center is fitted with chains in case of muddy beachhead. LST 399 (center) became known as scrappiest ship of its class in the South Pacific.



FINAL PLANS. Comdr. Easterly and Lieut. Bertell Henning (bareheaded, right of jeep) confer with LST officers. Quonset warehouses and broad highways are evidence of Banika's amazing growth as an advanced base during the battalion's two-month stay.

SHOVING OFF FOR "ISLAND X"



RUSSELLS TO TREASURIES



DAMN THE TORPEDOES, FULL SPEED AHEAD! The three convoyed LSTs, under full speed, continue north through the Coral Sea toward the Treasury Islands. Morning of the second day, men are beginning to stir in anticipation of chow. Comdr. Easterly

(bareheaded, extreme left) makes hurried inspection of vessel, checking condition of men and equipment after first night of voyage. Open area in front of trucks is platform elevator used on early LSTs. Later models featured ramp direct from top deck.

RUGGED LST TRIP PREPARES OUTFIT FOR HARDSHIPS

The late afternoon of 26 November 1943 found the main body of the 87th Seabees aboard three LSTs in Banika harbor awaiting darkness before shoving off for "Island X."

The mates made themselves comfortable on deck. The hustle and bustle of the past few days made the men content to lounge anywhere. Speculation as to the ultimate destination dominated the conversation.

Like a windowshade being pulled down, darkness came suddenly across the bay. While members of the rear echelon waved fond farewells, the LSTs began moving northward behind their tiny escorts.

At last, the battalion was on its way, but no one could be positive of the objective. Either Jap-crowded Bougainville or the seething Treasury Islands was the popular choice. The latter was favored because a sizeable part of the 87th was already there. The lights of the Russells faded and talk became low and scattered.

These LSTs were dirty and their crews knew it. The heads were clogged up, bunks were black and the bulkheads crusty with rust. The men slept on deck under trucks, on vehicles, in the cabs, anywhere. Rain squalls blew over the convoy both nights at sea. Mates simply pulled ponchos over their heads and went back to sleep.

Two of these LSTs had been in on the initial landings at Mono a month earlier. They had also been in on the fireworks at Munda, Rendova and Vella LaVella. The war was becoming increasingly hard to follow.

A gang of battalion welders worked on an addition to a LST elevator and also built a ramp to facilitate the loading and unloading of trucks. When both innovations worked to perfection, the ship's crew smiled admiringly.

An alert as the convoy lumbered past Vella LaVella had both crew and troops on edge. However, no action developed. The alert ended in 10 minutes and the men crawled topside for a personal inventory of the situation.

Slightly before dawn on 28 November, the convoy suddenly ceased its forward motion. Mates, aroused by the unusual quiet, could barely make out headlands looming high and mysterious out of the dark waters ahead. The unnatural quietness was disconcerting!

Caught in the trough of an offshore swell, the clumsy ships rocked from side to side with a nauseating motion. Two trucks loaded higher than the others were obviously top-heavy on the open deck. Each sway threatened to throw them overboard or cause them to lose their loads.

The alarmed troops scrambled for safer positions. Equipment creaked and strained against its bindings. Battalion riggers scurried about the deck checking chains and lashings and tightening wherever necessary. Fortunately, the swells gradually subsided and stomachs and nerves returned to normal.

Gray dawn broke and still the mute silence of land and water persisted. The men checked packs, gear and pieces for, at least, the tenth time. Then the LSTs began moving slowly toward land.

There were two main islands now clearly visible. One had a huge gash cut in the jungle, pointing like an arrow at the heart of Jap-held Bougainville. It was the fighter direction control that Lieut. "Pete" Turnbull had written about in his detailed letter to the Skipper.

The mystery of the battalion's "Island X" was, at last, solved—these were the Treasury Islands. One box-car turned left and headed for Mono; the others steered for Stirling. The LSTs had covered the 270 miles from Banika to the Treasuries in creditable time.

By now it was 0700. The ships were moving in for a close-up view. There wasn't much beach and the jungle was growing right down to the water's edge. Vehicle operators cranked up their machines, riggers relaxed turnbuckles securing the equipment to the deck and all hands stood at the ready.

Without warning, there was a great thud and a bump. The clumsy ships had again made creditable landings despite limited beach-space.

Suddenly, the new arrivals spotted their Company A buddies ashore. The quiet was shattered by joyous shouts of reunion. Most of the "invaders" looked slightly peaked.

Three hours after landing, the LSTs were again empty and some of the adventurers, still sweating in coveralls, were gathered at a New Zealand field canteen for a spot of tea with friendly New Zealand invasion forces.

Again the battalion was together and ready for the inevitable fireworks.



LOOKING FORWARD. Escorts are lost on horizon as LSTs plod on. The ditchdigger, "Old Faithful" (right), which dug many seldom used fox-holes at Banika, stands by for more important duty. Tarpaulin rigged upon bow provides shelter from rain and sun.

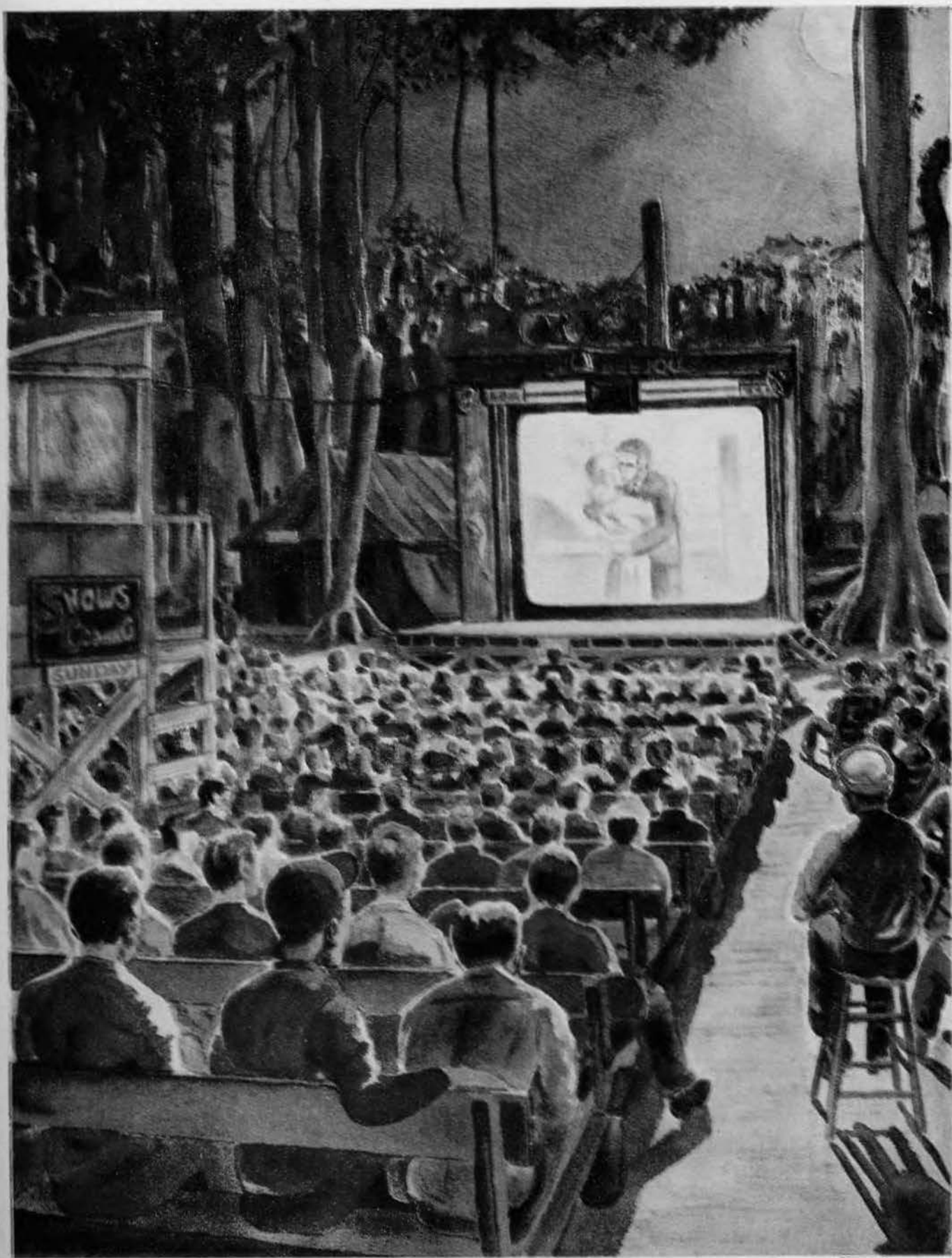


FINAL SKULL SESSION. In a LST wardroom, Lieut. William L. Whyte, Jr., (standing center) in charge of camp construction, checks final details with officers and CPOs. Lt.(jg) Harold Hart (standing, left) assigned details for unloading at destination.



LANDING DAY. Jungled Mono Island looms dark and ominously quiet at the break-of-day landing on Stirling across Blanche Harbor. Armed and helmeted men make final adjustments of pack and gear as they crowd every inch of top deck in readiness for quick landing and unloading once

the flat belly of the LST scrapes the beach. Myriads of 20-mm. anti-aircraft guns, loaded and manned, are ready for instant action. All hands have survived rough sea trip.



JUNGLE THEATRE
(A Stirling Water Color)

TREASURY ISLANDS



T H E I N V A S I O N

BATTLE STATIONS AT FALAMAI BEACH, 27 OCTOBER 1943



"OLD 399" is shown beached at Falamai Village during invasion of the Treasuries on 27 October 1943. In trees (left of village) pillbox episode occurred. Mobile 40s on deck of LST, manned by part of New Zealand landing force, augment crew's anti-aircraft defense. Jap mortars, located on

twin hills (left background), resulted in many Allied casualties. This village sheltered numerous Jap snipers. After their extermination, dozers moved in and leveled rickety shacks.

STIRLING LANDING. A sizeable group of Company A men under Carpenter Carl J. Mitchell landed on Stirling on D-day without incident. Equipment comes off at Purple Two Beach while mates, wearing steel helmets, stand by to unload fuel and rations. Two 40-mm. guns (in bow of

LST) are fully manned and pointing skyward as "welcoming committee" for any wandering "Meatballers." Crane (right) has just come off ramp, followed closely by 10-wheel cargo truck loaded with water distillation unit.





"BUSHWHACK." Company A bivouac area was set up a half-mile from the unloading beaches. Weary mates changed name to "Bushwhack" after they had hacked at underbrush and vines to clear space for living quarters. Most paired off in two-man pup-

tents, but some constructed lean-tos (left) by lashing shelter halves and ponchos together. Mud, damp clothing and towering trees that shut out sunlight made this most depressing, cheerless camp. Company A lived here over a month.

87TH BLOODED IN TREASURY ISLANDS INVASION

The electrifying news raced through the 87th's staging camp on Bonika. It was 18 October 1943. Company A and a part of Headquarters Company were being detached from the battalion and moved back to the Canal.

The detached unit consisted of 224 men and six officers with Lieut. Charles E. Turnbull as OinC. Arriving at Guadalcanal, they joined several assault companies of the 8th New Zealand Brigade.

On 26 October, the combined forces departed from Guadalcanal for the Northern Solomons. The objective was to neutralize the Treasury Islands group, 30 miles below Bougainville.

The attacking force embarked in a fleet of eleven warships. They approached Blanche Harbor between Stirling and Mono before dawn on 27 October. The first indication many had of this being the real thing was the murderous barrage from the cruisers and destroyers of Task Force 31 as they blasted the Falamai beachhead vicinity.

Heavy aerial bombardment preceded the landing craft. The warships poured more tons of steel into mountain-gun emplacements while small craft headed shoreward. The retorting flashes ashore gradually diminished one by one. Soon only Jap mortars and machine-guns remained to spray the beach.

As soon as the small boats hit the invasion sector, New Zealand landing parties dispersed into the jungle. Pillboxes were quickly encircled. Bayonets flashed. Cries and screams intermingled with hand-grenade blasts. Enemy machine-gun chatter soon ceased altogether.

However, the Jap's specialty—his deadly mortar—made more and more trouble. Projectiles patterned the beach with uncanny precision. More New Zealand squads disappeared into the jungle. The remaining mountain-guns were finally put out of action by the incessant shelling from offshore ships. The Japs were soon forced to retreat.

Enemy mortar fire, however, continued to be deadly accurate. One shell landed directly on a pile of ammunition just unloaded. It was here the 87th suffered its first casualty. Herbert Bodine, one of the battalion armorers, was seriously wounded and burned by a nearby explosion. Hospital corpsmen removed him, still unconscious, to an unloaded LST ready to return to the Canal.

Another Jap mortar shell struck the food supplies being stacked ashore. Several more exploded on the deck of another LST. The beached LSTs could not depress their guns enough to bear on pill-

boxes ashore, so New Zealand assault troops attacked whenever a hidden gun opened fire. The fury of the pitched battle moved deeper into the jungle. It was at this point that Aurelio Tassone, 87th bulldozer operator, very effectively silenced an annoying pillbox that was hampering unloading operations.

Meanwhile, equipment continued pouring out of the LSTs. Rolling stock began carrying supplies off the unprotected beach area. Everyone seemed to be carrying something ashore or moving something further up the narrow strip of sand.

One 'dozer began knocking a road out of the thick undergrowth. Others started clearing space for parking equipment. A pit was gashed in the solid coral for a direction finder. This trench was 90 feet long, 9 feet deep and 14 feet wide. For some unknown reason, the gears on the 'dozers operated by Sam Rajala and Dewey White refused to function. With only hand tools and a world of guts, Leonard Friedman rode unprotected on the hoods and kept the big machines on the job.

A LCM was sent around Mono with a bulldozer aboard. This carried Ensign John R. Boyer and crew. His special detail had been aboard the last ship in the attacking force. They had left the convoy at dawn and struck on the opposite side of Mono. Their assignment was to set up vital radar equipment atop a high precipice at Soanatalu. Joe Canada and Grady Thompson performed a masterful job on their 'dozers as they cut a road through solid jungle on a sharp 45-degree slope.

Edwin ("Swede") Ostman was reported missing in action the night of 29 October and was never found. Clair Charles and Odell Bob Hayes, Jr. were both slightly wounded by shrapnel from Jap grenades.

By sunset of the initial day, Mono and Stirling were definitely in Allied hands. Remnants of the Jap garrison scattered in the jungle were being hunted down by New Zealand patrols. Enemy air activity continued throughout the night, but it was not too effective.

The tired mates dug hasty slit trenches, set up pup-tents, placed a guard at every foxhole and attempted to catch a bit of sleep. Ten days later organized resistance was declared at an end. The Treasury had been wrested from the enemy, but Tokyo still seemed in another world.

AN 87TH SEABEE AND HIS BEST FRIEND



PALS. A shy, smiling Italian-American lad who was cast so suddenly into the world spotlight, Aurelio ("Ray") Tassone, of Milford, Mass., rests in the Treasury jungle with his beloved canine. The dog, a coalblack cocker spaniel, was left behind by Japs on Mono. Picked up by Tassone and christened "Dozer,"

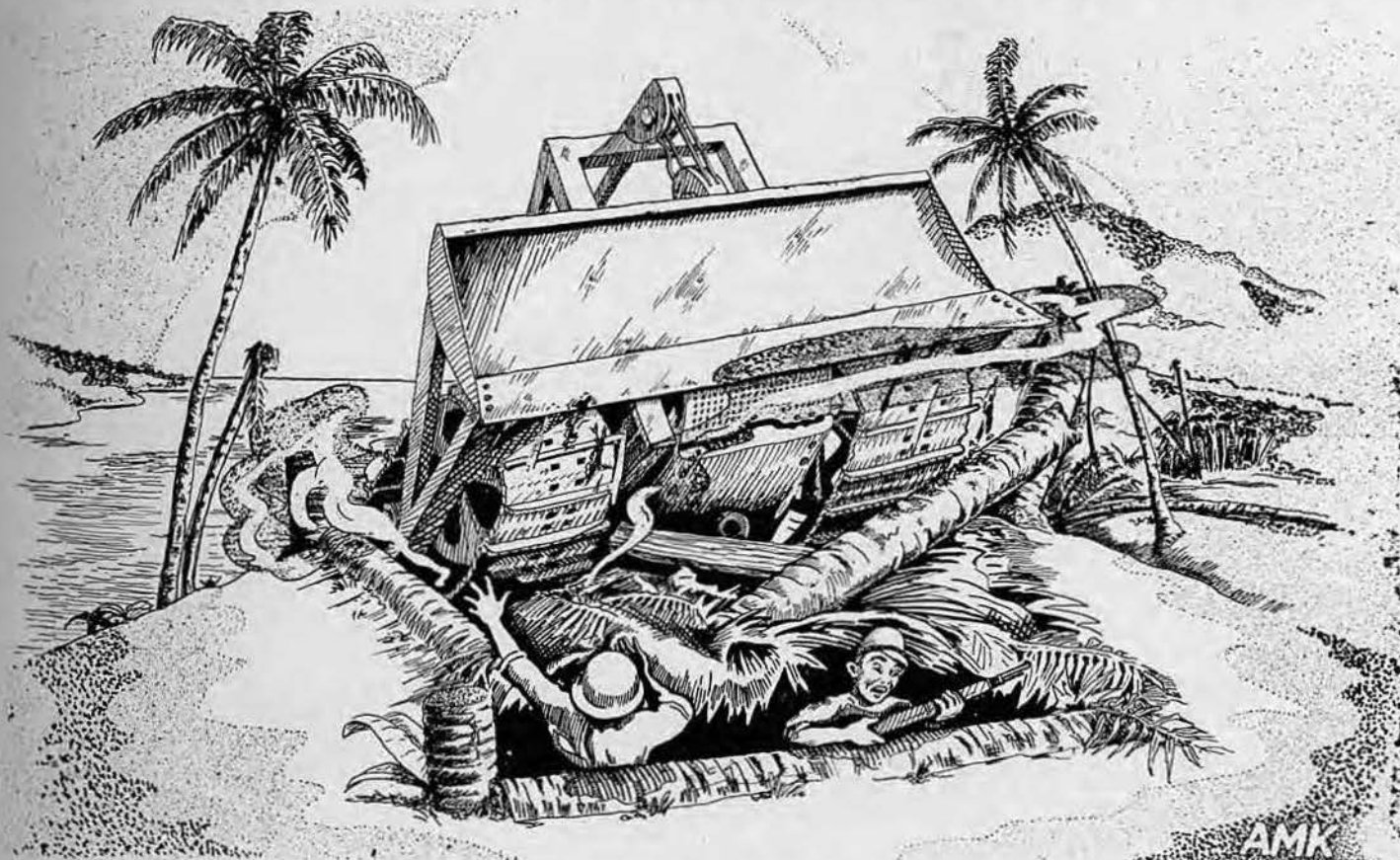
the two became inseparable. Just prior to Tassone's detachment on 9 March 1944 for recall to the States, "Dozer" was reported as "missing in line of duty." A neighboring Seabee outfit was alleged to have "acquired" him. (This picture appears on page L of the Seabee book, CAN DO.)

THE PRINCIPALS. Two leading actors in the stirring invasion drama at Falamai Beach spruce up and have their picture taken on the famed D-8 'dozer. Aurelio Tassone is at the controls while Lieut. Charles E. Turnbull (holding carbine) rides side-saddle.

BIG MOMENT. Aurelio Tassone, "The Bulldozer Man," receives Silver Star Medal from Comdr. Easterly, 87th OinC. The Skipper smiles as he proudly pins coveted decoration on his charge's chest. (This picture received wide circulation in the States.)



"EARTHMOVER" ARTIST DEPICTS FAMED PILLBOX EPISODE



THE DEED. Keeping blade high so as not to scoop dirt ahead of pillbox and perhaps stall bulldozer, and also as a shield in deflecting enemy fire, Tassone is depicted riding high over enemy fortification just prior to dropping blade and smashing choice

target. The Japs found this a new angle in jungle warfare, but not one they could admire too much. The "work-horse" of the Pacific had been converted into a "war horse"—at least, for a day.

TASSONE WIPES OUT JAP PILLBOX WITH BULLDOZER

From the Treasury Islands attack have come many stories of Seabee workmanship. One, above all, has become a South Pacific legend—a lone bulldozer operator had wiped out a formidable Jap gun emplacement!

Falamai was the principal native village on Mono Island, largest of the tiny Treasury group. Its thatched huts had been Jap headquarters since 1942.

As Allied invasion forces worked feverishly to consolidate their precarious positions immediately after the initial landings on 27 October, crackling rifle fire came from pillboxes along the shore.

The Japs had the beach "taped." Mortars from the jungled hills overlooking Orange Beach laid a deadly pattern on and around the unloading LSTs. Potent Jap mountain pieces added their quota of death and confusion to the crowded and confused beach scene.

Falamai peninsula was the main initial objective of the Allied invasion. Here, Lieut. Charles E. Turnbull and his hardy band of 87th Seabees went to work with two D-8 bulldozers.

Sam Rajala, Dewey White and Aurelio Tassone kept the dozers going continuously. Leonard Friedman was there, too, when anything went wrong mechanically.

Emplacements were quickly dug for strategic pieces being unloaded. However, one 90-mm. gun had been in position only a few minutes when Jap artillery completely demolished it.

The main body of New Zealand infantry had immediately pressed inland to silence the enemy's heavier weapons. The inexperienced 87th builders surprisingly found themselves in the hottest spot of the entire beach and right there they were forced to remain and work while the battle raged.

An hour after the landings, a previously undetected Jap pillbox, approximately 75 feet from the LST bow doors, became alarmingly active. Fire from this point became stronger and stronger, inflicting casualties on the invading forces and seriously hampering operations.

Aurelio Tassone, Flc, cutting a road through the jungle to the rear of Falamai village, spotted the enemy strongpoint and quickly sized up the situation. It was apparent that the unloading party was defenseless as the LST guns could not be depressed enough to bring the pillbox under fire.

Turning from his prosaic road-building, Tassone threw his machine in low gear and bore down on the coconut-lagged bunker from the rear. Snipers from nearby huts concentrated on the lonesome figure

atop the snorting 20-ton steel monster. Blade raised as a shield, the clanking tractor roared on like its armored offspring, the tank.

Lieut. Turnbull and a few mates covered Tassone's wild charge as best they could, pinning down the most active snipers. At the precise moment, the 87th operator expertly dropped his blade and the pillbox collapsed.

Methodically, as if he were smoothing a rough spot in a road, Tassone bladed earth over the wreckage. His mission was accomplished.

Some time later, after the roar of battle had moved further inland, the mass grave was shoveled open. Twelve bodies and a large new gun were exhumed.

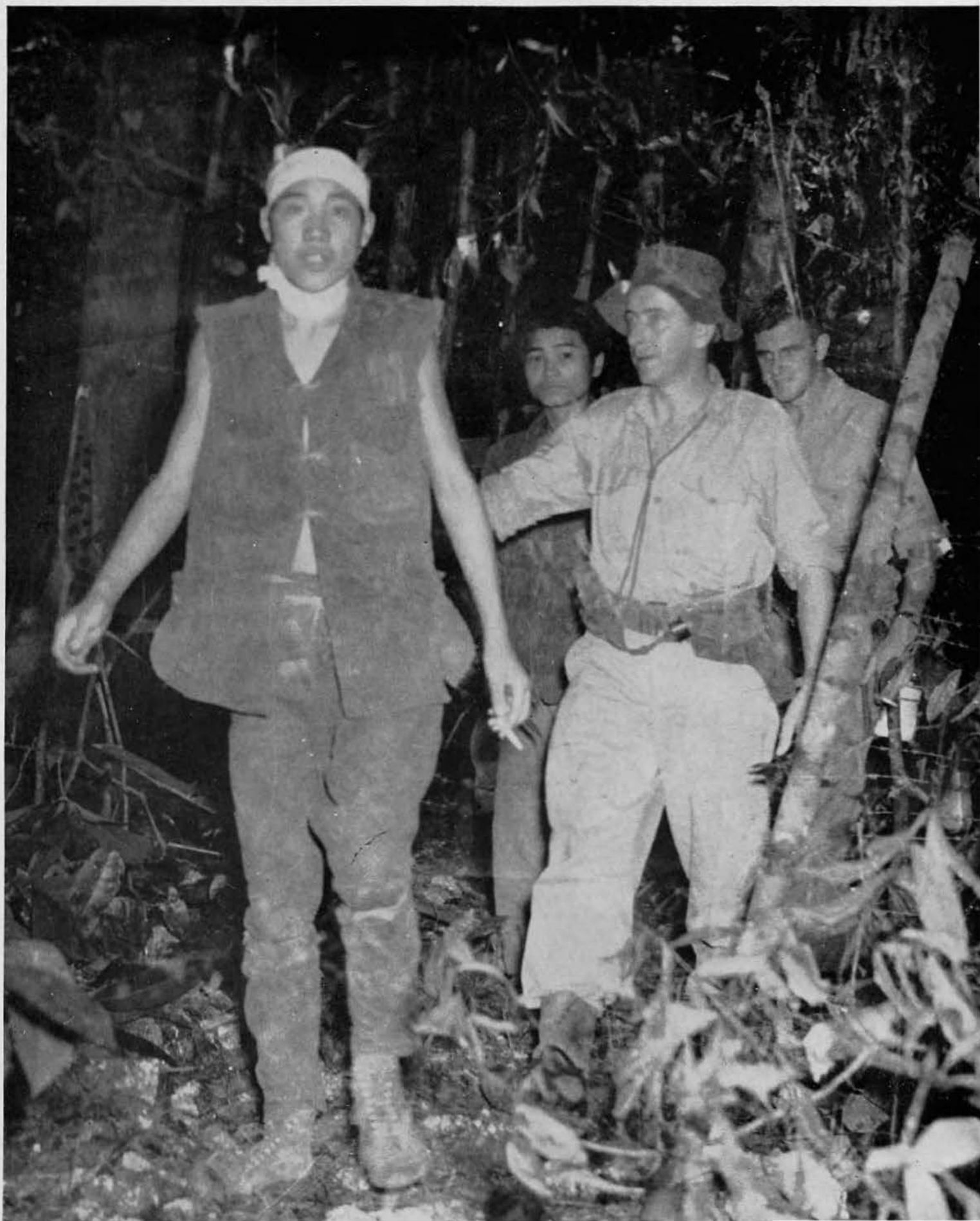


THE PILLBOX. New Zealand and American assault troops inspect wrecked Jap pillbox on Falamai Beach after Aurelio Tassone had buried 12 Nips with 20-ton dozer. Size of heavy coconut logs and other timbers attest to strength of enemy fortification.

WAR ENDS PREMATURELY FOR THESE SONS OF HEAVEN

TRAPPED RATS. Two Jap rats, caught in wilderness of Mono, are brought to Stirling by New Zealand MPs. "Meatballer" with bandaged head and neck is well over 6-foot tall—an unusual height for his race. These Japs avoided patrols for five weeks after invasion, but were finally surprised and overpowered by natives as they dug in latter's gardens for food. After

being grilled at Stirling, they were shipped back to Guadalcanal and New Caledonia for further questioning and internment. The arrival of captured Japs in Stirling stockade was a highlight for all hands. The Jap's fanatical resistance to capture awakened a corresponding interest in watching their reactions as prisoners.



T H E S T R I P



STIRLING FIELD



UNSUNG HEROES. The battalion gets the credit and the plummy rods get the blame. Above, Kenneth Hansing, Chief F. L. LeBaron, Sammy Carlino, and "Swede" Palmquist strike a pose on the centerline of proposed Stirling Strip the first day—28 November 1943.



LET THERE BE LIGHT! This isn't a night clearing scene. It was just this dark when the first bulldozer arrived on the centerline of Stirling Strip the first morning of clearing operations. Lights were soon installed in the virgin jungle.



AND THERE WAS LIGHT. The jungle begins to recede from the onslaughts of the big 'dozers. Things are looking better as the boys break into their theme song, "Move It Over." (This picture appears on Page LX of CAN DO, "The Story of the Seabees.")



AND DAY IS DONE. The end of the first day. An area of 300 feet in width and 600 feet in length has been roughed clear. A good, fast start on a good fast job—on the road to Tokyo! However, the 87th was to build many more strips before V-J Day.



BLOWING IT OUT. Stalwarts like this required a little extra persuasion. This 48-incher, which is held up by large buttressing roots, proved too difficult for the 'dozers. A little "Can Do" and a shot of dynamite finally did the trick.



AFTER THE STORM. 'Dozers, timber-cutters and blasting crews create a real tangle. Chief Bos'n's Mate Frank Rychlak and gang are busy loading logs, using cant-hooks and a stirrup puller. 'Dozers then pushed remaining branches, stumps and foliage to sidelines.

JUNGLE YIELDS STIRLING FIELD

As the 87th Seabees and New Zealand assault troops hit the Treasury Islands beach that memorable 27 October, the prospects for an airfield on Mono or Stirling Islands seemed quite remote.

The battalion's engineer reconnaissance group, attached to Company A, was not scheduled to arrive for another 10 days, at which time possible sites for a fighter strip were to be investigated. Apparently, Treasury was an alternate site for a field planned in the Treasury-Bougainville operation.

Soon after the initial landings, however, it became increasingly evident that tiny Stirling had good possibilities as an air base such as flat terrain, workable coral, excellent water supply and good landing beaches.

Therefore, the reconnaissance crew was ordered forward ahead of schedule, arriving from Guadalcanal the morning of 1 November (D-day on Bougainville), and on 5 November this group submitted a favorable report on the location of a proposed fighter strip.

A few days later, orders were received to make additional surveys and report location and size of a bomber field that could be built on Stirling. On the basis of this report, Bougainville bomber strip "W" was moved to Stirling.

At 0800, 29 November, the first bulldozer was put to work clearing for the runway, and by nightfall the following day, a heavily-timbered area—300 by 2,000 feet—had been cleared. Most of the heavy clearing was done by 'dozers. Hand-clearing and logging crews cut out much of the small growth, trimmed and sawed the larger trees, and hauled them to the nearby sawmill.

After the clearing came the stripping. Over the coral formation that was the island, there was a blanket of about a foot of dark, humus soil, composed largely of vegetable matter in various stages of decay. Since this material was very unstable when wet, it had to be completely removed and wasted before the grading of the underlying coral could commence.

Not much of the coral required blasting. Most of it was soft enough to be broken up by rooters and the bulk of it could be moved by the pans without rooting. The cuts and fills were relatively light. Therefore, the rough-grading stages of the work proceeded rapidly.

As the graders and rollers brought the surface to smooth finish, salt water was applied by sprinklers, causing the surface to set up like concrete.

The tactical plan called for a usable 4,000-foot strip by 10 January 1944. It was made ready the preceding Christmas Day. A 6,000-foot bomber strip had to be ready for operation by 1 February. It was in use 2 January.

Taxiways, hardstands, warm-up aprons, repair areas, operations tower, camps for aviation personnel and other field facilities assigned to the 87th were all completed well within the time allotted.

And after more urgent facilities had been provided, the original strip was extended to a length of 7,000 feet. The jungle had been licked. The Jap was next!



HITCH-HIKERS. A "snatch-cat" tows a huge stump and carries a couple of passengers. The small tractors had been used previously to drag logs out of the rough and up to the loading pits. It has been raining again!



AND THEY CARRIED THEM AWAY TO THE MILL. Lumber for pilot housing was sawed from timber cleared from the Strip. Here, Bos'n's Mate Meredith Walls and crew load out a few. A 'dozer ditch accommodates the trucks and eliminates uphill pull.



COME HELL OR HIGH WATER, the gang was in there pitching. Frequent cloudbursts were a considerable inconvenience, but work continued just the same. That glum look on Clyde Pemberton's face is probably the result of a very damp "drift."



SKIMMING OFF THE MUD. Before grading the runway to shape, it was necessary to clear off the black humus overburden. Here, two HD-10s struggle to load an eight-yard pan with the sticky muck shortly after a terrific downpour.



EASTY DOES IT, BOYS. The big rock is tottering, but Clyde Pemberton and his D-8 are precariously close to the crumbling edge of a 70-foot cliff. Lieut. L. D. Spaw, Jr., with his little stick, is delivering the necessary push.



EARTHMOVERS EXTRAORDINARY. In foreground, bulldozers have pushed waste humus material into large piles from which three-quarter shovels are loading trucks. Further back (left), pans are engaged in final stripping. A group of pans (background) are cutting and filling coral, bringing the

section to shape, and motor graders and rollers are working the surface to a smooth finish. (This 87th photo appears on Page LXI of CAN DO, [Dutton], by Lt.(jg) William Bradford Huie.)



GETTING RID OF IT FOR KEEPS. Gushion E. Bolt supervises from the shade of a convenient tree as trucks dump loads of strippings into the sea some 80 feet below. Most stumps and roots were disposed of in this manner—once and forever.



PROGRESS. The dense Solomons jungle stubbornly yields to the furious onslaught of the Seabees. Things are looking better as the Strip begins to take shape. In foreground (left), a 'dozer prepares site for a twin .50-mm. ack-ack gun.

SUPPLIES FROM HEAVEN. Marine transports are shown dropping vital supplies by parachutes on unfinished Stirling Strip in order that strategic airfield may be completed on schedule. Strip builders have cleared field to watch colorful 'chute landings. It took an entire flight of these planes to transport huge consignment. Unescorted round trip from Guadalcanal to the Treasuries was, in fact, a trial run for newly-arrived Marine pilots, who apparently were eager for their first flight over a real forward area.



SUPPLIES DROPPED BY 'CHUTES

Jungle so thick not even the sun's rays could penetrate it. Its stale dampness from constant torrential rains caused clothing and shoes to rot on one's body. Such jungle not even Hollywood had imagined. It was in the midst of this setting that the 87th Seabees were assigned to build a bomber strip.

Logs bulldozed back to form the original runway were so large and numerous that the estimated number of axes and saws proved insufficient. More tools had to be obtained before this jungle logjam could be broken. All this prompted Lt.(jg) W. E. Mannix, original battalion supply officer, and Chief Storekeeper John T. Ahaesy to leave the Treasuries in December in search of these supplies.

Leaving GOODTIME by PT boat—the only fast transportation out of Stirling at the time—the officer and chief parted company at Vella LaVella. Ahaesy was to fly on to Guadalcanal while Lt. Mannix was to try Munda. The chief bummed a ride to the Canal aboard a SCAT plane loaded with casualties and mail from Bougainville.

Upon arrival, Ahaesy first tried the Naval Supply Depot, but with no success. Undaunted, he started out the following morning for the Army Supply Depot. After much persuasion, Ahaesy convinced a grizzled supply sergeant that his hoarded axes and saws would be doing more for the war effort in the hands of the 87th building a vital airfield on Stirling than rusting in a warehouse.

Finally convinced, the sergeant parted with 200 axes, 25 cross-cut saws, 500 pair of shoes and 2,000 coveralls.

The toughest problem was transportation. The trip would take two weeks by LST. Unarmed SCAT planes would not fly that near Shortlands and Bougainville. By enlisting the aid of a Marine Parachute Service Command unit and successfully propositioning the OinC of a newly arrived group of transport planes, the case was finally cracked wide open—and by an ENLISTED man!

At 1000, on the fourth day of the mission, the supplies were



SOUVENIRS. Mates surround one of the many colored parachutes and commence repacking it for return trip to Guadalcanal by LST. A pack containing heavy-duty shoes was attached to this 'chute. Some chutes were "procured" for their intrinsic or souvenir value.

dropped on the unfinished strip. A total of 90 multi-colored parachutes were involved. Once again, the 87th's luck held and the merchandise was delivered—thanks to the teamwork of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. Such was Solomons warfare in 1943.



DAY AND NIGHT. The equipment didn't shut down until it broke down unless Jap bombers came over. This was a quiet night with everything running smoothly as the stripping operation progressed. There were four spreads like this clearing at the edge of the

strip area, removing the top-soil muck and cleaning down to good coral. The muck was hauled to convenient spoil areas along the strip's edge. Here, Carpenter Edward ("Butch") O'Meara (left) is standing by—"just in case."

AROUND THE CLOCK

87TH DEFIES ENEMY ATTACKS

TO PUSH STRIP WORK

24 HOURS A DAY

When construction began on Stirling Strip, the island dim-out regulations were rigorously enforced because of the constant threat of surprise bombing attacks.

However, when confronted with the fact that deadlines could not otherwise be met, the Island Commander granted permission for floodlights to be set up and for strip-building to proceed 24 hours a day.

Light towers were built on skids and a system of red and green flares and telephone communications were provided to insure prompt pulling of the switches when red alerts came on.

The entire Transportation department, including the repair shops and grade organization, was reorganized into three eight-hour shifts.

Except for half-hour periods at midshift when chow was served on the job, everything was kept rolling around the clock—seven days a week!



YOU ROUGH IT OUT, then finish it off! It's all in the day's work. The fine-grading equipment follows right along behind the heavy units. Those men at the light towers aren't mere spectators. Alert goes on, lights go off!



CASUALTIES. The welding shop was part of the equipment "sick bay." The going was tough and it wasn't always the coral that moved. A pan pulled out of shape and a rooter hitch pulled apart are being "treated" by welders.



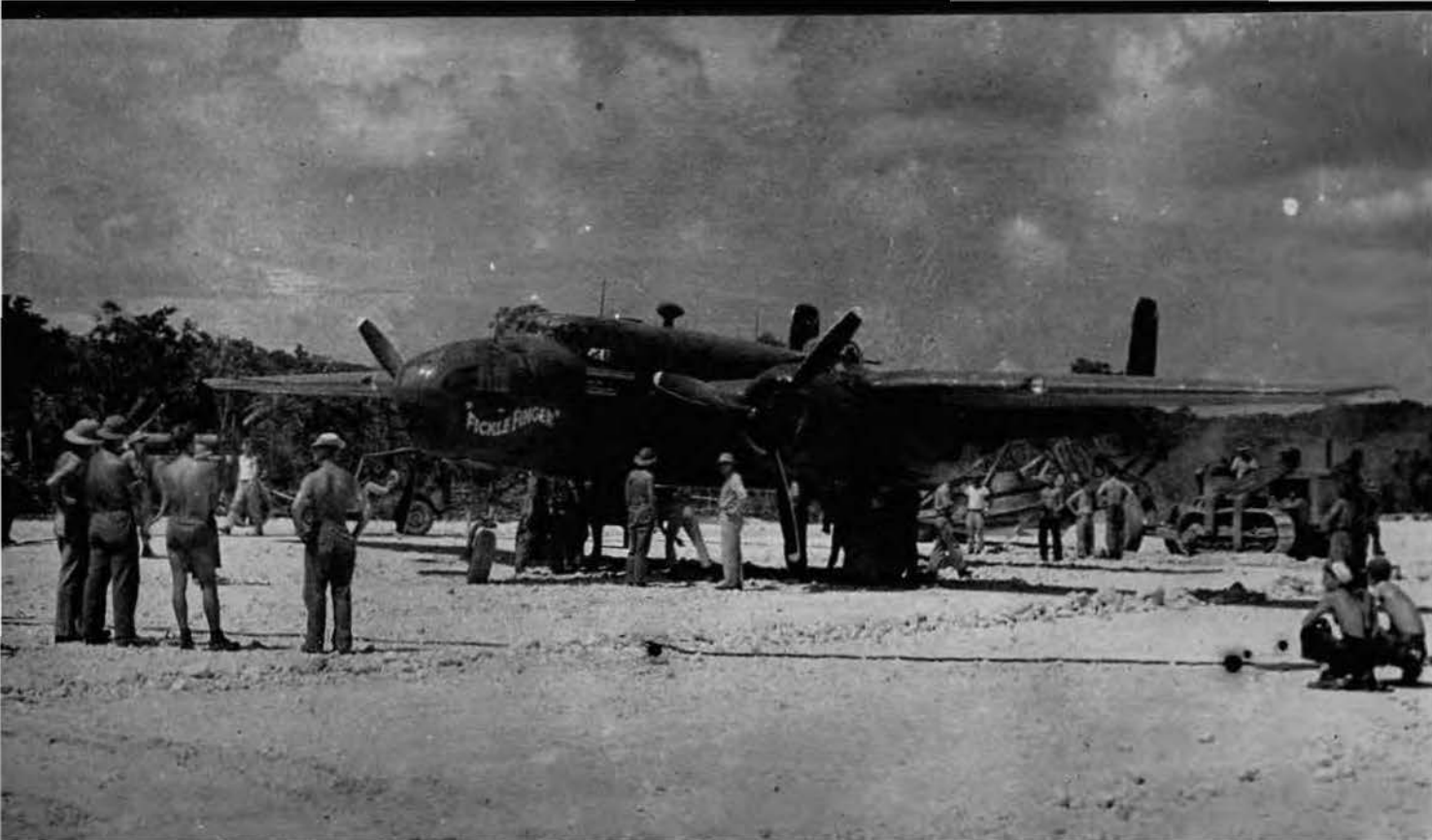
WALKING OUT. All fills were considered properly compacted when the sheepfoot roller "walked out." The sheepfoot also proved itself invaluable with its ability to spread large chunks of soft coral into smaller ones, thereby speeding up the operations immeasurably. Here, R. F. Johns is operating the sheepfoot rig. Surveyors Tom Campagna and Byron Chronic (with transit and levels) are setting blue tops. Grade Foreman Jim Bailey, (staff in hand, right) is supervising operations. Grader operator is C. J. Rominger.



STRIPPING DOWN. This area is almost cleaned up. Soon the shovels can be moved to a borrow pit and the pan spread can come on through to perform its phase of the work. Excavations were former 90-mm. gun pits.



TAKING SHAPE. While pans are bringing the section to close rough grade (left), the grader is working the finish (right). Up ahead can be seen the demolition and donicker removal crew. (See page LXIII of CAN DO.)



FIRST PLANE—19TH DAY. The finishing spread was furiously working the first 2,000-foot section that eventful 17th day of December when FICKLEFINGER, spewing gasoline and obviously in trouble, came hovering over. Dozers, pans, graders, rollers and trucks were

hustled off the Strip and long stakes kicked down as the plane circled. Once on the field, FICKLEFINGER quickly became the paramount island attraction. Equipment operators found it difficult to resist the temptation to ride over and take a quick look.

“ FICKLEFINGER ” LIMPS IN

It was late morning of 17 December 1943. The bristling B-25 (Mitchell) was roaming the east coast of jungled Bougainville—far from her home base in the Russells.

Suddenly they spotted what they were looking for. Bomb bays opened and FICKLEFINGER dropped her nose as clusters of bombs spilled out upon the harried enemy.

The attack was quick, but so were the Japs. The em-

battled bomber took slugs—lots of them—right in the belly. The plane was immediately threatened with 100-octane flames. Her crew expected her to explode any minute.

Lieut. Schwartzwalder nosed his ailing ship toward the southeast and tensely watched the gasoline gauge drop steadily. He could only hope that he could reach friendly waters before they had to bail out.

Then, the Treasury Islands came into view. Stirling Field, begun only 19 days earlier, stuck out like a gashed sore thumb, but from the air it looked smooth.

The pilot started his glide, but when he overshot the short section of finished runway, he pulled back up again and prayed that his gas would hold out and the explosion hold off. He circled and came in from the opposite end.

This time he mushed her beautifully right at the edge of the smooth section and jammed on all brakes. Even before the plane stopped sliding, doors opened on all sides, disgorging six fast-moving crew members.

Old FICKLEFINGER, veteran of 39 successful missions, just sat there, dripping gasoline and settling on one side as a tire went flat.

Repaired, she was soon giving the Japs a bad time again, coming in to her new roost on Stirling Field after every mission.

GRATEFUL. Lieut. Schwartzwalder (fourth from left) and crew exhibit relieved expressions as they realize they are on terra firma again—and all in one piece! They were preparing to “ditch” when Stirling was sighted.





SECOND PLANE. Forty-five minutes after the first emergency landing, a second plane showed up. Seabees and AA gunners (shown here) immediately raised plane off ground just enough to remove the dazed pilot—all within the space of minutes.



A SUCCESSFUL LANDING is generally considered to be one from which the pilot can walk away. However, the skipper of this Navy Corsair fighter left in an ambulance. Suffering only from shock and bruises, he was soon back in action.

CORSAIR CRACKS UP

LOST FIGHTER GUESSES WRONG,
OVERSHOTS FINISHED PART OF
STRIP AND TURNS TURTLE

During the early afternoon while the 87th was slamming its way through the nineteenth day of strip construction, a F4U dove out of the clouds and buzzed the strip from north to south.

A carrier-based Corsair fighter returning from a strike at Rabaul, he was far off course and running low on gas when he spotted the clearing in Stirling jungle.

Unfortunately, he made a wrong guess and flew over the paved area, landed on the rough grade and hit a boulder with one wheel. The skittery fighter flipped over and skidded to a stop on its back.

The wrecked plane had barely stopped before excited workers picked up the plane while others extracted the dazed, but only slightly injured, pilot from the shattered cockpit.

Still spitting coral, he was rushed to Sick Bay and treated for shock. Here, he was detained overnight, much to the delight of the Seabees, who bombarded him with questions of the war in the air.

PALMBEARERS. The Corsair is a dead duck. The 87th loads it aboard a long service trailer, which will carry it to the dock area. There, it may be loaded on a ship and carried to the nearest aviation repair shop, or

again it may lie for months, deserted and exposed to the forages of souvenir fiends and gadget-makers. Finally, it may be condemned to a forgotten corner of the island junk heap. Such accidents delayed the Strip.





CENTER OF OPERATIONS. Not only did the Earthmovers build a strip on Stirling, but they constructed aviation facilities to go with it like this 60-foot control tower and the communications and weather huts shown here. Equipped with sizeable bolts and timbers,

structure crews spiked together a luminated tower of two-inch material, guyed it securely and added bolts later. Battalion communications men set up and operated the field communications system until an Army Signal Corps unit arrived weeks later.



MAKE ROOM FOR BOMBERS! Fighters were already hitting Rabaul from the 5,000-foot completed strip. To make room for bombers, the men turned to taxiways and hardstands. (This 87th photo—one of eight—appears on Page LXII of CAN DO.)



ROOM FOR BOMBERS. And board, too! Here, a Navy PV is being gassed, serviced and loaded with bombs. Battalion transportation, equipment repair and service shops encircle this completed hardstand. A 40-mm. anti-aircraft gun stands by in ready position.



THE BOSS. Appearance to the contrary notwithstanding, Lieut. Ray Pape is not actually preparing to tackle that coral cut barehanded. However, if Chief Jim Hurley and 12-yard pan are not equal to task, he will surely take over.



"A" BATTERY of the 198th Coast Artillery 90-mm. crew. They didn't shoot many down, but they must have scared the Nips to death. These boys undoubtedly hold the record for tons of steel per minute hurled into the air.



CHOW DOWN, FORE AND AFT. Chief Paul Vater looks on as Chief "Jack" Smeltzer and Ship's Cook Merlin Monroe dish out noon chow on the spot to the clearing and logging crews. It is safe to assume that the apparent casualty at extreme right is not necessarily a result of overfeeding.

Chief "Ted" Wills (seated, center) seems happy over something. Could it be over this 30-minute chow period—the only break in the dawn-to-dark working day?



WHEREVER HE WANDERS. Here is the likeness of a truly domesticated man. After almost a year overseas, Lt.(jg) Louis D. Spaw, Jr. still shows



LESS DOMESTICATED. Lieut. Ray Pape and Lieut. Bill Luce take time out from the pressing demands of their jobs to view the Strip scenery. What



COMBINED OPERATIONS. Roller operators, forced off section of the Strip they were working on, watch as CASU 8 torpedo bomber takes off. Pans, working side sections, roll on undisturbed. Landings presented a somewhat greater hazard as the noise of diesels often prevented operators

from hearing returning planes as they approached for landings. However, grade foremen kept on the alert and whenever necessary, extra men whose sole duty was to watch and warn of approaching planes, were posted at strategic points.



CUTTING A WIDE SWATH. The Earthmovers always tried to observe a basic rule: "Never spread yourselves thin." The attempt was made to tackle every phase of the job with sufficient men and equipment, well grouped for close supervision and balanced operation. Here, the finishing spread illustrates the 87th's favorite method of concentrated attack. Not plainly visible are the salt-water spray trucks and rollers following the graders. The

entire 300 foot by 7,000 foot runway was double-bladed, sprayed with salt water and rolled between the take-off and return of bomber strikes against Rabaul. This was the last and final finishing touch to the Strip by the battalion as the field was now completed and in continuous full operation.



THE MILK RUN. A squadron of B-25s is shown leaving for the daily pounding of Rabaul. Stirling Field served as a base for four of these squadrons whose job was to pulverize the Jap fortress and keep it that way. Daily reconnaissance photographs showed new ships in Rabaul harbor, airfields

repaired after being bombed, and gun positions shifted to new locations. And daily the planes left Stirling to make sure this great enemy base stayed out of the fight.

JAP POISON. Although only a couple miles long and hardly a mile wide anywhere, tiny Stirling Island was just barely large enough to provide space for one good air strip. This revealing aerial shows Stirling Field from a direction exactly opposite that indicated in frontispiece photo, page 61. Plane was almost directly over Stirling Dock area as camera clicked. With the completion of this job, the battalion was ready to move on to more fertile territory closer to Japan proper.





CLEAR THE FIELD! A P-38 buzzes the field preparatory to coming in for a landing and alert 87th equipment operators make for the edge of the Strip. There is no doubt here as to who has the right-of-way.



HOLD YOUR FIRE! This one is friendly. A B-25 caught zooming over a bristling gun position is glad to sight the place called home. With flaps down, he will soon make the traffic pattern and come in for a landing.



HISTORY IN THE MAKING. B-24 Liberators, stripped of all armament, and carrying heavy photographic equipment and all the extra gasoline that can be put aboard, are poised for the take-off on a highly important and dangerous mission. If even one gets back, it will bring the first

aerial photographs that intelligence has been able to get of the mighty Jap base at Truk, the main Pacific home of the elusive enemy fleet. Good luck and good shooting!



VISITORS DROP IN. Stirling Strip was frequently used as a staging field for fighter squadrons of other nations. Often flying American planes and operating in the Solomons area of the South Pacific, pilots from "Down



LAST ONE IS IN! The end of a mission is buttoned up. The trip to Rabaul took about seven hours, and a flight over that target was a day's work in any language. POWERHOUSE just makes it home before dark, but the field was well lighted for night operations.



GASSED UP AND LOADED. A typical daily version of a familiar scene at Stirling Strip. Ground crews are waiting for the arrival of pilots and flight personnel, who will soon arrive from the briefing room. Then, the motors will roar, the big planes will wheel out on

the runway, and after a flash of green from the tower, this group of Mitchells (B-25s) will slide into the air. Each pilot will open his throttle as the plane ahead becomes airborne.

HEAVIES. Although Stirling Strip was constructed for the use of medium bombers, the Heavies (Liberators and Fortresses) frequently set down to replenish their fuel, emergencies, etc. The Strip accommodated these monsters—the largest planes in early 1944—with

plenty of mat to spare. The take-off of these big boys under full load was easily accomplished. Said one visiting Liberator pilot: "Stirling Field is the fastest and smoothest strip in the Solomons." However, the larger visitors seldom stayed long.



JAP BOMBERS HIT AND MISS STRIP TARGETS



THE MORNING AFTER. Despite radar aircraft warning systems and defense anti-aircraft and night-fighter protection, several Jap bombers had slipped in here the night before. A direct hit caught this B-25, setting off its gasoline and ammunition, and causing it to burn intensely for a few minutes

before becoming a pile of debris. Soon, however, battalion bulldozers had shoved the wreckage aside, a replacement plane was ordered from the Russells and the field reverted to business as usual.



A CLOSE CALL. The boys in operations tower had something to write home about. The plane that dropped this bomb had joined up with a B-25 squadron landing after dark. Anti-aircraft fire was held for fear of hitting friendly planes and the nery Jap laid one right down the middle.

The only damage was a small hole in the hard strip surface and an extra "field day" for the tower boys. Planes took off the same morning as usual.



REPEAT PERFORMANCE. The Japs really had tiny Stirling and its crowded airfield under the gun throughout January, 1944. Seldom a night passed without one or more raids. Always, the frustrated enemy headed for the gleaming Strip. He usually succeeded in dropping his eggs. With

planes parked almost wing to wing, it was hard to miss. Above is further proof of his ability to score direct hits. The mates, generally speaking, could hardly wait until morning to see the damage.



DISASTER. On 25 January 1944, a bomb-laden Mitchell crashed in the takeoff, blocking one-third of the Strip. The 87th was in the process of removing this plane when an unheralded Liberator, with one motor out and a prop that wouldn't feather, attempted to land. The big bomber

crashed at the edge of the runway and burst into flame. Battalion men assisted in rescuing the crew, most of whom, fortunately, had been thrown clear of the twisted wreckage.



TRAGEDY. At dawn, 14 January, a lone Jap dive bomber, flying at tree-top level, slipped in over Stirling undetected. The holes in the can and the 87th grease-truck are only the visible parts of the damage wrought by the plane's lightning strafing and bombing attack. Roy Goldberg met

his death near the spot where Azzario Capuano is standing. Several other 87th workers, including Raymond Langlois and Harold Johnston, were injured by the bomb. The enemy had scored again.



FROM HOME! Willing hands unloaded first load of air mail for Stirling Islanders from SCAT (C-47) transport. When news of incoming mail reached strip builders, a flat-bed truck used by 87th welders for field work was pressed into service to pick up the priceless cargo. This plane

was unloaded alongside of the Strip near the control tower. Within a brief period, SCAT had its own facilities in two sturdy quonset huts at the south end of B taxiway.

SCATS ARRIVE

C-47s WERE MAROONED

MEN'S MOST RELIABLE

CONTACT WITH THE

WORLD LEFT BEHIND

The first SCAT plane to use recently completed Stirling Strip settled down on the glazed coral runway on 30 December 1943. The name SCAT is derived from the initials of Service Command Air Transport.

This condensation would have been more appropriate for a fighter plane rather than the twin-motored Douglas C-47s, whose strongpoint was capacity rather than speed.

The introduction of Air Mail delivery to the Treasuries greatly improved the men's sagging morale. Previously, mail had been brought in by LSTs or LCTs from Guadalcanal or by PT boats from Munda.

With the coming of SCAT, Stirling Field became a station on the local air freight lines, which branched out from Handerson Field and covered the entire Solomons.

Cargo, mail or passengers—SCAT ferried them all. Islanders with week-end passes often obtained reservations aboard C-47s and escaped the drabness of Stirling's limited existence by visiting friends on neighboring islands.

The unescorted "Flying Box-Cars" completed their appointed rounds despite tropical storms, enemy ack-ack and, at times, roving enemy fighter planes.

This small link of the globe-girdling Air Transport Command helped make life bearable for men stationed on remote jungle islands.

The sight of these lumbering ships hovering over the island was, at least, always encouraging to the marooned mates.



FLIGHT of four cargo planes approaches Stirling Field from the South. Battalion surveyors (right) cease operations as traffic approaches. ACORN 12 fire-truck stands by in case of trouble during landing. These SCAT transports flew unarmed—even in forward areas.



LONE SCAT transport flies over the Strip from the North. Mono may be seen in background. Tents of AA batteries still line the runway. Guns and tents were later removed. (This 87th photo appears on Page LXV of the widely read Seabee book, CAN DO.)

PLANE ART SHOCKED PURITANS

To the Puritanical element of the Treasury personnel, a visit to the Strip was a shocking experience. Here, they were confronted with the widest and wildest variety of leg-art ever gathered in one small area. Gaudy, life-size pin-ups frequently startled even the most hardy sightseers with their free use of varied hunks of feminine anatomy.

As more squadrons of planes arrived at Stirling for the final all-out air push against Rabaul, Truk and Kavieng, the sightseers daily increased in number. Men began making private snapshot collections for their photo albums of the galaxy of cheese-cake displayed on the nose of the planes.

Experienced pin-up enthusiasts could quickly determine the length of time the squadron had spent in the war zone by the liveliness of its insignia.

Planes fresh from the States had neither art work nor inscriptions on their noses. At most, they sported a Walt Disney cartoon of the Donald Duck variety or a self-conscious, half-hidden pet name of the wife or sweetheart. These were the green planes. Their pilots still had fresh recollections of home.

After a few months of rough and tumble duty and their first taste of the kill, these same planes would usually blossom out with some murderous, blood-and-guts inscription such as "Educated Death," "Murder, Inc.," "Powerhouse" or "We're Buzzin' Cuzzin."

But it wasn't long before they abandoned their cops and robbers attitude and went in for the really solid stuff that was more in keeping with the fine traditions laid down by the long-bearded, rock-happy old-timers. These crusty, battle-scarred individuals went all-out in their free-handed decorations.

Giving their imagination a free hand, the planes resembled burlesque show posters with their terrific expanse of legs, arms and buxom torsos. Appropriate titles added still more interest to the emblazoned heroines, many of them revealing tasteful delicacies and descriptive qualities of the highest order. Among the titles were such gems as "Virgin's Retreat," "Passion Flower" and "Hot Pants."

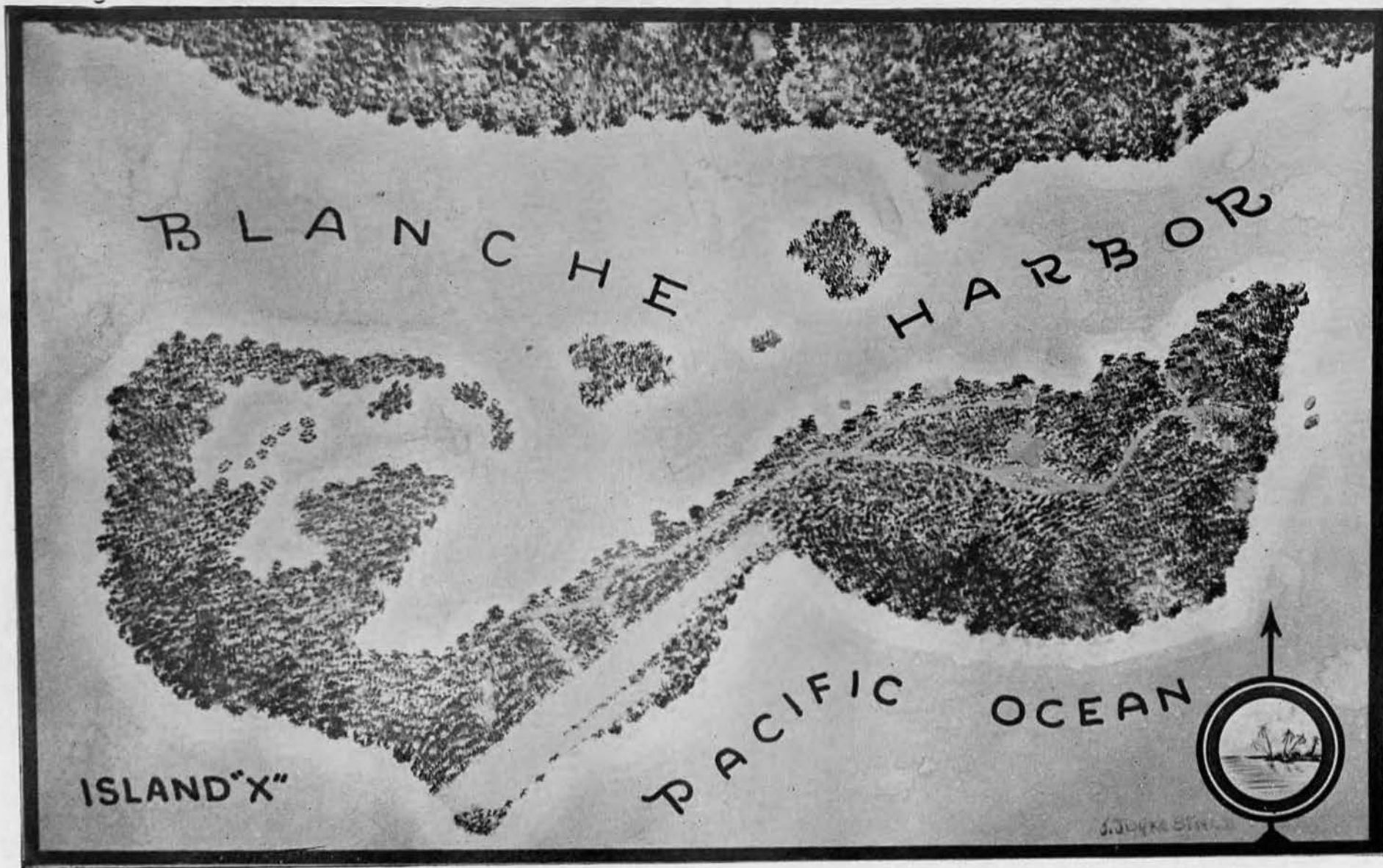
It was this latter group that attracted the most admiring sightseers. For it was largely through their efforts that the blazing torch of fair womanhood was kept burning!



PRECAUTION. Crew members of the B-25 bomber, POWERHOUSE, cover up strafing guns on the flanks of their ship while a visiting Seabee snaps picture. Taken under the watchful eye of Intelligence, this precaution was taken before picture-taking was permitted.

Reading from top to bottom: FLYING "PADRE." Typical of a B-25's ability to get there and back was the ALPINE MILKMAN, still going strong after 165 successful missions. Pilot, co-pilot and navigator are shown with Lieut. Cyril R. Kavanagh (hand on gun), 87th chaplain. WIND-BLOWN. Example of more extreme taste in plane pin-ups was MILLIE. News of the arrival of a plane with such a painting was quickly passed around the island and eager sightseers flocked to admire, but only for art's sake, of course! JIVE-TALK ENTHUSIASTS were also numbered among crews of Mitchells judging by slang names like above. When these twin-motored bombers started warming up, the noise was incredible. This Stirling veteran was familiar sight to Seabees working on the airfield.

AERIAL VIEW OF STIRLING STRIP REVEALS AMAZING PROGRESS IN 24 DAYS



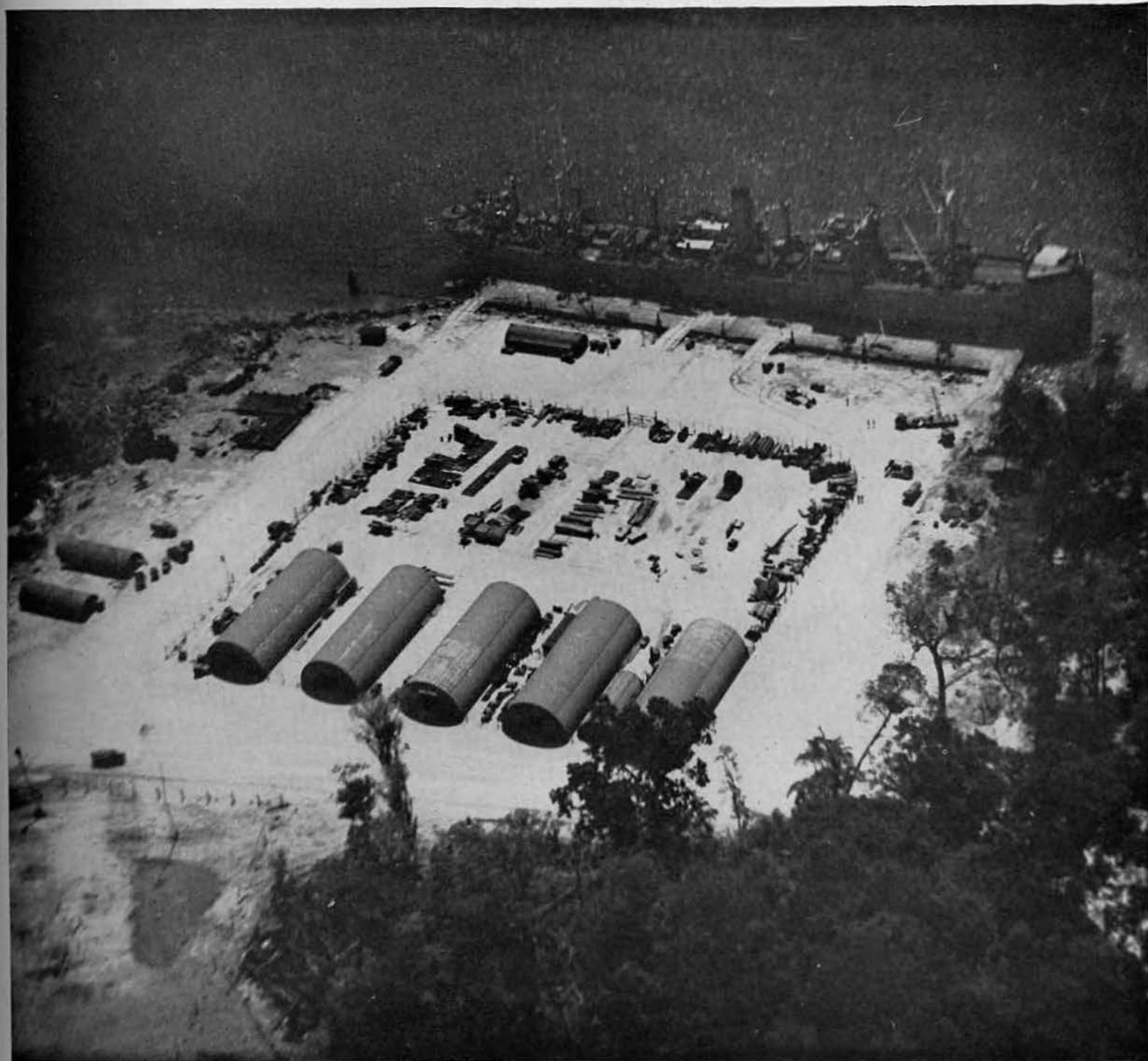
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THE SHAPE OF THINGS. This painting of Island "X" was done by the 87th's Julian J. Dyke from an aerial reconnaissance photo taken 22 December 1943. Reproduction is notable in that it shows remarkable headway the battalion had made on Stirling Field in slightly

over three weeks of work. Except for the initial runway, a portion of "A" taxiway and the Blanche Channel highway, Stirling was still virtually as invasion forces found it on D-day. The 87th's permanent camp was located at far end of winding channel road in cleared

space near eastern end of Island. Rugged Mono Island, including the cleared triangular perimeter at Fajamai where initial landings took place, lies opposite word "Harbor" across channel. Original photo was secret document for many months.

P R O J E C T S



S T I R L I N G — m o n o

STIRLING BECOMES COMPLETE BASE WITH 87TH - BUILT DOCK



POWER. Initial clearing for Stirling Dock area begins. Jack Kenning (on D-8) pushes over sizeable tree—roots and all, thereby providing more fodder for the battalion sawmill. A stubby LCM plys its route between Stirling and Mono.



HILL DISAPPEARS. Grading of the cleared dock area is now progressing by leaps and bounds. The hill, which formerly was here, has been carved away and used as fill on shore access road. Plane tender is anchored offshore with PBYS.



THE DETAIL. Heavy ramps from pier to shore are put into place. Timbers for the ramps were made of heavy native lumber cut to order by battalion sawmill. Four ramps of this type connected the pontoon pier to the land. Such work had to be right.



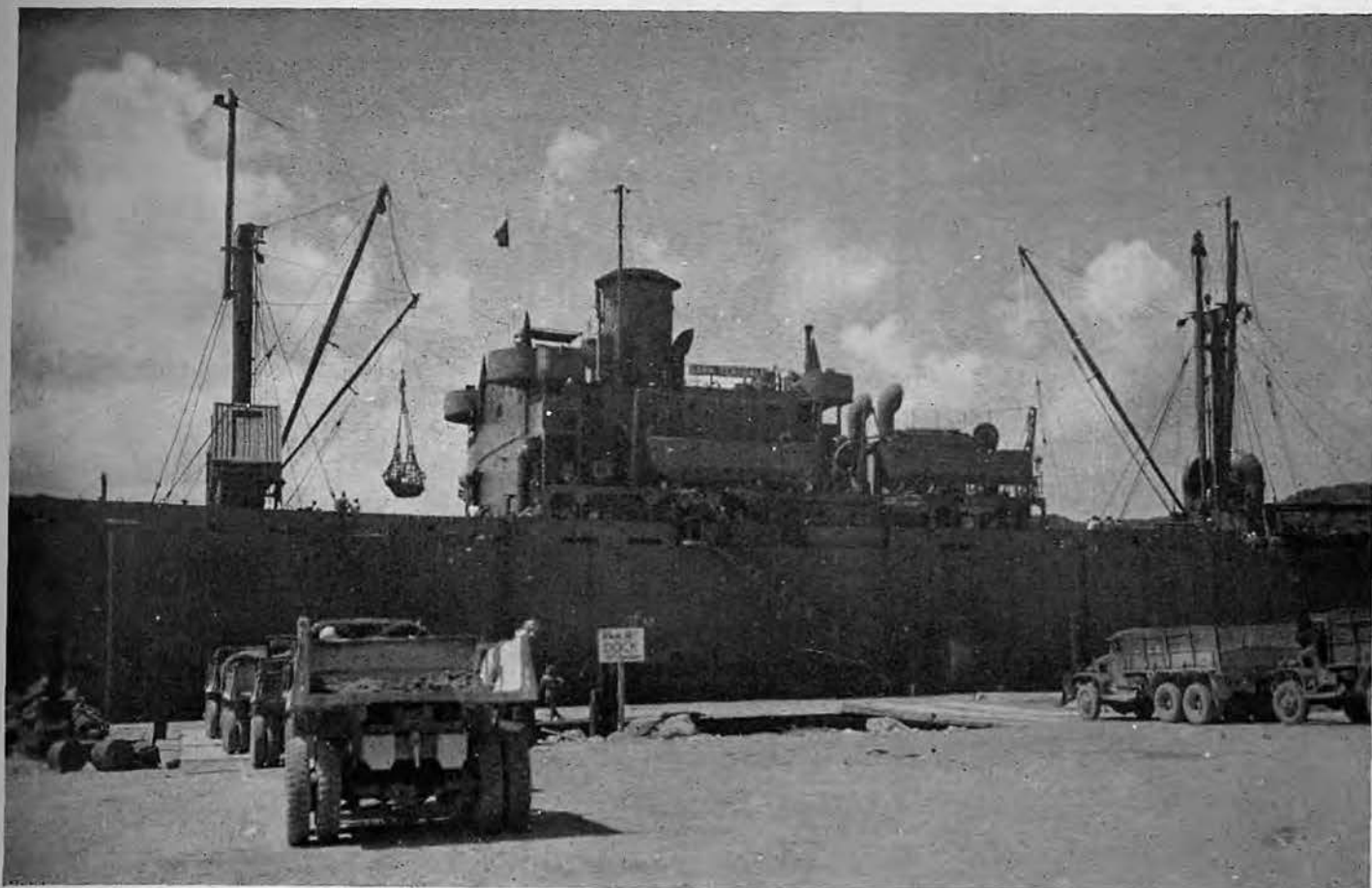
PILE-DRIVER rig is poised to sink one of many piles used for dolphins and clusters. Piles were sharpened and steel-tipped to secure them in coral bottom. Net tender and barge (right) are laying submarine net across harbor entrance.



FIRST LIBERTY SHIP unloads at Stirling Dock on 30 January 1944. Pier was 428 feet long and 43 feet wide, so all holds of ships could be worked simultaneously. Seabees furnished winchmen and the signalmen while Kiwis unloaded cargo into trucks.



SUPPLY DEPOT, built in dock area, consisted of five 40x100 quonset warehouses and a compound surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. Office of Port Director was the 20x48 quonset (foreground). Area was once a Seabee baseball diamond



SETBACK. Stirling's completed dock was named from the Bugs Bunny expression of "What's Up, Dock?" (center sign). The clearing, grading, approach roads, warehouses, offices, stockade and pier, as shown on Page 81, called for diversified craftsmanship. But the Seabees never rest for ships come and must be unloaded.

Trucks were always waiting for cargo. Seabee humor was officially snubbed and the once cherished name became just plain Stirling Dock. But to the 87th it would always be "What's Up, Dock?"

STRIP BUILDERS PROVE VERSATILITY ON OTHER JOBS

The amazing conversion of the Treasury Islands from virgin jungle to a completely implemented base of operations was accomplished—for all practical purposes—in three months.

Never before in the Pacific had such a small contingent of Seabees labored so prodigiously and accomplished so much in such a short period.

By 1 March 1944, Stirling was at its operational peak. In addition to Stirling Field and its manifold installations of hardstands, taxiways, hangar, shops, control tower, bomb dumps and tank farms, other essential projects already completed by the 87th included the PT Base, all primary highways and the dock.

All major assignments were completed on or ahead of schedule, but there was no apparent slackening of the overall work program.

More and more flight groups continued to arrive as the trip-hammer tempo against Jap bastions was constantly stepped up. The Stirling miracle virtually sealed the doom of the Japs in the Solomons.

The newly-arrived air units had to be housed, fed and furnished recreational facilities. This led to an enlargement of the island ration dump and the installation of additional reefers.

By virtue of their early arrival, the 87th Seabees logically spearheaded this vast island development program. They did the bulk of the work—and finally got the credit.

The battalion's crack logging detail roamed the islands, selecting felled trees dozed aside. Trimmed and cut to the proper length, these mammoth timbers were sawed into usable lumber for island structures.

Headquarters were built for such strategic operational units as Island Command, 198th Coast Artillery, ACORN 12, Naval Air Command, etc.

Hospitals were set up at ACORN and Naval Base 811. Movie theatres, recreation areas, motor pools and shops were built all over. Soon every inch of "The Rock" was "homesteaded." There were no longer any vacancies in the Treasuries and the Stirling jungle had all but disappeared.

Other 87th assignments included the endless ship-unloading details, building of a tortuous mountain road on Mono, maintenance of the primary highway system and the almost perpetual upkeep of the

Strip and installations until the CBMUs took over in July.

Public works for the 87th ended as of 1 July and the battalion again entered a staging period for the long road ahead.



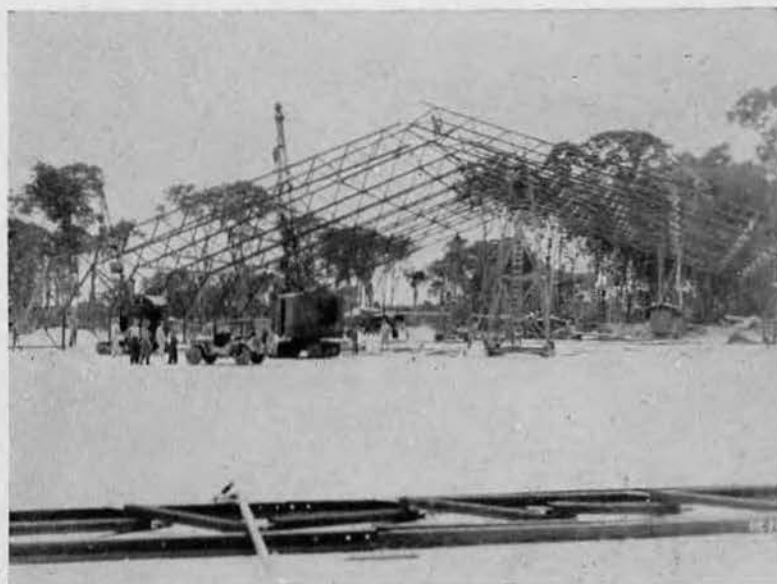
SICK BAY FOXHOLE. Chief William Martin and crew work hard constructing huge foxhole for 87th Sick Bay. The shelter accommodated 30 patients and was equipped with an emergency generator for use during alerts or when main power was not available.

RIGGERS ERECT HUGE HANGAR FOR AIR GROUPS



ERECTION OF A HANGAR gave Stirling Field a big-time flavor. Built on a sweeping coral apron just off "C" taxiway, this job introduced another skilled part of the 87th construction team—riggers and ironworkers. Chief "Hank" Ahrens' R Division gang handled the steel. Emerson Turner and

Eli Pifer took care of the delicate crane work. Chief Hugh MacDonald's carpenter crew provided the essential scaffolding and bracing. Structure was 120 feet wide, 160 feet long and 43 feet in height.



CAPACITY. Needing only the joining of the end section to be ready for tarpaulin cover, completed hangar will soon house four B-25s undergoing repairs. Structure was completed in 10 days. Crews worked from "know-how" as plans had been lost.



SICK CALL. Wounded aircraft are crowding completed hangar for "treatment." Structure had been erected on three other islands and 87th riggers were able to use only 11 of 13 main trusses. This plane "hospital" was constructed for the 25th Fighter Squadron.



THE PORT DIRECTOR, the busy young man who took care of the comings and goings of ships in the Treasuries—from LSTs to Liberty ships—had his office in his jeep or a tent until he was furnished more appropriate quarters dockside. Here, 87th carpenters, paced by George Bieger and Alten

Storts (center), are putting a prefabricated section of roofing into place. Cargo ships unloaded a steady stream of war supplies at the 87th-built Stirling Dock.



ACORN 12 OFFICERS WINE MESS was built in T-shape fashion out of quonsets by Chief Hugh MacDonald's crack carpenter crew. Shown at work (standing, left to right) are: Richard Bogdanski, James Bilyard, James Gordon, Edward Allman, Walter Edwards, Ralph Smith, Clarence Nielsen,

Robert Stone, Ralph Hastings, Andrew Byrne and Richard Evans. (Kneeling): Chief MacDonald, Charley Danford and Lloyd Aubert. The ACORN club eventually became a show-place of the Treasuries and virtually all visiting celebrities paid it a call.



YOGL gets camouflage job from Chief Vic Cedarstaff's paint crew and riggers. Two of these huge aviation gasoline storage barges were stationed in Blanche Channel and they needed to be disguised. Chicken-wire netting with strips of green fabric interwoven was suspended over vessels in uneven

pattern to break up contours. Dressed in green war-paint against jungle background, these barges were fairly safe from enemy observation and strikes. A bomb hit on such a ship would leave only memories.



SPRAYING IT ON. Sheldon McCaleb (with spray gun) stands on small raft while painting sides of gasoline barge. Albert Mundy gives him a tow from the rail. These craft had crews of 15 with a CPO in charge. Lacking motive power of their own, they were towed to destination by sea-

going tugs. NO SMOKING signs were hung all over these barges as warning to any small craft personnel coming alongside or aboard. Seabee painters used spray guns almost exclusively.



FIRST CARPENTER SHOP, set up in rough clearing, consisted of tarps to cover saws. Half sections of tent decking were assembled here and trucked to jobs where other carpenter crews put them together. This assembly line system speeded operations immeasurably.



PILOTS CAMP is well under construction. Carpenters (center) are completing tent decks. Replete with screening and framework, these tents provided cool, comfortable living quarters for combat-weary P-38 pilots at Stirling. A mess hall and shower rounded out camp.

PT BASE IS BATTALION'S FIRST STIRLING PROJECT



PT BASE. Torpedo dock for the cocky little night raiders was built by Chief Bill Inness and his Company A carpenter crew. Working long days with only hand-axes, this group completed the first Stirling project assigned the 87th in jig-time. Made of lashed coconut logs, the above crude struc-

ture nevertheless filled the bill. The PT Base later developed into a huge installation with warehouses, cranes, machine shops, etc., for housing several squadrons of these feared craft.



WIDE CLEARING, made for a main highway on Stirling Island, has been brushed out below airfield. Odd-shaped New Zealand truck was used by a Kiwi field bakery in delivering bread to various outlying units. Early roads weren't too good.



A MAIN DRAG on Stirling Island—a section of beach highway approaching the entrance road to ACORN 12 and the Pilots Camp area. This super-speedway, originally a trail 'dozed out' by invasion forces, was 40 feet in overall width.

RE-BLADING STRIP 87TH'S FINAL TREASURY JOI



PERFECT FORMATION. Tandem lines of graders and rollers are shown during "face-lifting" operation performed on Stirling Field runway early in June. Harvil Nolin and George Sambrat, equipment operators, are leading grader parade. Work was continuous for two days and nights.



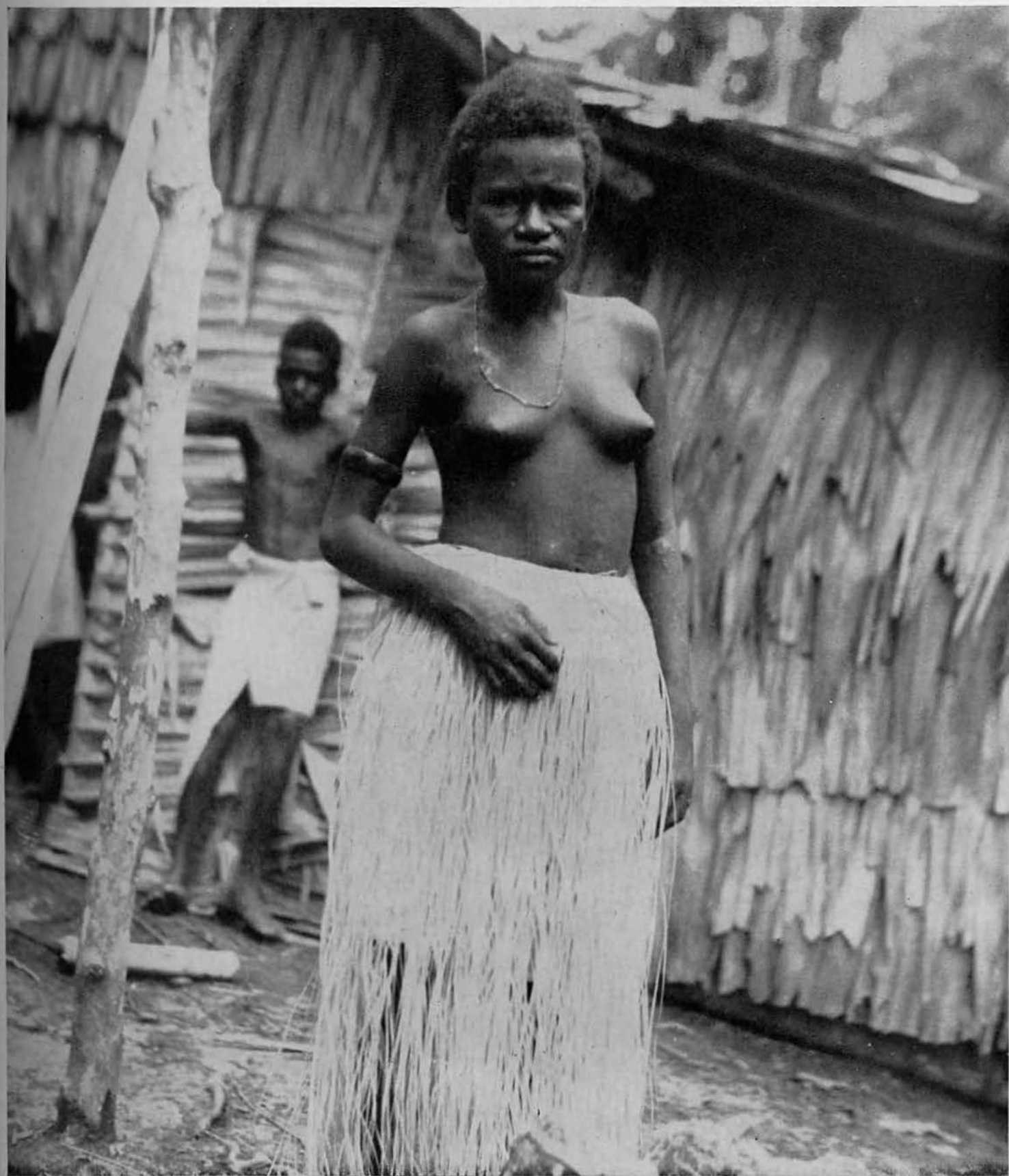
CROWDED OPERATIONS. A huge SCAT transport, loaded with top priority passengers and freight, prepares to take off as re-blading of runway continues at furious pace. Weather station's theodolite, used for making wind observations, is inside picket fence enclosure.



RAIDERS AND GRADERS. A B-25 takes off as part of a strike against last remaining Japs in the Solomons without interfering with a grading spread. It was usually necessary to clear runway when a mission was taking

for the 87th to spend 48 hours in completing this re-blading task—the battalion's last public works assignment on Stirling. Rollers and water trucks worked right along with the graders.

NATIVES *and* SCENIC



TREASURY ISLANDS



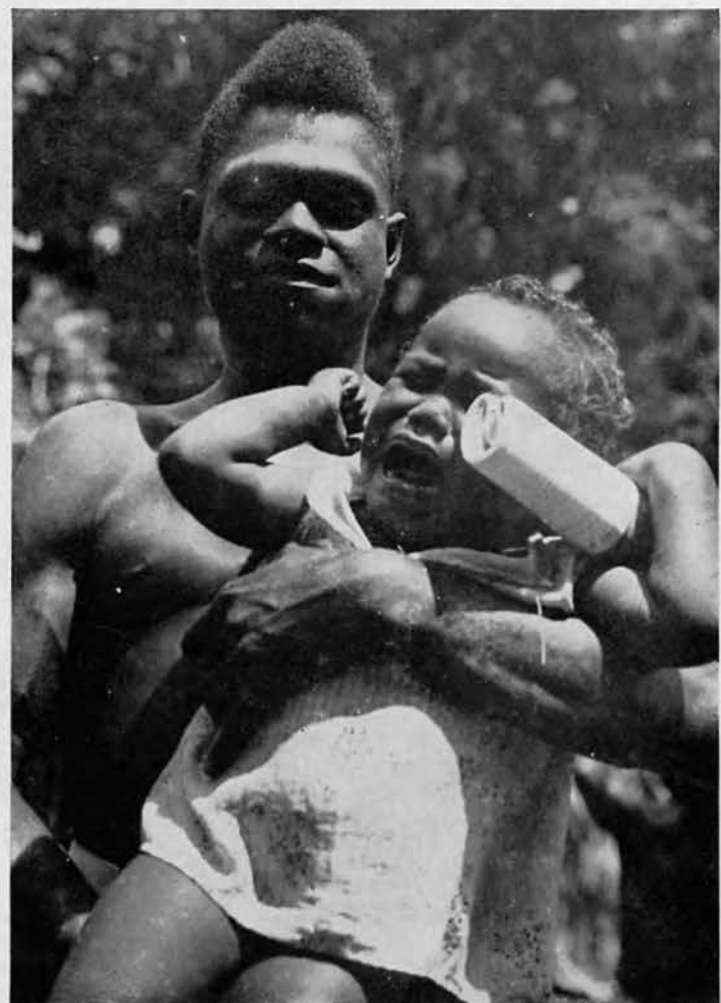
PHOTOGENIC. Two strapping specimens of young, native manhood are Phillip (left, shouldering New Zealand rifle) and John, perhaps, the most intelligent male of Mono Island. Single, both were widely sought after as husbands by village damsels.



HOLY FAMILY. Backbone of both the social and religious life on Mono was the Reverend Timothy Piani and family. Educated in the New Georgia Islands by New Zealand missionaries, this Man-of-God eventually returned to work among his own people.



HUNGER. This handsome Mono mother feels no qualms in calmly facing the camera as her lusty offspring helps himself to breakfast despite Seabee visitors from Stirling. Baby wisely uses both hands as insurance against losing favored position.



OLD BAWL GAME. John's amazing versatility as a man-of-all-work about the native village suffers a serious reverse as he undertakes to demonstrate his talent with the infant set. Baby, clutching an issue of LIFE magazine, screams helplessly.



THE WORD. Mono natives are shown attending Sunday morning services. Then, they were still living in caves along the waterfront. Barefooted and standing in a primitive pulpit, the Reverend Timothy Piani raises hand and points to Heavens as he exhorts his

audience to live better lives. Many Americans and New Zealanders attended these services every Sunday morning, primarily to enjoy the group's fine choral singing. The text was invariably given in English, but the sermon was in the native tongue.

TREASURY NATIVES PROVE IT'S "ONE WORLD"

The inhabitants of the Treasury Islands represented "Nature in the Raw"—Exhibit A!

Souvenir-hunting or curiosity-seeking Seabees were deeply impressed by their hardy existence on rugged Mono Island where they had long ago retreated in superstitious fear of Stirling's less favorable health conditions.

Greed was almost totally foreign to these Melanesian citizens of the British Northern Solomons. They turned to the soil or to the sea for necessities—not to their neighbor.

They tolerated civilization's advances only when these strange customs did not harm them. Probably this was the explanation behind their acceptance of a loincloth and Christianity from well-meaning missionaries.

Left alone, they discarded everything and continued living amid their ancient traditions. Visitors were welcomed with quiet respect, but a certain reserve seemed to temper their association with most GIs.

The 87th found a deserted native compound and huts in weather-beaten ruins upon helping to rid the Treasuries of the Japs in late '43. Apparently the residents could not adjust themselves to the Jap's "co-prosperity" propaganda.

Soon after the invasion, American and New Zealand troops discovered these simple people living deep in the jungle or holed up in large caves along the ocean's edge.

Eventually a few men were persuaded to return to their native habitat. Others followed gradually. For a considerable period, only the very young or very old women were to be seen at the cave dwellings. The most desirable females had been whisked away to secret hideaways in the jungles at the first sign of danger.

In time, the thatched villages were completely rebuilt, and the day finally dawned when visiting servicemen were surrounded by candy-seeking youngsters—just like back home!

Such visiting groups were, at first, largely ignored by the female population, but slowly fear evolved into studied friendliness.

The white man's way may not have appealed to these kindly natives, but neither did it disturb them.

The 87th, leaving the Treasuries in September, 1944, after a grueling year in the tropics, knew in their hearts that the late great Wendell Willkie's doctrine of "One World" was indeed an actuality.



KNOW-HOW. Perhaps, the most coy "model" on Mono was Alyce, who made and modeled native grass skirts to sell visiting Seabees. This buxom lassie was never known to exhibit her "wares" until it had been made worth her while.



STUDY IN EBONY. Attired in their Sabbath best, this interesting group poses for the 87th cameraman before leaving for morning church service. This was the only time her two urchins weren't completely nude. Woman is wife of native wearing pants.



GETTING HIS GOAT. Gideon, one of several highly-respected patriarchs in the Mono village, requested visiting photographer to snap him with his beloved goat. Obviously, the animal is not nearly as enthusiastic about the matter as his master.



JUNGLE VILLAGE. An excellent cross-section view of the picturesque native village, this shot catches a typical group of carefree youngsters taking time out from their games. The nearness of the encroaching jungle is emphasized by this contrast in tones.



JIVE SESSION. Attired in their immaculate Sunday-best, the natives' reed band plays for visiting friends from American and New Zealand camps on Stirling and Mono. Their instrumental renditions compared quite favorably with their haunting group singing.



HIGH LLAMA. Old, Old, Old Man was alleged to be oldest citizen of the Treasuries, Kinkola (second from left), 70, said "The Old One" was an old man when he was a boy. Relatives thought oldster was perhaps 130, but records were lacking.



HOSPITALITY. Perhaps, the most hospitable native group was Paul and his intelligent family whom 87th friends usually visited after Sunday services. Church over until next week, the "Mrs." has already shed her blouse and the youngsters have returned to Nature.



CHARACTER. The striking facial resemblance between this buxom Mono mother and her child attracted the attention of THE EARTHMOVER's photographer. Except for the more obvious differences, it was often difficult for visitors to distinguish between native men and women.



HABIT. Many native women were strongly addicted to the habitual use of tobacco. Always willing to accept an American cigarette, such women as "Candy" were definitely partial to their pipes. Seabees frequently took tobacco to the villages for trading purposes.



GOODWILL. Now and again Mono natives repaid visits to their Seabee friends on Stirling, bringing along special items of native craft such as grass skirts, canoe paddles, miniature canoes, war clubs, etc. Here, Comdr. Easterly exchanges views with a couple

of visitors near the 87th camp and incidentally treats them to cigarettes and a light. Natives were never awed by military rank. However, CPOs rated a special reception as the native leader, Roy, was also a chief.



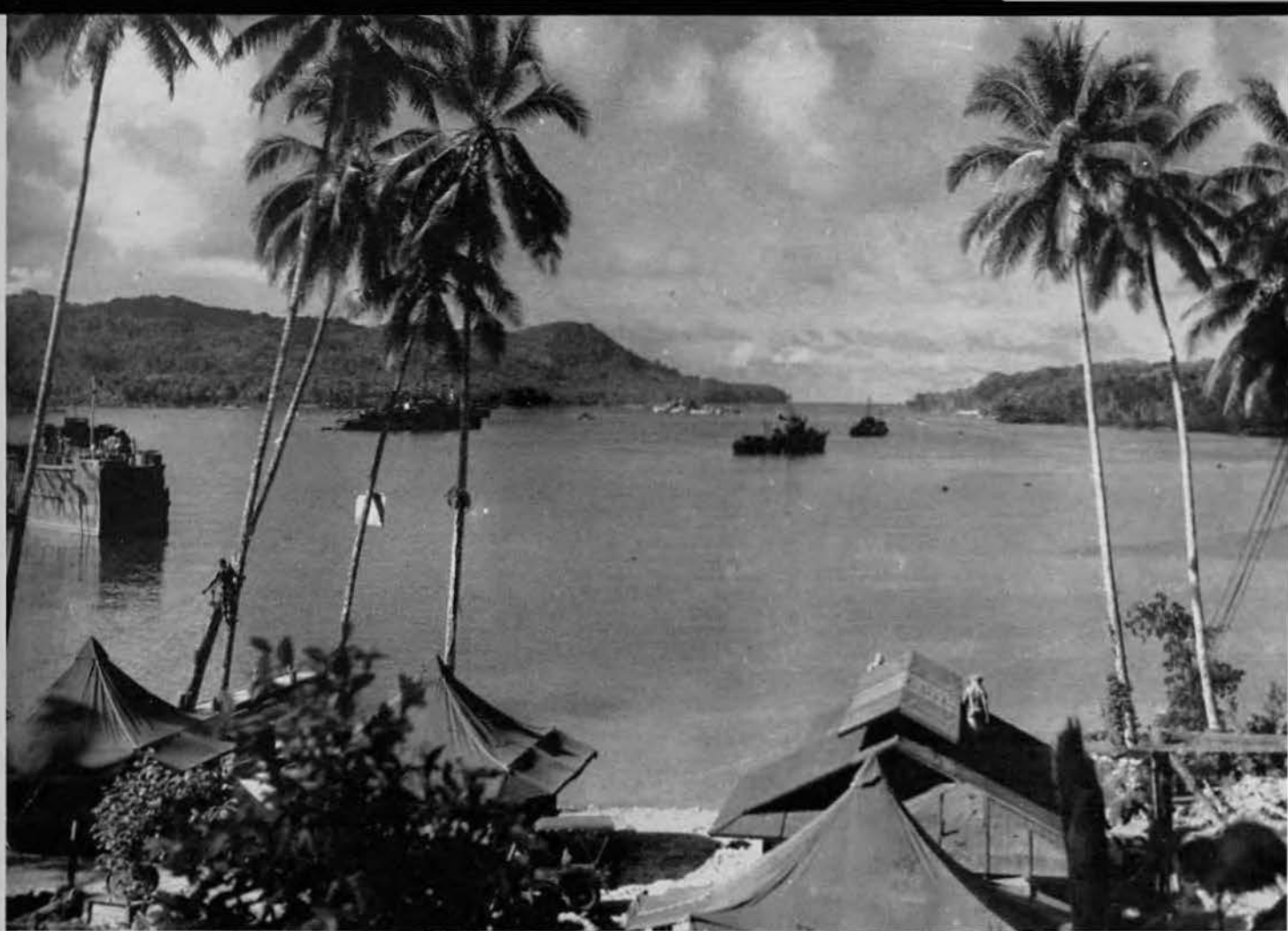
THE JUNGLE is a place: where one doesn't sink to his knees to pray because he's already knee-deep in mud; where there are no horizons to scan; where men, with their fan drained by jungle suction, file along like a column of ghosts; where men die cursing the thing they couldn't see;

where there are no boys—just men who became of age during their first combat; where sweat of fingers drowns a cigarette; WHERE PATRIOTISM IS NEVER DISCUSSED!

MALSI BEACH was on far side of primeval Mono Island. Reached from Stirling by a ferry (landing craft), it was a popular stop for Seabee "tourists" from other side. New Zealand troops stationed here manned AA batteries in rugged hills. "Kiwis," as they term themselves, are shown bath-

ing (right background), while others are working on home-made outrigger craft. Near here were located the caves where natives existed during Japanese occupation and previous to construction of their new inland village.





BLANCHE HARBOR. Looking northward from the general vicinity of Island Command, sightseers had a perfect view of the "business district" of the narrow channel that separates Mono (left) from Stirling. This placid combination of sky, water and landscape looks anything but warlike. Yet

the destroyers and destroyer escorts shown nestling in harbor are awaiting orders before resuming the prowl for enemy shipping. There were comparatively few coconut palm trees in the Treasuries. These were, perhaps, the most picturesque on "Island X."

JUNGLE HOSPITAL. The first quonset hut erected on GOODTIME nears completion as a few carpenters work aloft while others finish inside trim. A group of these huts—eventually manned by medical officers and corpsmen—served as an emergency hospital for all air strip personnel. Airfield

construction had been pushed so rapidly that barely enough clearing had been done to allow space for this hospital. Here, lush jungle is obviously seeking to envelop the structure before it is even finished.





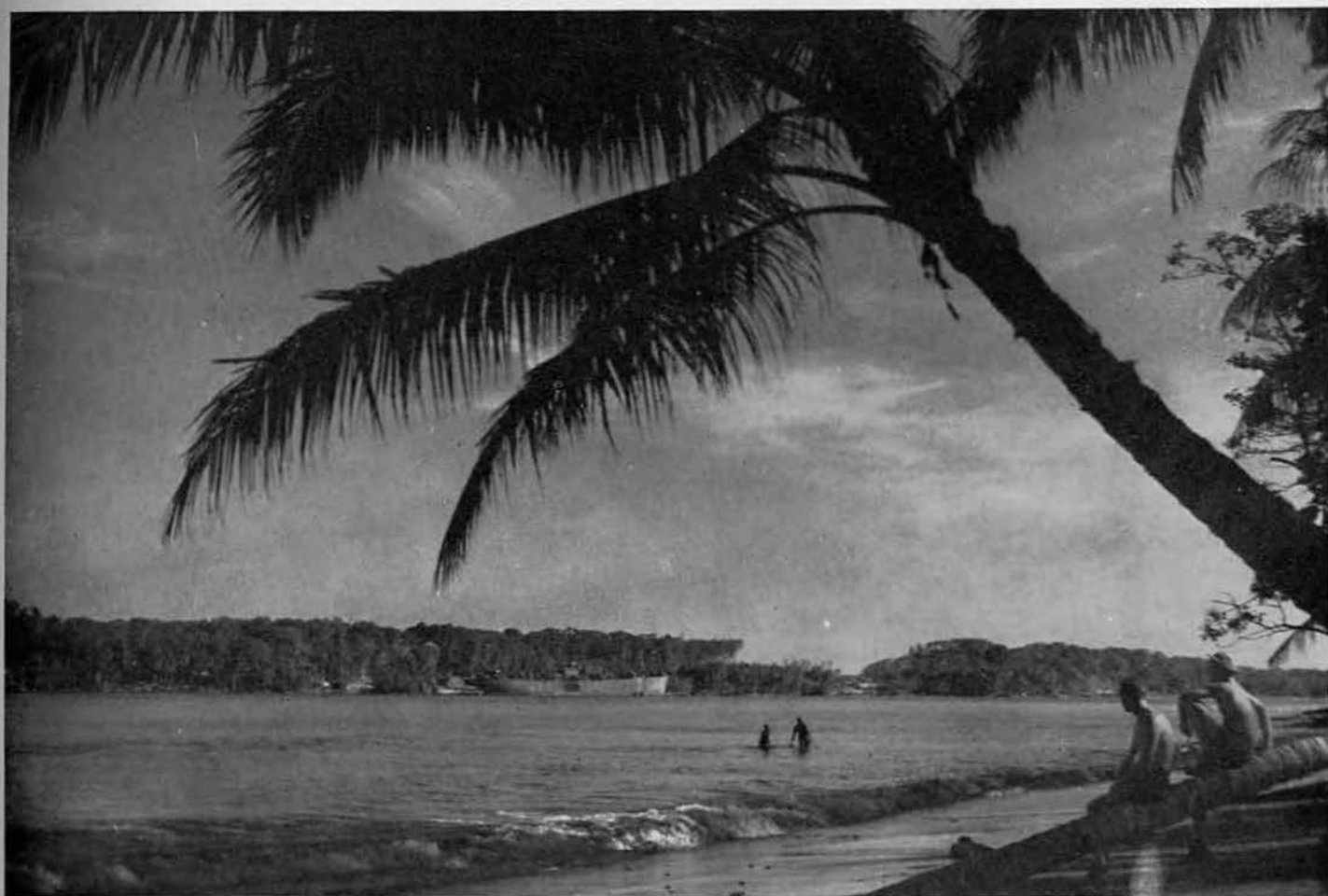
THE NATURALISTS stop en route to Mono village to marvel at giant banyan tree. Measuring 40 feet in diameter, 120 in circumference and over 100 in height, this eye-arresting monstrosity is largest tree of record in Treasuries. Actually, the awesome mass is hundreds of cannibalistic vines choking

a primeval monarch to death. Natives frequently mentioned a much larger tree further inland, but no white man reported seeing it. "Explorers" are: Jim Wierengo (seated), Chief Carl Ruble and "Barney" Nelson.



DAWN STRIKE. As the faint pink fingers of a tropical sunrise probe the somber Solomons sky, a lone B-25 takes off on a special mission to Bougainville. This plane has two incendiary bombs tucked away under each wing. For months, the mates were awakened each morning by the sound of these

Mitchells warming up and taking off. Seared pile of brush (left) reveals all that's left of the once flourishing jungle. It's lying where 'dozers pushed it off the runway.



THE ROMANTIC ILLUSION of the South Seas is captured in this panoramic shot of Stirling taken from Falamai Peninsula on Mono. A large cargo ship is unloading at Stirling Dock across the channel. Break in tree skyline (right of ship) marks end of Stirling Field runway. Two mates cool off in

comparatively cool waters, while another pair of roving Bees relax under a palm tree (right). This picturesque shot could easily be mistaken for Tahiti instead of the Northern Solomons.



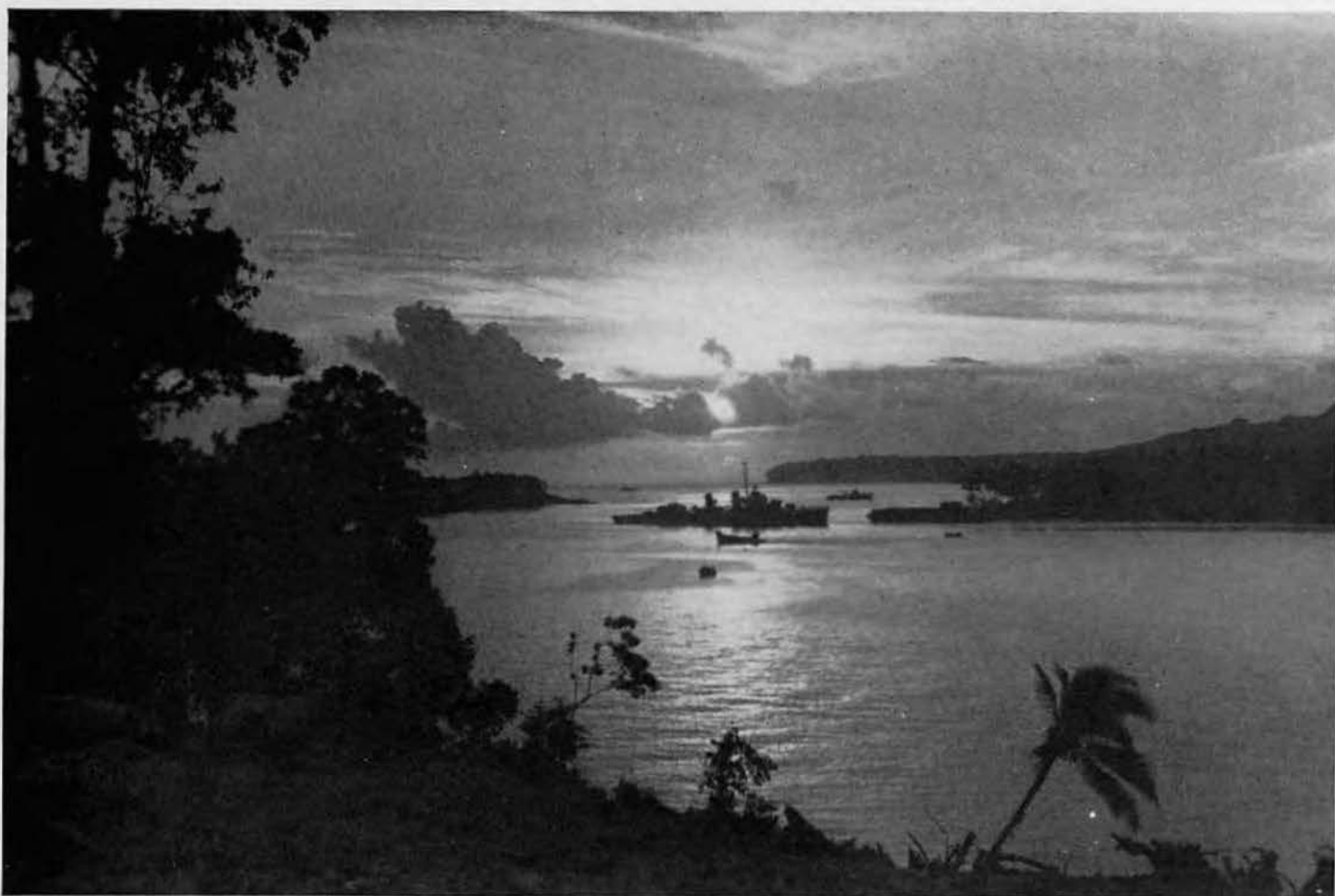
TOPPING IT OFF. Richard Bogdanski and Charley Danford consult on the finished product while Clarence Nielson nails last section of quonset roof in place. While working in the open, sun helmets were a necessary item of apparel. Tender, young palm at right (one of a few growing any dis-

tance from shore) struggles against lack of soil on coral-based island. Quonset huts never became commonplace on Stirling. They usually housed administrative units where records had to be protected against elements.



FAIRYLAND. Infra-red film depicts (as none other can) the delicate tracery of lush tropical vegetation. This special film (tropically packed) creates the illusion of piercing the jungle itself, portraying in depth and detail, which would appear as a solid front in ordinary film. Clouds stand out

billowing full, yet filmy and light against perfect blueness of Pacific sky. Many trees without tops reveal devastating effect of heavy Naval gunfire when U. S. Task Force 31 shelled Mono during Treasury invasion.



CHANNEL SUNSET. Resting in the placid harbor waters with Mono (right) and Stirling (left), perfectly silhouetted destroyer (center) noses up to fuel barge whose blunt outline is barely discernable against the darkening shoreline. Landing craft (used as ferry) is making last run from Malsi back to

Navy boat pool. The sunset lights up upper sky brilliantly while darkness has settled over earth and water. From daylight to complete darkness in five minutes is a typical sunset in the South Pacific.

CAMP O S T M A N



‘ ‘ I S L A N D X ’ ’



LAND-GOING SUBMARINE. A battalion truck "ferries" men of the 87th across the awesome "moat," which practically surrounded early Camp Ostman area for much too long. Almost daily torrential downpours for weeks made situations similar to this a common sight.



MORE PROVISIONS ARRIVE. A monstrous carryall, jampacked with vitally-needed supplies and provisions for early occupation forces on Stirling, rumbles cautiously down a tortuous road, blazed only a few hours earlier by a sweating Seabee and his bulldozer.



HIDEAWAY. Surrounded entirely by tangled vegetation, cleverly camouflaged by Nature, a back-saving crane assists battalion storekeepers and riggers laboriously unloading pallets of invaluable supplies from ships to be hidden in this secret supply dump.



QUICK LUNCH. Between truckloads of supplies steadily pouring into the new camp, work-hungry Seabees hastily grab a bite of impromptu chow. Any time was chow-time at this stage when the cry was work, work, and then more work. The days were never long enough.



NERVE CENTER. It was first things first in constructing the new camp. Here, axe-swinging carpenters build bomb-resisting underground communications dugout, using watersoaked mahogany and teakwood logs from surrounding forest. Structure was eventually sandbagged.



WATER POINT. In the midst of this God-made jungle, a Seabee-built (87th) water plant is operating. Trucks haul the precious fluid continuously so sweat-soaked men—to whom a bath was only a memory—may again feel human. Water rated a top priority.



AND DAMN THE TORPEDOES! Typical of the several early "super-highways" leading into unshod Camp Ostman was this obstacle course, which tested the mettle of even the stoutest truckdrivers throughout the memorable months following the invasion. "Pilots" of heavy-duty trucks approached such dilemmas with considerable

misgiving as the depth of such uncharted "lakes" naturally varied with the amount of rainfall. However, "T" Division was "on the ball" and kept 'em rolling day and night. It was Man vs. Nature.

LIFE AT CAMP OSTMAN WAS STERILE EXISTENCE

To an isolated few, "Island X" was "Home, Sweet Home." To all others, however, it was the 87th's "Devil's Island." To one and all, "The Rock" represented an 11-month interlude spent like degraded castaways on a 1x3 coral landspeck in the lonely Pacific. Why Stirling's operational code name was GOODTIME was never learned.

From the first days of the mud-drenched bivouac in October and November, 1943 until the day of departure in September, 1944, the men lived in the crudest and most primitive manner imaginable. Propriety and customs were soon all but discarded.

Sleep was virtually impossible in the bivouac area. It was, in fact, a hellish nightmare of jagged coral, swarms of persistent insects and hordes of such monsters as giant iguanas, scorpions, land-crabs, centipedes and the deadly coral snake.

Pup-tents were small protection against the incessant rains. Throughout the long, restless nights, the eerie wailing of air-raid sirens and the deep barking of AA guns were interspersed with weird jungle noises. Attacks of dysentery added to the general misery. It was invariably a hollow-eyed, water-soaked crew reporting for early duty.

Once the top-priority air strip was begun, each division commenced clearing its own area in the main camp. Armed with axes and machetes, crews first hacked out clearings for tents. Then, 'dozers cleared narrow roads between rows of tents and the camp began to shape up.

Soil removed in 'dozing weakened the foundation of the towering trees by further exposing the already shallow roots. During the worst windstorms, the wary men usually evacuated their tents in favor of cleared areas like the rifle range. Inevitably, tents were destroyed by crashing jungle monarchs until eventually this menace superseded the Jap threat.

As the vast island-development program expanded, chigger bites caused the most lost man-hours. Other prevalent afflictions were jungle rot, fungus, ulcers and heat rash. Lacerations became infected overnight. The men gulped daily doses of atabrine, salt tablets and vitamin pills to stay on their feet.

Throughout those early, trying months, money, as such, had absolutely no value. Cigarettes, candy and toilet articles were free. The Solomons medium of exchange was barter, but there was little to bargain for.

The 87th quickly cultivated neighboring New Zealanders. The con-

nection was usually good for tea or beer. However, the Kiwis generally contrived to get back more than they gave.

Early island chow consisted largely of warmed-over field rations. When fresh meat made its infrequent appearance on holidays like Christmas and New Year's, the mates were unable to do it justice.

Procuring food from visiting merchant ships became the most highly developed of many cutthroat arts in the forward area. It was every outfit for itself with no holds barred!

Liquor could be had at \$35 to \$50 a fifth. Crude stills, hidden under trunks of trees, produced potent "Jungle Juice" from handy items like raisins, fruit bars, canned corn or apricots. Only after many had become violently ill did Island Command clamp down.

Most men experienced their first real earthquake on 24 December 1943. Many in breakfast chow-line were hurled to the ground. Lesser quakes and tremors occurred periodically. Other than air-mailed clippings, the men depended upon THE MITCHELL and THE DAILY MAIL (two-page mimeographed newsheets) for current news.

Scuttlebutt became rife that once the Strip was completed the battalion would get a 30-day leave in New Zealand. The abortive Kavieng push collapsed, but it was in the making just long enough to blast the visit "Down Under."

Stirling was strictly a womanless world. Except for an occasional flight nurse, the only white women the men saw were those with Bob Hope and Jack Benny.

The mates resorted to almost every pastime to speed the dragging days. Hunting cateyes solved the problem for many. Souvenir-making turned the trick for some. Others resorted to fishing trips in the MISSEABEE, swimming at Falamai or hikes to the native villages. The planned recreation program included basketball, volleyball, softball, boxing, wrestling, horseshoe pitching and, finally, ping pong! Five battalion officers were lucky in a restricted lottery and flew to Australia for a leave. They rejoined the outfit at New Cal.

Morale was tremendously improved when the battalion was awarded its first battle star for the Treasury-Bougainville operation.

But all wasn't work and boredom on Stirling. Twice the bug-eyed men watched a mighty task force shelling nearby Shortland Islands. Black alerts were not infrequent.

When the jungle-battered outfit left Stirling in September, 1944, the men had absorbed their fill of the tropics. The next destination—no matter where—would certainly be an improvement!

NEW CHOW HALL BUILT IN VIRGIN JUNGLE



JUNGLE SUFFERS SET-BACK. Not even this almost impenetrable jungle can withstand the Seabees' assault as they labor tirelessly to push back the thick, green mass for the new 87th chow hall. Here, in a neatly bulldozed central clearing, concrete foundations are laid. A hastily-pitched tent

(right) provides a haven where workers exhausted from intense equatorial heat and stifling humidity may recuperate. Note unusual buttressing roots of larger trees (extreme left and right) characteristically spreading out in all directions.



WHEN DO WE EAT? Eventually, the budding chow hall commences to shape up as skilled carpenters, assisted by muscular apprentices and laborers, hasten to complete the building so their shipmates might eat without undue exposure to the unpredictable tropical elements.



FLYLESS! The essential project completed, the end of the initial chow-line may be seen slowly disappearing between the mess hall wings. Completely screened out, Stirling's pesky flies were, at last, deprived of the "privilege" of dining with the 87th.



NO VACANCIES. Their once bountiful energy slowly drained away by the suction of torrid heat, Seabees recuperate from multiple tropical illnesses in Sick Bay. Steel helmets hang in readiness in case of a surprise air raid

by the enemy. Another battalion picture of this ward appears on page LVI of CAN DO. Contrary to the author's deft implication, the 87th had only one case of bona fide malaria during twelve months in the Solomons.



AFTER SICK CALL. Pharmacist Mates, First Class John Baker (left) and Fred Colby run laboratory tests and post entries to men's health records, following busy sick call. The 87th dispensary included a complete operating set-up and a dental office that was a going concern.



CHIGOES. Just about everyone eventually acquired a case of "jiggers." Caused by a microscopic red mite, usually found on tropical vegetation, resultant infections were almost invariably made worse by uncontrollable scratching. Chief Art Collins exhibits his infected legs.



TROPICAL HOSPITAL. In this rain-drenched jungle rendezvous, safe from the probing eyes of enemy bombers, the Sick Bay was constructed none too soon. Here, near a high cliff overlooking the gleaming Coral Sea, top-

bombings, strafings and construction accidents. One of the earliest buildings finished, this hospital proved invaluable, not only to the 87th, but to many other nearby outfits without proper medical facilities.



HOUSE OF DAVID. Full-faced beards, as well as bushy mustaches, seemed to flourish on Stirling as nowhere else on the 87th's trans-Pacific saga. Just about everyone—both officers and men—either sprouted—or attempted to sprout—the most formidable facial adornment possible, but finally the pride-smashing order was handed

down. ALL HANDS—SHAVE OFF FACE BEARDS! (Reason: too unsanitary!) Left to right: Lister ("Monty Wooley") Harrell, Charlie Barker, Jim Moore, King Norton, Byron Chronic and Charlie Johnson.

JUNGLE "BRUSH"

SHAVING TAKES A HOLIDAY
AS ALMOST EVERYONE LETS
HIS WHISKERS GROW WILD

In the lush, green Treasury jungles, the urge to express one's personality became a dreamer's reality, at last. Perhaps, the tangled and matted natural growth had something to do with this gusty camouflage epidemic.

At first, the morning's routine shave was, of necessity, postponed. Then, it was simply forgotten.

Soon hair hedges sprouted from ear to ear via the chin. Impressive handlebars were trained to stand erect or point—frequently with the aid of sail-maker's beeswax.

Youthful faces hopefully cultivated a crop of peach-fuzz, while others proudly displayed handfuls of manly "spinach."

Bushes of black, brown or flaming red became badges of distinction. Competition became increasingly keener. A shipmate's social standing was determined by the hair on his face—not on his chest!

This vogue slowly evolved into artistic landscape gardening until one day—"the boom was dropped!!!"

The order had two immediate effects: it enabled Nature to resume her course with many hopefuls and allowed the be-whiskered element to shed an extra blanket!!



THE DOC. Lt. Comdr. Frederick P. Osgood of Toledo, original Senior Medical Officer, seems to have also caught the trend of beard-sprouting as he proudly exhibits his own neatly-trimmed "Van Dyke" for future South Pacific warriors.



THE BEARD. Not to be outdone by lesser spirits, Lieut. Ray Pape, St. Louis, gives a prime example of how a forward-area beard should really look. Never without his inseparable cigar, Lieut. "Crusty" seldom missed a trick "Up Front!"



TIMBER! Huge water-soaked logs, an invaluable by-product of the clearing for nearby Stirling Strip, await processing at the 87th's portable sawmill (partially shown in background). This mill furnished lumber for all the most important projects in the Treasuries.



ALL WET. A hastily-constructed shed provides inadequate shelter for men and machinery against Stirling's puzzling elements. The hearty sawmillers, "bossed" by Chief Carpenter W. C. Gladish and Chief Leo McDonald, were always either sweat-soaked or shower-drenched.



SWEATING IT OUT. Shirtless, bearded sawmill hands prepare a large native log for sawing into finished lumber for the innumerable top-priority jobs all over Mono and Stirling. Projects, it seemed to these men, could never be supplied with enough lumber to meet the ever-increasing

demands. Lumber for their own camp needs always seemed to be the bottom order. Interwoven surrounding jungle insured a bountiful supply of huge teakwood and mahogany logs. Daily average output was 6,500 board feet.



KNOCKING OUT POCKETS. Spraying water-filled pockets in the volcanic ash cliffs adjacent Camp Ostman with lethal diesel oil, the Malaria Control group succeeded in conquering an enemy rated eight times more

dangerous than the deadliest Jap in the Northern Solomons. Left to right: Shelah Kern, Ernest Lommatsch, Jr., George Beote, August Kafer, Raymond Austin and Oren Ammerman.



CLOSING IN FOR THE KILL. Like modern Paul Bunyans, the legendary American timberman, four husky, axe-swinging Malaria Controllers literally hack their way through almost impenetrable undergrowth to "splash"

malaria-carrying mosquitoes. These pests operated against the 87th from the battalion's water-point base—Soola Lake. Left to right: Sam Janka, Edward O'Con, Ralph ("Mush") Masciarelli and Angelo Insalaco.



EXTERMINATION. Reaching the lake, Malaria Control "puts to sea" to ferret out and destroy the mosquitoes' secret breeding dens. Every nook and cove is "bombaraded" with deadly diesel oil and a thin film of

the smothering agent is spread over the lake's surface each week. Left to right: Ernest Lommatsch, Jr., Oren Ammerman, Lorre Andre, Raymond David and Shelah Kern.



A MOSQUITO'S NIGHTMARE. The 17 original members of the 87th Malaria Control group are shown at their Camp Ostman operational base, complete with a toolshed full of anti-mosquito gear and drums of the indispensable diesel oil. Left to right (seated):

Rollins and David; (kneeling): Insalaco, Lommatsch, Beote, Hussey, O'Con (with pipe), Mohr and Ammerman; (standing): Kafer, Masciarelli, Haitom, Janka and Andre; (top of shed): Kern and Boehm; (on top of barrel): Raymond Austin.

SOLOMONS: 12 MONTHS— MALARIA: NIL

A tiny island so infested by insects of every description that it fairly crawled. Jungle so thick it was well-nigh impenetrable. Cliffs so sheer, one slip would have meant not only breaking every bone in one's body, but also being lacerated beyond recognition by the razor-edge volcanic ash.

All that and much more was the problem that confronted the 87th Malarial Control unit when it arrived on Stirling Island in late 1943. Half of the island was assigned to the battalion to debug and maintain.

As the undergrowth was cleared and the thousands of breeding places of the dangerous malaria-carrier were sprayed with a special diesel oil and kerosene solution (DDT was not then available), a gradual lessening of mosquitoes became apparent.

Breeding places were found not only in the puddles, coconut shells, swamps and rotting logs, but also along cliffs, 150 to 200 feet above the ocean.

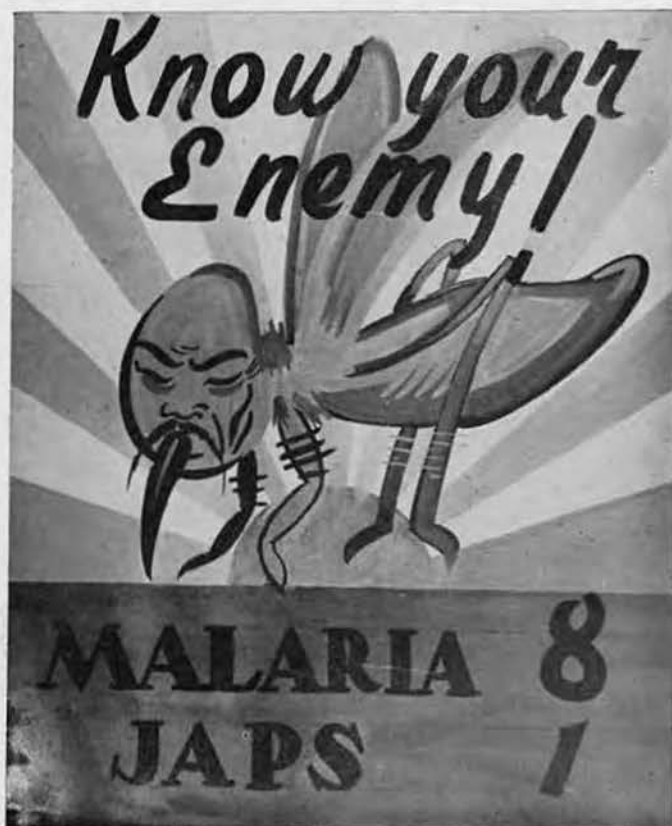
The volcanic ash of these bluffs was similar in appearance to a petrified sponge-cake, and, consequently, provided innumerable pockets, which acted as catch-basins for the tides and the rains. These pockets also made comfortable dwellings for many malaria-carrying mosquitoes and their teeming offspring.

Tides and torrential rains conspired to make the task of the hardy Malaria group one of endless spraying. They also had the job of spraying Soola Lake, the main fresh-water reservoir of the island.

Then, there was the problem of preventing sea-water from seeping into a fresh-water lake on nearby Mono Island just across the channel. The lake was at a lower level than the nearby ocean; consequently, salt water ran into the lake during high tides.

This was overcome by a dam built by the unit. As a result of this laborious work, the level of the fresh water was soon raised to a point above sea-level.

Because of the fine work of these persistent "microbe hunters," the 87th had only one case of malaria (questionable) during its long residence in one of the worst infested areas on Earth.

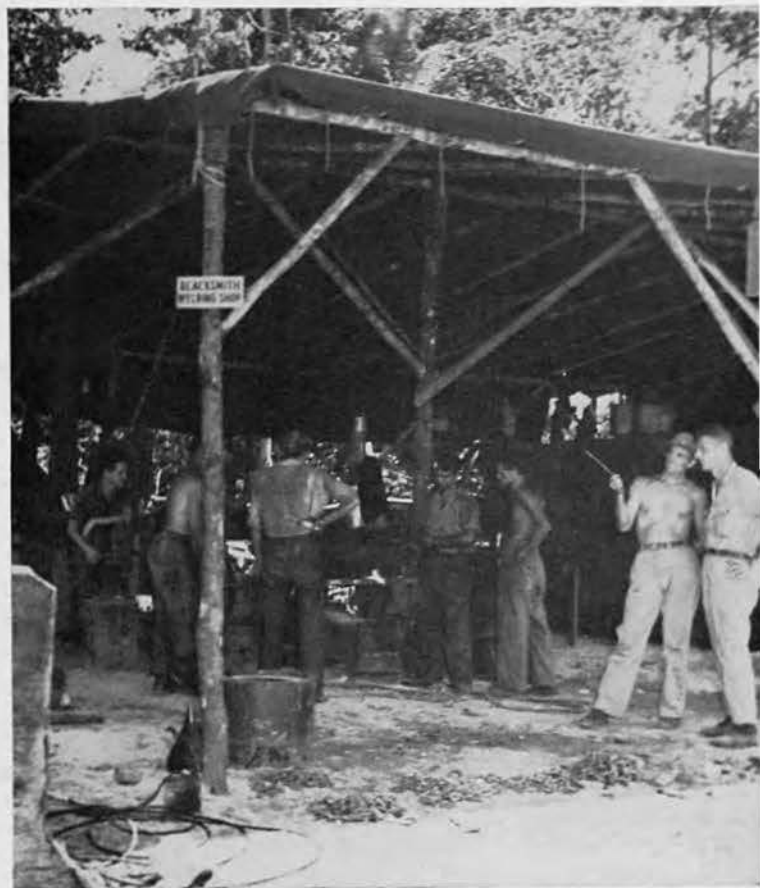


BEWARE! Reproduced above by John Schaefer is a replica of the first malaria educational poster displayed on Stirling. Battalion members were alarmed to learn that malaria was claiming eight victims to the Japs' one throughout the fever-ridden Solomons.

SHOPS KEEP PROJECTS ROLLING AROUND CLOCK



CARPENTER SHOP. Chief Carpenter's Mate "Bob" Parrott and Carpenter Karl Jehannossen (left center) study detailed blueprint at an improvised table while machine-handy assistants turn out all types of furniture from native lumber for the 87th and other units.



BLACKSMITHS AND WELDERS. By continuously making new machine parts and welding others that couldn't be immediately replaced, the blacksmith and welding shop operated day and night to keep strip equipment in tip-top operating condition right around the clock.



BIG STUFF. Vital to the sustained construction progress of Stirling Field was the essential work done by the highly skilled crew of the Heavy-Duty Machine Shop on such monstrous earthmoving equipment as power shovels, carryalls, bulldozers and motor graders.



LIGHTWEIGHTS. No motor problem proved too difficult for the crack mechanics of the Light-Duty Machine Shop, who specialized in trucks, jeeps, etc. Left to right: Sylvester Savage, Chief Carpenter Edward ("Butch") O'Meara, Chief Robert ("Pappy") Holt and Americo Brizzi.

87TH SUPPLIED STIRLING WATER

In the plans of attack on enemy-held sectors, little is left to chance. A supply of water is of prime importance among the many objectives.

Immediately upon landing in the Treasury Islands, New Zealand engineers, with the aid of aerial reconnaissance photos, located fresh-water Soola Lake in the midst of the matted jungle on Stirling Island. A road was pushed through at once by 87th bulldozers and on the third day pumps were erected and service to the invasion troops commenced.

Mike Yanoscik, Bob Scanlon and Ed Joe Mulhern, all of the 87th's trail-blazing Company A, were detailed to aid in the operation. An output of 3,000 gallons per day was sufficient for a while.

When the main body of the 87th arrived, however, the Kiwis relinquished control and the development of the water point became a battalion project.

Pump after pump was installed and under the supervision of Chief Shipfitter "Jack" Ormiston, new methods for treating the impure water were producing gratifying results.

Lieut. William C. Reilly, in charge of the design of the water system, soon evolved an efficient method of supply. Water was pumped up through pipes to huge reservoir towers from which all major units were able to draw. Smaller units, however, still carted their water by tank, truck or trailer.

A 15,000-gallon tank was set up beside the pumps. The water was forced into troughs located at the top. Through holes in the sides of these troughs, it cascaded ten feet, thereby aerating itself thoroughly before being distributed.

Every half-hour the water was checked and tested to see that it conformed to the required standards. The test established the hypochloride of lime content at one part in one million parts of water. Daily output eventually reached 120,000 gallons.

With the help of the Malaria Control group, the swampy jungle pond, with its shoreline of tangled trees and brush, was transformed into a coral-banked modern reservoir.

By constant hard work and by continually devising new ways and means of increasing the efficiency of operation, the 87th Water Department was able to provide all units on Stirling with an ample supply of pure, potable water, thus contributing greatly to the health and comfort of the entire island.



WATER TOWER. Towering virtually as high as the tallest surrounding jungle monarch, this imposing water tower supplies the pressure for the entire Camp Ostman water system. Perched high on the supporting platform, Lieut. William C. Reilly looks his project over.

TOP TO BOTTOM: TEST CASE. Lieut. Reilly, 87th water supply officer, observes Hubert Rieck, Jr., running a periodical test for chlorine content in purified water at Soola Lake. The island name on sign is correctly and officially spelled STIRLING—not STERLING. **LAKE VIEW.** This shot of the rear of the battalion's water-purifying plant, taken from a rowboat adrift on crystal-clear Soola Lake, reveals the 87th-built and operated plant against a majestic jungle background. Sizeable crocodiles infested the lake. **CHECK-UP.** Comdr. Easterly confers with Chief Shipfitter "Jack" Ormiston about water-purifying equipment recently installed. The sign—"A Clean Ship is a Happy Ship"—recalls shades of Lieut. Felber's cherry "propaganda" aboard the S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY.



"HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING." Though the prospects for the first Yuletide overseas were none too bright, many spirits were lifted early Christmas morning by the above group of carol-singing New Zealanders

from the adjacent camp. Even cooks and bakers (right), overhearing the old familiar songs, temporarily left their stoves and ovens for a few moments to listen.



ATTENTION! The Christmas spirit and carol-singing cease momentarily while "The Military" takes over. While all stand at attention, Mike Corrado, battalion bugler, blows "Colors" as "Old Glory" is hoisted sky-

ward. This scene is particularly significant inasmuch as this was the second flag-raising ceremony at newly-built Camp Ostman. Camp was named for Seaman Edwin Ostman, missing in action.



DINNER IN THE MAKING. In order that Christmas might be as joyful an occasion as possible, the cooks and bakers worked untiringly, preparing the feast long anticipated. Turkeys, being prepared above, formed but

a part of the complete menu served at Christmas dinner. Working (left to right): Chief John Duarte, Lundquist, Rogers, Chief "Jack" Smeltzer, Short, Shoup, Kaczkowski and Goodrich.



JINGLE BELLS. Perhaps, the most gala 1943 Christmas Eve party in the Camp Ostman area was held in the 87th disbursing office. Bridging the traditional gulf existing between officers and enlisted personnel, "Gold Braid" and the mates pay homage to their priceless heritage of Yuletide.

Chief Carl W. Ruble, Lexington, Virginia (Santa Claus), leads all hands in a rafter-shaking chorus of JINGLE BELLS as Jack Jones, Cleveland, opens another package. Refreshments featured iced beer and "The Real McCoy!"

MATES CELEBRATE FIRST OVERSEAS CHRISTMAS IN JUNGLE

" 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house . . ." dirty water crawled over sloppy, foot-churned, black mud, then passed on into the next tent.

Rain dripped constantly from the canvas overhead, splattering upon shelter-half or poncho-covered cots and forming miniature pools. Oil-filled bottles emitted smoky and jerky flames from their twisted rag wicks. Clothing was wet, the bedding damp. It had been damp for weeks and was now beginning to smell.

Such was the battalion's first overseas Christmas Eve in the heart of the dreary, cheerless Stirling jungle.

For most, it was the first Christmas Eve away from home. The night held only one consolation—enemy bombers might not come over in the soupy weather. A few pre-arranged get-togethers were held in the more weatherproof tents. Several mates had even fashioned small Christmas trees from handy jungle growth, trimming them

with wrapping paper and tinsel string off packages from home.

Now and then, an old, familiar Christmas carol would begin somewhere. It faltered and broke after one or two verses. Something was lacking.

The parties didn't last long. A 12-hour work schedule left little time for parties, and Christmas Day was just another day of hard labor from dawn until dusk on unfinished Stirling Strip for most of the gang.

Still, a good many may not have fallen asleep at once. Perhaps, visions of past Christmas Eves appeared before them in the dismal night—visions of helping the wife with the tree and arranging presents for the family; of attending a gala Yuletide party with the girlfriend; of the many things a guy could be doing if he were home on Christmas Eve instead of in the depressing Solomons.

Luckily, no air alert sounded that night. The Japs did not come over. It was truly peaceful.



MERRY CHRISTMAS! Posed before a hastily improvised Christmas tree, appropriately decorated with tinsel and leaves from nearby eucalyptus trees, Comdr. Easterly and Lt. Comdr. Flynn receive a "MERRY CHRIST-

MAS TO ALL from "celebrating" cooks and bakers. Representing the galley staff in rear are (left to right): Arnold Shoup, Emmett June, Chief John Duarte and Matt Caffrey.



AFTERMATH. Torn and twisted cots on which men were sleeping, scattered seabags, mess gear, buckets, foot lockers, letters, etc., are all that remain of camp site in S Division where four men were killed during the all-night bombing raid of 12 January 1944. Chief Bos'n's Mate Ted Marienthal,

New York City, searches debris for items of personal effects to be sent to deceased men's "next of kin." Note shrapnel from bombs embedded in tree (left) and condition of tent.



DUDS! Chief John Porter exhibits four Jap two-pound anti-personnel bombs. Dropped from tree-level height, most enemy "eggs" had arming fins damaged by jungle branches during descent. Thirty-two were found in the camp area following morning.



SKYLIGHT. Serving as a grim reminder of the previous night's bombing, this jagged hole in the chow hall roof convinced all "doubters" that the enemy was playing for keeps. Russell Kanter peers through "skylight" created by Jap anti-personnel bomb.



THE MORNING AFTER. These sizeable mahogany and teakwood trees lay broken and splintered by a single Jap bomb. Having withstood the onslaught of many a tropical hurricane and typhoon, they were snapped like matchsticks by a 140-pounder. This was the

scene that greeted the eyes of the dazed 87th the morning following the all-out raid. The thought foremost in all minds was to thank God that this one had landed here, rather than on some mate's tent.

JAP BOMBS KILL 5, WOUND 34

From 27 October until several weeks following D-day of the Treasury-Bougainville campaign, Stirling absorbed a plastering equal to that received by any island in the South Pacific. Once the 90s were in place, the enemy was forced to keep at a high altitude, making their bombing generally inaccurate.

One night, 12 January, around 2030, Tojo's "Freight Train" came in again under an ideal full moon. All hands hit the dirt and the routine performance began all over again.

Radars picked up another flight when the first formation lumbered past, high above a withering flak curtain. Then, several more flights. Every searchlight on Mono and Stirling began sweeping overhead. It was unlike anything in the past. Previously, they would circle a bit, drop their "eggs" and depart. This was different.

At times, five or six twin-motored bombers remained in the light beams while other flights moved in. Radar-guided 90s, 40s and 20s criss-crossed the sky with tracers until it looked like a tangled mass of silvery spider-webs.

The grinding sound of power-dives and exploding bombs became deafening. Enemy fighters darted in at tree-top level, strafed, vanished—then tore in again.

Invasion rumors spread like wildfire. It was suspected that perhaps planes from Rabaul, Bougainville and possibly Truk were being supported by a large carrier force offshore somewhere. Without doubt, the Japs were staging what appeared to be an all-out effort.

There was no denying their reckless or fantastic courage that night. They sowed fields of thin metal slivers attached to tiny parachutes. These kites engaged the radar beams while other planes dove in to bomb and strafe. One Jap tailed a returning Mitchell. Rattling off fluent English over his radio, he switched on his lights and coasted in as if to land. At the strip's edge, his plane suddenly roared, spewed its bombs and sped away.

Another plane sneaked in during a lull in the firing. A string of explosions followed his glide over the 87th's part of Stirling before gun crews were even aware of his presence. Mob hysteria resulted. Frantic mates milled around in the darkness, yelling for missing buddies. Wounded men and shock cases stumbled along the roads. In S Division, officers and men tried desperately to restore order.

One or two bombs had struck the tents in which Eddie Burns, Blake Musselman, Art Nappen and Don Fitzgerald lived. All were killed instantly. The nearby New Zealand supply dump received a direct hit. Another bomb landed within three feet of the 87th Supply Office. One personnel bomb went through the battalion chow hall.

Several trucks carrying AA ammunition were knocked out by dive-bombers. Searchlights were out of action all over the island. Bombs caused damage in all conceivable places, since both Mono and Stirling were jam-packed with men and equipment.

The 87th Sick Bay was overcrowded. Casualties were admitted from the 11th Airdrome, CASU 8 and the 198th Field Artillery. Doctors and corpsmen worked unceasingly over the wounded.

Unexploded two-pound anti-personnel bombs were found scattered all over camp that night and the next morning. The densely interwoven branches and vines overhead were responsible for most of the duds.

Due to the exhaustive work program, the men had had little time for digging foxholes out of the solid coral, despite directives to that end on bulletin boards. Reveille at 0445 and remaining on the job until 1800 gave little time even for supper—to say nothing of washing, laundry and an occasional letter home.

The next morning, however, all but the most essential work parties were cancelled and the men were ordered to take time off for digging foxholes. The ditch-digger appeared and dug deep trenches between tents in some divisions. Logs were laid over the top of the excavations and sandbags piled on as further protection.

These precautions came none too soon as the "Bogies" were back in considerable force again that night, but these raids were comparatively short-lived.

However, the fanatical Nips pulled the first of a series of early-morning daylight sneaks on 14 January, and Roy Goldberg, working on a grease truck at the Strip, was killed by a hedge-hopping Jap, who bombed and strafed everything in his line of flight.

This was the fifth 87th death from enemy action within two days. And in addition to the fatalities, a total of 34 had been wounded as a result of the assaults. These, in time, received Purple Hearts.



BUDDIES. The brief boat trip from Stirling completed, truck containing flag-shrouded bodies finally reaches peaceful American-New Zealand cemetery, set back from the once blood-soaked sands of Falamai Beach, on Mono. Here, bodies are being carefully low-

ered to helmeted pallbearers, patiently waiting to carry their deceased buddies to hastily-dug graves. Battalion members would always remember this occasion as a most solemn one. For the first time, the war, which had once seemed so distant, had struck tragically home.

BOMB VICTIMS BURIED WITH FULL HONORS ON MONO

The hushed crowd moved outside and only four persons remained in the Recreation Hall. Each lay upon a cot, wrapped in a gray blanket—silent. It was 13 January 1944.

Twenty-four men entered, dressed in green coveralls and wearing steel helmets. They were the pallbearers, the dead men's closest friends.

A low command was given. Shipmates carried their friends outside to waiting trucks. Eight honor guards boarded the lead vehicle with the bodies and the others followed.

The line of trucks slowly weaved through an endless series of mud-wallows and holes in the bomb-pocked road. At Purple Beach, the trucks boarded LCMs and were ferried to the American and New Zealand burial grounds at Falamaia on Mono Island.

Protestant Chaplain Ernest T. Marble and Catholic Chaplain Cyril R. Kavanagh delivered the last rites of each man's faith. The services were short and simple, but there could not have been a more solemn or dignified occasion. Even the men's worn and faded clothing seemed to add dignity to the scene.

War's grim reality surrounded the onlookers. They seemed to grasp that life itself was somehow insignificant—that it was only the work ahead that mattered—and that only they who remained to finish the job could best appreciate the enormous contribution the fallen had made.

Intense tropical heat necessitated prompt interment. Coffins are not found in front-line battlezones. Times does not permit their construction.

The four shipmates were lowered into their graves as all hands stood at attention. Three sharp volleys broke the silence. Colors rose from half-mast to full staff. The sound of "Taps" and it was over. The funeral party thoughtfully turned back.

Suddenly, an air alert siren shrilly warned of approaching Jap planes, even before the LCMs could be loaded for the return trip. Instinctively, everyone scattered into nearby New Zealand foxholes.

The beach was deserted and the brooding jungle behind the rows and rows of white crosses continued watching in silence.



TAPS. No military funeral, even in the distant Treasury Islands, would have been complete without the peaceful sounding of "Taps." Two other servicemen were buried at the same time Burns, Fitzgerald, Musselman and Nappen were laid to rest.

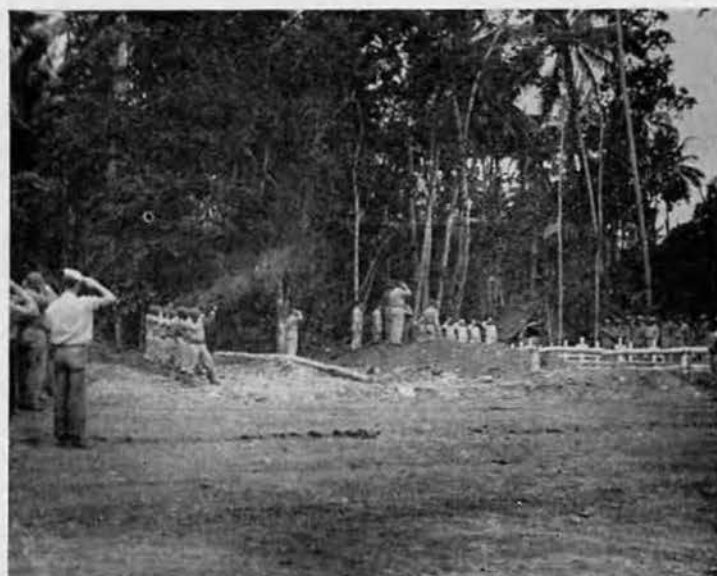


"WITH FULL MILITARY HONORS." While the Honor Guard stands at "Present Arms," and officers and men salute, pallbearers carry flag-covered bodies to graveside for burial with full military honors. Due to

intense jungle heat, it was imperative that funerals be held at the earliest possible moment. Ambulance accompanied procession as additional air raids were expected momentarily.



LAST RITES. Men stand with bowed heads as Lt.(jg) Ernest T. Marble, original battalion chaplain, solemnly conducts burial services for the 87th's first war casualties. This picture appears on page LI of the Seabee book, CAN DO.



SALUTE. The funeral ceremonies nearly over, all stand at attention as rifle squad fires resounding salute—a last tribute to the departed. American and New Zealand flags fly at half-mast and remained so until burial entourage had left Mono.



MAY THEY REST IN PEACE. This cemetery, with its thick, green jungle background, was constructed by American and New Zealand troops. White crosses mark graves of men who paid "the supreme price" during and

after the invasion. Here, battalion casualties are carefully lowered to their final resting places as flags are folded for return to camp and almost certain further use.



CORAL CHURCH. War's reality brought to many an increased devotion to their faith, whether Protestant, Catholic or Jewish. Chaplain's services were fairly well attended. Above, men have assembled in the Coral Church to hear the Gospel preached by a shipmate.



DIVINE SERVICES. In the incomplected benchless chapel, Chaplain Ernest T. Marble leads Protestant worshippers in hymn-singing. Chaplain's assistant, Norman Hill, accompanies on a GI organ. Battalion and ACORN men built chapel during off-duty hours.

CRUDE CHURCHES FOSTERED RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS

Thousands of miles from their native land, living under adverse conditions and faced with the grimer aspects of war, men in such forward areas as the Treasury Islands groped for some reminder of home with which to carry on and finish the job ahead. This sustenance was often found as many men turned with renewed faith and belief to their religion.

With the Japanese dug in on Shortland Islands—less than 14 miles from Stirling—a seven-day, around-the-clock work schedule was in effect for months as men worked feverishly to keep a step ahead of the Nips.

Nevertheless, Divine Services were conducted twice each Sunday in the battalion chow hall and armory for those men able to attend. Men of the Hebrew faith traveled each Saturday to a neighboring outfit to attend Jewish services, where, in the absence of a chaplain, they conducted their own services.

The necessity of completing Stirling Strip precluded a regular work

detail, so men rallied to build a chapel during off-duty hours. Under the guidance of Chaplain Cyril R. Kavanagh, then attached to ACORN 12, native lumber and other essential construction materials were procured and assembled. After five weeks of self-sacrificing effort, the mates viewed with pride the completed edifice.

Although the battalion's construction program eventually slackened, some men—due to their working hours—were still unable to attend Divine Services. Therefore, a church near the still unfinished strip was begun. Built in a natural coral cave, it was appropriately named Coral Church. Here, services were conducted by the enlisted personnel.

Chaplains of all faiths, whose primary responsibility was the welfare of the crew—especially keeping the mates spiritually "on the ball"—were perhaps, after all, mostly responsible for the serviceman's classic rejoinder: "Ah, take your troubles to the chaplain, mate!!"

CHURCH IN THE WILDWOOD. Chaplain Cyril R. Kavanagh, detached from ACORN 12 to the 87th, stands proudly in front of the completed chapel. Now equipped with benches, chapel's bulkheads are screened with camouflage netting. The roof is made of tarps.

FIRST EASTER OVERSEAS. With the coming of Easter, 1944, the unfamiliar absence of femininity in the strictly masculine congregation didn't detract from the significance of Easter tide at the front. At Easter Mass, Father Kavanagh again tells the beloved Easter story.





THE FIRST SHOW. A hastily-constructed platform, built on oil drums and covered with tarps, provided ample stage for the unit's first entertainment on Stirling. Men arrived from neighboring units carrying helmets and improvised chairs, packing this small clearing to hear the travelling New Zealand show. To right of stage, a tent serves as a dressing room for the performers' quick changes. Presentation consisted of comedy skits, impersonations and vocals backed up by the five-piece band.

NEW ZEALAND PRESENTS:

When the touring Kiwi Concert Party played at the 87th early in February, 1944, it was apparent that the tea-drinking forces from "Down Under" were also concerned about the morale of all Allied troops in the South Pacific. This group consisted of professionals from the New Zealand Army who entertained wherever such troops were stationed. It was a sort of USO arrangement.

The best performance of the Kiwi Concert—best described as a variety show—was not on the program. As the MC cleared his throat to launch the show with a little of the "Cherrie, Chappies," the air-raid siren began its doleful tune.

Before the lad could say, "God Save the King!"; he found himself gazing at a few hundred of his fellow countrymen and many empty home-made chairs, which Seabees had abandoned in their wild flight. The 87th had done it again! It had set a new island record for clearing a theatre area!!

Fortunately, the all-clear soon sounded and the men reappeared above ground to be further entertained.

No New Zealand show is complete without female impersonators. This show had two and they walked off with the evening's top laurels. If they weren't the real thing, the mates thought, they were certainly the best that could be had at the front.

The comedians were in fine form and assured themselves of a good hand by ribbing the officers unmercifully. A small, well-rehearsed band, competent vocalists and several sleight-of-hand artists completed the show. Although a bit different from the usual stage entertainment in the States, the Kiwi show had life and dash. And when the curtain went down, the crowd endorsed the performance by yelling for more.

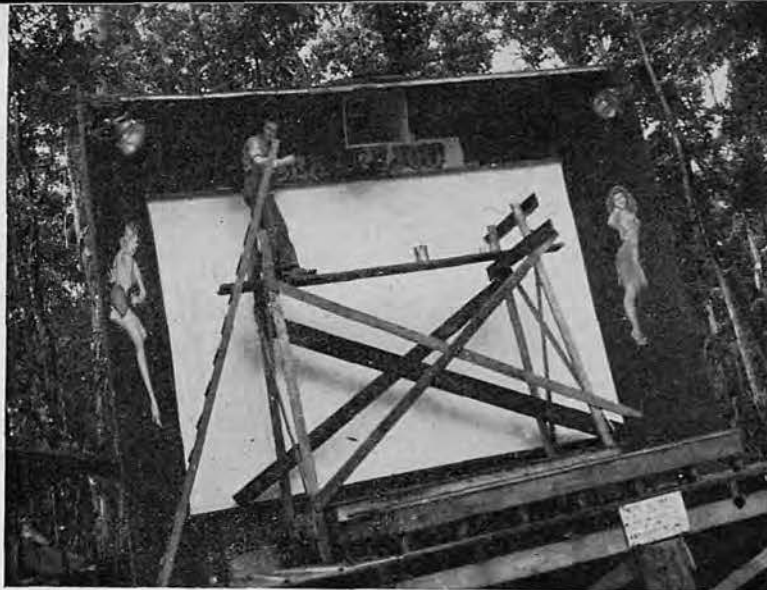
Another popular New Zealand presentation was the All-Brass Military Band of the 8th Brigade. Providing a mixture of martial music, semi-classical and popular selections, it was quite well received.

Treasury-based Kiwis often took part in the boxing and wrestling shows at the SEA BEEJOU theatre. Good sports, they time and again proved themselves rugged antagonists.

The Seabees owed many pleasant hours of relaxation and entertainment to these men of New Zealand—not to overlook a few cups of tea when they did the most good!



READING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: "MISS NEW ZEALAND." Lack of feminine talent proved no obstacle for the ingenious New Zealanders. Here, an impersonator of females performs convincingly before a whistling Seabee audience. Orchestra (in rear) is providing background syncopation for the hilarious song, "Oh, Walter!" **STUDY IN BRASS.** Upon another occasion the battalion was vigorously entertained by the Eighth New Zealand Brigade's All-Brass Band. For those of the 87th who appreciate good martial music, this was a night long to be remembered. This unit was quite versatile.



ARTIST. John W. Schaefer, Sunbury, Pennsylvania, talented battalion artist, pauses momentarily to pose with a pair of his "Schaefer Girls" painted on wings of cinema stage. The theatre's name, SEA BEEJOU, was selected in contest won by Chief John Porter.



THE HUB. The overall theatre area was easily the most used place of assembly in Camp Ostman. The mates often braved torrential downpours to see favorite Hollywood stars, many of whom they had fraternized with in faraway California. Camp life revolved about this spot.

SEA BEEJOU THEATER WAS CIVIC CENTER

The theatre area in any jungle encampment is always a civic center of sorts. All important activities were held here: movies, lectures, concerts, occasional USO shows and the proud nights when the battalion's citations and Purple Hearts were awarded.

Here, many spirited boxing and wrestling matches also took place, featuring Army, PT Base, New Zealand and Seabee athletic talent virtually every Saturday night. Few, if any, are likely to forget the wild, free-swinging "Battle of the Century" that uproarious night when "Zeke" Amato and Mike Kocian slugged it out for three hilarious rounds with the fracas ending in true story-book fashion.

The battalion's swing band often entertained here with their groovy renditions, frequently exciting audience members to impromptu jive exhibitions on stage.

Downpours rarely discouraged anyone. It rained all the time anyway. At least, one's time was his own at the movies. He could either sing to the bouncing ball, watch the cinema or go to sleep as he pleased.

And if perchance the evening's flicker was too odorous, one could usually pass time by gazing at target planes circling overhead, caught in the converging beams of powerful searchlights.

Far more important, however, was the daily short-wave newscast from San Francisco after evening chow. All hands would sit quietly—

sometimes a bit tensely when the Japs were jamming the air with static—and listen to some Stateside announcer beaming the happenings of the other world.

When newscasting ended, the mates would often remain, talking things over until showtime. And here, late at night, long after the show, men would congregate and listen to hot swing sessions radioed from Japan by that silken-voiced propagandist, "Tokyo Rose," on her "Zero Hour" program.

At that time, crude as it was and despite frequent sour additions of propaganda, her program was generally considered superior to most American broadcasts being beamed to the South Pacific.

Eventually, most work details fell into the habit of assembling here as it offered a resting place to those awaiting outbound trucks.

Second only to the sturdy back-rests on each SEA BEEJOU bench was John Schaefer's widely-discussed art work, which adorned all sides of the screen. Almost overnight, his artistic efforts were responsible for the pleasing appearance of three fetching female figures.

These enhancing additions seemed to stimulate mental entertainment and secretive speculation whenever mates arrived early and weren't in a scuttlebutting mood.

The ladies were a blonde, a brunette and a redhead—presumably to satisfy every man's imaginary preference!

JUMP TIME. The 87th Swing Band was responsible for a generous portion of the unit's entertainment, playing before movies and upon special occasions. Here, the orchestra hits a few hot licks as Bandleader Norman ("Bird-Legs") Grier listens (offstage) with a critical ear.



FIGHT NIGHT. No event drew larger crowds than "Fight Night," held virtually every Saturday evening. Directed by Ray Pursley, former Golden Gloves performer, battalion fighters and guests put on top-notch slugging matches to the delight of island enthusiasts.



OFFICERS COUNTRY ATTRACTED MANY ISLAND GUESTS



SET 'EM UP! The officers bar and lounge was the scene of many a pleasant festivity. In this cool, screened section of the wardroom, Baird ("Pop") Okey, Dayton, Iowa, regular bartender, "sets 'em up." Decorative "pin-up" girls add a refreshing touch as does the battalion plaque

OFFICERS COUNTRY. In the midst of these huge trees and on the edge of a coral-ash cliff, the Officers Mess was built. From the dining room, a magnificent view of the beautiful and historic Coral Sea could always be had. To the rear, a boardwalk, running left and right, connected of-

(top of radio), carved by Tom Davis and Armond Kirschbaum. Scenes over bar are shots from the battalion's various Stateside camps and overseas projects.

ficer tents, located at very edge of cliff, where they received full benefit of the sea-breeze. To right of picture, officers whiled away many off hours at volleyball.



SEABEE OFFICERS AND MEN PROVE KIPLING WRONG!



"EAST IS EAST, WEST IS WEST—and never the twain shall meet!" Again the traditional barrier between officers and enlisted men was relaxed after both "Gold Braid" and mates had received individual citations signed by Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey for heroic action during the Treas-

CITATION NIGHT. The outfit turned out in strength to pay homage to its cited officers and men the night of 1 March 1944. Battalion officers and guests are shown seated on stage, flanked by the three "Schaefer Girls" and the traditional American and Division flags. The unit's military band

ury-Bougainville operation. Such unusual fraternization proved Rudyard Kipling wrong—at least, in this instance! Left to right: Chief Shipfitter Tom Bailey, Lieut. Charles Turnbull, Comdr. Easterly, Ensign John Boyver and Aurelio Tassone, MM2c.

provided appropriate martial music for the ceremonies. The program was opened with prayer by ACORN Chaplain Cyril R. Kavanagh. Below, Comdr. Easterly reads a citation as audience listens intently.





LIEUT. CHARLES E. TURNBULL, Raleigh, North Carolina, Company A commander and cool OinC of the 87th's invasion forces, was the first of four to receive his citation. For conspicuous leadership under fire, Lieut. "Pete" was awarded a Commendation Ribbon.



ENSIGN JOHN R. BOYER, San Fernando Valley, California, OinC of the Soanatalu group, was other officer cited. For directing operations under fire, thereby assuring completion of vital radar installations, Ensign "Bo" was also awarded Commendation Ribbon.

"BULL" HALSEY CITES FOUR FOR INVASION BRAVERY

On the night of 1 March 1944—over four months after the successful Treasury-Bougainville operation of late October, 1943—public recognition was finally accorded by Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey, then Commander, South Pacific Area, to two officers and two enlisted men of the 87th Seabees, whose exemplary conduct under heavy enemy fire had brought much credit to their unit.

Fortunately, it was a perfect tropical night for such an auspicious occasion. It was safe to predict the Jap would not be over as he was much too occupied making his final Solomons stand in the Bougainville jungles to pay further heed to tiny Stirling.

As this was a new experience in the battalion's brief overseas life, it was only natural that a feeling of subdued excitement should pervade the packed theatre area that night long before the principals appeared. A sense of pride in mutual achievement resulted in an overflow crowd.

The stage of the SEA BEEJOU theatre was jammed with battalion officers and visiting dignitaries from the 21st Naval Construction Regiment and NOB.

From time to time during the waiting, high-ranking "Gold Braid" glanced somewhat self-consciously at the three shapely "Schaefer

Girls" forming an alluring backdrop for the 87th first night of recognition.

Finally, a fanfare heralded the arrival of Comdr. Easterly, accompanied by the officers and men to be honored.

The four battalion stalwarts were seated on the port side of the stage. As Skipper Easterly proudly read out the name of each individual cited, the recipient advanced to the center of the platform where he remained at rigid attention until the OinC had finished reading the special citation, verbatim.

Following a snappy exchange of salutes and a warm handclasp, the recipient received the cherished Halsey citation, and returned to his seat amid almost deafening applause.

Certainly, it was a most memorable occasion for Lieut. Charles E. Turnbull, Ens. John R. Boyyer, Chief Shipfitter Thomas J. Bailey and Machinist Mate, Second Class Aurelio Tassone. Tassone's award, the Silver Star, was destined to remain the highest award won by an enlisted member of the 87th through Okinawa.

Thus ended a glamorous night in the battalion's eventful life overseas—an occasion that was never equaled or duplicated.



THOMAS J. BAILEY, CSF, Chicago, was one of two enlisted men to receive individual citations. For skillfully reorganizing unloading details disrupted by enemy fire—thereby assuring availability of indispensable cargo—Chief Bailey won Citation Ribbon.



AURELIO TASSONE, MM2c, Milford, Mass., became the command's ranking hero when he was awarded the coveted Silver Star. This recognition stemmed from his destruction of an active enemy pillbox and burying its twelve occupants with a bulldozer on D-day.

WOLVES HOWL AS PATTY STEALS SHOW



THE ANSWER. The Bob Hope USO show, which played Stirling three performances on 4 August 1944, featured, in addition to the celebrated comedian, such topflight cinema and radio stars as Frances Langford, Jerry Colonna and Tony Romano. However, many eventful months after these headliners were all but forgotten, the mates still "drooled" whenever the name of a little, unknown tap-dancer, Patty Thomas, was mentioned. It was her twinkling toes and shapely legs that etched her obscure act into

their receptive minds for the duration—plus! Hope cracked wisely, Langford sang ever so fetchingly and Colonna "screeched" as previously advertised, but it was Patty's refreshing charms that made the men realize what they were really fighting and building for in the Pacific. Attired in a scant, black dance costume of postage-stamp proportions—excitedly trimmed in red—the little "heart thief" was inspiringly supported by the crack 93rd Division swing band.

ISLAND-HAPPY SEABEES APPLAUD HOPE TROUPE



STANDING ROOM ONLY. Typical of the huge crowds that gathered to attend USO camp shows is shown above where this immense open-air amphitheatre is packed to overflowing. This mammoth throng is witnessing the long-awaited Bob Hope show that played the Stirling circuit. Even the

movie booth is invaded as mates scramble to get the best seats. The 87th is well represented in the lower left corner by Lopez, Milman, Steadley, Caffrey and Van Hoozer.



SONGBIRD. Lovely Frances Langford, glamorous Hollywood star, gives out with the latest song hits, accompanied by Tony Romano on the guitar. She was first white woman the mates had seen in almost a year overseas. Her snood attracted attention.



A COUPLE OF MUGGS. Jerry Colonna and Bob Hope strike a special pose for THE EARTHMOVER cameraman. Dressed in plain khaki uniforms, this pair would be taken for ordinary GIs if it were not for their cinema-wise facial expressions.



THE SHOW GOES ON. Come rain or shine, this group of durable troupers carry on in the highest traditions of the show game. Although it's pouring rain, barefooted Frances Langford continues singing as Tony

Romano provides guitar accompaniment. The 93rd Division swing band has retreated to meager shelter of stage. Throughout torrential downpour, the entertainment-starved men held their seats to last performance.



THE SCREEC!!! Funnyman Jerry Colonna appeared to be in rare form the evening he entertained the Treasury Seabees. To make the show complete, Jerry gives out with one of the celebrated screeching introductions to a Colonna-styled song.



WITHOUT SCRIPT. Frances Langford and Bob Hope go into an unrehearsed gag routine with the songstress emerging the winner. Miss Langford's costume was a definite violation of Malaria Control regulations, but there are exceptions to all man-made rules!

AND THE RAINS CAME. Undaunted by the sudden rainstorm that threatened to wash out the afternoon performance, Jerry Colonna proceeds to take a showerbath under stream of water leaking through canvas tarp.

Such improvising causes even Tony Romano, his accompanist, to admire star's ingenuity. Officer behind Colonna appears to have been "sent," but is actually trying to solve the drainage problem.



JACK BENNY PRESENTS BEST U.S.O. SHOW OF TRIP



STARS. The Jack Benny cast poses and smiles for THE EARTHMOVER after providing best entertainment of battalion's long overseas tour. Left to right: June Brunner, accompanist; Martha Tilton, vocalist; Mastro Benny; Carole Landis, screen queen; and Larry Adler, harmonica wizard.



SKIPPER. Comdr. Easterly, skipper of the 87th, poses none too reluctantly with lovely, buxom Carole Landis, well-endowed "skipper" of the Jack Benny show. Glamorous Carole measured up to all expectations, appearing fully as magnetic off the screen as on.

DINNER GUESTS. The sure-fire performance completed, Jack Benny's troupe are wined and dined by the 198th Coast Artillery officers. Commanding General of the 93rd Division is at Miss Landis' left while Col. Donald Herron, 198th CO, is to her right. Two seats away, Mastro Benny

turns familiar profile to camera. Comdr. Easterly seems more than pleased just beyond June Brunner (left) as Larry Adler looks anything but happy as he leans on table. Martha Tilton, erstwhile Benny Goodman vocalist, also beams (right).



FINAL TRIBUTE PAID TO NAVY SECRETARY FRANK KNOX



IN MEMORIAM. May Day, 1944, brought shocking news of the sudden death of Secretary of Navy Frank Knox. The 87th takes a brief respite from its varied work program to assemble in the general administration area for a short memorial service for the fallen leader, Comdr.

Easterly (on platform at right with Lt. Comdr. Flynn and Chaplain Kavanagh) reads official death message from Acting Secretary James Forrestal. Note weird conglomeration of uniforms worn by mates after eight months in tropics.

"MISSEABEE" LAUNCHED AT ISLAND PT BASE



LOWER AWAY! The battalion's newly-acquired small boat, MISSEABEE, is launched at 87th-built PT Base. Boat was trucked to dockside where adequate launching facilities were available. This "life-saver" was "procured" from YOGL-42 in deal for a six-cylinder engine. In recondition-

ing ill-used craft, its keel had to be replaced as Tereido worms had eaten it badly. Ship's crew, composed of Chief Cedarstaff, "Jerry" Kadenbach and Rayden Hamilton, took mates on fishing trips and island tours.

UNIT WORKS AND PLAYS TO STAVE OFF BOREDOM



CHAMPS. Winners of the battalion's Inter-Division basketball tournament was S Division's "Murder, Inc." Standing between Captain Irving Milman (third from left, standing) and Coach Charlie Stauss, Skipper Easterly presents trophy.



"CATEYE, YANK?" Busy boats take on GI passengers for the short trip to Mono. Boats were used continuously and expedited traffic between Stirling and Mono. Noted for its fine cateyes, Mono proved a Mecca for souvenir-hunting Seabees.



THE DARING YOUNG MAN. Chief Ted Marienthal inspects flagpole he and crew erected in front of the mess hall. Having followed this work as a civilian, Marienthal was equally at ease aloft or on the ground. "Nothing to it, Mates!"



YE OLDE SWIMMING HOLE. During their few leisure hours, men raced to the dock area, seeking relief from the heat in the cool, crystal water. This spot was ideal for swimming as sharks and barracuda seldom came close to the shore.



KPs?? These CPOs haven't been assigned to KP duty; they are guests of Chief Owen Lawson (third from left). All chiefs had been invited to his french-fry in lieu of supper. Rendezvous for this gathering was the plumbing shop.



ARSENAL. Weapons in the well-appointed Armory were kept in tip-top condition by (left to right): James Kellar, Charles Welsey, Chief John Porter, Chief Carpenter Hugo Olsen and Edward Simons. Kellar inspects a machine-gun and Welsey a mortar.

JUNGLE LIFE EMBRACES A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING



HIGH COMMAND. Beyond movie area is an overall view of battalion administration offices. First long structure housed Post Office, Personnel and Disbursing. Tents further along accommodated: Labor Pool and MAA Offices; OinC and Exec headquarters; and the Supply Office.



"CLEANLINESS NEXT TO . . ." Through the courtesy of P Division, home-made showers were installed throughout the camp. Hot water wasn't altogether necessary as the torrid climate usually kept the water at a comfortable temperature. Good showers made for good morale.



SOAPFLAKES. The first Stirling laundry was unsuitably adjacent the main galley. The laundry was later moved to a more logical spot. Equipment, consisting of only several washing-machines, was supervised by Chief Ona Deroche, affectionately known as "Chief Rinso."



CITY HALL. Chief Yeomen John Knowles, Lauren Merriam and Herman ("P. A.") Pack (left to right) and Bill ("Esquire") Getz (not present) were unofficially known as "City Hall." "MichFlaOk" over foxhole represents Michigan, Florida, Ohio and Kentucky, their home states.



HOBBY. Lt. Comdr. Edward A. Flynn, art enthusiast and architect, takes time off from his multiple duties as executive officer to pursue hobby of painting and sketching. From a jagged cliff overlooking the sea, he finds many inspiring subjects.



TRADING POST. Vital to morale in the forward area was Ship's Store, which kept men supplied with toiletries, cigarettes, etc. "Mickey" Britvich (background) and Russ Evenson do business with their bosses, Chief John Ahaesy (left) and Lt.(jg) W. E. Mannix.



REPARATION. With peace eventually restored in the Treasuries, New Zealanders and Americans—as reparation for destroying the native church in exterminating the enemy—began building another church for their island friends. New edifice was erected on a beach in vicinity of former church site. Structure featured ornate windows

over the altar, a choir section, pulpit and a plush-covered chair for the pastor. The natives contributed their inherent skill in fashioning the thatched roof. Various other features were added later.

ALLIED-BUILT CHURCH FOR MONO NATIVES DEDICATED

Upon landing in the Treasury Islands in late October, 1943, Allied forces, including the formidable 87th contingent, were somewhat surprised not to find a pagan and barbarous people.

Many years before, the earlier natives had embraced the Christian faith, and much later one of their number, Timothy Piani, had been educated by New Zealand Methodist missionaries in the New Georgia Islands. He, in time, returned to his people and was still their spiritual leader at invasion time.

In the last phases of their desperate, losing battle, the Japanese had completely destroyed the ancient native church at Falamai Beach. The simple edifice disappeared when Jap ammunition stored under the church was touched off by the cornered Sons of Nippon.

Undaunted by the widespread chaos and loss of their entire village, the natives took up temporary residence in well-hidden caves and worshipped under open skies.

In appreciation of their efforts in aiding against the Jap, the Americans and New Zealanders partially expressed their gratitude by rebuilding the native church. The new structure was much larger than the original, with comfortable pews replacing the crude rows of logs.

The dedication was a colorful event. Conducting the services were two New Zealand ministers and the islanders' own Timothy Piani. The latter also led the native choir, which outdid itself in its beautiful, many-voiced choral renditions. In the congregation, staid, high-ranking Allied officers rubbed gold-crested shoulders with the shining ebony skin of the natives.

Each Sunday, thereafter, hundreds of servicemen gathered in this church to give thanks to the Almighty and spend a few minutes in quiet meditation.

The natives' inherent faith in God was thereby perhaps strengthened by an enhanced faith in the basic goodness of their white friends who had driven a ruthless invader from their peaceful jungle sanctuary.



DEDICATION. At initial service conducted jointly by two New Zealand chaplains and Timothy Piani, the native missionary, the new church was significantly dedicated to God's Glory and to New Zealanders and Americans who died securing the once Jap-held islands.



COMPETITORS. Attired in immaculate white apparel, Mono native choir, led by Missionary Timothy Piani, who was educated in the New Georgia Islands, sings inspiringly at dedication of new church. Their renditions were often compared to those of "Wings Over Jordan."



PASS IN REVIEW! On this 87th-built baseball diamond, the entire battalion lines up in impromptu company formation prior to passing in review before visiting Rear Admirals L. B. Combs and C. H. Cotter, Pacific representatives of the Bureau of Yards and Docks. The outfit's mili-

tary band (extreme right) is ready to step out at this point to pace the companies past the reviewers. Both dignitaries were obviously well pleased by what they saw and congratulated the unit through its OinC.

ADMIRALS REVIEW

BATTALION STEPS OUT OF CHARACTER TO PUT ON A SHOW FOR TOP "SEADOGS"

In the steaming tropics where the temperature seldom drops below 100 degrees, shirtsleeves were promptly cut off when they became a nuisance. Later, shirts were discarded altogether—then underwear. Dungarees were cut off at the knee; then, replaced with bathing trunks.

Tight-fitting white hats, which had been dyed blue or green before leaving California, afforded little protection against the glaring sunshine. Sun helmets, vizored caps or floppy New Zealand hats became the jungle vogue.

Work clothes soon wore out or fell apart from damp-rot. The mates had to wear what they had left or what could be procured. This included coveralls, undress whites, legless blues, plain drawers or New Zealand or Army uniforms.

Of course, the apparel was trimmed for comfort while working—job-comfort always came first! One day, bulletin boards informed all hands that the 87th would be reviewed by Rear Admirals L. B. Combs and C. H. Cotter from the Bureau of Yards and Docks. Uniform for the inspection would be dungarees, chambray shirts and white hats.

This order naturally resulted in quite serious complications. Dungarees were scarce; white hats almost non-existent on Stirling.

However, the prospect of seeing so much "gold" spurred everyone to scout neighboring Seabee camps, the PT base and even ships in the harbor for proper apparel. By and large, these scouting parties eventually reported success.

The battalion marched to the reviewing grounds, formed unit fronts and were thoroughly inspected. Upon returning to Camp Ostman, everyone, as expected, again donned their work duds and returned to their jobs.

Most cut the sleeves or trouser-legs off the new clothing, but others stowed theirs away—just in case another admiral showed up!

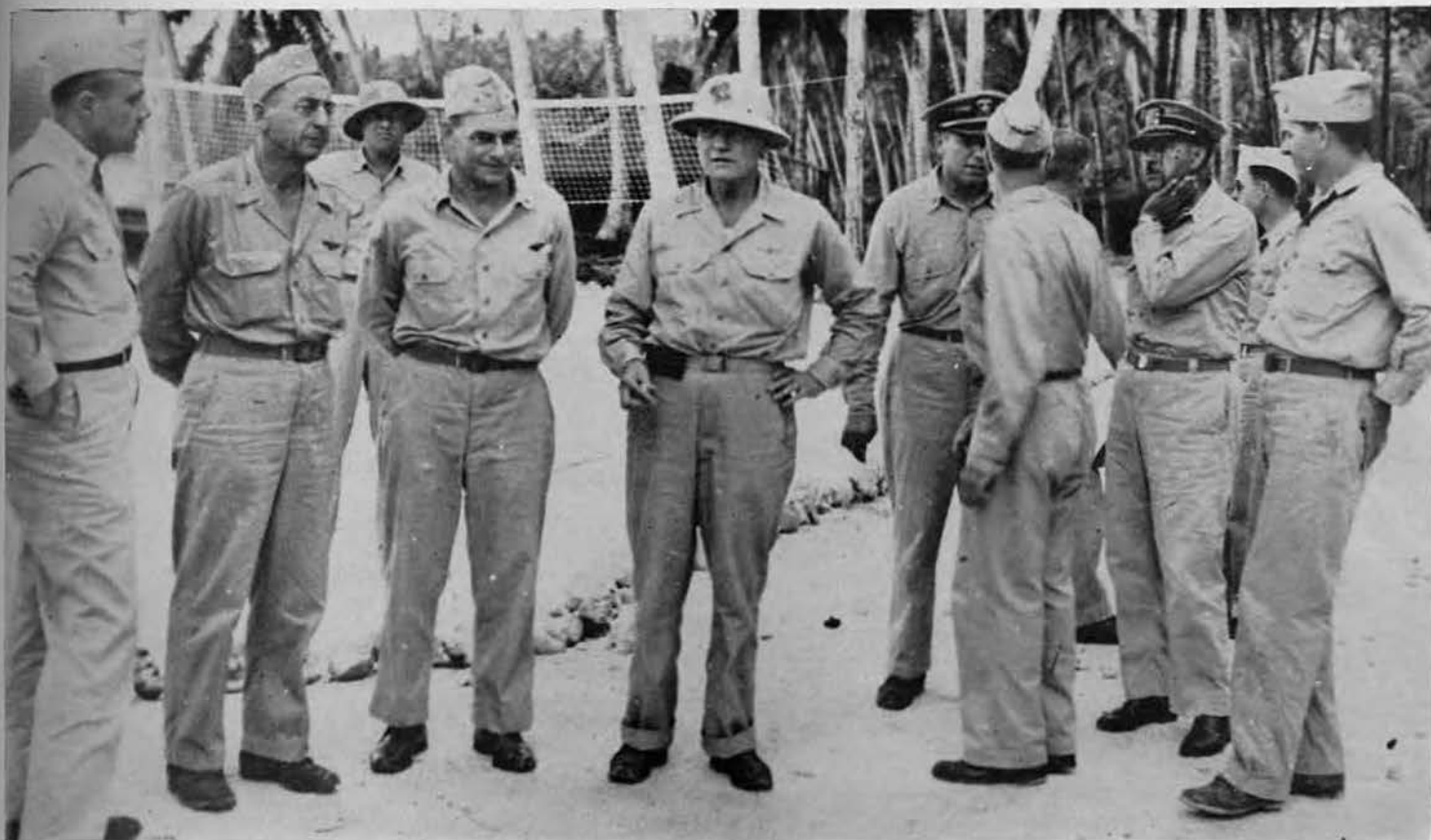


COLORS. Immediately preceding the first unit to march past the reviewing group were the color bearers and guards, proudly displaying the American and battalion flags. Left to right: John Schaefer, Ernest Lomatsch, Jr. (face hidden), Albert Printz and Vernon Woodcock.



AT EASE! The sweltering review over, anxious officers group around Rear Admiral Lewis B. Combs, Assistant Chief of BuDocks, for his opinion of the battalion, now 11 months overseas. Apparently officers dress was service cap and side arms.

"BULL" HALSEY INSPECTS TREASURIES ON LAST SOLOMONS TOUR



THE MAN. 26 May 1944 was a day to remember. It was on this occasion that Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey, then Commander of South Pacific Forces, made an inspection tour of the Treasuries. The Admiral confers with high-ranking Seabee officers prior to examining island in-

stallations and projects. This was his first and last visit to Stirling and Mono. Judging from his upturned trouser cuffs, the Admiral is obviously wearing untailored khaki. Comdr. Easterly rubs his jaw.



FOUR STARS. This informal study was snapped immediately after Admiral Halsey landed on Stirling. His private plane, a huge PBV, was heavily escorted throughout Northern Solomons tour. Highest ranking officer to visit islands, many Seabees never knew he was there.



"OKAY, BOYS." The inspection of Mono and Stirling completed, Admiral Halsey compliments officers and men on their accomplishments of the past seven months. Upon returning to Noumea from this flying trip, the Admiral assumed command of the famed Third Fleet.

BATTALION BRUSHES UP ON TACTICS WHILE AWAITING DELIVERANCE

The war in the Northern Solomons was over. Rabaul, Bougainville, Shortlands, Kavieng and Truk had been neutralized. The Treasury Islands had served their purpose. The few remaining work projects were cancelled.

For the first time in months, the mates had time on their hands. To forestall possible crack-ups from this enforced idleness, the Administration instituted a full program of military training in early July, 1944.

The schedule was as complete as climate, terrain and existing limited facilities would permit. It consisted of hikes, close-order drill and military lectures.

The program collapsed in late August when news filtered through that the 87th was being secured and would, at last, be delivered from the straight-jacket confines of microscopic Stirling where the battalion had been fenced in for ten months.

During the interim, however, close-order drill under arms was executed early each morning to avoid the intense tropical heat that never seemed to let up once the day got under way.

The hikes soon convinced the mates that they were sadly out of shape as fighting men, despite the hard labor they had put in on Stirling Field since the previous November.

Firing on the new battalion range, cleared out of the jungle behind S Division, usually comprised the afternoon program. The mates hauled out their trusty '03s and soon had the Armory busy keeping them supplied with targets.

Meanwhile, selected groups of special weapon men brushed up on mortar, machine-gun and anti-aircraft firing. The battalion medical officers covered Field Sanitation and First Aid in a few interesting lectures.

Proper positions and sling adjustments for rifle firing were reviewed for the mates by various 87th experts. Gas drills, including a testing of masks in the gas chamber, continued until all faulty equipment had been weeded out and all hands could don masks in the required time. An ordnance expert from NOB acquainted the crew



DOWN SHE GOES! Great emphasis was placed on mortar firing during July-August military training period. Here, Chief John Porter sets mortar as Norman Barnum prepares to drop deadly charge. Target is an oil drum floating well out to sea.

with the latest in Jap grenades, land-mines and booby-traps.

To the average Seabee—primarily interesting in construction—military training holds little allure. Yet, this particular program, coming when it did, probably kept many slightly "rock-happy" men from blowing their tops.



TIME OUT. A moment of relaxation occurs on the range as firing ceases and men gaze skyward at flight of P-38s headed for the Shortlands and Bougainville. Mates seated on coral have just finished firing and are standing by to watch mortars in action when firing is resumed. Ordnance

Chief John Porter sticks by mortar, as Chief Carpenter Hugo Olsen, Ordnance Officer (right foreground), stares at flight formation. Lieut. James Castanes (wearing dark glasses) stands slightly to right of mortar.



READY ON THE FIRING LINE? Of particular interest to all men overseas is a thorough knowledge of their '03 rifle, dubbed in training camps as "your best friend." Here, on the battalion's 90-yard range, Frank Mar-

tin and Robert Hardcastle (standing, left to right) coach in marksmanship. Red flag (to Martin's right) is popularly known as "Maggie's Drawers."



LINING HER UP! Chief John Porter lines up tripod with base stake of 60-mm. mortar as Ernest Green prepares to drop shell. Target is a coral island approximately 1,000 yards offshore. Chief Frank Thibodeau (next to

Browning .30 machine-gun), Jim Kellar and Eugene ("Snuffy") Smith surround the weapon. The rugged terrain shown here is typical of Stirling topography.



YOUR LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT! No military training program would have been complete without the old "one-two-three" of close-order drill. Marching along the highway in the cool morning shade of towering

jungle giants, S Division's four platoons stride toward supply dump that was the drill field. Chief Charlie ("Pappy") Moers (left flank, forward) counts cadence for leading platoon.

REPTILES PLENTIFUL, BUT ANIMALS WERE SCARCE



SMALL ONE. Monsters like this 30-inch iguana soon became a commonplace sight in the tropics. The irrepressible mates attempted to domesticate these giant lizards, but without success. Left to right: Richard Rehrig, Jr., George Tschudi and Chief John Porter.



FRUIT SLOTH (above) was only animal seen during a year in the Solomons. Sometimes called a "banana bear," this strange, little creature enjoyed hanging by its long, sleek tail from overhead objects like rafters, braces, etc. Sloth resembles the o'possum.



REPTILE AGE. Julius Bridges, Baytown, Texas, exhibits a superb 48-inch iguana—largest specimen seen on trip. Such monsters were harmless to humans, but a scourge to mosquitoes and other insect pests, which they trap with their lightning-forked tongue.



TIPPY, 7, was lone survivor of six battalion mascots leaving California in August, '43. She sweated out all the months, returning in December, '45 with two stars on her Asiatic-Pacific ribbon, Shellback certificate, complete service record—and the Victory Medal!



"LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!" Crews loading the U. S. S. NAOS required little pushing. The perspiring men well realized the sooner she was loaded the better. The 87th was long, long overdue anywhere else. Here, floodlights illuminate Stirling Dock as night crews turn-to with a

will. Two trucks and a low-boy trailer are being relieved of their cargo. Huge tarp (right) is already in place as it looks like rain and certain valuable cargo must be protected against elements.

87TH LOST NO TIME LOADING THEIR "MERCY SHIP"



EASY DOES IT. Silhouetted against the slate-colored Solomons sky, Eugene Goldie stands on truck-cab aboard the NAOS, directing boom operator in raising groaning cargo net. This type of net is capable of hoisting a maximum of 2,000 pounds.

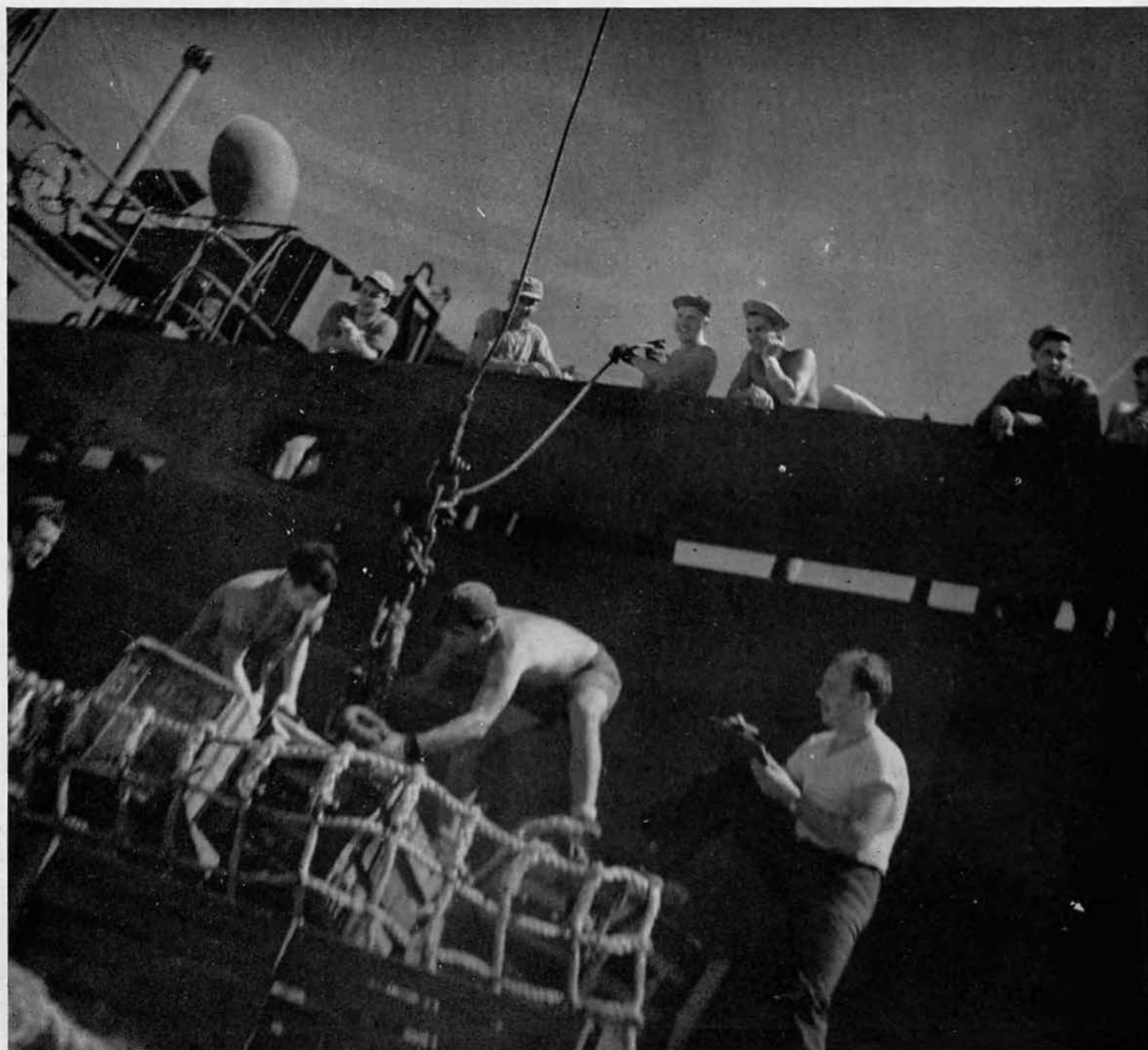


THE SAFE. Disbursing's heavy safe is one of the last major items to be loaded aboard the NAOS as the crew prepares to button up the hatches. Safe was stored near topside so as to be accessible for possible transfers. Lt.(jg) C. Schlotter should be nearby!



AK-105. Before climbing up the narrow gangplank of the U. S. S. NAOS, members of the 87th had never sailed on an AK-type ship. First, it had been the S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY (C-3) from Port Hueneme to Banika and then the lumbering LSTs to "Island X". Loading of the NAOS (above)

continues unabated as two Seabees give hand signals to winch operator and dock gang. Others (all along ship's rail) are awaiting the change of shifts before turning-to.



INVENTORY. Alexander ("The Baron") Lesch, SK2c (lower right), maintains close checklist on cargo being loaded aboard the NAOS as dockside operations near the peak of efficiency. Cargo nets were spread out in truck-bed before pallets were loaded at Supply dump. Men in this typical

stevedore scene are: (on truck, left to right): Joe Hebert, Albert Magniarinni, Ernest ("Partner") Bertoniere and Checker Lesch; (along the rail): Wallace Ohlstein, Mike Kocian, James Smith, Meredith Walls, "Bobo" Escobedo and James Stewart.



THE DAY! All set and ready to go, the Headquarters gang sweats it out while waiting for their farewell ride to Stirling Dock. Peter DeRyke (center) adjusts his gear while Chief Carl Ruble makes final check of division bulletin board.

ROCK-WEARY 87TH GLADLY LEAVES CAMP OSTMAN

Everyone in the first echelon—all but a rear detachment of 50 men and one officer—had been waiting for passenger trucks since daybreak. Most had packed the day before.

The Seabee method was to stack all personal gear and accumulated odds and ends on the tent deck. One seabag was filled from this pile. The rest helped a rubbish fire become larger.

Excited groups huddled around each Division office. Before this day—5 September—had ended, they would be far away from Stirling!

This meant no more petty details just to keep occupied; no more working to keep the ACORN comfortable; no more endless rain and trees falling in the camp area at night; no more "jiggers," fungus, earaches, ring-worm, enveloping rash or the many other diseases to which everyone living on Stirling had been exposed; and no more scorpions or giant centipedes crawling in one's sweat-drenched bedding!

Scuttlebutt said the battalion was bound for New Caledonia. Real civilization there with plenty of refreshments and white women; in fact, more than enough of everything the mates had dreamed of and done without for such a long, long time.

This was really the battalion's red-letter day. No one felt the least nostalgia about leaving. The men weren't even sore any more over cancellation of the first overseas anniversary party nine days earlier.



WHAT'S THE DELAY? "Tippy," durable battalion mascot, stands by wondering what could be detaining her shipmates. Except for a bad time on the COMET between California and Banika in '43, "The Old Lady" proved herself to be a good "WAVE."



TAKING IT EASY. With only "the duration and six months" ahead of them, Lawrence Wilburn (left) and Ira Loden nonchalantly await their last Stirling ride. Seabags bearing their E Division designation make somewhat better seats than the hard coral earth.

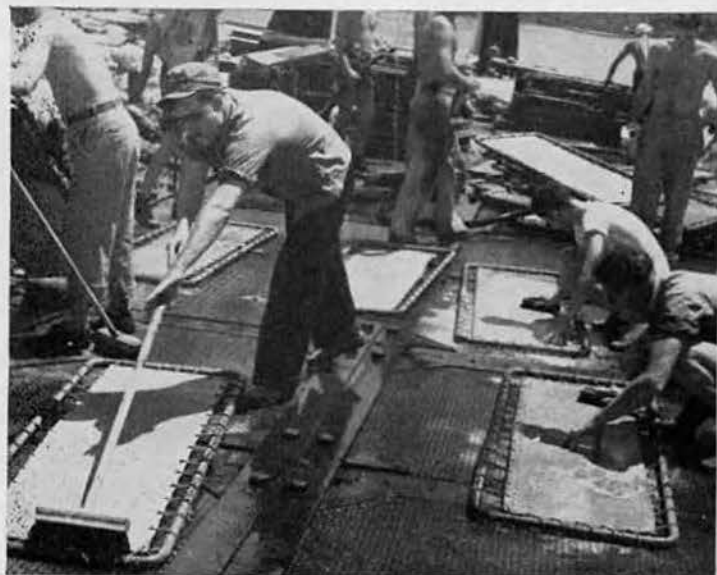


THE ARMY COMES THROUGH. GI trucks begin pouring into camp to commence job of transporting the Seabees dockside. E Division men climb aboard vehicle for the last mile as Chiefs Arthur McKinney (left) and Verne Franke supervise the loading.



WHEN A FELLOW NEEDS A FRIEND. Lugging a weighty, bulky seabag is no fun. Here, as still another division loads, mates assist one another in getting gear aboard truck. The ever-useful GI pails are quite in evidence. These were eventually left overseas.

MATES SCRUB DOWN "NAOS" BUNKS BEFORE EMBARKING



LAY ON! In its long months of Solomons duty, the NAOS had acquired a thick layer of grime and dirt. Bill Doster (left) gets in some back-breaking licks at a crusty bunk as STOREKEEPERS and YEOMEN scrub down, too! Few observers could believe their eyes!



SWABBIES. Ed Towey (left background) and Bernhardt ("The Lord") Nelson (left foreground) diligently scrub two grimy bunks. Dark glasses were worn as protection against glare and heat reflected by steel pontoon pier. This Sabbath detail was supervised by Chief Cedarstaff.



"DOWN TO THE SEA . . ." As the long, tedious morning slowly draws toward noon and departure, the lush, green jungles continue to disgorge trucks loaded with perspiring, but happy, mates about to leave Stirling forever. Early arrivals have lined up preparatory to boarding ship. Heat

from the glaring white coral pavement was terrific, so Chief Pharmacist Mate "Gene" Tunney (extreme right, in undershirt) and Bill Armstrong, Hospital Corpsman, stand by in case of heat prostration. Thus, the 87th left Stirling.

U. S. S. N A O S



STIRLING TO NEW CALEDONIA

VETERAN 87TH LEAVES STIRLING A SEASONED OUTFIT



BUCKET BRIGADE. T Division approaches gangplank of the NAOS. Tom Nanfra, "Crusty" Green and "Lippy" Lipshitz head long line. Green carries the beloved guitar he has lugged all the way from Camp Peary. Each man wore uniform of his choice.



WHITE HATS. A sure sign that the outfit is not heading for enemy territory are the sea-going white hats worn by most men for this move. The mates are traveling light as all non-essential gear has been left behind. The trash heaps would burn for days.



NO HANDS. Charlie Johnson and Willard ("Bill") Allen struggle toward ship with duffelbags while puffing farewell "stogies." Mailman Joe Cantrell (third from left) has his hands full without cigar handicap. Few will forget these soul-testing embarkations.



BON VOYAGE SMILE. Maurice Goodman, traveling light, mounts the NAOS gangplank. His unrestrained smile reflects how the men felt about finally leaving "The Rock." The ascension of a narrow ladder of this type was an unparalleled ordeal for most passengers.



AND STILL THEY COME. Three CPOs sweat it out (seated on piling, right foreground) as endless lines continue up accommodation ladder. While the 87th builders are still given credit for Stirling Dock, gone forever is the famed sign, "What's Up, Dock?"



ALL SECURE. Assurance of soon getting under way is guaranteed when Comdr. Easterly, last to come aboard, salutes the quarterdeck and the Officer of the Deck. The NAOS is now ready to sail. Lieut. Reilly and crew remain behind.



CAST OFF! Relieved men sit in bow of the NAOS and watch ship move slowly away from the dock as lines are hauled in. Chief Bill Inness (foreground) calmly smokes cigar as installations, on which his carpenter crew worked many long, hard hours, gradually recede.

Small island with lone spindling tree (left foreground) was a popular cataye hunting ground. Many necklaces and bracelets currently worn in the States originated at this spot. The Bees took the departure in stride.

BATTALION SURVIVES THE NAOS TO ESCAPE TROPICS

Veterans of the early Solomons campaign will doubtless relate many tall tales for years to come. Even so, anything the 87th may say concerning the U. S. S. NAOS, a tramp Naval transport, will not be a product of imagination. She was something that should happen only to Japs—or worse!

The NAOS had just discharged a cargo of troops at nearby Bougainville, and had then picked up the 18th Naval Construction Regiment in the Admiralties. She had next sailed south in search of the 87th, marooned on Stirling for the past 11 months.

This somewhat weird itinerary made the Treasuries a mere port of call—an evacuation point—not a point of embarkation. The jungle-wasted mates, however, were not interested in technicalities. In their tropical-baked minds, the dirty NAOS was their "Dream Boat," a means of escape from the disease-ridden Northern Solomons back to a temperate "Promised Land."

They glanced at the grimy bulkheads in sleeping compartments, examined the tattered canvas on bunks and concluded that the NAOS was not "a happy ship." Bluntly speaking, she was dirty as a hog-pen!

On 5 September, when the vessel finally put to sea, the ship's rail supported men who cursed the Treasuries with their every breath until they were completely out of sight, but "The Rock" would never be erased from their seared memories.

However, it was only a short time until most of these same men were woefully clutching the rail, giving "Old Man Ocean" their all. The weather became progressively worse and all hands knew it would be the worst voyage of all. At times, the tiny armed escorts were barely discernable as they wallowed in the boiling Coral Sea.

The journey got off on the wrong foot and never regained stride. The starboard passageway was barred to all passengers. This resulted in permanent congestion and endless traffic jams in the port passage.

Moreover, all chowlines formed on the port side. Those craving food had to present a chow-chit and a life-preserver at the confused mess hatch. It was a sort of combined entrance fee. Neither was good without the other. Food was rigidly rationed in No. 2 hold, which boasted tables for all, but seats for only the chosen.

The place smelled of garbage, even when overhead hatches were tardily removed to permit a semblance of ventilation. The endless se-

ries of squalls further added to the general discomfort. Many men became deathly seasick for the first time since leaving the States.

The noon meal—the NAOS "Blueplate Special"—cannot be ignored in a chronicle of this long-remember exodus. It was, in fact, a creation! The first course was a watery soup—unidentified! The final course was either corn-starch or canned fruit. There was never a middle course. No seconds either. And no more chits until the next chow call.

Drinking water throughout the trip was lukewarm. Volunteer Seabees with reefer know-how were not permitted to fix the cooling system. Neither was anyone allowed in the restricted passageway where ship's company drank ice water.

Opinion was unanimous that never in its checkered history had the 87th taken such a terrific, all-around drubbing aboard a single vessel with such a sustained smile. But the "rock-happy" veterans apparently didn't care too much. Every turn of the screw was bringing them closer to "The Land of Milk and Honey"—peaceful New Caledonia.

To preserve their sanity, the men tossed cards, plowed through innumerable books or speculated about coming events.

The sure-fire topic of all conversation was the first liberty just around the corner after over a year with little time off.

Everyone, it seemed, began airing private opinions regarding life's bare, neglected necessities. These essentials, it appeared, would come out of a fancy bottle or out of a fancy—in a fancy dress anyway!

An unrestrained roar was heard all over the grimy transport as the picturesque Noumea lighthouse hove into sight. The men were sorely disappointed when the ship was unexpectedly diverted from Noumea and continued on to Monte D'Or where the hook was dropped 10 September. The 1,280-mile trip back to New Cal. was completed in five days.

All hands stood by to shove off for the beach next morning—all except one: John F. Phillips, Carpenter's Mate, First Class, had died quietly of a heart attack aboard ship the previous night.

Coming at the eleventh hour, the "CHAOS" had been a formidable obstacle, but in its unseemly way it had fulfilled its ignoble destiny.



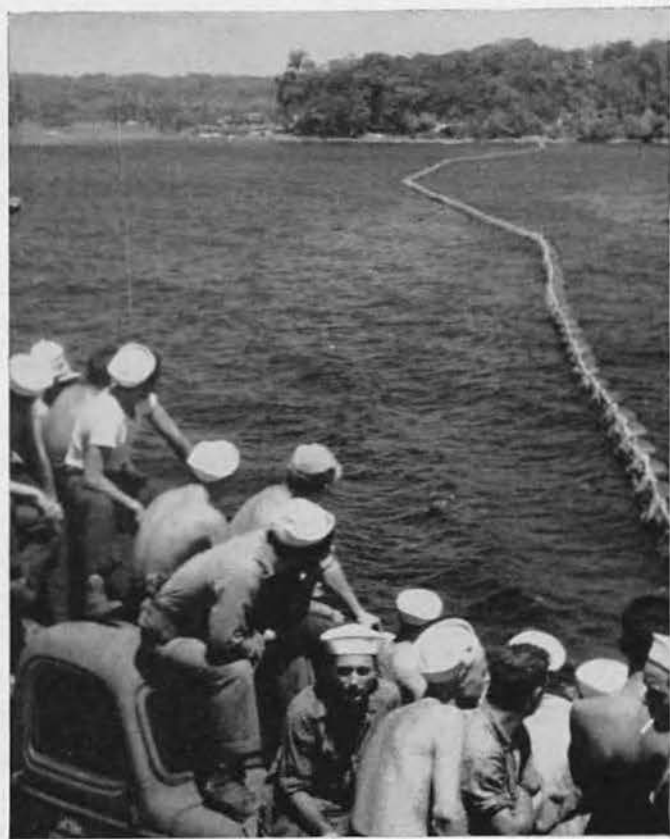
LAY BELOW. Troops enter hatch to stow gear below. Bunk numbers were assigned men before leaving Camp Ostman. Division MAAs—below with compartment diagrams—helped passengers find berths. Each man had scrubbed his bunk (or someone else's!) ashore.



UNDER WAY. Stirling Dock lies directly astern as the NAOS heads to sea. Crew signalmen (top right) blink farewell message to shore before leaving harbor. This portion of Stirling was where 87th camp was pitched for almost a year.



OUTWARD BOUND. Men perch atop trucks and crowd rail for a last look. Howard Sansom has lifebelt already inflated to test its effectiveness. Gear-wheel emblem on truck door was the 87th's equipment "trade mark." Equipment was parked everywhere topside.



SUB NET, stretched from Stirling across to Mono, protected harbor and PT Base from enemy raiders. Seaplane tenders and PBYS, as well as sizeable warcraft, also found sanctuary inside its protective rim. Skillful navigation was required upon passing net opening.



DECK CARGO. Routine shipboard life begins as the NAOS hits open sea. Marvin Klaes (standing, center), 5 Division MAA, searches for prospective "volunteers" for KP duty. Trucks are well lashed to iron decks in event of anticipated rough weather.



MISSEABEE UNDER WRAPS. Pride and joy of the 87th fleet—freshly painted and overhauled—the MISSEABEE takes her first long voyage under other than her own power. The NAOS was hardly under way before the old, familiar card games started.



CHOW CHITS. Headquarters lines up for first chow aboard ship. Joe Hudson, division MAA, distributes chits. Due to unappetizing food and the added discomfort of standing while eating, these chits were an unnecessary precaution against overeating.



STAFF OF LIFE. Not having eaten since dawn of embarkation day, passengers chow down with a vengeance. Here, a baker doles out bread. "Boarder" in foreground juggles tray, canteen cup and lifejacket while searching for a place to park his gear.



READING ROOM. Jim Carpenter, Theodore Gambert and Willie Crouch (left foreground) have suddenly come into possession of some choice "lib."



TOPSIDE. Group atop truck loaded with tents finds ideal spot to play without being annoyed by "kibitzers." Dejected character (lower right).



WELCOME HAVEN. Relief from the trying trip is, at last, in sight as New Caledonia appears on distant horizon. Observer on ship's boom studies one of many treacherous reefs, which make Noumea harbor perhaps the world's most difficult to navigate, especially in bad weather.



BACK HOME. The harbor lighthouse and its scenic little island were well remembered from the battalion's first brief stop at Noumea in September, 1943. New Caledonia's mild, temperate climate felt cool after the tropics and some have already donned jackets.



MONTE D'OR. The NAOS anchors as mates attempt to pick out landmarks. Towering mountains looked heavenly to the ocean-tossed Seabees. Quonset hut camp (left center) was jestingly selected by many as most ideal camp site. When this guess surprisingly proved to be correct, few

could believe the outfit's sudden change of fortune. English translation of Monte D'Or is "Mountain of Gold," but the Earthmovers found no precious metal here in 4½ months of casual searching for legendary mineral deposits.



AWAY THE GIG! Comdr. Easterly and party go ashore in MISSEABEE to make funeral arrangements for Jack Phillips, CM1c, who died the previous night—the tenth fatality since Camp Peary. Battalion was ordered to occupy 40th Seabees recently vacated camp.



SHIP TO SHORE. The NAOS rides peacefully in Monte D'Or harbor as another large pontoon barge of land-hungry Bees come ashore the morning of 11 September. Alert bargeman (extreme right) prepares to heave line as crowded barge nears pier. Men could hardly wait.



BEACHHEAD. Cooperative mates crouch low as ponderous barge nears pier so coxswain may correctly judge his approach. On a large barge like this, a man is usually stationed forward to give hand signals to the coxswain. Pictures of this type were accorded preference by the editors, be-

cause it was one way of getting a maximum number of battalion personnel into these pages. This candid shot was a staff favorite because it was judged an excellent close-up of many Stirling veterans.



OPERATIONS RESUMED. Lieut. Ray Pape, noticeably refreshed by two weeks in Australia, was on hand bright and early to supervise unloading. Here, he directs Chief Al Broomfield and his R Division crew to a truck. Outfit shows unmistakable evidence of wear.



PUSH 'EM UP! Frank Mordente takes duffelbags from shipmates and hurls them into truck. Needless to add, men will have no little problem locating them later. New camp, only partially completed by 40th, is only short drive from here. There was work ahead.

RETURN TO "THE PROMISED LAND"



STRIKERS ARRIVE. Obviously determined to "ignore" the camera, Augustine Borelli, "boogie-woogie bugle boy," smiles as he takes up his burden and heads for truck. The tool of his trade may be seen suspended from his neck. Jack ("Josh") Kenning, the battalion's Gene Krupa, precedes the "young man with a horn." Ira Thomas, Richard ("Mail Call") Rogers and Roland Janson (behind) prepare to hoist gear and follow. Prominent division marking on bag was solution to knotty sorting problem.



RICE CULTIVATION
(A New Caledonia Water Color)

NEW CALEDONIA



MONTE D'OR—NOUMEA—BOURAIL



LOST AND FOUND. Establishing a new camp was an old story for the far-ranging 87th. In spite of this, duffelbags, rifles and pails were lost and found a dozen times before the battalion settled down for its first night ashore.



FARE LIMIT. Trucks filled with tired, dirty Seabees shuttled madly between dock and camp all day long. For the first time in all its moves, the battalion had a camp of sorts waiting to be moved into right away. Debris was everywhere.



SOUVENIRS A LA CARTE. Souvenirs, the weakness of all Seabees, appeared in camp as if by magic with their local Javanese vendors. Lt. (jg) A. L. Davis and some mates examine a few choice items on their way to chow. Purchases were made on spot.



UNACCUSTOMED AS WE WERE . . . ! Many rare sights presented themselves at Monte D'Or, but none was more unusual than Chiefs Competello, Sowers and Ruble tittivating their own quonset deck. The collective reputation of CPOs was never the same after this!



TIME OUT. Lieut. Bertsell Henning was a tired man at the end of the first day. As camp officer, he shouldered the mammoth task of housing, bedding and feeding the entire battalion.



TENT CITY. The new camp was far from being all quonsets. Two divisions, S and T, settled on ground floor of the familiar pyramids until such time



THE LINE-UP. The cooks outdid themselves the first day in camp. Much to everyone's surprise, dinner was ready and waiting even before the men arrived. With a huge quonset already set up, it was only a matter of hours until the outfit was eating in a comfort-

able mess hall serving 500 men at each sitting. Enterprising Javanese souvenir vendor (left foreground) peddles his wares to mates waiting in long line. Note nearness of mountains to camp site.

TRIP'S BEST DUTY FOUND AT NEW CALEDONIA

Not until the men had arrived at Monte D'Or did the strained expression leave their faces. After the tropics, the long, rolling hills, green pastures and tiny villages of New Caledonia were like a fairyland.

Scuttlebutt, moreover, pointed strongly toward home. Life was suddenly bright, and for the first time since leaving the States, the men felt a new freedom, which was quickly perceived in their jaunty bearing.

At first, it seemed that everything on their new island was perfect. The climate, for example, was ideal. Blankets again came into use after a year's storage. Fresh eggs, purchased at nearby farms, were fried by the dozen in ingenious utensils.

Tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and other vegetables graced each hut's table. Life was going to be full to the brim during the "rest period."

However, before the men could become adjusted to the new climate, work projects began rolling in from everywhere. Apparently, all units—from Island Command down—had been waiting for the 87th.

Battalion welders were dispatched by plane to Espirito Santo to repair damaged ships. Bullgangs left for ABCD; others to live with the CBMUs near town. Carpenters rushed off to Noumea to work on TRADE WINDS and the theatre. Cement crews were pushing wheelbarrows at the Officers Receiving Station Club and at the Base CPO Club. Riggers strained and sweated pulling down seaplane hangers at Ile Nou.

Practically all of T Division left for the farway mountains of Bourail to do a futile road job. The few who remained at Monte D'Or strained their backs storing the vast quantity of supplies that poured in continuously. All of this in some mysterious way constituted the fabulous "rest period."

However, one bright spot shone through all the storm-clouds. After a prolonged waiting period, the battalion was finally rationed its long overdue liberty in Noumea. The result of this pent-up frustration was vividly recorded in the Provost Marshall's log of that first hectic day. The 87th "Gestapo" had a field day retrieving the liberty-happy mates. "The Battle of Noumea" was the talk for weeks.

After another prolonged probation period, the battalion resumed liberties. This time a bit more reserve was noticed. The "Black Maria" made only four trips to town!

Almost every quonset at Monte D'Or blossomed out with a black-market radio and many thrilled to the titanic struggle between the

Cardinals and Brownies for the World Series championship. FDR's election to a fourth term was received by radio. Summaries were found in the SOUTH PACIFIC DAILY NEWS, Chief Carl Ruble and Photographer Edmund Jaskulski commenced work on the battalion trip book (THE EARTHMOVER) on 19 December. The second overseas Christmas came and passed almost unnoticed except for packages from home.

To the more sober-minded, the liberty city of Noumea was indeed a pleasant return to civilization. Wearing cool whites and shiny black shoes, the men strutted about town, whistling with equal abandon at the amazing conglomeration of white, black, brown and olive women. In this heady backwash of civilization, anything seemed permissible, and everything—no matter how strange—seemed logical. It was astonishingly simple to fall into the pattern of the easy-going metropolis.

The street scenes resembled a lavish bazaar. The town was filled with snooty French colonials; graceful, sarong-clad Javanese; broad-beamed, barefooted Kanakas; and tiny, servile Chinese. Mixing with these were the armed forces of all Allied nations: Americans, British, French, Dutch, New Zealanders and Australians. It all added up to a most picturesque and colorful melting pot.

Activities in town, generally speaking, were restricted to three basic points of interest. First, there were the gaudy souvenirs sold by all stores—even the Army's deluxe Super-PX! Next in popularity was liquor. At half a dollar a shot, it was guaranteed to deliver the KO punch in three short gulps!

The final and, of course, ultimate attraction was women. Here, the chase was perhaps a bit more difficult, but it was nevertheless pursued with bloodhound tenacity born of long enforced abstinence. In the end, however, the men could always find consolation in the long lines at "The Pink House."

Liberty soon fell into a definite pattern. Names such as the NORMANDIE, SEBASTAPOL and CHICAGO BAR eventually became by-words. The initial curiosity was slowly giving way to monotonous restlessness toward the end. The men knew that only a change of scenery could erase that strangely familiar feeling. News of another forward move, at least, guaranteed something different.

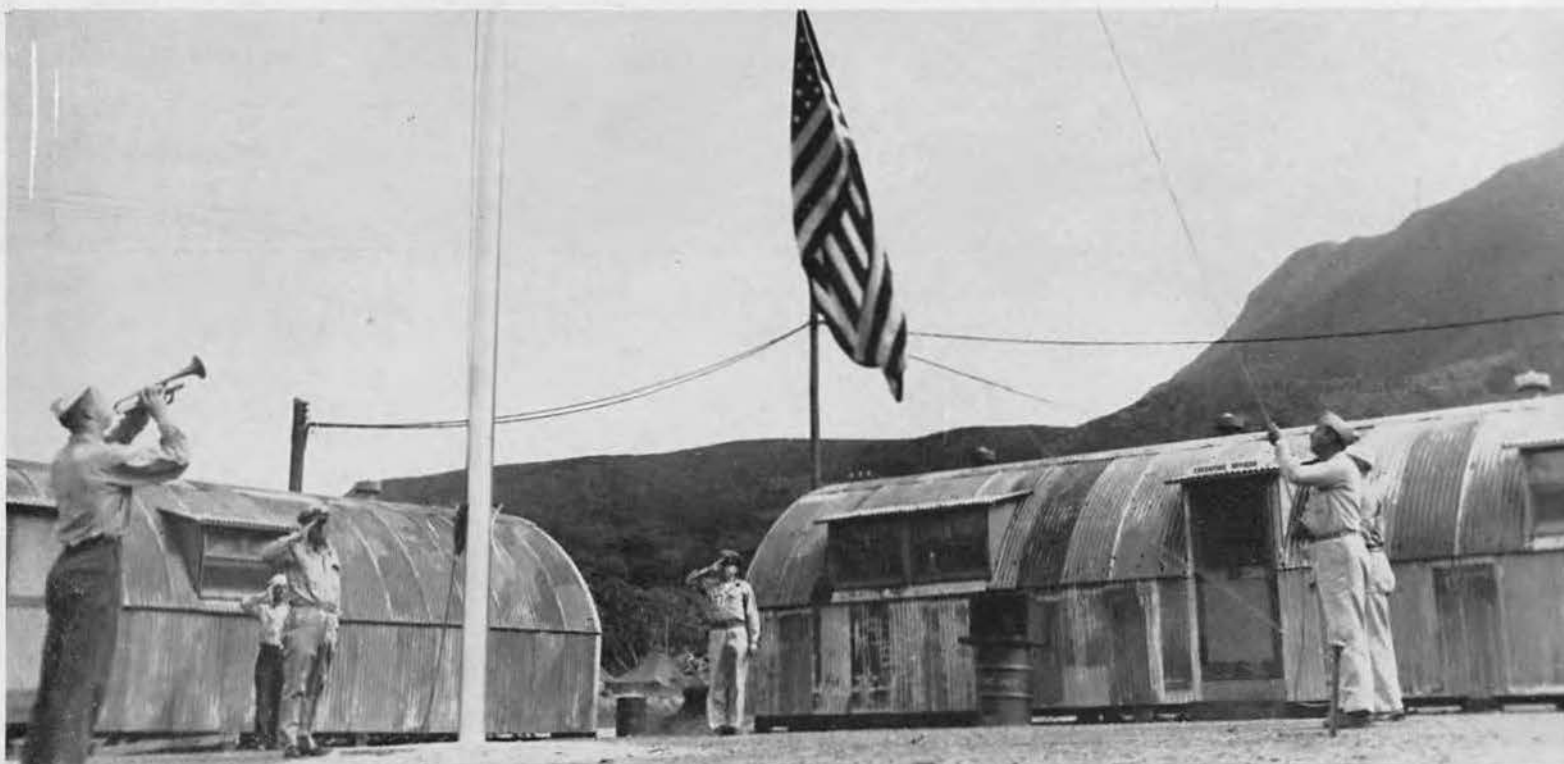
However, the 87th never again encountered such a delightful land as New Caledonia—the only place most of the men would consider revisiting in later years.



ASSEMBLY LINE. Four quonsets every eight hours was the record set by the four carpenter crews of 10 men each. Here, Chief Sam Beacom stands by as the arches are being hoisted into place on the steel-ribbed foundation.



SEABEE HIVES. It was only a matter of days until almost everyone was comfortably settled under metal roofs. Located on a sharp slope, the rows were first terraced to keep the huts on an even keel. Officers Country is in background.



COLORS Comdr. Easterly raises the first flag at Monte D'Or to the call of "Colors" by Bugler T. W. ("Junior") Berry. Standing at attention (left to right) are: Harry Lavery (nearest left quonset), Chief Carpenter

Hugo O'sen and Chief R. J. ("Pappy") Holt, Jr. O.O.D. Set up in the administration area, the flagpole stood 70 feet above its base and was a landmark for all wayward Seabees for miles around.



MOUNTAIN OF GOLD. Monte D'Or loomed ominously over camp with its deep creases formed by ravines and gullies. Toward evening, its rusty face softened with a brilliant golden hue as it reflected last rays of sun set.



SPORTS CENTER. In time, the camp sported a super-highway, a baseball field, and basketball and handball courts. By far the finest camp on the island. It was little wonder men held their breath each time scuttlebutt



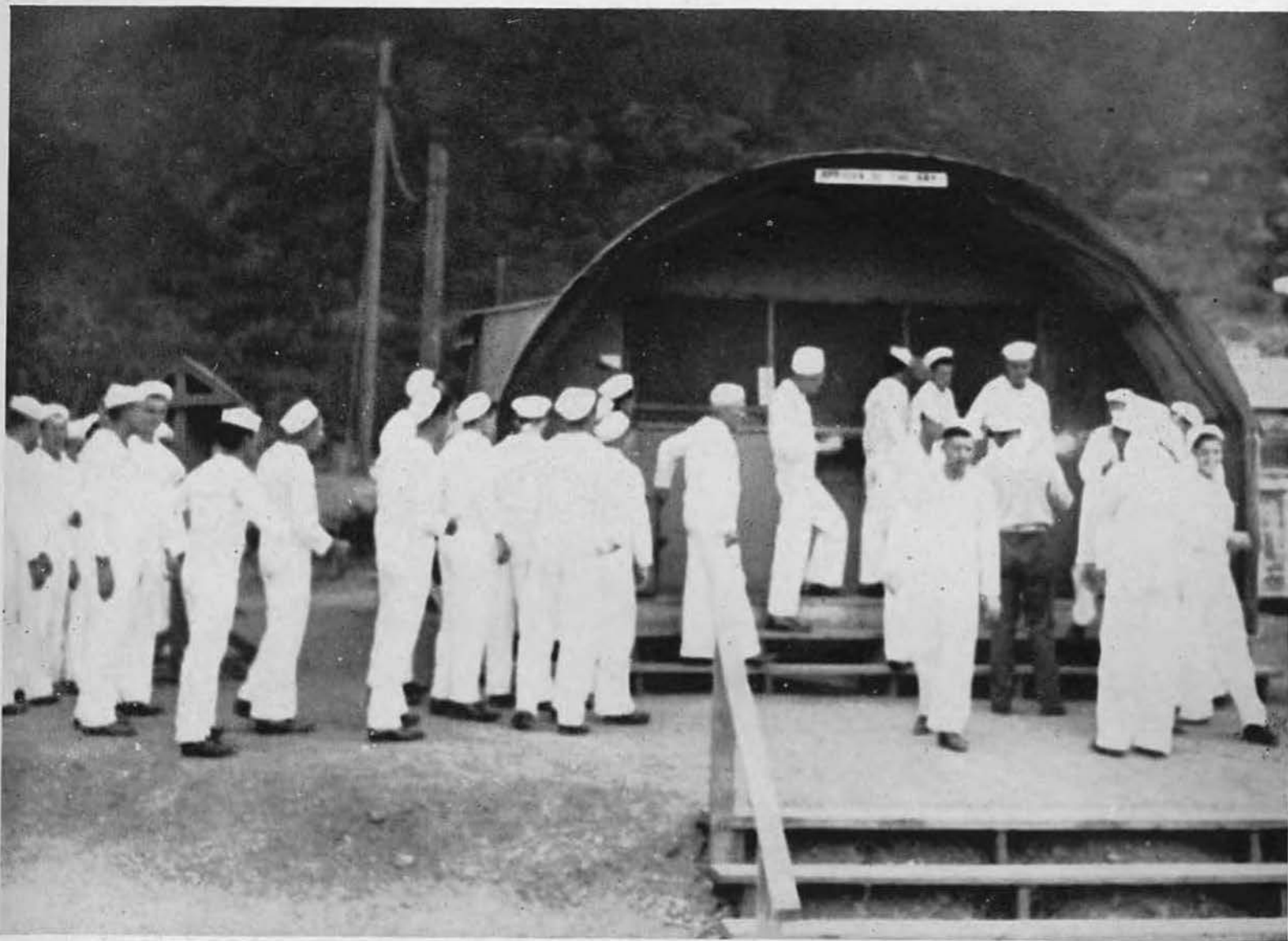
A PRIZE IN EVERY PACKAGE. The Post Office was a beehive of activity whenever "surface" mail arrived by ship. The hundreds of packages—containing items ranging from Stateside whiskey to radios—invariably called for extra help. Chief Mailman Donald Arthur never forgot the

division clerks upon such occasions. Above group, with CPO "Art" wielding the whip, includes (left to right): Inglis, Lundquist, Berry, Thompson, the Chief, Siefker, Printz, Karas, Newkirk, Schmidt, an unidentified clerk and Cantrell. These were Christmas packages.

BUNDLES FROM THE OLD COUNTRY. Morale rose and fell proportionately to the amount of incoming mail. No men were more aware of this than the three postal clerks—past masters at reassuring anxious mates concerning lack of mail. When the bulky sacks (often watersoaked) did pour

in, Chief Arthur (left), Wallace Berry, (top of pile) and Joe ("Private Tussie") Cantrell were right in there pitching for THE EARTHMOVER photographer, but "Art" always made sure division clerks did the work.





LIBERTY AHEAD. Spotless whites and polished shoes were the order of the day for a liberty card at the OOD Office. From 1300 to 2000, the boisterous 87th had its daily fling in Noumea—come rain, heat or high winds! After its first liberty (rightly termed "The Invasion of Noumea"),

the gang settled down to weekly visits devoted mainly to souvenir-hunting in Chinese shops, New Zealand beer at TRADE WINDS, and potent rotgut in the town's dives.



LIBERTY BUSES. Only point in favor of 87th liberty buses was they carried the men to Noumea and somehow got them back. The roughest drive in any man's experience, the ordeal was comparable to the toughest commando course.



LIBERTY HOUNDS. Jampacked in sardine fashion—21 to each truck—the unfettered men figuratively closed their eyes to the bumps picked up by converted dump-trucks and paid their weekly visit to the capital city for pleasures long denied.



STORM WARNING. With a hearty heave-to, a supply dump bullgang spreads a tarp over huge rolls of new wire in face of an approaching storm. Supplying the grunts and sweat are: Chris Condon, Walt Czerwinski, Ralph Chaney and James Little.



SUPPLY TEAM. Management of entire supply dump rested on above group. Combining brains and brawn, these men were tops in efficiency and hard work. Front row: Ponder, Beams, Simon; back row: Peterson, Sakowitz, Chief Hall, Hunt and Britvich.



QUONSETS BY THE CARLOAD. Supplies poured into the supply dump in never-ending streams, always a sure-fire indication the unit was getting set for another forward move and another big job. Little did the unloading crew realize that these same quonsets would be their future Sick

Bay, mess hall and office buildings at the Jap fortress-base of Okinawa. The crew: Tommy Lowe, Walter Hurley, Al Blasso, Roy Lergen, Martin MacDonald, Jimmy Quinlan and Maurice Goodman.



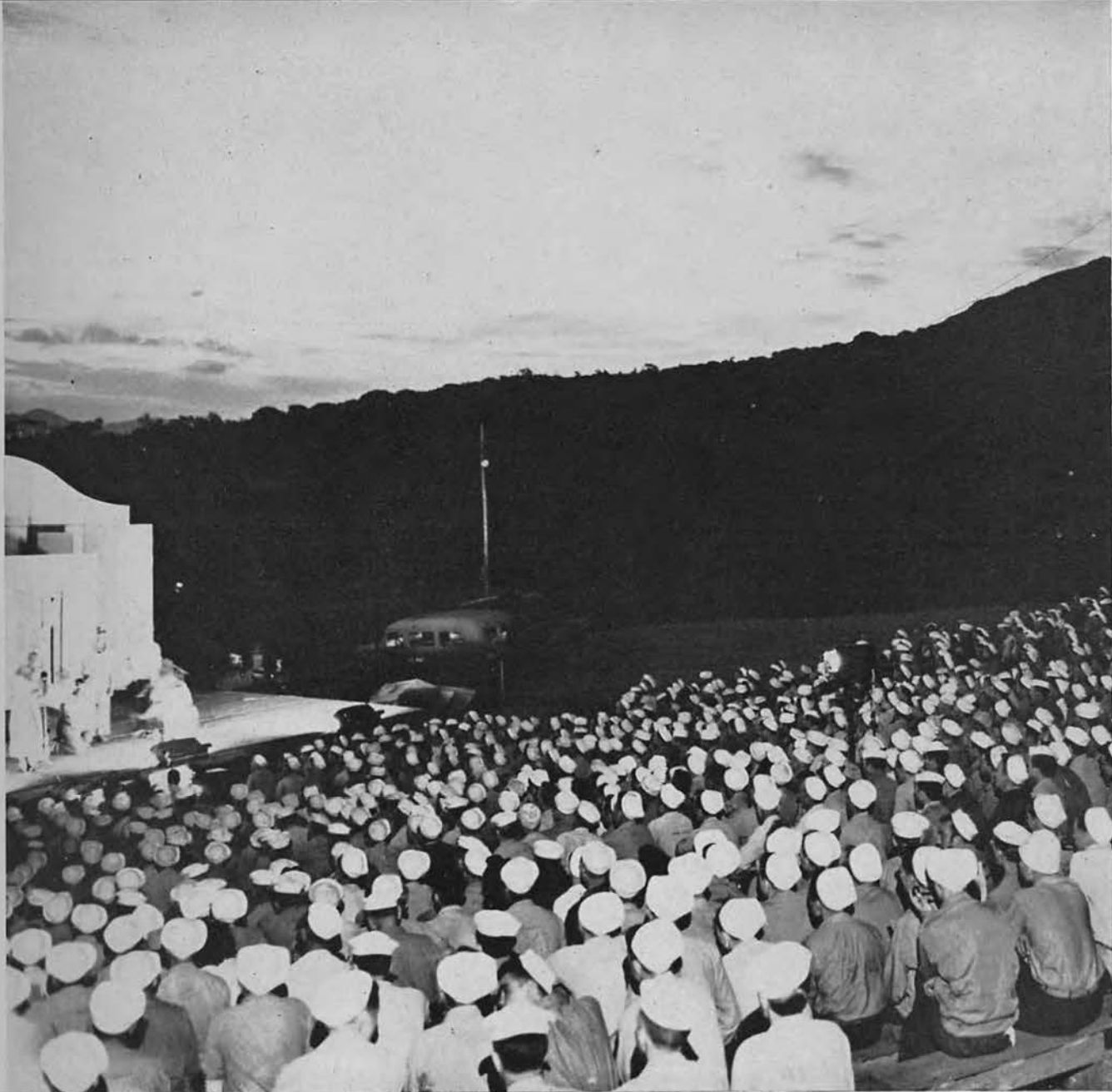
WHAT'S YOURS, MATE? The Ship's Store was no place to pass the time of day. From the moment the blinds were lifted until the last minute before closing, a steady flow of customers plied Chief John Ahaesy and John ("Fats") Spence with purchases of drygoods, drugs, toilet articles and

soft beverages. Due to the energy of "The Big Pink Chief," stock was always varied and the supply ample. Occasionally a few dated magazines were on sale.



GET YOUR CHITS HERE, MEN! No assignment was too large or too small for Suppy. Here could be obtained a chit for anything from shoelaces to D-8 dozer blades. With its best foot forward, this group procured and distributed approximately a million dollars worth of supplies and equip-

ment in outfitting the Earthmovers. Above group (left to right) includes: Chief Elmer Isaacs, Barrett Sumrell, Lt.(jg) Grover J. Daly, Jr. (Supply Officer), Chief Ahaesy, Al Lesch and George Pritchard.

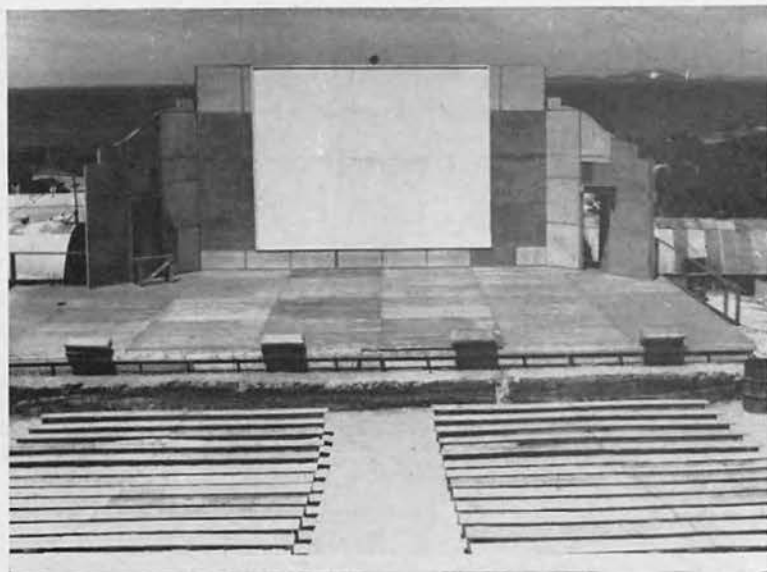


WHAT! NO MICKEY MOUSE? Movies every night and an occasional stage show made the outdoor theatre the most popular spot at Monte D'Or. Situated high above camp, it provided an ideal view of the harbor, Noumea peninsula and the craggy mountains beyond. Highlight of the

stage shows was the USO production of the popular George Gershwin folk opera, **PORGY AND BESS**, with an all-Negro cast, starring John Garth, III and Frances Brock, both well known on Broadway.



FLICKERS. The addition of two new 35-mm. projectors—guaranteeing full shows without interruptions—enhanced the stock of the movie booth gang with the man, Comdr. Easterly observes workmanship as Chief Carson Rhyne, John Roche and Dale Gillings thread film.



CAPACITY, PLUS! The stage of the battalion's mountainside theatre would have—if necessary—accommodated approximately one-fourth of the men aboard. Mates contended such unusual capacity was second only to the mammoth stage of Radio City Music Hall.



THE HILL. Igloo-like Dallas huts, small quonsets and a choice location established Officers Country at Monte D'Or as a snug, comfortable community. Erected long after the crew camp was completed, it was never-

theless the scene of many gay social affairs—thanks to the patronage of neighboring Army nurses and Red Cross workers. The panoramic view from here was very fine.



TOP OF THE HEAP. Comdr. Easterly and Lt. Comdr. Flynn occupied the three-room quonsets shown on upper terrace. The breath-taking view from this highest level surpassed all others in the area. Equipped with run-

ning water and individual showers—in fact, what amounted to Stateside bathrooms—this lay-out was indeed a far cry from the rugged jungle existence.



NOB HILL. Recreation for officers was largely made up of volleyball on a hard-packed court (right foreground) and almost perpetual Bridge games in the well-appointed, T-shaped officers mess hall (left). Commonly known

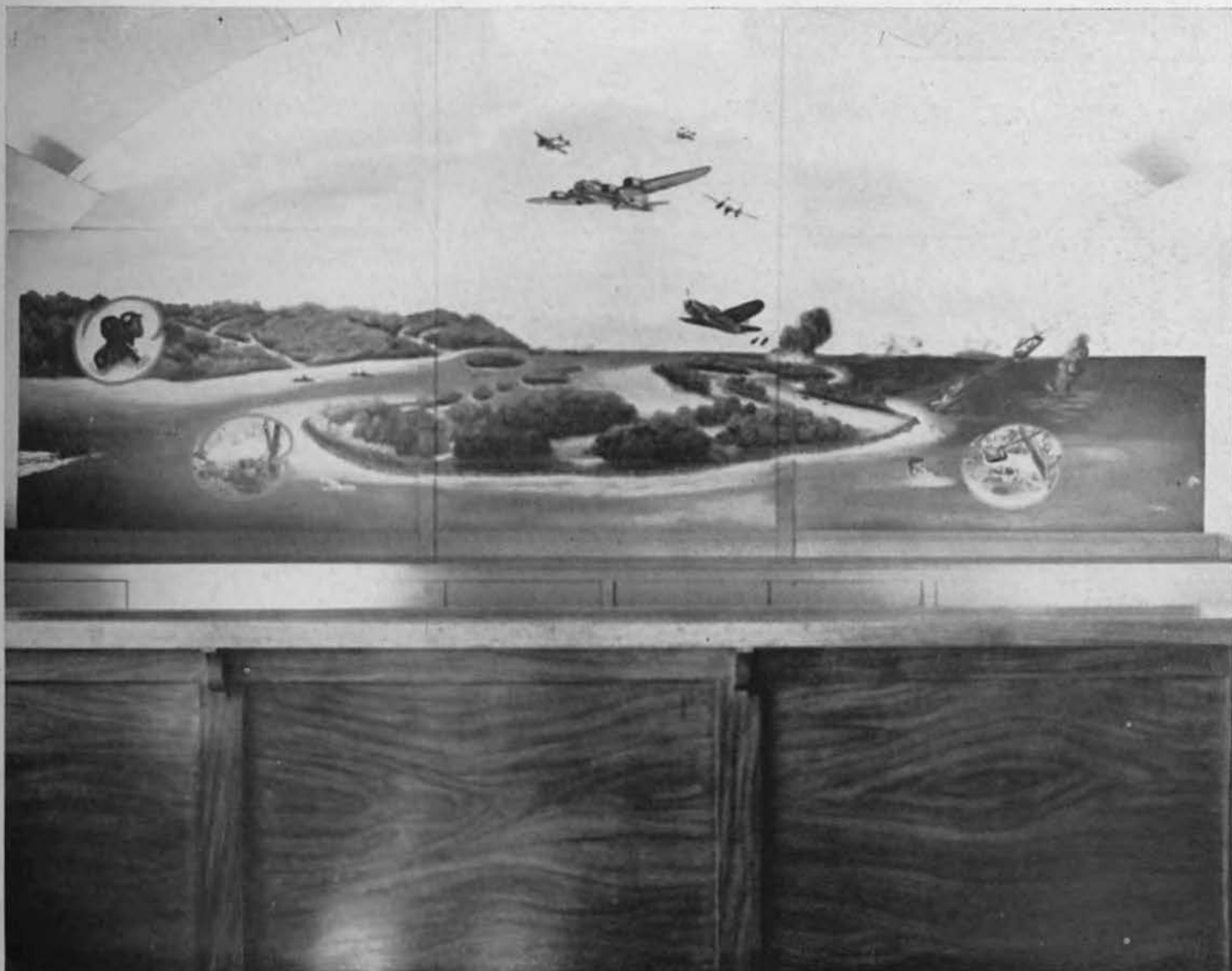
among the mates as "Nob Hill," comparatively few enlisted men ever scaled these heights. The crew chow hall is the large quonset at right.



LOUNGE. Designed with simple, good taste, the lounge of the officers mess was an ideal spot for a quiet evening of Bridge or a bit of music. Indirect lighting and ample window space added considerably to its airiness.



DINING HALL. Ship's Cooks Merlin Monroe and Louis Pacheco were the caterers at officers mess. Individually engraved napkin rings of silver-plated brass tubing added a touch of luxury. Officers were seated at table according to rank.



REMINDER OF THINGS PAST. Covering the entire end wall of the bar in the officers mess, this splendid mural by Artist John Schaefer was a vivid portrayal of old times in the Treasuries. Done in well-blended oils, it portrayed the many familiar sights and incidents, which made battalion

history in 1943-44: B-25s, P-38s, enemy planes bombing Camp Ostman, the Tassone episode (lower left) and the bombardments of the Shortlands (right background). All blend into a highly dramatic pictorial scene.



TAKE IT OFF! Eye-filling Hollywood pin-ups of all shapes, sizes and contours warmed the barren walls of many quonsets. Vic Schultz (in his corner) displays a keen appreciation of feminine anatomy in his choice of sweater-girl glamour.



GENUINE SEABEE. Alten Storts goes the ordinary Seabee one better by being the first Seabee-hivekeeper in the Pacific. His apiary boasted three hives of seven combs each. These netted him ample honey for daily breakfast of hot cakes.



MUSCLE MEN. Doffing their gold and khaki, four officers display their "Superman" torsos as a ringing challenge to all comers. Strenuous exercise, both in the field and on the volleyball court, kept these "Braid" in superb physical condition—a shining example of vigorous, rugged Sea-

bee leadership. Left to right: Dr. E. L. Zorn, Lieut. Ray Pape, Chief Carpenter Carl Mitchell and Carpenter Joseph Stewart. (Though hoary with all the earmarks of the typical gag shot, THE EARTHMOVER editors liked this.)



"... FOUR, YOUR LEFT ..." Military training again took over. Close-order drill, long-distance hikes and extended order first blistered, then toughened, soft feet and reduced many extended waistlines. Here P and R Divisions drag out last hundred yards.



SPOTLESS. Eli Pifer and Dave Ehrich "pass in review" before brand-new jeeps lined up in T Division shop area. Operators had to be broken in by the dozen to take care of new equipment, which rolled in during reoutfitting. Moving time was near.



AND DON'T FORGET YOUR CHOW CHIT! Like all Navy outfits, the 87th learned to stand patiently in line early in the game. By far the longest and hottest was noon chow-line. This line-up snaked half-way down to T Division long before doors of the enormous mess hall opened. After

the cornwilly and spam diet of the Treasuries, the men could never get enough of the fresh meat, eggs and vegetables that were served daily at Monte D'Or.



RESCUE. The camp area of CBMU 519 was directly in the path of a raging forest fire, so the 87th received a call for help. The Earthmovers responded by dispatching trailer-loads of volunteer fire-fighters. The camp was saved after hours of effort.



CHARGE! Lieut. Ben Markette gives direction to Jimmy McLlland, 'dozer operator, cutting fire-break through dense mountainside brush. Men stationed along trail eventually got fire under control with shovels and axes. However, two miles of dry oak timber burned.



DEDICATION. And then one Sunday, 17 December, the battalion had its own chapel. A simple structure, molded around the clean lines of a quonset; it had the solemn beauty and restful atmosphere of the true house of worship. Men's response was an overflowing congregation—irrefutable

testimony of their real religious spirit and God-fearing nature. The 87th's third chaplain, Lieut. Marvin Sielken, introduced Captain H. M. Peterson, Senior South Pacific Chaplain, who, as guest of honor, delivered dedicatory sermon.



CHOIR. Originated by Chaplain Sielken, the choir was soon turned over to Ens. Donald Porath, who did a fine job of directing it during chapel services. Chief "Jack" Ormiston is at portable organ. Front row (left to right): Chaplain Sielken, Elsie King, Orville Swanstrom, Harry Bell, Jack

Jones, Gideon Bucuren, George Scherer, Clyde Hunt and Ens. Porath; (rear row): William Weber, Albert Printz, Jack Thomas, James Little, Swen Helge, Edmund Jaskulski, Paul Stache, John McGill and Emmett King.

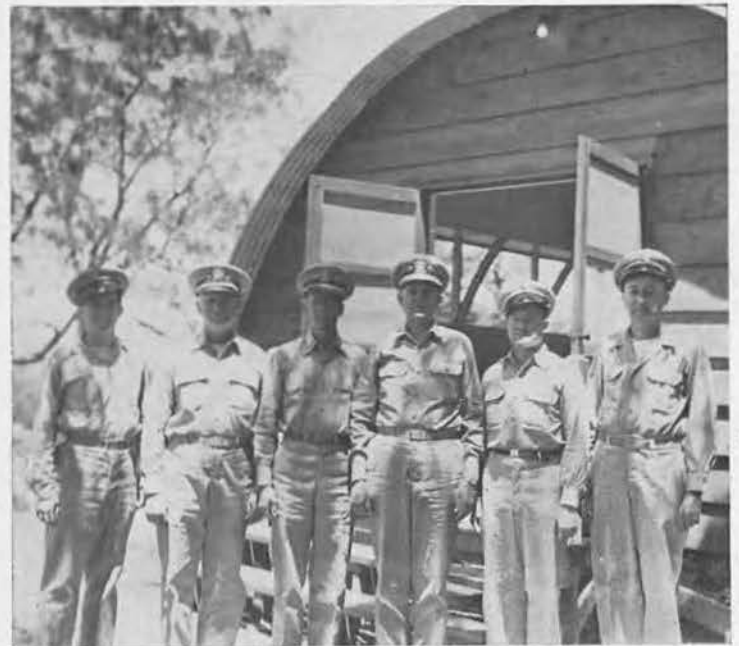


DAY OF REST. Set in an abundance of wide-spreading oak, pine and sweet-smelling lemon trees, the chapel was a restful haven for body and soul. Climax of its religious activities was the candlelight service on Christmas Eve—a fitting commemoration of the 87th's second Christmas

overseas. It was the third consecutive Yuletide away from home for some who were in boot training at Camp Peary in December, 1942. Scrubbed and washed mates are seen leaving chapel after services.



MEN OF GOD. Chaplain Kofflin (left), 78th Battalion "padre," and Chaplain Sielken stand on either side of painting, "Christ at Gethsemane," above chapel altar. Artist John Schaefer executed this inspirational painting in oils. He was invaluable to unit throughout trip.



KEEPERS OF THE FAITH. Senior Chaplain Peterson often jeoped the 18 bumpy miles from Noumea to Monte D'Or to address an 87th congregation. Left to right: Chief Lauren Merriam, Chaplain Schwake, Chaplain Sielken, Capt. Peterson, Chiefs Herman Pack and "Jack" Ormiston.



WEDDING BELLS. Many braved a thunderous rainstorm the evening of 22 January to see Lt. (jg) John Robert Boyver take as his bride pretty Second Lieut. Martha Jane Arrowsmith, ANC. Performed in the chapel, it was the battalion's outstanding social function.



HERE COMES THE BRIDE! The happy bride and groom are shown striding down the aisle once the ceremony is over. A portion of the wedding assembly have already departed for the movie, *MRS. PARKINGTON*. Some men still wear their parka hoods.



MR AND MRS. The bride (from Scio, Ohio) had been 29 consecutive months overseas when she met Lt. Boyver, formerly a mining engineer, at a 109th Station Hospital Thanksgiving party in fall of '44. The attractive bride holds her corsage.



ENTOURAGE. Bridal party included Comdr. Easterly; Lt. and Mrs. Boyver; Col. Jenkins, MOinC, 109th Hospital, who gave bride away; Capt. McIntyre, head 109th nurse; and Lt. (jg) Hal Chapin, one of Lt. Boyver's college classmates.



INFORMAL. A reception, attended by 87th officers and 109th guests, was held at the officers mess following the ceremony. Lt. Ina Tucci of North Carolina, close friend of Mrs. Boyver, poses with the couple before the buffet supper table.



THE CAKE. 109th Hospital bakers contributed a lovely wedding cake. After the reception, the couple repaired to Magenta Hills cottage of M. Hagen, Noumea bank president, for a five-day honeymoon. Lt. Boyver soon embarked for Saipan.



HINKY DINKY PARLEY VOUS? A hilarious Christmas party at the French farmhouse near Glass House outside of Noumea brought forth abundance of good cheer and plenty of vin rouge as gang celebrated second overseas Yuletide. In addition to the charming hostess, her husband and win-

some daughter (center), others in this confused, but happy, scene are: Chiefs Rubla, Arthur and Ahaesy, plus—Jaskulski, Soule, Schaefer, Silver, Bernie Kruger, "Barney" Nelson, Towey, Berry, Lamoureux, Bartlett, Jack Jones, Bucceri, Hosey and Asich.



"'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE . . ." While a weird mixture of rain and fog swirled about the summit of lofty Monte D'Or, mates in the quonsets nestled at the foot of the forbidden elevation were preparing for the "Old Man With the Whiskers." Jack Jones (left), Carleton Soule (kneeling) and "Barney" Nelson add a bit of Christmas cheer to their crowded quonset.





BUSY MAN. Leading candidate for title of most overworked officer at Monte D'Or was Lt.(jg) Steve Lynch, battalion dentist. Working two chairs simultaneously, he took care of an average 300 cases per month throughout busy New Caledonia period.



NEEDLE TIME. To make sure no man sneaked by for seconds, "eager" victims were checked off muster list outside of Sick Bay. Only after both arms were well swabbed with iodine could mates pass into the inner sanctum for the real business.



THE SQUARE NEEDLE. Shots increased in volume and intensity as the battalion prepared for its next forward move. A list of diseases the men were immunized against read like a medical dictionary—typhus, plague, cholera, yellow fever, smallpox, tetanus, etc.! All these horrible maladies

were supposedly laying in wait for the 87th at BIVE—wherever that was! Dr. Eugene Zorn chats with Lt. Boyer (center) as Corpsmen Guenera, Byers, Schneider, Malkassian and Chief Tunney prepare to administer injections.



WATER MAIN. Laying the principal waterline into the Monte D'Or camp involved skinning the heavy pipe a distance of approximately two miles over the rolling, scrubby hills adjacent the towering mountain range. An

estimated 10,000 feet of six-inch pipe was used for the entire project. Chief Owen Lawson (right) and his "pipe-bucking" gang are shown hard at it.



NOT IN THE CONTRACT. Battalion plumbers were truly "jacks-of-all-trades." Besides piping the entire camp for showers and plumbing Sick Bay, mess hall, laundry, etc., they frequently had to dig their own ditches

with pick and shovel. Taking five, with a smile, (left to right): Chief Louie Carlisle, Charles Reid, Hurschel Turner, William Brekke and Ed Joe Mulhern.

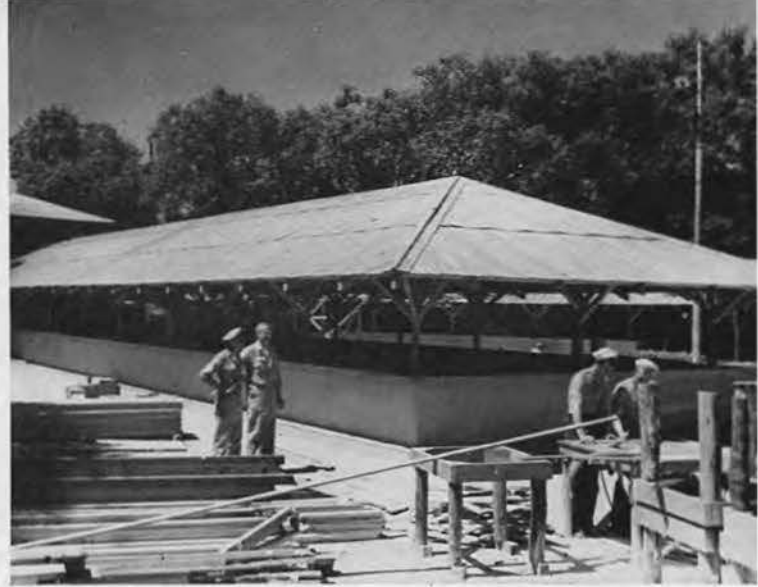


SOME CONTAINER! One section of a 10,000-barrel, bolted steel tank used as the water storage point for entire camp. Planned by Carpenter

was capable of turning out 40,000 gallons of drinking water a day. Steel work on construction of this immense tank was supervised by Chief "Hank"



GOOD START. Carpenter crews of Chiefs Emil Schoenke and Frank Lutterall were assigned the construction of a servicemen's center in the heart of Noumea. A concrete deck (easy to clean with hose and water) has hardened as building commences.



PROGRESS. Lieut. W. C. Reilly commends "Uncle Slug" Schoenke on progress his carpenters have made on the main building (central structure), which is spacious beer and soft drinks counter, Joe Ponaski (left) and Glen Ludwig are working saw



SETTING UP HOUSE. Prefabricated tables and really comfortable chairs were thrown together quickly once the basic construction was completed. Later painted in brilliant hues, the enlisted man's center had the rich carnival atmosphere of a gay beach resort.



SPRAYING, INC. The 87th paint crew eventually became a rather familiar sight along Noumea's busy streets. Chief Cedarstaff's crew of experts mixed and prepared color mixtures on the spot with this mobile unit. All paint was applied with spray guns.



WELL DONE. Ten sizeable coolers in interior of completed fountain assured thirsty GIs of iced beer and coke. More large reefers in surrounding buildings kept reserve supply of beverages at constant temperature.



ALL SET to open next day (Thanksgiving), exterior of TRADE WINDS fountain was finished with stained plywood and a fireproof asbestos roof. Once opened, its 175-foot bar was never without several hundred parched servicemen.



GRAND OPENING. Thousands of Allied servicemen attended the formal opening of **TRADE WINDS** Thanksgiving Day. For first time in Noumea history, real hamburgers, embellished with the "works," were served over the counter for the price of a dime. Also ex-

ceedingly popular was the counter serving New Zealand beer. Two bottles of this potent malt and the amateur imbiber was almost certain to require help in locating the liberty bus for the grueling, sobering truck-ride back to camp.

87TH BUILDS "TRADE WINDS"

During the two years of Allied use of New Caledonia as a supply base for the South Pacific, no provision had ever been made for furnishing the enlisted men of all service branches with a recreational center in the liberty city of Noumea. Blessings were finally given for such a project by Island Command to be built on the site of the old Triangle Gardens.

A contest was immediately announced for an appropriate name and **TRADE WINDS** was chosen.

The project was started with the various branches of service furnishing unskilled work details to aid in the construction, but this soon proved most unsatisfactory and the entire project was assigned to the 87th Seabees.

Lieut. William C. Reilly, as officer in charge of construction, and the seasoned carpenter crews of Chiefs Emil Schoenke and Frank Lutterall were detailed to carry out the work. They immediately moved gear and bedding to the deserted **ARGUS** camp on the outskirts of town. This move eliminated the long, dreary ride each morning and evening between Monte D'Or and Noumea.

The men worked a long, ten-hour day, but the freedom from the tiresome restrictions of the main camp counterbalanced the exacting work schedule. Moreover, the prospect of nightly liberty was a further compensation for extra work.

Beginning the project in early October, it was scheduled for completion on Thanksgiving Day. Using many labor-saving devices to streamline operations, the job was well timed to meet the deadline.

At precisely the right moment, Chief Vic Cedarstaff and his itinerant paint crew charged into town with loaded spray-guns and in a few days the entire project—inside and out—was decorated in a gay, colorful motif.

Promptly on 23 November (Thanksgiving Day), **TRADE WINDS** was opened with appropriate ceremonies. The mates queued up in long lines for the iced beer, hamburgers, hot-dogs and soft drinks. The long step toward improving the enlisted men's welfare had been accomplished.

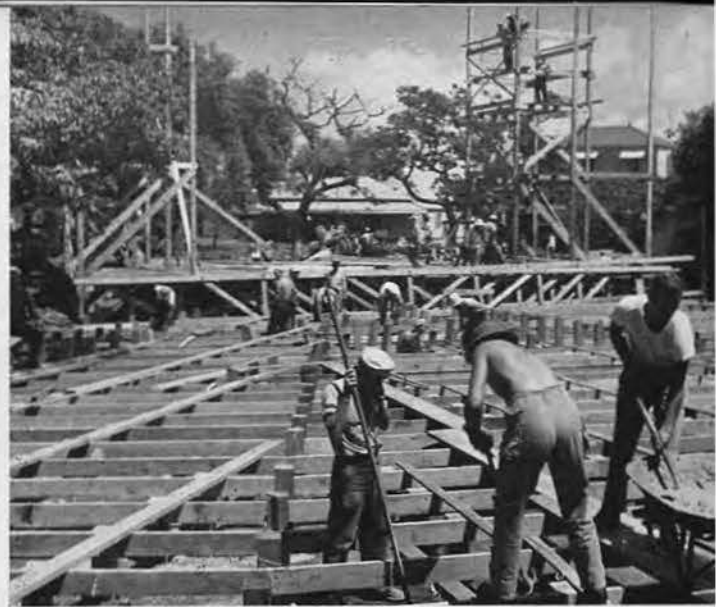
TRADE WINDS literally blew the black market trafficking in liquor out of its once flourishing spot in Noumea. At the same time, the new center gave all enlisted GIs a decent spot to eat and drink or just to sit and shoot the breeze.



RUSTIC UPHOLSTERY. Framework for all structural work in compound was of native rough timber and a minimum of finished lumber. Project was stymied time and again for lack of sufficient building materials. Here, construction was still in progress.



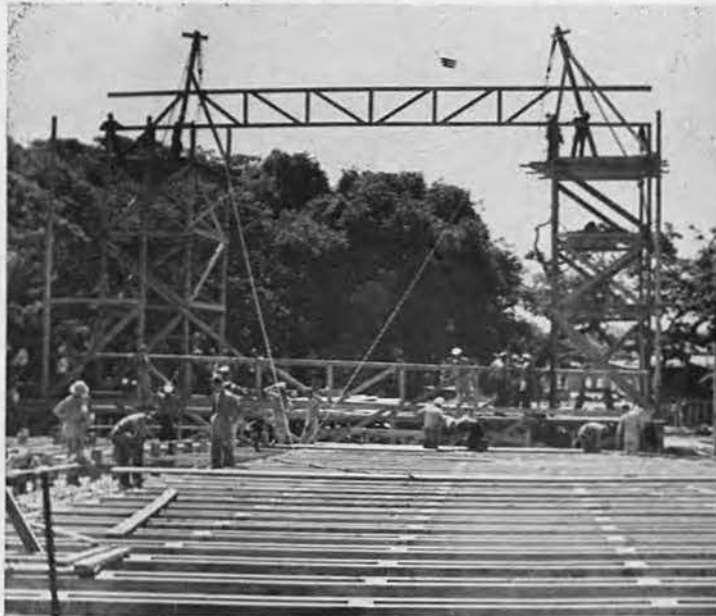
VISITOR. Chief Carl W. Ruble (center, foreground group), recently appointed editor-in-chief of 87th trip book (eventually named **THE EARTH-MOVER**), interviews Chief Emil Schoenke (left) as Community Theatre project commences in Noumea.



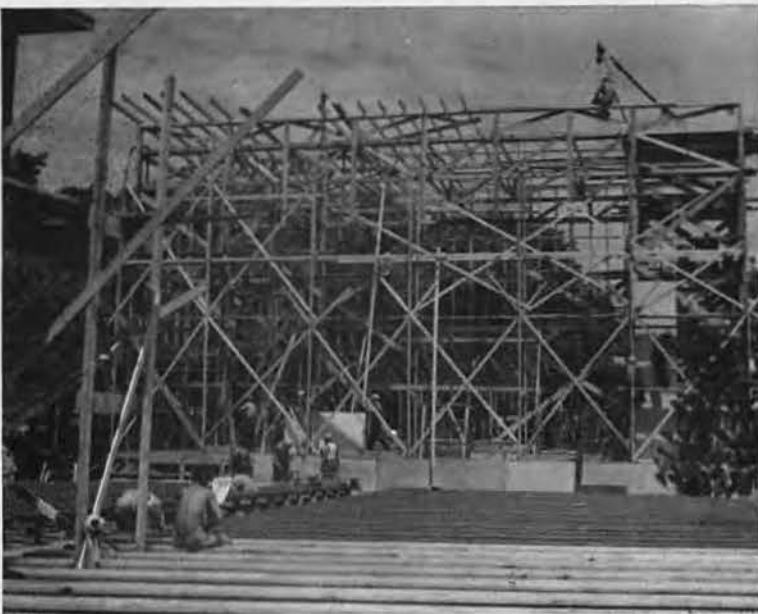
FRAMEWORK begins to rear skyward on stage of theatre project as crew in foreground pours concrete around foundation posts for seats. Stage wings are beginning to take shape as carpenters clamber over filmy structure with ease of trapeze artists.



ACROSS THE STREET from thriving **TRADE WINDS** (see picket fence), Chief Rufus Bland (right) directs construction of foundation for projection booth. Carpenters are: Darrell Haws, Julius Scruggs, Joe Williams, Daniel Petrich and Bob Droege.



RIGGERS, fresh from Ile Nou, are rushed to theatre project to set entire top of stage with improvised rigs as first truss is hoisted into place. Chief Charlie Stauss supervised rigging until his crew finished their job and moved on to another.



SPIDER WEB. Framework of mushrooming theatre project assumed appearance of a jig-saw puzzle with its tangle of scaffolding in preparation for fitting on plywood facing. All hands were turning-to with a will as Christmas opening was near.



PROJECTION booth almost finished and seating arrangements for an audience of 1,200 ready. Chief William Martin (arms folded) focuses attention on few remaining touches needed to complete stage. **EARTH-MOVER** photographer found theatre an arresting subject.



NOUMEA THEATRE. Finishing touches to new theatre were rushed to meet the deadline of 23 December for the colossal Red Cross Christmas Festival. Carpenter crews worked feverish 14-hour shifts and came to a breathless completion only four hours before the

formal opening of the pageant. Here, carpenters and electricians are installing floodlights on the last work day. Already gala Yuletide designs have been tacked on front of structure for the occasion. This project attracted much attention from Noumea natives.

CIVIC THEATER BUILT—FLOPS

With the servicemen's recreation center, **TRADE WINDS**, well on its way to completion, Island Command suddenly decided, with the aid of Red Cross suggestions, to sponsor a huge, open-air theatre in the central park area of Noumea.

The project was assigned to Army Engineers in mid-November with a finish date of late December. By the first of December, however, the extent of construction was a few post-holes dug with some 6x6s leaning out at odd angles. It was quite apparent that the project would never be completed on schedule.

At this point, Lieut. Reilly and his construction gang, fresh from completion of **TRADE WINDS**, were assigned to the job.

Chiefs William Martin and Rufus Bland and their crack carpenter crews were installed in the **ARGUS** camp and work began in earnest. It was a rush job from the start. As in all these operations, however, excellent craftsmanship was apparent.

To set the intricate stage framework, Chief Charlie Stauss and his riggers were brought in for the ticklish work. Charlie's men were just in from Ile Nou where they had dismantled the huge seaplane base hangars and other steel installations.

The mobile paint department again rolled into Noumea to put the finishing touches and decorations to the elaborate stage and projection booth. Battalion electricians installed sound and with the installations of footlights, the job was completed, and, to everyone's surprise, on time for the long-planned Christmas festivities.

In collaboration with the Red Cross, Army Special Services presented Handel's "Messiah," a Yuletide carol sing and a huge Christmas party for the native children—Santa Claus and all!

After such an auspicious opening, the theatre was almost certain of success. Unfortunately, when Army Special Service attempted to set up a movie schedule, French civil authorities stepped in quite unexpectedly.

The proprietors of the local theatres, which showed French and American movies of ancient vintage once a week, refused to sanction the showing of free movies—not even to servicemen.

Thus, the mammoth installation was destined to the ignominy of a "white elephant." Nourished only by a few afternoon concerts and occasional stage shows, it stands today as an expensive monument to the war in the Pacific.



SPRAY BOYS. Albert Mundy and Sheldon McCaleb get in the last licks on the otherwise completed screen and stage from swinging scaffold. One of several community Christmas trees is already decorated and wired for lighting in anticipation of pageant.



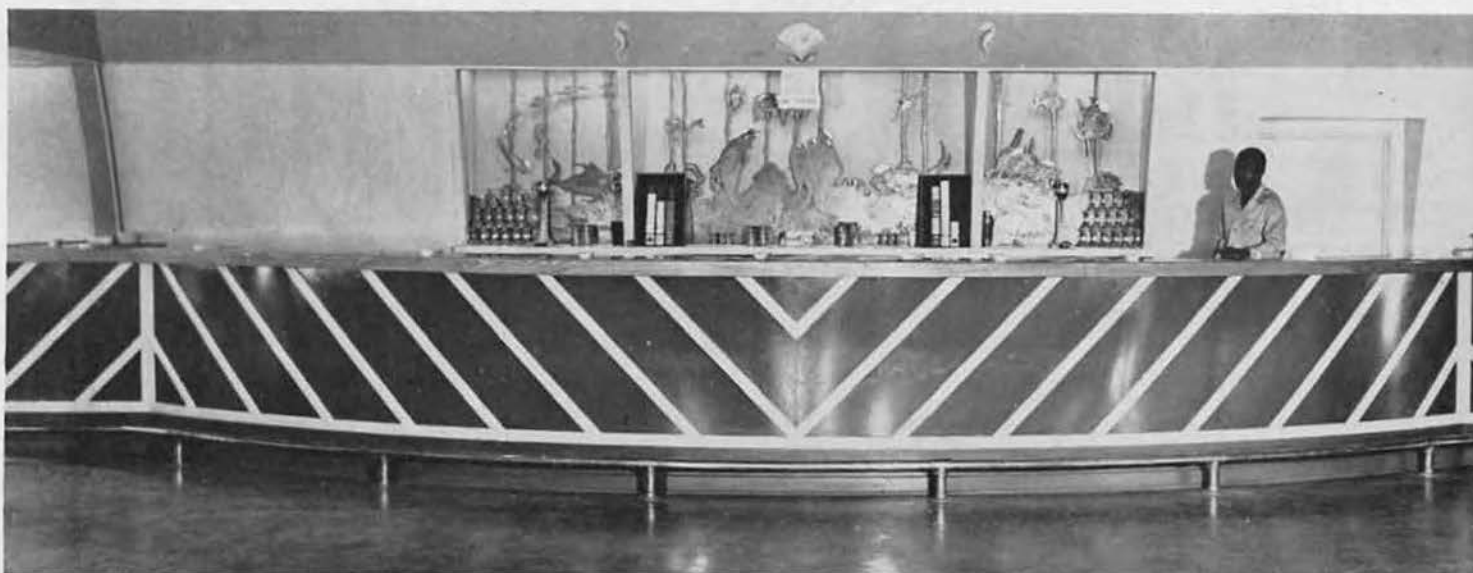
NRS OFFICERS CLUB. A plywood entrance, screened terrace, a few ship's lanterns—and presto!!!—the once lowly quonset acquires the regal lines of a modern night club. Designed and supervised by Lt. Comdr. Flynn, it

was by all odds the most sumptuous officers club in the entire Pacific. This luxurious retreat was ideally located on the outskirts of Noumea.



INTERIOR. Five nights a week, dances were held on this highly polished composition dance floor. At far end is the roomy, comfortable lounge, which extends to the library and writing room. Ingenious use of cloth net-

ting in the terraced ceiling provides fine, natural air-conditioning. Elaborate bar may be seen at right center. Dance orchestra occupied raised platform at right.



SHADES OF THE RITZ. Most popular spot in deluxe building was the gala 40-foot bar, complete with polished brass rail and lacquered masonite top. Serving everything from plain beer to resplendent zombies (with

cherries!), this cleverly decorated bar was an oasis for officer refugees from Noumea's sweltering semi-tropical heat. Deep-sea figures back of bar were cut-outs.

n o u m e a





SUPER PX. To all Allied servicemen, the real heart of Noumea was the Army's Super PX, located in the main business district of town. Its separate sections included dry goods, toilet articles, clothing, souvenirs, magazines and—most important of all—ice cream sundaes and sodas! The

nearest thing to a Stateside corner drugstore, it attracted hundreds of curious natives who stood outside and stared in amazement at its endless variety. Establishment was staffed by GIs and attractive French girls.



MACY'S, SOUTH PACIFIC! Largest department store in Noumea occupies one city block and deals in everything from jewelry and food to clothing and souvenirs. More appreciated than the articles for sale on its dusty counters is the wooden canopy stretching the length of the building, offer-

ing much-needed shade to footsore sightseers. Cars at curb are predominately of French manufacture, although an occasional early vintage Ford makes its wheezy appearance. The spacious city park starts just across street.



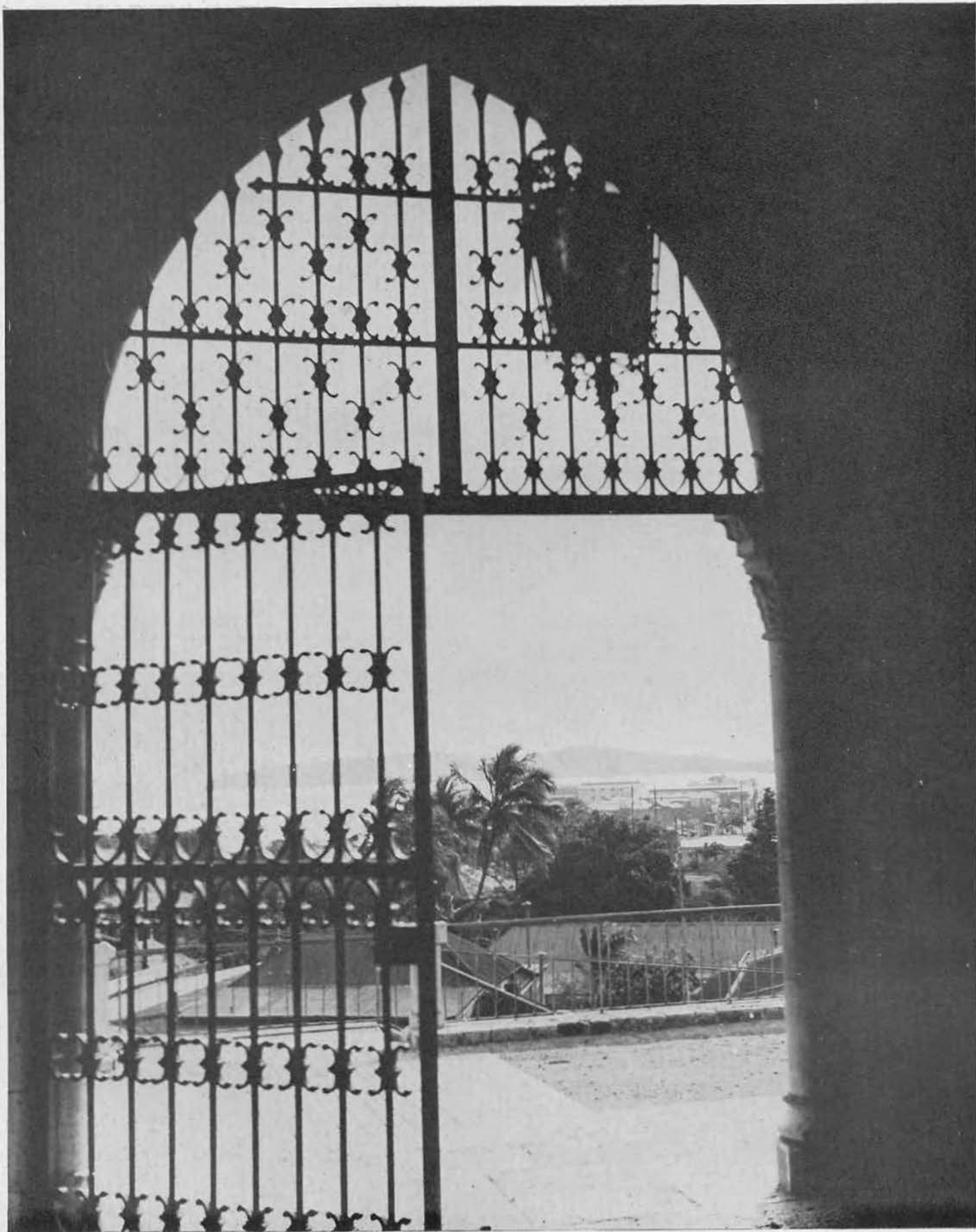
JAVANESE WEDDING. Festivities are in full swing as aftermath of a Javanese wedding. The ceremony proper was an unusually simple affair compared to the gay, noisy reception here taking place in a converted vegetable storage barn. Gay, many-colored streamers and banners cut from

paper and cloth are strung entire length of building. Women and children occupy one side of the room while men sit on the other. Food consisted mainly of sweet rice cakes and colored soda water.



THE EAST. Entertainment at the wedding centered around a professional female dancer and her partners. Dressed in striking costume of gilt and crimson and wearing white camellias in her hair, she performed ritual Javanese dances with unusually graceful and expressive gestures of her

hands. Orchestra consisting of many sized drums and bronze xylophones produced very rhythmic, but unmelodic, accompaniment. Members of orchestra are really in the groove, resembling a group of Gene Krupas in their facial contortions.



WROUGHT IRON gates of St. Joseph's Cathedral are typical of French architecture throughout the world. Rich homes in Noumea were almost all decorated with grille-work gates or fences. Tall buildings (right) are part of Nickel Docks. Nickel is leading export of New Caledonia. Deserted har-

bor reveals war has progressed since 87th's first visit here in September, 1943. Then, Noumea was a crowded, bustling main base. By late '44, however, it had become a comparatively deserted rear-area receiving station.



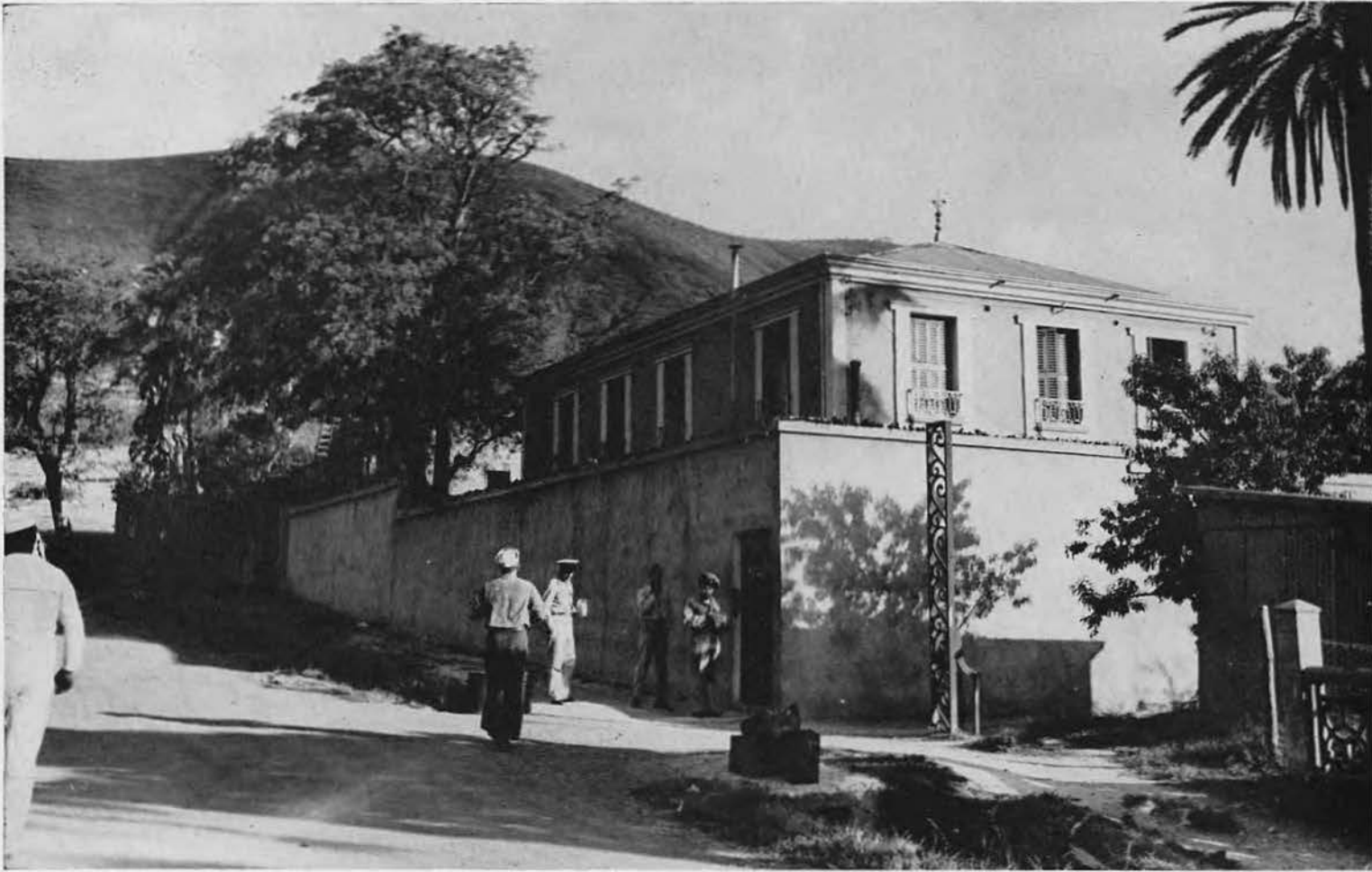
SUNDAY IN THE PARK. Civic center of the city of Noumea is this spacious park located in the heart of the town. Shaded by squat eucalyptus trees and swaying coconut palms, it attracted hundreds of native French, Kanakas and Javanese at the regular Sunday afternoon concerts in the

small circular bandstand. At night, GI bands frequently entertained with their renditions of American jazz and long-haired concerts. The 1944 World Series was rebroadcast from speakers set up at bandstand.



INTERSECTION. The enlisted man's center in Noumea, **TRADE WINDS**, presents an unusual sight with its tall picket fence and surrounding SPs. Built by the 87th, it was favorite meeting place for all servicemen in town. This was only spot in the sprawling city where hamburgers and

beer were sold at Stateside prices. Camera picks up two Kanakas crossing intersection (left center). Spires of landmark St. Joseph's Cathedral can just be seen beyond trees. Noumea's main streets were wide and spacious.



LOVE IS WHERE YOU BUY IT. All armed forces stationed in the South Pacific area sooner or later made the acquaintance of the widely-heralded "Pink House." This industrious institution was sponsored by the French government to serve as a buffer between its feminine population and the

female-hungry GIs lately returned from forward areas. The line starts early as evidenced by the above group of veteran Treasury Seabees, who are waiting at the gate. It is only 0700!



HUNTING GROUNDS. Hotel du Pacifique was the focal center of all of officers in New Caledonia. Here they found amusement and entertainment comparable to the best Stateside quality. Frequent dances held here were attended by Red Cross workers and service nurses, thus assuring the

"Gold Braid" of an ample supply of dancing partners. Transient officers were also housed here. Passing enlisted personnel were kept at a safe distance by a horde of GI cops. This hotel was leased by the U. S.



THE HANGOUT. One of Noumea's many shabby side streets harbored a favorite 87th rendezvous, the justly famed CHICAGO BAR. Hardly an ideal name for a South Pacific saloon, it nevertheless prospered mightily. Owned by a Frenchman named M. Etienne Boulanger, the proprietor's

knowledge of English was strictly limited to such expressive phrases as "OK," "50c" or "SP." It seemed everyone in Noumea—from dignified French civil administrators to colorful Kanaka laborers—rode bicycles as shown in this typical street scene.



MUSIC HATH ITS CHARMS. French owners of Noumea's dinky little cinemas howled to high heaven when Island Command attempted to exhibit GI movies at the 87th-built Community Theatre, which was intended for servicemen, as well as the local populace. The movie magnates won and

only one show was screened. Instead, the huge affair was only used on Sundays and holidays. A Navy band plays as mixed audience sits and stands despite ample seating arrangements. Native children watch camera-man.



WELCOME RESPITE. Visiting servicemen on liberty in Noumea often found momentary relief from the sun's boiling rays by strolling along under canopy-covered sidewalks such as this. Walks were often protected by high blinds (upper left)—permanent property fixtures.



LIBERATOR. One of several impressive monuments in Noumea's spacious public park is this one of the great French liberator, Admiral Olry. Two Free French soldiers of the New Caledonia Territorial Forces pose beside statue. Joe (right) was an eager subject.



MARKET DAY. American servicemen rubbed shoulders with many types of people in Noumea while walking down the sidewalks of the French capital. Chinese, Javanese, Kanakas and French—all jumbled together in the great South Pacific melting pot—attempted to sell their wares to Allied visitors.

Here, a sidewalk vendor (Javanese) has his display of cheap trinkets. However, in case of a shady deal, his cart has wheels and the dealer can usually vanish before irate authorities can apprehend him.



SENTINEL. St. Joseph's Cathedral (right background) looms like some medieval sentinel over this intriguing street corner scene in ever-colorful Noumea. Here, the camera has picked up a typical mixture of GIs, civilians and service cops (extreme left). Noumea was crawling with cocky

SPs and MPs, most of whom patrolled in pairs for obvious reasons. Most stores were built like barns with roofs but no ceilings. Many were vacant due to lack of merchandise. Javanese women (left) always excited interest.



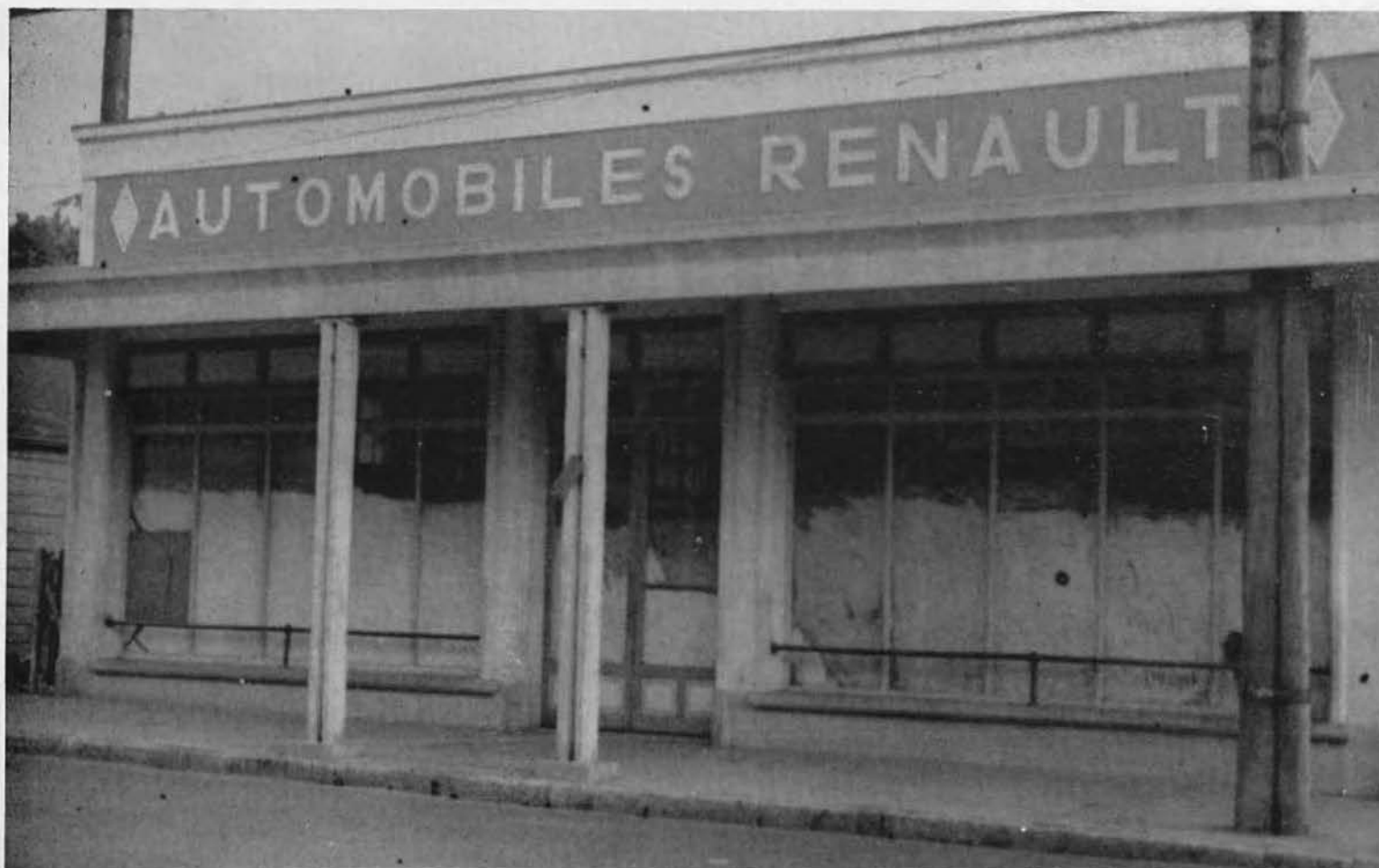
"SOME OF EVERYTHING, ALWAYS" is literal translation of horizontal sign and one visit usually converted shoppers into "believers." Some American products were still available as jumbled RINSO boxes (right show window) prove to French Marine passing in shorts. Scarcest merchan-

dise was that manufactured in prostrate France and the little that was left was retailed at exorbitant prices. Noumea stores had one amazing (to Americans) thing in common—no merchant bothered about window displays. Lattice-work overhanging canopy is characteristic.



MAID OF ORLEANS. Native boy points out statue of Joan of Arc to an attentive audience composed of Bernie Kruger, Jack Jones and Russ Evenson. The memorial to France's national heroine is located in St. Joseph's Cathedral courtyard. Painted a bright aluminum color and kept well pol-

ished, this dazzling figure is visible for many blocks. Sightseeing in Noumea entailed considerable hill-climbing and, combined with the usual bright sun, provoked a prodigious thirst.



CLOSED FOR DURATION. Commonly known as the Ford car of France, Noumea automobile dealers in this low-priced, popular vehicle were forced to close up shop for lack of cars. In far off France, Renault was manufacturing tanks for the Nazis. (When his country was liberated,

Renault was rounded up as a collaboratorist. Found guilty and sentenced to hang, the once-proud magnate cheated the gallows by committing suicide.) Such depressing sights were one of many eyesores along back streets.

“MEET ME IN SAINT LOUIS”



ST LOUIS MISSION, with its rich mixture of the medieval and the primitive, drew hundreds of incredulous Seabee visitors. The mission church, seen here through a massive archway, was built by native Kanakas under guidance of missionaries, who also helped.



GARDEN OF EDEN. Narrow lanes and streets winding through St. Louis village were veritable open-air greenhouses. Orchids, poinsettias, hyacinths, lilies and myriads of other flowers of all colors and fragrance spilled over the lanes in breath-taking beauty.



HOMESTEAD. Native inhabitants of the village, which was the half-way mark between Monte D'Or and Noumea, still clung to their primitive mode of living. Homes were customary thatched-roof affairs, which were shared by man, fowl and animal alike.



CHURCH CALL was a series of long, weird blasts blown on a huge conch shell by native sexton of St. Louis Mission. Barefooted natives listened with characteristic religious fervor to the French-spoken sermons delivered by aged French missionaries.



SMILE, LADY, SMILE! From Java (Seerabaja Province) hails this beauty working in New Caledonia under the indenture labor system. The Jap occupation of Java prevented thousands of such laborers from returning to their native country. Childless, Genah loved her cat.



THE LOOK. A local Kanaka, wearing the Free French Marine uniform, stands guard duty in Noumea, armed with an Australian rifle. However, New Caledonia natives serve as garrison troops instead of duties usually associated with Marines of most nations.



BOY MEETS GIRL. Dressed in summer uniform, Free French Marine poses for THE EARTHMOVER with lady of his choice. Usually a gay people, Kanakas invariably freeze up when facing camera. Lady wears typical Mother Hubbard dress. Shoes were no problem!



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER. Sartama radiates Ipana smile as she exhibits her daughter to Seabee guests. Originally from Batavia (Java), Sartama also signed for indentured labor. Most French families in New Caledonia had Javanese servants who worked for very low wages.



UNDER THE TRI-COLOR. French cemetery, near Noumea, has Javanese, Chinese, Kanakas and even Japanese buried in individual sections. Chief Carl Ruble, *EARTHMOVER* editor, surveys new French portion where memorials to Frenchmen killed in North Africa stand in gleaming rows.

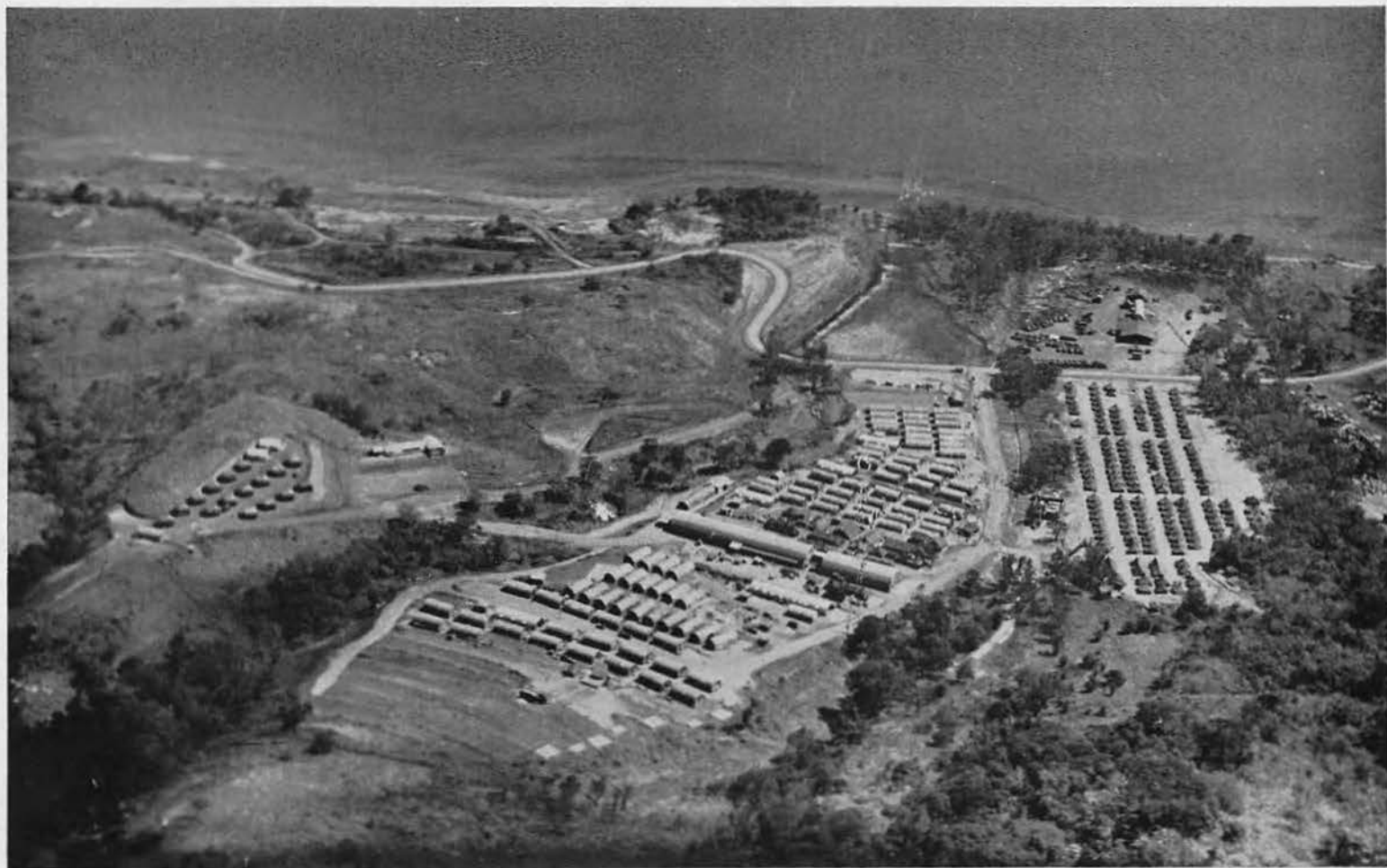


REST IN PEACE. Each mission had its own tiny cemetery. Fancy wrought iron crosses of intricate design denote occupants of these graves were of French decent. Section was badly overgrown with weeds. The Seabees were learning the world's burial customs.



THE SMALL WHITE CROSS. Lying peaceful under the flag of the United States and a small white cross, hundreds of dead Americans repose in their final resting place. Casualties of the costly Solomons campaign and others who died while receiving medical attention are buried here. A mem-

ber of the 87th Battalion points out the grave of John F. Phillips, CMIC, who died on the U. S. S. NAOS as the ship lay at anchorage in Monte D'Or harbor on 10 September 1945.



SMALL WORLD. Here is 87th camp lay-out as seen from approximately half-way up Monte D'Or. (For contrasting view taken from summit, see frontispiece, page 149.) In both classic shots, EARTHMOVER photographer, Edmund ("Jas") Jaskulski, has used camera to great advantage in show-

ing compact camp sandwiched between ocean and mountains. Some landmarks showing are: Officers Country (left); movie area (central foreground); T Division shops and parking areas (right background); mess hall (huge quonsets, center). Other features are fairly obvious.



RUGGED. Looking East across huge island from the majestic heights of Monte D'Or, the ambitious climber saw an awe-inspiring panorama. An exceedingly rugged climb, it was well worth the effort, but once was usually enough. Beyond the mountains (right) was located the Army's Sixth

Replacement Depot. It was in this type of terrain that Lieut. Alexander G. Shisko, jovial 18th Regiment officer, was lost while mountain climbing. He was found dead by an 87th search party one Sunday morning.



SKY, LAND, WATER. Looking over the bay to a peninsula (left) may be seen the approximate location of the capital of New Caledonia. From atop Monte D'Or, looking north, the excellent land-locked harbors of the far-reaching peninsula are obvious. The 87th camp was located 18 miles

out of Noumea by road while across the bay it was a mere five miles. The shoreline, rugged but with sandy beaches, offered swimming and fruit to cateye hunters.



THE HARD WAY. Totally ignorant of modern methods of farming, these Javanese cultivate a rice field by use of oxen. The man in front keeps the rows straight and removes rocks that may hinder planting. The oxen are guided by the touch of the stick held by man holding the plow. The

women (extreme left) plant rice sprouts in the furrowed ground that is irrigated from nearby stream. This was a familiar scene to liberty-bound Seabees.



COUNTRY LANE. Typical of a native town with palm trees and green bushes lining the road is this village off the beaten track. The huts, with thatched roofs and fences always in need of repair, resemble closely the

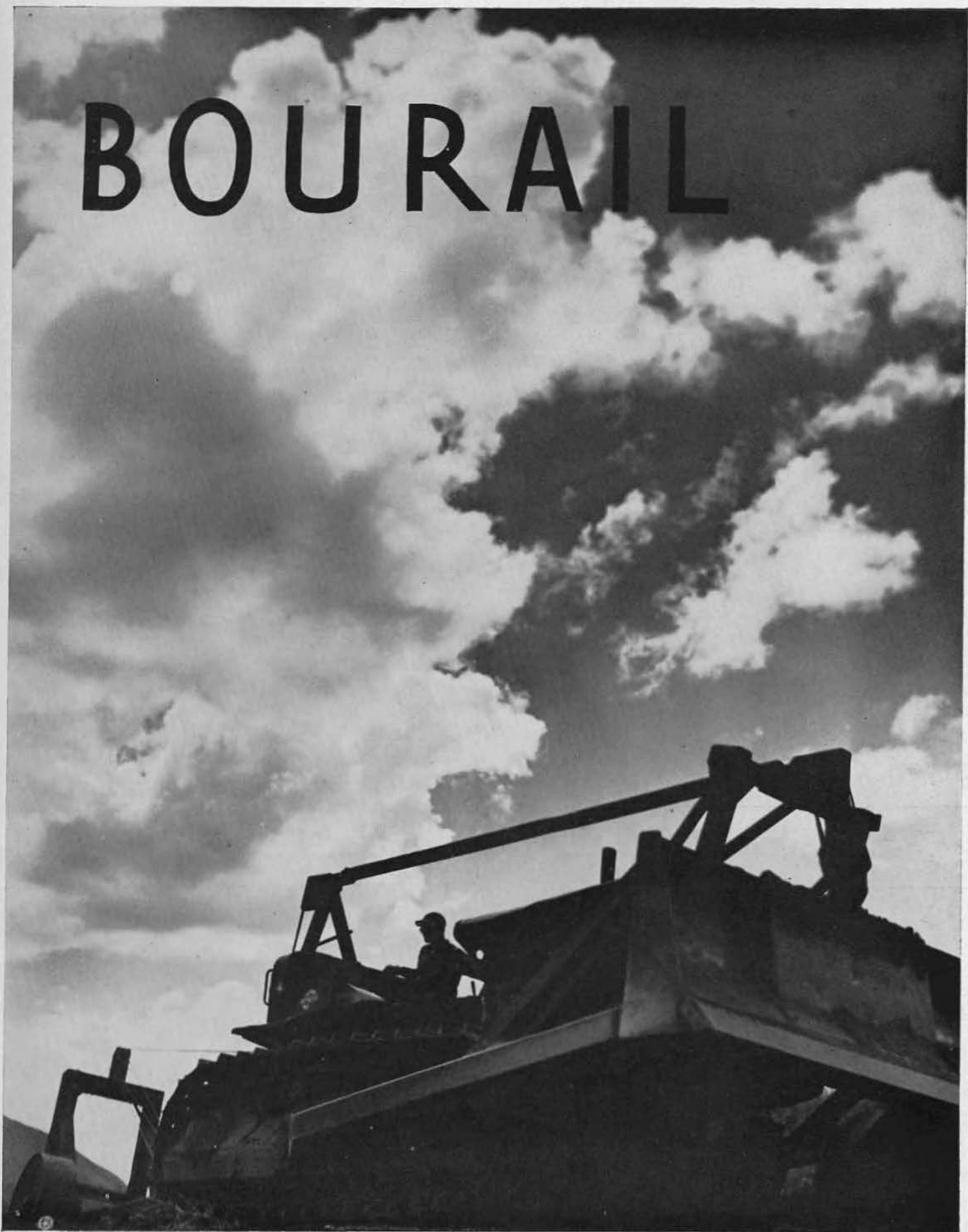
majority of native homes on the island. The roads are usually well cared for as they are the vital link with the outer world. All in all, the life led by the natives is a peaceful one.



A LITTLE GRASS SHACK. A small farmyard, cluttered with chickens, hogs, trees, bananas and various types of fruit, is the essence of good living for the average Kanaka. His home, made of a clay composition with leaves for a roof, is invariably a modest structure. As virtually all cook-

ing is done outside over an open hearth, the dwelling is used primarily for sleeping. One or two openings for windows are sufficient for this simple way of life.

BOURAIL





COVERED WAGON. A hardy lot, 87th surveyors pause only for chow before shoving off again on Bourail road job. Here, Jim Moore checks final data as Robert Smithgall, Charlie Johnson, Byron Chronic and J. R. Olivares wait in engineering caravan.



ON LOCATION. With eight projects in progress simultaneously, the battalion's two survey crews had more than their hands full in keeping a jump ahead of the hustling construction gangs. M. O. Brenn reads transit data off to Chief Paul Sowers (seated).



TOPOGRAPHER. Jean Worley of Lincoln, Nebraska, pores over his plane table to plot the topography of one of the multiple bridge sites and culverts, which were built along 13-mile stretch. Worley sports typical cap worn by most Seabees overseas.



HEAVE HO! Miles of fence had to be reset by hand to make room for the road widening. Chief Al Broomfield (right) directs a straight line for the post-hole diggers, who are (left to right): Listenberger, Perlak and Ahlf.



FILLING TO GRADE. Bawled out by both surveyors and operators, 87th grade foremen led a harried life. One exception, however, was Gushion Bolt (left) who "stood his grade" against worse gripers. Ralph Carter is at right.



CAFETERIA. Noon chow, served on the job, was usually a combination box-lunch and K-rations. Boiling-hot lamb stew (with a sprinkle of sand) was a favorite dish, even with midday temperature of 110 degrees, in outdoor cafeteria.



LITTLE BURMA ROAD. Snaking over exceedingly treacherous mountain passes, the original road above Bourail was actually no more than a narrow 15-foot wagon trail. Earth, cut away from the bordering red-dirt bluffs, was dumped over edge on opposite side

where it was eventually graded, rolled, etc. Existing narrow culverts were braced and extended to a width of 75 feet in many cases. Three trucks await turn to be loaded as one is under bucket and another drives off.

EARTHMOVERS REGAIN STRIDE ON ILL-FATED BOURAIL JOB

Instead of the long anticipated relaxation in a rear area, the 87th was assigned various "must" projects almost immediately upon returning to New Caledonia. The "rush" never let up until the battalion embarked for Saipan some four months later.

The assignment involving the most men (300) was the repairing of a tortuous, one-lane road leading over the mountains north of Bourail.

A tent camp was erected in the hills where the climate was blistering during midday and breath was transformed into vapor at night. This camp was located 133 miles north of Monte D'Or.

Lieut. Ray F. Papp, OinC at Bourail, further enhanced his enormous prestige with the men by promptly establishing a six-day work week with liberty every night and Sunday.

The liberty trucks either drove to Bourail or to distant places like Haeloue where the wine was generally bad, the liquor vile and the sociable females predominately black.

Whenever possible, men drove off to pre-arranged dinners at nearby farms. Deer were plentiful in the mountains and frequent hunting parties kept the camp well supplied with venison.

Bourail maintained communications with Monte D'Or by truck. Making the 266-mile round-trip every other day, this service transported personnel, spare parts, mail, laundry, ship's store stock, etc.

The road-repair work branched into road-broadening. Bulldozers tore into the mountainside. A gravel-hopper was built, concrete culverts were poured and box culverts were fashioned of stout beams.

A long relocation was cut across a deep, muddy valley, eliminating miles of treacherous, winding, mountain road. Pilings were driven across the lazy Wahoo River and many trailer-loads of heavy timber were bolted into place. Soon, the natives had a heavy-duty bridge alongside their horse-walk.

Work crews absorbed brutal treatment, bouncing and vibrating the 42 kilometers to the job every morning over a wagon highway whose heavy, red dust seemed to settle only on passengers.

The engineers swore no place on Earth had been surveyed so often for so many reasons. One day, as expected, the project collapsed and everyone returned to Monte D'Or to await the Saipan move. No one seemed to know why it folded—or why it was ever begun! Nor was it ever learned what happened to the "rest period!"



SPLASH. Final gravel-topping for completed stretches of new road was scooped out of handy stream bottoms with the dragline. Splash resulting from this operation was fodder for visiting picture book cameraman. Semi-tropical tree adds class to shot.



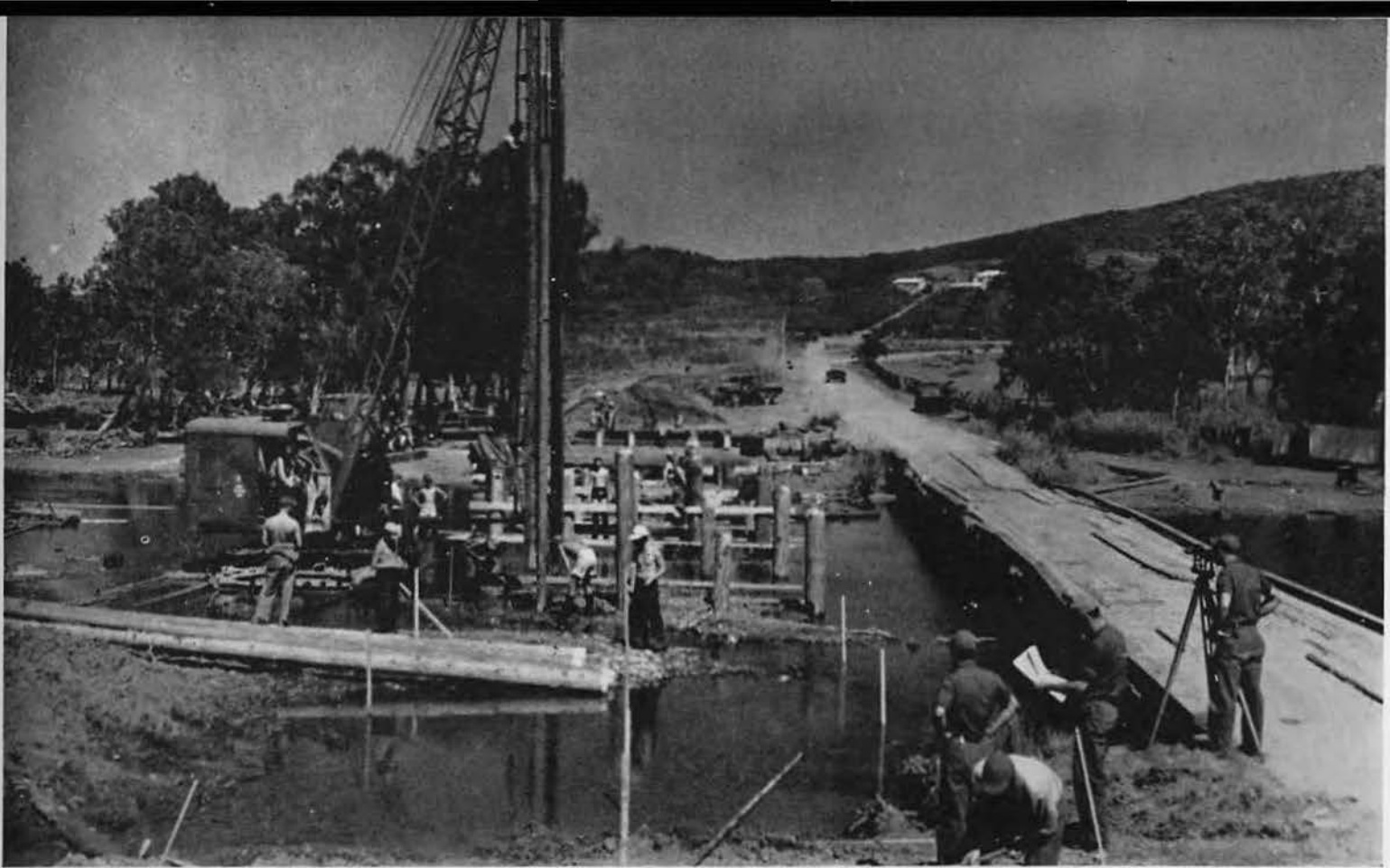
FACE LIFTING. The big Northwest shovel was kept busy tearing out huge chunks of the mountainside, which bordered the road project. Transporting the above monster and other heavy equipment the 133 miles between Monte D'Or and the Bourail location presented a major traffic problem.

Finally, a LST was pressed into service and the rolling stock was shipped to Point Nepui above Poya. Again, the prickly Bourail chestnut was pulled out of the fire, but Lieut. Pape's troubles were just beginning.



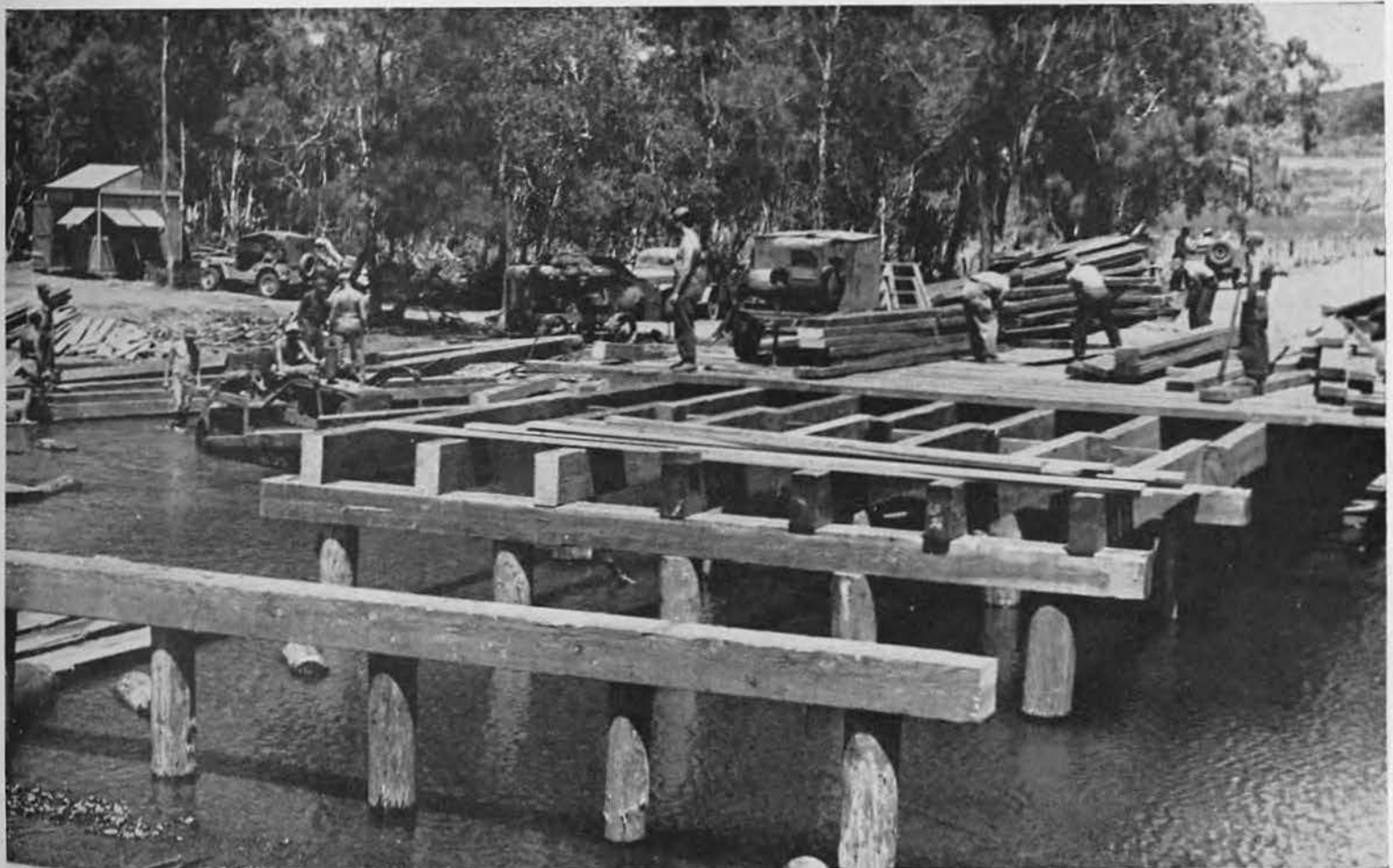
THE HIGH ROAD. The mountains extended thousands of feet above and below the Bourail road. In many locations, these one-way roads were the only connecting link between villages separated by miles of towering slopes and deep gorges. In spite of these dangerous conditions, accidents on the

job were astonishingly few. The chief gripe of the truckdrivers and machine operators was the choking red dust, which meant wearing dust-masks and goggles at all times.



BRIDGE SITE. The old road site led over numerous narrow, rickety bridges, which threatened to collapse at virtually every crossing. Although most streams were shallow, they quickly overflowed during periodic flash-floods. New bridges, constructed of heavy timbers and set solidly on stout piles,

were built. Here, pile-drivers are shown at work while surveyors (right) set more piles. These pilings were usually driven into the earth an average 15 or 20 feet. Most men worked in shorts and boots.



SKELETON CROSSING. Largest bridge of the project was the one across Frenchman's Creek in the long valley between Poya and Point Nepui. Utilizing a total of 55 piles, this sturdy bridge was 110 feet in length and 22 feet in width. Heavy 16x16 stringers (tying in the piles) were, in turn,

capped by 10x16 beams. This basic structure was covered by heavy planking for the bridge deck. At left, a dozer is performing a different task.



BULLGANG. Roughest and toughest crew on Bourail job was Chief Frank Rychlak's "devil-may-care" bullgang. These huskies threw trailer-loads of heavy timbers around with ease of lumberjacks. Above: Eddie Breitenbach, Leo LeBlanc and Phil Mungiole.



MILES OF PILES. Battalion pile-driver assembly more than earned its keep. Shuttling from one bridge to another, the Northwest "25" rig, with its 2,000-pound hammer, kept ramming the long piles into the earth until last day of construction.



SHOEMAKER. Frequent solid-rock ledges in river beds presented formidable obstacles to pile-driver. Only after pointed shoes of steel plates were fashioned together and attached to the leading end could piles be driven home. Tom Clements is welding.



TIE HER DOWN RIGHT THERE! An almost miraculous time-saver was the air-hammer, which practically eliminated the back-breaking sledge hammer and an extra crew. Here, the Jones boys add their combined weight and brawn to vibrating spike-driver.



SIX O'CLOCK SIGHT PICTURE. Sloshing in rivers and muddy streams, the 87th pile-driving crew was soaked to the skin from morning to night. Paced by big "Spook" Elliott (left), the gang included: Warner, Hewitt, Hoback and Rooney.



SMOOTHIES. Final touch to the bridge was smoothing off rough, uneven planking and rounding off end approaches. Here, men revert to use of time-honored adze, which in hands of such men as Gordon, Lingle and others, gets results.



GOLDEN SPIKE? Four lanes of heavy top tread were eventually added to save wear and tear on the main decking of bridge. Chief Bill Inness, Lieut. Ray Pape and F. K. Jones observe as J. C. Jones drives a final row of spikes.



BIG BOSS. Directing head of the sizeable Bourail project, which actually included lots more than a tough road assignment, was cigar-chewing Lieut. Pape. Charged with overall welfare of 300 men, Lieut. "Crusty" never faltered.



BLUE MONDAY. Every day was wash-day for the old French couple and their two attractive daughters near the bridge job. This frugal family had given up working the land in favor of the more lucrative hand-laundry business for Seabees.



BRIDGE BUILDERS. Most of the credit for construction of seven fine bridges on tough Bourail job must go to Chief Inness and the 18 stalwarts of his hustling carpenter crew. Here, the entire gang knocks off for a group portrait.



MACHINE AGE. In order to speed the distribution of mixed concrete, a mixing plant was centrally erected in the primary construction area. A clamshell rig was set up next to it. With this convenient arrangement, the aggregate was scraped directly into large, wooden hopper from

where it slid down a gravity-flow chute into the mixer. Operated by only five men, this arrangement saved many hours of back-breaking labor. It also turned out four yards of concrete per hour.



DRUMMERS. Oil drums (with ends out) were spliced together in long double rows and set on concrete foundations for culverts. Carpenters, like Ray Pursley's crew, then built forms around drums for other three sides. Others shown: Nelson, Stuchlik and Straz.



OVER THE TOP! Once the concrete had sufficiently hardened, wooden forms were stripped off and the indispensable bulldozers bladed tons of earth over the drains to bring spot to road level. Grady Thompson (at controls) shows how it's done.



POURING THE MUD. Once the oil-drums were fashioned together and the supporting forms built, mixed concrete was driven up in trucks whose beds had been somewhat redesigned and poured through a rear chute. Mike Kocian and Raymond LaRue (right) stand back from wildly splashing

concrete, which is controlled by Joe Bentley in the driver's seat. Trucks hauling the soupy concrete made many quick trips to central mixing plant until forms were full. (Mate in undershirt is not identified.)



TOP MAN. In almost every possible way, the indefatigable Lieut. Pape was top man on the road job. With the alacrity and daring of a trapeze artist, he could be found in the most precarious positions at any hour. Here, The Man looks down from top of gravel hopper as men operate

mixing chute. With plenty of liberty and minimum restrictions, the men worked well. Mere insinuation that "goldbricks" would be returned to hidebound Monte D'Or kept all hands turning-to.

BOURAIL CAMP LIFE APPEALED TO PAPE'S MEN



MAIN STREET. The Niaouli-shaded main street in the road camp housed all administrative and service units in one compact area. On the one side, the tents included: Sick Bay, Post Office, Operations, Ship's Store, Drafting and the ever-popular chow hall. Across the street was Officers Country.

The men lived in nearby areas, conveniently located to "Main Street." Here, at Bourail, the mates enjoyed a freedom of movement and action rarely, if ever, found in a military camp.



DEERSLAYERS. Fresh meat was assured by quick-triggered hunting parties. Many groups roamed the abundant hills during off hours. One successful group was that shown above: Chief Al Broomfield, Jimmy Beachler, Charles Ahlf, Virgil Kaeshoeffler and Bill Listenberger.



HUDDLE. An important part of the daily work routine was the morning pep talk to crew chiefs by Lieut. Pape. Here, the past day's work was reviewed and orders given for the new day's construction program. Attendance was mandatory—and without fail!



A SUNDAY OFF frequently meant a trip across the mountainous island to small town of Hailoue. Above, pausing for a glimpse of the breathtaking beauty, are: Fields, Smithgall, Barker, Jim Moore, Buonora, Brenn, Ackerman, Olivaries, Johnson, Worley and DeRyke.



INSIDE VIEW. Roadside attractions were not restricted to scenic beauty alone. Other items of interest included unusual specimen of vegetation, multi-colored bird life and a periodic canvas structure which attracted many a connoisseur's closest scrutiny.



SOLITUDE. Most farm buildings in Northern New Caledonia are picturesque, primitive structures. Usually nestled near thick groves of coconut palms, each group presents a scene of unparalleled beauty. Natives claim palms are best protection against winds.



"KIDS IS KIDS!", one native mother told an 87th Seabee in broken English. Wearing cast-off GI clothing, the numerous Bourail children play games in much the same manner as kids in the States or on Banika or on Mono. Kids make it "One World."



INSIDE CURVE. In sharp contrast to modern road and bridge construction methods of Seabees were the primitive, hand-made efforts of the native Franch. Lack of equipment and proper materials, coupled with different ideas, resulted in this curved curiosity.



HOME, SWEET HOME. Besides providing an adequate shelter against the rain, straw-thatched roofs of native huts were a haven for rats, snakes and insects. Walls were mixture of clay and earth, but kept the temperature inside quite comfortable.



SPLASH ONE! It was back to Nature for the mates in Bourail's thickly-wooded hills. Frequented by both officers and men, this type of outdoor recreation appealed to all hands alike. These men are swimming during lunch hour.



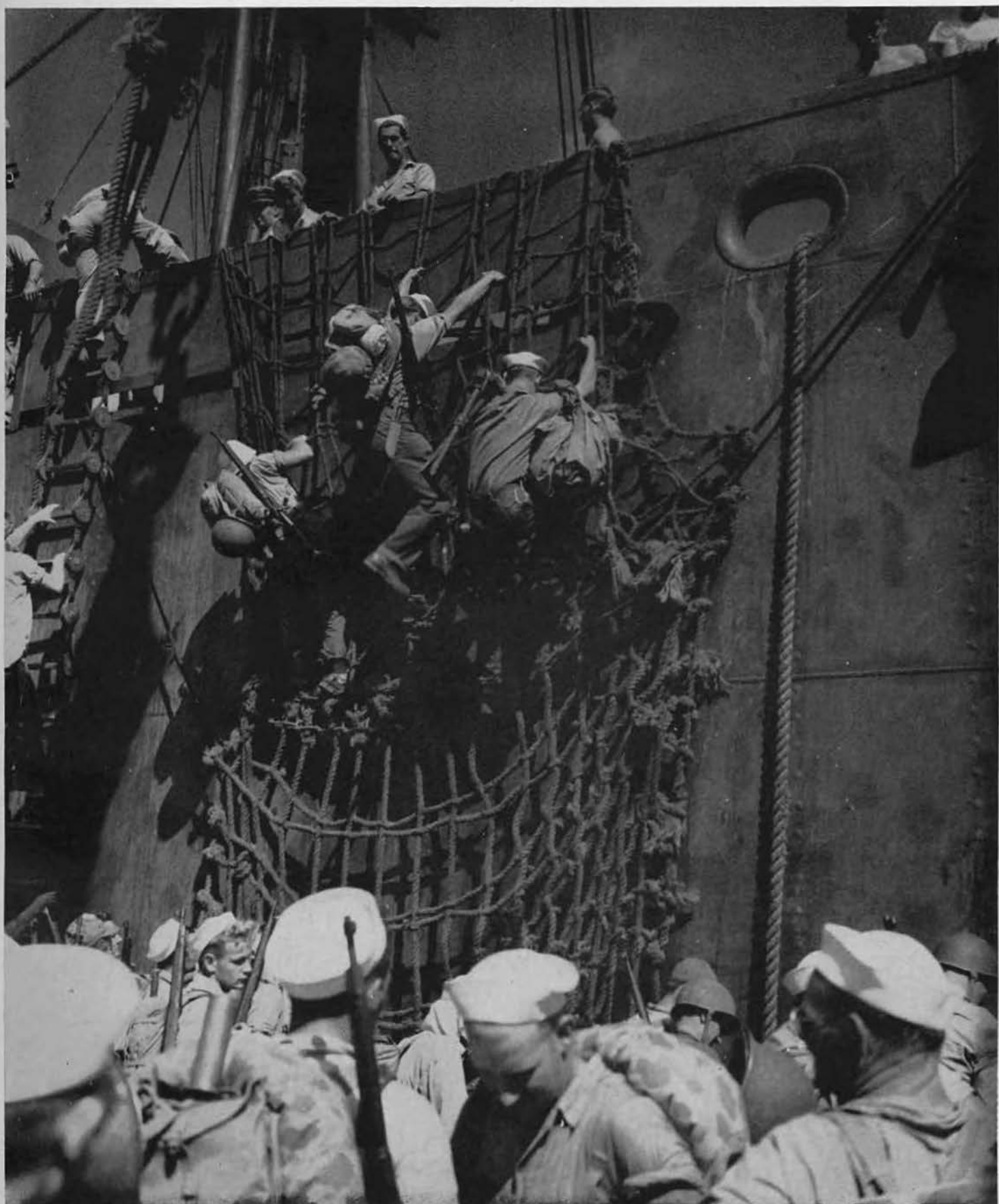
THE SIMPLE LIFE. Nestled in the shadow of lofty mountains, well-kept native huts and fertile farms provided the 87th's city-bred element with an appealing glimpse of a truly idyllic existence. Palms had now become the Pacific trade mark.



THE LONG VALLEY. The 87th's principal construction project was the relocation of the road leading into the low, flat valley bordering the ocean near Point Nepui. Covered with knee-deep grass and thousands of stubby pines, this four-mile stretch of pasture land absorbed the full

impact of the Earthmovers' last blow for liberty on New Caledonia. Suddenly and without advance notice, the Pape contingent was ordered back to Monte D'Or to pack for the move to Saipan.

U.S.S. ROTANIN



NEW CALEDONIA TO SAIPAN



SAIPAN BOUND! After more than 17 months overseas, mates have learned each move brings the usual portion of "hurry up and wait." Jim McLaughlin (foreground) realizes that "standing by" is easier sitting down. This was 31 January 1945.



AWAITING TRANSPORTATION! The tables are turned on most of the 87th's Transportation Division boys as they wait for trucks to move them dockside. Lieut. Ben Markette, division officer, checks those present against muster list.



UP YOU GO! Last minute rush and scramble for truck space, tireless chatter about nothing in particular and the noisy hustle in climbing aboard vehicles are all in marked contrast to the listless monotony of just standing by.



T. S. Long before the Saipan move, some men had decided they had absorbed an abundance of forward area duty for one war. Quietly, these individuals had sought Station Force in Noumea. A few succeeded; the others were on this barge!



EPISODE. The men watch listlessly as the last barge eases along the ROTANIN's starboard side. Ralph Pontow (left foreground, hands on hips) readies himself for his famed "swan dive." (The barge suddenly reversed—Pontow didn't!)



THE SEABEE WAY. John Barker and Ed Shaffer board the ROTANIN in typical Seabee fashion as Chief Ted Marienthal mutters encouragement to others in midst of rigorous ascension. The practical Seabees never learned why this was necessary.



TAKE FIVE, BOYS! Where there was a tough job ahead, there was always a seasoned Seabee outfit to do it. And wherever Seabees went, mountains of equipment and materials had to accompany the "know-how" boys. The Japs are alleged to have feared this hard-to-beat combination almost

as much as they dreaded the Marines. Here, 87th stevedores take advantage of a "breather" as they wave off still another barge-load of pallets and pipe headed for the ROTANIN.

ORDERED FORWARD AGAIN AFTER 17 MONTHS OVERSEAS

The announcement each man had been dreading for the past four months came with dramatic suddenness. It was early January, 1945. The battalion was in the midst of extended-order drill in the scrub-woods at the base of Monte D'Or when orders to secure all military training and return to camp were received.

All hands immediately assumed the fatal day was close at hand. Instead of returning to the States at the end of 18 months, the battalion's mythical luck had apparently run out. Now, it looked like back to the forward areas again.

In camp, bulletin boards already blazed with orders concerning the 12 January departure of the first echelon. The old, familiar tension again gripped the camp. Now that the matter had finally been decided, the men waited with impatience to get on with the inevitable.

In amazingly short order, the initial group of 344 men and six officers were loaded onto long trailers, driven to the Noumea docks and put aboard the already jampacked S. S. PRINCE GEORGE. Their itinerary included Tulagi, where all remaining space was jampacked with dynamite; Eniwetok, where, as anticipated, time was lost; and finally Saipan on 27 January.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the battalion was busy loading the U. S. S. ROTANIN (AK-108) with pontoon barges. Eventually, even the ship slated to transport the rear echelon showed up and commenced taking on cargo.

On 31 January, when the 87th Seabees had ticked off slightly over 17 months of foreign service, including a solid year in the torrid Solomons, the second echelon of 717 men and 22 officers climbed aboard the ROTANIN via the wildly-swinging cargo nets and sailed.

Life aboard the ROTANIN was typical of all crowded Navy troopships. Shade, as always, was at a premium on the scorching steel decks. When the pensive men weren't doing the usual things, they could be found fooling around with the battalion dogs in their pen or simply gazing off into meaningless space along the rail.

Chow was eaten while standing in the steaming holds next to the ship's engines and each meal was an ordeal. Divine Services were held both Sundays. Fresh water was soon rationed and the mood of the entire unit swerved sharply downward as guards were posted at each spigot.

The fourth day at sea and 1,000 miles out of New Cal. found the

men once more gazing at Guadalcanal, hardly recognizable now with its neat rows of quonsets and huge docks. The war had unmistakably moved away from the Canal since 1942-'43.

The next morning found the ROTANIN on the high seas again, this time with a tiny Australian corvette as its lone escort. The ship headed due north across the Equator, obviously toward the Marshalls—1,420 miles from the Canal. It was the 87th's second crossing of "The Line."

A sub alarm at sunset caused everyone to don life-jackets while the lumbering ship lurched at crazy angles. After a few anxious moments, the corvette signalled reassuring news—a school of porpoises had excited the radar! However, the stubby escort was taking no chances. The transport was then quite near Truk and the Caroline Islands—still Jap-held!

The corvette was eventually relieved by a small American gunboat, which took over the watchdog duties for the remaining few days to Eniwetok.

The first indication of land came in the form of hundreds of short chimneys jutting out of the horizon and somewhat resembling a factory town. Slowly, the breath-taking scene unrolled and the men gaped at the unprecedented sight.

Here, enclosed within a barren, horseshoe-shaped strip of land were hundreds and hundreds of ships of all types—battlewagons, flat-tops, cruisers, destroyers, LSTs and pontoon barges—all crowding one another in the huge, land-locked harbor right there in the middle of nowhere! This was Eniwetok in February, 1945, the first—and thank God!—the only island of the Marshalls visited by the 87th.

While waiting for the next convoy, the men were taken on a shore party for a refreshing swim, a few bottles of beverage and a first-hand view of the battlegrounds.

At sea, once more, now the flagship of a 14-ship convoy, the ROTANIN covered the remaining five days and 1,430 additional miles to the Marianas uneventfully.

The men knew the long journey was nearing completion when they began to see flight after flight of huge B-29s passing in the distance. It was, however, with a genuine sigh of relief that the men greeted the rocky crags of Saipan after 17 tedious days of the sea. The 3,850-mile voyage from New Cal. to Saipan had exhausted all hands.



BAD BREAK. A majority had wagered hard cash the 87th would return Stateside from New Caledonia. Lacking only a month of meeting the Navy's 18-month requirement for rotation, mates never took seriously the possibility of another forward move, which, if it developed, would surely pro-

long their overseas tour beyond two years. It couldn't happen to an over-worked unit with a year in the Solomons behind them! (The ROTANIN is here shown leaving Monte D'Or for the Central Pacific Front.)



LAST LOOK. After four and one-half months in scenic New Caledonia, the utterly impossible had abruptly happened to the battalion. The men could scarcely believe it, but as the ROTANIN passed close by the world-

famous lighthouse in leaving Noumea's treacherous harbor, all knew that the unit wasn't being shipped to the great Saipan staging area just for the ride. Again, the blue chips were down!



"... AND WE CAN FIGHT." Anything to relieve the stifling monotony had been uppermost in the minds of most personnel on the WENTLEY, the LSTs, the NAOS and this concept remained unchanged aboard the ROTANIN. Even the proverbial card-playing, reading and sleeping

become tiresome on a 17-day voyage. Hence, it is little wonder that impromptu ring bouts (above) attracted such crowds. Robert ("Blackie") Lares (center) teaches a ship's crew novice a few Seabee tricks. Chief Frank Rychlak referees.



SUNDAY AT SEA. The battalion harbored many men of deep religious convictions. These never missed Divine Services—even at sea. Here, Comdr. Easterly (left) joins members of his command in singing praises to the Almighty.



PROFILES. The alert cameraman gets off a quick shot during the singing of a hymn at Divine Services and comes up with a candid study par excellence. It was scoops of this calibre that ranked 87th photography far above average.



PROBLEM. As he revises and rewrites cutlines for these pictures, THE EARTHMOVER editor (not shown) finds it increasingly difficult to concoct something original about shipboard card games. Therefore, he proposes to let players explain this one.



IN THE DOGHOUSE. There were almost as many dogs as men at Monte D'Or. With few exceptions, they were ingeniously smuggled aboard the ROTANIN. Even "Tippy," senior member of the 87th's canine contingent, was ordered into the above kennel.

BATTALION SWEATS IT OUT ON 17-DAY TRIP



"SWEEPERS, MAN YOUR BROOMS for a clean sweep fore and aft!" To those unfortunates who were assigned the ignoble task of keeping the littered decks swept, the foregoing order was anything but music in their ears. Sweeping was continuous.



HAVEN. Armond Kirschbaum (right foreground), talented EARTHMOVER artist, who did much of the art work for this volume, entertains friends atop a reefer. "Kirsch" sketched life aboard most ships, but lost his entire output.



LUNGA POINT. Once frothy Guadalcanal appeared unbelievably calm and peaceful in '45 to men who remembered its madhouse importance in September, '43. (For contrasting views, see page 39). Mates were no longer interested in the Canal—resumption

of the long journey ahead was all that mattered. Very few, in fact, ever learned why the brief stop was necessary at all. Certainly there was nothing to see here anymore. The Pacific action lay straight ahead in the direction they were sailing.

GUADALCANAL HAD BECOME "REAR AREA" BY 1945

"Well! Well! Well! So this is 'the Canal,' hey? They say there's dames here and everything. Must really be a racket if a guy could make Station Force!"

The 87th again anchored overnight at Guadalcanal on 3 February 1945. Once again, it was moving up into the "Big Time."

The stop was only a routine layover. Now, they were tired, 18-month veterans to whom war's glamour had become quite ragged.

Card games progressed listlessly. Most mates still read to kill time. Some discussed the ever-popular possibilities of going home—"after this next one!" Still others lay in their sacks below.

And Guadalcanal? This time, it was just another place where ships stopped overnight. Scarcely anyone mentioned the WENT-

LEY anchoring here in September, 1943—over 16 months before.

The past was too far away—too much had happened. The war had moved northward and away from the South Pacific with amazing rapidity.

Nature had cleverly camouflaged her battle-scars along the once embattled beaches. Lunga Point now looked like a cozy bathing resort. The bay had been cleared of all wreckage except a few permanently beached Jap warships, slowly rusting away.

Docks had been built and quonset warehouses lined the waterfront. Guadalcanal was definitely "rear area" now—just another port of call for shipping bound for the blazing Central and Western Pacific battle sectors.



SAYO. These mates were two, among others, who were still intrigued by the sobering nearness of momentous past events. A certain tenseness was almost sure to grip any American as he stood and gazed upon small, historic Savo Island—across famed

Iron Bottom Bay from Guadalcanal. Here, in darkest 1942, a potent Jap task force had sent four Allied cruisers to the bottom in jig-time. Here, somewhat later, Jap sea-power was dealt its death-blow in the Solomons.

SEAFARING 87TH REJUVENATED BY ENIWETOK BEER



OASIS. A barge-load of ship-weary Seabees from the ROTANIN are snapped en route from the AK-108 to the Fleet Canteen on Parry Island—hub of the strategic Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshalls. Parched throats can hardly wait!



COINS TO COOL. "Money to burn" could be exchanged (within limitations, of course!) for cold beer and coke on the arid sands of Parry Island. Chiefs Cedarstaff and Ahasy collect beverage money from John Spence, Johnny Bucceri and Bernie Kruger.



MOB SCENE. Three's a crowd—3,000 is a mob! This 87th mob waits patiently for their issue of liquid refreshments. Although most units brought sandwiches ashore, the ROTANIN contingent came only with appetites. Trading of beer for food was brisk.



S. O. S. in this instance, means "Sleep or Swim!" Assorted GIs, refugees from transports awaiting convoy assignments, bask or swim in broiling Parry Island sun to enjoy a brief respite ashore. Never had the 87th seen such a void as Eniwetok.



PACIFIC GOOD TIME. A serviceman's version of a good time in the Pacific would approach boredom back home. In a womanless world, a good time consists of time off, some cold drinks and something to eat better than rations.



BABY FLAT-TOPS. Of all the armed might in Eniwetok harbor, none so captivated the Seabees as various CVEs, one of which is herewith pictured. The carriers had pulled in and dropped anchor near the ROTANIN on Sunday.



THE MARSHALLS. Typical of the uninviting Marshall Islands was Parry Island (above), part of Eniwetok Atoll. Parry Island, barren, flat and entirely void of vegetation or shade, harbored the popular Fleet Canteen where the 87th downed a few beers and bummed a few sandwiches and

hard-boiled eggs off friendly Marines on 11 February 1945. A very small indication of the Navy's colossal concentration of sea-power at Eniwetok may be seen on horizon (right). Ships stretched for miles.

ENIWETOK — THE MARSHALL ISLANDS



DESOLATION. After four hours ashore, mates were willing to change name of their host islands from Eniwetok Atoll to "Absolutely-Nothing" Atoll. Mute testimony to the fury of America's all-out assault against the Marshalls is this shot of shell-swept desolation. Maimed trunks of once

verdant coconut palms stand sheared in half, charred evidence of what the Jap was up against in the Central Pacific. This was indeed a strange world to veterans of the altogether different Solomons campaign.



CONVOY. Caught in a long, trim line that stretches almost to the horizon, ships making up the ROTANIN's convoy leave Eniwetok for the Marianas. Entire convoy pursued a charted zig-zag course and was heavily escorted by warships.



NEIGHBORS. The camera peers from between two landing craft parked topside to capture this beautifully imagined shot of a Dutch merchant ship on starboard side of convoy's flagship, the ROTANIN. Eniwetok to Saipan trip took four days.



LAND HO! Tinian, five miles South of Saipan, was the first of the Marianas group sighted on the fourth day after leaving Eniwetok. Almost completely ringed by protective coral reefs, Tinian was a perfect companion B-29 base to Saipan.



RETURN FROM TOKYO. Heading East toward Saipan, the ROTANIN crosses paths with a flight of Superforts returning to their base after a devastating strike against the heart of Japan. The huge B-29s appear deceptively small from this angle.



THE SPRINGBOARD for the mammoth aerial strikes against Nippon suddenly came into sight as the convoy by-passed Tinian and there was Saipan shimmering under a bright February sun. Mates have begun to pack the rail for a better view.



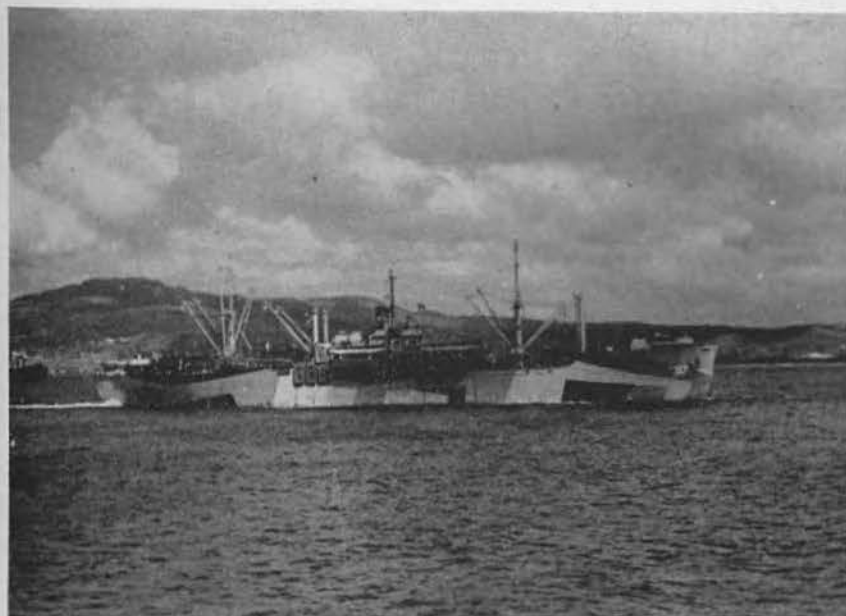
BOX SEATS. Chiefs Carl Ruble (left) and Bob Parrott, both ardent followers of the major leagues in the States, climb aboard a convenient hatch-cover for box seats as the ROTANIN leads the convoy into the crowded Saipan harbor.

SAIPAN WAS MOST ADVANCED PACIFIC BASE IN FEBRUARY, '45



INVALUABLE ROCK. Saipan, nearest striking point against the embattled enemy in February, '45, was figuratively worth its weight in gold as a base of operations. As the convoy got closer and closer to the strategic island, passengers were amazed at the island's enormous installations, es-

pecially the numerous airfields, which handled fighters and B-27s with equal dispatch. Wrested from a strong Jap garrison during preceding summer, Saipan was nearing its peak of development when the 87th arrived for staging six months later.

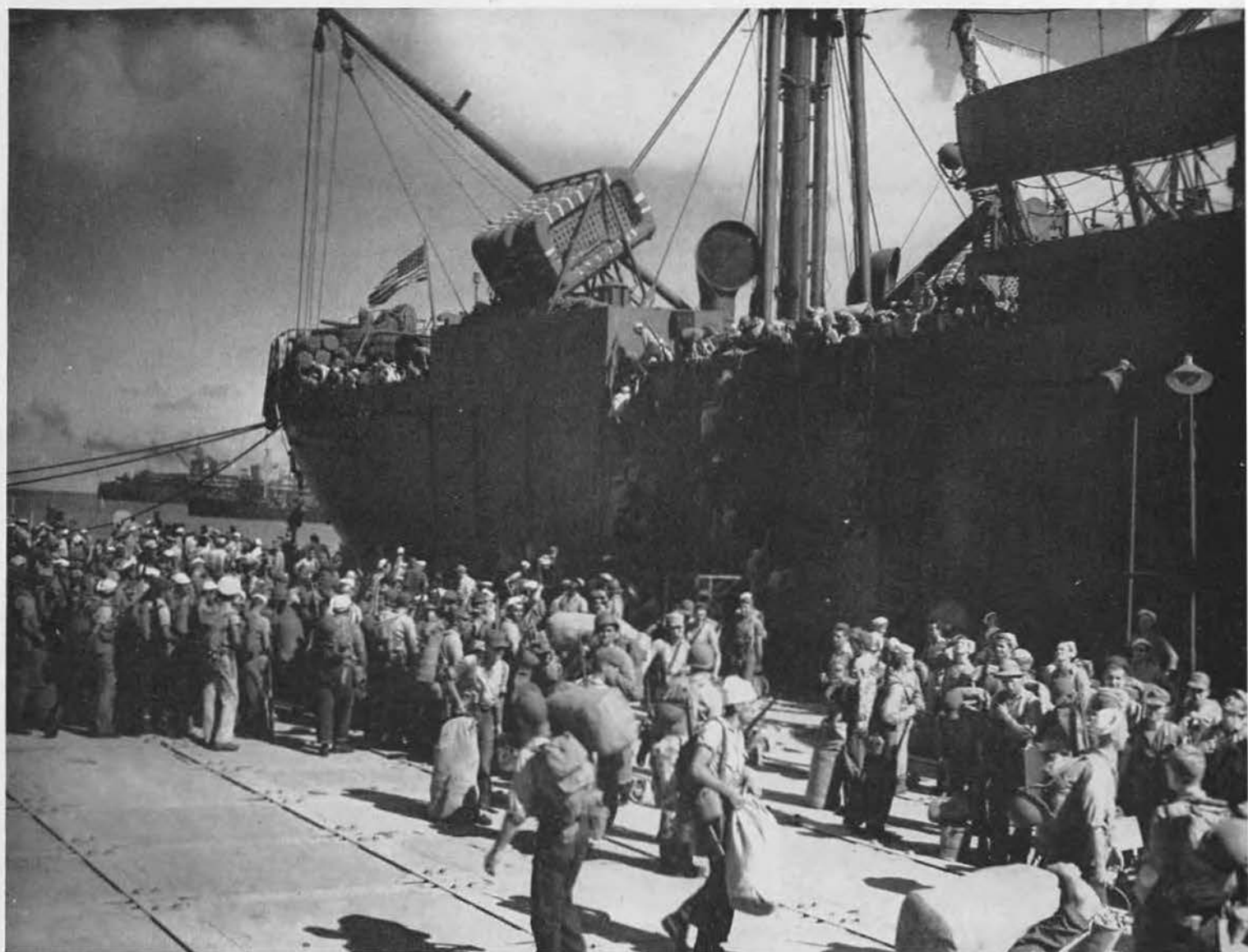


BOUND FOR IWO JIMA, PA-157, one of 56 attack vessels transporting Marines, Seabees and invasion equipment, crosses ROTANIN's bow as first assault waves leave Saipan on 16 February. Three days later, this potent force unleashed all hell again Iwo.



SILHOUETTES. The ROTANIN reached Saipan 17 days after leaving New Caledonia, but the massive operation against Iwo postponed debarkation until following morning. Here, several eye-witnesses to world-shaking events discuss what they have seen.

SEASONED 87TH DISEMBARKS FOR SAIPAN STAGING PERIOD



OVER THE SIDE. The 87th boarded the ROTANIN the hard way (see page 201) and debarkation was no different. If the AK-108 had a brow, ship's crew was evidently saving it for invasion of Japan. While hundreds already off wait on pier, others clamber down rickety rope netting and ladders.

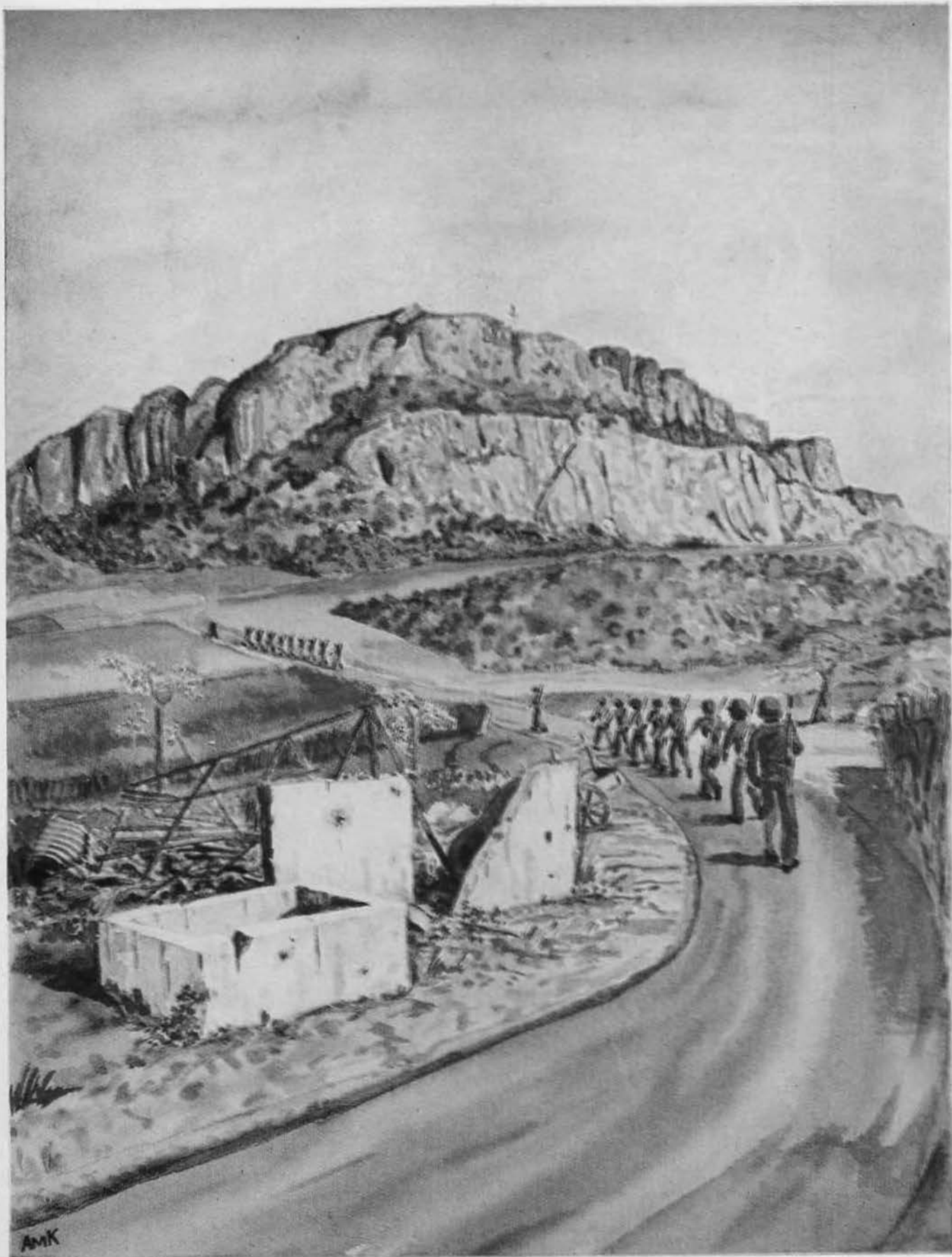
Men used hand-ropes to lower some personal gear they didn't want to carry during tricky descent. Seabags and duffelbags, along with the dogs, were unloaded in cargo nets.



LOOK ALIVE, MEN! Chief Jim Ferron musters T Division contingent prior to loading on trucks for scenic ride to the battalion's staging camp. Second echelon was met at dock by Lt. Comdr. Flynn and other officers of the advance group.



THE SHIP, looking sleek and trim, releases her booms once all troops are ashore and prepares to discharge her cargo. Soon, gangs of carpenters, riggers and stevedores will be returning from camp in orderly shifts to commence unloading.



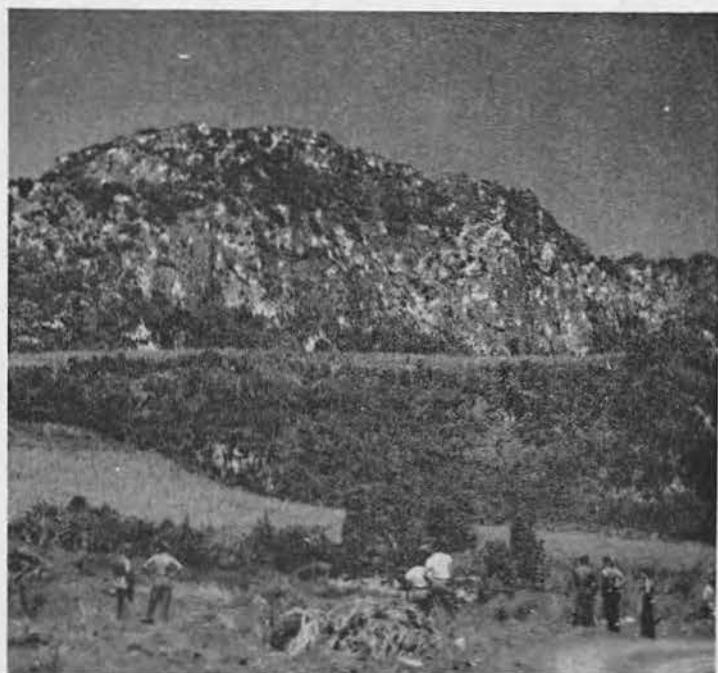
MOPPING UP
(A Saipan Water Color)

S A I P A N



M A R I A N A S I S L A N D S

SECOND STAGING CAMP SHAPES UP RAPIDLY



A NEW CAMP IS BORN. Newly arrived men of first echelon, which reached Saipan on 27 January 1945, gaze uncertainly at sloping cane fields where staging camp is to be built. Shellpocked cliffs remind newcomers of grim battle waged for Saipan.



CULTIVATOR. A chugging 'dozer, operated by "Red" Moorman, clears a patch of native sugar cane as camp construction begins in earnest. During the months an entire army was being assembled for the BIVE assault, the 87th sweated it out here.



HAND LAUNDRY. Clothes laden with gritty coral dust and honest Seabee sweat are no problem for Sam Miller, "Little Caesar of the Chow Hall," who operates his own laundry. New camp sites have no washing machine luxuries for weeks.



WIRED FOR ACTION. William Shady (left) "gets a line" on pole as Andrew ("Mule") Steadley prepares to mount native timber. Altogether, 50 miles of telephone and 20 miles of electrical wire knitted the staging camp into a tightly-woven unit.



JOB VARIETY. A guard stands solitary watch as John Bell guides motor grader over rough coral road within staging camp perimeter. Dazzling coral surface gave off constant clouds of powdery dust and men and tents became coated with grimy skim of dirt. De-

spite sustained adverse conditions, American vehicles kept right on rolling over roads once traveled by the Sons of Heaven. Many Jap soldiers (and some civilians) had somehow managed to elude dragnet and were living in hills like animals.

SAIPAN WAS STAGING AREA FOR OKINAWA PUSH

In early 1945, Saipan was a front page punchline in the news of the world. As the battalion's advance echelon arrived there on 27 January, they were already reading of the huge B-29 armadas taking off from the Marianas for the Jap homeland. Again, the seasoned 87th was moving into a front seat!

As the second echelon rolled in on 16 February, they were treated to the stirring sight of a huge convoy of 56 PA ships—loaded to the gunwhales with Marines—heading for the all-out assault against bloody Iwo Jima.

The staging camp had been pitched in a cleared sugar cane field at the base of a tall, jagged, shell-pocked mountain cliff. Tents had been thrown up hastily with no thought of permanence.

By far the most persistent gripe of the men was the sustained scarcity of fresh water. Mates waited in long, tiresome lines for a ration of one-third of a bucket of the precious necessity three times a day. Eventually, salt-water showers were installed in order to furnish at least rudimentary bathing facilities.

Due to the extremely poor living conditions, morale was not at its best. Food again reverted to the almost forgotten GI rations. Beer, although usually issued twice a week, was lukewarm and anything but refreshing.

However, with the 29 March change of command, certain essential changes began to occur. Ice water, for example, was served at chow; iced beer was sold in the newly-erected beer garden; and ice cream—of all things!—again appeared on the menu. "The Forgotten Battalion" naturally began to perk up!

Construction took a brief respite on Saipan. A few carpenter crews threw together some large quonsets at the 39th General Hospital and later erected a few long wooden structures for the natives in Garapan.

The Allied Military Government borrowed an 87th survey party to lay out various housing projects in the native area, while Chief Andy Competiello rubbed elbows with Jap civilian draftsmen at Camp Susupe. This, and the clearing of adjacent areas for incoming Seabees, comprised the battalion's construction program on HODE.

Reliable scuttlebutt had the 87th joining the huge, recently-formed Tenth Army. Wild rumors foretold an all-out push in the near future. The next beachhead would probably be Formosa, the China coast or Japan proper! Meanwhile, the battalion sweated through another series of lectures and refresher courses covering all phases of military science and tactics.

The neighboring 24th Infantry Regiment permitted 87th officers and men to accompany them on night patrols. Various "volunteers" cut legitimate notches on their rifle-stocks after patrolling the Jap-infested hills with this veteran colored outfit.

In spite of a constant vigil by a cordon of guards, the battalion supply dump time and again displayed evidence of enemy thievery. The guard was doubled and ordered to shoot any moving object after sundown.

One wild night, shortly before midnight, a terrific barrage of rifle fire awakened the slumbering camp. Guns of all descriptions joined the fray from the obviously excited O. O. D. and M. A. A. offices.

Word spread that Japs were trapped and pinned down by at least 40 would-be heroes wielding '03s, BARs and even two machine-guns. The entire camp was naturally kept on edge all night by the nearby sustained, crackling gunfire.

Finally, dawn came and all hands hurried to the supply dump to gaze upon the carnage. However, to everyone's amazement, no bodies lay strewn about the shell-pocked area. Nor had any of the alleged Japs surrendered! In fact, there weren't any Japs around at all. There were only the crestfallen "Gostapo" whose faces will doubtless always crimson whenever the incident is mentioned.

Later, almost the entire battalion witnessed a prime example of Saipan's savage warfare as waged in the Spring of 1945. The men stood in noon chow-line and watched a 24th Infantry patrol, high on a towering, shell-scarred ledge, mow down three cornered Japs at point-blank range and then throw the bodies over the precipice for further disposition.

After a few months of this, the battalion was mentally geared for the move against BIVE.



SUPPLIES ARRIVE. Charlie ("Pudgy") Barker, supply storekeeper (left), checks shipping lists as Marvin Martin, Raymond Allard and Everett Dubuque place a box in supply dump. Jap rails proved boon in setting up bays and keeping materials dry.



WATCH IT CLOSE, MATE! Most precious commodity of overseas battalions is Stateside lumber. Mike Lubišich (right) keeps sharp lookout for any and all "procuring" parties as truck-crane swings another net of supplies onto bays. Bullgang takes five.



DAILY WORD. Second echelon reaches staging camp on 17 February and the newcomers rush division bulletin boards for "the latest" and tent assignments. After reading all notices, new arrivals will seek out first echelon cronies for "the real lowdown."



FRAMED. Warren Parrish, Joe Ward and unidentified carpenter's mate are shown in midst of framing battalion barber shop, which will be ready for customers once a tarp covering is thrown over skeleton. All staging structures were strictly temporary.



TOPSIDE. The battalion's staging life was governed by directives and orders issued from this row of tent-offices: Personnel and Disbursing (far left), Camp Administration, Executive Officer, OinC, Operations, O. O. D. —and Eddie Breitenbach.



SHOT AGAIN. The memory of past shots was all too vivid as the men fell into line to receive "The Square Needle" again in anticipation of the coming invasion. Shots were given for Yellow Fever, Cholera and Tetanus. Men received shots in both arms.



WATER! WATER! WATER! Painful cries and dejected spirits are linked forever with memories of Saipan's acute water shortage. Trucks hauled the available supply around the clock, storing the precious liquid in large distilleries, but the crying demand could never be met! Bucket brigades

formed in long lines prior to "watering hours," but a guard on each spigot allowed only one-third of a bucket to each dirty man. Here, a typical group waits for the main valve to be opened.



CAN DO—AGAIN! The embarrassing shortage of fresh water was in sharp contrast to the limitless supply of salt water. This ingenious contraption was "invented" by some of the more progressive element, using empty fuel drums, fashioned together by pipe. It was another illustration of what

the combined talent of two 87th divisions (P and T) could accomplish working together. This water truck was put into operation none too soon as most of the outfit was groggy from dust.



BUG TENT. When this strange tent opened for business, everyone suspected the worst. Here, green shirts and trousers, as well as blankets and socks, were given a thorough impregnation. Scuttlebutt said BIVE would be lousy with bugs—and Japs!



X MARKS THE SPOT, but in this instance a yellow X will identify the portions of each Seabee's wardrobe that have been chemically rendered bug-proof by dipping into a DDT solution by Jesse Coomes (left) and John Henderson. These precautions created much scuttlebutt.



SLUGS FOR PARATROOPERS. Armory group works far into the night in March when Saipan went on an all-night black alert—ENEMY INVASION EXPECTED! Left to right: Ed. Simons, Jim Kellar, "Tubby" Hiles, Charlie Welsey and Willie Hanley prepare for the worst.



CONDITION BLACK. The suddenly aroused camp turns out for hurried muster, fogged in coveralls, and helmets and carrying pieces and gas-masks. This was battalion's only scare at Saipan and resulted from reports of Jap task force headed for Marianas.



AT HOME. Battalion was open to receive visitors when this progress shot was taken of the completed camp in early March. Tailor and barber shops, as well as Ship's Store, are in foreground. Officers Country is situated in the background.



ADMIRAL'S HEALTH CLUB. Muscular members of "Admiral Ben" Stone's celebrated health club always managed to find time for their daily workout. The Admiral (back to camera) instructs Stan Fendryk, Bob Harrington, Joe Cabral (lifting) and "Lippy" Lipshitz.



CHARGE! Employing the shrill battle-cry picked up at New Caledonia from Actor John Alexander's long remembered impersonation of the immortal "Teddy" in "Arsenic and Old Lace," an 87th division simulates a charge over rugged Saipan hills. Such field maneuvers were basic in the outfit's extensive military training pro-

gram. During these rigorous field problems, many men discovered they weren't physically up to invasion standards. However, daily hikes (with loaded pieces!) through the Jap-haunted hills soon remedied this situation.

SAIPAN FIELD MANEUVERS TOO REALISTIC AT TIMES

Saipan was bad. Thousands of stubborn Japs still remained in the hills and caves, frequently ambushing unwary small parties in broad daylight.

Guards surrounded the camp perimeter each night, challenging and firing almost in the same breath. Sudden volleys often awakened the entire camp. No one dared move beyond the fixed area.

Scouting parties from the neighboring 24th Infantry killed hundreds of Japs during the 87th's staging period.

Jap remains rotted everywhere. Even the battalion camp site was littered with bleaching bones. Unexploded rockets with blocks of TNT attached stuck out of the ground like arrows.

A new firing range was set up and pieces were zeroed again, this time in earnest—like checking an important piece of equipment.

Large groups travelled across the island to the 20-mm. AA range to fire at towed sleeves. Mortars and machine-guns acquired a new meaning. All hands had a go at them.

Combat marching took the place of close-order drill. These hikes gradually lengthened to 10 miles over dangerous ridges and deceptive hills, along narrow trails in thickly-wooded hollows, and through fields of tall sugar cane. The last quarter-mile was usually at a jog-trot.

This was combat training in enemy-infested territory—not routine drilling in boot! The shell-scarred cliffs, the wreckage of homes and the shreds of blasted civilian clothing convinced even the hardest skeptic that this war was actually a survival of the fittest.

Throughout these daily field exercises, training groups were continually flushing small groups of armed Japs in the fields of sugar cane. Greatly outnumbered, the surprised Japs usually beat it!

The 87th had been assigned to the new Tenth Army for the forthcoming mammoth operation against BIVE. And scuttlebutt said this army was slated to blast all the way inside the Jap Empire!

But the mates didn't seem too much concerned. They were still too busy discussing the recent New Caledonia maneuver—perhaps better known as "The Quick Shuffle"—and how it was applied to the battalion's aborted "rest period."



PEEPHOLE. Sam Fields peers cautiously through a comparatively large hole made by Naval shellfire on an enemy blockhouse during the invasion of Saipan in June, 1944. This blasted fortification was found during one of many military maneuvers in March.



AND NOW FOR A SMOKE. Tired, sweaty, aching Seabees halt for "The Pause That Refreshes." The indispensable cigarettes are forthwith lighted and canteens drained to within the last drop as squad protecting column's rear arrives. Most men found these infrequent rest periods all too short, at

first, but they were soon able to hike miles without tiring. Here, group rests adjacent sugar cane fields where a party of Japs had been flushed a short time before. (See page 351.)



FIELD LECTURE. Chief Vic Cedarstaff outlines next phase of field maneuvers while the class continues to recover from long, hard pull up into the mountains. Sugar cane in these fields was well over heads of even the six-footers and was frequent hideout for Japs.



DANGEROUS BUSINESS. Jim Bilyard (right) gives Wendell Cornish, specialist in mine detection work, a hand as latter guides latest type detector carefully over ground. Cornish, along with Ens. Edwin Rayson, was temporarily attached to the 87th for Okinawa operation.



PRELUDE. "Coming events cast their shadow before" as battalion members, assigned to the mine detection squad, work out against a cloud-filled backdrop. When Allied assault forces reach BIVE, (now suspected to be operational code name for the Ryukyus), every foot of invasion terri-

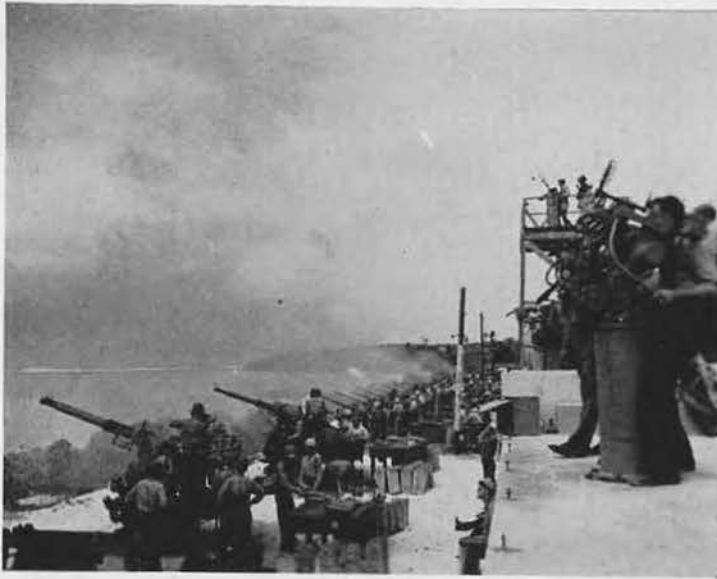
tory must be combed with these detectors and buried mines unearthed and exploded. This was to be a tedious task, but a highly necessary one to keep men and equipment from being blown to bits.



FIRST COOK'S TOUR. With the unexpected change of command in late March, Comdr. Richard R. Cook, the new OinC, promptly inaugurated his celebrated COOK'S TOURS of Saipan and future destinations. Such tours, of course, were scheduled for Sunday as the 87th now had the Sabbath off

for a welcome change. Here, a truck-load of battalion "tourists" are casually inspecting the stark ruins of a native home. Battered Jap gun positions along the coast also attracted these "globe trotters."

ACK-ACK CREWS PREPARE FOR "BLUE" INVASION



COMMENCE FIRING! The staccato bark of lead-belching 20-mm. guns rent the air above Saipan as each anti-aircraft crew fires its allotted rounds at the plane-towed sleeve. This was the next best thing to action and the men loved it.



TRACK THE SLEEVE! An 87th ack-ack crew, led by Mackey Davis (right foreground), tensely eyes approaching target as the gunner lines his sights on moving sleeve. As in the Solomons, the men took this type of training quite seriously.



PANDEMONIUM. Dozens of 20s all along the firing line let loose simultaneously as the mechanical range-finder broadcasts the range. Hundreds of tracers streaked the air, all tending to converge on the target. The noise of the mass firing was so intense many men held their cotton-stuffed ears

and figuratively hung on. Crews from ships anchored in Tanapag Harbor, as well as all Seabees, trained at this well arranged Naval gunnery school. All firing was directed toward sea.



FRATERNIZATION? A Jap prisoner of war intently studies the intricate mechanism of an American transit as his four fellow prisoners and five Seabees watch the proceedings. Chief Kenneth Hansing (left), Sammy Carlino, Jim Bollerhey, Joe Fontcuberta (pointing to instrument) and Larry

Slater give helpful hints with hand motions from time to time. Jap prisoners assisted Allied forces in building up every captured island, thus releasing skilled GIs for more meticulous work. The Engineers really got around on Saipan.



39TH GENERAL HOSPITAL was one of three projects assigned the 87th during its three-month stay on Saipan. Above quonset hut additions provided cool, roomy wards for wounded Marines returning from the flaming inferno that was Iwo Jima in February. This hospital assignment was, in

fact, the most sizeable Saipan project tackled by the unit. More and more the emphasis swung to military training and eventually this strange war found carpenters, painters and riggers maneuvering alongside storekeepers, yeomen and cooks.



HONORABLE ANCESTORS. Three lonely skulls are grim reminders of the stubborn, fanatical Jap resistance that made Saipan one of the most costly Pacific bases to acquire. Jean Worley, Charlie Johnson and Pete DeRyke stumbled onto this cave during a souvenir hunt and decided to investi-

gate. In addition to numerous skeletons strewn about and Jap characters carved on cavern walls, the explorers also found bits of clothing, rusty weapons, Jap coins and diaries and even a few enemy photographs.



ANYBODY HOME? The yawning entrance to still another cavern dwarfs this party of armed "explorers" as they carefully size up the situation before entering the cave. Many caves were as large as an ordinary house and were used as temporary homes by Jap soldiers when they were driven inland by invasion forces. Booby traps were often found inside.





B-29 LAIR. Principal weapon used to bring Japan to her knees without invasion was the powerful armadas of Superforts, which flew out of the Marianas with Saipan as the hub of operations. These graceful sky monsters took off from (and most returned to) Isley

Field—once a Jap fighter strip. It was from the above lair that picked B-29s, carrying the world-shaking atomic bombs, took off on life-changing missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August, '45.

SEABEES OCCUPY RINGSIDE SEATS FOR B-29 SHOW

For months news accounts were full of stories of the new weapon that was proving the answer to the long distances involved in the Pacific war.

With the arrival of the 87th on Saipan, mates grasped the first opportunity to visit the B-29 field and investigate the sky monsters at first hand.

Isley Field was built on the site of the captured Jap Aslito Strip. It was greatly enlarged, improved and reinforced with water asphalt topping by Army engineers to accommodate the heavier ships.

The men soon made the acquaintance of ground crews who showed them over the big planes from nose to tail.

Such mysteries as speed, altitude, bomb-loads, fire-power and other pertinent details soon became the source of much discussion in the staging area.

Morale during January and February, 1945, was low among the pilots and crews of the Superforts. Losses were high and the long 3,000-mile round-trip was a grueling physical and mental ordeal.

The most difficult problem was the weather over Japan. At 30,000 feet, the wind often blew at 200 miles an hour. Traveling upwind, this made the B-29s easy targets for ack-ack. Jap fighter pilots did not hesitate to ram the big planes.

However, the morale of the B-29 crews rose in March with the securing of Iwo Jima, halfway between Saipan and Tokyo. Iwo had been intended originally as a base for P-51 fighters, which were to accompany B-29s over Japan. But it turned out to be even more valuable as a rescue station where crippled or gas-shy B-29s could set down on the way back from Nippon.

With their new station established and with the added protection of fighters, the B-29s began a systematic burning of Japan's industrial areas with thousands of incendiaries.

Seated in the movie area in the evening, mates could watch the heavily-loaded Superforts get under way, one after the other, fly low for a time over the water, slowly gain altitude and head for the enemy's homeland.

By this time, the 87th had a ringside idea of what the Jap Empire was undergoing and what was yet in store for the aggressors.



TAKE OFF! A Superfort, warming up for the take-off, races its powerful motors on taxiway (right) before wheeling out onto one of several main strips. Despite distance involved, many Seabees from staging areas visited Isley Field at every opportunity.



UNHATCHED EGGS. A crack B-29 ground crew, radiating plenty of "know-how," goes about the routine business of readying a Superfort for the next mission to Japan as Seabee visitors (right) look on admiringly. Some of crew concentrate on motors while others prepare to load up bomb-

racks with monstrous "eggs" laid out in left foreground. It took immense quantities of fuel, ammunition and bombs to keep these Gargantuan war-birds operating at their peak of efficient destruction.



TAIL. Two crewmen slip the tail-belly turret into place as the ground crew buttons up the great ship for the next Jap strike, which will get under way as soon as flight crew arrives from briefing room. These missions were taken quite seriously by crews.



MISSION'S END. Dog-tired and completely worn out from the long, unescorted flight over Japan, a B-29 crew loads into waiting vehicle for usual short session with Intelligence before hitting the sack. This was America's "first team" in the Pacific play-off.



PIN-UPS. An unmistakable attitude of nonchalance and boredom describes this indifferent mechanic as he dozes peacefully beside the shapely inspiration painted on nose of another well-named B-29. Several artists had full-time assignments at Isley Field painting lovely nudes or challeng-

ing motifs on the Superforts. The names of the ships, in most cases, reflected that which was uppermost in the crew's minds while they were about their lethal business. Such art work was definitely good for morale.



CRAFTSMANSHIP. Mute tribute to the uncanny Jap craftsmanship was found in these concrete pillboxes lining the southern ridges of Isley Field. Walls, three-foot thick, remain intact despite terrific Naval bombardment and aerial bombing during the invasion. When the air corps took over

Aslito Field and renamed it after Comdr. Isley, these sturdy blockhouses were used for storage of supplies and as living quarters until more suitable billets could be built. Several Superforts are parked on hardstands.



FIELD DAY. Both officers and men spent long hours washing and polishing their Superforts. They seemed to lavish the same care on these big ships as they had once accorded their personal automobiles in civilian days. Bullet holes were patched and all traces of grease and dirt were

removed from the gleaming, stainless surface with the aid of vigorous "elbow grease." Each new mission invariably found the ships in A-1 condition. Several B-24 Liberators are parked across taxiway.



"A THING OF BEAUTY is a joy forever," the poet said, but the regular appearance of these giant B-29s over Tokyo was doubtless anything but beautiful to the doomed Japanese. As a party of Seabees watch, the four powerful engines thunder as the pilot prepares to "give her the gun."

Entire ship quivers and strains. Then, the brakes are released and the immense war machine leaps forward. Gracefully it rises, the wheels fold magically and the long flight has begun.



PUBLIC BATH. Chamorro women and children gather of an evening at one of Camp Susupe's many public wells to wash clothes and bathe. All this is an integral part of the varied and interesting life inside the enemy alien compound supervised by the Al-

lied Military Government. Clothes were scrubbed in true Navy-fashion—1) dipped in bucket of water; 2) laid out flat on the spacious concrete deck; 3) scrubbed vigorously with large stiff brush. The parallel ended there.

CAMP SUSUPE WAS A PRIME SAIPAN ATTRACTION

Saipan was the first Jap territory where U. S. Forces encountered large numbers of Jap citizens. Scrawny, hungry civilians still drifted out of caves where they had hidden since the battle began in June, 1944.

They were housed in the two-mile-square compound called Camp Susupe (named after the nearby shallow lake) which sheltered approximately 18,000 Japs, along with numerous Chamorros, Koreans and Kanakas.

The compound was a prime objective of the 87th sightseers, but the closest most men were able to approach the reservation was to ride by on a truck. A heavy detail of MPs on the outside was reinforced by an interior guard of Civilian Police appointed by the Allied Military Government.

The captive civilians lived in makeshift shelters, built of weathered planks, battered sheet metal roofing from the nearby bomb-shattered sugar refinery and tattered bits of canvas.

During the Saipan staging period, Seabee carpenters were at work constructing large, clean, wooden barracks at a new camp site a few miles away. When these were ready for occupancy, it would improve the sanitary conditions of the badly overcrowded settlement. A survey party of the 87th Engineers and a draftsman worked at the compound for several weeks and found the strange customs of the occupants highly interesting.

Canned food rationed out to the civilians from huge warehouses was supplemented by fresh vegetables and fruit, which they cultivated in the fertile Saipan soil. Ample supplies of fish caught in the nearby Pacific were almost daily on their menu. Besides tilling the fields and fishing, the Japs worked as common laborers and at other jobs they were equipped to handle for the Armed Forces. Most laborers received 35c per day while skilled workers were paid 50c.

An Army-staffed hospital received the seriously ill and wounded. The "Midtown Pharmacy" treated about 1,200 cases a day, mostly malnutrition, diarrhea, worms and beriberi.

Saipan Japs apparently had one of the highest birthrates on Earth. The swarms of children, who played everywhere in the area and begged for candy, seemed quite happy in their new surroundings.

The treatment they received as prisoners proved to even the most suspicious Japanese that their government's propaganda had viciously distorted the American enemy. The Americans had taken a long step forward, promoting inestimable goodwill by their just treatment of the vanquished.



PASS ONE! Battalion surveyors, working within the native compound for the Civilian Government, were required to show certified passes before gaining entrance. Joe Fontcuberta smilingly presents his pass to unsmiling woman guard as he enters restricted section of camp.

JAPS ENJOY USUAL PURSUITS AT CAMP SUSUPE



RECITATION. Sponsored by the Allied Military Government, young boys and girls attend school regularly within the extensive native compound. Here, youngsters are taught to read and write and are given the same recreational opportunities as kids in Democratic countries.



MILITARISM. Despite rigid restrictions imposed by Allied authorities, native teachers still contrive to inject a bit of military training into educational routine. Here, the alert cameraman catches a group of young girls standing at "Right, Dress!"



FREE FOR ALL. Carefree boys wrestle and pummel one another just as American boys have done since Revolutionary times. As usual, this community tussle stemmed from two young Chamorros fighting over candy. Native kids, like those everywhere, love sweets.



BALANCED PRECISION. Two heavily laden buckets swing lightly from the crosspole as this sturdy native woman walks barefooted along a dusty road within the compound. As is customary throughout the Orient, women do bulk of the manual work.



SLOW BUT SURE. A slightly sway-backed ox trudges after his master, pulling a cart-load of highly usable rough lumber. These two-wheeled carts were most conspicuous on Saipan. The battalion had seen a few on New Caledonia. Such contraptions always excited interest.



FISH MARKET. A proud, smiling native woman displays a fat, salt-water fish to her inquiring Seabee visitors. Fish is a cherished staple in the native diet on Saipan. Squatting position is seen throughout the Central and Western Pacific.



CLASSES. Native girls study their lessons in an outdoors room of the Camp Susupe school sponsored by their American conquerors for the uplift of a race long trod under foot by the Japanese. Meanwhile, the irrepressible boys are enjoying a bit of recess (background). The people

were still free to worship as they pleased, the leading faiths being Buddhism and Shintoism. The makeshift Buddhist temple then had a tin roof, no front door, but its priest had all his trappings.



PROTEST. Violent screams rent the air as THE EARTHMOVER photographer took this little fellow's picture. He was in fine fettle until he spied camera. Ten to 15 babies are born each day at Camp Susupe. Births are recorded.



SAGE AND SPOUSE. This elderly gentleman of the old school refused to pose alone and it wasn't until his good wife was beside him that picture could be taken. This old couple appeared to be taking new life in stride.



"SAIPAN SAM," the gentleman with the sarcastic voice, is photographed in midst of his daily broadcast from Station WXLD. His "must" program reproved officers and men alike, but as caustic as he was, no one ever missed his daily tirade. (Real name: Ashley Sims.)



DOMINANT SEVEN. A memorable swing session in the chow hall by musicians formerly with Tommy Dorsey, Earl ("Father") Hines, "Fats" Waller and Stan Kenton was topflight relaxation. Battalion bandmen were: "Josh" Kenning, George Yorke, Armond Kirschbaum and Tom Peiffer.



TANAPAG HARBOR. The second COOK'S TOUR found truck-loads of mates ranging far and wide over the 75-square-mile island. Here, a typical group pauses en route to enjoy refreshing panoramic beauty of Tanapag Harbor. Remains of the erstwhile capital city of Garapan is be-

yond headlands (left). In order to obtain truck and driver for Sabbath tours, each group of "tourists" had to recruit required number (20) and a CPO to be in charge of trip.



CENTRAL PACIFIC. Atop a hill near Marpi Point at northern tip of Saipan, Edmund ("Jas") Jaskulski, photographer and executive editor of **THE EARTHMOVER**, consents (under pressure) to be photographed against this sweeping background, which perhaps reveals more than the censors

could have passed had the war not ended many months before the distribution of this volume. This superb shot, along with the half-page view on opposite page, shows prominent coral reef protecting Tanapag Harbor to best advantage.



SUICIDE CLIFFS. The Pacific's blue waters beat against rugged coral reefs and cliffs in endless fury, causing salt spray to resemble boiling steam arising from the surf. Hundreds of frantic civilians threw their children and then themselves over the high cliffs rather than be captured by Marines

mopping up northern end of the island. As the 87th was leaving Saipan, months after the mass suicides of '44, remnants of clothing and human bones were still being found along the shore.



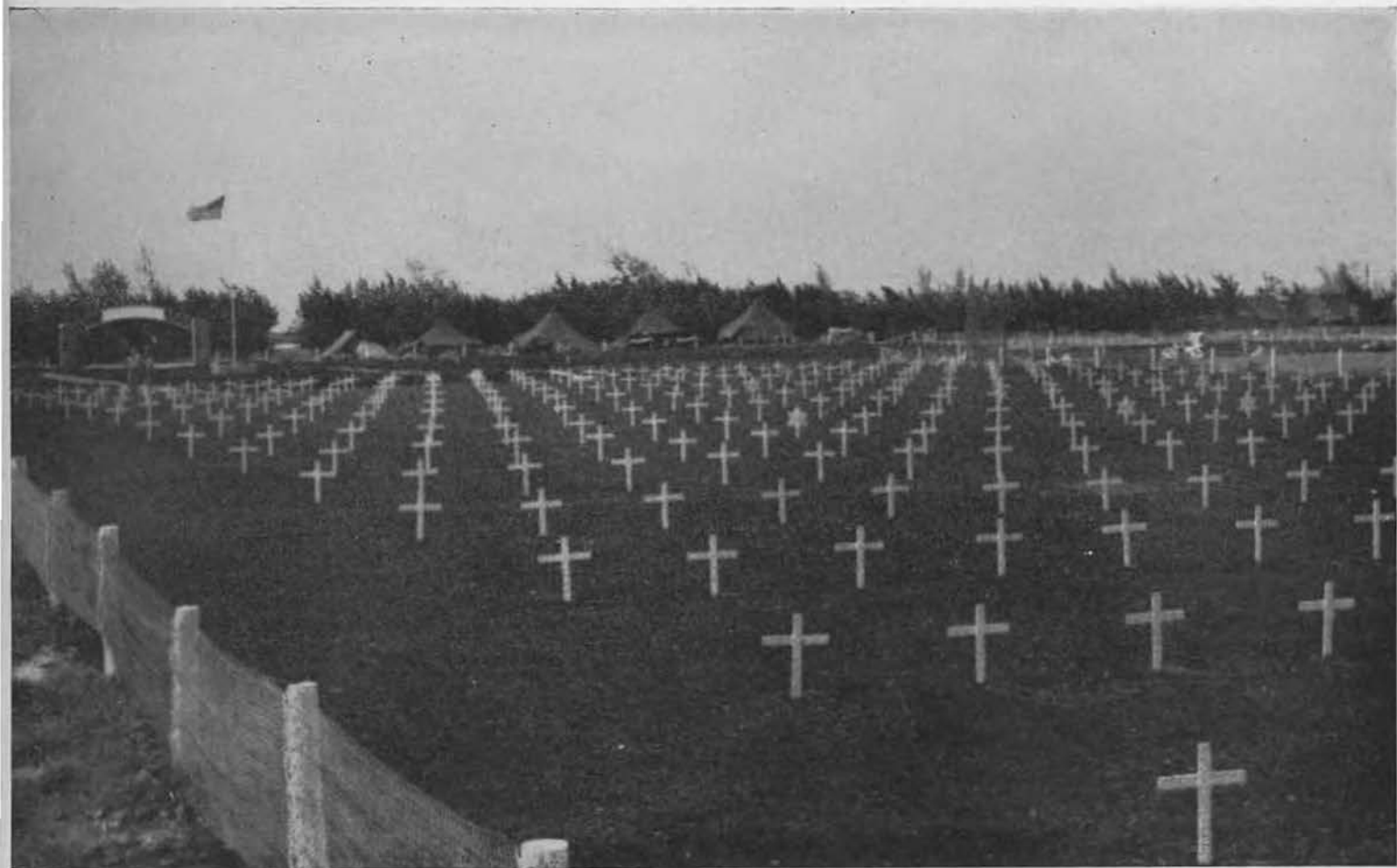
JAP FACTORY. Leading industry of Charan Kanoa was a sprawling sugar mill (refinery), which was reduced to above state by 16-inch Naval shell-fire during the furious Allied assault against this key to the Marianas and the approaches to Tokyo. The nearby town of Charan Kanoa (population:

2,500) also lay in a mass of twisted rubble. Although sturdily built and reinforced, the sugar mill was unable to withstand terrific barrages laid down by Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58.



BUSTED BANK. With windows, including frames, completely blasted, roof gone and walls peeling, all that's left of the once proud Bank of Garapan stands as grim reminder to Jap survivors of U. S. might. Yawning hole at top-front of building and those in right end indicate direct hits by giant

projectiles fired offshore. Entire thriving city of Garapan, Jap capital of the Marianas group, was virtually wiped out during invasion. (TIME's issue, 17 July 1944, pictures same building.)



THE PRICE. Row after row of gleaming white crosses mark the final resting place of the Fourth Marine Division's gallant dead—part of the price America paid for a "must" island. To the U. S., the cost of Saipan was admittedly high—2,359 killed, 1,213 missing, 11,481 wounded. But

the overall military justification was high, too; Saipan was the most important objective yet taken by U. S. troops—it established an air base only 1,500 miles from Tokyo.



JAPS PAID, TOO. Most of Japan's 16,000 known military dead in the titanic struggle for Saipan were buried in mass graves dug and covered by bulldozers. In addition to 1,000 prisoners, countless others were missing in caves where they were buried by explosive or bulldozers. Here,

in a hallowed corner of Camp Susupe are buried most civilian casualties who were caught between the American juggernaut and their own lines. Graves are coral topped with wooden markers bearing names of deceased.



SHINTO, which literally means "emperor worship," is embodied in any shrine where Jap soldiers pray to their "Son of Heaven." When Japan originally occupied Saipan, they brought their shrines along. Shinto worship posed a definite problem in religious freedom for the Allied

Military Government charged with the administration of Camp Susupe. Authorities had made no attempt to stop Shintoism, but no facilities had been set up to encourage it. Here, touring 87th representatives view a Shinto shrine at close range.



JAP PILLBOX. Numbers of these formidable fortifications still rimmed the future B-29 field after invasion—an ignoble monument to short-sighted Jap stupidity. These pillboxes, constructed of reinforcing steel and concrete three feet thick, were apparently impregnable to attacking troops. Two

narrow slits at unseen end constituted observation and firing posts. The opened iron door was the sole entrance. Finally, American invasion forces stormed close enough for craftsmen to weld door shut. Occupants were exterminated by grenades through firing slits.



"I SALUTE YOU!" Comdr. Easterly assembles the battalion in the open area on a rare Sabbath morning to bid men he had led since 16 April 1943 a heartfelt goodbye. This was Skipper Easterly's last official act before turning the OinC reins over to his succes-

or, Comdr. Richard R. Cook. The change of command came as a shock to most. On the eve of the largest operation in the Pacific campaign, the men groped for an explanation, but none was coming.

FIRST CHANGE OF COMMAND OCCURS AT SAIPAN

On 29 March 1945, the 87th Seabees were shaken out of their staging area lethargy at Saipan. Without warning, announcement was made that Comdr. Robert Easterly, original OinC, had been relieved by Comdr. Richard R. Cook, a veteran construction man, who had been in charge of the 99th Battalion in the Pacific during his previous tour of duty.

The responsibility of guiding the 87th had rested squarely on Comdr. Easterly's shoulders for approximately two years. He assumed the helm at Camp Peary, took the men north to Endicott, shepherded them across the country to California, and paced them for 19 months in the South Pacific where the strain was frequently at the breaking point.

After this rather exacting tour of duty, The Skipper was ordered to the States for a well-deserved rest and reassignment.

It was not easy for Comdr. Easterly to part with the officers and men whose destinies he had guided for so long. His voice was filled with considerable emotion as he addressed the battalion for the last time.

In concluding his farewell address, he paid the 87th his greatest compliment: "Men of the 87th, I salute you!" Suiting the action to the word, he snappily saluted and stepped down. The Easterly regime had ended.

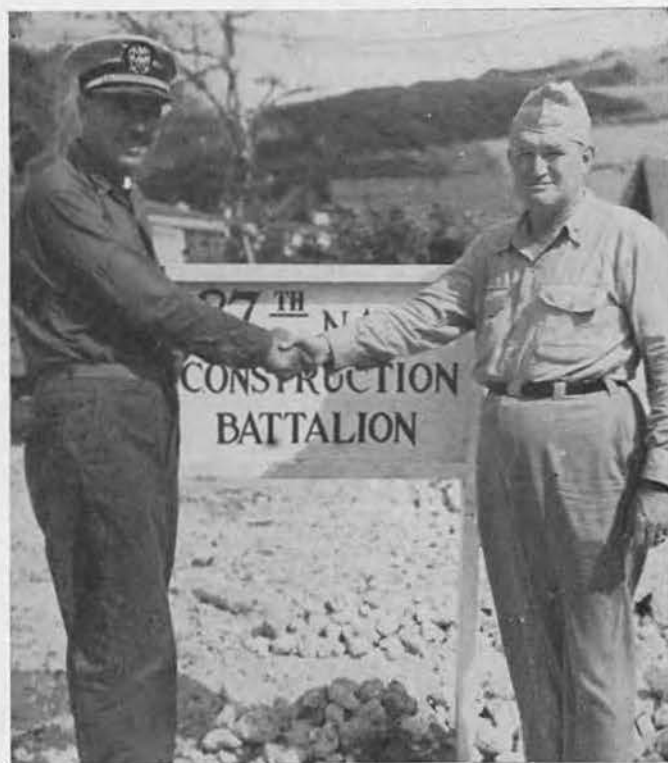
A leader with an outstanding record had been appointed to succeed the first OinC. Comdr. Cook took over a comparatively well-organized outfit. The veteran 87th was disgruntled, however, and travel-weary. On the threshold of its most important forward move, the battalion, as a whole, was "down." Never in battalion history had morale been so low.

To the mates who still nurtured hopes of handing over the new equipment to some "boot" outfit and going home, this unexpected change of command was the final, crushing blow.

It was obvious to even the most optimistic "die-hard" that an officer fresh from Stateside leave would not be placed in charge of a homeward-bound battalion.

The airfield makers were going forward again. All hands were well aware that the forthcoming operation would be the biggest thing yet. Never had so many men or so much invasion equipment been assembled in the Pacific.

The die was cast. The blue chips were down. There was no turning back now.



GOOD LUCK! Comdr. Easterly, dressed for return to the States, bids farewell to his successor, Comdr. Cook, prior to departing for airport. Despite inherent sadness of parting with his command, Skipper Easterly, photogenic to the end, manages a last smile.



THE MULTITUDE. The 87th, over a thousand strong, has just been marched to the sloping theatre area where they are patiently awaiting arrival of Comdr. Easterly, who desires to address them on an unannounced subject. Each man, according to Seabee custom in the Pacific, has brought

his folding chair, and is sweating it out as photographer works the gang over from various angles. Projection booth is directly behind crowd and the Photo Lab is housed in tent at extreme left.

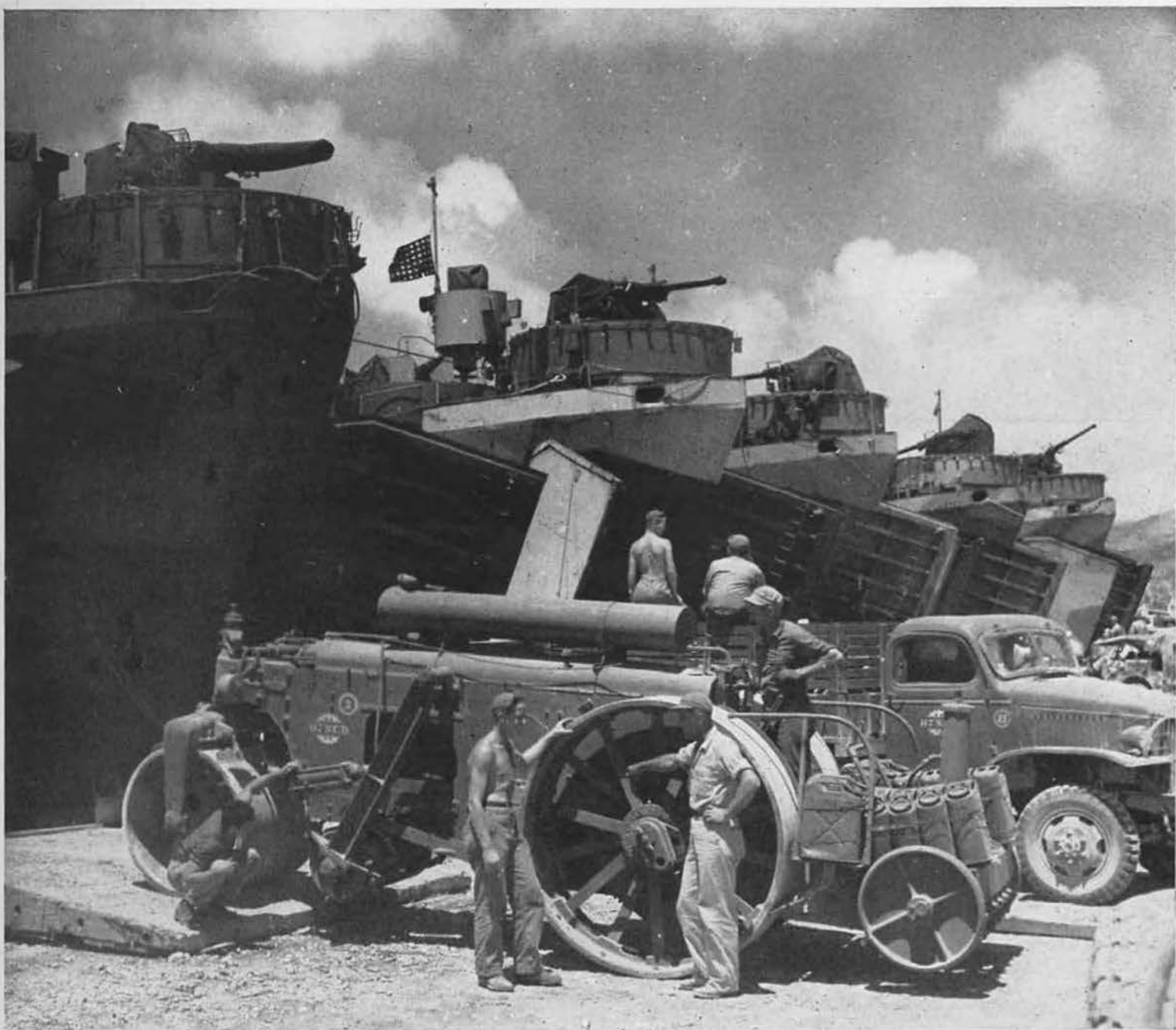


CLOSE-UP of Comdr. Easterly reveals serious expression on retiring skipper's countenance as he prepares to salute his erstwhile charges for their contributions toward his success as a Seabee leader. Lt. Comdr. Flynn, "exec" throughout the Forteach mission, stands behind him.



SUCCESS STORY. This was Comdr. Cook as an electrician's mate, second class in World War I. From an enlisted man in one war to a full commander in the next is second skipper's enviable service record. He bridged

MARIANAS TO RYUKYUS



S A I P A N T O O K I N A W A



D PLUS 16, Lieut. Ben Markette and Lt.(jg) R. J. Seugling (standing on LST ramp) check muster list of first echelon for Okinawa as 87th loads at Saipan docks on 16 April 1945. Outfitted with rifles, packs, gas-masks, seabags and folding chairs, the men size up the "Large, Slow Targets"

that are to carry them to BIVE. Fully loaded trucks (left) await orders to commence rolling through massive steel doors onto tank deck of LSTs.



OPEN JAWS. What was to be the battalion's last forward move in World War II gets under way as smiling veterans filing into one of four LSTs. These men are squeezing past the blade of a D-8 bulldozer, which will be the first ashore when the ramp bangs down on the very

doorstep of the tottering Jap Empire. Nonchalant expressions on men's faces may be attributed to 20 months overseas, including a year in the Solomons.



DAYBREAK. With Saipan's craggy ranges, including renowned Mt. Tapotchau, looming in the background, the silhouetted form of a LST is seen against a typical Central Pacific sunrise. This is the morning the 87th's advance echelon moved out into the stream

to become an integral part of the most sweeping operation of the long and bitter Pacific War. A majority of the "chosen" were still asleep when this shot was taken by the early-rising cameraman.

SEASONED EARTHMOVERS ENTER FLAMING OKINAWA SECTOR

There were four LSTs in the advance echelon of the 87th's nerve-testing move in April, 1945 from Saipan in the Marianas to Okinawa, strongest rung in the Ryukyu ladder stretching from Formosa to Japan.

The build-up for this move had been thorough and ominous. Disbursing urged all hands to take the limit on government insurance. All personal funds in excess of ten dollars had to be sent home.

The Medical Department lectured on the numerous diseases, miserable climatic conditions and the polluted water, which, it seemed, were the main features of the next island.

Mates stormed the armory and quickly cleaned out its supply of .30 caliber ammunition. Through all the build-up, the men never once forgot that Okinawa was only 370 miles from the Jap homeland! President Roosevelt's shocking death on 13 April stunned the entire camp as did Ernie Pyle's passing five days later on Ie Shima.

The rear echelon of 330 men and five officers—under the command of Lieut. William C. Reilly—remained at Saipan for several weeks to clean up the remaining camp area and drink up most of the battalion's beer and coke. The unit's cash funds were transferred to units not participating in the forward move. Records, meanwhile, were brought up-to-date.

At the dock area men piled off the trucks as best they could. After 20 months overseas, the average Seabee has accumulated enough gear to fill a carryall.

Early one April morning the heavily-protected 19-ship convoy slipped out of Tanapag Harbor, carrying with them, among others, the veteran 87th who were, after almost two years overseas, at last headed for the Emperor's backyard. It is only 1,400 miles from Saipan to Okinawa.

The men took up routine shipboard duties. Off duty, men read special pamphlets about "malaria-ridden, poverty-stricken, snake-infested Okinawa." One and all accustomed themselves to the Gook yen and sen, which had replaced the familiar dollar and cent as the new medium of exchange.

The grim, gray watchdogs prowled back and forth, maintaining a protective circle about their lumbering charges throughout the journey. Due to their constant alertness, many floating Jap mines were detected and detonated by gunfire.

Five days out of Saipan, the mates were both thrilled and re-

assured by the sight of the "Picket Line" around Okinawa and other Ryukyu Islands. Carriers, cruisers and escorts, they formed an endless steel chain around Okinawa, preventing the Jap from effectively reinforcing the besieged garrison.

The appearance of this evidence of power quickly convinced all hands that the U. S. Navy was indeed the undisputed ruler of the Western Pacific.

As Okinawa's mountain peaks appeared on the horizon, the convoy split. LSTs 894 and 895 continued on to Nakagusuku Wan Beach, while 879 and 1029 swung around past besieged Naha into the East China Sea. There, the mates witnessed units of the fleet—powerful battlewagons and sleek cruisers—steaming slowly along the shore, pouring it into the doomed capital city.

Here was the real big-time in action! Fire belched from elevated turrets—the ships rocked from the mighty recoil. After an interval, a cloud of smoke and flame would appear on the hillside, marking the spot where the huge missiles had exploded.

The sky was studded with planes. Corsairs, Hellcats, Avengers and Hell-divers bombed and strafed the trembling earth, singly and en masse all day long. Mates at ship's rail marveled at the sights. Everywhere the same comment: "How do they stand it? They must really be dugged in, eh?" It seemed incredible!

The word went around—"Tide's out, can't beach today . . ." The anchor went down. It wasn't long after dark until the Nips began to come over in force. The smoke-screen was laid down by all ships, 40s chattered and 90s roared. But still they came. A suicide plane hit a ship close by. With one huge, eye-splitting belch of flame and smoke, it sank in three minutes. Tracers raced across the skies.

And thus the night wore on with one raid after another. Gun crews stayed glued to their pieces—pouring it into the fanatics at every opportunity.

By dawn, the men were confirmed "believers!" "Let's get off this tub and dig a foxhole," became the watchword of all hands. Down the ramp clanked and the first D-8, chugging and puffing, rolled off on to the embattled island. The 87th had covered 13,980 miles upon reaching Okinawa.

No one had to say, "Roll 'em out, boys!" The previous night had rendered words useless. There was a war going on and the battle-seasoned 87th was again in the middle of it.



LOADED FOR BEAR is this fully loaded LST, which is ready for the seven-day voyage from Saipan to Okinawa. Perhaps, "Loaded for Japs" would have been a better title for this superb shot of an apparently confused scene. However, despite the appearance of unbridled confusion

ashore, the loading at Saipan went ahead on schedule with very few mistakes. Men will have to seek out deck space wherever they can find it. Two (right foreground) have already "staked" out a jeep.



SO LONG, MATES! With rail of both LSTs lined by shipmates bidding one another temporary farewell, port ship backs out into Tanapag Harbor where it will await formation of convoy. Last mail, along with beer and coke, was loaded aboard just before steel jaws snapped shut for shoveoff.

American flag on LST 894, like on all ships, flies at half-mast in respect to President Roosevelt's shocking death on 13 April as first echelon was leaving staging camp.



FULL MOON. With an unfettered heave-to, this unidentified mate soars high above the crowd in a perfect example of fine form and synchronization. While awaiting the oft-delayed sailing orders, the recreation-minded men found this sure way of passing time and escaping, at least, tempor-

arily, the blistering heat of the Marianas sun in April. Fortunately, the LST crew cooperated wholeheartedly in these simple pleasures by swinging open the great jaws and lowering the ramp for one and all.



OUTING. Battalion officers join in another carefree swim off LST ramp as word is received the convoy won't be leaving today. When they left Hueneme 20 months ago, everyone had swimming trunks, but that was a long time ago.



COME WHAT MAY, the happy-go-lucky mates are apparently determined to get the most out of each day. On the eve of their departure for bloody Okinawa, the probing camera catches all hands having a truly wonderful time.



SACK TIME. Not quite up to the accommodations of the QUEEN MARY, perhaps, but still a place to lay a weary body for a night's sleep at sea. Not to be caught short in case ABANDON SHIP! should become necessary, virtually all men sleep with most of their clothes on—even

socks and shoes in many instances! Some have "promoted" stretchers from LST Sick Bay and lie on top of ramp to escape closeness of sleeping compartments below.



PIPE ALL HANDS. Time to rise and shine aboard this LST headed for Okinawa. Joe Morton (seated on truck cab) rubs sleep out of his eyes, while Ambrose Gillespie (on hood) examines his mess gear. Tom Hussey (seated on bumper) ties his shoestrings as Oren Ammerman finds new

use for tire chains by hanging his helmet from same. Robert Johnson uses truck's rear-view mirror in shaving and Kenneth Mayes (face obscured by towel) leisurely dries his head.



GOOK MONEY. Frank Martin (right) is shown receiving ten dollars in military (invasion) currency in exchange for the ten dollars in U. S. currency he was permitted to take aboard the LST on the forward move. Martin uses his "invasion" cap to hold the "gook money"—as it was

later dubbed on Okinawa. LST disbursing officer counts out Frank's portion. Chief Carpenter Olsen (wearing life belt, right) sees the transaction well done. No American money could be taken ashore.



FULL HOUSE Even the somewhat narrow confines of a LST compartment offers just enough room for these addicts to participate in the top favorite of all shipboard games—POKER! Seated with his back to camera is Kerns. Standing behind him is his big brother, missing. Seated (left

to right from Kerns) are: Ralph Hebert, Daniel Sweeney and Tony Kabasinskas. Kibitzers (standing) are: Jack Bigknife, John ("Boston") Lane and Robert Saeger. Fred Williams (left) has already hit the sack.



KNOTS TO YOU! A rare scene indeed to most LST passengers is the heart of the sturdy craft and the men who keep the two 1,000-horsepower General Motors engines in continuous operation. LSTs, moving into such forward areas as the Ryukyus, can ill afford to experience mechanical diffi-

culty. Each 12-cylinder, V-type engine turns a separate screw—one clockwise, the other counter-clockwise—at an average of 750 RPMs. Here, "black gang" checks gauges and pumps.



ON THE BLUE HORIZON. Approximately one day out of Okinawa, units of the potent U. S. Fleet (dimly seen off starboard beam) rendezvous with oil and ammunition tenders before resuming the bombardment they have

sured to see so much convincing evidence of U. S. might in the right spot—especially on the right side! An escort maintains constant watch nearby. It's last days for Japan with all to lose!



ALMOST THERE, land is finally sighted dead ahead as necks are craned and eyes are strained for a first look at the real Orient—only 370 miles south of Jap mainland! However, the relaxed men are far more impressed by the recent abrupt drop in temperature than by their first

glimpse of the Ryukyus. All men topside have donned jackets to ward off chilling wind blowing in from East China Sea and the broad expanses of the Western Pacific.



LITTLE OLD NEW YORK. On the tense morning of 27 April, the convoy passed quite close to the powerful battleship, U. S. S. NEW YORK, as this

96th and 27th Divisions of General Buckner's hard-pressed Tenth Army. The combined American and British fleets never eased up as firing continued



THE INNER RIM. Dead ahead, 27 days after the Easter Morning Invasion, is Okinawa, keystone to the all-essential Ryukyus and an integral part of Japan's INNER rim of defense. Apparently more interested in a good breakfast than in a good look at BIVE, hungry men (right foreground)

devour food in great gulps. It is shortly after dawn and anti-aircraft crews are preparing to remove protective nocturnal hoods from deck artillery as "Meatballers" are due about this time.



SLIGHTLY CROWDED. Shipmates, travelling apart for past week, are shown exchanging loud greetings as two of four LSTs transporting the 87th pull alongside one another prior to effecting landings on the comparatively narrow beachhead just ahead. This shot, perhaps, better than any other,

reveals extremely crowded conditions on these ships. The death battle for strategic Okinawa was now into its twenty-seventh day. No less than 55 days of gruelling campaigning were still ahead before the island would be "secured."



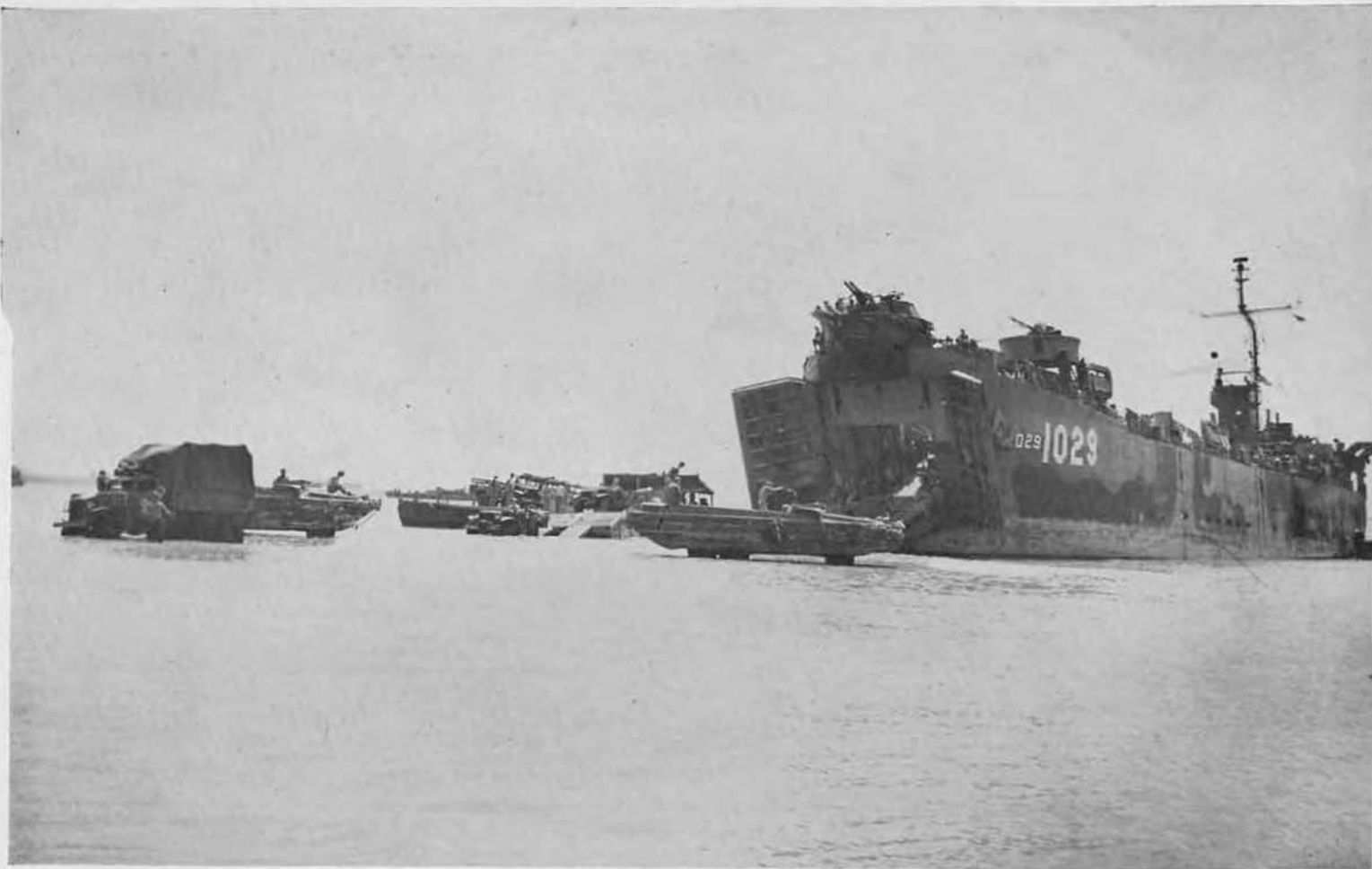
ALL ABOARD. Packed into an amphibious truck in approved sardine fashion, men are pictured going ashore for better or worse. After an outlandish night of continuous alerts and Kamikaze attacks in the packed harbor, all hands were extremely anxious to get ashore and dug in at the

earliest moment. Not even the tall tales of Okinawa's intensely poisonous snakes deterred the Seabees after their "welcoming party" to the Western Pacific the previous night. These handy vehicles (DUKWs) are known as "Ducks."



MAN THE GUNS! With twin 40-mm. anti-aircraft guns (pom-poms) on the LST stripped for action, another overcrowded "Duck" prepares to ferry more of the first echelon ashore. These guns were the ship's sole defense against Kamikaze planes or Baka bombs once the suicidal pilots had

broken through the formidable "Picket Line" ringed the once peaceful island. The Japs seldom went after LSTs in the early days as they were bent on selling their lives in sinking destroyers, cruisers, battlewagons and cruisers.



DELIVERY SERVICE. Huge, slightly awkward "Ducks" waddle past LST 1029 to proceed to a nearby ammunition ship whose cargo's value has suddenly been enhanced by increased Jap resistance on the southern battlefield. All 87th trucks (extreme left) have five-gallon water cans

strapped to every available spot as advance information indicates a scarcity of water on Okinawa. Each man was restricted to one can for three days until battalion well-diggers could locate a suitable water hole in bivouac area.



TERRA FIRMA. As friendly Marines wait ashore to greet their old Solomons buddies, the Seabees, another "Duck" approaches the beachhead road, which is muddy from water brought up by vehicles emerging from the surf. The harbor at this point was practically empty as virtually all

shipping was congregated as far as the eye could see in more favorable water further down the island. Here, at Okinawa, was seen the greatest concentration of shipping of the entire trip—including Eniwetok!



ANCESTRAL HOME
(An Okinawa Water Color)

O K I N A W A



R Y U K Y U S I S L A N D S



FUTURE HOME. Unloading from "Ducks" that have moved them over water and land from the beached LSTs, the first echelon inspects the new camp site at Bolo Point. Shellholes and shrapnel attest to the effectiveness of U. S. Naval bombardment.



AMONG THE PINES, the experienced 87th sets up still another bivouac until more permanent installations can be built. Tiny pup-tents spring all over the area as the veterans make themselves at home. Date: April 1945.



TIPPED OFF "Bogies" are over every night (usually all night), four mates team up to dig shallow slit trench. Unidentified mate (using helmet, left), G. W. Jordan (picking), William Bell and Clarence Totherow will dig real foxhole tomorrow.



WHEN IT RAINED on Okinawa in late April, men, clad in foul-weather gear, spent more time outside securing their hastily-pitched shelters than under canvas. Accustomed to tropical downpours in the Solomons, 87th took Bolo's rains in stride.



INDICATE, DON'T POINT! Chief Kenneth Hansing's survey crew is "alerted" as their leader sings out orders to the engineers staking out a new road to the 87th supply dump. Others are: Olivares, Ackerman, Bollerhey, Harp and Thompson.



NO PICNIC. Three sturdy GI cans, filled with boiling water, serve as sterilizers for men cleaning mess gear after eating a mess of C-rations. Vapor arising from cans indicates the low temperature during first few weeks.



OUTDOOR CAFETERIA. Continuous mud and no chow hall didn't deter work-hungry men from standing in long lines for the dreaded C-rations. Dehydrated food was standard chow for the first few weeks until Comdr. Cook got fed up with unrelieved rations, too.

All hands, including officers and chiefs, stood in chow lines with the mates until the second echelon arrived at Bolo on 14 May. Then, things quickly reverted to normal as the "pushers" resumed their old tricks.

OVERSEAS TOUR REACHES SMASHING CLIMAX AT OKINAWA

The Okinawa campaign was an apparently endless series of rough assignments for the veteran 87th Seabees—a mad pace that began on 27 April and didn't let up until the battalion was finally inactivated on 7 November. The unit was involved in many important construction projects south of Bolo Point.

Among these were two major operations—Yontan Airfield, the first American-built bomber strip on Okinawa, and Bolo Airfield, the mammoth B-29 strip near Camp Bolo. The battalion also helped build Awase Airfield where the 36th Seabees required the assistance of 150 operators and mechanics for 45 days.

Every conceivable type of aerial warfare was witnessed by the 87th ringsiders. The never-ending roar from the death struggle around Naha and Shuri was audible day and night. Artillery concussion and continuous flares over the flaming battlefield frequently resulted in lost sleep at Bolo.

Kamikaze planes, sometimes eluding the famed "Picket Line" around Okinawa in broad daylight, constantly tried for Allied shipping in the nearby crowded harbor. Frequently, a withering curtain of flak would box in the fanatical invaders and fascinated onlookers would cheer lustily as the "Meatballers" exploded in mid-air.

At night, searchlights held enemy planes in their radar-controlled beams until 90-mm. gunfire erased the "Bogies." Flak dropped all over with a fearsome sound. Then, everyone hit the foxholes—but never for long! The show was too big, gruesome and fascinating to be missed underground. Fortunately, the battalion's fabulous luck under fire continued.

General alarms were circulated virtually every night after the Japs' suicidal airborne invasion of Yontan Airfield in May. After that nightmare, mates slept beside loaded pieces, ammunition, knives and gas-masks. Less than two miles from Yontan and Kadena and expecting the worse, Camp Bolo was ringed with machine-gun pillboxes and the guard was doubled.

Soon after General Buckner's shocking death, the island was secured on 21 June—82 days after Easter D-Day—but enemy raids continued until the end. There had been 281 Jap raids up to that time.

The Okinawa operation gave the 87th its second battle star, one Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars and five Commendation Ribbons before the Pacific tour ended.

And then one never-to-be-forgotten night—10 August—as the mates sighed over a torrid cinema love scene, all the island seemed to explode into a scintillation fireworks exhibition. The sky was miraculously ablaze with madly whirling searchlights. Colored tracers of all calibers streaked wildly in every direction. Many made a scrambled rush for foxholes. This could be nothing less than the all-out air-borne invasion so often promised by Radio Tokyo!

Then, loudspeakers blared the astounding news: "THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ARE READY TO ACCEPT . . ." Like an all-engulfing tidal wave, the stunned men surged out of foxholes with hysterical shouts: THE WAR IS OVER! THE WAR IS OVER! Few had expected the end for another six months—if then! Surrender seemed incredible! Lurching in blind circles, the men were drunk with mad, delirious joy.

Next day, the still excited men were astounded to learn that six had been killed and 30 wounded during the previous night's premature celebration—and that the war was still on!

Then, on 2 September, the inevitable peace became official aboard the U. S. S. MISSOURI in Tokyo harbor. Like a lump of sugar in the rain, the 87th began slowly, but surely, to dissolve. Men over 42 had been flown home in June, along with the excess personnel. Two small rotation groups arrived, releasing 27 men.

The 44-point discharge system became operative amid loud squawks from veterans long overseas who were receiving no credit for foreign service. Simultaneously, rotation and the five per cent deal apparently ceased.

In late September, the battalion moved from Bolo Point to Baten-Ko. On 9 October, the worst typhoon in 20 years leveled Okinawa and the 87th camp.

Finally, in their twenty-seventh month of foreign service—on 7 November—the remaining 361 veterans left for the States.

The hardened 87th—with more than two years overseas—had occupied a ringside seat for the titanic Pacific struggle from the Solomons campaign to the resounding atomic end at Hirohito's own doorstep.



PASSING THE AMMUNITION. Military sages of all ages have agreed that an armed force fights strictly in accordance with the content of its collective stomachs. This axiom was never more in order than during the battalion's first few weeks at Bolo. It was rations three meals a day—

week in and week out—until piddling amounts of fresh stuff commenced seeping through in refrigerator ships. This break-out crew contended the 87th consumed at least a carload of rations per day.



HOUSEWIFE'S LAMENT. If only Mrs. Pape and Mrs. Spaw could have seen this homey little Bolo scene, the tables may have been turned on Lieuts. Pape and Spaw upon their return home. It's wash day in Officers Country! Battalion laundry is still crated.



PROOF. Few were disappointed that more poisonous snakes weren't found, but here's one that Barber Charlie ("Dry-Dock") Boyd (not shown) shot on guard duty. Max Fuller (left), six-foot-four in height, measures deadly pit viper, assisted by Pat Dobbs.



NUMBER, PLEASE! John Hatcher (foreground) puts through first call on switchboard in new underground communications center as Lieut. A. L. Davis, E Division Officer, tests radio set. Constructed of sandbags, Jap rails, etc., this structure proved invaluable.



BASIC needs of every new camp—like an adequate supply of purified water, for example—were taken care of in accordance with the cardinal principle of "first things first!" Water department had their product in camp three days after arrival. There were no complaints.



FORGOTTEN VILLAGE. The main highway to Bolo Point led through numerous villages and hamlets, all blasted to smithereens by shelling and bombing during the invasion period. Most of these roads, however, were hardly more than narrow cowpaths when the battalion arrived. Traffic in-

variably became fouled up badly after each hard rain, so T Division's first project was widening and grading these roads. Above, J. C. Bell (on grader) and Claude Brown (on 'dozer) work in once picturesque village of Uza.



CHICKEN FEED. Ollie Brenn (left) and Charlie Johnson tempt their pet Japanese hen with K-rations. In return for such attentiveness, these "drumstick farmers" expect an occasional egg or two for their efforts. Translated sign reads: **PRODUCE, OR ELSE!**



FOXHOLE DAY. The Japs had the boys up all night again as they tried for radar and 90-mm. installations around the rim of Bolo Point, so all hands turned out next morning to reinforce already heavily sandbagged foxholes. There were no "goldbricks" here!



DESTRUCTION FOR CONSTRUCTION. This humble native home was directly in the path of an urgently needed road from the main highway to Camp Bolo. After battalion carpenters had salvaged all usable lumber (along with souvenirs and a colony of fleas!), "Big John" Wines

smashed his 'dozer into this already shell-blasted dwelling. Many native homes had to be demolished because of military necessity, but never without permission of Island Command. All natives had long since been herded into compounds.



DO NOT DISTURB. Cliff Engebretson comes dangerously close to disturbing the peace of native ancestors as he breaks the solitude by leveling a revetment for a gasoline dump. These nicely designed tombs were found just about everywhere on Okinawa.



SECOND ECHELON finally reached the new scene of operations on 14 May—17 days after the advance wave arrived. "The Reilly Gang", accompanied by "Tippy," "Queenie," "Bougie," "Blackie" (above center) and "Jiggs," were met by convoy of trucks at Gray Beach.

Y O N T A N F I E L D



W E S T C E N T R A L O K I N A W A



BAILING OUT the abundant mud from the sub-grade after the big rains was necessary before coralling could be resumed on Yontan Airfield. Ralph Carter (on dozer) pulls a pan at crossing of the East-West strip. Date: 15 May 1945.



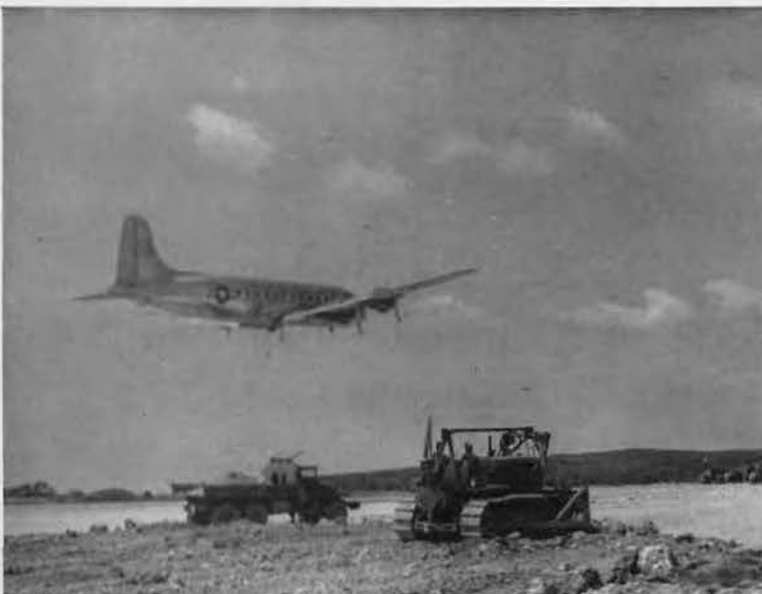
HUDDLE. Lieut. Ben Markette (seated on jeep), battalion transportation officer, discusses the general state of affairs at Yontan with Lieut. Louis Spaw, who is overseeing engineering aspects of rush project. Already 4,500 feet of sub-grade are finished.



TRIMMING deep fill slope at western end of lengthened, reinforced Jap strip, one of many 'dozers pushes another load over the side. This temporary measure kept badly needed field from being closed to all planes. Pans (center) grade new location.



FIELD REPAIRS. Sam Newman (atop his grader) watches "Porky" Clements weld the under parts of his damaged machine. Frank Hevey and Clarence Dean (right), heavy duty mechanics, scrutinize a defective part. Truck (left) contains complete welding equipment.



SKYMASTER arrives for early landing on extended Jap strip. In addition to top-priority passengers, C-54s (backbone of Naval Air Transport Service—NATS) brought in badly needed blood plasma and medical supplies. Returning, they evacuated wounded to Guam.



SUPER-RUNWAYS. "Plummy Rods" of 87th survey crew set up fill stakes on a section of sub-grade for paving. Big fills on old strip kept trucks busy continuously. Meanwhile, pans have shaped up entire length ready for coral. The airfield makers are clicking now.



MASS PRODUCTION. A typical heavy yardage spread, pans in this shot often moved 900 yards of Jap earth per hour. With the work carried out in above grand manner, it is easily understood how Yontan was completed in such gratifying time. Using only the

finest equipment manned by the battalion's most seasoned operators, the grade was knocked out in astounding time despite adverse weather conditions. Sight of the wounded on stretchers awaiting air transportation spurred the Seabees on.

YONTAN AIRFIELD BUILT AMID STRANGLING WAR TRAFFIC

When the United States forces came ashore on Okinawa, the first airfield captured intact was Yontan Airfield, which consisted of three coral-paved runways and a number of taxiways and hardstands.

The prize, however, soon proved to be less effective than had been expected. The Japanese, with their usual shortsighted construction policy, had built poorly drained and lightly paved runways of 5,000 feet in length, suitable only for the operation of fighter planes.

American fighters and pursuits soon jammed the field, parking wing to wing and taking off at a rate exceeding one per minute, in support of the ground actions of the front line troops. At the same time, the big, four-motored PB4Y2 Privateers were doing an excellent job of eliminating Jap shipping. Their losses from enemy action were low, but operational losses due to the short strips were too high.

Plans were on hand for the complete rebuilding of Yontan Field, but under the circumstances it was considered inadvisable to close such a vital and intensively operated field for reconstruction.

Priority was given to a temporary expedient, which would permit the big planes to operate with less operational loss. In accordance with this plan, the 87th Seabees started work on a 1,000-foot extension to one of the Japanese strips.

This gave the big ships a 6,000-foot runway on which to operate until the proposed heavy-bomber strips could be completed. Work on the first heavy-bomber strip to be built on Okinawa was started at Yontan on 15 May by the veteran 87th airfield makers.

'Round the clock shifts were set up for operators, grade men, grease-monkeys, fuel men, and mechanics. Flood-lighting was provided and even the surveyors worked at night. The grading quantities were very light for a strip of this calibre, enabling the coral-paving spread to start work immediately behind the excavation equipment.

Morale was high and the job moved ahead like a smooth, well-oiled machine. Fortunately, only a few bombs fell and then—IT RAINED! Thirteen inches fell during the most intensive period of construction and, of this total, eight fell in five days.

Paving work continued with only a day or two lost, but sub-grade

construction was delayed for almost a week. The rains finally let up, the ground dried and late in May grading was completed to a point where further work would involve closing the existing North-South strip to all air traffic. Even this was arranged and the grading proceeded until a few days later when an intersection with the 6,000-foot long Northeast-Southwest runway was reached.

To close this strip meant closing Yontan Field to all aircraft larger than fighters. Therefore, the equipment was moved across it and onto the final 1,200 feet of construction at the northern end of the new field. This section contained a large amount of heavy cutting and a small amount of grading and finishing. This completed, the night of 12 June arrived amid considerable excitement.

Coral trucks were recruited from several battalions and all haste was made to pave the intersection of the two strips without interrupting Yontan's heavy transport and bomber traffic.

Night fighters and patrols flew in and out among the trucks and tractors all through the hectic night. Several operators even thought it advisable to retire to the lee of Cats as the Hellcats came in at a mere twenty feet, and a certain officer, caught in the middle of the strip, tried in vain to dig a foxhole in the coral paving—without tools! That F6F came in at only TEN feet!

All the coral was placed and graded that night and the shoulders of the new strip were ramped out to meet the grade of the old, so that it might still be used while the finishing touches were being put on the new one.

Graders and rollers worked all day and all night, finishing a 2,000-foot section of the runway, which included the intersection. At last, at 0605, on 15 June, SAFEWAY SUE, a Navy Privateer, officially opened the new strip by taking off on a patrol mission to Korea.

From that moment on, Yontan was as busy as an airfield can possibly be. All three of the original Japanese strips had been converted by then into taxiways and the new 7,500-foot runway was now carrying all the load.

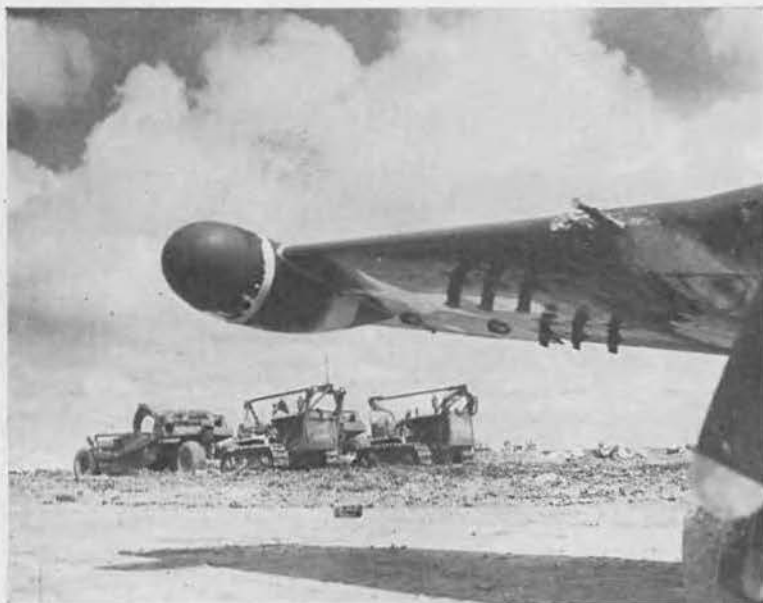
The 87th, with its vast cavalcade of all the components required for converting hills and dales, farms and towns, jungles and rice-paddies into fighting flying facilities, clanked off in search of new fields to conquer.



LOAD AFTER LOAD of coral is dumped at edge of runway by some of 87th's 30 trucks employed on battalion's first Okinawa assignment. One of hundreds of Corsair fighters of the Marine Air Wing operating from Yontan flies over.



THREE OF A KIND are caught by alert **EARTHMOVER** cameraman as they dump additional paving material across old East-West Jap strip. Bulldozers will soon smooth piles to required level. A F4U night fighter is shown parked nearby.



UP RADARI Strange looking, bulb-shaped affair affixed to wing-tip of Hellcat fighter is actually a Radarscope used by the belligerent, little fighters in turning Jap raiders back during night fighting. Pans continue dragging out mud.



CONSTANT RAINS have turned sub-grade into a bog. Pans have been brought back to work over the wet coral. All finishing work is practically at a standstill, but the gang is loading chunks of rock removed from surface to utilize time.



DYNAMITE CREW removes coral chunks from the graded pavement. Those present: Manuel Rivera, Dick Henry, Harry Jolley, Bill Listenberger (kneeling), Clarence Keller, Paul Armstrong (on truck), Chief Al Broomfield, Leo Burke and Jimmy Beachler.



TOKYO TROLLEY. A Curtiss Commando of the Air Transport Command (ATC) takes off on a run to a rear base in the Marianas. Max Mathas on TD-18 (left) and Gene Ross on D-8 trim off edge of the pavement as the work progresses.



IN THE DUMPS. "Kask" Conine dumps a load of rough coral on newly constructed access road into Yontan bomb dump as Meredith Walls (standing, left) checks grade. Oliver Aulry (right) operates the 'dozer. A pile of 500-pound aerial bombs stacked in the revetment may be seen, in part,

beyond two vehicles. Yontan Airfield, with its multiple planes, taxiways and hardstands, is shown in background. A loaded truck waits its turn to back into area at road entrance.



FROM ABOVE, a comparatively small portion of Yontan bomb dump is seen in this aerial view taken in May from a Piper Cub. Actual sections are quite well dispersed and reveted to prevent spread of fire in case of direct bomb hits. This shot reveals fairly good detail of how native

farmers cultivate their nicely groomed fields of beans and sweet potatoes. These fields were torn up here and there where pre-invasion bombardment had created sizeable craters.



MISSION'S END. This is the Jap twin-engine "Sally" that pancaked to an almost perfect landing on Yontan Field one night in late May when suicidal demolition teams attempted to wreck what was then most important airport on Okinawa. This was the only

plane able to effect a landing; all others were shot down near the field. Here, a "cherry-picker," towed by an 87th 'dozer, drags the camouflaged plane from runway so business of war may continue.

NIGHT SHIFT ARE RINGSIDERS FOR AIRBORNE INVASION

Everything in the Yontan sector was throwing up a flak curtain that night. The radar-guided guns continued depressing until their angle of fire became dangerously low. The 87th night shift crouched in foxholes near the strip. Some simply lay flat under their bulldozers. This was becoming a nightly occurrence.

Suddenly a large aircraft loomed against the moonlit sky. It didn't make sense. The plane was preparing to land on the strip! Trouble or no trouble, no plane had any business in this rain of fire! The next few minutes were a nightmare. The plane skidded on its belly in the very center of the runway with its landing gear still up!

It was a Jap twin-engine "Sally!" Air-borne invasion! This was the debut of the Giretsu, the enemy's fantastic suicide warriors. The Japs leaped out of this big ship while it still screeched along the coral strip. They tumbled head-over-heels like racing cartwheels, got up and sprinted into the darkness.

Suddenly, from all directions, blinding flashes illuminated the hardstands. Gas tanks exploded and parked planes became flaming

infernos. The Japs were destroying American planes with magnesium grenades and phosphorus bombs!

By this time GIs, Seabees and Marines were racing around with Tommy-guns, spraying everything in sight. The strip was bright as daylight. Four other Jap planes roared in. The ack-ack was more accurate this time. All crashed at the edge of the strip and went up in flames, burning all the invaders—15 in each plane. However, twenty U. S. planes were completely destroyed before the saboteurs were annihilated. A huge fuel dump also went up in flames, making the horizon glow for miles.

With no means of returning to their Bolo Point camp, the 87th night crew sweated it out on the strip all night. Came the dawn and the area was a shambles. Dead Japs lay everywhere. The lone Jap plane that got in still rested on the strip. The remains of the burned American transports still smoldered.

It was later estimated that over one hundred of these Jap planes had begun the invasion trip. Fortunately, only six managed to reach Yontan Airfield. The rest were taken care of by American night fighters—and the potent "Picket Line" around Okinawa.



THE MORNING AFTER, patrols were still combing area around Yontan for possible survivors of the Giretsu after as wild a night as Pacific veterans had ever seen. This young Jap, wearing two ammunition belts, was prepared to sell his life dearly.



SHOT DOWN before he could escape from scene of destruction, another suicidal Jap has sacrificed his all for his Emperor. Obviously a well-trained demolition man, he carried dynamite in small haversack, along with plenty fuses.



REMAINS of another enemy suicidal craft that was blown apart in mid-air before it could land on runway are spread all over this former Jap airfield. Loaded with airborne demolition troops, enemy plane was maneuvering for pancake landing when converging cone of ack-ack caught

it squarely, strewing the wreckage of plane and its occupants over an extended area. Here, 'dozers and motor graders have commenced clearing away heavy debris. A number of huge C-54s were destroyed by invaders.



SCAVENGERS. George Sembrat and Sam Newman are caught in the act of chiseling out a few souvenirs from the wrecked suicide ship. Using a sledge hammer and a pinch-bar, the Seabees would appear to be doing quite all right!

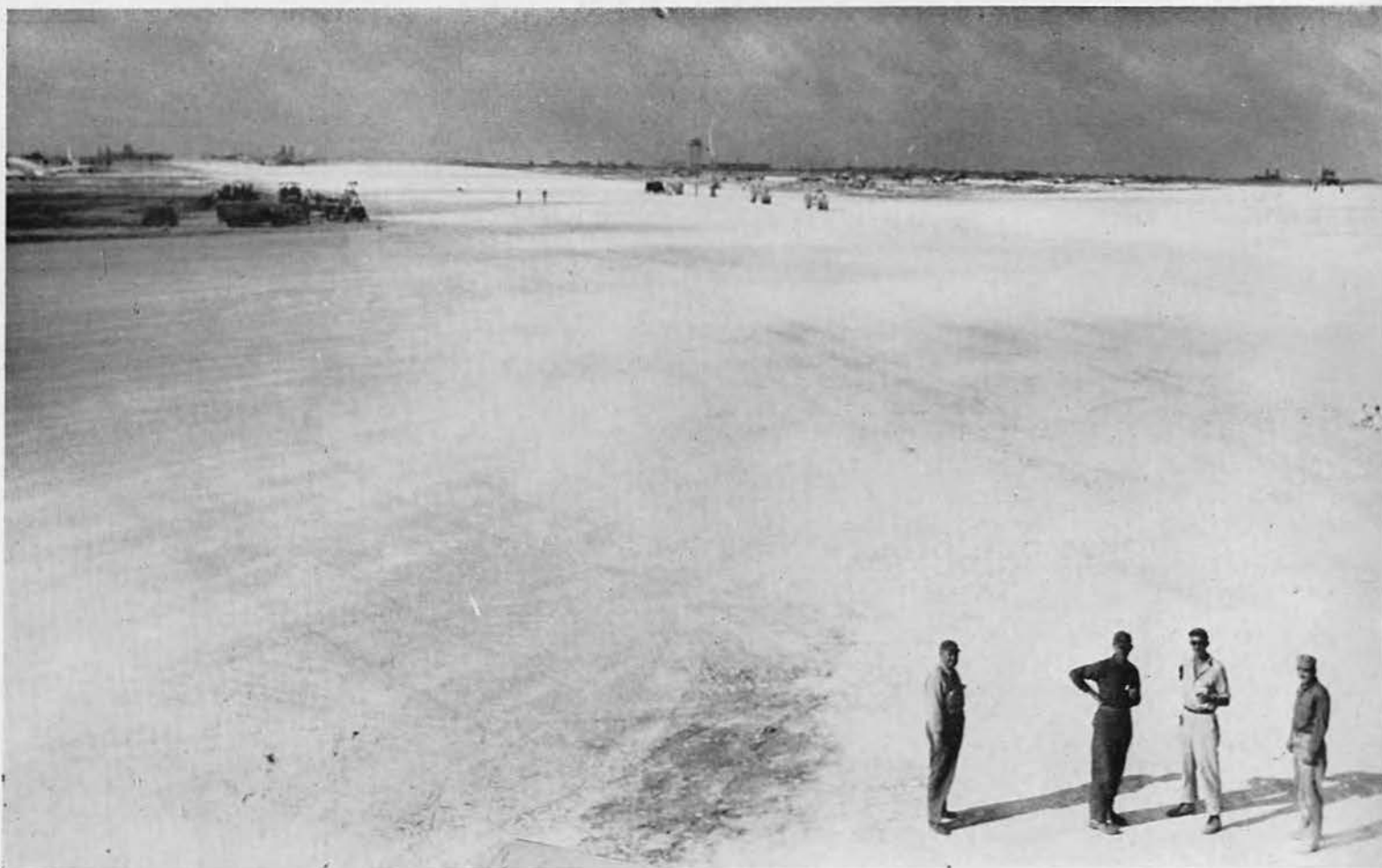


FLAMING YONTAN, as seen from Bolo only two miles away, flares up again as another terrific explosion rents air with Jap-fired fuel and ammunition dumps going up at regular intervals. The earth-jarring explosions continued far into night.



THE GIRETSU ("unsurpassed loyalists"), the special airborne attack units of Japan's fantastic suicide warriors, failed in their attempt to put Yontan out of operation, but as the above picture indicates, the one load that succeeded in landing gave the Emperor his money's worth. Loss of

Yontan at such a critical time would have been a costly set-back to American forces. Detailed maps of the entire field, including the most recent construction projects, were found on some dead Japs.



INTERSECTION. This sweeping view of Yontan's main intersection was taken as rollers and graders were finishing up the last day. Here, the new 87th-built strip crosses the old East-West temporary runway. The new strip extends to upper left. New runway was opened to air traffic the

following day. A plane is shown landing on small strip soon to be closed. Comdr. Cook (left) and party (Mitchell, Bovyer and Panttaja) place their stamp of approval on the work.



YONTAN COMPLETE. This aerial view, taken several weeks after the battalion finished its work, reveals the immensity and completeness of the overall Yontan installation. The 87th-built strip is the dark runway extending from right foreground to left center. Black-topped with asphalt,

it bore the brunt of Yontan's endless traffic during the last critical months of the war. Temporary strip used during construction (extending off to right) is lined with transports as it is no longer used as runway.

T H E F R O N T



Y O N A B A R U — N A H A — S H U R I



FIELD DRESSING. Medics of the 96th Division examine a casualty near the line southeast of Naha. Prompt and efficient action by these front line medical units administering first aid saved thousands of lives. Jeeps equipped with two stretchers provided rapid transportation of wounded

to field hospitals behind lines. Smoke rising in background marks progress of battle. Small groups of fighting men (left center) gather around ration box for noon chow. (EARTHMOVER photographer took these shots in early May.)



LAST TRIP. On the disheveled outskirts of the devastated capital city of Naha, a cluster of native buildings surrounded the Sixth Marine Division's collecting station for its ever-increasing dead. Here, bodies were identified and registered prior to burial. Properly tagged, the casual-

ties were then loaded into trucks, covered with tarps and delivered to the Marine Cemetery 10 miles behind the lines. One such truck (left center) is already loaded and ready to make the next trip.



EVACUATION. Corpsmen load a badly wounded soldier onto cargo truck for transfer to transport plane, which will fly him back to a rear area hospital in the Marianas. Despite great care in handling stretcher, patient writhes in intense pain, dislodging his blankets.

Jap concrete shelter, well protected by sandbags, provides excellent site for evacuation point. Although casualties of this kind had become somewhat commonplace by May, men were still unable to conceal feelings of compassion for a suffering mate.

GRAY BEACH SHIP UNLOADING WAS KAMIKAZE NIGHTMARE

The sound of heavy artillery came closer each day. Scuttlebutt said it was only 10 miles away, then nine and finally a mere six. For two weeks, this bombardment continued around the clock without a break. Then, they were only several hills away.

The ominous booming and the day's frying heat became extremely irritating to the night shift unloading Kamikaze-threatened ships jam-packed at Gray Beach. They lay awake and watched their mosquito netting sway from the sharp concussion of each salvo.

The 87th supplies were being unloaded at Gray Beach only because barges were available there. It was across the island from battered Naha harbor where the fierce battle still raged. All Gray Beach cargo was unloaded in the compound at Reilly's Camp. Then, it was transported by truck across the island to the main camp at Bolo Point. Work stopped only for the worst air raids and never on Awashie strip except during attack. During May and half of June, the sirens seldom agreed when raids were imminent or had ended. Distant land alerts were not "official" in the congested harbor area. This meant ship-unloading details and compound crews had to continue working until a signal came from the Dockmaster.

Sometimes, land-based ack-ack was heard long before the alarm. It splashed black flak-puffs on thick clouds above the harbor. Then, everyone in the compound or around the docks would knock off to watch an unparalleled drama, which usually lasted only a few breathtaking minutes.

Kamikaze planes would dart out of the clouds, weave in the flak curtain until the best targets were spotted and then they would go into screaming dives. Usually, the human bombs would overshoot their targets and explode with resounding roars in the sea. On a few occasions these suicidal death-traps were blasted apart before their doomed occupants were able to single out suitable targets. But their luck wasn't always bad—nor was their aim erroneous all the time.

Once, ships on either side of the one where the 87th was working took direct hits from Kamikaze planes, but the battalion's luck again held fast.

These fantastic attacks placed a terrific strain on the mates unloading the ships. They quickly lost weight and became haggard. And in-



A SOLDIER OF THE EMPIRE lies by the side of a road in the village of Ahomen below Shuri. Tropped by Marines in the village while in the act of sniping, this fanatic preferred this ghastly end to surrender.

evitably some cracked up under the nightmare.

The work went on, however. At night, all hands frequently stood outside, watching tracers fill the skies in an effort to wing bombers caught in the criss-cross of the many converging searchlight beams.

Hardly anyone remained in foxholes during the larger raids. Instead, the men behaved like excited spectators at some crucial football game back home. This foolish indifference to danger and possible death was certainly not intentional. It was simply a noteworthy example of calloused carelessness.



THE REAL THING. A Jap artillery shell explodes just short of small hill, throwing earth and rocks high into the air. Some may be seen taking cover in order to avoid falling missiles; others gaze in fixed fascination at the terrible spectacle of war at first hand. Flame-throwing tank (right

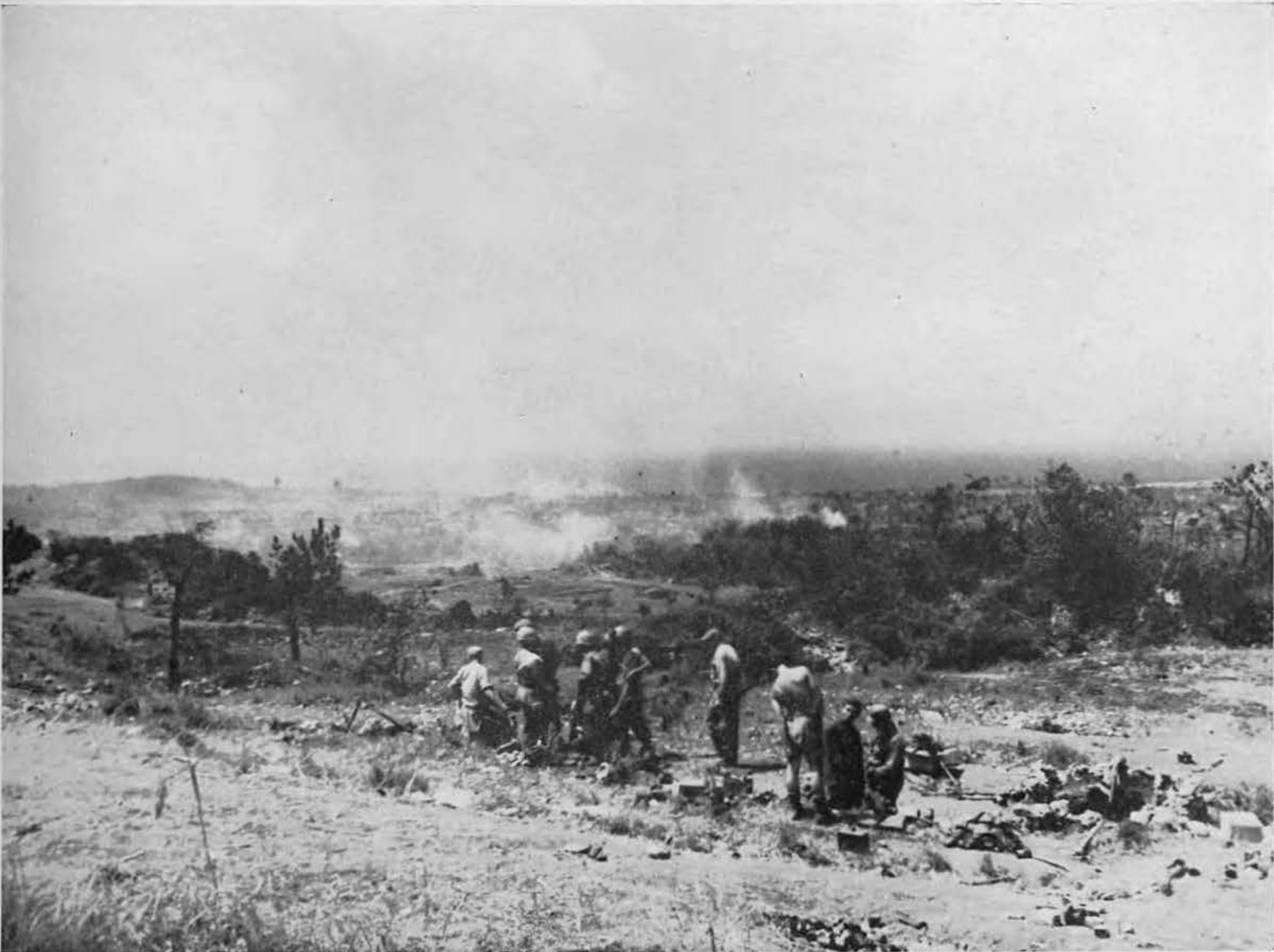
center, beside truck) was most effective of all weapons in driving die-hard Japs from numerous tunnels and caves. An American lies in somber repose under blanket on stretcher.



FIRST AID. Corpsman bathes eyes of native woman temporarily blinded by white phosphorus grenade. Other medics hold dressings. Holed up in cave, two Jap snipers finally surrendered when W. P. grenades were tossed in. They brought this woman out with them.



BLOOD BANK. Army doctor (wearing light shirt, left center) observes wounded soldier's reaction as medic injects plasma into blood stream. Shot through hip while on patrol, this soldier can thank donor of this plasma for saving his life. This was price many Americans paid.



VALLEY OF DEATH. Beyond Shuri and its fabulous castle—chief stumbling block to U. S. assault forces for weeks—96th Division troops finally hit open country and roll up large advances. Here, the fighting eventually resolved into cleaning up disorganized pockets of resistance. Men are shown

organizing another patrol to mop up still further as main battle moves ahead in distance. Debris marks overnight bivouac site. Once Naha-Shuri line was smashed, the end was definitely in sight.



COMMAND POST. Front line command posts were a far cry from the comfortable billets of rear areas. Consisting of a few dispersed pup-tents, high ranking officers, as well as enlisted personnel, lived a really dangerous existence.



EXTERMINATION. After hurling potent sachel of dynamite into the mouth of a Jap-occupied cave, these two combat veterans dash for cover to escape flying debris when charge explodes. Last man was killed a moment later by Jap sniper.



TANGLED and broken Japanese telephone lines are completely ignored by these energetic Marine linemen as they prepare to string up new American wire. In these blasted outskirts of Naha, the problem of cleaning up such an entangled mass was too great, time was too valuable and

communications were desperately needed to the weaving front line. Therefore, only the Jap poles are utilized. Following hard on the heels of assault troops, these linemen were kept busy day and night.



NAHA, the once thriving capital of Okinawa with a population of 65,000, formerly boasted a university, modern buildings and beautiful parks and gardens. When Marines and GIs finally secured the city, after the longest and bloodiest siege in the Pacific (82 days), they found complete devasta-

tion everywhere. Only a few isolated roof tops remained as mute evidence of former Jap prosperity. Enemy radio towers may be seen against central horizon. Total enemy ground losses during Okinawa campaign were 111,351.



ON TARGET! Formidable 75-mm. howitzers, emplaced near once prosperous lacquer manufacturing plant (background), are blasting impregnable Shuri Castle on distant horizon. Gun crew in above picture rests between salvos and finds small comfort from sun's rays under Jap souvenir umbrella (right

of howitzer). Clinging to each foot of captured terrain, the matchless Marines lived, endured and fought for weeks amid such scenes as this. Finally even the Shuri line crumbled and for all practical purposes the campaign was over.



PRAYERS OF THE WICKED. Between these pillars Naha citizens once trod on green grass to visit formal gardens and worship at shrines and temples. Here, their esteemed shrines lay gutted and in battered ruins from American shelling and bombing.



CLOSED FOR REPAIRS. Naha's City Hall, silent and ghostly with windows shattered and doors jarred loose, remains standing despite terrific bombardment and shelling for many weeks. Two souvenir hunters, unmindful of **KEEP OUT** sign (left), are about to enter.



BUSINESS DISTRICT. Centered in main business area of Naha, the formidable Bank of Japan stands as a shell-pocked monument to the folly of Jap aggression against greater nations. Remains of Naha's largest theatre may be seen at left.



GOING MY WAY? Chief John Porter, reputedly best shot with hand weapons in the 87th, often accompanied visiting groups to southern battlefronts. It was safety first to have Porter along. Here, he thumbs ride back to Bolo Point.



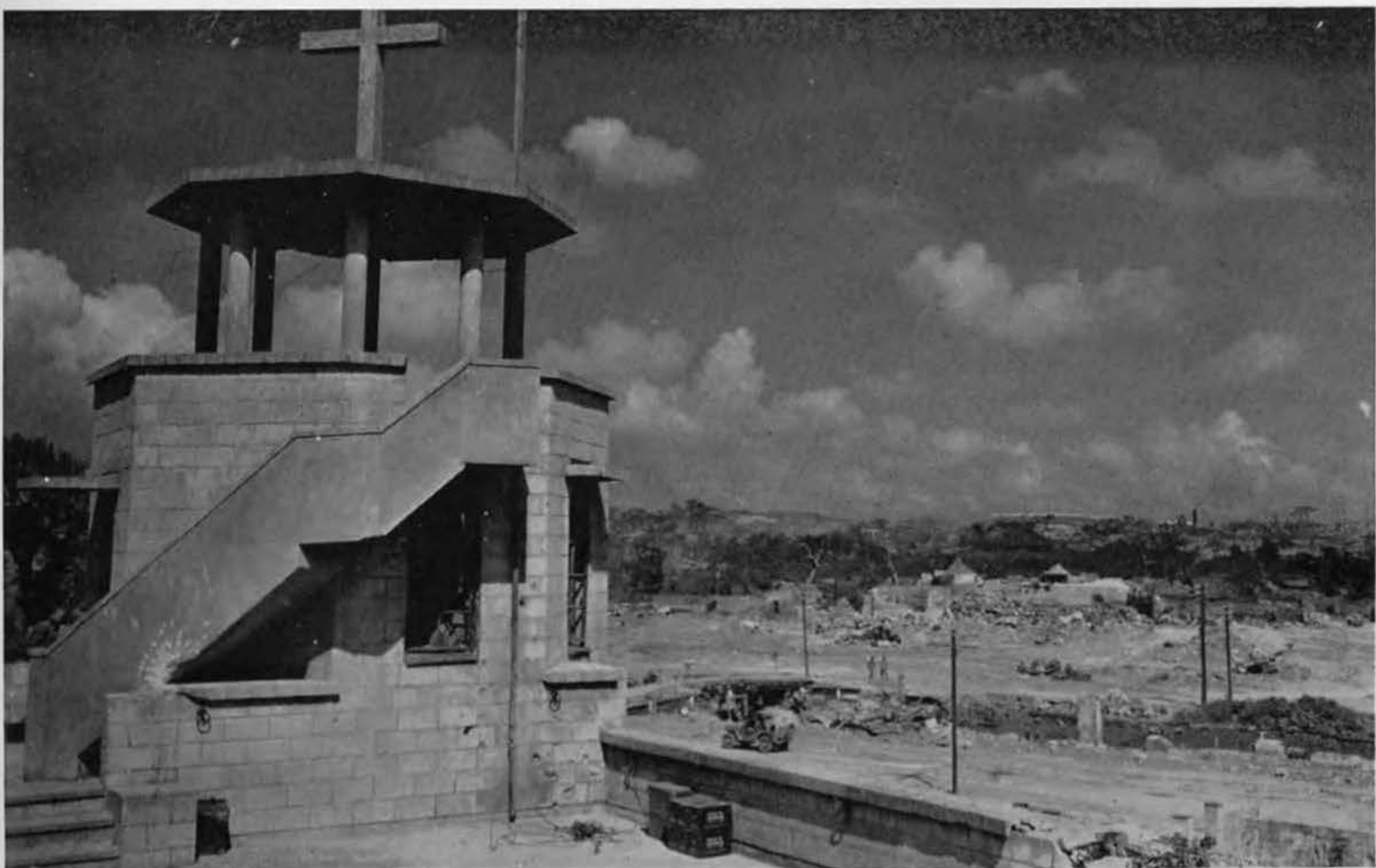
DESOLATION. Once embattled Naha's crowded residential section presented an appalling scene of devastation and ruin after Marines and soldiers of the Tenth Army were through with it in June. The capital was a primary target for continuous shelling from battleships and cruisers operating close

offshore and incessant bombing from Yontan and Kadena during the furious weeks it was under attack. After preliminary blastings, civilians fled into hills only to find themselves in greater danger from flame-throwing tanks.



THE UNIVERSITY of Naha was not spared in the relentless drive against the capital city. Desolate and shell-torn, the former center of Jap higher education now serves as a communication center for American forces operating out of Naha against Shuri. Trees (central foreground) were once

objects of great beauty, but they now stand as grotesque reminders of a splendor definitely past. A party of adventuresome 87th Seabees are impressed by so much desolation amid a former scene of culture.



CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY. The most startling sight in the heart of the annihilated city was this comparatively intact Christian church with its spire and cross still proudly erect despite numerous shell-pocks on its surface. Once a place of divine worship, the church soon became headquarters for

a mobile laundry unit. However, the main portion of the structure was converted into a small movie theatre. Two GIs (right center) walk leisurely along a street in the ravaged city.



UNBEATABLE. Japs retreating south from Naha to take up final positions blew up this concrete bridge to hamper the American drive. The unbeatable Army Engineers reduced lost time to a minimum by throwing a prefabricated Bailey bridge over the chasm in record time. It was imperative

that troops and supplies be rushed through this bottleneck before the confused enemy could consolidate his new lines. Loaded trucks and jeeps now speed over Asato Gawa en route to the front.



THE ORIENT. This huge, concrete entrance to the major Shinto shrine in Naha not only was symbolic of the Orient, but it served a dual purpose for aggressive Marines who habitually put everything to use. First, it supported the maze of communication lines extending throughout the burned-

out city, and secondly, it served as an anchorage for a large Red Cross flag. The latter denoted a field hospital nearby. Guttured Naha University is in background. Island was secured 21 June.

B O L O F I E L D



T H E B - 2 9 S T R I P



PRELIMINARY survey for Bolo Field, which ran through village of Jima, was 1,700 feet east of site where B-29 strip was finally built. Members of Chief Paul Sowers' (left) survey gang shown are: Sam Fields, August Kafer, John Barker.



HEAT TREATMENT. A native village was squarely in the center of the proposed site for the B-29 strips, so Malaria Control gave it the hot-foot. Burning of these abandoned villages was advisable because of fleas and other vermin.



BEFORE CONSTRUCTION commenced, the general site for the new airfield looked like this. This view was taken looking southwest toward the East China Sea and famed Green Beach where Americans made initial Easter Morning landings.



GRAND OPENING. A power-shovel starts cutting into one of the two coral pits that are to provide all paving material for the Bolo job. Demolition gang drills hole for charge to loosen up solid portions of the coral formation.



HARVESTING. Widespread vegetation, consisting principally of sweet potatoes and beans, is removed from sub-grade site by pans as 87th assembles maximum skill and power for all-out assault on what is to be its last wartime project.



AT LAST. Actual work on Bolo Field commences on 19 June after many false starts and the 87th's last direct contribution toward winning the war is under way. Here, sheepfoot roller compacts fill behind 12-yard pan.



30 DAYS ALLOTTED. Perfect weather for large scale earthmoving prevailed during virtually all of the 30 days allotted for the construction of Bolo's first B-29 strip. The second of the twin strips was started, but cancelled by war's sudden end in August. Here, sub-

grade construction is beginning to shape up as great pans continue making cuts from high spot still visible at left center. Scenic fields shown in landscape scene (opposite page) have disappeared entirely.

COMPLETED BOLO FIELD HELPS KNOCK OUT JAPS

Fifty-two long days after the 87th landed on Okinawa, work was started on its main job. It was to be a twin B-29 strip with all the accessories.

Fighting on Okinawa had steadfastly refused to follow the blueprints laid out by the High Command. Construction plans, likewise, had to be tailored to fit the ever-shifting pattern of battle. Rumored as bound for Yonabaru, then Naha, it was with a great sigh of relief that the 87th was finally allowed to sink its teeth into the Bolo Point job.

During the six weeks that controversy raged in the high places, the battalion had been occupied with Yontan Bomb Dump, Route No. 6 to The Front and Yontan Airfield—all major projects in themselves, but not THE JOB.

Operations on Bolo began on 19 June by clearing the ruins of the town of Uza from the right-of-way at the northern end of the proposed strip and rough-grading a 500-foot section. On the second day, work was transferred to the opposite end, primarily because the Seventh Marine Field Depot supply dump had not been cleared sufficiently so that work could begin there, and secondly, a Jap cave had been discovered beneath the strip, which had to be collapsed and filled in before work could continue.

Engineering problems on Bolo were more complex and varied than on any previous strip job the 87th had tackled. Broken, hilly terrain, rice paddies and underground seeping wells provided a tough drainage angle. This was solved by sinking galvanized culverts in ditches cut across the strip—in many spots as deep as 30 feet—to carry off excess water and provide a solid bottom for the anticipated Superforts.

One of the most formidable obstacles was a hill of solid coral found in the runway at the south end. On 28 June, the small 87th shovel was put to work here, and with five Euclid Diesel trucks obtained from the 10th Naval Construction Brigade, paving was begun. It was 7 July before the 87th's two big Northwest shovels returned from Awase Strip on Buckner Bay. Up to this point, paving had been definitely lagging. However, four more Euclids were procured and a

large deposit of coral was discovered between the strip and "B" taxiway.

With three shovels going full blast at the conveniently located coral pit, Euclids began moving the finish "stuff" on an unparalleled scale. From here on in, these chugging giants chased the "pans" down the strip, pouring out coral as fast as sub-grade could be laid. The mates were working at top speed on Bolo, anxious to see the B-29s take off for Japan from their own backyard.

Due to their hair-raising experiences on Yontan and constant warnings from Intelligence about expected air-borne attacks, men rode their machines with loaded rifles, gas-masks and helmets within arm's reach.

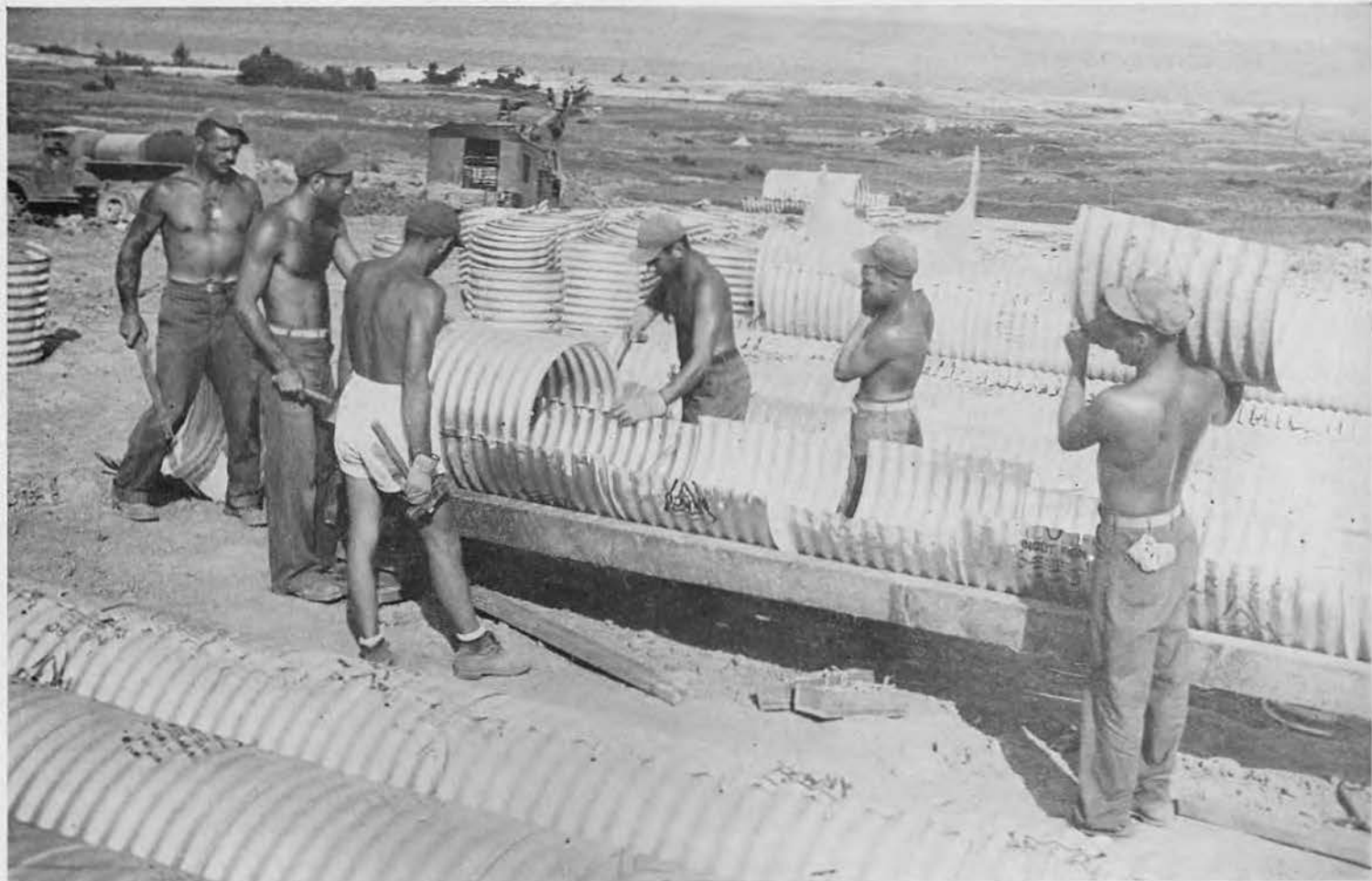
A convoy system for bringing men to and from work on the "graveyard" shift was inaugurated after one of the officers had been shot at while on his rounds as O. O. D. The sniper was never brought to earth, but a great deal of .30-caliber ammunition was expended in the attempt.

Air raid alerts occurred frequently at night, but raids were not as prolonged or intense as during the three previous hectic months. The only known casualty was Dewain ("Big Red") Buettenbach, who collected two shiners and a lacerated nose diving under his 'dozer when flek fell too close one memorable night.

Half the strip was coraled by July and the other half was either ready for coral or in final stages of "cuttin' and fillin'."

Here, the Yankee special formula for superior strips was resorted to once more. Four trucks were rigged with 1,200-gallon pontoons and sprinkler attachments. Salt-water treatment was given the coral after the final grading and before rolling. This binding process, often used with such success by the 87th, produces the fastest surface known for handling aircraft.

On 19 July and well ahead of schedule, the last loads of coral were shaped and graded and the first B-29 strip on Okinawa was ready. The Bolo job was soundly licked by the unbeatable combination of "know-how" and the high spirit embodied in the 87th who did the job with one eye on the project and the other on the long-anticipated trip home.



"THE MUCK GANG" was Chief Frank Rychlak's men-of-all-work crew shown assembling 36-inch corrugated pipe used in drainage. Above group includes (left to right): Rychlak, Serap Appelian, Jim Dalton, Joe DeMasi, Laurel Leonard and Dale Anderson. (The latter was later killed in a

quarry accident.) A versatile "seadog" of the tattooed Navy, Chief Rychlak was Chief Feature Writer on THE EARTHMOVER's editorial staff, contributing many of the major stories in this volume.



RICE PADDY. This obstacle, harmless in appearance, but a formidable obstruction to rapid construction, had to be drained before strip could cross over. A 12-yard pan is doing preliminary cutting on culvert ditch before backhoe takes over.



HEADS UP! "The Muck Gang" lowers another drainage section into the completed cat excavation. When the galvanized section reaches bottom, Chief Rychlak will order "all hands below" to move pipe a little to the port or a trifle starboard.



TOUGH SPOT. Preparing to blast stubborn section of shale in center of another drainage ditch, demolition crew is sinking 12-foot holes into rock. Handling chattering jackhammers in intense heat was rugged duty—even for "Mush"!



"LEND A HAND, FELLOW!" The going is really tough here so Vic Terrell (left) and Ralph ("Mush") Masciarelli (right) team up on a drill, and dust really begins to fly.



DIVERSION DITCH. The ditch that carried water away while metal drains were being installed is shown in right foreground. The pans have commenced filling in huge cut, which will be brought up to grade when culvert work has been completed. As fast as backhoe throws earth to one

side, a 'dozer pushes it into the low spots. Peculiar looking pine trees (right background) appear in most Okinawa skylines. Thunderheads loom on horizon, but fortunately the rain held off.



DOWN THE MIDDLE. A 2½-yard shovel digs handy paving coral right out of the middle of what will soon be a B-29 runway. This particular hill furnished enough coral to completely pave the first 3,000 feet. When this spot was leveled to grade, a new coral pit was opened nearby,

which contained ample material to complete all paving. Every natural obstacle—from a real swamp to solid rock—was encountered during the Bolo job.



STRAIGHT AWAY. Invaluable pans are seen grading just east of coral hill shown above. Through clouds of dust (left), fast rolling trucks may be seen dumping loads of coral at start of runway. Some buildings and tents of the Seventh Marine Field Depot are still here (left and right),

but the Leathernecks are clearing out fast. Telephone lines still cross runway, but will soon disappear. A grademan and an equipment operator confer with a project officer in foreground.



SOUTH END of runway begins to take on a semblance of grade completion after a sustained siege of clearing, cutting and filling. Coral (left center) came from huge drainage cut and was spread by pans as prelude to heavy laying of coral by trucks. Light towers (center) provide

adequate illumination for regular night shift. A flotilla of war-loaded LSTs may be seen in harbor beyond project site. These awkward, but indispensable vessels, were seen all over.



BIG PIT. A 2½-yard shovel and a small fleet of Euclid trucks are working out huge portions of coral at spot known as "the big pit." This site supplied coral for most of runway, plus connecting link with west taxiway.

Three shovels worked around the clock here as the comparatively short haul guaranteed a continuous line of waiting trucks. One dipper of earth from this shovel would fill an ordinary truck, but Euclids hold four.



IN FORMATION. Three monstrous Euclids simultaneously dump 30 yards of paving coral onto strip at a single clip. This would be enough material to pave an area of runway three feet long and 200 feet wide. These three "Ukes" were piloted by Lyman Dailey, John Radel and John

Proffitt. It would have been impossible to complete the first B-29 strip in 30 days had it not been for the timely appearance of these king-size vehicles.

MEN, MACHINES AND EARTH COMPRISE AIRFIELD BUILDING



TAKE COVER! Shovel operator and his oiler curl up inside huge dipper (left foreground) as demolition crew shoots out a tough baby in center of runway. Heavy steel of bucket provides ample protection against flying debris.



PINCHHITTERS. A carpenter crew is detailed to work at a common labor job—sinking one of four power and communications conduits running under the strip. Left to right: A. Thompson, Lowell Cable, Angelo Insalaco and William Beard.



FILL 'ER UP! Operator Henry Steele (on grader) watches Bob Petoletti give his motor a long drink of diesel. Paul Krueger (at left) operates the weird looking "cookie cutter," which did everything including what it was built to do.



DOWN THE LINE. Four of battalion's five motor graders are snapped in echelon as they carry a nice windrow of good looking coral. At the controls (left to right): C. J. Rominger, Chester Watkins, Chester Pope and Sam Newman.



ON THE BALL. Grader and roller operators exert best effort to get everything in readiness for the final paving as Superforts are soon due. William Young (on roller) stands for better view as machine comes near a grade stake.



STINSON GRASSHOPPERS were first planes to use Bolo Field. During very first week of construction 'Hoppers landed and took off on west shoulder of strip. Clyde Pemberton inspects mite from his 'dozer as Chief Ken Hansing crouches.



CARVINGS. The sloping hillside at northern end of Bolo runway is being carved away by a battery of pans. Earth from this cutting operation is being hauled leftward to fill in connecting ramp with westerly taxiway. Eventually, this entire hill had to be cut through to connect with east

taxiway. Bolo Point appears in background (at right) with airport perimeter road winding along the shoreline. Long white line of coral reef (left) stands out in water.



DIGGING FOR NUGGETS. A jackhammer crew is removing hard rocks from surface of runway. These "niggerheads" cropped up during blading and had to be dug out. The holes were then refilled with firm coral and the rocks thrown away.



GETTING SALTY. Sprinkling and rolling of the glazed runway continued day and night as the completion of the project neared a record breaking end. Three of the battalion's four water sprinklers wet down surface with salt water.



THE SIGN, "invented" by Comdr. Cook, the 87th's publicity-wise second skipper, was the talk of Bolo Field for many days. More than once higher authorities threatened its removal, but it was still there when the job ended. Battalion pranksters were forever adding the exciting word HOME

after "LET'S GO" and "Cookie" had it removed just as often. Four rollers, four graders and four sprinkler trucks are stretched out half the length of the almost (seven-eighths) completed runway.



WELL DONE, BOYS! Comdr. Cook (in jeep at right) gives completed south end of Bolo runway the once over as only an experienced construction veteran could do. It was indeed a rare day in June (or July) when THE MAN didn't visit his favorite project now that Yontan was no longer

a point of regular visitation. Lubrication trucks (right center), which regularly service equipment on large jobs like Bolo, may be seen fixing up some of the rolling stock.



FIRST CARGO PLANE, a twin-motored C-47 (Douglas), makes emergency landing on Bolo Field after being unable to locate Naha Airfield during siege of inclement weather that descended upon Okinawa immediately after B-29 strip was put into operation. Inspecting the project after

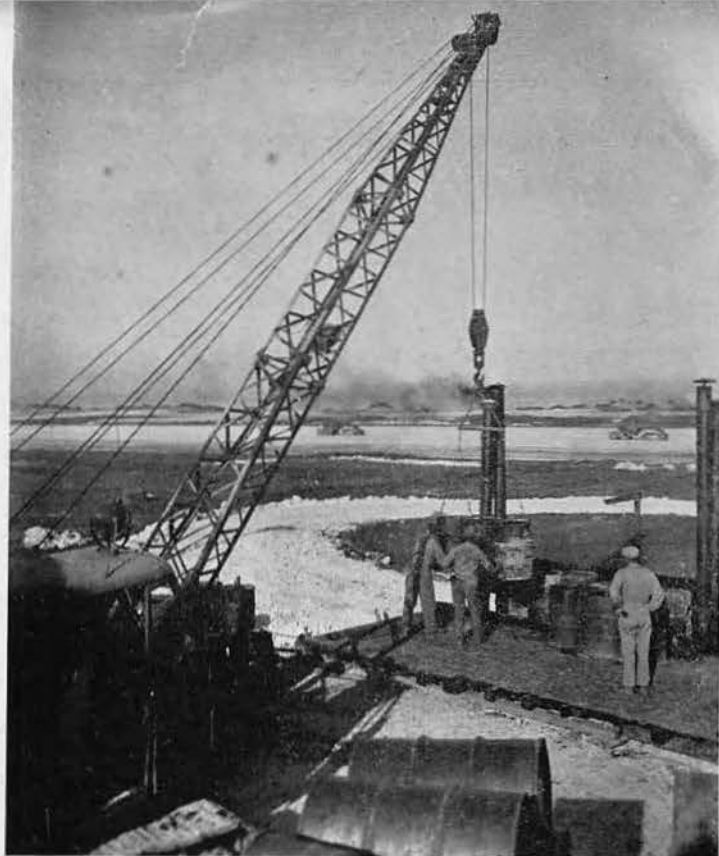
a week of steady rain, Comdr. Cook and Lt. Comdr. James Douglas, new 87th exac. (left), were on hand to wave a hearty greeting to the crew of the big transport. (The sign is still there!)



TEAMMATES. Seabees build the airfields and the flyers put them to work against the harried enemy. Here, the crew of THE SIOUX poses for THE EARTHMOVER cameraman with the 87th administrative heads. This plane also made emergency landing.



THUNDERBOLT pilot climbs out of P-47 fighter after landing on Bolo following successful completion of another mission. One of a squadron of Thunderbolts operating from the B-29 strip, these planes flew in support of the bombers.



BLACK STUFF. A crane picks up three opened barrels of ready asphalt. Heated "just so" in large boilers, mixture is then run off into tank trucks. Graders (background) give runway a final "facial" before the asphalt topping is applied.



OPENING DAY. Using hammers and chisels, Seabees open endless drums of surfacing material. Thousands of drums were used as porous coral absorbed huge quantities of asphalt. A regular mixing plant was soon built at Nagahama.



FINAL APPLICATION. Black-topping of the completed Bolo runway is started at northeast section of the strip. Towed by a 10-wheel truck, trailer tank has a sprinkler attachment that spreads a 10-foot section at a single

swoop. Tank operator rides on a rear platform where he controls flow of the asphalt by means of valves. Visitors seemed to enjoy watching this process as they flocked to Bolo Point from all parts of Okinawa.



LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL, first B-29 to use Bolo Field after its completion, had flown from Saipan on a mission over Formosa. Its tail assembly shot up over the target, numerous flak holes and a dead engine, the Superfort was forced to leave its formation en route back to the

Marianas and ended up by crash-landing on Bolo. Named by crew admirers of the late Thomas Wolfe's immortal first novel of the same name, the big ship has just been towed in for repairs.



GOING UP. Bolo control tower finally begins to take shape despite the AAF changing its plans four times after construction had started. With one section in place, a crane lifts the other side and soon the sections will be tied together.



TIE HER DOWN! As framework nears completion, stairs are installed and deck for radio generators built. Cement gang shovels mix into hopper for concrete base that will help anchor tower when Okinawa typhoons come in September and October.



CUTTING ON "C" taxiway goes ahead as pans cut out adjoining hardstands on taxiway east of the completed runway. Most battalion equipment has been moved to this location. To the right of light tower are a few remaining piles of asphalt barrels. A roofer, pulled by 'dozer (right center), softens up the cut for pans. Tails of the new Douglas A-26 attack bombers (far right) are barely discernable. The taxiways at right are already completed and ready for occupancy.

BOTTOM. THE EXTRAS. A coral shelf behind a hardstand on "C" taxiway provides fine grade of coral for paving of remaining hardstands and taxiways. With its squadron off on a mission, a lone Mustang fighter stands 'n solitary splendor against ocean on "8" taxiway (far left, background). Pans at right are cutting out additional hardstands on east side of taxiway. Culvert (left) is assembled for drainage under taxiway. Small 'dozer clears rocks from right-of-way to keep traffic flowing.



COMING AND GOING. An empty truck heads back to the pit for another load of coral as a full vehicle turns into a hardstand to dump its burden. This is a general view of unpaved taxiways and paved hardstands looking south. Bolo Field proper is at right. Sheepsfoot roller (foreground)

is crushing hunks of coral and compacting the paving so graders and rollers can apply finishing touches without undue obstructions. Soon B-29s from India and the Marianas will arrive.



LOOKING WEST across Bolo Field to the East China Sea, a 2½-yard shovel loads a Euclid with one of last loads of coral used. A 1½-yard shovel (right) digs dirt out of last hardstand. In 1943-44, Stirling Airfield

was completed in the Northern Solomons with only ¾-yard shovels. However, by the time the 87th started Bolo Field, the battalion was outfitted with one 2½-yard shovel, one 1½-yard shovel and five ¾-yard shovels.

AERIAL OF COMPLETED BOLO FIELD SHOWS B-29 STRIP IN FULL USE AGAINST ENEMY



BOLO FIELD never really served its intended purpose of launching huge armadas of Superfortresses against Japan's tottering empire. Before the B-29s could arrive in force from various outlying bases, the bewildered enemy was begging for peace on any terms. Therefore, plans

for the second B-29 strip were cancelled, although the battalion had already commenced preliminary grading for the twin runway. Its third airfield assignment on Okinawa completed, the 87th was content to rest on its laurels. Bolo traffic, consisting principally of medium

bombers and fighters, reached its peak in late August and early September when hordes of transports used it in flying airborne occupation troops to Japan. It had been a great adventure, but the men were satisfied that it was over.

P R O J E C T S



NAGAHAMA QUARRY—ROUTE NO. 6—DISPOSAL PLANT



FIRST UNIT of the rock crusher assembly at Nagahama Quarry is being erected as the jaw crusher is set in place. Heavy timber bulkhead, set against formidable earth ramp (left), provides an easy approach for rock-laden trucks.



JIG SAW. Before the 87th could complete the assembling and erection of the new crusher, it fell heir to the full operation of the project. Soon the versatile Earthmovers were shooting down whole mountainsides (see previous page).



THE WORKS. Here is an overall view of entire unit in operation from time rough rock is dumped into crusher (center) until it is carried up conveyor belts ready for use. Nearby quarry was considered a dangerous assignment.



STORAGE BINS for crushed stone (right) feed materials into trucks that haul it to various projects. These bins are filled by means of conveyor belts (left), which are driven by crusher motors. No unauthorized personnel were allowed.



TESTING screened limestone taken at random from storage bins, Ralph Ackerman (left) and Byron Chronic use a slide rule in making computations. Aggregate was thoroughly tested every eight hours to insure minimum specifications.



ASPHALT PLANT. The 87th's ability to absorb punishment (and endless work assignments!) was again demonstrated when the battalion fell heir to the new asphalt plant set up at Nagahama. However, it soon went to 82nd Seabees.



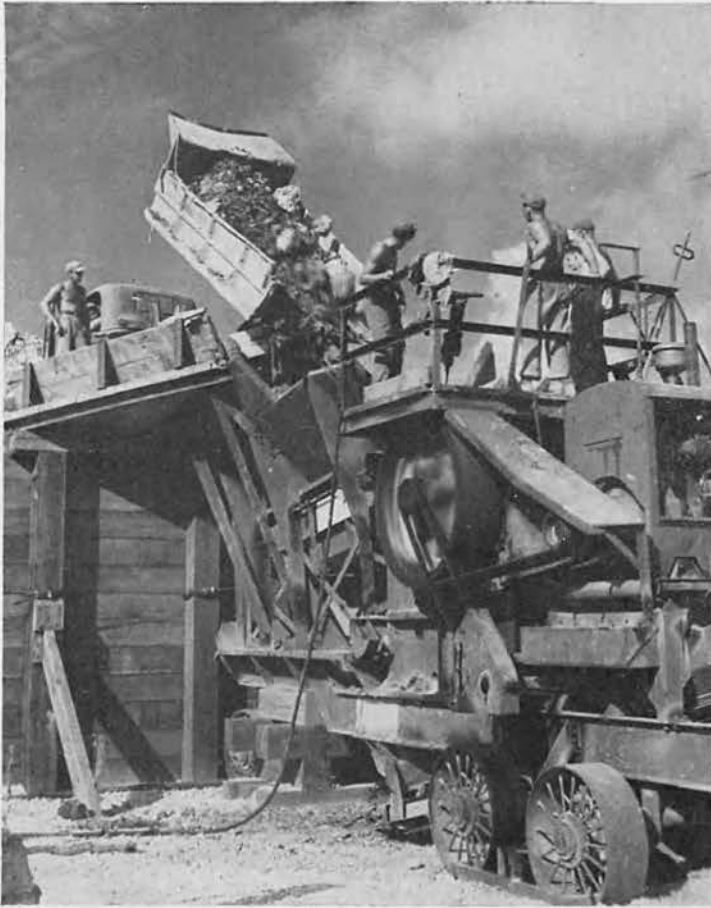
NAGAHAMA HARBOR (right center) is photographed from Face 1, near top of limestone mountain (see page 295). Taken before crusher assembly was installed, this shot shows site selected for rock crusher approximately in center of picture. Village of Nagahama spreads along waterfront of

nearest promontory, while Bolo Point projects its great bulk into the East China Sea (far left). Building housing air compressors for quarry drills is in left foreground near trucks. A main highway, Route 6, is easily recognized.

DEATH SCENE. Demolition gang is drilling holes for charges to reduce size of boulders. At this spot, Dale Anderson was accidentally killed and Dick Henry seriously injured on 24 August. Neither are in this group as they worked opposite shift.

NOT FOR WATER. Battalion quarrymen utilize one of three well-drilling rigs to drive holes 200 feet into mountain top in preparation for mammoth blast shown on page 295. Holes were then loaded with dynamite and shot simultaneously. More "CAN DO."





HERE SHE COMES! Another truck dumps its load of bulk rock into first unit put into operation. The resultant product then passes on to the next smallest crushing unit before the finishing operation.



UP AND OVER. Ensign Frank Cizek observes flow of crushed stone along the conveyor belts into the gravity operated storage bins. The finished product varies in size up to 3/4-inch.



ACCENTUATING THE MAXIMUM, the fully completed Nagahama crusher grinds away without a hitch as the enormous jaw crushers chew up boulders of all sizes from the nearby quarry. Twenty-seven tons of dynamite were

used to blow down the mountainside when the last wartime charge was set off in mid-August. Drilling and loading for this final blast (page 295) occupied demolition crews for almost a month.



ROUTE 6 TO THE FRONT was, with the possible exception of Yontan, Awase and Bolo Airfields, the 87th's most important project during its six busy months on Okinawa. Above relocation site, taken during a lull

in traffic, is a far cry from the miserable thoroughfare all vehicles traveled during April and May en route to The Front.



BATTLE-WEARY VETERANS are speeded back from front lines over Route 6, which 87th Earthmovers converted from a jeep trail to a main thoroughfare. The project was under the supervision of Lt. Toivo Panttaja. This

vital highway ran along the very edge of the west coast and was the only main traffic route from northern Okinawa to General Buckner's positions at The Front.



SEABEE WAY. Construction of Bolo Point garbage disposal plant required the collective skill of nearly every 87th division before completion. After a 'dozer clearing by Transportation, R and S demolition crews blasted proper slope angle along cliff. Carpenters then erected boiler house

and laid foundation for chutes. They were followed by plumbers who piped the fresh and salt water assembly. Chief Doug Thomas' cement crew poured concrete apron, after which electricians wired the boiler house and she was ready!



IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN, but Stacy Potter, member of a carpenter crew building foundations for three oil drum chutes designed to carry garbage 75 feet down to the sea, keeps right on with his tedious form work. (For view of completed chutes, see picture above.)



BOILER CHECK. Mike Yanoscik (left) and Martin Melasky check valves of boilers supplying hot water and steam for sterilizing operation. Despite most modern methods of design, this plant, built in July, was destroyed by terrible typhoon of 9 October.

C A M P B O L O



B O L O P O I N T

NEW CAMP WAS A BEEHIVE OF CONSTRUCTION



"I HEAR YOU TALKING, but you can't come in". Tomb or no tomb, communications must go through and far from being superstitious after 21 months overseas is this E Division telephone crew: Stevens, Cherpick, Jordan, Lynch, Shady, Steadley and Chief Riley.



ROBBING THE OCEAN for these "just right" coral blocks cut by natives from conveniently located reefs, Chief Doug Thomas (standing, right) and his versatile concrete gang lay foundations for Ship's Store in May. Chow hall is in the background.



SUPERVISION, PLUS! An officer (Lieut. Davis) and three chiefs (McKinney, Wemple and Rhyne) "supervise" four electricians and crane operator in erecting Jap rails fashioned into light poles for camp area. Workers: Henderson, Scott, Chet Smith, Dobbs. Operator: Carnes.



FRUSTRATION. This was approximately the way the 87th's permanent chow hall looked shortly after it was commenced in June. It still looked like this when the depleted battalion left Bolo for Baten-Ko in late September. Explanation: Confusion from above.



"COOKIE'S CASINO," a beer and coke garden where all hands enjoyed these iced refreshments together, was instituted at Saipan, in April, by Comdr. Cook and continued throughout his regime on Okinawa. Here, the Wet Canteen line still files past rear serv-

ice entrance of Ship's Store as hundreds of tired men are picked up at day's end in pleasant grove of green pines. Beer was rationed two cans per customer, per day, but there was no limit on cokes.

LIFE AT CAMP BOLO WAS NEVER DULL

Construction of the 87th's main camp at Bolo Point began immediately after the LSTs commenced unloading at Green Beach on 27 April.

Ditchdiggers dug deep slit trenches for foxholes wherever tents were raised. Many tent groups built fancy bomb shelters with roofs fashioned from narrow-gauge Jap rails, ripped up at the Front by battalion bullgangs while artillery shells still arched overhead. This type of underground shelter, complete with cots, mosquito bars and insect bombs, was used for sleeping quarters when the raids lasted all night as they often did.

An adequate mess hall was built in double-quick time and was thrown open to all hungry servicemen. Ice cream was served the first week in May and ice water became a permanent fixture. GIs, Marines and fighter pilots from Yontan and Kadena often outnumbered the Bees in 87th chowlines.

And then the Ryukyu rains came. For 30 consecutive days—from 15 May to 15 June—it never let up. Yet the work went on. The outfit was now a long time away from home. Personnel Office was more and more besieged with requests for emergency leaves as the morale-breaking "Dear John" letters continued to arrive from impatient spouses. Disbursing also had its quota of headaches in handling military invasion currency, which had rendered U. S. currency obsolete on Okinawa for the duration.

Once the few remaining Jap pockets of resistance were mopped up, the celebrated COOK'S TOURS of battle areas and historic shrines, instituted at Saipan, were resumed. The news-hungry men depended upon the daily island newspaper—THE NEW OKINAWIAN—for resumes of world-shaking events. Ears were kept glued to Radio Okinawa, Station WXLH—"Just a stone's throw from Tokyo." Never before had the men chanced across so many former acquaintances as they encountered here. For the first time, the battalion found itself rubbing elbows with an entire army—Buckner's dogged Tenth.

Last of many indelible impressions were the swarms of huge transports using the island's many airfields—Bolo, Yontan, Kadena, Awasha, Machinato, Yonabaru, Chimu, Futema, Motobu, etc.—in ferrying legions of occupation troops to Japan. As the endless flights of aerial box-cars shuttled back and forth between Okinawa and Japan, the spent men knew that their labors had not been in vain.



DISHING IT OUT. Scuttlebutt raced through camp that an extra-special meal was to be had at the battalion chow hall and every manjack "charged" the galley forthwith. KPs are shown dishing it out to the usual double line.



"NOW THIS MAY HURT a little," says Lt. Comdr. (Dr.) Abraham Fleischer to patient, Ararat Malkassian, PhM2c, one of his corpsmen, as the battalion's third Senior Medical Officer administers a spinal anesthesia. Chief Pharmacist Mate Garrett Tunney assists.



"HERE'S HOW, BOYS!" The spinal having performed its mission of mercy, Dr. Fleischer, surrounded by Lt.(jg.) (Dr.) A. R. Robertson, IV (unseen) and three corpsmen, proceeds to remove a bothersome cyst from base of patient's spine in 87th's operating room.



SICK CALL. Statistics prove men overseas two years do not have natural resistance of fresh Stateside troops. With 12 of their 24 overseas months spent in the unhealthy Solomons, it was not surprising that many ROBIN WENTLEY veterans found it necessary to visit Sick Bay occasionally during

the Bolo sojourn. Erected in a L-shaped quonset that housed entire medical and dental departments, including a spacious ward and a well equipped operating room, Bolo Point was a medico's dream.



"FINKEL'S PLACE" was one of many fairly appropriate names for the 87th Ship's Store—one of Comdr. Cook's several pet projects. Supervised by Lt.(jg) Grover Daly and managed by Chief John Ahaesy, customers were handled by Spence, Grubb and Corwin.



COMMAND PERFORMANCE. Comdr. Cook, a patron of the arts, ordained a Sunday afternoon jam session for "the boys" and immediately it was so ordered. "Crushing the Coral" (left to right): Lockard, Hanson, Pagano, Peiffer, Yorke, Kenning and Van Dorn.



NO TICKEE, NO WASHEE. Chief O. J. Deroche (left), "big boss" of the battalion laundry throughout trip, keeps an omniscient eye on his hustling laundry crew as "my boys" and machines remove honest sweat from another division's clothes.



SHOES PRESERVE THE MAN. Joe Curci buffs a shoe and make this item of footwear as good as new. Shoes were repaired here with new heels and soles, but shine boy was always out! Most Seabees, however, were always after new shoes at Supply.



"COMING EVENTS cast their shadows before" and Painter Joe Morton (right) knows they can't keep the long-suffering 87th overseas forever. Here, Frank Stupia (left) and Gaetano Pallisi, battalion tailors, get Seabee Joe ready for a Frisco blow. "Hope springs eternal . . ."



CLIP JOINT. Fancy haircuts and latest scuttlebutt are offered all comers by barbers. "Weary Willie" Williams (center) and "Wild Bill" Doster (right) work on Joe Bentley and Danny Hernandez, respectively, while "Dry-Dock" Boyd "trims" a Gook (left).



"WELL DONE, 'BOYS'!" Ensign Porath, Flight Nurse Keiffer and Comdr. Cook (second row) see first group (20 of 71) of 42-year-olds off for home in June at Yontan Airfield. Here, many of these veterans of two World Wars had fought the enemy, indirectly with strip-building know-

how and directly with '03s and carbines when Jap airborne troops once paid busy Yontan a surprise suicidal visit. Practically all this group had served the battalion since Camp Peary.



STATESIDE BOUND! This unusually well-groomed (for the Western Pacific!) group of 24 left by plane and ship for the States on 6 August. Composed of men previously reported to ComServPac (Pearl Harbor) as being in excess of the battalion's allowed complement, plus the first ro-

tation group to leave the unit, this contingent left Okinawa same day the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and only four days before the enemy made his first overture for peace.



GOOK WOMEN from Ishikawa native compound were "hired" in August as laundry help and for camp cleaning. However, 50 women and 825 Seabees (two years overseas) proved too much for Comdr. Cook and he "chased" the help within 30 days.



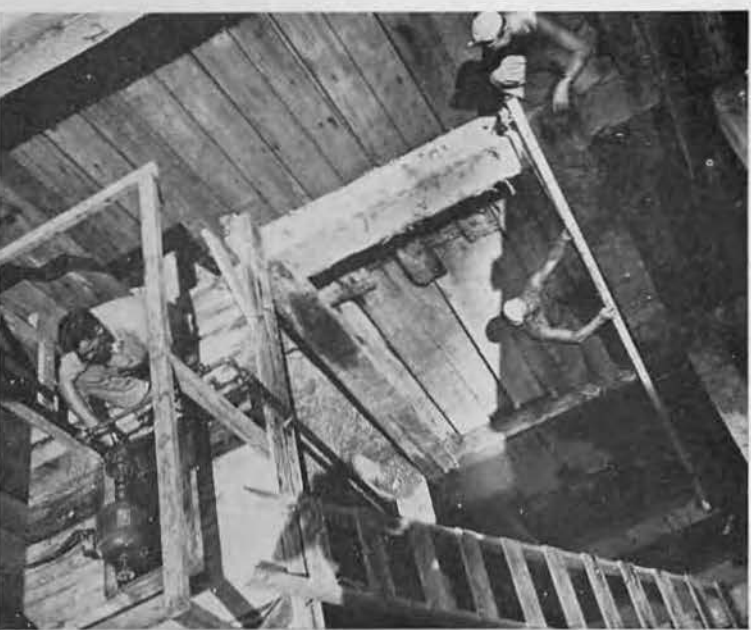
SEABEE WAVES. Sumiko (left), 21, and Homiko, 19, were leaders of the Gook contingent that upset the tranquility of Camp Bolo. Appointed by the Civilian Government authorities, these young women studied English even on the job.



ROUND-UP TIME in "Tex-Kinawa" found "rustlers," sent by Military Government, taking every horse in sight from the battalion corral, but not without protest from 87th cowboys. These horses had been left behind by retreating Jap Army.



BIG LEAGUER, Chief Specialist Andy High, veteran of five National League clubs and three World Series, demonstrates batting staunch to Charles Gifford (left), James Rossetti (seated) and James Krueger before he leaves battalion for home.



WATER WELL dug by battalion well drillers was excellent example of Seabee craftsmanship. Bob Scanlon (lower right) balances on narrow planking while Don Kilmer (upper right) and Chief Hubert Rieck check depth and pumps, respectively.



2.5 IS PASSING. Personnel ambitious for re-rates take qualifying examinations in chow hall. Passing grades will be entered in service records, but applicants must await openings. Yeoman Johnny Bucceri and Chief Bill Getz assist.



HYMN SINGERS, vigorously paced by Chaplain G. Jay Umberger, fourth 87th "padre," give out with an old favorite at Sunday evening services held at the movie area in the absence of an adequate chapel. Leading group with plenty of free-swinging gusto, Chaplain

Umberger's voice led all the rest. Divine Services for Protestants were held twice each Sunday, but movie area was always cleared in time for regular Sunday night show. Catholics and Jews worshipped with nearby outfits.



"SWING IT, BOYS!" As they must to all islands wherever American forces are fighting, Stateside women eventually arrived on Okinawa and, among other strongpoints, took the 87th and Bolo Point by storm. In the American Red Cross hut set aside for

recreation and relaxation, William ("Crusty") Green (left) and the irrepressible Thomas Patrick Rooney (right) sing and play their cherished guitars along with a gala contingent of shipmates—and four (4) Red Cross girls. Center: Artie Hansford, vocalist.



"BUGS!" Chief Pharmacist Mate John Baker (left) displays a beaker of assorted inoculation fluids, which he claims approximates the sum total of serum injected into average 87th Seabee since entering service. Fred Colby, PhMtc, holds celebrated "square needle."

REUNIONS. Seabee fathers chanced across warrior sons throughout trip with reunions reaching a peak on Okinawa. Chief Bill Inness is shown with Marine William, Jr. Other lucky fathers: Chiefs Harold Brennan and Leon Tubbs, Charley Danford and J. D. Devaney.



ADMIRAL'S PARTY. Among the Seabee units on Okinawa visited by Vice Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks (seated, center), was the 43rd Naval Construction Regiment, which, of course, included the 87th. This party was held at the regiment the night of 11

August. The Japs had just asked to quit. Seated in chairs (left to right): Rear Admiral Price, Rear Admiral Cotter, Vice Admiral Moreell, Rear Admiral Manning and Commodore Bisset.

SELDOM A DULL MOMENT FOR THESE SEABEES



GRAND PRIZE of this Country Store Night at movie theatre was an Okinawa goat won by "lucky" ticket-holder, David Tucker, PhM3c (right), as Ed Towey, SKD1c, master of ceremonies, vents his enjoyment over the public address mike. Goat later escaped.



MADE TO ORDER. "Jap" flags of the above type were turned out in wholesale lots at 87th Paint Shop by Albert Mundy, John Schaefer and Ken Rollins. Complete with appropriate inscriptions and characters, Marines preferred these flags to genuine product.

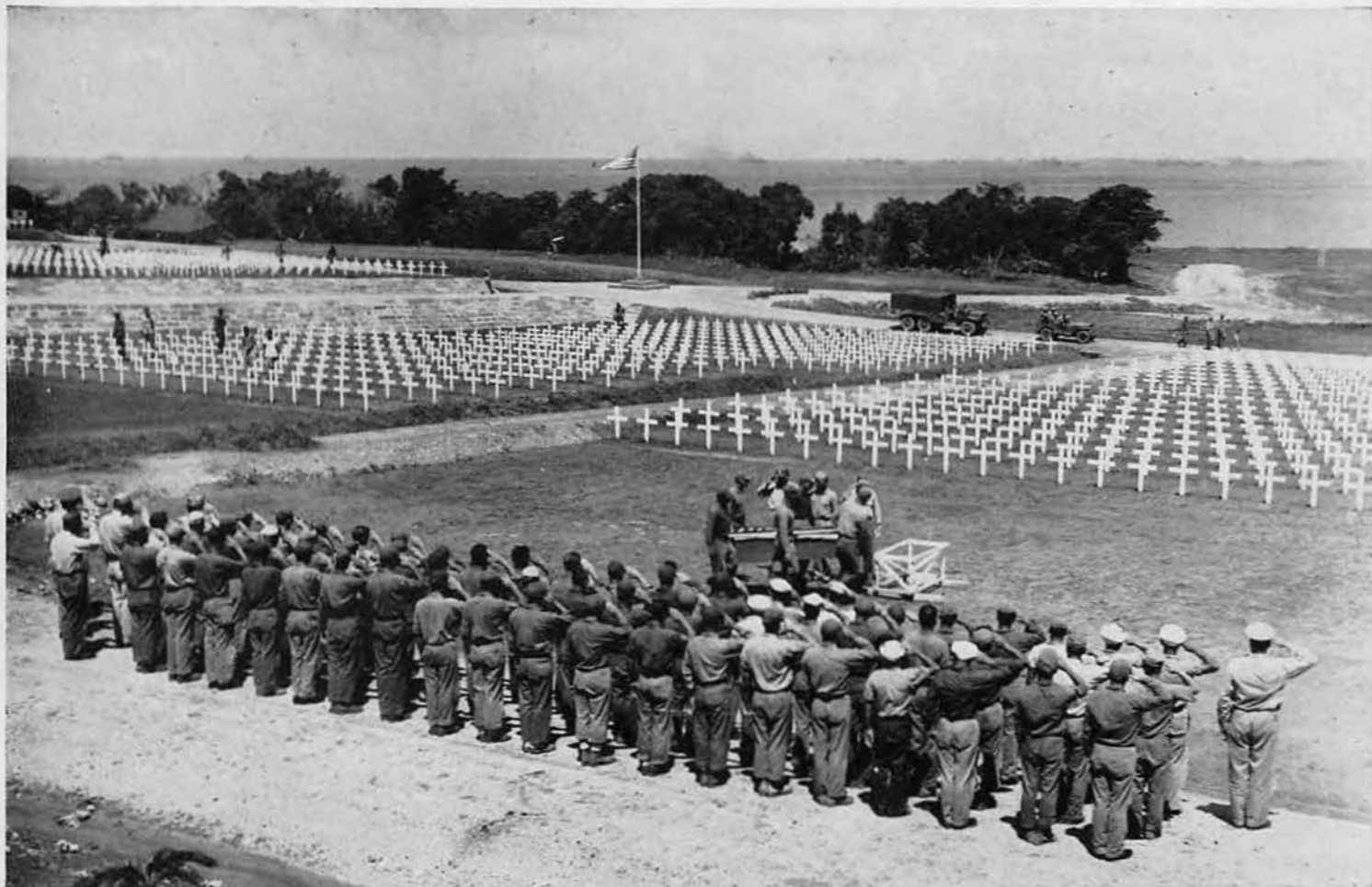


SOUVENIRS. Tom Pungitore, Sic, of the Bronx, gazes fondly at a Japanese officer's sword and battle flag, perhaps wishing they were his to send home. Actually, "Pungy" borrowed props from Comdr. Cook, whose source of supply was a military secret!



GAG. There's more than one way to get your picture in THE EARTH-MOVER as Michael ("Utch") Utchell learned after conferring with the editor and photographer, who apparently thought it took a little of just about everything for a complete Seabee book.

DALE ANDERSON BURIED IN OKINAWA CEMETERY



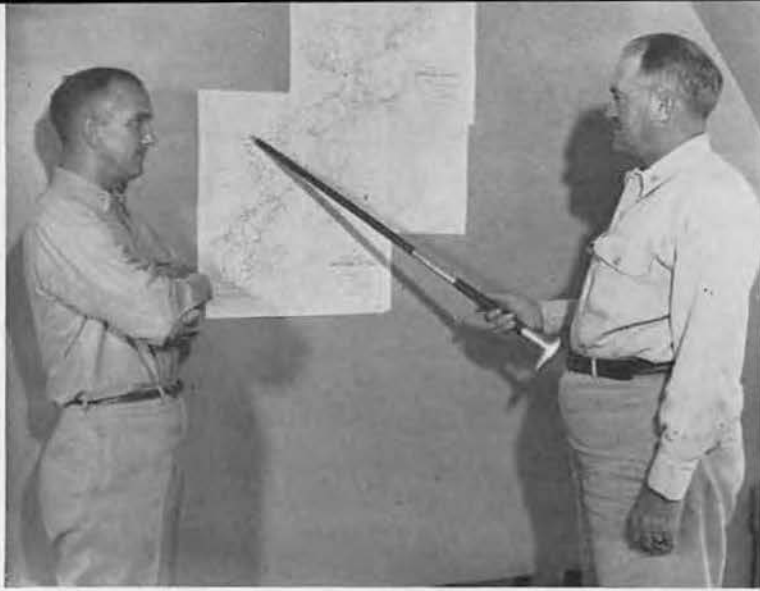
JOURNEY'S END. Last rites, with full military honors, were held for Dale S. Anderson, CM3c, of Monaca, Pa., at the Island Command Cemetery, on Sunday, 26 August. Comdr. Cook and Lt. Comdr. Douglas (facing funeral entourage) salute, along with battalion officers and men, as

TAPS ARE SOUNDED for a departed buddy and shipmate by Ensign Harold Lockard (left) as pallbearers prepare to lower Dale Anderson to his final resting place overseas. The first and only 87th fatality on Okinawa, Anderson's was the battalion's eleventh death since leaving Camp Peary

Chaplain G. Jay Umberger (face obscured) halts pallbearers at spot where services will be conducted. An original member of the 87th, Anderson lacked only four days of having two years overseas at the time of his death.

in April, 1943. His accidental death at Nagahama Quarry on 24 August came after the enemy had sued for peace and the end of the long trip was definitely in sight.





"NOW, WHERE ARE WE?" Comdr. Cook (right) says to his "exec," Lt. Comdr. Douglas, as he points a fancy Seabee-made cane straight at Bolo Point where the 87th Bees are encamped. These officers were acquainted at Camp Peary, but didn't serve together until Okinawa.



DRAFTING. Lt.(jg) Juel Belsaas (right) drives home a fine point to his able technical group at Camp Bolo. Left to right: Carpenter Vincent Pagano, Chief Andy Competiello, Ed Palmquist, Harry Reuell, George Miller, Ed Shaffer and Willard Hamilton.



DISBURSING. Lt.(jg) Charles Schlotter (seated, far left) and Chief Storekeeper Carl Ruble discuss next pay day as "Tippy," battalion mascot from Ventura, Calif., listens in. Others (left to right): Charlie Dashiell, Bernard Robinson, Ed Towey and Bernie Kruger.



PERSONNEL. Ens. Donald Porath and Chief Yeoman Lauren Merriam (far left and right) drive their yeomen hard to get out orders and records to send eligibles home. Others (left to right): "Larry" Lamoureux, Lawrence Iaquina, John Bucceri and Melvin Ertwine.



POST OFFICE mailmen saw that battalion mail was well handled. William Kemp, Jr. (left) writes report as Wallace Berry (center) sorts outgoing mail. Eoss Joe Cantrell cancels letters just finished by censors (background) and dreams of Kentucky mountains.



CENSORS. Razor blade boys focus eagle eyes on outgoing mail as Ensign Porath, battalion censor (right), talks across table with deputy, Chief Carl Dorfeld. Others: Ralph Silver, John Kershaw, Edward O'Con, John Brumit, Frank Van Houten and Carleton Soule.



HASH SLINGERS. A housewife may complain about cooking for hubby, but these fellows cooked for over 1,000 men. Ship's cooks, bakers and butchers comprise the commissary department which feeds the entire unit. Chow, at times, may not meet with the approval of all hands, but on

Okinawa the food was usually A-1. Proof of this is that chow tickets had to be issued to keep outsiders from overrunning chow hall, especially when fresh meat was on menu.



THE MEDICS. Physicians, dentists and corpsmen step outside Sick Bay to strike a pose for posterity. Left to right, front: Fred Colby, Burton Barnes, Chief John Baker, Lieut. Steve Lynch, Comdr. A. J. Fleischer, Chief Garrett Tunney and Santo DeGrazia; (back row): Ralph Pontow,

Gaylord Hold, William Armstrong, Francis ("Buck") Byers, Lt.(jg) A. R. Robertson, IV, Lieut. Bruce Snider, Ararat Malkassian, David Tucker and Julius Fontenot.



MACHINE SHOP, manned by experts, proved invaluable throughout Pacific tour. When parts were unobtainable, especially in forward areas, these machine-wise boys made them. Above, Cecil Farmer, Ambrose Gillespie and John Chisler. Chief sideline: souvenirs!



CARPENTER SHOP was always staffed by tool-handy carpenter's mate. Front row: Augustine Borrelli, Elmo Hoffman, Jack Bauske, William Bear and Richard Stough; (standing): Charles Briggs, John Kane, Lieut. A. C. ("Cal") Winters, Daniel John and Alexander Bocko.



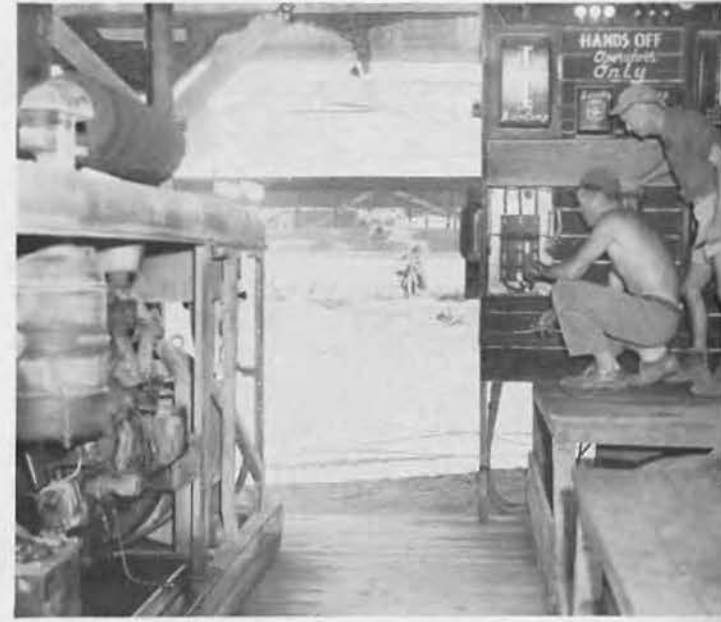
HEAVY DUTY MECHANICS are the lads who keep the big cats rolling, come what may. Kneeling: James Rossetti, Charles Gifford, Judson Milligan, John Mullen; (standing): Adam Bull, Edward Giannattasio, Glen Cummings, Pedro Ruiz, and Lovell Hukle.



PLUMBING SHOP. Pipefitters come in all sizes like the work they are expected to do. Field includes everything from wrist bands to 12-inch pipe. The crew: Chief Herbert Rieck, Domenic Carapelliese, Tom Die, Jack Miller and "Frenchy" Terroux.



TIRE SHOP. From the smallest jeep to the largest pan, this essential group handles all types of rubber repairs for rolling stock. Repairmen are: Theodore Lindlau, Ed McKibben, Ed Dutrow, Cecil Haley, Lawrence McVey and Tommy Grissom.



GENERATOR HOUSE. The switchboard in this strategic establishment controls all the electric power from main generators to Camp Bolo. Merle Martin (left) may have his hands a little too close to fuses, so Lieut. A. L. Davis keeps a safe distance.



SPARE PARTS. No earthmoving equipment is better than existing system of providing spare parts as they are required. These lads knew what was needed and were able to anticipate most requirements! Barrett Sumrell, Lyell Whyte and Woodrow Carter.



TRANSPORTATION RIGGING LOFT. The cable crib was no place for gold-bricks. Here, T Division riggers took care of cables for shovels, cranes, draglines, etc. Chief Charlie Bowers (center) assists as Tom Nanfra (left) holds strands and Joe Basket applies spike.



GENERAL RIGGING LOFT handled all assignments not pertaining to transportation equipment. Fred ("Buttercup") Haas (left) bellies his nickname as he executes a neat splice on a heavy cable. Tutor John ("Pinky") Doyle smiles down proudly upon his protegee.



SHEET METAL SHOP. Specializing in any sheet metal item from a fancy lavatory to a tin whistle, these boys always add another shingle to their sign at each new place of duty. Left to right: Robert Bowman, Joe Ferrera, James Smith and Lincoln Bock.



T DIVISION STAFF, consisting primarily of shop foremen and field supervisors, assemble for a final picture of the real earthmovers as Lieut. Ben Markette (fourth from left, second row) hands reins over to Lieut. John C. Britton (center, first row).



WATER POINT. Combining utility with compactness, this purifying unit and filter were built from various odds and ends and powered by a captured Jap motor. Bob Scanlon (left) and Chief Hubert Rieck adjust the unit, which handles 50 gallons per minute.



WELDING AND BLACKSMITH SHOPS were combined into a single efficient unit in T Division. The above happy-go-lucky gang could and did handle anything and everything—from souvenir bracelets to 12-yard carryalls—and were never stumped.



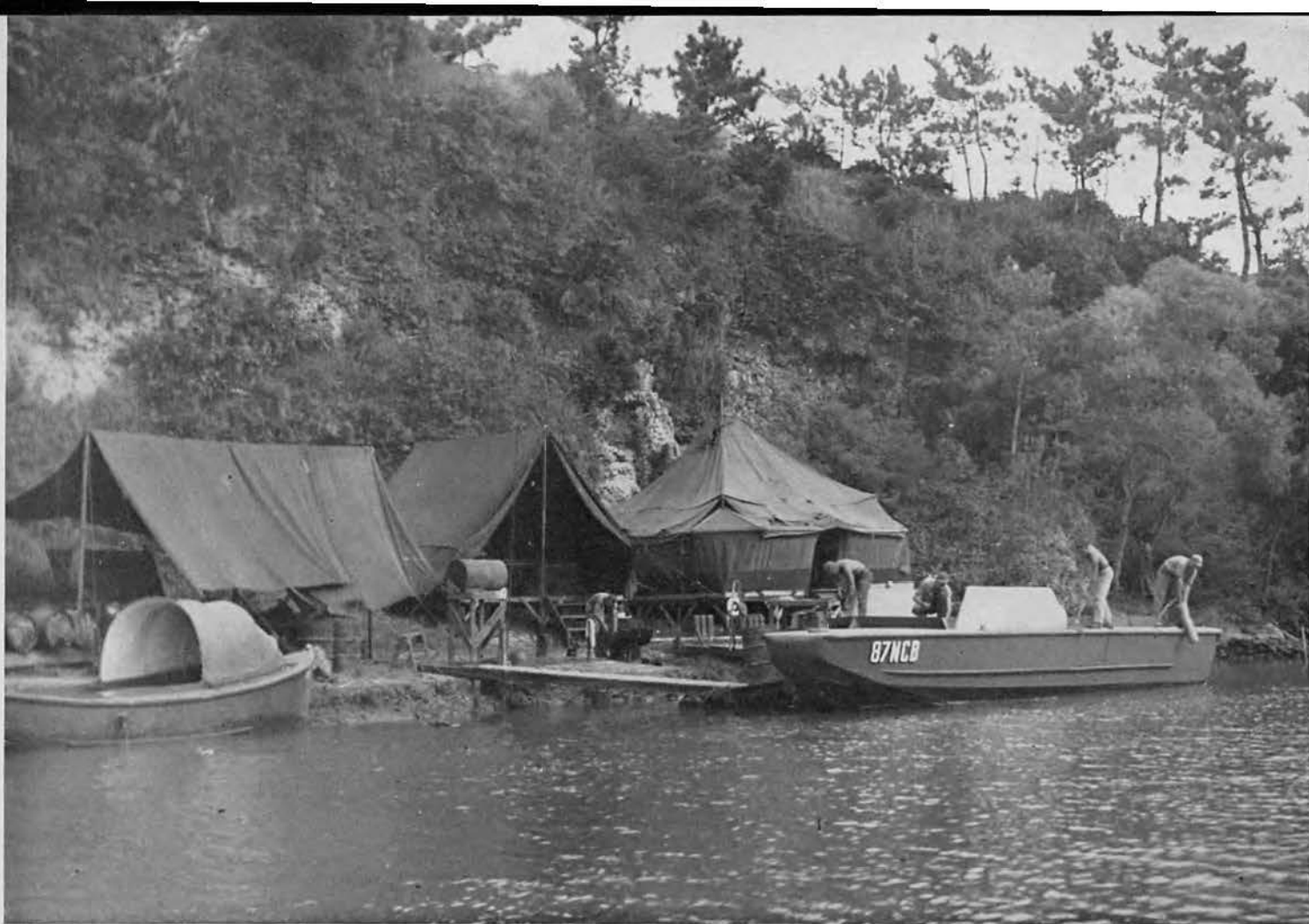
LIGHT DUTY MECHANICS are as inaptly named as their work is heavy, both in its nature and quantity. Battalion had well over 100 trucks and jeeps to be maintained. These men have just finished repairing this 10-yard Euclid truck.



ELECTRIC SHOP handled repairs, rewinding and supplies. James Cheke and Bob Loden catch up bench work while Lieut. Davis explains defective coil to James Hockersmith. Here, these three were electrician's mates, first class; all eventually made CEM.



THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, bossed by Chief Constant Upham (center, back row), sprinkled all access roads into camp, kept lister bags and fire barrels placed and filled, maintained fire extinguishers at proper spots—and put out fires any old time!



BATTALION NAVY. The 87th's small boat pool was located at mouth of Bisha Gawa (river), six miles from Camp Bolo. Chief "Jerry" Kadenbach and his crew (William Schmidt and Tennis Wick) played a leading role in helping keep the Earthmovers well supplied with fresh meat, eggs, etc.,

from ships in Okinawa's several harbors. These fresh vitamins kept the air-field makers in tip-top condition for their gruelling work schedule. MISSEABEE (left) and HARDNOSE were also used extensively for fishing trips.



BREATHER. P Division plumbers and pipefitters knock off at new garbage unit long enough to make the battalion book. (Front): Howard Hattal, Walt Maximuk, Chiefs Louie Carlisle and Charlie Polrot, Mike Yanoscik, (back): Robert DeVries, Hurchel Turner, Robert Newkirk.



"GOOD LUCK, YOUNG MAN," Comdr. Cook, 52, tells his successor and former executive officer, Lt. Comdr. Douglas, 30, as second OinC departs for the States (and inactive duty) in September. Comdr. Cook guided the 87th slightly over five months. Great friends, these!

JAP RAIDERS GUIDED ON BOLO POINT IN STRIKES AGAINST U. S. AIRFIELDS



BOLO REFERENCE POINT. What Mt. Tapotchau was to Saipan, the landmark of Bolo Point was to Okinawa.

for alike as THE reference point for calculating operational distances. Ringed with 90s searchlights and radar

airfields. The 87th encampment is easily recognized

N A T I V E S



O K I N A W A S H I M A



A **FALLEN CULTURE** is symbolized by this no longer used Shinto shrine and these three dispossessed Okinawa natives en route back to a native compound after picking up a few of their belonging at their former home. Located in a pleasant grove near the village of Uza, and quite

near Camp Bolo, this shrine was a favorite background of 87th camera fiends. This group is typical of Okinawa society in that the two women are bearing the heavy burdens.



THE LAW. This solemn citizen of Okinawa, attired in GI clothing, was a civilian policeman (the CPs) who assisted MPs in recovering native horses. Approximately 40 were collected on the 87th "range" and taken to Ishikawa.



CULLING RICE. Sorting the grain from the chaff is still done on Okinawa by primitive laborious sifting through one wicker basket to another. Thanks to their short, sturdy legs, native women can squat for long periods without fatigue.



DISPLACED PERSONS. Natives of all sizes and ages are shown crowded into a sorting compound at Taira. Rounded up as they roamed aimlessly about the countryside, they are questioned here by civilian and military authorities. Then, they are sorted for return to villages or internment.

Tarps thrown over poles serve as living quarters for transients. Due to their inability to respond to challenges of sentries, compounds or guarded villages were the only safe places for natives at night.



THE YOUNGER SET of Nago, barefooted and already toting their burdens aloft, walk nonchalantly over a pebbly road. The girls have exhausted their shoe rationing coupons for the current month. Bilingual signs warn natives to stay away from Nago and nearby military installations.

Nago was principal city of this section and had a peacetime population of 10,000. Located half-way up the island, it was badly damaged by the First Marines when they made their invasion sweep northward.



GOAT TOWN. These hardy animals are the only occupants remaining in village of Uza. Only a mile away, this was closest village to Camp Bolo. Heavy stone walls are built against typhoons that come in September and October.



PHOTOGENIC. In Taira, a fishing village north of Nago, wider streets and glass windows indicate a greater prosperity than found in average poverty-stricken hovels. Tiny couple (foreground) are all dressed up in contrast to lad in window.



VILLAGE WELL. This amiable character operates hand chain device to bring up a bucket of water in almost deserted village of Takashippo. His "procuring bag" (on ground behind him) is still quite full, evidence of a good day's scavenging.



GENTS OF OLD SCHOOL pose on steps of school building in Takashippo. Gentleman at right wears Jap split-toed shoes and carries a handsome cane. GI souvenir hunters have picked village clean. Almost empty bag indicates poor hunting.



STRAW BOSS (center, wearing large, white hat) directs countrymen in hurried search of partially destroyed village of Jima. Searchers pick up anything useful in their new life in native compounds. Houses were later razed by 'dozers.



FRATERNIZATION! Native women and children lose their inherent camera-shyness as Comdr. Cook, far-ranging 87th skipper, stops for a chat along Route 4-N. This would have been tempting morsel if roving MPs had happened along!



"ALL THE COMFORTS . . ." The interior of each native dwelling at Ishikima has a corner where the family's belongings are piled in picturesque disorder. Limited section under eaves serves as a kitchen. Two children sleep on floor while a third infant (right) peeks over mother's shoulder.

Kimonoed urchin (left) has dropped his fan and is giggling wildly. Straw mats, used for all purposes, are the only furniture these people possess. Chairs and beds are unknown.



EAGER BEAVER. This tiny native at village of Taira heads for parked 87th jeep—on the double! Steep stairs are the least of his worries as his thoughts center on the possibility of tagging the Americans for candy.



HARVEST TIME. Picturesque Okinawan women (at least, from the back!), wearing typical, high-crowned straw hats against the sun, reap the full grown grain. To facilitate squatting and bending required by manual tasks, skirts are slit.



BINDLE STIFF, Okinawa model, is hardly one of the "Okies" Author John Steinbeck wrote about in "The Grapes of Wrath," but this character would certainly appear in any Seabee's forthcoming novel about the "Okies" of Okinawa. His hat appears worn.



CHOW'S ON. Crude utensils are used by native mother to grind meal for chow at Ishikawa compound. Children gaze longingly at sticky concoction. Her smallest child rides astern. Boy (right), obviously troubled with fleas, forgot to dress for dinner!



THE GLEANERS. Women and boys work in a sweet potato field. Lads use home-made mattocks to loosen earth; then, women dig potatoes and cut leaves. Small scythes (tucked in waistbands) are used for trimming. Woman (left) smiles broadly, but keeps her head averted. Sweet potatoes

and pork are their staple foods, but pork supply has been sadly depleted by ravages of war. Seabees were as eager for these hats as souvenirs as they once were for grass skirts.

S C E N I C



R Y U K Y U R E T T O



BEAUTY IS EVERYWHERE, according to THE EARTHMOVER photographer, who stumbled across this idyllic little valley in west central Okinawa between Yontan and Kadena. Although this haven of peace shows much evidence of native cultivation, it was once a secret Jap supply depot where

vital enemy supplies were hidden underground. Evidence of intense Jap activity, including entrance to a secret recess, may be seen in left background. A small, convenient water point is shown at right center.



"FILL 'ER UPI" This Japanese monument, which stands near a military academy at Nago, is now serving a more useful purpose than was originally intended by its erectors. GIs have converted it into a gasoline refueling station.

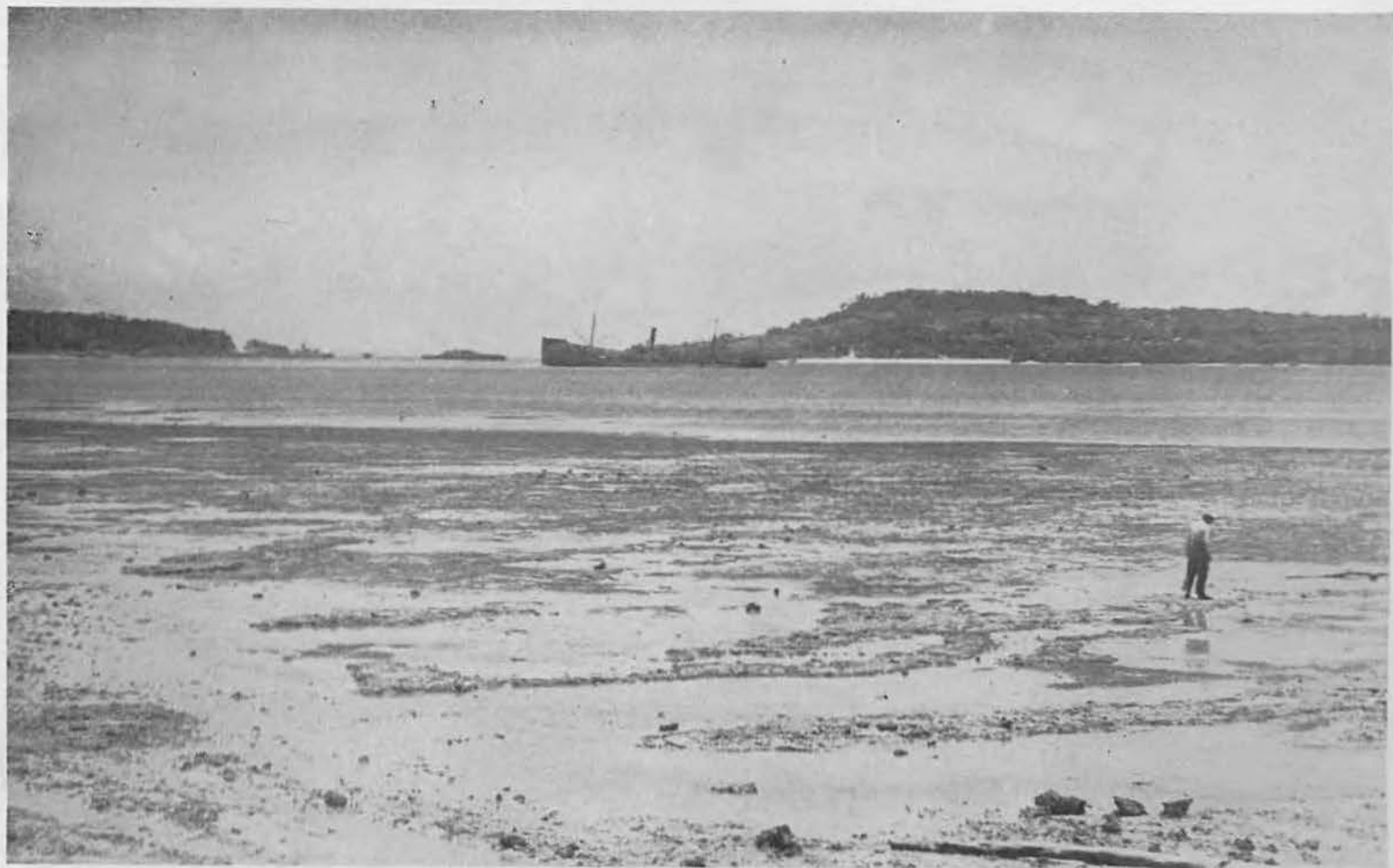


DOWN IN THE VALLEY. In a quiet ravine below bustling Yontan Airfield, natives have made maximum use of the fertile land for cultivation. Because of scarcity of water for irrigation, Okinawans take advantage of every natural rain shed.



SHURI CASTLE, anchor of the Jap's fiercely resisting Shuri Line, stands blasted by overwhelming firepower from land, sea and air. Once the home of Ryukyu kings, its thick, reinforced concrete walls tell a story of a game little man beaten by a determined bigger opponent. Entire structure

covers several acres and attracted visitors from all over. Here, Mailman Wallace Berry of the 87th, stands near one entrance and says he wouldn't have believed such destruction possible.



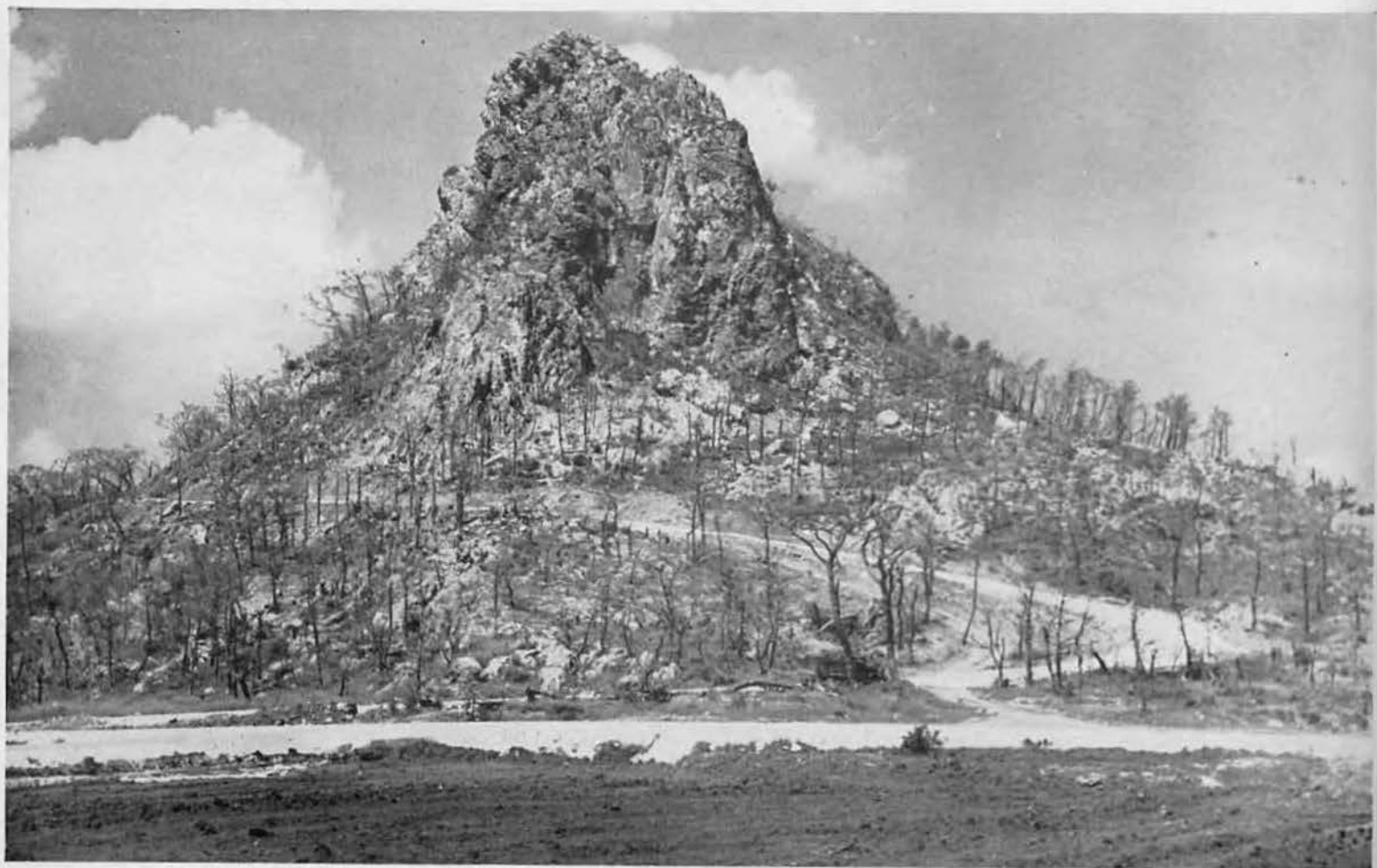
THE BEACHCOMBER. Comdr. Cook, a lone figure against a desolate landscape, hunts seashells, including cateyes, of course, at low tide along Toguchi Village beach, which faces a huge Jap anchorage. The enemy attempted to blockade this channel against American ships by scuttling eight

vessels. One of the derelict ships may be seen in central background. The blockade proved fruitless, however, as U. S. ships now use this haven to escape frequent typhoons. Sesoko Shima is in right background.



IE SHIMA, where Journalist Ernie Pyle died and the Jap surrender envoys transferred for Manila at war's end, could be seen from Bolo Point on a good day. This aerial view, taken en route from Okinawa to Ie, shows the three air strips (one Jap-built) the AAF had in operation against the

suicidal invaders. Despite the fact the tiny (10 square miles) isle took a merciless pounding throughout the Okinawa campaign, it served its purpose well as an outer defense.



DEAD VOLCANO on Ie boldly rises above the flat, barren terrain like some prehistoric monster. Only sizeable elevation on the island, it may also be seen in left center of top picture this page. Sole purpose this landmark served in World War II was as an observation post. The once

verdant trees and vegetation surrounding this eye-catcher now stand burned and devoid of beauty. A winding coral road was built to make it more accessible as a lookout.



CORAL RIBBONS. At an altitude of 7,000 feet, high above the great forward base of Okinawa, interlacing roads resemble coral ribbons converging into one junction. Through frequent breaks in light, puffy clouds, drifting lazily away toward the southern battlefield, may be seen camp

sites, fertile valleys and native villages. The eastern portion of the 60-mile-long island is seen here. (The title, "Coral Ribbons," was runner-up to **THE EARTHMOVER** for name of this volume.)



FALLEN FRIEND. Along the roadside where famed Ernie Pyle, the enlisted man's war correspondent, was ambushed by a Jap machine-gunner on 18 April 1945, some of his infantry friends erected this simple monument on Ie Shima.



SCUTTLED by her crew, this Japanese warship lies on a reef in a futile attempt to blockade Nago Wan beaches. One of eight vessels sunk for this purpose, this ship sits as another monument to enemy futility.



AIRFIELDS OF WAR. In this magnificent aerial taken at 6,000 feet, the two fine strips built in central Okinawa by the 87th Seabees are shown in the same sweeping exposure. Yontan Airfield (central foreground) was first medium bomber strip built on Okinawa and Bolo Field (central back-

ground) was the first B-29 strip built in the Ryukyus. This picture presents irrefutable proof of the vast amount of essential work accomplished by the 87th on Okinawa.



KADENA Airfield, which based Corsair fighters, was overrun by roaming goats in search of food. It was not uncommon to see a jeep racing down the strip to clear the runway of nonchalant goats for some incoming pilot.

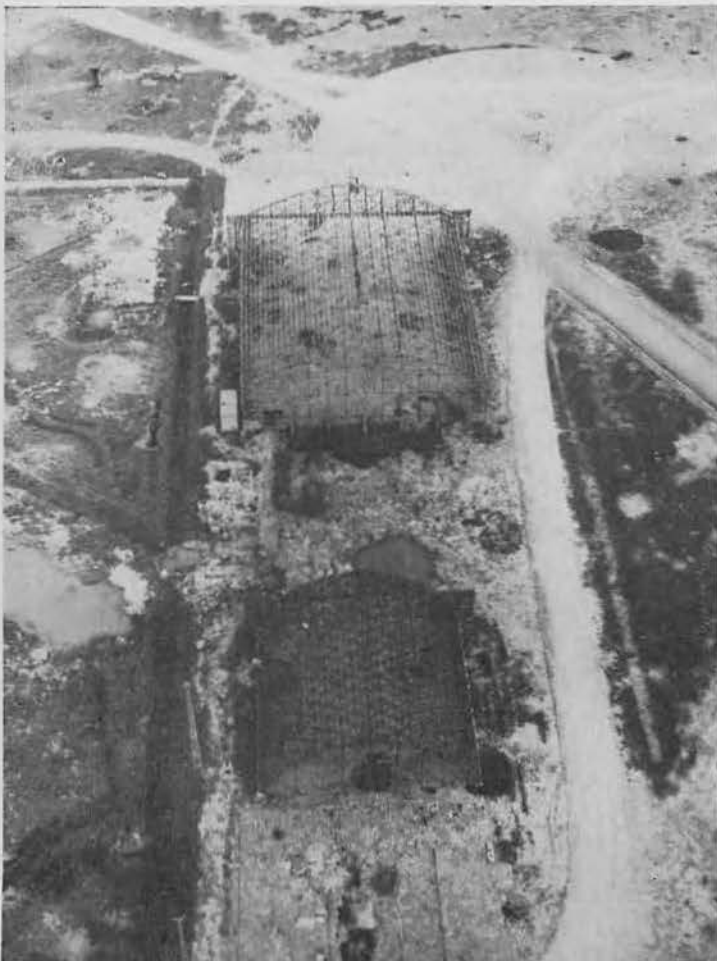


THE OTHER HALF lives on a plane all its own in picturesque village of Taira in the Nago sector of Okinawa. Here, life is simple and much time is spent visiting. Natives sit on sacks of soy beans (left).



NAGO HARBOR. This well protected harbor lies north of Bolo Point and was a quite prominent Japanese anchorage before the war. Sole harbor entrance is through a small channel and it is otherwise surrounded by reefs. Toward low-lying mountains on far horizon lies city of Nago, second

largest concentration of civilians on Okinawa. Not battered into debris like Naha in the South, Nago remains practically intact. Many of its buildings are used by U. S. troops for quarters.



JAP HANGARS, unfinished due to aerial interference, stand alongside shell-torn Naha Field, largest Jap airfield on Okinawa. Direct hits left twisted metal ribs and warped sides. One of many Jap planes destroyed on ground is shown.

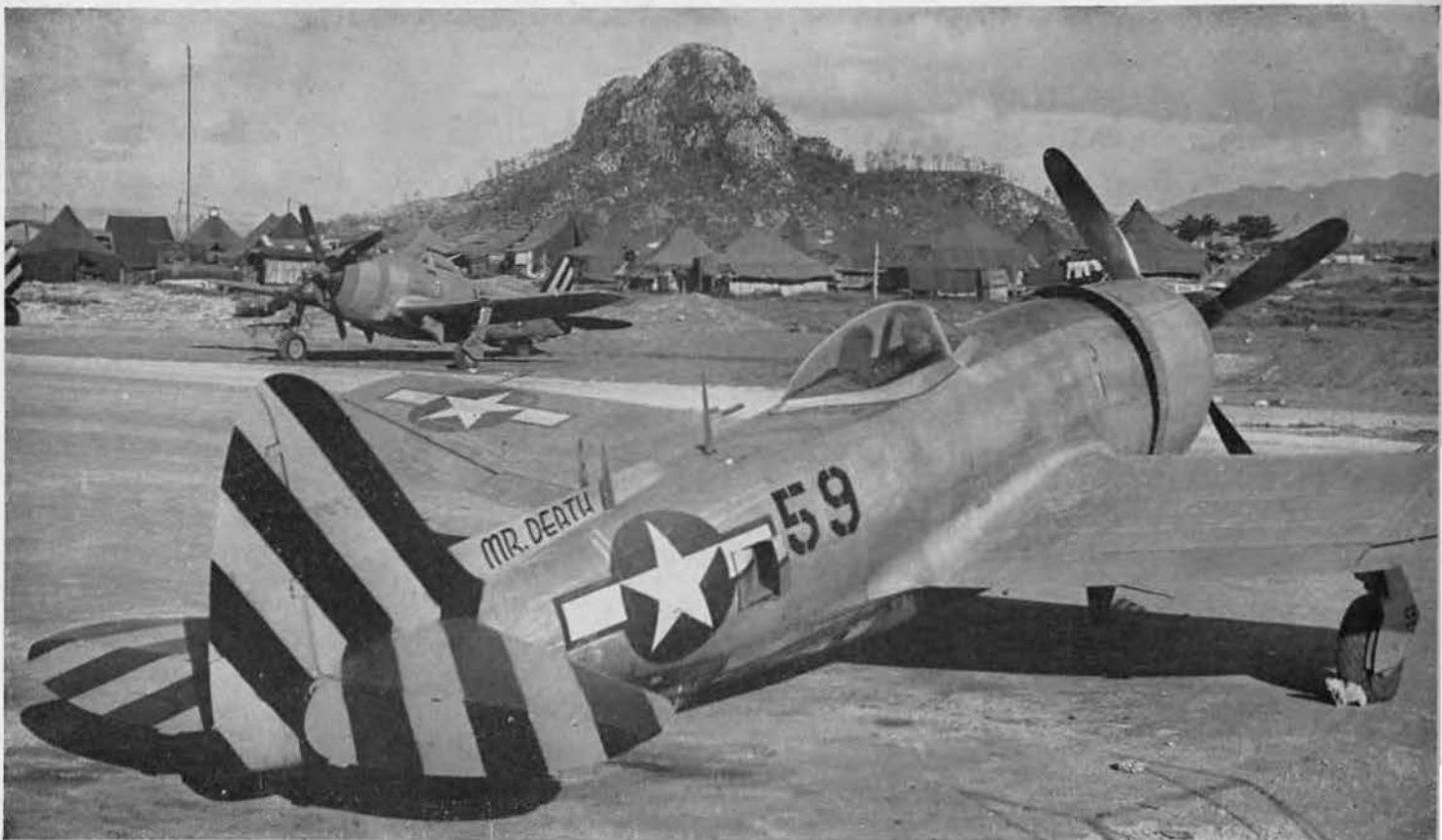


CULTIVATED VALLEY strongly resembles a meandering river flowing slowly, but surely, to the sea. Laid out in usual neat sections, the natives plant many types of vegetables. The field is irrigated by water from the nearby creek (right).



HEAVYWEIGHT! Close-up aerial of Bolo Field, still under construction by 87th Seabees, shows airfield makers and equipment rushing to finish sprawling B-29 strip in time to help deliver knockout blows to hard-pressed Japan. Jackhammer crews remove niggerheads (central fore-

ground) from almost completed strip, while rollers and graders apply finishing touches at opposite end. Bolo Point, where 87th is encamped, is in extreme central background. Later, planes taking off from runway, flew directly over battalion area.



MR. DEATH. This P-47 Thunderbolt on Ernie Pyle Field at Ie Shima carries a symbolic inscription for Japanese pilots it may chance to meet in the vicinity of the "Picket Line" protecting Okinawa. Ie's extinct volcano stands as a lone sentinel over airfield named after famed war corre-

spondent. Stripes on tail and under wings make these Thunderbolts easily discernible at great altitudes. Ie was raided even more often than Okinawa by Japs.



NATIVE JAIL. Strikingly unlike "bastilles" GIs had known back home, this simple, unoccupied jail for the village of Nakaoshi was nevertheless set up for the same purpose. Sign reads: "These people have broken the law and disgraced Nakaoshi."



WORK IN PEACE. Native women from the fishing village of Taira are harvesting rice in paddy fields by hand. Cultivated terraces, which cover entire side of hill in background, kept rich soil from being washed away by rains.



CHART LOCATION. In flying from Okinawa to Ie Shima in late August to photograph the historic arrival of the Japanese surrender mission, THE EARTHMOVER photographer aimed his big Graflex at tiny Yanaha Shima.

Resembling thousands of small islands that dot the limitless Pacific, this reef-surrounded landspeck is uninhabited. About all that can be said for it—another dot to be marked on a location chart.



GREEN PASTURES. Near a fertile valley, soggy with water drained from nearby hills, lies the beginning of the city of Nago. The terraces (left) and grain crops (center) all add up to, at least, a subsistence for the Okinawans.



THROUGH THESE PORTALS pass American wounded from front line areas. This former Japanese military academy at Nago now houses the 87th Field Hospital. This structure was left virtually intact by invasion forces sweeping north.

AERIAL OF BOLO POINT SHOWS 87TH ENCAMPMENT AGAINST CHINA SEA



334

HOME OF THE 87th. This interesting angle shot, taken from a low-flying Piper Cub in August, is unique in that it shows the entire 87th camp on Bolo Point, plus many outlying installations not previously shown at close-

mond (foreground) to camp area with living quarters and various ship's service units (center), the 87th "campers" produced a camp site second to none in the Ryukyus. The offices and parking lot of the 43rd Regi-

jurisdiction over the 87th—are shown at left. Cliffs around Bolo Point added scenic beauty to this location as did misty outline of mountains in distance.

SURRENDER!



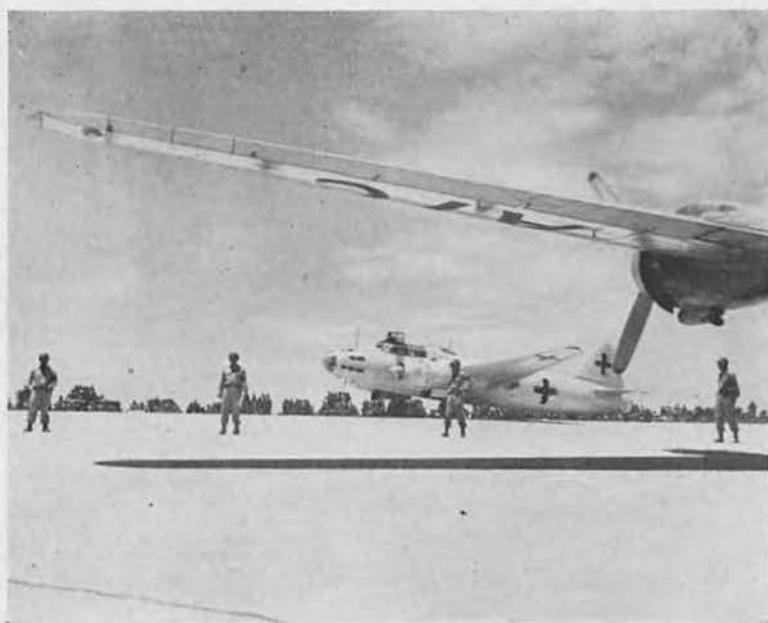
IE SHIMA—25 AUGUST 1945



SAFETY FIRST. Hundreds of picked soldiers with fixed bayonets stand guard around an Ie Shima airfield to insure the safety of the Jap surrender envoys who are expected to arrive any moment from Tokyo. It is three miles from Okinawa to Ie.



TOKYO EXPRESS, DEFANGED. First of two disarmed Jap "Betty" bombers arrives with initial surrender group. Identified by code word "Bataan" and prominent green crosses painted over Rising Suns, enemy planes were escorted in by 30 P-38s and two B-25s.



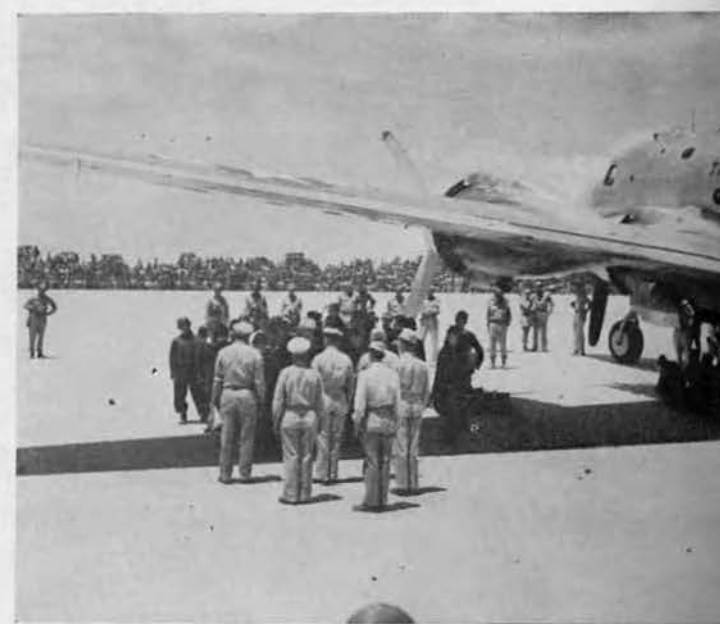
DECEPTIVE. Looking as peaceful as a hospital evacuation unit, this once "muck-shot-at" Jap medium bomber taxis past MPs to designated parking spot. All American planes had been removed from Birch Strip except two C-54s for the trip to Manila.



SPORTS. Ranging from sport civilian shorts to heavy gold braid and campaign ribbons, the somewhat jaunty Japs presented a variety of styles as they descended ladder. Second bomber (right) has just arrived. (This is only view of both bombers together.)



EASY NOW. A Jap pilot leans out of pilot's blister to gauge distance to heavily guarded hardstand. Stripped of all armor and fitted with soft plush seats, each "Betty" had room for 10 passengers and a crew of six. GIs were impressed by these planes.



THE BIG SHOW. Japanese surrender mission, headed by sullen Lt. Gen. Torashiro Kawabe (front right, page 335), presents credentials to Maj. Gen. Southwick of General MacArthur's staff. Spectators, kept off field by barbed wire, lined area by thousands.



FAT CIGAR was perhaps the most apt description of the trim "Betty" bombers. This was the same type plane that gave the inexperienced 87th such a hard time in the Northern Solomons in early 1944. The once dazzling Rising Sun of the bomb-shattered Jap Empire is easily seen under

the still wet white and green paint. Jap dressed in white (extreme left, page 335) carries traditional bouquet of flowers (wrapped in black cloth) for American conquerors in Manila.



CREAM OF EMPIRE. Fur-capped pilots who flew converted OBOs from Tokyo, were presumed pick of enemy flyers. Both wore freshly-pressed flight suits, life preservers, but no parachutes. However, one bomber hit ditch in taking off for return trip.



"HOLD IT!" Included in screened group of photographers permitted to take closeups was THE EARTHMOVER's ace cameraman, Ed Jaskulski, who ably represented the 87th at Ie. After only 15 minutes, envoys boarded C-54 for flight to Manila. Cameras grind merrily.

MACARTHUR AT YONTAN EN ROUTE TO TOKYO



THE BATAAN, emblazoned with the five impressive stars of a General of the Army, stops at Yontan Airfield late in August to refuel and be checked over. This was General MacArthur's private plane and excited considerable interest. Having thoroughly snubbed the Jap surrender mission in

Manila, the General was en route to Tokyo for the official surrender on 2 September. His visit to Okinawa for the rigid military secret, but Merlin Monroe, SC1c, happened to be there with these results.

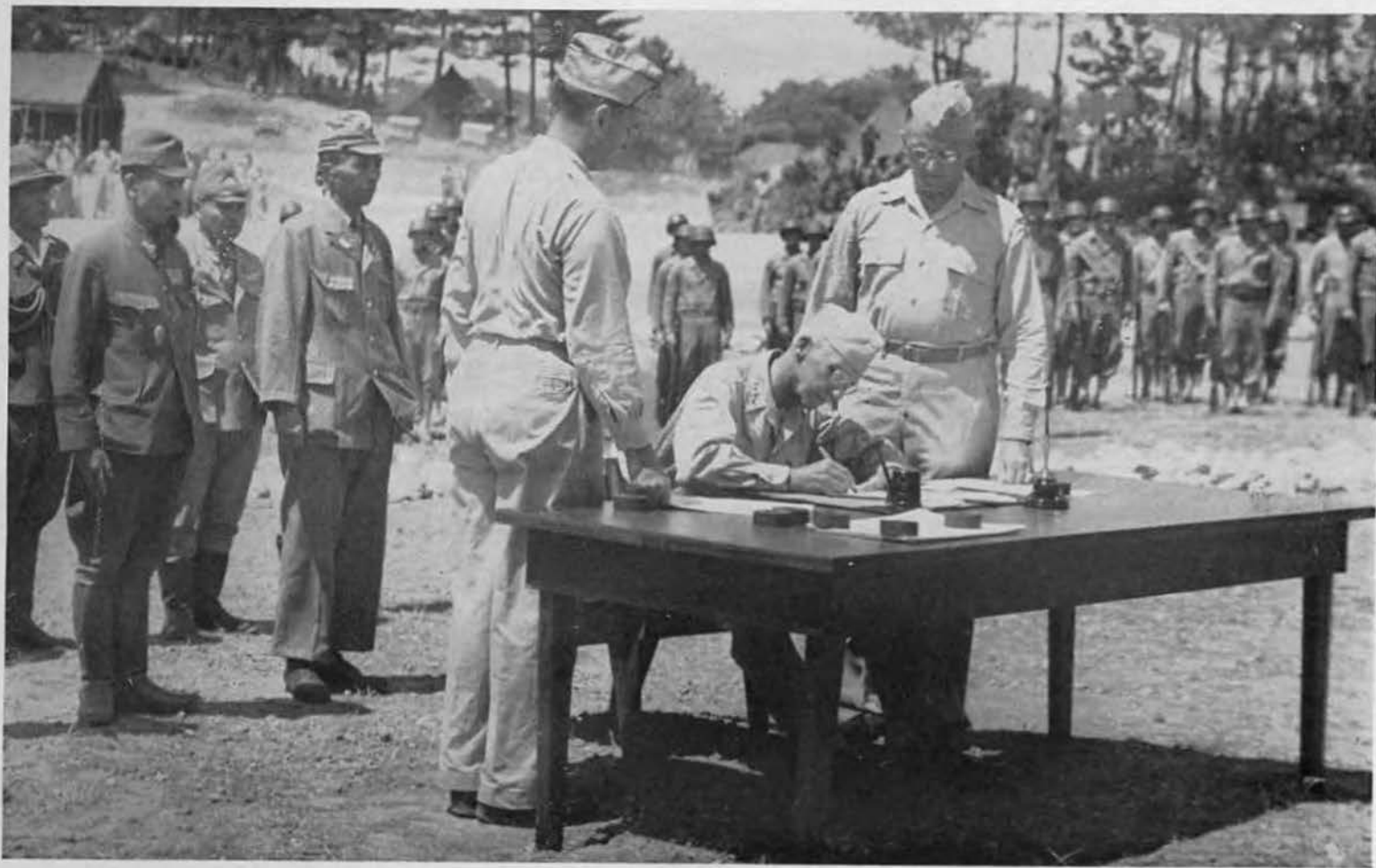


SEE YOU IN TOKYO. General MacArthur (third from left) bids farewell to General George Kenney (back to camera) while Lt. Gen. Robert Richardson (right) looks on. General Kenney sold MacArthur on maximum use of air power in the Pacific.



HAIL, THE CHIEF! While waiting for mechanics to apply final touches, General MacArthur discusses Jap surrender with Lt. Gen. Richardson, boss of Middle Pacific Command. This was MacArthur's first and only visit to Okinawa.

RYUKYU JAPS SURRENDER TO STILWELL ON OKINAWA



"VINEGAR JOE'S" DAY. Having fought the Japs in China for years, General Joseph Stilwell (seated at table) is only Allied officer to sign document that officially ended World War II in the Ryukyus on 7 September. Then, the Japs were surrendering all over the Pacific and Okinawa

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. Last vestige of Jap power in its Ryukyu backyard is signed away by its goateed commanding officer, General Karashiru. Accompanied by eight military officials, the General flew in from Amano O'Shima, landing on the 87th-built bomber strip at Yontan for a

—closest base of operation to Japan at war's end—naturally was entitled to its own little show. This ceremony was held at Tenth Army Headquarters where Gen. Stilwell had succeeded the late Lt. Gen. Buckner.

"conducted" tour of Okinawa. Two other Jap officers signed for the enemy's vanquished Navy and Air Corps. The U. S. Fleet was represented by Admiral Raymond Spruance while General Jimmy Doolittle stood by for the Air Corps.

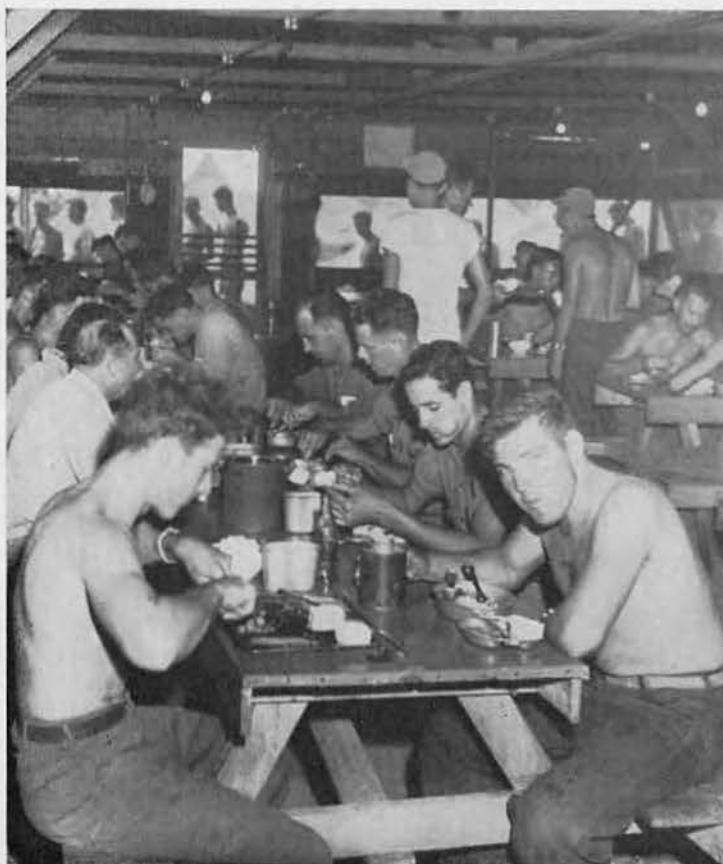


ANNUAL 28 AUGUST DINNER ENHANCED BY EXTRAS



ON THE HOUSE! There was a large evening ahead for these 87th veterans on 28 August, their second anniversary overseas, so the free issue of beer and coke at the big noon meal was restricted to a choice of one bottle of either beverage. Storekeeper Charlie Barker (seated on table)

passes out the free issue as the gang files slowly past in the long chow-line. Chief Commissary Steward Gwynne Neifert (between table and door) distributes special souvenir menus.



BIG FEED. This busy scene shows mates ravenously devouring dinner commemorating completion of their second year overseas. Despite the war being over and the special occasion, all hands, except the night shift, worked as usual.



SOMETHING SPECIAL for the occasion was this elaborately decorated second anniversary cake baked by Luther Goodsell (left) and Johnny Miller, battalion bakery "magicians." Cake features names of islands where battalion saw duty.

SECOND OVERSEAS ANNIVERSARY



OKINAWA — 28 AUGUST 1945



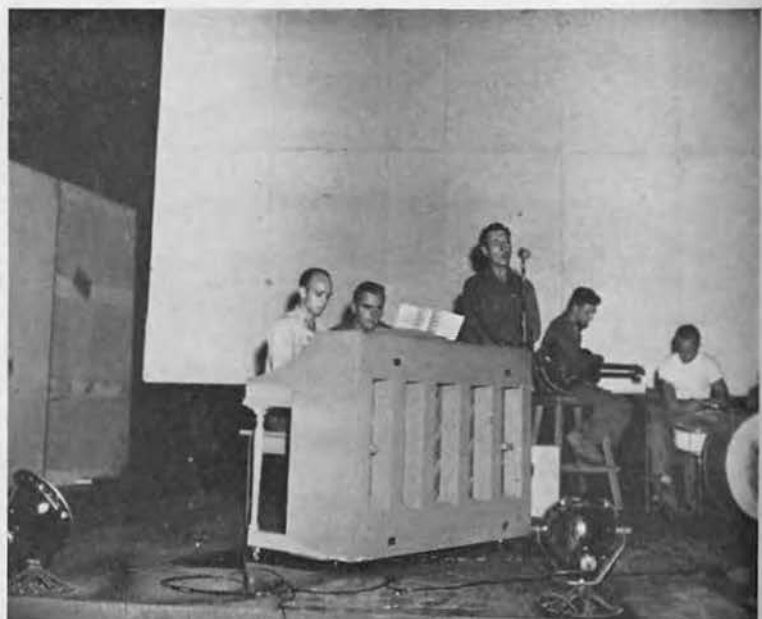
PACESETTER of special home talent program presented on theatre stage the night of 28 August was popular Lieut. Ray Pape, who was also observing the completion of his twenty-fourth month overseas. His earthy humor and sly digs kept program rolling.



WESTERN STYLE. Oren Ammerman of Brookville, Indiana, wins a big hand from rollicking audience with his cowboy version of "When My Dream Boat Comes Home." A quiet chap around Headquarters Division Office, Ammerman volunteered to appear on program.



STEAL. Charlie Steele, throws arms in air when he discovers John Haranis has stolen their act. In addition to their burlesque skit, Steele played harmonica and his partner brought house down by impersonating female undressing (in silhouette) behind screen.



TRIBUTE. The one solemn touch of the otherwise hilarious program was Theodore Linlau's singing of "Rest, Comrade, Rest," composed and played by Norman Hill (left). This composition was written for and dedicated to the memory of shipmates lost on trip.



"FRANKIE." Edwin Keddle, T Division's own Sinatra, swoons receptive audience with his "sweet" rendition of "Embraceable You." Always popular with the 87th audience, Keddle was unable to leave stage until he had rendered several additional selections.



SPEAKER of the evening was Chaplain G Jay Umberger, who represented the Administration. Bubbling over with his characteristic zest and good fellowship, the "Padre" was indeed in rare form as he spoke of home and of his desire to serve all hands.



"LUCKY LOCKARD and his Five Yen" was Master of Ceremonies Pape's name for the battalion combo, which provided an ample program of good jazz for the anniversary celebration. Except for one member, this closely-knit unit was made up exclusively of

87th talent. The lively sextet was uniquely composed of three officers and three enlisted personnel. Left to right: Tom Peiffer, "Josh" Kenning, Howard Van Dorn, Carpenter Vincent Pagano, a Lt.(ig) Hanson and Ensign Harold Lockard, leader.

WAR'S END OVERSHADOWS SECOND OVERSEAS ANNIVERSARY

28 August 1945 found the 87th Seabees two years overseas. This significant milestone called for some kind of special celebration, but, of course, it brought little change in the general plan of the day. Most men worked as usual.

Cooks had prepared something a little special for dinner and the bakers had outdone themselves with an elaborately decorated cake. Supply handed each man an iced beer or coke as he showed up for the anniversary repast.

The men had ample reason to celebrate the completion of their first twenty-four months overseas. Not only were they "over the hump" and could now reasonably expect to go home, but news had filtered through that the Japs had accepted unconditional surrender.

This was the only anniversary celebration the battalion had observed overseas. The end of the first year had found them on the eve of leaving Stirling. Consequently, no party was held. Arriving at New Caledonia, all thoughts of the postponed party were lost in the subsequent hustle and bustle.

A number of the mates, spark-plugged by several officers, presented a peppery variety show at the theatre the evening that marked the two-year milestone.

Of the huge audience witnessing the Okinawa show that evening, only 600 of the original 87th were present. The Navy's "alleged" rotation program had liberated a few; others, in excess of complement, were en route home, as were the 44-pointers.

The entertainment's success was virtually guaranteed when Lieut. Ray F. Pape, long a battalion favorite, appeared as MC. The music had plenty of variety—the skits were down-to-earth. Thus, the 87th commemorated the completion of its second year overseas and with it—for all practical purposes—World War II.

The ruling thought in most minds as the men stumbled through the darkness back to their tattered tents was the prospect of an early return home. Without rest or leave for two long years, the men knew they were long overdue. The end of the war, however, had trapped the "lucky" 87th in the worst imaginable spot. All shipping in the Okinawa sector was slated for the occupation of Japan.

The celebrants doubtless slept fitfully that night, knowing full well that the morrow would mark the beginning of their third year overseas.



THE THREE MUSKETEERS. Providing the all-essential hillbilly touch to the varied program was this hearty trio of old battalion favorites: William ("Crusty") Green, Artie Hansford and Tom Rooney. Each an individual soloist, they were unbeatable as a team.

A P P E N D I X

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A NOTE ON RANDOM CAMERA

The following section contains a general hodge-podge of strictly unrelated shots of a miscellaneous nature, which depict incidents, places and personalities of the 87th Battalion during its 27-month tour overseas. It includes no Stateside shots.

As this volume was being compiled, certain choice pictures were inadvertently squeezed out in attempting to achieve a semblance of good, balanced lay-out.

These shots were set aside as each section was developed and the best of this rather strange assortment have been assembled hereinafter without any thought or regard for time or place sequence. They are essentially just what their name implies—RANDOM shots!

The original book plan provided space for a small section of essential group shots. However, this idea was eventually discarded as the overall plan for a larger book developed when the battalion failed to return to the States upon leaving New Caledonia. Accordingly, the group shots have been divided between CAMPS, USA and RANDOM CAMERA.

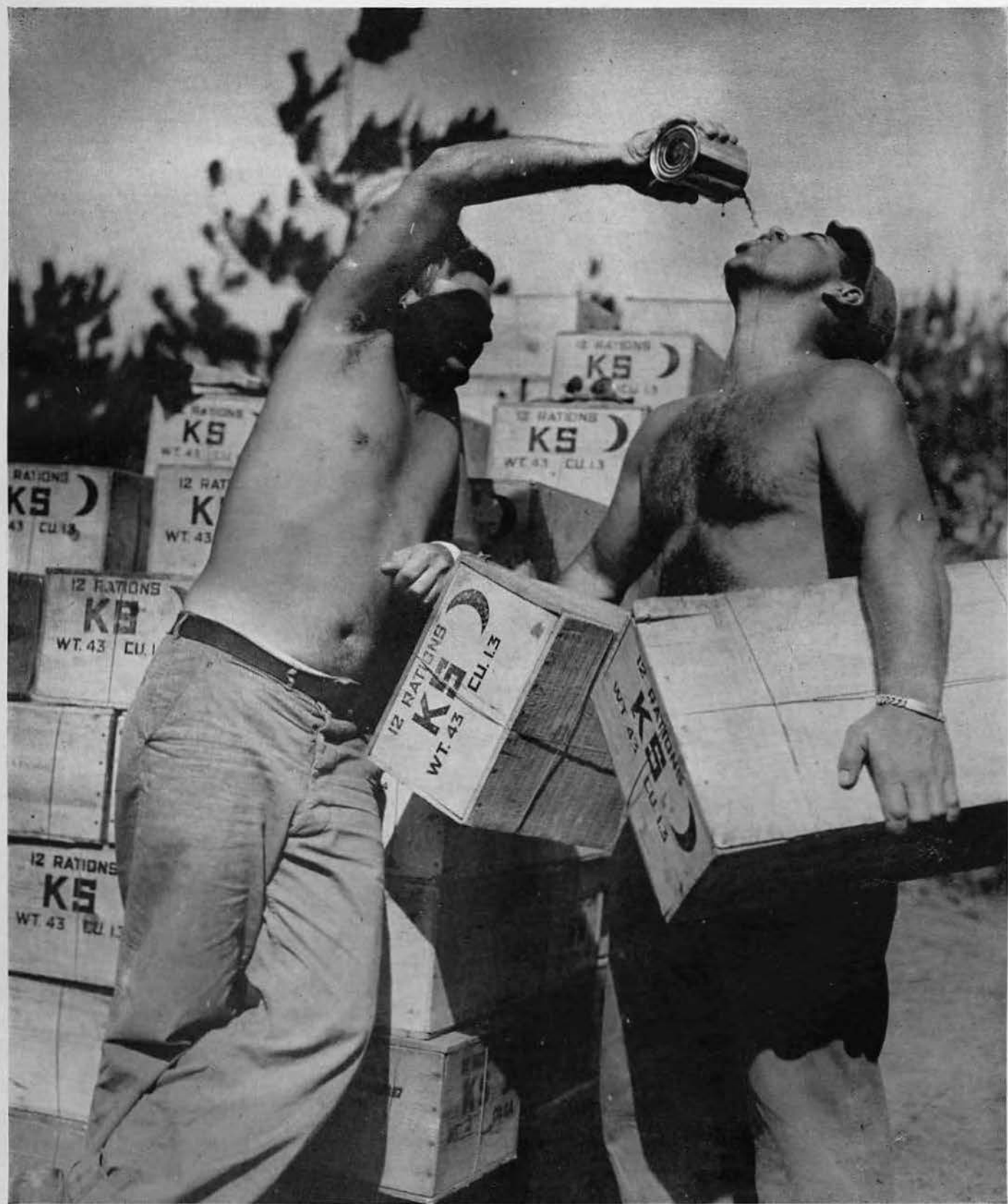
The subjects of this miscellaneous section are manifold and diverse. Many are obviously posed (something that was frowned upon in the trip sections of the book) and some are really corny in the worse sense of the word.

Perhaps, they are not especially important, but the editors believe most of them contain plenty of what made the 87th the crack Seabee outfit it was.

So the staff gives you RANDOM CAMERA—something you didn't ask for or perhaps didn't even expect—and it is offered without apology or regret.

—THE EDITORS.

R A N D O M C A M E R A





EDITORIAL STAFF is finishing this volume at Baten-Ko. Around table (left to right): Editor Carl Ruble; Ens. Donald Porath (officer advisor); Photographer Ed Jaskulski; Tom Cacavas and Tom Peiffer (editorial assistants); (standing): Artist Armond Kirschbaum and Writer Craig Porter.



OUTSIDE LOOKING IN, these natives (Kanakas) are watching opening dance at 87th-built Base CPO Club in Noumea in October, 1944. Among guests were Comdr. Easterly and Lt. Comdr. Flynn. Guests of honor: Admirals J. H. Newton and Paul Hendren. Half of 87th CPOs attended.



FLYING HOME. Another group of 42-year-olds pose for THE BOOK just before leaving Camp Bolo for home in late June. (Kneeling): Age, Brennan and Stauss; (standing): Marvin Martin, Leyden, Spillsbury, Whitehead, Inness, Dietz and Deroche. These smiles just won't come off!



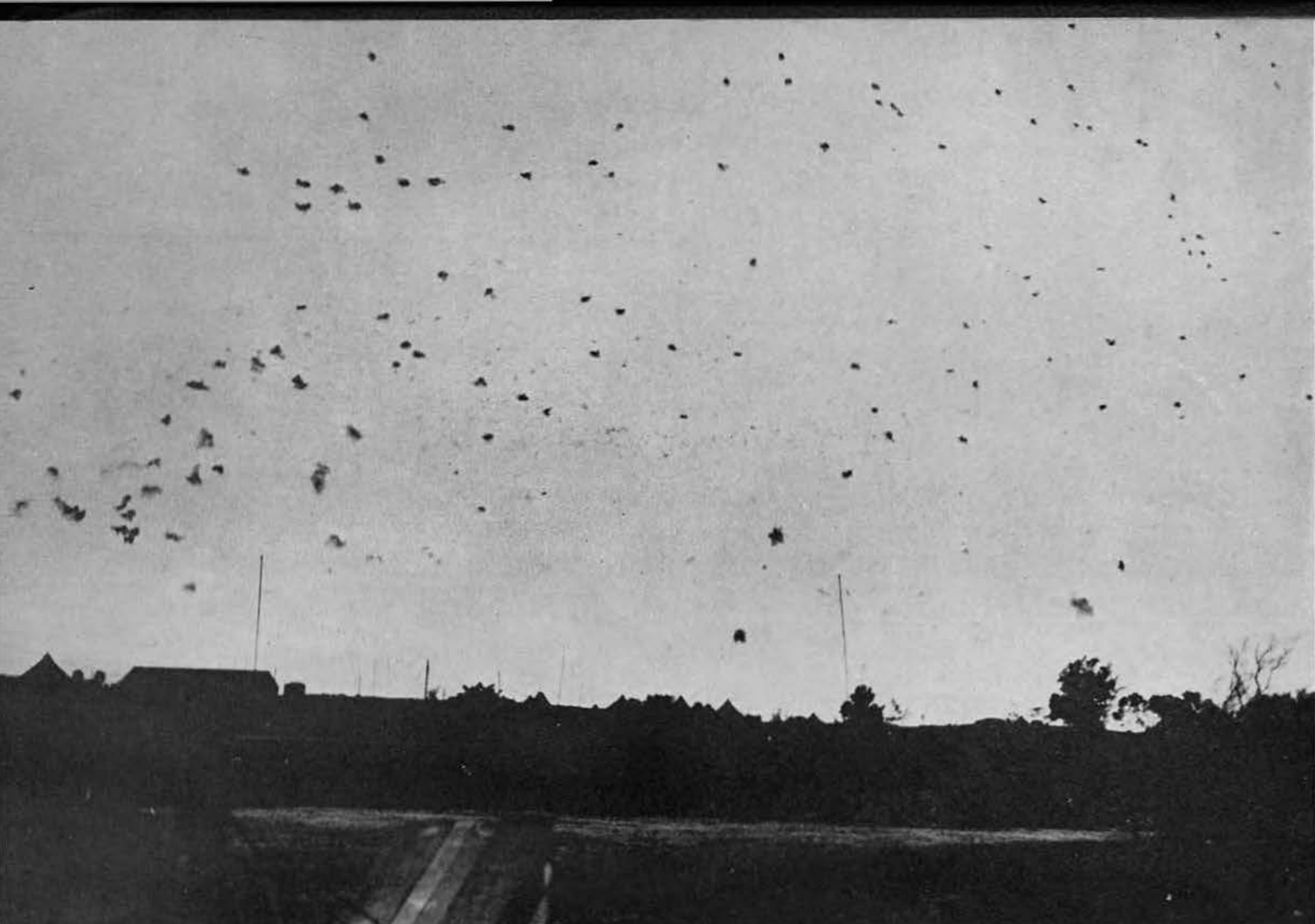
REPAIRS. Lieut. Steve Lynch, battalion dentist (not shown), is assisted by "guest" dental officers throughout staging period at Saipan. Dr. Lynch carried a heavy load at New Caledonia, but volume of patients eventually became too much. The cry for help got results.



GIRLS. Three USO show girls (one of Chinese extraction) pass an enjoyable afternoon with some of the fellows off duty at Camp Bolo Recreation Center. Chaplain Umberger joins group for picture. Girls entertained 87th on stage previous evening with a full performance.

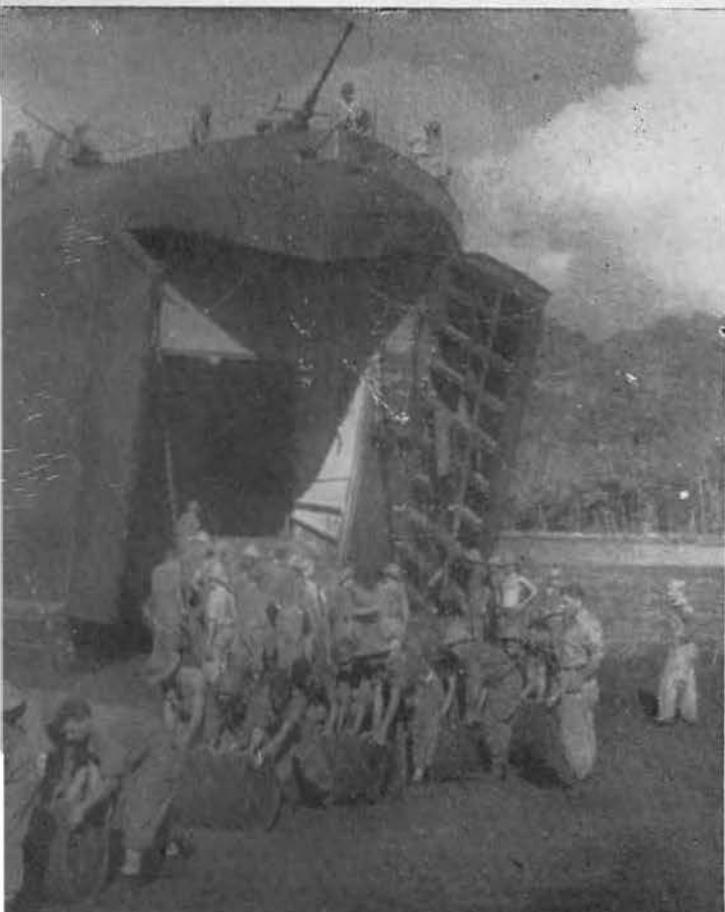


HE NAMED IT. Howard Hattal is presented fine wrist watch by Comdr. Cook as prize for submitting winning name for this volume. Approximately 650 names were suggested by the battalion. The seven judges included three members of the editorial staff. (Runner-up: CORAL RIBBONS).

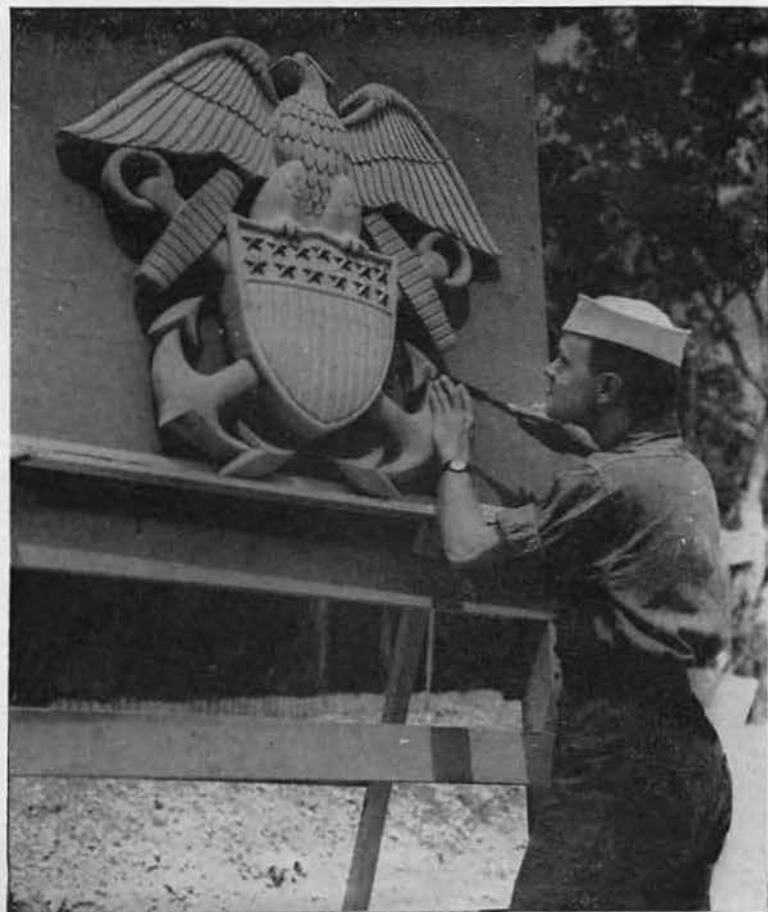


FLAK AT DAWN. The deceptive Jap airmen had a crafty way of following American planes back to Okinawa along about dawn in the hope of unloading their eggs before being detected. They pursued the same tactics in the Northern Solomons in early 1944, and occasionally, like on

Okinawa, the trick worked. However, this time the radar and gun crews had them spotted as they neared Bolo Point behind U. S. planes and instantly the sky was a mass of black flak puffs.



THE HARD WAY. Battalions, like the 87th, moving into forward areas in late '43, carried their own limited supply of gasoline and diesel oil on the LSTs. Here, the boys unload heavy drums by hand. Date: 28 November 1943.



WOOD CARVER. Charley Welsey of Philadelphia, is shown at work on Naval emblem he carved to go over entrance of Receiving Station Officers Club in Noumea. (Emblem was not in place when pictures on page 172 were taken).



TAKING IT EASY at their quarters after work hours on Bolo are Lt. Comdr. Flynn and Comdr. Cook. Layout features coral flagstone walk, fairly comfortable chairs, a wooden deck, "Stateside" iron beds and steel helmets. Foxholes were nearby.



FOXHOLE BUNKS were built by many groups as raids became gradually worse. This arrangement enabled men to sleep below ground level without having to arise for constant alerts. Above: Carlino, DeRyke, Buonora, Palmquist and Jaskulski.



KING BEE. Vice Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, speaks to a group of officers at the 43rd Regiment in August. Rear Admiral J. D. Price, Commandant, NOB, Okinawa, is at speaker's left.



GOING MY WAY? Frank Buonora (left) and Pete DeRyke are endeavoring to thumb a ride from Okinawa to China off Truckdriver Robert Pruitt. However, China, in this instance, is only an insignificant village between Yontan and Bolo.



"OLD TIMERS" pause to have beauty struck for THE EARTHMOVER before leaving for home and a discharge. (Kneeling): Jordan, Shoup, Decker and Remley; (standing): Marienthal, Hewlett, McDonald, Vogt, Stache, Broomfield and Kelly.



CHAPEL ARTIST. The battalion chapel at Monte D'Or was greatly enhanced by this addition of "Christ at Gethsemane" from the talented brush of John Schaefer. Many attended Divine Services to see and admire this fine creative work.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Comdr. Cook, attired in full "battlefront" regalia, including the compulsory side arm, pauses at a battery of intersection signs to ascertain his next direction. While on Okinawa, he was an indefatigable traveler.



FIRST TEAM. Ensign John Boyver (fourth from left, standing) and his radar installation gang, who were commended as a unit for their work under enemy fire at Soanatalu during the Treasury invasion in late October, 1943.



READY TO TURN IN. "Big John" Ahaesy, all dolled up in a genuine Jap kimono of gorgeous colors, appears ready to crawl into his Gook tomb for a peaceful nap. However, Comdr. Cook will probably find him here, too!



SHADES OF "BEAU GESTE." The equipment depot of the National Marines was a frequent place of visitation for many 87th Seabees during their weekly pilgrimage into Noumea. It was just like something out of a P. C. Wren novel.



UNIFORM OF THE DAY for Carpenter A. M. Andrews' carpenter crew on Stirling was whatever one happened to still have around to wear. Certainly no two of this group are dressed alike, which was typical of life in forward areas.



IT'S STILL EARLY, but in late April, on Okinawa, it paid dividends to be on the alert for "Bogies" any time after sundown. Charlie Johnson (left) has his rugged "battery" alerted. Others: Fontcuberta, Brenn, Bollerhey and Worley.



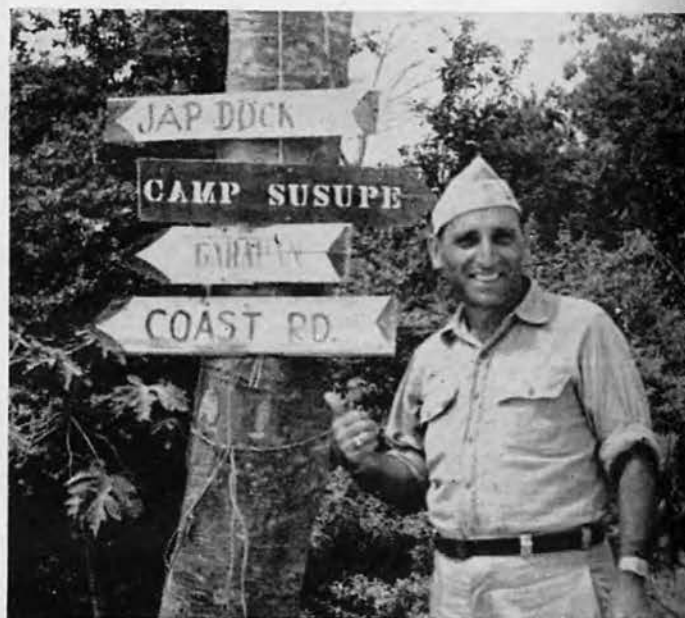
MAAs Chief Harry Levery (standing, right) complained his picture wouldn't be in THE BOOK (see page 152) so "Jas" took this. (Front): Kirschbaum, Lyons, O'Donnell; (back): Kellar, Hoback, Ch. Carp, Querin, "Hannibal's Own!"



SMILES. Officers often entertained guests from neighboring units at Monte D'Or. With Bartender Baird ("Pop") Okey serving them up, Officers Winters, Olsen, Belsaas and Panttaja pace two visitors at the bar.



THIS GUY SCHAEFER was ever so versatile (and photogenic!), artistically speaking, that it was hazardous to ignore him. He was always doing something of photographic interest. Here, he superimposes "Mr. Seabee" on MISSEABEE aboard the NAOS.



A CHARACTER, if the 87th ever had one, Chief Andy Competiello had some enviable contacts while working for Civilian Government at Saipan. The battalion is indebted to him for the cover and all three maps in this volume.



MOST ELIGIBLE of all 87th bachelors was the battalion's first "exec," Lt. Comdr. Flynn, shown here at his busy desk on Okinawa. An architect by profession, his know-how in the field of design was an invaluable asset.



AFTER 24 MONTHS overseas, the mates can still smile and take it, even though they may not like it. Here, a representative cross section downs beer with their anniversary dinner at Camp Bolo on 28 August 1945.



FIRST ASHORE on Stirling, D-day, was Chief Paul Hewlett and this small band of stalwarts. Fortunately, invasion fireworks exploded on Mono and important business on Stirling went ahead as scheduled. Picture was taken months later.



FRIENDS of the 87th during Bolo were Lt. Comdr. Springer (second from left), Lieut. Sullivan and Flight Nurse Keiffer. Shown with Ens. Porath and Comdr. Cook at Yontan, these NATS officers arranged air transit home.



JAP NEST was found in sugar cane field by 87th division on maneuvers at Saipan. While guerillas got away, food was still hot as Japs were having late breakfast. Enemy was using regulation U. S. can for storing their drinking water.



HONEST SWEAT gets a lot of fresh concrete troweled down to the right finish if you keep at it long and hard enough. Above, Chief Thomas' crew sweat it out on Bolo Point garbage disposal project. Here were some hard workers.



FAMILIAR SIGHT during June and July at Bolo were groups of those over-age and in excess of battalion complement men milling around OOD's tent prior to receiving orders and shoving off by truck for Yontan Airfield and home.



CRAFTSMEN. Carpenter Karl Johannessen (second from left, kneeling) claimed he had best carpenter shop crew on Stirling. The battalion agreed. Chief Bob Parrott (third from left, standing) took over shop upon warrant's departure for home.



BOYS WILL BE BOYS. Comdr. Easterly and Lt. Comdrs. Osgood and Flynn engage in a bit of horseplay outside their Stirling foxhole when warfare was still an academic pursuit for most of the unit—except Co. A.!



ART? Seabees thought they had seen virtually everything in the "art" line in the Treasuries, but they had to await the Okinawa operation for this eye-opener. Such sights were not unusual around Yontan and Kadena strips.



A FAREWELL TO ARMS. Headed, at last, in the right direction, these "over-42" veterans face the camera like boots going on a first liberty. (The editors regret that space doesn't permit identification of all these "characters.")



AN INVASION UNIT. It was many small groups like this one headed by Chief Tom Bailey that made up the 87th's invasion team when the Allies pushed the Japs off Monn in 1943. These were unloading specialists.



INCESSANT AIR RAIDS on Okinawa forced the overworked editorial committee selecting pictures for **THE EARTHMOVER** to work underground during May, June and July. Left to right: Photographer Jaskulski, Officer Advisor Porath, Editor Rubble. ("Tippy" searches for her own likeness.)



SAWMILLERS cease operations on Stirling long enough to square off with camera as a group. This was the gang that could never do enough to please everyone as the demand for lumber always exceeded maximum output.



LT. COL. Loo Smith, USMC, Officer in Charge of operations at busy Yontan Airfield, poses with Comdr. Cook at Air Base Command headquarters prior to handing 87th skipper the "Well Done" letter appearing on page 360.



BATEN-KO Camp. In September, the Army finished taking over Bolo Point and the 87th was forced to move to Baten-Ko, near Buckner Bay, where they moved into the partially completed camp recently vacated by the 66th Seabees.



CHOW WAGON visited strip and adjacent shop areas on rigidly fixed schedule until Stirling Field was completed. Working eight-hour shifts—three shifts spanning 24 hours—the men had just enough time off to eat on job.



"LET'S GO"—HOME! Upon completion of Bolo Field on 19 July—30 days after starting date—Lieuts. Pape and Markette literally "lay down on the job" and concur in the mates' favorite addition to Comdr. Cook's pet sign.



CHIEF YEOMAN Lauren Merriam, who, with Chief Herman Pack, made up the 87th's team of "Lum and Abner," will have a difficult time convincing his descendants that he wasn't a fan of this "Chick" thing.



JAP DESIGN of this trim "Betty" bomber impressed many Americans on Ie Shima when enemy surrender mission arrived in August. Small portion



BLITZED by the lightweight typhoon that hit Okinawa on 16 September, THE EARTHMOVER staff surveys wreckage of its tent headquarters before moving into vacant Censor Office. THE BOOK was saved by removal to Personnel-Disbursing.



HOMES were wrecked throughout Camp Bolo by the Sabbath typhoon that finally blew itself out early Monday morning. Men whose tents were blown down in the night sought refuge in quonset office buildings. Here, R Division digs out.



SUPPLY ISSUE ROOM was as hard hit by first typhoon as any of the tents housing the men. Here Pat Walsh (left) and Jack Sakowitz, supply storekeepers, survey the extensive damage. Battalion had day off for repairs.



WORST TYPHOON to hit Okinawa in 20 years wrecked entire island, including 87th's Baten-Ko camp, on 9 October. Taken second day after terrifying debacle, view shows partially rebuilt area, including wrecked Post Office and Ship's Store.

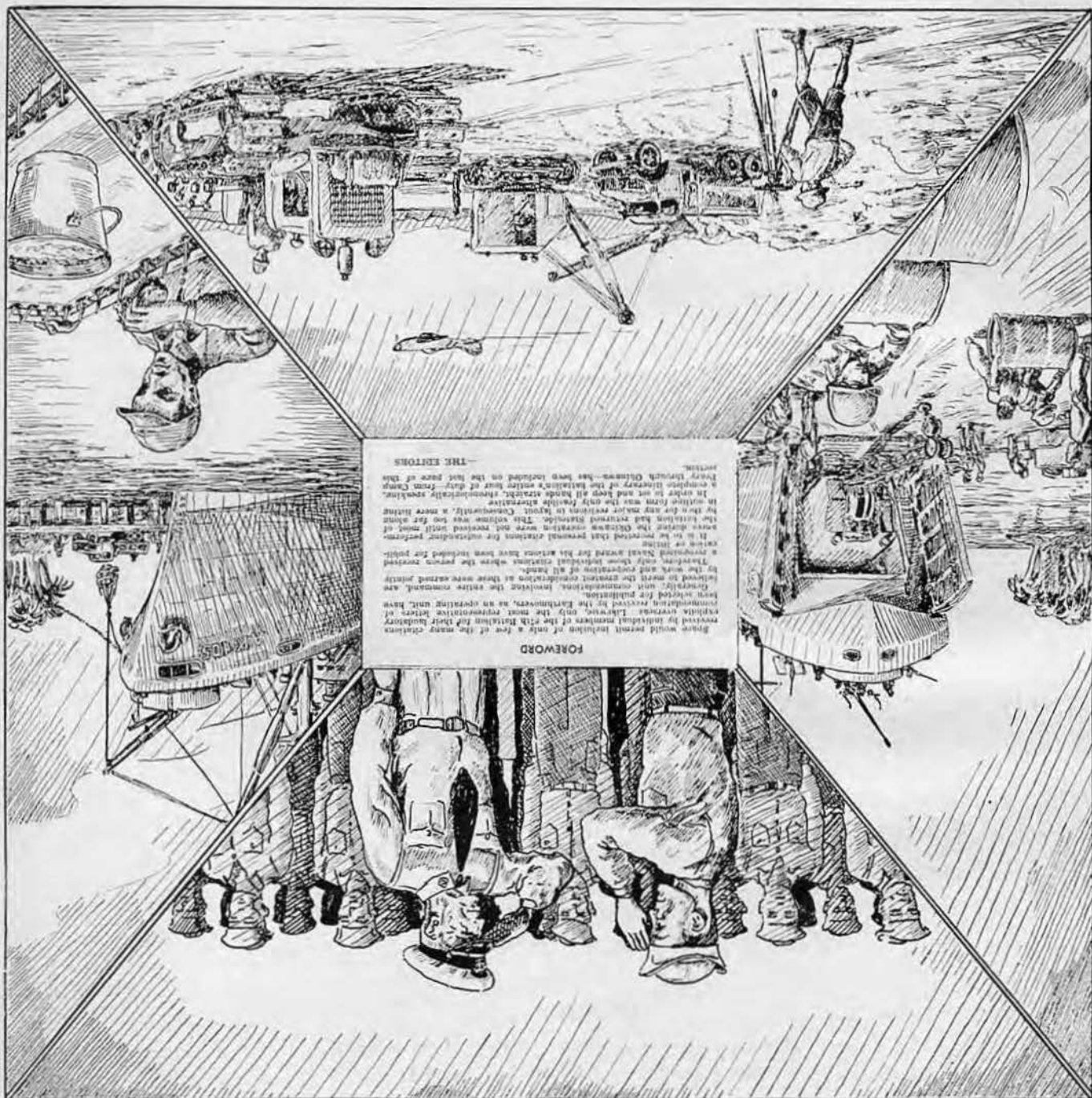


MANY lost everything except what they wore. Tents were ripped to shreds or blown away. Quonsets were torn apart and hurled through the air. Tent decks were blown about like matchsticks. Here, survivors salvage remains. Book office collapsed, but a miracle saved this volume.



PRIME EXAMPLE of typhoon's awesome fury is what it did to huge 87th chow hall. Men sought to escape with their lives by hiding in reefers and Gook tombs. Wind was clocked at 173 miles per hour as Nature's steam-roller reached peak.

COMMENTS



FORWARD

These would permit inclusion of only a few of the many citations received by individual members of the 41st Battalion for their audacious exploits overseas. Likewise, only the most representative letters of commendation received by the Battalion, as an operating unit, have been selected for publication.

Formerly war correspondents, involved in the entire command, are pleased to meet the greatest consideration as these were earned jointly by the work and cooperation of all hands.

Thanks are given to the various units who have been included for their part in the successful operations for the entire Battalion.

It is to be expected that personal citations for outstanding performance were during the Christmas season. This volume was too far behind the Battalion had returned overseas. The volume was too far behind the Battalion had returned overseas. The volume was too far behind the Battalion had returned overseas.

—THE EDITORS—

Every Fourth Christmas has been included on the last page of this volume. Every Fourth Christmas has been included on the last page of this volume. Every Fourth Christmas has been included on the last page of this volume.

CITATIONS

SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE

of the United States Pacific Fleet
Headquarters of the Commander

(NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA)

In the name of the President of the United States, the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force takes pleasure in awarding the SILVER STAR MEDAL to

AURELIO TASSONE,

Machinist's Mate, Second Class, United States Naval Reserve

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with a naval construction battalion during and following the initial landing by Allied forces on the Treasury Islands, British Solomon Islands, on 27 October 1943. When a Japanese pillbox became very active, causing casualties and impeding unloading operations, TASSONE, who was operating a bulldozer, was ordered to silence it. Without delay or hesitation, he raised the blade and moved forward against the pillbox. At the signal from his officer in charge, he dropped the blade and effectively silenced the position and annihilating twelve of the enemy entrenched therein. His courageous conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

W. F. HALSEY,
Admiral, U. S. Navy.



SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE

of the United States Pacific Fleet
Headquarters of the Commander

(NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA)

The Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force takes pleasure in commending

LIEUTENANT CHARLES E. TURNBULL,

Civil Engineering Corps, United States Naval Reserve

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

"For skillful and effective performance of duty while serving with a naval construction battalion during and following the initial landing by Allied forces on the Treasury Islands, British Solomon Islands, on 27 October 1943. Lieutenant TURNBULL though exposed to enemy fire, courageously directed the movements of a bulldozer used in the destruction of a Japanese pillbox, which was impeding unloading operations by its effective fire. His leadership, devotion to duty and tireless efforts in the blazing of roads through hostile jungle was an inspiration to his men and in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

W. F. HALSEY,
Admiral, U. S. Navy.

OTHER AWARDS—TREASURY-BOUGAINVILLE CAMPAIGN

COMMENDATION WITH RIBBON

FOR SKILLFUL AND EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DURING AND FOLLOWING THE
INITIAL LANDINGS ON THE TREASURY ISLANDS

AWARDED BY

WILLIAM F. HALSEY

Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

ENSIGN JOHN R. BOVYER

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

THOMAS J. BAILEY

Chief Ship Fitter, U. S. Naval Reserve

SUMMARY OF AWARDS—OKINAWA CAMPAIGN



LEGION OF MERIT

FOR EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE AS OFFICER IN CHARGE
DURING THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

AWARDED BY

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

COMMANDER RICHARD R. COOK

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve



BRONZE STAR

FOR MERITORIOUS PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DURING THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

AWARDED BY

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

LI COMDR. JAMES DOUGLAS

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Navy

LIEUT. RAYMOND F. PAPE

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve



COMMENDATION WITH RIBBON

FOR MERITORIOUS PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DURING THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

AWARDED BY

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

LIEUT. COMDR. EDWARD A. FLYNN

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

LIEUT. BENJAMIN T. MARKETTE, JR.

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

LIEUTENANT LOUIS D. SPAW, JR.

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

HARVEY O. POSTON

Chief Motor Machinist's Mate, U. S. Naval Reserve

ENNIS R. BALDRIDGE

Chief Carpenter's Mate, U. S. Naval Reserve

DETACHMENT TWO COM AIR NOR SOLS

November 9, 1943.

From: Commanding Officer.

To: Commander, 8th (NZ) Bdg. Gp.

Subject: Recommendation for Commendation.

1. It is recommended that the small unit of the 87th Naval Construction Battalion, which landed at Soanatalu, Treasury Islands, for the purpose of placing the radar, be commended by letter for their fine work.

2. In order to install the first long-range radar, it was necessary to break down a coral bluff on the beach, build a road up a steep hill and continue through the jungle to the site chosen. After this had been done, the unit bulldozer towed the heavy radar equipment to the chosen position. All the above was extremely difficult and the natural obstacles could only be overcome by them. Through their hard work, it was possible to have the long-range radar in position on D-1 (Bougainville) day as was ordered.

3. The C. B. reply to all orders was "CAN DO," which was exceedingly edifying and encouraging in the face of apparently pessimistic surroundings and circumstances.

4. In addition, due to their efforts, the second long-range radar was placed in position on D-4 day.

5. The below listed comprise the mentioned unit, which not only lived up to their motto, "CAN DO," but also gave evidence of fine soldierly qualities:

BOYER, J. R., Ens.

RYCHLAK, F., BM1c.

MURPHY, R. L., MM2c.

THOMPSON, G. L., MM2c.

GORDON, D. W., CM2c.

COVEY, E. R., CM3c.

BARKS, L. L., S1c.

CABLE, L. M., S1c.

GRACE, R. H., S1c.

GRAVES, W. E., S1c.

GREGG, D. M., S1c.

HAYES, O. B., S1c.

PAULSON, W. D., S1c.

BENNETT, J. E., S2c.

CHARLES, C. J., S2c.

FLYNN, E. J., S2c.

GIANNATTASIO, E. R., S2c.

OSTMAN, E. E., S2c. (MIA)

SCANLON, W. R., S1c.

TURMAN, A. R., S2c.

B. V. LEARY,

Major, U. S. Marine Corps

HEADQUARTERS

Eighth NZ Infantry Brigade
NZEI (I. P.)

Commander C. R. Hersum,
Commanding, Naval Base,
Treasury.

18 May 1944.

Through: (1) Commander Naval Bases, Forward Area.
(2) Commanding General, VI Island Command.

On leaving Treasury Islands and relinquishing command of the Island Base, I wish to place on record my great appreciation of the splendid work that the following unit has done during the last six months as well as to express my sincere thanks for the loyal cooperation, valuable advice and personal kindness I have received from their officers and the men associated with them.

The 87th CBs were responsible for the early stages of progress in circumstances of jungle conditions and weather which could hardly have been worse. This battalion, under the able direction of Commander Easterly, by dint of tremendously hard and sustained effort and by working for weeks around the clock and often under enemy bombing attack, developed the airfield, dock, and many other facilities in a manner which I can only describe as amazing. In the early weeks this unit carried out these duties with only the bare essential work on their own quarters and the progress made under these trying circumstances is all the more noteworthy. This battalion has done a splendid job of which they may feel justifiably proud.

I would be pleased if recipients of this letter would make known to all ranks my appreciation and thanks for their fine efforts.

L. G. GOSS,
Brigadier, Comdg., Treasury Islands.

U. S. ACORN TWELVE

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California
(TREASURY ISLANDS)

P15

20 June 1944.

Serial 0669

From: Commanding Officer.

To: Officer-in-Charge, 87th Naval Construction Battalion.

Via: Officer-in-Charge, 21st Naval Construction Regiment.

Subject: Commendation.

1. As your job at this base nears completion, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to extend to you, your officers, and your men a hearty commendation on a job well done.

2. The splendid job you have done in the construction of the strip, aviation camps, roads and other facilities has been appreciated not only by the officers and men of ACORN TWELVE, but by all of the air activities at this base.

R. SANDERS.

HEADQUARTERS 42ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)

APO 706 Unit I
(TREASURY ISLANDS)

21 August 1944.

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Commander, Naval Base, APO 706, Unit I.

1. On the completion of the tour of duty of this Group at this station, I am taking this opportunity of expressing my sincere appreciation for the splendid cooperation you and your subordinate units have given to all the units of the 42nd Bombardment Group (M).

2. From the first introduction of this organization to this Island in January, 1944, you and your organization have given untold assistance to us. The 87th Naval Construction Battalion has cooperated 100 per cent in aiding in our camp construction and maintenance, providing equipment needed and maintaining the airdrome facilities for our tactical aircraft.

3. Your splendid cooperation in helping us to efficiently maintain our combat strike schedule has been a contributing factor in the successful completion of the Solomons campaign.

4. On behalf of all the personnel of the 42nd Bombardment Group (M), I want to wish you Happy Landings and success in your future operations.

HARRY E. WILSON,
Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding.

U. S. S. NAOS
Fleet Post Office
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Noumea, New Caledonia,
16 September 1944.

From: Commanding Officer.
To: Commander Service Squadron, South Pacific Force.
Subject: Commendation—Letter of.

1. In the writing of this letter, it becomes almost a necessity to digress from formalized Naval correspondence to adequately convey the appreciation and thanks of the officers and men of this Command to the organization (87th N. C. B.) which this vessel just recently transported from the Treasury Islands to Noumea.

2. During the course of our tour of duty in this area, under your operational command, this vessel has transported many thousands of personnel of all the branches of the armed services, but not until the last operation have we contacted a unit, which by its magnificent spirit and wholehearted cooperation, has moved us to so depart from orthodox routine as to prompt the writing of this letter.

3. Prior to embarkation, the men of this unit removed to their encampment and scrubbed by hand over one thousand canvas bunk bottoms; thoroughly scrubbed, washed and policed all the troop compartments on the ship, loaded some 1,500 tons of their own equipment, volunteered for sea watches, accomplished innumerable repairs in all departments and as a final gesture of goodwill provided the manpower to load outbound Army material and mobile equipment when other labor was not provided. As this is being written, artificers from this unit have just completed an all-night task of installing a new unit of ovens in the bake shop.

4. The crew have requested me as Commanding Officer to express to the Commanding Officer and the men of the 87th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion their many thanks for all favors and their best wishes.

5. I should like to add my own "Well Done."

N. E. WILCOX.

cc: CO, 87th USNCB
File.



AIR BASE COMMAND, FIELD NO. 6
COMMANDER NAVAL AIR BASES, 3256

c/o Fleet Post Office,
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
(Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands)

16 June 1945.

From: The Air Base Commander.
To: The Officer in Charge, 87th Naval Construction Battalion.
Via: The Commander, Naval Air Bases, Navy Number 3256.
Subject: Letter of Congratulations.

1. The writer wishes to officially congratulate the officers and men of your organization on the completion, this date, of the FIRST HEAVY BOMBER STRIP ON OKINAWA, YONTAN AIRFIELD.

2. The perfection of the grading, compaction and shoulders of this strip is a testimonial of your organization's skill, and the completion of this runway is a direct, vital and real blow against our enemy.

3. The spirit of cooperation displayed by all hands of your organization in accomplishing this task made the project most successful.

LEO R. SMITH,
Lt. Col., U. S. M. C.

COMMANDER NAVAL AIR BASES, NAVY 3256

c/o Fleet Post Office
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

NAB3256/P15
Serial: 79
FIRST ENDORSEMENT

21 June 1945.

From: Commander Naval Air Bases, Navy No. 3256.
To: The Officer in Charge, 87th Naval Construction Battalion.
Via: Commanding Officer, 43rd Regiment, Naval Construction Battalions.

1. In forwarding basic correspondence, the writer wishes to express his opinion and appreciation of the work done in the form of COMMENDATION for work performed by your organization.
2. The spirit of cooperation with which the above was accomplished is deserving of special note and is sincerely appreciated by this command.

W. M. DILLON,
Commodore, U. S. N.

43RD U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

c/o Fleet Post Office,
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

P15
Serial: 527
SECOND ENDORSEMENT

25 June 1945.

Air Base Commander
Yontan's Letter of
16 June 1945.

From: Officer in Charge, 43rd U. S. Naval Construction Regiment.
To: Officer in Charge, 87th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion.
Subject: Letter of Congratulations—Forwarding of.

1. Forwarded with congratulations.
2. Letters of congratulations, such as this, are further proof of the appreciation for the Seabees as a whole, and every officer and enlisted man of the 87th Seabees can be justly proud of the accomplishments on Yontan Airfield under enemy airborne attacks, bombings, and enemy shelling.
3. The 43rd Naval Construction Regiment again says to the 87th Seabees: "Well Done."

W. W. STUDDERT,
Commander, CEC, USNR.

87TH U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

c/o Fleet Post Office
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

P15/(RRC:jk)
Serial: 330
THIRD ENDORSEMENT

27 June 1945.

From: The Officer in Charge.
To: All Officers and Enlisted Personnel.

1. Honest and diligent effort rarely goes unrewarded, as has been proven by the commendations received by this unit for the fine work on Yontan Airfield.
2. It is with a great amount of pleasure that I extend this letter to you with the admission that I am proud to be the Officer in Charge of the 87th Battalion—the "on the ball" outfit.

RICHARD R. COOK,
Commander, CEC, USNR.

THE COMPLETE 87TH ITINERARY

(Stateside and Overseas)

23 February 1943—19 December 1945

- 23 February 1943—Formed at NCTC, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va., (Date Officer in Charge reported).
- 16 April 1943—Battalion transferred to NCTC, Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island. (31 officers and 1,080 men).
- 17 April 1943—Arrived at NCTC, Camp Endicott, Davisville, R. I.
- 13 June 1943—Transferred by three troop trains to ABD, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California. (30 officers and 1,061 men).
- 19 June 1943—Arrived at Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California.
- 28 August 1943—Troop ship (S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY) departed ABD, Port Hueneme, California for overseas. (25 officers and 1,012 men).
- 29 August 1943—Supply ship (S. S. COMET) departed ABD, Port Hueneme, California for overseas. (4 officers and 12 men).
- 14 September 1943—Troop ship arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 16 September 1943—Supply ship arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 26 September 1943—Troop ship departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 29 September 1943—Troop ship layed overnight at Guadalcanal.
- 30 September 1943—Troop ship arrived Banika, Russell Islands, Southern Solomons.
- 1 October 1943—Supply ship departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 5 October 1943—Supply ship arrived Banika, Russell Islands.
- 18 October 1943—Company A, plus miscellaneous ratings from Headquarters Company, detached from battalion and departed Banika, Russell Islands, as first echelon on forward movement, via Guadalcanal, for amphibious training. (6 officers and 224 men).
- 27 October 1943—First echelon arrived with assault forces (8th New Zealand Brigade) at Mono and Stirling, Treasury Islands, Northern Solomons.
- 26 November 1943—Second echelon departed Banika Russell Islands. (21 officers and 720 men).
- 28 November 1943—Second echelon arrived Stirling, Treasury Islands.
- 8 December 1943—Third echelon departed Banika, Russell Islands. (3 officers and 50 men).
- 10 December 1943—Third echelon arrived Stirling, Treasury Islands.
- 5 September 1944—First echelon departed Stirling, Treasury Islands. (26 officers and 1,028 men).
- 10 September 1944—First echelon arrived Monte D'Or, New Caledonia.
- 25 September 1944—Second echelon departed Stirling, Treasury Islands. (1 officer and 50 men).
- 30 September 1944—Second echelon arrived Monte D'Or, New Caledonia.
- 11 January 1945—First echelon departed Noumea, New Caledonia. (6 officers and 344 men).
- 27 January 1945—First echelon arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, after brief layovers at Tulagi and Eniwetok.
- 31 January 1945—Second echelon departed Monte D'Or, New Caledonia. (22 officers and 717 men).
- 16 February 1945—Second echelon arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, after short layovers at Guadalcanal and Eniwetok.
- 11 February 1945—Third echelon departed Monte D'Or, New Caledonia. (3 officers and 25 men).
- 3 March 1945—Third echelon arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, after brief layovers at Banika and Eniwetok.
- 29 March 1945—Comdr. Robert Easterly, CEC, USNR, relieved as Officer in Charge by Comdr. Richard R. Cook, CEC, USNR.
- 20 April 1945—First echelon departed Saipan, Marianas Islands. (27 officers and 741 men).
- 27 April 1945—First echelon arrived Okinawa Shima, Ryukyu Retto.
- 7 May 1945—Second echelon departed Saipan, Marianas Islands. (5 officers and 327 men).
- 14 May 1945—Second echelon arrived Okinawa Shima, Ryukyu Retto.
- 2 September 1945—War against Japan formally concluded aboard U. S. S. MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay.
- 10 September 1945—Comdr. Richard R. Cook, CEC, USNR relieved as Officer in Charge by Lt. Comdr. James Douglas, CEC, USN.
- 25 September 1945—87th camp moved from Bolo Point to Baten-Ko on Buckner Bay.
- 7 November 1945—Last contingent of battalion embarked for return to the States. (6 officers, 361 men).
- 21 November 1945—EARTHMOVER editors departed Okinawa for Portland, Oregon.
- 4 December 1945—EARTHMOVER editors arrived Portland aboard U. S. S. HASKILL.
- 19 December 1945—EARTHMOVER editor-in-chief delivered this volume to publishers at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, exactly one year after it was commenced at New Caledonia.



BATTALION MUSTER



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THOMAS, George D., 130 Pennsylvania St., Reading.
TOKAR, John, Jr., 8 Jackson St., Brownsville.
TOMASURA, Richard W., 61 Williams St., Edwardsville.
TOMKO, George S., 532 Selfridge St., Bethlehem.
URSBRUNG, Paul R., 46 Lehman St., Lebanon.
UTCHELL, Michael, 1713 Walnut St., Heidelberg.
VANIG, Cyril J., 649 Atlantic St., Bethlehem.
VATER, Raymond W., 1462 Stauben St., Pittsburgh.
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WALKER, Ralph G., 1335 1/2 Gordon St., Allentown.

WARD, Joseph F., 3516 Vista St., Philadelphia.
WEBER, William F., Jr., 4228 Striles St., West, Philadelphia.
WEISS, Abraham, 6252 Pine St., Philadelphia.
WELSEY, Charles, 4723 Tacony St., Philadelphia.
WERKMAN, James W., 1231 1/2 Mechanic St., East, Bethlehem.
WEYER, Harry L., Jr., 632 New Castle Road, Farrell.
WILLIAMS, Fred J., 3070 Thompson St., East, Philadelphia.
WILLIAMS, Robert J., 105 Mason Ave., Wilkes-Barre.
WINES, John R., 235 Fourth Ave., West, Derry.
YAWORSKY, John, 105 Railroad St., West, Nesquehoning.
YODER, David Hampton, Cogan Station, R. F. D., J.
ZEARFOSS, Jesse M., Jr., 1223 Airy St., W., Norris-town.

RHODE ISLAND

BEACOM, Samuel, 202 Holmes Road, Lakewood.
BURDICK, William A., 37 Highland Ave., Westerly.
DeINGENIS, Francesco, 26 Wallace St., Providence.
HEVEY, Francis A., 35 Schiller St., Pawtucket.
HUSSEY, Thomas F., 29 Cobb St., East Providence.
KUZIKYAN, Harry, 49 Verdale Ave., Providence.
SIMONE, Vincent, 436 Valley St., Providence.
ZELLER, Edward W., 22 Henry St., Cranston.

SOUTH CAROLINA

BAILEY, James W., 104 Syracuse St., Darlington.
BELL, John C., R. F. D. 4, Box 158, North Augusta.
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LEWIS, Marion J., 600 Kershaw St., Florence.
MEETZE, Joseph B., P. O. Box 145, Taffney.
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LEYDEN, Merle E., Tyndall.

TENNESSEE

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BRYANT, Johnie J., R. F. D. 1, Seymour.
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JENKINS, Joe H., Sr., R. F. D. 4, Ripley.
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RHYNE, Carson T., 1905 Jefferson Ave., Knoxville.
SMITH, John L., 998 Monroe Ave., Memphis.
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TEXAS

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BALCOURSE, Emitt W., 201 1/2 North "A" St., Harlingen.
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FAILS, Cornelius J., Jr., R. F. D. 3, Odonnell.
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KING, Emmett R., 407 Central Ave., West, Fort Worth.
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O'CON, Edward E., 202 King Williams St., San Antonio.
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PONDER, William W., 106 Patterston St., Sweetwater.
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SPRADLING, Ray A., 231 Astor, San Antonio.
TAYLOR, George D., R. F. D. 3, Center.
TURK, William A., Jr., 401 Eighth St., West, Del Rio.
WALKER, Perry P., 534 Fifth St., N. W., Paris.
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WHITLEY, Julius W., Teague.

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VERMONT

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DUBUQUE, Everett W., 507 Shelburne Road, Burlington.

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BOWMAN, James R., Hillsville.
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FARMER, Cecil H., 1522 Floyd Ave., Richmond.
HALL, Luther R., 3818 Sixteenth St., South, Arlington.
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KERN, Shelah C., Verde.
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PARRISH, Warren E., 835 Elm Ave., S. E., Roanoke.
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CRAWFORD, Clarence E., Jr., 3334 St. Hollidays Cove West.
DANFORD, Charley A., 2130 Chapline St., Wheeling.
GARRETT, Okey J., Jr., 2002 Washington St., W. Charleston.
GORDON, James W., Gorman.
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HAWKINS, Emel F., 1014 Fourth St., Fairmont.
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KELLER, Clarence P., 364 Mound St., Berlin.
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LANDRY, Thomas W., 713 Douglas St., South, Appleton.
MARINE, Jack D., 225 Stout St., Menomonie.
NELSON, Viggo J., 2006 Chatham St., Racine.
SCHUETZ, George A., 6520 Nineteenth Ave., Kenosha.
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WYOMING

ASICH, John, 142 Park St., North, Casper.
HOLMAN, Glen C., Jr., Cody.

CANADA

DOUGLAS, Edmund C., 88 McDonald Ave., Toronto, Ontario.



1943



Geographical History

Eighty-Seventh Seabees

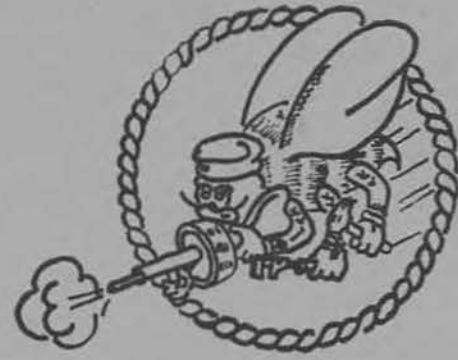
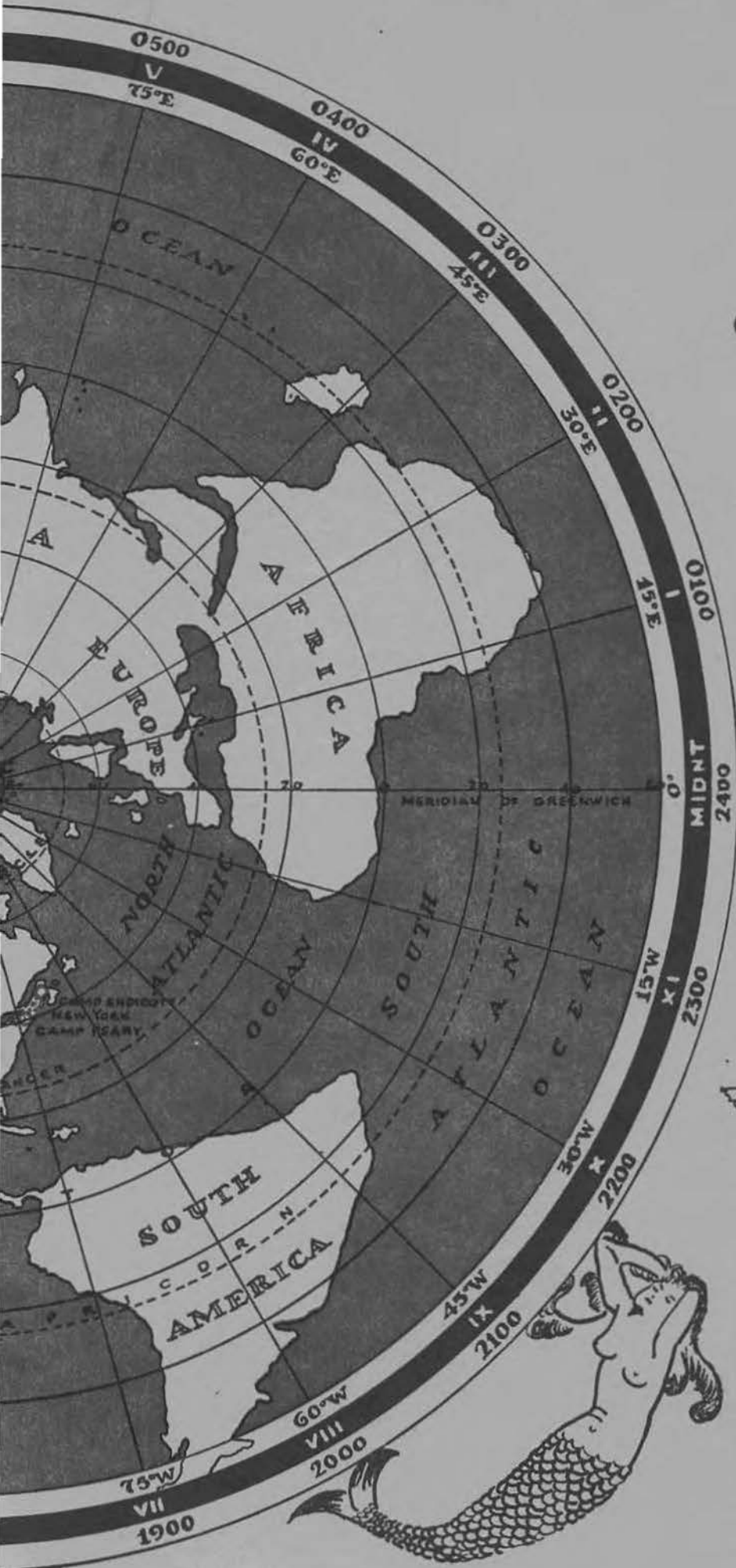
Destination	Arrival-Departure
Va. Camp Peary	2-23-43 - 4-16-43
Rt. Camp Endicott	4-17-43 - 6-13-43

Cross Country Route

Connecticut	Hartford
New York	Buffalo
Pennsylvania	Erie
Ohio	Cleveland
Indiana	Indianapolis
Illinois	St. Louis
Missouri	St. Louis
Kansas	Kansas City
Colorado	Denver
Wyoming	Cheyenne
Utah	Salt Lake City
Nevada	Las Vegas
California	Los Angeles

Cal. Camp Russell 6-19-43 - 8-28-43





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Geographical History

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>
<i>Cross Pacific Route</i>		
<i>New Caledonia Noumea</i>	<i>9-14-43</i>	<i>9-26-43</i>
<i>Solomon Is. Guadalcanal</i>		
<i>Russell Is. Banika</i>	<i>9-30-43</i>	<i>11-26-43</i>
<i>Treasury Is. Stirling</i>	<i>10-27-43</i>	<i>9-5-44</i>
<i>New Caledonia Mt. Div</i>	<i>9-10-44</i>	<i>1-31-45</i>
<i>Solomon Is. Guadalcanal</i>		
<i>Marshall Is. Eniwetok</i>		
<i>Maximas G. Saipan</i>	<i>2-17-45</i>	<i>4-20-45</i>
<i>Ryukyo Rette Okinawa</i>	<i>4-27-45</i>	<i>11-7-45</i>



