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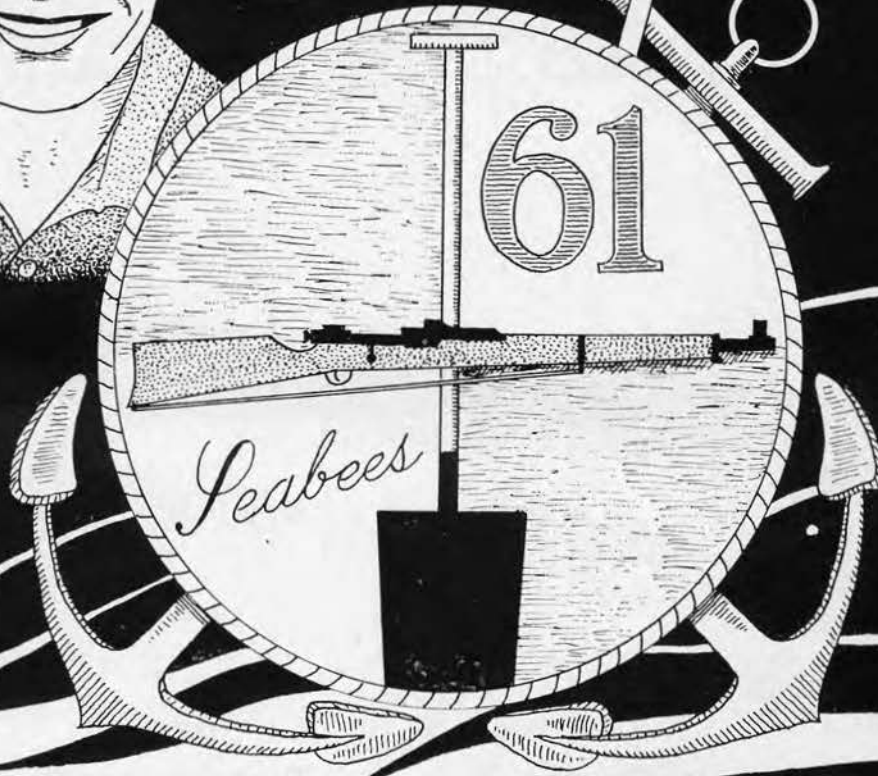
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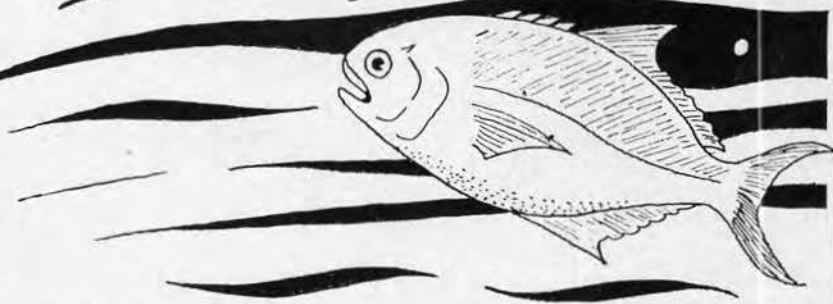
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# Sixty first Sea foam



BY D. B. WEBB

a  
log book



Originated & Compiled by Members of  
SIXTY-FIRST U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION



Battalion sign in administration area of 61st Samar Camp

## Foreword

Two years ago today, we, the members of the 61st Seabees, embarked upon an overseas trek that was to take us into the unpublicized "junk" lanes of the far Pacific reaches. Little did we know then that we would view hundreds of islands of mystery and travel some 25,000 miles during a two-year period. Yes, we saw volcanic and coral islands with strange names as Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Savo, Manus, Espiritu Santo, Malaita, Emirau, New Caledonia, Musau, Teti Pari, Bougainville, New Hanover, Ile Nou, Santa Isabel, New Zealand, Ganongga, Tulagi, Russells, and unnumbered islands in the Philippines.

We came prepared to do our bit in chasing the Japs back from the Solomons to Japan and, in those two eventful years, we have used several hundred thousand tons of supplies and equipment in completing approximately 400 major projects. Projects which were so instrumental in assisting the American Armed Forces fight their way back to the Philippines. Our efforts haven't gone unnoticed. We have been both cited and praised by high ranking officials of all services.

The veteran 61st Battalion has been aptly

named by their comrades, the Marines, "Tough Old Timers," a statement of fact! The original 61sters were enlisted personnel with an overall average age of 34 (approximate), none of whom were inductees. As time passed, this average age was reduced by the addition of replacements, some of whom were inductees. Some of the "Old Timers" have jokingly called these men "re-treads." However, these new men have proven their worth and are now included as "Old Timers."

The word "tough" is an inadequate description for a fine group of men who have fought Jap Paratroopers, endured bombings, and approximately 700 air raid alerts that disturbed their work and rest.

Thus, we, the Editors, have originated and compiled the material of this book, covering 29 months of activities. We hope that its documentation will leave an indelible mark of the Seabee spirit of "Can Do" etched in the appreciative hearts of all free men.

THE EDITORS

April 14, 1945



## *Dedication*

This book, SEAFOAM, is dedicated to the personnel of the 61st Seabees who have, as individuals and a battalion, given the full share of their efforts in the defense of their country.

You have not only made it possible for our forces to take off from the air fields and ports of Guadalcanal but repeated it again at Emirau. At this very moment, you are repeating it again in the Philippines, farther on the road to Tokyo.

Through unity of thought and action, all hands have piled up a high score, not only in construction but also when subjected to direct attacks by the enemy.

The 61st Seabees are known for their many "firsts" and I take great pride in being the "first" to wish that this book will bring you many memories of events in the past and thoughts for the future.

COMMANDER BRADFORD M. BOWKER  
*Officer in Charge*

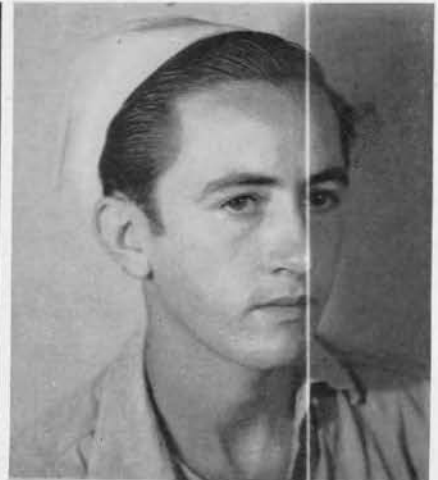
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61

# The STORY

*Seabees*

## Travelling the Pacific

EQUATOR

by D.B. Webb

120°E 130°E 140°E 150°E 160°E 170°E

# GUADALCANAL

## *British Solomon Islands*

On December 4, 1942, a group of civilian craftsmen, from every walk of life, assembled at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia. These men came from every section of the country; however, such States as Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Texas, and New York seemed to have the most representatives. Upon their arrival, the formation of the 61st U. S. Naval Construction Battalion began. A primary training schedule, in detention, was endured until January 3, 1943, and on that date, the Battalion was given its colors and the officers were formally given their respective commands. This primary training was a period of indoctrination during which the "boots" were familiarized with the ways of Seabee life and received inoculations for the prevention of various diseases.

Following the 30 days of "boot," an Advanced Training schedule was set up for the Battalion to follow. This training included such activities as extended order drills, close order drills, guard duty, manual of arms, military lectures, lectures on hygiene, work projects on the base, and the assignment of qualified men for the many specialist schools. During this period, several hundred men were transferred from our complement which, at that time was considered oversized. However, on January 9, 1943, 52 men were transferred from the 65th Battalion into ours.

Well-remembered incidents in our life in Camp Peary were such incidents as the cold weather, lack of clothing during the early weeks, the oceans of mud, the "shots," cutting fire wood, "Goldie's" extended order drills, Captain Ware's inspection, the week-end liberty to Richmond, the final dress parade, and the embarkation for Gulfport.

Our stay at Gulfport was brief. We arrived there the last day of February, the night of which the ill-famed "Battle of Leave Tickets" took place. The second of March was the scene of a mad scramble when 1,100 men tried to board a

single train to start a nine days "pre-embarkation" leave. Following this leave, the Battalion once again boarded the three trains "convoy" at Gulfport to go to Hueneme, California. This trip took us through the great American Southwest and, although it was allegedly "hush-hush" throughout, a flock of girls managed to meet the trains at some stops. We arrived in Hueneme at night during a drizzle and spent several hours hunting our seabags and getting set in our quarters.

Our stay in Hueneme, California, was filled with activities in preparation for our embarkation for overseas duties. We drilled regularly, attended lectures, acquired and checked equipment and supplies. Regular liberties were granted to the personnel who took advantage of them to go to Los Angeles, Hollywood, Ventura, Santa Monica, and numerous other places. The 61sters saw movies, movie stars, stage shows, golf matches, and enjoyed all the facilities of the many vacation-land resorts whenever possible. However, these pleasures were interrupted by a slight incident that occurred on April 14, 1943. The 61st Seabees embarked to start a trip that was to take them overseas into unknown combat areas.

During our voyage overseas aboard the Dutch freighter-transport, the *M.S. Brastagi*, scuttlebutt and shipboard excitement reached new heights. On April 22, 1943, we crossed the equator and the whole Battalion was initiated into the Shellback organization of Neptunus Rex. This turned out to be a riotous affair as officers and men alike had their heads shaved and were forced to walk the plank. On April 26, after a continuous voyage in a southwesterly direction, we became members of the Golden Dragon upon crossing the 180th Meridian. We finally reached our first port, after weeks of voyage, which turned out to be Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Islands. However, we didn't land there. We lay in that harbor for

approximately 11 days before making the final leg of our voyage. While in the New Hebrides, Commander Studdert announced that our destination was Guadalcanal. We arrived in Sealark Channel, off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on May 15, 1943.

"Guadalcanal off the port bow!" That was the call that was heard on the morning of May, 1943. The tremors and thrills that passed through the men were beyond description. It was the first time overseas for most, and for all it was their first taste of war in unknown territories.

We dropped anchor at 1500 and by 1530 the camp construction men went ashore to locate and lay out two camp sites. The first at Teneru River and the second at Koli Point. These two camps were approximately 12 miles apart. The next morning, the rest of the Battalion went ashore. Palm-studded coast lines and, further inland, groves of palms stood at attention in close order.

While unloading crews struggled to get all our supplies and equipment ashore, the crews ashore threw up pup tents as temporary quarters until the camps could be built. The first considerations were given to the construction of foxholes and, within a matter of hours, pits, pot-holes, slit trenches, ditches, and covered caverns were ready. During this early period of camp erection, the men at Teneru were furnished chow at the 46th Seabees' Camp and those at Koli by the 14th Seabees Camp. The Teneru Camp, across Alligator Creek (misnamed the Ilu River) from Fighter Strip No. 1 and less than a mile from the famed Henderson Field, was the first to be cleared and completely erected. While the Teneru Camp had been comparatively easy to clear, being in a coconut grove, the Koli Camp had to be hacked out of the jungle of heavy tropical underbrush and hardwood trees.

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61st Seabees Teneru Camp, Guadalcanal, B.S.I., as seen from the main road leading towards Fighter No. 1 Airfield



Entrance to the 61st Camp, Koli Point, Guadalcanal, B.S.I.

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On May 24th the 61st men at Teneru Camp ate their first meal in their own chow hall. The next day project work began in earnest as survey parties were sent out to make a topograph of Henderson Field, and Commander Studdert conferred with Marine Aviation Engineers concerning the construction of a bomber field at Koli Point. Upon this same day 61st began using fresh water from their own wells. Our water wells sunk at our two camps were the first developed on Guadalcanal. All other water on the island, used by other units, had been drawn from nearby rivers infested with fungus growths.

By the middle of June, the 61st Battalion, from the standpoint of sanitation, location, and management, had the best camps on the island. Although, heavy rains plagued most of the crews,

record-breaking progress was maintained on all jobs. During the same period, the Battalion had its first pay day since they left the States.

Although continuous rains made travel impractical, many of the men spent their spare time making sight-seeing trips into the interior and up and down the coasts. They explored native villages and learned startling facts about the Solomon Islanders, of whom there are less than 100,000 in the whole island chain. The vocation of these natives seems to be agriculture and the construction of boat craft. The chief exports were ivory nuts and copra. Like most native populations that are to be found throughout the Pacific, the absence of meat, other than fish, didn't seem to endanger their physical powers. The abundance of fruit, along with the cultivation of sweet potatoes, corn, and other vegetables, insured them of a well-balanced diet. The one exception to this, was the habit of chewing Betel nut, that caused the evident rapid decay of their teeth. Up to the present generation, the Melanesians were head hunters. However, this was inter-tribal and the occasion was rare whenever the head of a white man was acquired. Usually

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Teneru River, site of gravel pit, Guadalcanal

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Teneru River, site of gravel pit, Guadalcanal



Alligator Creek, misnamed the Ilu River, as seen from the 61st Teneru Camp

Among the points of interest, visited by the sight-seeing Seabees were the battle sights of Bloody Knoll, Matanakau River, Kokumbona, and lower Henderson Field. Kokumbona Beach was littered with smashed Jap barges and beached Japanese freighters. Many of the men salvaged parts and souvenirs from these hulks. Matanakau River, sight of one of the bloodiest battles on Guadalcanal, was littered with discarded Jap equipment and its banks strewn with personal belongings and bones of Japanese dead. Bloody Knoll, like the Kokumbona area, was also littered with Japanese equipment. However, the trees atop Bloody Knoll, that weren't blown down, were all bullet-scarred and ribbed from artillery fire. The 61st Seabees collected many souvenirs from these areas but always exercised extreme caution due to the possibilities of undiscovered land mines and booby traps.

One of the constant sources of amazement, scenic beauty, and irritation were the numerous

streams and rivers that flowed down from cloud-cloaked mountains, of great heights, across the flat, muddy plains and forest lands of the northern coast of Guadalcanal. Frequent heavy rains in the mountains caused the rivers to overflow their banks on numerous occasions and wash out bridges. Thus, Seabees were forced to rebuild many of the bridges to maintain communications on the island. No matter how cool, clean, and inviting these streams appeared, bathing and swimming were not practical. All fresh water streams contained fungus growths, leeches, and crocodiles. Most of the bathing and swimming was done on the seacoast. Several 61sters constructed boats in which they fished and traveled up and down the coast. All the beaches of Guadalcanal were of black volcanic sand.

The mountain ranges of Guadalcanal were visible from both camps, the peaks of which were hidden by low hanging tropical rain clouds. Very few 61st Seabees were able to penetrate into the

heart of the range. Nine of the peaks were over 7,000 feet high, the highest being Mt. Popomansui of 8,005 feet, with Mt. Yellow Scar being close second at 7,552 feet. New Zealand's forces, camped along a trail in the heart of those mountains, informed us that it rained every day of the year in these mountains, and in many of these areas, the jungle thicket was impenetrable.

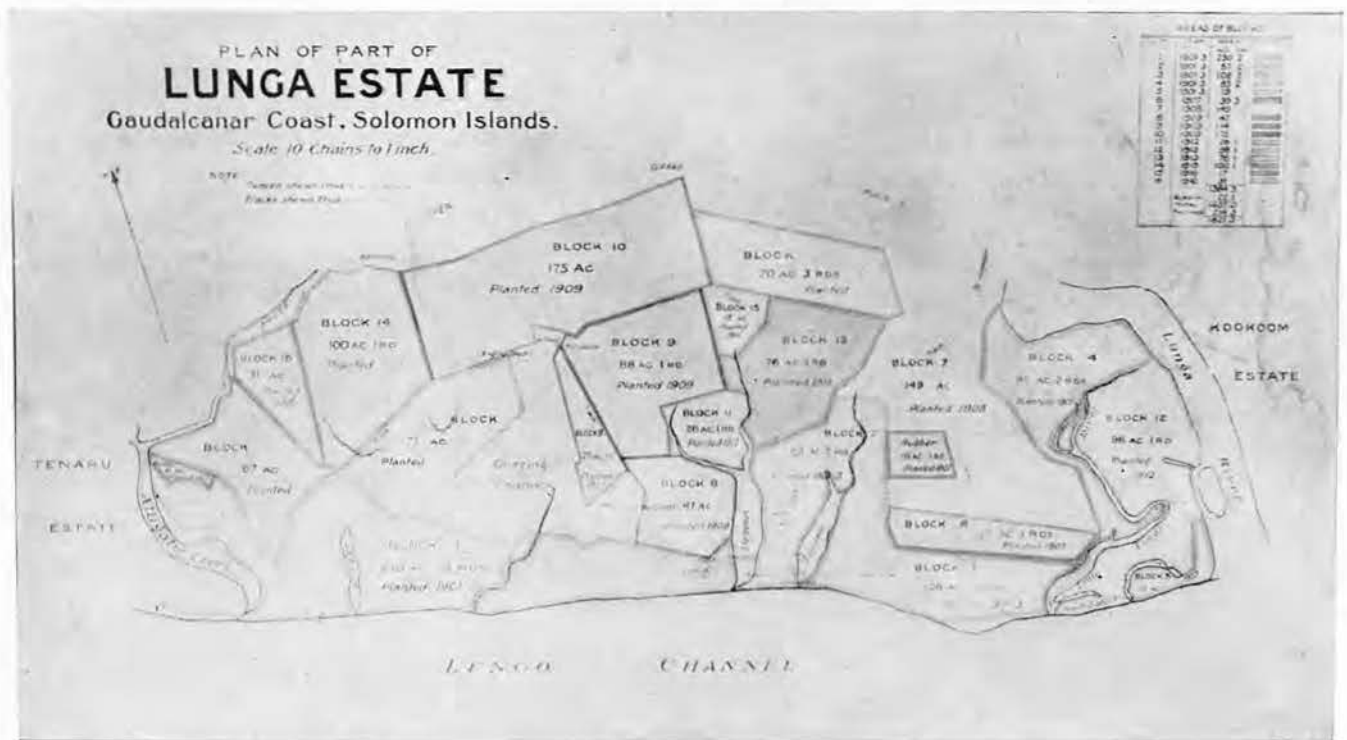
As the air raids continued regularly, the Battalion became inured to this particular danger. However, this complacency was shattered on June 16, 1943, at 1345, at which time the Japanese air force made the largest air raid of the war on Guadalcanal. One hundred and twenty-five Jap airplanes struck at the American airfields, shipping, and dumps of the island. First figures, issued by the intelligence, indicated that 74 Japanese planes had been shot down during the attack. This figure, at later date, was revised upwards to 113 planes. Our losses of six planes, one LST,

and two barges was considered negligible. Throughout this attack, the men of our Battalion were secured in their foxholes. Although none of our men were injured by Japanese action, several foxhole casualties were occasioned, one of which was best illustrated by our commanding officer. It took Commander Studdert a whole week to lose that "shiner." More common casualties among the men, were acquired by such actions as head-on collisions at entrances of foxholes, and track meets over rough ground. Following this raid, during which two U. S. vessels sustained damage to their side plates, 61st welding units and operators repaired ship damage in record time.

On June 30, news was flashed that Marine Raiders landed on New Georgia Island and, as if in commemoration of the event, the erection and operation of all administration buildings of the 61st was completed.

Japanese ship beached during Guadalcanal Campaign





Lunga Estate plan of coconut plantings on the north coast of Guadalcanal

On July 10, George Miller Hunter, S1c, of Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, died of malaria. He was the first 61st man to lose his life. He was buried, with full honors, in the Guadalcanal Cemetery. A firing squad, composed of his friends, fired three volleys over his grave. On July 20, a Japanese attack on Henderson Field damaged several Quonset huts built by the 61st. Although Japanese air attacks continued, the size of these attacks diminished.

Throughout our tour of duty on Guadalcanal, work projects were accomplished in record time. However, all efforts were made to ease the hardships of overseas life. Tent decks were installed in living quarters, showers were built, recreational facilities such as a library, a movie area, and a sports field was built. The men soon became ardent movie-goers. At times, air raids forced some pictures to such an extent that, in some cases, it took three nights to see a complete single picture. When attending these shows and an air raid warning was sounded, the men usually had minutes in which to seek cover. Nevertheless, surprise attacks caught them flat-seated. The harum-scarum confusion that usually occurred,

though sometimes painful, were hilarious affairs of overland races and scenes of lightning excavations.

Monday morning, December 20, 1943, a physical muster of the entire crew was called at 6:45, and the Battalion was assembled at the theater to hear Commander W. W. Studdert read his orders relieving him of duty with the 61st Battalion and assuming the duty of officer-in-charge of the 18th USNC Regiment. Following this, Lt. Harold Koopman read his orders to take over the duty of officer-in-charge of the 61st.

On December 24, a group of Seabees made a trek inland to obtain an Australian Pine for use as a Christmas tree to be placed in front of the Battalion Chapel. The afternoon of the same day painters, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians put their heads together on the problem of decorations. Ornaments consisted of ivory nuts, medicine bottles, beer bottles, and pine cones dipped in paint of different colors. Tinted light bulbs were placed strategically in the tree that was placed in a special stand built by the carpenters.

Christmas Day, 1943, was our first overseas and second in the service. Our thoughts were of home naturally, but our spirits were high.

Church services were held for all men and a special Christmas dinner of turkey and all the trimmings was the order of the day. The complement of the Battalion at the time was 898 men.

The latter months of 1943 saw the creation of the Battalion's first publication. This was the Battalion newspaper, the first issue of which appeared on the 13th of November. Commander Studdert felt that the speed with which the men completed projects should be noted. Therefore the title of *The Workers Wallop* was the new masthead. This paper contained stories and drawings of things current in the lives of the 61st Seabees.

On January 15, 1944, considerable damage was done to our pontoon yard and floating docks by rough seas and a storm. Upon the same day a coconut palm tree fell upon one of the tents on Sixth Street in our camp. But to top all this, the entire Battalion was given typhoid and Tetanus booster shots. However, the pain of this was

eased by a posted bulletin that notified all personnel of the 61st to expect a trip to Auckland, New Zealand.

On January 19, considerable excitement was caused in our camp by the appearance of an American nurse attending our movies. She was the first white woman the Seabees had seen on Guadalcanal.

Floods washed out several bridges over the Metapona, the Malimbu, and the Mantanakau rivers, thus tying up both men and heavy equipment. Bridge crews worked night and day to restore highway communications.

On June 30, Commander Bradford M. Bowker arrived from the United States of America to assume command of the 61st. He was the former commander of the 124th Construction Battalion at Gulfport, Mississippi. Shortly thereafter a battalion inspection was held, followed by close order drill and bag inspection.

On February 5, Vice Admiral Ben Morreel,

Bullet-riddled palm trees on the Kukum battle site, Guadalcanal





Lunga Lagoon, near NOB, Guadalcanal

Chief of the Seabees; Rear Admiral Cotter and Commodore Quigley visited our Battalion. A banquet was held for them, after which time plans were discussed for future movement of the 61st. A few days later Commander Bowker addressed all CPOs concerning plans for our coming trip to New Zealand. This speech was supplemented on February 14 by Lieut. Maynard, of the New Zealand forces, who addressed the battalion at our theater. He gave a history of his country and answered all questions, put to him by the men, concerning customs, amusements, and places to go and things to do.

Prior to going to New Zealand, the men indulged in pig hunting. The results of these hunts afforded many pleasant barbecues. Young pigs were butchered, scalded, and scraped and hung in the galley refrigerator. Barbecued hams, sliced from the exhumed carcasses, from these colder regions, were the source of many after-hour

feasts. Among other after-hour activities were the meetings of such clubs known as the Pizzie Winkums, the Con-Fed-For-Sou-Pac's, and the "190" Club. Membership in these particular organizations assured extra-curricular bull sessions and occasional snorts.

One of the most common, but ever amusing, sights that occurred every evening on Guadalcanal was the modes of transportation used to go to a movie. It was not unusual to see twenty aboard one jeep, the driver of which always thought he was on the Indianapolis track. Manipulating curves at high speeds always forced to a halt several hundred yards beyond, while the dismounted picked themselves up off the road and remounted.

In civilian life, an assortment of pets usually consisted of domestic animals. Such being the case, the 61st Seabees brought a mascot overseas from the States. Our official mascot was

named Mr. Confused Bee, a Boston Bull Terrier. A Californian by birth, Mr. Confused Bee was released by the Womens Voluntary Service, at Santa Barbara, and sent to Hueneme to be inducted into the 61st Seabees. Upon his arrival there, the doctors put him through a tough physical and gave him shots for rabies. He was sworn in by Commander Studdert and then sent to the clothes issue room where the ship's tailor gave him a blue jacket with the 61st insignia on it. Unlike his mates in the 61st, who left their love life behind, Mr. Confused Bee put on the dog with a ship board romance and, by the time Guadalcanal was reached, he was the proud father of eight sea-going pups. While on Guadalcanal he was wounded in action against a 23-inch lizard and, in time received an advance in rating. However, he was broken to an apprentice seaman when caught in an illicit love affair with a 'possum. Mr. Confused Bee was an integral part of

the everyday life of the 61sters. It was a sad day for all when he was pronounced missing in action. Since that time we have had no official mascot in the Battalion. Although a collection of pets, such as parrots, cockatoos, pigs, lizards, and stray dogs, graced the various canvas caves of "enlisted men's country."

Speaking of animal life, our greatest problem and nuisance were rats, some of whom grew to tremendous sizes. These rats were extremely bold and would steal food from under your nose. Several Seabees complained that they ran across them while they were asleep. One humorous incident evolved from the rodent family was when several men of the sanitation crew discovered a nest of baby rats, one of the men gathered them up and struck them under a blanket in a mate's sack and tucked the mosquito netting firmly around the cot. This mate, upon returning from late work shift, benignly hit the sack and after

Japanese ship beached during Guadalcanal campaign





Overlooking Salark Channel from atop Bloody Knoll, Guadalcanal, towards Florida Island

reclining for perhaps an hour, he was awakened by the nausea of having that furry crawly feeling. Reaching down beneath the blanket, he felt a series of live furry objects, and with a scream that would curl the enamel from false teeth, he bounded out of the tent but forgot to lift up the mosquito net in doing so. The contortions he evoked did credit to a burlesque show's finest performance of "The Dance of the Seven Veils."

Despite the pressing urgency of work projects and the time consumed by them, the majority of 61st Seabees found time to be amazed by the multitude of the species of plant and forest life. We had heard of many of the hardwoods, but it was the first time we saw such trees growing as ebony, teak, mahogany, and tropical red wood. Other varieties of tropical trees that interested the Seabees were the Lincana and the ivory nut trees. These particular trees grew fruit that could be made into souvenirs. There were also

various flowering trees, the blossoms of which were every color of the spectrum. Then too, there were innumerable flowering bushes. To the surprise of the Florida men, one of these flowering bushes turned out to be the well-known red Hibiscus.

Very little fresh water fishing was done on Guadalcanal. Nevertheless, salt water fishing was in great evidence. The men rigged up their own tackle, in most cases, and in many instances dynamite was used to obtain catches. In this connection, one of these men, Patrick McGouirk, lost his life. McGouirk, like Bordley, was buried in the Guadalcanal cemetery with full honors.

Not satisfied with the scenery of Guadalcanal alone, not a few of the 61st Seabees took sight-seeing trips to nearby islands of Savo, Tulagi, Gavuitu, Florida, Santa Ysabel, and Malaita aboard the various barge ferries. These trips



afforded new fields for the souvenir hunters. canal all the above-named islands were visible to the naked eye.

During the last months of our stay on Guadalcanal, more than a dozen of our men transferred into the 18th Regiment to work with Commander Studdert. During the same period several 61st construction crews erected quarters and offices of the Regiment.

The personnel of the Battalion gradually diminished, due to surveys, transfers, and men receiving commissions going Stateside for officers training. Continuous hard work, plus bad weather and air raid alerts, found the men rather tired and physically run down. Nevertheless, they never faltered in any task, and the word "shirking" was not in the Seabee vocabulary. The 61st Battalion got its first fame on Guadalcanal and laid a great foundation of a series of

accomplishments to be known as the "famous firsts of the 61st." A few noteworthy "firsts" were: they sunk the first fresh water wells on Guadalcanal; they served the first ice cream on a regular chow menu; made some of the first surveys of some of the sections of Guadalcanal; they maintained the first camp to have tent decking in the enlisted men's country; and had the first Solomon Island Championship Baseball Club. At one time, the 61st Battalion had more projects in operation simultaneously than was believed possible for any engineering outfit to maintain. Regardless of this overwhelming burden of work, the Battalion established an enviable speed record in the construction of the Koli Point Bomber Field. Upon one occasion, in order to maintain our speed record, we enlisted the services of native Solomon Islanders to help us lay matting on the air field.

Wrecked Japanese barges at Kokumbona Beach, Guadalcanal



# MALAITA

## *British Solomon Islands*

Our tour of duty on Guadalcanal was noteworthy in many respects, but the story would not be complete without a commentary on the detachment that was dispatched to nearby Malaita Island to construct roads and a radar station for the Royal New Zealand Air Force. This detachment was sent to Malaita on July 28 and was under the command of Lieut. Maier. They landed from their vessel in a lagoon on the southwestern part of Malaita. Unlike the Canal, Malaita had

no broad coastal plains. The mountains there, though rugged, were not as big or precipitous as those of Guadalcanal. Low hanging clouds constantly shrouded even the lowest hills and gave the general appearance of fog. Men of this detachment reported that very few clear days were experienced. While constructing buildings and station roads, the 61sters were protected by the New Zealand Army forces from attack on the island. Several men stated that there were

Native canoes near the 61st Seabees' landing site, Malaita, B.S.I.





Canoeing off the jungle-infested coast of Malaita

Jap patrols in some of the nearby valleys. Upon completion of these projects the men returned to Guadalcanal and were cited for their work by the New Zealand Army officials.

On February 14, 1944, all Guadalcanal projects were secured and all equipment was brought into the 61st transportation yard to be serviced and parked for storage as the Battalion prepared for their forthcoming holiday in New Zealand. All supplies were inventoried, and the men were given time to check over their personal gear prior to boarding the ship. The resultant confusion that usually reigns in the expectancy of a pleasant but entertaining interlude was a sight, with newly washed dress blues and stacks of trading articles for romantic purposes, all mixed together.

On the 18th of February, 1944, 1,000 men and officers, several thousand sea bags and foot lockers and untold thousands of cartons of cigarettes boarded the *U.S.S. Pinkney* bound for New Zealand. Early the next morning, the bulging craft lifted her hook and sailed, flaunting her prow southward.

The voyage aboard the *U.S.S. Pinkney*, for the main part, was uneventful. The ship, although speedy, rolled and tossed like an unsaddled nightmare. Many of the men leaned over the rail and disillusioned the entrepreneurs of shark-fin soup.

On February 23, the *U.S.S. Pinkney*, with a thousand wolves aboard, arrived in an Auckland harbor, New Zealand. It took a better part of two hours for the ship to traverse the length of the harbor to the lower Queenstreet docks.

# NEW ZEALAND

Auckland! This was the end of our journey of anticipation! As our ship docked on that 23rd day of February of 1944, the 61sters grabbed their gear and disembarked. They then were loaded upon trucks, driven by CBMUs, across Auckland, to Waikaraka Park, in the Onehunga section of the city. While en route to Waikaraka, interesting feminine topography was in great evidence, and the covered trucks soon became uncovered. The whistles emitted therefrom would have put the shipping in New York harbor to shame. Enough wind was expended, in ap-

preciative remarks, to cool the blushes of a whole feminine rose garden. Upon arrival at Waikaraka, the men donned their dress blues and stowed their gear in record time. The first night saw most of the Battalion take liberty prior to leave. On February 24 the majority of the men started their leave. A system of leave had been set up by the Battalion that one company was to maintain the Waikaraka Camp each week of our stay in New Zealand. All other weeks were free for leave.

The city of Auckland, in many respects, was

Aerial view of downtown Auckland, New Zealand





Downtown Queen Street, Auckland, N. Z., looking towards the Harbor Ferry

modern as an American city. However, customs, communication systems, and domestic fixtures were twenty years behind ours. This city, 197,000, was inured to the sight of American service men. Yet, its citizens extended unrestrained hospitality at all times. Some of the sights that seemed rather odd to the 61st Seabees were: all traffic drove on the left hand side, pedestrians walked to the left, choicest and highest priced theater seats were always in the balcony, the popularity of the American movies, the amount of handsome people and the complete civilization of the Maori people. The names of stores and items were always a source of confusion to the Seabees. Example of these were: "tobacconist" for a combination cigar store and

barber shop, "wireless shop" for a radio store, "cream bar" for a soda fountain, "tinkers" sheet metal shop and hardwood stores, "stationers" for office supply stores, "tyre shop" for filling stations and an "accessory inn" for gift shops, trams for street cars, "tourist cars" for buses, "apparel shops" for department stores, "bush lands" for forests and "tea" as the name for all meals.

The great majority of the 61st Seabees, after receiving their leave papers, did not remain in the vicinity of Auckland. They bought tickets to cities and towns heretofore unknown. They wanted to see the whole of New Zealand. Such cities and towns as Whangarei, Hamilton, Te Awmutu, Roto Rua, Waihi Tauranga, Taupo, Gisborne, Wanganui, New Plymouth, Palmerston

North, Dannevirke, Napier, Masterton, Wellington, Nelson, Blenheim, Christ Church, Graymouth, Lyttletown, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill were visited. The odd circumstances the men encountered in their travels were, riding narrow gauge railroads, all conveyances stopping for tea, and low fares.

The New Zealand people, both Caucasian and Maori, greeted the Seabees with "open arms" hospitality everywhere they went. The scenic beauty of New Zealand was so grand and awe-inspiring that it didn't seem real. Snow-capped mountains, glaciers, sheep stations, gold mines, giant fisheries, horse ranches, dairy farms, great forests, and crystal clear streams were to be

found in every section. New Zealand has been called the land of ferns, some of which grow to heights of thirty feet. Another unusual growth is the Kaori Gum tree. The gum from this tree is of crystal clear amber color and its texture resembles resin.

There were many Seabees who spent a few days of companionship with the Maoris of New Zealand, and it is only fitting that we give a brief history and description of them here.

The present stories that are being told of the ancient doings of these friendly people have their subject-source from the word of mouth system passed on from generation to generation. However, the stories of their amazing canoe voyages

The Main Harbor, as seen from the top of Mt. Eden, Auckland, N. Z.





The foot of Queen Street, Auckland, N. Z., as seen from the Ferry Building; Government Post Office second building on the left

to New Zealand has been substantiated. The actual names of the early Maoris and of their craft, in which they set out from far-off Hawaii, are matters of ancient world history. When those first crews cast their gazes hungrily at the loom of Ao-Te-Roa, the Pohutukawa-clothed shores of the new land seemed to beckon them with a promise of sunshine and plenty. The name Ao-Te-Roa, simply means, "the long daylight." Some accounts say that it was Kupe's wife who first sighted New Zealand and gave it its new name. Kupe, who came from Ra'iatea, in Tahiti, in 950, is credited as being the first Maori in New Zealand. According to tradition though, the main Maori migration didn't begin until two centuries later. Be this as it may, the fact still

remains that the Maori safely made these voyages, arriving with sufficient vigor to overpower the inhabitants and take advantage of the abundant forest and prolific fishing grounds. There were two pre-Maori races in New Zealand ere the advent of the Maoris. The Maorioris, of Polynesian stock, and Mouriuri who were believed to have been Melanesian. Both of these races are now extinct, but the Maori race is increasing.

Before the arrival of Capt. Cook, in 1760, it was believed that any crews that were so unfortunate as to set foot on New Zealand soil were slain. In these earlier days, the various "Pas" and tribes of Maoris were constantly at war with one another. Although they were accredited with being extremely blood thirsty, these warriors were

known to have been exceptionally good sports and believed in fair play.

The Maori people of today are well educated and a very dignified people. They have fair skin and a proud bearing. The majority of Maori women are beautiful and take great pride and delight in wearing the latest fashions in clothes from the United States. They are ardent movie fans and swing record collectors. Dancing and singing are their main recreations, as the Seabees soon found out. The Maoris have assumed their rightful place of importance in the affairs of government and social life in New Zealand.

On March 13, 1944, via wireless broadcasts throughout New Zealand, the 61st Seabees had their leaves cut short and were called into camp.

That night a farewell dance was given at the Auckland Town Hall. This dance was a closed formal affair. The hall was decorated with balloons, flags of all nations, and potted plants. Hanging from the balcony, at the end of the dance floor, was a large "thank you" sign which read, "To our friends and hosts of New Zealand, we, the members of the 61st, thank you for your kind and unstinted hospitality." During the dance a floorshow was given and all music was furnished by a swing band from the United States Navy Base. This affair ended at 0100, March 14.

The late morning of March 14, 1944, the 61st Battalion left the Waikaraka Camp in Onehunga and boarded the *U.S.S. Pinkney* for a return trip to the Solomon Islands.

View of the outer harbor, Auckland, N. Z., as seen from Mt. Eden



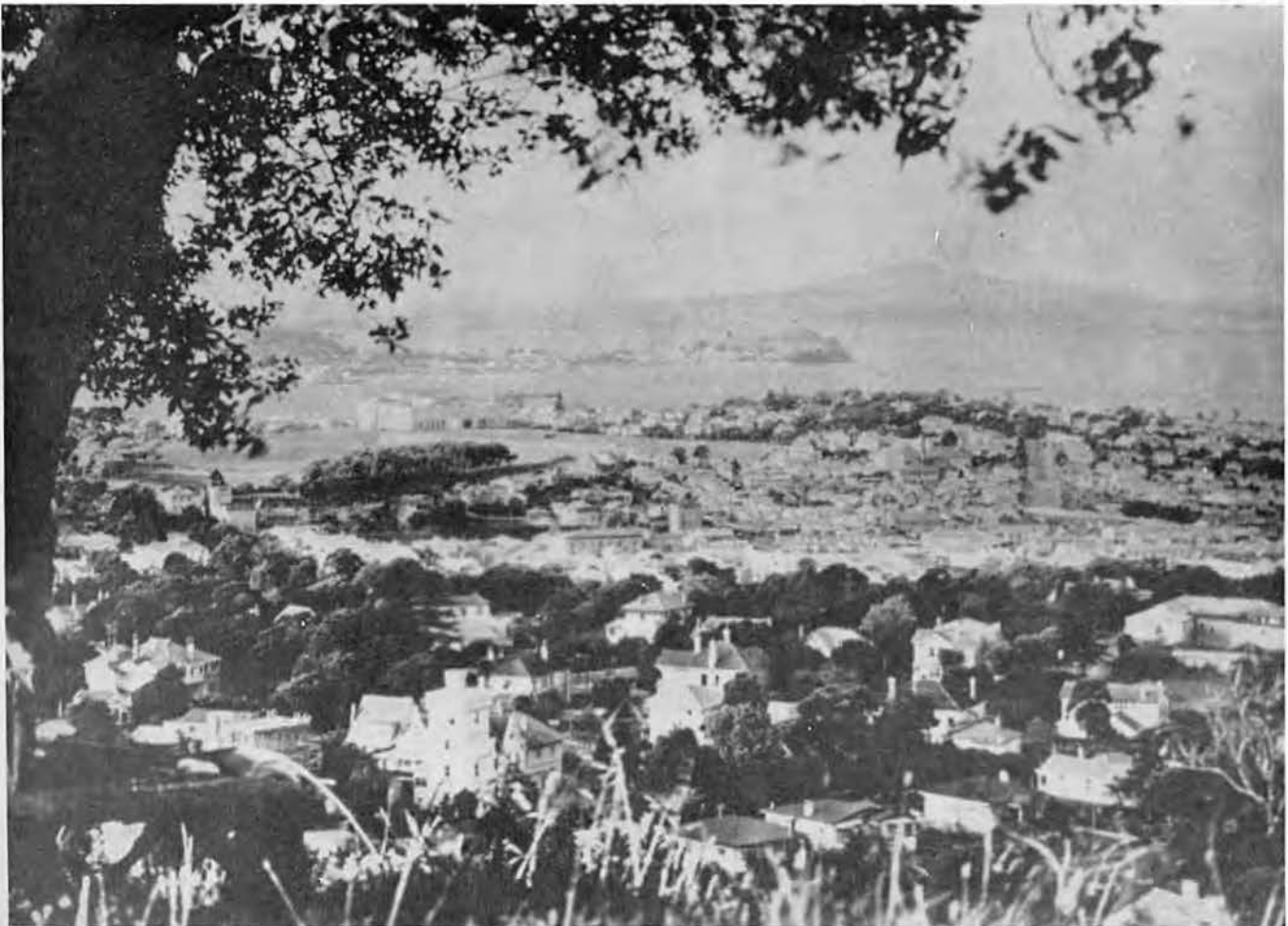


# NEW CALEDONIA

March 15, 1944, we left Auckland harbor bound north, and after several days of uneventful voyaging, other than rough water, we sighted a huge mountainous island, the shores of which were protected by forbidding coral reefs. At first, we didn't know where we were. However, we sighted coastal freighters flying the French flag and thereupon knew it to be New Caledonia. Following this, we threaded through a myriad of under-sea reefy catacombs to enter a harbor of emerald

water. As we dropped anchor, to our starboard, we could see the ill-famed Ile Nou, former prison island, and to the port we could see the city of Noumea, capital of New Caledonia. We also noticed several smelters smoking in the distance and were informed that they were producing nickel. Our stay at New Caledonia was for a brief twenty-four hours, after which we made an uneventful trip back to Guadalcanal, where we re-occupied our old quarters—temporarily.

View of town and harbor at Noumea, New Caledonia; Ile Nou, former prison island in the distance



# EMIRAU

## *St. Mathais Group, Bismark Archipelago*

On March 25, after several days of feverish preparation, the Battalion boarded two LCI's and three LST's with the exception of fifty men in the rear echelon, who were left behind to transport additional crated equipment. Once aboard these craft, we understood why our New Zealand leave was cut short. We were told that we were to invade Emirau Island, St. Matthias group, in the Bismarck Archipelago.

En route to Emirau, during a five-day trip, we passed such islands as Savo, Tetivari, Rendova, Kolombangara, Ganongga, Vella Lavella, Treasury Islands, Bougainville, Buka, Green Islands, Tanga, New Ireland, New Hanover, and finally Emirau. On the third additional LST's and LCI's joined our convoy at Green Islands. The majority of the 61st Seabees agreed that this voyage was the most pleasant that they had experienced

Looking west along the 61st Camp beach, Emirau Island, St. Matthias Group, Bismarck Archipelago, in the Bismarck Sea





Looking east on the same beach (Emirau Island)

to date. Shipboard chow and topside siestas were really enjoyed. However, the dark hours before dawn, on March 30, caused some apprehension—H-Hour usually does.

During the first daylight hours of March 30, the 61st and other Seabee Battalions landed and started unloading their gear and moving it inland. The Marines landed there before us. Camp construction crews, preceded by bulldozers that cut paths through the tropical underbrush, with Black Beach bound for a beach area on a point of land three miles away. Upon arrival there, tents and other temporary installations were immediately erected. By night fall, the situation was well in

hand, and the men set out to explore their new home. Emirau Island was the nearest thing to a tropical paradise pictured by the Hollywood "Fakers." The beaches at our camp site were broad and of white sand. The water was clear and warm. The landscape was picturesque with its unusual trees, and the obvious lack of mud. The men soon took advantage of the natural facilities and bathed along the beaches.

The first week on Emirau was consumed in the establishment of permanent camp facilities and living quarters, as well as the construction of roads. For the first time our primary construction projects were not hampered by foul weather.

The 61st Battalion started its major project, the Baker airstrip, on Wednesday, April 5, 1944. Engineers, heavy equipment operators, and shovel men reported the island ideal for an airstrip. The natural coral was in evidence everywhere and eased the problem of foundations and surfacing for air strips and roads. Round the clock work shifts were set up and climatic conditions allowed adequate rest.

By the middle of April, all our camp facilities were functioning. During the same period, the Army arrived and the Marines departed. By the end of the month, the 61st took advantage of the great quantities of hardwood timber and set up

sawmill operations. The sizes of these hardwood trees were immense and some reached the height of 150 feet. The lumbermen, upon many occasions, had great difficulty hacking their way through the dense tropical underbrush to snake out desired logs. Typical of all South Pacific Islands, Emirau Island had its usual quota of coconut groves for the insatiable copra and soap industries.

The 61st were no exception to typical Seabee ingenuity. They knew there were unlimited amounts of seafood for the taking in the waters around Emirau. Thus it was that a great unofficial fishing industry arose in our Battalion.

Infra-red photo of Cape Tietjens as seen from the Emirau Airstrip





Landing site and dispersal point of the 61st Seabees, Emirau Island

With the acquisition of native outriggers and the construction of home-made craft of questionable class, fishing parties carried home-made tackle, spears, harpoons, and dynamite out to sea. As the innumerable fish fries that could be seen throughout the camp every night will attest the catches were prolific. There were so many varieties of fish caught that the appellations of them taxed the knowledge of the few veteran fishermen of tropical waters that were in the Battalion. The appearance of some of these fish defied the eating, even though they were assured that they were edible. One hardened old salt remarked that there had been so many dynamite blasts set off along the shores that a cross-section view of

Emirau Island would resemble a toad stool. Upon one occasion, 1,300 fish were brought in a single catch. Some of the fish caught were octopus, Giant Rays, Amber Jacks, Grouper, Angel fish, Sculpy, Zebra fish, Jew fish, Mullet, Sea perch, Barracuda, puff fish and the Blue runners.

While on Emirau, the cooks and bakers instituted a system by which the enlisted men of the 61st Battalion were honored on their birthdays. The last Sunday of each month was set aside as the particular luncheon day for all men having birthdays in that month; besides the special feast, each man received an official Battalion birthday card signed by the officer in charge. The variety of delicacies that were placed before the men

seemed unbelievable after the GI menu day after day. There were long tables, covered with white cloths, with all the food arranged artistically on trays and placed symetrically down its length. The banqueteers each month were addressed by the officer in charge, who wished them happy birthdays. A typical example of one of the menus read like this: roast chicken, brown gravy, mashed potatoes, buttered June peas, buttered yam jewels, bread, peach jam, creamery butter, chocolate ice cream, silver layer cake, mint dainties, coffee and lemonade.

For the first time, the 61sters took advantage of the Armed Forces Institute Educational

courses. One hundred and forty men enrolled in these correspondence courses which covered seventy subjects. The cost of them was negligible, and it was possible for the men to earn credits toward diplomas and degrees through this medium.

On June 22, 1944, the rear echelon of fifty-one arrived at Emirau, from Guadalcanal. These men brought all the material we left behind. The addition of these men eased the pressure upon the working complement. During this same month rain fell heavily but did not hamper the work schedules as all the roads had been built and the stripping of forestland for the air fields had been

Native hut at Blue Beach, Emirau Island





Looking across a lagoon at an Emirau native village, near Blue Beach

completed. The rain packed the exposed coral surface into a smooth cement-like surface. Working incessantly in all types of weather, the crew of Seabees were enthusiastic in their jobs, as they felt that the work accomplished on Emirau as the ultimate example for all engineering forces to follow. In spite of occasional difficulties that sometimes seemed insurmountable, the 61sters were not discouraged but felt that they were adding new teeth to the cog that would turn the wheels of victory. Not only our officers, but the air force men, felt a pride in the work that was being done here. We had established a precedent on Guadalcanal, by accomplishing construction

tasks that were then believed impossible, and here on Emirau, we were bettering this previous record and were gaining the name of being air-field construction wizards. These jobs, so vital to the life of Advanced Bases, employed equipment operators, dynamite men, mechanics, truck drivers, electricians, carpenters, engineers, fuel and grease men, tire crews, and manual laborers.

As we neared an end to our current tasks of this Advanced Base, various high naval officials visited the island and all were lavish in their praise. This accumulation of high approval led to the awarding of the Bronze Medal to the 18th Regimental Commander which was a commenda-

tion to construction battalions thereunder, of which the 61st Battalion was one. The day of the award, all units involved were represented by one or more companies of men who paraded by the reviewing stand that had been erected on an airfield hardstand near the "Charlie" strip. The ceremony was carried out in the highest military tradition with only a "slight rain" to mar its perfection.

Sixty-first Seabees, not actually working on the airstrip, were engaged in various necessary projects over the island, such as dock construction for PT Base and general drainage. In passing, we would like to note that our water purification

men sank several wells in camp that served for drinking water as well as for showers. This water was the clearest and purest that we had encountered in the Pacific. It was so cool that many of the men, in jest, complained that they would have enjoyed taking shower baths if it weren't for having to scale off icy films and icicles from their bodies.

In the early part of July, Admiral Halsey, Commander of the United States Third Fleet, of whom we were a part, arrived, escorted by Mitchel Bombers. He addressed all the Seabees on the island in an informal gathering. 61sters appeared at the gathering in all manner of attire,

Main street of a native village at Blue Beach, Emirau Island







Admiral Halsey pays the Seabees a visit on Emirau Island; Commander W. W. Studdert, former 61st Officer-in-Charge, in the right foreground.

ranging from underwear shorts to dress white. The Admiral seemed pleased with what he saw. He informed the men that he was going to new fields and hoped that we would join him again, farther up the line. His speech was recorded in Stateside newspapers and the accounts described a feat of the 61st Battalion by quoting a part of Halsey's citation to the Seabees, which said: "Given forty-four days in which to build a strip and complete an advanced base, the 61st did the job in thirty days."

Several of our officers, when asked by correspondents, what esteem they held for their crews, replied that all men had shown interest and de-

votion to their jobs as well as loyalty to the 61st and patriotism to their country. These men have proven themselves to be tops in every task they have undertaken to do.

With the completion of all work projects necessary for an advanced base on the Emirau Island, the 61sters occupied themselves by an extensive sports program and the creation of souvenirs from the native hardwoods. Several men went into boat building on a large scale but never had time to finish the projects they started. In July the entire Battalion engaged in rifle, carbine, and machine gun practice on the rifle range for a period of three days. Typical of Seabees, much

money changed hands as the result of bets made on their individual prowess.

The Commander informed the Battalion that they were due for another move and thereupon dispatched an officer and several men to locate and secure a camp site for the Battalion in the Russells.

July 18, the Liberty Ship, *Mintaka*, AK-94,

arrived in Hamburg Bay near Cape Tietjens. For the next several days, equipment and gear for the 61st were loaded aboard the ship, and on the morning of the 20th the men went aboard. The ship got underway at 1845, and after an uneventful voyage, arrived in the Russell Islands five days later.

Cave at base of cliff at the end of the Emirau Airstrip



# BANIKA

## *Russell Group, British Solomon Islands*

Here we were back in the Solomon Islands, but this time we were on Banika Island instead of Guadalcanal. Standing on the beaches of Banika, we could see the great mountain peaks of our first overseas home rearing their ugly heads above the haze. Banika Island was one of the main bases of the Russells group and differed little from Guadalcanal other than having fewer and smaller mountains.

We found, and to our great amazement, a very few work projects to be done here. We were told that this was a staging base for forward movements. At that time we didn't know where our next move would be but we could hear the rumble of a boiling pot of invasion. Officers and men alike took advantage of this lull in activities to engage in an all-out educational and athletic program. Classes were held in courses ranging from

View of Banika Island, Russell Islands, B.S.I.





Company office in "Enlisted Men's Country," Russell Islands

Mathematics to Japanese. Fifty per cent of the personnel took these active class courses. New men were given experienced training in the operation of heavy equipment. For the first time, an inter-company sports program was introduced, consisting of softball, volleyball, and badminton.

Although we had no specific work projects assigned to us on Banika Island, the following details were carried out:

Picking up and guarding pipe from the PT Base; laying new pipe lines and installing pumps to new water pool; transporting patients from ships to hospitals; loading material aboard ships for the movement of the First Marines. Loading details for Gr.-Pac.; guarding the 75th Seabee

Camp; the dismantling of the 17th Special Seabees galley; installing a ramp assembly on a barge at PAD; dismantling the 75th mess hall; building decks for commissary warehouses at Base Four.

September 28, 1944, was the day that the 61st Seabees boarded the *U.S.S. Sabik* and the *U.S.S. Cassiopeia* for their most important destination of all their voyages. However, they were to make several stops en route. The men had no inkling, at the time, that it was to be other than one of former routine tasks. The work of packing, crating, and loading the ships was done by the 61st. When all the pre-embarkation tasks were completed, all personnel shouldered their packs,

grabbed their weapons, and boarded ship. Berths were assigned to all but a few men, who had to sleep on deck on cots. The quarters aboard, and in the hold, were usually clean; in fact, some of the men seemed to think that there was entirely too much to that "clean, sweep down fore and aft" stuff to allow them a good long game of cards topside. Each time they would get settled in one spot a hose crew would start a field day. Facilities for bathing, washing, and shaving were the best we had encountered aboard any ship up to that time. For men sweltering topside all day long, the fresh water shower proved to be the great attraction.

September 29 at sunup, we hoisted anchor and

pulled out to sea. But only for a few hours that day. This short leg of our journey was not without interest. We passed the famed Savo Island where so many warships, both of the United States and Japan, had been sunk in various sea battles around it. It was also home of the most famous head hunters in the Solomons. Although it isn't particularly large, having an approximate area of thirty square miles, Savo Island has the largest native population per square mile of any island in the Solomons. Its general appearance is round with several sugar-loaf peaks on it.

Upon arriving at Tulagi Harbor, a view of Florida Island showed us some of the toughest

"Officers' Country," Banika, Russell Islands.





61st Seabees' swimming and fishing pier, Banika, Russell Islands

terrain we had seen to date. Regardless of the fact that there are no high mountains around Tulagi, it was easily understood why that particular area wasn't heavily populated. As far as the eye could see, there were series of low craggy hills, between which there were no valleys of any appreciable size. Also, the jungle was extremely heavy and constantly shrouded with mist and rains.

Laying overnight in Tulagi, we sailed westward towards Guadalcanal, after a false start several hours earlier. Naturally, we were all somewhat mystified as to why we should stop at the "Canal." Scuttlebutt was soon out that there had been a change in our orders and we were to pick

up new sailing orders at Lunga Beach, Guadalcanal. Thus, on the morning of September 30, and after several hours' sailing, we reached Lunga Beach, and once again viewed the lofty peaks towering above the clouds over familiar terrain which we felt to be home grounds. Yes, we were once again viewing our first Island X, where we spent more than ten months in '43. This stopover lasted three days, and on October 2, 1944, we hoisted anchor, sailing away from Guadalcanal, under a bright moon. Our course took us by Savo Island once again, after which we sailed around the southern end of Santo Ysabel and headed northeast into the open sea.

# Admiralty Islands

After several days of sailing without a land-rise, we sighted Emirau off the starboard bow during the early hours of October 6, but we didn't pause there. We steamed the northwest course for several hours, as new ships trailed into our convoy, and then turned due west, north of Massau Island, and sailed at moderate speed until early the next morning when a new land fall was in sight. It was the Admiralty Islands.

The harbor area of Manus Island, in the Admiralties, was filled with every type of warship and auxiliary. There were more ships there than we had ever seen in any one location heretofore.

Although we hadn't been told officially, we knew that we had become a part of that giant armada that was to invade the Philippine Islands. All the men lined the rails in discussion of various types of ships surrounding their own. The very air they breathed seemed charged with the shock of expectancy for new beachheads. On October 9, liberty parties boarded barges and went ashore to Liberty Island. This island was partially man-made; a Seabee Battalion had dredged up harbor bottom to enlarge a small, sandy island that stood off-shore from Manus. This island contained all types of recreational equipment and athletic fields.

Pitelu Island, off Manus Island, in the Admiralty Islands





61st Seabees' shore party returning to their ship in the Admiralties

Beer was also made available in sufficient quantities to satisfy the men, and under the heat of the sun, many of them had their top gallants luffing to starboard.

The days seemed to drag, as we lay at anchor in the Admiralties. Our impatience to get on with it and to secure a new beachhead grew by the hour. After what seemed centuries, our ship lifted its hook and steamed out to sea about 1700 on October 13, 1944. The next morning we were surprised to find that we held a forward position in a large convoy bound due west. Other than idle speculation among the men, no untoward incidents occurred.

In the early dawn hours of October 15, 1944, a new land rise was sighted, and as we drew near it, a shore of rugged misty peaks, whose shore-sides had been sheared by time, formed a

wall of forboding cliffs. As if some god had pulled the tab of a giant zipper, a harbor entrance appeared. We knew we had reached New Guinea, although we knew not where. As we rounded a rocky point, another great armada met our eyes. We soon learned that we had reached Hollandia, Netherlands New Guinea, and were anchored in Humboldt Baai. This harbor was quite picturesque with its red tiled city, high mountain peaks and emerald-smooth lagoons.

October 18, as we left Hollandia at 0530 in a large convoy, Commander Bowker issued a ship-board news bulletin, announcing the Philippines as our destination. On the 20th we received news of first American launching. On October 22, ammunition and rations were passed out to all men and additional shots were given by the medical department.



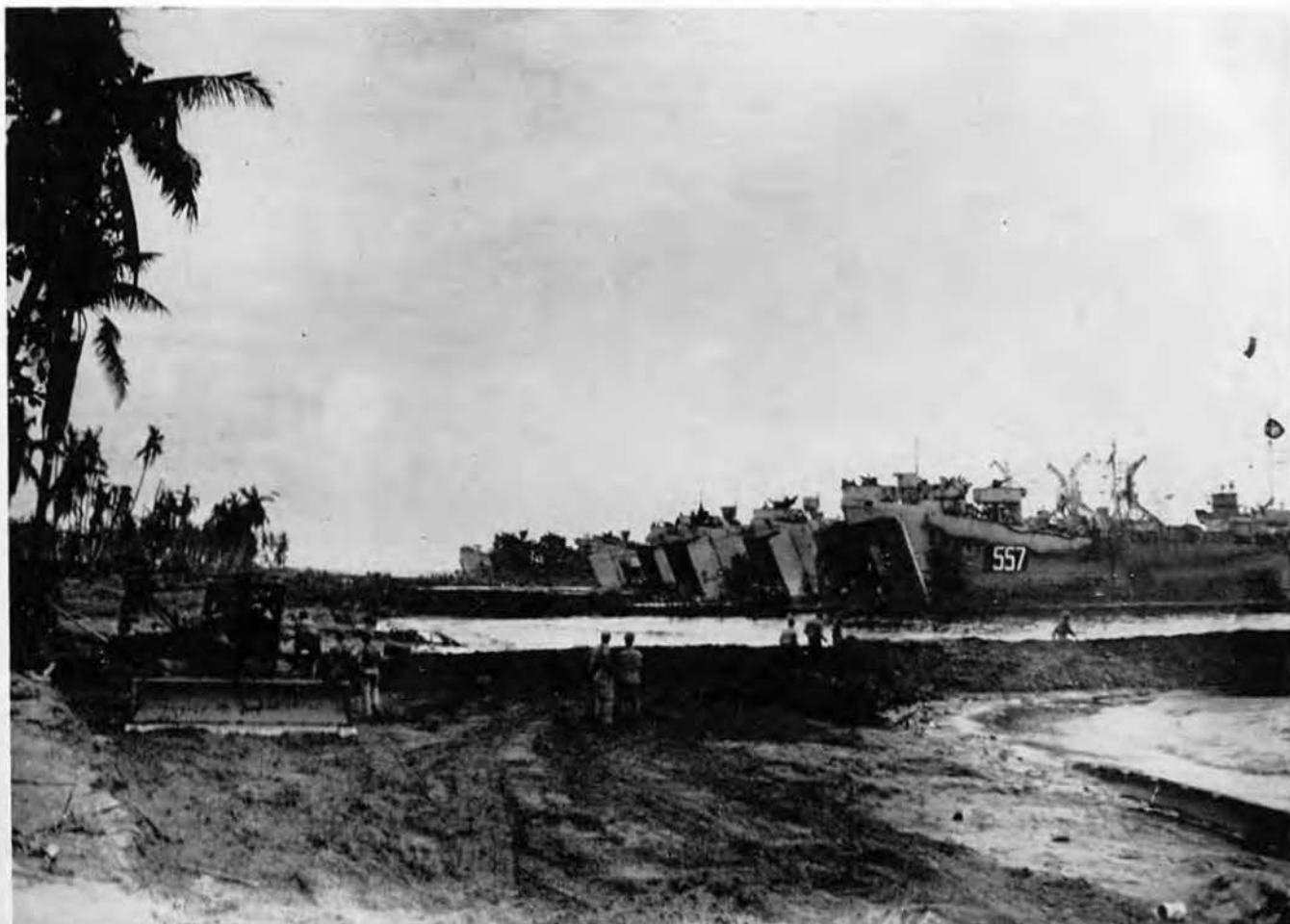
# LEYTE

## *Philippine Islands*

On the night of October 23, 1944, the 61st Battalion arrived in Leyte Gulf, near Tacloban, in the Philippine Islands, and while anchored offshore we watched American planes dive-bomb Japanese beach positions; destroyers and cruisers shell inland positions and our guns shoot down marauding Japanese aircraft. There wasn't a daylight hour while at anchor off Leyte Island, that we weren't engaged in action against air attacks.

For the next few days, the 61st engaged in unloading. The 61st Seabees have the distinction of being the first complete Naval Construction battalion to land on the Philippines. Withstanding the bombing raids on shipping and the strafing while moving inland, the 61st reached their plotted camp site near a former Jap air strip. Roads were cut out of a sea of mud, and the stream of supplies seemed endless as they rolled from the beach to our camp. A few men were left

LST's during the 61st's invasion of Leyte Island, Philippines, near D-Day





A movement of 61st equipment on the Leyte Invasion beach, near Dulag

aboardship to do stevedoring on around-the-clock schedules. Winchmen, hatch bosses, and the stevedores kept the important lifts going over the side, even though Jap bombs were landing in the immediate vicinity.

Several of our men were reported as "missing" due to the Japanese combat action. Others were turned in as "wounded." Fortunately, none of the 61sters were killed in action.

Our camp site was located on the southeastern end of the Japanese airfield. The airfield itself ran through the middle of a rice paddy. Naturally we couldn't pitch our tents on the airstrip, and, as a consequence, our new canvas homes straddled mud that was knee deep, and in some cases, housed quiet limpid pools of clear water. The Seabees took old tin cans and set the legs of their cots on top of them to get above the water

line. During the early days of our encampment, we thought the water would recede, but our wishes were doomed by a rainfall of 23 inches in 26 days. The men attempted to dig foxholes but found that they filled with water and became swimming pools for frogs. Thus, the ingenuity of the 61st was taxed, the result being sandbag revetments above ground. Nevertheless, in the hectic moments of Japanese air attacks many a perfect swan-dive was made into water-filled foxholes. In fact, the men were not the least bit choosy in their selection of protection. Several men even dived under a water buffalo. Another jumped into a drainage ditch and sprawled flat on his stomach atop a fair sized lizard. The lizard wiggled furiously, but the man never moved. After about ten minutes of this the Seabee exclaimed, "Keep quiet, you damned liz-

ard; do you want to get us both shot?" Another chap dove into the culvert pipe and, after the raid was over, it took three men to haul him out, but yards of skin were lost.

It can be truthfully said that the few months of our Philippine invasion were well watered. Some men called it the "Slime and Grime" campaign. No man, regardless of how many pairs of shoes he had, had his feet dry for more than a five-minute period per day. Through all this slush, the 61st Battalion endured the most desperate air attacks the Japanese could muster. The men went through hell with a calm fortitude that could have only been maintained by hardened veterans. Meanwhile the work went on. Men acted as visual air-raid spotters and during attack, the construction men only took cover when Japanese planes actually appeared overhead and,

as soon as they passed over, resumed their jobs. Each new day seemed a repetition of the one previous. Build and fight, build and fight again, and this ritual was never altered.

As if we hadn't endured enough, in these early days, our camp site was visited by a bit of a breeze, a Philippine Typhoon. Yes, we 61st Seabees lost the struggle with that breeze. It might have been said, that a Seabee had once sought refuge within, or behind, yards and yards of sheer canvas when threatened by capricious breezes dancing about in damp abandon. But not so this time. The men spent a bewildering night under flattened tents. After twelve or so hours of this and after the sun had risen, the men viewed the sight of tents deflated like a newly removed pair of spinster's bloomers. It was an experience never to be forgotten and left

Ruins of the Dulag Church, Leyte Islands, P. I.





Ruins of the Dulag Municipal School, Leyte Island, P. I.

the men with the thought, "A strong rope is better than a mere stitch."

The day of December 6, 1944, began as a nice day for a change. Not too much rain or too much sun. An uneventful day until 1700, when an air raid signal was sounded. Within a few minutes, large flights flew overhead with all American guns taking pot shots at them. Not much fire was thrown up from our area, as most of our anti-aircraft protection had been withdrawn several days before. We couldn't understand the object of the Japanese planes, but with the appearance of large flights of low-flying Japanese transports overhead, hundreds of Jap paratroopers bailed out. Their parachutes looked orange in the flaming light of the sunset. The

61st Seabees, upon viewing this sight, grabbed their guns and took up perimeter defense positions with lightning-like speed that would have been the envy of any assault troops. There was little or no confusion. It became apparent to all that the objectives of the Jap paratroopers were: the 61st camp site, and its equipment, the airfield, and the planes and ammunition dumps. This was later verified by maps taken from the bodies of the Japs. The 61st Seabees took to this action like veterans, and for seventy-two hours, or until approximately 350 Japs were pocketed and disposed of, the men kept on the firing line. There were many individual and collective acts of heroism. Judging from the number of Japanese bodies in the area, Seabee marksmanship was quite good.



Doctor Sidney Berman, MC, Senior Medical Officer of the 61st,  
standing in a typical camp street on Leyte, P. I.

To say the 61st took advantage of the embarrassing defeat of the Japanese paratroopers is to put it mildly. Parachutes and other equipment that the Japanese abandoned were soon acquired by the enterprising Bees. Evidences of these souvenirs were seen soon after in both the United States and in camp by such items as silk dresses,

fancy shirts, handkerchiefs, pillow cases, and hula skirts, the latter being made from the chute rip-cords.

This paratroop action involved many amusing incidents of human interest. Probably the most outstanding was the harboring and protection of Filipino civilians. At one time the Seabees were



Drums of 61st gasoline dumped at Japanese revetment, Leyte, P. I.

doing a little grass cutting with tommy guns and as one chap yelled, "Tallyho," three Filipino girls popped out of the high grass. The belligerent Seabees vociferously berated one another for not knowing the difference between pretty Filipino girls and Japs. Another incident involved several Bees, who had lonely vigils at perimeter outposts near a creek after flaunting their carcasses in the myriad of eerie sounds in the night, one exclaimed, "I don't mind fighting Japs, but I would have preferred scuttling twin-engine frogs that patrolled the creek." Another Seabee outpost guard was relieved from a parapet watch and slumped to the muddy bottom of the foxhole. Shortly thereafter he heard a "plop." As he bawled out his mate for tossing rocks at him while reaching for the alleged stone, he was horrified to find that it was a Jap grenade. Needless to say, he toossed it out and hit the deck.

When the 61st Battalion took part in the early stages of the Leyte operation, it had its own civilian labor group of Filipino men and boys of all ages. Some two hundred men were hired by the 61st. They were dressed in various nondescript apparel, such as sack cloth dungarees and homespun hemp outfits. Their hats were of everything from Chinese straw to jaunty GI toppers. These Filipinos seemed overjoyed to work for us, and every morning and evening one could see them lined up at the civilian labor office set up by the Battalion. These civilians were picked up in their villages by Battalion trucks and brought to work each morning. Their work consisted of sorting gravel for the air strip, cutting down bushes and grass, unloading supplies, and other minor jobs to relieve important Seabee workers for major tasks. The first payday found the civilians lined up at the disbursing office to be paid

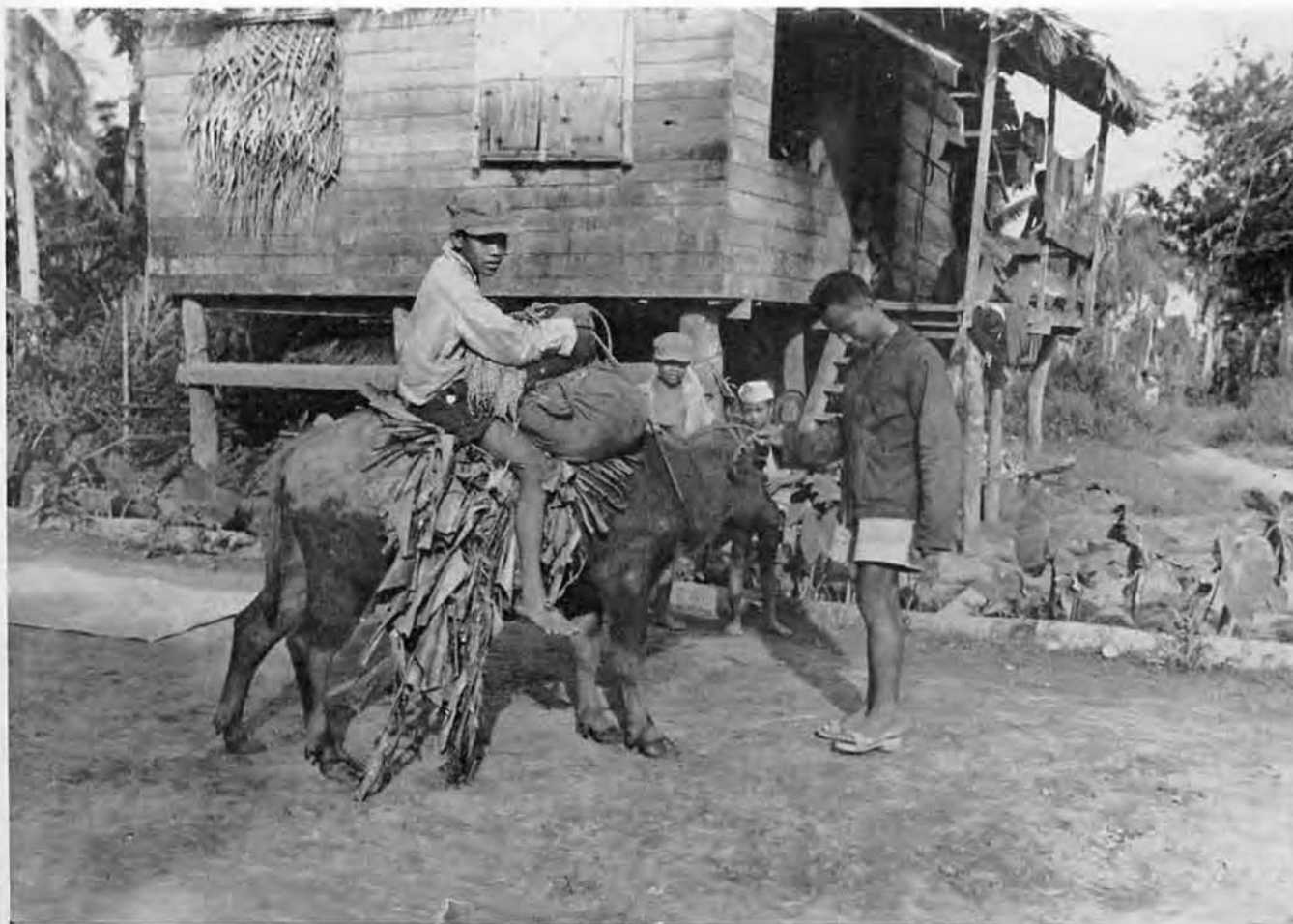
for their work in the new Filipino victory currency. The wage scale ran in accordance to the skill of the worker, top wage being two pesos and twenty-five centavos. Ordinary laborers received one peso and twenty-five centavos. Many Seabees had their laundry done by civilians and were amazed when it was returned to them nicely pressed. It did seem unusual to see a GI stroll nonchalantly down a muddy company street with a razor-edged crease in his dungarees. Yeah, in fact, it was quite a sight!

Contrary to all previous amphibious landings made by the 61st Seabees, we were assigned to work regularly with the Army and its engineers. Heretofore all operations had been carried out in conjunction with the United States Marine Corps. However, this assignment with the Army on Leyte was for only the first part of our stay in

the Philippine Invasion. Seabees and soldiers worked side-by-side, battling the mud, in the construction of and reconversion of Japanese airfields for our airplanes. In this connection, Lt. Col. M. S. Webb and Capt. McCall of the 6th United States Army were quartered in our camp to act as liaison officers.

Dulag was our seaport for incoming supplies and materials, and our camp was some seventeen kilometers inland from that port. When we first invaded the beaches at Dulag, the municipal school building, an old Spanish Church, and the majority of the homes had been leveled by naval shelling and aerial bombardments of the American Fleet. Everything was rush-rush as we came ashore. Filipino civilians stood wide eyed as they watched the might of American arms pouring inland. Whenever possible, the Filipinos assisted on beach

Filipino family, their carabao and home near the 61st Camp on Leyte





Interior of typical Filipino home on Leyte Island

operations, and as we pushed inland, men, women, and children lined along the path, holding up two fingers in a victory sign and yelling at the Seabees, "Victory." The only discordant feature in this trek was the presence of dead Jap bodies and the pungent odors that went with them. It is entirely possible that the nonchalance displayed by the Seabees in ignoring the Japanese dead would seem hard and thick-skinned to Statesiders. The truth of the matter was that the Seabees had neither the time nor inclination to dispose of these bodies. As we traveled along, combat patrols operated on the flanks in search for snipers.

On November 18, 1944, representatives of the 12th United States Naval Construction Regiment met with our project officers. Lt Elsperman and a crew of approximately 200 men were assigned to build a fleet headquarters at Tolosa, Leyte.

This crew performed outstanding work in the erection of Quonset huts and general fleet installations at Tolosa. A noteworthy incident occurred when a large flotilla of LCI's were due to start an invasion mission to the north. It was discovered that there was no way for these craft to replenish their water supply in time to maintain their schedule. When the 61st Seabees of Tolosa Detachment heard of this, they immediately pitched in to alleviate this situation by running a pipe line from their well to the beach and pumped water from there to the LCI's. This bit of "Can Do" was hailed by the Commander of the Philippine Sea Frontier, who cited our men thusly: "The Commander of the Philippine Sea Frontier wishes to express his appreciation for the excellent effort of the 61st Seabees in being able to accomplish the watering of the ships of



LCI(L) Flotilla No. .... in so prompt and efficient manner. Without this water, these ships would have been delayed in partaking in certain important pending operations, thus postponing these operations for a later date."

Not only the Quonset huts were built at Tolosa, three bridges were built, radio antennas erected, pipe line laid, and communications installed. The Tolosa detachment did a fast and complete job on all assignments.

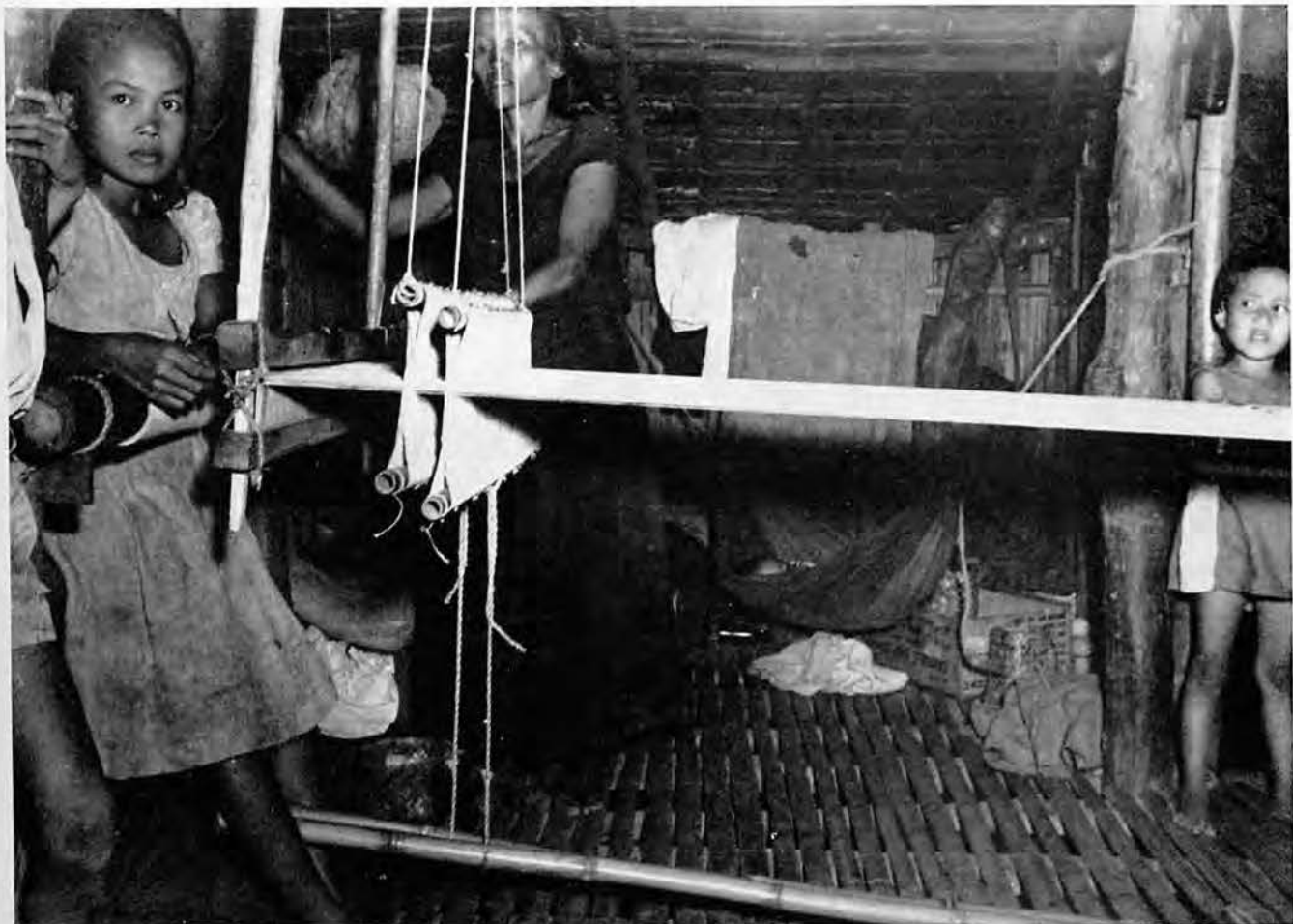
On December 11, Army Intelligence sent a memorandum to the Seabees concerning the final survey of our action against Japanese paratroopers. This report stated that the Jap paratroopers carried new ordnance equipment and special A/B equipment such as medicines and uniforms. Extra material was dropped in equipment chutes included demolition and incendiary grenades. This

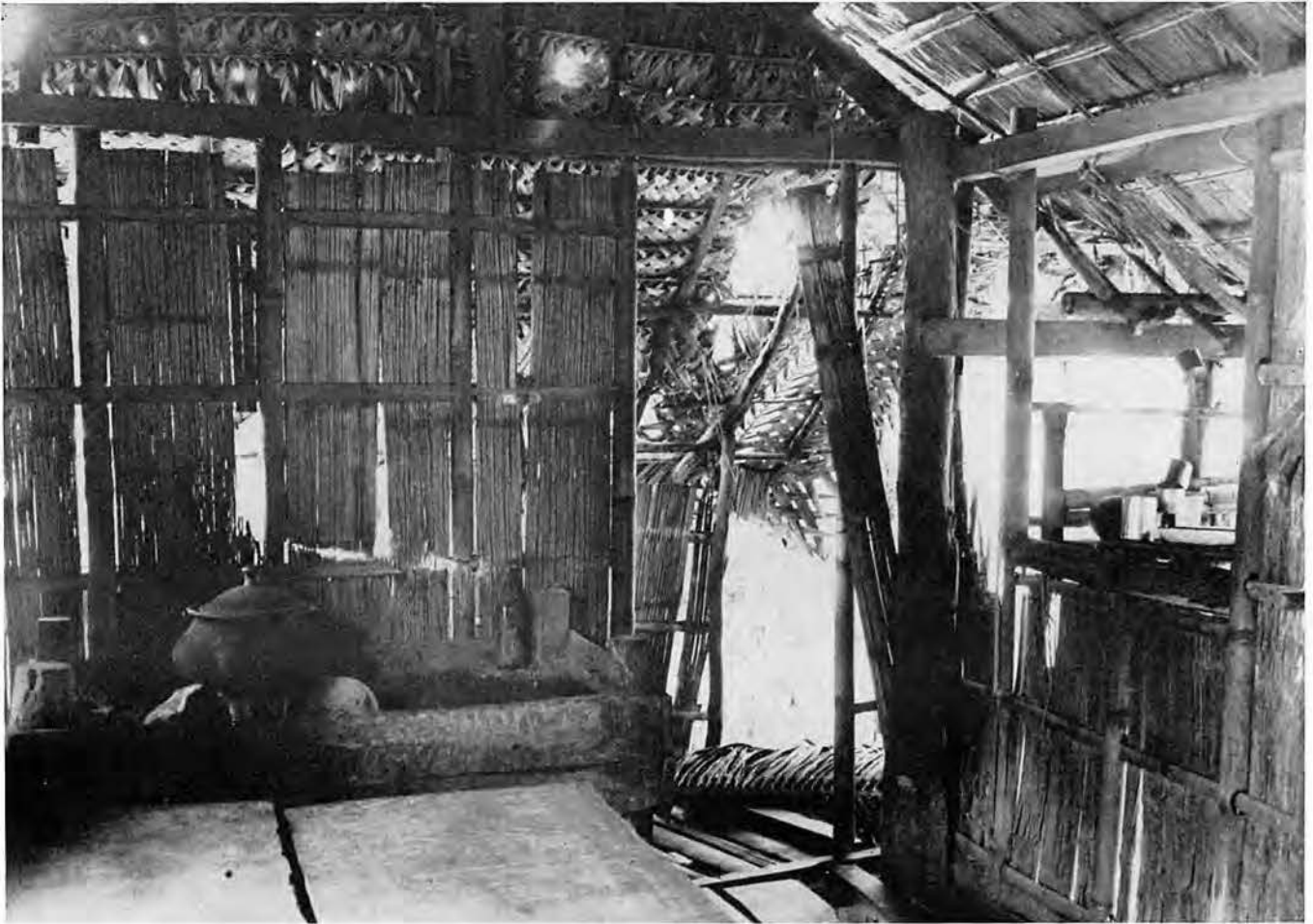
airborne attack was apparently coordinated with a small break-through in the vicinity of Buri.

It was also reported that some 35 Japanese had sought cover in the village of Maliquenabat across the airstrip, while the inhabitants of that village ran for their lives to the village of Calbasag. The 61st Seabees captured several dozen parachutes, all of which were white but in two sizes. In spite of the danger, a few men thoughtlessly sought souvenirs.

Shortly after the episode of the paratroopers, the bulk of the Battalion embarked for another island, Samar, that had been previously determined as an ideal area for new construction. This trip, however short, was one that men would never forget. Both from the standpoint of the greeting they received on their arrival and, after living in mud for months, having their feet on dry

Home industry, Filipino family, near 61st Camp on Leyte, weaving cloth for the household





Filipino kitchen, Calbasag, Leyte, P. I.

ground and wearing dry shoes again. The erection of a camp site there proved to be an easier task than that on Leyte.

The Filipino people, as we soon learned, were very hospitable and extremely courteous. Their appearance was short, well developed, muscular, yellow-brown in color, black eyed, and coal-black hair. They walked in a very erect and straight posture; this was especially true of the women. The lithesome grace with which the most ordinary belle walked down the dirt road would be the envy of any debutante. The grace in posture, so natural to the Filipino, is acquired through the life-long habit of carrying everything on the top of their heads instead of in their hands. The sight of men, women, and children balancing tremendous loads atop their heads, while their hands swung freely, was a sight that never failed to awe

the hardened Seabees. One Seabee remarked, "Gosh, they carry everything but the kitchen sink up there."

Not only the people, but the scenery as well, was extremely interesting. The Seabees saw the timbered wealth of the Philippines. Wild life ran rampant in both the cool rain forest of the high mist-shrouded mountain peaks and the very dense lowland forest of gigantic hardwood trees. These forests contained over 150 hardwoods of commercial value—everything from mahogany to the finest teakwood.

There were enough animals in the forests to make it seem as if we were in a natural zoo. The men saw such things as small wildcat, known as the Civet, Flying Fox Batt, the unbelievable Tasiar monkey with enormous deer-like eyes and the usual variety of varied colored lizards. We

also saw birds of many colors, most of which we couldn't identify. However, our old feathered companions, Parakeets, Parrots, and Cockatoos were very much in evidence.

Many of the men took advantage of their spare time, after things had quieted down, to make sight-seeing trips. They visited picturesque little villages nestled deep in the mountains near crystal-clear streams and beautiful waterfalls. The men found that these villages were, however, more picturesque from a distance than at close hand. As could be expected of the Seabees, they returned from these trips laden with souvenirs, everything from Jap swords to Filipino cooking pots.

Three villages were in the neighborhood of our San Pablo camp on Leyte. They were Malaquena-lot, Calbasag, and Julita. The inhabitants of

these villages made it a point to become acquainted individually with the members of the 61st. They invited the Seabees to dinners, parties, and dances. The dinners consisted of such items as Carabao steaks, baked camotes, young corn on the cob, fresh coconut milk, and fried banana fritters. The parties were usually small meetings with a Filipino family, during which time refreshments were served. The dances were usually held in either the municipal school or a city hall with a wornout phonograph serving as an orchestra. The first time the men went to one of these dances very weird music greeted their ears as the records, in most cases, were of ancient vintage plus a few Japanese records. The very next time, the 61sters were invited to attend a Filipino dance, our musicians carried their instruments on their backs and waded through the

Wash day on Leyte, near the Tolosa 61st Camp





The town of Tolosa, Leyte, P. I.; Old Spanish Fort shown on top of distant hill.

rice paddies. The Filipinos were so pleased at our thoughtfulness, they laughed, giggled and shouted their approval and thanks.

With the exception of the Seabees stationed at Tolosa, the entire Battalion prepared to move to Samar Island in the Philippines. It had rained so much that all existing roads leading to the main highway to the beach had become ribbons of glue-like quagmires. Therefore the road construction crews were forced to build new roads in order to get our equipment out to the Leyte beaches. The men packed their gear, struck their tents, and loaded aboard trucks. Upon reaching the beaches, they grouped together to await transportation across Leyte Gulf aboard LCT's. After several hours' delay, we drove our equipment and trucks up the lowered ramps into the yawning mouths of the LCT's after dark.

Each LCT, upon being fully loaded, pulled off the beach to anchor 500 yards off-shore to await further orders. After many hours of this monotony, interrupted briefly by an air raid, the LCT lifted her hook and got underway just before dawn. The open-water crossing to Samar was uneventful, other than the usual complaints of appalling lack of food.

Many of the men en route to Samar never descended from the trucks until their destination was reached. They endured both the sweltering heat of the sun and chilly rains of the night. They dozed in their full combat dress, wearing helmets, cartridge belts filled with ammunition, and with guns in their hands.

When the first LCT neared the coastline of Samar, the weary Seabees discovered that they were to land at the town of Guiuan, which was

located at the tip end of the finger-like peninsula. As they neared the town, hundreds of Filipino outrigger canoes swarmed out from the shoreline to surround our craft. It seems that the entire populace of Guiuan had mysteriously received word of our proposed landing there. So many outriggers jammed around our craft that it took two hours of frantic signaling, palavering, and yelling before we could clear the water enough to get inshore. No sooner had the ramp been lowered than swarms of civilians came aboard, girls and men alike threw their arms around the necks of the Seabees in joyous greetings. All the Filipinos were anxious to assist in anything we had to do, but so many were jammed aboard the ship that they hindered rather than helped us. After some effort, our equipment rolled ashore and started towards our camp site.

Our path of travel through the town of Guiuan was lined on either side by cheering civilians who held their fingers up in "V for victory" sign.

When we arrived at our proposed camp site, the mayor of Guiuan had arrived there ahead of us with a brass band. The Seabees were amazed as they could not understand from whence came the musical instruments. Upon being questioned, the mayor told us that they had buried the instruments during the Japanese occupation and brought them out when they heard of our proposed landing on Samar.

Our Samar camp site was situated in a coconut grove in which several Filipino thatched houses were located. There were also extensive plantings of camotes. By necessity, the Filipinos were evacuated and the bulldozers cleared the camote patches. One aged Filipino woman, although

61st Seabees' chow hall, Tolosa Camp, Leyte, P. I.





Provincial Capitol Building of Leyte Island, at Tacloban

she had been fully paid for all her assets, stood by and wept profusely as the bulldozers destroyed the camote crop. The dozer operator was so deeply touched that he stopped, got off his machine, and went over, placed his arms around the little old lady to try to give some solace.

In the construction of the camp, hundreds of Filipino laborers were hired to do the job and, for the first time, several Filipino clerical workers were engaged and proved to be quite proficient. As the camp began to assimilate the appearance of permanency, Lt. Commander Koopman and Lieutenant McCann put the wheels of airfield construction into motion. Round-the-clock schedules were established, and the crews were split up into three shifts. In order not to lose time traveling to and from camp for meals, lunches and coffee were sent out to the airfield crews on the job.

Our old equipment, at the time, was in deplorable condition and called for our repair crews to work day and night to keep them rolling. The combination of shifts and constant repairs enabled our Battalion to maintain a pace ahead of schedule. Officers from outside units often asked how it was possible to turn out so much work with such wornout equipment.

Following our arrival on Samar, the 61st Battalion set several precedents, one of which was the re-establishment of Masonry back in the Philippines. During the latter part of December, 1944, a group of 61st Seabees, all of whom were Masons, got together to form a nucleus of an organization that would be instrumental in the return of Masonry to these islands. Officers were elected, club laws were presented, discussed,

and adopted; and regular meeting times were established. Governor Earl Warren, of the State of California, was made the first honorary member of the Samar Club.

Another "first" by the 61st Seabees startled but pleased Filipinos and service forces alike. In the town of Guiuan stands an old Spanish church approximately 310 years old. This old church was named the Immaculate Conception and had withstood the travails of both war and weather. It was built of natural stone, and the stained windows were hand-pared sea shells of many colors. The interior was large and somewhat musty. The altar was a masterpiece of statuary and of old Spanish architecture. The Seabees found that they couldn't hear mass when the church was full on account of the poor acoustics. thereupon they conceived the idea of installing a

public address system in the church and, since it was Christmastime, install loud speakers in the belfry. When this extra-curricular project was completed, the 61sters played electrical transcriptions of Christmas Carols, the music of which could be heard all over town. The surprised and mystified Filipinos, at first, couldn't figure out from just where the music was emanating, but they were pleased nevertheless.

Adjacent to Samar, in Leyte Gulf, lies the island of Homonhon. This island was the first sighted by Magellan on March 16, 1551, when he was sailing around the world. Several of his crew died and a few were too sick to continue the voyage, thus those men were left there. Today, there are several rocks there to commemorate this landing spot.

Street scene, Tacloban, Leyte Island, P. I.; Mercedes Theater, second building on left



# SAMAR

## *Philippine Islands*

On December 25, the 61st Battalion celebrated another Christmas overseas. A party was held at 2000 in the chow hall. Our Christmas tree embellished the front of the hall. This tree was a Backhan tree, native to the Philippines. It had short leaves and many suitable branches for ornaments. It was thoroughly decorated and featured

a hand-drawn Santa Claus in front of it. The chow hall rafters were decorated with crepe paper. The singing of Christmas Carols and serving refreshments were a source of entertainment, reminiscent of the Christmas spent in the Solomons.

Shortly after Christmastime, six men of the

61st Seabees land on Samar Island, P. I., near the town of Guiuan. Entire civil populace lines the shore in celebration of their liberation by the Seabees.





61st Battalion were awarded purple heart medals and citations through Commander B. M. Bowker at special exercise held in the 61st theater area. Commander Bowker was assisted by Lt. Commander Koopman and Chaplain Scott in making these awards. These were forwarded to the men with congratulations and expression of full appreciation for the sacrifices made for their country. The six men receiving the awards were: S. G. Autrey, CM3c; R. A. Shannon, Ptr1c; H. Kohler, CCM(PA); J. L. Donavon, Cox.; C. M. Stunz, CCM(T); and J. R. Whaley, CM1c.

Saturday, 14 April 1945, held a special significance for the 61st Battalion in that it was the second anniversary of overseas service for the Battalion. The date also had the distinction of

being the day on which the Samar airstrip project surpassed one million total yards of excavation moved. This amount far exceeded the yardage of any previous 61st Seabee Battalion job. The totals from the period from 6 December 1944, to 14 April 1945, are as follows:

Cubic yards of excavation moved,	1,000,000.
Acres of heavy clearing .....	360
Acres of hard coral surfacing .....	90

This large amount of heavy construction work was completed in less than four months, despite unusually heavy rainfall and handicaps of old equipment, most of which had seen two years of continuous service.

Lieut. McCann extended another "well done" to heavy equipment operators, truck drivers,

Town square of Guiuan, Samar, P. I.





Municipal School Building, Guiuan, Samar, near the town square

dynamite and clearing groups, engineering, surveyors, mechanics and welders in both field and shop, supervisors and checkers, maintenance, tire, fuel, and greasemen, light tower operators, galley service, Filipino civilian labor, and all others that helped in this work.

Hard work, close cooperation, able supervision, courage, and intestinal fortitude were the things that made possible such accomplishments.

Fourteen April 1945 was also a day of celebration, a day filled with various activities honoring our second anniversary overseas. Free beer was issued to the men, sporting events were held during the afternoon. A USO show of four clever feminine artists was presented on a newly constructed stage. This stage, by the way, was unique both architecturally and in the way it was con-

ceived. The plans, material and actual construction were products of ingenuity of a half dozen enlisted men.

Quonset hut material was converted into a modern type stage. It called for radical usage of such material, even though architecturally a Stateside job. The finished product resembled a streamlined stage of a movie house. The screen was placed above the shell-like stage and both were flanked by modernistic wing panels. They started with black at the top and were followed down with yellow, green, and maroon respectively. The interior of the shell was a soft gray.

Customary, to veteran Seabee tradition, the 61sters began their third year by hard and gruelling work. Nevertheless, as the days and months seemed to roll on, nostalgic looks were visible in many eyes.

Summing up two years overseas, plus an approximate five months in the States, the 61st veteran Seabees have endured about all the different experiences that troops could in wartime. Everything from mud, hard work, and heat to monotonous hours endured in foxholes during air raids and their share of combat. At the present writing, those who remain, of the original complement of men that came overseas in April, 1943, are turning their thoughts of the future towards home rather than another job. This, of course, springs from vague murmurings of a rotation plan that may send the "old timers" Stateside for a leave.

It is fitting that some chronological and pic-

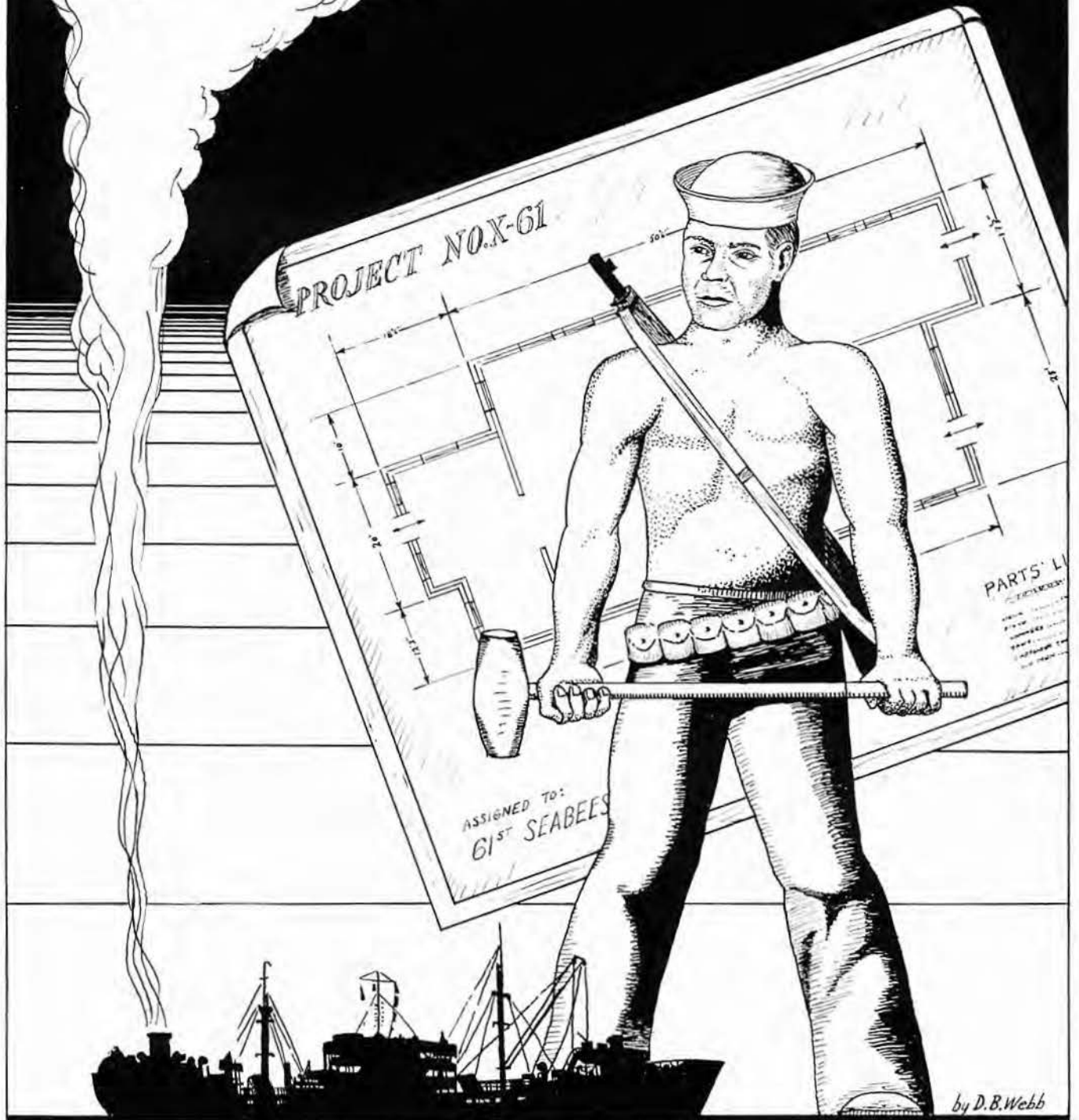
torial tribute should be made in due homage to the fighting Seabees of the 61st. No publication, no matter how sincere the effort, can fully grasp the spirit with which these men carried out their duties, nor can it illustrate the thousands of personal sacrifices made by the men. We know that several years of back-breaking duty, mud-wading, Jap baiting, the endless hours of heat and the experiencing of such discomforts as bombing attacks, strafing, typhoons, and floods have not been in vain.

There have been too many individual accomplishments to list them all, or even in a greater part, in these several hundred pages, but the generalization of the over-all is our tribute to their very magnificance.

Camp site of the 61st Seabees prior to the erection of living quarters



# WE DID IT!



by D.B. Webb

# *Work Projects*

The one outstanding thing about the 61st Seabees, to my mind, was the amount and variety of work successfully completed. It was the first battalion to be commissioned in Camp Peary. Having left the United States on April 14, 1943, the 61st arrived at Guadalcanal May 16, and started working immediately, while unloading the ship, which took ten days, under repeated bombing attacks. The 61st started maintenance and rebuilding of Henderson Field. The Battalion maintained two camps, one of which was near the Ilu River and the second, ten miles away, near Koli. Only a quarter of the Battalion was assigned to build the bomber field near the Koli Camp. The 14th, 26th, and 46th Seabees were on the island at the time. As they left the island, their projects were assigned to the 61st until the burden of work practically staggered the Battalion. At one time, 19 cranes and shovels, 24 tractors, 9 power graders, 9 welding machines, and two sawmills were operated simultaneously by the crews of the 61st. The work included such varied items as: maintenance and reconstruction of Henderson Field; building of pilots camps and airfield facilities; engineering; mapping; drafting work; construction of Koli Bomber Field; building and operating AVGAS tank farm; building pontoon barges; constructing finger piers; docks and bridges; digging numerous drainage ditches; building camps for three admirals, one of whom was Admiral Halsey; erecting water tank towers and digging wells; building and maintaining roads; operating gas station, refrigeration banks and ice plants; welding and repairing LST's and larger ships; digging gravel out of rivers; saving trestle bridges during sudden floods by lifting the debris of trees and trash with clam buckets over the bridges and pulling large trees on to the river banks with tractors and long cables; repairing everything from watches to tractors; moving native huts; operating pontoon barges; logging and operating sawmills; helping to unload ships; and dozens of other projects.

After a thirty-day leave, in New Zealand, was cut short to eighteen days, the 61st was rushed back to Guadalcanal and given three days to pack and move all gear and equipment to the beach and allotted 28 hours to load aboard LST's and LCI's for the invasion of Emirau Island. Upon arrival on Emirau, four months were spent there building a coral airport, roads and camps. Thereafter, two months were occupied going to Banika Island in the Russell group, and re-equipping for another big push. On 28th of September, 1944, the Battalion left Banika and traveled via the Admiralty Islands, Hollandia, New Guinea, to arrive in Leyte Gulf, in the Philippines on the night of the 23rd, October, 1944. The next day the 61st went ashore at Dulag from the two AK's. Jap air raids were continuous. The Battalion was assigned to the Army to build an airstrip. After fighting mud, rain, and snipers for weeks, the Army abandoned the San Pablo Strip, the Buri Strip, and Bayog Strip.

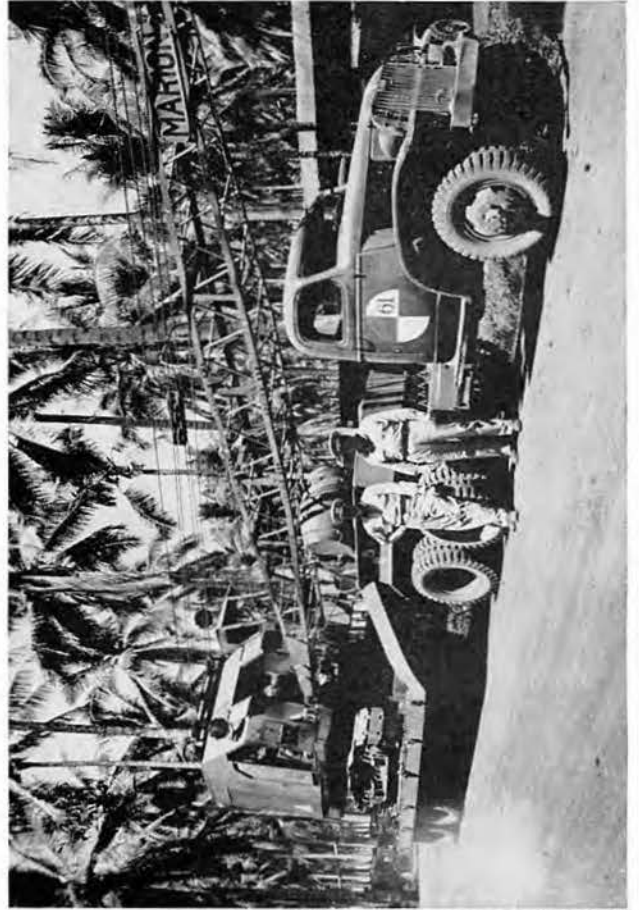
Work was done by the 61st on all those airfields, plus work on Dulag Strip and roads. With a quarter of the Battalion left at Tolosa to build fleet headquarters, the remainder landed on Samar Island where they constructed an air strip and completed miscellaneous work projects.



"T" Dock under construction by the 61st Seabees at Guadalcanal



Trucks hauling gravel from the 61st gravel pit

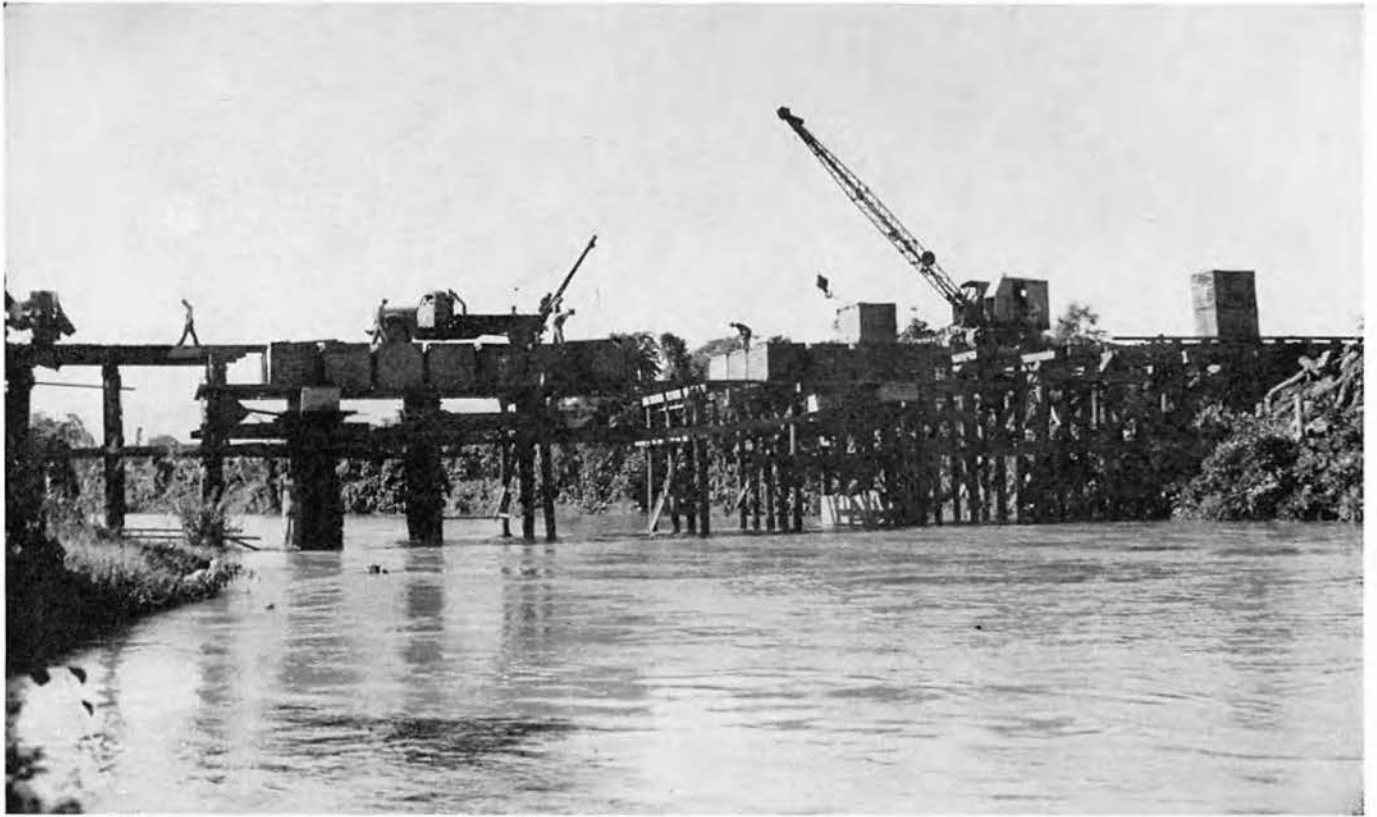


Crane loaded on "low boy" constructed by the 61st on Guadalcanal

# PROJECTS COMPLETED ON GUADALCANAL

Dates indicate time work began.

Unloading <i>M.S. Brastagi</i> . . . . .	17 May
Construction of 61st Teneru Camp . . . . .	17 May
Construction of 61st Koli Camp . . . . .	18 May
Maintenance of Henderson Field . . . . .	20 May
Construction on Henderson Field . . . . .	20 May
Maintenance and construction on Fighter No. 1 . . . . .	20 May
Maintenance and construction on Fighter No. 2 . . . . .	20 May
Pontoon Barge Assembly . . . . .	21 May
Extension of Carney Field Taxiways . . . . .	22 May
Construction of Koli Bomber Field . . . . .	22 May
Tetere Road Construction . . . . .	23 May
Henderson Field Topographic Mapping . . . . .	24 May
Tetere Topographic Mapping . . . . .	25 May
Unloading 47th Seabee Battalion . . . . .	25 May
Developing Gravel Pit in Matapona River . . . . .	25 May
Construction of Anchorages at Kokumbona . . . . .	28 May
FABU Camp construction . . . . .	29 May
Black Cat Camp Construction . . . . .	29 May
Pilot's Camp Construction, Fighter No. 1 . . . . .	1 June
Malaria Control Work . . . . .	1 June
General Engineering and Designing Work . . . . .	1 June
Wiring on Bloody Knoll . . . . .	4 June
Operation of Sawmill and Procuring Piling . . . . .	15 June
Construction of Firewall . . . . .	20 June
Construction of Air Center Dispensary . . . . .	20 June
Construction of SCAT and Black Cat Operations . . . . .	20 June
Construction of Dispensary at Fighter No. 1 . . . . .	21 June
Drainage of Pond at Hotel De Gink . . . . .	23 June
Furniture Construction in Carpenter Shop . . . . .	26 June
Construction of SBD-TBF Operations on Pagoda Hill . . . . .	27 June
17th Photo Laboratory Construction . . . . .	28 June
Construction of Henderson Field Dispensary . . . . .	29 June
Construction of Operational Huts at Fighter No. 1 . . . . .	2 July
Operation of Lunga River Gravel Pit and Teneru Coral Pit . . . . .	3 July
Coast of Australian Coast Watch Camp . . . . .	3 July
Disposal of Trash Pile Beyond Henderson Field . . . . .	4 July
Construction at FABU No. 3 Camp . . . . .	9 July
Radar Supplies Hut Construction at Lunga . . . . .	10 July
Construction of Navy GSK Stores Building . . . . .	10 July
Welding Repairs on Cruiser at Tulagi . . . . .	14 July
NOB Communications Department at Lunga . . . . .	17 July
Construction of Henderson Field Operations Hut . . . . .	17 July
Collecting Marston Mat and Irving Grid . . . . .	18 July
Salvaging Spare Parts from Burned Vehicles . . . . .	18 July
Erection of Signal Tower at Kukum Beach . . . . .	20 July
Construction of ARU Shops and Camp . . . . .	20 July
Additions and Repairs to Hotel De Gink . . . . .	21 July
Construction of Ordnance Shops at Henderson Field . . . . .	21 July
Highway and Bridge Surveys Around Henderson Field . . . . .	22 July
17th Photo Laboratory Additional Construction . . . . .	24 July
Camp and Highway Sign Painting . . . . .	24 July



Upper Lunga River Bridge

61st dock workers building a pier at Guadalcanal



Guadalcanal jungle road prior to construction by the 61st





## PROJECTS COMPLETED ON GUADALCANAL (Continued)

Generator Watch at Bloody Knoll	25 July
Construction of V-Mail Hut at Lunga	27 July
Special Mission to Construct on Malaitia	27 July
Construction of Ordnance Huts and Magazines at Fighter No. 1	3 August
Getting out Piling for Pier Construction	3 August
Quonset Hut Erection at NOB	3 August
Refrigeration Installations at RNZAF Camp	3 August
Construction of Barge Piers at Teneru Beach	3 August
Loading Rack Construction at Kukum Coral Pit	5 August
Messing Facilities at 13th Air Force	5 August
Construction of Operational Hut VS-54	5 August
Construction of Amphibious Boat Supply Depot Hut	5 August
Supply Office NOB Hut Erection	5 August
Topographic Survey ARU Camp	6 August
Construction of Stairway to Tower Fighter No. 1	7 August
Com-Air-Sols Camp Quarters and Mess Hall Construction	8 August
Construction of Field Operations Hut, Fighter No. 1	8 August
Radio and Radar Storage Building Construction, 557th AWS	8 August
Dismantling Lunga Freight Building	12 August
Erection of Koli Point Signal Tower	20 August
Construction of Officers' Quarters, Additions to Fighter No. 1	20 August
ANB Commander's Office	21 August
Clearing of ROU for Base Radio Control Lines	21 August
Construction of Information Center Fighter No. 1	25 August
Construction of Office and Shelving in CNB Radio Warehouse	28 August
Construction of Point Cruz Signal Tower	30 August
Construction of Chain Fall Structure Fighter No. 1	30 August
Construction of Heads, TBF Operations	3 September
Grading for Carney Field Magazine Huts	3 September
Homing Beacon Housing at Bloody Knoll	5 September
Construction of Ramps, PATSU 1-1	7 September
Construction of Briefing Room Strike Command	7 September
Construction of Beacons west of Point Cruz	8 September
FPO Warehouse Lunga Coast	9 September
Lunga Finger Point Construction	16 September
Bulkhead Construction at Koli Point Pier A	16 September
Clearing for Telephone Lines Carney to Henderson Field	17 September
Topographic Survey for 66th Technical Reconnaissance Camp	16 September
Water Tower and Tank Construction for Service Command Signal Depot	16 September
Mine Depot Topographic Survey	18 September
Radio Hut Construction, CASU 11	19 September
Hut Erection RNZ, 3rd Division	19 September
Survey for Levee, ARU-ASA	19 September
Water Tank Erection, PATSU 103	21 September
Repairs to S. S. Store and FPO at NOB	22 September
Construction of Port Directors' Office	25 September
Camouflaging Dispensary 38th Service Squadron	27 September
Construction and Erection of Kukum Beach Markers	28 September
Building of Material bins, Lunga Radio Shop	29 September
Installation of Field Lighting, Koli Field	29 September
Removal of Ship Buoys and Pontoon Barge from Waterfront	30 September
Tent Decking and Framing FPO Personnel	1 October
Fender Pile Replacement Koli Pier C	1 October
Bin Construction for Ordnance Training Film Hut	1 October



61st crews laying mat on Koli Field, Guadalcanal

First American plane lands on Koli Field.



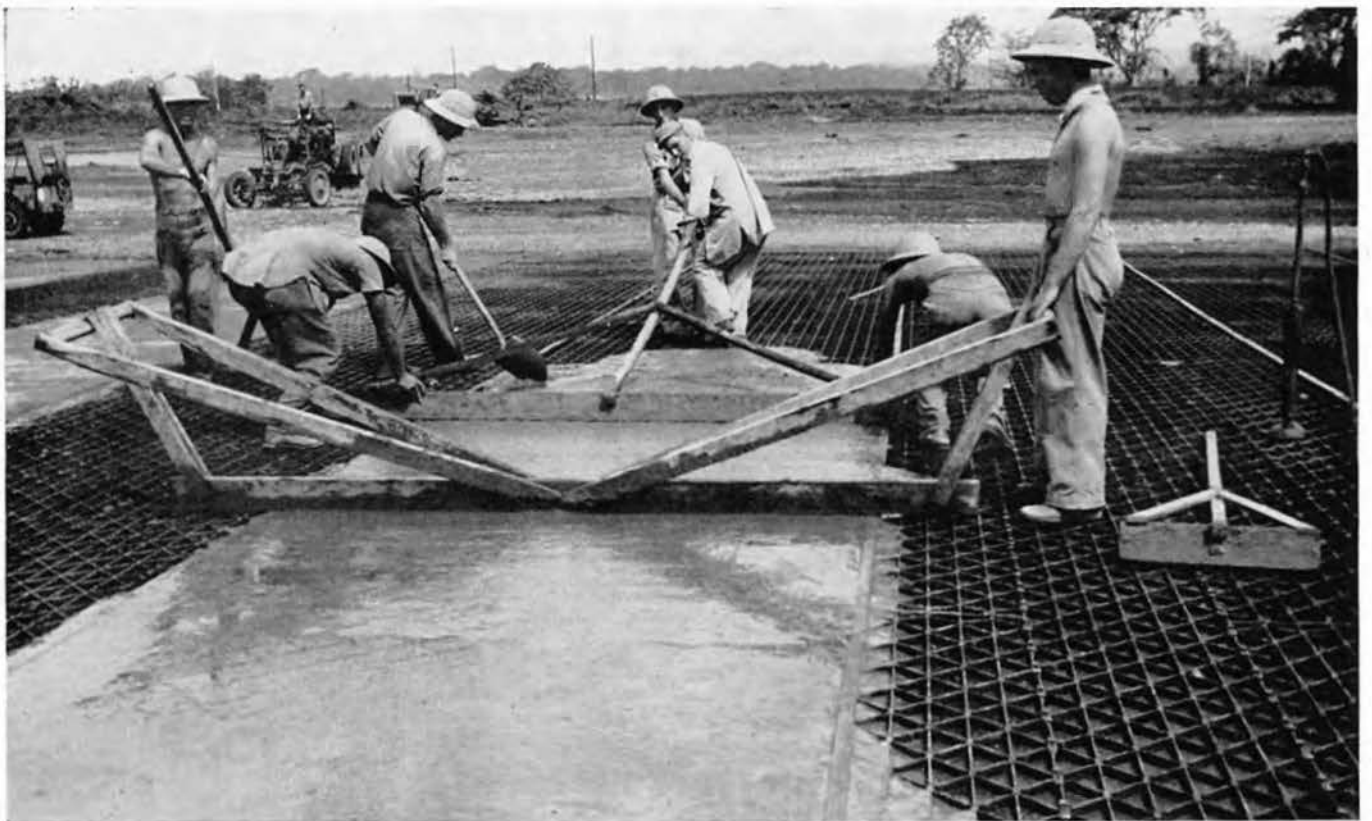
## PROJECTS COMPLETED ON GUADALCANAL (Continued)

Repair Air Compressor Building Machine Base . . . . .	October
Survey and Design for New Lunga High Level Bridge . . . . .	October
Construction of Bridge Approaches to New Bridge . . . . .	October
Construction of Upper Lunga Bridge . . . . .	October
Construction of Overpass Near Bridge . . . . .	October
Construction of RNZAF Mess Hall . . . . .	October
Improvements to SCAT Freight and Passengers Buildings . . . . .	October
Build COM-SO-PAC (Admiral Halsey) Camp . . . . .	October
Construction on COM-AIR-GUAD. Officers' Camp . . . . .	November
Taking Soundings off West Kukum Beach . . . . .	November
Making Laboratory and Office Equipment 12 PIU . . . . .	November
Build Additions to 17th Photo Laboratory . . . . .	November
Build Freezer Housing NOB . . . . .	November
Erect Quonset Huts Staff Headquarters NOB . . . . .	November
Construct Ordnance Film Dryer Hut . . . . .	November
Construct Telephone Pole Line . . . . .	November
Repairs on Lunga Beach Piers . . . . .	November
Paint Camouflage—Various Places . . . . .	November
Repair Pier No. 1 Teneru Beach . . . . .	November
Build 66th TAC. RECON. Group Camp . . . . .	November
Welding Project on S.S. <i>Hines</i> . . . . .	November
Dig well in Mine Depot . . . . .	November
Plumbing and Incinerator Work in COM-AIR-SO-PAC. Camp . . . . .	November
Build Boat Dispatchers' Shack, Lunga Beach . . . . .	November
Repair Dugout DSIO . . . . .	November
Build Henderson Field Chapel . . . . .	November
Install Water Heaters PATSU 1-1 . . . . .	November
Additions to Army Weather Station . . . . .	November
Additions to SCAT . . . . .	November
Rehabilitate old MAB Mess Hall . . . . .	November
Operate Utilities Formerly Operated by 14th Seabees . . . . .	November
Guard 14th Seabee Camp . . . . .	November
Erect Huts at Material Recovery Unit . . . . .	November
Build Foundations Torpedo Magazines . . . . .	November
Repair Docks at Koli Point . . . . .	November
Build Dispensary for Lunga Boat Pool . . . . .	November
Various Welding Jobs on LST's . . . . .	November
Repair Navy Supply Warehouse No. 4 . . . . .	November
Move Timbers on Kukum Beach . . . . .	November
Dig Well at 14th Seabee Camp . . . . .	November
Improvements to COM-AIR-SO-PAC Camp . . . . .	November
Install Reefer at SCAT . . . . .	November
Gravel Parking Areas at Fighter No. 1 . . . . .	November
Special Mission at West Cape . . . . .	November
Maintenance of Refrigeration and Ice Machines . . . . .	November
Construction of Kukum Ship Pier No. 2 . . . . .	November
Operate Island Machine Shop . . . . .	November
Build Roads COM-AIR-SO-PAC Camp . . . . .	November
Survey and Map COM-AIR-SO-PAC Camp . . . . .	November
Operate Pontoon Assembly Plant . . . . .	November
Additions to 12th Photo . . . . .	November
Construction at Camp Crocodile . . . . .	November
Additional Works for COM-AIR-SO-PAC Camp . . . . .	November
Tank Construction at Koli Camp . . . . .	November



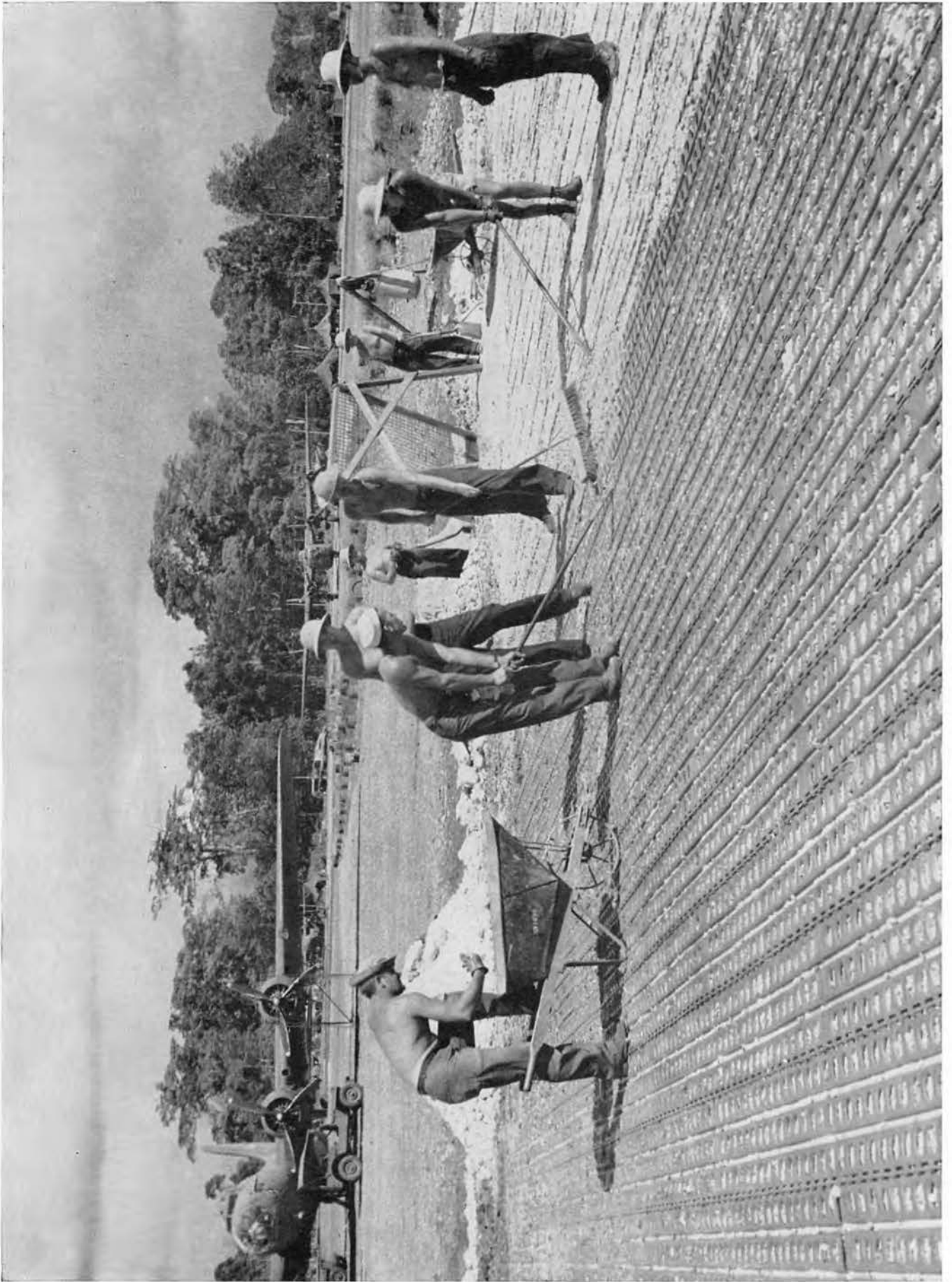
Solomon Islanders assist the 61st Seabees in laying mat on Koli Field, Guadalcanal.

Cementing the end of Koli Bomber Field runway, Guadalcanal



## PROJECTS COMPLETED ON GUADALCANAL (Continued)

Improvement of Boat Harbor	November
Drainage Ditch for COM-AIR-GUAD	November
Collecting and Shipping Pontoons	November
Drill well at Kukum Beach	November
Operating Utilities Formerly Operated by 26th Seabees	November
1. Marine and Navy Power Station	
2. Five Generator Stations and Line Crews	
3. Ice Plant	
4. Aviation Gasoline Tank Farm, Lunga	
Asphalt Road Construction at Lunga	December
Surfaced Warm-up Ramp	December
Build Tables, Gen. Harmon's Camp	December
Construct Ship Watering Point, Pipe Line to Kukum Dock No. 1	December
Build Hut, Explorers' Club, CNB A	December
Build Boxing Ring, Servicemen's Club	December
Additions to Koli Tank Farm	December
Grade ASA Storage Areas	December
Grade and Gravel Roads to RNZAF Headquarters	December
Repair Leaking Tents, NOB	December
Maintain Trunk Line Roads	December
Repair Lunga River Bridge	December
Construct Housing VJ-9 Officers	December
Replace Submarine Fuel Line at Lunga Tank Farm	December
Repair Kukum Ship Dock	December
Assist 27th Seabees on Road Project	December
Replace Port Directors Office Roof, NOB	December
New Road Survey	December
Improve Maples Drive	December
Repair, PAB-24, Kukum	December
Construct Roads and Fire Breaks in Bomb Dump No. 1	December
Build 19th Fighter Group Officers' Mess	December
Grade Kukum Beach Road	December
Construct Compass Rose at Henderson Field and at Fighter No. 2	December
Gravel Plane Parking Areas	December
Repair E. Kukum Finger Pier	December
Grading in Sun Valley Ammunition Dump	December
Dismantle Quonset Hut and Re-erect at 18th Regiment Camp	December
Repair Metapona River Bridge	December
Cable Tool Well Drilling for Service Command	December
Gravel ASA Storage Area No. 1	December
Repair Lunga Pier No. 1	January, 1944
Erect FPO Quonset Huts	January
Inspection of all water distillation Units	January
Grading Roads, Service Command, F. A., and Admiral Halsey's Camp	January
Dig Well Boat Repair Unit	January
Replace Piling at Kukum Leach, No. 17 Beach	January
Erect Quonset Huts at Camp Crocodile	January
Repair Both Kukum and Pt. Cruz Docks	January
Erect Stran and Dallas Huts, Henderson Field	January
Drainage at ARU Warm-up Ramp	January
Road Building, Near 40th Division Camp	January
Hut Erection at SCAT	January
SO-PAC Photo Wing Camp Constructed	January
Coral on Henderson Field No. 1 Taxiway	January



GRAVELLING A SECTION OF HENDERSON FIELD, GUADALCANAL

### PROJECTS COMPLETED ON GUADALCANAL (Continued)

Make Tablecloths for 18th Regiment Mess . . . . .	January
Resurface Lunga Boat Pool Road . . . . .	January
Repair Bridge Near Fighter No. 2 Field . . . . .	January
Install NOB Water System . . . . .	January
Fifth Island Air Command Facilities . . . . .	January
Erect Boat Pool Warehouse . . . . .	January
Build Alligator Creek Bridge . . . . .	January
Build Kukum Pier Ship Water Station . . . . .	January
Maintain All Main Road Bridges . . . . .	January
Recover a B-17 from Water at Tassaforonga . . . . .	January
Build Tassaforonga Barrage Balloon Buildings . . . . .	January
Construct Tent and Enclosure SCAT . . . . .	February
Aviation Gasoline Pipe Line Crossing at Lunga River . . . . .	February
Construction ASA Warehouse . . . . .	February
Dig Well for PATSU No. 1 . . . . .	February
Open Lunga Lagoon . . . . .	February
Survey damage to all piers, docks and Miscellaneous; Also Small Repair	February

61st crew awaiting for bomber to get out of the way to repair a section of Henderson Field, Guadalcanal





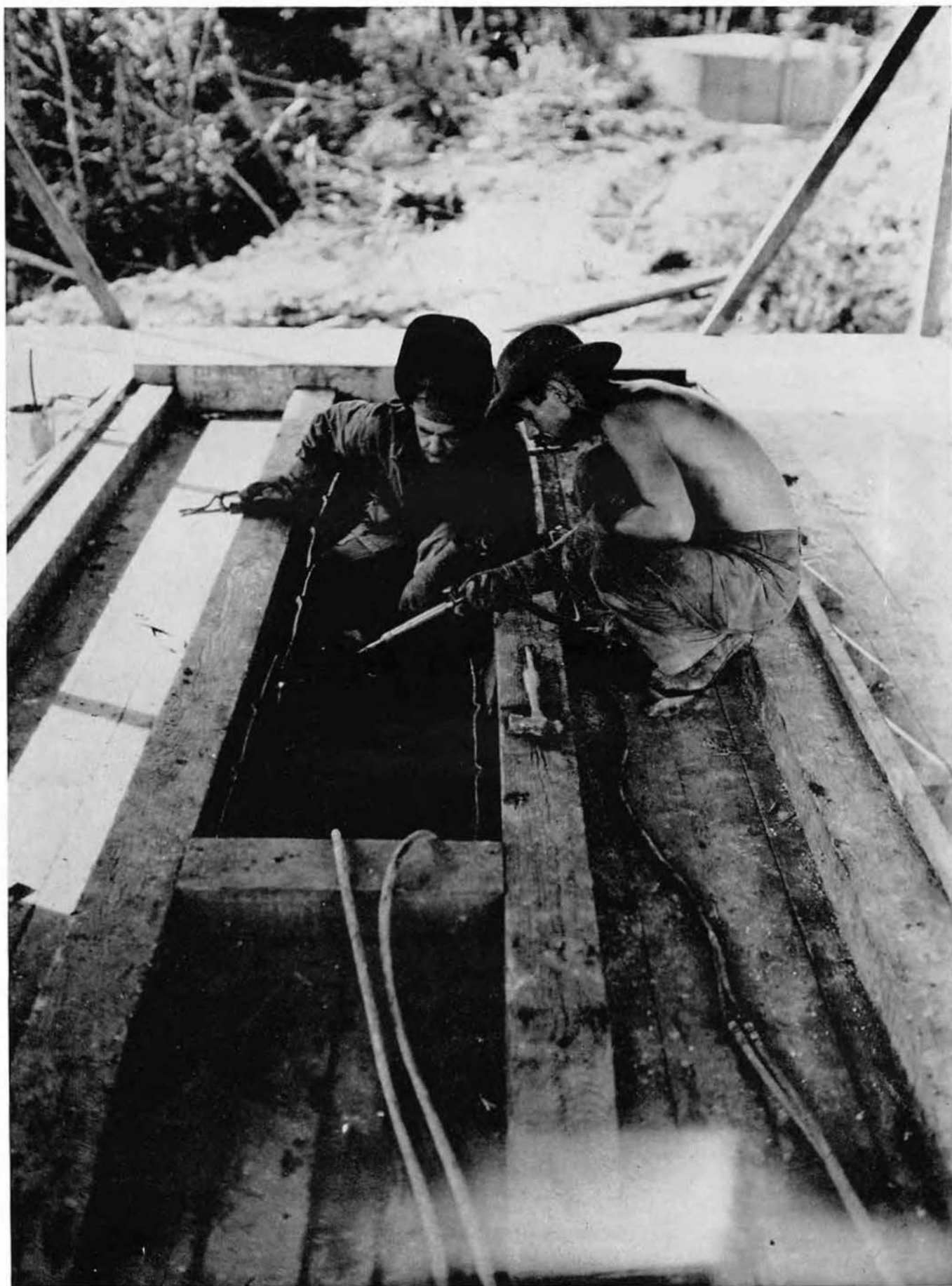
Top, Guadalcanal sawmill being operated by the 61st Seabees. Bottom, 61st pontoon crews at work on Guadalcanal.



# PROJECTS COMPLETED ON EMIRAU

Dates indicate when work began.

Camp Construction	4 April
Road Job—Black Beach	4 April
Cargo Truck and Driver—Blue Beach	4 April
18th Regiment—Temporary Assignments	5 April
Malaria Control	5 April
Sign Painting	5 April
Equipment Assignments—Baker Airstrip	5 April
Quarters for Island Chief	5 April
Sawmill	6 April
18th Regiment Camp Construction	6 April
Island Topographical Survey Party	6 April
Black Beach Unloading	6 April
Tank Truck Dump Depot	15 April
Argus 13, Radar and Fighter Control Center	17 April
Runway "Charlie Airstrip" Construction	17 April
Com-Air Center Storage Buildings	17 April
Cleaning six 300-gallon tanks	17 April
Black Beach Pile Driving	17 April
PATSU Camp Clean-up	20 April
PATSU AAC, SCAT Mess Hall and Galley	20 April
SCAT, PATSU Water System	27 April
Island Water System	27 April
PATSU Miscellaneous, Officers' Quarters	27 April
Army 24th Field Hospital Construction	2 May
Army Bombardment Group Camp Construction	7 May
Second Army Bombardment Group Camp Construction	7 May
Field Facilities "C" Strip Construction	12 May
Bomber Group Facilities Construction	10 May
Fuze Storage Bomb Dump Construction	10 May
Slit Trenches at "C" Strip	10 May
Rewinding Electric Washing Machine Motor	10 May
Barge Construction "PT" Base	10 May
Field Marker for "C" Strip	14 May
Coral to Acorn 7 and Pilots' Camp	14 May
Miscellaneous Work at PATSU 1-11	14 May
East Perimeter Road Construction	30 May
Pontoon Cells for Trucks	30 May
"C" Taxiways Maintenance	29 May
Administration Office PATSU 1-11	29 May
"C" Strip Drainage	29 May
PATSU 1-11 Enlisted Men's Galley Facilities	29 May
Malaria Control, Blue Beach	29 May
Recreation Building, Acorn 7	6 June
PATSU 1-9 Miscellaneous Work	6 June
Acorn 7 Well	8 June
Additional Facilities at PATSU 1-9	16 June
Caskets—Service Command	16 June
Island Athletic Field Construction	16 June
NSB Warehouse—Oxygen Plant	21 June
Army Weather Station	26 June



DRUM DUMPING PLATFORM

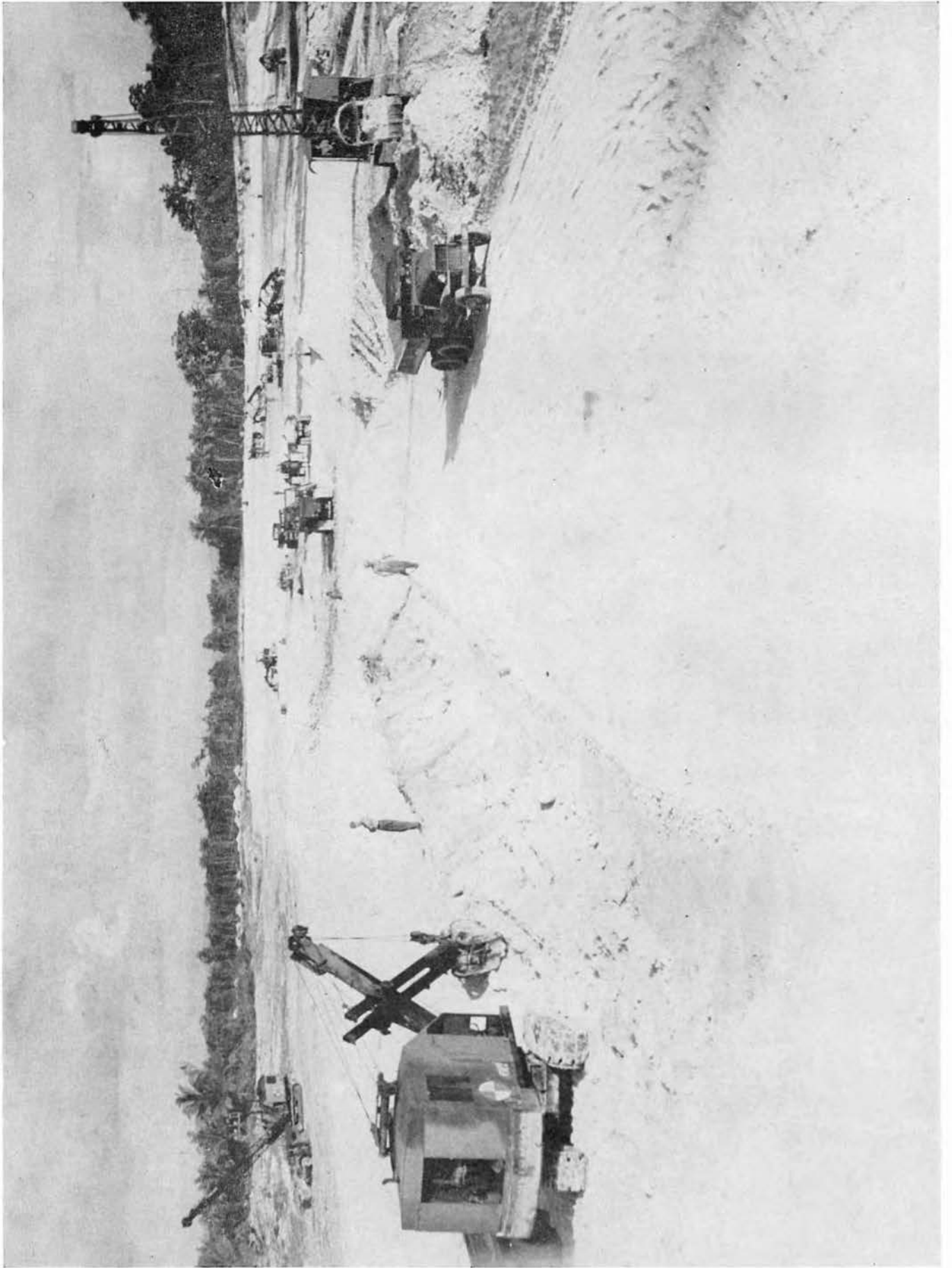
## PROJECTS COMPLETED ON EMIRAU (Continued)

Dates indicate when work began.

Trucks to NAB . . . . .	26 June
PATSU 1-9 Shop and Engineering Facilities . . . . .	26 June
Aviation Gasoline Dump Storage Bays . . . . .	26 June
MTB-16 Furnishing Timber and Logs . . . . .	26 June
Foxholes, PATSU Camps . . . . .	26 June
NAB Recreation Warehouse . . . . .	29 June
Red Beach Tower Platform Shack . . . . .	29 June
Foundations for Island Signal Facilities . . . . .	29 June
Wheel Chocks for PATSU 1-9 . . . . .	29 June
MTB-16 Warehouse . . . . .	29 June
Gas Bomb Dump Barricades . . . . .	29 June
MTB-16 Construction of Concrete Slab for Engine Overhaul . . . . .	29 June



Connect AV gas pipe line to filling stand



61ST EQUIPMENT AT WORK ON EMIRAU AIR FIELD

## WORK PROJECTS COMPLETED ON LEYTE

Dates indicate when work began.

San Pablo Airdrome, No. 1 Runway Construction . . . . .	26 October
Gravel Pit Started, Continuous Operation . . . . .	26 October
Addition to Bridge, Adjacent to Gravel Pit . . . . .	26 October
San Pablo Airdrome, No. 1 Culvert and one-way road . . . . .	26 October
SAN Pablo Airstrip, No. 2 Control Tower . . . . .	26 October
Dulag-Sector, San Pablo Area, Engineer Reconnaissance . . . . .	26 October
Buri Airdrome Control Tower . . . . .	26 October
San Pablo Airdrome No. 1, 2,000-foot Runway . . . . .	26 October
San Pablo Airdrome No. 1, 1,000-barrel Aviation Gas tank . . . . .	26 October
San Pablo No. 2, 1,500 of Mat Laying . . . . .	26 October
Pile Bent Bridge at Dagami . . . . .	26 October
PhilSea Front Seventh Fleet Headquarters Project . . . . .	26 October

The Emirau air field near completion



# WORK PROJECTS COMPLETED ON SAMAR

Dates indicate when work began.

Road Maintenance	15 December
Waterfront Facilities	17 December
Airstrip Construction	6 December
Temporary Control at Strip at Station 55	16 December
NAB Headquarters Temporary Enlisted Men's Quarters	22 December
Acorn 34 Naval Air Bases Plot Plan Facilities	22 December
Repairs and Alterations to CNAB Quarters	24 December
Road and Bridge Reconstruction from Town to Airstrip	25 December
Navy Base Housing Areas—Sewerage	27 December
Aviation Gasoline Tank, 5,000-barrel capacity, constructed	27 December
Log Tower, AACS	1 January, 1945
Road LST to LCT Beach	11 January
Acorn Camp Construction	15 January
Communications CNAB	15 January
Naval Station Officers' Country	2 February
10,000-barrel Aviation Gasoline Tank	2 February
Acorn Camp Road Construction	18 February
Acorn Camp Electrical System	18 February
Acorn Camp Sewerage Disposal System	18 February
Acorn Camp Water Supply Distribution System	18 February
Acorn Camp Enlisted Men's Quarters	18 February
Acorn Camp Enlisted Men's Heads and Showers	18 February
Acorn Camp Galley and Mess Hall	18 February
NATS Office Buildings and Utilities	18 February
Airway Command Building	18 February
Air Center Seabee Material Depot	25 February
Maintenance of Telephone System	8 March
Naval Base Dump Construction	9 March
Two 75-foot Towers at AACS	10 March
NAB Maintenance of Airstrip and Taxiways	10 March
Seabee Camp Area Cleared	11 March
Fighter Strip Construction	6 April
Jeep Bridge Construction	6 April
Quonset Hut Erection at Naval Base	6 April



61st equipment smoothing coral for highway on Emirau Island

Dozing down hardwood trees for roads on Emirau Island



## PLUMBING SHOP

The life blood of any organization is the plumbing equipment. With hard working rugged Seabees, no day was ever complete without a shower. Just turn that valve and the water comes splashing, dashing down. Smiles by the mile was the rule as the boys vigorously applied soap. Yes, the smiles are a tribute to an unsung hero, the plumber. The 61st is one of the many organizations to have an efficient plumbing crew.

"Did you say that our friends, the Marines, haven't any water?" So it was said, when our Battalion hit Guadalcanal. The boys cheerfully packed their tools, pipe, and fixtures and, in a matter of a few days, the Marines had the necessary plumbing conveniences in their camp. At that time, our plumbing crew consisted of Hickman, VanDecar, Webster, Gerdis, Giles, King, Holcomb, Moore, Hunter, and Elmquist.

On Emirau, the bakers were short on baking ovens. An oven had to be made. The plumbing crew designed and constructed an oven from sheet iron and pipe. This oven proved to be quite successful.

After landing in the Philippines, another oven had to be made. One identical to the one made on Emirau was constructed. The crew on Samar have shown good craftsmanship on every project tackled. Their crowning achievement was the installation of first quality fixtures in the Red Cross Canteen on the Guiuan airstrip. These fixtures

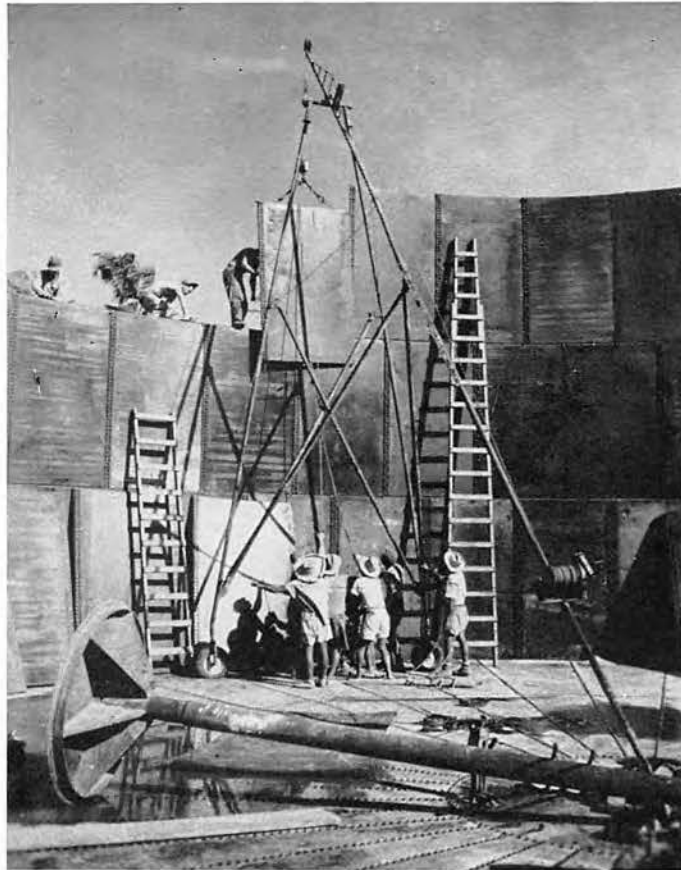
consist of a refreshment service bar, hot and cold showers, wash bowls, and porcelain flush toilets—all for the accommodation of passengers traveling by air. Many such persons have complimented the plumbers on the excellent workmanship shown on this project. This building has been considered one of the best of its kind in the Pacific and will remain as a monument of skilled workmanship done by the 61st men.

The plumbing crew has more than lived up to the duties expected of them, such duties as running culverts under roads, running piping for sewerage disposal and drainage, piping water to strategic camp facilities and improvising necessary plumbing units for hygienic purposes. All these tasks were accomplished consistently in record breaking time. Although this crew had regulation hours, they were called upon during many off-hours for emergencies. An example of this was the emergency line constructed to water an amphibious invasion fleet so that it could maintain its combat schedule. For this many of the crew were awarded commendations.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC LABORATORY

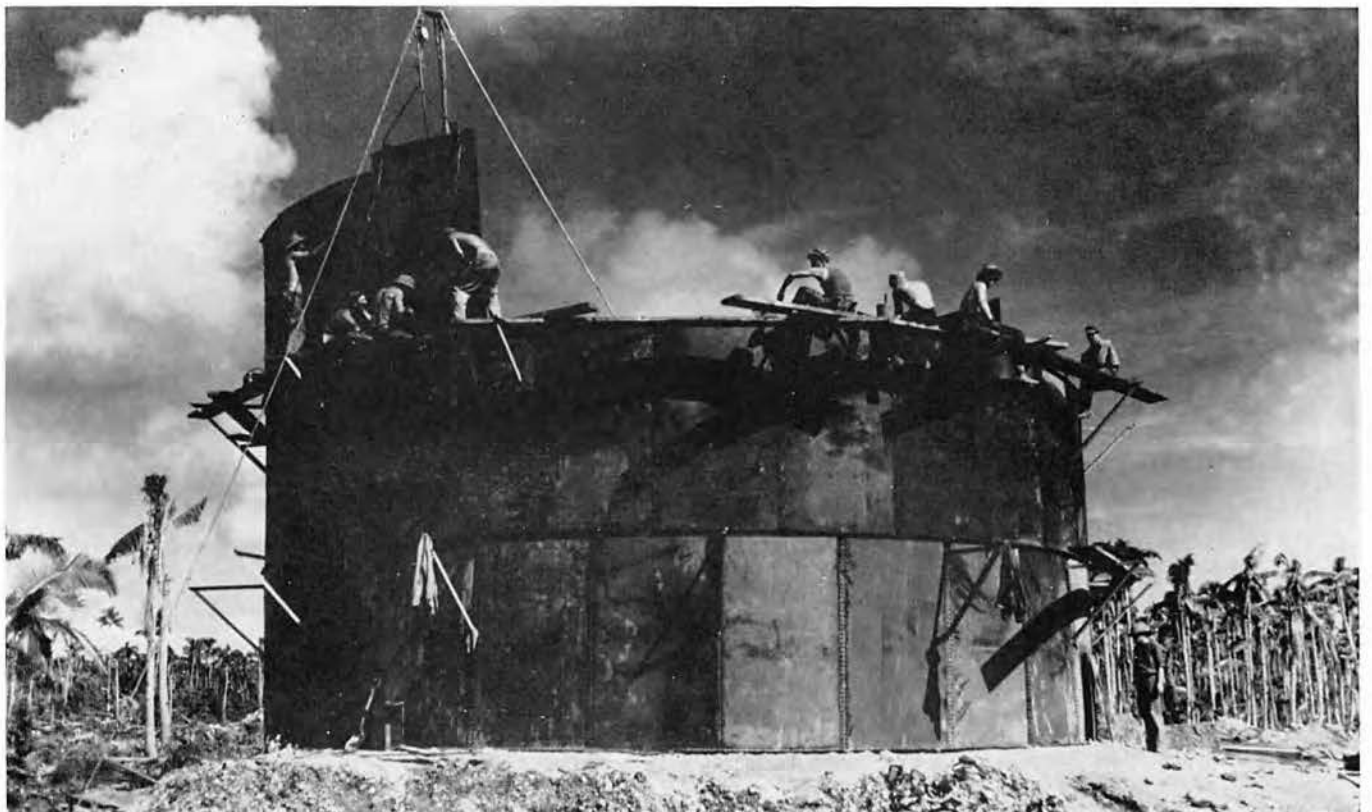
The photographic laboratory, although a small department in men involved, kept and presented a pictorial record of both accomplishments and things seen and experienced. These photo records supplied BuDocks with a panoramic record of





Constructing AV gas tank showing Gantry crane designed by Chief Gean.

Constructing AV gas tank, showing gin pole erection



what the 61st Seabees actually did. These were supplied along with official monthly reports. The unceasing labors of two photographers, J. J. Arnau and W. F. O'Donnell, made thousands of photos available for this *Log Book*, as well as the official Navy records.

## ENGINEERING

In construction, no project, camp site, or movements can be made without planning and design. This task naturally falls to the lot of all sections and units of the Engineering Department, the units of which are comprised of draftsmen, surveying crews, blueprint men, strippers, and geodetic and topographic experts.

The engineers are always first on the job. Upon them depends the success of future Seabee achievements. Needless to say, the completion of advanced bases by the 61st attests the precision and efficiency of the department.

## ELECTRICAL

"It's taps, cut off the juice," so the generator watch pulls a switch and like a shroud the inky blackness enfolds the camp. Yet generators run on furnishing juice to the reefers, thus keeping the fresh food supplies cold and freezing ice cream.

Electricity is a life-line to fast and efficient job production and has been effectively used to make construction records on strategic islands. Tojo

has painfully felt the "airstrip" punches of the 61st Seabees. The electrical department has overpowered many obstacles in their overseas work. They have rebuilt generators and rigged up motors for every conceivable type of project. This work has fused them together into an efficient crew.

## PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

The first ten months, since the foundation of the 61st Battalion, there was no publicity department. Naturally this was unnecessary during these early months, as the Battalion had not built up a reputation of any note. However, the personnel of this Battalion, by their ingenuity, established a series of "Firsts" that soon became famous in their immediate locale. Commander Studdert saw the necessity for publicity in order that the people at home would know of our exploits. A Battalion newspaper was to be the medium. Commander Studdert chose the name *Workers Wallop*, the first issue of which was published November 13, 1943. The first few issues were edited by J. A. McVay on a weekly basis. In December of the same year, D. B. Webb became editor, and the paper was issued on a bi-monthly basis until we reached Emirau. From that time on, the *Workers Wallop* became a bi-monthly magazine covering every scope of news concerning the Seabees.

Upon arrival in the Philippines, near D-Day,



61st trucks loading gravel at the Marabang River Gravel Pit, Leyte Island, P. I.

Construction of tower on San Pablo Strip, Leyte, P. I.



61st equipment repairing captured Jap airstrip,  
San Pablo No. 1, Leyte, P. I.



the *Workers Wallop* was supplemented by a daily newspaper covering only international war news. This paper carried the masthead, *The 61st Seabees Daily News*, edited by D. B. Webb. Several Filipino municipal school teachers adopted our newspaper as a reading text for their English classes.

Commander B. M. Bowker, shortly after our landing on Samar, suggested that the Publicity Department issue press releases to newspapers of the home towns of the personnel of the 61st Seabees. This was carried out with a program that covered releases to 468 newspapers.

## LABOR POOL

Work experience cards were filled out by the men, and then a labor pool was set up to classify the men according to their trade skills. As soon as different projects were assigned to the Battalion, the labor pool then assigned the qualified men to the various projects. "Tojo" has tried to interrupt project completion, but the courageous craftsmen were not to be shaken off and redoubled their efforts to make record project completion. Fear and anxiety furrowed the brows of the Rising Sun clique as the hard working and fighting reputation was painfully felt.

Therefore the labor pool serving as a labor expeditor and job transfer office has effectively carried out its duties to the final punch.

## POST OFFICE

"We have the sugar rations," says a postal clerk, perspiring under the weight of a sack full of mail from the States. Yes, any letter containing endearing sentiments from home is a sugar ration. In these letters, fond memories were renewed and furnished an excellent tonic for the Seabees' morale.

Regardless of invasion hardships, rain and mud, the postal clerk boys always managed to have a supply of stamps, envelopes and money orders on hand. Also taking parcel post packages to be sent to their destination. Thus many souvenirs found haven in many homes.

## CENSORS

En route to our destination, the censor board gathered up the letters written by the men and sat on the deck to censor them and had the letters ready to mail at the next stopping place taking mail home. When the Battalion made amphibious moves, the censors carried on their task, whether in a foxhole or sitting on discarded boxes, under a swaying, sagging, flapping tent as torrents of water attempted to make them ragged dish cloths. The censorship tent was the last to be decked and, as the result, the placid pond of water that abided there was enough to make the censors feel as if they were really in



Top: Filipino village being dismantled to clear the right-of-way for the construction of airstrip on Samar Island, P. I., by the 61st. Bottom, left: San San Pablo air strip with tower, Leyte, P. I. Bottom, right: Dynamite crew setting off a blast near the air field on Samar Island, P. I.

the swim of things. However, the mail went through so that the Stateside loved ones would get their daily due from Seabee Lou. At times, it can well be imagined that the home folks received letters not unlike their morning shredded wheat. All knew, of course, a gap in the flap saved a rap from the Jap. After months of toil and association, the censors soon acquainted themselves not only with the men themselves but with their style and subject material of their correspondence. It was always the purpose of each censor to aid rather than restrict messages home from the men. Mail, like food and entertainment, is the paramount backbone of good morale.

## **BARBERS**

On our various cruises, the barbers did their clipping of hair on deck, having the men sit on hatch covers. Regardless of how the wind blew, the hair shorter grew. Those who had a little hair on their noggins had still less, but neatly cut, when the barber finished.

It seems that the hair was more wirey than the barbers were. The two barbers who started out with the Battalion were soon replaced on Guadalcanal with three barbers. The tropics has also caused a few men to lose hair, and they wished that their hair could be as easily replaced as the barbers were.

Before tent decking was available, soapboxes were used, and anyone desiring a haircut would firmly plant his feet in the mud while the barber applied his tools. Later these soapboxes were replaced with decking and improvised plywood

chairs made to practically resemble the genuine article.

There have been five barbers who have kept up the neat appearance of the Seabees of the 61st.

## **TAILOR SHOP**

“What if it doesn’t fit you?” Well, Uncle Sam may not know your actual size, but nevertheless, a tailor shop has been set up for just this purpose. Alterations are made to make the clothing comfortable to wear. Therefore, more than any other member of the armed forces, the Seabee keeps his clothing neatly tailored for a streamlined appearance.

## **LAUNDRY**

The Battalion laundry deserves much credit in helping to keep up the neat appearance of the men. Though very seldom mentioned, their work was of vital importance, and many a Seabee, neatly dressed in clean washed uniform, owes his thanks to the laundry boys. The laundry crew have made conscientious effort to give back the clothes cleaner than they received them.

## **SUPPLY**

Food is one of the bases of stamina of all service men in combat zones. Throughout most of our overseas trek, the Supply Department has overcome almost insurmountable difficulties of canned dehydrated foods. Occasionally our supply men were fortunate enough to obtain fresh meats and vegetables.

Normal routine called for daily trips to supply



Top: Construction of 1,000-man mess hall and galley for naval base. Bottom, left: 61st Chief Lockhart supervising his road maintenance crew of Filipinos on Samar Island, P. I. Bottom, right: Constructing road from town to LCT beach.

dumps by our trucks. The system evolved was that rations were issued on a fifteen-day basis. If certain quantities could be obtained at various Service Command dumps, unrestricted requisitions were made upon an "A and P" food dump. This dump derived its name from the allocated piles of canned goods from broken cases damaged in handling. Any supplies taken from "A and P" were considered as extras and not duly accredited to a fifteen day allotment.

There were times, especially in invasion zones, when the supply men were called upon to brave both the elements, dangers of war, and the loss of much needed sleep. These round-the-clock missions to secure supplies were necessitated by the odd hours of supply ship arrivals. Then, too, the supply department was forced to rely upon emergency at infrequent intervals. Unglamorous as this department may have been, their performance has been, throughout our tour of duty, comparable to that of the United States mail. Like the mail, the supplies must go through.

Food alone is but a part of the problems of the supply department. Such things as tools, spare parts, heavy equipment, electrical equipment, galley utensils, lumber and every considerable thing was necessary to supply and replace items to operate a naval construction battalion successfully. The supply men not only obtain these things but operated two rooms and directly handled the issuance of all material.

The ship's service has often been called the luxury department of the supply corps. Nevertheless, their role was vital to the complement of

the 61st. We were supplied with the necessary soaps, razor blades and other items natural to our normal lives. The small margin of profit gained through the sale of these items to the men was placed in the welfare fund.

The business office of the Supply Department acquired the name of being "The Office of Expert Procuring." It was said that there was never an item that the 61st procurers could not obtain by some means or method.

To wage a successful campaign against the enemy, a good water supply must be had. In the 61st this responsibility has been proficiently handled by the water purification gang, who are Ion Wainwright, R. S. Barnwell, J. H. Strahan, Bufford L. Brunson, E. W. Mangold, R. E. Durant, C. M. Boffetti, E. T. Wimberly, and D. Tackett.

It took a week to put the first well down on Guadalcanal. In the meantime, while it was being dug, the water was brought to our camp site by truck and a trailer tank. Then it was pumped through a small purifying unit into a storage tank. The well had a fifty-gallon-per-minute output, which was pumped into a raw water tank from which the water was used for showers and laundry. Two small purifying units pumped water from this tank into the pure water tank used for drinking and cooking. A small tank was used in connection with a refrigeration unit. It wasn't long before service units discovered or heard of the cold water, and it wasn't long before the 61st became a mecca for thirsty





61st Seabees constructing Quonset huts at Tolosa, Leyte, P. I.

The Tolosa Quonset hut project after completion



throats to slake their burning thirst with cool, soothing water.

When our Battalion made a forward push to Emirau, "Ye Colde Water Fountain" went along too. It was on the fourth day after making a beachhead that the water gang had a well dug and operating. They were fortunate in having to go only fifteen feet to water, using dynamite to boost out the necessary coral formation. Here for the first time chlorinated water was being used for showers as in other facilities. The Naval specifications of chlorine injected into the water stream is approximately one part per million. Tests were frequently taken to vigilantly check the purity of the water. Reports show that 40,000 gallons were being used daily during our stay there.

After leaving Emirau, our next stop was Banika. Here the source of water supply was pumped from a clear mountain stream in the thick of the jungle, about a mile away from camp. A mile of four-inch pipe and a centrifugal pump sent the water into camp to be purified and used as needed.

Strafing airplanes, shrapnel, and exploding bombs throwing debris in every direction met the boys when they landed on Leyte Beach. Digging foxholes and flinging curses at the "yellow sons of ——" did not interfere with locating a well which was presumably used the day before by the Japs. In a matter of hours, the boys had a purification unit beside the well temporarily set up until our own well was finished.

Moving to Samar Island was not so hazardous. There the boys found an excellent site to put down a well and set the best water purification plant on the island. It supplied all camp necessities and also outside units. "Ye Colde Water Fountain" is enjoying an ever-increasing popularity, as before.

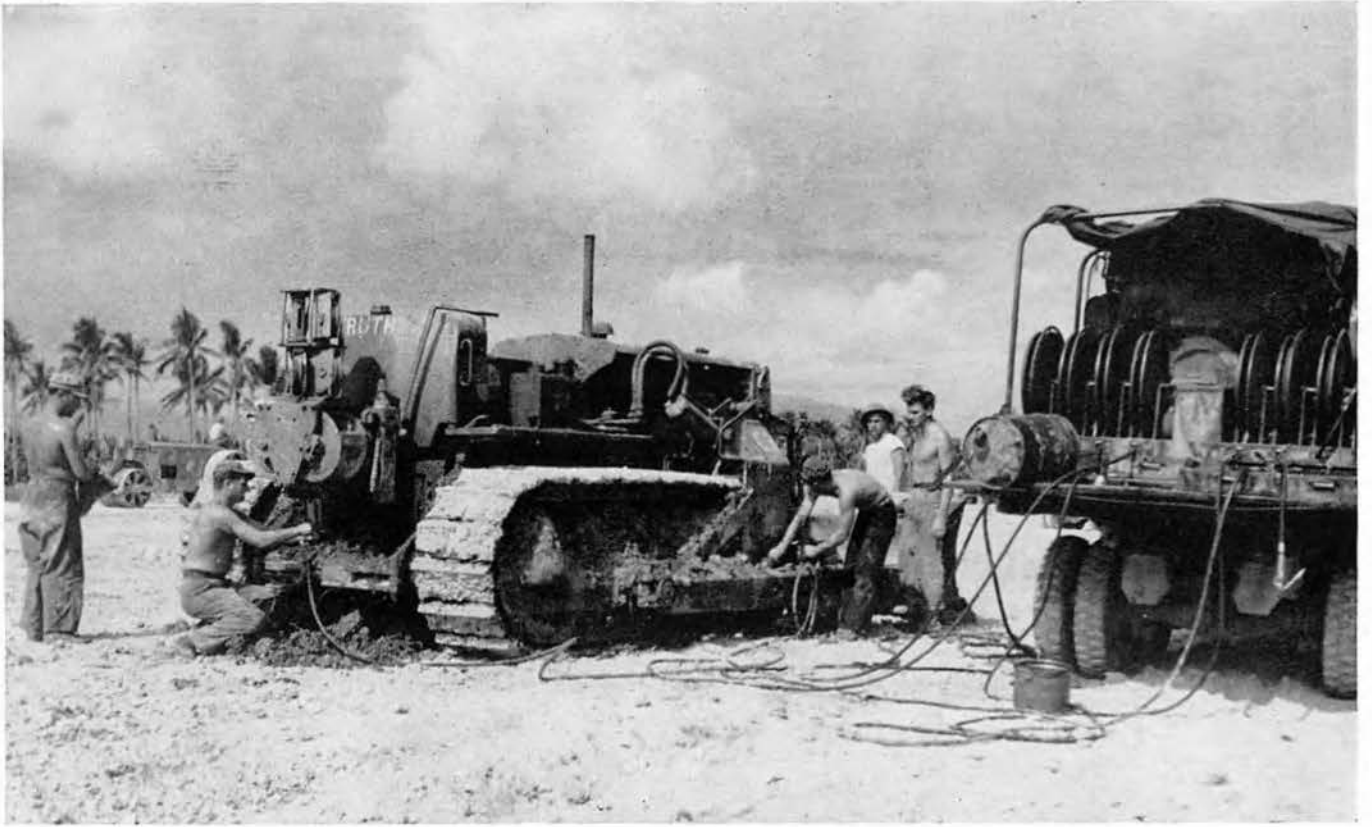
In maintaining an orderly and sanitary camp, it necessitates a Master-at-Arms force. On December 14, 1942, the Battalion Master-at-Arms force was formed. King B. Walker was appointed Master-at-Arms in charge, and had nine men assigned to his force. These men were permanently assigned and were detached from their companies and formed into a separate unit. When the Battalion broke advanced training, these men were directly under the Executive Officer.

Daybreak found a Master-at-Arms in charge, seeing to it that the colors were made on time, and also nearby to seek the culprit in case someone might heave a shoe at the early morning bugler.

By observation, the MAA noted the interest taken in camp sanitation. This suggested that the hut leaders were competent and therefore made the duties of the company chiefs easier.

When a man had liberty, the Master-at-Arms safely stored his gear until he returned. The personal gear of any man absent-over-leave, or absent-without-leave was held. The personal effects of deserters are generally sold and that of the deceased are sent home.

"Where is that towel I left in the showers last night?" someone asks. Generally the answer to



Crease truck servicing a dozer

Airfield maintenance crew filling in a bomb crater on a Samar Island airstrip



that was a Master-at-Arms has picked it up and put it into the lucky bag. It took an hour or more of extra duty to recover the lost article. This lucky bag was an incentive for every Seabee to keep his belongings shipshape at all times.

Any man who was fortunate enough to go back to the States had his belongings carefully inspected. This was a precautionary measure to ascertain that man's proper allotment of gear.

George S. Cone, Jr., was appointed to Chief Master-at-Arms on June 28, 1943. He served faithfully and was later replaced by W. W. Wooten as Chief Master-at-Arms. At present the staff, with Chief Wooten, consists of G. H. Gagnon, C. R. Ottman, A. C. Fagant, J. N. Zapp, Jr., D. W. Little.

The following men detached from the staff for various reasons were J. B. Kildea, F. Pfiefer, C. H. Ormond, Sr., Jones Baker, F. F. Cole, L. Segal, K. B. Walker, G. S. Cone, L. E. Lincoln, Jr., C. Allen.

The original bakers of the 61st Battalion numbered a half dozen men, among whom were Johnson, Cabe, Crisler, Partain, Mortimer, and Herbertson. These men had gone to baker's school at Camp Peary, while in boot. This instruction differed from civilian methods, inasmuch as coal-burning ranges and traditional Navy procedure was the rule of order.

Following a pre-embarkation leave of nine days, the bakers were organized into a cohesive group, at which time a new baker, Delrow, was added.

Our arrival at Port Hueneme found our bakers checking supplies prior to embarkation.

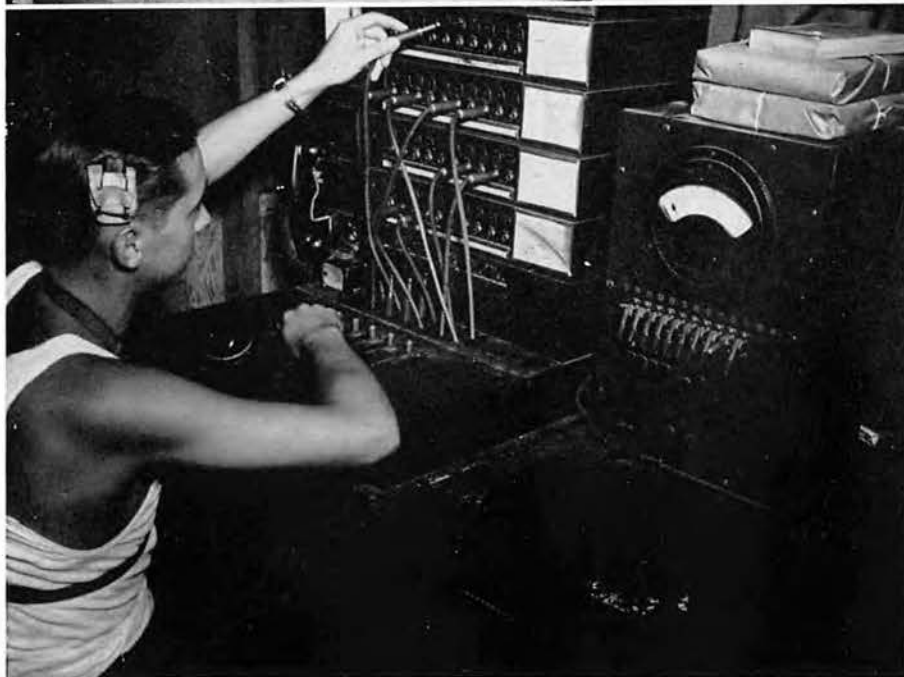
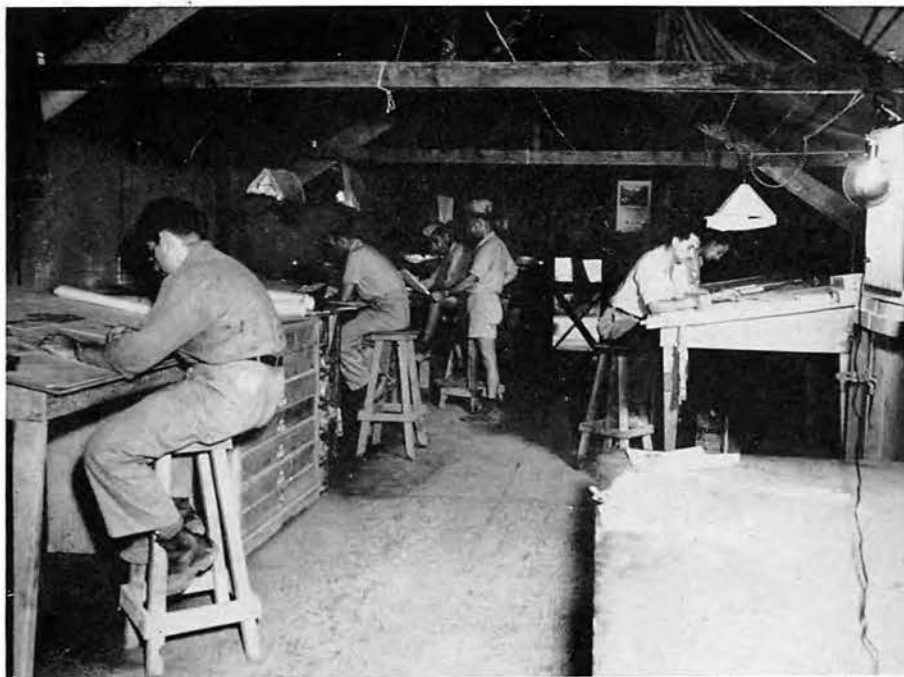
Our trip aboard the *Brastagi*, from California to Guadalcanal, was one interspersed with faulty oil-fired ovens, inadequate supplies of yeast, and inexperience with ship equipment. The yeast problem was solved by making improvised yeast from potatoes. An additional striker, LeMaster, was added to our crew.

Our first days on Guadalcanal, a temporary galley was hastily erected while permanent camp facilities were being built. Having a minimum amount of equipment, the demand for baked goods exceeded the supply, until 61st metalsmiths created bread pans from discarded cans. Two new strikers, Nelms and Clark, were soon added to our staff.

Our bakery supplied various units, ranging from Marine pilots to disgruntled G. I. Joes. Working hours were handled in shifts. Our bakers instructed numerous Army and Marine corpsmen for the purpose of baking for their respective units. The first batch of ice cream mixed and served on Guadalcanal was made by our bakers.

After a short vacation in New Zealand, the bakers served bread aboard LST's, on the road to Emirau, by much improvisation and ingenuity. Hitting the beach of Emirau was a repeat performance of the first day of Guadalcanal. A new baker, Haslm, joined the crew.

On Banika, we lost our baker in charge, Par-



Top, left: 61st Engineering Office. Top, right: At work in the 61st machine shop, Samar Island. Bottom, left: 61st telephone switchboard, Samar Island. Bottom, right: 61st plumbing crew at work in plumbing shop on Samar Island.

tain, and added Firestein, Herndon, and Sivula, all strikers.

Hitting the beaches of Leyte, near D-Day, the bakers soon supplied the men of the Battalion with baked goods in spite of the hell of war.

On Samar the bakers set up equipment to attain new heights in both facilities and production, the best to date.

Looking back over a period of 29 months, of which 24 were spent overseas, reports indicate that 400,000 loaves of bread and more than 25,000 pies and cakes were baked. This record speaks for itself.

## MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

The Medical Department was formed in Camp Peary, December of 1942. The department consisted of two doctors and eight corpsmen, all of whom set to work immediately, giving boot training vaccinations and shots. Other than the usual cat fever and illness caused by change of diet from civilian life to service life, their task proved mostly to be routine. Near the end of the Battalion's stay in Camp Peary, supplies were gathered and checked for trans-shipment to the West Coast. The corpsmen took the usual rifle range and field training at the California advanced base in Port Hueneme. After having checked and loaded necessary supplies for overseas trek, the department boarded the *M.S. Brastagi* and assumed their share of battle station duty throughout the trip to Guadalcanal.

The first day ashore, Guadalcanal saw the

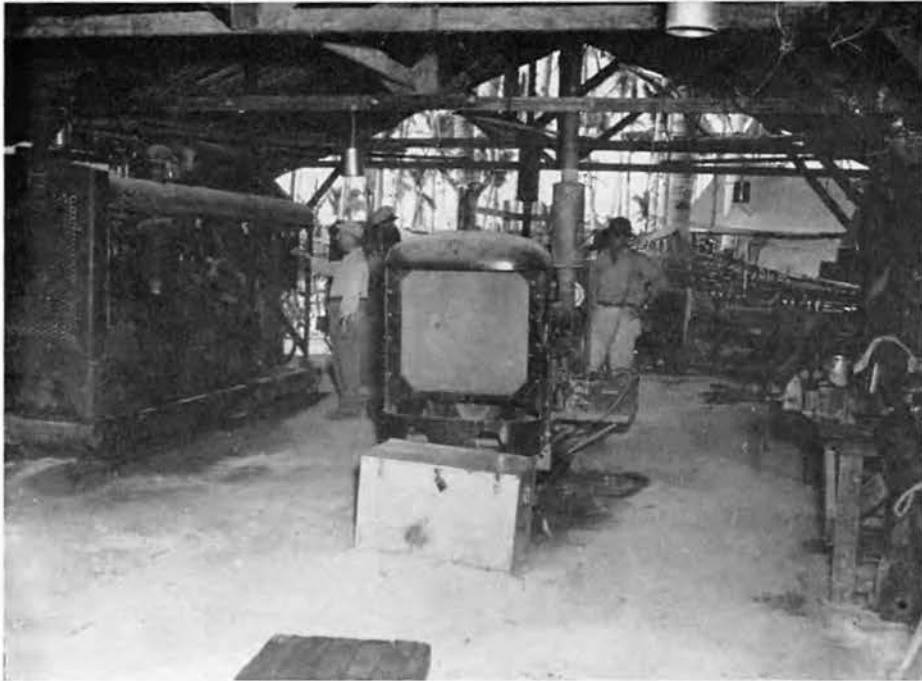
hasty erection of a field first aid station. Thereafter, a complete medical dispensary was built and equipped. The medical attention rendered kept down the overall average of malaria cases. However, fungus infections managed to remain a constant aggravation in spite of all efforts.

The Dental Department kept the teeth of the men in the Battalion in a state of good repair and soundness.

Although the entire Battalion was technically free of duties during their holiday in New Zealand, one-third of the corpsmen were constantly assigned to stand by the station.

Duties in the Russells, Emirau, and aboard the various vessels of our journeys were much the same as those experienced on Guadalcanal. However, invasion of the Philippines alerted them to new fields of corpsman duty. They were prepared for any emergency and took care of all casualties of war. Nevertheless, 61st casualties were not as many as expected during hazardous days of bombing and strafing. During the Jap paratroop "tete-a-tete" the medical staff armed themselves and guarded and attended all patients throughout the emergency. Their stay on Samar was a peaceful but welcome change to the blood and mud of Leyte.

The doctors and corpsmen of the 61st Battalion maintained a high degree of efficiency. Throughout 29 months of service, the Medical Department has been staffed by a total of six doctors and a dozen corpsmen.



Top, left: 61st personnel office, Samar Island. Top, right: Repair shop area of the 61st on Samar Island. Bottom, left: 61st electric generator and repair shop on Samar Island. Bottom, right: 61st postal clerks assorting the mail on Samar Island.

## MALARIA CONTROL

The lowly Anopheles mosquito, or malaria carrier, breeds in the stagnant, rank sloughs of the tropics. Men of the malaria control not only fight mosquitos but bury dead enemy soldiers left in rapid evacuation, such as our malaria control boys had to do in the Philippine invasion. The reeking stench from these sun-bloated, maggot infested bodies seem to paralyze the muscles of the stomachs of men burying the bodies. Bits of arms, legs, heads, and torn open intestines of strewn bodies had to be scooped up and put into wooden caskets for burial.

Ditches had to be dug to drain off the malaria larvae-infested ponds. Here the rotten, decomposed vegetation gives off its nauseating odor. The water also contains liver fluke worms, which, if allowed to come in contact with the human skin, soon burrows into the bloodstream and starts to deteriorate the victim's liver, stomach, and brain. There is only one cure for this—death.

The 61st Battalion has had an efficient malaria control crew and have buried their share of yellow-skinned soldiers, despite all difficulties encountered.

## WATCH REPAIR DEPARTMENT

Keeping numerous watches of the 61st Battalion in good running order, a watch repair shop has been set up. The watches came flooding in;

though parts were not always available, many were repaired. Due to the tropical climatic conditions and the exposure to which watches were subjugated, frequent cleaning was required. An experienced watch repair craftsman, D. S. Weis, has kept the watches ticking. Thus, schedules were maintained, projects completed, all on or before time in delivering a slap to the Jap.

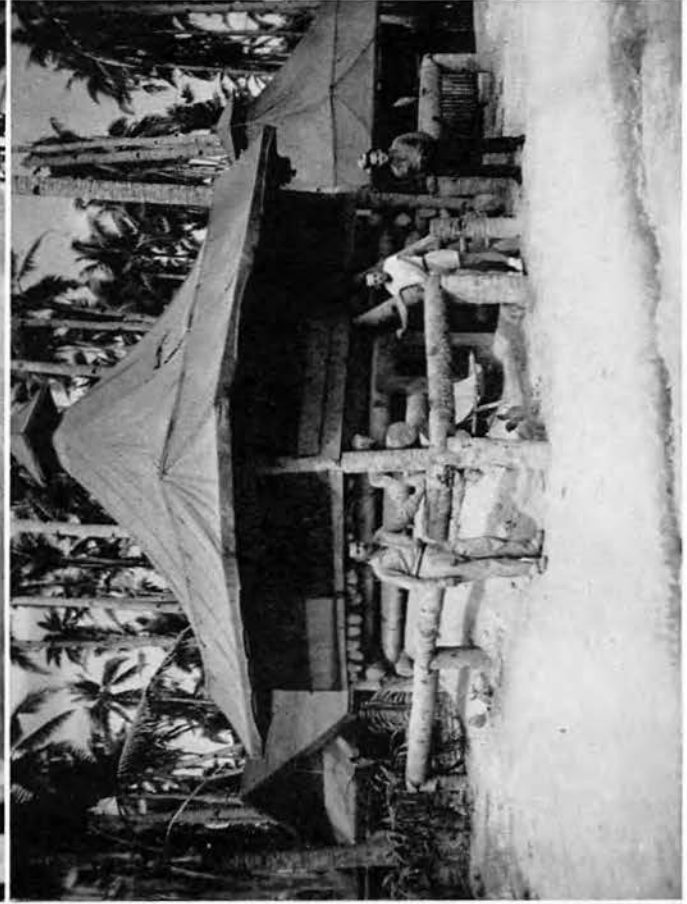
## COMMUNICATIONS

A network of communications wiring is the answer to the operating efficiency and teamwork of several units occupying a vast expanse of territory. The installation and maintenance of such network, demand the skill of Seabee linemen.

The 61st line crew, D. W. Kean, J. L. Chambliss, W. H. Lipscomb, W. J. Meek, M. F. Mitchel, being assigned to Chief Courtney, have strung many miles of telephone wire from coconut tree to coconut tree. Thus, they brought many other service divisions into close unity.

On Emirau, Chief Courtney was replaced by Chief C. M. Finch. Here, to speed up communication installations, the large switchboard was installed in a trailer house, thus making a portable unit which served to keep all equipment dry from slashing rains and muddy mires of the eventful Philippine invasion. Switchboard operators, O. W. LeDuc, W. C. Clopton, N. J. Galley, G. T. Dodge, and H. L. Weinstein, bravely kept the wires humming. Due to erring Nips from the Nippon, these men survived to tell their experiences.

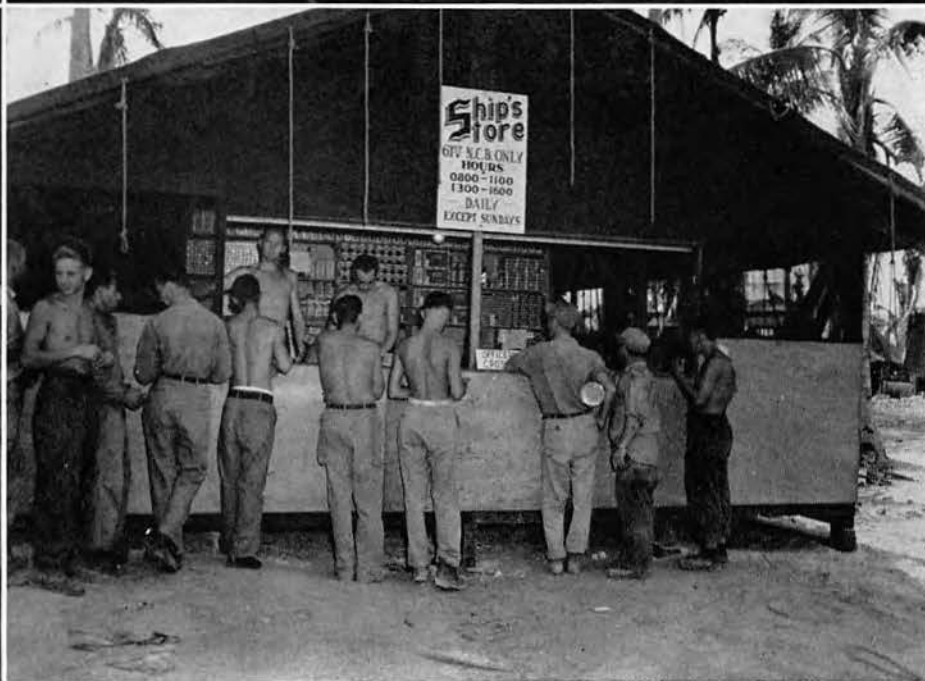
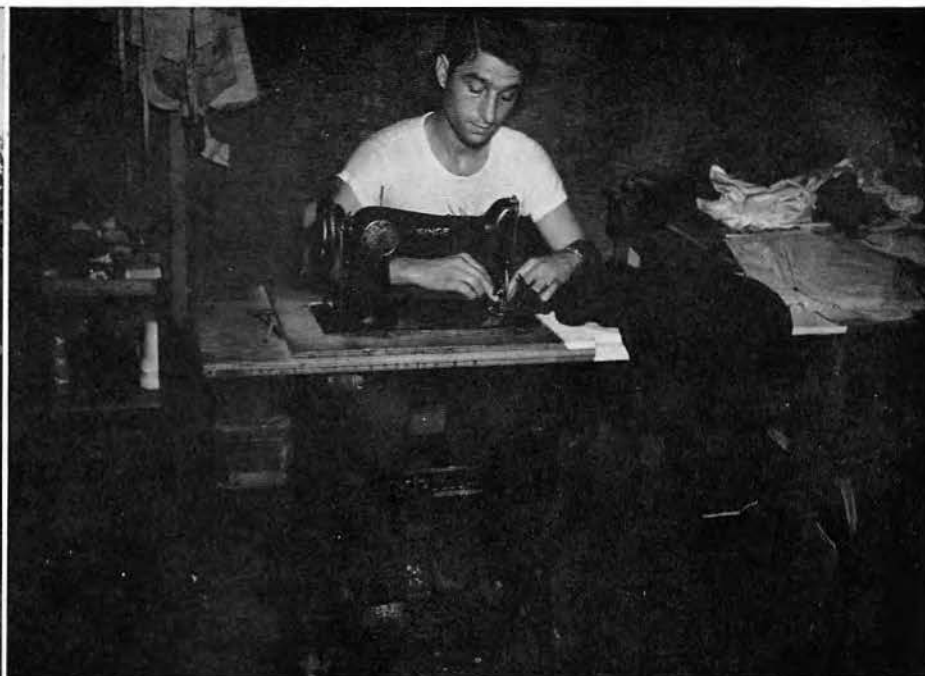




Top, left: 61st censor board in action, Samar Island. Top, right: 61st Armory, Samar Island. Bottom, left: 61st mess stewards in officers' dining room on Samar Island. Bottom, right: MAA, "Gestapo" headquarters, Samar Island—office upstairs, brig down.



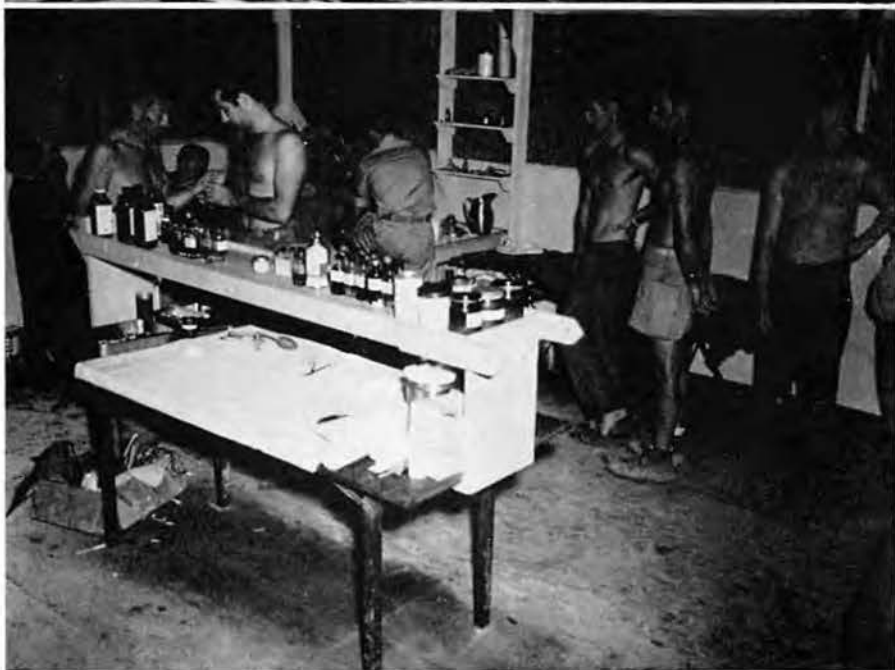
Top, left: The 61st bakers, Samar Island. Top, right: Making ice cream on Sunday on Samar Island. Bottom, left: 61st mess stewards putting the soup on for the officers, Samar Island. Bottom right: Galley cooks at work, Samar Island.



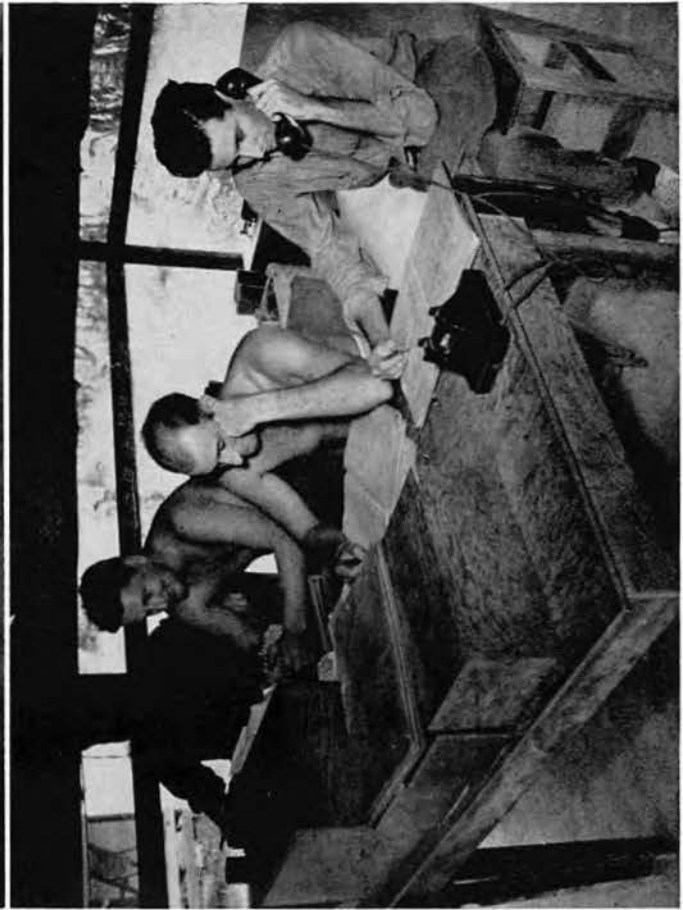
Top left: 61st laundry on Emirau Island. Top right: Ship's tailor of the 61st doing things about dress blues. Bottom, left: "Clip joint" 61st barbers at work on Samar Island. Bottom, right: The Samar ship's store. "What? No cigarettes!"



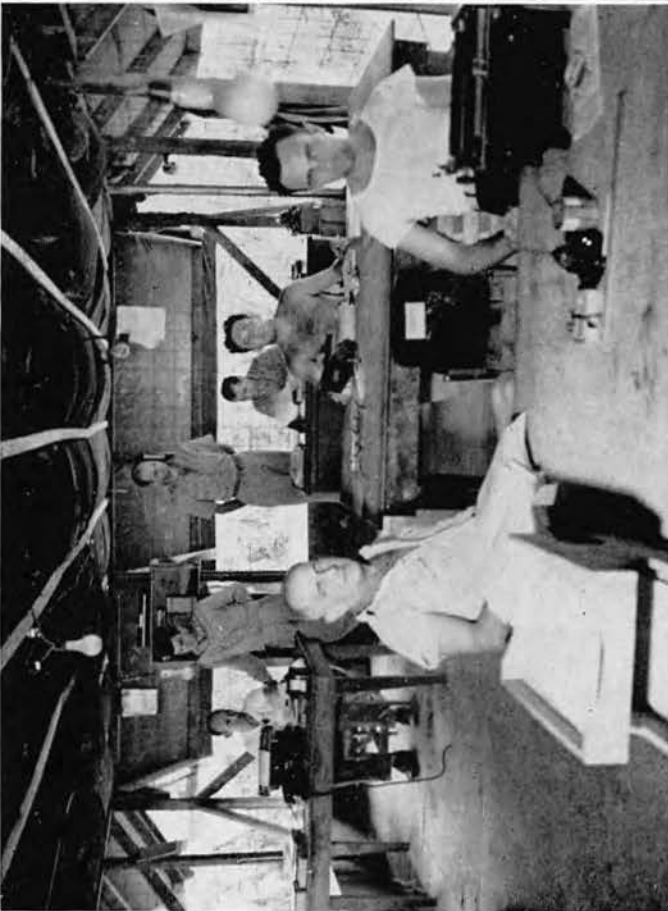
Top, left: 61st camp maintenance crew with Filipino assistants clearing site for Dulag Camp on Leyte Island. Top, right: Publicity office, Samar Island, P. I. Bottom, left: Photo darkroom of 61st mobile laboratory. Bottom, right: Camp construction crew building mess hall on Samar Island.



Top, left: Camp construction aided by Solomon Islanders, constructing the Chapel on Guadalcanal. Top, right: 61st camp administration area, Samar Island, P. I. Bottom, left: 61st Seabee sick bay on Samar Island, P. I. Bottom, right: 61st Hospital Ward on Samar Island, P. I.



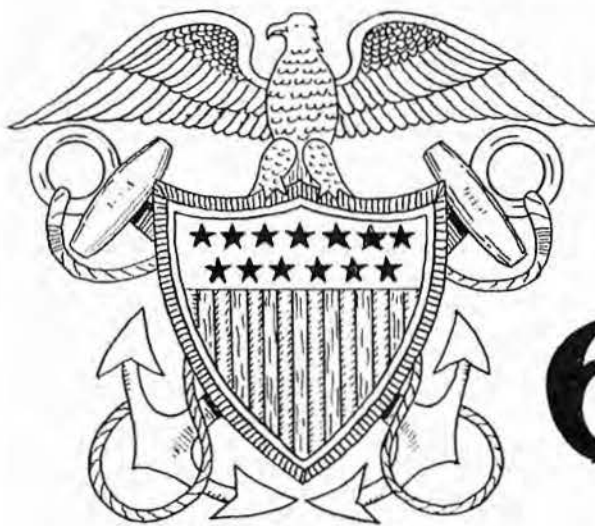
Upper right: Disbursing office  
Lower right: Labor pool office



Upper left: Supply office  
Lower left: Bugler Harrison

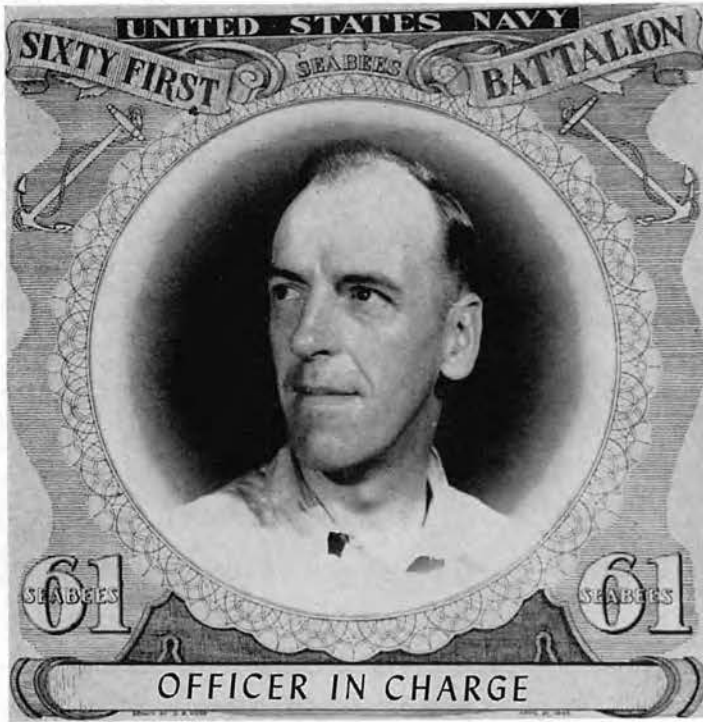


# Officers

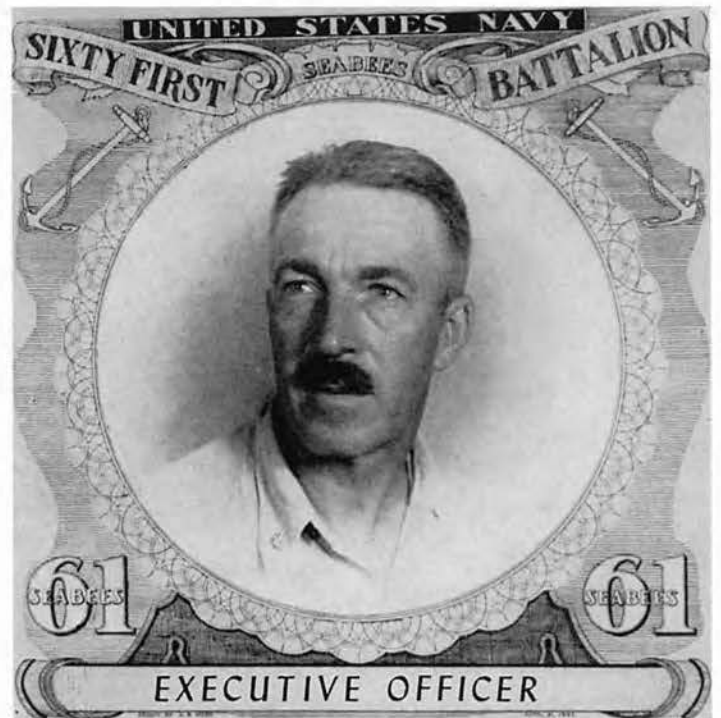


A COMPLETE AND  
COMPREHENSIVE  
ROSTER of PRESENT  
& PAST OFFICERS

# 61<sup>st</sup> Seabees



*Present  
Officers*







Lt. Comdr. J. H. Thomas  
MC

Lt. A. R. Elsperman  
CEC



Lt. D. P. Eubank  
DC, USN

Lt. J. B. Paris  
CEC



Lt. H. A. Scott  
ChC, USN

Lt. J. D. Piper  
CEC





Lt. R. M. McCann  
CEC



Lt. J. D. Brunner  
CEC



Lt. R. J. Conner  
CEC



Lt. T. J. Nelson  
CEC



Lt. V. E. Cresto  
CEC



Lt. (jg) G. E. Scholze  
CEC



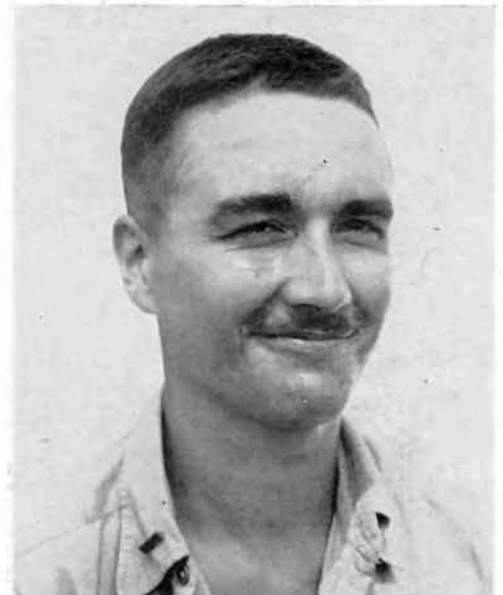
Lt. R. G. Beer  
CEC

Lt. (jg) M. H. Buhner  
CEC



Lt. (jg) C. M. Connor  
SC

Lt. (jg) J. H. Healy  
CEC



Lt. (jg) P. S. Mills  
SC

Lt. (jg) D. L. Donaldson  
CEC





Lt. (jg) O. F. Kuhl  
CEC

C. Carp. C. T. Wright  
CEC



Lt. (jg) E. A. Fisher  
CEC

C. Carp. J. J. Mulvey  
CEC



Lt. (jg) C. W. Thurston  
CEC

C. Carp. J. E. Grund  
CEC





C. Carp. R. E. Griffin  
CEC



C. Carp. W. F. Berkeley  
CEC



Carp. K. K. Kahler  
CEC



*Past*



*Officers*

Comdr. W. W. Studdert  
CEC



Lt. Comdr. L. E. Howe  
CEC



Lt. Comdr. S. Berman  
MC-V



Lt. Comdr. M. Glazier  
MC



Lt. M. F. Walker  
MC-V



Lt. R. Alexander  
ChC, USN



Lt. M. C. Robbins  
DC, USN



Lt. S. F. Nydam  
CEC



Lt. T. Maier  
CEC



Lt. W. R. Eldridge  
CEC



Lt. E. T. Potts  
CEC



Lt. A. E. Hill, Jr.  
CEC



Lt. T. W. Newcomb  
CEC



Lt. R. P. Zickefoose  
CES



Lt. (jg) J. B. Craven  
CES



Ens. J. D. Haggitt  
CEC



Lt. (ig) M. C. Rodman  
CEC



Lt. (ig) W. E. Weaver  
CEC



Lt. (ig) N. J. MacDonald  
CEC



Lt. (ig) A. D. Reagan, Jr.  
CEC



Carp. A. Kamp  
CEC

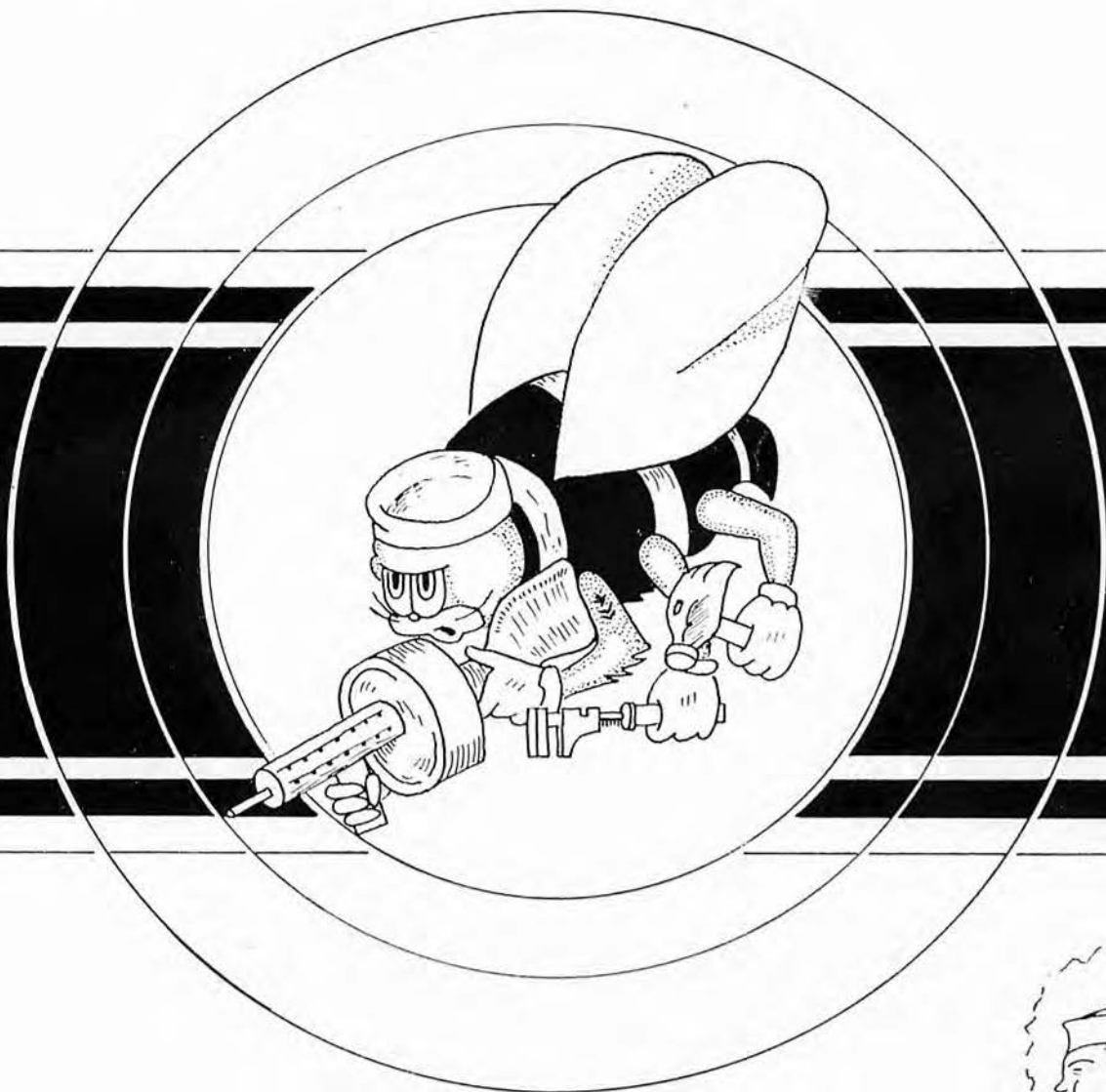


Carp. W. O. Townsley  
CEC



# Enlisted Men

"Photo Muster"





## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

### PLATOON A

*Front Row (Sitting):* O. W. Martin, J. Blanco, T. C. Hull, J. A. McDonald, U. Hall, J. L. Thomas, M. J. DeMato, J. K. Weaver, J. L. Roses, J. Lino.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* J. A. Bernier, R. A. Pierce, W. W. Black, J. J. Maddux, M. C. Zachariah, W. J. Weaver, F. S. Gyorke, B. M. Heath, L. Siegal, W. J. Meister, D. B. Webb.

*Third Row (Standing):* C. H. Ormond, F. W. Cross, J. C. Culbreath, C. C. Allen, K. B. Walker, C. R. Dodson, M. A. Odom, W. W. Wooten, F. Lopez, C. Jones, N. R. Vadenias, R. W. Blue, O. Shaw.



## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

### PLATOON B

*Front Row (Sitting):* G. H. Gagnon, N. J. Galley, W. E. Mangold, C. M. Boffetti, J. H. Strahan, H. F. Hughes, R. T. Mellor, E. W. Moody, J. K. Pearson, W. W. Field, C. B. Rogers.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* H. G. Moon, W. D. Board, J. M. Norman, W. J. Stanley, W. C. Schmidt, K. E. Harris, J. Schenfelt, R. W. Smith, B. Hyatt, P. M. Gallery, W. L. Simmons.

*Third Row (Standing):* W. F. O'Donnell, F. J. Lefner, B. L. Brunson, L. L. Smith, R. S. Barnwell, R. E. Fuller, G. E. Hendershot, I. Wainwright, O. S. Jaquith, G. L. McArthur, K. S. Figel, W. S. Kennedy.



## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

### PLATOON C

*Front Row (Sitting):* A. L. Blount, G. A. Greene, J. W. Robinson, G. N. Nelms, W. O. Hutcheson, S. Firestein, C. Moncus, A. W. Herbertson, A. F. LeMaster, G. R. Johnston, R. L. Upton, J. L. Wilkerson.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* F. J. Bray, B. Skibik, E. T. Delrow, R. E. Herndon, O. J. Lambert, R. T. Robbins, A. Pietruni, R. A. Clark, J. F. Monette, R. M. Cabe, M. E. Dodd, B. W. Kelley, R. E. Everett, A. P. Walker.

*Third Row (Standing):* R. B. Crouzet, R. S. Goforth, B. C. Levy, R. J. Manganiello, J. N. Buckner, S. Urrate, S. W. Jones, J. M. McCluckie, L. L. Jackson, E. G. Haslam, C. L. Mortimer, T. A. Segars, R. Bode, J. R. Sivula, M. R. O'Brien, J. L. Malone, L. E. Lincoln, A. Benevides.



## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

### PLATOON D

*Front Row (Sitting):* G. V. Murray, G. W. Holland, L. A. Sibberns, E. H. Burton, W. H. Goodman, R. W. Holmes, R. L. Ward, O. L. Chason.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* C. W. Walkup, T. L. Speirer, O. C. Judy, J. DeGregorio, G. J. Stops, W. D. Roseberg, J. D. Casebeer, C. J. Auble, W. D. Anthony, F. V. Casale, J. Gripp.

*Third Row (Standing):* A. A. Kirschner, A. Sherman, J. P. Wheeler, J. A. McVay, G. L. Agosti, J. T. Bennett, H. Wilkinson, S. E. Flagler, D. S. Banner, W. C. New, E. F. Mulholland, J. C. Dokken.



## COMPANY A

### PLATOON 1

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. E. Noon, E. J. Kaminski, C. W. Cotton, E. F. Jonansmyer, H. W. Belcher, R. E. Riggan, P. R. Jackson, M. H. Whicker, E. E. Garrett, E. R. Morrison.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* R. L. Collins, K. L. Crawford, R. S. Latour, C. F. Held, J. L. Guantt, G. C. Morgan, F. V. Lopez, A. B. Koch, H. L. Layne, R. E. Kitchens.

*Third Row (Standing):* C. R. Copple, F. Lawless, M. L. Bigham, S. G. Autrey, B. A. Flick, A. L. Brown, A. W. Stokes, J. A. Ross, L. E. Cole, G. T. Dodge, W. W. Clifford and D. J. Hebert.



## COMPANY A

### PLATOON 2

*Front Row (Sitting):* W. A. Blount, J. F. Newell, M. Rivero, G. B. Bland, G. D. Ayres, R. C. Fox, C. C. Lively, T. L. Little, J. P. Lee, C. I. Newsome.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* J. P. Killourie, L. W. Grimes, D. P. Legler, N. B. Etheridge, R. W. Dutter, A. F. Lattatore, A. Alves, J. Lino, R. P. Johann, G. R. Loftus, H. D. Roberts, P. A. Moffa.

*Third Row (Standing):* R. J. Dorman, P. H. Corbett, A. L. Winslow, L. C. Davis, D. M. Bowen, C. M. Opper, F. D. Gregory, W. J. Lockhart, J. W. Drew, E. R. Atkinson, J. F. Slyfield, D. L. Creel, L. G. Nelson.



## COMPANY A

### PLATOON 3

*Front Row (Sitting):* E. L. Lundy, H. E. Magnon, H. R. Geiger, S. R. Cusick, S. E. Tremellen, P. Kontos, F. S. Gyorke, R. F. Durant, J. I. Sikes.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* P. B. Blankenship, C. R. Swilley, P. E. Martin, D. E. Evanson, S. R. Anderson, A. L. Martin, J. S. Latina, A. Armstrong, H. Freeman.

*Third Row (Standing):* F. D. Gregory, J. A. V. Nolan, J. J. Osikowicz, R. C. Norcross, S. E. Crawford, E. W. Fleege, R. L. Green, H. Hicks, L. H. Parks, H. H. Schmer, O. N. Smith, H. E. Olsen.





## COMPANY A

### PLATOON 5

*Front Row (Sitting):* O. E. Dean, E. S. Hammon, J. M. Gay, T. Senn, A. L. Womack, J. S. Sirmons, A. D. Arnold, T. A. Nelson, J. C. King, J. Krevonick.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* P. T. Newton, G. W. McCotter, L. F. Augustinek, T. C. Maynard, W. T. Martin, J. A. D. Mitchell, J. O. Kirkland, C. E. McCoy, W. P. Jacobs, K. F. McGinnis.

*Third Row (Standing):* R. E. Edwards, H. Morrow, H. A. Belanger, D. L. Nichols, W. L. McCabe, N. J. Pierce, F. Hidalgo, C. R. Ottman, E. E. Norris, M. M. Peevy, R. C. Taylor, B. E. Norton, A. L. Chick, H. H. Davis.



## COMPANY A

### PLATOON 6

*Front Row (Sitting):* M. L. Mitchen, L. G. Miller, A. J. Melman, S. C. Kelly, C. N. Maret, W. J. McKinley, W. K. White, A. K. Hill, J. L. Donovan.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* O. J. Anthony, D. T. Maley, C. H. Sperry, J. S. Kilpatrick, A. R. Otto, A. W. Bennett, H. E. Gann, H. G. Poor, E. F. Potes, A. Queen, M. C. Petty, F. O. Baxter.

*Third Row (Standing):* M. G. Dennis, A. J. Byerly, W. B. Knobles, S. C. Rawson, R. C. Durand, H. Osborne, J. B. Ferguson, T. A. Griffith, R. A. Gautreaux, R. H. Pontius, J. T. Stinson, W. C. Elder.



## COMPANY A

### ADDITIONAL MEN

*Front Row (Sitting):* F. W. Hunt, J. F. Newell, N. D. Della-Pizzi, J. G. Gubata, R. F. Fuchs.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* D. R. Legler, R. C. Norcross, E. F. Potes, I. Jaffe, J. P. Killourie, P. A. Moffa.

*Third Row (Standing):* L. G. Nelson, J. M. Johnson, H. Kohler, W. C. Evans, R. D. Johnson, D. J. Cardarelli, J. E. Hoff.



## COMPANY B

### PLATOON 1

*Front Row (Sitting):* F. R. Bednar, T. C. Gilden, N. George, J. S. Goddard, H. H. Huey, J. W. Thompson, H. G. Thornton, D. M. Kean, E. W. Moore.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* S. L. Beers, C. Huckeba, F. J. Harvill, W. J. Sanderson, J. A. Morgan, A. B. Neubauer, H. H. Thompson, H. N. Loundsbury, E. W. Moore, F. J. Ray, D. C. Turner.

*Third Row (Standing):* M. Canjar, G. E. Morin, J. H. Klanecky, D. M. Allardice, D. W. Billups, J. H. Hulsey, D. S. Mallory, K. W. Burrill, H. R. Kraatz, G. H. Lorman, E. H. Knetig.



## COMPANY B

### PLATOON 2

*Front Row (Sitting):* W. O. Hutcheson, G. W. Robinson, A. J. Hoffer, A. Ingenito, C. E. Hicks, J. A. S. Venable, C. R. Staples, F. F. Johnson, W. R. Riggle, J. M. Hillman, O. D. Ogles.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* E. Goodbout, A. R. Butler, G. L. Martiniere, W. C. Clopton, J. F. Ribon, Jr., T. E. Coppage, M. L. Carrol, C. E. Iler, O. Johns, R. J. Hale.

*Third Row (Standing):* L. J. Henderson, V. C. Roberts, E. R. Rentz, J. R. Jolley, W. A. Williams, L. R. Andrews, A. F. Latham, J. O. Fuller, C. G. Freeman, W. W. Liverett, R. E. Groth, G. Ferguson.



## COMPANY B

### PLATOON 3

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. J. Lapila, J. D. Rupp, H. A. Burbey, C. A. Jackson, C. E. Burgess, A. J. Graham, F. J. Bua, J. A. Miller, W. J. Morrell, I. J. Merritt.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* R. D. Davis, H. J. Roehner, K. W. Kiehm, E. L. Merritt, E. Montgomery, J. G. McGukin, D. C. Cook, N. W. Shafer, C. J. Schaeffer, J. Bedgood.

*Third Row (Standing):* P. A. Lowman, E. W. Runnekamp, F. J. Schirck, Sr., W. A. Morgan, G. W. Knittel, F. R. Ledford, R. J. Weaver, T. J. Leonard, L. H. Rumph, V. E. Nanney, R. A. Shannon, E. R. Rode, C. E. Rhodes.



## COMPANY B

### PLATOON 4

*Front Row (Sitting):* O. H. Baty, C. Shippey, W. Hieftje, C. T. Wright, D. J. O'Neill, A. B. Kaminski, J. E. Golding, J. S. Krajcirovic, J. Kupinski, J. H. Shepard.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* M. N. Simpson, J. Q. Carson, Jr., W. K. Hinson, L. C. Leamer, J. Jacobs, L. M. Kissel, O. W. LeDuc, R. A. Laurent, R. N. Shepherd.

*Third Row (Standing):* C. A. Gosnell, O. B. Jones, C. J. Lanning, M. Lucas, C. Lawson, L. E. Newton, T. F. McLaulin, M. J. Bilich, L. M. Goodman, H. J. Shaid, R. C. Shosted.



## COMPANY B

### PLATOON 5

*Front Row (Sitting):* P. G. Sparks, J. E. Slay, G. L. Hedgepeth, A. F. Faul, J. F. Hyland, N. L. Smith, W. B. Huffman, T. D. Babers, T. M. Aubrey.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* R. H. Gary, J. W. Fullington, L. E. Goodman, J. P. Booth, F. D. Rosekrans, A. Ewing, A. C. Fagant, R. L. Smith, M. J. Paliwoda.

*Third Row (Standing):* E. L. Dinkins, P. C. Ellison, J. B. Kildea, M. Pace, H. Crosby, H. E. Mills, E. C. Taylor, E. F. Davis, W. J. Skalisky, R. C. Smith.





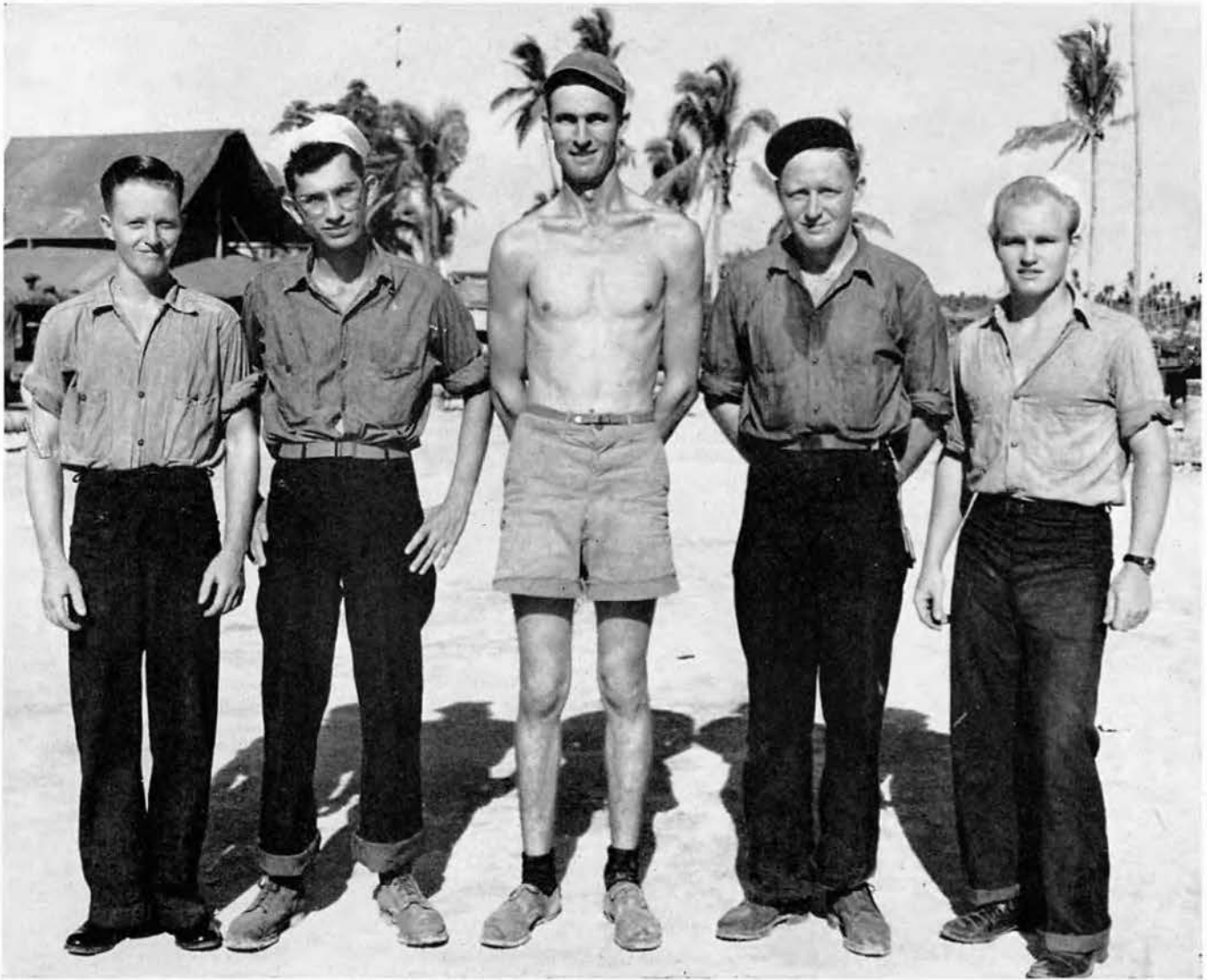
## COMPANY B

### PLATOON 6

*Front Row (Sitting):* D. N. Bellamy, T. L. Spaw, A. Stewart, J. G. Sullivan, E. W. McDow, J. Jacober, L. M. Gewin, J. D. Brewer, M. Caterina.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* M. K. Green, W. A. Stephenson, H. H. Thompson, B. F. Smith, E. F. Nethery, G. W. Wright, I. N. Newkerk, J. A. Beavers, E. F. Reynolds, O. C. Morgan, K. L. Monroe.

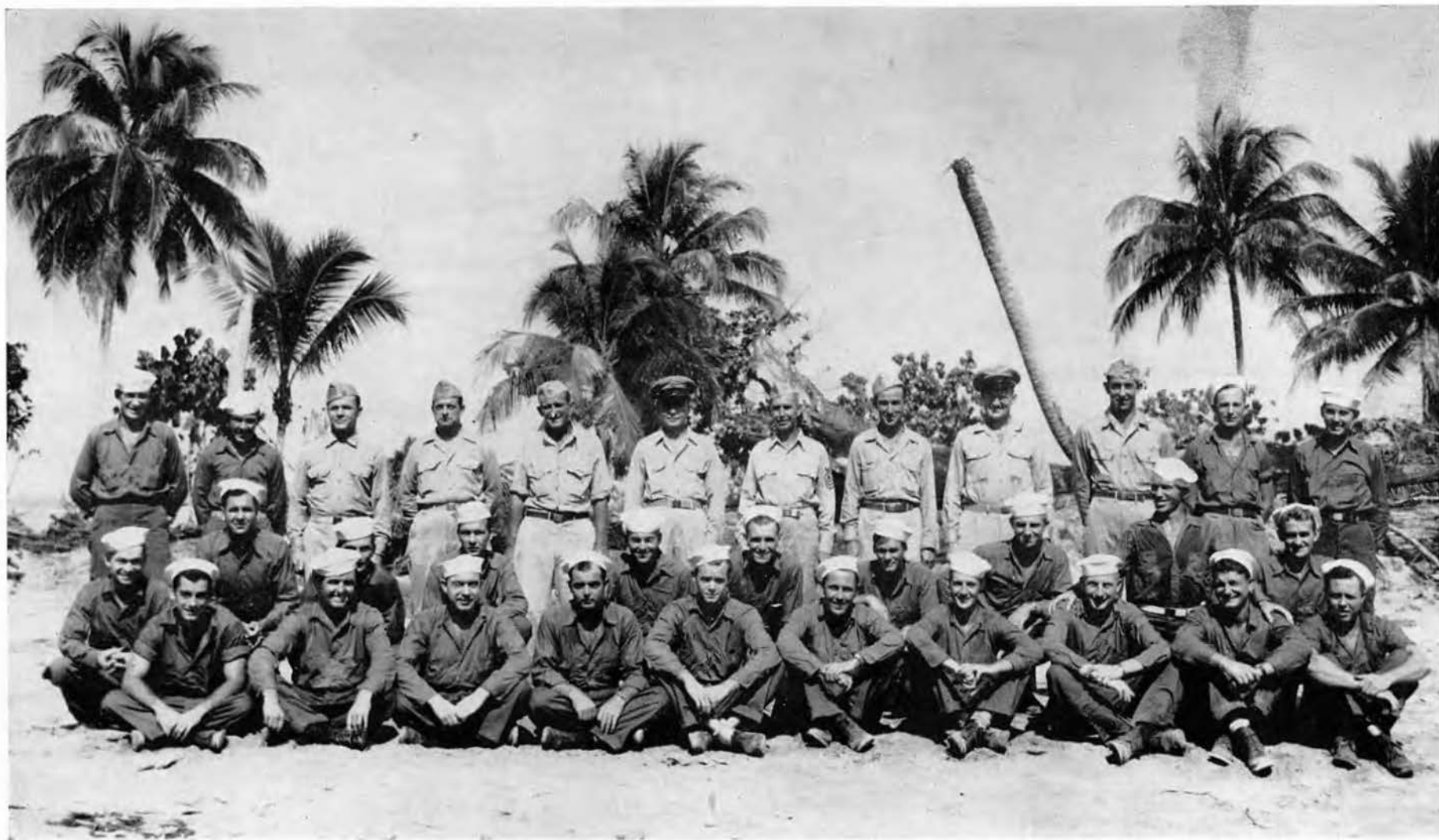
*Third Row (Standing):* C. W. Morton, W. E. Bellamy, T. F. Mulrooney, C. E. Gentz, C. S. Lawyer, R. V. Calkins, C. M. Struntz, C. F. Lilley, C. L. Bryant, J. E. Joyner, M. R. White.



## COMPANY B

### ADDITIONAL MEN

*Front Row (Standing):* C. A. Jeff, Johnston, H. M. Garonzik, R. H. Gary, V. C. Roberts, M. N. Simpson.



## COMPANY C

### PLATOON 1

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. S. Nemet, E. M. Stephens, W. H. Preston, H. B. Thompson, W. R. Hawkins, E. C. Bovis, M. A. Murphy, J. H. Grimstead, L. L. Parham, E. W. Hayes.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* C. M. Bassham, J. J. Folker, P. P. Olszowy, W. H. Kirkendall, C. E. Thomas, T. S. O'Tool, W. R. Cline, D. P. Milam, G. A. Polk, M. C. Huff.

*Third Row (Standing):* R. A. Winegar, C. D. Newkirk, R. W. Nix, E. M. Swearingen, C. E. Thompson, C. D. Hartley, Jr., H. E. Hill, Sr., W. S. Dodson, Jr., H. B. Chapin, D. P. Pangle, C. Fortune, F. D. Harrison.



## COMPANY C

### PLATOON 2

*Front Row (Sitting):* W. B. Steele, E. J. Johnson, R. E. Caldwell, V. Krymowski, A. E. Jochum, E. E. Dumont, N. J. St. Pierre, J. H. Pickels, A. S. Beldin, W. E. Robertson.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* E. R. Lloyd, O. N. VanDecar, V. A. Hammond, R. B. Gibson, P. V. Struble, J. A. Shoupe, A. R. Brindley, F. S. Johnson, G. H. Strange, Sr., W. P. Tredway, S. L. Valentino.

*Third Row (Standing):* W. O. McElheny, Jr., W. H. McEwen, B. J. Robinson, C. M. Finch, D. R. Reed, S. L. Cason, P. A. Laurent, J. F. Patton, J. A. Stewart, R. Verways, C. D. Trivette.



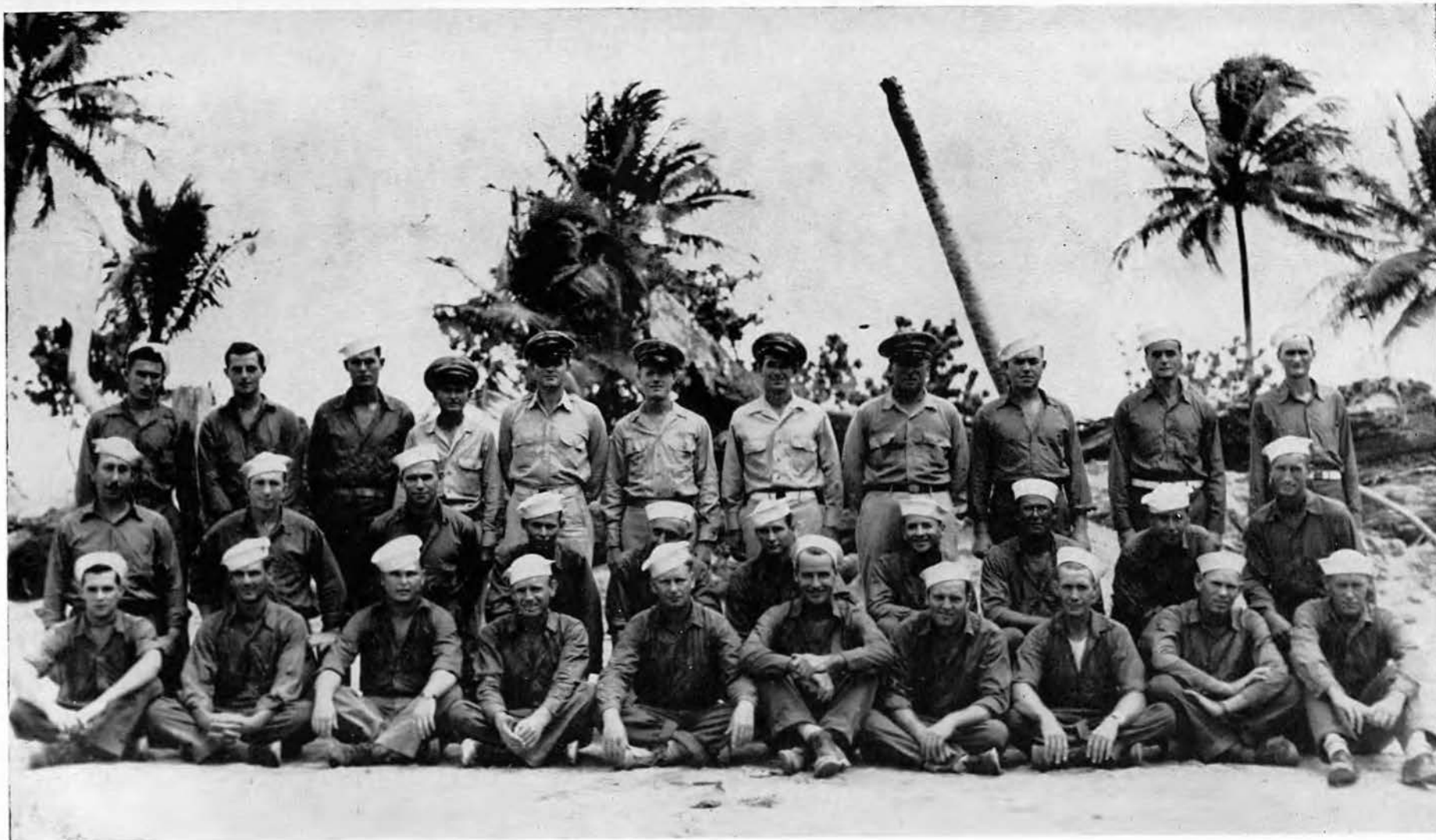
## COMPANY C

### PLATOON 3

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. N. Zapp, Jr., J. E. Rose, J. W. King, M. Molchan, C. R. Heatwole, J. B. Bryant, E. L. Thomas, J. C. Day, R. L. Upton, W. J. Meek, D. C. Hughes.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* T. L. Stanley, S. M. Rubin, L. B. Horbath, R. J. Gest, M. E. Mitchell, E. F. Tuk, T. R. Martin, W. Smith, P. G. Eubanks, W. L. Kay, R. V. Chambers.

*Third Row (Standing):* W. H. Saunders, C. L. King, J. G. Kitterl, J. D. Lundy, Sr., W. D. York, U. M. Webster, B. Carter, Y. H. LaTendresse, C. M. Shirley, C. L. Ezell, F. P. Rival.



## COMPANY C

### PLATOON 4

*First Row (Sitting):* A. J. Gray, W. R. Grager, K. L. Sellers, C. L. Hatch, L. J. Morgan, H. B. McCollum, F. L. Gunnerson, I. L. Holcomb, E. N. Williams, J. F. Hancox.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* N. F. Torens, A. H. Hamilton, J. Jones, J. V. Hager, F. J. Huff, T. R. Heath, W. H. Kilpatrick, J. S. Drew, R. Hughey, J. B. Walker.

*Third Row (Standing):* J. W. Greenaway, C. G. Jacobie, A. W. McBroom B. Stuckey, J. B. Mann, Jr., G. J. David, T. F. Burke, L. W. Cross, S. V. Pryor, F. G. Hepburn, F. W. Greer.



## COMPANY C

### PLATOON 5

*Front Row (Sitting):* E. T. Wimberly, Jr., H. G. Peacock, C. E. Curik, W. M. Reynolds, H. N. Porter, A. Shuttleworth, H. M. Foxwell, J. J. Scalfani, R. S. Corvino, W. J. Pruitt.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* R. L. McPherson, J. W. Lechner, R. D. Rolfe, D. G. F. Ward, Jr., W. J. Hickman, C. M. Kiefer, C. E. Cavanagh, J. G. Pittman, P. Tagliaevore, J. R. Picariello, W. R. Coats.

*Third Row (Standing):* C. W. Hobbs, A. J. Rhodes, R. F. Laird, N. P. Janovich, J. F. Turner, F. E. McGovern, C. N. Fitzgerald, M. F. Volger, E. L. Westlund, L. T. Mathis, H. D. Ussery.



## COMPANY C

### PLATOON 6

*First Row (Sitting):* E. L. Mrozinsky, H. L. Weinstein, G. G. James, D. J. Paul, J. E. King, S. T. Trzyna, E. B. Brown, P. D. Williams, P. E. Mobley, C. E. Prothro.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* D. O. Tackett, W. M. Godwin, D. H. Petty, D. Walker, A. J. Widlak, R. E. Brotherton, D. L. Barker, D. S. Weis, W. T. Winstead, L. M. Wooldridge.

*Third Row (Standing):* R. O. Fleming, P. P. Maltese, J. R. Pritchard, E. E. Wyatt, H. Barnes, C. H. Kaup, H. B. Dicbson, H. G. Queberg, R. H. Burham, K. H. Ward, A. McMillan, V. Woodell.





## COMPANY C

### ADDITIONAL MEN

*Front Row (Sitting):* W. F. Glennon, R. O. Hardy, E. S. Czarski, A. J. DeMuria, H. F. Gallagher, F. D. Casselman, C. D. Trivett.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* E. Floyd, F. E. Dietrick, G. A. Allen, L. M. Dotto, J. W. Carlock, H. J. Coco, J. P. Treadway.

*Third Row (Standing):* F. M. Faggart, C. A. Christian, M. F. Vogler, R. G. Diller, A. T. Devlin, C. M. Christensen, J. Guglik.



## COMPANY D

### PLATOON 1

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. T. Nalls, G. J. Kuligoski, R. J. Anglim, M. S. Music, M. L. Weinstein, W. G. Daus, E. M. Corville, R. E. Graham, A. Greenberg, R. R. Snyder.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* J. M. Gaines, J. R. Coughlin, R. E. Burnham, T. F. Zabrabski, J. M. Welch, S. W. Mowry, L. E. Wheeler, S. G. Duncan, C. W. Carter, R. O. Richard.

*Third Row (Standing):* M. T. Holabird, E. B. Shover, H. O. Shiver, A. B. Stone, R. L. Scott, J. F. Mayor, S. E. McGuire, G. B. Cline, W. H. Sadler, C. D. Fulton, O. F. Young, W. H. Kirsch, J. A. Yurksaitis.



## COMPANY D

### PLATOON 2

*Front Row (Sitting):* B. J. Wilson, W. J. Cieprisz, S. M. Worchesik, Sr., B. C. Kopytko, H. F. Tornoe, W. R. Garbett, R. H. Whiddon, D. S. Giles, A. J. Fiorello, A. J. Portalance, Jr.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* G. W. Pursely, E. M. Thompson, R. F. Bonner, S. Goldie, V. Y. West, W. P. Giles, J. C. Tyler, J. J. Battaglino, R. W. Whittaker, R. O. Blanton, B. L. Goble.

*Third Row (Standing):* J. T. Allgood, R. E. Hardin, J. W. Erp, G. Belekis, B. Jarzemba, C. Pluta, H. Whitehead, H. J. Lowman, C. E. Sherrill, W. K. Alexander, L. A. Philpott, J. B. Parker, Jr.



## COMPANY D

### PLATOON 3

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. R. Phaneuf, F. Aleshinky, R. V. Allison, R. Patrick, C. C. Manier, B. P. Patterson, H. VanOstrand, P. A. Bennett, F. J. Bergeron, F. G. Flamquist, H. V. Hagood.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* W. P. Temple, J. L. Chambliss, W. R. Lawson, A. Pawloski, R. A. Taylor, J. M. Bass, J. Alexsuk, W. H. Lipscomb, M. Ditkoff, S. Hibbert.

*Third Row (Standing):* J. S. Anderson, W. C. Barfield, M. Bresnick, H. H. Hayes, J. C. Williams, C. Lukin, E. B. Hutchins, C. F. Chambers, R. A. Burns, R. L. Henderson, A. P. Haus, R. J. Jakubowski.



## COMPANY D

### PLATOON 4

*Front Row (Sitting):* J. B. Alderman, A. T. Nolan, B. P. Lee, T. A. Mrugala, L. F. Hickman, E. A. Philipps, J. T. Clark, J. J. Smith, B. B. Pinkerton, C. P. Gavin, H. E. Plato.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* G. M. Braswell, E. D. Panella, W. A. Glindmeyer, E. R. Hahn, M. Chapman, C. T. Kispert, A. Narekiewicz, K. F. Ayres, I. M. Davis, J. F. Paull, R. H. Chess, J. E. Woomer, L. C. Wood.

*Third Row (Standing):* R. F. Berry, H. T. Houston, J. A. Brite, M. J. Rawson, R. A. Miller, L. L. Manning, J. M. Cadzow, E. K. Scott, G. W. Hawks, III, E. J. Moreland, C. R. Turner, J. M. Wolford, W. J. Kalp, M. F. Royer.



## COMPANY D

### PLATOON 5

*Front Row (Sitting):* W. P. Gladkowski, C. D. Norman, F. H. Regin, S. Penazuk, K. T. Batson, R. E. Thornton, W. L. Minnick, G. E. Brown, R. F. McDermott, M. H. Rupp.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* E. L. Kastenbein, B. Kaplan, R. Miller, J. J. Kaelin, J. L. Rodgers, E. G. Bausch, R. G. Stephens, R. H. Smith, W. R. Harrison, D. Shay, J. G. Knighton, E. T. Mathis.

*Third Row (Standing):* C. M. Osborne, P. N. Harrel, C. A. Wall, P. G. Towell, O. E. Barnett, J. E. Estes, B. R. Simmons, C. T. McDouglass, W. H. Moore, C. Y. McCain, S. Stricko, F. J. Zembruski.



## COMPANY D

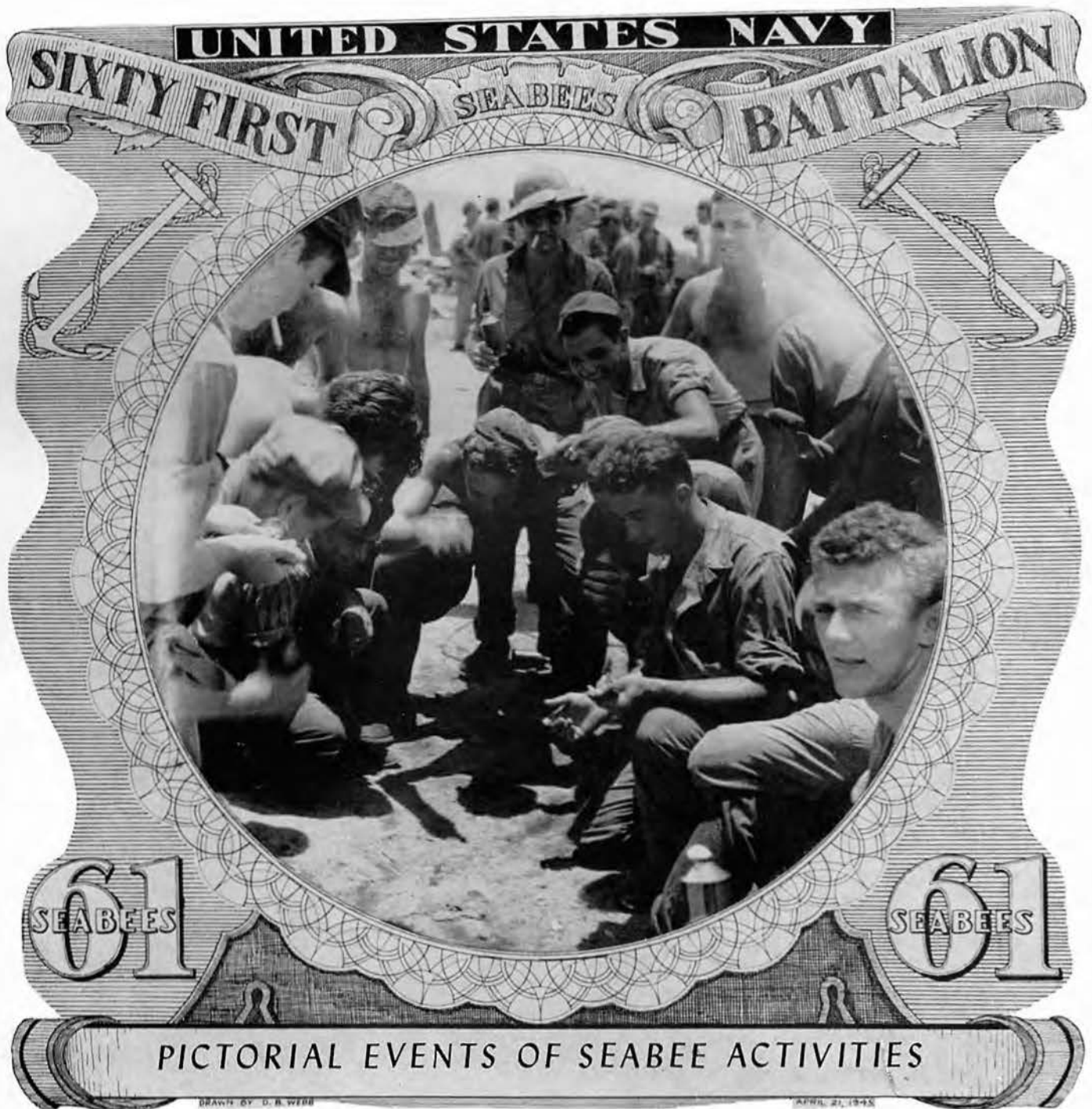
### PLATOON 6

*Front Row (Sitting):* T. Heck, D. Angelico, J. D. Hicks, R. E. Sampey, J. D. McDonald, R. H. Hollinger, E. I. Isaacs, C. W. Vest, D. M. Douglas.

*Second Row (Kneeling):* J. J. Hess, F. H. Reed, F. J. Potkay, J. L. Davis, M. A. Ponce, W. R. Henrickson, J. M. Flynn, D. A. Nixon, J. G. Hoffner, H. F. Golden.

*Third Row (Standing):* F. P. Waldron, W. H. Ricks, J. H. Purcell, P. A. Hankey, J. F. Quinn, R. M. Stirk, V. E. Holiman, F. L. Roper, H. H. McAnney, H. W. Plott, R. B. Vaughan, H. Rodriguez, A. N. Craig.

# FEATURES

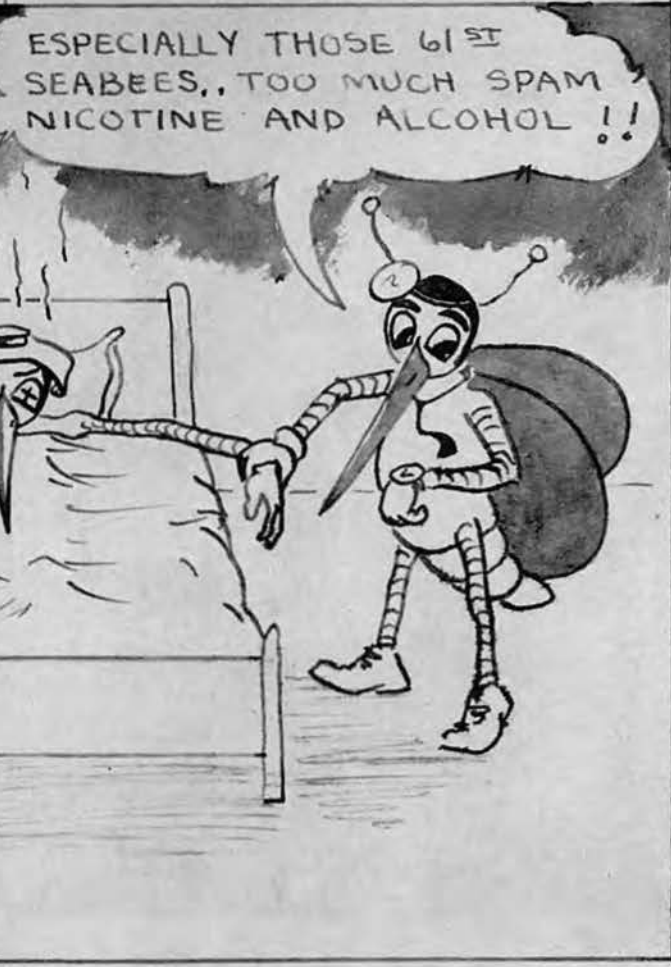




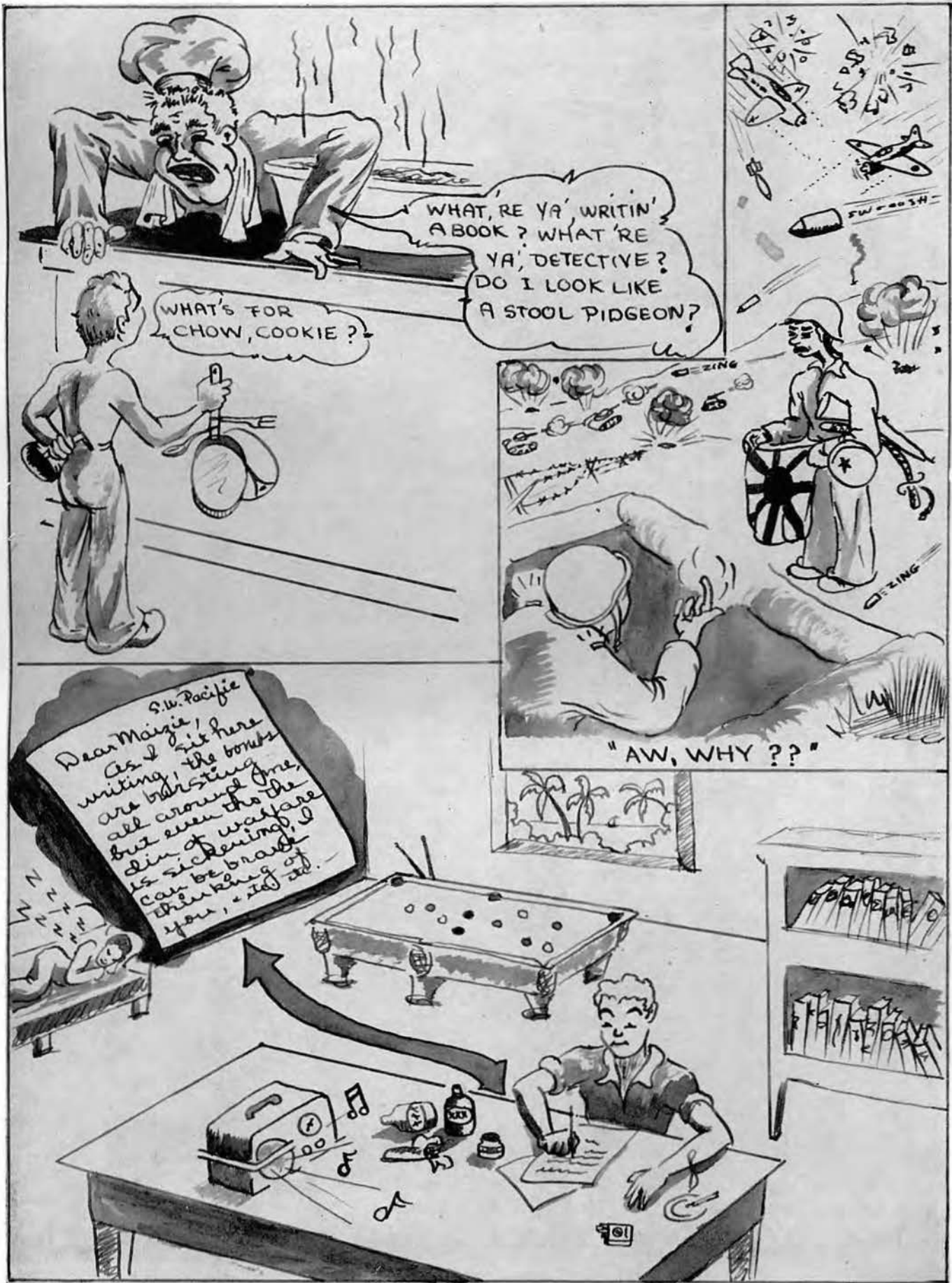
# Features

This section portrays a pictorial miscellany of events and incidents that occurred in the 61st Battalion at one time or another. Most of the photographs contained herein are self-explanatory and need not be summarized. There were hundreds of individual incidents that should be recorded here, but are too numerous to recount. A few examples were: the September night on Guadalcanal when the 61st Swing Band manned an AA gun to shoot down a Japanese plane; the lectures on scouting of combat patrols as given by Chief MacDouglass; the pig barbecues held on the company streets on Guadalcanal; Commander Studdert's article from whence our title, "Old Timers" was derived; the first white woman the Seabees saw overseas; Eleanor's failure to visit us in our camp when she landed on Guadalcanal; the flourishing cat-eye and shell necklace industry; our first Christmas overseas; the change of commanders on Guadalcanal; off the record sight-seeing trips; the loss of our Boston Bull terrier mascot; the transfer of some of the men to a regiment; the June 16th raid by Japanese planes; the confusion caused by New Zealand money; the dynamite fishing around Emirau Island; the monthly birthday parties; the nightly fish fries with liquid refreshments; the Armed Forces Institute Classes in the Russells; the beer party in the Admiralties; the long wait aboardship in both the Admiralty Islands and in Hollandia; New Guinea; the invasion landing at Dulag; the insufferable dust on the first day on the road from the beach; the mud after the rains came; fighting a typhoon that blew our tents down during one night; seeking shelter during the Japanese strafing; the three-day battle with the paratroopers; the long and rationless trips to Samar; the early hospitality of Guiuan before the SP's arrived; sitting through movies during rainy nights; the second anniversary celebration that stopped the show; and the drawing for rotation. These are but a pitiful few of the incidents in the lives of the 61st Seabees.

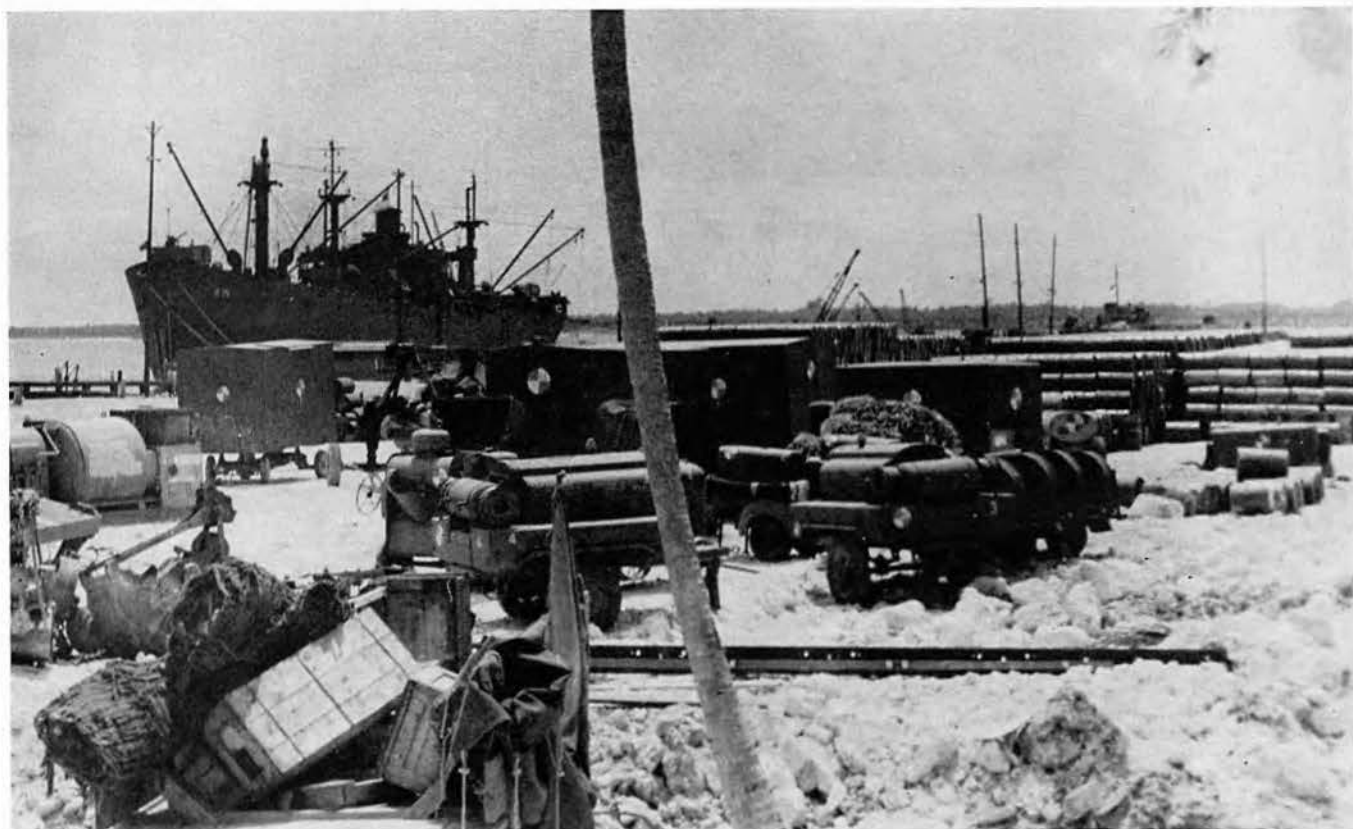
On these incidents alone a book could be written. Thus we hope the pictures and captions in this section will, in part, illustrate them.





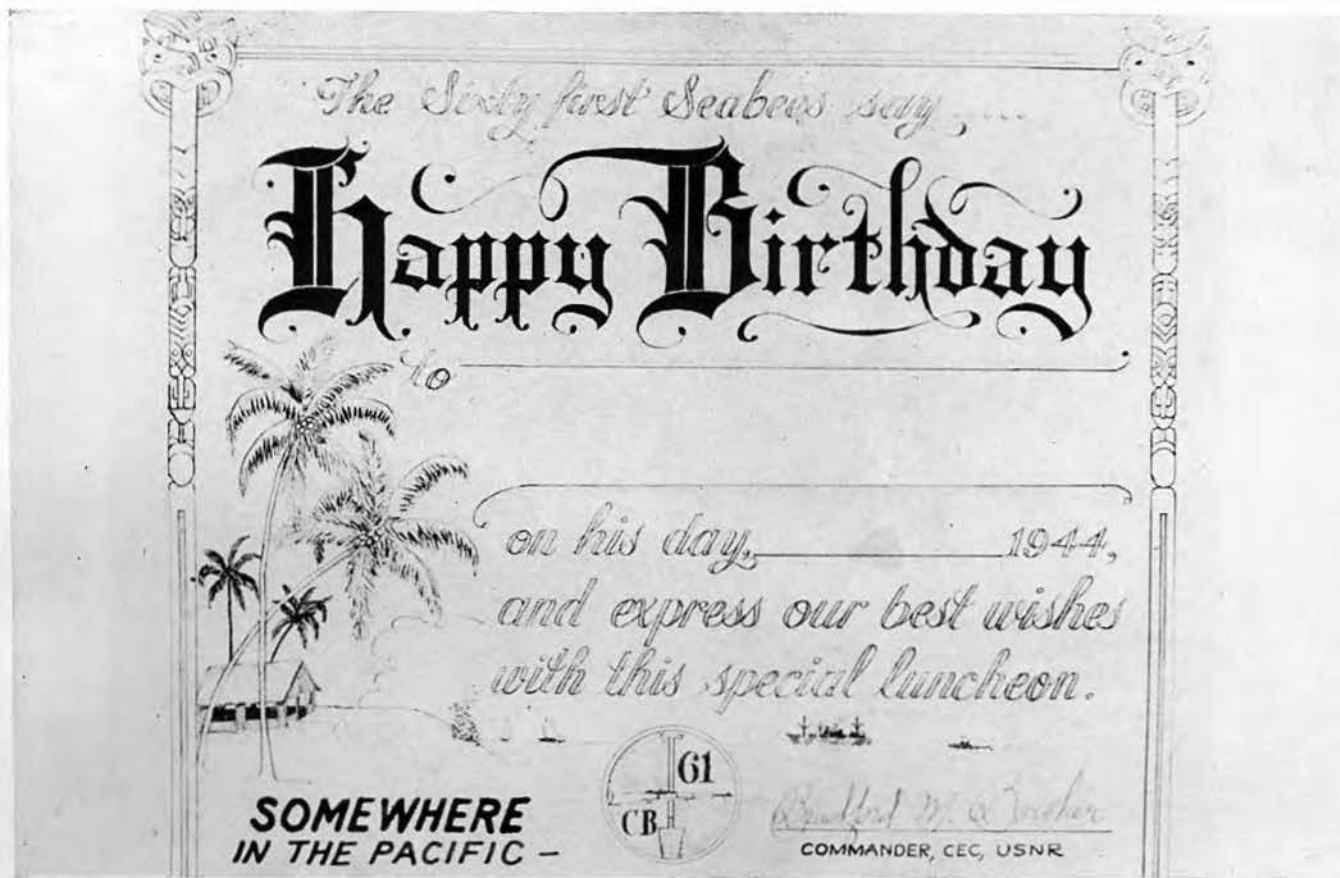


61st mobile equipment awaiting to be loaded for a future cruise from the Russells



Our Guadalcanal dump carries the torch.

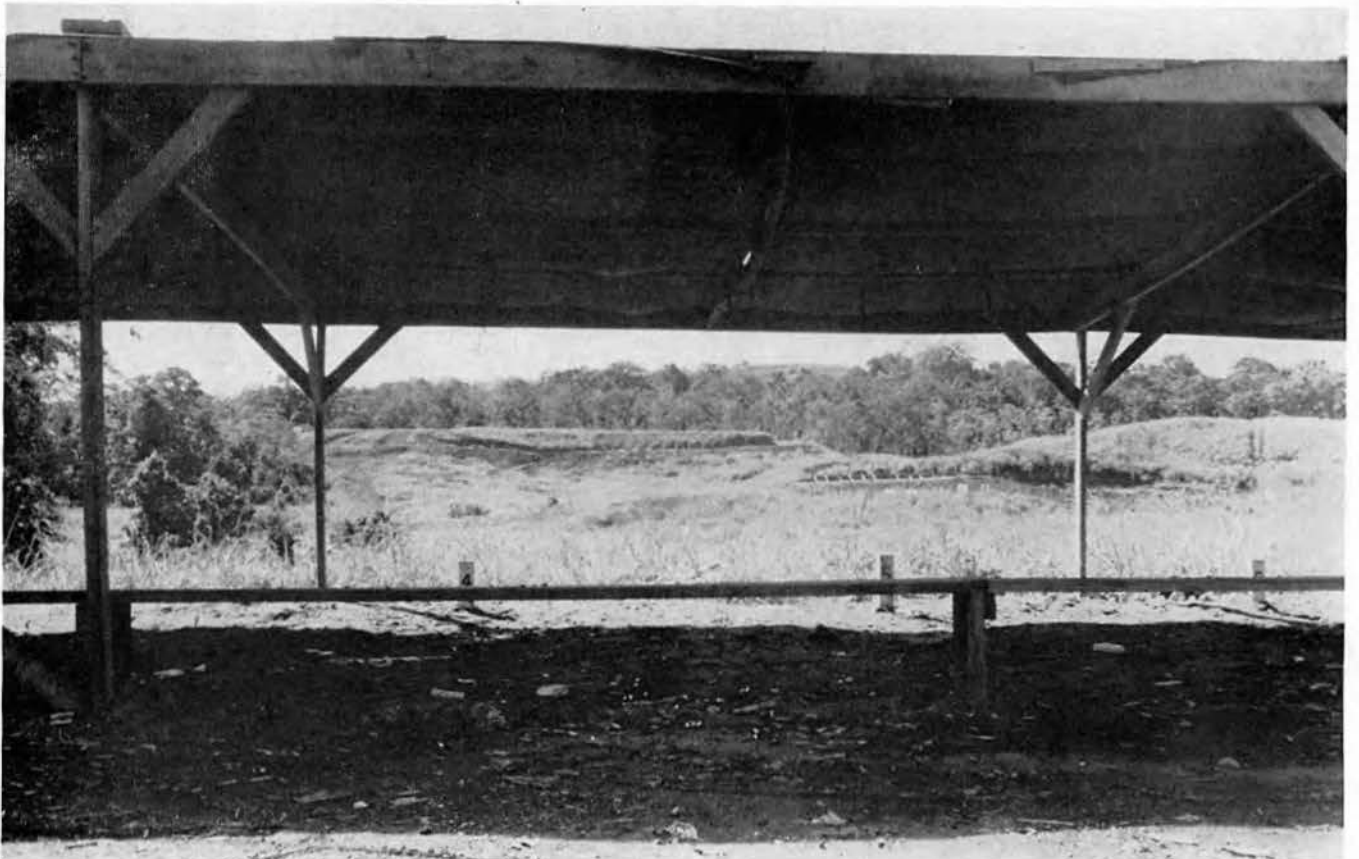
Battalion birthday greeting card



Army sign on the main road near the 61st Camp on Guadalcanal



61st Swing Band takes over during an air raid on Guadalcanal.



61st Rifle range on Guadalcanal



Change of command on Guadalcanal



Camp pets

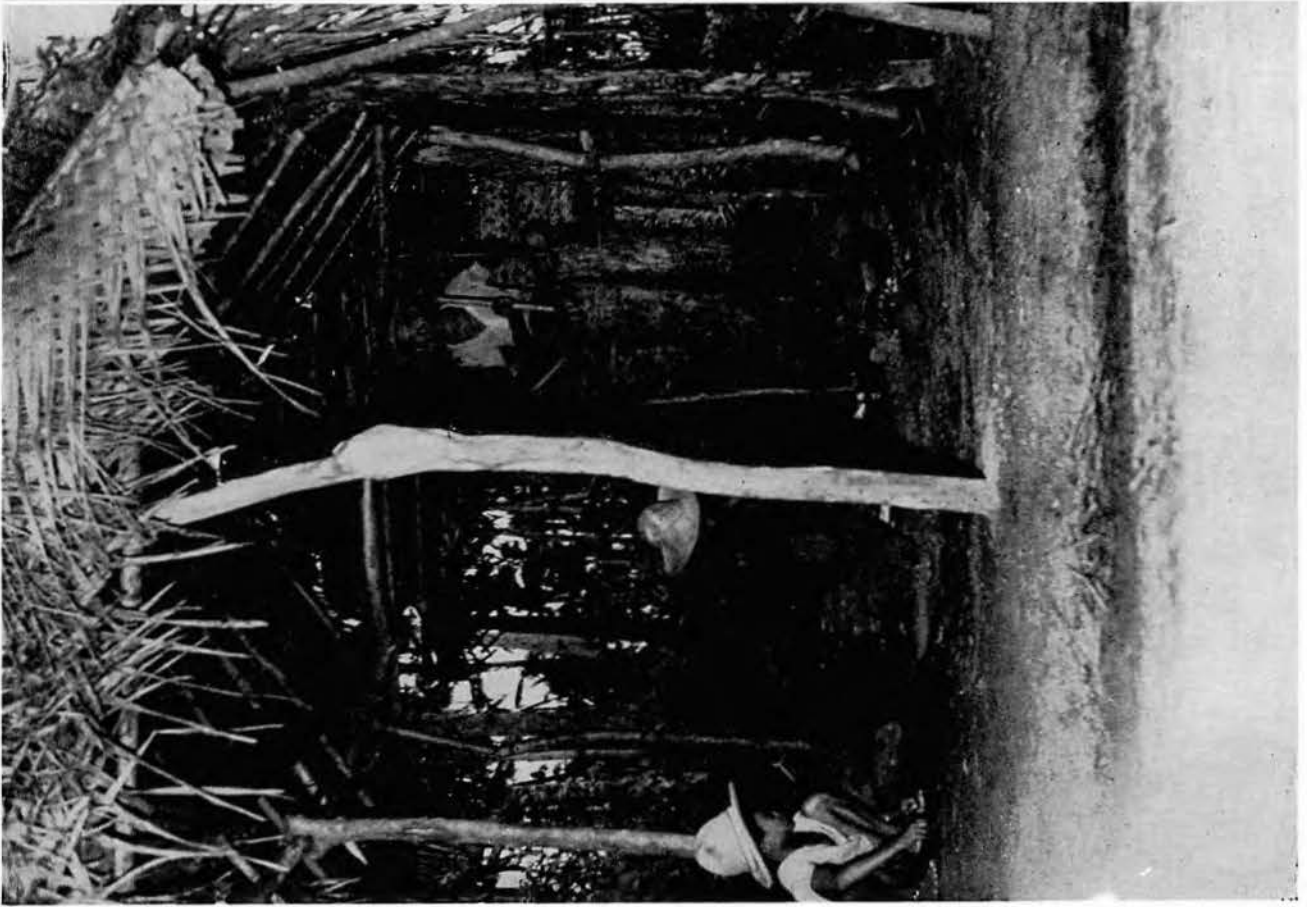


En route to the front, Leyte, P. I.



Mr. Confused Bee, 61st mascot





Filipino blacksmith on Samar Island, P. I.



Captured Jap officer on Guiuan, Samar, P. I.



Jap tony on San Pablo strip near the 61st Camp, Leyte, P. I.



B-29 pays a visit to the Samar airfield.

Wildcat lands on Samar airstrip built by 61st.



Fleet of mail planes at rest on the Samar airfield.

TBF landing from Samar airfield.



Jap planes dropped a phosphorous bomb on Leyte.



Aerial view of the 61st Seabees' camp, Samar Island, P. I.



Filipino coastal ferry off Samar Island, P. I.



61st recipients of the Purple Heart Award, Samar Island, P. I.



Street in Salcedo



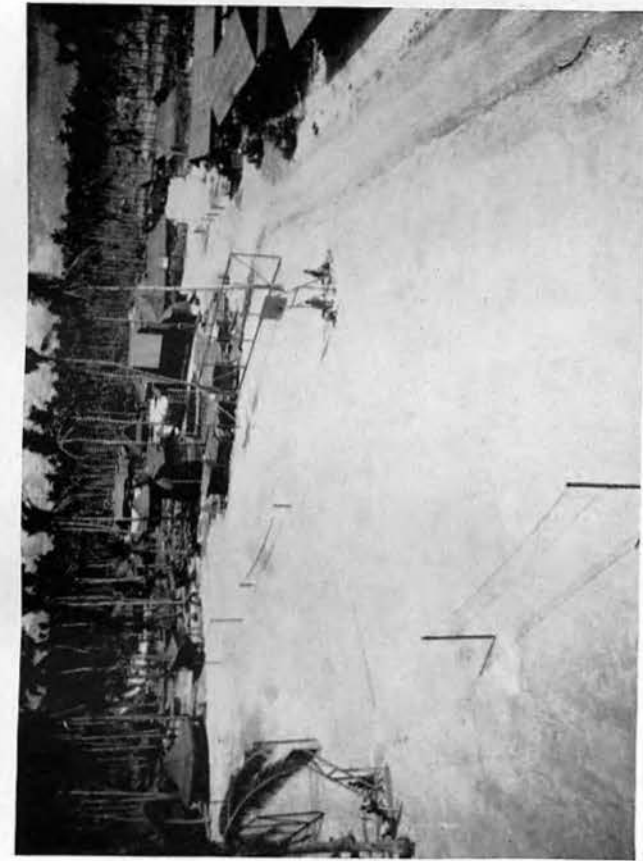
Officer-in-Charge pinning Purple Heart on Knighton



Our first Christmas overseas, Guadalcanal, 1943



Our second Christmas overseas, Samar Island, P. I.



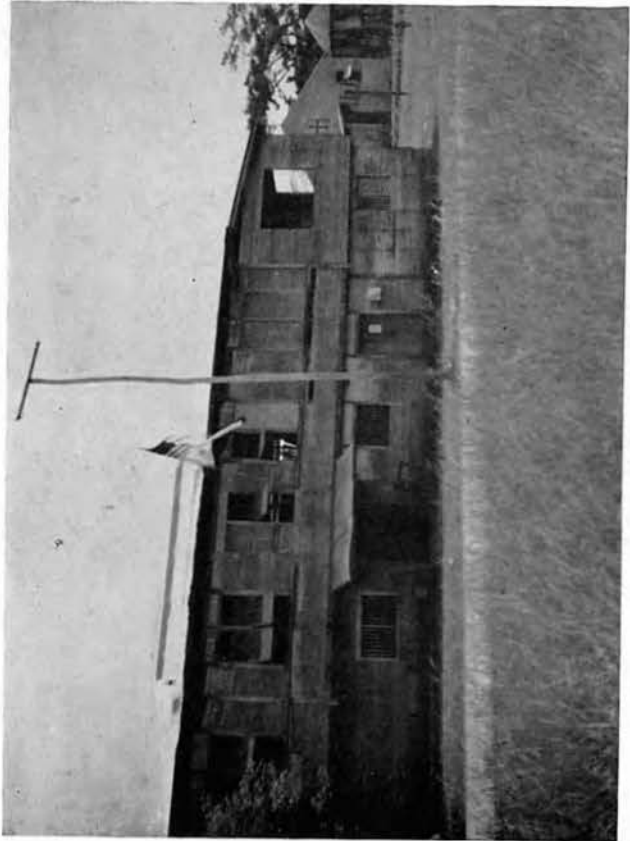
61st recreation area, Samar Island, P. I.



Reddy's Sky Bar-X 61st juke joint



Two Seabees of the first draft giving away their junk and pets.

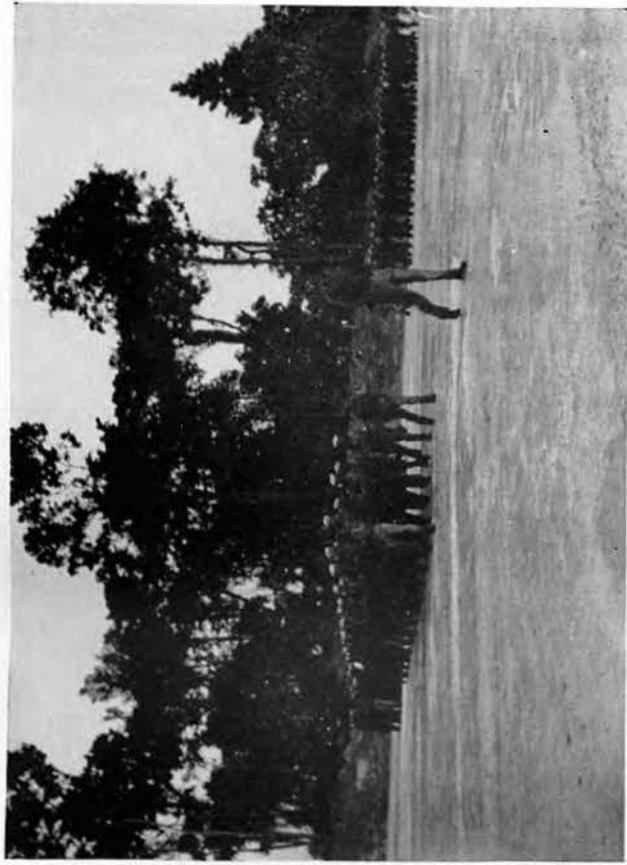


Municipal Building, Saledo





"61st Seabees' Armored Division"



61st Seabees parade for Admiral Halsey on Emirau Island.



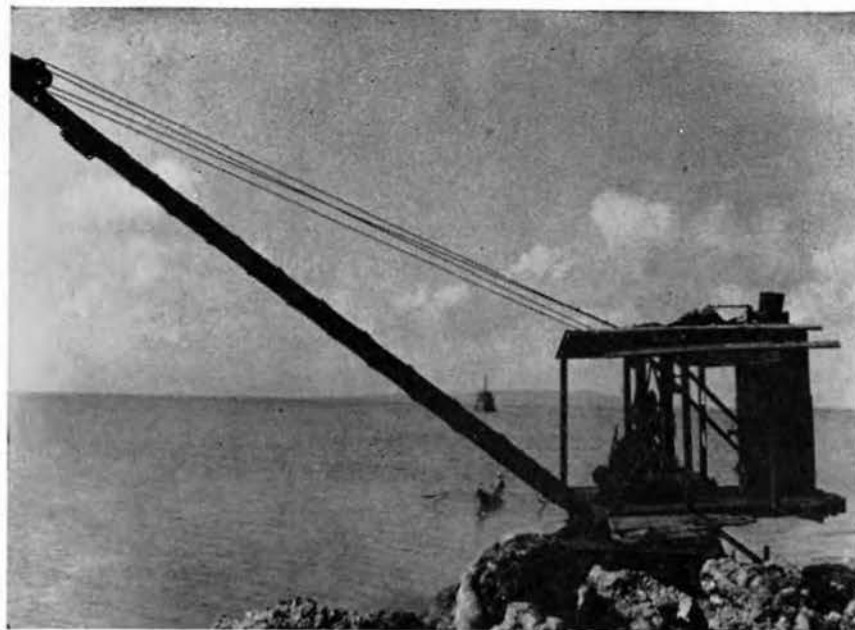
"The Seabee Air Corps"



Seabee home life in the Philippines



Two Marine Fighter Squadrons honor the 61st by using the Seabee insignia on their planes.



Old Filipino steam crane on jetty on Samar Island, P. I.



"Washing his dainties," Samar Island



Samar Islanders, "Buy a hat, Serr?"



Filipino municipal school children entertain the service forces on Samar Island with a native pageant.



61sters bid a buddy going Stateside, "Cheerio."



William Bradford Huie, correspondent and author, gathers data from the 61st Seabees for his forthcoming new book, "From Omaha to Okinawa."



"Stateside sweepstakes," drawing names for the first draft going home, Samar Island, P. I.



"Old Folks." What's left of the original twenty-seven chiefs of the 61st.

# SPORTS



in the  
**61<sup>st</sup>**

by D.B. Webb

# S P O R T S

## *Baseball*

Of all sports, in which the 61st Seabees engaged, baseball was probably the most successful athletic endeavor. The 61st organized its first baseball club at Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California, and played its first game on April 4, 1943, against the ABC Base team. This game was more or less a tryout for baseball prospects. After arriving overseas, the 61st, along with other services force units, organized a baseball league on Guadalcanal. The eight teams in this league represented the best ball clubs in the Southwest Pacific at that time. Consequently when the 61st won the league championship, they automatically became the Southwest Pacific Champions of 1943. This success was made possible under the leadership of Chief "Old Folks" Fuller and a squad and recreational committee consisting of "Chunky" Maret, "Doc" Delia, "Schoolboy" Ponce, "Lefty" Fortune, "Curley Locks" Taylor, "Nawleens" Miller, "Maggie" Magnon, "Gabby" Whicker, "Sleepy" Guant, "Fatty" Goble, "Red" Hughes, "Smoky" Greenaway, "Fireball" Rode, "Satchel-Hook" Molchan, "Little" Pruitt, "Big" Bigham, "Stubby" Kerns, "Caroline Joe" Monett, "Butch" Kirkland, "Ol Proff" Webb, "Chuck" Boffetti, "Mush Mouth" Mathis, and "Old Bones" Arnau.

This team lost games, but never in a series. They were outstanding players for every position. For reasons of war, the Guadalcanal league was the only one with which our baseball team had a chance to compete. Competition has been keen wherever our team has had a chance to play, which has been often. The approximate standings on our ball club is 40 wins and with but seven losses.

## *Softball*

The 61st had never organized a Battalion softball club for interservice competition. Whenever another unit was played, a pick-up team was used. Contrary to this, however, an intramural league was formed in the Russell Islands comprised of six teams. These teams were represented by the five companies and the chiefs' club. After gay, but raucous weeks of keen competition, Company A emerged the victor with Company D a close second.

There were odd softball games played between officers and the chiefs and various pick-up teams. They were always scheduled on the spur of the moment.

## *Basketball*

The 61st Basketteers never won a league championship, but were considered by all competitors as being stiff competition. The basketball team was the only one that managed to engage in competition on every Island X. For their undying spirit and maintenance of physical fitness, the basketteers deserve a great amount of credit.

One noteworthy incident worth recounting took place on Guadalcanal. The Seabees were scheduled to play an Army MP officers team on a court beside a Japanese prisoners stockade. During the third quarter of the game, when the score was tied, Jap prisoners could be heard giving excited yells to the perspiring players.

They seemed to take an avid interest in the sport.

## *Volley Ball*

This sport was only played regularly by the officers and the men of Company D. The men of Company D made a league inside their own company, being of platoon teams, and played every evening. The other companies engaged in the sport only sporadically. At no time was there a Battalion-sponsored team.

## *Miscellaneous Recreations*

On Emirau Island the 61st Seabees acquired a cast-off pool table from a newly arrived Army unit. Seabee craftsmen soon restored the table to good condition. Since that time that table has served to fill many spare hours for many war-weary Seabees.

Such sports as tennis, badminton, handball, and horse shoes, were practically unknown on our schedule of recreations. However, during the latter part of our stay on the Philippines, tennis courts and horse shoe courts were built, but the men never had sufficient time to use them extensively.

Summarizing sports activities overseas, the editors would like to say that there was a real desire for athletic competition on the part of the men. But due to extensive service in the combat areas, opportunities were restricted. In spite of these restraining situations, the men did produce a sports schedule of worth from which they gained honors. We are proud of these accomplishments.



BASEBALL CHAMPIONS, GUADALCANAL, 1943

Front Row, Left to Right (Sitting): Maret, 2b; Delia, 2b; Ponce, cf; Fortune, rf; Taylor, p; and Miller, 3b. Second Row (Kneeling): Fuller, p and Mgr.; Pruitt, lf; Molchan, ss; Rode, p; Greenaway, 1b; Whicker, c; and Magnan, lf. Third Row (Standing): Lieut. Robbins; Lt Comdr. S. Berman; Kerns, c; Monett, rf; Kirkland, cf; Arnau, ut; D. B. Webb, ut; Bigham, ut; Lt. Comdr. Koopman; and Chaplain Alexander.

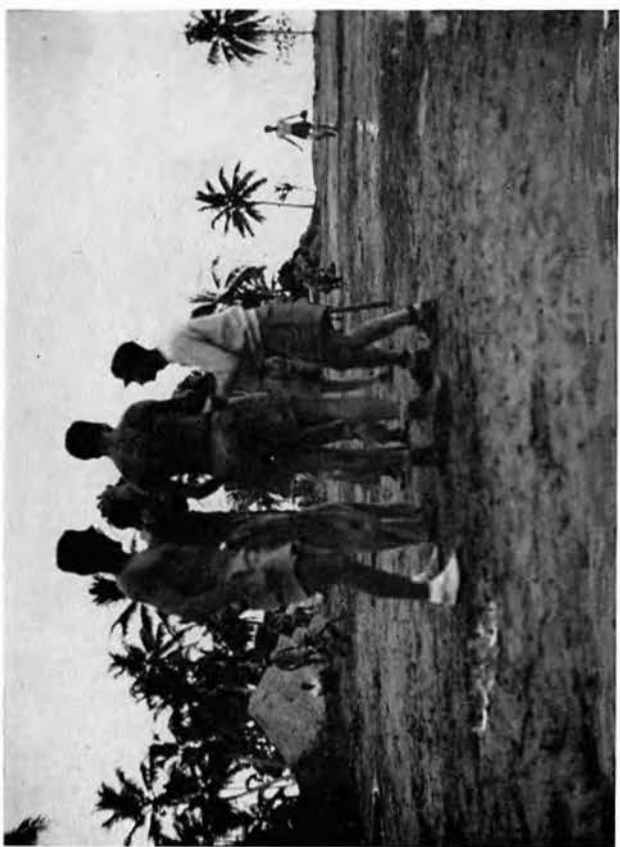




Laying down a bunt, Emirau



Home Run



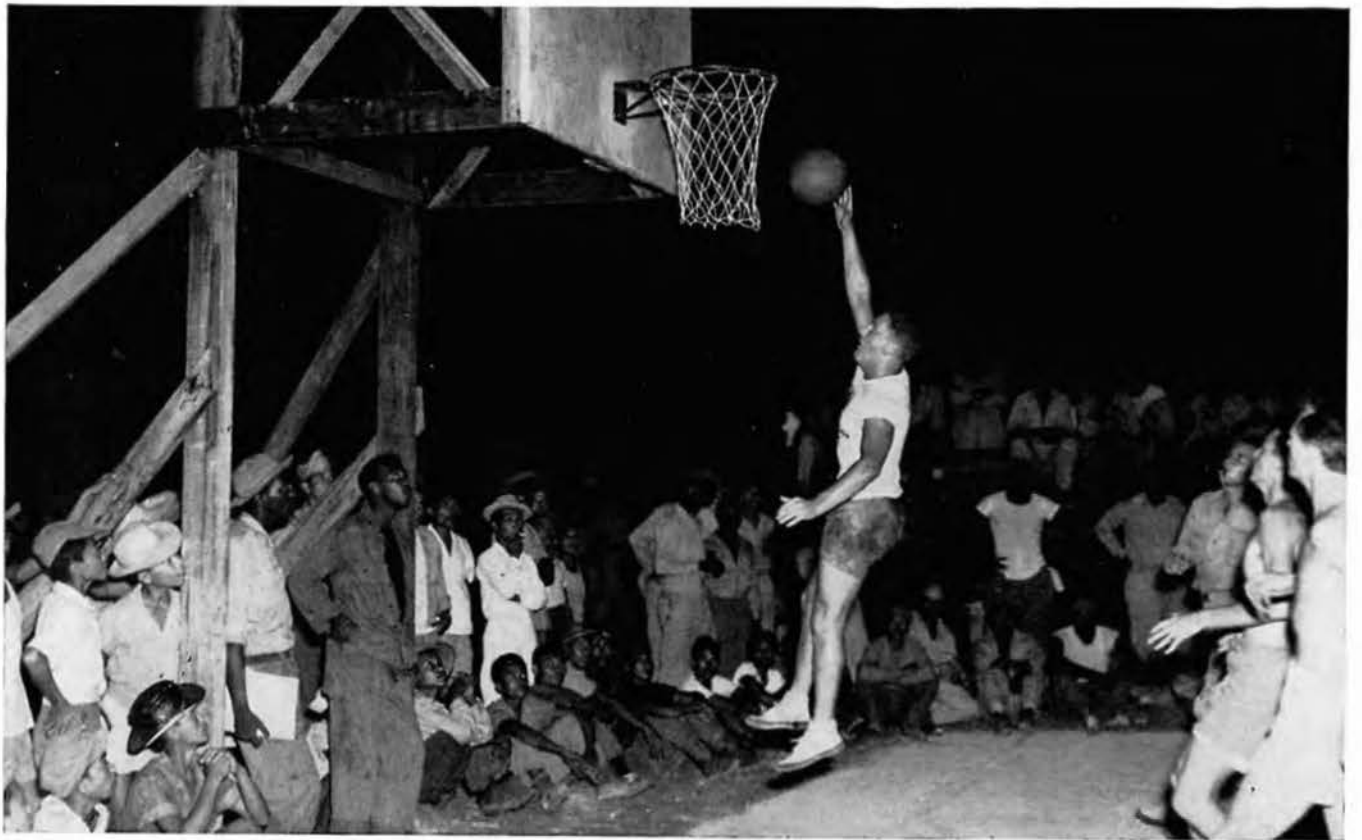
Arguing with the umpire, Emirau



Foul Ball

BASKETBALL SQUAD, EMIRAU ISLAND

Front Row, Left to Right: Beers, Bedgood, Miller, Lapila, Molchan, and Poor. Second Row: Kupinski, Webb, Rodriguez, Kildea, "Mgr.," Levi, Lilley, and Matchett.



"Crip" shot 61sters defeat the Marines.

1944 SOFTBALL INTRAMURAL CHAMPIONS, COMPANY A  
 Front Row, Left to Right: Poor, Hoff, Kirkland, (Capt.) Gauntt, and Miller. Second Row: Baxter, Geiger,  
 Shaw, Maret, Maslanka, Elder, Beyrly, and Jackson.



61ST BOXING SQUAD, EMIRAU ISLAND  
 Front Row, Left to Right: Manganiello, Levy, Miller, Beers, Lapila, and Newkerk. Second Row: Latina,  
 Sherman, Sperry, Henderson, O'Connell, Jochum, Morton, and Lively.

# AMUSEMENTS



*in the*  
**61<sup>st</sup>**

by D. B. Webb

# Amusements

There comes a pause in the day's occupation. Just as the sun is gathering its light rays, preparing to depart and brighten up another part of the earth, it is then that men turn their minds to the relaxing and soothing effects of recreation. The morale of every man and woman in the armed services is constructively influenced by the amount of time allowed to participate in diversified recreational activities.

A search for musicians and entertainers was made during the Battalion's training at Camp Peary. Then musical instruments were ordered. In the meantime B. F. Martin was selected as band leader. Lt. Eldridge was appointed as recreation officer. J. H. Kerns was athletic or "Smoker" promoter. Large attendances have seen many interesting wrestling and boxing matches in these "Smoker" promotions.

At Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, the orchestra came into full swing. The Oxnard USO Unit requested the band to play for their dances. This proved to be successful, and more performances continued to appreciative audiences. The local newspaper complimented their efforts as entertainers. During the week days, the band practiced many of its numbers on the drill field, and thus the field drills were much more pleasant to the marching men.

To the band members, April 4, 1943, was a day of many pleasant memories. At 1100 the band was escorted to the Saticoy Country Club. Here many screen personalities were seen, and having an opportunity to associate with them in entertaining approximately 8000 service men proved to be quite a treat to the musicians. Many autographs were collected, and a buffet style supper was enjoyed that evening with them.

Prior to embarkation, the last and most impressive band and Battalion march was made on Sunday, April 11, when marching to Divine Services conducted by our Chaplain Alexander. This was the first event of this kind witnessed by Camp Rousseau personnel, and many compliments were given by the officers.

On that memorable day of April 14, the 61st Battalion embarked on the *M.S. Brastagi*. As she sailed out of the harbor the music of "Anchors Aweigh" was being played by the band. Many lumps formed in the throats of the men as the Stateside coast line disappeared from view.

While en route to our unknown destination, the band played popular music over the ship's public address system. At different intervals the program would be in charge of a dance orchestra known as "Chuck Sperry and the Georgia Wildcats." Any tune, hill-billy or popular, these boys played it, and with an added bit of humorous gab. They became favorite entertainers, playing special requests of those having birthdays.

An eleven-day stop was made at Espiritu Santo Island in New Hebrides. During the stay the men went ashore for a swim on the beach. In the nearby coconut grove many coconuts were broken open and the white meat relished. Also many lemons and limes were gathered. These activities afforded many hours of relaxation and an opportunity to do a little bit of exploring on the beach and in a native settlement nearby.

About a week after making a beachhead on Guadalcanal, a recreation tent was erected, with Chaplain Alexander in charge as Welfare Officer, and B. F. Martin assigned to him. In the tent could be found many games, radio to receive the latest news flashes, popular and classical music records with a portable phonograph, writing tables, several hundred books, and sports equipment. At the Koli Camp site another recreation tent was erected. J. H. Kerns was assigned to look after the recreational equipment located there. Many books were to be had, radio for listening to latest broadcast news to this area, records, and card games, as well as many newspapers and magazines.

One of their many songs had a realistic touch. Yes, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." It was on July 17 that the orchestra was detailed to put on a show, to entertain the 217 Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) Unit. The boys half way completed their program, when the air raid signal was given. Each one rushed in a mad scramble to seek cover in the foxholes. It wasn't long before the gunners needed more ammunition and extra help to get it to them. Thus the Seabee Orchestra boys had a job of passing these projectiles to the gunners in the pit. This they did with valiant swiftness. Soon the command was given to get under cover, as the Jap planes were nearly overhead. After

several minutes the air alert was over and the boys started again to finish their program. After playing several numbers an interruption of four "ker-woomph" blasts were heard. Quick dives into the foxholes followed and as before, the musicians were passing the ammunition into the gun pits. Later they were relieved at the sight of a night fighter downing the invading bomber plane. It was nearly midnight when the boys finally completed their program. The Seabees that made this tour are: B. F. Martin, music director; F. D. Harrison, trumpet; W. R. Hawkins, guitar; Carrol Huckaba, guitar; C. H. Sperry, vocalist; O. N. Vandecar, drums; and C. T. MacDouglass.

Our first star of stage and screen to appear on our stage in Guadalcanal was Jim Burke, comedian. His performance easily substantiated his reputation as one of the leading comedians in the show business.

Soon to follow was Randolph Scott with his group of entertainers: Rosita Moreno, Mary Elliott, Frances Faye. Being the first women to perform on our stage, they attracted wide-spread publicity among other units and a large attendance was had that night. Many encores were encouraged, and if an applause meter could have registered the applause that night, the stage show would have been declared a unanimous success.

Lieut. Maynard was introduced to the men the following afternoon. He gave an address about New Zealand, its hospitality, scenic parks to see and forms of recreation that could be found there. This trip to New Zealand turned out to be educational as well as a place of sincere hospitality, which was enjoyed by all members of the 61st. Many expressed their appreciation and desire to see the country again.

Being hurried back to Guadalcanal, we left for Emirau, the next invasion to be made by the Battalion. After a few weeks of hewing out the jungle to make a suitable camp site, our stage was erected. On the night of June 1, 1944, the 63rd Battalion Band gave us our first stage show, which was well received. In the latter part of the month, the 17th Special gave a good performance.

To the men having birthdays in a certain month are given a special banquet. The men having birthdays in the following months are also given a special banquet. Thus each man will have an opportunity to celebrate his birthday. Special delicacies are prepared for these occasions and are enjoyed with gastronomic appreciation.

After finishing our projects, the Battalion was then moved to Banika Island of the Russell's. Here, after becoming situated in our new camp site, an opportunity came to listen to one of the finest military bands known, the Royal New Zealand Air Force Band. This band showed its versatile accomplishments by playing many types of music. Later in the evening, one of America's top-flight comedians, Bob Hope, accompanied by Frances Langford and Jerry Colonna, played. Both shows were well received and attended by a large audience.

Our band was once again organized with Chief Mayor in charge. Many of the instruments had to be repaired or traded for better ones. Diligent practice followed. The band members were, Sax section: J. H. Pickels, I. N. Newkirk, P. R. Gonzales, J. F. Mayor; Trumpet: F. D. Harrison; Guitar: W. R. Hawkins; Trombone: H. E. Magnan; Bass Violin, C. M. Bassham; and Drums: O. W. Van Decar. The rhythmic swing music played by the orchestra has been in big demand by other service units, having been asked to appear on their respective programs.

It was here that Chaplain Scott relieved Chaplain Alexander. Thereafter it was a matter of but a few days before the camp was torn down and loaded on the ships taking us to our next invasion on the Island of Leyte in the Philippines.

Along with many other "firsts," the 61st Orchestra has the distinction of being the very first organized swing band to play in the Philippines since the Japanese invasion. The band played for many parties and dances involving Americans and Filipinos as well as giving concerts on special occasions for the Battalion.

Chief Mayor was told by an elderly Filipino that the people were quite impressed by the variety of numbers the band played and everyone in his village was enthusiastically fond of American swing. In fact, this man stated that it was the first American band he had seen for over twenty years.

Every place the swing band has played since its arrival on the islands, the Filipino people have gathered in huge numbers to listen. After each selection their enthusiastic approval was deafening.

Several Filipino musicians have asked if they might practice with our band in order to improve their technique.

Among our entertainers can be found an amusing and colorful personality, Chuck Sperry, a man of varied talents. His talents seem capable

of doing things without provocation. Many things for that matter, about all that one can do about his talents is to ignore them until they decide to become a stage show or a work project. Then you can sit back and stare at the display with the customary awe. He certainly gets results.

Several weeks later our permanent camp site was constructed on Samar Island. There was a super-streamlined stage with adjoining dressing room for the USO glamour gals.

Chief D. W. Billups conceived the plan to build a stage of scrapped Quonset hut material. Being called to receive a commission, he left Chief S. L. Cason in charge of the project. Chief Cason called together a crew of craftsmen and told them what was needed to be done. E. H. Knetig, H. R. Kraatz, W. B. Steel constructed the framework and sheathed it with corrugated iron. Chief Cason and C. A. Jackson installed the sound fixtures. J. W. Drew, P. Laurent and R. A. Shannon secured the necessary material and painted modernistic patterns to complete the project.

The finished product resembles the most modern type stage of a streamlined movie house in the States. The screen is above the shell-like stage, and both are flanked by modernistic wing panels. The panel colors start with black at the top and are followed down with yellow, green, and maroon respectively. The interior of the shell stage is a soft gray.

A resemblance of a Latin-American fiesta was the first performance brought to us by four featured players of USO Unit No. 460. They sang and danced before a large crowd of cheering Seabees.

Lonnie Alonso, a senorita from Wyoming won the men's hearts by her charming rendition of Spanish songs and the current Hit-Parade favorite, "Rum and Coca-Cola." Mayita de la Valle, fresh from three years of film work at Warner Brothers, made all the boys whistle their best—"street corner" style—as she did her whirling dances. Both of these girls were beautifully costumed. Fred Orrico, Brooklyn tenor, and Manuel San Miguel, from Broadway's "Mexican Hayride," drew their share of applause.

On Christmas Eve a party was given in the mess hall. A Backhau tree, native to the Philippines, served as a Christmas tree. Its many short leaves and branches were suitable for ornaments. Chief J. McClukie, D. S. Weis and the Bellamy brothers decorated the tree with bits of odly painted objects and the features of a hand-drawn Santa Claus in front. Over the serving

counters were placed crepe paper which brought a touch of home.

Movies! the main attraction of recreation that is looked forward to and about which a question is asked a hundred times a day, if not more. The answer is posted on the bulletin board and the other places about camp. Yes, the desire for entertainment out here in the Pacific is very great.

The 61st came overseas without any motion picture equipment. Through the efforts of the Supply Department and our Chaplain, two worn-out machines were obtained by trade. They never proved to be quite satisfactory, due to the shortage of satisfactory working parts. Later a 16-mm. machine was secured that operated very well, though the supply of film was limited.

Chief Cason was assigned as operator or projectionist. During the latter part of our stay on the Canal, the operator was required to make the trip to Koli Camp, a distance of eighteen miles, to provide movie entertainment for the boys located there. Several occasions, during those trips, proved to be humorous and some to be a little pathetic. Once, while projecting an air raid scene on the screen, someone leaped up and gave an ear-shattering shout, "Air raid!" Everyone either ran, jumped, or crawled wildly to nearby foxholes. The operator was left alone in the darkness, until out of the stygian gloom, a firm friendly hand pulled him into a nearby foxhole. After several minutes of sitting in a twisted position, he cautiously peered out and saw the lights in the airfield lit. Another incident at Koli was a tropical dew that caused a bridge to be washed out. The operator was detained at the bank of the swollen stream. A disgruntled experience spread over his countenance as he gazed over the wide expanse where once was a bridge.

At Teneru Camp it hadn't rained a drop. Therefore it took a lot of perspiration and fast patter to tell his powers-that-be that it wasn't GI double talk that kept him detained.

Chief Cason has had C. A. "Pee-Wee" Jackson assigned to him. "Pee-Wee," a dust bowl Kansan, showed much aptitude while being schooled to be a projectionist. After several months, "Pee-Wee" has proven to be a capable operator, as well as assisting in handling the stage sound equipment while putting on USO shows.

The 61st Battalion is fortunate to have Chief S. L. Cason, a competent projectionist of many years' operating experience in civilian life.



Farewell dance, March 14, 1944, Town Hall, Auckland, N. Z.



Georgia Wildcats in action in Auckland, N. Z.





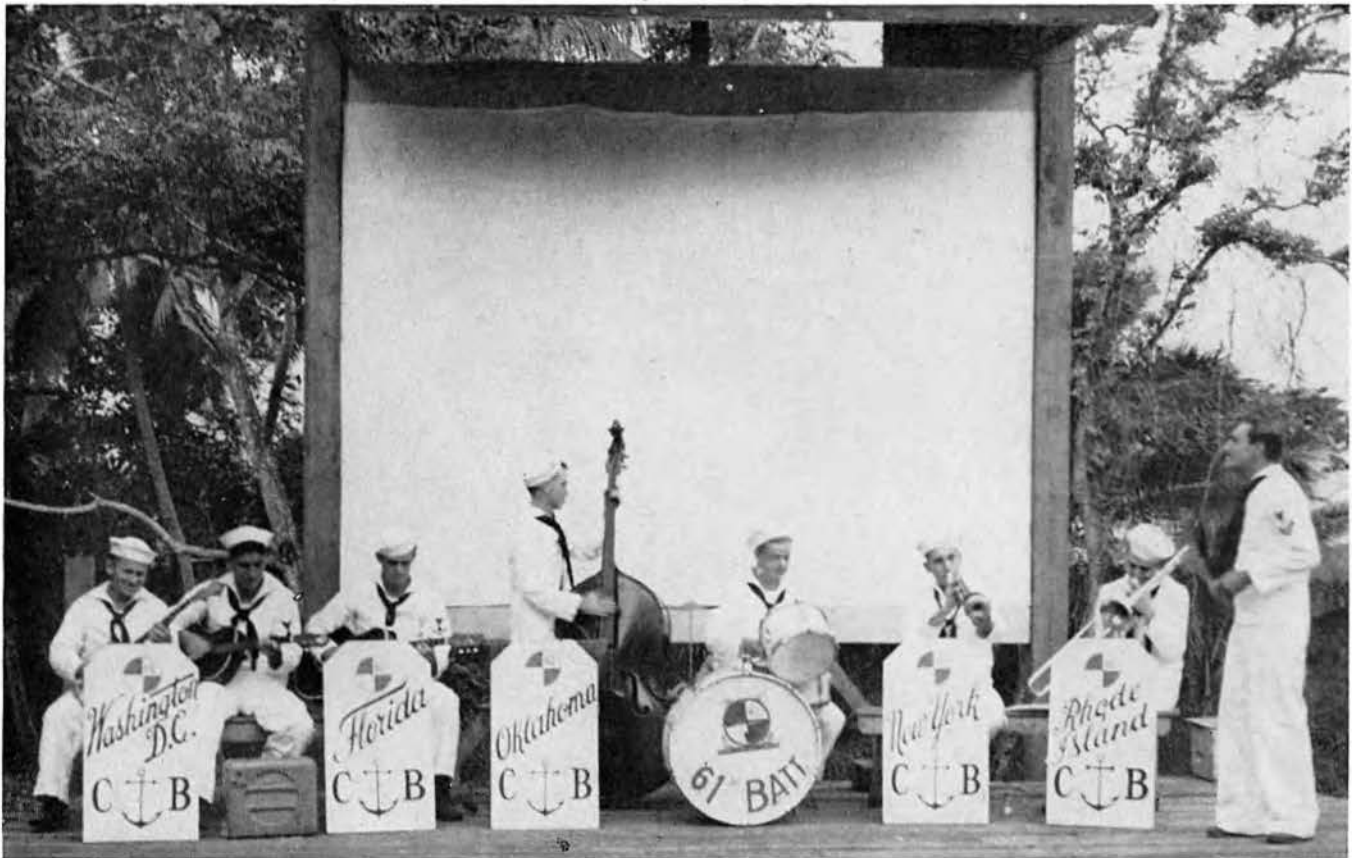
Watching the floorshow, Town Hall, Auckland



"Cuttin' the rug, New Zealand style"



61st Swing Band in the Russell Islands.



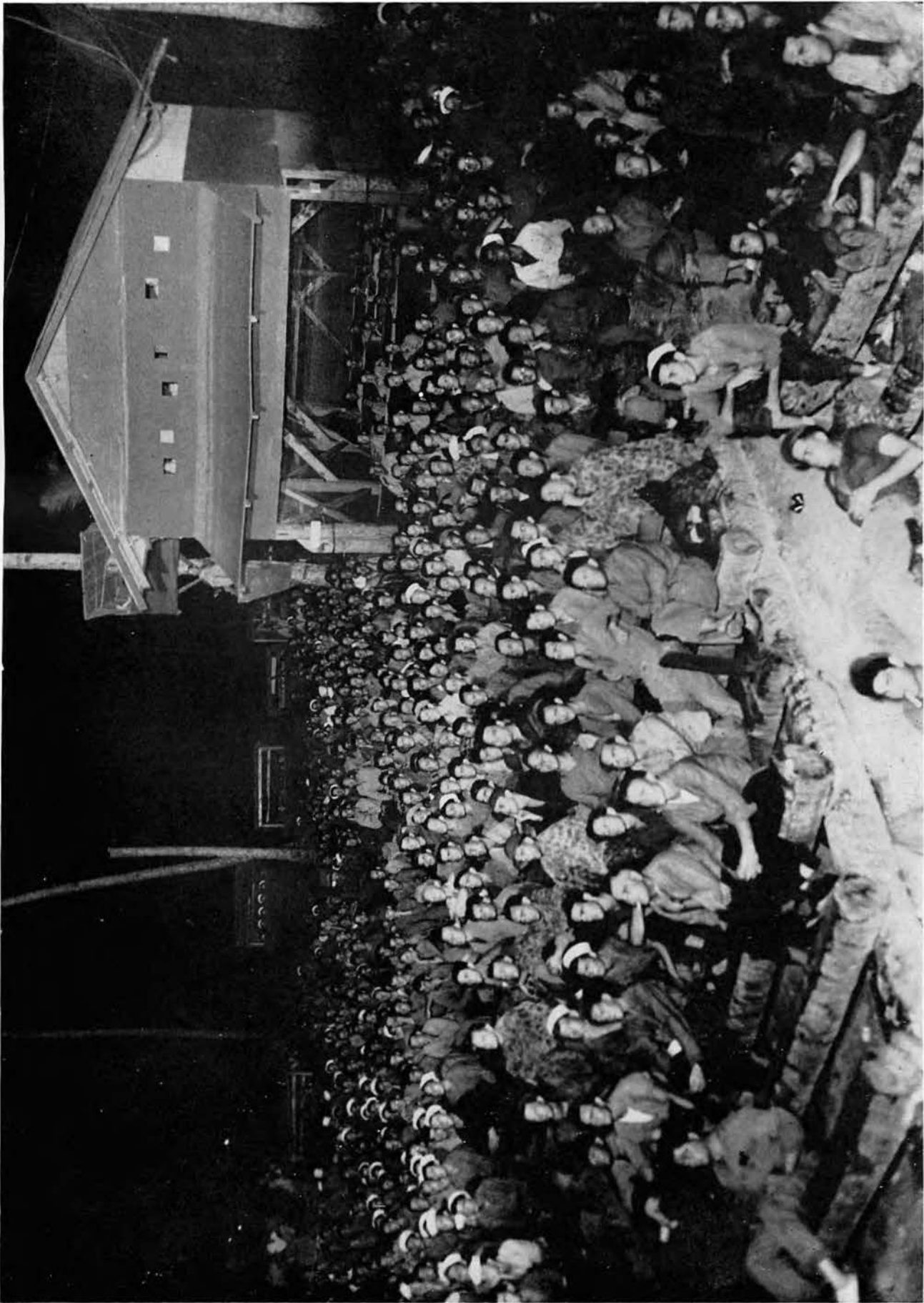
The Georgia Wildcats, Guadalcanal



61st Seabees' Theater, Samar Island



61st Seabees' Theater, Russell Islands.



"At ease," in the 61st theater, Samar Island



Boating and swimming in the Russell Islands



Beer issue in the Admiralty Islands



Keeping up with the times in the 61st library, Samar Island



Filipino serenade on Samar Island, P. I.



61st Jam Band  
plays for dance on  
Leyte Island.



"Belles of the Ball,"  
Samar Island



61sters attend party  
given by the Samar  
Islanders.



Mayta de la Valle, Warner Brothers star, swings a mean hip for the 61ster on Samar Island.



USO unit dressed for 61st show on Samar Island



Little Peggy Alexander greets us on Russells.



Mayta has everything.

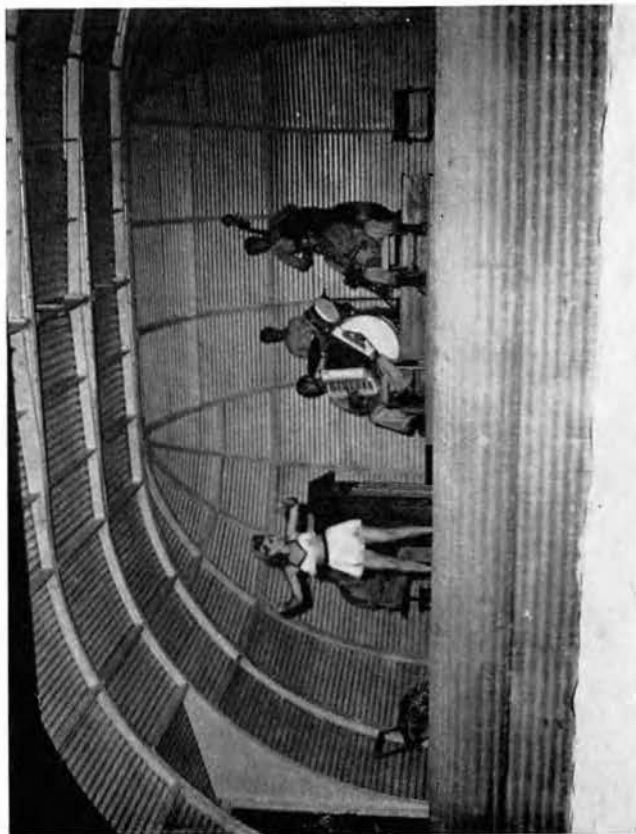


USO girls at ease with 61st Seabees



Mexican USO show entertains us on Samar Island.





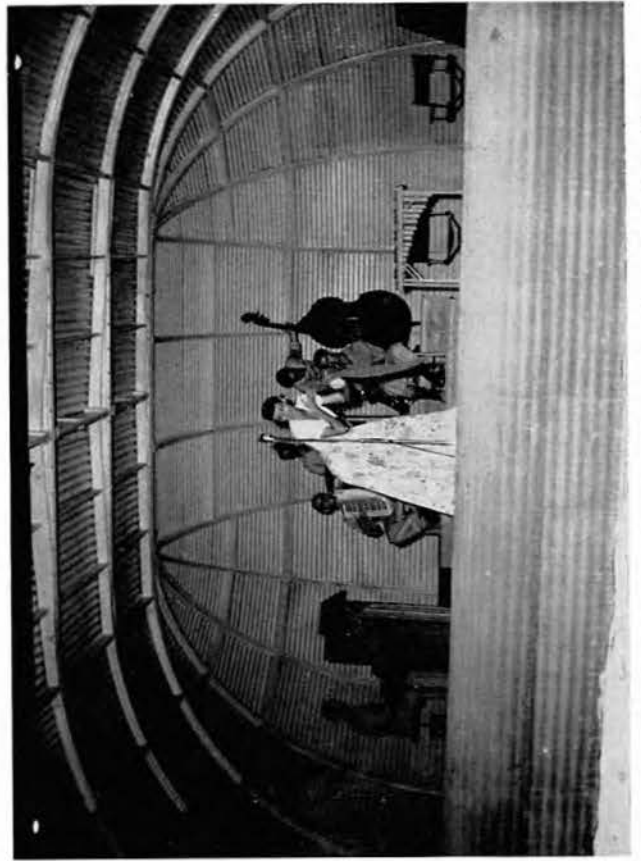
Taps before taps during a USO show on Samar Island



Long exercises on Samar Island by a USO unit



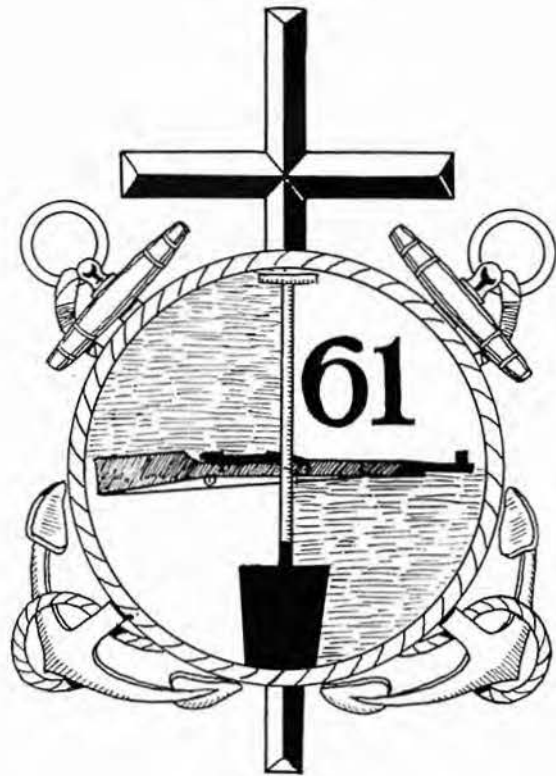
Is everybody hippy?



"Hey, Mate, pipe the gams on that USO chorus line" (Samar).



# Religion



# Religion

Religious opportunities, with the comforts and encouragement of each man's faith, have been a part of our Battalion life from the beginning of our induction.

At Camp Peary, religious services for all faiths were provided in both our Battalion area and at the Base Chapel. Chaplain Paul Edgar, the Base Chaplain, was always available for religious guidance and counsel, as well as being indefatigable in helping out in many other personal matters.

Just a few weeks before we left Camp Peary for advance training, Chaplain McConnell reported for duty as our Battalion Chaplain. Shortly thereafter we entrained for Gulfport, Mississippi, from which station we received our nine days' leave. Returning to this Advance Base after our leave period, we learned that Chaplain McConnell had been detached for sea duty. Leaving Gulfport shortly thereafter for Camp Rousseau, Hueneme, California, we were somewhat dubious as to whether we were to have a Chaplain before embarking. Imagine our satisfaction a couple of weeks later when Chaplain Robert C. Alexander reported for duty with the 61st.

At Camp Rousseau, we found regular services for both Protestants and Roman Catholics at the Base Chapel. Chaplain Paul McCleave, the Base Chaplain, was always available to us, until our own Chaplain reported.

After Chaplain Alexander reported aboard, a choir was organized. An early service was provided in our area in one of the warehouses. Chaplain Alexander also preached at the Base Chapel on several occasions. During this period, the Chaplain and CPO MacDouglas, through the help of the Salvation Army, secured an excellent portable reed organ, which has gone along with us. Perhaps the most memorable service was held the Sunday evening before our embarkation. On this occasion the Battalion formed in marching order and, led by the Battalion Band playing "Onward Christian Soldiers," with the Battalion Banner and the national ensign leading, marched to the Base Chapel, where our Chaplain preached an appropriate sermon and administered the Holy Communion.

Our services aboard the *M.S. Brastagi* at sea were novel. Each Sunday we rigged for Church Services on the aft deck of the bridge and superstructure. There was always a celebration of the Holy Communion early and a general service

later. There were three unforgettable services aboard the *Brastagi*—Palm Sunday, Easter, and Mother's Day. It was a unique experience to worship God on those great religious days on-board a troop ship sailing smoothly over the beautiful blue Pacific. During Easter week one person was baptized just before making our landing on Guadalcanal. We concluded our voyage with an appropriate service of thanksgiving for our safe crossing and arrival at our destination.

Our first service on Guadalcanal was held under a small side-wall tent, with a table serving as a temporary altar. In a short time this has been transformed into a sanctuary with a raised deck, altar, altar-rail, pulpit and prayer desk. Our organ was set up in the sanctuary, and choir benches arranged chancel-wise provided seating for the choir. Through the cooperation of Commander Studdert, the Battalion plaque, Company banners, Battalion flag and national ensign were used effectively to decorate the sanctuary. Chief Ledford carved two beautiful candelabra and a cross for the altar. The altar and sanctuary furniture were painted white and trimmed in blue and gold. A coral deck was laid down in front of the sanctuary, and benches from the Recreation tent were placed there for services. As our Chaplain pointed out, "We have an altar," around which all churches had been built. Just as the sanctuary was built, Trinity Sunday came. This, together with the coincidence that both our Chaplain and the Officer-in-Charge hailed from churches named Trinity, the sanctuary was dedicated and named Trinity Chapel Under the Palms, Trinity Sunday, June, 1943.

Two Protestant services and a Roman Catholic Mass were held each Sunday thereafter. Choir practice was conducted during the mid-week. Our choir has included the following members: W. H. Preston, W. B. Steele, B. F. Martin, J. W. Kitchen, A. P. Haus, E. R. Rode, C. M. Basham, F. D. Harrison, E. L. Gunnarson, E. M. Swearingen, H. VanOstrand, C. T. MacDouglass, E. T. Mathis, C. A. Wall, L. E. Davis, E. Montgomery.

In September sidewalls of camouflage netting, a native thatched roof and belfry were added. These were provided by Chief Jackson with the use of native laborers. D. B. Webb painted two angels kneeling on each side of the altar. The interior was painted green by Neal Torens. The altar pulpit and sanctuary furnishings were deco-

rated by Max Forkish. So beginning with a simple sanctuary under a tent, our Chapel grew to be a thing of beauty and holiness, where we enjoyed many services of worship together, often also with natives in attendance. In times of stress and sad news from home, many a man has entered the Chapel for quiet, rest and help from the Unseen Presence.

One remembers especially three outstanding services in the Trinity Chapel Under the Palms. There was the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Perhaps the most memorable was the midnight Christmas Eve Service. Outside was a Christmas tree contrived and decorated with lights and ornaments, attesting the versatile ingenuity and the "Can Do" of the Seabees. Singing Christmas Carols, hearing the choir sing the communion service, and simple Christmas anthem, with the candlelight, the Christmas epistle, gospel and message, all made home in its spiritual essence closer. For the Roman Catholics there was the Holy Mass on Christmas Day with its emphasis on the Birth of Christ in Bethlehem. A number of men were baptized here.

Other religious groups were not neglected on Guadalcanal. Transportation was always provided for both the Hebrews and the Christian Scientists to points where services were provided for those of these faiths.

On February the Battalion was given a rest period in New Zealand. Here the men had many opportunities for religious worship and fellowship. Services and entertainment were provided by the Anglican Churches, the Baptist, Christian and other denominations. The Roman Catholic Church and the Hebrew and Christian Science were available for men of these faiths. The YMCA also made a great contribution. The Anglican Bishop of Auckland had made plans to confirm some of the men. Unfortunately our leave was suddenly canceled and this blessing was denied them.

Returning to Guadalcanal preparatory to a forward move, special embarkation services were provided in the Chapel for both Protestants and Roman Catholics. These were solemn services, as the men knew that we were headed farther into Japanese territory than any Seabee had yet been.

We pause to pay tribute here to three comrades: George Miller Hunter, George Wright Bordley, and Patrick William McGouirk, whom we have left behind. Two of these men were victims of accidents, and one of disease. They were buried in that burial plot of heroes, beside many other comrades, who gave their all for their country. Here in Guadalcanal Cemetery

their bodies were committed to the ground and their souls to Almighty God.

En route to our new field of work, some aboard LST's, others on LCI's, religious services were held on Passion Sunday, 1944.

Arriving at Emirau during Passion Week, Palm Sunday was our first ashore. The Chaplain had two services on the beach with the congregation sitting around on drift wood. Palm Crosses made by the Chaplain were given to the men as mementos of this Holy Day. By being enclosed with camouflage wire-netting, a sanctuary, altar, and altar rail were constructed, and a simple Chapel was equipped for Easter. There was a sunrise and evening service for Protestants and Roman Catholics. During this period the Jewish Passover services were held in another battalion. Transportation was provided to these celebrations.

Work continued on the Chapel. Chief Powell and his men did a good job. Chief MacDouglass built a rustic pulpit. Others wove palm mats for altar frontal and wainscoating for the Sanctuary.

Finally the religious gear arrived. Company banners were hung over the altar rail. Our carved candelabra and cross were placed on the altar. The mariners' cross and an appropriate gift cross from Miss Mary Bowditch were placed on the altar frontal and pulpit respectively. The Battalion and national flags were hung by the door. Coconut logs were placed in position for pews. Another Chapel had been built by the Seabees. Being that Emirau is in the St. Mathias group, the Chapel was named St. Mathias by the Sea. It was erected on the beach, and a short distance away the rolling surf could be heard.

Here we again celebrated Mother's Day, recalling our Christian Mothers' faith and love for us, for country and for God. Every Sunday of significance was given special recognition in the services. Every Sunday there were three services in the Chapel of St. Mathias by the Sea.

Our next move brought us to Banika. Here was built a very attractive Chapel, which we named the Chapel of the Transfiguration. The first service was held here in the Feast of the Transfiguration. Riddles of red, white and blue with a dorsal of white was first used here, this being the first time signal cloth was available. Many interesting and inspiring services were held regularly on Sunday. The Roman Catholics celebrated their holy days here as well as the weekly mass with Chaplain of the 12th CUB Unit as the officiant. The men having little work here, the attendance at the regular services showed considerable improvement.

Chaplain Alexander was relieved by Chaplain Harold A. Scott, who reported aboard the *U.S.S. Sabik* en route to its next invasion, which later proved to be Leyte. Protestant Services were conducted onboard each Sunday.

One evening after "darken ship" a few men at the bow of the ship began to sing familiar songs and eventually got around to hymns. The next evening they invited the Chaplain to join them to lead in prayer. This soon developed into a fellowship of worship each night with as many men participating as could get in close enough.

On Leyte, soon after "A" Day in the Philippines, a temporary Chapel was set up in a sixteen-by-fifty tent. Improvisation of the altar was made by laying a white cloth across the top of a huge crate then hanging a piece of dark greenfelt in front and placing the portable altar gear in front of the Battalion's new triptych. The carpenters made benches to serve as pews.

The triptych which had been ordered by Chaplain Alexander arrived while we were in the Russells. It appropriately shows three scenes of labor and religion being joined together in a common effort. The dominant central panel shows a mural of the Holy Family in the carpenter shop working. On the right wing is pictured Nehemiah and his men rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem with tools in one hand and weapons in the other. On the left wing are pictured working-fighting Seabees at worship and going out to their work of construction.

When the Battalion moved to Samar, a beautiful native constructed Chapel was erected, using mostly Filipino carpenters. The engineering office drew plans which were turned over to Harry Schmer, with a construction force of Filipinos. They erected a frame of coconut logs and made a roof of palm frond thatch which was woven by the wives and sisters of the carpenters. State-side pews were made by the Battalion carpenters who also built a beautiful chancel, altar and pulpit. The electricians installed an intricate lighting system that included spotlights directed at the silver cross on the altar. The result, a beautiful Chapel being named "The Chapel of the Good Samaritan."

The Roman Catholic men were very fortunate to have access to the historic and picturesque "Church of the Immaculate Conception" in Guiuan. At the church, during Christmas holidays, electric lights illuminated the beautiful and impressive ritual of Christmas Solemn High Mass. Later a gift of several thousand pesos was presented to an aged Filipino priest, as an aid to repair the damage done to the church during the Japanese occupation.

During the life and travels of the Battalion, the facilities of religion have always been present. Men of every faith have found their opportunities to worship. Here has been exemplified according to the highest traditions of American freedom, the opportunity to worship God, each man according to the dictates of his conscience.



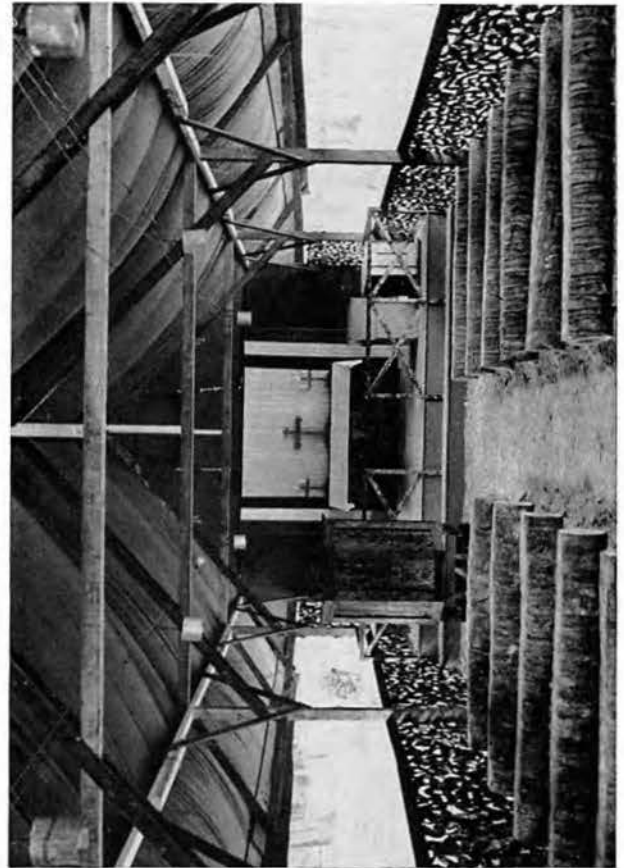
View of the altar of 61st church on Guadalcanal



Trinity Church under the palms, Guadalcanal



Evening services, Samar Island



Interior of chapel on Banika



Evening services, Guadalcanal



Chaplain Scott relieves Chaplain Alexander of duties, Russell Islands.



Church of the Immaculate Conception, Guiuan, on Samar



Church of the Good Samaritan at the 61st Seabees' Camp on Samar





Altar of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Guiuan, Samar

The title 'HOME TOWNS' is rendered in a bold, black, serif typeface. The letters are arranged in two lines: 'HOME' on top and 'TOWNS' below it. The text is set against a background of three concentric circles. The circles are centered behind the text, with the largest circle encompassing the entire word 'HOME TOWNS'. The font style is a classic, slightly condensed serif, with thick strokes and a prominent shadow on the right side of each letter, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

# HOME TOWNS

*by D. B. Webb*

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