

THE 561 LOG

1943-45





Dedicated to
"BUTCH"

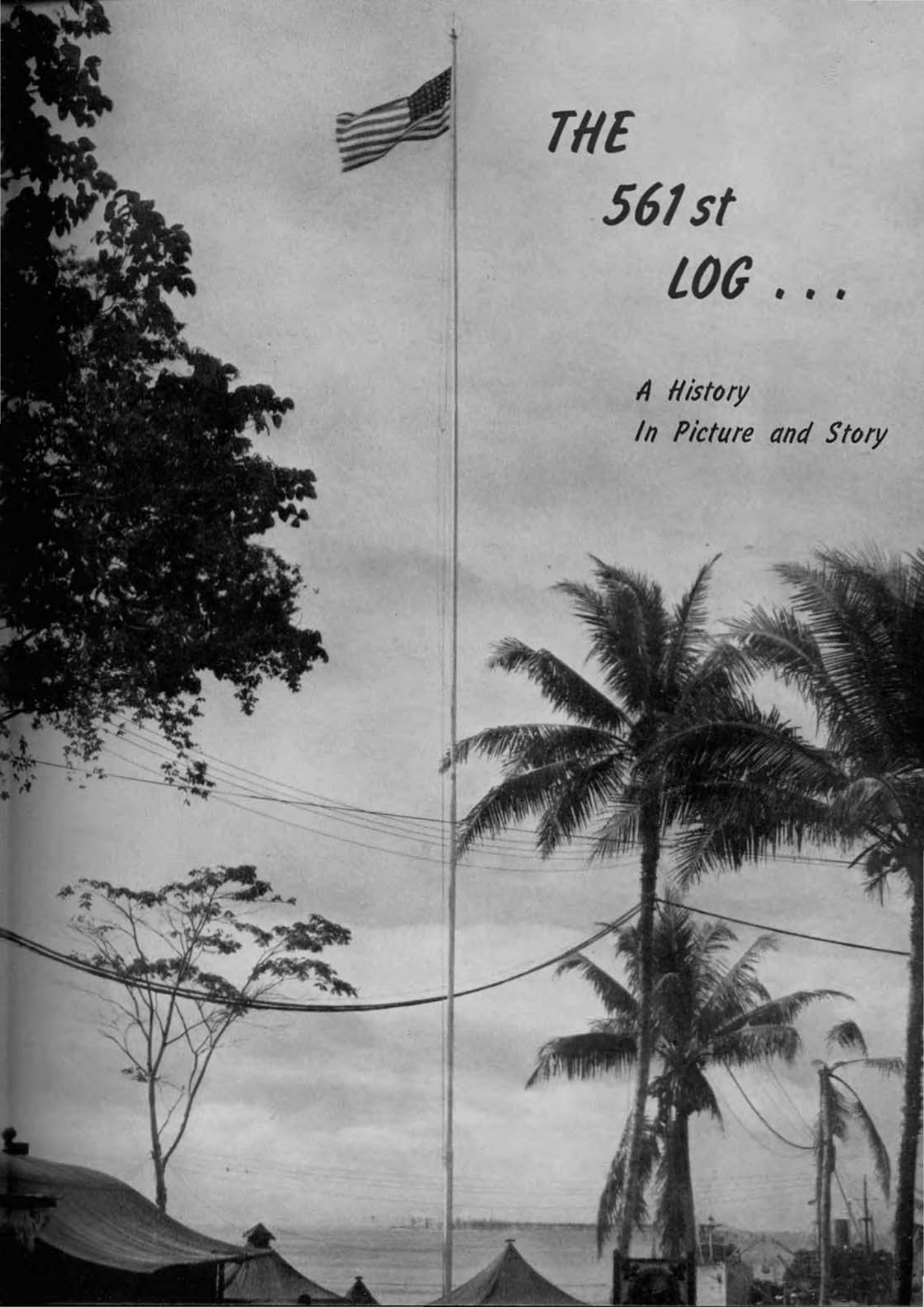
WHOSE STERN VISAGE, WHOSE FIGHTING
SPIRIT . . . WHOSE WHOLE OUTLOOK ON
LIFE . . . FULLY EPITOMIZES THE SPIRIT
OF THE MEN OF 561.

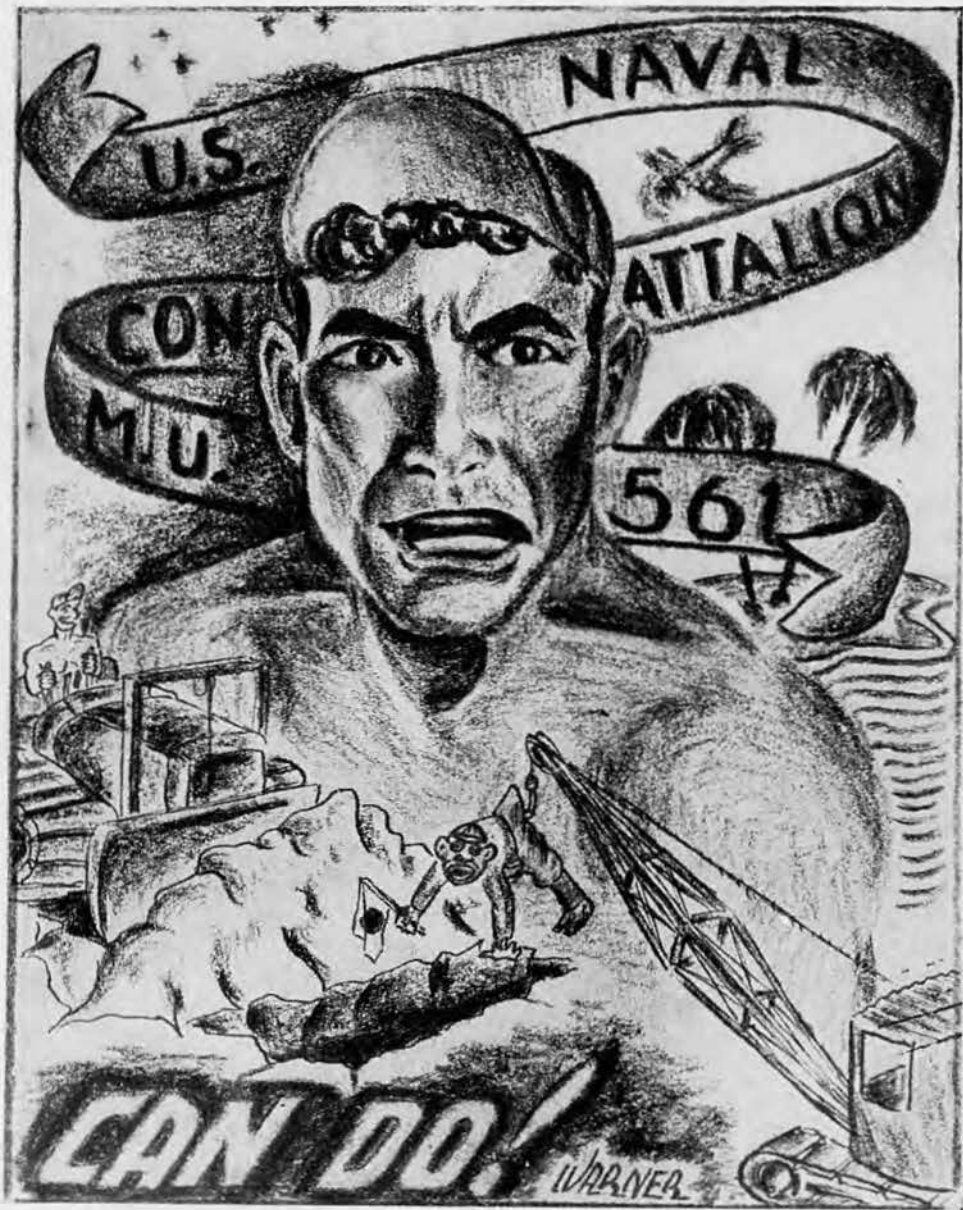
May He Some Day Grow Up To Be a Seabee!



THE
561st
LOG . . .

A History
In Picture and Story

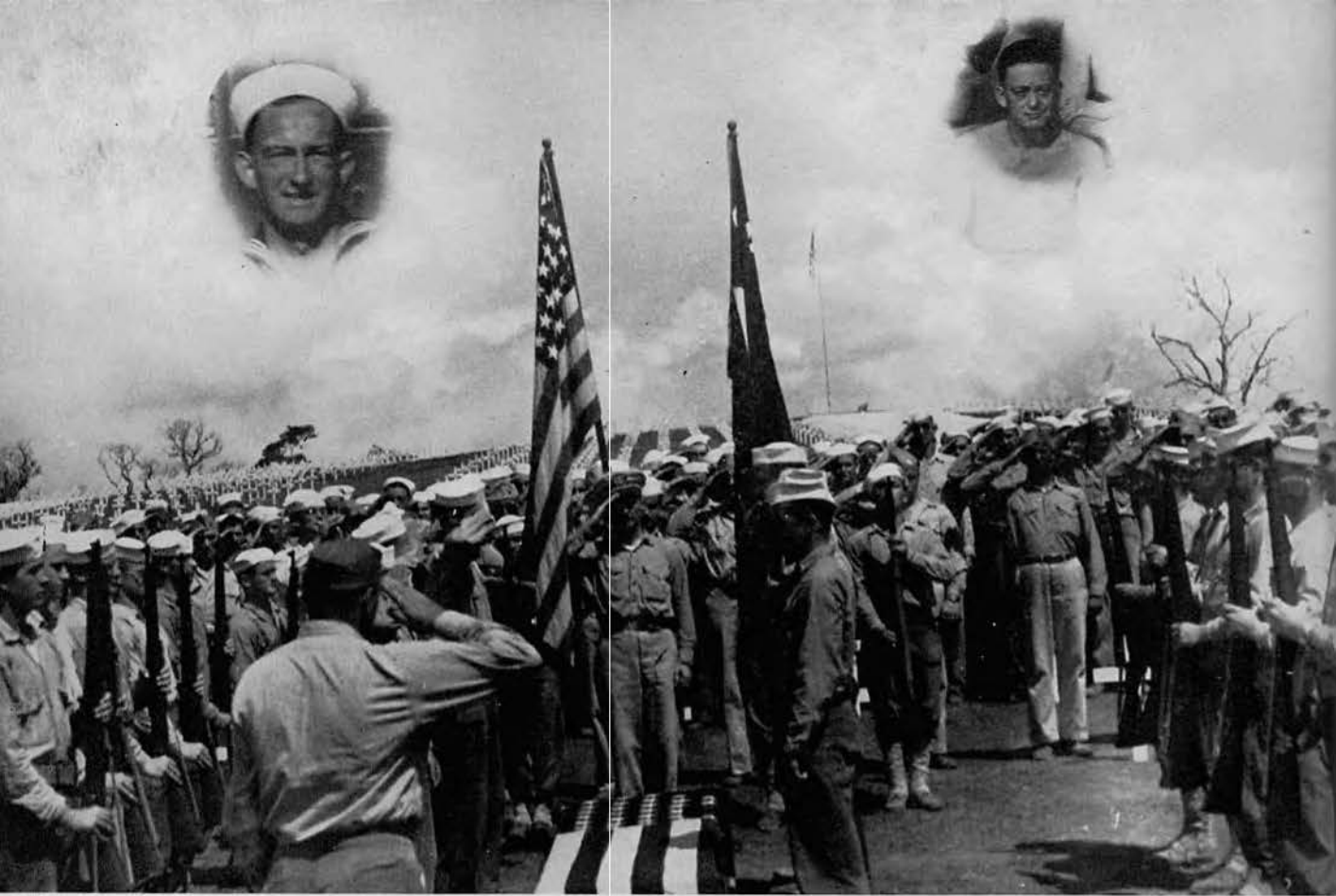




IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER,
IN THE YEAR 1943, THERE WAS
CONCEIVED IN THE MINDS
AND PLANS OF THE NAVAL
POWERS IN WASHINGTON,
D.C., A U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUC-
TION BATTALION MAINTEN-
ANCE UNIT BY THE NUMBER
OF FIVE HUNDRED AND
SIXTY ONE.

FOR YOUR PERUSAL AND EDIFICATION HERE FOLLOWS THE
HISTORY, IN PICTURE AND STORY, OF THE LIVES, LOVES AND
WORKINGS OF THE MEN AND MATERIA THAT MAKE UP THAT
SCOURGE OF THE PACIFIC AND POINTS EAST

WE GIVE YOU THE U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION
MAINTENANCE UNIT NO. 561.



Roll of Honor

William E Webb m3c
22 August 1944

Harold E Vingling em3c
27 March 1945

Qui Dono?



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Photography



BILL McQUEEN, BM2c
Composition—Procurement

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"BREEZY" BRESSETTE, Ptr2c
Art



BILL WARNER, CM3c
Art—Composition

THE SKIPPER'S MESSAGE . . .

In the relatively short period of two years our unit has travelled in an interrupted series of cross-country movements, a meandering course stretching from our inception center at Camp Peary to the advanced bases of Munda, New Georgia and Manus in the Admiralties.

During this period we have established an enviable record of integrity of performance, efficiency, and overall cooperation with the various Army, Navy and Marine Corps activities the Unit has worked with. This has been evidenced by the numerous individual and unit commendations received from high ranking officers of the various branches of the service.

At times, our assigned duties proved dull and tiresome, and seemed without bearing on the furtherance of the war effort. Despite the discomforts entailed, your ability to cope with the manifold duties and your adaptability to each new environment, have definitely aided towards the complete success of our mission.

I wish to express my personal thanks to the officers and enlisted men of our unit for their fine spirit of cooperation, loyalty and good sportsmanship; all of which have tended to weld us into a highly effective Naval organization.

LIEUT. F. V. CORNELIUS



“THE SKIPPER”

LIEUT. FRANCIS V. CORNELIUS, CEC, USNR
218 E. Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio

As Company Commander of Co. “C” of the old Super 16th Battalion, Lieut. Cornelius took over as OinC when “C” became CBMU 561 in November of 1943. A “civilian soldier” like all of us, the Lieutenant proved himself a military leader on par with any of them; one who held the respect and confidence of his men—whose first aim was the welfare of those men and in seeing that they got the right deal. A tireless worker, for whom no job tackled was too big, Lieut. Cornelius was in the most part responsible for the fine reputation of a well-balanced, versatile and hard-working outfit that 561 soon acquired in the Pacific Theatre.

Lieut. Cornelius received his BS degree in civil engineering and a Certificate in Architecture from the University of Cincinnati, after earning these honors with *fourteen* years of night school study, which speaks as well as anything of his perseverance. His civilian job before coming into the Service in 1942 was an Assistant Engineer in the Department of Public Works of the City of Cincinnati. Prior to taking over CBMU 561, Cornelius served as Assistant Public Works Officer and Resident Officer-in-Charge of Construction during the building of NTS, Fort Schuyler, N. Y.; a part of his Naval career few of us knew about.

“The Skipper” will still be remembered long after 561 has ceased to exist.



LIEUT. JOSEPH W. GIVENS, CEC, USNR
1448 17th Avenue,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Executive Officer of CBMU 561; another charter member of the Unit; recipient of the extra handle of "Dusty" back in the campaign days of Gulfport. Veteran of the beachhead on Ship Island, Lieut. Givens doubled as Supply Officer throughout our tour of overseas duty, and more than occasionally a friend with a sympathetic ear to the men and their troubles.

A true "Okie" and fanatically proud of his State, we have yet to see Lieut. Givens defeated in argument as to the merits of Oklahoma as compared to the lesser States. Was educated at Oklahoma A & M, graduating with a BS degree in civil engineering. Prior to entering the Service, was Building Engineer with the E. I. DuPont de Nemours Co. in the construction of their huge TNT plant in Oklahoma.

"Dusty" was truly a man among men . . . an officer highly respected by those who served with him and under him. A "regular guy", frank, forward, and with a conscientious sense of responsibility to both the men and the Navy, Lieut. Givens well merited the admiration of all the men as an officer and real friend.

LT. (jg) TOLAND H. WATSON, CEC, USNR
621 Chatham Avenue
Columbia, South Carolina

. . . another "Rebel", who brought the Civil War with him to the Pacific . . . Lt. Watson was a real "enlisted man's officer" . . . popularity unbounded, tied in with the ability to get things done, made him a valuable officer. Heavy waterfront construction his specialty. Maintenance and Heavy Equipment Officer with 561, he hit his stride as Heavy Construction Officer for the Combined CBMUs in the Admiralties. His chief aim . . . "getting this d - - n war over and getting home!"

Educated at the University of South Carolina, graduating with a BS degree in 1938, Lt. Watson worked for the U. S. Coast Guard (as a civilian) holding down the title of Assistant Construction Engineer in building docks, marine railways and warehouses. One of the original crew of 561, Lieut. Watson was commissioned in the Navy in May of 1943.

"Carolinah" should be proud to have you back, Lt. Watson!



ENSIGN GEORGE E. SWEENEY
Springfield, Massachusetts

Ensign Sweeney joined our outfit on Munda during the Christmas Holidays of 1944. Mr. Sweeney just dropped in on us out of the proverbial blue sky, and forthwith proceeded to make himself at home. He proved himself among the best as an officer and well liked by a great majority of the men. His first duties on Munda were those of Engineering Officer and Welfare and Recreation Officer. Upon our arrival on Manus, Ens. Sweeney was assigned duty as Personnel Officer of the Combined CBMU's and later as Base Barge Pool Officer.

Ens. Sweeney received his BS in Civil Engineering from Tufts College in 1944; was a junior engineer for the Department of Streets and Engineering for the city of Springfield, Massachusetts before enlisting in the Navy and receiving his commission after Midshipman training at Camp Endicotte, Rhode Island.

Mr. Sweeney is affectionately referred to as "JUGHAID" by Lt. Watson.



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HUBERT H. DOD
Route 4
Lexington, Virginia

. . . the officer who probably held down more simultaneous jobs than any in the PTO . . . Field Construction Officer, Sawmill & Logging, Carpentry Officer and Officer-in-Charge of all shops, besides being Welfare & Recreation and Censorship Officer on the side . . . and Mr. Dod, at this writing, is looking for still more jobs to do. A horse for work, and thoroughly idolized by every man in the Unit, Mr. Dod was a typical Seabee officer . . . getting things done in the fastest possible manner with the least amount of red tape was his byword. His friends, both officer and enlisted, were legion . . . his slow Virginia drawl identified him as a true son of the South.

In civilian life, Mr. Dod worked on about every big construction project undertaken up and down the East Coast. A specialist in concrete and brick construction, his services were never lacking in demand. As our Military Training Officer, both in Stateside and overseas days, he did much to wield the Unit into a smooth working organization.

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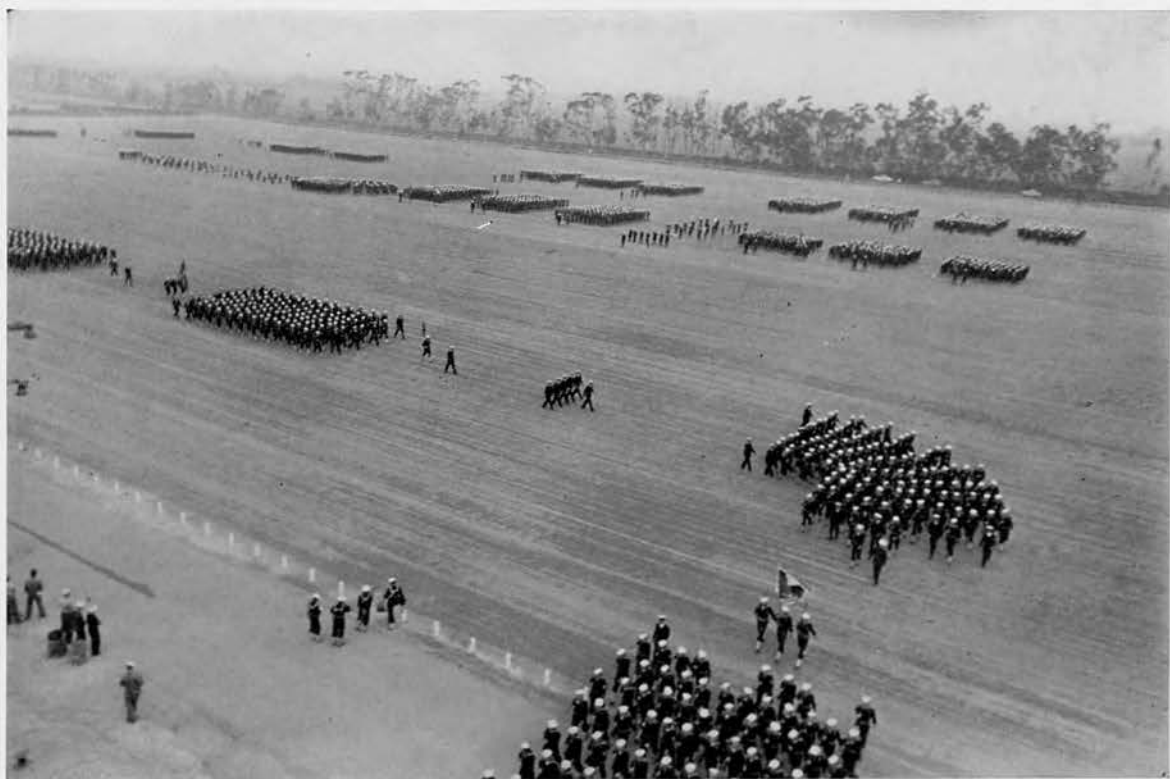


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Gateway to Camp Peary, Virginia—To Us a One-way Trip to Three Years of a New Life.



"Training Days—The Beginning and the End"
Drill Field, Port Hueneme, California

History

. . . is not all battle and sudden death. It is more a record of human survival and not always (goldbricking being the next oldest of the professions) the survival of the fittest. Without firing a gun, with no more foes than red tape, mud, and boot camp chiefs, it can still be proven that Sherman was right.

It is recorded that the Abbe de Sieyes, on being asked what part he took in the French Revolution, replied, "I lived through it". If you did too, read carefully from here on. It is really history; a poor thing, perhaps, but our own; and one way of saying that the good curate was hep to the war jive.

Chapter One

‘ ‘ B O O T ’ ’

It will be a considerable time yet before the majority of us will ever forget that vivid day when our trains rolled in from all corners of the United States and Texas to that torrid, dusty, desolate and forsaken railroad station in a land called Virginia (with apologies to our amiable Mr. Dod) a few years ago. This was Williamsburg, which in prewar days was noted for its renovation and great historical background; but may now be tragically known by many other terms, if you would have the Seabees who spent their training days at Camp Perry say their piece. For that was the location of good old Camp Perry, originally "Muddy Magruder", training camp for the Naval Construction Battalions. This was to be our happy home for the many and miserable coming weeks . . . truly a new era had begun in the history of mankind . . . or at least in the lives of those of us who were eventually to find themselves comprising that Seabee Combine of 561 . . . in future days to be known as "Corny's Raiders".

With the "Sad Sack" making a final pass and Bill Moser breaking up that poker game, we climbed eagerly off the train, took one quick glimpse of the situation, and before we even had time to comment, some salty looking guy in dungarees had bellowed for us to fall into ranks of four. (It must have been at this moment that Ed Gunn decided that all was hopeless). After standing around in that blistering Virginia sun for about an hour, we ex-civilians were already becoming proficient in that illustrious Seabee art of "bitching" and griping, as we proceeded to register in no uncertain terms our complaints as to having to wait for transportation. This was, of course, prior to the days of Randall's Riders and Transportation Co. If only then could we have realized how many times we would stand in line of some form or other in the days to come. It is undoubtedly a good thing we did not or they would most probably still be hunting Ken Means and Red Orcutt in the hills of Idaho.

"Line up over there men, and fall into trucks as soon as they arrive. They will take

you to camp where you will get your first taste of Navy chow and a bunk for tonight. Tomorrow the work begins". Thus spoke the salty looking gentleman in dungarees, who we later learned to be a CPO in disguise.

We piled onto the trucks that soon pulled into the station and the next fifteen minute ride was a pure contest between a group of would-be truck drivers to see which might offer his group the roughest ride to camp, as we bounced over the dusty, windswept roads into the portals of Camp Perry.

We finally climbed out at what was to be the indoctrination center (Judging from the 12-foot barbed wire fence and every exit manned by fierce looking Navy guards, we thought they said "concentration" at first). Anyway, with our handful of belongings we were pushed into an open area amidst the enclosure of barracks.

After meekly and weakly answering to our names and being segregated into various assorted alphabetical groups, we proceeded to turn in all knives, razors, brass knuckles, arms and ammunition. (It must be for this reason that Benny Mierzwa and Clarence Meeks are still doing a landslide knife manufacturing business). Then things began to happen. Confusion reigned supreme. One of the most harrowing days we spent in the service was at hand. We were herded across the immediate camp area and straggled down the road for our first taste of that far-famed Navy chow. It is doubtful that any of us will ever forget that first meal at Camp Perry. (We can't blame Tex and Commando for that one at least.) Before we had even visioned the chow hall, we had to hike for what seemed ten miles through a maze of trails, hillsides and underbrush. It was in reality only a mile and a half, but there were many of us who were unaccustomed to walking more than a city block as long as there was a taxi in sight who quickly dropped by the wayside. Perhaps there are still some of our number lying beside one of those trails, trying to make the chow hall. Anyway this was to be our first chow line, the first of an endless procession

of them through the coming years. Even the MAA had to stand this one. After sweating out the long line in the blistering sun and eventually reaching the door, we were literally carried away by the scent and aroma of that wonderful Navy food. None of us probably remember just what it was they served us at that first meal, but for certain, the meal made a lasting impression on all of us. The only means by which we could assure ourselves that we were drinking coffee was that the sign read "Coffee". The shuffling trek back to camp was accompanied by the rumbling of our stomachs and a continuous argument as to just what had been those strange things that were served us for chow.

0430, and the sound of reveille and our first morning in the Navy! What sort of life was this that aroused us from slumber at such an hour? For most of us it had been the hour we had been hitting the sack during those frantic last few days before reporting for duty. Those first reveilles must have been rough and weary ones indeed for Eddy Briggs, "Wreck" Dietrich and some more of our "sack kings"! By the time the sun had risen over those Virginia hills we had already made the two mile jaunt to the mess hall and had consumed (or sat through the serving of) very little of our second Navy chow. Shortly thereafter we were ordered to report for our final physical examination. We were depending on those last two meals to get us turned down.

"Adams, Adams, Alderman, Anderson . . . fall in as I call off your names and report for physicals!" Again it was a line to befall us, and even then we did not realize that the Navy practically operates on the theory of "a line for everything" and the time worn slogan of "hurry up so you can wait". It wasn't so bad for the boys topping the alphabetical lists, but for fellows with monickers like Yenzer and Zunker, it meant spending another considerable few hours in the sun before even approaching the examination quarters.

"Strip to the waist", barked some gob, who had probably been goldbricking in Ship's Company for some time. Off came those precious civilian raiments and another salt with a swab and a bit of mercurochrome implanted a number across our respective chests. From there on we were recognized by number rather than by name. And so on through the examination as the long line wormed its way

through the various stages of our final physical. It all boiled down to something like this:

"Blood?"

"Yes"

"Eyesight?"

"Yes"

"Hearing?"

"Yes."

"Have both hands and feet?"

"Yes"

"Breathing?"

"Yes"

"You're O.K., mate!" And that was it. Even at that a few of the unlucky (we use that word with reservations) were sent back to the carefree ways of a civilian.

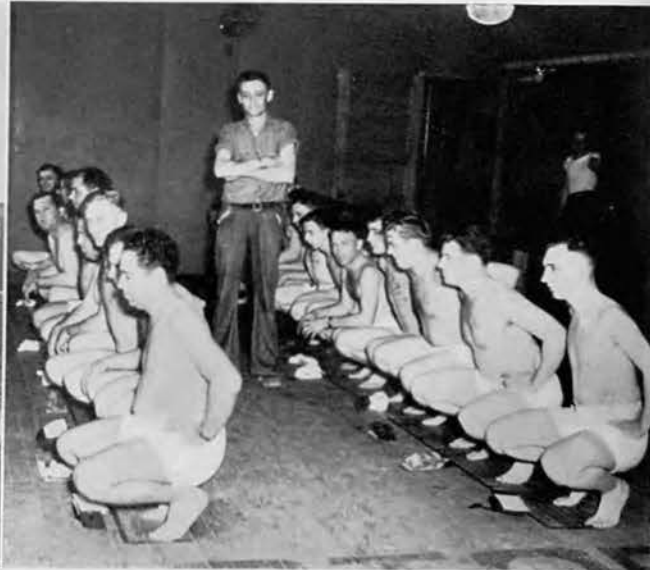
"Quiet, men, this morning you are going to draw your Navy clothing issue. Now, men, once you accept an article it is yours and it cannot be returned. It is up to you to care for your own clothing and see that it is not lost. You will be charged with these goods and held responsible for them, down to the last clothes stop. The first thing you will be given is a long white bag called a mattress cover, which you will presently use for a bag to carry the remainder of your gear in." Thus barked another Ship's Company commando on the following dreary morning. Thus began one of the most confused days that any of us endured in the Seabees. Pillows, dungarees, greens, shorts, shirts, shoes, scrub brushes, more shoes, peacoats, and a tonnage of other articles were tossed at us so fast and haphazardly we didn't realize what or where they were and hope for the best. By the time we reached the end of the line it was next to impossible to even lift the sack. Everything came of course in perfect Navy fit. We always had a choice of two sizes; either too large or too small. That call of "Put your soap in your pocket and keep moving" will long sound in our memories!

"Now," continues another bright fellow, "you will follow around to the next building where you will receive a stencil and have your clothes marked. (Maybe if Allard had known what this was for he wouldn't be having so much trouble now in finding his own shirt) Lay your mattress cover on the deck, mate, and put all your clothes on it. The deck, Mac, is what you used to term the floor". Finally, clothing duly stencilled and all of us



The awful trek through the Virginia muck carrying those "gosh-awful" loads of "G I" gear.

exhausted to the point of wanting nothing more of life but sack duty, we staggered out of the building barely able to drag our belongings behind us. No trucks to carry us to the barracks. Nothing but a brief "smoking lamp is lit" and then an tortured hike to the camp area



The Corpsmen had us doing everything but standing on our heads.

with that back-breaking load. And to think of the items in that bag that we never used, but carried all the way overseas and kicked around until "Commodore" Sweeney carried them away on the barges!

The next step in our fabrication as Seabees



Inspections were to Plague our Training Days from the Beginning

found us signing a multitude of papers, buying war bonds, insurance, explaining what we wanted to do in the Navy (little realizing that we would surely wind up doing just about everything but) and then stepping in for that haircut.

First came the insurance applications, and various other applications where we signed a dozen copies of Form "D" and eleven of form "A" so that Section "B" would be concise and complete and certified on Form "F". As Frank Olsen said, "I would be there yet signing my name if I had stopped to read everything I signed!" Then came the bonds. But of course we wanted to register an allotment for bonds! Storekeeper Jimmy Sineath didn't have to threaten *us* and twist our arms!

The entire procedure happened so fast that this, plus our allotments, etc., and a bit of money for the "little woman" back home, left us a month's pay that we could count on one hand . . . just enough left over for cigarettes or a worthy investment in the "Ben Blue Welfare Fund".

Then on to the barber shop, where the famed Navy haircut awaited us. "But wait", bellows Joe "Mummy" Pierce, "I had a haircut two days before I left home . . . and short too!"

"That's too bad mate, you should have saved the dough, because this one is free and *really* short. Line up over there and keep the chairs filled up!"

The process begins, Joe enters the shop, takes three steps to the chair, sits down, the barber (?) makes one run with the cutters, two with the clippers, a flash with the scissors, spins the chair twice, getting the rest on the second spin. "Okay, Mac, you're all done. Only fifteen seconds on that one! For a guy that's never barbered before, I'm getting pretty good at this! No, we don't have any mirrors here, Mac, but you don't have to worry . . . you won't see anybody for a few weeks and we cut regulation here. If you want any more taken off, just drop back anytime!"

It must have been this initial touch that was to lead to the famed arguments between Tom Maines, Pappy Breen, Bob Goodwin, Al Gould and Ken Means as to who was the possessor of the finest head of skin.

"Now tonight at 1830 (that's Navy time for 6:30 p.m., Mac), you will fall out next to

the barracks and report to the drill field for assignment to your boot training area. Youse are now ready to start boot". Thus bellowed our CPO on our next happy morning. At about 1845, our beloved "Sam" confronted a milling mass of us and screamed for quiet. "There are about two thousand of you out there and in order for you to answer to your name it must be absolutely quiet. There will be no talking or horseplay and every man be ready to answer to your own name and no one else's. After I call off your names, you will report as directed. All right, men, for the first group now. ANDERSON, Tollivar, ANDERSON, Tollivar! Isn't he here? Okay, the following men answer and fall out in the far corner of the field and wait for Anderson".

"Alderman, J. R."

No answer.

"Alderman, J. R."

Still no answer.

"A-L-D-E-R-M-A-N ! J. R. !"

"Here!"

"Well, mate, it's about time you woke up and found out what in h--l your name is. Now, are you sure you are Alderman? Why didn't you answer before? Now, let this be a lesson to the rest of you to keep quiet and listen when I'm doing the talking. Alderman, go out and pick up five hundred cigarette butts and next time you will learn to listen!" Thus continued our beloved Sam.

And so on down the line the men were assigned. About an hour later Alderman reports back with the cigarette butts and Sam barks, "How many butts did you get Alderman?" in a sweet voice.

"Five hundred and seven."

"Five hundred and seven!" I told you to pick up five hundred butts; no more, no less! Now when are you going to learn to obey orders? Get out of here and throw those butts away and pick up five hundred more, and I mean bring back *five hundred* and remember you are in the Navy now!"

It was then that Joe Alderman and the rest of us decided that surely all was lost.

After considerable more, but inconsequential, confusion, we were finally assigned to a boot area, which found most of the embryo crew of 561 in Area C-4. Taps was sounding peacefully in another camp area and we had yet to find a bunk and to meet our new Chief.

The first night we met our CPO who was



Just a small section of the vastness of Camp Peary showing the main area.

to lead our platoon through the days of boot.
 "Hey, you guys, fall out over there. Toss your gear inside and grab yourself a bunk. And hang around, I want to talk to you. How many would rather hit the sack than listen to me for a few minutes? Good. Well, let's

get a few things straight, but quick. I have a little advice to give you before you begin your training. You, get off that bunk and take the cotton out of your ears and listen to what I'm telling you! Yeah, I'm going to make a speech and I want you all to remember it.



G I Issue—Confusion was rampant and shoes never fit.



"Boots" learning right from left and beginning to despise all instructors.

Now you birds are mine for four weeks and you are probably wondering who I am. Well, I'll tell you and you will find out soon enough. In ten days . . . in fact tomorrow, a lot of you guys will be calling me everything else, but I had better not hear you. I have plenty of service on my sleeve and I've been pushing boots like you through for some time now. Those of you who would like to run to the pill rollers at the dispensary to keep out of drill, well, nothing will be said until the day we break boot and then you will go back and begin boot all over again. And that is just a sample of what happens if you try to foul me up!"

Thus, and with an additional lengthy discussion, largely on the part of the CPO in his enthusiasm to demonstrate how much he knew and how little we knew, were we launched into our boot career.

But, it wouldn't take reveille to waken us in the morning. No, not by a dozen buglers. There was old dependable, reliable, irritating John Moore, who always hit the deck by himself at about 0445. I think Johnny must have had a secret, sadistic pleasure in awakening us about five minutes before the bugle. There wasn't a morning those four weeks that John missed a 0455 and a bellow of "HIT THE DECK!" Yes, John, in spite of the multitude of good in him, was one of those boot camp M.A.A.'s. With apologies to John, we must give you a little information on an M.A.A.; which, translated, means Master at Arms, in addition of course, to any other pet names the boys, through the history of the Navy, have tagged on to those holding that exalted position. Now, the M.A.A. is in charge of the situation. He is responsible to see that the barracks and camp is kept in top-top shape and always ready for inspection. For misbehavior and the like you answer to the M.A.A., and if you bother to really answer you are also likely to answer to the Skipper. In short, the M.A.A. sees that everything is done the Navy way and carries on all the other little details that no one else cares to do. M.A.A.'s are destined for greatness . . . they are the very backbone of the Navy.

The next four weeks were of training that left us with only thoughts of how soon would it be over and where do we go from here. TRAINING, TRAINING and more training.

Instructors barking commands and the chiefs trying to do likewise in an equally sorry fashion. "About Face", "To the left flank, hurch!" and "Right oblique, hurch!" were just so much confusion to us at first, but we soon learned to distinguish our right foot from our left and to march in a reasonable facsimile of order. Of course, there were always those long-legged right guides who had the poor short legged guys at the rear of the platoon marching at a dog trot. Three to four hours in that broiling Virginia sun under those drill commands was enough to break the spirit of men of less mettle than ourselves. But, the ten minute breaks and the lectures in the drill halls were always welcome. Many of us got in more sleep in those drill hall lectures than we did in our sacks. Then of course the routine varied to include such things as extended order, marching, hiking, judo, machete drill, bayonet, and everything else in the Landing Force Manual. And commando courses . . . Ah, those exhilarating commando courses! That is a matter far too painful to go into here. Then there was the manual of arms . . . just a source of more confusion to us.

Of course, we marched everywhere . . . to the movies, to sick bay, to the chow hall. Merely walking from one point to another was strictly verboten; apparently it just wasn't done, in the Navy. We distinctly remember two guys from another platoon sleepwalking one night . . . one was counting cadence.

The few off-duty hours we had all to ourselves . . . washing clothes and learning to clothes-stop them with nothing but square knots; our wives at home chortled in unrestrained glee over our piteous letters relating of our laundry problems. And then the rolling of the clothes . . . all according to Hoyle and the Blue Jacket's Manual . . . blues to the right and whites to the left, or something to that order; with all the knots we had to untie, getting dressed in the morning was a major operation in itself. Then there was the barracks to keep shined up; and we mean shining to a degree of spotless splendor . . . the inspecting parties didn't miss a thing. Guard duty and the eleven general orders, boiler watches, fire watches . . . yes, we had lots of spare time! Yet, the few minutes of barracks life we had before sinking into the sacks was a happy one. We were just one big happy family, with everyone learning where

everybody else was from; fighting the Civil War over a dozen times, then all hands uniting to obliterate the Texas tall tales. Gambling of course was strictly verboten, so those little black jack and poker games were strictly for fun.

The "shots" were yet to come . . . and we had long been prepared . . . round needles, square needles and hooked ones . . . many of us were kept on "light duty" for days. None of the fantastic tales told of those needles and sadistic corpsmen were nearly as long as the needles actually felt, but even now we are convinced we have more serum than blood in our veins.

Then there were the endless duties of K.P. . . . or did you want to be reminded of that? . . . the spud locker, pots and pans . . . rolling out at 0300 and lucky to be back in the barracks by 2100. Those were the days when the rated men pulled no distinction . . . they happily scrubbed pots and concrete floors with the rest of us.

Thus the endless course of events rolled on until the long anticipated day we were to "break boot" and go into that exalted stage of "advanced training". Up until now, the guys in "advanced" had been a species of demi-god to us . . . hardened veterans, to whose tales of rigorous training and privations we listened with open-mouthed awe. And now we, who had only a few weeks before been poor, soft civilians, were to enter in that exalted stage! But first, all of us were figuring on how many hours we would be able to spend

in Washington on that oft-rumored 62-hour liberty that all boots were supposed to get . . . but that was just that much more scuttlebutt, as we were quick to find out

Thus, the location of our advanced camp drew our concentrated attention. But definitely it never occurred to us that we could possibly be retained in Peary . . . a group with a record like ours was surely destined for greater things! Al Storella and the rest of the Yankee crowd had the liberty schedule from Davisville, R. I. all arranged, while the Warden, "Cottonpicker" Cone and a few more Gulf Coast denizens were measuring the miles to Gulfport. Jim Hurl and a few others were looking for an assignment on the Pacific coast. All of us had one thing in common . . . a deep-seated desire to leave Peary. Then came the day orders were posted. What a let-down! There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth . . . our assignment fell to Area A-4, Camp Peary, Virginia, for advanced training as the Super 16th Battalion. The word "Super" consoled us only somewhat . . . we took that to mean only that our status as supermen was only now duly recognized. Anyway, it amounted to only a five-minute change of camp areas, and it was a distracted, miserable group of men that set forth for A-4 that morning . . . the fact that we were now of the "upper crust" notwithstanding. But, at least advanced training would bring occasional liberty and our first look at the outside world in four weeks . . . that was our small consolation. And so, on to Advanced!

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NEXT ! WARNER

Chapter Two

“ADVANCED”

It was one of those exceptionally hot Virginia mornings when the trucks came to the detention to gather up and haul our gear and persons to the advanced training area we were to live, work and fight in for the next four weeks. We were all so anxious to get settled in our new barracks that every man helped in loading the seabags and by mid-day we were all at our new area and assigned to barracks.

We dug around for our bags in the lot where they were eventually unloaded and piled up (it seems that the major portion of our training days was taken up in digging our seabags out of a pile). After an hour or so of probing and sweating, we finally located what we believed to be our bags, and dragging them behind us, staggered down a long company street in the sweltering heat until we came upon the barracks with the number on the front corresponding to the one we had been informed we would berth in during our rugged training days to come.

Soon after we had secured our seabags to a bunk and placed our bedding on same, around came the inevitable CPO, this one again claiming to be our lord and master through this phase of our war . . . he was our platoon chief. The Chief looked over his new charges and selected an M.A.A. for each barracks and informed us that if we did not comply to the letter with every demand of our M.A.A. we would surely be subject to the direst consequences ever devised in the mind of a CPO. As soon as he had finished threatening each of us in turn, he ordered us to fall out for chow on the field adjacent to our barracks. We were then marched to chow in an orderly (?) manner. Although the chow hall and the cuisine was identical to the boot camp establishment, we swore to a man that we were now getting much better food than we had had at boot. It still was far from being anything to brag about.

After that particular noon chow we again fell out and were marched a mile or two (to settle the chow) to a large drill field where we were to be given the opportunity to display the talents in close order drill we had

acquired as boots. We received frequent long rests and smoking periods and already we began to like this progressive treatment we were receiving. The Navy was beginning to treat us like men! They even treated the young boys like that.

The big feature of Advanced to us, however, was the fact that this new assignment brought with it the privilege of purchasing and imbibing of that wonderful golden brew . . . beer. The Advanced Area beer garden was close by the area, and those of us who had long ago acquired a deep love for the stuff and had not had a taste of brew for five long weeks, contemplated that beer garden with a fond and glowing eye all day. Time out only to hurriedly square away our gear that first evening, and then began the trek to the huge fenced in stockade on the hill. There we stood in endless, serpentine lines that wound inside the stockade in a confused maze, doubling on itself again and again . . . and waited from a half hour to an hour to file by the spigot to draw a glass of lukewarm beer . . . then to rush back to the end of the line to wait the better part of an hour for another glass. Nothing has ever tasted or ever will taste as good as that first glass of brew!

The next day we were to be informed that we were now a part of the 16th Super Battalion. No one told us that Super meant “supernumerary”, and we immediately and proudly took the designation “Super” to mean we were a picked outfit, a battalion of men selected as being far above average. Our talents had at last been recognized!

That second day in our new area found us going into our new military training schedule. We were assigned to various details and the CPO's secured what information they could that would aid in utilizing our respective talents in assigning us to the technical schools and work assignments that would best use those talents. Some were assigned to watches, others to yeoman duties; mess cooks were selected; others went off to school, and a large portion assigned strictly to military drill.

The realization was quick to come that all of us, having broken detention, were now



Going under the barbed wire at the obstacle course at Camp Peary.

eligible for a 12-hour liberty on every fourth night. The grapevine immediately began as to who was going where and when, and how to obtain the necessary funds, since we had drawn but one payday of fifteen dollars in boot camp. Wrinkled and mothball impregnated dress blues were dug out, new shoes shined again, and unpressed neckerchiefs tied in a manner that strangely resembled a large black blossom on our chests. We found that busses for Richmond left our area every night. The less adventurous of us chose Williamsburg,



Many a poor "Boot" dunked himself in this pond along the run of the obstacle course.

but a few miles from camp, for our first sally into the outside world. Nothing much can be said of either place. We went at liberty in the reckless abandon we had heard all sailors must effect on pass . . . a few of us found great adventures and conquests that furnished material for barracks brag-sessions for many a day to come. To some of the men, liberty proved to be hazardous and to others very exhausting, since we had to report in the morning after and stand muster along with the men who did not go on liberty . . . we had



It looks easy but we who have done know better. It's easy to trip on this obstacle.



Where sharpshooters were made. Firing for record after a 3 mile hike to the range, Camp Peary.

the same gruelling drill the next day too. Once in a while a man could be found dozing off in a class he was attending or a lecture given by one of the officers, but on the whole we suffered, and hit the sack the next evening right after chow and slept on until muster the following morning. Yes, we believe liberty was the toughest phase of our training days!

Our battalion was in full swing on the morning of the fourth day and men were attending machine gun, mortar, camouflage and several trade schools. We were soon learning to operate heavy equipment, power boats, diving equipment, and learning to set up a quonset hut and a steel tank . . . in short everything that would prove useful to us in those "Island-X" days to come.

We also had the long marches to Camp Peary's rifle range . . . those bright and cold mornings, with the platoon officer doubletiming us every time it appeared that we were lagging too much. The entire battalion proved to be better than tyros with the carbine, with very few men emerging unqualified. Out of Company C alone, ten men came out with the Navy Expert Rifleman Medal, including, Blanchard, Cross, Larson, Lord, Neal, Olsen, H. A. Smith, Bill Warner, Hurl, and Chief Parkman.

Then there were the long extended order hikes, the battle "problems" and field bivouacs; all under simulated "combat" conditions. The only glimmer of hope in our fog of confusion and misery was that this couldn't possibly last forever. You may recall one hike we took in the woods of Camp Peary. It was a forced march, and "forced" was right, because not a man of us was too enthusiastic about going. It was cold, wet, and the Virginia mud, that world-famous Virginia mud, was deep in the trail we were to blaze through Magruder's forests. There was a detachment of "snipers" in hiding someplace along our route of march and we were to take cover as soon as we heard their first firing on the battalion. Several times while on the march, the officers would have us take cover for practice, and then came the distinct sound of an Enfield rifle, supposedly meant to take our life on the battlefield of Virginia. We were swift to take cover, and Eddie Briggs, who is slow and cautious in all his doings, surveyed the terrain long enough to select what he thought to be a nice hard section of ground to make his

landing on. It turned out that his calculations were all wrong, and he sank eight inches into a nice bed of oozing, Virginia mud. There was not a section of skin visible on "Speed" Brigg's hide. He was a disgruntled lad that day.

All hands in the battalion were later at peace with the medical officer when said medical officer decreed that our forthcoming practice beachhead was to be called off because of inclement weather. There wasn't a lad in the battalion who relished the thought of jumping out of a landing craft into five feet of the water of the muddy York River, meanwhile holding a rifle over our heads and running for the beach in said five feet of water in a military manner. Yes, missing that particular party was the best part of our advanced training.

But, the training went on, intensified towards the later days of our allotted four weeks. The prospect of our forthcoming 10-day embarkation leave held all of our attention, however. "Embarkation" had an ominous sound to us, and we were prepared to make the most of those last ten days we would see our families before shipping out to those mysterious regions designated only as "Island-X". Scuttlebutt of course had it that the battalion already had its overseas orders, and that we would return from leave to board ship immediately. Anyway, we started wiring and writing home for money, and while the technical schoolboys wound up their final week and took their examinations, the anti-aircraft gunnery trainees departed for five days of firing at Virginia Beach, the yeomen burned midnight oil in getting our leave papers, ration certificates and air priority chits ready.

It was a mighty happy bunch of "graduated" Seabees that were driven to the Camp Peary station on the evening of November 1st to take a special train to Richmond, from whence we would scatter to all corners of the nation for our 10 days. We were given a break in being given a head start . . . our leave didn't officially begin until November 2nd, and many of us were at home in the easy chair before leave began. Some of us had been impatient with means of conveyance as slow as trains, and had spent a small fortune in flying home. The far West and West Coast boys stayed behind, to take the chance of the battalion being transferred to a west coast staging area, from whence they could better take their leave.



Training Seabees for Stevedores at Camp Peary with use of a training ship.



Going to diving school to learn dock building and salvage work for overseas.

It seemed to us but a few hours at home before we were on our way back to Peary after frantic and tearful last-minute goodbyes. We were leaving much behind, and knew not when we would see it again . . . our future was one big question mark . . . that occupied our minds entirely on that dreary ride back to blessed Camp Peary. On arrival back into the familiar old fold, we found the gear we left behind moved, together with the remnants of the battalion, to another area, and soon learned that we were slated to again pull out

of Peary in but a few days. We also learned that we were no longer a battalion but had been divided into three CBMU's; Companies A, B, and C into CBMU's 559, 560 and 561 respectively, and Co. D into a Casual Detachment. With our initial training days officially over, we were now integral units. Our former company officers became our Unit officers, with Lieut. Cornelius as OinC, Lieut. Givens, as Exec, and Lt. (jg) (then Ensign) Watson and Warrant Officers Dod and McLoughlin rounding out the officer complement.



Learning to assemble a 20' x 48' Quonset Hut in 120 man hours so bases could spring up quickly in the Pacific.



The same hut completed at 1630 the same day.

Chapter Three

GULFPORT

The newly-commissioned 561st entrained on a cold dreary Camp Peary siding on Monday, November 14th, 1943, with memories of our embarkation leave still lingering. 561 was on the move! Even with the train unmistakably heading south, the scuttlebutt still had us going to Camp Endicott via Cincinnati; to the West Coast via New Orleans; anywhere but to where we were actually going. Gulfport, Camp Holliday, was two busy days away. It was a balmy springlike day that noon of November 16th when we arrived. Notwithstanding the fact that we could see our gear being unloaded, scuttlebutt immediately had it that Gulfport was merely an hour's stopover to "pick up additional orders" . . . we were definitely going back to Endicott, possibly to Alaska. Tom Maines and Ed Gunn had no comment to make.

Anyway, Gulfport it was, and with Red Bennett leading us in a jeep, we forthwith entered the gates of Camp Holliday. 561 had made it's first of many beachheads.

After Peary, Holliday appeared like nothing short of heaven . . . two-deck barracks . . . centrally heated . . . heads and showers *in* the barracks . . . in comparison Peary had been an Okie squatter's camp!

With the usual attendant confusion that became a term synonymous with the minor operations of 561, we were eventually settled and the "Battle of Gulfport" began for us. Headquarters office was set up; Jack Stein gathered in his legal tomes and documents; Cross planned an armory; LaDuke eventually got his messcooks rounded up and provided with recipe books and can openers . . . 561 was ready!

Swinging right into training with the old standby . . . close order drill, extended order drill . . . more drill, and better drill . . . we were prepared to invade Island "X" in columns of two. Outside of the few perennial stumblebums, 561's platoons soon drilled with the precision and dispatch of the Rockettes.

The "balmy spring-like southern winter" that welcomed us to Gulfport soon changed to a nasty, drizzling cold and wholly uncomfortable southern winter. Our morale soon

underwent a like change. Liberty passes were not long in coming, however, and our hopefuls went forth into the wilds and pitfalls that is the city of Gulfport and the sections surrounding; penetrated the inner defenses and fanned out in patrols into Pass Christian, Pascagoula, Biloxi, Long Beach. Reconnaissance forces penetrated as far as Jackson. Intermittent weekend task forces beat upon the bastions of New Orleans. Liberty hounds were coming into their full glory. Ah, beautiful Southland . . . spanish moss, waving palms, warm breezes . . . and frigid maidens! What had we done to deserve this lot? . . . unfriendly civilians, superior Army forces, and local option!

Our first Christmas away from home, that Christmas of '43, found us generally an unhappy lot . . . standing fence guard and finding release from our boredom and loneliness by taking fiendish delight in apprehending the hopeful mates taking that extra liberty via the under and over-the-fence route . . . and thereby gaining for 561 a dastardly name among our brothers-in-arms. (Even out here in the far reaches of the Pacific we still meet former Holliday inmates of other outfits who snarl "Oh, you're the \$%*—&% who caught me going over the fence in '43!" . . . and proceed to viciously knee us in the groin).

Even while things were still foggy in the aftermath of our New Year's Eve liberty, we set forth upon one of our most memorable sorties . . . that 30-mile hike to Holliday's rifle range. Unhappy Days! Shades of blistered feet, aching arches, and roadside casualties! Thirty miles out, thirty miles back . . . we counted them one by one . . . every step pounded on our brain . . . every step another curse upon the hapless head of the recruiting officer who talked us into all this! Those miserable, lightless, head-less, bitter nights probably smothered the last vestiges of patriotic fire that yet remained in us. Someone quoted an overseas veteran to the effect that compared to Gulfport's rifle range accommodations, Island "X" would be a pleasure jaunt. He was entirely right. But then, no one had yet told us about Ship Island.



Flying our Tattered Battle Flag, 561 Invades Ship Island

We will dwell on that sorry venture later in this narrative.

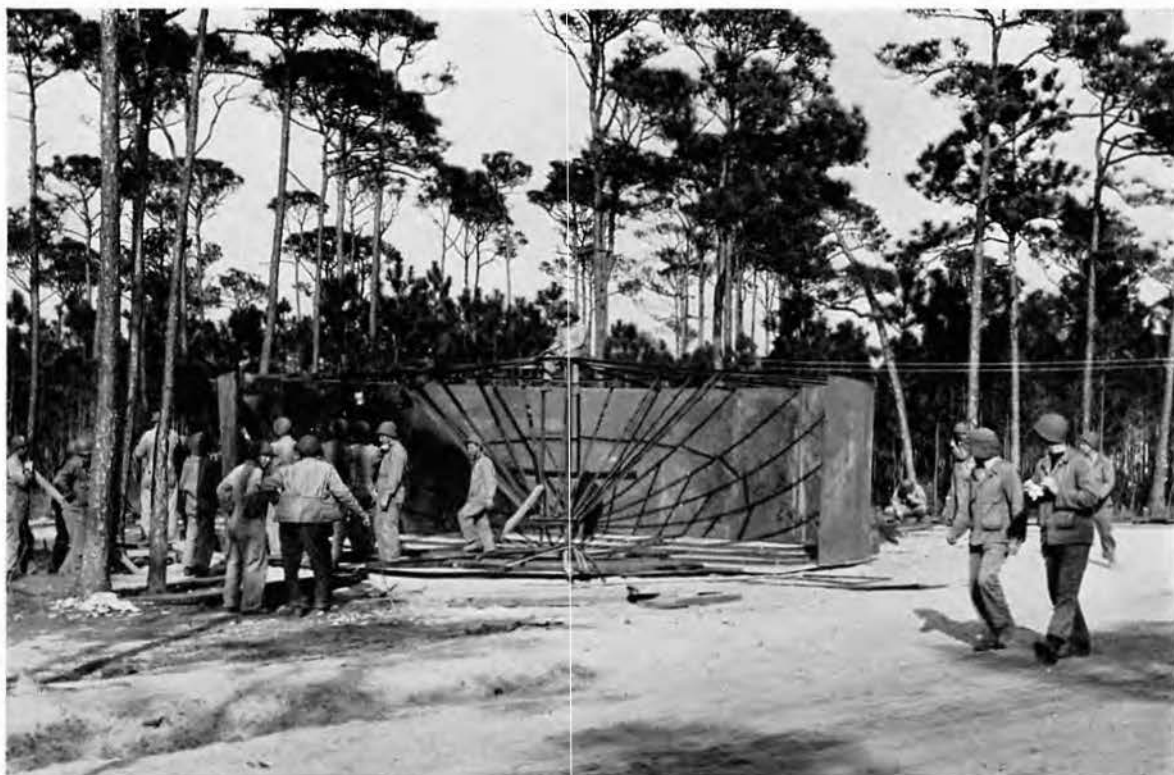
Late January and partial recuperation from the effects of the rifle range found us spreading out into our technical school assignments . . . earthmoving, plumbing, refrigeration,



Ship Island beachhead survivors pose after stirring victory.

machine shop, quonset huts, tank farm, welding diesel, carpentry, model school, rigging, weapons, gunnery, docks, sawmill . . . everything to mold us into the efficient little Seabees we are. Of course, between-class periods and all our waking hours seemed to be spent

Tank School—Gulfport



in moving from one barracks to another and from barracks to quonset huts. 561 can break a lease anywhere. We lived, at one time or another, in every barracks and other place of reasonable habitation that Holliday had . . . and we cleaned and swabbed every d. . n one of them until they glistened. "Dusty" Givens amply saw to the latter; to wit: quote: "Barracks shining or no liberty!" Unquote. 561 marches on!

Came February and the "Battle of Ship Island". More unhappy days! The history books have Ship Island as a historical scrap of land. We say the history books can have Ship Island . . . period. 561 wants to forget its part in that history. Old Fort Massachusetts, which overlooked our "beachhead", veritably groaned to its foundations when it witnessed the invasion of the motley crew that was Corny's Raiders. Weighted down with battle gear, .03's, fifty-pound packs that contained within their scrambled depths everything but the proverbial kitchen stove (the cooks and bakers brought in the kitchen stoves on *their* backs), we secured Ship Island with great dispatch. Pup Tent City-on-the-Dunes promptly sprang into being . . . tents anchored down with sand, cuss words, and the contributions of the island's cattle herds. Our own comforts taken care of, we proceeded to clear the island of an imaginary enemy; then to clear the island of non-imaginary debris, engineer a foot bridge of momentous proportions, and repair a generator plant that had not seen service since the early months of the War of 1812. All this 561 took in its stride, with only a minimum of the usual grouching. However, on the third or fourth day (we don't remember which), a whistling, frigid "norther", that quickly proceeded to freeze the proverbial appendages off the proverbial brass monkey, sent us scurrying into the confines of Fort Massachusetts itself, there to spend two thoroughly miserable nights (and days), sleeping on hastily-gathered marsh grass on the concrete floors of the fort. It was then that 561's worthies were convinced that General Sherman was right when he made his famous statement. Only the orders that came in to evacuate Ship Island, evacuate Gulfport, and get ourselves on to the West Coast, saved us from another night of misery and a possible icy death. Back to Holliday we went; got the scuttlebutt rolling as to where we were

going; frantic last-night liberties for those having wives in town, with all the tearful goodbyes to us who were sailing off to the wars.

Thus, on February 19th in the year 1944, we, as the movie travelogues have it, "said farewell to the beauteous city of Gulfport", and turned our bleary warrior eyes toward wider horizons. Port Hueneme, L.A., Hollywood!

ON TO THE COAST

The cross-country trip was largely uneventful . . . just another troop train. The Texans in the outfit of course had one helluva time explaining the endless miles of nothing but sand dunes and cactus that was our route through that fair and spacious state, after their long expounding its scenic beauties. Our rest stop at El Paso, and our magnificent parade up its streets was but a small diversion. Our chief claim to fame in that particular trip across country was in that ability of our worthies to lean out of train windows a little farther and to whistle at female civilians a little more raucously than the inhabitants of the average, run-of-the-mill troop train.

It was at 0400 of the morning of 22 February 1944, that sunny California greeted us in apparently typical California atmosphere . . . rain. It rained six more days and six more nights without a pause to allow us to glimpse the famous California sun, which sun we were soon convinced was but a filament of the California Chamber of Commerce imagination. By way of wading, swimming and stumbling through the driving rain . . . dressed, of course, in dress blues . . . we were with apparent distasteful dispatch (our fame had surely preceded us) established in "Q" area of vast Camp Rousseau, our last Stateside staging camp.

There cannot be a great deal said about Hueneme. (hark the dissenting voices!) It will long remain in our very personal memoirs anyway . . . the scene of our most intensive and bloody battles for liberty (and leave) after we had found the California natives so friendly. Ah, those natives! But, let us on with the war.

Hueneme gave us our last intensive military training, in addition to a series of short and concentrated technical schools. We were summarily outfitted for "Island X" . . . the "Island X" we had heard so many, oft-conflicting and horrible versions of, from our first boot camp day on. Carbines, gas masks,



Brings back wonderful memories—that Hueneme liberty gate . . . doesn't it?



Sad Sacks on the saddest day in 561's history . . . We're off to the wars! April 10, 1944.

mosquito nets, foul weather gear, the ever-horrifying and confusing infantry packs . . . even the old die-hards grudgingly admitted that our Stateside days were numbered. Came more drill, more rifle range with the accent on the dry-firing, extended marches, bivouacs, anti-aircraft training at San Diego . . . we were getting that final edge and polish of fighting Seabees.

And the battle for liberty was ever rumbling in the background. The liberty hounds and the liberty wolves were howling in all their glory, and impressive indeed was the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth when those liberty passes were but a mite irregular in their forthcoming.

Seemingly, from the trend of this narrative,

our entire training periods revolved only around our out-of-camp freedoms. Such is not the case by any means. But, ask any Seabee, or common-Navy man, about their training camps . . . they are all judged by their liberty: "Such-and-such was a good liberty camp", etc. We of 561 can never complain about lack and luster in our own liberties . . . our officers were generous in dispensing the passes, and the good people of California fell all over themselves to make our last days in the States exceedingly happy ones. Just how friendly the natives of Hollywood, Santa Monica and Los Angeles were is still a topic of fireside discussion, even to this day. Ask us about Hueneme, and we'll switch the subject and tell you of Hollywood.

Chapter Four

\$1,500 PLEASURE CRUISE

Finally, in early April, came that day we were "secured", and given an FPO address . . . embarkation day was just around the well-known corner. It was then that Mr. Dod made his epic speech that day we were gathered en-masse for our final instructions, "Men, you are leaving on a \$1,500 pleasure cruise to the beautiful islands of the Pacific". Inspiring words and beautiful thoughts were those! Some of us believed them. The morning of April 10th saw us, with the perennial 561 confusion, stumbling aboard the MS JAPARA, stacking our ponderous gear and our weary carcasses in the narrow confines of the fo'c'sle hold. The evening of the next day we saw the shores of Hueneme slip away. Scuttlebutt immediately had us going to Frisco, and strangely enough, for once scuttlebutt was right. Even the originators were surprised.

With the good JAPARA ploughing through a heavy ground swell up the California coast, we acquired our sea legs . . . flat on our respective backs in the same fo'c'sle hold. It is without doubt that never in the annals of modern and ancient seafaring were there ever a bunch of sicker or more miserable quasi-sailors. It wasn't funny at the time, but the sights and inevitable situations among the green-gilled brethren of 561 in that fo'c'sle hold and head and the concerted staggering up for

fresh air on the open deck were ones we won't for long forget. Many a one of us wished the end would quickly come and release us from our unspeakable misery. Only the hardiest souls appeared for chow that first day . . . and a greater percentage of those soon beat a hasty retreat therefrom. The KP's and the cooks who labored in the galley that day do well deserve a citation. They were the heroes of the day.

The balance of our coastal jaunt was uneventful. Stomachs were soon settled, and we hove under San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge on the evening of April 12th. A couple of days in Frisco, liberty for the chiefs, then the evening of April 15th saw us slipping quietly out of San Francisco harbor, under the same Golden Gate Bridge, destination unknown. The memory of that late evening will be long with us. Not a sound could be heard on the crowded decks; what small conversation there was came in hushed tones. Each man had his own thoughts, watching the homeland slip slowly away, and the last flickering neon barroom sign fade into the evening haze. Where were we going? And what awaited us? How long before we would see this shore line and those barroom signs again, or, would we ever see it again? Most of us were looking far beyond that shore line and thinking of scenes



"From slimy Pollywogs to hardened Shellbacks in one wild day"

to the east . . . thinking of home; wondering what the folks were doing right at that moment, and whether we would ever see them again. It was a thoroughly sober 561 on the deck of the MS JAPARA that evening.

It didn't take us long in the days following to get into the routine and general boredom of shipboard life. In comparison to many other troopships, we were fortunate indeed in being on the good Dutch motorship JAPARA . . . ventilated holds; crowded to be sure, but not too uncomfortable . . . showers of salt water, but better than nothing. The food wasn't bad; two squares a day and "sandwiches" at noon. A great number of us slept on deck atop hatch covers and wrapped in ponchos, nightly rain squalls notwithstanding. Long blistering days; with everyone acquiring a deep tan or a horrible sunburn . . . the ever-present poker and crap games (many eventually got down to playing for cigarettes) . . . the long, winding chow lines . . . the even longer canteen and library lines . . . the blaring of the ship's P.A. system . . . "Now hear this . . ." . . . "Dump the garbage" . . . "Joe Blotz fall down to Hold No. 2" . . . "Belay that last order!" . . . etc.

On the whole, it was a lazy cruise for most of us. The cooks and bakers and the perennial Kaypees labored on. Electricians and painters details put in time on shipboard repairs and improvements . . . carpenter details built ship's lockers. The Captain's commendation proved 561 did its first good job on its first assignment.

April 22nd, and we were over the equator, southbound. We had long been prepared for this momentous occasion . . . the old "Shellbacks" for days preceding had presented horrible pictures and dire predictions of the appearance aboard of King Neptune and his "Royal" court, and of the initiation that would forthwith transform us from lowly "Polywogs" to hardened and salty "Shellbacks". What an orgy it was! The slimy crawl through the garbage-littered tunnel, culminating in the long grim line of enthusiastic paddle-wielding Shellbacks, at the end of which line sat King Neptune and his Court, in all their respective glory. The palpitating Polywog travelled this gory gauntlet on his hands and knees, spurred on by the whistling paddles of the sadistic Shellbacks . . . salaam to Neptune, which usually culminated in other indignities . . .

then a mouth stuffed full of feathers . . . backside shocked by Neptune's electrically charged and heinously contrived trident . . . forthwith ducked, with great efficiency but no neatness, in the canvas tank built on deck for the occasion. On the very verge of drowning, we were hauled to our tottering feet, chocking, spitting wet feathers . . . somewhat confused . . . declared a Shellback in good standing . . . King Neptune's sadistic appetite for suffering had been satisfied. We staggered off to find some dry clothes and to lick our wounds. War is hell!

Came more long, blistering days of sailing . . . long nights aboard a blacked-out deck . . . those nights especially will be long remembered . . . the ship trembling from the dron of the motors; water hissing and whispering along her steep sides as she forced steadily ahead; phosphorus gleaming in the wake like hidden flashes of fire. Everywhere men were just leaning over the rail, watching that hissing water . . . thinking their own thoughts of lonesome and varied things. That was a tenacious thing, the lonesomeness of a man surrounded by men! Others of us were lying on the hatch covers, gazing up at those neon-bright tropical stars seemingly swinging back and forth in the rigging as the ship rolled; we were doing some more thinking; or talking; or violently arguing or discussing in one of the sessions that was always taking place. We spoke with great earnestness on all subjects ever contrived by mind of man . . . from automobiles to alcohol . . . from war to women . . . from laundry soap to love. They were all profound and thorough discussions . . . anything to relieve that first and then new-to-us loneliness and boredom. We crossed the International Date Line on the 28th, and we were given brief distraction in marvelling over the fact that the 29th was completely lost, spending more heated arguments on the whys and wherefores of the whole thing, and gloating over the fact that we were being paid for an extra day that we didn't experience.

Then, many days later, there came the morning when some gimlet-eyed individual saw (or thought he saw) the first glimpse of land. Upon the announcement of that momentous discovery, a moment greater to us than Columbus' first sight of the Indies must have been to him. Instantaneously, a concerted rush of bodies filled and overflowed the rail . . . the



The days aboard ship dragged on . . .

solid pack of gaping and squinting souls, hungry for that sight of land, extended three and four feet out over the water at some points . . . the good JAPARA listed several degrees to starboard. There is still argument to this day as to whether that slight haze on the horizon was actually land . . . but to us on that day it was, and it was solemnly declared to be everything from Pitcairn Island to northern New Zealand. When we came to the islands of our first stop-over some days later, it was merely an anti-climax. But, that first



We by-passed many islands.

port of call looked mighty beautiful to us (from a distance) . . .

A series more of ports of call for the JAPARA, that embodied a South Pacific Cook's tour of the earlier battle grounds of the Pacific war, and we were told that our own appointed Island "X" was but a few days sailing away. Scuttlebutt was revived, dusted off and energetically bandied about that our "beachhead" was still under continuous attack by the enemy; that air raids were still a common occurrence, etc., etc.



The Souvenir Trade was brisk from the start . . .

Chapter Five

' ' D - D A Y ' '

None of us are likely to forget our first sight of our island "home" for the coming many months. Most of us looked at the tangled mass of jungle with mixed feelings of eagerness and apprehension. A month on a transport is an awful overdose of ocean, and solid ground looked mighty good. On the other hand, no one could be sure what lurked in the mysterious depths of that forbidding tapestry of vines and weird growths.

With the usual shouting of directives and invectives and the usual confusion of orders, we prepared to debark. Hot? Lord, it was hot! Struggling through narrow companionways and up steel ladders with enough equipment on your back for three men was the Devil's own assignment! Sweating, cursing, tripping and stumbling . . . frantic searching for forgotten miscellany . . . rifles and seabags; packs and ditty bags; melee and confusion . . . Snafu . . . Finally, the peace and quiet (comparative) of the line on deck leading to the sea-ladder. Some men stood resignedly with their heavy seabags on their shoulders, knowing that if they ever set them down the job of picking them up again might prove too much.

How we ever got down that rickety, slippery, ladder to the haven of the landing barge without serious casualties is a mystery. No more proof is needed that every Seabee is a cross between a pack mule and an acrobat. Up to this point, the sun had been beaming in true tropical splendor, but Oh-h Brother! . . . no sooner was the barge half full of struggling humanity than "the rains came"! Now, the landing barge is a remarkable piece of equipment, but it will *never* replace the Chris-Craft. For spectacular discomfort you can't beat it. We stood and soaked up rain for what seemed like several hours. There was nothing we could do but bitch . . . so we bitched.

We had been informed that the island was "secured", but it was reassuring to find, upon arrival ashore, that our land transportation consisted of genuine *United States* trucks. There was always that possibility lurking in the back of our minds that our little brown

brothers might still be on the welcoming committee.

Land underfoot, good solid earth, felt mighty wonderful, but we were not given long to gloat in it . . . things happened fast after that. A whirlwind truck ride . . . another barge . . . another truck ride through the gathering darkness, and finally, "Here y'are boys!", at the darkest spot along the road. We were in camp . . . so we were told . . . but we could see nothing but more jungle. It had again started to rain, and with increased vehemence. We had our first taste of real tropical downpour. Night had fallen completely. Nobody had the slightest idea as to where we were, or if or where we were to sleep. We huddled miserably under hastily broken out ponchos and shelter halves, too tired and befuddled to even bitch . . . truly the saddest collection of sacks that ever wished they were someplace else.

Suddenly a flashlight appeared with "Mr. Mac" on the other end of it. Mr. Mac was giving with the cheerful bravado, but any one could see that he was as unhappy as the lowliest seaman. He had found some broken down and long-abandoned tents, and these were to be our temporary quarters. In a last mad scramble, we shouldered or dragged our gear through the downpour, blindly following the flashlight as it pointed out tents along the jungle-overgrown trails. Any shelter at all was a blessing, and we thankfully shed our packs and paraphernalia and collapsed ourselves.

It soon became apparent that these abandoned tents were not ours exclusively. They also housed as fine a collection of the more repulsive forms of wild life as Frank Buck ever met on a business trip. Many tales made the rounds the next morning . . . Joe Cihak and his land crab; Shorty Kiel and his centipede; Tex Swanzy's hostile rat and Bill Warner's friendly one, and Gene Parr's toad, to name but a few.

On the morn, after a thoroughly miserable night, there was but one thing on our respective minds . . . souvenirs (what else *is* first in a Seabee's mind?) The early dawn saw the



Our First Headquarters—

searching parties scattering to all points of the compass. True, the varied and often doubtful relics that were soon dragged into camp and proudly displayed and bartered for were chiefly worthless stuff, abandoned by our predecessors, but to us they were battle relics of inestimable value. Rusty Jap helmets, cartridge cases, mess kits and buttons. Then, unexploded ordnance began to enter into the picture. When Chief Vaughn brought in a Jap hand grenade rendered "inactive" by the simple expedient of a clothes stop, and when



The Original Beer Call

another unidentified worthy came in dragging a live bomb down the trail by means of a 10-foot length of rope "so that if it went off it wouldn't hurt me" . . . then was when authority stepped in and forbade further souvenir "procurement". We turned our efforts to "making our own" . . . an off-duty industry 561 was soon to become noted for.

That same day, May 10th, 1944, still stands as the best mail-call day in the outfit's history. During our month at sea, a terrific back-log of letters had accumulated for us.

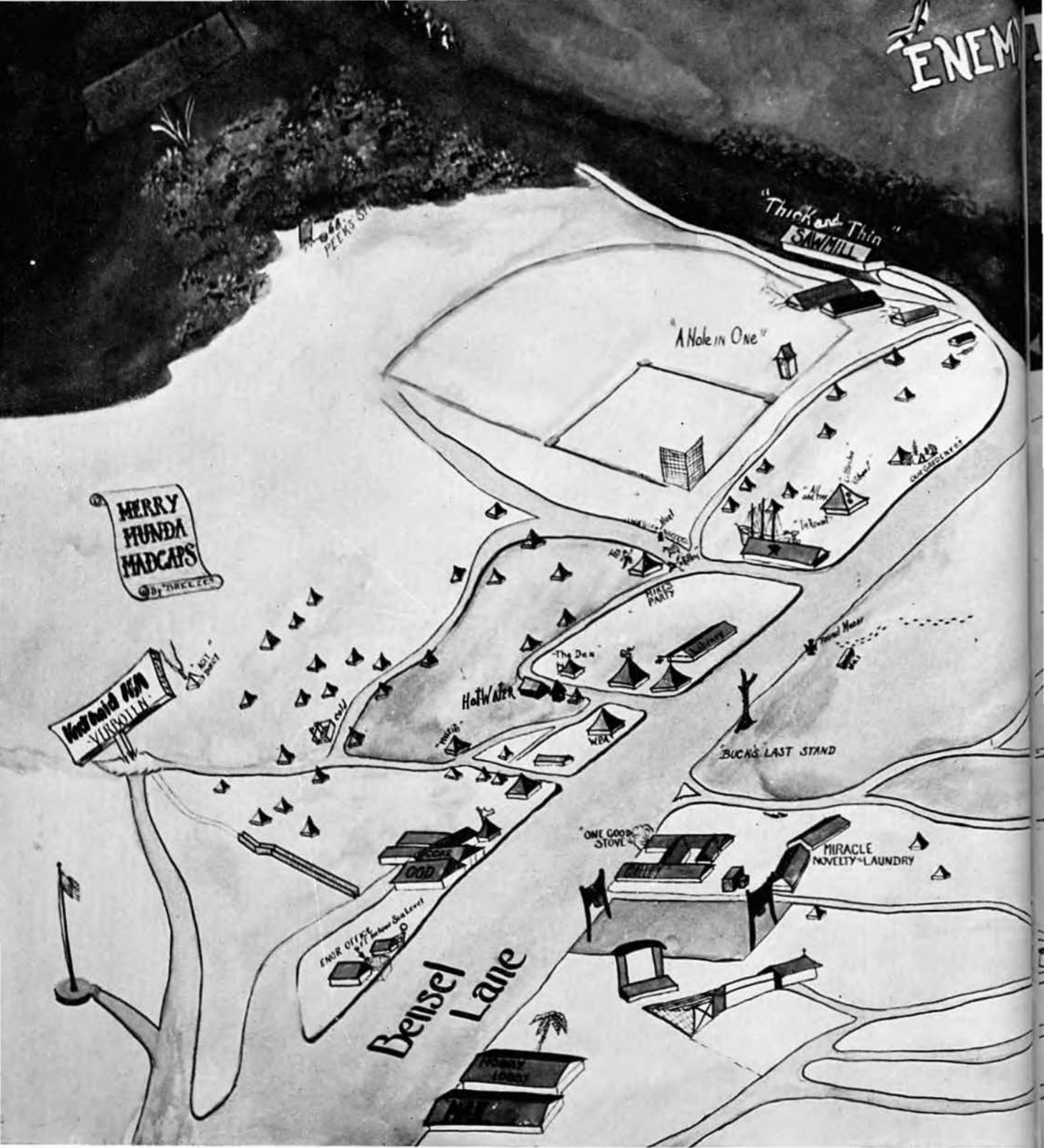


Vaughn, his Cigar and his "Duck"—
Most Familiar Sight on Munda!



"Jungle Patrol" Dod—Jap nemesis

ENEMY



ERRITORY?

HOW GET THAT
SQUEAK OUT

"Beer"
"real's party"

MESS

Smilly's VITAMIN Patch

"CAMP WILLIAMS,
Munda, New Georgia, 1944"

Chapter Six

NEW GEORGIA DAYS AND NIGHTS

The months that followed found '61 settling into our niche in the Pacific war; a gradual routine, which, while it could hardly be called pleasant, was well established and organized and about as satisfactory as overseas existence can be. For reasons of security, we can not, of course, set down the actual nature of our operations, but the commendations we received speak for themselves. We were not long in gaining a reputation as a "good outfit" . . . a balanced and well disciplined organization that could handle any type of work assigned to us, from moving a hill to repairing the most intricate mechanisms. In our ranks were included men from every construction and technical field . . . many others went into work they had never heard of . . . and made good at it. We were adaptable to any situation. The heavy equipment boys kept the strip, reputed to be the finest in the South Pacific, in shape and paved the way for many a successful bomber-fighter strike. A short-handed sawmill and logging crew set and held a record in lumber production for that Pacific area. Our Base water system was a model of efficiency and production. On the lighter side, the engineers developed sub-level surveying to it's highest degree; Peeks shattered all existing records in raisin-jack production; the laundry lost at least a full seabag of clothing for every man in the outfit.

In general, we made the best of our situations. In spite of the inevitable grouching and griping, our morale was among the highest. Ours was eventually a model camp in the best Seabee tradition of personal comfort. Many were the footlockers, hotlockers and rubber bunks constructed . . . many of us lived better than we had in civilian life. Our health remained good. Most of us put on weight. Of course there were the usual cases of cat fever, an occasional appendectomy, the inevitable "jungle rot" and the usual sprains and bruises. A hard blow fell in our midst when we lost Bill Webb on August 22, 1944; our first casualty.

We moved to Camp Williams, established a more permanent camp area, and life for us went on its merry way. The "Angels" made

the semi-finals in the Island League . . . '61 consumed more steak and french-fries pound for pound, than any outfit in the South Pacific and swore to a man that it was the worst they ever ate (editors note: Civilians were starving!) Then there were the more notable beer issues . . . Platoon Five's victory softball brawl . . . steak and beer at the "Acey-Duecy" . . . the "sociables" thrown by "The Misfits" (Bill Graham set a record too) that kept Comedian Siegel awake and unhappy. Then came the holidays . . . first the Thanksgiving dinner, in which our cooks well outdid themselves, and which left us foodlogged and staggering. It seemed but a few days before Christmas, our second Christmas away from home, was again upon us. With Christmas too came the usual round of "social" events . . . a magnificent holiday, that did much to assuage our loneliness and thoughts of home. Memorable were, of course, our Xmas Eve show, featuring "Si" Martin and the dampened fiddles; Professor "IQ" Hurl's Inquisition Program; Peek's commercials and Louie Picciano's epic strip tease. Talent, tears and Bacchus reigned freely that memorable night! New Year's Eve was in many points a repeat performance, on a diminished scale.

Life went on, work went on, and as far as we knew, the war went on. Day followed day with monotonous regularity. However, nearly everyone had his own particular hobby or "racket" to occupy his off-duty hours. Many of us became seagoing Seabees; small boats of all description, many quite interesting and appalling in design, but nonetheless seaworthy, and constructed of every conceivable form of scrap and cast-off materials, were in all stages of building throughout the camp. Boating became a regular Sunday pastime, with trips to neighboring islands, fishing trips, and now and then a longer feat of navigation such as the epochal jaunt of "Ghastly" Gould. Other craftsmen among us rivalled the natives themselves in the making of shell and cateye necklaces and trinkets. The manufacture of metal and plexi-glass watch bands became a major industry. Then there was always the wild life



Jap snipers in trees were a constant menace.

to keep us company . . . lizards of varying sizes from four feet to finger length; rats, land crabs, bats, and the giant flying foxes that nightly raided our papaya trees, were all our constant companions. The latter months of our tour of duty brought excitement, or rather diversion, in the form of increased activity on the part of the by-passed Japs on the island and near our camp area. Although we had no direct brushes with the enemy, we were kept on our toes, the sentry guard doubled, and no little sleep was lost in contemplation of enemy



"Gestapo" Chief Conlan.

infiltration in the night. Jungle patrols in command of Chief Carpenter Dod made extended forays into the jungle in search of our little brown brothers, but no direct clashes were reported.

Then, as is normal with all outfits, there were always our blacker moments . . . and concerning them, we let ourselves be known, with loud bewailings and crying out. If the sun shone, it was too hot; if it rained, it was too wet. There was never enough mail . . . or beer. The rats and lizards got more use out



Constant practice on the machine gun range kept our shooting eyes sharp.



We bid farewell to a buddy—last rites for Bill Webb—Munda

of our tents that we did . . . the "Dear John" letters came thick and fast . . . everybody was getting a rawer deal than *anybody* else. Then there was the perpetual subject of rates . . . but we won't go into that. We think everyone will agree that the hardest working off-duty man was Deacon "Two-Bible" McCaleb. "Go see McCaleb" soon became a by-word.

Chapter Seven

ON TO ISLAND 'X' NUMBER TWO

We will not dwell for long on our second movement, although it could be called a more than minor operation, and at this stage of the game we cannot say too much of even the minor operations. We may mention that our means of conveyance was the Liberty ship MICHAEL KERR, and that our trip was a tale of crowded quarters, rainy nights, but otherwise smooth sailing. We were by now more or less hardened to the multitude of minor inconveniences and hardships. In fact, we didn't even notice them. We were, for the larger part, billeted topdeck among our deck cargo. Wondrous indeed were the shelters and tents that sprang up in a matter of minutes! The resourcefulness of our commissary department was quick in coming to the fore in the form of the complete galley set up right on deck. We can easily say that in spite of the improvisations, the food on that trip was among the best we have yet had overseas.

We were sailing through reputedly enemy sub-infested waters, and our men alternated with the armed guard crew in standing doubled submarine and gun watches. Good Providence was with us; we had not even a good scare.

There were the same dark, blacked out nights, the same long bull-sessions into all hours of the night; the same black waters hissing along the sides. Otherwise, this movement was entirely different than our first, our maiden voyage. Moreover, it was much shorter; it seemed but a few days before we approached our destination. The late evening of February 15th had us lying in the vast harbor of our present base.

It was here we came to see the far reaching size; the vastness and complexity of the United State's operations in the Pacific. This base was then the major supply and staging base for the Fleet's operations in the Philippines.

Finally, to divert our minds to other channels, came the rumor that we were again set to move. The question of "when and where" at once became the subject of our favorite indoor diversion . . . scuttlebutt. But, the first rumors were well founded. February of 1945 found 561 again packing . . . this time with a minimum of confusion. We hadn't been overseas ten months for nothing!

The harbor here alone could berth the ships of all the navies of the world, with room to spare.

Instead of a large part of a smaller base, we were to become a small cog in a large operation. There was not much lost motion in getting down to our assigned task. We were herded into our tents in the night; the next morning saw the greater part of us already assigned to our duties and setting off to work. We had our job to do and we went right into it.

We would like to tell you more of our actual operations here; the work we accomplished, the installations that were of our doing. But, for the obvious security reasons, such things can only be told later. As to our off-duty life; there was not the freedom of movement and the comparative lessening of restrictions that were ours at our previous base. However, more elaborate recreation facilities easily overshadowed that factor. Nightly movies were a novelty for us; scores of us soon became inveterate movie hounds. Many more of us obtained our only exercise of the day in the nightly beer line; were an issue of one can per round made it necessary to run like all hell to get back in line again, repeating that process until we had obtained as many as the traffic would bear. There, in our beer garden after a hard day's work, with those wonderful cans of cold suds in our respective fists, was where perhaps the most profound discussions and arguments of the day were in order. By this time the subject of 95% of those discussions was the endless dissertation on "going home" . . . in fact, we talked, ate and slept "rotation". Our first waking thought was "when, how, and why not?". The scuttlebutt kings had a continual field day; many and wondrous and varied were the versions on how "rotation" would really work. After a year and a half away from home, one could scarcely blame us



Our "first anniversary overseas" party . . . the Skipper tells us
"We're over the hump".

We never stopped getting shot.

for grabbing at the straw of every bit of new information on that subject that came out. As this goes into print, the question still raves, "When are we going home?" But even now, the Jap is on his last leg and the actual prospect seems brighter each day. A few of us have already gone, chiefly via the casualty route.

We sustained another permanent loss on March 27th, when Harold "Ying" Yingling died. It was a loss we took especially hard. By now, in a unit as small as ours, we knew each other intimately; were as a large family. Ying's ready wit, his dry humor, and his being an all-around good fellow, is still sorely missed.



Mail call was what we lived for . . .

The native belles intrigued us.

Conclusion

The unit has been overseas for over eighteen months now, and there are many more events of those months that we would like to include in our year book, but by the complexity of our operations; the many everyday happenings; each phase of our history herein encompassed by a chapter, could well be covered by an entire book. Our own deeply imprinted memories will surely serve us better than these printed words possibly can.

We would like to tell you what we built, how we built, why we built. We would like to tell you more of our assignments. We would like to tell you more about every little tragedy and humor of our daily lives. Most of all we want to tell you how proud we are of our own unit, and of our job "WELL DONE".

The 561st Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit is a mobile unit whose activities cannot be made wholly public. Therefore, many of the most thrilling experiences and major facts of construction and operation must remain, for now, unwritten. However, CBMU 561 has, it hopes, by its own small contribution, its own part as a small cog in the gargantuan machinery of the Pacific War, written an important chapter in World War II history, and has fully contributed its part in the building of the Road to Tokyo.



WE WORKED . . .





The logging trucks kept the mill fed to full capacity



The operating force of the "Thick'n Thin Lumber Co."—
Munda—they set lumber production records.



Jungles disappeared before the logging crew's
saws and axes.



Solomon Island lumberjacks
... the Northwoods could
be proud of them ...



We had to use a pencil-
sharpener technique to
whittle the large logs down
to mill size ...



Portable Scaffold for Dismantling Quonsets;
Wait's Patent.



Welding Shop, Munda
Everybody Works but Masters



Wait's Welders—Munda—the welding department
they kept everything patched up.



"Mitch" and Cobel who ran the rigging loft at Munda.
Good thing "Mitch" knew his business.



"Padre" Spurlin and his boys who maintained our water purification stations at Munda and Manus.



Plumbing and sheetmetal shop at Munda.



The malaria control and sanitation engineers kept the Munda camp in tip-top shape



"Pappy" Glass . . . the hub of the mechanical department.



"Footlockers, Inc." Carpenter Shop—Munda



Public Works Garage, Munda . . . they kept the rolling stock rolling . . .

"Jitterbug" and his "you call—we haul" boys kept us traveling.



The electric and refrigeration repair shop on Munda . . . maintaining New Georgia's extensive electrical system was their job . . .



. . . and the communications electricians kept up the island's telephone system . . .



The supply crew at Manus . . . an important cog in keeping the jobs supplied.



Our office force on Munda kept the records straight . . . and the re-rates coming . . .



The low-boy shuttled heavy equipment from one job site to another.

"Sad Sack" doubled in ministering to jeeps.

We specialized in taking down warehouses at Munda.

We devised still faster ways of taking down quonsets and warehouses . . . and Jack Medart blasted them with reckless abandon . . .



We moved tanks out of jungles and built others in more jungles.



We built Manus' extensive system of warehouses . . . the warehouses that supplied the Fleet.



Our surveying crews penetrated deep, Jap-infested jungles to lay out our roads.



The Munda airstrip we maintained was acclaimed by fliers to be the best in the South Pacific . . .



Jack Medart and Margie kept the harbor deep at Manus.



"Ben Blue" kept the lights on at NSD.



The Manus Base Power Plant was Pappy Edward's pride and joy.



Keeping Seadler Harbor's dock approaches deepened was our continuous job.



Generator watches were long, tiresome jobs . . .



The personnel department on Manus . . . theirs was a rough job.



Chief Malinoski . . . a prince among CPO'S . . . we hated to leave him at the hospital . . .



The chow line was always long and hungry.



The hardest working boys in the outfit . . . with the least glory . . . the cooks and bakers.



Tex and Commando cooked up many a mess of prime steaks . . . civilians were starving . . .



The day of The Big Feed . . . Thanksgiving Dinner, Munda, 1944

Butcher Bill Merkle carves up a mess of Sunday turkey (remember those few days we had fresh meat?)





Warrant Officer Dod ruled the construction end with an iron hand . . .



Mudcat and Margie



The sawmill crew took time out to have some more pictures made . . .



Hymie Leipold drew a Stateside ticket . . .

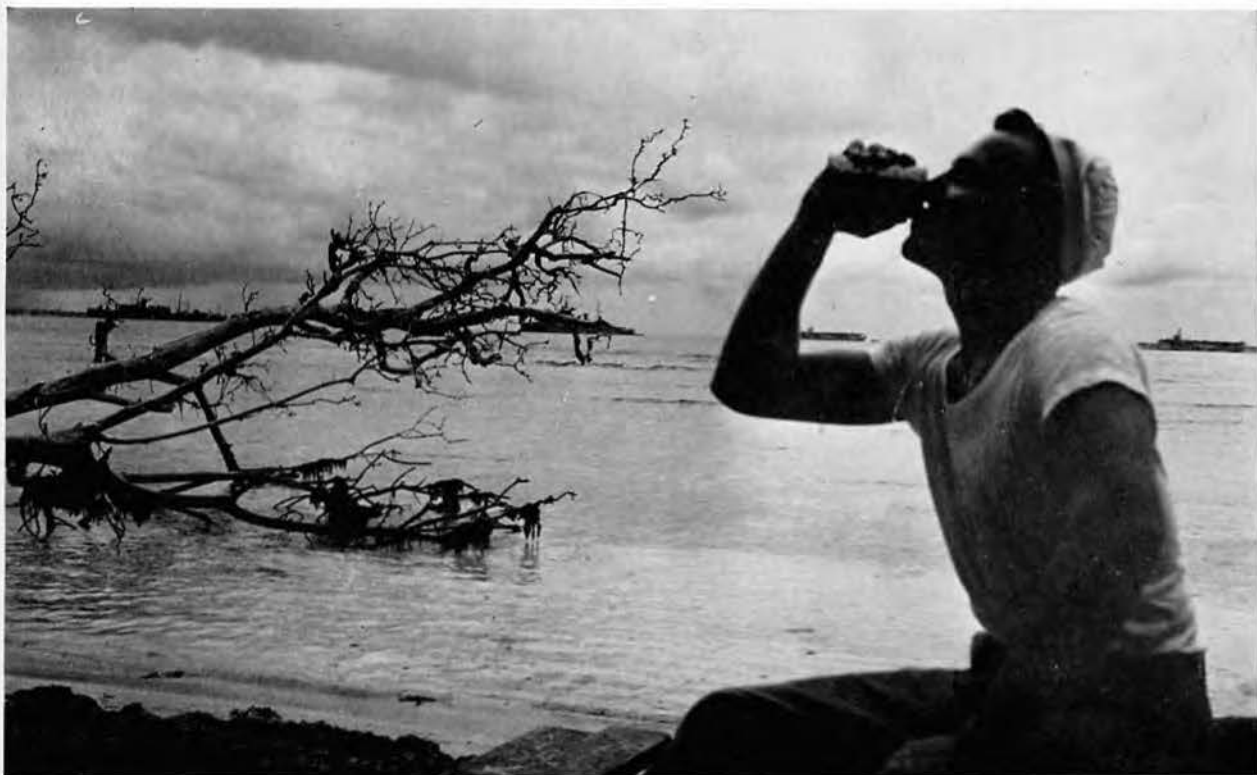


and now and then we'd find time to keep our shooting eye in trim . . . just in case . . .

AND THEN TOO, WE TOOK THINGS EASY



For a day of beery fun and relaxation, there was nothing like a Sunday picnic on Ra Ra.



Portrait of a Contented Seabee.



We whiled away many a profitable . . . (and disastrous) . . . evening at our favorite indoor sport.



. . . if you wanted a little quiet and relaxation, the library was the place

. . . or, if that was too quiet, we could always go out and absorb some more beer.



Just passing the time until we go on duty again . . .



Ra Ra Island's Swimming beach, where we spent many a fine day off.



The swimming hole on the Loren-gau River was an even better spot.



A cold can of beer after a hard days work, with the "Sons of Bees" furnishing the floor show . . . was mighty good.



It was a tough war . . . quote Lt. Watson.



... nor wind nor rain nor
snow could keep us away
from those nightly movies.

How can we forget
Jackinoff?



Our own Swingbees . . .
one of the finest bands in
that neck of the Pacific.

We had a band too!
Prof. Abie and his
Hungry Fourteen.

"Si Martin's Stump Jumpers"

WE WENT IN FOR SPORTS IN A BIG WAY . . .



The Angels' games and the twilight inter-platoon games on Munda were the big sporting events. A bunch of battling Bruisers . . . our boxing team . . . including "He Got Me in the Eye" Musseter. In the way of less strenuous sports we also had a chess team.

561's Angels—runners-up in the New Georgia softball playoffs. With a short but brilliant record . . . our Munda basketball squad. Volleyball was another of the favorite twilight games.



Chaplain B. H. Thaden—a Good Joe
 With our small chapel, it was always "standing room only"
 at Sunday services.
 The Chapel staff.

Chapel and Recreation Hall . . . Manus
 . . . our choir, although small, was one of the best.
 Base Chapel—Manus—Seabee built.

"OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS WERE WELL CARED FOR . . ."

"THE SHIP'S SERVICE DEPARTMENT CATERED TO OUR EVERYDAY NEEDS"

A haircut and the day's scuttlebut . . .
 Uncle Louie's shoe shop kept us shod . . . and supplied
 with handbags and sandals . . .
 The Novelty-Miracle Laundry Co. . . . if your clothes
 came back clean, it was a novelty—if they came back at all,
 it was a miracle!

. . . Al Storella kept our blues ready for that first
 Stateside liberty.
 We even lined up for cokes and razor blades . . .
 Wash Day . . . for those of us who didn't trust the
 laundry . . .





Most popular boy in the outfit . . . when there was mail.
 Aye! 'Tis a bonnie Scotch laddie . . . Scotland's gift to 561.
 Commander Martin tells us all about the point system.

Rebel officers Dod and Watson secede and raise the Con-
 federate flag over their tent.
 We lined up for still more shots.
 A great day . . . we left our jobs to hear the official news of
 Japan's surrender . . . August 15th, 1945.



. . . AND THE LOCAL SCENERY WAS MIGHTY PURTY . . .





Munda Airstrip—lower end



Angau Native Village, Manus

Stockade—Angau Village the Natives' Brig





561 Family Group—The Beer Garden—here we sweated out a substantial portion of a tough war.



Angau native family group.



Meditation . . . "Somewhere over the horizon is home" . . .

U. S. NAVAL BASE HOSPITAL NO. 11
U. S. NAVAL ADVANCE BASE, NAVY 250

In care of Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

17 October 1944

From: Medical Officer in Command.
To: Officer-in-Charge, 561st C.B.M.U.
Subject: Hospital Construction done by the 561st C.B.M.U.

1. The Medical Officer in Command wishes to express his sincere thanks to the personnel of your unit for the excellent work they did in building the extensions to the Recreation Building and the Officers' Mess, the erecting of new tents for the Hospital personnel, and the constructing of the athletic field areas.

2. The men of the various construction crews worked hard and skillfully and showed marked ingenuity in getting the areas and buildings completed so that they functioned with maximum efficiency. The men worked with keen interest and showed a great desire to please.

(Signed)

F. F. MURDOCH

Captain (MC) USN

NAVAL SPEEDLETTER

CNNS/P15

1 March 1945

From: Commander Naval Forces, Northern Solomons

To: CBMU No. 561.

Subject: Commendation.

Upon my detachment from this command I wish to commend officers and men of your organization for their wholehearted cooperation and efficient performance of duty. The voluminous forms of construction work and the maintenance of air strips, highways and port facilities were carried out by your unit in splendid fashion. To your "Can Do" and "Will Do" Seabee outfit I say . . . "Very *Well* Done!"

E. J. MORAN

Commodore, USN

THE "EX-ALUMNI"

MEN TRANSFERRED FROM THE UNIT

| | Date | To |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| ELY, Russell L., S2c | 15 Dec. 1943 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| MILLER, William P., M1c | 12 Jan. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| McBRIDE, John J., CM3c | 12 Jan. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| ROHDE, Kurt G., CSF | 24 Jan. 1944 | Casual Detachment No. 2234 |
| O'DELL, Frank, SF3c | 2 Feb. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| LEE, Aubrey M., S2c | 2 Feb. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| MUEHLEISEN, Paul M., S2c | 2 Feb. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| CIOTTI, Frank M., SC1c | 7 Feb. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| BLUMER, Thaine Q., MM3c | 8 Feb. 1944 | CBMU No. 573 |
| FREW, Andrew J., S2c | 11 Feb. 1944 | V-12 Training, Camp Peary |
| WALKER, Elbert R., SF1c | 16 Feb. 1944 | Discharged |
| WILKINSON, Robert M., SK3c | 16 Feb. 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Florida |
| WAXMAN, Leonard, SK2c | 18 Feb. 1944 | Station Force, ABD, Gulfport, Miss. |
| PRUITT, William L., CM2c | 18 Feb. 1944 | Station Force, ABD, Gulfport, Miss. |
| ZIOLA, Albert J., SF2c | 18 Feb. 1944 | Station Force, ABD, Gulfport, Miss. |
| McCARTHY, R. D., CSK | 24 Feb. 1944 | Station Force, ABD, Gulfport, Miss. |
| LUCIER, Henry W., S1c | 2 March 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Long Beach, Calif. |
| BRUMBELOE, Irie T., CM1c | 6 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| LEVY, Morris, S2c | 7 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| CAFARELLI, Armand, MM3c | 8 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| JOHNS, Roy L., CM2c | 10 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| WALLING, Ben, CM1c | 15 March 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Corona, Calif. |
| CHAFFEE, Glen F., S1c | 15 March 1944 | U.S. Naval Hospital, Corona, Calif. |
| ZUPON, Johnnie W., MM3c | 15 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| CULLISON, Thomas C., CM1c | 15 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| HADLEY, Vernon N., CCM | 20 March 1944 | CBRD, Camp Parks, California |
| EARLEY, Thomas J., MM3c | 22 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| BARTLETT, Arthur L., CM1c | 23 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| SHARP, Edwin, MM2c | 28 March 1944 | ABD, Port Hueneme, California |
| GELO, Evan H., BM1c | 9 May 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| SCHNEIDER, Julius, SF2c | 6 June 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| SCHNEFF, Eugene F., S2c | 8 June 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| WEBB, William G., MM2c | 28 July 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda, (Deceased 8/27) |
| BELL, James A., MME2c | 13 Aug. 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| CRANSTON, Victor A., S2c | 21 Aug. 1944 | 47th USN Construction Battalion |
| SHIBLA, Frederick R., GM1c | 21 Aug. 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| HORVATH, William A., MM2c | 2 Sept. 1944 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| KIMBALL, Richard E., S1c | 16 Oct. 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| LEIPOLD, Herman F., MM3c | 3 Nov. 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| DWORCZYK, Theodore W., S1c | 1 Nov. 1944 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| CONLAN, Walter P., CBM | 1 Dec. 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| SWANZY, W. T., Jr., MM3c | 2 Dec. 1944 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| COLE, Donno E., EM2c | 13 Dec. 1944 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| ANDERSON, Gus S., MMS2c | 3 Jan. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| BOLIN, Elmer H., CCM | 3 Jan. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| McKEE, Sidnie, SF1c | 3 Jan. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| VAUGN, Lloyd S., CCM | 3 Jan. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| REYNOLDS, Raymond W., WT1c | 6 Jan. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| RENTZ, John F., CCM | 16 Jan. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| STENGEL, William N., SF3c | 2 Feb. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 11, Munda |
| HAW, James A., MoMM1c | 8 Feb. 1945 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| HILL, Lee T., S1c | 9 Feb. 1945 | U.S.A.—Naval Academy Prep School |
| SMITH, Clarence H., Y1c | 23 Feb. 1945 | Subordinate Comd, 7th Fleet, Manus |
| MALINOSKI, John P., CEM | 12 March 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| YINGLING, Harold E., CM3c | 21 March 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus (Deceased 3/27) |
| FERRARINI, Edmund, MM2c | 5 April 1945 | Naval Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| SAIPHER, Herman E., SK3c | 19 April 1945 | ABCD, Manus |
| SMITH, James H., MM3c | 27 April 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| LYNCH, Charles J., SF1c | 4 May 1945 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| SMITH, Bennie L., Ptr1c | 4 May 1945 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| MORELAND, Robert W., S1c | 15 May 1945 | U.S.A. (Discharge) |
| RIFFEY, Kirb A., CM1c | 18 May 1945 | U.S.A. (Emergency Leave) |
| SPOTTEN, Stephen C., MMS3c | 5 June 1945 | U.S.A. (Discharge) |
| ALLEN, Arlin W., CM1c | 7 June 1945 | U.S.A. (Rehabilitation Leave) |
| GREBEL, Harold H., MoMM1c | 8 June 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| BREEN, John W., SK1c | 19 June 1945 | U.S.A. (Discharge) |
| EDWARDS, Rufus L., CMMS | 27 June 1945 | U.S.A. (Discharge) |
| GOODWIN, Robert B., CM1c | 13 July 1945 | U.S.A. (Rehabilitation Leave) |
| THOMAS, Samuel P., MM2c | 13 July 1945 | U.S.A. (Rehabilitation Leave) |
| KADING, Earl W., MM2c | 4 Aug. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| COBLE, Glenn E., SF2c | 4 Aug. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| RIGHTMIRE, Frank, CM2c | 8 Aug. 1945 | Naval Base Hospital No. 15, Manus |
| SOHRWEID, Lawrence E., MM2c | 14 Aug. 1945 | U.S.A. (Flight Training) |
| MOORE, John, SF2c | 18 Aug. 1945 | CBMU No. 609 |
| MUSSETTER, H. R., Jr., M3c | 18 Aug. 1945 | CBMU No. 609 |
| PIERCE, Joe C., EM1c | 18 Aug. 1945 | CBMU No. 609 |
| WITT, Morris B., EM2c | 18 Aug. 1945 | CBMU No. 609 |

REPRESENTATION BY STATES

| | |
|----------------|----|
| New York | 28 |
| Pennsylvania | 21 |
| Massachusetts | 15 |
| Oklahoma | 13 |
| Texas | 12 |
| California | 12 |
| Michigan | 11 |
| Ohio | 11 |
| Washington | 10 |
| Illinois | 9 |
| Missouri | 9 |
| West Virginia | 8 |
| Indiana | 7 |
| Minnesota | 6 |
| Mississippi | 5 |
| New Jersey | 5 |
| Oregon | 5 |
| Florida | 5 |
| Iowa | 5 |
| Alabama | 4 |
| Arkansas | 4 |
| Louisiana | 4 |
| Tennessee | 3 |
| Connecticut | 3 |
| Georgia | 3 |
| Wyoming | 3 |
| Idaho | 3 |
| Kentucky | 2 |
| Maryland | 2 |
| New Hampshire | 2 |
| South Carolina | 2 |
| Rhode Island | 1 |
| Montana | 1 |
| Wisconsin | 1 |
| New Mexico | 1 |
| Arizona | 1 |
| Nebraska | 1 |
| South Dakota | 1 |

REPRESENTATION BY AGES

| <i>Age</i> | <i>No. Men</i> |
|------------|--------------------|
| 19 | 4 |
| 20 | 23 |
| 21 | 16 |
| 22 | 6 |
| 23 | 10 |
| 24 | 14 |
| 25 | 20 |
| 26 | 15 |
| 27 | 11 |
| 28 | 12 |
| 29 | 11 |
| 30 | 11 |
| 31 | 15 |
| 32 | 6 |
| 33 | 9 |
| 34 | 9 |
| 35 | 8 |
| 36 | 4 |
| 37 | 6 |
| 38 | 7 |
| 39 | 9 |
| 40 | 2 |
| 41 | 3 |
| 42 | 3 |
| 44 | 2 |
| 45 | 1 |
| 46 | 1 |
| 49 | 1 |

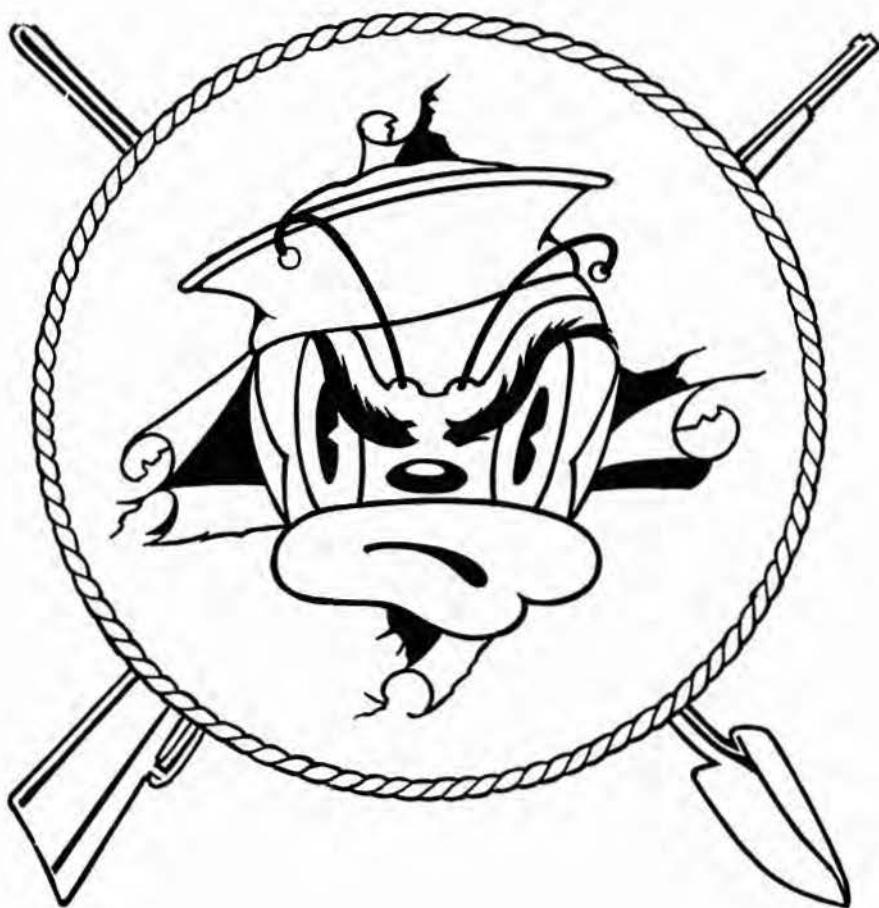
Youngest man—

Joseph Luranc—Aug. 22, 1926

Oldest man—

Wm. R. Shaughnessy—Sept. 13, 1896

Average age, all men—29.5 years



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