

Down

**AT BRIGHT
ALLEY**



with the 140th Seabees



COMDR. G. H. CARRITHERS
C.E.C. U.S.N.R.
OFFICER IN CHARGE



LIEUT. N. C. HARVEY
C.E.C. U.S.N.R.
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

It is most appropriate that the 140th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion's duty record be dedicated to the officers and men of that Battalion. It has been their determination, energy, toil and sacrifices, which have established the high reputation for accomplishments credited to the 140th Seabees. No manner of recognition or praise for the services they have so fully rendered, can equal the deep sense of pride and satisfaction each individual must feel for having had a part in these accomplishments.

In the long, hard hours of toil; in the seemingly never-ending rain, mud, heat and discomfort of the tropical jungle conditions; in the disappointments and obstacles encountered and overcome, were forged the ties of comradeship, sympathy, understanding, and tolerance, each for the other, that will, in the succeeding years, sustain and inspire us all to constant vigilance, courage, and determination, in the safeguarding for all peoples, the peace and freedom that has been so dearly won.

To each of them a most heartfelt and sincere "Well Done."

GALE H. CARRITHERS

Comdr. CEC, USNR

DOWN
ATABRINE ALLEY
WITH THE
140TH SEABEES



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Battalion as a Permanent Record of
Their First Tour of Duty

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cold persisted and faces and hands chapped while the crack of the M-1 carbine could be heard day after day. Not everyone fired on the Sun Valley Range. Of the 792 men who did fire, 64 qualified as expert riflemen, 253 as sharpshooters and 336 as marksmen. Thirty-four men qualified as Browning Automatic Riflemen and 16 as Thompson Sub-machinegun men. The total number of rounds of all types of ammunition fired was 151,200.

Something new in quarters was experienced at Sun Valley. Built as a realistic model of an actual Seabee camp in the field, Quonset hut construction had been used throughout the installation. For a week life was much the same as might have been experienced on any Island "X" where a winter climate prevailed.

On December 18, 1943, the men of the Battalion were granted their embarkation leave. All but 180 men who lived in the western part of the United States spent Christmas in their homes. The remainder waited, hoping the Battalion would move westward and they could then take their leave.

When leave expired December 28, 1943, Battalion activities were resumed. December 31, 1943, was the day set aside for the official commissioning of the Battalion. On that date, while officers and men stood at attention, Mrs. N. C. Harvey, wife of the Executive Officer, presented the Battalion Colors to the Officer-in-Charge, Lt. Comdr. Gale H. Carrithers, and the 140th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion made her debut as a full fledged operating unit, joining the list of Battalions already serving in the field.

With the commissioning of the Battalion, another phase of training was completed. It was anticipated that she would move again. This time it would be to an Advance Base Depot for final training and subsequent embarkation for Island "X." Scuttlebutt, the ever present but seldom reliable source of Naval information, for once proved almost one hundred per cent correct, when on January 10, 1944, three separate trains left Camp Endicott carrying the 140th toward Camp Parks, California.

Traveling slowly and mostly at night, the trains moved westward across the United States. Several stops were made en route, during which times the men enjoyed eating a meal away from the crowded dining cars.

They were able to relieve the stiffness caused from long hours of sitting down by marching in platoon formation through the streets of Dodge City, Kansas, La Junta and Denver, Colorado. Ogden, Utah's Wasatch Mountains and the nearby Great Salt Lake were seen only fleetingly through the darkness as the Pacific Coast drew nearer. On the seventh day, Donner Pass, heavy with midwinter snow, was climbed, and before dawn of January 17, 1944, the first train was standing at the gate of Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California.

The much-advertised California sun was seen only intermittently through the daily rain for the first two weeks after the Battalion's arrival. Lack of sunshine did not prevent advanced training from being carried on. More close-order drill, schools of instruction on both military and construction methods were held, and even a camp drainage project was taken over and maintained. It was here that the men living West of the Mississippi were granted their embarkation leave. For the remainder of the Battalion, San Francisco, Oakland and Hayward supplied adequate reasons for liberty, which was allowed every fourth night. Here too, amid the rolling hills bordering the blue Pacific, the Battalion made long marches, ran obstacle courses, stood morning colors on the camp drill field, and, in dress blues, passed in review under the eyes of Captain J. D. Wilson.

The Battalion was getting better acquainted and team work at everything improved. Scuttlebutt increased, the question in everyone's mind was: "When and where?" Part of this was answered on March 14, 1944, when again the Battalion entrained. This time it was but an overnight ride down the coast to Camp Rousseau at Port Hueneme, California.

Spirits were a little higher at Camp Rousseau; it was a point of embarkation and Island "X" would be the next stop. Life there was almost too much the same as in the previous camps, but the weather was more pleasant and Hollywood and Los Angeles were excellent liberty towns. Final training was undertaken. Long marches under a full pack, more firing on the rifle, mortar and machine-gun ranges saw men of the 140th score equally well with the best of gun crews. A three-day bivouac on K-rations gave her men some idea of

what they might expect in the near future. Time dragged and waiting was hard, and it was not until May 14, 1944, that the anticipated day arrived. On that date, the Battalion was secured to camp and preparations were made to sail. Already outward bound was the S.S. HITCHCOCK, loaded with equipment and supplies and carrying three officers and twelve of the Battalion's enlisted men. The remainder, carrying full packs, rifles, bed rolls and ditty bags, climbed the gang plank and stepped down onto the deck of the M.S. BLOEMFONTEIN on May 20, 1944. They did not know it then, but they were not to set foot on land again for 28 long, tiresome days.

A Dutch liner, converted for transporting troops, the M.S. BLOEMFONTEIN afforded few if any comforts for the hundreds of men aboard her. Quarters in the holds were crowded, and a long way down; they were hot and stuffy and were avoided as much as possible. When the holds were empty of their men, the decks were crowded. Every bit of space was utilized. Under life raft racks, on top of winches and hatch covers, and wherever else it was possible, the men sat or stood in groups during the day and, as the ship approached a warmer climate, far into the night. "General Quarters" and "Abandon Ship" drills were held daily until each man knew his place and how to get to it in the shortest possible time.

Seasickness, which had taken its toll in the first few days, died out almost completely. The Pacific lived up to its name and, except for an occasional shower, the weather was excellent.

The men spent their days reading, playing cards and speculating as to their ultimate destination. Scuttlebutt ran rampant throughout the voyage and Island "X" was said to be in a different place a dozen times a day. On May 30, the ship crossed the Equator and the Battalion's members were called before King Neptune and, amid much laughter, shouting, and hazing, were initiated into the Royal Order of the Deep. On June 4 the International Date Line was crossed and all on board automatically became members of the Royal Order of the Dragon. A radio broadcast on June 7 electrified everyone aboard with the announcement of the Allied landings on the coast of Normandy. Spirits soared. Three days later there came the cry, "Land ho!" and for the first time since leaving port, something be-

sides sea and sky were visible. It was the Horn Island Group and, shortly after they faded over the horizon, other small islands began to appear. The voyage was drawing to a close.

The ship passed the Solomon Islands and Bougainville which had but recently been wrested from the Japanese. She reached New Guinea and after a brief pause in one of the harbors there, moved on up the coastline and entered the Bismarck Sea. There, two hundred miles off the northern coast of New Guinea, two degrees below the Equator, and marking the furthest point of Allied advance into enemy waters, lay the Admiralty Islands. It was here, on June 16, 1944, the M.S. BLOEMFONTEIN dropped anchor in one of the world's finest natural harbors and for the first time the men of the 140th gazed on the coral beaches and jungle covered hills of their Island "X." This was it.

They were not the first to arrive. Combat units of the Army and Navy had already cleared all but scattered remnants of the Japanese garrison from the Island. Construction work had begun on what was to be the largest supply base in the southwest Pacific.

On June 18, 1944, the first men of the Battalion stepped ashore. Landings were accomplished by LCM barges. They were made near a small fresh-water creek where, but a short time before, American troops had fought their way inland against stubborn Japanese resistance. Signs of battle were everywhere. Enemy dugouts and pillboxes were scattered over the low hills guarding the approaches to the beach; palm trees were shattered and broken from gun fire; expended ammunition, both Allied and Japanese, lay strewn about the area. Over all was the stillness and the awful stench of death.

This then was Island "X." Here for several days in a temporary camp of "pup" tents, the Battalion lived while the ships carrying her supplies and equipment were unloaded. Here, with the arrival of the first bull-dozer and trucks, the job for which she had been organized and trained, was to begin. She would earn neither praise nor glory in combat against the enemy. She would have no battle heroes in her ranks. Her lot would be a struggle against the mud, monsoon rains, heat, malaria, dysentery and time. The story of her men, their good times and bad, and their accomplishments on this Island "X," is told on the pages that follow.



Mrs. N. C. Harvey Presenting the Battalion Colors to Lt. Com. G. H. Carrithers, December 31, 1943, Camp Endicott, Rhode Island.





FULL DRESS PARADE AT CAMP PARKS

THE BAND PLAYED ON

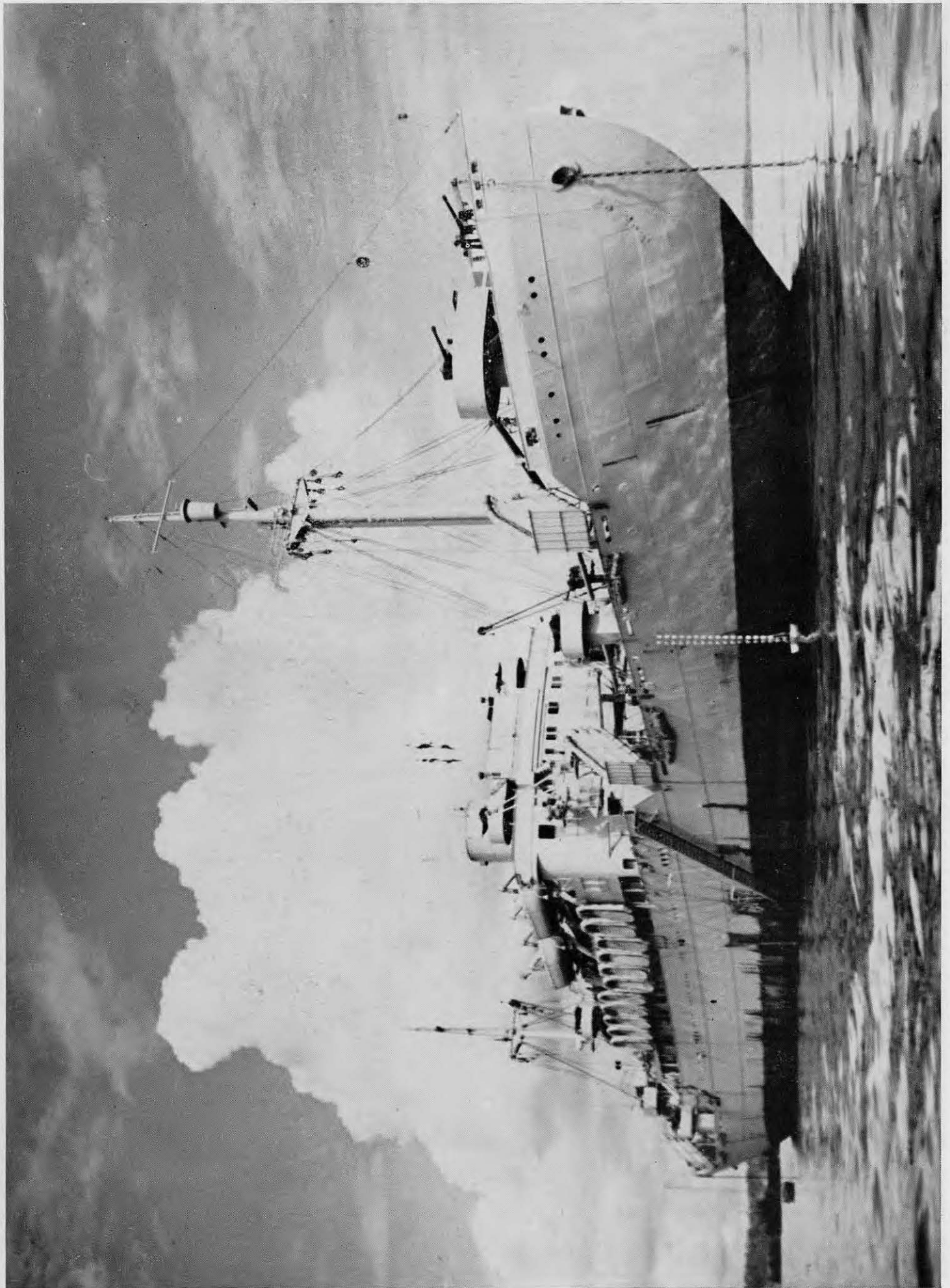


FORWARD, MARCH!

CAPTAIN AND MRS. WILSON BID THE COMMANDER GOOD-BYE



NEXT STOP HUENEME



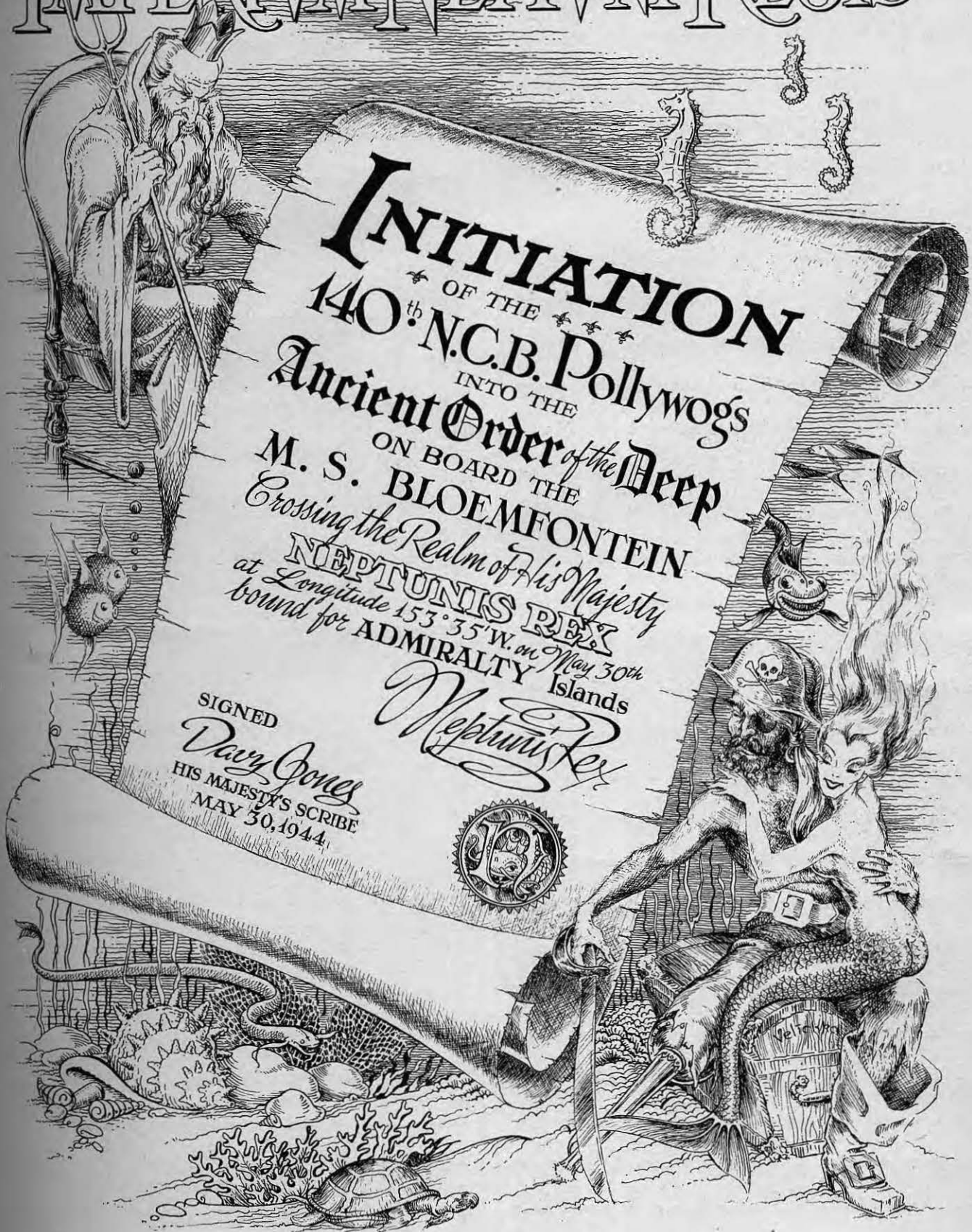
"M.S. BLOEMFONTEIN"

GET YOUR FOOT OUTA MY FACE



OFFICERS' MESS AND WARDROOM

IMPERIVM NEPTVNI REGIS



INITIATION

OF THE
140th N.C.B. Pollywogs

INTO THE
Ancient Order of the Deep

ON BOARD THE
M. S. BLOEMFONTEIN
Crossing the Realm of His Majesty
NEPTUNIS REX
at Longitude 153° 35' W. on May 30th
bound for ADMIRALTY Islands

SIGNED
Davy Jones
HIS MAJESTY'S SCRIBE
MAY 30, 1944

Neptunus Rex



EQUATOR CROSSING

Running around the world, equidistant between the North and South Poles, is an imaginary line called the Equator. Regardless of his time spent at sea and no matter where his sailings may have taken him, a seafaring man is not a real "Salt" until he has crossed the Equator at some point during his wanderings.

Here is the domain of His Majesty, Neptunis Rex, the Sea God of Roman mythology, whose sovereignty has been recognized and respected by sailors for hundreds of years. Tradition considers all ocean travelers, passengers and crew alike, who have never crossed the Equator, to be slimy things of the deep called "Pollywogs" and unfit to associate with Neptune's trusty "Shellbacks" who have already made such a crossing. Hence it is that, as any ship or sailing vessel approaches the boundary marking Neptune's kingdom, preparations are made for holding the sacred rites which will enable all "Pollywogs" aboard to become "Shellbacks" and members of His Majesty's Royal Order of the Deep.

On the day the ship crosses the Equator, summons are sent to all Pollywogs notifying them to appear before His Majesty's court for trial. Neptune himself, represented by the oldest Shellback aboard, heads a group of other Shellbacks in making up the court, and all are dressed as tradition decrees. The king is royally robed and carries a crown on his head and a trident in his hand while the other members of the court are garbed in trappings suitable to courtiers. Procedure is simple. Each hapless Pollywog is called before the king and is asked to give an explanation as to why he should be al-

lowed entry into the domain. Regardless of the answer given, His Majesty is never satisfied and some form of punishment is meted out to the culprit. He may be sent to the royal barber to be shorn of all his hair, he may be sent to the royal baths to be cleansed (with a salt water fire hose) and massaged (with heavy black grease or paint), or he may be sent to the royal Doctor who administers him a dose of medicine (tabasco sauce, diesel oil, raw eggs and pepper). All during the ceremony, those Shellbacks not actually participating hurl taunts and insults at the victim before the court. The entire trial is accompanied by much laughter and shouting on the part of the onlookers.

When all those summoned before the king have been properly humbled, they are pronounced ready and deserving to become trusty Shellbacks and members of the Royal Order of the Deep. The court is then adjourned, Neptune returns to his castle in the sea, and the initiates are left to the mercy of the spectators. Needless to say, most of the victims carry the marks of the punishment inflicted for several days after the ceremony is over.

Also traditional, although not as colorful, is the crossing of the one hundred and eightieth meridian, known as the International Date Line. Those making such a crossing are automatically enrolled in the Royal Order of the Dragon whose memberships include all good sailors and trusty Shellbacks. Certificates are given to all passengers by the Captain of the vessel attesting to their crossing of the Equator or the International Date Line.

THE ROYAL COURT OF NEPTUNIS REX



COURT OF INQUIRY

THE ROYAL COURT OF NEPTUNIS REX



COURT OF INQUIRY

IT'LL ALL COME OUT IN THE WASH, DOC



ASSUME THE ANGLE

ABIE GETS THE WORKS



PURIFYING A POLYWOG



THE WEASEL GETS SKINNED



OFFICERS

It is not intended to set forth here a detailed account of the officers of the 140th. To do so would necessitate a complete review of everything the Battalion as a whole accomplished during its tour of overseas duty. It is to be remembered that all that was accomplished and the success with which the Battalion carried out her various assignments can be traced directly back to the individual project officers, through them to the staff officers and the Executive Officer, and finally to the Officer in Charge under whose guidance and control the Battalion operated as a unit.

Listed below is the complete officers' roster for the 140th Battalion in the order of seniority of rank and showing the main or primary duty of each officer:

- Com. G. H. Carrithers, Officer in Charge.
- Lt. N. C. Harvey, Executive Officer.
- Lt. "R" "B" Walters, Company C Commander, Operations and Beachmaster.
- Lt. C. C. Lupton, Former Senior Medical Officer.
- Lt. W. P. O'Neill, Company A Commander and Maintenance Officer.
- Lt. C. K. Hertrick, Company B Commander and Safety Officer.
- Lt. J. L. Reid, Company H Commander and Transportation Officer.
- Lt. L. A. Ehret, Former Chaplain.
- Lt. F. W. Smith, Medical Officer.
- Lt. J. M. Whallon, Present Chaplain.
- Lt. E. M. Busby, Company Officer and Project Manager.
- Lt. F. W. Arnold, Company D Commander and Ordnance Officer.
- Lt. H. M. Fair, Company and Camp Officer.

- Lt. D. L. Davies, Jr., Company and Water Supply Officer.
- Lt. (jg) C. J. Roberts, Supply Officer.
- Lt. (jg) W. J. Krebs, Disbursing Officer.
- Lt. (jg) O. K. Wright, Company Officer and Utilities and Shops Officer.
- Lt. (jg) F. W. Sneddon, Company Officer and Project Manager.
- Lt. (jg) C. E. Vaurio, Personnel Officer.
- Lt. (jg) G. R. Campbell, Company Officer, Diving and Legal Officer.
- Lt. (jg) P. A. Burton, Company and Malaria Control Officer.
- Ch. Carp. E. E. Cherry, Company and Cargo Officer.
- Ch. Carp. T. J. Linton, Company Officer and Project Manager.
- Ch. Carp. H. Bullard, Jr., Company Officer and Coral Production Officer.
- Ch. Carp. T. J. Speed, Utilities Officer.
- Ch. Carp. C. Trimble, Jr., Permanent O.O.D. and Engineering Officer.
- Ch. Carp. A. J. Weeks, Company Officer and Project Manager.
- Ch. Carp. C. H. Miller, Company Officer and Project Manager.
- Ch. Carp. T. F. Roberts, Company Officer and Project Manager.
- Ch. Carp. W. R. Stephens, Jr., Company and Staff Censor Officer.
- Ch. Carp. A. H. Cobb, Company Officer, Heavy Equipment Repair and Dispatch.
- Ch. Carp. H. D. Bushmiller, Company Officer and Project Manager.

ORIGINAL OFFICER COMPLEMENT OF THE BATTALION



OFFICER COMPLEMENT OVERSEAS

THE SATURDAY AFTERNOON MEETINGS



COFFEE HOUR



DEPARTMENTS

It is through the operating efficiency of her internal structure that any Battalion is able to function properly in the field. Grouped here in this section are those departments which carried on specialized types of work, day in and day out, and as integral parts of the whole, were largely responsible for the 140th's successful completion of her assignments.

Battalion Headquarters was the nucleus around which all other departments operated. Here the Officer in Charge and the Executive Officer established the policies, issued the orders, and made the final decisions which governed the activities of the entire unit. Embraced in this department were both the Officer of the Deck and the Battalion Master at Arms force, the former the communications center and the latter the police force which maintained order within the Battalion itself.

Concerned mainly with the necessary keeping of records and files, especially in connection with those records pertaining directly to the Battalion's enlisted men, were the Personnel and Disbursing departments. It was there the men went for solutions to their problems on family matters, their pay, allotments or insurance, and it was there that the service records and pay accounts for each man were kept accurately and up to date.

Over the desks of the Supply department passed the orders for everything from food to heavy equipment. Always of vital importance, the Supply unit first secured the necessary items and then supervised their issuance when and where they were needed. Aside from the paper work involved, a large number of men were kept busy loading and unloading trucks and passing out items ranging from hammers to GI clothing. Closely allied, and servicing the individual men more than any of the other departments, were those of Ship's Service. Cobbler, Barber, and Tailor shops were kept busy, and the laundry, Ship's Store, and beer issue crews had a steady stream of customers.

Battalion work assignments were first considered in the Engineering Office for it was there the plans and blue prints were drawn up, stresses and strains figured,

and the type of building material decided upon. Survey crews from this department laid out roads and building sites and the photo laboratory accounted for the pictures which accompanied the progress reports forwarded to Washington each month. To the Projects Office went the job of picking the individual men and officers who made up the work and construction crews allotted to each project, and reassigning them as the jobs were completed. The prevention of accidents fell to the Safety Office whose job it was to safeguard the lives of the men by eliminating work hazards and keeping the thought of "Safety First" in the minds of all.

Mail from home was the main barometer by which the morale of the entire Battalion was measured. When mail was plentiful spirits were high, but when several days would pass without mail from home, that fact was plainly evident in the faces of the men. During the entire tour of duty overseas the Battalion's Post Office handled both incoming and outgoing mail promptly and much to the satisfaction of all. Closely allied with this department was the Censor Board through whose hands passed hundreds of letters daily. It was their job to make sure all outgoing mail conformed with military censorship regulations.

Spiritual welfare of the Battalion rested with the Chaplain. To his office went those men of troubled hearts and minds. Never an easy task, the Battalion's Chaplains were of service to the men whenever and wherever it was possible. Especially appreciated were the efforts of Chaplain Whallon in getting a fine chapel built in the Battalion's home camp late in the summer of 1945. Prior to its completion, services had been held either in other activities' chapels, or wherever space would permit in the Battalion's own area.

A man-sized job, especially during the early months, was handled by the Armory crew. Climatic conditions encouraged rust and rot in the Battalion's small arms and required their frequent cleaning, oiling, and proper storing. Unexploded ordnance found about camp or building sites was promptly disarmed and disposed of, while

those of enemy manufacture picked up for souvenir purposes were rendered harmless before the finder was allowed to send them home.

Over the extensive roadways built and maintained by the Battalion ranged the Shore Patrol detail. Theirs was the job of directing traffic, expediting the movement of supplies and equipment, and at the same time doing all within their power to reduce road accidents.

Always of prime importance to any military organization is its sick-bay and dental department. For several weeks these departments operated under the most trying conditions. Quarters at first were far from adequate. The first sick-bay was a floorless tent with no bed ward at all. It was here the many men afflicted with jungle rot of one kind or another and dysentery, received whatever treatment could be given them. After the first few weeks a larger and more permanent sick-bay and ward were built and the situation eased off. During the invasion of the Peleliu Island group, corpsmen of the 140th received hundreds of the wounded as they were returned by air from the battlefield, and aided in their removal to base hospitals in the rear areas.

Telephone linemen, installation and repair crews were responsible for the excellent system of inter-island and inter-unit communications, and the balance of the electrical department installed the generators, power plants, and light systems so necessary to the shops and quarters of the camp. Their services were not restricted to the 140th alone. Over the entire group of islands they built and maintained power plants, reefer units and lighting systems.

Ship to shore transportation of supplies and the inter-island movement of both men and equipment was accomplished through the efforts of the Barge Pool. Running twenty-four hours a day when the situation required, the crews lived aboard their barges and were seldom far from the waterfront.

From the Plumbing and Metal shops came the skilled men who set up the necessary camp water facilities, the boilers needed in the galley and laundry, and the thousand and one different metal work jobs. In this group were the water plant men. To them went the task of assembling one of the biggest water supply systems in

the southwest Pacific area. From the location of the sources of supply to the completion of large filtration and storage plants, this crew worked tirelessly and they were rewarded when the adequate supply of water proved to be as pure and sweet as that found anywhere.

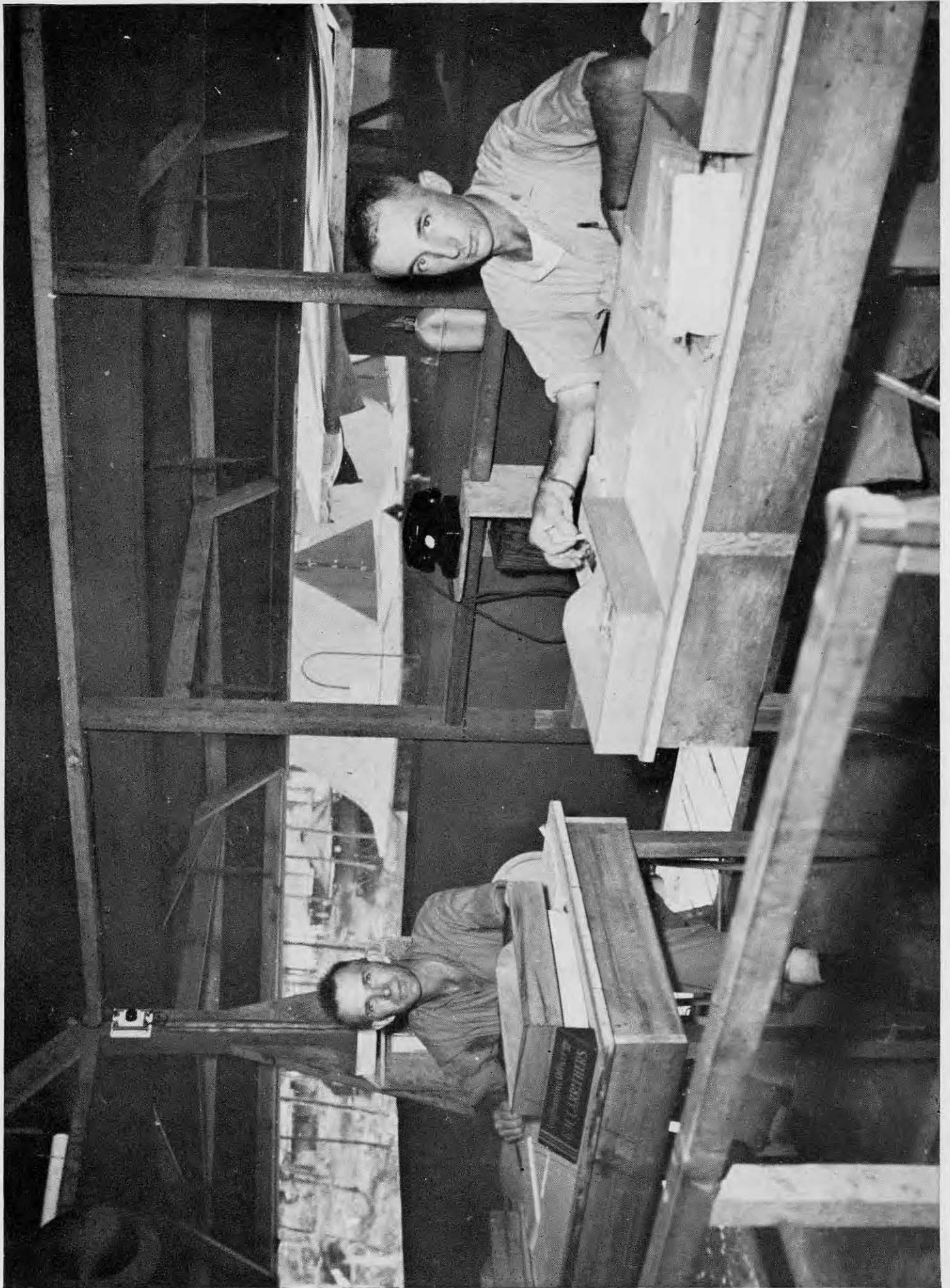
Thankless and yet necessary were the duties of the Camp Maintenance detail. The manner in which they took care of garbage disposal, area policing and the repairing of tents and buildings, kept the camp clean and livable at all times. From the Carpenter Shop came the door frames, storage shelves for the various offices, tables and chairs, and the other hundreds of articles of woodwork needed for the successful operation of the Battalion as a whole.

To land and unload supplies on an undeveloped island, docks must be built. The Battalion's dock crew did fine work on every job to which they were assigned. Much of this type of work was conducted by the underwater divers of the 140th, whose skill rated with the best.

Probably the biggest individual departments in the Battalion were Transportation and Heavy Equipment. Until roads could be built by the bull-dozer and motor patrol operators, the supplies and other necessary items could not be moved by the many trucks controlled by Transportation. Working all types of equipment under the worst possible conditions necessitated a constant alertness to breakdowns and proper upkeep of everything movable. When parts for repair were not available the crews improvised, sometimes even manufacturing their own shop machines, in order that the equipment could continue its uninterrupted movement.

The scourge of malaria and similar diseases so prevalent to the tropics was reduced to a minimum through the efforts of the Malaria Control crew. Into the swamps they went, blasting and cutting drainage ditches so the stagnant waters could drain away and, where this was impossible, spraying oil on any pond which would furnish breeding grounds for the mosquito larvae.

No Battalion department rates above another; from Headquarters to the Officers Stewards who operated the Officers' Mess, all fulfilled their assignments competently and with the team work so necessary to the successful operation of any military organization.



OUR SKIPPER AND EXEC.

OFFICERS' COUNTRY AND BATTALION HEADQUARTERS



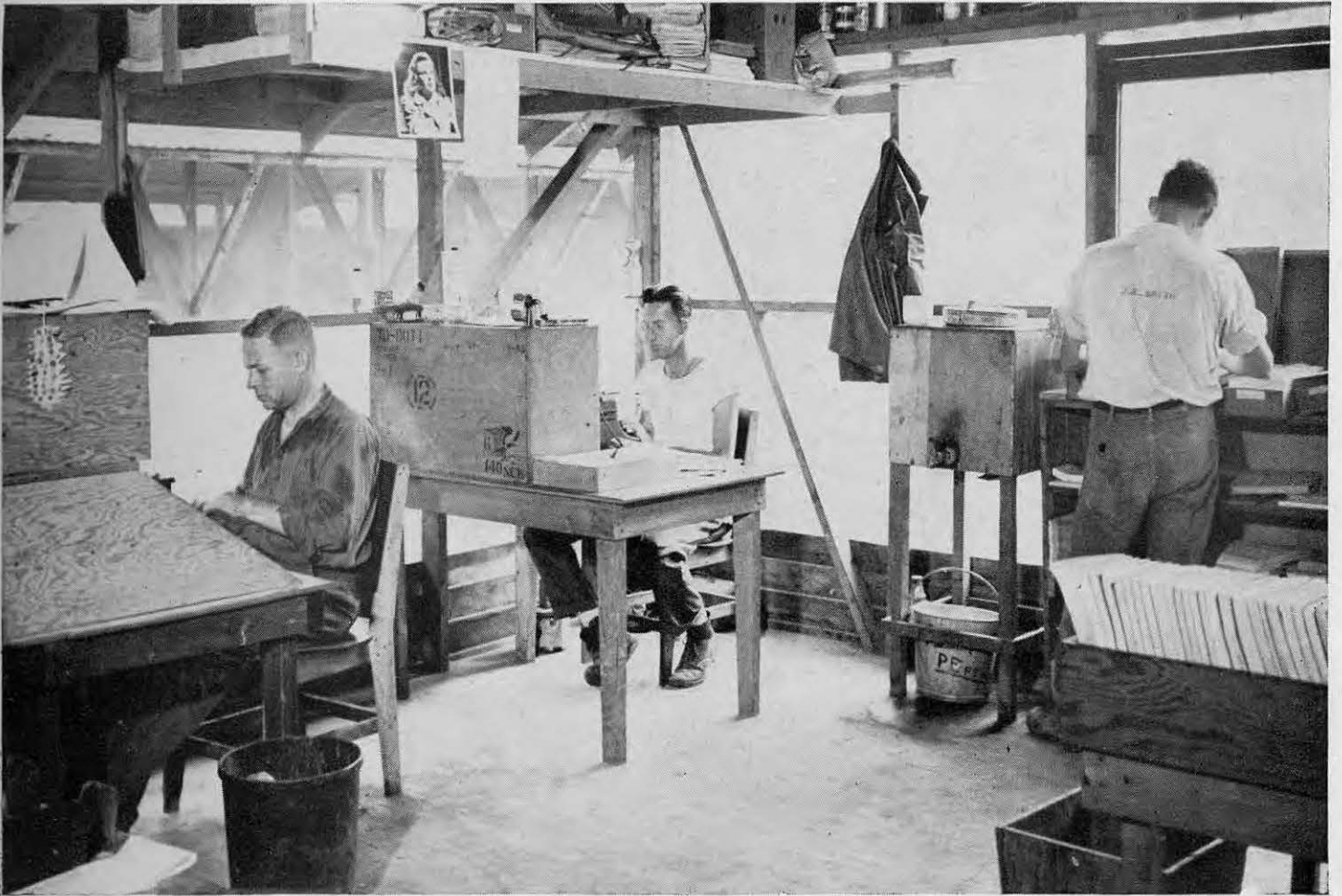
LAW WEST OF FRISCO

GET YOUR LIBERTY CHITS HERE



KEEPER OF THE FILES

PERSONNEL PERSONALITIES



THE EAGLE SCREAMS

SUPPLY OFFICE AND PAPER WORK



ARE THEY SHARP, MATE?

MORE SPAM?



THE "BACON" BOYS



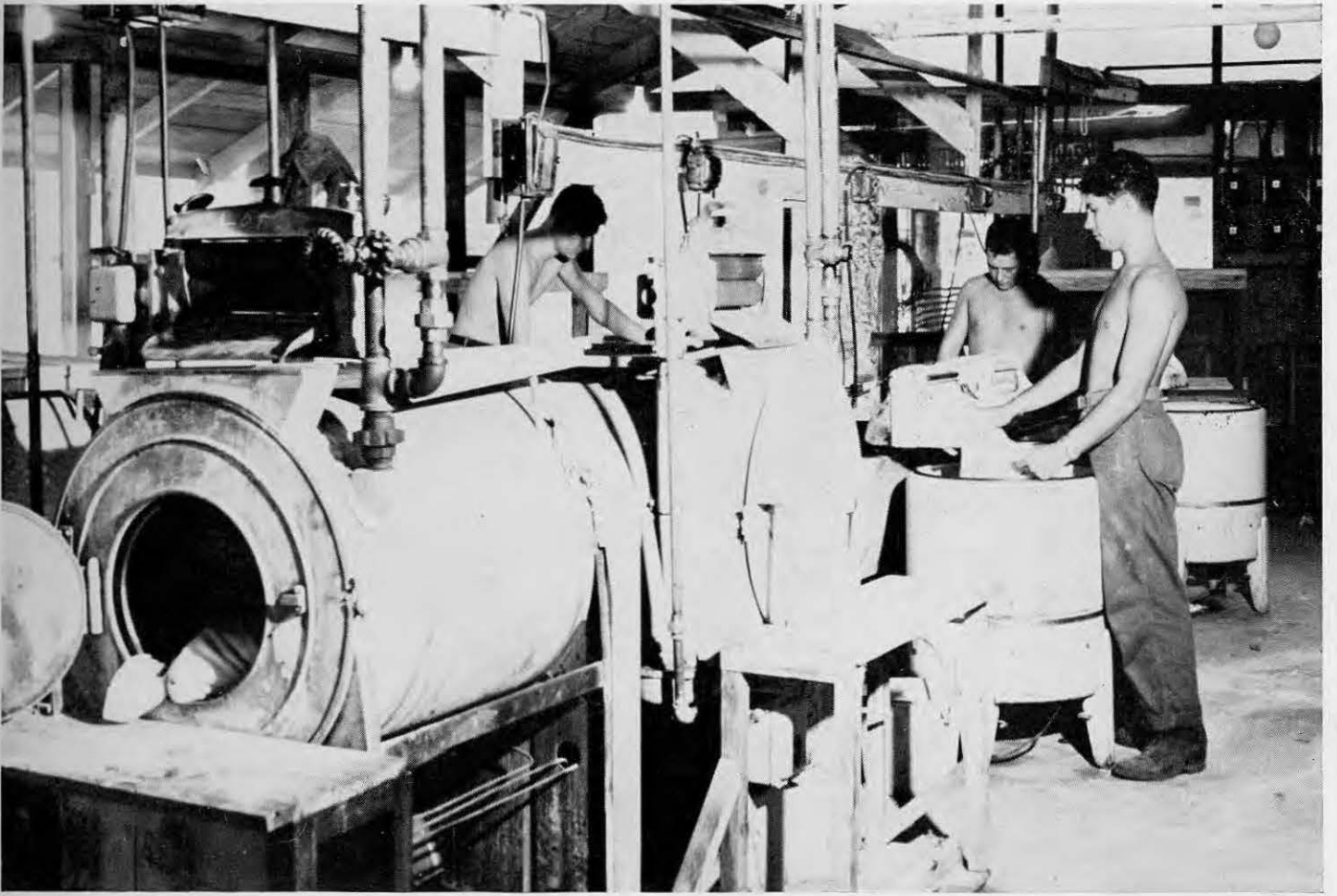


YA GOT ANY ZIPPERS?



"SING LOW HAND LAUNDRY"

BLUE MONDAY!



ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT AND SURVEY CREW

DRAFTSMEN

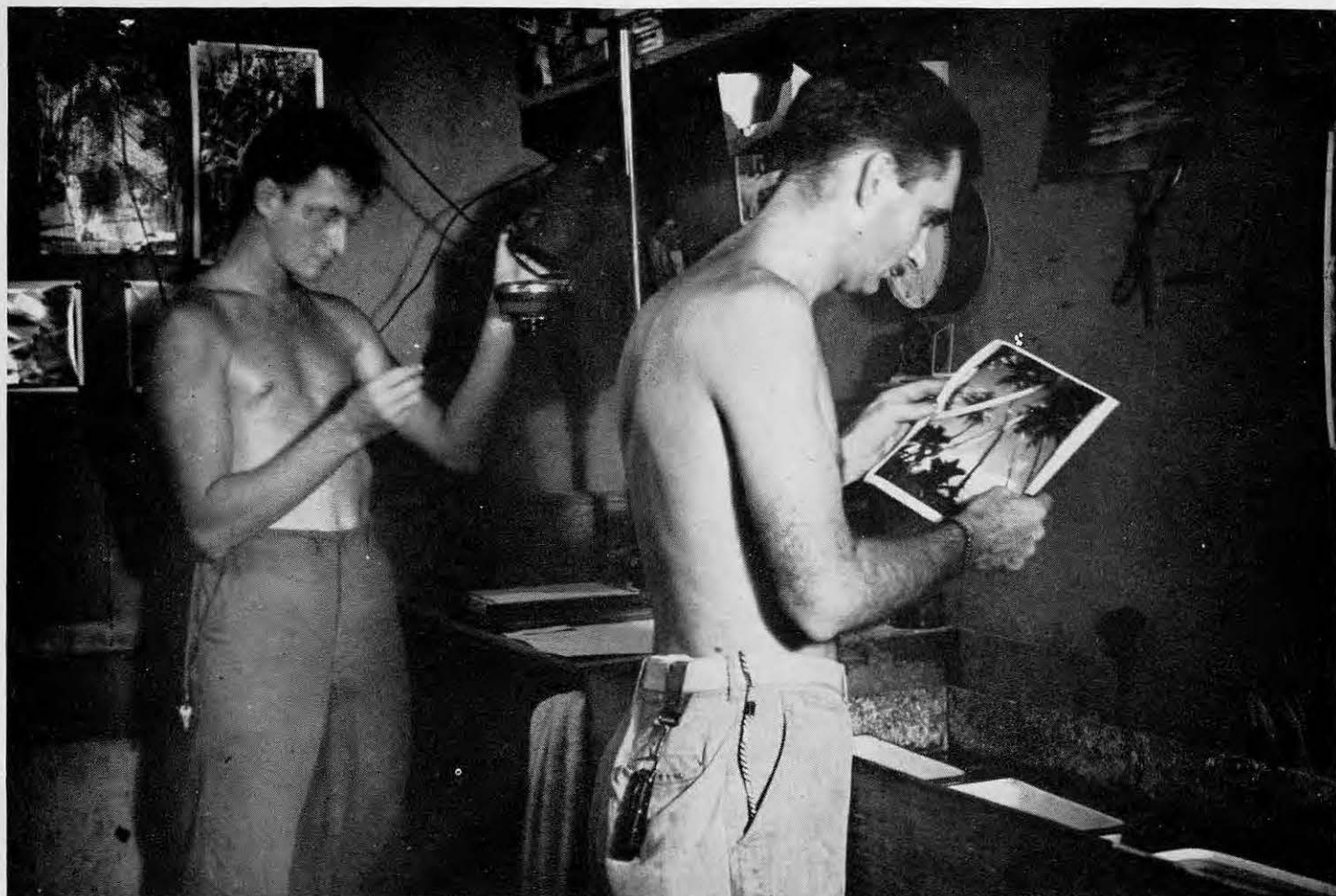
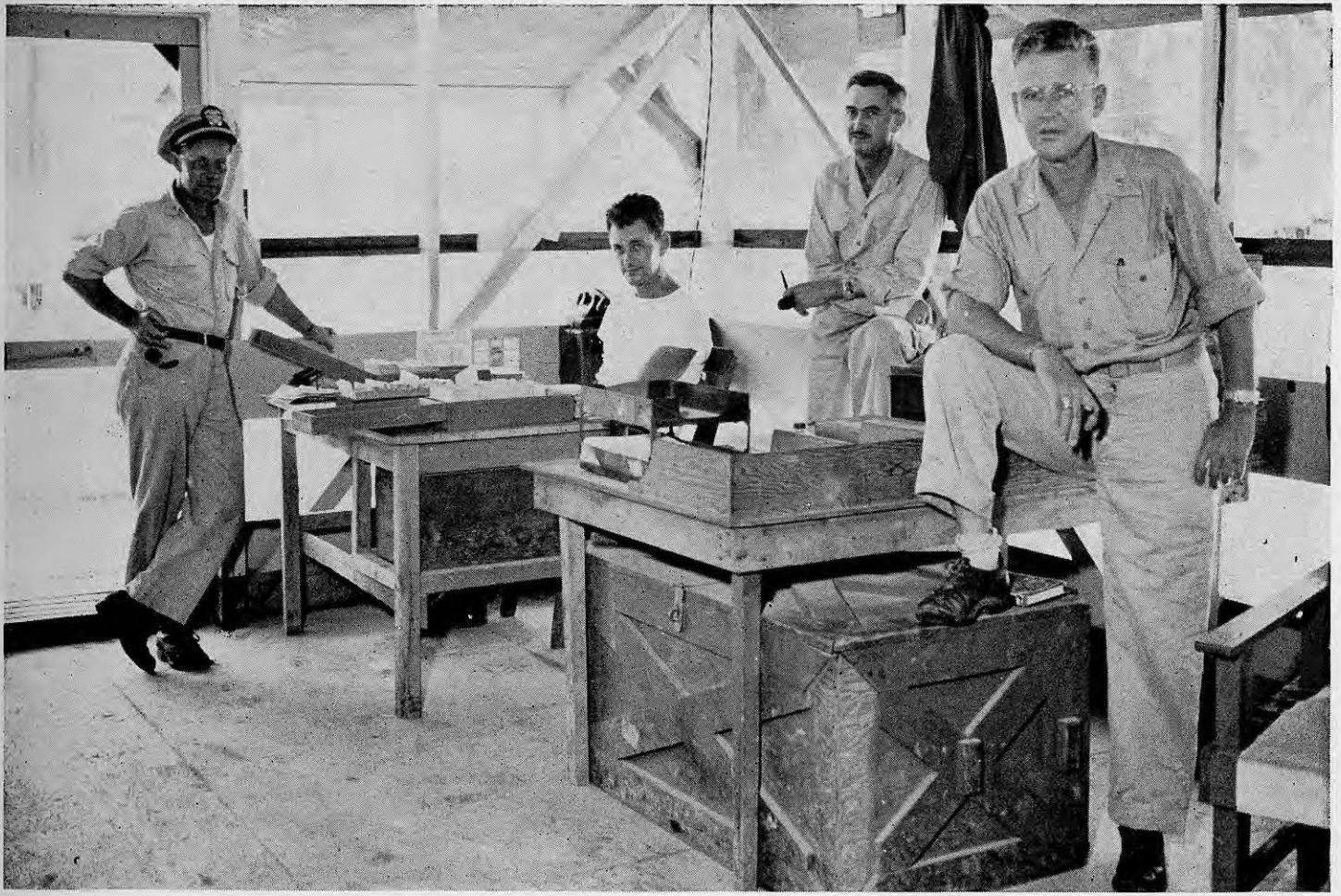
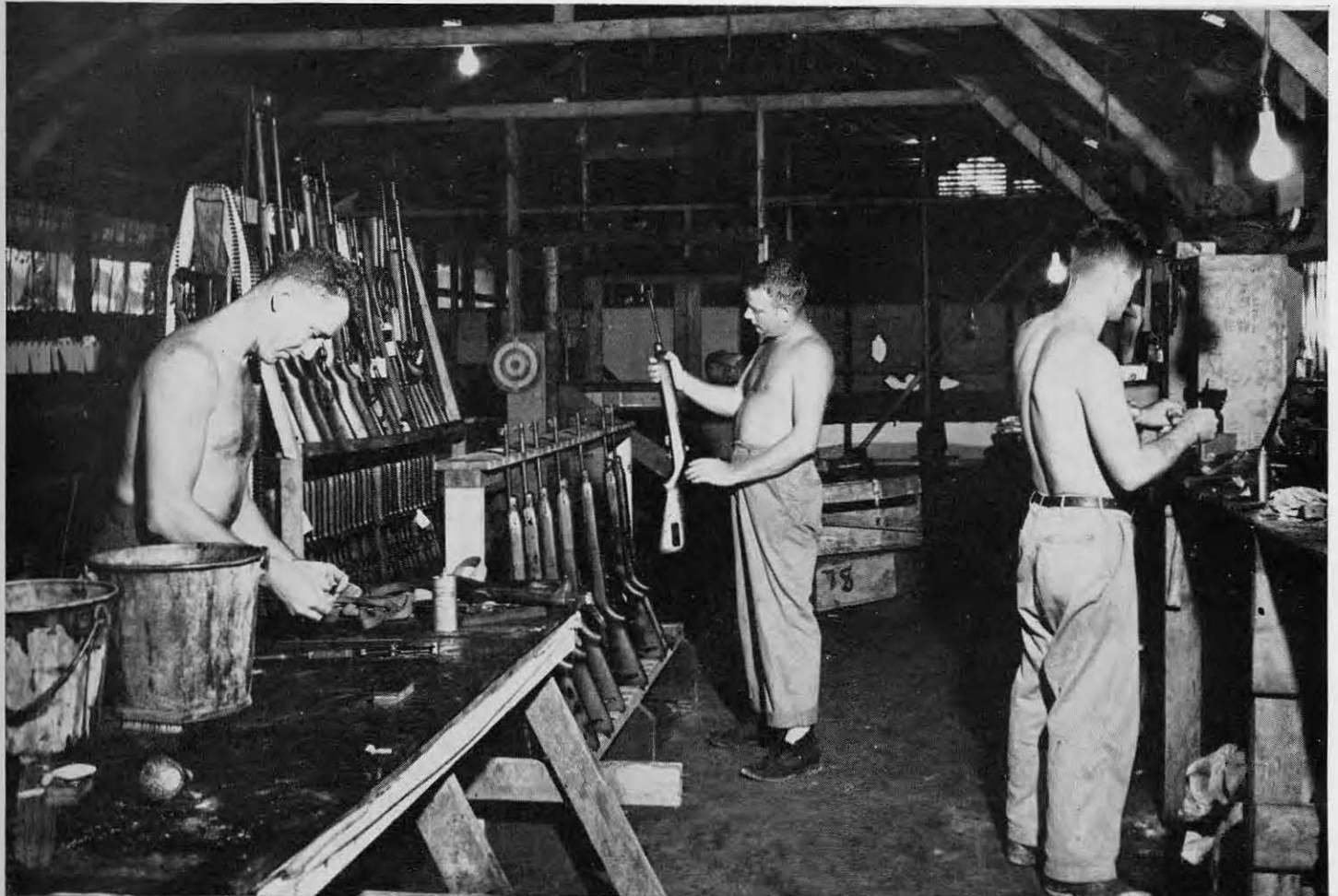


PHOTO LAB AND ART GALLERY





CAREFUL WHAT YOU WRITE



ARMORY CREW

BOGEY-MEN: SLOW DOWN!



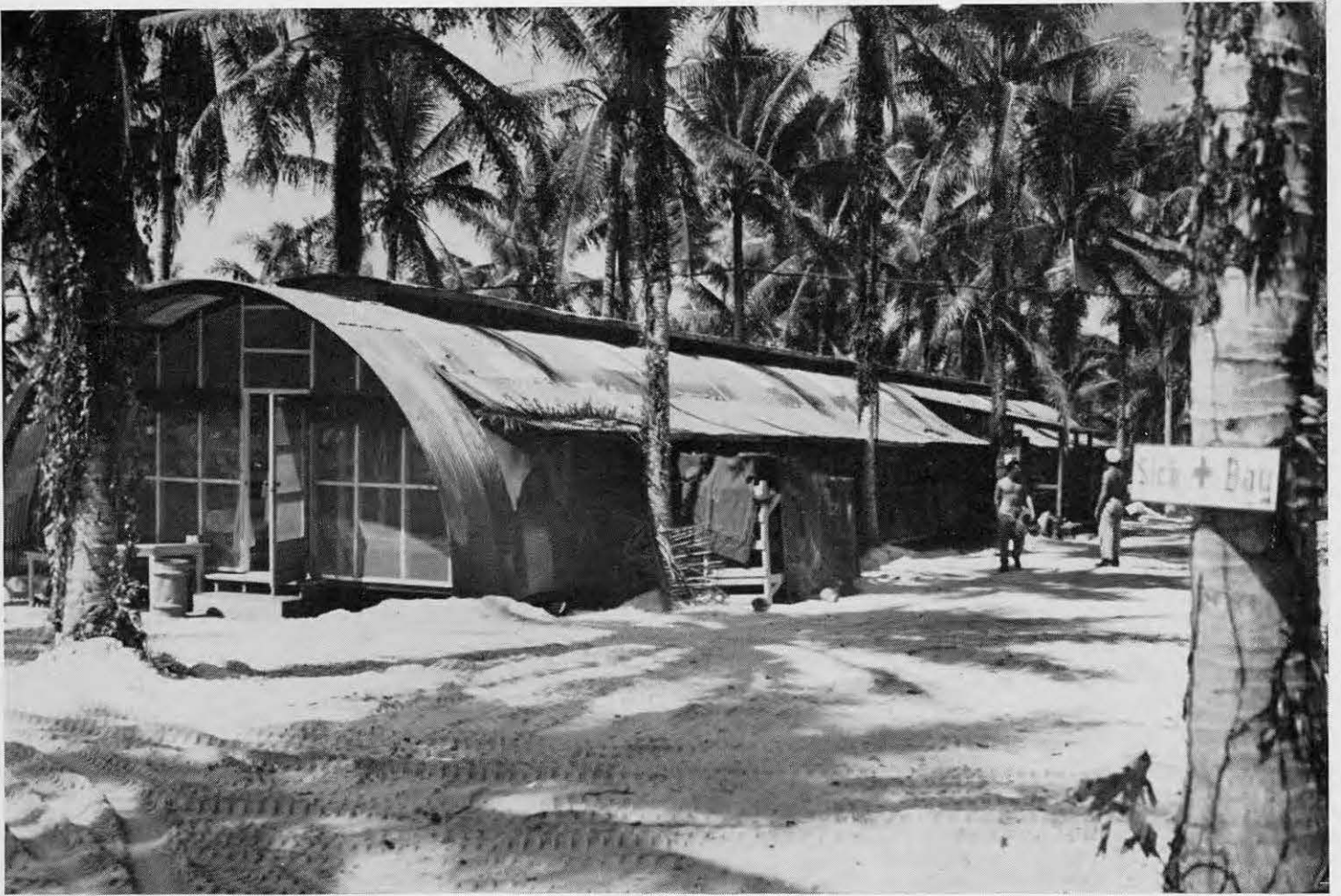
WIDER, PLEASE

MEDICAL STAFF AND THE BEDPAN-BRIGADE



DYSENTERY DEPOT

"REST-CURE HOTEL"

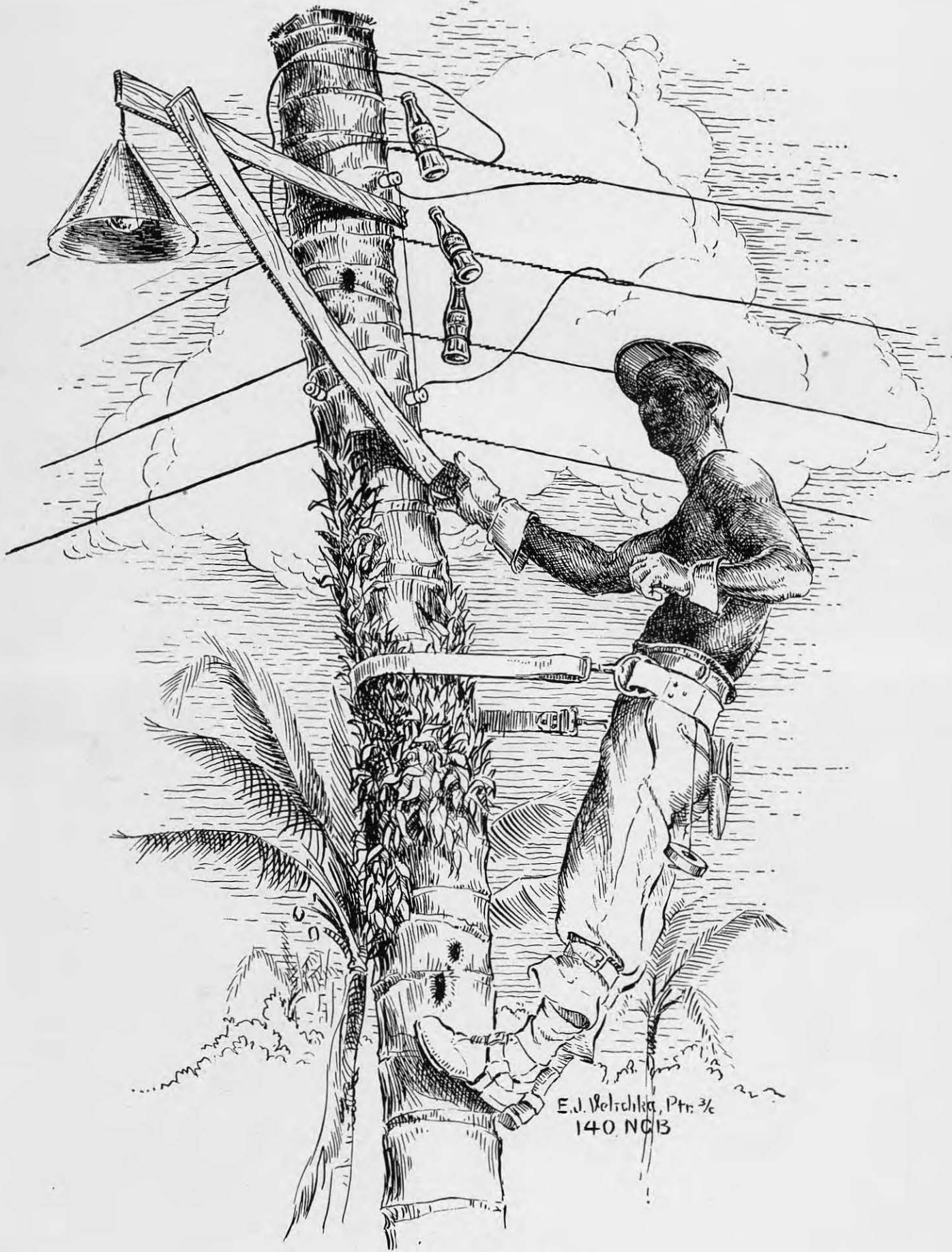


"NUMBER PLEEZE"

TROUBLE-SHOOTING OUR SPECIALTY



POWER PLANT CREW



E. J. Velichka, Ptr. 3/6
140. NCB

COKE BOTTLE INSULATORS

ELECTRIC SHOP PERSONNEL



ELECTRIC SHOP MAINTENANCE CREW

REEFER MAINTENANCE



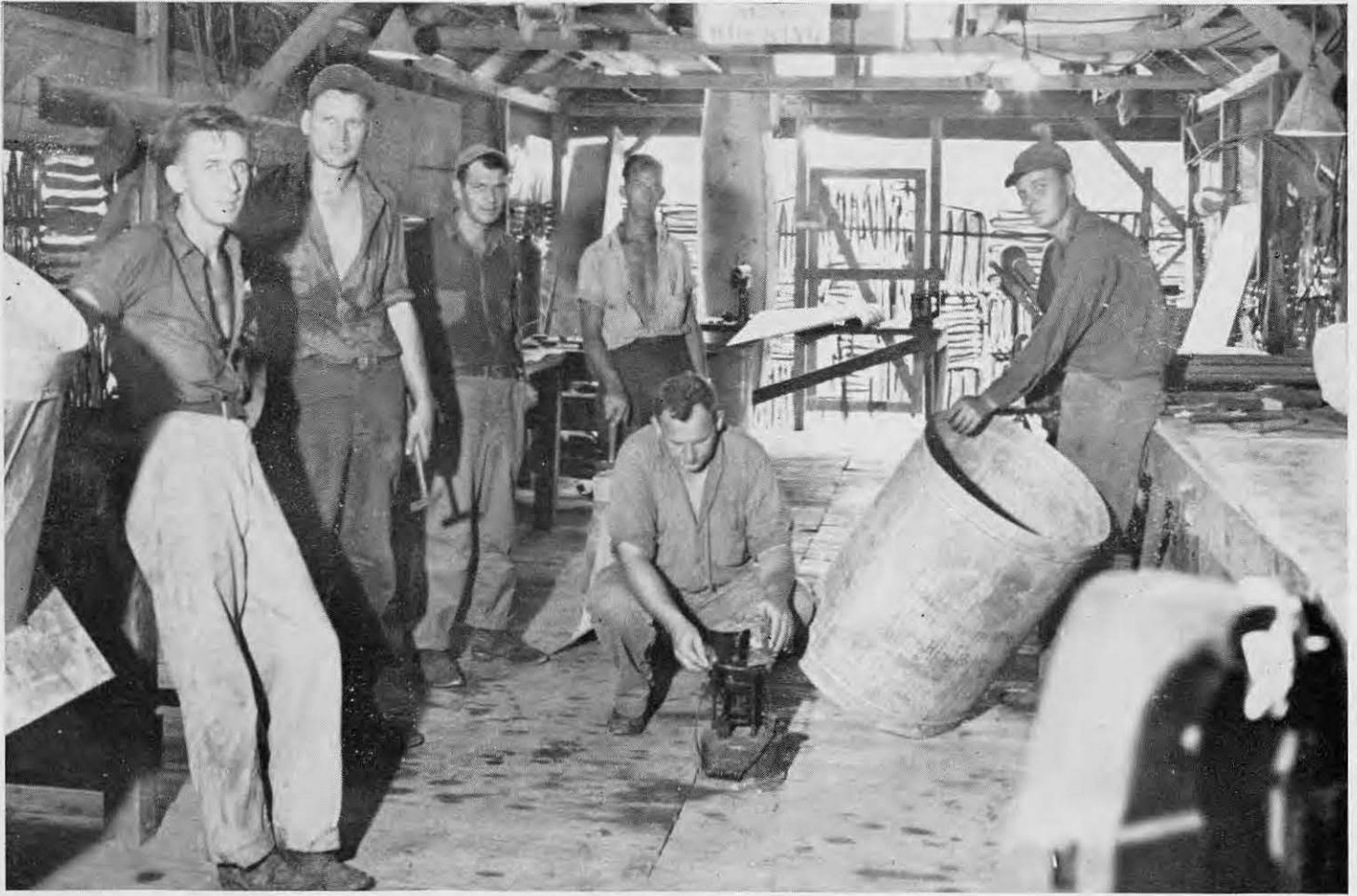
DO YOU "SMOK"?

MARINE DIVISION



"SHAFER'S SHIPFITTERS"

DANGER: MAN WORKING!



WATER PLANT CREW

WATER PURIFICATION DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL



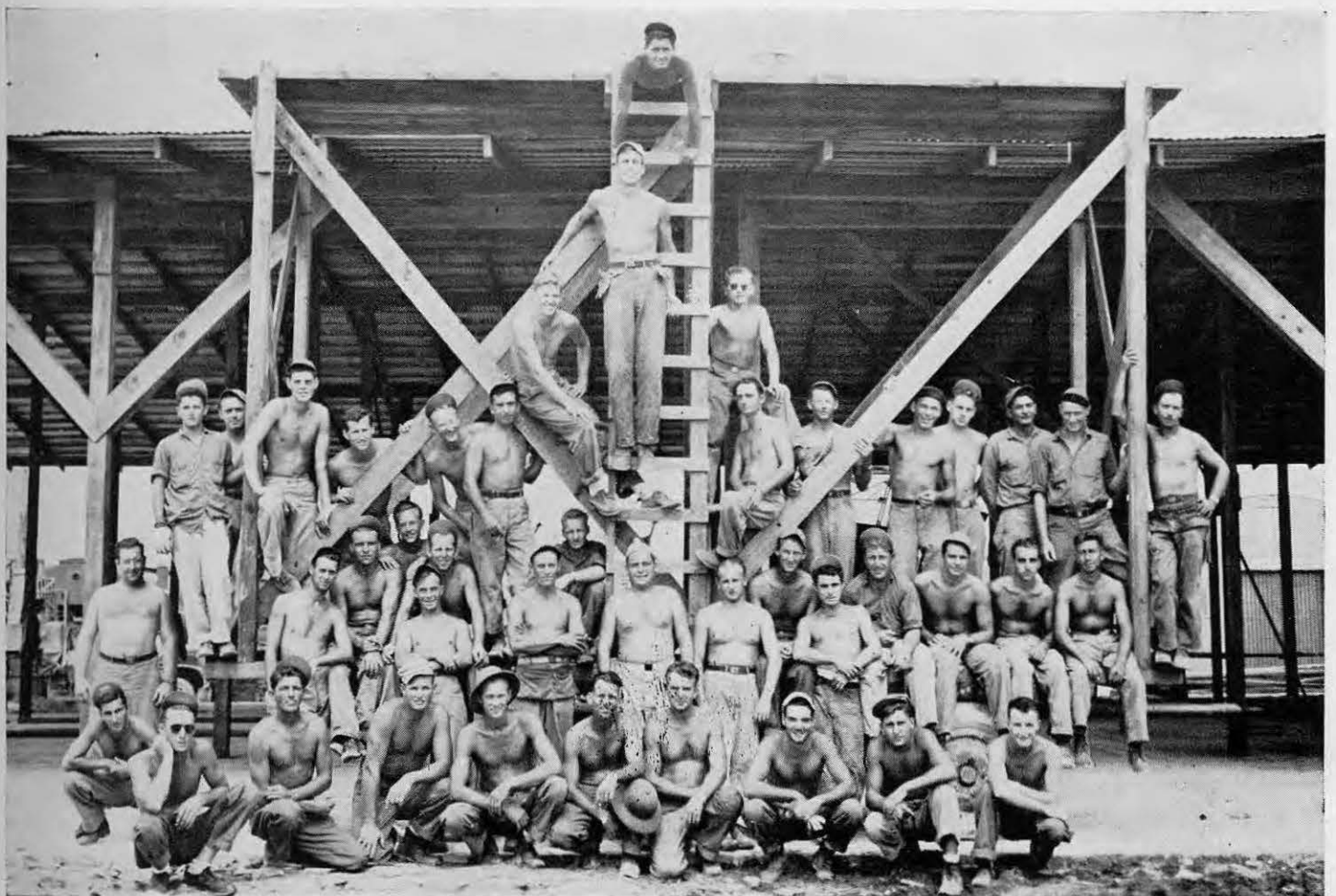
WATER PLANT CONSTRUCTION CREW

PIPE GANG



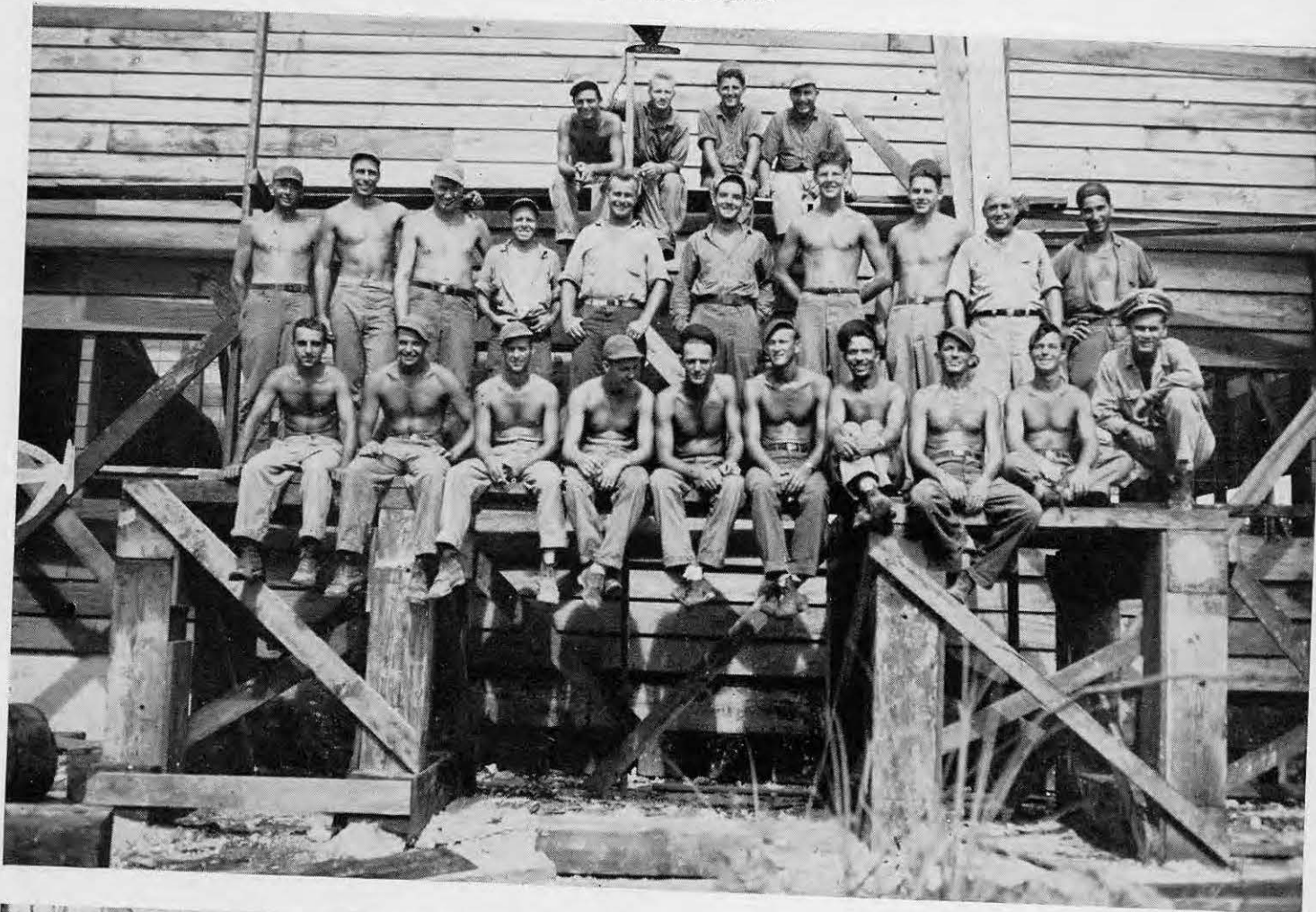
CAMP SANITATION AND MAINTENANCE

CARPENTER SHOP CREW—"IF IT'S WOOD WE CAN MAKE IT"



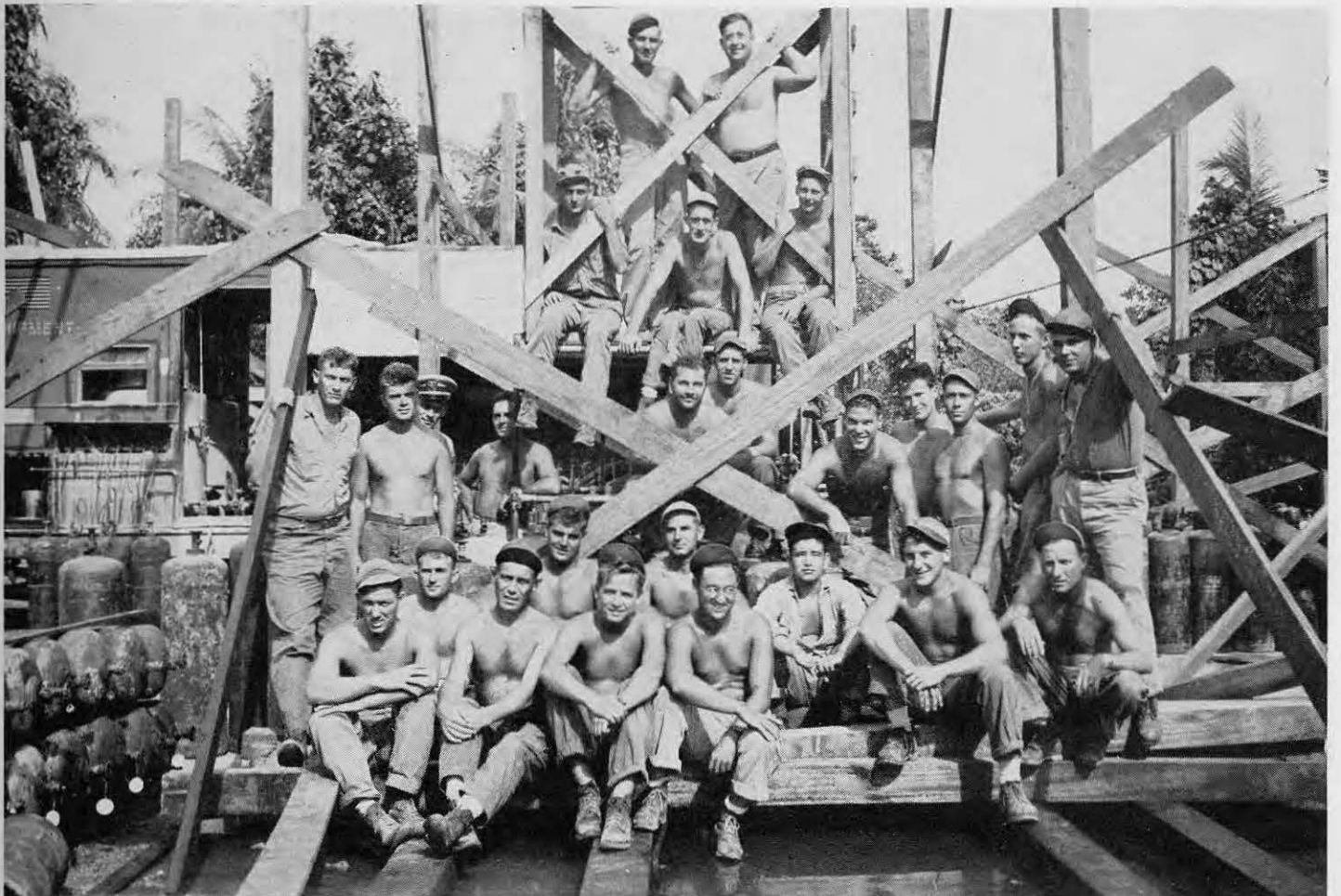
"BAY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY"

CARPENTER DETAIL



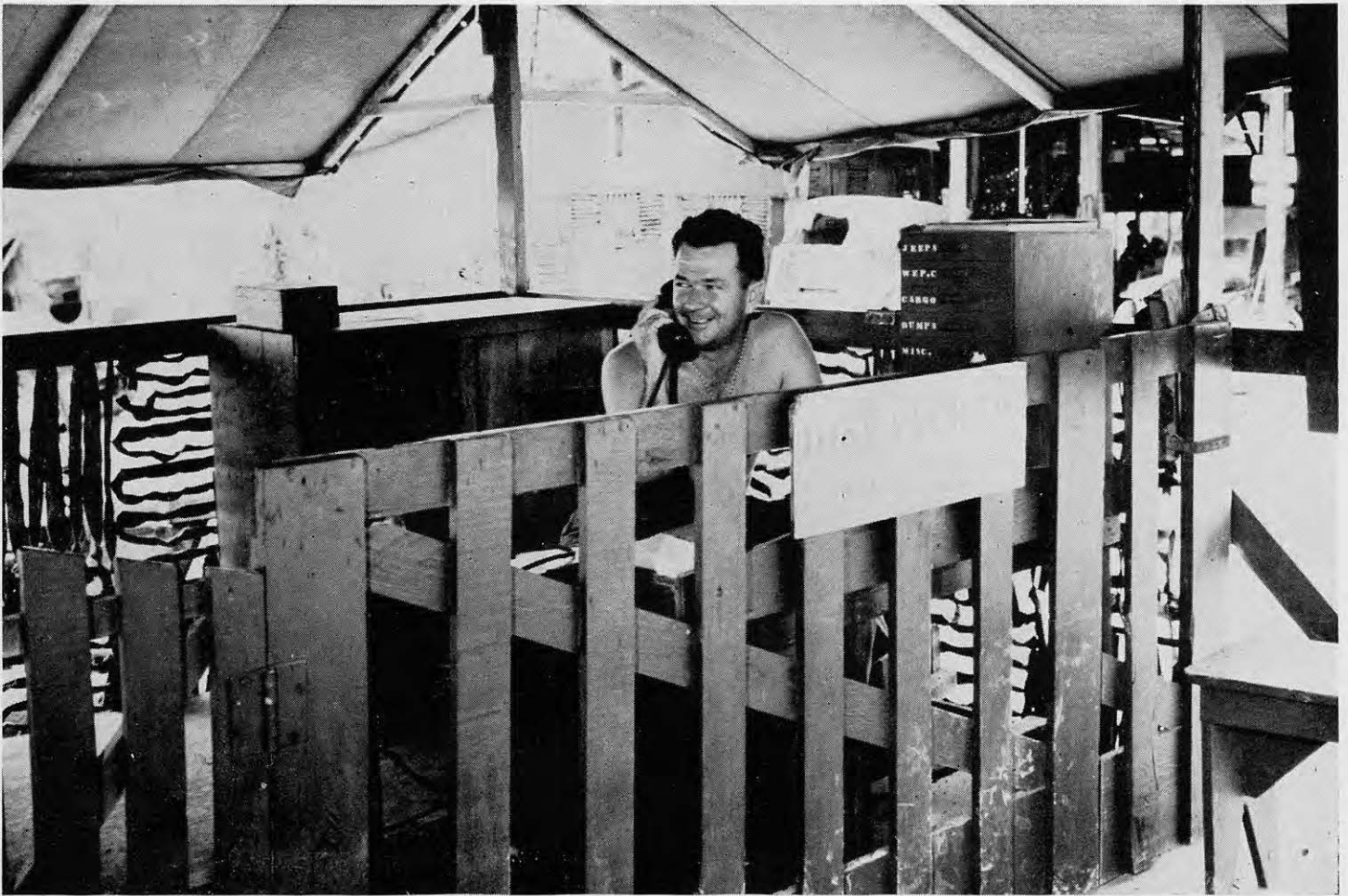
WAREHOUSE BUILT TO ORDER

"LAPRISE'S PILEBUCKS"



SNODGRASS' SUPERMEN

WHITE COLLAR WORKER



"REID'S ROUGH RIDERS"

"THE KNUCKLE-BUSTERS"



ONE-STOP SERVICE

AIRSTRIP MAINTENANCE CREW



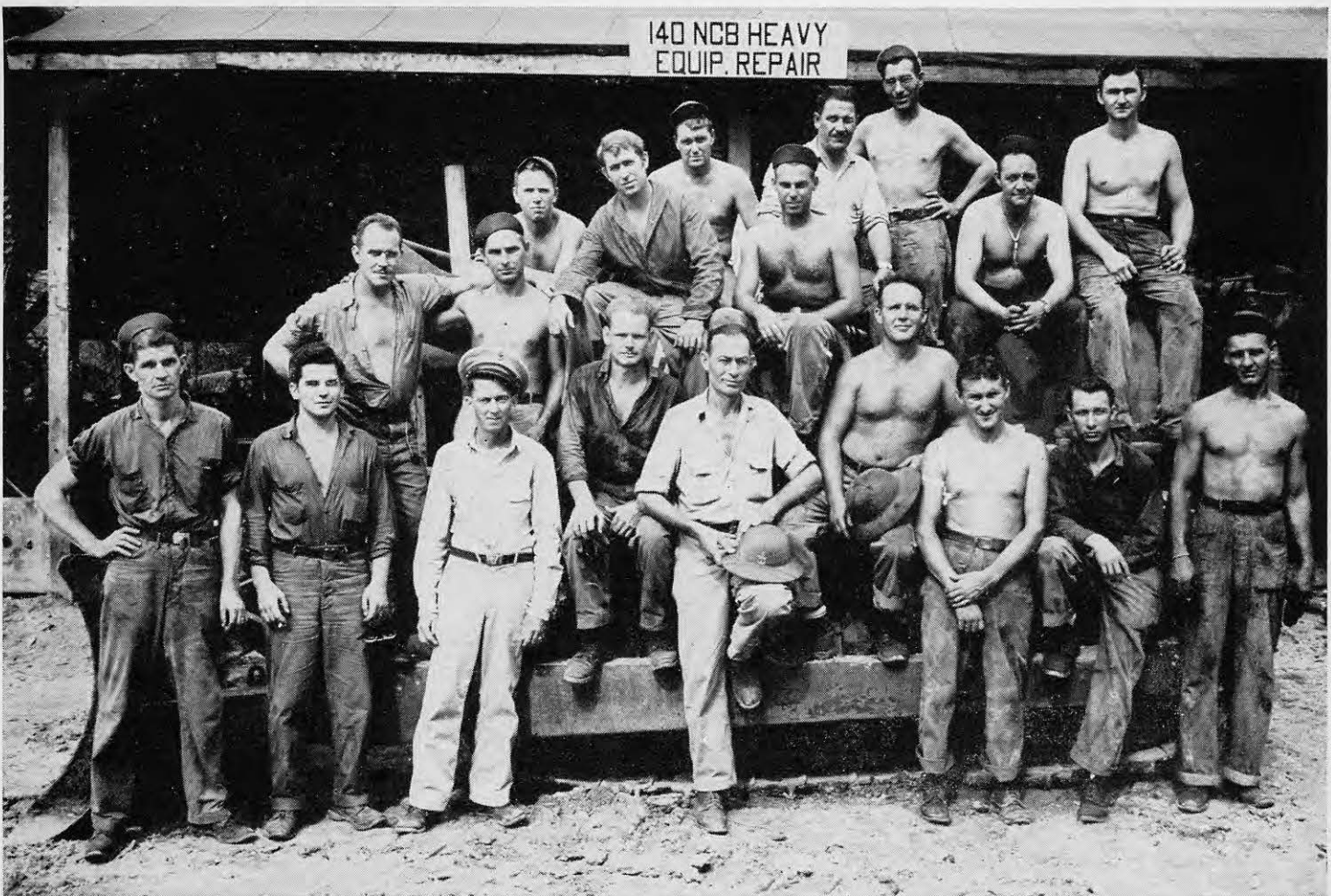
SCRAPING, ROLLING, AND SETTLING THE DUST

HEAVY EQUIPMENT DEPARTMENT—COMPANY D



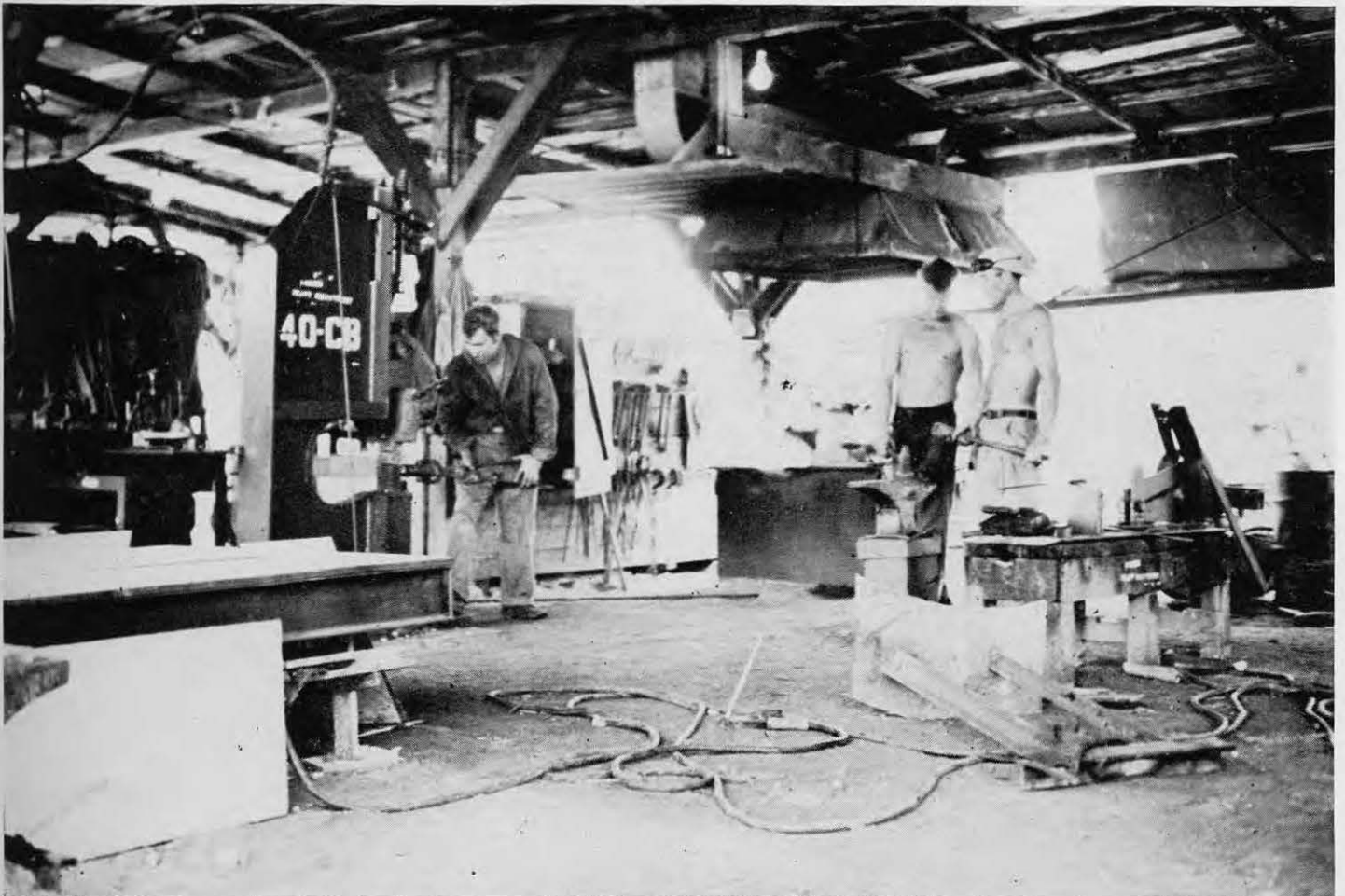
COMPANY D DETAIL

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL OF COMPANY D



WE FIX ANYTHING

SQUEAK ERADICATORS



"UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE . . ."



"BIG OPERATORS"



BLASTING

ANOPHELES EXTERMINATORS



OFFICERS' MESS ATTENDANTS



CONSTRUCTION

A good deal of the fame surrounding the Seabees came from their ability to land in virgin territory anywhere in the world and, with nothing more than their skill and the equipment carried with them, provide themselves with adequate living quarters while at the same time constructing from jungle and wilderness, the air strips, docks, and bases of supply so vitally necessary to the successful operation of the Armed Forces of the United States and her Allies.

The 140th Naval Construction Battalion upheld her share of that tradition during her tour of overseas duty. Lugos Mission, on Manus Island, in the Admiralties had been selected for her landing spot. Here, on a series of low, rolling hills, shut in on three sides by dense jungle and on the fourth by the sea, she began her first construction work. Hardly had the first landing barge disgorged its cargo of men when the work began. To gain access to her camp site, it was necessary to build a small coconut-log bridge over a jungle creek and to repair and rebuild a landing dock of similar material so men and supplies could be unloaded with a minimum of effort and time.

Actual building on the camp itself started almost immediately. Galley, mess hall, heads, showers, water and electric systems, telephone facilities, tent decks, administrative offices, sick bay and shops, all were constructed within the first months' time in spite of sweltering heat and almost incessant rainfall. Adjacent to the camp site were built torpedo overhaul shops, a torpedo storage rack, and concrete detonator magazines to be used by the regular Navy. Along access roads, a series of underground magazines were constructed for the storage of all types of Naval ammunition. Coral procuring operations were carried on twenty-four hours a day, and as roads were extended, they were graded and topped with coral, and the mud which had at first plagued the movement of equipment disappeared.

During the period from July to September, 1944, more than thirty underground magazines were completed, a 40 x 100 wood frame transit shed with concrete deck was finished and taken over by Naval Ammunition Depot Personnel, and a main road connecting the 140th and the magazine area with the nearest Allied unit several miles away was built.

In August, 1944, Company A moved to Ponam Island and took over the necessary construction and maintenance work on the air strip there, while Company B moved to Pityliu Island on a similar assignment. The remainder of the Battalion stayed on at the original camp and built fuse and fuse overhaul shops for the ammunition depot and at the same time maintained and operated the entire telephone system for that end of Manus Island.

With the arrival of the 63rd Naval Construction Battalion in September, 1944, work on the Naval Ammunition Depot was turned over to them. Company D of the 140th moved to near-by Los Negros Island to take over the construction work and maintenance on Momote Air Strip, where the original Allied landings in the Admiralties had been made, while Company C with those Headquarters Company men not already assigned to duty with the detached units, took over the operation and maintenance of a water purification plant producing 3,000,000 gallons per day as well as the maintenance and watches on the generators and "reefers" at the main Naval Supply Depot located at Lorengau, on Manus.

In December, 1944, all the remaining men of the 140th were moved from Manus to Los Negros Island where they located at Lombrum Point. Early in 1945, they were joined by both Companies A and B, who had completed their assignments on the outlying islands.

Considerable construction work at Lombrum Point was carried on by the Battalion. A camp comprised of 24 x 80 two-story frame barracks buildings, administrative offices and a ships store were erected for the billeting of the Ship Repair Unit stationed there. An electric power plant housing five 300-KW generators was built and maintained and the water plant which supplied that area was run by 140th men. Roads the length and breadth of the island were graded and maintained by the Battalion's men and equipment, and wherever building needs arose, large or small, the 140th was on the job.

For their efforts, the officers and men of the 140th Naval Construction Battalion were commended by both the Commander, Service Force, Seventh Fleet, and Commodore J. E. Boak, Commander of the Naval Base in the Admiralty Islands.



BEATING BACK THE JUNGLE

ROUGH WORK



FIRST STAGES

GETTING IT TO GRADE



VICTORY HIGHWAY

CORAL PIT



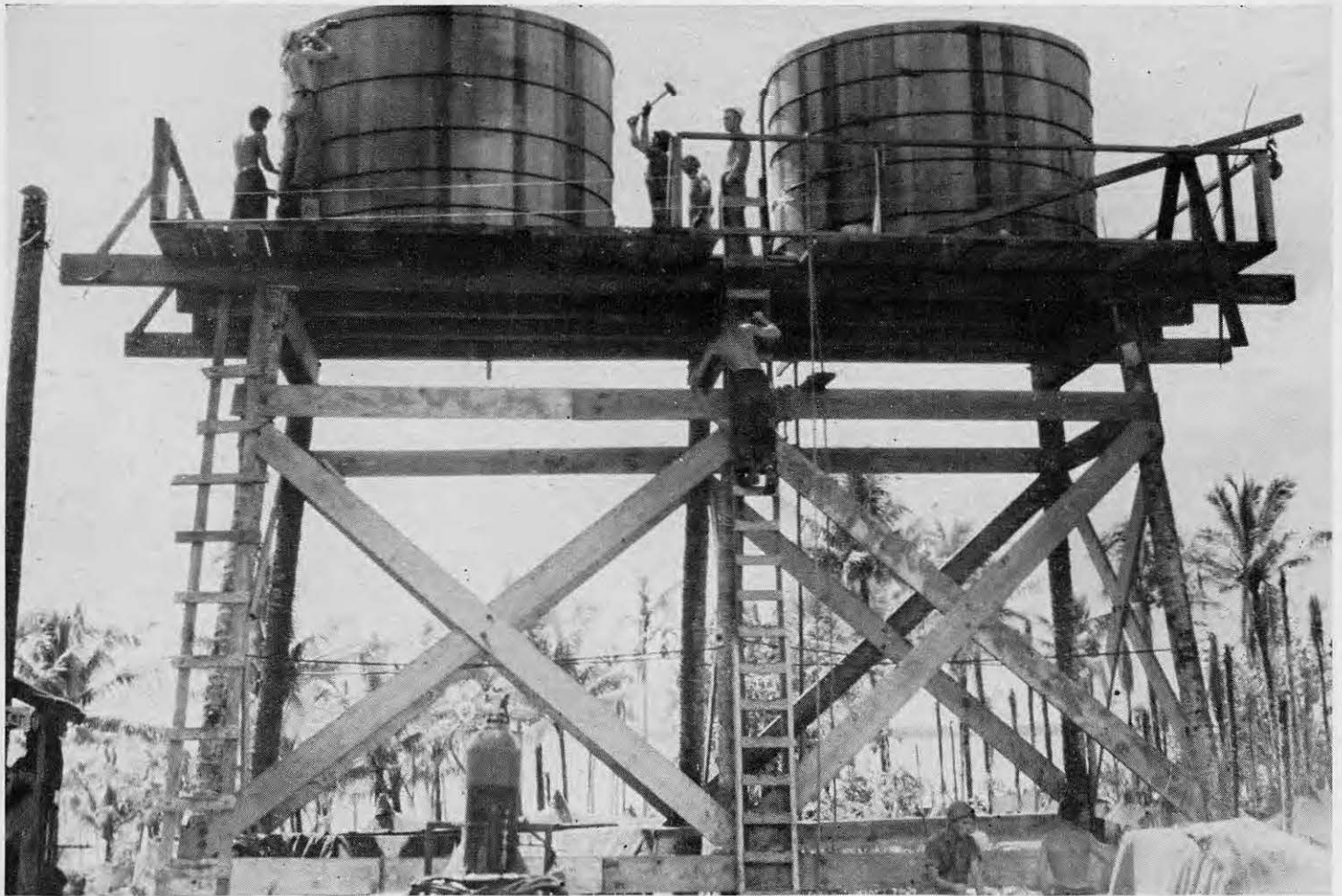
ROAD TO THE BEACH

PARTIALLY COMPLETED AMMO DUMPS



FINISHED PRODUCT

OUR FIRST WATER TANKS



BASE WATER PLANT

STEEL WORKER'S NIGHTMARE



"NOW LET'S SEE IF IT LEAKS"



BARRACKS A'BUILDIN'

SKELETON CREW



ARCH OF ENTERPRISE

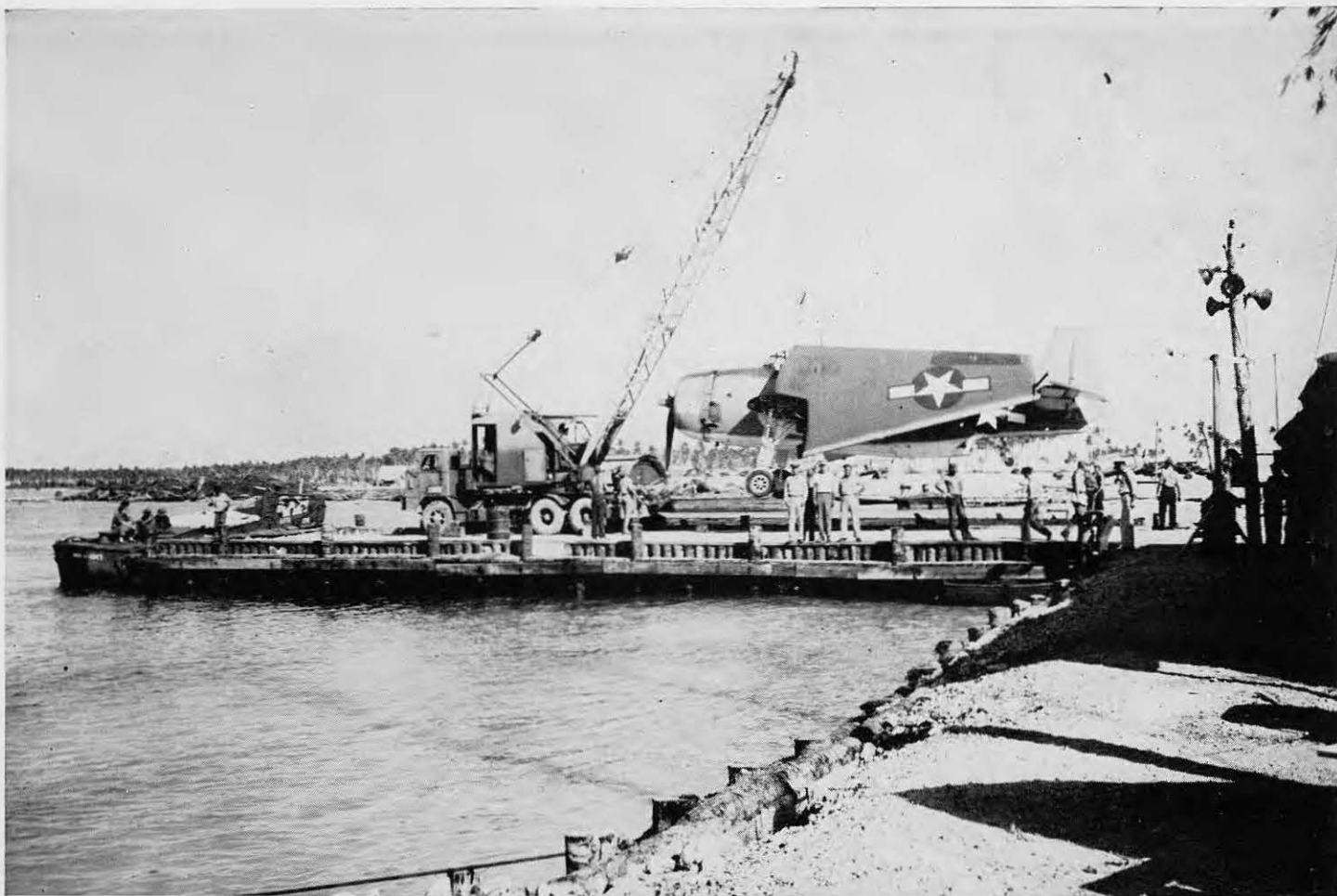


DRIVING PILES FOR SMALL BOAT LANDING



FINISHING UP A DOLPHIN

IN FOR REPAIRS

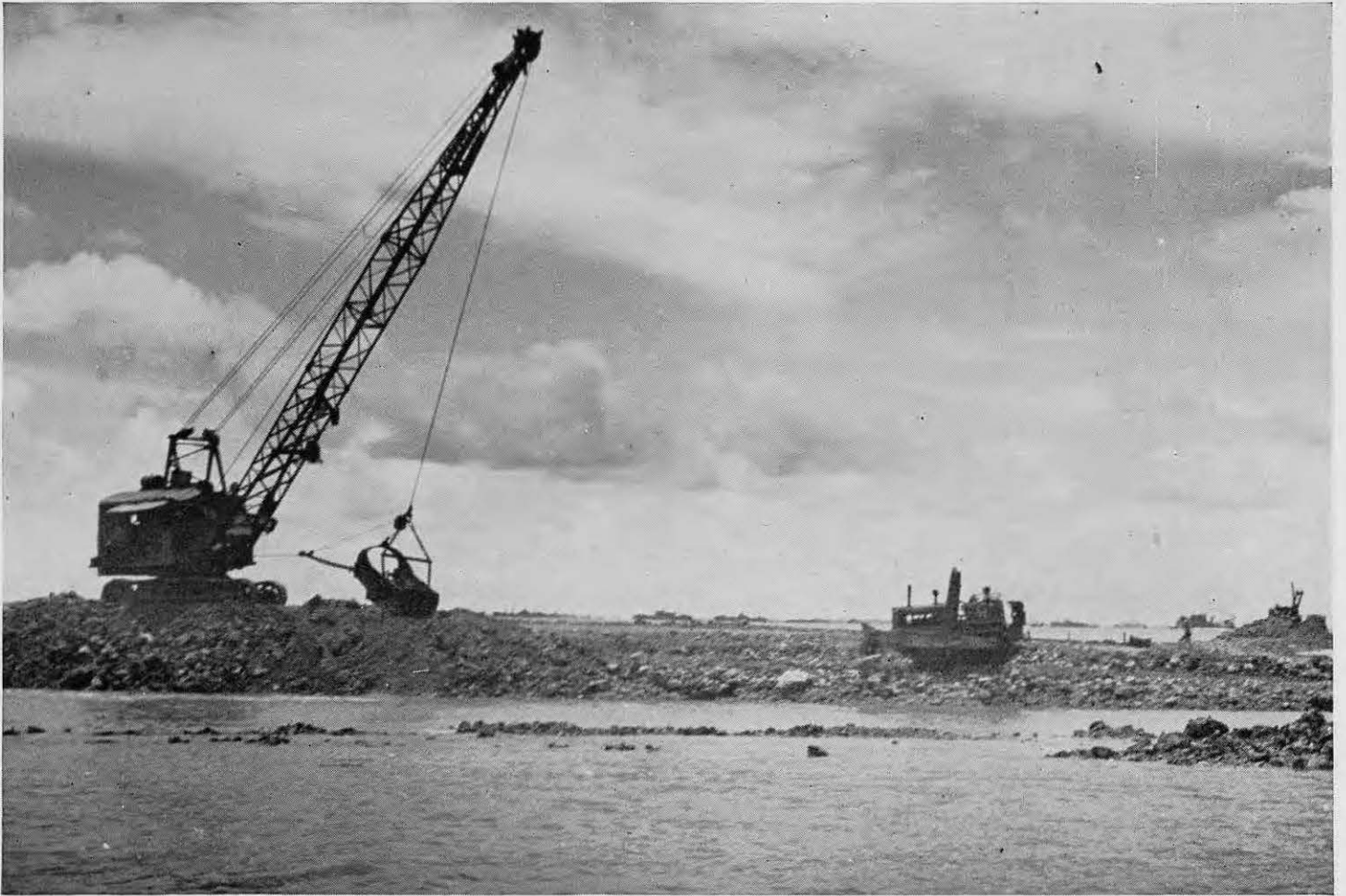


POWDERMEN DRILLING



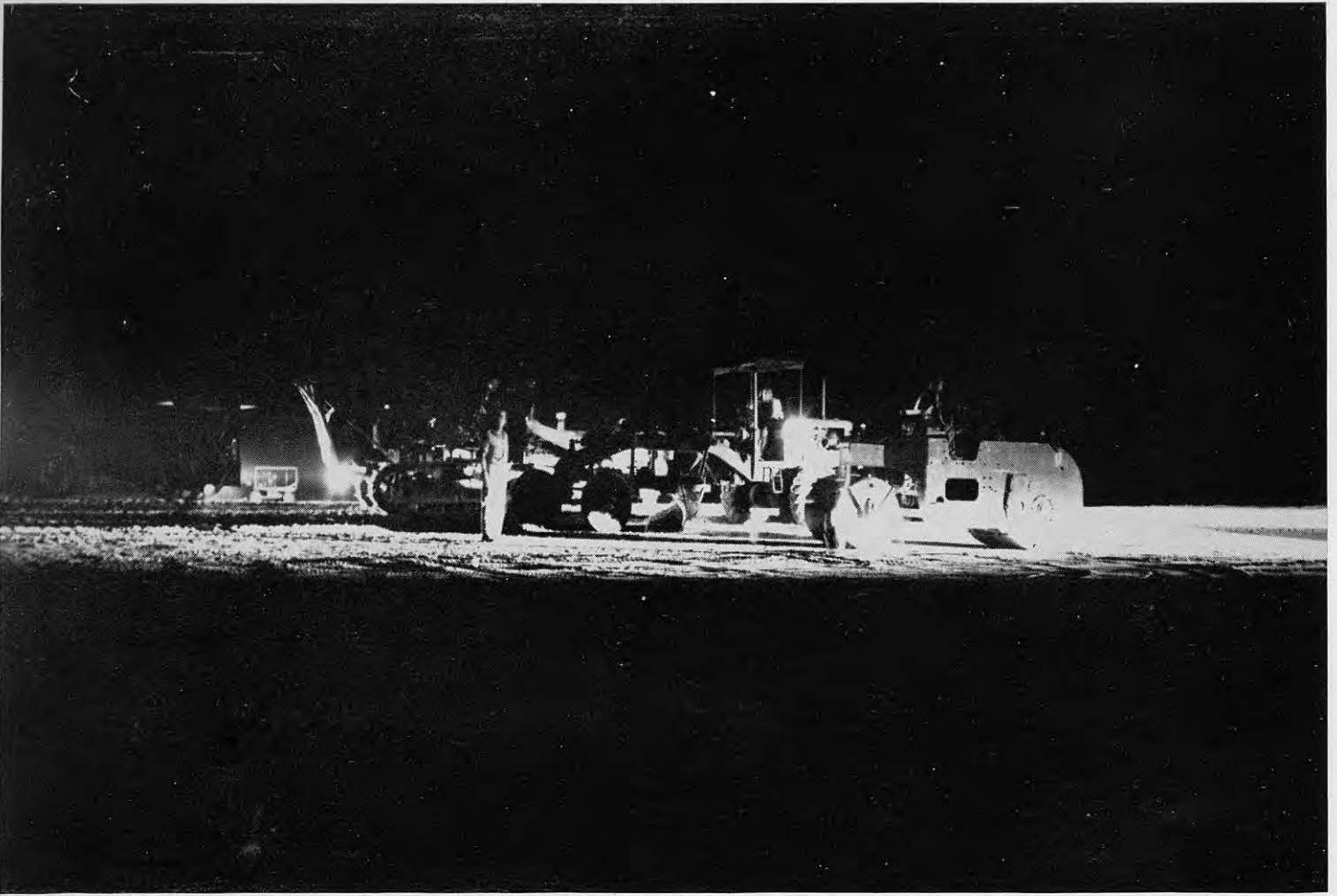
THE BLAST

DRAGLINE DRAMA



THE MEN AND THE MEANS

GRAVEYARD SHIFT



MOTHER EAGLE AND BROOD

CONTROL TOWER



WAREHOUSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION



RECREATION

The Recreation Department of a battalion has that all-important job of making the idle hours a little more pleasant and helping each man forget the discomforts at hand. The islands of the Pacific do not offer the type of excitement that the men saw in the Stateside liberty towns of Williamsburg, Providence, "Frisco," Oakland and "L. A." There were a lucky few who spent ten-day leaves in Sydney, Australia, but in general, recreation on Manus did not include women, dancing, or gay night life . . . it was "home-made" recreation.

During the first months after the landing at Lugos Mission, little organized recreation was possible. The volume of work required during the early months cut spare time amusements down to those individual hobbies the men provided for themselves. The major portion of free time in the early days was spent in writing letters home. Card games, always a popular form of amusement, could be found in great numbers during the evening hours, while swimming and shell hunting at the near-by beach occupied some of the free time during the day. The first form of Stateside recreation was the nightly movie shown under a hastily erected tent shelter. Often the power failed and the picture faded out or the sound equipment became temperamental; but regardless, Betty Grable, Fred McMurray, and even Roy Rogers played to capacity audiences. This movie was operated by Lion 4, which had landed at Lugos several weeks before the 140th, and usually its members got the

choice seats under the canvas. On moonlight nights this presented no hardships, but such nights were few, and usually the Seabees sat in helmet, poncho, and boots, exposed to the driving rain. The first 140th theatre was an open-air affair, and although the rain still presented an inconvenience, there was room for all. The ticket of admission was a box which served as a seat. Later the location was changed and permanent benches were added to the facilities.

A number of the men spent many worthwhile hours making souvenirs and trinkets. From the time of the landing in June, until December, when the battalion moved to the Lombrum Point camp, untold numbers of shell bracelets, necklaces, rings and watch bands were made by hand and traded, sold to men from passing ships, or mailed home as gifts. Candle sticks and ash trays were made from expended ammunition cases. Wrecked planes furnished plexiglass for picture frames, and aluminum and Monel metal for rings and watch bands. The natives traded "cat-eye" and "tiger-eye" shells, materials important to jewelry making, for cigarettes and "lap-lap," and the near-by Australian servicemen provided the silver Shillings and Florins from which were fashioned unique and handsome bracelets.

Baseball led all forms of outdoor athletics. Horseshoes, basketball and volley ball were played, but it was baseball that furnished the greatest share of outdoor recreation for all. The 140th's team met and defeated, at least

once, every team that could be scheduled from both the island units and the visiting ships. Scarcely a Sunday passed without a game being played. More often than not there were both morning and afternoon games. An adequate ball field, built by the battalion on Los Negros Island, was located on a coral flat and served a good many of the surrounding units.

At Lombrum Point work schedules were eased and recreation played an even more important role than before. A large hall was constructed of scrap material, metal roofed and screened, and within its shelter the men played ping pong, cards, chess, and table games of all kinds. Perhaps the most popular feature of the "Rec" hall was the combination radio-phonograph, and the enormous collection of recordings which covered all types of music from "jive" to Beethoven. From opening hours until closing, there were groups of men seated beside the radio listening to the news or playing the records of their choice. Immediately behind the administration area at Lombrum Point a natural amphitheatre was utilized for a permanent, open-air theatre. A large and excellently designed stage and projection booth were built. The nightly movies and occasional stage shows were enjoyed not only by the battalion's men but by visitors from all parts of the island and from ships anchored in the near-by harbor. Many of the visitors commented that the 140th stage and recreation hall were by far the best in the Pacific.

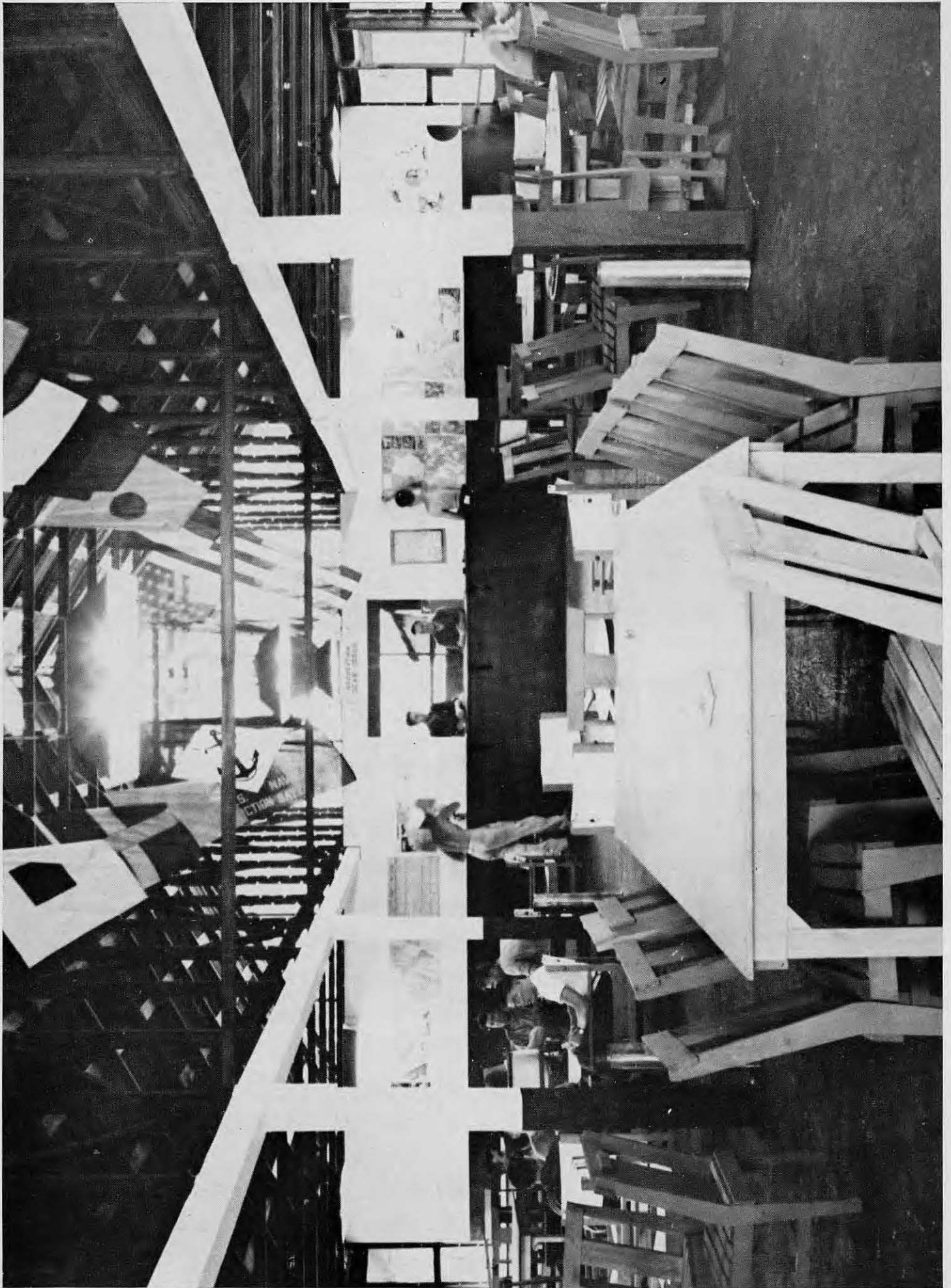
The proximity of the bay afforded an excellent opportunity for fishing and boating; the only

difficulty being a scarcity of water transportation. However, Seabee ingenuity and craftsmanship supplemented the "Fleet" with several sleek, professional looking boats, both sail and power, as well as numerous craft made of discarded aeroplane belly tanks, pontoons, junked hulls, and quonset parts. At one time the "Fleet" sported a twenty-five foot, quonset-ribbed, three masted "schooner," the "Mamie Fay," but she now rests on the bottom.

The officers spent many of their free moments at "Sloppy John's," the officers' club, playing gin rummy and shooting the breeze. Horseshoe pitching was popular, and the daily volley ball games were a source of pleasure not only to the players, but to the spectators as well. Boating, fishing, and crabbing, occupied much leisure time.

Enjoyed by both officers and men was the Battalion's library, which was stocked with over six thousand volumes of every type including many technical books used to advantage in studying for re-rate exams. A table in the center of the reading room, covered with copies of nearly every popular magazine, was surrounded by easy chairs well lighted with Seabee-made lamps.

The various forms of recreation did much to keep the morale of the battalion on a high plane. Nearly every man could find some activity to suit his taste from either the organized program or the many possible individual diversions. Whether it was vigorous athletics or passive reading, there was always something available to fill that gap of time after the working day.



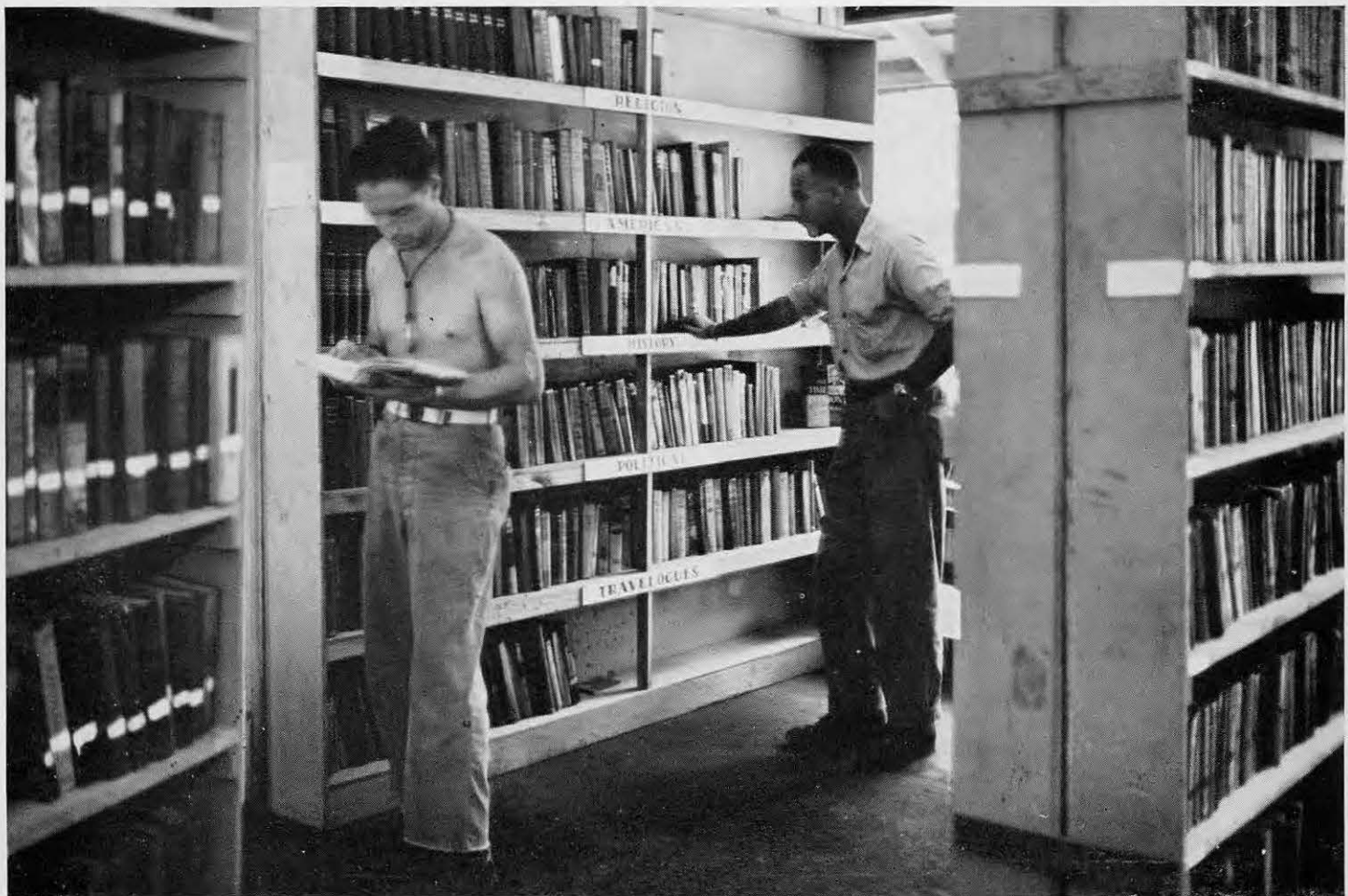
RECREATION HALL

RECREATION DEPARTMENT



MUSIC FOR THE MASSES

LIBRARY AND WRITING ROOM



YOU NAME IT, WE HAVE IT

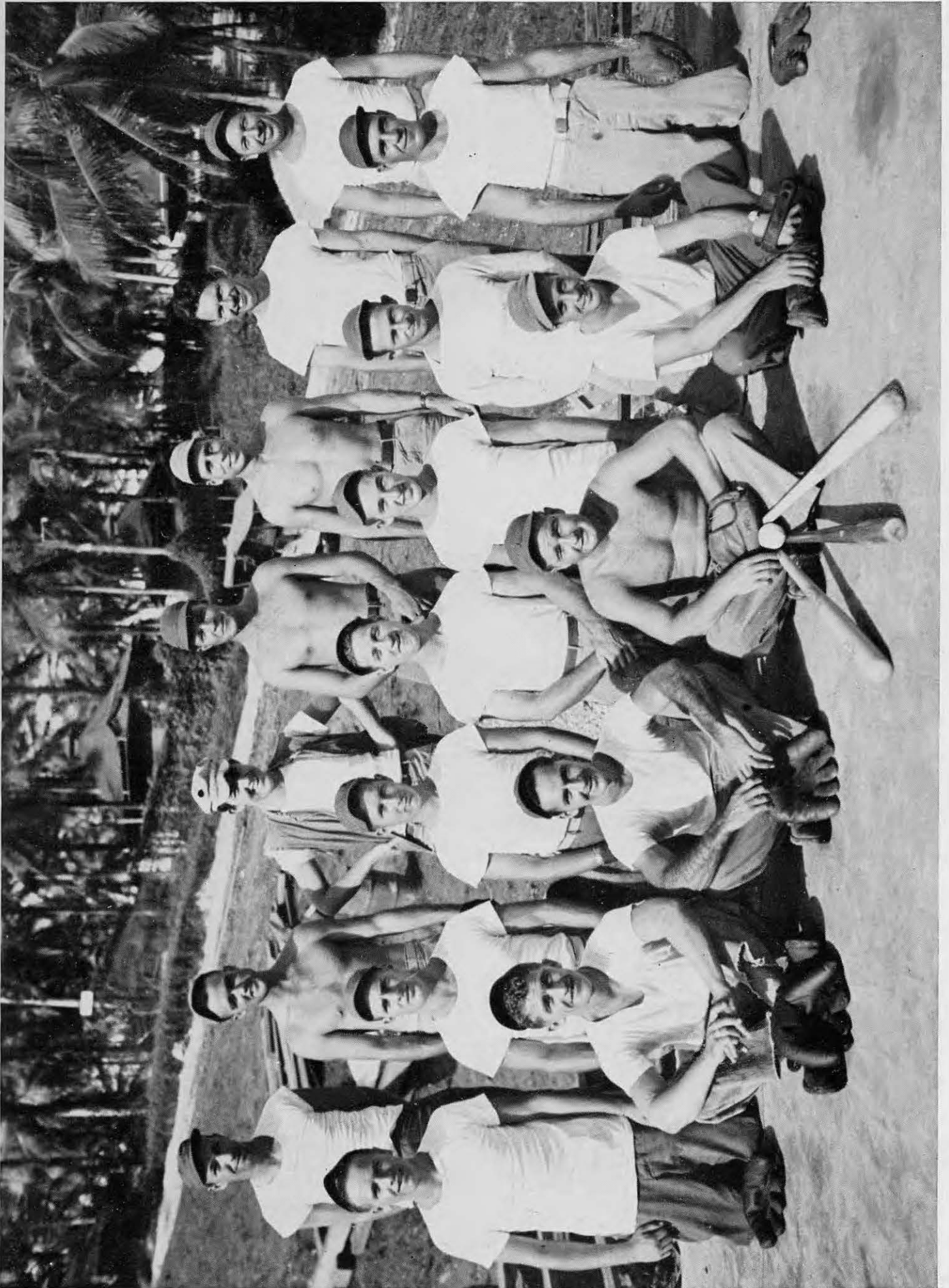
IT'S ALL YOURS, MATE



BARNYARD GOLF



REFRESHMENT TIME

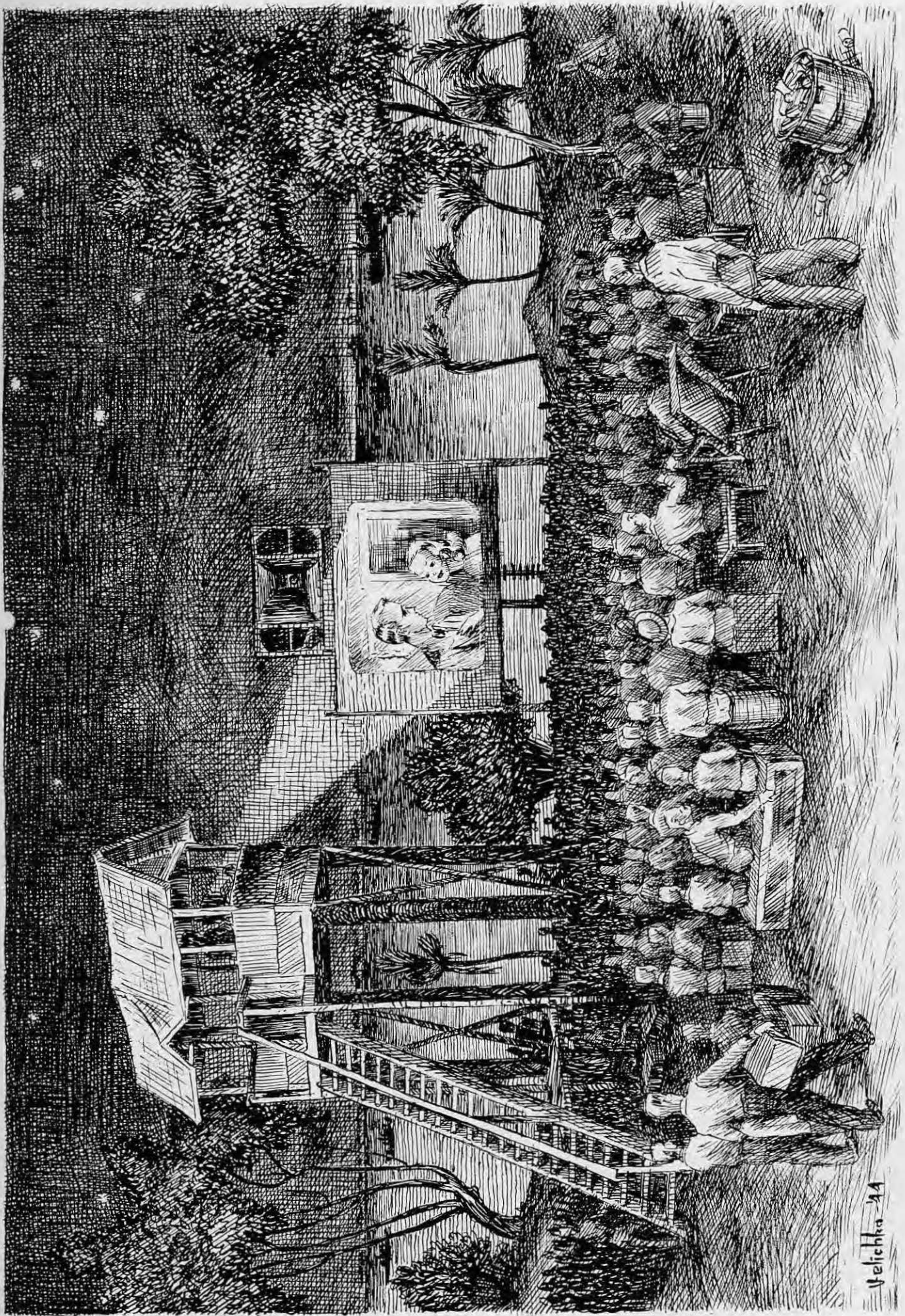


DEM BUMS

LAYING INTO ONE



COMING HOME



Velichka 44

OUR FIRST THEATER—LUGOS MISSION

PROJECTION BOOTH



THEATER UNDER CONSTRUCTION

CHIEFS AT WORK !!



FINISHED PRODUCT

SWING OUT, GATES!



BRING ON THE BAND



THE SKIPPER GETS ONE



YA SHOULDDA SEEN THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY



General
Interest

The illustration is a complex woodcut-style scene. In the center, two figures stand on a wooden bridge or path. To the left, a tall, thin structure with a cross on top is visible. To the right, a wooden water tower stands on a raised platform. The scene is filled with various tropical plants, including palm trees, ferns, and other foliage. A dragonfly is depicted in flight at the top left, and a snake is visible at the bottom right. The text 'General Interest' is written in a large, stylized, serif font across the middle of the scene.

GENERAL INTEREST

It is hoped that this section will recall to the minds of the men those many incidents which can only be described through the spoken word of those who experienced them. So many and varied are the items of general interest that neither the scenes that follow nor the words written here adequately cover the facts. A combination of the two can give only a brief over-all picture of the passing of time and show some of the events which took place.

At first everything on Island "X" was of interest. Within a few hundred yards of what was to be the first camp site, a small freshwater stream came out of the jungle, cascaded down a low, rocky cliff and ran into the sea. There, for the first time in nearly a month, the men could bathe in fresh water, and wash from clothes and bedding the grime and perspiration which had accumulated during the twenty-eight-day voyage. From the stream also came the water to be used for drinking and cooking. Since drinking water on the ship had come largely through the distillation of salt water, in comparison, the water from the stream tasted sweet and pure. It was not so highly prized, however, by those men who were on the first water supply crews and had to haul it laboriously through knee deep mud to the Lister bags which were set atop the bluff overlooking the beach.

It did not rain for almost two days after the Battalion first landed, but then, as if to make up for lost time, the heavens opened and the rain came down in torrents. Within minutes jeeps and trucks were hub-deep in the most clinging mud the men had ever seen. It was everywhere and the interiors of the men's pup tents were no exceptions. For weeks the men worked in it, slept in it, and ate in it. Tarps and hastily erected shelters covered the most vital supplies until such time as more permanent storage facilities could be built, but there were few places which were not soaked through by the steady downpour.

For the first few weeks food consisted only of "K" or "C" rations and meals were eaten whenever time and shelter from the rain could be found. Hot food of any kind came only with the setting up of field ranges under large canvas tent tops but the hot coffee and soup they furnished were a welcome addition to the cold canned rations.

As time wore on the camp blossomed. The regulation 16 x 16 tent took the place of the pup tent, canvas cots

were issued which, although the new tents had no floors, allowed the men to sleep above the ground and out of the mud. A chow hall, of vital importance to all, was started and completed in a little over two weeks time. With its coming, meals improved and the dysentery, which had ravaged the entire battalion, disappeared. As plywood became available, decks were built in the tents and the battle against the mud was all but won.

While the camp was being built, construction work on the Battalion's projects went ahead as rapidly as equipment and supplies could be unloaded from the waiting ships. The first roads, which were quagmires of mud, gradually gave way to coral topped grades over which passed heavy construction equipment of all kinds. Trunk roads were built to other sections of the island and off-duty men spent much of their time sight-seeing and exploring the newly accessible locations. With electric power and water lines laid, the necessary repair and machine shops completed, the chow hall and a clean, dry sick-bay finished, the Battalion settled down and began to operate on schedule.

In August, 1944, Companies A, B, and D, along with a proportionate number of Headquarters Company men, received assignments on outlying islands of the Admiralty group. Then, in December, 1944, the remainder of the Battalion moved from its original location to another island a dozen miles away. The new camp was situated atop a high hill overlooking the harbor. It had been used by other units prior to the arrival of the 140th, but in spite of that fact, nearly a month went by before its inadequate chow hall could be rebuilt, showers and heads installed, tents repaired and living conditions in general brought up to standard. Most enjoyable feature of the new camp was the increase in recreational facilities.

Participating in the Seventh War Bond Drive, the Battalion over-subscribed its quota of twenty-five thousand dollars by 97 per cent and ranked close to the top among all the units in the Admiralties.

The months spent overseas were not without their periods of discouragement. However, morale in general was high and the hardships and disappointments failed to dampen spirits for very long. Always there was the knowledge that each passing day brought the ultimate goal a little closer within reach; that goal so dear to all, a job well done and home.

FRESH WATER FROLIC



OUR FIRST JOB



PUP TENTS AND DOG FOOD

ROAD FROM LANDING—PLUS MUD



DARKNESS COVERS A MULTITUDE OF THINGS

ROAD FROM LANDING—PLUS MUD



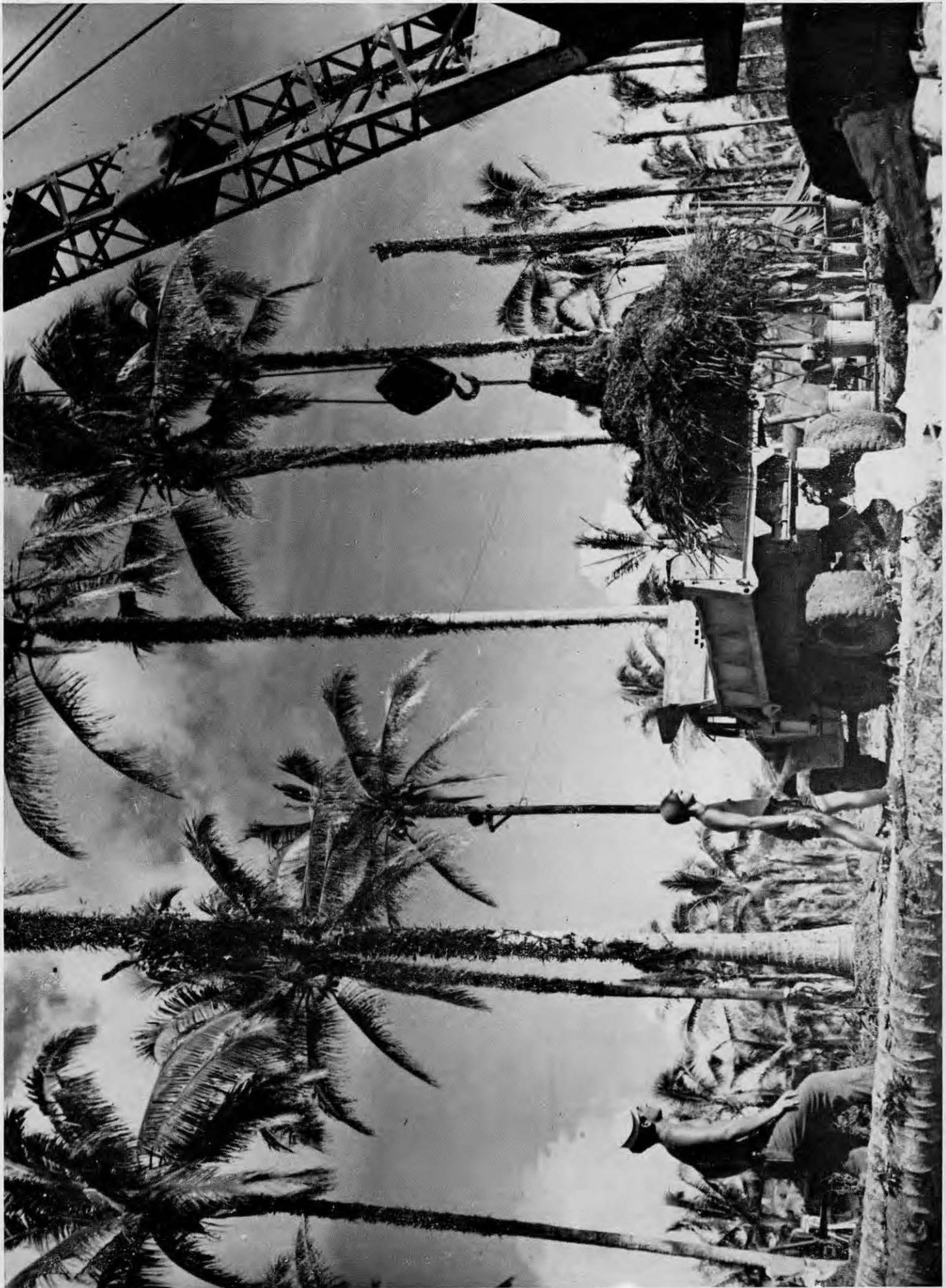
DARKNESS COVERS A MULTITUDE OF THINGS

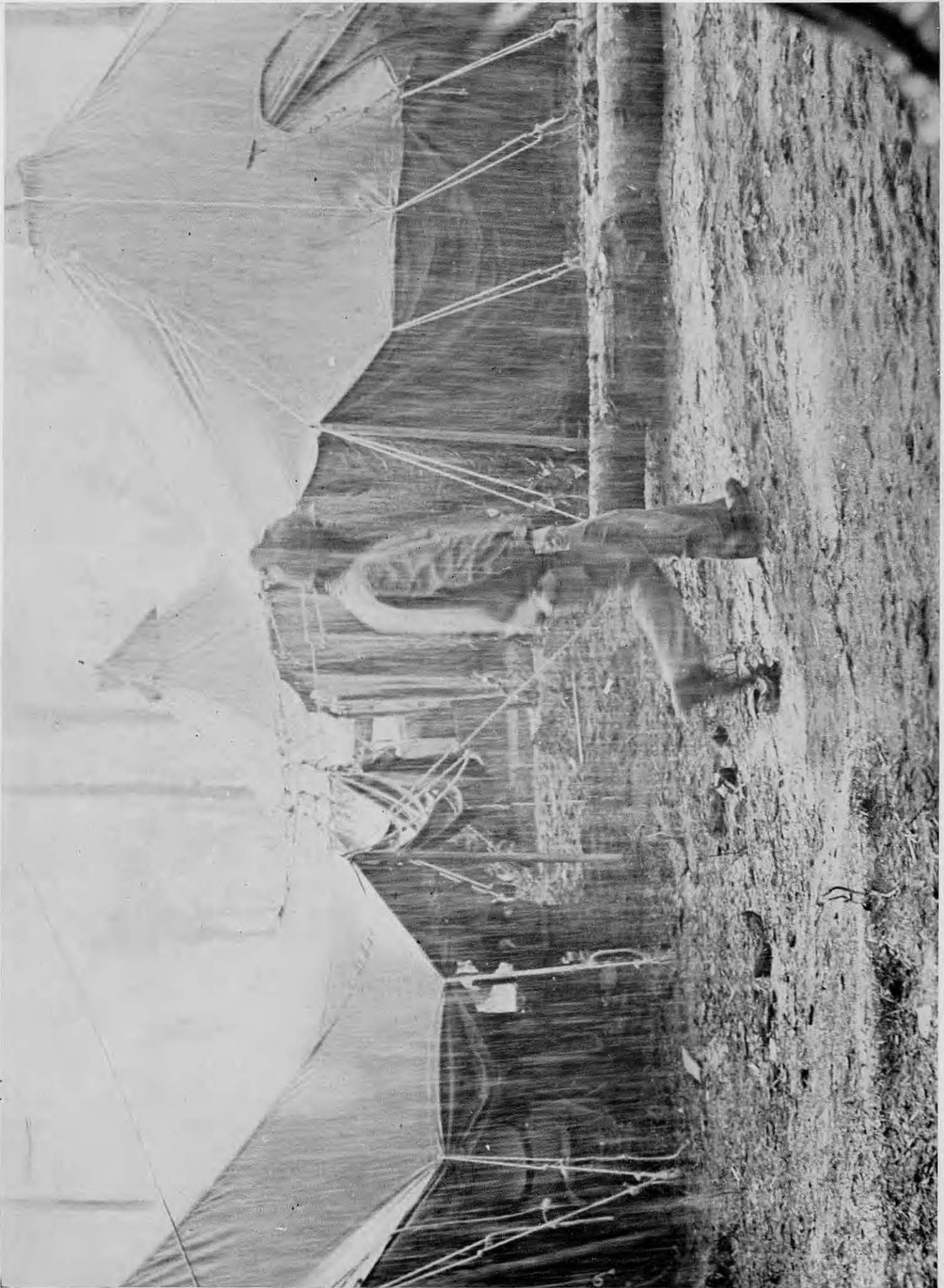


AND WE HAD MUD



RAT HOLE





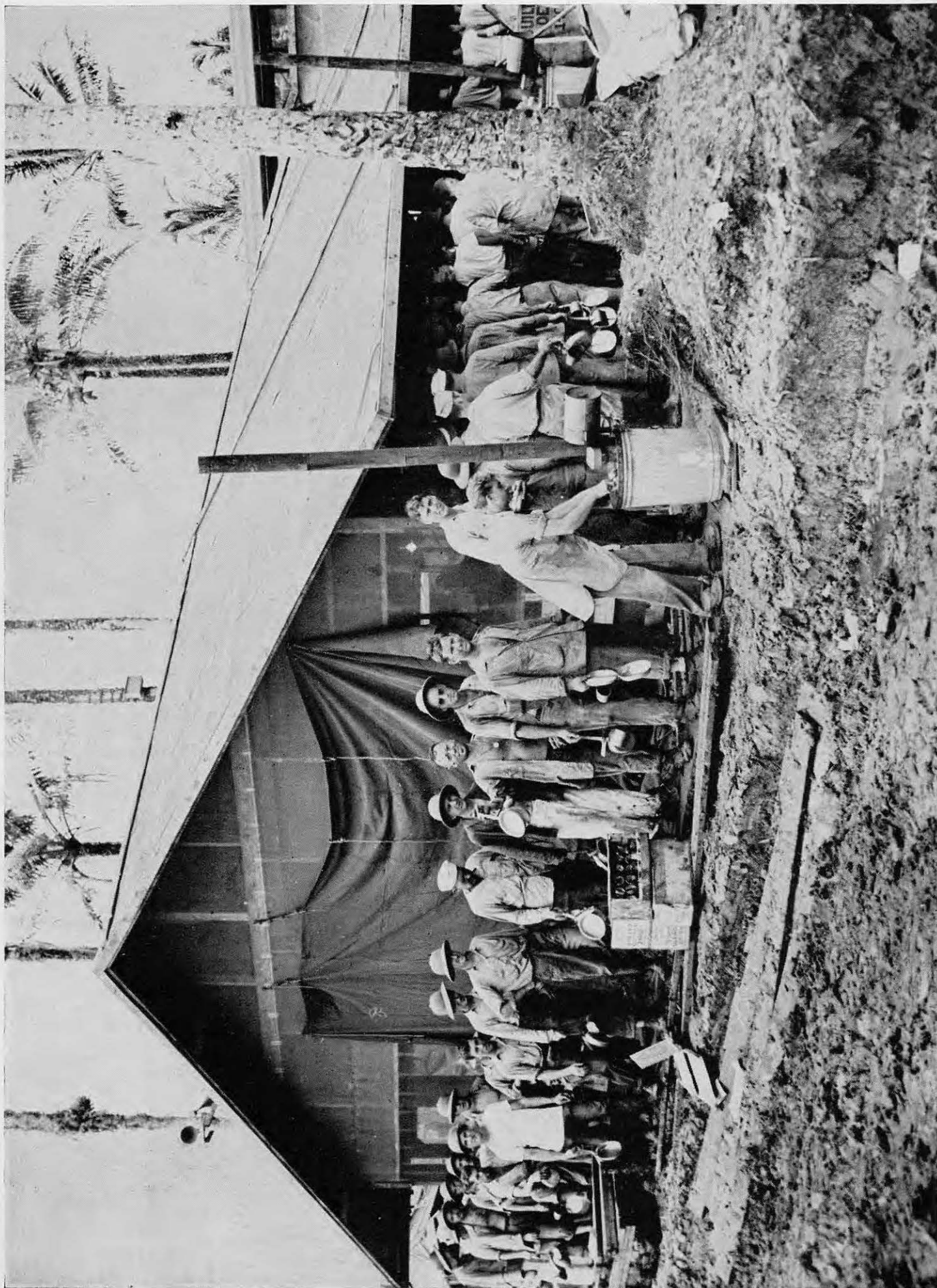
DETOUR—ROAD IMPOSSIBLE



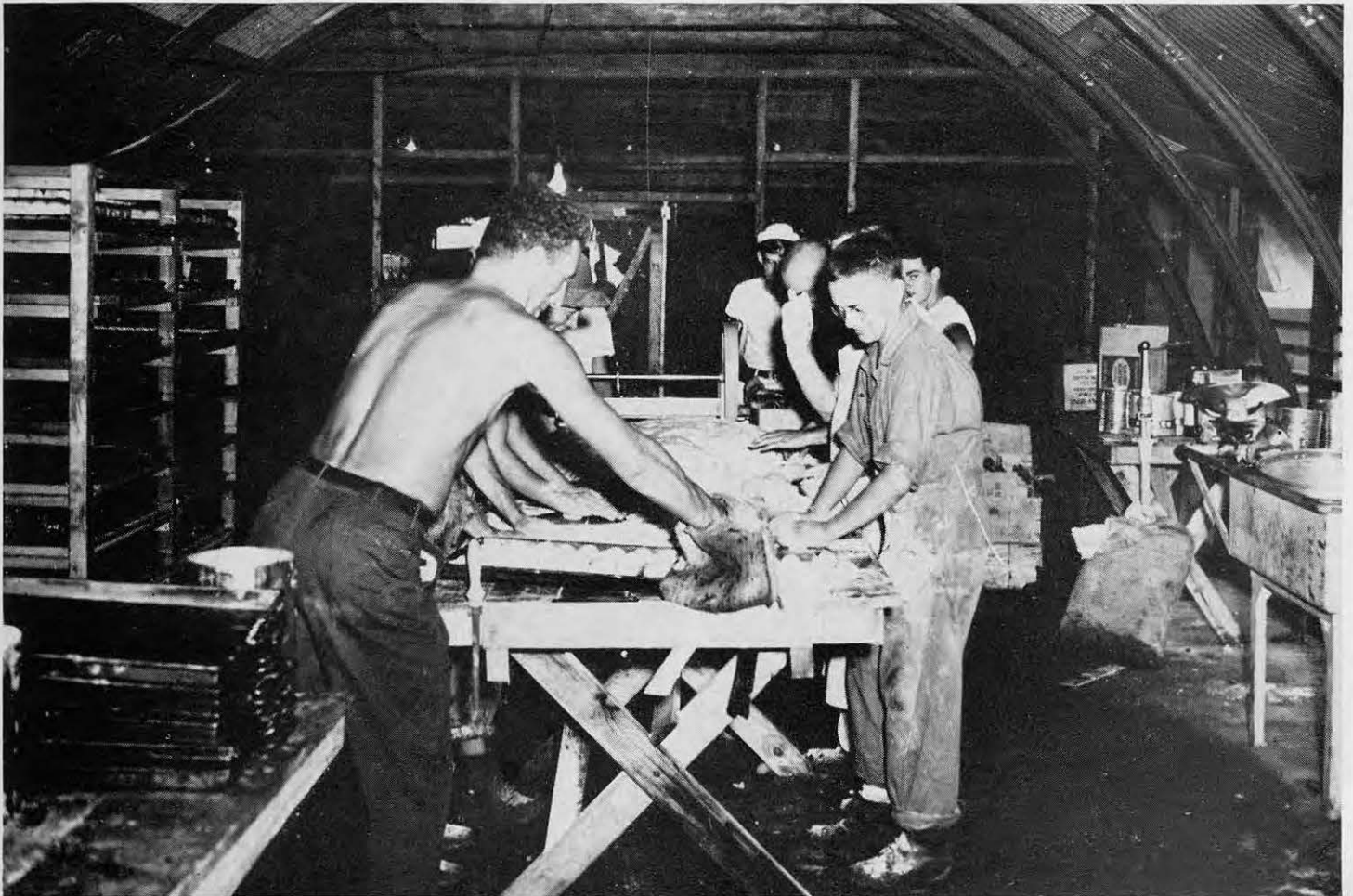
CHOW DOWN!



FIRST CHOW HALL

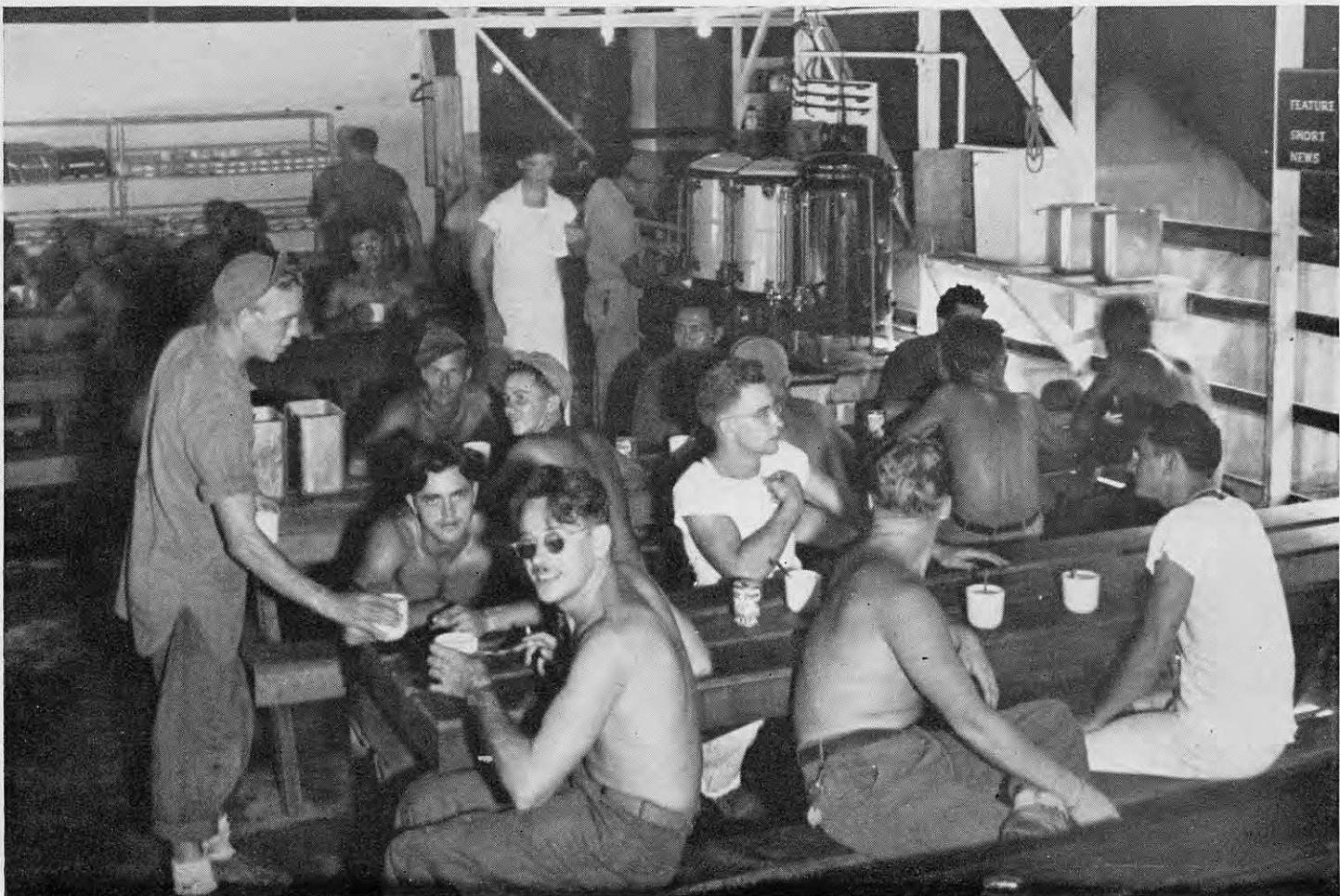


IMAGINE! CHOW UNDER A ROOF



BAKERS IN ACTION

SCULLERY DUTY



THE COCKTAIL HOUR



DAY IS DONE

CHIEF'S MESS



SICK-BAY MACHINISTS



WHISPERING PALMS

PONAM ADMINISTRATION AREA

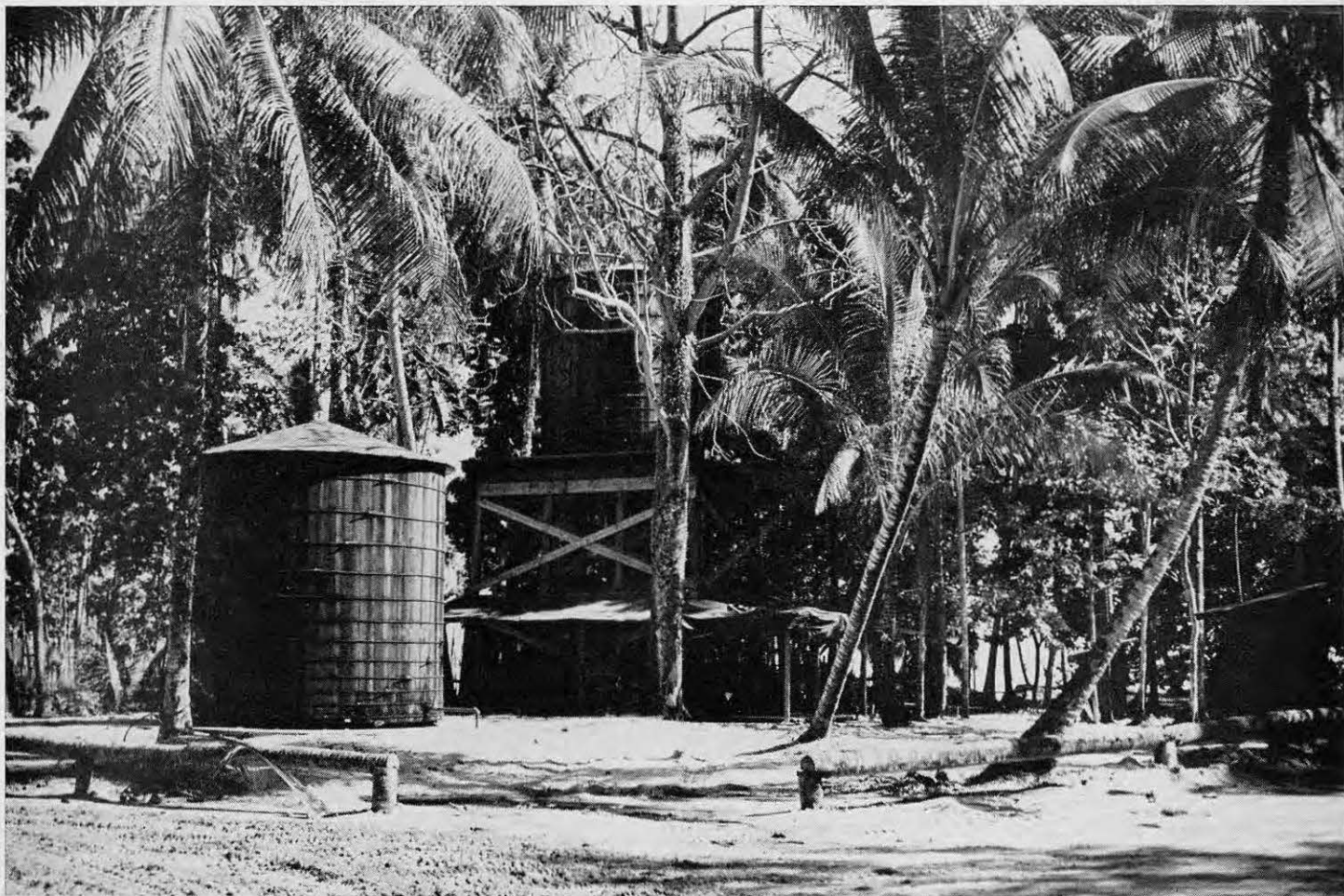


"HOME OF COMPANY A"—PONAM



SURFACE WELL—PONAM

COOL WATER



MERRY CHRISTMAS

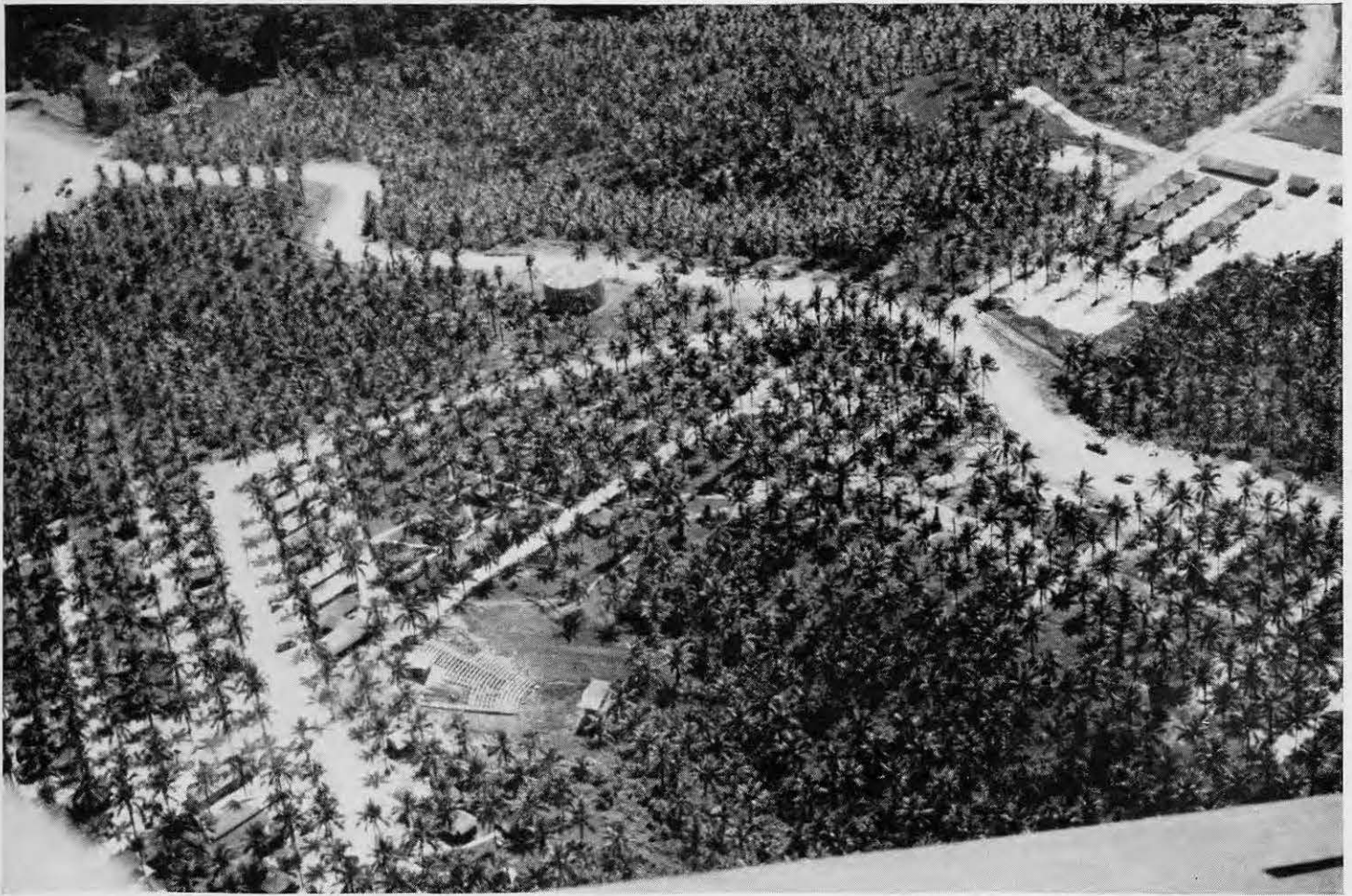


COLORS

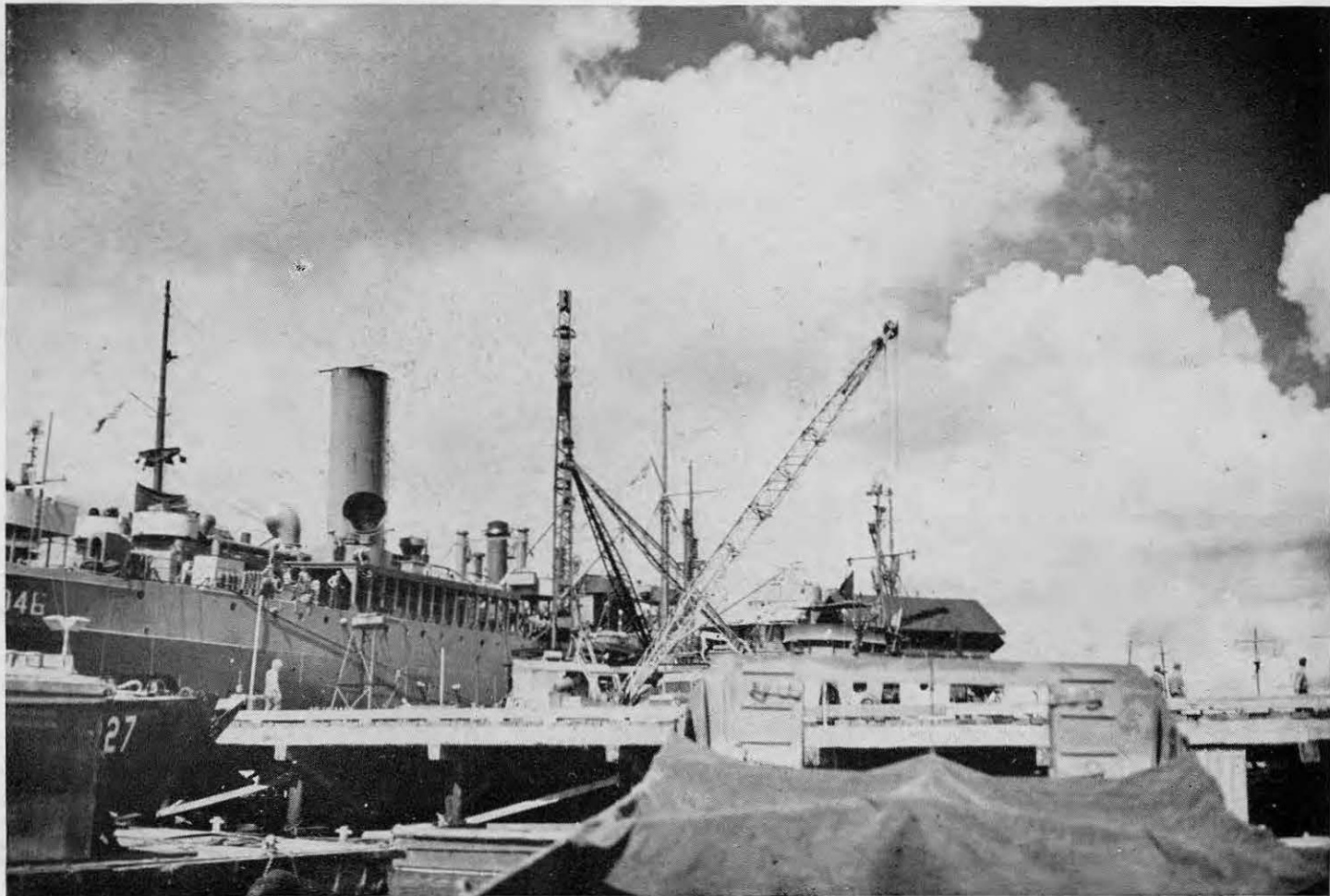
COMPANY B DETACHMENT—AIR VIEW



SUNSET AND SHADOWS



DUPLEX DELUXE



SHIP REPAIR DOCK

JUNGLE JUICE



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

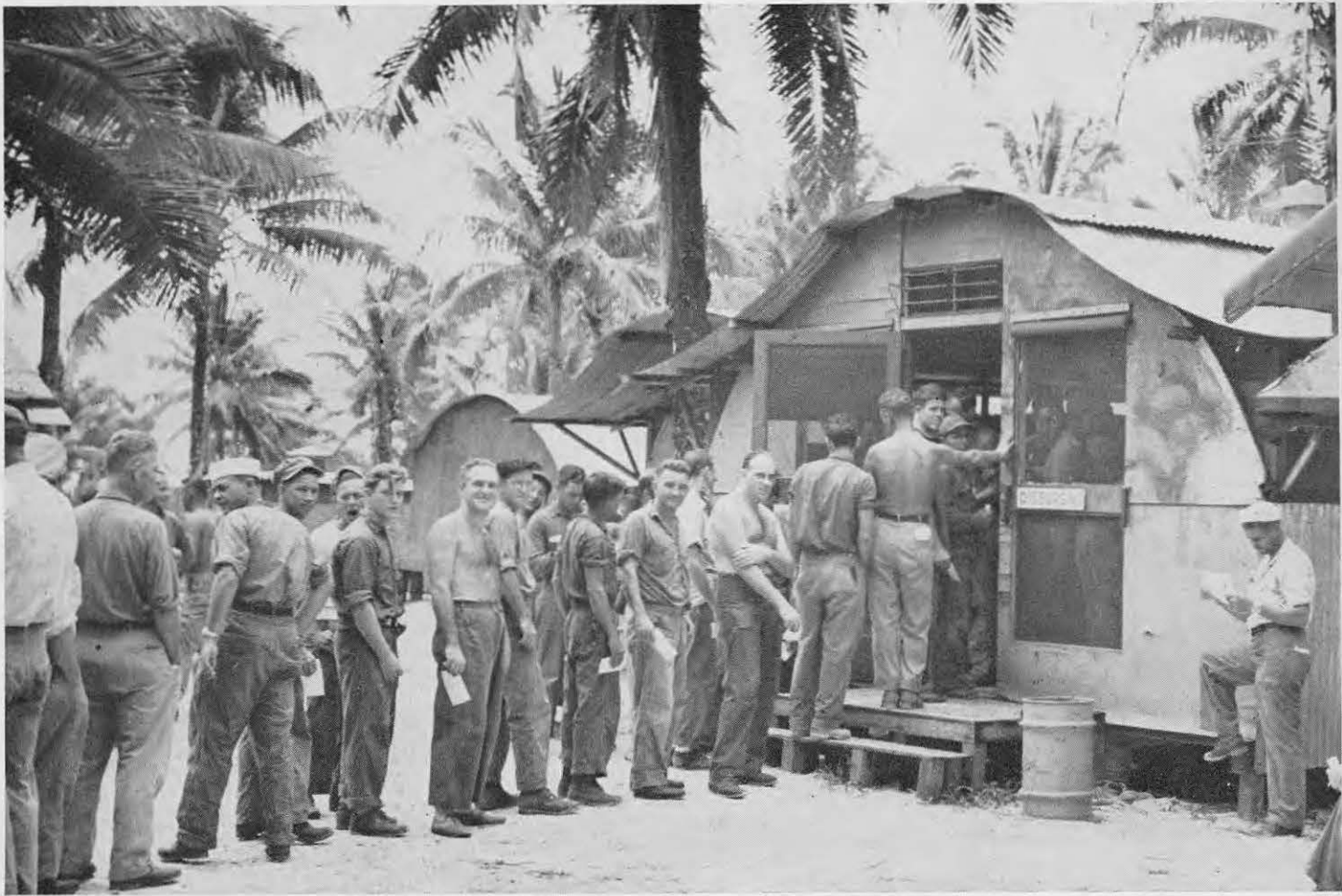
JUNGLE JUICE



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY









CHAPLAIN EHRET CONDUCTING SERVICES



COMPANY D DETACHMENT

OFFICERS' BAR



SHAVE, SHOWER AND SHAMPOO

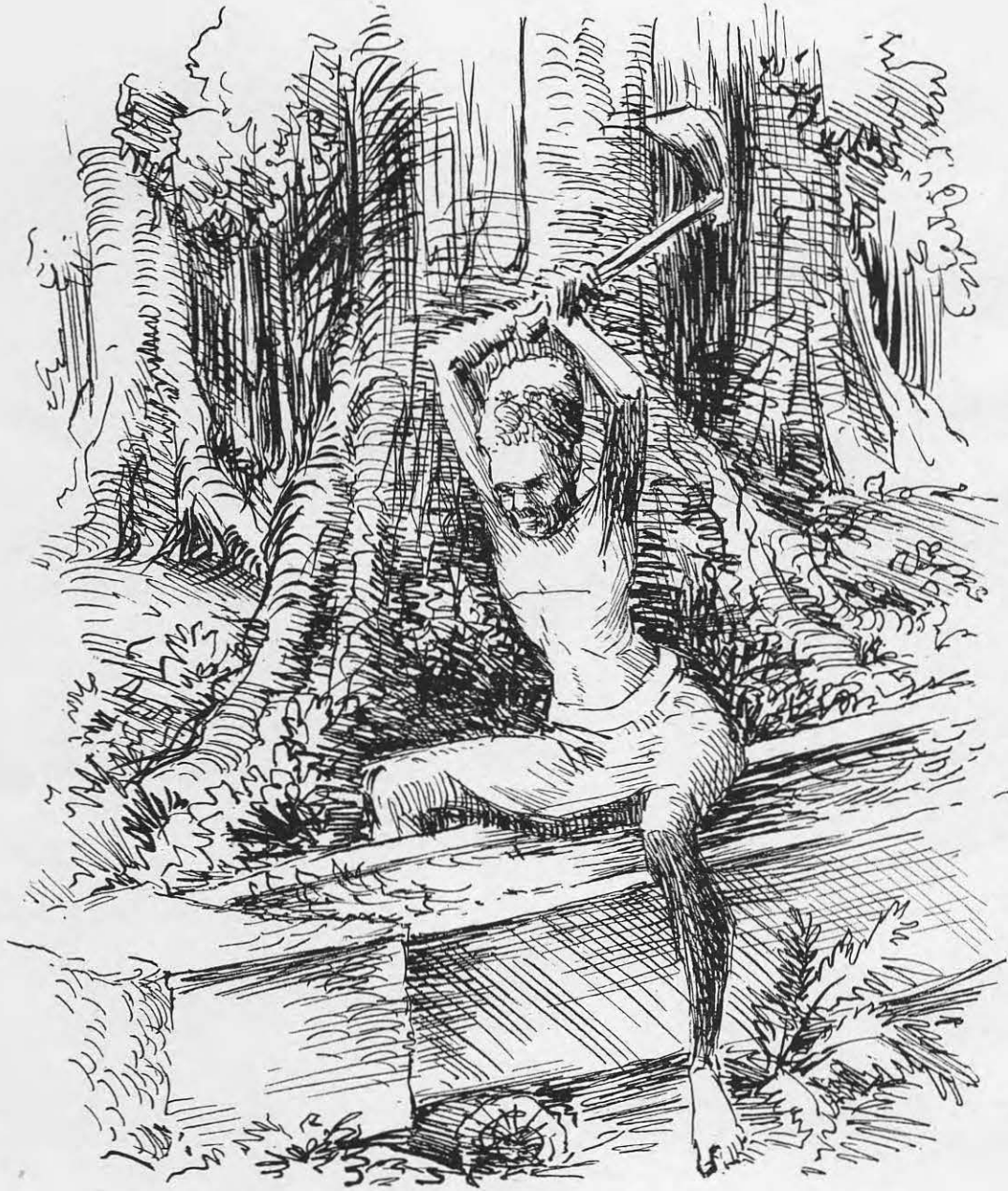
THANKSGIVING



ON V-J DAY



AND THE CELEBRATION





THE ISLANDS AND THE NATIVES

For one hundred and fifty years after their discovery during the eighteenth century by a Dutchman named Schouten, the shores of the Admiralty Islands were unvisited by any members of the white race. The first recorded landing by whites was made in 1875 but it was not until ten years later that actual occupation of the islands was made by Germans who held them until they were ceded to Australia at the close of World War I. What little development took place in the Admiralties prior to their occupation in the spring of 1944 by American Armed Forces during World War II, was carried out by the Australians. Economical productiveness consisted mainly in the growing of coconuts on thirty-six plantations owned by one or two companies and some small amount of trade carried on by ship's captains who plied their small vessels in and about the islands.

A moist and tropical climate prevails throughout the group, except on the higher slopes of its largest island, Manus, where a small range of mountains rises to the height of three thousand feet. Of volcanic origin, Manus has an area of eight hundred square miles being fifty-two miles long and having a breadth of twelve miles. Small by comparison are the other islands, whose combined areas equal only two hundred square miles. Annual rainfall exceeds two hundred and seventy-five inches a year and although temperatures as high as one hundred and fifty-five degrees with a minimum of seventy-one degrees have been recorded, there is little variation from the average of about ninety-one degrees.

Heavily jungled, the extensive forests of the island contain every specie of tree native to the southwest Pacific. Palms of various types, eucalyptus, mangrove, red banana, breadfruit, and papaya trees grow in abundance and up their trunks and entwined around their branches flourish vines and creepers of all descriptions. The forests form a natural habitat for all manner of bird life. Especially notable are the flightless Cassowary, which sometimes grows to the height of five feet and possesses tremendous kicking power, and the flocks of beautifully plumed pigeons and cockatoos. At least two varieties, the Crowned Pigeon and the Megapode, or brush turkey, are edible and considered by some to be table delicacies.

Prior to the landing of the white men there were few, if any, animals native to the Admiralties. Today, however, half-wild pigs, dogs, chickens and goats can be

found in the jungles. All are domesticated breeds brought in by the whites and used by the natives for food or now returned completely to a wild state.

It is the insect species which far outnumber any other form of life on the islands. Myriads beyond counting thrive in the swamps and torrid dampness of the main island although the lesser islands are in some cases almost insect free because they are formed from coral reefs extending only inches above sea level and their sands are not conducive to the breeding of mosquitoes, flies and gnats. Lizards, some of which grow to the length of four feet, abound everywhere. Scorpions and centipedes take delight in hiding in shoes and clothes of the human inhabitants. Both the small carnivorous bats and the large fruit bats, with wing spreads oftentimes in excess of four feet, can be seen throughout the islands. Crocodiles inhabit the jungle swamps and several varieties of snakes can be found. Of the latter, the deadly coral snake is frequently seen during low tide on the coral reefs bordering the group.

Most interesting of the Admiralty's inhabitants, of course, are the natives. They are believed to be descendants of the original tribes of New Guinea. Headhunters for centuries, they now live in comparative peace and spend their time procuring food and the other necessities of life. The total native population was estimated in 1939 to be approximately thirteen thousand and is divided into two main groups; the interior tribes called "Usiai," and the coastal tribes known as "Salt Water Boys."

Among the tribes, a good deal of trading is done for foodstuffs, native household goods, and between the interior and coastal tribes especially, for coral lime and betel nut which, when mixed, forms a narcotic highly prized and chewed universally by natives young and old. Individual villages are adept at making certain articles. One village specializes in weaving the baskets used as containers for food and personal possessions, the men of another village are expert divers and furnish shells for native jewelry and still another may specialize in making hunting or fishing spears, stone axes and knives. Transportation is by foot to territories inaccessible by water but otherwise almost entirely by outrigger canoes hand carved from single tree trunks. Equipped with crude sails, the larger of these canoes are sea-

worthy to the extent that trips of hundreds of miles and lasting several days are often made in them.

The Admiralty Island native averages about five feet six inches in height and has arms and legs seemingly long for his short body. His feet are flat and large and his color ranges from a very dark brown to coal black. His face, with its wide mouth and teeth blackened by betel nut, is topped by a broad, flat nose, a pair of wide set eyes, and a mop of kinky hair. Although the hair is naturally black, many of the males, by the use of lime, bleach the ends of their hair and the resulting blondness makes their appearance unique on first sight. About his head and neck the native may have a tattoo of scars made by cutting the skin with a sharp shell and rubbing in lime or mud. The lobes of his ears are often stretched to a length of three to four inches by the weight of a heavy brass ring worn there and his only article of clothing, except on ceremonial occasions, is a wrap-around cloth skirt called "lap-lap." While not heavily muscled he is strong and wiry and, if the occasion demands, can work tediously for long hours under climatic conditions which would cause a white man to collapse. In mingling with the whites, the native is inclined to be sullen and morose except when trading. At that time he is alert and usually drives a hard bargain.

Coconuts, fish, papayas, and the starchy flour derived from the Sago palm are the mainstays of the native's diet. This is augmented occasionally with pork from the jungle pig, crabs and other shell fish from the sea. Wild honey, fat wood grubs and lizards are also eaten and considered delicacies. Cannibalism, formerly widely practiced, has died out almost entirely with the exception of rare instances which take place far in the interior of Manus. Except for food supplied by hunting and fishing, the women of the tribes procure the necessities of life. As is common among other primitive peoples, the woman is the beast of burden and performs the bulk of the manual labor done. Formerly polygamous, many of the natives have received teachings in Christianity by missionaries who built a native school on the shore of Manus Island, and the practice is dying out. Despite the work of the missionaries, the natives as a whole, are superstitious and believe in many deities and spirits which are supposed to govern life and death and their general well being.

Speech dialects differ with each tribe. Their speech is euphonious and consonants do not come together except with "ng" and "mb." "Pidgin English" is spoken

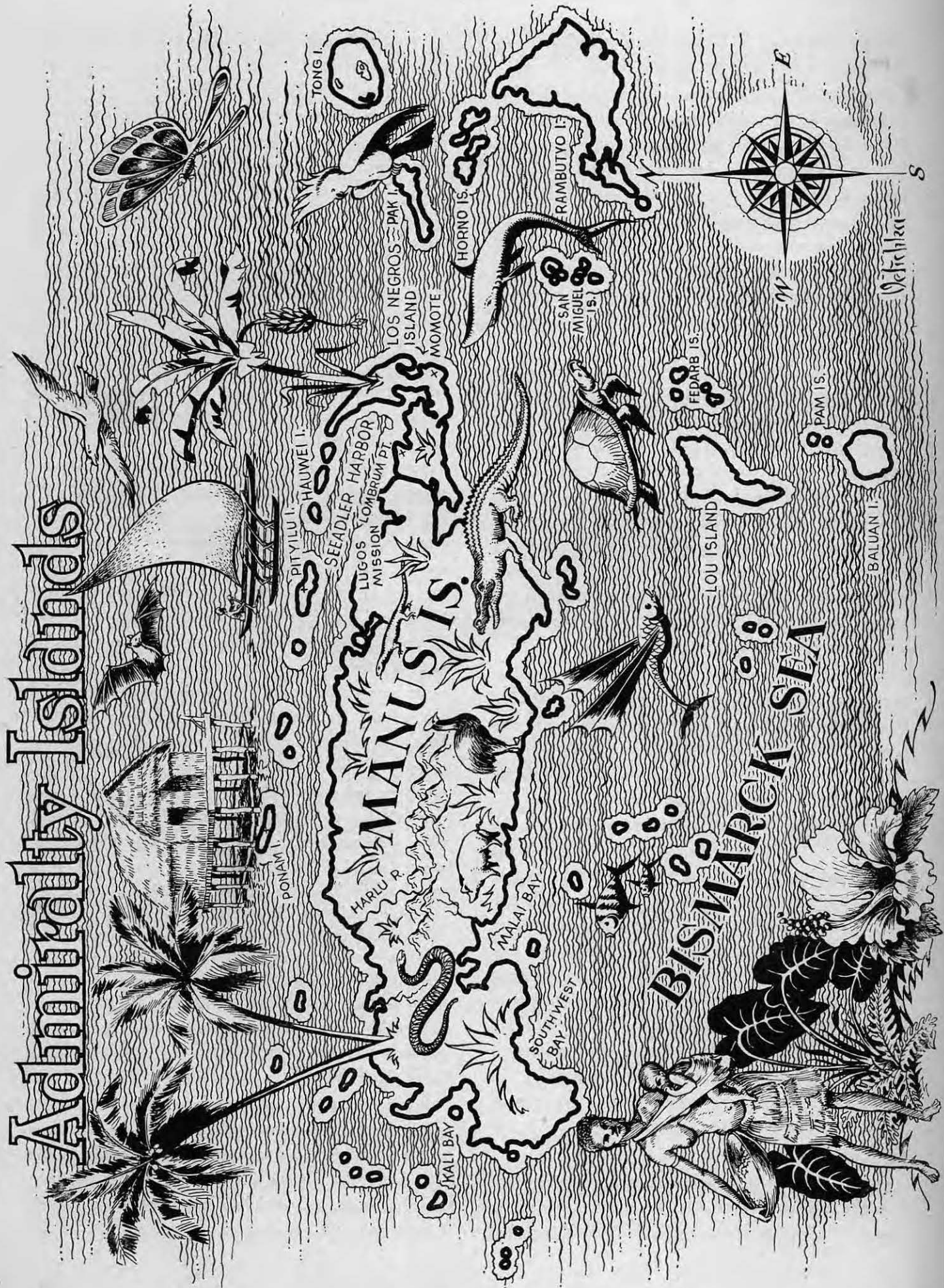
by many among the coastal tribes and through the use of it and gestures, conversation between whites and blacks is not too difficult. Although very few of the natives can read or write, there are some among the youths who have attended the missionary school, able to write a few simple sentences.

Skin diseases, rickets and bone afflictions are prevalent in the children. Since the coming of the white man several cases of tuberculosis have developed and more recently, infantile paralysis and spinal meningitis have made their appearance and are believed to have been brought in by the Japanese who occupied the islands from the start of World War II until the time of the Allied landings early in 1944. As a whole, the natives keep themselves as clean and neat as possible. Their villages are comprised of hand made, thatched roof huts usually built close to the ground except where there is danger of rising tides in which instances the huts are raised several feet on stilt-like supports. Furniture in the huts is limited to the family bed which is nothing more than a wooden frame with a covering of matting. Below a smoke hole in the roof, a cooking fire burns in each hut and utensils and food stuffs are stored in woven baskets and hung from the rafters.

With the coming of the Allied Armed Forces, a period of prosperity for the natives set in which will undoubtedly never be equalled again. The service men's demand for native curios as souvenirs created trading possibilities for the natives on a gargantuan scale. Deep sea shells, grass skirts, hunting and fishing spears, bracelets and necklaces and original native wood carvings found their way into the duffel and sea bags of the service men, while mattress covers for "lap-lap," pipes, jackknives, cigarettes, GI clothing, and even the famous "K" ration went back to the native villages at the close of each trading session. Many of the males from villages close to military camps, under the guidance of both Australian and American officers, worked daily clearing swamps, logging, and preparing the thatched roofs which topped many of the camp buildings. For their work the natives were paid a small daily wage in coin. To the natives, any American was "Number One Boy" which was their "pidgin English" way of saying, "The best."

It is not expected that the Admiralties will ever again attain the world prominence they enjoyed by being one of the largest naval bases in the southwest Pacific during World War II. Among those men who were stationed there, however, the coral beaches, jungled hills and the friendly natives will never be forgotten.

Admiralty Islands



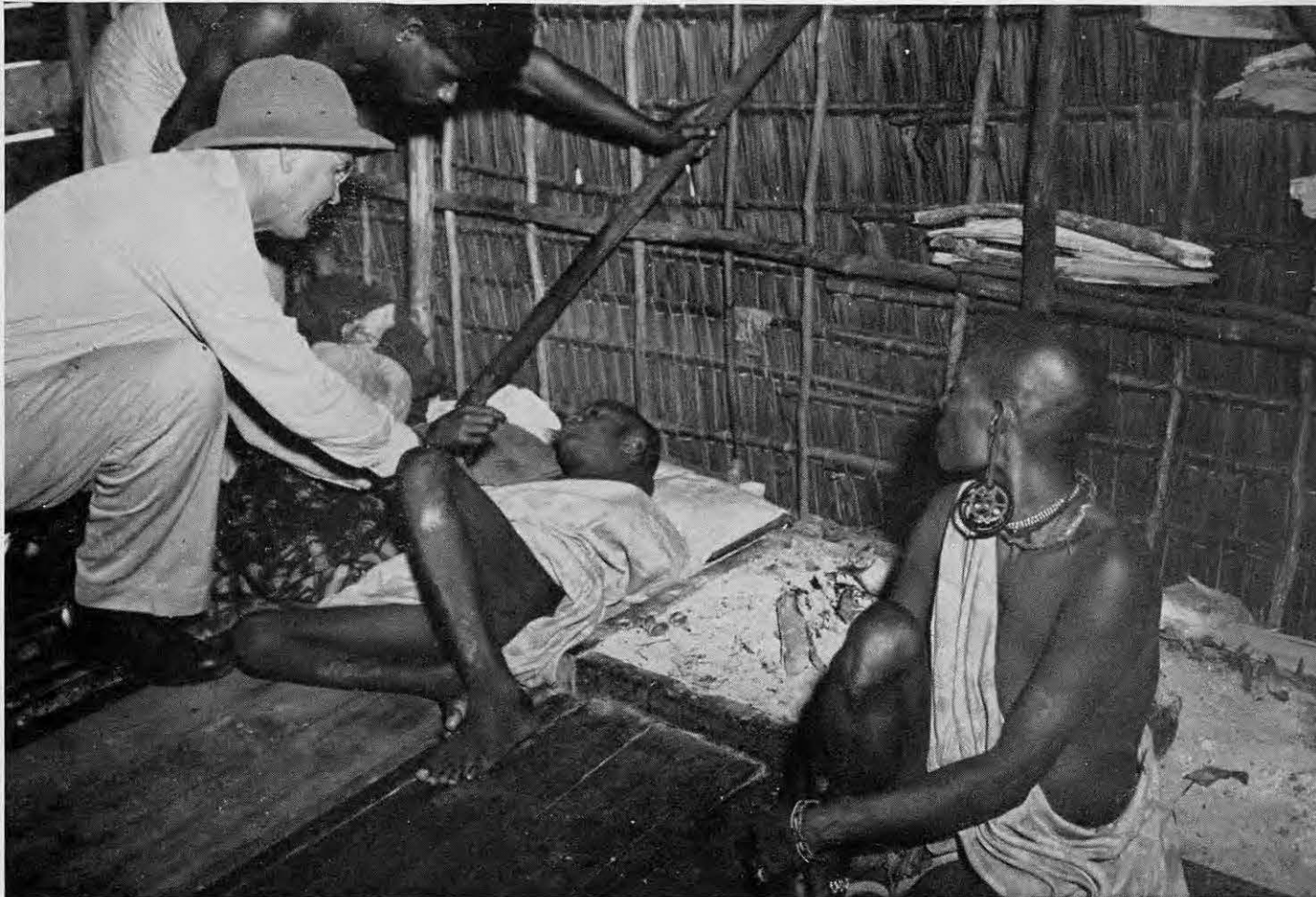


NATIVE VILLAGE ON THE MANUS ROAD



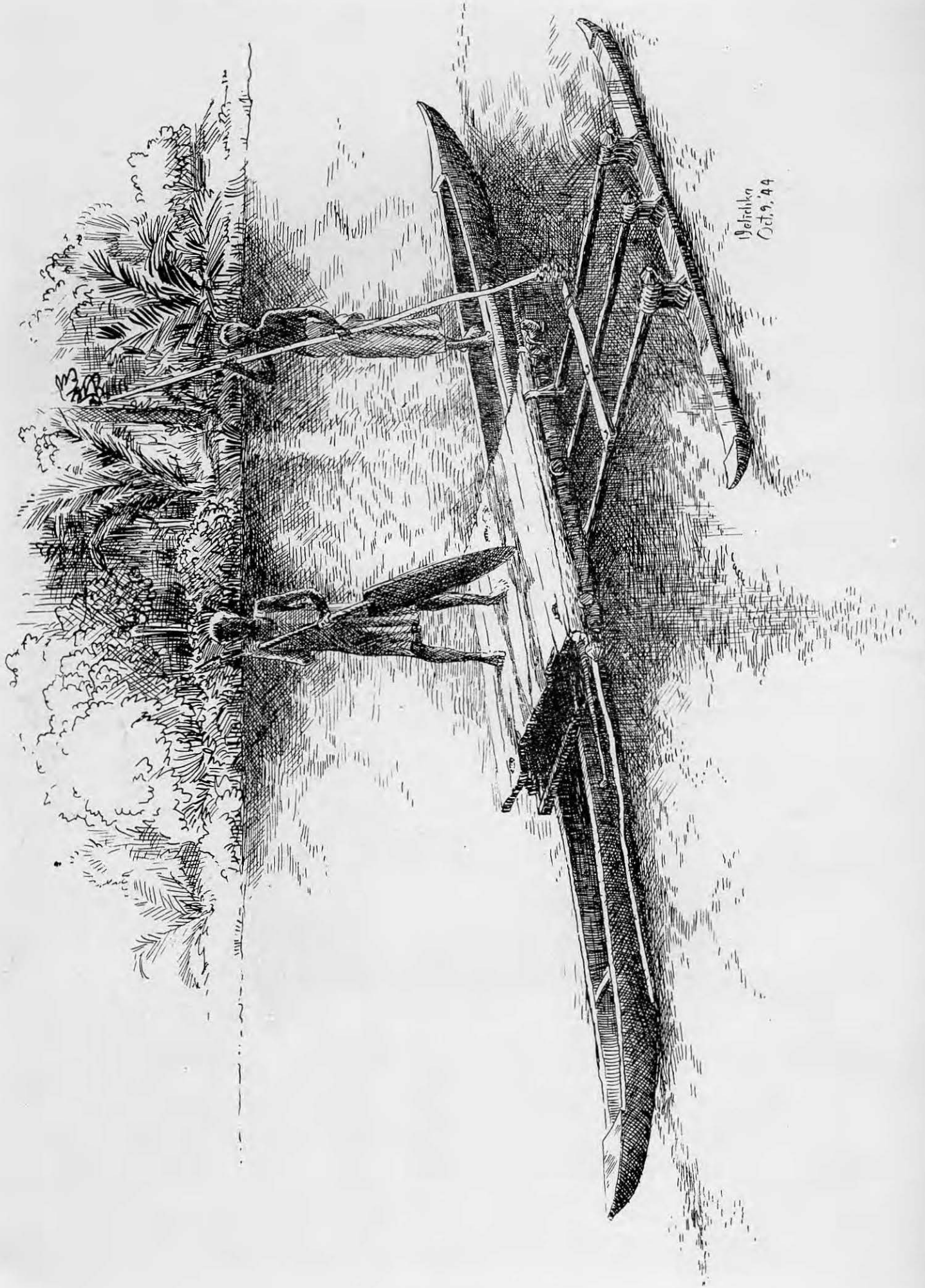


BETEL NUT AND LIME





POLE CREW AND AUXILIARY



Bethelka
Oct. 9, '44



DICKERING



BIG DEAL



WHISTLING A HERMIT CRAB OUT OF ITS SHELL

MAKING THATCH FOR THE CHAPEL



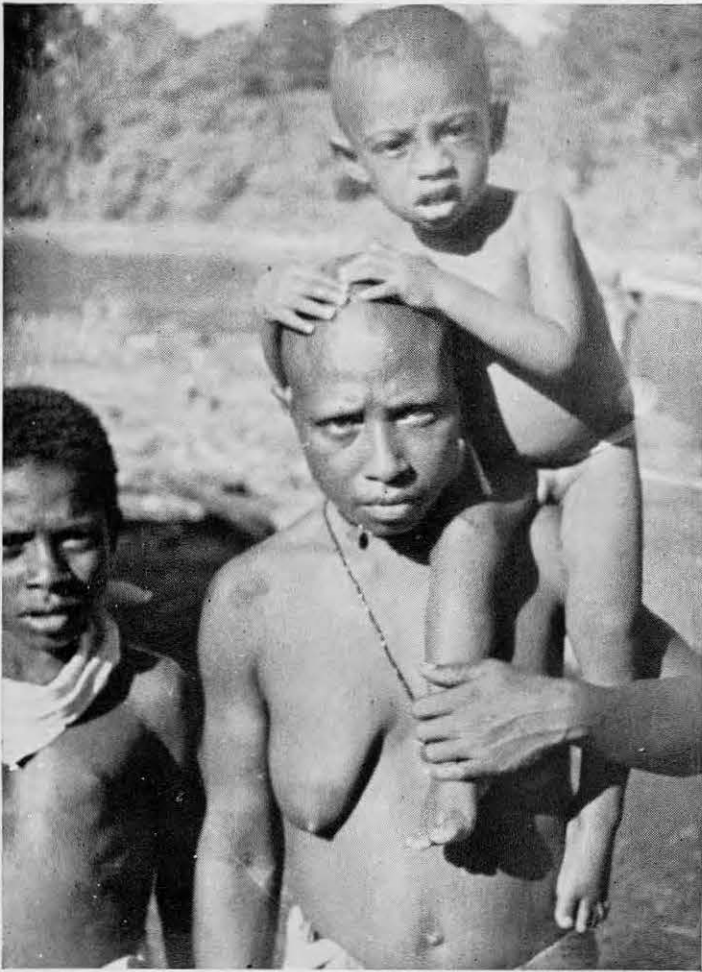
CHAPEL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

HEN PARTY



GROWING PAINS

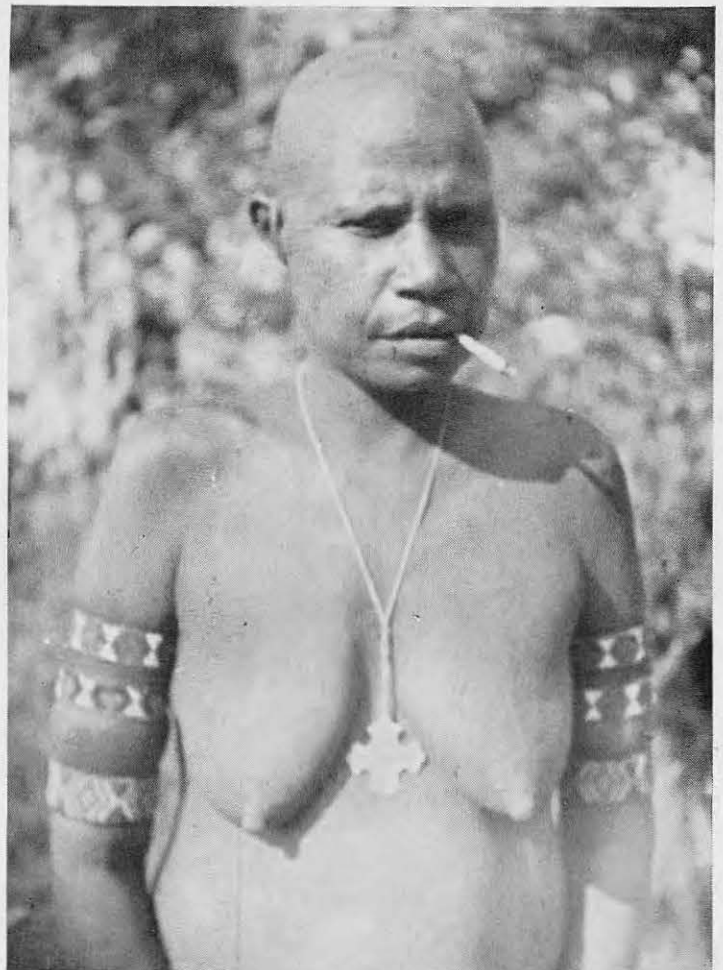




HOLD TIGHT



GRANDMA





MELANESIAN MADONNA

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