

SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

PREPARED BY THE BUREAU OF YARDS AND DOCKS FOR BATTALION NEWSPAPERS AND BULLETIN BOARDS

NAVDOCKS P 117

ISSUE NO. 67

10 APRIL 1945

KEEP BASES, ADMIRAL KING ASKS U. S.

Underlining the part the Seabees have played in World War II, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, USN, speaking in New York City, declared that the war in the Pacific thus far has been largely a battle for bases and that it is America's duty to retain those bases after the war.

"The atolls, these island harbors, will have been paid for by the sacrifice of American blood," he said. "They will have been scooped out of sand and rock, coral and volcanic ash," by a generation of Americans, giving their service, their ingenuity and their money.

The United States cannot afford to continue a cycle of fighting and building and winning and giving away, Admiral King said; no adequate peace-time defense will be possible unless the bases are held and kept in constant readiness to support the fleet.

Our sea power should be maintained, he told his audience, and "it should be dedicated, in war and peace alike, to promoting the security and well-being of our people and the peaceful stabilization of an improving world orderliness. We who have gone through this war have paid the penalty of forgetting the lessons of the years between wars. This time we shall win the victory despite our past mistakes. But next time, the penalty of forgetting may be the loss of America, and of liberty as we have known it.

HELPED TURN BACK JAP ATTACK

The information carried by a Seabee who volunteered to act as runner from a beach command post to two Marine divisions, frustrated an attempt by a large concentration of Japanese to drive a wedge between the two Marine Divisions on Saipan.

The Seabee battalion, attached to the 4th Marine Division, was holding down the position of beach security battalion during the invasion of the island. It was D-plus 1 and the situation as outlined on the CP's map looked bad. No information had been received on the progress of the 2nd Division for some time and besides, it was feared that the Japs were concentrating to split the two divisions with a drive to the beach.

CCM Leslie G. Smith of Los Angeles, Calif., chief in charge of the CP, called for a volunteer to run the gauntlet to the 2nd Marines, Frank H. Chmielewicz, S1c, of Camden, N. J. popped out of his foxhole to accept the assignment.

Risking being shot at by his own mates as well as by Japs and Marines, Chmielewicz made his way up the fringe of the beach and found the Marine CP. Securing the desired information he made the perilous 2 1/2 mile return journey to the Seabee CP and then set off to contact the 4th Marine Division in the opposite direction.

With the maps prepared by the Seabee plotters at the beach CP, the Marines were able to locate the Jap wedge and eliminate it.

Chmielewicz's battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its part in the capture of Saipan and Tinian. Chmielewicz was wounded during the later campaign and has received the Purple Heart.

BEER WITH A WALLOP

Things were tough for a battalion of Specials after their beer hall burned in the Marianas. Their tongues hung out so far it looked as though they were wearing red ties.

Given the "go" signal on rebuilding this haven of thirst-slaking, Sam Austin, CBM and I. Waehner, CM3c, were on hand for the initial concrete pour. Deciding to shovel the aggregate into the mixer, they started with a vision of a can of beer in front of them. Intent on getting the job done, they shoveled what they thought was an old beer can into the mixer--then, realizing their error, shouted to the finisher, G. Chapin, GM1c, to watch for it.

The pour went into a wheelbarrow and three men started tamping.

Pop Chapin pulled out the "beer can" with a trowel.

It was an armed hand grenade.

POUR ON WATER, POUR, ETC...

Personnel of one maintenance unit, now on duty in the Pacific, should return home qualified as first class fire fighters after a tour of duty in which their outfit served as the entire fire department on one Island X.

Ammunition dump fires were their specialty--backed by an unlimited water supply. The supply was the Pacific Ocean and a lagoon. At places the island was so narrow that a temporary suction line could be placed across the entire land strip.

The Seabees' first blaze was an ammunition dump containing aircraft bombs and machine gun ammunition. Equipment took a beating as the exploding tracers and shells ripped hose-lines and peppered pumping equipment. (The equipment, repaired, now carries a painted bomb, to prove it has been through a "bombing.")

The BMU fire department's second blaze of consequence was a gasoline-laden

LST which had slipped its moorings and drifted from a pier, necessitating both land and marine operations.

The third major run was to fight a fire caused by leakage of gasoline into underground coral fissures, creating underground explosions. The fire-fighters had to use the bulldozer department in this one. A second munitions dump fire involved 155mm shells.

SHADES OF BILL KLEM

Sp(A) Philip Hamm, of Hartford, Ala., with the Seabees in the Marianas, rather liked officiating at a field-day meet held for Japanese children in a civilian internment camp.

"I don't speak Japanese," he said, "and they couldn't speak English, so nobody could question my decisions!"

COMMENDED

Bernard D. Goldberg, SF2c, former aircraft worker who now triples in swing piano, church organ and newscasting for a Marianas battalion, has gone into the finer points of a chapel organ and made enough improvements to warrant praise from Rear Admiral Robert D. Workman, Chief of the Navy Chaplain Corps.

The battalion choir leader complained that the portable organ, as was, ruined his choral programs and asked Goldberg to remedy the situation. Most important of the changes was installation of a sound box, with facilities for a microphone for modified sound.

TELEPHONE PIONEERING .

Marianas Seabees hitched an American jeep to a Japanese plow and produced some of the straightest furrows west of the Iowa corn belt--but the product they planted won't sprout anything but conversation. They were trenching to bury cable.

That was the way one telephone system was launched, according to Charles A. Roberts, 40, EM1c, who is in charge of a communications crew at a battalion base.

But the Jap plow wasn't the only equipment salvaged. "If it weren't for some of the Jap stuff," said Roberts, "we'd barely be in business."

One of the richest finds in the telephone salvage hunt was a spool of Jap cable, the outer layer riddled by shrapnel and rifle fire, but it produced 400 feet of undamaged and badly-needed cable. They also found two buried power lines, lead-covered and armor-protected, many Jap coils, switches, condensers and a Jap oxcart, which was forthwith converted into a reel-cart for wire and tools.

The work wasn't without its hazards. At one time, the communications crew

flushed four Japs out of hiding without being aware of it until they were notified by a nearby patrol that "four Japs just came from your direction." On another occasion, Roy R. Maloney EM2c, was fired on. "I heard a 'whhhht' and then a rifle crack-- then all of a sudden it came to me what the 'whhht' was!" he said.

The crew used a mobile crane and a bos'un's chair to lower a man 80 feet over the side of a cliff while rigging a telephone line to direct well-drillers.

It was this crew's loud speaker system which Comdr. G. Wood Smith, CEC, used in directing operations to a Seabee patrol which killed six Jap stragglers who had wounded two Marines near the Seabee base.

HE DID WHAT THE MAN SAID

A sweat-drenched Seabee got off his bulldozer on a blistering hot day, bent on getting a drink of water, vouches CBM Jim Hays, writing from Tinian. The water was on the far side of camp, but the beer line happened to open on the near side. The cold beer quenched the Seabee's thirst but there was a rule excluding men on duty from the beer line. So he went on report for the first time in two wars.

At last, he was properly told off. "You say you really wanted water. Well, we'll give you lots of water -- two hours extra duty tonight driving the sprinkler."

Dust had been ankle deep, but that night it rained. To be exact, it poured. Watching the cloudburst which threatened to wash away the tents, the executive officer saw something which made him look again.

The lumbering tank truck could have doubled for an LCI headed for shore.

"They ordered water," the Seabee driver was mumbling to himself, "I'll give 'em water."

Before his orders were countermanded, he'd managed dutifully, to sprinkle the flooded streets with nearly 2,000 gallons.

ONE SOUVENIR, WELL SPENT

Oscar L. Prewitt, CM1c, is still carrying around the .25 caliber slug which struck him in the stomach "like a good, stiff poke" on the beach at Iwo Jima.

But it should be pointed out that Prewitt's webbed belt stopped the already-spent bullet, fired at him by a Jap sniper. "All it did" he grinned "was leave a

black and blue spot as big as a good-sized pancake."

HACK SERVICE

The best way to get good duty, testify Thomas E. O'Connor, MM3c, of Muskegon Heights, Michigan, and Raymond G. O'Brien, Cox., of Brooklyn, New York, is to create the billets yourself.

The Seabees, on duty in the Marianas, got permission to refloat and rebuild a sunken Japanese barge; now operate it as a harbor taxi with O'Brien as "captain" and O'Connor as "engineer". They use the barge to ferry work parties between nearby islands.

CUSTOM-BUILT GRINDER

Even if there were any hardware stores in the Marianas, none of them would be likely to carry in stock a device as specialized as a jeweler's bench grinder, but that didn't stop a Seabee repairman from asking for one. He knew that, someday or other, his mates would deliver.

Robert E. Crosby, EM1c, USNR, of Palatka, Florida, and Reino A. Maki, EM2c, of Embarrass, Minn., asked what the finished grinder was supposed to be like, went into conference, then rummaged in a box of salvaged Japanese material. A few hours later, they had a grinder waiting for the repairman to claim it.

Into its making went a Japanese motor that once controlled a Nip anti-aircraft gun, a condenser from a Jap radio transmitter part of a Jap 127-mm. brass shell case, and an assortment of smaller odds and ends from the pockets of souvenir-hunting Seabees.

HIGH FINANCE DEPARTMENT

If they don't glut the market by then, Seabees of one battalion now in the Marianas are going to get rich off Palmyra or skull-shells, which sell for 10 cents each on the Honolulu market.

"A survey," says one contributor, "proved this island to be an exceptionally lucrative hunting ground. Over a period of five months, these Seabees have gathered in excess of 66,000 shells from a lagoon and reef.

"At the same rate," figures the contributor, "the five companies of this battalion would be able to gather a total of 330,000 sea shells.

This, concludes the dreamer, eyeing the current market, would give the Seabees a haul of \$33,000.

Maybe they can buy the Japs off!

SAD STORY

This story lays an egg. It has no happy ending.

Kenneth W. Potter, CM1c, staked an early claim to a hen he found quietly clucking out the war on an egg at the edge of a Marianas jungle. The egg he deemed so precious he wouldn't even imperil the production by moving the hen, preferring to make daily visits to the shrine of rare food.

A Jap, marooned from his forces and food, did likewise.

Eventually Potter and the Jap began stalking each other with carbine and grenade (with the hen and egg as the prize) but they could never make their visits mesh. Potter chose the reveille run one morning, pounced on the hen and brought her back to camp to outwit the enemy and set up egg production close by. He had great plans for the hen--as gaunt as Poe's raven, but still an egg producer. A nest box was built, complete with hot and cold visits by Potter.

Then someone stole the hen.

A LITTLE PREVIOUS

Seabee Robert L. Sanford, Gunner's Mate, Third Class, USNR, of Coalinga, California, landed on Iwo Jima two days before D-Day, swimming 500 yards to the beach to reconnoitre. The Japs concentrated their fire, but he returned to his ship uninjured. Then, as he sighed with relief, a Jap bomber came over, scored a hit, and Sanford wound up in the hospital.

DOUBLE FEATURE

A maintenance unit, in transit through the war zones, had another show to watch if they didn't like the movie that was shown on deck the night they passed an island.

By simply turning their heads, they could see the flash of flame throwers and gun fire as Marines on the island did a little night work in digging Japanese out of caves and dugouts.

DELIVERED PERSONALLY

The Secretary of the Navy handled these arrangements.

He sent word ahead to a Philippines base that he had a message from Col. C. V. (Sonny) Whitney to his son, Harry P. Whitney, WT3c, on duty with a Philippines-based battalion. Young Whitney was on hand when the Secretary's plane touched the landing strip and was there when the door opened.

The "message" was Colonel Whitney himself. On General H. H. Arnold's staff, the colonel accompanied Secretary Forrestal on his Pacific tour and took advantage of the opportunity to fix the reunion with his son.

DINNER FOR TWO

From Oahu, Seabee August Reinhard, CM1c, of Reese, Michigan, last fall sent his brother, a Marine corporal at an advanced base, a Christmas food box. Shortly after he mailed the parcel, August was ordered to Tinian. As he stepped from the ship to the beach, someone ran forward to greet him. It was his brother -- carrying the box of groceries.

BABY FURNITURE DEPARTMENT

Artillery fire and bombing in the Marianas wrecked the Tejerons' family cradle, among other things--and the Tejeron family, already blessed with many children, was expecting another child.

George Alkofer, MM1c, whose only claim to cradle-making prowess was that his father was a cabinet-maker, volunteered for the job and with salvaged plywood, wire screening and paint, turned out a pleasing job--pleasing not only to the Tejerons, but to the Island Command as well.

An order came for 60 "just like it" for use in a civilian hospital.

Alkofer and other Seabees complied. If there's a child born near this base without a cradle, it is only because no order was left with Alkofer.

PIPE THREADER

A power-driven pipe-threading machine has been fashioned from scrap by two Seabees on Eniwetok. Elmer T. Smith, SF1c, and Joseph F. Scharo, MoMM2c, built the device from Jap push buggies and piping. Powered by a two-cylinder, gasoline-driven jaeger pump motor, it can be used for all pipe two inches in diameter and larger. In use for more than six months, it has threaded more than a thousand pieces of pipe without a breakdown.

HIGH PRESSURE METHODS

A Tinian battalion, forced to move because an airstrip was going to run right down the company street, took advantage of the move to improve the water supply system--and eliminated construction of 70-foot towers in the bargain.

Chief Carpenter Joseph F. Singer, CEC, and Chief Shipfitter Charles A. Smith,

installed a Heil gasoline pump with an electrically controlled automatic pressure switch to change the system from gravity flow to air pressure. The water is pumped from two 5,000 gallon storage tanks to the pressure tank, where a 35-pound pressure is maintained. The two wooden tanks are kept filled by pontoon tank trucks which shuttle between a large well and the new "pumping station".

NO WRONG NUMBER!

Roger T. Coots, 20, S1c, tried to tell them they had the wrong number when he was awakened to go to work on a switchboard on Iwo Jima. Artillery fire had prevented sleep during the fore part of the evening and Coots wasn't too happy about the midnight shift.

But, as is customary in the Navy, he obeyed the order, manned the switchboard, listened to a Jap mortar barrage that lasted almost until dawn and then started for "home".

Those who had called him had the correct number.

A Jap shell had scored a direct hit on his foxhole while he was gone.

FACILITIES NAMED FOR FALLEN MATES

A Tinian-based battalion has named its recreation hall and library in honor of two of its members who have died in the line of duty.

The recreation hall has been named Stewart Hall, in memory of James W. Stewart, SF3c, who lost his life in the Marshall Islands while fighting a fire.

The Mack Memorial library honors the memory of Ralph D. Mack, MM1c, who was killed in an accident. Both fatalities occurred in 1944.

HOME-MADE BATTERY CHARGER

A jeep motor and two amphibious jeep-type generators can be combined to produce a generator plant capable of servicing batteries for more than 150 pieces of transportation equipment, two maintenance units in the Russells have proved.

The 12-volt, 55-ampere generators which comprise the plant are capable of charging a total of 16 automobiles batteries in 24 to 30 hours.

Electric light bulbs of varying wattages are used as control testers.

A length of pipe in the center of the platform holding the batteries under

charge serves as a ground connection. Three-quarter inch bronze rod is used for positive connections. Leads are strung from these to battery terminals.

Designer of the plant was CMOMM David A. Bodenhamer of Tacoma, Washington, who worked with Paul C. Olson, MoMM3c of Hebron, Nebraska, and Charles W. Curtice, EM1c, of Beltsville, Maryland, to construct the apparatus and install the wiring.

WELL DONE, WIFE?

The mobile galley designed by Laurence M. Howarth, MM2c, was pleasing to all directly concerned, but Howarth wonders whether the plans would pass his wife's approval. Mrs. Howarth is a draftsman employed by Fisher Body Company.

The Howarth galley is mounted on a trailer built of salvaged materials and provides space for a 35-foot refrigerator, four field ranges, a 200-gallon water storage tank and a portable generator.

REAL ESTATE SECTION

Souvenirs, made from the metal of wrecked Jap planes on Tinian, have paid for a Mississippi farm. Joseph H. Lollar, EM2c, made a metal watch band for a friend to begin business and since then he has sold almost 200 of them to transient fliers and Navy men.

SELF SERVICE

Dental officers at a naval hospital on Tinian were behind schedule in making plates. The bottleneck, one of them told Raymond F. Grueninger, SF1c, of Baltimore, Maryland, was a shortage of clamps to hold the forms while they were setting.

Needing a partial plate himself, the Seabee studied the intricate clamps in use at the hospital; decided that while he couldn't duplicate them, he could at least make a model that would work. He did -- twelve, to be exact.

"You might say I made my own teeth", he said as he displayed his new partial plate.

HEELS RETREADED

A cobbler shop crew in the Marianas has applied the old fashioned cookie-cutter idea and is producing heavy-service rubber heels for GI shoes from old, discarded truck casings.

In the sharp coral country, heels and soles are good for about three weeks and

the factory supply soon was exhausted.

The four cobblers---Theodore C. Stover, SSM2c, James M. Johnson, SSM3c, William R. Davis, Jr., S2c, and John M. Brock, S2c, built the heel-cutter. A block of wood, a die that resembles a cookie-cutter, a vehicle jack and a rigid support are the basic parts of the device. The jack fits inside the tire and catches the die and tire in a squeeze, cuts out a heel ready to hammer on a shoe and trim down to size.

A similar die has been made to cut out soles--just in case the supply gives out.

HOBBYIST

What more appropriate spare-hours pursuit for a Seabee than gathering honey? Sounds like a gag, but that's the hobby of Frank M. Lester, SF2c, of Tucson, Arizona, who's made a study of bee-keeping. He's been nursing bee hives all through his 26 months overseas, donating the honey to the battalion galley.

IT'S FEEEXED!

A Marianas-based battalion's "Tuba Gulch" theater has two new movie projection machines which give a flawless performance, but the name Joseph F. Dostal, Jr., EM1c, acquired during the pioneering days of two not-too-efficient machines, still lingers on.

Before the new machines arrived, "Junior" had to stop the projector between each reel while an impatient audience clamored "fix it, Junior!" His patience was taxed to the limit one night as the bedlam roared "fix it, Junior." Finally when the noise died down, the shrill voice of a tiny native boy squeaked:

"Feeeeeex eet, Junior!"

HENRY "CAN DO"

To Seabee Henry G. Hammerly, CM2c, "Can Do" brings nostalgic memories. Henry's hometown is Cando, North Dakota.

SEEKS WIFE TRAPPED IN CHINA

It has taken Seabee cook Albert Toy 15 years to come back three-fourths of the long way across the Pacific to his wife and native land.

In 1930 Toy left his young wife in China. Intending to follow her husband soon after, she was compelled by circumstances to delay the trip many times. The Japanese invasion of 1937 finally made emigration impossible.

Toy heard from his wife last May. She was in hiding in a neighboring village

she wrote, after their home town had been seized by plundering Japs.

"It's been a long wait," the Seabee says, "but now I've gotten as far as Saipan and I hope I'll be among those who go the rest of the way right to the coast of China. One thing I'm sure of -- after the war, nothing is going to stop me from doing what I started out to do in 1930 -- bring my wife to the United States.

COMMENDED FOR RESEARCH

CSF Clyde W. Brown, of Riverside, Ill., and CCM James T. Lowes, of Spartanburg, S.C., have been commended by Captain W. O. Hiltabidle, CEC, USN, OinC of a brigade, and Lt. Comdr. E. W. Chidester, CEC, USNR, battalion OinC, for their research work which may produce a highly-desirable water-softening process by the use of readily available natural material on an island in the Marianas.

THIS WAY, PLEASE

During the early weeks of the invasion of Tinian, a group of Seabees were staking out the secured section with marker signs while the Marines continued their clean-up of Japs on the remainder of the island. Next day the Leathernecks told the Seabees they'd discovered their markers all through "no man's land." Unknowingly, they had pioneered the way.

HIS OWN HIGHEST BIDDER

Seabees have been doing a thriving business selling homemade souvenirs to other servicemen, but not until now has a Seabee salesman come along who's good enough to convince himself.

Forty-six-year-old Perry C. Rudd, SF1c, of Halfway, Oregon, a veteran blacksmith, fashioned metal scraps into a handsome Jap sword in the Marianas. He dressed up the handle with seashells. The finished product was a sabre any Nip general would have been proud to own.

As expected, the souvenir-hunters bit hard. Bids were running as high as \$250 when Rudd regretfully but firmly declared the auction off. The sword was such an outstanding trophy, he said, he'd decided to keep it himself. But would some of the boys give him a few ideas? He needed a convincing story, he explained, to have ready for the home folks when they asked how he'd captured the sabre!

SHADES OF PRUDENCE PENNY!

One Pacific-based Seabee outfit sponsors a series of monthly "good housekeeping" prizes. An outstanding tent is selected in each of the battalion's five company areas and each man in the tent is \$5 richer. The money comes out of the battalion's welfare fund.

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

SINCE Pearl Harbor more than 500 of the nation's professional, collegiate and amateur athletes have given their lives in the service of their country...Football's ranks hardest hit with loss of outstanding stars like Hal Hursch of Indiana; Keith Birlem of Chicago Cardinals and Washington Redskins; Clint Castleberry of Georgia Tech; Ken Basca of Villanova; Derace Moser and All-American Joe Routt of Texas A & M; Howie Seymour of Yale; Jim McDonald of Illinois; Ken Cotten of California; Bob Yelton and All-American Nile Kinnick of Iowa....Among those listed as missing are Young Bussey, Chicago Bears; Waddy Young, Brooklyn; and Al Blozis, New York Giants...Major league baseball has three gold stars on its service flag...Ardys Keller, Browns' catcher, and Forrest Brewer, Senators' pitcher, were killed in action while Eugene Stack, rookie White Sox pitcher, died in service.

BEGINNING his 61st season in baseball, Connie Mack, 82-year-old pilot of Athletics, doesn't have to think very long when asked the greatest moment in his long and celebrated career..."It was the seventh inning of the fourth game of our 1929 World Series with the Cubs," recalls Connie. "For six innings it looked like a blue day. Charley Root held us to two hits, was breezing along on an 8-0 lead. You know what happened after that. All of a sudden we put together 10 hits, for 10 runs, beating the Cubs 10-8."...The rally was the most astounding in World Series history....The Cubs never recovered and lost the series in five games.

WILLIE Pep, the featherweight boxing champion, is the only outstanding athlete to receive a discharge from two branches of the armed forces in the same war...The 22-year-old battler was medically discharged from the Navy last year after seven months' service because of a perforated eardrum...Early this year, Pep was inducted into the Army...Last week came home ...The ear trouble again and another honorable discharge... Before going into the Navy, Pep won the featherweight title by scoring a 15-round victory over Chalky Wright on November 20, 1942 and then went on to pile up an amazing record of 86 wins and but one defeat...Only loss came at hands of Sammy Angott who won a 10-round decision on March 19, 1943.

OKLAHOMA Aggies, NCAA champions, won the mythical National basketball title by defeating DePaul of Chicago, the invitation tournament winners, 52-44, in benefit game at NY's Madison Square Garden that turned over more than \$50,000 to Red Cross.Battle of the "Giants" between Aggies' 7-foot Bob Kurland and 6-foot, 9-inch George Mikan of DePaul failed to materialize as Mikan went out of game on five fouls after only 14 minutes of play.

GUNDER Hagg, Swedish miler, preparing to return home after a most disappointing tour...Lost three races out of four, all to Jimmy Rafferty...Latte broke Paavo Nurmi's 20-year Buffalo record (4:12) with 4:10.9 mile for season's 9th straight mile victory...Bumped off plane at Memphis, Gunder was unable to make Buffalo games.

DISA AND DATA...Tracks all over country busy making preparations, arranging schedules since ex-Director of War Manpower Commission James Byrnes stated horse-racing ban would be lifted on V-E Day...Lieut. Bert Shepard, P-38 pilot who lost part of right leg in combat over Germany, signed with Senators as coach; probably break into AL competition later in season as pitcher and pinch-hitter...Ted Williams of Red Sox is the greatest natural baseball hitter of the past decade according to Babe Ruth...Toronto's Maple Leafs sprung upset by eliminating National Hockey League champs, Montreal Canadians, 4 games to 2 in Stanley Cup playoffs...Cmdr. Jack Dempsey had ringside seat aboard assault craft at Okinawa invasion...Frankie Sinkwich, Detroit Lions' quarterback, won Joe F. Carr Trophy as National Football League's most valuable player in 1944.... Bert La Brucherie, Calif. H. S. Coach, named head coach at UCLA, succeeding Babe Horrell, resigned.