



U. S. Naval Construction Battalion
Maintenance Unit No. 521

its tour of duty on

- ... TULAGI
- ... BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS
- ... OKINAWA
- ... SOUTH PACIFIC

C. B. M. U.
No. 521

E. W. O. Clifford & Moran
Editor



Foreward..

THIS is the story of United States Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit, Number 521, and its tour of duty on Tulagi, British Solomon Islands, from December, 1943, to.....

It is not a military history; Naval ranks and ratings do not appear here. It is merely a memento of a company of Seabees who went to do a job.

The Seabee is perhaps the oddest specimen of this or any war. He is a master carpenter, plumber, welder, metalsmith, electrician; he handles a twenty ton bulldozer and the family car with equal ease; he gets things done ahead of time, and if he doesn't have the equipment, he makes it. His individualism and his scorn for military busy-work are frequently sources of embarrassment to spit - and - polish Naval officers. Yet because of him the Fleet moves to its battle stations. He is the man who built America.

Seabee maintenance units do not get the glamour assignments, and they wear few campaign bars. Their job is one of hard work, deadly monotony, and great loneliness. Their job is the sweat, the fatigue, and the boredom behind the phrase "logistic support." For them no Purple Hearts, no exotic adventures, no screaming headlines. For them work and labor, malaria and atabrine, spam and dysentery.

Here, then, is C.B.M.U. 521.







Dedication..

Dedicated to

THE SKIPPER **GEORGE STRADER**
[Lt. CEC (S) U.S.N.R.]

"... You are men and as such I expect to regard you and judge you. Let us operate in a businesslike manner . . . Let us remember 'boot' days are over. The chips are down."

—Message to the Unit, September 25, 1943

Tulagi Bound!



ON THE afternoon of Sunday August 22, 1943 the 7th Supernumerary U. S. Naval Construction Battalion fell out for muster for the last time. The battalion was on the march! But it moved only from one camp area to another. Having cleared a training area the battalion personnel went on a long-looked-for ten day leave.

Returning to Camp Peary in early September, Company "D" that was found itself again quartered in platoon order, found too that the X7 had vanished into thin air, and that the company was now known as C.B.M.U. 521, and was making ready to move.

Countless train musters. "Carry the duffle bag in the right hand. Put it down, face east, salute his holiness, left face, enter the car by placing the left hand on the hand rail." These instructions were valuable. Though we had been getting on and off trains for years, we had always put ourselves in the hands of the porter who carried us aboard, especially after football games. Finally came 521's own "D" Day, and it rained. For some unmilitary reason busses were supplied, and we rode to the Peary railroad station in great style. Disgorging from the busses we again fell in for train muster. This time we had a train. Lined up in front of Pullmans borrowed from the Capitol Limited—they really were, we were lucky—we said grimly: "This is it," and synchronized our watches. Someone didn't synchronize. A Ship's Company CPO glancing at his trim wrist watch, raced madly up and down in front of us, paused to remark: "I just DON'T understand it. The Captain KNOWS that sailing time is 1300. He should be here for his speech." This burst of emotion was replied to by a quite calm C. & O. conductor, a man born and bred in the traditions of railroading, who, while affectionately fondling a huge pocket watch, said: "Well, I don't know anything about that, but they've cleared the line for this train at ONE P.M. She'll have to move then or not at all." Visibly shaken by this comment, the CPO sped away. As the time approached ONE P.M.—or 1300—we got the order to go aboard, and some of the mates entered the train without grasping any rail. At precisely the zero hour the train moved slowly out while the station force band played *Anchor Aweigh* very badly.

Train-ride: Two days through the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and into Mississippi. Even our Capitol Limited Pullmans rocked furiously on a roadbed laid down shortly after Mr. Sherman's famous march. High point of the train ride: We had just left Peary when the brakeman announced that Italy had surrendered. It was September, 1943.

ABD, Gulfport, Mississippi. Here was undoubtedly the nicest camp area we ever saw. Here we built Quonset huts, and heard Will Osborne on "Spotlight Bands." Here appeared Vol. 1, No. 1 of the *Globe News*, an adolescent four page sheet worthy of the Jones Junior High. All this was done while we awaited the return of the gents who had not taken leave from Peary. These men returned, we broke all records for the erection of Quonsets. We would have broken our own record were it not for an order stating that all construction work within the continental limits would be done by civilians. So—we went back to the comic opera aspects of Left Face, Right Face, To the Rear Hut (March). Caswell won the nod of approval for his design for a unit coat-of-arms.

OCTOBER brought more "sailing orders," again by Pullman. Our luck held, many units drew day coaches for a transcontinental trip. A merciful veil must be drawn over those ten or twelve weeks we spent passing through Texas and Arizona. Still, gazing at that waste land was a wonderful indoctrination course for life on Island "X". Ultimately we came again into civilization, and pulled into that suburb of Port Hueneme, Los Angeles. Seabees had already exhausted the resources of the Southern Pacific Railway's commissary so we went "ashore" to dine as guests of Mr. Fred Harvey. As we passed by, those two dining cars looked awfully tired. After dinner a two hour liberty was enjoyed. But since we had missed a pay day that liberty didn't do much except to prove to the boys from Brooklyn that the Hudson River is not the westernmost boundary of these United States.

NOVEMBER—A complete recital of events in glorious California where it never rains is not possible here, and besides, each has his own memories. This idyllic interlude was interrupted by the news: "We are secured."

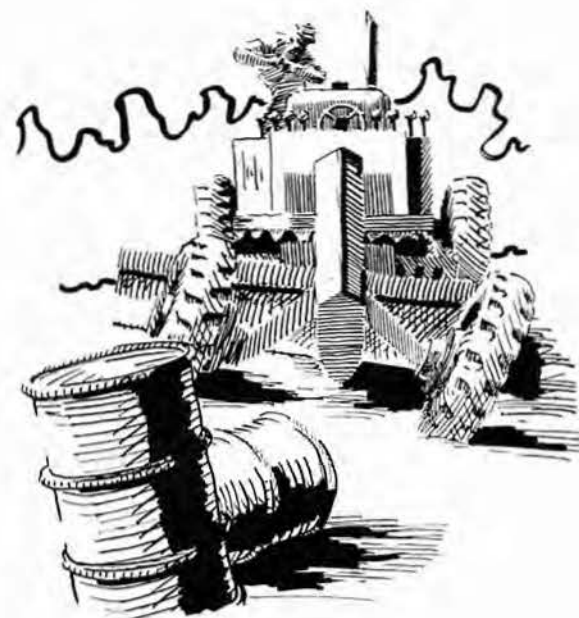
An overnight coach ride took us to San Francisco where we detrained, walked across the street, and boarded the *MS Sommelsdijk*. Thus we saw the City of the Golden Gate as we sailed through the gate itself at 16:30 (4:30 P.M.) Wednesday November 11, 1943—ironic date.

The good ship *Sommelsdijk* (*Fleet Duck*) was a freighter from the Holland-America Line. She was fast, which was the only characteristic to distinguish her from a cattleboat. Followed days of blue, blue, blue Pacific Ocean which caused one wag to remark that it looked like a damp Texas. Another, who had doubtless read of the exploits of previous Seabees, cracked: "Why don't dey build a subway?" At the equator Davy Jones, representing King Neptune, came aboard to make Shellbacks out of Pollywogs and raised quite a rumpus in so doing. It was with mixed emotions that we heard after twenty-three days: "Hallo, Bose-mann. Lay-go anck-air," and the rattle of chains denoting that our vessel had pulled onto a sidetrack. We stepped ashore on the island of Tulagi in the British Solomons and said: "Hollywood is wrong in its conception of a tropic isle."





Camp Perry, Virginia







Gulfport, Mississippi

OFFICERS OF C.B.M.U. No. 521

(Left to Right): CWO C. R. Moran, Lt. A. P. Ketchen (Executive Officer), Lt. George Strader (Officer in Charge), Lt. (jg) M. J. Nolan, CWO E. G. Jackson.

MAIN GATE, GULFPORT, MISS.

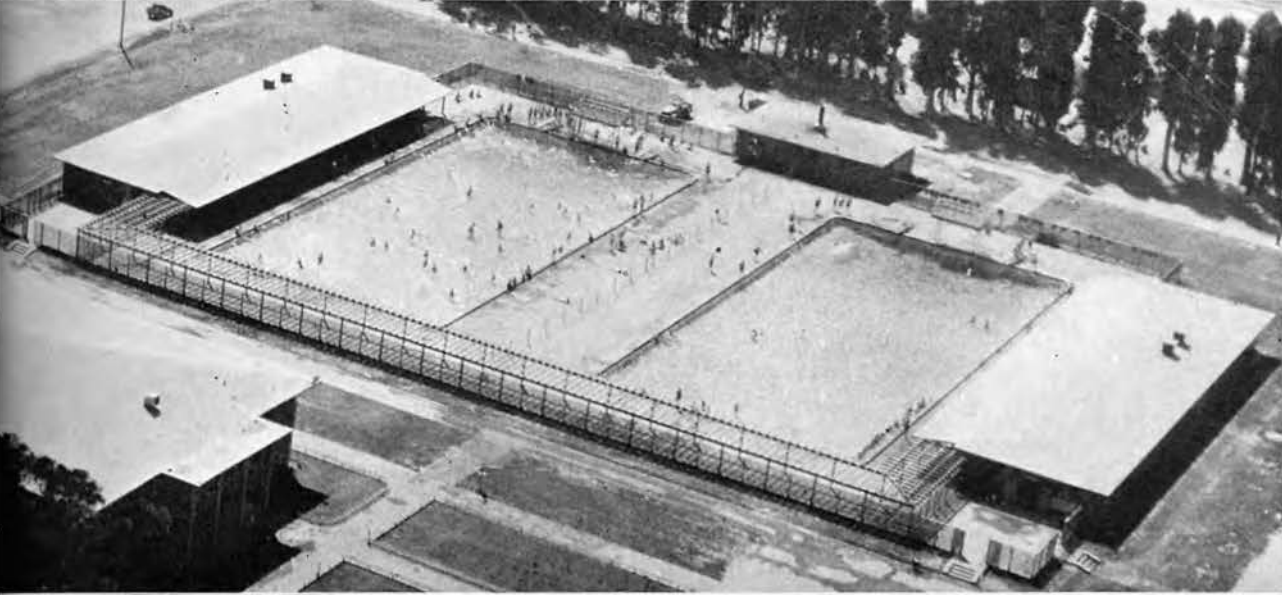


OBSTACLE COURSE





MAIN GATE
SHORE LEAVE

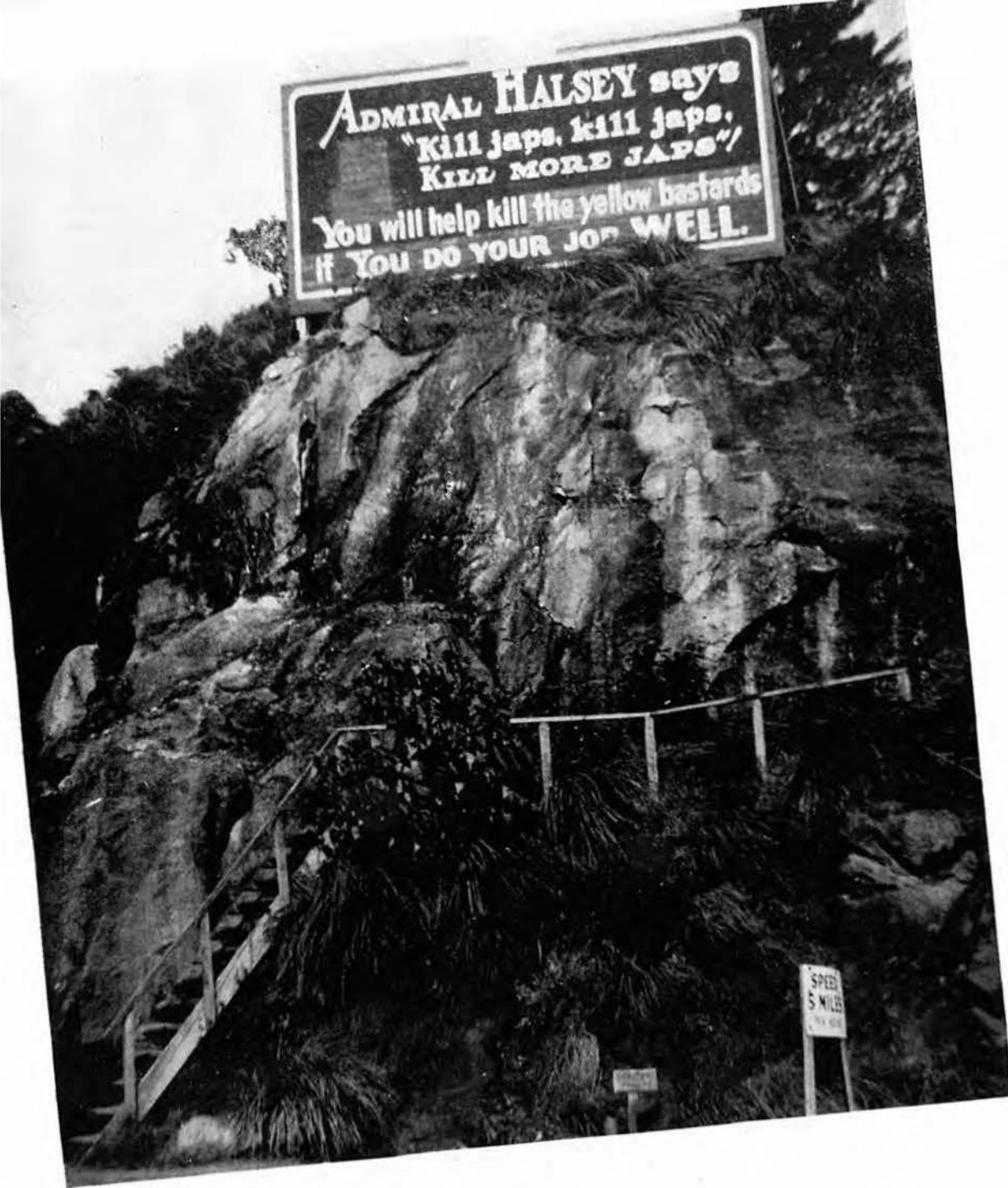


SWIMMING POOL



VISITORS DAY

Port. Hueneme, California



Tulagi!
First
View

"Strader City" OVERLOOKS THE CORAL SEA



Tulagi
by
Air

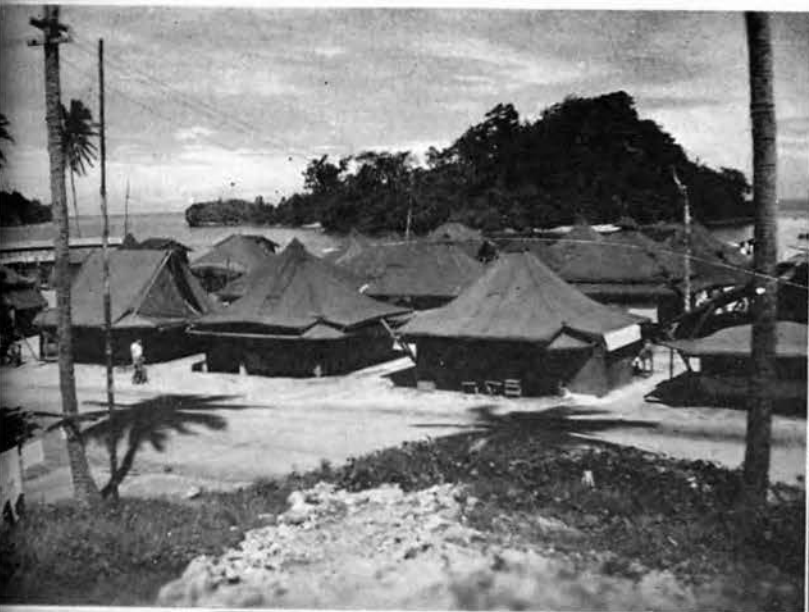




Strader City.... Tulagi



Camp Scenes



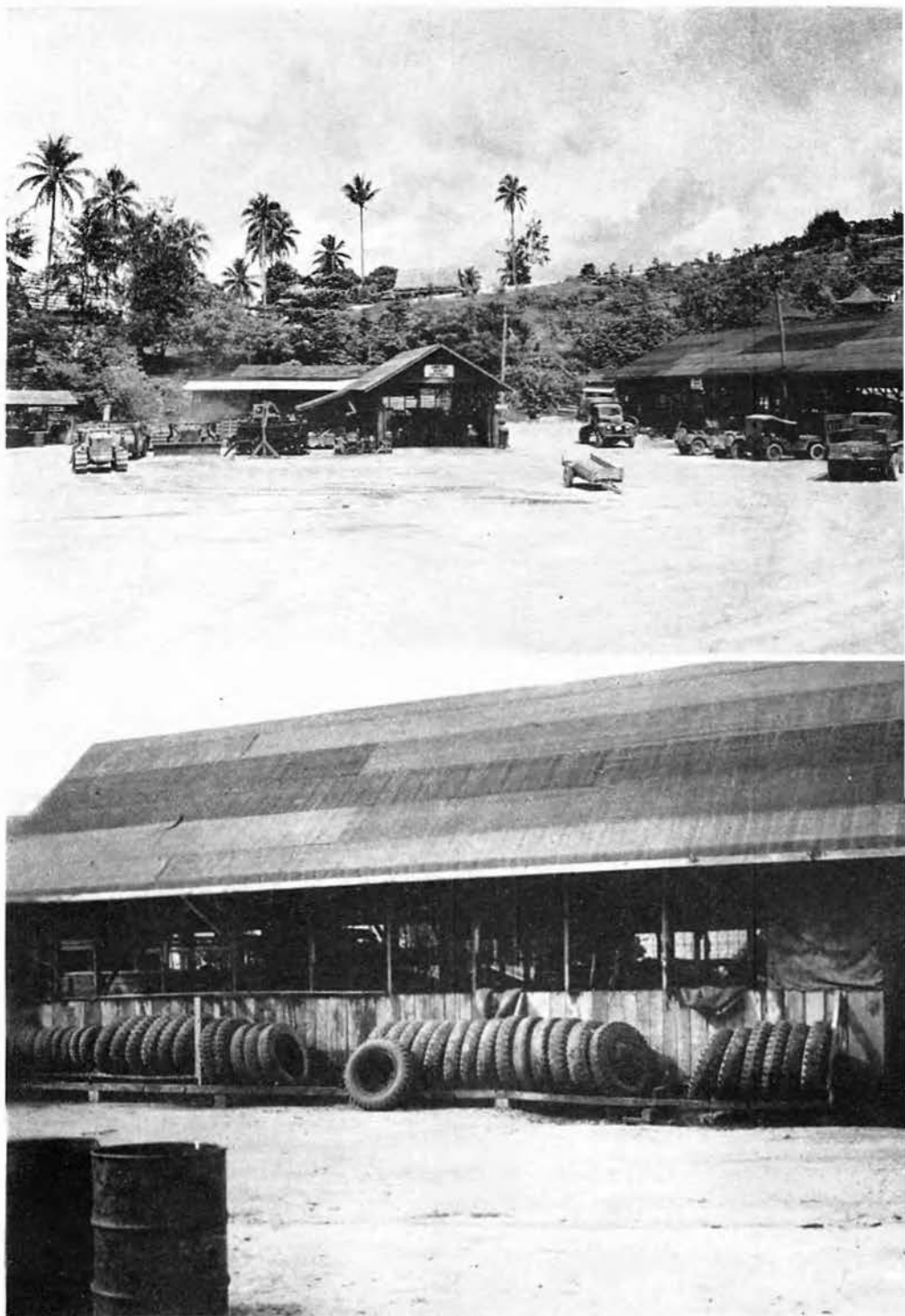


OVERLOOKING CAMP FROM
ROAD TO S. O. Q.



Strader City

CONSTRUCTING THE HEAVY
EQUIPMENT SHOP



Downtown

GARAGE AND HEAVY
EQUIPMENT SHOP

TIRES — OH BOY!

TRUCK REPAIR YARD



All
slicked
up
for...



Sunday
Morning
Inspection



The Shops of C. B. M. U. 521



REPAIRING SALT WATER PUMP

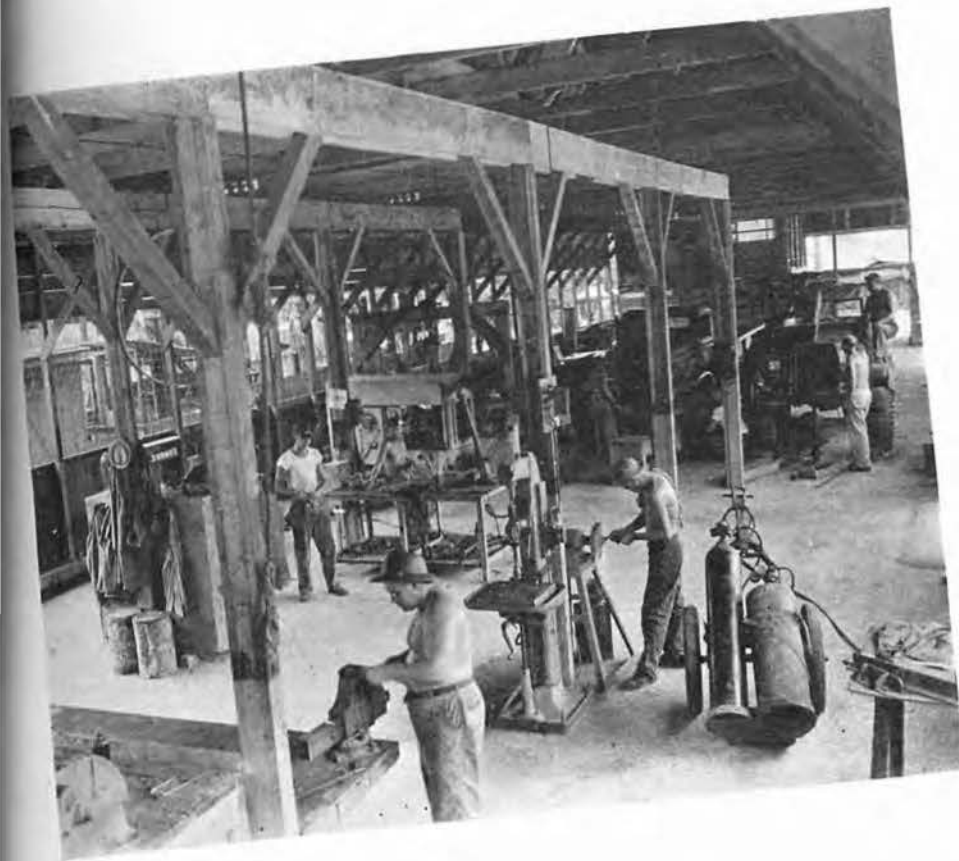
Carpenters



Standing: R. H. Sullivan,
Gourley, Rouch, Lightle,
Schukraft

Kneeling: Stoltz, Gorrell,
Sollowin





WELDING SHOP

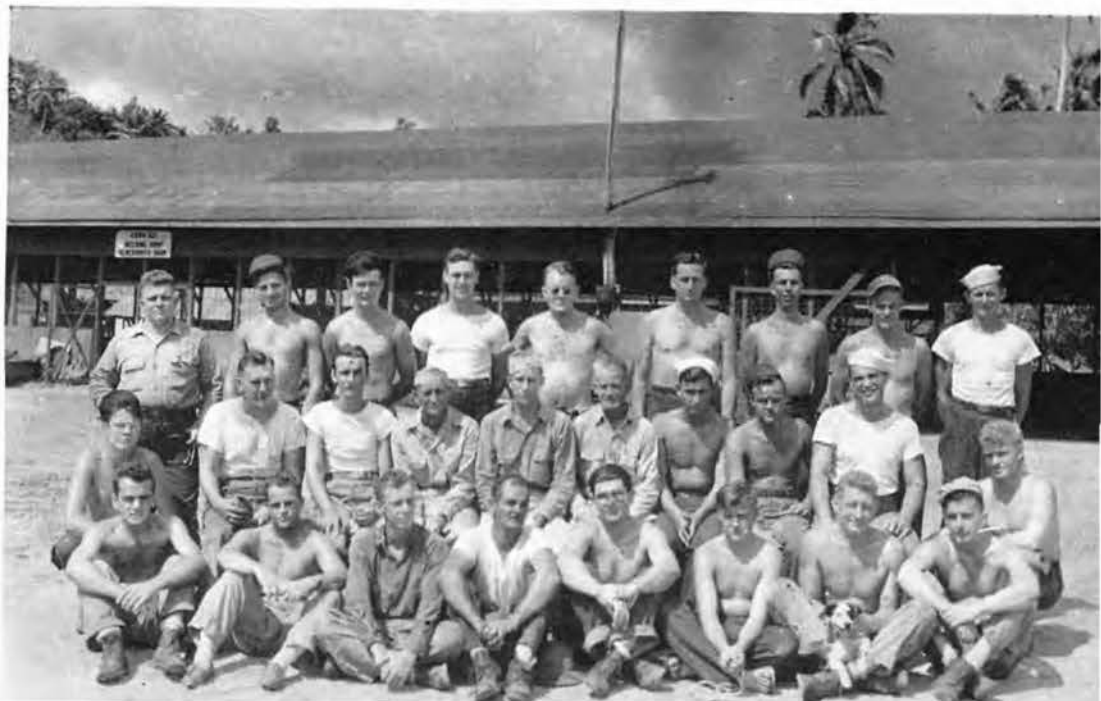
Garage... Blacksmith Welding



Front Row: Robertson, C. Kennedy, Turner, Caron, Earl, Rowe, Ostenski, Auge

Second Row: Dutrow, Safko, O'Keefe, E. W. Sims, Van Der Heyden, McMillan, Rigsbee, Stanton, Auerbach

Third Row: Fippin, Pavlo, Skelly, Shears, Aultman, H. R. Smith, Suggs, H. E. Johnson, A. Anderson

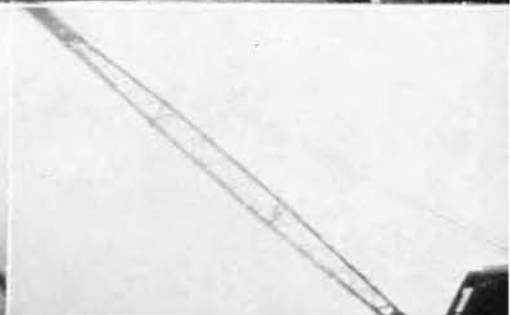


Standing: Williams, N. W.
Haugan, McDonald, G. E.
Anderson, Nipper, Wren,
Webster, N. Smith

Kneeling: G. E. Irwin,
Waugh, Dennison, B. A.
Thompson, Curley, O. R.
Riley, Worrell.



Heavy Equipment...



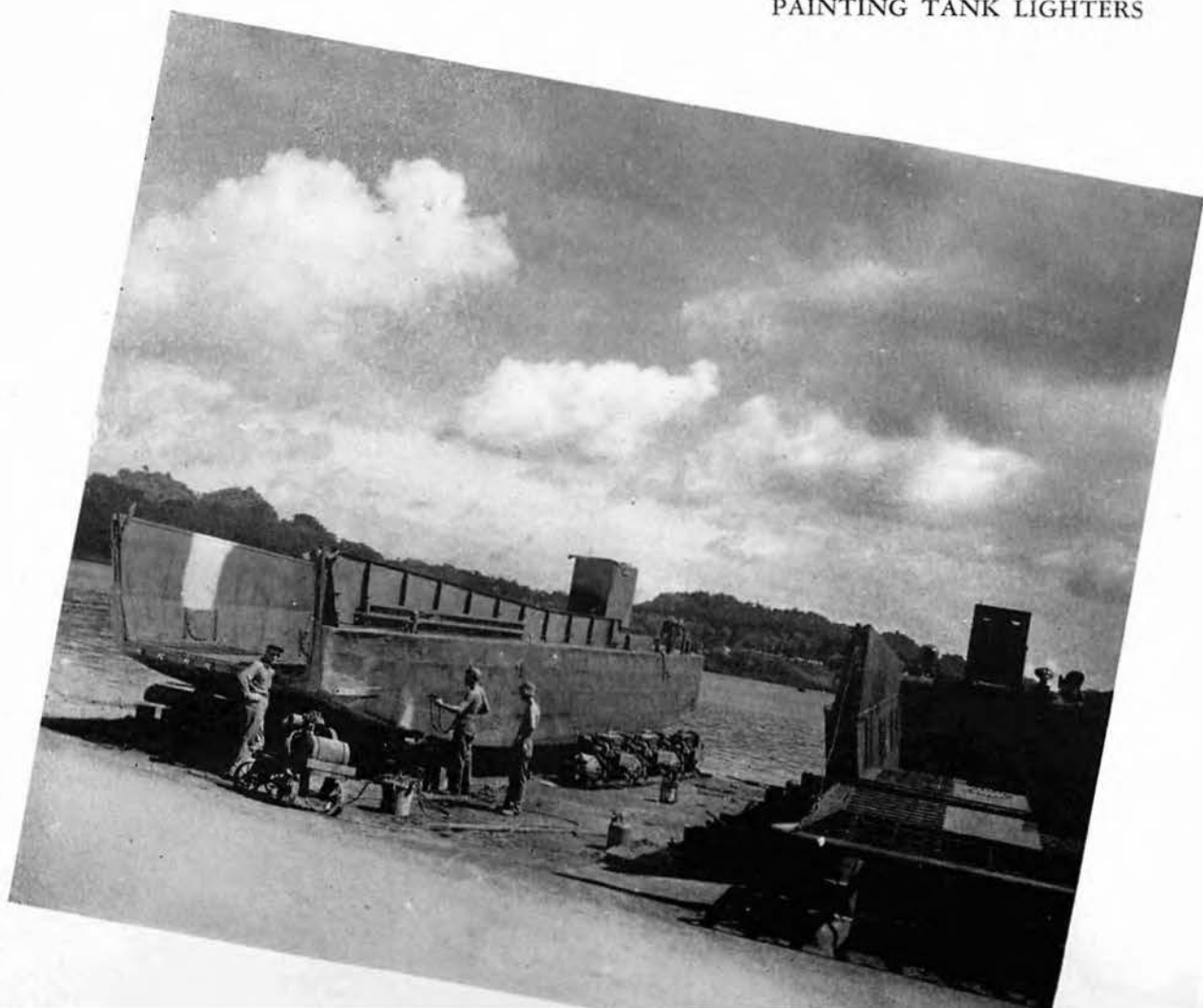


Standing: Putzke, Ayres,
Kresge

Kneeling: Lima, Camps,
Rossi

Painters...

PAINTING TANK LIGHTERS



"Blackie's"

FIX-IT-SHOP



Metal Smiths



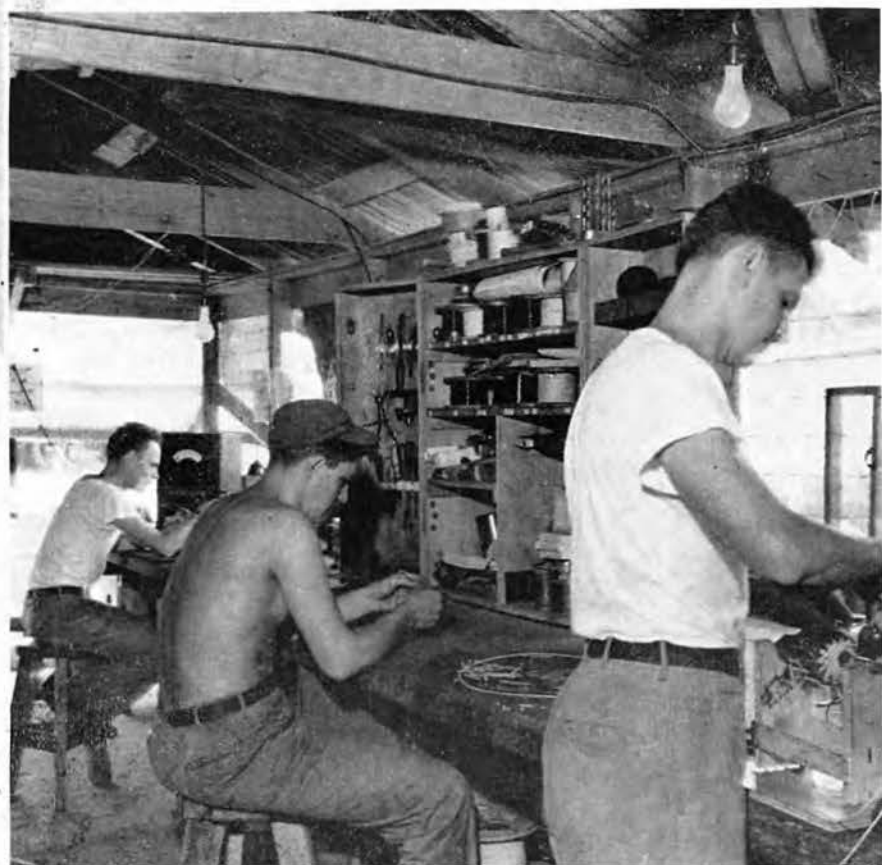
Miner, A. Haugen,
Layman, Hallgring



OUTSIDE LINE CREW
 Philliber, Hurst, Clarke, Saccone

Farineau, Payne, Kardys

"Electricians"



SHOP AND INSIDE WIRING CREW

Standing: Doran, Payne, Ekman, Greiner
Kneeling: Klett, Farineau, Kardys



INSTALLING NEW FLAG POLE
AT DOCK AREA



DOCK CREW

Standing: Zaremba, Maynard, Eckwerth, McCulley, Carney, Wyberanec, Viering, Volmert, Radovic, LaPorte

Sitting: Hallgring, Beaugez, Romanowski, Shipley, C. C. Johnson, McQuaid, Rose, Garnett, Tenney, Koch, Miner, Prina



REPAIRING MAIN WHARF



UNLOADING SUPPLY SHIP
AT MAIN WHARF



REPAIRING TANK
AND JEEP LIGHTERS

*Circle - Adm Raeder
German Navy.*



REPAIR CREW

Standing: Santen, Tuenge,
Raeder, Wehrman, Deans
Kneeling: Bell, Rogers,
Booker, A. H. Smith, Scafa

Communications...



REPAIRING LINES
IN JUNGLE



LINE CREW
READY TO GO



COMMUNICATIONS
"GANG"

Standing: Wood, Richeson,
Preuninger, Gilbert, P. F.
Sullivan, Tuttle

Kneeling: Kean, Rochester,
W. F. Kennedy, Nunnink,
Simpson, Renner

LIGHT AND POWER
MAINTENANCE CREW

Standing: Egan, L. F. Hoffman, Shrum, Patrick, J. J. Smith, Seidel

Kneeling: Stace, Schroeder, Sorenson, Cox, Belaney, Trcka, Spearow, Swierczewski, Eby, Scheffler



No. 1
LIGHT & POWER PLANT



ELECTRICAL CREW

Standing: Soloninka, Prout, Novak, Doudt, D. A. Smith, Pendleton, Trowbridge, Bennett

Kneeling: Delmore, Lee, Madsen, Roussey, Taylor, Caswell, Olson



Generators & Refrigeration...



BEFORE



AFTER

Water Department

WATER DEPARTMENT CREW

Kneeling: Blasetti, Roth, Panos, Myers, Orcutt, Stephens, Monroe, Burns, Holmes, J. A. Hoffman, Praffa

Standing: Montgomery, P. G. Riley, Mason, Mertens, Hart, Rooney, CWO Moran, Joern, Eisenberg, Doerre, Cooper, Ramsey

Top: Watkins, Danley, L. L. Thompson, Moskal, Prissella, Wackenhuth, Schubert, Morehead, J. Peterson, Herry, H. Peterson, Marsh





SEA-BEE MADE GASOLINE
TRUCK REFUELING
WATER PUMP



JAPANESE MOTOR USED
TO OPERATE SALT WATER
FIRE PUMP



FRESH WATER BARGE



"Road Gang"



LOADING CORAL



BUILDING ROADS
BEYOND HOSPITAL AREA



ROAD "GANG"

Standing: Svoboda, Benhart, Jos. J. Sullivan, Lapp, Murphy, Dorrill

Kneeling: R. A. Smith, E. Peterson, Hudson, Gragglio, Truskolaski



Headquarters Company

Standing: Robinson, Niles,
Coffey, Knight, Sovecka,
C. B. Sims, Jaeger

Sitting: Kloepfel, Flana-
gain, Yost, Musselman, W.
J. Anderson, Utley, Leggett,
Fitch, Clugh

Kneeling: Kunkle, Price,
Ditman, Patton, Ryan

Cooks and Bakers



Standing: Wagner, Rapecis,
Britton, Shackleton, Ham-
blen, Shlevin

Kneeling: Reichstein, Wil-
cox, Riczu, Cobb, Vandal,
Pflanz, Teetor



Chiefs of No. 521

Standing: Sims, Roussey,
Joern, Van Der Heyden,
Hudson, Lassiter, Tipton,
Nunnink

Sitting: Cobb, Booker,
McMillan, Rooney, Gorrell,
M c Q u a i d, Anderson,
Belaney

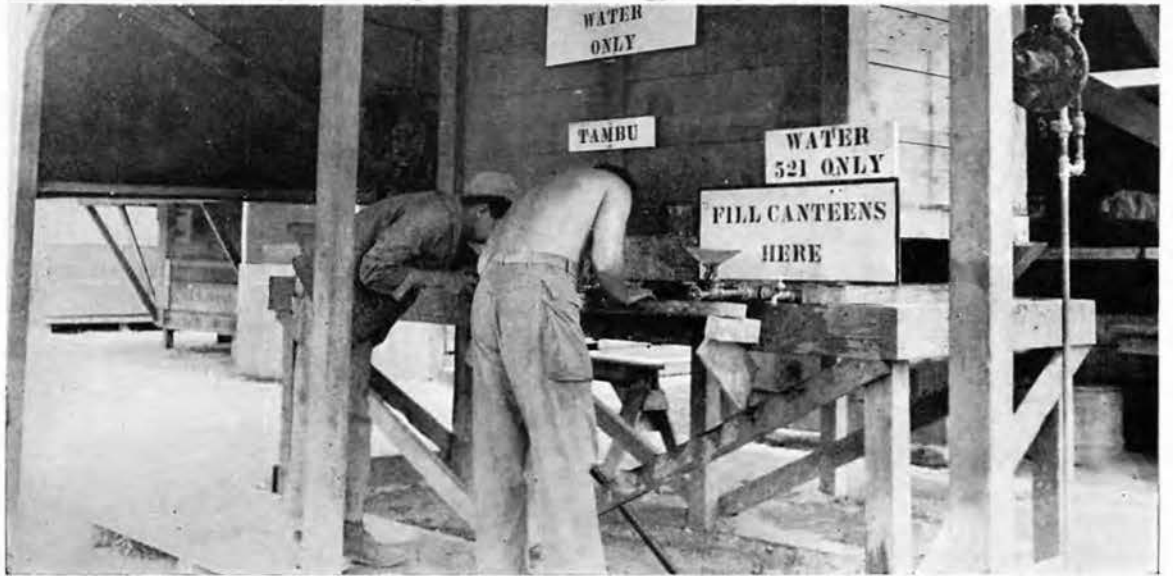
"Lassiter's" Demolition Commandos

Top: Sylvia, Racek, Holmes,
Zelinsky, Benson, Nelson,
Ramirez, Hayes

Bottom: Rubenstein, J. M.
Moran, Lassiter, Pavlick,
Blessing



HAULING ICE
TO WATER COOLERS



SEA-BEE MADE AUTOMATIC DRINKING
FOUNTAIN AND WATER COOLER

"Best Water"
on Tulagi

"Pay Day"

and to the canteen we go!





LUCKY STIFF



INSIDE OF MODER
TULAGI "BUNGALOC

"Mail Call"

News!



EDITOR'S OFFICE



REWRITE ROOM



LOOKING TOWARD
GUADALCANAL



JUNGLE SCENE
BEYOND HOSPITAL AREA

Tulagi!



The Sports of C. B. M. U. 521





On the 521 Sports Front

CBMU 521 was the athletic power on Tulagi. Proof of this is found in the fact that when the unit moved from the island it took with it the island's most sought after athletic award—the Captain's Trophy. Three Tulagi softball crowns and the Tulagi touch-football championship gave 521 more titles than any other organization could come close to garnering. The Island Softball Champs, the Globe Trotters, made a softball name that was known from one end of the Solomons to the other. The 521 gridders, managed by Rabbit Ramsey, pushed aside bigger opponents to gain the recognition of being the winners of the only Tulagi touch-football league on record. Under the mentoring of Herman Auerbach, one-time west coast boxing headliner, 521 pugilists punched their way to top awards in Island Boxing shows. Teams representing the unit took part in every athletic program held on the rock. Men who didn't take part in the events as athletes often contributed their time as officials. When All Star teams were selected 521 basketball and softball players formed the nucleus of the dream teams. 521er Ramsey was chosen manager of the Tulagi All Star softball team which established a never to be forgotten name in these islands.

CBMU 521 softball, basketball, boxing, volleyball, and touch-football squads were all top island teams but it wasn't in the field of island competition alone that the unit won acclaim as an athletic power. The unit Athletic Committee, headed by Welfare and Recreation Officer, C. R. Moran, and Athletic Director, August Van Der Heyden, sponsored two successful Inter-521 platoon basketball leagues, a platoon softball league, volleyball games, and staged two successive Fourth of July Field Days. The 521 leagues were accomplishments that no other organization on the island could hope to match. Actually, none tried. The Field Days were gigantic ventures in which every 521er had the opportunity to participate and will long be remembered as the biggest single day events ever staged on Tulagi.

In the first Inter-521 Platoon basketball league, which started in March 1944 and was played on Moran Court—built by 521 Seabees—drew much interest. Platoon 4 finally took the mythical flag by defeating Platoon 3 in the season's finale. Platoon 4 also won the second Inter-Platoon court race which ran through June of '45 until late July. While this tourney was in progress, the Platoon 4 softballers were winning the Inter-Platoon softball race. Without doubt, Platoon 4 possessed the strongest athletic teams in the unit. However, at the same time, there wasn't a platoon that didn't chase Platoon 4 to the wire in every race. Competition was always keen.

One of the most popular sports, but one which was never rolled into a league, was Volleyball. A fine court was put up next to Strader City where "pick-up" teams ran themselves ragged nightly. Several Officer vs. Chief games highlighted 521 Volleyball history and always drew droves of heckling onlookers. For Volleyball competition with other organizations, a team known as the 521 Regulars, managed by Lt. (jg) Nolan, carried the 521 colors.

For those who cared more for the lighter athletic contest such as cards, checkers, chess and other similar games as well as table-tennis, the 521 Recreation Hut was always available.

CBMU 521 was definitely the Tulagi athletic power. Its teams were great. Besides champions, they were sportsmen. The Inter-521 programs attracted island-wide attention and applause. For all of this success no single person, no single few can be accredited. But to all those who participated: the players, the scorers, referees, the Athletic Committee, who staged each 521 program, and even just plain Joe Fan belongs the rightful credit.

ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

C. R. Moran, Welfare and Recreation Officer — August Van Der Heyden, Athletic Director		
Jack Robinson	John Pavlick	Jim Moran
Pat Monroe	Willard Coffey	Aaron Shlevin
Rabbit Ramsey	John Rogers	Al Schlenger
John Burns	Norris Price	William Bell
Warren Schroeder		Harold Stoltz



Standing: Philliber, Joe Sullivan, Saccone, Grasaglio, Klett
Kneeling: Burns, Ramsey, Richeson, Monroe, C. Kennedy.

Globe Trotters

GLOBE TROTTERS — As long as softball is remembered by Tulagians, the name: 521 Globe Trotters will mean softball champions. During 521's stay on Tulagi the Globe Trotters won three island titles. In the first softball league ever organized on the rock, the GTs, then managed by Al Schlenger, went through the race undefeated. Behind the strong-arm pitching of Richeson, 521 continued to win until it had downed the powerful Base Co. 1 ten in the island's first "Little World Series", two games to one, on the Fourth of July, 1944.

The second Tulagi league opened in August of the same year and when the coral dust had settled on Hobbs Field, the Globe Trotters were again at the top of the heap in the "National League". Opposition in the "Little Worlds Series" this time was provided by the 521 Zombies, a new team, which had entered and won the "American League" title. After a thrilling series that went to four games before the GTs finally won out, the Globe Trotters hung up championship number two. That series, an all 521 affair, provided Tulagians with the best softball ever recorded on that island. All four of the championship games, including the one, 1-1, tie game, were pitchers' battles between Richeson and the Zombies' Pavlick.

The Globe Trotters took on a new manager, Rabbit Ramsey, when they entered the third Tulagi race in November 1944. There was only one league in operation this time and the Zombies and Globe Trotters came face to face as the campaign neared its close. A win for the Globe Trotters would have given 521 its third crown but Pavlick and the Zombies put the stopper on the GTs and for the first and only time 521 was without the island title. The Globe Trotters finished second in that race and the Zombies third.

In the spring of '45 another Tulagi softball loop, which proved to be the island's last, got underway. Ramsey's Globe Trotters fought down to the wire with the 1008 Seabees, another hard-hitting aggregation, for top honors. The race ended in a tie which brought about another championship series. Eventually 521 was awarded the decision which not only meant that CMBU 521 was the permanent Tulagi Softball King but it also meant that the Captain's Trophy would be permanent property of the unit.

In the early rounds of GT history too much could not be written about Richeson's fast ball pitching. It was the deciding factor in most all victories. But then the great hitting of Grasaglio, the steady fielding of shortstop Klett, the timely hitting of Benhart, the game-saving catches of shortfielder Monroe, the all around play of Saccone, Joe Sullivan, Ramsey, Philliber, Burns and all the rest can not be over looked. It was a great team with a great record. Neither will ever be forgotten.



Standing: Wren, Stanton, Schroeder, Doren, Curley, Coffey.

Kneeling: Ramirez, Ekman, Pavlick, G. E. Irwin, LaPorte

"ZOMBIES" IN ACTION
AT HOSPITAL FIELD

Zombies

ZOMBIES — While the Globe Trotters were making softball history another 521 softball team sprung up from the remaining bulk of the unit's vast softball talent. Willard Coffey, as manager, whipped the team into shape and in August 1944 the team entered the second island tournament as the Zombies. The Zombies amazed more than a few when they won the "American League" softball race to wind up in the "Little Worlds Series" with the champion Globe Trotters, as told on the adjoining page.

When the Zombies first began they were heralded by some as "521's second team" but it didn't take the Coffeymen long to disprove this opinion. The Zombies were too strong to be considered anybody's second team. As seasons passed rivalry between the two 521 teams grew. On one occasion in the summer of '45, after the teams had battled to a 3-all tie the week before, the Zombies and the Globe Trotters played a "Command Performance" for the Captain of the base. It was no wonder that when these two teams met that Hobbs Field, Tualgi's Yankee Stadium, drew its largest crowds. But the game the Zombies will remember longest took place in November 1944 when they dumped the GTs, who were battling for their third straight championship, out of the race.

BASKETBALL — The basketball history of CBMU 521 is long and varied. The hoop sport was the first in which 521 took part after "invading" tropical Tulagi. The first regular 521 quintet was formed in early March '44. Pat Monroe was the team's skipper and such men as Ekman, Pavlick, Raeder, Saccone, Ramsey, Ramirez, Stanton, Worrell, and Grasaglio made up the original line-up. The team, known as the "Regulars", entered the strong island league which was then in operation and finished third. For a new team it was a grand beginning.

In the early days, perhaps the greatest accomplishment by the Regulars was the defeat of an aircraft carrier quintet which had previously copped 39 straight games over Pacific rivals.

In the fall of '44 a new 521 court team was organized. John Pavlick took the reins as manager and formed a strong team around Ekman, Saccone, Turner, Ramirez, Paul Riley, and eventually Ross and Raeder. This gave 521 two strong fives. The Regulars and the Aces, as Pavlick's team was named, established 521 as a basketball power on Tulagi.

Basketball

"THE REGULARS"

Standing: Grasaglio, Ramsey, Worrell, Monroe

Kneeling: Raeder, Stanton, Trowbridge, Philliber



"THE ACES"

Standing: Pavlick, Raeder, Saccone

Kneeling: P. G. Riley, Ramirez, Turner, Ekman





TOUCH-FOOTBALL

Rear Row: Ramirez, Saccone, Renner, Burns, Monroe, Ramsey

Front Row: Raeder, Turner, Philliber, Grasaglio, P. G. Riley, Putzke, Ekman, Stanton

VOLLEY BALL

Standing: J. M. Moran, Lt. Nolan, Price, Monroe

Kneeling: Danley, Bell, P. G. Riley

Football and Volleyball

Once and only once was touch-football ever attempted on Tulagi. In October 1944 CBMU 521 copped the Tulagi Touch-Football Championship after turning back all island competition in a race that lasted a little more than one month. It was rough, tough and body-wearing competition.

Rabbit Ramsey managed the 521 gridders, who went through the campaign with but one setback. In what perhaps amounted to the hardest fought and most exciting clash of the race, the Ramseymen defeated the 9th Special Seabees, who, before the league was underway, were touted as the team to beat for the crown. 521 edged the 9th Special, 1 to 0, in a game that went into over-time.

But it was in the season's finale that the 521 team staged a thrilling up-hill battle to nip the strong Base Co. aggregation, 6 to 2, to cop the Tulagi Title. A long 30-yard pass, which went from Renner to Ekman, netted 521 the game's lone touchdown late in the game.

Ramsey's team was built on fleetness and deception. Ekman and Raeder, ends, were the big ground gainers, while Renner and Burns did most of the pitching. Saccone, the great little back, proved to be the island's best break-away runner. The line, formed around such men as Grasaglio, Paul Riley and Philliber, was strong both offensively and defensively. But it wasn't the individual play of one or two men that won this championship for 521; it was the all around play of the entire squad.

Field Day

READY TO GO
PREPARING FOR
TUG-O-WAR



(Native) DANCE TEAM

PIE EATING CONTEST



VOLLEY BALL GAME

REFEREE SNOWED UNDER



TUG-O-WAR

FAT MAN'S RACE



Reading Room

Information

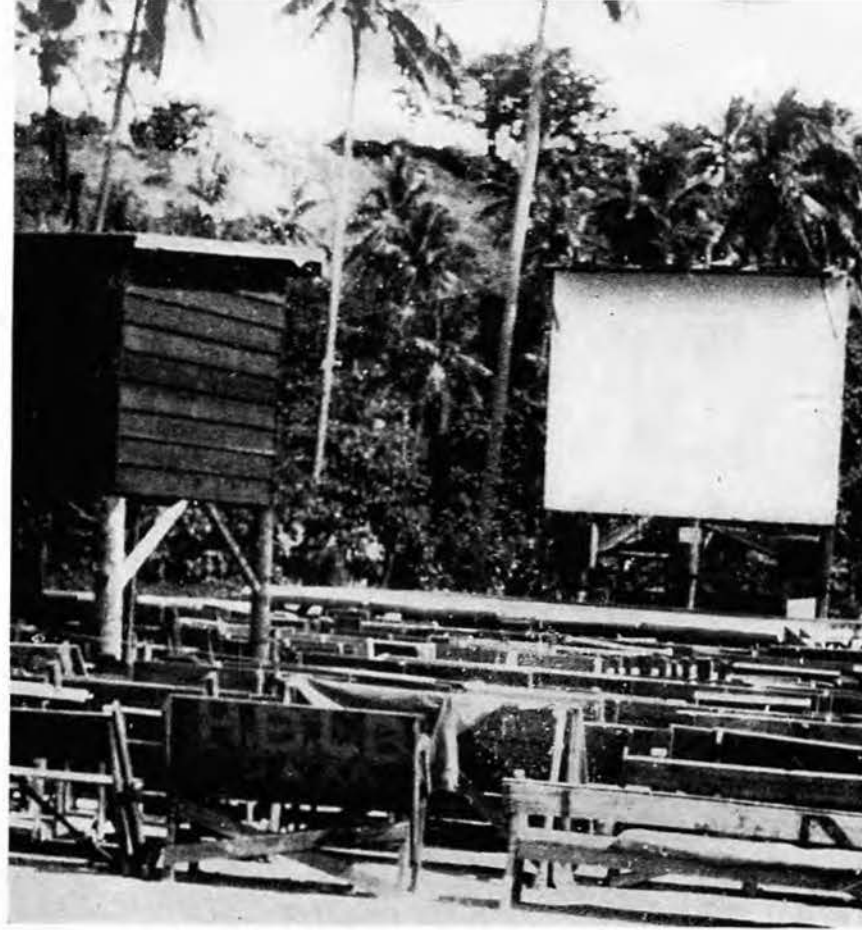
"U. S. armed forces are the best informed fighting men in the world."





Recreation C. B. M. U. 521





FIRST "MOVIE" HOUSE ON TULAGI

G.I. Shows





NEW SEA-BEE BUILT THEATRE





SKIPPER CUTTING BIRTHDAY CAKE



C. W. O. JACKSON



BEER PARTY

"First Birthday"



"SWEET ADELIN"



CELEBRATION IN QUONSET HUT

MORE "SWEET ADELINÉ"



LT. KETCHEN

"Farewell" to Chief Smith



CHIEF COBB



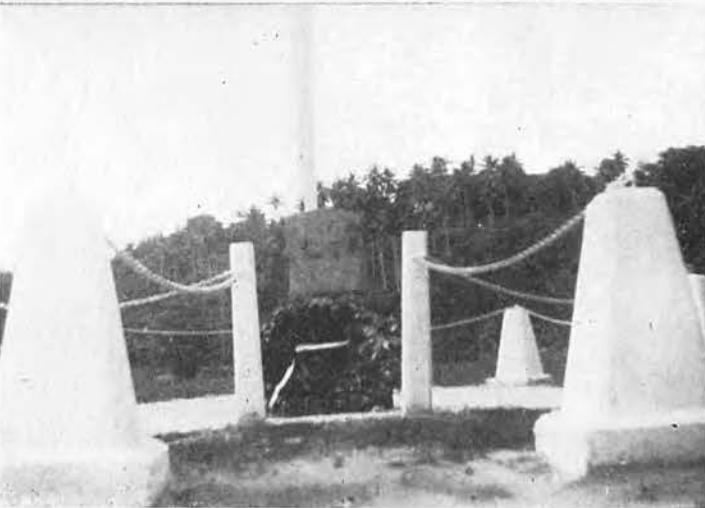
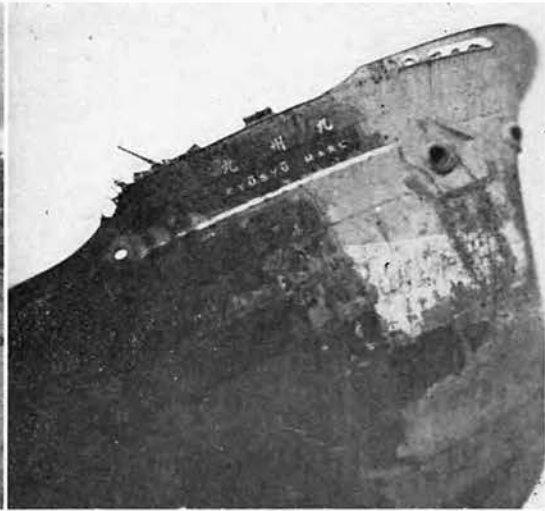
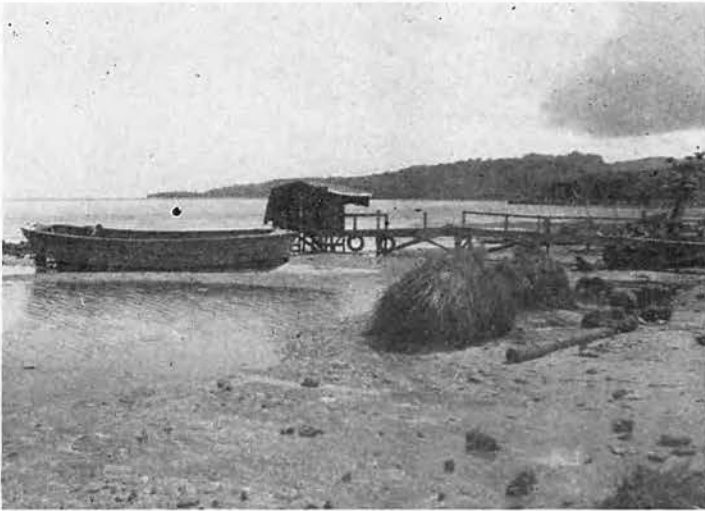
"Christmas" on Tulagi



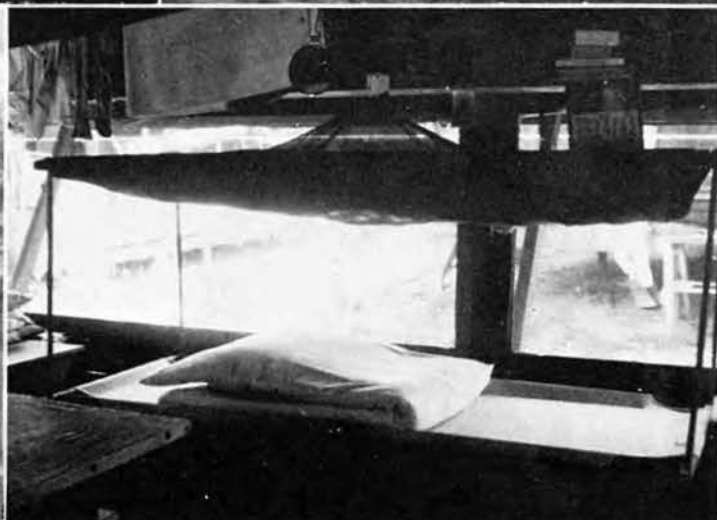
Camp Life on Tulagi



Camp Life...



on Tulagi



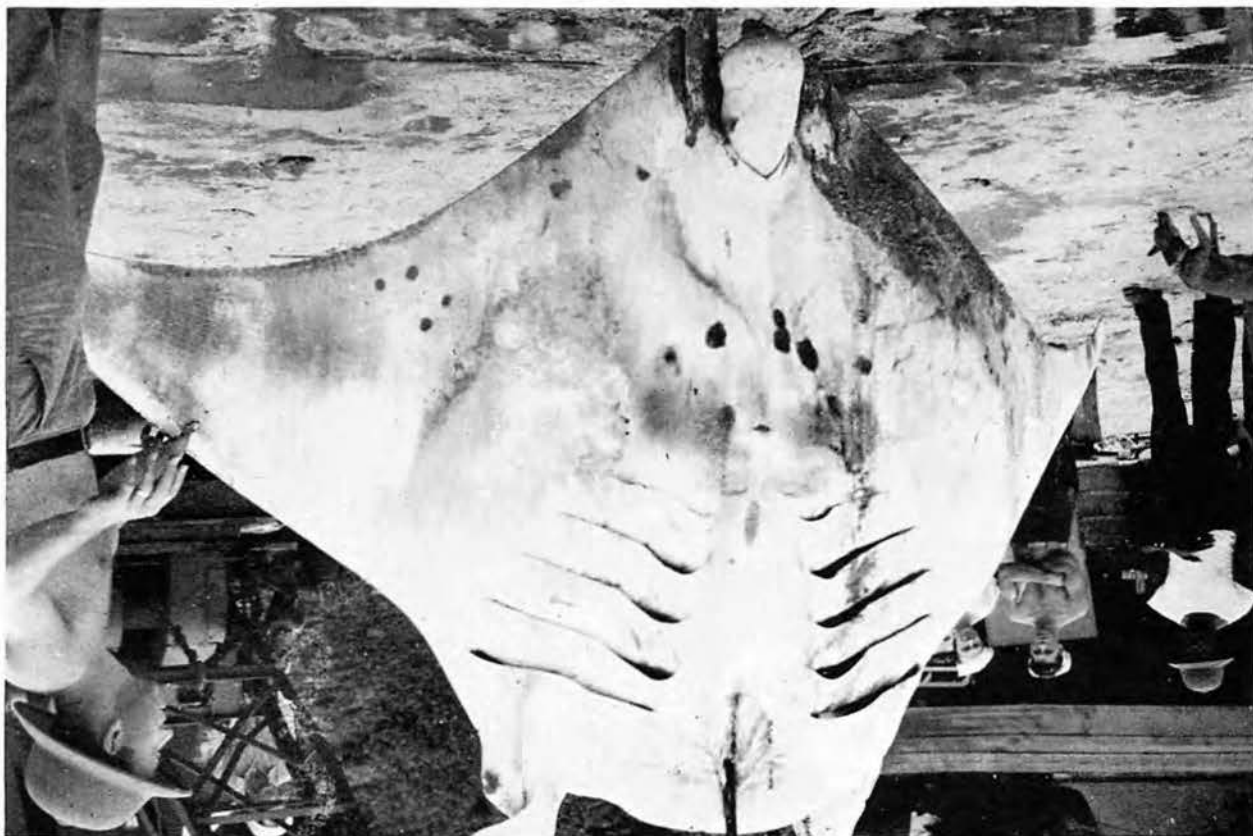
Fishing and Hunting



OTHER NATIVES OF THE LAND



GIANT DEVIL-RAY FISH





BEER PARTY



MAKING BLUE PRINTS

Camp Life...



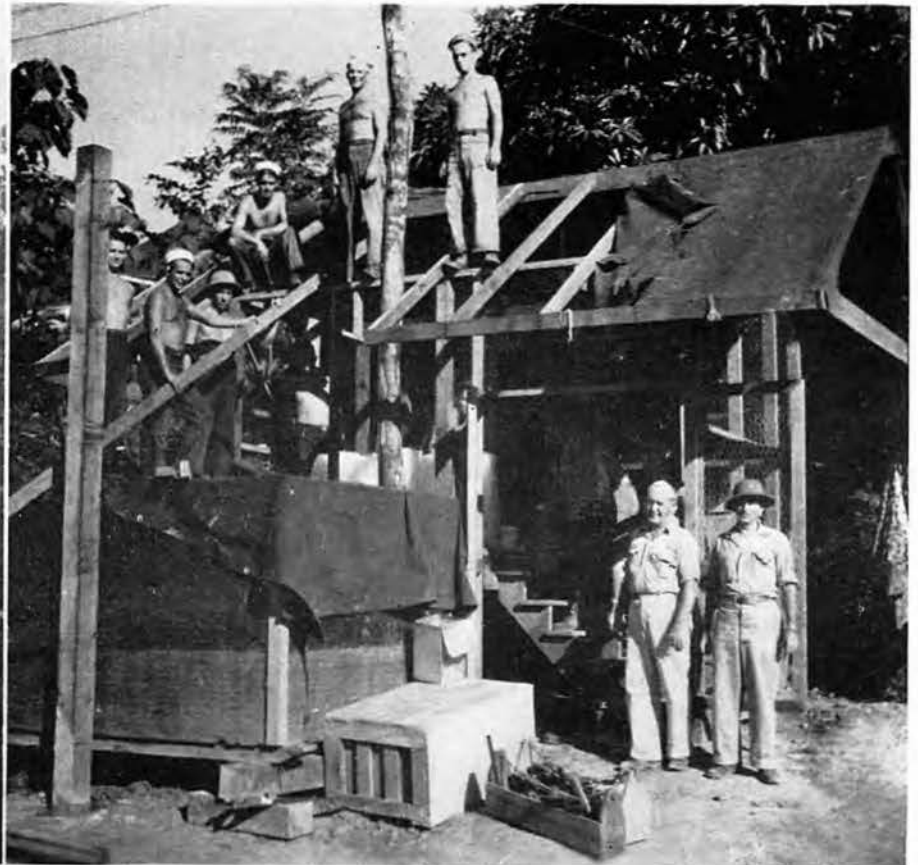
SHOE REPAIRING



MORE BEER



DYNAMITING OLD WATER DAM
FIRST SOURCE OF WATER ON ISLAND



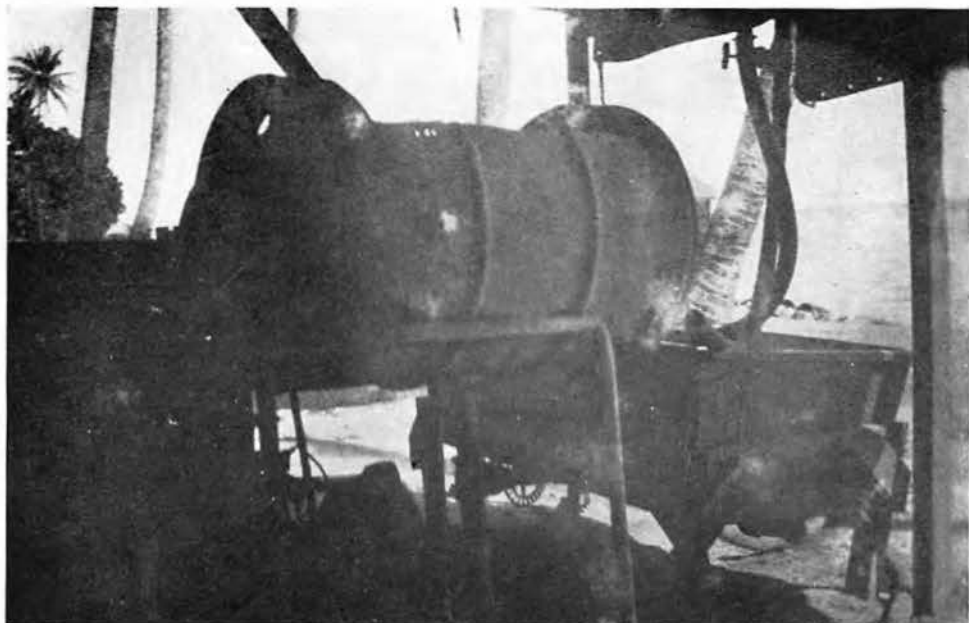
REPAIRING WIND DAMAGE TO ICE PLANT

Camp Life...



TULAGI'S FIRE DEPARTMENT

SEA-BEE MADE
WASHING MACHINE



CHIEF JOERN, FIRE PUMPER
AND FIRE TRUCK



ABOUT TO DYNAMITE
WATER DAM





BELL BEING PLACED INTO POSITION



B. A. HOLMES ALL DRESSED UP

Deep Sea Diving...

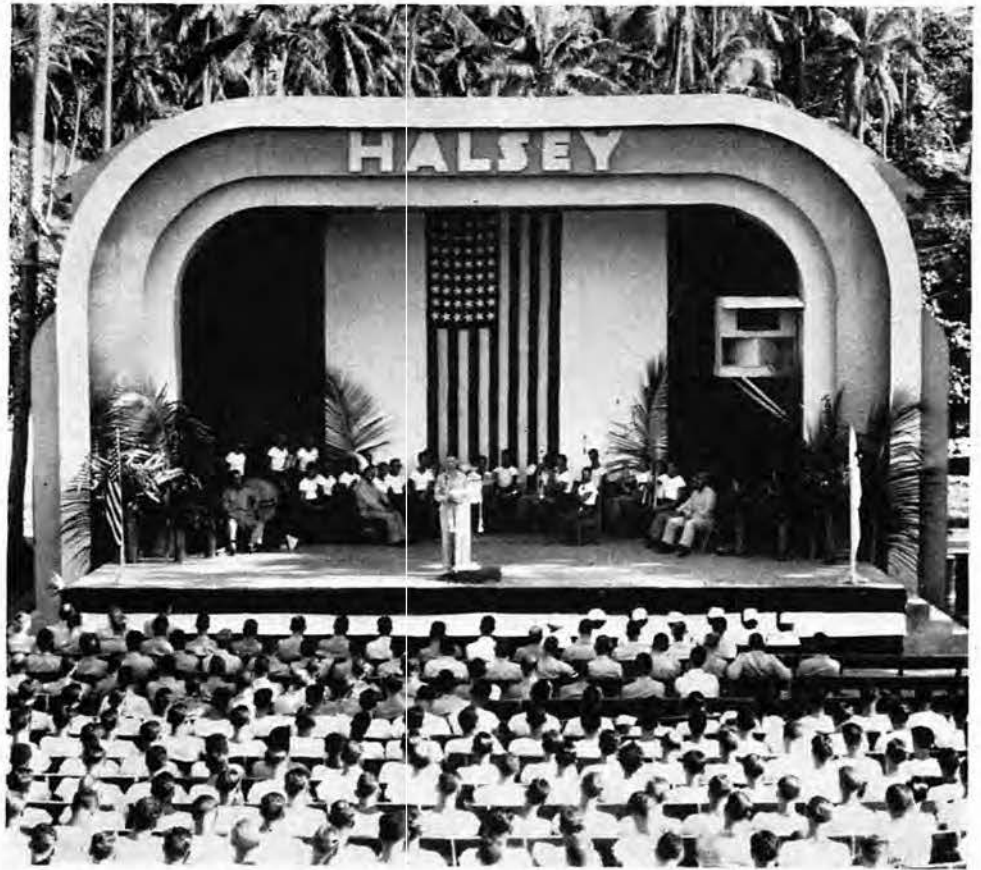
Harbor Shots



N. W. HAUGEN ON BIG CRANE

LOOKING UP TO
NEW ZEALAND
OFFICERS' QUARTERS





Memorial Services...

for the...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

On Sunday morning, April 15, 1945, at 08:00 Tulagi time, the personnel gathered in solemn tribute to it's famous Commander-in-chief, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who, after a very stormy yet successful career as President of The United States, passed away on April 12, 1945. At this gathering an appropriate memorial service was held in memory of him, to whom the sea and it's traditions were held in very high regard as well as being very near and dear to his heart.



Natives are Friendly...



The Natives on Tulagi

LEARNING that we were stationed on a glamorous South Sea island, the folks at home pictured us as lolling on a coral beach in the shade of a stately palm tree and the arms of a wench resembling Dottie Lamour. All of which proves that the folks at home had been seeing too many movies.

Coral will wear out a pair of GI shoes in a month and is an excellent material for road building. Why lie in it? A palm tree gives no shade—Florida and California chambers of commerce to the contrary — and the natives if clothed — and shod — could walk down the street of any U. S. Harlem entirely unnoticed except, perhaps, for their ugliness.

Natives of the Solomons are members of the Melanesian race, are darker and less creative than the famous Polynesians. Missionaries of all faiths have been active in the islands with the result that the "Joes" have embraced Christianity quite extensively. Other aspects of civilization, however, have largely passed them by. Their needs are few and their wants simple. Only a generation ago they were head-hunters. With the missionaries have come operators of coconut plantations and Joe has furnished a large amount of the labor requisite to such enterprizes.

In the main these "savages" are content to sit back peaceably while the civilized races conduct the greatest blood-letting in human history.





THIS AIN'T CORNSILK!

BABY'S BATH TIME

CHAPEL ON TULAGI

NATIVE FAMILY

ANOTHER FAMILY GROUP



***The Natives
on Tulagi***





***The Natives
are
Sea-Faring***





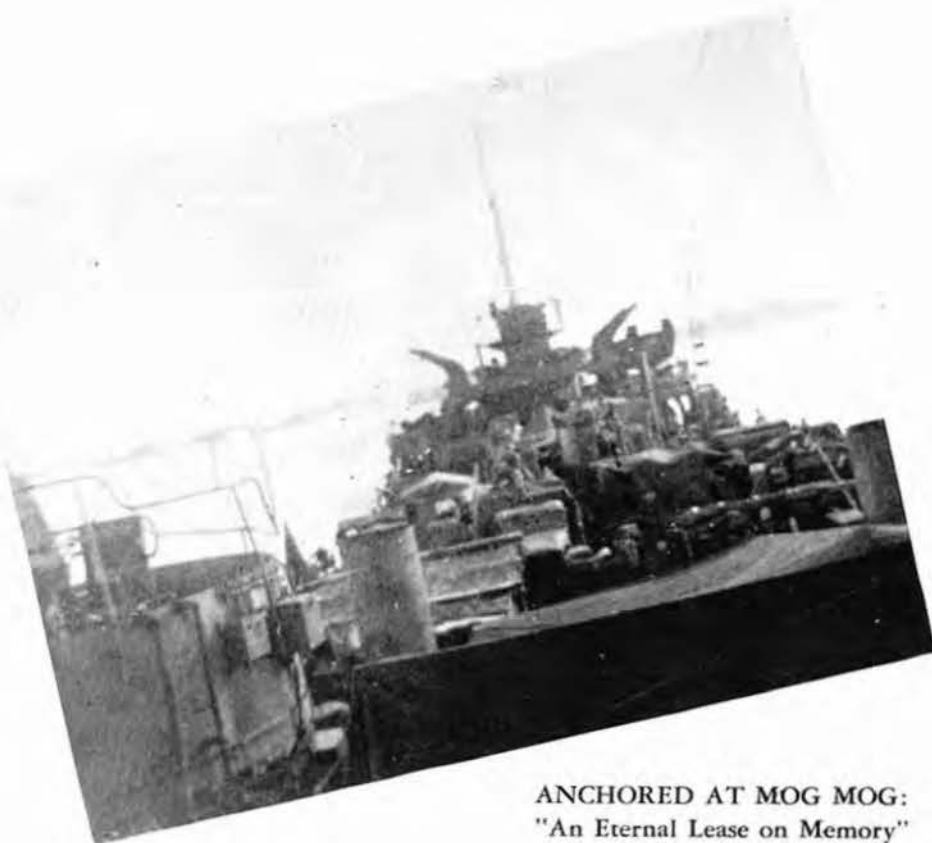
End of Duty on Tulagi

THROUGH THIS CUT PASS THE MOST EAGER SEABEES IN THE WORLD

. . . It leads to the docks and to tall ships that sail away



After Tulagi



ANCHORED AT MOG MOG:
"An Eternal Lease on Memory"

After Tulagi

Originally, the covers of this book were to close here and end the story of CBMU 521. But the months that followed and the experiences encountered by the unit brought about a final conclusion much too worthy of the Seabees to be passed up. Briefly, the next pages bring forth that conclusion.

Half of CBMU 521's oldest wish—to get off Tulagi—became a reality on August 14, 1945 when all hands climbed aboard the Coast Guard LST 782, with Lt. A. P. Ketchen in command, Lt. (jg) Tom E. Mings, Executive Officer and Ensign Vic Gretzinger and Walter A. Woodworth. At 1600 the ship pulled into the stream and at last all that remained of 521 on Tulagi was its fine record of achievement. It was off to the then unknown destination of Okinawa and the future's open log lay open to be written. Few men watched their island home of 21 months fade into darkness as the big landing ship slipped out of Tulagi Bay at 0100 the next morning for the Russell Islands.

The first official flash of Japan's unconditional surrender reached the unit shortly after anchoring at the Russells, the morning of August 15. On the still, tepid waters of the Russell Bay, the great news was received almost in quiet. Little outward emotion was shown, save perhaps for a cheer or three. Men's thoughts snapped to home and they wondered whether or not V-J Day would bring a change in sailing orders.

Orders were not changed and on August 19th the eight day journey to Ulithi began. Though days and nights were as endless as any Pacific cruise, the voyage wasn't completely without incident. Off New Guinea one night (August 21st) before sunset a sudden break from the daily monotony was encountered. The ship broke convoy with the other LST's, which had joined the convoy at the Russells, and made a decided swing to the starboard. All hands wondered what was in the making. Top-side, men scrambled for front row seats atop cranes, trucks, and 521-made living quarters on the main deck. (Dead Seat Smith, in true 521 wit: "We are finally going to Frisco!") The reason for this sudden change in course was soon discovered. A speck spotted on the horizon turned out to be a single, empty life raft. The alert was over but the feeling that real tragedy rode with the raft which swept past the ship in the dying light of sunset enveloped crew and troops as the convoy was joined.

Seven pure, Tulagi breed dogs had been brought aboard, including one of Strader City's most loved ladies, "Audrey." And 521's mascot mother pup added five more K-9 cuties to the critical score at noon on August 21st. "Audrey's" life as a mother was short-lived, however, and as the strong Western Caroline sun scorched the decks nine days later she was buried at sea after suffering several days of sickness.

Twenty-three days were spent anchored at Ulithi after putting in on August 27th. Mog Mog, poorly polished by LIFE as a "Pacific Paradise" and boldly boasted by the Navy as a Fleet Recreation Island, will be remembered by 521ers long after Tulagi is forgotten which should give the coral atoll an eternal lease on memory. One platoon a day had liberty on Mog Mog and two cans of warm beer with 20,000 other would-be pleasure seekers. One day was enough for most liberty hounds but there were some who took the torture twice.

For all Mog Mog was, one notable event places the atoll on the bright side of the unit's history. It was on one of Mog Mog's four softball fields that the 521 softball team climaxed its great career. A win over the Coast Guard crew put the final out in the 521 score book.

During the stay at Ulithi, the Navy discharge point system was announced and before weighing anchor for Okinawa 60 smiling Seabees left the unit for Guam and eventual discharge. The original outfit had begun to break up.

A small—small in comparison with big winds to come—typhoon held up sailing the second week in September but on September 19th it was off to Okinawa.

CMBU 521's first look at Okinawa came five days later, on September 24th, when the LST dropped hook off Naha City. The next morning orders came to sail around Okinawa's southern tip and to anchor in Buckner Bay. That night the biggest event of the cruise took place when the first mail in some forty days was brought aboard marked for CBMU 521.

Docking at Baton Ko on September 27th, unloading began. It was while the unloading of supplies and equipment was going on that 521ers saw for the first time a sample of what tortures Japan wrought upon its helpless prisoners of war. While equipment was rolling out of the LST's giant jaws on one side of a pontoon causeway, a hospital ship unloaded several hundred Australian and New Zealand POWs just released from Jap prison camps across the way. It was at dusk on September 28th when landing barges overloaded with



Lt. A. P. KETCHEN
Officer in Charge



"THE L.S.T. DROPPED HOOK OFF NAHA CITY"

stretcher cases began the long shuttle from the hospital ship to ambulances waiting on the causeway. The process was slow, difficult for the corpsmen who were handling the patients, and greatly uncomfortable for the distorted sick men too weak to move their skeleton-like bodies. A good number of 521ers were quick to observe this and jumped in to help, ala Red Cross, USO, and Information Please. For many of the evacuated prisoners, the sight of landing barges, LSTs, jeeps, and even Seabees was a new experience. Those strong enough could not ask enough questions. They all received answers, swapping answers for the invariable question: what did they do to you?

Irony poked its sordid head into the not pleasant picture before all of the evacuees could be sped to base hospitals. Aboard another ship docked along side the LST, the motion picture, *Heavenly Body*, was being shown while the horrible reminders of Jap torture were being stretchered into ambulances.

Forty-four days after leaving Tulagi, on August 29th, the unit disembarked from the LST and moved into the 86 CB camp. The camp, overlooking Buckner Bay, proved to be one of the most advanced camp sites on Okinawa. A large chow hall and all ready erected tents made 521's second "beach head" easy. By the first of the new month life and work went on much like it had on Tulagi. That was until the disastrous typhoon of November 9th struck and levelled Okinawa. Clocking at 175 miles per hour, the typhoon more than made up for any action some 521ers long felt they had missed. Nature's typhoon rated a very close second to the U. S.'s atomic bomb.

The storm began at dawn and increased in velocity by the hour, reaching its peak in mid-afternoon. By noon, long chunks of sheet-iron from the nearby 21st CB mess hall were raining down on the camp area like so many feathers in a fan. Tents were taking off and the air was filled with every kind of debris. To face the storm was to be blinded. To stand on one's feet was impossible.

Lt. Ketchen had ordered the tent area evacuated at noon and men found what protection from the storm they could in various places. The majority made a close by "Gook" village their port in the storm. Some grouped in caves; others in cranes and similar heavy equipment. Still others, less fortunate, huddled in the open until dawn. Proving that Seabees will do anything, two men, driven by the wet and cold, sought shelter in a Jap Tomb. After many skeletons had been tossed out, the tomb made a comparably comfortable escape.



No. 521's OKINAWA HOME
OVERLOOKING
BUCKNER BAY

Luckily only two 521 men—Beaugez and Marsh—were injured. Damage to the camp, however, was to the other extreme. Only one building stood the morning after the big blow and that was in sore need of repair. By night sufficient tents had been put up to shelter all 521 personnel but many men slept in wet clothes. Breakfast, dinner, and supper for the next week came out of K and C ration cans while a new chow hall was being constructed.

It was several weeks before life resumed its normal Seabee-Okinawa pace but on November 21st twelve more men went home on points. Lt. Ketchen, last of the unit's original officers and Officer in Charge, was detached the next day and left for overseas. Lt. (jg) Mings became acting Officer in Charge. By month's end thirty 41 point men had departed for home, lowering the compliment to 109 men and three officers.



**"GOOKS" OKINAWA NATIVES MARCH TO
WORK LIKE TULAGI "JOES"**

November 6th, like November 11th, will be a day which the 109 men will never forget. The Navy figured that 5 percent of the personnel could be "released" for leave and rehabilitation. A lottery was held to choose the lucky six. In alphabetical order the men, gambling for the seemingly biggest stakes of their lives, pulled capsules from a container. Utley, Klett, Shipley, Sorenson, Clugh, and Egan drew the lucky "yes" capsules. Along with ten 41-point men, they received their Stateside orders that day.

Here, the final period is placed on 521 history. On November 7th, the remaining 94 men were transferred into the 21st NCB, then in the process of inactivation. The 94 men would soon be homeward bound, too. But the transfer brought forth an end to CBMU 521 worthy of any Seabee confusion, rather conclusion, on record. In the last days, the 94 men lived with the 86 Seabees, worked for the 9th Seabees, belonged to the 21st battalion, and answered to four CBMU 521 officers.



**NATURES TYPHOON RATED A VERY CLOSE
SECOND TO U. S. ATOMIC BOMB**

**AT YONTAN 521'ERS SAW THEIR
FIRST B-29**



This book, published at no cost to the Government, has been prepared by the following committee:

G. V. BLESSING	J. M. MORAN
R. H. HADLEY	H. B. NILES
A. JENSEN	M. M. RADOVIC
C. C. JOHNSON	J. W. ROBINSON
C. R. MORAN	A. VAN DER HEYDEN

Etching by DON BIRREN

Surplus funds have been contributed to Navy Relief.

