

SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

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

ISSUE NO. 11

15 FEBRUARY 1944

THE CHIEF STEPS UP

New recognition for the Seabees came this month with the promotion of their founder, Ben Moreell, to the rank of Vice Admiral. At 51, he thereby becomes the youngest vice admiral in the Navy, as well as the first Civil Engineer Corps officer and the first Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks to hold this rank.

Now on an inspection tour of the Pacific bases, Vice Admiral Moreell accompanied a task force during the invasion of the Marshall islands and witnessed how well Seabees perform under fire.

Born in Salt Lake City in 1892, Vice Admiral Moreell was taken to St. Louis at the age of 5. There he attended public schools and was graduated from Washington University where he was captain of the track team and a star fullback on the football team. Commissioned in the navy in 1917 after a competitive examination, he rose steadily to the post of Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to which he was appointed on December 1, 1937.

---0---

SEABEES IN MARSHALLS RIVET JAPS WITH TOMMY GUNS

In the thick of the Marshalls fighting, a fanatical Jap dashed from a blockhouse with a grenade in his fist, making for an ammunition line the Seabees were operating. Before he could accomplish his deadly mission, wirelessly reported Robert Trumbull to the "New York Times", a Seabee guard mowed the Japanese down with a tommy gun and, as the guard put it, "the grenade thereupon blew him to hell."

The Seabees had landed earlier, as part of the third wave, while the first wave of assault Marines was still pinned on the beach. The Fighter-Builders had been unloading supplies under fire while splashing in the bullet-spattered surf.

When, three hours after the first assault, the combat correspondent's landing boat had approached the beach of Namur Island, the battle had been at its peak. Vicious machine gun and rifle fire, punctuated by the tremendous explosion of pillboxes being blown up, made his ears ache, said Trumbull.

As the reporter and part of an advance signal company poured out of the landing craft, a Seabee lieutenant, head of a pioneer Seabee shore party, directed them into a deep tank trap, originally built by the Japs for another purpose, but now being used by the Seabees as a de luxe fox hole.

"Keep your head down," the Civil Engineer Corps officer advised, "the

place is alive with snipers."

The trench in which the Seabees and the newcomers were huddled was hot and smokey, reported the "Times" correspondent, and the noise of battle made conversation difficult.

While intermittent rain wetted their sandy beds, he and the Seabees spent a sleepless night. Almost continual fire lighted the sky, with tracers occasionally arching over the trench to the sea, where shore parties worked night long, regardless.

They kept their sentries quiet, ordering them to "knock off firing until you see Japs to shoot at".

Making his way over to Roi the following morning, the reporter inspected the Jap-built runways which earlier had been pock-marked to uselessness by American air and naval fire. Returning to his tank-trap "home" on Namur, he found his Seabee hosts, this group mostly from the Bronx, relaxing after the earlier excitement and having open house with captured Japanese beer.

"And very good it was," added Trumbull.

While snipers were still all too numerous, (one Japanese machine gunner had hidden high in the twisted steel frame work of a ruined hangar), the Seabees plunged into the vital job of rebuilding Roi's blasted airfield.

They were later reported to be working at a pace so rapid that the three runways, one 4,300 feet long and 265 feet wide, the others each 3,600 by 195, were expected to be ready for American fighters and bombers smashing at the important enemy bases of Ponape and Truk, Japan's Pearl Harbor, only a few days after the battle for Kwajalein Atoll had ended.

---0---

"NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE TO SEABEES," SAYS MARINE GENERAL

Major General Allen H. Turnage, who led the Marines' invasion of Bougainville, rode in a jeep to within a stone's throw of the front lines and credited the feat to the "simply astonishing" construction accomplishments of the Seabees, aided by Marine engineers, according to Capt. Patrick O'Sheel, USMC, writing from Bougainville.

"It's unbelievable," the General said, "this was a little jungle trail a week ago and tough going on foot. You wouldn't have thought it possible to ride in here this way."

At least a dozen times during the trip General Turnage stopped for a personal chat with sweating cat-skinners, bulldozer operators, and other Naval Construction men. "You're doing a wonderful job," he told them.

As the General jolted over the corduroy road which was being used while a permanent highway was under construction he commented, "You can't get through without corduroy. And just about the time it begins to go to pieces and

you wonder about your supply line breaking down, the Seabees open up a big new road and save the day.

"Nothing is impossible to the Seabees," he continued, "Men coming down off the front just aren't going to believe their eyes."

----0----

ADMIRAL COMBS LAUDS ROAD BUILDING ABILITY OF ELEVENTH REGIMENT

Rear Admiral Lewis B. Combs, USN, Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, extended his "personal compliments" to the men of the Eleventh Construction Regiment for the many difficult and unusual road engineering problems they have surmounted in the construction of a mountain road.

In a letter to Lt. Comdr. J. S. Horder, CEC, USNR, Executive Officer of the Regiment, Admiral Combs stated:

"This is an engineering as well as a construction project of such character and scope that any organization can well be proud of its accomplishment."

The project was probably the most tremendous undertaking in mountain road-building in the history of the island, involving the removal of nearly 1,000,000 cubic yards of earth, deep cuts through rock formations, clearing and grubbing on mountainous terrain--all performed at great risk by the Seabees.

Nearly one and one-half miles of the seven mile road was blasted out of solid rock. Some idea of the amount of blasting required was furnished by the chief in charge of a blasting gang who reported that 5,500 pounds of dynamite are used each week.

----0----

SEABEES FIVE TIMES AS FAST AS JAPS, SAYS O-in-C

The Seabees can build and repair airfields at least five times as fast as the Japs in the opinion of the Officer-in-Charge of the veteran Naval Construction Battalion which completed and maintained Henderson Field on Guadalcanal and built other air strips needed for the opening of our South Pacific offensive.

Comdr. Joseph P. Blundon, (CEC) USNR, who recently returned from the Pacific theater, is convinced that American superiority in base construction will prove to be one of the vital factors in eventual victory.

"Speed is the essence of modern warfare," he declared, "and I speak conservatively when I say that our Seabees can build more in a week than the Japs can in a month. Furthermore, our men can build airfields on difficult terrain, whereas the Japs, using slow hand labor, are limited to easily converted sites such as cocoanut groves."

Comdr. Blundon points out that the Japs are constructing their fields principally with hand labor and without the use of such modern equipment as carry-alls, power shovels, or dump trucks.

"One Seabee operating a 12 cubic yard carry-all can move as much dirt in a day as 150 Japanese laborers," he said. "We found at Guadalcanal that 100 Seabees could completely repair the damage of a 500 pound bomb hit on an air strip in 40 minutes, including the replacing of the steel mesh mat. The same repair job would take the Japs more than three hours and then they would only have filled the hole with dirt.

No evidence has been found, he said, that the Japs make use of such time savers as compressors or pneumatic hammers. Even their hand tools -- shovels and picks -- are only two-thirds the size of those the Seabees use, reflecting he believes, the Jap's lack of physical strength.

The Seabee commander described the Japanese electrical installations as "very good."

"We also found their surveying instruments very good, and at first we used them almost entirely on Guadalcanal," said Comdr. Blundon. "For that matter, we made use of a good deal of other Jap construction equipment, such as it was. During those first days of finishing Henderson field, it represented about all we had. We were also lucky to find 18,000 feet of pipe and 10,000 barrels of cement."

The Jap equipment and supplies were satisfactory only as make-shifts, however, and real construction speed was not achieved until the Seabees' own equipment was brought in.

"Just how important speed in construction is can best be understood in terms of its support to offensive action," said Comdr. Blundon. "With the Seabees and the Marine Aviation Engineers constructing airfields in record time coupled with the Jap's slowness in repairing the damage our planes dump on their fields, it is obvious how we have been able to move in on them and how we will continue to do so."

---0---

SEABEES SAWED OFF HILL TOP TO READY MUNDA AIRSTRIP

In one of his last columns, Raymond Clapper, the famous correspondent recently killed over the Marshalls, wirelessly described this description of what the Seabees had done at Munda:

"We got in here early last August. Three days later the Seabees moved in with bulldozers and dynamite to remove cocoon groves and saw off the top of a hill, and in 56 hours we were using an airstrip. The Japs' strip here, as everywhere else, was too small. It was 3700 feet long. We built one 8000 feet long and three times as wide as the Japs'.

"Now, after five months, Munda has a huge coral-surfaced airfield and hard-surfaced roads, and the hills are covered with installations and supplies, making a strong forward base out of this place."

The conditions under which the Seabees worked were extremely difficult. Clapper wrote, "Admiral Nimitz was understating it when he said this was

the worst terrain he had ever seen. It is surely the worst he ever will see. One Marine colonel said the jungle was so dense he never saw the sun for days at a time.

"The Japs had only narrow roads or trails. All their work was done by hand. They had no heavy road-building machinery such as we bring in everywhere out here. We went into jungle this way -- patrols first, bulldozers next, followed by jeeps and artillery."

----0----

NO MATTER HOW IT'S SLICED

John E. Connolly, SC1c, has taken time out from his South Pacific galley to suggest ten ways of serving canned beef.

From his kitchen the mates get "corned willie" plain -- cold or hot; with sauce, with potatoes, with cracker crumbs, as patties, stew, meat pie, with egg, as hash, and creamed.

"But," sighs the Seabee, "the boys still know it's "corned willie"!"

----0----

LEFT HOLDING THE BAG?

Newly-sworn-in Seabee Charles E. Prince decided he needed a bag to take with him to "Island X". He bought a battered suitcase at an auction. Opening it, he found \$8,536 in gold, two diamonds, and some other trinkets.

Before he could celebrate, officials impounded the gold on grounds it was stored in 1935, a year after the government called in all bulk gold. It may be condemned.

When he learned what the situation was, Prince said, "... (censored)".

---0---

HARD TO HIT

A Seabee battalion making the rounds of the islands in the South Pacific reports they're all alike --- wherever they go, they get bombed. The battalion has come through more than fifty attacks in the Coral Sea, Guadalcanal, Bonika, the Russell Islands, Segi Point, and Munda without experiencing a single casualty.

----0----

THE JAPS CALLED IT VULGAR

Never intended for publication, a letter written friends by Lt. (jg) C. J. Glaze, of the Sixth Special battalion, offers a vivid story of Seabee speed and efficiency on "Island X".

"Before our landing at the island," Lt. Glaze writes, "no LST had been completely discharged in the five hours they were allowed on the beach. We organized and loaded the one we came up on in our own fashion. The threat and penalty that hung over us was the loss of our own equipment and supplies if the ship had to pull off the beach before all our gear was ashore.

"Well," he continued, "the log of that LST shows that we completely discharged her in one hour and 55 minutes and was off the beach before the dive bombers appeared.....our record still stands."

Lt. Glaze said that since the original landing, the Seabees have been competing with other outfits in discharging both LST's and LCT's. "To date," he wrote, "their fastest time is an hour and forty minutes behind our slowest, which shows what organized and experienced men can do.

In describing the activities of the regular construction battalions, the lieutenant said that in less than 60 days on "Island X", the Seabees built more than 15 miles of road, a fighter strip completed, another almost completed, and a bomber strip well under way. In addition they built landing ramps, gun positions, water systems, fortifications and entrenchments. He pointed out that some of the road work extended beyond the front lines.

"The Japs," he concluded, "think we are not fighting fair and all this is just a vulgar display of material."

----0----

HOW TO GET LOTS OF MAIL

One man of every four in the 78th Battalion is taking a correspondence course offered by the Military Institute.

----0----

SEABEE FATHER AND SON BOTH IN RENDOVA ATTACK

How he and his son, members of the same Seabee battalion, stormed ashore at Rendova under enemy fire was related in a newspaper interview by Earl F. Turner, CM1c, of Nashville, Tenn. now at the Memphis Naval Hospital for treatment.

"We went in under fire from machine guns and larger pieces," said Turner, "but for every man in my outfit who became a casualty, at least ten Japs were killed."

His first night on the island, Turner recalled, he slept in a foxhole within 100 yards of the Jap lines.

The 42-year-old Seabee said that his unit had been stationed on Guadalcanal before the drive on Rendova and that the commanding officer had told the men that action would be "pretty hot" and if anyone felt unable to go through with it he could step out before the expedition got under way.

"Not a man left," Turner added proudly.

The Seabee wasn't wounded until after he had been on Rendova for several days. "A Jap bomb finally caught up with me," he said, "It was only a near miss, but the concussion blew me into the air. I came down with torn muscles in my back and a pair of punctured eardrums."

Turner's son, John, 19, received a medical discharge on November 19 after participating in action at Munda and on another small island in the New Georgia group as well as on Rendova. The younger member of the Seabees' fighting father-and-son team said he went through 76 Jap air raids in a 27-day period on Rendova.

----0----

SO SOLLY! JAP RADIO MAKE MISTAKE

Back in 1942, the cruiser Minneapolis, hit by torpedoes and shells from enemy warships and fire-ravaged from waterline to superstructure, limped into Tulagi after an engagement with superior enemy forces north of the Solomon Islands.

So badly damaged was the cruiser that the Japanese radio reported her sunk in the action. But at Tulagi, Seabees joined with her crew in making the vessel seaworthy for the long trip to Mare Island Navy Yard where repairs were completed, the Associated Press reports.

Today the Minneapolis is back in action, combing the Pacific to prove to the Japs that reports of her death were slightly exaggerated.

----0----

ORCHIDS FOR MAISIE

"May we have our check, please?"

Arnold Barill, William Campbell, John Smith and James Brennen, all of the 21st Special, were on leave from Camp Peary and enroute to Buffalo, N.Y., accompanied by Mrs. Barill and Mrs. Campbell. They had just finished an excellent lunch, the best meal they'd had on the trip, at Maisie Smith's diner in Covington, Pa.

"Let's see now," calculated the pleasant-faced proprietress, "four Seabees and two ladies. Dinner's \$1.25. Well, I guess that will be \$2.50."

"Six times \$1.25 is \$7.50 the way I figure," puzzled one of the Navy men.

"Not when four of my guests are Seabees," replied Maisie, "I haven't accepted payment for a meal from a serviceman since Pearl Harbor."

Maisie, the Seabees salute you!

----0----

THE WILL TO WIN

The mission of the 87th Battalion, when it arrived at "Island X", was to build a vitally needed airfield.

Landing, the Seabees found enemy snipers still active. The airfield site was in jungle so dense that not even foot trails had existed before. Living conditions were primitive. And, in the midst of the rainy season, the island was one vast quagmire.

Under conditions like these, construction might understandably be delayed. Instead the Seabees completed the field, which boasts a runway 6000' x 200', thirty days ahead of schedule despite thirteen days of torrential downpour.

The 87th rang up two new records: one for airfield construction, the other for Seabee "Can Do".

----0----

THIS MUST PROVE SOMETHING

Seabee Michael Baltusnik, CM2c, was taken sick while on duty in the Solomons. By land, sea, and air, he was rushed to a distant hospital. After his recuperation, he was shipped 3,000 miles to a Naval Receiving Station. There, with much secrecy, he was placed aboard a transport and, after many more days on the drink disembarked -- to find himself back on his old "Island X". Meanwhile, however, his battalion had been moved to another base for rest and recuperation. By this time another 8,000 miles meant nothing to Mike. He was a bit surprised, when he caught up with his mates, to find that the rest and recuperation center to which the battalion had been assigned was in the same camp as the hospital from which he had embarked.

Incidentally, he arrived back just in time to be given thirty day leave with the rest of his unit.

----0----

SEABEE SPECIALS GIVEN HIGH PRAISE BY ADMIRAL LAND

From men who really know the stevedoring business comes high praise for the over-all accomplishments of the Seabee Special battalions.

Rear Admiral Emory S. Land, Administrator for the War Shipping Administration, in a letter to Vice Admiral Ben Moreell, CEC, USN, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, praised the "Specials" for "their fast and efficient handling of cargoes which has so decreased the turn around time required for supply ships that as a result, hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping space must have been conserved during this critical time."

Admiral Land said he had referred a report of Seabee performance to officials of the War Shipping Administration directly concerned with stevedoring matters and who have personal knowledge of the performances of stevedores at home ports in the handling of cargoes.

"They have advised me," he said, "from their practical steamship and stevedoring experience, that this performance is admirable and compares very favorably with that achieved at American ports of loading, especially since accomplished under what must be most unusual and difficult conditions and at times even in spite of enemy action. They further suggest that such work cannot just happen but rather indicates the efficient execution of carefully laid plans."

In conclusion the War Shipping Administrator said:

"I wish to take this opportunity of personally commending the work of the Special Naval Construction Battalions and their Civil Engineer Corps officers for the expeditious handling of cargoes at advanced bases. Thanks to their organization, quality of personnel, and training, they have more than justified our hope that they would widen one of the principal bottlenecks in our supply system, -- that of getting material from ship to shore.

"May this remarkable work continue."

----0----

SEABEE FIRE-FIGHTER CITED BY SECRETARY KNOX

John J. O Leary, BM2c, a member of a municipal fire department in civilian life, has been commended by Secretary of the Navy Knox for efficiently directing fire-fighting activities and displaying great personal heroism when a fire swept the BOQ, Naval Air Station, Argentia, Newfoundland.

O Leary expertly analyzed the crucial areas of the blaze, devised the most effective methods of combating the flames, directed that certain essential measures be employed and then, in the words of the citation, "with complete disregard for .. personal safety and the fury of the blaze, .. mounted a ladder to the attic in a daring effort to bring the fire under control.

Following this, the Seabee suggested to the Commandant the use of cranes as towers from which water could be cascaded into the building. The prompt adoption of this proposal was probably the most important factor in saving the building.

Finally, O Leary, in spite of injuries, returned after treatment to supervise the cutting of holes in the burnt remains to minimize the damage caused by water.

----0----

"NO BULLING OR DOZING" FOR SEABEES AT BOUGAINVILLE

A group of hard-working, fighting Seabees who "fought the Japs and the jungle" to hack out a flying field at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, have been commended by Admiral William F. Halsey, according to a report from the field.

The citation was couched in typical Halsey terms. It said: "There was no bulling or dozing on the job."

IT'S A LONG TIME BETWEEN PARTIES

Yank, the doughboys' magazine, tells this one about the Fighter Builders:

At New Georgia, when the Japs were firing with everything they had on the ground and bombing from the air, a grey-haired, fantastically happy Seabee stuck his head out of a not-too-deep foxhole, adjusted his rifle, and chortled, "Gol damn, I haven't had so much fun since the Argonne."

----0----

BULLDOZER SUBSTITUTES FOR PILE DRIVER

Add to your private list of unique uses Seabees have for bulldozers, this suggestion, vouched for by the 42nd Battalion:

The 42nd's Grading Department, asked to erect a heavy duty guard rail, found the only material available was a number of short lengths of very heavy piling. Hand-setting these would have been a slow and difficult job. Operating conditions and limited room prevented the use of a standard pile-driver. In the resulting emergency, the Seabees just naturally turned to a bulldozer.

Each piece of piling was given a preliminary setting. The bulldozer was run up on blocks so that its blade was immediately over the pile. The operator, by alternately raising and lowering the blade, then could quickly drive each pile into position.

----0----

SEABEE HEROISM IN MUNDA AIRFIELD FIRE WINS COMMENDATION

When, after the accidental explosion of a bomb on the Munda airfield, several planes and vehicles caught fire and others were threatened, eighteen Seabee officers and men braved burning gasoline and the threat of other explosions to fight the blaze. Commendations signed by Comdr. K. P. Doane, CEC, USNR, went to Lt. (jg) Hugh G. Mealer, CEC, USNR; Allen C. Altvater, CCM; George D. Dawson, CMM; Charles Tassin, CCM; Rex M. Helms, CCM; Bruce L. Norris, BM1c; Joseph H. Drago, MM1c; William F. Harvey, MM1c; William T. Stuart, MM1c; Henry J. Taveggia, MM1c; Bernard H. Johnson, GM2c; Willford G. Wells, GM2c; Woodrow W. Watkins, SF2c; James H. Wilson, MM3c; H. F. Doty, WT1c; E. E. Cooper, GM2c; and G. H. Cloninger, SF2c.

----0----

MANY THANKS

An increasing number of good news stories have been coming in to the Seabee News Service from battalions both overseas and in this country. Not only does this result in more interesting issues of the News Service, but much of the material also is made available to various publications and to writers preparing articles on the Seabees. This serves to acquaint the general public with your accomplishments so that when you get back to the States you won't have to explain who the Seabees are or what they do. So keep your eyes open and keep the stories coming!

----0----

ARMY ENGINEER CAPTAIN LAUDS WORK OF 21ST BATTALION

Noting that the performance of the 21st Construction Battalion will "add immensely to the reputation of the armed services as a whole and the Naval Construction Battalions in particular", Capt. Sidney F. Tate, Jr., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Liaison Officer, commended the officers and men of the battalion for the manner in which they carried out and completed their part of an Army construction program at an Alaskan base.

Capt. Tate expressed the opinion that it would be "extremely difficult to gather another group of construction men which would display more ability and craftsmanship" and observed that the work had evoked much favorable comment from Army personnel, "both as to speed and excellency of construction."

In a forwarding letter to the commendation, Colonel Elgan C. Robertson, U. S. Army CAC, Commanding Officer, added his own "sincere" appreciation for the work accomplished which was one of the "major" projects in the program.

"The work has been diligently prosecuted under conditions of difficult terrain and extremely adverse weather which has necessitated unusual and extensive protective measures. Excellent results have been achieved and a high standard of workmanship maintained", Colonel Robertson's endorsement read.

----0----

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Last month the Seabee News Service carried a story about a camp for 6,000 which the Fighter Builders had completed in seventeen days. We called attention to the part played by the 62nd and 72nd Battalions, but didn't mention that CBMU 523 was in there pitching too.

The 523'ers are a smooth working outfit, not given to calling attention to themselves. But in the case of this record-breaking camp construction job, their work speaks for itself.

----0----

DARES SHELLS TO PUMP WATER FOR BOUGAINVILLE INVADERS

Lonnie F. (Pappy) Suder, WT1c, today is the president and chief stockholder of the Bougainville Water Works.

Landing in the second assault wave, Suder borrowed a caterpillar tractor to clear a path to the nearest river so that he could set up his small unit.

An enemy machine-gun punched holes through his gasoline cans -- and sent four shots through a shirt he had placed over the water filter to dry.

"I could get more gas," said Pappy disgustedly, "but shirts were scarce."

A squad of Marines located two snipers in trees just a few yards from "The Works" and shot the Japanese out of their positions.

"The dirty Nips were trying to sabotage me," Suder indignantly recalled.

Bougainville Marines have honored Pappy's bravery under fire by placing a large sign with the inscription, "Suder Circle", on a tree along the road he first cut through the jungle to set up his "plant".

----0----

SEABEE BOOM-BOOM TOWN

Newest jungle metropolis to join the growing list of Seabee "developments" in the forward zone is Miracle City, a thriving center which boasts not only a motion picture theatre and an athletic field, but an outdoor basketball court with an asphalt floor, complete with flood lights.

Memorial Hall, the pride of Miracle City, is dedicated to the Marines killed in action on Guadalcanal. Designed by Dougal Thompson, CM1c, the hall boasts a chapel, reading and writing room, game room, and work shop. The altar of the chapel has been equipped with religious fixtures hammered and shaped from discharged anti-aircraft and field gun shells.

----0----

EIGHTH SPECIAL VERSATILE

During and between stevedoring activities, the Eighth Special Battalion, the "Eight Ball - On the Ball" boys, have built their own camp on "Island X", manned an army barge with a goose neck crane for salvage activities, laid thousands of feet of communication cable, and mounted pierce plank for an airfield runway, reports Lt. William Harter (CEC) USNR.

Given a twenty-four hour deadline to discharge a ship, the Eighth Special not only completed its assignment on schedule, but also loaded on the gear of a homeward-bound battalion and waved them on their way.

----0----

RESCUES TWO IN HOTEL FIRE

On leave in New York on Christmas Eve, Wilbur Call, S2c of the 114th Battalion saved the lives of two men trapped in a rapidly spreading blaze in a 42nd Street hotel.

Passing the scene just after the fire was discovered, Call entered the building and carried one of the occupants to safety; then, despite the imminent threat of collapsing floors and stairways, reentered the furiously burning hotel and dragged another guest free of the flames.

----0----

SEABEE DIVERS COMMENDED

Five Seabee divers of the 62nd Construction Battalion have been commended by Captain F. H. Whitaker, USN, Salvage Superintendent at a Pacific Naval base, for their outstanding and exceptionally valuable services during ship salvage operations.

William Stafford, SF2c; Julius Pongowski, MM2c; Warren Selinsky, SF2c; Joseph Nagy, SF3c; and Robert Shaw, S1c were the divers who were cited for their performance under "arduous .. and extraordinarily hazardous conditions (which) required a high order of stamina, courage and devotion to duty."

----0----

"FIRST LADY" IS FIRST LADY

Back from two years' service in the South Pacific with the famed Bobcats, the first Seabee outfit to go overseas, J. I. Resnicoff Y1c, of Washington, D.C. relates how he met the first white woman he had seen during his many months on Bora Bora.

"I was in the post office sorting the outgoing mail when I heard a woman's voice. I could hardly believe my eyes, because not only was she a white woman, but she was Mrs. Roosevelt."

Resnicoff, who has returned to the States because of illness, said Mrs. Roosevelt asked him if the mail he was sorting was incoming or outgoing.

"I told her there would be a mob around if the mail was coming in," he said.

----0----

BEG PARDON

In Issue 10, January 31, of the News Service we erroneously referred to Commander Francis M. McCarthy, CEC, USNR, as Officer-in-Charge of the Sixth Special Battalion. Commander McCarthy was OinC of the Second Special but has been promoted to Officer-in-Charge of the 23rd Construction Regiment.

----0----

DARING SEABEE DIVERS COME UP WITH RIGHT ANSWERS

Salvaging Japanese planes practically in the Jap's own backyard, and dynamiting damaged propellers from LSTs when the conventional methods proved too slow, are just part of the day's work to the divers attached to a Seabee Battalion in the Southwest Pacific.

Working under the constant threat of enemy air attack, the divers, operating at an advanced naval base, have proved themselves just as adept at improvisation as their mates on shore.

When the regular diving gear proved too heavy and cumbersome to remove quickly during air raid alarms, the intrepid Seabee divers substituted light gas mask equipment which could be shed rapidly, when necessary.

Queried by Naval Intelligence on the possibility of salvaging a Japanese carrier-based plane, knocked down and sunk about 40 miles from a Jap seaplane base, the Seabee diving crew responded in keeping with their slogan of "Can Do".

Requisitioning a reconditioned Jap landing barge, the Seabees sailed boldly to the scene of operations, raised the slightly damaged plane just before dark and, rather than run the risk of returning to their base through the American air and surface patrols, slipped in and laid at anchor all night among some nearby islands.

Early the next morning the daring salvage crew returned with their prize, including all the pilot's charts, for examination by Intelligence -- wearied with picking over the charred remains of enemy aircraft which had crashed to the ground.

Prior to the Munda invasion, the divers were hard at work readying the invasion craft needed for the operations. Since there was no drydock available and the ships were desperately needed, the Seabees accomplished all the necessary repairs underwater, using the materials at hand. This led to novel, though nonetheless effective, methods.

Speed was the prime requisite so the Seabee divers -- while the landing craft skippers crossed their fingers, closed their eyes and trembled -- placed dynamite alongside the shafts, packed wet sand around the charges and neatly blasted the propellers off.

The first assignment the divers faced upon reaching their "Island X" was a tough one but, according to the officer in charge of the diving crew, a "fortunate" one from the battalion's viewpoint as it separated "the boys from the men".

---0---

GIVE 'EM WHAT THEY ASK FOR

"If it's frosted glass they want, that's what we'll give 'em -- even though we don't have any", said P. R. Gregori, M2c, when diffusing frosted glass was requested for the footlights of the newly built CBMU 516 theater.

Gregori, collected a sand-blasting device from the nozzle of an airhose, some rubber tubing, a baffle regulator, a few other assorted gadgets, mixed well and came up with a miniature blaster which handled the frosted glass order to perfection.

----0----

SYMPHONY CONCERTS IN NEW GUINEA

Not content with movies and the various sporting activities that ordinarily comprise the greater part of a military unit's recreational program, Seabees in New Guinea are sponsoring a weekly program of symphonic music.

A typical recorded program featured Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra, Toscanini conducting the N.B.C. Symphony, and Ormandy conducting the Minneapolis Symphony.

----0----

INSTRUMENTS FREEZE, THE BAND PLAYS ON

When Seabee bands attempted to supply music for drilling and marching at Camp Lee-Stephenson in wintry Maine, their instruments froze. The "Can Do" boys solved this one with "canned" music, installing an electrical transcription unit and wiring the marches to amplifiers set up on the drill field.

----0----

SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES

Servicemen smoke over 50,000,000 cigars a month, according to an estimate by the commanding officer of an army quartermaster depot. Cigarettes total about a billion packages a year.

----0----

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

Prospects for major leagues completing full 1944 schedule becomes dimmer each passing day despite determination of magnates to carry on come hell or high water..still plan All-Star, World Series..question now is not, who will WIN, but who will PLAY..selective service boards now taking baseball players at rate of dozen per week..Bill Johnson, Yankee's outstanding rookie third baseman, accepted for service..Gene Desautels, Cleveland back-stopper, in Navy..Cincinnati's Johnny Vander Meer, of double no-hit, no-run fame, passed pre-induction, awaiting call..Veteran Van Lingle Mungo, Giants, reported for physical..Others re-classified 1-A, Cleveland's pitcher Vernon Kennedy, Bill Herman, Dodger's veteran second baseman, Roy Weatherly, Yankee's outfielder..Ray Mack, star second baseman of Indians, among many stars assertedly remaining in defense work for duration..Veteran Bill Dickey became first Yankee to sign 1944 contract..Rubber-armed Giant hurler Ace Adams, rejected for military service, signs new contract as did first baseman Joe Kuehel and outfielder Gene Moore, Washington and Max Butcher, Pittsburgh..Major leagues have contributed more than \$2,130,000 to war effort during past two years..Joe Tinker, of "Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance" fame, gravely ill..Casey Stengel resigned as manager of Boston Braves..Bob Montgomery, former

lightweight champ knocked out Ike Williams, latest lightweight sensation in twelfth round, stopping latter's winning streak at 33 straight .. New York's world lightweight champ Beau Jack and Sammy Angott, NBA's lightweight king, fought ten round non-title draw .. Hammerin' Hank Armstrong, former three title holder, stopped Saverio Turiello in seven rounds .. Harold "Jug" McSpaden, recent winner of \$10,000 Los Angeles Open, called for physical .. N. Y. Sports Committee raised more than \$5,000,000 in first six days of Fourth War Loan Drive .. Ensign Sid Luckman, Maritime Service, named "Most Valuable Player" in 1943 National Football League .. defeated Green Bay's Don Hutson by three points for coveted honor .. Bob Snyder, veteran Chicago Bears' goal-kicking specialist, 4-F .. Yankees purchased Ed Levy, infielder, outfielder, from Newark farm club .. Mississippi State Senate voted in favor of reinstating inter-collegiate football at Univ. of Miss. and Miss. State College .. Army's basketball team still tops in East with 9 wins no defeats .. Dartmouth won seventh straight to clinch seventh straight Eastern Intercollegiate League title .. Iowa, Utah and Miami (Ohio) also still undefeated .. Montreal leads National Hockey League with 24 wins, 3 losses, 6 ties .. Syd Howe, Detroit, scored six goals to set new world's record in Detroit's 12-2 victory over hapless NY Rangers .. latter deep in last place with 6 wins, 27 losses, 2 ties .. DID YOU KNOW that Admiral William F. Halsey, starred in football at Annapolis in '02 and '03, led his class and won annual Thompson Trophy which goes to best scholar and athlete at Naval Academy .. was appointed director of athletics at Annapolis in 1928?

-----0-----

HOW TO WIN FRIENDS PERIOD!

When patrols return to lonely Midway island, their hats are off to the Seabees.

Because, according to Comdr. William W. Wannamaker, CEC, USNR, who until December 7, 1943 served as Public Works Officer on the island, the Seabees have provided as elaborate a set-up of recreation facilities as exists on any of the "Island X's."

In addition to nicely arranged barracks and mess hall, the Seabees have built a recreation building, complete with movies, ping pong, etc.; a bowling alley, basketball and tennis courts and a baseball diamond. This, coupled with the fact that Midway saves a 2,400-mile round trip back to Pearl Harbor, makes Midway a sort of island Paradise to our patrol forces.

Comdr. Wannamaker is proudest, however, of the Seabees' feat in constructing a 3,000-foot breakwater in less than two months. "That," he says, "is a better record than could probably be made by any outfit in the States."

With the Japs on the defensive, Midway is not too lively a spot, and the Seabees on the island would welcome a chance to tangle with the Japs, according to Comdr. Wannamaker. "However," he observed, "the Seabees being generally older men have taken their job philosophically and they've made themselves popular and respected because of their willingness to work."

-----0-----