



**TAKE FIVE, BOYS!** Where there was a tough job ahead, there was always a seasoned Seabee outfit to do it. And wherever Seabees went, mountains of equipment and materials had to accompany the "know-how" boys. The Japs are alleged to have feared this hard-to-beat combination almost

as much as they dreaded the Marines. Here, 87th stevedores take advantage of a "breather" as they wave off still another barge-load of pallets and pipe headed for the ROTANIN.

## ORDERED FORWARD AGAIN AFTER 17 MONTHS OVERSEAS

The announcement each man had been dreading for the past four months came with dramatic suddenness. It was early January, 1945. The battalion was in the midst of extended-order drill in the scrub-woods at the base of Monte D'Or when orders to secure all military training and return to camp were received.

All hands immediately assumed the fatal day was close at hand. Instead of returning to the States at the end of 18 months, the battalion's mythical luck had apparently run out. Now, it looked like back to the forward areas again.

In camp, bulletin boards already blazed with orders concerning the 12 January departure of the first echelon. The old, familiar tension again gripped the camp. Now that the matter had finally been decided, the men waited with impatience to get on with the inevitable.

In amazingly short order, the initial group of 344 men and six officers were loaded onto long trailers, driven to the Noumea docks and put aboard the already jampacked S. S. PRINCE GEORGE. Their itinerary included Tulagi, where all remaining space was jampacked with dynamite; Eniwetok, where, as anticipated, time was lost; and finally Saipan on 27 January.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the battalion was busy loading the U. S. S. ROTANIN (AK-108) with pontoon barges. Eventually, even the ship slated to transport the rear echelon showed up and commenced taking on cargo.

On 31 January, when the 87th Seabees had ticked off slightly over 17 months of foreign service, including a solid year in the torrid Solomons, the second echelon of 717 men and 22 officers climbed aboard the ROTANIN via the wildly-swinging cargo nets and sailed.

Life aboard the ROTANIN was typical of all crowded Navy troopships. Shade, as always, was at a premium on the scorching steel decks. When the pensive men weren't doing the usual things, they could be found fooling around with the battalion dogs in their pen or simply gazing off into meaningless space along the rail.

Chow was eaten while standing in the steaming holds next to the ship's engines and each meal was an ordeal. Divine Services were held both Sundays. Fresh water was soon rationed and the mood of the entire unit swerved sharply downward as guards were posted at each spigot.

The fourth day at sea and 1,000 miles out of New Cal. found the

men once more gazing at Guadalcanal, hardly recognizable now with its neat rows of quonsets and huge docks. The war had unmistakably moved away from the Canal since 1942-'43.

The next morning found the ROTANIN on the high seas again, this time with a tiny Australian corvette as its lone escort. The ship headed due north across the Equator, obviously toward the Marshalls—1,420 miles from the Canal. It was the 87th's second crossing of "The Line."

A sub alarm at sunset caused everyone to don life-jackets while the lumbering ship lurched at crazy angles. After a few anxious moments, the corvette signalled reassuring news—a school of porpoises had excited the radar! However, the stubby escort was taking no chances. The transport was then quite near Truk and the Caroline Islands—still Jap-held!

The corvette was eventually relieved by a small American gunboat, which took over the watchdog duties for the remaining few days to Eniwetok.

The first indication of land came in the form of hundreds of short chimneys jutting out of the horizon and somewhat resembling a factory town. Slowly, the breath-taking scene unrolled and the men gaped at the unprecedented sight.

Here, enclosed within a barren, horseshoe-shaped strip of land were hundreds and hundreds of ships of all types—battlegroups, flat-tops, cruisers, destroyers. LSTs and pontoon barges—all crowding one another in the huge, land-locked harbor right there in the middle of nowhere! This was Eniwetok in February, 1945, the first—and thank God!—the only island of the Marshalls visited by the 87th.

While waiting for the next convoy, the men were taken on a shore party for a refreshing swim, a few bottles of beverage and a first-hand view of the battlegrounds.

At sea, once more, now the flagship of a 14-ship convoy, the ROTANIN covered the remaining five days and 1,430 additional miles to the Marianas uneventfully.

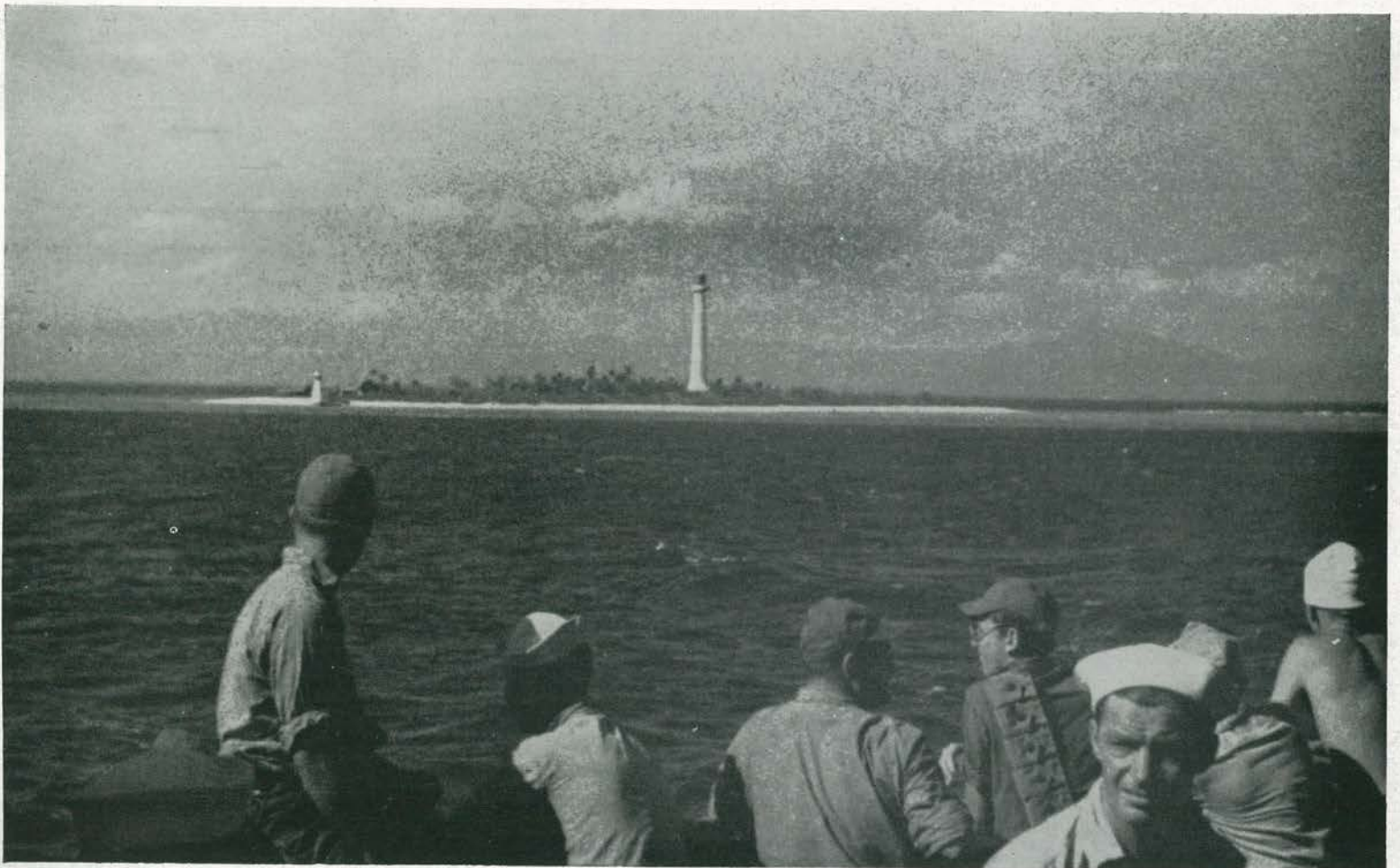
The men knew the long journey was nearing completion when they began to see flight after flight of huge B-29s passing in the distance. It was, however, with a genuine sigh of relief that the men greeted the rocky crags of Saipan after 17 tedious days of the sea. The 3,850-mile voyage from New Cal. to Saipan had exhausted all hands.





**BAD BREAK.** A majority had wagered hard cash the 87th would return Stateside from New Caledonia. Lacking only a month of meeting the Navy's 18-month requirement for rotation, mates never took seriously the possibility of another forward move, which, if it developed, would surely pro-

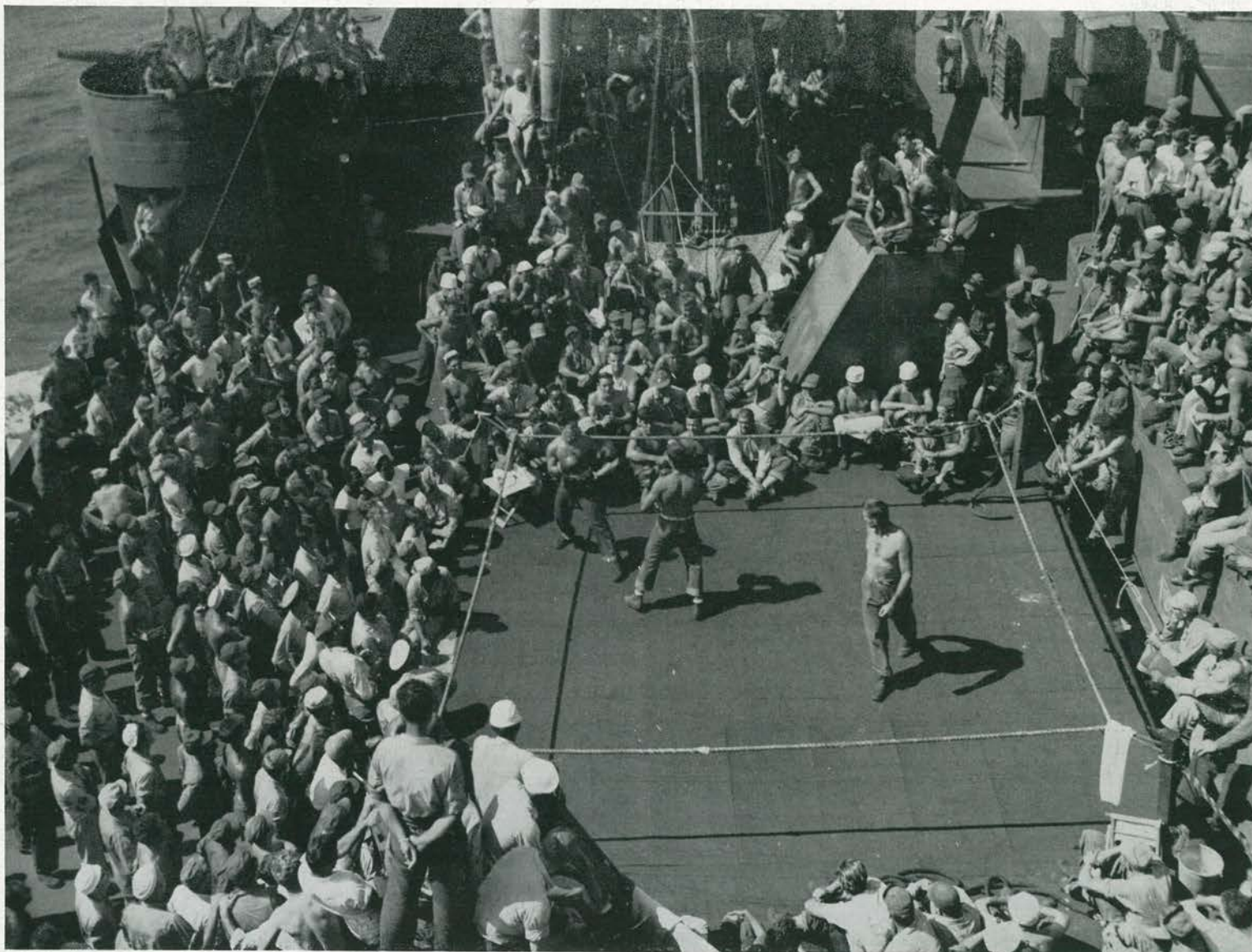
long their overseas tour beyond two years. It couldn't happen to an over-worked unit with a year in the Solomons behind them! (The ROTANIN is here shown leaving Monte D'Or for the Central Pacific Front.)



**LAST LOOK.** After four and one-half months in scenic New Caledonia, the utterly impossible had abruptly happened to the battalion. The men could scarcely believe it, but as the ROTANIN passed close by the world-

famous lighthouse in leaving Noumea's treacherous harbor, all knew that the unit wasn't being shipped to the great Saipan staging area just for the ride. Again, the blue chips were down!





"... AND WE CAN FIGHT." Anything to relieve the stifling monotony had been uppermost in the minds of most personnel on the WENTLEY, the LSTs, the NAOS and this concept remained unchanged aboard the ROTANIN. Even the proverbial card-playing, reading and sleeping

become tiresome on a 17-day voyage. Hence, it is little wonder that impromptu ring bouts (above) attracted such crowds. Robert ("Blackie") Lares (center) teaches a ship's crew novice a few Seabee tricks. Chief Frank Rychlak referees.



**SUNDAY AT SEA.** The battalion harbored many men of deep religious convictions. These never missed Divine Services—even at sea. Here, Comdr. Easterly (left) joins members of his command in singing praises to the Almighty.



**PROFILES.** The alert cameraman gets off a quick shot during the singing of a hymn at Divine Services and comes up with a candid study par excellence. It was scoops of this calibre that ranked 87th photography far above average.





**PROBLEM.** As he revises and rewrites cutlines for these pictures, THE EARTHMOVER editor (not shown) finds it increasingly difficult to concoct something original about shipboard card games. Therefore, he proposes to let players explain this one.

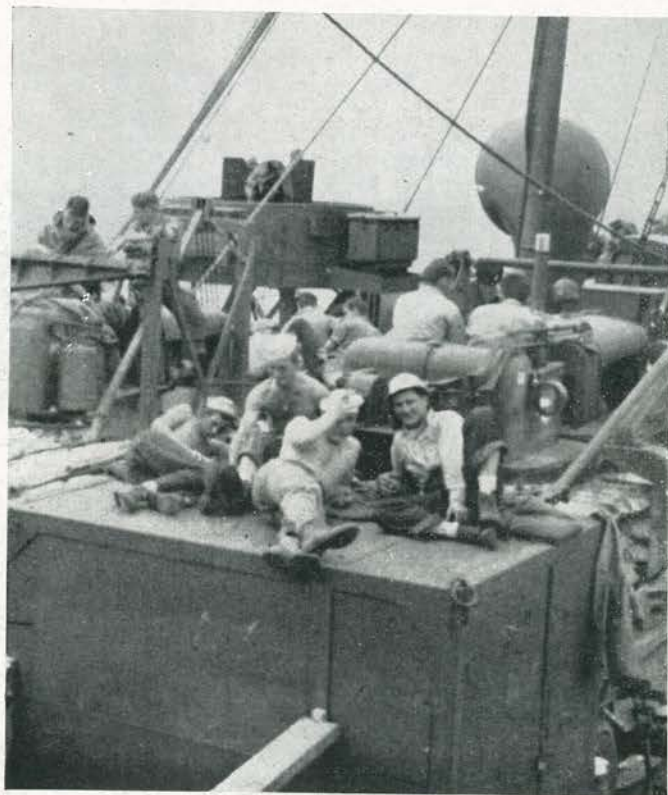


**IN THE DOGHOUSE.** There were almost as many dogs as men at Monte D'Or. With few exceptions, they were ingeniously smuggled aboard the ROTANIN. Even "Tippy," senior member of the 87th's canine contingent, was ordered into the above kennel.

## BATTALION SWEATS IT OUT ON 17-DAY TRIP



**"SWEEPERS, MAN YOUR BROOMS** for a clean sweep fore and aft!" To those unfortunates who were assigned the ignoble task of keeping the littered decks swept, the foregoing order was anything but music in their ears. Sweeping was continuous.



**HAVEN.** Armond Kirschbaum (right foreground), talented EARTHMOVER artist, who did much of the art work for this volume, entertains friends atop a reefer. "Kirsch" sketched life aboard most ships, but lost his entire output.





**LUNGA POINT.** Once frothy Guadalcanal appeared unbelievably calm and peaceful in '45 to men who remembered its madhouse importance in September, '43. (For contrasting views, see page 39). Mates were no longer interested in the Canal—resumption

of the long journey ahead was all that mattered. Very few, in fact, ever learned why the brief stop was necessary at all. Certainly there was nothing to see here anymore. The Pacific action lay straight ahead in the direction they were sailing.

## GUADALCANAL HAD BECOME "REAR AREA" BY 1945

"Well! Well! Well! So this is 'the Canal,' hey? They say there's dames here and everything. Must really be a racket if a guy could make Station Force!"

The 87th again anchored overnight at Guadalcanal on 3 February 1945. Once again, it was moving up into the "Big Time."

The stop was only a routine layover. Now, they were tired, 18-month veterans to whom war's glamour had become quite ragged. Card games progressed listlessly. Most mates still read to kill time. Some discussed the ever-popular possibilities of going home—"after this next one!" Still others lay in their sacks below.

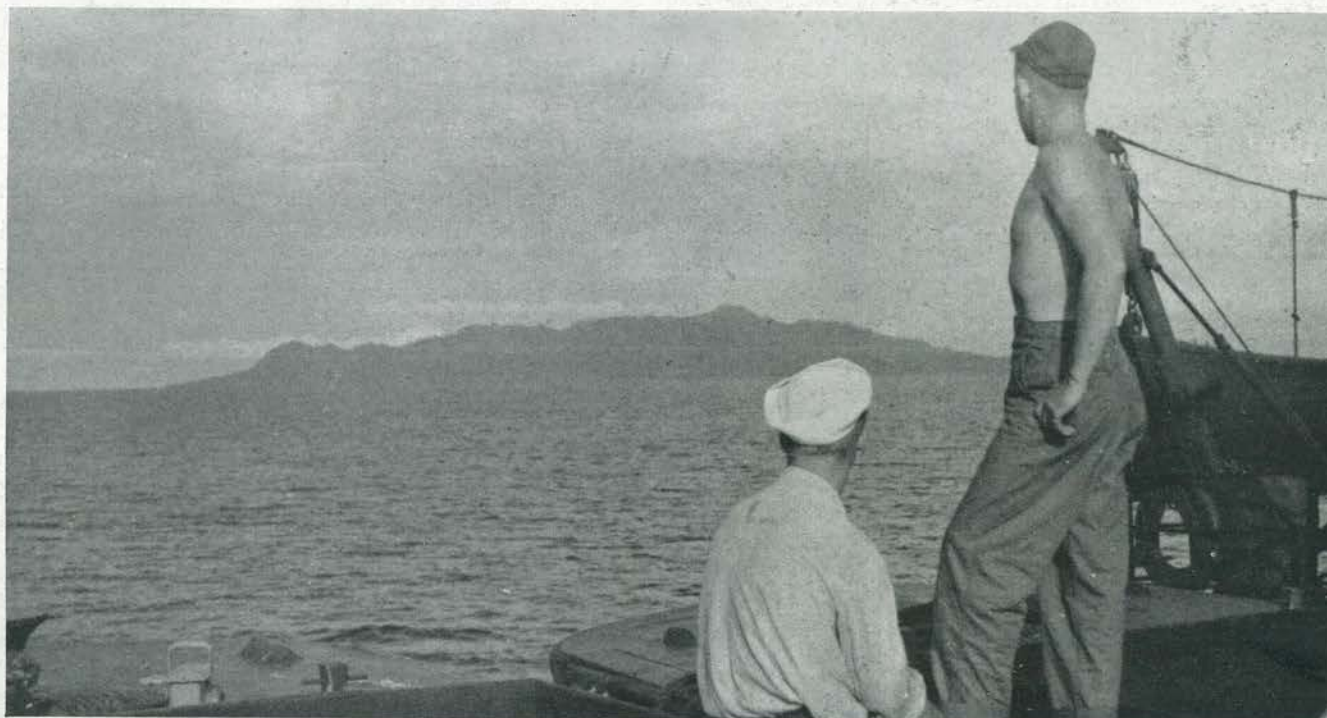
And Guadalcanal? This time, it was just another place where ships stopped overnight. Scarcely anyone mentioned the WENT-

LEY anchoring here in September, 1943—over 16 months before.

The past was too far away—too much had happened. The war had moved northward and away from the South Pacific with amazing rapidity.

Nature had cleverly camouflaged her battle-scars along the once embattled beaches. Lunga Point now looked like a cozy bathing resort. The bay had been cleared of all wreckage except a few permanently beached Jap warships, slowly rusting away.

Docks had been built and quonset warehouses lined the waterfront. Guadalcanal was definitely "rear area" now—just another port of call for shipping bound for the blazing Central and Western Pacific battle sectors.



**SAVO.** These mates were two, among others, who were still intrigued by the sobering nearness of momentous past events. A certain tenseness was almost sure to grip any American as he stood and gazed upon small, historic Savo Island—across famed

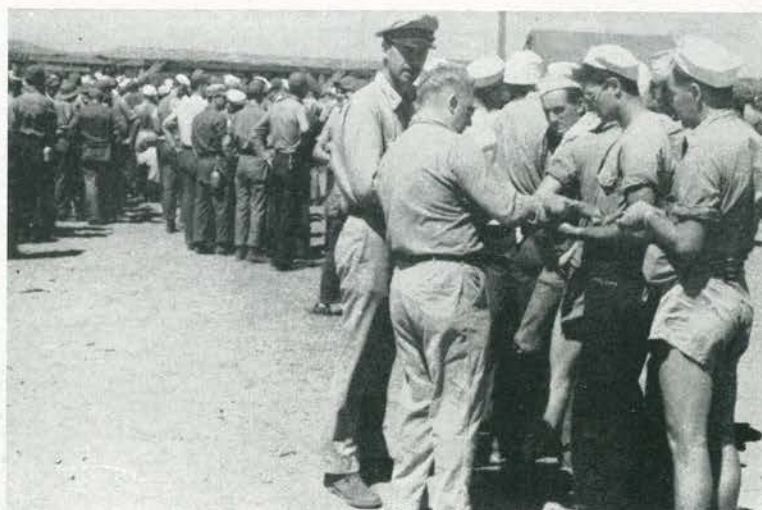
Iron Bottom Bay from Guadalcanal. Here, in darkest 1942, a potent Jap task force had sent four Allied cruisers to the bottom in jig-time. Here, somewhat later, Jap sea-power was dealt its death-blow in the Solomons.



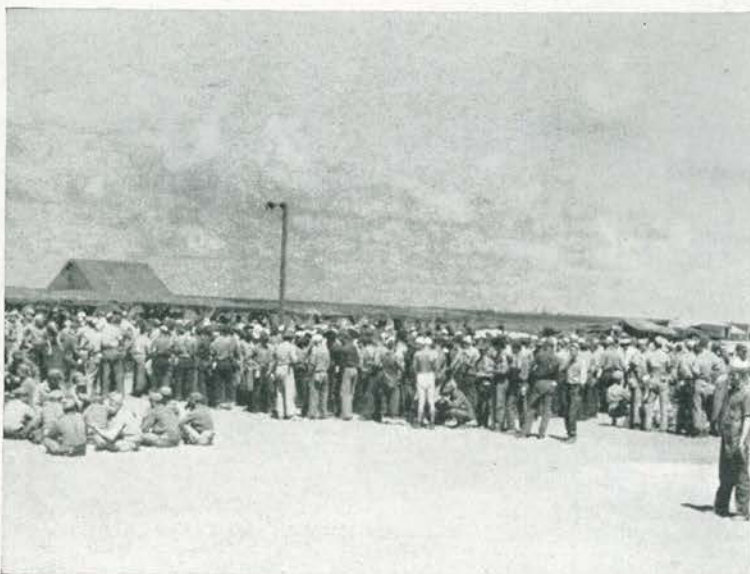
# SEAFARING 87TH REJUVENATED BY ENIWETOK BEER



**OASIS.** A barge-load of ship-weary Seabees from the ROTANIN are snapped en route from the AK-108 to the Fleet Canteen on Parry Island—hub of the strategic Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshalls. Parched throats can hardly wait!



**COINS TO COOL.** "Money to burn" could be exchanged (within limitations, of course!) for cold beer and coke on the arid sands of Parry Island. Chiefs Cedarstaff and Ahaesy collect beverage money from John Spence, Johnny Bucceri and Bernie Kruger.



**MOB SCENE.** Three's a crowd—3,000 is a mob! This 87th mob waits patiently for their issue of liquid refreshments. Although most units brought sandwiches ashore, the ROTANIN contingent came only with appetites. Trading of beer for food was brisk.



**S. O. S.** in this instance, means "Sleep or Swim!" Assorted GIs, refugees from transports awaiting convoy assignments, bask or swim in broiling Parry Island sun to enjoy a brief respite ashore. Never had the 87th seen such a void as Eniwetok.



**PACIFIC GOOD TIME.** A serviceman's version of a good time in the Pacific would approach boredom back home. In a womanless world, a good time consists of time off, some cold drinks and something to eat better than rations.



**BABY FLAT-TOPS.** Of all the armed might in Eniwetok harbor, none so captivated the Seabees as various CVEs, one of which is herewith pictured. The carriers had pulled in and dropped anchor near the ROTANIN on Sunday.





THE MARSHALLS. Typical of the uninviting Marshall Islands was Parry Island (above), part of Eniwetok Atoll. Parry Island, barren, flat and entirely void of vegetation or shade, harbored the popular Fleet Canteen where the 87th downed a few beers and bummed a few sandwiches and

hard-boiled eggs off friendly Marines on 11 February 1945. A very small indication of the Navy's colossal concentration of sea-power at Eniwetok may be seen on horizon (right). Ships stretched for miles.

# ENIWETOK — THE MARSHALL ISLANDS



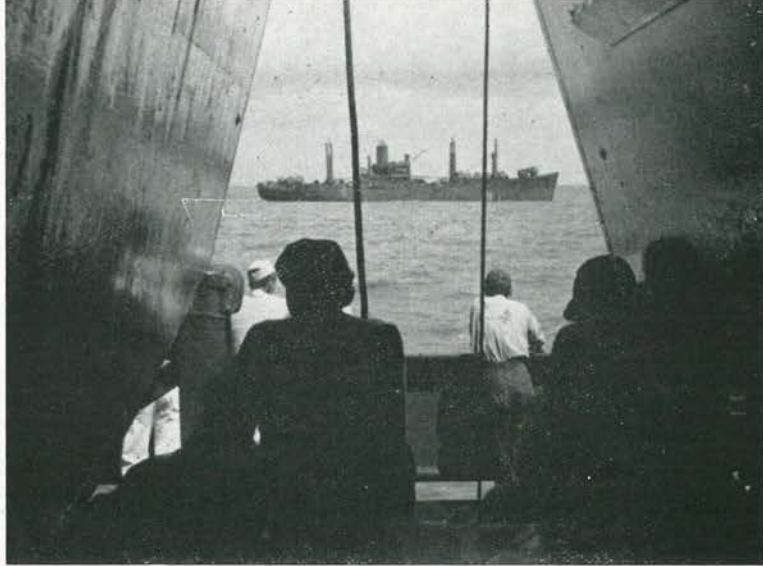
DESOLATION. After four hours ashore, mates were willing to change name of their host islands from Eniwetok Atoll to "Absolutely-Nothing" Atoll. Mute testimony to the fury of America's all-out assault against the Marshalls is this shot of shell-swept desolation. Maimed trunks of once

verdant coconut palms stand sheared in half, charred evidence of what the Jap was up against in the Central Pacific. This was indeed a strange world to veterans of the altogether different Solomons campaign.

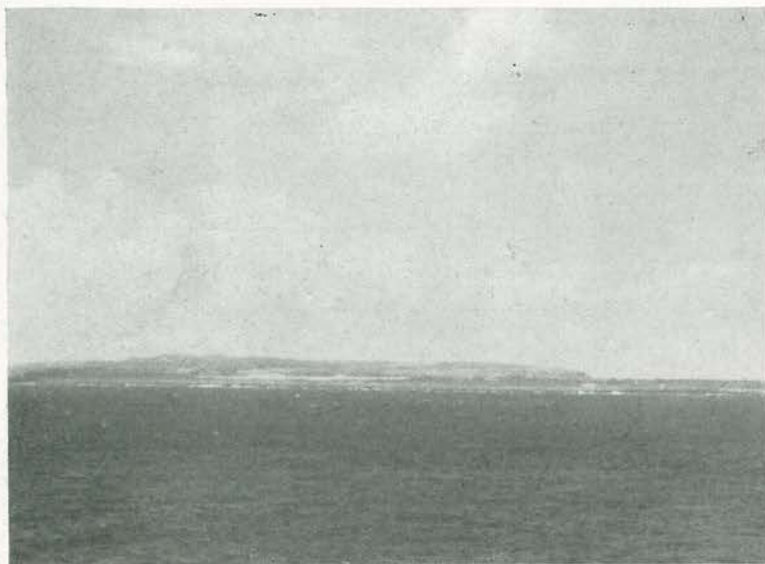




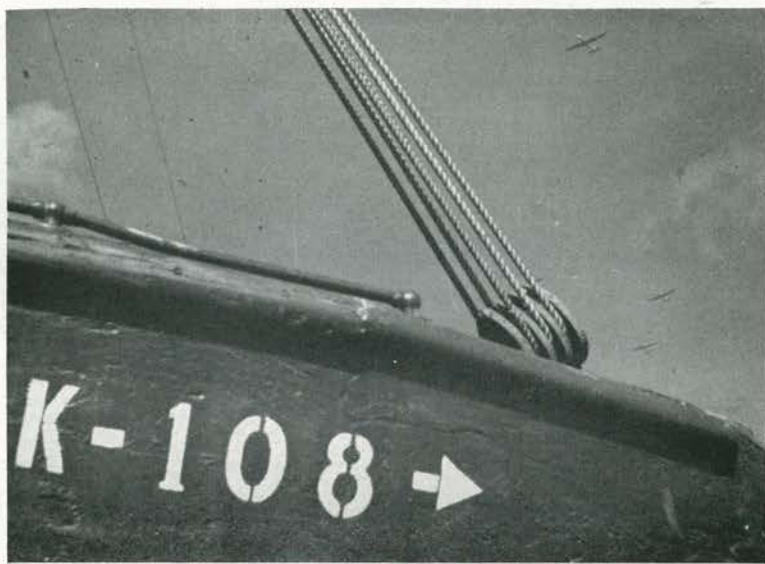
**CONVOY.** Caught in a long, trim line that stretches almost to the horizon, ships making up the ROTANIN's convoy leave Eniwetok for the Marianas. Entire convoy pursued a charted zig-zag course and was heavily escorted by warships.



**NEIGHBORS.** The camera peers from between two landing craft parked topside to capture this beautifully imagined shot of a Dutch merchant ship on starboard side of convoy's flagship, the ROTANIN. Eniwetok to Saipan trip took four days.



**LAND HO!** Tinian, five miles South of Saipan, was the first of the Marianas group sighted on the fourth day after leaving Eniwetok. Almost completely ringed by protective coral reefs, Tinian was a perfect companion B-29 base to Saipan.



**RETURN FROM TOKYO.** Heading East toward Saipan, the ROTANIN crosses paths with a flight of Superforts returning to their base after a devastating strike against the heart of Japan. The huge B-29s appear deceptively small from this angle.



**THE SPRINGBOARD** for the mammoth aerial strikes against Nippon suddenly came into sight as the convoy by-passed Tinian and there was Saipan shimmering under a bright February sun. Mafes have begun to pack the rail for a better view.



**BOX SEATS.** Chiefs Carl Ruble (left) and Bob Parrott, both ardent followers of the major leagues in the States, climb aboard a convenient hatch-cover for box seats as the ROTANIN leads the convoy into the crowded Saipan harbor.

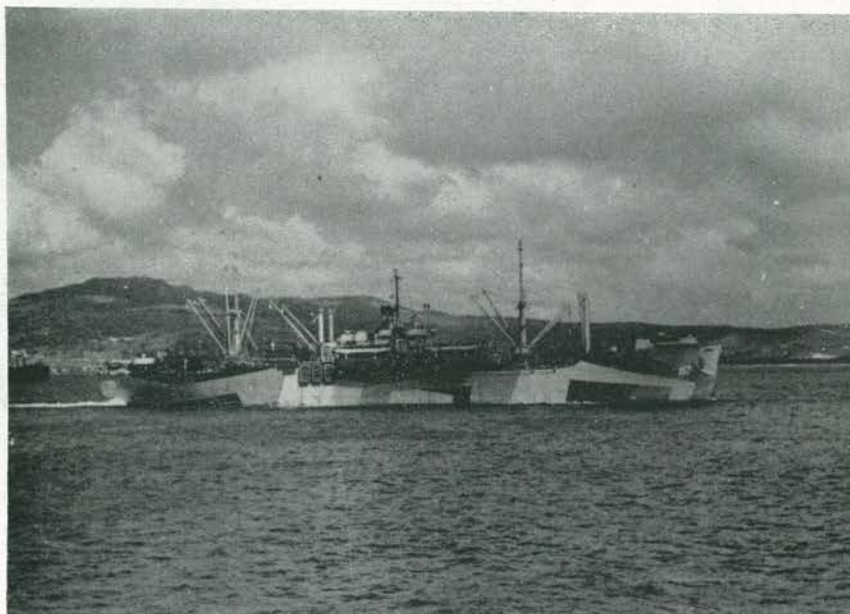


# SAIPAN WAS MOST ADVANCED PACIFIC BASE IN FEBRUARY, '45



**INVALUABLE ROCK.** Saipan, nearest striking point against the embattled enemy in February, '45, was figuratively worth its weight in gold as a base of operations. As the convoy got closer and closer to the strategic island, passengers were amazed at the island's enormous installations, es-

pecially the numerous airfields, which handled fighters and B-27s with equal dispatch. Wrested from a strong Jap garrison during preceding summer, Saipan was nearing its peak of development when the 87th arrived for staging six months later.



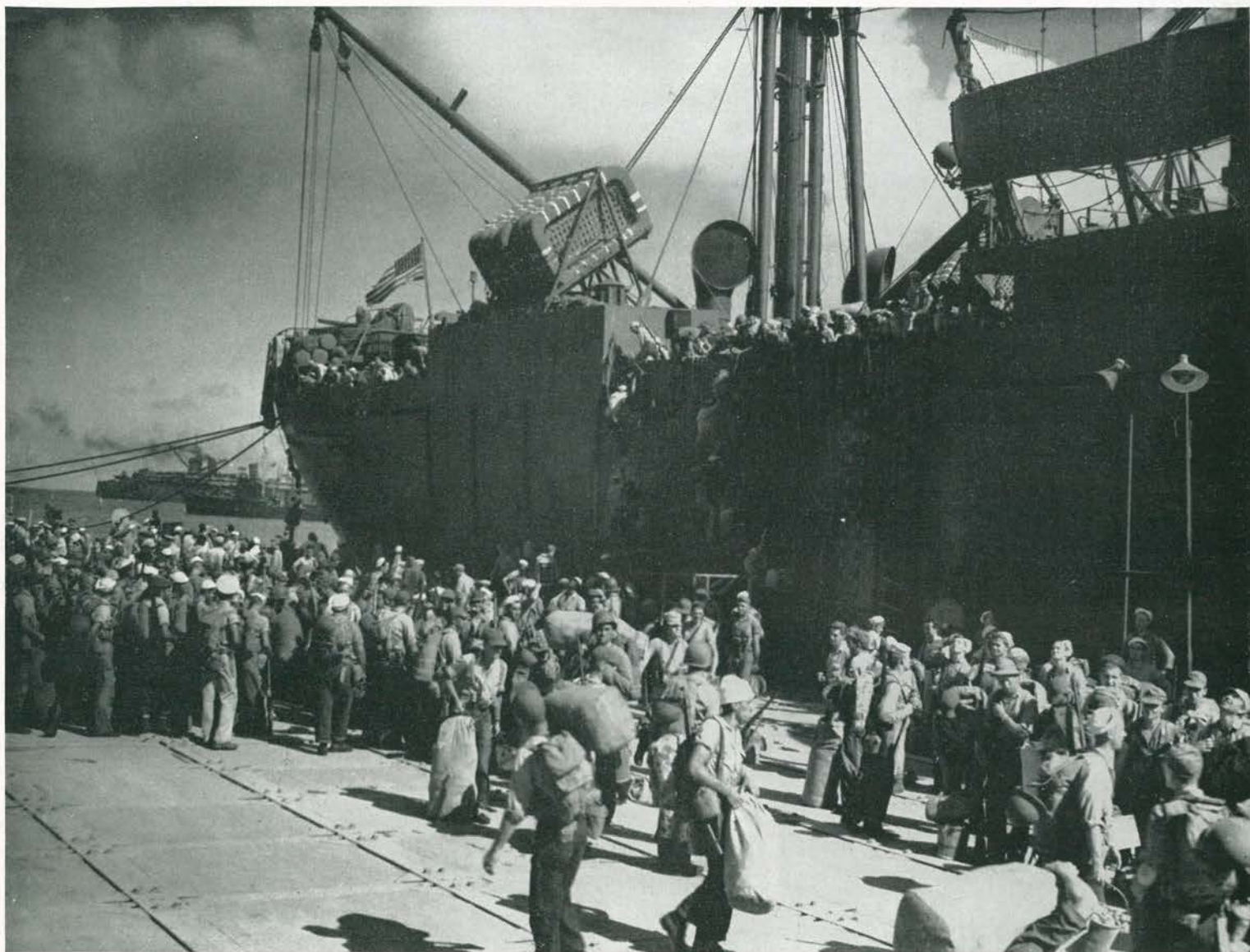
**BOUND FOR IWO JIMA.** PA-157, one of 56 attack vessels transporting Marines, Seabees and invasion equipment, crosses ROTANIN's bow as first assault waves leave Saipan on 16 February. Three days later, this potent force unleashed all hell again Iwo.



**SILHOUETTES.** The ROTANIN reached Saipan 17 days after leaving New Caledonia, but the massive operation against Iwo postponed debarkation until following morning. Here, several eye-witnesses to world-shaking events discuss what they have seen.



# SEASONED 87TH DISEMBARKS FOR SAIPAN STAGING PERIOD

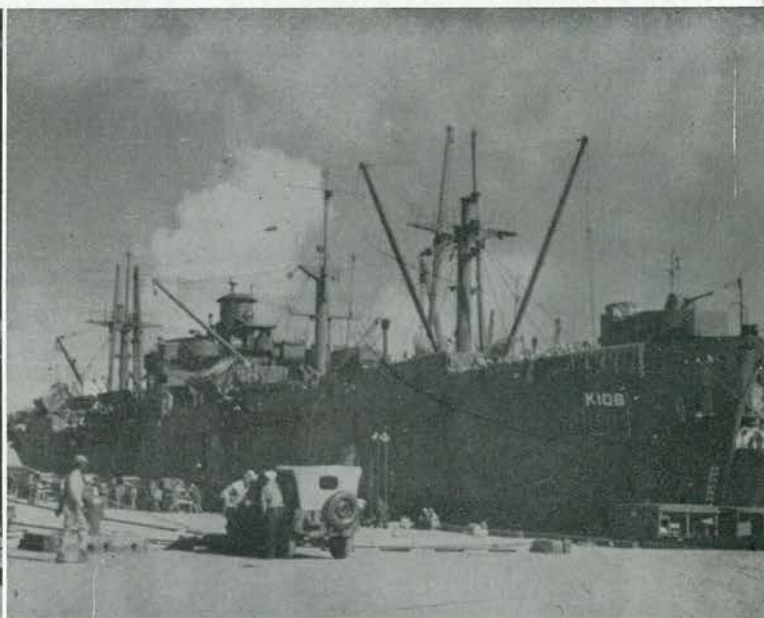


**OVER THE SIDE.** The 87th boarded the ROTANIN the hard way (see page 201) and debarkation was no different. If the AK-108 had a brow, ship's crew was evidently saving it for invasion of Japan. While hundreds already off wait on pier, others clamber down rickety rope netting and ladders.

Men used hand-ropes to lower some personal gear they didn't want to carry during tricky descent. Seabags and duffelbags, along with the dogs, were unloaded in cargo nets.

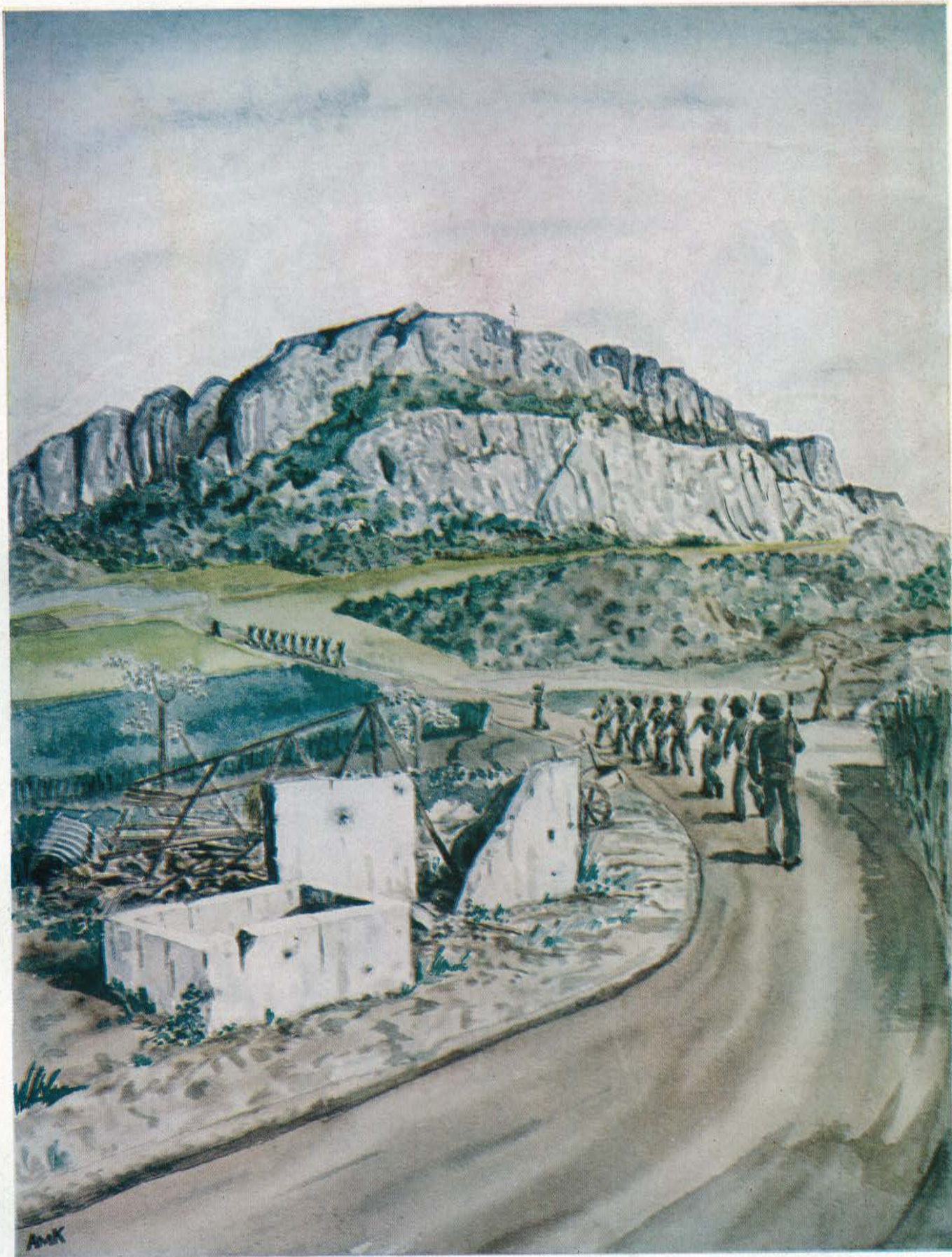


**LOOK ALIVE, MEN!** Chief Jim Ferron musters T Division contingent prior to loading on trucks for scenic ride to the battalion's staging camp. Second echelon was met at dock by Lt. Comdr. Flynn and other officers of the advance group.



**THE SHIP,** looking sleek and trim, releases her booms once all troops are ashore and prepares to discharge her cargo. Soon, gangs of carpenters, riggers and stevedores will be returning from camp in orderly shifts to commence unloading.





MOPPING UP  
(A Saipan Water Color)



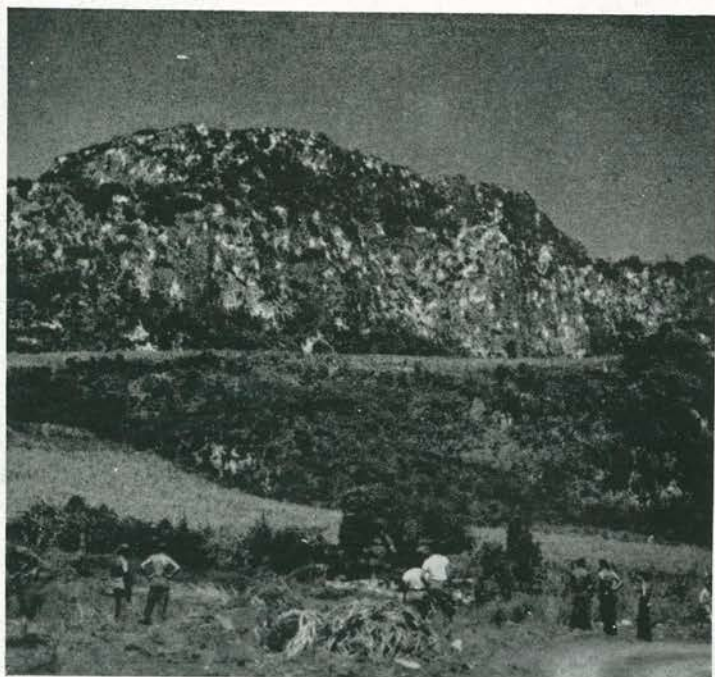
# S A I P A N



# M A R I A N A S I S L A N D S



# SECOND STAGING CAMP SHAPES UP RAPIDLY



**A NEW CAMP IS BORN.** Newly arrived men of first echelon, which reached Saipan on 27 January 1945, gaze uncertainly at sloping cane fields where staging camp is to be built. Shellpocked cliffs remind newcomers of grim battle waged for Saipan.



**CULTIVATOR.** A chugging 'dozer, operated by "Red" Moorman, clears a patch of native sugar cane as camp construction begins in earnest. During the months an entire army was being assembled for the BIVE assault, the 87th sweated it out here.

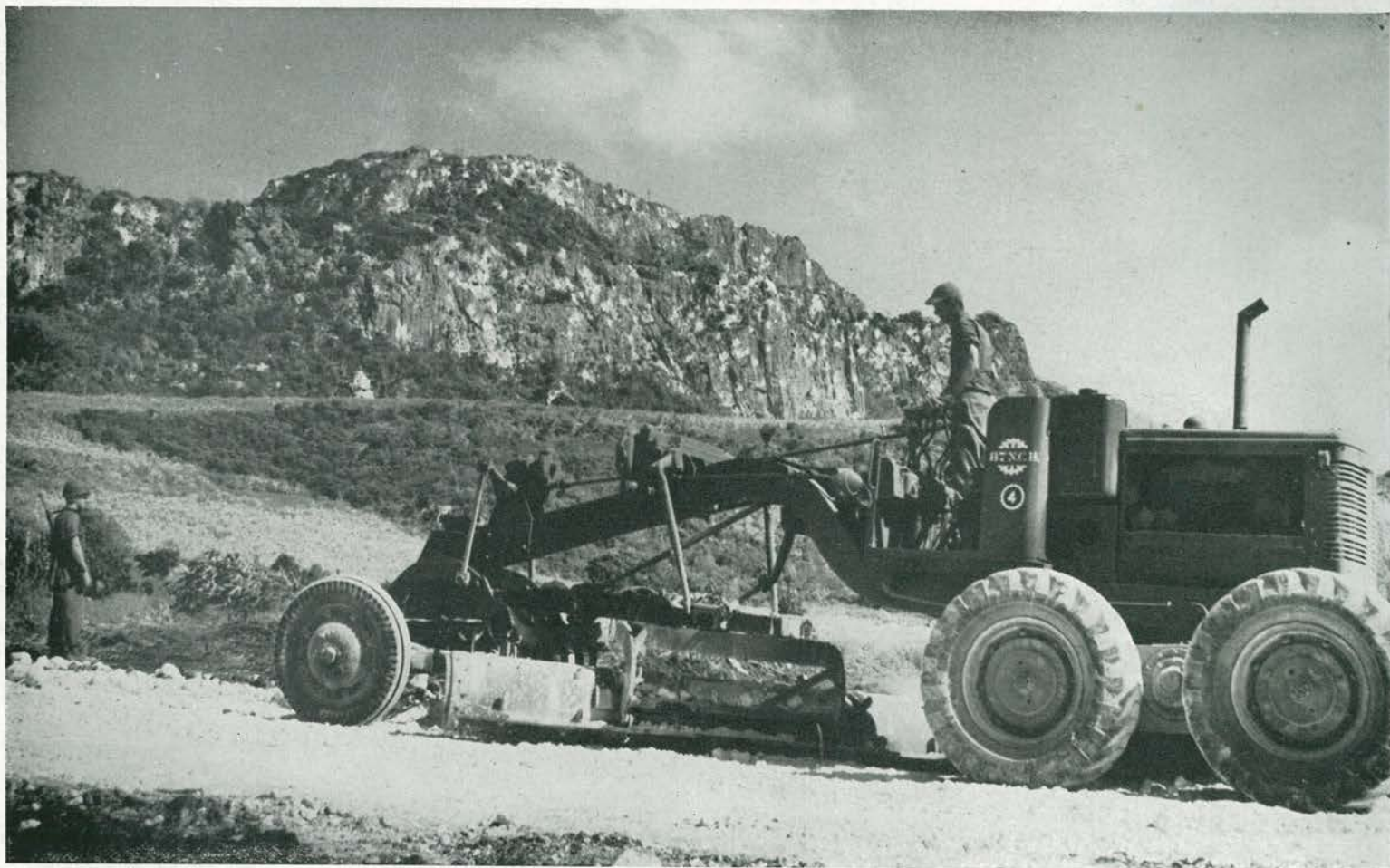


**HAND LAUNDRY.** Clothes laden with gritty coral dust and honest Seabee sweat are no problem for Sam Miller, "Little Caesar of the Chow Hall," who operates his own laundry. New camp sites have no washing machine luxuries for weeks.



**WIRED FOR ACTION.** William Shady (left) "gets a line" on pole as Andrew ("Mule") Steadley prepares to mount native timber. Altogether, 50 miles of telephone and 20 miles of electrical wire knitted the staging camp into a tightly-woven unit.





**JOB VARIETY.** A guard stands solitary watch as John Bell guides motor grader over rough coral road within staging camp perimeter. Dazzling coral surface gave off constant clouds of powdery dust and men and tents became coated with grimy skim of dirt. De-

spite sustained adverse conditions, American vehicles kept right on rolling over roads once traveled by the Sons of Heaven. Many Jap soldiers (and some civilians) had somehow managed to elude dragnet and were living in hills like animals.

## SAIPAN WAS STAGING AREA FOR OKINAWA PUSH

In early 1945, Saipan was a front page punchline in the news of the world. As the battalion's advance echelon arrived there on 27 January, they were already reading of the huge B-29 armadas taking off from the Marianas for the Jap homeland. Again, the seasoned 87th was moving into a front seat!

As the second echelon rolled in on 16 February, they were treated to the stirring sight of a huge convoy of 56 PA ships—loaded to the gunwhales with Marines—heading for the all-out assault against bloody Iwo Jima.

The staging camp had been pitched in a cleared sugar cane field at the base of a tall, jagged, shell-pocked mountain cliff. Tents had been thrown up hastily with no thought of permanence.

By far the most persistent gripe of the men was the sustained scarcity of fresh water. Mates waited in long, tiresome lines for a ration of one-third of a bucket of the precious necessity three times a day. Eventually, salt-water showers were installed in order to furnish at least rudimentary bathing facilities.

Due to the extremely poor living conditions, morale was not at its best. Food again reverted to the almost forgotten GI rations. Beer, although usually issued twice a week, was lukewarm and anything but refreshing.

However, with the 29 March change of command, certain essential changes began to occur. Ice water, for example, was served at chow; iced beer was sold in the newly-erected beer garden; and ice cream—of all things!—again appeared on the menu. "The Forgotten Battalion" naturally began to perk up!

Construction took a brief respite on Saipan. A few carpenter crews threw together some large quonsets at the 39th General Hospital and later erected a few long wooden structures for the natives in Garapan.

The Allied Military Government borrowed an 87th survey party to lay out various housing projects in the native area, while Chief Andy Competiello rubbed elbows with Jap civilian draftsmen at Camp Susupe. This, and the clearing of adjacent areas for incoming Seabees, comprised the battalion's construction program on HODE.

Reliable scuttlebutt had the 87th joining the huge, recently-formed Tenth Army. Wild rumors foretold an all-out push in the near future. The next beachhead would probably be Formosa, the China coast or Japan proper! Meanwhile, the battalion sweated through another series of lectures and refresher courses covering all phases of military science and tactics.

The neighboring 24th Infantry Regiment permitted 87th officers and men to accompany them on night patrols. Various "volunteers" cut legitimate notches on their rifle-stocks after patrolling the Jap-infested hills with this veteran colored outfit.

In spite of a constant vigil by a cordon of guards, the battalion supply dump time and again displayed evidence of enemy thievery. The guard was doubled and ordered to shoot any moving object after sundown.

One wild night, shortly before midnight, a terrific barrage of rifle fire awakened the slumbering camp. Guns of all descriptions joined the fray from the obviously excited O. O. D. and M. A. A. offices.

Word spread that Japs were trapped and pinned down by at least 40 would-be heroes wielding '03s, BARs and even two machine-guns. The entire camp was naturally kept on edge all night by the nearby sustained, crackling gunfire.

Finally, dawn came and all hands hurried to the supply dump to gaze upon the carnage. However, to everyone's amazement, no bodies lay strewn about the shell-pocked area. Nor had any of the alleged Japs surrendered! In fact, there weren't any Japs around at all. There were only the crestfallen "Gestapo" whose faces will doubtless always crimson whenever the incident is mentioned.

Later, almost the entire battalion witnessed a prime example of Saipan's savage warfare as waged in the Spring of 1945. The men stood in noon chow-line and watched a 24th Infantry patrol, high on a towering, shell-scarred ledge, mow down three cornered Japs at point-blank range and then throw the bodies over the precipice for further disposition.

After a few months of this, the battalion was mentally geared for the move against BIVE.





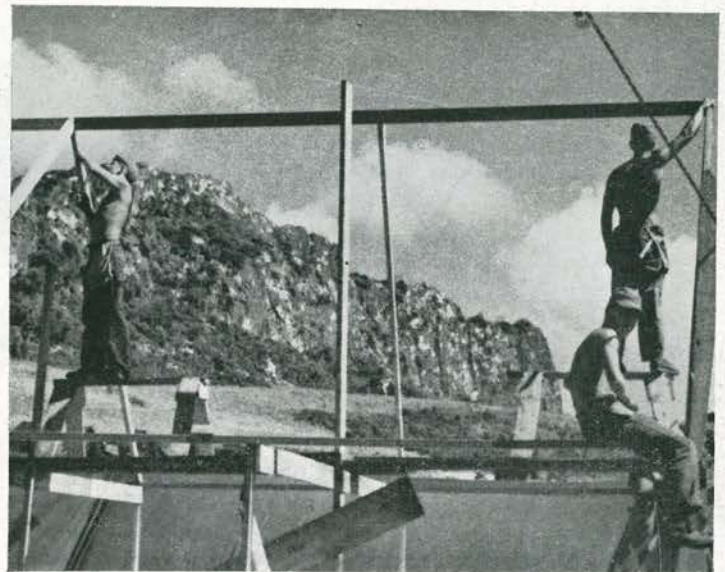
**SUPPLIES ARRIVE.** Charlie ("Pudgy") Barker, supply storekeeper (left), checks shipping lists as Marvin Martin, Raymond Allard and Everett Dubuque place a box in supply dump. Jap rails proved boon in setting up bays and keeping materials dry.



**WATCH IT CLOSE, MATE!** Most precious commodity of overseas battalions is Stateside lumber. Mike Lubisch (right) keeps sharp lookout for any and all "procuring" parties as truck-crane swings another net of supplies onto bays. Bullgang takes five.



**DAILY WORD.** Second echelon reaches staging camp on 17 February and the newcomers rush division bulletin boards for "the latest" and tent assignments. After reading all notices, new arrivals will seek out first echelon cronies for "the real lowdown."



**FRAMED.** Warren Parrish, Joe Ward and unidentified carpenter's mate are shown in midst of framing battalion barber shop, which will be ready for customers once a tarp covering is thrown over skeleton. All staging structures were strictly temporary.



**TOPSIDE.** The battalion's staging life was governed by directives and orders issued from this row of tent-offices: Personnel and Disbursing (far left), Camp Administration, Executive Officer, OinC, Operations, O. O. D. —and Eddie Breitenbach.



**SHOT AGAIN.** The memory of past shots was all too vivid as the men fell into line to receive "The Square Needle" again in anticipation of the coming invasion. Shots were given for Yellow Fever, Cholera and Tetanus. Men received shots in both arms.





**WATER! WATER! WATER!** Painful cries and dejected spirits are linked forever with memories of Saipan's acute water shortage. Trucks hauled the available supply around the clock, storing the precious liquid in large distilleries, but the crying demand could never be met! Bucket brigades

formed in long lines prior to "watering hours," but a guard on each spigot allowed only one-third of a bucket to each dirty man. Here, a typical group waits for the main valve to be opened.



**CAN DO—AGAIN!** The embarrassing shortage of fresh water was in sharp contrast to the limitless supply of salt water. This ingenious contraption was "invented" by some of the more progressive element, using empty fuel drums, fashioned together by pipe. It was another illustration of what

the combined talent of two 87th divisions (P and T) could accomplish working together. This water truck was put into operation none too soon as most of the outfit was groggy from dust.





**BUG TENT.** When this strange tent opened for business, everyone suspected the worst. Here, green shirts and trousers, as well as blankets and socks, were given a thorough impregnation. Scuttlebutt said BIVE would be lousy with bugs—and Japs!



**X MARKS THE SPOT,** but in this instance a yellow X will identify the portions of each Seabee's wardrobe that have been chemically rendered bug-proof by dipping into a DDT solution by Jesse Coomes (left) and John Henderson. These precautions created much scuttlebutt.



**SLUGS FOR PARATROOPERS.** Armory group works far into the night in March when Saipan went on an all-night black alert—ENEMY INVASION EXPECTED! Left to right: Ed. Simons, Jim Kellar, "Tubby" Hiles, Charlie Welsey and Willie Hanley prepare for the worst.



**CONDITION BLACK.** The suddenly aroused camp turns out for hurried muster, toggled in coveralls, and helmets and carrying pieces and gas-masks. This was battalion's only scare at Saipan and resulted from reports of Jap task force headed for Marianas.



**AT HOME.** Battalion was open to receive visitors when this progress shot was taken of the completed camp in early March. Tailor and barber shops, as well as Ship's Store, are in foreground. Officers Country is situated in the background.



**ADMIRAL'S HEALTH CLUB.** Muscular members of "Admiral Ben" Stone's celebrated health club always managed to find time for their daily workout. The Admiral (back to camera) instructs Stan Fendryk, Bob Harrington, Joe Cabral (lifting) and "Lippy" Lipshitz.





**CHARGE!** Employing the shrill battle-cry picked up at New Caledonia from Actor John Alexander's long remembered impersonation of the immortal "Teddy" in "Arsenic and Old Lace," an 87th division simulates a charge over rugged Saipan hills. Such field maneuvers were basic in the outfit's extensive military training pro-

gram. During these rigorous field problems, many men discovered they weren't physically up to invasion standards. However, daily hikes (with loaded pieces!) through the Jap-haunted hills soon remedied this situation.

## SAIPAN FIELD MANEUVERS TOO REALISTIC AT TIMES

Saipan was bad. Thousands of stubborn Japs still remained in the hills and caves, frequently ambushing unwary small parties in broad daylight.

Guards surrounded the camp perimeter each night, challenging and firing almost in the same breath. Sudden volleys often awakened the entire camp. No one dared move beyond the fixed area.

Scouting parties from the neighboring 24th Infantry killed hundreds of Japs during the 87th's staging period.

Jap remains rotted everywhere. Even the battalion camp site was littered with bleaching bones. Unexploded rockets with blocks of TNT attached stuck out of the ground like arrows.

A new firing range was set up and pieces were zeroed again, this time in earnest—like checking an important piece of equipment.

Large groups travelled across the island to the 20-mm. AA range to fire at towed sleeves. Mortars and machine-guns acquired a new meaning. All hands had a go at them.

Combat marching took the place of close-order drill. These hikes gradually lengthened to 10 miles over dangerous ridges and deceptive hills, along narrow trails in thickly-wooded hollows, and through fields of tall sugar cane. The last quarter-mile was usually at a jog-trot.

This was combat training in enemy-infested territory—not routine drilling in boot! The shell-scarred cliffs, the wreckage of homes and the shreds of blasted civilian clothing convinced even the hardest skeptic that this war was actually a survival of the fittest.

Throughout these daily field exercises, training groups were continually flushing small groups of armed Japs in the fields of sugar cane. Greatly outnumbered, the surprised Japs usually beat it!

The 87th had been assigned to the new Tenth Army for the forthcoming mammoth operation against BIVE. And scuttlebutt said this army was slated to blast all the way inside the Jap Empire!

But the mates didn't seem too much concerned. They were still too busy discussing the recent New Caledonia maneuver—perhaps better known as "The Quick Shuffle"—and how it was applied to the battalion's aborted "rest period."



**PEEPHOLE.** Sam Fields peers cautiously through a comparatively large hole made by Naval shellfire on an enemy blockhouse during the invasion of Saipan in June, 1944. This blasted fortification was found during one of many military maneuvers in March.





AND NOW FOR A SMOKE. Tired, sweaty, aching Seabees halt for "The Pause That Refreshes." The indispensable cigarettes are forthwith lighted and canteens drained to within the last drop as squad protecting column's rear arrives. Most men found these infrequent rest periods all too short, at

first, but they were soon able to hike miles without tiring. Here, group rests adjacent sugar cane fields where a party of Japs had been flushed a short time before. (See page 351.)



FIELD LECTURE. Chief Vic Cedarstaff outlines next phase of field maneuvers while the class continues to recover from long, hard pull up into the mountains. Sugar cane in these fields was well over heads of even the six-footers and was frequent hideout for Japs.



DANGEROUS BUSINESS. Jim Bilyard (right) gives Wendell Cornish, specialist in mine detection work, a hand as latter guides latest type detector carefully over ground. Cornish, along with Ens. Edwin Rayson, was temporarily attached to the 87th for Okinawa operation.





PRELUDE. "Coming events cast their shadow before" as battalion members, assigned to the mine detection squad, work out against a cloud-filled backdrop. When Allied assault forces reach BIVE, (now suspected to be operational code name for the Ryukyus), every foot of invasion terri-

tory must be combed with these detectors and buried mines unearthed and exploded. This was to be a tedious task, but a highly necessary one to keep men and equipment from being blown to bits.



FIRST COOK'S TOUR. With the unexpected change of command in late March, Comdr. Richard R. Cook, the new OinC, promptly inaugurated his celebrated COOK'S TOURS of Saipan and future destinations. Such tours, of course, were scheduled for Sunday as the 87th now had the Sabbath off

for a welcome change. Here, a truck-load of battalion "tourists" are casually inspecting the stark ruins of a native home. Battered Jap gun positions along the coast also attracted these "globe trotters."



# ACK-ACK CREWS PREPARE FOR "BLUE" INVASION



**COMMENCE FIRING!** The staccato bark of lead-belching 20-mm. guns rent the air above Saipan as each anti-aircraft crew fires its allotted rounds at the plane-towed sleeve. This was the next best thing to action and the men loved it.



**TRACK THE SLEEVE!** An 87th ack-ack crew, led by Mackey Davis (right foreground), tensely eyes approaching target as the gunner lines his sights on moving sleeve. As in the Solomons, the men took this type of training quite seriously.



**PANDEMONIUM.** Dozens of 20s all along the firing line let loose simultaneously as the mechanical range-finder broadcasts the range. Hundreds of tracers streaked the air, all tending to converge on the target. The noise of the mass firing was so intense many men held their cotton-stuffed ears

and figuratively hung on. Crews from ships anchored in Tanapag Harbor, as well as all Seabees, trained at this well arranged Naval gunnery school. All firing was directed toward sea.





FRATERNIZATION? A Jap prisoner of war intently studies the intricate mechanism of an American transit as his four fellow prisoners and five Seabees watch the proceedings. Chief Kenneth Hansing (left), Sammy Carlino, Jim Bollerhey, Joe Fontcuberta (pointing to instrument) and Larry

Slater give helpful hints with hand motions from time to time. Jap prisoners assisted Allied forces in building up every captured island, thus releasing skilled GIs for more meticulous work. The Engineers really got around on Saipan.



39TH GENERAL HOSPITAL was one of three projects assigned the 87th during its three-month stay on Saipan. Above quonset hut additions provided cool, roomy wards for wounded Marines returning from the flaming inferno that was Iwo Jima in February. This hospital assignment was, in

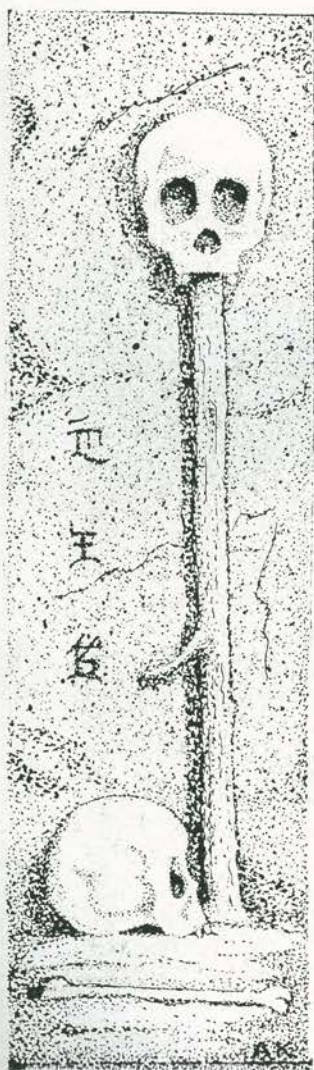
fact, the most sizeable Saipan project tackled by the unit. More and more the emphasis swung to military training and eventually this strange war found carpenters, painters and riggers maneuvering alongside storekeepers, yeomen and cooks.



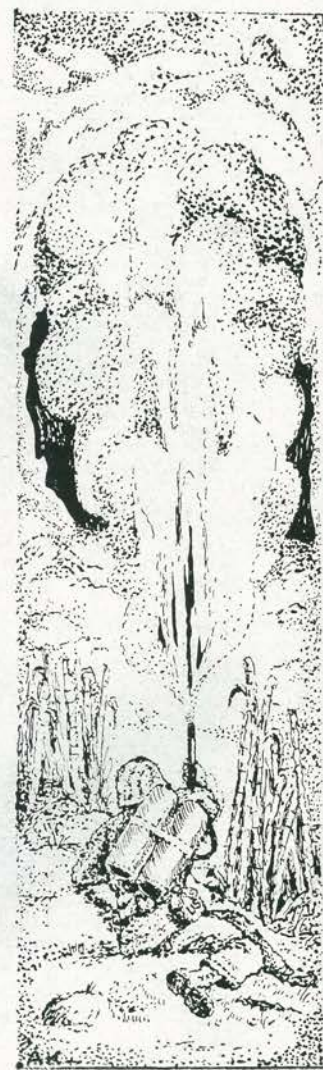


**HONORABLE ANCESTORS.** Three lonely skulls are grim reminders of the stubborn, fanatical Jap resistance that made Saipan one of the most costly Pacific bases to acquire. Jean Worley, Charlie Johnson and Pete DeRyke stumbled onto this cave during a souvenir hunt and decided to investi-

gate. In addition to numerous skeletons strewn about and Jap characters carved on cavern walls, the explorers also found bits of clothing, rusty weapons, Jap coins and diaries and even a few enemy photographs.



**ANYBODY HOME?** The yawning entrance to still another cavern dwarfs this party of armed "explorers" as they carefully size up the situation before entering the cave. Many caves were as large as an ordinary house and were used as temporary homes by Jap soldiers when they were driven inland by invasion forces. Booby traps were often found inside.







B-29 LAIR. Principal weapon used to bring Japan to her knees without invasion was the powerful armadas of Superforts, which flew out of the Marianas with Saipan as the hub of operations. These graceful sky monsters took off from (and most returned to) Isley

Field—once a Jap fighter strip. It was from the above lair that picked B-29s, carrying the world-shaking atomic bombs, took off on life-changing missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August, '45.

## SEABEES OCCUPY RINGSIDE SEATS FOR B-29 SHOW

For months news accounts were full of stories of the new weapon that was proving the answer to the long distances involved in the Pacific war.

With the arrival of the 87th on Saipan, mates grasped the first opportunity to visit the B-29 field and investigate the sky monsters at first hand.

Isley Field was built on the site of the captured Jap Aslito Strip. It was greatly enlarged, improved and reinforced with water asphalt topping by Army engineers to accommodate the heavier ships.

The men soon made the acquaintance of ground crews who showed them over the big planes from nose to tail.

Such mysteries as speed, altitude, bomb-loads, fire-power and other pertinent details soon became the source of much discussion in the staging area.

Morale during January and February, 1945, was low among the pilots and crews of the Superforts. Losses were high and the long 3,000-mile round-trip was a gruelling physical and mental ordeal.

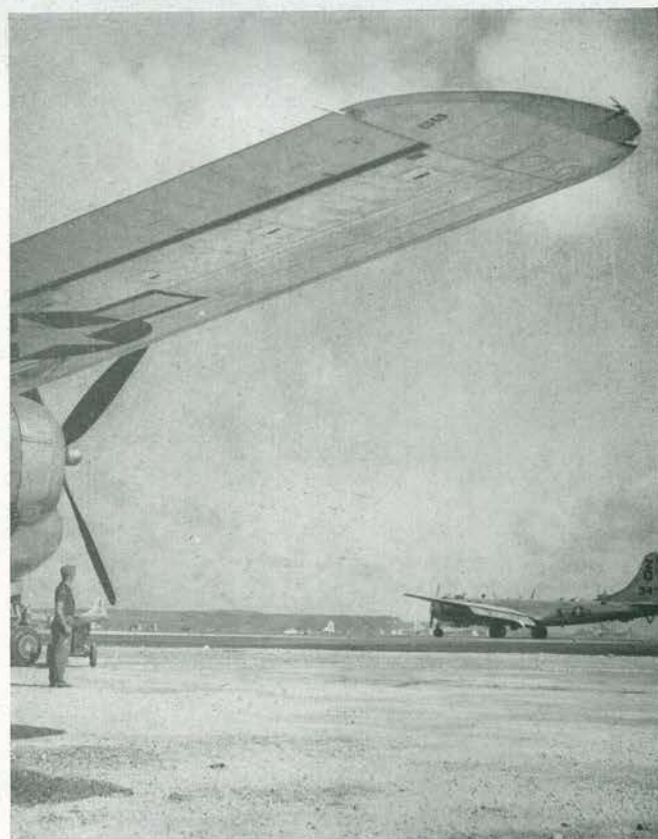
The most difficult problem was the weather over Japan. At 30,000 feet, the wind often blew at 200 miles an hour. Traveling upwind, this made the B-29s easy targets for ack-ack. Jap fighter pilots did not hesitate to ram the big planes.

However, the morale of the B-29 crews rose in March with the securing of Iwo Jima, halfway between Saipan and Tokyo. Iwo had been intended originally as a base for P-51 fighters, which were to accompany B-29s over Japan. But it turned out to be even more valuable as a rescue station where crippled or gas-shy B-29s could set down on the way back from Nippon.

With their new station established and with the added protection of fighters, the B-29s began a systematic burning of Japan's industrial areas with thousands of incendiaries.

Seated in the movie area in the evening, mates could watch the heavily-loaded Superforts get under way, one after the other, fly low for a time over the water, slowly gain altitude and head for the enemy's homeland.

By this time, the 87th had a ringside idea of what the Jap Empire was undergoing and what was yet in store for the aggressors.



TAKE OFF! A Superfort, warming up for the take-off, races its powerful motors on taxiway (right) before wheeling out onto one of several main strips. Despite distance involved, many Seabees from staging areas visited Isley Field at every opportunity.





**UNHATCHED EGGS.** A crack B-29 ground crew, radiating plenty of "know-how," goes about the routine business of readying a Superfort for the next mission to Japan as Seabee visitors (right) look on admiringly. Some of crew concentrate on motors while others prepare to load up bomb-

racks with monstrous "eggs" laid out in left foreground. It took immense quantities of fuel, ammunition and bombs to keep these Gargantuan war-birds operating at their peak of efficient destruction.



**TAIL.** Two crewmen slip the tail-belly turret into place as the ground crew buttons up the great ship for the next Jap strike, which will get under way as soon as flight crew arrives from briefing room. These missions were taken quite seriously by crews.



**MISSION'S END.** Dog-tired and completely worn out from the long, unescorted flight over Japan, a B-29 crew loads into waiting vehicle for usual short session with Intelligence before hitting the sack. This was America's "first team" in the Pacific play-off.





**PIN-UPS.** An unmistakable attitude of nonchalance and boredom describes this indifferent mechanic as he dozes peacefully beside the shapely inspiration painted on nose of another well-named B-29. Several artists had full-time assignments at Isley Field painting lovely nudes or challeng-

ing motifs on the Superforts. The names of the ships, in most cases, reflected that which was uppermost in the crew's minds while they were about their lethal business. Such art work was definitely good for morale.



**CRAFTSMANSHIP.** Mute tribute to the uncanny Jap craftsmanship was found in these concrete pillboxes lining the southern ridges of Isley Field. Walls, three-foot thick, remain intact despite terrific Naval bombardment and aerial bombing during the invasion. When the air corps took over

Aslito Field and renamed it after Comdr. Isley, these sturdy block-houses were used for storage of supplies and as living quarters until more suitable billets could be built. Several Superforts are parked on hard-stands.





FIELD DAY. Both officers and men spent long hours washing and polishing their Superforts. They seemed to lavish the same care on these big ships as they had once accorded their personal automobiles in civilian days. Bullet holes were patched and all traces of grease and dirt were

removed from the gleaming, stainless surface with the aid of vigorous "elbow grease." Each new mission invariably found the ships in A-1 condition. Several B-24 Liberators are parked across taxiway.



"A THING OF BEAUTY is a joy forever," the poet said, but the regular appearance of these giant B-29s over Tokyo was doubtless anything but beautiful to the doomed Japanese. As a party of Seabees watch, the four powerful engines thunder as the pilot prepares to "give her the gun."

Entire ship quivers and strains. Then, the brakes are released and the immense war machine leaps forward. Gracefully it rises, the wheels fold magically and the long flight has begun.





**PUBLIC BATH.** Chamorro women and children gather at an evening at one of Camp Susupe's many public wells to wash clothes and bathe. All this is an integral part of the varied and interesting life inside the enemy alien compound supervised by the Al-

lied Military Government. Clothes were scrubbed in true Navy-fashion—1) dipped in bucket of water; 2) laid out flat on the spacious concrete deck; 3) scrubbed vigorously with large stiff brush. The parallel ended there.

## CAMP SUSUPE WAS A PRIME SAIPAN ATTRACTION

Saipan was the first Jap territory where U. S. Forces encountered large numbers of Jap citizens. Scrawny, hungry civilians still drifted out of caves where they had hidden since the battle began in June, 1944.

They were housed in the two-mile-square compound called Camp Susupe (named after the nearby shallow lake) which sheltered approximately 18,000 Japs, along with numerous Chamorros, Koreans and Kanakas.

The compound was a prime objective of the 87th sightseers, but the closest most men were able to approach the reservation was to ride by on a truck. A heavy detail of MPs on the outside was reinforced by an interior guard of Civilian Police appointed by the Allied Military Government.

The captive civilians lived in makeshift shelters, built of weathered planks, battered sheet metal roofing from the nearby bomb-shattered sugar refinery and tattered bits of canvas.

During the Saipan staging period, Seabee carpenters were at work constructing large, clean, wooden barracks at a new camp site a few miles away. When these were ready for occupancy, it would improve the sanitary conditions of the badly overcrowded settlement. A survey party of the 87th Engineers and a draftsman worked at the compound for several weeks and found the strange customs of the occupants highly interesting.

Canned food rationed out to the civilians from huge warehouses was supplemented by fresh vegetables and fruit, which they cultivated in the fertile Saipan soil. Ample supplies of fish caught in the nearby Pacific were almost daily on their menu. Besides tilling the fields and fishing, the Japs worked as common laborers and at other jobs they were equipped to handle for the Armed Forces. Most laborers received 35c per day while skilled workers were paid 50c.

An Army-staffed hospital received the seriously ill and wounded. The "Midtown Pharmacy" treated about 1,200 cases a day, mostly malnutrition, diarrhea, worms and beriberi.

Saipan Japs apparently had one of the highest birthrates on Earth. The swarms of children, who played everywhere in the area and begged for candy, seemed quite happy in their new surroundings.

The treatment they received as prisoners proved to even the most suspicious Japanese that their government's propaganda had viciously distorted the American enemy. The Americans had taken a long step forward, promoting inestimable goodwill by their just treatment of the vanquished.



**PASS ONE!** Battalion surveyors, working within the native compound for the Civilian Government, were required to show certified passes before gaining entrance. Joe Fontcuberta smilingly presents his pass to unsmiting woman guard as he enters restricted section of camp.



# JAPS ENJOY USUAL PURSUITS AT CAMP SUSUPE



**RECITATION.** Sponsored by the Allied Military Government, young boys and girls attend school regularly within the extensive native compound. Here, youngsters are taught to read and write and are given the same recreational opportunities as kids in Democratic countries.



**MILITARISM.** Despite rigid restrictions imposed by Allied authorities, native teachers still contrive to inject a bit of military training into educational routine. Here, the alert cameraman catches a group of young girls standing at "Right, Dress!"



**FREE FOR ALL.** Carefree boys wrestle and pummel one another just as American boys have done since Revolutionary times. As usual, this community tussle stemmed from two young Chamorros fighting over candy. Native kids, like those everywhere, love sweets.



**BALANCED PRECISION.** Two heavily laden buckets swing lightly from the crosspole as this sturdy native woman walks barefooted along a dusty road within the compound. As is customary throughout the Orient, women do bulk of the manual work.



**SLOW BUT SURE.** A slightly sway-backed ox trudges after his master, pulling a cart-load of highly usable rough lumber. These two-wheeled carts were most conspicuous on Saipan. The battalion had seen a few on New Caledonia. Such contraptions always excited interest.



**FISH MARKET.** A proud, smiling native woman displays a fat, salt-water fish to her inquiring Seabee visitors. Fish is a cherished staple in the native diet on Saipan. Squatting position is seen throughout the Central and Western Pacific.





CLASSES. Native girls study their lessons in an outdoors room of the Camp Susupe school sponsored by their American conquerors for the uplift of a race long trod under foot by the Japanese. Meanwhile, the irrepressible boys are enjoying a bit of recess (background). The people

were still free to worship as they pleased, the leading faiths being Buddhism and Shintoism. The makeshift Buddhist temple then had a tin roof, no front door, but its priest had all his trappings.

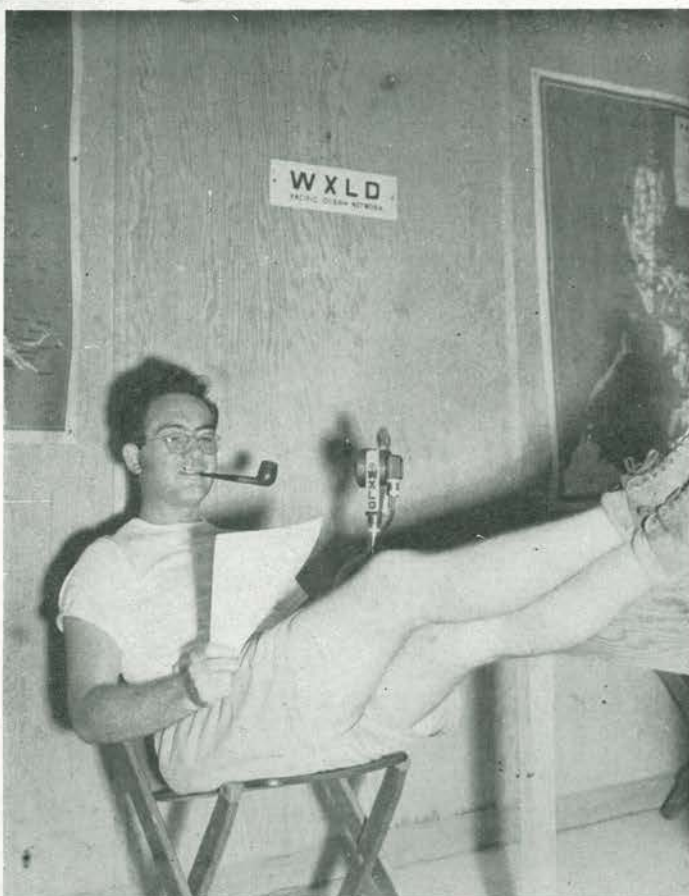


PROTEST. Violent screams rent the air as THE EARTHMOVER photographer took this little fellow's picture. He was in fine fettle until he spied camera. Ten to 15 babies are born each day at Camp Susupe. Births are recorded.

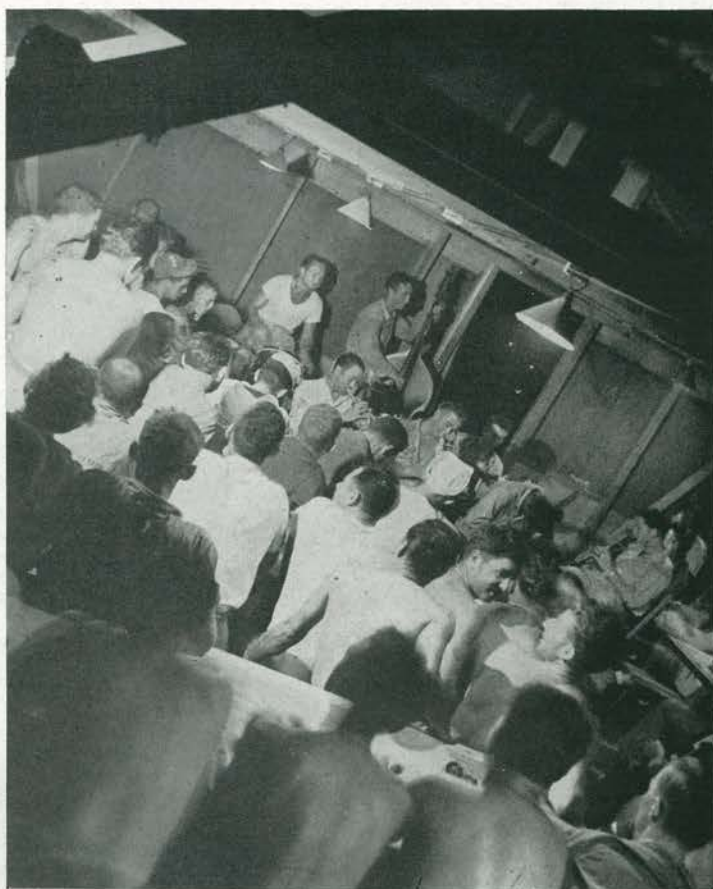


SAGE AND SPOUSE. This elderly gentleman of the old school refused to pose alone and it wasn't until his good wife was beside him that picture could be taken. This old couple appeared to be taking new life in stride.





"SAIPAN SAM," the gentleman with the sarcastic voice, is photographed in midst of his daily broadcast from Station WXLD. His "must" program reproved officers and men alike, but as caustic as he was, no one ever missed his daily tirade. (Real name: Ashley Sims.)



DOMINANT SEVEN. A memorable swing session in the chow hall by musicians formerly with Tommy Dorsey, Earl ("Father") Hines, "Fats" Waller and Stan Kenton was topflight relaxation. Battalion bandmen were: "Josh" Kenning, George Yorke, Armond Kirschbaum and Tom Peiffer.



TANAPAG HARBOR. The second COOK'S TOUR found truck-loads of mates ranging far and wide over the 75-square-mile island. Here, a typical group pauses en route to enjoy refreshing panoramic beauty of Tanapag Harbor. Remains of the erstwhile capital city of Garapan is be-

yond headlands (left). In order to obtain truck and driver for Sabbath tours, each group of "tourists" had to recruit required number (20) and a CPO to be in charge of trip.





CENTRAL PACIFIC. Atop a hill near Marpi Point at northern tip of Saipan, Edmund ("Jas'") Jaskulski, photographer and executive editor of THE EARTHMOVER, consents (under pressure) to be photographed against this sweeping background, which perhaps reveals more than the censors

could have passed had the war not ended many months before the distribution of this volume. This superb shot, along with the half-page view on opposite page, shows prominent coral reef protecting Tanapag Harbor to best advantage.



SUICIDE CLIFFS. The Pacific's blue waters beat against rugged coral reefs and cliffs in endless fury, causing salt spray to resemble boiling steam arising from the surf. Hundreds of frantic civilians threw their children and then themselves over the high cliffs rather than be captured by Marines

mopping up northern end of the island. As the 87th was leaving Saipan, months after the mass suicides of '44, remnants of clothing and human bones were still being found along the shore.





**JAP FACTORY.** Leading industry of Charan Kanoa was a sprawling sugar mill (refinery), which was reduced to above state by 16-inch Naval shell-fire during the furious Allied assault against this key to the Marianas and the approaches to Tokyo. The nearby town of Charan Kanoa (population:

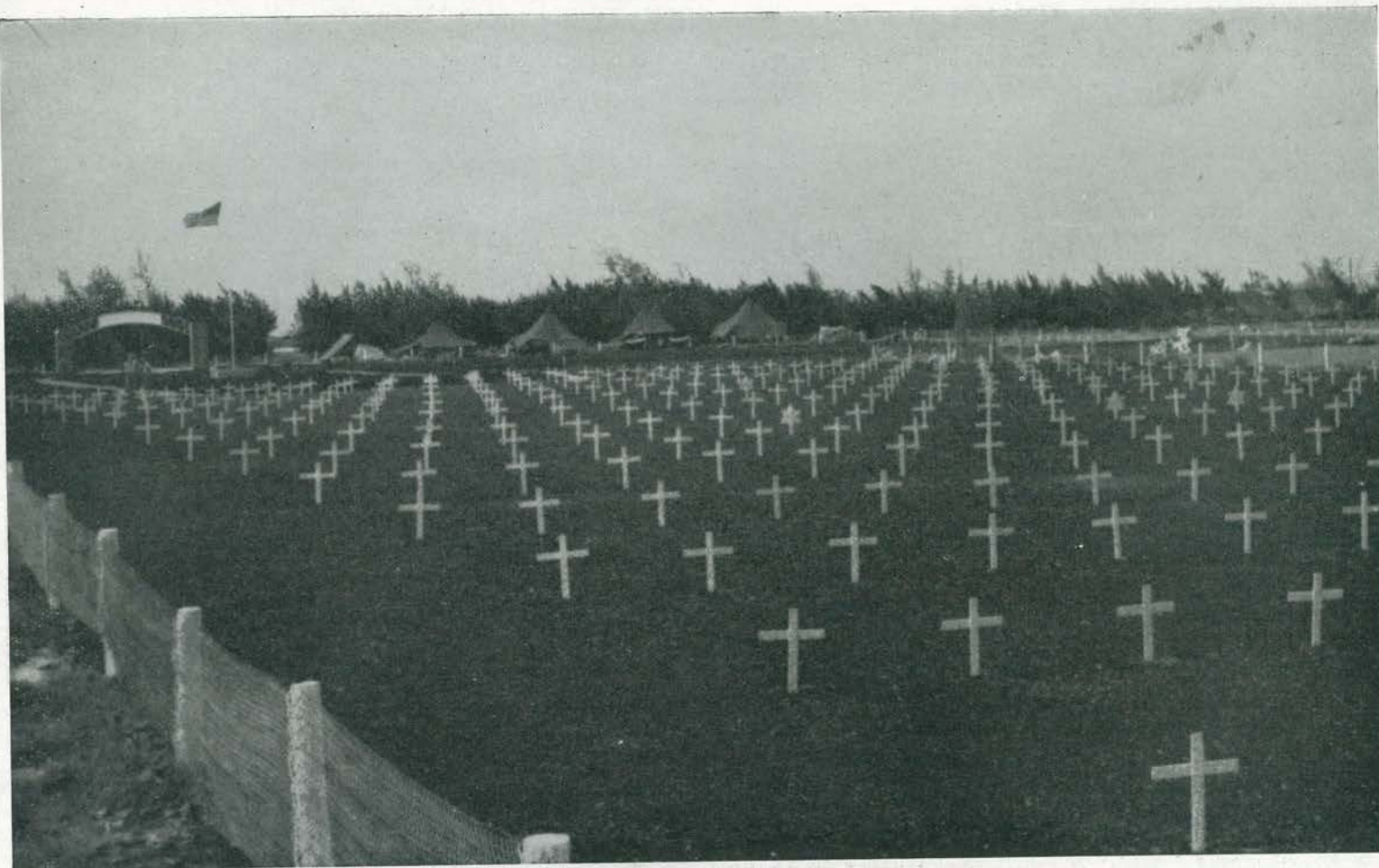
2,500) also lay in a mass of twisted rubble. Although sturdily built and reinforced, the sugar mill was unable to withstand terrific barrages laid down by Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58.



**BUSTED BANK.** With windows, including frames, completely blasted, roof gone and walls peeling, all that's left of the once proud Bank of Garapan stands as grim reminder to Jap survivors of U. S. might. Yawning hole at top-front of building and those in right end indicate direct hits by giant

projectiles fired offshore. Entire thriving city of Garapan, Jap capital of the Marianas group, was virtually wiped out during invasion. (TIME's issue, 17 July 1944, pictures same building.)





**THE PRICE.** Row after row of gleaming white crosses mark the final resting place of the Fourth Marine Division's gallant dead—part of the price America paid for a "must" island. To the U. S., the cost of Saipan was admittedly high—2,359 killed, 1,213 missing, 11,481 wounded. But

the overall military justification was high, too; Saipan was the most important objective yet taken by U. S. troops—it established an air base only 1,500 miles from Tokyo.



**JAPS PAID, TOO.** Most of Japan's 16,000 known military dead in the titanic struggle for Saipan were buried in mass graves dug and covered by bulldozers. In addition to 1,000 prisoners, countless others were missing in caves where they were buried by explosive or bulldozers. Here,

in a hallowed corner of Camp Susupe are buried most civilian casualties who were caught between the American juggernaut and their own lines. Graves are coral topped with wooden markers bearing names of deceased.





SHINTO, which literally means "emperor worship," is embodied in any shrine where Jap soldiers pray to their "Son of Heaven." When Japan originally occupied Saipan, they brought their shrines along. Shinto worship posed a definite problem in religious freedom for the Allied

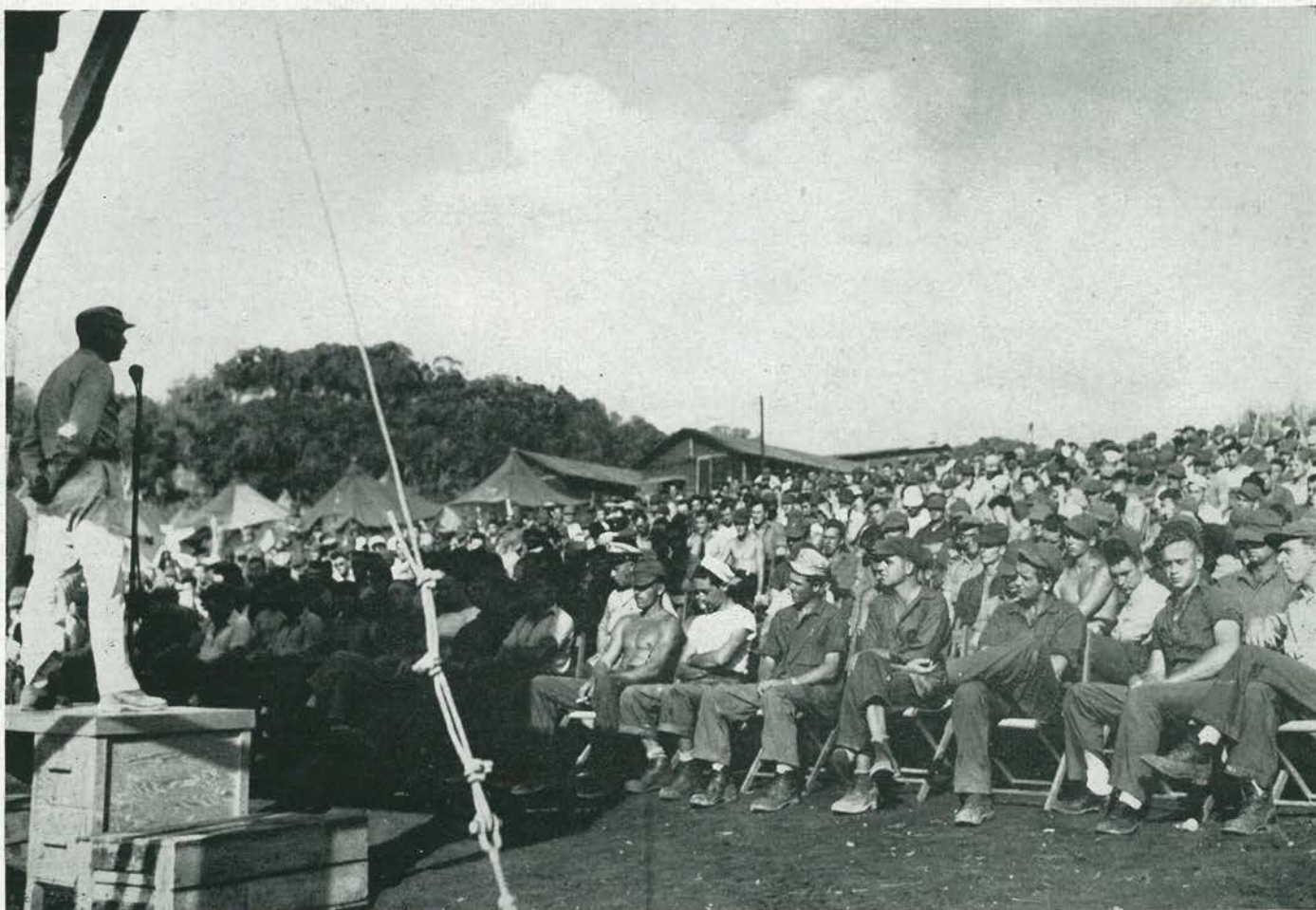
Military Government charged with the administration of Camp Susupe. Authorities had made no attempt to stop Shintoism, but no facilities had been set up to encourage it. Here, touring 87th representatives view a Shinto shrine at close range.



JAP PILLBOX. Numbers of these formidable fortifications still rimmed the future B-29 field after invasion—an ignoble monument to short-sighted Jap stupidity. These pillboxes, constructed of reinforcing steel and concrete three feet thick, were apparently impregnable to attacking troops. Two

narrow slits at unseen end constituted observation and firing posts. The opened iron door was the sole entrance. Finally, American invasion forces stormed close enough for craftsmen to weld door shut. Occupants were exterminated by grenades through firing slits.





"I SALUTE YOU!" Comdr. Easterly assembles the battalion in the area on a rare Sabbath morning to bid men he had led since 16 April 1943 a heartfelt goodbye. This was Skipper Easterly's last official act before turning the OinC reins over to his suc-

cessor, Comdr. Richard R. Cook. The change of command came as a shock to most. On the eve of the largest operation in the Pacific campaign, the men groped for an explanation, but none was coming.

## FIRST CHANGE OF COMMAND OCCURS AT SAIPAN

On 29 March 1945, the 87th Seabees were shaken out of their staging area lethargy at Saipan. Without warning, announcement was made that Comdr. Robert Easterly, original OinC, had been relieved by Comdr. Richard R. Cook, a veteran construction man, who had been in charge of the 99th Battalion in the Pacific during his previous tour of duty.

The responsibility of guiding the 87th had rested squarely on Comdr. Easterly's shoulders for approximately two years. He assumed the helm at Camp Peary, took the men north to Endicott, shepherded them across the country to California, and paced them for 19 months in the South Pacific where the strain was frequently at the breaking point.

After this rather exacting tour of duty, The Skipper was ordered to the States for a well-deserved rest and reassignment.

It was not easy for Comdr. Easterly to part with the officers and men whose destinies he had guided for so long. His voice was filled with considerable emotion as he addressed the battalion for the last time.

In concluding his farewell address, he paid the 87th his greatest compliment: "Men of the 87th, I salute you!" Suiting the action to the word, he snappily saluted and stepped down. The Easterly regime had ended.

A leader with an outstanding record had been appointed to succeed the first OinC. Comdr. Cook took over a comparatively well-organized outfit. The veteran 87th was disgruntled, however, and travel-weary. On the threshold of its most important forward move, the battalion, as a whole, was "down." Never in battalion history had morale been so low.

To the mates who still nurtured hopes of handing over the new equipment to some "boot" outfit and going home, this unexpected change of command was the final, crushing blow.

It was obvious to even the most optimistic "die-hard" that an officer fresh from Stateside leave would not be placed in charge of a homeward-bound battalion.

The airfield makers were going forward again. All hands were well aware that the forthcoming operation would be the biggest thing yet. Never had so many men or so much invasion equipment been assembled in the Pacific.

The die was cast. The blue chips were down. There was no turning back now.



GOOD LUCK! Comdr. Easterly, dressed for return to the States, bids farewell to his successor, Comdr. Cook, prior to departing for airport. Despite inherent sadness of parting with his command, Skipper Easterly, photogenic to the end, manages a last smile.





**THE MULTITUDE.** The 87th, over a thousand strong, has just been marched to the sloping theatre area where they are patiently awaiting arrival of Comdr. Easterly, who desires to address them on an unannounced subject. Each man, according to Seabee custom in the Pacific, has brought

his folding chair, and is sweating it out as photographer works the gang over from various angles. Projection booth is directly behind crowd and the Photo Lab is housed in tent at extreme left.



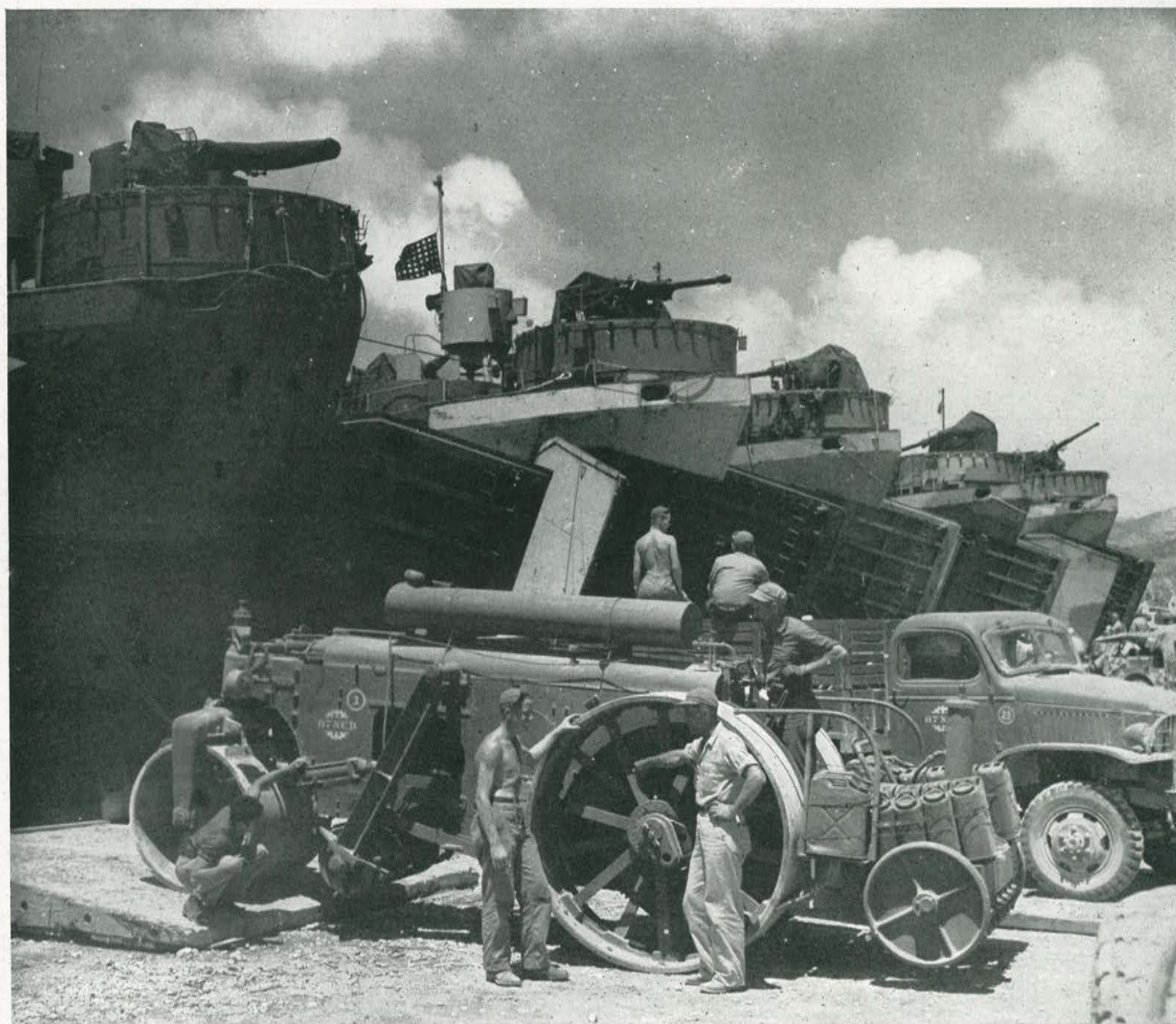
**CLOSE-UP** of Comdr. Easterly reveals serious expression on retiring skipper's countenance as he prepares to salute his erstwhile charges for their contributions toward his success as a Seabee leader. Lt. Comdr. Flynn, "exec" throughout the Easterly regime, stands by.



**SUCCESS STORY.** This was Comdr. Cook as an electrician's mate, second class in World War I. From an enlisted man in one war to a full commander in the next is second skipper's enviable service record. He bridged the gap!



# MARIANAS TO RYUKYUS



S A I P A N T O O K I N A W A





D PLUS 16. Lieut. Ben Markette and Lt.(jg) R. J. Seugling (standing on LST ramp) check muster list of first echelon for Okinawa as 87th loads at Saipan docks on 16 April 1945. Outfitted with rifles, packs, gas-masks, seabags and folding chairs, the men size up the "Large, Slow Targets"

that are to carry them to BIVE. Fully loaded trucks (left) await orders to commence rolling through massive steel doors onto tank deck of LSTs.



OPEN JAWS. What was to be the battalion's last forward move in World War II gets under way as smiling veterans commence filing into one of four LSTs. These men are squeezing past the blade of a D-8 bulldozer, which will be the first ashore when the ramp bangs down on the very

doorstep of the tottering Jap Empire. Nonchalant expressions on men's faces may be attributed to 20 months overseas, including a year in the Solomons.





**DAYBREAK.** With Saipan's craggy ranges, including renowned Mt. Tapotchau, looming in the background, the silhouetted form of a LST is seen against a typical Central Pacific sunrise. This is the morning the 87th's advance echelon moved out into the stream

to become an integral part of the most sweeping operation of the long and bitter Pacific War. A majority of the "chosen" were still asleep when this shot was taken by the early-rising cameraman.

## SEASONED EARTHMOVERS ENTER FLAMING OKINAWA SECTOR

There were four LSTs in the advance echelon of the 87th's nerve-testing move in April, 1945 from Saipan in the Marianas to Okinawa, strongest rung in the Ryukyu ladder stretching from Formosa to Japan.

The build-up for this move had been thorough and ominous. Disbursing urged all hands to take the limit on government insurance. All personal funds in excess of ten dollars had to be sent home.

The Medical Department lectured on the numerous diseases, miserable climatic conditions and the polluted water, which, it seemed, were the main features of the next island.

Mates stormed the armory and quickly cleaned out its supply of .30 caliber ammunition. Through all the build-up, the men never once forgot that Okinawa was only 370 miles from the Jap homeland! President Roosevelt's shocking death on 13 April stunned the entire camp as did Ernie Pyle's passing five days later on Ia Shima.

The rear echelon of 330 men and five officers—under the command of Lieut. William C. Reilly—remained at Saipan for several weeks to clean up the remaining camp area and drink up most of the battalion's beer and coke. The unit's cash funds were transferred to units not participating in the forward move. Records, meanwhile, were brought up-to-date.

At the dock area men piled off the trucks as best they could. After 20 months overseas, the average Seabee has accumulated enough gear to fill a carryall!

Early one April morning the heavily-protected 19-ship convoy slipped out of Tanapag Harbor, carrying with them, among others, the veteran 87th who were, after almost two years overseas, at last headed for the Emperor's backyard. It is only 1,400 miles from Saipan to Okinawa.

The men took up routine shipboard duties. Off duty, men read special pamphlets about "malaria-ridden, poverty-stricken, snake-infested Okinawa." One and all accustomed themselves to the Gook yen and sen, which had replaced the familiar dollar and cent as the new medium of exchange.

The grim, gray watchdogs prowled back and forth, maintaining a protective circle about their lumbering charges throughout the journey. Due to their constant alertness, many floating Jap mines were detected and detonated by gunfire.

Five days out of Saipan, the mates were both thrilled and re-

assured by the sight of the "Picket Line" around Okinawa and other Ryukyu Islands. Carriers, cruisers and escorts, they formed an endless steel chain around Okinawa, preventing the Jap from effectively reinforcing the besieged garrison.

The appearance of this evidence of power quickly convinced all hands that the U. S. Navy was indeed the undisputed ruler of the Western Pacific.

As Okinawa's mountain peaks appeared on the horizon, the convoy split. LSTs 894 and 895 continued on to Nakagusuku Wan Beach, while 879 and 1029 swung around past besieged Naha into the East China Sea. There, the mates witnessed units of the fleet—powerful battlewagons and sleek cruisers—steaming slowly along the shore, pouring it into the doomed capital city.

Here was the real big-time in action! Fire belched from elevated turrets—the ships rocked from the mighty recoil. After an interval, a cloud of smoke and flame would appear on the hillside, marking the spot where the huge missiles had exploded.

The sky was studded with planes. Corsairs, Hellcats, Avengers and Hell-divers bombed and strafed the trembling earth, singly and en masse all day long. Mates at ship's rail marveled at the sights. Everywhere the same comment: "How do they stand it? They must really be dugged in, eh?" It seemed incredible!

The word went around—"Tide's out, can't beach today . . ." The anchor went down. It wasn't long after dark until the Nips began to come over in force. The smoke-screen was laid down by all ships, 40s chattered and 90s roared. But still they came. A suicide plane hit a ship close by. With one huge, eye-splitting belch of flame and smoke, it sank in three minutes. Tracers raced across the skies.

And thus the night wore on with one raid after another. Gun crews stayed glued to their pieces—pouring it into the fanatics at every opportunity.

By dawn, the men were confirmed "believers!" "Let's get off this tub and dig a foxhole," became the watchword of all hands. Down the ramp clanked and the first D-8, chugging and puffing, rolled off on to the embattled island. The 87th had covered 13,980 miles upon reaching Okinawa.

No one had to say, "Roll 'em out, boys!" The previous night had rendered words useless. There was a war going on and the battle-seasoned 87th was again in the middle of it.





LOADED FOR BEAR is this fully loaded LST, which is ready for the seven-day voyage from Saipan to Okinawa. Perhaps, "Loaded for Japs" would have been a better title for this superb shot of an apparently confused scene. However, despite the appearance of unbridled confusion

ashore, the loading at Saipan went ahead on schedule with very few mistakes. Men will have to seek out deck space wherever they can find it. Two (right foreground) have already "staked" out a jeep.



SO LONG, MATES! With rail of both LSTs lined by shipmates bidding one another temporary farewell, port ship backs out into Tanapag Harbor where it will await formation of convoy. Last mail, along with beer and coke, was loaded aboard just before steel jaws snapped shut for shoveoff.

American flag on LST 894, like on all ships, flies at half-mast in respect to President Roosevelt's shocking death on 13 April as first echelon was leaving staging camp.



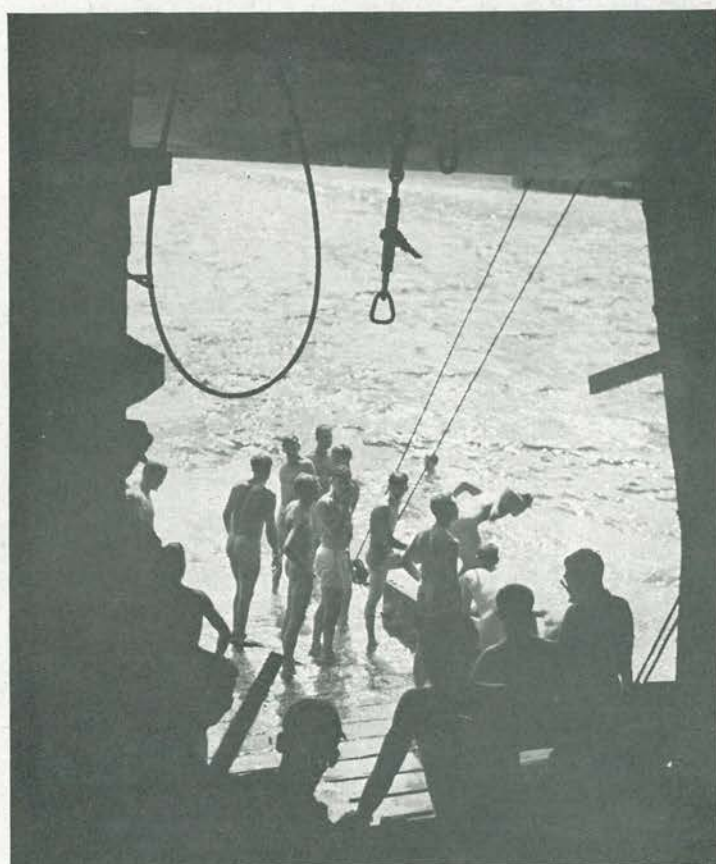


**FULL MOON.** With an unfettered heave-to, this unidentified mate soars high above the crowd in a perfect example of fine form and synchronization. While awaiting the oft-delayed sailing orders, the recreation-minded men found this sure way of passing time and escaping, at least, temporarily,

the blistering heat of the Marianas sun in April. Fortunately, the LST crew cooperated wholeheartedly in these simple pleasures by swinging open the great jaws and lowering the ramp for one and all.



**OUTING.** Battalion officers join in another carefree swim off LST ramp as word is received the convoy won't be leaving today. When they left Hueneme 20 months ago, everyone had swimming trunks, but that was a long time ago.



**COME WHAT MAY,** the happy-go-lucky mates are apparently determined to get the most out of each day. On the eve of their departure for bloody Okinawa, the probing camera catches all hands having a truly wonderful time.





**SACK TIME.** Not quite up to the accommodations of the *QUEEN MARY*, perhaps, but still a place to lay a weary body for a night's sleep at sea. Not to be caught short in case *ABANDON SHIP!* should become necessary, virtually all men sleep with most of their clothes on—even

socks and shoes in many instances! Some have "promoted" stretchers from LST Sick Bay and lie on top of ramp to escape closeness of sleeping compartments below.



**PIPE ALL HANDS.** Time to rise and shine aboard this LST headed for Okinawa. Joe Morton (seated on truck cab) rubs sleep out of his eyes, while Ambrose Gillespie (on hood) examines his mess gear. Tom Hussey (seated on bumper) ties his shoestrings as Oren Ammerman finds new

use for tire chains by hanging his helmet from same. Robert Johnson uses truck's rear-view mirror in shaving and Kenneth Mayes (face obscured by towel) leisurely dries his head.





**GOOK MONEY.** Frank Martin (right) is shown receiving ten dollars in military (invasion) currency in exchange for the ten dollars in U. S. currency he was permitted to take aboard the LST on the forward move. Martin uses his "invasion" cap to hold the "gook money"—as it was

later dubbed on Okinawa. LST disbursing officer counts out Frank's portion. Chief Carpenter Olsen (wearing life belt, right) sees the transaction well done. No American money could be taken ashore.



**FULL HOUSE.** Even the somewhat narrow confines of a LST compartment offers just enough room for these addicts to participate in the top favorite of all shipboard games—POKER! Seated with his back to camera is James Kerns, who apparently has his shipmates guessing. Seated (left

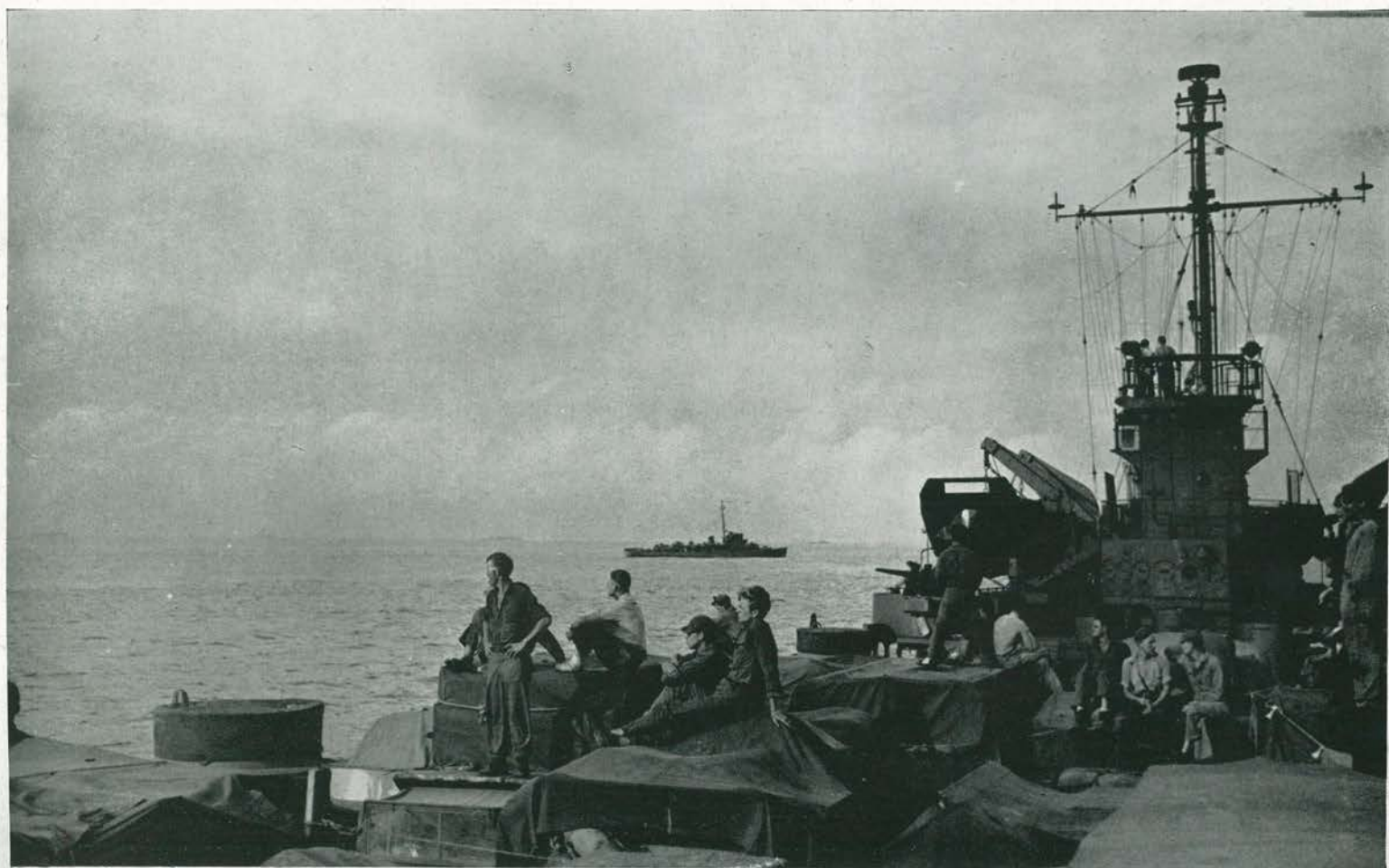
to right from Kerns) are: Ralph Hebert, Daniel Sweeney and Tony Kabasinskas. Kibitzers (standing) are: Jack Bigknife, John ("Boston") Lane and Robert Saeger. Fred Williams (left) has already hit the sack,





**KNOTS TO YOU!** A rare scene indeed to most LST passengers is the heart of the sturdy craft and the men who keep the two 1,000-horsepower General Motors engines in continuous operation. LSTs, moving into such forward areas as the Ryukyus, can ill afford to experience mechanical diffi-

culty. Each 12-cylinder, V-type engine turns a separate screw—one clockwise, the other counter-clockwise—at an average of 750 RPMs. Here, "black gang" checks gauges and pumps.



**ON THE BLUE HORIZON.** Approximately one day out of Okinawa, units of the potent U. S. Fleet (dimly seen off starboard beam) rendezvous with oil and ammunition tenders before resuming the bombardment they have been pouring into southern Okinawa for past month. Seabees were reas-

sured to see so much convincing evidence of U. S. might in the right spot—especially on the right side! An escort maintains constant watch nearby. It's last down for Japan with all to lose!





ALMOST THERE, land is finally sighted dead ahead as necks are craned and eyes are strained for a first look at the real Orient—only 370 miles south of Jap mainland! However, the relaxed men are far more impressed by the recent abrupt drop in temperature than by their first

glimpse of the Ryukyus. All men topside have donned jackets to ward off chilling wind blowing in from East China Sea and the broad expanses of the Western Pacific.



LITTLE OLD NEW YORK. On the tense morning of 27 April, the convoy passed quite close to the powerful battleship, U. S. S. NEW YORK, as this fleet heavyweight, along with two other "wagons," continued to pound Naha and Shuri. These heavies were supporting land action of the 7th,

96th and 27th Divisions of General Buckner's hard-pressed Tenth Army. The combined American and British fleets never eased up as firing continued around the clock.





**THE INNER RIM.** Dead ahead, 27 days after the Easter Morning invasion, is Okinawa, keystone to the all-essential Ryukyus and an integral part of Japan's INNER rim of defense. Apparently more interested in a good breakfast than in a good look at BIVE, hungry men (right foreground)

devour food in great gulps. It is shortly after dawn and anti-aircraft crews are preparing to remove protective nocturnal hoods from deck artillery as "Meatballers" are due about this time.



**SLIGHTLY CROWDED.** Shipmates, travelling apart for past week, are shown exchanging loud greetings as two of four LSTs transporting the 87th pull alongside one another prior to effecting landings on the comparatively narrow beachhead just ahead. This shot, perhaps, better than any other,

reveals extremely crowded conditions on these ships. The death battle for strategic Okinawa was now into its twenty-seventh day. No less than 55 days of gruelling campaigning were still ahead before the island would be "secured."





ALL ABOARD. Packed into an amphibious truck in approved sardine fashion, men are pictured going ashore for better or worse. After an outlandish night of continuous alerts and Kamikaze attacks in the packed harbor, all hands were extremely anxious to get ashore and dug in at the

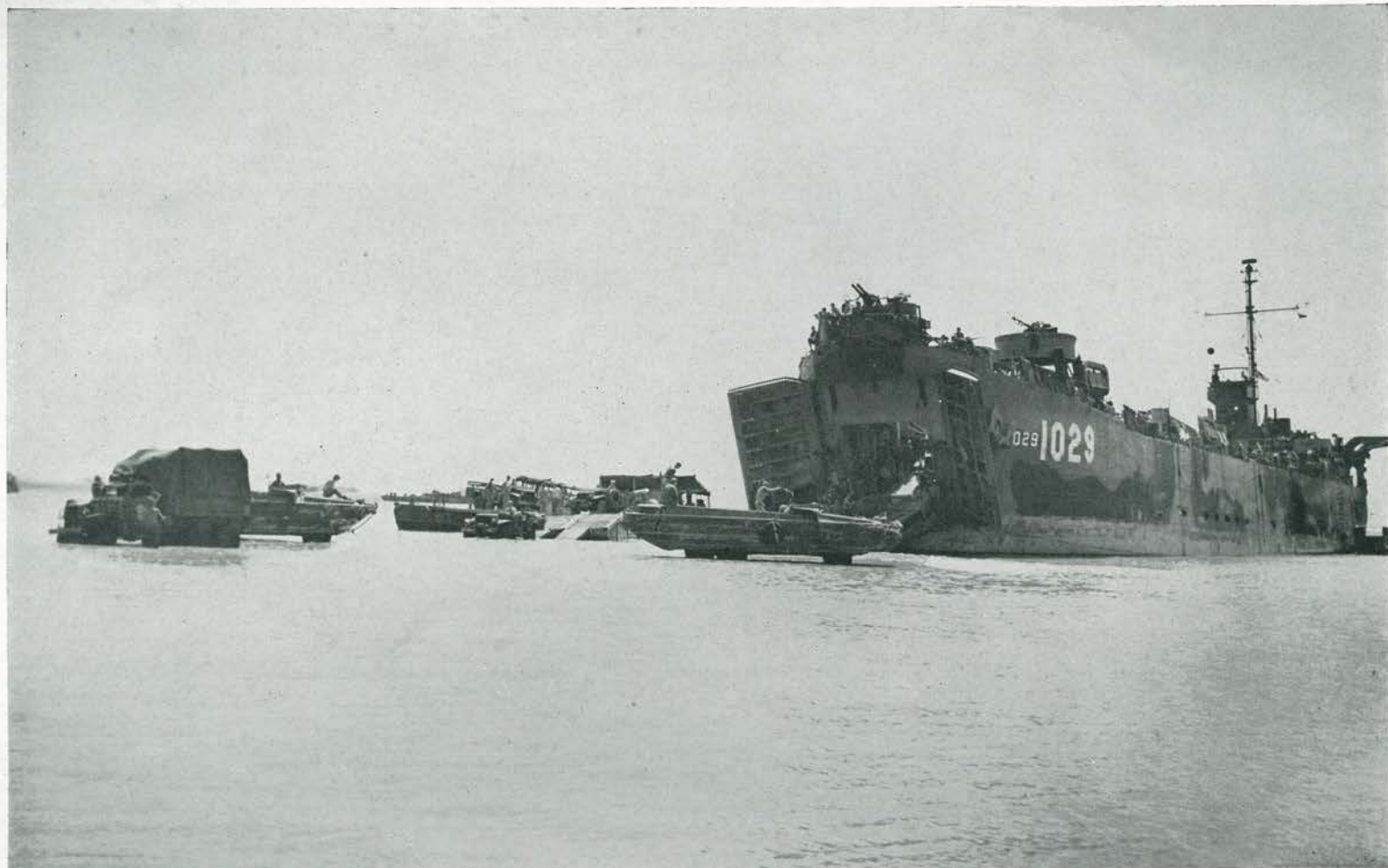
earliest moment. Not even the tall tales of Okinawa's intensely poisonous snakes deterred the Seabees after their "welcoming party" to the Western Pacific the previous night. These handy vehicles (DUKWs) are known as "Ducks."



MAN THE GUNS! With twin 40-mm. anti-aircraft guns (pom-poms) on the LST stripped for action, another overcrowded "Duck" prepares to ferry more of the first echelon ashore. These guns were the ship's sole defense against Kamikaze planes or Baka bombs once the suicidal pilots had

broken through the formidable "Picket Line" ringing the once peaceful island. The Japs seldom went after LSTs in the early days as they were bent on selling their lives in sinking destroyers, cruisers, battlewagons and cruisers.





**DELIVERY SERVICE.** Huge, slightly awkward "Ducks" waddle past LST 1029 to proceed to a nearby ammunition ship whose cargo's value has suddenly been enhanced by increased Jap resistance on the southern battlefield. All 87th trucks (extreme left) have five-gallon water cans

strapped to every available spot as advance information indicates a scarcity of water on Okinawa. Each man was restricted to one can for three days until battalion well-diggers could locate a suitable water hole in bivouac area.



**TERRA FIRMA.** As friendly Marines wait ashore to greet their old Solomons buddies, the Seabees, another "Duck" approaches the beachhead road, which is muddy from water brought up by vehicles emerging from the surf. The harbor at this point was practically empty as virtually all

shipping was congregated as far as the eye could see in more favorable water further down the island. Here, at Okinawa, was seen the greatest concentration of shipping of the entire trip—including Eniwetok!





ANCESTRAL HOME  
(An Okinawa Water Color)



**O K I N A W A**



**R Y U K Y U S I S L A N D S**





**FUTURE HOME.** Unloading from "Ducks" that have moved them over water and land from the beached LSTs, the first echelon inspects the new camp site at Bolo Point. Shellholes and shrapnel attest to the effectiveness of U. S. Naval bombardment.



**AMONG THE PINES,** the experienced 87th sets up still another bivouac until more permanent installations can be built. Tiny pup-tents spring up all over the area as the veterans make themselves at home. Date: 28 April 1945.



**TIPPED OFF "Bogies"** are over every night (usually all night), four mates team up to dig shallow slit trench. Unidentified mate (using helmet, left), G. W. Jordan (picking), William Bell and Clarence Tothorow will dig real foxhole tomorrow.



**WHEN IT RAINED** on Okinawa in late April, men, clad in foul-weather gear, spent more time outside securing their hastily-pitched shelters than under canvas. Accustomed to tropical downpours in the Solomons, 87th took Bolo's rains in stride.



**INDICATE, DON'T POINT!** Chief Kenneth Hansing's survey crew is "alerted" as their leader sings out orders to the engineers staking out a new road to the 87th supply dump. Others are: Olivares, Ackerman, Bollerhey, Harp and Thompson.



**NO PICNIC.** Three sturdy GI cans, filled with boiling water, serve as sterilizers for men cleaning mess gear after eating a mess of C-rations. Vapor arising from cans indicates the low temperature during first few weeks.





**OUTDOOR CAFETERIA.** Continuous mud and no chow hall didn't deter work-hungry men from standing in long lines for the dreaded C-rations. Dehydrated food was standard chow for the first few weeks until Comdr. Cook got fed up with unrelieved rations, too.

All hands, including officers and chiefs, stood in chow lines with the mates until the second echelon arrived at Bolo on 14 May. Then, things quickly reverted to normal as the "pushers" resumed their old tricks.

## OVERSEAS TOUR REACHES SMASHING CLIMAX AT OKINAWA

The Okinawa campaign was an apparently endless series of rough assignments for the veteran 87th Seabees—a mad pace that began on 27 April and didn't let up until the battalion was finally inactivated on 7 November. The unit was involved in many important construction projects south of Bolo Point.

Among these were two major operations—Yontan Airfield, the first American-built bomber strip on Okinawa, and Bolo Airfield, the mammoth B-29 strip near Camp Bolo. The battalion also helped build Awase Airfield where the 36th Seabees required the assistance of 150 operators and mechanics for 45 days.

Every conceivable type of aerial warfare was witnessed by the 87th ringsiders. The never-ending roar from the death struggle around Naha and Shuri was audible day and night. Artillery concussion and continuous flares over the flaming battlefield frequently resulted in lost sleep at Bolo.

Kamikaze planes, sometimes eluding the famed "Picket Line" around Okinawa in broad daylight, constantly tried for Allied shipping in the nearby crowded harbor. Frequently, a withering curtain of flak would box in the fanatical invaders and fascinated onlookers would cheer lustily as the "Meatballers" exploded in mid-air.

At night, searchlights held enemy planes in their radar-controlled beams until 90-mm. gunfire erased the "Bogies." Flak dropped all over with a fearsome sound. Then, everyone hit the foxholes—but never for long! The show was too big, gruesome and fascinating to be missed underground. Fortunately, the battalion's fabulous luck under fire continued.

General alarms were circulated virtually every night after the Japs' suicidal airborne invasion of Yontan Airfield in May. After that nightmare, mates slept beside loaded pieces, ammunition, knives and gas-masks. Less than two miles from Yontan and Kadena and expecting the worse, Camp Bolo was ringed with machine-gun pillboxes and the guard was doubled.

Soon after General Buckner's shocking death, the island was secured on 21 June—82 days after Easter D-Day—but enemy raids continued until the end. There had been 281 Jap raids up to that time.

The Okinawa operation gave the 87th its second battle star, one Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars and five Commendation Ribbons before the Pacific tour ended.

And then one never-to-be-forgotten night—10 August—as the mates sighed over a torrid cinema love scene, all the island seemed to explode into a scintillation fireworks exhibition. The sky was miraculously ablaze with madly whirling searchlights. Colored tracers of all calibers streaked wildly in every direction. Many made a scrambled rush for foxholes. This could be nothing less than the all-out air-borne invasion so often promised by Radio Tokyo!

Then, loudspeakers blared the astounding news: "THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ARE READY TO ACCEPT . . ." Like an all-engulfing tidal wave, the stunned men surged out of foxholes with hysterical shouts: THE WAR IS OVER! THE WAR IS OVER! Few had expected the end for another six months—if then! Surrender seemed incredible! Lurching in blind circles, the men were drunk with mad, delirious joy.

Next day, the still excited men were astounded to learn that six had been killed and 30 wounded during the previous night's premature celebration—and that the war was still on!

Then, on 2 September, the inevitable peace became official aboard the U. S. S. MISSOURI in Tokyo harbor. Like a lump of sugar in the rain, the 87th began slowly, but surely, to dissolve. Men over 42 had been flown home in June, along with the excess personnel. Two small rotation groups arrived, releasing 27 men.

The 44-point discharge system became operative amid loud squawks from veterans long overseas who were receiving no credit for foreign service. Simultaneously, rotation and the five per cent deal apparently ceased.

In late September, the battalion moved from Bolo Point to Baten-Ko. On 9 October, the worst typhoon in 20 years leveled Okinawa and the 87th camp.

Finally, in their twenty-seventh month of foreign service—on 7 November—the remaining 361 veterans left for the States.

The hardened 87th—with more than two years overseas—had occupied a ringside seat for the titanic Pacific struggle from the Solomons campaign to the resounding atomic end at Hirohito's own doorstep.





**PASSING THE AMMUNITION.** Military sages of all ages have agreed that an armed force fights strictly in accordance with the content of its collective stomachs. This axiom was never more in order than during the battalion's first few weeks at Bolo. It was rations three meals a day—

week in and week out—until piddling amounts of fresh stuff commenced seeping through in refrigerator ships. This break-out crew contended the 87th consumed at least a carload of rations per day.



**HOUSEWIFE'S LAMENT.** If only Mrs. Pape and Mrs. Spaw could have seen this homey little Bolo scene, the tables may have been turned on Lieuts. Pape and Spaw upon their return home. It's wash day in Officers Country! Battalion laundry is still crated.



**PROOF.** Few were disappointed that more poisonous snakes weren't found, but here's one that Barber Charlie ("Dry-Dock") Boyd (not shown) shot on guard duty. Max Fuller (left), six-foot-four in height, measures deadly pit viper, assisted by Pat Dobbs.





NUMBER, PLEASE! John Hatcher (foreground) puts through first call on switchboard in new underground communications center as Lieut. A. L. Davis, E Division Officer, tests radio set. Constructed of sandbags, Jap rails, etc., this structure proved invaluable.



BASIC needs of every new camp—like an adequate supply of purified water, for example—were taken care of in accordance with the cardinal principle of "first things first." Water department had their product in camp three days after arrival. There were no complaints.



FORGOTTEN VILLAGE. The main highway to Bolo Point led through numerous villages and hamlets, all blasted to smithereens by shelling and bombing during the invasion period. Most of these roads, however, were hardly more than narrow cowpaths when the battalion arrived. Traffic in-

variably became fouled up badly after each hard rain, so T Division's first project was widening and grading these roads. Above, J. C. Bell (on grader) and Claude Brown (on 'dozer) work in once picturesque village of Uza.



CHICKEN FEED. Ollie Brenn (left) and Charlie Johnson tempt their pet Japanese hen with K-rations. In return for such attentiveness, these "drumstick farmers" expect an occasional egg or two for their efforts. Translated sign reads: PRODUCE, OR ELSE!



FOXHOLE DAY. The Japs had the boys up all night again as they tried for radar and 90-mm. installations around the rim of Bolo Point, so all hands turned out next morning to reinforce already heavily sandbagged foxholes. There were no "goldbricks" here!





**DESTRUCTION FOR CONSTRUCTION.** This humble native home was directly in the path of an urgently needed road from the main highway to Camp Bolo. After battalion carpenters had salvaged all usable lumber (along with souvenirs and a colony of fleas!), "Big John" Wines

smashed his 'dozer into this already shell-blasted dwelling. Many native homes had to be demolished because of military necessity, but never without permission of Island Command. All natives had long since been herded into compounds.



**DO NOT DISTURB.** Cliff Engbretson comes dangerously close to disturbing the peace of native ancestors as he breaks the solitude by leveling a revetment for a gasoline dump. These nicely designed tombs were found just about everywhere on Okinawa.



**SECOND ECHELON** finally reached the new scene of operations on 14 May—17 days after the advance wave arrived. "The Reilly Gang", accompanied by "Tippy," "Queenie," "Bougie," "Blackie" (above center) and "Jiggs," were met by convoy of trucks at Gray Beach.



# YONTAN FIELD



WEST CENTRAL OKINAWA





**BAILING OUT** the abundant mud from the sub-grade after the big rains was necessary before coraling could be resumed on Yontan Airfield. Ralph Carter (on dozer) pulls a pan at crossing of the East-West strip. Date: 15 May 1945.



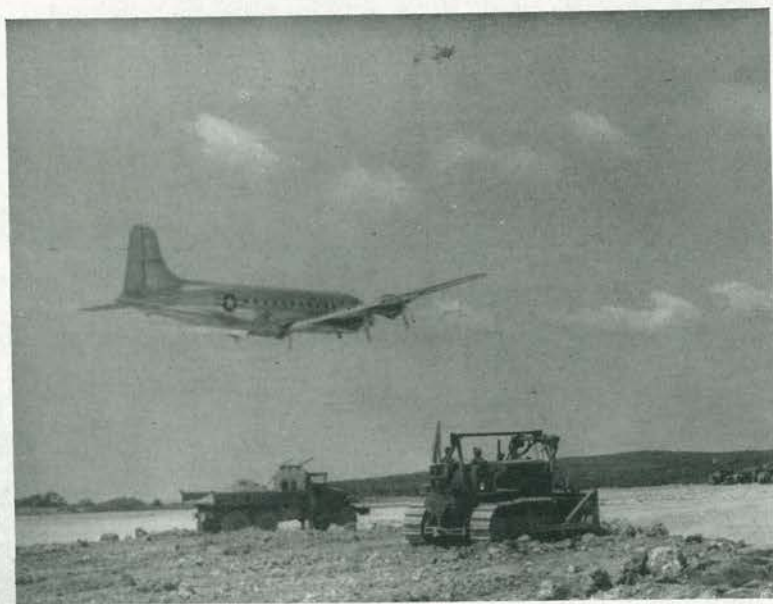
**HUDDLE.** Lieut. Ben Markette (seated on jeep), battalion transportation officer, discusses the general state of affairs at Yontan with Lieut. Louis Spaw, who is overseeing engineering aspects of rush project. Already 4,500 feet of sub-grade are finished.



**TRIMMING** deep fill slope at western end of lengthened, reinforced Jap strip, one of many 'dozers pushes another load over the side. This temporary measure kept badly needed field from being closed to all planes. Pans (center) grade new location.



**FIELD REPAIRS.** Sam Newman (atop his grader) watches "Porky" Clements weld the under parts of his damaged machine. Frank Hevey and Clarence Dean (right), heavy duty mechanics, scrutinize a defective part. Truck (left) contains complete welding equipment.



**SKYMASTER** arrives for early landing on extended Jap strip. In addition to top-priority passengers, C-54s (backbone of Naval Air Transport Service—NATS) brought in badly needed blood plasma and medical supplies. Returning, they evacuated wounded to Guam.



**SUPER-RUNWAYS.** "Plummy Rods" of 87th survey crew set up fill stakes on a section of sub-grade for paving. Big fills on old strip kept trucks busy continuously. Meanwhile, pans have shaped up entire length ready for coral. The airfield makers are clicking now.





**MASS PRODUCTION.** A typical heavy yardage spread, pans in this shot often moved 900 yards of Jap earth per hour. With the work carried out in above grand manner, it is easily understood how Yontan was completed in such gratifying time. Using only the

finest equipment manned by the battalion's most seasoned operators, the grade was knocked out in astounding time despite adverse weather conditions. Sight of the wounded on stretchers awaiting air transportation spurred the Seabees on.

## YONTAN AIRFIELD BUILT AMID STRANGLING WAR TRAFFIC

When the United States forces came ashore on Okinawa, the first airfield captured intact was Yontan Airfield, which consisted of three coral-paved runways and a number of taxiways and hardstands.

The prize, however, soon proved to be less effective than had been expected. The Japanese, with their usual shortsighted construction policy, had built poorly drained and lightly paved runways of 5,000 feet in length, suitable only for the operation of fighter planes.

American fighters and pursuits soon jammed the field, parking wing to wing and taking off at a rate exceeding one per minute, in support of the ground actions of the front line troops. At the same time, the big, four-motored PB4Y2 Privateers were doing an excellent job of eliminating Jap shipping. Their losses from enemy action were low, but operational losses due to the short strips were too high.

Plans were on hand for the complete rebuilding of Yontan Field, but under the circumstances it was considered inadvisable to close such a vital and intensively operated field for reconstruction.

Priority was given to a temporary expedient, which would permit the big planes to operate with less operational loss. In accordance with this plan, the 87th Seabees started work on a 1,000-foot extension to one of the Japanese strips.

This gave the big ships a 6,000-foot runway on which to operate until the proposed heavy-bomber strips could be completed. Work on the first heavy-bomber strip to be built on Okinawa was started at Yontan on 15 May by the veteran 87th airfield makers.

'Round the clock shifts were set up for operators, grade men, grease-monkeys, fuel men, and mechanics. Flood-lighting was provided and even the surveyors worked at night. The grading quantities were very light for a strip of this calibre, enabling the coral-paving spread to start work immediately behind the excavation equipment.

Morale was high and the job moved ahead like a smooth, well-oiled machine. Fortunately, only a few bombs fell and then—IT RAINED! Thirteen inches fell during the most intensive period of construction and, of this total, eight fell in five days.

Paving work continued with only a day or two lost, but sub-grade

construction was delayed for almost a week. The rains finally let up, the ground dried and late in May grading was completed to a point where further work would involve closing the existing North-South strip to all air traffic. Even this was arranged and the grading proceeded until a few days later when an intersection with the 6,000-foot long Northeast-Southwest runway was reached.

To close this strip meant closing Yontan Field to all aircraft larger than fighters. Therefore, the equipment was moved across it and onto the final 1,200 feet of construction at the northern end of the new field. This section contained a large amount of heavy cutting and a small amount of grading and finishing. This completed, the night of 12 June arrived amid considerable excitement.

Coral trucks were recruited from several battalions and all haste was made to pave the intersection of the two strips without interrupting Yontan's heavy transport and bomber traffic.

Night fighters and patrols flew in and out among the trucks and tractors all through the hectic night. Several operators even thought it advisable to retire to the lee of Cats as the Hellcats came in at a mere twenty feet, and a certain officer, caught in the middle of the strip, tried in vain to dig a foxhole in the coral paving—without tools! That F6F came in at only TEN feet!

All the coral was placed and graded that night and the shoulders of the new strip were ramped out to meet the grade of the old, so that it might still be used while the finishing touches were being put on the new one.

Graders and rollers worked all day and all night, finishing a 2,000-foot section of the runway, which included the intersection. At last, at 0605, on 15 June, SAFEWAY SUE, a Navy Privateer, officially opened the new strip by taking off on a patrol mission to Korea.

From that moment on, Yontan was as busy as an airfield can possibly be. All three of the original Japanese strips had been converted by then into taxiways and the new 7,500-foot runway was now carrying all the load.

The 87th, with its vast cavalcade of all the components required for converting hills and dales, farms and towns, jungles and rice-paddies into fighting flying facilities, clanked off in search of new fields to conquer.

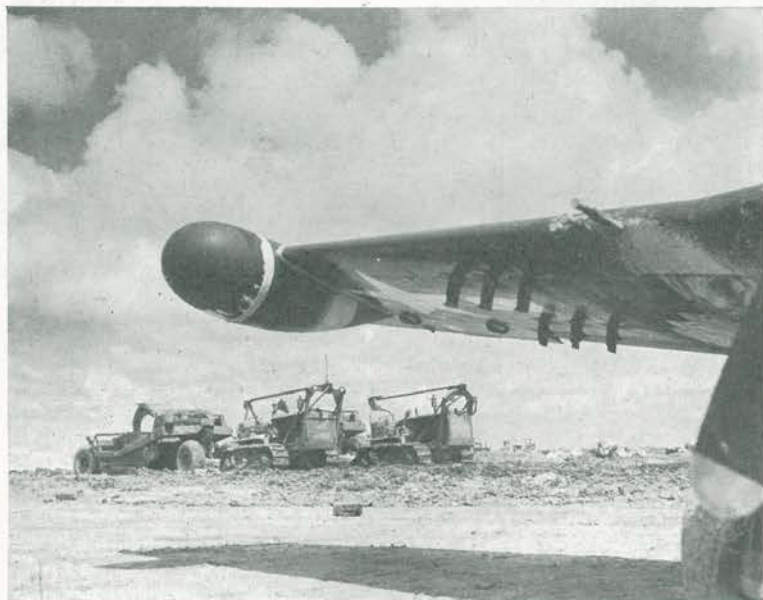




LOAD AFTER LOAD of coral is dumped at edge of runway by some of 87th's 30 trucks employed on battalion's first Okinawa assignment. One of hundreds of Corsair fighters of the Marine Air Wing operating from Yontan flies over.



THREE OF A KIND are caught by alert EARTHMOVER cameraman as they dump additional paving material across old East-West Jap strip. Bulldozers will soon smooth piles to required level. A F4U night fighter is shown parked nearby.



UP RADAR! Strange looking, bulb-shaped affair affixed to wing-tip of Hellcat fighter is actually a Radarscope used by the belligerent, little fighters in turning Jap raiders back during night fighting. Pans continue dragging out mud.



CONSTANT RAINS have turned sub-grade into a bog. Pans have been brought back to work over the wet coral. All finishing work is practically at a standstill, but the gang is loading chunks of rock removed from surface to utilize time.



DYNAMITE CREW removes coral chunks from the graded pavement. Those present: Manuel Rivera, Dick Henry, Harry Jolley, Bill Listenberger (kneeling), Clarence Keller, Paul Armstrong (on truck), Chief Al Broomfield, Leo Burke and Jimmy Beachler.



TOKYO TROLLEY. A Curtiss Commando of the Air Transport Command (ATC) takes off on a run to a rear base in the Marianas. Max Mathas on TD-18 (left) and Gene Ross on D-8 trim off edge of the pavement as the work progresses.





IN THE DUMPS, "Kask" Conine dumps a load of rough coral on newly constructed access road into Yontan bomb dump as Meredith Walls (standing, left) checks grade. Oliver Autry (right) operates the 'dozer. A pile of 500-pound aerial bombs stacked in the revetment may be seen, in part,

beyond two vehicles. Yontan Airfield, with its multiple planes, taxiways and hardstands, is shown in background. A loaded truck waits its turn to back into area at road entrance.



FROM ABOVE, a comparatively small portion of Yontan bomb dump is seen in this aerial view taken in May from a Piper Cub. Actual sections are quite well dispersed and reveted to prevent spread of fire in case of direct bomb hits. This shot reveals fairly good detail of how native

farmers cultivate their nicely groomed fields of beans and sweet potatoes. These fields were torn up here and there where pre-invasion bombardment had created sizeable craters.





**MISSION'S END.** This is the Jap twin-engined "Sally" that panicked to an almost perfect landing on Yontan Field one night in late May when suicidal demolition teams attempted to wreck what was then most important airport on Okinawa. This was the only

plane able to effect a landing; all others were shot down near the field. Here, a "cherry-picker," towed by an 87th 'dozer, drags the camouflaged plane from runway so business of war may continue.

## NIGHT SHIFT ARE RINGSIDERS FOR AIRBORNE INVASION

Everything in the Yontan sector was throwing up a flak curtain that night. The radar-guided guns continued depressing until their angle of fire became dangerously low. The 87th night shift crouched in foxholes near the strip. Some simply lay flat under their bulldozers. This was becoming a nightly occurrence.

Suddenly a large aircraft loomed against the moonlit sky. It didn't make sense. The plane was preparing to land on the strip! Trouble or no trouble, no plane had any business in this rain of fire! The next few minutes were a nightmare. The plane skidded on its belly in the very center of the runway with its landing gear still up!

It was a Jap twin-engined "Sally!" Air-borne invasion! This was the debut of the Giretsu, the enemy's fantastic suicide warriors. The Japs leaped out of this big ship while it still screeched along the coral strip. They tumbled head-over-heels like racing cartwheels, got up and sprinted into the darkness.

Suddenly, from all directions, blinding flashes illuminated the hardstands. Gas tanks exploded and parked planes became flaming

infernos. The Japs were destroying American planes with magnesium grenades and phosphorus bombs!

By this time GIs, Seabees and Marines were racing around with Tommy-guns, spraying everything in sight. The strip was bright as daylight. Four other Jap planes roared in. The ack-ack was more accurate this time. All crashed at the edge of the strip and went up in flames, burning all the invaders—15 in each plane. However, twenty U. S. planes were completely destroyed before the saboteurs were annihilated. A huge fuel dump also went up in flames, making the horizon glow for miles.

With no means of returning to their Bolo Point camp, the 87th night crew sweated it out on the strip all night. Came the dawn and the area was a shambles. Dead Japs lay everywhere. The lone Jap plane that got in still rested on the strip. The remains of the burned American transports still smoldered.

It was later estimated that over one hundred of these Jap planes had begun the invasion trip. Fortunately, only six managed to reach Yontan Airfield. The rest were taken care of by American night fighters—and the potent "Picket Line" around Okinawa.



**THE MORNING AFTER,** patrols were still combing area around Yontan for possible survivors of the Giretsu after as wild a night as Pacific veterans had ever seen. This young Jap, wearing two ammunition belts, was prepared to sell his life dearly.



**SHOT DOWN** before he could escape from scene of destruction, another suicidal Jap has sacrificed his all for his Emperor. Obviously a well-trained demolition man, he carried dynamite in small haversack, along with plenty fuses.





REMAINS of another enemy suicidal craft that was blown apart in mid-air before it could land on runway are spread all over this former Jap airfield. Loaded with airborne demolition troops, enemy plane was maneuvering for pancake landing when converging cone of ack-ack caught

it squarely, strewing the wreckage of plane and its occupants over an extended area. Here, 'dozers and motor graders have commenced clearing away heavy debris. A number of huge C-54s were destroyed by invaders.



SCAVENGERS. George Sembrat and Sam Newman are caught in the act of chiseling out a few souvenirs from the wrecked suicide ship. Using a sledge hammer and a pinch-bar, the Seabees would appear to be doing quite all right!



FLAMING YONTAN, as seen from Bolo only two miles away, flares up again as another terrific explosion rents air with Jap-fired fuel and ammunition dumps going up at regular intervals. The earth-jarring explosions continued far into night.



THE GIRESU ("unsurpassed loyalists"), the special airborne attack units of Japan's fantastic suicide warriors, failed in their attempt to put Yontan out of operation, but as the above picture indicates, the one load that succeeded in landing gave the Emperor his money's worth. Loss of

Yontan at such a critical time would have been a costly set-back to American forces. Detailed maps of the entire field, including the most recent construction projects, were found on some dead Japs.





**INTERSECTION.** This sweeping view of Yontan's main intersection was taken as rollers and graders were finishing up the last day. Here, the new 87th-built strip crosses the old East-West temporary runway. The new strip extends to upper left. New runway was opened to air traffic the

following day. A plane is shown landing on small strip soon to be closed. Comdr. Cook (left) and party (Mitchell, Boyer and Panttaja) place their stamp of approval on the work.



**YONTAN COMPLETE.** This aerial view, taken several weeks after the battalion finished its work, reveals the immensity and completeness of the overall Yontan installation. The 87th-built strip is the dark runway extending from right foreground to left center. Black-topped with asphalt,

it bore the brunt of Yontan's endless traffic during the last critical months of the war. Temporary strip used during construction (extending off to right) is lined with transports as it is no longer used as runway.



# T H E F R O N T



Y O N A B A R U — N A H A — S H U R I





**FIELD DRESSING.** Medics of the 96th Division examine a casualty near the line southeast of Naha. Prompt and efficient action by these front line medical units administering first aid saved thousands of lives. Jeeps equipped with two stretchers provided rapid transportation of wounded

to field hospitals behind lines. Smoke rising in background marks progress of battle. Small groups of fighting men (left center) gather around ration box for noon chow. (EARTHMOVER photographer took these shots in early May.)



**LAST TRIP.** On the disheveled outskirts of the devastated capital city of Naha, a cluster of native buildings surrounded the Sixth Marine Division's collecting station for its ever-increasing dead. Here, bodies were identified and registered prior to burial. Properly tagged, the casual-

ties were then loaded into trucks, covered with tarps and delivered to the Marine Cemetery 10 miles behind the lines. One such truck (left center) is already loaded and ready to make the next trip.





**EVACUATION.** Corpsmen load a badly wounded soldier onto cargo truck for transfer to transport plane, which will fly him back to a rear area hospital in the Marianas. Despite great care in handling stretcher, patient writhes in intense pain, dislodging his blankets.

Jap concrete shelter, well protected by sandbags, provides excellent site for evacuation point. Although casualties of this kind had become somewhat commonplace by May, men were still unable to conceal feelings of compassion for a suffering mate.

## GRAY BEACH SHIP UNLOADING WAS KAMIKAZE NIGHTMARE

The sound of heavy artillery came closer each day. Scuttlebutt said it was only 10 miles away, then nine and finally a mere six. For two weeks, this bombardment continued around the clock without a break. Then, they were only several hills away.

The ominous booming and the day's frying heat became extremely irritating to the night shift unloading Kamikaze-threatened ships jam-packed at Gray Beach. They lay awake and watched their mosquito netting sway from the sharp concussion of each salvo.

The 87th supplies were being unloaded at Gray Beach only because barges were available there. It was across the island from battered Naha harbor where the fierce battle still raged. All Gray Beach cargo was unloaded in the compound at Reilly's Camp. Then, it was transported by truck across the island to the main camp at Bolo Point. Work stopped only for the worst air raids and never on Awashe strip except during attack. During May and half of June, the sirens seldom agreed when raids were imminent or had ended. Distant land alerts were not "official" in the congested harbor area. This meant ship-unloading details and compound crews had to continue working until a signal came from the Dockmaster.

Sometimes, land-based ack-ack was heard long before the alarm. It splashed black flak-puffs on thick clouds above the harbor. Then, everyone in the compound or around the docks would knock off to watch an unparalleled drama, which usually lasted only a few breathtaking minutes.

Kamikaze planes would dart out of the clouds, weave in the flak curtain until the best targets were spotted and then they would go into screaming dives. Usually, the human bombs would overshoot their targets and explode with resounding roars in the sea. On a few occasions these suicidal death-traps were blasted apart before their doomed occupants were able to single out suitable targets. But their luck wasn't always bad—nor was their aim erroneous all the time.

Once, ships on either side of the one where the 87th was working took direct hits from Kamikaze planes, but the battalion's luck again held fast.

These fantastic attacks placed a terrific strain on the mates unloading the ships. They quickly lost weight and became haggard. And in-



**A SOLDIER OF THE EMPIRE** lies by the side of a road in the village of Ahoman below Shuri. Trapped by Marines in the village while in the act of sniping, this fanatic preferred this ghastly end to surrender.

evitably some cracked up under the nightmare.

The work went on, however. At night, all hands frequently stood outside, watching tracers fill the skies in an effort to wing bombers caught in the criss-cross of the many converging searchlight beams.

Hardly anyone remained in foxholes during the larger raids. Instead, the men behaved like excited spectators at some crucial football game back home. This foolish indifference to danger and possible death was certainly not intentional. It was simply a noteworthy example of calloused carelessness.





THE REAL THING. A Jap artillery shell explodes just short of small hill, throwing earth and rocks high into the air. Some may be seen taking cover in order to avoid falling missiles; others gaze in fixed fascination at the terrible spectacle of war at first hand. Flame-throwing tank (right

center, beside truck) was most effective of all weapons in driving die-hard Japs from numerous tunnels and caves. An American lies in somber repose under blanket on stretcher.

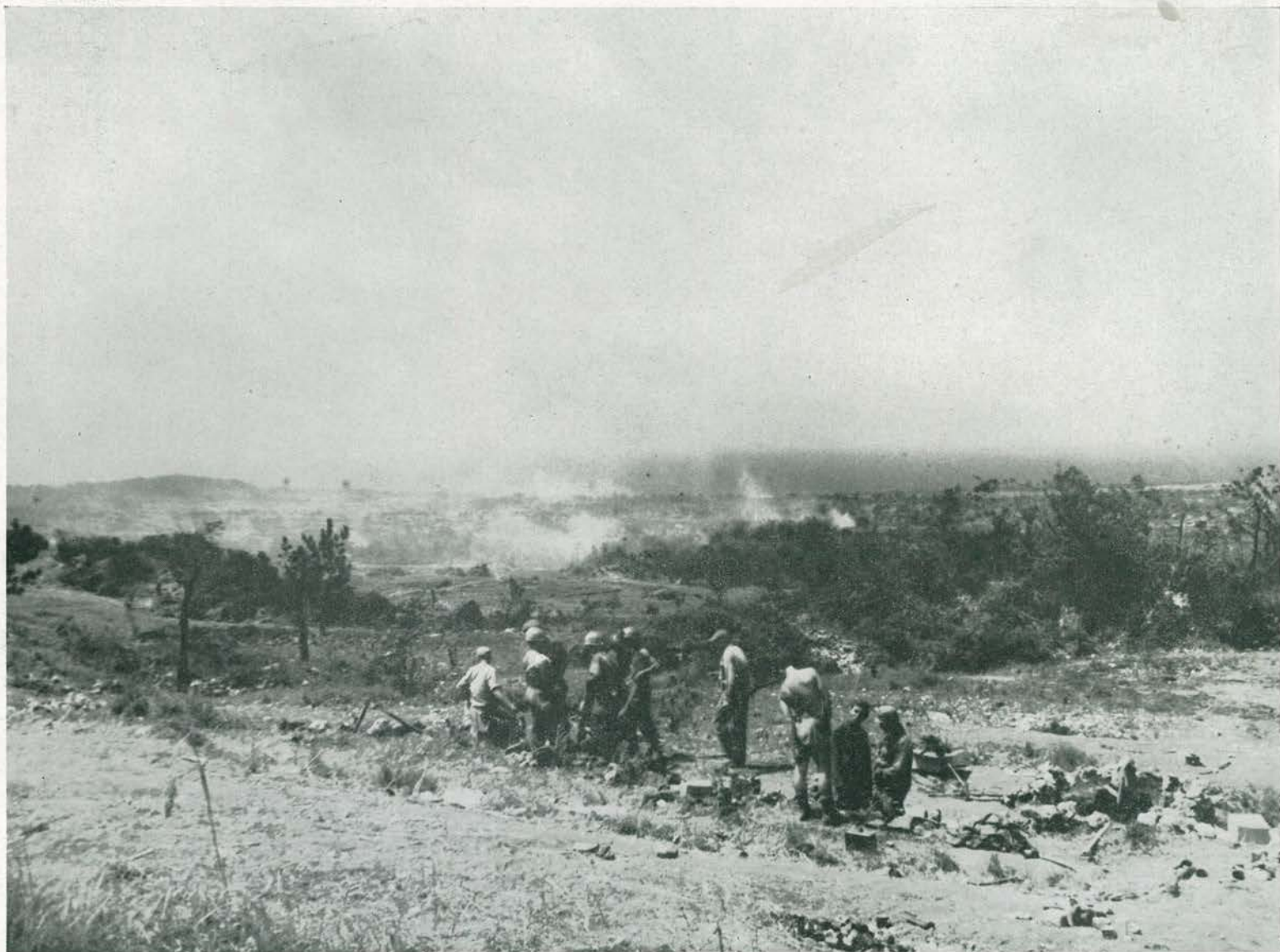


FIRST AID. Corpsman bathes eyes of native woman temporarily blinded by white phosphorus grenade. Other medics hold dressings. Holed up in cave, two Jap snipers finally surrendered when W. P. grenades were tossed in. They brought this woman out with them.



BLOOD BANK. Army doctor (wearing light shirt, left center) observes wounded soldier's reaction as medic injects plasma into blood stream. Shot through hip while on patrol, this soldier can thank donor of this plasma for saving his life. This was price many Americans paid.





**VALLEY OF DEATH.** Beyond Shuri and its fabulous castle—chief stumbling block to U. S. assault forces for weeks—96th Division troops finally hit open country and roll up large advances. Here, the fighting eventually resolved into cleaning up disorganized pockets of resistance. Men are shown

organizing another patrol to mop up still further as main battle moves ahead in distance. Debris marks overnight bivouac site. Once Naha-Shuri line was smashed, the end was definitely in sight.



**COMMAND POST.** Front line command posts were a far cry from the comfortable billets of rear areas. Consisting of a few dispersed pup-tents, high ranking officers, as well as enlisted personnel, lived a really dangerous existence.



**EXTERMINATION.** After hurling potent sachel of dynamite into the mouth of a Jap-occupied cave, these two combat veterans dash for cover to escape flying debris when charge explodes. Last man was killed a moment later by Jap sniper.





TANGLED and broken Japanese telephone lines are completely ignored by these energetic Marine linemen as they prepare to string up new American wire. In these blasted outskirts of Naha, the problem of cleaning up such an entangled mass was too great, time was too valuable and

communications were desperately needed to the weaving front line. Therefore, only the Jap poles are utilized. Following hard on the heels of assault troops, these linemen were kept busy day and night.



NAHA, the once thriving capital of Okinawa with a population of 65,000, formerly boasted a university, modern buildings and beautiful parks and gardens. When Marines and GIs finally secured the city, after the longest and bloodiest siege in the Pacific (82 days), they found complete devasta-

tion everywhere. Only a few isolated roof tops remained as mute evidence of former Jap prosperity. Enemy radio towers may be seen against central horizon. Total enemy ground losses during Okinawa campaign were 111,351.





ON TARGET! Formidable 75-mm. howitzers, emplaced near once prosperous lacquer manufacturing plant (background), are blasting impregnable Shuri Castle on distant horizon. Gun crew in above picture rests between salvos and finds small comfort from sun's rays under Jap souvenir umbrella (right

of howitzer). Clinging to each foot of captured terrain, the matchless Marines lived, endured and fought for weeks amid such scenes as this. Finally even the Shuri line crumbled and for all practical purposes the campaign was over.



PRAYERS OF THE WICKED. Between these pillars Naha citizens once trod on green grass to visit formal gardens and worship at shrines and temples. Here, their esteemed shrines lay gutted and in battered ruins from American shelling and bombing.



CLOSED FOR REPAIRS. Naha's City Hall, silent and ghostly with windows shattered and doors jarred loose, remains standing despite terrific bombardment and shelling for many weeks. Two souvenir hunters, unmindful of KEEP OUT sign (left), are about to enter.





**BUSINESS DISTRICT.** Centered in main business area of Naha, the formidable Bank of Japan stands as a shell-pocked monument to the folly of Jap aggression against greater nations. Remains of Naha's largest theatre may be seen at left.



**GOING MY WAY?** Chief John Porter, reputedly best shot with hand weapons in the 87th, often accompanied visiting groups to southern battlefronts. It was safety first to have Porter along. Here, he thumbs ride back to Bolo Point.



**DESOLATION.** Once embattled Naha's crowded residential section presented an appalling scene of devastation and ruin after Marines and soldiers of the Tenth Army were through with it in June. The capital was a primary target for continuous shelling from battleships and cruisers operating close

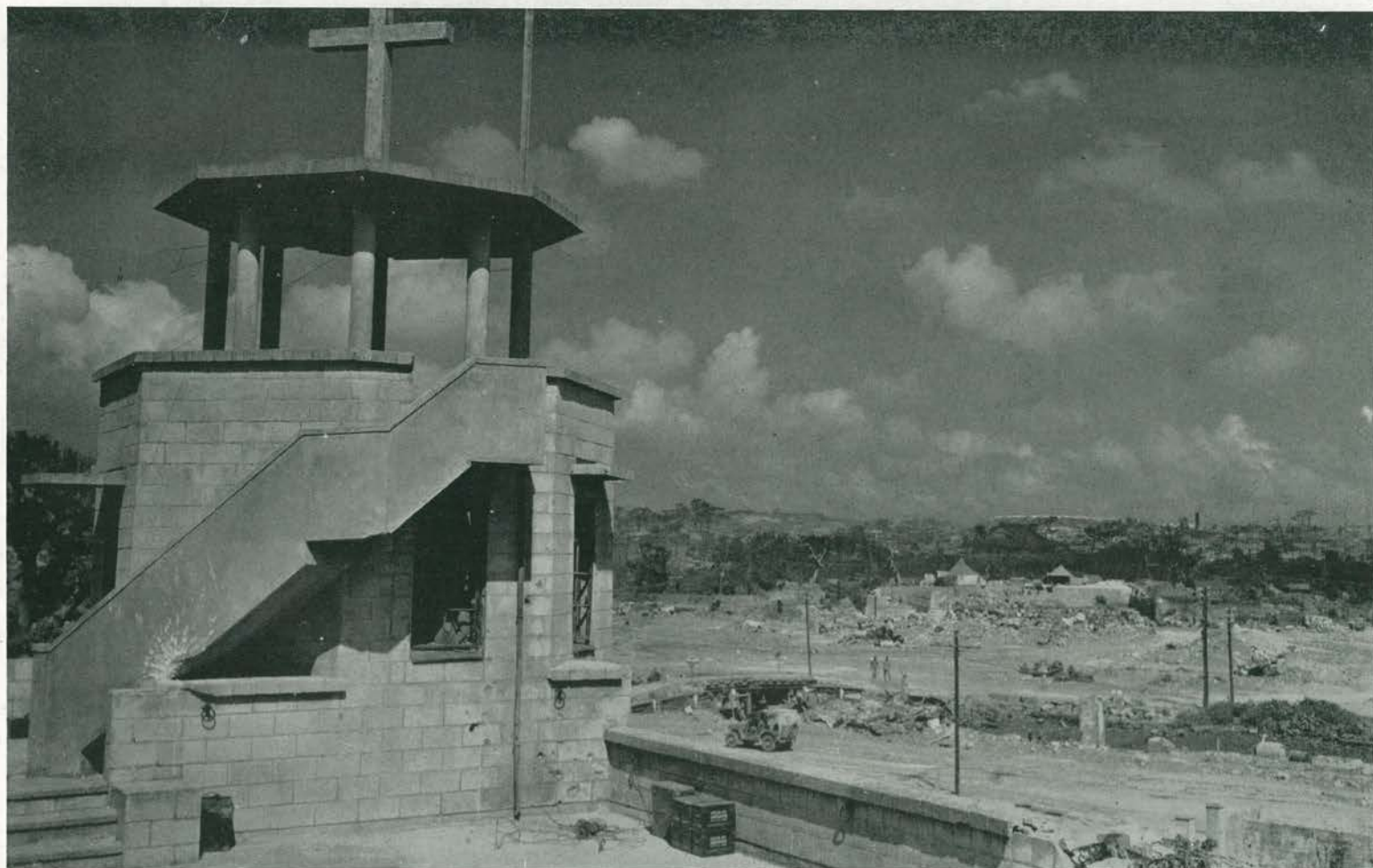
offshore and incessant bombing from Yontan and Kadena during the furious weeks it was under attack. After preliminary blastings, civilians fled into hills only to find themselves in greater danger from flame-throwing tanks.





THE UNIVERSITY of Naha was not spared in the relentless drive against the capital city. Desolate and shell-torn, the former center of Jap higher education now serves as a communication center for American forces operating out of Naha against Shuri. Trees (central foreground) were once

objects of great beauty, but they now stand as grotesque reminders of a splendor definitely past. A party of adventuresome 87th Seabees are impressed by so much desolation amid a former scene of culture.



CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY. The most startling sight in the heart of the annihilated city was this comparatively intact Christian church with its spire and cross still proudly erect despite numerous shell-pocks on its surface. Once a place of divine worship, the church soon became headquarters for

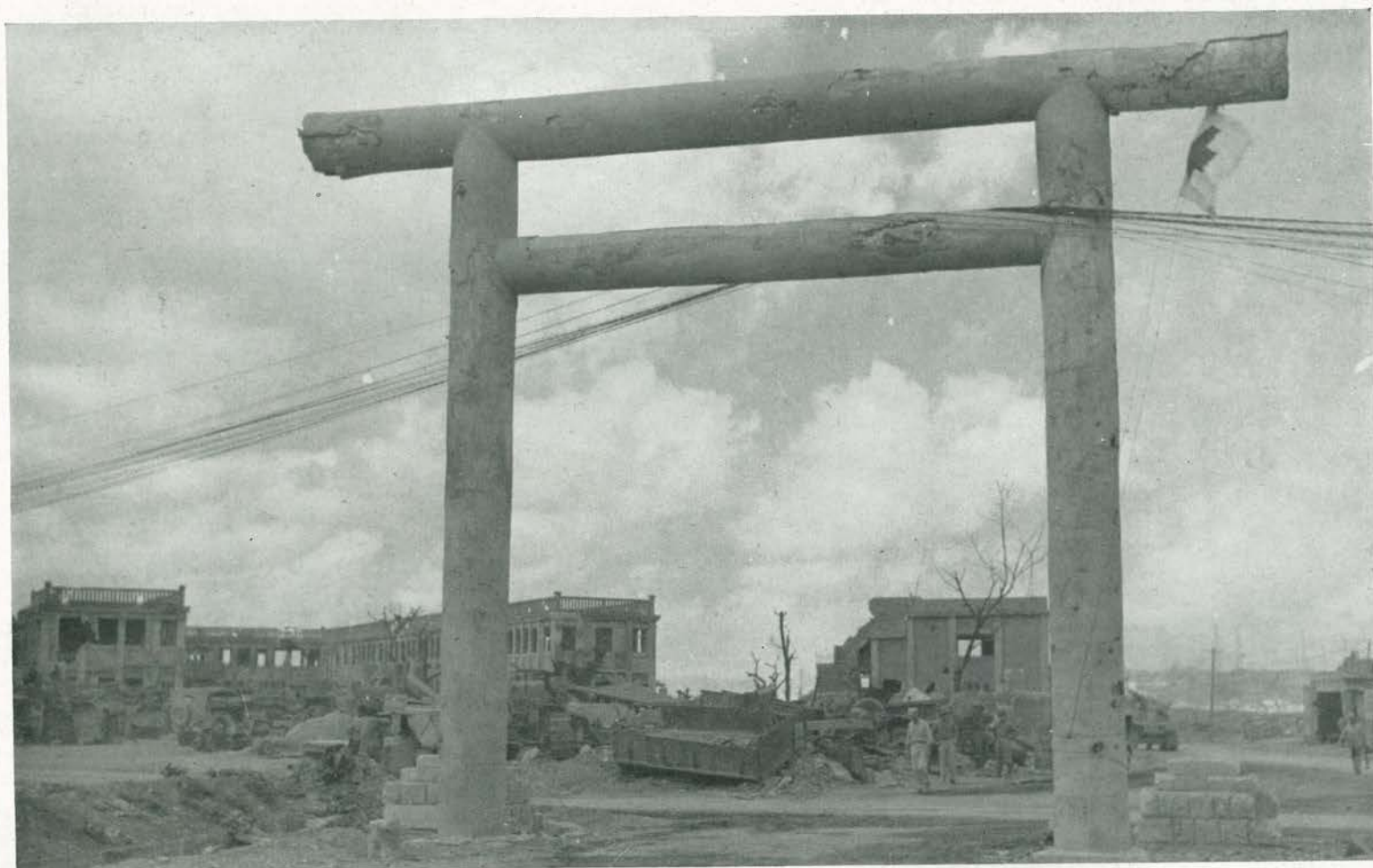
a mobile laundry unit. However, the main portion of the structure was converted into a small movie theatre. Two GIs (right center) walk leisurely along a street in the ravaged city.





**UNBEATABLE.** Japs retreating south from Naha to take up final positions blew up this concrete bridge to hamper the American drive. The unbeatable Army Engineers reduced lost time to a minimum by throwing a prefabricated Bailey bridge over the chasm in record time. It was imperative

that troops and supplies be rushed through this bottleneck before the confused enemy could consolidate his new lines. Loaded trucks and jeeps now speed over Asato Gawa en route to the front.

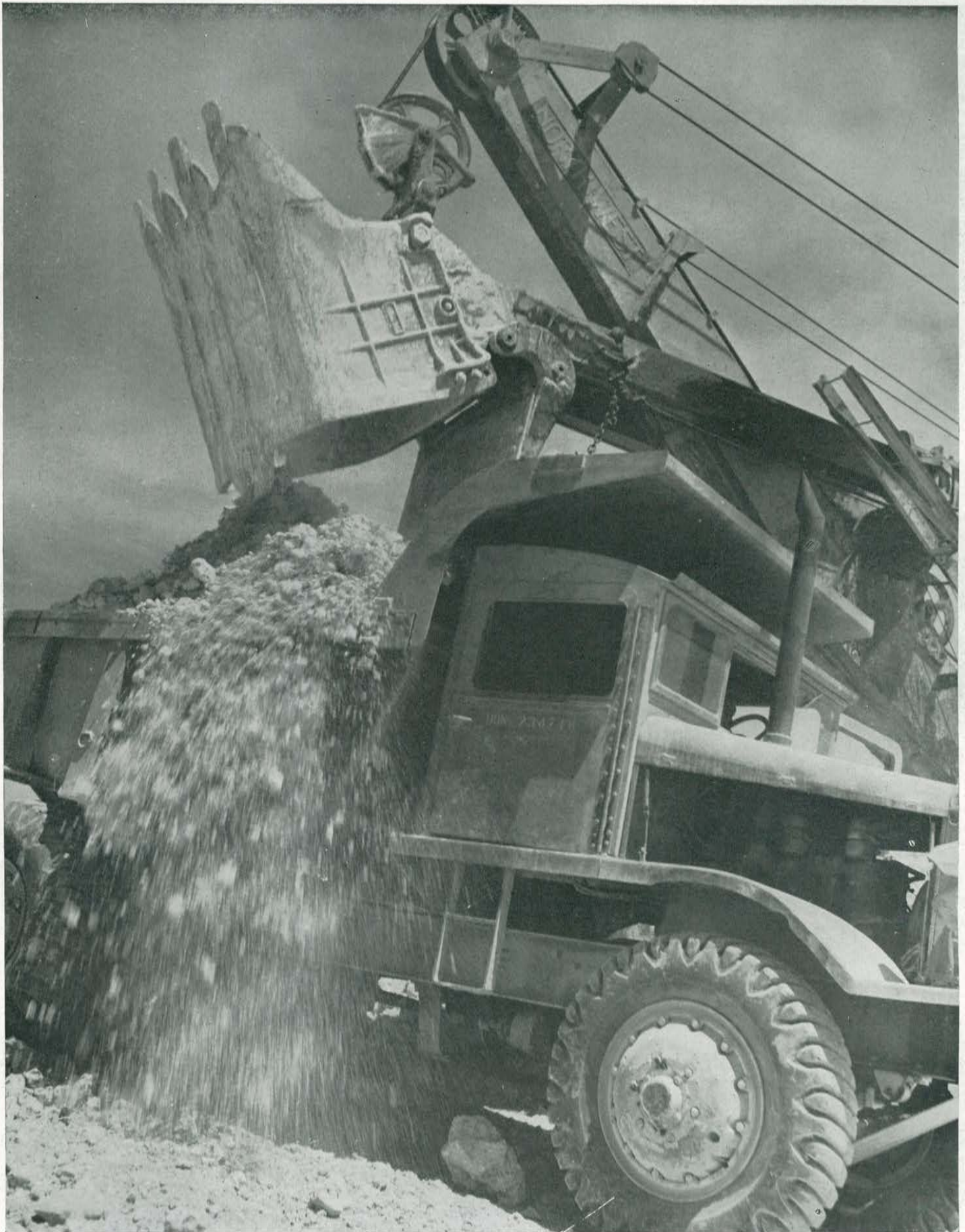


**THE ORIENT.** This huge, concrete entrance to the major Shinto shrine in Naha not only was symbolic of the Orient, but it served a dual purpose for aggressive Marines who habitually put everything to use. First, it supported the maze of communication lines extending throughout the burned-

out city, and secondly, it served as an anchorage for a large Red Cross flag. The latter denoted a field hospital nearby. Gutted Naha University is in background. Island was secured 21 June.



# B O L O F I E L D



T H E B - 2 9 S T R I P





PRELIMINARY survey for Bolo Field, which ran through village of Jima, was 1,700 feet east of site where B-29 strip was finally built. Members of Chief Paul Sowers' (left) survey gang shown are: Sam Fields, August Kafer, John Barker.



HEAT TREATMENT. A native village was squarely in the center of the proposed site for the B-29 strips, so Malaria Control gave it the hot-foot. Burning of these abandoned villages was advisable because of fleas and other vermin.



BEFORE CONSTRUCTION commenced, the general site for the new airfield looked like this. This view was taken looking southwest toward the East China Sea and famed Green Beach where Americans made initial Easter Morning landings.



GRAND OPENING. A power-shovel starts cutting into one of the two coral pits that are to provide all paving material for the Bolo job. Demolition gang drills hole for charge to loosen up solid portions of the coral formation.



HARVESTING. Widespread vegetation, consisting principally of sweet potatoes and beans, is removed from sub-grade site by pans as 87th assembles maximum skill and power for all-out assault on what is to be its last wartime project.



AT LAST. Actual work on Bolo Field commences on 19 June after many false starts and the 87th's last direct contribution toward winning the war is under way. Here, sheepfoot roller compacts fill behind 12-yard pan.





**30 DAYS ALLOTTED.** Perfect weather for large scale earthmoving prevailed during virtually all of the 30 days allotted for the construction of Bolo's first B-29 strip. The second of the twin strips was started, but cancelled by war's sudden end in August. Here, sub-

grade construction is beginning to shape up as great pans continue making cuts from high spot still visible at left center. Scenic fields shown in landscape scene (opposite page) have disappeared entirely.

## COMPLETED BOLO FIELD HELPS KNOCK OUT JAPS

Fifty-two long days after the 87th landed on Okinawa, work was started on its main job. It was to be a twin B-29 strip with all the accessories.

Fighting on Okinawa had steadfastly refused to follow the blueprints laid out by the High Command. Construction plans, likewise, had to be tailored to fit the ever-shifting pattern of battle. Rumored as bound for Yonabaru, then Naha, it was with a great sigh of relief that the 87th was finally allowed to sink its teeth into the Bolo Point job.

During the six weeks that controversy raged in the high places, the battalion had been occupied with Yontan Bomb Dump, Route No. 6 to The Front and Yontan Airfield—all major projects in themselves, but not THE JOB.

Operations on Bolo began on 19 June by clearing the ruins of the town of Uza from the right-of-way at the northern end of the proposed strip and rough-grading a 500-foot section. On the second day, work was transferred to the opposite end, primarily because the Seventh Marine Field Depot supply dump had not been cleared sufficiently so that work could begin there, and secondly, a Jap cave had been discovered beneath the strip, which had to be collapsed and filled in before work could continue.

Engineering problems on Bolo were more complex and varied than on any previous strip job the 87th had tackled. Broken, hilly terrain, rice paddies and underground seeping wells provided a tough drainage angle. This was solved by sinking galvanized culverts in ditches cut across the strip—in many spots as deep as 30 feet—to carry off excess water and provide a solid bottom for the anticipated Super-forts.

One of the most formidable obstacles was a hill of solid coral found in the runway at the south end. On 28 June, the small 87th shovel was put to work here, and with five Euclid Diesel trucks obtained from the 10th Naval Construction Brigade, paving was begun. It was 7 July before the 87th's two big Northwest shovels returned from Awase Strip on Buckner Bay. Up to this point, paving had been definitely lagging. However, four more Euclids were procured and a

large deposit of coral was discovered between the strip and "B" taxi-way.

With three shovels going full blast at the conveniently located coral pit, Euclids began moving the finish "stuff" on an unparalleled scale. From here on in, these chugging giants chased the "pans" down the strip, pouring out coral as fast as sub-grade could be laid. The mates were working at top speed on Bolo, anxious to see the B-29s take off for Japan from their own backyard.

Due to their hair-raising experiences on Yontan and constant warnings from Intelligence about expected air-borne attacks, men rode their machines with loaded rifles, gas-masks and helmets within arm's reach.

A convoy system for bringing men to and from work on the "graveyard" shift was inaugurated after one of the officers had been shot at while on his rounds as O. O. D. The sniper was never brought to earth, but a great deal of .30-caliber ammunition was expended in the attempt.

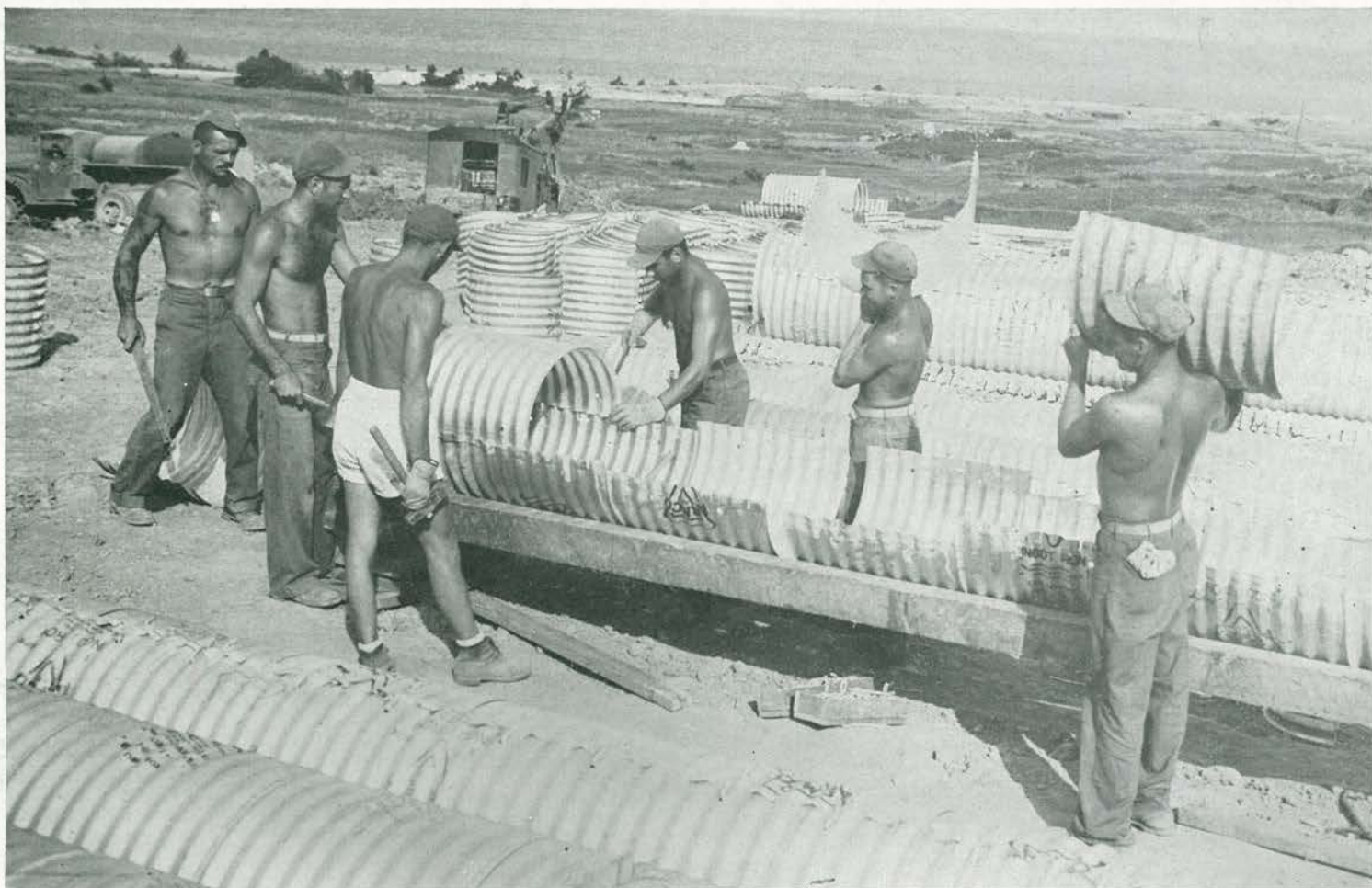
Air raid alerts occurred frequently at night, but raids were not as prolonged or intense as during the three previous hectic months. The only known casualty was Dewain ("Big Red") Buettenbach, who collected two shiners and a lacerated nose diving under his 'dozer when flak fell too close one memorable night.

Half the strip was coraled by July and the other half was either ready for coral or in final stages of "cuttin' and fillin'."

Here, the Yankee special formula for superior strips was resorted to once more. Four trucks were rigged with 1,200-gallon pontoons and sprinkler attachments. Salt-water treatment was given the coral after the final grading and before rolling. This binding process, often used with such success by the 87th, produces the fastest surface known for handling aircraft.

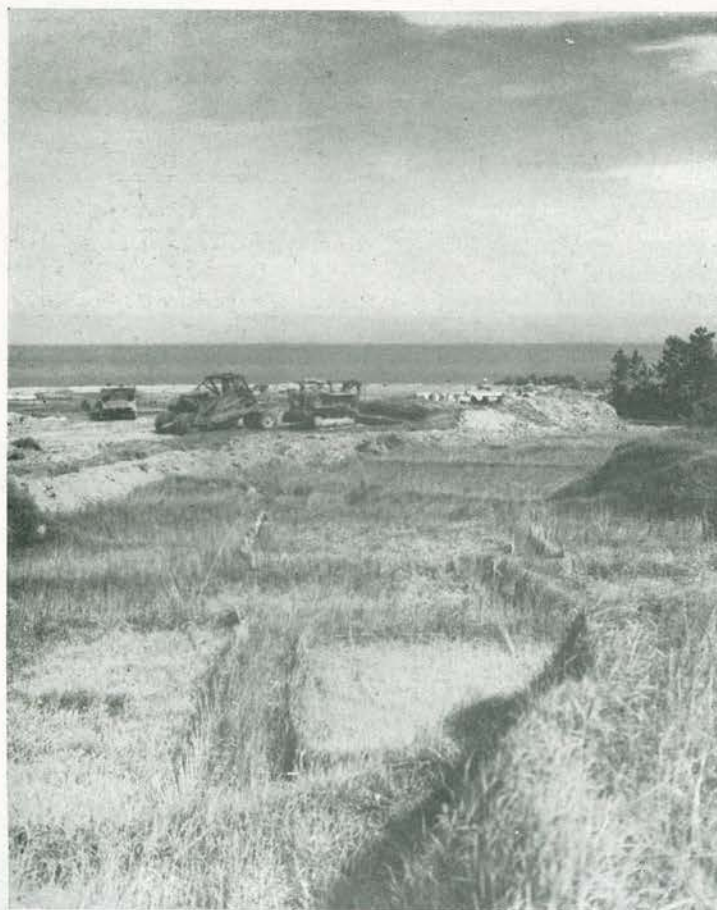
On 19 July and well ahead of schedule, the last loads of coral were shaped and graded and the first B-29 strip on Okinawa was ready. The Bolo job was soundly licked by the unbeatable combination of "know-how" and the high spirit embodied in the 87th who did the job with one eye on the project and the other on the long-anticipated trip home.





"THE MUCK GANG" was Chief Frank Rychlak's men-of-all-work crew shown assembling 36-inch corrugated pipe used in drainage. Above group includes (left to right): Rychlak, Serap Appelian, Jim Dalton, Joe DeMasi, Laurel Leonard and Dale Anderson. (The latter was later killed in a

quarry accident.) A versatile "seadog" of the tattooed Navy, Chief Rychlak was Chief Feature Writer on THE EARTHMOVER's editorial staff, contributing many of the major stories in this volume.



RICE PADDY. This obstacle, harmless in appearance, but a formidable obstruction to rapid construction, had to be drained before strip could cross over. A 12-yard pan is doing preliminary cutting on culvert ditch before backhoe takes over.

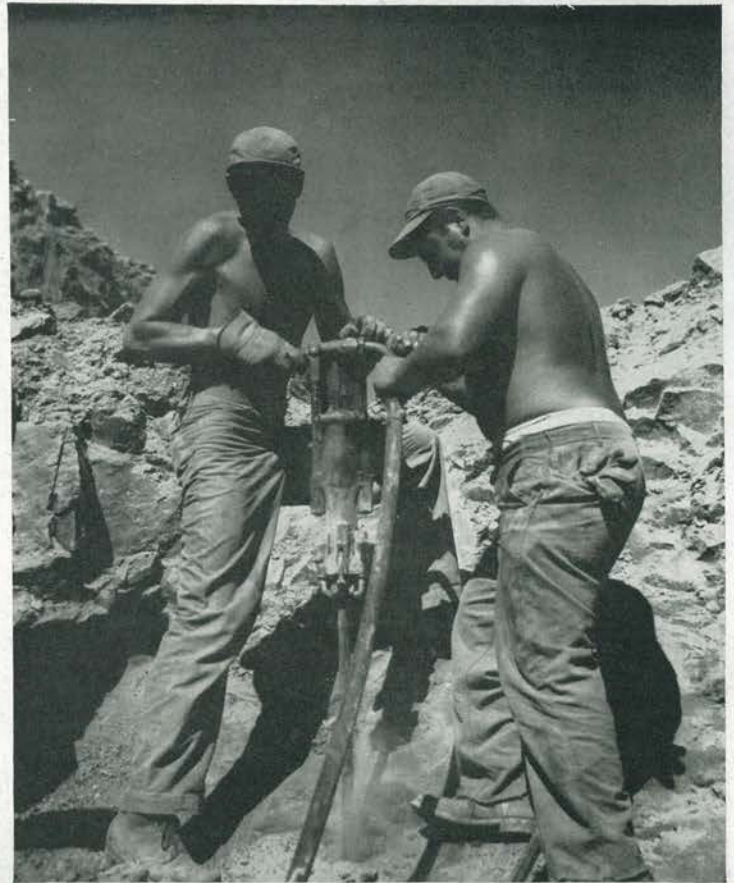


HEADS UP! "The Muck Gang" lowers another drainage section into the completed cat excavation. When the galvanized section reaches bottom, Chief Rychlak will order "all hands below" to move pipe a little to the port or a trifle starboard.





**TOUGH SPOT.** Preparing to blast stubborn section of shale in center of another drainage ditch, demolition crew is sinking 12-foot holes into rock. Handling chattering jackhammers in intense heat was rugged duty—even for "Mush"!



**"LEND A HAND, FELLOW!"** The going is really tough here so Vic Terrell (left) and Ralph ("Mush") Masciarelli (right) team up on a drill, and dust really begins to fly.



**DIVERSION DITCH.** The ditch that carried water away while metal drains were being installed is shown in right foreground. The pans have commenced filling in huge cut, which will be brought up to grade when culvert work has been completed. As fast as backhoe throws earth to one

side, a 'dozer pushes it into the low spots. Peculiar looking pine trees (right background) appear in most Okinawa skylines, Thunderheads loom on horizon, but fortunately the rain held off.





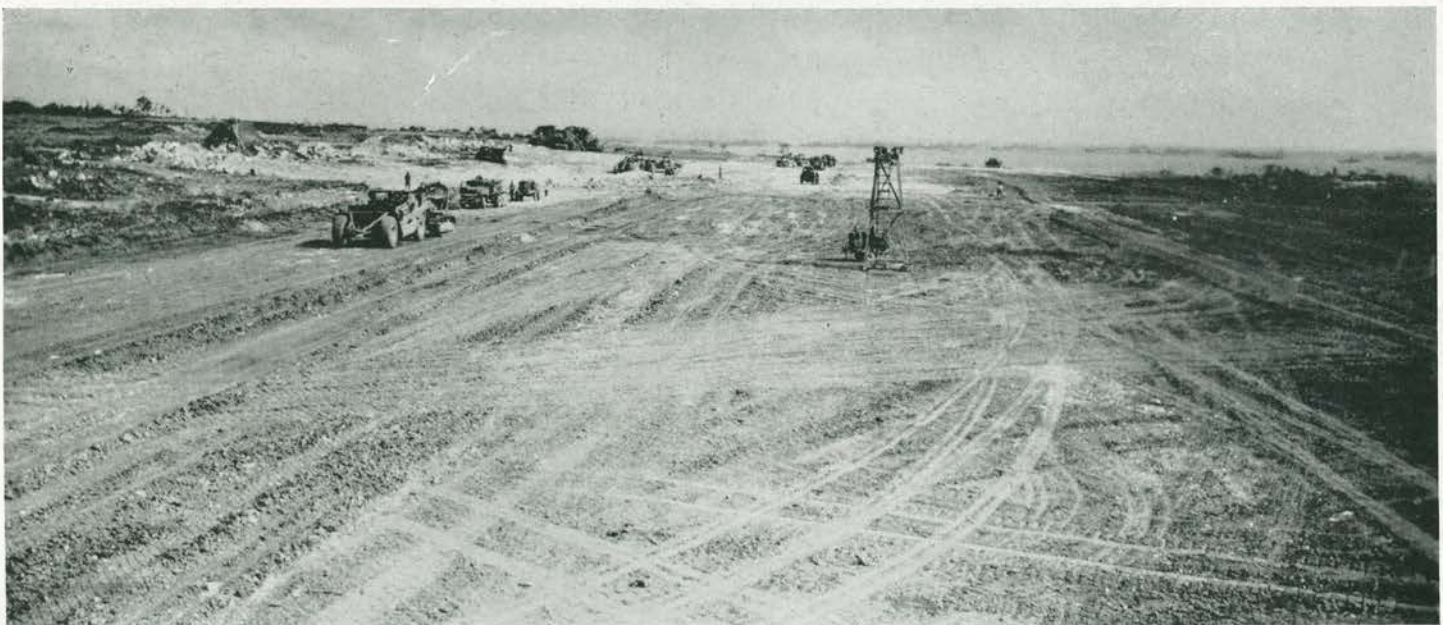
**DOWN THE MIDDLE.** A 2½-yard shovel digs handy paving coral right out of the middle of what will soon be a B-29 runway. This particular hill furnished enough coral to completely pave the first 3,000 feet. When this spot was leveled to grade, a new coral pit was opened nearby,

which contained ample material to complete all paving. Every natural obstacle—from a real swamp to solid rock—was encountered during the Bolo job.



**STRAIGHT AWAY.** Invaluable pans are seen grading just east of coral hill shown above. Through clouds of dust (left), fast rolling trucks may be seen dumping loads of coral at start of runway. Some buildings and tents of the Seventh Marine Field Depot are still here (left and right),

but the Leathernecks are clearing out fast. Telephone lines still cross runway, but will soon disappear. A grademan and an equipment operator confer with a project officer in foreground.



**SOUTH END** of runway begins to take on a semblance of grade completion after a sustained siege of clearing, cutting and filling. Coral (left center) came from huge drainage cut and was spread by pans as prelude to heavy laying of coral by trucks. Light towers (center) provide

adequate illumination for regular night shift. A flotilla of war-loaded LSTs may be seen in harbor beyond project site. These awkward, but indispensable vessels, were seen all over.





**BIG PIT.** A 2½-yard shovel and a small fleet of Euclid trucks are working out huge portions of coral at spot known as "the big pit." This site supplied coral for most of runway, plus connecting link with west taxiway.

Three shovels worked around the clock here as the comparatively short haul guaranteed a continuous line of waiting trucks. One dipper of earth from this shovel would fill an ordinary truck, but Euclids hold four.



**IN FORMATION.** Three monstrous Euclids simultaneously dump 30 yards of paving coral onto strip at a single clip. This would be enough material to pave an area of runway three feet long and 200 feet wide. These three "Ukes" were piloted by Lyman Dailey, John Radel and John

Proffitt. It would have been impossible to complete the first B-29 strip in 30 days had it not been for the timely appearance of these king-size vehicles.



# MEN, MACHINES AND EARTH COMPRISE AIRFIELD BUILDING



**TAKE COVER!** Shovel operator and his oiler curl up inside huge dipper (left foreground) as demolition crew shoots out a tough baby in center of runway. Heavy steel of bucket provides ample protection against flying debris.



**PINCHHITTERS.** A carpenter crew is detailed to work at a common labor job—sinking one of four power and communications conduits running under the strip. Left to right: A. Thompson, Lowell Cable, Angelo Insalaco and William Beard.



**FILL 'ER UP!** Operator Henry Steele (on grader) watches Bob Petoletti give his motor a long drink of diesel. Paul Krueger (at left) operates the weird looking "cookie cutter," which did everything including what it was built to do.



**DOWN THE LINE.** Four of battalion's five motor graders are snapped in echelon as they carry a nice windrow of good looking coral. At the controls (left to right): C. J. Rominger, Chester Watkins, Chester Pope and Sam Newman.





**ON THE BALL.** Grader and roller operators exert best effort to get everything in readiness for the final paving as Superforts are soon due. William Young (on roller) stands for better view as machine comes near a grade stake.



**STINSON GRASSHOPPERS** were first planes to use Bolo Field. During very first week of construction 'Hoppers landed and took off on west shoulder of strip. Clyde Pemberton inspects mite from his 'dozer as Chief Ken Hansing crouches.



**CARVINGS.** The sloping hillside at northern end of Bolo runway is being carved away by a battery of pans. Earth from this cutting operation is being heeled leftward to fill in connecting ramp with westerly taxiway. Eventually, this entire hili had to be cut through to connect with east

taxiway. Bolo Point appears in background (at right) with airport perimeter road winding along the shoreline. Long white line of coral reef (left) stands out in water.



**DIGGING FOR NUGGETS.** A jackhammer crew is removing hard rocks from surface of runway. These "niggerheads" cropped up during blading and had to be dug out. The holes were then refilled with firm coral and the rocks thrown away.



**GETTING SALTY.** Sprinkling and rolling of the glazed runway continued day and night as the completion of the project neared a record breaking end. Three of the battalion's four water sprinklers wet down surface with salt water.





THE SIGN, "invented" by Comdr. Cook, the 87th's publicity-wise second skipper, was the talk of Bolo Field for many days. More than once higher authorities threatened its removal, but it was still there when the job ended. Battalion pranksters were forever adding the exciting word HOME

after "LET'S GO" and "Cookie" had it removed just as often. Four rollers, four graders and four sprinkler trucks are stretched out half the length of the almost (seven-eighths) completed runway.



WELL DONE, BOYS! Comdr. Cook (in jeep at right) gives completed south end of Bolo runway the once over as only an experienced construction veteran could do. It was indeed a rare day in June (or July) when THE MAN didn't visit his favorite project now that Yontan was no longer

a point of regular visitation. Lubrication trucks (right center), which regularly service equipment on large jobs like Bolo, may be seen fixing up some of the rolling stock.





FIRST CARGO PLANE, a twin-motored C-47 (Douglas), makes emergency landing on Bolo Field after being unable to locate Naha Airfield during siege of inclement weather that descended upon Okinawa immediately after B-29 strip was put into operation. Inspecting the project after

a week of steady rain, Comdr. Cook and Lt. Comdr. James Douglas, new 87th exec. (left), were on hand to wave a hearty greeting to the crew of the big transport. (The sign is still there!)



TEAMMATES. Seabees build the airfields and the flyers put them to work against the harried enemy. Here, the crew of THE SIOUX poses for THE EARTHMOVER cameraman with the 87th administrative heads. This plane also made emergency landing.



THUNDERBOLT pilot climbs out of P-47 fighter after landing on Bolo following successful completion of another mission. One of a squadron of Thunderbolts operating from the B-29 strip, these planes flew in support of the bombers.





**BLACK STUFF.** A crane picks up three opened barrels of ready asphalt. Heated "just so" in large boilers, mixture is then run off into tank trucks. Graders (background) give runway a final "facial" before the asphalt topping is applied.



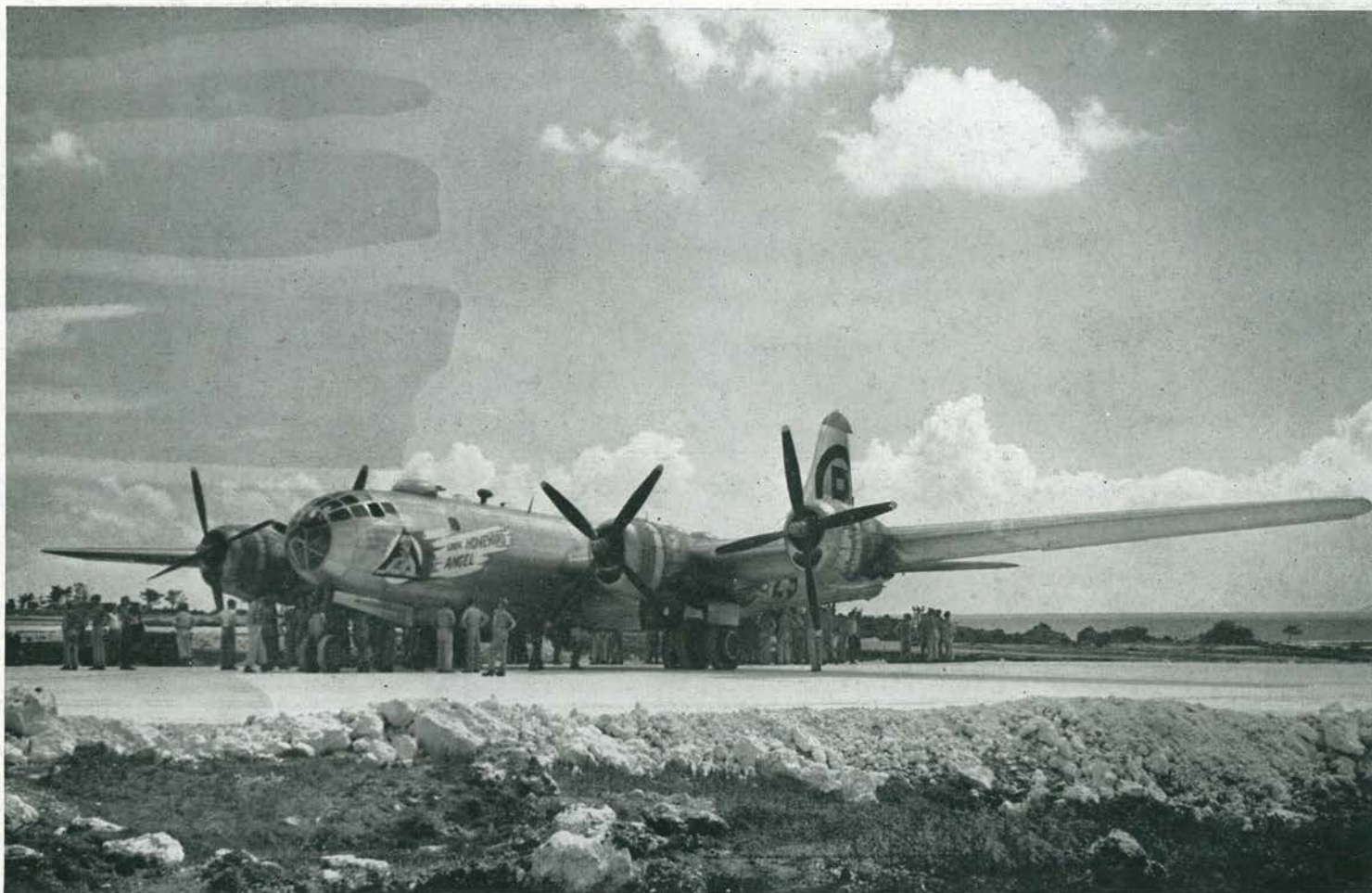
**OPENING DAY.** Using hammers and chisels, Seabees open endless drums of surfacing material. Thousands of drums were used as porous coral absorbed huge quantities of asphalt. A regular mixing plant was soon built at Nagahama.



**FINAL APPLICATION.** Black-topping of the completed Bolo runway is started at northeast section of the strip. Towed by a 10-wheel truck, trailer tank has a sprinkler attachment that spreads a 10-foot section at a single

swoop. Tank operator rides on a rear platform where he controls flow of the asphalt by means of valves. Visitors seemed to enjoy watching this process as they flocked to Bolo Point from all parts of Okinawa.



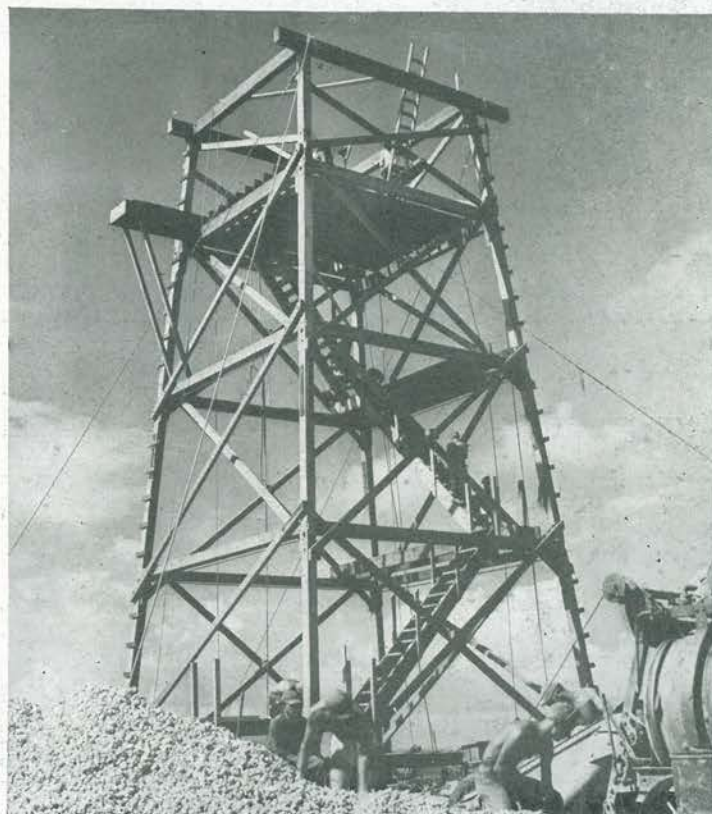


LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL, first B-29 to use Bolo Field after its completion, had flown from Saipan on a mission over Formosa. Its tail assembly shot up over the target, numerous flak holes and a dead engine, the Superfort was forced to leave its formation en route back to the

Marianas and ended up by crash-landing on Bolo. Named by crew admirers of the late Thomas Wolfe's immortal first novel of the same name, the big ship has just been towed in for repairs.



GOING UP. Bolo control tower finally begins to take shape despite the AAF changing its plans four times after construction had started. With one section in place, a crane lifts the other side and soon the sections will be tied together.



TIE HER DOWN! As framework nears completion, stairs are installed and deck for radio generators built. Cement gang shovels mix into hopper for concrete base that will help anchor tower when Okinawa typhoons come in September and October.





CUTTING ON "C" taxiway goes ahead as pans cut out adjoining hardstands on taxiway east of the completed runway. Most battalion equipment has been moved to this new location. To the right of light tower are a few remaining piles of asphalt barrels. A roofer, pulled by 'dozer (right center), softens up the cut for pans. Tails of the new Douglas A-26 attack bombers (far right) are barely discernable. The taxiways at right are already completed and ready for occupancy.

BOTTOM. THE EXTRAS. A coral shelf behind a hardstand on "C" taxiway provides fine grade of coral for paving of remaining hardstands and taxiways. With its squadron off on a mission, a lone Mustang fighter stands in solitary splendor against ocean on "B" taxiway (far left, background). Pans at right are cutting out additional hardstands on east side of taxiway. Culvert (left) is assembled for drainage under taxiway. Small 'dozer clears rocks from right-of-way to keep traffic flowing.





**COMING AND GOING.** An empty truck heads back to the pit for another load of coral as a full vehicle turns into a hardstand to dump its burden. This is a general view of unpaved taxiways and paved hardstands looking south. Bolo Field proper is at right. Sheepfoot roller (foreground)

is crushing hunks of coral and compacting the paving so graders and rollers can apply finishing touches without undue obstructions. Soon B-29s from India and the Marianas will arrive.

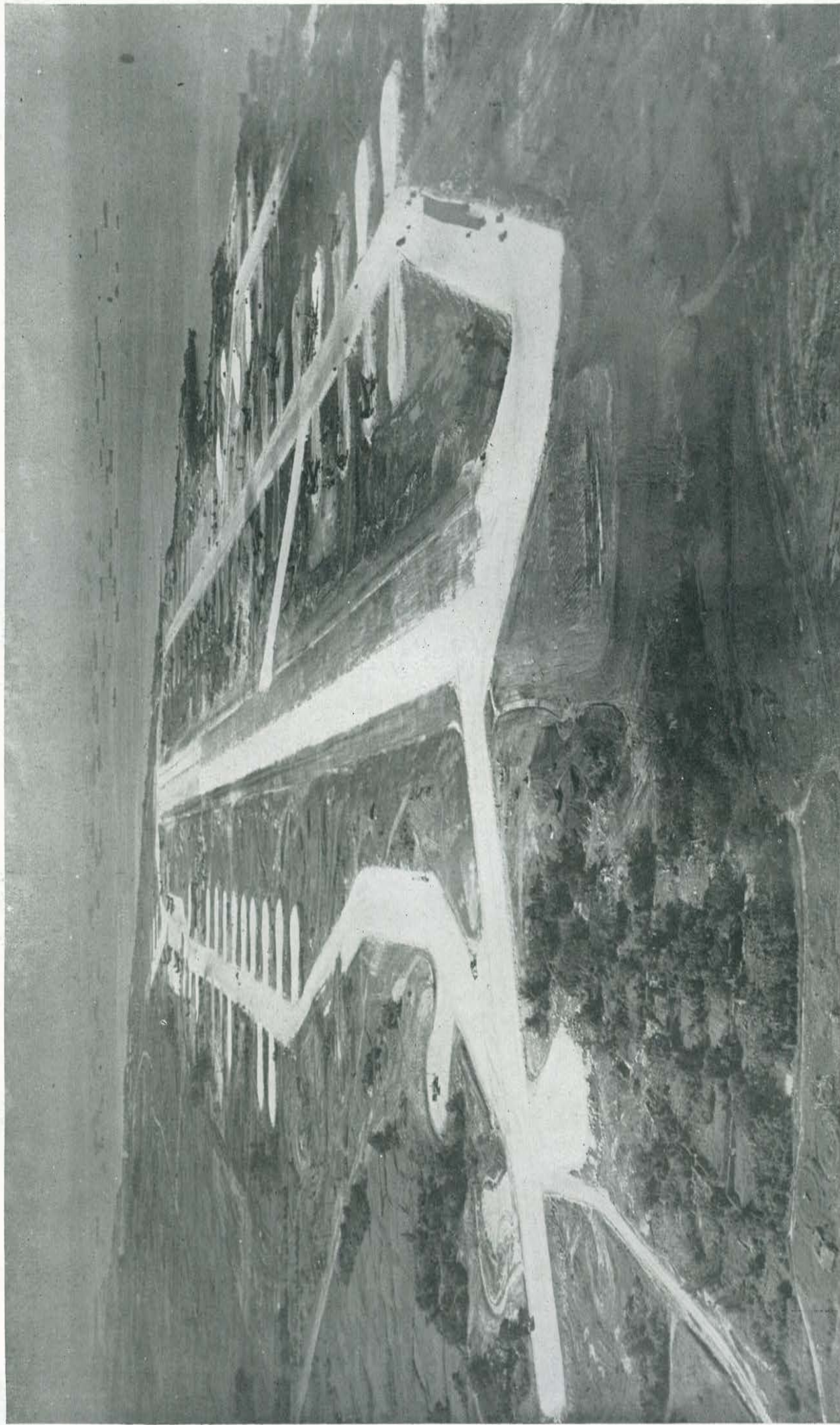


**LOOKING WEST** across Bolo Field to the East China Sea, a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -yard shovel loads a Euclid with one of last loads of coral used. A  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -yard shovel (right) digs dirt out of last hardstand. In 1943-44, Stirling Airfield

was completed in the Northern Solomons with only  $\frac{3}{4}$ -yard shovels. However, by the time the 87th started Bolo Field, the battalion was outfitted with one  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -yard shovel, one  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -yard shovel and five  $\frac{3}{4}$ -yard shovels.



# AERIAL OF COMPLETED BOLO FIELD SHOWS B-29 STRIP IN FULL USE AGAINST ENEMY



BOLO FIELD never really served its intended purpose of launching huge armadas of Superfortresses against Japan's tottering empire. Before the B-29s could arrive in force from various outlying bases, the bewildered enemy was begging for peace on any terms. Therefore, plans

for the second B-29 strip were cancelled, although the battalion had already commenced preliminary grading for the twin runway. Its third airfield assignment on Okinawa, completed the 87th was content to rest on its laurels. Bolo traffic, consisting principally of medium

bombers and fighters, reached its peak in late August and early September when hordes of transports used it in flying airborne occupation troops to Japan. It had been a great adventure, but the men were satisfied that it was over.



# P R O J E C T S



**NAGAHAMA QUARRY—ROUTE NO. 6—DISPOSAL PLANT**





FIRST UNIT of the rock crusher assembly at Nagahama Quarry is being erected as the jaw crusher is set in place. Heavy timber bulkhead, set against formidable earth ramp (left), provides an easy approach for rock-laden trucks.



JIG SAW. Before the 87th could complete the assembling and erection of the new crusher, it fell heir to the full operation of the project. Soon the versatile Earthmovers were shooting down whole mountainsides (see previous page).



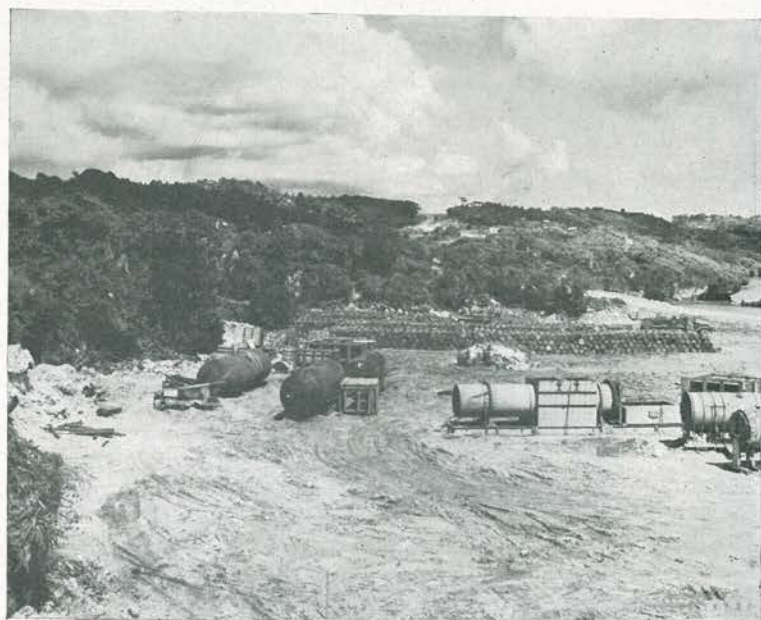
THE WORKS. Here is an overall view of entire unit in operation from time rough rock is dumped into crusher (center) until it is carried up conveyor belts ready for use. Nearby quarry was considered a dangerous assignment.



STORAGE BINS for crushed stone (right) feed materials into trucks that haul it to various projects. These bins are filled by means of conveyor belts (left), which are driven by crusher motors. No unauthorized personnel were allowed.



TESTING screened limestone taken at random from storage bins, Ralph Ackerman (left) and Byron Chronic use a slide rule in making computations. Aggregate was thoroughly tested every eight hours to insure minimum specifications.



ASPHALT PLANT. The 87th's ability to absorb punishment (and endless work assignments!) was again demonstrated when the battalion fell heir to the new asphalt plant set up at Nagahama. However, it soon went to 82nd Seabees.



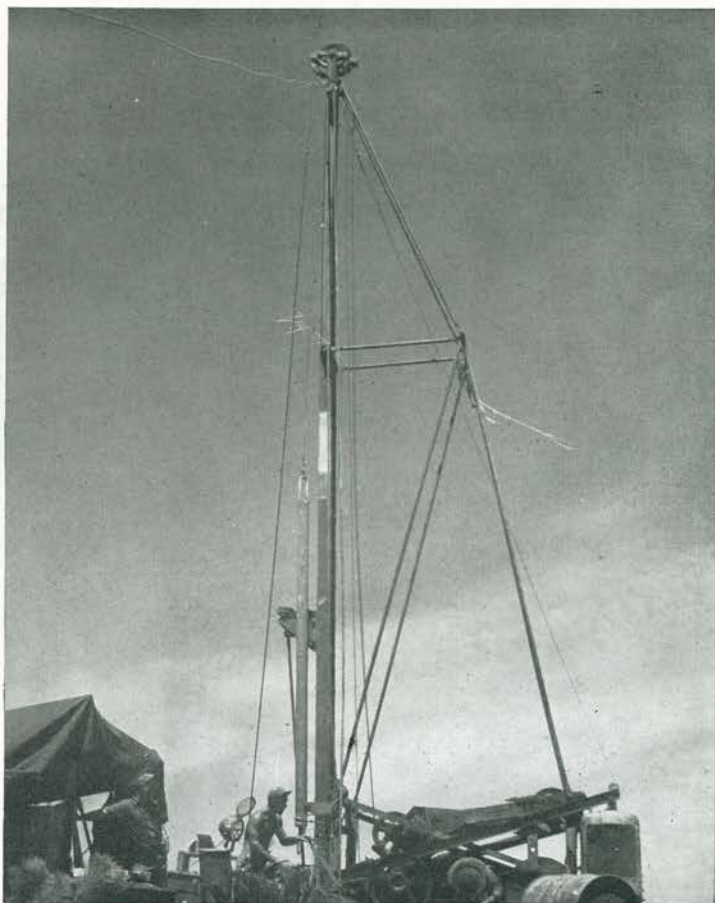


NAGAHAMA HARBOR (right center) is photographed from Face I, near top of limestone mountain (see page 295). Taken before crusher assembly was installed, this shot shows site selected for rock crusher approximately in center of picture. Village of Nagahama spreads along waterfront of

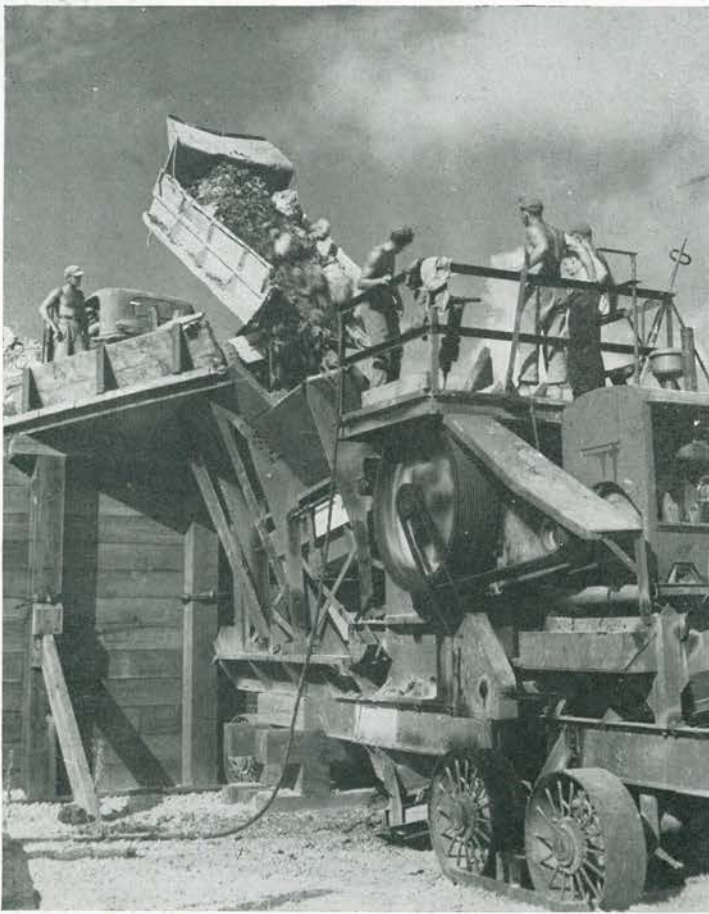
nearest promontory, while Bolo Point projects its great bulk into the East China Sea (far left). Building housing air compressors for quarry drills is in left foreground near trucks. A main highway, Route 6, is easily recognized.

**DEATH SCENE.** Demolition gang is drilling holes for charges to reduce size of boulders. At this spot, Dale Anderson was accidentally killed and Dick Henry seriously injured on 24 August. Neither are in this group as they worked opposite shift.

**NOT FOR WATER.** Battalion quarrymen utilize one of three well-drilling rigs to drive holes 200 feet into mountain top in preparation for mammoth blast shown on page 295. Holes were then loaded with dynamite and shot simultaneously. More "CAN DO."







HERE SHE COMES! Another truck dumps its load of bulk rock into first unit put into operation. The resultant product then passes on to the next smallest crushing unit before the finishing operation.



UP AND OVER. Ensign Frank Cizek observes flow of crushed stone along the conveyor belts into the gravity operated storage bins. The finished product varies in size up to 3/4-inch.



ACCENTUATING THE MAXIMUM, the fully completed Nagahama crusher grinds away without a hitch as the enormous jaw crushers chew up boulders of all sizes from the nearby quarry. Twenty-seven tons of dynamite were

used to blow down the mountainside when the last wartime charge was set off in mid-August. Drilling and loading for this final blast (page 295) occupied demolition crews for almost a month.





ROUTE 6 TO THE FRONT was, with the possible exception of Yontan, Awase and Bolo Airfields, the 87th's most important project during its six busy months on Okinawa. Above relocation site, taken during a lull

in traffic, is a far cry from the miserable thoroughfare all vehicles traveled during April and May en route to The Front.



BATTLE-WEARY VETERANS are speeded back from front lines over Route 6, which 87th Earthmovers converted from a jeep trail to a main thoroughfare. The project was under the supervision of Lt. Tolvo Panttaja. This

vital highway ran along the very edge of the west coast and was the only main traffic route from northern Okinawa to General Buckner's positions at The Front.





SEABEE WAY. Construction of Bolo Point garbage disposal plant required the collective skill of nearly every 87th division before completion. After a 'dozer clearing by Transportation, R and S demolition crews blasted proper slope angle along cliff. Carpenters then erected boiler house

and laid foundation for chutes. They were followed by plumbers who piped the fresh and salt water assembly. Chief Doug Thomas' cement crew poured concrete apron, after which electricians wired the boiler house and she was ready!



IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN, but Stacy Potter, member of a carpenter crew building foundations for three oil drum chutes designed to carry garbage 75 feet down to the sea, keeps right on with his tedious form work. (For view of completed chutes, see picture above.)



BOILER CHECK. Mike Yanoscik (left) and Martin Melasky check valves of boilers supplying hot water and steam for sterilizing operation. Despite most modern methods of design, this plant, built in July, was destroyed by terrible typhoon of 9 October.



# C A M P B O L O



## B O L O P O I N T



# NEW CAMP WAS A BEEHIVE OF CONSTRUCTION



"I HEAR YOU TALKING, but you can't come in". Tomb or no tomb, communications must go through and far from being superstitious after 21 months overseas is this E Division telephone crew: Stevens, Cherpick, Jordan, Lynch, Shady, Steadley and Chief Riley.



ROBBING THE OCEAN for these "just right" coral blocks cut by natives from conveniently located reefs, Chief Doug Thomas (standing, right) and his versatile concrete gang lay foundations for Ship's Store in May. Chow hall is in the background.



SUPERVISION, PLUS! An officer (Lieut. Davis) and three chiefs (McKinney, Wemple and Rhyne) "supervise" four electricians and crane operator in erecting Jap rails fashioned into light poles for camp area. Workers: Henderson, Scott, Chet Smith, Dobbs. Operator: Carnes.



FRUSTRATION. This was approximately the way the 87th's permanent chow hall looked shortly after it was commenced in June. It still looked like this when the depleted battalion left Bolo for Baten-Ko in late September. Explanation: Confusion from above.





"COOKIE'S CASINO," a beer and coke garden where all hands enjoyed these iced refreshments together, was instituted at Saipan, in April, by Comdr. Cook and continued throughout his regime on Okinawa. Here, the Wet Canteen line still files past rear serv-

ice entrance of Ship's Store as hundreds of tired men are picked up at day's end in pleasant grove of green pines. Beer was rationed two cans per customer, per day, but there was no limit on cokes.

## LIFE AT CAMP BOLO WAS NEVER DULL

Construction of the 87th's main camp at Bolo Point began immediately after the LSTs commenced unloading at Green Beach on 27 April.

Ditchdiggers dug deep slit trenches for foxholes wherever tents were raised. Many tent groups built fancy bomb shelters with roofs fashioned from narrow-gauge Jap rails, ripped up at the Front by battalion bullgangs while artillery shells still arched overhead. This type of underground shelter, complete with cots, mosquito bars and insect bombs, was used for sleeping quarters when the raids lasted all night as they often did.

An adequate mess hall was built in double-quick time and was thrown open to all hungry servicemen. Ice cream was served the first week in May and ice water became a permanent fixture. GIs, Marines and fighter pilots from Yontan and Kadena often outnumbered the Bees in 87th chowlines.

And then the Ryukyu rains came. For 30 consecutive days—from 15 May to 15 June—it never let up. Yet the work went on. The outfit was now a long time away from home. Personnel Office was more and more besieged with requests for emergency leaves as the morale-breaking "Dear John" letters continued to arrive from impatient spouses. Disbursing also had its quota of headaches in handling military invasion currency, which had rendered U. S. currency obsolete on Okinawa for the duration.

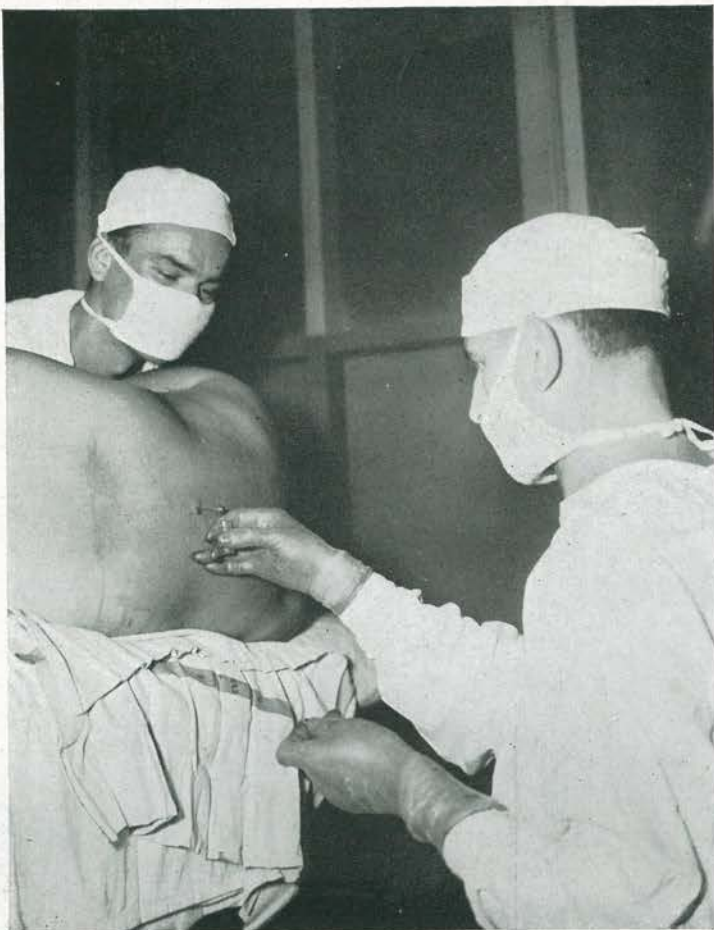
Once the few remaining Jap pockets of resistance were mopped up, the celebrated COOK'S TOURS of battle areas and historic shrines, instituted at Saipan, were resumed. The news-hungry men depended upon the daily island newspaper—THE NEW OKINAWIAN—for resumes of world-shaking events. Ears were kept glued to Radio Okinawa, Station WXLH—"Just a stone's throw from Tokyo." Never before had the men chanced across so many former acquaintances as they encountered here. For the first time, the battalion found itself rubbing elbows with an entire army—Buckner's dogged Tenth.

Last of many indelible impressions were the swarms of huge transports using the island's many airfields—Bolo, Yontan, Kadena, Awase, Machinato, Yonabaru, Chimu, Futema, Motobu, etc.—in ferrying legions of occupation troops to Japan. As the endless flights of aerial box-cars shuttled back and forth between Okinawa and Japan, the spent men knew that their labors had not been in vain.



DISHING IT OUT. Scuttlebutt raced through camp that an extra-special meal was to be had at the battalion chow hall and every manjack "charged" the galley forthwith. KPs are shown dishing it out to the usual double line.





"NOW THIS MAY HURT a little," says Lt. Comdr. (Dr.) Abraham Fleischer to patient, Ararat Malkassian, PhM2c, one of his corpsmen, as the battalion's third Senior Medical Officer administers a spinal anesthesia. Chief Pharmacist Mate Garrett Tunney assists.



"HERE'S HOW, BOYS!" The spinal having performed its mission of mercy, Dr. Fleischer, surrounded by Lt.(jg.) (Dr.) A. R. Robertson, IV (unseen) and three corpsmen, proceeds to remove a bothersome cyst from base of patient's spine in 87th's operating room.



**SICK CALL.** Statistics prove men overseas two years do not have natural resistance of fresh Stateside troops. With 12 of their 24 overseas months spent in the unhealthy Solomons, it was not surprising that many ROBIN WENTLEY veterans found it necessary to visit Sick Bay occasionally during

the Bolo sojourn. Erected in a L-shaped quonset that housed entire medical and dental departments, including a spacious ward and a well equipped operating room, Bolo Point was a medico's dream.





"FINKEL'S PLACE" was one of many fairly appropriate names for the 87th Ship's Store—one of Comdr. Cook's several pet projects. Supervised by Lt.(jg) Grover Daly and managed by Chief John Ahaesy, customers were handled by Spence, Grubb and Corwin.



COMMAND PERFORMANCE. Comdr. Cook, a patron of the arts, ordained a Sunday afternoon jam session for "the boys" and immediately it was so ordered. "Crushing the Coral" (left to right): Lockard, Hanson, Pagano, Peiffer, Yorke, Kenning and Van Dorn.



NO TICKEE, NO WASHEE. Chief O. J. Deroche (left), "big boss" of the battalion laundry throughout trip, keeps an omniscient eye on his hustling laundry crew as "my boys" and machines remove honest sweat from another division's clothes.



SHOES PRESERVE THE MAN. Joe Curci buffs a shoe and make this item of footgear as good as new. Shoes were repaired here with new heels and soles, but shine boy was always out! Most Seabees, however, were always after new shoes at Supply.



"COMING EVENTS cast their shadows before" and Painter Joe Morton (right) knows they can't keep the long-suffering 87th overseas forever. Here, Frank Stupia (left) and Gaetano Palisi, battalion tailors, get Seabee Joe ready for a Frisco blow. "Hope springs eternal . . ."



CLIP JOINT. Fancy haircuts and latest scuttlebutt are offered all comers by barbers. "Weary Willie" Williams (center) and "Wild Bill" Doster (right) work on Joe Bentley and Danny Hernandez, respectively, while "Dry-Dock" Boyd "trims" a Gook (left).





"WELL DONE, 'BOYS' !!! Ensign Porath, Flight Nurse Keiffer and Comdr. Cook (second row) see first group (20 of 71) of 42-year-olds off for home in June at Yontan Airfield. Here, many of these veterans of two World Wars had fought the enemy, indirectly with strip-building know-

how and directly with '03s and carbines when Jap airborne troops once paid busy Yontan a surprise suicidal visit. Practically all this group had served the battalion since Camp Peary.



STATESIDE BOUND! This unusually well-groomed (for the Western Pacific!) group of 24 left by plane and ship for the States on 6 August. Composed of men previously reported to ComServPac (Pearl Harbor) as being in excess of the battalion's allowed complement, plus the first ro-

tation group to leave the unit, this contingent left Okinawa same day the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and only four days before the enemy made his first overture for peace.





**GOOK WOMEN** from Ishikawa native compound were "hired" in August as laundry help and for camp cleaning. However, 50 women and 825 Seabees (two years overseas) proved too much for Comdr. Cook and he "chased" the help within 30 days.



**SEABEE WAVES.** Sumiko (left), 21, and Homiko, 19, were leaders of the Gook contingent that upset the tranquility of Camp Bolo. Appointed by the Civilian Government authorities, these young women studied English even on the job.



**ROUND-UP TIME** in "Tex-Kinawa" found "rustlers," sent by Military Government, taking every horse in sight from the battalion corral, but not without protest from 87th cowboys. These horses had been left behind by retreating Jap Army.



**BIG LEAGUER,** Chief Specialist Andy High, veteran of five National League clubs and three World Series, demonstrates batting staunch to Charles Gifford (left), James Rossetti (seated) and James Krueger before he leaves battalion for home.



**WATER WELL** dug by battalion well drillers was excellent example of Seabee craftsmanship. Bob Scanlon (lower right) balances on narrow planking while Don Kilmer (upper right) and Chief Hubert Rieck check depth and pumps, respectively.



**2.5 IS PASSING.** Personnel ambitious for re-rates take qualifying examinations in chow hall. Passing grades will be entered in service records, but applicants must await openings. Yeoman Johnny Bucceri and Chief Bill Getz assist.





HYMN SINGERS, vigorously paced by Chaplain G. Jay Umberger, fourth 87th "padre," give out with an old favorite at Sunday evening services held at the movie area in the absence of an adequate chapel. Leading group with plenty of free-swinging gusto, Chaplain

Umberger's voice led all the rest. Divine Services for Protestants were held twice each Sunday, but movie area was always cleared in time for regular Sunday night show. Catholics and Jews worshipped with nearby outfits.



"SWING IT, BOYS!" As they must to all islands wherever American forces are fighting, Stateside women eventually arrived on Okinawa and, among other strongpoints, took the 87th and Bolo Point by storm. In the American Red Cross hut set aside for

recreation and relaxation, William ("Crusty") Green (left) and the irrepressible Thomas Patrick Rooney (right) sing and play their cherished guitars along with a gala contingent of shipmates—and four (4) Red Cross girls. Center: Artie Hansford, vocalist.





"BUGS!" Chief Pharmacist Mate John Baker (left) displays a beaker of assorted inoculation fluids, which he claims approximates the sum total of serum injected into average 87th Seabee since entering service. Fred Colby, PhMlc, holds celebrated "square needle."



REUNIONS. Seabee fathers chanced across warrior sons throughout trip with reunions reaching a peak on Okinawa. Chief Bill Inness is shown with Marine William, Jr. Other lucky fathers: Chiefs Harold Brennan and Leon Tubbs, Charley Danford and J. D. Deveney.



ADMIRAL'S PARTY. Among the Seabee units on Okinawa visited by Vice Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks (seated, center), was the 43rd Naval Construction Regiment, which, of course, included the 87th. This party was held at the regiment the night of 11

August. The Japs had just asked to quit. Seated in chairs (left to right): Rear Admiral Price, Rear Admiral Cotter, Vice Admiral Moreell, Rear Admiral Manning and Commodore Bisset.



# SELDOM A DULL MOMENT FOR THESE SEABEES



GRAND PRIZE of this Country Store Night at movie theatre was an Okinawa goat won by "lucky" ticket-holder, David Tucker, PhM3c (right), as Ed Towey, SKD1c, master of ceremonies, vents his enjoyment over the public address mike. Goat later escaped.



MADE TO ORDER, "Jap" flags of the above type were turned out in wholesale lots at 87th Paint Shop by Albert Mundy, John Schaefer and Ken Rollins. Complete with appropriate inscriptions and characters, Marines preferred these flags to genuine product.



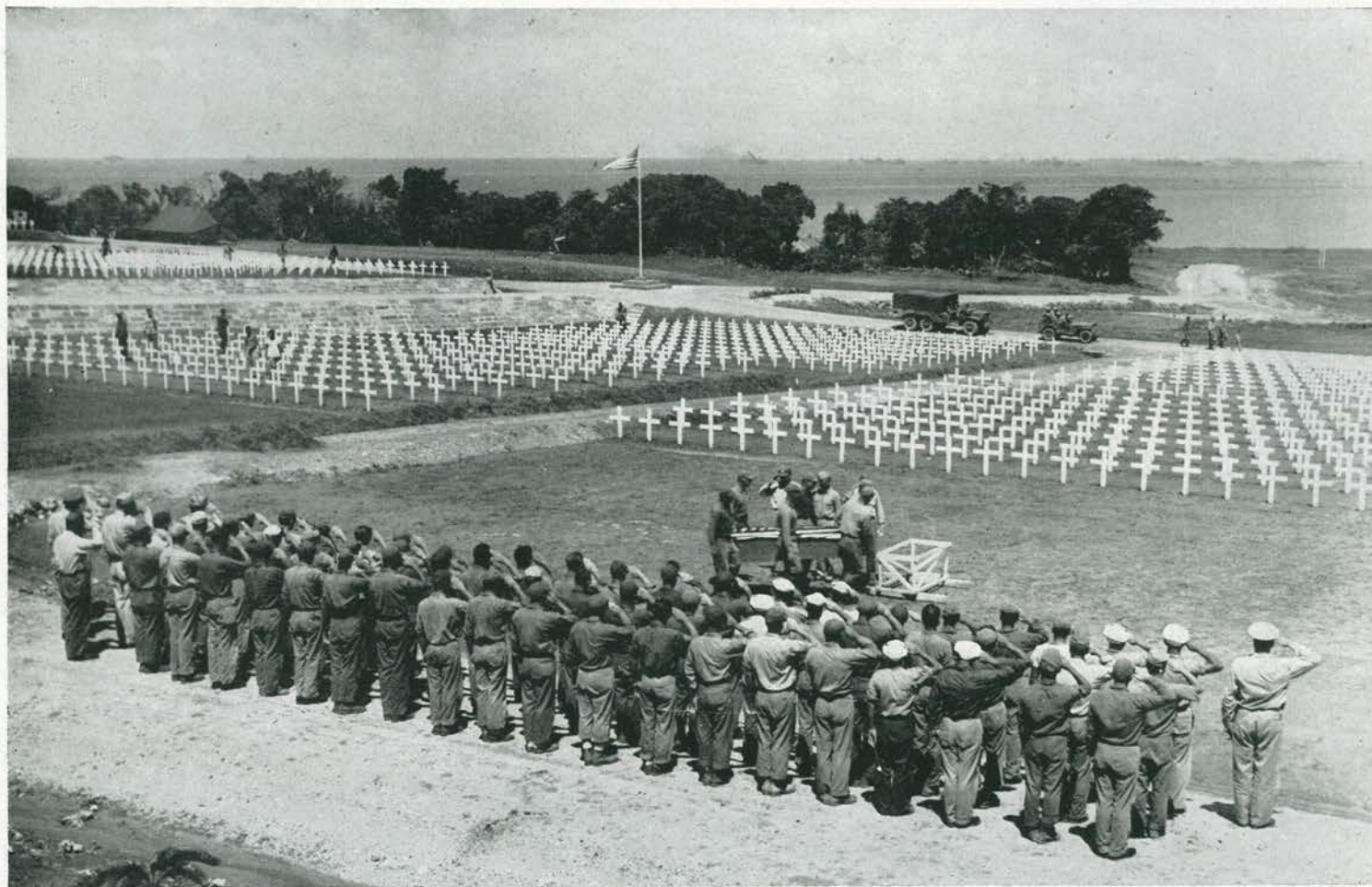
SOUVENIRS. Tom Pungitore, S1c, of the Bronx, gazes fondly at a Japanese officer's sword and battle flag, perhaps wishing they were his to send home. Actually, "Pungy" borrowed props from Comdr. Cook, whose source of supply was a military secret!



GAG. There's more than one way to get your picture in THE EARTH-MOVER as Michael ("Utch") Utchell learned after conferring with the editor and photographer, who apparently thought it took a little of just about everything for a complete Seabee book.



# DALE ANDERSON BURIED IN OKINAWA CEMETERY

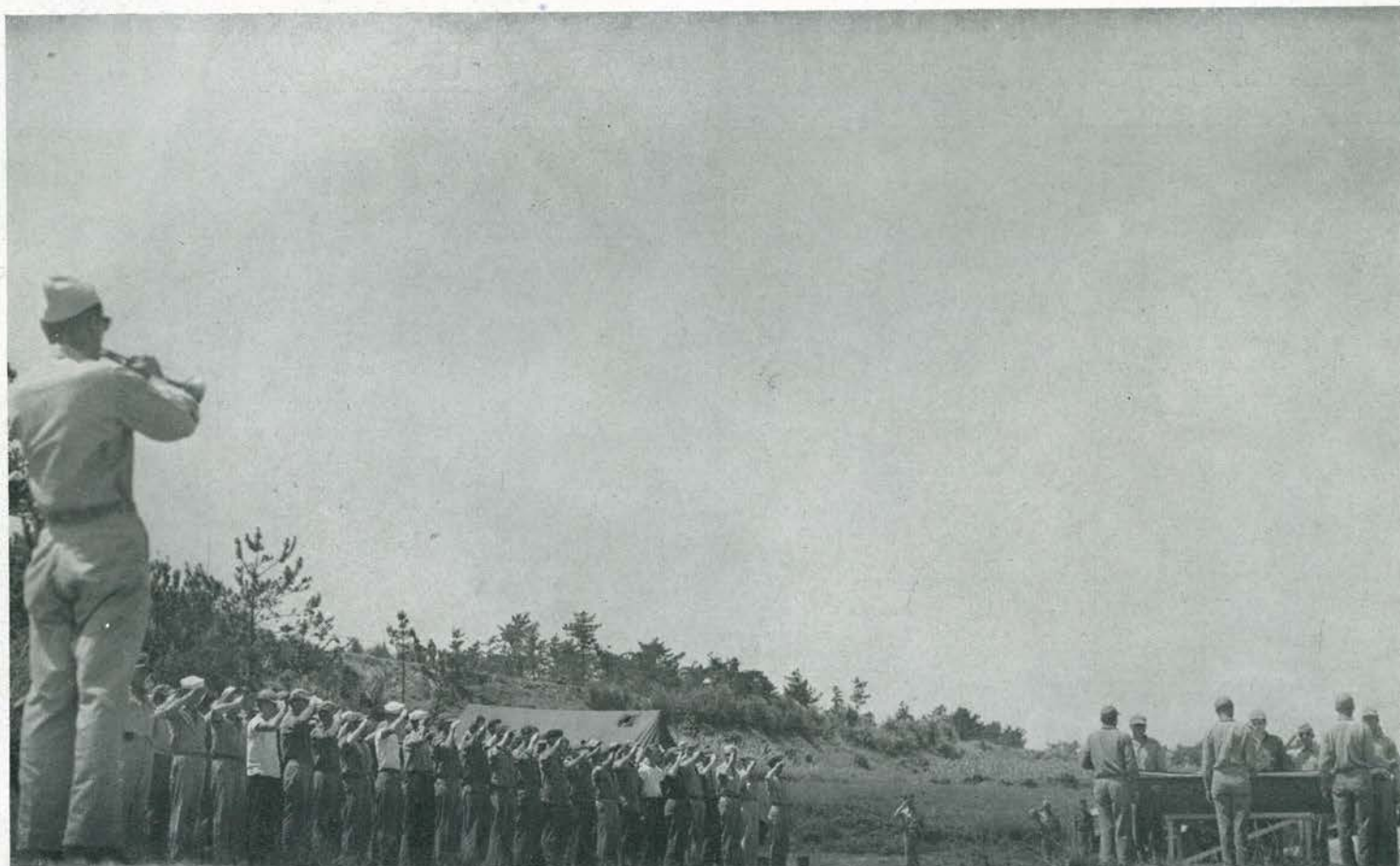


**JOURNEY'S END.** Last rites, with full military honors, were held for Dale S. Anderson, CM3c, of Monaca, Pa., at the Island Command Cemetery, on Sunday, 26 August. Comdr. Cook and Lt. Comdr. Douglas (facing funeral entourage) salute, along with battalion officers and men, as

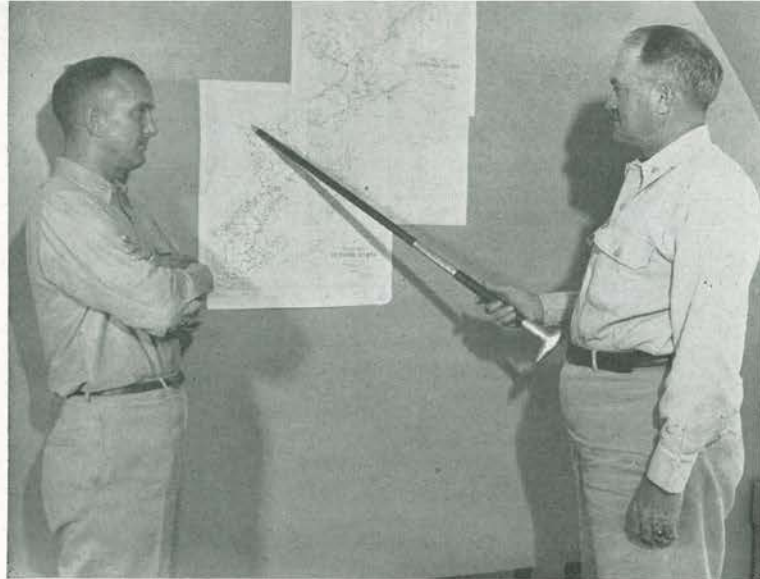
**TAPS ARE SOUNDED** for a departed buddy and shipmate by Ensign Harold Lockard (left) as pallbearers prepare to lower Dale Anderson to his final resting place overseas. The first and only 87th fatality on Okinawa, Anderson's was the battalion's eleventh death since leaving Camp Peary

Chaplain G. Jay Umberger (face obscured) halts pallbearers at spot where services will be conducted. An original member of the 87th, Anderson lacked only four days of having two years overseas at the time of his death.

in April, 1943. His accidental death at Nagahama Quarry on 24 August came after the enemy had sued for peace and the end of the long trip was definitely in sight.







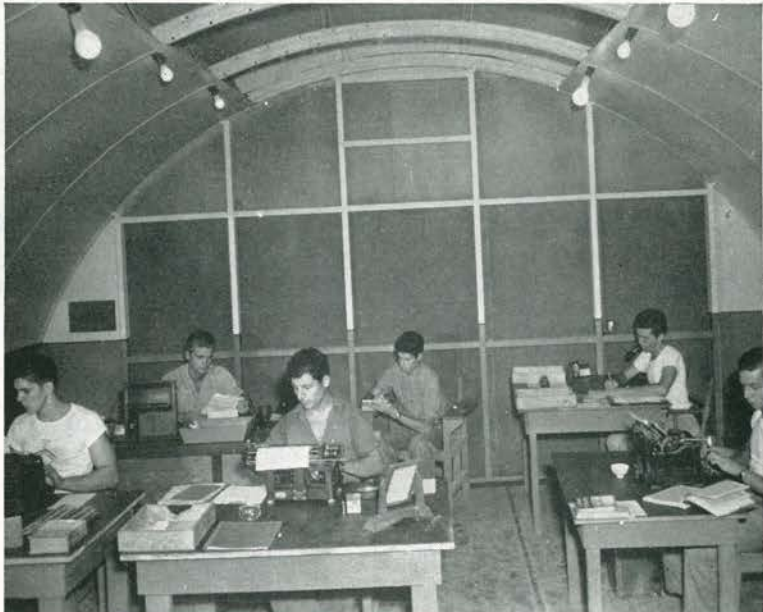
"NOW, WHERE ARE WE?" Comdr. Cook (right) says to his "exec." Lt. Comdr. Douglas, as he points a fancy Seabee-made cane straight at Bolo Point where the 87th Bees are encamped. These officers were acquainted at Camp Peary, but didn't serve together until Okinawa.



DRAFTING. Lt.(jg) Juel Belsaas (right) drives home a fine point to his able technical group at Camp Bolo. Left to right: Carpenter Vincent Pagano, Chief Andy Competiello, Ed Palmquist, Harry Reuell, George Miller, Ed Shaffer and Willard Hamilton.



DISBURSING. Lt.(jg) Charles Schlotter (seated, far left) and Chief Storekeeper Carl Ruble discuss next pay day as "Tippy," battalion mascot from Ventura, Calif., listens in. Others (left to right): Charlie Dashiell, Bernard Robinson, Ed Towey and Bernie Kruger.



PERSONNEL. Ens. Donald Porath and Chief Yeoman Lauren Merriam (far left and right) drive their yeomen hard to get out orders and records to send eligibles home. Others (left to right): "Larry" Lamoureux, Lawrence Iaquina, John Bucceri and Melvin Ertwine.



POST OFFICE mailmen saw that battalion mail was well handled. William Kemp, Jr. (left) writes report as Wallace Berry (center) sorts outgoing mail. Boss Joe Cantrell cancels letters just finished by censors (background) and dreams of Kentucky mountains.



CENSORS. Razor blade boys focus eagle eyes on outgoing mail as Ensign Porath, battalion censor (right), talks across table with deputy, Chief Carl Dorfelf. Others: Ralph Silver, John Kershaw, Edward O'Con, John Brumit, Frank Van Houten and Carleton Soule.





**HASH SLINGERS.** A housewife may complain about cooking for hubby, but these fellows cooked for over 1,000 men. Ship's cooks, bakers and butchers comprise the commissary department which feeds the entire unit. Chow, at times, may not meet with the approval of all hands, but on

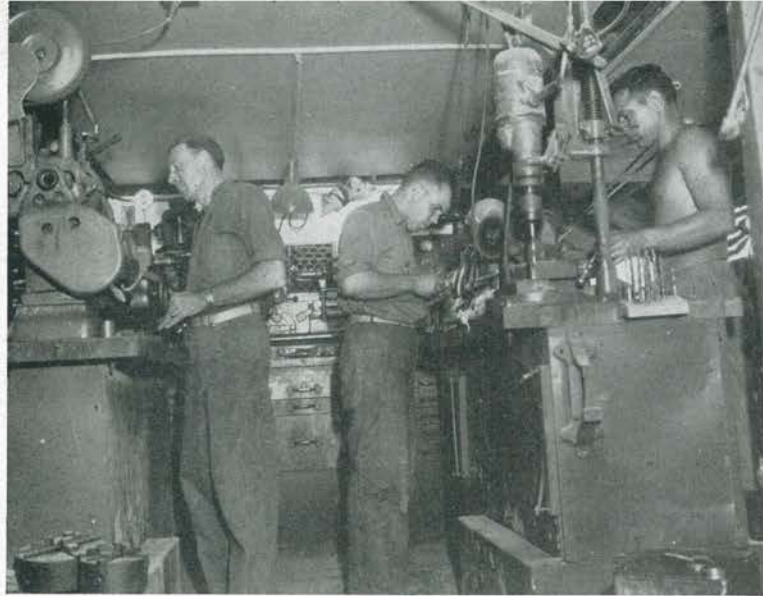
Okinawa the food was usually A-1. Proof of this is that chow tickets had to be issued to keep outsiders from overrunning chow hall, especially when fresh meat was on menu.



**THE MEDICS.** Physicians, dentists and corpsmen step outside Sick Bay to strike a pose for posterity. Left to right, front: Fred Colby, Burton Barnes, Chief John Baker, Lieut. Steve Lynch, Comdr. A. J. Fleischer, Chief Garrett Tunney and Santo DeGrazia; (back row): Ralph Pontow,

Gaylord Hold, William Armstrong, Francis ("Buck") Byers, Lt.(jg) A. R. Robertson, IV, Lieut. Bruce Snider, Ararat Malkasian, David Tucker and Julius Fontenot.





**MACHINE SHOP**, manned by experts, proved invaluable throughout Pacific tour. When parts were unobtainable, especially in forward areas, these machine-wise boys made them. Above, Cecil Farmer, Ambrose Gillespie and John Chisler. Chief sideline: souvenirs!



**CARPENTER SHOP** was always staffed by tool-handry carpenter's mates. Front row: Augustine Borrelli, Elmo Hoffman, Jack Bauske, William Beard and Richard Stough; (standing): Charles Briggs, John Kane, Lieut. A. C. ("Cal") Winters, Daniel John and Alexander Bocko.



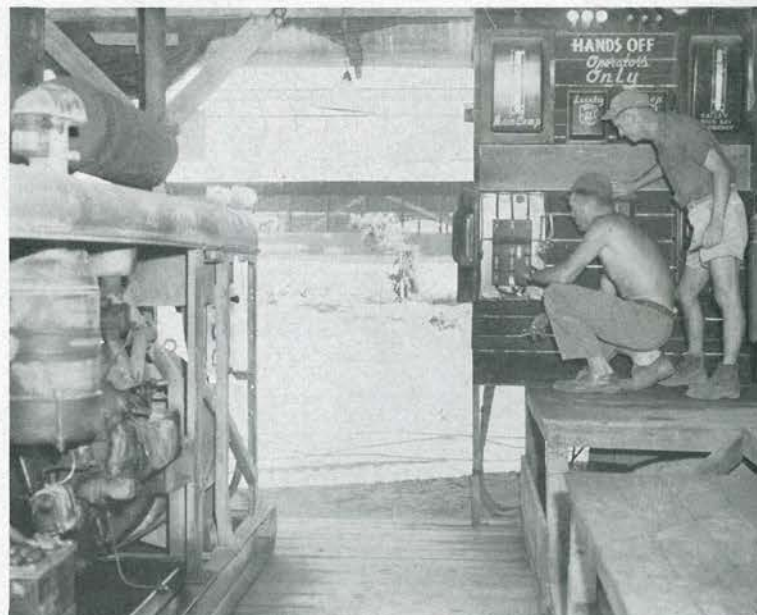
**HEAVY DUTY MECHANICS** are the lads who keep the big cats rolling, come what may. Kneeling: James Rossetti, Charles Gifford, Judson Milligan, John Mullen; (standing): Adam Bull, Edward Giannattasio, Glen Cummings, Pedro Ruiz, and Lovell Hukle.



**PLUMBING SHOP.** Pipefitters come in all sizes like the work they are expected to do. Field includes everything from wrist bands to 12-inch pipe. The crew: Chief Herbert Rieck, Domenic Carapellese, Tom Die, Jack Miller and "Frenchy" Terroux.



**TIRE SHOP.** From the smallest jeep to the largest pan, this essential group handles all types of rubber repairs for rolling stock. Repairmen are: Theodore Lindlau, Ed McKibben, Ed Dutrow, Cecil Haley, Lawrence McVey and Tommy Grissom.



**GENERATOR HOUSE.** The switchboard in this strategic establishment controls all the electric power from main generators to Camp Bolo. Merle Martin (left) may have his hands a little too close to fuses, so Lieut. A. L. Davis keeps a safe distance.





**SPARE PARTS.** No earthmoving equipment is better than existing system of providing spare parts as they are required. These lads knew what was needed and were able to anticipate most requirements! Barrett Sumrell, Lyell Whyte and Woodrow Carter.



**TRANSPORTATION RIGGING LOFT.** The cable crib was no place for gold-bricks. Here, T Division riggers took care of cables for shovels, cranes, draglines, etc. Chief Charlie Bowers (center) assists as Tom Nanfra (left) holds strands and Joe Basket applies spike.



**GENERAL RIGGING LOFT** handled all assignments not pertaining to transportation equipment. Fred ("Buttercup") Haas (left) belies his nickname as he executes a neat splice on a heavy cable. Tutor John ("Pinky") Doyle smiles down proudly upon his protege.

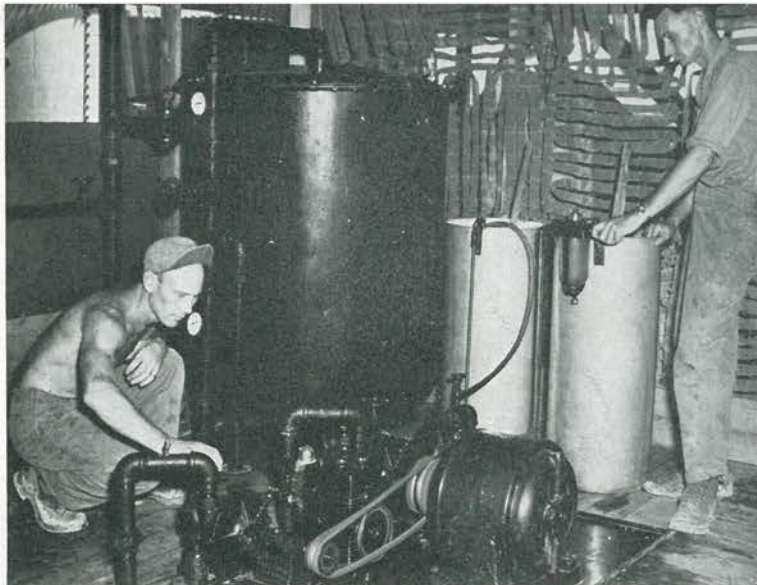


**SHEET METAL SHOP.** Specializing in any sheet metal item from a fancy lavatory to a tin whistle, these boys always add another shingle to their sign at each new place of duty. Left to right: Robert Bowman, Joe Ferrera, James Smith and Lincoln Bock.





T DIVISION STAFF, consisting primarily of shop foremen and field supervisors, assemble for a final picture of the real earthmovers as Lieut. Ben Markette (fourth from left, second row) hands reins over to Lieut. John C. Britton (center, first row).



WATER POINT. Combining utility with compactness, this purifying unit and filter were built from various odds and ends and powered by a captured Jap motor. Bob Scanlon (left) and Chief Hubert Rieck adjust the unit, which handles 50 gallons per minute.



WELDING AND BLACKSMITH SHOPS were combined into a single efficient unit in T Division. The above happy-go-lucky gang could and did handle anything and everything—from souvenir bracelets to 12-yard carryalls—and were never stumped.



LIGHT DUTY MECHANICS are as inaptly named as their work is heavy, both in its nature and quantity. Battalion had well over 100 trucks and jeeps to be maintained. These men have just finished repairing this 10-yard Euclid truck.



ELECTRIC SHOP handled repairs, rewinding and supplies. James Cheke and Bob Loden catch up bench work while Lieut. Davis explains defective coil to James Hockersmith. Here, these three were electrician's mates, first class; all eventually made CEM.



THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, bossed by Chief Constant Upham (center, back row), sprinkled all access roads into camp, kept lister bags and fire barrels placed and filled, maintained fire extinguishers at proper spots—and put out fires any old time!





**BATTALION NAVY.** The 87th's small boat pool was located at mouth of Bisha Gawa (river), six miles from Camp Bolo. Chief "Jerry" Kadenbach and his crew (William Schmidt and Tennis Wick) played a leading role in helping keep the Earthmovers well supplied with fresh meat, eggs, etc.,

from ships in Okinawa's several harbors. These fresh vitamins kept the air-field makers in tip-top condition for their gruelling work schedule. MISSEABEE (left) and HARDNOSE were also used extensively for fishing trips.



**BREATHER.** P Division plumbers and pipefitters knock off at new garbage unit long enough to make the battalion book. (Front): Howard Hattal, Walt Maximuk, Chiefs Louie Carlisle and Charlie Poirot, Mike Yanoscik, (back): Robert DeVries, Hurchel Turner, Robert Newkirk.



**"GOOD LUCK, YOUNG MAN,"** Comdr. Cook, 52, tells his successor and former executive officer, Lt. Comdr. Douglas, 30, as second OinC departs for the States (and inactive duty) in September. Comdr. Cook guided the 87th slightly over five months. Great friends, these!



# JAP RAIDERS GUIDED ON BOLO POINT IN STRIKES AGAINST U. S. AIRFIELDS



**BOLO REFERENCE POINT.** What Mt. Tapotchau was to Saipan, the landmark of Bolo Point was to Okinawa. This prominent fixation point, jutting into the East China Sea and pointing like a steel arrow straight toward the heart of crumbling Japan, was used by friend and

foe alike as THE reference point for calculating operational distances. Ringed with 90° searchlight and radar detection units, Bolo was a favorite target for enemy bombers, especially when they hadn't been successful in unloading their nuggets over one of Okinawa's many

airfields. The 87th encampment is easily recognized approximately in upper center of view and almost directly south of the apex of the Bolo arrowhead. Northern tip of Bolo Field is barely visible at upper right.



# **n A T I V E S**



**O K I N A W A S H I M A**





A **FALLEN CULTURE** is symbolized by this no longer used Shinto shrine and these three dispossessed Okinawa natives en route back to a native compound after picking up a few of their belonging at their former home. Located in a pleasant grove near the village of Uza, and quite

near Camp Bolo, this shrine was a favorite background of 87th camera fiends. This group is typical of Okinawa society in that the two women are bearing the heavy burdens.



**THE LAW.** This solemn citizen of Okinawa, attired in GI clothing, was a civilian policeman (the CPs) who assisted MPs in recovering native horses. Approximately 40 were collected on the 87th "range" and taken to Ishikawa.



**CULLING RICE.** Sorting the grain from the chaff is still done on Okinawa by primitive laborious sifting through one wicker basket to another. Thanks to their short, sturdy legs, native women can squat for long periods without fatigue.





**DISPLACED PERSONS.** Natives of all sizes and ages are shown crowded into a sorting compound at Taira. Rounded up as they roamed aimlessly about the countryside, they are questioned here by civilian and military authorities. Then, they are sorted for return to villages or internment.

Tarps thrown over poles serve as living quarters for transients. Due to their inability to respond to challenges of sentries, compounds or guarded villages were the only safe places for natives at night.



**THE YOUNGER SET** of Nago, barefooted and already toting their burdens aloft, walk nonchalantly over a pebbly road. The girls have exhausted their shoe rationing coupons for the current month. Bilingual signs warn natives to stay away from Nago and nearby military installations.

Nago was principal city of this section and had a peacetime population of 10,000. Located half-way up the island, it was badly damaged by the First Marines when they made their invasion sweep northward.





**GOAT TOWN.** These hardy animals are the only occupants remaining in village of Uza. Only a mile away, this was closest village to Camp Bolo. Heavy stone walls are built against typhoons that come in September and October.



**PHOTOGENIC.** In Taira, a fishing village north of Nago, wider streets and glass windows indicate a greater prosperity than found in average poverty-stricken hovels. Tiny couple (foreground) are all dressed up in contrast to lad in window.



**VILLAGE WELL.** This amiable character operates hand chain device to bring up a bucket of water in almost deserted village of Takashippo. His "procuring bag" (on ground behind him) is still quite full, evidence of a good day's scavenging.



**GENTS OF OLD SCHOOL** pose on steps of school building in Takashippo. Gentleman at right wears Jap split-toed shoes and carries a handsome cane. GI souvenir hunters have picked village clean. Almost empty bag indicates poor hunting.



**STRAW BOSS** (center, wearing large, white hat) directs countrymen in hurried search of partially destroyed village of Jima. Searchers pick up anything useful in their new life in native compounds. Houses were later razed by 'dozers.



**FRATERNIZATION!** Native women and children lose their inherent camera-shyness as Comdr. Cook, far-ranging 87th skipper, stops for a chat along Route 6-N. This would have been tempting morsel if roving MPs had happened along!





"ALL THE COMFORTS . . ." The interior of each native dwelling at Ishikima has a corner where the family's belongings are piled in picturesque disorder. Limited section under eaves serves as a kitchen. Two children sleep on floor while a third infant (right) peeks over mother's shoulder.

Kimonoed urchin (left) has dropped his fan and is giggling wildly. Straw mats, used for all purposes, are the only furniture these people possess. Chairs and beds are unknown.



EAGER BEAVER. This tiny native at village of Taira heads for parked 87th jeep—on the double! Steep stairs are the least of his worries as his thoughts center on the possibility of tagging the Americans for candy.



HARVEST TIME. Picturesque Okinawan women (at least, from the back!), wearing typical, high-crowned straw hats against the sun, reap the full grown grain. To facilitate squatting and bending required by manual tasks, skirts are slit.





**BINDLE STIFF**, Okinawa model, is hardly one of the "Okies" Author John Steinbeck wrote about in "The Grapes of Wrath," but this character would certainly appear in any Seabee's forthcoming novel about the "Okies" of Okinawa. His hat appears worn.



**CHOW'S ON**. Crude utensils are used by native mother to grind meal for chow at Ishikawa compound. Children gaze longingly at sticky concoction. Her smallest child rides astern. Boy (right), obviously troubled with fleas, forgot to dress for dinner!



**THE GLEANERS**. Women and boys work in a sweet potato field. Lads use home-made mattocks to loosen earth; then, women dig potatoes and cut leaves. Small scythes (tucked in waistbands) are used for trimming. Woman (left) smiles broadly, but keeps her head averted. Sweet potatoes

and pork are their staple foods, but pork supply has been sadly depleted by ravages of war. Seabees were as eager for these hats as souvenirs as they once were for grass skirts.



**S C E N I C**



**RYUKYU RETTO**





BEAUTY IS EVERYWHERE, according to THE EARTHMOVER photographer, who stumbled across this idyllic little valley in west central Okinawa between Yontan and Kadena. Although this haven of peace shows much evidence of native cultivation, it was once a secret Jap supply depot where

vital enemy supplies were hidden underground. Evidence of intense Jap activity, including entrance to a secret recess, may be seen in left background. A small, convenient water point is shown at right center.



"FILL 'ER UP!" This Japanese monument, which stands near a military academy at Nago, is now serving a more useful purpose than was originally intended by its erectors. GIs have converted it into a gasoline refueling station.



DOWN IN THE VALLEY. In a quiet ravine below bustling Yontan Airfield, natives have made maximum use of the fertile land for cultivation. Because of scarcity of water for irrigation, Okinawans take advantage of every natural rain shed.





SHURI CASTLE, anchor of the Jap's fiercely resisting Shuri Line, stands blasted by overwhelming firepower from land, sea and air. Once the home of Ryukyu kings, its thick, reinforced concrete walls tell a story of a game little man beaten by a determined bigger opponent. Entire structure

covers several acres and attracted visitors from all over. Here, Mailman Wallace Berry of the 87th, stands near one entrance and says he wouldn't have believed such destruction possible.



THE BEACHCOMBER. Comdr. Cook, a lone figure against a desolate landscape, hunts seashells, including cateyes, of course, at low tide along Toguchi Village beach, which faces a huge Jap anchorage. The enemy attempted to blockade this channel against American ships by scuttling eight

vessels. One of the derelict ships may be seen in central background. The blockade proved fruitless, however, as U. S. ships now use this haven to escape frequent typhoons. Sesoko Shima is in right background.





IE SHIMA, where Journalist Ernie Pyle died and the Jap surrender envoys transferred for Manila at war's end, could be seen from Bolo Point on a good day. This aerial view, taken en route from Okinawa to Ie, shows the three air strips (one Jap-built) the AAF had in operation against the

suicidal invaders. Despite the fact the tiny (10 square miles) isle took a merciless pounding throughout the Okinawa campaign, it served its purpose well as an outer defense.



DEAD VOLCANO on Ie boldly rises above the flat, barren terrain like some prehistoric monster. Only sizeable elevation on the island, it may also be seen in left center of top picture this page. Sole purpose this landmark served in World War II was as an observation post. The once

verdant trees and vegetation surrounding this eye-catcher now stand burned and devoid of beauty. A winding coral road was built to make it more accessible as a lookout.





**CORAL RIBBONS.** At an altitude of 7,000 feet, high above the great forward base of Okinawa, interlacing roads resemble coral ribbons converging into one junction. Through frequent breaks in light, puffy clouds, drifting lazily away toward the southern battlefront, may be seen camp

sites, fertile valleys and native villages. The eastern portion of the 60-mile-long island is seen here. (The title, "Coral Ribbons," was runner-up to **THE EARTHMOVER** for name of this volume.)



**FALLEN FRIEND.** Along the roadside where famed Ernie Pyle, the enlisted man's war correspondent, was ambushed by a Jap machine-gunner on 18 April 1945, some of his infantry friends erected this simple monument on Ie Shima.



**SCUTTLED** by her crew, this Japanese warship lies on a reef in a futile attempt to blockade Nago Wan beaches. One of eight vessels sunk for this purpose, this ship sits as another monument to enemy futility.





**AIRFIELDS OF WAR.** In this magnificent aerial taken at 6,000 feet, the two fine strips built in central Okinawa by the 87th Seabees are shown in the same sweeping exposure. Yontan Airfield (central foreground) was first medium bomber strip built on Okinawa and Bolo Field (central back-

ground) was the first B-29 strip built in the Ryukyus. This picture presents irrefutable proof of the vast amount of essential work accomplished by the 87th on Okinawa.



**KADENA Airfield**, which based Corsair fighters, was overrun by roaming goats in search of food. It was not uncommon to see a jeep racing down the strip to clear the runway of nonchalant goats for some incoming pilot.



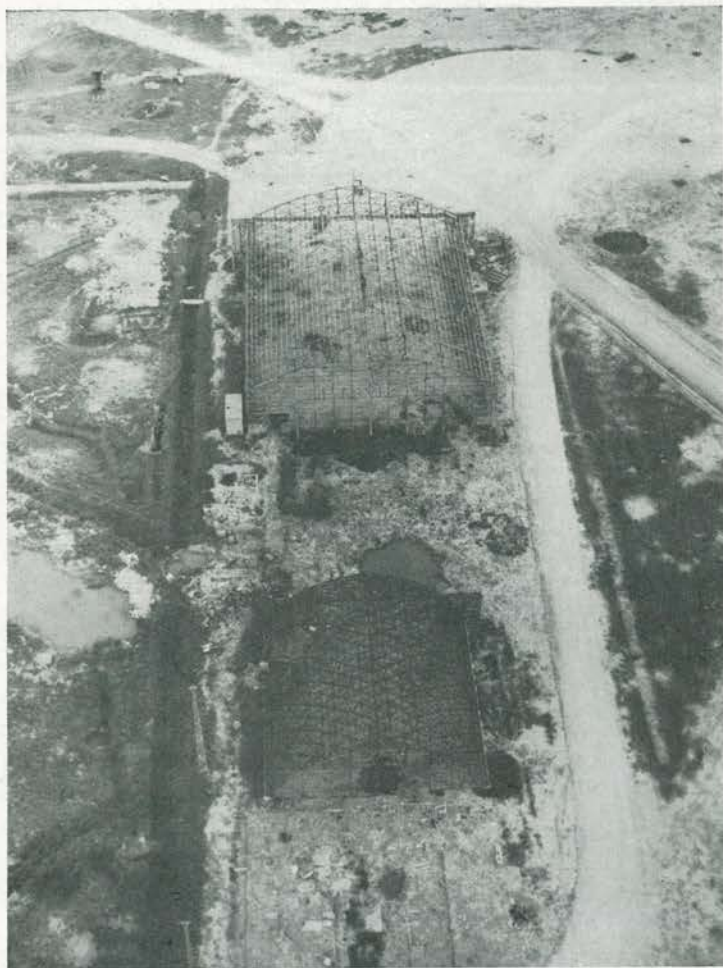
**THE OTHER HALF** lives on a plane all its own in picturesque village of Taira in the Nago sector of Okinawa. Here, life is simple and much time is spent visiting. Natives sit on sacks of soy beans (left).





**NAGO HARBOR.** This well protected harbor lies north of Bolo Point and was a quite prominent Japanese anchorage before the war. Sole harbor entrance is through a small channel and it is otherwise surrounded by reefs. Toward low-lying mountains on far horizon lies city of Nago, second

largest concentration of civilians on Okinawa. Not battered into debris like Naha in the South, Nago remains practically intact. Many of its buildings are used by U. S. troops for quarters.



**JAP HANGARS,** unfinished due to aerial interference, stand alongside shell-torn Naha Field, largest Jap airfield on Okinawa. Direct hits left twisted metal ribs and warped sides. One of many Jap planes destroyed on ground is shown.



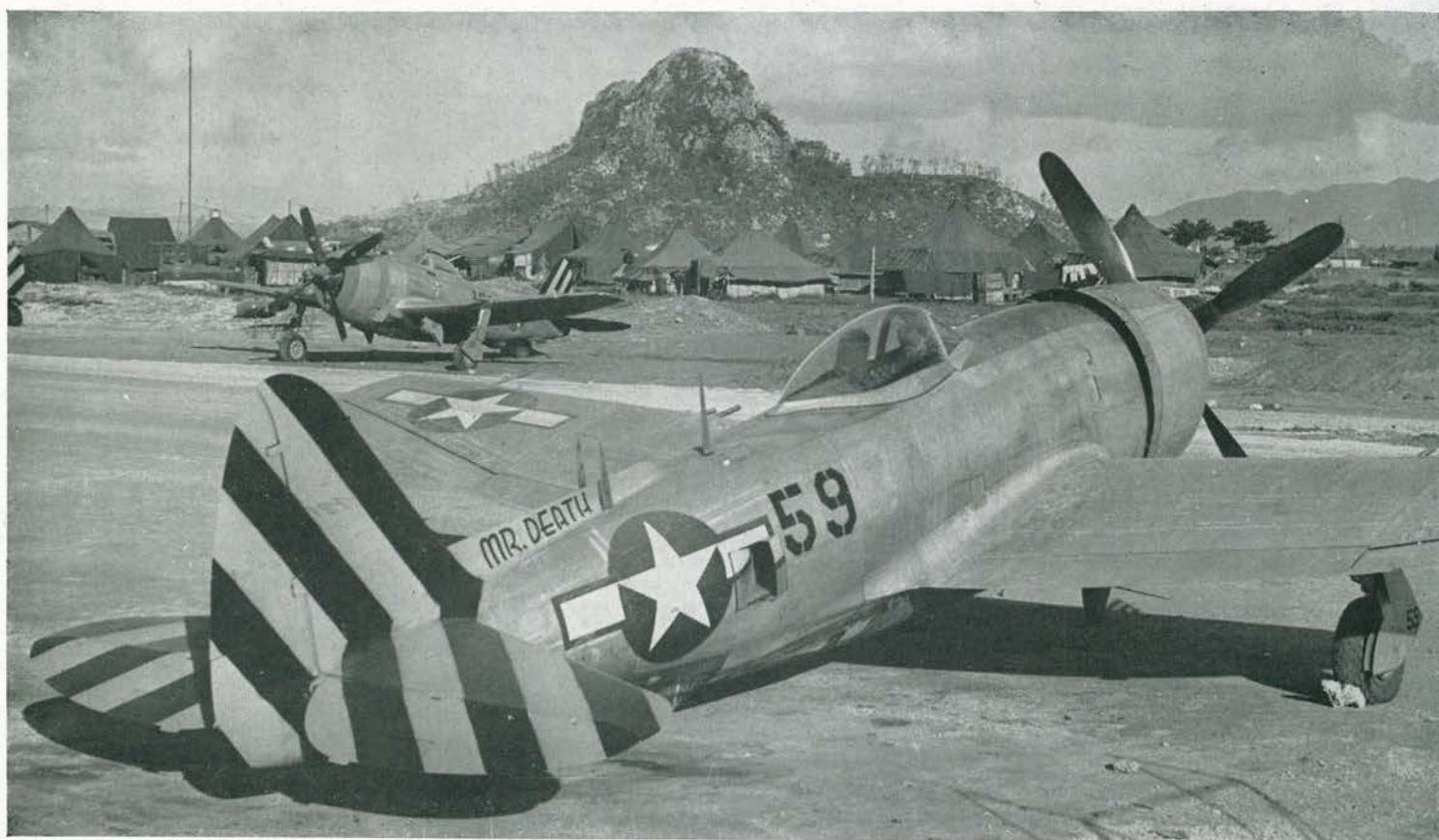
**CULTIVATED VALLEY** strongly resembles a meandering river flowing slowly, but surely, to the sea. Laid out in usual neat sections, the natives plant many types of vegetables. The field is irrigated by water from the nearby creek (right).





HEAVYWEIGHT! Close-up aerial of Bolo Field, still under construction by 87th Seabees, shows airfield makers and equipment rushing to finish sprawling B-29 strip in time to help deliver knockout blows to hard-pressed Japan. Jackhammer crews remove niggerheads (central fore-

ground) from almost completed strip, while rollers and graders apply finishing touches at opposite end. Bolo Point, where 87th is encamped, is in extreme central background. Later, planes taking off from runway, flew directly over battalion area.



MR. DEATH. This P-47 Thunderbolt on Ernie Pyle Field at Ie Shima carries a symbolic inscription for Japanese pilots it may chance to meet in the vicinity of the "Picket Line" protecting Okinawa. Ie's extinct volcano stands as a lone sentinel over airfield named after famed war corre-

spondent. Stripes on tail and under wings make these Thunderbolts easily discernible at great altitudes. Ie was raided even more often than Okinawa by Japs.





**NATIVE JAIL.** Strikingly unlike "bastilles" GIs had known back home, this simple, unoccupied jail for the village of Nakaoshi was nevertheless set up for the same purpose. Sign reads: "These people have broken the law and disgraced Nakaoshi."



**WORK IN PEACE.** Native women from the fishing village of Taira are harvesting rice in paddy fields by hand. Cultivated terraces, which cover entire side of hill in background, kept rich soil from being washed away by rains.



**CHART LOCATION.** In flying from Okinawa to Ie Shima in late August to photograph the historic arrival of the Japanese surrender mission, THE EARTHMOVER photographer aimed his big Graflex at tiny Yanaha Shima.

Resembling thousands of small islands that dot the limitless Pacific, this reef-surrounded landspeck is uninhabited. About all that can be said for it—another dot to be marked on a location chart.



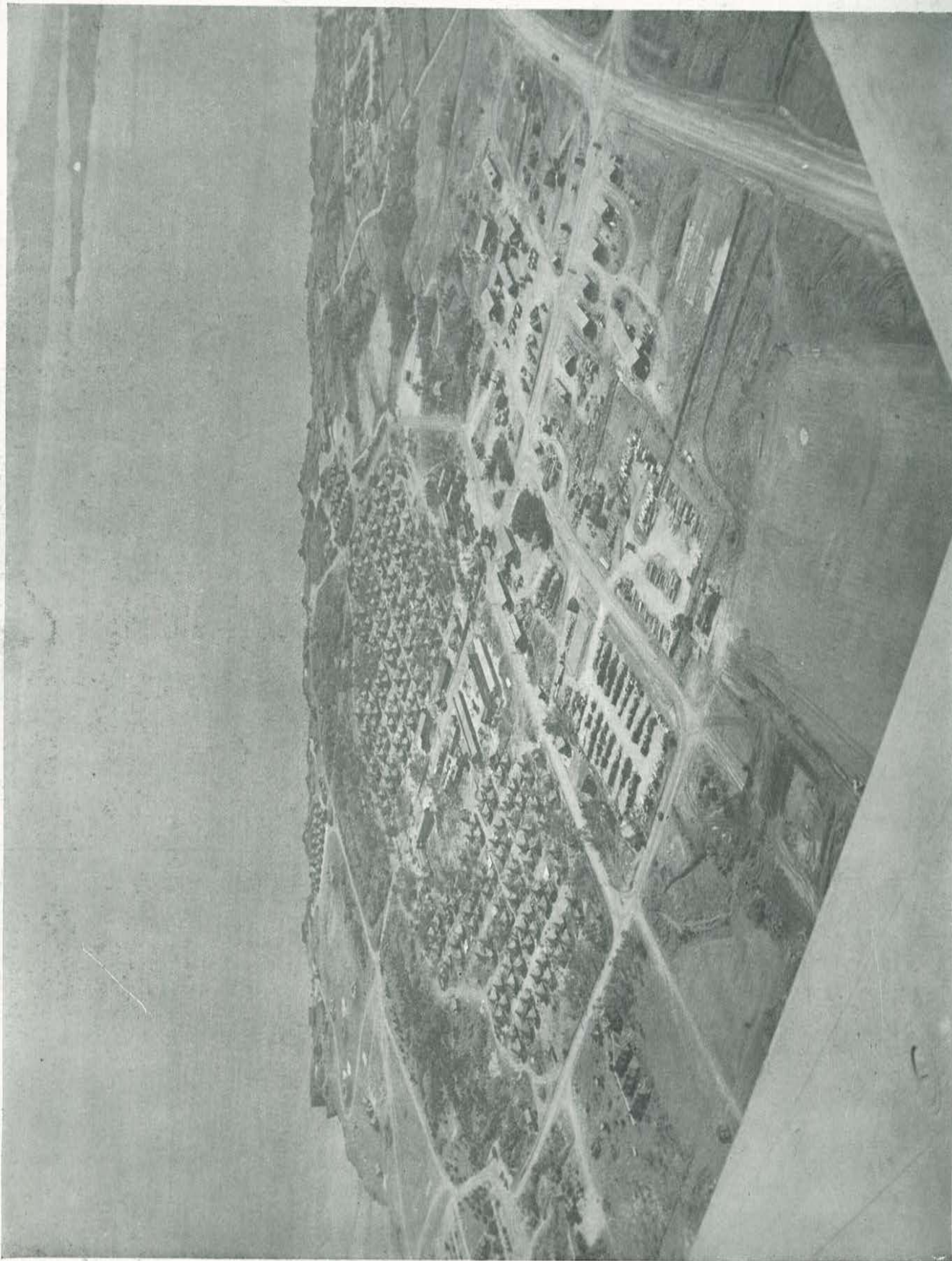
**GREEN PASTURES.** Near a fertile valley, soggy with water drained from nearby hills, lies the beginning of the city of Nago. The terraces (left) and grain crops (center) all add up to, at least, a subsistence for the Okinawans.



**THROUGH THESE PORTALS** pass American wounded from front line areas. This former Japanese military academy at Nago now houses the 87th Field Hospital. This structure was left virtually intact by invasion forces sweeping north.



# AERIAL OF BOLO POINT SHOWS 87TH ENCAMPMENT AGAINST CHINA SEA



jurisdiction over the 87th—are shown at left. Cliffs around Bolo Point added scenic beauty to this location as did misty outline of mountains in distance.

mond (foreground) to camp area with living quarters and various ship's service units (center), the 87th "campers" produced a camp site second to none in the Ryukyus. The offices and parking lot of the 43rd Regiment—parent administrative echelon with operational

HOME OF THE 87th. This interesting angle shot, taken from a low-flying Piper Cub in August, is unique in that it shows the entire 87th camp on Bolo Point, plus many outlying installations not previously shown at close-up range. From shop areas (right) to the baseball diamond (left), the camp is a complete community.



# S U R R E N D E R !



I E S H I M A — 2 5 A U G U S T 1 9 4 5

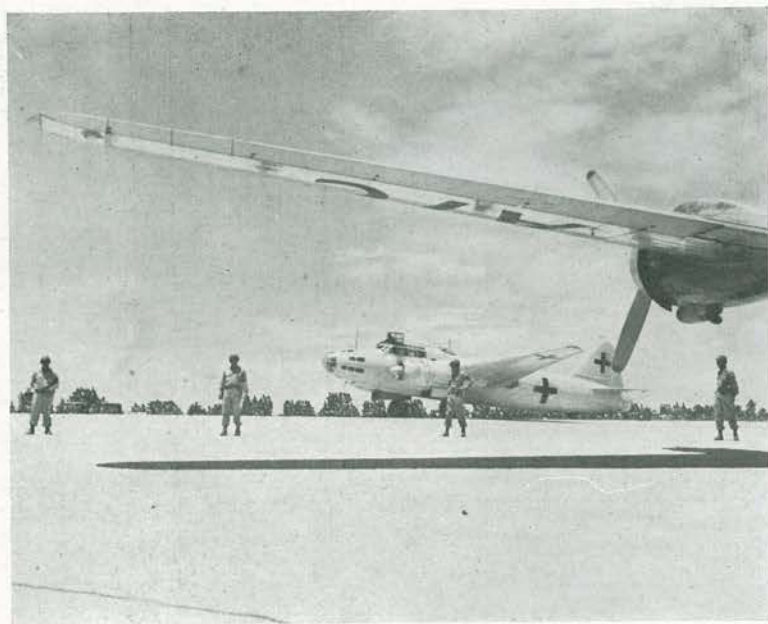




**SAFETY FIRST.** Hundreds of picked soldiers with fixed bayonets stand guard around an Ie Shima airfield to insure the safety of the Jap surrender envoys who are expected to arrive any moment from Tokyo. It is three miles from Okinawa to Ie.



**TOKYO EXPRESS, DEFANGED.** First of two disarmed Jap "Betty" bombers arrives with initial surrender group. Identified by code word "Bataan" and prominent green crosses painted over Rising Suns, enemy planes were escorted in by 30 P-38s and two B-25s.



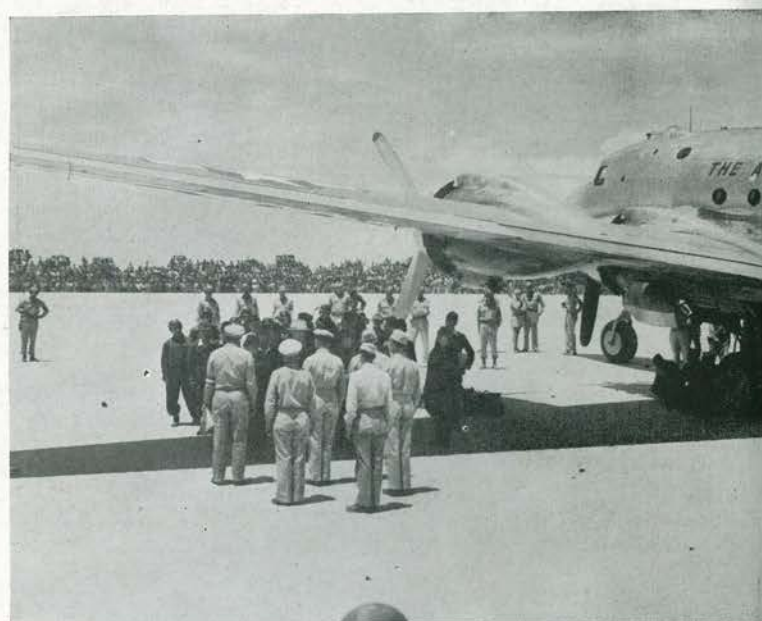
**DECEPTIVE.** Looking as peaceful as a hospital evacuation unit, this once "much-shot-at" Jap medium bomber taxis past MPs to designated parking spot. All American planes had been removed from Birch Strip except two C-54s for the trip to Manila.



**SPORTS.** Ranging from sport civilian shorts to heavy gold braid and campaign ribbons, the somewhat jaunty Japs presented a variety of styles as they descended ladder. Second bomber (right) has just arrived. (This is only view of both bombers together.)



**EASY NOW.** A Jap pilot leans out of pilot's blister to gauge distance to heavily guarded hardstand. Stripped of all armor and fitted with soft plush seats, each "Betty" had room for 10 passengers and a crew of six. GIs were impressed by these planes.



**THE BIG SHOW.** Japanese surrender mission, headed by sullen Lt. Gen. Torashiro Kawabe (front right, page 335), presents credentials to Maj. Gen. Southwick of General MacArthur's staff. Spectators, kept off field by barbed wire, lined area by thousands.





FAT CIGAR was perhaps the most apt description of the trim "Betty" bombers. This was the same type plane that gave the inexperienced 87th such a hard time in the Northern Solomons in early 1944. The once dazzling Rising Sun of the bomb-shattered Jap Empire is easily seen under

the still wet white and green paint. Jap dressed in white (extreme left, page 335) carries traditional bouquet of flowers (wrapped in black cloth) for American conquerors in Manila.



CREAM OF EMPIRE. Fur-capped pilots who flew converted OBOIs from Tokyo, were presumed pick of enemy flyers. Both wore freshly-pressed flight suits, life preservers, but no parachutes. However, one bomber hit ditch in taking off for return trip.



"HOLD IT!" Included in screened group of photographers permitted to take closeups was THE EARTHMOVER's ace cameraman, Ed Jaskulski, who ably represented the 87th at ie. After only 15 minutes, envoys boarded C-54 for flight to Manila. Cameras grind merrily.



# MACARTHUR AT YONTAN EN ROUTE TO TOKYO



THE BATAAN, emblazoned with the five impressive stars of a General of the Army, stops at Yontan Airfield late in August to refuel and be checked over. This was General MacArthur's private plane and excited considerable interest. Having thoroughly snubbed the Jap surrender mission in

Manila, the General was en route to Tokyo for the official surrender on 2 September. His visit to Okinawa was a rigid military secret, but Merlin Monroe, SCIC, happened to be there with these results.



SEE YOU IN TOKYO. General MacArthur (third from left) bids farewell to General George Kenney (back to camera) while Lt. Gen. Robert Richardson (right) looks on. General Kenney sold MacArthur on maximum use of air power in the Pacific.



HAIL, THE CHIEF! While waiting for mechanics to apply final touches, General MacArthur discusses Jap surrender with Lt. Gen. Richardson, boss of Middle Pacific Command. This was MacArthur's first and only visit to Okinawa.



# RYUKYU JAPS SURRENDER TO STILWELL ON OKINAWA



**"VINEGAR JOE'S" DAY.** Having fought the Japs in China for years, General Joseph Stilwell (seated at table) is only Allied officer to sign document that officially ended World War II in the Ryukyus on 7 September. Then, the Japs were surrendering all over the Pacific and Okinawa

**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.** Last vestige of Jap power in its Ryukyu backyard is signed away by its goateed commanding officer, General Kara-shiru. Accompanied by eight military officials, the General flew in from Amano O'Shima, landing on the 87th-built bomber strip at Yontan for a

—closest base of operation to Japan at war's end—naturally was entitled to its own little show. This ceremony was held at Tenth Army Headquarters where Gen. Stilwell had succeeded the late Lt. Gen. Buckner.

"conducted" tour of Okinawa. Two other Jap officers signed for the enemy's vanquished Navy and Air Corps. The U. S. Fleet was represented by Admiral Raymond Spruance while General Jimmy Doolittle stood by for the Air Corps.



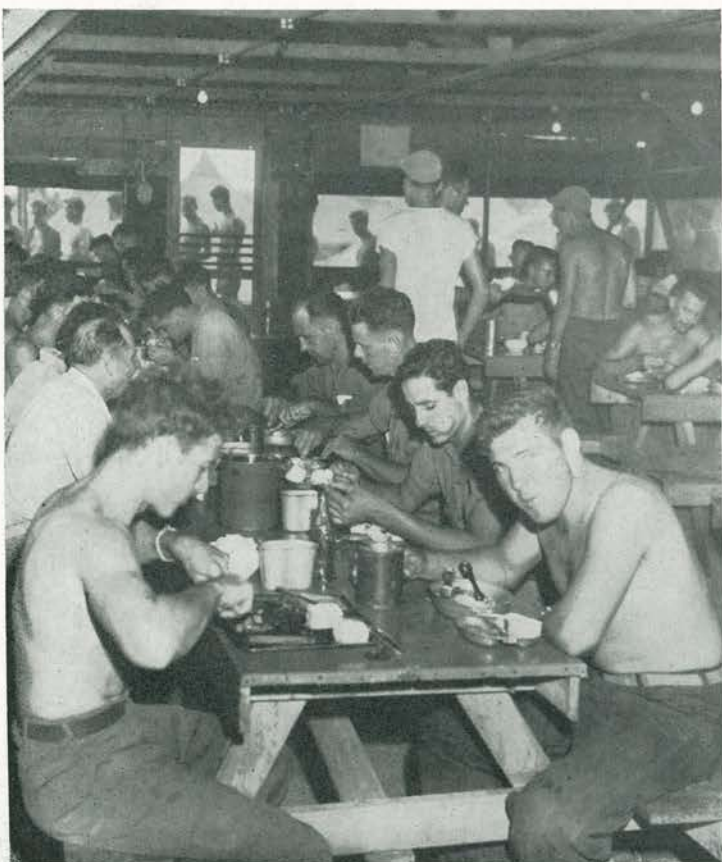


# ANNUAL 28 AUGUST DINNER ENHANCED BY EXTRAS

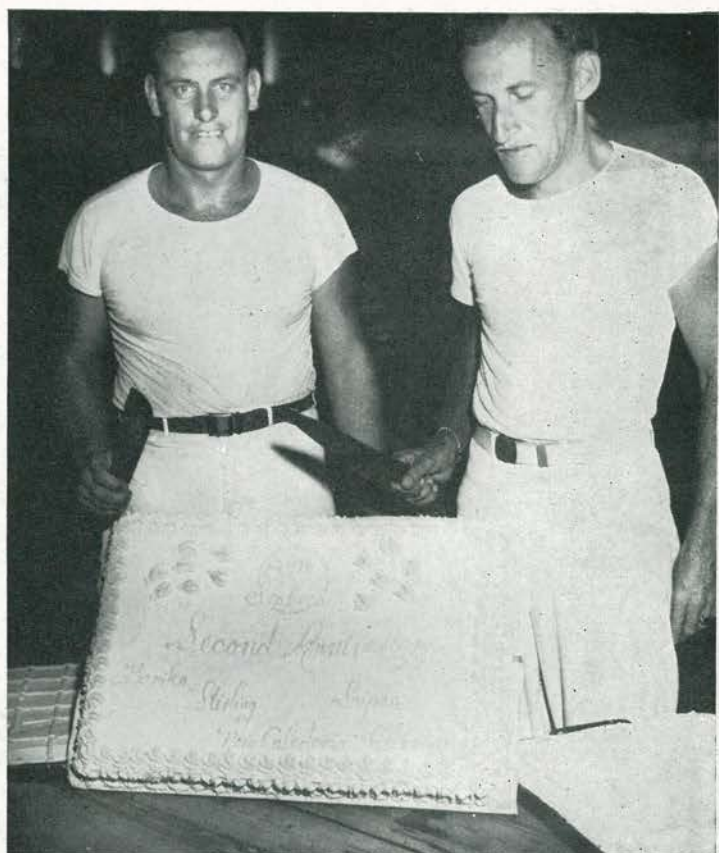


**ON THE HOUSE!** There was a large evening ahead for these 87th veterans on 28 August, their second anniversary overseas, so the free issue of beer and coke at the big noon meal was restricted to a choice of one bottle of either beverage. Storekeeper Charlie Barker (seated on table)

passes out the free issue as the gang files slowly past in the long chow-line. Chief Commissary Steward Gwynne Neifert (between table and door) distributes special souvenir menus.



**BIG FEED.** This busy scene shows mates ravenously devouring dinner commemorating completion of their second year overseas. Despite the war being over and the special occasion, all hands, except the night shift, worked as usual.



**SOMETHING SPECIAL** for the occasion was this elaborately decorated second anniversary cake baked by Luther Goodsell (left) and Johnny Miller, battalion bakery "magicians." Cake features names of islands where battalion saw duty.



# **S E C O N D   O V E R S E A S A N N I V E R S A R Y**



**O K I N A W A   —   2 8   A U G U S T   1 9 4 5**





**PACESETTER** of special home talent program presented on theatre stage the night of 28 August was popular Lieut. Ray Pape, who was also observing the completion of his twenty-fourth month overseas. His earthy humor and sly digs kept program rolling.



**WESTERN STYLE.** Oren Ammerman of Brookville, Indiana, wins a big hand from rollicking audience with his cowboy version of "When My Dream Boat Comes Home." A quiet chap around Headquarters Division Office, Ammerman volunteered to appear on program.



**STEAL.** Charlie Steele, throws arms in air when he discovers John Haranis has stolen their act. In addition to their burlesque skit, Steele played harmonica and his partner brought house down by impersonating female undressing (in silhouette) behind screen.



**TRIBUTE.** The one solemn touch of the otherwise hilarious program was Theodore Linlau's singing of "Rest, Comrade, Rest," composed and played by Norman Hill (left). This composition was written for and dedicated to the memory of shipmates lost on trip.



**"FRANKIE."** Edwin Keddle, T Division's own Sinatra, swoons receptive audience with his "sweet" rendition of "Embraceable You." Always popular with the 87th audience, Keddle was unable to leave stage until he had rendered several additional selections.



**SPEAKER** of the evening was Chaplain G Jay Umberger, who represented the Administration. Bubbling over with his characteristic zest and good fellowship, the "Padre" was indeed in rare form as he spoke of home and of his desire to serve all hands.





"LUCKY LOCKARD and his Five Yen" was Master of Ceremonies Pape's name for the battalion combo, which provided an ample program of good jazz for the anniversary celebration. Except for one member, this closely-knit unit was made up exclusively of

87th talent. The lively sextet was uniquely composed of three officers and three enlisted personnel. Left to right: Tom Peiffer, "Josh" Kenning, Howard Van Dorn, Carpenter Vincent Pagano, a Lt.(jg) Hanson and Ensign Harold Lockard, leader.

## WAR'S END OVERSHADOWS SECOND OVERSEAS ANNIVERSARY

28 August 1945 found the 87th Seabees two years overseas. This significant milestone called for some kind of special celebration, but, of course, it brought little change in the general plan of the day. Most men worked as usual.

Cooks had prepared something a little special for dinner and the bakers had outdone themselves with an elaborately decorated cake. Supply handed each man an iced beer or coke as he showed up for the anniversary repast.

The men had ample reason to celebrate the completion of their first twenty-four months overseas. Not only were they "over the hump" and could now reasonably expect to go home, but news had filtered through that the Japs had accepted unconditional surrender.

This was the only anniversary celebration the battalion had observed overseas. The end of the first year had found them on the eve of leaving Stirling. Consequently, no party was held. Arriving at New Caledonia, all thoughts of the postponed party were lost in the subsequent hustle and bustle.

A number of the mates, spark-plugged by several officers, presented a peppery variety show at the theatre the evening that marked the two-year milestone.

Of the huge audience witnessing the Okinawa show that evening, only 600 of the original 87th were present. The Navy's "alleged" rotation program had liberated a few; others, in excess of complement, were en route home, as were the 44-pointers.

The entertainment's success was virtually guaranteed when Lieut. Ray F. Pape, long a battalion favorite, appeared as MC. The music had plenty of variety—the skits were down-to-earth. Thus, the 87th commemorated the completion of its second year overseas and with it—for all practical purposes—World War II.

The ruling thought in most minds as the men stumbled through the darkness back to their tattered tents was the prospect of an early return home. Without rest or leave for two long years, the men knew they were long overdue. The end of the war, however, had trapped the "lucky" 87th in the worst imaginable spot. All shipping in the Okinawa sector was slated for the occupation of Japan.

The celebrants doubtless slept fitfully that night, knowing full well that the morrow would mark the beginning of their third year overseas.



THE THREE MUSKETEERS. Providing the all-essential hillbilly touch to the varied program was this hearty trio of old battalion favorites: William ("Crusty") Green, Artie Hansford and Tom Rooney. Each an individual soloist, they were unbeatable as a team.



# A P P E N D I X

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### A NOTE ON RANDOM CAMERA

The following section contains a general hodge-podge of strictly unrelated shots of a miscellaneous nature, which depict incidents, places and personalities of the 87th Battalion during its 27-month tour overseas. It includes no Stateside shots.

As this volume was being compiled, certain choice pictures were inadvertently squeezed out in attempting to achieve a semblance of good, balanced lay-out.

These shots were set aside as each section was developed and the best of this rather strange assortment have been assembled hereinafter without any thought or regard for time or place sequence. They are essentially just what their name implies—RANDOM shots!

The original book plan provided space for a small section of essential group shots. However, this idea was eventually discarded as the overall plan for a larger book developed when the battalion failed to return to the States upon leaving New Caledonia. Accordingly, the group shots have been divided between CAMPS, USA and RANDOM CAMERA.

The subjects of this miscellaneous section are manifold and diverse. Many are obviously posed (something that was frowned upon in the trip sections of the book) and some are really corny in the worse sense of the word.

Perhaps, they are not especially important, but the editors believe most of them contain plenty of what made the 87th the crack Seabee outfit it was.

So the staff gives you RANDOM CAMERA—something you didn't ask for or perhaps didn't even expect—and it is offered without apology or regret.

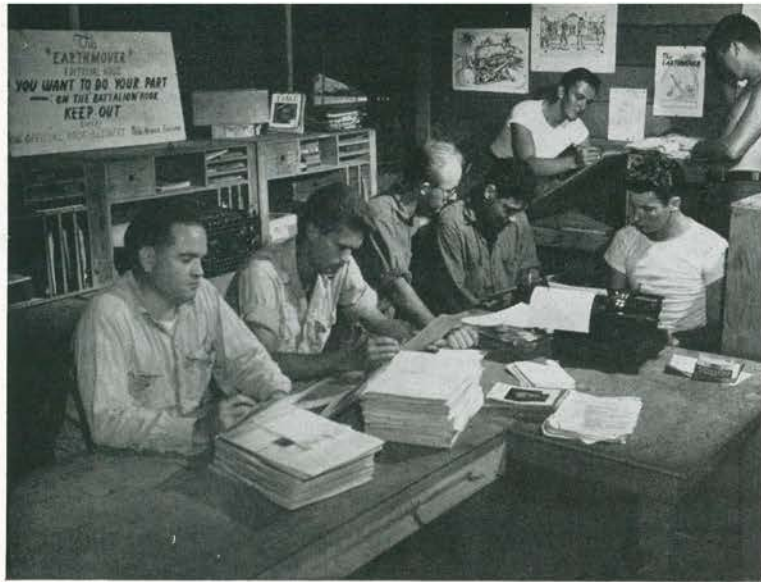
—THE EDITORS.



# R A N D O M   C A M E R A







EDITORIAL STAFF is finishing this volume at Baten-Ko. Around table (left to right): Editor Carl Ruble; Ens. Donald Porath (officer advisor); Photographer Ed Jaskulski; Tom Cacavas and Tom Peiffer (editorial assistants); (standing): Artist Armond Kirschbaum and Writer Craig Porter.



OUTSIDE LOOKING IN, these natives (Kanakas) are watching opening dance at 87th-built Base CPO Club in Noumea in October, 1944. Among guests were Comdr. Easterly and Lt. Comdr. Flynn. Guests of honor: Admirals J. H. Newton and Paul Hendren. Half of 87th CPOs attended.



FLYING HOME. Another group of 42-year-olds pose for THE BOOK just before leaving Camp Bolo for home in late June. (Kneeling): Age, Brennan and Staiss; (standing): Marvin Martin, Leyden, Spillsbury, Whitehead, Inness, Dietz and Deroche. These smiles just won't come off!



REPAIRS. Lieut. Steve Lynch, battalion dentist (not shown), is assisted by "guest" dental officers throughout staging period at Saipan. Dr. Lynch carried a heavy load at New Caledonia, but volume of patients eventually became too much. The cry for help got results.



GIRLS. Three USO show girls (one of Chinese extraction) pass an enjoyable afternoon with some of the fellows off duty at Camp Bolo Recreation Center. Chaplain Umberger joins group for picture. Girls entertained 87th on stage previous evening with a full performance.



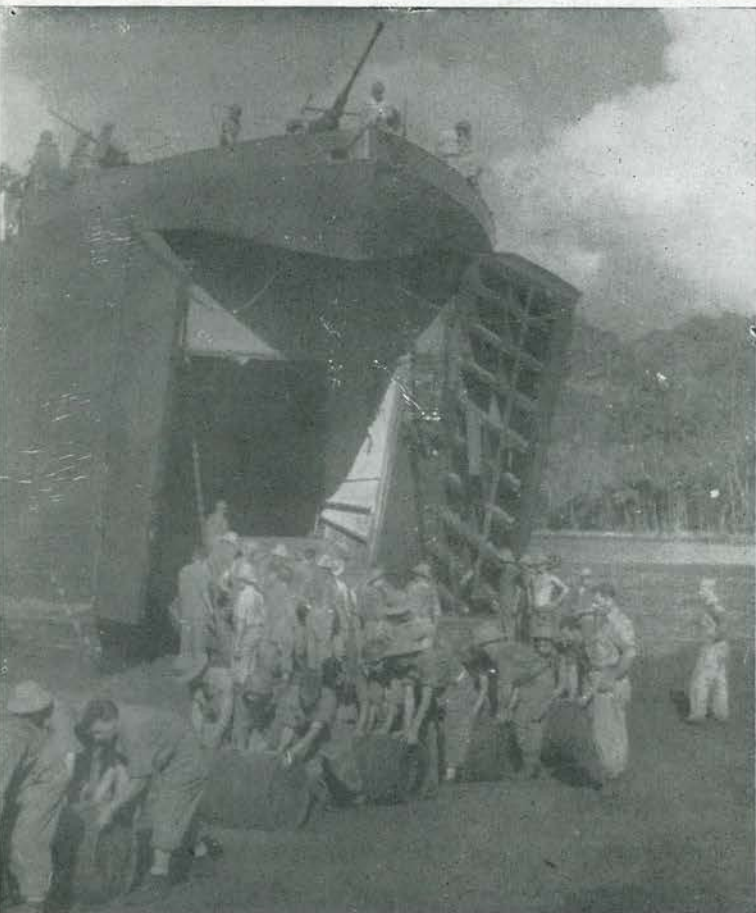
HE NAMED IT. Howard Hattal is presented fine wrist watch by Comdr. Cook as prize for submitting winning name for this volume. Approximately 650 names were suggested by the battalion. The seven judges included three members of the editorial staff. (Runner-up: CORAL RIBBONS).



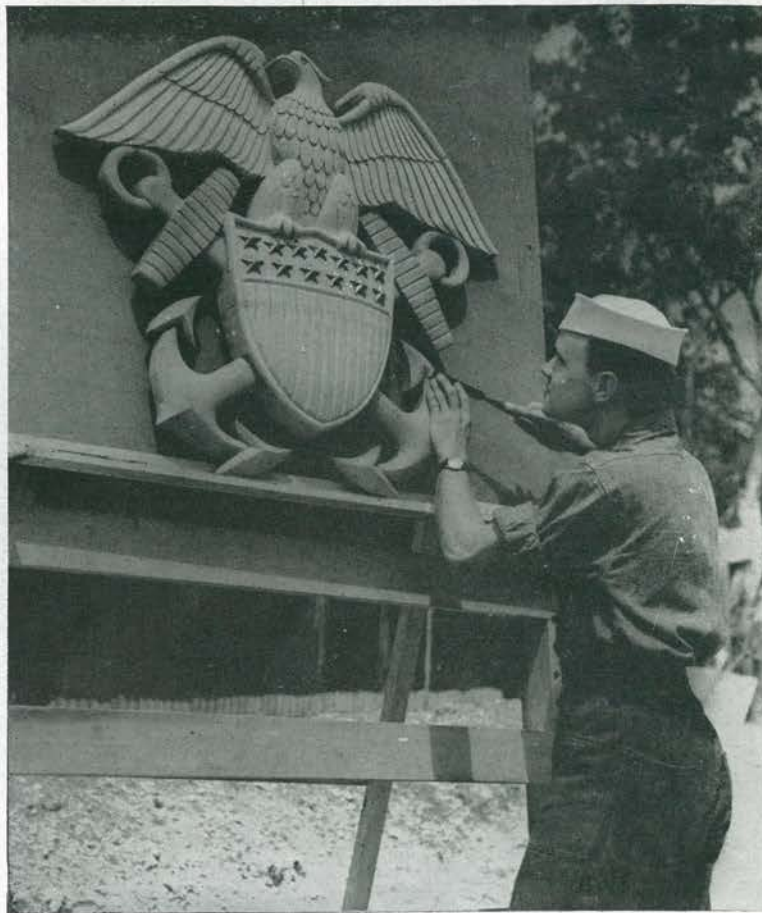


**FLAK AT DAWN.** The deceptive Jap airmen had a crafty way of following American planes back to Okinawa along about dawn in the hope of unloading their eggs before being detected. They pursued the same tactics in the Northern Solomons in early 1944, and occasionally, like on

Okinawa, the trick worked. However, this time the radar and gun crews had them spotted as they neared Bolo Point behind U. S. planes and instantly the sky was a mass of black flak puffs.



**THE HARD WAY.** Battalions, like the 87th, moving into forward areas in late '43, carried their own limited supply of gasoline and diesel oil on the LSTs. Here, the boys unload heavy drums by hand. Date: 28 November 1943.



**WOOD CARVER.** Charley Welsey of Philadelphia, is shown at work on Naval emblem he carved to go over entrance of Receiving Station Officers Club in Noumea. (Emblem was not in place when pictures on page 172 were taken).





TAKING IT EASY at their quarters after work hours on Bolo are Lt. Comdr. Flynn and Comdr. Cook. Layout features coral flagstone walk, fairly comfortable chairs, a wooden deck, "Stateside" iron beds and steel helmets. Foxholes were nearby.



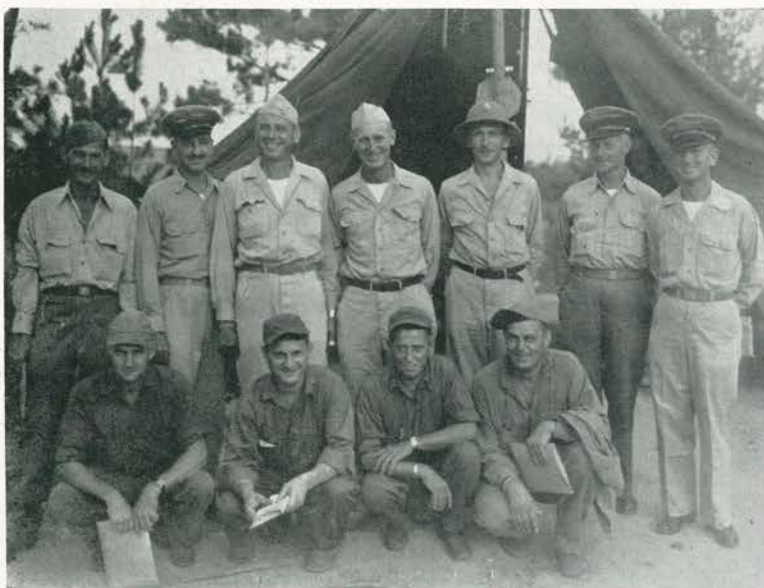
FOXHOLE BUNKS were built by many groups as raids became gradually worse. This arrangement enabled men to sleep below ground level without having to arise for constant alerts. Above: Carlino, DeRyke, Buonora, Palmquist and Jaskulski.



KING BEE. Vice Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, speaks to a group of officers at the 43rd Regiment in August. Rear Admiral J. D. Price, Commandant, NOB, Okinawa, is at speaker's left.



GOING MY WAY? Frank Buonora (left) and Pete DeRyke are endeavoring to thumb a ride from Okinawa to China off Truckdriver Robert Pruitt. However, China, in this instance, is only an insignificant village between Yontan and Bolo.



"OLD TIMERS" pause to have beauty struck for THE EARTHMOVER before leaving for home and a discharge. (Kneeling): Jordan, Shoup, Decker and Remley; (standing): Marienthal, Hewlett, McDonald, Vogt, Stache, Broomfield and Kelly.



CHAPEL ARTIST. The battalion chapel at Monte D'Or was greatly enhanced by this addition of "Christ at Gethsemane" from the talented brush of John Schaefer. Many attended Divine Services to see and admire this fine creative work.





**SIGNS OF THE TIMES.** Comdr. Cook, attired in full "battlefront" regalia, including the compulsory side arm, pauses at a battery of intersection signs to ascertain his next direction. While on Okinawa, he was an indefatigable traveler.



**FIRST TEAM.** Ensign John Boyer (fourth from left, standing) and his radar installation gang, who were commended as a unit for their work under enemy fire at Soanatalu during the Treasury invasion in late October, 1943.



**READY TO TURN IN.** "Big John" Ahaesy, all dolled up in a genuine Jap kimono of gorgeous colors, appears ready to crawl into his Gook tomb for a peaceful nap. However, Comdr. Cook will probably find him here, too!



**SHADES OF "BEAU GESTE."** The equipment depot of the National Marines was a frequent place of visitation for many 87th Seabees during their weekly pilgrimage into Noumea. It was just like something out of a P. C. Wren novel.



**UNIFORM OF THE DAY** for Carpenter A. M. Andrews' carpenter crew on Stirling was whatever one happened to still have around to wear. Certainly no two of this group are dressed alike, which was typical of life in forward areas.



**IT'S STILL EARLY**, but in late April, on Okinawa, it paid dividends to be on the alert for "Bogies" any time after sundown. Charlie Johnson (left) has his rugged "battery" alerted. Others: Fontcuberta, Brenn, Bollerhey and Worley.





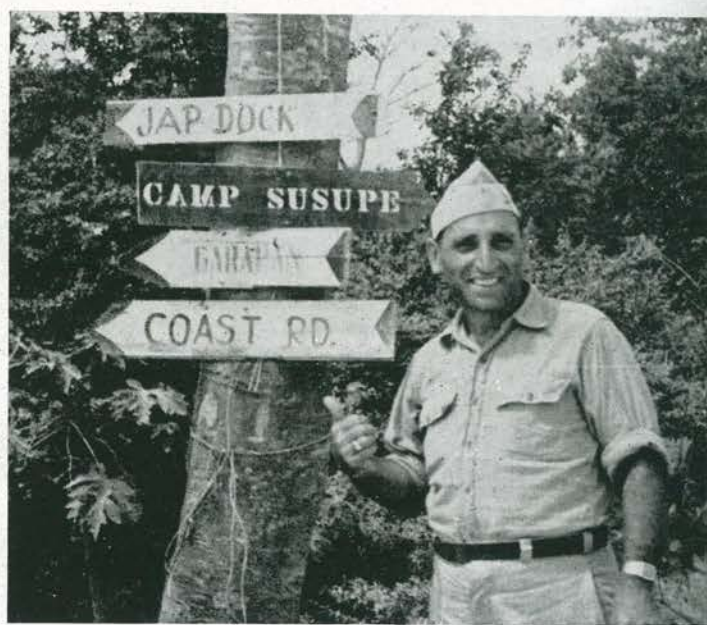
MAAs Chief Harry Levery (standing, right) complained his picture wouldn't be in THE BOOK (see page 152) so "Jas" took this. (Front): Kirschbaum, Lyons, O'Donnell; (back): Kellar, Hoback, Ch. Carp, Querin, "Hannibal's Own!"



SMILES. Officers often entertained guests from neighboring units at Monte D'Or. With Bartender Baird ("Pop") Okey serving them up, Officers Winters, Olsen, Belsaas and Panttaja pace two visitors at the bar.



THIS GUY SCHAEFER was ever so versatile (and photogenic!), artistically speaking, that it was hazardous to ignore him. He was always doing something of photographic interest. Here, he superimposes "Mr. Seabee" on MISSEABEE aboard the NAOS.



A CHARACTER, if the 87th ever had one, Chief Andy Competiello had some enviable contacts while working for Civilian Government at Saipan. The battalion is indebted to him for the cover and all three maps in this volume.



MOST ELIGIBLE of all 87th bachelors was the battalion's first "exec." Lt. Comdr. Flynn, shown here at his busy desk on Okinawa. An architect by profession, his know-how in the field of design was an invaluable asset.



AFTER 24 MONTHS overseas, the mates can still smile and take it, even though they may not like it. Here, a representative cross section downs beer with their anniversary dinner at Camp Bolo on 28 August 1945.





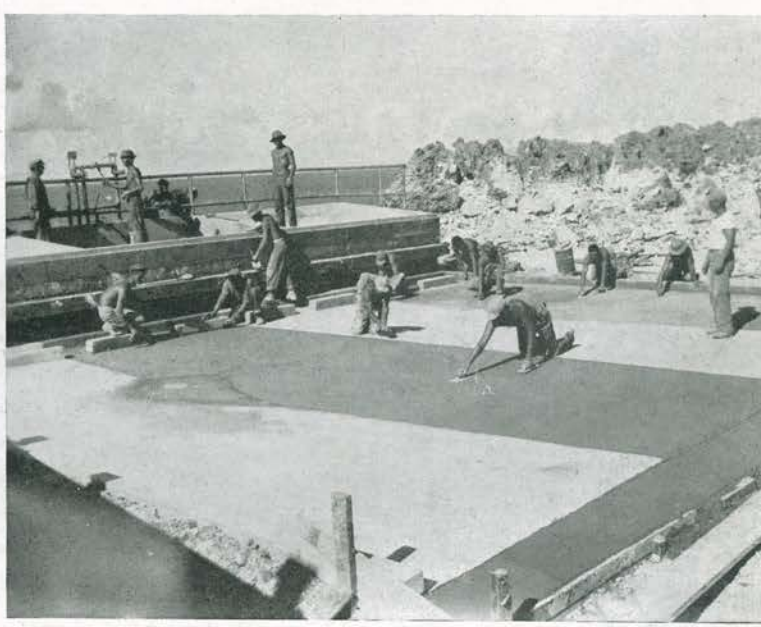
**FIRST ASHORE** on Stirling, D-day, was Chief Paul Hewlett and this small band of stalwarts. Fortunately, invasion fireworks exploded on Mono and important business on Stirling went ahead as scheduled. Picture was taken months later.



**FRIENDS** of the 87th during Bolo were Lt. Comdr. Springer (second from left), Lieut. Sullivan and Flight Nurse Keiffer. Shown with Ens. Porath and Comdr. Cook at Yontan, these NATS officers arranged air transit home.



**JAP NEST** was found in sugar cane field by 87th division on maneuvers at Saipan. While guerillas got away, food was still hot as Japs were having late breakfast. Enemy was using regulation U. S. can for storing their drinking water.



**HONEST SWEAT** gets a lot of fresh concrete troweled down to the right finish if you keep at it long and hard enough. Above, Chief Thomas' crew sweat it out on Bolo Point garbage disposal project. Here were some hard workers.



**FAMILIAR SIGHT** during June and July at Bolo were groups of those over-age and in excess of battalion complement men milling around OOD's tent prior to receiving orders and shoving off by truck for Yontan Airfield and home.



**CRAFTSMEN.** Carpenter Karl Johannessen (second from left, kneeling) claimed he had best carpenter shop crew on Stirling. The battalion agreed. Chief Bob Parrott (third from left, standing) took over shop upon warrant's departure for home.





**BOYS WILL BE BOYS.** Comdr. Easterly and Lt. Comdrs. Osgood and Flynn engage in a bit of horseplay outside their Stirling foxhole when warfare was still an academic pursuit for most of the unit—except Co. A!



**ART?** Seabees thought they had seen virtually everything in the "art" line in the Treasuries, but they had to await the Okinawa operation for this eye-opener. Such sights were not unusual around Yontan and Kadena strips.



**A FAREWELL TO ARMS.** Headed, at last, in the right direction, these "over-42" veterans face the camera like boots going on a first liberty. (The editors regret that space doesn't permit identification of all these "characters.")



**AN INVASION UNIT.** It was many small groups like this one headed by Chief Tom Bailey that made up the 87th's invasion team when the Allies pushed the Japs off Mono in 1943. These were unloading specialists.

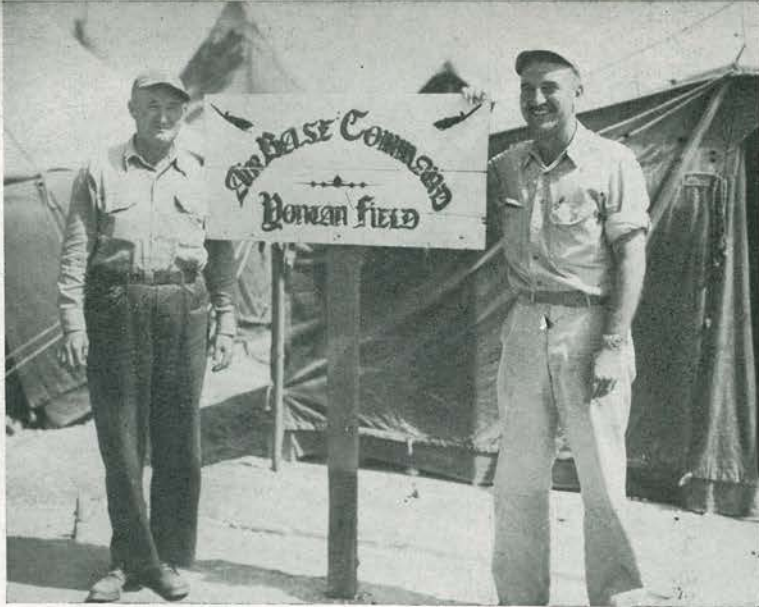


**INCESSANT AIR RAIDS** on Okinawa forced the overworked editorial committee selecting pictures for **THE EARTHMOVER** to work underground during May, June and July. Left to right: Photographer Jaskulski, Officer Advisor Porath, Editor Rubble. ("Tippy" searches for her own likeness.)



**SAWMILLERS** cease operations on Stirling long enough to square off with camera as a group. This was the gang that could never do enough to please everyone as the demand for lumber always exceeded maximum output.





LT. COL. Leo Smith, USMC, Officer in Charge of operations at busy Yontan Airfield, poses with Comdr. Cook at Air Base Command headquarters prior to handing 87th skipper the "Well Done" letter appearing on page 360.



BATEN-KO Camp. In September, the Army finished taking over Bolo Point and the 87th was forced to move to Baten-Ko, near Buckner Bay, where they moved into the partially completed camp recently vacated by the 66th Seabees.



CHOW WAGON visited strip and adjacent shop areas on rigidly fixed schedule until Stirling Field was completed. Working eight-hour shifts—three shifts spanning 24 hours—the men had just enough time off to eat on job.



"LET'S GO"—HOME! Upon completion of Bolo Field on 19 July—30 days after starting date—Lieuts. Pape and Markette literally "lay down on the job" and concur in the mates' favorite addition to Comdr. Cook's pet sign.



CHIEF YEOMAN Lauren Merriam, who, with Chief Herman Pack, made up the 87th's team of "Lum and Abner," will have a difficult time convincing his descendants that he wasn't a Jap at this Shinto shrine in 1945.



JAP DESIGN of this trim "Betty" bomber impressed many Americans on Ie Shima when enemy surrender mission arrived in August. Small portion of mammoth GI crowd is visible. Jap pilot peers out of cockpit as first plane stops.





BLITZED by the lightweight typhoon that hit Okinawa on 16 September, THE EARTHMOVER staff surveys wreckage of its tent headquarters before moving into vacant Censor Office. THE BOOK was saved by removal to Personnel-Disbursing.



HOMES were wrecked throughout Camp Bolo by the Sabbath typhoon that finally blew itself out early Monday morning. Men whose tents were blown down in the night sought refuge in quonset office buildings. Here, R Division digs out.



SUPPLY ISSUE ROOM was as hard hit by first typhoon as any of the tents housing the men. Here Pat Walsh (left) and Jack Sakowitz, supply storekeepers, survey the extensive damage. Battalion had day off for repairs.



WORST TYPHOON to hit Okinawa in 20 years wrecked entire island, including 87th's Baten-Ko camp, on 9 October. Taken second day after terrifying debacle, view shows partially rebuilt area, including wrecked Post Office and Ship's Store.



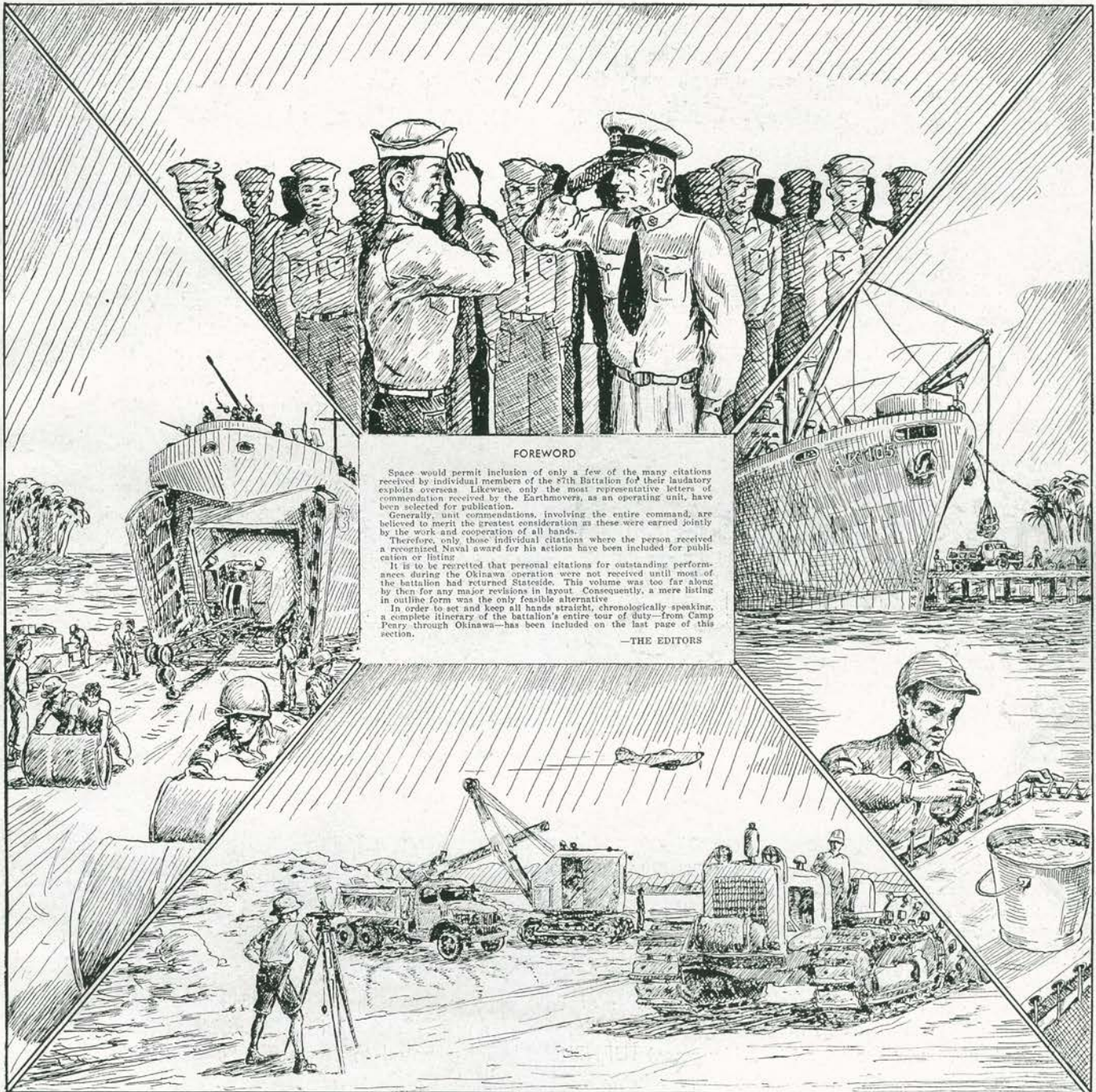
MANY lost everything except what they wore. Tents were ripped to shreds or blown away. Quonsets were torn apart and hurled through the air. Tent decks were blown about like matchsticks. Here, survivors salvage remains. Book office collapsed, but a miracle saved this volume.



PRIME EXAMPLE of typhoon's awesome fury is what it did to huge 87th chow hall. Men sought to escape with their lives by hiding in reefers and Gook tombs. Wind was clocked at 173 miles per hour as Nature's steam-roller reached peak.



# CITATIONS



## FOREWORD

Space would permit inclusion of only a few of the many citations received by individual members of the 87th Battalion for their laudatory exploits overseas. Likewise, only the most representative letters of commendation received by the Earthmovers, as an operating unit, have been selected for publication.

Generally, unit commendations, involving the entire command, are believed to merit the greatest consideration as these were earned jointly by the work and cooperation of all hands.

Therefore, only those individual actions where the person received a recognized Naval award for his actions have been included for publication or listing.

It is to be regretted that personal citations for outstanding performance during the Okinawa operation were not received until most of the battalion had returned Stateside. This volume was too far along by then for any major revisions in layout. Consequently, a mere listing in outline form was the only feasible alternative.

In order to set and keep all hands straight, chronologically speaking, a complete itinerary of the battalion's entire tour of duty—from Camp Perry through Okinawa—has been included on the last page of this section.

—THE EDITORS

# COMMENDATIONS



## **SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE**

of the United States Pacific Fleet  
Headquarters of the Commander

(NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA)

In the name of the President of the United States, the Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force takes pleasure in awarding the SILVER STAR MEDAL to

AURELIO TASSONE,

Machinist's Mate, Second Class, United States Naval Reserve

for service as set forth in the following

### **CITATION**

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with a naval construction battalion during and following the initial landing by Allied forces on the Treasury Islands, British Solomon Islands, on 27 October 1943. When a Japanese pillbox became very active, causing casualties and impeding unloading operations, TASSONE, who was operating a bulldozer, was ordered to silence it. Without delay or hesitation, he raised the blade and moved forward against the pillbox. At the signal from his officer in charge, he dropped the blade and effectively silenced the position and annihilating twelve of the enemy entrenched therein. His courageous conduct was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

W. F. HALSEY,  
Admiral, U. S. Navy.



## **SOUTH PACIFIC FORCE**

of the United States Pacific Fleet  
Headquarters of the Commander

(NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA)

The Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force takes pleasure in commending

LIEUTENANT CHARLES E. TURNBULL,

Civil Engineering Corps, United States Naval Reserve

for service as set forth in the following

### **CITATION**

"For skillful and effective performance of duty while serving with a naval construction battalion during and following the initial landing by Allied forces on the Treasury Islands, British Solomon Islands, on 27 October 1943. Lieutenant TURNBULL though exposed to enemy fire, courageously directed the movements of a bulldozer used in the destruction of a Japanese pillbox, which was impeding unloading operations by its effective fire. His leadership, devotion to duty and tireless efforts in the blazing of roads through hostile jungle was an inspiration to his men and in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

W. F. HALSEY,  
Admiral, U. S. Navy.



## **OTHER AWARDS—TREASURY-BOUGAINVILLE CAMPAIGN**

### **COMMENDATION WITH RIBBON**

FOR SKILLFUL AND EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DURING AND FOLLOWING THE  
INITIAL LANDINGS ON THE TREASURY ISLANDS

AWARDED BY

WILLIAM F. HALSEY

Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

ENSIGN JOHN R. BOYER

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

THOMAS J. BAILEY

Chief Ship Fitter, U. S. Naval Reserve

## **SUMMARY OF AWARDS—OKINAWA CAMPAIGN**



### **LEGION OF MERIT**

FOR EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS SERVICE AS OFFICER IN CHARGE  
DURING THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

AWARDED BY

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

COMMANDER RICHARD R. COOK

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve



### **BRONZE STAR**

FOR MERITORIOUS PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DURING THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

AWARDED BY

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

LT COMDR. JAMES DOUGLAS

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Navy

LIEUT. RAYMOND F. PAPE

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve



### **COMMENDATION WITH RIBBON**

FOR MERITORIOUS PERFORMANCE OF DUTY DURING THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN

AWARDED BY

CHESTER W. NIMITZ

Fleet Admiral, U. S. Navy

TO

LIEUT. COMDR. EDWARD A. FLYNN

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

LIEUT. BENJAMIN T. MARKETTE, JR.

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

LIEUTENANT LOUIS D. SPAW, JR.

Civil Engineer Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve

HARVEY O. POSTON

Chief Motor Machinist's Mate, U. S. Naval Reserve

ENNIS R. BALDRIDGE

Chief Carpenter's Mate, U. S. Naval Reserve



## DETACHMENT TWO COM AIR NOR SOLS

November 9, 1943.

From: Commanding Officer.

To: Commander, 8th (NZ) Bdg. Gp.

Subject: Recommendation for Commendation.

1. It is recommended that the small unit of the 87th Naval Construction Battalion, which landed at Soanatalu, Treasury Islands, for the purpose of placing the radar, be commended by letter for their fine work.

2. In order to install the first long-range radar, it was necessary to break down a coral bluff on the beach, build a road up a steep hill and continue through the jungle to the site chosen. After this had been done, the unit bulldozer towed the heavy radar equipment to the chosen position. All the above was extremely difficult and the natural obstacles could only be overcome by them. Through their hard work, it was possible to have the long-range radar in position on D-1 (Bougainville) day as was ordered.

3. The C. B. reply to all orders was "CAN DO," which was exceedingly edifying and encouraging in the face of apparently pessimistic surroundings and circumstances.

4. In addition, due to their efforts, the second long-range radar was placed in position on D-4 day.

5. The below listed comprise the mentioned unit, which not only lived up to their motto, "CAN DO," but also gave evidence of fine soldierly qualities:

BOVYER, J. R., Ens.

RYCHLAK, F., BM1c.

MURPHY, R. L., MM2c.

THOMPSON, G. L., MM2c.

GORDON, D. W., CM2c.

COVEY, E. R., CM3c.

BARKS, L. L., S1c.

CABLE, L. M., S1c.

GRACE, R. H., S1c.

GRAVES, W. E., S1c.

GREGG, D. M., S1c.

HAYES, O. B., S1c.

PAULSON, W. D., S1c.

BENNETT, J. E., S2c.

CHARLES, C. J., S2c.

FLYNN, E. J., S2c.

GIANNATTASIO, E. R., S2c.

OSTMAN, E. E., S2c, (MIA)

SCANLON, W. R., S1c.

TURMAN, A. R., S2c.

B. V. LEARY,

Major, U. S. Marine Corps



## HEADQUARTERS

Eighth NZ Infantry Brigade  
NZEI (I. P.)

Commander C. R. Hersum,  
Commanding, Naval Base,  
Treasury.

18 May 1944.

Through: (1) Commander Naval Bases, Forward Area.  
(2) Commanding General, VI Island Command.

On leaving Treasury Islands and relinquishing command of the Island Base, I wish to place on record my great appreciation of the splendid work that the following unit has done during the last six months as well as to express my sincere thanks for the loyal cooperation, valuable advice and personal kindness I have received from their officers and the men associated with them.

The 87th CBs were responsible for the early stages of progress in circumstances of jungle conditions and weather which could hardly have been worse. This battalion, under the able direction of Commander Easterly, by dint of tremendously hard and sustained effort and by working for weeks around the clock and often under enemy bombing attack, developed the airfield, dock, and many other facilities in a manner which I can only describe as amazing. In the early weeks this unit carried out these duties with only the bare essential work on their own quarters and the progress made under these trying circumstances is all the more noteworthy. This battalion has done a splendid job of which they may feel justifiably proud.

I would be pleased if recipients of this letter would make known to all ranks my appreciation and thanks for their fine efforts.

L. G. GOSS,  
Brigadier, Comdg., Treasury Islands.

## U. S. ACORN TWELVE

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California  
(TREASURY ISLANDS)

P15

20 June 1944.

Serial 0669

From: Commanding Officer.

To: Officer-in-Charge, 87th Naval Construction Battalion.

Via: Officer-in-Charge, 21st Naval Construction Regiment.

Subject: Commendation.

1. As your job at this base nears completion, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to extend to you, your officers, and your men a hearty commendation on a job well done.

2. The splendid job you have done in the construction of the strip, aviation camps, roads and other facilities has been appreciated not only by the officers and men of ACORN TWELVE, but by all of the air activities at this base.

R. SANDERS.

## HEADQUARTERS 42ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)

APO 706 Unit I  
(TREASURY ISLANDS)

21 August 1944.

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Commander, Naval Base, APO 706, Unit I.

1. On the completion of the tour of duty of this Group at this station, I am taking this opportunity of expressing my sincere appreciation for the splendid cooperation you and your subordinate units have given to all the units of the 42nd Bombardment Group (M).

2. From the first introduction of this organization to this Island in January, 1944, you and your organization have given untold assistance to us. The 87th Naval Construction Battalion has cooperated 100 per cent in aiding in our camp construction and maintenance, providing equipment needed and maintaining the airdrome facilities for our tactical aircraft.

3. Your splendid cooperation in helping us to efficiently maintain our combat strike schedule has been a contributing factor in the successful completion of the Solomons campaign.

4. On behalf of all the personnel of the 42nd Bombardment Group (M), I want to wish you Happy Landings and success in your future operations.

HARRY E. WILSON,  
Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding.



# U. S. S. NAOS

Fleet Post Office

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Noumea, New Caledonia,  
16 September 1944.

From: Commanding Officer.

To: Commander Service Squadron, South Pacific Force.

Subject: Commendation—Letter of.

1. In the writing of this letter, it becomes almost a necessity to digress from formalized Naval correspondence to adequately convey the appreciation and thanks of the officers and men of this Command to the organization (87th N. C. B.) which this vessel just recently transported from the Treasury Islands to Noumea.

2. During the course of our tour of duty in this area, under your operational command, this vessel has transported many thousands of personnel of all the branches of the armed services, but not until the last operation have we contacted a unit, which by its magnificent spirit and wholehearted cooperation, has moved us to so depart from orthodox routine as to prompt the writing of this letter.

3. Prior to embarkation, the men of this unit removed to their encampment and scrubbed by hand over one thousand canvas bunk bottoms; thoroughly scrubbed, washed and policed all the troop compartments on the ship, loaded some 1,500 tons of their own equipment, volunteered for sea watches, accomplished innumerable repairs in all departments and as a final gesture of goodwill provided the manpower to load outbound Army material and mobile equipment when other labor was not provided. As this is being written, artificers from this unit have just completed an all-night task of installing a new unit of ovens in the bake shop.

4. The crew have requested me as Commanding Officer to express to the Commanding Officer and the men of the 87th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion their many thanks for all favors and their best wishes.

5. I should like to add my own "Well Done."

N. E. WILCOX.

cc: CO, 87th USNCB  
File.



## AIR BASE COMMAND, FIELD NO. 6 COMMANDER NAVAL AIR BASES, 3256

c/o Fleet Post Office,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.  
(Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands)

16 June 1945.

From: The Air Base Commander.

To: The Officer in Charge, 87th Naval Construction Battalion.

Via: The Commander, Naval Air Bases, Navy Number 3256.

Subject: Letter of Congratulations.

1. The writer wishes to officially congratulate the officers and men of your organization on the completion, this date, of the FIRST HEAVY BOMBER STRIP ON OKINAWA, YONTAN AIRFIELD.

2. The perfection of the grading, compaction and shoulders of this strip is a testimonial of your organization's skill, and the completion of this runway is a direct, vital and real blow against our enemy.

3. The spirit of cooperation displayed by all hands of your organization in accomplishing this task made the project most successful.

LEO R. SMITH,  
Lt. Col., U. S. M. C.



## COMMANDER NAVAL AIR BASES, NAVY 3256

c/o Fleet Post Office  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

NAB3256/PI5  
Serial: 79  
FIRST ENDORSEMENT

21 June 1945.

From: Commander Naval Air Bases, Navy No. 3256.  
To: The Officer in Charge, 87th Naval Construction Battalion.  
Via: Commanding Officer, 43rd Regiment, Naval Construction Battalions.

1. In forwarding basic correspondence, the writer wishes to express his opinion and appreciation of the work done in the form of COMMENDATION for work performed by your organization.
2. The spirit of cooperation with which the above was accomplished is deserving of special note and is sincerely appreciated by this command.

W. M. DILLON,  
Commodore, U. S. N.

## 43RD U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

c/o Fleet Post Office,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

PI5  
Serial: 527  
SECOND ENDORSEMENT

25 June 1945.

Air Base Commander  
Yontan's Letter of  
16 June 1945.

From: Officer in Charge, 43rd U. S. Naval Construction Regiment.  
To: Officer in Charge, 87th U. S. Naval Construction Battalion.  
Subject: Letter of Congratulations—Forwarding of.

1. Forwarded with congratulations.
2. Letters of congratulations, such as this, are further proof of the appreciation for the Seabees as a whole, and every officer and enlisted man of the 87th Seabees can be justly proud of the accomplishments on Yontan Airfield under enemy airborne attacks, bombings, and enemy shelling.
3. The 43rd Naval Construction Regiment again says to the 87th Seabees: "Well Done."

W. W. STUDDERT,  
Commander, CEC, USNR.

## 87TH U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

c/o Fleet Post Office  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

PI5/(RRC:jk)  
Serial: 330  
THIRD ENDORSEMENT

27 June 1945.

From: The Officer in Charge.  
To: All Officers and Enlisted Personnel.

1. Honest and diligent effort rarely goes unrewarded, as has been proven by the commendations received by this unit for the fine work on Yontan Airfield.
2. It is with a great amount of pleasure that I extend this letter to you with the admission that I am proud to be the Officer in Charge of the 87th Battalion—the "on the ball" outfit.

RICHARD R. COOK,  
Commander, CEC, USNR.



# THE COMPLETE 87TH ITINERARY

(Stateside and Overseas)

23 February 1943—19 December 1945

- 23 February 1943—Formed at NCTC, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va., (Date Officer in Charge reported).
- 16 April 1943—Battalion transferred to NCTC, Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island. (31 officers and 1,080 men).
- 17 April 1943—Arrived at NCTC, Camp Endicott, Davisville, R. I.
- 13 June 1943—Transferred by three troop trains to ABD, Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California. (30 officers and 1,061 men).
- 19 June 1943—Arrived at Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California.
- 28 August 1943—Troop ship (S. S. ROBIN WENTLEY) departed ABD, Port Hueneme, California for overseas. (25 officers and 1,012 men).
- 29 August 1943—Supply ship (S. S. COMET) departed ABD, Port Hueneme, California for overseas. (4 officers and 12 men).
- 14 September 1943—Troop ship arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 16 September 1943—Supply ship arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 26 September 1943—Troop ship departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 29 September 1943—Troop ship layed overnight at Guadalcanal.
- 30 September 1943—Troop ship arrived Banika, Russell Islands, Southern Solomons.
- 1 October 1943—Supply ship departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 5 October 1943—Supply ship arrived Banika, Russell Islands.
- 18 October 1943—Company A, plus miscellaneous ratings from Headquarters Company, detached from battalion and departed Banika, Russell Islands, as first echelon on forward movement, via Guadalcanal, for amphibious training. (6 officers and 224 men).
- 27 October 1943—First echelon arrived with assault forces (8th New Zealand Brigade) at Mono and Stirling, Treasury Islands, Northern Solomons.
- 26 November 1943—Second echelon departed Banika Russell Islands. (21 officers and 720 men).
- 28 November 1943—Second echelon arrived Stirling, Treasury Islands.
- 8 December 1943—Third echelon departed Banika, Russell Islands. (3 officers and 50 men).
- 10 December 1943—Third echelon arrived Stirling, Treasury Islands.
- 5 September 1944—First echelon departed Stirling, Treasury Islands. (26 officers and 1,028 men).
- 10 September 1944—First echelon arrived Monte D'Or, New Caledonia.
- 25 September 1944—Second echelon departed Stirling, Treasury Islands. (1 officer and 50 men).
- 30 September 1944—Second echelon arrived Monte D'Or, New Caledonia.
- 11 January 1945—First echelon departed Noumea, New Caledonia. (6 officers and 344 men).
- 27 January 1945—First echelon arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, after brief layovers at Tulagi and Eniwetok.
- 31 January 1945—Second echelon departed Monte D'Or, New Caledonia. (22 officers and 717 men).
- 16 February 1945—Second echelon arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, after short layovers at Guadalcanal and Eniwetok.
- 11 February 1945—Third echelon departed Monte D'Or, New Caledonia. (3 officers and 25 men).
- 3 March 1945—Third echelon arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, after brief layovers at Banika and Eniwetok.
- 29 March 1945—Comdr. Robert Easterly, CEC, USNR, relieved as Officer in Charge by Comdr. Richard R. Cook, CEC, USNR.
- 20 April 1945—First echelon departed Saipan, Marianas Islands. (27 officers and 741 men).
- 27 April 1945—First echelon arrived Okinawa Shima, Ryukyu Retto.
- 7 May 1945—Second echelon departed Saipan, Marianas Islands. (5 officers and 327 men).
- 14 May 1945—Second echelon arrived Okinawa Shima, Ryukyu Retto.
- 2 September 1945—War against Japan formally concluded aboard U. S. S. MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay.
- 10 September 1945—Comdr. Richard R. Cook, CEC, USNR relieved as Officer in Charge by Lt. Comdr. James Douglas, CEC, USN.
- 25 September 1945—87th camp moved from Bolo Point to Baten-Ko on Buckner Bay.
- 7 November 1945—Last contingent of battalion embarked for return to the States. (6 officers, 361 men).
- 21 November 1945—EARTHMOVER editors departed Okinawa for Portland, Oregon.
- 4 December 1945—EARTHMOVER editors arrived Portland aboard U. S. S. HASKILL.
- 19 December 1945—EARTHMOVER editor-in-chief delivered this volume to publishers at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, exactly one year after it was commenced at New Caledonia.





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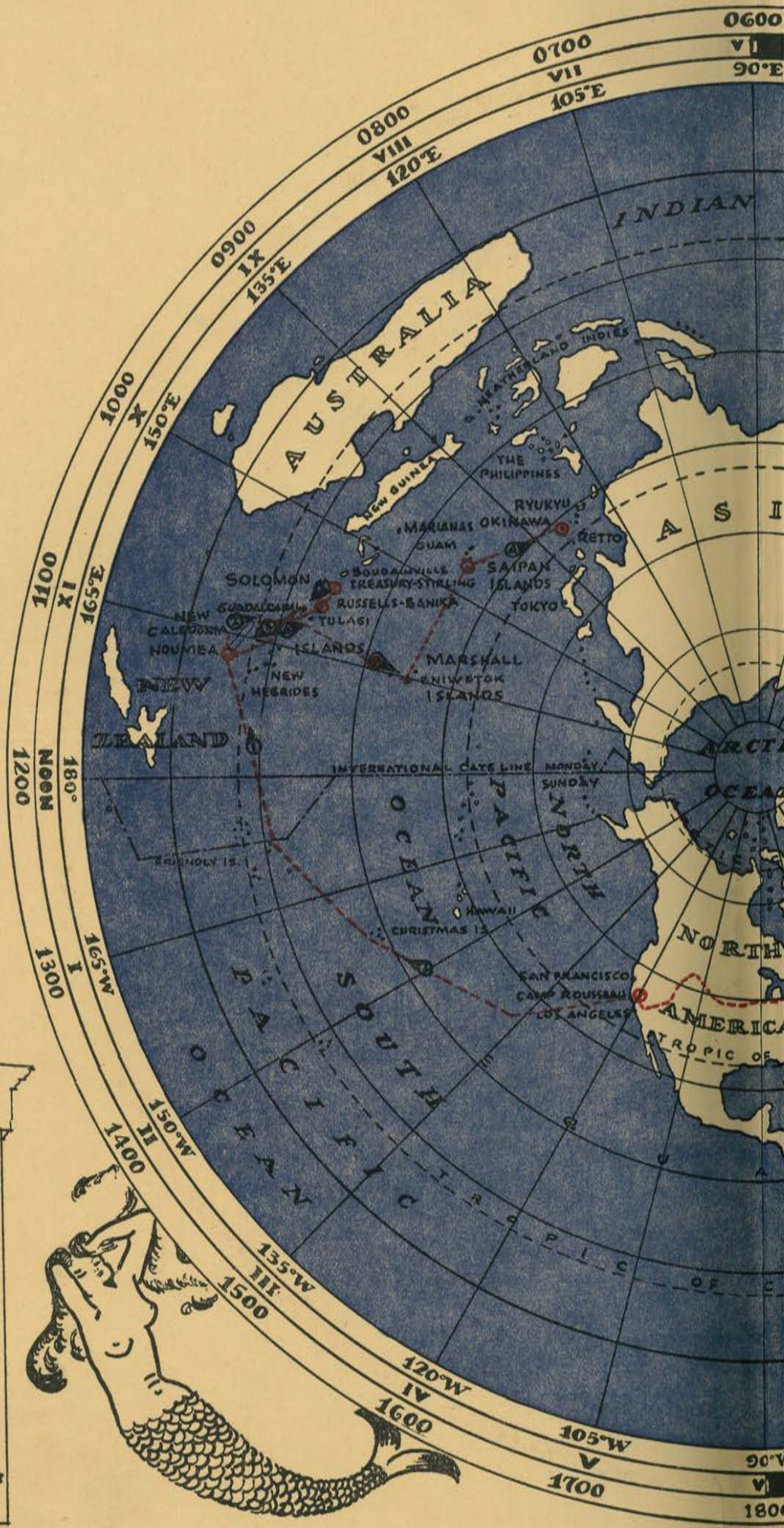
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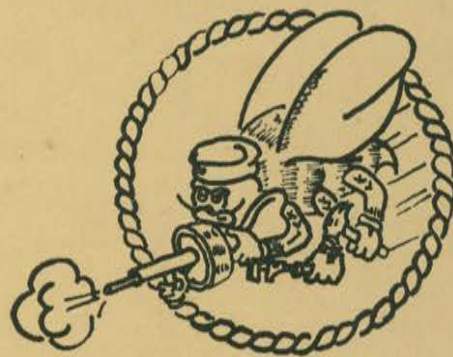
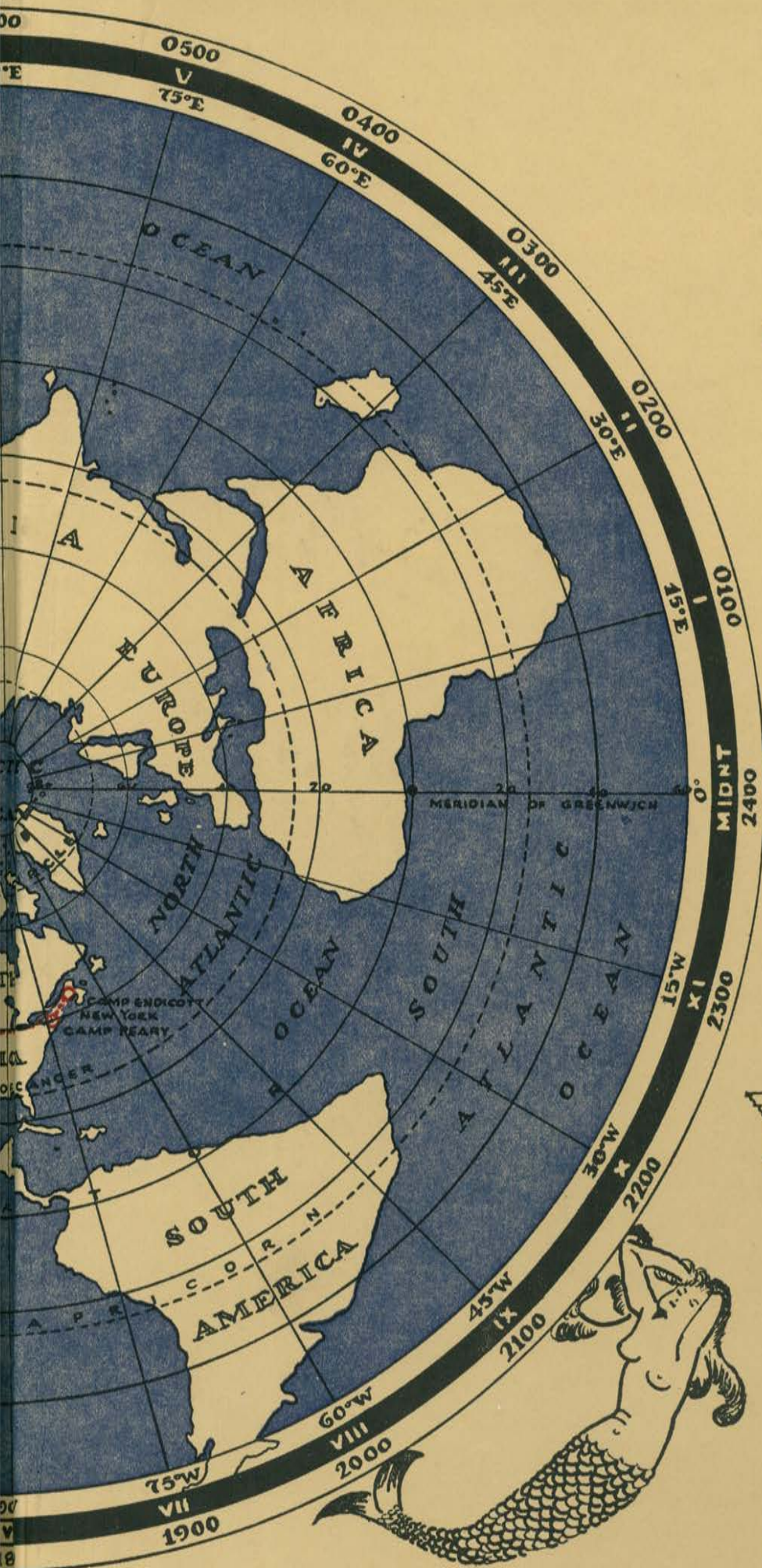
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1945

Geographical History	
Eighty-Seventh Seabees	
Destination	Arrival-Departure
<b>Cross Pacific Route</b>	
New Caledonia/Pompeii	9-14-43 - 9-26-43
Solomon Is. Guadalcanal	
Russell Is. Banika	9-30-43 - 11-26-43
Treasury Is. Hirling	10-27-43 - 9-5-44
New Caledonia Mt. Div	9-10-44 - 1-31-45
Solomon Is. Guadalcanal	
Marshall Is. Eniwetok	
Maxianas Is. Saipan	2-11-45 - 4-20-45
Ryukyu Rts. Okinawa	4-27-45 - 11-7-45



