

1946

Contrast: the story of the the Fifth Special Naval Construction Battalion

United States Navy

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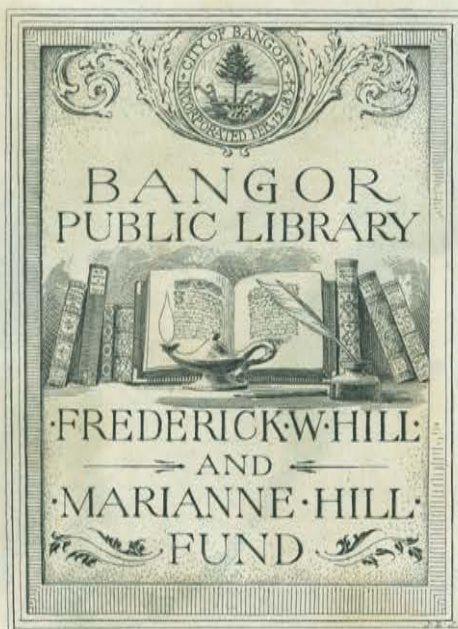
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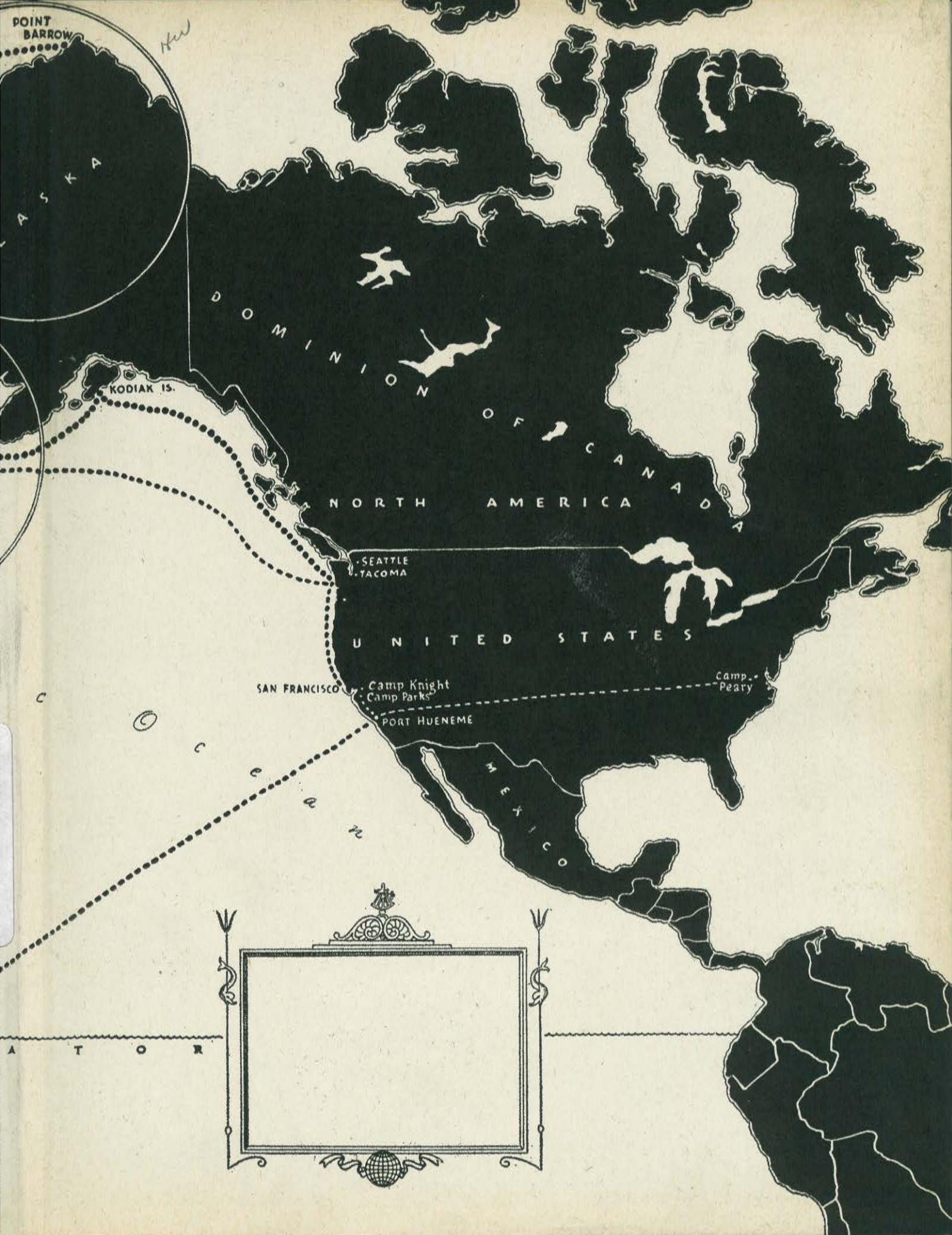


Contrast



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DOES NOT
CIRCULATE



A black and white photograph of a tropical beach. In the foreground, there is a dark, silhouetted line of trees and foliage. The middle ground shows a calm body of water with several small boats or structures. In the background, a large, snow-capped mountain rises against a cloudy sky. The word "Contrast" is written in a large, bold, italicized serif font across the center of the image.

Contrast





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. . . the story of the

FIFTH SPECIAL

Naval Construction Battalion

Kelly M. Pitner

Charles A. Quinn

Charles L. Ramsay

Steve Tomko

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In Memoriam



Carl O. Bauman

Milton L. Buffington

Fred D. Laughlin

John T. Murphy





T H E S K I P P E R

This is the story of a Seabee Special Battalion, a rigger or stevedoring battalion, whose principal function in the Navy of World War II was the working of the vital cargo and materiel necessary for the prosecution of the war.

Special battalions were not permanently employed on Stateside duty; that was a job for civilians. Like all Seabee units, the Specials were rigidly trained and indoctrinated for overseas duty and the inevitable hazards of war. They became the life blood, the dominating force of the supply lines, radiating from Allied ports of loading to the front lines of the farthest theaters of war. Participating in actual invasions, they helped conquer new territory for their supply line, then maintained those extensions as our forces pushed forward toward the enemies' homelands. Ships and craft of every size and denomination, flying the flags of every Allied nation, were worked by the Seabee stevedores, the Special battalions.

This, then, is the story of one of those stevedoring battalions, and it chronicles its wanderings from its birthplace in Virginia across the United States; its duty in the frozen wastelands of the Aleutian Islands and the farthest Arctic outpost at Point Barrow; its return to the States for rehabilitation and re-assignment; and finally, its tour of duty in the South and Central Pacific. From Point Barrow to New Guinea, from Virginia to the Philippines—thousands of miles, months that stretched into years, are written into this history, a story not only of the battalion but of the men, the individuals themselves, who loaned that part of their lives to the service of their country that this history might be written.

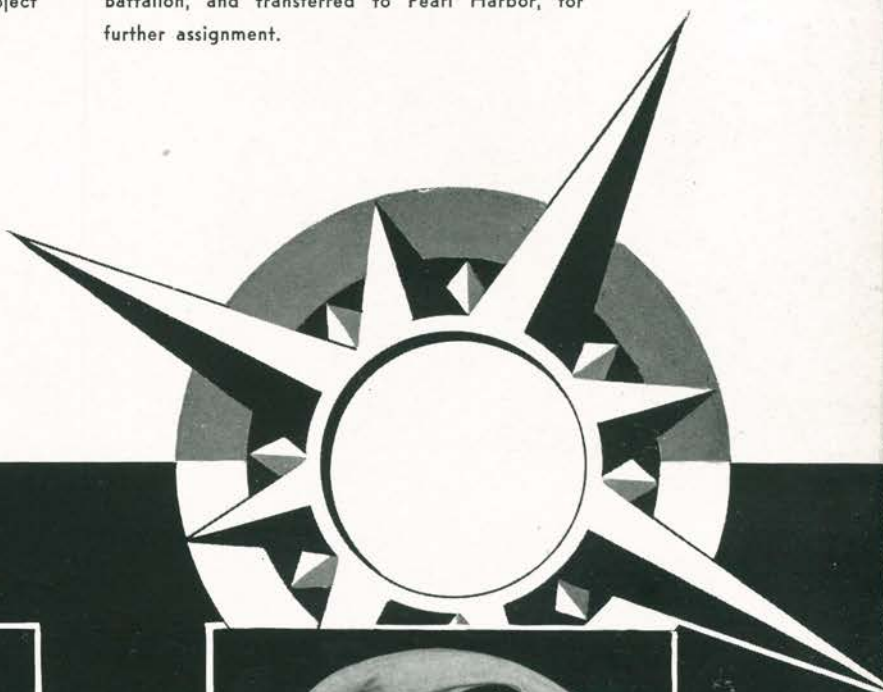
It is to them, then, the men of the Fifth Special Naval Construction Battalion, that this history of their outfit is dedicated.

Lieutenant-Commander, U.S.N.R.
Officer-in-Charge.

THE EXECUTIVES

Lieutenant Eugene F. Blossfield, CEC, USNR, joined the Battalion at its commissioning. At Adak, in addition to his regular duties as Military Officer, he was assigned collateral duty with the Sixth Regiment, as Construction Officer. Leaving Adak, he was in charge of the First Section, and at Camp Parks was made Executive Officer. He remained "Exec" until May 1945, at which time he was transferred to Manila for construction duties with the 24th Regiment, as a project engineer.

Lieutenant Commander John J. Mason, CEC, USNR, after thirteen months duty in New Guinea, became Executive Officer of the Battalion in May of 1945. His tour of duty with the Fifth Special was brief. Four months later, he received temporary additional duty with the Seventh Naval Construction Brigade, in Guiuan, Samar. The following month, October 1945, upon completion of his duty with the Brigade was detached from the Battalion, and transferred to Pearl Harbor, for further assignment.



Lt. Eugene F. Blossfield

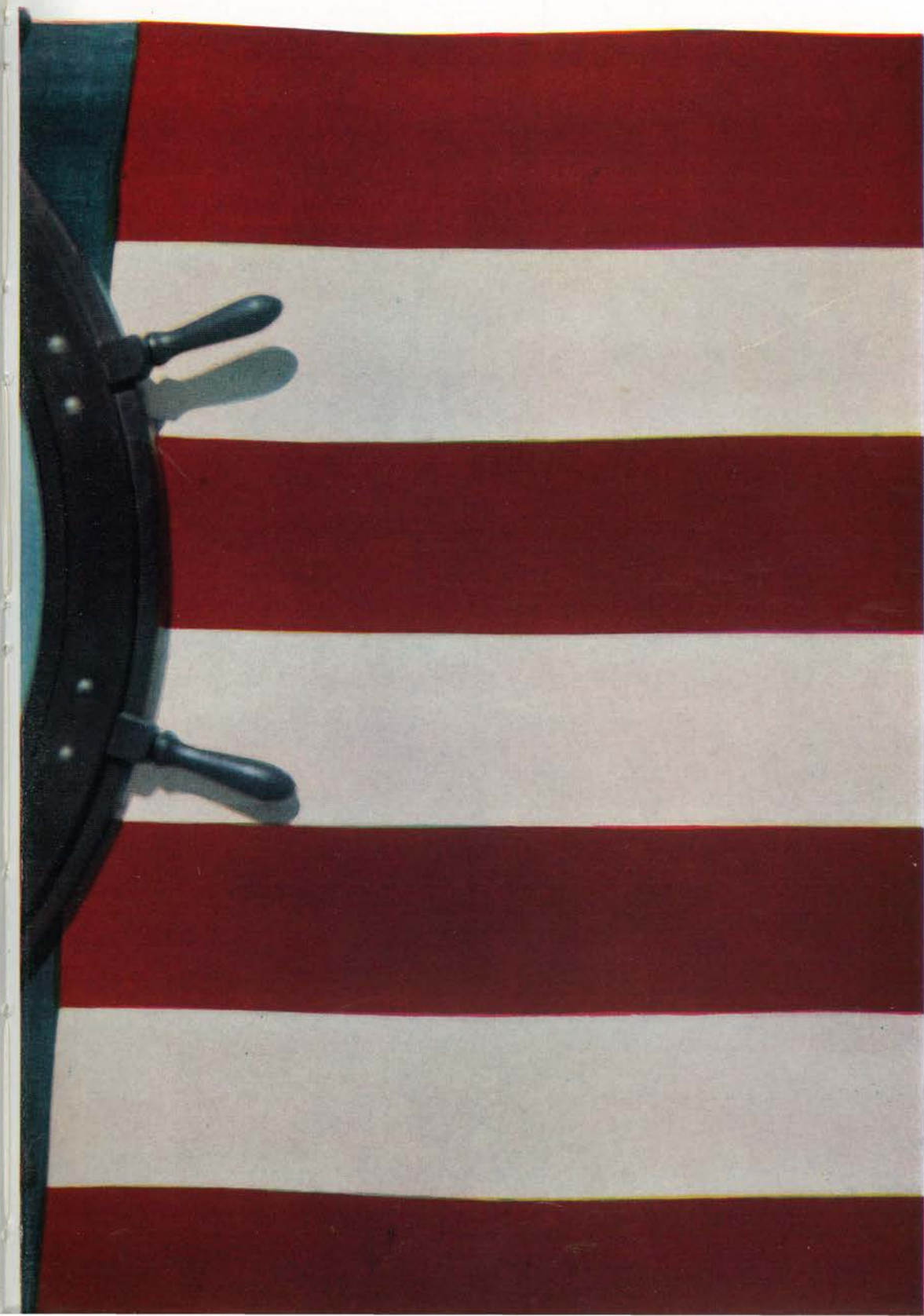


Lt. Comdr. John J. Mason



FIFTH SPECIAL NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

F o r m a t i o n



TRAINING

Your Stance Is Everything.



"Right Shoulder—Harms!"

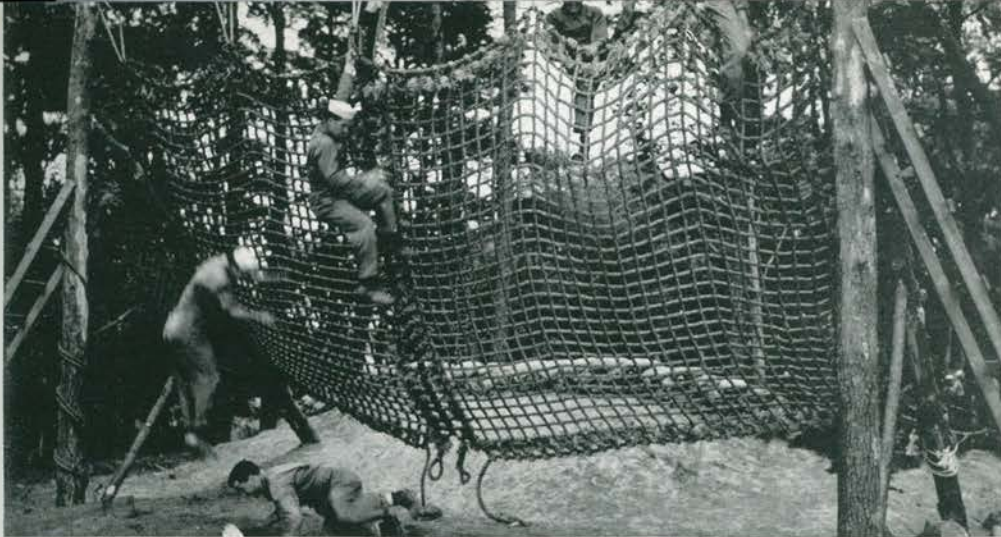
"Carry Me Back To Old Virginny."

On 30 January 1943, Lt. Commander Charles E. Nash and Lt., Frank L. Holland, Officer-in-Charge and Executive Officer respectively, reported to USNTC Camp Peary, Virginia, for duty with the Fifth Special Naval Construction Battalion, and officially as of that date the battalion was commissioned. It was a battalion in name only, however, for it was not until 5 February 1943 that the first in-draft of personnel was assigned to the battalion.

During the latter months of 1942, thousands of recruits were streaming into Seabee boot camps from every point in the United States, from every walk of life, from every stratum of society, from every profession. Stevedores from all the waterfronts, ranchers, artisans, students, professional entertainers, business men. The Ozarks, Boston Common, Hollywood, the deep South, Alaska, giant metropolises and rural farms. From all these came the Seabee recruits, and from such was the Fifth Special organized.

In most respects, boot camps were all alike . . . terrible. Remember the sad moment when we wrapped our individual identities into the bundle with our civvies and shipped them home for the duration? Remember when they clipped our heads and thereby went our last identification with the world that was not G.I.? Remember those weeks in quarantine and the shots and the heckling we got? And those long hours on the drill field, and





Camp Peary Commandos.



the home-sickness, and that first liberty? It's all in the record.

We learned for the first time what a Special Battalion was supposed to do: stevedoring; and that all other activity was incidental. It was about the middle of February that we moved to a new area and began classes on the Stevedore Training Ship. It was just completed and we were the first trainees. We had a lot of pet names for it, such as the "USS Never Sail," and a few others not quite printable. But in spite of the grumbling and beefing we established a record of some kind or other and were pretty well set as to our future duties when we got the order: "Battalion secured for further transfer."

March 15th, 1943, dawned bright and clear and we departed, 1036 strong, for Port Hueneme, California, travelling in three train sections and arriving at ABD Port Hueneme on the 21st and 22nd. A nine-day leave started the day after we arrived, and there was a mad scramble in getting our gear secured, our leave papers in order and in checking out.

The leave expired on 1 April, and from then until we left, there were six days of furious activity. It didn't help matters when, for a time, we were divided into two sections (on paper), then the plans were cancelled. We finally got organized and on 7 April we boarded two trains for NSD, Seattle, for further transfer overseas. We got there on 9 April and were discharged onto the docks to board ship. There the authorities met us with orders to separate into two sections—then and there—right on the dock! We were both to board the same

ship, but one section was to get off before the other and the gear had to be stowed accordingly. Things were finally straightened out and in the wee small hours of the morning the last weary and be-draggled man crawled aboard the USS CHAUMONT. We sailed that morning, 10 April 1943, for the Aleutians.

Well, we almost sailed. We got as far as Port Townsend in Puget Sound that first morning when the destroyer escort assigned to us developed turbine trouble. We dropped anchor and while waiting for news of the escort, the ship's Captain decided it was an excellent time for abandon ship drill. For all of us it was a new experience to go over and down the side of a ship, clinging to an elusive net, and dropping into a much-too-small life-boat tossing and heaving in the giant swells. We were glad to get back aboard ship, but we weren't so happy with the news we received. Our

Bolo Practice.

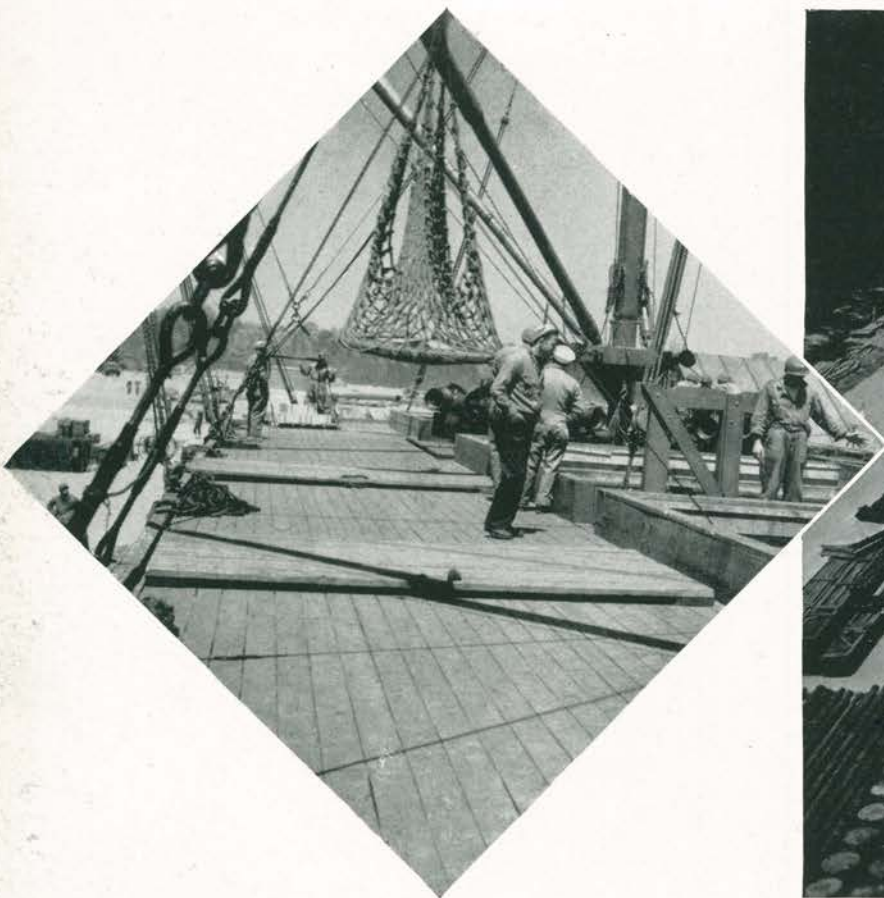


escort couldn't be conditioned in time and we would have to go on without it. At that time, with Dutch Harbor having been bombed a few months before and with enemy subs still active in Aleutian waters, it was alarming to learn that ours would be the first ship to make a major portion of the run without escort. We got our first taste of shipboard security precautions: fire drill, lifeboat drill, wearing life belts constantly, and darkened ship after sundown.

By now we knew we were headed for Dutch Harbor. Even if we hadn't known, we would have been fully aware that we were going some place that was plenty cold. Icy winds were sweeping across the deck and from time to time we could catch brief glimpses of a foggy, snowbound coastline. During the night of 17 April, we cut through Unimak Pass in the Aleutian Chain and into the Bering Sea. On the morning of the 18th, the submarine nets that guarded the entrance to Iliuk Bay were opened and we steamed through to get our first

storm-blurred view of Dutch Harbor—a sprawling, young G.I. encampment at the foot of towering Ballyhoo Mountain. We nosed up to Ballyhoo Dock and tied up in a flurry of wind and sleet and snow . . . the first Seabee stevedoring battalion to hit the Aleutian Islands.

The O-in-C and Exec went ashore for further orders and returned with the news that Section 1 under Lt. Holland would disembark at Dutch and that Lt. Commander Nash would take Section 2 on up to Adak. It wasn't a very happy day for a lot of us, because buddies and friends who had been inseparable from boot camp days found themselves in different sections, with no assurance that the sections would ever re-unite. There was a good-sized crowd from the Dutch Harbor gang down on Ballyhoo Dock the next morning to see the CHAUMONT pull out with Section 2. There was a lot of good-natured cat-calling and ribbing as the old ship, her rails jammed with the Fifth Special gang, faded away into the swirling mist of snow.



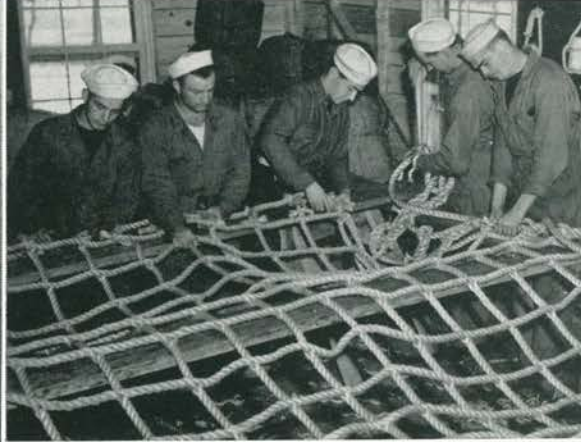
Deck View of landlocked Stevedore Training Ship, U.S.S. "Seabee" at Camp Peary, Va.



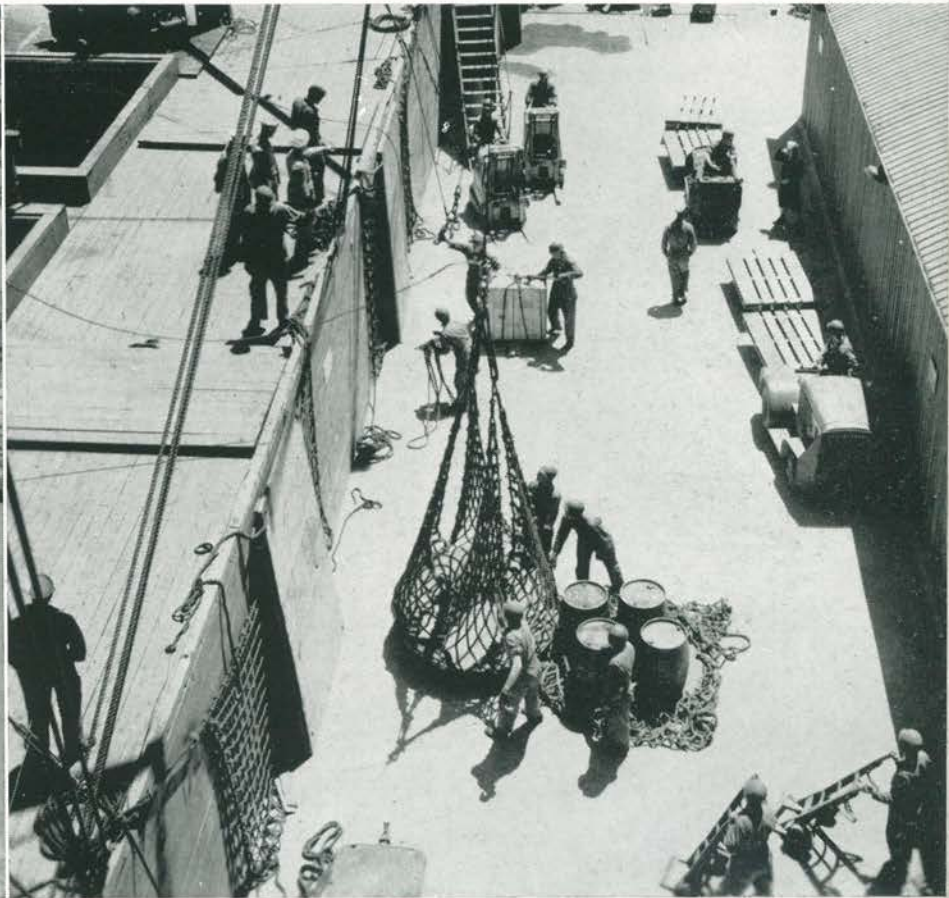
Looking aft along newly laid keel of U.S.S. "Seabee." Foreground shows piles of training cargo which was loaded and unloaded thousands of times yet never left port.



Deck signalman directing landing of salmon board and special bridge. Men enjoyed riding this gear out of holds but safety officers said, "Knock it off!"



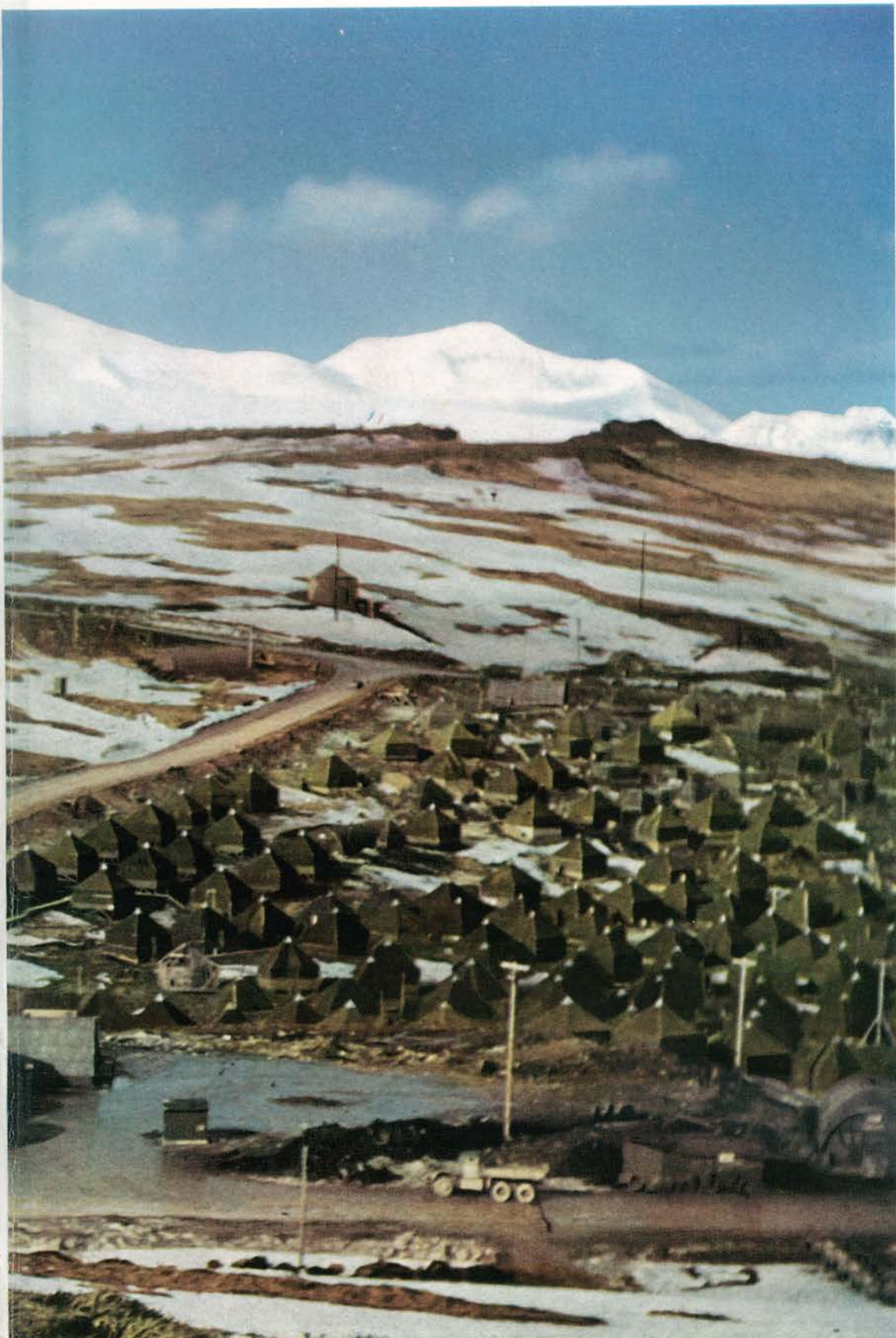
Seabees in rigging loft making hemp cargo nets.
"Tote 'Dat Bar'l 'Lift 'Dat Bale"
"As you were!"



Training officer instructs future stevedores in the proper use of cargo nets.



Aleutian Cruise





DUTCH HARBOR



A break in the weather gives us a rare view of the stark grandeur of the Aleutian landscape.



Grim and brooding under ever threatening skies this photo best describes Old Dutch's temperament.

The old town of Dutch Harbor proper where we were quartered and worked had lost its identity in the overnight change to a bustling military outpost. Construction battalions had preceded the Fifth by a few months and buildings, barracks, docks and the air strip were well under way.

As far as quarters were concerned, we were fortunate in being able to scatter our unit and take advantage of housing already erected. The officers lived in the P.T. Officers' Quarters on the northern tip of Ililiuk, Headquarters Company was lodged in an upper wing of the Marine Barracks in Dutch Harbor, and Companies "A" and "B" were assigned to Radio Barracks No. 1 and No. 2, also in Dutch.

Upon our arrival we were given two days in which to get settled and organized. After quarters, the next most important item was appropriate clothing. Our wardrobe, therefore, was augmented to include heavy woolen socks and underwear, wool caps, waterproof suits, parkas, fleece-lined jackets and trousers, artics, etc.

Our Personnel Office was located in the C.B. administration building. Supply and Disbursing



Old Russian Church a reminder of Czar's former possession.



View of dock and barge crane in an arctic setting.

had to rough it in a corner of the warehouse at the dock in which our Operations Office was located. The Sick Bay was comfortably set up on the upper deck of Radio Barracks. The chiefs messed at the Marine Chow Hall, and the rest of the unit ate at the Naval Air Station mess hall. Fifth Special cooks, bakers and mess cooks were loaned to N.A.S.

Prior to our arrival, stevedoring had been executed haphazardly by Army port companies and hybrid gangs of regular Navy and construction men, and it was apparent at a glance that there was considerable organizing and work to be done. We were assigned Ballyhoo Dock for our exclusive operation, and we took over the old Port Company office for an operations office.

Our stevedoring activity started on our third day: two ten-hour shifts, with Company "A" working one shift and Company "B" the other. The shifts were rotated every two weeks. The working schedule for every officer and man was ten hours a day, seven days a week, and no holidays were recognized. The construction outfits allotted one day a week to each man, which was called a "G.I.

Sunday." The urgent nature of our stevedoring, however, did not permit a G.I. Sunday. The ships had to be worked and it was impossible to stagger our limited manpower to avail ourselves of this privilege.

Thus we learned early that stevedoring was a high priority project which was not to be interrupted by any force that could be controlled. In wind, rain and snow, we worked ships around the clock; in Aleutian fog and swirling mist that dimmed bright dock and ship lights to a candle flame and doubled the hazard of icy docks. There were occasions when work was secured, but those were the times when raging williwaws at tornado speed came screaming in from the Bering Sea, battering the ships at the dock until they were forced to cast off and risk their fate in deep water rather than be buffeted against the pilings.

We had 17 stevedore gangs, with the chiefs assigned as gang leaders, but as men within the gangs qualified, they were placed in charge and the chiefs stepped into the supervisory capacity of deck chiefs. In spite of our skeptical acceptance of the early stevedore training at Peary, it more



Unloading tank-treaded trailer. Unsurpassed for Aleutian need.

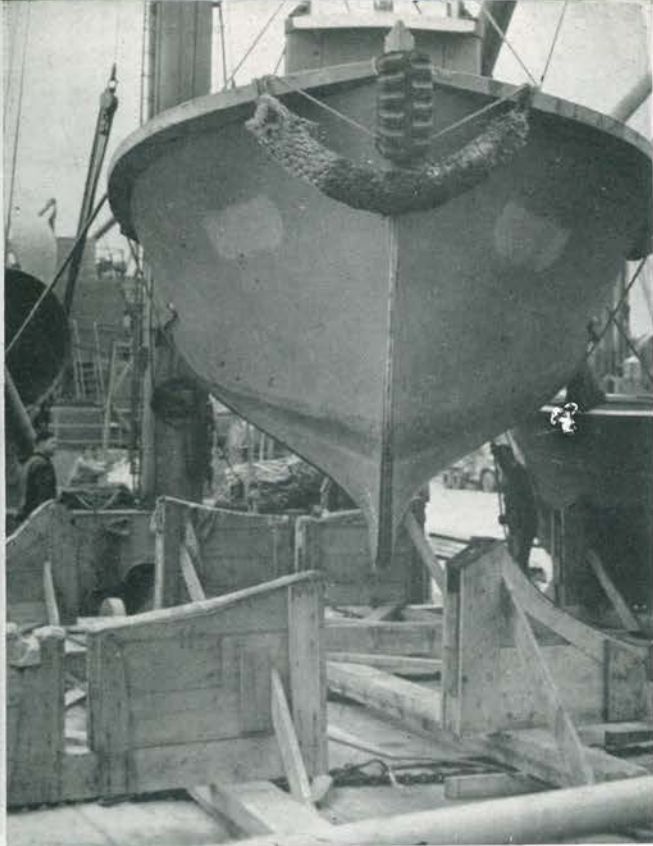
than justified its aims when we hit the field. Our operation did not include only stevedore gangs. We had to supply checkers, and again our early training came to the front. Out came the records and those who had attended the classes were promptly assigned. Truck, jitney and heavy equipment operators were also needed. Older men with experience were assigned to trucks and heavy equipment, and to the younger fellows went the jitneys and fork lifts. Off the record, there were plenty of tugs-of-war and bumping matches and high stake races in the warehouses and on the dock when the head man wasn't around. But the cargo was moved. It wasn't long before the local skeptics had a new tune: "For Gawd's sake, stay off Ballyhoo Dock; that Fifth Special is CRAZY!" Perhaps we created that impression, but we got those ships moving. And now let's take a look around and get our bearings.

Dutch Harbor! The name recalls all the romance and adventure of the early Arctic conquest. The largest outpost of civilization in the Aleutians before World War II, its citizens were a hodgepodge of Aleutes, Russians and Asiatics. Its claim to existence lay in its importance as a coaling station for the ships that worked the rich seal, walrus

and salmon fields beyond. There was also a little gold there and the neighboring islands, otherwise almost barren of wild life, were abundant in silver and blue fox.

Dutch Harbor, on the small island of Iliiuk, was wedded to its larger, more desolate neighbor, Unalaska, by a small, ancient cable ferry. The town of Unalaska, formerly a Russian settlement, was still there at the opposite terminus of the ferry; a straggling shanty town of rotting shacks and lean-tos. The old Orthodox Russian church was still noble in its regal tatters, its broken stained glass windows, and its red flaked dome and splintered cross. There was a small, unkempt cemetery with rows of half-buried markers of hand-carved planks and crumbling stones. It was no longer an active house of worship, for its doors were closed with the evacuation of the civilian population, but it stood as a promise of days to come.

The tavern at Unalaska had been a riproaring saloon in the old days and was now a beer hall, packed each night with soldiers, sailors and marines. Lights were dimmed by a fog of tobacco smoke, and there was a constant crash of beer bottles hurled into the drum containers. The roller skating rink was the town's one and only dance hall,



Removing deck load of Naval craft before breaking into ship's holds.



reconverted. A yellow, ragged poster at the entrance still announced: "Dancing Wednesdays and Saturdays . . . Bring Your Own Woman." The stand-up bar was still there, but the only refreshment was soda pop at two bits a bottle. We had music to skate to, a decrepit victrola with wheezing old refrains that rasped out a rhythm for the whir and click of the skates.

Dutch Harbor, on the other extreme, was military and G.I. The Jap air raid was still fresh in the minds of the authorities, and additional raids were not only possible but probable. Military training was mandatory for all men who could be spared from their basic duties. Representation by all activities at gunnery classes and commando courses was enforced. Red and yellow alert drills were called at all hours, and battle stations were assigned to all activities.

Recreation at Dutch Harbor was of the best. Our Station was strictly Navy and G.I. and even in those early days, every thought was given to welfare and morale. We had a large, well-constructed theatre that showed pictures nightly and gave matinees for those on night shifts. Boxing tournaments were held, in which regular Navy,

Left:

"The man at the winch was made to feel contempt for the wildest blow.

"Tho it often appeared when the gale had cleared he'd been in the 'beer' below."

Below:

Attractive tent sites, running water and complete air-conditioning.





Winterized Jeep and Designer



Recreation

Seabees, Army and Marines took part. The theatre building also housed an indoor gymnasium. There was a large Ship's Service building that featured ice cream sodas, a hamburger stand, recorded music and a souvenir department. This building also housed a smaller theatre for local talent stage shows, a bowling alley and a well-stocked library. Then, of course, there was the Navy beer hall. Some of the greatest unwritten battles of the war were fought there; that is, until the authorities in desperation finally set separate hours for the seagoing Navy, the Station Force Navy, the Seabees and the Marines. Thereafter, there was more order and fewer riot calls.

To return to the ships, we state here and now that our own voyage was not all clear sailing. Recreation facilities were delightful, but we had very little time to enjoy them. The harbor was always jammed with ships. Dutch Harbor was the terminus of the main supply line from the States and the mother port for all the newer outposts farther along the Chain. In addition, Dutch was alive with another and far greater project—the staging of the memorable invasion of Attu. Our stevedoring activity played an important role in this. Loading maintained an equal pace with discharging operations and presented all the attendant problems. The talent within our ranks, how-

ever, asserted itself and the men quickly justified the earlier confidence that Lt. Holland had placed in them.

Enough cannot be said about the work and efficiency of our Commissary Department. Our cooks, bakers and mess cooks had been assigned to the N.A.S. commissary where we chowed. We can't vouch for the food before we arrived, but we sang its praise while we were there. We do know the boys worked long and hard and they lost no time in gaining everyone's respect and cooperation.

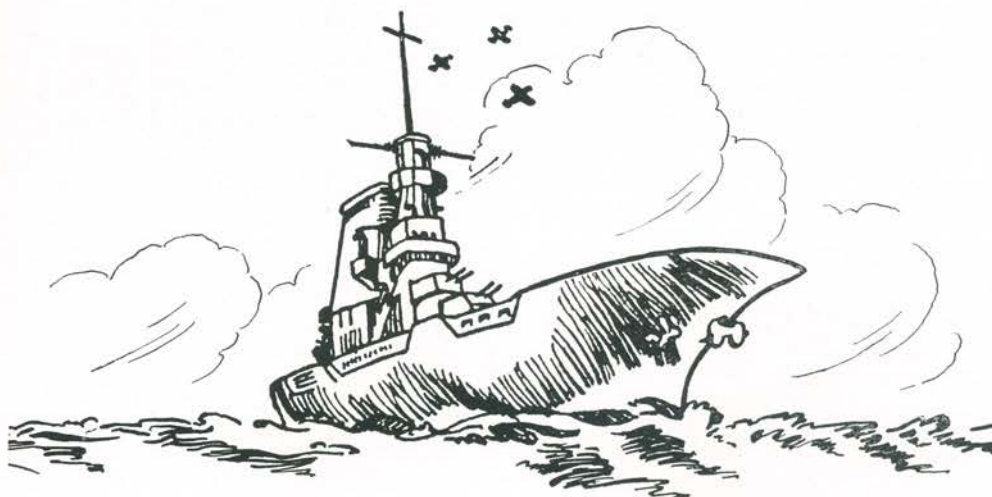
We were settled for a long and happy career at Dutch when official confirmation came on the heels of flying scuttlebutt that we were to be relieved to join the other half of the Fifth at Adak. Thus it was that on 1 July 1943 the Seventh Special arrived at Dutch Harbor and took over as Port Company. We were not, however, secured from activity, but helped the new battalion get under way. Then on July 5th all of our gangs were called back to the docks. The emergency at hand warranted the decision to make use of our unit until the last moment. Attu had been taken and Dutch was now engaged in preparation for the Kiska push. On July 19th, just three months after our arrival, we were officially secured, and on July 20th, Lt. Blossfield and 86 Company "B" men boarded the SS MORMACHAWK for Adak, sailing on the

21st. The rest of us were slated to go on the U.S.A.T. TJISDANE, and on the 25th we boarded and she pulled out into the stream. We did not get under way at once, spending a brief time working the SS PRESIDENT FILLMORE which was to accompany us, along with a Destroyer Escort, to Adak. On July 27th the three ships got under way. We waved goodbye to Dutch Harbor as we steamed through the submarine nets, then we were out in the open sea and on our way.

We had an experience that first night out which is worthy of recording. It was nearing midnight and we were cutting through Unimak Pass, a particularly dangerous part of our voyage, driving through the blanketing fog at full speed ahead, our ships blacked out. Suddenly there was a terrific grinding of gears from below decks and the ship's bow rose in a shuddering lunge. She had been thrown full speed ahead into full speed astern. During the uproar and bedlam that followed, the escort flashed a signal message from the darkness ahead and the other two ships immediately replied. Then, as though at a given signal, all the ships lit up, and bright beams of light broke the darkness. The fog chose that moment to lift for a few sec-

onds, and the cold moonlight revealed the rugged shoreline of the pass, so close to our starboard that we could see that the black cliffs sihouetted in bold relief against the sky. The escort was in much closer but was backing slowly out into mid-stream. When we reached safe water there was more signalling, the ships blacked out again, and we went on our way. We learned later that the escort, blinded by fog, had gotten off her bearings and very nearly grounded. Only alertness and skillful piloting had averted a catastrophe.

The balance of the trip was uneventful. In the late afternoon we steamed into Kuluk Bay and tied up at the Army Dock at Adak. We didn't expect a brass band and a reception committee to greet us, but we were a little disappointed to find none of our Fifth Special mates there on the dock. Commander Nash was there to meet us and direct us to our area. We later learned that the men were all employed on another dock, and as we knew by then, nothing could interfere with stevedoring, not even anything as important as this great occasion of our reunion. We disembarked at once, and shortly thereafter, trucks arrived to carry us to our new home in Happy Valley, Adak, Alaska.



ADAK

Those of us in Section Two weren't feeling very pleasant as we waved goodbye to the boys on the dock at Dutch Harbor and set sail on the last lap of our voyage. Not only were we leaving friends behind, but Dutch Harbor looked settled and secure, and we were not certain what lay ahead of us. At first, we had the consolation that there would now be more room for us aboard the CHAUMONT, but at the last moment, a detachment of men from the 52nd N.C.B. was loaded aboard. At about 2000 on our second day out, we arrived at Sand Bay in the Bering Sea. Though it was still daylight when we dropped anchor, we could see very little, for waves of fog were rolling in on us. What we did see when the fog occasionally lifted was anything but reassuring: a barren, lifeless expanse of snow and ice. We were informed that this was the new home of the 52nd detachment. Early next morning, April 21st, we arrived at the entrance to Kuluk Bay. We had to lay over until daylight before the nets could be opened to admit us into the inner harbor and a berth at the dock at Adak.

Gangs were immediately broken out to start discharging the battalion gear. Those of us not assigned to that detail were lined up, mustered several times to be certain none of us had gone AWOL on the trip, then marched up the road toward Navy Town, under full pack and carrying our own gear. After marching for what seemed hours, we were instructed to halt, since we were now at our new home. It was a warehouse, the only place on the island at that time to accommodate a group our size. The rest of the day was spent in mustering for chows, mustering for details such as sentry and fire watch (we had no fires), and just plain mustering. At 2100 that night an order was issued to vacate the warehouse, move to our new camp site and erect our tents before retiring. Pandemonium broke out. Most of us had hit the

sack for the night. In the excitement that followed, it was impossible to call the inevitable muster immediately, and meanwhile, most of us had mysteriously vanished. It was discovered the next morning that the order had been misinterpreted; it was meant for a daylight move.

That morning, when we were finally moved, the first Fifth Special area on Adak was born. Material was at a bare minimum and improvisation was necessary. We were issued tents but it was up to the occupants of each tent to find and haul scrap lumber or anything else they could procure to make their tent livable. After three days of erecting (on our own time, stevedoring operations having commenced at once), with each tent group utilizing whatever could be found for sidings and decks, our Tent City began to look like the wrong side of the tracks at a gypsy camp. It was just about this time that letters began coming through from the lads at Dutch Harbor. One and all they were

Adak Harbor area before the 'Bees streamlined the landscape, built docks and laid miles of high-speed roads.



unanimous in acclaiming the perfect set-up they had: warm, dry barracks with plenty of hot showers, a large up-to-date chow hall, movies, bowling, a library . . . and BEER!

A week had passed and our area had been whipped into a slightly more presentable and comfortable condition, when the base Ordnance Officer happened by on an inspection tour. His reaction when he spotted our Tent City was slightly disconcerting. "Ye Gods!" he screamed. "Right on top of my ammunition dump! Get those men out of there; they're living on top of Nitro Hill!" Commander Nash at once set out to get another camp site. This time we were assigned to a more practical, and safer, location: a hillside bordering Mitt Lake in Happy Valley. Commander Nash put pressure on the authorities and secured the necessary construction material, and it was not long before our new camp was ready.

During all this building and moving, our men had been working the ships. Lt. (jg) J. W. Cobb was named as Stevedoring Officer for the Fifth, and all stevedoring was under his supervision. Fifteen gangs of eighteen men each had been formed.

At first, we worked on a schedule of two 12-hour shifts, but this was later changed to three 8-hour shifts. In addition to discharging ships, we also had the job of hauling cargo to the consignees, unloading the trucks, and storing the cargo in the various warehouses.

Toward the latter part of June, scuttlebutt started flying to the effect that the Dutch Harbor section was to join us at Adak. Rumor became a fact when the order was issued to erect tents to accommodate additional men and officers. We were all pleased with the prospect of our reunion, but the order to set up facilities for the other section was not received with a great deal of favor. The troubles and hardships of our own pioneering days were not far removed, and their memory was still vivid. Who could blame us if we were all of the opinion that the Dutch section should have to live in an igloo until they built their own quarters? Of course, our mutiny never got beyond our tent doors, and we built the accommodations. Section One arrived soon after (we still think they delayed their arrival until their quarters were set up). And how did we greet them? Four hundred strong we

The spit (a long narrow shoal running into the sea) before the "dozers" filled it in.



chorused: "You should'a been here when **we** got got here!"

With the rejoining of the two sections at Adak, a certain amount of intra-battalion reorganization was necessary and there was an immediate arrangement of all personnel into the following departments: stevedore gangs, checkers, equipment operators and maintenance men, gear loft, and cargo operations office. In the camp area were located the administrative offices and shops. On August 5th, eleven days after the sections joined, Commander Nash was detached from the battalion for temporary additional duty and Lt. Holland was made acting Officer-in-Charge, receiving a spot promotion to Lt. Commander. Commander Nash never returned to the battalion. He was permanently detached in January 1944, and in June, Lt. Commander Holland was officially designated as Officer-in-Charge.

Our stevedoring operations continued on the Navy Dock, and the new organizational set-up gave us 24 gangs of about 16 men each. All the gangs, however, were not used on shipboard. Some were used in small craft operations, at the sorting yard, and at the backland dumps. It was a matter of but a few days before both sections were blended into a unified whole. It was the first time since the battalion's inception that it had the opportunity as a single unit to prove its efficiency in the

endeavor for which it was commissioned—stevedoring.

A great deal of forethought and intelligent planning had gone into the drafting of the new area, and there was no compromise during construction. The area terrain was a steep hillside that rose abruptly from the road bordering Mitt Lake. Tent rows climbed high up the hill in precise and orderly file, each row being a radius from the central Square, where a rustic waterfall and stream made a natural park. The battalion colors and National Ensign were flown in the Square, and directly across the roadway was the administration area. The color scheme, as always with nature in the Aleutians, was simple and at times severe. Camouflage and protective coloring were still mandatory, but easily effected. Our tents were drab olive and during the few short months of summer, when there was no snow, they blended well with the heavy, lush carpet of tundra which covered the whole terrain. During the major part of the year, when snow and ice provided the color scheme, nature proved a more capable camouflager than our experts. She piled snow banks up to the very eaves of our tents, then carpeted the roofs themselves in white, lacing them to the snow banks with wrist-thick icicles. The steep, arterial catwalks that rose by steps to the highest tents were perpetually covered with ice.

Beach-head setting on the Bering Sea side of Adak.



We were quite proud of our "front yards," but we were prouder of the interiors of our respective domiciles. Inside, regimentation gave way to the only luxuries available: warmth and comfort. Weekly inspections were made in the interests of cleanliness, but that was all that was demanded, and we bent every effort to make our homes as warm and cozy as we could.

We learned early that foxholes were designed unwittingly for a purpose more practical than security. When filled to surface level with snow and their identity somewhat hidden, they became excellent family style refrigerators to hold such precious items as fresh butter, eggs, ham, bacon, steaks and chickens. Although inclement weather restricted outdoor athletics, we did have a recreation room with ping-pong and other indoor games.

We had movies in the chow hall every evening, with matinees for the night watches. If one felt like it, he could trek over to Bick Hall, across the lake, for evening shows, or catch a ride into Navy Town which boasted the nearest thing to a real theatre.

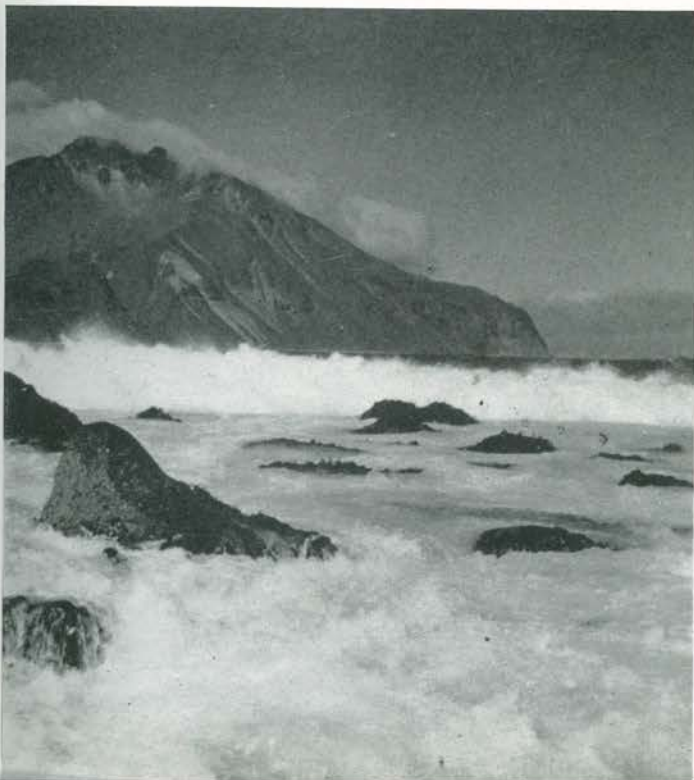
Our new organizational policy was well launched and functioning smoothly. We had succeeded in getting our various dock area offices and departments conveniently located. Then the blow fell. It was late in October that the Naval authorities decided to move their location closer to the dock area and concentrate their heretofore scattered

administrative offices in a new area to be known as Navy Town. In order to keep the Naval facilities exclusive from those of the Army, it was necessary to exchange docks. It was impossible to secure our stevedoring activity during the move, so all operations had to be synchronized and scheduled accordingly. The move was made over a period of several days, but it was done so smoothly that even the coffee pot in the equipment repair office did not grow cold.

It has been mentioned that there were no holidays on the stevedore calendar. For a few days, however, it looked as though Christmas at Adak was going to prove the exception. Word had come from official sources that the grand concession had been made and the Fifth would be secured over Christmas Day. Spirits soared and plans were made for individual celebrations. Then the day before, with due apologies, topside announced that a "hot" ship had arrived and would have to be worked. Our Skipper was as disappointed as the rest of us, but he pulled some strings and gained a compromise: we would work Christmas Day but the entire battalion would be secured on Christmas Eve. To further soften the blow, our officers financed a Tom-and-Jerry party for the outfit. In all fairness to accurate reporting it must be admitted that the party was not as successful as planned. At the last moment, Charity and Good Will, who ride in with Santa Claus, prompted an invitation to a neighboring outfit to share our Tom-and-Jerrys. This was a mistake. Our guests, imbued with a great thirst and horrible manners, repeatedly crashed the punch-bowl line. This might have been tolerated, even, had not several roast turkeys disappeared from their places on the festive buffet board. This was too much. Accusations were made, both factions counted their numbers and flexed their biceps, and Charity and Good Will flew out of the window. The warning tones of a nice friendly riot reached the authorities' ears, however, a premature Auld Lang Syne was ordered . . . and the party ended.

That is, the Tom-and-Jerry party ended, but the evening's festivities had hardly begun. Unofficial "good cheer" from mysterious sources soon dispelled the nostalgic depression so keenly felt on our first overseas Christmas. Outraged Charity and Good Will were dragged in from the snow and icy winds outside and quickly thawed in the warmth

Natural Booby traps against enemy landings in the Clam Lagoon area on the Bering Sea.



of fire, friendship and festive fermentations. Numerous characters, not only in our outfit but in activities all over the island, became confused as to which holiday they were celebrating. Some thought it was New Year's, others were convinced it was the 4th of July, and still others had the idea that peace had been declared. Whatever their illusions, shortly after midnight all hell broke loose. The peace and sanctity of a mellow Christmas Eve was violated by fireworks and deafening reverberations. Colored flares and tracer bullets lighted the sky. Eager celebrants joined in the fun with carbines, .03's, B.A.R.'s and .45's. The moon was the general target for the shooting, but direction and aim are alien to inebriation and the result was near catastrophe. Firey balls from flares and signal pistols hopped over tent tops or skipped up roadways. Bullets aimed at the moon were mysteriously deflected through the tops of tents. The occupants of these tents hurled themselves to the deck and stayed there. Charity and Good Will, in a blue rage, gave up in disgust and departed for calmer climes.

The wild climax of gunfire was stretching the celebration too far. "Cease firing" orders were quickly issued and, as an additional maneuver, the

main switch was pulled and the area blacked out. Disciplinary action was not taken against the Christmas Eve revellers, but the Skipper took strong measures to insure that there would be no recurrence on New Year's Eve. Dire threats and official notices were promulgated and as an added precaution, the entire roster of Fifth Special chiefs was assigned area guard and roving patrol duty throughout the night. They naturally considered this an ignoble and obnoxious assignment, and during the long vigil on New Year's Eve, the chiefs' discomfort and aggrieved feelings were not improved with the advent of one of the worst blizzards we ever experienced at Adak. To make matters worse, all of the tents were as quiet and orderly as a monasterial bed-check, and there wasn't a single hapless person who could be slapped on report.

Our Aleutian tour ended much sooner than even the most optimistic of us dared to hope. It came as a complete surprise without benefit of advance notice or the usual conflicting scuttlebutt. In the afternoon of February 5th, 1944, the Skipper got a telephone message from topside to the effect that one-half the Fifth Special was to board the SS HENRY FAILING, already at dock, the next

Deep eroded creek carrying the waters off the mountains to the sea ran through the Fifth's area.
In emergency could be used as airraid shelter.





General views of the Fifth Special area during the dubious seasons.

day for return to the States. The other half of the outfit was to carry on while awaiting transportation. The administrative staff worked all night, breaking down the roster into two units of equal operating and manpower strength, because at that time it was doubted that the two sections would ever be re-united. The next morning, those in Section Two, the unit leaving, were secured and the day was spent in a frenzy of packing and mustering. They boarded ship that night and sailed the next morning, February 7th, with Lt. Blossfield as Officer-in-Charge. After a rough voyage, the *FAILING* arrived at Seattle on February 15th. Train transportation was not available at that time so the men were quartered in barracks at the Naval Station there. On February 20th, repairs were completed on the aircraft carrier, *USS LEXINGTON*, and since she was sailing for San Francisco, the Fifth was assigned transportation aboard her. Docking at San Francisco on the 22nd, the Fifth

was taken by bus to Camp Parks, and on the 24th, the men were sent on a 28-day overseas leave. For half of the Fifth Special, at least, the Aleutian tour of duty was over.

The day after Section Two left, the remaining half of the outfit was relieved of all ship work at Adak by the recently arrived Seventh Special Battalion, and on February 25th, the Fifth Special was completely secured from operational activity. At 2000 on March 2nd, Section One boarded the *SS YUKON* and the next day, accompanied by the *SS COLUMBIA* and one destroyer escort, the Fifth Special wrote finis to its brief but hectic Aleutian career and sailed out of Kuluk Bay, homeward bound. The *YUKON* docked at Seattle on March 11th and the Fifth boarded a train that evening for Camp Parks. On the 16th, after three days at camp, the men departed on their 30-day leave. Thus ended the Fifth Special's first tour of duty.

Heavy lift crane on pontoon barge picking up a "cinch" load.



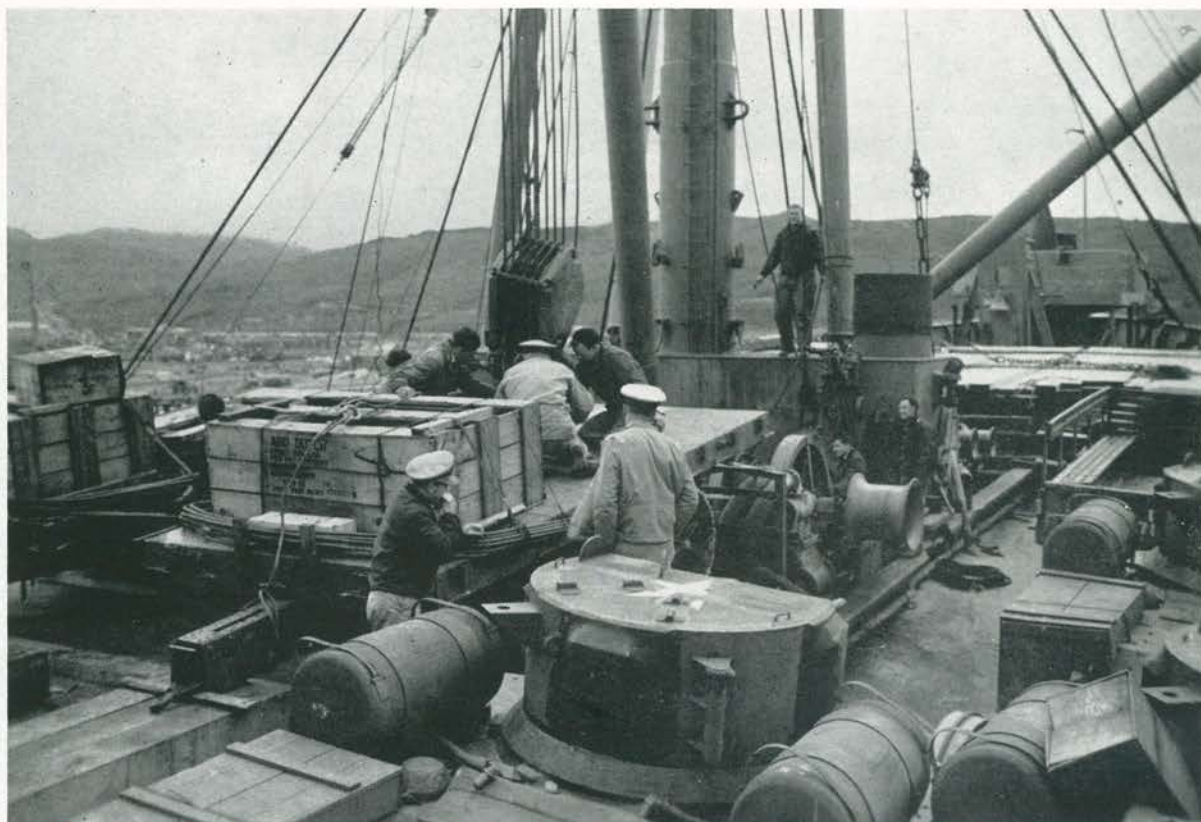
The "Jumbo" boom with a nice little draft of some sixty tons. It will land on the dock as gently as a sunbeam; an eager Seabee will promptly drive it away and start digging.

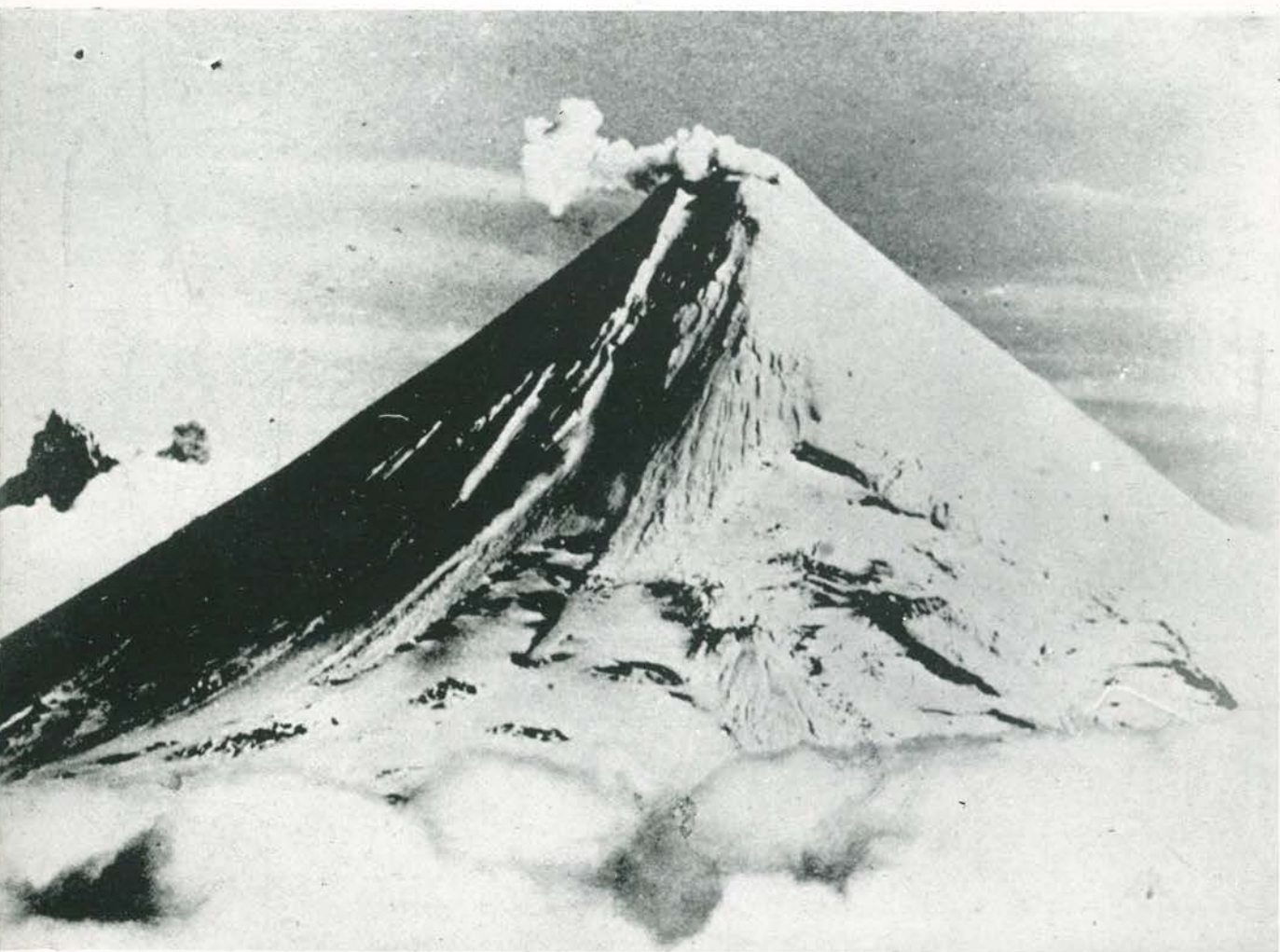




The ingenious Seabees invented and improved many methods for handling our vital war cargo. Note the special truck bridge, simple, safe and a real time saver. See heavy lift bridge on opposite page.

Preparing to remove heavy deck load. The men are rigging the "Jumbo" boom and are about to hook the first draft.

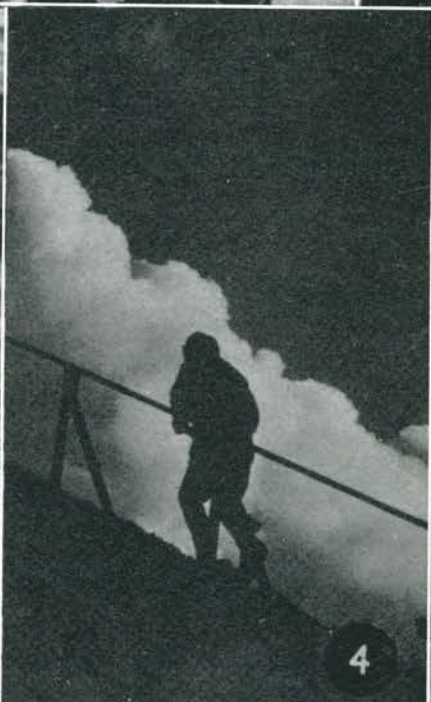




Although snow encased, one of the active volcanos of the Aleutian chain gives off a subtle warning that there is still life in the old gentleman.

Not an ancient lamasery of Shanga-La in the Himalayan mountains in Tibet but a Seabee camp staggered over the rugged hills of the Andreaonf group.





1. Bagley and his heavy hitters.
 2. Rustic Bridge built (Circa A.D. 1943). 3. Trout stream right in our back yard and no license needed. 4. Arctic Silhouette.
 5. Winter Sports.

Like the ground hog the boys of the Disbursing Office come out to check their shadows.

Our Chief Petty Officers.



Hockett's "Boom Benders."



Top: Our Cooks and Bakers. A nice bunch of boys who would camouflage Spam making it difficult to decide whether you were enjoying Breast of Pheasant or Breaded Veal Cutlets.



Bottom: Officers Mess Cooks.





2



3



4



5



6

1. Nash Hall, The Recreation Center, 2. A group of Headquarters Company men, 3. "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" "Oh Yah!" 4. A friendly little game of cut-throat poker, 5. Mess cooks in their Sacks, 6. The library, Nash Hall.



Our officers on the Aleutian tour of duty.



(Above): "See yonder little cloud, that, born aloft
so tenderly by the wind, floats fast away over
snowy peaks."—Longfellow.



(Left): Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious,
sometimes awful, never the same for two moments
together; almost human in its passions, almost
spiritual in its tenderness, almost Divine in its infi-
nity."—Ruskin.



(Right): "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble
strife."—Gray.

(Below): "On a lone winter evening when the
frost has wrought a silence."—Keats.



Commendations

August 15, 1943, Adak, Alaska . . . Commander, Alaskan Sector has noted with gratification the excellent job performed in the matter of the unloading and loading of the U.S.S. VEGA. The speed with which the job was accomplished under adverse conditions is indicative of the high degree of cooperation attained. The officers and men in your organization detailed to this operation are to be commended upon the accomplishment of this work and it is my desire that a copy of this letter be made a part of the fitness report of each officer concerned, and that a suitable entry be made in the service record of each man who participated in this work.

J. W. REEVES, JR., Comalsec.

October 17, 1943, S. S. William T. Sherman, In Port, Adak. . . This letter is to commend the officers and personnel of the Fifth Special Battalion which is now performing stevedore duties for the Navy at Adak. In my opinion, their work compares favorably with any civilian operation now being performed on the West Coast.

A. W. WESTERHOLM, Master, S.S. William T. Sherman.

December 15, 1943, S.S. William T. Sherman, Adak, Alaska. . . For the past year and a half I have been master in ships to various bases in Alaska carrying cargo which has been discharged by personnel at the ports. This present voyage, sailing for the Navy, this ship was discharged here by the U.S. Fifth Special stevedore battalion. I would like to compliment the Officer-in-Charge of this battalion for the organizing of such a splendid group of workers, and I particularly commend the officers and men themselves for an excellent job of cargo working. They are very thorough, very fast, and very considerate of the ship's gear. They are, in my estimation, the best stevedore gangs in Alaska. As a matter of note, 8800 weight tons were discharged and 500 tons loaded in five days even. This was accomplished under the handicap of extremely severe weather.

P. R. SELIG, Master, S.S. William T. Sherman.

March 3, 1944, Naval Operating Base, Adak, Alaska. . . . We are happy with you in your opportunity to return home, and you can take with you the satisfaction of a job well done. You came to this base when there was nothing. With your resourcefulness and determination, amidst difficult conditions you made a definite, positive contribution to the development of the base. We are sorry to break our cordial association with you individually as friends and collectively as associates. You have been most cooperative. Good Luck!

For The Supply Department: G. M. BRYDON, Captain, SC, USN.

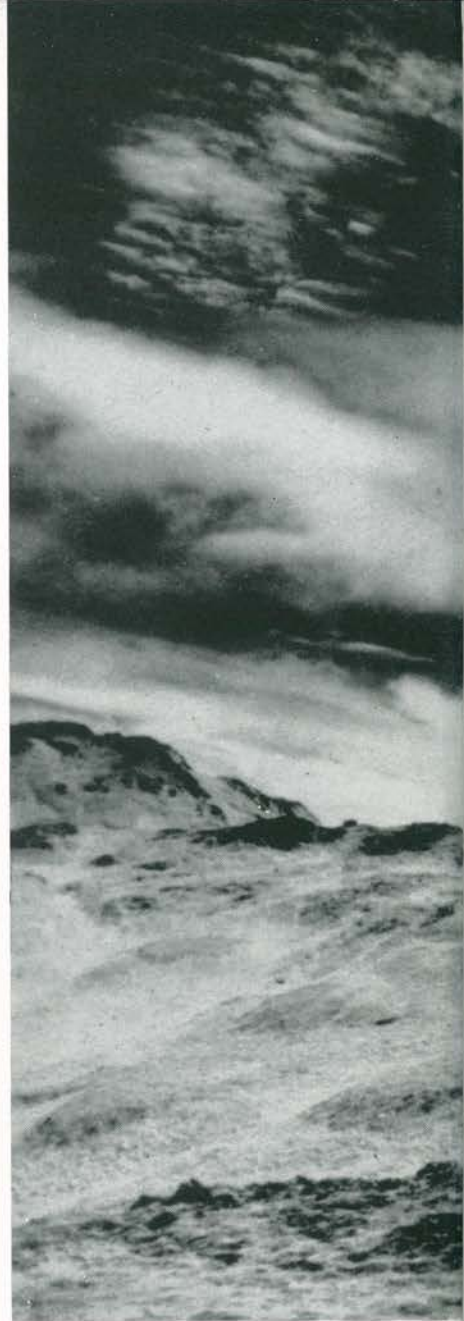


CONSTRUIMUS BATUIMUS

(Below): The big Quonset (Iron Lung) Huts were better living quarters than the tents but they held too many mates. One had about as much privacy as a bubble dancer at an American Legion Convention.

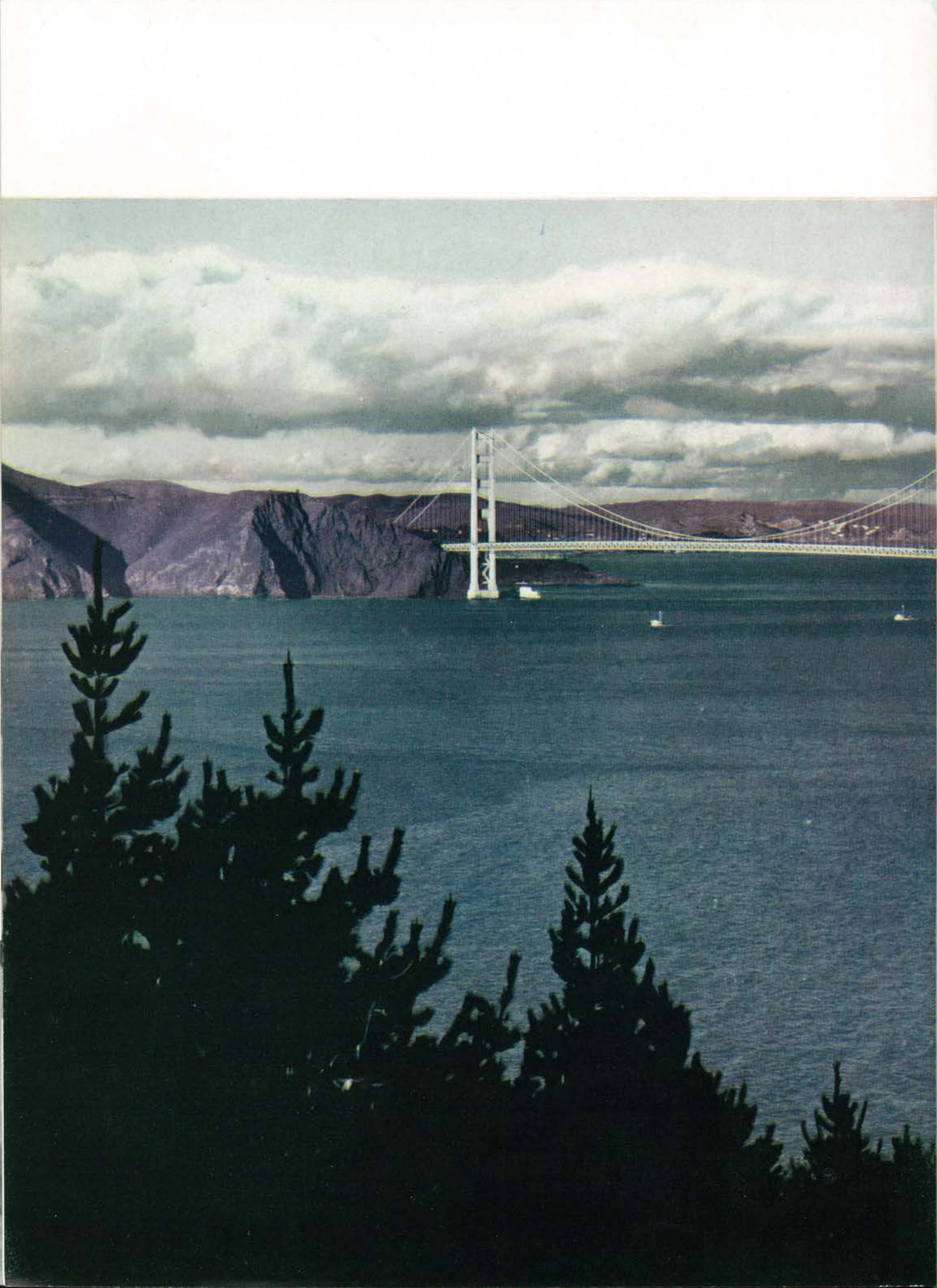


(Right): Chow hounds attacking their objective in old Indian file formation.

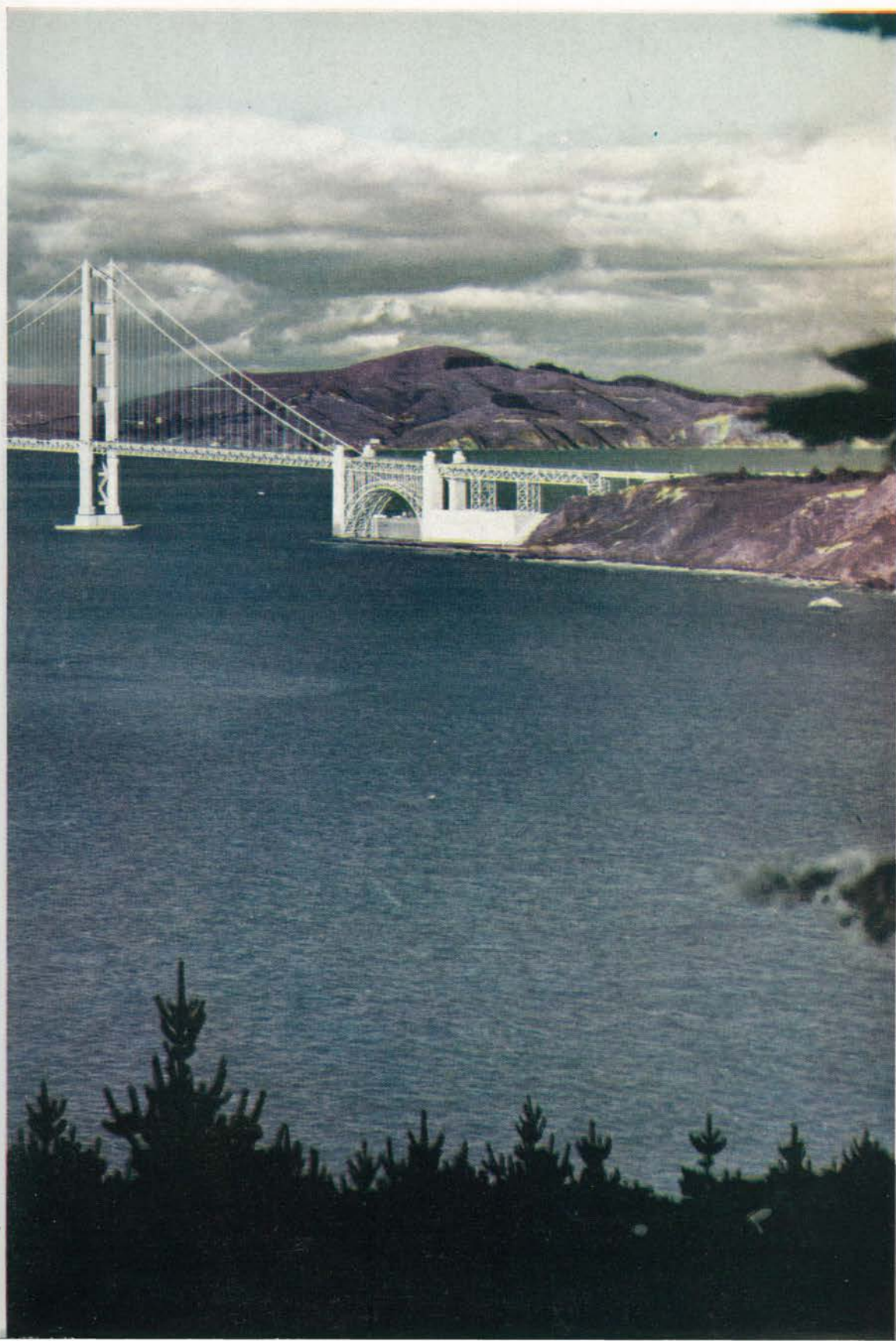




Part of Mount Moffett as viewed in summer, might as an illusory mirage, in less than twenty minutes, completely surround itself in an impenetrable wall of mist and fog.



S t a t e s i d e





CAMP PARKS

The Fifth Special return to San Francisco from their first arduous tour of duty in the Aleutians aboard the gigantic carrier USS Lexington. The Camp Parks "Seabee" Band welcomes them with, "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight!" (They weren't kidding!)

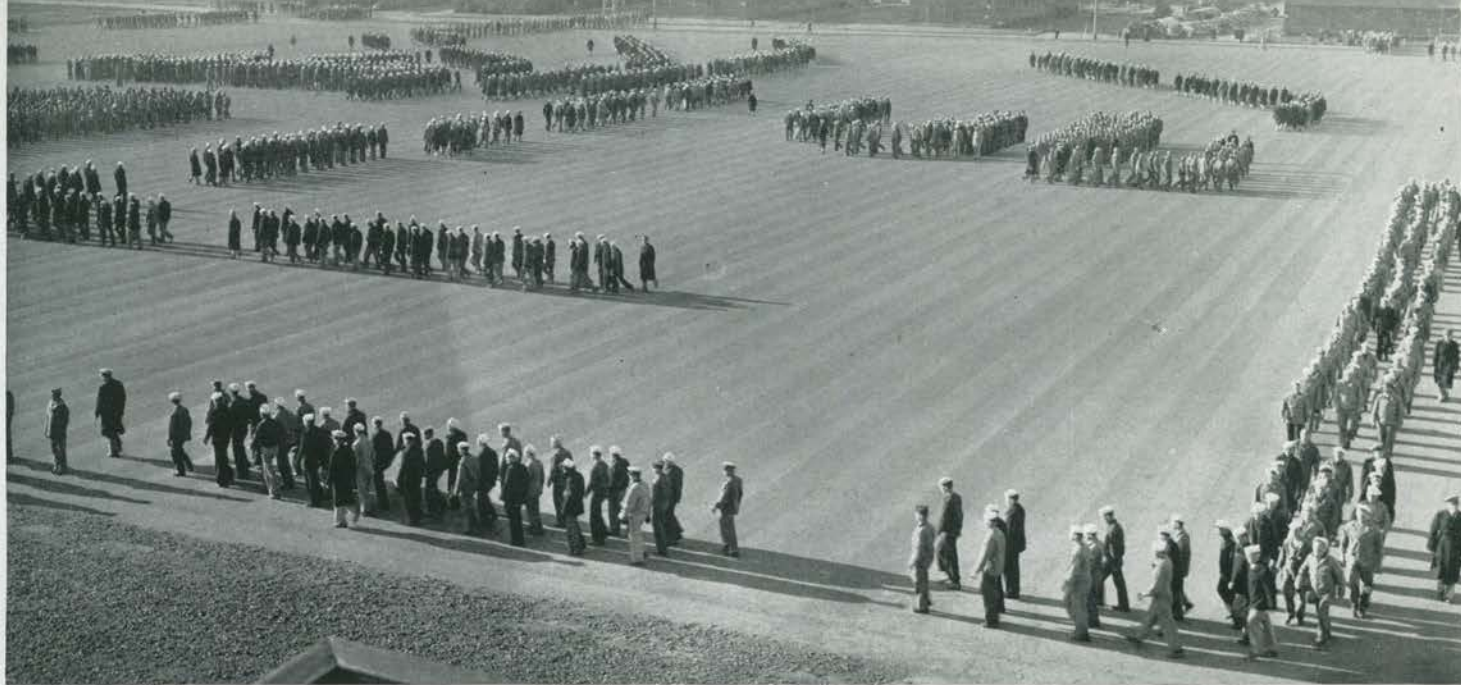
The splitting of our battalion in Adak prior to our return to the States was not, as we had feared, to be permanent. When we reported back to Camp Parks from our respective overseas leaves, we were re-united and Lt. Blossfield was assigned as Executive Officer. From our return until we left the States again on our second overseas tour, the outfit was in a continual state of re-formation.

Immediately before leaving Camp Parks on our overseas leave, and during the period shortly after our return, a number of our officers were detached

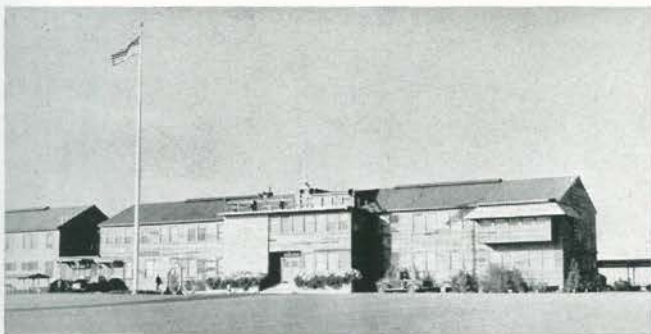
for duty elsewhere and new officers reported aboard. Among the additions were Dr. Morris as Senior Medical Officer, Dr. Temple as Junior Medical Officer, Dr. Longwood as Dental Officer, Chaplain Novak, Lt. (ig) Hartwigsen and Ensign Bonetti as Stevedoring Officers, and Ensign Huff as Supply Officer. Later, at Port Hueneme, Ensigns Servant, Berg, and Miller were attached to the outfit. There was a decided shuffling of enlisted men as well. In line with the rehabilitation program at Camp Parks, our entire complement was screened.

Camp Parks (near San Francisco) Recuperation Center for returning Seabees awaiting reassignment. "Pick out your old hut, Bub?" Can you find the "Grinder" and the "Brig?"





We assembled each morning on the "Black top" for "colors." If we were unlucky we might catch a few hours of "close order" drill, usually after a strenuous evening of Market Street Maneuvers.



(Left): "Topside." The administration building where each dewy morning at "Colors" the loud-speaker would tell us what had happened to one of our hopeless mates: "Auturo Q. Rodinski; apprentice seaman: A.W.O.L., 2 hours and ten minutes. Fined \$2000; five years in solitary confinement. Demoted to rank of citizen, (j.g.) (Right): The theatre. A very pleasant place to spend an evening especially when payday was so darn far off.

Medical check-ups were made and some men were transferred to hospitals or shore billets. Other men were put into activities for which they were better qualified. By the same procedure, new men were sent to the battalion.

Immediately upon our return from leave, we were launched into an intensive military training program, since we were scheduled for an early return to overseas duty. It was not long before we heard that the date was set for June 18th, and rumor became a fact when we were released on a 15-day embarkation leave starting June 1st.

The authorities changed their plans while we were on leave, however, and when we got back we found that our departure date had been indefinitely postponed. The reason became apparent when we got orders to form a stevedoring unit for permanent detachment. Thus, CBD 1056 was

formed, composing 256 men with Lt. (jg) Buckwalter in charge, assisted by Ensign Willis and Warrant Officers Gorecki and Beneduce. This unit was sent to Port Hueneme early in June.

As replacements for this detached unit, the Station assigned to us a quarter of a battalion of Eighth Special men, who had followed us from the Aleutians by a few days. These men were on overseas leave at the time and were wired a 10-day extension to count as embarkation leave. When they returned they automatically checked in with the Fifth Special.

Within a few days, the request was made of us to form and temporarily detach another stevedoring unit of officers and men. This unit became CD 2514, sometimes called S.U. 1058, the stevedoring component of the 1058 outfit which carried out the now famous Point Barrow Expedition, as related elsewhere in this narrative.

On July 20th, the Fifth Special, with some replacements but still not a full battalion in size, was sent to Port Hueneme, California. The Fifth was never again to reach full battalion strength. The outfit boarded a train at Camp Parks on the 20th to the farewell salute of the Station Band, and set out for their port of embarkation to be further trained and equipped for overseas. Arriving at Hueneme on the morning of the 21st, we were assigned an area and prepared to begin our military training.

(Right): The four 5th Special men who brought us back the top awards at the Camp Parks swimming meet. (Below): "Load and lock!" The rifle range where the Seabees scores were equal to any other in the service. Those indentations in the safety wall in the background are where the hot lead stopped.



The Fifth's expert riflemen. From Tennessee Turkey-shoots to Coney Island shooting galleries these men learned to look thru sights the Navy way.





1. Battalion review on "Grinder" in front of Administration Building. 2. "Liberty Pass?" "I. D. Card?" Liberty Hounds rushing the gate to make that bus.



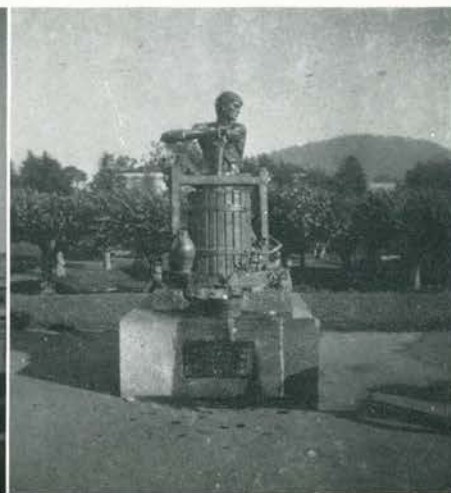
(Left): Seabee Battalion march down Market Street, San Francisco, as the movie, "Fighting Seabees," based on Hollywood's idea of Seabees at work and play, looms fortuitously in the background.





Rugged Camp site at Camp Parks.

Scenes around San Francisco.



OAKLAND

We had been at Hueneme about a month when we received orders to report to N.S.D., Oakland, for temporary stevedoring duty. We left by train on August 25th and the next day arrived at our new home, Camp John T. Knight at Emeryville, Oakland. The camp was small and autonomous, and there were no Station Force restrictions or red tape governing us. And we were but a few miles from the centers of Oakland and San Francisco.

The work at the N.S.D. docks was long and difficult, but we were well-trained by then and it was right up our alley. In turn, the Skipper compensated by granting automatic liberty when not on duty. The only control was an honor system under which a single violation would result in the offender's entire company being restricted. There were no violations. Two weeks later, however, we were relieved by the 32nd Special, a new outfit for which we had been substituting until they arrived from the East Coast. After helping to break in the 32nd on the docks, therefore, we loaded up all our gear, and on September 10th boarded a troop train for Port Hueneme, arriving on the morning of the 11th. The Camp Knight tour was the briefest and most pleasant any battalion ever had.



(Below): Chief Kerrison and one of our fair bus drivers at Camp Knight. (Right): Chinese Tower, and Sun Dial, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.



POINT BARROW

The month of May, 1944, was a beautiful one back at Camp Parks, California. The Fifth Special was, in fact, enjoying its program of so-called recuperation, drilling, marching to colors and lots of nice military formalities. But there were some compensations: basking in that California climate, remember? And those trips to Oakland? At any rate, we were hardening up for that next tour of duty.

The usual revamping process was under way and inter-battalion traffic was rather heavy. Men were being transferred in and out of many units in Camp Parks, several drafts of men had left the Fifth, and rumors were that a "special deal" was in the making. Most of us were in favor of staying Stateside as long as possible, or as long as there were liberties and beer.

It was about the middle of May that the real news broke. A draft of men was to be organized to form part of an Arctic expedition. Then things started to hum! Wives were getting sick and mothers-in-law appeared in the limelight. Lots of the boys were trying their hand at sick-call in order to remain a Stateside Commando. But the Navy already knew all the answers.

Lt. (jg) Turnbull was first to leave Parks for Ta-



A halt in the big timber country on our way North.

coma, early in June. The usual Naval routine took shape: first you're on the list, then you aren't, and pretty soon you're on again. That's how units are born and such was the case of S. U. 1058 as it started its growing pains.

The thing about all this that most attracted attention and consideration was that of all the stevedore units then at Camp Parks, the boys of the Fifth were thought the most capable for the Cula Expedition to Point Barrow. Such an expedition called for safe and speedy delivery of cargo, and the Fifth's previous tour of duty had proven its ability. As it went, time was a determining factor, and 1058 lived up to the previous fine record of the Fifth.

Things at camp were rapidly shaping up. An advance group at Tacoma were making arrangements at that end, and the first contingent of the draft left for Tacoma on July 12th, 1944. There were about 88 men in this first section, and several days later they were joined by the other 112 men comprising 1058. There was quite a reunion at

Thru the grim, gray Arctic Ocean our ship's bow thrust great masses of floe aside.





Mid-summer harbor scenes 350 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

Tacoma, for the boys had now learned where they were heading, and the local town got a red painting during the next few days. The thought of Point Barrow, Alaska, rather threw a chill into the crowd. The main body of 1058 was also there, having joined the Stevedoring Unit along with a special draft of LCM operators. The LCM men had been sent by the regular Navy and most of them had seen European service.

Our stay at Tacoma lasted four days and things were done in whirlwind fashion. The entire unit was finally set up and ready to board ship at a moment's notice. The Commander of the Base had already had his fill of Seabees; in fact, he was heard to say that this had been his first experience with Seabees and he hoped it would be his last. Actually, he treated us aces, and he made that statement only because he could find no way to keep the Bees in camp. Liberty was liberty.

During all this time, our two ships, the USS Spica and the liberty ship, the SS Harrington, were being loaded with equipment at docks just a few blocks from the Receiving Station. The Spica was a Navy ship of the AK class and could handle 4500 tons of

cargo plus troops. The Harrington carried 7500 tons of cargo and could also carry some troops. It is a fact that these two ships were the largest of any so far recorded as venturing into these most northern waters, and they did encounter some hazardous experiences.

"Barking Captain Kiley" was skipper of the Spica and in charge of all operations, and the Spica's ice-pilot was Lt. Commander Lystedt, who was Admiral Byrd's personal navigator during the Admiral's famous dash into Arctic regions. The skipper of the Harrington was Captain Stone and the ice-pilot of the ship was Lt. Commander Bachland, a noted factor in the Arctic area. Lts. (jg) Turnbull and Joslin, along with Warrant Officer Sullivan, were in charge of all stevedoring aboard the Spica, while Lt., (jg) Murphy and Chief Warrant Hurley handled that phase aboard the Harrington.

On the evening of 19 July, the entire unit of 450 men was sent aboard ship. Liberties were cancelled, watches were set up, and all the security rules went into effect. On the morning of the 20th, the ships were secured for sea and at 0800



Eskimo amateur stevedores land drums of oil from the S. S. Harrington.

the lines were cast off, and the two ships slowly steamed into the Sound. The Spica took the lead, heading for the first port of call. This should have been Dutch Harbor, but minor engine trouble forced us to head for Kodiak, Alaska. There the harbor was full of activity. The town was nestled among pine trees and the mountains in the background were spotted with snow. It reminded one of a small Stateside village. Soon we were under way along the Kodiak coast, and as Kodiak faded into the distance, two more ships joined our convoy. Four more had joined us by morning, with Dutch Harbor our next port. Quite a contrast to the beauty of Kodiak.

July 28th was a day of many trying events. The full convoy steamed into Dutch Harbor, passing one by one through the submarine nets. The Harrington passed the nets next to last, followed by the Schuyler Colfax, a converted liberty tanker. The Harrington was only a ship length ahead of the Colfax, when suddenly the Harrington was rammed mid-ships, damaging the entire starboard side. By the time the excitement had subsided, the Harrington was past the nets and in a few moments was tied up at the Dutch Harbor docks, while the Spica anchored in the stream. A gang of Seabees was soon working on the hole in our side, and by morning the entire damage was repaired. Meanwhile, working parties had loaded more cargo and equipment. The next morning found us secured for sea once more, and that



Eskimos and their Squaws tie up along side the Harrington.

evening we headed out to sea midst a wind and plenty of fog and rain.

The Bering Sea is a calm body of water at this time of the year, and this leg of the journey was the most enjoyable. We passed the Pribilof Islands, mating grounds for fur seals that migrate there from the West Coast. Now and then we saw the Alaskan coast and as we neared the straits, the weather became more wintry. We passed through the straits on the American side, near the Little Diomedes, and on our port side we could see the Large Diomedes blanketed by a low-hanging fog. These two islands, the smaller an American and the larger a Russian possession, are bleak rock formations jutting directly from the water.

Heading north, we officially passed over the Arctic Circle on August 1st, a memorable day for the Seabees aboard who had never before been so far north. The next day, we sighted the first of the ice-bergs, some so large as to be floating islands of ice. Now in "The Land Of The Midnight Sun," we could see the colorful sky which is characteristic of the region, a spectacle which is electrifying in splendor. Sailing in near-daylight for 24 hours, we could see land from time to time, and at Cape Hope, the Spica dropped anchor to discharge a supply of gas and oil for an Army outpost there. It was here that the first casualties were suffered, as two men were nearly lost in the icy waters and another injured a hand just before we left.



1. "Swede" and the boys working with the Cherry Picker on the beach. 2. Boarding a landing craft the hard way. 3. Unloading steel landing mats for airplane runways. 4. Late summer, yet these floes make navigation hazardous for small craft.



Far Left: The boys will insist these are huge walrus tusks but actually they are rib bones of a defunct whale. (Left): Putting a LCM over the side of the S. S. Harrington.



(Above): 1. Glamour gals of the Arctic Region. Gentleman wearing sun-glasses in charge of good-will relations. 2. Local Zoot-suiter. 3. Old Man of the Mountains. 4. Fur lined bobby-socker.

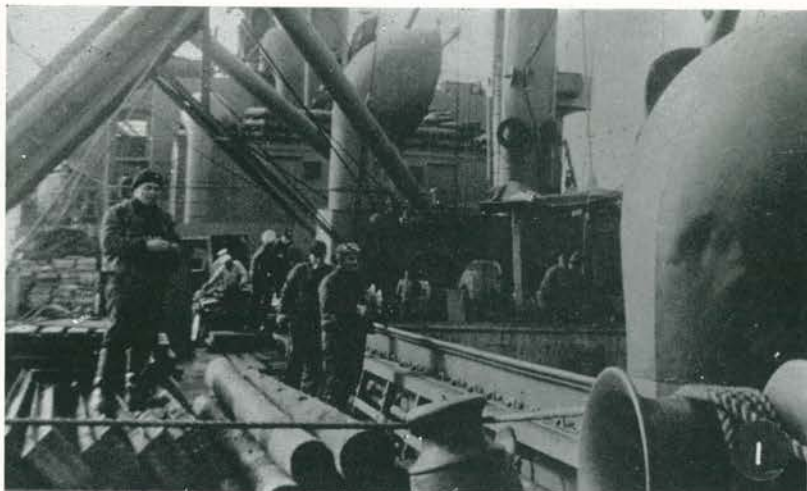
(Right): The natives were as curious about the Seabees as the Bees were about them.





(Left): "And never the twain shall meet."

(Below): 1. Men at work. Deck scene. 2. Dining Out.
3. Seven "Damn" good men. 4. "Steady Boys!" 5. A
Liberty ship laying on the hook.



Just out of Cape Hope, the call to general quarters was sounded and the Spica opened up with her guns. When the all clear was sounded, it was found that a dead whale had been mistaken for a torpedo wake, the oil slick having baffled the gun watch. Meanwhile, the hazards of ice-bergs had become more acute, and frequent soundings had to be taken to avoid running aground. Soon, however, we were approaching land once more, and people could be seen on the narrow strip of Arctic waste, giving us our first glimpse of the native Eskimo. Here and there one could see a tent or an unfinished structure, and the land was without hills or mountains. This was the town of Barrow, and soon the trading post and public buildings could be seen, in this village almost on top of the world.

As our ships found anchorage, it was late evening, and we turned in for the night. Early next morning, the ship was over-run with crowds of happy, laughing Eskimos, eager to look over the equipment and cargo. While the Seabees were trading for souvenirs, they were also learning some points of the natives' customs and habits. By noon the Eskimos had returned to the beach in their walrus-skin craft, some with outboard motors. Some had Stateside boats powered by inboard motors. In the days that followed, we were to become good friends of these cheerful, courteous people.

For several days, we steamed around the icy waters to avoid the incoming ice-pack, the movements of which were being watched by a PBY assigned to the expedition by the Navy. The weather station also played an important part in providing vital information. Many of our operations were hampered by weather conditions which included gale winds, heavy fog, and snow and ice, but a scouting party was sent to find the best location for the first beach-head soon to be established. Then on August 12th, work got under way. The natives made a last formal visit, since they could not be aboard during the operations. The first piece of equipment to go over the side was an LCM at 0957, August 12th, 1944. Our gangs were working both the ship and the shore, and cargo was discharged onto pontoon barges, when the sea was calm enough. The M crews were taking supplies ashore for the camp, meanwhile, and a temporary site was soon set up. Weather conditions made all operations dangerous, and on several occasions there was near loss of lives.

Life ashore during the early stages was primitive, and being stranded on the beach was entirely a matter of existence as best you knew how with what you had. Our first beach-head had been set up at the extreme end of a narrow piece of barren waste, with a second and permanent site on the road to Point Barrow some 4 or 5 miles from the village. Trips to and from the beach soon told on

the men and the number of accidents increased. It wasn't until cranes and bulldozers got ashore that the handling of equipment became less laborious and dangerous. Most operations had to be made by M's and barges from beach to beach.

The Spica soon discharged its cargo and these gangs then worked the beach. The Harrington had more cargo and finished up on August 26th, and those gangs which were secured first were sent to the Spica. Meanwhile, all casualties were put aboard the Harrington and she secured for sea. When her sailing orders came, the last of our gangs was sent over the side to join the Spica, and the Harrington slipped out to sea.

All gangs were working the beach by this time, and the work went on more rapidly, but as time went by it became necessary for the Spica to seek shelter from ice floes more and more often. This meant that the beach gangs were stranded for longer intervals, and often the ship was not in sight.

On August 31st, while the gangs were working ashore during a stormy night, the Spica had to make her final dash from the ice-laden ocean. The gangs near Barrow made a dash and got to the ship before she was well under way, but those at the tip of the Point were left stranded with no chance of leaving until daybreak, by which time the Spica was too far out to be overtaken. Sixty-five men failed to get aboard, and here's the story of that night for those men.

Four gangs went to work that evening, and in the early part the weather was rather mild, but after midnight the wind, rain and fog began. At dawn we noticed how far the ice had come in, but by then it was too late to make the ship. When it was found we were stranded, the men were put aboard an M to await conditions favorable enough to get back to camp. By noon we were at the main site, and facing the problem of food and housing. Until this time, we had been living aboard ship, and the camp had few extra facilities. By sleeping and working in shifts, it was possible to use the same bunks night and day, though the bedding was insufficient for the extreme cold. We were living with the oil draft and they had come out with supplies for only a year and had little to spare, so we were definitely excess baggage, but both groups did as best they could. Real winter was settling in now and clothing was scarce.

Arrangements were being made to have a plane fly in as soon as the weather permitted, and one bright day the first commercial plane hit the strip. The skipper of a supply ship was aboard, making the trip to see whether the ice pack would permit him to make this a port of call. Arrangements were set up for us to go on this ship should she come in. The plane left and returned with sleeping



bags, then left again taking the final draft of M operators. Our only hope was the supply ship.

There were a few recreational facilities, including a small band, movies and a library. The Eskimos visited us frequently and entertained us with tricks and stunts, and as always they were most polite and friendly. The chaplain arranged a trip to the town of Barrow where the boys saw the public buildings, a Saturday night tribal dance and the trading post, at which purchases of skilled workmanship could be made. The village factor is the famous "Pop" Brower, who at the age of 85 is still the big boss and the friend of all the natives.

As time passed, a new quonset area was under construction, and we finally enjoyed the luxury of occupying them, complete with plenty of stoves. Meanwhile, no more planes had come in, but we had learned that the supply ship would make this a port of call. Just before the ship arrived, we had the exciting experience of an encounter with a polar bear. A shooting party developed and the 700-pound animal was killed, and the pelt was given to the Eskimos, who informed the Seabees that 700 pounds was a medium sized bear.

On Saturday night, September 16th, the supply ship made its appearance on the horizon. Work for the gangs that night was a real pleasure, because now we were soon to be on our way. The following night we were aboard the ship working cargo and the amount of tonnage was amazing. Two gangs worked the ship and the other two the beach. The ship was unloading supplies for the Eskimos, and they used every available boat and barge to help with the job. All gangs worked until noon Monday without rest, then the beach gangs were hurriedly called aboard. At one-thirty we secured for sea, waved farewell to Point Barrow, and headed home.

Our return trip was one of interest and pleasant adventure. We ran into some heavy seas and bad weather, but nobody minded now that we were

homeward bound. Our journey along the Alaskan coast was a memorable one. We made ports of call at the Little Diomedes, Kotzebue, King Island, Nome, then Dutch Harbor and Seattle. We worked cargo at each of the Alaskan ports, in each case working beside the Eskimo. We had time to visit each port, and at Nome the boys went ashore for a real liberty.

It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon when we docked at Pier Two of the Alaskan Steamship Company in Seattle. We disembarked immediately and were greeted by the Red Cross, who treated us royally. Inside the wharf building, we received all our mail and back pay, after which we were taken in a Navy bus to Pier 91 in Seattle. Here we were billeted in the receiving barracks, and that night the boys had a real Stateside liberty. There were four days of fun in Seattle, then we got aboard a train on Wednesday, October 18th, 1944 and journeyed to Port Hueneme to join the Fifth Special, which was now ready to leave the States once more. On October 21st we hit Hueneme and joined up with the rest of S.U. 1058 who had returned on the Spica. The reunion was a lively one, with the major topic of conversation being the unusual memorable pioneering expedition to Point Barrow. It was the case of another job well done and an experience never to be forgotten. Now we were ready to take on another tour with the Fifth Special. As events worked out, however, the Fifth was just ready to shove off, and since 1058 was not equipped in full, the unit was sent on leave while the main body of the Fifth shipped out on October 26th, heading for the South Pacific.

After a brief leave and a period of training and re-equipping, 1058 was reorganized to some extent, then sent aboard ship to follow the Fifth Special. After a long voyage, during which we stopped and worked at several ports, we went into the Philippines in February, rejoining the Fifth Special on the island of Samar.



A historical day we will long remember; with pomp and traditional ceremony, the band playing martial airs, we marched in review with pride and the exactness of seasoned campaigners.



1. Where the service men could receive their families and friends. 2. The swimming pools. Here the men were specially trained and instructed against disasters at sea. 3. The Hostess House was pleasant to use on "No Liberty" nights.

PORT HUENEME

When we arrived at Hueneme from Camp Parks in July, we were assigned an area and immediately set about getting it in good shape. Just as we were getting under way on this project, we were moved to another, and better, area, this time a quonset hut area. Again started the job of policing and minor construction, and in a short time the Fifth had one of the finest looking camps on the Base, and received numerous commendations during the area inspections. At the same time, we

were undergoing intensive military training, both in the field and in the classroom, and we took part in military night maneuvers. The job of completely equipping the outfit for the South Pacific and possible combat duty also began at this time. This task was a particularly difficult one because of a constant shifting of personnel. In addition to personnel equipment, the Battalion began assembling all the gear and supplies necessary to set up in the field in an advance area, the presumption being that we would be able to operate entirely on our own without assistance from any established base or group.

We had been given a considerable amount of military drill at Camp Parks, and three days after

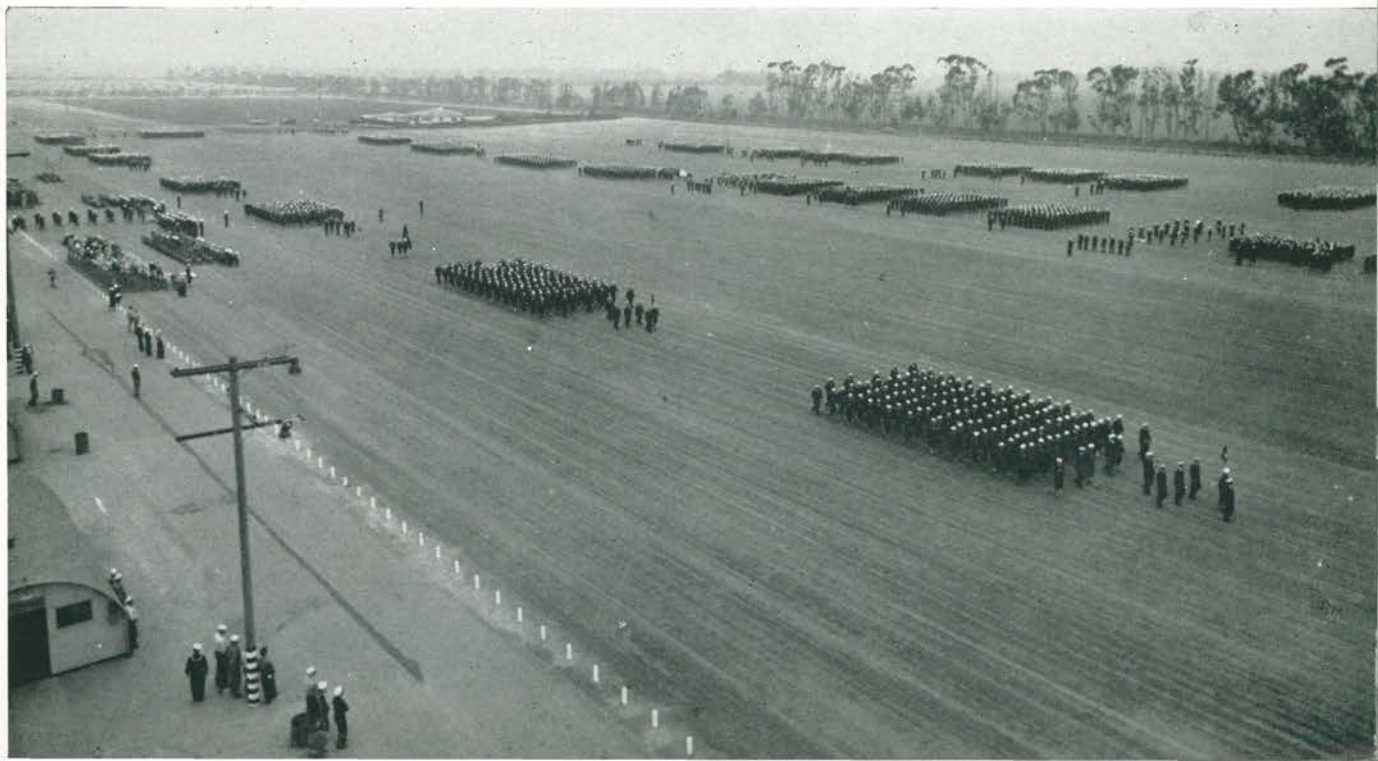
our arrival at Hueneme, we were called upon to take part in a Regimental Review. The Fifth's showing can best be described by quoting from a letter of commendation received by Commander Holland from Captain Needham, Officer-in-Charge of the Base: "I take pleasure in thanking and congratulating you for the part played by your unit in the splendid review this morning. Please pass on to all your men my appreciation of their fine performance." There was an additional endorse-

ment from Hueneme's Commander of Troops, which read as follows: "The Fifth Special is to be especially commended for their well-trained personnel and general excellent military appearance."

Recreational facilities at Port Hueneme did not approach those at Camp Parks, nor was the liberty schedule quite as good, but Los Angeles was a good liberty town and easy to get to, so no one suffered much from lack of play-time. Ventura was only a few miles away, and besides being a pleas-



—"We're the Seabees of the Navy,
We can build and we can fight—."





1. "Ride to Hollywood, mate?" 2. "Is You is or is you Ain't My Baby?" 3. "Accentuate the positive!" 4. "Golden Gate in '48!"

ant small town in which to spend a liberty, afforded a good beach with excellent, if very cold, swimming. It was only two miles to Oxnard, an even smaller town, where one could see a show or drop in at one of the several bars. Liberty busses from the camp ran a regular daily schedule to Oxnard, from which point it was possible to pick up transportation to more distant points.

There was great and constant conjecture as to the date of our leaving for overseas. One minute it would seem that we were shoving off in a week and the next it would look like three months. We were just getting more-or-less settled into the local routine and had our area in excellent shape, when a hurry call came through for us to move, with all our equipment, to Oakland to handle N.S.D steve-

doring. Within two days we were at Camp Knight in Oakland, and within three fast weeks we were once more back at Hueneme, where we were assigned another camp area, this one so dirty and run-down as to be unlivable in that condition. Once again we set about to get an area in order, and in a short time we had a presentable and comfortable camp. And now again we started sweating out our overseas departure. We were assigned stevedoring duty on the Hueneme docks and the military and technical training was resumed.

Early in October we lost quite a few more men. In compliance with a new policy set by Washington, the Station was forced to transfer Station Force men into units earmarked for duty overseas. The transfer worked both ways, since the Station



the leave to start on Thursday morning, October 19th, and run to Saturday morning, he then added the rest of Saturday and Sunday as a regular Station week-end liberty. In addition, he released us on Wednesday night on Liberty cards. The entire set-up was strictly legitimate, but thoughtful planning netted us 108 instead of 48 hours. It was to be our last liberty for a long time to come, and it meant a great deal.

We reported back to camp at 0600 on Monday, October 23rd, and the battalion was secured the next day. The 24th and 25th were spent packing and checking all supplies and equipment, a big job in itself. The morning of October 26th, 1944, was gray and misty, and as the long lines of trucks loaded with men and their gear rolled toward the Hueneme docks, the Fifth Special knew that this was it. At 0900 the men began to file aboard the U.S.A.T. Torrens, a slow and tedious process, climbing the steep gangway with full gear and being checked off a muster list as they hit the foot of the plank. There was a band on the dock, and when the ship was loaded, they played a farewell salute to the men shoving off.

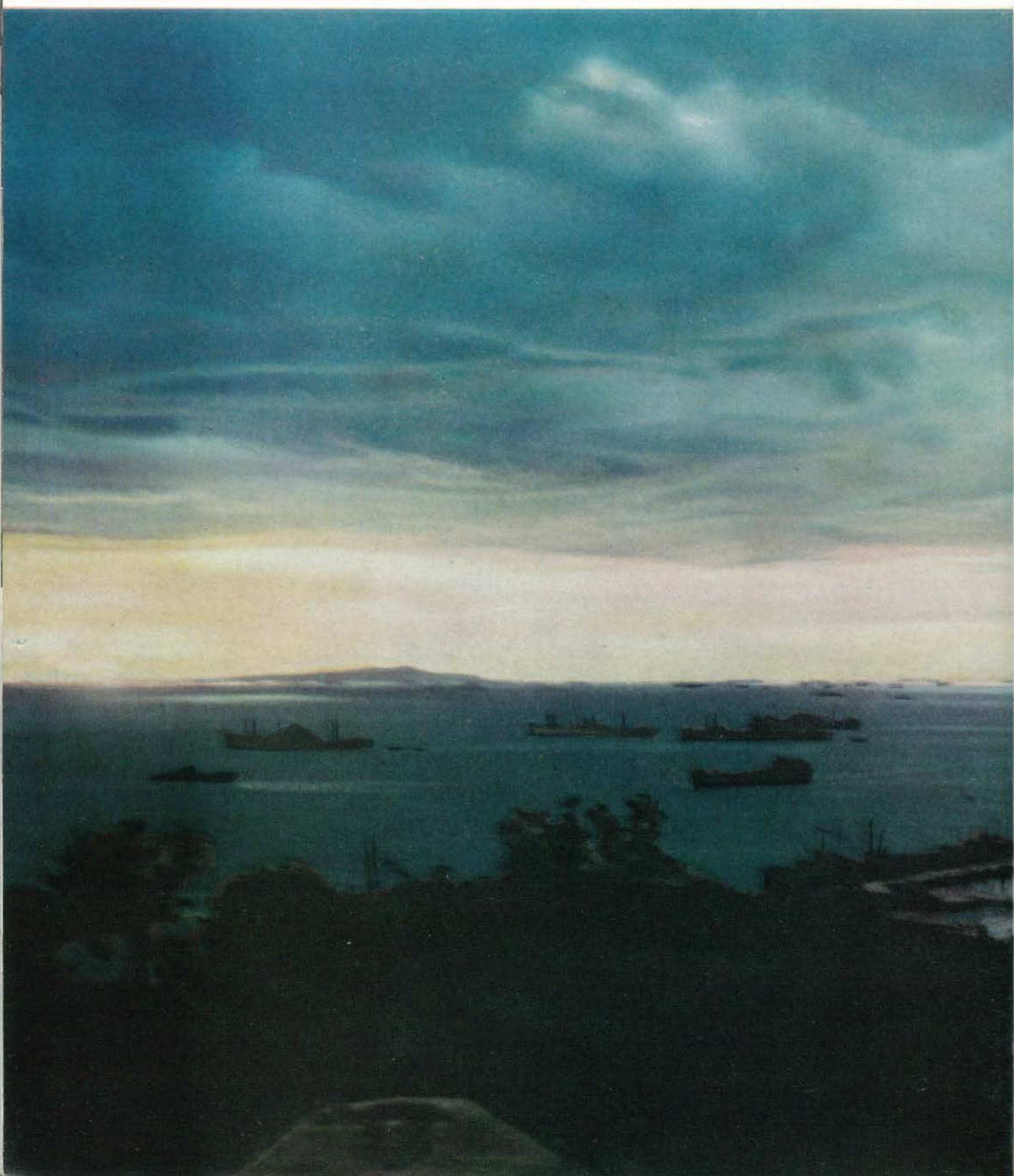
Only a handful of dock workers and Base personnel lined the dock and waved goodbye as the Torrens began to slip out into the stream at 1500, led by a sturdy tug. As the ship got under way, the tug cast loose, blew a farewell whistle, and the Fifth Special was on its way to an unannounced destination in the South Pacific.

1. Earl Carroll's Theatre. 2. The Brown Derby Cafe. 3. Sunset and Vine. 4. National Broadcasting Corp. 5. Grauman's Chinese Theatre. 6. The Palladium Dance Hall.

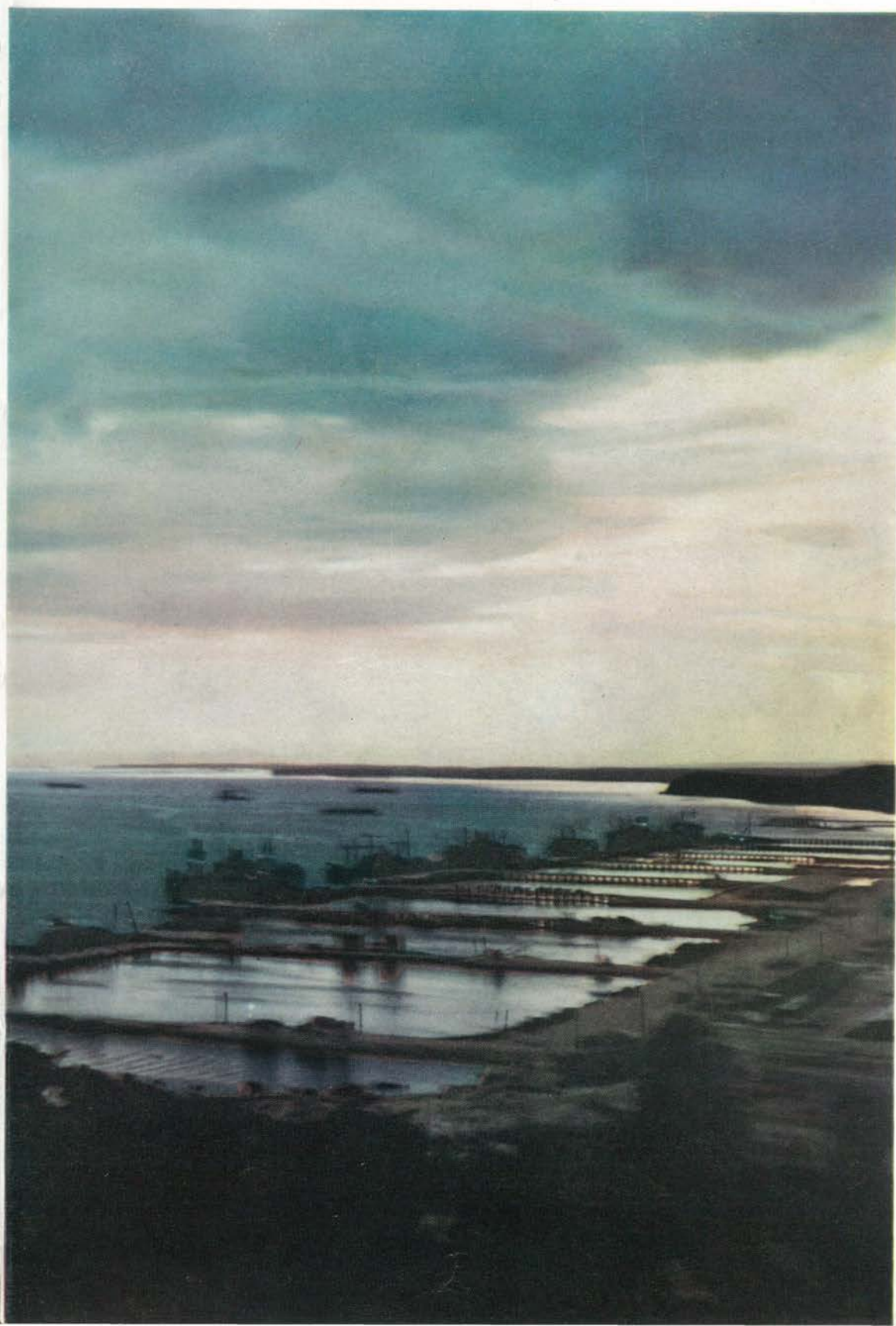
openings were filled by men from units which had already served outside the States. Most of our men were eligible for transfer to Station Force and a number of them decided on that course.

Around the middle of October we finally received the word we had been expecting for over four months. Our departure was imminent and we would probably be gone before the month was out. When the Skipper learned that we would soon be going, he submitted an official request for an embarkation leave for the battalion. This was denied on the basis that our services would be needed right up to the time of our departure. Our Skipper knew that we had earned an embarkation leave and that we faced another long and possibly hazardous tour of duty overseas. He pressed suit on the authorities and finally gained a half-way compromise: a forty-eight hour embarkation "leave." He had, however, an ace up his sleeve. Setting





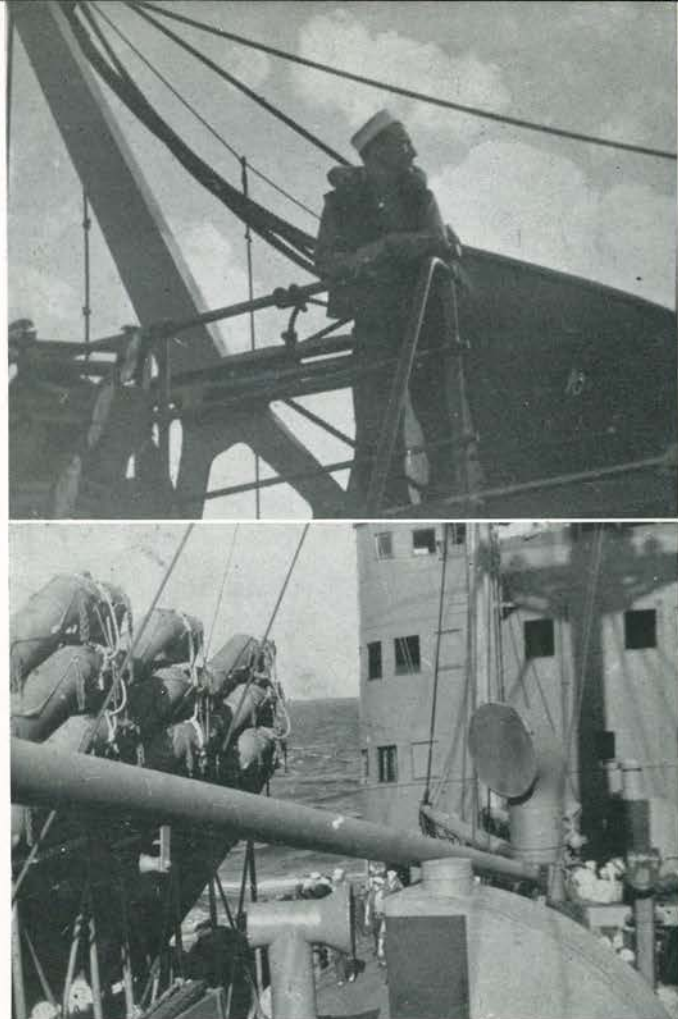
South Pacific



OUTWARD BOUND

From the start there was a sort of feeling that this second cruise was going to be "different." Certainly our various departments had shaken down to a cohesive working system and confusion no longer reigned supreme at every turn. Boarding the *Torrens* went smoothly and well, and little time was lost in stowing gear and getting a bunk and a lifejacket. The *Torrens'* complement was cosmopolitan. Built originally for North Sea and European waters, she was a fast tight ship, not the best for tropical waters, but not too bad. Her Captain, Thor Bruu, peace-time Master, held a commission in the Royal Norwegian Naval Reserve. Her deck and engineer officers and her gun crews were either regular Norwegian Navy or Naval Reserve. The balance was made up of U.S. Merchant Marine. Our own U.S. Armed Guard furnished communications men under Lt. Knight. Messing facilities were no worse than most wartime transports, and better than many. We had a hot meal at breakfast and supper, with a sandwich lunch at noon.

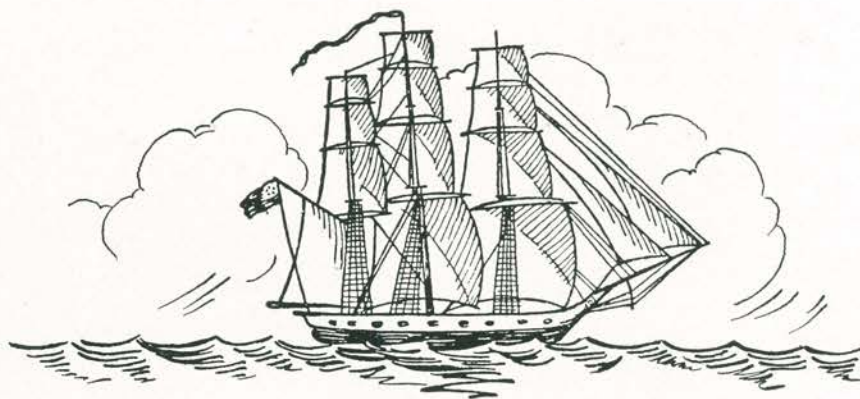
Slipping out of Hueneme at 1500 on 26 October, 1944, the *Torrens* started her turbines to a steady fast clip for the long run alone to New Guinea. Our companion outfit, the 33rd Special, furnished gun watches on the 20-mm. AA armament, while the Fifth's own signal squad, from the start of the voyage, reported to the Communications Officer and stood watch with the ship's signalmen. Both battalions alternated in guard and messcook duties. Life soon settled to the usual troopship routine, and as California's fall mists were left astern, sun-worshippers began peeling to the waist, lopping off pants legs to form a variety of shorts, and keeping MAAs busy prowling the decks and gruffly ordering: "Put a shirt on; this sun will give you a bad burn." The eternal crop of rumors swiftly made the rounds of the crowded ship (some 1700 men), imaginary subs were sighted and cloud formations became islands to horizon-watchers, but the voyage was uneventful and safe. Talented shipmates soon formed little groups for daily en-



Scenes Aboard our Transport.

tertainment. There were singers, musicians and boxers, and a day or so before crossing the Equator, King Neptune's Court was rounded up from the several shellbacks aboard. The day of the 5th of November was dedicated to the age-old ceremonies, complete with the traditional Court, the dunking tank, and arrests and penalties—taken in varying degrees of good or bad grace by the harried victims.

The battalion log for 6 November carries this notation: "Crossed the International Date Line, advance time 24 hours, therefore the day of 6 November, 1944, is lost." Skirting Guadalcanal and nearby islands, many thoughts were sober and long as the blood-soaked beaches and hills were left to starboard. Then came the long curving run through the Bismarck Archipelago, giving us close-ups of scattered, tiny South Sea islands, all set in one pattern—white beach, nodding palms, breaking surf on an outer reef—just like the travel folders,



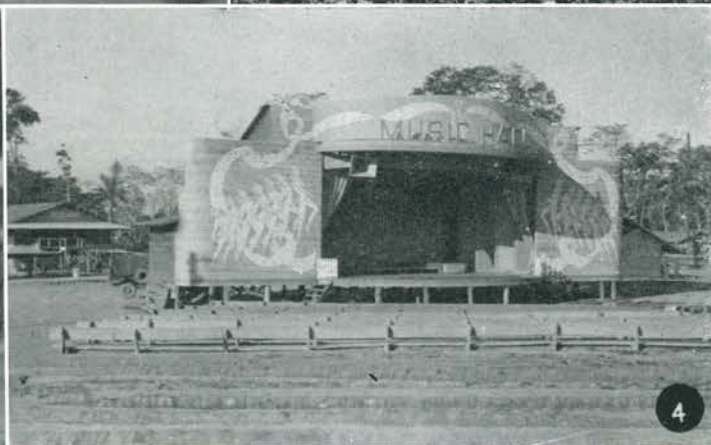
and we began to think: much better than the gloomy Aleutians.

Anchoring in Milne Bay, New Guinea, on Armistice Day, we tied up to the dock at 1030, having made the voyage in 15 days, the fastest troopship run from the West Coast on record. Booms were rigged and hatches readied and our stevedores

turned at once to unloading cargo and equipment, while all hands disembarked and marched up the muddy, red-clay road to Manila Barracks, part of the U.S.N. Receiving Station. It was good to get one's feet on the ground again, and we were ready now to take a look around at our new duty station, New Guinea.

1. In the danger zones special men were rehearsed each day in life boat drill. 2. Bucket brigade. 3. Chow topside; it was much cooler there! 4. From morn until dark men played cards or checkers to ward off boredom.





1. Old swimming hole at Milne Bay, New Guinea. 2. The tumbling falls above our camp. 3. "Boy Meets Girl." 4. Symphony under the Stars. Movie palace at Milne Bay.

NEW GUINEA

The Receiving Station barracks at Milne Bay were two-story wood and tin affairs, and we were crowded, hot and stuffy, but we were fortunate in missing most of the rainy season. Stevedoring routine commenced immediately and our own guards were posted on all gear, equipment and stores. Nobody was going to get into the Fifth's belongings, and loaded carbines backed up this intention.

Possibilities of the base did not look promising. There were too many Navy and Seabee personnel, and chow lines were long and tedious. Everything was pretty G.I. and most interesting-looking places such as native villages, distant mountains, and the seashore, seemed to be restricted areas. A few of the boys managed to explore a bit and many of us ate our first coconuts or drank the cool, refreshing milk "right off the trees." We gaped curi-



(Left): 1. Modern Design in jungle setting. (Right): 2. Our Milne Bay barracks, "Manila."

ously at the New Guinea natives, skinny brown fellows with negroid features and huge shocks of bushy, orange-bleached hair. We did a little trading and made a few purchases of so-called typical native items, but there was not a great deal of interest or value to be had in that area.

There was not much tropical glamour about Milne Bay, and it is doubtful that anyone minded

very much when the order came to re-embark on the old *Torrens*; we felt like she was "our" ship now. Our orders from the States had read "to Milne Bay for duty or further assignment," and we had been there for only five days when our further assignment orders came through. The ship had been about one-third unloaded, but we shoved the gear back aboard and on 16 November the Fifth and 33rd piled back on, along with the Seventh Fleet Band, a hilarious and talented group of musicians. Early the next morning we sailed, anchoring just off Hollandia, New Guinea on 19 November. The trip to Hollandia was uneventful, the *Torrens* making the run at an average 18-knot speed.

Now began a dull, hot and tiresome period of swinging on the hook, broken by daily setting-up exercises, boat drills, and the daily crop of rumors and speculations. There were movies at night, and the Seventh Fleet Band put on some good swing entertainment, supplemented by talent from among the Fifth or 33rd personnel. The harbor was packed, and it was difficult for the Skipper to get any definite word as to what was in store for us. As had been the case at Milne Bay, no one seemed to have expected us to appear there at all. On the signal bridge we identified and logged 186

ships and there were easily that many more beyond our range of vision.

Some of our stevedore gangs were sent ashore at the busy, crowded, and bustling base. Traffic there was so heavy and constant that clouds of red dust drifted far out over the water, sifting onto the great assembly of anchored ships. And at night, we could see long lines of ambulances carrying the wounded from nearby hospital ships to the base hospital.

We had heard that we were to become part of a convoy at Hollandia, destined for some part of the Philippines, and at last, on 29 November, the convoy formed and got under way. There were 42 ships in all, with the fast *Torrens* just astern of the Commodore, aboard an AKA. Convoy maneuvers and signals were rehearsed and methodical zig-zagging begun. Our ship was designated as Repeating Ship for convoy signals, and our Seabee signalmen, Frank Johnston, Art Sipes, Bernal Schooley and Chief Kerrison, together with the ship's signalmen, attended communications school daily, brushing up on their particular forms of "Can-Do." Back we went across the Equator, catching up with the rainy season and running into frequent tropical showers. We were heading for the Philippines and an active combat zone.

1. The Papuan (Fuzzy-wuzzy) natives of New Guinea in full battle dress. 2. Native outrigger canoe in dry dock. 3. "Main Street" Jungleville, N. G. 4. "—The female of the species is more deadly than the male."



D E C E M



As we approached the Philippines, frequent alerts were received, and all during the 4th of December, gunners and communications men stood by in expectation of enemy air attack. It came at 0838 the next day, December 5th, when a lone Jap bomber bore in from the starboard bow and dropped a near-miss bomb by the last ship of the starboard column. This Nip headed for nearby land bases and brought out his fellows. Attacking one, two or three at a time, the enemy smashed at our convoy with bombs and torpedoes. One Jap made a Kamikase dive onto the bow of a Liberty ship astern of us, and another transport took a torpedo full amidships. Some of the planes made strafing runs, then dropped torpedoes, as every ship in the convoy threw up a storm of AA gunfire. Our DE escorts and small Army craft picked up many survivors thrown into the water by bomb explosion, and there was some loss of life. At one point a dive bomber came swooping in directly at the Torrens. Just as the Jap was over a small Army ship on our port beam, a burst—credited to our five-inch forecandle gun—scored a direct hit, the plane barely cleared the rigging of the Army ship, then blew up and plunged into the sea. Of the two of our ships hit, one managed to rejoin the convoy later, while the other was sunk by our own forces after personnel had been picked up by escorts. During this one day, there were 13 alerts and nine actual raids on the convoy.



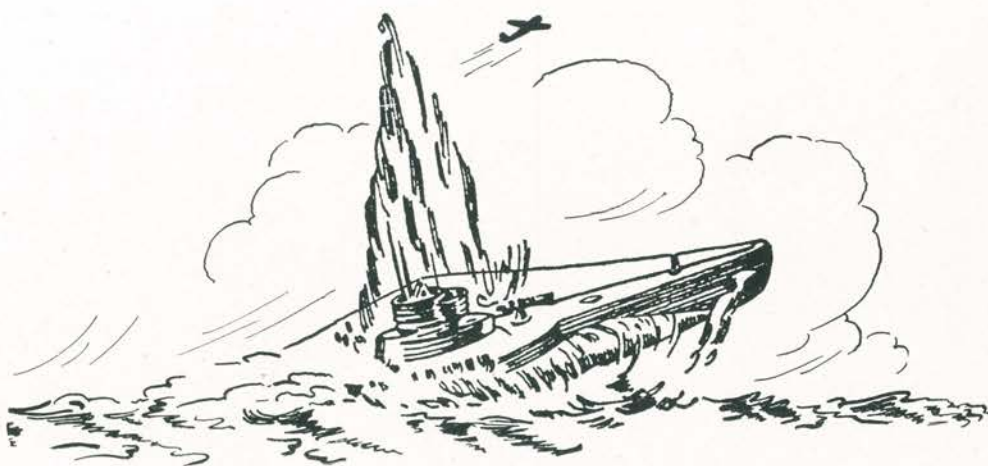
BER 5TH 1944



TACLOBAN-LEYTE



1. Business as usual, Tacloban Street scene shortly after invasion 2. Home, sweet home. 3. Super-duper Type Class of Seagoing out rigger. 4. Busy Philippine harbor scene. Out-rigger in foreground is permanent home of six persons.





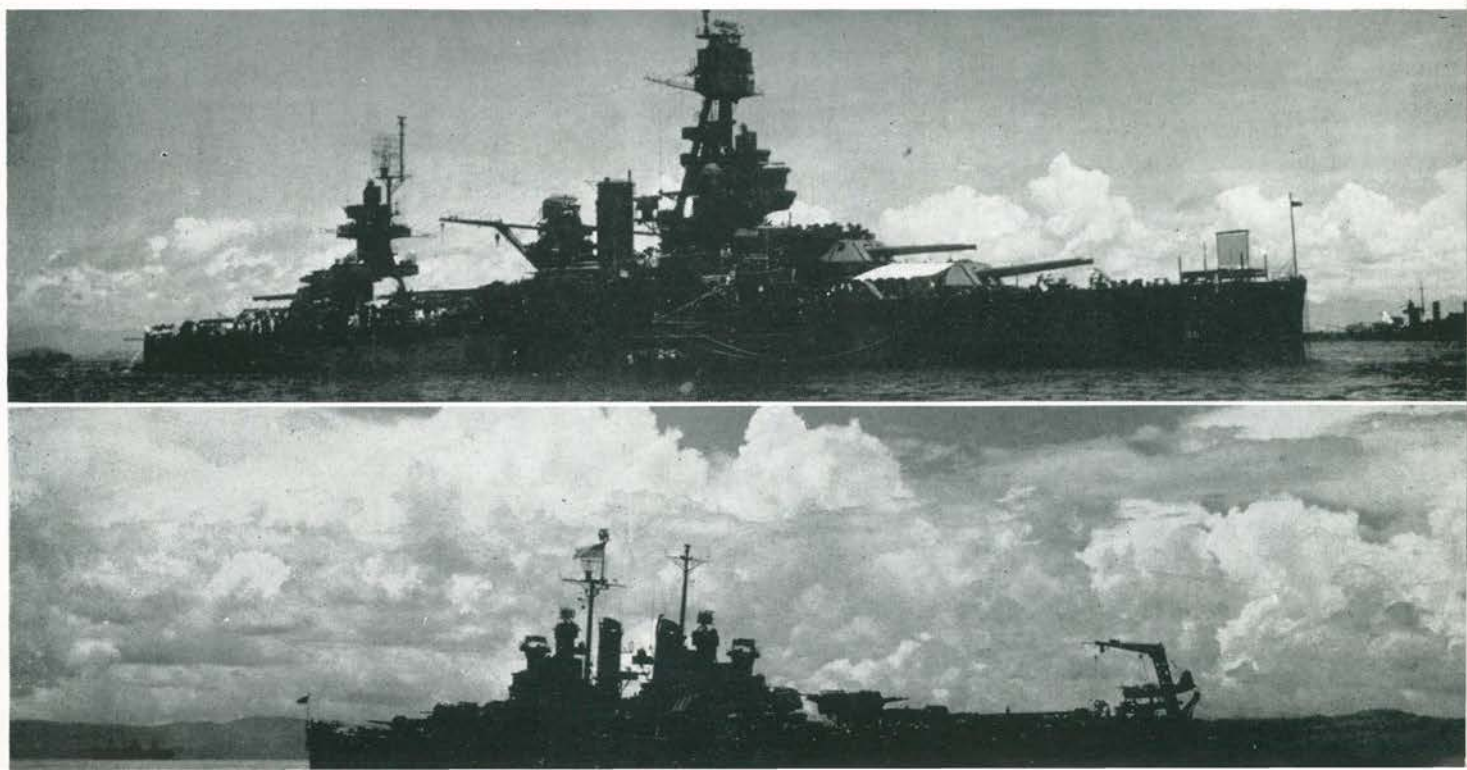
Talcoban Harbor, Leyte, P. I.

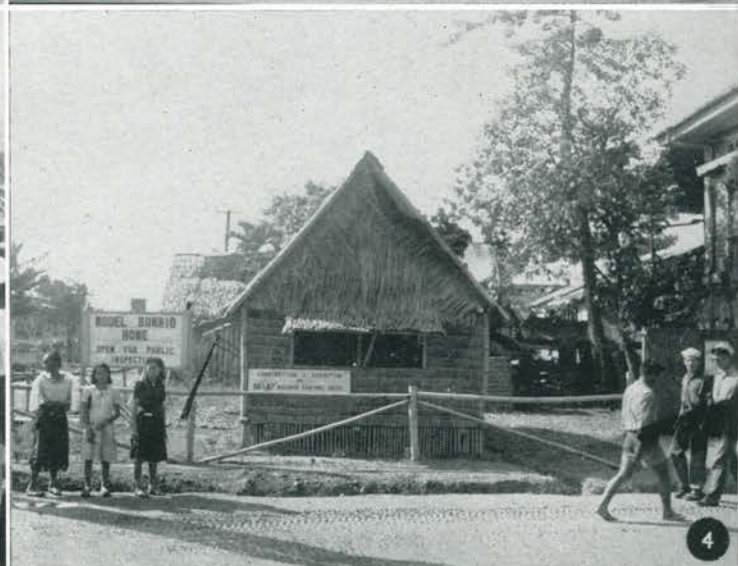
We were expecting a heavy dawn air attack on the morning of December 6th, as we neared the island of Leyte, where heavy fighting was still going on. We anchored in Leyte Bay that morning, without further raids. The weather was quite hot now, and there were frequent rain showers. The Bay was crowded with ships, and we learned that the Jap planes alternated between striking at the ships and bombing the air-strip, the end of which was at the water's edge. Off and on throughout each night, there were many alerts, and often the sky was filled with tracers. During the Torrens' stay just off the town of Tacloban, the Nips elected to hit the air-strip, and one plane suicided into a fuel and ammunition dump near the strip, lighting the night with brilliant flames. It was on the night after the Torrens had moved on, however, that the enemy again turned their attention to the ships, sinking several and damaging

a number of others. Meanwhile, throughout the days and nights, we could hear the muffled pounding of heavy artillery fire some miles away, as the Army ground forces relentlessly followed the retreating Japanese infantry.

The town of Tacloban is the provincial capital of Leyte and one of the larger towns in that area of the Philippines. In December of 1944, it was crowded with Army personnel, and the trucks and heavy equipment had made the rain-soaked, muddy roads almost impassable. We did not go ashore at Tacloban at that time, though many of us saw it later. On the 9th of December we got under way and made the short run up Leyte Gulf, anchoring outside the ancient little town of Guiuan, Samar, at 1530 that day. At that time, we were the only ship in the area, standing alone as a perfect target for roving Jap bombers. But the next morning, without further mishap, we disembarked at the little jetty of Guiuan.

Two heavy hitters wait to go into action on the Luzon invasion.





(Above): 1. The Carromata, a sort of fresh-air taxi cab. Capacity load is decided when over balanced cart lifts miniature house off ground. 2. Leyte Provincial Hospital at Tacloban. Small window lights are made of translucent hand-pressed sea shells. 3. The market place is stocked with curious and exotic fruits and vegetables. 4. Model House of the future. Designed by U. S. Army Malaria Control Units.

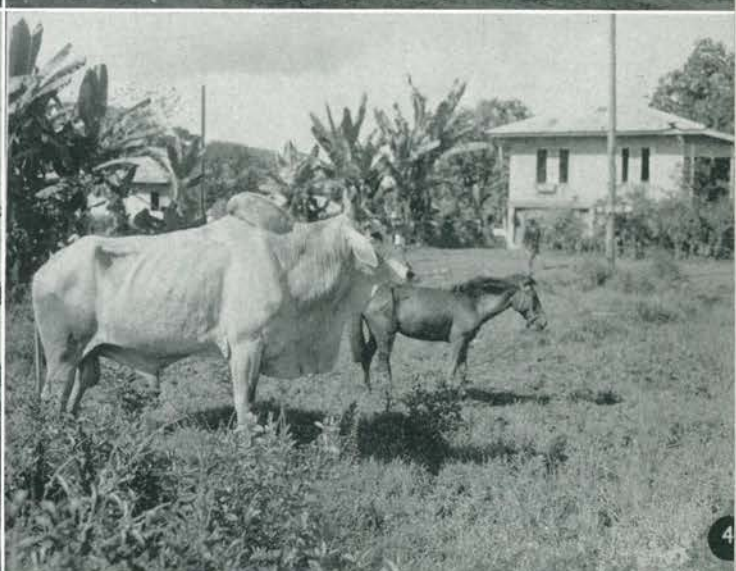
(Right): Top men in the Leyte Boy Scouts. During Jap occupation they were active in underground work and guerilla warfare.





(Left): First meeting of Leyte Boy Scouts since their country was occupied three years before.

(Below): 1. An American M. P. directs traffic at busy intersection. Grand Central Hotel and one chair Barber Shop in background. 2. Ancient Catholic Church and bell tower. 3. The Provincial Capitol Building of Leyte, an impressive structure with good Greek lines. 4. Not quite sure what kind of bull this is, but he seems to be wearing a combat pack on his back and a half-shelter in front. The little horse just muscled into the act.

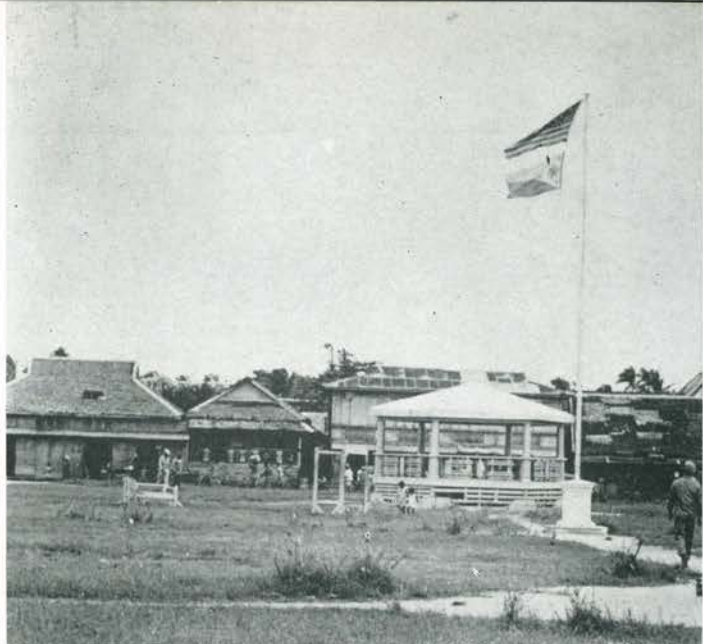


GUIUAN- SAMAR

We were in the vanguard of American troops to arrive on Samar, and we were genuinely and happily welcomed by the people of Guiuan. People smiled and said "Hello, Joe," and little boys swarmed around vying with one another for job as porters, houseboys and handymen. The sun came out and we stood or laid around at ease in front of the town's ancient cathedral. Many of us stepped reverently into the cool, musty interior to gaze at the tarnished silver and gold of the High Altar and the frescoes and carvings of this, the first Christian mission in the Philippines. More than a few knelt briefly in silent thanks for a safe passage thus far.

Our Skipper and Exec, meanwhile, were back of the town picking out a camp site in the thick jungle, and soon the gear was assembled and picked up and our column was off, in a more-or-less military formation, to pitch pup tents and spend a more-or-less restful night. Within a matter of days, the Fifth Special had a tent town erected on both sides of a raw, new road on a rise in the jungle. Heavy downpours brought the inevitable gooey mud, soon churned hub-deep by traffic. Our dynamiters soon had a good sweet-water well dug, and life began to be pleasanter. Showers, latrines and chow lines had to be sweated out in the open air, of course, to the divertimento of passers-by, the natives finding all of our activities fascinating by the hour. Small houseboys and laundry-women thrived mightily, and money was the least of enrichment. It took only about a week to clothe every local Filipino male in dungarees, GI greens or cast-off whites, while the ladies blossomed out in dresses made from silk neckerchiefs or undress blues. The favorite base for the "Victore-e-e" creations, however, was the lowly mattress cover.

Right: 1. Our first camp. A Hobo "jungle" compares favorably with our brave attempt to rough it. 2. Old Spanish Bell Tower. Under Spanish rule (1569-1899) this rugged tower was a pill box for Spanish cannon guarding the harbor. 3. Native girls going to market. Some live in back country ten miles from Guiuan and make the trip twice daily on foot with their meager produce.



The Plaza, the Central Park of Guiuan.





A patriot in marble watches over his little village.



The Man Who Stayed For Dinner—A Jap prisoner captured in our neighborhood. Note Filipino Guerilla, at left, holding his prize by wire leash.



(Left): Our first structure to rise on Samar. Due to our great confusion, even the sign appears backwards.
(Right): Our mess and galley headquarters was neat but not gaudy.



In addition to building an area in the wilderness, the Fifth stevedored around the clock, first unloading the Torrens and later the fast-accumulating fleet of supply and troopships in the harbor. There were no docking facilities at Guiuan, and all cargo had to be handled via LCT's, pontoons or barges. Starting from a portable light in a pup tent on the muddy foreshore, our signal station grew to a 20-foot tower with a 12-inch searchlight and several blinkers, and for a long time our station received and transmitted all ship-to-shore communications on the island. Perimeter guards were recruited from fifty Filipino boys, most of them ex-Guerrillas fresh from Jap-hunting in the hills and jungles of Samar. Air alerts were frequent and we spent a good deal of time in a blackout. Soon after our arrival, Seabees began construction of an air-strip, later used to bomb Formosa and Manila, and the Fifth's camp was located only a few feet from the revetments a'long the side of the strip.

On Christmas night, 1944, a single Jap plane glided in over the Guiuan harbor, sent a steel fish into an anchored Dutch ship loaded with troops, then crashed into the sea. During the ensuing confusion, the troops were brought ashore, casualties were rushed to all available dispensaries and the men then billeted in the Cathedral for the night. For the next few days while the new arrivals were setting up areas, the Fifth helped feed and equip them. But stevedoring operations never stopped. Although air and submarine alerts continued for many weeks, there were no more bombs dropped in the Guiuan area. Soon thousands of new men



Right: 1. Filipino Razor backs in their glory 2. Christmas services 1944. 3. "You buy banna, Joe?"

Jetty at Guiuan, Samar.





1. In a secluded cove a Filipino family celebrate wash day. 2. Lady in Distress. 3. Road side concessions display fried fish, sugar cane and sparking Tuba (Filipino Secret Weapon.) Coy debutante, with mango-bango leaf, flirts outrageously with photographer. 4. Three types of tropical wear; depending on thermometer.

Left: Two nude little Samar kids acting, unconsciously, as crocodile decoys.

Below: 1. Municipal Building and Post Office, 2. Causeway joining Guiuan and the outer peninsula of Calicoan, 3. Before the Seabees built this Causeway it took hours by water from Guiuan to Calicoan. It is now a matter of minutes over the high speed highway. 4. Old Municipal School Building converted into Naval administration offices.





(Above): 1. Barber shop quartette. 2. Road to town. Reconstructed by Seabees to carry heavy traffic. 3. Street Scene. 4. Souvenir Stands.

(Left): Graceful but rugged. These canoes are hollowed from the tall lauan tree.



The main altar of the 270-year-old Immaculate Conception Church in Guiuan. The massive carved door of the church was made from one of the sixty species of hardwood trees found in the Philippines.

were pouring ashore, and there began an expansion which was to over-run the entire Southern end of Samar. It was in the middle of February that the Fifth received orders to move to the tiny island of Calicoan, just off Samar.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception, located at Guiuan, Samar, is a significant landmark in the history of the Philippines and a monument to the sincere religious faith of the Filipino people. Built in 1676 by the Spanish Jesuits, it served not only as a church but as a fortress for Guiuan against the pirates and the English. The belfry did double duty; it not only rang the Angelus but served as a look-out to sea. The facade is flanked by high, thick stone walls which mounted cannon in the old days. Some of these 17th Century relics, tumbled from their former mounts and rusting in the grass, are still to be seen, contrasting picturesquely with the engines of modern war that rumble along the nearby road.

Sometime in the 18th Century the church was taken over by the Franciscan Fathers who set about



Right: 1. A Filipino patriot is remembered in the Plaza in Guiuan. 2. "Take my peekcher, Sayr?" 3. Highway holdup. Business transaction on road to Guiuan. Black log carrier asks \$35 for iron wood as is. 4. Bulang Arena-cockfight pit-is the sports center in every Filipino village. 5. The owner of the winning fighting cock seems to be doing a Highland Fling so great his excitement. 6. Making bets before the next bout of flying feathers.





The baptismal font in the Church is set in a mosaic of sea shells, coral and colored stones in artistic Arabesques.

developing a native priesthood, to whose care the church has been entrusted ever since.

During the Japanese occupation it was demanded that the church be converted into an army building. Father Donato Guimbaolebot, seventy-eight year old Filipino pastor replied, "I have lived here all my life. I shall die here. Whether sooner or later, peacefully, or violently, makes no difference." The Father's flat refusal balked the Japs. Fearful of further enraging an already unfriendly population, the Japanese military government withdrew its demand.

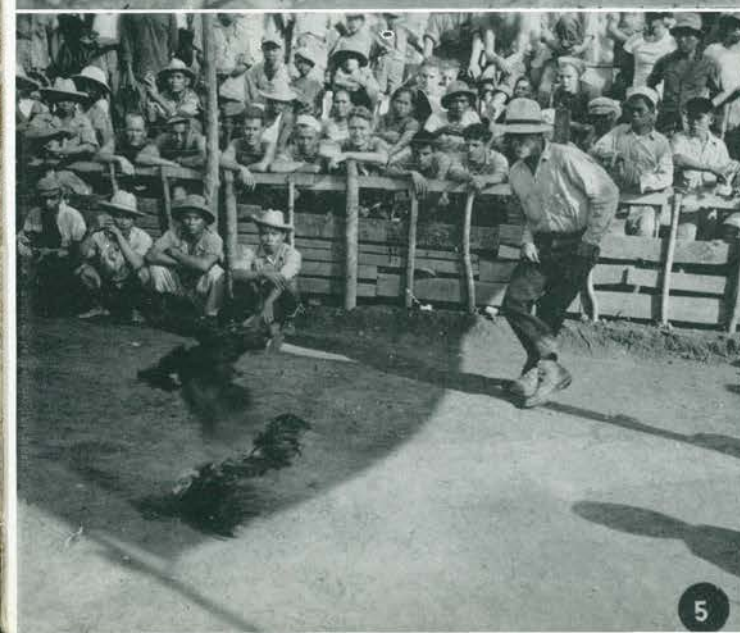
Now that the Japs are gone, the church is filled with American servicemen as well as Filipino worshippers, and the church still preserves the quiet, simple 17th Century faith to which it was dedicated three centuries ago.



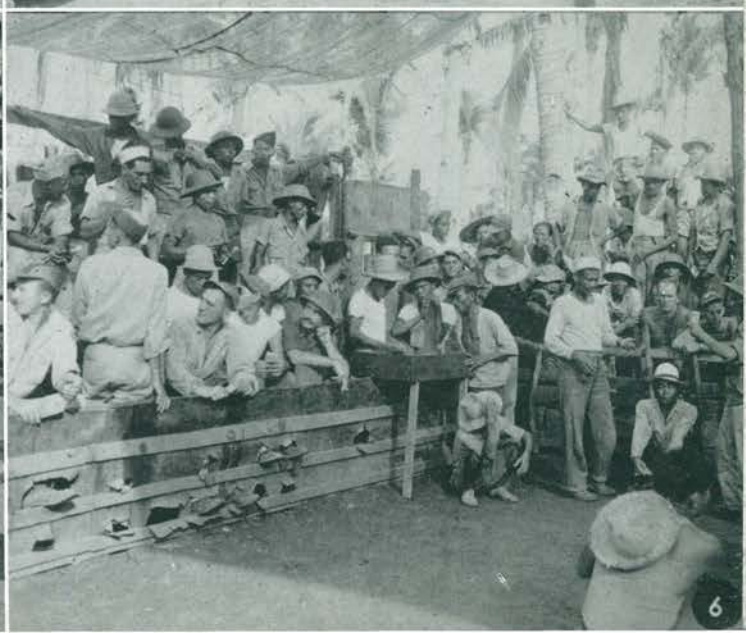
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3



5

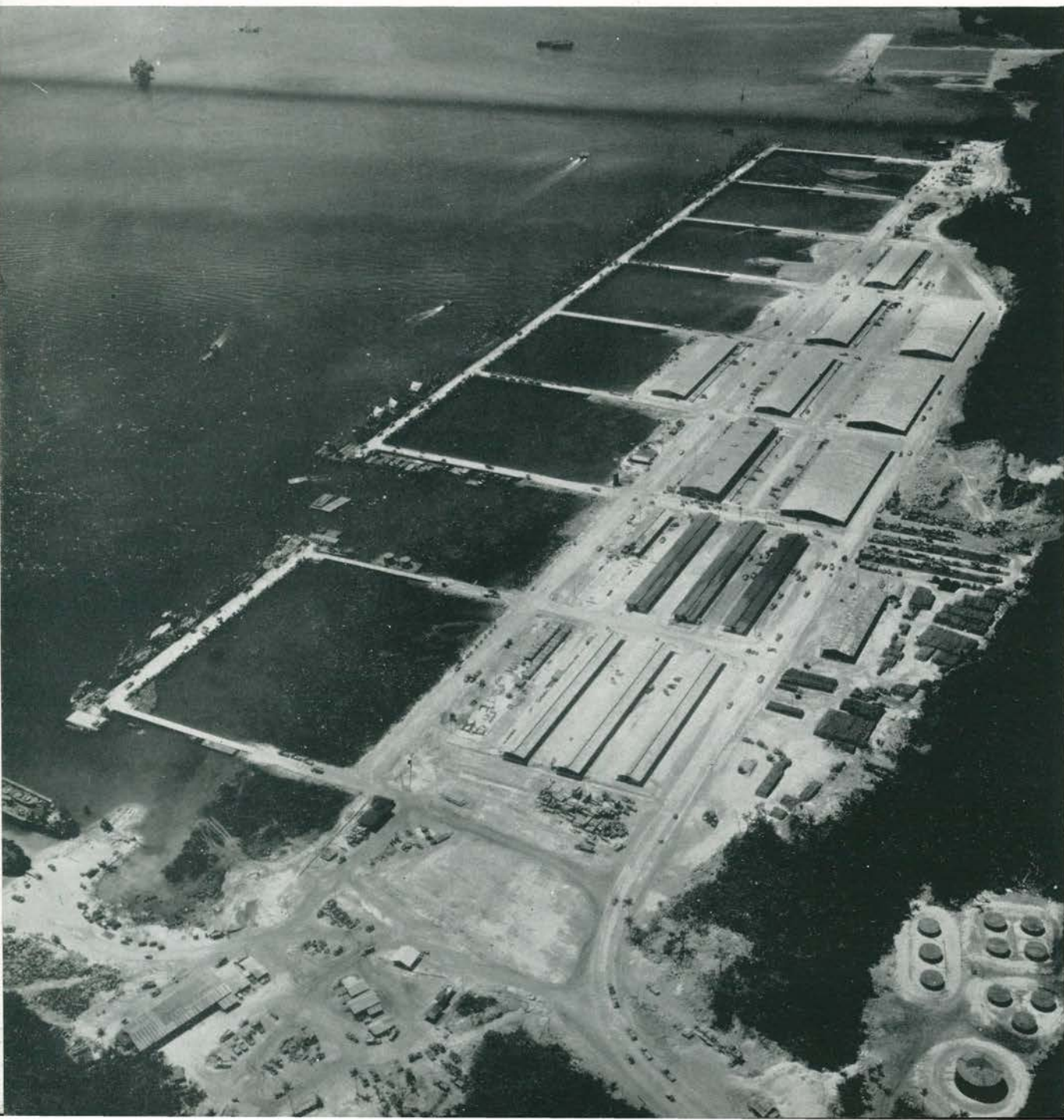


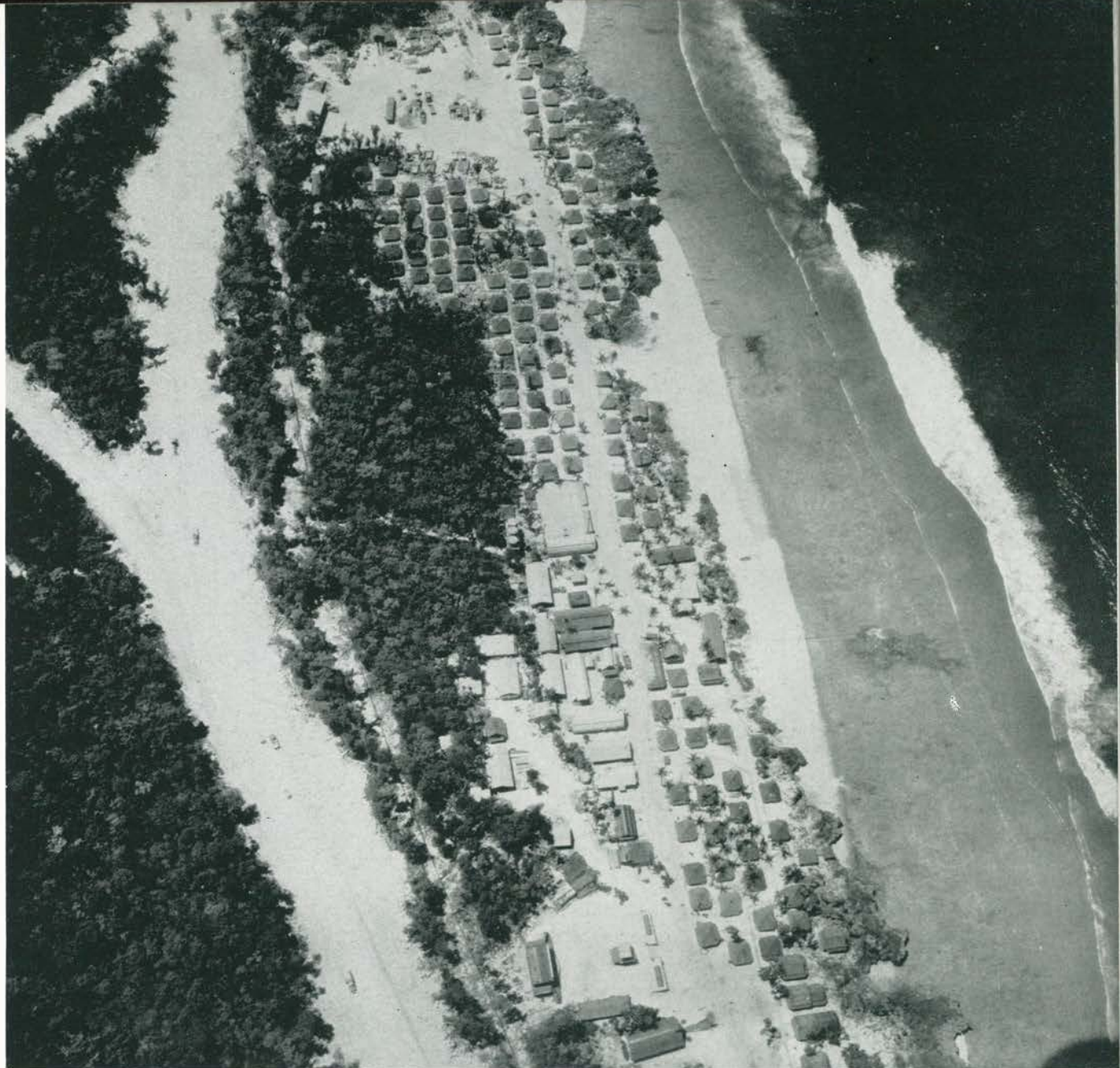
6

CALICOAN

Right: In May 1945 the temporary pontoon docks were being gradually repaced by sturdy piles and heavy timbers.

Below: Permanent heavy duty docks and finger piers were completed in September 1945. When the Fifth Special landed on Samar in December 1944 this area was a sleepy native village.





Above: Looking down from 1,500 feet at the Fifth Special Battalion's Seaside camp at Calicoan, Samar, P. I. At bottom of the picture is the theatre.



Left: 1. Hacked out of dense jungle growth and surfaced with sand from the beach our men made a civilized camp out of this savage country. 2. Due to the extremely porous nature of this coral island well drilling was out of the question. Brackish lake at top of picture furnished water for our condensers which turned out pure water for drinking, cooking and washing.



Digging in coral pits for fill and road surfacing.



Stateside-like roads run through "impregnable" jungles.

As the decision was made to make Leyte Gulf a huge staging area for the Pacific war, new quarters and bases became imperative for the rapidly expanding mass of men and material. A pioneer group from the 75th Construction Battalion had already landed on Calicoan Island at the south-eastern tip of Samar, and the job of hewing out roads and building docks had been started. Early in February, an advance party of carpenters, technical CPO's and a part of one company were sent from the Fifth Special's area at Guiuan to Calicoan to start a new camp area on some rocky coral bluffs overlooking the blue Pacific. It was virgin jungle territory, and local Naval authorities had charted the land as "unusuable." We moved in, however, and were therefore able to stretch our camp along the shore as far as we wanted. Living and working under the roughest pioneer conditions, and hampered by the declining rainy season, our advance group carved a road and a livable camp area. They cleared the jungle, leaving only scattered coconut palms, and rushed to completion the water-purification machinery, shops, galley, messhall, and sickbay. Some 50 Filipino laborers were hired to help with the work of jungle clearing, and this group remained in the employ of the Fifth as long as the outfit was on Calicoan.

By 12 February, 1945, accommodations were far enough advanced to allow the transfer of the remainder of the battalion from Guiuan to the new area on Calicoan. All personnel and equipment had to be transported by barges, for there was no bridge across the narrow strip of water separating the two islands. Some time later, a causeway was built connecting Calicoan and Samar, and an elaborate highway was constructed to carry the increasingly heavy traffic. The job of moving an entire battalion by barge and small boat was a long



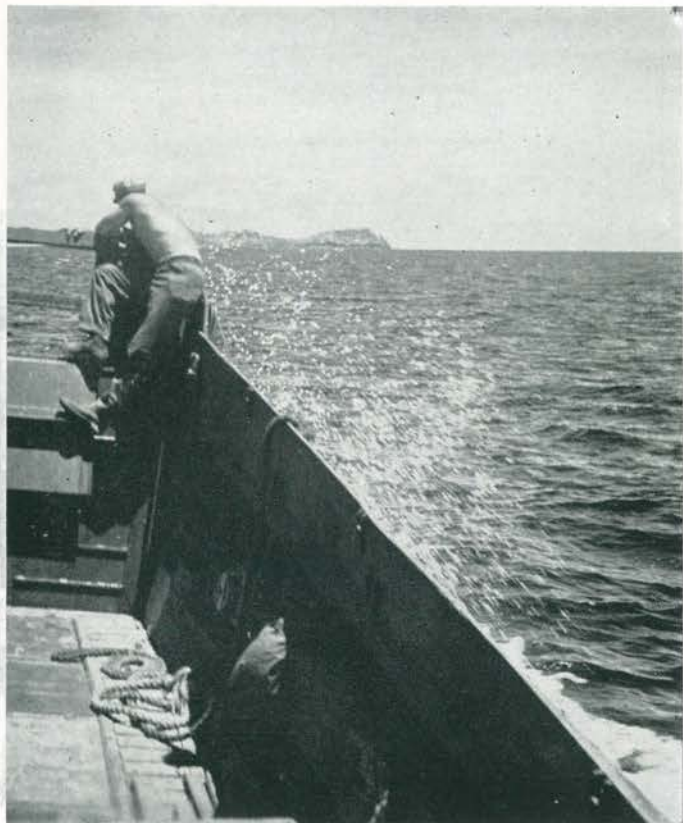
"Reefs ahead!" Tally's Geodetic Survey crew mapping safe sea lanes to neighboring islands.

General view, from docks, of our cargo office and rigging lofts before improvements.





Natives from distant islands land on our beach to barter bolos for skivvy shirts, mattress covers and cigarettes.

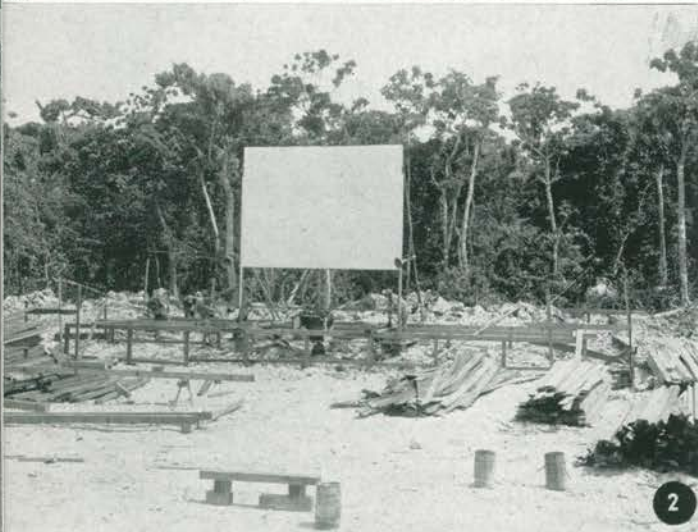
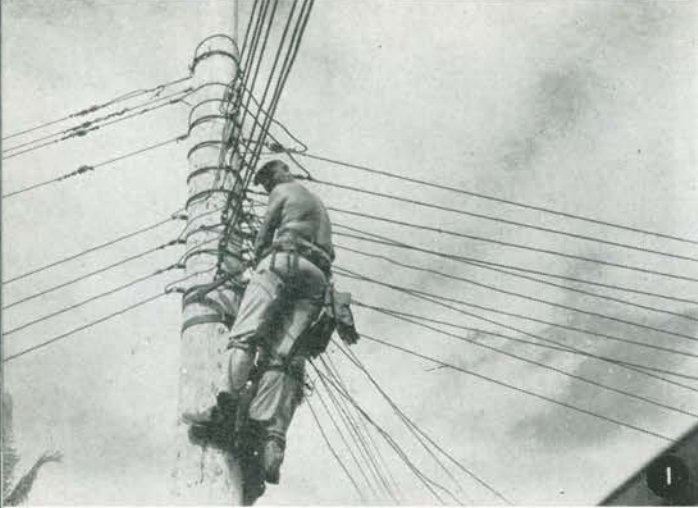


and tedious affair, but it was handled with a minimum of delay. Just as the move was completed, the Point Barrow detachment from 1058 rejoined the Fifth, bringing the complement of the Battalion up to about 650 men.

Calicoan was a much pleasanter spot in which to live than Guiuan had been. In place of the mud and mosquitoes which afflicted us on Samar, we now had clean coral sand, an area removed from any main road, and a cooling breeze from the ocean below us. We could look out across the blue water and take comfort in the thought that San Francisco was only 6,000 miles away and that we were closer to the States than we had been at Guiuan. Within a short time, area construction was completed, and we settled down to the routine of around-the-clock stevedoring. There were a few air and submarine alerts after we got to Calicoan, but that area of the Philippines was fairly secured by then.

Over a period of the next several months, much attention was given to providing recreation and amusement facilities for the outfit. Soon the Fifth boasted one of the finest theatres on the island, an excellent basketball court, a boxing ring, and horseshoe courts. There was no land near our area that was suitable for a baseball diamond, but by





Above: 1. Trouble shooter Nelms up a pole with some live wires. 2. "—the Motion Picture Industry is still in its infancy." 3. Our Chapel on Calicoan starts to take shape.

using the field of another outfit for practice, the Fifth developed one of the outstanding ball clubs in the island. Movies were held nightly, and a boxing show was offered about every two weeks. In basketball, in addition to a fast quintet representing us in the Calicoan League, we had inter-company games nearly every night, drawing capacity crowds.

By this time, a number of docks had been completed and a huge Naval Supply Depot set up, and the Fifth already had the reputation of being the hottest stevedoring outfit on the island. From individual ships and from the Naval Base, commendations came frequently, and near the end of our tour a recommendation was sent to the Secretary of the Navy that the Fifth Special be awarded a special Unit Citation for their work in the Philippines. The end of the war did not, of course, affect the duties of the Fifth, and operations at the dock continued much as they had before V-J Day. In the area itself, maintenance was a constant job for Headquarters Company, and the Commodore's inspection brought a "very good" in regards to the condition and appearance of the camp.

We had hoped that the Fifth Special would return to the States as a unit, but soon after the war ended, it became apparent that such would not be the case. The Navy point system for discharges took a great many of our men as soon as the system was announced, especially those in the outfit who had been in the Aleutians. In October came official word that the Fifth Special would be inactivated and personnel without enough discharge points sent to the 33rd Special Battalion or the 50th Construction Regiment. By the time the transfer of men and equipment to the 33rd had been completed, there were only a small percentage of Fifth Special men left in the Philippines. To many of the men who had joined the battalion early in 1943, and to a number of those who joined later, the break-up of the Fifth was a sad occasion.

This has been the story of a Seabee Special Battalion, a story made possible by the officers and men of the Fifth Special Naval Construction Battalion. It has been a story of cold and heat, of sun and snow, of land and water, of work and play, and of war and peace. It has been a story of Contrast.



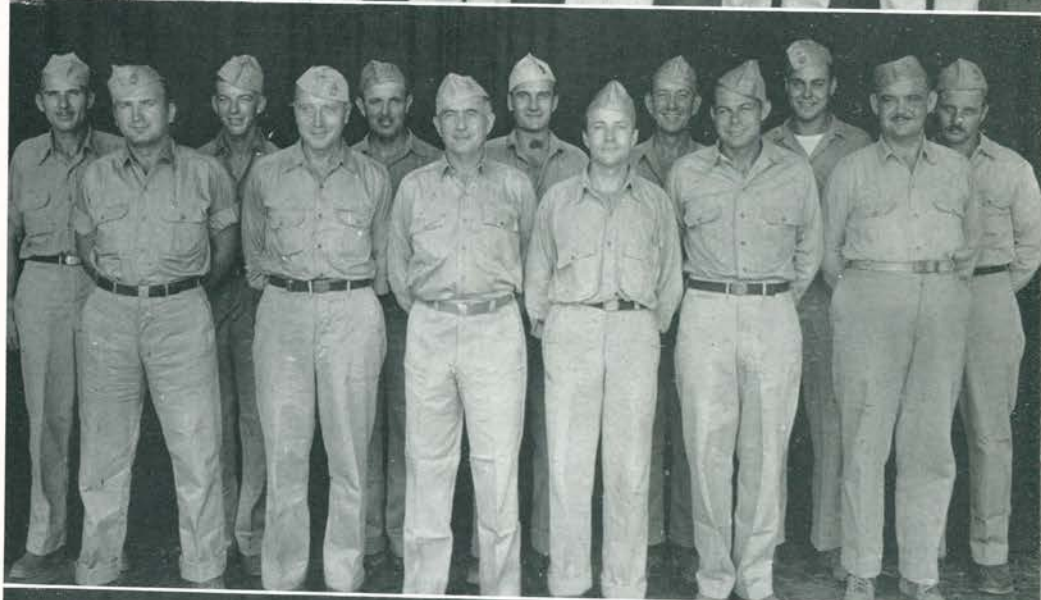
Right: Brackish water was piped to our camp from this lake. The floor of the lake was carpeted with jelly fish who moved about like pulse beats. The natives had long ago put a tabu on the "forbidden" lake.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

W. L. Longwood, N. Morris, A. Novak, N. Srol, D. A. Huff, J. G. Alnutt.



Front Row: C. W. McCauley, A. H. Rebstock, L. M. Kerrison, L. O. Warner, H. W. Slagle, H. P. Doty. Back Row: R. W. Wedel, C. S. Hutt, R. J. Burris, F. H. Green, E. E. Browne, R. M. Tuma, D. C. Carter.



Front Row: J. L. Poulin, J. Tipping, E. J. Kamin, J. T. Ludescher. Back Row: A. B. Gwyn, B. Hovde, H. D. Davenport, H. S. Chavez, R. R. Steele.





Disbursing Office

H. D. Davenport, R. W. Parcher, J. G. Alnutt, J. F. Hourihan, H. D. Blackwood, E. A. Crawford,
D. A. Huff, E. E. Browne.



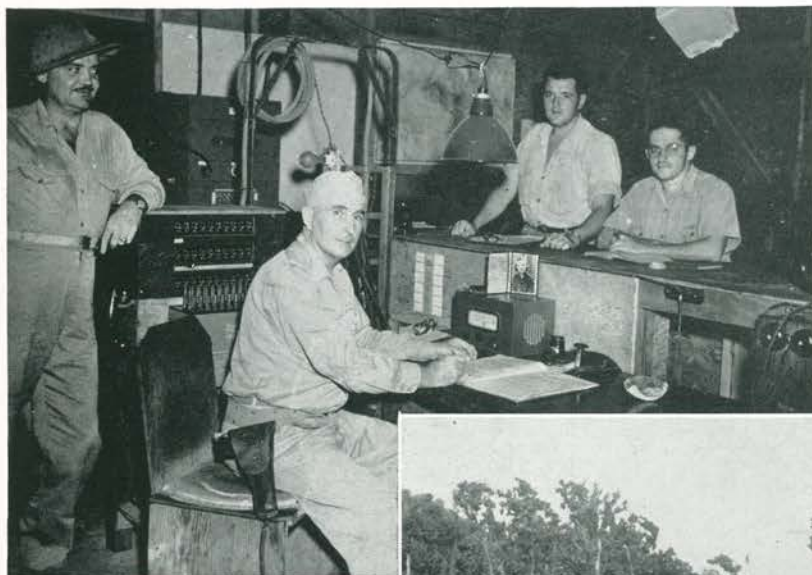
Post Office

At Left: E. H. Morhaus, P. K. Collins, E. J. Descy.

Personnel Office

At right: A. B. Gwyn, W. E. Giliam, B. Hovde.





OOD's Office

At Left: H. P. Doty, L. M.
Kerrison, C. F. Lynds, R. E.
Scheurer.

Area Guards

At Right: F. C. Biondi, R. M.
Nolan, D. R. Miller.



Master-at-Arms Group

M. P. Smith, H. Tenorio, J. Tipping, A. L. Sipes, W. N. Beck, P. M. Selmon.





Cooks and Butchers

D. A. Lewis, H. S. Chavez, R. B. St. John, W. W. Bier, R. K. Byerman, M. E. Korich, J. F. Collins, L. R. Stolberg, M. J. Bonda, D. E. Thomas, J. J. Maffucci.



Bakery Shop

W. A. Brammer, A. E. Urzik, J. P. Kinikin, F. N. Greene, H. B. Day, T. D. Jaynes.

Cooks Serving Chow Line

D. G. Rogers, M. J. Musselman, W. M. Crump, M. E. Long, R. J. Audet, T. J. Robersen, F. M. Abbantangelo.



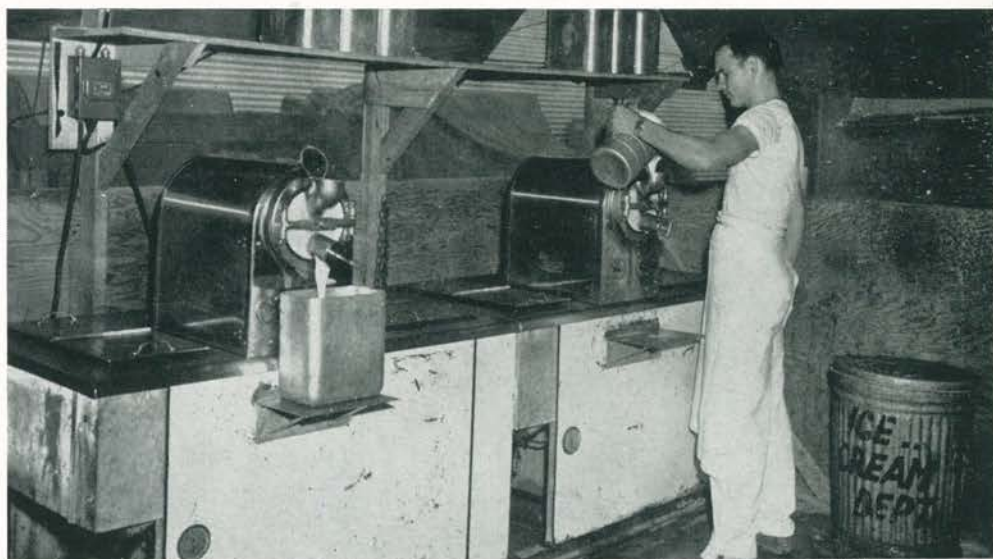


Butchers and Turkeys

J. J. Maffucci, M. J. Bonda, R. K. Byerman.

Ice Cream Department

G. A. Bearce.



Miscellaneous Mates

Front Row: A. L. Sipes, G. E. Winters, A. T. Beamer, H. W. Slagle.
Back Row: M. P. Smith, G. L. Hartman, W. N. Beck.



Officer's Mess

Galley Staff

Front Row: L. A. Jemison, C. E. Galloway.
Back Row: L. J. Sterling, N. R. Mitchell,
H. W. Dean, G. M. Delfin.

Officer's Messmen

Below, Top, Front Row: M. Macawile, G.
M. Delfin, L. Handayan. Back Row: L. D.
Wannemacher, T. W. Hunt, C. E. Gallo-
way, H. W. Dean, L. J. Sterling, J. A.
Dawidko.

Commissary Warehouse

Bottom: W. J. McIntosh, D. A. Huff, H. W.
Slagle, J. L. Cannizzaro.





Medical Officers

Above, Top: D. H. Stone, E. H. Quint, H. G. McCall, J. L. Murray, N. Morris, R. M. Tuma.

Ship's Store

Bottom: J. Skla, D. A. Huff, W. S. Skarzynski, E. E. Browne, A. H. Letten, H. C. Harned, D. R. Miller.

Dental Office

Left: W. L. Longwood, R. M. Tuma, H. G. McCall.

Top: R. R. Steele, G. R. Vincent. Center: E. E. Crane, A. H. Rebstock, D. E. Palm, J. W. Polson, C. D. Gregson, W. J. Harden, H. W. Wise. Bottom, Front Row: A. G. Lembi, J. L. Poulin, W. R. Putman. Back Row: D. L. Davis, H. H. Brooks, D. O. Burkhardt, T. O. Nelms.





Pump Station

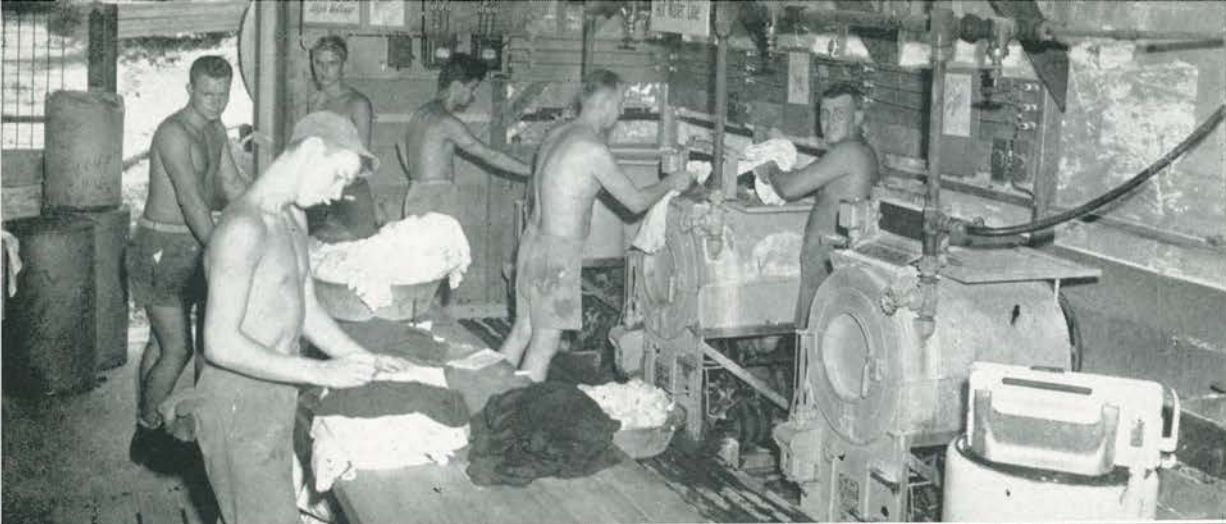
Top: R. Miller.

Water Purification

Center: J. C. Turso, E. J. White, H. C. Carter, R. H. Herod.

Machine Shop

Bottom: C. D. Walker, L. I. Proe, R. H. Herod.



***Laundry
Tailor Shop
Armory***

Above, Top: B. D. Warner, J. R. Dashofy, S. F. Tomko, P. Vaszilson, E. J. Descy, J. C. Sanner.

Center: P. M. McTighe, J. J. Mason, D. A. Huff, H. Lemus.

Bottom: H. E. Glasser, C. F. Hussman.

Below, Top: G. D. Lewis, A. Monaco, J. E. Myers, P. K. Collins.

Center: P. B. Sheets.

Bottom: R. W. Wedel.

Barber Shop
Library
Sign and Paint Shop





Cargo Office

Above, Top: H. L. Smallwood, N. Srol, E. J. Kamin, C. W. McCauley, D. Alkon, C. S. Hutt, W. V. Masson, W. E. Chaney.

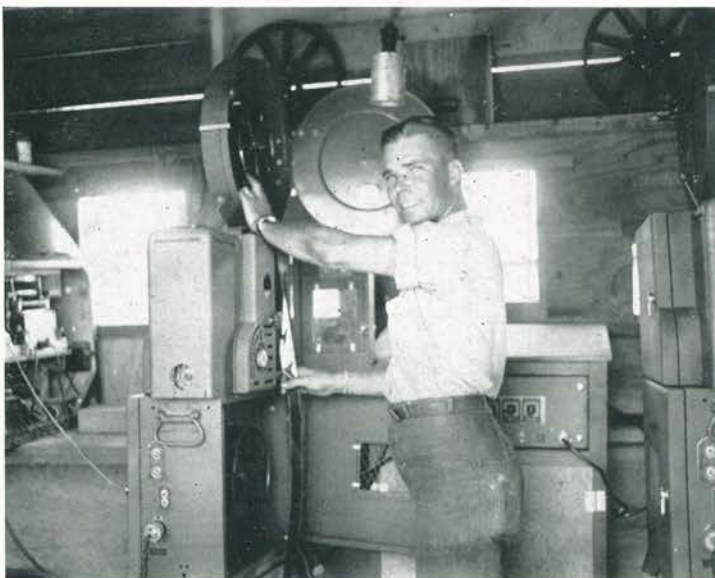
Sheet Metal Shop

Bottom: G. J. Dolak.

G. S. K. Warehouse

C. V. Stockton.





Motion Picture Projectionist

B. L. Schooley.

Transportation

Below, Top: F. W. Lee, H. C. Rutledge, H. M. Crawley, M. F. Carr. (Sitting E. L. Ray, J. E. Sullivan.

Head Cargo Checkers

Bottom: H. L. Smallwood, C. W. McCauley, W. V. Masson.



Flip

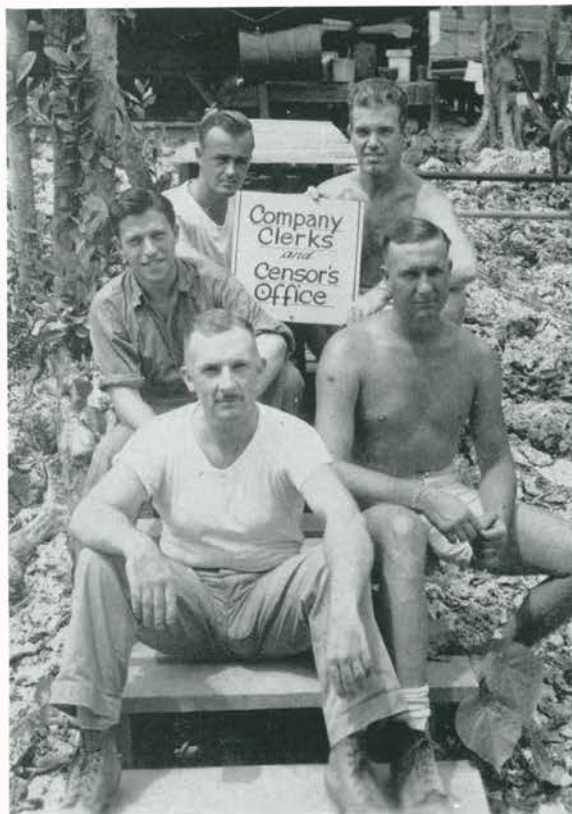
Our mascot Flip became a member of the battalion when he joined us for the Southwest Pacific cruise . . . as a replacement for "Tails" the AWOL Pup. Registered with the New York Kennels as "Theuna's Flip, A837933," our mascot first saw the light of day on May 25, 1944.



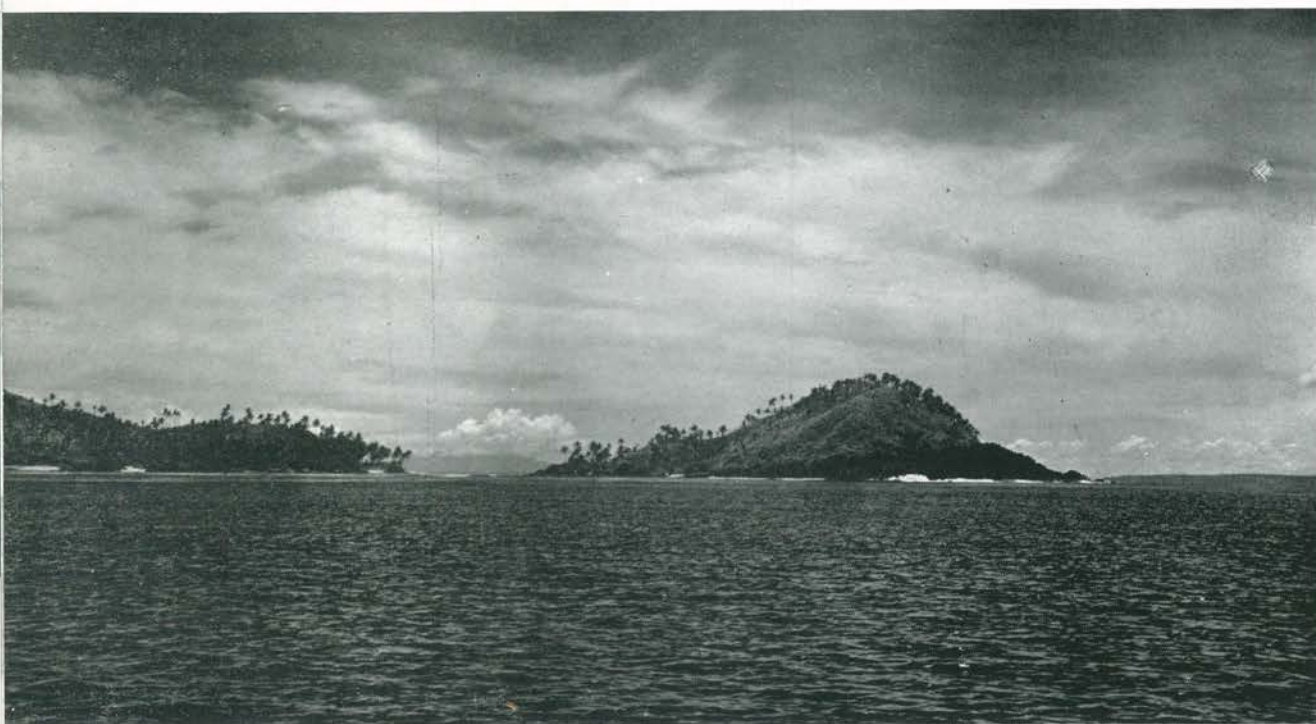
"Flip."

Clerks and Censors

Front Row: S. C. Smith. Middle Row: B. Adler, B. E. Colvin. Back Row: J. A. Mazoch, A. H. Letten.



Island "X," an unnamed island near Calicoan, Samar. In the distance is the island of Homonhon.





The church altar at Comangan near Guiuan, is the work of the faithful congregation.

C O M A N G A N

The Junior Leaguers of Comangan. These young ladies are teachers in the primary grades of the local school.



A seventeen-year-old mother and her pretty baby.



A COMPANY



C. R. Stinger, W. L. Berg, R. J. Foreman



R. C. Craven, C. L. Murray, E. Hockett, R. A. Payne, E. E. Bagley.



W. Y. Hazlehurst.



BLOCK'S BLOCK BUSTERS

Above, Top, Front Row: H. O. Westgaard, F. T. Connett, F. E. Enyeart, C. J. Block, J. F. Roundtree, Jr., C. W. Green. Middle Row: L. J. Carbone, L. H. Witt, F. F. Lamotta, J. L. Robertson, Jr., H. J. Talleur. Back Row: J. B. De Cavage, A. E. Varieur, E. S. Williams, W. F. Kodosky, E. A. Seraydarian.

HAYDEN'S HOYDENS

Bottom: Front Row: R. C. Miller, J. A. Davis, F. P. Hayden, R. A. Wells, W. G. Davis. Middle Row: A. R. Evenson, A. K. Mauser, L. F. Golden, J. B. Wood, J. W. Baugh. Back Row: E. L. Davis, R. McWorter, D. F. Carrell, A. H. Brower, C. E. Wehrman, C. R. Irvine.



BAGLEY'S CABLE STRAINERS

Front Row: R. J. Quinn, J. R. L. Crawford, E. E. Bagley, J. Conrad, P. D. Plumly, R. J., Tripp. Back Row: A. H. Burnham, W. B. Hickson, C. C. Sweerus, S. J. Washko, E. A. Dambert, B. D. Caylor, P. M. Selmon, D. J. Sullivan, J. Reill, H. A. Brill.



HOCKETT'S MULES

Front Row: F. H. Findley, R. J. Lave, A. L. Summers, E. Hockett, L. R. Wilson. Back Row: E. R. Cherry, W. R. Williams, M. L. LeRay, J. Willemsen, F. P. Johnston, P. H. Givens, C. V. Wilson, T. L. Lipperf.

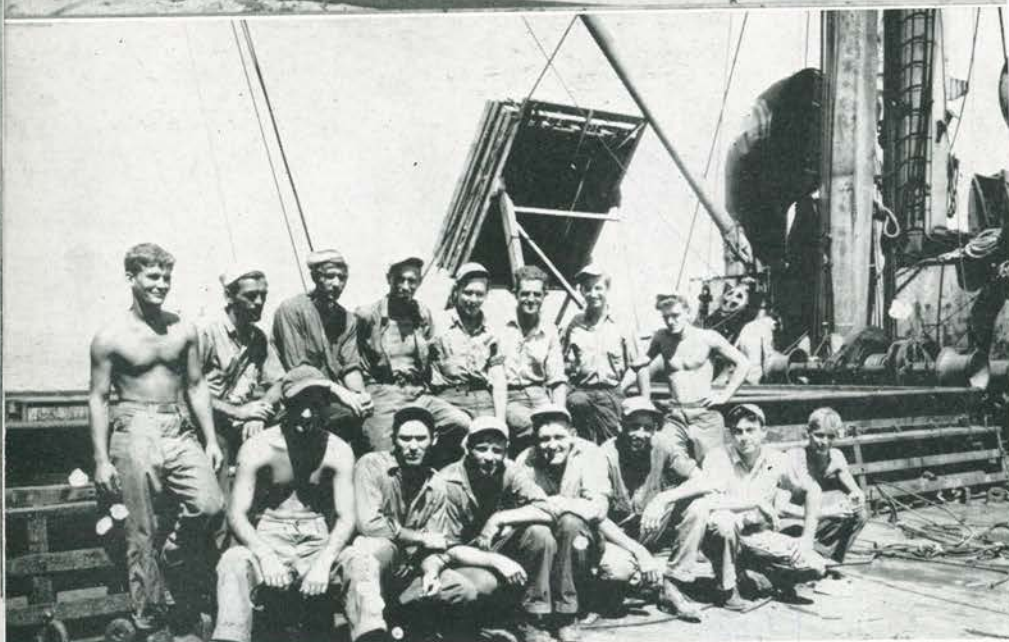
Stamey's Cargo Humpers

Front Row: O. A. Lahti, R. Johnson, H. Hrabos, J. W. Phinny, C. B. Stamey, G. E. Reynolds, R. L. Kreiss, E. A. Pokrewczynski. Back Row: E. J. Hoyo, H. Alcorn, W. D. Fender, B. T. Martin, H. E. Phillips, R. A. Janora, U. H. Hohman.



Clark's Hook and Crooks

Front Row: J. R. Wiley, L. W. Allen, R. A. Christiansen, H. C. Ball, R. H. Crosby. Middle Row: L. W. Van Slyke, J. S. Breich, H. R. Glick, A. Sipecki, N. W. McBride. Back Row: T. E. O'Toole, V. A. Wirth, R. E. Wenzel, P. H. Miller, M. J. Clark.



Swede's Hatch Cats

Front Row: L. E. Slayton, H. J. Roberson, R. I. Arnold, R. V. Owen, R. J. Niemier, R. B. Morrison, F. T. Fuller. Back Row: J. M. Murphy, Jr., R. Marchesi, H. L. Wheat, J. H. Lane, J. A. Caudill, P. V. O'Leary, C. Asselstine, M. D. Zeibert.





Arnold's Mauraders

Front Row: M. Stepovich, J. Gibson, W. H. Kalinowsky, D. P. Gaido, R. W. Eberhardt, J. V. McDonald, G. P. Gray. Back Row: R. L. Frederick, W. D. Chapman, K. E. Guthrie, A. W. Garvin, G. H. Estes, E. D. Yardley, J. Gaona, W. J. Maciejewski,

V-J Day

T. L. Lippert, L. W. Allen, V. A. Wirth, R. V. Owen, J. P. Kinikin, E. R. Cherry, F. P. Johnston, W. A. Purks, P. H. Givens, D. F. Carrell, F. H. Findley, A. L. Summers, F. Ponder.



Chow Express

Seated: T. E. O'Toole, J. R. Wiley, H. A. Brill, P. H. Miller, L. J. Carbone. Standing: F. H. Findley, A. H. Burnham, P. D. Plumly.



Only the sturdy skeleton remains of this old copra warehouse after the lusty typhoon of 1944.



The carabao, or water buffalo, a beast of burden in the Philippines, is valued for its great strength, its flesh and hide.

SANTA MARGUERITA

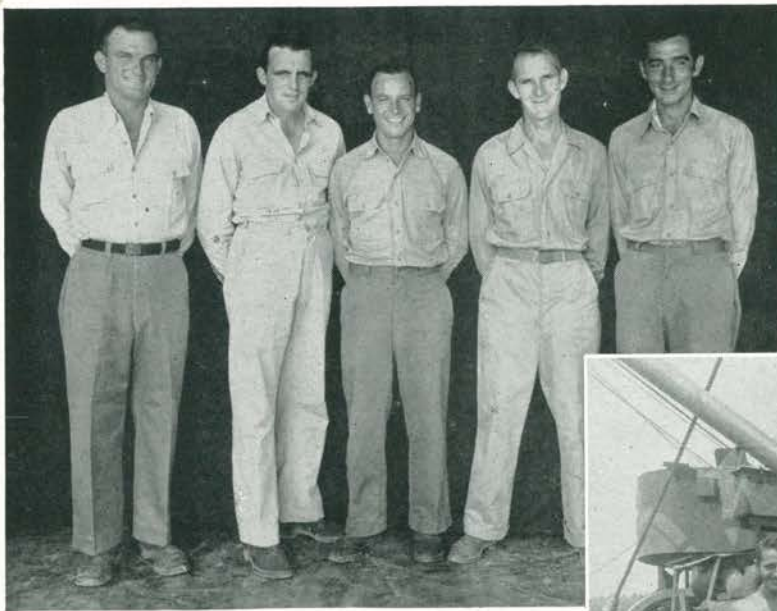
The little fishing village of Santa Marguerita is self-contained and its people patriotic.





M. E. Germany, J. W. Miller, A. Hartwigsen, P. V. La Coste.

B COMPANY



Above: J. L. Sharkey, T. H. Clark, M. A. Inderlin, H. M. Crawley, J. Simakas.

Gerstel's Stays and Guys

Right, Front Row: H. W. Biederstadt, C. Mainieri, R. M. Gerstel, F. H. Peck, C. Aspenson. Middle Row: L. E. De La Mater, D. R. Boyd, V. G. Clobes, R. R. Theriault, D. E. Trietsch, A. J. De Maio. Back Row: D. V. De Gennaro, J. M. Bowers, J. A. De Filippo.





Front Row: P. G. Lebel, J. White, A. W. Francescangeli, D. A. Wild, P. F. Moore. Middle Row: L. R. McDonough, J. J. Hellswarth, J. J. McAlevey, M. J. Musselman, J. P. Eddings, W. C. James. Back Row: D. V. Hahn, L. V. Lyman, J. P. Janousek, L. W. Eckhardt.



Sitting: W. C. Sutton, H. H. Roland, W. N. Bastin. Standing: K. W. Davis, A. A. Di Cicco, B. Jacobs, J. E. Davis. On Stairs, Top to Bottom: I. R. Milan, T. C. Helleberg, I. S. Knight, F. E. Unum, A. J. Van Bezey, O. L. McIver, M. D'Angelo.

Below, Front Row: R. Trapiss, B. D. Warner, M. E. Winterhof, L. E. Traxler, T. H. Barron, V. Giles. Middle Row: H. J. Berg, C. F. Ulfig, M. D. Ulland, A. H. Stevens, D. E. Truitt, Back Row: J. C. Sanner, R. A. Johnson, G. C. Anderson, N. F. Heimbach.





Above, Front Row: E. B. Hudson, J. M. Hittner, E. M. Kouzemetis, J. L. Izvorski, A. E. Hendershott, H. L. Schenstrom, J. R. Hanson. Back Row: R. L. Darby, T. A. Deriso, F. B. Johnson, B. B. Heidig, E. J. Kulhanek, L. E. Hawn, J. E. Coffee, F. C. Hopkins.

Standing: J. C. Snyder, H. E. Rogers, R. S. Smith, T. Martindale, J. W. Pruett, F. W. Watson, L. J. Matthews, J. W. Putnam. On Stairs Top to Bottom: K. N. Morton, W. H. Etherington, W. C. Saunders, H. D. Reineke, E. A. Whiterock, M. M. Russell, M. M. Hamdorf.

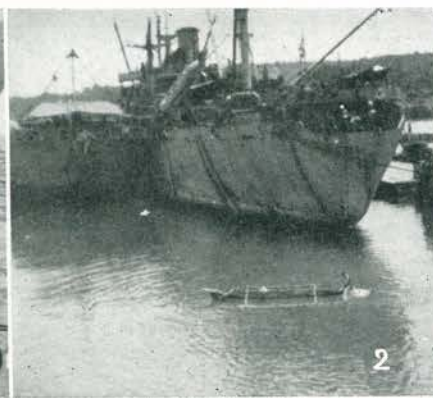


Front Row: P. A. Callaway, T. L. Cook, E. F. Wozniak, J. C. Rulewich, R. E. Trombley, J. F. Petree, F. L. Constantini, N. W. Tolle. Back Row: H. E. Tupa, M. D. O'Hare, M. G. McNair, H. H. Hines, G. W. Haile.





Front Row: S. F. Tomko, R. B. Yaeger, O. M. Altmire, G. F. Daniels, B. E. Keesler, E. P. Langer. Back Row: V. P. Joannes, H. D. Hirschboeck, J. R. Dashofy, W. Didgus, P. J. lerardi, J. E. Troiano, J. W. Hunt.



1. Hitch-hiking: Samar fashion.
2. Natives salvaging odds and ends on harbor bottom.
3. Unloading truck with Jumbo boom.





A herd of Carabao in lush pasture.

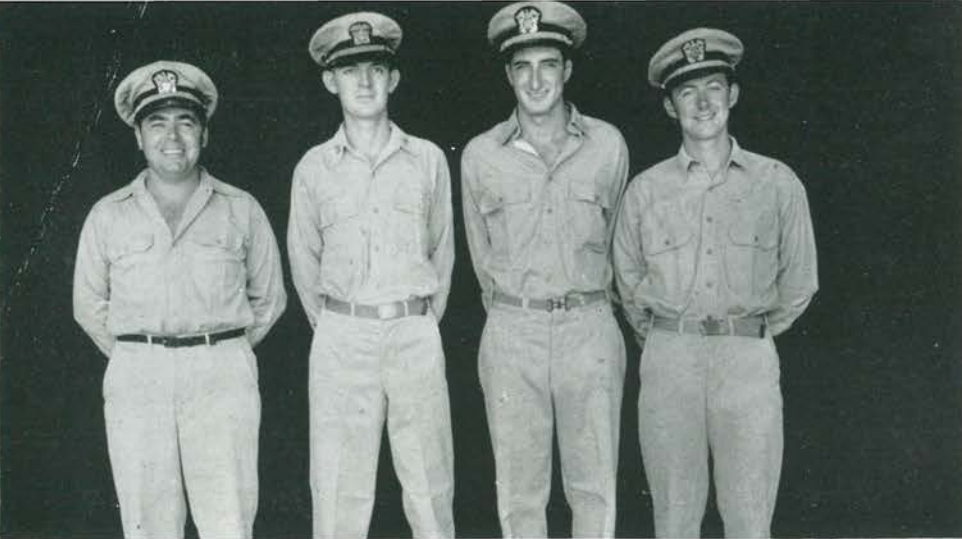
BUNA VISTA



Carabao in steaming jungle mudhole.

1. Peaceful village. 2. Prosperous villagers' nipa hut with hedge. 3. Lt. Huff and friends. 4. The Filipinos are proud of their children.





J. Bonetti, C. O. Turnbull, P. F. Iacono, R. H. Servant.

C COMPANY

J. D. Cusachs, C. A. Albertoni, J. R. Anderson, L. F. Payne, J. T. Ludescher.



Kneeling: W. D. Phillips, A. M. O'Connor, A. J. Saxon, M. Zertuche, R. E. Turino.
Standing: H. O. Gray, D. C. Brown, P. P. Trujillo, H. A. McNeece, C. C. Sanders, L. A. Lochte, J. A. Webb, L. P. Simonini, P. Waters, F. R. Paessun, C. F. Shelby.



Sitting: H. A. Beaver, W. S. Barco, C. C. Reed. Standing: D. L. Darby, H. J. Penton, P. D. Bates, R. J. Breese, L. H. Santonico, R. A. Christian, J. J. Reinhardt, P. D. Ryherd, G. R. Oliver, A. H. Cottar. Sitting in "Goose": W. R. White.



Standing: O. R. Porter, I. A. Helms, C. J. Bridenstine, M. W. McClain, R. J. Gebhard, J. R. Kinder, R. E. McClaine, G. D. Olson, T. P. David. Sitting in Truck: R. Jurenka, A. Monaco, L. A. Watts, L. L. Honeycutt, P. Basler, L. L. Hogan, R. E. Darby.



Sitting: W. J. Boudreaux, F. M. Abbantangelo, B. Corradini, J. D. Smith, J. C. Duncan, A. D. Bowie. Standing: A. Peterson, A. J. Chomor, M. S. Colgrove, J. McReynolds, D. R. Darnall, C. E. Catron.



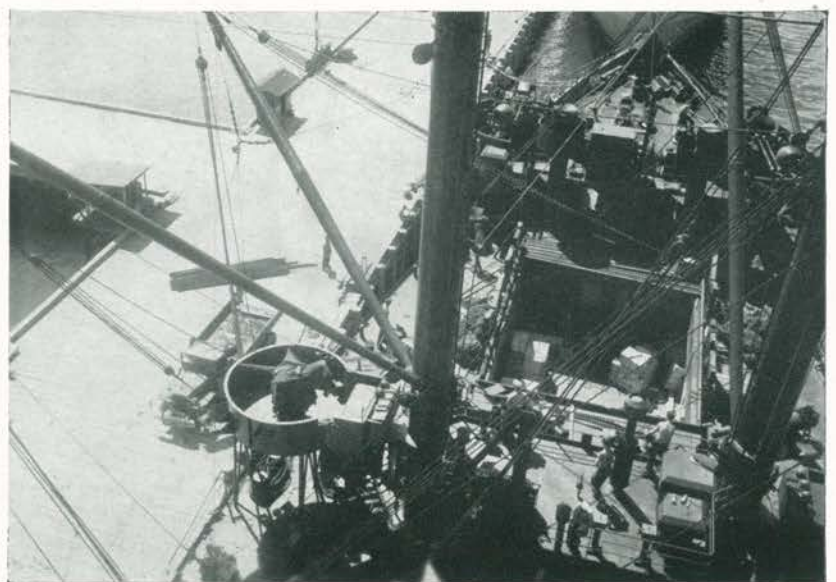


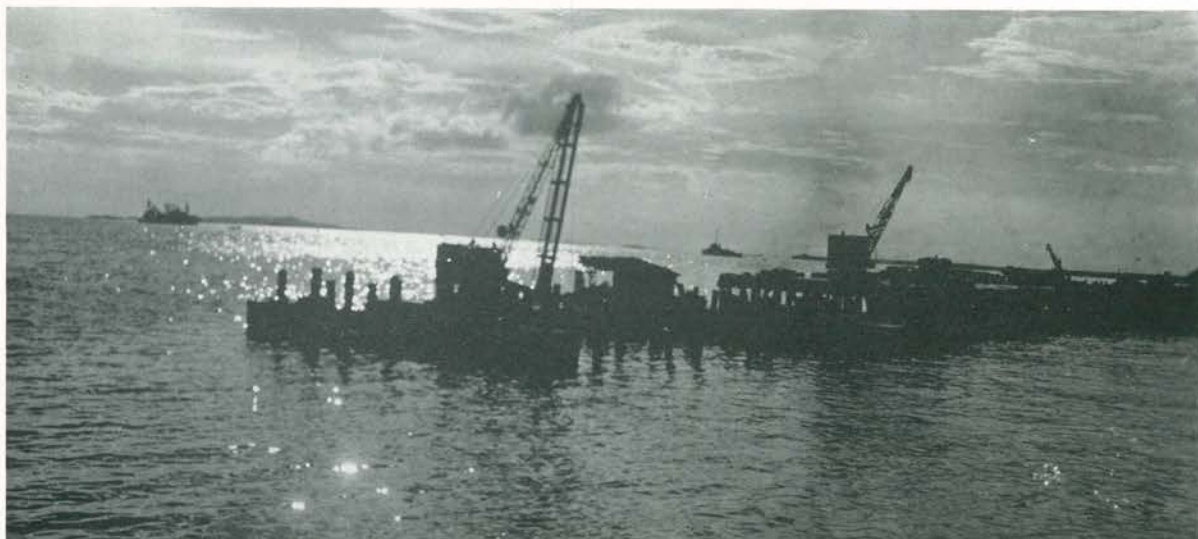
Sitting: W. A. Davis, J. W. Aldridge, E. J. Killough, H. F. Smith, F. E. De Marseilles, E. A. Krieg, M. D. Young, W. P. Delo, G. L. Davenport, H. R. Deckman. Standing: R. T. Burdett, B. M. Bursch, K. T. Holst, W. M. Sommers, A. D. De Priest.



F. A. Grzesik, J. C. Borunda, A. Ablamsky, J. H. Sproul, C. E. Sams, F. C. Conrod, T. Neal, J. E. Hirsh, A. J. King, N. L. Armstrong, D. S. Dean, P. V. Williams, T. L. Cohoon, A. L. Whisenhunt, V. J. Simonich, A. W. Sinkunas.

View of deck and dock from crow's nest.





Driving piles into coral for the new docks.

Kneeling: L. H. Darlak, J. L. De Rose, A. Del Guercio, N. M. Wallace, R. S. Armstrong, Standing: G. L. Abrahamson, D. K. Copeland, J. Snarski, C. A. Leach, W. Topolski, F. Darwell, H. M. Fisher, J. T. Stanton, W. F. Daley.



Sitting: J. D. Smythe, J. M. Wague-spak, C. J. White, W. B. Scott, R. O. Hohn, F. O. Grabow, T. M. Barraza, Standing: M. Rhoad, S. G. Wheeler, G. A. Lorton, G. A. Nyquist, L. Weber.



BANOYO

Right: Returning from nearby stream, the village community laundry. Right: "—Barefoot boy with cheeks of tan—"

Below: Like so many isolated jungle villages it is puzzling to discover just what the people of Banoyo live on. The typhoon of 1944 caused them great hardships.





D COMPANY

Officers and Chiefs

F. W. Lee, E. L. Ray, E. Hartnek,
R. J. Foreman, H. M. Crawley, M. F.
Carr, H. C. Rutledge.

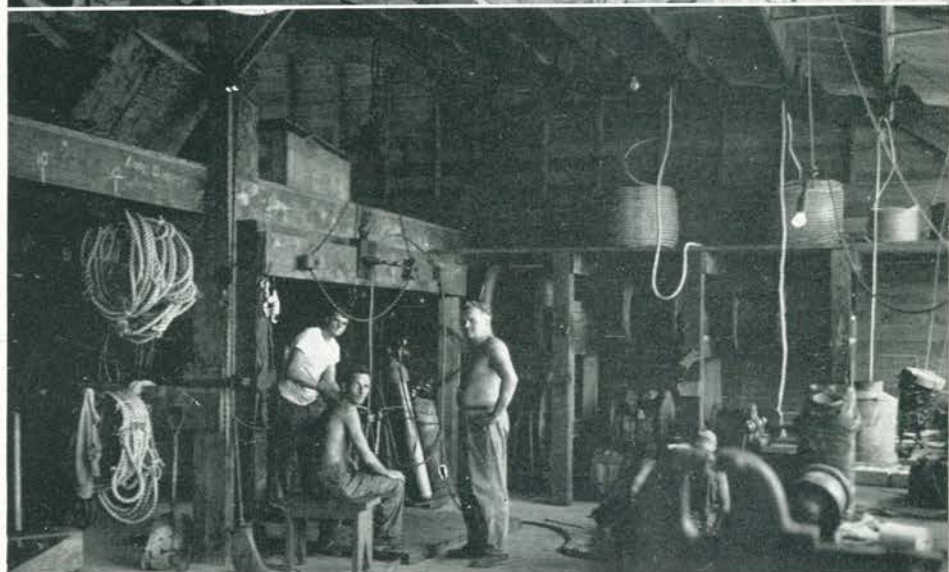
Temporary Rigging Loft

E. Hartnek, W. E. Barrett, E. J. Brault,
E. P. Roger, A. D'Alessandro, J. N.
Peters, W. S. Skarzynski, R. H. Hague.



New Rigging Loft

I. T. Siegfried, E. J. Brault, W. E. Barrett.





Truck Dispatchers

F. J. Pegueros, G. Keefer, M. D. Turner.



Crane Operators

Kneeling: E. B. Howell, W. L. Loyd, D. L. Corman, D. Moore. Standing: J. W. Lockhardt, J. F. Rose, J. W. Glidewell, C. A. Hobgood, D. G. Lord.

Small Boat Dock

Below: V. T. Tally, O. W. Peoples, P. C. Voorhees.





Dock Equipment Maintenance

Above Top: C. O. Burrell, F. W. Lee, V. M. Hicks, O. W. Peoples, E. Sadowski.

Garage Repairmen

Bottom, Kneeling: F. W. Lee, A. G. Gonzales, H. C. Rutledge. Standing: R. B. Noble, R. Taranta, H. M. Crawley, W. P. Knudsen, E. R. Miner.

Cat Operation

Right: G. R. McDonald.





Small Craft Anchorage



Transportation

Standing: M. S. Delp, P. A. Callaway, F. J. Pegueros, R. E. Wiese, T. N. Guthrie, H. R. Glass, O. W. Boettner, H. M. Crawley, G. Keefer, J. Laskowski. Kneeling: C. G. Dennison, B. W. Coffee, H. R. Wilson, J. O. Dennis, B. M. Wellman, C. P. Warichak, W. J. Cole, C. M. Fisher, W. A. Walter,



Transportation

Front Row: H. M. Crawley, G. F. Anglin, A. A. Heminghaus, B. M. Davis.



Transportation

J. W. Lockhardt, T. N. Guthrie, C. A. Hobgood, R. J. Foreman, H. M. Crawley, D. G. Lord, D. L. Corman, W. L. Loyd F. W. Lee, J. F. Rose, D. Moore.

Rigging Loft Transportation



Back Row: J. W. Keelty, R. Wilson, F. M. Lowen, D. Moore, W. L. Loyd, H. O. Gray.





Pay Day



Ship's Store

Fire Department





Tent City

Over "42" Club

C.P.O.'s Dinner Party



NATIVE LIFE



Left: 1. Sixth Grade, Salsedo, Samar. Teacher, extreme right, was educated in Manila.
2. School store. No Hershey bars! 3. Recess! The children's playground covers acres of green lawn.



Below: Children must remove slippers to keep mahogany classroom floor polished.



Fishing village, Naga, Samar.





Toting a few coral rocks at a time this jetty took eight years to build.



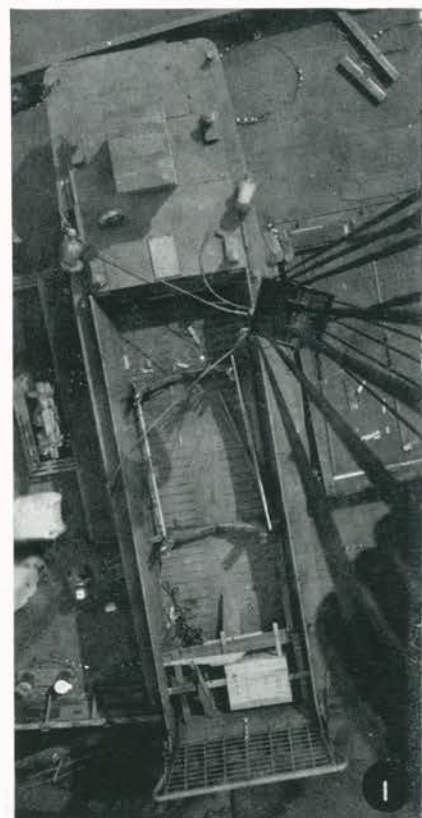
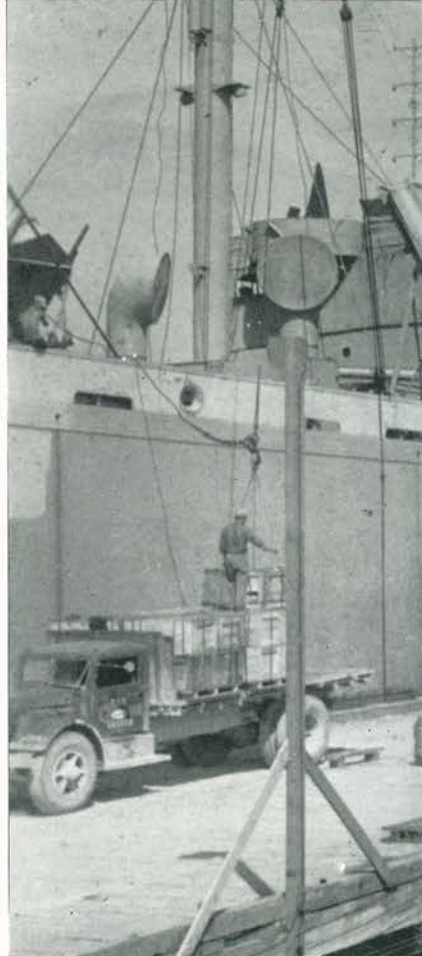
Old woman pounding meal.

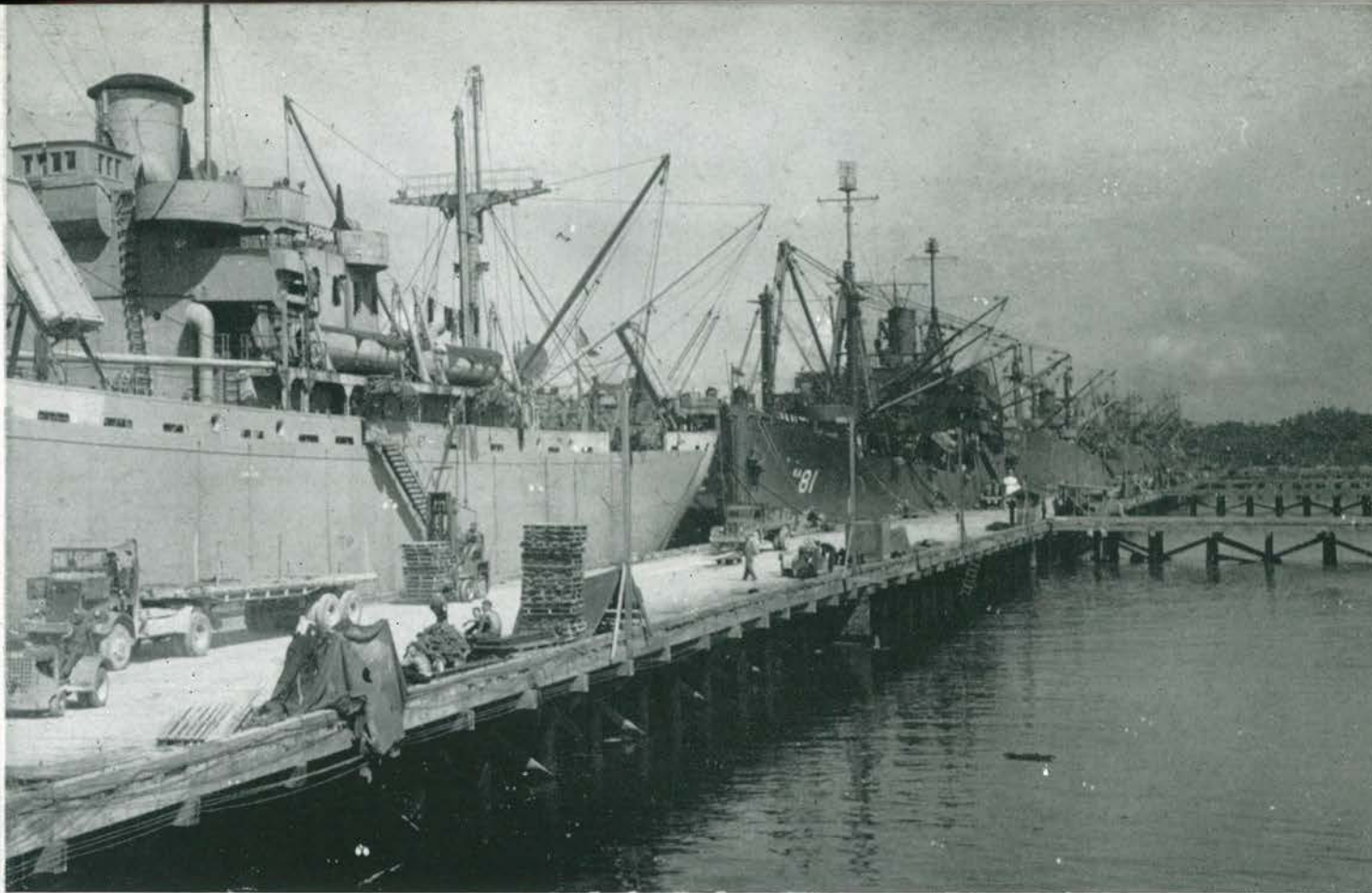
Right: 1. Dock and jetty at low tide, Naga, Samar, 2. Filipino children love school and are eager for education. Teachers in foreground. 3. Main Street, Salsedo, Samar.



OPERATIONS

Below: 1. New dock and finger piers viewed from crow's nest. 2. Tying up Liberty ship at Calicoan. 3. Loading "Mexican Sugar" on lowbed truck trailer.



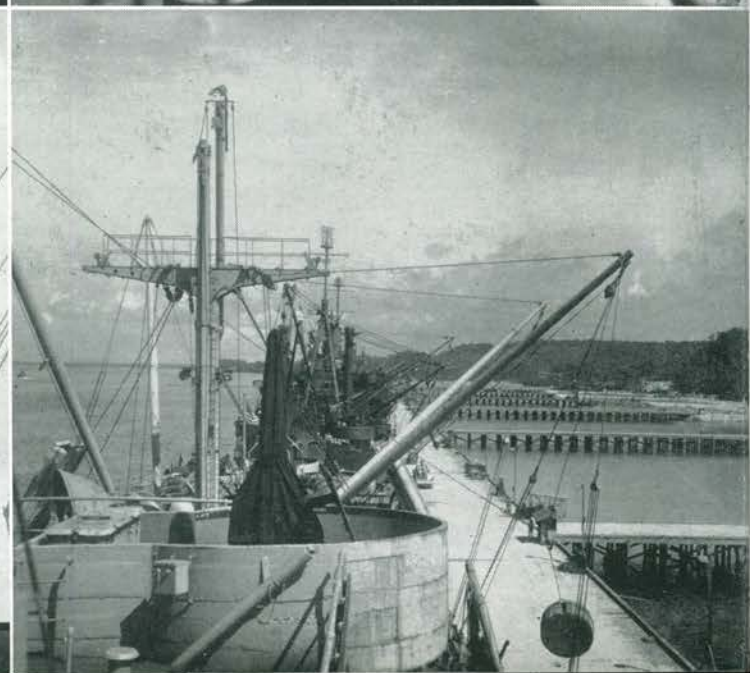
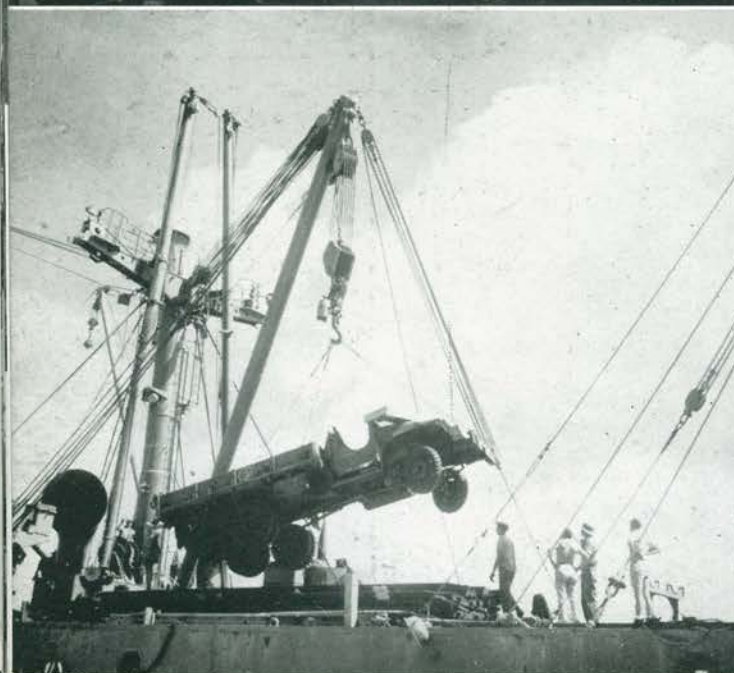
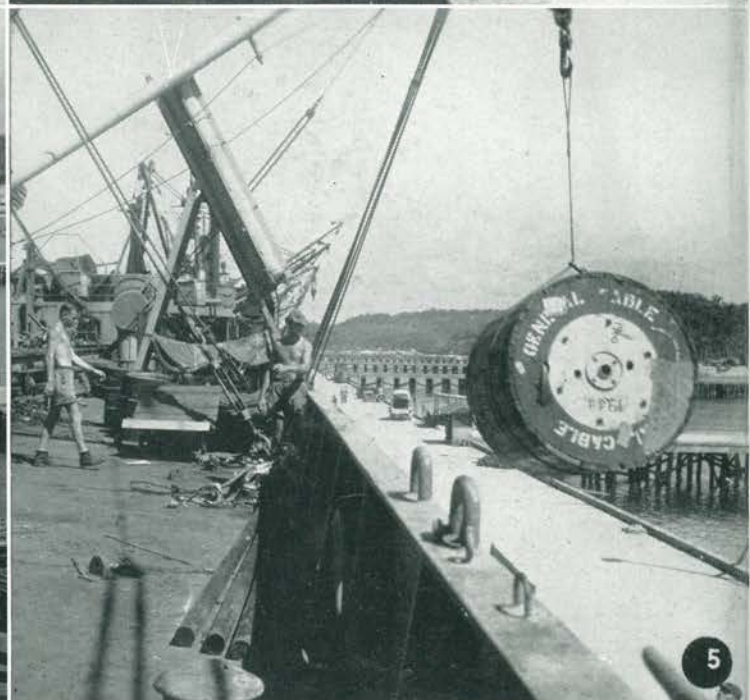
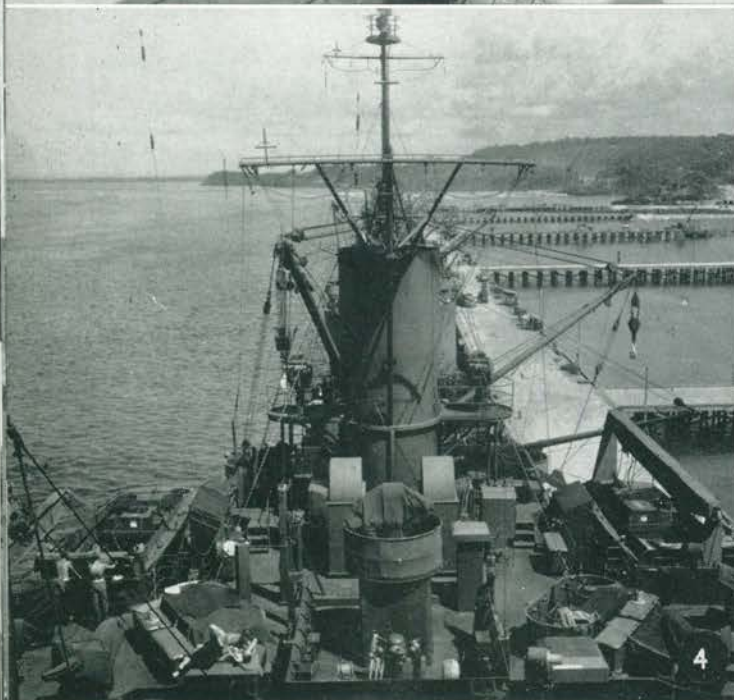


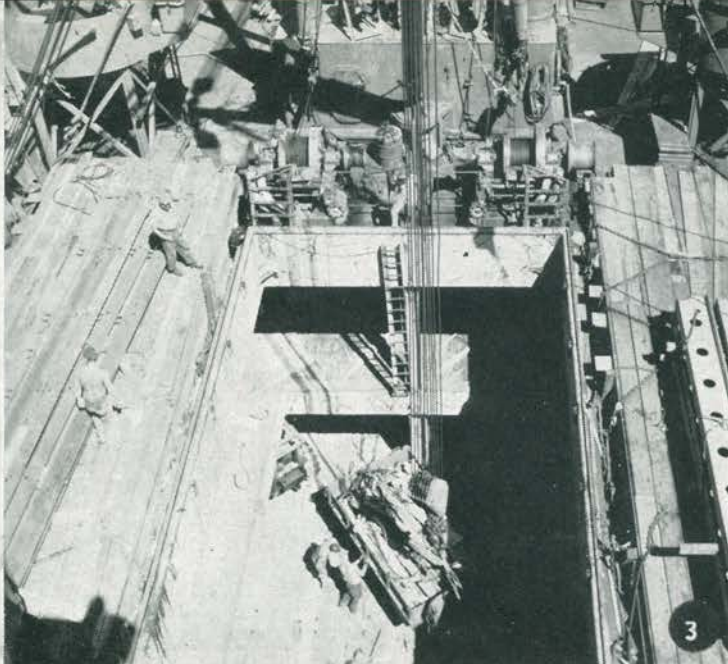
Around the clock the Fifth Special men kept the "hook" moving.



Lumber carrier or Straddle truck, with a load of plywood.

Left: 1. Looking down the falls as the heavy lift crane snags a landing craft. 2. A pretty good hookful. 3. Interesting design in lumber hold. 4. "Fork truck," "lift jitney," the "Bull," the "Goose" or what have you, picks up two salmon boards.





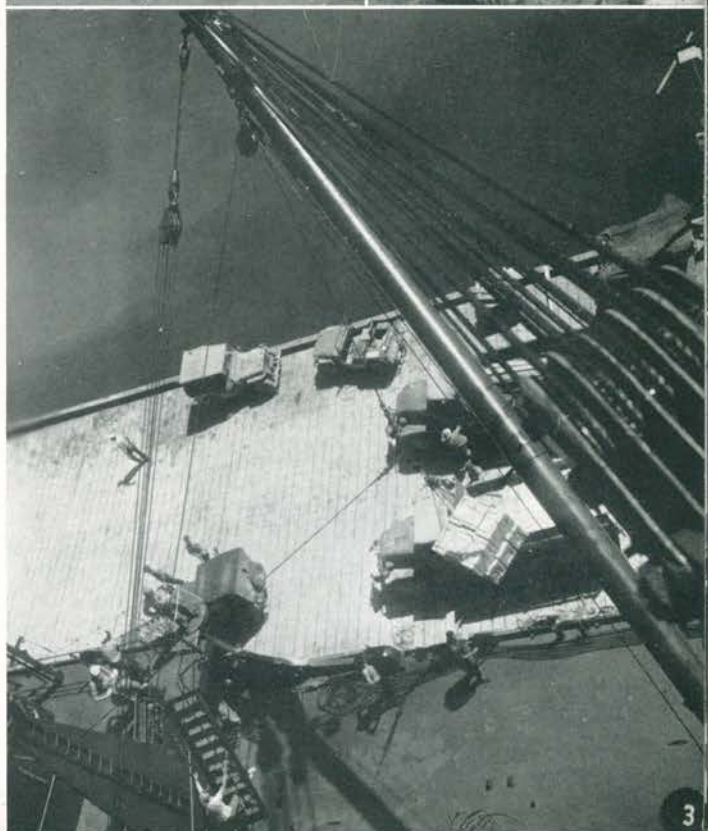
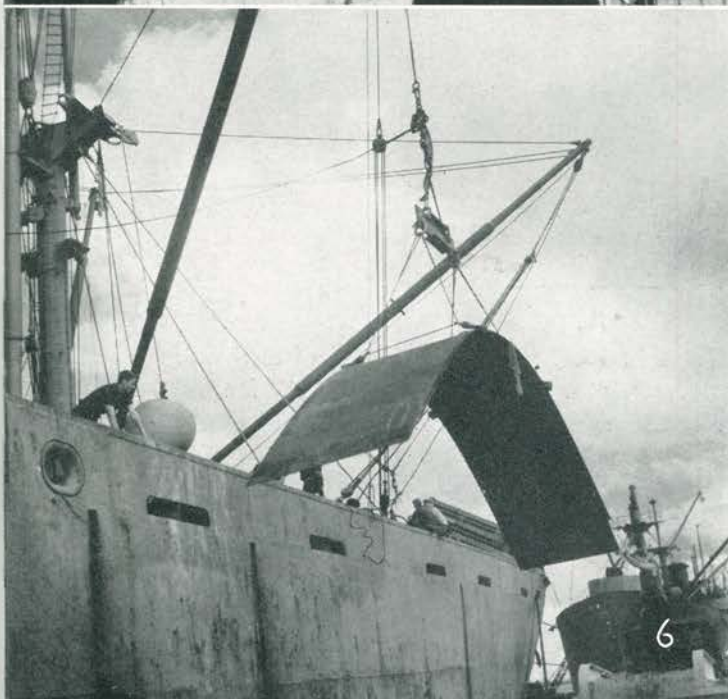
(Opposite page): 1. Making up drafts on salmon boards, 2. "Long stuff," for more dock building, 4. Looking down on navigation bridge of Navy ship. 5. "Heads up!" 7. Jumbo boom picking up a truck. 8. Six months before this was a coral beach.



Left: 3. Looking down into ship's hold. 6. Heavy sheets of steel. 9. Big hook picks up a light one.



Below: 1. Steady hands and cool heads are needed on this job. 2. Settling down a bulldozer on a lowbed trailer, 3. Looking along the boom as it lowers a draft of general cargo to the truck below.





Commendations

January 12, 1945, Guiuan, Samar. . . . The operation of discharging the cargo has been most efficient . . . best experienced in forward area . . . men worked exceptionally well . . . cooperation and efficiency is greatly appreciated.

DAVID PORTER, Master, S. S. Meteor.

✱

February 3, 1945, Guiuan, Samar. . . . Extremely efficient discharging and cargo handling methods . . . employed on this ship . . . Fifth Special performed their duties more capably than any other unit with which we have had contact. Excellent stevedoring principles and practices observed at all times . . . my opinion . . . work compares very favorably with best stevedoring gangs seen in various United States ports.

W. LINK, Master, S. S. Jacob A. Westervelt.

March 1, 1945, Calicoan Island. . . . I cannot help commenting on the speed and efficiency with which the work was accomplished, as well as the care taken in the use of the ship's equipment.

W. C. WALLACE, Master, S. S. Jim Bridger.



March 17, 1945, Calicoan Island. . . . Work was done just as efficiently and quickly as it could have been done in one of the long established ports in the states.

C. R. BLAIN, Master, S. S. Peter Desmet.



May 3, 1945, Calicoan Island. . . . I take this opportunity of expressing my complete satisfaction with the performance of the men in discharging the cargo from my vessel. The work was accomplished with speed and dispatch.

CAPT. A. H. BEEKEN, Master, S. S. Ambrose Bierce.



June 19, 1945, Calicoan Island. . . . In serving as mate on various ships in both the Atlantic and Pacific, I have been in a position to judge and compare the different battalions that have worked our ship. The initiative, skill and cooperation that your officers and men have exhibited while discharging and loading our vessel has placed them far in the lead of all such battalions I have encountered.

A. E. SINNES, Chief Mate, S. S. Owen Summers.



August 14, 1945, Calicoan Island. . . . The proficiency and speed with which the Fifth Special discharged my vessel demands me to write. The care and highly efficient manner in which they handled the rockets, dynamite, blasting caps and other high explosives and highly inflammable cargo is certainly deserving of praise. I have had many units of the Armed Forces and civilian stevedores discharge cargo from my ship but at no time has it been handled with more speed and efficiency.

R. W. HILL, Master, S. S. Rainbow.

Commendations

Commendations

September 13, 1945.

From: Officer in Charge of Construction, Navy 3149, c/o FPO San Francisco, Calif.

To: Secretary of the Navy

Subject: U. S. Fifth Special Naval Construction Battalion, Recommendation for award of Navy Unit Commendation to.

1. It is recommended that the Navy Unit Commendation be awarded to the U. S. Fifth Special Naval Construction Battalion for extremely meritorious service in connection with its stevedoring operations at U. S. Naval Station, Navy 3149, Samar, Philippine Islands, during the period from 10 December 1944, to 31 July 1945.

2. This stevedoring battalion arrived at Guiuan, Samar, 10 December 1944. The convoy which brought the battalion to Samar was subjected to twelve separate enemy air attacks en route and sustained heavy casualties, including one ship sunk. Upon arriving at the port of Guiuan the subject battalion immediately commenced stevedoring operations and pioneered in establishing the stevedoring activity at that port. During the first weeks of its activities at Guiuan this battalion worked under incessant day and night alerts, and operations were on a twenty-four per day basis. On 25 December 1944, a troop ship being unloaded in Guiuan Harbor was torpedoed by an enemy plane causing many casualties which the subject battalion assisted in evacuating.

3. During the early stages of the Fifth Special Battalion's work at Guiuan there were no dock or landing facilities and stevedoring operations consisted exclusively of ship to barge work. These operations were during a period of extremely inclement weather, including high winds and torrential downpours. Adverse weather conditions, high seas and dangerous shoals and reefs in the then uncharted harbor rendered the work ex-

ceptionally hazardous. The enforced use of inadequate native trails and roads presented serious problems in the transporting of cargo, and the shortage of available manpower restricted the establishment and maintenance of suitable storage yards and dumps.

4. On 10 February 1945, the Fifth Special Battalion was transferred to Calicoan, Samar, where it again pioneered in establishing the stevedoring activity and synchronizing procedures with the cargo receiving agencies. At the time of its arrival in the Philippine Islands the personnel of this battalion was at less than half strength, and at no time did its on-board complement exceed three-quarters strength. Although short-handed, the Fifth Special Battalion led all other stevedoring battalions at the U. S. Naval Station, Navy 3149, by a wide margin in tonnage handled for every month of the period covered by this recommendation. In the month of May 1945 this unit, with only 16 per cent of the stevedoring personnel at this Station, accounted for 41 per cent of the total tonnage handled. From the date of its arrival to 31 July 1945, the battalion worked a total of 734,007 cubic tons.

5. During the period of stevedoring operations in this area, the Fifth Special Battalion has received eight letters of commendation from the Masters of ships worked by the battalion, with numerous endorsements of further commendation by the Naval Station. These commendations referred to untiring efforts, speed, efficiency and careful handling on the part of the Battalion, and note the sincerity of purpose and cooperation expressed by all hands concerned. It is considered that this unit has distinguished itself by extremely meritorious service and has proved outstanding in performance of duty in comparison with other similar units.

W. H. GODSON,
By direction.

Commendations



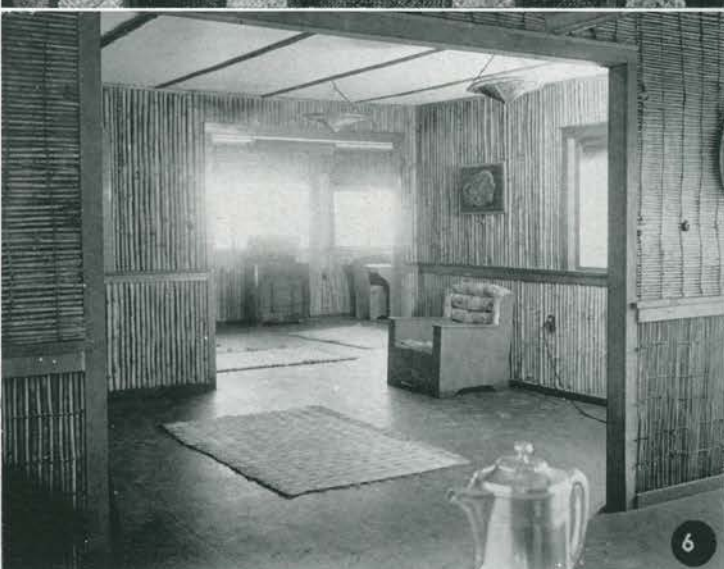
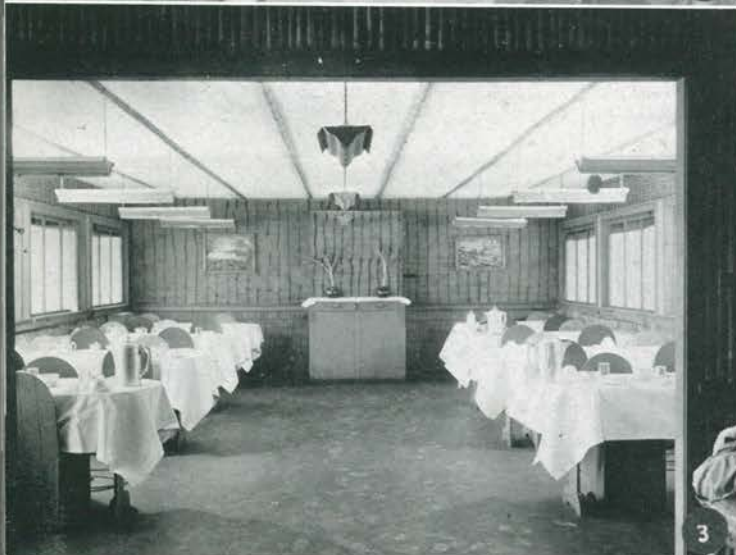
(At left): Our camp street at Calicoan. At left of picture is the boxing ring, tailor shop and barber. (Below): Commodore R. H. Meade officer-in-charge of construction makes tour of camp inspection with our officers.

(Opposite page): Assorted views of the Fifth's camp area, Home-by-the-Sea at Calicoan. Being in the typhoon belt you will notice that all buildings are lashed down by taut cables and cargo nets.

Below: Scenes of our chapel at Calicoan. The framework was erected by our men but the roof and palm leaf treatment was done by Filipinos. Captain Albert of the 7th Fleet officiated at dedication.







1. Reception given the Guian school teachers in the new Officers' Mess. 2. Exterior of Officers' Mess. 3. Dining room. 4. The Mess was named after the famous Cafe in Oakland, California. 5. Writing and Cardroom. 6. Our carpenters built the furniture, the walls and mats were woven by Filipino workers.



Chief Burrell, first man to go home on the "Over 42" plan cuts the cake. The Skipper seems amused. General view of going away party given Chief Burrell in C. P. O.'s Mess.



Dining under the palms.



Pay-day line-up.

1. Company "B" musters for work. 2. Up from the docks for chow. 3. Chow line stampede.





NAGA

(At Left): Alter at Noga, Samar was entirely built and decorated by pious villagers. The candelabra are copied from the Octopus, a food delicacy of these people. Plaster Saints seem always attired in high red boots.

Opposite page: 1. End of voyage. 2. Naga skyline. 3. Coral jetty. 4. Low tide. 5. Filipino Express. 6. Old covered bridge. 7. Traffic jam. 8. Python country.



(Above): Conchita, the village beauty, hasn't forgotten the Japanese occupation, but she's happy now.

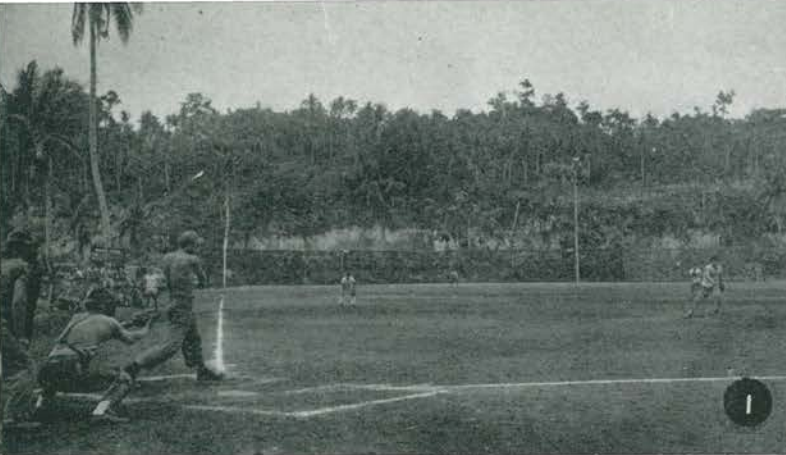
(Right): The pause that refreshes.



Everyone seems very serious, considering boy at left with girl's dress is Naga's leading comedian.







B A S E B A L L

1. "Strike one!" 2. South paw. 3. Slam it. 4. "Safe a mile!" 5. The Fifth at bat. 6. "A three bagger."



The Fifth Special Baseball Team.

B A S K E T B A L L

1. Officers vs. Chiefs. 2. A tense moment. 3. Night flight. 4. Regulation court. 5. "Basket." 6. Football or basketball?



The Fifth's Varsity.



Promoters, announcers, referees, seconds and leather pushers. The Fifth Special Battalion's boxing stable and trainers.

BOXING

When the smoke had cleared from the many Boxing Arena's on the Isles of Calicoan and Samar, the Fifth Special Sluggers carried with them an enviable record. In eight meets, against the best competition the Army, Naval Station, and other Seabee outfits boasted, our team showed a total of sixteen wins, six draws, and only eight losses. The Team's number one puncher and a character long to be remembered was our own Ikey Knight the Mobile Mauler. Considering the fact that our fighters worked each day and trained whenever they managed to find the time, we are especially appreciative of the fine entertainment they gave us.



1. "—a spearhead of heavy tanks hit the enemy in its vulnerable points—" 2. "—with low level bombing our men left the enemy groggy—" 3. "—a small contingent on our left flank stunned the enemy as we readied our striking force on our right—" 4. "—bombarding the enemy's beach head we followed through with our main drive—"

An owl's eye view of the new stadium.



The old ring.



ENTER- TAINMENT





Like a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

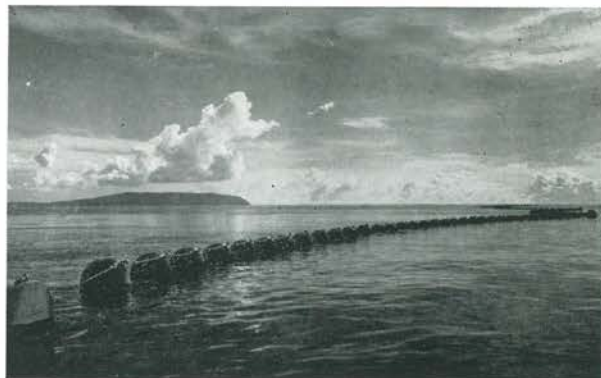
ABBANTANGELO, F. M., 45-12 162nd St., Flushing, N. Y.
 ABBATE, P. J., 36 Southard Ave., Rockville Centre, N. Y.
 ABLAMSKY, A., 635 East Sixth St., New York, N. Y.
 ABRAHAMSEN, G. L., 478 Bond St., Astoria, Ore.
 ADAMS, R. E., 58 West Prospect St., Ventura, Calif.
 ADKINS, W. C., Box 18, Boulevard, Va.
 ADLER, B., 3475 Knox Place, Bronx, New York, N. Y.
 AKIN, J. D., Mountain Aire, New Mexico.
 ALBERS, R. G., Albers Apts., Chehalis, Wash.
 ALBERTHAL, J. H., Box 228, Deer Park, Wash.
 ALBERTONI, C. A., 65 Spring Lane, Fairfax, Marin County, Calif.
 ALCORN, H., Willow Springs, Mo.
 ALDRIDGE, J. W., Amherst, Tex.
 ALFORD, E. T., 1051 Sierra Ave., Martinez, Calif.
 ALKON, D., 3027 West 22nd St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 ALLEN, L. W., 1015 S. Fourth Ave., Maywood, Ill.
 ALLEN, J. F., 4953 Emerson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.
 ALLPHIN, E. F., Rt. 1, Box 796, Oxnard, Calif.
 ALNUTT, J. G., 307 Letcher Ave., Lexington, Va.
 ALTMIRE, O. M., Macks Place, Box 24, Boyers, Pa.
 ALVARADO, S., 4803 Broadway, Galveston, Tex.
 AMOS, R., 2232 S. Ransom Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.
 ANDERSON, G. C., 2518 W. 15th St., Los Angeles, Calif.
 ANDERSON, J. R., 1601 39th St., Sacramento, Calif.
 ANDERSON, R. F., 655 E. 81st St., Chicago, Ill.
 ANDERSON, W. D., 332 Elm St., Perth Amboy, N. J.
 ANDRAKIN, T., 101 E. Julian St., Apt. 9, San Jose, Calif.
 ANGLIN, G. F., 204 S. Matteson St., Maquoketa, Iowa.
 ANTROBUS, E., Masson, Ky.
 ANTROBUS, H., Masson, Ky.
 ARCHER, J. P., 806 Waugh Drive, Houston, Tex.
 ARKATIN, P., Chesapeake City, Md.
 ARMSTRONG, N. L., 825 E. 258 St., Euclid, Ohio.
 ARMSTRONG, R. L., Antwerp, Ohio.
 ARNOLD, G. L., Box 178, Onalaska, Wash.
 ARNOLD, R. I., 414 Jackson St., Taft, Calif.
 ASBURY, K. E., 2724 Clarendon Ave., Huntington Park, Calif.
 ASHER, H. C., 144 N. California St., Stockton, Calif.
 ASPENSON, C., Gays Mills, Wis.
 ASSELSTINE, C., 728 Bluff St., Enderlin, N. D.
 ATTEBERY, E. M., 537 A St., Hayward, Calif.
 AUDET, R. J., 183 Sabbathus St., Lewiston, Maine.
 AYRES, B., Box 374, Osborn, Kan.
 BAGLEY, E. E., Box 67, Weaverville, Calif.
 BAKER, H. E., 906 Ojai Road, Santa Paula, Calif.

BALDWIN, L. I., 12 Grand Blvd., Baldwin, L. I., N. Y.
 BALES, G. A., 610 West Fifth St., Topeka, Kan.
 BALL, H. C., 134 Duke St., East Greenwich, R. I.
 BALL, J. H., 734 East Anaheim St., Long Beach, Calif.
 BANKO, E. J., 312 Suydam St., New Brunswick, N. J.
 BARCO, W. S., 3338 Trafalgar St., New Orleans, La.
 BARKER, W. T., 505 Market St., Brownsville, Pa.
 BARRAZA, T. M., Gen. Del., El Paso, Tex.
 BARRETT, J. F., 314 East 240th St., New York, N. Y.
 BARRETT, S. C., 630 Ridge Road, East, Rochester, N. Y.
 BARRETT, W. E., 505 Eighth Ave., No., St. Cloud, Minn.
 BARRON, T. H., 4540 Tackawanna St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 BASINGER, E. O., 654 East 12th St., Pomona, Calif.
 BASLER, P., Box 283, Polson, Mont.
 BASTIN, W. N., Rt. 3, Standford, Ky.
 BATES, P. D., 72 Mansfield St., Lynn, Mass.
 BATHURST, A. J., 131 West Second St., Chico, Calif.
 BAUER, E. R., 1330 Ralph St., Rosemead, Calif.
 BAUGH, J. W., Rt. 1, Box 27, Warrenton, N. C.
 BAUSTAIN, B. F., 2625 Jackson St., Long Beach, Calif.
 BAXTER, C. L., 4018 Pelham Road, Dearborn, Mich.
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Submarine net guards trail away in symmetrical perspective.





The coral island raised itself from the deep like a sea monster.

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Indefatigable iron ants eating the mountains away.



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The Skipper says a few words to the first men discharged on points.



O'er the gladwaters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as Boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home.

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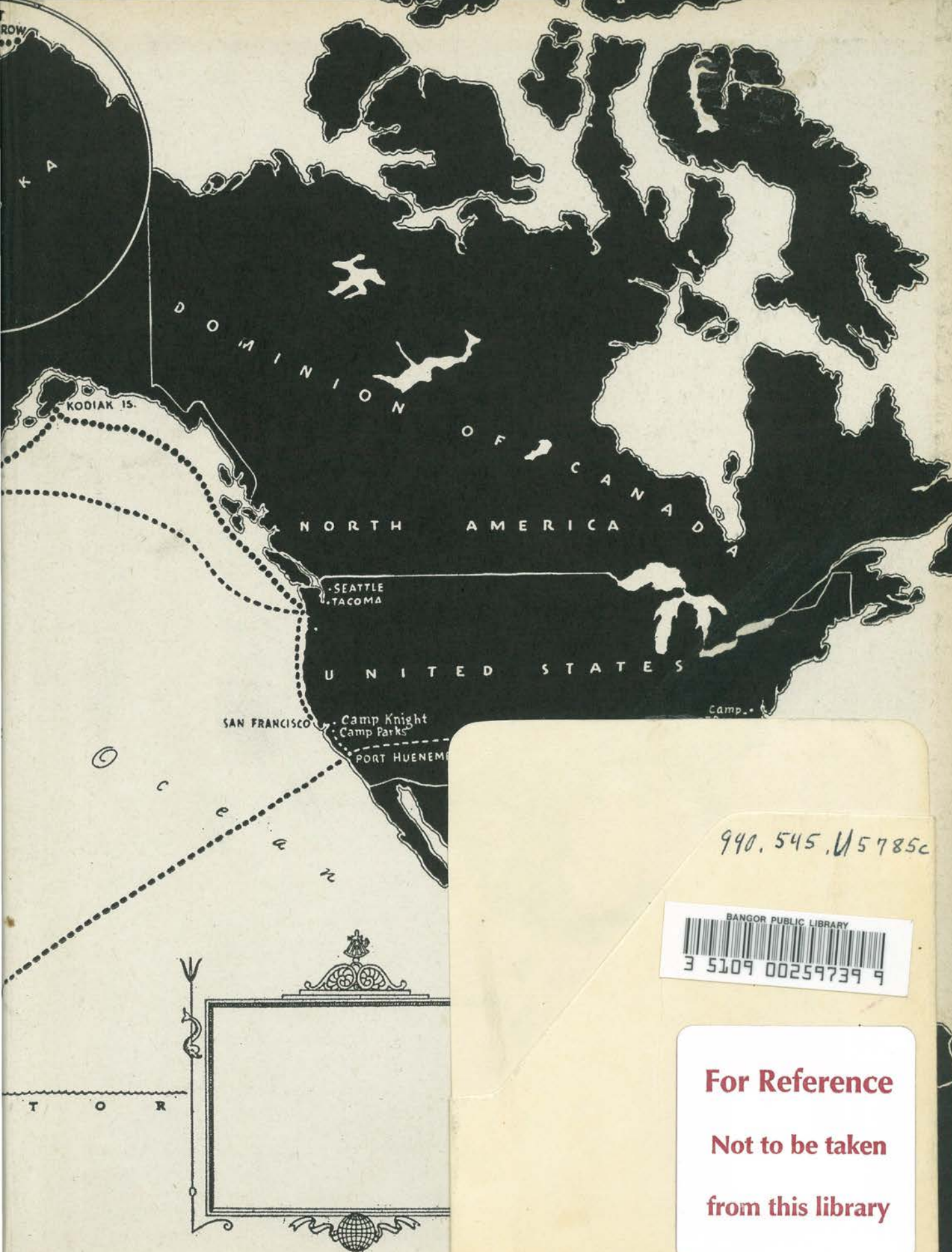
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