

84th
NCB
1945



2nd
Anniversary
1945



VA
83
84C.B.



The
United States
Naval Construction
Battalion

84



FOREWORD

On February 10, 1943, eleven hundred officers and men, formally commissioned as the Eighty-Fourth Naval Construction Battalion, solemnly pledged themselves to the service of their country.

Primary training was completed at Endicott, followed by advanced training and final issue of equipment at Camp Parks and Port Hueneme.

A long ocean voyage, a brief sojourn in Australia, and the battalion began its march toward Tokyo, step by step, closely following our victorious landing forces. Contingents, companies and echelons, depending on the size of the job, completed special assignments as well as combining on the major jobs. A future re-union of the battalion would be a review of the War in the South Pacific. Long after the war is over, mates may use this book as a reminder of work done and friends made.

The battalion has carried high the banner "Can Do". The record of achievement is viewed with pardonable pride.

This book makes no claim to be a complete story of those achievements, nor a final record. The reader will recognize the military considerations and proper restrictions which must be considered in compiling a written record during war time, and view the pages which follow not as a catalogue, but rather as a reminder of jobs well done. The complete story of Seabee achievements, in which the 84th N. C. B. is proud to have played its part, awaits Victory.

The Editors

UNITED STATES NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS

"Pride in the privilege which has been conferred upon us; of serving and supporting the striking forces, and participating with them in active combat when the need arises and opportunity affords." Vice Admiral Ben Moreell, head of the "Seabees".

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

In October, 1941, Moreell conceived the idea of construction battalions, the first company consisting of 99 men. On December 7 came the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, and the first regiment of 3300 men was promptly organized. On January 26, 1942, the first battalion of the first regiment began training at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. Calling of Civil Engineer Corps officers to active duty began. An angry, well-armed worker bee became the symbol of the "Seabees", (C. B.). When enlistments closed on October 31, 1943, they numbered 262,000.

"The Seabees have come forward as an institution more quickly than anyone I know of in the whole of our history, and all of us back home and out at the front are mighty proud of you." President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

From our Aussie comrades-in-arms comes the following tribute: "The Navy's troops, but everyone's heroes. They are the super construction gangs of the Pacific War, the men who convert battle-torn islands into formidable bases, not while you wait--but while you watch!" From the Brisbane, Australia, "Telegraph".

Adm. William Halsey, commander of the South Pacific naval forces, aptly summarized Seabee and allied unit accomplishments in the following words: "Our magnificent engineers, Navy Seabees and Army units, hewed airfields out of jungles. We got the planes into them in time to stem all enemy counter-attacks. We went into harbors where little if any docking facilities existed, and built them. We cut the turn-around time of cargo ships from weeks to days. It is with the deepest gratitude that I pay tribute to these components of the South Pacific Force. Thanks to their labors, we now have the spring-boards from which our future offensives must be launched. We have a date in Tokio."

In that great project, the 84th has sought to do its part.



CIVIL ENGINEERS, VOLUNTEER RESERVE
(Special Service) CEC - V(S)

"Officers of the Civil Engineer Corps", says the Personnel manual, "are charged with the design, construction, and maintenance of all facilities entering into the shore establishment of the Navy."

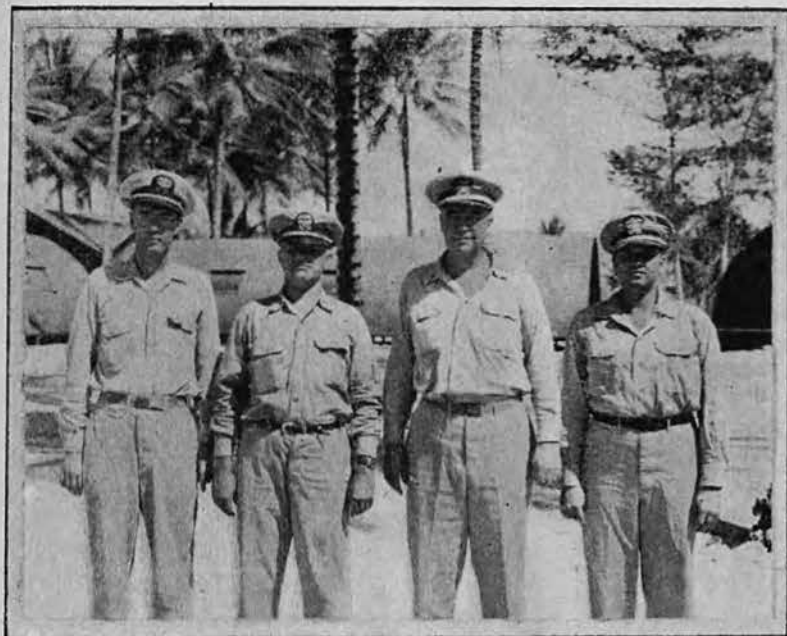
"The wide scope of engineering activities comprises drydocks, marine railways, shipbuilding ways, harbor works, quay walls, piers, wharves, ships, dredging, landing, floating and stationary cranes, power plants, coaling plants, hangars, flying fields, seaplane ramps, heating, lighting, telephone, water, sewer, and railroad systems; roads, walks, and grounds; bridges, radio towers, hospitals, shops, barracks, and all buildings for whatever purpose required."

These tasks were undertaken and completed successfully under conditions that required engineering skill and inventiveness of the highest order. Jungle and climatic obstacles, combined with war urgencies and often battlefield conditions, had to be overcome.

Skill, nerves, bone and muscle were often drawn to a razor edge, but the job was done. Regulations, customs and precedents went overboard in the speediest and vastest construction job in the annals of war.

The skill and versatility displayed by the Civil Engineer Corps in performing these many and varied duties stirred the admiration of the world, and contributed much to the almost legendary fame of the Seabees.

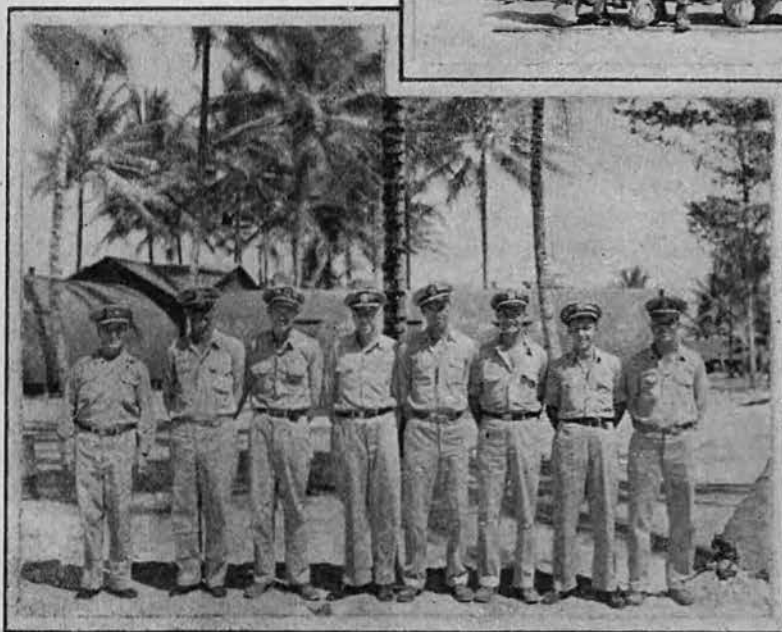
No finer record of devotion to duty can be found in American history.



Officer in Charge
and Staff



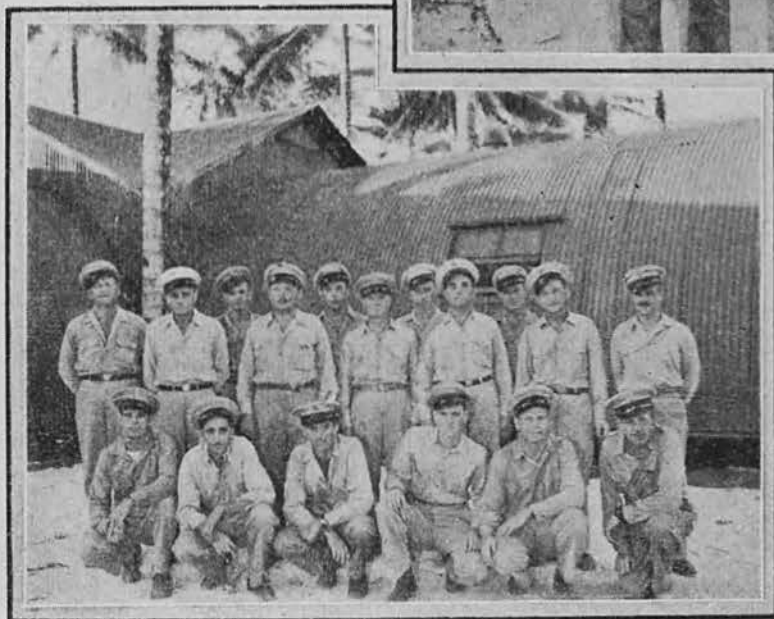
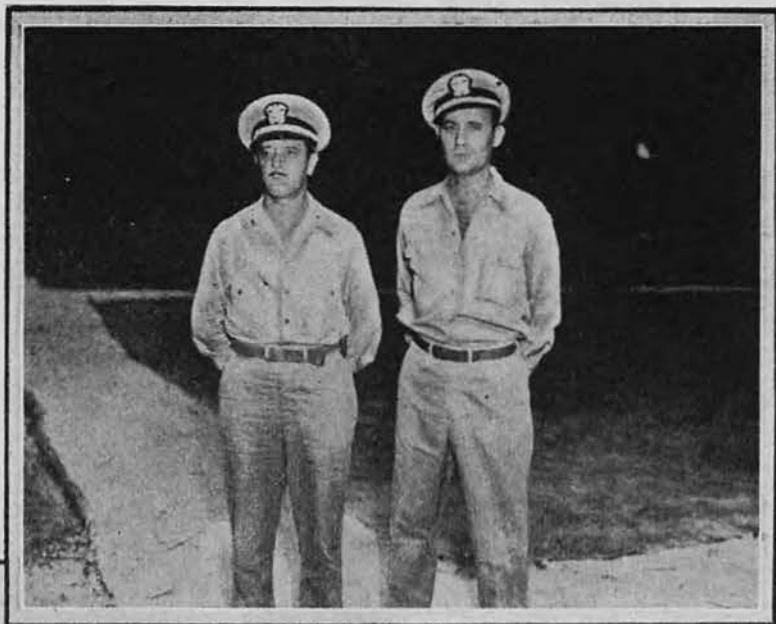
Battalion Officers



Remaining Original
84th Officers



Headquarters Company
Officers



Headquarters Company
Chiefs



HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

Comprising the staffs of the administrative offices, yeoman, storekeepers, engineers, cooks, bakers and medical corpsmen, the company has had a hand in every project undertaken by the 84th.

As each project required some or all of the functions of headquarters personnel, the men of this company furnish a cross-section of the many and varied achievements of the battalion.

Because their travels and work were so wide spread, it was only natural that this company became the number one "scuttlebutt" factory, and the tall tales often grew to unbelievable size.

From "feather merchants" to "engineers with hairy ears", they covered the waterfront.



Corpsmen, Yeoman,
Galley, Signalmen



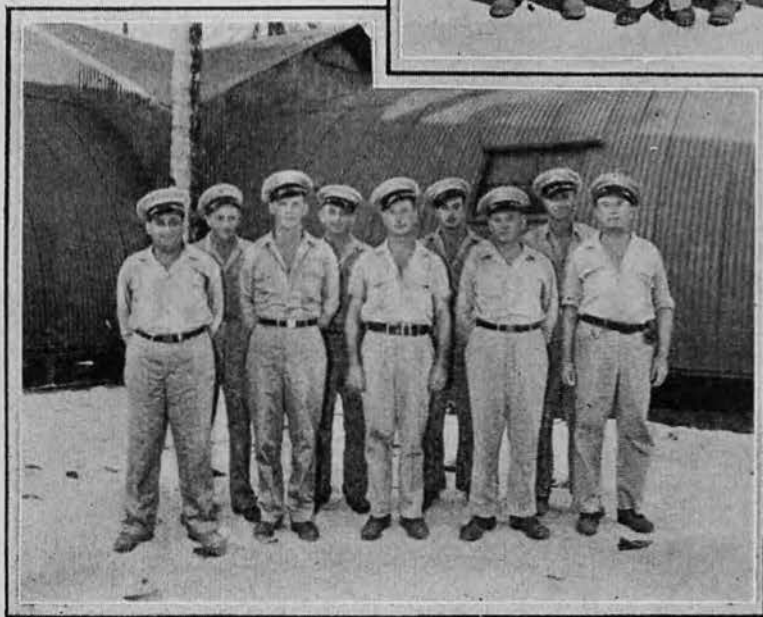
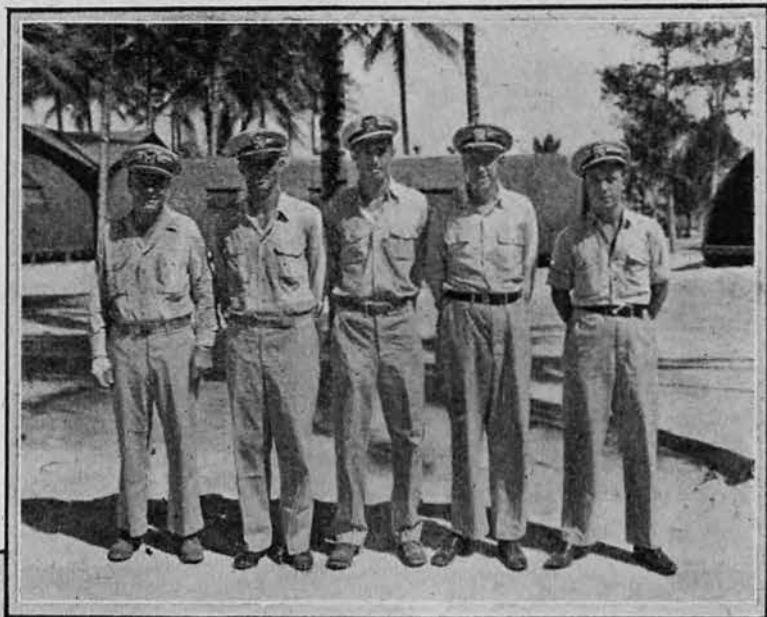
Engineers, Storekeepers
Post Office



Cooks and Bakers



**"A" Company
Officers**



**"A" Company
Chiefs**



"A" COMPANY

Four important stages on the road to Tokio may be proudly claimed by this company.

Island X (1). Participated on docks, jetties, warehouses, barracks, pontoons, roads, etc.

Island X (2). PBY depot, landing ramp, dock, hanger, camp, warehouses, magazines, etc.

Island X (3). Camp facilities, jetty, warehouses, and living quarters.

Island X (4). Dock, airfields, warehouses, quarters, roads and general base facilities.

Add to the above, general construction work in Australia, and this company has made great and innumerable contributions to the record of Naval Construction Battalion Eighty-Four.



Platoon 1



Platoon 2



Platoon 3



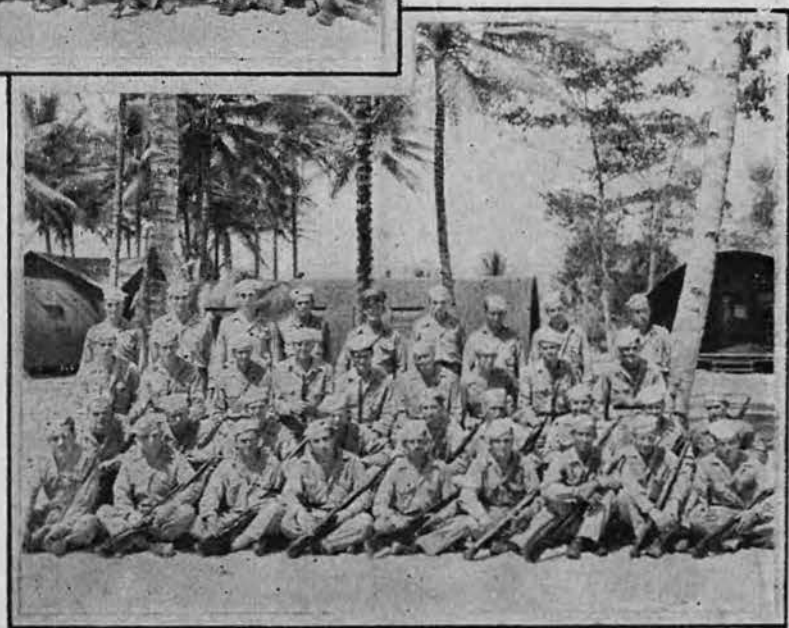
Platoon 4

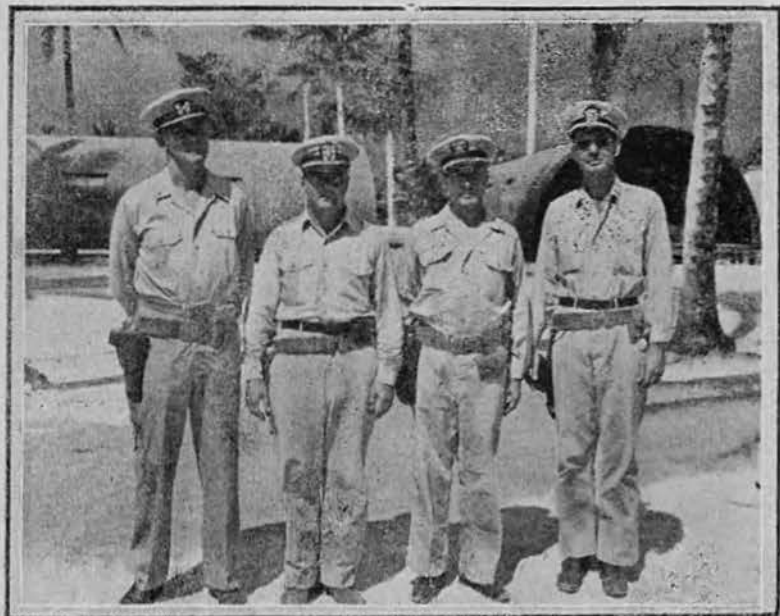


Platoon 5

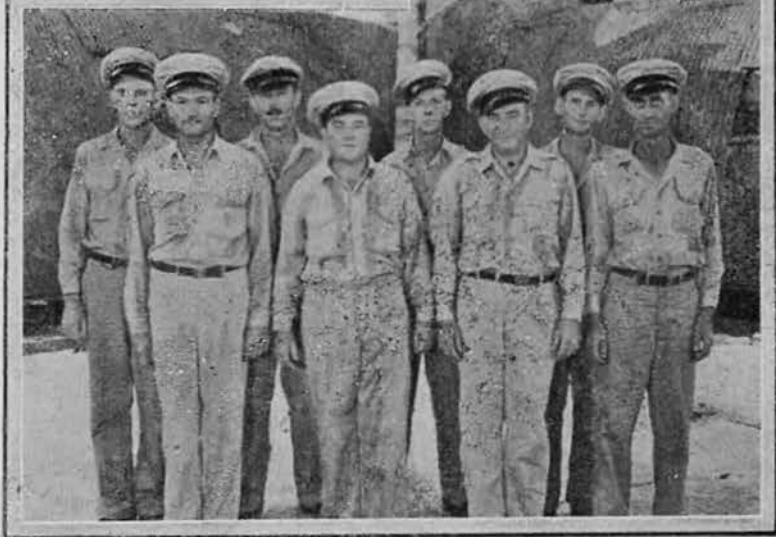


Platoon 6





"B" Company
Officers



"B" Company
Chiefs



"B" COMPANY

Arriving in Australia as an integral part of the battalion, the company operated as a detached unit until rejoining their mates on Island X (4).

In Australia their first project, building up the original Seabee receiving camp, followed by a large hospital project for 1500 beds, complete with galley, water supply, sewage, electricity, and all necessary facilities.

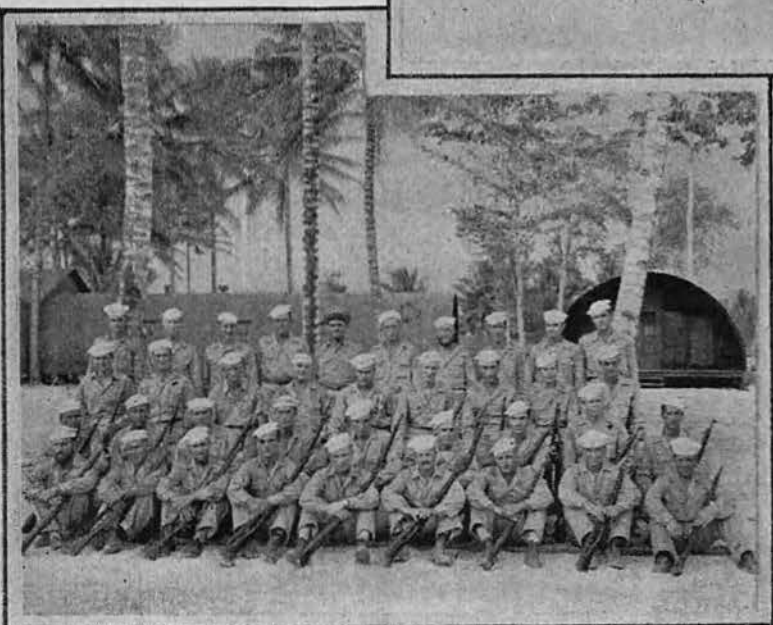
At a north Australia port, then under severe enemy air attack, they modernized Naval facilities and constructed "Seabee City", a remarkable lot of achievements for a small echelon.

"Camp Bado Kuji", on a strategically important island, was the scene of marine railway and jetty operations.

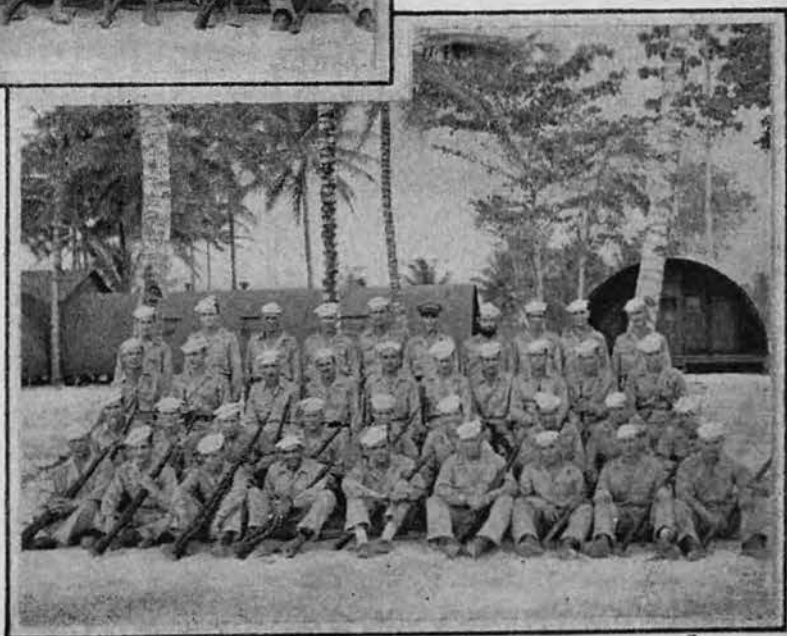
Platoon 1

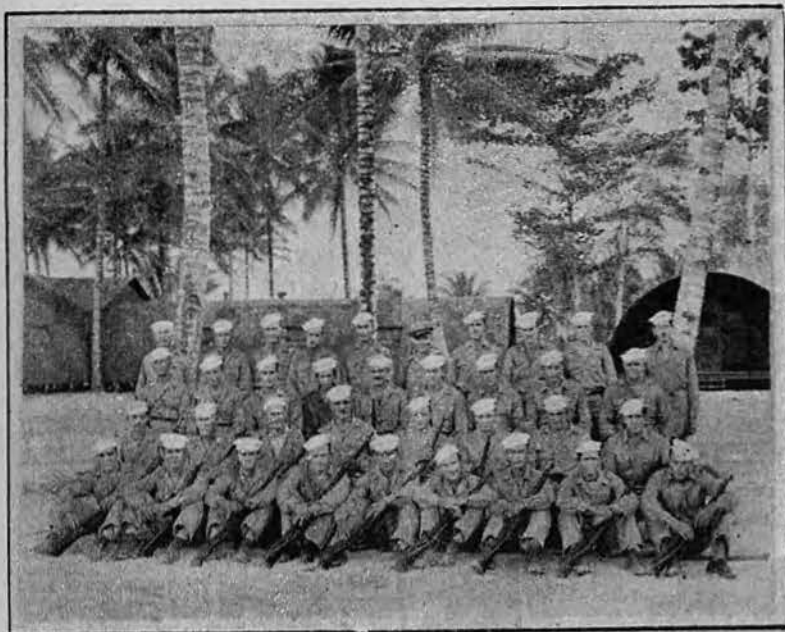


Platoon 2



Platoon 3

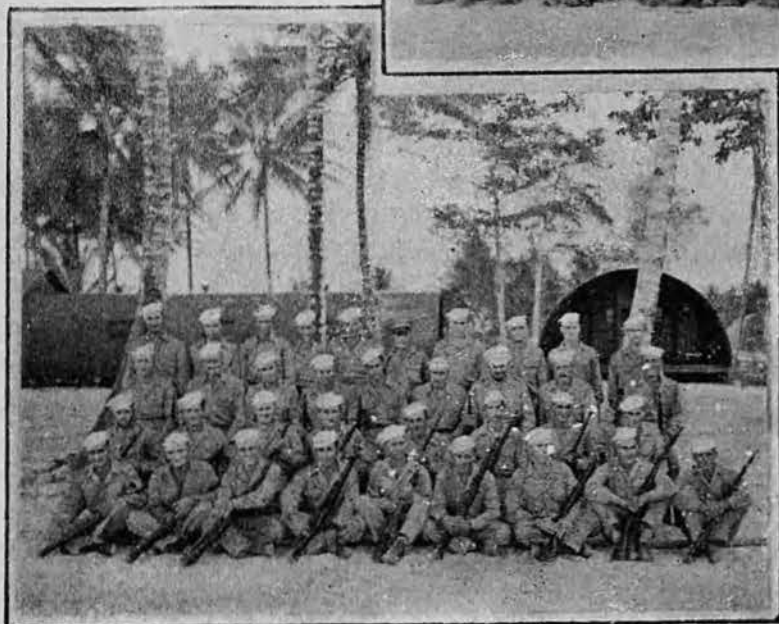
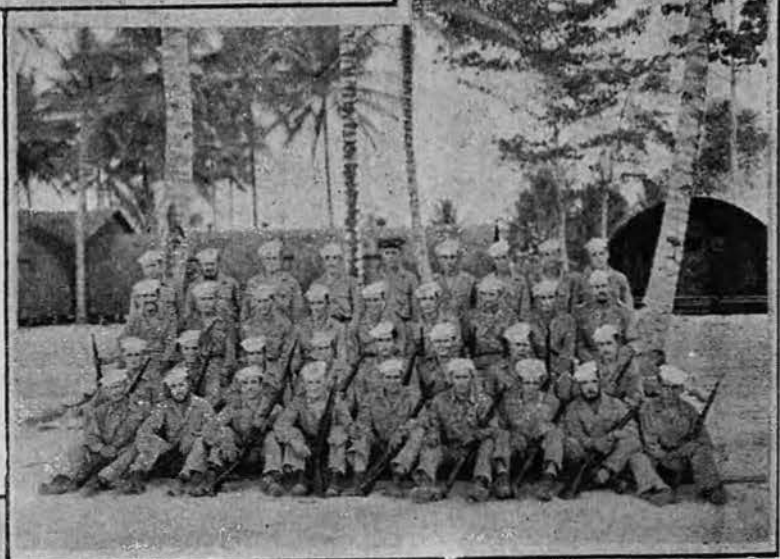




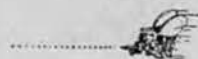
Platoon 4



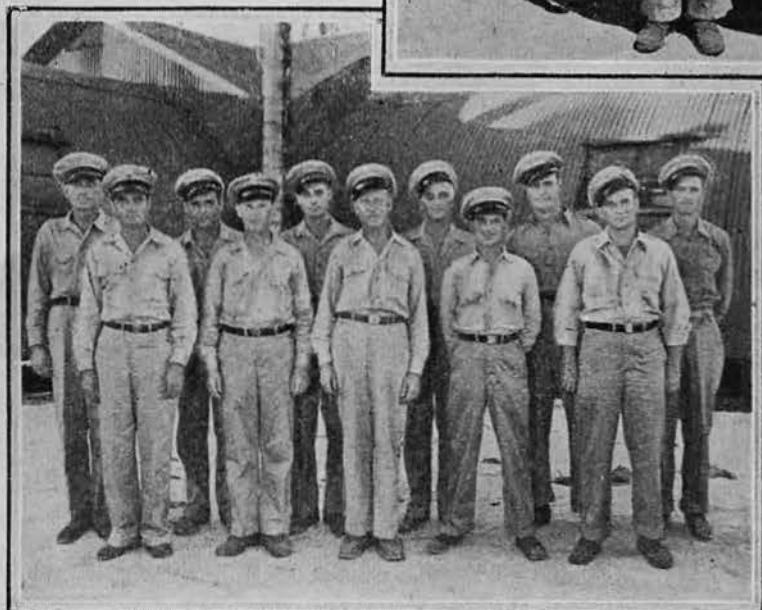
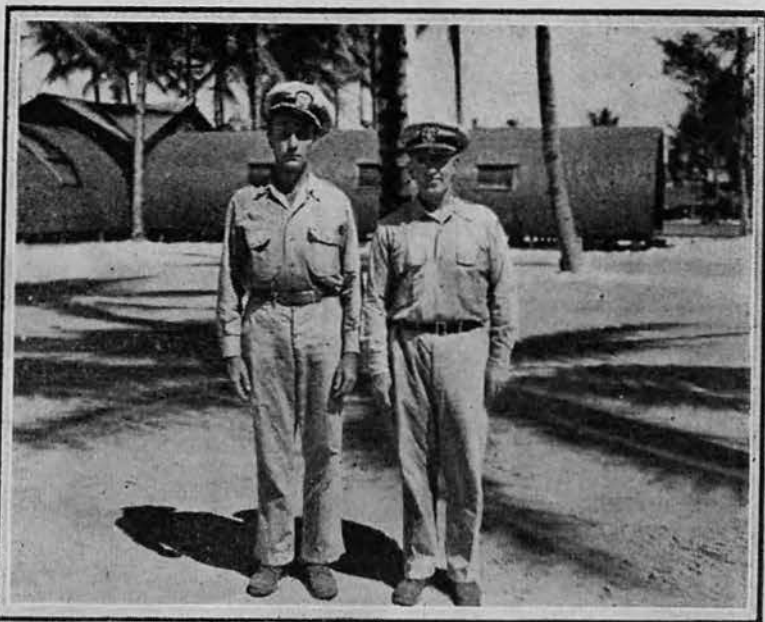
Platoon 5



Platoon 6



**"C" Company
Officers**



**"C" Company
Chiefs**



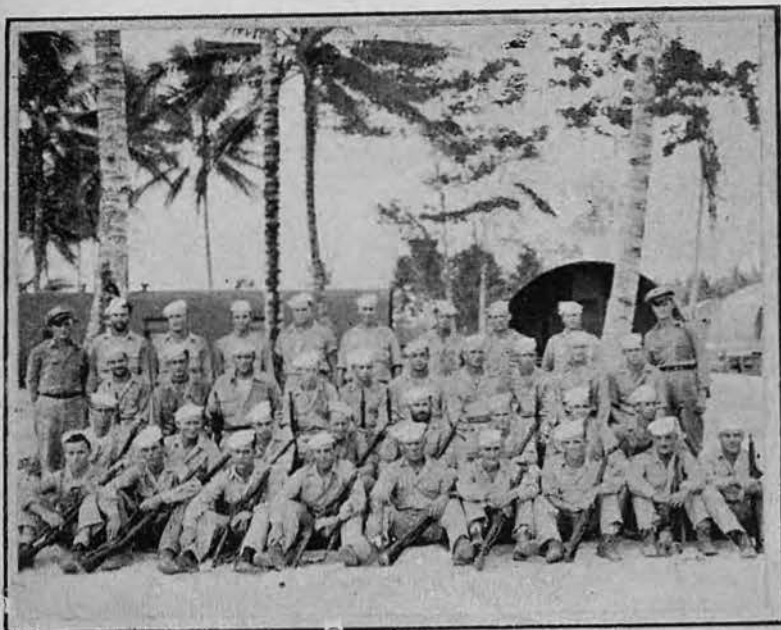
"C" COMPANY

Landing with company "A" and most of Headquarters company in a jungle wilderness on the shores of New Guinea, the company pioneered in the work of building what is today one of the greatest Naval bases in the Pacific.

Untouched since the dawn of Time, the mud and tangled jungle presented a challenge that was overcome only by tremendous work and skill.

Docks for sea-going ships, loading ramps, warehouses, roads and every conceivable service facility grew rapidly on the site of what had been a tiny native village by a small brook.

Achievements like this gave the world real proof that "CAN DO" meant exactly that.



Platoon 1



Platoon 2



Platoon 3



Platoon 1



Platoon 2



Platoon 3

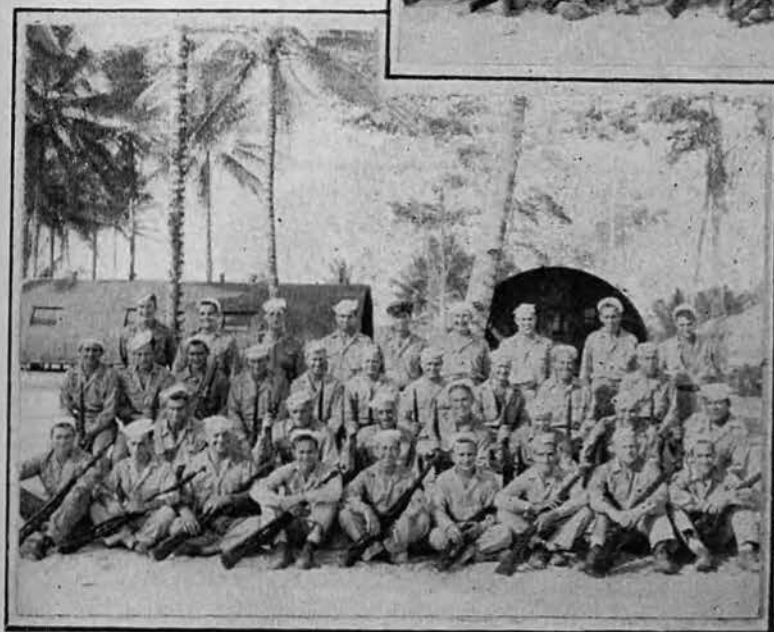




Platoon 4



Platoon 5



Platoon 6





Cooks & Bakers



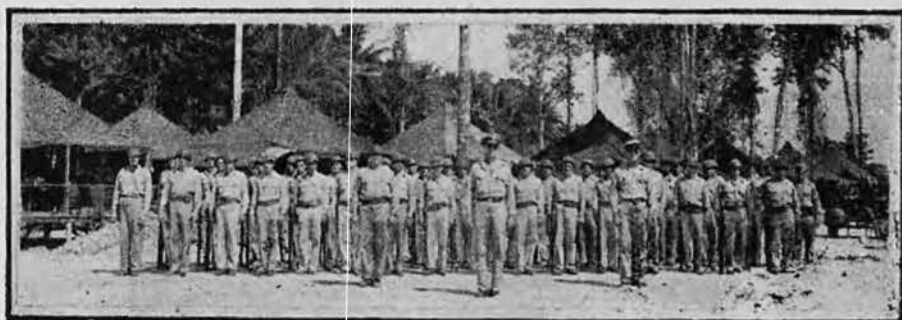
Galley Staff



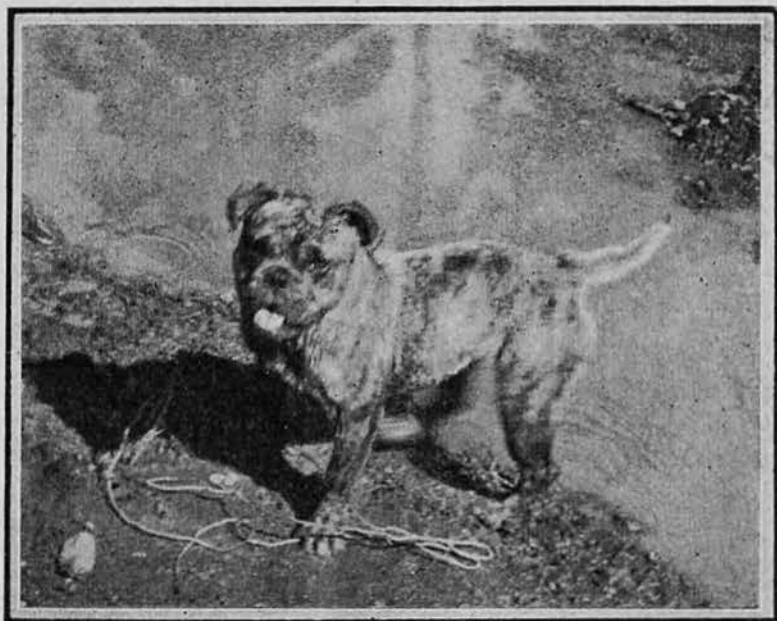
Guards



At Attention



TILLIE



Number One Sweetheart of the Coral Sea-
Homely of face and ungainly in gait-
With but one dress to her name, and an old one-
She was, nevertheless,
Unanimous sweetheart of the 84th.,
Darling of the Pacific Fleet,
Girl Friend of the Merchant Marine,
Supervisor of every project,
Champion hitchhiker of New Guinea,
A welcome lady guest in every tent,
Everybody's Sweetheart and Girl Friend-

Tillie !!!

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EIGHTY-FOURTH BATTALION

Certain dates are burned into the memory of all of us, but the men of the Eighty-Fourth Seabees have one particular date frozen into theirs. That memorable day began at 4 a.m., January 11, 1943. Eleven hundred frozen strangers huddled and shivered together between half finished barracks at Camp Endicott, Rhode Island. When night came, they were the 84th Naval Construction Battalion.

Three weeks that froze your bones, blistered your feet and ached your muscles, followed. Left, right, left, right, hep, hep, hep, extended order, bayonet drills, judo, made the "sack" a wonderful place to crawl or be lifted into by nightfall. Some were able to get out in the morning, unassisted.

Then came the day of days--the first Liberty night. Like boys with their first long pants, they rushed to the main street of Providence, then disappeared into every public place except the Carnegie Library. They had no need for books, having memorized the Bluejackets manual.

A snappy dress parade before the newly arrived officers, and the boot days were over. "Mac" no more, they were full-fledged "mates". Most startling discovery--that the instructors we held in the same awe as an admiral were mostly Seaman, First Class. Our morale shot up.

Home leave, and the rolling walk of real sailors was easier than we had figured, helped along by the tearing New York Central and some very helpful flagmen and Pullman porters. Some of the boys claim they had no trouble convincing the home town boys that they had just come out of a furious naval battle, winning after a sensational struggle.

Sad partings, back for extended order, final check of gear, and three trainloads of men started across the country they were leaving home and loved ones to defend. The Great Adventure had begun. On our way.

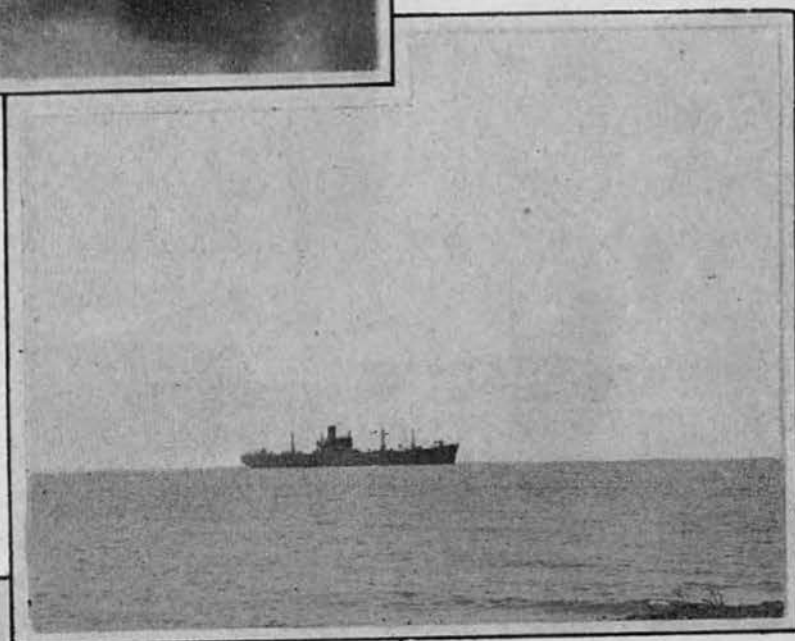
Certain, when boarding, that the trip would end in California, the first two days looked like a grand circle tour of New York state. Finally, a loophole was discovered, and from then on a speedy path was cut across the Middle West, every city a heart tug for someone. Crossing the Mississippi symbolized the cutting of the lifeline, the valley nearly every man called home. Easter Day services aboard were doubly significant and full of deep meaning.



Camp Endicott
Dedication and Review



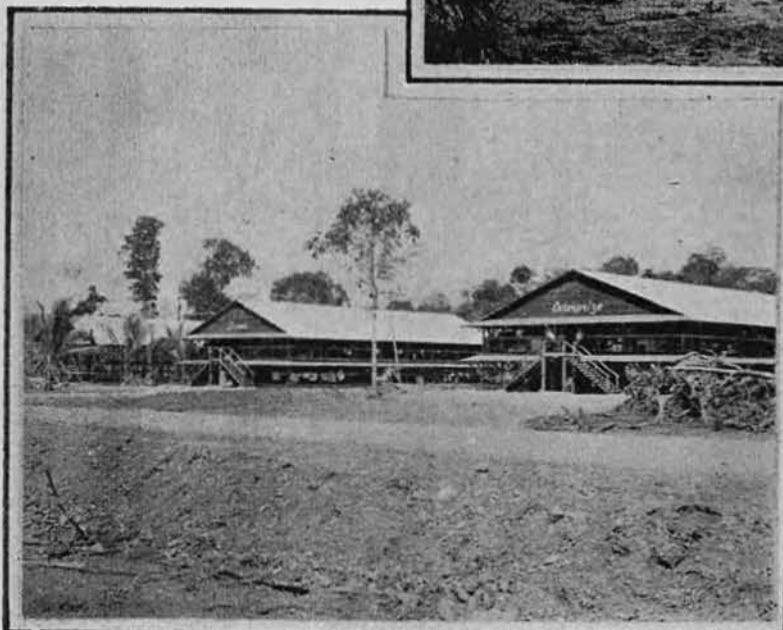
On Our Way



First Landing



Our First Look
At a Jungle Beach



Honoring
Famous Carriers



Shop Row

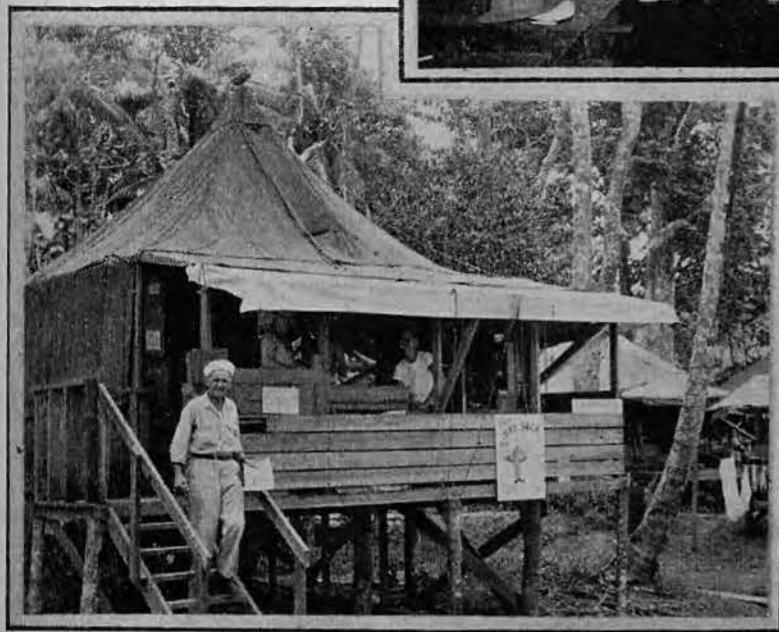




All Saints Chapel



A Capella Choir



Chaplain's Office



Daily News

Our Own
Theatre

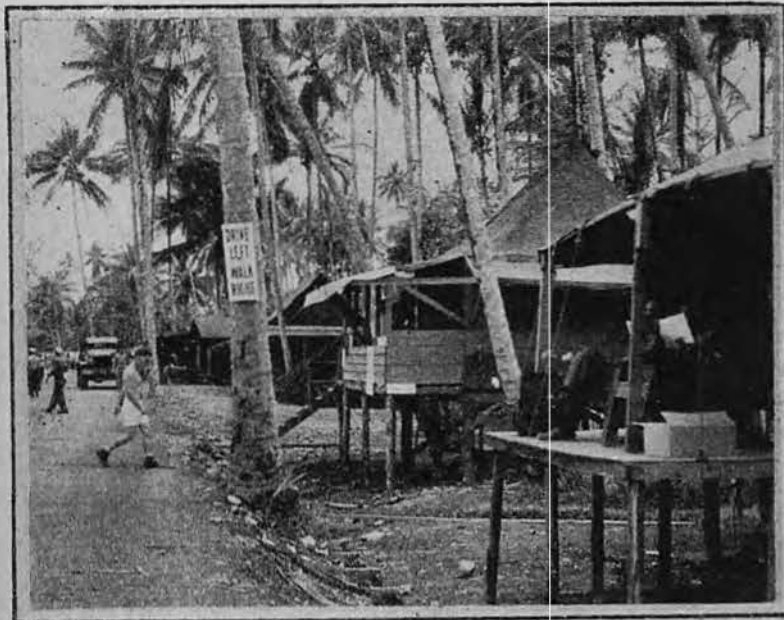


Stars of Radio
and Broadway



Street Scene

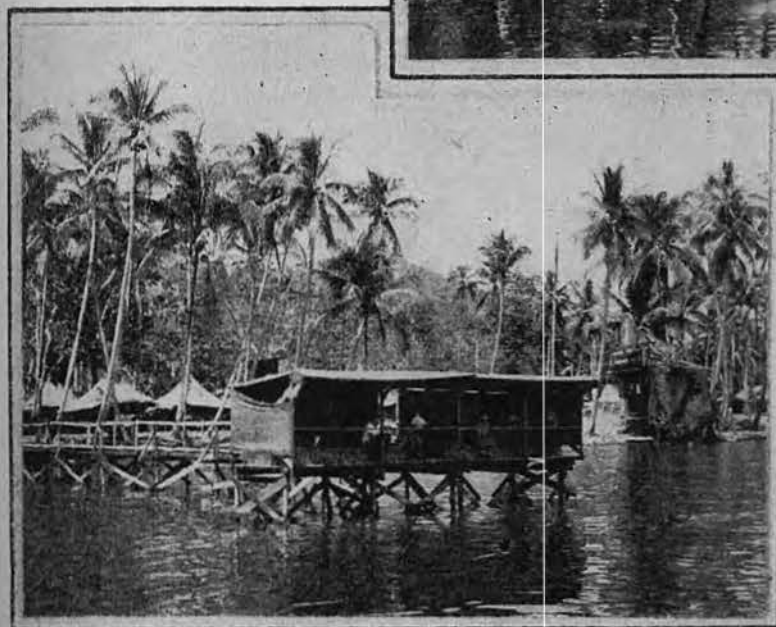




The Old Home Town



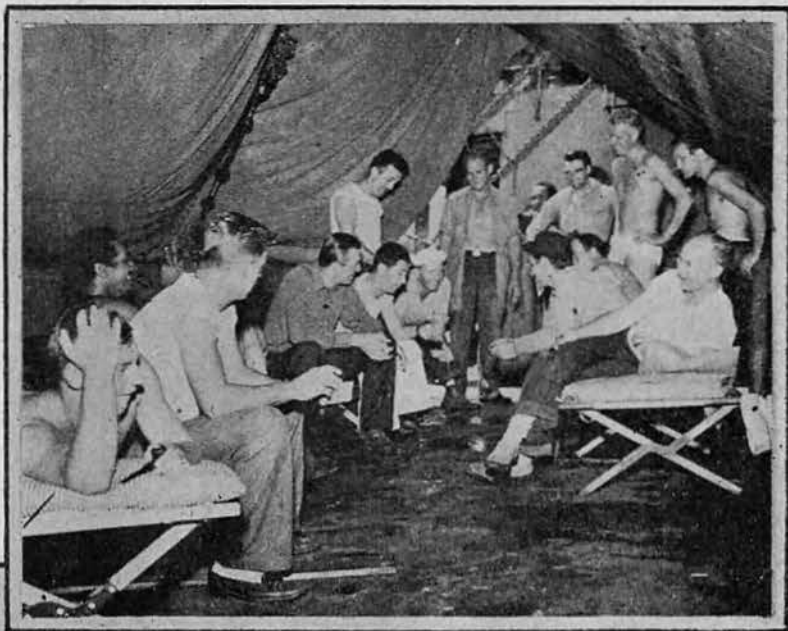
Tropic Swimming
Hole



"Bayview Lodge"



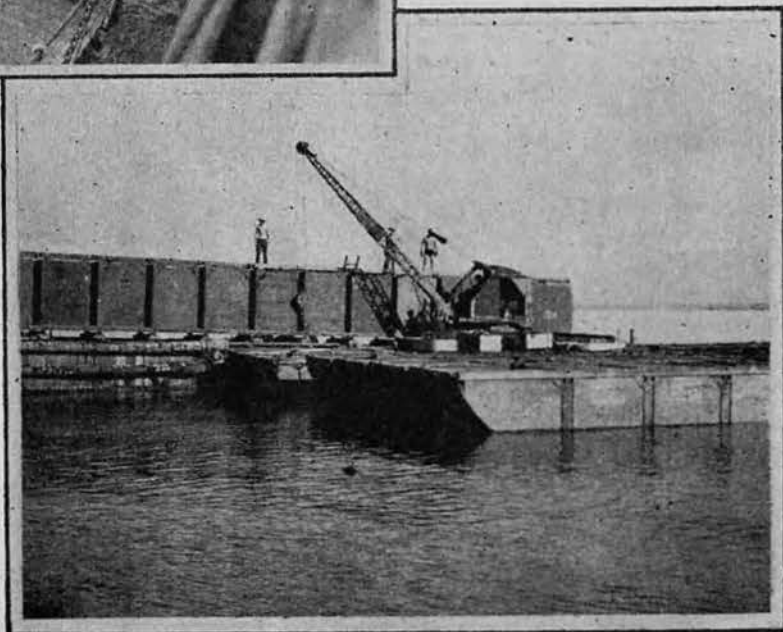
Sea Stories

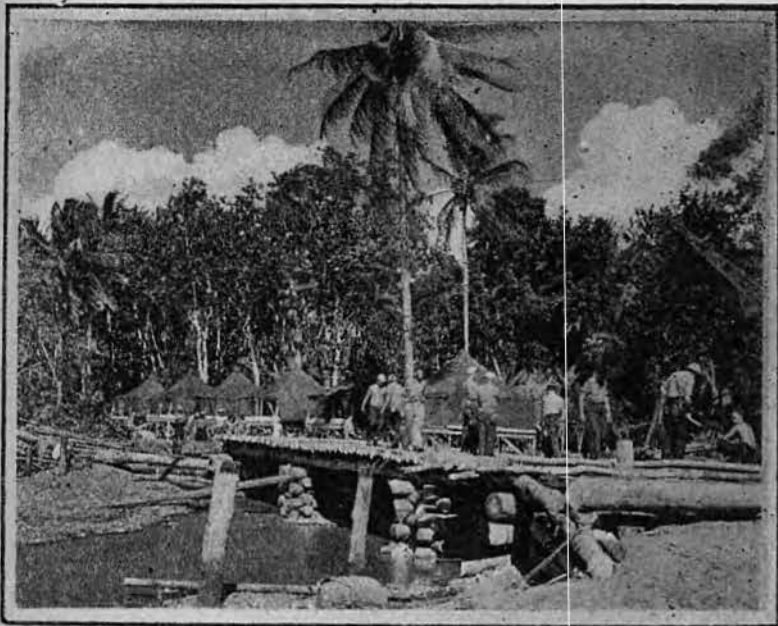


Coming Off



Seabee Secret Weapon

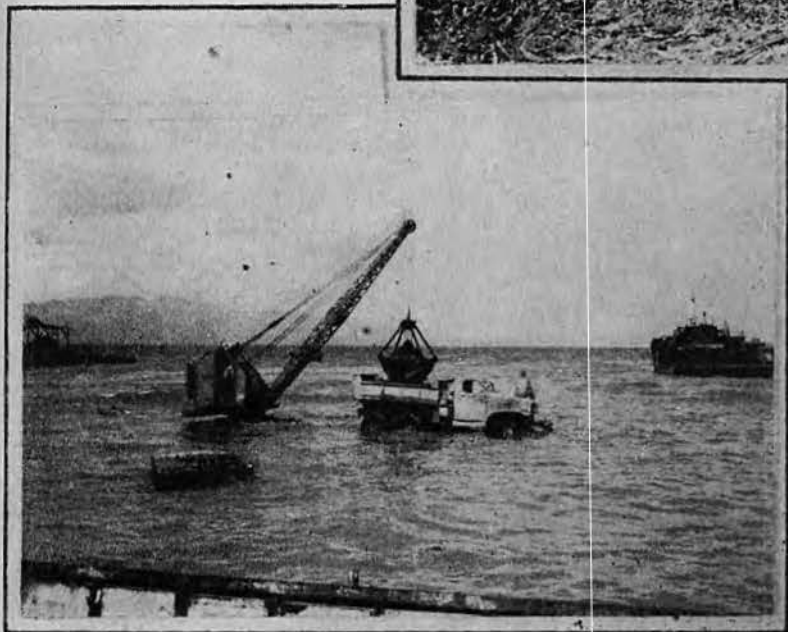




Teller Bridge



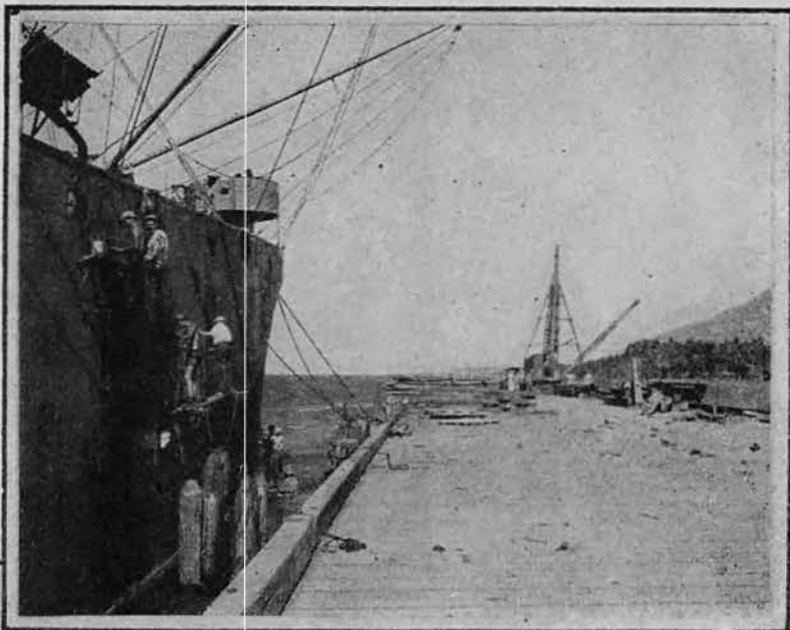
Seabee Heavy
Artillery



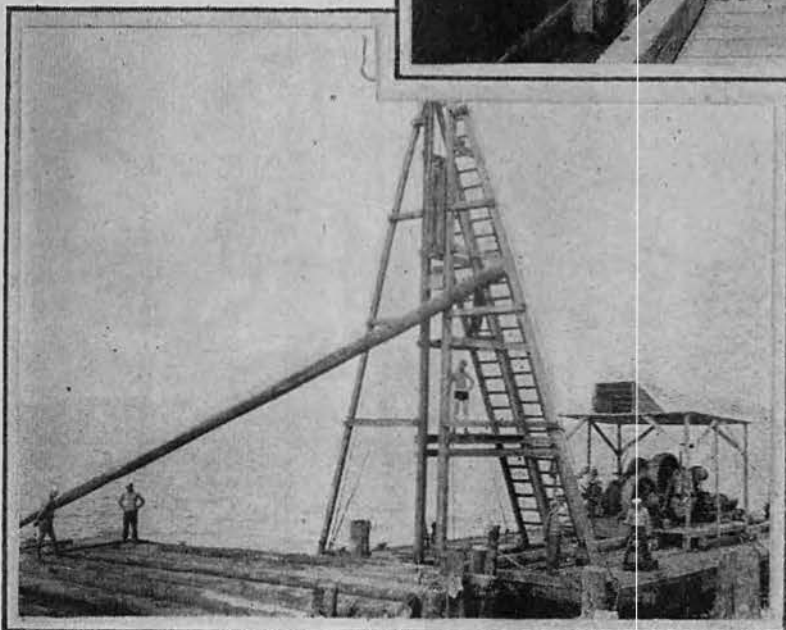
Clam Bucket
Gravel Pit



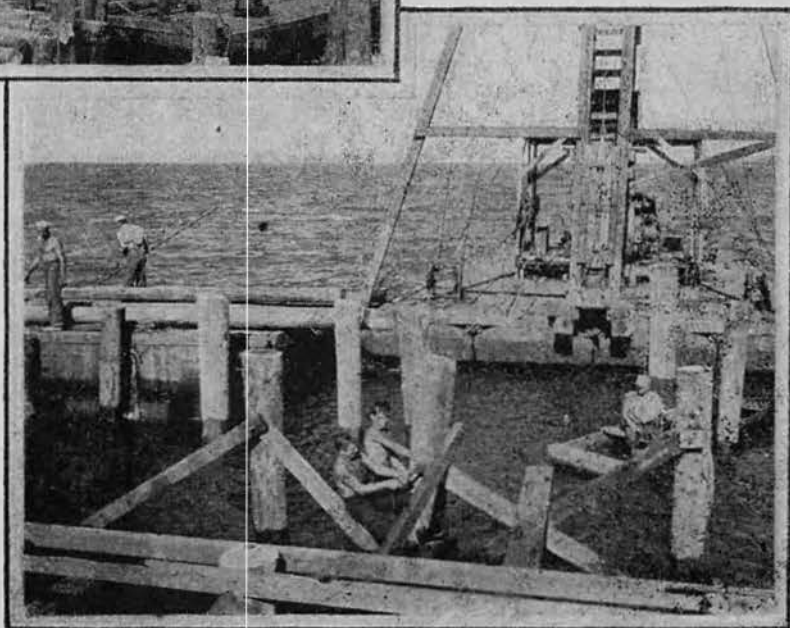
First Dock Customer



Up She Goes



Pile It There





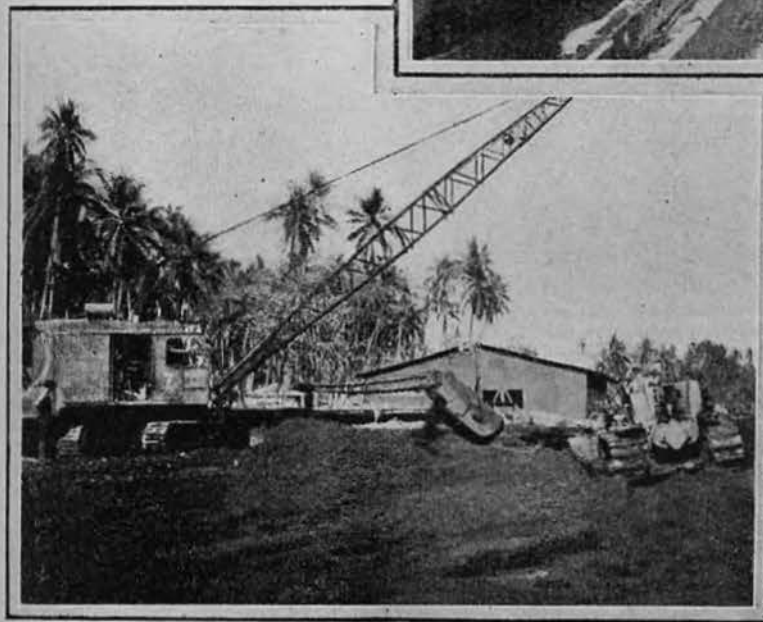
Good Bye
Reef



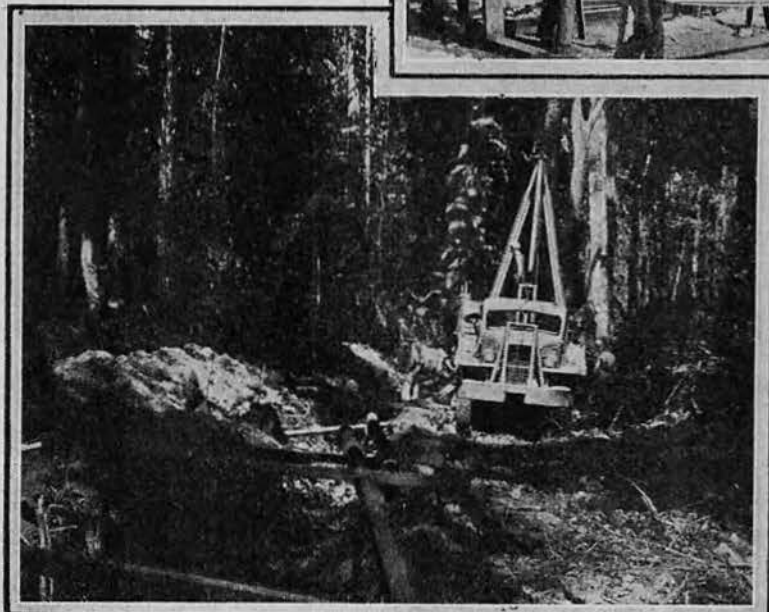
A Bolt Here
and a
Bolt There



Shove and Drag



Saw Mill



Trail Blazer



Mud in the Yard





Skipper and Crew



There She Is Boys



Electrical Gang Confab



Sunny California greeted us with the "very unusual" spectacle of a rain storm, quickly forgotten at the sight of new redwood barracks, inside "heads" and laundry on every floor, bunks spaced wide enough to walk around, and a large welcome sign in the cheerful messhall. Camp Parks started well and ended well, the Ship's Company doing an excellent job on starting Seabees on their way to Island X. Even the grueling climb to the top of Mt. Diablo was quickly forgotten in the warm hospitality of Hayward and other good liberty spots. Final issue of gear and weapons impressed upon all that a long time and many trials would pass before such a pleasant experience would come again.

Seabees go to sea, and the final intensive training period found the battalion on the shores of the great Pacific, making final preparations to cross its wide reaches and build the supply stations on the Road to Tokio. Camp Rousseau introduced us to docks, warehouses, Quonsets, and the many implements of naval bases. Palms we had seen before, although they were dark ones in the hands of dining car waiters on the trip across. Final liberties were spent in seeing Hollywood, where the movie stars, if around, couldn't be recognized without clever trick photography. Most of these jaunts were held up for an hour or two at Oxnard, where an overflow reception room for ride thumbers was conducted by SPs.

Then came the day of all days for Seabees--embarkation day. Eleven hundred officers and men walked a gang plank to the deck of an ocean-going ship, many for the first time of their lives. Sleeping tier on tier gave an idea what sardines must think about, and the first rolling of the ship taught many why sailors may run out of water, but never out of food.

Three weeks on the smooth Pacific, with a giant Viking captain at the helm and "May West" snuggling close, were passed in calm assurance, the only excitement coming when afternoon snoozers staged a track meet at the first bark of gun practice.

Australia, large as the United States, with its seven million people concentrated in six cities; land of the platypus, koala bear, emu and the Kangaroo; primitive blacks living as earliest man on the world's oldest land; "Styke", "Tye", and "aigs" on the menu three times a day; where fun is a "bit of a go" and OK is "fair dinkum". The newcomer wonders at the paradox of a people whose whole interest seems concentrated in "ryces", "tye" and three day week-ends, at the same time producing the gallant Aussie soldier, a first-class fighting man. The excitement of the first "pub call", where you go in like Notre Dame smashing off tackle, and come out looking like you had just stopped Bronko Nagurski. A land of strange and interesting views and animal life, including, as the Seabees were soon to learn, lumber as heavy and tough as pig iron.



Command Post



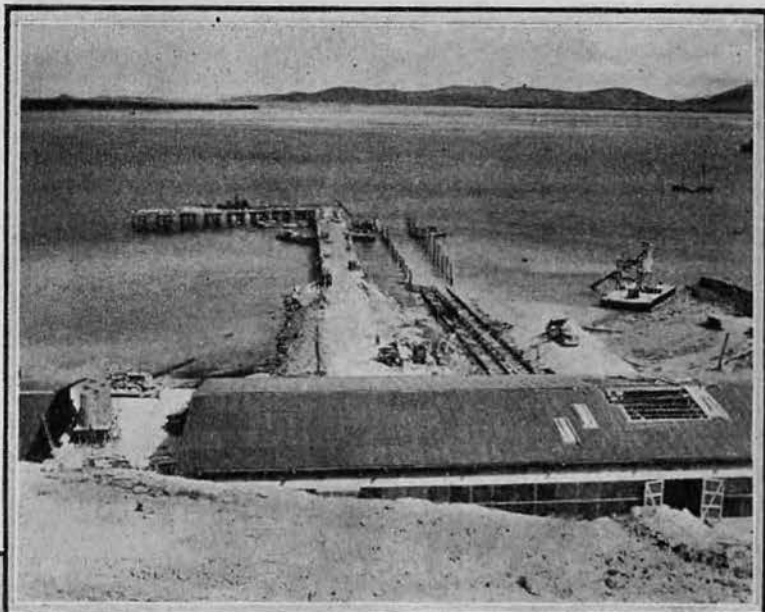
Native Name
for Seabee



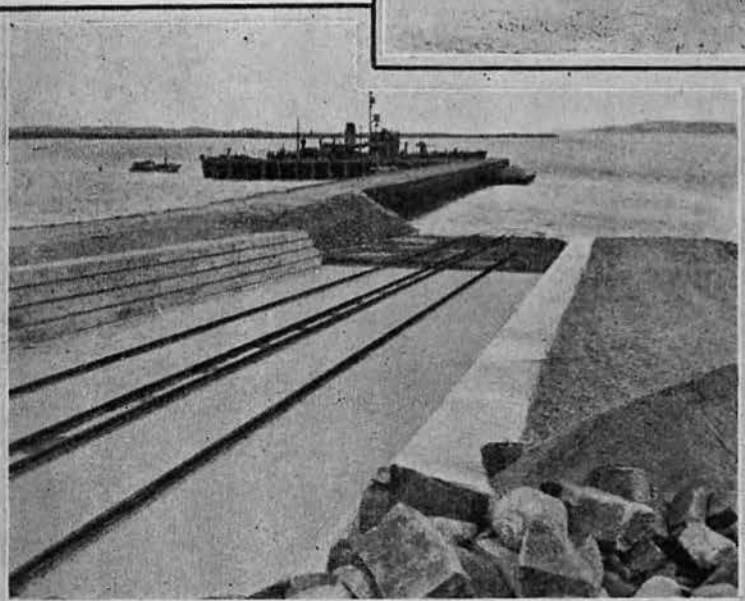
Harbour Gates



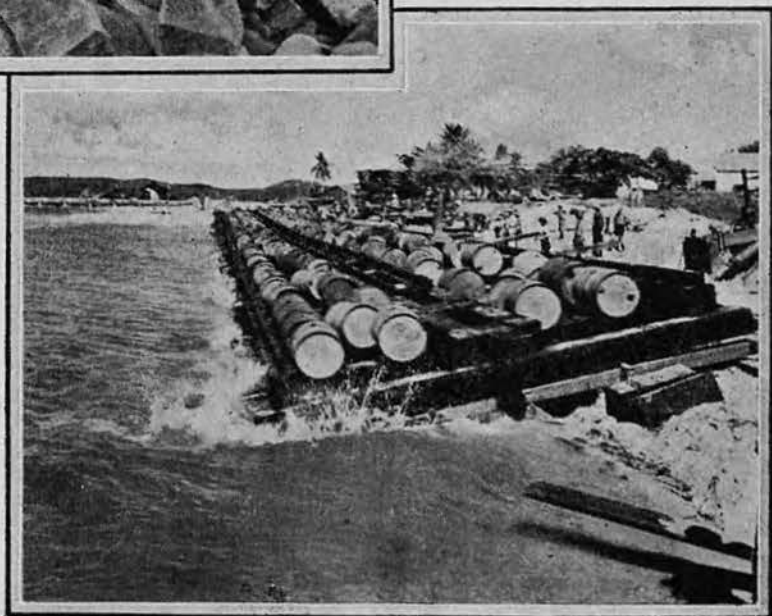
Breakwater



Marine Railway



Railway Terminal





The Square Needle



Issue Room



Chow Hounds



Military life is hard, and no sooner had the battalion set up a schedule of the pubs with the biggest quotas, and choice telephone numbers, orders came to board again for Headquarters, "A" and "C" companies. Through the still hot Coral Sea, where a great American naval victory had turned the tide of Jap invasion, alerted Seabees waited tensely for the sight of Island X. On this voyage was born the "Coral Sea Bee" official battalion publication.

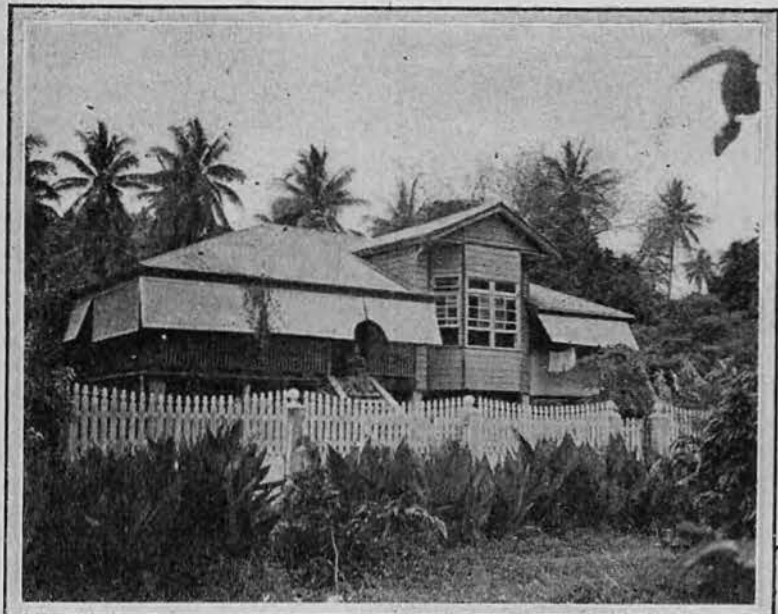
Grimly, all aboard realized that in the waters below were ships and heroes of the American Navy, who in one of the most decisive naval battles in history, had given all to stop the tide of Jap invasion. We were now the vanguard of the fleet that was to drive the Nips back to Tokio. Where New Guinea enters the Coral Sea, we entered the War.

Low clouds, rising like steam from weird, jungle matted hills, barely revealed a fringe of coconut palms on a shore without a sign of life. As the copper-colored sun rose over the mountain top, the mists drifted away, and nestled in the palms, native reed-thatched houses came dimly to view. Out from the shore shot a dugout canoe, a native paddler skillfully cutting the water. Our first Fuzzy-Wuzzy. The 84th and Island X had made contact. At this point begins the story of the New Guinea jungle, transformed by Seabee skill into a modern base. This we have sought to picture in the pages of this book.

Companies "A", "C" and Headquarters prepared to go ashore, thrilled and a bit shaky about 16 foot pythons, and ants that carried you outside to divide among themselves. There was nothing about this in the Bluejackets manual or the enlistment papers. In fact, the Recruiting Officer distinctly hinted that Dorothy Lamour was only a carbon copy of the real thing to be found in the South Seas. These scarce reports turned out like most stories turned out by advance parties, and were filed with the boot camp gags about the square needle and the bow and arrow shot.

Eighth and Plum, temporary campsite, was a bit on the rugged side, and many a Seabee grandson will enjoy the story of how it was named as soon as he is big enough, of course. Some Seabee stories are for adults only.

A better and more convenient location was soon selected, and a mess hall (always a Seabee No. 1 priority) and quarters on 4' stilts made a good camp while our road builders elevated and graveled their jobs, enabling one to get about without scraping mud from your belt every night. No longer was the mud plumb, nor did you "8" to go home.



Coconut Planters
Hacienda



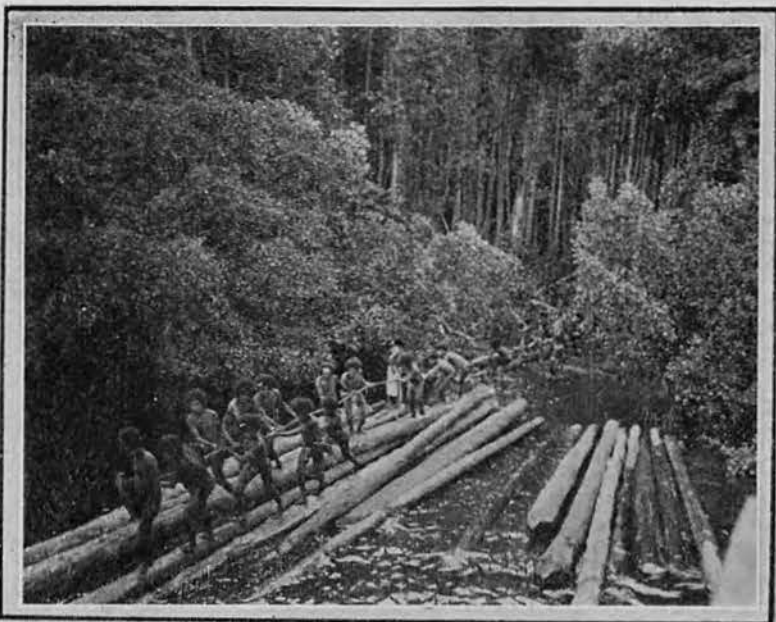
Hospital Approach



Shoreline Dock
Service



Native Paul Bunyan's



Angau



Jap "LCI"



Once settled in camp, the real purpose of our long trip and technical training courses began to unroll. Docks must be built, warehouses erected, jungle cleared for many purposes, water, sewer, road, electrical and other facilities had to be put into operation. Those were the days when the great steamroller of amphibious might had barely begun to turn its wheels, and a firm footing must be secured in a hurry. Those first days were hurried, as you all well remember, but once the bugs and kinks were ironed out, the smooth working teams soon were clicking at a surprising rate, with no more noise or misses than a good watch. Each night expert eyes measured the progress on the dock, counted the new warehouses and walked appraisingly over the new roads. Waterworks men proudly urged you to try their new showers, the electricians checked the size of our new and welcome tent lighting, and tents began to blossom out with porches and furniture. Haertzen's Hash House, Cadiff's Cut Rate, the Detroit Edison Company (SWPA branch), and P. O., the Clip Joint and other services lined the main drag of a pretty homey little city. There was even talk of electing a Mayor and a City Council, but there were more candidates than voters.

As a great Naval Base came into being, new units began to flow in, and soon the Pandemonium Gayety ceased to be a civic club, and the family entrance to the Ship's Store was no more. We had been taken over; our work was done. And when the day came to go out, we left with only a parting glance.

Back in Australia, we strutted down the King's, Queen's and the Princes' streets with the swagger of bronzed and veteran seafaring men. Atabrine complexions needed no proof of our travels and adventures. Civilization did look good, the milk and ice cream looked better, and chance acquaintances made on our first brief stop became almost part of the family--in some cases they did. Fair Dinkum.

The retired fire horse in the pasture yearns for the days of excitement and frenzied effort. So do Seabees who have conquered the jungle. We wanted to go, home if we could, but out if we could not. We did. Again.

For the first time, the entire battalion was to work as a unit. Getting acquainted again was easy on a troop transport, snugly huddled as we were. And the cruise was a happy one, marred only by the one problem--The Galley Shtack Vas Smoking. The Seabees couldn't fix that, nor the Cook.

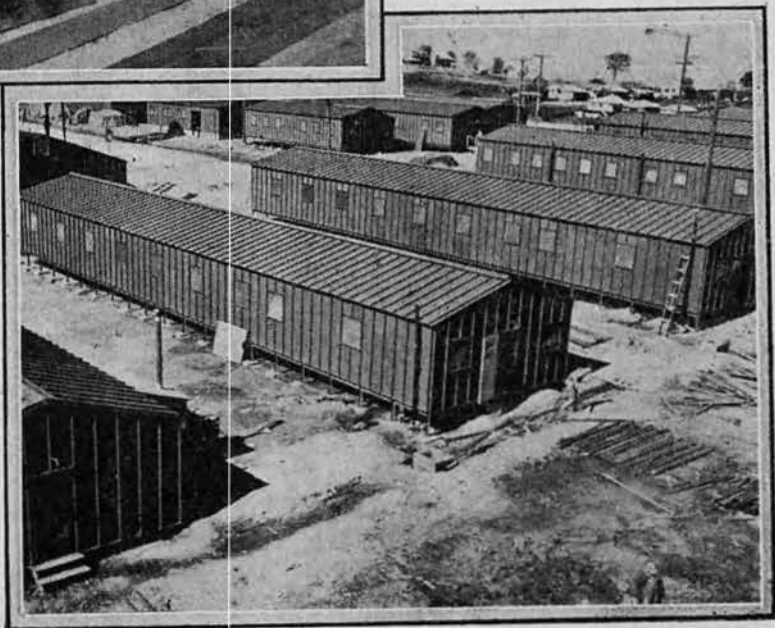
Liberty Lane

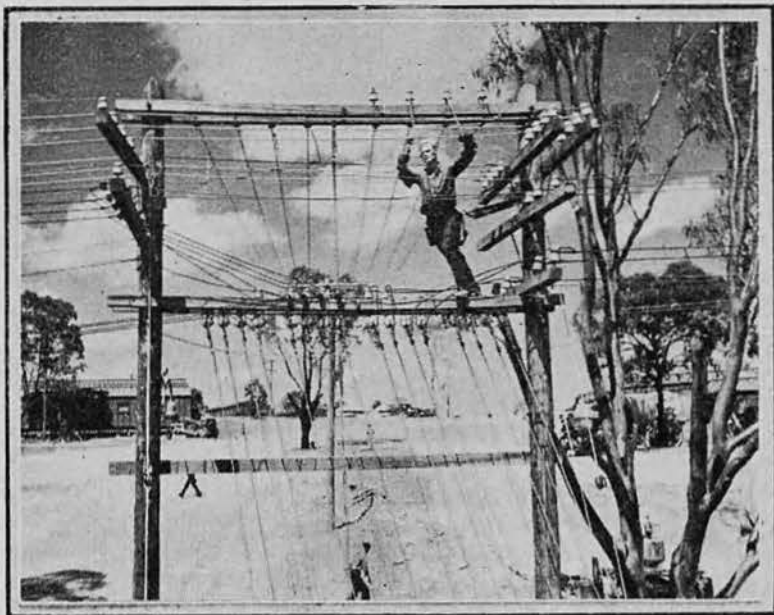


If we only had Tents

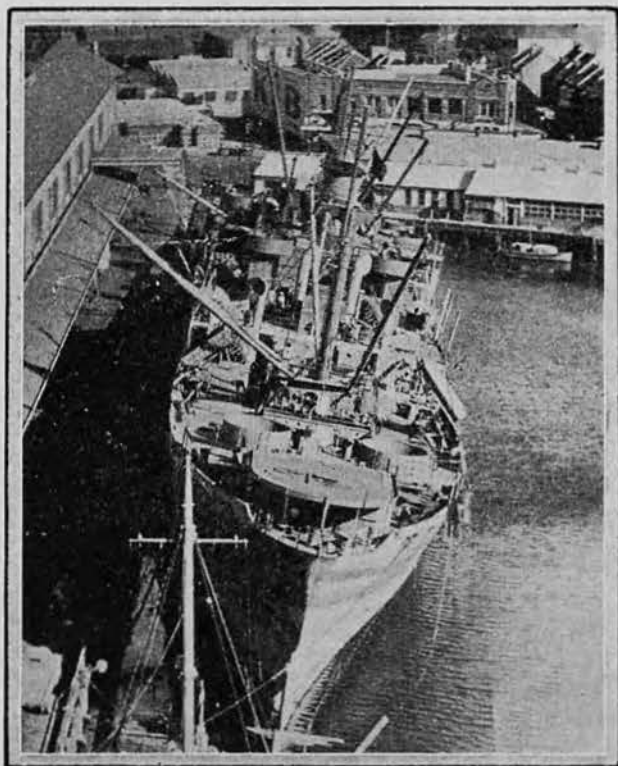


Mob 9





High Tension



Good Old Sydney

We were exclusive again. Our own very private little island, which nobody could get on, and we couldn't get off. In New Guinea we wanted to be alone. In Australia we got that way. Now we had it. Garbo wasn't there, either.

After weeks that would have delighted an old soldier, with little work and good chow, blunt nosed LSTs bumped our shore, and opened their hungry mouths for men and equipment, loaded on with a new technique in record time. Shove off.

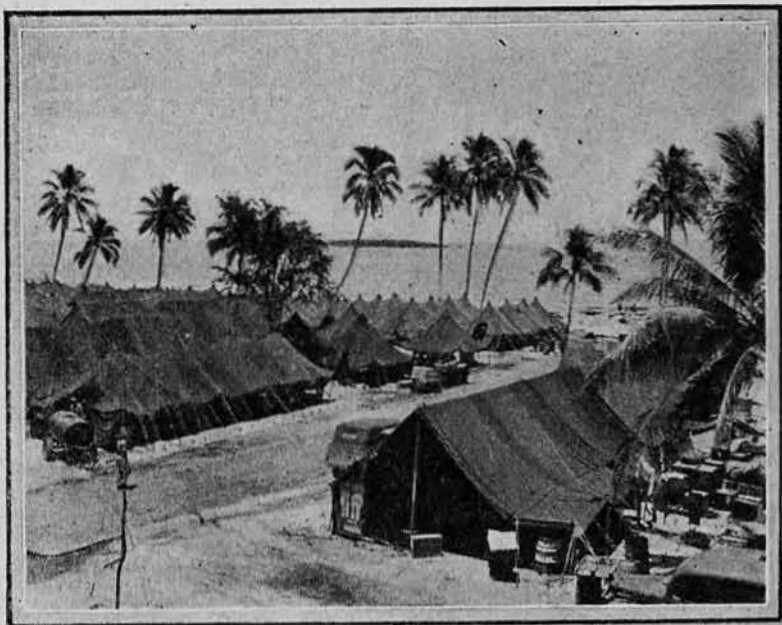
This time there was no fooling. Guns and packs were checked. Speeding the unloading job might be our necks and there was a chance that the brown babies with big teeth might not like it. Could be--could be.

On a gray dawn made gloomy by welcome fog, we slipped up to a strange shore. Hastily dug gun pits lined the jungle edge, from which came battle stained soldiers. Off in the distance, guns barked. Somebody was being mopped-up, but it wasn't us. Four men let go of the Chaplain's hands. The rest of us let go with the gear.

No longer greenhorns, but experienced veterans, pitching camp was an old and simple story. Like Topsy, it grew and fast. No mud, no mosquitos, no nets. A good deal and a good deal it continued to be from that day on. Movies, baseball, Rec. Hall, Library, horseshoes, all crowned by a beautiful chapel that soon became the cathedral of Island X; made the leisure hours pleasant. Four top commendations in as many months for good work done were even more pleasant. The experience acquired the hard way was paying off. We knew how to produce and to make the most of it. Two years that seemed both short and long had transformed skilled American citizens into jungle fighter-builders, giving us days and nights of strange and interesting experiences never to be forgotten. Nor will they be. The Netherlands East Indies added another chapter to our travel history.

"I will be back," said General MacArthur. He came, and in that vast armada were five LSTs bearing the 84th Seabees. Men and equipment poured out with the sure routine of veterans, even the confusion showing skilled organization. Little did we dream on leaving Port Hueneme of someday seeing the Philippines, but this was no dream. We too had arrived.

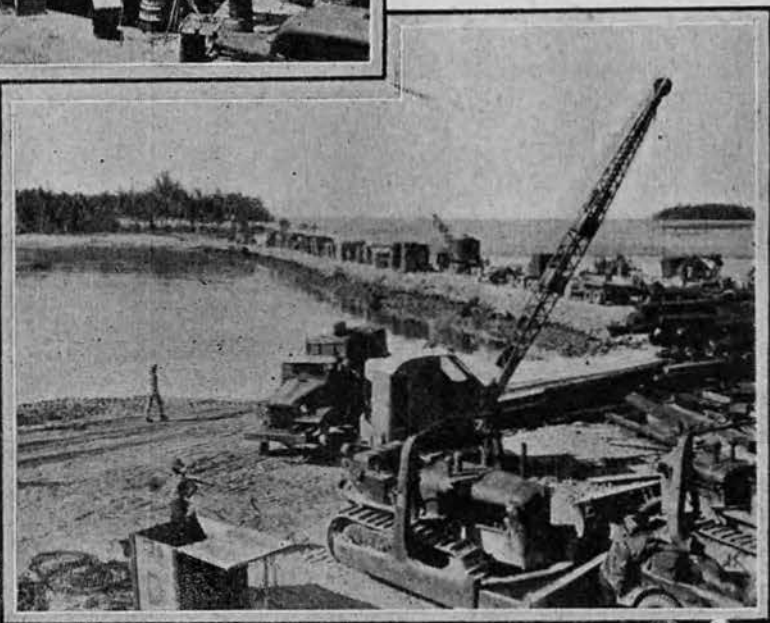
The end of the long road from Sydney to Tokio has nearly been reached. The original 84th has concluded its career on the doorstep of eventual Victory, certain to have its proud banner in the parade to the Emperor Hirohito's bomb-crushed palace. Finis la guerre.



Way Station
on Tokyo Road



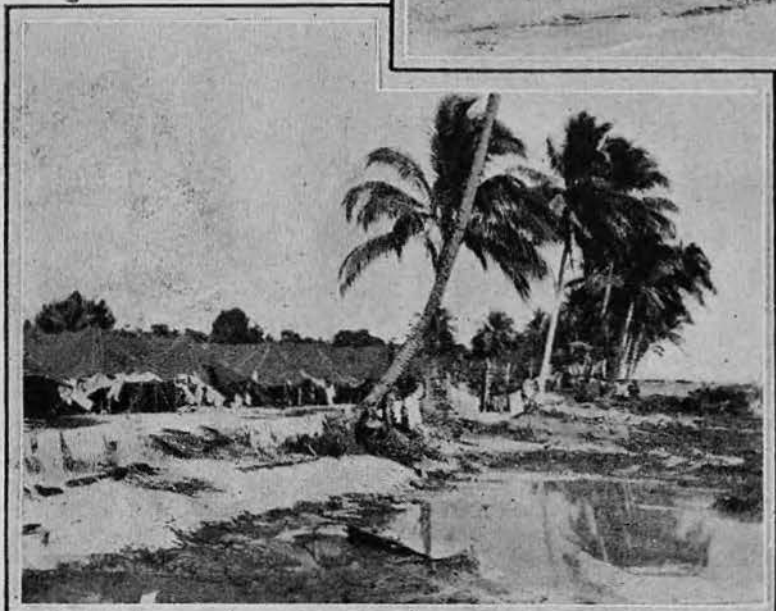
Loading Ramp



Going In



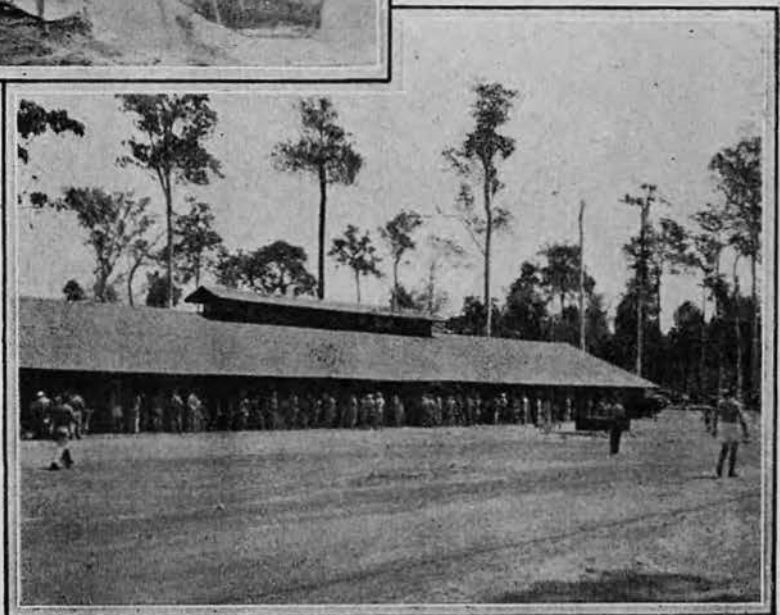
Open Air Mess Hall



Temporary Camp



Modern Tropical
Chow House





Island X (4)



Main Highway



Street Scene



Main Street



Country Stores



Paton Roadway





Modern Seabee
City

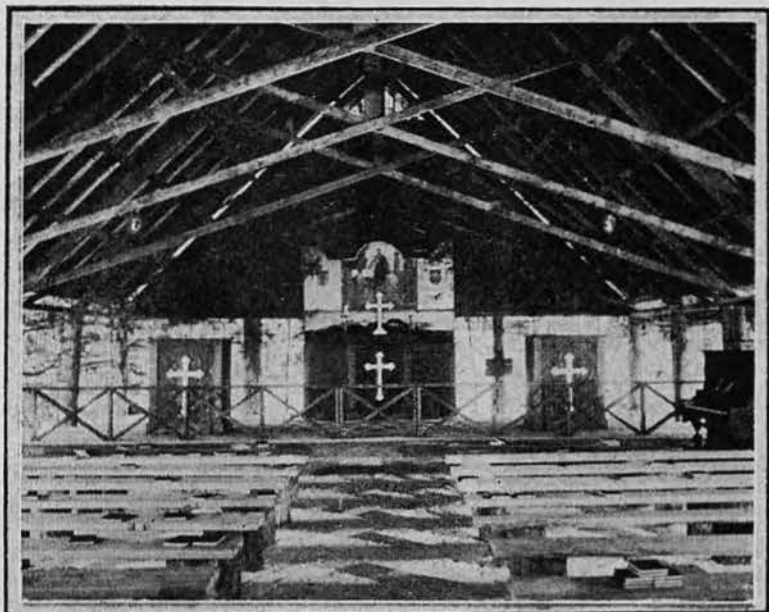


Stored in
the Shade



New Trails





Holy Trinity Chapel





**First Military Funeral
for a Fallen Mate**



**A Far off Morning View
Volcano Smokes Upward**



| | |
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BON VOYAGE

Commemorating two years of Seabee life for officers and men of the Eighty-Fourth Naval Construction Battalion, this little volume is dedicated to the men who made it possible--YOU.

For the Staff, planning, designing, photographing, writing and printing this record has been a pleasant and interesting experience, for which opportunity we are grateful.

First and foremost, however, this is Yours--your work, your pleasures in recreation and worship--Yourself. The book, in every respect, belongs to you.

This book was printed in its entirety in your own print shop, partly in the Netherlands East Indies, the remainder in the Philippine Islands.



CHAPTER VII

MOROTAI IN THE SPICE ISLANDS

The next morning we were coasting along the New Guinea coast at seven knots. The sun was shining and the air felt brisk and clean after the blow during the night. The high mountains behind the coast looked dark and forbidding as ever with the usual clouds drifting between the curtains of showers. The other LSTs were on both sides of us and way up ahead the two destroyers were crossing back and forth clearing the way. In toward the beach I could see one of our "Black Cats" patrolling low and close. The gunners were still at their battle stations, for the time soon after sunrise is the most dangerous in submarine waters.

The Chief told me to look over the side. All I could see was a couple of cable ends hanging from the bits on deck. The boat in which I had nearly left my seachest was gone, and the boat on the other side had done likewise. We plugged along all day and since there was nothing to do, everybody stretched out on deck and took it easy. Toward sunset

we had General Quarters for about two hours, for subs might be around waiting to take a crack at us and planes might show up any old time. Sometime during the night we stopped and lay drifting for quite a while. We were at the rendezvous spot and waited for the main convoy to show.

As day broke I could see over fifty ships all around us, mostly LSTs but also many big transports, cargo ships and many types of auxiliary vessels. The escorts were laying ahead, behind and to the sides. The convoy commanders ship was in the middle and forward and as soon as it was light, signals went up and the ships in the convoy changed position; all were at General Quarters. Then we had gun practice and it was quite a sight to watch the curtain of ack-ack which went up as the whole convoy fired, and it was also a good bet to keep the steel helmet on for shrapnel was falling all around us.

The night before we were to land I had a chance to get in the radar shack with the gunnery officer, and the operator let me watch the dial. The center was our own ship and outside was the outline of the other ships in the convoy including the two destroyers way up ahead. We were forty-two miles off the coast of Morotai and I could see the outline of the islands, both Halmahara and Morotai in the dial.

The Japs had expected us to attack Halmahara on the south tip so we knew they had a large force and several airfields on that island, which was only 12 miles from Morotai.

It was pitch dark when we got up, had something to eat and got into combat gear. The engines stopped and it seemed very quiet all of a sudden. We could see a few lights ashore and we knew some of

the Army were already in, but still it was very uncertain what would happen when daylight came.

Dawn comes fast here so close to the line. The first wave went in, hit the beach and nothing happened. Then the second wave. The sun was up now and no planes had come in; the beach was quiet and the only firing we could hear was up under the hills, mostly machinegun and rifle fire but now and then the booming of a big gun rocked the air. The beach was a nasty one for landing. A coral rim stopped the landing crafts about forty or fifty feet from the sand. When we came in we hit with a hell of a jar which shook the ship -- it must have taken off inches of the steel plates in the bow -- and we were still forty feet from land. So we got a bulldozer started to build a ramp of sand and sent men in to make sandbags to pack the sides of the ramp so the surf wouldn't destroy it.

We had orders to dump our supply of gasoline and diesel oil overboard the minute we hit, and as the LSTs kept their engines running at full speed ahead, the barrels were out in the bay in no time, scattered to the four winds. Some nets had been sent along which were to be used for fishing out the barrels, but after several unsuccessful attempts the boats came back.

We had to get our fuel so I got orders to go out and see what I could do. I got hold of all the heaving lines I could find and a crew of the best swimmers in the battalion. We went out and began chasing the four hundred-some barrels which by now were a couple of miles out. The boys jumped overboard and tied the long heaving lines to the barrels which were then pulled alongside the boat. However,

the barrels were too heavy to heave into the boats. Besides there was very little room in the small boats. But the barrels had to be rescued before they floated out to the ocean. An Army LCT came along and I got an idea. We pulled alongside and I explained our predicament to the ensign in charge. I wanted to use his ship to get the barrels; it had plenty of room and we could lower the ramp forward and float the barrels to where they could be rolled. He was a nice sort of guy, but slower than hell and spoke with a southern drawl. He blinked the beachmaster and asked permission, which we got after much explanation. The boys jumped in and soon the barrels began rolling. But it took about four hours and we were three-four miles off when we had the last of them aboard. Some had drifted ashore, however, and we could see the Army boys come out to get them. Gasoline is scarce and valuable on a newly invaded island so we knew these barrels were lost as far as we were concerned, and when we hollered to them to lay off, they fingered their noses and told us to jump in the bay.

On the way the LCT got orders to come around the point to Red Beach, so while the ensign had hot pants, I rushed around trying to find additional crew to get the barrels off in a hurry.

Our equipment had been unloaded by now and was stacked all through the coconut grove, and we had been damned lucky getting in as we did without the Jap planes attacking. The Jap gun which had fired from the hills had been silenced shortly after it started firing. We had guards posted right away around our supply dumps, for the Army boys were hungry and had started digging into the grubpiles.

side of the island, so we sent bulldozers ahead to clear a trail through the jungle. Trucks were loaded with tents, galley equipment and everything we needed for the first night, and the long line started rolling, bouncing and jumping over the rough muddy ground, and when a truck got stuck the tractors hauled it out and the line was moving again. The boys were packed on top of the loads and had to hang on for dear life. Now and then a few fell off, but the mud was soft so they did not get hurt, except one who fell under the rear wheel which went over his chest. He was one of the boys who had done the swimming for the oil barrels, and it looked bad but Doc Comboy got him fixed up and after a long time in bed he was alright again.

Our campsite was in a large coconut grove next to the edge of a thick stretch of jungle, and when I got there it was busy as a beehive. Tents shot up all over; the cooks had most of the field galley erected and down by the beach the evaporators were running making fresh water from the sea. Everybody was in good spirits and the laughing and shouting could be heard a mile away. We were short of tents in the officers' country, so I and one of the other officers had to be satisfied with an awning which we stretched over a couple of poles, cleaned off the ground and setup our cots,

The day was now pretty well along toward sunset, the fires were going in the galley, there was water in the tank and Harold Slick, the provost marshal was sending out his sentries to their posts around the camp. After my partner and I had our tent all set, we scratched out a small foxhole, just big enough so the two of us could stretch out in it. The stars were out by the time the chowline formed,

everybody got their portion and sat down any old place to eat it.

Some were still eating when the three warning shots boomed, and they must have been late with the warning, for all hell broke loose right then and there. The Japs were in low and every gun was firing so shrapnel fell all around us. The boys were hugging palm trunks and anything for some kind of cover, for very few had foxholes dug. We jumped into our small shallow trench and damn near got squashed by the ten or twelve who tried to get in on top of us.

At one time the planes came directly down, but they leveled off and strafed the cargo ships anchored out in the bay in front of us. Shrapnel makes a terrifying sound as it comes whirling down, and a piece six inches long buried itself deep in the palm trunk directly over our small foxhole. It is a wonder we did not have many casualties that night. As it was we lost one man. He was buried under a little white cross together with many others ^{FROM THE ARMY} in a small clearing up against the jungle wall, and when we later built a baseball field on the base, we called it Brennan field.

The next day work started. Bulldozers were roaring and tearing into the thick jungle, knocking down trees, pushing away the undergrowth and tugging at the long tough vines inches thick which hung down from the trees. Spiders, scorpions and a million other bugs drizzled down on the operators, but they just wiped them off, cussed and dived in again. It looked like a personal fight. The jungle had challenged them and now it had to go.

A portable dock made from Standard pontoons had been towed in and work was in full swing installing it, for the ships in the harbor had

to be unloaded as soon as possible. We had brought a sawmill along and had orders to cut all lumber necessary to build the base. Ray Woelker was put in charge of the lumber operations and I, being new in the battalion, was ordered to assist him until I got my assignment.

We had soon located a good spot for the sawmill and had found plenty of big trees to log. The trees were tall and straight and of a semi-hard wood which would make fine building material. Ole Birkeland from North Dakota was put in charge of the logging crews and started cutting as soon as the bulldozers had cleared a road to the trees. The sawmill crew had been sent to the beach to pick out the parts for the mill and haul it to the site which had been cleared off. The jungle was thick around the logging area so we put out guards with Tommy guns for the Jap patrols were still drifting around trying to get through our lines to get back to their main force up under the hills.

We also had to be careful about "Dud" bombs which our airforce had dropped but which had not exploded when they hit. We had to have men walk ahead of the bulldozers and we picked up many on the ground and also parachute bombs which were hanging in the trees.

We had quite a job finding the parts of the sawmill and it was not until two days later, that we decided we were short several crates of parts. We had air raids every night and one night some Japs sneaked in and bayoneted the machinist's mate on watch at the electric generators. Our sentries were jittery on their post out in the jungle at night, and every now and then a shot went off and the corporal of the guard dashed off in the jeep to find out what had happened. Most of the time it was wild pigs moving about, and several porkers got

shot, but they shot at anything that made a noise or moved and found out what it was afterwards.

Ray finally had to tell the Skipper that we were short one third of the parts for the sawmill, and the old man did a lot of cussing and sent us out to look again, but when we reported no luck, it was his turn to report to the base commander and stand by and hear him do some cussing. We had brought no lumber along and we had a big base to build. If we ordered the parts through the regular channels we knew the war might be over before the parts arrived.

Having been with the regiment I knew pretty well what machinery was available in the dumps at the bases toward the south, and at one particular base, I knew there were several sawmills of the same make as the one we had. The "old man" decided I better see if I could get a plane ride out of the place and go south to procure the parts. The base commander told me he actually could not write me orders as he had not the authority to do so without getting permission from headquarters. But getting orders from headquarters would take just about as long a time as it would take to get the parts for they would most likely write back a couple of times and ask why we wanted such orders and why we had left the parts in the first place, so the Captain wrote me a set of orders anyway.

The seaplane tender "Tangier" was anchored off Red Beach and I thought she would be my best bet as she had PBVs flying both north and south. I packed my light handbag and was soon bousing in a jeep up along a muddy trail where we met rows of our trucks hauling equipment from the beach and we had to stay out of the truck tracks or

the jeep would hang up. By the Army hospitals the mud was so deep we had to spin through in compound low and from there on the Army was cluttering the road. Near the Jap airfield I noticed one of our bombers, a B24, circling low over the field with one of his engines afire and oil pouring out behind. The Jap strip was small and looked like a plowed potato field, but I knew the 24 had to come down ~~so~~ stopped.

He circled again and came in low over the palmtops for he had to take advantage of the small amount of field available. When he hit, the big ship bounced and leaped back in the air, then came down again with a crash and sheered over to one side, knocked off a few palm trees and settled in a heap up against the jungle wall. What stopped the ship from catching fire and blowing up I still cannot understand, but it did not and the crew climbed out all unhurt. It was a Navy ship, and when we talked to the pilot he said he would have to report to the "Tangier", so we took him along.

Red Beach was all confusion. Army trucks were plowing the mud to get the lighters unloaded which was bringing stores in from the cargo ships in the harbor. I could see the "Tangier" anchored way out toward the PT base with several Black Cats floating alongside. The beachmaster thought I was crazy when I asked him for a ride to the tender; he had plenty to do without bothering with the Navy and we could wait till the Tangier sent a boat ashore. But it was getting late in the day so we started to look around for some other way of getting out. A big noisy sergeant was running the show down by the landing, shouting and swearing, bawling the hell out of boat crews

and truckdrivers. When I approached him about a ride he took such a dirty look at my Navy hat that I hurriedly added that I was a Seabee. Well, a Seabee, that was different, sure he would get us out there.

It was sunset when we walked up the gangway of the Tangier and we had a hard time getting alongside for the wind was blowing and the water was real choppy. I saw the executive officer and he told me I was welcome to stay onboard and that they had planes flying south the next day so he would get me off.

Down in the wardroom several officers were gathered around the radio listening to Tokio Rose. She reeled off her usual stuff and began telling us all about Morotai in such a way that we knew she must have gotten first hand information that was good. She even mentioned the Tangier, where she was anchored and that the Jap airforce would see to it that the ship got what she had coming to her. As usual we had a good time joking about the broadcast and laughing, but she certainly had plenty of information about us. We had steak for dinner which sure tasted good to me after having lived on Spam and rations for several days.

We had just settled down for a smoke after dinner when the claxon sounded General Quarters and everyone rushed out to their battle-stations. Everybody except me. Being a transient officer, I had to stay there in the wardroom. I heard the stamping of feet along the deck and the noise of the guns being readied, then the clicking of the bolts as the bulkheads were secured, followed by silence. The Philippino messmen huddled together in a corner and whispered in their own lingo and it was nearly dark all around. Just a few red lights

were shining here and there. Somebody was talking over the loudspeaker but it was muddled and made little sense to me, and I was wishing I had slipped out on deck before they shut the bulkheads.

I never did mind the air raids much when I was sitting in a foxhole or out in the open, but to be locked up below deck on a ship in a ward-room which is just above a hold filled with aviation gasoline, bombs and torpedoes, is quite another sensation.

The loudspeaker barked sharply and it started. Thunder multiplied a thousand times would be nothing compared to the noise those big and small guns made on the steel decks above my head. The whole ship shook all over, and after several dull sounding thuds she rocked back and forth. We had had a near miss by the stern. The boys were telling me all about it when they came down after the "all clear", but they did not stay very long for the claxon sounded again a little later.

This time I tried to slip out on deck but was turned back to the black hole by the guard at the bulkhead. I think we had eight raids that night and after the fifth one we pulled the hook and moved out in the stream and anchored near a bunch of Liberty ships to the disgust of the merchant crews, for the big crane on the Tangier was standing out in the moonlight like a sore thumb.

It was way toward morning when we got a chance for a little shut-eye and the CD had given me a cot to sleep on out on deck. I had just got comfortable and was ready to doze off when somebody shook me and asked me to please get to hell out of his bunk. I felt like telling him to go to the same place, but being a visitor onboard I had to be polite. I got up and found an empty cot a few rows down; as nobody claimed it I slept well for a couple of hours.

Just as we were going down the gangway the next morning to take the crashboat to our plane, a Black Cat came in all shot up with holes in the wings and all along the fuselage. They called for a doctor as they had many wounded onboard, so we went back onboard while the boat went out to get them. A couple were on stretchers and the rest were bandaged but otherwise in good shape, laughing and joking as they went up the gangway. They had surprised a Jap ship alongside a dock somewhere and had blown it up, but had damn near got the deep six themselves.

We were soon taxiing out toward open water and took off, making a wide circle over the island as we gained altitude, which gave me a good chance to see the layout of our operations.

Morotai is shaped like a pillywog, big and fat with a small tail. The tail was flat and about eight ^{inches} long and that was all we had and ~~it was~~ all we wanted of the island. At the root of the tail, the hills rose and we had set up a perimeter there to defend our part of the island from the Japs who were hiding in the thick jungles along the hillsides. I could see the pillboxes and the lines the Army had cut, the heavy artillery, and Cub planes were flying back and forth over the enemy territory keeping track of the Jap movements and giving range to the artillery whenever they saw any concentration. They were firing away as we went over.

The Tangier was under us now and on a small island to the west the PT boats were gathered outside their base. As we swung over the island again I saw the trails and roads, the hospitals, the Jap airstrip and just below, the opening in the coconut trees where we had started to

build the bomber strips. Farther south we passed our camp and flew over the tip of the Tail where the Army had their biggest concentration of anti-aircraft batteries. Twelve miles away on the other side of Morotai Straits, was Halmahara with it's smoking volcano and jagged mountain ranges. We swung away toward the east for near that volcano were nine Jap airfields.

As soon as we were well out over the Halmahara Sea I stretched out under the waist gun blister and went to sleep making up for what I lost the night before and did not wake up until we passed over the island of Numfour where the Army had landed and driven off the Japs.

Shortly after we landed in the harbor of Mios Woende, taxied in and pulled up on the ramp, I got a jeep to take me to my old outfit. Larson was still there and plenty busy packing for the move south. The officer I had to see about the sawmill parts gave me the Red Tape as usual. I argued with him for hours, but he insisted it was necessary to go through the regular channels which would take time. I tried to impress upon him how important it was that we get the parts right away and that I would have to have them flown in the next day but he said he could not give permission and would have to write headquarters. I finally got him to agree to give me one box of spare parts which did not belong to the three complete sawmills in the dump.

That night I got a Chief I knew in the 55th battalion to help me. He brought a crew and we got the box of spare parts but added all the other parts we needed and, for good measure, took a diesel engine with us. We dumped the diesel engine at the docks and brought the parts to the airbase where I had arranged for a plane to take

them to Morotai the next morning, thanks to Air Wing Ten which was one of the most cooperative outfits I ever ran into in the South Pacific. There were still some parts I could not get at Mios Woende, so I made arrangements to fly all the way to Milne Bay for the balance. I got special permission to send a dispatch to my battalion at Morotai asking them to meet the plane and have it unloaded at once when it arrived. When the plane arrived at Morotai there was no one there to unload it thanks to a certain jackass of an officer we had in the battalion. He had received the message in good order, but had put it in his pocket and forgotten about it. The next time I saw the operation officer of Air Wing Ten at Mios, I had plenty of explaining to do and luckily had a copy of my dispatch in my pocket to prove it. I got the diesel engine shipped by a tug leaving for Morotai and it was there in three days.

To get a plane for Milne Bay I had to go to Owi island by PT boat and as I could not catch a flight the same day I stayed overnight with the 60th battalion and my old friend Fighting McBain. The NATS, as usual, would do nothing to help one along, just put your name down on the list and hope to God you make it. Mac drove me down along the taxiways and we ran into a bunch of Army pilots sitting on a log shooting the breeze. Sure, I could fly with them, if they were filled up there was always room for another one. They were going as far as Finchafen and were leaving in a few minutes. Before we took off, a heavy wind had started blowing and as soon as we were airborne we climbed steeply to 14,000 to get over the weather and Mios Woende. The other islands looked like small green flowers as we passed over.

I had become very friendly with the pilot and he asked me forward in the cockpit. After we leveled off, he turned the controls over to the co-pilot and we started talking. He had made hundreds of trips over the mountains in New Guinea and among many places he mentioned was the Valley of Shangrila and Hidden Valley. I had heard something about these places but had no idea where they were located. He told me it would not be very far off the course and as we had plenty of time he would swing inland and fly over Shangrila and turning back toward the coast we would hit Hidden Valley.

As we left Japan island behind to starboard we came in over the big swamps and deltas of Northern New Guinea where thousands of rivers twist like snakes through the thick steaming jungles. Ahead we saw high mountains and to the left of us the great Mamberamo River flowed slowly toward the sea to the north. As we climbed over a mountain range, we came in over flat country cut with many lakes and crossed the Rouffaer River which flows into the Mamberamo. Then we began to climb for ahead were peaks more than 12000 feet high. Among these mountains are the headwaters of the Baliem River which flows south through deep mountain gorges, through the Valley of Shangrila and empties into the Arafura Sea.

As we came over the mountain range we saw the valley before us. It was about 40 miles long and 10 miles wide with the Baliem flowing through it. On both sides were high mountains, the highest to the west where Mount Wilhelmina reaches 15580 feet into the sky with clouds drifting around it and snow on top. The valley was locked in from all sides for at both ends were deep mountain gorges where the Baliem was

whipped to white. We circled and dropped down to about six or seven hundred feet above the valley floor which was at about 5000 feet elevation.

The whole valley seemed to be cultivated with fields laid out in squares and irrigated and the people must have lived in small tribes for here and there were villages with stockades and thatched houses, some round and some long and arched, looking like Quonset huts. The plane did not seem to bother the natives as they worked in the fields and moved around the villages. They must have gotten used to them, but I wonder what they thought the first time the thunderbirds came over, for these thousands of primitive people have never had any contact with the outside world and still live in the stone age. The crops in the fields looked like yams, taro root, cucumbers and gourds, and toward the edges of the valley were banana trees and a tree which looked like a scrubby pine. The cultivated areas must have been cleared by fire for charred stumps stood here and there.

After circling several times we headed back out over the rough mountain country, country so wild it would take months to cover on foot the same distance we now covered in a few minutes. Maybe it wouldn't be passable at all, for no man had ever tried it. We never got to see Hidden Valley for it got cloudy so we kept on our course above the clouds which did not clear until we got above the Sepik River. We were following the main course which I had flown before, but I still kept on looking for I never could get tired of looking at this endless, wild unknown land which rolled away under us.

Finchhafen was still a mess and full of transient officers and

men, but this time I was lucky to find a NATS officer who wanted to do something for the passengers. I had priority No. 2 requested on my orders and when I explained my mission to him, he told me to stay in camp for the night and come down again early in the morning. I got there before seven o'clock, but many others must have had the same idea for the place looked like the Union station and some of them told me they had been waiting for weeks.

When the roll call came for the first plane south I was no. 3 on the list and as the others had not seen me around for the last week or more they began to ask questions as to why I should have the privilege of departing before they did. I only told them it was a military secret and left them guessing, but one high ranking officer got very tough about it and demanded an explanation from the NATS officer in a very nasty way. The NATS officer was polite and explained all about my priority and told him that if he wanted to change the arrangement the base commander would have to do the changing. The very indignant high brass then began to act and talk in a way very little becoming a Naval officer which made the crowd laugh and he burst out the door and jumped in a jeep which was waiting for him outside with two enlisted men and enough baggage for three people on a world cruise.

It was foggily overcast when we took off but when altitude was gained we were flying over a snow white carpet of clouds with a deep blue heaven above us. The white carpet reached as far as the eye could see, with tall thunderhead clouds sticking up through it here and there. It seemed lonely and still up there and strange as if we had entered some other world.

The base at Gamadodo looked the same. The roads were a little better and the mud not quite so deep and maybe things were a little deader, but it was the same, and after one look I felt glad I was only going to stay for a couple of days.

The 24th battalion had moved from the old BOQ to their new camp which was the fanciest and most extravagant I ever saw in the South Pacific. The individual cottages, each accommodating two officers, had asbestos roofing and rustic siding with copper screening. Inside the walls, ceiling and floors were finished in plywood with hotlockers built in. Tables and chairs were fully finished and there were special beds with innerspring mattresses; also radios and iceboxes. It resembled a first class hotel. When I saw Jess Ginn I asked him when the Persian carpets would arrive. He passed that one off and asked me what I would like to drink, an icecold American or Australian beer, coca-cola, or would I prefer a highball. I told him since he did not have my special brand of Scotch he could hand me a can of Beer.

Homer Gill was his roommate so we settled down and started talking things over. Homer seemed to be satisfied where he was and as usual was living and dreaming about loading and unloading ships, but Jess was restless and was working hard on getting a transfer to some advanced base.

When we got to the new messhall it was in the same first class hotel style with white linen table cloths, Navy silver and the mess-boys were all dressed in white coats. They handed me a bill of fare which included everything but Spam. They had also built themselves an enormous place for the wine mess with mahogany bar, dance floor

and indirect lighting, but it was closed for the base commander had taken one look at it and got mad.

The next day was Sunday so I had to wait with the business until Monday morning, which gave me a rest and a chance to visit some of my other friends. Sunday night Jess got the most pleasant surprise of his life when the Chief yeoman came in and handed him orders for transfer to a base north. This also meant we could travel together.

To make sure the parts I wanted were available, I went up to the advanced base depot early Monday morning and got hold of a Chief storekeeper whom I knew. We found all the parts, including a six foot diameter sawblade and tagged them. Then I went to the offices for requisitions and as usual I got the big arguments, was sent from one office to the other and most of the officers I talked to swore they had no such parts, others wanted to know in detail why such parts were needed and where and how the original parts had been lost. In other words I was getting the "runaround".

Fortunately I knew the commanding officer, but to get in to see him I had to get hold of commander Lyles of the 24th, who took me. I told him my story and handed him a list of the parts numbers and the warehouse number in which they were stored, and the Commander, McGregor, being an "old construction stiff" himself, went into action. A couple of officers were called in and had some explaining to do after which they were handed so much time to get the parts ready. The commander then gave me a letter explaining that the parts were badly needed at the front and asked that I would be given the highest priority to get to my destination. The parts were shipped to Ladava right away

and Jess and I followed. There was no plane until the next morning so we stayed in the EOQ for the night.

The plane was filled with passengers for Manus when it arrived the next morning, but three of them were taken off to make room for me and the 500 lbs cargo. Jess, however, had to go back to the base to wait another day. As we taxied out for the takeoff, the starboard engine developed some trouble and we had to pull back for repairs. Before the repairs were finished it was nearly dark, but the pilot decided he would fly just the same so off we went.

It was pitch dark all the way over the water and the only lights I noticed were when we flew over New Britain. We also saw heavy ack-ack under us, but whether they were firing at us or something else we did not know for the pilot swung off and got out of there in a hurry. The big base at Manus was all lit up when we slid down on the airstrip about 0200 o'clock.

I had to see to the unloading of my cargo and when I got it safely over in the NATS warehouse, I stopped in to see the NATS duty officer about transportation up the line. He was the usual type, pulled the Red Tape and argued every little point telling me the priority did not mean a damn to him. I knew right then and there that I would have to make other arrangements, so I said goodnight and went to the EOQ and hit the sack. I had just corked off soundly when a couple of noisy guys came in, turned on the light, and started a loud conversation. This also started a heavy argument with some of the officers who had had their sleep disturbed. One of them got out of bed, turned off the light and dared anyone to turn it on again. The lights were

turned off and on and off again several times. I do not know how many or how the fight ended for I was too damned tired to listen, and light or no light, I went to sleep.

After a good breakfast the next morning, I decided my best bet would be to get hold of my old friends in Air Wing Ten; they had never let me down so far. Their base was on the other island and after trying all over, I got into a boat which just happened to be leaving for that point. The operation officer told me a PBV was leaving for Mios Woende sometime in the afternoon. It was fully loaded, but after I showed him my letter, he told me to get my cargo over as soon as possible. He would see that there would be room for me on the plane.

Getting back to the landing, I thought I could save time by having the NATS send the cargo down by truck, for Air Wing Ten had given me a boat which was to wait for me at the landing. But the NATS gave me the runaround, so I banged the telephone and went outside to wait for the bus. After I had sat there for ten minutes an Army truck pulled up and a sergeant got out with some papers he had to deliver to the beachmaster. I asked him if by any chance he was going near the airstrip. No, he was bound the other way. But why? So I gave him my story. Oh, hell. He was in no hurry and would be glad to drive me to the strip, get my cargo and bring me back. And he did. At a terrific speed we got to the airbase, got my sawmill parts, and were soon back at the landing where the boatcrew was bitching because they would be too late for chow. I told them they were lucky they did not have to wait a hell of a lot longer and promised to get them chow passes when we got there.

I had been worrying about the big sawblade being too big to get through the blister of the PBV, but it just slipped in with about a quarter of an inch clearance on each side and we lashed it down between the machineguns to the deck. There was some delay and I watched a couple of PTMs being beached. They gave the crew a lot of trouble for the surf was real heavy in front of the ramp.

When we finally taxied out, the wind was howling and the water choppy, so it took us a long time to get speed enough to lift. We bounced from wave to wave with the spray all around us and it felt as if a bunch of jackhammers were working under the hull. Airborn, we made a wide circle and there under us I saw a sight I shall never forget. For down below was the whole invasion fleet for the big push toward the Philippines. There were hundreds of ships of all types and sizes, from landing craft and big invasion transports to battleships and enormous aircraft carriers. The battlefleet was outside the harbor and, moving. laying up a curtain of anti-aircraft fire in practice maneuvers, the battlewagons ahead and in a long line behind cruisers and smaller craft. As we passed near the flat tops the fighters came up and started cutting up around us. They dived on us and as they came in I could look right into the barrels of the machineguns thinking how that would feel if the fighters had been Zeros instead of Hell Cats. As it was they gave me a good scare for a couple of them dived in under our tail and the downdraft made our heavy lumbering old Black Cat fall like a bullet for several hundred feet. The pilot had a hard time handling her and he was madder than hell, but this did not bother the fighter pilots who barrelrolled alongside of us,

fingering their noses as they swung off sharply, gained altitude and made another dive pulling our Black Cat down again. By the time we got away from the cut-throats we were damned near down on water.

From then on we had nothing but sunshine and glittering water below us except for passing five or six large convoys that were also heading for the big show in the Philippines. I had to reload my saw-mill parts onboard another plane at Mios Woende and stayed overnight, but the next morning we took off on the last lap to Morotai.

It was a beautiful day with sunshine and fair weather clouds hanging on the horizon, but it was Friday the 13th and some of the crew, being superstitious, were worried about every little thing. After taking off we buzzed the tower and the pilot jerked the plane into a steep climb. The boys were sore because he pulled that kind of monkey business on that kind of day. Later on when we came around Biak the pilot slipped down close to the water, evidently to take a look at something and flew for several minutes just above the surface. When he banked and one of the pontoons slightly touched the water, the boys really started yelling, and I wasn't feeling any too good about it myself.

We flew high over Numfour Island, crossed the Equator and headed up into the Halmahara Sea where we got an SOS from somewhere. The pilot began making wide circles to look around and shortly we spotted a Liberty ship fully loaded and heading north. We blinked her, but for quite a while got no answer. When she finally answered, the signals were slow and hard to make out, so we kept on circling for about half an hour's time before the slowpoke got through telling us that

They also had the SOS but had no idea where it came from. We took off again and searching south, went back over the line. Everyone onboard went to sharp lookout and the radio operator thought the call came from a "Gibson Girl", a small handoperated radio set which is used on life rafts. I was lying on my belly in the tailend looking down through the open trap door and had several smoke bombs ready to drop in case we spotted something.

We cruised around for hours but only the empty ocean was beneath us. After crossing back north of the equator again, we headed in for the coast of some islands just off the north tip of New Guinea. The SOS was still coming in. As we came closer to the coast the signals got stronger and shortly after, the lookout in the nose reported a raft dead ahead. We went down and as we passed over, I let go a smoke-bomb. As we passed I could see there were no one on the raft. We went down lower and as we passed over again we could see the inside of the raft was green so it must have been in the water for a long time. Still the SOS came in so we flew closer to the coast. It was rocky and jagged. We were close enough to make out the details, when the nose-gunner who had been watching through a pair of binoculars called to the pilot to turn off for things ahead looked suspicious. Flying back and forth at a safe distance we soon understood. The Japs were in there and they were cracking the "Gibson Girl", the raft was planted and they had a gun ready for us when we got close enough. As we had no bombs with us and did not feel like going in with nothing but 50 cal. machine-guns, especially on Friday the 13th, we made our fourth crossing of the Line and headed south for Kios to get help.

The next morning we headed north again, but this time we had two other Black Cats along and plenty of bombs. When we found the spot, we wiped it good and clean and we kept on our course while the other planes returned to Mios.

As we reached Morotai and flew over the island near our camp, I could see the battalion had made plenty of progress while I had been gone. The heavy jungle stretch between the two coconut groves had been entirely cleared and work on our permanent camp in the southern grove had been started. I could see new roads and the beach had been filled and leveled toward the dock entrance. A cargo ship was tied up alongside the new dock and unloading was in full swing.

I went onboard the Tangier to get transportation ashore and ran into the executive officer who gave me hell for all the trouble it had caused him when the first load of machinery had arrived and there had been no Seabees there to unbad the plane. I showed him the copy of my message and told him to climb all over a certain guy in the battalion the first chance he got. They were just having supper at the camp when I arrived so I lined up and got Spam.

A new officer had arrived and moved in under my tarpaulin. His name was Dan Garvin who later became my steady tent partner and sidekick. He was telling me all about his stay in New Zealand and Guadalcanal when "Washinguachine Charlie" showed up and we had to dive in the foxhole. The next day I started building the Naval Supply Depot and had my hands full of work for a long time to come. The airstrip had been finished far enough for the C47s to land so we were getting mail regularly and the Fleet Postoffice was operating in a tent on

I could not sleep that night in the forenoon, but some show-
ers did break started blowing and it cooled off some. The nights
were cool so the sleeping would have been good if it had not been for
the slight dollar heat at ungodly hours.

It was a pretty island with nice weather most of the time.
Heavy cumulus clouds always hung behind Hainakara across the straits
and the volcano over there bulched awake up into the deep blue sky.
The sunsets and sunrises were marvelous.

"Pop" Craft and Ray Voelker had the tent next to ours and I
usually spent some of the evenings in there shooting the breeze. Pop
and I both like papayas and we used to go out and gather them in the
jungle, lay them in the sun to ripen, and store them in the cooler by
the galley and have them for breakfast every morning.

The heat was hard on the boys who had to do the labor, but grad-
ually they got used to it. We were erecting large Quonset huts for
warehouses and the corrugated iron got so hot we had to put on night
shifts to do this work. When it rained, it rained just as hard as it
ever did in New Guinea but it never lasted very long and did not happen
so often. It stormed once in a while and the winds got up to 60 miles
an hour bending the coconut palms and making the nuts fly all around
us. After the heat, however, the storms felt good.

We had no Sundays or holidays for we had plenty of work which had
to be finished on time. The boys in my gangs had been out much longer
than I and working in that heat was no picnic, but I very seldom heard
any squeaking outside of the regular common bitching, and they did
good work for they were real skilled men who could hold their own any

place. In fact, the enlisted men of the 6th Battalion were the best I ever saw anywhere in the South Pacific and they made the reputation of the outfit, which was darned good.

The boys practically moved into their new quarters in the coconut grove which were 16 x 16 tents raised off the ground on stilts, with open sides. Work had started on the main messhall and the repair shops were in full swing night and day.

The fresh water supply was very short for a while, but it is surprising what a man can do with a helmet full of water. I used to start with brushing my teeth, then a shave, a face wash and a sponge bath. For a while I tried to stretch it for washing out my shorts, but there was not enough water left so I just quit wearing shorts.

As the work progressed we were soon able to knock off for Sundays which gave us a breathing spell, and we moved into the new HQ which had been built next to the beach in a palm grove. The tents were raised on stilts with wooden deck and we had plenty of room with just the officers to the tent. Dan and I made ourselves very comfortable with hammocks for our clothes, writing desk and chairs and we even put in reading lights over the beds. We had showers, for by now Alva Taylor had finished the water installations and it sure felt good to get in under the cool water, soap in and let it run all over. The mess was finished with dining room, wardrobe and a bar, but we were still eating Spex for the provisions were slow in getting in.

On Sundays we drove around in the jeep and looked over the rest of the island. The bomber strip was finished and was filled with all types of planes, and the fighter strip next to it was well under way.

Roads were being built and we had completed a large radio station on the east side of the island. We also had the movie built with a large stage and benches for everybody to sit on and had a new show every night. The Chaplain, Harold Gosnell, whom we all called "Chappy" could preach a damn fine sermon but he also knew his way around and could "Horse Trade" with the best of them both in the Army and in the Navy in regular Seabee fashion.

We built our own machinery and installed a laundry which was a great relief to everybody, for when you have to depend on your own washing, the shirts in that climate get pretty sticky before you discard them.

Provisions were still very scarce on the island and the bill of fare got very monotonous with Spam, canned winies and canned corned beef served everyday plain and in all kinds of camouflaged styles. The Australian coffee was of very poor grade and the butter was a canned cheese mixture from New Zealand which went poorly with the flap jacks we had every morning for breakfast for most of us had half forgotten what an egg tasted like. The canned Australian bacon was like bacon in name only.

All this "bitching" about the grub is not meant in any way to reflect on the efficiency of our supply officer, Alphonse Monahan, for Al was one of the best "horse traders" and "procurers" I ever saw in action and many times he rode "Fat Cat" planes for thousands of miles getting us stuff we needed. But at Morotai there was just nothing to be had for the time being, except a little we got from the ships now and then when Al or Ray Woelker, who was messofficer, went

cut and "horse traded" with the supply officer onboard.

One morning Ray suggested that we try to get some fresh fish. I thought it was a very good idea so I volunteered to get it. I got the boat ready and sent the Chief Diver up to the Army to get some pull fuses for the dynamite bombs which the Chief had made. The carpenter shop made me a couple of big boxes which were filled with ice and we took off up along the islands. We needed divers, so we stopped at a small island called Loleba-Ketjil and picked the Chief, whose name was Moses, and six other natives and promised them a sack of rice if they got us plenty of fish. Moses took over right away, stepped up on the bow and pointed toward the outer reef north of the island -- "Ikan, Ikan, Ikan Bagoes" he shouted, waving his hands in all directions. It means in Malay, "Fish, fish, plenty of fish."

These natives spoke Malay but they were not Mohamedans like most of those around the islands; they were Christians and looked more like the Melanesians of New Guinea.

As we slid along at slow speed over the shallow reef, a squadron of big bombers roared past us overhead heading for the Philippines. The natives waved and shouted, "Boroeng besar tida baik boeat Djapang" -- "Big birds bad for Japanese" and one who had learned some English added, "Japan man no F... good".

A little later Moses started jumping up and down and pointing toward a spot on the water and shouted, "Ikan, Ikan bagoes Ikan BOOM, BOOM" and the Chief let go a bomb. Moses clapped his hands when it hit the water so we knew the Chief had aimed just right. A few seconds later we heard a dull thud and the water was boiling up ahead

of us bringing my sled to the surface. With a lightsheet, the natives adjusted their diving goggles and went overboard, all except Moses who was in ball position on the lower diving orders. A couple of the older men stayed on the surface and picked up the floating fish, while the others dived and when they came up they each had a fish in the mouth and two in each hand. In a few seconds, the after deck looked like the marketplace had fish of all shapes and of the most brilliant colors. Moses got out his knife and started cleaning them and picking them in the ice. I noticed that he sorted some out and put them in a basket he had brought and asked his why. "Ikan Ikan" — "Poisoned Fish" was the answer. He then pointed at my stomach and, grabbing his own, made as if he was in great agony, but pointing at himself he rubbed his stomach and said "Ikan baik". I got the idea. The fish was poison to me, but he was so used to eating them that the poison did not affect him any more.

As we lifted anchor to move along for more fish, a couple of native canoes came up and I traded cigars for a fine woven mat and some large and very rare seashells. Moses was now pointing toward the bigger island and we followed the edge of the reef going very slowly for we could see several schools of Bonita surfacing outside. The day was very beautiful with blue sky, sunshine and not a ripple on the water, and one forgot all about the war for there was no sign of it out here. Moses suddenly made signs for all to be quiet and when I looked toward where he was pointing, I saw a school of Bonita coming toward us. They were cutting the water and leaping into the air, all in formation. We could hear the splash as they hit the water and the

and now took to the air. The school swam in terrific spans and looked like a big white seething through the water. Keesa went up three times and pointed at three places, one directly in front of the school and one on each side. The Chief got the idea and laid the boats perfectly when Keesa called, "Ukon, Ukon," as the first boat went off we could see the school part and steer to the side, only to receive the other two boats.

We dropped anchor and with a wild roar the natives went over the side. Fish were floating all over and through the clear water we could see the bottom which was covered with silver, but it was close to forty feet so the natives would have tough diving. A few of them came up with fish but some of them gave up, shaking their heads as they grasped the boat and hung on. Then Keesa himself went down and soon came up with five fish. He threw the two in each hand aboard, then the one he had in his mouth, spat and let out a flow of lines talking the rest of the lot to get down, "Ukon, Ukon" he shouted, and climbed aboard where he continued to clean fish, shaking his head and talking to himself.

The natives on the big island had heard our boats and now they were coming out in canoes, paddling at top speed with the spray all around them. As they came nearer we could hear them shouting, "Ikan, Ikan Kai-Kai"; Keesa did not seem to like it. He shouted to the divers to hurry, and as the canoes came nearer he began shouting to them to stay off. They did for a while and formed a circle around our boat, but when they saw all the fish on the bottom, they could not wait any longer but dived over the sides of the canoes and came up with fish. Keesa tried again to stop them, but the excitement was

We saw our boat approached and they held about 1000 lbs. as I tried to understand that they could have the rest. But Kees had other ideas. He wanted the surplus fish for his village; to sell with the limulore from the other island; they could do their own thing. Just then the cry went up, "Iken Joe, Iken Joe." Sharks were coming in. At first the natives did not leave the water, but Kees soon ordered them all out, and making sign to the Chief for another "WOK, WOK" he carefully scanned the water. After a few minutes of dead silence, Kees whispered, "WOK, WOK" and pointed to the right spot which the Chief hit on the nose. When the dull report came, Kees let out a roar, waved his arms and began a popular war dance on deck. The rest of the natives got right in with him and the unshowered villagers supplied the chorus. The shark, Iken Joe, had been fooled and they hurled insults at him, shook their fists at the spot and spat on the water. I do not know whether the bomb killed the shark or not for none of them came to the surface, but I am sure they were traveling fast if they were still alive and that they would not come back to the spot for some time. And the natives had gotten even with their arch-enemy, Iken Joe.

We made a fast run for a couple of miles so we could get away from the villagers in the canoe and to Kees' delight, we got another big school of Bonito and this time in such shallow water. He drove his divers to full speed and carefully piled the fish in a corner of the stern of the boat. His village should have plenty to eat tonight.

Going back to Lolaba-Watjil we had to make a wide circle around the reef for it was not low tide, and we got close to the shore of

Special orders are needed from the narrow passage between the islands. The natives were busy with their work and some of them were in great discomfort. Many of them were sick and some were dead. I was finding a very fine basket of delicacies for myself and his household. As we rounded a point of the coast I noticed one of the natives jump up and go aft to Moses talking and pointing toward the shore in a very excited manner. Moses waved me aft and pointing he whispered: "Djupon banjak" (Many Japanese) I soon saw them as they passed in a long line through a clearing in the jungle on the run. I told the coxswain to get to hell out of there as fast as he could for they might have opened up on us any minute and they were not more than a thousand yards away.

I spotted a Cub plane coming toward us over the hills and told the signalman to stand by at the blinker but wait with the message until we had a safer distance between us and the Japs, for they were many and there was damned little we could have done with the two carbines we had aboard. The Cub got the idea and soon sent the range to the artillery behind the hills, which opened up a few seconds later and after a few shots had their shells dropping right in the little valley into which the Japs had disappeared. They kept up the firing for quite a while and the valley was soon filled with fire and smoke and I am sure very few of the Japs got away for they had been following a small river and the jungle wall on both sides was too thick to get through. Anyway, for good measure a bunch of B25s came roaring down and dropped a string of bombs up the little valley.

Back at the village we were met by all the natives on the island and as we slid up on the soft sand, Moses let go his load of fish over the side. With a wild yell the whole population jumped in the water and started picking up the fish and the children dived after them in the shallow water, came up with them in their mouths, and let on they were breathing very hard as if they had made a real deep dive. Moses got the sack of rice and we passed another pack of cigarets among the divers.

As we left we heard the cry: "Ikan Sagoes, Kai-Kai-Sagoes. Taba. Kontali besak." (Plenty of fish, plenty of food. Goodby. Come back tomorrow.) and they waved until we were out of sight.

It was nearing Christmas and I got a letter from my wife with a clipping from a newspaper telling that according to Tokyo the Japanese Army had retaken Morotai and that all the Americans who were not killed were now prisoners. Well, it wasn't quite that bad, but I imagine that if the Japanese intelligence really had known how few of us were left on the island, they would have tried it. Anyway they gave us plenty. Air raids took place every night and the damage to the planes on the airbase was great. For a while the Seabees had to turn to with the Army out in the jungle at night, and a few bargeloads of Japs landed at Wajaboela, drove back a small American detachment and got into the village. Here they were going to execute some natives whom they accused of collaborating with the Americans but the natives jumped them and a fight started. The natives had only their knives while the Japs had machineguns, so the fight did not last long, but hundreds of women and children had been killed and wounded. I saw many of them down at the Army hospital the next day and they were a pitiful sight. One little

girl had been shot three times and had a bayonet stab through the fleshy part of her arm.

We got warning that we could expect paratroopers to be landed any night and that we might be counterinvaded by a large force from Halma-hara where there was supposed to be a Jap garrison of 72,000 men. The PT kept a sharp lookout and slugged it out with Jap barges which carried 3 inch guns.

Up on the perimeter the fight continued and one night, after a big airraid in which we lost a lot of planes, the Japs stormed three anti-aircraft batteries and held them for a while.

I was sleeping soundly one morning after a couple of watches in the jungle during the night, when I woke up to hear machinegun fire. As I looked out through the screen, I looked right into four machineguns spitting fire from the wings of an old Jap Val. I dived through the mosquito net, shook Dan out of his slumber and sprinted toward the fox-hole with Dan right behind me just as naked as I was.

There were seven Jap planes over the palm tops all strafing an ammunition ship which was tied up at the dock a thousand yards from our tent. As I peaked through the opening in the foxhole, I saw one of the Jap planes catch one from our 20mm., burst into flames and come screaming down. It hit a tree and the Jap pilot was thrown clear and catapulted out into the water. The plane crashed on the beach just far enough out to kill the flames.

The other planes were still over, but I saw some of our Seabees, hungry as they always were for souvenirs, leave their foxholes run toward the beach where they stripped the plane of everything. Some even

swam out and got the pilot who was dead in the shallow water along the edge of the reef. Four of the seven Japs were shot down that morning and after it was all over a big argument started between the Army, the ships in the harbor and our gunners as to who was to get credit for the shot down planes. Our boys finally got their papers signed for the crash I saw.

Most of our work was completed by now and we were taking things easier. It had been a hard job for we had lost so much sleep during the nights on account of the steady airraids. After having your sleep disrupted four and five times during the night it is no picnic to get up at reveille and go out and do hard work in a baking sun.

One day I talked to Colonel Saether in charge of the Field Hospital and he showed me the miserable condition of his camp. The grounds had no drainage and the mud was deep all around the tents. He had tried to get some help from the Army, but they had no time. His doctors and nurses were overworked for they had wounded coming in right along and besides the wards were overfilled with mental cases. The nurses had no floors in their tents and when it was raining hard they had to move their beds and belongings to the highest spot in the tent when the water poured in over the floor. These nurses certainly have a lot of credit coming. Most of them had served in the rotten tropics of the South Pacific for a couple of years without leave. At Morotai during the airraids they had to get up and go to the wards and drag the wounded into slit trenches outside and cover the badly wounded who could not be moved with a couple of mattresses.

When I told our commander about the state at the hospital he

agreed I should send my carpenter crew down there and get things in shape. Chief Carpenter's Mate Andy Anderson soon had the place fixed up. The tents were raised and wooden floors installed all through the nurses quarters as well as the EOQ and the Colonel's tent. They fixed up nice rooms for the Red Cross and repaired and straightened things around the wards. Leo Lynch who now was in charge of our heavy equipment and dirt moving sent his boys down to put in drains and fix the roads.

When everything was completed we decided the nurses should have a club house for Christmas so Andy began work, put in a dancefloor and built them a bar which later was decorated by our Chief Painter, Red Bannister. When finished, the place looked like a million dollars and the nurses and the doctors had their Christmas Party there. The nurses were invited to our mess for dinner and dance, and it became a very popular place after good provisions were brought to the island and Al Monahan had a chance to use his talent in "procuring". Filet steaks, an inch thick, French fried potatoes, fresh vegetables and several flavors of ice cream were on the bill of fare almost every Saturday night. Ray Voelker of course also had much of a hand in this for Ray did not only like to eat; he loved it.

Sometimes the nurses went along on boat rides, and I still remember the Sunday Alva Taylor asked me to go along. He had a date with ~~one~~ three of them because he never did remember anything, so the only thing Alva could do was to bring two other fellows and let it go at that. After cruising along the island for a while Alva decided he would like a little surfboard riding. I do not think for a moment that he had

any intention of showing off; he knew he wasn't good enough for that. But when Alva gets an idea he just does it come hell or high water. He wobbled along on the board for a couple of hundred feet when he fell and disappeared for quite a while, came up spouting water and we hauled him onboard. Now one of the nurses, a fat short Jewess from Brooklyn decided that she wanted to try if someone would get on the board with her. Taking one look at Alva I knew he could not stand any more, so I knew it meant me. The fat one sat down on the board which started to sink right away, and when the rope tightened up I had one hell of a time getting on my feet. She was screaming on top of her lungs, hanging onto my legs which I was trying to straighten. When I got standing room we were doing fine at about 25 miles an hour, when all of a sudden the rope broke, the board took a dive, I made a summersault and hit the water just in time to get the fat one right on top of me and down we went together. It seems to me minutes before we came to the surface spitting and coughing and half drowned from all the seawater we had swallowed. The boat was half a mile away and Alva was hanging over the rail laughing himself sick.

Some of my friends from the Tangier came ashore to pay me a visit and to get some dust on their shoes. After lunch in the mess we took a drive up to the air strips. It had not rained for some time so the roads were thick with dust, clouds of it made it hard to see ahead. So the boys got dust, not only on their shoes, but in their hair, eyes, nose, lungs and it covered them completely.

The strip was busy as ever. Planes taxiing in and out and the repair shops along the sides were in full swing. The boys were working

on engines, radios, radar and wings. They wore no clothes except a pair of very short shorts and their skin was so dark from sunburn they were hard to tell from the natives. Long trains of bomb trailers came snaking down the taxiways and pulled alongside the big bombers and crews were stuffing them into the bellies one by one.

At the lower end of the bomberstrip the nightfighters, the Black Widows, were lined up. We stopped and one of the boys from the Tangier got to kidding with some of the pilots telling them what a lousy job they were doing on the "Betties" and why in the hell they couldn't get them before they had a chance at pasting the Tangier. It was all in fun for a while but one of the pilots finally got sore and the arguments got serious. The Navy was told in no uncertain terms to take care of their own damned ships and not mix into the air corps business. When it looked like a fist fight, which I think the boys from the Tangier were itching to get into, I started up the car and pulled away. Just then one of the "Widows" pulled out and began warming up the motors, and as they got to top speed we heard a sharp click and saw the propeller flying through the air directly toward us followed by the starboard engine which hit the ground and rolled toward us stopping a few feet away from the car. Then the flames of fire broke out all along the nose and wing, small at first but soon gaining and turning into a blazing inferno. We had not seen the crew get out so we ran over to see what we could do, but as we got there both of them jumped out, rolled on the ground and ran. The fire engine came tearing down the strip and soon had the fire killed with foam. As we drove away one of the pilots hollered: "Better get onboard the Tub before you salts get hurt." This gave the jg from the Tangier another chance and he

in the air when it falls apart on the ground."

One day Dan Garvin and I took a ride up the road and drove as far as the Perimeter line along the jungle. The last miles or so was out of bounds, but we stopped and got a pass from an artillery officer we knew. Some of the soldiers were trying out a Japanese bulldozer which they had taken from a ravine where it had been left stuck in the mud when the Japs retreated. It had German diesel engines, an imitation of a well known American make hydraulic lift on the blade and a very narrow tank type track. The controls were very complicated and it took two men to operate them. As a bulldozer, it wasn't worth a nickel for the track would spin with two shovels of dirt in front of the blade, but it was fast on the road, making better than 20 miles per hour in high gear.

It was quiet on the line when we got there and the soldiers were laying around in the sun outside the pillboxes taking things easy. Only the sentries and the radio and talkie-talkie men were at their posts. The jungle had been cut away for about 100 ft. in front of the pillboxes and trenches and wired for lights which could be turned on the jungle wall at night. The boys told us things had been quiet in the daytime for some time, but at night the Japs pulled all kinds of stunts. The night before, one Jap had gotten through the line and sneaking up from behind had thrown a TNT bomb into a pillbox killing several soldiers. Some days before, patrols had been sent into the jungle to break up Jap concentrations along the line. They had had a tough fight and had to be reinforced, but they had killed many Japs

One of the soldiers was from Fresno, Calif. and as he passed a big tree he heard someone calling his name and asking for help. Surprised, he turned and looking behind the tree, found a Japanese soldier on the ground with his hand shot off. Thinking of the usual Nip tricks he raised his rifle and nearly fired when the Jap said in perfect English: "Hi, Jim, don't you know me?" Jim did — he had gone to school with the Jap for several years, so he carried him out and took him to the hospital.

On the way home, we passed a company of the Army marching along the dusty road. They were driving wet from perspiration in the hot sun and were staggering under their packs and arms. A Seabee was hanging in a telephone pole alongside the road fixing the wires and singing loudly:

"You're in the Army now
You're not behind the plow
You'll never get rich
You son of a bitch
You're in the Army now."

The Dogfaces did not bother to shout back, just mumbled something about "confused bastards" and kept on marching.

The morning of Christmas Eve was like any other morning. The sky flamed in the east and the sun popped out like a cannon ball and flooded the palm grove around the tents. The Bay was calm and across the straits the volcano was smoking, sending a pillar of smoke straight up into the clear morning air. As the sun rose higher, the heat set in, dead heat for several hours until the trade wind started blowing toward noon. We worked as usual and there was very little to remind one of Christmas, except that the boys were talking about how much Turkey they were going to eat.

After lunch I told the leading chief, Elmer McDonald, to knock the men off work so they could have the afternoon to themselves, but not to let them gang up around the camp which might put me in Dutch for that kind of consideration for the enlisted men was not too popular in our battalion. Later on when I drove past the radio station on the east side of the island, I saw most of them along the beach. Some were in the shade of a tree playing cards; others were swimming or looking for seashells along the edge of the reef.

The boys who had built the clubhouse for the nurses at the field hospital had received a Christmas present of two gallons of GI alcohol and had taken off to the jungle where they had their party, and got a fine jag on. Chief McDonald and I had a Christmas drink in my tent and shot the breeze for several hours. Mac was a real fine fellow and was the best Chief I ever had. He knew his business and the men liked him so in his pleasant way he got more work done than ten other Chiefs who were forever barking. We did a lot of work together in the South Pacific and had a good time of it, and I shall always remember Mac as the best friend I had out there.

After supper Dan Garvin and I drove to the beach in the jeep, as we did so many evenings to watch the sunset. As usual we brought a couple of cigars and just sat and smoked and passed the time in small talk. The sun dropped behind the mountains across at Halmahara and the sky flickered and flamed in a million colors which reflected in the sea and on the mountains and in the heavy looming clouds. A few minutes later it turned dark, the sky deepened to a dark blue and the stars came out one by one until they covered the blue with blazing gold. The evening star hung on the horizon and it was shining brighter

than all the rest. The Chapel was just behind us and Chappy and his boys began singing the Christmas carols. It gave us quite a feeling sitting there looking up into the starlit sky under the coconut palms and listen to the old familiar Christmas songs.

Later on the moon came out. Big and redfaced, he popped up above the jungle and sent his soft light out over the sea and painted streaks of gold in under the palm trees. As he climbed higher into the sky his face grew paler and his light more brilliant. Nothing is more beautiful than a tropical island bathed in his light, but he was not very welcome at Morotai. Here he was the traitor and the collaborator who guided the Jap "Betties" to the airstrip, the stinker who pointed out the ships and the installations worth bombing. No wonder his face got pale as he climbed up there where we could see him, for we all gave him a dirty look and made him understand that we knew what he was up to.

Back in the tent we sat down to write our Christmas letters, but we had no more than started when the three warning shots rang out. The "Betties" were coming agin. As usual we waited outside the foxhole until the radar got contact with them and the searchlights started playing. Sometimes we waited for quite a while; at other times we had hardly time to get into the foxhole. This time it took quite a while but when the searchlight found them we could see that they were many. The heavy batteries down on the point opened up and the big shells were bursting all around but they came in straight and headed for the airstrip. When they were right over us we had to duck for the shrapnel fell like rain and we could hear the nasty sound the big steel pieces

made as they hit the palm trees and the ground. Once in a while they went through the tents, but the hits were surprisingly few considering the amount of steel coming down.

One of the Japs must have gotten excited for he dropped his load out over the Bay and we counted the bombs as they went off one by one. As the firing died down at the point and the 90mm. opened up close to the airstrip, we got out of the foxholes where we could watch the show. One Betty had passed directly over us and we could see him like a dirty colored little night moth way up there when the searchlight beam hit him. All of a sudden a roar went up from the camp and when I looked up again I saw a small Spitfire like a pinpoint climbing up along the light beam directly under the belly of the Betty. A few seconds later the Betty blew up like a big star and streaked toward the ground with a tail of fire behind it, the whole camp cheering wildly until we heard the dull thud when the Betty hit the water on the east side of the island.

The airstrip now looked like a Christmas tree with the thousands of tracers lighting up the sky in red and yellow. Then came the muffled reports from the Jap bombs, some single and some in clusters, but they had hit home. In a few seconds flames were leaping high up in the sky and later when we heard the terrific explosions which shook the ground, we knew some of our bombers had blown up with fullload of bombs.

It was still burning wildly up there when the "all clear" sounded and we went back to the tent to finish the letters. The carol singing began again down at the Chapel and John Wolf, who had had quite a bit

of Australian gin, was singing "I Am Dreaming of a White Christmas" all by himself stretched out on his bunk. He did not exactly have the best of tenor voices, so Harold Slick, his tent mate, tried to shut him up. But John told him it was Christmas only once a year so if he felt like singing he was going to sing and if Harold did not like it he could go back to the foxhole. "But Harold", John added, "I was just thinking. What in the hell would have happened from now on if Santa Claus had gotten into that heavy ack-ack and one of those 90s had hit him?" I do not remember how many raids we had that night, but the strip was burning all night and we got very little sleep; anyway it was Christmas night, 1944.

The next morning Leo Lynch went with me up to the airstrip to look at the damage. As we passed the hospital, we noticed a big bomb crater on a small hill just above the hospital wards. The bomb had hit directly in the middle of an anti-aircraft battery and the fourteen men had been blown to bits. The gunbarrel was sticking out among the scattered sandbags and the charred pieces of metal which had once been ammunition boxes and other equipment. Of the fourteen there was not a piece big enough to identify any of them.

The airstrip was a mess. Pieces of the big bombers were scattered all over and some of the wrecks were still smoldering. The Australian Airforce had been wiped out entirely. Their repairshops had received a direct hit and most of their planes were burned up or damaged. But the bombers and the fighters were taking off one behind the other; they roared into the sky and headed for Halmahara to pay the Japs for everything.

The day after Christmas, Leo Lynch and I got orders to go to Owl and Mios Woende to check over some equipment of a couple of battalions which had gone home. From there we were to continue to Hollandia and report our findings to headquarters. Leo got sick so I left alone but I was sorry to miss his company on the trip for I had got to like him a lot for the good fellow he was. I used to shake him out of the sack every morning and he was always crabby, telling me he was not going to get up and for me to go to hell, but we were always the first at the breakfast table in the mess. During the day we always got together on the job and we got into the damndest hottest arguments, but it was all in fun and I know no one I would rather have for a companion in a place like the South Pacific than Leo Lynch.

As soon as we took off from the strip I piled up in a bunch of mail sacks and went to sleep and did not wake up until I felt the bump of the landing gear as we came down at Biak.

A PT boat brought me over to Mios Woende which looked deader than ever; the 55th battalion was loafing while waiting for their ship to take them to the states and home. I got a bunk in a cabin next to the surf, and during the night I woke up soaking wet with the spray from the surf hitting me in the face. Outside a storm was howling. Lightning in heavy zig-zag bands was continuously flickering over Japan island to the west, lighting up the sea and the beach in a ghostly kind of a light. The coconut trees were bending in the wind and the thump of falling nuts sounded dull in the roar of the surf. I turned the mattress over, covered myself with the raincape and went back to sleep.

The 55th battalion had their equipment in first class shape and had a lot of stock in their warehouses which were badly needed at Morotai. One thing we were absolutely out of was nails and the 55th had hundreds of kegs. However the supply officer, a new guy, was very redtape and told me he had orders from headquarters that nothing could be moved out of the warehouses. I had made up my mind to get the nails in some way, so I went over to see the commanding officer whom I knew from my stay at the island. Leland was a real construction man and understood right away telling me not to worry — he would get me the nail kegs. I had them taken to the NSD for shipment to Morotai but as usual they forgot all about them, so before we moved to the Philippines I had to go back and get them myself.

While I was at the NSD a dog came running up to me, barking and jumping all over me. It was Dudley from the BOQ at Gamadodo. One of the supply officers told me Dudley had arrived onboard a destroyer, had left when the ship docked and had showed up at the messhall. From there he had followed the officer to the BOQ and had settled down. I guess Dudley felt like moving again for he would not let me out of his sight but followed me. When I went onboard the PT in the afternoon to go to Owl, he tried to get onboard but I could not take him so I ordered him to stay where he was. When the boat slid away from the dock, Dudley was howling and running along the beach as we pulled out into the harbor. I felt badly about it and I am sure Dudley was heartbroken for being left behind, but there was no way I could have taken him. However Dudley, the South Pacific tramp and beachcomber, did get off the island somehow, for months later I again heard of him from another man who had

known him at Gamadodo. He was then the pet of the Chief Warrant officer in charge of the Fleet Post Office at Lingayan Gulf in the Philippines.

At Owi the camp looked like a ghost town. The battalion had gone home and a skeleton crew with "Dave" Davis in charge was left to look after the place with my friend Fighting Jerry McBain as second in command. I stayed with Mac and he served some of the most foul drinks I have ever tasted. I have forgotten the name of the brand but it was some kind of Aussie mix, which Mac again mixed with Coca-cola and liked it.

I had trouble with the NATS again in trying to get to Hollandia, so I went over to the Army as usual. The sergeant told me a plane was just pulling out and for me to get in the jeep and flag it down. The plane called "The Purple Cow", a C47 transport, was warming up at the end of the strip when we got there. I ran up and waved to the pilot, who throttled down his motors when he saw me. Sure, hop in, he would take me.

At Hollandia I met some of the fellows I knew and they had me stay in their quarters. The next day Leo arrived, and having been stationed at the place, knew all the ropes but it did not do much good for I have never been handed so much redtape as Leo and I got from certain conceited asses at Hollandia headquarters. We both got so dmaned mad we just gave up trying to get anything approved.

In the quarter we had a good time. We had a great time with Andy Anderson who had been with us for the landing at Morotai as an observer for the brigade. It seems that just now Andy had some very peculiar

was moving all his paraphernalia. Among other things there were four very valuable water flushing toilets. Andy and three other full lieutenants had been assigned to guard these toilets with their lives, to see that they were not misplaced, damaged or stolen. The toilets were now on-board an IST in the outer harbor and Andy had to drive 20 miles back and forth everyday to stand his share of the watches over the "cans". He was really burnt up about the duty and did not like to talk about it. But he did hear plenty and everytime he entered the quarters, Leo would sniff and holler: "God, how it stinks here. What in the hell have you been into, Andy?" All he got for an answer was a dirty look.

I had heard that my friend Dimi Melnikov was in the Naval Hospital, so I went up to see him. He was smiling as usual and in good spirits, but he was down with the most miserable case of fungus I have ever seen. His whole body was covered with the stuff and his finger and toe nails were falling out. I asked him why they had not sent him home, but he told me he did not want to go and that he soon would be all right. I just wish we had had many more like Dimi in the Seabees.

Hollandia was by now a typical back base, with saluting and all kinds of regulations. The Waacs were even there, both white and colored; the latter was called "Wacaroons". McArthur's "Castle" was on top of the hill and the Admirals lived all by themselves in quarters made up of three and four Quonset huts with tennis courts billiard tables and overstuffed furniture made by the Seabees from the stuffing of Navy mattresses. So Leo and I were very pleased to leave the place, but we had a hard time getting ourselves a plane and we would have been stuck for sometime if Leo did not have such good connections all

WROKE.

We stopped at ~~the~~^{the} island which was absolutely deserted. A few Australians were standing around with their hands in their pockets and some natives were squatting in the grass, which together with the jungle, would soon cover the airstrip.

At Biak we had to wait overnight for a plane to Morotai and we went to the Army show after supper. There must have been four thousand soldiers there and it was a very noisy and loud audience, but when the Newsreel showed a picture of General McArthur doing one of his "wading ashore poses" all hell broke loose with "Hi, Mac", "Dougout Dough", and "Don't get your feet wet, Dougout" followed by boos and a salvo of "Rasberries."

I had heard often that McArthur was not very popular among his troops but I had never expected to see such a demonstration; I even heard some of the Army officers making stinging remarks about him. Leo had always stuck up for McArthur, so on the way home we got into an argument. He started the argument again in the plane the next morning, but just then we hit some rough weather and Leo shut up for he always got airsick as soon as the planes began to bounce.

Our battalion now had orders to pack and prepare for another landing somewhere in the Philippines, and when we got there the work of packing and gathering supplies was in full swing. The enlisted men were kind of downhearted for they had been expecting to go home for rehabilitation leave as soon as a maintenance unit took over at Morotai. They blamed the skipper and the executive officer whom they claimed were too ambitious about rank for having talked headquarters into keeping the battalion intact. I doubt there was any truth to the story.

for I do not think headquarters was that easy to sway, but neither of the two officers were very popular among the enlisted men so scuttlebutt of this type was easily started.

My good friend John McNair, who was the malaria control officer of the battalion, had gone to Manus to get supplies for his department and to procure a load of liquor for the wine mess. Coming back in a "Fat Cat" plane they ran into trouble with the engines. They were long overdue when they finally arrived at the Morotai airstrip after dark. Mac had sweated for hours during the trouble and now he was feeling sort of relieved as they circled to get in on the field. But Mac's troubles were not over. Just as they slid in toward the field a couple of Jap fighters, who had slipped through a blind spot in the radar, roared in over the "Fat Cat" and let go with their machineguns at the row of B24 bombers parked on the taxiways. The Fat Cat's pilot leveled off and took to the air and Mac was sweating again, sweating hard for a long time while they circled, waiting for the field to clear. Mac was so damned tired he went to sleep with a lighted cigaret and when Alva Taylor and I got back from the movies we could smell the smoke from Mac's mattress which was burning, but Mac was sound asleep. When we pulled him off the bed and carried the mattress outside, Mac followed us and swore up and down that we had set fire to the thing and that it was a hell of a joke to pull on anybody.

The airraids continued every night and the Japs behind the perimeter kept on making trouble. The Army sent detachments after them

the camp of the Nica Boys, the Dutch East India Troops, and made a mess. It killed more than seventy of them, wounded hundreds and knocked down most of the bamboo barracks.

We had to be on our guard around the camps and the installations for the Japs were constantly sending in spys disguised as natives. Many of these natives, particularly the Mohamedans, were directly collaborating with the Japs, not so much because they had any use for them but because of their hatred for the Dutch.

One night the Army caught a Jap captain who had landed with some natives in a canoe just below our camp. He told the MPs he had spent over three hours in the Navy areas loafing around dressed like a native.

We were spreading propaganda literature in Japanese from planes which flew in over their territory in the jungle asking them to give themselves up and they would be given good food and good treatment. I guess they did not believe us any more than we believed them, for very few came out. Toward sunset one night our picket boat was coming down the passage between the main and the small islands when the coxswain saw a couple of men waving from an open spot next to a small river. When he pulled near, he saw they were Japs and were holding up some of the leaflets we had dropped. The coxswain was careful and told them if they wanted to undress and swim out he would take them. Evidently they must have understood for they got their clothes off in a hurry and came swimming out. The crew made them lay on deck with their faces down and told them not to move, but one of the Japs asked if they were Seabees. When the coxswain said they were, the Japs,

whom we later found out was a lieutenant and could say a few words in English, said "OK, Seabee good; Army kill, no good." The Army intelligence was very grateful to receive the prisoners and the boys on the J-boat got a nice commendation from the commanding general. The Japs always spilled the works once they were taken prisoner but the GIs would not take any, and shot them the minute they saw them.

The Japs on Halmahara were now trying desperately to cross the straits to reinforce the garrison on Morotai and also bring provisions across. They had mounted 3 inch field guns on the barges and for a while they were giving the PT boats hell. Some of the barges got across but most of them were sunk by the PTs and also by the patrol bombers. One morning in the haze one of our bombers mistook a couple of PTs for Jap barges and opened up on them. The PTs did not know what had struck them so they opened up on the plane. One of the PTs got sunk and the other badly damaged. There was loss of life on both boats.

Several of our Seabees were regularly going out with the PT boats at night for slugfests with the Japs along the Halmahara shores. They brought along Tommy guns and hand grenades and got right in there with the PT boys, who must have appreciated the reinforcements for they would stop at our dock to pick up the Seabees and bring them back in time for work.

Some of the boys were also riding the bombers up along the Philippines but this was daytime job so they were missing for work. I used to let them get by with it, but was very careful about the muster lists and did not report them present when not there, for for all I

to handle it, however, for they were young boys and full of hell who liked action, so they were never reported AWOL until it was absolutely necessary.

One of the boys, Loui, a big overgrown Italian kid, would rather ride the bombers than eat, and he was always either on a mission or in the Brig. He had been scaled down in rate from petty officer to seaman second class, but that did not bother Loui. As soon as he had done his 10 days of hard labor in the brig, he disappeared for several days, only to be put right back in the brig as soon as he returned to camp. One time he was gone for nearly two weeks. He told me the bomber in which he had been riding and caught some sick-ack and had had to make a forced landing somewhere in the Philippines. He had finally gotten down to Leyte and had secured a ride back on a cargo plane when he met a Waac at the airport who asked him to come to a dance with her. Loui agreed to right away and forgot all about his going home.

The day after the dance he caught a bomber out of Tacloban which was heading for Morotai, when it got orders to turn and go to Guam. So Loui also got to Guam, and he figured as long as he was there he might as well see the island. So he stayed there four days. Coming back he again landed at Leyte, and Loui thought as long as he was back there he might as well look up the Waac again. This way nearly two weeks passed and Loui got twenty days for that one. When I saw him back in the coveralls with the big yellow P on his back, in a yellow helmet and a pick in his hand digging a ditch I asked him if he had had a good trip. Loui wiped the sweat off his face, put on one of his big, broad smiles and answered, "The best I ever had. It was

Another "bomber-rider" was little "Red", a redfaced and redhaired sawed off stump of an Irishman from the Kentucky Hills. He used to ride the B25s, a hellraising outfit, which suited "Red" to a "T". He always brought along his carbine and when the bomber went down low to strafe, Red would pop away with his gun from the side window and yell like a wild Indian. He used to come to my tent in the evening, look around to see if anyone else was around and whisper to me that he was taking off in the morning. He never asked; he just told me he was going. He got caught several times and did his time in the brig, but most of the times I covered up for him. Red was a fine fellow and a very good worker, but he was one of the wildest little devils I ever saw, and he loved a good fight better than anything else. But if I ever had had to pick men for a very dangerous mission during the war, Red would have been one of the first ones to be chosen.

The Dutch were very strict about keeping everybody away from the native villages and the small islands. No one could land without a pass and they were damned near impossible to get. But Leo Lynch, as usual, soon found a way to beat that. The 31st Infantry Div. of the Army had moved in on the island for staging before they went to Luzon, and Leo knew one of the high ranking officers who was from Leo's home town, the windy city of Chicago. Leo soon knew everybody including the General and had passes for everyplace within a hundred miles.

One morning we took the J-boat for a trip up along the islands. There were Leo, Dan Garvin, Al Monahan and myself. We loaded up with groceries and a lot of junk for trading purposes and took off. The

like a mirror, the sky was blue and the sun was shining as we

Leo was telling about the time he had duty in Brisbane Australia and got seven dollars per day for subsistence. We did not believe a damned word, but Leo was a good storyteller so we let him ramble. Dan usually started an argument when Leo got slightly mixed up in the facts, but this morning I think the lazy atmosphere of the South Seas had gripped Dan, so he just lay there looking up into the blue sky.

We passed a few Japanese barges which had been sunk in the passage, went by the small islands and were soon up under the point at Vajabola which is the biggest town and the Capitol of Morotai. It looked like any other village, except that it had a Mosque and several Chinese stores with corrugated iron roofs. It also had a sort of pier, but it looked in very poor condition, so we decided not to go ashore and headed back out in the passage and crossed to the island of Rao.

The village was on the south side and stretched from the beach, where there were stilthouses over the tide and back up through the coconut groves to the jungle behind. Hundreds of people were gathered under big shady trees. The population of the village before the war had been small, but now many natives from other islands and from Halmahara had come there to live. It had also increased lately, for many of the people from Vajabola had moved across after the massacre during the Japanese counterlanding.

We ran our boat up on the sandy beach and immediately a very polite Malay who spoke Dutch came down to ask us if we had a pass. Leo shoved him our pass and told him a lot of bull in English which the Malay did not understand any more than Leo did his Dutch, but it is just as well that he did not. The Malay hesitated as if he was waiting for something, so after I handed him a package of Luckies, he

managed to form some kind of a smile on his sour face, opened the package, lit a cigaret and walked off very dignified swinging his cane. When Leo asked me why in the hell I had to spoil the natives from the start, I told him he was the one who came from Chicago and ought to know, *why*.

Most of the natives in the villages on Rao were Malays and were dressed accordingly, some of them wearing the Fez. They did not seem over-friendly, but when they understood we wanted to trade they brought carvings, baskets and mats. Cloth of any kind was much in demand and for an old sheet one could get almost any article. A woman had a very fine old belt buckle handmade of filigree silver which she wanted to trade for cloth. At first she was very bashful and her husband did all the bargaining. Leo showed them an old bedsheet, but as it was worn they did not seem very interested, and when Leo added some Dutch money the husband started bargaining for more money. But the lady would have none of it; she had her mind set on getting some cloth. I had a small roll of linen which had been sent to me from the states and when I brought it on deck she got very excited. I measured off 3 yds., but the husband wanted five and when I stood pat he grabbed the woman by the hand and started walking away mad. But now the woman changed all of a sudden. She shook herself out of his grip, gave him a push and began telling him off in Malay. He threw up his hands and walked away talking to himself while the woman came rushing back, waded out in the water alongside the boat and handed me the buckle. When she walked back with her 3 yds. of linen she had a broad smile on her face and hastened up under the big trees to show it to the other women. A little

later she came back with an old silver locket and a bracelet both of native make and I gave her three more yards for each of the things. We also got inlaid walking sticks carved from the black ebony wood and model canoes carved from the same wood. I tried to make one of them understand that I wanted to get a few hunks of the black wood but they all shook their heads and pointed to a small island up the coast.

Several small boys were playing reed flutes in a canoe alongside our boat, a wierd, monotonous oriental sounding tune. I asked one of them to let me have a look at the flute and handed it to me smiling broadly. It was very crude but had a nice clear sound although it was nothing but a piece of reed with holes cut in it. I handed it back to him and he put it in his mouth and played, of all things, "Pistol Packing Mama" in real jazzy fashion and pointed toward a small island out in the passage. I knew then where he had picked it up, for there was a radar station on that island; the soldiers had taught him the tune. Just the same it was kind of a surprise to hear it played by the naked little savage.

We went up along the island and stopped at several villages, but they had all been deserted for fear of the roving Japanese bands which drifted around the island in search of food. At one of the villages an old native was out in a canoe fishing. When he first saw us he tried to pull away, but we overhauled him and tried to talk to him. He just sat there looking daggers at us and spat on the water just to show us what he thought. I do not think the old boy gave a damn whether we were Japs or Yanks, to him we were nothing but a bunch of

dirty noisy dogs who had disturbed the peace of his island and had upset the routine in the village.

We continued along the coast but when a mist set in we decided we better turn back, for Jap barges might try to make the run from Halma-hara and we did not feel like being a target for any 3 in. guns. We followed the chain of small islands and saw natives on many of them, but the water around was too shallow over the reefs.

At one place a canoe came out and a big, fat Malay was sitting in the stern while a couple of naked natives handled the paddles. He was very smooth and polite at first and talked continuously in his own tongue of which we did not understand a word, and of course neither did he understand a word of what we were saying. He then pulled out a very fat pocket book stuffed with Japanese war money, and wanted us to exchange it for "Ten dollars". When we laughed he got very nasty, waved his hands shook his fist and talked a blue streak. We left him sitting there talking to himself, for he had most likely been very anxious to get that money when the Japs had the upper hand and had promised him the world. Now, since things had turned, he had found out that the money wasn't worth the paper it was printed on.

When we got to the last of the islands we found a passage and followed it in to the beach. The natives here were of a different type, not typical Malays but more like Moses and his boys whom I had taken fishing from the island of ^{LOLEBA} Kjitil ~~island~~. They were more friendly and very anxious to trade, bringing mats and carving to the beach. They wanted rice so we brought out a bag, and traded their stuff for so many cupfulls. I noticed that all their carvings were done in the

same black wood and tried to make some of them understand that I wanted a small log of it, but I gave it up for none of them seemed to understand me. However just as we were pulling out an old native came out from behind the huts with a big hunk of the wood on his back. I let him know that I wanted it and offered him rice and cigarets, but he shook his head and would have none of it. At first I thought he did not want to sell the wood, but he came right up to me and took hold of the sleeve of my khaki shirt. The old boy had made up his mind, the shirt or no deal. So I went home without a shirt, but I had finally managed to get the black wood which I had wanted for carving.

Morotai was to be one of the taking off places for the forces which were to invade Borneo. The Australian Infantry arrived to stage on the island. They were of the Tobruk Rats, famed from the desert fighting in Africa, and they were a tough bunch, hardy and seasoned as fighters. I never saw any of them wear a shirt, rain or shine and they lived right in the jungle sleeping under flies and eating from Billy cans. One day I watched them unload trucks in a dump. They worked full speed in the burning sun throwing cases of canned goods into high piles and while they waited for the next truck to come around they amused themselves by wrestling each other and having boxing matches, hitting each other with full blows with bare fists and laughing about it. Our officers' mess was really an Allied setup. We had American Army and Navy, Australian Army and Navy, Dutch and Javanese officers at the tables. Our show was overrun by Australian soldiers and even in pouring rain they sat there without a shirt and their battered Bushwacker hats dripping water all over them.

Baseball games got in full swing on the island for we had completed the field, which was named Brannan Field after the first Seabee killed on Morotai, and the boys were given time to practice so we soon had a good team. They played the Army, which had many teams, the Navy and the Aircorps and the games were real "hot" with heavy betting on the side lines. In fact, the more time the boys had to themselves, the heavier the gambling got all around. They had high stake poker games in camp and some of them were running crap games and making small fortunes. One of my boys had built a box for shooting crap and he told me he had made several thousand dollars which he was trying to send home. He was a very nice sort of fellow and I knew he had a very large family to take care of and his one big ambition for years had been to get himself a small farm where the big family could live. He was running a straight game strictly on percentage basis and the boys who liked to gamble would do so regardless of Navy regulations so I figured he might as well have the chance to get the money as somebody else who would throw it away.

We still had no idea about where we were going next, but was certain it would be somewhere in the Philippines. However there were always ways to find out. I had built a large clubhouse for the Aircorps and was acquainted with several of the higher ranking officers in the outfit. One day I mentioned to one of them, who was in the intelligence, about our destination and he took me into his office and showed me on a large map the exact spot where we were to land which was Puerto Princessa on the island of Palawan, the western-most island in the Philippine group out in the Sulu Sea. There was heavy

betting in camp as to our destination and I could have made a lot of money taking some of them, but I did not want to put my friend from the aircorps on the spot.

Most of our equipment was ready and we were pre-cutting lumber at the sawmill for buildings to be erected in the new camp. They soon ran entirely out of nails and there were none to be had at Morotai so when I told the Skipper about the cache I had at Mios Woende he gave me orders to go and get them.

I found out that the Mothership of the PT boats was to go down to that island to exchange a flotilla of boats and the Captain onboard gave me permission to go along. It was the "Mob Jack" a DE which had been converted to that purpose and we left right away, followed by fifteen PTs which crowded around us like chickens around a hen. We stopped at Zanzipor New Guinea for refueling of the small boats and the next day were anchored in the harbor at Mios.

I got my nails and was also lucky enough to get a load of beer for the battalion which the Captain told me I could stow onboard. The ship was also taking on beer and as usual we had to watch closely so the boys would not steal too many cases. I think we were six or seven officers standing around while the beer was passed from the trucks to the hatch and we kept a sharp eye on every case, but when we checked the load in the hold twelve cases were missing. How those guys could do it I still have not figured out for it was a mystery how things could disappear out there right in front of your eyes. Beer was in high demand among the boys and when it came to getting it, they really used their talents.

We had to bring the ship up to the dock for loading and the Skipper had a hard time getting her alongside, but as we were leaving we had a much worse time. After tearing loose the moorings of a drydock and backing into three PT boats, we finally succeeded in getting out in deep water; the new squadron of PTs followed us and we headed out through the nets for our trip home.

As we got out in Japan passage the PTs spread out around us and we began to roll heavily for a strong wind had come up and the water was choppy, making the PTs bounce and leap with the spray flying all around them. As we neared the tip of Japan island, the lookout reported a sailing ship coming out from one of the inlets. The ship was alerted at once for the Japs might be trying one of their tricks. The PTs were ordered to investigate and hauled off at full speed swooping down on the schooner like a pack of greyhounds after a rabbit. As they got to him they formed a circle and one boat pulled closer to speak to the schooner. We soon got the OK and found that the schooner was manned with Australian soldiers. Jap submarines had been reported in the waters so we kept a sharp lookout and during dark hours we zig-zagged with two rows of PTs doing the same on each side.

I had a good time onboard and got to know some of the officers real well and was taken through the engine rooms and had everything explained to me, and watched them take a torpedo apart which was very interesting. We had coffee every fifteen minutes and I do not think I ever drank as much coffee in my life as I did onboard the "Mob Jack." A few days before the LSTs arrived to pick up the battalion, it began to storm and rain. It broke with a terrific thunder storm and a high

the coconut trees; then the downpour started with water coming down in buckets making a lake out of the camp grounds and driven inside the open tent walls by the wind soaked everything and everybody. It clogged the drains in the ditches along the roads and flooded the road beds; it made a big lake out of the base ball field and the tennis courts we had built down by the beach, and cut big ravines in the coral fills.

Part of the Army was also moving and after the rains they ran their tanks and heavy trucks down the main highway and made a mess of it, and a few days later we began moving our landing sleds which were dragged behind trucks and tractors down the same highway. Before we had all our gear down to RedBeach the main thoroughfare of Morotai was bottomless and damned near unpassable, making everybody else on the island sore as the devil and I cannot say that I blame them. The dragging of those sleds down the road was not at all necessary but was done only because at times very shortsided orders were given.

I stayed behind when the battalion left and I talked to several Army officers who were plenty sore about the way the road was ruined for it put several Army units into untold trouble and extra work and it took the Army engineers several weeks to complete the road. All this left the 84th battalion a very bad name after leaving Morotai where they had done a lot of excellent work and had been known as a top outfit. But it shows what damage one shortsighted officer can do when given authority and does not even know what he is doing.

The Skipper always let the executive officer handle the moving,

responsibility in construction and had to have a

and the old man kept him away from it as much as he could, letting him handle his beloved police duty which included the Brig and the Shore Patrol known among the men in the battalion as the "Gestapo". His greatest joy was to catch a man at some trifle breach of the rules and have him thrown in the Brig, dress him up in coveralls with a yellow P on the back and have his "Gestapos" drill him in the hot sun together with the rest of the long and short term prisoners. The men all despised him and hated his guts. Many of them told me that they were just looking for the day when they could meet him on even terms and give him the works. The commander was, of course, to blame for letting him get by with some of the injustice, but the Skipper, who was a very capable construction man and a very good manager had also a very poor attitude toward his enlisted men and therefore was not very well liked by them.

I remember one day at Morotai, my Chief came up to me and was madder than a fire cracker. He had been working a gang of carpenters constructing the administration buildings for the base command. The Skipper had told him that he thought the Chief was too lenient with his men and that he should drive them more. "They have to be treated like the Okies" was his remark. It made me just as sore as the Chief was, for in the first place if the Skipper wanted to complain about the work he should have come to me directly and in the second place I thought it a rotten remark to make about the type of men working on that building. They were all first class tradesmen, knew their business and worked at it hard and I don't think I ever had a better crew. They had been out in the Pacific for more than twenty months and

worked hard all the way through in the hot, damp, tropical climate, worked just as hard as they ever did at home for top wages.

At the end of the war the Skipper got a lot of credit for the battalions' work, but he forgot the men entirely, the same men who made it possible for the battalion to get the reputation. The men admired the Skipper for the capable construction man he was, but as an officer and as a man they had no use for him. As far as I am concerned, I was treated well by the Skipper and he was friendly toward me, but I have also seen him very overbearing and unjust toward other officers and backing the executive officer in his many unreasonable and insulting treatments of both officers and men. Most of the officers just took it for there was very little they could do against them when they were sent to quarters for no reason at all and kept there for days without any charges ever brought against them. We had no legal officers and the few that were supposed to be around the bases did not have any guts to take any action and usually sided in with the command. The Chaplain tried to step in, but he was damned lucky not to be sent to quarters himself.

A few fought back and when they did they usually got by with it. I remember when Harold Slick was sent to quarters and the rumpus that started. Harold put a few under the belt and proceeded to lay them both low. He demanded a General Court Martial and reminded them of a few things he was going to spring at the hearing. Among them the story of the "Yachts" which the Skipper and the executive had been using for their own private use.

These "Yachts" were the two boats which the battalion had and

they had been acquired from the Army at Morotai by "horse trade". According to scuttlebutt, they had been traded from a colonel for a couple of refrigerator units from the battalion's stock. This was, of course, nothing unusual for the Seabees horse-traded anything to get what they needed. But these boats were different for they were only used by the two officers for fishing trips and for taking nurses out on dates. Some of the other officers got a chance to use them now and then but very seldom, and as for the enlisted men, the use of these boats was out of question.

This caused a lot of talk among the men and they figured out how much it cost the government to keep these "Yachts." The price of the boats was set at \$100,000. — and to this was added the pay of the crew which consisted of three men on one boat and four on the other who did nothing else but just tend and run these boats and on top of that came the gasoline bill. This was all true; the boats were used for a year and were of no official or practical use to the battalion, but were used entirely for pleasure cruises by the two officers and their parties. The men were kept on the boats and the government gasoline was used. In fact we were so shorthanded many times that we had to split gangs to get the work done, but never was anybody ever able to get the men transferred off the "Yachts" and put to work.

When Harold Slick sprung that one he was immediately let out of quarters and nothing was said about his court martial.

This "Yacht" business cropped up every now and then and I remember one day the executive officer had put a Bosn's Mate on report for having a can of cherries in his bunk, the can having been found

in one of the "Gestapo" raids which were pulled every now and then for no reason at all but to satisfy the executive's hunger for police authority.

The Bosn's Mate was first charged with stealing government property, but when the executive officer demanded that Al Monahan, the supply officer, should testify that the can had been stolen from the supply dump, Al refused on the grounds that he did not know where the can had come from, had not seen the Bosn's Mate steal it and did not know that it was government property. The charge was then changed to illegal possession of Government property. As we were in a meeting, there were several officers present and some of them spoke up and said that we thought we were all in possession of illegal property from the same source. Most of us had fans in the tents, radios from the P38 planes and a few like the executive officer, even had a refrigerator, all illegal. Leo then said something about the "Yachts" and the "Old Man" flew off the handle, told the executive to drop the whole matter, turn the Bosn's Mate loose and forget it. Leo just sat there with a wicked smile on his face while the Skipper looked daggers at him, but he was always a little afraid of Leo and always let him alone.

When the battalion was ready to pull out of Morotai the question of transporting the "Yachts" came up, and as the Navy would not allow them to be hoisted onboard the LSTs, the executive got the idea of towing them behind with the crew onboard them, and ordered me to supervise the rigging of the towlines. I told him I was very much against

in rough weather and getting lost and even reminded him of the loss of the LSTs which we had towed alongside coming up to Norotai. But he would not listen and told me to go ahead with the toelines. I did put double toelines clear around the hull and made things as secure as possible, but I still did not feel right about the thing so after having installed flares, signal lights, plenty of water and grub onboard, I went up to the Army to get description of the Philippine coast and marked on a map all the safe and the unsafe places where landing could be made in case of the toelines breaking for I knew well the convoy could not stop to pick them up even if they knew the boats had broken away.

As it turned out the boats were hoisted onboard the LSTs at the last minute. How they got by with it I do not know, but I was ordered to do the hoisting, and I was glad to do it, for I should have hated to see the nine sailors onboard drifting by themselves in that kind of water.

I got orders to stay behind at Norotai to take care of the shipment of additional machinery which was on the way and also to see that the equipment which could not be put onboard the LSTs, mostly due to the large space taken up by the "Yachts", got shipped by first available batten.

I went along to Red Beach where they were loading and helped Leo with his outfit. The executive officer was all over the place barking and yelling and nobody seemed to pay any attention to him. He had a two-way radio installed in his jeep which was connected to "Gestapo" Headquarters in the other end, and was constantly calling and giving

orders. While he was aboard one of the ISBs, somebody disconnected the power, but when the generator came back he jumped in the jeep and started calling his station, whereupon he carried on a long conversation ending with a loud "Blower Out". Leo and I were watching and both of us knew from well that the mike was still disconnected and that he had been talking to himself and was just shouting off.

The loading of the ISBs was difficult on account of the sand and the heavy surf at the beach, but they got off on time and as they pulled out, I felt kind of lonely standing there waving. But I soon forgot all about my loneliness, for a big breaker rolled in and washed over me, drenching me to the skin.

When I got back to camp the Acorn outfit from the airstrip had moved in and taken over, not only the rest of the camp, but also my tent. When I complained about it to the mess officer he got very huffy and told me they had taken over and I would have to find some other place to stay. I felt like settling the questions in a certain way, but being in the Navy means to follow the regulations and take the matter up with the right authority through the proper channels, so I went down to see Captain Harrison, the base commander. He soon settled the question and my tent was cleared out in a hurry and the mess officer was told that he was expected to use some judgment before he gave orders.

All the jeeps had been loaded on the ISBs including mine so I was left without transportation which was kind of a handicap for to get the transportation for the equipment I had to keep in constant touch with the Army which had their headquarters miles away on the

other side of the airstrip. I had done some favors for an officer at the ordnance depot and when I told him about my predicament he immediately sent a sergeant down with a jeep which I was told I could use as long as I stayed on the island. I knew all the officers and some of the men of the maintenance unit which had taken over the work on the island, for they had been my neighbors at Gamadodo. One of them was "Tex" Rogers, a Chief Warrant, whom I knew real well and had worked with before. He was one of the best all round construction men I knew. To "Tex" fell the task of straightening out the roads which had been so badly damaged when my battalion moved away, and he was telling me every day what a damned fool outfit I belonged to which would leave the place in such shape. And I agreed for it was not only the roads but the grounds around the shops and the camp areas were littered with rubbish and junk, and "Tex's" men had to clean it up. Captain Harrison was also very peeved about the whole thing. He had never had any use for nor had he gotten along well with our officers in charge which was not entirely his fault, for Cap was a nice sort of an old time Navy officer and I always had liked him.

"Tex" gave me a crew to get my things ready and straightened out and I soon had very little to do except keep in touch with the Army about transportation. I spent most of the time roaming around the island, doing a little woodcarving and going out with the Navy pilot who brought the ships into the harbor.

The airraids had stopped and it was about time for they had lasted for better than ninety days and had given us many a sleepless night. To keep the gunners in trim, they set up a rocket range at the

beach and kept on popping all day. They set up the rockets down along the beach in both directions and the guns along the beachline would fire as the rocket passed. Now and then a single Jap would try to come in, which they did and sometimes very unexpectedly, but we shot several down and the ones that got away did small damage. One bomb hit a latrine at one of the Army camps and did no actual damage except to blow up the building, but the content of the trench underneath splattered all over the rows of tents so a lot of the GIs had to move out just the same and the tents had to be taken down and washed.

One night I went to the show with the officer in charge of the maintenance unit and just about the time the show was half over I heard "Washing Machine Charlie's" motors. No alert had been sounded, but by now I knew the sound well and I told my friend we better get near the foxholes. He told me not to bother him, for he thought I was kidding and when I left he just sat there laughing. Several of the "old timers" had also heard the sound and soon quite a few of us were heading down the road. I did not get many hundred feet away before the warning shots blasted out and just then "Charlie" opened up with his machineguns and our ground guns let go a curtain of ack-ack. When I turned I saw my doubting friend coming hell bent down the road running faster than he ever did the rest of his life, for it was his first air-raid and he was scared like everybody else.

One day I got a call from over the telephone from the airstrip. It was John Wolf, who had been on one of his many trips to Australia and had overstayed his leave missing the departure of the battalion. I was all excited for he had orders for Morotai and no further and

now they would not give him transportation to the Philippines. I got in my jeep and found John standing under the wing of a C47 which had brought him in and he looked very forlorn and was all up in the air. He had also some other troubles for he had been caught stowing a load of beer onboard the transport which was strictly prohibited and now he was on report "Down under." He had to get orders of some kind but did not want to report to the base for fear they might ask for some explanation, so we doped it out between ourselves and wrote a set of orders which I signed as officer in charge of the Rear Escalon of the 24th CB. I knew the sergeant at the Army Transport office so after John left I told him the story and asked him to destroy the fake orders, which he did.

I had a lot of useless things in my pile of equipment and stores which I did not want to send along because we had no earthly use for them. There were twelve thousand pairs of socks dipped in insecticide and five thousand pairs of woolen mittens dipped in the same dope, old stoves and countless other junk. The Army and the Navy wouldn't even look at the junk so I called in the Australian supply officer and asked him to pick out anything he wanted, which he did. He took the whole lot and was very glad to have it.

The Australian soldiers soon got in the habit of stealing everything they could get their hands on, a habit they learned fast from our own men. When I went out to look over an old dynamite dump which I wanted destroyed because all the boxes were rotten and soaking wet, I found one of our brand new generator sets on wheels which had been carefully hidden in the jungle. I drove over ^{to} the maintenance unit to

have them tow it in and was not gone over half an hour, but when we got there with the truck, the generator set was gone. We followed the trail through the jungle only to find it leading on to the main road where it became impossible to follow the tracks. I asked a couple of GIs who were working on the water lines if they had seen it go by and they told me a bunch of Aussies had towed it past a few minutes ago with a truck.

I had a good friend, an Australian Infantry Captain, and I went right over to see him about it. He immediately started an investigation and called all the provost marshalls at the various Australian camps, but after a few days we had to give up; the generator set could not be found.

When the battalion left they had been very short on stores and the little we had was mostly Australian and New Zealand make, such as coffee and tinned butter, canned milk and sugar which was always moist and had a gunnysack taste. A ship had arrived at Morotai from the states and was filled with all kinds of stores and the skipper, a Dutchman, wanted to unload as much as possible for he had been delayed and was to be back in the states at a certain time.

I thought it a good chance for me to ship the battalion some badly wanted American stores and went to the base supply officer to see what I could do, but was told that there was no way it could be done. I tried Captain Harrison but got the same answer. However I was sure his reason was not only the trouble of transferring stores to an outfit which had left the island, but also because of the not too good feeling between him and the battalion. I had still a lot of lumber left, several thousand board feet stacked in bundles and ready for

shipment. But the lumber had been bundled green and now it was cooking in the hot sun and I had already made up my mind to leave it, for it would be rotten long before it got to Palawan island. Cap had been after me to let him have some of the cut lumber which he needed, for a late order had come in to dismantle the sawmill and ship it to Palawan. I had already done this so I offered the old boy the whole stack of lumber in return for an order on 200 tons of stores from the ship, which he accepted right there and then, but I said nothing about the lumber cooking and I just hope he used it up before it fell apart by itself.

I had expected to leave Morotai within a couple of weeks, but now things dragged along and there was no ship in sight which could take on my equipment. I got a lot of help from the Navy Port Director at Morotai who was a dandy fellow and did everything he could, but there was nothing we could do to hurry the procedures.

The Navy pilot at the harbor had a boat which he could use any time, so we made several trips to the islands and went through the native villages and I was successful in getting a large native drum which I had tried to buy for so long. The natives just would not part with these drums, and several times I had offered them a lot of money for them but always got no for an answer. This time I had brought along a couple of white Navy blankets which the supply department had left for junk for they had been badly stained by oil. An old man in the village wanted the blankets in the worst way, but I told him I wanted a drum and nothing else.

Most of the natives in the village, including the Chief himself,

were very unfriendly and wanted nothing to do with us, but we managed to get some very good mats and quite a few rare seashells. As we were leaving the village, we followed a trail through some thick jungle toward the beach, and here the old man was waiting for me looking kind of nervous. He pointed toward some thick bushes and there was a very fine drum made from a hollow coconut log and covered with goat skin. I gave him the two old, stained blankets and he ducked away in the jungle without a word.

Some of my friends in the states sent me several packages of seeds of flowers and I gave them to Dr. Stroh who had a very fine native garden around his tent. Doc planted them right away and they began to sprout in a couple of days and I made the remark it sure would be funny to see California poppies grow in a place like that. But when the sprouts got about an inch high, the bugs got at them one night and the next morning you could not have found a sign of any of them with a magnifying glass. A USO show arrived on the island and put on "The Mexican Hayride" and the girls received much attention from the wild audience who shouted "fresh" remarks and also talked among themselves and made remarks which were more than "fresh" and never could have been shouted.

The Australians played their particular kind of football or Rugby and I used to go up and watch them, although I never got the idea of the game, but they were playing very rough and rolling in the mud cutting themselves on coral, but they did not seem to mind and took their game very seriously and got into hot arguments with the other players as well as the onlookers at the sidelines.

I had just finished supper one evening when I walked John Wolf. He had found the battalion all right and had straightened out about his overleave, but Alva Taylor was missing some of the parts for the bits on the water drill and thinking the parts were still at Morotai where they might have been left on the beach, John had gotten orders to go down and look for them. The next morning we went all through everything in the equipment yard and did not find anything looking like drill parts. I was pretty sure there would be no chance finding them at the beach for they would have been found a few minutes after the LSTs left and carted away by the Army, the Aussies or whoever found them. But we drove to Red Beach anyway and looked everywhere without any success.

I also contacted some of the Army Engineers I knew, but they had no such parts in stock; their drills were also of a different type. I would like to have gone back with John, but I still had nothing definite about transportation for the equipment, so he had to leave by himself. The Acorn Unit now in our camp also got orders to move to Palawan and an LCI came into pick up some of the crews while the rest were going to fly their Venturas all the way. Just then I got a despatch from the Skipper to come on up and leave the transportation problem for the equipment with the base supply officer. I was very glad to get the message for I was getting tired of hanging around with nothing to do and just sit there and wait for the slow moving Red Tape to settle the transportation question.

I thought for a while of taking the seatrip in the LCI but the way it was crowded soon changed my mind and I went up to the airstrip

to look over the Venturas. They were even more crowded so I made up my mind to wait for the next Army plane, not even trying the NATS for I was not going to go through all that again. The 13th Airforce had a plane for Samar that same noon and the pilot told me I was welcome to come along that far.

It was raining and overcast when we took off, but as we got out over the Molucca Passage it cleared and sun was shining making the water under us shine like a floor of silver. Farther on we hit heavy cloud banks and we were flying through deep blue canons with snow white walls and a white carpet under us which had a hole here and there through which we could see the sea below.

We landed at the strip at Samar in a cloud of dust and as we taxied right up to the NATS office, I went in and asked for transportation to Palawan I do not think the guy who waited on me ever had heard of the place -- he told me they had no planes bound there. As I was leaving with my mind set to find the Army Transport office, an elderly officer spoke to me and said he overheard me asking for a plane to Palawan. He told me the best chance would be to try from some other airport in the Philippines and suggested that I take a plane which was heading for Mindoro in two days. Mindoro, of course, was farther north, but as long as I was traveling I thought I might as well see as much of the place as possible, and booked myself for the plane and went over to the transient ECQ. The place was right in the middle of the town of Guinan in an old building with a long wide porch and had once been the town school house. It faced the Plaza which was swarming with Philippines, men and women, Carabaos and wagons and small horses. On

the other side of the Plaza was the very old Spanish Fort with the adobe church.

The rooms inside were large and filled with rows of bunks covered with mosquito netting. An old Lt. Commander from the regular Navy was in charge and was sitting in a small office in the hallway roaring orders to the colored messboys. The first thing I looked for was the shower which I found in the back yard and to get there one had to walk across the open porch facing the Plaza which made me think I better bring my pants along. And it was a good thing I did, for coming back several other officers were behind me, one of them stark naked. As we passed the small office a roar louder than any other came from within and out came the old Lt. Comdr. and started to lay the naked one low. I have never heard anyone getting such a bawling out. Of course the old boy was right. Any man who would walk stark naked right in front of all the women out on the Plaza and in the street should have a bawling out and also have his head examined.

Shortly after I noticed that there was no pillow on my bunk so I asked the messboy to get me one. The old Lt. Comdr. overheard this and told me in a very quiet tone that they were all out of pillows, "But", he added, I think I can get you one. With that he walked over to the bunk of the officer who had walked naked on the porch, took his pillow and handed it to me saying, "Take this one. Anyone with a head as empty as this fellow's sure does not have any use for a pillow." As soon as the old boy left I handed the pillow back to the poor guy who was standing there very red in the face. I could see he was a stranger and knew no one, so I began talking to him and found him a

very decent sort of a young fellow. He told me he never even gave the thing a thought for he had lived so long around the island camps where anybody walked around stripped that he had entirely forgotten that there were native women outside.

We got to be good friends and took a walk through the town which had narrow dirty streets with heavy traffic and the side streets even more dirty and full of sleeping pigs and dogs with chickens scratching and cackling. The Plaza had once had grass in it, but now, it was dirty and dusty and in the middle stood a statue of Dr. Jose Rizal, the Lincoln of the Philippines.

There had at one time been a walled city around the Spanish fort but most of the walls had fallen down and had been removed long ago. Some of the wall was still standing against the bay where the old bell-tower was still standing. We climbed up into the tower and saw the old cracked bells with Spanish inscriptions.

The door to the church was a solid carving and very beautifully done ^{but} with now very weatherworn and wormeaten. Inside the church it was cool and the light breaking through the colored window gave it a strange effect. There were many birds flying around inside. The church was gaudily decorated as are most of the Spanish Catholic Churches, full of Saints and Shrines with much tinfoil and loud colors, but there was peace about the place so we found a corner and sat down and I do not think I ever had such a perfect feeling of full relaxation as I had that hour I sat in the old church at Guinan. There were many women kneeling and praying — most of them very old and some of them were still kneeling when I left after a good hour. Dogs would drift

in at times, sniff around the walls and at the old women kneeling, loaf around the altar and gradually drift out the side doors, but nobody seemed to pay the slightest attention to them. The dogs seemed to behave themselves, none of them barked and I did not notice that any of them lifted their legs against the walls.

In the evening we went to the Navy show which had seats for the Navy personnel as well as for the natives of the village. A band of Philippine Guerillas came in and as they wanted to sit with the Navy they got into an argument with the Shore Patrol. They finally had to move over in the native section, but they did not like it and sat there glaring at the sailors.

The next morning I found out that Jess Gin's battalion was at Manacni island which was only half an hour's run with a boat from the village. I found Jess at the beach where he was building a large dock and he was running around without a shirt and had a big cigar in his mouth. He was, of course, very surprised to see me and as it was time for lunch we went up to the mess. Afterwards he took me around the island and stopped at the other side to look at the Japanese submarine which had run aground on the reef. It was now tied up to a wharf and was being fixed up for shipment to the states. It was old and rusty and everything in it seemed to be out of order, but it had not been a fighting ship but had been used to run supplies along the coast to garrisons which had been cut off by the American drive. Coming back on the boat I saw the large drydock installations in the Bay off Samar. Some of the docks were big enough to take a battleship.

There were very few in the place to Mindoro -- three enlisted

mess and two Chaplains. One was a Captain I had known at Morotai where we had been seated at the same table in the mess and the other was an Admiral, the head Chaplain of the Navy. The Captain told me they were going to Mindoro for the opening of a big new Chapel which had been built there by some Seabee battalion.

At Mindoro I got a soldier to drive me down to the Naval Base which was several miles away and there I was told that there was no chance of getting from there to Palawan. The first boat they knew would go there would not be in for another three weeks, so I just asked for transportation to the Army airbase.

The airbase was on some large flats under the mountains and was filled with planes — mostly bombers and fighters. The Army Transport office was jam packed and one of the boys at the desk told me the waiting list was a mile long for flights in any direction. I got talking to a pilot and he told me the best bet would be to go down to the B25s for they made several flights everyday both to Samar and Tacloban. This was of course back where I had started from, but by now I had made up my mind that there was no chance of getting to Palawan from Mindoro.

I missed a B25 by a few minutes so for a while I thought I should have to spend the night with the Army, but I drifted down along the rows of B24s and got talking to a Lt. Colonel who was standing in front of his plane; told him I was looking for transportation. He turned to the crew chief and asked him what time they were supposed to pick up another crew at Tacloban. The crew chief answered that they were supposed to leave in the morning as soon as the co-pilot got back,

whereupon the colonel turned to me and asked me how I would like to go right away to which I answered that any time would suit me. "Mind her up," the colonel ordered, "we might as well go now and come back in the morning. Tell that ground officer I will take him for a co-pilot; he wants to handle her anyway." I borrowed a jeep and got my bag and they had the motors warming when I got back.

The colonel asked me to stay in the cockpit and we were soon in the air with the colonel at the controls and the ground officer in the co-pilot's seat while the crew chief and I stood behind listening to the colonel telling about the raids over Hong-Kong which he had led the day before. The colonel was old for a pilot, must have been around 35, but the crew chief told me later that he was one of the best pilots he had ever known and he had flown with many of them. The colonel had been a buck private only about a year ago, when he was a tankdriver in Patton's outfit in Africa. He had made such a good account of himself in some of the hot battles that "Old Blood and Guts" had asked him one day what he could do for him. The colonel had told him that he had started driving horses on a farm in the Dakotas, now he was driving a tank so the next thing he wanted was to fly a plane. So a letter from "Blood and Guts" to General Arnold put him through flying school and he came out to the South Pacific as a shavetail with one gold bar.

The ground officer took over the controls later on and for a few minutes we were wobbling all over, but when he jerked too much the colonel helped along a little and soon he got on to the tricks and held her fairly steady. We were now out over the water and saw many

islands large and small below us. They were all cultivated and looked like checkerboards with villages here and there. The sun was shining and the air was clear and blue and there wasn't any wind so the big bomber hummed along steady as a big oceanliner. The ground officer was just having a look out the side when the colonel reached over and switched off two of the four motors. This put her nose down and I never forget the look on that ground officer's face when he turned and started jerking the controls. The colonel let out a roar of laughter and straightened the ship with a few adjustments, switched the motors back on. The colonel told him he should never be surprised when he was at the controls for anything might happen. Then he asked him to make a few turns and banks. I cannot say they were very good and I cannot say I liked it, but for some reason it made me feel safe just having the colonel sit there ready to grab her any time.

As we crossed some tall mountains the air got real bumpy and when we started to bounce, the colonel took over and brought her in toward the airstrip at Tacloban. As we slid down for a landing the wind was still strong and the crew chief bet the colonel that he would bounce more than twice on the steel planked strip. The colonel answered that he never bounced any ship but he was wrong that time for a side wind caught us and for a while it looked to me that we were coming down sidewise. The downdraft caught us and we bounced high into the air, once, twice, three times, then a fourth and by that time we had used up half of the landingstrip. The colonel was pulling everything in the way of levers and did some tall cussing for the end of the strip which was out in the water was coming toward us very fast. The brakes were squeaking but the speed was still so great I was thinking

of getting down flat on deck, when we were at the taxiway and the colonel threw her over hard which lifted one wheel way off the ground and sent the crewchief and myself hard and fast over to the starboard side, but she came back on the other wheel and we rolled easily. The strip was overfilled so they parked us way down in the sticks and there we stood for better than half an hour waiting for a car to come and get us and we had to send word in before they did.

At the Transportation office, it was just as crowded as it had been at Mindoro and when I asked for a flight to Palawan, they told me I would have to go to another airstrip miles away. As it was too late in the day to do anything, I got a ride with a Navy officer up to the town of Tacloban where I hoped to find a place to stay overnight.

We drove through the crowded streets filled with natives, soldiers, sailors, tanks, Carabaos and wagons, trucks and jeeps. At the OD's office at the Naval Headquarters I had to wait in line to log in, and when I finally got up to the desk they told me it would be too late for supper but they could give me a bunk in the EOQ. Right behind me was a Lt. Comdr. who was looking for his ship, a destroyer, and when he heard about us being too late for supper he swore up and down that he was going to get something to eat if he had to steal it, for he had had nothing to eat since early in the morning. I admitted that I felt damned near that hungry, so we found the so called EOQ which was a half fallen down tent with a dirt floor and cots with one dirty dusty blanket -- no pillows and no lights.

We left our bags and hit out looking for anything which might be a galley but saw nothing until we got down toward town where there was

a Seabee camp. They were just washing the dishes and when we asked one of the colored messboys about the chances for supper he kept on shaking his head until we pulled out a couple of bucks, the sight of which made him very polite all of a sudden and he told us to go to the backdoor. We got ham and eggs and all the trimmings and felt a hell of a lot better as we walked back the dusty road. The show was right outside the BOQ and as none of us felt like spending more than the time absolutely necessary in the dark tent we sat down and saw the picture, which was a Chicago gangster story and made the native audience on the back benches roar with excitement every time someone was shot or stabbed.

We got very little sleep for all through the night men were constantly coming in, lighting matches and trying to find their bunks. A couple of drunks got into the wrong beds and there was quite an argument which they went outside to settle when somebody complained about the noise they were making. When I went to the washrooms to shave in the morning, I found five or six waiting. It seems everybody was trying to get up first, for the washroom was the bathroom of an old Philippine house with one homemade shower and one cracked washbowl which would not hold water and the toilet kept on flushing all the time. I do not know how many officers were in the BOQ all together, but there were at least twenty-five in the big dark tent I had slept in, so I guess the rush for the washroom was the heaviest later on close to chow time.

The airtrip I had to get to was the Tinian Airfield and it was better than twenty miles down the coast, so I tried to get transportation. The OD on duty was far from accommodating; in fact he was very

sarcastic and told me to get my own transportation which made me mad and knowing the best way out when you get mad and are in the Navy is to shut your mouth; I did and walked out.

A young yeoman had overheard the whole thing and when I left he followed me, catching up with me out on the porch he told me he would drive me over. I thanked him and told him not to get in Dutch on my account, but he said he was driving downtown for the mail and nobody would pay any attention to how long he was gone anyway. He gave me a fast drive in the jeep, but the roads were good all the way and led through several small villages and the fara country. At the airbase the yeoman got mixed up on some of the side roads and we ended up by driving down the side of the runway, for which we got a damned good hauling out from the operation officer.

The Transportation office was an old frame shack covered with burlap and next to it was another shed where the Red Cross had a place for coffee and sandwiches. The place was filled with soldiers some of them still sleeping with their duffelbags under their heads and others were having coffee, but they were all waiting for transportation. I contacted the officer on duty and asked about a plane to Palawan. He told me there was still very little traffic to that place for the airstrip was not completed, however some C47s had landed so there might be a chance but I would have to stick around and wait. I did not mind so much the waiting around but I was hoping I would not have to stay overnight at the same place where I had slept the night before. Just to make sure, I found out where the nearest Seabee battalion was stationed, which was a couple of miles from the strip. I called the

OO on the telephone and he told me I would be welcome if I had to stay overnight. That settled, I got myself a cup of coffee and settled down talking with a bunch of GIs.

I pestered the desk at the office every half hour or so just to make sure they hadn't forgotten me but I got the same story every time. There was no plane due for Palawan. The last time I came in a staff sergeant had come in and he overheard my conversation with the man at the desk. As I was leaving he called me over and told me there was very little chance for me to get a plane through the office. However, he handled special planes for the 13th Air Force and there would be one in from Morotai in a couple of hours which was bound for Palawan. He would look after it for me and all I had to do was to stick around so he would know where to find me. I told him I certainly appreciated his kindness and if he would give me his address I would send him a quart of whisky by one of the pilots as soon as I got to my destination. He said he did not expect anything for doing someone a good turn but never having had a drink of that kind for a long, long time he would not refuse the offer.

It was near noon and I was just having a Red Cross sandwich and a cup of coffee when the sergeant came up in a jeep and told me to jump in. We drove over to some far corner of the hardstands and there was a C47 being refueled and about 20 soldiers standing around as well as the crew and the pilots to whom the sergeant introduced me. The pilot told me he was overloaded now but one more or less wouldn't make any difference so I was welcome to the ride.

The cabin was full of all kinds of junk and the whole deck filled with old two-by-fours and lumber which the crew was going to use for

fixing up their tents at the new camp, and when we got nested there was little room to spare, the bucket seats were all filled and some of the soldiers sat down on top of the lumber pile.

We crossed the island of Leyte and came out over the straits. We could see Cebu ahead of us and later crossed it's northern tip from where we followed the Straits of Guimaras between the islands of Panay and Negros, heading out toward the Sulu Sea. The land looked like checker boards with rice and grain fields and we saw several towns of fair size with roads between them. The straits were full of fishing crafts and canoes and as we passed Naso Point we noticed five PT boats streaking for shore where we spotted a P38 down on the beach. Whether he had been shot down or had crash landed we never did know, but the PTs had seen him and were going in for him so there was nothing for us to do.

It was hazy out over the Sulu Sea and we saw nothing but water except that we passed over a small convoy heading for Palawan and a few minutes later we could see the outline of the high mountains on the island. As we circled over the airstrip I could see the men and equipment working and we got orders to stay up for a while until the strip was cleared. When we did go down we hit a rough spot and made a hundred foot leap, came down again and made another fifty foot leap and each time the two-by-fours and the junk slid all over and all of us were hanging onto the bucket seats for dear life. A couple more leaps and we finally got the brakes working just in time to stop before we piled into a bunch of coral boulders. Outside it was hotter than hell and dust swirled around.

CHAPTER VIII

AT FUERTA PRINCESSA ON PALAWAN ISLAND

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AT PUERTA PRINCESSA ON PALAWAN ISLAND

Our camp was on the east side of the island facing the Sulu Sea and after we got most of the Mangroves cut out, we always had a fine breeze in the afternoon. It was laid out in a palagrove next to the beach with the BOQ in one end and the galley installations in the other. We built a main road which ran the full length of the camp and continued up along the beach toward the airstrip. On the other side of the road the jungle was thick and always full of monkeys and wild parrots.

I got in on a Saturday afternoon and the next day being Sunday I got a chance to look around the island. Dan Gerwin and I got in a jeep and drove down to the town of Puerta Princessa which was full of soldiers and natives who were occupying the few houses still standing after our bombing before the landing.

The government buildings and the official residence of the Governor of Palawan was smashed to ruins and right in the middle of the plaza

which by now had been covered with Quonset huts for the base command, stood a statue of Dr. Rizal shot full of holes and riddled with shrapnel and machinegun bullets.

On one side of the Plaza were the Constabulary Barracks which had been the Jap headquarters during the occupation. It was partly knocked down, but the Army had cleared the debris and made a storage place out of it. Here in the yard more than one hundred American prisoners of war had been burned to death by the Japs just before the first wave of our troops went ashore. They had been ordered into a large trench which they used for airraid shelter and there the Japs had poured gasoline into the ditch and struck it afire. The few who managed to get out of the ditch were machinegunned and only five got away. We found 104 bodies which were buried under small white crosses up in the shade under the big Barion trees.

Toward the bay side were Chinese Bodegas and a road led down to an old stone jetty which had been built many years ago so the copra schooners would have a place to load. On the other side of the town were swamps with thick growth of bamboo and an old graveyard which by now was thickly overgrown with grass and jungle.

The airstrip ran east and west and had been put in by the Japanese using American prisoners of war for the hard labor for pouring the concrete runway. This had been bombed so badly by our planes that we had to resurface the whole thing and also lengthen it for our big bombers. The work was in full swing and was done by the Seabees and the Army Engineers together and now the bulldozers were roaring and tearing into the hard coral and a steady stream of trucks ran back and forth hauling the fill.

Lee Lynch was on the job and we found him sitting in his jeep waving his hands and having a hell of an argument with one of the Army officers and there was quite some time before he had time to talk to us. He was still red in the face when he came over and the first thing I asked him was why in the hell the airstrip was not finished by now and turned to Dan with the remark that it was no wonder the war lasted so long when they were taking such a long time in building a lousy little runway like this. Dan sided right with me and we got the famous Lynch dirty look with the comment that the war lasted so long because certain guys were sitting on their butt on other islands stalling, and taking vacations when they ought to be right in there pitching.

I got my mail which had piled up at the post office and also my wristwatch which finally had arrived from the states where I had sent it for repairs many months ago. A friend of mine in the MATS, Terry Parker, had promised to send it out with some pilot which he did, but it had landed at Guam for the pilot had had change of orders after he left and had tried to get some other pilot to take it from Guam but had been unable to find anybody bound for Morotai. In the meantime Terry had been sent out himself and had been stationed at Kwajalin where the watch had arrived and from there Terry sent it airmail.

The country around Puerta Princesa used to be known as a very bad Malaria and fever place, but it had been cleaned up right away and had been sprayed with DDT from planes, so McNair the malaria control officer, told us there was no danger and we all believed Mac for he knew his job and did his work well. The only thing Mac could not do away with was the centipedes and they were all over. One morning I grabbed my shoes and one of the devils about six inches long came out of one of

the shoes fighting and dug into my little finger. It felt like a hot poker had hit me and the finger swelled up like a balloon but outside of that it did not seem to do me much harm, but many of the other boys who were bitten got deadly sick from the poison.

The Japs on the island had taken to the hills and were now being hunted down by the Phillipino Guerilla bands which were drifting all over the island. The first thing they did when they caught one of them was to chop his head off and carry the head around to show it to everybody. Some of them even brought the heads down to the American camps and charged the sailors and soldiers five pesos for the use of the heads in posing for photographs. The Japs were hungry and having nothing to eat in the hills would come down to the yam fields and fruit groves during the night, where the Guerillas would be waiting for them with Tommy guns. "Just like pig hunting", one of them told me, "only more fun."

It was time for the Monssoon to blow and the rainy season to begin and one night I woke up with the tent shaking, and a bombardment of coconuts on the canvass, *the* Outside the wind was screaming through the palm trees and bending them, lightning flared and flickered out over the Sulu sea, thunder rolled and soon the rain poured so heavy it felt like a million highpressure firehoses were aimed from above.

But when I got up at daybreak as usual, the sky was clear except for the tall, fairweather clouds which hung on the horizon. At first streaks of light crawled slowly through the clouds, gained in speed and then all of a sudden flared in all the colors of the rainbow and reflected in the sea which was like a mirror. The sun shot out of the Sulu sea and another day had started.

I always woke Leo up in the mornings and it got to be a regular ceremony. I would sneak up to the side of the tent and whisper through the flyscreen calling him a lazy, fat so-and-so (so-and-so is substituted for a very well used Navy slang word which looks bad in print) and telling him to get the hell out of the sack. I guess I woke him up every morning out there, but the response was always the same. He would turn over and start cussing and tell me to take a flying...at myself, scratch his belly because he was always worrying about getting too fat, yawn, stretch, cuss some more and finally sit up in bed telling me to get to hell out of there. But I have never seen him late in the morning and we were always the first in the mess for breakfast.

Leo was in charge of the repair shops, but his jeep was always on the blink so I usually had to push him around with mine to get his started. It happened so often I sometimes suspected the son of a gun to be too lazy to step on the starter.

My job was building all the permanent structures on the airstrip for repair shops, hangars, warehouses for plane parts, control towers and operational buildings, all of which were Quonset structures except the towers. When I wanted grades and roads put in I had to see Leo and I always got an argument, but I knew I could always depend on him and I very seldom lost any time due to delay on his part. The strip was now in full operation and filled with planes, bombers and fighters, both Army and Navy operated.

The Borace campaign had been opened and in the morning you could not hear yourself talk as the planes roared down the strip, one behind the other for takeoff, and the others were warming up along the hard-

stands with wide open engines. The B25s were the worst, making a hell of a roaring noise when the motors were opened up, while the P30s were smooth and gave a whistling sound as they tore down the runway. The B24s gave off a deeper more balanced sound and were not as irritating to the ears as their little brothers the 25s.

The pilots did not give a damn where they turned up and many a time I had them turn tail toward one of the half finished structures, wind up their engines and send sheets of corrugated steel, lumber, wall-boards and everything loose, flying in all directions. When you ran up to them and started bawling them out, they just let the engines roar and sat there shaking their heads letting you know they could not hear a thing.

The MA3 moved in and I built them a very fine office with wooden floors and frame structure over which we stretched a large fifty foot tent and inside we made them desks and tables and long benches for waiting passengers. When I asked the officer in charge how many of these benches he wanted, he thought two of them would be enough, but I told him I thought about six would be more like it for my experience with the MA3 was that there was always more passengers waiting on benches than there were riding in the planes. This particular guy happened to have a good sense of humor so he laughed about the joke and he became a very good friend of mine.

The second day after he moved in and got all set in his new office, a C47 transport came in, turned around right in front and the backwash blew the tent twenty feet away and piled the officer and his crew, together with desks, benches and passengers over in the far corner. When the same thing happened twice more, I got a Quonset hut and built him a real fancy office a couple of hundred yards away from the turning spot.

When the planes returned everybody was watching and there were often some of them missing, and others came in all shot up, some of them having to crash land. The worst was when they caught fire for then the crew had little chance for the gasoline splashed and made a torch out of the whole plane in a few seconds. It was also a tough job for the firefighters for the gas tanks usually blew up and splattered burning gasoline all over and when things got hot enough the machinegun ammunition went off sounding like a giant Chinese firecracker and sending whistling bullets in all directions.

Sometimes the bigger bombers were too heavily loaded and did not make it on the takeoff, crashing at the end of the strip. I remember one B24 which used all the strip and then smashed against the coral at the water's edge when the bombs went off and scattered pieces of the plane and the crew all over the landscape, killing nine out of the eleven men crew and one of the two still alive died on the way to the hospital.

The P30s were sent out with "jelly" tanks for incendiary purposes and had just enough gasoline to make their target and hurry back home again. If they were delayed for only a few minutes it meant going down on the sea, and one evening thirteen went down on the water and although we had a very fine rescue setup only a few of them were picked up. I saw several P30s come in all shot up and with their landing gear out of order. They would circle ~~the field~~ while the tower sent up a red flare to clear the field and make ready for crash landing. When they dropped down everybody was watching and got very tense, but most of the time the pilots made perfect belly flops and came out without a scratch.

The planes were nearly all decorated and mostly with nude women and all had some kind of a name. I remember a B25 with a big bull painted on the side with head down and smoke coming out of his nose charging the moon and the name was "Bitermouth". ~~Forgetting~~ ^{1A}. mosquito^{1A} powerliving on the tail end of the bull with long stinger ready to drive home. Then there was the flagship of the 2nd. Photo. Troop. Air Squadron which had a picture of a blonde with her skirts up under her arms. ~~and~~ The name of the ship was "Clairvoyance". "Lucky Eleven" was a B24 with a nude shooting crap holding up her braier and panties for a last bot. Reclining on the side of another B24 was another nude with Indian Head dress and the name "Indian Made". One of the transports was called the "Meat Wagon" had a very risky^{one} redheaded nude showing everything at first, but when General Barnes said "Enough is enough", somebody had to paint some clothes on her.

"Off we Go", a B24, had a large keyhole painted on the side and in the middle of it a girl minus everything else unhooking and ready to drop her skanties. The boys spent hours painting these things on the planes and many of them were the work of artists and very well done. When the planes were parked on the hardstands a constant stream of sailors and soldiers came down to have their pictures taken in front of the nudes posing in all kinds of positions and with remarks in a lingo not very well suitable for print.

So far the Jap planes had not bothered us at Palawan, but one night I came in late and just as I stepped out of my jeep the warning shots went off and I could hear the "Washingmachine" sound coming low right over the palatops in the moonlight. He opened up with his machineguns

so I looked under the jeep for it was hard to tell in which direction he was firing. He swung in over toward the airstrip and dropped a cluster of bombs. One bomb landed directly on top of a JBY rescue ship which was parked next to the operation office. The rest of the bombs fell all around and some of them went off wounding two of the men in the operation shack. The rest of the bombs were duds and we picked them up the next morning. We found them to be a homemade sort of an affair formed from old gas pipe, but the one which hit the "Black Cat" did a good job for it set it afire and it burnt to a heap of scraps and ashes.

The same Jap came back two more nights and got away with it, but the fourth visit brought him within the range of the guns of a "Black Widow" and "Charlie" went down to the sea in flames. Later we had several more visits from other "Charlies" and they were all flying the same type of ship which was the "Wick" a twinengine nightfighter with plenty of firing power but all carried the small homemade bombs so they did us little damage. However we were wise to all the Jap tricks so we dug ourselves a few foxholes just in case he should get hold of bigger bombs and surprise us.

The heat was getting terrific and several days we had better than 120 degrees in the shade at the airstrip making the whole place feel like a bakeoven without a breath of wind. I used to drive my jeep behind the motors of one of the bombers and sit there while the crew was revving them up. It was like a 90 mile wind and mixed with dust but it cooled one off and dried the shirt.

On May the seventh we got the news that the war was over in Europe, but it did not seem to mean a damned thing to any of us out there;

never told any one about it and it was hardly talked about. Dan Garvin and Leo had been betting each other and had had some tall arguments about the time it was going to end over there. Now that it was actually over none of them could agree on who had bet on what and how, which started another argument which lasted until bedtime when they ended up by making another bet as to how long the Pacific war was going to last. Dan always had the habit of pulling out his pencil and shaking it under Leo's nose when the arguments were at the hottest point, and that always made Leo furious.

Up under the mountains about twenty miles from our camp was the large penal colony of Itahig which was operated by the Philippine government. It was quite a settlement with hundreds of prisoners and the officials and guards. As usual a few of the men from both the Army and the Navy visiting there had misbehaved themselves so the place was ordered out of bounds. However McNair, being in charge of the Malaria control, had a pass and could take anyone he wished, so one Sunday Al Taylor and I went up there with him on invitation from the colony's doctor, Danje, to attend a dance in honor of the Governor.

The road to the place led first through the flatlands, then through the thick jungle and in among the rice paddies and the open farmland next to the colony ending up with rows of Mango trees on both sides as we got near the gates where the guards were on duty. The place was laid out in squares with streets and houses on both sides. The houses were mostly typical native houses made from framework with sides of woven reed mats, no windows but just large openings and large open porches.

Around the large plaza were the administration buildings, the church and the hospital all with green lawns and flowers shaded by tall Fan

Polio. We stopped at the doctor's house and he fixed us a drink while we listened to him tell about the days of the occupation. He had been caught by the Japs in Luzon and had taken part in the deathmarch from Bataan about which he told a lot of detail. After he had been sent to Italdig he had helped several American prisoners escape and had made several trips into the jungle at night right under the nose of the Jap guards to treat wounded who had sent word by the underground that they needed a doctor.

The doctor was very well educated and was a very clear thinking man. When we discussed the liberation of the Philippines he told us how he loved his homeland and longed to see it free, but said frankly that he hoped it would be no less than five years before they started to rule themselves.

The Governor's dance was in a large hall to one side of the plaza and it was all lit up and we could hear the music as we walked from the doctor's house. Inside the place was filled with Army and Navy officers and all the officials and employees of the colony with their wives and children. In the middle and to one side was the big band, all prisoners and dressed up in white uniforms and with goldbraid. The Army and Navy all wore khaki while the civilians were mostly in white suits and the women except a few younger ones in modern dress, wore the flaring wide skirts and the puffed lace sleeves so typical of the old native Philippine dress.

We were introduced to all the officials including the Governor who again introduced us to some of the women with whom we then had to dance. Dinner was served and I have never seen so many different dishes

and we ate many things we had no idea of what it was. There was fish, meat, eggs and fowl in all sorts of fashions and vegetables the like of which I had never tasted. I made a good meal of it for I was hungry. The drinks were made from distilled "Tuba", the brandy made from the sap of the flowers of the coconut tree, and the tables were heaped with mangoes, Papayas and many other fruits.

When we went home Al Taylor was driving and Mac and I were talking in the back of the jeep paying no attention to the road. After twenty minutes or so Al stopped and asked if we thought we were on the right road for it seemed to have gotten awful rough all of a sudden. Outside we could see nothing but thick jungle and the dark night. After that much driving we should have been down in the flat country below, so we decided we were on the wrong road and Mac accused Al of having downed too many glasses of the strong "Tuba". Anyway we turned around and after twenty minutes were right back outside the dancehall and we knew we had been lucky for we had driven way out in the sticks where a Jap band might roam around anyplace looking for food.

Taylor thought our "escape" ought to be celebrated with a good drink of "Tuba" so we went back into the dancehall which by now was nearly empty except for a few men sitting around drinking. I guess we had quite a few, but Mac and I both checked Al this time and saw to it that we got on the right road. It was almost morning when we arrived in camp but by then we were all hungry again so we opened the well known Taylor-McNair icebox which was always full of cold beer, ham, roast beef and everything we couldn't get in the mess. How those two managed to keep it stocked, I never know, for the icebox was well known, even at the Army and the Air Corps who both constantly sent raiding parties over.

In fact the tent was very specially equipped all around. There was a fan at the foot of each bed; not just ordinary small fans, but big ones which moved noiselessly and which swung around from side to side blowing a mild breeze through the room. The icebox was not the box in which we dumped a bucketfull of ice each day, but a seven c.f. refrigerator with trays for icecubes and shelves and next to it was a table with electric plate for frying the special steaks they always had in the icebox. In the other end was a cabinet full of bottles and on top a fancy radio set with a thousand buttons and switches. Taylor always picked up a lot of souvenirs which he had put in boxes for shipment home, but Taylor always forgot to ship them so when they piled up and cluttered the place, Mac gathered them up and shipped them without asking and I do not think Al even noticed that they were gone.

The camp began to look like a menagerie for the boys picked up monkeys and parrots, dogs and cats and kept them around the tents for pets. The monkeys made a lot of noise at first and tried their damndest to get back to their brothers in the jungle who hung around the trees by the edge of the road and kept up a constant jabbering. But they soon got tame and seemed to enjoy themselves - having all they wanted to eat and plenty of time to sleep. The boys gave them beer to drink and about a half a cup full made them drunker than skunks and they stood on their heads, made summersaults and talked a blue streak until they got tired, reeled over in the shade and passed out. Some of the parrots were good talkers and others could imitate any kind of a whistle and got so tame they would ride on the shoulder of their owners anywhere

they went. The jungle was full of wild pigs and the boys used to go out and shoot a small one and barbecue it native fashion right in the jungle which made a nice change for them in the way of chow. Driving through the backroad toward sunset I used to see flocks of these pigs, and when they crossed the road the old boar was leading with Mama a close second and a string of little pigs following twisting along like a long snake. I often had to come to a stop for once the old boar had crossed, the rest followed -- jeep or no jeep.

Dan Garvin finally got his orders to go home and he sure had it coming for he had been without leave for nearly thirty months and Mary had been waiting for him all this time. Mary and Dan were going to get married as soon as he got there. I had never met Mary but I knew her damned near as well as Dan for I had heard her praises sung both evening and morning and sometimes in the foxhole in the middle of the night when we sat there waiting for the raid to be over.

They did get married and my wife gave them a sendoff in San Francisco and she wrote me all about it and told me Dan was very bashful and nervous before they got it over with. Now we have heard from them again and there is a new daughter in the Garvin family, the first one of the eight or nine he was always bragging about he was going to have, but I never told Mary about that for I never did meet her.

McNair had become acquainted with one of the guards at the penal colony and he had asked a few of us to come to dinner at his house on Sunday. Taylor couldn't go so Mac and I took along a couple of the enlisted men and drove up there. Their house was the typical Philippine house and they were all gathered on the porch when we got there.

Mama De la Cruz was very fat and always smiled and Papa De la Cruz was a small, shriveled man with a rather sober face. Both were standing on the steps with all the little De la Cruzes behind them like step-ladder beginning with a girl of fifteen and ending with a baby a few months old crawling around on the porch floor. They all spoke and could understand some English so the conversation was soon in full swing.

The De la Cruzes had lived in Davao in Mindanao before the war, but the Japs had put them onboard a steamer and sent them off to Palawan. Mama De la Cruz was a Moro woman from Mindanao, but Papa had originally come from the island of Luzon. Papa said he would just as soon stay where they were, but Mama insisted that they would return to Davao as soon as travel was possible. ~~She~~ I have an idea they are back there now for Mama De la Cruz knew how to work things the way she wanted them and did it in her smiling quiet smooth sort of way.

When dinner was served we all sat down at the table with Mama De la Cruz handling the kitchen with her helper who was a lifetime prisoner. The oldest daughter waited on the table and Papa would not sit down and did not eat but stood at the end of the table fanning us and the food with a palm leaf to keep the flies away. The rest of the step-ladder were ordered out on the porch and told to stay there. We started out with a drink of distilled Tuba and got a reddish looking soup with some small beans in it followed by fried chicken and some cakes made from pork and fried wild rice.

To drink with it we got a glass of fermented Tuba, and then a large dish of something like chop-suey was brought in. It tasted excellent and had everything in it from chopped meat and diced pork to beans, peas and green onions. For dessert we had ripe Papaya and a glass of Carabao milk.

After dinner we packed and talked some more when Papa De la Cruz said he would have to go to work. After he left Mac made some remarks about it was too bad Papa had to leave, but Mama told us that he was not actually going to work until late at night but that he always went to see his girl friend on Sunday afternoons. Mac thought it was a joke and started kidding about it, but Mama was serious. Papa always had some concubine on the side and she thought it was a good idea; it made him appreciate his home more. She was very natural about the thing and it did not seem to bother her the least bit that the old man was stepping out.

Mama was telling us about the oldest daughter going to be confirmed in a few weeks, but to be confirmed in the church one must have a white dress and where would one get such a white dress in these times when not even thread was available. She did not know what to do; confirmation would have to take place, but to send a girl to church for such an occasion without the proper white dress would be unthinkable. We told her not to worry for we would furnish the white material as well as the white thread not only for the daughter but also for the rest of the girls who were to be confirmed and needed white dresses. We sent them a few silk parachutes which had been surveyed and a large spool of parachute thread. It made many dresses and Mama De la Cruz was overjoyed the next time we saw her and proudly made her daughter put on the finished dress to show us how elegant it was.

Along in the afternoon we said goodbye and drove down along the river to look at the coconut plantations, the work shops and the lower colony where the trustees lived. On the way out, we passed a gang of prisoners all chained with leg irons. They were the dangerous boys;

murderers and executioners who could not be trusted and had to be handled with clubs. Later down we passed the enclosure and the buildings where they kept the traitors and the collaborators who had been taken into custody after the invasion. Among them were many members of the government, governors, high military men and members of the supreme court of the Philippines.

The road was winding with the river which had thick jungle on the other side and was full of crocodiles. On our side stretched large coconut plantations which by now were in bad shape and overgrown with jungle. For there had been little and no work on the plantations during the Japanese occupation and the little copra which they had taken out was used for oil to light the houses and to run the old one lugger gas engines which seem to chug along well on the stinking kerosene stuff.

The lower colony was quite a village and here lived the trustees who had by good conduct earned the privilege of having their families brought in to live with them. The main work at the village was to tend the large drying ovens for copra but I could see it had been a long time since they had been in use. There were no guards in the village but there seemed to be a headman among them who ruled the place like a chief. The whole population was gathered in and around their bamboo and palm thatch huts and did not seem to pay very much attention to us strangers and very few of them answered when we tried to talk to them. Some of the children, however, soon got friendly and gathered around us when we passed out some candy and cigars.

There was some talk now about the battalion going home, but the boys had been fooled so many times I do not think any of them took the

travels very seriously. It was the 3rd Anniversary overseas and we all got together for a big dinner in the enlisted men's messhall and had chicken and a ten foot long cake which the bakers had made for the occasion. We had a hillbilly band playing and after a few beers everybody got in and sang old tunes, making it a good time for everybody. Only the executive officer as usual had to start some trouble of some kind, so when he found his piece of chicken tough he asked in a nasty way to have it replaced by "something that could be chewed." The next piece did not seem to be to his liking either, so with a few drinks under his belt he started raving and commenced to talk himself into one of his rages, called the chief commissary steward and began howling him out and blaming him for spoiling the food. When the chief, who at first thought it was a joke, explained that the chicken was just naturally tough and that both he and the cooks had tried to make the best of it, the executive got still madder and told the chief to go to his quarters and stay there. Everybody who heard it of course got sore and many of the officers and men left the messhall for the whole thing was so absolutely unjust that we had a hard time shutting our mouths. ~~But~~ The officer in charge was there and overheard the whole thing ^{but} ~~and~~ said nothing because he did not have the guts to do ~~it~~ So.

Later on while Taylor, Mac and I sat talking in the tent, the executive came in with more drinks under his belt and started bragging of what he had done. I let him have it and told him what I thought about the whole thing which made him fly off the handle and start to threaten me with all kinds of punishment. Since I was in the Navy and he was a superior officer, I could not plant my fist in his face, but I sure felt

like it and should have enjoyed doing so. But I did the best thing which was to shut up and Mac and I started a private conversation while Taylor grabbed a book and started reading and we just let him sit there until he felt foolish and left.

Taylor had got acquainted with the Second Photo. Sec. Squadron, an Army unit which had moved in on the island and they were having trouble and needed help. They had moved in with their planes and millions of dollars worth of developing machinery and equipment, but had no way of getting a building for it. They did not belong to the Army setups on the island and nobody had time to help them out. So Taylor had promised to dig them a well for water and send some of his electricians to install the power lines. Leo had promised to do the grading and build them a road and I told Taylor I would go along and take care of the buildings and the darkrooms.

The material was the hardest to get, but as I had a very large building project going, I simply told McDonald to send some of the loads of materials and dump it at the 2nd Photo's camp. In other words we stole it all from the Navy and gave it to the Army, which was the only way the materials could be transferred and any other way would not have worked. It would have been no more difficult to have the same material transferred to the Imperial Japanese Army than it would have been to ask some of the high brass of the U. S. Navy to have this material transferred to the U. S. Army. That is how it was -- sometimes you would think they were not fighting for the same country but were strangers and had never heard about each other.

The buildings for this photo outfit were badly needed for they had

some of my personal stuff which had to be developed and used at the
invasion of Iloilo ^{was} ~~to~~ come off my dog, and The Army head-
quarters was searching for the photographs while the Army at Palawan
could not help the outfit because it did not belong there. The few
batches of plates which made the darkrooms and the few feet of lumber
plus the tarpaulins which it took to make the buildings were never
missed by the Navy, but the pictures were developed and got there on
time. Both Leo, Al and I got the nicest collection of pictures anyone
ever brought back from the South Pacific. They were given to us by
Colonel Gustavson and his chief warrant officer Cass who offered them
to us in appreciation of what we had done to help them.

The rains set in for awhile and the roads got muddy and large
puddles formed in the low spots under the Karsten matting on the air-
strip making the spray fly everytime the planes hit them in taking off.
It also brought the green out with many flowers and made the jungle
look slick and oily and steaming when the sun hit between showers. The
Acom outfit was searching for shelters for repairing plane motors and
the ^{MONSTER} ~~monstrosities~~ which had been sent out from the states were turned
down as useless.

They were large, clumsy structures, canvass covered on a heavy
frame of steel and it was tough work to erect them. But if we shut the
canvass curtains they turned into a balisever and nobody could work inside
and if we left the curtains open the rain came in just as much as out
in the open so we gave them up. We then erected small nose hangers
out on the hardstands by taking Quonset hat parts and welding them to-
gether forming a canopy with drop curtains to the top of the wings of
the plane leaving the motors inside to be worked on under cover

no matter how hard it was raining outside.

One morning we got a flash at the airbase that two Jap destroyers were heading up the Sulu Sea trying to get out from Borneo. The F3Es and some B2Fs took off right away and started looking for them. About four hours later they were back and we knew right away that they had had good luck for they cut up in real fashion making barrelrolls and loops and swooping down low toward the control tower and would pull up straight into the air one behind the other.

Many of the battalion officers were relieved and got orders for home but the enlisted men again got disappointed for they had been promised rehabilitation leave in the states and vacations had been set up for leaving as shipping space was available. Most of the work was finished and the boys were kept working on fixing up "boudoirs" for some of the higher ranking base officers. In one Quonset hut they changed the partitions I do not know how many times and the blue and pink walls did not have just the right shade to suit the officer so they painted them over three or four times.

They were also making overstuffed furniture from plywood which was damned hard to get and the stuffing was procured by tearing up Navy mattresses. This mattress destroying caused a lot of comments from the enlisted men for some time before, our executive officer had gone through the mens' quarters and gathered all air and special mattresses found. Actually the enlisted men only rated a pad, a very thin mattress which wasn't much on top of the hard cots but the boys traded for these from the Army and many of them needed them -- in fact most of the air mattresses taken had been Oked by our doctor and the Chaplain had also

promised to be for days with backache and other troubles. Why the
officers should be taken away from their jobs, could ever understand
and. In the 20's we all had heavy improving mattresses and a lot of the
officers even had two, one on top of the other.

Leo Lynch who had been overseas longer than any of us had still
no orders for leave at home, so he was pretty sore about it when the
others with long time packed up and left and one day he suggested that
we take a trip and a few days vacation. At first he talked about a
flight to Manila but gave that up after finding out how terrible the
situation was in the city with hardly anyone to stay and all kinds
of regulations.

After looking over the maps, we decided on a trip with boat down
along the coast of Palawan and south to Brooks Point which was down
in the Moro country about 170 miles from Puerto Princesa. Rex Thomson,
a "Black Widow" pilot who was standing by to go home after completed
missions, wanted to go along. Gunn at the 2nd Photo Squadron, told us
we could take along one of his sergeant photographers so we could have
some good pictures of the trip. It was early in the morning and the
beginning of a very fine day with bright sun, clear sky and a snappy
breeze when we headed out from the harbor of Puerto Princesa, turned
the point and struck the nose down along the Sulu Sea and followed the
trail of the old Moro pirates who had ruled that sea for centuries.

Rex knew the superintendent of the penal colony at Inayawan which
was a few miles down the coast and we were to stop there to have lunch
and also to load up the boat with fresh fruit which was plentiful in
the plantations. The landing place at Inayawan was hard to find for

The boat stopped in a small bay and filled with men of coconut trees and other things. At the superintendent's house of that for investigation. A party on the beach and as we got near we could see the waving white flag. The assistant superintendent was also on the beach to welcome us and a driver was waiting in an old Japanese truck which had large handcarved hardwood chairs for seats lashed to the flat truck body. So off we went in style -- the old truck snorting and back-firing, hitting on one and sometimes two cylinders at the same time. We passed rows of houses and the natives were out to greet us with hand-clapping and shouts and ahead of the steaming radiator were flocks of pigs, chickens, dogs and Carabaoes running for their lives when the driver took the lead horn.

We stopped in front of the superintendent's house which was a very fine two storied affair with wide balconies in both ends and built from mahogany and other hardwoods. The superintendent was not there but one of his clerks told us that he had been called to another village in the colony on some important business and for us to make ourselves at home until he got back. The sun was very hot and after we had been exposed to it directly while sitting in the chairs on top of the flat truck, the hall in the building felt nice and cool. A stairway led to the second floor which was a beautiful piece of work, all handcarved and inlaid with several kinds of woods, and led to ~~another~~ ^{THE} hall above which was very much decorated with paintings, photographs and loud carpets and in one end an old trusty was unweaving thread from a piece of cloth, rolling it into a big ball. There was no such thing as thread in the islands so they were making their own that way.

We ate some of the bananas and a banana bread in a tray with cool mangoes and a bottle of Tea, while we listened to the assistant superintendent talk about the colony.

It had all been built during the war when the Japanese Army moved the whole colony from Java on Pandanoo Island. The prisoners were housed in large barracks, which we could see from the balcony, and there was a rice mill, a chapel and many small houses in which the widows lived. All around were large cultivated fields in which the prisoners were working and we could see herds of Brahma cattle and many Carabos. The assistant superintendent hated the Japanese for they had killed his only brother and he swore he would kill any Jap on sight and suggested that the best method was to pour a gallon of gasoline in a fifty gallon drum and set it afire after having stuck the Jap in it head first. His eyes flared when he spoke and I am sure he has already tried out his special treatment several times.

After a couple of the very delicious cool mangoes we followed him on a trip around the colony and as we passed the downstairs hall he pulled a shotgun out of a rack with the remark that he never went without one for the hungry Japs now and then would come down to the fields looking for food and that he would hate to miss his chance of getting one of them.

The rice mill was all hand made and very crude but seemed to be very efficient and many prisoners were working there, all of them bowing low as we passed. A few young ones with irons and chains around their feet who did not seem to want to bow received a heavy slap across the face from the assistant superintendent who got his temper up and called the

...the old man and the slave... We could hear the loud hinges all
around, near to the market which was still under construction. The
walls were all from ruyas ruyas and the roof was palm thatch all raised
up for traps tied together with strips of ruyas done by old prisoners who
worked slowly and after bonding hardly looked up. We were told they
were nearly all lifers who had committed murder and other terrible crimes,
but now they were so old all the night was out of them and they hardly
had to be watched.

One old fellow was hammering a large broken bell to a heavy frame of
hardwood tying it to the crossbeam with long strings of ruyas, working
very carefully and slowly and moving his lips as if he was talking to
himself. I handed him a pack of cigarets when the guard wasn't look-
ing and he grabbed it stuffing it in his trousers and looking around
like a hunted animal and continued working, turning his face toward
me with a pathetic sort of smile for thank you.

Down by the creek a gang was working putting in a new bridge and
there were many guards for these were the worst desperadoes all in leg
irons and chains. They did the heaviest of work, lifting and carrying
heavy hardwood logs and in the hot sun the perspiration was running off
them while they swore and growled at each other like a pack of dogs.
All along the creek the Carabans were wallowing in the mud burying them-
selves in it up to their necks and when we passed they snorted for the
Caraban does not like the smell of a white man. If one gets too close
the animal is liable to jump out of the mud and charge. With the natives
he is gentle and even if he has his temper up, tears up the ground with
his horns, snorts and stamps, a small native child can walk up to him,
grab him by the ring in his nose and lead him away like a lamb.

Getting back to the house, the air conditioner had arrived and he and Mrs. Smith, and the two boys who had been in the house before, were all gathered on the porch where we joined them in a cool drink. The lunch was quite an affair with a waitress behind each chair and many odd dishes and everything to drink from Caracas milk to Tuba brandy.

When we left we again climbed into the locked chairs on the flat-bed truck and the superintendent went with us for the drive. ^{HE} stood on the beach waving as we pulled out between the islands. The coast looked about the same with small islands and inlets, but after a couple of hours run we could see the faint outline of tall mountains in the haze to the south.

Here and there we saw villages ashore and now and then we passed a Kempt (Horn sailing craft) now becalmed for the wind had died down to nearly nothing. We were now on our own and far away from regular patrols so every plane which spotted us gave the challenge and we had to keep the signal light at the blinker all the time so we would be sure to answer right away for we knew how trigger happy some of those pilots were. Some of them dove on us and as they turned the nose down we could look into the machineguns. I could just imagine how it would feel to be on the receiving end when a B25 let go with those eight 50 calibers they carry in the nose. One of them came down real low and as he leveled off directly over us, he let go with his nose guns at a small island. The whole front of the plane was a solid sheet of flame and the bullets cut a regular trail through the thick jungle.

Leo and I got out the maps to find a likely harbor for the night but the maps were of small scale and showed very little detail, so we

decided to get closer to the shore and pick out an anchorage where we
could see. They said the most beautiful anchorage in the world are found
around the Sulu Sea and I believe it, for never did I see any so beauti-
ful as the one we had that night. We were now in under some very tall
mountains with jagged peaks and jungle covered sides and as the sun
slid behind them they changed to a deep purple with gilded edges; the
whole sky above glared in a million colors which reflected in the still
water like sun around us, first intense and brilliant, then slowly
dying away in pastel shades.

We knew it would be dark in a few minutes so we headed for a place
like a cove or inlet. As we got nearer we found the reef was too
shallow and had to cut our speed so we could feel our way. This took
a lot of time so it was pitch dark when we dropped the hook in twelve
feet of water in between two long spits which stuck out into the sea.

The cook was busy with the dinner and we had everything all set
for the night when heavy squalls started to rock and roll the boat
and as Leo got sick we pulled the hook and moved closer to the land
on the south side, feeling our way with a leadline until we set down
to steak and potatoes. I noticed ^{Leo} did not leave any of his but
finished two big T-bones like the rest of us.

Ashore we could see lights from fires and coconut oil lamps, some
single and some in clusters and several times I heard voices talking
so we were not very far from shore. We decided to set watches for the
night for we did not know who was ashore so close to us and the Moro
of the Sulu Sea has been a pirate for many centuries and drifting bands
of Japs might be around.

A little later a big orange red moon climbed over the horizon to the east and lit up the sea and the land behind; the night was still except for the slight sound of the surf and far off in the mountains a drum was beating. The boat was rolling slightly but it did not bother Leo this time for by the sound of his snoring he was far off in dream-land.

I was awakened the next morning by the motors starting and the dawn was just breaking as I got out on deck. We had been much closer to the beach than we had thought we were and as the tide was going out, the man on watch had called the coxswain who decided to move when he found we had just enough water under the keel to keep afloat. Once more in deep water we anchored again and while the crew cooked breakfast, we got out the map to see where we were. We decided the tallest of the peaks ashore was Mount Mantalingayan so we should only be a couple of hours run from Brooke Point.

Several natives had gathered on the beach and were shouting and waving at us, but we paid no attention to them for all they wanted was for us to come in so they could buy cigars and matches from us. However, later, thinking it a good idea to get a pilot who knew the reefs I went ashore to look them over. Most of them were Palawanos, but two who were standing to the side by themselves were Moros both in tan and with Sarongs slung in their belts. The youngest spoke a little English and could understand me. He and his uncle were on the way to Brooke's Point so they would be glad to go with us for it would save them many miles of walking and he knew all the shortcuts over the reefs so he would pilot us in.

both of them were wisely eyed and when looking at me I never would have thought either of them as far as I could have thrown a full grown bull, but I noticed right away that the young one was a good sailor by the way he took over and began to direct the command. I noticed that he had a ring with a very large pearl and asked him where he got it, but he did not answer, just gave me a look as if to say that it was none of my business and turned the ring around so the pearl faced the inside of his hand. The old man sat down on the aft deck, fixed himself a largewad of betelnut and never opened his mouth except to spit over the side. As we rounded the reef by the entrance to the small harbor at Brock's Point, the natives spotted us and came running toward the beach -- men, women, and children -- and through my field glasses I could see two white men sitting by themselves on a rock.

Ashore we met Mr. Edwards, a planter, and Mr. Loudon, a lumberman, both Americans who had lived in the islands for better than forty years. Mr. Loudon, who was close to eighty years old, but in good health and also in exceptional good spirits introduced himself as "A Spanish-American war veteran waiting for rotation." Mr. Edwards asked us to come to his house but said he would have to apologise in advance for its poor condition for he had taken to the hills when the Japanese arrived and had lived there during the whole occupation and the house had been raided and partly burned down -- not by the Japanese, but by some of the Philippine guerrilla bands of whom both Mr. Edwards and Mr. Loudon had very little good to say.

The house was the usual Philippine home with thatched roof and natan mats for floors and next to it was his store which was brand new

and half Michael had built where the old one had burned. On the front porch he sat his wife, a Phillipine woman, and one of his grandchildren-- a small girl. His children were all away from home. The son was married and lived somewhere on the island and his daughters were at school in the United States.

Both Mr. Edwards and Mr. Louisa were eager for conversation, so we soon heard their stories. Mr. Edwards had come to the islands as a young teacher and had spent years teaching in the schools on Iliganao. After twenty years he had put his savings in a coconut plantation here at Brook's Point and had lived here ever since. He had visited the United States only once.

Mr. Louisa had arrived in the islands as a soldier in the Spanish-American war and when his enlistment was up he had stayed on, going into the lumber and sawmill business. He had been caught in Manila when the war broke out and had been interned by the Japanese in the prison camp at Santo Thomas.

Their story was about the occupation, about traitors and politics, about graft and bribery; a detailed story with many names that meant nothing to us. They told how the guerilla bands had burned the little towns and slaughtered the cattle, had fought among themselves and had done very little against the thirty man Japanese garrison which had been stationed at Brook's Point. American Marines and Navy officers who had escaped from the Jap prison camps, had joined them in the hills and had tried to organize the guerillas who had been split on politics. In one case, we were told, an American naval officer had taken some of the politicians out in a Banca (canoe) and had come back all by

himself with the result that the guerrillas got organized under a marine from Texas and had stormed the school house where the Japs had been quartered. They had killed most of them. The marine was later found suffocated in a hut in the jungle and we were made to understand that the Japanese had not done the killing.

The dinner we were served was very good and lasted several hours, for Mr. Richards continued his long and detailed story. Later he took us around the town and we saw where all the buildings had been burned down and also the schoolhouse where the fight had taken place. All the windows were shot out and the back wall was riddled with bullets. As I left the porch a Philippine came up to me with his cap in his hand and very politely and in good English asked me if I would do him a great favor.

He was a small, skinny fellow with a pale yellow face and his burning eyes told me that he was suffering from fever. He wanted me to take him to the hospital at Puerta Princesa for he had been down with fever for a long time and was having terrible cramps in his stomach. He had just come from the mountains over which he had followed a band of Japanese who now were in hiding on some small islands on the west coast. He also told me that he had taken part in the fight at the schoolhouse. "Dad", as he called the Marine, had gathered the guerrillas together and worked out a plan to attack the Japs. They had moved down slowly under cover of darkness and had hidden in the jungle across from the schoolhouse grounds waiting for the Japs to go to bed. When the lights went out, they moved in and the plan was for certain men to throw hand-grenades through the windows blowing up the schoolhouse with the Japs

for it. The Japs were waiting for a Jap party and then had a good time, starting by shooting first. Only one head was sent through the water for the other guerrillas had them back to the jungle when the party fired. Just the way they did a good job on the Japs for sixteen of them got killed and the rest ran for the small blackhouse at the beach where a Jap patrol boat picked them up during the night. The Japs did not send more men to Brock's Point but sent some planes which bombed and strafed the town. I told the guerrilla whose name was Martin that he should come to the beach the next morning and I would see that he got to the hospital.

Down by the beach was the Chinese Bodega which is found in every little "barrio" in the islands. The store was all boarded up but through the windows on the second floor we could see the Chinese merchant and his wife looking at us and over the door was a crude sign reading "AMERICAN". Among the crowd of children who had followed us all the way through the village I could easily pick out at least half a dozen small slant-eyed Sons of Heaven with nothing on but a T shirt full of holes which reached just above the belly button.

As we inspected the site where the church had stood a flock of Palawanese from the hills came down the road. They were very small and naked except for a bark loincloth and a belt in which hung a large knife. All carried long bundles of rattan which they were going to sell to the Chinese. The sergeant tried to take a picture of them but that scared them and for a while I thought they were going to take to the jungle. But when Martin spoke to them in their own language they quieted down and we got their picture.

At the temporary City Hall we met the mayor, a big fat man, who spoke no English but gave us a very friendly smile and turned us over to the Chief of Police who also was very fat but spoke good English. When we left he gave us a very fine silver dagger with a carved handle. He told us he had always wanted to give it to some American, for his grandfather had used it to kill Americans with during the Spanish-American war and now that we were friends and fighting on the same side he thought it proper that the knife should belong to an American.

He also told us there was no more danger from the Japs; they were all gone by now, but warned us against going too far away from the barrier for the Salomances from the mountains were not to be depended on and they were good with their blowguns and poisonous arrows. I asked Martin if he knew where we could see some of the blowguns and he took us outside of the settlement where we found several small very dark men gathered around a small fire. They got excited when we approached them but Martin soon made them understand that we were all right and one of them got up and brought over one of the blowguns which was leaning against a tree.

It was a hollow piece of bamboo about seven feet long and lined inside with a soft silky reed the whole length of the barrel which was decorated with crude carvings. The little fellow reached in his belt and opened a bamboo holder from which he drew a thin pointed arrow with a ~~point~~ soft gasket fastened to one end. He dipped the point in a smaller bamboo tube which was fastened to the holder, and Martin told us that the small tube contained the poison. The arrow was stuck in the mouthpiece of the blowgun, point first, and the little fellow

Edwards, and in a time in which several monkeys were chattering about fifty yards away. He raised the gun slowly and we heard a slight pop as the arrow left the barrel. One of the monkeys let out a scream which scattered the rest of them and in a few seconds fell dead from the tree he was sitting on. The arrow had gone clear through him near the neck and the poison had not even fast, but evidently had had no effect on the man which Martin said the mountain men ate and of which they were very fond.

As we got back to Mr. Edwards' house I noticed a small hut behind the store and in the opening sat an old Palawan all naked except for a few rags for a loincloth. As Edwards looked the other way, he made a slight wave with his hand toward me and I got the idea that he wanted to see me but was a little afraid of Edwards. I let the others get ahead of me and went over to the old fellow handing him a cigaret and lit it for him. He puffed away and started talking a blue streak of which I did not understand a word but from his gestures soon made out that he was cold and wanted clothes. I made signs for him to come to the beach when we went onboard for the night and when I gave him a whole pack of cigarets, he got up, grabbed my hand and bowed deeply. I asked Edwards about the old fellow and he told me his name was Tobigan and old Palawan who was his servant and also the father of his housekeeper.

When we got to the beach, Tobigan was there with two large stocks of bananas which he had brought as a gift for me. When I called for the boat, I told the coxswain to send along my seabag in which I had brought along some clothing for trading purposes.

Yokipani's eyes got real big when I made him understand that he could have his pick. He pulled out a pair of khaki pants, a blue buttoned coat, a khaki shirt and a pair of GI shoes. He was soon dressed in stripes, touching the material, talking to himself and he continually shook my hand again and again, bowing deeply while trying to hang on to the pants which threatened to fall down. When it came to the shoes he ran into trouble. First he tried to put them on standing up but soon gave that up and sat down in the sand putting one shoe first on one foot and then on the other while he was talking to himself, giggling and having the time of his life.

Finally he got them both on and stood up hanging onto the pants with one hand and brushing off the sand with the other. He took a few steps, shuffling and dragging his feet as if he had skis on, turned toward us with a lost look on his face, shook his head and looked down on the shoes. He tried a few more steps, shook his head again and sat down pulling the shoes off, tied the laces together and slung them over his shoulder. With a wide grin, he came back still hanging onto the pants with one hand, came over to me, shook my hand once more, and walked away up the beach.

Leo had had a box of chewing gum sent over from the boat and handed the sticks out to the children which had followed us. The news traveled fast and soon we had every kid in the village gathered around Leo who made them stand on their heels, make handprints and even fight for the sticks of gum while the screaming and yelling could be heard clear up to the barrier where the Chinaman stuck his head out of a window of his Lodge to see what the yelling was about.

That afternoon, after taking up Martin on the beach, we headed out of the harbor and followed the coast closely as we headed north again. Martin knew the waters very well and was able to show us a few settlements before the beach. He told us there were several more settlements along a small river a few miles up the coast, but they were hard to get to for the water was too shallow for our craft.

As we slowly approached the riversouth we saw a small house with a man fishing and when he spotted us we could see him grab his paddle and start for shore in a hurry. As we wanted to speak to him, we slowed up and soon overtook him which made him very nervous. I noticed he grabbed his harpoon as we pulled alongside, but when Martin spoke to him he put it away again and gave us a look which reminded me of a very scared animal. I handed him a pack of cigarettes but he wouldn't take it until Martin assured him it was alright and lit one for him. Then he quieted down and sat there puffing and spitting hotel juice, but the slightest move or noise onboard made him jerk his head around and stare wild-eyed.

Through Martin we found out that the Kanjit we had seen anchored in the stream belonged to a Datu from the southern islands who had come to trade and visit the Datu of the settlement. Some people had gathered on the beach about half a mile off and as we could go no farther in the shallow water, Martin asked ^{THE FISHERMAN} ~~him~~ to go ashore and tell the other Moros that we wanted to trade for *knongs*, the famous Moro knives. He did, and seemed to have quite a session with the men ashore. Finally after half an hour or so the Banca came back with four men. One of them was a school teacher and he spoke fair English

But he was in pain as the others had had large tropical ulcers all over his legs and feet.

They had some very fine knives but did not seem very keen on trading. I gave the teacher some talcum powder to treat his ulcers and he was very thankful telling me he was barely able to walk and the pain was so terrible he could not sleep. I could well understand for the ulcers were the deepest and worst I ever saw and I knew that if he did not get them treated that they would go into the bones and he would be crippled for life. After much haggling and with the help of Martin and the school teacher we managed to trade the very fine Barongs for a sprayed parachute, some clothing and a few cigarettes.

We continued loading up along the coast and when we arrived at Inaguan about sunset we were so low on fuel we decided we better send Rex up to the colony to get a barrel of gasoline. The tide was low so we could not go in to the beach and had a terrible time making the guard understand that we wanted him to send out a banca.

It was dark before Rex got back with the Jap truck, the assistant superintendent, six convicts and the gasoline barrel. The convicts carried the barrel down to the water and began lifting it into the Banca when the assistant superintendent told them to swim out with the barrel. They hesitated and did not seem to want to get wet, but a few swift kicks and a clay behind the ears from the boat men, sent them flying into the surf and they floated the barrel alongside our boat. It was quite a job getting it in over the side, but we managed and emptied the contents into our hungry gas tanks.

Going home we hit a tough gale and for a while we thought of turning back to Inaguan, but just then the patrol boat spotted us and we

got busy working on suspects. He answered his challenge with the right code and our light was a good one, but for some reason he kept on challenging and by the time we got through with him we were mad enough to back our tails and kept on directly for Puerto Princesa.

The next morning we heard that a maintenance unit had arrived to take over the battalion duties and that the Clink was to be decommissioned and sent home. Leo had time enough but I had not, so he kept talking me all way how wonderful Chicago was going to look and how nice it would be for me to get to some other island with taller and better command trees. One of the mail planes had been lost so the mail was small but in one of mine were pictures of Don Garvin's wedding and honeymoon.

I got very busy for a Navy tanker had been torpedoed outside the harbor and I got the job to spare up her bulkheads so she could be towed to Manzanil to the drydock. I also had a new type of radio bearing station to build, so with the regular maintenances on the airfield, I had still plenty to do.

One morning while I was shaving I felt something crawling up my trouser leg and in a flash a red hot poker dug itself into my flesh. I let go the razor and grabbed the pants only to receive another jab hotter than ever. It was a dirty, blue red centipede about six inches long and a stream of blood was running down my leg from the four cuts he had given me. I got a razor blade, dipped it in whisky and cut the bites open, but could not reach the wound with my mouth to suck out the poison so I ran for the sickbay where I compressed it with arsonia. Leo was for once awake without me having to shake him out and as I passed

his tent he wanted to know what in the hell the big hurry was so early in the morning. His head lower of which was taken as big around and it felt as if someone was hitting me with a hammer with regular timed strokes.

Then came the news about the bombing of Hiroshima and the terrible atomic bomb which had been used. At first we thought it was some fantastic bluff but as more and more detail came we all realized that something very important had happened. We had known for some time that the airforce knew more than they let on, for they were taking big bets that the war would be over before the first of September. Then came the news about Russia declaring war on Japan and attacking in Manchuria.

On August 15th, Leo and I just got back from the show and were about to enter Leo's tent for a cold-cream when we noticed anti-air tracers from the other side of the island and just then somebody shouted: "THE WAR IS OVER". Leo headed for the wardrobe and I followed both on the double; when all the anti-air started firing, the boys came out of the tents and the shout went from one end of the camp to the other — THE WAR IS OVER — THE WAR IS OVER. Leo called a friend of his in the Army on the telephone and came out again yelling and waving his arms shouting on top of his lungs: "It's true, THE WAR IS OVER."

Everybody was firing their rifles and pistols so we ran back to the tents, got our pistols, and fired away like the rest until all the ammunition was gone. A big bell's bell, which the executive officer had had erected in the BOQ to wake everybody in the morning, was rung, torn down, and promptly buried. Over in the mess things got very lively around the bar. Everybody was having drinks, and free, for the bartender

I remember... I sat about there with the tears running down
 the... "The War is Over, Come and get it." and poured
 drinks in the glasses on the bar and all over everybody's hands and
 clothes. Lee never touched any hard liquor and I tried my darndest to
 get him to take one on such a big occasion, but Lee had his coca-cola
 and like as always.

As for myself, well, I shall admit I had my tea party and that I
 went up my post-chamber in a chair on the porch of the guest tent down
 by the beach. I opened my eyes just as the big red copper moon shot up
 out of the Sulu Sea and I looked right into his face and I thought he
 was smiling. The cool nightwind felt good and I just sat there as the
 moon climbed higher and higher, flooding the camp between the coconut
 palms with a strange soft light. ^{THE} Camp was still dark except for the
 lights in Mac's and Taylor's tent. ~~But~~ They always fell asleep with the
 lights on and tonight they had had more reason than ever after the way
 both of them had been holding drinks during the celebration around the
 bar, ^{THE} camp was still except for Leo's snoring.

The next morning we found out that we had been a little early with
 our "The War is Over Celebration" but anyway we had had a good time
 and we were all sure -- "It would not be long now." But a few days
 later we were told that the battalion was to take on additional work
 and would not go home. This of course deeply disappointed the boys who
 had been fooled so many times before.

I was not in the show when the announcement of no decommissioning
 was made by the executive officer, but they told me a few eggs were
 thrown. None of them hit, but there were many who wished that they had.

I do not know the exact time I was told that the Japanese planes were grounded for the time being for maintenance and we all sat around waiting for confirmation from headquarters which we did not get till the next day. Then President Truman announced that all hostilities had come to an end. I remember the airport the next morning. Usually when I got there it was all rear and thruster with all the planes taking off. This morning it was deadly still, looked only now and then when a patrol craft took off.

The planes were lined up, row after row, but the hoods were on the engines and the crews were playing pinocle in the shade under the wings. The war was over, and now everybody was wondering how long it would be before we could go home. The point system had been set up by the Navy and most of us had enough points to go home anytime, but the whole thing just did not work and many rank hungry commanding officers were sidetracking the whole thing to keep their units together.

Some overdue leave orders came through and the first one of my close pals to go was Alva Taylor. He had three beachheads and all kinds of other junk and it took his days to get packed; in fact if it had not been for him he never would. The next one was Leo and as much as I hated to part with him I was damned glad he got his orders. He had been out longer than any of us and had often been disappointed. I took him over to the airstrip in my jeep and we finally got him a flight in a bomber, a B23, for transportation was hard to get after all the planes had been grounded. I had him all loaded onboard one ship when the orders were cancelled and we had to move over to another. I think there were eleven passengers and there is not much room in a B25. They got nine of them stowed away, the next one was a very fat nurse who hardly went

times in the bush, West Gate Lake area. I had to back the parachute
down the hill behind where we could close the trunk so in case he had
to bail out all he would have to do would be to roll over backwards.
The pilot went the whole length of the strip to get off with his heavy
load and soon I saw the plane disappear in the haze to the east and it
was as fast lonely as hell.

Orders came and orders went. One day we were to tackle new work --
the next day we were to be decommissioned. It got so bad nobody
believed anything. The rain set in and the weather and the mud became
miserable, but most of the men kept up their spirits and took things as
they came in good humor. Then one day Commander Horman arrived from
headquarters at Cebu and brought orders that the battalion was to dis-
continue all work and stand by for the trip home. Nothing was done
about the point system so we did not know who was to go and who was to
stay.

The boys could loaf as well as they could work and they had a good
time. They went to cockfights in the native villages, pig hunting in
the jungle, and had barbecues native fashion. "Red" from the Ozark
mountains had a "still" in the jungle making rum and when a couple of
Negroes from the Army tried to highjack his stuff. Red went after them
with a carbine and ended up in the brig. Some of the boys got plane
rides to Manila where we had a hell of a time keeping our muster lists
straight, trying to protect ourselves and at the same time not get the
boys in trouble. One of the men in the battalion got killed in a plane
wreck when they hit a mountain top near Lindero.

Orders were issued that all pots had to be removed from the camp

and that my animals would be allowed aboard the transport. This was laid on the boys for they had become very much attached to their company and dogs. Most of them were given away to other units, but I am quite sure there were both monkeys and dogs aboard the homebound ship and that the pets were stowed ashore in the crates. The boys had an uncanny skill to hide things in a big crowd so when we got orders to search for certain things we never took it very seriously for we very well knew we were licked before we started.

All the enlisted men had a lot of souvenirs and things they had made which they wanted to take home, but as usual orders came that no enlisted men would be allowed any packages or boxes. Why, I do not know. The war was over and we were going aboard an empty transport with plenty of room in the holds for twenty times that many boxes. However I know very well that the boys could take care of themselves and that they would find some way of getting the stuff both aboard and ashore. I am sure there were very few things left in the camp which they actually wanted to take home. Our transport came in. She was the "Jane Adams" a converted Liberty ship and we watched her from the camp as she rounded the reef. Her hull looked high and her screws was churning half out of the water. It looked like a slow trip home.

Still we had no definite orders and did not know the war was going. Nothing had been done about the point system although all of us with enough points sent in our requests for transfer to inactive duty. The requests never got passed our own personnel office and no action was taken on them. Then came orders from Admiral Kauffman, Commander Philippine Sea Frontier, that all men and officers with sufficient points

...the mail and transportation and if any had
...the commanding officer would have to
...to and receive permission directly from the Admiral. That
helped. Our baggage went next in in a hurry; in fact a special officer
was sent to Manila with the papers to have them signed and bring them
back.

My company went onboard the night before we were to sail and it
was raining cats and dogs as we splashed through the mud to get to the
dock. The officers quarters were in hatch no. 4 and the hatchway itself
was the wardroom with long tables and benches and the sleeping quarters
were along the sides in the twin decks. The place was near the boilers
and hotter than hell with a slight stink of rotten bilge water. The
bunks were three high with an eighteen inch passageway between the rows.
Being one of the first onboard I picked myself a lower bunk and lashed
my gear under the ceiling. It was only five of us onboard and there
were sixty more to come. The boys were quartered forward where the bunks
were five high, but they had more headroom and more fresh air than we
had had to the boilers.

I did not sleep very well the first night onboard. With the ship
at anchor and steam up the room had a temperature of the average bake-
oven and five minutes after I layed down my bed was soaking wet. I had
just corked off for a few minutes when a hell of a racket out in the
wardroom woke me up. Two of the Merchant Mariners were roaring drunk
and were having a free for all fight in there. When one of us in the
bakeoven told them to pipe down and clear out, they immediately became
the best of friends and came over to our door handing out a lot of

rested language. We sat there for a while, but finally got out of the steam bath and cleared the wardroom.

* had had enough so I went up on deck and sat down in a deckchair which I had brought with me. The night air felt good and there I fell asleep with nothing on but a pair of slivvies. The smell of coffee woke me up just as the dawn was breaking and it made me hungry. I noticed the big colored coat standing in the galley door so I thought I would try my luck about breakfast. He was a fine fellow and right away offered me hot and eggs and all the coffee I could drink. He also brought his own breakfast so we sat there eating and watching the sunrise. He made the remark he would like to have a few sets of khaki and I told him I would fix him up as I had plenty in my cabin. However as I had no way of washing mine, he would get my dirty ones as I used them. So we struck a bargain. He was to get all my surplus gear and I was to get one gallon of hot shaving water and coffee and donuts every morning until we landed in the states. I included the gallon of hot water for I had seen the washroom and the showers. It had two washbasins, two mirrors and two showers. All that for only sixty-five officers with the fresh water turned on one hour every morning and evening.

CHAPTER IX

HOMEROUND BOUND

CHAPTER IX

HEAVENLY BODIES

It was nearly 11:00 o'clock when I heard the anchor winch rattle, the "Jane Adams" blew a long whistle and the screw began to chug. We were all loaded and heading out of the harbor of Puerta Princesa. The sun was shining through drifting storm clouds and the sky was blue toward the east, but to the west a curtain of rain was coming off the mountains up toward Tashig.

As we rounded the reef I saw our camp in under the palm trees on the point with the surf breaking in a white and green half circle. Goodby jungle and coconuts, mud and dust. Goodby. The Sulu Sea looked clean and blue green with white caps all over, for a stiff breeze had come up making the "Jane" roll and shiver as her screw hit the air above the waterline. A little later when I looked back the mountains of Palawan were faintly outlined in the haze and I watched until they disappeared.

When everybody got in the chowline it just filled the whole ward-room and after one got one's plate and cup plus tools it was quite a

with to get it through the crowd and squeeze in at one of the tables. The man who was the one who gave a damn. He wore heavy boots. Nothing else interesting.

When each line was around my decision to sleep on deck but I thought it would be just too damned much trouble moving around so I kept up back down below. Some of the enlisted men had made themselves regular beds between the stow and the beams on deck. Some just strung their blankets out in the open, while the others covered them with parachutes and some bedding. My two Chiefs McDonald and Gault created themselves a full size bunk on the aft hatch and made a real home out of it.

We went in between the islands and a few days later were anchored in the harbor of Tashkent. We had a couple of hundred men who did not have enough points and we had orders to drop them at Leyte. Among these were many who were short points because they were unexercised and some too young, but they had been in the Pacific as long as the rest, so we were all hoping that the orders would be changed so they could go home with us.

As soon as we got in touch with shore we were told to go back down the bay to take oil and water. So back we went and we did not get back until the next day. Then we got orders to unload the men without enough points the next morning. That evening the boys were plenty down hearted and got some whisky at twenty-five dollars a quart from the Merchant Mariners and quite a few of them got feeling very high. They kept it up all night and paid no attention to the threats about having them punished. As usual they had it in for the executive officer who was surrounded through the hatchway and handed all kinds of challenges. He was smart this time and stayed in his bunk saying nothing.

I don't know how many for the boys when they put their gear in a back locker and showed off for us. They were all down in the mess, I know, but they did not show us. They were shopping it up letting on they were having a hell of a time. As their boat still hung from the ship a lot of "compliments" were handed over to several officers standing at the rail. All of them had it coming.

After breakfast I was glad I had made the arrangement with the cook. I got up early, went up in the galley and got my gillon can full of hot water and had the washroom all to myself. After a cold water shower sprang off with my leftover shaving water, I had my coffee and donuts on the hatch. Down below in the washroom there were two lines six and seven deep all trying to shave in the two mirrors.

From Leyte we followed the longer coast at a steady ten knot clip and just got far enough away when a hurricane hit the Philippine coast. We got some of the tail end but had no trouble except it slowed us down. There were many ships coming and going in the longer and our old "Jane" seemed a little slow then; one of the new AFM's passed us at twenty knots. We had moving pictures every night and when we ran out of film we stopped some other ship and got new movies. Otherwise life aboard was regular routine, eating, sleeping, movies and sitting around on the hatch.

The next stop would be San Francisco, but we saw land several times passing the islands of Yap and Truk, some of the Marshall Islands and at Ulithe I counted over four hundred ships anchored in the enormous lagoon. After passing the Marshalls we swung northward for the big circle and passed between Midway and the Hawaiian Islands heading for San Francisco. The Sooty birds followed us all the way and when the gun

...for hanging over the side, making I got into the
 ...the ... of the ... officers
 ... in the ... , ...
 ... the ...
 ... All we had to look out for now was
 ...

A ... of the California coast we got orders to go to San Diego
 ... had ...
 ... This was the
 ... the same port I had started from nearly two
 years before.

During the ... we had ...
 ... After
 ...
 ... The next morning
 I watched the ...
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 ... before he showed
 up, but it was ...
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... that there would be a big reception for the
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Mr. Reid had reached home before the buses showed up, then he
walked down the hallway. When the executive officer reached down a
box was up from the hallway and he received
"bump" which showed the entrance to warehouse along the
dock.

As the barracks found one sleepy enlisted man in the OD's office
the OD was no there to be found and no one could tell us where we
were to be quartered. We sat around in the sun and just waited. The
OD showed up around noon and sent us to some quarters which were
all ready occupied, but we were in no hurry, for we knew there was no
chance of getting out of the camp that day as there was not a soul
in the administration office to enforce our orders.

Toward evening Alva Taylor came over in his car and we drove
up to the town near by. We had often talked, while overseas, about
how we would find things when we got back home. I was still wondering
but after the ride down the main street of the little town I wasn't
wondering any more. I saw the kids with their mouths full of gum
in the lineup in front of the movie, pushing and yelling. The soda-
fountain in the drugstore was filled with youngsters and groups
sipping sodas and eating icecream while the "Jukebox" was shaking
the joint down. In a car alongside of us a woman was doing all the
driving from the backseat while the "old man" handled the wheel
cussing to himself through the big cigar in his face. A couple of
drunks were shaking heads on the corner and the women walking on the
sidewalks had on hats which were sexier than ever.
The war did not seem to have changed things very much.

E N D

