

# SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

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## PHILIPPINE DEFENSE AND LIBERATION RIBBONS AUTHORIZED

The new campaign ribbons, the Philippine Defense Ribbon and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, newly created by the Philippine government, have been authorized for members of the U. S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard who served in the Philippines.

The Philippine Defense Ribbon, a red ribbon with a 1/8 inch blue stripe and a 3/16 inch white stripe vertically through the center, may be worn by any member of the U. S. armed forces who took part in any engagement against the enemy in the Philippine area between December 8, 1941, and June 15, 1942, or who was stationed in the Philippine area for not less than 30 days during that period.

Those eligible for the Philippine Defense Ribbon for both reasons are authorized to wear a bronze star on the ribbon.

The Philippine Liberation Ribbon is a red ribbon, bearing 3/16 inch vertical white strips about one-fourth inch from either end, and with three small white stars forming a triangle in the center. It may be worn by personnel who participated in the initial landing operations on Leyte and the adjoining islands from October 17 to October 20, 1944, took part in any engagement against the enemy during the campaign, or served in the Philippine Islands or on ships in Philippine waters for not less than thirty days between October 17, 1944, and a terminal date to be announced.

Naval personnel fulfilling all three provisions for the Philippine Liberation Ribbon are authorized to wear two bronze stars on the ribbon. Those eligible under any two provisions, may wear one bronze star on the ribbon.

The new ribbons will be worn after Area Campaign Ribbons, and the Philippine Defense Ribbon will take precedence over the Philippine Liberation Ribbon.

All personnel now authorized to wear a bronze star on the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Ribbon for the Philippine Islands operation from December 8, 1941, to May 6, 1942, are eligible for the Philippine Defense Ribbon. Any officer or enlisted man who believes himself otherwise eligible may apply to the Chief of Naval Personnel, explaining the basis for eligibility.

Commanding officers have been instructed to make suitable entries in service records of eligible enlisted personnel and to authorized officers by letter with copy to the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Interested parties may refer to Alnav 64 of 5 April, 1945 for fuller information.

## NAVY DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES 7TH INCREMENT FOR V-12 PROGRAM

The attention of all Construction Battalion personnel is called to BNPCL-99-45, published in the 15 April 1945 issue of the Navy Department Semi-Monthly Bulletin, which outlines the procedure to be followed in the selection and transfer to the Navy V-12 Program of applicants to be assigned to college training on 1 November 1945.

Specific attention is called to the fact that no quota has been, or will be, assigned to Construction Battalion Units. Commanding Officers may, therefore, forward the applications of all outstanding candidates under their command, to arrive at the Selecting Command (Chief of Naval Personnel, Attention Pers 3655) not later than 1 July 1945, where the final selection will be made.

## JOBS FOR STEVEDORES

Comdr. S. E. Mittler, CEC, USNR, special assistant in the Bureau of Yards and Docks, told the Foreign Traders Association the "skill and talent of over 40,000 Seabees who have been trained will be available to the steamship and stevedoring industry after the war."

Speaking in Philadelphia on the performance of the Special battalions, Commander Mittler declared that "if the Seabees are encouraged to remain in the industry, the American Merchant Marine and you as individual shippers and consignees are bound to benefit."

The Commander, who told the shippers of seeing the Seabee stevedores in action in the field, said "they are strong, healthy and smart enough to grasp the know-how of stevedoring and are constantly improving their technique. They are accustomed to hard work at a fast pace. After the war this will result in better tonnage efficiency that should place American shipping in a better position to compete with foreign flag operators."

## 24 GET UNIT CITATION

Twenty four men, 22 of them stationed at Fort Pierce, Fla., and two at Camp Endicott, have been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for "outstanding performance in combat during the Normandy invasion as a part of Navy Combat Demolition Unit Force 'O'."

Those now stationed at Fort Pierce are: Milton Wright Bard, BM1c; James Newton Barker, SF1c; Lester Harold Baumann, M2c; Charles Edward Bledsoe, MM1c; Jack Allen Caldwell, GM2c; Jack Wayne Choffin, GM2c; Edward Walter Cicerone, Slc;

Matthew David Conti, S1c; Richard Herman Coombs, S1c; Laurence Sebastian Dorash, S1c; Stanley Dracz, GM1c; William Hugh Duffy, S1c; James Joseph Dwyer, BM1c; Ernest George Gernon, S1c; Dean Kirkpatrick, MoMM2c; CBM George Louis Logan; James Calloway McKinley, EM1c; William Charles Mitchell, GM2c; James Owen Patrick, GM2c; John William Prefontaine, MoMM2c; Jasper George Ross, GM1c; Max Siegle, S1c.

Those at Camp Endicott: CBM Robert Ambrose Bolding, Jr. and Lewis Henry Hursh, Jr., MM2c.

### JAP STEEL EXPEDITES AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION

By utilizing surplus Marston matting and salvaged Japanese steel, Seabees of the 6th Brigade, intent on constructing the Superfortress facilities on Tinian in record-breaking time, increased the capacity of dump trucks by more than 25 percent. And despite the additional loading the improved truck beds withstood the augmented work schedule better than those used as they came from the factories.

To obtain the load increase, the Marston mats were welded to the steel beds with approximately 14 inches of the mat extending above the bed. The corners were braced with angle iron. To prevent power shovels from smashing the relatively thin mats during loading operations, a steel rod--either an inch and a quarter or an inch and a half in size--was employed to form a bead on the topmost edge of the mat. The rods used were brought to the island originally by the Japs for use in reinforcing concrete installations.

By mounting sections of Japanese rail lengthwise within the bed of the truck, and at right angles to the reinforcing channel irons on the underside of the bed, strain and wear on the bed were greatly reduced. In addition, the rail section protected the steel floor of the bed against damage caused when heavy boulders were dropped by shovels during loading. The rail was salvaged from an island line formerly operated by the Japs.

### DEMOLITION SPECIALIST RECEIVES BRONZE STAR

A CEC officer whose demolition unit cleared underwater obstacles and beach obstructions to pave the way for early assault waves during the invasion of Southern France last August has been presented the Bronze Star Medal by Rear Admiral John J. Manning, CEC, USN.

The citation commended the officer, Lt. (jg) Joseph L. Padgett, CEC, USNR of Marion, N. C. for "extraordinary ability, cool and courageous action and outstanding devotion to duty...."

Earlier he had been commended by Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll, Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, for the development of a successful method for the clearance

of wires and entanglements. "This latter weapon," said Admiral Ingersoll, "was developed in the face of protestations by physicists who advised that (the) solution was impossible."

### VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

On Iwo Jima, CSK M. Leslie Harris of Greenville, Texas, wasn't worried about the remaining Japanese, but he wanted an armed guard just the same.

The Chief had just pocketed enough money to pay for beer the Seabees were receiving through the cooperation of the Army Quartermaster Corps who had offered part of their meager supply.

"You don't need protection," the Seabees' supply officer told Harris. "No one is interested in money on this island."

"Maybe so," the Seabee agreed, "but there are a helluva lot of guys who are interested in the beer!"

### CABLE TROLLEY EVACUATES WOUNDED

During the vicious struggle for Bloody Nose Ridge, the Five Sisters, and other bitterly contested Jap suicide emplacements on Peleliu, members of an Army division captured several positions along the top of the sheer ridges, commanding a view of the Jap-held caves and dugouts in the coral pockets in between. By using hands, feet, fingernails, and teeth, a man could work his way up to these positions, but the problem of getting food and ammunition up and carrying the wounded down still remained to be solved.

An Army officer turned for assistance to a Seabee Special battalion and to Chief Eugene A. Dolan of Long Island City, N. Y. Dolan broke out three sets of block and tackle and enough rope to rig a trolley from the foot of the hill to the positions on the ridge. A stretcher, fastened to the line, provided suitable transportation.

The next day, however, the officer returned with a request for more rope. In the periods between the brilliant white flares which lit up the coral, the Japs had stolen out and cut the lines. Dolan suggested the use of steel cable would be more effective, donated more blocks, cable clamps, and cable, and rigged up a new trolley. No further difficulty was encountered.

The following week Dolan was called upon to supply 800 feet of steel cable which was used to hoist light artillery to the summit of a ridge. These guns were credited with contributing substantially to the elimination of the last Jap defenders.

## CONVERT LARGEST JAP EQUIPMENT

By capturing and reconditioning a Japanese dipper dredge in the Marianas, a Seabee battalion claims it holds the record for putting to work the largest single piece of Nipponese equipment captured so far.

In taking over the 550-ton dredge, the Seabees had to shoot several Japs who refused to come out of the boiler room and surrender.

## MOMENT OF GLORY

As he pressed down, he could see the crisp punctures cut right through the middle. But there was no thrill of achievement, no exhilaration at having downed a hated enemy. Nor would there likely be -- ever.

His "weapon," the Seabee reproached himself, was a sewing machine, not a machine gun. So 26-year-old Bertram J. Robbins, SSM(T)2c, of Colorado Springs, Colo., worked on in his Iwo Jima-bound transport, resigning himself to the inglorious substitute of needle for bayonet and thimble for armor.

Then, as the transport lay off the enemy-held island, Jap torpedo planes and dive bombers attacked.

A call came for volunteers to help man the transport's guns. Heart pounding, Robbins volunteered.

"You! You're on that gun over there!" an officer shouted.

In the long minutes that followed, the Seabee worked furiously -- and gladly. The attack was beaten off.

The regular loaders were back on the job next day. Robbins was back at his machine. "I'm just putting patches on Seabee pants again," he said. His eyes turned backwards to yesterday. "But it was fun while it lasted."

## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER

A few days after his battalion had completed a tough job ahead of schedule, Lt. Comdr. Paul V. McHenry, CEC, USNR, the OinC, had a notice tacked up on the bulletin board. It said, in part:

"I can say, 'Thank you men,' but will go a little further -- I will say, 'You are a helluva fine gang! -- For the next three days the drinks are on the house, and we will have beer every day for the rest of the month.'"

A dirt-covered catskiner began to read the memo with no special interest, but as he reached the bottom he exploded: "Hell! commendations are a dime-a-dozen. But when they start passing out free beer -- that's different. Let's go get it!"

### FROM THE MARINES...

"No words of tribute can express what those boys did." Thus Captain Jesse L. Massey, Quartermaster for the Fourth Marine Division, paid tribute to the Seabees who landed with the Leathernecks during the first few days of the Iwo Jima campaign.

"They were brave and resourceful enough," the captain continued, "to carry out a difficult assignment under the most hazardous conditions."

Said another Marine veteran, Warrant Gunner Carl H. Gerlach: "I saw Seabees of the -- battalion carry ammunition to Marine gunners on the front lines until we could set up a dump behind the lines. I understand the group I was with was under fire for the first time. The work I saw done was as fine an example of Seabee "Can Do" as will ever be turned in by any outfit."

#### DOESN'T LIKE HIS EGGS "OVER"

Even with fresh eggs at a premium, Kendrid W. Clarke, EM1c, still feels he can be particular as to how he'll have his--and he doesn't mean all over.

Clarke, on duty in the Marianas, went foraging for eggs produced by Marianas hens which fled civilization when the invasion bombardment started. Returning from a hunt that netted 13 fresh eggs, Clarke had them cuddled close when a Marine patrol nearby, still hunting Japs, cut loose with a volley. Clarke hit the deck--hard.

Thirteen shells burst.

#### SALVAGE DIVIDENDS

A Materials Recovery Unit of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts in the Marianas has salvaged an estimated \$243,000 worth of scrap material and machinery.

The Unit reported for duty in September, 1944, with Lt. Homer J. Nelson, S. C., USNR, of N. Y. in charge. It was then comprised of 17 enlisted men.

Sniper fire interfered with the first assignment, that of salvaging five 210-foot Japanese radio towers, although the island had been secured. All five towers were

dismantled in such a manner that they could be reassembled. One of them has already been erected for use on the island and the other four are awaiting shipment to other forward areas. The total estimated valuation of the towers is \$200,000.

The second major project was dismantling of a large sugar mill. On this job, as well as on the radio tower dismantlement, Seabees collaborated; a detail of 12 men being supplied to increase Lt. Nelson's complement.

Structural steel, machinery and miscellaneous materials obtained from the sugar mill were reissued for construction jobs at the direction of Island Command, with priorities being assigned in accordance with the relative military importance of projects. Lt. Nelson screened the orders.

Since the Unit's arrival, its authorized complement has grown to 42 enlisted men and three officers.

The Unit has sponsored a B-29 bomber, and their insignia - an octopus with tentacles curling around Pacific islands which have been wrested from the Japanese, is painted on the plane's side. The B-29 is piloted by 1st Lt. Alvie A. Brooks, Jr., USAAF, of Houston, Texas.

### THE HUNTERS AND THE HUNTED

In CCM Ross J. Ott of Austin, Texas, CEM James O. Lang, of Cowpens, SC; and Cox. Harvard W. Rogers of Boston, Mass., Seabees in the Palaus claim three of the best trappers in the business.

Your three guesses on what they trap are wrong -- no Japs, no rats, no fur. The objects of their affection are chickens--plain, ordinary, garden variety chickens, once kept by the natives and Japanese, but driven into the jungle during invasion operations.

"Fresh eggs are welcome," explains one of the Seabees, "and so is fried chicken. We're willing to forgive them their ancestry."

### IN REVERSE

The "Lost and Found" column of a Seabee battalion newspaper in the Pacific offers a reward for the disposition of a Japanese bugle, trophy of one of the mates. The twist is that the reward is offered not for the recovery of the instrument, but its disappearance! Complain the Seabees about the bugle's owner, J. R. Swope: "He practices too much!"

## THERE'S A GREAT DAY COMING

Seabee R. J. "Rojo" Blevins -- a beer-lover from 'way back -- will have to wait until he returns from the Marianas to his home in Panama before he does much guzzling. But, during his first thirty days on his old stamping ground, he will be able to consume the local brew until it runs out of his ears -- and all for free.

This pleasant prospect arises, strangely, out of a bet which was lost, not won. Blevins and his tent-mate, W. D. Lange, of Brooklyn, argued over the number of stanzas in a ballad, "The Lure of the Tropics," which was reprinted in Blevins' hometown paper, "The Panama American," and finally wagered thirty beer chits on the outcome.

A V-mail query to the paper's editor brought the news that the local boy had lost thirty days' drinking to his buddy. But the editor also reported the story of Blevins' bet in the newspaper, which in turn found its way to the hands of Harry Kris, proprietor of the Doghouse Bar in Colon.

Blevins, while he was an Army civilian employee in the Canal Zone, had spent many a pleasant hour with Kris in the Doghouse, and Kris was saddened that his beer-loving friend was faced with thirty mighty thirsty days. Kris could not V-mail him any beer but he did the next best thing. He sent Blevins an elaborately inscribed certificate of membership in the Doghouse Club, endorsed with the promise of free beer -- all he can drink -- the first thirty days after his return to the Isthmus of Panama.

## SURPRISE PACKAGE

An evil-looking land mine was the unexpected catch made by Dale Gretton, MM2c, of Lansing, Mich., as he manipulated the shovel of his crane on Saipan recently.

How did the Seabee react? "Wow!" he said.

"It seemed like ten years before I got it back on the ground," he added -- rather unnecessarily.

## LSM CREW HAS OWN SWIMMING POOL

While his LSM was proceeding through the warm waters of the Pacific, Lt. William Whatley, USNR, 24, of Corpus Christi, Texas, was surprised when the spokesman for a small gathering outside the wardroom asked:

"Sir, may we have permission to use the swimming pool?"

"The what?" replied the startled skipper.



"The swimming pool, sir -- the one up forward," ventured another member of the crew.

This called for an immediate investigation. The CO hastily proceeded forward. Sure enough, in the triangular space between the bow doors and the bow ramp, was a made-to-order swimming pool.

"Well, I'll be damned," Lt. Whatley muttered.

Permission was granted and the off-section of the watch dipped and splashed in their newly-acquired source of recreation.

Later, in the wardroom Lt. Whatley summed it all up:

"We're the only ship in the fleet that can boast a built-in, sanitary swimming pool. At standard speed we have from five to six feet of water in it -- fresh running water 24 hours a day."

How was the pool discovered?

While working on the interior of the bow doors, one of the engineers fell in!

### JUST LIKE THAT

Seabee William J. Russell, MM2c, likes to tinker.

Two small screwdrivers he fashioned out of needles. A large reading glass became an eyepiece. Bent hacksaw blades were converted into tweezers. Aviation gas substituted for cleaning fluid. And little coffee cans became receptacles for tiny screws and parts.

Russell has become his battalion's watch repairman.

### RETURNED POW'S GET SPECIAL PROMOTION CONSIDERATION

Special consideration with respect to promotion will be given, with certain exceptions, to returned officer and enlisted personnel of the Army and Navy who, in the course of honorable service, have fallen into the hands of the enemy as prisoners of war or who have escaped from such custody or evaded capture.

Upon return to the jurisdiction of their respective services, they will be considered, if qualified, for immediate promotion of one rank, grade or rating, and for subsequent promotion as soon as qualified. Time in grade, position vacancy and billet requirements will be waived in their case. Officer personnel, however, will not be advanced more than one grade at a time.

## EXCUSE IT, PLEASE

It was just a few days after D-Day at Iwo Jima and Anthony Coppola, EM3c, of Philadelphia, Penna., and A. M. Burt EM1c, of Salt Lake City, Utah, had decided what the boys needed was a little relaxation--something that would help them forget the war for a while.

So they piled up shell cases as a windbreak for their portable screen; hooked up electric wires, ripped from a captured Jap pillbox, to a nearby generator; and passed the word around.

Seabees, sailors and marines quickly assembled to see the show. Seats were no problem; there was plenty of room on the ground.

The picture was a short which showed the Seabee back at Hawaii, enjoying themselves at an anniversary picnic. Catcalls, groans and cheers went up as the Seabees saw themselves eating ice cream, drinking beer--and clad in immaculate whites.

Suddenly a high pitched wail split the air. As one man, the entire audience hit the deck. The air raid siren--a Jap raid!

The silence was broken by Coppola. "Hey, fellows, get up," he called to his prone audience, "that's not the air raid siren--it's just a microphone feed-back!"

## UNSTOPPABLE

Observing "a person stealing silently from the surrounding undergrowth," the official report to the duty officer read, the guard called the customary command --

"Halt!"

"The person kept moving forward, waving long arms in a menacing manner," the report continued. "Taking steady aim, the guard fired nine rounds at the person."

Each shot was observed to pass through the intruder's middle. Still he kept coming. The guard prudently retreated.

When James T. Sage, Ptr1c, of Troy, New York, came around next morning to take down the suit of GI greens he had hung out to dry the night before, he looked with dismay at his well punctured suit. "A moon, a breeze, and a bit of jungle can produce a shadow that sure can scare hell out of a guy!" he lamented.

### AIR RAID "CASUALTY"

Anything will do for a foxhole when a bombardment starts--almost anything. A Pacific battalion's chow line dispersed in wild abandon when a battery of guns nearby opened up without the usual air raid warnings.

Norman C. Koehler, WT2c, threw mess gear to the winds and fled for cover, choosing what appeared to be a good protective hole. The gun fire, later determined to have been howitzers on test by Marines, died as quickly as it started.

There stood Koehler, hip deep in a pit of garbage.

### CARD OF THANKS

Ernest C. Clark, SF3c, ran into a pack-clipping barrage in an Iwo Jima foxhole. Clark, with his foul weather gear strapped atop his field pack, was nuzzling the bottom of the foxhole, "when I felt a jerk.

"Then I discovered my gear and gas mask were gone. Later I found the gear-- a clean hole right through it.

### MUTUAL FRIEND

All CSK William E. Dull, Jr., knew about his niece's fiance was that his name was Smith.

In the Marianas, he visited a nearby supply office for information on a job he'd been assigned. About to question the chief sitting at a desk in the outer office, he glanced at a photograph on the desk. "Hey!" he exclaimed, "that's my niece!"

"You don't say!" replied CPO Erwin W. Smith of Seattle, Wash., "That's my girl!"

### MAKES THE HOURS GO BY

For a sparetime watch repairman, Conrad J. Caron, MM2c, of Glendale, New York, does pretty well. Since reporting for duty in the Marianas, the Seabee has fixed 1500 timepieces.

## SHORT SPORT SHOTS

SERVICEMEN in the Pacific will get an opportunity to see some real first class baseball this summer and other sports later in the year. Navy Department this week formally ordered its stateside all-star athletic teams disbanded for "morale purposes," with more emphasis on games in battle areas. The order applies to all forms of athletics and probably puts an end to the brilliant records run up by Great Lakes and Bainbridge NYS teams. Navy announcement said that it does not favor "deliberate concentration of professional or publicly known athletes within the continental United States for the purpose of exploiting their specialties in athletic team competition." It added that the morale of the Navy will be enhanced by dispersal of well-known athletes in routine service with active units, and that "their concentration within continental limits is detrimental to general morale and incurs adverse criticism" for service personnel as well as civilians. "In order to break up aggregations now formed..it is directed that no person..either officer or enlisted.. shall be stationed beyond his normal period of duty or training in a particular command or locality..and be permitted to coach, play or concern himself with competitive athletics." Eight Great Lakes baseball players including four former major leaguers (Clyde Shoun, Cincinnati pitcher; Pinky Higgins, third baseman, and Johnny Gorsica, pitcher, Detroit; and Max Marshall, outfielder, New York Giants) shipped out for the Pacific. The Bainbridge swimming team, competing after a last minute switch in orders, captured the 1945 National AAU indoor team championship. Adolf Kiefer, former Olympic champ, was the individual star of meet. Defeated but once in ten years of back stroke competition, Kiefer won two individual events and swam winning legs on two successful relay combinations. Walter Ris, of Bainbridge, pulled biggest upset beating Alan Ford, world record holder, in 100-yard free-style race. Ford, who broke Johnny Weissmuller's long-standing mark five times in three years, had been unbeaten for more than two years.

MAJOR league clubs broke spring training and moved to home parks for final exhibitions before opening day, April 17. WMC ruling permitting players to leave war jobs backfired when local draft board nabbed Dodger rookie as "job-jumper." War Department noted that any player deferred for essential work would be subjected to immediate induction if he leaves job.

NATIONAL Football League adopted 10-team, two division circuit for 1945. Brooklyn Tigers and Boston Yanks were merged for season, but future status of Brooklyn club is still in doubt. The new club, to be known as the Yanks and coached by Herb Kopf who directed the Boston team last season, will play one game at the Yankee Stadium against Giants. All other home contests will be at Boston. League also drafted 330 college players, nearly all of whom are now in service. Boston selected Ellis Jones, one-armed guard who starred with Tulsa the past three seasons.

REPORTS from Germany say Max Schmeling, former world heavyweight champ, is being held in German army deserters prison camp where 100,000 deserters have died from starvation and cruel treatment. Prisoners in camp are said to be chronic offenders or those who have refused to fight under Nazi Party control of the army.