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NEW BASE FOR ADMIRAL NIMITZ BUILT IN RECORD TIME

(How the Seabees landed on a Japanese-held island and transformed it into a great naval base, now the headquarters for Admiral Nimitz and his staff, was told by New York "Times" war correspondent Warren Moscow in a wirelessly dispatched to his newspaper. Because Mr. Moscow's report presents a graphic picture of a typical Seabee operation, the Seabee News Service is reprinting it in full.)

"The story of the Seabees and their ability to achieve the impossible in less than record time has been told many times in this war, and out here on the Western Pacific island to be used as headquarters by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, is being written again the record of their accomplishment, possibly on a larger scale than ever before.

"On this island, which had seen machine age pass it by, steam shovels, bulldozers and trucks plus Seabee "savvy" have dug huge chunks from the coral hills, transported them to planned road beds and laid the foundations for highways, lifting transportation out of a sea of mud. All is not yet finished, but it will be before the theoretically dry season turns to the wet season, and rain falls twenty-three hours daily. Around this headquarters area, growing from nothing a few months ago to facilities that may equal Pearl Harbor, new sidewalks appear daily, and giant quonset huts two stories high, dry, airy and commodious, for office and living quarters, mushroom from still drying concrete foundations.

"Yesterday the engineer in charge of construction of the island's first sewerage system bet the supervising Navy official that they would have it ready in ten days. Meanwhile, giant pontoons sunk in the ground serve as septic tanks. The Seabee corps is hard pressed to keep ahead of the island's growing military personnel, but it is doing it. Floodlights burn all night as the twenty-four-hour schedule is maintained, and even rain that drives all others indoors to the quarters that the Seabees have built, fails to stop them. Army and Marine encampments are created where thick jungles had been, and natives accustoming themselves to the accelerated pace hitch rides on Seabee trucks along roads as new to them as to the majority of the military personnel.

"Apart from physical accomplishments the Seabees' cheerfulness and willingness to do all sorts of small favors for all comers stand out. Correspondents moving into new quarters turned to them for little extra luxuries, such as typewriter tables and ash trays to match the new living accommodations.

"Two Seabees from New Jersey and three from Brooklyn took only a few minutes to turn packing cases for plumbing fixtures into acceptable tables, while discarded shell cases were cut off near the base for a set of ash trays, all done in a spirit of 'glad-to-do-it-no-trouble-at-all and what's-the-news-from-home.'

"The Seabees, once an all-volunteer group, are now getting draftees. They are also lowering their age level slightly, but they are not impairing their efficiency."

ADDITIONAL COMBAT STARS AUTHORIZED

The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, had designated additional naval operations and engagements, through the occupation of the Mariana Islands, for which Naval personnel are authorized to wear bronze or silver combat stars on Area Service Ribbons. The additions of greatest interest to Seabees are:

ASIATIC-PACIFIC AREA SERVICE RIBBON:

(Only one star for participation in one or more of the following:)

Capture and occupation of Saipan	June 11-August 10, 1944
Capture and occupation of Guam	July 12-August 15, 1944
Capture and occupation of Tinian	July 20-August 10, 1944
Green Islands Landing	February 15-19, 1944

EUROPEAN-AFRICAN-MIDDLE EASTERN AREA SERVICE RIBBON:

(Only one star for participation in one or more of the following:)

Invasion of Southern France	August 15-September 25, 1944
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Previous list was carried in SNS Issue No. 41, 10 October, 1944.

NO BED-TIME STORY

The man who gripes about a four-hour watch will get no sympathy from Harry H. Brock, MM2c, who had to stay up three days and nights without sleep to keep his gasoline barge off the reefs at Peleliu:

Wounded in the leg by a bursting mortar shell on the first day of supply operations off the beaches, Brock and his barge mates battled through mortar and machine gun fire from the Japs on shore -- but protested loudest over navigational difficulties. They tried steering at night by the stars; then they tried the Milky Way.

"That didn't work either," Brock lamented. "Next morning we were on the other side of Anguar island and it took us eight hours to get back to Peleliu!"

PRAISE FROM A CONGRESSWOMAN

Margaret Chase Smith, Congresswoman from Maine's second district and a member of the House Naval Affairs Committee, toured the Pacific as a member of

that group and came back to write a column and a half of praise for the Seabees in a Bangor, Maine, newspaper.

"The Japs," she wrote, "are bad enemies, but not much more formidable than the combination of heat, rain and disease that these men must first contact and defeat before an advance Naval base can come into being.

"The island I'm writing about," she continued, "is an example of how Seabees and their Civil Engineer Corps officers fight mud, rain and jungle for their very existence.

"This island was typical of those encountered by a battalion which helped build a giant base that served as a springboard for attack on the Philippines. This base, as I saw it last month, now resembles a medium size city whose principal industry is war. It was virtually a jungle when this battalion--comprised principally of Negro stevedores--landed last May 29. The battalion was not the first on the island, but as far as living quarters were concerned, the job had to start from scratch, except for the enlisted men's permanent galley and mess hall. Construction of these vital facilities had been started by a regular naval construction battalion nine days before.

"Within two days after the headquarters company of the stevedore battalion had landed, its bulldozers had cleared away the soaked jungle. Tents were pitched on the ground which was typical of the area--moldy, wet, soggy and swampy.

"The first permanent building was a dispensary and sick bay housed in a quonset hut type structure, began June 13, in line with the practice of building hospitalization facilities at the earliest possible moment.

"The next milestone in the battle against primitive conditions was reached June 15, less than three weeks after the first company landed. It was the opening of the enlisted men's mess hall, a huge quonset-type building completely equipped with galley, refrigeration, lighting and seating facilities. The officers ate in a corner of the enlisted men's hall until their own mess hall was completed thirty days later."

The congresswoman's praise recounted, step by step and difficulty by difficulty, progress of the base construction, to opening of the theater, drainage projects and completion of good roads.

"Within approximately four months," she concluded, "the Seabee battalion had transformed a steaming jungle of palms into a well-drained little city housed in quonset huts with adequate insulation and ventilation and plywood desks; were fed at a modern mess hall with sanitary and lavatory facilities; were protected by sufficient hospitalization; and had available such entertainment as moving picture theatre, a ball diamond--and this is as I saw it.

"All this was accomplished in spare time because the critical No. 1 job was the unloading and loading of supply ships that serviced our combat forces."

JEEPS THAT JAPS BUILT

The automotive hybrids which scuttle around the 74th Battalion's base may not be unusual in Japan, but they still resemble a bad dream from Detroit. The Jap jeeps

are three wheelers -- a cross between a jeep and a motorcycle. They were picked up and repaired on Betio a year ago and are still giving good service. The front part has a seat and handlebars like an American motorcycle; the rear is a two-wheeled carrier with a seat wide enough for two men. The tires carry a Yokohama marking.

Also in the 74th stable is a battle-scarred Jap tractor with a Kato trade name. Elsewhere in the salvage department is a power saw of Jap Hodegaya manufacture. Originally powered with gas, it was converted to electric power by A. G. McCorkle, MM1c; B. O. Gibson, EM1c; and Denny Kaye, SF1c.

TWILIGHT OF THE SUPERMEN

The Army has announced that a Work Camp for German Prisoners of War has been established at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

The POW's are being quartered in Areas D3 and D4.

REAL HOSPITALITY

"Almost too good to be true" was the consensus of Seabees of the 103rd Battalion as they disembarked at a Pacific "Island X". It seems their predecessors, the 94th Battalion, had anticipated their arrival and had:

Constructed temporary roads into the 103rd's permanent campsite.

Improved roads leading from main island road to temporary roads.

Erected direction signs from dock area to new campsite.

Prepared temporary campsite with water from tank trailers.

Plotted battalion's property allowance.

And designed several excellent camp layout plans for selection by the 103rd.

SESAME DIDN'T OPEN

A Marianas-based battalion had a little difficulty in accounting for its casualties following a flak-filled air-raid session.

Leo Twardoski, SF3c, howled "Open, Sesame!" as he wheeled in the darkness for what he thought was the mouth of a cave. It was not the mouth of a cave--and Twardoski slammed full into the coral cliff.

Louis C. Higdon, CSK, sought refuge under what appeared to be a water truck--which was leaking. He was well soaked when someone from the shelter of another truck shouted: "...and what are you doing under that gasoline truck?" Higdon took off like a P-38. Result: One slight cold and temporary embarrassment.

LAST LAUGH

The mail censors don't always win. When the 107th was at Pearl Harbor, the boys weren't allowed to mention it for a few weeks. One Seabee started a letter with "Dear Pearl" and the censors cut the name out. But when his wife got the letter she knew exactly where he was. Her name was Pearl!

BARGEMEN VINDICATED

They all laughed when three Seabees of the 105th Battalion salvaged a damaged Jap barge and decided to put it into operation.

The battalion, which had landed shortly after D-Day, hadn't been at its new base very long, and there were a number of sunk and damaged Jap craft off shore.

Among them was one barge that caught the fancy of Robert W. Keith, EM2c, James R. Eaton, EM1c, and Philip S. Bennett, CM2c. The barge was pretty much intact, it could still float, but the motor was shot.

They decided to salvage it.

It was an incongruous sight, several days later, to see the barge, its Japanese characters still plainly visible, threading its way comfortably, if not rapidly, through the sleek ships off shore.

Several tense moments occurred when harbor patrol craft, spotting the Japanese lettering on the barge, bore down with guns ominously trained on the Seabees. But a tiny American flag painted on the barge's stern and the Seabees' own explanation were enough to bridge these bad moments.

One afternoon while the barge was making one of its self-appointed runs, with Bennett in charge of the craft and David R. Gurd, F1c, as acting coxswain, it passed a PT boat that appeared to be anchored comfortably some 200 yards off the shore. The skipper of the boat, however, was flailing his arms about and apparently hailing the barge.

Gurd, at Bennett's direction, headed the barge for the PT boat and drew alongside.

The commander of the craft explained the situation: it was necessary that he get his ship on the move and she was stuck fast on a sand bar.

He cast a doubtful look at the disreputable Jap barge. Did they think -- was there any chance -- that he might be towed off the bar?

Bennett and Gurd looked the situation over. Then they threw the PT boat a couple of lines.

The Jap barge tugged and strained, and slowly, unwillingly almost, the stranded craft began to move off the bar.

Finally the PT boat was free and able to navigate under her own power. Lines were cast off and the commander of the freed vessel gave the men his hearty thanks for a job "well done."

Nobody's laughing at the Seabee-salvaged Jap barge any more.

"THE BOOM" BOOMED!

A Seabee battalion newspaper, whose emergency office during air raids is in a specially-built foxhole, calls itself "THE BOOM."

The name, however, refers not to the explosives being dropped on the island by Jap planes but to the cargo-loading booms which symbolize the stevedore work of the 31st Special.

Editor of THE BOOM is Jerry B. Cohen, S1c.

TOKYO BRANCH NEXT

Erich Weber, CCStd, has his third Pacific branch bakery in operation in the Marshalls--painted sign and all. Weber, who has had hot bread ready in 24 hours after three different Pacific landings, operated the original Weber's bakery in Chicago. He set up the first Pacific branch at Eniwetok, the second at Saipan.

RAT STEALS SEABEE'S TEETH

A tropical field rat somewhere in the South Pacific gnawed a hole in a cardboard box and scampered off with a lower set of false teeth belonging to Seabee Shipfitter Franzell H. Boardman of Islesboro, Me., a Marine Corps combat correspondent reports. Evidence indicated that the rat also attempted to steal Boardman's upper plate, but couldn't drag it out of the box. The hole wasn't large enough. Widespread search failed to reveal the missing "lowers."

CASEY JONES IN THE MARIANAS

Mathew L. Piotrowski, CMM, operates the shortest railroad in the business on a Marianas island--not only the shortest, but the cheapest.

Piotrowski and his crew pulled the rails from a Japanese sugar mill railroad, installed them at the battalion filling station to facilitate handling of the 475-pound oil drums.

Before the "railroad," the drums were stacked on top of a slope above the station and when one was needed it was rolled down the hill-- but the situation often got out of hand. Piotrowski set up 75 foot spurs on an even grade, had the drums unloaded directly on them. Now it takes only a one-foot power shove to roll the drums to the platform, where they are pulled upright and the end of a portable rotary gasoline pump inserted.

ON THE AIR

The Camp Parks radio show, already recognized as one of the finest servicemen's programs in the States, will be beamed to all parts of the world beginning 1 February.

The program, transmitted through the facilities of the Armed Forces Radio Service, which requested the show, will be broadcast each Sunday at the following times (all EWT):

0030-0100 via KWID to the Philippines and China, and KNBA, KNBC, and KROJ to the Southwest Pacific;

0430-0500, KROJ and KGEI to the South Pacific and Pacific Ocean Area;

0730-0800, KGEI to the Southwest Pacific and Philippines;

0930-1000, KROJ and KGEI to Alaska, Aleutians and Southwest Pacific;

1230-1300, WLWL-1 and WLWL-2, to the South Atlantic and Africa;

1331-1400, WCBN and WBOS to England, Europe and the Mediterranean;

1415-1445, KWIX, KROJ, and KGEX to Southwest Pacific;

1830-1900, WBOS to Greenland, Iceland, and England.

In addition, records will be sent by air to New Delhi, India, where they will be rebroadcast for the China-Burma-India theater and then forwarded to Persia to be broadcast again. The show also will be broadcast each week to South America over approximately twenty stations.

Because of the many Seabees in the Hawaiian Islands, the AFRS has arranged to broadcast the show on a special point-to-point hookup to Pearl Harbor where it will be rebroadcast at the most convenient time.

The Camp Parks show now is being broadcast by transcription over KSFO, San Francisco.

MERCY WORKERS

The value of work done by the 18th and 121st Battalions was measured in human life when they made emergency repairs to a damaged airfield to allow hospital

evacuation planes to land and carry off wounded Marines.

Landing from LCT's, the two battalions were organized into assault patrols and assigned specific tasks by Capt. Paul J. Halloran, CEC, USN.

Early plans had been to evacuate the wounded by LST's from the beach, but adverse weather conditions and high seas prevented this move.

An aerial inspection by an Army plane brought back information that not even a Piper Cub could land on the bomb-pitted airfield, much less a transport. The order went out for emergency repairs. The Seabees started at 0830 and the first plane landed on the 4,700-foot runway 11 hours and 25 minutes later! In readying the field, the construction men used some of their own equipment, augmented by salvaged and repaired enemy machinery.

PURPLE HEARTS TO 23

Twenty-two enlisted men and one officer of the 121st Battalion have been awarded Purple Hearts for wounds received in action. The awards were presented by Capt. P. J. Halloran, CEC, USN, brigade commander.

All the wounded are now back in full duty status.

NO DEAL

CEM Sam S. Huston has a new respect for the trading ability of New Guinea natives. Unloading mess hall equipment from a cargo ship, a case of dishes and silverware fell overboard.

Natives lingering alongside in their outrigger canoes retrieved the articles. So Seabee Huston decided to use his knowledge of native psychology.

He held up a carbine. "Trade carbine for plates," he said. The native headman eagerly assented, held up a plate and replied, "Okay, one carbine, one plate."

While Huston was still trying to figure out a new approach, the natives, tableware and all, paddled around the cove and out of sight.

ADMIRAL DEWEY IMPRESSED HIM

Douglas S. Buchanan, CBM, heard the story of Manila Bay from Admiral Dewey himself and the Navy made such a lasting impression on him, the 49-year-old Chief is in the Seabees.

Buchanan, now a master-at-arms in the Hawaiian area, was 12 years old when he heard Dewey tell of the Manila Bay battle. He joined the Navy four years later, served one hitch, was out a year and then served throughout World War I. Forty-seven when this war started, he got in again, saw action in the Marshalls before being assigned to the Hawaiian duty.

\$500 SAVING

The money received from someone's \$500 war bond might have been used to purchase a power hack-saw for the 21st Battalion but three machinist's mates made their own saw and diverted the funds to other war uses.

Frank Swoboda, CMM, E. L. Richards, MM1c and E. W. Swanson, MM1c, three Portland, Oregon, men, dug into the junk piles at their base and came up with:

A used auto transmission for the speed controls; a force feed pump for its oiler; a wrecked airplane landing gear for hydraulic lift; odds and ends from an anti-aircraft gun for the frame slide and vise; and an overhauled electric motor.

In spare time they built the saw which, they say, will do anything a commercially-built device will do. They demonstrated by cutting through a 5 1/2-inch steel alloy shaft in 45 minutes.

REVERSED ROLES

Turnabout is not fair play, complain Seabees in the Marianas. It seems that the mates, like all Seabees, inveterate collectors of souvenirs, themselves have been the victims of Japanese trophy hunters. The Japs, holed up in the coral hills on the island, have been sneaking into the Seabees' bivouac and making off with prized possessions.

Complained CCM James R. Caldwell: "I've been hoarding cigars for weeks, and I almost had a full box of 'em; now they're gone, along with my tobacco and pipe, too."

Sighed Arthur R. Broadhust, MM1c: "I had a couple of bottles of saki and a bottle of Jap whiskey; they left the saki, which was sour anyway, but took the whiskey!"

FEAST

A steak dinner for 160 Seabees of the 21st Battalion was an amphibious outfit's way of showing its appreciation of a job the construction men had completed for them.

"After moving from tents into the barracks the Seabees built for us and getting out of the mud and dust for the first time in months," said Warrant Officer Ervin C. Hunt, USN, who heads the commissary department of the amphibious unit, "we felt that

a steak dinner was the least we could do to express our gratitude."

The 1500-man camp was completed in less than three months. It includes seven warehouses, five barracks, roads, a galley, theater, garage, rigging loft, and water, power, and sewer connections.

NEW RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT CATALOG

Designed to provide commanding officers and recreational officers with information on what's available and what's new in Navy recreational equipment, the second edition of the Navy's Sports-Games-Music Catalog soon will be issued to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

The new catalog will contain complete listings of athletic, amusement and entertainment material and features such items as synthetic rubber golf balls, overseas model radios, 18 string and brass musical instruments, tennis rackets strung with nylon and mildew-resistant softballs.

It will also provide information on the disposition of damaged equipment which may now be sent for repair to the Naval Athletic Renovating Depot, Terminal Island, San Pedro, California, or a similar depot at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

ODDS AND ENDS

The Japanese radio, appealing for increased production on the home front, says a new plane in the Philippines lasts only 24 hours. . . .they lost 1,000 of them in December alone and 3,070 in the last four months of '44. . . .the "life expectancy" of a Japanese admiral isn't much better; their 83rd one has just been checked off. . . .

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz has predicted "desperate resistance by the Japanese in coming months to stave off final defeat"; Lieut. Gen. Millard F. Harmon foresees the Japs "on their feet and fighting in 1946" and Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King announced the Navy's intention of pursuing a policy of "intensified offense to the limit of facilities available to us through the coming year"

John T. McCullough, war correspondent of the Philadelphia Inquirer, had high praise for the Seabees, who are doing "almost incredible and unbelievable engineering jobs"

Aussies have relieved American troops behind the Pacific's front line in mopping up by-passed and isolated areas. . . .the hamburger is going to war. . . .canned hamburger, two to a can with salt and pepper added and a charcoal broiled flavor is the newest addition to pre-cooked meals for the armed forces. . . .

American war casualties have reached 686,380 or 2 1/2 times those of World War I. . . .now the Japs have announced a tunnel digging machine to speed bomb-blasted factories underground. . . .

SAMARITANS

A veteran Seabee battalion found time to do a good turn for Filipino inhabitants of its fifth "Island X".

Landing in the Philippines shortly before Christmas, the Navy construction men installed lights and a generator in a local church which had been dark throughout the Japanese occupation. The Japs had plundered all the wiring.

In addition to having the church lighted in time for the holiday celebration, the battalion's O-in-C, Comdr. B. M. Bowker, CEC, USNR reported the men contributed 1016 pesos (about \$508) for repair of the building's roof, badly damaged by a typhoon.

THE MOST IMPROBABLE PLACE

Ken "Calm-and-collected" Grubb can't help it if he has trouble waking up. A recent air raid in the Marianas sent him frantically searching over, under, and around his bunk. "Where's my shoes?" he shouted, "Where's my shoes?"

"On yer feet!" grinned a mate.

CBD 1040 PLAYS SANTA

Detachment 1040 accepted readily when the chaplain asked for 400 toys to distribute among natives near their base at Christmas. The original figure was increased to 3,000 and the Seabees turned them out in their spare time -- yoyos, walking ducks, quoit sets and wooden shoes. There were 1,500 children at the Christmas Day party.

NOT THAT IT MATTERS

Lewis R. Cobb, SK1c, hopes no one will ask him his age. Enroute to the Leyte invasion, Cobb went to bed the night of September 28 anticipating his birthday the next day. But the 29th never came.

During the night the ship crossed the international date line, and the next day was September 30.

"I'm confused," says Cobb. "I don't know whether I'm 34 or still 33!"

LEND-LEASE FRIENDSHIP

The Hawaiian Wongs and the Pennsylvania Tanners are sharing the festive board.

Pfc. Sammy Wong, son of Henry A. Wong, Hawaiian liquor dealer, and recovering from South Pacific wounds in a Butler, Pennsylvania, hospital, became acquainted with Mrs. Edward Tanner, of Butler, whose son, Edward A. Tanner, EM2c, is with the Seabees in Hawaii. Wong wrote his father and brother of the kindness of Mrs. Tanner, and the Wongs looked up Tanner. Now young Wong is enjoying Pennsylvania home cooking at intervals and Tanner feasts at the palatial Wong home in Hawaii -- not only Tanner but a number of Seabee friends, invited by the grateful Wongs.

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

PERSONAL FOUL: New York grand jury investigating basketball gambling situation after five Brooklyn College players confessed to having accepting \$3,000 bribe to throw game against Akron. Disclosure of biggest scandal to hit sporting world since "Black Sox" deal of 1919 World Series stunned fans; may mean end of "professional arena" games. Pressure applied by NCAA may cause most of the larger colleges that used to accept Garden invitations to withdraw from such competition. "Fix" was revealed when detectives, shadowing gambler suspected of operating "Fagan" gang, spotted two of the basketball players and questioned them. No charges were placed against players, who were ejected from team and expelled. School will play out rest of its 1945 schedule with exception of Akron game which was cancelled....

END OF ERA: New York Yankees, baseball's wealthiest and most powerful organization, purchased by syndicate comprised of Col. Larry MacPhail, former president of the Brooklyn Dodgers; Capt. Dan Topping, wealthy owner of Brooklyn Tigers pro football team; and Del E. Webb, millionaire head of oil construction company. Purchase price of estimated \$2,800,000 included all Yankee property holdings as well as major and minor league franchises. Syndicate bought 97 percent of the club's stock from heirs of late Jacob Ruppert and Edward Barrow; remaining 3 percent still held by George Ruppert, brother of former owner. No changes contemplated as yet. Manager Joe McCarthy will remain as boss of club on field and George Weiss, secretary of the club and head of the vast farm system, has contract with three years to run.

CRUSADER: Jim Thorpe, probably the greatest athlete of them all, now 57 but still in robust health, formulating plans for Nation-wide stage tour to campaign against juvenile delinquency and to plug for citizenship for Indians. "Everybody asks me what was my greatest thrill in football," Jim says. "Well, it was while playing with the Carlisle Indians against Army. I ran back an Army kickoff for 105 yards and a touchdown but the play was called back on a penalty. Army kicked off again and this time I ran the ball 100 yards for a touchdown. It was fun for the people in the stands-- but for me it was a lot of work"....

JUST ONE MORE CHANCE: Frank Chance, the "Peerless Leader" of the Chicago Cubs in the 1906-12 era, and end-man of Tinkers to Evers to Chance, missed baseball's Hall of Fame by only seven votes as Baseball Writers Association of America failed to give any candidate the required 75 percent of the ballots cast.

DISA AND DATA: Army's undefeated quintet ran two year streak to 22... Illinois nosed out Iowa to put Big 9 Conference race in four-way tie... Lee Oma, Detroit heavyweight, outpointed Joe Baski for "duration" title... Sammy Byrd won Texas open golf beating Byron Nelson by one stroke... Army track team, intercollegiate indoor champs, won 10 of 13 events in West Point Relays... Alan Ford, Yale's swimming captain, breaking flocks of swimming records... Bulldog Turner, Chicago Bears center, and Eddie Yost, Senators' third baseman, inducted into Army; Danny Litwhiler retained 4-F classification after re-examination... Dodgers signed 16-year-old Los Angeles high school pitcher, Ervin Palica.