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MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR 1248

Lt.(jg) John P. Cowan, ChC, USNR, chaplain of one of the Seabee battalions closest to the front when the Navy construction men first landed in France, accompanied a local clergyman to the latter's old parish. The French curé wanted to see how much damage had been done to his church. It had been directly in the path of the German retreat.

"First," said Lt. Cowan, "we went to a chateau where the curé had stored some church vestments and altar equipment of considerable value. The place had been burned to the ground.

"We went on to the church itself," the Seabee Chaplain continued. "It had been badly damaged by shell fire. In fact, only the belfry was still standing."

The curé was not bitter. Turning to Lt. Cowan with a smile on his careworn face, he said, "See, the bell is still safe." And we have a great deal to be thankful for --- we have life, and we are free."

SEABEES READY PALAU AIRFIELD ¹²⁴⁹

Seabees were at work repairing the captured Japanese airfield on Peleliu Island in the Palau group within five days after the initial landings, according to reports from front line correspondents.

"The fall of Bloody Nose Ridge," said a United Press dispatch, "silenced most of the enemy fire directed against the Peleliu airdrome, now in American hands. Seabees already were at work preparing for the arrival of combat aircraft which will permanently nullify uninvaded islands of the Palau group, where an estimated 30,000 Japanese are immobilized."

Hard-fighting veterans of the First Marine Division captured the ridge after fighting "stiffer than Guadalcanal".

Later reports stated that despite occasional shelling, the Seabees were rapidly reconditioning the captured airdrome and the clearing of war-debris elsewhere was progressing.

Coincidentally with the reports of the capture of Bloody Nose Ridge came word that small American planes already were operating from Peleliu Field. These were midget Piper Cubs, flying on military observation and artillery-spotting assignments.

The first American plane on the airstrip, described as the finest in the mandated island, was a carrier plane which made an emergency landing.

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WELCOME

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"Glad to see you--again," said Chiefs Ray Amick and James Skaggs to WO H.J. Dickens, CEC, USNR, newly-arrived at the 94th Battalion's "Island X" -- and they weren't kidding.

Mr. Dickens was a recruiting officer at Denver, Colorado, the Chiefs' home town!

SEABEES REBUILDING "FUTURIST HELL"

The shambles of the French port of Brest, which the Seabees are now helping to rebuild after its major installations were practically demolished by Allied bombardment and German sabotage, has been described by War Correspondent Lewis Gannett as resembling a "futurist Hell".

"The heart of Brest looks like a lunar landscape," wrote Gannett, "a pitted desert of shell holes and ragged walls that once were buildings. Jeeps driving into the city along a path cleared by engineers ride over rubble so deep that sometimes they look down on bits of flooring that once were a full story above the pavement. The great docks are valleys of crumbled masonry, sometimes covering whole ships, whose smoke stacks protrude in crazy patterns. The swing bridge stands on its head in the river.

"The fifteen great submarine pens, with twenty-foot-thick roofs and walls of solid concrete, still stand, almost intact. Only one had its roof punctured. But they stand amid a scrambled mass of wreckage that looks like a futurist painting of a concrete hell."

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SAYS JAPS WILL GET TOUGHER ¹²⁵⁷

Under-Secretary of Navy Ralph A. Bard has cautioned against underestimation of the strength of the Japanese and predicted that the task of defeating them would become increasingly difficult as fighting got nearer to their home base.

The enemy's position is not nearly as bad as we would like to believe, the Under-Secretary said. In their inner citadel the Japanese still retain great concentrated strength and determination.

Mr. Bard observed that while the enemy's shipping losses have been severe, they may not necessarily be considered fatal, since as the Japanese withdraw farther into their home area their lines of communication will be greatly shortened and their present shipping deficit may actually be turned into a transportation surplus.

He expressed the opinion that the Japanese were playing for time, hoping to emerge from the war with a compromise peace which, from their point of view, would be tantamount to victory.

BULLDOZERS CRACK SIEGFRIED LINE ¹²⁵³

Seabee Aurelio Tassone really started something when he crushed a Jap pillbox with his bulldozer during the invasion of the Treasury Islands. In the battle for Germany, the 'dozers now are as much a combat weapon as tanks. Army engineers are neutralizing particularly stubborn enemy defense positions in the Siegfried Line, according to press association reports, by grinding their machines right up in front of the pillboxes and shoving smothering mounds of earth against the doors.

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BARGAIN

M. A. Goldberg of Lee-Stephenson's Station Force got himself a real buy -- a 1933 Ford for just one buck.

"Then," said Goldberg, "came the deluge."

First someone relieved him of three tires. Next, all his mates piled into the buggy and the tired jalopy promptly broke a spring. A Seabee antique collector took the radiator cap as a souvenir. Finally, another of Goldberg's good friends took three of the car's windows out to put in his homemade picture frames.

"The Ford," Goldberg announces, "is definitely again on the market." His rumored asking price -- one buck -- with a couple of gasoline ration coupons thrown in.

SUPPLY MIRACLE MAKING APPROACHING EUROPEAN VICTORY POSSIBLE

A quick victory in Europe will be due largely to "the miracle of supply," says a late issue of "Time", explaining how the Seabees and British and American Army Engineers made it possible for General Eisenhower to land well over 1,000,000 men on the continent although he still had only one good usable port -- some 500 miles behind his front -- through which to supply his armies.

The miracle, according to "Time", could be stated in simple arithmetical terms: in the first 100 days after D-day, over 1,000,000 long tons of supplies (700,000 items) and 100,000 vehicles poured into France.

"It was a joint miracle, wrought by many hands," states "Time". The magazine credits the Seabees for "building up Cherbourg's shattered port to a capacity far greater than in peacetime."

BATTALION COMMENDED FOR GUAM ROLE

A Seabee battalion led by Cmdr. E. M. Denbro, CEC, USNR, has been commended by the Commanding General of the Marine Brigade with which it served for its part in the recapture of Guam.

The Seabees, the citation stated, "immediately began construction of a road net without which transportation to assault troops would have been most difficult.

"The prompt and efficient manner in which the officers and men of the -- Naval Construction Battalion performed their duties," the citation continued, "aided materially in the success of this phase of the operation and is in keeping with the fine record established by Naval Construction Troops in the South Pacific."

The Seabees made their initial landing on Guam under what was described officially as "shelling, mortar fire, machine gun fire, and rifle fire."

October 13th will be the first anniversary of Italy's declaration of war on Germany.

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TRAVEL NOTE

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The Seabees are seeing France. Units are now at work in Cherbourg, Brest, Granville, Roscoff, St. Malo, and Cancale, and reconnaissance parties are operating in the region of Nantes, St. Nazaire, and Lorient.

THEY NEVER WILL BE MISSED 1259

The three high Japanese military figures most closely associated with the attack on Pearl Harbor have fared as could be expected.

Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, who led the Japanese attack, shot himself on Saipan this summer while the island was being overrun by Marines. Nagumo gathered his staff in a hut and they all committed suicide.

The Japanese chief of combined fleets, Isoroku Yamamoto, is dead. He was shot down in an airplane over the South Pacific a year ago last spring.

General Hideki Tojo, who started it all, is no longer premier of Japan, but, according to the Tokyo radio, is "grappling for the successful conclusion of the war" by working in his victory vegetable garden.

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REPAIR VITAL WATER WORKS

Four days after they took over the project from native laborers, a fast-working Seabee detail had completed repairs and filled Agana's (Guam) 700,000-gallon reservoir, according to a Marine Corps combat correspondent.

The reservoir, one of the main sources of water on the island, was severely damaged by American bombing and shelling during the battle for the strategic island.

Seabees also reestablished a pumping station, purification unit, and several miles of bomb-blasted pipeline.

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AVERTS FUEL FIRE

A lone Seabee who groped his way through dense clouds of smoke to remove and extinguish a German smoke bomb has been credited with averting a dangerous fire in a Refueling Depot at Cherbourg.

Seeing a column of smoke rising from the top of three high-octane pipelines, within a hundred yards of two large high-octane storage tanks, the Seabee, Irving Kosowitz, Mlc, braved the threat of explosion to smother the incendiary.

PROGRESS

This week's puzzler is a thought-provoking item copied intact from the 146th's "Invader":

"Phyllis Clever made a presentation of 'medals of honor' to Chief Hood and Chief Patrick -- to Patrick for an excellent bit of work on one of the battalion's installations... to Hood, for ripping out the work done by Patrick."

AID APPRECIATED

Further evidence of the close relationship between Seabees and the men of other branches of the armed forces is a "special" commendation from Major General H. T. Burgin, U. S. Army, Commanding General of a Pacific Base, to Lt. Cmdr. A. C. Van Schaick, CEC, USNR, OinC of the 20th Seabee Regiment.

"It is requested," the commendation read, "that special commendation be extended to Commander A. G. Van Schaick...and the officers and men .. who recently so ably assisted the Signal Corps in stowing undersea telegraph cable on the Cable-ship 'X'.

"An informal request was made..at a time when it was impossible to procure soldier personnel for the job. Immediate aid was given by furnishing two eight-hour shifts of 16 men each...

"The Cable Engineer in charge of the loading reported their work to be superior, which resulted in the completion of the loading schedule sooner than anticipated," General Burgin's commendation concluded.

Placing "credit where credit is due", Lt. Cmdr. Van Schaick forwarded the commendation to the 18th Special and Lt. H. J. Carpenter, CEC, USNR, battalion OinC.

WITH SOUND EFFECTS

As Seabees worked on Guam's newly conquered airfield, and Jap troops made futile suicidal counterattacks on advancing Marines, the Leathernecks (according to "Yank") took time out to print and distribute the following handbills:

Thrills Tonight
 BANZAI CHARGE
Chills Suspense

See Sake-Crazed
Japs Charge at High Port

See Everybody Shoot Everybody

See the Cream of the Marine Corps
Play with Live Ammo

Sponsored by
The Athletic and Morale Office

Come Along and Bring a Friend

Don't Miss the Thrilling Spectacle
of the Banzai Charge, Starting at
10 P.M. and Lasting All Night

ADMISSION FREE

THREE SEABEES COMMENDED BY ADMIRAL KING ¹²⁶⁴

Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet, has commended three Seabees of the 46th Battalion who, "by a magnificent display of seamanship and sheer determination", succeeded in the recovery of four barges which had broken loose from a tow in heavy seas off a South Pacific island.

In identical citations to CBM Nelson L. Jernigan, John P. Muzar, BM1c, and Willie F. Duke, CM2c, Admiral King praised the Seabees for their "steadfast devotion to duty" and "splendid achievement in the accomplishment of this difficult and dangerous mission".

Ordered to return to the starting point when the cables parted, the Seabees overcame "discouraging" conditions of heavy seas and repeated snapping of tow lines to eventually bring the unmanageable craft to safe anchorage, "thereby saving their vitally needed cargo of critical materials," the citations said.

By virtue of the commendations from Admiral King, the Seabees are authorized to wear the Commendation Ribbon.

JAP NAVY FACES OVERWHELMING ODDS ¹²⁶⁵

A hint of the overwhelming sea power the United States and Britain are massing for use against Japan is contained in the new edition of "Jane's Fighting Ships".

This authoritative naval publication points out that while the Allied navies are still growing, the German and Japanese fleets are showing signs of the steady process of attrition to which they have been subjected.

The Nazis, according to "Jane's", have given up any pretense of trying to replace their losses. Japan's plight is scarcely better. The latter's shipbuilding facilities, the new volume said, were "manifestly unequal" to any such task.

The most interesting thing to record about the Japanese fleet, according to "Jane's", was that two 45,000-ton battleships had been completed recently.

"There is little else of note to record about the Japanese Navy," "Jane's" continues, "except that the list of its losses is lengthening."

United States expansion, the new edition notes, "continues at a tremendous pace". More than 24 battleships and a hundred aircraft carriers are in service with the American Navy with "many more" in various stages of construction, "a fact of ill omen to Japan."

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THREAT

Somebody jokingly spread a story that Seabees in Italy intended to rebuild Pisa's famous Leaning Tower with "even more lean."

When Army engineers entered the city, they found the populace very much worried about the tower -- but for an entirely different reason.

The Italians were bemoaning the imminent destruction of whatever attraction Pisa might have as a postwar tourist mecca. The Germans had circulated rumors that the Yanks intended to straighten the lean!

AIN T IT THE TRUTH

As partial payment for being thousands of miles from home, the Navy fixed up a special year-round swimming beach at Bizerte just for bluejackets. Burly SPs keep the ever-present Arabs at a safe distance while sailors relax on the sands or swim in the Mediterranean.

With the African hills as a background, the wide, clean beach resembles a Hollywoodian creation, but the gobs still have two complaints:

No hot dog stands within 6,000 miles; and --- the 6,000 miles.

SET UP FISHING CAMP ¹²⁶⁹

Our candidates for Seabees with the best duty of the month are the men in CBMUs 536 and 537. One-half mile from their permanent camp base the gentlemen have established a joint "fishing camp" which they say not only will provide recreational facilities but (hopefully) a source of fresh fish to supplement the camp mess rations. Boats, purchased with the units' welfare funds, have been secured from the base, and complete fishing equipment, including nets, is rapidly being assembled.

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UNDER PRESSURE

The 94th Battalion had a problem.

Assigned the task of reassembling two 150,000-barrel steel tanks, the Seabees found that plates and structural steel (about 100,000 square feet of surface area) had accumulated a heavy coating of rust and scale.

Obviously, since the tanks were to be used for water storage, it would be necessary to sand-blast all the exposed surfaces.

Besides the lack of proper sand blasting equipment, the available coral sand supply was found to be too large and soft for ideal sand-blasting operations. In addition, tests proved the coral to be unusually damp, thereby necessitating a drying process before using.

This was a case for Seabee improvisation. Aided by the suggestions of men of the 62nd Battalion, the 94th set up a plant whereby raw sand was delivered from an overhead hopper into a concrete mixer, the drum of which was kept heated by the blast from a large oil burning blow torch. The dried sand was then dumped through screeners into sand-blast tanks. During early operation the heat of the blow torch melted some of the cores of the mixer's radiator. This was corrected by installing a shield between the heat source and the engine.

Compressed air in sufficient volume and pressure to maintain four one-half inch sand-blast nozzles in almost continuous operation presented another problem. This was overcome by setting up two air receiving tanks as a reservoir, fed by six diesel-powered compressors hooked up to a common three-inch manifold. After the compressors had been synchronized -- adjusted so that as one began to idle another took up the load -- no trouble was encountered either with the amount of air at the requisite pressure or the mechanical functioning of the compressors themselves.

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PLENTY OF DOUGH

The 125th Battalion's bakers proved their construction ability by producing a 350-pound birthday cake in commemoration of the battalion's first anniversary.

The battalion's emblem was reproduced in full color on the seven by seven-foot delicacy.

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MIRAGE IN REVERSE

Seabees attending a Munda open-air theater sat through the "grand-daddy" of all rainstorms to see the motion picture "Sahara."

Biggest scene in the film showed the hero dying of thirst in the desert.

BROKEN CHAIN

"You gotta find my wife's letter No. 37," said a worried-looking Seabee to the chief mail specialist of the 118th Battalion.

"What do I know about your wife's letter No. 37?" the mailman replied.

"Well," the Seabee answered, "I just got her letter No. 38 and she says she just brought the crutch and X-Ray back to the hospital. I wanna know: What crutch? What X-ray?"

129th COMMENDED

The 129th Battalion and its OinC, Lt. Cmdr. R. P. Redman, CEC, USNR, have been commended for "splendid cooperation, efficient organization and accomplishment of construction" by Captain D.S. Ingalls, USNR, Commanding Officer at a U. S. Naval Air Station.

In his citation, Captain Ingalls said he "has had a continuous association with Construction Battalions for well over a year, both in this area and the Solomons, which has been gratifying throughout."

STEP BY STEP

Urging German civilians to revolt, the Russians are broadcasting easy lessons in disarming Nazi police patrols. Says Moscow: "A hefty stick will get you a revolver; to get a rifle and a few grenades with the help of a pistol is no work of art."

TABLE SALT NEW ROAD AND AIRFIELD INGREDIENT

If salt cellars begin to disappear from Seabee mess tables under mysterious circumstances, it may be that the mates have decided to do some experimenting. Reports from Canada claim that common salt now is being used extensively in the development of soil-stabilized bases for runways at Canadian airfields. It is also being used in soil stabilization for the foundations of highways and for a surface veneer for gravel roads. The Canadians also report that sand piled each fall at regular intervals along main highways remains loose and free flowing even in the coldest weather when mixed with salt, thus allowing easy distribution on the icy roadways.

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MILLION AND A HALF NAVY MEN OVERSEAS

James V. Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, said at a recent press conference in Washington that the United States Navy had grown to "world-circling dimensions" and has more than 1,500,000 men serving overseas.

THIS IS THE END

"When it comes to hand tools," says the 118th Battalion's 'Pillar News', "Jim Dippell, CM2c, is one of the handiest men we know.

"But his troubles began with a little nook he built, where a foot-locker, a chest of drawers, a couple of small tables, a stool, an easy-chair, a bench, etc., all fold up or fit under each other in a space no more than 3' by 6'.

"Now this cozy nook is the most convenient writing-and-reading place in the barracks," continues 'Pillar News', "as proved by the fact that all the neighbors use it, and Jim generally had to oust a couple of trespassers to get to his bunk.

"Finally he had to put up a sign: 'Writing Room hours 1600-2200 except on Wednesdays, when this room is closed all day.

"Alas for Jim," laments 'Pillar News', "the sign has only made matters worse. Some mates are insisting that he lay in a stock of books, magazines and writing paper .. others are threatening to put him on report for entering into competition with the Library."

But, concludes 'Pillar News', "the crowning blow came when Jim was severely upbraided by a mate, who pointed at the sign and said: 'Can't you read? This room is not opened until 1600. Kindly vacate the premises!'"

TWIN BILL

An apt explanation of why, despite current military successes in Europe, we can't afford to relax our efforts comes from Major Bruno C. Anderson of the Army.

"The second game in our double-header is just as vital," he reminds his men. "It still remains to be played after we have licked Germany."

NEW MOSQUITO GLOVE

Seabees and other fighting men in the malarial regions of the Pacific will soon be furnished with a new-type "mosquito glove" recently developed by the Navy.

Early in the war, medical men discovered that heads and hands were the most vulnerable spots for the malaria-bearing mosquito. Heavy netting was designed to protect the head but, until the new glove was developed, only ordinary gloves were available to protect the hands. Besides being awkward when firearms were handled, the gloves caused excessive sweating and many men discarded them.

The new "mosquito glove" has been designed to provide protection and ventilation and does not impede the handling of guns. Fingers and thumbs of the glove are cut off at the first knuckle; a small hole about the size of a silver dollar is left in the palm; and small vents are provided between the fingers. A four-inch elastic wristlet gives complete protection to the wrist.

The glove, made of khaki colored canton flannel, will be furnished in only one size.

CONFUSING

"Carl John Holmberg, SF1c, meet Carl John Holmberg, SF1c."

No, that's not double talk but an actual incident on the 112th Battalion's "Island X".

Both Holmbergs hail from Iowa, worked at the same trade in civilian life, and answer "Here" to "Carl John Holmberg, SF1c" when the 112th's muster rolls are checked.

UNDERSTANDABLE

The word "catastrophe" has been banned from official German news because it gives a bad impression in psychological and political respects, according to a broadcast recently recorded in the United States.

FAST MAIL

At a recent Camp Lee-Stephenson mail call, Raymond L. Dodd, CM3c, was handed a package which had followed him around the world since it was mailed in August, 1943.

At that time, said the Lee-Stephenson "Village Beacon", Dodd was attached to the 10th Battalion. Cancellations showed the package had been all over the South Pacific and to many stations within the States. When it finally arrived, the "Beacon" observed, the package's contents "smelled to high heaven."

NEW TREATMENT FOR FOOT DISEASE

Copper plating has become a unique treatment for athlete's foot among servicemen at a South Pacific base.

The method, devised by Navy doctors, requires that the patient place his feet in a copper sulphate solution containing an ordinary copper plate. Copper bands, soaked in salt water for good contact, are fastened around the ankles and connected to six-volt storage batteries. The procedure takes about six minutes and is repeated for several days. There is no discoloration or discomfort from the copper particles which adhere to the patient's feet.

SOUR GRAPES DEPARTMENT

Jap propagandists are claiming that the imminent American invasion of the Philippines would be to their liking because "it is truly the one chance in a thousand years when we could, with one strategic blow, bring complete destruction to the enemy."

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

BASEBALL: Cardinals clinched their eighth National League pennant and their third in a row with double win over Braves September 21. Armed Forces Radio Service will use six transmitters this year to shortwave World Series to GIs. Five troupes of major league baseball stars will head overseas shortly after World Series to entertain front line troops. eleven active players, six managers, four former players, two umpires and five baseball writers have volunteered to make the trip. Freddie Fitzsimmons signed to manage Phils in '45. Los Angeles won their second straight Pacific Coast pennant. Nashville captured '44 Southern Association title by whipping Memphis.

FOOTBALL: Football began to edge into sport spotlight. Michigan upset Iowa Pre-Flight, 12-7; Great Lakes swamped Ft. Sheridan, 62-0; Indiana overwhelmed Ft. Knox, 72-0. National Pro league season opened with Green Bay Packers scoring 14-7 victory over Brooklyn Tigers. Tigers drew 21 penalties for 165 yards to set new league record. Don Hutson's touchdown gave Packers victory and was 36th consecutive league game in which he scored. Hutson will make new records every time he catches pass or kicks point. Third new pro football league for post-war operation, known as Trans-American FB League will be headed by Chick Meehan. Franchises granted to New York, Baltimore, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston and Miami. With so recently announced United States FB League, this makes 37 franchises now outstanding. Ensign Sid Luckman, USMS, has been granted permission by commanding officer to play with Bears until called for sea duty. Draft board notified Slingin Sammy Baugh he would be drafted unless he returned to ranch. as rancher Baugh is 2-C, as footballer, 1-A. Baugh implied he'd remain on ranch. Francis A. Schmidt, former head football coach at U of Idaho and famous for his Ohio State U and southwestern grid teams, died.

BOXING: Cpl. Fritzie Zivic, ex-world welter champ kayoed Felix Oreles. Manuel Ortiz, world bantam champ, in 11th title defense kayoed Louis Castillo. Feather-weight champ Willie Pep stopped Charley Lewis. Tami Mauriello kayoed Lee Oma. Jackie Wilson scored unpopular victory over Cleo Shans. Ike Williams ended Freddy Dawson's winning streak at 27 by kayo. In wild battle that saw spectators storm ring Coley Welch retained New England middleweight title when Ralph Zanelli was disqualified for unnecessary roughness. Jock McAvoy, British middleweight champ for past 11 years, retired.

SERVICEMEN'S SPORTS: Virgil Trucks, former Detroit pitching star, hurled Navy All-Stars to 5-0 victory over Army's All-Flyers in first game of Army-Navy "world series" at Honolulu. Lt. Cmdr. Mickey Cochrane, transferred from Great Lakes to Southwest Pacific. Under Cochrane's direction, Great Lakes nine won 166, lost 26 and tied 1 in three years. Col. Jock Whitney, captured by Germans in Southern France, reported escaped. Lt. (jg) Norman Call, Tom Harmon's teammate at U of Michigan, reported lost at sea. Lt. Cmdr. Benny Leonard appointed recreation and morale officer at Maritime Service Training Center at New York. Lt. William Omanski, former Holy Cross and Chicago Bears fullback, to coach Camp Lejeune Marine football team. 125th Batt's 'Rebels' won basketball championship in All-Seabee Central Pacific League.