

# 14<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

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*Historical  
Information*



*“Construimus, Batuimus”  
“We Build, We Fight”*



14th C.B.

NOTG - Norfolk  
ABD - Davisville - 8 Aug'42  
Ready Date - 19 Aug'42  
Left ABD -  
Destination - Acorn #1

End Embarkation  
ABD - Parks  
Ready Date - 1 Sep'44  
Left ABD - 21 Oct'44  
Location - Pearl Harbor Saipan  
Okinawa

LOG

- 6-29-42 - Designated for Argentina; maintenance and ~~operation~~ construction.
- 8-20-42 - To be ordered to West Coast.
- 1-20-43 - Acorn 1 at Cactus doing Koli Point Airfield Construction, housing and repair facil.
- 5-11-43 - 14th CB is at Guadalcanal (Acorn 1). (ComNavBases SoPac area to ComSoPac Sec. ltr dtd 5-11-43)
- 7- 3-43 - 1 May'44 report of 14th CB - operating at Koli Point, Guadalcanal.
- 7-12-43 - 14th CB detached from Acorn 1 and reports to ComNavBasesSols. (ComNavBasesSols ltr EF13-15 A3, Ser 412 of 13 May'43)
- 12-18-43 - 14th CB arrived in U.S. for rehabilitation about 11 Dec'43. (WRK)

- 10-18-44 - The 14th CB scheduled to depart for overseas 21 Oct'44. (Com 12 Sec. disp. 072354 NCR 8144 to CNO dtd 8 Oct'44).
- 10-28-44 - 14th CB with 33 off. and 1073 men departed Parks for overseas 21 Oct'44. (Parks conf. disp. to Bupers conf. 221832 NCR 1123 dtd 22 Oct'44).
- 11-15-44 - The 14th CB assigned to the 35th Reg. under HANCB (Comservforpacflt Sec. ltr 55-CKW/ ask over Ser. 001008 to CNO dtd 4 Nov'44).

14th CB

- 11-16-44 - The 14th CB is located at Pearl Hbr. (Com 14 Sec. disp. to CNO 062243 NCR 15886 dtd 11 Nov'44).
- 12-7-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of ~~xxxxxxx~~ 35th Reg. - 14th CB arrived aboard on 30 Oct'44.
- 1-17-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 14th CB - Location not stated. Report endorsed by the 35th Regiment, 8th Brigade, and H.A.B.
- 1-26-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 35th Reg. - The 14th CB, consisting of 33 off. and 1071 men departed U.S. on 25 Oct'44, arriving P.H. on 29 Oct'44 where the batt debarked and was temporarily quartered at Iroquois Point until 2 Nov'44. On that date 21 off. and 669 men were moved to the quarters formerly occupied by the 130th CB at the MCAS Ewa, and 12 off. and 402 men were quartered in the 116th CB area at the NAS Barbers Pt. Has assumed portions of work at Ewa MCAS and Barbers Pt. NAS. Batt has completed the Haleiwa Air Field.
- 1-29-45 -- The 14th CB which is located at Pearl H. is to leave for Saipan. (Comservpac Sec. disp. to CNO 212311 dtd 22 Jan'45).
- 2- 6-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 14th CB - no info on location. Report endorsed by the 35th Regiment.
- 2-17-45 -- The 14th CB is located at Pearl Hbr. (Com 14 Sec. disp. to CNO 081016 Feb'45).
- 3-10-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 14th CB - location not given. Report endorsed by the 35th Regiment.
- 4- 9-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 8th Brg. - the 14th CB was secured from const work 27 Jan.
- 4-24-45 - The 14th CB is staging at Saipan. (1 Apr'45 report of the 35th Reg.)
- 5-1-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 14th CB - During Feb'45 Detach. "A" of the 14th CB consisting of 2 officers & 9 men & Det. "B" consisting of 6 officers & 77 men departed for Saipan. Report end. by 35th Reg.

Location - Saipan Okinawa 14th C.B.

- 5-8-45 - The 14th CB is located at Saipan staging for Okinawa. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec. Rep of 15 Apr'45)
- 5-14-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 35th Reg. - The adv echelon of the Reg. arrived at Saipan on 17 Mar'45. The 7th, 14th, and 21st CBs arrived at the staging point shortly thereafter. The adv echelon of the Reg. and the batts are moving forward to target in echelons.
- 5-17-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of 35th Reg - 24 officers & 1028 men of the 14th CB along with 35th Reg. & 7th & 21st CBs embarked during Feb'45 for staging at a forward area.
- 5-13-45 - Dirpacdocks SF sec report of 15 May shows the 14th CB at Okinawa.
- 7-11-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 14th CB - located at Okinawa & Saipan. On 19 Apr'45 the 1st Echelon of the 14th CB consisting of 21 officers and 719 men including 4 men from the 35th Reg on TD with this Batt departed Staging Area, Saipan and arrived at Okinawa on 29 Apr'45. 8 officers and 289 men remained at Saipan supervising loading of cargo for delivery at Okinawa. Report routed via 35th Reg & 8th Brig.
- 7-12-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 14th CB - 14th CB, 2nd echelon (8 off. and 301 men) broke temp camp at Saipan on 9 May'45, boarding ship. Subsequently on 23 May, 4 off. and 105 men disembarked from ship at Saipan for the purpose of remaining with the bal of cargo. The remaining personnel of the original group aboard ship, consisting of 4 off. and 196 men stayed aboard ship and departed Saipan on 23 May, arriving at Okinawa on 27 May'45. Personnel remaining at Saipan subsequently boarded ship on 28 May'45 for transp to Okinawa. Report via 35th Reg and 8th Brig.
- 7-25-45 - The 14th CB is assigned to the 10th Brg and 44th Reg effective 10 July. (CCT APO 331 sec report on assignment of CB units ser 897 dtd 10 July)

Location - Okinawa

14th CB

- 9-25-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 14th CB. Located at Okinawa. Report via 44th Reg & 10th Brig.
- 10-17-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 44th Reg. & 10th Brig.
- 12-6-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 44th Reg. & 10th Brig. 367 men transferred to U.S. for discharge.
- 1-28-46 - 1 Dec'45 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. 209 men transferred to U.S. for discharge. 601 men rec'd during Nov. These men came from the 71st & 130th CBs.
- 1-28-46 - 1 Jan'46 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Reg. ~~Report via 48th Reg.~~
- 2-18-46 - 1 Feb 46 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Reg.
- 3-14-46 - 1 Mar 46 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Reg.
- 4-19-46 - 1 Apr 46 report of 14th CB - located at Okinawa. Report via 48th Regiment. Battalion is in process of inactivation. No further reports to be submitted.
- 4-23-46 - Roster of officers submitted by 14th CB dtd 12 April 1946 states that unit is inactivated. No officers on board.
- 4-14-46 - 14th CB inactivated on 12 April 1946. (Comdt. NOB Okin spdltr ser 1651-46 to Comservpad dtd 4 May 1946).

INACTIVATED

DATE	OFFICERS	MEM	AUTHORITY
1 Aug'44	32	1072	R & BNP625
1 Sep'44	32	1063	R & BNP625
1 Oct'44		1077	BNP625
1 Dec'44	31	1068	BNP625 & MoR
1 Jan'45	31	1066	MoR
1 Feb'45	30	1042	MoR
1 Mar'45	29	1024	MoR
1 Apr'45		1021	BNP625
1 May'45		1009	BNP625
1 Jun'45		1003	BNP625
1 Jul'45	29	1024	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45		996	BNP625
1 Sept'45		964	BNP625
1 Oct'45	22		R
1 Nov'45	19	444	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'45	17	806	BNP625 & R
1 Jan'46	24	990	BNP625 & R
1 Feb 46	23	756	BNP 625 & R
1 Mar 46	25	604	BNP 625 & R
1 Apr 46	20	572	BNP 625 & R

14th Construction Battalion (Waterfront) (INACTIVATED)

DECLASSIFIED

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
5/30/44		(Camp Banks)		
7/1/44		13 43		
7/2		(Hawaiian Area)	CNO Conf disp. 031525 aug.	Ready Camp Banks 1 sept. asid for waterfront construction.
7/18		2nd MC Brigade	CNO Conf disp. 081705 aug.	report 2nd MC Brigade.
10/11		(Camp Banks)	Rec Probs memo 4 sept + 12 sept	Ready camp Banks 1 sept - asid P.H (waterfront).
9/23		Beard	Com 12 sec act disp 073854 oct	Scheduled depart 25 for May 21 oct
11/13		FRAY	Banks Conf disp. 221832 oct.	departed 21 oct for overseas.
3/1/42			Com 14 sec act disp. 062243 nov.	8th Brig.
3/1/42			Com 14 sec act disp. 040153 mar.	delete added Saipan

3/1/42 419 Saipan rec. 030318 April.

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Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
8/14	- Bureau	report Aug. show	Dine.	

COMPLIMENT of  
SEABEE VETERANS of AMERICA INC.

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Island #-1  
Dallas, Texas

Frank E. Ware - Vice President At-Large

We wish to express our everlasting thanks to R. N. Weldy, our Seabee Buddy for this History of the 14th Battalion, and his generosity in letting us use this fine account, to help further the efforts of the Seabee Battalion Association.

HISTORICAL DATA - 14th CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

The Fourteenth United States Naval Construction Battalion was commissioned 14th July, 1942, in ceremonies conducted on the green clad field of Camp Allen, near Norfolk, Virginia. The commissioning representative of the United States Navy was Captain J. G. Ware, Command-Officer of Naval Training Center, Camp Allen.

A Battalion of Seabees was then composed of five companies called Headquarters Company, and A, B, C, and D Companies. The first mentioned was also subdivided into A and B and C and D Headquarters Companies. These men were cooks, storekeepers, mailmen, corpsmen and clerical workers. Design Engineers and survey, necessary to operate a Battalion. The other companies each composed of six platoons were organized into certain skills, such as Platoon 1, Equipment, Utility Operator, Maintenance; Platoon 2 & 3, Carpentry and Building, Platoon 4, Earthmoving and Road construction; Platoon 5, as Dock Builder and Waterfront Installation; and Platoon 6, Steel Work and Tank Erection. The Complement of the construction companies was 224 enlisted men, 4 Officers of Headquarters Company, 170 men and 10 Officers including Staff Officers.

On July 15th, the first move of the Battalion towards its part in the six month old war began. Trucks and busses loaded with 14th personnel and their gear were transported to the Advanced Base Training Center, called Camp Bradford, approximately sixteen miles from Camp Allen. This camp, in a heavily wooded sector, was then under construction and had as its offering to the Battalion a partially completed area for its use, while there. This area was occupied and improved during our short stay.

The technical schools concerned with the problems of water distillation, hut erection, power, jungle living, and other needed orientation in special skills were the main activities of the Battalion personnel. However some construction work, such as the Tent City Project, and the Board Walk detail will linger in the memory of those who were there. The Tent City project was accomplished

Over night and provided living quarters and facilities for 1200 men.

During the period of training at this base, the enlisted personnel were interviewed and classified as to the occupation best suited to their abilities and the first semblance of organization began. It was here that we first enjoyed liberty too, freedom from rule and regulation in Norfolk, then a densely crowded Navy city. In addition to these activities, additional inoculations were in order and then came the first leave. Five wonderful days of freedom to show the folks back home how you looked in your G.I. garb, for those of us who were fortunate enough to be able to make the journey home and return in that length of time. During this leave period, approximately two hundred men remained at Camp Bradford. In the absence of the Officer in Charge, Lt. Comdr. Thomas F. Reilly, Jr., Lt. Clyde V. Bryans was placed in charge of the Battalion. The personnel of this unit were gathered together mainly from the Southern States of Oklahoma, Texas, Alabama, Arkansas and mixed with them were small delegations from New York to California. The total complement at the expiration of the leave was 1040 Enlisted Personnel and 25 Officers.

August 6, 1942, the first inkling of things to come were given to the men by their company Officers. We were to depart for the Advanced Base Depot, Davisville, Rhode Island in the next forty-eight hours. Our Quarters at that point would be quonset huts, issues of Army Field gear, including arms, would be made at that base. The weather limited the activities considerably during this period of preparing to move, but on the late afternoon of Saturday 8th, August, 1942, busses, open trucks and cars transported us in a drizzling rain to the dock at Little Creek, Virginia, where we boarded the modern Ferry, Princess Ann, and began our first bit of sea duty, Captain Ware was on hand to, with a send-off greeting, and the air was filled with quiet and stillness as Chaplain McCann bestowed his blessings on us. The voyage to Cape Charles, Maryland was a rough one and many of us experienced some difficulty. The ship was quite large and was subjected to an abnormal amount

of investigation by those of us who were just beginning to realize we'd be seeing more of this kind of a home soon. There was some singing in the lounge during the crossing, and in general the morale was excellent. The journey required two hours, and we docked at the Railway Station Pier in darkness. Awaiting our arrival were three special Pullman trains, which after we boarded into the black night, to our unknown future.

The trip northward was a fast one. Shortly after breakfast in the dining car, we arrived in New Haven, Connecticut. Then on to Davisville siding. We entered the Quonset Point Naval Station Yards around noon. We were met by open trucks and transported to a heavily wooded, partially developed area, containing quonset huts. The huts provided a haven for our gear from the drizzling rain, which had followed us from Virginia. Chow, good chow, of chicken, ice cream and trimmings awaited us at the Station Force Galley, a former barn which had been converted into a galley. Then back to our area and some acclimation and renovation for the night. For the first several days it was necessary to be transported to the Station Force Galley for our meals. During this time we had taken hold of this living area and began completing its development. Stone bordered walks, transplanted shrubbery and thin timber rails around different huts appeared as if by magic. Classical names such as Bell Aires appeared in small white rock on the front yards, and spirit of "Can Do" was not lacking. The galley was open for business on Tuesday August 11th. Additional crews were occupied clearing debris, widening roads, constructing more huts in general, getting down to business. One compensation for the work being done was the liberty in the nearby capital, Providence. The New England people were most cordial, gracious and friendly to this newest branch of the Navy. Several technical skills, such as diving, pontoon assembly and rigging were given further instruction by men at the base. The infantry gear, including 1903 Springfield rifles were distributed and the construction work was progressing most satisfactory, until 1400 of 20th of August, when liberty for that evening was abruptly cancelled.

The daily newspaper, which we had been paying moderate attention to, were filled with the news about the landing of our Marines on a distant Pacific Isle in the Solomons, known as Guadalcanal. The next two days were spent in preparing packs, packing newly acquired gear and records for the next jump toward we knew not where. At noon, Saturday 22nd, August, we began moving out in trucks and busses to the siding in Davisville Base. This completed, our first test of skill leaving behind a newly asphalted road  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles long and 25' wide, 56 additional completely erected wired huts, a galley and a bake shop, a Flag pole and a much improved camp area for those next to come. All in a span of 14 short days.

The trip across the country began almost immediately after boarding the three special trains. Each one was dispatched on a different route from Chicago westward. Many of the men never glimpsed as much of their great country as they had the opportunity to do in those five days and nights. From the industrial New England States, through the teeming metropolis of New York, across the densely settled middle Eastern States to Chicago, then westward over desolate areas of stone and sand to the coast of California. Pittsburg, Crescentville, Fort Wayne, Council Bluff, Denver, Ogden and Sacramento all stops along the route. The meals were excellently prepared, sleeping was comfortable in air-conditioned Pullmans and at intervals along the way, brief spells of exercise were given all hands. Tragedy marred the full enjoyments of the journey when C. McClintock was killed enroute, and a bit of humor was added when Claude Cash jumped the train near his home to get married. The arrival of all trains at Oakland Pier did not coincide and it was late in the afternoon of August 28th, before all men were at our new base, Treasure Island.

This was our first station which offered complete living quarters, excellent chow, 1300 liberty and little to do in return. The Battalion was housed in the former Transportation Building of the San Francisco World's Fair of the previous year. Adjoining this mammoth barracks was an equally gigantic mess hall, which was rumored to be able to feed 5,000 men each hour and fed them well,

we can assure you.

Not long after we began this pleasant stay, other personnel began arriving and getting settled in this Barracks "J". We soon discovered the Navy was assembling a unit which it called an Acorn, and that we were to be a part of it. On Sunday, September 1, we were dressed in undressed blues and marched in review in the inside of the barracks. The Officers of our Battalion were accompanied by Comdr. James V. Carney, United States Navy, who addressed us briefly about the task which lay ahead for all of us. A selected group of painters were sent to Moffett Field, near Menlo Park, California to camouflage tents to be used as housing at our destination and another draft of riggers were flown by plane to Port Hueneme, California for assistance in loading our company equipment.

The days soon passed with generous liberty and busy gathering up and packing the new gear issued each day. The general instructions for departure were issued September 3rd, and in the early morning hours Sunday September 6th, we lashed our hammocks around our seabags, loaded them on trailer trucks at the front of the barracks, hurriedly ate chow and wiggled into those all too heavy packs. The first formations of the Battalion moved down the roadway towards the ferry at 0700. We were on our way again. This time the ferry chugged us out under the Oakland Bay Bridge to a crib near a loading ship in the Oakland Army Supply Depot where we arrived at 0830. We boarded ship in time for a chicken dinner in the warm lower aft hold which was utilized for a galley. The ship was a large Dutch merchantman, between 10 & 12,000 tons, called Motor Ship Sommeldsyk, built in 1939 at Odense, Denmark. The length of it is some 350' and it was originally planned as a combination passenger and freight ship. The speed is 17 knots, a formidable asset. It is owned by the Holland American Lines. The balance of our first day aboard was spent getting settled below in the crowded rows of canvas bunks in tiers of six and was extending from end to end of each hold. This and ducking the continued cargo floating overhead from the docks to the hold below

occupied a good deal of our time the rest of our first day aboard, and we retired early, very sleepy. Monday morning, the finishing touches were put to the cargo loading, hatches were closed and cables secured all items. At 1000, Monday 7th, September, two small tugs chugged in close, threw us tow lines and shortly afterward, we moved out in the bay under the Golden Gate Bridge and our first voyage in the Pacific began. Our escort was the Subchaser 570, and a Navy Blimp from Moffett Field. At sundown the blimp returned and only the bobbling weary speedy Subchaser remained with us. Our first leg of the trip was hardly more than an initiation for the rugged bound terrain of the coastline was visible all the way to Port Hueneme, California, where we docked at 1200, September 8th. Stevedors on the dock were busy getting ready for us. Our securing lines werethrown to the pier and soon more cargo, oil, tractor cranes, a fire truck, crane booms, and galley gear were coming aboard to occupy every bit of space on hatches, passageways and on top of the cargo already stowed topside.

It is appropriate at the time to enlarge a bit on life aboard this vessel. The heads were small buildings built topside near the outer section of the deck. Only salt water was available for bathing, washing or laundry purposes, which made it difficult to keep ones self clean. The crowded condition of the ship made it necessary to eat by companies in all fairness to everyone. The abandon ship drill, musters, fire drills and numberless tasks to be accomplished enroute, did little to lose the apparent crowdness.

On the morning of Wednesday 9th of September, we again hoisted anchor and churned slowly out thru the submarine nets to sea, this time, however, accompanied by the Motor Ship Manoeran, sister ship of the M.S. Sommeldsyk. This vessel was also owned by the Holland American Lines, but was classed as a 14,000 ton freighter and was loaded to capacity with our gear. A small complement of riggers and winch operators with Carp. A.R. Anderson were aboard her. There was also one other cargo vessel besides our single escort in the group of ships

putting to sea that morning. Our journey to the South Pacific had now began in earnest.

The establishing of guard posts and organizing work parties while aboard ship were now in full progress. There seemed to be an endless amount of work to be done each day. Mess duty, sentrys here and there, gun watches and many other miscellaneous duties had to be attended to. The sea was calm much of the time and the sailing was good. After the first day out, our escort left us as did the other cargo ships and the two Dutch vessels continued southward alone.

On the morning of Thursday, September 10th, and at irregular intervals thereafter, our companion ship, the Manoeran experienced engine trouble. Our ship continued moving but instead of a forward direction, we traveled in a wide circle around the ailing Manoeran. Usually this trouble was repaired in several hours and only once did we spend one-half doing this lost motion.

The men unaccustomed to the salt water did little about keeping clean the first few days, but the personnel inspections were decreed by Captain Carney and those over instrumental in keeping all hands busy keeping themselves and their clothing clean. No other ships were encountered for many days, only the flying fish and albatross seemed to be interested in looking us over. News dispatches received by the Ship's Radioman, September 13th, revealed that Seabees are now at work in the Solomons. The daily routine varied little, on Sundays there was always church for every denomination and a chicken dinner. Reading, playing checkers, dominoes and cards occupied some of the men's leisure time and in the evenings, a few men with musical talents would be the center of attention as we moved swiftly southbound thru the ever changing blue waters of the Pacific. Some of the sunsets and high moonlight nights were remarkable sights.

Then amidst our peaceful journey, a due warning appeared on the Plan of the Day for Welfare of Polywogs. Upon investigation, it was disclosed that we were approaching the equator and that those who had not previously

crossed this earthly guidepost, were polywogs, and remain such until properly indoctrinated as members in the Royal Order of Shellbacks. This process was begun at 1600, Friday, September 18th, when all polywogs were directed to report to their mustering stations to await King Neptune and his questionably beautiful golden haired Queen's appearance. They stepped into view shortly afterward and were most arrogant in manner, painting their subjects foreheads with their opinion of them and generally creating disfavor. The Irish ire in several of the subjects finally zoomed beyond control and the paint for their subjects descended on their majesties most distastefully. This ended the first visit of the King and his Queen. The following day was the day of atonement. Early in the morning the torture began with even the Officers subjected to unkind treatment. The general procedure seemed to favor getting as dirty, as wet, as sore in vital points as could possibly be, make you look as uncouth and bedraggled as a dead end kid. This was accomplished to everyone's injury. A canvas tank was erected on the forward deck to further discomfort the polywogs about to receive the Royal Seal of Approval as Shellback. After this ordeal a delicious meal of celebration was prepared and served in the then termed, sunken garden mess hall. The menu was turkey, cranberry sauce, dressing, peas, fresh hot rolls and butter with apricot pie for dessert. Then a musical program on the poop deck and the end of a great day in any sea-faring man's life. The equator was officially crossed at 0115, September 19th, 1942.

Sailing onward, over southward, we continued on our way until the end of September. Twice land was sighted during this period of time, and we were informed by the ship's crew that those spots on the horizon were islands of the Samoan and Fiji group. They seemed very faint and we soon lost them. The weather was turning cooler as we left the equator and jackets and sweaters and even pea coats began appearing in the morning and late evening topside. Navy planes soared over head on Wednesday, 23rd September, in passing one of the previously described bits of land. The day previous to this, we had been informed that we are to build an airfield. This to be accomplished thru the use of marsden matting, a newly developed

steel landing plank. Our destination is as yet unrevealed. The International Date Line was crossed at approximately 0500, 24th September, 1942. The rumors of the presence of land somewhere near ahead was strengthened by the issuing of one-half pail of fresh water to all hands and the checking of all liberty cards by the Personnel Office. The former was by far, the most welcome, for we had our fill of salt water baths and laundry. The fresh water was generally used first for a good head wash, then a bath and finally for washing clothes thoroughly utilizing every bit of each man's allotment.

Early on the morning of September 30th, a blue rough looking hulk began rising up ahead. Men gathered everywhere on the forward part of the ship, straining their eyes into the cool breeze, as we moved toward this mountainous bit of green covered land. As we approached we could discern more about the island, and at 0925, we dropped anchor near a small lighthouse on a tiny island nestled neatly and inviting in the bay. There were many ships around us of all kinds and description. Afternoon chow, a chow was lifted and with the pilot, who had come aboard since our arrival, guiding us, steamed forward thru the narrow bay, thru the nets, and into the inner harbor where we again were surprised to see ships we had heard and read so much about. The Hornet was among the many Navy ships riding at anchor there. After settling down in the harbor and dropping anchor again. This time the salt water supply was cut off and two small boats were launched. The Commanding Officer, Comdr. J. V. Carney was taken to the Fleet Commander Flagship to report our presence and to get more information about a mailgram, detaching the 14th CB's from Acorn Red One. This order was cancelled. The buildings ashore looked small in the distance, but they seemed to be numerous. After chow that evening, lights of automobiles could be discerned moving up and down the hillsides as they traversed the roads. The main deck was filled with staring Seabees, late into the evening, glad at last to see land again and with the hope that they might soon tread the sod that was visible.

The first liberty party was chosen during the morning

of Thursday, October 1st, and left the ship at 1215 that day. The liberty period was from 1300 to 1700. Upon their return that evening, the general consensus of opinion was that there was little to buy ashore. There were stores, but they had little to offer. American troops had been on the island for sometime and an Army Canteen seemed to have a good supply of a few essentials. There were no movies, but numerous sidewalk cafes, where one could purchase cookies, cake or soft drinks. The current value of our money was 2½¢ per frank and was readily exchanged. The French people were not overly friendly and seemed anxious to pursue their own way without interference. The city itself is primitive but contains many homes which have been there for sometime. The most beautiful and scenic structures are the churches, which overlook the harbors and bay, and are constructed of stone, are large spacious buildings and seemingly well taken care of. There are two classes of people, the French and Canapians, the latter class is the poorer and native class of the island. The most surprising report to come back was the fact the ship's refuse, now being dumped ashore, was the object of intense interest and caused no little fighting among the natives near the dumping area. The main important factors of the city, are the Michol Smelter, supplying needed nickel ore to the United States and the Naval Hospital ashore, which cares for those wounded in the engagements of this area.

The command of the American Forces was being directed by Admirals Nimitz and Halsey from their headquarters at this base. The extremely critical supply of labor in the area and the many needed facilities, occasioned them to call in the Acorn Unit, of which we are a part, for help. A Substantial number of men and officers were sent ashore to work two days after our arrival. They were busily occupied in erecting quonset huts, building roads, handling supplies coming into Noumea, building a large storehouse, constructing a building for the Fleet Post Office and transferring selected cargo from the Manoeran to Navy type cargo transports, USS Neville, USS Heywood and the USS Fumholtz. Many of the shore details lived near their jobs and enjoyed a change of diet, plus some sweets we had not enjoyed aboard ship. The cargo

transfer workers remained aboard ship and men were busy leaving the ship, eating, sleeping, coming back to the ship at all hours of the day and night. Some clothing was purchased aboard the USS Whitney and our mail was taken to the USS Argonne each day. No incoming mail was received while the entire battalion was aboard the *Sommelsdyk*. As soon as the men were dispatched to duties ashore and in the transferring of cargo, in preparation of the next move, the task at hand was the selection and organization of those advance detachments designed as A, B, and C. The first A, to contain approximately 8 officers and men, including the command, who were to go aboard the destroyer, USS *McKean*, the B detachment to contain 200 men and 8 officers to go aboard the USS *Neville*, the third detachment C, to contain a like amount, and go aboard the USS *Formalhaut*. The B detachment was first to leave the *M.S. Sommelsdyk*. They left the *Sommelsdyk* for the USS *Neville* at 1600, October 14th. The next detachment, C, departed the following day for the USS *Formalhaut*, which was also carrying a bulk of the cargo for the advanced group. The cargo handling being done with pontoon barges, was then nearing completion.

Back aboard ship after the first two detachments had left, living conditions were less crowded, chow lines were shorter and the general working conditions were changed to give the men four hours of work, and then twelve hours off. Numerous oldsters and sickly personnel were transferred to the USS *Solace*, an American Hospital Ship for treatment. They will likely continue on homeward when they have recuperated sufficiently. The last Advanced Detachment headed by Comdr. Carney and Lt. Comdr. T.F. Reilly, left the ship October 20th. The remaining personnel were sent back ashore to do construction again on Cub 13, on a hospital, at Camp Cal, and at an Ordnance Camp in Noumea. A ship unloading the warehouse crew were also assigned to assist the Marine Quartermaster Corps. On October 20th, twenty-eight bags of mail from the U.S.A. finally caught up with us and everyone felt elated to read mail from home. The advance parties were still in the harbor and mail brought to their ships for the

Detachment "A", which was the smaller of the three sent aboard the *McKean*, October 19th. The Destroyer was small and quarters were proportioned inside, but the chow was good. They never left the harbor of Noumea ashore for they were transferred to the USS *Heywood* before leaving the harbor. During the period of waiting some ship alterations became necessary, and as soon as the other detachments were in the bay, Chief R.T. Miller and a crew of carpenters were ordered aboard the USS *Heywood* for this purpose.

Detachment "B", aboard the USS *Neville*, departed October 15th, from Noumea, bound for Tonga Tabu. The ship was a Naval vessel and had excellent food. Quarters were similar to the *M.S. Sommelsdyk*, canvassed tiered bunks below deck. There were movies aboard every night. On October 19th, this unit reached Tonga Tabu in time to observe the Army's landing maneuvers in that harbor. Upon completion of these maneuvers, one thousand soldiers of the 164th Infantry, climbed aboard with ten times that number of sand flies with them. The departure from Tonga Tabu occurred on October 21st, and the trip to Espirito Santos was not as comfortable as the previous leg of the journey. There were a number of ships in the harbor upon our arrival, on the 25th of October, among those carrying our other detachments. The detachment's stay here, was short lived. Two hours after dropping anchor, orders were received to proceed at once to Port Vila, New Hebrides at all available speed. Enemy Naval units were in the immediate vicinity and are being sought by our Forces. Impending action was expected. Port Vila was reached at 0630 the following morning. It was a small, well hidden harbor, and the city looked colorful on the side of a small hill near the anchorage. Small homes, a church or two, and a few large buildings seemed to be in good repair and to have been recently painted. The natives came out around the ships, paddling their canoes, which were hewn out of logs, single passengers and with a parallel float attached by two cross pieces to aid in balancing the craft. A miniature replica was offered amid gestures and hopeful looks, for the sum of one dollar. Coconuts were also for sale,

at a more moderate of exchange. During the stay in the harbor, paint was chipped from the decks and bulkheads and considerable alterations and renovations were made to the officers quarters aboard the USS Neville. On the 31st of October, anchor was again lifted and we proceeded in convoy, northward. After two days of fairly rough sailing, the work details aboard ship were secured and on November 2nd, 1942, some difficulty was experienced in holding our course. One ship was missing from the convoy the following morning and not until late in the afternoon of that day did we again meet up with it, and proceeded on our way. Our destination according to one of our officers aboard, was Ndoni, a small island in the Santa Cruz group, directly east of the Solomon Islands. This however, was changed enroute, and at dawn November 4th, 1942, we carefully approached the green palm tree studded beach of lower Guadalcanal, escorted by twenty-one warships of the fleet, including the cruisers San Francisco, Honolulu, Chicago and Salt Lake City. The stillness was broken only by the swishing of the water, as we slowly moved forward towards the other transports in the Task Force. The Executive Officer, William O. Bailey, of the USS Neville, spoke a word of commendation to the 14th, as they prepared to disembark. His remarks were that in all his experience of hauling Jap prisoners, Marines, Soldiers and other units, our group was the best organized and did most co-operation that he had ever transported.

The remaining detachment, "C", aboard the USS Formalhaut found their ship to be a comparably new one with excellent food, movies, ice cream, fresh water showers, laundry and good quarters for many of the men. This ship was the last to get loaded and as a result we were the last to depart from Noumea. Two stragglers, Elmer J. Glais and Reginald H. Hurt reported aboard, after leaving the USS Neville, where they had been originally placed. They had started from the Noumea dock in search of something to eat, and upon their return, found the ship pulling out of the harbor. They returned to the U. S. Somneldyck, then were delivered to the Formalhaut to rejoin their detachment, when convenient. The Formalhaut

departed from Noumea the morning of October 23rd, and after three days of good sailing northwestward, entered the harbor of Espiritito Santos, in the New Hebrides Islands. The two stragglers, Hurt and Slade, were returned to their ship. Chief Miller and a dozen men were transferred to Detachment "A". A supply of fresh vegetables and meat was obtained before we were suddenly ordered to leave. The anchor was lifted and we had proceeded to get underway before the small boats had completed provisioning. All thru the night, the Formalhaut's motors kept up a steady hum and at dawn we entered the harbor of Port Vila, in the same islands together with a number of other ships. This British and French owned and controlled islands was our haven until 31st, October. During these several days, the ship's decks were chipped of paint, and a new coat was applied to them as well as to the bulkheads. No shore parties were permitted and our main recreation was the movies and ice cream each night. Men on gun watches and ship operation details continued duties even while in port.

Underway the 31st, in company with a number of other cargo vessels, transports, destroyers and cruisers. It was announced that our destination would be reached the morning of November 3rd. The weather turned for the worse and the visibility became difficult in the night of 2nd November. Our escort continued on ahead, but came back at intervals to check on the convoy. An enemy task force was in the vicinity, and the waters we were traveling were dangerous ones. Somehow or other, Captain Flanagan, of the Formalhaut, became confused in his guidance of the ship, for on the morning of November 3rd, when we all expected to land at Guadalcanal, we awoke and came topside to find our ship circling amid an endless amount of ocean in every direction. Not one of the score or more vessels accompanying us the previous day, were on hand or visible. Everyone scurried around for cover, as our 20mm and 50 caliber guns opened fire. The attacking enemy was a submarine. The firing ceased after several hundred rounds had been directed to the water, near our ship and the Captain's order to ram had been carried out. Several men in the gun crews were brought down to the main deck on the way to sick bay, bleeding about the face, and we

expected to feel the sudden shock of a torpedo at any moment. Then the truth was revealed, our "submarine" was a mopstick floating so near the ship that in order to hit it with our guns, they had been aimed so that the corner of the bullet hit the steel railing around the gun position causing the particles of metal to fly back at the gun crew. Eleven men received minor injuries and only one. Melvin M. Ale\_\_\_, was seriously cut about the eye. The radio room news bulletin carried an additional item that morning, expressed by John Butters, "Sighted sub, sank same, changed dungarees". The revelation of the truth made many a Seabee's heart beat more steadily. At 1600, in the afternoon, we looked gratefully ahead to find the lost companions and rejoined the task force. Our destination was near and we would land on the morning of the 4th of November, with the same plan that was to be used the previous day.

Quietly, and cautiously, the small destroyers went forward to the dark island ahead, the transports proceeded directly behind them, our task force had now split into two groups, the Eastern Landing Group and the Western Landing Group. Ours, the Eastern Landing Group, was heading into Skylark Channel, later more famously known as part of the Slot. All hands were up and about at 0330, and at dawn, 0500, the thin smoke of a vari gun signal was observed in the dense green foliage ahead. The 1st & 3rd Marine Raiders, in their carefully camouflaged greens, heavily armed and ready for action, were first to leave their destroyer for the landing, we could see their craft streaking for the beach. Two planes flying close together, just above the water, were observed flying towards our group. Several 20 mm's opened up at them and a signal light flashed "U.S." real quick, and another scare was eliminated. Unloading operation began at once, small boats churned here and there, in and around the three cargo ships as our escorts dotted the surrounding horizon at regular intervals. They were continually on the watch for the enemy that did not appear. Pontoon barges were quickly assembled, propulsion units installed and cargo moved ashore fast. The Radio station was in operation. Everybody turned to work, carrying boxes, pushing vehicles and getting everything we

had brought along ashore. A row of palm trees lay 50 ft. from the beach and underneath this meager shelter, a pile of crates, boxes and containers were hurriedly piled for a half-mile up the beach. The first man ashore was \_\_\_ Natived, black, scantily clad and carrying Jap rifles met us as we came ashore. He spoke an understandable English due to the influence of missionaries, who had been working this group of islands for many years. There were several air alerts, but no enemy planes were sighted. The unloading was terminated at 0100, the 6th of November with everyone in need of rest and chow.

A temporary camp was established at this site, and tents were erected for everyone. The Marines were all around us, and the Army had now come ashore. Shells were plainly heard in camp thru the night and no one moved about much. One soldier was accidentally killed in the landing operation. Now that the three detachments were united under the command of Commander Carney, with Lt. Clyde V. Bryan as Executive Officer, work crews were organized by trades, and we began looking for a new campsite. This was located several miles away from our landing spot, and there, amid the regular rows of coconut palm trees, our camp was constructed. The location was adjacent to a heavy jungle growth of green vines and trees, just in from the ocean about a mile. All hands were quartered in their occupational classifications. The galley, mess halls, laundry shop area and various headquarters tents were up and in use in short order. Work was begun on a beach road, and a pontoon dock, as soon as that was finished. Preliminary surveys were made to select a suitable site for an airfield. Air raids were becoming daily occurrences, and all men had foxholes or dugouts as protection against expected enemy bombs.

In the early evening of November 12th, all hands were issued an ample supply of additional ammunition, some rations and warned to be ready to move at a moment's notice. An enemy task force was expected to attempt the landing of re-inforcements during the next forty-eight hours. The radio room was well stuffed that night, listening to current reports as they came in. The sky was lit

up with different colors and flares all thru the night, the sounds of heavy gunfire could be heard in the distance, and we knew something big was taking place. This, we learned, was the battlewagon, South Dakota's big night and the cruiser, San Francisco's great victory. The enemy was routed, and their wrecked, battered transports hulls are still lying on the beaches of Guadalcanal, near Lunga. Some 25,000 enemy troops were killed in this action.

The sawmill was set up and placed in operation. Coral surfacing was placed on the beach road to the camp. Barges were dispatched to Henderson Field with supplies of gasoline and ammunition at regular intervals during the next week. Captain Carney was notified of his change in rank, and was in contact with Henderson Field constantly. Despite everyone being busy, there was an unsettled air about the future.

Thanksgiving Day came, but without any fresh meat, there was little we could do to celebrate the occasion. A plan to use the cows on the island was abandoned upon disclosure by Dr. Walker, that they were tubercular. The following day, however, brought a message from a destroyer standing out in the bay. "Come and get your turkeys", it said, and trucks were on the way at once. A delicious turkey dinner with all the trimmings mustered from our stock provisions. That very same day, orders were received to prepare to move all equipment and personnel to a point 18 miles above Aola Bay, at once. Soldiers and Marines of our group, had been in that area a few days previously, and returned with one starved-looking prisoner, reporting only few scattered enemy troops in the vicinity. Pontoon barges, tank lighters and ramp boats were loaded immediately and movement of the first group of men to Koli Point began November 26th, 1942. A large 750 ton pontoon barge towed to Aola, was loaded with most of the gear of the 14th. The last cargo, and personnel, left Aola Bay on December 4th, closing out that part of our first landing.

The first group to reach Koli Point, began surveys for an airfield site, and camp as unloading operations were carried out. They confirmed a previous survey made by the 6th Battalion, that the area was not suited for a fighter strip as was then needed. The cargo was segregated in general areas and tents were pitched along the sandy beach, as the Army pushed into the jungle behind us. The remnants of a native village were in the vicinity, and grass shacks were used as shelter by those who had just arrived. The moving from Aola Bay took on minor importance after Sunday, November 29th, when a large convoy appeared in the harbor. Shortly after dawn, the small ramp boats were streaking towards our shore, and they were remaining personnel of Acorn Red One.

They had lingered at Noumea until the 3rd of November when all work parties were called back to the Sommeltsdyk. At 1500, November 5th, both the USS Sommeltsdyk and Maraberan, had set sail northward. The journey required three days and on November 8th, the two Dutch vessels arrived Espiritito Santos, where immediately, they began transferring was completed on November 12th, and a detachment of men from the Sommeltsdyk moved aboard the USS Formalhaut and USS Heywood. Due to the enemy forces in and around the Solomons, the ship remained at Espiritito Santos, until November 27th, when they pulled up anchor and headed to sea. Thanksgiving Day was celebrated in good style aboard with an excellent turkey dinner. In the interim, swim parties and chow parties were allowed each day. Some work was done on the ship. A party of welders were sent to work on the San Francisco, when she limped into the harbor after her engagement at Guadalcanal. She was wildly cheered, as she passed by the ships who had learned of her heroic action via the news bulletins. The voyage to Guadalcanal was uneventful and early on the morning of November 29th, a dark hulk of land appeared and soon thereafter, unloading operations began.

The re-uniting of the battalion brought many a smile to the men's faces, and renewed the effects of unloading and getting at the task at hand. Mail bags, containing mail for the advance groups, came ashore that night, and was gratefully received. The unloading operations were being directed by the Marine Pioneer Officers and they

cancelled the night unloading. The camp of tents had been steadily growing since the first men arrived from Aola Bay. The galley was in operation under a native grass canopy, and mess tents, tables and gear washing devices, were improved each day. The unloading continued until the 5th of December, while a portion of the complement were busily engaged in making a temporary camp, setting up maintenance shops and doing surveying and foot reconnaissance in the area.

The first and most important job that was to be done was the construction of a bridge across the Malimbu River, connecting the Koli area with the Lunga area by road. The Lunga area, is the first strip of territory invaded, and is centered around the highly important Henderson Field. Naval Headquarters were also at that location. The construction of this bridge was begun the 10th of December. The structure was twenty feet wide and 182 Feet long. The piling used was native timber, and many of the bolts and iron fittings were made from Japanese salvaged stocks. The bridge was completed and opened to traffic on December 23rd, and was commonly referred to as the "Mahogany Bridge", because of the similiar appearance of native timber to that wood.

An emergency landing strip, 150' x 7300' & long, about two miles inland from the beach location, was also prepared for use between December 5th and 17th. The first plane to land, was a two seated fighter, flown from Henderson Field by Captain Carney, on December 16th. Captain Carney pronounced the strip satisfactory. After taking off again, his plane developed motor trouble over Skylark Channel, and plunged into the bay, killing Captain Carney and his gunner. The body was recovered and memorial services were conducted on the beach the 19th of December, and his remains were interred at the Marine Cemetery, in Lunga.

During the construction of these first two projects, the camp was continually improved in sanitation facilities, and a net work of roads around the Koli area was begun December 7th, high Marine and Navy Officials visited Koli Point under orders of the Commander of

South Pacific, to determine whether Koli Point was a desirable point to develop into the needed location, or that it should be developed. However, the Lunga area was short of equipment and part on the 14th's gear was still in that development. In accordance with this decision, a camp site for the 14th, a hospital site and a water point were selected in the dense jungle growth along the banks of the Metuponi River. Then acres were cleared, and construction of the new camp begun. One other casualty was sustained when Elmer Leo Finch, QMlc, operating a tank lighter, was accidentally struck on the head by the hatch of the boat, and died in the hospital a few hours later, on December 10th. The prospect of Christmas did not present too much because of the great activity around Koli area. Then when it was announced that Christmas would be celebrated December 27th, the men were not greatly surprised. The enemy were causing some fighting in places but the Army and Marine patrols had things well in hand. Air raids occurred nightly and "Washing Machine Charlie", as the lone enemy plane was dubbed, seemed to delight in keeping us awake and in our foxholes.

December 27th found everyone enjoying an excellent Christmas supper of turkey with all the trimmings. The meal will long be remembered by those who were there. Our final group of some forty soldiers arrived aboard the Firehawk that day, and a ship load of material for the airfield to be constructed here.

The problem of keeping well was increasing since arriving on this island, Malaria was prevalent, and some twenty-five cases on the sick list daily. Other ailments accounted for the remainder of 82 men, incapacitated early in December. There was by the sap of trees aptly named, "Guadalcanal Rot".

The succeeding command officer, Comdr. P. R. Coffey, arrived, replacing Lt. Comdr. B.M. Coleman. Accompanying the Executive Officer, Major Captain C. R. ...

was addressed to Comdr. of South Pacific, to designate the airfield to be constructed as Carney Field, in memory of the inspiring leader who lost his life in the interest of its development. The final decision to begin construction of the runway was received December 27th, and personnel and equipment were started immediately on the 6-24 runway, and the Northwest Taxi-way.

The Acorn Hospital camp was nearing completion on January 2nd, enough that part of the personnel began moving into the area. All wards were decked and secured. Dallas huts were used for surgery and officers quarters. The area was low, and a good deal of fill was necessary.

On the evening of the 2nd of January, 1943, the 147th Infantry Band gave a concert in the center of the Beach Camp, which was one of the first bits of entertainment we had enjoyed since leaving the ship that had carried us to this base. More good news was the arrival in the early days of January, of our Christmas packages, letters and greeting cards from home. After chow the evening of the 7th, a group of natives came into camp and performed many of their native dances amid a giant circle of Seabees. The dances were primitive in nature, and were predominantly comprised of stamping the bare feet against the earth. A little confusion was caused by the throwing of cigarettes into the circle, for they were confirmed addicts of the cigarette habit from the smallest to the largest of them. As they completed their final dance, the Chief spoke to an attending Seabee and requested that we join him in the finale. A low murmur among the natives gathered closely together in the center of the circle soon rose into the familiar strains of "God Bless America" and all hands joined in the enthusiasm.

The move to the new camp began January 13th, and was carried on steadily until our beach camp was emptied of Seabee Personnel. Heavy rains and continued air raids were becoming every day occurrences. A large number of rate advancements were announced in a special muster January 21st, and at 2-3- that night, the general assembly call on the bugle awakened the camp, and sent rescue parties to the hospital area to evacuate the 110 patients

being flooded out by the rising Metaponia. They were brought back to camp and placed in all available buildings, mess halls and decked tents. This evacuation was completed and secured in sixty minutes. All hands returned to bed but were immediately alerted for a bombing raid. Shells were bursting overhead at short intervals, planes were droning thru the sky overhead escaping the searching lights continually in operation. This was the most anti-aircraft shelling that had yet taken place on the island. Secretary of Navy Knox, Admiral Halsey and staff were at Lunga witnessing the action. Several small bombs fell in the camp area damaging tents and shrapnel could be heard hitting the quonset huts in the HQ. area. The action was stepped up on all fronts this last week of January. During the day heavy artillery fire could be heard in the nearby hills and occasional raids took place during the day. The night air raids were regular and little sleep could be obtained. Barrel top covers for foxholes were being added for additional protection from the falling anti-aircraft shrapnel.

The airfield runway 6-24 was almost completely graded at this time. Four P-39 Airacobras landed on the 26th of January, because of difficulty finding Henderson Field. They were brought to camp and remained until the following afternoon. The hospital site had been selected at the top of the river banks and was rebuilt with quonset huts and concrete docks. Work was progressing on this project. The First and Second Lagoon \_\_\_\_\_ were also constructed at this time. The Thick and Thin Lumber Company's sawmill was running constantly, supplying much timber and lumber for the work the battalion was carrying on. At the end of January, approximately 200,000 board feet had been cut and used.

Equipment and personnel loaned to Henderson Field, were returned for use on the Koli Airfield. The road work was steadily improved and Koli roads are in good condition. Gravel was obtained from the Nalimby River. The hospital area also was again nearing completion.

On the 1st and 2nd of February, enemy re-enforcements attempted a landing on Guadalcanal. The general assembly

was sounded at 1430, and all hands mustered with packs and rifles. An enemy task force comprised of aircraft carriers, battle wagons, transports, cruisers and destroyers attempted to reinforce the garrison on the island. Our job was to set up a defense position on the west bank of the Metoponi River and be on the lookout for parachute troops. The Battalion assumed these defense positions shortly before dusk, the evening of 1st of February. An abnormal amount of gunfire was heard during the night and air alerts were continuous until morning hours. No enemy action was discovered in our area, but there was indeed a continuous volley of gunfire along the banks of the Metoponia that night. At day break the next morning, we fell out of our position and marched back to camp before the home guard, which consisted of truck drivers, cooks, bakers and other personnel. The day was a warm sunny one and after our arms inspection, we were secured to enjoy our first holiday in months. A small group of men were assigned eight posts along the river, starting in the evening of the 2nd, and they will be heavily armed in the event of attack. The enemy forces sustained heavy losses and were repulsed at 0500 that morning. Guard posts were manned for several days following this incident but work and regular routing was resumed on the 3rd of February, 1943.

Just about this time, orders were received to make ready the emergency strip for immediate operation. This was to be done by using Summerfrid mesh, taxiways, fueling facilities and houses were hurriedly erected around the runway, designated as the emergency strip, but after February 10th, work was resumed on the 6-24 runway because these orders were cancelled.

More units were pouring steadily into the Koli area and the 2nd Marine Aviation Engineers provided some assistance to the construction of the 6-24 airfield. The job of handling cargo and assisting in the building of camp facilities for these incoming Army, Navy and Marine units was a main activity of the battalion at all times. Our own camp was undergoing improvements, with the planned construction of the second 25,000 gallon water tower in our camp, the first one being built in the hospital

area. Mess trays were now in use for the first time since our arrival.

The island had been declared secure on February 8th, and the command had completed its first hundred days ashore Thursday, February 11th, 1943. To commemorate that event, a huge talent show was arranged and given in Company B area that evening. The affair was our first bit of entertainment on the island in a long period of time, and was greatly enjoyed by the officers and men who were in attendance.

Our most important project, the construction of runway 6-24, was hampered by heavy rain but never the less, progressed considerably. The laying of Marsden Mat was begun February 13th, by crews of battalion personnel, aided by natives of the island, in work groups of twenty, headed by a lead boy. The several stages of construction could now be observed in progress on the 6-24 runway. The entire job was now 50% complete.

A slight tremor of the earth, lasting several seconds, was felt during the night of February 16th, and the entire camp was stirred up by this new foe. The enemy activity had declined considerably and few raids were experienced during the month.

Admiral Turner arrived on the island in the wake of many Army, Marine and Navy Units, who were using the island as a staging area for activity to come on Munda, Russell Islands and other Solomon, Jap held territory. The Battalion erected and equipped Admiral Turner's quarters with all necessary gear.

In the latter part of February, radiograms were received notifying the command of the appointment of D. Desmond, CM2c, to the rank of Lieutenant(Jg), and the appointment of L.R. Annis, CCM, as Lieutenant (Senior Grade). Lt.(Jg) Desmond was to remain with the battalion as heavy equipment officer. Lt. Annis was directed to return to the 12th Naval District, San Francisco for further assignments to duty. These were the first enlisted men to be granted commissions as officers.

Now that the airfield construction was proceeding rapidly, the plans for the construction of a tank farm was studied. The construction of the control tower progressed. One B-24 Bomber landed on February 26th. The scuttlebutt was so intense about the battalion leaving the island, that a directive from Comdr. Reilly to all notified us that it was not true and that we would not leave the island until we had been there a year. This information was given by Comdr. P. R. Coffin of Acorn Red One. Since our departure from Camp Bradford, Virginia, 88 men have been transferred out of the battalion for medical reasons. Malaria was still a prevailing disease, and some 250 cases were reported by March 1st.

With the airfield nearing completion, the task of putting it into active operation was begun. Navy Air units, anti-aircraft gun crews and radio and operation personnel units began arriving in quantity in the Koli Area. The tank farm work was done by this battalion and the tank erection by the 26th Construction Battalion. Housing and galley and other facilities for all new units arriving in the area, were constructed, some of which included the Dallas Huts and 1000 man galley at Fabu 13, the 500 man galley at 34th CB, the 500 man galley at the New Zealander's Camp, and the concrete gun replacements for the 155 mm anti-aircraft. Due to this increased amount of activity, it was necessary to shut down the sawmill on the 14th of March, after a production of 368,330 board feet of native timber. The personnel released from this action were used in the unloading of ships at the Koli Beach, cargo consisting mainly of airfield matting and incoming unit's gear.

High Naval Officers in this area visited Koli early in March and inspected the installations. They were well pleased with the general program, but directed other units should do the ship unloading to allow more time to be applied to the 6-24 runway and its adjoining taxiway, crossovers, and hard stands completion. The 13-31 runway was abandoned because of an insufficient amount of steel surfacing mat, crews assigned to this work were diverted to the 6-24 runway. The natives who worked on a contract basis, were being urged to increase their work

output, to no avail. However, the graveling and mat laying was completed in time for the first five Night Fighters to be based there on March 23rd. These were the powerful A-20 planes and were some of the first so-called planes in the Pacific. These were augmented by several other planes during the latter part of the month and operations were carried out on a limited scale, while the facilities were being rushed to completion.

All the while this rush of activity was being carried out, our chow was improving considerably and supplies were being received more regular. The first movie was shown on March 6th, in an area between the Post Office and the Photo Laboratory. The 16mm portable machine had been arranged for, thru the co-operation of the Acorn Hospital. Even the natives thrilled to glimpse the pictures of a land they had never seen, as they sat huddled together with the Seabees, Marines and Soldiers, watching with interest the silver screen. Another Battalion show was given St. Patrick's Day and was well attended and received. The Formal Flag raising at the new flag pole in the HQ. area, was attended by all hands March 12th, in the early morning hours. A member of the Battalion, M.H. Coe, formerly a sculptor had done wonders with the limited amount of material at his disposal. The concrete monument had an original design of Coe's and included all the dates of the Battalion's importance, except our departure, which had been allowed.

Two more Chief Petty Officers received commissions in March. One of them, Lt. R.W. Armstrong, remained with the Battalion, and the other, Captain Paul W. Reed, received his Bars from the U.S. Army and was transferred to Henderson Field for further disposition. A Commendation from Captain Peary of the Bureau of Yards and Docks was received for the excellent progress on our assignments. A letter of Commendation was also received from the President Lines in appreciation of the last efficient unloading of the USS President Tyler at Koli.

In anticipation of a possible move in the immediate future, a detailed survey of initial equipment and equipment and spare parts required for a similar assignment were submitted to the Bureau with the Commander's

recommendation that we be given a rest and change of duty in the near future. The twenty-six alerts during the month, some of which have resulted in a few bombs dropping near camp, had not helped the morale or mental condition of the personnel. A quantity of anti-aircraft fire overhead at frequent intervals had kept the men in foxholes a good part of the nights.

The enemy started giving more attention to the Koli Area, probably as a result of the airfield being constructed and the general development and increasing activity in that area. Enemy aircraft were overhead regularly. Our night fighters had several encounters with them and the heavy anti-aircraft fire and downed several planes during April. Several enemy planes attacked shipping in the harbor at noon the 15th, and made two hits on the destroyer, Aaron Ward. Survivors were picked up and taken to the Acorn Hospital for treatment. There were badly burnt fellows, all without gear of any kind. Clothing, toilet articles and even blood were given by the 14th. They were well taken care of by the Seabees before they were returned to the U.S.A. The first bombing mission occurred during the early part of April, and additional planes were arriving at Koli Airfield daily. The increased activity during the past month was now revealed to have been the preparation for the invasion of Russell Islands, near Guadalcanal. A recommendation from the Commander of the task force, which participated in that that action, was received because of the strenuous work done by this unit.

The Koli Airfield #1 completed on April 22nd, was in operation several days prior to that date. The planes based there were of the heavy bomber type, Liberators and Flying Fortresses. One B-24, taking off in the early afternoon of the 14th, got away from the runway all right, but before completing its first circle of the field to get directions, crashed into an ammunition dump. All personnel were killed instantly and little remained of the plane. Due to heavy pounding given the landing end of the field, the matting became distorted at one end soon after subjected to heavy use. This necessitated some repairing and replacing of matting. A night maintenance crew was inaugurated on the 17th of April, to alleviate

the danger for incoming planes. Drainage canals and preliminary work on another airfield to be known as Koli #2 were commenced upon completion of Koli #1. This newest strip was near the Metoponia River, and was in excess of 3,000 feet long, have concrete circles at each end to take up the landing shock of the planes. The 2nd Aviation Marines and the 61st CB's and the 14th CB's were diverting all available equipment and personnel to this new construction. An official of the Air Transport Command visited Koli to determine the possibility of adding this point to their regular route.

Heavy rains during most of the month hampered construction work on the roads to the airfield. The West Peninsula Road widening, was partially completed and provided a four lane highway to the field from the beach, as well as a commuting link to roadways around the airfield between the two rivers. The equipment was rapidly wearing out and many units were being used for repair parts because there were none.

Ten percent of the battalion had been evacuated for medical reason. Two officers, Lt. Callanan, Executive Officer and Corp R.N. Baraoux, who had much to do with the airfield construction, were evacuated because of illness. Several Acorn Officers were also sent off the island. The strain on all hands was beginning to tell. One measure taken to help this situation was the order given all hands one day off a week. The packing crates delivered to the different departments remained unused and did little to lift the morale of the men.

Another enlisted man, James R. Albin, CM2c, was fortunate in having his commission arrive and was transferred to the 12th Naval District, San Francisco for on the 28th of April.

Easter Sunday, the flat field adjacent to camp was the scene of Dawn Service. The Marine Band, Choral Groups from nearby units co-operated in this memorable day's observance. The three wooden crosses could be seen against the blue clouds in the sky as the sun slowly came up over the horizon. Loud speakers carried the program to all corners of the field, as some two-thousand Soldiers,

Marines and Seabees listed to the religious service. There were hard boiled eggs for breakfast, served shortly after the service, and then the day went on as usual.

The weather of day was a little less than the last. Everything seemed to get a little better. The snow was not as plentiful as we had been used to. The bakers had exhausted our supply of yeast, so we had no bread for almost a week. Our diet was predominately spam, beans, hard crackers and peanut butter. The rains seemed to be more frequent now. It rained and we were standing about in them during chow time. On the evening of May 21st, a heavy rain fell from an overcast sky. The rain was a everyone sought after. The rain which usually subsided after a short interval did not seem so mollified and continued for an hour or so which curtailed any plans we might have had to finish the clearing of the beach. "Night on Lister". The deep pour settled down to a drizzle and continued throughout the night. Sunday morning, "Mother's Day". It was apparent that the Metapona River less than a half mile from the edge of our camp, was having a great deal of difficulty in carrying away the torrent coming from the mountains. A creeping stream of water was gradually edging toward the Headquarters Area early in the morning. Men from A, C, and D Company reported water near their tents, all without decks or protection of height. Efforts were made to keep a path open between the two sides of camp as a narrow ravine separated them and seemed to be a natural drain for the water which was steadily rising on the Metapona River side of the camp. Along about 1100 in the morning, the rising water began to be considered serious. All hands began lashing their gear in trees or high rafters in the showers, pants were rolled up, a few pairs of boots appeared and work was suspended to await the outcome. Battalion headquarters was flooded and B, C & D company area along with the Maintenance Shop, were sinking lower into the water. A continuous watch on the rain height gauge was kept at the water point at the Aorn Hospital, but this was secured when the gauge was washed away. At 1610, Comdr. Reilly ordered all hands to evacuate. The Hospital patients then had been evacuated to Fabu Camp on the

other side of Koli and other Marine and Army units were already jamming the roads towards the beach. Service Company and trucks were to pick us up at the nearest point they could reach. We started out the camp entrance knee deep in muddy waters of the Metapona, only a few trucks drivers, bulldozer operators remained in addition to Comdr. Reilly and a few other officers. The few who had been fortunate enough to be on trucks were forced to disembark a little ways from camp, and ford a deep ditch with water shoulder high. A camp was a forlorn sight, with its deserted tents some barely visible above the rising water. After walking approximately two miles in waist deep water the occasional high places, we reached the trucks from the beach. That night we bedded down on the sand with coconut logs for pillows and ponchos for covers. A breakfast of vienna sausages and thick hot cakes and jelly served by colored cooks, was relished with enthusiasm. Immediately after eating, trucks came near and prepared to take us back to the camp we'd left under water the previous day. The day was warm with the sun shining bright as we glimpsed the damage wrought by the water along the way back. A little before 0800, we pulled into the old homestead to find it cleared of flood waters, but in need of much rebuilding. Work started immediately and by mid-afternoon, all hands were back in camp busily engaged in construction new heads, finding their gear, bracing the mess hall, drying out tools and machines and draining foxholes. A good supper was served in the chow hall in the evening. Every one sort of looked forward to a good night's sleep after two days of excitement. This looked forward to event, was not yet to take place however, soon after dark, the general assembly sounded and we arose to find the water running wild again. This time not as rambunctious as the previous night, and we forded the deep ravine separating the B, C, and D areas to the higher headquarters area. Only these three companies were subjected to the rising water on the 10th, A and Headquarters were on higher ground. The former crowded into mess halls and headquarters area buildings to spend the night listening to the running water and slowly rising under the structures. Dawn found the water receding and for the second time, rehabilitation was started. The water plant resumed operations that day and other shops,

warehouses and departments began the job of salvaging tools and materials. The battalion soon began to resume normal operation again.

The catastrophe had not passed without causing other damages. The Walimbu River Bridge constructed early as a connecting link to Lunga and Naval Operating Headquarters was washed out by the large trees and debris washed down from the mountains above the bridge location. This seriously handicapped operations because of food supplies, mail, spare parts and other items were constantly coming in over this route. Construction of a new bridge was begun in conjunction with the 46th CB's, who were to help only a short time before being directed elsewhere. The Metaponi River channel was also proving dangerous to handle and a new channel was blasted for it by use of dynamite. Salvaging of old bridge timbers and piling were an important part of the preparation for constructing a new bridge.

The orders to stabilize and resurface 2,000 feet of the 6-24 runway were received and work began at once on this job. Planes not able to operate from Northwest taxiway moved to Henderson Field until the task could be completed. The operation of the Koli Tank Farm was turned over to the battalion on the 18th, and we were not supplying the gasoline loading racks with the fuel for all Koli based aircraft. There were other changes during May. The battalion was detached from Acorn Red One, on the 14th. Lt. Comdr. C.A. Callahan returned from the Hebrides in improved health. He did not resume his duties at once, although Lt. C.V. Bryan's health made it necessary for him to leave the Executive Office in favor of Lt. W.S. Wilcox, who was next in line for that post. The advancement of T.F. Reilly to Commander, C.A. Callanan to Lt. Comdr., and several other junior officers to Lieutenant, was confirmed.

Staff medical officers made an inspection of the camp and its facilities prior to the flood. A letter of commendation for the sanitary and clean condition of this one of the oldest permanent camps on the island, was forwarded by Capt. Quigley, Publics Officer of the Island.

Several new projects were begun, one of which was an areal photographic and map making unit, and the other which opened up a new place for development. Lumber shortages made it necessary to start the sawmill again as heavy timbers were needed for the new camp water tower and another plan to deck all tents of enlisted personnel. Teter work consisted of a jeep for reconnaissance and observance for the desirability of this area, a Marine training base in preparation for another move toward the enemy strongholds to the north.

Air raids were frequent and the night of May 13th, night fighters downed two Jap planes high in the sky above camp. They burst into a bulb of yellow flame as they hesitated, swooped upward, they lunged towards earth. The 61st CB's arriving at about this time on the island, were given a sleepless welcome. They camped in mud and lived in pup tents until, with some assistance from us, they got settled near the Airfield#2. Some bombs were dropped near the airfield during the night of May 19th, causing no damage to the runway, a gaping hole in the road and shattering the pipe and unloading rack opposite the flight tower, necessitating immediate repairs.

All companies had their group pictures taken during the early part of the month before the flood. These were taken in the theatre area. Evacuations increasing daily were diminishing the strength of the battalion. The former Executive Officer, Lt. C.V. Bryans, was evacuated and his successor, Lt. W. S. Wilcox, was replaced by Lt. Comdr. C.A. Callanan on May 29th, 1943.

The 6-24 runway stabilizing and reconstruction project was rushed to completion. New matting was inlaid, and to further assist the operation of the field, an oil treatment was accomplished on the greater portion of the runway and taxiway eliminating for a time, the great amount of dust which hampered pilots visibility in taking off. Upon the termination of work on this runway, all personnel were concentrated on Bomber 2, near the Metaponia. B-25s and B-24s, in increasing quantities were arriving daily, new housing for airfield personnel were being constructed as quickly as possible. The enemy was apparently planning some new blow, for all the preparations being made to prevent any successful operation. The battalion was

ordered to have its airfield facilities and major projects completed by the 15th of June. To assist in accomplishing this end, assistance was sent from the 4th Special CB's, 24th CB's and 34th CB's, also in the Koli area.

Air operations were steadily on the up-grade by June 14th. Our planes were coming in and taking off all hours of the day and night. The more than one hundred light and heavy bombers each loaded with its own panoramic picture and name, were a thrilling sight, as one rounded the field on the West Perimeter Road. The B-25, of Major General Doolittle's son, "Hairless Joe", was among these. A lone enemy plane droned in at a low height early on the morning of June 15th, dropped its bombs at ships in the harbor, setting the liberty ship, "John Penn" and another vessel afire, then escaped before our planes could get into the air. Then the fireworks began. June 16th was one of the greatest aerial battles of the South Pacific War. Much of the day was spent on or near foxholes. The screaming sounds of planes diving thru the clouds, the faint staccato of machine guns at high altitude and the tiny spears of flack moving thru the blue white sky, were seen and heard all afternoon. Our fighters and the Russell Island based fighters had a field day for each had intercepted the Jap planes. The Russell Islands planes took their toll, while the Japs were on their way to Guadalcanal, then returned to their base and refueled to await them on their return, after encountering our forces. San Francisco radio reports revealed 77 enemy planes shot down that afternoon, against six losses for the Americans. Marine Raiders were in position at all beach points to offer resistance, in the event of a Jap invasion, also expected about this time. It never took place. The enemy forces were still in substantial strength on Bouganville and the Northern Solomons. Bombers from Koli #1 were striking them daily. The first raid to the northeast was begun, when B-25's and B-24's made the 2,000 mile trip to the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. B-24's were scheduled for this initial run, but were unable to take off with their heavy loads of bombs and gas, and those that did make the trip were tightly loaded. The desperate position of enemy garrisons in the area brought the precautionary measure of protection from gas attack to the fore.

Impregnation compound for shoes clothing and ointment for relief from gas burns were distributed to all hands. Gas warning gongs were installed in all areas, and lectures were given to further enlighten personnel regarding their characteristics and effects, by Lt.(jg) Meier. He and a small group from the battalion, had recently completed a course of combat intelligence with the 14th Army Corps near Henderson Field.

Some statistics which may be of interest, are the water, ice and lumber production, gasoline consumption at this period. The highest daily output at the water plant during June, was 89,460 gallons, with a total monthly output of 1,973,245 gallons. This considerable quantity of water was not only for our own use, but hauled to other units in the Koli area, in addition to supplying the pipeline now extending from the water point to Mobile Hospital S, Koli Branch, and the 14th Battalion Camp. Forty-six tons of ice were manufactured and used during June. The sawmill's highest day of production was 7,032 board feet, with an end of the month total of 188,585 board feet cut. Aviation gasoline consumed by planes operating from Koli Field, totaled 446,075 gallons, or a trainload of almost fifty ten-thousand gallon tank cars. The highest amount used in one day was 45,592 gallons and this in our first month of steady operation. Preparations for construction of a permanent bridge across the Metaponia River to the Tere Area, was made during the month. The 63rd CB's arrived at Tere Beach June 11th, and on June 13th took over our road construction work, initial to that area's development. The enlarging and improving of the facilities and housing at Admirals Turner, Fort and Wilkerson's Camp Crocodile were continued during June as operations from this base were increasing at a fast pace.

The first USO Troup to reach this outpost arrived at the 14th camp, where a flat bed trailer stage and canopy were quickly improvised. The entertainment of Jim Burke, Green Cop of long standing, Bob Gilchurst, radio singer and the roly poly magician, Marty Sunshine, were welcome additions to the every other night movie. Another excellent group of entertainers from the 24th

CB's, under former 101 Ranch Showman, Chief Marshall, came up to our camp to sing, play and amuse us for several hours. Everyone was reluctant to see them leave. The electric guitar, good band and popular music were good to hear.

The camp was improved with the authorizing of lumber for decks in all tents of enlisted men, same to be supplied as available from the sawmill. The depleted stock of soap handicapped the chow hall and mess kits were dug out of seabags to be used until more was forthcoming. The tragic spectacle of seeing a mate, "lose his marbles" was a quietening sight one evening as the show began, Joslyn of Company "C", attempted to make a speech from the stage of the theatre, unheeded by those seated and quietly returned to his tent, where his queer actions aroused his mates. The medical department evacuated him immediately.

A commendation was received from Marine Command for alterations on the M-3 Tanks of the 9th Marine defense Battalion, our neighboring Service Unit. This improvement was made to prevent the enemy's ability to put those tanks out of commission as easily as previously.

July found the battalion engaged in construction of additional housing facilities at the airfield, and the maintenance of the heavily used 6-24 runway. Coral, not available in the Koli area was trucked in from Lunga for this purpose, run thru the rock crusher, then applied to the matting wherever required, "Pop" Flanagan's crew, while cutting piling for one of the quonsets on the airfield, were exposed to some strange sap. This contact made them victims of a body rash, which resulted in the evacuation of over fifty percent of the crew within a two-week period.

The Metaponia Bridge, planned for some time past, was built in eighteen days, opening for traffic on July 28th. The structures, a pile trestle type, 210' in length, \_\_\_ wide, required 60,000 board feet of native lumber for the laminated deck. A survey of roads now in use in the Koli area, revealed that the 14th had partici-

pated in or completed construction of 35.35 miles of airways, since arriving in the Area. Several miles of road in the Lunga area was also surfaced, but one not included in this total. Some 127,700 yards of gravel had been extracted from the Nalimbu River bed for use on the airfield, and this network of roadways.

Enemy activities were still not entirely eliminated. Lone Jap planes appeared in the early morning hours to drop bombs, small personnel type, on the 61st CB's near our camp and also to scatter a few in our area with little damage. The total alerts recorded to the end of July 14th, while the island has been, military speaking, secured since February 8th. The invasion of Munda, was proceeding rapidly and was heavily supplied from planes based on this airfield. There were some that were lost due to enemy gunfire, and some due to accidents. A B-24 took off with one motor spurting flames, began its circle around the field and exploded in the air above the bay, falling into the water and sinking almost at once. Other minor accidents occurred in take offs and landing of the planes, and many came in badly shot up and personnel killed. This heavy use of the runway made it advisable to oil the surface and this was done with engine oil brought by barge from Lunga.

The health of the battalion declined rapidly, the hot month of July. 35% or 343 men and 7 officers had now been evacuated for medical reasons. One of the largest contingents to leave departed the latter part of the month numbering thirty men and causing a send-off crowd to gather at the MAA office to see them off. Malaria, Benign Tertian and fatigue, operational brought on by hard strenuous duty with little fresh foodstuff, are the reasons for these evacuations.

Another USO Show visited the 14th camp in the persons of Jan Bubin, violinist, Eddie White, comedian and Frank Mitchell, movie veteran of many enjoyable roles. There entertainment was well attended by all the personnel in the area who could. Artie Shaw and band played for us and the 4th Marine Raiders, who had just arrived from Munda. They were guests of the battalion for two days.

A special chow was prepared for their relish and a double feature movie the night following the USO Show was given them. Many of the Raiders were able to replenish their every day needs from Seabee friends in the battalion. The 63rd CB Band also gave a concert one evening in the theatre area.

Other out of the ordinary events included the appearance of fried eggs and butter on our menus again in limited quantities, and the discovery of an artesian well at Camp Crocodile, the up in ranks of three Chief Petty Officers, Raney, Counts and Henderson to Warrant Rank, the arrival of a new dentist and the changed working schedule as of August 1st.

Early during the month of August, plans for a finger pier were started. The pier was to extend out 100' or until a sixteen foot depth of water was reached. Native timber and piling would be used in its construction. Actual work was begun August, 8th, and the structures dimension grew to 40' x 320' before completing it to the desired depth at the end of the pier. Native piling 25' to 35' length were used.

The grading and earth work on Bomber 2, was being done rapidly by the numerous pieces of equipment being utilized in its construction. The termination of maintenance on Bomber 1 by the battalion released a number of men for this work, as well as supplying needed crews to operate the sawmill more than a single shift. The flight tower for Bomber 2, was being built and painted so as to be in readiness for quick operation. The 873rd Army Engrs. relieved our maintenance crews on Bomber 1. The natives formerly used extensively in the may laying operations, were diverted to the erection of a sand bag wall around the Koli Radar Station, near Lunga, which was operated by the Royal New Zealand Airforce.

The steady decreasing number of personnel in the battalion, was now cutting deeply into the man power available for carrying out the Work Program for Koli Area. The number of evacuees increased from an average of 16 monthly the first six months, to 71 per month now.

Galley two was closed and appropriate marking on its entrance said, "Closed for the Duration, eat at Galley One". One of the unused mess halls was converted into a library and reading room. There were other innovations also, the opening of a new sick bay in camp, a quonset hut, pagoda complete with operating room and hot and cold running water. Baseball was gaining a great deal of popularity and several teams besides the regular battalion line up were loose about camp. The regulars played a good game, were fortunate in having good pitchers and also star players in other positions. The field near the camp entrance was well packed and in good condition for playing.

The new Warrant Officers, Raney, Counts and Henderson were ordered to report to 1st CB's at new Hebrides Island and five of their Warrants were ordered to the 14th.

In spite of the fact that this island has been inhabited by U S Troops for one year, action was still as occasional bombing or enemy action. A lone Jap bomber hit a cargo vessel early on the morning of August 13th, making same in the shallow waters of the harbor Lunga. The information about an enemy task force in the vicinity increased the vigilance of our aircraft and one evening several hundred men were rushed to the airfield to prepare emergency trenches and protection against an expected strafing attack. This did not occur and all hands returned to camp several hours later. Planes based at Bomber 1, had hit the emergency task force and disrupted its plans. Two bombers crashed during their operations, one on the runway and the other near VDI camp, erected by the battalion along the Nalimbu River.

One of the most interesting services was held in the CB Chapel one Sunday. A native Solomon Islander known as Sgt. Marcus, preached the sermon about Christianity. He spoke in a broken torrent of words with many mistakes but managed to convey his message to the attendance. He and the group of boy singers who accompanied him in the service were clad in the cast off clothing of Soldiers and Marines. A scivy shirt, a pair of off

trousers, a jungle jacket, a pair of white shorts, each seemed to have his own particular combination. The Sgt. was encouraged in his work by our missionaries, who have remained here all these years and was now greatly in demand as a native preacher. He and his native followers have completed a chapel at the Army Camp near Bomber 2 recently, for the second time.

The enemy were again more active than usual during September. All of the alerts were sounded during the late evening and early morning hours, under cover of darkness. The camp itself was a target on September 15th. Enemy bombers overhead dropped a dozen small personnel bombs in the camp area, half of them were duds, but four of them exploded in the vicinity of Camp B, and the cooks and bakers quarters. Fragments splattered thru the netting and imbedded in the wooden bulkheads of the tent houses. Three were hit, F. L. Richardson, S01c, S.M. Ferguson, SF2c, and W.M. Barbarick, CM3c, the latter was hit in his posterior as he leaned over to put on his shoes, while sitting on his bunk. New serious effects in any case. An unexploded bomb imbedded in the road, was removed by a Bomb Disposalman the following day. Shortly after this raid September 22nd, we saw two enemy planes downed by our night fighters. The alert was sounded at 2300 and everyone watched the search lights finally locate the enemy craft, a few minutes later red balls of flame sped out of the darkness into the shining target of the searchlights, a short period of waiting, then a frantic maneuver upward as the flames began to intensify, then an earthward plunge as the crowd flies. The other enemy plane soon followed, after being hit by night fighters. The wreckage were found the following day near Lunga, badly broken and in many fragments. One other raid did considerable damage to the Tank Farm Unloading Rack near the command post, and a bomb hit a B-24 Bomber on a hard stand at Bomber 1, doing considerable damage and causing the matting to be severed in several places. Our aerial activity was steadily increasing and it is believed payments for this damage were made in kind to the enemy, still entrenched in the Upper Solomon Island Chail. One B-24 over shot the

Landing Field and crashed in the Glide Angle with casualties.

Tetere Pier, complete with LST ramps was completed September \_\_\_\_\_. The approaches were graded and graveled. Camels and fringes were installed to protect it from incoming traffic. The waterfront and bridge crews had another project on the Nalimbu River, to follow Tetere completion. The Nalimbu River Bridge was to be extended on the west side of the bank, some four hundred feet to provide adequate waterway. This work was begun late in September.

Koli area was developing at a rapid rate, at this point. New units were coming in constantly. This required more camps and the battalion constructed galleys, mess halls and barracks buildings for Communications, Fourth Amphibs, New Zealand Navy and Camp Crocodile. A huge 100' x 40' warehouse was also built for the New Zealand Navy. The materials for these camps were furnished by the newly established Naval Construction Materials Depot, which in turn was supplied by the battalions steadily operating sawmill. Heavy timbers and decking for the Kokumbonia and Tetere Piers were also cut during September.

Bomber 2's progress was fast becoming apparent, the first bomber to land and take off on the new runway, did so on the 9th. A concrete circle was being poured at each end for the absorption of the landing force, of the heavy planes.

A survey of officers and men, accompanied by Comdr. Gally, departed late in September by sea, for Banufort Bay, a point on the opposite side of the mountains, which was to be the site of a Radar Installation, by the Royal New Zealand NSair Force. A road to the selected site from the beach, was the task to be performed by the battalion. They returned the following day, and preparations for the undertaking began.

In his report to the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Gally stressed again the need for the battalion's early relief and recuperation and re-assignment. This

recommendation emphasized that of the 991 men landed on Guadalcanal, 427 of them had been affected by malaria, many of them more than once. The increasing accidents, six on the Telere job alone are traceable to fatigue of the men. They were unable to do heavy and hard work any longer. Two of the Warrant Officers, who were transferred to this battalion from the 1st CB's, were given medical transfers for the now often used "fatigue" operational reason. A hand carved varnished miniature tombstone was completed and sent to the widow of Elmo Lee Finch, QM1c, who lost his life accidentally upon our arrival at Koli Point.

The warm sunny days were excellent for outdoor recreation, and main games enjoyed were baseball, and softball. The Guadalcanal League was now organized, and a team from the 14th entered its ranks. Jess Harrison and Fred Wollput as pitchers, did much to aid the chances for championship, as we defeated the 90th Field Artillery 1 to 0, the 8th Field Artillery 14 to 0, and the 2nd Aviation Engrs. (Marines). The good beginning was lost, however as we were defeated by the 70th Fighter Group, who were tied with us in the League standings.

Five men, one from each company were selected to enter V-12 training, in colleges of their selection in the states. These men selected from 23 enlisted men, fulfilling requirements, set down by the Navy, were to be forwarded via first available transportation to San Diego, California. The five, D.R. Andress, CM3c, D.A. Crow, CM2c, Doyle D. \_\_\_\_\_, MM3c, Miley, MM3c, and E.E. Ko \_\_\_\_\_, CM3c, departed by plane September 11th, for Noumea and further transfer home, all excited and with the best wishes for success from the entire battalion.

There was other good news for us in the radio bulletin for the 5th. The invasion of Italy was revealed. Progress was being made, however slowly. Our next door neighbors the 9th Defense Battalion, was preparing to move to Munda. The early batteries which they had sent up had done a remarkable job. Our hottest scuttlebutt was that the 9th, a long friend of the 14th, and us would return to the U.S.A. together, in October.

The neighboring Air Group on the opposite side from

the 9th Defense, were near the 42nd Command by a young Major, and only twenty-two years of age. The spacious tropical decorated theatre adjoining their camp was instrumental in drawing the top-notch travel entertainers. Lanny Ross, Little Jack Little and Ray Bolger appeared at the "Centipede", and were seen by Seabees, Soldiers, Marines and Airmen for miles around. Their performances were typical of the grand position they hold in the entertainment world. The two bottles of beer given each man were much enjoyed, this was our first of that commodity since July 4th.

A Missionary in the Solomons since 1908, visited camp and conducted services for the Catholic Faith, during the latter part of September. He was glad to tell of the native habits and characteristics, which according to his observation, were of high quality. His adventures had been many and varied, and were interesting to those who spoke with him. During his short stay, he was given many gifts for himself and his people. The realization that successful conquering of this island was credited in great part, to friendly natives made so by kindly, well meaning and generous Missionaries had long been upon us.

The Beaufort Bay mission, was being readied as October came along. Rations, equipment, fuel and supplies of all kinds needed for approximately forty-five men, were gathered in quantity. Early in the morning, the group departed from camp for the Koli Beach, where after loading their gear aboard small boats, they began the journey to the West Cape. The initial task was to provide accommodations for themselves and then the construction of 2,500 lineal feet of single all weather roadway to be built on a hillside, with a slope of 60°, there was to be one switchback curve and surfacing in the expected time required of three weeks. The natives in that section of the island, had previously made little contact with American Forces. They were in and about the camp in numbers, from barefooted boys to shy curious adults and aged parents. Tropical fruit limes, papaya and pineapple, were plentiful and were used to advantage by the group. One native woman gave birth to a baby

with the help of Mike Lentini, a Pharmacist Mate, long a fixture and favorite of the battalion enlisted personnel. Other disease laden natives were treated, as in our initial landing, some eleven months previously. The continual downpour of rain did much to hamper the work. Flight Lt. Conyers Brown RNZAF, reconsidered his plan for an all weather road, to a dry weather road, to speed our progress.

Back at Koli, coming events were casting shadows, as the 9th Marine Division, with the 2nd and 4th Marine Raider Battalions, moved into Tetere. Bombs, ammunition, heavy guns, rations and supplies of all kinds, began pouring in over the Tetere Pier to this concentration. The rumor had it, this was the striking force for the invasion of Bouganville, still a strongly held enemy position in the Solomons. One LSt rammed into the pier early in October, and one towards the end of a busy month, for that installation. This required repairs, which the waterfront and bridge crews made rapidly. The Tetere area was rapidly becoming a well populated section, with an estimated 25,000 Marines in combat training, thru its still dense jungle growth and undeveloped terrain.

This military move occasioned increased activity in the Koli Area, also. Bomber 11 was completed, lighting system installed and in operation early in the month. A commendation from the Marine General in Command, was received for our part of this work. The transfer of the men released from this work to Bomber 1, was rapid and hard stands were torn up to permit construction of Repair and Service Shops on Bomber 1 for P 1-3. A new bomb dump to hold the incoming stream of death dealing instruments, was engineered, constructed and filled. The pattern of roads around this addition comprised some ten miles of earth work. In order to accomplish these tasks in the face of steadily decreasing personnel, all work on the Nalimbu Bridge was suspended and the sawmill was closed October 19th, after an output of 1,104,787 board feet, in its year of operation.

Camp Crocodile, the admirals haven on Guadalcanal,

was still being improved with a new distinctive Galley opened early in October, with a supper, which was attended by many 14th personnel, new ship service, Radio Shack War Correspondents Quarters and additional housing for expected dignitaries. Admiral Wilkerson and Fort were next to Lt. General Vandergrift and Admiral Halsey part of the month, undoubtedly planning the Bouganville invasion. The first white woman to be seen on the island by battalion personnel, were glimpsed thru a heavy gold-braid convoy, on the occasion of the gala opening of the new mess hall.

Enemy air attacks were still occurring infrequently, and were intended to destroy the number of ships in the harbor, responsible for the Tetere Forces concentration. Early on the morning of the 11th, a lone Jap bomber hit a cargo vessel being unloaded by the 4th Special CB's at Koli Beach. The red glare of flames were reflected in the clouds and smoke, heavy black smoke, was visible for several days after that. Other raids occurred but were not successful. Our planes were out in force each day, intercepting and doing their destruction from the air, for the strategic that was soon to be revealed to the enemy. Some didn't return, some did with battle scars visible everywhere and wounded men were quickly given medical treatment, befitting their injuries. The B-25s and B-24s of the 13th Air Force, were doing their job. Gasoline consumption amounted to 1,879,520 gallon tank car loads. There were other new activities to occupy the dwindling personnel.

Two oxygen generating plants at Lunga were built by another detachment of men. These plants were to generate the badly needed oxygen for welding shops on the island. Heretofore, this product was shipped in its elongated cylinder, from the states. Lack of spare parts made this a frequent last resort in placing equipment back in operation. Spare parts requirements for all equipment were again complied for forwarding to the Bureau of Yards and Docks. Mosquito Control under Army supervision, required 10% of complement and several pieces of heavy equipment. These men, tractors and draglines, were utilized in the clearing and draining of approximately 320

acres of land from the Admiral's Camp, to above the Koli Branch of Mobile Hospital Number 8.

The weather up to the 24th of October, had been dry and warm, even hot at times. Then on that day, the rains came. High in the mountains to the northeast. The torrential rains had up rooted trees, branches of every size and begun pushing them downward toward the sea. The Nalimbui River rose quickly, and the accompanying debris soon was heard against the dolphins holding the trestle structures together. Crews were at work all night long blasting and attemptin at all costs to keep the bridge from washing out. One approach was completely washing out, the other badly damaged. It was during this misfortune that an incident occured which to the writer's mind had much to do with an event to be chronicled in this recollection. A guard had been posted at the first sign of possible damage to the Nalimbu Bridge on the night of October 24th. His name was Adair. B. E. Adair, Alabama born carpenter of no little skill. As he stood his post an automobile approached, and he took his place at the center of the road to do his duty. "Halt", he said as the approaching vechile came nearer. "You can't cross this bridge", he drawled in his southern accent. The car stopped and a bushy, familiar face poked thru the open window. "Do you know who you are speaking to?" it said in a gruff voice. "I don't care who you are, you can't cross this bridge", Adair replied. "Who's your Commanding Officer?" "Comdr. Reilly." " Well, get him out here," the voice ordered impatiently. Adair called and Comdr. Reilly arrived shortly afterwards. He spoke with the thwarted gentleman acquainting him with the pecarious condition of the bridge and of the 14th's seemingly endless task of keeping it across the stream. The Gentleman still insisted on crossing the structure, and so Comdr. Reilly instructed the guard to allow Admiral Halsey to go through.

The influx of shipping provided numerous vegetables fruits and fresh meat supplies for the galley, as well as new clothing, shoes, candy bars, cookies, beer, coke and cigars for all hands. We were getting much better food, but still medical evacuations were continuing.

An even six hundred remained at the end of October.

We lost the softball championship, as the Yank won the World Series back home. Chief W.P. "Pappy" Clark, began an electrical school, for his crew and others who were interested in becoming familiar with forgotten principles. The water produced and consumed by the Battalion and its customers in the Koli Area, soared to 3,587,600 gal. during the month. Classes in Judo were conducted in the theatre area, by Chief Specialist for NOB.

As the first anniversary of our stay approached, the weather was cloudy and rain fell at frequent intervals. Comdr. Reilly inspected the Oxygen Plant at Lung November 2nd, and upon his return at noon all officers were summoned to Battalion Headquarters. In a few minutes, the camp was well aware of the news received. Our orders had at long last arrived and we were to leave the Island within a few days.

Word was radioed to the Beaufort Bay group to re-at once, but this was already being done as the road had at last, in spite of adverse conditionsn been completed. It was 3,000 feet long, and 15 to 18 feet in width. 1,000 feet of the job had been coral surfaced. The average grade was 10%, the maxium 17%. In addition to this work, a 2½ mile road had been bulldozed to a water point for future use by our forces and other improvements were left as the men gladly turned toward Koli and the hurried efforts of packing.

Comdr. Reilly called a meeting of all hands in the theatre area, on the evening of November 2nd, to make a short speech, outlining our next few days schedule. A dispatch from Commander Service Squadron, South Pacific to Commander Naval bases, Forward Area received at Lung was given him on his visit to NOB. All details were secured, packing was begun at once, and we will try to be ready at the end of three days, he said. Appreciation of the men's accomplishments was also given.

Officers of the 61st CB's arrived in camp to tak

work at the Nalimbu River Bridge, the camp facilities, equipment and materials on hand. The lack of transportation and the urgency of our departure preclude any moving of this by the battalion. Guards were posted around the camp by them and in a few days, we were only occupied in cleaning up our individual areas, taking some military training and awaiting the day of departure.

At 0330, the morning of November 8th, all hands chowed, lashed their gear, and boarded trucks of the 2nd Aviation Marine Engrs. for the last ride out of our home this past year, to the docks at Koli Point. We arrived there shortly after 0800. A grey object, heading directly for us, was steaming from across the Sealark Channel. Soon our packs on our backs, infantry gear and all, we were headed towards it, off shore in pontoon barges. The battalion gear, jeeps and trucks accompanying us, were loaded by the 4th Special CB's. At approximately 1530, the anchor was lifted and 25 officers and 595 enlisted men, about 605 of the initial landing force, set sail for Pearl Harbor, after spending a year and four days on Guadalcanal.

As the green clad pattern studded island faded away, everyone was lining the rails to see the last of this much contested bit of land. There visible as the tides permitted, were the overturned hulk of the latest enemy casualty, a cargo vessel hit during a raid in October and further up the coast, were the beached remains of a once powerful enemy task force, which was the target of our fleet that glowing night of November 12th. Yes, there were some pleasant memories, but there were many more unpleasant ones. May we never return to this patch of land in the great Pacific.

November 11th, found us in the harbor of New Hebrides Islands, a vastly improved base since our appearance there in 1942. More of our men, who had been evacuated to this point, were picked up before sailing again. The great number of carriers, cruisers and ships of all types in this harbor, gave one an assuring frame of mind.

Thanksgiving was spent at the sea with a chicken

dinner and trimmings, equal to the best aboard. The sea was fairly calm, sailing was good. Sun bathing, occasional movies and the not too crowded condition of our ship, the USS Lew Wallace, made the journey a fairly comfortable one. The ship's Chaplain, a young enterprising human sort of a fellow, did all in his power to make us enjoy the voyage.

On the morning of November 27th, we prepared our packs and gear for debarking at Pearl Harbor, clearly visible ahead in the early morning hours. Our ship, aft awaiting a pilot, preceded to dock in the Navy Yard. A we awaited orders to debark, a limousine arrives at the dock below our gangway, and Lt. Comdr. J.J. Delaney boarded ship and entered the Captain's cabin. In several minutes the Master Sergeant in charge of the troops appeared and gave Chief J.J. Quinn, the orders to unpack, as we were going on to San Francisco with the ship. This was smilingly confirmed by Lt. Comdr. Callanan a few minutes later. The joy quite apparent, as shouting, hooping and hollering spread with the news around the deck below.

Liberty for all hands was given the following two days, and we were again able to see what civilization looked like. In the meantime our mail was located and our Christmas packages began arriving in quantity. Pearl Harbor was well on its way to being repaired after 7th, December. Only two ships were visible in the harbor which were being salvaged. Admiral Cotter, Chief of the Pacific Division, BuDocks, came aboard and mingled with the men one morning, warning us all to stay with the Lew Wallace as she was heading where we wanted to go.

November 30th, tugs approached and towed us out to sea, for the last leg of our journey home. The weather was cold and peacoats were welcome topside. Anti-Aircraft target practice and heavy gunfire were activities the first afternoon out. There were several other ships in the convoy, but few remained with us all the way in.

Several stormy days bounced our lightly loaded vessel around mercilessly, but we did finally glimpse the Faroe Island at San Francisco's harbor outer entrance.

slowly thru the mine fields, single file, until the Golden Gate Bridge appeared out of the fog. Noise and excitement were high and soon we were under the bridge and nearing our pier. This was December 11th.

Apparently we had been expected, for a band was playing as we neared the mooring position and the gangway was upped to the deck. Waves, our first to see, Red Cross ladies and officials from Camp Parks were on hand to welcome us. A radio announcer interviewed the first man to come down the gang plank and everyone seemed happy.

Fresh milk, donuts, hersheys and coffee were served at the Mobile Canteen, at the foot of the gangway. Western Union representatives were on hand to receive telegrams and busses driven by pretty young ladies awaited our entrance. The long ride thru the streets Of Oakland and out into the valley, required over an hour, but at 2000, we were eating a steak dinner in one of the cleanest mess halls we had been in. Home at last and glad of it.

We bedded down in quonset huts for several days while we acquired clothes, turned in gear, got railroad tickets and awaited leave papers, but by 15th of December, all had departed for home and a real Christmas and a year's celebration with their families and loved ones before returning once again to the war across the Blue Pacific and another Island "X".

Norris W. Woldy

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San Francisco to Port Hueneme .....	34
Port Hueneme to Noumea .....	55
Noumea to Tongatabu .....	104
Tongatabu to Espirito Santos .....	107
Espirito Santos to Port Vila Efati .....	22
Noumea to Espirito Santos .....	67
Espirito Santos to Koli Point .....	62
Espirito Santos to Pearl Harbor .....	363
Pearl Harbor to San Francisco .....	209
Pearl Harbor to Eniwetok .....	237
Eniwetok to Siapan .....	99
Saipan to Okinawa .....	120
Okinawa to Pearl Harbor .....	410
Okinawa to San Francisco .....	561

(Great circle route )

## **14<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion,**

**July 1942 – April 1946**

The 14<sup>th</sup> U.S. Naval Construction Battalion (NCB) was commissioned on 14 July 1942 at the Naval Construction Training Center, Camp Allen, Norfolk, Virginia. It was immediately transferred to Camp Bradford near Little Creek, Virginia, for further training. After short stays at Davisville, Rhode Island, and Oakland, California, the 14<sup>th</sup> NCB embarked for the Pacific Theater of Operations, arriving in November 1942 at Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands. At Guadalcanal the battalion's principal occupation was airfield construction. During its year there the Seabees endured frequent Japanese bombing raids, bad weather (including high humidity, torrential rains, and mud), and tropical diseases. Before the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion's sojourn on Guadalcanal ended, 40 percent of its personnel had been evacuated due to disease and operational fatigue.

In November 1943 the 14<sup>th</sup> NCB was finally returned to the continental United States for rest and retraining, arriving at Camp Parks near Oakland, California, on 11 December. The battalion remained at Camp Parks for 10 months, recuperating, learning new skills, and replacing personnel who had been detached because of illness and fatigue.

In October 1944 the 14<sup>th</sup> NCB departed from Camp Parks for its second deployment to the Pacific, arriving at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, on 29 October. In Hawaii the battalion worked on the construction of the Marine Corps Air Station at Ewa and the Barber's Point Naval Air Station.

In March 1945 the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion left Pearl Harbor for Saipan in the Marianas, where it staged for the invasion of Okinawa. At Saipan the battalion was divided into two echelons. The first echelon, comprising 21 officers and 719 enlisted men, left Saipan around 20 April 1945 and arrived at Okinawa on the 29<sup>th</sup> while combat was still raging. The remainder of the battalion moved forward to Okinawa at the end of May. At Okinawa the battalion built roads, repaired bridges, and constructed harbor facilities, frequently dodging bullets from Japanese snipers, who continued to harass American troops until their government surrendered in August. One battalion member was killed in action

## HISTORY OF 14<sup>TH</sup> NCB

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in May when his bridge-repair party was ambushed by enemy soldiers. The 14<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion remained at Okinawa for the early months of the postwar period building facilities for the occupation forces. It was disestablished on 12 April 1946 at Okinawa.

Prepared by:

NAVFAC Historian's Office  
Port Hueneme, CA  
May 2004

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COPY

ITINERARY OF THE 14TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

Battalion formed at NCTC, Camp Allen, Norfolk.

- 14 July 1942 Transferred to Camp Bradford, Norfolk, Va.
- 22 Aug 1942 Departed ABD, Davisville, R. I. for embarkation point.
- 27 Aug 1942 Arrived Oakland, Calif.
- 7 Sep 1942 Departed Oakland for Port Hueneme.
- 9 Sep 1942 Sailed from Port Hueneme for overseas destination.
- 29 Sep 1942 Arrived Noumea.
- 16 Oct 1942) At Noumea, the 14th CB was split into 2 sections, the 1st  
19 Oct 1942) section departing on these dates for Guadalcanal.
- 4 Nov 1942 1st Section arrived Guadalcanal.
- 5 Nov 1942 2nd Section departed Noumea.
- 8 Nov 1942 2nd Section arrived Espiritu Santo.
- 27 Nov 1942 2nd Section departed Espiritu Santo. 45 men of this section  
remained at Espiritu Santo.
- 29 Nov 1942 2nd Section arrived Guadalcanal.
- 20 Dec 1942 Rear echelon of 2nd Section departed Espiritu Santo.
- 23 Dec 1942 Rear echelon of 2nd Section arrived Guadalcanal.
- 9 Nov 1943 The 14th CB complete departed Guadalcanal.
- 27 Nov 1943 Arrived Pearl Harbor.
- 30 Nov 1943 Departed Pearl Harbor for the U. S.
- 11 Dec 1943 Arrived Camp Parks.
- 21 Oct 1944 Departed Camp Parks for 2nd tour overseas duty.
- 29 Oct 1944 Arrived Pearl Harbor.
- 1 Feb 1945 Battalion is located at Pearl Harbor.
- Mar 1945 Moved to Saipan.
- May 1945 Moved to Okinawa.
- 1 Oct 1945 Located Okinawa.

The above itinerary is based upon information available in the C. B. Operations Section of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

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TOP SECRET PLAN

ITINERARY OF THE 14TH CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (SPECIAL)

- 10 Sep 1943 - Transferred from Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va., to Port Hueneme, Calif.
- 30 Sep 1943 - First echelon departed U. S.
- 3 Oct 1943 - First echelon arrived Pearl Harbor.
- 7 Oct 1943 - Second echelon arrived Pearl Harbor. Date of departure unknown.
- 3 Nov 1943 - 243 men and 6 officers left Honolulu.
- 10 Nov 1943 - Arrived Funa Futi.
- 12 Nov 1943 - 109 men and 3 officers left Honolulu.
- 18 Nov 1943 - Arrived Funa Futi.
- 4 Jan 1944 - The 14th CB(Sp) is split up as follows: The greater part of the battalion is assigned to ABRD, Iroquois Point. One Unit left in two sections for Funa Futi, the second section going on to Tarawa.
- 1 Feb 1944 - 179 men at Funa Futi.  
160 men at Tarawa.  
360 men at Oahu,  
266 men aboard different ships on temporary assignments - used in Marshall offensive during January. 20 men were also at Gilbert offensive.
- 15 Mar 1944 - ComSerFor advised that the two detachments at Funa Futi and Tarawa were transferred to Kwajalein. Co. B. left Tarawa 29 Feb 1944 and arrived Majura 3 March 1944, operated 3 1/2 days, left 8 March 1944 and arrived Kwajalein 9 March 1944. Co. C left Tarawa 1 March 1944, arrived Kwajalein 6 March 1944.
- 1 Jul 1944 - Monthly report states main operations at Pearl Harbor with two detached sections of which no location is given.
- 1 Aug 1944 - Monthly report states operating at Pearl Harbor and Eniwetok Is.
- Jan 1945 - Two ship gangs of 25 men each returned from tempdu aboard ships that took part in Philippine invasion. One ship gang of 25 men still aboard ship.
- 1 Feb 1945 - Located at Pearl Harbor with 130 men in forward areas. A detachment still at Eniwetok.
- 21 Aug 1945 - To be inactivated effective upon the disposal of all records, accounts and equipment.

NOTE: The above itinerary is based upon the records available in the C.B. Operations Section of the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

5 September 1945.

## 14<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

### Chronology

14 Jul 1942 Battalion formed at NCTC, Camp Allen, and Norfolk.  
Transferred to Camp Bradford, Norfolk, VA.

22 Aug 1942 Departed Advance Base Depot, Davisville, R. I., for embarkation point.

27 Aug 1942 Arrived Oakland, CA.

07 Sep 1942 Departed Oakland for Port Hueneme, CA.

09 Sep 1942 Sailed from Port Hueneme for overseas destination.

29 Sep 1942 Arrived Noumea.

16 Oct 1942 – At Noumea, the 14<sup>th</sup> CB was split into 2 sections, the 1<sup>st</sup> section departing on these dates for Guadalcanal.

19 Oct 1942

04 Nov 1942 1<sup>st</sup> Section arrived at Guadalcanal.

05 Nov 1942 2<sup>nd</sup> Section departed Noumea.

08 Nov 1942 2<sup>nd</sup> Section arrived at Espiritu Santo.

27 Nov 1942 2<sup>nd</sup> Section departed Espiritu Santo. 45 men of this section remained at Espiritu Santo.

29 Nov 1942 2<sup>nd</sup> Section arrived at Guadalcanal.

20 Dec 1942 Rear echelon of 2<sup>nd</sup> Section departed Espiritu Santo.

23 Dec 1942 Rear echelon of 2<sup>nd</sup> Section arrived at Guadalcanal.

09 Nov 1943 The 14<sup>th</sup> CB departed Guadalcanal.

27 Nov 1943 Arrived at Pearl Harbor.

30 Nov 1943 Departed Pearl Harbor for U. S.

11 Dec 1943 Arrived at Camp Parks, CA.

21 Oct 1944 Departed Camp Parks for 2<sup>nd</sup> tour of duty overseas.

29 Oct 1944 Arrived at Pearl Harbor.

01 Feb 1945 Battalion is located at Pearl Harbor.

Mar 1945 Battalion is moved to Saipan.

May 1945 Battalion is moved to Okinawa.

01 Oct 1945 Battalion is located at Okinawa.

12 Apr 1946 14<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion is inactivated.

14<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion

Commanding Officers

Commander T. F. Reilly, Jr., CEC, USN	14 Jul 1942 – 15 Dec 1943
Lieutenant Commander C. A. Callanan, CEC, USN	15 Dec 1943 – 20 Feb 1944
Commander T. F. Reilly, Jr., CEC, USN	20 Feb 1944 – 15 Jul 1945
Commander C. J. Simandl, CEC, USN	15 Jul 1945 – 12 Apr 1946

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U.S. NAVAL

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