

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

---

*Historical  
Information*



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



64th C.B.

|            |                                             |                                        |
|------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| NOTG       | - Norfolk, Magruder                         | <u>2nd Embarkation</u>                 |
| ABD        | - Davisville                                | ABD - Parks                            |
| Ready Date | - 9 Apr'43                                  | Rdy Date - 10 Oct'44                   |
| Left ABD   | - 1st Sect - 23 Mar'43; 2nd Sect. 31 Mar'43 | Left ABD - 21 Oct'44                   |
| Location   | - Argentia                                  | Location - Pearl Harbor<br>Leyte-Samar |

LOG

- 2-25-43 - Ordered transferred ABD Davisville.  
 3-28-43 - 543 men and 15 officers sailed from ABD Davisville.  
 5-24-43 - 1st half 64th arrived Argentia 27 Mar. - 2nd half 4 Apr'43. (IKS)  
 6-25-43 - May report from NOB Argentia - 1026 men.  
 1- 4-44 - 64th CB arrived U.S. 4 Jan'44. (WRK)
- 10- 9-44 - 64th CB arrived Parks from Davisville 30 Sep'44 with 29 off. and 1025 men.  
 (O2TWX2136 Oct'44 from Parks)
- 10-18-44 - The 64th CB is scheduled to depart for overseas 21 Oct'44. (Com 12 Sec. disp. 072354 NCR 8144 to CNO dtd 8 Oct'44).
- 10-28-44 - The 64th CB with 31 off and 1047 men departed Parks for overseas 21 Oct'44. (Parks conf. disp. to Bopers conf. B21832 NCR 1123 dtd 22 Oct'44).
- 11-15-44 - The 64th CB is assigned to the 3rd Reg. (Comserforpacflt Sec. ltr 55-QKW/apk over Ser. 001008 to CNO dtd 4 Nov'44).
- 11-15-44 - The 64th CB detachment is now located at NAS Melbourne, Fla. and under orders to report with all equipment to Pearl H. leaving 13 Nov'44. (CAOTRA COMD Sec. disp to UnderSecNav 102030 NCR 8730 dtd 10 Nov'44).

## 64th CB

- 11-16-44 - The 64th CB is located at Pearl Hbr. (Com 14 Sec. disp to CNO 062243 NCR 15886 dtd 11 Nov'44).
- 12-16-44 - 64th CB is located at Pearl Harbor and is in the 2nd Brig. (Com 14 Sec. Disp. to CNO 072103 dtd 13 Dec'44)
- 12-28-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of the 64th CB - Located at Pearl Harbor. Report endorsed by 3rd Reg Batt left Camp Parks for pre-embarkation barracks, Treasure Island on 21 Oct'44. Left U.S. on 25 Oct. and arrived P.H. on 30 Oct'44. A detachment of 25 men and 1 officer were left behind on temporary duty at NAS Melbourne, Fla.
- 1-10-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 3rd Regiment - A detachment of 1 officer and 23 men was ordered on or about 10 Nov'44 from NAS Melbourne, Florida to the CBRD Camp Parks for further transfer to the 64th CB.
- 1-11-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 64th CB - On 3 Nov'44 the 64th CB started operations on the John Rodgers Airport by taking over work on 12 projects assigned by the 129th CB.
- 2- 7-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 64th CB - no info on location. Report endorsed by the 3rd Regiment.
- 2-13-45 - 2nd Brdg. Sec. ltr Ser. 092 dtd 27 Jan'45 to OinC 64th CB - ordered to proceed on ships to a verbally designated place in the Pacific area. Upon arrival to report to the 2nd Brdg. for duty.
- 2-13-45 - The 64th CB is available form Pearl for assignment to Samar. (CNO Sec. ltr to distribution list Ser. 0039230 dtd 3 Feb'45).
- 2-13-45 - Comserfor7fltl desires to lift the 64th CB from Pearl in Feb or early Mar'45. (Comserfor7fltl Sec. disp 061001 to Com7fltl dtd 8 Feb'45).
- 2-17-45 - The 64th CB is located at Pearl Hbr. (Com 14 Sec. disp to CNO 081016 Feb'45).

Location - Pearl Harbor Leyte-Samar

64th C.B.

- 2-26-45 - 1 Feb '45 report of the 64th CB - located in Hawaiian Area. Report endorsed by the 3rd Reg.
- 4-9-45 - Personnel and cargo of the 64th CB left Pearl 26 Mar '45. (Cincpoa Pearl Sec Disp to CNO 310153 Mar '45)
- 4-25-45 - 64th CB included in list of units deleted from 14ND. (Com14 Sec Airmailgram NCR 13634 to CNO dtd 10 Apr '45)
- 4-30-45 - Comserfor7flt Sec Rep of 1 Apr '45 shows the 64th CB ordered from P.H. to Leyte-Sam
- 5- 1-45 - Dirpacdock P Sec Rep of 1 Apr '45 shows the 64th CB located at Samar.
- 5- 8-45 - The 64th CB is shown enroute to Samar on the Dirpacdock S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr '45
- 5-17-45 - 1 Mar '45 report of 3rd Reg. - As of 1 Mar '45 the 3rd Reg. was comprised of the 64th, 126th & 129th CBs.
- 5-19-45 - 1 Mar '45 report of the 64th CB - location not given. Report end. by 3rd Reg. and 2nd Brg.
- 5-25-45 - 1 May '45 report of the 64th CB - located at Leyte-Samar. Batt was in transit from 26 Mar '45 to 1 May '45. Stopped over at Eniwetok. Report routed via the 3rd Reg and 2nd Brg.
- 6-6-45 - 1 May '45 report of the 3rd Reg. states that the 64th CB located in Leyte Gulf Are & that they departed Hawaiian Area traveling in echelons & arrived at Leyte Gulf area as follows.

| ARRIVAL DATE<br>LEYTE GULF | DEPARTURE DATE<br>HAWAIIAN AREA | ECHELON<br>NUMBER | TOTAL NUMBER<br>MEN - OFFICERS |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 8 Apr '45                  | 20 Mar '45                      | 1                 | 10 5                           |
| 29 Apr '45                 | 26 Mar '45                      | 2, 3 & 4          | 369 7                          |
| 28 Apr '45                 | 26 Mar '45                      | 5 & 6             | 242 6                          |
| 28 Apr '45                 | 30 Mar '45                      | 10                | 14 3                           |
| Still enroute              | 26 Mar '45                      | 7, 8 & 9          | 389 9                          |

Location - Leyte-Samar

64th C.B.

- 6- 8-45 - 1 Apr '45 report of the 64th CB - Secured all work at Hawaii on 24 Mar '45 and boarded ship on 26 Mar '45 for an adv base. Report routed via 3rd Reg and 2nd Brg.
- 6-13-45 - 1 Jun '45 report of the 3rd Reg. - 389 men and 9 off. of the 64th CB departed old station on 26 Mar '45 and arrived Leyte-Samar on 1 May '45. 64th CB was detached from the 3rd Reg on 28 May '45.
- 6-15-45 - 1 Jun '45 report of the 64th CB - located at Leyte-Samar. On 1 May '45 the 64th CB took over the work of construction of a 15,000 man Rec Barracks on Tubabao Is. Also engaged in constr of small boat repair fac on Inatoulan Is. Report via 12th Reg and 2nd Brg.
- 7-27-45 - The 64th CB is attached to the 12th Reg and 2nd Brg. Located at Guiuan, Samar erecting RecSta, constructing Inatoulan Island small boat repair facilities, constructing anchor blocks and channel buoys. (CCT 7th Flt Sec rep for June)
- 8-13-45 - The 64th CB is assigned to the Olympic Operation. (Com7flt conf report on CB organization in Leyte-Samar area ser 04296 dtd 26 July to CNO)
- 8-14-45 - 1 Aug '45 report of the 64th CB - located at Tubabao Is., Samar. Report via the 12th Reg and 2nd Brg.
- 8-24-45 - Following units available for ur 182303 of Aug of higher classification:-33rd Reg, CBs 5, 29, 30 & 64. Subj units now Samar. Req you confirm. OinC, 2nd Brig is directed to detach subj units & direct to report for operational control by disp to Comgenfmpac upon his confirmation. Cincpac, Guam 200956 Aug not to all or needed refers. (Comservpac Sec disp 222145 to Comgenfmpac).
- 8-30-45 - CBs 30, 34 & 132 report by disp for operational control to Marairwing. (Comservpac sec disp 280455 Aug '45 to 2nd & 7th Brigs).
- 9-25-45 - 1 Sept '45 report of 64th CB. Located in Samar area. Report via 12th Reg & 2nd Brg.

Location - Leyte-Samar

64th CB

- 10-17-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 64th CB - location not stated. Report via 32nd Reg. & 2nd Brg.  
 11-15-45 - OinCC, Samar reqs CCT, Philseafron authority to inactivate the 64th CB. (OinCC, Samar ltr ser P68-45 dtd 23 Oct'45 to CCT, Philseafron).  
 11-21-45 - Comservpac directs Comphilseafron to inactivate the 64th CB. (Comservpac 192201 Nov'45 TWX to Comphilseafron).  
 11-30-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 64th CB - location not stated. Report via 32nd Reg. & 2nd Brg.  
 12-3-45 - 64th CB was inactivated(date not given). (Comservpac restr ltr ser-61 undtd to BuPers).  
 3-1-46 - 64th CB considered inactivated. (OinC 34th Reg ltr Ser 01498 dtd 31 Dec 45 to OinC 64th CB)

## INACTIVATED

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>ON BOARD</u> |            | <u>AUTHORITY</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|
|             | <u>OFFICERS</u> | <u>MEN</u> |                  |
| 24 May'44   | 32              |            | Roster           |
| 30 Jun'44   |                 | 981        | Recap.           |
| 1 Oct'44    |                 | 1046       | BNP625           |
| 1 Nov'44    | 32              | 1043       | MoR              |
| 1 Jan'45    | 31              | 1016       | MoR              |
| 1 Feb'45    | 29              | 1003       | MoR              |
| 1 Mar'45    | 27              | 1014       | MoR BNP625 + MoR |
| 1 May'45    | 27              | 1012       | MoR              |
| 1 Jun'45    | 29              | 1009       | MoR              |
| 1 Jul'45    | 27              | 989        | Roster & BNP625  |
| 1 Aug'45    | 29              | 974        | BNP625 & R       |
| 1 Sept'45   |                 | 826        | BNP625           |
| 1 Oct'45    | 28              | 1039       | BNP625 & R       |
| 1 Nov'45    | 25              | 529        | BNP625 & R       |

64th C. B.

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DECLASSIFIED

| Date | Organization | Location  | Reference                                                           |
|------|--------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4/21 | -            | (Nod)     | Com 14 sec act<br>disp. 14 April NCR<br>13634.                      |
| 5/22 | -            | 0550-4100 | Consewach jet added<br>sec act disp<br>100031 May                   |
| 9/17 | -            |           | Consewach Con). request to ready<br>310037 Aug. for listing by 9/20 |

64th C. B.

DECLASSIFIED

| Date    | Organization | Location                | Reference                                                                                     | Notes                                   |
|---------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 5/31/44 | -            | (Camp Endicott)<br>fray | -                                                                                             | -                                       |
| 9/12/44 | -            | (Pearl)                 | CNS SOC DISP.<br>081545 Sept                                                                  | Ready Bands 10<br>Oct - ared Pearl.     |
| 9/20    | -            | (..)                    | CNS CONF DISP<br>161345 Sept                                                                  | Transfer to Bands<br>about 25 Sept.     |
| 10/10   | -            | "                       | Bands memo 10/5                                                                               | Ready Bands 10 Oct -<br>assigned Pearl. |
| 10/11   | -            | Pearl                   | Com 14 sec act<br>072354 Oct.                                                                 | scheduled depart for<br>Fray 2 Oct.     |
| 10/23   | -            | Pearl                   | Camp Bands con.<br>disp. 221832 Oct.                                                          | departed Bands 21 Oct<br>for overseas.  |
| 11/13   | -            | FRAY                    | Com 14 sec act disp<br>062243 Nov.                                                            |                                         |
| 12/12   | -            | FRAY                    | Com 14 sec act disp add - 2nd Brigade<br>072103 Dec                                           |                                         |
| 1/18    | -            |                         | Consewach Ave disp (2nd listed (ulst)) (for Con. Supp.)                                       |                                         |
| 2/6     | -            |                         | Consewach jet sec disp. desired shipment be listed Pearl in<br>061001 Feb. sec.               |                                         |
| 2/5     | -            |                         | ability Consewach to provide shpg.<br>Com Secw Doc. 061947 Feb. pms. 6 EPP. ready FRAY 15 Feb |                                         |

# THE UNIFORM YEARS

## A HISTORY OF THE 64TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

A troop train chugged in to the station and came to a panting halt. The big engine let out a rush of steam, a sigh of exhaustion after its long cross-country pull. Faces which had breath-fisted the windows were quickly withdrawn. There was a moment's pause, then the narrow platform was inundated with the surge of recruits streaming from the coaches. A chill December wind flapped the topcoats of the men and sent a grey hat rolling into the Virginia mud. A fat boy from Texas raced after it while the spectators laughed. The laugh was cut short by the sharp order of a Seabee Chief demanding "Attention!" The group formed an uncertain line.

"Ashcraft - Atkinson - Brown - Cohen - Connally —"  
The voice ground on. The first muster of many musters through



"You'll be sorr-eee"

many uniformed years had begun. "The boots" had arrived. Despite the checked sport coats or slacks or double-breasted blues they wore, they were already part of the Navy, part of the Armed Forces of the United States. The job ahead for each man was to change as quickly as possible from an easy-going civilian to a fighting-construcing Seabee. The job ahead for America and her Allies was to conquer the Axis partners, Germany, Italy, and Japan.

This small group of men assembled on a station platform in Little Creek, Va., represented only a handful of potential power. However, on many other station platforms throughout the length and breadth of America other troops were being assembled. This scene of a great country gathering its might would be duplicated and multiplied tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

Rain fell from the cloud-smudged skies as the boots marched through the gates at Camp Bradford. Already the mire was deep. A truck swooshed by splattering the men with mud. Grinning, the driver looked back and yelled, "You'll be sorr-eee!", and then sped on his way.

"Wish I was home," a tow-head kid from Arizona mumbled. No one answered but the unexpressed thought was clogged in the throats and hearts of the recruits.

Now orders were coming fast. Fall in. Fall out. Muster double. Faster. Faster.

The G. I. Issue Warehouse for clothing. "Don't crowd. Keep moving. March. Halt. About face. Close in. Count off. On the move. Check each item for size." "Shirt—15. Pants—32.

Shoes—9D." "Do NOT stencil your soap!" "Other way out." "Get goin'!"

Medical Check Up. Mercurochrome number on each chest. "Name, rate, any disabilities." "I hear the guy up ahead didn't pass. Found something bad wrong with him and he's being sent home, lucky stiff!!" "Read the Chart." "Breathe deeply". Open your mouth and say, "Ah". "You're okay. Next!"

The Barber Shop. Clippers mowing hair. A butcher and a plumber doing the barbering. "If you don't mind, sir, just trim a little off the top and —", "Gee, get a load of you! Bald like a billiard ball." "Well, you don't look like an ad for Vitalis". "Gee, if me Mudder could see me now. Me beautiful coils gone!"

"Come on, get the lead out." Move on. March. Faster. Faster.

National Service Life Insurance and War Bond Office. "We recommend \$10,000 insurance for each man. Secretary Knox wants you to have it. Besides, you can't ever tell what may happen to you before you get through. You don't want your widow to be in need, do you?" "How many bonds shall we take out of your pay check each month? Make it a little more. Good way of saving and helping your country at the same time. Okay, sign here. Next!"

The Express Office. "Dump your civvies in the box provided. Come on, come on, you're holding up the works. You ain't the only guy goin' through, you know. Where do you want this stuff sent?" "That will be 82c postage. Next!"

The Photo Studio. "Line up for pictures here. What are we takin' 'em for? To send to your home-town paper, of course, to show what a hero you are. For your IDENTIFICATION CARD, you dope! Look pretty". Click. "That's got it. Next!"

0530 reveille. "Hit the deck." Rise and shine." "On the double." Muster. "Fall out for P. T." Ready now, the jumping jack. Okay, the West Point breather. Rim in place. Get those legs higher! Higher! Higher!"

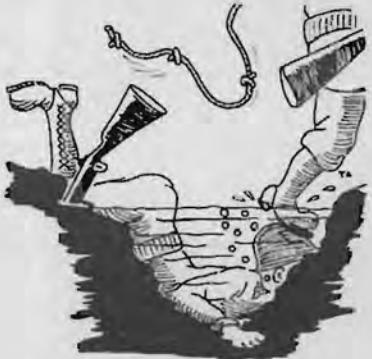
Chow. Beans for breakfast—and lunch, and supper. Chipped beef on a shingle. Horse stock. "No wonder the Navy calls it 'mess'".

Drill. Line up and march to the drill field. "Forward-march! A-hum, two, tree, four. A-hum, two, tree, four. Fill in there. Keep your distance. Don't gang up. Keep your eyes off the deck." Ten minutes out for water and rest. "The smoking lamp is lit." "Fall in on the double, we don't have all day." Drill. Extended order drill. Drill. Dis-order drill. "Left, left. I had a good home and I left."

The reading of the Articles of the Navy in solemn tones. The Chaplain's talk. Movies shorts on prevention of V. D. Shorts on hand-to-hand combat. Lectures and demonstrations of Judo, use of the machete, use of the bayonet, use of the .45, use of the carbine. Men falling asleep during the drowsing talks, tired by the marching. "Wake that guy up over there and have him stand at attention till the talk's over. More talk. More movie shorts. More talk. More marching.

Poison gas demonstration. "Adjust your gas masks and march through the gas chamber. Remove masks just prior to exiting from chamber." The burning irritation of tear gas." What gas smells like new mown hay?" "If a gas smells like geraniums, what gas is it?" "Put on that gas mask faster. Your life may depend on it!"

Bayonet drill. "Lunge, thrust, withdraw. Make like it's a



Amphibious training.



Am I intruding?

Jap you're stabbing." Machete practice. "This is position one, position two, and on the third position it is 80 percent footwork." "In my case, it's gonna be 100 percent footwork!" Hand grenade practice. "Toss it and hit the deck." "Faster! The enemy ain't gonna wait for you to make up your mind. Faster!"

"Please, sir, when do we get liberty?" "Liberty, haw!" You have three more weeks to go in boot camp yet. Fall in for a cross-country hike."

The big day! The end of boot training. The first liberty. "Boy, am I gonna get pie-eyed!" "Yeah, three beers and you're out."

Seaman second class marching down a road. A new truck load of boats arriving in camp. As one, the S2s yell, "You'll be sort-of!"

Yesterday's heckled are today's hecklers.

The date—8 January 1943. Men have been assigned to battalions. The 64th Naval Construction Battalion is commissioned. "Wonder what sorta outfit we got into." "Wonder where we'll be headin' next."

The answer. The 64th Seabees are transferred to Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Va. "Beautiful, historic Williamsburg". Mud. Rain. Mud. "The girls from William and Mary College are not allowed to go with Seabees". "Over there's the Navy Chaplain's School". "Yeah, but where's the bars?" "Pu-lease, young man!" "Carry me AWAY from ol' Virginy!"

Lt. Commander Victor W. Buhr becomes Officer-in-Charge of the 64th Battalion. Advance training starts. The Marines are placed in charge of training. Drill, March. "Gee, and I figured it was rough in boot camp." Technical training classes commence. Stevedoring, Camouflage, Heavy Equipment Operation, Chemical Warfare. Hikes. How to get in and out of shell holes. How to dig a fox hole. Inoculations. "The Square Needle". The obstacle course. Faster. Crawl through the barbed wire. Icy winds making men lose their balance. Others slipping and sliding as they run. "Hurry!" Across the rope bridge. Over the wall. Under the culvert. Through that pipe. "Faster! Swing out over the water. Hurry. The enemy ain't gonna wait!" "If you can't make it, drop out of line and begin once more from the start."

Abandon ship drill. Fire drill. How to get in and out of landing barges. The General Orders. "What's Order Number Seven?" "You shoulda learned it way back in boot camp. You better study them again." March, Hike, Drill, Inspection Sunday. "Police the area." "Sew a button on your shirt." Fall out.

Letters home. "Dear Honey, I was so sorry to hear what a hard time you are having trying to get home. Things in civilian life sure must be tough." Movies. "Gee, it's been a long while

since I last saw Clara Bow in a show." Liberty in Richmond. "Meet me at the White Tower Hamburger stand if you want a lift back to camp." Card games in the barracks. Talk of home. Talk of the future. The radio blaring news of German and Japanese conquest. The cheery voice throughout—Gabriel Heater—"There is great news for the men on the fighting front today . . .". "Better pack your barracks bag."

**THE Crap Game.** It had been going on hot and heavy in one corner of the barracks since after chow. Now it was 2100. Greenbacks changed hands. "Come on, seven. Shoot 'em!" Suddenly, the Skipper appeared in the doorway. A mad scramble for money, then men scattered in all directions. "I want to know the name of each man who participated in this game. Severe disciplinary action will be taken." Only two men admit their part in the game. "Alright then, have all the men fall outside the barracks." Sleepy 64th'ers tumbled out into the darkness and rain. "Did you take part?" "Oh, no sir". "Did you?" "No, sir". "Well, then we'll stand out here until every man confesses. March the men by companies into the recreation hall to be questioned individually." Men questioned and only a few more confess. Men waiting in the rain. "Well, we'll march awhile. Maybe that will teach some of you to speak up." 2200. Marching, marching. 2300. More questions. More marching. Midnight. Still some men holding out. March some more. Not until 0000 were the men allowed to return to their barracks. Still some hold outs but 12 men had confessed. They were marched to the brig. The red dice became a symbol, the insignia of the 64th.

Two months' of advanced training over now. Talk of moving on, but where to? Scuttlebutt in the barracks, in the mess hall, in the head. "I heard from a Chief we was goin' to Gulfport. That's only 10 miles from home!" "Yeah? Well I heard we were heading for Port Huenece." "You're both nuts, we're

Ah wish ah was in Dixie!

A-way! A-way!



being issued winter gear and that ain't for heading South no-where's."

On 5 March 1943, the 64th arrived at Camp Thomas, Davisville, R. I. Bitter cold weather. Six inches of snow on the ground. "Wish Ah Was in Dixie, Away, Away." Ten days' embarkation leave announced. "Oh, boy, ten days at home! Looks like we're really going somewhere this time."

All but 125 men got to go home on March 8. Those men are to remain as a maintenance unit and get leaves later. They did, but upon arrival home they received word to return to camp AT ONCE. The 64th was shipping out. And soon.

The first echelon of the 64th moved out of Camp Thomas on 24 March 1943. "We're going to Newfoundland!" The last day of the journey and the ship approached "Submarine Alley". Word to the crew, "Condition Red." Life jackets were donned. Everyone alerted. Word came through that a German submarine wolf pack had just sunk a ship nearby. Chaplain Anderson went around, prayer book in hand. "Be calm, we are safe in the hands of God." His voice shook as he spoke. Goose pimples became the uniform of the day.

Men assigned to the quarters below deck huddled apprehensively on the ladders. In a compartment on "B" deck someone played a tinny tune on the phonograph to relieve the tension. "Goodbye, Dear, I'll Be Back in a Year." An excited Ensign hurried down the ladder.

"Who's playing that damned radio?" he demanded. "Don't you know it will give away our position?"

"But, sir," one of the crew answered meekly, "it's only a music box."

"Oh," the Ensign mumbled and backed out, wiping his brow. "Battes noives," a sailor from Brooklyn commented. "Look at me, I ain't noivous a bit." His teeth chattered as he spoke.

On 27 March, the first echelon of the 64th arrived in Argentia, Newfoundland. The second echelon, under command of Lt. Commander Edward H. Gessner, Executive Officer at that time, arrived at their destination on 2 April.

Men crowded to the deck rail to get their first view of Newfoundland. It was a bleak, dark day and the wind was blowing. The land looked barren and uninviting. "So, this is Newfoundland! Don't look like much to me." "What's those two hills out yonder called?" "Mae West's so-and-so's." Wow, there's gold in them that hills!"

When the 64th disembarked it was damp but not cold. "Doubt if we'll get much chance to use our winter gear." That night the snow fell. Next day it was 10 feet deep and the wind flung the snow high. Men who went out-doors without face masks quickly dug into their bags to get them. Work would be hard in this weather. "Better travel in pairs during a snow storm so as not to get lost."

Trucks were unloaded. "Hey, what's the idea of drivin' on the wrong side of the road?" Bang! "From here out, keep to the left."

The 64th settled down to work. Construction work as Seabee builders who were making a name for themselves throughout the war-fronts of the world. "Nor rain, nor sleet, nor dark of night shall keep them from their appointed rounds."

The work schedule increased and military discipline was strictly enforced. Drill. Hikes. Maneuvers. Hikes in the rain and sleet. The long climb up 64th Hill on Saturday afternoons. "Back home I'd be watchin' a football game about now." Beach landing practice on the slippery ice. "Hit the deck"—and slide. The Army was around too, trampled to defeat by the Seabees on maneuvers. More drill. The 2000 bed check. "Here comes the gold braid to tuck us in!"

The initial assignment for the outfit was to build a B.O.Q. (no cracks), a boathouse and ship repair facilities complete with industrial shop building, dry docks, and marginal wharf to be

started from scratch. No transportation and little equipment to work with but the job went on.

Now the 64th really got going—full speed ahead. Roads, walks, railroad tracks laid. A salt water pumping station was erected. Gasoline carrier refueling piers were constructed. A reinforced gasoline tank was poured one night during a driving blizzard with visibility, zero. The 64thers built four additional barracks, net depot facilities with a pier and warehouse, and ordnance pier with magazines. They set up extra mess hall facilities. They extended the airfield runway. Work, work, and more work. Grass planting? Hell, no. Leave that to the 69th!

There was fun, too. Ship's Haven. Doughnuts and coffee served most of the time. Sinkers and a cup of java tasted fine during the bitter cold. And the Fleet Canteen. Rough, tough, and gruesome. Like something out of a Wild West movie. Men from all services, from many countries. Noise, smoke, brawls, camaraderie.

The "Newfie" barracks nearby. "Them Newfie women ain't bad, but gosh what bad teeth. Still what's a plate between friends?" The Bond Party Picnic. Free drinks and eats. "Well, this is a new one on me." The N. E. Arm Recreation Camp dock in Placentia. Salmon fishing pretty good.

Liberty in St. Johns and Placentia, "the — of Argentia", "21" games in the barracks. Crap games. "There ain't no gambling in the Navy . . ." it says here.

Minstrel show tonight. Hit of the evening was "Mr. Five by Five" Rogers singing the parody to the tune of "Pistol Packin' Mama", all about Lt. Commander Victor Buhr, "The Great White Father" and Chief O'Rourke and his rock pile gang working on the S. S. Concrete".

Other Seabee battalions arrived and Lt. Commander Bohr became OinC of the 10th Regiment. Lt. Commander Edward H. Gessner took over the job of OinC of the 64th and Lt. Commander Albert L. Guerry became the Executive Officer of the battalion.

A day to remember. Rain through the afternoon, then quiet dusk. Men, tired from hard work, hit the sack early. "Onion" Nichols had gone on liberty, came back from the Fleet Canteen feeling his drinks. Slowly, he undressed, crawled into bed. He drew the covers over his balding head. A deep sigh and he was asleep.

Bang, bang! Two loud explosions! The earth quivered and windows shook and shattered. Air raid!

"Onion" jumped out of bed yelling, "This is it!" Grabbing his rifle, he ran for the door shouting excited orders. "Turn out them danged lights or I'll shoot 'em out." Already he was aiming at the bulls.

Lights flicked out and men waited tensely for the next bomb to fall. No report. Men moved to the windows and peered out into the dimming dusk. Flames from a burning plane lit the airfield. A Navy PBM was afire and a ground force was

Peace on Earth.



trying to extinguish the blaze. As the plane had landed on the runway, sparks from the wheels had flicked up to set fire to the motor. Flames ignited the two depth bombs it was carrying, caused the loud explosions. Tough alright but no air raid.

One of the men glanced over at "Onion" who stood sheepishly, gun in hand.

"Onion" didn't say anything. Just put his piece away and crawled into bed once more. Soon he was snoring noisily. The "air raid" was over.

December 1943. Some of the jobs secured. "Maybe we'll get home by Christmas." No, "Maybe by New Year's Eve." Try building a concrete tank while you are packing to board a ship for home.

Christmas Day. Big celebrations planned. "If we can't be home, might as well make this place as cheery as possible." Decorations being hung when word came through that the big German Battleship, "Scharnhorst", was loose in the North Atlantic. Anything could happen. Possibility of attack at any time. The Army was alerted. Seabee guncrews took their positions. No Christmas dinner for the soldiers. The 64th confined to the barracks. "Get your pieces oiled and ready. Prepare for any emergency." "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."

It was 1630 on Christmas afternoon when the "All Clear" was announced. Relief, but a let-down. "That damned Hitler had to spoil everything for us. Even Christmas."

On New Year's Day, the 64th headed for the States. Happiness ahead. "Looks like a big blow coming up!" The wind howled and the waves grew high. A man clapped his hands over his mouth and rushed to the rail. Others followed. The ship pitched and tossed, a 37-degree roll to port. "Gosh, if I ever get home safe, I hope I don't have to leave no more." The ship was lost at sea for 24 hours, having missed the buoy. Then the States at last. On a January 1944, the 64th Battalion debarked at Narragansett Pier, R. I.

Twenty-five days' leave ahead! Wow! "It's sure gonna be swell to see the wife and kids again. Never saw my youngest. He was born while I was up in Newfoundland," 25 days at home. Tall tales grew taller. "Now when we were up in Argentina . . ." "John, stop talking so much. Your supper's getting cold." 25 days to rest and relax, 25 days to see old friends. "Gee, Lem, you ain't changed a bit. Got a little thinner maybe. Still, it becomes you." 25 days of no drill, no reveille, no muster. No work either—except maybe for having to fix the back door screen so the flies wouldn't come in—or mow the lawn—or build a sand box for Junior—or fix the cupboard for the wife. 25 days. Whiz! And there were none.

Back to Camp Endicott, R. I. Back to drill and military routine.

Commander Gessner was detached during the leave period and Lt. Commander Guerry assumed command until the arrival of Lt. Commander Louis G. Puls in March 1944.

"Providence is a swell liberty town." "Show your pass, square your hat, roll your sleeves down, Mate." The long bus line. The packed cars. East Greenwich, Apponaug, Hilly-grove, Crescent Park. "Lemme out at the Biltmore. Wife's waiting for me." "Where you heading, Tom?" "Oh, the usual joints—The China Clipper, The Port Arthur, The Fu-Manchu. Gotta get goin." Roger Williams Park. "Gosh, you know you remind me of a girl I knew back in South Bend. Of course, her eyes weren't blue, they were brown. Guess her hair was different too. Not so blonde. Still there's something

#### Liberty Hound—Woof!



There aint nothin' like  
bein' relieved for  
active duty.

about you. Your forehead, I guess?" "Look Seabee, I don't go out with no sailors. Still if you insist, I'll meet you on the starboard side of the bus station, lower deck, at 2100."

Military training once more. March to Sun Valley (not Idaho) for four weeks of mud and ice. The day in the cold rain when the 64th took "Hill 420". Fire on the range. "Ready on the left? Ready on the right? Ready on the firing line?" "I coulda made a much better score only you see, it was like this . . ."

Technical training classes began once more. Divers School. Chemical Warfare classes. Lessons in the erection of Quonset Huts. More shots in the arm. P. T. at 0530. Muster and march to the drill field. "One-a, two-a, three-a, four. Next, the deep knee bend. Ready begin. Any more boooing and you'll stay out here all day."

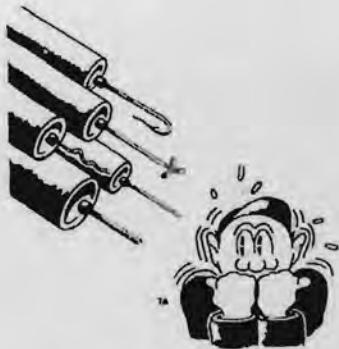
"Let's stop down at S-29 for hamburgers and milk shake." "Hey, pipe the WAVES! Not bad, not bad." "Bus leaves for New York Saturday at 1500." Take the train. The long ride from Grand Central Station to Wickford Junction. No more money, but oh, the memories! "Liberty hound!" "So what? So I'm a liberty hound. WOOF!!"

Work began on two Stevedore Training Ships, "The Invasion" and "The Liberation". All men on the job. The ships were quickly completed. Ships which helped train many stevedore outfits to follow.

And then the word came through that the 64th was shoving off once more. Likely heading for the Pacific this time. "Wonder if those palm trees and girls look like they do in the movies." Ten-day embarkation leave. Back to camp. Full battle gear issued. Battalion's complement filled. "Mama, mama, put the star back in the window, I'm off to Station Force." "Goodbye, girls, goodbye!" "Slow, Mama, I'm off to Yokohoma." "Take care of the kids, dear, it may be a long time before I get back."

The 64th piled into troop trains for the long trip to the West Coast. Three sections. "These coaches musta been built for the war, the last war." "What's for chow?" "Jam sandwiches, two pieces of bread jammed together." "Everything of the best for the service man. O yeah?" The train crawls through villages, towns, hamlets. Five days trip to California. "Get off next





All this—and atabrine, too.

stop and stretch your legs." "California, here we come!"

Camp Parks, Shoemaker, Calif. The 64th arrived on 30 September 1943. Shots, Lectures, Final battalion review. More gear. Liberty in Oakland or Frisco. "Take the A train." Top of the Mark, The St. Francis. "Boy, is this town packed with sailors!" Tomorrow's the day.

Treasure Island. Confined behind wire mesh. Mobs of men awaiting embarkation. "That's Alcatraz over there. One thing about them. They know when they're gonna get out!"

October 25, 1944. The 64th Seabees boarded the General Hawze, an Army transport, manned by Coast Guardsmen, carrying Navy, Marines, and Seabees. Through the loudspeakers, "Our destination, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii." Cheers. Lines for chow. "Cramped quarters. "Darken ship at 1800." No lights above or below deck. Five days on board, then Hawaii.

The Battalion was stationed at Moanalua Ridge, about eight miles from Honolulu, on the Island of Oahu. Plenty of other Seabee outfits all around. Navy men. Marines. Soldiers. "So that's Pearl Harbor!" Barracks for the 64th—good food—fair, liberty set-up—not bad. Work—Plenty. Work on the John Rogers Airport. Work on road building and paving. Work on many projects throughout the camp. Then the inevitable—building barracks for the WAVES, building barracks for the lady Marines. "There ain't nothing like being relieved for active duty."

Honolulu holiday. Crowded buses. The long line before the Army-Navy Y.M.C.A. The bars. "Let's see your I. D. card, Mac." "Out of bounds." Tattoo parlours. Designs ranging from sinking ships titled "A Sailor's Grave" to the flaming dirk labeled "Death Before Dishonor." The sound of needles buzzing as they spit their indelible design. Penny arcades. Curio shops filled with grass skirts, bridge sets, beads, bracelets. "Alaia," the word that launched a thousand tourist dollars. Frozen malts a quarter, "99" gin, whiskey, or Scotch-flavored cane spirits. "Mainland liquor today"—but not for long. Picture studios. "Have your pit-cher taken wid a gen-u-ine hula goil, only two bucks!" Songs blaring from joke boxes—"Put Your Arms Around Me, Honey, Hold Me Tight," "Rum and Coca Cola," "Don't Fence Me In," "I Walk Alone" . . . The Royal Palms Hotel. The beach at Waikiki. The Moana. "Better get going. Gotta get back to camp. Hey, Mate, where can a guy get the Naval Housing bus?"

Recreation at camp. Perry Bowl movies. Hula girl, USO shows. Dance for the lady Marines in the 64th mess hall. The band. Sunday recreation. Trips around the Island, over the Pali Pass. "Surf sacking" at the beach. Wet a mattress cover, run down the beach to inflate it with air, then use it as a float to ride the waves. Pineapple fields. Rainbows in the sky. Tropical flowers—the hibiscus, the bougainvillea, the bird of Paradise flower. Beautiful Hawaii.

Preparation for the advance. Shorts and lectures on prevention of jungle diseases, first aid, poison gasses, "Survival in the Pacific," hand-to-hand combat, use of the bayonet and the carbine. Shots in the arm. Firing on the rifle range to zero in pieces. A mad mixture of amusement and preparation for war.

March 26, 1945. "On to Tokyo . . ." The 64th moves out on LSTs. "Now hear this . . ." "Chow down for Ship's Company, watch relief at the start of the line." Darken Ship." "Report to the galley for mess cook duty." G. Q. (General Quarters). The day the word came through of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Flags and hearts at half mast. LSTs lumbering along like drunken elephants.



Boy, did I get the best of that kid!

Crossing the International Date Line. Tomorrow becomes today. We're getting into dangerous waters."

Beer party at Peary Island, Eniwetok. Men piled into barges to go ashore. Destination—a hot, dry, barren atoll. Line up for three hot beers or ditto cokes. No food around. The beach crowded with men from each of the services. Nude bathing in the hot, salty, oil-slicked water. "Sort of like bathing in a can of kerosene." The rains came and no shelter around. Sun again and the heat waves wriggled up from the burning sand. "Time's up!" Hurry back to the barge on unsteady feet. Several men pushed into the water. More rain and men huddle under ponchos for protection. The LST's once more. Home again . . . well, almost home.

A short stop outside of Babeldaob Island in the Palau. Gun crews and guard alerted. "There's still Japs on that island, thousands of 'em. Only five or so days to the Philippines now. 'Condition X-ray' from here out."

The LST's drop anchor in Leyte Gulf. "Wonder who won the anchor pool." Other ships in the harbor. Native outrigger canoes with Filipinos fishing from them. "What's that over there?" Someone is pointing to a white church building ashore. "That's the town of Guiuan. That church was built by the Spaniards over 300 years ago. Looks like we'll be stationed somewhere near."

On 28 April 1945, the 64th Battalion disembarked and went ashore at Tubabao Island, just west of Guiuan, Samar. The job—ahead—to build a U. S. Naval Receiving Station.

The outfit was quartered in Quonset huts, shared a mess hall with another outfit which had arrived previously. Plans were for the 34th Battalion to pull out and the 64th to take over. There was electricity in only a few of the huts. The field sanitation units were already at work but sanitary facilities were sparse. Helmet showers, then later oil can showers. Outdoor plumbing. Mud. Rain. Heat. Insects.

The 64th began a 9-hour day, 7-day week work schedule. "Take 8 to 10 salt tablets a day." "Don't forget to take your atabrine as malaria prevention." "There's sure some difference between this place and Newfoundland, isn't there?" The Battalion swung into action.

Filipinos are friendly. "Hello, Joe. Umbrago, kiss kiss." Kids lined the roads and hung around work projects begging. "Give me tsueng gum, give me candy, give me money." Ewas! The Seabees learned there were some folks who could even out-trade them. Eager hands dug into barracks bags for mattress covers, "Donald Duck" hats, and kerchiefs as items for trading. "Want to buy bolo, Joe?" "Want to buy beads?" Rope shoes, bolo

Get the damned job done!



May the Lord bless this, and keep the deer! The Lord has given us so little, and we have so much to give. The gift Bureaucrat as a son will be no more, but may the spirit of the deer go marching on—.

The men who assembled on a sunken platform in Little Creek, 23, to witness the history-day of December 1863, were the heroes from whom we learn the story of the battles of Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. And so will the others who pourred in from cities, towns, and hamlets to watch for the battle which was almost over now.

The histories of the eighties are now ended. Probably it will not be known more than ten years from now what will be the American way of life. Until then, the sufferer of the nation can rest in the knowledge that he has done his best and strived hard until each man's heart was won to the American way of life.

This much more power to the war. Through the efforts made by the workers themselves were largely "Superior," some units of men's enduring strength is certain. Through the considerable losses suffered in their work transmuted the crevices of men's enduring strength into the solid rock of the nation's strength. This much more power to the war. Through the efforts made by the workers themselves were largely "Superior," some units of men's enduring strength is certain. Through the considerable losses suffered in their work transmuted the crevices of men's enduring strength into the solid rock of the nation's strength.

As a unit of a proud organization, the eighth Battalion has earned its place and power. As a unit of a proud organization, the eighth Battalion has earned its place and power. As a unit of a proud organization, the eighth Battalion has earned its place and power.

Throughout the entire period, every member has backed up an excellent record. Throughout the entire period, every member has backed up an excellent record. Throughout the entire period, every member has backed up an excellent record. Throughout the entire period, every member has backed up an excellent record.

Method of the *Bartholinus* was adopted for construction work was provided by Phlegonides.

While these projects for the Navy were in progress, the 4th and 5th regiments were engaged in arid mountainous interior in Arizona.

The situation built a large storage and warehousing area, set up with a modern dispensary area. They created a station where patients could get the sort of large amounts of food, medicine, etc., that they need.

was issued and distributed to each camp. In effect these Post Orders were to be used in the same manner as the Navy money was used for the same purpose.

Only 23 more points and  
you got it made. Pop.



We left the town after a brief, hard-wining meal. The month was still young, though we had already passed three months since our last visit. The island had been so quiet for so long that we were surprised to find it so full of activity. The port was crowded with ships, and the streets were filled with people. We saw many familiar faces, and heard many familiar voices. It was like coming home again.

Supplies were ordered. Roads were built. Sanitation facilities were provided. Refugees and others were fed. Work was set up. Ships were built. Work moved on. From the other outfit moved out and the gift moved on. No master had you serve him, it's still Spain." A complete water system was set up. Ships were built. Work in the camp was completed, refugees and the like "Spain Battle" was still being fought.

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

### Chronology

|              |                                                                            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08 Jan 1943  | Formed at NCTC, Norfolk, Va.                                               |
| 05 Mar 1943  | Transferred to ABD, Davisville, Rhode Island.                              |
| 07 Mar 1943  | Arrived at ABD, Davisville, R.I.                                           |
| 24 Mar 1943  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Echelon departed ABD, Davisville for overseas.             |
| 27 Mar 1943  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Echelon arrived Argentia.                                  |
| 31 Mar 1943  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Echelon departed ABD, Davisville for overseas.             |
| 03 Apr 1943  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Echelon arrived Argentia.                                  |
| 01 Jan 1944  | Departed from Argentia for U.S.                                            |
| 04 Jan 1944  | Arrived U.S.                                                               |
| 05 Jan 1944  | Arrived NCTC, Davisville, R.I.                                             |
| 30 May 1944  | 1 officer and 65 men left for NAS, Melbourne, Florida, for temporary duty. |
| 18 Sept 1944 | 34 men reported to Battalion from Melbourne, Florida                       |

### Second Tour of Duty

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25 Sept 1944 | Departed NCTC, Davisville.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 30 Sept 1944 | Arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, California                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 21 Oct 1944  | Departed CBRD, Camp Parks for Treasure Island.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 25 Oct 1944  | Departed U.S.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 30 Oct 1944  | Arrived Pearl Harbor (a detachment of 1 officer and 25 men was left at NAS, Melbourne, Florida on temporary duty. On 25 Oct 1944 BuPers ordered this detachment to Camp Parks FFT to this activity as casual draft #2513) |
| 15 Dec 1944  | BuPers ordered Camp Parks to cancel uncompleted portion of 25 Oct orders – Casual draft #2513 remained at Camp Parks.                                                                                                     |
| 18 Jun 1945  | 64 <sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion was still located at Samar.                                                                                                                                                 |

SIXTY-FOURTH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

c/o Fleet Post Office

San Francisco, California

1946

In Reply Address  
OFFICER-IN-CHARGE  
SIXTY-FOURTH  
NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION  
NCO-64-02-MIG/as  
A-9

Serial No. 393.

18 JUN 1946

**DECLASSIFIED**

From: Officer in Charge.  
To: Chief of Naval Personnel.  
Subject: Itinerary of the 64th Naval Construction Battalion.  
Reference: (a) BuPers ltr. W9/Pers-21220-CEC/km: dated Apr 23, 1945.  
Enclosure: (A) Certified copy of correct Itinerary of this unit.  
1. Enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith in compliance with the request contained in reference (a).

*Albert I. Gaffey*  
ALBERT I. GAFFEY,  
By direction.

cc: 12th NCR  
2nd NCBr  
CinCC, Navy 3149

To facilitate  
administrative work  
and action changes  
between  
COM224th NCB  
RESTRICTED  
See Encls. 3  
Gaffey  
S. S. Gaffey, USN  
S. S. Gaffey

**DECLASSIFIED**

ITINERARY OF THE 64TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

8 Jan 1943 - Formed at NCTC, Norfolk, Va.

5 Mar 1943 - Transferred to ABD, Davisville, Rhode Island

7 Mar 1943 - Arrived at ABD, Davisville, R. I.

24 Mar 1943 - 1st Echelon departed ABD, Davisville for overseas.

27 Mar 1943 - 1st Echelon arrived Argentia.

31 Mar 1943 - 2nd Echelon departed ABD, Davisville for overseas.

3 Apr 1943 - 2nd Echelon arrived Argentia.

1 Jan 1944 - Departed from Argentia for U. S.

4 Jan 1944 - Arrived U. S.

5 Jan 1944 - Arrived NCTC, Davisville, R. I.

30 May 1944 - 1 officer and 65 men left for NAS, Melbourne, Florida, for temporary duty.

18 Sep 1944 - 34 men reported to Battalion from Melbourne, Florida, via Miami, Fla., by boat.

2ND TOUR OF DUTY

25 Sep 1944 - Departed NCTC, Davisville.

30 Sep 1944 - Arrived CBRD, Camp Parks, Shoemaker, Calif.

21 Oct 1944 - Departed CBRD, Camp Parks for Treasure Island.

25 Oct 1944 - Departed U. S.

30 Oct 1944 - Arrived Pearl Harbor (a detachment of 1 officer and 25 men was left at NAS, Melbourne, Fla. on temp. duty. On 25 Oct 1944 BuPers ordered this detachment to Camp Parks FFT to this activity as casual draft #2513).

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*Minimize PGSW 12-3-43  
from 12-3-43  
Camp Parks  
Casual draft #2513*

**DECLASSIFIED**

*Minimize PGSW 12-3-43  
from 12-3-43  
Camp Parks  
Casual draft #2513*

*Minimize PGSW 12-3-43  
from 12-3-43  
Camp Parks  
Casual draft #2513*

Certified to be a True Copy:

Albert L. Guerry  
Albert L. Guerry  
Lt. Comdr., CSC, USNR.

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ITINERARY OF THE 64TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (Cont'd)

|                                   | <u>Departed P.M.</u> | <u>Arrived Samar</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1st Echelon - 5 officers, 10 men  | 20 Mar 1945          | 8 Apr 1945           |
| 2nd Echelon - 3 officers, 131 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 1 May 1945           |
| 3rd Echelon - 2 officers, 115 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 30 Apr 1945          |
| 4th Echelon - 3 officers, 141 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 3 May 1945           |
| 5th Echelon - 3 officers, 117 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 1 May 1945           |
| 6th Echelon - 3 officers, 114 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 29 Apr 1945          |
| 7th Echelon - 2 officers, 115 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 29 Apr 1945          |
| 8th Echelon - 2 officers, 140 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 29 Apr 1945          |
| 9th Echelon - 4 officers, 125 men | 26 Mar 1945          | 30 Apr 1945          |
| 10th Echelon - 4 officers, 14 men | 30 Mar 1945          | 28 Apr 1945          |

18 June 1945 - Still located at Samar.

Certified to be a true copy:

Albert I. Guerry  
Albert I. Guerry,  
Lt. Comdr., CEC, USNR.

To Facilitate  
Administrative Handling  
Classification Changed

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REF ID: A6525  
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Compt. Contr. & Util.  
Signature



64 TH  
SEABEES











851