115th Naval Construction Battalion

Historical Information

"Construimus, Batuimus"
"We Build, We Fight"

NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND

DECLASSIFIED

6/3/44	-	Milne Bay	-	Left [illegible]
7/25/44	-	EDUR "	Comseventh flt sec act disp 110844 July.	
11/24	-	Co-NABU 6	Comseventh flt sec disp. nn. 230848.	detached 19th NCReg. ordered report NABU 6 for duty. shall move forward to Leyte.
2/12	-	Leyte	Comseventh flt sec 020659 Feb.	Added to Leyte - deleted Edur.
3/29	-	* Subic Bay (Nav Base)	Comseventh flt Sec. 260557 Mar	* present location & assignment.

115th C.B.

NCTC	-	Peary
ABD	-	Davisville
Ready Date	-	22 Oct'43
Left ABD	-	10 Dec'43
Location	-	~~Milne Bay~~ **Subic Bay**

LOG

9-16-43 - VCNO orders transfer of the 115th CB from Peary to Davisville about 22 Sep'43. (Conf. disp. 161831 NCR 1351 from VCNO to Peary dtd 16 Sep'43)

11-18-43 - Destination of 115th CB changed from LEFT to EDUR. (Conf. Disp. 181845 NCR 2242 from CNO to addressees dtd 18 Nov'43)

12-22-43 - 115th CB left ABD 10 Dec'43. (WRK)

2-29-44 - 115th CB assigned temporarily to the 12th Regiment. (Com7flt ltr L24 Ser 1276 to OinC of 115th CB dtd 8 Feb'44)

5-13-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 115th CB - operating at Gamadodo, Milne Bay.

6-28-44 - 115th CB is located at Gamadodo as of 31 May'44. (Comserfor7flt Sec. ltr A-9 over Ser BP-001407 to Dirpacdocks dtd 8 Jun'44)

7- 7-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 115th CB - operating at Gamadodo.

9-15-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 115th CB - operating at Gamadodo.

10- 5-44 - 115th CB detached from temp. duty with CNB Milne Bay and ordered to report to the 19th Reg. (Rest. Disp. 261003 NCR 39380 from Comserv7flt to CNB Biak and CNB Milne)

11- 2-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 115th CB - then located at Milne Bay. Report endorsed by 12th Regiment.

11-28-44 - 115th CB hereby detached from the 19th Reg. and ordered to report to CO, NABU 6

115th C.B.

11-28-44 - (Cont.) for duty. Batt shall move forward to GEFE in accordance with previous instructions. (Comserv7flt Base Plans to CNB Milne Bay 230848 NCR 2157 dtd 24 Nov'44)

(11-8-44) - 115th CB located at Gamadodo. On 26 Sep'44 this Batt was detached from the 12th Reg. and assigned to the 19th Reg. A small detail was in Brisbane during the month of Sep. (Comserfor7flt Sec. ltr A9-4 over Ser BP-001882 to Budocks dtd 12 Oct'44 monthly report for Sep'44)

12-18-44 — The 115th CB ordered detached from the 19th Reg. and ordered to report to CO, NABU 6 for duty and forward movement.(CNB EDUR conf. ltr P16-3(3) over Ser. 0500 to OinC 115th CB dtd 26 Nov'44).

12-28-44 — The 115th CB is located at Milne Bay. A detail was in Brisbane during Oct'44. This batt is scheduled for a forward movement in Nov'44.(Comserfor7flt Sec. report for Oct'44 dtd 20 Nov'44).

1-1-45 - 1 Oct'44 report of 115th CB - located at Milne Bay.

1-13-45 - 115th CB located at Gamadodo with the 3rd Brigade; batt scheduled for forward movement and has been assigned to NABU 6. (comserfor7flt Sec report for Nov'44 dtd 15 Dec'44)

1-15-45 - 1 Nov'44 report of the 19th Reg. - 224 men and 2 officers from the 115th CB were assigned temporary addt'l duty at Brisbane in connection with the conversion of the USS WRIGHT. 94 men on temp addt'l duty with PAD #3 Milne Bay.

1-17-45 - 1 Nov'44 report of the 115th CB - Located at Milne Bay. Rec'd a draft of 81 men in Oct.

1-31-45 - 115th CB at Luzon. (Dirpacdocks San Fran 15 Jan'45 report)

Location - Luzon 115th C.B.

2/15/45 - The 115th CB left Milne Bay 14 Dec'44 with NABU 6 for M1 operation.(Comserfor7flt Sec. report for Dec'44 dtd 15 Jan'45).

-15/45 - The 115th CB is located at Luzon.(Comser7flt Sec. disp to CNO 020659 dtd 9 Feb'45).

3-19-45 - The 115th CB hereby ordered to report to CO NABU 6 for duty with the 24th Reg. (Comserfor7flt Conf spdltr Ser 0407 to NABU 6 dtd 3 Mar'45)

4-10445 - The 115th CB is located at Olongapo.(Com7flt Sec. disp to Cominch 250756 Mar'45).

4-11-45 - 1 Dec, 1 Jan, and 1 Feb combined report of 115th CB - Was relieved of all project assignments on 30 Oct'44. In transit during 1 Jan to 21 Jan'45. Now located at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon.

4-24-45 - 1 Dec, 1 Jan, 1 Feb, 1 Mar combined reports of the 115th CB -
30 Oct'44 - Batt was relieved of all work projects.
1 Jan to
21 Jan'45 - Batt in transit.
7 Feb'45 - Moved from Lingayeh Gulf.
8 Feb'45 - Landed at Subic Bay, Luzon.
29 men of the original 30 men loaned to 302nd CB were retd to batt in Jan'45.

4-30-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 24th Reg states 115th CB arrived Subic Bay 8 Feb'45.

4-30-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 115th CB - located at Subic Bay. End by 24th Reg.

5- 1-45 - The 115th CB is located at Subic Bay. (Comserfor7flt Sec Rep of 1 Apr'45)

5- 1-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 115th CB - Moved to camp site at Malakan River approx 2 mi north of Olangapo on 14 Mar'45.

5- 8-45 - The 115th CB is located at Subic Bay, assigned NABU #6. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)

5-21-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of 24th Reg - 115th CB arrived at Subic Bay on 1 Mar'45.

5-23-45 - 1 May'45 report of 115th CB - Housed at Olangapo.

Location - Subic Bay

115th C.B.

5-13-45 - Dirpacdocks SF sec rep of 15 May'45 shows the 115th CB at Subic Bay - assigned NABU 6.

6-19-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of 115th CB - located at Subic Bay.

7- 2-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 115th CB - Batt left Lingayen Gulf on 7 Feb'45 and arrived Subic Bay on 8 Feb'45. Report via 24th Reg.

7-20-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 115th CB - located at Subic Bay. 24 men to be transfd for rehabilitation.

7-24-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 24th Reg states that approx the 1st wk in Jul'45 24 men will be transferred to the U.S. for rehabilitation and reassignment. The 11th CB has arrived at Subic Bay and is to assume the work being done by the 115th CB.

7-27-45 - The 115th CB is attached to the 24th Reg and 3rd Brg. Located at Subic Bay, Luzon constructing NavBase facilities, constructing camps, rec bks tents, ship waterfront pier, pontoon pier and docks and Fleet Officers Club. (CCT 7th Flt Sec Rep of June

8-21-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 115th CB - located at Subic Bay.

9-19-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of the 115th CB - No info as to location.

11-15-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 115th CB - location not stated.

12-7-45 - Comservpac reqs Comphilseafron to inactivate 115th CB. (Comservpac restr disp 060115 Dec'45 to Comphilseafron).

12-17-45 - 1 Dec'45 report of 3rd Brig. states that the 115th CB will have been inactivated by 7 Dec'45.

12-19-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 115th CB - location not stated. Report via 24th Reg. & 3rd Brg.

1-6-46 - 115th CB reported inactivated since 20 Dec'45. (Comservpac, Pearl disp 022103 Jan '46 to BuPers).

INACTIVATED

ON BOARD

DATE	OFFICERS	MEN	AUTHORITY
1 May'44	31		MoR
30 Jun'44		952	Recap.
1 Aug'44	31	962	MoR
1 Sep'44	31	977	MoR
30 Sep'44		980	Recap
1 Oct'44	31	980	MoR
1 Nov'44	31	1065	MoR
1 Dec'44	31	1080	MoR
1 Jan'4 5	31	1075	MoR
1 Feb'45	31	1072	MoR
1 Mar'45	26	1070	MoR
1 Apr'45	26	1065	MoR
1 May'45	23	1064	MoR
1 Jun'45	26	1080	BNP625 & R
1 Jul'45	30	1028	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45	31	997	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		1068	BNP625
1 Oct'45	20	787	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45	13		R

115th Construction Battalion (INACTIVATED)

ON BOARD

DATE	OFFICERS	MEN	AUTHORITY
31 May'44	31		R
30 Jun'44		1076	Recap.

The Seabees, the Navy's "Engineers," were born of the necessities of the Second World War—in the tale of the heroic construction men of Wake—in the island-hopping campaign of the Pacific where bases had to be carved from jungle or laid on coral atolls—in the vast installations of North Africa and the United Kingdom, jumping-off spots for the assault of Hitler's "Festung Europa."

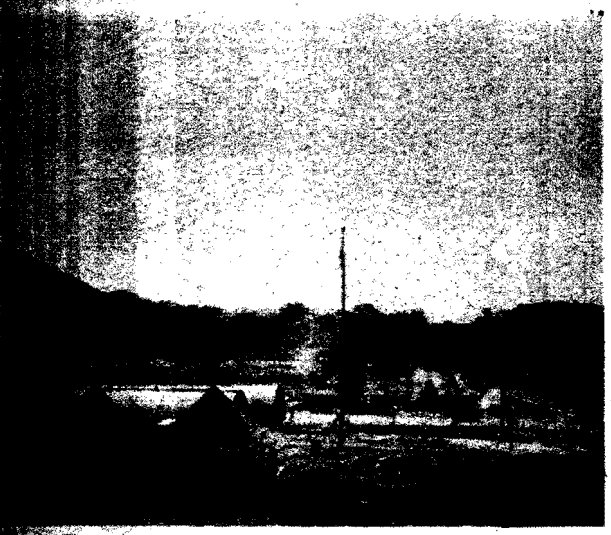
Like many another Construction Battalion, ours is not a story of pill-box destroying bulldozers, of D-minus landings or similar exploits. For us was the battle of mud, mosquitoes, jungle rot, "island-happiness" and homesickness, work, work and more work. We built the bases of supply for the forces up front—at Milne Bay for the New Guinea and Philippines campaigns—at Lingayen Gulf for the battle of Luzon then in progress—at Subic Bay for the assault on Japan. With few exceptions, ours was a "safe" war.

For this we can make no apology; such was our lot and we did our best on the tasks assigned us. We are proud of the 115th with the pride of men who learned to live together, to work together and who against adversity accomplished much-needed things.

Long years ago—on 13 August 1943—the men who formed the 115th Naval Construction Battalion were gathered in Camp Peary's area A-8. Behind them lay the weeks of "boot" camp—drills, obstacle courses, rifle practice, training films. The first days of July saw the end of civilian days, sharp changes, new experiences, a more varied and colorful vocabulary.

On 10 September came the ten-day interlude called "Embarkation Leave." Shortly after our return the unit moved to Davisville, Rhode Island, expecting to be alerted at any time. However, several months passed during which we experienced more training, built the "Sock" in Narragansett Bay, marched with blaring band to Sun Valley and back again, made the most of liberty in Providence and surrounding towns. At last, on 10 December, we boarded the ALCOA PATRIOT in undress blues and full field gear—confident that either England or North Africa was our destination.

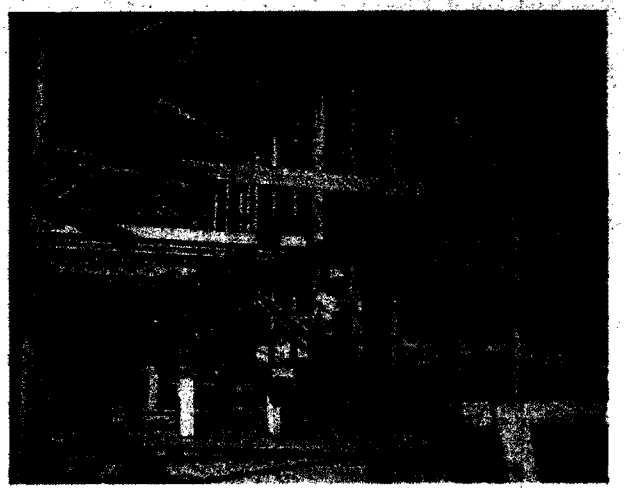
This book hits the high spots of our tour of duty. To have told it in its entirety, to have done justice to all of the projects and activities, would have required some hundreds more of pages. As it goes to press, V-J Day has come and gone. Men who short months ago wondered when we could hope for rehabilitation leave are finding themselves returning to civilian life and the post-war world. The day approaches when the 115th, its work done, will live on only in the hearts and memories of its men.



A CAMP RISES

A jungle in a sea of mud, this was our "Island X." The jungle was forced to a reluctant retreat, the mud, never. Roads were built, shops erected, stockpiles accumulated. Native trees, felled by our loggers and ripped at our sawmill, became galley, chowhall, and living quarters. Projects were assigned and work begun, while the camp was still building. Temporary quarters pitched among stockpiles gave way to the more comfortable five-man tents. Some of these, possessed by the industrious, became veritable honeymoon cottages in appearance. In time, we added a theater, library, rec. hall and ship's service store. Beer began to flow. Chief Welsh and crew successfully created a "coke" machine. We had built our "home."

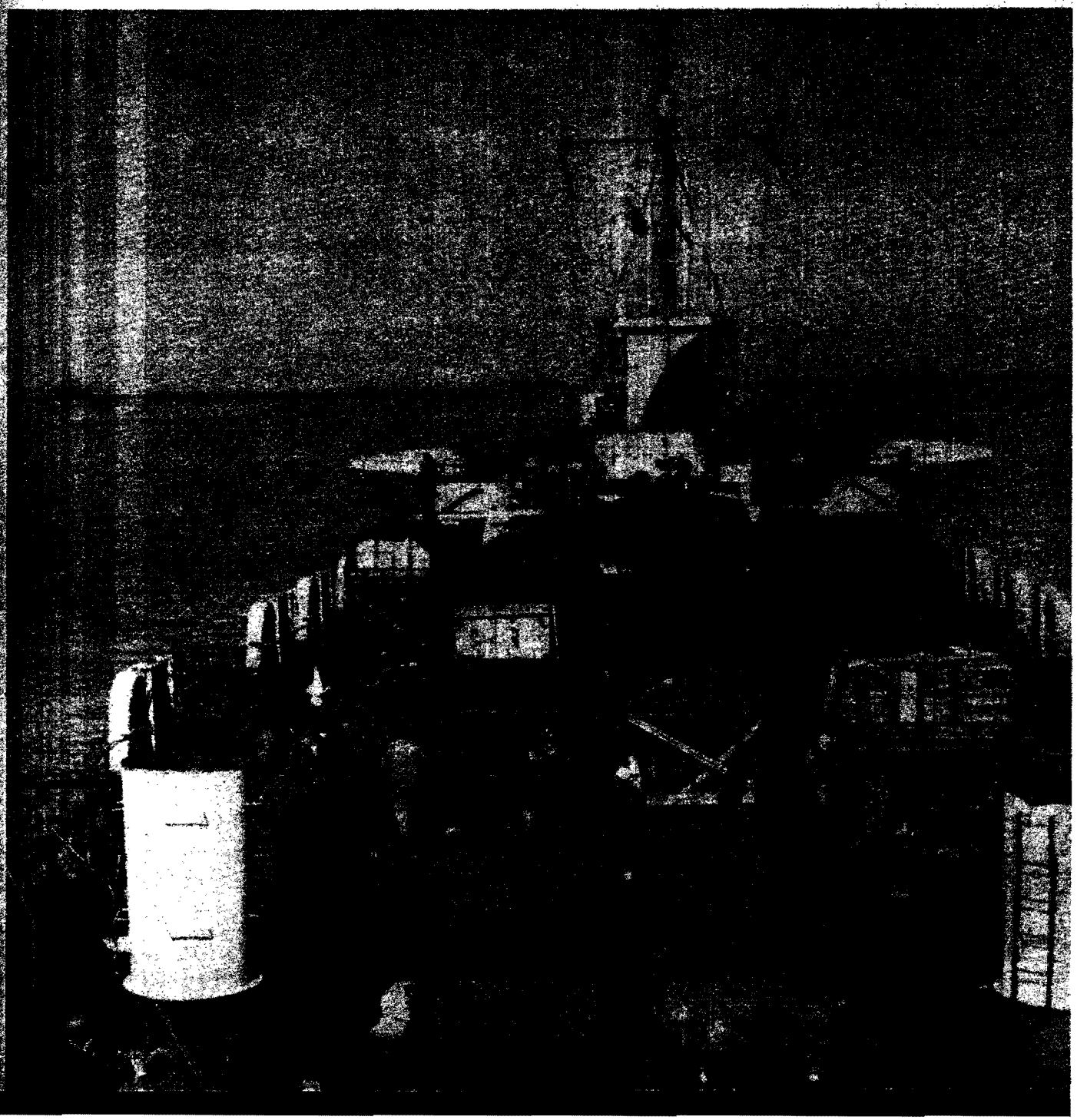
Occasional pythons straggling across the area, wheeling bats at nightfall, the birds, lizards, and animals we captured, and the ever-present clouds of insects remained, however—a constant reminder of that green and steaming jungle about us, awaiting its chance to retake all that we had forced from it.



Housing was one of the Gamadodo Base's main needs, since it was to be one of the principal staging areas for personnel on the "road to Tokyo." We drew the greater part of this assignment. Seven days a week, from 0001 to 2400, dozers and carry-alls cleared and graded . . . trucks brought lumber, cement and fill . . . form carpenters and cement workers laid down pads hard on the heels of engineers who had surveyed their placement. Carpenters raised the framework and finished the job. With double-deck bunks from the shops, the barracks were ready. In the end, the base could house 40,000 men.

INVASION

On a rainy first of December we climbed the cargo nets from LCM to LST and looked without regret at our deserted camp ashore. Two weeks later we weighed anchor and put out to sea. Destination: Hollandia, to join convoy. Our five-ship flotilla trailed up New Guinea's coast past Finschhafen, Madang, Lae, and Jap-held Wewak to reach Humboldt Bay on 18 December. Again Christmas and New Year's found us aboard ship. We were able to attend the base's Yuletide services, however, and we celebrated New Year's Day amid Pie Beach's wrecked tanks, amphibs and shell cases. Until 8 January, when we at last passed out through the DE "picket line," it had begun to look as if ours was a "waiting war."

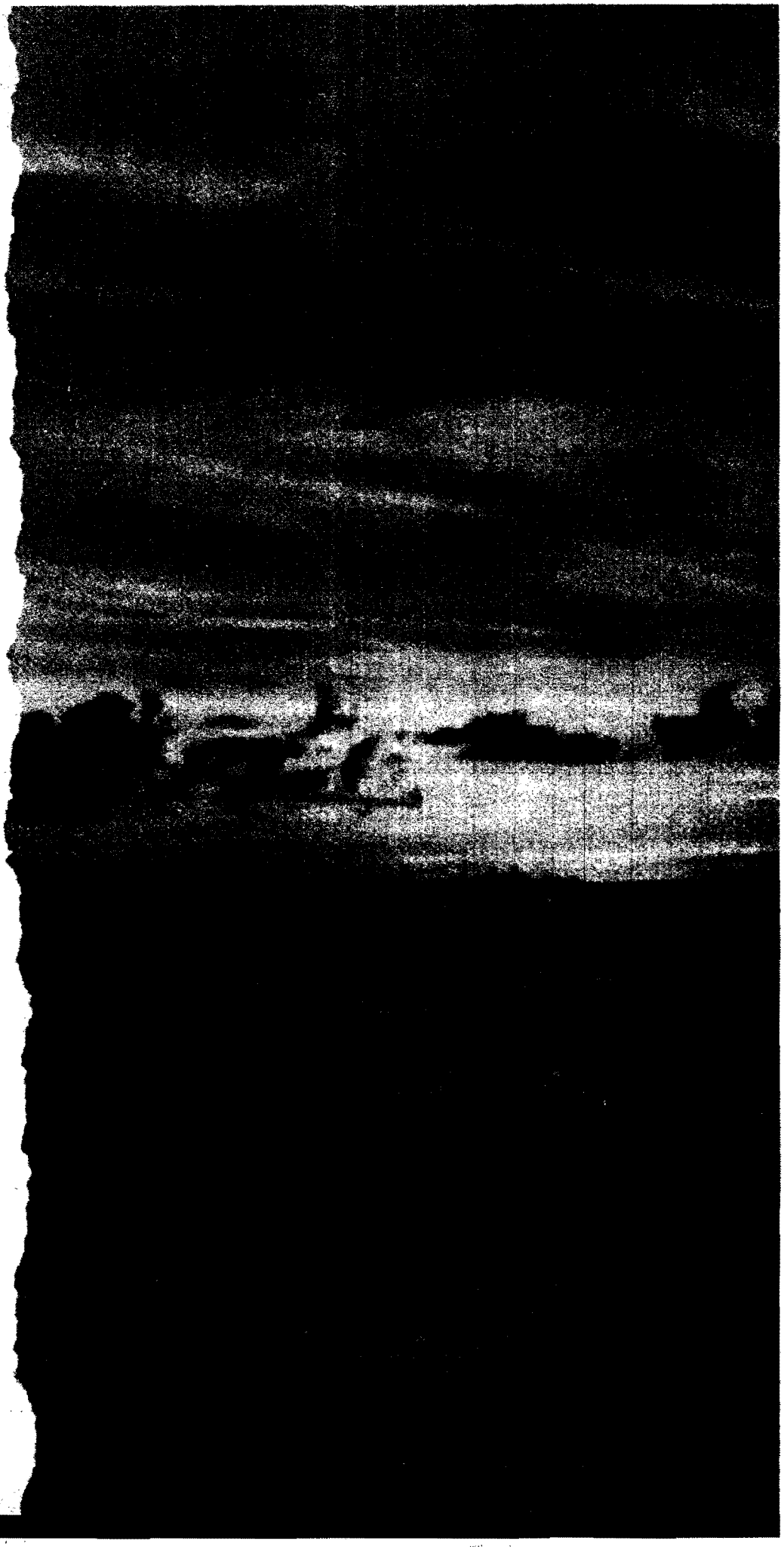


in convoy we learned our head would be on Luzon. ism vanished—this was ill Soon we were over the nao Deep, within easy reach enemy. But our luck was even Tacloban, Leyte, was the night we spent there.

morning we prepared to run ntlet between Mindanao ohol, Negros and Panay. In ng, we watched our ships lanes raising havoc with ro's shore. Beating up the Sea along Luzon's coast, lerts became almost con- But 21 January found us, cathed, entering Lingayen

at last, we found our war. wagons and cruisers lay off blasting the hills. Vehicles dashed about, then made land while behind us trans- debarked troops into am- moving beachward. With nd the smoke screens came nuisance raiders, bombing trafing, then running away er the water. For us there ork. Surveyors found them- sighting transits practically front lines. One of our work , building a Marine air was paid a visit one night ozen Jap coastal artillery Step by step they ap- ed our camp, to stop just of the perimeter. Then, hings were still interesting, came to "Move!" and we did.

Photo by Dr. Jacobs



SUBIC LANDING

A night and a day brought us into Subic Bay. The date: 8 February 1945. With DE's probing the shoreline we moved on in and swept up on the beach in the very dooryards of the town. After New Guinea it all seemed very strange—roads, towns, concrete bridges, comparative civilization. Subic was half-deserted; the population had gone into the hills in obedience to instruction leaflets dropped by our planes before the invasion. Working without let-up, we got our equipment ashore and off up the road through the hills to Olongapo Naval Base, hearing on all sides the shout "Victory, Joe!"

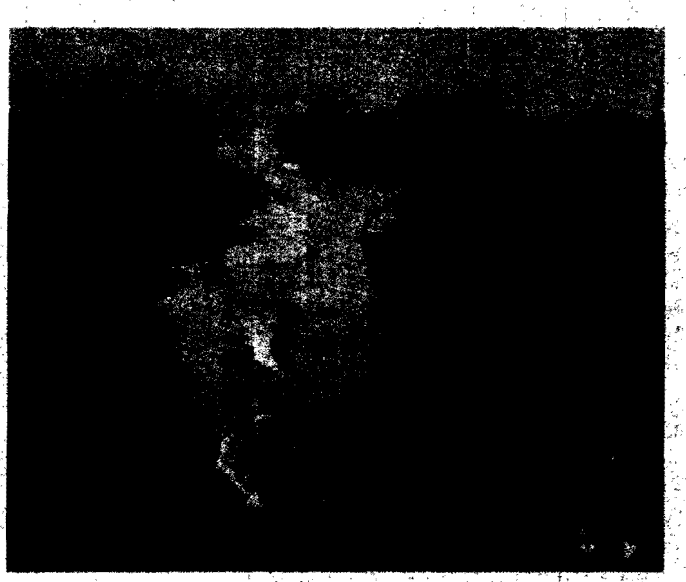


Photo by Hage

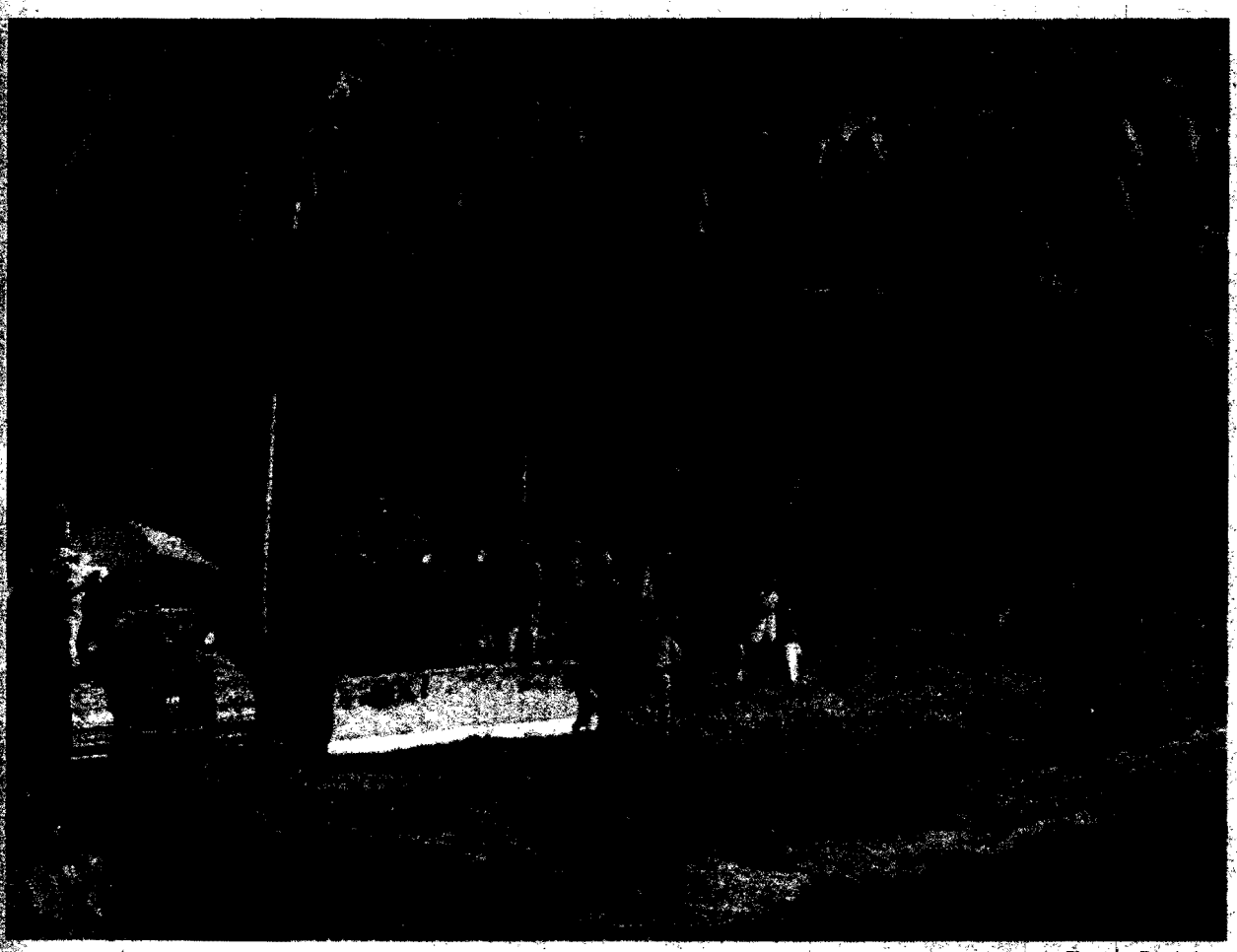


Photo by Prechak

Olongapo showed all the ravages of war. Much of the town had been bombed or burned; roofless shells that had been buildings stood everywhere. Those homes still standing wore plainly in their peeling paint and patchwork repairs the effect of the Japanese occupation. The once beautiful Naval Base was pock-marked with enemy pill-boxes. Standing among the great trees were 105 mm. howitzers, "Long Toms" and tanks. Down at the water-front two bandsaws were all that remained of a sawmill. Lathes, milling machines and other shop tools lay about—sabotaged by hammer and cutting-torch. For the rest, nothing but scrap and rubble, burned and blasted ruins.

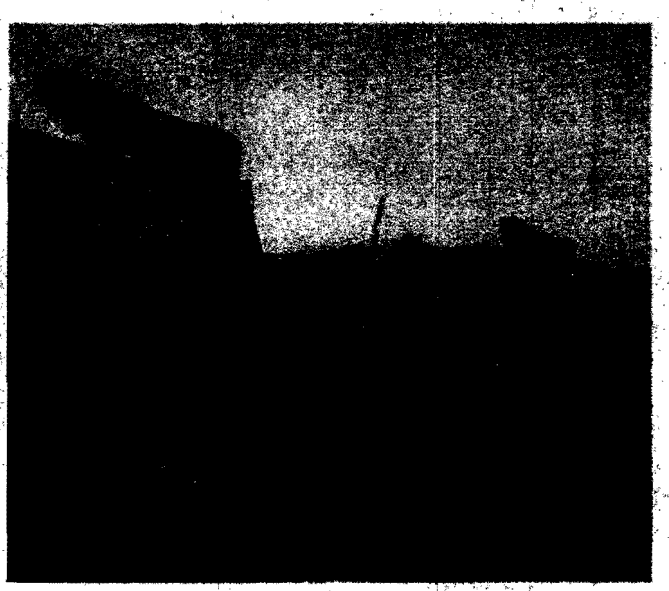
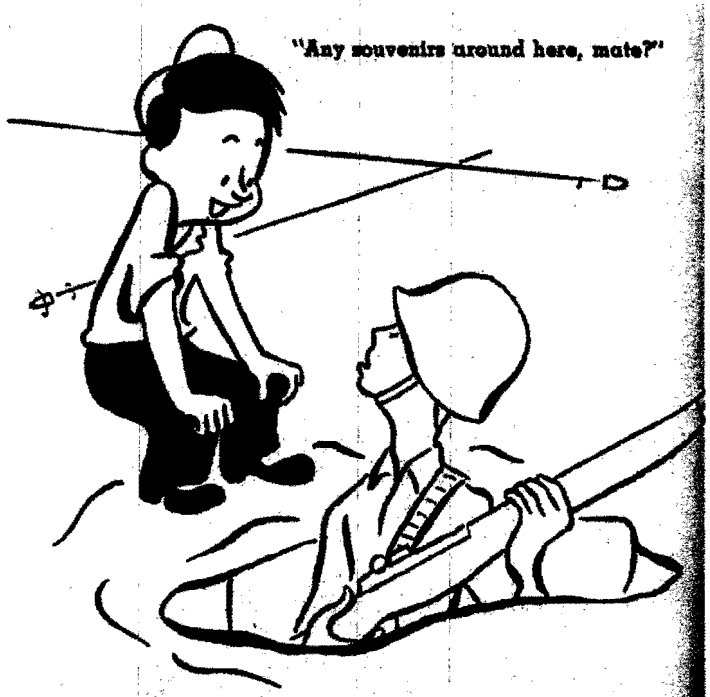


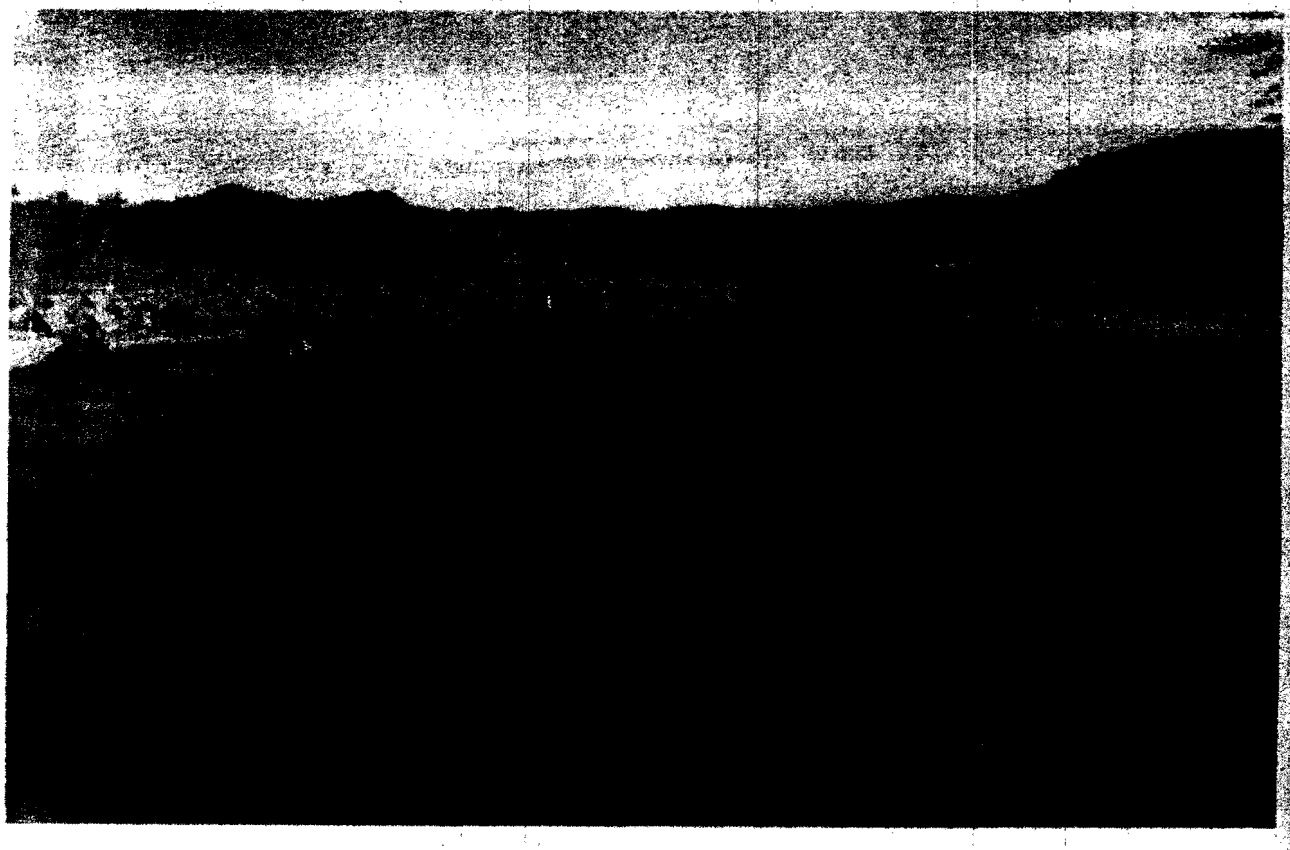
Photo by Van Hoorebeke

OLONGAPO CAMP

What a place to sleep! Scattered around the field where we pitched our pup tents, field artillery rocked the ground and shattered the night as it shelled Zig Zag Pass. From across the road 155's lumbered overhead. Machine gun and rifle fire punctuated the occasional silences. Nevertheless, sleep we did—fully clothed, loaded rifles beside us.

Fire hydrants provided temporary showers. Strangely, neither we nor the laundresses seemed embarrassed at our state of undress. Chow from our field kitchen was eaten anywhere; on boxes, the ground or standing. Hungry civilian children, cans in hand, eagerly accepted any leavings. Our movie screen, set up next after the tents and kitchen, brought unexpected practice at hitting the deck when our first-night audience was swept by machine-gun fire. Intrepid Seabees went hunting up at the front—for souvenirs.





OLONGAPO

During the years of enemy occupation Olongapo degenerated from a neat provincial town to a clutter of decrepit buildings whose peeling paint and patchwork repairs showed the "benefits" of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." The water supply was out of order; all electric wiring and telephones had been seized. A few days before the invasion the Japanese systematically burned churches, homes, buildings and broke holes through the dike system which controlled the waterflow on the lowlands.

In the face of limited facilities and supplies, some rehabilitation was begun. The water supply was repaired, wreckage cleared away and roads improved. But the rebuilding of Olongapo and its surrounding barrios—Kalalake, Kababae, Asinan, Tapinac, Bajac Bajac, Santa Rita—obviously was a task for the coming years. Meantime, Olongapo became a "boom town." Civilian workers in hundreds flocked in for jobs on Navy projects. Shacks rose on the ruins of burned homes. Restaurants and night clubs sprang up and with them laundries.

OLONGAPO

DECLASSIFIED

RESTRICTED

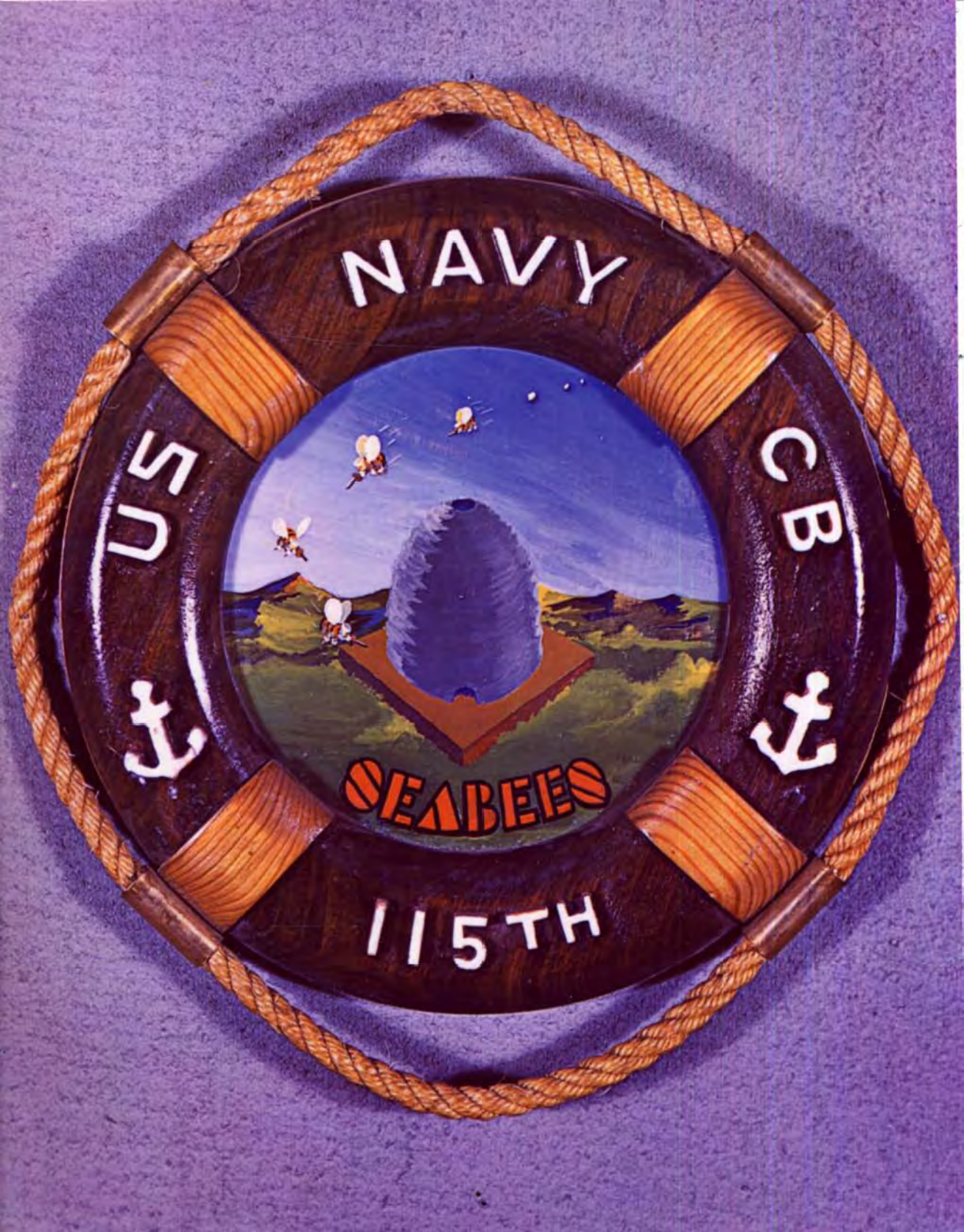
ITINERARY OF THE 1150TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

22 Sept 1943	Transferred from NOTC, Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia to ABD, Davisville, R. I.
10 Dec. 1943	Left for overseas destination.
1 Apr. 1944	Monthly Report of this date states operating at Gasmdolo, Milne Bay. Exact date of arrival unknown.
Sept 1944	A detachment in Brisbane during this month and part of October in connection with conversion of the USS WRIGHT.
1 Jan. to 21 Jan. 1945	Battalion in transit to Luzon.
7 Feb. 1945	Moved from Lingayen Gulf, Luzon.
8 Feb. 1945	Landed in Subic Bay, Luzon.
1 Aug. 1945	Located at Subic Bay.

NOTE: This itinerary based on records available in C.B. Operations and Personnel Section of Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Date: 19 September 1945.

DECLASSIFIED-DOD. DIR. 5200.9, 27 Sept. 1958


NAVY
U.S.
C.B.
SEABEES
115TH