

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

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## *Historical Information*



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



119th C.B.

NCTC - Peary, Davisville  
ABD - Hueneme  
Ready Date - 2 Nov'43  
Left ABD - 21 Feb'44  
Location - ~~Milne-Bay~~ Hollandia Manila

LOG

- 8-20-43 - CNO orders transfer of the 119th CB about 23 Aug'43 from Peary to NCTC Davisville. (Conf. Disp. 201715 NCR 6825 from VCNO to Peary dtd 20 Aug'43)
- 12-21-43 - CNO orders transfer of the 119th CB about 28 Dec. from Quoddy to ABD Hueneme. (Conf. Disp. 211325 NCR 7419 from CNO to Quoddy dtd 21 Dec'43)
- 2-25-44 - 119th CB left ABD 21 Feb'44. (AES)
- 5- 6-44 - 104th CB is erecting camp for the 119th CB at Gamadodo. (104th CB Mo. Report Feb'44)
- 6-29-44 - 119th CB is located at Gamadodo, preparing to move to Hollandia as of 31 May'44. (Comserfor7flt Sec. ltr A-9 over Ser BP-001407 to Dirpadocks dtd 8 Jun'44)
- 7- 7-44 - 119th CB is located at Gamadodo - A detachment left late in May for Aitape and another Det. left for Wakde Is. late in May. (Comserfor7flt Sec. ltr A-9-4 over Ser 00673 to Budocks dtd 14 Jun'44)
- 8-11-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 119th CB - Left Milne Bay 29 May'44 and arrived at Hollandia 13 Jun'44.
- 8-11-44 - According to the 24th Reg. 1 Jul'44 report, the 119th CB is operating at Lake Sentani, Tanamersah Bay and Humboldt Bay (all at Hollandia)

119th C.B.

- 9- 4-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 119th CB - operating at Hollandia (Lake Sentani, Tanamersah Bay, and Humboldt Bay).
- 10-25-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 119th CB - operating at Hollandia (Lake Sentani, Tanamersah Bay, and Humboldt Bay). Report endorsed by 24th Reg.
- 11- 8-44 - 119th CB is in the 24th Reg. and is located at Hollandia. (Comserfor7flt Sec. ltr A9-4 over Ser BP-001882 to Budocks dtd 12 Oct'44 monthly report for Sep'44)
- 1-29-44 - 119th CB located at Hollandia. (Comserv7flt Sec. Disp. to CNO 150133 NCR 18921 dtd 24 Nov'44)
- 2-29-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 119th CB - located at Hollandia. Report endorsed by 24th Reg.
- 1-11-45 - 1 Nov'44 report of 119th CB - located at Hollandia. Report endorsed by 24th Reg.
- 1-13-45 - 119th CB located at Hollandia with the 24th Regiment. (Comserfor7flt Sec report for Nov'44 dtd 15 Dec'44)
- 1-27-45 - 1 Dec'44 report of the 119th CB - located at Hollandia. Report endorsed by the 24th Reg.
- 2-13-45 -- 1/2 of the 119th CB assigned to Samar. (CNO sec. ltr to distribution list Ser. 0039230 dtd 3 Feb'45).
- 2-15-45 -- The 119th CB is located at Hollandia. (Comserfor7flt Sec. report for Dec'44 dtd 15 Jan'45).
- 3-29-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 119th CB - located at Hollandia - has been ordered to Manila for duty.
- 3-30-45 - 1 Jan'45 report of the 24th Reg.- 119th CB moved personnel and equip. from Lake Sentani to the area formerly occupied by the 122nd CB.
- 3-31-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 24th Reg. - 1 off. and 32 men of the 119th CB on det. duty with the 302nd Pont. Det.

Location - Manila

119th CB

- 4-10-45 - The 119th CB is located at Manila. (Com7flt Sec. disp to Cominch 250756 Mar'45).
- 4-26-45 - This revises my 220131 Feb. 119th CB heredet 24th Reg. Report to CNB Manila for both adm and oper purposes. (Comserfor7flt Conf Spdltr Ser BP-0963 dtd 14 Apr to OinC 119th CB)
- 5- 1-45 - The 119th CB is located at Manila. (Comserfor7flt Sec Rep of 1 Apr'45)
- 5-7-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of 119th CB - located at Hollandia. As of 1 Apr'45 were alerted and preparations for moving are being carried on. Detachment of 1 offcr & 32 men working with 202nd CB returned to 119th CB on 5 Feb'45.
- 5- 8-45 - The 119th CB is shown located at Manila on the Dirpadocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr.
- 5-16-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 119th CB - located at Manila.
- 5-21-45 - 1 May'45 report of 24th Reg - 119th CB is remaining at Hollandia & is to complete work previously assigned to 102nd CB.
- 5-25-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 24th Reg. - During April orders have been recd detaching the 63rd and 119th CBs, located at Manila, from the 24th Reg.
- 6-13-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of the 119th CB - located at Manila. The 119th CB departed from Hollandia 8 Mar'45 & arrived at Manila on 21 Mar'45.
- 6-14-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 119th CB - located at Manila. Recd 25 men on 16 May'45.
- 7-20-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 119th CB - located at Manila.
- 7-27-45 - The 119th CB is attached to the 3rd Reg and 3rd Brg. Located at Manila, constr 7th Flt Major Radio Station and Hdqtrs. (CCT 7th Flt Sec Rep for June)
- 8-13-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 119th CB - located at Manila. Report via 3rd Reg and 3rd Brg.
- 8-18-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 3rd Brig states that the 119th CB is being used for the construction of the 7th Flt Area and is attached to the 3rd Reg & 3rd Brig.

Location - Manila

119th CB

- 9-10-45 - CBMU 548 to be inactivated 9-15-45. Residual pers to be transferred to 119th CB upon receipt of orders. CBMU 548 to be replaced by CBMU 610 from Manus. (CCT, 7th Flt conf spdltr ser 0148 dtd 27 Aug'45 to CNOB, Manila-Subic)
- 9-21-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 119th CB. Location not stated. Report via 3rd Reg & 3rd Brg.
- 10-17-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 3rd Reg. 3rd Reg. states that the 119th CB is located at Manila.
- 10-18-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 119th CB - location not stated. Report via 3rd Reg. & 3rd Brg.
- 11-28-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 119th CB - location not stated. Report via 3rd Reg. & 3rd Brg.
- 12-7-45 - Comservpac reqs Comphilseafron to inactivate 119th CB. (Comservpac restr disp 060115 Dec'45 to Comphilseafron).
- 12-17-45 - 1 Dec'45 report of 3rd Brig. states that the 119th CB will have been inactivated by 7 Dec'45.
- 1-5-45 - 119th CB reported inactivated since 20 Dec'45. (Comservpac, Pearl disp 022103 Jan'46 to BuPers).

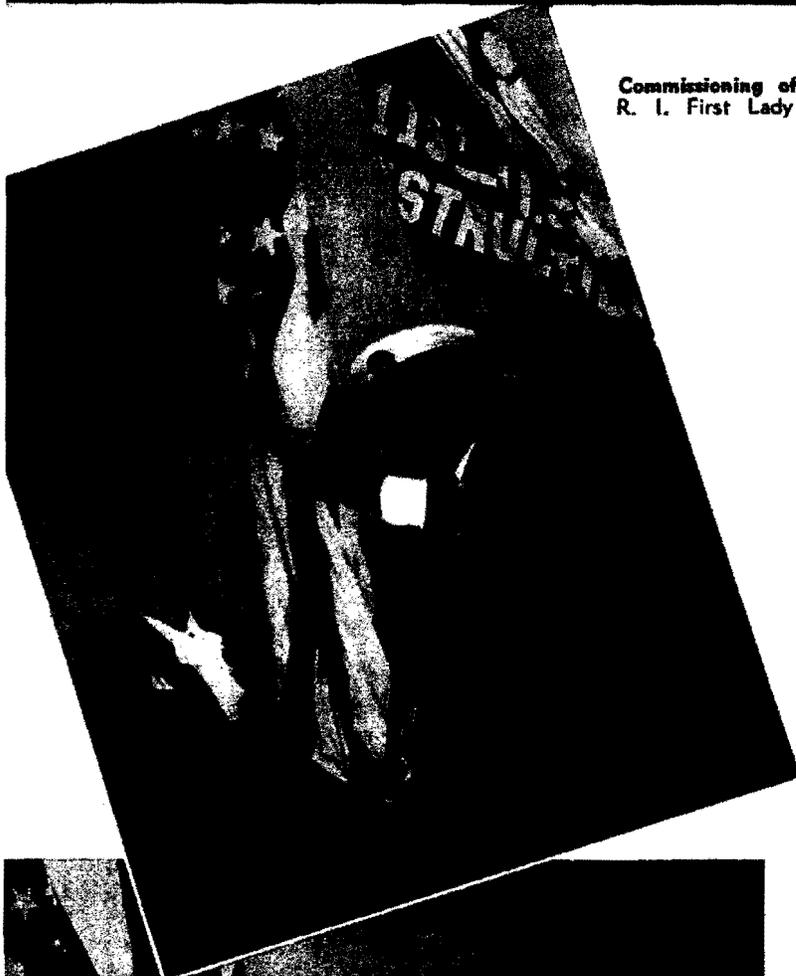
INACTIVATED

DATE	LOCATION	REMARKS
6/3/44	Milne Bay	Left U.S. Feb. 1944.
7/19	Hollandia TRIM	G. B. report 1 July
11/25	Trin	Comdesopch 22 Sec act clia, 11/1 150133.
3/29	* Manila New 02 Manila Recp	Comdesopch 22 Sec. 260558 Mar. present location 6 assignment.

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
30 Jun'44	31	986	Recap. ✓
1 Aug'44	30	995	MoR
1 Sep'44	30	994	MoR
30 Sep'44		985	Recap
1 Oct'44	30	986	MoR
1 Nov'44	29	991	MoR
1 Dec'44	28	987	MoR
31 Dec'44		974	Recap.
1 Feb'45	29	964	MoR
1 MAR'45	30	955	MoR
1 Apr'45	34	958	BNP625 - MoR
1 May'45	33	959	BNP625 & R
1 Jun'45	32	977	BNP625
1 Jul'45	32	968	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45	27	948	BNP625 & R
1 Sept'45		976	BNP625
1 Oct'45	26	786	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45	17	590	BNP625 & R

Commissioning of the battalion at Camp Endicott, R. I. First Lady of the 119th accepts the flag.



## Camp Peary

GENESIS. — “You’ll be sorry!” With those ominous words ringing in their ears, 1082 embryo Seabees, destined to become the 119th Naval Construction Battalion, passed from civilian life into the receiving center at Camp Peary on a prophetic torrid day in July of 1943.

“You’re in the Navy, Mac. Wipe that grin off your face and line up as your name is called.” Men who had been welders, electricians, machinists, carpenters, plumbers, ship-fitters, and skilled workers in every trade and profession found themselves on a threshold of a new life.

At 5:30 in the early darkness of the next day, the raucous blare of the bugle — their first reveille — awakened them. Sleepy and confused, they were mustered and lined up. They scarcely realized then that for the rest of their service lives they would “sweat out” endless lines for every occasion.

First day impressions stick with the men: “Another physical?” Any who had hopes of a last minute reprieve were soon disillusioned. They were examined and tested on a speedy assembly line basis. One word pounding in every man’s ear . . . “Next.” . . . “Strip.” . . . “Put your civilian clothes in this box and express it home.” . . . “Next.” . . . “Try this on for fit — perfect.” . . . “Take a deep breath — hold it — step down.” . . . “Next.” . . . “How d’ya wanna part it?” “On the right side, ple—.” Clip, zip, clip . . . “Next.” . . . Allotments explained. Questions, questions, questions . . . “Next.” . . . Double file march on the long trek to noon chow in new dungarees and G. I. shoes that pinched and



Commander Mackey gives the battalion standard to the color guard.

grew heavier. . . . Beginning to feel just a tiny bit salty. . . . Seen: a single file of marching men with large P's inscribed on back of uniforms. A recruit snickered, "First time I knew the Navy trained paratroopers." . . . Back to stand in long lines; lines for coveralls, lines for mattresses, lines for seabags. Lines, lines, lines.

Late in the afternoon, the men, confused and exhausted, were alphabetically assigned to platoons. Struggling with their gear from temporary barracks to waiting trucks, most of the men had to make two trips to lug all the newly issued belongings. A ten minute ride from the hill brought them to their home for a month in "C" area.

**MILITARY TRAINING.** — Beneath a blazing Virginia sun that beat down remorselessly, military training was begun under the direction of tough, tenacious marine instructors; eight hours on the drill field every day

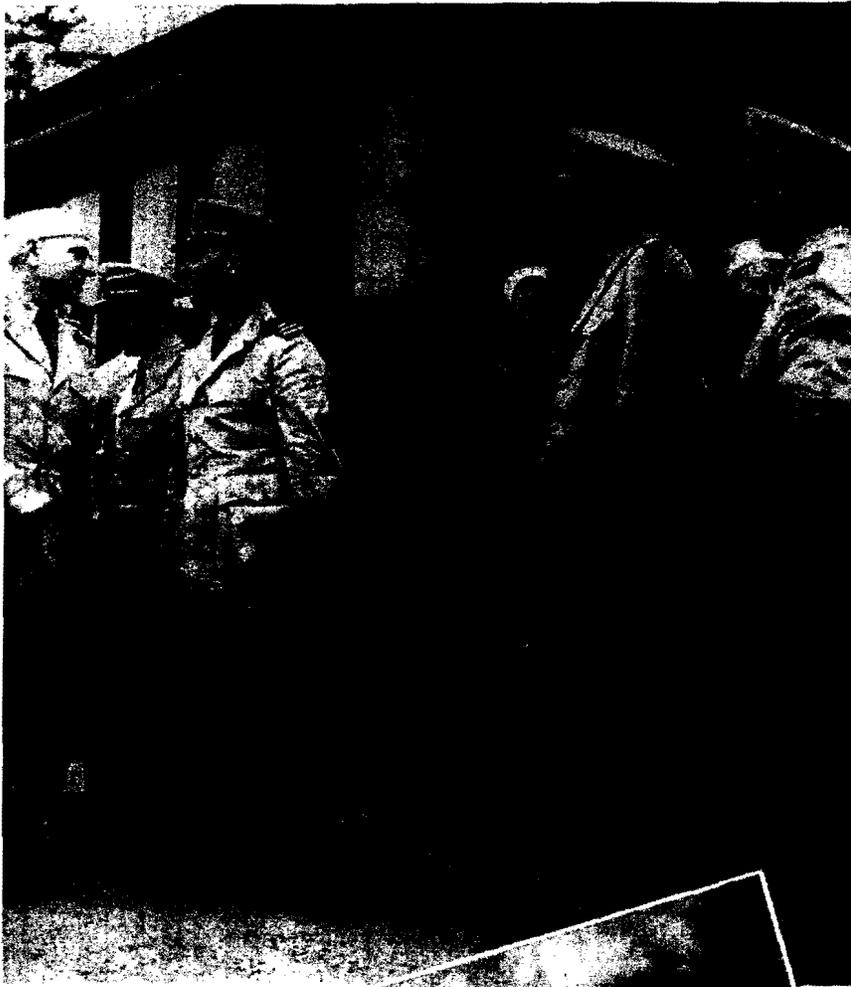
with only a ten minute break, morning and afternoon. During these breaks, the recruits quenched thirsts with vile, chemically treated, acrid-tasting water and had time to grab a few quick puffs from a butt while the "smoking lamp" was lit. They learned to live, to eat, to breathe, to sleep in cadence. They marched to chow. They marched to the movies. They marched on blistered feet. They cursed and sweated and some passed out in the burning heat.

The intense drilling began to pay dividends. The recent civilians walked with a spring in their steps, their shoulders erect. Their appetites increased. Healthy tans erased pasty, pale complexions. Bay windows or "Budweiser tumors" melted away under the broiling sun.

They advanced from close order to extended order drills and with wooden guns mastered the manual of arms. With those

Captain Rogers inspects the battalion in the chilly New England rain.





same toy guns, they slashed at each other for hours in bayonet drills. They learned the proper way to toss hand grenades and how to "hit the deck". They attended lectures and saw training films in hot, stuffy drill halls. It was a problem to relax for a lecture and stay awake at the same time.

When recall sounded, labors were far from ended. The men had clothes to wash. Scrub, scrub, endless scrubbing to keep whites, white. Painfully they mastered the art of rolling and stowing their clothes away. If they stole a moment to rest, they relaxed with a shoe brush in their hands, polishing shoes for next morning's inspection.

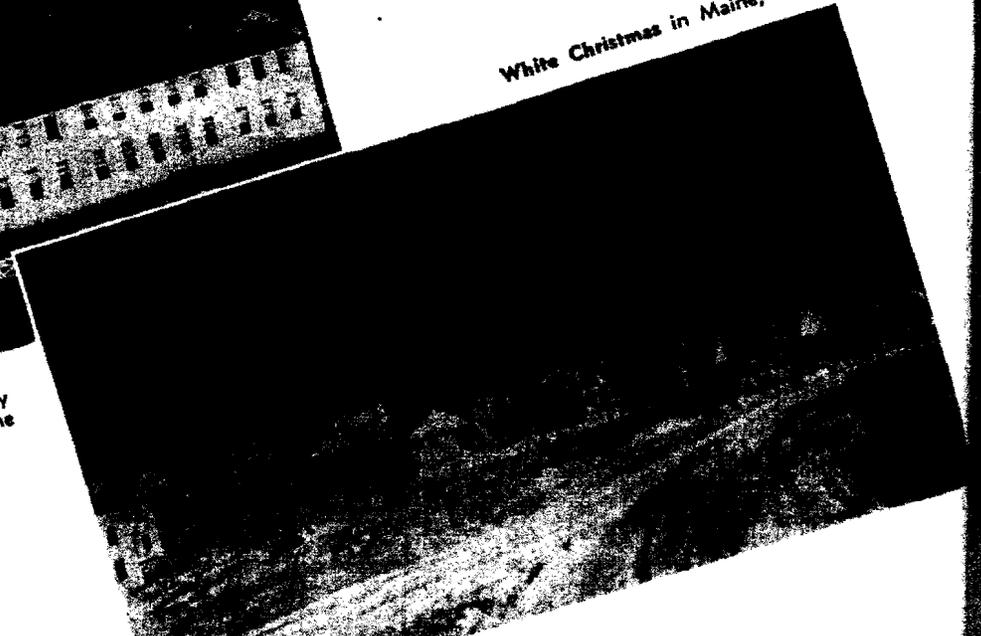
**HIGHLIGHTS.**—Duty days: guard posts, learning general orders, boiler watches, "short arms," K. P. work details, policing the grounds . . . Ship's Store: long lines, cold Coca-

Commander Fuller welcomes Lieut. Meade to Quoddy Village, Maine. Lieut. Cook, and W O Shryock look on.



Administration building at Camp Lee-Stevenson, Quoddy Village, Me. Built originally for the offices of the NYA, it served the Navy admirably.

White Christmas in Maine, 1943.

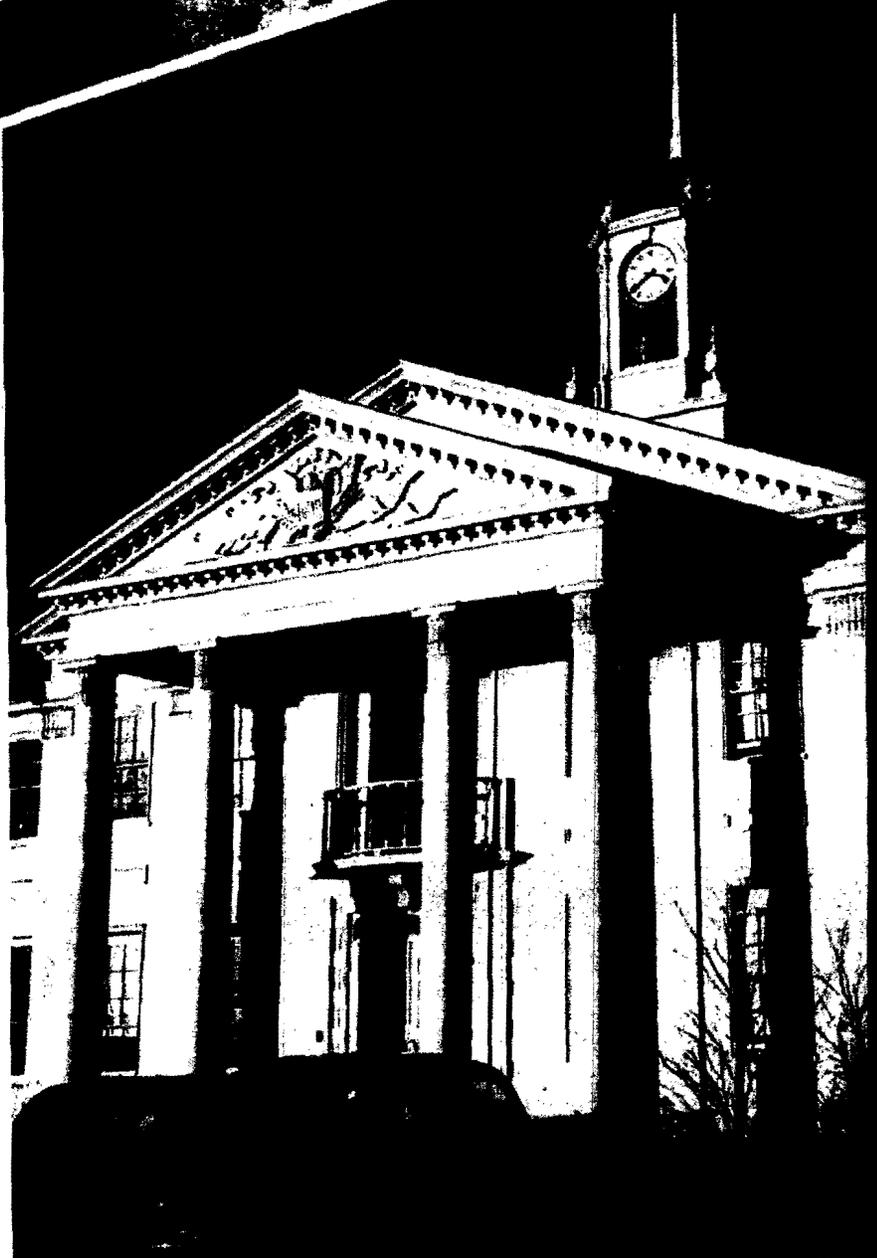




Passamaquoddy Bay with its twenty eight foot tides, as seen from the road through camp.

Main entrance to the Administration Building

Colas, 7-Ups, quart cartons of icecream  
... Reveille, hit the deck, muster and agonizing P. T. before daylight. "Keep those knees high, one-two, one-two."  
... Line up at Sick Bay for shots. "Watch for that square needle." "I didn't move fast enough. He jabbed me twice." ... Inspections: Barracks inspections. "Did we make 4.0 today?" Bag inspections. "Where in hell does this peacoat go?" Sunday afternoon review inspections on the drill field. "Send a corpsman. Another guy went heat-happy and hit the deck." Barracks Bull Sessions after taps. Sleepy mates yelling, "Pipe down." Answered by, "Blow it out you're homesick — scabag." ...





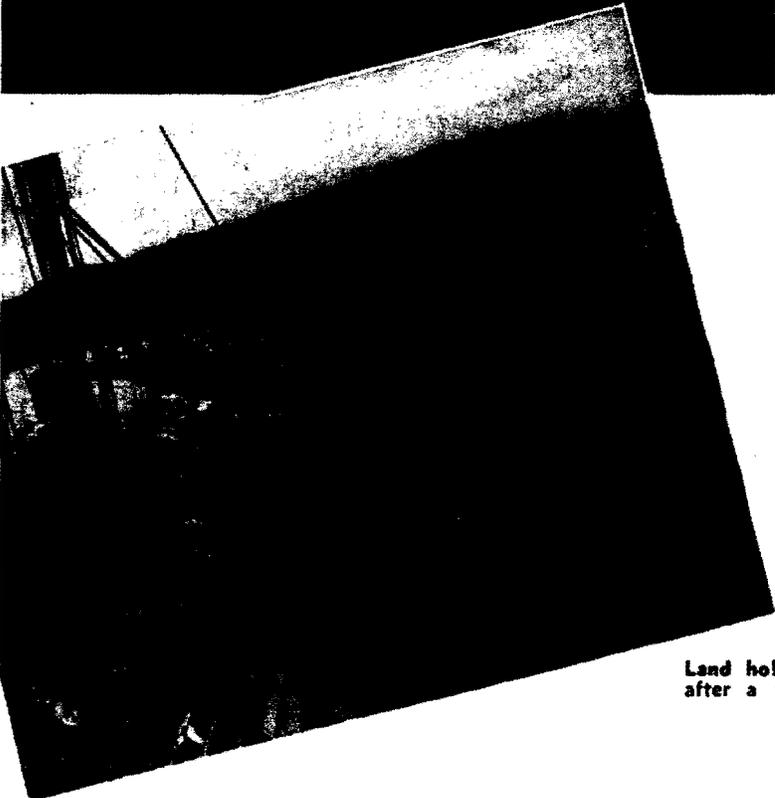
Poker and Cribbage aboard  
ship enroute to Hollandia.

## *Camp Endicott*

After a sleepless, K-rationed, all-night ride in day coaches, the newly formed 119th Naval Construction Battalion arrived at Camp Endicott as day was breaking, Tuesday, August 24. The battalion was mustered and marched to a drill hall in "G" area where barracks were assigned to companies.

The men quickly sensed that Endicott was a dream compared to Peary. Air-conditioned barracks. Cold water fountains on each of the two floors. Good, sweet-tasting water. Individual lockers near the bunks. Well planned areas with two battalions to each section. Recreation facilities and ship's store for each area. Streets and even a drill field paved. No more mud — for awhile!

**ADVANCED TRAINING.** — Within three days time the battalion was squared away and the men "turned to" for intensive advance training. The military took on a more serious note: drills with real guns now, old Springfields from World War I. Bayonet drills with unsheathed bayonets. Classes organized to train men in the deadly use of light and heavy machine guns, mortars and 20 mm anti-aircraft guns. "Dry firing" — a week on the firing range at "Sun Valley." The fine old art of folding packs and extended order maneuvers. Chemical warfare and classes in various types of grenades. Here also, they ran the world's toughest obstacle course and maimed and mauled each other in judo classes. Tough? Yes, but they were learning to take it.



Land ho! Hollandia sighted  
after a twenty day cruise.

**SCHOOLS.** — Again, as at Camp Peary, the men received technical training. Picked personnel of the 119th attended classes in Diesel engines, refrigeration, road construction, diving, equipment repair, electricity and generators, heavy equipment and repair, carpentry, camouflage, rigging, piping and heating, rock crushing, wharves and dock construction, tank and pontoon building and others. Walter Mickritz, SF1c, won the certificate of merit for being the most outstanding student in the schools for technical training at Camp Endicott.

**RECREATION.** — It wasn't all hard work and no play this time. Muscles had hardened and the men had plenty of energy to expend

after eight duty hours. Liberty privileges were extended to each Company every fourth night. With all the glitter of a wartime boom town, Providence was only a short bus ride away and was a sailor's idea of a perfect

"No savy", but it didn't matter. (He got a chocolate for a pretty shell.)

Welcome Committee at Hollandia. "Any youse guys from Brooklyn?"



New Guinea WAC replaces man for active duty.



Chow!



liberty town. The local natives? Very friendly.

Some of the men brought their wives to live in nearby towns. They could visit their wives on regular nights and on other nights their "better halves" could visit at the Camp's elaborate guest house. The wives could also come into camp to attend movies.

The elaborate facilities in each area included: a modern movie theatre, library, gymnasium, bowling alley, billiard tables, and ship's store, where beer, soft drinks, and sandwiches could be purchased. Smooth tennis courts and well planned baseball and softball fields were an incentive for outdoor sports.

His grandfather smoked heads; he smokes American cigarettes.



Native lake village on Sentani. No bugs, no land crabs, no streets to clean.

Broadway shows were brought to the Camp under the auspices of U. S. O. and staged in large auditoriums jammed to the roof with whistling, cheering Seabees. Major league baseball teams stopped off on open dates and played exhibition games on the Seabee diamond. Championship girls' softball teams challenged and sometimes defeated Seabee teams. It all made for swell entertainment.

**ENDICOTT HIGHLIGHTS.** — Whistling at the Navy Waves . . . When Ed Carlson saw the Waves' "unmentionables" hanging on the wash line the first morning in camp and was fully convinced he had come to the right place for advanced training . . . Oscar Brake found a short cut at the obstacle course, but even so always came in with his tongue hanging out . . . Many service-long and perhaps life-long friendships established at Endicott. . . . First liberty and the trouble tying

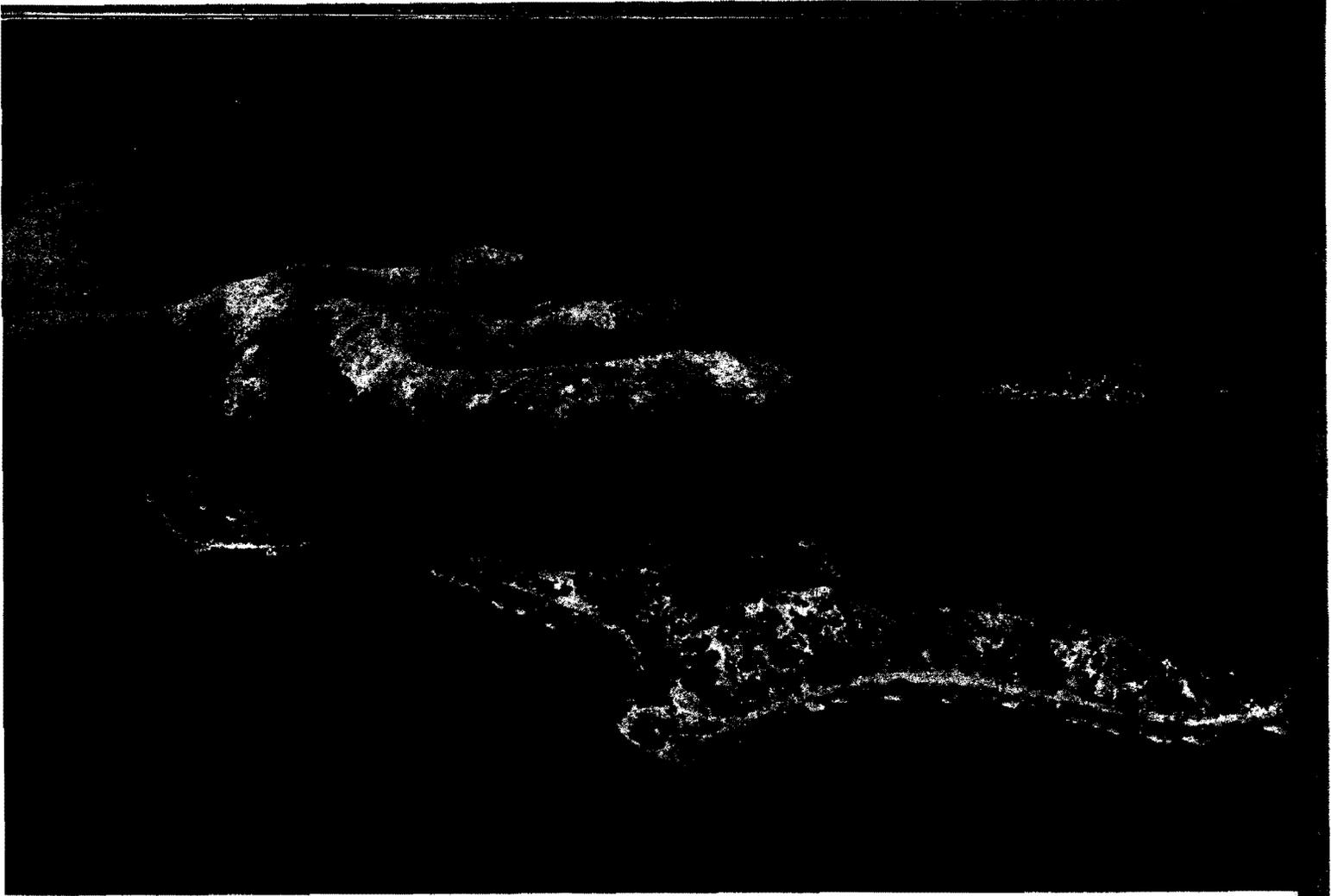
that darn neckerchief. "Old Salts" finally came to the rescue. . . . White hats were worn squared and cocked down over one eye to make a fellow look "salty" and to cover his "boot" haircut. . . . Favorite spots in Providence: Crescent Park, Pirate's Den, Girls' U. S. O. Club. . . . Bull sessions at Ship's Store beer hall over a big ten cent glass of suds and a "Seabee delight" (a sandwich consisting of half loaf of bread, baloney, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and anything else that didn't move and was clean). . . . Bill Cody's one-man show on the mat at judo class the morning after his first liberty. . . . Waking to a jazzed-up reveille. . . .

**LEAVES, COLOR REVIEW, ASSIGNMENT.** — In an amazingly short time the battalion began to function with an individuality all its own. The enlisted men took pride in their platoons, their chiefs, and their companies. They began to get acquainted and recognize their officers by sight. The officers began to realize the potential abilities of the men.

September 19th was a red-letter day for the battalion. It was the date of the beginning of ten-day embarkation leaves. Except for a hundred-odd west coast boys who gambled on getting their leaves later from a Pacific Coast Camp, the 119th went home to receive the praises of proud families, wives, and sweethearts. Ten days leave was all too short, but except for a couple of stragglers everyone beat the deadline back to Endicott.

The dress review and presentation of battalion colors rounded out the 119th's agenda at Endicott. The review was postponed two days by a typical New England, September storm. Finally on the third day, the ritual was performed on a misty morning when Mrs. Edwin J. Mackey, wife of the Officer-in-Charge, presented the battalion its colors at an impressive ceremony.

View of Lake Sentani.



Aerial view of the emerald-hued islands of Lake Sentani. Thick jungle growth and grass covered slopes was the typical topography of Hollandia.

## *Camp Lee-Stephenson*

A bare notice on the bulletin boards informed the men that the 119th Battalion was assigned to temporary duty at Passamaquoddy, Maine. At dusk on Saturday, October 2nd, the outfit marched to the martial airs of an Endicott band to the railroad tracks and boarded a train for a long trip to its next home, Quoddy Village, Maine.

The battalion made the jump overnight from Davisville, Rhode Island, to Quoddy Village, Maine. Again the transportation was day coaches; few got a good night's rest. The usual card and crap games were off to an early start. A colorful thirty minute layover at Lowell, Mass., broke the monotony of the fourteen hour ride. The train was switched

to a siding near a brewery. The Seabees with usual ingenuity drafted all local civilians (men, women, and children) to run beer from the brewery to the windows of the coaches. On one section, nearby college girls discovered the seabee train and even the most undesirable coeds rocketed to sudden popularity. Names were exchanged and some of the more optimistic mates later weathered a trip from Quoddy to Lowell on week-end passes to date these chance-made acquaintances.

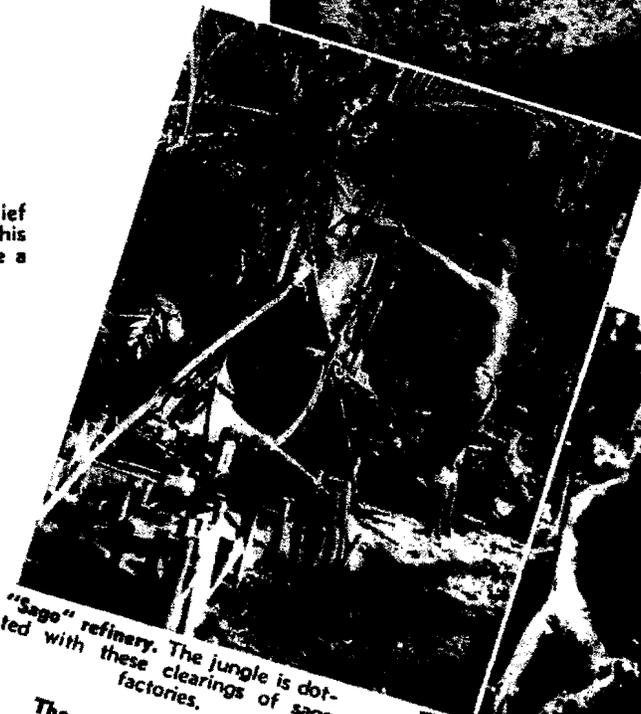
The battalion received a rousing welcome by the 112th Battalion band upon its arrival at Quoddy Village around noon of the next day. The air was cold but a warm sun was shining, and the neat white apartment-like buildings, built among the pines along the bay, sparkled in the sunshine.

The living quarters of the battalion were the neat frame houses and apartments previously occupied by students and leaders of the former N. Y. A. Camp. The 112th, which had preceded the 119th to Quoddy by a month, had the abandoned camp in fine shape. The main portion of the enlisted personnel was soon settled in two of the most imposing buildings: the Leaderney and the Kittery. Each three-room apartment was occupied by an average of fourteen men. Steam-heated apartments were equipped with hot and cold running water and real bath tubs. Crowded, but luxurious.

Except for "Causey's Raiders," very little military training was undertaken during the battalion's three month tour of duty at Quoddy. Men were assigned to work details and began to get a foretaste of construction jobs to come. Spring Farm, vast dump and warehouse area, was cleared up and build-



Fresh coconut milk was a relief from the dehydrated Navy diet. This native boy charged one cigarette a trip; then inflation set in.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY SNOW



"Sago" refinery. The jungle is dotted with these clearings of sago factories.

The work is tiresome; the finished product almost tasteless, closely resembling gelatin.

"Sago", the bread and potatoes of New Guinea is made from the pith of the palm tree.





Girl dancers lead the procession.

ings repaired. One particularly tough job, hindered by the bitter, northeastern cold and sleet, was raising the main camp buildings while new foundations were laid. The huge mess hall was repaired and concrete floors poured.

The nearby towns of Eastport and Calais, Maine and St. Stephens, Canada were taxed to furnish entertainment and accommodations for Seabees on liberty. As a whole the men appreciated the friendliness and hospitality of the New Englanders. Lasting friendships were formed between townspeople and members of the 119th.

**HIGHLIGHTS.** — Armistice Day parade and review in Eastport: Men shivered without peacoats in cold sleet and rain, and unglued hands froze to metal of rifles. Commander Howard and Lt. Comdr. La Porte reviewed the parade from the balcony of the Eastport Hotel. . . . U. S. O. Dances



Chieftain, with a Union Leader Tobacco carton for a headdress, stops to scowl at an American cameraman.



Natives at Hollandia celebrate the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina. Head man (far end of line at right) shouts the word to begin the dance.



"By the left flank . . ." Dress Review, to celebrate the Battalion's Anniversary.



"Inspection . . . H-h-h-Arms". Captain King, Lieut. Cook, and Comdr. Mackey inspect Company "B".

ing accommodations for visiting wives. . . . Shortage of fuel and cold rooms made for good smuggling. . . . First guest house so crowded a man never knew if he would end up with his own or someone else's wife. . . . Burns' restaurant, famous for inch-thick steaks, cocanut cream pies. . . . Mill Town and square dances. . . . Causey's famous parade command, "B - A - T - T - A - L - - I - ON". . . . Froede's escapade with a little nurse from Weal Asylum. . . . "Butch" Claymiller cluttering up some of the most exclusive gutters in Calais. . . . "Dog Face" Jones commissioned "Chief" at nearby Indian Village. . . . Indian Village, "hot spot" where off limits orders made sneak visits necessary. . . . Gem Cafe, a favorite meeting place of Seabees on liberty in Calais. . . . Popular

records of juke boxes: "Pistol Packin' Mama", "White Christmas", and "Rosalita". . . . The small, compact "head" in the Gem Cafe, always in demand. The night the door was locked from the inside and the local authorities plus a line of impatient patrons had to break it down — Mel Fuller was discovered on the deck, horizontal and peacefully asleep! . . . "Oakie" Pipkins, George Sommers, and Jack McCaw always wore pea-coats no matter how mild the weather; came in handy for smuggling bottles across the Canadian border. . . . Steve Klasnick, Bill Cody, and Paul Seng, slightly inebriated, almost broke up the political banquet at the St. Croix Hotel when they crashed the party.

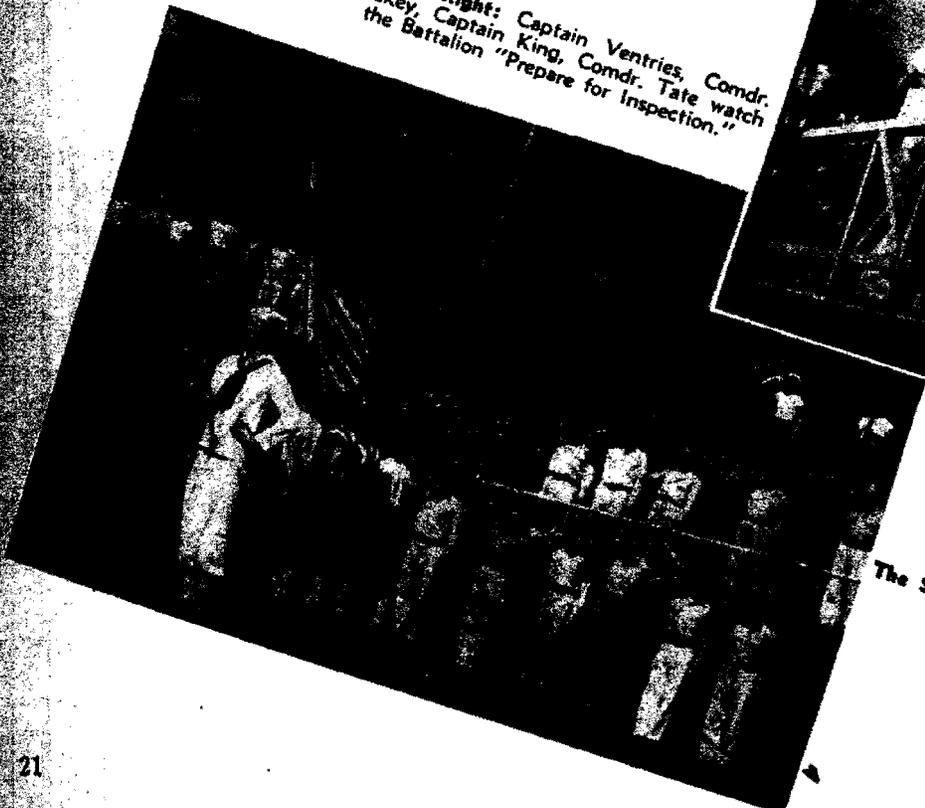
Saturday morning inspections caused the biggest headaches at Quoddy. Friday night all hands "turned to" and scrubbed and polished everything in sight. Saturday mornings the Camp looked like a "Chinese fire drill." Orders were: "If it moves, salute. If its still,



The Battalion Standard . . . It's a long way from Endicott, R. I.



Left to Right: Captain Ventres, Comdr. Mackey, Captain King, Comdr. Tate watch the Battalion "Prepare for Inspection."



The Stars and Stripes pass the Reviewing Stand.

pick it up, and if you can't move it, then paint it."

Christmas was a gala affair with most of the personnel of the battalion remaining aboard. Those men with wives and relatives in nearby towns were given holiday passes.

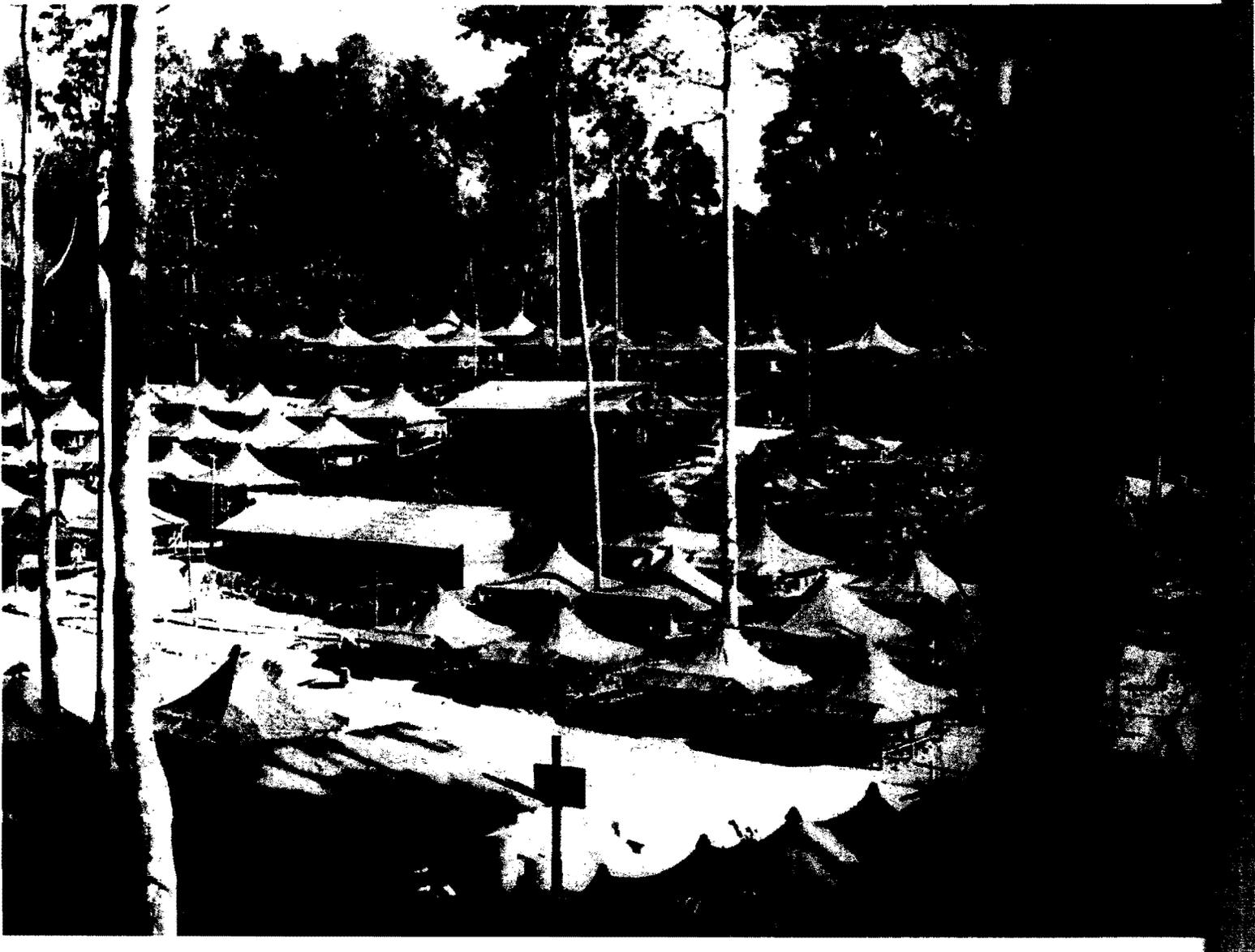
Shortly afterwards the battalion was secured and on the night of December 28, with the mercury hitting a new low, the men entrained in four sections for its cross-country journey to A.B.D. at Port Hueneme.

This time the 119th was destined to travel in comfort in Pullmans and troop sleepers.

## *Six Day Interlude*

Battalion split four ways at Bangor, Maine; two sections rode the northern route, other two travelled southern rails. . . . Diners hooked on at meal times. Food good. Portions too small for rugged Seabees. . . . Men relaxed into usual card and crap games. . . . Bull sessions plentiful. Same eternal subjects — food and women (preference depending on nearness of chow time.) . . . Musical instruments were dragged out. . . . Jam ses-

Last 119th campsite at Hollandia before shoving off for the Philippines. From here a special advance pontoon detachment was sent for D Day operations in Lingayen Gulf, P. I.





One year overseas. Seaman 2/c Eddie Mackey puts the machete to the monstrous anniversary cake at the Enlisted Men's Recreation Hall. Beer and sandwiches launched the 119th on its second year.

sions were spontaneous, sometimes spreading length of train. . . . Floating library of magazines and paper-bound detective novels appeared.

Half hour stop-overs each day to stretch-cramped muscles. . . . Footballs and baseballs magically appeared to be tossed around. . . . Snowball battles in snow country. . . . One Seabee "jumped" train at Massachusetts



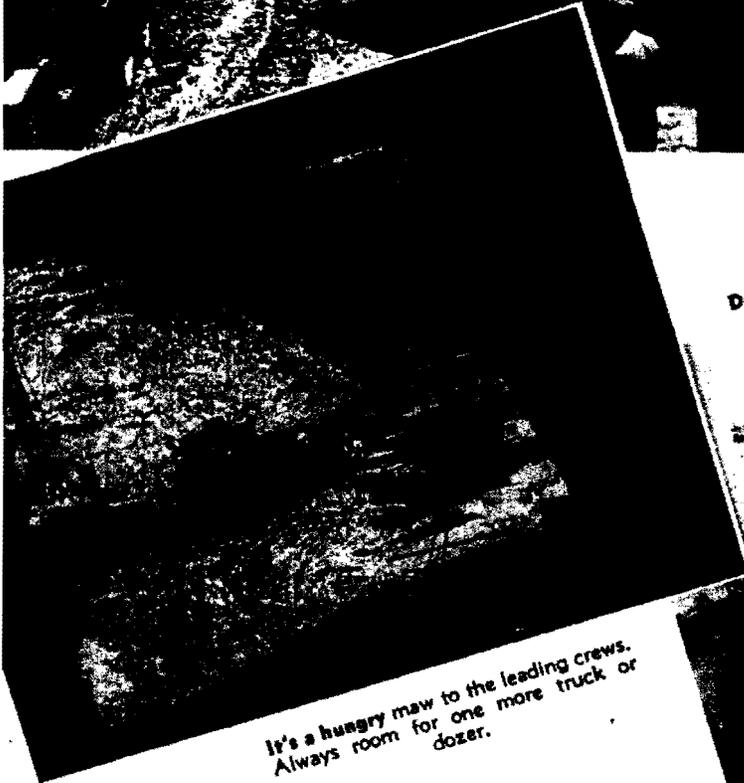


Philippine bound. Leading operations get underway at Hollandia.

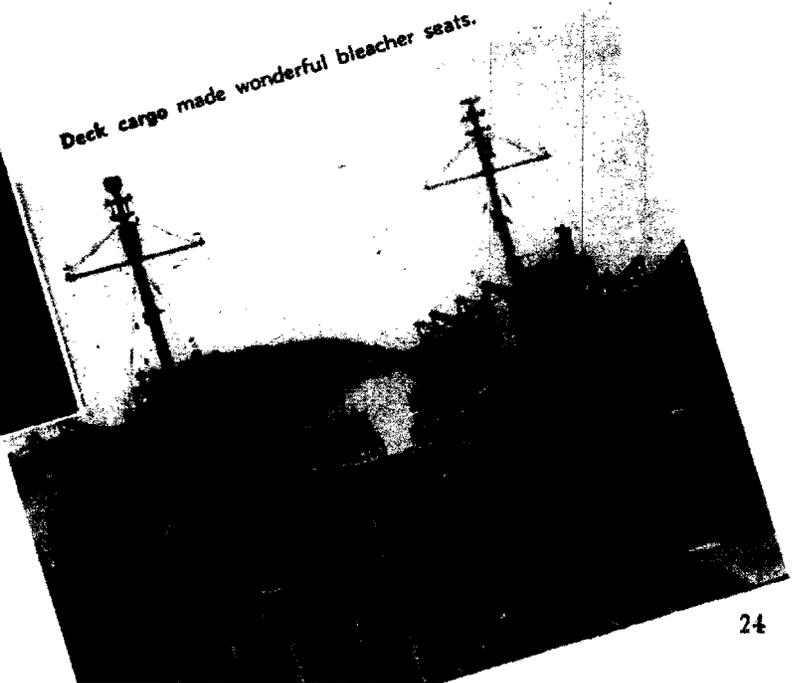
stop. . . . Boys of Company "D" raced for saloon at a stop in Kent, Ohio. Left drinks untasted on bar when Gardner and Sheaks chased them back to train.

Citizens along the way, kindhearted. Waved the Seabees luck. . . . Fellows in Section Two remember little girl in blue sweater at station in Terre Haute, Indiana. She gave out with that which the boys wanted. . . . Service organizations in some cities spread cheer among the troop trains dispensing doughnuts, cookies, coffee, and magazines. An old man at a Wyoming station contributed a large bundle of magazines. Turned out to be farm journals; latest issue dated 1935. . . . Units going southern route traded with Indians for souvenirs. . . . Crossing the prairies men amazingly watched train-racing jack-rabbits as big as small deer.

Fun hiding beer from "Alabama" Meade in water cooler. . . . "Little Willie," colored waiter in diner — funny character: . . . "Ain't got time to chew de fat jus' got time to come un go." "Sides de Navy's broke, ain't nuttin' in de Kitty for little Willie." . . . It was true. . . . The men were broke. Too soon after Christmas.



It's a hungry maw to the leading crews. Always room for one more truck or dozer.



Deck cargo made wonderful bleacher seats.

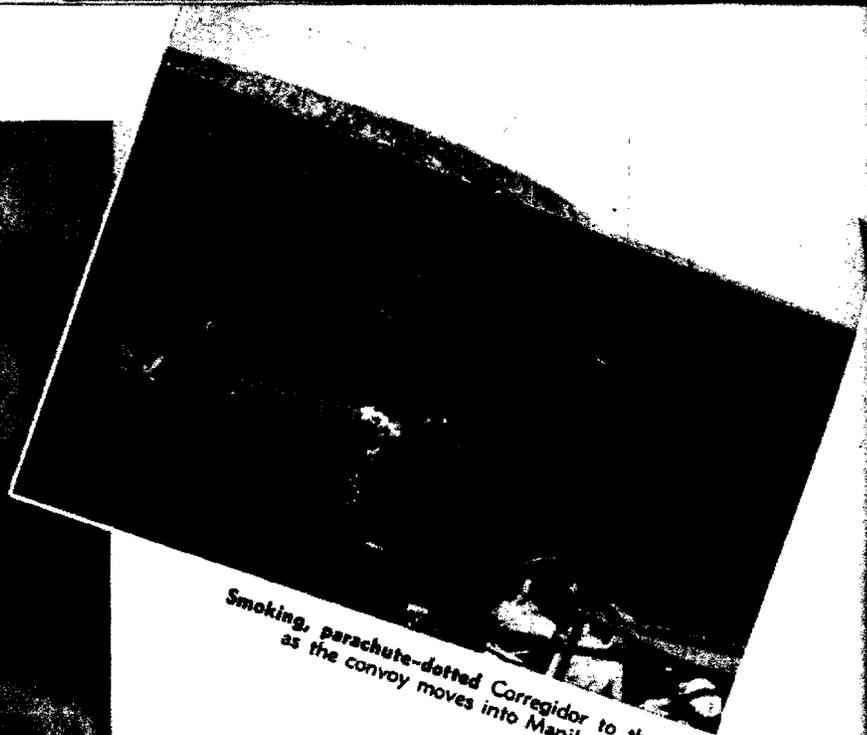
Keenan woke up his car every morning with his guitar playing "The Harlot of Jerusalem." . . . Paul Kinaley of "B" Company gave a small boy a ten dollar bill in Indianapolis, Indiana, with orders to run and buy all the beer he could carry. The train pulled out ahead of schedule and Paul's still wondering what the kid did with all that beer. . . . Joe Lucas had all the mates in his car believing that Texas was God's country. It took the train 48 hours to pass through the "Lone Star" state, and all the men saw was desert, cactus, prairie rabbits, and a gigantic sign on a billboard reading, "Buy war bonds and help Texas win the war."

On the beach, Seabees sit on their gear and wait.



On the deck, confusion as men search for places to sack down.





Smoking, parachute-dotted Corregidor to the port as the convoy moves into Manila Bay.

Leisure time while enroute.

Topside quarters for 119th personnel aboard an LST.



## *Camp Rousseau, Cal.*

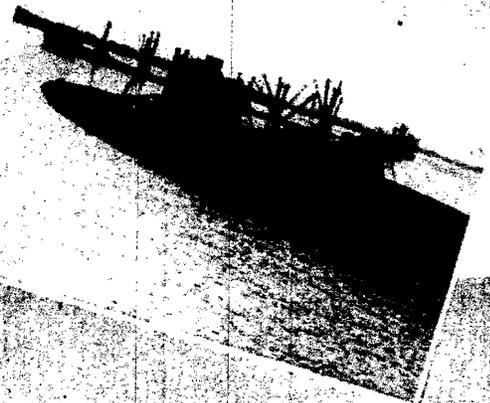
Six busy weeks were spent at Rousseau polishing up military tactics and maneuvers; attending final schools; processing the personnel for overseas duty. Feverishly, the men were having their final flings at fun on liberties in Hollywood, Los Angeles, and the nearer towns of Oxnard and Ventura.

The big quonset camp was a bee-hive of industry from the docks to the main gates. Men of the 119th enthusiastically sensed the stepped-up tempo. This was it. They were on their way for sure, this time.

Impressions at Hueneme were a heterogeneous lot. The drill, bivouacs, and long



*Manila Bay, graveyard of the Japanese Fleet. Over two hundred Japanese warships were sunk here.*



hikes were rough. Springfield '03 rifles were issued to men previously trained with carbines. Results first day on the rifle range: bloody, swollen lips, and cheeks, but enthusiasm over the accuracy of '03's.

Recreation facilities at the camp were excellent. The spacious movie theatres were well built. Latest films were shown for the service men and their wives. A well rounded sports program was carried out. Long lines formed at the wet canteens at 1830 every night.

Glamorous Hollywood was the magnet that drew most Liberty parties. Transportation was tough. Lots of hitch-hikers. Hollywood U. S. O. a good hangout for sailors. Lots of fellows bunked at Hollywood Guild (actors). 119th painters worked and lived at Hollywood canteen. . . . Musts: — Harry





Inside the ancient walled city built by the Spanish conquerors in the sixteenth century.  
Shell-gutted apartments in the fashionable residential section off Dewey Boulevard.

James orchestra at the Palladium. . . . Earl Carroll's, across the street if a Seabee felt rich enough to pay the check. . . . Burlesque shows at Fifth and Main in Los Angeles. . . . Silver Dollar Cafe, good chow and meeting place. . . . U. S. O. dances at Civic Community Hall, Ventura.

Eventually the supply ships were loaded, men said final farewells to wives and relatives, who had followed them to the coast, and the battalion secured. On a cold rain-soaked pre-dawn February morning the 119th, staggering under tons of personal gear, entrained for San Pedro where late in the afternoon they boarded the transport, USS West Point.

Without fanfare, the huge vessel slipped her hawser and moved quietly out of the harbor on the next afternoon's tide. The date was February 22, 1944. Somber mates lined the ship's rails to get their last glimpse of the homeland for many months.

The walled city was originally built as a fortress against early Moro invaders.

Augustine's, oldest church in the Philippines, stands amidst the leveled destruction of the walled city.



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PLAIN

ITINERARY OF THE 119TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

23 Aug. 1943 Transferred from Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia to Camp Endicott, Davisville, R.I.

28 Dec. 1943 Transferred from Quoddy Village, Maine to ABD, Huonamu, California.

21 Feb. 1944 Left for Milne Bay. Exact date of arrival unknown.

29 May 1944 Left Milne Bay.

18 June 1944 Arrived Hollandia. Late in May a detachment left for Aitope and another for Wopda Island.

1 Feb. 1945 One officer and 32 men on detached duty with 302nd Pontoon Detachment. Returned 5 Feb. 1945.

8 Mar. 1945 Departed Hollandia.

21 Mar. 1945 Arrived Manila, P.I.

27 Aug. 1945 Located Manila.

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

Date: 18 September 1945.

CONSTRUCTION  
BATTALION

119<sup>th</sup>

U.S.N.

On the Ball!

BUILD TO VICTORY









