

147th Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



Nucleus - CBD 1045

147th CB

NCTC -
ABD - (CBRD Parks)
Ready Date - 15 May'45
Left ABD - 25 May'45
Location - Okinawa

- 3-1-45 -- Comservpac Sec. disp to CNO 240203 Feb'45 - requests that one of the four main-land battalions which is to be assigned to the 8th Brg.(BIVE)(replacements for the 43rd, 52nd, 98th and 116th CB's) be the one formed from the nucleus of CBD 1045. These four batts will report to the 17th Reg. on the West Coast.
- 3-1-45 -- Cincpoa P.H. Sec. disp to CNO 232345 Feb'45 - PetDiv #1 not desired in this area. Request that a standard CB be formed from CBD 1045 as a nucleus and assigned to BIVE for tank farm work. This new batt (Petrol) ready date is 23 Apr'45.
- 3-1-45 -- The 147th CB is to be formed using CBD 1045 as nucleus.(CNO Sec. disp to Cincpoa Pearl 271319 Feb'45).
- 3-20-45 - The 147th CB for tank farm work is to replace the 116th CB. (Comserforpacflt Sec ltr 001000 dtd 10 Mar'45 to CNO)
- 3-23-45 - The 147th CB ready for BIVE 15 May'45. (Cominch Sec Disp to Cincpoa P & Adv Hdqtrs 201905 Mar'45)
- 4-19-45 - CNO orders transf of the 147th CB about 23 Apr to CBRD Parks. (CNO conf ltr Ser 0159930 dtd 13 Apr to NCTC Davisville) Assgnd tank farm work at BIVE.
- 4-25-45 - The 147th CB departed Davisville 24 Apr'45 for Camp Parks in three sections-- total of 24 off. and 1082 men. (Davisville TWX 242348 Apr to Bupers)
- 5- 2-45 - The 147th CB, 20 off. and 1079 men, arrived Parks 29 Apr'45 from NCTC Davisville. (Parks TWX 010005 May'45 to Bupers)
- 5-31-45 - The 147th CB, consisting of 23 off. and 1072 men, departed Parks for overseas on 25 May'45. (CBRD Parks Sec Disp 271630 May'45 to Bupers)

Location - Okinawa

147th C.B.

- 7-23-45 - The 147th CB is assigned to the 11th Brg and 39th Reg effective 10 July. (COT APO 331 sec report on assignment of CB units ser 897 dtd 10 July)
- 8-20-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 147th CB - located at Okinawa. Det 1045 is the nucleus of this batt. Batt arrived Buckner Bay 14 Jul'45 and came ashore on 16 July. While enroute to destination, stopped off at Eniwetok and Ulithi. Report via the 39th Reg and 11th Brg.
- 9-21-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 147th CB. Located at Okinawa. Report via 39th Reg & 11th Brig.
- 10-31-45 - For consolidation purposes request inactivation when directed by CNOB, Okinawa the 147th CB. (Comdr., NOB, Okinawa conf disp 291147 Oct'45 to Comservpac).
- 11-6-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 147th CB - location not stated. Report via 39th Reg. & 11th Brig.
- 12-4-45 - Comservpac reqs NOB, Okinawa to inactivate 147th CB. (Comservpac spdltr ser 5800 dtd 13 Nov'45 to CNOB, Okinawa).
- 12-6-45 - 1 Nov'45 report of 147th CB - location not stated. Report via 39th Reg.
- 12-17-45 - 147th CB is directed to report to CNCT, Okinawa upon inactivation of 39th Reg. on or about 30 Nov'45. (CNCT, Okinawa conf ltr ser 6289 dtd 24 Nov'45 to 39th Reg).
- 1-14-46 - Off. & men of 147th CB reported to CNCT, Okinawa on 30 Nov'45. (CNCT, Okinawa 1st end. ser 6469 dtd 30 Nov'45 to OinC, 147th CB).
- 1-28-46 - Inactivation of 147th CB was completed on 21 Dec'45. (OinC, 147th CB ltr dtd 21 Dec'45 to Comservpac).
- 1-29-46 - 1 Dec'45 report of 147th CB - located at Okinawa. Men transferred to other CB units on the island.

INACTIVATED

ON BOARD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
1 Apr'45	24	305	BNP625 & R
1 May'45	24	1083	BNP625 & R
1 Jun'45		1068	BNP625
1 Aug'45		1059	BNP625
1 Sept'45	25	1007	BNP625
1 Oct'45	18	996	
		52 Trans.	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45	21	932	BNP625 & R
1 Dec'45	18	713	BNP625 & R
1 Jan'46	3		R

147th Construction Battalion (INACTIVATED)

147 C.B.

DECLASSIFIED

<u>Date</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Notes</u>
12/20	-	Camp Endicott	C.B. report 1 December.	(new unit being activated) -
1/17	-	"	C.B. memo 1/13.	New unit. Gen. ready date 4/23/45. no assignment
3/5	-	-	CNO sec dis 8. 27 1319 Feb.	will form with nucleus 71045 for assignment Bine.
1/13	-	-	op 30-0100030 3/6.	Supers requested to make C.B. 147 ready Camp Banks 15 May 1945. will report escom Bine for assignment to duty.
3/19	-	"	Bine's memo 3/9.	New unit. Gen ready date 4/23/45. Earmarked Bine.
Asst Bine Vice 1/17	-	C Bine	op 30. Conf serial. 0159930 2 13 April	Left Camp Banks about 4/23- about Bine.

147 C.B.

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DECLASSIFIED

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
5/12	-	(Biele)	CNS sec 071935	assid priority
5/22	-	skiswan	mag.	being shpd
				Biele may of
				early June.
			Com 14 sec act	
			dwp. 140159 mag.	delete frag -
				2nd Brig.

A Battalion Is Born



CAMP ENDICOTT, DAVISVILLE, R. I.

Year 1945 was but ten days old when our battalion was born. Destined to an uncertain childhood, its birth was announced at 1:00 P.M. on January 10 by a telephone call. There was none of the hysterical excitement and passing out of cigars so familiar in the birth of a usual child. This was no usual child. Born to serve the Navy and a country at war, this battalion had not only one glorious tradition to live up to, but also the added responsibility of being worthy to build, and if necessary, fight under a Seabee banner. Through the very same telephone call the battalion was given a name and a guardian. It was christened the provisional 148th Naval Construction Battalion, and Commander George S. Robinson, CEC, USN, was appointed Officer-in-Charge.

FIRST MEN RECEIVED

Camp Endicott now set down to the task of supplying us with men. January 15th saw 900 men assigned to the provisional 148th NCB. The group was temporarily set to roost in D area of NCTC. Our stay here was short. About the time accommodations became adequate and battalion routine geared to a comparatively smooth pace, orders were received to move to Sun Valley for field training.

RIFLE RANGE

Sun Valley gave battalion personnel an opportunity to study and fire carbines. It also gave Camp Endicott a chance to take back practically all of our seamen. Due to the reckless bleeding of our seamen complement, rumors arose that the provisional 148th NCB was to be broken up. This was indeed a shaly period for the battalion and it left Sun Valley on the 17th of February with a doubtful future.

SOME CHANGES MADE

New hope and new surroundings were found at Camp Thomas. With our arrival we received word that the 148th would be a pontoon outfit. More men were received to replace the ones taken away from us at Sun Valley, and arrangements were made to train both officers and men in pontoon tactics and assembly. Then it happened! Men from Seabee Detachment 1045, just recently returned from invasion duty in Southern France, were transferred to us in increasing numbers, until by March 5th we absorbed the major part of the 1045. The receipt of these men changed the picture considerably. Men of the 1045 Detachment knew nothing of pontoons, being strictly an oil tank construction group. On March 8th we received word to change the battalion from "Pontoon" to "Construction," and furthermore to use the number 147th in place of 148th.

WASHINGTON GIVES GREEN LIGHT

On March 15th the 147th was officially launched by orders from Washington. Between the 15th and 20th Camp Endicott sent us large drafts of men. Our need for battalion personnel was so acute that the Training Center apparently could not screen the men. Many were sent to us with physical disabilities and ailments ranging from flat feet to stomach ulcers. We could only muster 495 men for a review. Two days later we started for the coast with 1,108. Camp Endicott went all out and transferred over 600 men in one day—the day before we left.

Reading of Orders

BATTALION REVIEW



Under the watchful eye of Captain Fred F. Rogers, USN (retired), Commanding Officer of Camp Endicott, the 147th Battalion, received its colors. The colors were presented by sponsors, Mrs. George S. Robinson, wife of the OinC, and Mrs. Fred T. Williams, wife of the Executive Officer. The Battalion then passed in review before NCTC's Commanding Officer. Ceremony was held at the NCTC parade ground.

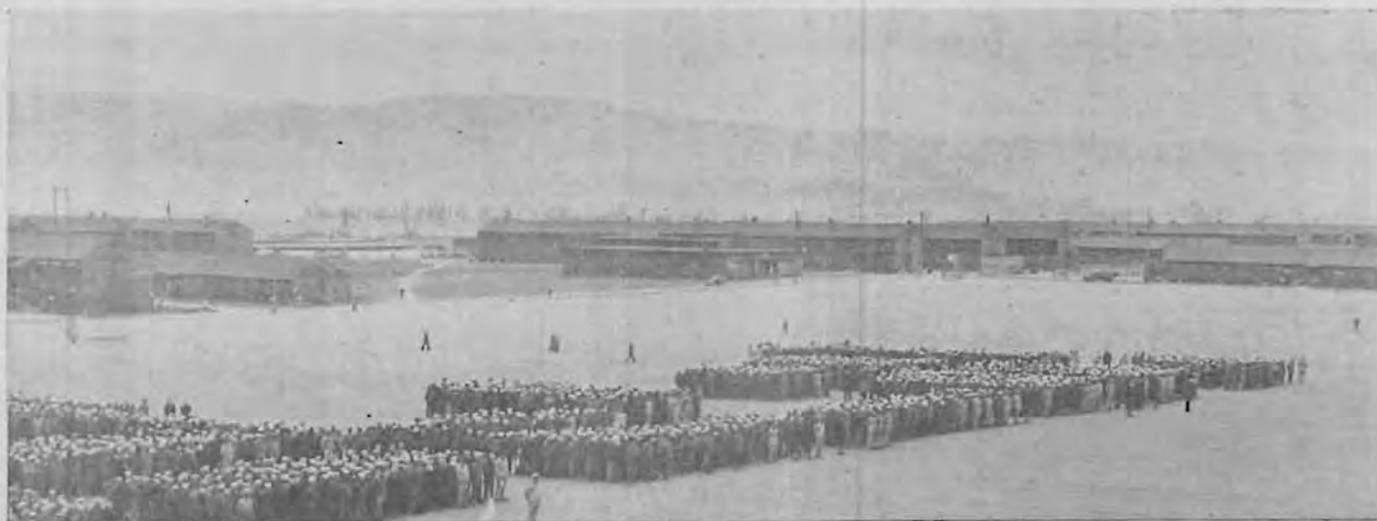
Mrs. Robinson Presents the Colors

Inspection of Colors





CAMP

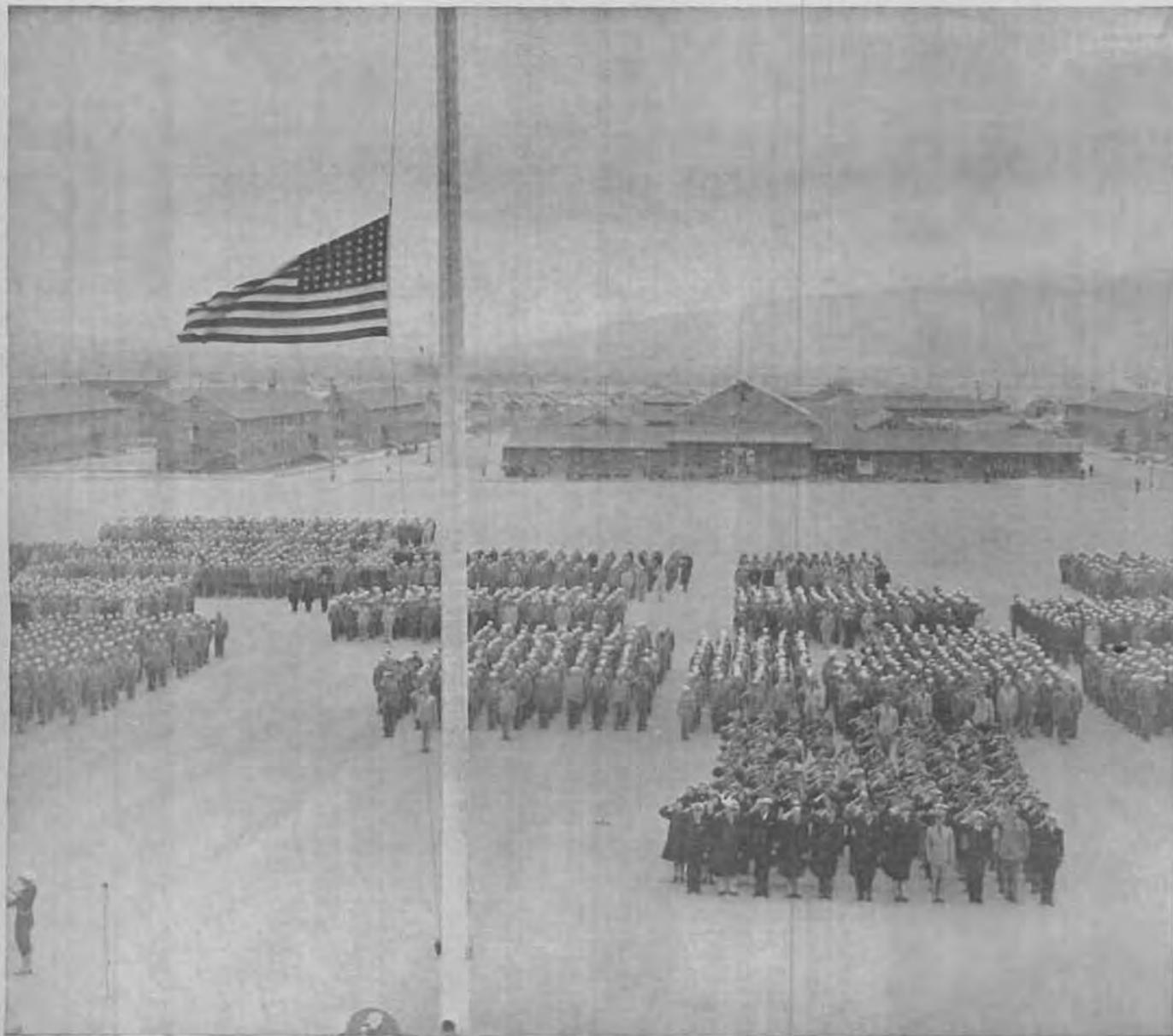


Two main reasons why the 147th NCB found itself at Camp Parks were: 1, Preparatory screening and training of men for overseas duty, and 2, Fitting out. Our date of departure for Island "X" was set at May 23. After living quarters were assigned, things started to happen. The paper war was on. Lists for deletions were being prepared for men in excess of complement or having physical disabilities. Physical and dental examinations began in earnest several days after arrival. The Battalion, by companies, was run through the Camp Parks Overseas Examining Board. The physical and dental check-ups took a heavy toll. Our Battalion doctor and pharmacist mates saw to it that we got the required overseas inoculations. Typhoid, Tetanus, Typhus and Cholera were stabbed into our blood stream by grinning pharmacist mates wielding hideous looking needles.

PARKS



Saluting Colors at V-E Day Celebration
Flag is flying at half mast in mourning of the late Franklin D. Roosevelt



V-E Day at Parks

On May 8, nine days after arriving at Camp Parks, we celebrated V-E Day. The Battalion marched to the parade ground where the entire station assembled to hear Captain Wilson, Civil Engineer Officer in Command of CBRD, CAMP PARKS, speak on the Allied Victory in Europe. The Station Military Band played and the brief program ended with the rebroadcast of President Truman's V-E Day address.

ISSUE

Men were issued infantry packs, field jackets, gas masks, helmets and rifles. Carbines were fired and zeroed. Special orders on required and personal gear were given, followed by a bag inspection.

LAST LOOK

Camp Parks had a farewell look at the 147th on May 19. Companies A, B, C, and D marched in review on the station parade grounds. It was during this review that Company D made a name for itself by whistling at a formation of Waves marching next to the Battalion. Too bad they missed that last week-end liberty.

TROOPSHIP VIA BUS:

Transportation from Camp Parks to Pier 7, San Francisco, was by Navy bus. I doubt whether anyone of us will ever forget that ride. Each man boarded his bus with full infantry pack, sea bag, gas mask, ditty bag and rifle. Never have figured out who was most on top, the gear or the man.

Men staggered up the gangplank with gear weighing heavily on their backs. The cleated gangplank was wet and slippery. Many a Seabee that night would have preferred walking a tight-rope for Barnum & Bailey's.



TROOPSHIP

Our troopship, the S.S. Sea Devil, was at one time a freighter. When the war broke out she, like many Americans, was drafted into the Army. Her last trip took her to the Philippines where she participated in the invasion of Leyte. Recently returned to San Francisco with a load of ambulatory casualties from the Philippines, the Sea Devil was again ready to make the trip back.

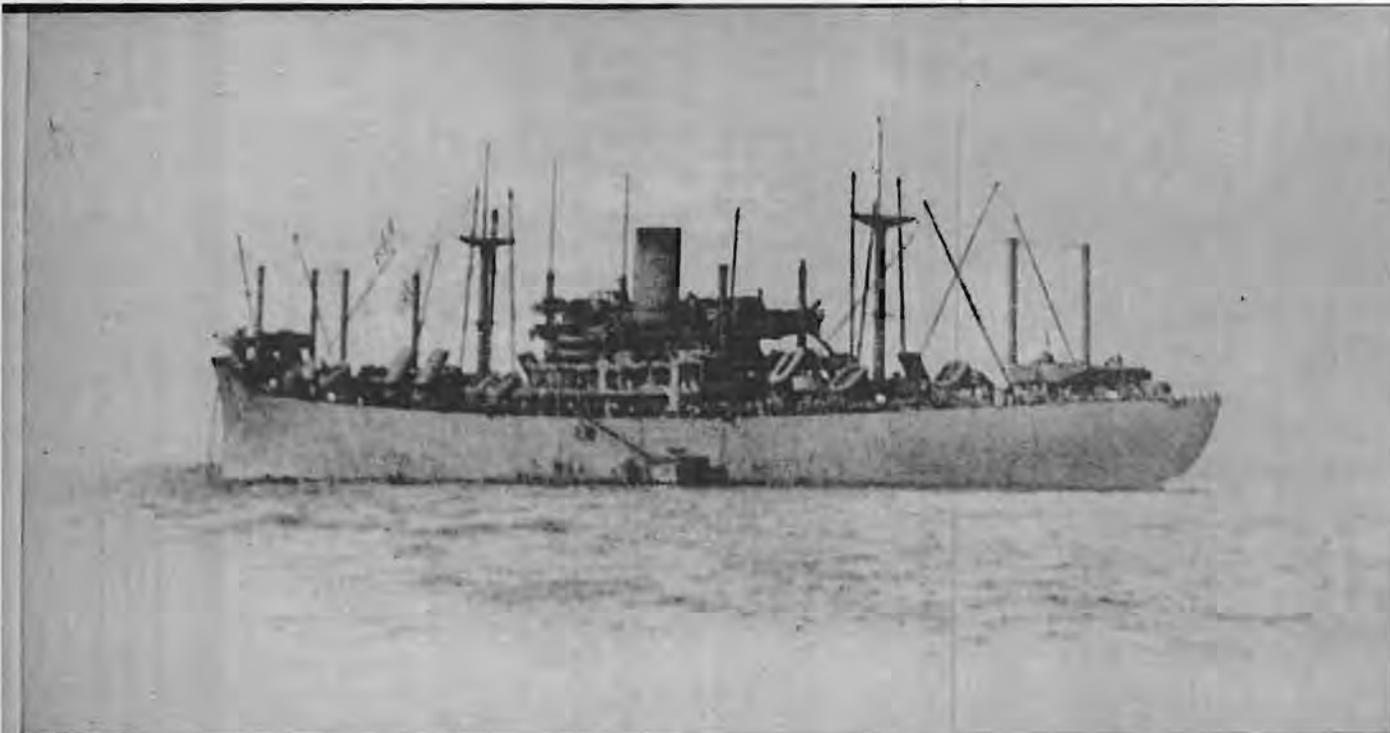
Ship's complement were made up of three separate services: the Merchant Marine in charge of navigation, the U. S. Navy Armed Guard handling security against enemy attack, and an Army detachment for the Troop Commander's office.

QUARTERS TWO DECKS BELOW

We were filed down two flights of ladders into dark and stuffy holds. Bunks decked five high had just enough room in between them for a man to slip in horizontally. Men were quick to see this and something short of pandemonium broke out as men sought upper bunks in hopes that they might find better ventilation and more freedom of movement. More fortunate mates were quartered between decks. Here bunks were merely three high.

Unlike the foul air below, out on the weather deck the night air was cool and invigorating. From our berth at Pier seven one could see the San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridge. It was but a week ago that we crossed this bridge via "A" train with our pockets full of money and a liberty pass, and our minds intent on having a good time.





S.S. Sea Devil

Anchors Aweigh

GOOD-BYE, "FRISCO"

At 1600, May 26, after fueling and apparently wandering aimlessly over every inch of San Francisco Bay, the Sea Devil broke for the Golden Gate. We passed under this longest suspension bridge in the world and within a few hours were out at sea. Down the coast of California we sailed. For hours we lost sight of the coast but caught up with it again as Santa Barbara's shore line loomed up at our port side. Shortly after May 27, 1945, we docked at Port Huneme. The Battalion was disembarked and taken to quarters at Camp Rousseau to await loading of the ship.

SHORT BUT PLEASANT

Our stay at Camp Rousseau was short and very pleasant. The stop-off gave us an opportunity to better prepare ourselves for the remainder of the voyage. We bore down on the Camp's Ship's Service Store, buying candy, soap, razor blades, and writing paper. It wasn't uncommon for mates to have their hair cut "boot style," some even went so far as to have it shaved off. The big treat was the fresh water showers (the Sea Devil had only salt water for the troops to bathe in), and also on our forget-me-not list are the excellent meals served at Camp Rousseau.

About the time we were starting to feel like home-steaders the order came to board the Sea Devil. Loaded almost to capacity and with an additional 800 men of the 146th NCB aboard, her weather deck seemed uncomfortably close to the water's surface.

OFF AGAIN!

Lines were cast off at 1500 on May 31. At our port-side a tugboat pulled, strained and grunted. It was quite evident that her efforts were not in vain as Port Huneme

appeared to be moving away from our ship. The strains of "Anchors Aweigh," being played by the Camp Rousseau Military Band, kept growing fainter and fainter while waving longshoremen shrank by degrees until their figures blended into the scene. The Sea Devil was now on her own and we, just a little closer to "Island X."

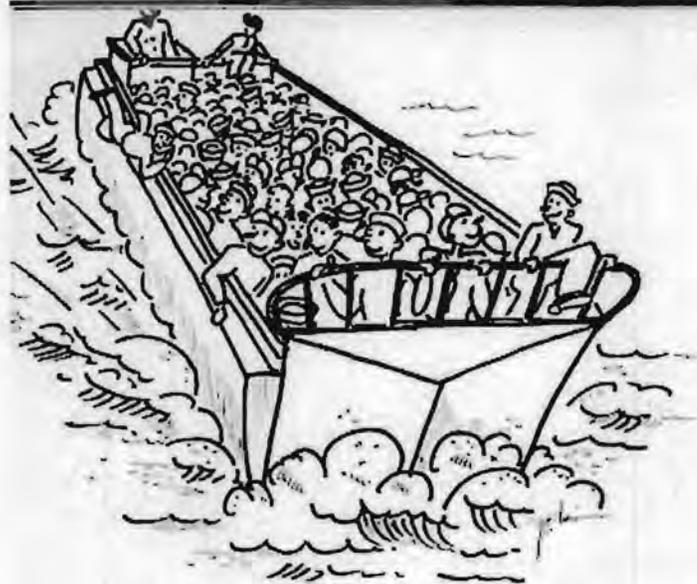
SAILING, SAILING!

FIVE DAYS OUT AT SEA ON THE CROWDED SEA DEVIL, WE WERE SLOWLY FINDING OUT HOW MUCH LIKE A DEVIL THIS SHIP WAS—TRULY A HELL ON KEELS. ONLY AN EARLY SEABEE, UP ON THE WEATHER DECK BY 4:30 A.M., COULD FIND A VACANT SPOT AND A BOX TO SIT ON. OTHERS HAD TO BE CONTENT WITH STANDING. THERE WASN'T MUCH EVIDENCE OF SEA SICKNESS, BUT WE WERE CAUTIONED, NEVERTHELESS, TO CARRY THE OUTER SHELL OF OUR HELMETS JUST IN CASE WE GET THAT GREEN FEELING.

Sun-up, on June 6, gave us our first sight of land in six days. Two islands of the Hawaiian group were off our starboard side. Rumors that we were to drop anchor at Pearl Harbor were groundless and we continued on. Four days past Hawaii, figured to June 11 because of the skip in one day when crossing the Date Line, we became eligible for membership in the Order of the Golden Dragon.

FIRST PACIFIC STOP

At stand-to on the morning of the 14th we dropped anchor at Eniwetok in the Marshalls. All hands were on deck, their eyes drinking in every little island, every tree and every stretch of sandy beach. The sight of land was



good after fourteen days of nothing but ocean — days that saw Captain Johnson's "R-e-lax" become a by-word; William O'Donnel, merchant seaman, committed to the deep the day after his fatal fall; a daily "Sea Devil," publication edited by the 146th and 147th; three appendectomies performed by the ship's Medical Officer; and the Sea Devil Review—comedy skits, music and novelty acts by mates of both battalions.

WORK AND PLAY

We set foot on Peary and Runit, two islands in the Marshalls group. Peary was our liberty island where groups of 200 to 300 men were taken to swim and to drink a few bottles of beer. If it weren't for the intense heat of the mid-day sun we would have enjoyed our liberty at Peary Island, but, as it was, many cases of severe sunburn were incurred and in several instances men experienced heat exhaustion.

On Runit Island the 146th and 147th Battalions worked on a Fleet Canteen, for which Commander Robinson received a message commending the two construction battalions for their good work.

GLAD TO BE ON OUR WAY

The Sea Devil weighed anchor on June 28. Once again we rushed up to the weather deck, but this time to see the Marshalls disappear into the blue Pacific. We were growing very tired of the Sea Devil and happy to be on our way again, for it meant reaching our destination and being rid of her. The one bad feature about going out to sea again was the stand-to's, at sun-up and sun-down.

The voyage between the Marshalls and Carolines lasted three days. Our diet during this jaunt was increased by an atabrine tablet daily and when a case of spinal meningitis broke out, a sulphur tablet was thrown in. These tablets were a welcome addition to an almost non-existent diet.

STOP-OVER TWO

On July 2 we reached Ulithi Atoll. Veterans of convoys stopping over at the Carolines will not forget Ulithi's little playground of Mog-Mog. Drinking beer under the shade of Mog-Mog's coconut trees is what we like most to remember about this small island. It also offered us the music of Dick Jergans, and softball and basketball courts to loosen stiff troop ship muscles.

LAST LAP

The Sea Devil left anchorage on July 10 and proceeded out to sea as one of a twenty-eight ship convoy. We were now in dangerous waters. Drills became more frequent and each ship in the convoy was given a chance to try out its guns. The type of target used was a radio-controlled model airplane, known to aviation circles as a Drone. Mates were cautioned by "The Voice" to have life-jackets and full canteens with them at all times. A very comforting sight were our destroyer escorts.

OKINAWA IS OUR "ISLAND X"

Finally found out the name of our "Island X" on July 10. A complete picture of Okinawa was painted for us on that day by Commander Robinson. It was a hot afternoon and battalion members were jammed tightly together at the midship house. Our eyes were on the resister platform where the Commander stood, microphone in hand, giving us the good and bad points of Okinawa.

END OF THE LINE

On July 15, forty-five days after sailing out of Port Huneme, California, the Sea Devil dropped anchor in Buckner Bay. [Nakagusuku Bay prior to General Simon B. Buckner's death when it was renamed in his honor]. We were scheduled to land on this very same day but strong winds made the bay too rough for barges. Landings were postponed until the following morning.

First barge pulled along side at 0800 on the 16th. Although the day was very hot and field packs, seabags and rifles weighed heavily upon our backs, we weren't the least bit unhappy. Forty-five days on an ex-cargo ship was about all we could stand.



Headquarters Tenth Army

7 September 1945

Surrender

The undersigned Japanese Commanders, in conformity with the general surrender executed by the Imperial Japanese Government, at Yokohama, on 2 September 1945, hereby formally render unconditional surrender of the islands in the Ryukyus within the following boundaries:

30° North 126° East, thence 24° North 122° East, thence
24° North 155° East, thence 29° North 151° East, thence
30° North 151° 30' East, thence to point of origin.

納見敏部

Toshiro Nomi
Lieutenant General
Commander Japanese Forces
Sakishima Gunto

高田利貞

Toshitada Takada
Major General
Commander Japanese Army Forces
Amami Gunto

加藤唯雄

Tadao Kato
Rear Admiral
Commander Japanese Navy Forces
Amami Gunto

Accepted:

Joseph W. Stilwell
J. W. Stilwell
General, United States Army
Commanding

This is It!

Okinawa was alerted by Island Command as to a possible Jap airborne invasion. They said the sons of Nippon would more than likely try to take back Okinawa during the period starting August 1 through August 10. The first nine days passed with little event. But on the 10th of August, at 9:00 P.M., the camp became alive with rifle fire. From ships anchored in Buckner Bay shot up bright red and yellow tails of tracer bullets. Men froze in their tracks and through their minds flashed but one thought —

invasion. Mates ran for their tents to grab carbines, gas masks and helmets. Fox holes on Nob Hill were doing a record business. Steady fire continued and one had the feeling that a bullet would rip through him at any moment. Still carbines cracked, sirens screamed and tracer fire streaked pretty red patterns in the sky. . . . But wait! The tracer fire took on the shape of a "V". This was not an invasion but a celebration of V-J Day.

~~RESTRICTED~~
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PLAIN

ITINERARY OF THE 147TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

24 Apr. 1945 Departed Davisville, R. I. for Camp Parks.
29 Apr. 1945 Arrived Camp Parks.
25 May 1945 Departed for Okinawa.
14 July 1945 Arrived Buckner Bay.
16 July 1945 Disembarked. While enroute to destination
 stopped off at Eniwetok and Ulithi.
1 Sept. 1945 Located at Okinawa.

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

Date: 23 September 1945.

147

NCB











