
The first few weeks were a mixture of orientation, military training, and stevedoring instruction. This was followed by the first red letter day on the 20th Special calendar, when on December 8, 1943, the battalion review was highlighted by the presentation of the battalion colors. This ceremony officially designated the 20th Special as an independent, self-supporting organization.

By December 23rd, the battalion finished its required training and all hands were granted pre-embarkation leave. At the expiration of this leave the battalion re-formed at Camp Peary, and on January 7, 1944, it left in three sections for a cross-country trip to Port Hueneme, Calif.

Arriving at Hueneme on January 12th, the battalion began advanced military and intensive stevedoring training. By the end of January the stevedoring gangs were put to work on actual ships, loading tons of supplies and equipment for operations in the Pacific.

During the stay at Hueneme, the battalion was taken over by Commander Fred C. Seibert.

As March 1944 began, rumors of the 20th Special’s prospective move overseas became prevalent. Guess as to the ultimate destination of the battalion ranged from Britain to New Britain. Finally on the 24th of March, the battalion went aboard the U. S. Army Transport SEA FLASHER for the journey overseas to Island X.

Life aboard ship was hot, crowded, and boring. The transport was nothing more than a converted cargo ship, with men for its cargo. For the most part the trip was quiet and uneventful. In spite of thousands of searching eyes, not one enemy ship, sub, or plane was seen on the entire trip.

The continual increase of temperature as the ship proceeded westward convinced most of the personnel that Island X was not going to be Alaska. This theory was further confirmed on April 3rd when everyone was informed that the equator was being crossed.

To celebrate this gala occasion all hands took part in King Neptune’s party for the purpose of initiating a large group of Pollywogs into the royal order of the Shellbacks.

On April 11th, after seemingly endless days at sea, the SEA FLASHER entered the harbor of Noumea for
the first stop on the journey to Island X. The second stop came at Milne Bay, New Guinea, and the third at Finschaven, New Guinea.

On April 26th, the SEA FLASHER, escorted by two destroyers, set sail on the last leg of the journey through the historic Bismarck Sea. Shortly after noon on April 27th, the first glimpse of Island X, the newly conquered Admiralty Islands, was seen.

As the ship entered large Seeadler Harbor everyone was impressed with the sight of a great number of fighting and cargo ships, but was equally appalled at the sight of a land without a solitary building other than a few scattered tents.

At 0600, April 28th, the entire battalion began the dual task of unloading tons of supplies and equipment, and building ashore on Manus, a temporary living camp. Before the latter could be completed it was necessary to bury the bodies of numerous enemy dead who were scattered over the campsite. The area had to be carefully examined to remove any booby traps and unexploded bombs; many shell holes had to be filled with the aid of bulldozers. Overcoming these handicaps as well as those of continual rain and endless seas of mud, the temporary camp was completed by the first week of May.

During this entire period, cargo unloaded by the 20th Special, kept pouring ashore to help in making Manus one of the United States' most advanced naval bases.

On July 3, the battalion moved into a new and partially completed camp which was destined to be "home" for over 17 months. As before the job of completing, modernizing, and beautifying the camp fell to the officers and men of the battalion. That they were successful in building and maintaining a neat and impressive camp is evidenced by the commendation of Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, which referred to the 20th Special Camp as one of the finest in the Pacific.

Meanwhile the unending task of loading and unloading cargo continued at a brisk pace. In the course of 20 months overseas the 20th handled every conceivable type of cargo from eggs to two-ton bombs. By late July 1945, the battalion had handled well over one-half million tons of cargo. For their continual good work under adverse conditions, the 20th Special received numerous commendations from high ranking Naval Officials.

Following the end of the war, an increasing number of men of the battalion began the long-awaited trip to the United States. On October, 22, 1945, the battalion received the welcome orders to begin inactivation. On November 3, 1945, the battalion was officially decommissioned.

To help recall the days on Manus the battalion is publishing this book. On this and following pages you will find many pictures which record far better than words, the humor, thrills and boredom shared by all during duty with the 20th Special Battalion. Every effort has been made to minimize the amount of copy and captions, in order that each man may relate his own personal story for every picture.

—So, proceed, Mr. Civilian, the history of the 20th Special U. S. N. C. B. lies in your hands.
BATTALION OFFICERS
COMDR. F. C. SEIBERT
LT. COMDR. C. A. GRAVES
LT. COMDR. E. F. KELLY
LT. V. L. VERDELL ET
LT. L. T. SWITZER
LT. W. O. CHLOPEK
LT. J. F. MCCOY
LT. H. WO O D W A R D
LT. S. F. LEICHTER
LT. N. N. JOHNSTON
LT. L. A. MCGLOTHLIN
LT. J. W. BRACEY
LT. D. E. ROBERTS
LT. J. O. LAMAR
LT. R. H. BECKMAN
LT. B. F. LOVETT
LT. C. H. TOBIAS
LT. (jg) P. L. BREIDENBACH

LT. (jg) T. S. SWEENEY
LT. (jg) J. I. BLAIR
LT. (jg) R. C. ELLIS
LT. (jg) G. F. DELASHMITT
LT. (jg) W. R. WARRICK
LT. (jg) A. S. STACK
LT. (jg) T. CAROLAN
LT. (jg) L. B. THOMAS
LT. (jg) R. W. KICKLIGHTER
LT. (jg) W. C. A. COSTELLO
LT. (jg) H. M. PROUT
LT. (jg) D. J. OWEN
LT. (jg) D. G. TAYLOR
ENSIGN J. M. KOPKA
ENSIGN M. W. HUEFLE
ENSIGN P. V. KING
ENSIGN W. C. KINGSHUR
CHIEF CARP. J. J. DONOVAN
CHIEF BOSN. H. D. BOSE
CHIEF CARP. I. SAMERUCK
CHIEF CARP. J. E. KENNEDY
CHIEF CARP. F. E. COOPER
CARP. T. T. EILERTS
CARP. D. J. DION
CARP. P. D. CATO
CARP. E. D. ARCHAMBEAULT
CARP. J. R. DOWD
CARP. E. A. LUNDBERG
CARP. T. A. RITCHIE
CARP. J. J. MCCAULEY
CARP. J. L. SOUTHERLAND
CARP. J. W. MCKEE
CARP. J. H. WEHNER
CARP. A. R. C. IDE
CARP. H. G. BERQUEST
CARP. F. J. LEAHY
CARP. C. R. YORK
PORT HUENEME, CALIFORNIA---MARCH 1944


MANUS, ADMIRALTIES---FEBRUARY 1945

JOURNEY OVERSEAS
SEA FLASHER DAYS
KING NEPTUNE'S ROYAL COURT
SHELLBACKS AND POLLYWOGS
BLUE BEACH CAMP
BLUE BEACH CAMP

ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

SUPPLY DUMP
SHOP AREA

OlnC's OFFICE

MOTOR POOL

WATER WORKS
BLUE BEACH CAMP

BLUE BEACH

GEAR LOCKER
ROAD CONSTRUCTION

SICK BAY

CHOW HALL

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES

MAA POST OFFICE
BLUE BEACH CAMP

CARPENTER SHOP

BATTLE SCARS
PERMANENT CAMP—JULY 1944

MOTOR POOL

QUONSET HUT CONSTRUCTION
LIVING QUARTERS

SHOP AREA

QUONSET HUT CONSTRUCTION

GALLEY CONSTRUCTION

LIVING QUARTERS
TRANSPORTATION
AREA

ELECTRIC SHOP

POST OFFICE

ARMORY
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT


DENTAL CLINIC

HERNIA OPERATION
DISPENSARY

LABORATORY
GALLEY

MESS HALL
ICE CREAM ROOM

BUTCHER SHOP

GALLEY
SHIP SERVICE

SHIP'S STORE

COBBLER

BARBER SHOP
TROPICAL STORM DAMAGE
STEVEDORING OPERATIONS
L. S. T. OPERATIONS
BATTALION PERSONNEL
CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS

HEADQUARTERS CHIEFS

HEADQUARTERS CHIEFS
COMPANY A CHIEFS
Left to right: F. J. Leahy, R. C. Cronian, J. J. Dwyer.

COMPANY C CHIEFS
Left to right: H. Malvenzi, K. K. McCully, W. J. Evans.

COMPANY D CHIEFS
CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS

COMPANY B CHIEFS

CHIEFS' MESS
ADMINISTRATION


TRANSPORTATION

DOCK ADMINISTRATION


MAINTENANCE

SECURITY


SUPPLY

COOKS AND BAKERS


COOKS AND BAKERS


MAINTENANCE
Left to right: H. Whitfield, C. K. Harding, P. E. Williams.

CORPSMEN
Left to right: J. A. Smith, E. L. Bruner.
OFFICERS STEWARDS


COMPANY C ADMINISTRATION


COMPANY D ADMINISTRATION

MESS COOKS


TYPICAL LIVING QUARTERS
GANG 1


GANG 2


GANG 5


GANG 6

GANG 7


GANG 8


G A N G 1 1


G A N G 1 2

GANG 13


GANG 14

GANG 13


GANG 14


GANG 17


GANG 18

GANG 19


GANG 20


GANG 23


GANG 24

GANG 25


GANG 26


Left to right, front row: S. N. Lipscomb, W. H. Moore, S. E. Evans, S. Austin, A. C. Jackson, C. C. Johnson.
GANG 29

Left to right, front row: A. Alexander, W. Nickles, Jr., E. H. Oliver, W. B. Hill, B. T. Hollis, C. M. Powell.

GANG 30

GANG 31


GANG 32

MESS COOKS


WELFARE AND RECREATION
WELFARE AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Left to right: L. G. Williams, J. K. Colvin, J. J. Bonner, R. E. Anderson.
Popularly known as "Willie Johnson's Music Airs," this group of melody makers have contributed unceasingly to the religious and recreational life of the men in the Admiralty Islands. Their activities have included four performances every Sunday: Divine Service at the 20th Special-Base Co. Chapel; Divine Service at the Naval Base Chapel; the Church of the Islands radio broadcast; the Jewish radio hour; and, for a time, they had a spot of their own on WYTD, broadcasting popular music. In addition to their Sunday performances they filled from one to three engagements during week nights entertaining the men at different outfits throughout the island, at times even going aboard major British ships to give them a sample of American music. Their singing ability has won for them the praise of the Commodore and the acclaim of all men who listened to their renditions.

The Music Airs present all types of music in varied interpretations. On Sundays they presented Negro spirituals, classic church hymns, and even Jewish religious chants. During the week there were red-hot jive tunes, sweet and sentimental songs and American and Negro folk ballads.

The one man who is responsible for the choir's outstanding work is Willie T. Johnson. Utilizing his experience with the Golden Gate Quartet, he developed and trained these men until they performed in a style comparable to anything heard on the radio back in the states. Hats off to these men who did their regular duties and sacrificed their free time to bring tears and laughter to the men stationed in the Admiralties.
NATIVES BUILD UNIQUE BEER GARDEN
Closing its season with an impressive record of 49 wins against 19 losses, the battalion softball team can look back over 10 months of brilliant success. Playing with a professional-like fervor and ability, the team gained an island-wide reputation for its excellent sportsmanship, as well as its fine play.

The team was formed from various company teams by Paul Hergert early in the year. With a few practice games under their belts, the team took on all comers. The early season was highlighted by a 13-game winning streak, which carried the team to the Manus Weekday League championship.

The team was taken over by Lou Williams in July, as they continued their winning ways. During the course of the season, over 25 different teams were played. The season was climaxed on September 15 with an 8-2 win over the 25th Special, Milne Bay champions.

The battalion was represented by another, less publicized team, the 20th Special Officers, who in their short season, won 22 games against six losses. This team also added laurels to the battalion by easily winning the crown of the Officer's League, and by setting the island scoring record for all games, winning a 22-0 game late in October.

For the success of the softball program, too much credit cannot be given Hergert and Williams. They were instrumental in initiating, developing and maintaining player and spectator interest, which highlighted the entire recreation program.
OFFICERS BALL TEAM

BATTALION THEATER
COMPANY B RECREATION HALL
20TH SPECIAL BASKETBALL TEAM
