SEABEES HELPED TAKE TWO GERMAN FORTS

How a Navy shore party of 52 Seabees, Coast Guardsmen and members of the fleet Navy which accompanied the Army into Cherbourg forced the surrender of two forts, took about 330 prisoners, and liberated 50 American paratroopers was revealed in the New York "Times" by Hanson W. Baldwin, noted military writer.

The Navy men also participated in the capture of Lt. General Carl Wilhelm von Schieben, commander of the Cherbourg garrison, and Rear Admiral Walter Hennecke, Nazi naval chief there, Baldwin said.

After participating in street fighting in Cherbourg, the party reached the port area and accomplished their mission, which was to survey the damage and estimate the amount of salvage and repair work necessary.

The party's two officers, Lt. Cmdr. Quentin R. Walsh, USCG, and Lt. Frank Lauer, CEC, USNR, attached to a Seabee battalion, were enough to take care of Fort du Homet, the correspondent wrote. "The two officers approached to within shouting distance of the fort and told the Nazis inside that all resistance had ceased," Baldwin said. "It had not, but the bluff worked. The Germans thought a large patrol was following the two men and 300 Germans filed out to surrender, accompanied by fifty liberated American paratroopers.

ENGINEERING MAGAZINE PRAISES SEABEES

The Seabees have been paid high praise by one of the outstanding American engineering journals, "Engineering News Record". On the editorial page of its June 29th issue, the publication says:

"Too much cannot be said in commendation of the Navy construction personnel in uniform, namely, the Seabees. This force, quite unlike anything heretofore in existence, has attracted to it many of the best the construction industry had to offer the war effort, and has provided a means through which a large number of men from that industry are meeting the challenge of war to good advantage.

"The program of warfare now has been stepped up to a point where forward movement in remote fields of activity depends largely upon advanced bases. The Seabees are taking talents developed on large peacetime construction projects to this advanced base work. The excellent results arise from a combination that probably would be possible only in the United States: manufacturers applying quantity production methods to specially developed equipment that a large body of armed workers use in applying the skill and experience of the construction industry to the
Navy's war projects. This combination of men and machines has added something new and vital to the execution of effective warfare.

EVERYTHING GOING WELL. SEABEES REPORT FROM FRANCE

The first first-hand account of the Seabees at work in France has been received from Lt. Cmdr. E. J. Brook, CEC, USNR, who led one of the early contingents across the channel.

"Everything is going well," Lt. Cmdr. Brook reported, "and our current worries and problems are being met."

The Seabees already have won two commendations on the invasion coast, one for manning the guns on their transport and the other for helping to unload the ship on the beach.

All of his unit's material arrived in France safely, the commander said. "Discharge was made to Rhino barges," he continued, "and we are placing it at the site of construction now. We also handled the rest of the freight in the hold and received commendations (verbal) for the way the boys performed."

"The balance of the men of this ship pitched in and discharged this cargo completely with the help of six men from the crew... and enabled the ship to make a 'turn around' about a week early."

Nazi planes apparently still were a considerable nuisance. "We have had a couple of very sleepless nights," the CEC officer said, "because of continual fighting off of enemy aircraft. They don't do much damage but are persistent. On shore the boys dodge the flak.

"Don't worry on this job," he concluded. "Give our best to the officers and men in camp. We won't let you down..."

FLORAL CASUALTY

H. A. Asp, CM2c, one of the first Seabees to land in France, is back in England. During his short stay on the continent, Asp learned the truth of the famous line, "In Flanders fields the poppies grow." He's hospitalized with swollen eyes -- the effect of poppy pollen.

MARINES AND SEABEES CARE FOR SAIPAN REFUGEES

Hundreds of civilian refugees--Japanese, Koreans, and native Chamorros--are being cared for by Marines and Seabees under the supervision of the Lieutenant commanding the Seabee shore party on Saipan, according to Marine Corps Combat Correspondent Sgt. David Dempsey.
Most of the civilians were inhabitants of Charan Kanoa, the first Japanese city to fall into American hands, and had evacuated the town when American planes dropped safe conduct leaflets shortly before our Naval bombardment began, Dempsey said.

Dempsey quoted the Lieutenant as saying that the civilians were quite surprised at the treatment they were receiving from the Americans.

"The Lieutenant... has provided a large stockade for them on the beach placing the men in one section and the women and the children in another," the sergeant wrote. "They are being fed American K and C rations, which they seem to relish somewhat more than our own men. Straw mats and Marine ponchos are being used as improvised shelters."

IRONY

The first man of a Seabee detachment to be wounded on the French invasion coast was the hospital corpsman. Although struck in the neck by falling flak, Jimmy Gallagher remained on the job.

SEABEE CASUALTY "RESTORED" BY NAVY MEDICS

Harry Johnson, MM2c, lost his left eye in a machine gun explosion in England.

"When I found out about it I wished I was dead," the Seabee told a "Washington Star" reporter. "If I could have seen, I guess I'd have killed myself."

At an English hospital, Johnson was given a glass eye, but was so disappointed with its appearance he continued to wear a patch. He was flown back to the States but refused to go home on leave to see his wife. Instead he went to the Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Maryland. Resourceful Navy doctors went to work. An impression of Johnson's eye socket was taken in wax. A mold was made from the model. Into the mold was invested plastic which had been colored with pigments to resemble the cornea. (Corneas can be pinkish or varying shades of blue green -- never white.) The ball was then hardened in a 180-degree water bath.

Meanwhile Johnson was sitting for a portrait of his good eye. A life-sized photograph of the iris was made. Using measurements taken from the photograph, an artist painted an iris and pupil with the exact colorings and flecks in the Seabee's right eye. The precious painted duplicate was cut out and the "cured" eyeball ground down to accommodate it. It was held in place and covered by Egyptian lacquer which seals colors during the curing process. Near the corners of the eye, tiny etchings of red were made with drafting ink to simulate blood vessels.

The eyeball was then built up to its original diameter with clear plastic, which gives an impression of depth to the iris and allows the eye to reflect and glisten naturally. The ball was "cured" again to solidify the new covering -- and Harry had an eye.

He has been on leave now and has seen his wife. He has asked for limited service, but he'd like to tour the war front hospitals to show men similarly injured that there still is hope.
"I'd pack my gear and go in twenty minutes if I thought I could show those guys what could be done for them," he said. "I've had my life handed back to me and you can say that twice."

LONG-DISTANCE SQUAWK

While talking from St. Louis with her husband, Warrant Officer Robert P. LaBouy, CEC, USNR, attached to a CBMU stationed in the Pacific, Mrs. LaBouy held the transmitter in front of her four-day-old son.

The infant obliged with a cry which not only satisfied Dad as to his lung power but was probably the first squawk WO LaBouy has enjoyed listening to since joining the Navy.

DOING GREAT JOB IN ADMIRALTIES AND SCHOUTENS

Says Lt. I. K. Stevenson, USNR, a veteran LST skipper who has seen the Seabees in action both in the Schoutens and the Admiralties:

"They are all doing a wonderful job and I wonder how we'd get along without them."

MARINES JOIN SEABEE UNIT

Teamwork between Marines and Seabees already has become traditional. In many instances, Seabee units have been assigned to Marine battalions and divisions and have worn Marine clothing. Now, for what is believed the first time in the history of the Naval Construction Battalions, Marines have been assigned to the Seabees. Fifty Leathernecks have joined Detachment 1010 for special duty.

SAIPAN BASE RENAMED ISELY FIELD

Aslito Airfield, the base which the Seabees rebuilt on Saipan Island, has been renamed Isely Field in honor of Cmdr. Robert H. Isely, USN, Commander of Torpedo Squadron Sixteen, who was shot down June 12th by Japanese anti-aircraft fire as he was leading a bombing attack on the field.

WHISTLE STOP

Seabee Estil Borden was enroute from an NCTC to Port Hueneme. As the long troop train jerked to a stop, he rubbed the sleep from his eyes and peered out the window. The store across from the station looked familiar ... very familiar. With a start, he realized he was in his home town.
Grabbing a pencil and some pieces of paper he started writing notes to his wife and throwing them out the window. A bystander noticed one and picked it up. He didn't know Mrs. Borden, but he rushed to the town hotel and found someone who did. Both men jumped into a truck and sped to the Seabee's home. Then, with Mrs. Borden and son Carl, they burned up the road back to the station.

The train was still there. Before it moved on, Borden, his wife, and youngster, were able to hold a happy thirty-minute reunion -- to the delight and satisfaction of the entire battalion.

TIRED TRANSIENT

Before he accepts his honorable discharge certificate at the end of the war, vows C. A. Napper of the 91st Battalion, he's going to give the document a thorough going-over for strings, springs, and elastic bands. The Seabee, who was drafted, released, drafted, released again, and then joined the Navy when war was declared, says that this time he'll be interested in a return to civilian status only if it's permanent duty.

SEABEE PUBLICATION BEST IN PACIFIC SAYS PRESS OFFICER

"Of the 40-odd publications cleared by the "X" Naval District, the (99th Battalion's) "Lone Star" is probably the best" wrote Lt. John A. Giles, Public Relation Officer, to the Secretary of the Navy in forwarding copies of the battalion's anniversary issue. Lt. Giles described the issue as "outstanding among station and unit publications in this area."

Editor of the "Lone Star" is Tom E. Foster, BMmc, a former Texas newspaper publisher.

YOUNG IN SPIRIT

The oldest enlisted man in the United States Armed Forces overseas is a Seabee, says the 146th Battalion's publication, "Invader". He is 83 year-old Claude Saunders, Sp(MJc), battalion postmaster, whose birth certificate has revealed he was born in Jackson, Michigan, on December 14, 1880.

(The Bureau of Naval Personnel's records show 82-year-old George Sanderson, stationed at the Naval Recruiting Station in San Francisco, is the oldest enlisted man on active duty. BuPers has no statistics on the age of the oldest man overseas.)

Although Saunders was reluctant to discuss his reasons for enlisting, the "Invader" learned that all three of his sons were in the service, Lt. Pat, as an instructor in the Army Air Corps; Lt. Claude, with the Supply Corps in the South
Pacific; and Mike, with the Army Air Corps in the European Theater.

Urged by a battalion reporter to explain why and how he managed to enlist at his age, Saunders finally said:

"I felt that I was just as young as my sons both in spirit and health if not in years. I wanted to bring them back home as soon as possible, and the only way I knew to do that was to get into the fight myself. I had already done a little hitch in the Navy from 1920 to 1924.

"When I enlisted in 1920 they had a 40-year age limit, and a helpful recruiting clerk, on his own initiative, reduced my age by six years. At the end of that tour, a clerk made an error on my discharge papers reducing my age another ten years. I didn't discover that mistake until later. They had taken a total of 16 years off my age insofar as the Navy was concerned.

"Going back to enlist in July, 1942, I simply presented my earlier discharge papers and the necessary information was taken from them. But I never denied my true age when questioned."

**CITED FOR SHIP REPAIR**

An officer and two enlisted men of the 16th Construction Battalion were commended for speedy repairs made to a crippled LST during urgent beaching operations at a Central Pacific island base.

The commendation to Lt. (jg) R. K. Fogg, CEC, USNR, Thadius J. Joyce, MM1c, and Barney M. Aring, SF1c was signed by H. W. Parker, Commander of the LST, while special endorsements were added by Cmdr. W. B. Phillips, Administrative Commander, Amphibian Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, and J. S. Lillard, Commander, LST, Flotilla.

**NOT-SO NAIVE NATIVES**

Natives on at least one "Island X" appear to have turned the tables on "city slicker" Seabees.

When the 15th Battalion first arrived at its advanced base, the medium of exchange for a fine native club, cane, or grass skirt was one mattress cover, much prized by the islanders as clothing material.

Time has taken its toll, however, the 15th laments. The natives now have accumulated a monopoly on the mattress-cover business. Now on Sundays the Seabees visit the native camp loaded with trinkets, old watches, rings, bracelets, and other trading inducements. If the builders are lucky, the natives, after indifferently looking over their wares and driving a hard bargain, complete the deal and the Seabees get -- one mattress cover.
MILK WAGON

Most of the time, Seabees in the Mediterranean theater were impressing the natives with their ingenuity. But in one instance the natives turned the tables and left the Seabees with their mouths open. The local milk wagon did the trick. Strictly fresh milk was delivered by a “wagon” which chewed its cud and stood patiently while the customers were served.

STRING ENSEMBLE

During the early days of the occupation of Guadalcanal, 26th Battalion Seabees found recreational facilities conspicuous by their complete absence. Three of the mates, Lisle L. Cottle, CEM; Paul B. Austin, CMM, and Pete Palmeri, EM2c, thought a bit of music might help. All they needed, they decided, was to manufacture the instruments.

They pieced together a bull fiddle from a used oil drum, a tent pole and a piece of line. An old stew-pot, a piece of wing fabric and stripped telephone line judiciously arranged, became a banjo. A third instrument, a guitar, was fashioned from island mahogany with more stripped telephone wire for strings.

After some experimenting and much rehearsing, the three Seabees reached the point where they were able to perform publicly. Their fame spread rapidly. Soon, war conditions permitting, they were playing nightly request “concerts” for Guadalcanal’s fighting men.

INSTALLMENT HONEYMOON

Lt. William H. Robertson, CEC, USNR, this week is home in Oklahoma, continuing a honeymoon which was interrupted more than two years ago when he left the United States for duty with the Seabees in the Southwest Pacific. Three days after Lt. Robertson was married at Norfolk, Virginia, his ship sailed for New Caledonia.

SKILL RECOGNIZED

The excellence of the 93rd Battalion’s work at an advanced Southwest Pacific base has drawn the commendation of Commander Chester A. Bates, A-VS, USNR, Commanding Officer of the Acorn on the Island.

Commander Bates praised the Seabees for “efficiency and dispatch” in the construction of vital facilities and for the cooperative attitude exhibited by the battalion’s officers and men. He said that he had observed the good work done by the 93rd in the Russell Islands and that it was a pleasure to report its continuance at the new base.
ADMIRAL NIMITZ PRESENTS FLAG TO "LONE STAR" BATTALION

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, presented the 99th Battalion with a silk battle flag of Texas at an informal ceremony recently.

"I know this flag will be in good care and that your Battalion will honor and protect it," the Admiral said in his deliverance speech to Cmdr. R. R. Cook, CEC, USNR, CinC of the 99th.

A native of Fredericksburg, Texas, Admiral Nimitz made the presentation on behalf of the Sons of the Republic of Texas, a patriotic organization.

The 99th was designated the "Lone Star" Battalion in a proclamation by Governor Coke R. Stevenson of Texas in August, 1943.

ROCK-A-BY BABY

The SNS doesn't vouch for the authenticity of the following story reprinted verbatim from the 79th Battalion's publication, "The Maintainer", but passes it on for the benefit of less enterprising Seabee telephone linemen.

"First they (the telephone gang) put up a small platform on a pole. Then they cover this with canvas so no one can look inside. Then one mate climbs the pole and sleeps under the canvas, while the other mates stand on the ground holding the line. The line is secured to the mate that is sleeping. When someone comes around the mate on the ground pulls the line and awakens the sleeping electrician. They take turns, two hours per shift."

VICTORIOUS

The bulldozer, the Seabees' most potent and versatile war machine, apparently is proving a versatile weapon not only for the Construction Battalions but for other Allied engineers as well.

"Time" tells how a bulldozer recently was used to capture two criminals in Nigeria, British Africa. According to this story, a village chief was giving shelter to two natives wanted on criminal charges. Around his village the chief built a "Maginot Line" of thorn-bush to keep out the authorities who wished to arrest the wanted men.

A bulldozer was transported by lorry to a nearby point and then unloaded for battle under the command of a Cockney driver. The task of this "land force" was to break down the thorn bush.
For the first time on record, a bulldozer went into action with fighter cover. A single RAF plane was assigned to the action, to assure air cover in case of any resistance during operations.

As the bulldozer advanced, the fighter diyed on the village, firing a succession of Very lights. Resistance collapsed; the "enemy" surrendered; the operations were concluded, and the wanted men were taken into custody.

Later in the day, an appropriate communiqué was issued by the RAF station commander to the effect that our mechanized forces withdrew after achieving their objective and "from these operations all our aircraft returned safely."

BIG ATTRACTION

Tire-tearing nails and jagged chunks of metal are being swept off "Island X's" roads via a homemade electro-magnet, built by the Third Special's Maintenance Shop. The 24-coil magnet is swung beneath and powered by a motor-driven generator. The generator is mounted on a trailer and towed by a dock-mule.

HOPE THE BOYS ARE BACK FOR THE FIFTH

As long as they're keeping the home fires burning, they might as well grill "franks" over them, a group of Seabee wives apparently believe. The ladies, all of whom are married to 119th Battalion men who come from the vicinity of Columbia, Pennsylvania, recently held a frankfurter roast to celebrate the fourth wedding anniversaries of two of the group, Mrs. Wilbur B. Rettew and Mrs. Gordon Mumhaw.

Rettew and Mumhaw, both second class petty officers, are now overseas with the 119th. Other Seabees in the battalion from the same section of Pennsylvania are Howard McComsey, Raymond H. Young, George Arter, Joseph Reichard, Ward Mulligan, and Robert Kirchoff.

QUICK WORK SAVES LIFE OF HUMAN TORCH

Walter G. Stanton, MM3c of the 146th Battalion, today is a hospital patient suffering from severe burns, but alive only because of the alertness and clear-thinking of several of his mates and a woman civilian.

Panic stricken when his gasoline-saturated clothes suddenly burst into flames, Stanton ran wildly down a camp street, ignoring the shouts of his mates to halt. Avon G. Mayfield, a member of the MAA force, finally caught up with Stanton and pulled him to the ground.

Mrs. Winifred Symons, whose home borders the Seabee camp, immediately provided rugs and blankets to several Seabees who wrapped them around the burning man and smothered the flames.
After first-aid had been administered, a hastily-summoned ambulance took Stanton to the hospital.

HEAVY PRODUCTION

Detachment 1007, an automotive and truck repair unit, turned out 664 pieces of construction and automotive equipment last month. This is equivalent in amount, points out Lt. Cmdr. W. E. Guest, CEC, USNR, the detachment's OinC, to all of the construction and automotive equipment of two construction battalions.

UP SHE GOES

Eight Seabees of CBMU 571 constructed and erected a 58-foot signal tower in less than two weeks.

Constructed of 8 by 8 timbers, spliced into 58-foot lengths, the tower was built on the ground in two sections, and raised into place on concrete footings by use of a 30-foot jib.

In addition, the crew built platforms and living quarters for the signalmen.

Dick Endres, Art Edmon, Virgil Farmer, Rawley Kline, Harold Meacham and Leon Newby were the carpenters, Paul Siegle did the painting, and Chod Burns, the concrete work.

THOSE BOBCATS AGAIN

"Lost Island," James Norman Hall's novel which deals with the activities of a Seabee unit on a South Pacific "Island X," actually was written about the First Construction Detachment, reports Commander H. M. Sylvester, CEC, USN, one-time OinC of the Bobcats. Many of the characters are modeled after real-life Seabees, says Commander Sylvester, and Bobcat veterans may recognize many of their officers and mates, despite the fictitious names used.

YOUNG BEES BUSY

Junior Seabees of Newport News, Virginia, are as industrious as their older mates overseas. The organization, which, although only two months old, has five clubs in the city, has announced in local newspapers that, "unlike many (home-town) organizations, it will continue to operate with a full program all summer." The five clubs have seventy members, all between nine and fourteen years old.
"Here I am, in the same position I was a year ago," comments Nicholas Bobie, *sic*, the first Seabee to leave Camp Parks in March, 1943, and now returned to his original station.

Bobie arrived at Parks in February, 1943, volunteered for overseas duty, and left with the second outgoing battalion to leave the station, the 56th. After five months with that outfit, he was transferred to the Second Battalion, which already had been out for many months. When the Second received its stateside sailing orders, Bobie came along. And just one year after leaving he was back where he had started. Again he's applied for a foreign duty transfer. "Not that I like it too well out there," he says, "especially when some Jap is trying to blow me out of my foxhole. But I feel that I can do more good on the islands than I can here in camp."

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**MILITARY SECRET**

Seabee W. C. Gleason still hasn't received any news about the invasion of the French coast but he knows there was one -- because he was in it.

In a letter to his wife in Washington, D. C., Gleason wrote:

"Seems funny that we could be right in the first wave on the invasion and know so little about what's going on. We hear no radio, see no papers and receive no mail.

"Guess they want to keep it a secret from us that there has been an invasion."

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**SWING YOUR PARTNER**

Residents of Exeter, England, were mildly surprised, to say the least, to hear the stomping of feet, the unfamiliar strains of American folk-music, and the sing-song chant of a "hill-billy" caller emanating from the hall of the Red Cross building.

But there really was no cause for alarm. Responsible for the uproar was Seabee James O'Neill, Cox. of Youngstown, Ohio, who as "caller" was helping to cement American-English relations by instructing English students in the art of American square dancing.

Specially trained Seabees now are operating smoke screens for Navy and Marine units engaged in amphibious operations.
SHORT SPORT SHOTS

BASEBALL. Fans eagerly awaiting twelfth annual Major League All-Star game at Pittsburgh. National League team, selected by team managers and piloted by Cards’ Billy Southworth, will field five Cardinals, four players from Reds and Braves, three each from Pirates, Cubs and Dodgers, two from Giants and one Phillie. Mel Ott became dean of All-Stars, being first player to be named for eleven consecutive years. Yankees Joe McCarthy will lead American League aggregation of four players each from Tigers, Indians and Senators, three apiece from Browns, Yanks and Red Sox, and two each from White Sox and Athletics. McCarthy, managing his seventh American League squad, will be backed by ten players from AL’s 43 team in his attempt to hang up his fifth win in the mid-summer classic. Named after a three season lapse, both Catcher Rollie Hemsley of Yankees and Pitcher Bucky Newsom of Athletics have distinction of making all-star grade in three different uniforms. Hemsley played for Browns and Indians while Bucky was selected from Browns and Tigers. Traditional July 4th Mid-way mark saw both St. Louis teams topping respective leagues. Cardinals look like cinch in NL but it’s still anybody’s race in AL. “Tripleheader” played at Polo Grounds drew 50,000, who bought $5,500,000 War Bonds to get in. Total was increased by $50,000,000 check from NY City. Dodgers won by score of 5-1-0, Giants being shut out twice in same game. Pirates’ Vince DiMaggio, given 90-day deferment, stomach ulcers, Jimmy Foxx’s comeback attempt with Cubs failed, removed from active list to status of coach and bullpen catcher. Athletics acquired outfielder Larry Rosenthal from Yankees for outfielder Lew Flick and cash. Memphis Chicks won Southern Assn. first half pennant, their first since 33.

BOXING. Fisticuffs front very quiet with most top-notchers doing fighting for Uncle Sam. Tommy Bell, Negro welter took 10-round split decision over Pvt. Fritz Zivic, former champ, who “retired” again after fight, later changed mind, said only Army assignments will keep him from continuing “comeback”.

RACING. Twilight Tear smashed Arlington (Chicago) track record, galloping to her ninth straight victory. Packing 121 pounds, filly sprinted 7 turfs in 1:22 3-5. Pensive, winner of Kentucky Derby, and Preakness, finished fifth in field of seven. Plater George Drum 5-year gelding, won July 4th $50,350 Stars and Stripes Handicap at Arlington. Aga Khan’s Umiddad, took England’s Gold Cup over two and one-quarter mile course. Top jockey Conn McCrea had wrist broken in auto accident.

SIDELINES. Buck Shaw, head football coach at U. of Santa Clara (Calif.) resigned. Arne Andersson raced three-quarter mile in 2:56.6 at Stockholm, last listed world’s record of 3:00.6 set in 1931 at Paris, no records at that distance have been listed since 1938. Francisco Segura won NCAA tennis title. Harold McSpaden captured his fifth golf title of year. Beat Lt. Ben Hogan in playoff for Chicago Victory National championship. Aido (Butt) Donelli signed coach contract with Cleveland Rams. Slingin’ Sammy Baugh, star footballer, won calf-roping contest at annual Texas Cowboy reunion.