

SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

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NO U. S. WARSHIPS LOST TO JAPS IN NEARLY A YEAR

More than three-quarters of a year has elapsed since the United States has lost a surface warship as a result of enemy action in the Pacific, Secretary of Navy James V. Forrestal revealed during his October 4 press conference in Washington.

Last surface vessel to be sunk in that theater of operations was the destroyer Brownson, announced lost in the Southwest Pacific in December, 1943, Mr. Forrestal said.

During his regular weekly naval war review and round-up, Mr. Forrestal also disclosed that American naval units were still in action off the Southern French coast.

The full text of the SecNav's report follows:

Operations

Atlantic:

American Naval units continued to bombard enemy troops, batteries, ammunition and storage dumps, and railway yards off the southern French coast, particularly in the vicinity of Ventimiglia. The LUDLOW, MADISON and HILARY P. JONES were still active, and they were joined this week by the WOOLSEY AND EDISON. Anglo-American Naval activity with light units continued in the Gulf of Genoa where several enemy craft were sunk.

Pacific:

The outstanding news from the Pacific during the past week was Admiral Halsey's strike on September 23 against the Central Visayas group of the Philippines, the fourth in a series of such strikes.

These operations were executed in the vicinity of large land masses where the Japanese had considerable numbers of land-based aircraft. Our carrier-based planes defeated this land-based air power, and not one of our surface craft was damaged.

More than three-quarters of a year has now elapsed since we lost a surface warship because of enemy action in the Pacific. (Destroyer BROWNSON announced lost in the Southwest Pacific, December, 1943.) We hope for continued good fortune. But we should not count on it. Losses are inevitable in war and both the nation and the Navy must anticipate them.

Production

Assault ships continue to be the Navy's primary production problem.

About eight per cent more Navy ships, planes and major ordnance items must be produced during the final quarter of this year, which began October 1, than in the preceding quarter. This increase in total volume can be achieved only if we maintain the high rate of production attained in September. Having ascended to a peak in May when the most urgent part of the landing craft program was completed, Navy production declined in June, July and August. Turning up again in September, Navy production in the three months ahead must exceed output in the same period of last year by five per cent.

The increase must be particularly steady in planes and major ordnance items. Another dip in ship completions is expected this month, after which they too should rise steadily.

Aircraft engines aggregating almost 200 million horsepower have now been produced for the Navy since July 1, 1940. Engines now being produced average 1,500 horsepower each against 770 when the defense program began, and we now receive more aircraft engines in six months than in the entire first two years of the defense program.

NEW COMBAT STARS AUTHORIZED

Additions to the list of Naval operations and engagements for which combat stars may be worn were announced recently. Those which are likely to be of greatest interest to Seabees follow:

Treasury-Bougainville Operation: (Only one star for participation in one or more of the following:)	Oct. 27-Dec. 15, 1943
Treasury Island Landing	Oct. 27-Nov. 6, 1943
Occupation and Defense of Cape Torokina	Nov. 1-Dec. 15, 1943
Gilbert Islands Operation	Nov. 13-Dec. 8, 1943
Marshall Islands Operation (Only one star for participation in one or more of the following:)	Nov. 26, '43-Mar. 2, '44
Occupation of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls	Jan. 29-Feb. 8, 1944
Occupation of Eniwetok Atoll	Feb. 17-Mar. 2, 1944
European-African-Middle Eastern Area Service Ribbon:	
Anzio-Nettuno Advanced Landings	Jan. 22-Mar. 1, 1944
Bombardment and Invasion of the French Coast	June 6-25, 1944

MINOR DISTURBANCE

For Lloyd E. Herman of the 36th Battalion we propose a new rate: MU Master of Understatement.

Writing of his experiences overseas, Herman said, "Jap shell fire demolished two tents while I was in them. This I found a bit exciting."

WHAT A MASCOT!

A little French school teacher has adopted a regiment of Navy Seabees and vice versa.

Her name is Petite, and she is small, blonde, and not at all the type you would expect to be a school teacher. But her class of forty Seabees and seventeen Civil Engineer Corps officers will testify in halting French that she sticks to business. Not even the fact that her class-room was on one of the Normandy beaches, nor that she had sneaked through the German lines to reach her pupils, doused the light of learning.

Captain Clyde W. Coryell, CEC, USN, did not venture to presume that the Navy men had more than an academic interest in Petite, but he did point out that their enthusiasm for the French class reached epic proportions.

So avid did they become to learn the language that when headquarters moved from the beachhead to Cherbourg, the scholars refused to leave their teacher behind. And when a weapon carrier drove up the new headquarters, it was a smuggled Petite who climbed out from under the tarpaulin. In a whisk, the class in French was resumed.

However, unfortunately, a war was going on, and pleasant as were the hours of learning from such a teacher as Petite, it seemed the classes would have to be discontinued. The little school teacher set off to find a new job through the Red Cross. Sorrowfully the Seabees bade her goodbye.

The next day she was back, a bona fide job holder. She was to interview and select native Frenchmen as construction workers for the restoration of Cherbourg.

"She did a mighty fine job of it, too," said Captain Coryell.

Her scholars were delighted. Now they could have their teacher without having to learn French.

BRAVES FIRE AND WATER

Everett E. Baugher, CM1c, is a Seabee who literally has gone through fire and water to help a mate.

Details of Baugher's heroism, recognized by Admiral Nimitz's award of the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, are not yet available, but it is known that Baugher fought his way through gasoline flames in a sinking twenty-six foot motor whaleboat to reach two drowning servicemen. After pulling out two life jackets stowed in the bow of the boat, he plunged into the water, placed one life jacket on a sailor who could not swim and the other on a Marine Sergeant who was a poor swimmer, and kept them together and afloat until rescued.

MEN OF 40TH WIN MORE HONORS

One officer and ten enlisted men have been singled out for individual awards for their outstanding services while attached to the "Fighting Fortieth", the battalion which won the Presidential Unit Citation for its "build by day-fight by night" activities during the battle for Los Negros in the Admiralties.

Despite admonitions to remain under cover during darkness and in the face of a particularly heavy enemy artillery barrage, CPhM Ellis H. Shields and two other Medical Corps men left the security of their dugout to administer first aid to the wounded and dying.

Killed while returning to his foxhole, Shields was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously, while Silver Star Medals were presented to Lt. Paul E. Rumph, MC, USNR, and CPhM Edward Burbage, Shields' companions on his mission of mercy.

A Silver Star Medal was awarded to a Seabee who volunteered to brave the night-darkened, Jap-infested jungle to carry an important message from the front lines to Army Headquarters and return. The Seabee, Robert F. Fetch, BM2c, also made two trips carrying ammunition and a machine gun to troops at forward combat positions.

Seabee CCM Glenn O. McEwen won the Bronze Star Medal for leaving the safety of his entrenchment to direct troops, whose ammunition had been exhausted, into the protection of his dugout and for helping to repulse the last phase of the enemy assault.

Six other Seabees were awarded Soldier's Medals for disregarding the dangers of exploding bombs and gasoline to rescue the survivors of a plane which had burst into flames after crashing on the air strip.

Recipients of the latter award were: CEM Frank A. Perry, Henry A. Busker, CM1c, Henry N. Mathias, CM1c, Warren W. Winstead, MM2c, John E. Hunting, EM3c, and Anthony J. O' Cone, CM3c.

BEAN LOVER

For months, friends of E. H. Puntch of the 23rd Battalion watched him gobble beans. He swore he relished them, but no one believed him. Then Puntch sent to his native Texas for -- and received -- five pounds of the home grown variety to supplement his regular Navy ration. Again he repeated -- he loved beans.

His fellow Seabees were convinced. Only one question remained: were they going to have to develop a similar appetite?

Because Puntch is the battalion cook.

ADMIRAL EDWARDS NAMED TO FILL NEW COMMAND UNDER ADMIRAL KING

Vice Admiral Richard S. Edwards, USN, has been named to fill the newly-created post of Deputy Commander in Chief of the U. S. Fleet and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, it was announced in Washington last week.

In an official announcement, the Navy said the magnitude of the task of directing activities of the world's greatest fleet made it necessary for Admiral Ernest J. King to "delegate some of his duties" as Commander in Chief and Chief of Operations to a deputy.

Under the new alignment, Admiral Edwards, who has been Admiral King's chief of staff, now will be second only to Admiral King in naval command.

HOT SEAT

By Leroy W. Page, CCM

How it feels to be the target of Jap artillery fire while figuratively sitting on a keg of dynamite was vividly described recently by two Seabees. Only instead of being perched on dynamite, Frank Davis, CEM, and Joe Rumano, CMM, were in charge of a landing crew aboard a pontoon barge loaded with high octane gasoline and ammunition.

Their never-to-be-forgotten experience took place during landing operations shortly after the Marines had established their beachhead in the invasion of Guam.

"It was just about dusk," Chief Davis recalled. "We were standing by on our

pontoon which was tied to an LST, preparing for our evening meal of K and C rations. The pontoon was loaded with high octane gasoline and ammunition from the LST in order to get it ashore thru the shallow water that stretched out for a long distance from the island.

"Suddenly a shell hit just off our port bow. At first we thought it might be stray Jap mortar fire. But then another, and another came over, landing in the water near us. And then, all Hell seemed to break loose. The Japs had our range and were pasting us with 77 mm. shells. There were 25 of us aboard the barge and we all seemed glued to the deck as the shells fell all about us, throwing funnels of spray into the air as they exploded in the shallow water. One direct hit and we would have been blown to bits.

"By this time the other LSTs were pulling away to get out of range, but the one we were tied to was beached on a coral reef and couldn't budge. We clambered aboard her and cut the pontoon loose hoping it would drift away. And were we glad to see it float. The bombardment continued for about an hour. During that time the Japs must have thrown 75 rounds at us. They managed to tear a few holes in our pontoon after it was set adrift, but they never scored a direct hit on it or any of the LSTs.

"Shortly after dark we drifted clear of the reef. About that time two of our destroyers got the range of the Jap artillery and knocked them out with accurate fire that the Japs lacked. Next morning we had to hunt up our pontoon which had drifted to sea. We found it soon and completed unloading operations that day without further incident."

TOO MUCH RACKET

He doesn't mind being shelled, says Beaumont J. Ford, CM3c, but he does object to being taken by surprise.

The 36th Battalion veteran of the Japs' two-week counter-attack against Piva Airfield on Bougainville recalls how he labored under fire to help get the field in shape for American planes to land.

"I was operating a shovel on the strip at the time of the shelling," he explains. "With the noise the shovel was making, I could never hear the shells coming in. I never knew the Japs were throwing them until I'd see the steel matting fly somewhere around the shovel!"

MIRACLE-MAKERS

"The Seabees", said an editorial in the Painesville (Ohio) Telegraph, "must be a new tribe of the Lord's chosen people, because wherever they appear, on the next day miracles have been passed."

SOUVENIR SPECIALISTS

The 13th Battalion has added some new wrinkles to this business of making souvenirs and trinkets.

In the hobby shop organized by Timothy F. Sweeney, CM2c, an average of 40 men spend their free time each day. Their only source of materials is the junk heap, a limitation which doesn't hinder them in the least. From bits of scrap, they have fashioned beautifully inlaid jewelry cases and cigarette cases, hand-tooled leather belts and knife sheaths, watch bands, knives, airplane and ship models, and scores of other articles.

Of course, these articles have been made by Seabees since the first battalion went out, but the 13th devised methods of producing them faster. They found that discarded dentist drills could be adapted for drilling tiny holes in metal -- useful in making such things as stainless steel watch bands.

When a buffer was needed for the shop, the hobbyists took a motor from a wrecked juke box, wheels from a wrecked airplane for the main pulley, a belt from an old rifle sling, and scraps of cloth sewed together by the battalion tailor for a buffer wheel.

The hobbyists made a set of napkin rings from a piece of discarded chrome pipe. They needed anvils, so they made them from I-beams. When the volleyball court was completed, it was lined off with a paint spray machine made from a discarded fire extinguisher. Two of the boys made a kayak out of junked canvas cots.

Sweeney, incidentally, served as physical director of a Boys' Club in Troy, N. Y., for 15 years before enlisting in the Navy.

FRUSTRATION

You'd think a guy would be satisfied to level a mountain for an airfield site with a single blast of 40 tons of dynamite, but John J. Mastrevich, CMM, of the 13th Battalion considers himself a thwarted man. A sudden change of plans on another project deprived him of the chance to set off a 200-ton blast. It has been reported reliably that he still goes about with a look of longing in his eyes.

BLEACHERITES

Stateside World Series fans who bemoaned the lack of tickets for the Cardinals-Browns series could have taken a few lessons from Seabees who faced a similar situation during the recent Army-Navy "Servicemen's World Series" at Honolulu.

Ducats for the service teams series were as scarce as 30-day leaves, but that didn't prevent the Seabees from enjoying the game in their own "private" bleachers.

They got a bulldozer and, right behind the regular bleachers on the first base foul line, built a mound some 100 feet long, 20 feet high, and 50 feet wide. Leveling

and packing it as solidly as possible, they "borrowed" lumber to build bleachers for 1000 wildly-cheering Seabees who claimed they had the best seats in the "house".

Higher than the bleachers inside the park, even the men sitting in the bottom row of seats had a perfect view of the diamond.

BUILD \$1,500 CLOTHES DRYER OF SCRAP

A pile of scrap metal, necessity, and the mechanical "know-how" of the machine shop crew of the 90th Battalion added up to a huge clothes dryer which, if factory-bought, would have set the Navy back at least \$1,500.

At the time the dryer was required for the newly built "Island X" laundry, there were none available and the problem of supplying the necessary equipment was dumped into the laps of the machinists.

Although the crew had never had any experience in constructing a dryer and were unable to secure blueprints, they proceeded to build the machine.

The interior is constructed of galvanized steel to prevent rusting of parts or soiling of clothes. Air is sucked in through 100 feet of steam pipe, enclosed in the top of the dryer, pass through a huge revolving drum, and expelled from two vents. The drum is divided into two sections so that two batches of clothes can be dried simultaneously. Tumblers are placed at intervals on the inside of the drum, keeping the clothes in constant rotation.

A reduction gear arrangement reduces the motor revolutions from 1800 rpm to 18 rpm for the large drum. Guards protect moving parts and grab hooks are welded to the top of the machine to facilitate its transfer from place to place.

NAVY EVACUATES 700 NATIVES

(By Sergeant William C. Harris, a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent)

In one of the most unusual feats of the war, the U. S. Navy recently evacuated the civilian native population of the Japanese-held fortress of Wotje atoll in the Marshall Islands.

Accomplished at night, the evacuation of more than 700 native Micronesians must have been a mortifying surprise to the nearby Japanese garrison of several thousand soldiers and Korean laborers.

Only one family, consisting of a man, his wife and their baby, elected to remain on the island, which has been bombarded from the sea and air almost continuously since early in January. Today Wotje remains one of the most bombed places in the world, sharing that distinction with three other by-passed Marshall bases, Mille, Jaluit and Maloelap.

LOW BRIDGE

Someone asked Seabee George Ebeling how he had reacted to Jap shellfire on Bougainville.

"Well, sir," replied George, "one day my mate and I heard a shell pass overhead. We took off for a foxhole about fifty yards away and made it in a dead heat. About an hour later we realized we'd lost our dog tags. We'd been running so close to the ground we'd stepped on them and snapped them off!"

NO LONGER ENTERTAINING

Clifford Chudoba, BM2c, is a salvage diver of no mean ability -- a veteran of eight months' gruelling underseas work in the Aleutians and now, on his second hitch overseas with the 13th Battalion, more tough work at his present "Island X" -- but the Seabee recalls there was a time when he was paid to dive "strictly for laughs."

As a comedy diver in Billy Rose's Aquacade, Chudoba made people laugh at three World's Fairs: the 1937 Great Lakes Exposition in Cleveland, the 1939 New York World's Fair, and the 1940 Treasure Island Exposition at San Francisco.

Before joining the Aquacade show, he was assistant to the physical director of the Cleveland Athletic Club, held an Ohio State Amateur Diving Championship in the outdoor ten-foot board event in 1926 and 1927, and for years was a prominent contestant in national diving competitions.

IMPROVISE MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS IN EMERGENCY

The skillful manufacture of precision accessories for immediate use in the treatment of bone fractures incurred by servicemen in recent battle activities won two Seabees the commendation of the commanding officer of a South Pacific fleet hospital.

Called upon for fast production, Albert R. Dutrizac, MM1c, and Frank B. Trainor, MM1c, members of CBMUs 572 and 573 respectively, fashioned in less than three days more than 100 aluminum rods, metal clamps and other items needed in the mechanical external fixation treatment, the process in which stainless steel pins are inserted through the fractured bone and clamped into position, thus permitting early use of the injured limb.

In identical letters to the Seabees' OinCs, Captain W. A. Fort, MC, USN, the hospital's CO, wrote that each man was "highly commended for his special effort and skill" and that hospital staff officers "are deeply appreciative of the assistance

rendered. . .without which the mechanical external fixation treatment of fractures would not have been so extensively and successfully accomplished."

FOUR SERVE 103 YEARS

One hundred and three years of continuous service in the U. S. Navy is the accumulative duty record of four officers now attached to the 26th Special Battalion. The four officers, each of whom now holds the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade, entered the service as Apprentice Seamen.

Henry E. Dooley, Garland B. Logan, and Leo Proimos, each have 26 years of service to their credit, while Raymond Martin is now completing his 25th year of continuous duty. Lieutenants (junior grade) Logan and Martin landed with the first forces at Casablanca and remained with the Amphibious Forces thru the Sicily campaign on to Naples. Lieutenant (junior grade) Proimos also saw action with the Amphibious Forces both in the Atlantic and Pacific areas. Before being attached to the Seabees Lieutenant (junior grade) Dooley, 43, oldest of the foursome, saw service with the Torpedo Boat Forces in the Pacific.

The 103-year service record held by the group has thus far gone unchallenged by like combinations of officers or men among the Seabee Battalions of the Pacific Area.

ATTENTION, COOKS

According to a recent War Department General Order, Sgt. Samuel A. Turner, of Fort Sill, Okla., has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism in preventing an enraged soldier armed with a rifle from shooting the company's mess sergeant.

A NEIGHBORHOOD MOVES

By A. M. Stewart, Y2c.

Without an experienced house mover in the crew, 25 Seabees of the 13th Battalion recently moved 58 civilian residences without damage to houses, furniture or occupants. Since all the moves were made at night, tenants remained in the houses during operations.

The Seabees, working under the supervision of Lt. Otto R. Kronenberg, CEC, USNR, did the job with makeshift equipment, much of it salvaged from the junk heaps.

Using a 70-foot, 24-wheel trailer which they made of scraps of lumber and metal, and using a rock-laden truck for traction, the Seabees moved the dwellings at the rate of two per night. After permission was granted by the local blackout authorities, the Seabees reclaimed an abandoned generator and installed it on the fore

end of the trailer. The portable lighting system provided the crew with the necessary night lighting and also permitted each house to be moved with a string of electric lights glowing brightly around its exterior.

The moving crew was divided into two shifts. Each day, a crew directed by CSF Arthur E. Clawitter, made all preparations for moving the houses. They jacked up the buildings --- often without awakening swing-shift workers asleep inside --- disconnected gas, water and electric lines and had everything ready for the actual moving, which began at dusk.

The night crew, under CBM Louis O. Denham, had a multitude of problems to overcome with each move. A total of 63 low hanging electric and telephone lines had to be raised or cut -- and quickly repaired -- in the process of moving each house.

At street intersections fire alarm boxes had to be removed to allow the houses to negotiate the turns -- and then had to be quickly reinstalled. In some places it was necessary to tear down 100 yards of heavy steel wire fencing and build a road wide enough for the trailer and its burden. Afterwards, the Seabees had to rebuild the fence. Low hanging trees along the route was a constant menace to the movers.

One of the houses posed a unique problem to the Seabees. One of the children in the family had measles. The Seabees were compelled to obtain permission from the family doctor before they could transfer the house to its new location.

Probably the most exciting incident in the entire job occurred one night when the tow truck stalled with the trailer and house resting across a railroad track, while a train could be seen approaching. Fortunately, the train stopped, the truck started, and the Seabees -- and their "passengers" -- breathed again.

When the last house had been set on its new foundation, the owners of the dwellings entertained the entire Seabee crew with a feast.

ARMY ENGINEERS PERFORM

The Seabees at Normandy will admit that the Army Engineers have their share of ingenuity, too.

According to Captain Clyde W. Coryell, CEC, USN, they watched with admiration while the Army Engineers figured out what to do with thousands of bags of Nazi cement they found near Cherbourg.

There wasn't time to build a dock with it --- a dock badly needed to get supplies over the soft sand above the high tide mark. But that didn't stop them. They simply mixed the cement with the sand, added water, and converted the soft beach into pavement over which DUKWs and other vehicles rolled with ease.

PREMONITION

Although he could not explain it in words, Richard J. Woehrle of the 95th Battalion knew his twin brother, "Chuck," was in trouble. About the only way he could

describe it was that he'd gotten some sort of message while he slept.

"Is my brother dead?" he asked the mate who brought the news to his quarters.

"Very much alive, Chief," the sailor replied, "but a prisoner."

Some time later, Woehrle learned his brother had been captured by the Germans after his plane had been shot down while participating in an attack on Nazi submarine bases on the French coast.

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

BASEBALL: Many stateside papers headlined fact that Jack Kramer, Brownie pitcher and winner of third World Series game, was former Seabee. Kramer received medical discharge from Navy in June, 1943, after serving eight months. Nelson Potter, Brownie hurler, made his major league debut with Cardinals back in 1936. pitched one inning and then was shipped back to minors. Browns regular line-up revealed only one .300 hitter, outfielder Mike Kreevich, who finished season with .301. Cards fielded three, Stan Musial with .347; Johnny Hopp, .335; and Walker Cooper, .315. Browns wrote World Series history in first game 2 to 1 victory. first time that team won Series game with only two hits. For first time since he became Baseball Commissioner in 1920, Judge Kenesaw M. Landis was unable to attend games. Landis, who will be 78 in November, was advised by physicians to forego series because of illness. Lou Boudreau, Cleveland manager, who captured AL batting title with unofficial .327, signed new 3-year contract with Indians. At end of first year as regular in big league, final AL figures show Yankees' George Stirnweiss as league's most powerful offensive player. Stirnweiss topped league in runs, with 125; in hits, 205; in stolen bases, 55; and tied for most triples with 16. batted .319--fourth best in league--in 154 games, only player among leaders who was in every game of season. Baltimore Orioles took International League play-offs from Newark Bears, 4 games to 3. meet Louisville in American Association-Int. "little world series". Orioles' Howard Moss, who led league in runs-driven-in and home runs, chosen league's most valuable player for 1944. Detroit signed Steve O'Neill to manage Tigers for third straight year.

FOOTBALL: First big Saturday of college football brough many upsets. North Carolina Preflight beat Navy, 21 to 14; Pennsylvania spilled Duke, 18 to 7; Wisconsin tripped Northwestern, 7 to 6; California downed UCLA, 6 to 0; and Indiana trounced Michigan, 20 to 0. Other noteworthy results: Notre Dame routed Pittsburgh, 50 to 0; Ohio State crumbled Missouri, 54 to 0; Tennessee swamped Kentucky, 26 to 13; Army conquered North Carolina, 46 to 0; Georgia Tech blasted highly-touted Clemson, 51 to 0; Illinois held Great Lakes to 26-26 tie. In only pro game of day, Green Bay Packers beat Detroit Lions, 27 to 6, for third straight league victory. Don Hutson ran his consecutive points after touchdown string to 62 before missing. Record held by Jack Manders, ex-Bears, who split posts for 72 in row. Brooklyn Tigers beat Service All-Stars, 48 to 14, in bond game. spectators bought \$3,500,000 in war bonds. Ensign Sid Luckman, playing with Stars in last game before heading overseas, was individual star. Coley McDonough, No. 1 quarterback of Pitts-Chic combine, inducted in Army.

SERVICEMEN'S SPORTS: Navy All-Stars won six of seven games played against Army All-Stars in "Servicemen's World Series" at Honolulu. Army team won final game in last inning with two-run homer. Lieut. Col. Bernie Bierman, on leave from Minnesota for duty with Marine Corps, will leave service to return to school "in advisory capacity". Dick Wakefield, hard-hitting Tiger outfielder, reported for induction. Wakefield enrolled as Naval Aviation Cadet at close of '43 season and was discharged last July after completion of preflight course in Navy aviation program cutback.