

9th Special Naval Construction Battalion

*Historical
Information*



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



NCTC - Peary
 ABD - Hueneme
 Ready Date - 15 Jul'43
 Left ARD - 7 Aug'43
 Destination - Guadalcanal Bougainville
 Tulagi, New Georgia and Green Is.,
 Russells Is. Tulagi
LOG

- 6-26-43 - 9th (Sp) arrived Hueneme 26 Jun'43. (Conf. Disp. 252110 NCR 3036 from Hueneme to Budocks dtd 26 Jun'43)
- 9- 1-43 - 9th (Sp) departed ARD 8 Aug'43.
- 11- 9-43 - 1 Oct'43 report of 9th (Sp) - Unit arrived Guadalcanal 21 Sep'43. Co. A plus 1/2 Hqtrs now at Russell Is.; Co. B plus 1/4 Hqtrs Co. now at Tulagi.
- 12- 7-43 - 1 Nov'43 report of 9th (Sp) - Co. A at Russells; Co. B at Tulagi; Co. D at Guadalcanal; Co. C at Guadalcanal.
- 1-10-44 - 1 Dec'43 report of 9th (Sp) - Co's A & D at Sasevele, New Georgia; Co. E at Guadalcanal; Co. B. at Tulagi.
- 1-27-44 - 1 Jan'44 report of 9th (Sp) - operating with Hqtrs and Co's A & D at Sasevele, New Georgia, Co. B at Tulagi, and Co. C at Bougainville.
- 3-30-44 - 1 Feb'44 report of 9th (Sp) - operating at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, New Georgia, and Tulagi.
- 3-24-44 - 9th (Sp) is located at Tulagi. (CNB Tulagi Sec. Disp. 150941 Mar'44 to Comersopac.)
- 4- 3-44 - 1 Mar'44 report of 9th (Sp) - Co's A and D, plus 1/2 Hqtrs Co., located at Sasevele New Georgia; Co. B and 1/4 Hqtrs Co. located at Tulagi. Co. C and 1/2 Hqtrs Co.

9th C.B. (Special)

- 4- 8-44 (Cont.) at Torokina waiting for transportation to Green Is. during first part of Mar'44.
- 5-11-44 - Supplementary report for Mar'44 - Distribution: Co. A and B plus 1/2 Hqtrs Co. is at Sasevele, New Georgia. Co. E and 1/2 Hqtrs Co. at Tulagi. Co. C and 1/4 Hqtrs Co. at Green Is. Co. C was transferred from Torokina to Green Is. arriving 6 Mar'44.
- 6- 1-44 - 1 Apr'44 report of 9th (Sp) - operating at New Georgia, Green Island, and Tulagi.
- 6-10-44 - 1 May'44 report of 9th (Sp) - operating at New Georgia, Green Island, and Tulagi.
- 7-19-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 9th (Sp), Co. C - operating at Green Is. Consists of 5 officers and 236 men.
- 7-28-44 - 1 Jun'44 report of 9th (Sp) - Operating at New Georgia, (Hqtrs), Green Is. and Tulagi.
- 8- 7-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 9th (Sp) - Operating at New Georgia (Hqtrs), Green Is. and Tulagi.
- 8-25-44 - 9th (Sp) located at Tulagi, Munda and Green Is. - Following info from COMSOPAC as of 7/1/44:
 Sep'43 - Arrived Guadalcanal
 Sep'43 - Co. E arrived Tulagi
 Nov'43 - Cos A & D arrived New Georgia
 Mar'44 - Co. C arrived Green Is.
- 8-29-44 - 9th (Sp) located at Munda. (CNB New Georgia Sec. Disp. 150539 NCR 14742 to Comersopac dtd 23 Aug'44).
- 9- 9-44 - 1 Aug'44 report of 9th (Sp) - located at: Co's A & D - Munda
 Co. B - - - Tulagi
 Co. C - - - Green Is.

9th C.S.

- 9-26-44 - 9th (Sp) is located at New Georgia. (Sec. Disp. 150538 NCR 17713 dtd 24 Sep from CNB New Georgia to Comseronsopac)
- 10-18-44 - 9th (Sp) is located at Munda. (CNB New Ga. Sec. Airmailgram to Comseronsopac 010538 NCR 18612 dtd 12 Oct '44)
- 10-20-44 - 9th (Sp) is located at Munda. (CNB New Ga. to Comseronsopac Sec. 150538 NCR 18612 dtd 26 Oct '44)
- 11- 8-44 - Co's A and D located at New Georgia with Co. C at Green Is. (Comserfor721st Sec. ltr AS-4 over Ser RP-001882 to Budsacks dtd 12 Oct '44 monthly report for Sep '44)
- 11-17-44 -- 9th (Sp) is located at Munda. (CNB New Georgia Sec. disp to Comseronsopac 010538 NCR 16611 dtd 14 Nov '44).
- 11-29-44 -- The 9th (Sp) is located at Munda. (CNB New Georgia Sec. disp to Comseronsopac 150538 dtd 28 Nov '44).
- 11-30-44 -- The 9th (Sp) is operating at Munda, Tulagi and Green Is. - 1 Sep '44 report of 9th (Sp).
- 12- 1-44 - 1 Oct '44 report of 9th (Sp) - Co's. A & D at Munda, New Ga.; Co. B at Tulagi, Solomons; Co. C at Green Island.
- 12-28-44 - The 9th (Sp) - Co. A & D located at New Georgia. Co. C at Green Is. and Co. B in the Sopac area. (Comserfor721st Sec. report for Oct '44 dtd 20 Nov '44).
- 1-5-45 - 9th (Sp) located at Munda. (CNB New Georgia Sec. Disp. to Comseronsopac 150538 dtd 30 Dec '44)
- 1-13-45 - 9th (Sp) located at New Georgia, Green Is., and the Sopac area. (Comserfor721st Sec report of Nov '44 dtd 15 Dec '44)
- 1-20-45 -- The 9th (Sp)(part) is located at Munda. (CNB New Georgia Sec. disp. to Comseronsopac 010538 dtd 13 Jan '45).

9th (Sp)

SEP '45

- 1-20-45 - The 9th (Sp)(part) is located at Tulagi. (CNB Tulagi Sec. disp to Comseronsopac 042208 dtd 4 Jan '45).
- 1-20-45 - The detachments of the 9th (Sp) at Munda and Green Is. are to return to the Sopac, ready 1 Feb '45. (Comincpac&poa conf. ltr Ser. 0198 dtd 6 Jan '45 to CNO).
- 2- 1-45 - Retention of the 9th (Sp) and CBMU 550 for roll-up ur 142236 approved. Steps will be taken to obtain one regular and one Special Batt from the West Coast to permit the return of the 44th, 46th, and 57th CB's for rehabilitation. Comsopac says that two new batts considered adequate to eliminate need of CBMU 552, 553, 561, 568, 569, 582, 586, and 587 in No. Solomons. (Cincpoa Sec disp to Comsopac 180059 dtd 18 Jan '45)
- 2- 1-45 - Request CNB Munda and CNB Green Is. be given necessary instructions to order the respective sections of the 9th (Sp) to proceed FAGTRANS to Russells and report to CNB Russells for duty. (Comsopac Sec disp to Com7flt 240326 dtd 24 Jan '45)
- 2- 1-45 - 9th (Sp) and CBMU's 561 and 568 are at Munda. (CNB New Georgia Sec Disp to Comseronsopac 150538 dtd 25 Jan '45)
- 2-10-45 - 1 Dec '44 report of the 9th (Sp) - located at New Georgia.
- 2-16-45 - 1 Jan '45 report of the 9th (Sp) - located at Munda and Green Island. 1 off. and 5 men from the Green Is. detachment were on tempduty at Torokina on a Special Steve-dore assignmet from 1 Dec to 15 Dec '44; 1 off. and 15 men detached from Green Is. on 19 Dec to report to CNB Torokina; 10 men were detached from Munda on 19 Dec to report to CNB Torokina.
- 2-20-45 - The 9th (Sp) is being transferred to Russells. (CNB New Georgia Sec. disp to Comseronsopac 010538 dtd 15 Feb '45).
- 3- 6-45 - 9th (Sp) arrived Russells 9 Feb '45 from Noumea. (Sec Disp 210315 from CNB Russells to Comseronsopacfor)

Location - Tulagi, Russells

9th C.B. (Special)

- 3-20-45 - 1 Feb'45 report of the 9th (Sp) - As of 1 Feb., batt was located in the following places: Co's A & D - Munda, Co. B - Tulagi, Co. C - Green Is.
- 3-23-45 -- Co. A & D of the 9th (Sp) is enroute to Russells. Co. B is at Tulagi. Co. C is enroute to Russells. (Comseronsopac Sec. report for Feb'45 dtd 5 Mar'45).
- 4-10-45 -- The 9th (Sp) is presently in the Solomons - is to return to Sopac when shipping is available (~~Probably late date~~) (Com7flt Sec. disp to Cominch 300346 Mar'45).
- 4-11-45 - 1 Mar'45 report of the 9th (Sp)-Co C, Green Is., trfd to Russells on 24 Feb'45; Cos A & D, Tulagi, trfd to Russells 26 Feb. All 3 Cos, total of 724 off. and men, arrived Banika, Russells 27 Feb'45 for duty.
- 4-30-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 47th Reg. - Activities of 47th Reg. at standstill inasmuch as operations have been assumed by the 9th (Sp).
- 5- 1-45 - Cos A & D located at New Georgia--returning to Sopac; Co C at Green Is. returning to Sopac. (Comserfor7flt Sec Rep of 1 Apr'45) (P. 4. 1. 1.)
- 5- 8-45 - The 9th (Sp) is located at Russells. (Dirpacdocks S.F. Sec Rep of 15 Apr'45)
- 5-9-45 - 1 Apr'45 report of 9th (Sp) - located at Russell Islands.
- 5-29-45 - 1 May'45 report of the 9th (Sp) - located at Russell Islands.
- 6-9-45 - The 9th (Sp) included in list of units earmarked and ready later but no destinations assigned. (Comsopac sec disp 290535 May'45 to Comservpac)
- 7-2-45 - In view of the long time this unit has been out of the States and imperative need to reduce complements of CB units Poa, propose to inactivate the 9th (Sp) (Comservpac conf spdltr ser 03326 dtd 21 Jun'45 to Comsopac.)
- 7- 2-45 - 1 Jun'45 report of the 9th (Sp) - located at Russells and Tulagi.

Location - Russells, Tulagi

9th C.B. (Special)

- 7- 6-45 - In view of the long time this unit has been out of States and imperative need to reduce complements of CB units Poa to meet Cominch ceilings, propose to inactivate the 9th (Sp). (Comservpac conf spdltr ser 03326 dtd 21 June to Comsopac)
- 7-19-45 - Comsopacfor concurs in the proposal to inactivate the 9th (Sp) but urges delay until after all Navy and Marine cargo is moved from the Russells and Tulagi, estimated as about 1 Oct'45. The suggested inactivation date of 1 Oct'45 is can be considered firm only on the assumption that shipping is cont available to move earmarked cargo. (Comsopac area and Sopacfor conf ltr ser 0751 dtd 1 July to Comservpac)
- 7-27-45 - Your approval is requested to inactivate the 9th(Sp) on 1 Oct'45, or as soon thereafter as cargo handling conditions at Russell Islands and Tulagi permit. (Comserforpac conf ltr Ser 03925 dtd 14 Jul'45 to CinCPac-Poa.)
- 7-28-45 - 1 Jul'45 report of the 9th(Sp) - located in Russells. Reliefs for 10 officers eligible for leave are expected to arrive on 1 Jul'45.
- 7-30-45 - CinCPac-Poa approves the inactivation of the 9th(Sp). (CinCPac-Poa conf. endorsement Ser 031225 dated 20 Jul'45 to ComserforPacflt.)
- 8-21-45 - 1 Aug'45 report of the 9th(Sp) - located at Russells. 5 officers were returned to the U.S. for leave during Jul'45.
- 8-28-45 - Inactivate immediately 9th (Sp), CBMI 501 & BODD, Noumea. Req you proceed with inactivations or advise. (Comservpac Sec disp 242159 to Comsopac).
- 9- 6-45 - Comservpac informed OinC, 9th(Sp) that it is planned to inactivate 9th(Sp) on or about 1 Oct'45 (Comservpac conf end to Dirpacdocks, P. ser 1859 dtd 21 Aug'45).
- 9-34-45 - 9th CB(Sp) - to be inactivated earliest possible date. (Comservpac sec report ser 001018 dtd 31 Aug'45 to Comservforpac).

Location -Russells

9th CB (Sp)

10-2-45 - 1 Sept'45 report of 9th CB(Sp) - located at Russells.

10-17-45 - 9th CB(Sp) inactivated 10 Oct'45. (Comservronsopac conf disp 110200 Oct'45 to Comservpac).

10-18-45 - 1 Oct'45 report of 9th CB(Sp) - located at Russells Is.

INACTIVATED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ON BOARD</u>		<u>AUTHORITY</u>
	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>MEN</u>	
30 Jun'44	28	911	Recap.
1 Aug'44	28	906	R & MoR
1 Oct'44	31	902	R & MoR
30 Sep'44		902	Recap
1 Nov'44	35		BNP625 & R
1 Dec'44	33	992	MoR
1 Jan'45		982	BNP625
1 Feb'45	35	973	MoR
1 Mar'45	30	975	MoR
1 Apr'45		963	BNP625
1 May'45	28	950	BNP625 & R
1 Jun'45	27	947	Roster & BNP625
1 Jul'45	27	910	BNP625 & R
1 Aug'45		863	BNP625
1 Sept'45	29	852	BNP625 & R
1 Oct'45	27	576	BNP625 & R
1 Nov'45		573	

9th Construction Battalion (Special) (INACTIVATED)

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
6/19/44	-	Munda	C.B. report 1 June.	Left U.S. Aug. 1943
6/28	-	Tulagi (fold)	Tulagi sec disp. 180147 June	
7/6/44	-	Green Is.	Com So Pac conf disp 202126 June	Company C.
7/24	-	Munda (SHA 6)	New Georgia Conf disp 150538 July	
9/25	-	SHA 6 -	New Georgia sec act disp. conf 150538.	
10/13	-	SHA 6	New Georgia sec act disp. Oct 010538.	
1/13	-	Fold		
2/17	-	(Howl)	New Georgia sec. act. disp. 010538 Feb.	Awaiting report from Sharp to Howl.
3/5	-	(Dirk-Russella)	Russell sec act disp. 2/0315 Feb.	Arrived 2/9 from Naumea

9th Special page 2

Date	Organization	Location	Reference	Notes
3/29	-	* Co. A - Munda Co. B - Tulagi Sals Co. C - Green Is	Com So Pac jet ser. 260558 Mar	present location
3/31	-	Salomons	Com 7th jet so 300346 Mar.	Correction - presently in Salomons between Sepac.
5/8	-	Fold. 2001	Tulagi sec act disp. 010253 May.	
10/16/45	-	-	Com So Pac Conf. 110200 Oct.	Inactivated 10 Oct.

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST

THE NINTH SPECIAL UNITED STATES NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION was organized on April 26, 1943 at Camp Peary, Virginia, with a complement of 1010 enlisted men and 34 officers. The "Special" designation was given it to differentiate it from regular construction battalions, and to signify that it was essentially a stevedoring battalion. Modern armies are insatiable in their constant demand for supplies of ammunition, ordnance, food and all the thousands of items that go to make up a self-contained fighting force. The United States, in the course of this gigantic war, has sent to overseas battlefront some five million men. All of them have to be supplied and provisioned by ship. Loading and unloading the vital cargoes of these freighters is the job of the "Special" C. B. battalions. Our motto is: "Keep the hook moving!" for on it may depend, in part, the length of this war, if not its outcome.

May 21, the Officer-in-Charge, Lt. Comdr. R. R. Bennett, reported aboard to commission the battalion as of that date. The onboard count at that time was 1006 enlisted men and 31 officers.

At area A-9 the battalion received its intensive advanced military training from April 26 to May 14 under Marine Corps instructors who were attached to the Camp Peary Station Force. Mainly, the training consisted of close order drill, long hikes, obstacle courses, skirmishes, tactics in effecting beachheads from tank lighters and Higgins boats, rifle and gunnery practice and instruction—'03, BAR, Thompson sub-machine gun, 20 mm. anti-aircraft, .30 and .50 caliber machine guns and mortars.

May 14, a 62-hour liberty was granted all hands. The battalion dress parade was staged at Bolles Field on May 17. Captain J. G. Ware, Commanding Officer of the base, made the inspection and presented the colors. It was a momentous and unique occasion, as this was the first battalion trained at Peary to be reviewed in whites. A thrilling and splendid spectacle indeed.

The next phase of training was designed to mould the organization into an efficient stevedoring unit which would be fully capable of loading and discharging ships' cargoes at any outlying base in the war zone. Stevedore classes were held on the decks and in the holds of the U.S.S. "NEVERSAIL," which was a land-locked wood and concrete replica of a Liberty ship. Aboard this craft, men were trained to drive a winch, to rig a ship, and to stow cargo properly. Training was carried out on a 24-hour basis in three eight-hour shifts. All companies divided their men into stevedore gangs and took turns working the ship.

Meanwhile, men from the companies who had been selected for other than stevedore training, were attending various advanced technical training schools to familiarize themselves with the equipment used at overseas bases. There were schools on refrigeration, electricity, hut and tent erection, camouflage, diving, water purification, plumbing, pontoon assembly, gunnery, dynamiting and demolitions, storekeeping and cargo checking, diesel and gas engines.

At the completion of advanced technical training on June 5, the battalion was moved to Area A-3. From June 7 to June 17, a ten-day embarkation leave was granted to all personnel desiring to take leave from the East Coast. As the majority of the men's homes were located east of the Mississippi, only 174 men remained on board during that period.

During the night of June 16 and the morning of June 17, the men returned to camp, wondering how ten days could be so fleeting. There were 23 AWOL's, 20 of whom straggled in anywhere from a few minutes late to just before the time the outfit shoved off on the morning of the 19th. Three men did not return: One on account of illness, and two due to hunting accidents.

June 19, the Battalion entrained for Port Hueneme, California, its advanced base depot. As the men marched to the platform and boarded the waiting train, motion pictures were taken of them to the accompaniment of the excellent Camp Peary band, supplying rhythm for their marching feet with the "National Emblem" march. At 0900 the first section departed. The second and third sections followed at intervals of two hours. The men were treated to Pullman accommodations, 26 men to a car. Rigid security measures



Birth and early training

We are acquainted with the weapons of war

Commissioning exercises

The Ninth Special meets "The Hook" and the U.S.S. "NEVERSAIL"

Advanced technical training completed, we go on leave—burrab!

Westward the course... California, here we are

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST



The mule is an animal . . .

The 7th of August, and the last view of the States

Troopship or "Watch out, mate. That's my head you're standing on."

Forty days of boardlife, subtitled: "BONES, BULL AND BOREDOM."

were enforced; the men were mustered often and stood around-the-clock watches between each car in two-hour shifts. Sections 1 and 2 travelled the southern route while section 3 went via the northern. The southern route proved precarious crawling through Missouri, due to the worst flood conditions prevailing in two years. The twin ribbons of steel were inundated for miles, and often the wheels of the cars were entirely submerged.

The battalion arrived intact at Port Hueneme on June 24. The salubrious California climate was an exhilarating experience to all the men but the Floridians. Further military and advanced technical training was soon in progress. Valuable experience in the loading and discharging of cargo ships was gained by the officers and men while working at the Port Hueneme docks.

Infantry packs, 1903 rifles, Browning automatics, gas masks, sun helmets and foul-weather gear were issued to the officers and men.

Between June 28 and July 8, all men living west of the Mississippi and who had not taken leave from the East Coast, were on their ten-day embarkation leave.

During this period, battalion equipment was being assembled on the docks for loading aboard ship. The loading of the USS LaSalle (AP-102), the ship on which the battalion was to sail, began about the first of August, and on the morning of August 7, 1943, the battalion personnel boarded her, 1039 strong (1008 enlisted men and 31 officers). The ship put to sea at 1700. In the bright afternoon sunshine the men swarmed on deck to shout farewells and to watch the "good old" U. S. A. recede into infinity as the ship plowed out to sea at 17 knots under the protective custody of a sub-hunting dirigible which followed the ship until dark.

The battalion was subjected to a packed sardine-can existence. In addition to the ship's crew, there were two other units and a contingent of Marines aboard to swell the total to over 1800. The Ninth Special men were crowded into the 'tween decks of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 holds, and eblow room was at a premium. Trucks and jeeps were lashed on top of the hatches. The ship was loaded to the gunwales with men and freight. In order to get a breath of air, the men stayed topside practically all the time, except at general quarters, held at least twice daily, extending through the morning and evening twilight. At night the majority of the men preferred to sleep on the hard metal decks instead of in their bunks in stuffy holds. There were a number of men who suffered from mal-de-mer, but after the first week everybody seemed to ride the ocean's billowy breast in comfort. That the voyage was not to be on the order of a Cook's tour was shown when men were detailed to stand gun watches, fire watches, life-raft and blackout watches. Others were assigned to cleaning and policing chores on decks and in holds.

Many occupied their leisure time with card playing and other games of chance, or with the reading of books and periodicals in some shady spot. Watching the antics of the flying fish was also a fascinating pastime. There was music aboard ship, thanks to the battalion band which serenaded on deck almost daily. Their music was both good and loud. In addition, a limited repertoire of phonograph records was played and relayed over the ship's loudspeakers. "Limited" is used advisedly, as about all that could be heard morning, noon and night was the ditty about that female arsenal, "Pistol Packin' Mama." The wax disk was more durable than the ability of some to listen to its reiterated admonitions for the Babe to lay that pistol down. Several target practices were staged by the ship's crew which helped to relieve the monotony. Inflated red balloons, three feet in diameter, were released and after they had risen to a considerable height, the gunners went into spirited action against them with the 20 mm, 50-caliber and three-inch guns. The results were good, though a few of the bobbing spheres got away without being tagged. A few times the five-inch gun on the fan-tail was boomed against an imaginary enemy, which was not very easy on the eardrums.

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST

As day after day passed, and there was nothing but ocean to the left of us, to the right of us, ahead of us, and in back of us, nobody would argue against the fact that 71 per cent of the earth's surface was covered by water.

One morning at about 1100 everybody got a thrill. One of the lookouts reported a periscope cutting the water about one-quarter mile off the port beam, which was visible to the mates. The ship promptly deviated from its zig-zag course and turned the bow in the direction of the "enemy" to evade being a broadside target. Everybody was soon relieved, though somewhat disillusioned, when the "periscope" was identified to be nothing but a drifting buoy.

On August 15, at 1546, the ship crossed the equator. At the time, via the public address system, the ship's Padre, a merry old soul, announced that if the men looked hard enough they might actually be able to see the girdling meridian lying on the ocean's surface. The mates strained their eyes to no avail as, no doubt, it takes more than 20/20 vision.

In the early dawn, just before land was sighted on the 19th, a torpedo missed the stern of the ship by six feet. Although it was rumored that several "tin-fish" were shot at the ship, only the one torpedo attack was recorded in the official ship's log.

Pago Pago, Samoa, the first port, was reached on 19th of August in 12 days' time. The men were granted two short shore liberties during the four days that the ship was tied up there. These were spent in gathering coconuts from the trees nestled along the beautiful lagoon, exploring the island and buying shells, beads and grass skirts from the natives clad in picturesque lava-lava attire. The missionaries had done a good job in this region, as was shown by the many churches established there. Pago Pago is famous as the setting of "Rain" and as the home of Robert Louis Stevenson, the great American author, who spent the last years of his life there in idyllic retirement. When it came to the personable Polynesian girls, the mates discovered, much to their chagrin, that the Marines had the situation well in hand.

The ship pulled anchor on the 24th and set sail for Noumea, New Caledonia, the second port, arriving there on the 29th. In transit at 1546 on the 25th day of August, the men qualified as members of the Realm of the Golden Dragon by crossing the 180th Meridian, the International Date Line. Thus they experienced the puzzling phenomenon of automatically gaining a day by jumping from a Wednesday to a Friday overnight, as was the case in this instance.

With the exception of 80 men and officers, who remained aboard ship, the battalion was quartered at the Naval Receiving Station ashore. During the stay at this great base, the men ashore were detailed to various duties, including the warehousing of naval supplies, while the men aboard the LaSalle stood watches and assisted in the shifting of battalion cargo which had to be discharged and reloaded. On September 16, on the battalion's quota for the V-12 Officer Training Program, five lucky young men—John M. Pellerin, Jr., S1c, Joseph M. Bennett, Jr., S2c, Charles F. Love, S2c, and Joseph M. Roski, S2c—were transferred back to the States for officer training.

The Ninth Special again boarded the LaSalle and on the 17th left Noumea and headed north in a nine-ship convoy.

On the morning of the 20th, the LaSalle anchored out in the channel off Guadalcanal. Just before day-break, those on watch were eye-witnesses to some real fireworks when one American pilot shot three Jap planes out of the sky about five miles away. Many saw the flaming Zeros light up the distant horizon and fall to a watery grave.

The ship tied up at Kukum Dock, Guadalcanal, on the 21st and that afternoon the battalion disembarked and forthwith proceeded to build a camp in a coconut palm grove only about 200 yards away from the dock area. At long last, the battalion had reached its destination.



Periscope off the port beam

His Majesty, Neptunus Rex Shellbacks at last

"Torpedo attack"

Pago Pago, where Mother Hubbard and the Marines had arrived to stay, is visited. We are told Sadie Thompson no longer lives here

Nouvelle Caledonie, an extension, if small, of La Belle France

Some guys have all the luck

The Canal, Rock of Legend

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST

The welcoming committee consisted of white birds (cockatoos) who gracefully circled overhead among the trees. An incongruous spectacle, indeed, to be greeted by white birds, symbolic of peace, in a combat area. Multiple-colored birds were also in evidence, notably parrots.

Although baptized by a sudden tropical shower, the men were in gay spirits as they pitched their pup tents and partook of "C" rations officially for the first time. Those were hectic days and nights that followed. There was a mountain of cargo, battalion equipment and supplies, piled in one area. Handling it was a tremendous task. However, in a burst of diligent endeavor, things were squared and cleared away for operations in less than a week's time. The scorching sun, most of the time, smiled its intense benediction and soon a lot of the men were in the pink of condition with mild cases of sunburn.

Fox holes were dug, tents erected, communication and electric lines installed. A gear locker was established to house tools broken from their cases for immediate use on camp construction. An ever-important galley and chow hall were set up. Showers were built, Ship's Service Store, transportation facilities were put into operation, as well as an OOD hut, Post Office, Sick Bay, Operations Office. Executive, Personnel and Disbursing offices were functioning within a few days' time. In short order, by Seabee "can do" ingenuity, a city had arisen from out of the wilderness.

The enemy was still a threat to the men's safety. Many nights, sleep was interrupted by the strident sound of the air raid alarm sirens rending the moonlight air. There are no official records, but the speed with which men reached fox-holes put to shame anything ever seen at track meets. There was considerable enemy action on the 'Canal during the first few weeks of the battalion's stay. However, Providence spared the Ninth Special's camp from a direct bombing attack, though one night two fully laden cargo ships were torpedoed by planes and severely crippled.

Since we were in a dangerous spot by virtue of our proximity to the dock and ammunition dumps, plans were promptly formulated to build a camp elsewhere. A site was selected two miles away, and a crew of 40 men were detailed to prepare it as the battalion's new home. Armed with machetes, picks, shovels, saws and demolition equipment, the men toiled laboriously to clear away the thick jungle undergrowth. The going was slow and somewhat hazardous, because of the live hand grenades, ammunition and booby traps that had to be removed in kid-glove style. Also, the atmosphere was pungent with the nauseating stench of decomposed bodies. After much progress had been made, the site was condemned by medical authorities. Undaunted, another site was selected two hundred yards across the Matanikau river, scene of famous battles between the U. S. Marines and defending Jap forces. In November the new camp was ready for occupancy, though not completed. On the 4th, C Company and the administrative forces moved there, as the rest of the battalion had been detached from the 'Canal and were located at other bases at that time. While in the throes of moving, an order came through from the Commander of the Base to the effect that the Ninth Special was to turn over the camp to another outfit. Everyone was nonplused by the disheartening news. The Officer-in-Charge, Lt. Comdr. Bennett, accepted the challenge. Marshalling his argumentative forces, he bearded the lion in his den and walked off with the decision that the battalion was to keep the camp as long as it remained on the Canal. The camp was built under the supervision of Lieutenant Allen, who did not spare himself nor his men to make it the finest on the Island.

Headquarters Company was dissolved and absorbed by the other four companies in equal ratio. This was necessary to meet the exigency created when the battalion was split into four components to function individually and as separate units.

September 29, A Company was ordered to the Russell Islands; October 1, B Company moved to Tulagi; October 20, D Company left for Sasavele in the Munda Area, and C Company was left to remain on Guadalcanal, along with the administrative staff.

From here the story will be taken up in separate chapters by companies.

First exercises in housekeeping

A camp is laid out

Washing Machine Charlie equals Foxhole Freddie

In motion there is progress?

Try again, and better luck next time

Divide to conquer!

Companiiiiies, the floor is yours. Take it from here!



SAGA OF COMPANY "A"



Company A came into its own when it was detached from the battalion to go to the Russell Islands. The battalion had hardly landed on Guadalcanal when Company A received orders to proceed to the Russells. There was much confusion and excitement as we set aside one-quarter of all the supplies and equipment that we were to take with us. On September 30, 1943, everything was loaded onto two LCT's. On top of everything piled the men. They settled down for the trip on crates, boxes and rolling stock. When darkness fell we shoved off, picked up our escort and were on our way. No sooner were we comfortably bedded down for the night, when the inevitable rain came. Where possible, the men crept under trucks and into all sorts of nooks and crannies. A few ponchos made their appearance, but most of those things were in packs and very few of the men could locate their gear in the inky blackness. We were running without lights, due to blackout regulations in this area. So with true Seabee aplomb, we simply slept through it all. Some of us occupied truck cabs along with boxes, packs, buckets, and rifles. We

spent the remainder of the trip in comfortable repose, enjoying the usual exchange of stories about enemy submarines.

Hitting the beach at about seven hundred in the morning, one and all immediately set to work after a breakfast of "K" rations. Gangs were assigned to unloading; others transported the stuff to our future camp site, an almost ideal spot. It was a beautiful coconut grove and the ground was covered with a lovely carpet of grass. By working like beavers we had a sufficient number of tents erected so that everyone slept under cover and on cots. Our stay on Banika was highlighted by the spirit in which the men tackled each and every job. With a will the men pitched in and as a result Company A had the finest camp on the island.

The regular crew on Camp Construction, composed of carpenters, electricians and plumbers, performed an exceptionally fine job in providing conveniences and shelter. For the first five days there, they were ably assisted by all stevedore crews, but on the sixth day regular stevedore work commenced on a 24-hour schedule and was maintained until we were secured, to move to Sasavele.

Fox holes were dug for all men and covered with coconut logs and earth. We had many alerts, for enemy planes were passing over on their way to other objectives. Fortunately we were never the target. The only danger was from the hundreds of coconuts which fell daily, but by some strange good omen no one was hit directly by a "widow maker" during our entire stay there.

The enlisted men's quarters were laid out symmetrically between the rows of palm trees, all on one side of the road. Streets were laid out and numbered. Across the road, on top of a slight rise overlooking the water, the Officers' Quarters were set up. There was a fine Sick Bay in charge of George Melchin, CphM, ably assisted by Red Dougherty, phm2/c. Another tent housed all the administrative offices—O.O.D., Operations, and Personnel. A recreation tent was provided for the men. A grand, cool mess hall was constructed right on the crest of the hill that sloped down to the water. A compact and efficient galley was laid out. Lieutenant Frank, Officer-in-Charge of the detachment, directed camp construction personally. Under him, Chief Alberts was in complete charge, and did a splendid job.

A well was sunk and fresh water provided. This was done under the supervision of Chief "Pop" Miller. Chief Dennis lost no time in getting his galley set up and his cooks started, so that our diet of "C" rations was short lived. The electricians under

(Concluded on page 117)



Sunlight Channel, Banika, Russell Islands



"The Coconut Trees Are Closing In"

nished plastic odds and ends. To the man in the jungles his hunting knife is one of his most essential possessions, so every man is anxious to have a knife that will be razor-sharp and at the same time attractive in appearance. The demand

dollars was maintained all during our stay on New Georgia.

American boys have always been souvenir hunters that follow the battle like locusts. But the Seabees are usually too busy to look for them. They roll their own.

SAGA OF COMPANY "A" (Concluded)

E. C. Andreu, EM1/c, were "on the job" and had installed lights the first night, to enable the carpenters to work on the mess hall.

Working on the camp was, of course, secondary to stevedoring activities. Lieutenant Hintze organized twelve-men gangs which were maintained during our stay at Banika. At last we were going to do the job for which we trained so long. The land-locked ship at Peary became a Liberty Ship lying in the stream, or one tied up to the brand new pontoon dock just completed by the Thirty-sixth Construction Battalion. Company A followed the first large sized cargo ship that dared visit the Russell Islands. At the time, Company A was the farthest advanced detachment of the Ninth Special Battalion. It was with gusto that we tackled our first assignment and established an enviable record. A new high was reached for discharging oil drums from a ship moored to the pontoon dock. Damages due to handling reached a new low. Company A had faced the acid test and came through with flying colors.

It was a sad day when the ship bearing the Eleventh Special dropped anchor in the bay. We knew that we had been destined for only a short stay at the Russels, but we had come to like our fine camp, the cool climate and the other friendly outfits on the island. On the other hand, we knew that this war cannot be won by staying too long in one place. The Japs were back-pedaling fast, and it was up to the special battalions to keep supplies moving at the most advanced bases. The thought of rejoining D Company was a consolation. Many men had buddies there and looked forward to being with them again. We had heard reports of the swell job D Company was doing and the prospect of working side by side with them was intriguing.

On Tuesday, 16 November 1943, we began breaking camp. By Wednesday night, men and equipment were aboard the S. S. Henry Durant. On the 23rd of November the escorting vessel arrived and we were under way after a week of waiting. The following morning found us sailing past Rendova and into Sasevele Cove. It was the day before Thanksgiving when Company A landed at Sasevele.

COMPANY B HISTORY



Glancing through the log of the good ship "Co. B," one is struck by the fact that the most important and dramatic entries begin on October 1, 1943. That date, figuratively speaking, marked the completion of her trial run, her shakedown cruise. That date signified her acceptance into the rapidly growing fleet of special ships, small but seaworthy, unornamented but efficiently designed to do her work well; her officers and men trained but untried. It was the day when, casting off from the mother ship, she pointed her nose out to the open sea to make her way through stormy seas, past hidden shoals and reefs.

How has she fared? Have her officers and crew lived up to the trust and responsibilities placed upon them? The entries in her log testify that on the whole the first leg of her journey has gone well. She has proved her seaworthiness—her crew, their growing skill and efficiency. But a fair amount of her adventures were not all smooth sailing. Some

rough seas and trying times were encountered. As a matter of fact, there are still a few kinks, leaking seams, creaking joints that should be eliminated to make her a better and tighter ship.

The first few days were hectic to say the least. A camp site had to be found, tents pitched, chow served, bags and equipment unloaded and sorted, and work started; all this simultaneously and in a driving rain. But soon, as a result of the cooperation between every man and the maintenance gangs of Chiefs Berry and Jones, sparked by Mr. McElroy, a method in all this madness was discernible. Things began to settle down, life and work became more organized and the men resigned themselves to the work that lay ahead. Symbolically, to this very day, our personnel office is situated over a Japanese grave-yard—a very good place for Japanese personnel, we think.

When we started operations, it became evident that we had a big job cut out for us. All types of ships were waiting their turn to be unloaded. Until our arrival, natives, G.I.'s and regular Seabees were doing the stevedoring. The result was this accumulated schedule. When we began to work, most of us were as green as grass, very few had a notion of the work or how to do it. We were eyed skeptically by the men of the base. However, as the cargo began to move under the able tutelage of Lt. McMahan and W.O. Bell, and the ships left the harbor, doubtfulness gave way to pleasant surprise and shortly after to open admiration for a job well done.

Other things became apparent too. Actual experience proved that preconceived notions of organization and methods of work had to be revised; others perfected, and completely new forms and methods introduced. The first big step was to knock off deadwood. All personnel, except a bare necessary minimum, were made available for stevedoring. New gangs were organized. New winchmen, hatchtenders, hatchbosses and chiefs had to be found and trained in the shortest possible time. This was successfully accomplished. Also, some very elementary things had to be learned by the holdmen: how to spread a net, load it, when to use a tray, how to stack and sling lumber, rope slings, wire straps, knots and what-nots, yes, even how to open a hatch efficiently and quickly, not to speak of rigging booms.

In short, this was a period of mental and physical readjustment. We had our share of heat rash, ring worms, malaria, griping, homesickness and accidents. But the test was met successfully. We've become veterans, we've lost our amateur standing. Today we take pride in our professionalism.

During the months of operations we encountered as wide a variety of ships and cargo as could be found in any port of the South Pacific. Everything from YP's to AK's, reefers to tankers, hog islanders to Liberty ships, C1's and C2's to the ultra-modern Victory ships, not to mention a few men-o'-war. And not only have we unloaded tens of thousands of cargo tons, including the heaviest of jumbo lifts, but we have loaded many a ship as well. The bulk of the cargo handled was the back-breaking kind, the pound by pound cargo that takes long days of hard and monotonous labor. No world's records were established, it's true, but more important, the job was well done and in the fastest possible time. All this was accomplished on a 'round-the-clock schedule under adverse weather conditions and intense heat, with extremely limited harbor facilities and equipment.

We were aided in our task by the relatively few "civilized" living conditions created by ourselves. We lost no time in building permanent all-weather tents with wooden floors, occupied by four men each. We had the good fortune to inherit the best chow hall on the base, and after several months of trials and tribulations, we had established the enviable reputation of serving the best chow on the island. Incidentally, we have a rare form of animal life in these parts: congenial MAA's headed by BM1c Lingo. Ice cream was served twice a week, and was sold daily at the base Ship's Service Store. Beer was issued free three times a week, made possible by the profits of our Ship's Store. Our base boasted of the best theatre in the South Pacific with nightly movies (about which the less said the better). We are exceedingly proud of our Ship's Service Store operated by Storekeeper Duval. It is the very best on the island, with a gross monthly of over \$10,000, patronized by the entire base personnel, and last, but by no means least, an excellent and efficient mail service under the supervision of M. L. McSpadden CM1c, plus Ray Moorehead's well functioning sick-bay.



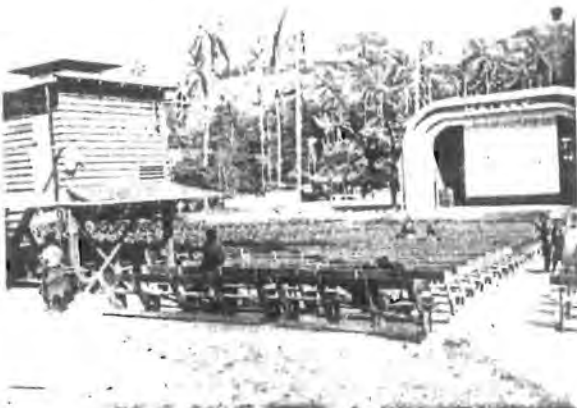
Tulagi Harbor—Florida Island in Background



Sunday Morning Inspection



Company B's Dock Area



Local Radio City Named After Admiral Halsey

Company B (Continued)

From the very start, an organized athletic program including inter-gang competition in basketball, volleyball and baseball was instituted under the leadership of W.O. Bell and Lt. Daut. Needless to say, the Company B basketball team emerged as base champions, and on the 4th of July we were awarded the Captain's trophy and a cup for winning the field meet of that day.

No account of our activities would be complete without mentioning the art of "scuttlebutt" as it was practised in Company B. Within our ranks we had truly great artists and virtuosos in this noble and gentle art. No topic, be it the date of the war's end or going home time was outside our sphere.

If, in reciting this narrative, we have appeared boastful, we ask the forgiveness and indulgence of the reader. It is not boastfulness, but rather a self-confidence born of experience and accomplishment, that we feel.

As we embark on the second leg of our cruise, we feel confident that our mission will be accomplished successfully. With esprit de corps so important a factor, measures are being perfected for a bigger and better recreational and sports program with new equipment.

We have come a long way. It has been an eventful cruise. Soon, not only Hitler, but Tojo as well, will feel the overwhelming blows that our armed forces and those of our Allies are delivering and preparing for them. The end of the beginning is over. It is now the beginning of the end. The end is almost in sight . . .

When victory is achieved, when the homeward bound pennant flies from the forepeak as the good ship Company B, with our skipper Lt. White at the helm, streaks for the States, we will be content in the knowledge that through our modest efforts we helped to make it possible.



Small Craft Tied Up at Inland Harbor on Tulagi

COMPANY C HISTORY



After the departure of A, B and D Companies from Guadalcanal, our first camp site, Co. C was left sole heir to this uncompleted camp which presented rather a deserted appearance. C Company was located at one end of the camp while the chow hall, officers' quarters and that portion of Headquarters Company remaining with the detachment, were located at the other end. The area in between had been occupied by the detached companies and now looked like no-man's land.

Work on the new camp on the beach between Matanikau River and Point Cruz, which had been started shortly before D Company left, now began in earnest. Lt. Allen and CWO Gregory spent all their daylight hours planning and supervising its construction. A bulldozer cleared the beach of old coconut palms, shattered by gun fire. This beach had been the scene of an American landing during the battle of the Matanikau. Blasted tanks, old Jap barges, machine gun emplacements and discarded ammunition, all gave evidence of the terrific struggle. Jap booby traps were found in a swamp that bordered one edge of the camp area, while several Jap bodies were found in the machine gun nests.

After the beach between the swamp and the ocean had been cleared of this debris, construction of quarters for the men was begun. In the meantime, the galley and bake shop were put up. Due to the number of ships waiting to be discharged, all hands except for a small number required to operate the camp, were on stevedoring operations. Therefore, some carpenters were borrowed from the 71st Seabees who were staging at Kokabona for the Bougainville push. With their assistance, the camp was quickly constructed and all hands moved in from the temporary camp on November 4, 1943.

Shortly after we moved to our new camp site, Lt. Comdrs. Bennett and Hymen, Chaplain Coleman, Lieutenants Allen, Wieland and King moved to New Georgia. Battalion headquarters remained at Guadalcanal and Lt. Comdr. Kane became acting O in C, with Lt. Vercoe as acting Executive Officer. While there was very little shade at this beach site, numerous other advantages helped to offset this lack. The sand beach made for ideal swimming. Ordinarily a cool breeze blew in from the ocean at night, making it a nice, cool spot. Of course, those gangs working the night shifts had to sleep during the daytime and they suffered from the intense heat of the sun as it blazed down from dawn to dusk. The camp was also located away from the main highway running along the beach, thereby greatly reducing the dust menace. Clouds of dust usually hovered over the road due to the continuous stream of trucks passing by. The heavy undergrowth and brush lining the highway acted as a barrier, and prevented most of the dust from reaching the camp proper.

The chow hall and enlisted men's quarters were located at the Matanikau end of the camp, while the Administration area and Transportation shops were located in the center around the flagpole. Officers' country was situated at the west end, toward Point Cruz. We were extremely fortunate in locating a well within the camp area which eliminated the necessity of hauling water from nearby water points. Although the well was located within 200 feet of the beach and was over 12 feet deep, its yield was fresh and pure. Our water tower with its tanks was adjacent to the well, and pipe lines branched from it to the chow hall, laundry, transportation shops and showers.

A large, oil-burning steam boiler was borrowed from the Public Works Department to supply steam to the galley and scullery. This was set up next to the galley, alongside the generators. Later on a Recreation Hall was constructed, housing the library, ping-pong tables, dart games, writing tables and the company mail box.

The Recreation Hall was opened on November 21, by showing a movie and serving ice-cream and coffee. Entertainment was furnished by the 61st C. B.'s band and an acrobatic tumbler who had at one time performed for the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus.

CWO Gregory laid out a square in front of the Administration area, and had a flagpole erected there. Flower seeds, banana trees and pineapple shrubs were planted in the circle around its base. These flower seeds had been carefully guarded by him for many months (since the Battalion left the States) for just such a purpose. We were destined to never see them bloom, however, as the detachment received orders to move long before they reached that stage. Many men who were sent to Guadalcanal (Mob 8) for hospitalization, have visited the old campsite and all report that the flowers are doing well. Our first flag raising ceremonies were held on December 15, 1943.

Due to the enormous amount of work that had to be handled at the dock and in the stream off Kukum Dock, 15 gangs of an Army Port Battalion were placed under our supervision. This permitted carrying on stevedoring operations on a 24-hour basis. The gangs worked six hour shifts with twelve hours off, around the clock. Ships were worked at Kukum Dock, in the stream off the dock and at Lunga Point. Where ships were worked in the stream, pontoon propulsion barges were used for hauling cargo to the beach. There, cranes operating on a finger pier, discharged the cargo onto trucks. At the dock, the cargo was landed directly into trucks or onto unloading platforms from which it was carried away by finger lifts.

COMPANY C HISTORY

Coxswains from this detachment maintained and operated our barges. These six barges were run on a 24-hour basis under the supervision of J. E. Samuelson, QM1c. In addition, a personnel boat and an Army "J" boat were operated to facilitate ship to shore communications and transportation.

Several times these bargemen were called out on rescue missions. Fighter planes attempting landings on fighter strip No. 2 off Kukum Beach would crash in the water and boats were dispatched to pick up their pilots. On November 22, E. R. Sergeant, BM2c, and J. E. Samuelson, QM1c, noticed a plane coming in low for a landing. A crash seemed imminent and two men sped over in a boat. The plane crashed and on reaching the spot, they hauled a man in an exhausted condition out of the water. Sergeant applied first aid and soon brought him around. The pilot, however, was pinned in the cockpit as the door was jammed. Samuelson dived repeatedly, trying to get the pilot out of the cockpit but, due to the presence of gasoline on the surface of the water, of which he swallowed a good bit in his effort to fill his lungs with air on coming up from his dives, finally had to give it up. Later a crane from shore picked plane and pilot out of the water. Both of our men were commended for their efforts.

Guadalcanal was a souvenir hunter's paradise. In their off-duty hours, the men combed the island looking for Jap souvenirs, and many were successful. Natives on the island often came around to the camp with shells, grass skirts and Jap souvenirs which they tried to sell or trade for other articles. A nearby village up the Matanikau was visited frequently by all hands, souvenir bent, until it was placed out of bounds for medical reasons.

At one time, Nov. 26, 1943, to be exact, the Hell's Point Ammo Dump caught fire and blew up. We were hosts to over 200 men of the First and Fourth Specials and also the 61st CBs. This dump adjoined their camps and many of these men lost all of their belongings. Our cooks and bakers did a notable job at that time feeding all the extra men. Cots and sleeping space for all these men was provided, and the camp took on the appearance of a boom town of gold- and land-rush days. The fire lasted for over 24 hours and the flames could be seen for miles. Explosions of bursting shells and bombs could be heard over at Tulagi, many miles distant. This fire caused some uneasiness in our camp, due to our

proximity to another ammo dump located only a short distance away.

From our camp we could look out across the water and see Tulagi and Savo Island, the scene of so many of the early naval battles in the fight for Guadalcanal. The water off Savo was known as "Iron Bottom Bay" because so many ships had been sunk there in those battles. Several miles up the coast from our camp were five Jap cargo ships that had been beached during the Guadalcanal campaign. Several Jap barges, which had been destroyed in the Japs' efforts to relieve and evacuate their personnel, could also be found on the beaches. These proved to be lucrative spots for souvenir hunters.

During our first few weeks' stay on Guadalcanal, we were subjected to many conditions "Red" and raids by Japanese planes, but the last Jap planes to do any damage came over during the night of October 11, when an enemy torpedo plane sank two freighters off Tenaru Beach. The plane got away scot-free. Some of the cargo was salvaged.

Toward the latter part of December, the Fourth Special started construction of a camp next to ours. This site had previously been occupied by an Army Engineer Battalion which had staged there after the Munda campaign. Rumors started to fly about the camp, relative to the transfer of our detachment to another base. Christmas rolled around, however, and these rumors were forgotten amidst preparations for that day. For most of the men it was the first Christmas away from the States, and for many a first Christmas away from home. Many had never experienced an Xmas without snow and very few had ever seen an Xmas where the thermometer registered over 100° F. in the shade. Uncle Sam, via the mails, had transported the spirit of Christmas as, daily, our mail-man distributed packages.

Our galley outdid itself in preparing a dinner that could compare favorably with anything at home. It is true that we lacked the usual Christmas tree, but for dinner we had the inevitable roast turkey with all the trimmings. In order to give everyone a chance to celebrate properly, all work was secured for 24 hours over the holiday. It may not have been the homelike Christmas of old, but it was the best that could be done under the circumstances. Next day, things were back to normal and we were once again keeping the hook moving.



C Company's Second Home on Guadalcanal



Morning Colors

COMPANY C HISTORY



Mount Bagana, One of Two Active Volcanos on Bougainville.

December 31, 1943 was a red letter day for all hands. It was on that day that we were advised that orders had been received to transfer us to Bougainville via FAG TRANS. We were scheduled to ship out the 10th of January and therefore the day after New Year's, we started to knock down the entire camp. All stevedoring activities were secured and all hands fell to, tearing down camp structures, piling salvaged lumber, crating supplies and packing up gear.

Lt. Comdr. Bennett and Lt. Vercoe flew to Bougainville on January 4, via SCAT to look over conditions at our future base. While there, they stayed at the Sixth Special. On returning to Guadalcanal on January 7, they reported that our new base would be located in the heart of a dense jungle and that due to a high water table and constant rain fall, much mud would have to be overcome. Stevedoring operations would be carried on under very unfavorable conditions.

On January 15, we were informed that our LST which was to transport us and our gear to Bougainville, would be on the beach the next day at noon, to start taking on our cargo. Arrangements were immediately made to start the job of hauling and storing all equipment we were taking with us to the beach at Kokabona. Our bulldozer was pressed into service to build a suitable earth ramp, expediting the handling of cargo from the beach into the LST. When our cargo was stowed to permit easy handling and quick loading, our camp guard was secured and guard placed on and around our cargo to prevent its disappearance.

At 1000 on January 16, our LST was sighted off Kokabona Beach, and at 1100 was beached. It was the LST 207, a Coast Guard ship, which already had quite a bit of cargo aboard. After getting the ramp approach graded up, the working parties fell to shortly after noon, and a steady stream of trucks started rolling into the LST with cargo. Loading operations were knocked off at about midnight because of heavy rain and resumed early in the morning. On the morning of January 18, at 0700 our convoy got under way for Bougainville. The convoy as it left Guadalcanal, was made up of one merchant vessel, the S. S. Benjamin J. Bonneville, five LST's and three escort vessels.

Our trip was calm and uneventful. The storm had subsided; it no longer rained, the sun came out and everyone had a chance to dry out. Space was at a premium aboard ship

but as it was rather hot below deck, practically everyone elected to sleep topside.

Chief Bell was placed in charge of a detail of our men who were to man some of the 20 MM. guns in the event of an attack. These men stood regular watches with the ship's company throughout the entire voyage. Several times during the course of our trip gunnery practice was held; target balloons were released at which the guns fired.

Several smaller convoys joined ours as we proceeded toward Bougainville. It soon developed into a fair-sized flotilla numbering upward of fifteen ships. Several destroyers, and destroyer escort vessels furnished protection. Many small islands were passed but the trip proved uneventful.

During the early morning hours of January 20, as we were nearing Bougainville, much anti-aircraft fire could be heard. The beams of the searchlights could be seen stabbing toward the sky, but although we watched carefully it seemed that none of the enemy planes were hit. Everything quieted down after a spell and as we steamed around Purata Island at dawn, all of the Torokina beachhead was dark and quiet. If one listened closely, occasional bursts of artillery fire could be heard.

The bulk of the LST's in the convoy were piloted to the beach on Purata Island where groups of trucks were standing by to aid in discharging their cargo. As LST 207 beached, the huge ramp was dropped into place and our bulldozer scuttled off onto the beach, immediately hauled a huge steel ramp matting into position and began building up an earthen ramp to facilitate the movement of trucks to and from the ship.

The men in the detachment had previously been divided into gangs and a regular schedule was placed into effect, rotating working hours and calling for relief at hourly intervals. This permitted unloading at top speed without any lost motion and assured us that all our cargo would be taken off. The chiefs and officers all had prearranged details and the chow schedule aboard ship was set up in accordance with the working schedule. The guard detail under Chief Bell functioned smoothly and under the eagle eye of these guards all of our cargo was directed to our storage area.

Army and Marine working parties were scheduled to assist us in the handling of our cargo on the beach but it soon developed that if we were to get it all off, our own men would have to be detailed to empty the trucks on the beach. Our working schedule was revised accordingly to meet this condition and despite the fact that our LST had a bigger cargo than the other ships, ours was the first one to be completely discharged. Our orders were that all of our cargo must be off by 1500 and the men, by cooperating and working at top speed throughout the day, easily beat this time. Many of the LST's still had cargo left at 1500. Our first sight of Bougainville had been very impressive on that early morning as the sun rose while the LST was proceeding toward the beach. In the distance, several mountains could be seen, their peaks completely covered by cloud banks. Mount Bagana, one of the two active volcanoes on the island, was belching out a cloud of steam and smoke that was blown about by the wind.

Some time before, the Japs had attempted to use this same volcano as a weapon. Jap planes had been dispatched to drop loads of bombs into the crater with the aim of causing it to erupt and to confuse our forces. It proved a vain attempt as nothing unusual occurred. After the bombs were dropped

COMPANY C HISTORY

into the crater their explosions caused a roar that echoed and re-echoed across the mountain tops; like so much of Jap strategy, this too was "sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Several PT Squadrons were based at Torokina at one end of Purata Island. Many were returning from patrols up and down the coast of Bougainville and Buka as we neared the beach. These speedy boats, trailed by a large white wake as they cut through the water, emphasized the business-like and war-like attitude of the whole place despite the pretty picture they made.

Lt. Comdr. Kane, Battalion Executive Officer, had flown up to Bougainville via SCAT and had made arrangements for us to use the old 53rd C. B. camp (just evacuated by them that day) until such time as our own camp could be constructed. The 53rd C. B.s embarked for the 'Canal aboard the LST's that came in that morning in our convoy.

That afternoon, after unloading the LST, some of our trucks were loaded with our gear and were ferried across in LCMs to the mainland and were dispatched to the temporary camp. A guard detail was set up to protect our cargo throughout the night against possible pilferage. Lieutenant Burbridge and Ensign Mariner were to stay with this detail. However, the major in charge of the M.P.s gave orders that eleven of our men were to be off the island by 1700 and that our cargo would be guarded by the M.P.s. Purata Island was known as Suicide Island because the Japs periodically shelled and bombed that small dot just off the mainland. It was used as a receiving center and cargo area for the bulk of all in-coming cargo and rations. Everyone was glad to leave this mudhole. The men had been wading around in the knee-deep mud throughout the entire operation and were mighty tired. Several weeks of rains had not helped much in doing away with the mud.

All hands boarded ducks, small boats and LCTs for the mainland and made their way to our temporary campsite. Tarps were broken out to cover some of the fox holes and to provide some protection against the daily rains that drenched everyone.

In the meantime Lt. (jg) Hanna had made arrangements with the 77th CBs to find us some hot chow that night. Despite the fact that it was past their regular chow hours, their entire galley force cooked up a meal of vienna sausages, peas, carrots and coffee. It really hit the spot and we are forever grateful for their courtesy. At that same time they offered to feed our men until such time as our own galley was functioning.

The next morning working parties were dispatched to Purata to load our trucks and send the gear to the new campsite where work was started clearing and preparing it for use. A constant stream of trucks kept flowing in from Purata with our supplies. They were then unloaded and sent back for more.

During this time our bulldozer was busy clearing out the jungle and preparing an area for stowing the cargo. It seemed an impossible task to develop the mudhole and swamp in the heart of the jungle into a decent camp. Our trucks were bogging down in the mud continually and the caterpillar would have to drag them out. A large bulldozer was borrowed then from the 71st CB.s to help get the camp ready and to start throwing up a road. The area was so boggy that even these powerful cats surrendered, at times, to the mud.

The water table had to be lowered before we could make the area habitable. A plan was developed for digging drainage ditches with feeders, the whole system to discharge into a nearby creek. At the same time a road embankment was thrown up by casting volcanic ash from ditches along the road onto the grade. In this manner, a high, dry access road was led into camp.

This system of drainage soon showed results as the water level in the swamp was lowered. Several springs were uncovered and one spring was developed with a flow of 3000 gallons per hour. The water was pure and fresh and was used to supply the entire camp.

While our first night (January 21) on the island had been free of air raids, we soon found that was an unusual occurrence. Artillery units which were located all around us kept up a continuous nightly barrage, firing at Jap concentrations of troops. Then, during raids, anti-aircraft units threw up a steady barrage of ack-ack fire at enemy planes picked up by the searchlights. This AAA fire managed to keep the Jap bombers high in the sky, greatly reducing the accuracy of their aim.

Usually, the night fighters managed to turn back the largest part of the enemy bomber squadrons but several fought their way through to the Torokina beachhead to lay their eggs. Little material damage was done, although occasional casualties to units around the airstrips resulted.

Little difficulty was experienced in getting all hands into foxholes after the first air raid. The danger of falling ack ack flak was evident when the morning after an air raid, punctured tents were the result, and vividly demonstrated the advisability of getting under cover. Further emphasis was given when several bombs fell nearby.

The general attitude on Guadalcanal was characterized by the attitude of Chief Charlie Augatis who dismissed the alerts with a casual "its only a practice, it doesn't mean a thing." However, on Bougainville Charlie was always found in his foxhole, before everyone else, immediately after the siren started to wail. He contended then that "this is carrying practice a little too far."

One night will always be remembered by our men who happened to be working on the beach and on the ship. A Jap bomber slipped through our defenses and lazily maneuvered overhead above the ack ack in the searchlights. The shriek and whoosh of falling bombs was heard and before it was all over eleven bombs fell between the beach and the ship. A regular blanket of flak fell around everyone but, curiously enough, no one was hurt.

The Marines had made the initial landing in force on the Torokina beachhead with the 71st, 53rd and 75th CB.s not far behind. The Seabees built a main thoroughfare from the beach to Torokina and Piva fighter strips and the bomber strip, calling it "Marine Highway" to honor their very close friends.

In expressing their thanks to the Seabees, the Marines in turn posted a sign near the strips reading:

"When we enter the City of Tokyo
With our caps at a jaunty tilt,
We'll be marching down a highway
That the Seabees built."

The major portion of the camp was completely constructed by February 11. The chow hall, sick bay, offices, ship service stores and transportation shops were up. A water

COMPANY C HISTORY



Camp Area on Green Island

supply system had been installed and most of the men's tents permanently erected with the drainage problem solved.

Our stay at Bougainville was very pleasant. We could attend movies every night at the surrounding camps and showed movies in our own camp area with an Army Special Service 16mm. projector every other night. Our chow hall and sick bay were the show places of the island. Dr. Cohen took special pleasure in showing our camp to visitors. We also received a special commendation from the Island Command for the first class camp that was constructed and for the huge malarial control project we undertook and completed in addition to our regular work.

Our gangs were transported to work in amphibious ducks which took the men directly to the ships. Of course, everyone got a salt water bath on each of these trips when waves were coming over the prow of the duck, but travel time to and from our camp to the ships was materially shortened by this mode of travel.

None of us will ever forget Bougainville and its insects. The jungle was full of bugs and crawlers of all kinds. Some harmless, and several varieties not so harmless. We soon learned to exercise caution on crawling into the "sack." The place was over-run with centipedes of all types and descriptions. Many were 12 inches long and had a wicked set of jaws. These centipedes seemed adept at crawling under the bedding and when any one tried to get in they would bite. It proved rather painful. The victim would be weak and sick and the infected area would swell up. It seemed that poisonous venom was secreted from their jaws that, while not deadly, did make the victim very miserable.

Poisonous scorpions were plentiful, as were millions of mosquitoes, flies, moths, and many funny insects, both winged and earth-bound, that most of us had never seen. There were multi-colored varieties of all species. Ants of all sizes and descriptions pestered all hands and got into everything.

We saw little animal life except for the cocoanut bear and, of course, rats. Many snakes were encountered but all seemed rather harmless. However, the birds were something to rave about. Their plumage was colorful and their screeching was deafening at times. Song birds were rare. The sky at night was full of bats flitting about but they never seemed to trouble anyone.

February 27 will remain as a day of disappointment in the memory of our chiefs. A chief's mess hall had been erected and was to be put to use on that day. At midnight on February 26, Lieutenant Vercoe received a radio dispatch ordering our transfer to "Green Island" via FAG TRANS.

All stevedoring operations on Bougainville were secured on February 27, and work was started on knocking down the camp and crating our gear once again. The chiefs' mess was one of the first to go. These operations continued until March 3 when we started to haul all of our gear to Purata Island where it was to be loaded aboard an LST.

Purata Island had changed in the six weeks since we landed. Nothing remained of the huge piles of cargo and rations. Practically the whole island was deserted and we had the place to ourselves. Even the mud was gone.

The LST which was to carry us to Green Island arrived shortly after noon on March 4th and the loading of our gear was immediately started. The bulk of it was loaded by midnight and work was knocked off till the next morning. By 0930 on March 5th all our gear and equipment was on and all hands piled aboard for the trip to our new base. The LST backed away from the beach and proceeded to a rendezvous with a convoy at 1200.

Our trip to Green Island was uneventful. Some apprehension was felt at what we might run into at Breen, as landings there had been effected only a short time before. However, we soon found out that this new island was a very quiet, peaceful place compared with the one we were leaving. The day after we left Torokina, the Japs started an offensive there that caused many uneasy hours for the personnel on the beachhead, despite the fact that the Japs couldn't break through. Jap artillery fire caused some casualties. Commander Dunbar of the 6th Special, while stopping over at our camp enroute from Torokina to Emirau in August reported that several Jap shells had landed in the middle of our old camp area. It seemed that Lady Luck had been with us.

Our convoy reached the lagoon entrance at dawn on March 6, and by 0730 the LST had beached and our cargo started to roll off. All hands had an early breakfast and were ready to pitch in and get settled in the new camp. We were to have no opportunity to spend any time building a camp since we continued our stevedoring operations.

A cargo ship arrived early the next morning and we



The Show's the Thing

COMPANY C HISTORY

immediately went to work discharging her cargo. Ships constantly kept coming in to be discharged and our camp was constructed in off duty hours. Despite this, our chow hall and galley were in operation in a few days and all hands enjoyed the hot meals.

Thereafter work on the camp progressed rapidly, and only minor construction details were left to be carried on when the first break in our schedule came.

No ship was in port from March 24 to April 10, and all men were given a chance to rest up and get back into good physical condition. They had been working continuously since September 21 without any mentionable time off and were tired. Daylight hours were devoted to sports, camp sanitation and general relaxation.

Our campsite at Green was not as pleasant as the one at the Canal, where we had a beautiful bathing beach, nor was it as cool as Bougainville, where the camp was located in the jungle under the shade of huge trees.

We landed at Blue Beach (where the Navy Base was located temporarily) in what was known as Pokonian Plantation, a huge grove of coconut palms. We were located on the seaward side of the island, off the neck of land at the mouth of the lagoon. Green Island is a coral atoll oblong in shape with a huge lagoon located in the center which is about three miles wide and six miles long. At no point is the island over a mile wide measuring from the beach to the ocean side.

On the day of our original landing a portion of the palms on the ocean side of the plantation were knocked down by a bulldozer to permit installation of a battery of 90 mm. AA guns. This battery moved to a point further south on the island several days before we arrived and we were allocated that area for a camp.

Our bulldozer pushed all the tree trunks and coral outcropping into the ocean. Sand was hauled in from the beach located on the lagoon side and soon overcame the mud that had made the camp a bog. Undergrowth that concealed a swamp along one side of the camp, was grubbed up and sprayed to combat the danger of malaria mosquitos.

Our first night on the island was marked by a downpour of rain. This was welcomed by all hands as we were now able to take a bath after a hard, dirty day's work. Water was caught in buckets as it dripped off the tent flaps, and saved for future use. We were handicapped on this island by the lack of fresh water wells. All our drinking water came from evaporators which distilled sea water. One of these evaporators was located on the lagoon side of our neck of land.

All stevedoring operations were carried on out in the open sea, off the mouth of the lagoon. The ships were constantly under way, the water being too deep to permit anchorage. All cargo was discharged into LCTs which carried their loads to beaches in the lagoon where they were unloaded by Army personnel. All operations were carried on under very unfavorable conditions. Heavy swells made it extremely difficult to keep the LCTs tied to the ship which was underway. Many of the LCTs were severely battered and several cargo ships had their sides punctured. This was especially true during rough seas. Several times the weather became so stormy and the sea so rough that work had to be suspended for a day.

The channel into the lagoon was very shallow—16½ feet at low tide and only 150 feet wide. CNB decided that although several cargo vessels had drafts permitting them to clear the channel, that the risk of bringing a ship into the

lagoon was too great. However, on August 21st the skipper of a Liberty ship prevailed upon the Port Director to give him permission to attempt bringing his ship into the lagoon. He successfully made the passage through the lagoon, thereby becoming the first Liberty ship to enter it. Unloading operations were carried on under much more favorable conditions. The vessel was anchored in quiet water. We hoped that ships with sufficiently shallow drafts would be permitted to enter the lagoon for unloading. Unfortunately, the "J. S. Hutchinson" remained the first and last ship to do so.

We had one surprise on reaching our new base. A unit that had come over on the U.S.S. La Salle with us, had a detachment quartered next to our camp. Old acquaintances were renewed by all hands.

We lost no time in constructing a movie area near our camp and borrowed a 16 mm. projector from Acorn 10 for our use. Films were shown when available, usually about three movies a week. A volley ball court and baseball diamond were laid out nearby.

Swimming was not advisable because of the presence of many sharks and coral snakes. Many of the boys broke out fishing gear and soon were catching enough for small fish fries. Life on Green Island was pleasant, despite high tropical temperatures and the humidity. It rains frequently and while we gripe about that, it is a mighty fortunate thing as our supply of fresh water depends on it. Several times, the thermometer crawled over 140 degrees F. but the men all stand up under it extremely well. In July we managed to get a 35 mm. projector and since that time movies were shown almost nightly. Several USO troupes put on performances that were highly appreciated. Jack Benny and Bob Hope brought USO shows to Green Island and while they did not play our area, we all had the opportunity to see them on the other side of the island.

We have been relatively free of bugs and insects. We weren't bothered with centipedes and scorpions but are pestered by innumerable flies, mosquitos, and pincher bugs. At night our lights attracted legions of moths but we passed them off with a shrug of the shoulder, thinking of the pesky insects of Bougainville.

Very few birds are found and practically no song birds. The few birds found have plumage that is not very colorful when compared with those on adjacent islands.

Few natives are living here at present. Those in the native compound work for the Service Command. Many native villages are now deserted. Pigs roam wild about the island, part of the herds that were kept by the natives. From time to time these were shot and barbecues were held.

The island is overrun with rats however, and a constant extermination campaign was conducted to eliminate them. The ever present lizard of the Solomon Islands abounded ranging in size from the small one of only a few inches in length to huge ones measuring several feet.

Many of the men spent their leisure time making souvenirs. Shells were littering the beaches and at any time throughout the day someone was on the beach or out on the reef picking them up. They were made into necklaces, bracelets and many other trinkets. Time, patience and an inherent skill is all that is required. Many of the boys are beating the natives at their own game in making shell necklaces. Those with woodworking skills found that the native hardwoods, such as teak, rosewood, ebony and mahogany make ideal chests, picture frames, boxes and small tables.

COMPANY D HISTORY

Within one week after the Ninth Special disembarked on Guadalcanal on September 21, 1943, A and B Companies had been transferred to two other islands, and we of Company D could see the handwriting on the wall, for a destined move. After one month's stay there, we broke camp on October 21, 1943 and said goodbye to our buddies in C Company, who now were the only company of the Ninth left on that island.

We knew we were headed for Munda on New Georgia, then the furthest outpost of Admiral Halsey's drive to the north. We went aboard our ship at about 1600 hours, and while the supplies, equipment, rations, etc, were being loaded, we stood at the rail watching the planes, both fighters and bombers, come back from raids to the north.

There was a beautiful sunset the evening we left the 'Canal,' the sky was a wonderful thing to see, with all the colors on display that only a sunset in the South Seas can produce. It was in strong contrast, this evening of our departure, with the night we had arrived in September. On that night, two Japs had come over with intentions of bombing Henderson Field, and anything else they could hit. Our night fighters went up to meet them and from our ship we witnessed our first dog fight in the air.

So, on this evening in October, we once again put out to sea, headed for—we were not sure what. Our ship was the first large cargo vessel to sail in these waters. A sharp lookout for enemy planes was kept at all times, and our escorts, a DE and a PC, searched the waters both forward and aft for submarines.

The complement of the detachment was 237 enlisted men and six officers. The officers consisted of Lieutenant Sjursen, in charge of the detachment, Lieutenant King, Supply Officer, Lieutenant Peller, executive officer of the detachment, Ensign Daut, and Warrant Officers Gatewood and Andrade. During the trip from the 'Canal to Munda, all men were assigned to the duty they would assume when arriving at our destination.

The voyage took one night and one day and was uneventful as far as any interference by the Japs was concerned. We arrived in Blanche Chanel in the late afternoon and had our first view of majestic Rendova. At 1800 hours, 22 October, we arrived in the bay known now as Sasavele Anchorage. However, our ship never dropped anchor, as ships always had to be prepared to get under way at a few minutes' notice, if and when the Jap planes came over, and they did come over often in those days.

From the ship, the islands all looked rather inviting. With luxuriant green foliage and the blue water of the Pacific they made a pretty sight as the waves broke over the white coral reefs.

The men of D Company will long remember those first days and nights on Sasavele, one of the smaller islands in the New Georgia group, which was to be the home of the D Company men and later A Company for many months. Within a few hours after the maintenance men hit the beach they were laying out plans for building a camp. Tents were put up temporarily in a partially cleared area and work began immediately on the men's mess hall.



Company Street



Administrative and Shop Area,
Ninth Special USNCB

COMPANY D HISTORY

It was under difficult conditions that Company D unloaded its supplies, equipment, rations, men's gear, etc. Due to the nightly raids by the Japs, there were as high as three or four red alerts each night, and every time that the Jap planes go through they dropped their bombs on Munda in an attempt to hit the airfield. One night a Nip plane came over a ship in our harbor and dropped three bombs, but Lady Luck was with the men aboard that ship, or else the pilot's aim was bad, or both. The nearest bomb hit about 200 feet off the starboard bow, close enough to give the men an idea of the damage a bomb can do.

The road . . . if it could be called that, which ran from one end of the island to the other, was nothing but a deep wide rut, always filled with water from the daily rains. The Army Engineers built a new road after we had been on the island about a month. The water supply was a serious problem during that first month. The island's well was located about one mile from our camp, and three times each day we were allowed to fill our small trailer type tank. Water was rationed to two gallons per man, per day. This included the water necessary for cooking, bathing, washing clothes and drinking. It was easy to see that the health of the unit was endangered with this small amount of water, so the Company Commander assigned Chief Wheeler to the job of trying to locate a new source of water supply nearer the camp. In a surprisingly short time a spot was picked out and ten days later an adequate supply of fresh, pure water was being pumped to all parts of the camp.

Our first movie was shown by the Army Special Service, which traveled throughout the New Georgia group with a 16 mm. projector, giving us a picture once a week. Naturally we had no theatre . . . the screen was hung up in a convenient place, and everyone furnished his own seat. This was the only form of recreation we had unless you could call swimming in the local waters a form of recreation. In swimming one took the chance of contracting a fungus infection or getting bit by a shark or barracuda. When D Company first "hit the beach" it was decided to pitch the men's tents along the road near the beach. Later after the jungle was cleared on the ridge back from the beach a few hundred yards, decks were built and all the tents moved to this better location. Animal life was most plentiful in those first weeks. Most of it seemed to be of a crawling variety, such as land crabs, lizards, huge centipedes and spiders. The coconut bear put in an appearance occasionally, and was definitely in a class by himself, as he alone, was the only animal that resembled some of our North American wild animals. Falling trees and limbs were constant hazards, and many tents were demolished as a result.

Chief Osier was assigned duty as Beachmaster, and worked in conjunction with the Army Service Command and the Navy Boat Pool in expediting the moving of cargo which was delivered at either of the two landings. Later these landings were consolidated into one, when the new barge dock was built at Sasavele Point.



Rendova as seen from Sasavele



Signal Tower on Approach to Sasavele Cove

A and D COMPANIES AT SASAVELE

On the 24th of November 1943, the S. S. Durant dropped anchor in Sasavele Cove and A Company joined forces with Company D. Stevedore gangs set to work immediately, and by evening, all equipment was ashore. Tents had been hurriedly set up in the jungle, and everyone slept under canvas that night. Previously, D Company had cleared away much of the dense undergrowth, and the only battle then encountered was with the ever-present mud and crawling things. The island is plentifully blessed with both of these.

Shortly after the arrival of A Company and a consequent increase in numerical strength, gangs were chosen to be sent to other nearby islands, to relieve the manpower shortage in unloading necessary cargo. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Hintze, with Chief Strube assisting, a total of eight gangs, four each from Companies A and D, set up camp at Munda and remained there for several weeks. At various times cargo operations were carried on at Vela Lavella, Ondonga, and Sagi Point.

Due to the efforts of the various officers in charge of camp construction, our camp became the best in the island. Coral roads and paths between tents were built; low spots were filled with sand and coral to combat the jungle weed and to make the site a more habitable place in which to live. Our well, and water supply, was adequate for all our needs as well as those of neighboring outfits. Large outdoor showers were built for each company, and were kept scrupulously clean to prevent infection. Health considerations were always foremost in the minds of the planners. Round and about camp, chiefs, under the direction of Lieutenant Sjursen, carried on. Chief Alberts was coordinator of all maintenance activities and a good deal of responsibility fell directly on his shoulders. The carpenter shop, in charge of Chief Roberts, did admirable work with limited supplies of lumber. "Pop" Miller took care of the plumbing shop, well and water supply; Chief Wheeler, transportation, and later the gear locker; and Chief Hargett the welding shop.

Lieutenant Doyle at the time was officer in charge of recreation. Under his supervision, our Sasavele version of the Hollywood Bowl was erected with its tiered seats along the hillside. An adequate screen and spacious stage took care of the nightly movie and the USO or Army Service Command shows that were staged there. Occasionally there was a boxing bout in the way of entertainment. A recreation hall was erected to house the library, reading tables, ping-pong tables, phonograph, and sports equipment, watched over by Yeoman Thompson and later Chief Semnyak.



The Dock Area at Sasavele, Assembly Point for Incoming and Outgoing Cargo



Bridge Connecting Sasavele and Roviana Islands



The Ferry, Only Means of Communication Between Sasavele and Munda, Ties Up at Olsen's Landing



Munda Cemetery



Chapel at Munda Cemetery

ADMINISTRATION

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The Executive Branch of the Ninth Special Battalion's Administration is headed by Lt. Comdr. J. E. Kane. In his office originate most of the decisions concerning the details of administration, policy, and routine operation. The office is, as it were, one arm of a municipal government under Lt. Comdr. Bennett. Through it, company commanders are informed of battalion policy by directive. But the similarity with government is not complete for the Executive Office is also the judiciary of the Ninth Special. The "long arm of the law" has its shoulder here, and has hauled many men through its doors on their way to Captain's Mast or higher courts.

In a monthly conference with the Personnel Officer, Lt. Comdr. Kane determines who is to be re-rated, disrated, or changed in rate during the coming month. All applications for enrollment in the various Navy training programs, applications for promotions to warrant and commissioned ranks, requests for transfer or discharge, all these are routed via the Executive Office to the Commanding Officer and thence to commands and bureaus concerned.

The duties of the Executive Officer are manifold. His office is the nerve center of the battalion, the seat of its administration, its legislative and its supreme court.



Executive Office

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

On the day of the Battalion's formation, the 26th of April 1943, the yeomen swung into whirling dervish action. The complement consisted of one chief and five men of other ratings. The first few days were hectic ones. Everything came at us at once and from all sides. Out of chaos and confusion, order and efficiency were soon established. To administer and maintain an accurate and detailed account of over 1000 men proved to be a formidable assignment.

After six weeks of advanced training in Area A-9, the battalion entrained for ABD, Port Hueneme, California on June 19. During the five-day ride some of the yeomen were kept busy turning out work in the improvised office set up in one of the cars supervised by Lieutenant Alvord, then Personnel Officer, who left no stone unturned to keep all the work on a current basis. On the 24th of June the Battalion arrived at Port Hueneme in three sections. We moved into our office without losing any time. First task was to get the muster in shape and check the records of all men (i.e., service, health and pay records) to authenticate that they were all received and in order. Our next step was to make endorsing entries in all records, prepare card files for muster, allowance, change, etc. A liberty schedule was readied on the second day. After six weeks' time we were on our way again.



Personnel Office

SMITH, Amos D., Y1/c
2217 Colfax Drive
St. Louis, Missouri

SARACOFF, Roger N., Y1/c
1622 Kentucky Street
Michigan City, Indiana

GRAY, Girard W., Y2/c
Silver Hills
New Albany, Indiana

FURTAK, Francis F., Y3/c
2020 White Oak Avenue
Whiting, Indiana

MASON, Harry J., Y1/c
1542 N. Hollywood Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

WAHRASAGER, Sherman, Y2/c
859 Schenectady Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

WALLACE, E. W., Y2/c
513 Kilbourn Avenue
Tomah, Wisconsin

ADMINISTRATION—PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT (Continued)

On the afternoon of August 7, 1943, the battalion embarked for overseas. Since a yeoman's work is never done, we set up an office in the cramped quarters of the ship's No. 4 hold, and under adverse conditions maintained a fair pace handling personnel problems. Under the rigors of mal-demer we made the first changes in rates to the joyful acclaim of the 54 men who were promoted. All service records were stamped with the date and time the ship crossed the international date line and the equator. We were kept at our tasks during the four-day layover at Samoa, and a three-weeks stay at Noumea, New Caledonia. Several of the force did not leave the ship until we disembarked at Guadalcanal on September 21, 1943.

A few days after reaching Guadalcanal we had our 35 odd boxes of supplies coralled and a tent set up. Dust, caused by heavy traffic on a nearby road, permeated everything and made our quarters untenable. On November 4, we moved from the Kukum dock area to our new camp site, two miles away and a hundred yards across the Matanikau River along whose banks some of the bloodiest fighting on the island took place less than a year ago. At that time, only C Company and the administrative offices were left on Guadalcanal, as the other companies had been sent to other islands on detached duty.

Within a month after our arrival, they had left, and although C Company too departed for Bougainville on January 17, battalion headquarters were maintained on Guadalcanal until February 6, when we sailed for Munda, arriving on Sasavele on February 12 to join Companies A and D. The former had moved from the Russell Islands to merge with Company D on November 24, 1943.

We were soon established in our office quarters. The fact that the battalion had been split into three units, did not make our job a sinecure. Under the circumstances we felt that we were doing the best, handling all clerical assignments by remote control. Never a dull moment. We have taken everything in our stride and surmounted all problems to date. Courts-martial, family allowance applications, lost I.D. cards, liberty cards, MAQ, beneficiary slips, service page entries,

semi-annual marks, rerates, disrates, mast actions, deck courts, insurance, discrepancies of service numbers and classifications, longevity computations, V-12 and V-7 officers' training program, flight training applications, brochures and memoranda to company commanders on various subjects, muster compilations and complications, transfers and receipts of men to and from hospitals and other commands, strength reports and voluminous Executive's reports—these give a panoramic, though incomplete review of the department's activities.

The farther we get away from Rainbow Land, the more reports we are called upon to prepare, due to the mandates of the various area bases under whose jurisdiction we fall. In the States, one original and seven copies are required, on Island X, Y or Z it is one original and eleven copies of everything. Although we are not on the firing line we have already won the war on paper.

Due to the detachment of two companies it became necessary to assign one yeoman to each of these. This has left us with a reduced force at Battalion headquarters to handle the administrative work for the whole unit. Harry Mason is attached to C Company and Willie Gray is our representative at B Company, leaving A. D. Smith, Sherman Wahrsager, Frank Furtak and Chief Chapman to hold the fort at Sasavele.

In May, the Executive Officer, Lt. Comdr. Kane, lost a good yeoman. Milton Reynolds was sent back to the States to attend Harvard University under the V-12 Officer Training Program and to acquire a commission, and possibly, an accent there. On July 9, the Personnel office also lost a good man in John Griffiths who reported for Midshipman Training. He was transferred to the States for a refresher course leading to an Ensign's commission.

At the present time three yeomen remain besides those already mentioned. "Parson" Thompson was the Chaplain's assistant and editor of the "Plimsol," the battalion publication, as well as of this cruise book. E. W. Wallace and Roger (Rajah) Saracoff are the capable yeomen assigned to the Executive office.



THE DISBURSING OFFICE

Pay Day! What a pleasing call to one's ears—and yet not as welcome on Island X, as it was when evenings could be spent in Richmond, Virginia, or Hollywood, California. Oh, for the pay day that will mean financial success on the leave we all hope to have when we return to Uncle Sam's homeland.

Pay day is the most important day to the skeleton crew of men working in the Disbursing Office. It involves considerable work and planning for a week prior to the great day. The pay must be computed and checked; money lists typed and verified; adjustments made because of a late voucher or two; it means hunting out the little-used wet sponge and fingerprint pad for the pay line; and finally posting notices of the pay day and the great curiosity sheet itself—the money list.

One of the greatest factors contributing to morale is pay. That is why, from our formation we were most fortunate in being assigned a Disbursing Officer who was well equipped with the necessary faculties to understand the intricate financial problems of the enlisted men. Having himself been an enlisted man once, he well understood such problems. After duty in an enlisted status in Kodiak, Alaska, graduation from the Harvard Supply Corps School, plus the background attained at Western Michigan, he came to us well qualified to handle one and all disbursing problems.

Out of Ship's Company, Central Disbursing Office, at Camp Peary, came the nucleus of Mr. Hanna's disbursing crew. (On January 1st, Ensign Darrow, SC, took over duties as Disbursing Officer. Lieutenant Hanna was transferred back to the States for duty and further assignment.) The list of its original members at the time of formation was headed by J. J. Corbett, who has since been transferred to duty afloat. Prior to this duty he had a hitch in the army to his record. J. J. Farley, John K. Locher and W. A. Fetzner. Elmo Roitsch, who lasted but a few months before going to the hospital for treatment of asthma. Only one man remains, E. M. Berube, CSK who hails from Beantown, USA; where he graduated from an accounting and finance course leading to the examination for Certified Public Accountant. Pay days are only part of the work. While at Camp Peary, the Disbursing crew took its leave ahead of the rest of the battalion. When the battalion went on leave, the disbursing office had been organized and was ready for operation as a unit. During those ten days before our departure for Port Hueneme, every available moment was fully utilized in an effort to segregate all necessary records, and to effect the vital transfer of pay records from the Central Disbursing Office at Peary to the newly organized pay office of this command.

Arriving at Port Hueneme shortly before embarkation, an office was immediately set up in order to expedite the various disbursing functions. Every man was urged to register an allotment for his dependents. A Bond Drive was held to popularize the purchase of War Savings Bonds by allotment. Family allowances of all newly married personnel and newly acquired dependents of personnel, had to be processed. Men without the benefit of insurance or those who weren't carrying the maximum allowed by the government, had to be contacted individually and sold the idea of maximum coverage, in order to make provision for their dependents. Men newly married, and those with a change of heart, wanted to change beneficiaries before leaving God's Country. So it went, until the eventful day of our embarkation when we boarded ship with a smile on our lips and a lump in our throats, to face what fate had in store for us.

Even at sea our work did not cease. During the darkened hours aboard, and while the majority of the passengers and crew were asleep, we continued to file, figure and fret in the Officer's Wardroom and in the Ship's Office. Pays were computed and the money list was completed as scheduled, when we docked at Noumea for a spell. Here the first pay day was held overseas, one which many will not forget for years to come, for the Monte Carlo that flourished there is most memorable. Leaving Noumea, we pulled curtain watches and deck details until we disembarked at the 'Canal. On this island we constructed a temporary pay tent in which we held pay day and put out our first quarterly returns. During construction of the new camp we found ourselves handling provisions, building tents, and even moving heads.

Once the camp was constructed and each company was off to various islands for duty, we became a traveling pay office. Our monthly trips to the detached companies averaged 2000 miles, covered by plane, ship or jeep.

In December 1943, financial returns had to be rendered and moving to be accomplished. Chief Berube and Farley, the only two storekeepers who had weathered the storm, were on hand to tackle and finish that job. Fortunately, and with Lady Luck to back us up, returns were rendered and in the mail on schedule. However, all this meant many a long, gruesome night. A sixteen and eighteen hour day was the rule rather than the exception. Christmas and New Year's Eves found us at work.

The duties of this office are not limited to paying men regularly. It's even more important to keep all records up to date. Interwoven with the Disbursing Office are the Ship's

THE DISBURSING OFFICE (Continued)

Store, Post Office and last, but not least, the Personnel Office. Cash in the Ship's Store or the Post Office eventually finds its way into the disbursing safe. All money orders and the majority of stamps are in the custody of the Disbursing Officer. Monthly audits are made, and monthly and daily statements have to be submitted. All postage and registry fees expended for official business purposes must be accounted for. Much praise is due the Navy mail clerks for their utmost cooperation in all respects at all times.

The majority of orders affecting a man's pay status, originate in the Personnel Department. Whether it be a rerate, longevity pay, transfers of personnel or family allowance applications, they all come via that one department.

The midnite oil in this office has burned often. Intricate problems are forever coming up, dealing with insurance, savings allotments, dependency allotments, court-martials, re-rates, leave rations, money allowance for quarters, family allowances, longevity pay, clothing allowances, money lists, pay receipts, checks, etc., not to forget the legal problems arising with divorces, which have, at times, proved most complicated. After working such intricate problems one can readily understand why the term "Deep Sea Lawyers" has been applied to us.

Every penny coming through this office has to be accounted for. Whether it be money accrued on the books by the battalion officers and personnel, or cash derived from miscellaneous sources. Reports have to be made regularly on every man's pay account, which involves much checking and rechecking in order to insure the maximum in efficiency and accuracy. Under the old pay system, reports and returns were submitted quarterly. With the introduction of the new pay

procedure it has now become a monthly ordeal rather than a quarterly one.

Financially, we were well prepared when we left the States, with \$225,000.00 in the safe. Today, eighteen months later, that amount has been totally expended; fortunately we were able to acquire transferred currency from other Disbursing Officers. Money paid to officers and men in the space of one year exceeded \$500,000.00. Checks were issued approximating \$450,000.00. Accounting to the government for these various expenditures has been the cause of many a headache.

It may be of interest to note that over a twelve months' period, allotments for this battalion amounted to well over \$250,000.00. Over the same period, cash and check payments were in the vicinity of \$1,000,000.00. With approximately 1000 officers and men in the battalion, \$225,000.00 in pay has accumulated on the books. This means approximately \$250.00 per man, which should provide financial security on the well deserved leave we shall get upon our return to the States.



FARLEY, John J., SKD1/c
672 Rhineland Avenue
Bronx, New York

LOCHER, J. K., SKD2/c
2819 W. Juncau Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

HENRICKS, John P., SKD2/c
811 W. 9th Street
The Dalles, Oregon

FETZNER, William A., SKD3/c
95 Covington Road
Rochester 5, New York

PHILLIPS, David L., SK3/c
1102 2nd Avenue, East
Albia, Iowa

WITH THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

The Supply Department, under the capable supervision of D. L. King, Lt. (SC) USNR, was formed from storekeepers originally assigned to Headquarters Company. All supply storekeepers received advance training at Camp Peary, with the exception of two assigned to the office to familiarize themselves with provisions and records. The storekeeper assigned to the Ship's Service Store was also kept busy learning store operation. At that station, the complement of the Supply Department had not yet been definitely determined, and there were fourteen men carried on the roster at the time.

At the embarkation point, ABD, the Supply Department began functioning as a separate unit. Its complement consisted of eight storekeepers, and each man was given a definite post. Detailed provision records were maintained and commissary items were filed. All ordnance was checked, and placed with the ordnance officer for distribution. Government issues of clothing—rain gear, shoes, coveralls and tropical helmets—were made to all hands. Custody receipt cards were kept so that every man could be checked for various items of equipment received.

M. G. Reiger and S. S. Duval took charge of the Ship's Store. The two storekeepers assigned to provisions were likewise receiving necessary training. It was here that R. H. Wigginton was kept busy teaching P. V. Williams the routine of provision storekeeping, records and inventory. The gear locker was already functioning, and C. T. Anderson was kept busy stenciling for overseas shipments. The office

personnel, Chief Tillotson and L. F. Birdsong, Jr., began acquainting themselves with the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts Manual and forms necessary to proper maintenance of office records and returns. July 1, the first set of returns on provisions were made, as we were then operating as a self-sustaining unit and required to conform with Navy regulations. An original allotment of Ship's Store stock was received and Duval and Reiger lost no time in checking the articles, making sure that shortages would not occur.

Just prior to departure, two storekeepers checked all equipment and material allocated to this battalion. Their cargo manifest later proved to be most accurate. Because of the fine cooperation of G. DeVine, in charge of checking our cargo, and who represented the contractors of the Pacific Naval Air Base, we were able to make this accuracy possible.

Aboard ship, since there were no supply activities, all storekeepers shared in the various details such as fire watch, deck cleaning, curtain watch, etc.

At Noumea, additional gear and ship's store stock was obtained. All storekeepers participated, under the guidance of Lieutenant King, in the procurement and guarding of this stock until it was secured aboard ship.

Immediately upon landing at Guadalcanal the ship's store stock was segregated. The second day after arriving, our first beer issue was made. Guard watches were set up and all supply storekeepers shared in a two hour watch each night until such time that store stock could properly be secured. So it was already on the third day after landing that Duval



BROWN, Charles R., SK2/c
Mazon, Illinois

REIGER, Maurice G., SK1/c
412 S. 21st Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

BIRDSONG, L. F., SK1/c
120 South Cherry Street
McComb, Mississippi

EARNEST, David V. K., SK2/c
5942 N. St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

WILLIAMS, Paul V., SK1/c
6426 Blackstone Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

MOUCK, James C., SK1/c
3701 Clement Street
San Francisco, California

WIGGINTON, Richard H., SK2/c
1136 W. 11th Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

VOSE, Chester F., SK2/c
1830 Vesta Avenue
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

MAYO, Horton E., Jr., SF3/c
2214 Dixie Place
Nashville, Tennessee

RHOADES, Mac H., SK3/c
409 8th Avenue South
Valley City, North Dakota

DU VAL, Samuel S., SK1/c
Route No. 13, Box 235
Richmond, Virginia

WITH THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT (Continued)

and Reiger were once again selling across the counter. Anderson and Moller were kept busy day and night assembling and issuing gear. As soon as trucks were available, Wigginton and Williams began hauling provisions. A fine job was done by these two men for in a few days "C" rations were forgotten and we were eating cooked meals from dehydrated foods. Just as we were beginning to see daylight, orders were received for the detachment of Companies A and B. All gear was carefully divided as equally as possible and an inventory of store stock was necessary so that it too, would be evenly shared. A split-up of all supply storekeepers became necessary, and after deliberation by Lieutenant King, Duval, Moller and Williams were detached from Headquarters to "B" Company. Reiger and Anderson were detached to "A" Company. CCstd Dennis was also detached to "A" Company to supervise the procurement of provisions. After long hours of detailed office work, in addition to the crating and boxing of supplies, Companies A and B were off to their new homes.

With the departing of the two Companies we now had half of a battalion with only three storekeepers. At this time Wigginton took over the gear locker operations and J. P. Hendrick, newly attached to the supply department, to provisions procurement. Birdsong operated the Ship's Store on Guadalcanal, and Chief Tillotson continued in the office. After the addition of a store-room to the Ship's Store, it was noted that for a 16- by 16-foot tent store, we were as well equipped as any battalion on the island.

Operating under the set-up, everything was going along fine until another order for the detachment of another company was received. This time D Company was chosen, and again the detaching of two men was necessary to take care of supply. Wigginton and Birdsong were elected. Another inventory and division of gear and stocks was necessary. Finally, all was in readiness, and Company D left for Sasavele Island, New Georgia.

Only two men were left to carry the work of the Supply Department, so, G. W. Gray of Personnel had his first taste of storekeeping. He was transferred to Supply and hastily converted from yeoman to storekeeper. A short time after this, Company C moved to its newly completed camp site on the ocean beach. It was here that Chief Tillotson and Gray turned stevedores and moved store stock and office to the first real store this battalion had known. They also supervised and assisted in the transfer of the gear locker to its new home. Hendricks was working day and night moving his provisions. It was with much pride that the store, with all stock under one roof, was finally opened.

What was destined to be our last move for approximately fourteen months, was effected when battalion headquarters prepared to join Company D at Sasavele. The same tedious routine of packing and taking inventories was required, and in four days we were on our way. At Munda, we found a suitable store had already been erected, and sales were as high as could be expected with the amount of stock we were able to purchase from the main base.

Thanksgiving Day, our first issue of free beer was made to all men, along with cigarettes and matches from the Ship's Store.

When A Company also arrived at Sasavele, five storekeepers were again assigned to the Supply Department. Each man retained the post he'd held when starting with the battalion. Earnest (after Anderson's transfer) in the gear locker, Wigginton on provisions, Chief Tillotson, Birdsong and Brown in the Ship's Store and office.

Company C's next stop was Bougainville, where it too had rough sledding. Much stock was lost in transit, necessitating a survey. A short stay at Bougainville and Company C was again on its way—to the Green Islands. Here, Reiger once more set up storekeeping while Chief Wetzel was in charge of provisions. After Chief Wetzel's transfer to the Supply Depot at Tulagi, Chief Kopp took over the duties of procuring GSK needs and provisions.

One function of the Supply Department which is favorable to the men, is the free issue of beer, candy, coke and cigarettes usually given out Christmas or other holidays. A typical day's sales would run around \$600 for the battalion. Beer, the All-American drink, was easily the biggest money maker. At ten cents a can, six cans a week per man, we can easily see the authenticity of this fact. Clothes were a good seller. One of the biggest sales days at A and D camp Ship's Store took in over \$7000, helped along, however, by the sale of 200 watches on its shelves. No shortage of cigarettes occurred during our tour of duty; the men were able to buy as many as they needed at fifty cents a carton. Although the store made only a profit of four cents per carton, this item was runner-up to beer as a money maker.

Because of the type of work done by this battalion, a man would go home penniless if he had to buy all the clothes that he had worn out. The Supply Department came to the rescue with G.I. issues of greens which were manna from Heaven to the hard working stevedores.

Many men, in all fields, have given a hand to make this department serve its purpose well. With this cooperation it will continue to give the same efficient service and its one ambition is improvement whenever and wherever possible.

OPERATIONS

On September 21, 1943, the Ninth Special Battalion disembarked from the U.S.S. La Salle on Guadalcanal and there, in the midst of chaos and disorder of a hastily erected camp site, Operations was born.

Our first office was a tent, with packing boxes for files and desks. In order to schedule the four companies' stevedore gangs who were being called upon to discharge our own transport and a cargo ship, we were required to operate our department twenty-four hours a day. The planning of stevedoring and work details was turned over to Operations from the beginning. Officers and men had to be detailed to the camp site to take care of the Ninth Special cargo that was being discharged from our transport. Stevedore gangs were rotated to give each one the same amount of rest. Six on and twelve off was the standard work day for these men for many months.

As the operations department was being molded into an efficiently working organization, orders were received that two of our companies were to move on to other islands to take charge of stevedoring there. The job of supplying each company with an experienced operations man was difficult, since no man had had more than two weeks experience. The task would be a hard one to carry. The checkers of the Operations office board all ships together with the stevedore gangs to record the number of tons of cargo stowed or discharged, to fill hour-by-hour reports of the progress of the work and of time lost; to keep in touch constantly, by means of walkie-talkie, with the Department ashore and relay all orders for additional stevedoring gear, dunnage or cargo needed at the ship.

Another company, B, received orders to report to Tulagi, to start the ball rolling at that port. Both of these detached

companies made enviable records at that time and were duly rewarded by letters of commendation and praise from Commanding Officers of their respective bases.

Company C had stayed on Guadalcanal, but after a few months there was ordered to establish the most advanced port of discharge of the Battalion. Bougainville meant many sleepless nights for the men of this company. Jap planes seemed to concentrate on the narrow strip of beach held by the Yanks, hoping to destroy what supplies were brought in. Despite the opposition of the Japs, Company C set records at this port and received praise from all the units on the island and masters of ships.

Since the port of Munda was continually growing, Company A was called there to help D Company discharge bombs that were to rain destruction on the Island of Rabaul and to repay the Japs at Bougainville for all their raids seven-fold.

Operations found its work schedule a heavy one and reports as well as schedules were keeping the staff busy twenty-four hours a day. Reports had to be prepared for Washington, Naval Headquarters at each base, and for various units of the Army Service Command. This information had to be accurate and our best sources of information were the checkers and officers aboard ships. Checkers were under the direction of Operations office and each one of them was given the exact amount and nature of cargo to be discharged and where it was to be found. The Operations office is also required by Naval Headquarters to furnish information about the progress of ships, to show tons discharged or loaded during each twenty-four hour period and to estimate time of completion. Operations must make out a six-hour shift report, showing how many gangs worked, their number, tonnage discharged or loaded, time lost at each hatch and the reason



Operations

for such loss. This shift report would also list any damaged cargo and the stowage of each hold.

Companies A and D, working as one unit then, kept the supplies moving on Munda. During one month, theirs was the third most efficient port overseas, in cargo handled, and based upon working hours. In their biggest month, the two companies together handled 31,000 tons of cargo consisting of gasoline, bombs, general cargo and even candy and coca-cola. One gang of this unit handled 300 tons of gasoline during one six-hour shift. This record has not been equalled by any other Special Battalion in the Pacific.

Company C was not satisfied with the assignment at Bougainville after the Japs had left for the hills. They still wanted action, so they were ordered to Green Island just behind the invasion forces. They were, according to figures in Operations Headquarters, leading all companies in tonnage handled by a small margin.

This fine record, so well known all over the Pacific, is something that every man is proud of. At the last, Operations was still working on new methods to improve our work for the next assignment, which we all hope will be in San Francisco or New York.

BROWN, George B., SK1/c
1854 20th Avenue
San Francisco, California

THURMAN, Glen H., SK1/c
La Bonita Hotel, 30 Fremont Street
Las Vegas, Nevada

SMITH, Hoke, SK1/c
76 N. Vickery Street
Lavonia, Georgia

TRACY, A. A., SK3/c
4952 E. 88th Street
Garfield Heights, Ohio

ROGGER, Hans J., SK3/c
238 Ft. Washington Avenue
New York, New York

HOAGLAND, Robert L., SK2/c
221 Douglas Street N. E.
Washington, D. C.

WATTS, Clarence C., SK3/c
Route No. 2
Afton, Tennessee

HOWARD, Asael A., CM2/c
c/o State Highway Department
Carson City, Nevada

HUNT, John P., SK1/c
443 West 45th Street
Chicago, Illinois

TRIMARCHI, Anthony (N), SK1/c
1522 Avenue H
Galveston, Texas

TURNER, John Charles, SK2/c
4710 Parrish Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CLODOVEO, Raymond J., SK2/c
750 E. Main Street
Annville, Pennsylvania

KAVANAUGH, J. G., SK1/c
3441 West 126th Street
Cleveland 11, Ohio

KOPKE, Charles R., SK1/c
3910 39th Avenue
Oakland 2, California

SCHMIDT, Clifton L., SK1/c
151 N. Ewing Street
Naperville, Illinois

SCOTT, Clarence L., SK3/c
Box 67
Graford, Texas

HODGE, Frank G., SK2/c
Moison Road
Orangeburg, New York

DENNING, Franklin C., SK2/c
1143 Brayton Pt. Road
Somerset, Massachusetts

WILLEY, Richard W., SK2/c
4188 So. Arlington Avenue
Los Angeles, California

DIEDE, Milbert H., SK2/c
1005 4th Street N. E.
Huron, South Dakota

PORTNER, Ralph W., EM1/c
161 W. Mountain Avenue
Fort Collins, Colorado

McKINNEY, Joseph W., SK1/c
1948 7th Street
Cuyahago Falls, Ohio

KNOWLES, John T., S1/c
1049 Jefferson Avenue
Elizabeth 4, New Jersey

PATERSON, Stewart W., SK2/c
1749 Liberty Street
South Baintree, Massachusetts

PITTENGER, Emory M., S1/c
Bartow, West Virginia

DI LONARDO, Harry A., SK3/c
276A Grove Street
North Plainfield, New Jersey

TEELING, Raymond G., S1/c
77 Louisiana Street
Long Beach, New York

SAMUELSON, James E., BM1/c
1527 Terry Avenue
Seattle 1, Washington

BETTENCOURT, Harry A., Cox
40 No. Fremont Street
San Mateo, California

WEST, Dave, Jr., Cox
2123 Stuart Street
Berkeley, California

UNDEN, Jack V., Jr., BM1/c
4218 Ventura Avenue
Sacramento 17, California

PERKINS, Coy G., MM3/c
2113 Parkside Avenue
Los Angeles, California

BROWN, "J" "K", SM2/c
Hazel Valley, Arkansas

THE CARPENTERS AT WORK

Any community, no matter what its size, counts among its most important members the carpenters. Long before houses were made of stone and steel, carpenters were our architects and builders, cabinet makers and interior decorators, and a military community can do without them as little as a town or village. Combining all these functions, their tasks overseas are often complicated by the frequent lack of tools and materials, especially lumber. In spite of all these difficulties, the carpenters of the Ninth Special Battalion have made of our camps places of comfort and utility - showplaces for other outfits, giving proof of the carpenters' own skill and ingenuity.

After helping to unload the ship which had brought us to the 'Canal, the erection of a chow-hall was the most important item on a schedule that would always call for more. Our lumber supply was exhausted right then and native woods were used for all framework in officers' and men's tents complete with wooden decks. In each company, wherever it went the picture was repeated. Chow-hall, quarters, sick bay, offices, recreation facilities—the carpenters had to furnish them. The most elaborate structures were put up when A and D Companies joined and Sasavele Island was made battalion headquarters. Here, the greatest number of men and officers were assembled, requiring the greatest number of public and individual buildings. Here the carpenters finally built their own shop in which to house tools, materials and build furniture. Larger and better offices were needed: Personnel, Disbursing, Supply, OOD, Operations, Dental, Medical, Postal, a Laundry, Ship's Service, Photographer's Laboratory, a Recreation Hall, Transportation shacks, Garages and Plumbing and Electrical Shops. These "Public Services" were not the limit of the carpenters' duties or their ability. Cargo aboard ship had to be lashed, blocked, shored and cribbed, boats maintained and repaired as well as stevedoring equipment and dock facilities.

It has been said that carpentry is not merely a craft, it's also an attitude. The carpenter is deliberate, conscientious and exacting about his work. The pride of our carpenters in their achievements is therefore pardonable and justified.



The Carpenters' Shop on Sasevele



Jap Motor Powering a Home-made Saw



Laying the Foundation for a New Mess Hall



The Chow Hall, First Structure to Go Up in a New Camp

THE ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT

Wherever Navy men meet and the Globe, symbol of Navy electricians is discussed, heated controversy inevitably results. Whatever the globe's meaning or significance to others, to the electricians of the Ninth Special it is a constant reminder to be on the ball, which in less vernacular terms means: to furnish lights, power, communications, and refrigeration in the shortest possible time.

This is perhaps the most unorthodox of wars, but nowhere is that truer than in the electrical field. At home, cities were lying in darkness for fear of enemy air-attack, out on Pacific islands lights were blazing on the very day of our landings to speed the work and light our way to Tokyo. Only an alert, advance warning of Jap airplanes, could extinguish them. Refrigeration—a luxury in a war-time America of shortages, was indispensable to every one of our units in the tropical heat. Installation and maintenance were the electrician's jobs. They furnished a bit of hometown flavor when the men could get ice and ice cream to remind them of the corner drugstore.

To establish communications is perhaps the electrician's most important job in war. Here we were faced with the difficulty of having to run telephone lines through thick jungle. Usually, wires were strung on wooden cross arms so high that climbing them was quite difficult. Switchboards and apparatus were furnished by the Army Signal Corps. For ship-to-shore communications between beachmaster and checker, or loading officer, walkie-talkies were employed.

The maid of all work of the South Pacific electrician is the 15 kw. gasoline engine driven generator, which is to us what the mule was to the old army. Unruly and unpredictable, they still claimed our undivided attention and care. Patience with it was no longer a virtue, it became a necessity. To mention the generator is always painful to us, and the less said the better. Types of wiring used most frequently were No. 5 TBWP for feeders, and No. 14 wires for services and wiring in tents and buildings. When the lights go on again all over the world, we'll shut off our generators, switch off the lights and take a long, well deserved rest.



Shop Interior



High Tension

ANDREW, Edward C., EM1/c
2437 15th Avenue
South St. Petersburg, Florida

BENDLE, Ernest L., EM2/c
Route No. 5, Box 28
Richmond, Virginia

GALLOWAY, Basil G., EM2/c
Route No. 3
Spencer, Indiana

CREGIER, Elliott P., EM2/c
37 South Bedford Avenue
Mt. Kisco, New York

JORDAN, Joseph J., EM2/c
Smyrna, Tennessee

HENRY, Graydon H., EM1/c
Walnut Street
Ravenswood, West Virginia

HOOD, George O., EM1/c
886 National Road
Bridgeport, Ohio

LOTSEY, A. A., EM2/c
1102 Washington Street
Hoboken, New Jersey

KLUGMAN, Leonard, EM2/c
412 Sheffield Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

KRUEGER, Lloyd H., MMR2/c
5116 East Mich Street
Indianapolis, Indiana

POTTER, George B., EM2/c
Plumerville, Arkansas

ROGGIO, James, EM2/c
100 Lynch Street
Brooklyn, New York

THOMPSON, Donald W., EM1/c
10981 Pine Avenue
Lynwood, California

TIPPEN, Frank A., Jr., EM2/c
2721 Pittsburgh Street
Houston 5, Texas

MILLER, Harry W., Jr., EM1/c
1722 Purdy Street
New York City, New York

REED, Elmer D., EM1/c
297 Pearl Street
Salem, New Jersey

BURT, Ralph D., EM1/c
255 79th Street
Brooklyn, New York

THE PLUMBING AND MACHINE SHOP

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink" may have been the sad tale of the ancient mariner, but that was never the lament of the Ninth Special thanks to its highly skilled crew of plumbers and machinists. This was one of the most important departments of the battalion. It was instrumental in building and maintaining the water supply systems and other equipment, such as washing machines, pipe lines, showers, drainage and sewage systems, stoves, boilers, pumps and purification apparatus.

At the outset, the battalion was ill-equipped with tools and replacement parts. In fact, the only plumbing tools available at first were two 48-inch Stilson wrenches. However, tools and materials were secured by trade, barter and as a reward for doing work for other outfits on the various islands where the battalion was stationed.

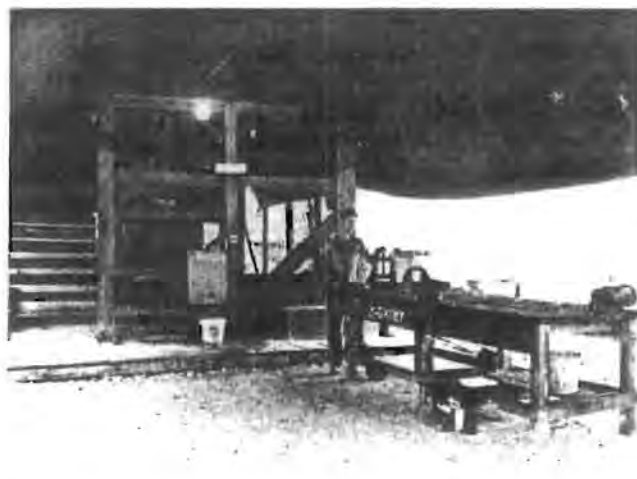
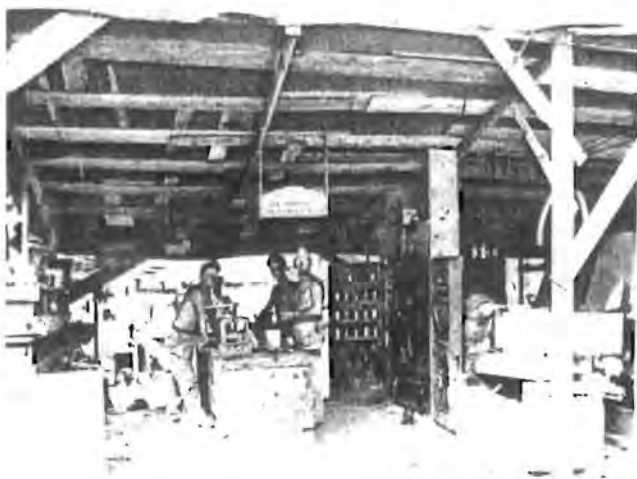
At the Russell Islands, the Ninth Special succeeded in finding drinking water where other outfits had failed. A neighboring battalion, the 11th Special, had dug nine dry holes. However, after Chief Miller had brought in a "gusher," he went to their aid. He surveyed the terrain and selected a spot to start drilling operations. This time, presto! the 11th Special's efforts were successful, and a fine supply of fresh water was secured. Similarly, on Sasavele, Chief Wheeler found drinking water after it was said that it could not be done. The fine well that was dug, not only supplied the two companies of the Ninth Special, but army outfits stationed on the island as well.

When A Company merged with D Company, it was necessary to revise a water system that was hardly adequate for one company. Under the supervision of Lieutenant Sjurson and Chiefs Miller and Schlegel, the conversion and added installations were made in record time by working crews eighteen hours a day. W. P. Nolan, T. F. O'Rourke, P. J. Riley, J. C. Becker, C. W. Smiley, and J. V. Rittenberg were the men who did an outstanding job on this project. The laundry, galley, scullery, sick bay, plumbing and storage tank installations were formidable jobs that were handled in style.

To keep the washing machines, boilers, pipe lines and drainage lines in repair was a constant struggle. The chemical reaction of the water due to coral and calcium elements made maintenance of the camp water system difficult and frequent renewal of piping and boiler tubes necessary.

The plumbing and machine shop did considerable work for other outfits and ships that anchored at the battalion's shores. By doing work for a Marine contingent, the battalion acquired some tools in exchange: wrenches, files, hacksaw blades, pipe cutters, vises and other vital plumbing tools. In exchange for urgent repairs to a ship that had a broken oil line, wrenches were given. For putting a fire system on one of the supply barges, the battalion was given pipe fittings, valves, shower heads and water hose. A lot of extracurricular work was done for the LST's that stopped in our ports. Although the many cargo ships that anchored in the battalion's waters were supposed to have been equipped to take care of their own repairs, the Ninth Special plumbers were often enlisted to come to their aid.

(Concluded on page 109)



The Plumbing and Machine Shop

PASTORE, Guido (N), WT1/c
153 Bridgeport Avenue
Shelton, Connecticut

SMILEY, Charles W., WT3/c
648 Liberty Avenue
Port Arthur, Texas

RITTENBERG, Jack V., WT2/c
1944 West 92nd Street
Los Angeles 44, California

BECKER, Jerome C., WT1/c
512 West Grace Street
Richmond, Virginia

VAN SIPE, Louis E., WT1/c
P. O. Box No. 93
Bonanza, Oregon

SILVA, Albert N., WT1/c
145 Washington Street
Gloucester, Massachusetts

KANE, Edward F., SF1/c
2016 Ashland Street
Fort Worth, Texas

PALMER, Willis L., WT3/c
Route No. 3, Box No. 155
Chico, California

HABBICK, Robert K., WT2/c
4101 48th Street, Sunnyside
Long Island City, New York

SAUMIER, Lawrence M., SF2/c
RFD No. 1
Saranac Lake, New York

SALMON, Harold W., WT2/c
Tipton, Missouri

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

When the Ninth Special Battalion first left the States no Transportation Department had as yet been organized as a separate unit. The first time such a unit was called for was on Guadalcanal when all available rolling stock was pressed into service to transport men and material to our camp site. Equipment then consisted of these items of rolling stock: 8 International trucks, 4 by 4; 12 jeeps (reconnaissance); 14 GMC trucks (6 by 6 cargo); 4 GMC (6 by 6 dump); 1 salvage truck; 1 ambulance; 13 tractors of varying sizes and makes; 12 Towmotor fork-lifts; 4 5-ton cranes and a battery charger. This supply had to be divided and assigned to the different companies who each maintained their own Transportation Departments. Primary use to which rolling stock was put was the hauling of supplies (rations especially) and transportation of stevedore gangs to and from ships and docks. The upkeep of trucks poses a special problem due to climatic conditions. Metal parts rust easily and stock must therefore always be well oiled and painted to prevent deterioration. The record of the Ninth Special is an excellent one on that score. Except for a few additions all our rolling stock is the same with which we left the States and generally speaking in top condition. None has been scrapped or condemned. All repairs are carried out by the men of the department, including welding. The replacement of tires is a major problem but one that was also solved in the end. One commodity of which there never seemed to be a sufficient supply was the jeep. All the men, of course, periodically wanted one of them for a joy ride, but unfortunately, received only a shake of the head from the dispatcher. Those jeeps that were available were reserved for official purposes and the men had to resign themselves and hope that they might be able to buy one after the war for their hunting and fishing trips.



Transportation Area and Grease Rack on Benika



Repair Shop at Companies A and D Camp

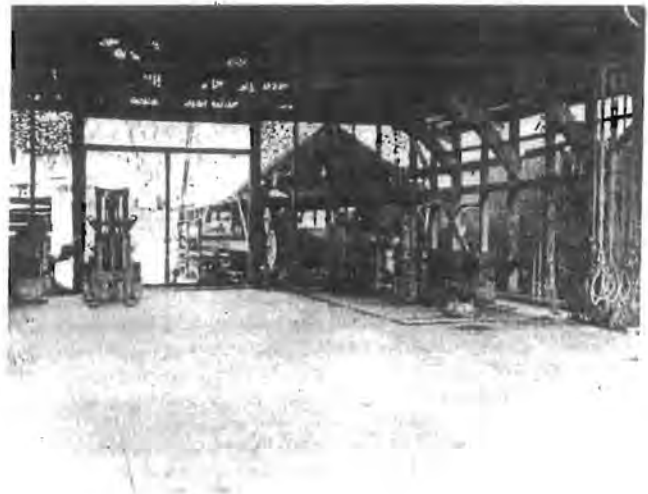
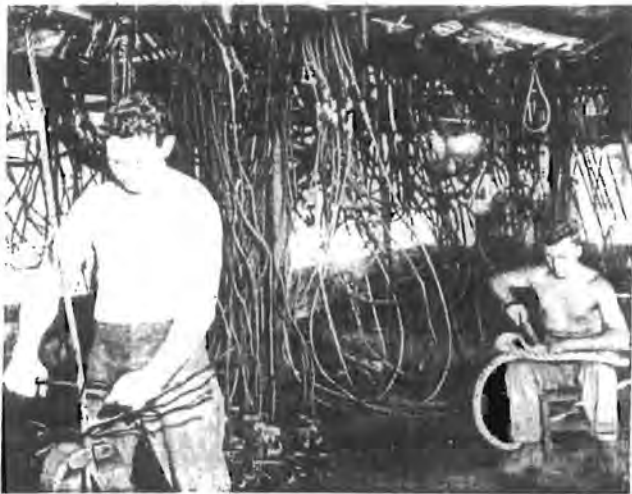


Transportation Department, Company B

THE BOATSWAIN'S LOCKER

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the locker is the variety of its functions and the versatility of its personnel. Stated simply enough, it was their job to supply all gear needed in stevedoring operations. But under that heading comes a multitude of details that are often as remote from stevedoring as the work of a blacksmith. As in all other branches of service the shortage of materials made improvisation necessary, and at improvisation these men excelled. When the battalion left the States, the equipment of the rigging loft was far from complete and its distribution to different companies still depleted it further. Most of it was still in raw form from which gear had to be fashioned according to the ever-changing needs of the stevedores. Then the previous training or civilian experience of the men proved itself.

Reels of wire of different widths were made into cables adapted to various uses on varied types of cargo. Rope-slings, cargo nets, barrel chimes, spreaders for heavy lifts (trucks, tanks, etc.), Jacob's ladders had to be manufactured. Once in use gear was repaired constantly, oiled and cleaned to keep it from deteriorating. When ships were worked, the rigging loft had to dispatch gear to them, to insure maximum efficiency on the part of the stevedores. The loft itself was constructed by the men working in it, and although no meals were ever served in it, it was not far behind the chow-hall in cleanliness and neatness. Each item has its appointed and easily found place. There are shackles, blocks, pedro-hooks, bomb bridles, (a local invention), tray bridles. The list is endless. For the men of the gear locker it was: "you name it we have it. If we don't—we'll make it."



THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

The Medical Department of the Ninth Special was first organized in Camp Peary, Virginia, in May, 1945. Two doctors and seven corpsmen made up its staff. Lt. Comdr. Max Hymen of Lowell, Massachusetts was Senior Medical Officer, and Dr. Harold Cohen, Lt. (MC) USNR, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was second in command.

The various functions of a battalion's medical department are too well known to require detailed description. The aim is "to keep as many men at as many guns as many days as possible." Although the Ninth Special was never in direct combat, and has only infrequently been called upon to man the guns, injuries and tropical diseases have called for close and untiring attention. Before leaving the States there were, of course, the usual number of necessary inoculations as a preventive measure against typhoid and lock-jaw. During four weeks at sea, doctors and corpsmen alike went about their duties regularly. To the great discomfort of many men, the new drug for sea-sickness had not yet been released for distribution at that time.

The crossing of the Pacific was undramatic, medically speaking as well as in all other respects. The real work began on Guadalcanal. On landing there, a complete sick-bay was set up and soon in operation. Matters were complicated however, when the battalion was split up. This called, simultaneously, for a redistribution of our medical "forces." Two corpsmen, Chief Melchin and J. W. Dougherty were to go to the Russell Islands with Company A. They set up a small sick-bay and were complimented on the remarkable job they did in caring for the men's health. The story was repeated in all other companies. Doctor Cohen, with corpsmen Bridges and Kligerman, went to Bougainville with C Company. Chief Evans, no longer with the battalion, was assigned to B Company at Tulagi. In his place, Ray Moorehead carried on the duties at that company. When two companies joined at Sasavele to form battalion headquarters, the Medical staff also set up its base of operations there. Doctor Hymen had five corpsmen at his disposal, and three sick-calls were held daily—morning, noon and night. Although no disease ever reached epidemic proportions (except, perhaps, occupational fatigue), these sick calls were always well attended. Most of the ailments were of a minor nature and readily cured after a few treatments. "Jungle Rot" was perhaps the biggest single problem facing the Department, for it was as wide-spread as it was tenacious. Malaria, first thought to give the greatest trouble, was vigorously attacked both at its source and in acute stages. Atabrine for prophylaxis, and quinine for treatment, kept the rate down. Classes in first aid were also given by the corpsmen, so that everyone should know what to do "until the doctor comes."

An extracurricular activity of the corpsmen of the battalion was their treatment of natives, who either came to the Ninth's sick-bay or were occasionally visited in their villages. Most of these cases, however, were for first aid only, since authorities maintain medical facilities for them.

The Dental Office, first headed by Dr. Weiland and after his detachment comprised of Dr. McConnell and Dental Technician Tom DeLuca, had its share of patients, and contributed materially to the general welfare. That most of us returned to the States with health and spirits undamaged is due in no small measure to the vigilance of the Medical Department, its doctors and corpsmen.



Hospital Ward



Dispensary

THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT



Pharmaceutical Department



"Open Wide, Please!"

SWARTZ, I., PHM3/c
53 Terhune Avenue
Jersey City 5, New Jersey

KLIGERMAN, Joshua (N), PHM1/c
4605 Ventnor Avenue
Atlantic City, New Jersey

MOREHEAD, Raymond W., PHM1/c
1615 Ashland Boulevard
St. Joseph, Missouri

DOUGHERTY, Joseph W., PHM3/c
821 Nutwood Avenue
Bowling Green, Kentucky

BRIDGES, Harry L., PHM2/c
203 E. Grant Street
Caro, Michigan

MAGNANI, Joseph, PHM2/c
219 Carlton Street
Providence, Rhode Island

HUSTAD, G. G., HA1/c
3430 43rd Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota

DE LUCA, Thomas R., PHM3/c
1223 Summit Avenue
Union City, New Jersey

THE PLUMBING AND MACHINE SHOP (Concluded)

The battalion's washing machines were built for family washing and not for the incessant eight hours per day service to which they were subjected. Hardly a day went by without the breakdown of one machine. It was up to the plumbers to keep them in working order for the length of our stay. Although replacement parts were occasionally available, the supply was never equal to the demand. This threat to the battalion's cleanliness was removed by fashioning parts (crown gears, shafts, rotor bearings) from salvaged battle materials by hand, and without the benefit of a lathe.

The Ninth Special plumbers and machinists epitomized the celebrated CB "Can Do" ingenuity at its best. They were unsurpassed in building coffee urns, boilers, stoves and parts for sundry machinery from shells, oil and gasoline drums. They have become known as the men who could make anything out of nothing.

IN MEMORIAM

The men, whose names follow, died while on duty with the Ninth Special Construction Battalion of the United States Navy. Like millions of their countrymen, they served faithfully at the posts to which they had been assigned. Their death demands that we honor them as we do our comrades who have fallen in battle. Some of them were casualties of a war that was forced upon us by the enemy, a war to whose successful conclusion we dedicate ourselves in their memory.

JOHN T. WIELAND

CLYDE F. DECKER, JR.

HENRY J. DI GIACOMO

JAMES C. FLYNN

SAM SUTHERLAND, JR.

THOMAS L. WOMACK

ITINERARY OF THE NINTH SPECIAL U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

100-100000

- 26 April 1943 -- Battalion Formed at Camp Peary.
- 19 June 1943 -- Departed Camp Peary for ABD, Port Huenehe.
- 24 June 1943 -- Arrived ABD, Port Huenehe.
- 7 August 1943 -- Departed ABD, Port Huenehe, for overseas.
- 19 August 1943 -- Arrived Pago Pago, Samoa.
- 24 August 1943 -- Departed Pago Pago, Samoa.
- 28 August 1943 -- Arrived Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 17 September 1943 -- Departed Noumea, New Caledonia.
- 21 September 1943 -- Arrived Guadalcanal.
- 30 September 1943 -- Company "A" and $\frac{1}{2}$ Headquarters Company departed Guadalcanal for Russell Islands.
- 1 October 1943 -- Company "A" arrived Russell Islands.
- 2 October 1943 -- Company "B" and $\frac{1}{2}$ Headquarters Company departed Guadalcanal for Tulagi.
- 3 October 1943 -- Company "B" arrived Tulagi.
- 21 October 1943 -- Company "D" and $\frac{1}{2}$ Headquarters Company departed Guadalcanal for Sasavele.
- 22 October 1943 -- Company "D" arrived Sasavele.
- 20 November 1943 -- Company "A" departed Russell Islands for Sasavele.
- 21 November 1943 -- Company "A" arrived Sasavele.
- 17 January 1944 -- Company "C" and $\frac{1}{2}$ Headquarters Company departed Guadalcanal for Bougainville.
- 19 January 1944 -- Company "C" arrived Bougainville.
- 5 March 1944 -- Company "C" departed Bougainville for Green Island.
- 6 March 1944 -- Company "C" arrived Green Island.

(Continued on Page 2)

100-100000

ITINERARY OF THE NINTH SPECIAL U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

- 1 December 1944 -- One (1) officer and fifteen (15) enlisted men depart from Company "C" (Green Island) for temporary detached duty at Bougainville.
- 19 December 1944 -- One (1) warrant officer and ten (10) enlisted men depart from Companies "A" and "D" (Sasavele) for temporary detached duty at Bougainville.
- 7 February 1945 -- Two (2) officers and thirty (30) enlisted men depart from Companies "A" and "D" (Sasavele) for Russell Islands as advance echelon.
- 10 February 1945 -- One (1) warrant officer and ten (10) enlisted men return to Companies "A" and "D" (Sasavele) from temporary detached duty at Bougainville.
- 16 February 1945 -- One (1) officer and fifteen (15) enlisted men return to Company "C" (Green Island) from temporary detached duty at Bougainville.
- 24 February 1945 -- Company "C" departed Green Island for Russell Islands.
- 26 February 1945 -- Companies "A" and "D" depart Sasavele for Russell Islands.
- 27 February 1945 -- Companies "A", "C" and "D" arrive Russell Islands.

Note: This itinerary has been authenticated by the Officer in Charge of the Ninth Special U. S. Naval Construction Battalion.

17 March 1945

1 October 1945 - Inactivated at Russell Islands.

15 October 1945



**NO
LOGO
AVAILABLE**





