

## SEABEES BUILD SPRINGBOARDS FOR THE ATTACK

Navy's Newest Unit Fights, Digs Under Fire of Enemy; "Can Do" Boys Now Number More Than 260,000

"Believe me in all sincerity, I really mean the statement that the navy will remember this war by the Seabees."—Vice Admiral W. L. Calhoun, commander of the Pacific service force.

Like a flash, war burst at Pearl Harbor, and almost immediately its black clouds rolled westward to Guam, Wake and the Philippines.

Caught in the outburst were many civilian construction workers for the navy, without weapons to defend themselves, or subject to execution by the enemy as guerrillas if captured bearing arms in civilian dress.

To Rear Admiral Ben Moreell of the bureau of yards and docks and the civil engineer corps came the idea of organizing the naval construction battalion—the heralded Seabees of today.

"Can Do" Boys  
Coming the name, "Seabees," from the initials of construction battalions, this newest branch of the navy set out to create its own tradition. The Seabees' first construction jobs were undertaken with such enthusiasm and such disregard for obstacles that other branches of the service began to refer to the newcomers as the "Can Do" boys. The name caught on, and soon "Can Do" became the tradition of the Seabees.

As performance reports came in to establish the wisdom of the conception of the Seabees, it became immediately obvious that the sights had been set too low. The Seabee quota rose from 6,000 to 20,000 to 40,000 to 100,000, and finally to the present quota of some 262,000 which is well in excess of the total complement of the entire prewar navy. Today there are approximately 115,400 Seabees in battalions serving overseas. Another 147,000 are completing their training in this country. Commanding the Seabees are approximately 7,500 civil engineer corps officers.

The first instance of "Can Do" came when the First Naval Construction battalion was put to work strengthening with shore installations our tenuous supply line to Australia. Despite inadequate equipment and organizational inexperience, those first Seabees built the bases which sent our warships into the critical Coral Sea battle in the best of fighting trim.

Since then, every major amphibious operation has found the Seabees among the first to land. At Guadalcanal, the fighting builders rode their bulldozers in building roads and airfields during the thick of the fighting. Their feat in maintaining Henderson Field despite incessant bombing and shelling and their construction of a companion strip for fighter planes were critical factors in our defense of the island. Other installations followed to make Guadalcanal a major base for attacks on the islands to the northwest.

Rendova, Munda, Vella Lavella, Bougainville were subjected to Seabee "Can Do." Not only did the sweating Seabees perform miracles in repairing destroyed and damaged Jap installations, but they completed entirely new projects in days rather than the weeks which normally would be required. At Munda, for example, the poorly constructed and bomb ravaged field of the Japs was put in usable condition in less than eight days.

Busy at Tarawa  
Again at bloody Tarawa while Jap machine gun bullets still whizzed over their heads, the Seabees began repairing the field that hours before had posed a major threat to our island positions in the Pacific. Four days after the initial landing, and less than one day after organized enemy resistance had ceased, the field was back in shape and receiving American planes.

In the Aleutians, too, the Seabees proved their "Can Do." Not only did they take over and complete the huge projects begun by civilian contractors, but they also moved in with the assault forces at Attu and Kiska. Before the last assault boat landed, they were at work replacing poorly constructed Jap installations with adequate roads, housing, dock facilities and air strips. They built these in spite of gales, bottomless tundra and the world's most awesome collection of bad weather.

On the other side of the world, the Seabees have been equally active. After landing with the first American forces in Africa, they immediately pounced on the job of rebuilding the enemy's bomb blasted installations and the construction of new airfields and docks for use in the onslaughts against Sicily and Italy. Later, during the invasions they took on the unglamorous but extremely important work of getting guns, supplies and mechanized equipment ashore. At Salerno under the heaviest attacks by enemy bombers and a hell of fire from shore batteries, the Seabees unloaded some 10,000 pieces of equipment and within two days had turned that

### At Camp Wolters



Pfc. Ralph Carlton recently visited his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Carlton, of Deep Gap. His address is: Pfc. Ralph Carlton, 181 Station Hospital, Camp Wolters, Texas.

sanguinary beach into a temporary base of operations.

The Seabees carry on the overseas construction work of the navy's bureau of yards and docks. They are commanded by officers of the civil engineer corps, the same corps which executed the bureau's vast naval shore construction program in this country to provide for servicing the fleet and training naval personnel. This active command by the CEC, incidentally, is an innovation of this war. Previously CEC officers had served only in staff capacities; however, the creation of the Seabees logically prompted the high command to give full control of these builders to engineering trained officers.

Building Trades Represented  
Fifty-nine different building trades are represented in the Seabees and, until enlistment was halted last October 31, men were given regular navy rates commensurate with their civilian experience. A journeyman carpenter, for example, might expect to have been made a second class petty officer; a construction foreman was given a chief petty officer's rating.

A battalion consists of 1,079 men and 32 officers, including 26 from the civil engineer corps. The battalion comprises four construction companies of 224 men each and a headquarters company. It is a self contained unit and all the construction skills are represented, so that the battalion can undertake any kind of base building job to which it might be assigned.

Within the Seabees were organized special battalions, especially trained in the work of unloading and loading ships. These battalions, officered by men commissioned from the ranks of highly trained civilian stevedores, are breaking one of the most serious bottlenecks in our supply lines. At one port in the South Pacific where not many months ago 66 ships lay idly at anchor because of inadequate facilities for their unloading, a Seabee battalion went to work. They unloaded them at better than one-a-day rate until the congestion was ended, and today, cargoes are being discharged as fast as they arrive.

Another special branch within the Seabees are the demolition units. These, consisting of one officer and four men, are given extremely rigorous physical conditioning and training in the handling of explosives.

### Extra Corn Yields By Better Methods

An extra 500,000 bushels of corn can be easily and cheaply produced in North Carolina this year through improved farm practices, said farmers in a recent series of field meetings held in co-operation with the State College extension service.

They suggested well prepared seed beds in advance of planting, as a means of reducing later cultivation and saving on labor. They emphasized the use of the best local variety for seed and the planting of the crop as early as possible.

The use of about 300 pounds of good fertilizer per acre at planting was recommended for most lands because fertilizer would give quick growth to the crop and enable growers to work out their corn without interfering with other farm operations.

About one-third of the entire acreage in cultivation in North Carolina is in corn and anything that can be done to save labor on the crop is of great importance. Average corn yields run about 20 bushels per acre and when all expense is continued, the cost of producing a bushel of corn reaches a relatively high figure.

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#### JESUS ON MOUNTAIN AND IN VALLEY

Lesson for Feb. 13: Mark 9:2-20; Golden Text: Mark 9:24.

The transfiguration took place on Mt. Hermon, which was in northern Palestine and the most conspicuous landmark in the country. As on many another great occasion, Jesus had taken the chosen three with Him. How the three knew the identity of the two who talked with Jesus, we do not know. It is striking that the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel were all concerned in the transfiguration.

This transcendent occurrence strengthened the humanity of Jesus and the faith of the disciples concerning the heavenly mission of Jesus, and it should confirm our belief in His divinity.

The three disciples were doubtless led to ask the question concerning Elijah because they had just seen him in glory on the mount of transfiguration. The answer of Jesus may indicate that John the Baptist had come in the character of Elijah to be the forerunner of the Christ.

The afflicted child was healed through his own father's faith. There are greatly needed at this present time, fathers and mothers whose faith can save their children from the evil that is in the world. In answer to the disciples' question as to why they could not heal the boy, Jesus said that "kind" could come forth "but by prayer and fasting." Whatever may be our application of what Jesus said, His words should encourage us to pray in most difficult cases. Let each of us come to the point of experience reached by the distressed father when he said, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

### State Will Get Rid of Frame Schoolhouses

Raleigh—The estimated 1,400 one to three-room frame school houses for some 200,000 negro school children in North Carolina will disappear just as soon after the war as materials are available to replace them.

That's a part of a program begun more than a decade ago, and temporarily halted by the war, to put the white and negro races on the same footing in educational opportunity, physical equipment, salaries to teachers, and graduate and professional training.

The state's general assembly already has provided for elimination of salary differentials. Its general fund, expected to show a surplus of more than \$70,000,000 by the end of the current fiscal year, will take care of the remainder of the program.

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