

# U.S. Navy Seabee Cruise book

CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation  
Civil Engineer Corps and Seabee Museum  
1000 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Bldg. 99, Code HO  
Port Hueneme, Ca 93043-4301  
June , 2001

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- Project coordinator  
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The Foundation wishes to thank the following for their advice and assistance:

- Carol Marsh:.....NAVFAC Command Historian
- Lara Bickell : .....Archivist
- Arthur K. Samora :.....Legal advice
- Andrea King..... Store Manager

The Foundation also wishes to thank the following for their donations of equipment material, or funds, to support this project:

- MCB-8 Association.
- Steve Thomas of Steve Thomas BMW: Former member of MCB-4 ,1967-68.  
In memory of Ronald Harrison MCB-4, Equipment Operator Third Class, KIA Vietnam.
- Vietnam Era Seabees (VNES)
- Navy Seabee Veterans Of America , Island X-7 Port Hueneme
- Paradise Chevrolet, Ventura
- Kinko's, Main St. Ventura
- Pugh & Associates, Ventura
- Ventura County Star Newspaper

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**“We Did”**  
*We Did*

THE  
STORY  
OF THE  
62ND NCB  
DECEMBER 7, 1942  
TO  
SEPTEMBER 15, 1945

# Foreword

The battalion arrived at Pearl Harbor on March 29, 1943. "Remember Pearl Harbor" had become a battle cry for all Americans in the Pacific War. Our Marines had turned the tide of the Japanese offensive at Guadalcanal and the enemy had begun to feel the blows struck from Henderson Field built by the Seabees.

The Navy was beginning to marshal her fast growing forces at Pearl Harbor. Men, material, and ships required new barracks, warehouses and ship-repair facilities. The 62nd Battalion was the first to take over work from the contractors at Pearl Harbor and our officers and men carried through their jobs with the true Seabee spirit and ingenuity. Among the vital and urgent projects completed were the Submarine Base Extension, the Waipio Point Amphibious repair facilities and housing at the Advance Base Reshipment Depot.

As the Pacific War moved into full scale offensive, our battalion was assigned to the Western Pacific on the assault echelon at Iwo Jima. Our battalion arrived on "Bloody Iwo" soon after the Marines and started to work immediately on the Southern Airfield. As soon as the Southern Field was operational, the 62nd Battalion was ordered to the Central Airfield. Both jobs were started under enemy mortar and sniper fire and the courage and the spirit of the battalion can never be forgotten.

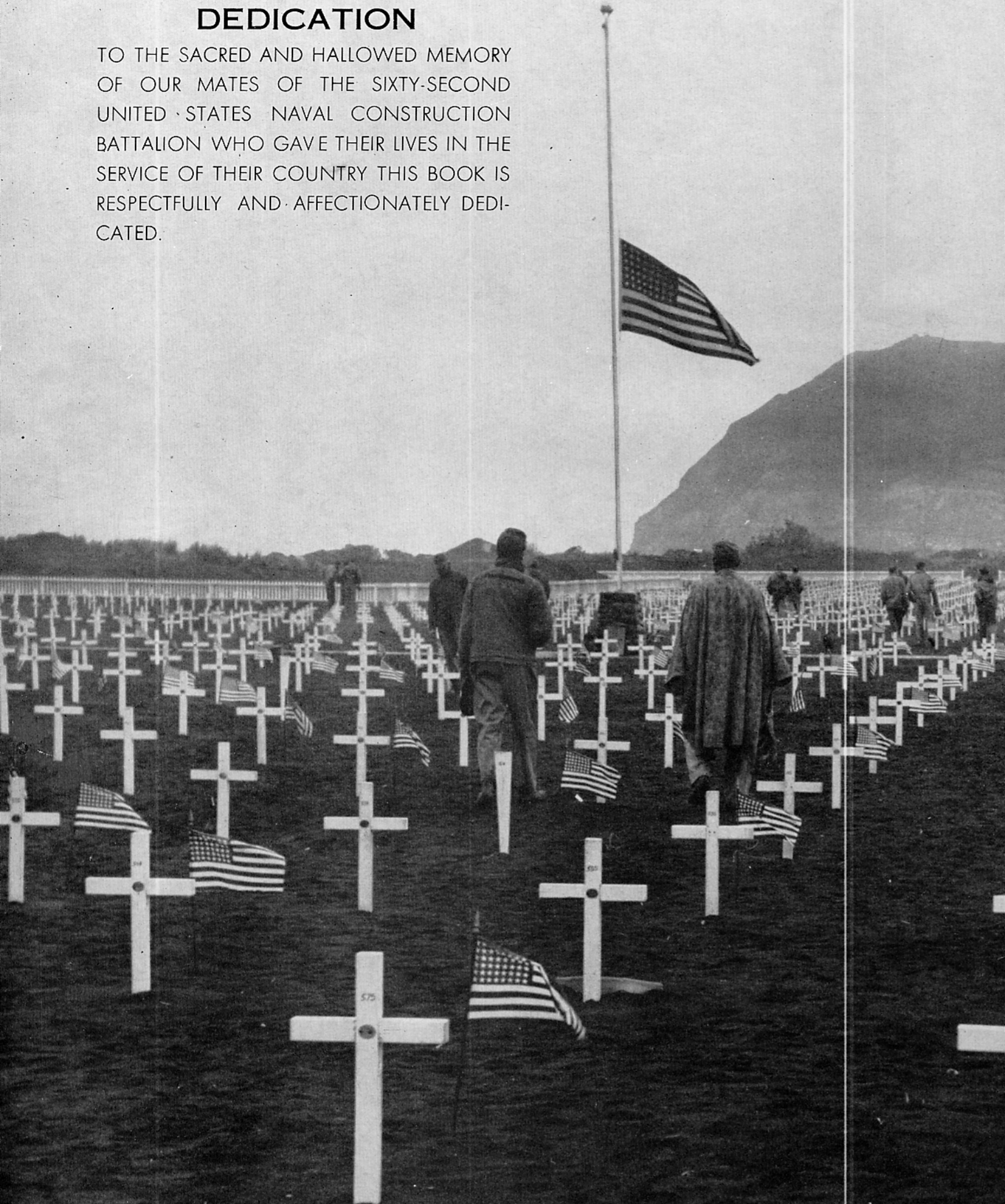
This book is a history of your battalion, a battalion in which you can take well-earned pride. It is a record of your experiences, both the hardships and pleasures which have made up your part in the winning of the war in the Pacific.

*F. B. Campbell*

F. B. CAMPBELL  
Comdr. USNR (CEC)  
Commanding Officer

## DEDICATION

TO THE SACRED AND HALLOWED MEMORY  
OF OUR MATES OF THE SIXTY-SECOND  
UNITED STATES NAVAL CONSTRUCTION  
BATTALION WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE  
SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY THIS BOOK IS  
RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDI-  
CATED.





C O M D . F . B . C A M P B E L L



# OUR SKIPPER

Frank Bixby Campbell . . . Born in Ironton, Ohio, September 16, 1904 . . . Youngest child in a family of four . . . Attended Ironton grade and high schools . . . Two years undergraduate studies, Wooster College, Ohio . . . Matriculated at Cornell University, New York, 1925 . . . Outstanding in college as public speaker, cross-country runner; house manager, Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity . . . Graduated with honors, 1928, Civil Engineering degree . . . For the next 14 years Mr. Campbell was associated almost entirely with Government bureaus . . . Acquired recognition as the youngest delegate to the World Peace Conference, Berlin, Germany, 1930 . . . Gained professional distinction as a hydraulic engineer . . . Married Maverette Beauchamp in New Mexico, February 1932 . . . The Campbells have two children . . . Duncan 11 years, Marcia Ann six years . . . Mr. Campbell was called to active duty December 15, 1941 . . . Commissioned Lieutenant, CEC, USNR . . . First tour of duty Bureau of Yards and Docks, Washington, D. C., December to May 1942 . . . Executive Officer 13th NCB, Dutch Harbor, Alaska, June to December 1942 . . . Executive Officer, Third NCR, Pearl Harbor, T. H., January to June 1943 . . . ALNAV promotion to Lieutenant Commander, May 1943 . . . Assigned to present tour of duty as Officer in Charge, 62nd NCB, July 27, 1943.



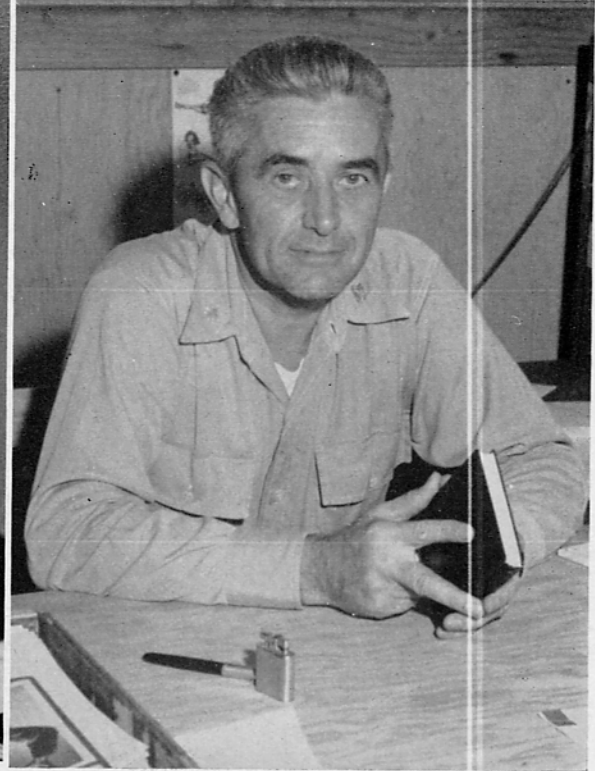
LT. COMDR. S. J. SCHULER

## OUR EXEC

Stewart John Schuler . . . Born in Rome, New York, July 4, 1905 . . . Oldest and only son in a family of five children . . . Attended Rome Grade and High Schools . . . Graduated University of Detroit, 1931, BCE degree . . . Layout engineer, Callahan Construction Company, 1933 to 1936 . . . Employed by Rome City Engineer, 1937 to 1940 . . . Appointed City Engineer of Rome, 1940, reappointed for a four-year term, 1944 . . . Married his childhood sweetheart, Helen Mahan, May 21, 1934 . . . The Schulers have two children . . . Stewart John, Jr., 11 years, Louis Marie, six years . . . Mr. Schuler was called to active duty December 17, 1942 . . . Commissioned Lieutenant, CEC, USNR . . . Assigned to 62nd Battalion . . . Promoted to Lt. Commander, May 17, 1943 . . . Appointed Executive Officer of 62nd Naval Construction Battalion May 20, 1943.



COMDR. MARX



COMDR. TAGGART

## FORMER SKIPPERS

COMDR. LESTER M. MARX. . . . First Officer in Charge of 62nd N.C.B., 7 December 1942 to 5 February 1943. . . . Born in Rochester, New York. . . . C.E. Degree, Ohio Northern University. . . . Worked as construction Engineer for many building, pipe line and utility projects. . . . Entered Government service as Engineer in Charge, Grand River Dam Project in Oklahoma. . . . Regional Engineer and Director of Federal Works Agency, Atlanta, Ga., before entering Navy.

COMDR. RUDULPH Y. TAGGART. . . . Brought the 62nd safely overseas to Hawaii. . . . Took us in tow 5 February 1943. . . . Bid us aloha 17 May 1943. . . . Born in Elkton, Maryland. . . . C.E. Degree, University of Delaware. . . . Associated with U. S. Engineer as a civilian. . . . Met us on Iwo as OinC, Eighth N.C.B.

LT. COMDR. W. H. O'BRIEN (picture not shown) . . . Came to us from the 16th N.C.B. while we were still in the camp at Aiea. . . . Turned over the wheel to Comdr. Campbell 27 July 1943.



# STAFF

**CLARENCE E. GODWIN**  
LIEUT. ChC, USNR

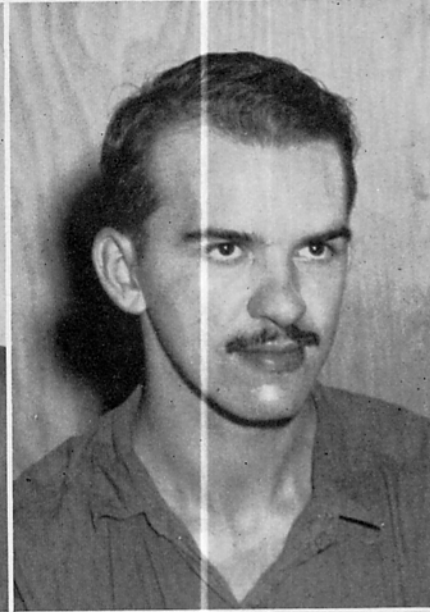
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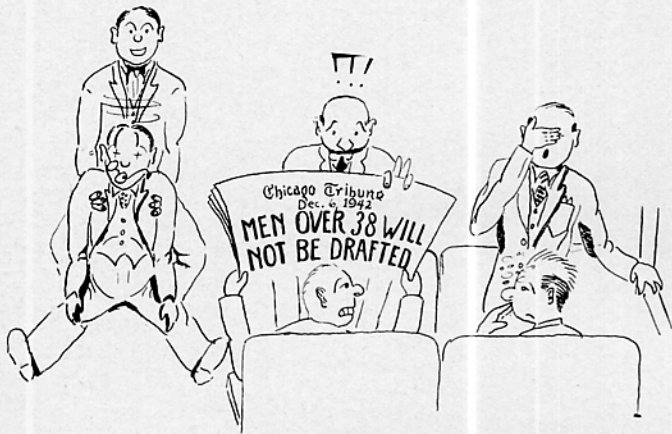
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MMS1c, USNR  
Cartoonist

Handlettering by Vincent Trengali

## A WORD OF APPRECIATION

Hearty and sincere thanks are due all men who helped make this book possible. Without their voluntary effort "We Did" would not have been "Can Do."

# Boot to Hueneme!



By the time this Battalion book is off the press and in your hands, we will have spent almost three years in the Seabees. We will have traveled enough miles on foot, on ships and trains and planes to have been around the globe at least once. From an over-all vantage point, we have had our ups and downs, our good and bad times, but we'll all agree that our first days in the service are the most memorable. Father Time has mellowed and tempered a lot of those early memories. Until today it's a pleasure to sit down with the gang and mull over the Boot Camp and Advance Training days. As you look over the pictures on the following pages you will see the groups of green and gullible rookies that are today seasoned veterans of this war. By no stretch of the imagination would we want to go through that ordeal again, but, we wouldn't give up our Boot Camp experiences for love or money.

A group of the finest construction men in the Middle West volunteered for service in the newly-formed Seabee legions and was called to active duty during the first days of December 1942. We bade goodbye to our loved ones and boarded trains in Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Cleveland, Milwaukee and way points, headed for a new life in the military service of our country. We didn't know "nothin' from nothin'" about this Navy life, but we

were game and sure of our skills in the allied building trades.

The first jolt in the new life was suffered by our oldsters on Sunday, December 6, 1942 while we were enroute on our Boot Camp-bound trains. The papers came out with a War Department announcement in big black headlines that men over 38 years old would not be drafted. Several of the boys fainted dead away and the rest of them were suddenly very sick, but there was no turning back at that late hour.

As each of the bulging recruit trains steamed into Davisville Station, a covey of shore police, led by a hardboiled young chief, came aboard as the official greeting party. Not knowing a Chief from an Admiral, we were awed by the uniform and cowered at his bark of authority when we were ordered to stay in our places until a shake-down and inspection had been completed. A few of our fellows, veterans of the first World War, were wise to this bunk and gladly handed over their empty bottles to the nonplused SP's. Most of us were quick to dig out our cameras and whiskey and hand them over, feeling like naughty boys. The Chief and his party left each train loaded down with an ample supply of spirits, while we began to learn our lessons the hard way.







## 62ND NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION OFFICERS

(Original)

**Bottom Row**, (left to right): Lt. Albertson, Ens. Murphy, Ens. Lappinen, Lt. Comdr. Taggart, Lt. Paul, Chaplain, Lt. LeMay, Lt. (jg) Dunn, Ens. Lawrence.

**Second Row**: Lt. Agnew, Lt. Schuler, Lt. (jg) Modlin, Ens. Dupont, Lt. (jg) Lange, Lt. (jg) Shaid, Lt. (jg) Kornrumpf, Lt. (jg) Urban, W. O. Carp. O'Brien.

**Top Row**: Ens. Kennedy, Ens. Collins, W. O. Carp. Arndt, W. O. Carp. Greenwood, W. O. Carp. Keith, Ens. Fisher, W. O. Carp. Nawn.

**Missing from Picture**: Ens. Blanchard, Lt. (jg) Linett, Lt. Comdr. Marx.

On December 1, 1942, our original officers arrived at Camp Allen, Virginia, for a three week tour of indoctrination. Stiff and formal in their newly purchased uniforms, the "BOOTS" logged in and were assigned to their B.O.Q. The rows of double bunks that confronted them weren't at all what they had expected. But orientation to this new life was rapid, and resentment melted away as the business-like training for war got under way with full speed. Upon the completion of training Lt. Comdr. Lester Marx was appointed Officer-in-Charge. The group proceeded to Davisville, Rhode Island, on December 30, 1942, for the formal commissioning of the 62nd Naval Construction Battalion. On February 25, 1943, advanced training was completed and with Lt. Comdr. Rudolph Y. Taggart as the new Officer-in-Charge, the battalion entrained for Port Hueneme—and Pearl Harbor.

Those hated P.T. classes on freezing mornings before dawn. . . . Those tough Marine Drill Sergeants . . . and the three hour drill periods every afternoon. . . .

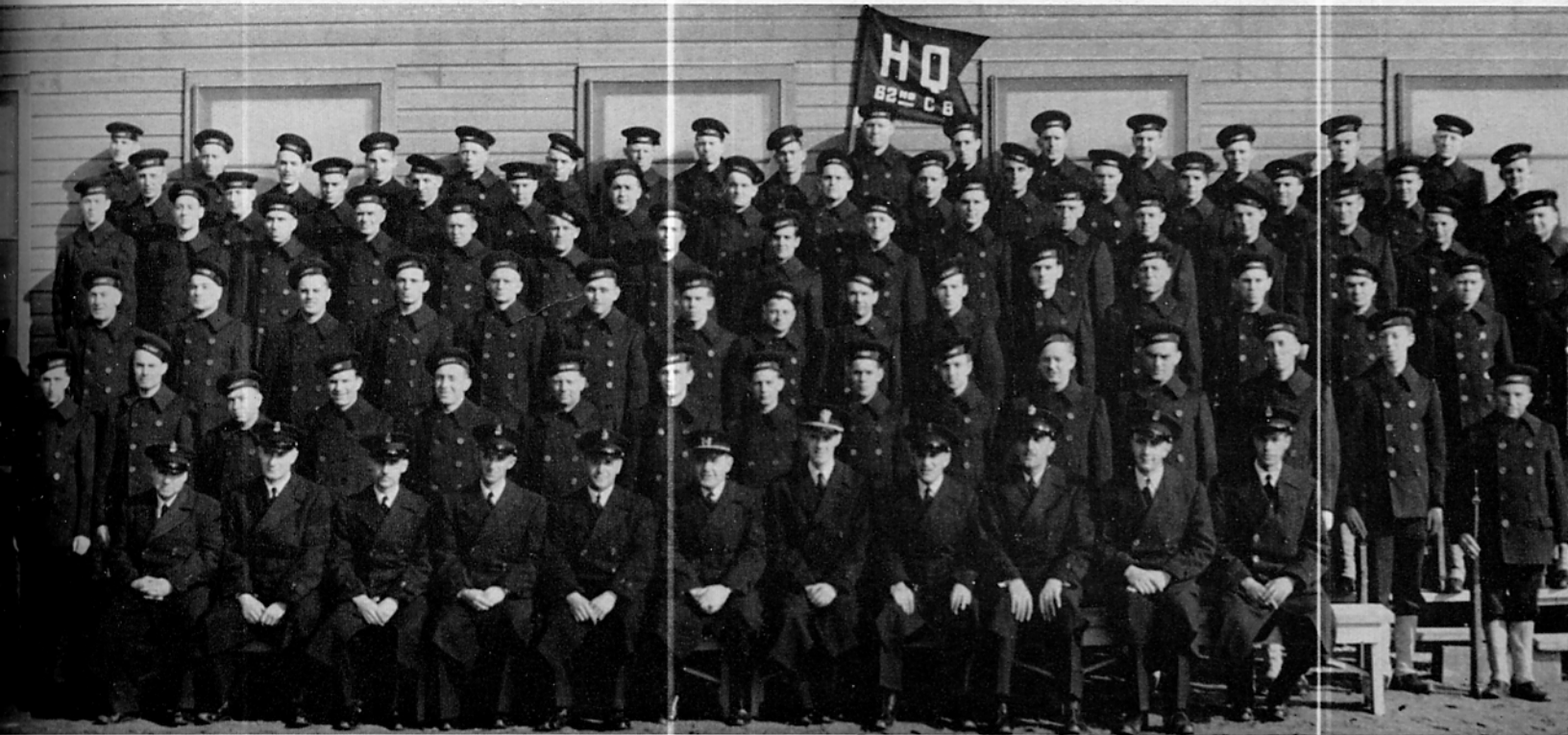
Cramming the books every night for those early morning classes. . . . Lt. Urban, with his mother's ironing board set up between the bunks, pressing his uniform with a flat iron. . . . Gawky Ens. Blanchard in his bunk-to-bunk search for candy. . . . W. O. Arndt, the old time Navy man, mothering his green and innocent chicks. . . . Ens. Lappinen, the old salt, wandering around in his worn-out Chinese robe. . . . W. O. Greenwood sneaking down to get a little schnaps from his Commander pal. . . . Brother Nawn, loudly championing the Cause of the Boston's Labor Unions. . . . Commander Marx and his itchy red flannel under-drawers. . . . W. O. Keith out-yelling his brother officers in his double-fortissimo voice. . . . Ens. Dupont gagging on the Navy's famous mutton curry. . . . W. O. O'Briens' foul smelling king size coffin nails. . . . That Xmas of '42 we could have spent at home. . . . Those tiresome lectures on "Chah-ts" . . . The cat fever epidemic. Bird-dogging.





"On the double." We were a bewildered, puffing gang of Boots when we stumbled to a halt in front of supply building S-1, very wet and very muddy from our mile hike. Our first taste of Navy speed (?) came next, as we stamped our feet and threw our arms about in wild motions to keep from freezing to death while we waited for someone to remember to issue blankets and mattresses, and assign us quarters. When we were all numb from the cold and had just about given up hope, they gave us our issue. Off we trudged again in the black night, stumbling over lumber piles and dropping our gear in the mud in search of our barracks which were somewhere in "THAT DIRECTION." It was after three in the morning when we crawled between our blankets. So this was the Navy! We were sorry already.

It was after midnight when we finally tumbled out of our warm coaches into Rhode Island's famous zero weather. A few stragglers lounging around the station platform leered at us and gave us the double shivers of the spine by yelling "YOU'LL BE SORRY" and "IT WON'T BE LONG NOW." Out of the night's blackness appeared another Chief just when we were beginning to wonder what came next. "Line up like four rows of corn, you jerks, and you know what I mean," he bawled at us. We began to shuffle into rows when "ON THE DOUBLE" came like a sharp report, and we got off the dime. Those of us that had never practiced the habit of being "on the double" caught on fast, and before we realized it the four rows of corn were entering Camp Endicott's famous barbed wire enclosure



## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

**Bottom Row, (left to right):** Varner, Hornidge, Hall, Williams, Phillips, O'Brien, Kennedy, Katz, Flach, Scheips, Willis.

**Second Row:** Leckrone, Bowers, Ritchie, Billetter, W. H. Nichols, Harter, Walker, Surma, Herr, Wilson, Amundson, Babcock, Peters, Hooton, Bogenrief.

**Third Row:** Collogan, Rukavina, Oprita, Shaw, Hunt, Rivers, Abbey, Karwoski, Bunda, Dorris, Toben, Rivinius, Panhorst, Kinman, Reimer, Vaccaro.

**Fourth Row:** Sinner, Tappana, Lipsitz, Mullholland, Beaver, Benda, Bradley, Eldridge, DuRoss, Knauer, Westmeier, Conley, Wilkie, Babich, Kasowski, Bisko.

**Fifth Row:** Luer, McHugh, Eucker, Turner, Lindgurg, Stefanko, Samlkowski, Lucas, Bauman, W. D. Nichols, Misner, Herrmann, Osberg, Blackburn, Fish.

**Top Row:** Rose, Goeller, Hiatt, Scanlan, Salmon, Keich, Ball, Fredericks, Cornwell, Scherschel, Kiefer, Costello, Myers, Miller, Thorn, Nalley.



## COMPANY A

**PLATOON SIX—Bottom Row**, (left to right): Olson, Natschke, Ehman, Curcio, Blank, Eakins, Allemenos, Cotterman.

**Second Row:** Davis, Mersnik, Cantrell, Dollahan, Bocholt, Lovett, McDonald, Hazel.

**Third Row:** Carlson, Desm, Burval, Copelan, Lake, McMahon, Marks, Lego.

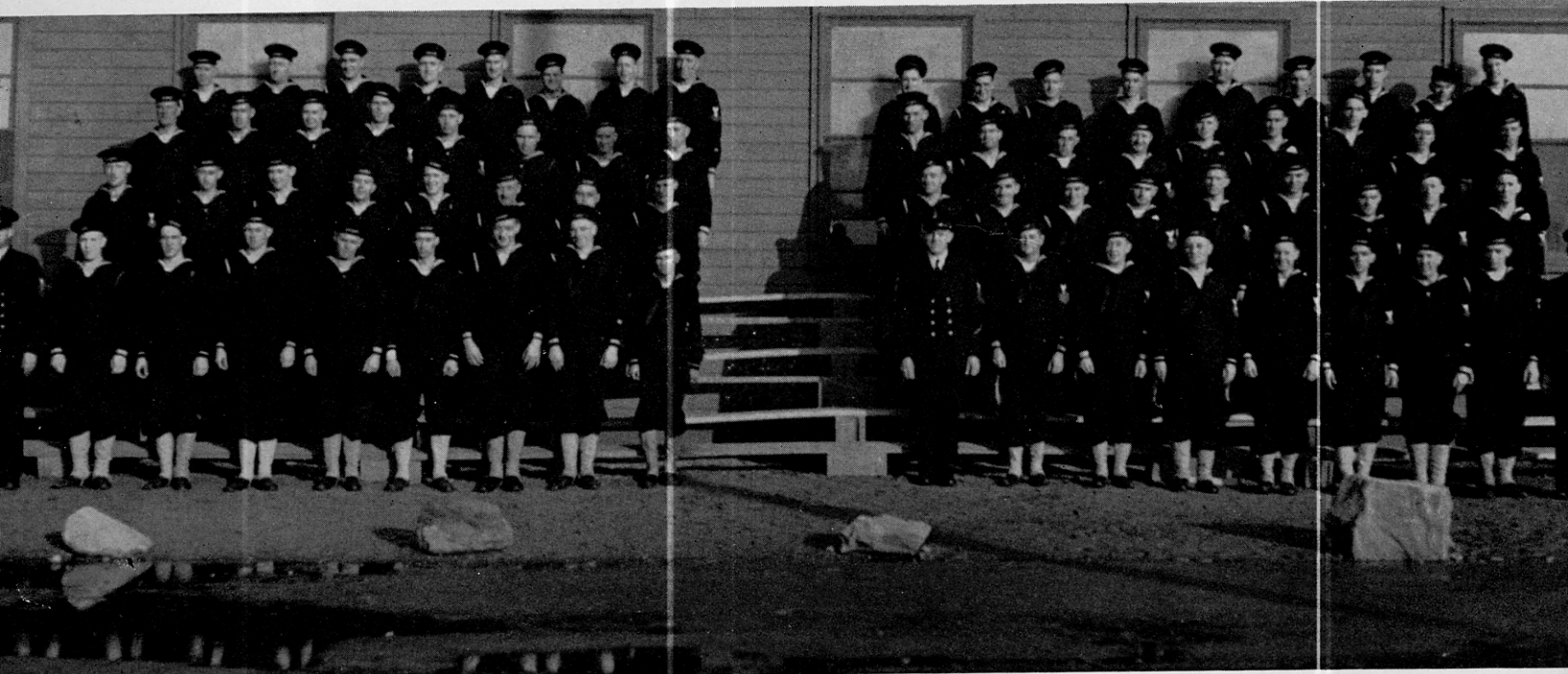
**Top Row:** Bow, Doyle, Richmond, Fletcher, Axne, Meschewski, Zuick, Wright.

**PLATOON FIVE—Bottom Row:** McNeeley, Parker, Pursch, Beacon, Gondor, Spooner, Ruth, Lochbihler.

**Second Row:** Vano, Zirger, Erickson, Fitos, Armagost, Krause, Jeske, Christensen.

**Third Row:** McCarron, Stamm, Meador, Kuduk, Matthey, Conley, Adams, Schlueter.

**Top Row:** Brugler, Jr., Albrecht, Nowning, Mathison, Fleury, Bowman, Baker.



## COMPANY A

**PLATOON FOUR—Bottom Row**, (left to right): J. Q. Goodwin, Riddell, Wedl, Bailey, Rosser, Tasker, Watson, Wuebbles, Richardson.

**Second Row:** Martin, Dembowski, Dickerhoff, Jameson, Yager, Charpen, Wilson, Brinkman.

**Third Row:** Mathiason, Mitchell, Shroeder, Erspamer, Hilton, Rose, Tennant, Leming.

**Top Row:** Johnson, Stratmoen, Miller, Peterson, Ashby, Boege, Arnesen, Girard.

**PLATOON THREE—Bottom Row:** Lochbihler, Wise, Roehr, Huck, Tribby, Stone, Horner, McGee, Taylor.

**Second Row:** Schwarzwaldler, Sangster, Mehl, Heitz, Bertelsen, Coniglio, Wells, Wensel, Prussman.

**Third Row:** Vlna, McKay, Kroeckel, Kloss, McHale, Daney, Borowski, McDonough, Bruce.

**Top Row:** Kulpa, Drake, McCrank, Cooney, Stafford, Wilkoske, Sielaff, Melvig, Duehring.