



Heroes: the Seabees

"...The two Sections accumulated these medals.

Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Navy Good Conduct Ribbon & medal, American Campaign Ribbon and Medal, Asiatic - Pacific Campaign Ribbon & Medal, WWII Victory Ribbon & Medal, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Philippine Liberation Ribbon & Medal, Philippine Independence Ribbon & Medal..."



6th Special Seabees (served with 53rd)-

The 6th Special Seabees were a "Combat Stevedore" Battalion that saw action in the Pacific. Loading and unloading ships both in the safety of the rear areas and under the enemy's guns on invasion beachheads. They humped cargo manhandling the materials of war, fuel, ammunition, bombs, rations, vehicles, building materials, etc, to where they were needed. The ships they were

unloading were "prime targets" for the Japanese bombers and artillery units. The Stevedores hauled under fire, went in with combat troops, came out just as bruised and tired.

The First Section of the Sixth Special arrived at Port Hueneme on April 10, 1943, and embarked May 1, 1943, arriving at Nandi, Fiji Islands, May 15. On December 29, 1943, the first section left Nandi, arrived at Guadalcanal January 3, 1944, then left there January 16 for Torokina, Bougainville landing there four days later. The outfit worked at this base and also sent a detachment to the Treasury Islands, which rejoined the main body on Bougainville August 18, 1944. The First Section left Torokina on October 1, 1944, and arrived at Ulithi Western Caroline, Islands, ten days later. The Sixth Special was inactivated early in July, 1945, on Oahu and sent back to the States.

The Second Section of the Sixth Special left Port Hueneme June 11, 1943, for Guadalcanal. On September 29, the first echelon of the Second Section embarked for Vella Lavella, and on October 20, the second echelon left for the Russell Islands. Both units were attached to the Fourth Marines Advanced Depot. The first echelon left Vella Lavella on November 22, 1943, arriving at Bougainville the next day, and the second echelon left the Russells December 19 and joined the first echelon on December 23. Parts of the first and second sections combined and were sent to the Treasury Islands March 1944. After returning to Bougainville the Second Section shipped to the Philippines in late October 1944. The Second Section was inactivated in June 1945.

Sixth Special NCB

Log

Vunda Pt. Fiji
Banika
New Caledonia
Guadalcanal
Bougainville
Ulithi Atoll
Samar, Philippine Island



Vella La Vella
Puruata
LST Flotilla 5
Green Island
Russell Island
Treasure Island
Hawaii
Pearl Harbor

CAN DO: THE DIFFICULT WE DO IMMEDIATELY, THE IMPOSSIBLE TAKES A LITTLE TIME





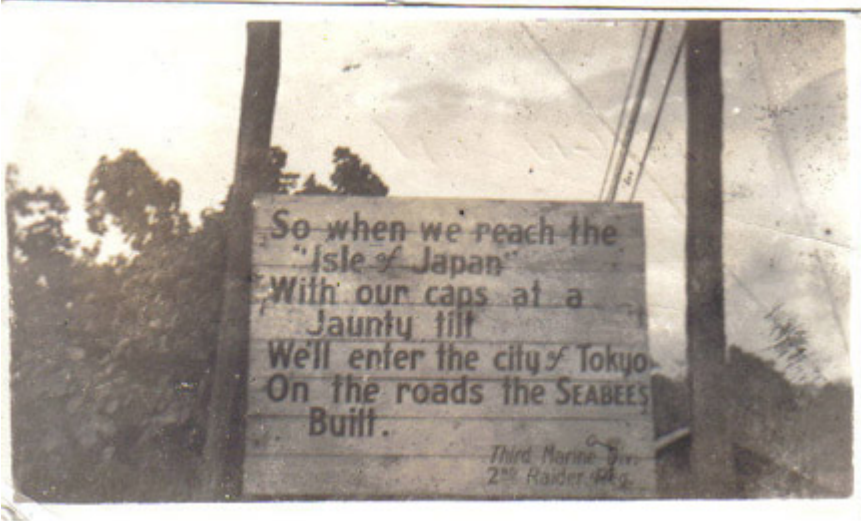
6th Special Seabees on Bougainville



6th Special Seabees on Bougainville



6th Special Seabees on Bougainville



6th Special Seabees on Bougainville



6th Special Seabees on Bougainville

Solomon Island In Rear of Foe Taken by U. S.

Troops Land in Force on Vella Lavella and Hasten Bairoko Garrison Doom

By The Associated Press
ALLIED HEADQUARTERS IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, Aug. 17 (Tuesday).—American troops have landed in force on Vella Lavella Island, in the central Solomons, by-passing Kolombangara Island and hastening the doom of Japan's encircled garrison at Bairoko, on New Georgia, forty-five miles southeast.

The occupation, achieved in force on Sunday and disclosed today by General Douglas MacArthur in a communique, was such a surprise move that it apparently was unopposed. Meager reports made no mention of enemy

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(In a delayed dispatch from Leif Erickson, Associated Press war correspondent, who went ashore from a landing barge with the troops, first disclosure was made that waves of Japanese planes tried to break up the invaders after the first boats had been unloaded. He said the dive-bombers, escorted by Zeros, failed to hit a single boat but did succeed in strafing some of the boats winding up the landing operations.

(Taken on in furious dogfights, 14 of the enemy planes were shot down at a cost of only two of ours.)

Yanks By-Passed Kolombangara

The Japanese obviously believed that the Americans, now wiping out bitter-end enemy resistance on New Georgia above the captured Munda airfield, would hold to island-by-island strategy and strike next across the Kula gulf at the Vila air base.

Instead, the Americans by-passed Kolombangara island, on which Vila is situated, and overwhelmed Vella Lavella, 45 miles northwest of New Georgia. Seizure of this northernmost island of the New Georgia group seemed to seal the fate of all other intervening islands—Ganongga, Gizo, Wankwani and Arundel as well as Kolombangara.

"This places our forces north of enemy positions at Vila on Kolombangara island and renders its continuous supply problematical," today's communique pointedly stated.

(Erickson's dispatch, written the day of the landing, said the obvious strategy was to starve out the Vila garrison, thus obviating the necessity of prolonged fighting in Kolombangara's jungles).

Yanks Capture Vella Lavella Island in Central Solomons

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC—Japan's holdings throughout the central Solomons are virtually doomed and the enemy bases still barring the way to his fortress of Rabaul are gravely menaced as the consequence of a surprise invasion of Vella Lavella island.

United States forces in considerable strength seized it Sunday in a move so unforeseen by the enemy that the invaders accomplished the hitherto unheard of feat of capturing 350 Japanese

By Associated Press

U. S. HEADQUARTERS IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, Aug. 19—Hundreds of Japanese troops were killed or captured during an enemy attempt to land on newly-conquered Vella Lavella island early yesterday morning.

The enemy forces were packed on possibly 50 to 30 large barges holding approximately 75 men each, indicating a force of 1500 to 2200 men, and not more than 300 of them were believed to have reached shore.

Four Japanese destroyers which were escorting the barges "took off for home" when U. S. warships engaged them, two were seriously damaged, one probably sank and a third enemy destroyer was hit.

The American force broke off its action against the Japanese destroyers to go after the enemy landing barges, crowded with troops.

Japanese

Yesterday's Japanese communique, as broadcast from Tokyo and recorded by The Associated Press:

Imperial Japanese naval air units, which had been keeping close watch on the movement of an enemy convoy fleet with escort vessels moving westward since Aug. 13 from the direction of Guadalcanal Island, having detected signs of the convoy fleet moving toward Vella Lavella Island since the night of Aug. 14, launched early in the morning of Aug. 15 repeated attacks on the enemy convoy and obtained the following war results:

Firstly: Off the southern coast of Vella Lavella our first attack plane unit launched an attack on the enemy convoy fleet escorted by approximately fifty enemy fighters which was approaching the coast and sank instantly one large-size transport, set ablaze three large and medium size transports and shot down thirteen enemy fighter planes.

Secondly: Our second attack

plane unit attacked the aforementioned enemy convoy fleet again and, defying the resistance put up by enemy fighters, sank two large-size transports and one landing motorboat, scored near hits on one large-size destroyer and one amphibian truck, strafed approximately ten landing motorboats and shot down eleven enemy fighters.

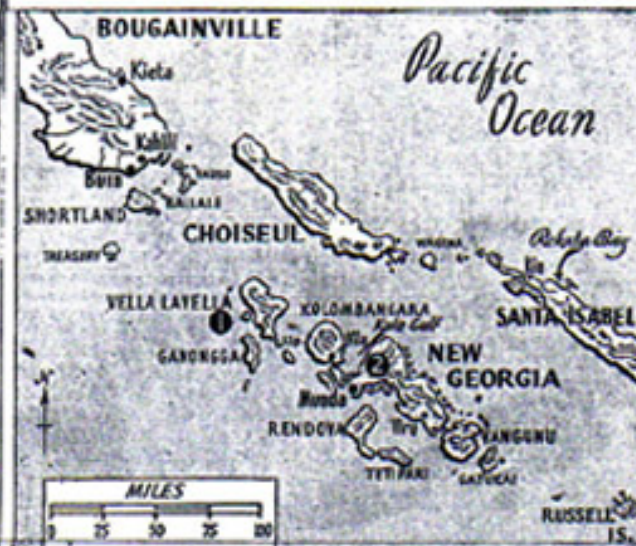
Thirdly: Our third attack plane unit, engaging in aerial combats with enemy fighters, riddled the vicinity of the enemy landing points and scored one near hit on one cruiser, set afire two landing places and shot down four enemy fighters.

Fourthly: Our fourth attack plane unit assaulted the enemy convoy fleet in waters ten nautical miles south of Simbu Island, as well as in waters fifteen nautical miles southeast of Ilolo, and sank one large-size destroyer and heavily damaged another destroyer.

Fifthly: Another attack plane unit which moved out to attack another convoy fleet at midnight Aug. 14 spotted the enemy convoy fleet in waters ten nautical miles east of Gatakal Island and, launching a torpedo attack, sank instantaneously one large-type cruiser, sank one large-size transport and another enemy warship which was either a light cruiser or a large-type destroyer. In addition it scored one direct torpedo hit on one cruiser and one destroyer.

In the above attacks seventeen of our planes either deliberately crashed themselves into enemy objectives or have not yet returned to base.

The Allies Take Another Solomon Island



Herald Tribune map
 Allied headquarters reported the taking of Vella Lavella (1) and the capture of 350 Japanese there. The occupation bypasses Kolombangara. Fighting is still in progress on New Georgia (2)

6th Special Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees)

Submitted by John J. Ratomski Original Story submitted 7 January 2005.

Source: 1943-1945 Cruisebook for the 6th Special Naval Construction Battalion