

Most of us may not know that the Wharf Operating Coy. consists of three groups of specialists who, in their own line can hold their jobs down with the best. The Winchmen who have a responsible job in civil life have a equally responsible, and perhaps more dangerous one in war time; the Hatchmen upon whose skill in judgement the working parties on the wharf depend as the cargo swings up from below, and, finally, the Tallymen who have the chocking of the cargo. Normally, wharf work is never a "safe" job even with all the modern equipment of unloading; the heavy, bulky cargo which covers products from all types of factories and industries does not make for easy handling. How much more difficult the Wharf Operating Coy. must find the undertaking we must leave time to reveal, since the nature of the "cargo" handled is "security".

Unloading is something that has to be worked out on the spot. With a wharf we usually associate overhead cranes, vessels berthed lazily along the wharfs, trolleys, and large storerooms. But not so here. The cargo is transferred straight from the holds to the waiting lorries below. Watching the loaded slings swing up from below after the cry "Shoot The Moon", and then hovering in mid air for a few seconds lends a touch of fantasy to the scene. The small jetty, it is no more, the bright lights from the ship, the screeches from the winches, the hissing of the escaping steam, the shadowy figures of the men and the Pacific moon overhead reminds one of pirates and smugglers of long ago.

Daylight, it is needless to say, gives a mere sober picture. The work goes on just the same—in four shifts of six hours each, under the supervision of a Sgt. and officer. During the day Eddie Heald and Tom O'Donnell are conspicuous....as cooks should be, it is said. More conspicuous is the famous oven which looks like a cross between a Heath Robinson Nightmare and the Flying Scotchman. In this all the cooking is done, and the water boiled....and where Eddie lost his lantern. Water has to be carried two miles for cooking purposes. The local water is liable to leave you more dirty after the wash than before. But even the cleanest water and the best soap are useless against the reddish earth once it is churned into mud after a heavy shower. The dark stain it leaves is a souvenir you carry until the trousers & coat is discarded.

The camp is situated on what must be one of the levellest spots on the Island. Built on the top of a hill before which stretches the great blue Pacific, while below is the small jetty and around are the Naiculi trees which form a background for a picture one does not easily forget. The impression is enhanced by the neat paths around the camp.

Capt. F. J. Clark O.C. keeps his eye on details which to the casual observer may appear trivial, but which are appreciated by those who know wharf work. Second in charge is 2/Lieut. B. Wright who does not miss very much that goes on.

There is the story of Sgt. N. Stanley who is given to sleep walking and one night removed the commutator from a jeep; Sgt. J. Hewitt of the Ovon Fano; Sgt. Gilcoy and Cpl. Lyons who know something of a fishing trip and Sgt. "Wally" Hobson in the HQ Orderly Room who keeps a check on what is required when the boys are out on a job. There are many stories space does not permit us to print and may comments we would like to make, but the note on which we finish is the unity and good feeling that makes the Wharf Operating Coy. an effective and vital part of our Army.

