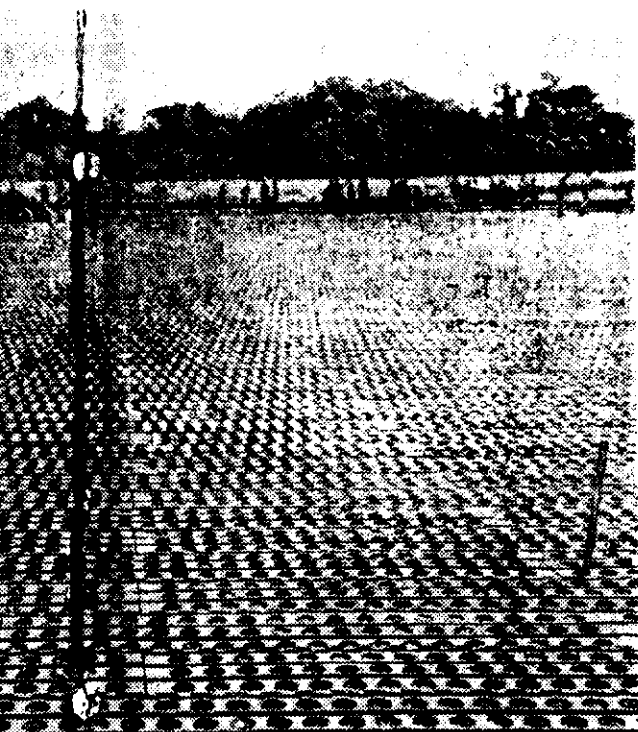
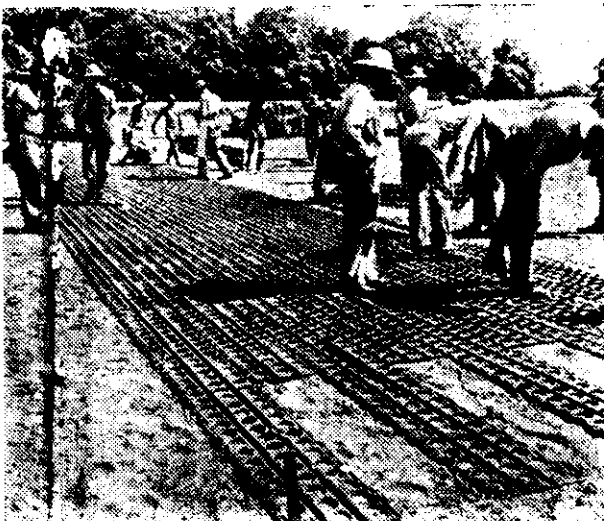




IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH we see preliminary work being done on a bomber runway in one of the South-Pacific Islands.



With equal speed and efficiency in the South-West Pacific and the Philippines, is shown here completed.



THE BEGINNING of the final state in building the airfield—laying the steel matting for runways.

a nearly completed condition by the Americans), a U.S. Marine complement of 152 men and two officers was feverishly hacking an airfield out of malarial jungles on Espiritu Santo Island in the New Hebrides. Within two months the field was in condition to receive its first plane.

Guadalcanal, on which U.S. troops landed in August, 1942, has been transformed into an air base of great importance, having, besides renovated Henderson Field, three new air strips. From there bombers and fighters attacked Japanese ships, planes, and installations in the Northern islands of the Solomon group.

#### Tribute to Builders

The story behind these assaults is a tribute to the men who built the fields. In one area they constructed 47 miles of gravel-surfaced, all-weather highway, with proper drainage and gradings; constructed a large number of timber beam bridges and piers; cleared 7,000,000 square feet of jungle area for occupation of troops; built 300 galleys, 450 tables and 1,800 benches; set up a water purification and supply system, pumping 60,000 to 75,000 gallons of water daily for cooking, drinking, and bathing; set up a sawmill which supplied 20,000 board feet of lumber per day for construction purposes; put into operation a gravel pit which produced 10,000 cubic yards of gravel for road building each week.

Munda, on New Georgia Island, is also the scene of a transformation wrought by Army engineers and Navy Seabees. Within a month after this battle-scarred area had been taken from the Japanese, the airfield on Lambeti Plantation, with its much-bombed runways, was put back into condition by steamshovels, bulldozers, and earth-movers. Modern two-lane hard-packed coral roads replaced the trails that had been passable only to jeeps; and screened-in mess halls, kitchens and hospitals stood where marines had eaten in the open and had their wounds dressed.

#### Fast Work by Negroes

One battalion of Seabees that landed in the Solomons was an all-Negro unit. Between sunrise and sunset of the day they landed, the men selected the site of their airfield, surveyed and mapped it, and had their selection approved. Then construction work started in earnest, despite 23 inches of rain during the next eight weeks. They cleared away jungle, levelled and graded the field, set up electric lights and telephones and milled their own lumber. They dammed mountain streams, piped the water as far as they could with available materials, and built wooden reservoirs.

Air bases are being made in other areas as well as in the South-West Pacific. American planes operating from India need bases far from established communications. In Assam, north-east India, Americans are constructing airports and roads. Chinese and American engineers have worked together to build bridges and keep the roads open during the monsoons.

Many of the construction men have had to fight side by side with combat troops to achieve their bridgeheads, and then battle against enemy patrols and build their bridges under fire.

The accomplishments of the fighting construction workers and the bulldozer are destined to become symbols of attack and victory as much as the tank and the bomber.

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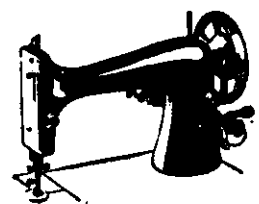
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