Title: Natale Bellantoni papers
Date (inclusive): 1942-2006
Collection Number: 2019C21
Contributing Institution: Hoover Institution Archives
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 5 manuscript boxes, 6 oversize boxes, 1 card file box, 1 oversize folder (9.0 linear feet)
Abstract: Writings, correspondence, printed matter, sketches, paintings, photographs, other audiovisual material, and memorabilia, relating to American military construction activities in the Pacific Theater during World War II.
Physical Location: Hoover Institution Archives
Creator: Bellantoni, Natale
Access
Boxes 10-12 restricted; use copies available in Box 3. The collection is open for research; materials must be requested at least two business days in advance of intended use.
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Natale Bellantoni papers, [Box no., Folder no. or title], Hoover Institution Archives
Acquisition Information
Materials were acquired by the Hoover Institution Archives in 2018.
Accruals
Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. To determine if this has occurred, find the collection in Stanford University's online catalog at http://searchworks.stanford.edu/. Materials have been added to the collection if the number of boxes listed in the catalog is larger than the number of boxes listed in this finding aid.
Biographical Note
Natale Bellantoni was born December 21, 1920. He was raised in Boston’s South End and attended Boston English High School. From 1939-1942, he attended the Massachusetts School of Art, receiving formal artistic training, and meeting his fiancée, Irene Sztucinski. Bellantoni enlisted in the Navy in October of 1942 and was assigned to the 78th Construction Battalion as a Carpenter’s Mate. The construction battalions, or “Seabees,” worked their way across the Pacific Ocean, building the airfields and bases that supported the United States’ efforts against Japan. As a member of the 78th battalion, Bellantoni served in New Caledonia, New Guinea, the Admiralty Islands, and Okinawa.
After the end of World War II, Bellantoni returned to Boston and married his fiancée, with whom he corresponded through the course of the war. After his discharge from the Navy, Bellantoni worked as a professional artist and graphic designer, primarily for Gunn Studios of Boston. Bellantoni died on June 23, 2012.
Scope and Content
The Natale Bellantoni papers consists of six series: Biographical Material, Correspondence, Artwork, Photographs, Audiovisual Material, and Memorabilia. The collection focuses on Bellantoni’s service in the U.S. Navy’s 78th Construction Battalion as they fought and built their way across the Pacific Ocean during World War II. The construction battalions, otherwise known as “Seabees,” built the airfields, bases, and other infrastructure necessary for the United States’ offensive push towards Japan.
The Biographical Material series contains clippings, pamphlets, posters, maps, notes, and other documents that Bellantoni collected regarding his service. The Correspondence series primarily consists of Bellantoni’s letters to his fiancée Irene Sztucinski. Despite the need to pass the censors, the letters present a lively and detailed description of Bellantoni’s life as a Seabee. The Artwork series includes original sketches, watercolors and drawings created by Nat Bellantoni, creating a visual journal of his life on board ship and on the islands his battalion visited, especially Noumea, New Guinea, and Okinawa. The Photographs series further provides a visual record of the 78th Battalion’s activities, including scenes of work, life in camp, and informal recreation for the Seabees. The photographs also extensively depict the landscapes of New Caledonia, New Guinea, and Okinawa, as well as local inhabitants and their daily life. The Audiovisual Materials series includes audio and video recordings of interviews regarding Seabee history, and the 78th Battalion’s reunion.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Biographical Material 1942-1997
Scope and Contents note
Contains Bellantoni's certificate of satisfactory service, Battalion yearbooks for the 71st and 78th Battalions, leaflets, hand-drawn and published maps, clippings, published works on World War II and the Seabees, and a script and related notes for a documentary on Seabee history. Of particular note is a scrapbook kept by Irene Sztucinski while Bellantoni was in the Navy, which contains correspondence and clippings documenting Nat's daily life as a Seabee. The series is divided into unpublished and published material, then arranged in chronological order.

Box 8
Scrapbook kept by Irene 1942-1943
Scope and Contents note
Includes letters from boot camp.

Box/Folder 1 : 1 Chapel Dedication 1944 July 2
Box/Folder 1 : 2 Malaria and Epidemic Disease Control calendar page: "If You Don't Give a Darn About Yourself, Do It For Her," art by Frank Mack 1945 May
Box/Folder 1 : 3 43rd U.S. Naval Construction Regiment Progress Report, Bolo Point, Okinawa. Project #2301 1945 September
Box/Folder 1 : 4 Certificate of satisfactory service, United States Navy 1946 January 10
Box/Folder 1 : 5 Script and notes for Seabee history video 1993-1994
Box/Folder 1 : 6 Hand drawn Strategy, Tactics and Operations plan from boot camp undated
Box/Folder 1 : 7 Ponam island: glossary of native words undated
Box/Folder 1 : 8 Surrender leaflet in English and Japanese undated

Published Material 1942-1997
Box/Folder 1 : 9 Reichenbach, Sidney. All you want to know about New Caledonia. Sydney: W.C. Penfold & Co. 1942 April
Box/Folder 1 : 11 Boston English High School Record, volume 59 number 3 1944 March
Box/Folder 2 : 1 U.S. Navy 71st Battalion [Yearbook] undated

General note
2 copies.

Box/Folder 2 : 4 Jensen, Lt. Oliver, United States Naval Reserve. Carrier War. New York: Pocket Books 1945
Box/Folder 2 : 5 Building the Navy's Bases in WWII, Volume II. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office 1947
Box/Folder 7 : 3-4 LIFE magazine, 7 issues 1943-1950

General note
Includes related correspondence.

### Clippings 1944-1992

- **Box/Folder 7 : 1**
  - "Pictures in Globe Charm Natives of South Seas Isles." *Boston Globe*. 1944 October 18

- **Box/Folder 6 : 8**
  - "War is Over at Last!" *Boston Globe* front page 1945 August 15

- **Box/Folder 1 : 14**
  - Newspaper clippings 1944-1992

- **Box/Folder 7 : 2**
  - Oversize newspaper clippings related to 78th Seabee Battalion 1944, 1991

- **Map case**
  - 3 War bond posters 1945

### National Geographic Society. *Pacific Ocean, Atlas plate 61. (1 : 36,432,000) 1962*

### Correspondence 1943-1945

Scope and Contents note

Includes letters written from Nat Bellantoni to his fiancee Irene Sztucinski during his training and deployment. Also includes correspondence with the Brooklyn Dodgers regarding the Seabees. Arranged by correspondent, then by date.

- **Box/Folder 1 : 15**
  - Brooklyn Dodgers 1945

- **Box/Folder 1 : 16-18**
  - Sztucinski, Irene 1943-1945

### Artwork 1943-1945

Scope and Contents note

Contains watercolors, sketches, paste-ups, drawings and scratchboards of Nat Bellantoni's art produced during World War II. Includes landscapes and scenes of daily life for the Seabees, in addition to their logo and art drawn for the battalion log. Arranged by format, then chronological order.

#### Sketches 1943-1945

- **Box/Folder 1 : 19**
  - 2 sketch books 1943-1944

- **Box 8**
  - "Marine Cleans His Rifle" 1943 November 29

- **Box 8**
  - "Sketch of a ship," Milne Bay, New Guinea 1943 December 3

- **Box 8**
  - "Sketch of Seabees," New Guinea 1943 December 27

- **Box 8**
  - [2 untitled sketches of boats] Milne Bay, New Guinea 1944 February 14-16

- **Box 8**
  - "Sketch of boat and sailors" undated

- **Box/Folder 6 : 6**
  - Charcoal sketch: "Bambi" mascot of 78th in New Caledonia 1945

#### Watercolors

- **Box/Folder 1 : 21**
  - List of watercolor titles and descriptions undated

- **Box 8**
  - "Gun Watch," painted aboard the *MS Day Star* 1943 June 22
    - General note
    - Alternate title, from verso: "Somewhere on the Pacific"

- **Box 8**
  - "Scanning the Horizon," painted aboard the *MS Day Star* 1943 June 26
    - General note
    - Alternate title, from verso: "On the Lookout!"

- **Box 8**
  - "Sundown," painted aboard the *MS Day Star* 1943 June 26
    - General note
    - Alternate title, from verso: "Ship's Crew at Sundown"

- **Box 8**
  - "KP," painted aboard the *MS Day Star* 1943 June 28
    - General note
    - Alternate title, from verso: "KP Somewhere on the Pacific"

- **Box 8**
  - "Fishing," Noumea, New Caledonia 1943 July 15
    - General note
    - Alternate title, from verso: "New Caledonia"
| Box 8 | "Signal Flags," painted aboard the *MS Day Star* 1943 July 18 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from verso: "Airing Out Signal Flags" |
| Box 8 | [Untitled watercolor], Noumea, New Caledonia 1943 August 22 |
| Box 8 | "Countryside," painted in Noumea, New Caledonia 1943 [September] |
| Box 8 | "Of Peace and War," painted in Noumea, New Caledonia 1943 October |
| Box 8 | "Final Journey," painted in Noumea, New Caledonia 1943 October 23 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from verso: "Magenta Air Field New Caledonia" |
| Box 8 | "Scuttlebutt," painted in Noumea, New Caledonia 1943 |
| Box 8 | "Harbor LST," Noumea, New Caledonia [1943] |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Impression of "Scuttlebutt" on verso |
| Box 8 | "Cathedral Square," painted in the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea 1944 June 24 |
| Box 8 | "New Guinea Mud," painted in the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea 1944 August 12 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from verso: "Los Negros." Cited in *The Battalion Artist* as "Mud, mud, mud." |
| Box 8 | "Quonset Hilton," painted in the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea 1944 |
| Box 8 | "First Stop," painted in Noumea, New Caledonia 1945 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from verso: "New Caledonia Nickel Docks" |
| Box 8 | "Target," painted aboard the *USS J. Franklin Bell* 1945 |
| Box 8 | "Convoy North," painted aboard the *USS J. Franklin Bell* 1945 |
| Box 8 | "Silent Convoy," painted aboard the *USS J. Franklin Bell* 1945 |
| Box 8 | [Untitled watercolor detail] [1945] |
| Box 8 | "Pup Tent City," painted in Okinawa 1945 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from verso: "Ryukus" |
| Box 8 | "Bombed Bridge at Atsutabarui," painted in Okinawa 1945 October 28 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from verso: "Atsutabarui" |
| Box 8 | "Okinawan Burial Vaults," painted in Okinawa 1945 |
| Box 8 | General note |
| Box 8 | Alternate title, from recto: "Okinawa" |
| Box 8 | "Okinawa Burial Vault" [1945] |
| Box 8 | "Searchlights," painted in Okinawa 1945 |
| Box 8 | "Pay day," painted in Okinawa 1945 |

**Ink drawings**
- Box/Folder 6 : 2 Cathedral Square [1940s]
- Box/Folder 6 : 3 Native mother nursing baby [1940s]

**Paste-ups**
- Box/Folder 6 : 4 78th Battalion Log Section Title Page, Golden Gate Bridge [1940s]
- Box/Folder 6 : 4 78th Battalion Log Section Title Page, Seabee signaling V for Victory [1940s]

**Scratchboards**
- Box/Folder 1 : 20 Seabee logo undated
- Box/Folder 6 : 1 Men in bunks undated
Artwork 1943-1945

Box/Folder 6 : 1

Photographs 1943-1945

Scope and Contents note

Photographic prints and negatives, many taken by Bellantoni’s friend and colleague Ed Keegan, documenting the life and work of the 78th Construction Battalion as they worked their way across the Pacific from 1943-1945. Includes scenes from the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, New Caledonia, Okinawa, and Port Hueneme. Arranged in chronological order.

New Caledonia, Noumea, First tour 1943 July-December

Box/Folder 4 : 1-8
Lay of the land. 62 black and white prints 1943
Box/Folder 4 : 9
Daily Life. 4 black and white prints 1943
Box/Folder 4 : 15
Islanders. 13 black and white prints 1943
Box/Folder 4 : 10-11
Recreation. 7 black and white prints 1943
Box/Folder 4 : 12
Work. 6 black and white prints 1943

New Guinea 1943-1944

Box/Folder 4 : 27
General. 3 black and white prints [1943-1944]
Box/Folder 3 : 2
43 Langemak Bay, 2 black and white prints 1943 September 22-October 1
Box/Folder 3 : 63
43 Langemak Bay, 1 black and white print 1944 March 28
Box/Folder 3 : 22-23
Finshafen: Daily life. 13 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 3
Finshafen: Daily life. 2 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 4
Finshafen: Entertainment. 3 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 3 : 24-26
Finshafen: Islanders. 22 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 5
Finshafen: Islanders. 6 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 20-21
Finshafen: Work. 18 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 6
Finshafen: Work. 5 black and white prints 1944

Admiralty Islands 1944 March-December

Box/Folder 4 : 22
Los Negros: Daily life. 8 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 7
Los Negros: Daily life. 3 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 8
Los Negros: Lay of the land. 8 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 4 : 23-24
Los Negros: Work. 15 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 9
Los Negros: Work. 9 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 4 : 17-19
Manus: Daily life. 24 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 10
Manus: Daily life. 3 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 4 : 20
Manus: Entertainment. 5 black and white prints 1944
Scope and Contents note
Includes 2 images of Bob Hope.

Box/Folder 5 : 11
Manus: Entertainment. 5 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 12
Manus: Lay of the land. 3 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 13
Manus: Mt. Hood explosion. 3 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 4 : 21
Manus: Portraits. 2 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 3 : 19-20
Manus: Work. 12 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 14
Manus: Work. 3 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 3 : 11
Ponam: Cathedral Square. 8 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 5 : 15
Ponam: Cathedral Square. 9 black and white prints 1944
Box/Folder 3 : 12-14
Ponam: Daily life. 21 black and white prints 1944
Photographs 1943-1945

Register of the Natale Bellantoni papers

| Box/Folder 5 : 16 | Ponam: Daily life. 7 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 15-18 | Ponam: Islanders. 29 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 17-18 | Ponam: Islanders. 13 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 19 | Ponam: Recreation and special events. 4 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 10 | Ponam: Work. 8 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 20-21 | Ponam: Work. 11 black and white prints 1944 |

New Caledonia, Second Tour 1944-1945

| Box/Folder 3 : 31-32 | Daily life. 11 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 4 : 35 | Daily life. 5 black and white prints 1944-1945 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 22 | Daily life. 7 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 27-30 | Lay of the land. 25 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 33-34 | Recreation. 16 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 23 | Recreation. 6 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 24 | Work. 10 black and white prints 1944 |
| Box/Folder 4 : 16 | Work. Third 78th Seabee Chapel. 5 black and white prints 1944-1945 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 35-37 | Portraits. 17 black and white prints 1944-1945 |

Scope and Contents note

Includes Nat Bellantoni, Ed Keegan, and the Captain of the MS Day Star.

| Box/Folder 5 : 25 | Portraits. 7 black and white prints 1944-1945 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 26 | Animal portraits. 3 black and white prints 1944-1945 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 27 | Okinawa bound: aboard the USS Franklin Bell. 6 black and white prints 1945 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 38-46 | Okinawa 1945 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 52-53 | General. 59 black and white prints 1945 |

Scope and Contents note

Depicts villagers, daily life in Okinawa, buildings in town, landscapes, ruins.

| Box/Folder 3 : 54-56 | Daily life. 15 black and white prints 1945 |

Scope and Contents note

Landscapes, tents in camp.

| Box/Folder 5 : 28 | Daily life. 3 black and white prints 1945 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 54-56 | End of the war. 17 black and white prints 1945 |

Scope and Contents note

Scenes of Seabees turning in their gear and preparing to leave. Also includes photographs, taken on le Shima, of Japanese delegates arriving in their own planes and leaving in an Army transport on their way to Manila to receive instructions on occupation terms.

| Box/Folder 5 : 29 | End of the war. 6 black and white prints 1945 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 57-59 | Lay of the land, people. 22 black and white prints 1945 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 30-31 | Lay of the land, people. 11 black and white prints 1945 |
| Box/Folder 6 : 7 | Lay of the land, places and things. 1. 1 black and white print 1945 |
| Box/Folder 3 : 60-62 | Lay of the land, places and things. 19 black and white prints 1945 |
| Box/Folder 5 : 32 | Lay of the land, places and things. 8 black and white prints 1945 |
Box/Folder 3 : Work. 38 black and white prints 1945
Scope and Contents note
Includes Seabees planning and constructing airfields and repairing buildings, with aid from local workers.

Box/Folder 5 : Work. 8 black and white prints 1945
Box/Folder 3 : 1 Project #2301 Bolo airfield, 2 black and white prints, aerial views [1940s]
Box/Folder 3 : 35 Project #2301 Bolo airfield. 1 black and white print [1940s]
Box/Folder 3 : 9 Photographs removed from correspondence, 6 black and white prints undated
Box/Folder 3 : 3 Easter Blessings from Southwest Pacific, 78th Seabee Chapel. 2 postcards [1940s]
Box/Folder 3 : 4-7 The Battalion Artist, 27 black and white prints depicting daily life in for the 78th Battalion [1940s]
Box/Folder 5 : 1 The Battalion Artist, 8 black and white prints undated
Box/Folder 3 : 8 Carvings, gourd, and spatula, 2 black and white prints of memorabilia undated
Box/Folder 4 : 28 Carvings. 7 black and white prints undated
Box/Folder 5 : 39 Carvings. 2 black and white prints undated
Box/Folder 4 : 29 Islanders. 2 black and white prints [1940s]
Box/Folder 4 : 30 Nose Art. 4 black and white photographs [1940s]
Box/Folder 4 : 31 Undated portraits. 10 black and white prints [1940s]
Box/Folder 4 : Recreation. 16 black and white prints [1940s]
Box/Folder 4 : 32-33 Work. 6 black and white photographs [1940s]
Box/Folder 4 : Photographs of paintings. 14 black and white prints undated
Box/Folder 5 : Photographs of paintings. 11 black and white prints undated
Box/Folder 5 : 34 Port Hueneme: Seabees marching. 1 black and white print [1940s]
Box/Folder 4 : Paste-up Sheet 78th Battalion Log: Sing Sing: Native Boys in Festival Dance. 5 black and white prints on 1 paste-up sheet [1940s]
Box/Folder 5 : 36 Undescribed negatives. 16 envelopes undated
StillNegPos Box 1 Scope and Contents note
Includes Okinawa, 1945, and Seabees' negatives

Audiovisual material 1991-2006
Scope and Contents note
Includes audiocassettes and VHS cassettes of interviews, a historical documentary, and recording of battalion reunion regarding the Seabees and the 78th battalion. Arranged by date.

Box 9 Memories of the South Pacific, 78th U.S.N. Seabees, 2nd take, narrator Stephen Pree, Natale Bellantoni, 1 videocassette 1991 December 28
Box 9 Interviews for Seabee 78th Documentary, Recorded 1992, Members of the 78th Battalion: Bellantone, Kelly, Roland, 1 videocassette 1992
Box 9 “We Build We Fight, 50 Years of Navy Seabees,” By Delaney Communications, 1 videocassette 1992
Box 9 78th U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Natale Bellantoni: unedited interviews, 1 videocassette 1993
Box 9 78th US Naval Construction battalion 1942-1945: Libertyville Great Lakes 78th Reunion, 1 videocassette 1993 October
Box 9 Veteran’s History Project, Sentry Hill, York, ME, 1 videocassette 2006 June 5
Box 9 78th US Naval Construction Battalion 1942-1945, Commissioned 2/9/1943 Camp Peary, Virginia, 1 videocassette undated
Box 9 Sound recordings regarding Merle Schall, pilot of PBY Catalina Black Cat which Natale painted in New Caledonia entitled “Final Journey,” 2 audiocassettes undated
Memorabilia undated

Scope and Contents note
Consists of souvenirs collected by Bellantoni during his service in the Pacific.

Box/Folder 6 : 5
Embroidered handkerchief from Noumea [1940s]
Wooden trunk undated
Access
Original materials in Box 10 restricted.

Box 12
Woven straw purse undated
Access
Restricted.

Box 12
7 inch carved figurine undated
Access
Originals located in Box 12 restricted; photograph available in Box 3 : 8.

Box 12
9 inch carved figurine undated
Access
Originals located in Box 12 restricted; photograph available in Box 3 : 8.

Box 11
17 inch wooden betal spatula undated
Access
Original material in Box 11 is restricted; photograph available in Box 3 : 8.

Box 12
Decorative gourd with betal inside undated
Access
Originals located in Box 12 restricted; photograph available in Box 3 : 8.