



# Busy as a bee, a Sea Bee that is....

By United States Navy Supply Corps Lt. Cmdr. Bryan Boudreaux

DLA Distribution Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, has seen its share of unique projects, but their latest challenge is one for the photo album. Recently, the Packing Division supervisor, Robert Lynch, was approached with an unusual request. The yearlong project of building a large replica of the Navy Seabees' "Fighting Bee" had come to completion and needed to be shipped half way around the world to the Naval Construction Battalion Center, or NCBC, in Gulfport, Miss.

Lynch knew shipping the Fighting Bee would be a difficult task, but was confident in his packing division. "This item is a challenge, as we normally do not pack items of this nature," said Lynch. "We have some very talented people, so I am confident in their abilities."

The Fighting Bee was only the third replica produced by the

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, or NAVFAC, Self-Help Seabees on Oahu, Hawaii, and the first to leave the island. An added obstacle was the fact that the Bee was constructed to be suspended, rather than rested on a pedestal.

Shipping large bulky items is not an unusual request for the Packing Division at DLA Distribution Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, but this particular request had some very unusual requirements. Since the Bee had to be suspended, it meant that the packing crate had to be built rigidly enough to support the Bee, as well as protect it from harm during its journey across the Pacific. With the suspension came other problems, such as possible damage to the Bee's legs if the crate was handled roughly; that's where master woodworker Lito Agustin came in. Agustin, who retired from the Naval Reserve Supply Corps, has been working in packing for 28 years, and after one look, the only words he uttered were "no problem." The plan was to build a shipping container around the Bee, still allowing it to be suspended and protected at the same time. Along with the special container, there was a generous amount of bubble



DLA Distribution Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, recently shipped a "Fighting Bee" in a specialized container. The Fighting Bee was originally created by Frank J. Lafrate in 1942 when he was a Navy civilian employee. Lafrate later joined the Navy and became a Seabee himself.

wrap, shrink wrap, and block and brace to help keep the Bee from "buzzing around" during its transit.

The project took only three days to complete and a bon voyage was wished to the Bee from the crew of the Packing Division as it began its journey across the ocean. It arrived in Gulfport, Miss., and Lori Bell of the Public Works Department for NAVFAC Gulfport stated "We received the bee and it was beautifully packed!"

The bee was raised to its new home suspended inside the doorway of the NCBC Gulfport Fitness Center. It now stands guard over the fighting Seabees as they ready themselves for battle.

Much like the Seabee's motto "Can do!" the Packing Division at DLA Distribution Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, continues to exhibit that "can do" attitude in everything they encounter.



The "Fighting Bee" hangs at its permanent location at the Naval Construction Battalion Center Fitness Center, in Gulfport, Miss.