

from the desk of

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April 22, 2009

Selectmen
Town of Putnam
Church Street
Putnam, Connecticut 06260

ATTN: Town Clerk

Dear People:

In observance of my 90th birthday this date, I am pleased to provide for the Town of Putnam archives, a copy of the roster showing the names of soldiers who were members of Headquarters Company, 43rd Infantry Division of the Connecticut National Guard upon its induction into World War II February 24, 1941, including two who were KIA in the South Pacific War area. Today, there are but half dozen alive who were on duty at the disbandment November 1, 1945.

Inclosed is a brief story of the 43rd Infantry Division for placement with , and in memory of those who sp nobley served.

Sincere best wishes,

Richard F. Potter

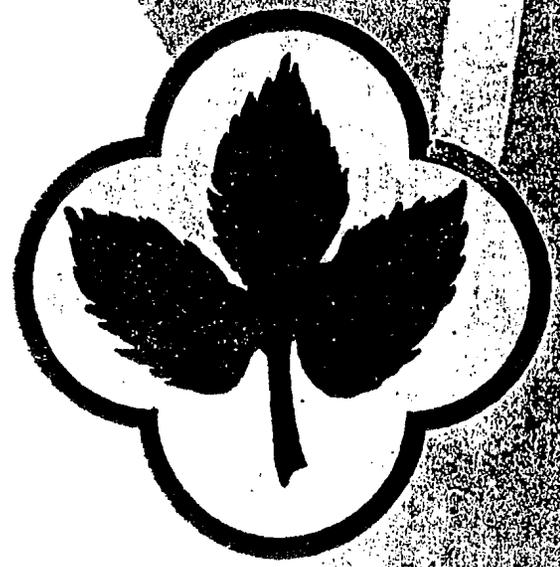
Incl

P.S. There has been added hure a battle diary kept by Robert E. Casco telling of his extraordinary experiences while engaged in the Solomon Islands campaign.



WINDSOR
FESTIVAL

THE STORY
of the
43^d INFANTRY
DIVISION
1941 - 1945



NATIONAL GUARD, ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY FEBRUARY 24, 1941.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 43D INFANTRY DIVISION
24 February 1941
ROSTER FOR INITIAL MORNING REPORT

CAPT TERENCE J. McGARRY
1ST LT BERTRAM L. HAMMOND
2D LT JOSEPH W. DONOVAN
2D LT PHILIP S. ST. ONGE
28 Feb 2001

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1ST SGT ROBERT W. BULGER | PVT ARTHUR J. BERTHIAUME |
| S/SGT JOSEPH E. JOYAL | * PVT LEONARD A. BONIN |
| SGT JEROME J. CORCORAN | PVT ALBERT E. BRIERE |
| SGT JOHN GRZYSIEWICZ | PVT HAROLD J. BURKE |
| SGT JOSEPH NAVARRO | PVT LEO J. CORDIER |
| SGT ANDREW H. PEPIN | PVT ALPHONSE CRAIG |
| CPL EARL E. FRANCKE | PVT ANTHONY CRISTOFORI |
| PFC ROBERT E. CASKO | PVT JOHN DESAUTEL |
| PFC ISADORE J. DUBOIS | PVT BERNARD DESPELTEAU |
| PFC ANDREW L. DUMAS | PVT HARVEY CUSSON |
| * PFC EARL W. GRAVLIN | PVT JOHN M. DUSCHAME |
| PFC EDWARD MULLAN | * PVT THEODORE J. FRENIER |
| PFC RICHARD F. POTTER | PVT ALVIN J. GAGNE |
| PFC ROMEO J. ROBITAILLE | PVT LOUIS J. GAGNON |
| PFC EDWARD T. RYAN | PVT AMBROSE GOYETTE |
| PFC FREDERICK W. SMITH | PVT PAUL H. GOYETTE |
| PFC STEPHEN SZARKOWICZ | PVT MICHAEL HANNIFAN |
| PVT PROGULO ARTIACO | * PVT ALFRED J. JOHNSON |
| PVT LUCIEN AUCCOIN | PVT CAMILLE R. LABONTE |
| PVT PETER BEAULIEU | PVT NELSON J. LAROSE |
| ** PVT LIONEL ARPIN | PVT CLARENCE LAMONDY |
| * PVT JOHN H. BABBITT | PVT GEORGE LAMARR |
| PVT LOUIS BENOIT, JR | PVT HARVEY A. LUSSIER |
| PVT OVIDE T. BERGERON | PVT THEODORE W. LUSSIER |
| PVT EUGENE A. RAYNO | PVT ULLERIC MAILLOUX |
| PVT ALBERT RONDEAU | PVT HENRY E. MORSE |
| PVT EUGENE VAILLANT | PVT ANTHONY MURACO |
| PVT ROLAND D. VANDALE | PVT DAVID NAVARRO |
| ** PVT ANTHONY WITKOWSKI | PVT SALVATORE NAVARRO |
| PVT RAYMOND FERREAUULT | PVT FRANCIS J. PARKER |

* Did not accompany Hq Co to Camp Blanding, Florida



I N T R O D U C T I O N

ON THE evening of September 20, 1945, ten days after the Forty-Third Infantry Division had landed as initial troops of occupation on the Japanese homeland, Maj. Gen. Leonard F. Wing, the Commanding General, issued a surprise message from his headquarters, sixty miles northwest of Tokyo. Orders had been received that within five days the 97th Infantry Division would relieve the 43d Infantry Division, which would immediately return with all veteran personnel to the United States for inactivation as a unit.

As men gathered in small groups to discuss the news, many memories were stirred, the memories of four long years on the road to victory. This is the story of those four years.

C H A P T E R O N E

Everyone in the crowded building on that particular Sunday had the same feeling. It didn't matter if they were completely religious men, or if they were there out of respect for their families, or there just because they were grateful on that particular day. There was a brotherhood of thankfulness that filled the small building.

The words of the chaplain reached their ears: "Our hearts are filled with gratitude that God has brought us peace at last. Today we begin this last chapter in the service of our country. We begin it in Japan. We begin it with the thought that though death has shadowed our thinking, it has not had the last word. Goodness has been crucified, but as always, it has a resurrection. With the knowledge of a job well done, with a lasting and abiding faith in Almighty God, let us rise. Turn to page 68 in your hymnals."

Those men of the 43d Infantry Division rose to their feet, and sharing their hymn books, they sang in unison and their voices had the strength of victorious men.

"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." ———

Soon the last words of the hymn were sung, and the men filed out of the chapel. Some of them stopped to light cigarettes and others walked along past the barracks that had once housed members of the Imperial Japanese Air Force; they walked past the hangars that had once sheltered Imperial Japanese planes.

In one of the groups there were three men that stopped to light cigarettes outside the chapel; three men who had been with the 43d Infantry Division a long time. One of them took a long, satisfying draw on his cigarette. "Nice sermon, huh, Arizona?"

The man called Arizona had been watching some Jap laborers cleaning out the rubble of a bombed building. "What did you say?"

"I said it was a nice sermon."

"Yeah, kinda makes a guy feel good to hear a chaplain like that tell you you've done a good job."

The third member of the group entered the conversation with a sudden burst of enthusiasm. "Well, we have. I don't know how you guys feel about it, but I feel as though I've done a fine job. I fought hard, and most of the time I knew what I was fighting for. It's a nice feeling to know what you're doing and get it done. Don't you think so, Iowa?"

Iowa looked at this friend from Connecticut. "Never thought much about it. Let's walk around this place and see what the Japs have got around here." They were walking around the Miizugahara Airfield. Here, they were spending their first Sunday on the Jap homeland.

Each of them had a lot of memories of the months and months that followed the year 1941, and maybe they were thinking about those memories, or maybe they were thinking about how it felt to be walking around in what was once enemy territory without fear of a pot shot from a Jap sniper, without fear of walking around in the open to be spotted by Jap artillery. Whatever they were thinking about, it was occupying them completely because they walked in silence.

Iowa was the first to break the silence. "You know, it's funny walking around here now when just a few months ago they were getting us all 'het up' about invading this place, telling us how tough it was going to be. I'm mighty glad it's over."

The man from Connecticut smiled. "You're glad? How do you think I feel?"

Arizona said, "Do you know it's been almost four years since we met at Camp Blanding?"

"Yes, and remember the night they moved you in and you threw your stuff on the two bunks next to mine?" Arizona looked at Connecticut. He looked a good deal older than he did that night back in '41.

"I remember well. I remember the first words you said to us."

"You do?"

"Yeah, You said, 'Where're you from?' And you didn't wait for us to answer; you said, 'Let me help you make up your bunk.'"

Iowa remembered too. He wanted to talk about it. "Let's sit down."

They had reached the top of a small hill and sat down on the grassy slope. Below them, American soldiers were busy setting up equipment of occupation. Japanese people, wearing bits and pieces of what once was the uniform of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, were digging pits and closing slit trenches. Trucks were driving along carrying crates that had been unloaded from the ships at Yokohama, 57 miles away. Below them was the activity of a victorious division that had seen action at New Georgia, at New Guinea, and in the Philippines; a division that had grown older and wiser through the years of hardship and accomplishment.

Connecticut broke the silence. "I didn't think they'd ever make a soldier out of you. You marched like you were still walking behind that old plow of yours. And you fired a rifle like you'd shoot at a flock of geese back home on the farm."

Arizona had something else to offer. The sentimental side of four years of being together. "I liked you both right from the start. I liked you, Connecticut, the minute you sat on your bunk and told us a little about the 43d Infantry Division. We didn't know anything about it, remember?"

Connecticut said, "I sure do. You said, 'I've been kicking around a training center a long time and all that time I wanted to be a part of a permanent organization. Now, here I am, a part of a thing I don't know anything about.' Then you asked me what I knew about it. Well, I guess I was pretty close to the Division, even way back when I was young and playing soldier, because the 43d was originally a New England Division, and I was born in Connecticut. I always heard a lot about it. I used to sit on my father's knee and listen to stories about its history."

"You love this Division, don't you?"

"Oh, I don't know. But when you've been a part of it as long as I have, I guess you feel pretty deeply about it."

Iowa said suddenly, "I guess you do. I never thought much about it before. The only thing I ever thought about was getting back home to my farm and my wife and kids. I never did much flag waving, but now that I think about it, this Division means a lot to me, and I guess as the years go by it's become almost as important as my land and my family."

"Think so?"

"Yeah, I think so. I got a few letters from guys who have already gone home. They all said they were anxious to get home too, but they left a good part of living with the Division."

Connecticut smiled. "You guys were in for the tough part of it. You were in the battle. I wish that you could have been there the day the 43d was inducted into Federal Service. That was back in February of '41. To hit it right on the nose, it was February 24th. I was there at the time. They had a radio program that was broadcast from the armory in Hartford. It went over New England. The troops were assembled there. Of course they were assembled in other armories too. Gee, I wish you could have seen those guys. Farmers, yeah, Iowa, we got farmers in New England too, tradesmen and school masters, big shots and the guys they employed. Just a bunch of guys from the potato acres and the sea and shore fisheries of Maine, from the stone quarries and dairy farms of Vermont, the industrial life of Rhode Island, from insurance centers, tobacco farms, and the rolling hills of Connecticut.

They were all there. Veterans of World War I and their sons, French Canadians, Poles and Hungarians; Catholics, Jews, and Protestants. All of them standing there listening to the speeches and the band playing. All of them there for one thing. It didn't matter what they had been up till that time. From that moment on, they were a part of an American division, a fighting division, the 43d Infantry Division."

"You sound like MacArthur."

Connecticut looked away from his two friends, and his eyes searched the hills as if he expected to find that day in February, 1941, being relived there. "Do I? I never talked this way before, but I've given some blood and an awful lot of sweat to see this thing through. I can't exactly explain what has taken the place of that blood and sweat. Maybe it's just the thought of belonging."

Iowa saw the expression on his friend's face. "I know what you mean."

Connecticut continued. "None of us thought much about the war at that time. Of course they were fighting in Europe. But that was 3,000 miles away. Anyhow, the order of the War Department called for one year of training. No one seemed to think it was very important. We had our uniforms, mine fit pretty well, and I was proud of it. But beyond that I didn't think much about what it meant. The 43d was a 'square' Division then, and I didn't even know what that meant. Not until later when I found out that it was made up of two Brigades with two Regiments in each Brigade. Am I boring you guys?"

Arizona knew that the history of the 43d Division had become the history of Connecticut's life. He had lived with him a long time, and besides, he could see the light in his eyes. "No, you're not boring us, go on."

"Not many guys would be interested, would they?"

Iowa answered him, "You'd be surprised how many guys are interested. Anybody who saw Munda, Aitape, and Luzon would be Section VIII stuff if they weren't interested. And think of the mothers and fathers and wives of the men who died for it. They want to know what their men have died for. Got more to tell us?"

"Sure, if you wish. I was in the 169th Infantry because I came from Connecticut. The 102nd Infantry and the 192nd Field Artillery were Connecticut units, too. The 103d Infantry was formed in Maine, likewise the 152nd Field Artillery. The 103d Field Artillery was in Rhode Island and the 172nd Infantry from Vermont. Well, we had our day; people making speeches, people like Lieutenant General Drum, Governor Hurley, from by home state, Major General Payne and Major General Woodruff. At that time Major General Payne was the division commander. We all felt pretty good. Our mothers and fathers were there, and though they had a lot of brass to look at, each one seemed to be watching his own son. Makes a guy feel kinda proud. When it was all over, we settled down to the real business of the army. The division was moving to Camp Blanding, Florida. Boy! what a job that was. You see, up until that time, it was the longest troop movement by truck and rail. When we first got there, the camp hadn't even been completely constructed. You guys know what that means. You've put up enough camps and torn them down to know. At that time there were other units at the camp. The 31st Infantry Division was there. You can imagine what that meant. Two divisions in the same camp. We fought the Civil War all over again, on every street corner in town. Anyhow, we got along OK and everything went well. We griped; we cussed out the sergeants; we talked about the officers. Gosh, when I think about it, it makes me laugh to remember how we yelled about the dirt, the sun, and the heat. 'Course we didn't know that we'd be fighting in places that makes Blanding look like an upholstered living room. Anyhow, we trained there. We learned about military courtesy. None of us could understand how any of that stuff could make us good infantrymen."

Iowa said, "Come to think of it, I still can't get my forearm at a 45° angle when I salute."

Arizona laughed, "And I don't think I've ever reported to my Company Commander the way I'm supposed to, but it's worth trying."

Connecticut continued. "My Mom sure got a kick out of my salute. That was in July '41 when I went home on furlough. A lot of us got furloughs then."

Iowa was thoughtful. "July; that's when I'd be sweating out my corn crop. Back in Iowa the corn is young then, and if it gets a lot of sun and a little bit of rain, it grows tall and husky. Farmers sure sweat it out in the month of July back in Iowa."

Arizona laughed and started singing in his whiskey tenor, "Iowa, Iowa, that's where the tall corn grows . . ."

"Yeah, I used to sing that too."

Connecticut said, "I went to a lot of dances and movies on that furlough. There was a swell movie came out about that time. Gary Cooper in 'Sergeant York.' Remember it? When I got back to camp, all the guys were copying Gary Cooper. Remember how he wet his thumb and rubbed it on the front sight of his rifle? Well, it didn't help their scores much. Then we went to Louisiana. There's a place for you—Louisiana. Maybe it's as good as any other state in the Union, but between the pigs, the coral snakes, the mud, dust and burnt tree stumps around the area south of Leesville, I just got about as much of that place as I could take."

Arizona said, "I'm certainly glad I missed it."

"I was happy to get back to Blanding after those maneuvers. We could take showers, real showers, not muddy baths in the swamps like we had to take in Louisiana. We could sit in mess halls at real tables and eat our chow. By the way, we got a new division commander when we arrived at Blanding. You know him, Brigadier General Hester. Before that, he was Commanding General at Camp Wheeler. We didn't stay there very long. We got moved again. Went up to Fort Lawn, South Carolina, to start new maneuvers. Gosh, after all the maneuvering we did around the states, we could have taken on the whole Jap army single-handed. Anyhow, we had a change of climate. The fall weather was wonderful and made a guy feel good. That's probably why the maneuvers seemed easier than the ones in Louisiana. Then we had our first real honest-to-God American holiday. I'll never forget that Thanksgiving. It came a few days late for us because the Blues had to beat the Reds before we could get our turkey. But when we got it, it was wonderful. Some of the guys thought about home, of course, but no one felt very lonely. A holiday like that makes a fellow realize that the man he's sitting next to is the man he's going to be sitting next to for a long time. It has something to do with brotherhood, I think. Sounds silly, doesn't it?" He looked at his two friends and then continued, "Sometime later, we left Carolina and we got back to Blanding again on December 6. Everyone was talking about going home for Christmas. We almost forgot about soldiering with the thought that Christmas was so close and we were so close to home. But the next day changed everything. December 7, 1941, changed our lives. Some of the guys did get home, but I wasn't one of them. Special trains were arranged to take the lucky ones to New England and to the 29 other states the guys came from. Before they left, those guys took care of their insurance, wills, and other odds and ends. It was war, and nobody knew what would happen next. Those fellows who got out of the army in August, because they were 28 years or over, were called back into the service. But nothing much happened for the first few weeks. I remember that the division was made a triangular division and the 102nd Infantry was sent to Charleston, S. C., for immediate shipment overseas."

Arizona said, "You're forgetting something, aren't you? I was with them, remember? I was transferred to the 172nd Infantry just before they left."

"That's right. You both joined up at Blanding just before we moved to Camp Shelby in Mississippi. Remember all the men they sent to OCS?"

Iowa remembered: "Remember? I spent half a lifetime of breath trying to talk you into going."

"In a way, I'm kinda glad I didn't go. I don't know why. I think I wanted to be a sergeant like Sergeant Hannibal D. Romeo of Company A of the 103d Infantry. I watched him get decorated with the Soldiers Medal for saving a guy's life during the Louisiana maneuvers. Another guy got the Soldiers Medal, too, Private Arthur G. Laird, 43d Signal Company. I wanted to be like them."

Iowa said, "Well, you got your medal."

"Yeah, I know, and it's nice to have, but now I sometimes wonder where line of duty ends and heroism begins."

The three men were silent. Maybe they were thinking about all the times in battle when courage and comradeship carried them far beyond the line of duty, and beyond heroism, too.

Then Connecticut said, "Remember when we all said good-bye to each other and got our furloughs in July, '42?"

Arizona answered him. "Yea. The way we said good-bye, you'd think we were never going to see each other again. Hell, I had a fine time when I went home. All the folks in Bisbee thought that I looked as good in my uniform as I thought I did. They kept me going the whole time I was there."

"And I sat on the porch of my farm house with my wife and two kids. It's a fine feeling to sit on the porch of your own home and look out over your land."

Then Connecticut said, "Gosh, when I left home, I didn't think it would be for the last time. But then you guys were back in camp when I got there. That helped a lot. Remember that September?"

"Yeah, we went to Ord—Fort Ord, way out in California. That was just like the end of the world to an Iowa farmer. With all that training I didn't get much of a chance to see it, though. Remember the equipment they gave us? It sure makes me laugh to think of the stuff we had and the stuff the well dressed replacement gets nowadays."

Iowa stood up and looked at the sky. "Then we went to the Port of Embarkation, remember?"

"All except me." Arizona said, "I stayed back with the 172nd Infantry."

Iowa continued, "It was the first day of October, about three o'clock in the afternoon. I looked out at the Golden Gate Bridge and I thought of the advance party. They had gone on ahead in September. I wondered what was happening to them. But I stopped thinking about them in a hurry because I was standing up on deck and I saw the ships moving into convoy position, the President Grant, Day Star, Tabinta, Muai, Bluefontaine and the Boshfontaine. And then we started. I'll never forget the feeling I had. Of course I was excited and, as big a lug as I am, I was a little bit scared too."

The other two men stood up. Iowa asked, "Want a cigarette, Arizona?"

"No thanks."

"Connecticut?"

"No thanks. When do you think we'll see the Golden Gate again?"

"I don't know. I wish I knew."

They became silent. Darkness was falling around the three soldiers.

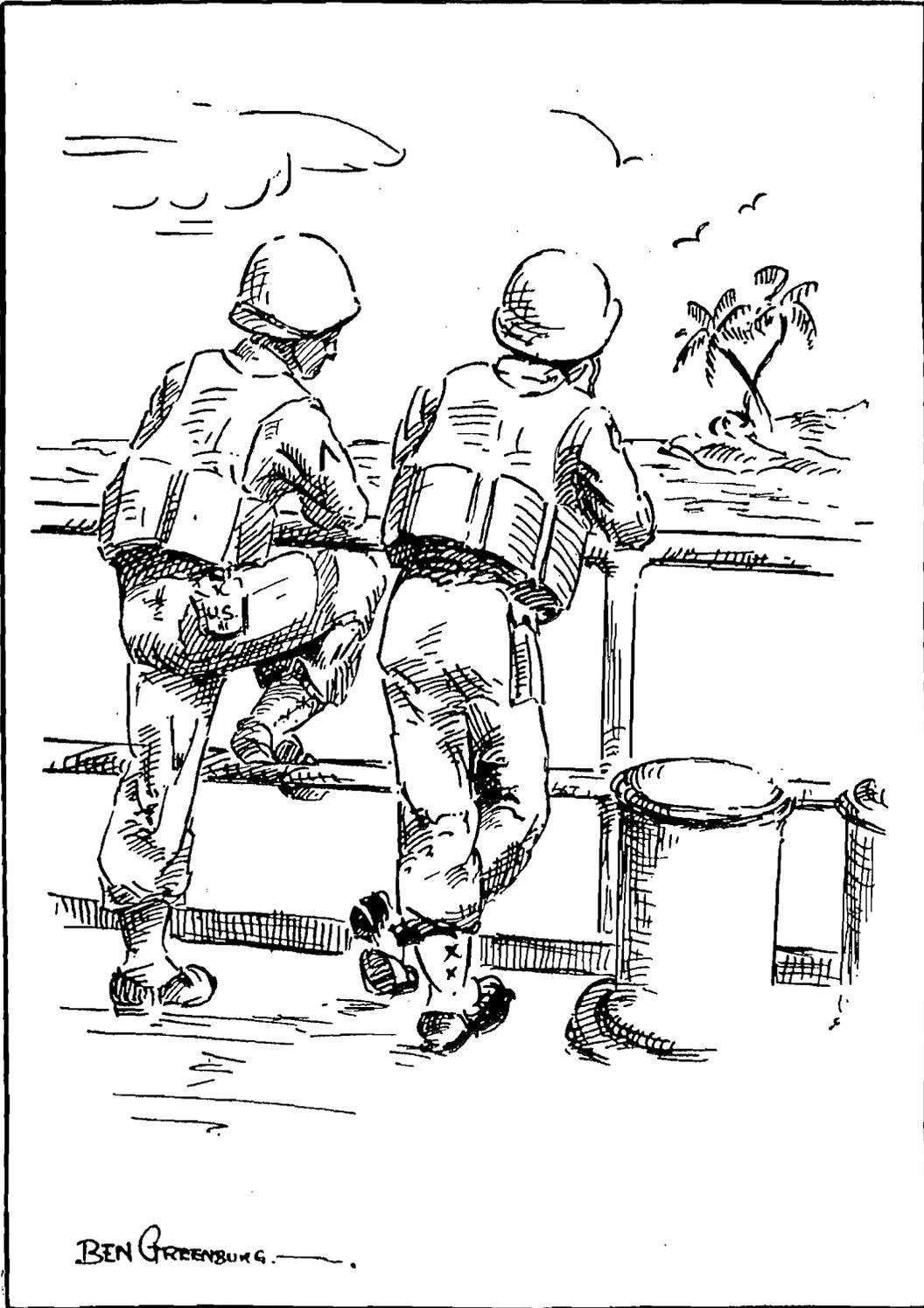
C H A P T E R T W O

On September 24, 1942, while the remainder of the division was completing preparation for embarkation, the advance party under the command of Brigadier General Leonard F. Wing, then the assistant Division Commander, left for New Zealand to make a reconnaissance and locate suitable staging facilities. It was a speedy crossing—twelve days from San Francisco to Auckland, and one of the fastest voyages ever made for that run. Work was hastily accomplished. Accordingly, the first of October, 1942, found the men of the main body of the division gathered on the decks of the ships as they watched the skyline of San Francisco fade in the distance to become just a memory. These men were thinking of where they were going and how soon they could finish the job and get back. A Navy blimp, which had followed them out to sea, blinked its message of farewell and turned back. The men standing on deck watched and then were jarred away from their thoughts by the ship's speakers blasting out, "Sweepers man your brooms. Clean sweep-down fore and aft. Sweep all ladders and passageways. . . ." And so the voyage had begun. The 43d Infantry Division had set sail on what has been recorded in history as a great experience and a great adventure.

The men sat on the decks in little groups and talked; they read books and played cards. In their conversations they speculated as to their reactions to battle and shared stories about the things that happened at home or the things they hoped for when they returned. Even then time passed slowly. Eventually they crossed the Equator, and in keeping with the traditions of the men who were about to go "down under" the ceremony of the "Ancient Order of the Deep" was performed. At long last, land was sighted at daybreak October 22. Never before had a more excited group of men gathered at the rails of the ships to watch the Island of New Zealand form majestically on the horizon.

That afternoon they entered colorful Auckland Harbor, and as the band played and the New Zealanders lined the docks to see them, these Americans walked down the gangways and put their feet on good old firm ground again. They moved by train and motor to their bivouac areas which the advance party had chosen. These bivouac areas stretched from Warkworth, 60 miles north of Auckland, to Pukekohe, 40 miles south. The Division Command Post was at Manurewa. Most of the camps consisted of small wooden hutments, each of which made fairly comfortable living quarters for two to four men. Looking out the doors, one could see bare rugged hills in the distance clasped in the fingers of wooded ravines, opulent with towering tree ferns, thirty-foot symbols of the Coal-age. In the foreground were luscious green rolling hills on which grazed large, wool-laden sheep. The men found New Zealand to be a completely friendly place. The people seemed very happy to have the Americans there, particularly these young fighting men because their own men were battling the Germans in Crete and North Africa. Then training started again with long cross-country marches over the rocky terrain and into the native "bush country." There were also maneuvers and tactical exercises. The men were training for what was to come, and they hadn't long to wait, for in the latter part of November the ships arrived for movement to French Mandate Island of New Caledonia. An advance party had been sent ahead, again under the command of General Wing and once again the division was on the move.

On December 6 the main body of the division landed at Noumea and was immediately assigned the mission of defending the central sector of the Island relieving the Americal Division which was destined for combat on Guadalcanal. Although New Caledonia was fabulous in mineral wealth, the men found it to be a dry, hilly



BEN GREENBURG.

country with white-barked Neole trees stretching as far as the eye could see. At night, the large non-malaria mosquitoes made sleeping without mosquito bars impossible. The lack of service troops at Noumea resulted in drawing heavily on the division for labor details. A number of men were assigned to secure and guard the Oui Tom, Tantouta, and Plain de Gaics Airfields north of Noumea. These airfields formed the springboard for attacks in Guadalcanal and the central Solomons and were an important factor in the victory of the Coral Sea. Despite all these duties, the division continued its preparation for the future with long marches and extensive, tough maneuvers. The artillery made a last run through the Army Ground Force Artillery tests in which they experimented with numbers of new type fuses. Results showed that they were prepared for anything to come.

At this time the 172nd Combat Team was training at Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides Islands. They had moved from Fort Ord, California, on October 5, following intensive maneuvers and amphibious training. They were to stop in New Hebrides to stage prior to combat on Guadalcanal. While entering the harbor aboard the President Coolidge, the ship was sunk after striking two submarine mines.

There is a great story behind that sinking; a story of courage and heroism; a story of men faced with one of the greatest catastrophes of their lives and acting with such calm that only one life was lost; the story of a combat team, the 172nd Infantry Combat Team which seemed almost incapable of surviving the tremendous accident of a ship being blown up under their feet, rising out of the chaos to gain victory on every inch of soil in which they were to fight. At "Abandon Ship," the men went over the sides into oil-covered water. Some of them swam ashore; some of them got into Higgins boats and barges, but they all reached land, their clothes dripping with oily water. All their personal belongings, pictures of their wives and their sweethearts, all the intimacies of their lives that they could carry with them were obliterated in oil. Colonel James A. Lewis, commanding officer of the regiment approached Brigadier General William I. Rose, Island Commander. The two officers were waist deep in water when they met. The Colonel, who had swum from the ship, made an effort at attention.

"Sir, Colonel Lewis, commanding, reports for duty."

The General returned the salute and he smiled as he said, "Go back and do it right."

Groups of soaked soldiers huddled on the beach. No one spoke. They sat and shivered and wondered.

Then an officer said, "You men go down to the shore and act as guides to help assemble the other units."

Some of their expressions were blank with shock. Others looked at him and smiled—smiles of relief because they had reached the beach. Some men came in dragging the exhausted ones and then fell on the beach alongside the men they had rescued. And all of them, when they had fully realized that they were safe, looked around for men they could recognize. Units had to get together again. Men had to get together again. Well, they did reorganize. The marines and sailors and soldiers who were already on the island literally gave them the shirts off their backs. And all the clothes that were in storage on the island, regardless of the service to which it had belonged, were given to the survivors.

It was a strange army that settled itself down to sleep that first night in the jungle. But they did sleep, in spite of the mud, in spite of the rain falling on the shelterless men. They slept because they were exhausted or because they were stunned by the tragedy.

It rained for two nights. Some can remember nights in the rain in a foxhole, but memory dulls the agony of it, memory dulls the feeling of these men who were new to the rain, new to the jungle.

And then troops from all over the island doubled up so they could give this stranded unit canvas for protection. They made beds of palm fronds and branches of trees. They dug slit-trenches and strung vines for clothes lines. They started to live again. And by week's end, after they had received rifles, they helped to take over the defenses of the island. They manned outposts and established sector defenses. Field Artillerymen were converted into Coast Artillerymen. And then finally they received a shipment of 155mm howitzers from another unit on the island. The mechanics of the Army were not forgotten. Men were ordered to stay clean-shaven. Even though one company of soldiers had only four razors, the men shaved. One of them made a razor from two cans he had saved, and he shaved.

Then the training program began. Sticks were substituted for machine guns and artillery pieces. These men played at war with these substitutions of weapons, but they played at it seriously because they were in a combat zone and they knew that their time was at hand. And then more equipment arrived. And they were ready to go.

What of their feelings? Well, you can never remove the soul of a man. And from the souls of these men came a feeling of affection and friendship that carried them above the misery of the jungle and the rain. Maybe the best example of the souls of these men is that Christmas morning in the New Hebrides. It had rained the night before and the jungle was moist and hot and steamy. And of course the moisture had its effect on the instruments of the band. But the band played anyhow. And the men stood in the mud and sang, "Silent night, Holy night . . ." Sometime they would return to their firesides, sometime there would be Christmas trees and Tom and Jerries and gifts . . . "All is calm, All is bright . . ." Sometime there would be peace. It was up to them. "Round Yon Virgin, Mother and Child . . ." The men who had been in the Coolidge disaster looked at each other and the feeling that they were all together had made them strong. It made them ready for the future.

Christmas was also being celebrated by the remainder of the division back in New Caledonia. Deer, that ran abundantly in the forest, were killed to make up the main course of the Christmas dinner. Then in the early part of February, during amphibious training, came word that the 43d Infantry Division was to be sent to Guadalcanal to stage for an attack on the Russell Islands, forty miles northwest of Guadalcanal. The 103d Combat Team left Noumea on February 13, 1943, aboard the assault transports, McCauley, John Penn and Fuller. At dawn four days later, they landed at Koli Point, Guadalcanal. Preparations were made immediately in malaria-ridden staging areas for the combat loading of Task Force 31 for its amphibious assault on the Russell Islands, termed the "Cleanslate" operation. On February 16, the 169th Combat Team sailed out of Noumea aboard the assault transports President Jackson, President Adams, President Hayes, and Crescent City. At 1950 on February 17, the 169th Combat Team received its baptism of fire when eleven Jap torpedo bombers attacked the convoy 100 miles northeast of San Cristobal. Six Jap planes were shot down but we incurred no damage. Following a ground reconnaissance from the 16th to the 19th of February, the elements of Task Force 31, consisting of the 43d Division, less the 172nd Combat Team, and attached elements of marines and naval construction units poured ashore and occupied the Russell Islands without enemy resistance, the last Jap stragglers having withdrawn four days prior to the landing. The first indication that the enemy was aware of the occupation came when Jap planes flew over Renard Sound and Wernham Cove on March 6, bombing and strafing the targets. Light casualties were incurred. These were the first division casualties from enemy action in World War II.

There followed a six-months period of intense watchfulness for Japanese amphibious counter-attacks, almost daily air raids, meager rations, and jungle training, all enacted

in what was reputedly known as the largest coconut grove in the world. Beach defenses were constructed and lonely outposts were manned twenty-four hours a day in preparation for constantly rumored Japanese attacks which always failed to materialize. Meanwhile, an airstrip was completed from which Marine fighter planes rose to intercept Jap bombers which heretofore had flown unhindered on their bombing missions toward Guadalcanal to the southeast. This same field was soon to furnish air support for elements of the division in operations to the north. Here for the first time the men of the division learned the art of living in the jungle, where they had to improvise for any comforts they might achieve. The daily ration was supplemented from the mixed breed cattle, which had originally been imported to keep down the undergrowth. Early June found the division preparing to move once more. A task force headquarters was formed in the coconut groves not far from the Command Post and there was planned the division's next major operation—the assault on New Georgia.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

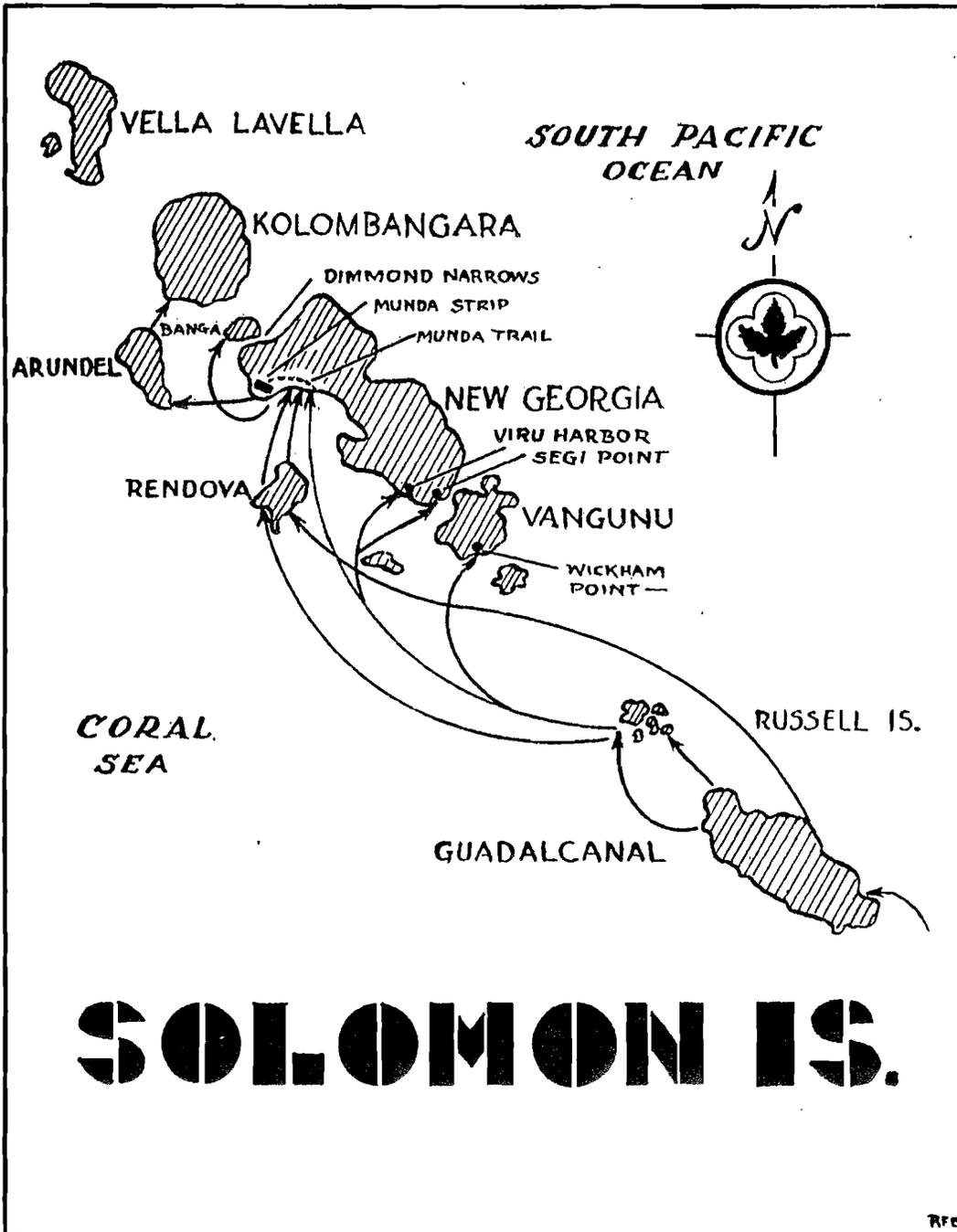
Stories of beachheads and invasions are old now. The men who were in them have told their own personal experiences many times. The newsreels have screened them for all the world to see, but the New Georgia invasion was probably different from any other. It was quite a while ago, the 30th of June, 1943. So long ago that men who were in it find it hard to believe now. The density of the jungle is a nightmare, a picture in a jungle comic strip, the heat is now a pool of sweat in a bad dream. There are many things that can be said about the New Georgia campaign, so let's start out at the beginning.

The plan was an ambitious one. It called for simultaneous amphibious landings by the 43d at Wickham Anchorage, Segi Point, Viru Harbor, and Rendova Island followed by a main effort to seize the vital Munda Airfield on New Georgia. Prior to daylight, June 30, the second battalion of the 103d Combat Team, with Company N and Q of the First Marine Raider Battalion, landed at Oleana Bay to seize Wickham Anchorage, thus making available a protected stopover for small shipping craft moving up from Guadalcanal to northern New Georgia. Elements engaged the enemy and occupied the west bank of the Bura River driving the remaining Jap force toward Kaeruku Point. The main force started its attack against entrenched enemy positions on Cheke Point where two Jap barges, during the night, attempted to make a surprise landing. One barge with about 40 personnel was destroyed and the other driven off. After three days of bitter fighting all enemy resistance was reduced.

The occupation of Segi Point was a different story. Twelve days before the scheduled landing, Companies A and D of the 103d Infantry, plus Companies O and P of the Fourth Marine Raider Battalion landed to counteract a rumored enemy reinforcement of this sector. On June 30 the remainder of the 103d Infantry, less the Second and Third Battalions, landed at Segi without opposition and assumed control. The 47th Naval Construction Battalion immediately broke ground for an airstrip which was to be used to support the attacks on the islands to the north. This airfield, despite frequent enemy bombings, was completed in eight days, setting a new record for construction of that type.

To the north the Japanese garrison at Viru Harbor drove off initial attempts to land by boat but was promptly destroyed by elements of Companies N and Q of the Fourth Marine Raider Battalion, reinforced by Company B of the 103d Infantry which attacked from positions seized further down the coast.

Meanwhile, the main effort of the Task Force was proceeding according to schedule. Two specially trained companies of the 172nd Infantry, known as the Barracudas, landed from destroyers at 0630, June 30, at Rendova Plantation. These units met determined but disorganized resistance immediately inland from the beach. No fortifications were encountered however, and fifty Japs were killed with about the same number escaping into the interior. As part of the occupation of Rendova and in preparation for the attacks on Munda, two rifle companies landed from A.P.D.s at Onavasi Entrance prior to daylight June 30 and against minor opposition secured the passage for further use. The 43d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop seized Banieta Point and Ugeli against minor opposition providing outposts on the flanks of the main Rendova dispositions. As more troops landed, they received stubborn enemy rifle and machine-gun fire from coconut groves inland, and the cry went up, "Put the Vermonters ahead." The Vermonters, the 172nd Regiment, were ahead and rapidly pushed from the harbor into the plantations. About 1500 that afternoon, twenty-five enemy dive bombers hurtled from the heights of Rendova Mountain down upon the ship-to-shore activity at Rendova Harbor and amid a hail of anti-aircraft fire from the ship and shore anti-aircraft guns. Seven planes were shot down.



The Jap anger over the occupation, and the punishment that our 155 howitzers had inflicted against their ground installations, was soon to be realized. A group of enemy dive bombers again swooped over the top of Rendova Mountain on July 2, and passed directly over the Division Command Post, dropping a shower of bombs which demolished equipment and caused severe casualties. The attack lasted only a few seconds, but it came without warning and was a lesson in anti-aircraft detection and the necessity for underground shelters for troops. Two days later the enemy struck again, but this time men had learned their lesson well. The air attack was detected, and troops occupied shelters which had been previously dug. Approximately eighteen two-motored Jap planes droned over the harbor, but extremely effective anti-aircraft fire caused the planes to wilt and fall like leaves. Fifteen enemy planes were shot down. Perhaps the Japs too had learned a lesson.

At last Rendova was secure and preparations for the main goal of the battle of New Georgia—seizure of the Munda Airstrip—were begun. Everything was in readiness; the men, the equipment, and the will to complete what had been started. The flanks were secure. The Supply line was intact, and the time was set. The capture of the important Munda Airstrip became the personal task of each and every man.

"Do you think it'll be tough, Sir?" a corporal asked a captain. "I don't know, corporal, tell you when it comes."

And there you have it. You don't know what lies ahead in battle and maybe that's a good thing.

After dark on July 2 the men of the First Battalion, 172nd Infantry, embarked for New Georgia. Company A of the 169th Infantry joined this unit at Onaivasi Entrance with the mission of covering the projected landing of the 169th Infantry, maintaining contact with the 172nd Infantry and reconnoitering routes to the line of departure. In the morning, leading elements landed without opposition on Zanana Beach successfully establishing the beachhead. The remainder of the battalion was ashore by 1000. During the next two or three days the balance of the 172nd Infantry, the 169th Infantry, and two engineer companies closed on Zanana Beach, and then moved out toward the Berike River which had been chosen as the line of departure for commencing the main attack.

They pushed inland along the Munda Trail which was merely a native footpath. It wasn't too tough at first, but there was mud and the jungle to fight. There was sniper fire and Jap infiltration. However, casualties were light. At 0630 on July 9, elements in strength reached the Berike River. It was forded without serious opposition, and the advance continued slowly through extremely swampy terrain and against increasing enemy resistance, indicating the approach to a major defensive line on the higher ground towards the airfield.

Swamps became increasingly difficult. The lines of communication were far extended which required long hand-carries to get food and ammunition to the front and evacuate the ever increasing casualties to the rear. The attack was slowing down in spite of air-drops and outstanding accomplishments in the construction of bridges and roads by the 118th Engineers. Enemy infiltration was occurring on a large scale, causing great damage and danger to the men being evacuated along the Munda Trail. The 169th Infantry on the right held an exposed flank which the Japs harassed both day and night. Constant sniper fire along the trail caused severe casualties, and the battle was as tough behind as it was in front. Then a break occurred. A reconnaissance patrol from the 172nd Infantry found a new undefended landing beach in the vicinity of Laiana which was much nearer the airfield than was Zanana beachhead. The decision was immediately reached to secure this area as the division's main beachhead, thus shortening by miles the treacherous line of supply along the Munda Trail.

At 1000, July 11, the 172nd Infantry was disengaged and moved south with the mission of establishing its left flank on the sea, securing a beachhead near Laiana and continuing the advance to the left. Although great care was taken to preserve the element of secrecy of this maneuver, enemy patrols discovered the columns, and this force met intensive mortar fire enroute.

The 169th Infantry, on the right flank, was encountering stiff enemy opposition and was under heavy mortar and machine gun fire; but against all this, battled their way to the high ground northeast of Lambetti Plantation which was extremely well defended with fortifications.

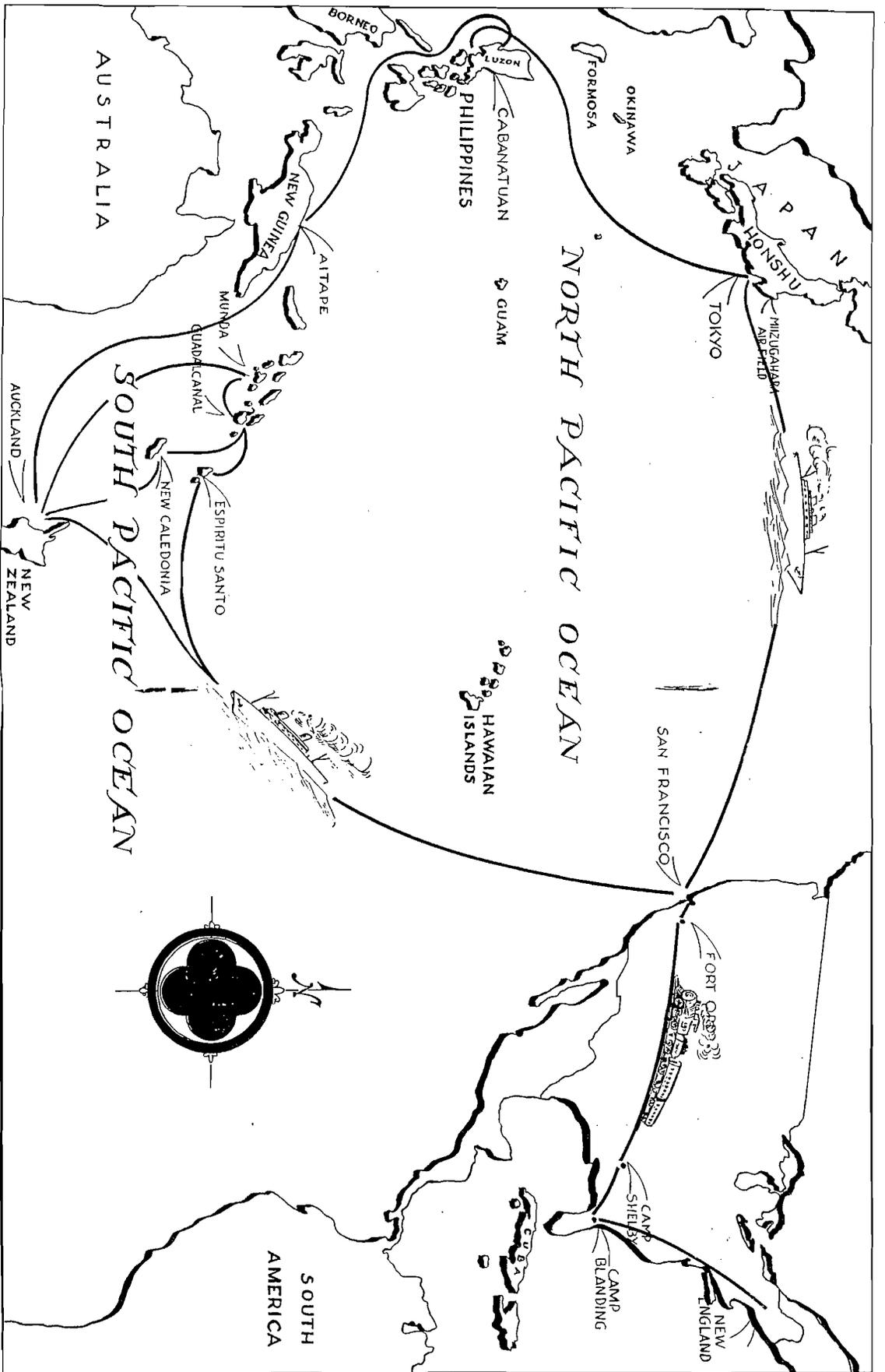
By afternoon July 12, the 172nd Infantry had hacked its way through and had secured a beachhead at Laiana. Immediately the supply line diverted to Laiana Beach. This was a turning point of the Munda Campaign. At last the men could be supplied adequately and the evacuation of the wounded did not necessitate the delay of twenty-four to thirty-six hours, nor the dangerous trek back along the Munda Trail.

Now began a period of increased pressure, reorganization, and resupply. Intensive reconnaissance probed the Japanese defenses, uncovering the strong points of Horse-shoe Mountain, O.P. Hill, and extensive pillbox fortifications at Ilangana Point. The 103d Infantry, less the first battalion, securing ground already seized on southern New Georgia, landed at Laiana Beach. The line was now composed of the 103d Infantry on the left flank along the coast and the 172nd Infantry on the right of the division zone of action. On the extreme right flank, elements of the 37th and 25th Divisions pushed into their place along the line. Finally on the 25th of July the stage was set for an all-out offensive to seize Munda Airfield. Following tremendous preparations by close support of aircraft and artillery, the attack jumped off accompanied by light tanks and employing flame throwers for the reduction of pillbox fortifications. Intense enemy resistance, typified by innumerable machine guns, automatic weapons, and mortars, revealed to the attackers that they were indeed engaging the main Munda defenses. On July 29, the 169th Infantry, less one battalion, was moved to the center of the line, thus giving the division a three regiment front. Constant pressure was gradually forcing the enemy back from its high ground defenses, but not without heavy casualties to our already depleted ranks.

During the following three days the Jap line was broken; units on the left flank advanced to the outer taxiways of Munda Field; units on the right flank had mounted the eastern peak of Bibilo Hill. By August 4 the division had occupied completely Munda Field, the southern shore of Munda Point, Bibilo Hill mass, and Kokengolo Hill after three days of fierce close combat within enemy pillbox fortifications. A message was sent by Brigadier General Wing to Major General Hodge, then commanding the division, "Munda is yours at 1410 today."

With the seizure and occupation of Munda, the 43d Infantry Division promptly set up defensive positions and initiated patrol action in all directions. Sporadic enemy artillery fire on the Munda area from the general direction of Baanga Island, while not effective, indicated that the enemy was still active. On the 10th of August troops assaulted Baanga Island from boats and engaged stubborn enemy defenders in fighting that lasted for eleven days before elements of the 169th and 172nd Infantry destroyed all enemy resistance.

When this mission was accomplished, a main effort was concentrated against the Island of Arundel where the 172nd Infantry advanced in a two-pronged attack along the east and west shores with plans to meet at the northern tip of the island. This was accomplished against heavy enemy resistance, especially on the northern most section of the island where the Japs were able to reinforce their garrison by barge from Kolumbangara. The Jap realized that if Arundel was secured by our troops, the entire New Georgia Group would be completely lost to him. Consequently he attempted numerous counter-offensives, all of which ended in costly defeat. On the



night of September 20, remnants of the Jap forces evacuated by barge to Kolombangara terminating one of the bloodiest battles in the New Georgia Campaign. Mopping-up operations of enemy stragglers on Kolombangara Island, Vella Lavella Island, and the New Georgia mainland was rapidly effected by elements of the 43d Infantry Division, 37th Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division, and 37th New Zealand Battalion. By October 12, after approximately three and a half months of continuous fighting, the New Georgia Campaign came to a successful conclusion.

C H A P T E R F O U R

The men were joyous aboard ship. They were going to New Zealand. Of course they had been there before but this time it was different. The first time it was merely a matter of moving from one civilized country to another. This was a matter of moving from an almost unbearable hell to a most gracious heaven. They had left New Georgia a few days before, and ever since they had boarded the ships, they had been busy thinking and talking about what they were going to do after they landed and had settled down in their various campsites.

On the 18th of February the transport convoy entered Auckland Harbor, and the troops immediately debarked at Princess Wharf and marched along Quay Street to the railroad station where they boarded trains bound for the camps. Upon arrival they saw the same hutments and the same beautiful landscape as were present a year before. After the masses of jungle foliage they had encountered in New Georgia, the open rolling hills of New Zealand formed a perfect beginning to the four months that followed.

Passes were issued almost at once, and the men set out to indulge in the freedom they had so rightfully deserved. They enjoyed above all, the hospitality of the people who invited them to their homes for tea, took them on sight-seeing tours of the surrounding country and listened to the stories of their personal experiences in combat. The men also enjoyed the rich milk shakes at the Central Cafe in Auckland, steaks and fresh vegetables at the Golden Pheasant. They danced at the Metropole and the Peter Pan and saw the best in entertainment at the Civic Theater. Football games were played between the regiments, and the men returned the hospitality of the people by inviting them to these games and trying to explain the technicalities of this great American sport. The most exciting were the two games of Army versus Marines. This hilarity lasted for one month until the time came for the men to settle down to the important business of training for future military operations.

It was cold then. Winter had set in. But despite the cold the division started for maneuvers in the Rerewhakaito Lake area, southeast of Rotorua. It was rough, hilly terrain, partially wooded, partially bare, perfectly suited for large scale maneuvers, permitting freedom in all types of live-fire exercises. The value of these maneuvers almost immediately became apparent when the division, at this time, was alerted for movement to the northern New Guinea coast where an estimated forty thousand Japs were making a desperate break-through from Wewak towards Aitape in the vicinity of the Driniumor River.

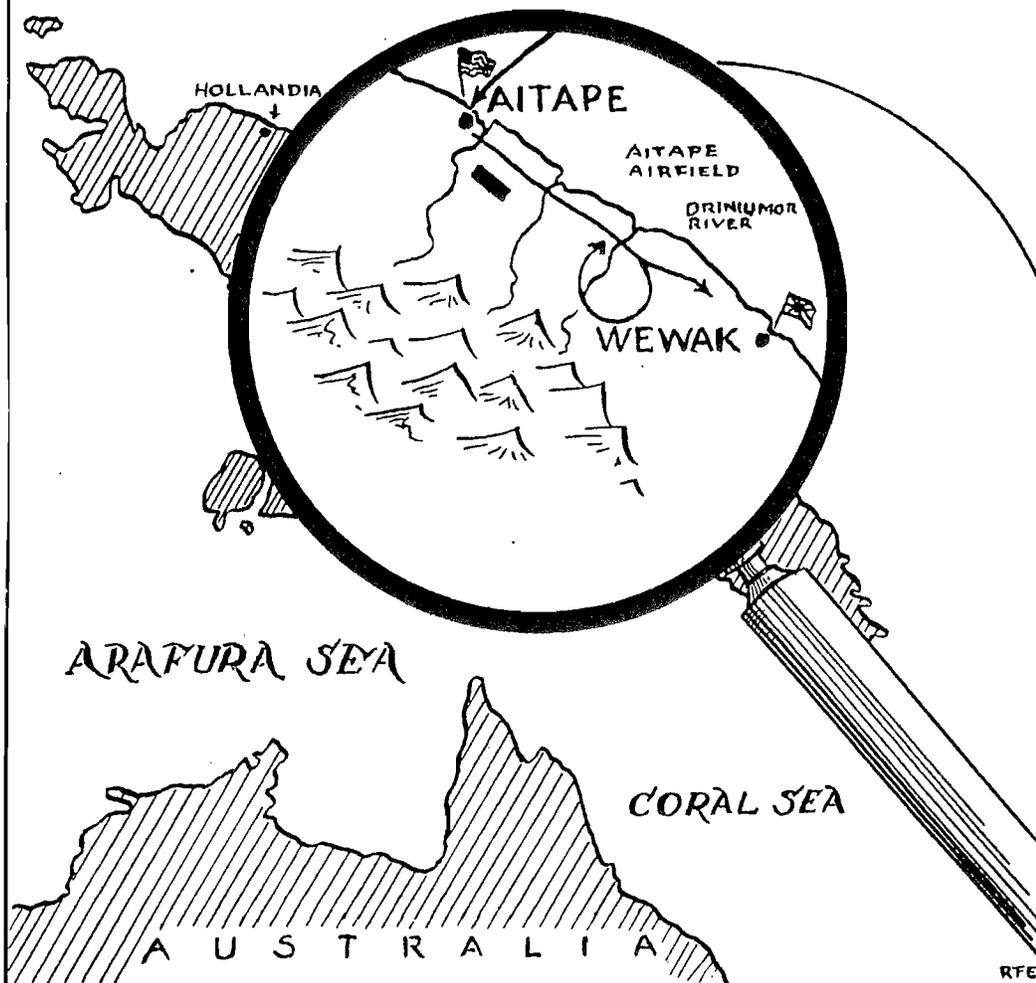
Eight ships laden with troops departed from Auckland Harbor during the period of July 4 to July 22, 1944. The first of these, the S. S. Shanks, debarked elements at Aitape, New Guinea on the 15th of July, 1944, where the troops immediately took their place in a defensive line. This commitment was co-ordinated by Brigadier General Alexander N. Stark, Jr., the assistant Division Commander, who, with a small advance party had preceded the main body of the division by air.

The terrain in this area consisted of typical jungle-covered coastal plains rising rapidly into the rugged Torecelli mountain range. It was in this country, between Aitape and Wewak, that many thousand Jap troops were faced with the decision of starving within their isolated defenses or desperately attempting a counter-attack against the American beachhead in an effort to secure food and facilities for possible evacuation from New Guinea. They elected to do the latter.

The American perimeter around Aitape Airfield was strongly built but thinly held at the time the Jap initiated his counter-offensive. The 103d and 172nd Infantry Regiments were immediately assigned the mission of manning the main line of resistance bor-

NEW GUINEA

SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN



dering the beachhead, while elements of the 169th Infantry moved to the Driniumor River, ten miles to the east, where elements of the 32nd Infantry Division, 112th R.C. T., and 124th Infantry were heavily engaged in repelling the mounting Jap offensive. The main attack came in the form of an attempted envelopment of the south flank of the Driniumor River line and was smashed in mid-July. Elements of the 169th Infantry and the 124th Infantry were immediately ordered to attack east into the jungle to search out and destroy the disorganized enemy forces. These missions were accomplished with promptness and high success in spite of meager supplies, poor evacuation, innumerable natural obstacles and desperate opposition. Never again did the Japanese attempt a major offensive in New Guinea.

There followed a period of long range patrolling and reconnaissance in force along the coast and into the mountains where bands of Japs were roving at will. These operations provided excellent training for the men who had not seen action at Munda and were to stand them in good stead in the near future.

In the early autumn of 1944 the division received orders to prepare for participation as one of two assault divisions to make the initial landing on the Philippine Islands where a beachhead was to be seized at Sarigani Bay on southern Mindanao. This operation was cancelled when General MacArthur speeded up plans for his return to the Philippines. Meanwhile all personnel underwent an intensive training period in amphibious operations, training most necessary for the division's next great mission. Eventually the men were told what that mission was to be and they trained all the harder. Additional replacements arrived. The men were resupplied with everything they would need. They were going to invade Luzon in the Philippines.

C H A P T E R F I V E

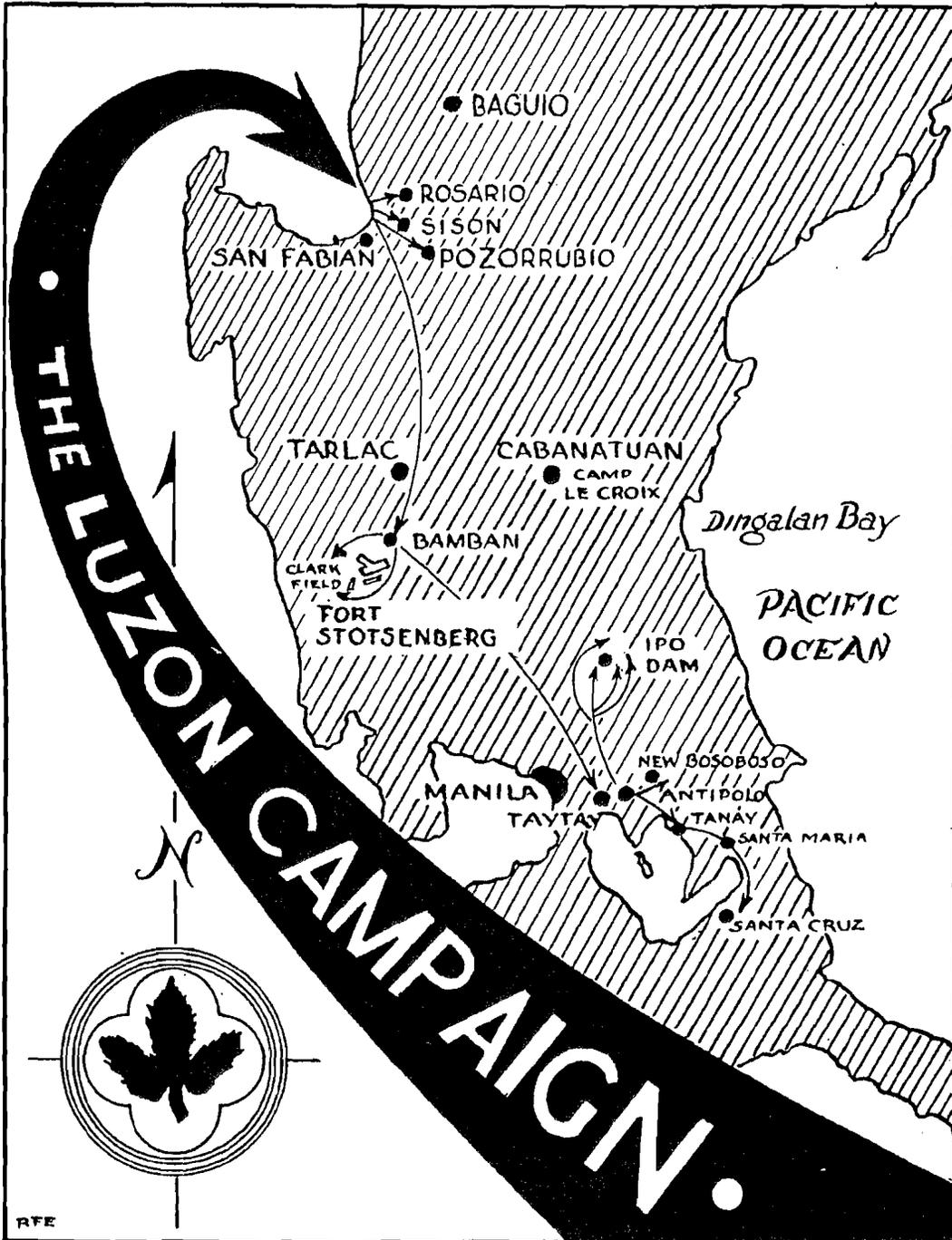
The ships were loaded and ready. On the rainy morning of December 26th, 1944, the men of the 43d Infantry Division marched to the beach at Aitape laden with bazookas, machine guns, mortars, grenades, and packs. Loading was accomplished speedily. Two days later, after all ships and personnel had participated in a complete landing, the ships sailed. The Sixth Army convoy speeding northward seemed to stretch from horizon to horizon. The 43d Infantry Division and its attached troops were combat loaded on eight APAs, three APs, four AKAs, sixteen LSTs, ten LSMs and two LSDs. The men were as calm as was the ocean on the voyage and even the propaganda broadcasts of Japan's famed Tokyo Rose couldn't excite them, though she said, "I am broadcasting to you Munda Butchers. The Japanese Army knows that you are headed for Luzon and that you are going to land at Lingayen Gulf." Then she would tell what to expect there, and it sounded as if the American invaders could expect the might of the entire Japanese Army. The men only shrugged their shoulders and continued reading their books and playing cards.

Then came the morning of January 9, 1945. The roar of the Naval guns sounded the unending roll of a thousand bass drums as they bombarded the shoreline. This was a sight no one who saw it will ever forget. And then it came. The loudspeakers aboard the ships blasted out with "Boat team 48 to Red 5." "Boat team 48 to Red 5." Then "Boat team 51 to Green 8," and this continued until the assault troops had all climbed down the rope nets into the small landing craft lying by the sides of the ships. Soon Lingayen Gulf was full of amphibious tanks and tractors, landing craft, and numerous other types of boats circling in small groups as they prepared for the assault to the beach. On signal they all turned and headed towards the shore forming V-shaped waves. The amphibious tanks and tractors landed first depositing thousands of troops which rapidly drove their way inland. No enemy small arms fire was encountered at the beach line, but casualties mounted from heavy mortar and artillery fire, from concealed guns in the high hills to the northeast.

Reorganization was hastily effected by the 103d Infantry on the right pushing into San Fabian, the 169th Infantry in the center moving forward toward Mabilao and the 172nd Infantry on the left straining to gain the high ground north of Alacan. As the infantry pushed forward, they began to uncover the Japanese outposts, but by nightfall a substantial area in the beachhead had been gained. On the second day, the leading elements on the division's north flank encountered fierce and determined resistance in the rugged hills north and east of Alacan, and on the south, other elements of the division were battling their way toward San Jacinto against scattered enemy resistance.

Meanwhile, on the beach, it was determined that Beach White 2, the middle beach was the only one in the entire Army beachhead suitable for landing the numerous LSTs on which the great bulk of mobile equipment of the assault force was loaded. This made the immediate destruction of enemy artillery on the hills overlooking this beach imperative and the order was sent down that these strong points must be overrun at all cost. But the enemy had been preparing these positions for two years, and only through the most bold and daring maneuver was this mission accomplished. The men who were there will never forget how the 172nd Infantry knifed its way over the sugar-loaf hills to seize the Jap supply base at Rosario; or the 169th daring night march to out-flank the enemy bastions on Hill 355; or the skillful encirclement of Hill 200 by the 103d Infantry.

By the last of January assigned missions were completed. The division had overrun 125 heavy artillery positions, engaged enemy tanks for the first time on Luzon,



and destroyed the Jap in his supreme effort, in the pillboxes guarding the road to Baguio. The division with its attached units found itself deployed on a front of twenty-five miles, depleted in strength, but continuing the attack. Regarding this initial action, the First Corps Commander, Major General Innis P. Swift, told the division after the campaign, "I am proud of you and I am proud of your commander. When this Division landed at Lingayen Gulf it had to fight the whole accursed Jap force, and don't let anyone tell you differently. The rest of the troops in the Corps didn't see a Jap for three weeks.

On February 13th, after twenty-six days of offensive action, the 43d Division with the 158th and the 63d R.C.T.s attached, completed the seizure and mopping up of its objectives, Rosario, Sison, and Pozzorubio and the adjacent mountains after having counted 7,831 dead Japs.

At this opportune moment the battle-depleted division was relieved by the 33d Infantry Division. Prompt motor movement assembled all units in the vicinity of Santa Barbara to the south where no time was lost in assimilating replacements for the casualties suffered in the initial landings. The men looked forward to a brief period of rest, but this was not to be. Orders were received on February 25th directing the division to relieve the 40th Infantry Division, heavily engaged in the hills west of Fort Stotsenberg, on or before the 2nd of March. This was accomplished by the 172nd Infantry and the 169th Infantry both of which took up the attack on enemy forces composed of the remainder of an original 12,000 air, army, navy and airborne troops formally garrisoning Clark Field. In this sector terrain was the Jap's best ally. It was typified by sharp jagged cliffs and razor back ridges constituting a powerful barrier against assault. During this action large quantities of Napalm bombs were dropped in an attempt to burn the enemy out of the inaccessible crags and caves in which he took shelter. Here, also, the enemy skilfully employed the 40mm anti-aircraft guns that they had taken from Clark Field causing severe casualties to our attack infantry. As at Lingayen, wide envelopment again proved to be the best method of cracking the enemy defenses. The 172nd Infantry made a fifty-mile motor movement around the northern flank and down the O'Donnell Trail to Tiaong, cutting off all possible Jap escape routes to the north and west. Along this same trail had marched the heroes of Bataan in the infamous death march two years before. Meanwhile the 169th Infantry on the south flank tenaciously pressed gruelling attacks against intricate dug-in positions along the Japanese main line of resistance. The combined offensive of these two regiments was nearing a successful conclusion when new orders were received. The division, less the 169th Combat Team was to relieve the First Cavalry Division engaged against the southern extremities of the vaunted Jap "Shimbu Line" east of Manila. Detailed reconnaissance of the First Cavalry's zone of action revealed that the enemy had taken his customary intelligent advantage of the hills. Again the division found him entrenched in strong, interlocking, prepared positions and again it was decided to hit him from the flank and rear.

Immediately upon completing the relief, the 43d launched a co-ordinated attack to secure Antipolo and the hills to the northeast. The 43d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop boldly probed the road nets to the south in the vicinity of Angono and Binangonan and secured the road net vital for the encircling maneuver scheduled for the 103d Infantry. On March 14, substantial gains were made in all zones of action and during the next few days the 103d Infantry on the right flank exploited its encirclement of the enemy main line seizing Teresa and the entire road-net in that sector. The battle for BM 7 proved to be difficult, but three days of continuous tank-infantry assault destroyed its defenses.

Meanwhile the 172nd Infantry on the north made slow, bitterly contested advances over very rough terrain in their advance toward Mount Camayuman. On March 20th they broke through the Jap defenses and secured the pass leading into

the New Bosoboso River Valley, thereby cutting a key avenue of retreat to the north for the Japanese forces engaging the 103d Infantry to the south. After turning the south end of the Shimbu Line, the 103d Infantry changed direction and drove north, taking Mount Tanauan, and entered the New Bosoboso River Valley. The division's right flank was secured by the 43d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop which moved with great speed along the road-net around Laguna de Bay, taking Morong, Baras and Tanay in fast order.

On March 30 the division received orders to drive east and south around Laguna de Bay and seize the Santa Maria Valley, where it was known that the enemy was making free use of the road to withdraw strength from Bicol Peninsula for concentration in the Infanta-Sanpolak area and to reinforce the Shimbu Line. On the 3d and 4th of April the 103d Infantry moved secretly at night to the line of departure and at 0300 April 4 they jumped off to make a twenty-five mile dash by foot and motor along the highway around Laguna de Bay. Two days later they burst upon the rear of Jap elements engaging the First Cavalry Division in the vicinity of Pagsanjan, successfully completing the liberation of the Santa Maria Valley. There followed a period of long hard patrolling in the mountains to the east to search out and destroy stubborn remnants of the disorganized Jap forces. Men who had lived precariously through Rosario, Fort Stotsenburg, and Antipolo began to hope that for them the battle for Luzon might be over, but this was no to be, for fifty miles to the north, the center of the Shimbu Line still held impregnable positions on the Palisade Cliffs containing the vital Ipo Dam which had formerly supplied one-third of the water for the city of Manila.

On April 29, 1945, the 43d Infantry Division moved by motor to the Santa Maria-Bulacan area to attack and seize Ipo Dam. The 112th Cavalry with the 169th R.C.T. attached had been disposed generally along the line Hot Corner-San Jose-Norzagaray containing the enemy in the Ipo Dam area while probing the well organized defenses with a series of costly reconnaissances in force. Efforts to drive in enemy outposts had enjoyed little success. The aggressiveness and accuracy of enemy artillery in this area was extraordinary. Any unusual activity by our infantry, or other elements, brought immediate shelling.

Reconnaissance revealed that one logical route led to the Dam, and that was the Metropolitan Road, a two lane highway twisting through the steep Palisades at Bigti, and then running east through towering hills to Ipo. The cliffs at Bigti were organized into a veritable fortress. Approximately a regiment of enemy infantry held the Bigti Cliffs and stood ready to deny our advance on the Metropolitan Road. On the north the Angat River gorge blocked any attempt to flank the Bigti positions. On the south, extremely severe terrain was a serious obstacle to an approach to the Dam.

Decisive action was required. Every effort had to be made to avoid a stalemate for the rainy season was rapidly approaching. A decision was reached to employ one regiment to create a major diversion against Bigti. The main effort of the division would be made wide to the south through the difficult terrain and then north to the Dam. Key terrain features flanking the dam were to be seized behind the enemy's main strength engaged in fighting at Bigti. Guerilla forces in regimental strength were to attack from the north of the Angat River, thus constituting the entire plan as a daring double envelopment by a division reinforced. On the night of May 3, the Division moved to its forward assembly areas relieving the 112th Cavalry R.C.T.

By the night of May 5, all combat elements of the division had been concentrated for the attack, which started on the night of May 6. As the 172nd and 103d Infantry crossed the line of departure they passed through outposts of the 169th Infantry which then advanced combat patrols in company strength against the fortifications north and south of Bigti. The 103d Infantry on the division right and the 172nd

Infantry in the center advanced steadily against varying degrees of enemy resistance, overrunning enemy outposts and securing key terrain features along the route. Close behind, the 118th Engineer Battalion broke roads in support of each regiment. Dive bombers were employed to destroy enemy anti-aircraft positions. To the north Markings, Guerilla regiment was steadily advancing and eliminating numerous enemy outposts. As the days went on these combat elements advanced while the enemy, as had been hoped, concentrated his main effort on holding the 169th Infantry at Bigti. During this period enemy artillery grew increasingly accurate.

By May 11, major elements of the division had encountered the enemy main line of resistance. These elements attacked the enemy strongholds in their sectors and under intense Jap artillery and mortar fire, advanced boldly. Elements of the 169th Infantry skirted the cliffs at Bigti. The 103d and 172nd Regiment continued to make progress against the stubborn defenses south of Ipo. At last only one more range of hills remained to be seized. If Hill 860, overlooking Ipo Dam and dominating the Metropolitan Road, could be secured, any Jap attempt to dislodge the division would be futile.

On the morning of May 13, heavy rains started drowning the landscape and causing the engineer roads to become impassible mud holes. Vehicles loaded with ammunition, rations and medical supplies were bogged down. Guerillas, service troops and air drops were thrown into the effort of supply to keep the assault battalions moving. The opening of the Metropolitan Road had become imperative. The 169th Infantry initiated reconnaissance so as to be prepared to take the long bitterly contested cliffs at Bigti. Anti-aircraft guns delivered direct fire missions against enemy ground positions to supplement the general artillery preparations. The largest Napalm bomb attacks employed to that time struck at the remaining stubborn defenses in preparation for an all out attack. On the 17th of May, one hundred and eighty-five planes bombed the Palisades with 50,470 gallons of Napalm. The horrifying effect of this tremendous assault by fire was as inspiring to tired Infantry soldiers as it was demoralizing to the Jap defenders. Large Napalm attacks continued along the Metropolitan Road defenses while the 169th Infantry, under cover of this tremendous screen, struck north along the cliffs and seized the Bigti Palisades.

By this time landing elements of the 103d Infantry had seized footholds on the southern shoulder of Hill 860, vital feature to the defense of Ipo Dam, while other elements of the Regiment drove north on the east side of Ipo River. The second Battalion of the 172nd Infantry pushed on and seized Red Bank, a hill dominating the Metropolitan Road west of Hill 860. The contested advance was progressing. First Battalion of the 103d Infantry seized the crest of Hill 860, while the Second Battalion, securing the junction of the Angat-Ipo River, blocked the evacuation route to the south and assisted the First Battalion in its reduction of pill-boxes on Hill 860. At this time, the new recoilless 57 and 75mm weapons were successfully used against enemy positions on Hill 860, and night operations were enhanced by liberal ground illumination from many anti-aircraft searchlights. Guerillas from Markings'-Yay Regiment fought through scattered resistance to secure the north end of the dam. By nightfall of May 18, elements of the 169th Infantry had seized two key hill features insuring the security of the Metropolitan Road and on the 19th of May, all organized resistance in the Ipo Dam area had been crushed. Thus was Ipo Dam captured intact by the successful employment of double envelopment, an uncommon military maneuver. Judged by speed, daring, skill and results achieved, this operation was one of the most successful of the entire Luzon campaign.

Following the completion of skillful mopping-up operations by the 169th Infantry in the Mount Oro sector, northeast of Wawa Dam, the entire division moved to Camp La Croix, six miles southeast of Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija Province, Luzon, Philippine Islands, where an extensive rainy season camp had been built by the 118th Engineer

Battalion. During July new personnel, mainly enlisted, arrived from the United States to replace veterans with high Adjusted Service Rating scores. The enlisted men who had accompanied the division overseas and endured the trials and errors of Munda were at last homeward-bound. Their loss was especially pronounced among the Signal, Ordnance, Quartermaster and other supporting troops of the division. The new men were able and willing to undergo the intensified specialist training program conducted by all units. A number attended the division schools where battle-wise instructors tutored approximately five hundred students weekly. Training in the field was not forgotten either, for each of the three infantry regiments conducted mopping-up operations in co-ordination with guerilla forces, killing over one thousand Jap stragglers and taking over three hundred prisoners of war in the Dingalan Bay-Cabanatuan-Papaya area.

The necessity for this training was readily apparent when orders were received on the 28th of July, 1945, indicating that the 43d Infantry Division was to participate, as one of the spearheads of General Walter Krueger's Sixth Army, in the assault landings on southern Kyushu with a target date of the first of November. Preparations for this campaign, the OLYMPIC OPERATION, proceeded at feverish pitch. That it would have been one of the wars bloodiest campaigns was indicated at a later date when troops of occupation found southern Kyushu to be held in great strength by Japanese divisions recently moved there from Manchuria and other parts of the Japanese Empire. However, on the 15th of August these plans were abruptly cancelled when news was received that Japan had sued for an armistice and was negotiating surrender terms. This occasion was received with quiet rejoicing and reverent calm at Camp La Croix by the combat veterans who could scarcely believe that the war might at last be over.

On the 16th of August the division received word that it would move on the first available shipping from Manila to Japan to participate in the occupation of Honshu Island as part of the Eleventh Corps under General Eichelberger's Eighth Army in the BLACKLIST OPERATION. Three weeks later, on September 13, the troops debarked from the Naval transports and moved by motor through the bombed wastes of Yokohama and Tokyo to enter and occupy a sector of the agricultural and industrial Kanto Plain, and seize the arsenals of defeated Japan. At last the journey from New Zealand to Tokyo had been completed.

E P I L O G U E

*O*N THE 20th of September, while engaged in the initial occupation of Saitama Prefecture in Territorial Japan, amazing news was received. The 97th Infantry Division, fresh from Europe and America was en route to relieve the 43d Infantry Division, which would move to the United States on the return shipping. During the period September 20-September 29, approximately eleven thousand low score men were transferred to units remaining in Japan and a similar number of high score veterans were transferred into the 43d Division from the Americal Division, First Cavalry Division, 112th R.C.T., and miscellaneous Corps units for return to the United States.

The advance elements of the 97th arrived at Kumagaya on the 24th of September, scarcely four days after it was known that the relief was to be effected. The tremendous tasks of transferring all organizational equipment from units of the 43d to the corresponding units of the 97th and of effecting tactical reliefs were immediately initiated. Forty-eight hours later, elements of the 172nd Infantry were loading aboard the U.S.S. General Pope at Yokohama Harbor. As rapidly as shipping arrived the relief of the remainder of both divisions was effected.

To the men of the division returning home there was a great sense of accomplishment, gratitude and peace. It had been a long road and for the 43d Division it had been a victorious one. Each man had his memories; some, of Camp Blanding, Camp Shelby and Fort Ord; others, of New Zealand, New Georgia, New Guinea, Luzon, and Japan. All triumphant memories.

As each ship sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge a great roar went up from the men. Three of them watched as the shadow of the bridge passed over their heads. They were the men called Arizona, Iowa and Connecticut.

Arizona turned to his two friends and said, "Boy, it's a great feeling isn't it?"

Iowa said, "Doesn't look as if it's changed, does it?"

"Why should it?"

Connecticut answered, "I don't know. I think I've changed."

Arizona looked at him, "We all have. You can't help but change when you've been through the grind we have, but it's all behind us now. If the other men of the division feel anything like I do, there's a good deal of pride mixed in with this great feeling of being here. I wonder what the General up there on the bridge is thinking now?"

Standing on the flying bridge of the U.S.S. Mark L. Hersey to receive the thirteen gun salute to a Major General of the United States Army, as the ship passed down the bay in front of Fort Mason, was the Division's tall, sturdy, red-haired Commander. To him, perhaps more than to any other man of the Division, this was a day filled with joy and pride, yet tinged with sadness. His forebears had fought in one of the division units in most, if not all, the wars in which the United States had engaged. At the outbreak of World War I he had enlisted as a private in that unit; down through the intervening years he had held every grade and rank except that of Corporal in the Division and had commanded it during combat. He had asked it times without number to do the impossible; it had always responded. He had led it when it seemed beset with insurmountable difficulties; seemingly facing certain disaster. He knew that the Division had never dipped its proud banners in defeat on the field of battle. He had led it in its triumphs under such great captains of history as Douglas MacArthur; the tough, shrewd, perhaps the greatest army commander, Walter Krueger; those tried and skillful Corps Commanders, Oscar Griswold, Charles Hall and Palmer Swift. Each had said that the 43d was one of the greatest fighting divisions in the United States Army.

Now General Wing was about to realize the hope and ambition of every division commander—that of bringing his division home. Behind the natural pride of the occasion there was a touch of sadness in his heart. He was sad because of the memory of those men who were not coming home, the many who had met a soldier's death, and whose graves were marked with White Crosses and the Stars of David in the far-flung islands of the Pacific, and of the pain and human suffering this war had caused their loved ones. He was glad because never again in this war would he have to order men to die in battle.

The last round of the thirteen gun salute had been fired. The ship was pulling into dock. Soon all the ships carrying men of the division would be docking in this Port of Embarkation. After a job well done, the 43d Infantry "Winged Victory" Division had come home as a unit, the first United States Army Division to be inactivated from the Pacific Theater of Operations in World War II.

Decorations

MEDAL OF HONOR



2

D S C



75

D S M



LEGION OF MERIT



90

SILVER STAR



987

SOLDIERS MEDAL



63

BRONZ STAR



2947

AIR MEDAL



31

PURPLE HEART



7610

ASIATIC-PACIFIC AREA MEDAL

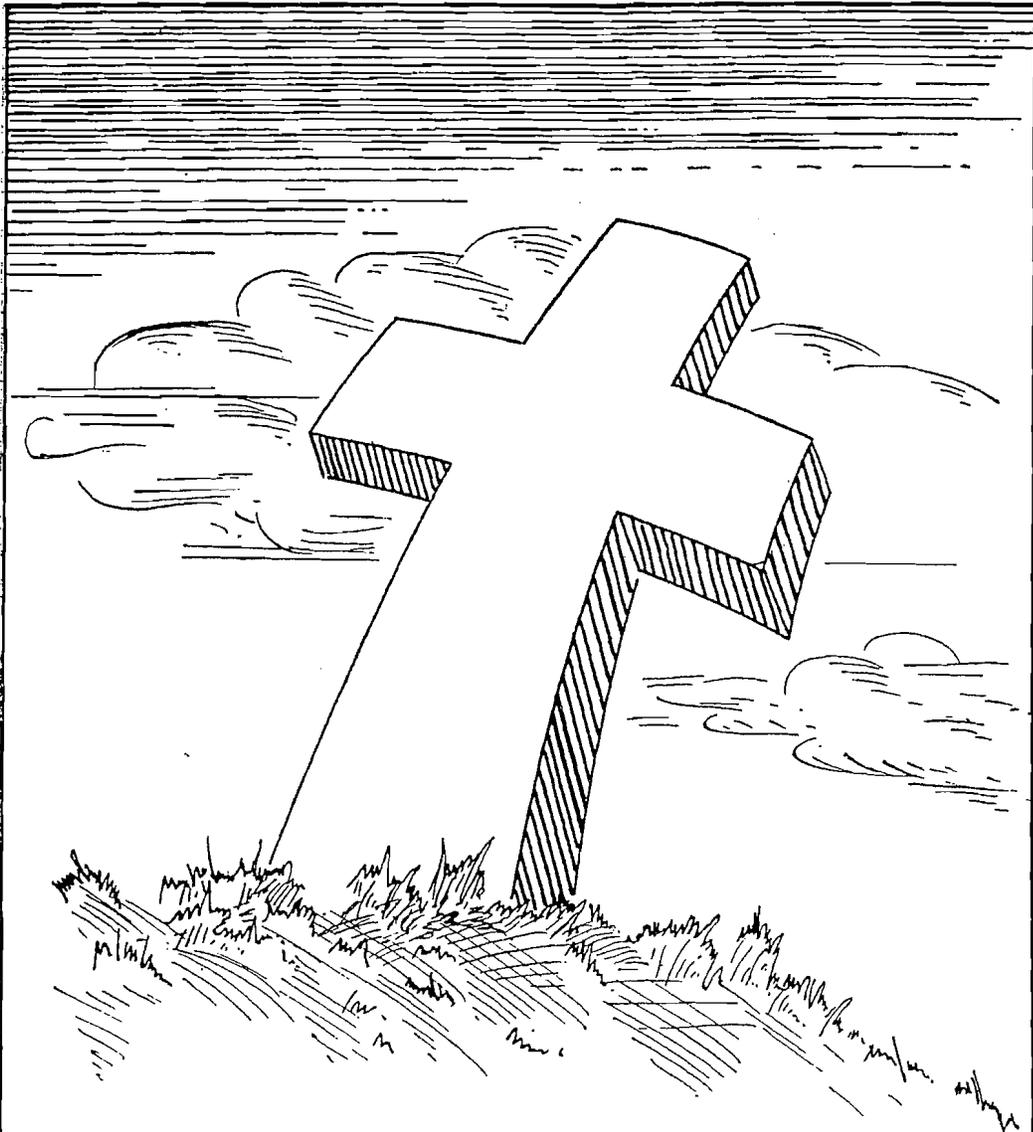




Congressional Medal of Honor	2
(Report that second medal was presented by President Truman. No official report has reached the Division)	
Distinguished Service Medal	1
(Reported unofficially as being ordered. Not yet received by Division)	
Distinguished Service Cross	75
Legion of Merit	90
Silver Star	987
Soldiers Medal	63
Bronze Star	2947
Air Medal	31
Purple Heart	7610

11806





THE SUPREME SACRIFICE
1561



BATTLE CASUALTIES



GUADALCANAL—RUSSELL ISLANDS, B.S.I.

15 February—29 June 1943

Killed in Action	0
Wounded in action	10



NEW GEORGIA, B.S.I.

30 June—7 October 1943

Killed in Action	581
Wounded in Action	2059



AITAPE, NEW GUINEA

29 June—25 August 1944

Killed in Action	28
Wounded in Action	59



LUZON, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

9 January—30 June 1945

Killed in Action	952
Wounded in Action	3921



50 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Operation Toenails: Objective Munda

Dick Potter's
home away from home
June 29, 1943 and on!

When Australian coastwatchers in the Solomons noted increased enemy activity on New Georgia, Allied leaders made plans to attack. With 10,000 Japanese already on the central Solomon island, and 4,000 on the way, many feared a battle of attrition.

On June 21, 1943, the Marine's 4th Raider Battalion landed at Segi Point, followed by the Army's 103rd Infantry, 43rd Division. Once the area was secured, Navy Seabees laid a vital airstrip.

Nearby Viru Harbor was a key enemy supply port. But getting to it was hazardous, as one soldier related: "I heard men curse the jungle, the mud that sucked us down, the million vines which clawed at a man and threw him off balance," said Sgt. Anthony Coulis. His sentiments were echoed by hundreds of other GIs fighting through the jungle.

On July 1 the Marines struck two occupied villages overlooking the harbor, and in the ensuing battles lost eight KIA with 15 WIA, while killing 48 enemy soldiers.

A small Japanese unit remained on Vangunu Island overlooking Viru Harbor, but was routed by the Army's 103rd Infantry, 2nd Bn.; 7th Coastal Artillery and the 4th Marine Raiders.

Main Thrust The main thrust was at Munda, with nearby Rendova Island to be used to ferry Marines and soldiers across the channel.

Rain and fog botched the invasion, scattering the landing craft off course. Opposing them were 200 troops from the 2nd Co., Kure 6th Special Naval Landing Force, most of whom were killed along the beach. Others escaped back to defensive positions at Munda.

Enemy planes at Rabaul harassed the Rendova beachhead, in one attack killing 64 and wounding 89 Americans when an ordnance dump exploded.

Japanese planes also managed to damage the flagship *McCawley*. It was later sunk accidentally by an American



Landing operations on Rendova Island, Solomon Islands, June 30, 1943. Attacking at the break of day in a heavy rainstorm, the first Americans ashore huddled behind tree trunks and any other cover they could find.

PT boat. The air battle claimed 30 enemy fighters versus four for the Allies.

By July 4, 155mm "long tom" artillery pieces were in place at Rendova to lob shells at the Japanese near Munda. Allied planes also targeted the airfield there.

The Marine's 9th Defense Bn. made the channel crossing that night, five miles from Munda, followed by the Marine Raiders the next day. Both units were slowed by the dense foliage and impassable rivers.

Farther north, at Rice Anchorage, another 2,200 Marines and GIs of the Northern Landing Group, composed of the 1st Marine Raiders, and the Army's 3rd Bn., 145th Inf., and 3rd Bn., 148th Inf., landed to ward off enemy reinforcements while trying to get to Munda. Along the way they killed 350 enemy soldiers.

One member of the 148th Inf., Pvt. Rodger Young, posthumously received the Medal of Honor for diverting machine gun fire from an enemy pillbox, allowing his own unit to withdraw. Though twice wounded in the battle, Young continued to engage the enemy with rifle fire and hand grenades until he was killed.

On July 5, a Japanese naval force, using long lance torpedoes, sank the cruiser *Helena* — 168 of the 900-man crew perished during some amazing ordeals.

Combat Fatigue Takes Toll Though only five miles from their objective, men of the 169th and 172nd Inf. (43rd Div.) landing at Zanana encountered dense jungle as they inched their way to Munda. Within days, after enduring hunger and thirst, lack of sleep, an unforgiving jungle and constant enemy harassment, many soldiers of the 43rd Division succumbed to combat fatigue. The 25th and 37th Divisions were quickly sent to New Georgia as reinforcements.

The delay allowed the enemy to fortify well-concealed pillboxes around Munda. From lessons learned at Guadalcanal and Buna, the Americans knew the enemy would fight to the death. Unlike those previous battles, the Japanese first had to withstand air and artillery barrages, plus naval gunfire.

After four days of continuous bombardments, flame throwers were used to rout the fanatical Japanese from their pillboxes. Many committed suicide rather than surrender. By Aug. 5, troops of the 43rd Div. had secured Munda airfield. It would take another two weeks to mop up the remaining enemy forces on New Georgia.

Some 1,000 Allied troops were lost, many from disease, on New Georgia. War neuroses claimed another 2,500 GIs. Enemy losses were estimated at 2,500 soldiers.

The Japanese had retreated to Kolombangara to await reinforcements, in the hope of retaking New Georgia. But as four enemy destroyers crept through Vella Gulf on Aug. 6, they were intercepted by six destroyers of *Task Group 31.2*, which fired 24 torpedoes at the unsuspecting convoy. Only one Japanese destroyer escaped. Three others, with 900 soldiers on board, were lost at Vella Gulf. GLB ☉

Peace-time Outfit to Inherit Outstanding Combat Record in Campaigns on Pacific Islands

9/8/46

BY CHARLES H. SPIELMAN
THE motto of the 118th Engineer Battalion of the Rhode Island National Guard is "Deeds Prove Us."

When the motto was adopted it was more a promise than a comment on the battalion's past, but in World War II the men of the 118th demonstrated that they had not been boasting.

The 118th made a proud record in combat in the Pacific, both as builders and as fighters. And they were fighters. They were "combat" engineers, engineers who accompanied—not followed—the infantrymen. There were times when they acted more like infantrymen than engineers.

The battalion was deactivated last October when it came home from Japan, but now it is being reorganized under Lt. Col. Antonio Gambardo as part of the new Rhode Island National Guard and will carry on the

traditions of fighting prowess and engineering skill the old 118th built on tropical islands and in the hills of Luzon.

Formed in 1926

The story of the battalion begins in June, 1926, when Company A of Pawtucket was given Federal recognition. Later that year Company B and Company C were joined with the first company to form a battalion. This was expanded in March, 1929, into a regiment with Col. S. Frank Nolan who later was the Providence city engineer, as its commanding officer.

Col. Thomas J. Hammond, now commanding the First Regiment of the Rhode Island State Guard, took over the 118th Engineers in 1929. He led the men of the regiment on their first tour of active duty in 1934 when, for 11 days in September, they were mobilized for duty during the textile strike.

The 118th was mobilized again in 1938 after the disastrous hurricane

and performed important police and salvage functions. Col. F. Snowden Skinner, who had succeeded Colonel Hammond, was commanding at the time.

With the other units of the 43rd Infantry Division, the 118th Engineers went into the service of the nation on Feb. 24, 1941. Soon the streamlining of the division had reduced the regiment to a battalion. After maneuvers in Louisiana and the Carolinas the battalion was ready to go overseas.

There wasn't much to do at Guadalcanal but when the division moved up through the Russell Islands to New Georgia in 1943, the 118th Engineers proved their contention that they were combat men.

After Ipo, the division was given a rest near Cabañatuan at Camp Lacroix, named for a Rhode Island man killed in the Luzon landing. Camp Lacroix was built by the 118th Engineers working around the clock. They moved gravel by the thousands of truckloads. Their sawmill turned out lumber totaling millions of board feet.

But their pride was in the recreation building. It had been an airplane hangar, but when they got there only the steel framework remained. One engineer was put in

charge of a party of 1500 Filipino civilians. They roofed the immense building with strips of bamboo matting. The biggest grass shack in the world, the men like to call it.

Somewhere, in War Department records, are figures on the work the 118th Engineers did in World War II—how many scores of millions of feet of lumber they sawed, how many hundreds of bridges they built, how many thousands of gallons of water they provided.

There are, too, the records of men of the battalion who died fighting while their companions were building. Today indeed the 118th Engineers can proclaim with pride that "Deeds Prove Us."

Operated in Water-Forest

In the jungle around Munda airfield, water was of the greatest importance. The engineers ordinarily would have set up and operated five water points—that was supposed to be their limit. But the 118th operated 11. They borrowed the extra equipment where they could, some of it coming from the Seabees. The engineers were working so close to the Japanese that the men at one water point captured a party of Japs who came in to fill their canteens, not knowing that the supply source had changed hands.

The division went to New Zealand for a rest after the Munda campaign. Then, in the Summer of 1944, the 118th Engineers and the rest of the division jumped to Attapeu on the north shore of New Guinea. Road building was the big job there. It wasn't so bad along the sandy coast, although there were a lot of streams to be bridged, but back in the jungle there was a difficult job to be done.

The jeep trail the engineers built through the jungle was something they talked about as far away as army headquarters. It was more like a railroad than a motor vehicle road. First the engineers had to lay logs crossways, like ties, on the swampy ground. Then they put down pierced planking to form a strip for each wheel, with side pieces making a sort of trough so the jeeps wouldn't run off the narrow strip. It was only 12 inches wide, so the engineers had to build turnouts exactly as you would find them on a 1-track railroad with 2-way traffic.

This jeep "railroad" extended for five miles into the jungle. Before it was finished the engineers had run out of nails. Corps couldn't give them any, and neither could army. There just weren't any nails in New Guinea. But the engineers kept on building. Instead of nailing their road, they tied the parts together with baling wire.

Loaded on Christmas Day

On Christmas Day, the 118th Engineers began loading for the move to the Philippine Islands. The battalion was split up, one company being assigned to each of the infantry regiments in the division.

The engineers landed on the shores of Janguan Gulf on Jan. 9, 1945. The 112nd Infantry pushed north, along a series of ridges and Company was right behind them. Infantrymen have to have food and water and ammunition, and it was Company's job to build the road over which these could move to the 172nd. This was to become known as the Britina Road. It hung precariously to the sides of steep ridges, plunged down ravines to twist and rise again. It was strictly a bulldozer job, cut by the steel blades from the heavy sun-dried Philippine soil. The working parties were constantly harassed by the Japs. Sometimes, if the strip got too bad, Company left one man to operate each bulldozer and the rest of them deployed through the rice paddies and breadfields with hand grenades. Combat engineers you see.

Company had its turn in February. It was attached to the 169th Infantry Regiment, which was stationed in the vicinity of Clark Field north of Manila. The Japs who had fled from the airfield on the approach

of American troops had taken with them a lot of machine guns from disabled planes. For a time, Company did little engineering work but a lot of Jap killing.

Assigned to Capture Bani. A company went along with the 103rd Infantry Regiment when that outfit was assigned the mission of making a wide encirclement to capture Ipo Bani, one of Manila's principal water supplies. Orders that the dam must be taken intact came down from army headquarters itself, so important was the dam and its lake considered. The dam was to be mined and planted with company traps.

An officer and 15 men of A Company were designated a "dehousing" team. They were taught everything

77 Identified Army Divisions in Action Against Germany, Japan

More in Field, But Not Named Yet; Largest Number, 50, Fighting on Western Front

Washington, March 10.—Seventy-seven or more American army divisions have been identified as in combat against the Germans and the Japanese.

Fifty of these are deployed on the western front, 20 in the Pacific and seven in the Mediterranean theatre. Obviously, more divisions are in all those areas, but have not been named.

A list of the identified divisions and the army groups, armies and corps of which they are a part, together with their commanders where they have been identified:

EUROPEAN THEATRE

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander.

ARMY GROUPS

21st—Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery; 12th—Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley; 6th—Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers.

ARMIES

1st—Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges; 3rd—Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.; 7th—Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr.; 8th—Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson; 15th—Lt. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow.

CORPS

3rd—Maj. Gen. Charles M. Millikan; 5th—Maj. Gen. Clarence R. Huckner; 6th—Maj. Gen. Edward Brooks; 7th—Maj. Gen. Joseph L. Collins; 8th—Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton; 12th—Maj. Gen. Manton Eddy; 13th—Maj. Gen. Alvan C. Gillelem, Jr.; 15th—Maj. Gen. Wade H. Haislip; 16th—18th Airborne—Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway; 18th—Maj. Gen. Raymond McClain; 20th—Maj. Gen. Wal-

ton Walker; 21st—Maj. Gen. Frank W. Milburn.

DIVISIONS

1st Infantry—Brig. Gen. Cliff Andrus; 2nd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson; 2nd Armored—Maj. Gen. Ernest Harmon; 3rd Armored—Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose; 3rd Infantry—Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel; 4th Infantry—Brig. Gen. Harold Blakeley; 4th Armored—Maj. Gen. Hugh Gaffey; 5th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Leroy Irwin; 5th Armored—Maj. Gen. Lunsford Oliver; 6th Armored—Maj. Gen. Robert Grow; 7th Armored—Maj. Gen. Robert Hasbrouck; 8th Armored—8th Infantry—Maj. Gen. William G. Weaver; 9th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Louis A. Craig; 9th Armored—Maj. Gen. John W. Leonard; 10th Armored—Maj. Gen. William H. Morris; 11th Armored—Maj. Gen. Charles Kilburn; 12th Armored—Maj. Gen. Roderick R. Allen; 14th Armored—Maj. Gen. Allen C. Smith; 17th Airborne—Maj. Gen. William M. Miley; 26th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Willard S. Paul; 28th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Norman D. Cote; 29th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Charles E. Gerhardt; 30th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Leland S. Hobbs; 35th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baad; 36th Infantry—Maj. Gen. John Dahlquist; 42nd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Harry J. Collins; 44th Infantry—Brig. Gen. William Dean; 45th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Robert

T. Frederick; 63rd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs; 66th Infantry—Maj. Gen. K. F. Kreamer; 70th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Allison J. Barnett; 75th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Ray E. Porter; 76th Infantry—78th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Edwin P. Parker; 79th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Ira Wyche; 80th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Horace McBride; 82nd Airborne—Maj. Gen. James N. Gavin; 83rd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Robert Macon; 84th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Bolling; 87th Infantry—Brig. Gen. Frank L. Cullin, Jr.; 90th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Harry J. Maloney; 95th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Harry Twaddle; 99th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Walter Lauer; 100th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Withers A. Burress; 101st Airborne—Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor; 102nd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Frank A. Keating; 103rd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe; 104th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Terry Allen; 106th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Alan Jones.

MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE

15th Army Group—Lt. Gen. Mark Clark.

ARMIES

5th—Lt. Gen. Lucian Truscott.

CORPS

2nd—Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Keyes; 4th—Maj. Gen. Willis D. Crittendenberger.

DIVISIONS

1st Armored—Maj. Gen. Vernon E. Prichard; 10th Mountain—34th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Charles L. Bolte; 85th Infantry—Maj. Gen. John B. Coulter; 88th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Paul W. Kendall; 91st Infantry—Maj. Gen. William A. Livesay; 92nd Infantry—Maj. Gen. E. M. Almond.

SOUTHWEST PACIFIC

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander.

ARMIES

6th—Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger; 8th—Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger.

CORPS

1st—Maj. Gen. Innis P. Swift; 10th

—Maj. Gen. Franklin C. Sibert; 11th—Maj. Gen. Charles P. Hall; 14th—Maj. Gen. Oscar W. Griswold; 24th—Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge.

DIVISIONS

Americal—Maj. Gen. William I. Arnold; 1st Cavalry—Maj. Gen. Ver Mudge; 6th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Edwin D. Patrick; 7th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Archibald V. Arnold; 11th Airborne—Maj. Gen. Joseph W. Swing; 24th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Frederic A. Irving; 25th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Charles L. Mullins; 27th—Maj. Gen. George W. Griner; 31st Infantry—33rd Infantry—Maj. Gen. Percy V. Clarkson; 32nd Infantry—Maj. Gen. William H. Gill; 37th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beighler; 38th Infantry—Maj. Gen. H. L. C. Jones; 40th Infantry—Maj. Gen. R. A. p. Brush; 41st Infantry—Maj. Gen. John A. Doe; 43rd Infantry—Brig. Gen. William F. Dean; 77th Infantry—Maj. Gen. Andrew D. Bruce; 81st Infantry—Maj. Gen. Paul Mueller; 83rd Infantry—Maj. Gen. H. H. Johnson; 96th Infantry—Maj. Gen. James L. Bradley.

**DIARY OF ROBERT E. CASKO TELLING OF WAR TIME IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC BATTLE FOR MUNDA IN THE NORTHERN SOLOMONS CAMPAIGN
FEBRUARY TO DECEMBER 1943- COMPANY H, 169TH INFANTRY**

"Bob" Casko was inducted into Federal Service February 24, 1941 with Headquarters Company, 43rd Infantry Division at Putnam, Ct. He had joined that organization November 20, 1939. Upon one of many changes in Personnel of his unit, he was transferred to the 169th Infantry Regiment and assigned to a Heavy Weapons Company.

Bob Casko's diary was obtained from his widow, Lucille M. (Lizotte) Casko, after his death February 6, 1987. It has been transcribed in its entirety by Richard F. Potter, Woodstock "historian", who was inducted at Putnam, CT with Bob on February 24, 1941. (Bob's writings show by stark accuracy the war fought in the South Pacific by the 169th infantry Regiment of which Company "H" was a part).

"Reverie"

Each day, a little time I set aside
which I may spend in silent reverie.
I light my pipe, and with the tide-of
thought, drift down the stream of memory.

The current swiftly travels on its way
Through the dim channels of the past,
And lightly touches scenes of every day
But saves the best scenes 'till the last.

Noumea, Feb, 1943 R.E. Casko

Feb 15- We left the harbor at Noumea today and set sail for Guadalcanal. We are on the "President Hayes". The other boats are the "President Adams", "President Jackson" and the "Crescent City". The sailors called them the "Unholy Four". They have seen plenty of action down here, I understand. We also have an oil tanker in the convoy plus an escort of six destroyers.

Feb 16- Well out to sea today. The water is calm and we have swell weather. Met a sailor called "Swede". He certainly has a gift at gab. Swell egg. Talked to him all morning while he tossed deck-swabs overboard to wash them out.

Feb 17 Saw our first action today. At about 7:45 PM our convoy was attacked by eight Jap torpedo bombers. Boy, what a display of fireworks: The sky was literally filled with the red streaks of our tracer bullets. I see now what the expression " wall of fire" means. The din was terrific. A depth charge exploded somewhere near us which seemed to rattle every plate on our ship. I thought we were hit, but soon learned otherwise. The scrap lasted for about an hour. 5 Jap planes were shot down and we suffered no damage to our convoy. Bad night for Tojo's boys.

Feb 18 Reached Guadalcanal this morning. Unloaded our ship which took the greater part of the day to complete. Landed on the beach in the later afternoon and set up camp for the night.

Feb19 Went swimming this morning. In the afternoon we left the beach and hiked a couple of miles to a cocoon grove in which we set up camp. It was very hot and we were darned glad to reach the shade of the grove. Found bits of wreckage from a Jap Zero fighter which was shot down here. The Jap Zero, the

Mitsubishi S-00 got its name this way: "S" stands for Sento KI meaning "fighter". The double zero "00" refers to the Japanese year 2,000 (our 1940) the year the first model, from which the name "Zero" is derived.

Feb 22 Went swimming in the Lunga River this afternoon.

Feb 23 Left our bivouac area in the coconut grove on Guadalcanal at 9 AM. At 12 noon we loaded onto 4 Destroyers. From 2 PM-6 PM just cruised around Tulagi and at 6 PM we started for the Russell Islands. Arrived around 10:30 and unloaded our boat (Humpreys). Finished unloading about midnight then bedded down for the night.

Feb 24 Moved from beach to the edge of jungle, pitched pup tents and dug slit trenches. Rained hard all night and we certainly got soaking wet. There was a little hollow spot in my tent into which the water seeped and as a result, I slept in a pool.

Feb 25 Moved again today. Now located in a coconut grove here on Pavuvu, one of the islands in the Russell Group. It rained again at night and we got plenty wet again.

Feb 26 Squad tents came in today. Defenses set up. Two O.P's established on Maiquitti Bay. Saw a Jap "Zero" which was hauled out of the water and onto the beach.

Feb 27 Set up squad tents today. It was swell to get into the big tents again.

Feb 28 Finished digging M.G. positions. They are manned all night. Had an air raid warning at 9:30 PM. but planes passed over us and went to Henderson field to unload their eggs.

Memoranda When we landed on the Russells, we met no opposition what so ever. The Japs had completely evacuated, leaving behind quite a lot of equipment.

March 1 Everything quiet. Meals pretty slim as we are low on rations just now but we get by OK.

March 3 Policed up the coconuts in our area. The coconut grove looks like a park now, but this "policing up" all over the South Pacific is getting to be a pain in the neck.

March 4 Heard that a Jap convoy of 22 ships was completely destroyed.

March 6 Jap planes attacked today. Strafing the beach where we first landed. One man was killed and 6 were wounded. Saw a F-4-F hot on a Zero's tail but don't know if our flyer got the Jap. Heard afterwards that one plane was shot down and another went away smoking. Six got away.

March 7 Attacked again at 1:30 PM. Japs fired a short burst in a strafing attempt but our own planes came over & drove the Japs off. Two water cooled 50's set up at our O.P's on Maiquitti Bay. Three air raid warnings last night. Ammo dump hit. 8 men killed. P.T. base bombed.

March 8 Air raid warning this morning but nothing happened.

March 9 Three air raids today. During one, 28 men were injured and some supplies destroyed. (Barika)

March 10 Air raid at 2:30. Six Jap bombers shot down/three fighter planes

March 11 Quiet all day.

March 12 Had 4 alerts but no bombs were dropped.

March 13 Three alerts during the night but no dropped bombs for our benefit.

March 14 Quiet all day.

March 15 Two air raid warnings which did not develop into anything.

April 1 "Dog fight" at 10 AM, rather cloudy so couldn't see much. Could hear the planes zooming & diving & could hear the rattle of their guns. 5 Jap planes down and 2 of our P38's. One pilot got down safe on Noro Island. 1 PM another dog fight. It lasted for 1 hour & 15 minutes. Total today- 12 Jap planes and 4 of ours shot down.

April 2 Correct number of planes shot down yesterday is 21 Jap planes & 6 American. 3 American pilots were picked up safe. Air raid warning last night but nothing happened.

April 3 10:15 AM dog fight going on. Rumor has it that the Japs gave us 3 days to get off the Russells. Today is the third day. The boys are ready and if Tojo tries anything he's in for a surprise.

April 4 Pay day today. Warning from Division that a big air raid is due. Had a warning at 10:35 but a lot of clouds piled up and weather was rotten.

April 5 Received a carton of "issue" cigarettes. I got "Dunhills" in the "grab bag". What rotten luck !

April 6 Big raid on Tulagi & Henderson airfield at Guadalcanal. The hospital on Tulagi was hit but haven't heard any reports on the amount of damage done.

April 7 At 1:15 this afternoon, 50 Jap bombers, escorted by fighter planes & dive bombers approached our island. Our flyers intercepted them and a dogfight took place for 2 hours.

April 8 37 Jap planes shot down yesterday and 7 American planes went down. One pilot of ours was picked up floating in the water. Air raid warning today but no action resulted here.

April 9 Two air raid warnings today but not action around here. There is a naval battle going on between us and Guadalcanal.. No mail going out and none coming in.

April 10 Everything quiet. Still no mail **April 11** Nothing much

April 12 Air raid at 2 AM. Two bombs dropped, injured 8 men of "K" Company. Jap destroyer was sunk a little way north of Bycee Island.

April 13 Air raid warning at 8:30 PM. Nothing happened.

April 14 Two air raid warnings. No bombs dropped. Working on pill boxes for Island defense

April 15 No raids today. Still working on our M.G. nests.

April 16 Started "Garrison Duty" today. What a crazy set-up. 59 miles from the Japs and we start this baloney again.

April 17 Two air raids warnings but no bombs. Jap boat was sunk off Santa Isabel Island last night.

April 18 Banika bombed today. Also Tulagi & Henderson field. Raid lasted 2 hrs

April 19 All quiet

April 20 Went to Kalan Point today to where we will dig in more gun positions.

April 21 Everything quiet

April 22 Three air raid warnings, but nothing developed from it here on Pavuvu

April 25 50 Jap bombers, plus dive bombers & fighters, were intercepted by our planes today. Haven't heard of the results.

April 26 Three air raids warnings last night. Planes went over us but bombs were dropped.

April 27 No enemy planes over the Russells last night. Had a good night's sleep

April 28 Almost finished on the defense set up. Have built 16 pill boxes for our M,G's in their various positions on A,C, & E plans.

May 5 Our occupation of the Russell Islands was announced today by the Navy. Has been raining endlessly for the past six days. The place is a veritable river of mud.

May 8 Went on an overnight trip into the jungle. What a place. Slippery trails, steep cliffs, vines tangling our feet. Thick undergrowth makes visibility rotten.

May 11 Eleven men from E Co. were injured by a mortar (60mm) shell which dropped short. One fellow lost his hand, another lost part of his leg. The rest of the fellows were not seriously hurt. Our 81 mm mortars fired today also. It was interesting to watch. I was in a spot where I could watch the shells burst in the target area. The boys really did a good job.

June 7 Left Pavuvu and went to Guadalcanal for the purpose of practicing making beach landings from L.C.I.'s

June 8 On Guadalcanal made three beach landings. Roamed around looking over the battle areas. Saw Jap bivouac areas, pill-boxes, equipment and also their skulls and bones sticking up out of shallow graves.

June 9 Made one landing today. Saw wrecked Jap ship, the Kinukawa Maru. It was beached after our bombers made a mess of it during an attempt by the Japs to land troops during the Guadalcanal Battle. The hull is battered and full of holes. The ship completely gutted by fire, masts broken, guns still pointing skyward, wrecked. All along the beach is the wreckage of Jap landing boats.

June 10 Three beach-heads today and one tonight

June 11 Went up Bloody Ridge this AM. Left Guadalcanal toward evening to go back to the Russells.

June 12 Back on Russell Island (Pavuvu) Spent the day cleaning our equipment and resting. Two air raid warnings

June 13 Three air raid warnings. Dog fight today in which Japs lost 18 planes & we lost 7. All our pilots, but one, were found and picked up.

Our stay in the Russells has been very quiet. Jap bombers made many attempts to bomb the fighter strip on Banika, but never succeeded very well. It has been lonely here, which is natural in such a place where there is nothing but coconut groves and jungle, but we have had quite a number of good movies which we're lucky to see. Even though we could go no place, it hasn't been too bad. There is a lot of wild beauty here which I have greatly enjoyed. We have had pretty good mail service which helped a lot. Canned rations weren't so hot, but we got used to them. It has been lonely, yes, but it has also been peaceful.

June 30 Today is "D" day. Our troops have left for the attack on New Georgia. We leave on "D" + 3 days"

July 1 Packing up our equipment

July 2 Moved our equipment and supplies to the dock on Maiquitti Bay.

July 3 Left our area at 10 AM. Loaded on the boats at 3:34 PM. We are going on the L.C.I.'s. Left Pavuvu at 4:45 and headed out to sea.

July 4 Landed on Rendova this morning after a rough trip. Those doggone L.C.I.'s pitched and rolled worse than a wild horse. I was plenty sea sick last night! We were bombed at 2:10 PM. Two L.C.I.'s were hit, plus a gas dump. Plenty of fireworks this 4th of July. Two men died from injuries received during the raid. The boats damaged were L.C.I.'s # 24 & 65. They were abandoned at 2:55 PM. At about 5 PM, moved over to Task Force Hq to set up a defense. 18 Jap bombers came over, 18 were destroyed. AA fire got several, fighter planes got the remainder.

July 5 Air raid warning at 12:15 but our fighters intercepted the Japs.

July 6 It seems to rain continuously here on Rendova. The ground is knee deep with mud along the roads which our vehicles have made. Elsewhere, the mud is not deep but there is still plenty of it. It is very slippery and so thick that it clings to one's shoes in great "gobs".

July 8 My outfit has one section of M.G.'s moved out for Munda. We must wait to be relieved before we can join the outfit. Relieved late this afternoon. Moved back to where we first landed. Had air raid warnings all night. Between those, the artillery (155's) shelling Munda kept us awake, so all in all I had very little sleep.

July 9 Boarded a tank lighter early this morning and headed for Munda to join the rest of the outfit. Joined our outfit at around 9 AM and immediately started moving toward the "front". Heard a few snipers firing but didn't see any Japs myself. Just before dark as we prepared the bivouac there was considerable sniper fire from the Japs. We had patrols out looking for them.

July 10 What a hell last night was. I didn't get a bit of sleep. Jap harassing troops filtered into our area, tossed hand grenades, yelled & fired all night. Bourge was killed, Jabush was shot in the shoulder and Arbour got war-neurosis. Moved forward again today, stopped again in jungle and dug in for the night. And

what a night! Guldry was cut up. McPherson got cuts on legs & arms. Perone's nerves cracked. Two nights without sleep. "Chico" Estrada got killed. Mastronardi badly wounded. T. Jones cut up bad and Watkins cut up. C. Benoit wounded and Brandon got lip cut. Mugent cut in hands.

July 11 Moved forward again during the day. Again we had to bivouac in the jungle. Another bad night.

July 12 Lost several men during last night and early this morning. Hogan & Cerino were killed. Roger Hedman, Jacobs, Bennett, Roberson, Elia, Rabalais & Hebert got neurosis. Jordan was wounded. K Reed got broken thumb. Crockett also got war neurosis.

In the afternoon we made an attempt at the enemy strong-point facing us. Ran into heavy machine gun fire and mortar fire. Sgt. Deck was shell shocked. Meedham got neurosis. Babineau accidentally shot himself in the leg. Morrison got a shrapnel wound in the back. We withdrew and up bivouac for the night.

July 13 Had a fairly restful night last night. Lost no one from the outfit. This morning we again attacked the enemy position on the ridge. We were doing pretty well when our own artillery hit us. Several shells landed among us. Berzas was killed. O'Bara (could be O'Hara) had his legs and buttox badly ripped by shrapnel. LaVerne badly wounded. Decker got flesh wound in his arm. Turner shot in elbow by a sniper. LeBlanc got shrapnel wounds. Bob Hickey had to crawl back after the machine gun Turner had to drop when he got hit in the arm. I was almost completely covered by falling debris when the shell hit. This afternoon R.P. Anderson was evacuated because of trouble he was having with his eyes.

July 14 Fiji Scouts patrolled our bivouac area last night. Every thing was comparatively quiet and we got our first fairly good rest since the 9th.

This morning, Kivney accidently shot himself while cleaning his .45 pistol. We set up defenses around the area. Rained hard this afternoon. Kessler was evacuated with war neurosis. Planes dropped food supplies for us.

July 15 Last night our fox holes were full of mud. It rained hard and we slept in mud & water. It was cold and miserable. This morning the sun came out bright, enabling us to get dried out. What a dirty bunch of guys we are-muddy clothes, muddy faces, heavy beards and tired.

The Japs sneaked in around 2 o'clock and sprayed our area with machine gun fire. Cook got a slug in his shoulder. Larry Buckland was evacuated because of malaria. Mazzucki evacuated with war neurosis. We moved into a new area around 5 PM & dug in. 86 men left in H Co. tonight.

July 16 Had a rather peaceful night but this morning at dawn the Japs lobbed "knee-mortar" shells into our area. One shell landed right in one of the foxholes. Five men killed and 9 injured. Several cases of shell-shock and war neurosis.

The 145th moved in this morning. We may be relieved soon. I hope so.

July 17 Had a fairly good rest last night. Heard some action around us but it didn't affect us. Started our attack around 10 o'clock. Just as we were moving up I got a letter from Al and the folks. At 2:45 PM we had gained about 300 yards. Quite a large number of casualties in our Battalion. "E" Co had the most. We ran into enemy m.g. fire.

Moved to the hill held by the 3rd Bn for the night. The hill has been completely razed by artillery shells. Huge trees blown out of the ground. Shell holes everywhere.

July 18 Rained like hell all last night. We got soaked- and how!. This AM we moved thru the valley to the 1st Bn. Hill. They had quite a scrap. 103 Japs were killed in the total night's action. There were over 40 of them in our area. What a mess!. In one huge bomb-crater there about a dozen Jap bodies. They had gotten into the crater for protection and one of our mortar shells made a direct hit in the crater.

While "digging in" Landry and Joe Frey must have struck a grenade or a knee-mortar shell with their tools. Landry got his face practically blown off and Joe Frey got bad shrapnel wounds in his legs.

July 19 Had a quiet night last night, but our supply trail has been blocked. We have no food or water and water has been scarce enough as it is.

A few mortar shells landed on our ridge this AM, no one hurt.

July 20 We got one cup of water yesterday and no food. A Jap plane dropped a couple of bombs last night but did no damage. Food was dropped yesterday from Douglas Transport planes but it landed in Jap hands. Our artillery took care of that situation. Our supply line is open now, or rather a new one. We may get supplies today. Went for water this afternoon. Boy it was wonderful. Good news!! We are to be relieved today. Thank God!

Heard that on the night of the 19th, the party carrying the wounded back was attacked by Japs while the party was bivouacked for the night. The Japs killed a lot of our wounded. Landry and Joe Frey died. Lot of Japs killed.

July 21 The 145th relieved us yesterday afternoon around 4:30. We went back to the beach (Liaiana Beach) Had hot coffee and food from the 118th Engineers. During our withdrawal, six men were hit by sniper bullets. This morning we had hot coffee & hot cakes. Boy it was swell. We are to move to Rendova.

Orders changed. We set up beach defenses. Had an air attack at 5:30. No damage

July 22 Had a good rest last night. 12:00 noon, we moved back to where we first landed on Zanana beach and set up defenses.

July 23 Small amount of harassing by a few Japs last night. No one hurt. A Figi scout shot a Jap.

July 24 Moved from New Georgia to Rendova at 10:30 AM. Got mail this afternoon. Took a bath and shaved and got new shoes and clothes. I feel like a new man now.

July 25 At about dawn, or just a little before, our Navy shelled Munda. We could see the flashes out on the horizon and could watch the shells (tracer) lobbing in on the island. This morning also, our dive bombers blasted Munda. Went to Church Services this morning. Had an air raid warning but our planes intercepted the Jap planes before they reached Rendova.

July 26 Heard today that O'Bara (could be O'Hara?) died from the wounds he received on the Munda Trail. He is buried here on Rendova.

A Japanese prisoner is reported to have made the statement that Jap officers had told them they were leaving Munda for a short while, and would be back later. In the meantime the Jap soldiers were to fight on. According to the soldier, those officers never came back. Jap soldiers have been told that we Americans are out to murder them all, and we would not take prisoners, but kill them instead. He was certainly surprised at the good treatment he got.

I heard another report which concerns the night harassing we got on the Munda Trail. It seems that a special Battalion of Japs was sent in to annihilate the 169th because we're a tough outfit. We got plenty of them, but never found their bodies because the live Japs carried them away. The Japs (Imperial Marines) did cause a lot of trouble., but they certainly ran into a lot of it themselves. A good many of them are now visiting their "honorable ancestors"

The Japs, though skilled in jungle warfare, cannot compete with the American soldier. Some of their equipment is pretty good stuff, but most of it outmoded. Our equipment greatly excels anything the Japs have got. I cannot see where the Japs ever got the idea that they could defeat American man-power and production.

I have noticed that the Japs continually send but one plane on bombing missions. Large flights of bombers on their part are a very rare occurrence. What can they hope to accomplish with but one bomber on a mission each night? The Jap bombers seldom hit their objective. They seem to be in an awful hurry to drop their load and get back to safer territory. I can't say that I blame them, for AA fire is a terrific thing to face. As far as "sky fighting" is concerned, our fliers just swarm all over the Japs. Jap fliers are no match for ours. Our pilots are better and our planes are better..

Our Navy has been striking serious blows to the Jap navy. The Japs are really taking a beating on land, sea and in the air. If they are taking such a beating now, what will they have to face when they feel the full force of American Power? It seems that Tojo has "bitten off more than he can chew"

August 5 (Munda Field is ours). Broke camp this morning and left Rendova around 8 AM, for Munda-landed at Lambeti Beach.- where we set up camp a short distance from the airfield. Went thru a Jap bivouac area which was in a complete stage of destruction. There isn't a tree in the area that isn't scarred by shrapnel from our artillery. The Japs really took an awful beating. The ground is covered with shell holes and bomb craters. Some of the bomb craters are about 20 ft in diameter.

August 6 Moved to a new bivouac area today on Gillespi Hill overlooking the Munda airfield. Wrecked Jap Zero's, dive bombers and twin engine bombers are scattered all over the place. We have machine guns set up on the reverse slope of the hill covering the draws behind it in case the Japs should try a comeback. Air raid warning this afternoon. Three Jap dive bombers came in low over the field with their wheels down. They must have thought that the fighter-strip was still in Jap hands. What a surprise they got when machine guns opened up on them. They were not hit by the small caliber gunfire. It surprises me that they dropped no bombs. Perhaps they already unloaded them elsewhere.

August 7 The Sea Bees are really going to town on the airfield. AA guns are here also and are being set up. 40's, 90's and 20MM are being set up all over the place. The Jap planes will get a warm reception when they try to bomb this place.

August 11 Moved to new bivouac area this AM. Still located on the hill but higher up and boy we have a swell view of the airfield, surrounding beach, ocean & small islands.

August 12 S/Sgt "Buck" Buckland came back from Guadalcanal late this afternoon. He had been evacuated for Malaria while on the Munda Trail. Bill Bennett also came back .

The Sea Bees worked all night on the fighter strip which is rapidly nearing completion. We had an air raid warning. Lights were glowing from the machinery on the field. The Sea Bees couldn't hear the siren because of the noise of the tractors and bull dozers. One plane came over and dropped a couple of eggs. Even with the lights on the field, the Japs missed. The eggs landed in the sea.

August 13 The day was quiet but at night the Japs pulled a bombing raid. Sent 8 planes over. The lights spotted six of them beautifully while in formation and the AA fire was bursting close. None of the planes were hit, for they were too high. It must have been too hot for the Japs as they only dropped a couple of bombs which didn't come anywhere near the airfield.

Today at 5 and ½ minutes after 5 PM, the first planes (Army planes) landed on the fighter strip. Four P-40's landed to re fuel. It was a sight I had been impatiently awaiting.

August 14 We moved again this morning to a new bivouac area about two miles north-west of the airfield. We are in a jungle country again.

"E" Co is alerted to the aid of "L" Co which ran into a trap on Baanga Island I hear that the boys there are in a bad spot.

August 15 We are alerted this morning to go over to Baanga. The 2nd Battalion or what is left of it, is to go over. Buckland evacuated.

We left Munda this afternoon and went to Baanga in Higgins boats. The island is approximately 4 miles long and 1 mile wide. We made a landing without mishap, and pushed forward into the jungle. Reached our bivouac area at 6:45, in swampy ground impossible to dig in so we slept "on top". During the night we heard AA fire on Munda.

August 16 The Japs really opened up on us this morning. Plenty of machine gun fire. Our mortars were set up. Lt Nugent really did a swell job. The mortars had to be literally "fired thru a dime". In the jungle growth and trees. Then the Japs opened up with a knee-mortar barrage, plus heavy m.g. fire. We had to withdraw.

Lino Girone was killed by a bullet which hit him in the side and went completely thru him. I helped carry him back. Hated to see him go, he was a swell friend. 1st Sgt Grady was wounded in shoulder. Moved back up in PM, met no opposition. The 172nd came in.

August 17 Moved forward this morning. Had different tactics which I believe are better suited in this type of fighting. Met no opposition and set up defenses along the beach on our left and the rifle companies completed our perimeter defense. The 172nd is on our right.

At 1:15 PM our dive bombers gave the Japs hell. They bombed and strafed up ahead of us for about an hour. Toward evening an F4U made a mistake. Spotted some of our men in a clearing, thought they were Japs & strafed them. He dived on us three times. We got in touch with the airfield and he was notified. 3 men were killed and 4 wounded.

August 18 Stayed in same area. Patrols sent out by rifle companies. Much action by our artillery. Haven't heard "Pistol Pete" fire that artillery piece of his today. Maybe our dive bombers or artillery finally got him. He has lobbed a few shells over on Munda. Some landed in the "Sea Bee's" area. The gun he is using is, I think, about the size of a 75mm. It has a very high velocity, for no sooner than I hear the sound of the gun, I can hear the shell whizzing over our heads. It has a sharp, fast sound. It can not in any way compare with our 105's & 155's.

August 19 Remained in bivouac area. Patrols sent out by rifle companies. Still plenty of our artillery shells coming over. The Japs won't enjoy that very much.

August 20 Moved up this PM. Met no opposition. Dug in & set up perimeter defense for the night. Detail sent out to carry litter cases to the beach. In the evening heard heavy m.g. fire & rifle fire. It was reported that the Japs were pulling out to the northern part of the island. Must be getting their belly-full of this business.

This morning (late) two 155 mm shells accidentally were dropped into our area. Capitoni got a slight head wound and Early got a slight wound in the knee. No other casualties. Heard two explanations of the accident. One that a new Battery was zeroing in, and the other was that a tooth brake in the elevating gear on one of the howltzers, causing the two shells to fall short.

Found Jap M.G.s and abandoned pill boxes. Also a box of "Pistol Pete's" artillery shells. They are 75's. The gun is gone, however.

August 21 Our mission completed this afternoon. Moved out to the beach and set up a defense for the night. Started to dig in, but ran in to a mess of roots and as it was getting dark we quit digging & set up a pup tent. It rained hard before we got the tent up, and as a result we got soaked.

August 22 Moved to the location of our first landing on Baanga. There we loaded onto Higgins boats and went back to Munda. We landed near the air field. While marching to our bivouac area we passed along the end of the fighter strip. P-40's & P-39's were landing. One P-40 struck a marker-post at the end of the runway with his left wheel as he was coming in; hit on one wheel and dug his left wing in. Heard harsh scraping noises as the wing dragged along and saw a cloud of dust. Don't know how the pilot made out, guess he was ok. There is a great number of planes here now. P-40's, P-39's, F4u's, SBD;s (A24) and TBF's.

August 23 Last night there was an air-raid on Munda field. I was sleeping so soundly I didn't know anything about it until this morning. "Buck" rejoined the outfit today.. Got a new jungle suit today. Size 42, Holy cow ! It would take two of me to fill it. At least it's clean though and I can get out of my dirty clothes.

In this evening mail, I received this diary from Anita. I will now have to fill in as much as I can of the events which precede this date. I can get most of the happenings from Lt. Maxwell's diary, and can fill in from memory some of the late happenings.

August 24 Cleared brush from our area this morning. Wrote a letter to Mom this afternoon. Got a letter from Al this evening, also one from Mom and a card from Helen & Maurice. Boy it was swell to get mail. It has been held up for quite a while, due to priorities on the Higgins boats.

We will get plenty of mail soon, for I have just heard that our mail has finally arrived at our Regimental P.O. Carberry is back in the outfit. Jacobs & Lovett also came back. Expect more of the fellows to be back with us soon.

August 25 Had a perfect night's sleep in my jungle hammock last night. Around 5 AM, I was awakened by the sound of heavy artillery fire. Guess the Japs caught hell this morning. The artillery must have been shelling some of the small islands around here to which the Japs evacuated when it got to be too hot for them on Munda.

Got more mail this morning. A letter from Billy Jones with a picture of his son, a letter from Mary & Harry with two pictures of Buddy (boy that kid has grown), a letter from Gene & Ann, and one from Lucille. Had an ordnance inspection this morning.

August 26 "Condition Red" at 3:45 AM. All clear at 4:20 AM. Heard one Jap plane but no "Ack Ack" of bombs. Hedman back with us again. Heavy rainfall.

Were told this AM that we would have to hang our "Jungle hammocks" inside of our pyramidal tents. That's the most asinine? order I ever hear of. That "soldier's soldier" of ours is letting his imagination run wild! How the devil are we going to set up poles tall enough & strong enough to support those hammocks??

PM, well I won't have to worry about the hammock situation. I got hold of the frame from a folding cot which had the canvas missing and tacked on an old shelter half to it. Makes a good bunk.

Received a "tract" from Pastor Zimmerman. Got 3 replacements late in PM.

August 27 Swell sunrise this morning. Last night we had two air raid warnings but the raids did not materialize. At about 5:15 AM we had a 1 plane raid. Heard a couple of bombs. Searchlights caught the plane and there was plenty of AA fire, but the plane got away. All clear at 5:45 AM

Wrote several letters today. The censorship rules have been relaxed and therefore I had plenty of news to write about. The folks will be surprised when they get my letter telling them about the places I've been in. They've been having to do a lot of guesswork at home, now they find out if their guessing was correct. It rained here during the afternoon.

August 28 They tell me that we had an air-raid during the night. I slept so soundly I didn't hear a thing. We're on garrison duty again. Made a rack in the center of my pyramidal tent this morning. This afternoon it rained hard. Grabbed my soap, hopped out of my pants and took a "shower" "A la New Georgia". Wrote several letters after mess, until it got too dark to write more.

August 29 No air-raids during the night. Had a swell night's sleep. Started duties as mail-orderly this morning. Quite a bit of mail coming in now. Got four letters and a card this AM. Card from the Ashleighs, letter from Mom, Charlie Marabite, Gene & Ann & Lucille. Finally got my barracks bag this afternoon. What a mess. All my clothes and writing paper and so forth was soaking wet. The clothing smelled terrible. I doubt if it will be usable anymore. 6:20 PM- Condition Red. 6:38 PM- Condition Green. Our fighters in the air. Enemy planes didn't get near Munda Field.

August 30 No mail today. Three of our casualties returned today- LeBlanc, Capitoni & Crissinger. Chris wasn't a battle casualty. He had been evacuated from the Russells with a trace of T.B. Went to 1st Sgt's meeting this afternoon to learn how to keep the new type Morning Report. All 1st Sgt's "understudies" had to attend. Wrote several letters this evening.

August 31 No mail this morning. Wrote three letters today. It is reported that one of the abandoned Jap areas in Baanga, a case of M-1 rifles was found. The rifles were new and in cosmoline. Clips of ammo for the guns were found also.

Bag of mail came in this evening, mostly packages. I got a package of stationery and cigarettes from Lucille. 1st Sgt Bob Grady and L. Bernard came back this evening. Air raid warning at 7:55 PM. All clear at 9:00 PM. Plenty of AA fire, no bombs dropped. Planes made about 4 attempts but couldn't get thru AA fire.

The following poem, I dedicate to those who live in fox-holes,
mud and rain- My comrades of the Munda Trail

R.E. Casco

MOONLIT CHAOS

1

Moonlight, starlight, booming surf
An evening meant for love and mirth
But filled with silence, and the dread
Of screeching bombs, cold steel, hot lead

3

A night-bird trills a doubtful note
The dread, grim-reaper stops to gloat
As with a choked off cry
A lad learns it's his turn to die

5

Surely, soon this all must end
And God above, again, will blend
The moonlight, starlight, and the surf
With happy hearts, and peaceful earth

2

Nervous palms sway in the breeze
A man drops quickly to his knees
And breathes a hurried pray'r
As shrapnel whistles thru the air.

4

A quiet moment comes at last
A lull in an unpleasant task
We dream of home, its far-off shores
Then turn, we must, to grimmer shores.

September 1 We had an air raid warning around 5:45 this morning. Sounded like one plane. The AA guns let loose. The Jap didn't bother to make a second try. All clear at 6:10 AM. Worked on road today. Rained hard in PM so we had to quit.

In today's mail I got the book "The Best of Damon Runyan" from Gene & Ann, also the cigarette papers I had asked for, but now I have plenty of cigarettes. The papers will come in handy later though when cigarettes get scarce again. Also got the package of air-mail stationery that Mom sent me. Made a stand in which to keep my "junk", this afternoon.

September 2 No air raid during the night. Had a swell night's sleep. Eight men & myself "on call" for various details which might come up during the day. Unloaded equipment this AM at the supply tent. Wrote three letters before mess. Got a letter from Mom & Rose this morning.

3:10 PM 31 liberators (B-24's) circling overhead with a great number of fighter planes as an escort. There are so many fighters, high up, it is nearly impossible to keep track of them long enough to count them. There must be at least 40 fighters up there. Boy, Tojo is really going to get a surprise package!

September 3 Cleared brush from around our tents, then worked on road. Road is nearly finished. Got two packages of writing paper from Gene & Ann this afternoon, also my church paper, the "Lutheran Witness". Finished cleaning all my clothes today. Glad that's over for the time being. That barracks-bag of mine really was a mess!

The 31 Liberators with their fighter escort hit Kolambangara yesterday. Our artillery also pounded Kolambangara at the same time.

September 4 Last night, at about 7:45 we had a one plane raid. The searchlights "caught" the plane and the AA guns "went to town". One more plane subtracted from Tojo's air force. During the "wee-small" hours of the morning we had two air-raid warnings but they did not materialize.

September 5 Went on patrol this morning. Traveled North, South, East and South West. Report- negative. During the raids last night, two planes rather than one, were shot down by AA fire.

Bad accident on the airfield yesterday. A T.B.F-1 came in on fire. It landed and blew up, also setting fire to a gas truck. It is said that three 500 lb bombs blew up with the plane. Nineteen men were killed and fourteen injured.

September 6 Had the day off today, for I went on patrol yesterday which was to have been a "free day", Got four packages today. The glue that I sent home for, package of Lucky strikes flat Fifties and pipe tobacco, the pipe that I wrote for, and also a package of 6 packs of Chesterfields. Mom and Ann & Gene sent them to me.

Tried doing some Algebra & Trig. Problems today, but I've forgotten about all I once knew. I was very much disgusted with myself. Wrote two letters this PM. Sent home for an algebra text-book. During the evening we had two air-raid alarms. Heard the planes & also a few bombs which were dropped to our north.

September 7 Today we cleared large tree trunks from our area with the aid of the winch on a "weapons-carrier". That winch is certainly "worth its weight in gold"

Had a couple of air raid warnings between the hours of 7 and 12 PM. Nothing was dropped on Munda. One plane came in for a try, but AA fire changed his mind for him and the pilot decided to "scram"

September 8 This morning, we moved our tent into a different location. This required most of the morning. Heard today that the air-raid (one plane stuff) of last night were directed against the island of Arundel where the 172nd is. The Japs, it is reported have shelled Arundel with six 1 inch guns.

Got a letter from Betty & Charlie today. Also one from Lucille. It is reported that the Germans are retreating along the entire 600 mile front in Russua. The invasion of Italy is progressing fast.

September 9 Good News!! Italy is reported to have surrendered, "unconditionally" to the Allies at 5 o'clock this morning. The war in Europe is certainly developing fast. The end appears to be very near. Germany cannot hope to survive the "blasting" she will get now.

Several air raid warnings last night. They did not amount to much. Heard a few bombs drop & explode in the distance. I cannot see what the Japs expect to accomplish with their one-plane raids. Worked clearing brush all day. Wrote two letters this evening.

September 10 Between 8 PM and 12:30 AM last night we had several air-raid warnings. Again it was but one plane. He made many attempts to approach Munda but the AA fire made it too hot for the Jap pilot, so he gave it up as a bad job.

The time of Italy's surrender yesterday is incorrect as I have it noted on the preceding page. Seems that the time I heard was mainly a rumor, but the surrender of Italy is true enough.

September 11 Two air raid warnings last night. Heard a couple of bombs explode in the direction of Bairoko Harbor. Heard today that the date of Italy's surrender was Fri, Sept 3rd. Perhaps some of these days I'll get the news correctly. This afternoon I got a letter from Ann & Gene, and one from Lucille.

Tominy, Daniels, Bob Anderson, Felixe Benoit, Culp and Majors rejoined the outfit. We also got one replacement by the name of Klutz (?)

Finished reading the book "The Best of Damon Runyon"

September 12 Had an air raid warning sometime during last night. I don't remember anything about it for I was asleep. Russ said he woke me up and I said "uh huh" and went back to dreamland. Went to church services this morning at 9:30. Chaplain Burr conducted the services. After church I finished washing the clothes I had started to work on earlier in the morning. Read the book "My sister Eileen" by Ruth McKenney, today. I enjoyed it very much. Wrote a letter to Lucille this afternoon.

September 13 One of Tojo's "egg layers" came over at 12:15 last night. Heard one "egg" explode somewhere in the distance. Worked in the jungle today clearing an area for a machine-gun range.

September 14 Cleared brush again today for the m.g. range. This noon I saw three flights of Liberators, T.B.F.'s, S.B.D's and pursuit planes. There must have been a hundred planes all told.

September 15 Had quite a series of air-raids last night, beginning at 8:15 PM and finally ending around 5 AM this morning. It was mainly a harassing stunt for the planes came over single or by two's or three's during the night & early morning. About 15 bombs were dropped. Cleared brush again today. This morning over 70 planes flew over to pay Tojo's boys a visit.

We are alerted this PM to move to Arundel. Left our company area at 2:00 PM. Went by truck to beach to land onto the boats. When we arrived, plans changed and we were sent back to our area. Will leave tomorrow instead.

One month ago today we left this same bivouac area and went to Baanga. Sgt Anderson, on patrol, captured a Jap today.

September 16 Had three air raids last night which didn't amount to much. One Jap plane was shot down. It is now 0825 hours and we are waiting for the order to move. Left Munda at approximately 1000 o'clock. Traveled on tank-lighter to a small island near Arundel, then by pontoon-barge to Arundel. Landed on beach (Carrigan Beach) about 1330 o'clock and unloaded our supplies. Had supper with "C" Co. 118th Eng. And will be bivouacked with them tonight. Expect to move forward tomorrow AM. to join "G" Co of our battalion. Taddeo acting rather strangely tonight, has the "jitters"

September 17 Left the beach-head at 0915 after having breakfasted with the Engineers (pancakes, bacon, coffee). Carrying a maximum amount of supplies we moved up the trail. The terrain is rugged, studded with a mass of coral-rock, and the jungle-growth just about makes "visibility zero"

Met no opposition, and reached our position at approximately 1110 hrs where we relieved the 172nd. One section of our H.M.G. plus our 81 mm mortars, is to remain in this area with "G" Co. Our mission being to maintain a trail-block. "Buck" and Hickey are to take their section of guns (attached to "F" Co) about 800 yds further up the trail to perform a similar mission. The 172nd is to push forward. Heard F Co killed a Jap while moving up.

September 18 Had a quiet night but could hear quite a bit of heavy gunfire coming from the direction of "F" Co. "I" Co of the 172nd plus "F" Co and Buck's & Hickey's M.G. section are reported to be pinned down. We are going up to get them out.

Left our bivouac area at 11 AM. Doubled back on our trail and cut down to the beach. Traveled thru heavy jungle growth and waded across 300 yds of open water to one of the finger-like peninsulas on this island. Rested there for a few minutes, and pulled out again, traveling inland along the peninsula. Very tough traveling. Our patrol met resistance at 3:15 PM "G" Co's mortars (60mm) cleared the resistance. Patrol got thru to "F" Co. Carrying party bringing food & supplies to F Co.

September 19 7:15 AM Sunday morning- Last night our patrol got thru to "F" Co after "G" Co's mortars scattered the Japs in front of us. The patrol then took out a carrying party to bring ammo, food & water to "F" Co. Met resistance again and as it was getting late they had to come back and we all bedded down for the night.

It was quiet during the night. Our artillery laid fire around us all night and boy, I mean it was close. Could hear the shrapnel whizzing overhead. Kept the Japs well away. Our mortars laid down a short barrage this AM and we now have a patrol out.

Are waiting for the patrol to return and then we shall move forward. Moved up about 9:15. Met plenty of M.G. fire. Tied in with "F" Co. Action plenty hot. Withdrew about 300 yds to bivouac for night. "F" Do & Buck & Hickey's m.g's are with us now.

Carter got killed this afternoon. Carl Budweh wounded in shoulder. "Fat" Harrin got bullet through the nose. Hope it is quiet tonight, those Jap "knee-mortars" are pretty wicked at times.

September 20 Had a peaceful nite last night, were not attacked. Our artillery laid a protective ring of fire close around us. The Chem Co's 4.2 mortars also lobbed in a few shells. We each got 1 canteen -cup full of water.

At 0700 this AM we moved back to "Hall's Point" on the tip of the peninsula. There we got water & rations. At approximately 0830 we left Hall's Point and traveled thru a rotten smelling swamp to the "Trail Block" position which we held on to on the 17th. This position is 1100 yds N.W. of Carrigan Beach.

Toward evening, one of our patrols ran into approximately 50 Japs/ opened up with a B.A.R. The Japs returned M.G. fire. Our patrol returned safely.

September 21 Last night, the Japs were reported to be trying to evacuate. 170 of them were seen along the beach N.W. from Hall's Point. Our artillery laid a barrage on them.

At 7:45 AM we moved out our bivouac area, proceeding N and then N.W. Met no resistance. Came upon the bodies of two dead Americans which we buried. Their graves were marked.

Reports from the 103rd, 172nd and 27th Infantry Regiments state that they met no opposition whatsoever. Seems that the island is now secure.

At 2 Pm we established a bivouac, but the 27th came into that area. We then moved to the beach where our boys had been "pinned down". On our route we passed thru a Jap bivouac area which our artillery had demolished. What a mess. The beach also had been pounded in a mess by our artillery. Several dead Japs were found (All secure here on Arundel).

September 22 Last night was very quiet. Had a good night's sleep. This AM I made a marker for Carter's grave, out of a mess-kit top. Found Jap rifles, grenades, broken Nambu light machine-gun. Life jackets on beach. O.P's have been established all along the coast. At 12:30 PM we moved back to Hall's Point (minus our m.g sections) which are on O.P. duty. We will remain at Hall's Point for an indefinite number of days. Have 50 cal. m.g's set up on the beach. Our 81 mm mortars are set up and have been "zeroed in" to cover the beach and swampland. Jap artillery from Kolombangara (1 ½ miles across the bay to the north) lobbed a few shells over us. Most of them were duds. Our artillery then showed 'em how it should be done.

September 23 Last night our artillery pounded Kolombangara. No retaliation by "Pistol Pete". This AM I sat in the brush on the beach and watched our Liberators bomb Kolombangara. The Jap anti-aircraft gunners are rotten shots, peppered the sky without coming even close to our planes. The bombs started a large fire, and I could see a huge column of black smoke rising from the cocoanut grove. (Probably a burning gas-dump). An "ammo dump" was also hit. Could hear the "ammo" popping off. Our artillery has been methodically shelling Kolombangara all morning. Have been watching the shell-bursts along the beach and in the cocoanut grove there. Went swimming in the water off Hall's Point this PM.

Brought rations out to our M.G. positions. Found several dead Japs in the jungle. Tomorrow we are to be alerted to move to Bessagi (?) Island. There we are to await transportation (first priority). Just what this will develop into- I don't know. An awful mess of rumors are floating around today. Our APO # has been changed. Our xmas pkgs to be cancelled for we are to be in the States by xmas and so forth

September 24 Last night at 8:10 PM "Pistol Pete" on Kolombangara lobbed a few shells over us. Out of 25 or 30 shells he fired, only about 8 exploded. The others were all duds. Our artillery at Bombo Village here on

Arundel has shelled the cocoanut grove on Kolombangara all day. An "ammo-dump" was hit and I could see the fire from the beach here and could hear the "ammo" popping away like an overgrown pop-corn popper. In the afternoon, Dive bombers (S.B.D;s) and Liberators bombed Kolombangara. The Japs are certainly catching hell! Had quite a rainstorm about 2:30 PM. Our kitchen caught about 50 gallons of rain water.

September 25 At 8:30 last night "Pistol Pete" (or "Whistling Rufus" as Billy Shaw calls him) opened up again and sent a few shells whistling over us. Again, a lot of them were duds. Our own artillery "answered" him with a sweet barrage and "Pistol Pete" shut up for the rest of the night. 8 AM- just had a breakfast of rice & pancakes. Now we are getting ready to move back to Munda.

Left Hall's Point at 8:35 AM & hiked to Carrigan Beach which we reached at 9:15 AM 10:15 AM saw a flight of 45 S.B.D's (A-24's) and T.B.F,'s. Left Carrigan Beach at 10:30 AM, traveled by out-board motor boat to Island Beach and arrived there at 10:45 AM. At 10:55 AM, we loaded onto L.C.T. # 326, pulled out of Island Beach at 11:05 AM. Arrived at Lambeti Pier on Munda at 1:30 PM. Traveled by truck to our bivouac area on Kinde Trail, reaching there at 2:00 PM

September 26 Had an air raid warning last night at 9:15, but in 15 minutes the all-clear signal was sounded and no planes had come within hearing distance. It has been quiet today. This morning Ray Martin, Bob Hickey & I went to the Munda airfield to see if we could get our radio repaired. No luck with the radio but we had a swell opportunity to see the fighter strip which has been greatly enlarged , and to see the planes there. Saw Lockheed Hudsons; P-39's, F4f's; F4u's , SBD's, Went to church at 4 PM this afternoon.

Heard a rumor that Jap Navy has been observed steaming out of Truk. Quite a bit of plane activity this PM
September 27 Last night at 7:15, a Jap bomber flew over and dropped quite a number of bombs. Some landed pretty close to our bivouac area. We received no warning from the Radar for some unknown reason. I heard the plane, and with the boys in my tent, made a dive for our shelter. No sooner got inside when the bombs started falling. No damage was done that I know of.

Cleaned ordnance this AM and was issued a G.I. sweater and cigarettes. Wrote several letters today. Got one from Mike Jannine, he is now in Tunis. Also got one from Al.

September 28 Had an air raid at 4:30 AM. All clear at 5:00 AM. Today we had an ordnance inspection by Bn. Officers at 4:00 PM. Didn't do very much today outside of cleaning our guns in preparation for the inspection.

Tried my hand at drawing today. Didn't turn out so good. Guess I'm losing what little "knack" I once had.

September 29 Had three air raids last night at approximately 7:30 PM-8:45 Pm and 12 PM respectively. Battalion clothing inspection this morning at 10 AM. After inspection we will work on our area.

September 30 Had three air raid warnings last night which failed to materialize. Equipment inspection this AM. Must clean out a new area today for we have to move our tents. Went on sick call this AM to get the sores on my feet & legs "doctored". This jungle climate certainly raises the deuce with one's feet.

Got a letter from Mike today. At the time he wrote, he was in Tunis. Also got a letter from Al.

October 1 Today begins our second year overseas. I hope it doesn't mean that we fill out another year over here. Trained replacements today. Took them into the jungle, had them establish a perimeter defense along a ridge. In the PM had one group man the defenses and two groups "attack". The problem turned out well. The new men are O.K.

4:40 PM just got "Condition-Red". Tojo's fliers must be getting rather brave- coming over in the daytime. I doubt if they get any where near Munda Field. Our flyers will intercept them and give Tojo a lesson in "subtracting zeroes". 4:45 PM "Condition Green: Japs must have changed their minds

October 2 Tojo's "Rice eaters" pulled another 1 plane raid last night. No damage. This morning we worked on our new area. Finished clearing brush and started work on our bomb shelters. Rained hard in the afternoon so didn't work. Wrote several letters.

October 3 Had three air-raids (Tojo's one-plane stuff) during the course of the night This morning I answered several letters and finally caught up with my correspondence again. Got a letter from Lucille today. Stanley Guldry came back to the outfit this afternoon

October 4 Al's birthday today. I hope he has a happy day there in Hawaii. Last night it was very quiet here. No Jap planes showed up. Moved our tent today. We really have a nice set-up now. Tent sides are stretched out on frames and we have coral-sand for a floor. Got a very nice letter from Lucille this evening. Too late to answer it now-it will be dark soon, so I'll answer it tomorrow.

October 5 No Jap planes came over last night. On C.Q. duty today. Wrote several letters and made a little "name plate" for our tent. Got a letter from Gene & Ann this PM. Also a package of air-mail stationery from Al.

October 6 Again, there were no Jap planes overhead last night. Worked on the area around our tent. The place certainly looks good. Got two months pay this PM. Still have three months pay due. Tried my hand at poker again. Won twenty-seven bucks. The usual procedure in my case is generally just the opposite.

October 7 Quiet last night- no enemy planes. Four nights have gone by without an air raid. That seems rather strange, for the Japs are in the habit of sending at least one plane nearly every night. Worked on the area again today. Made out a money order for fifty dollars which I will send home and have Gene & Ann do some Christmas shopping for me. Lost nine bucks in a poker game this evening. That "usual procedure" I wrote about yesterday is back again. Received a letter from Anita this afternoon.

October 8 Had several air raids last night. During the first two raids, bombs fell into our area. One landed about 30-35 yds behind Gagnon's tent and shrapnel cut the tent, went thru a box of clothing, cut the stock on a rifle. Another bomb caused the demise of "E" Co's latrine. Several other bombs hit, but did no damage. No one was injured during the raids. In two more raids during the early morning hours, no bombs were dropped..Must move tomorrow. Hate the thought for we have just gotten settled here.

October 9 Moved today beyond the "Sea Bee's" area, about a mile from the old area. Rained this AM. Trouble came up about the use of a road running near a Navy Hospital being built. We had to get out of the area again. Moved to location upon an artillery battalion battered hill. What a mess. There isn't enough room on this spot for our whole battalion. I never saw such a dizzy set-up.

October 10 Had several air-raids last night. During the first two raids, bombs fell into our area. Sun AM our C.O. has made arrangements for the repair of a road to the area we were in yesterday. This road does not go thru a restricted area. My outfit is moving back to the area we occupied yesterday AM Holy Cow! I'll be glad when we finally get settled. We have a mess of work ahead of us. We have to level-off the ground for our tent floor. (Tents are on a slope). Frames must be built for the tent and a log frame must be built on the ground to hold coral for a floor. A rack must be built around the tent pole for our equipment. Racks must be made for our barracks bags, etc. etc.

October 11 The whole outfit fell out this morning with machetes, and went to work clearing the jungle-growth out of the area. The greater part of the area was cleared by noon. In the afternoon, Bob, Danny, Buck, Russ and I started work on our tent "floor" digging out the slope and making a level platform

October 12 Russ on patrol today, Hickey on Detail at the old area. Buck, Danny & I finished leveling the "floor". Hickey returned at 3 PM & helped finish the job. Rained hard this afternoon which slowed us down considerably. Utilized the rain by taking a "jungle-shower". Cpl Earl Gagnon has a detail working on a "theatre" for our battalion. I understand that we have some good movies scheduled when the theatre is completed.

October 13 Today we put up the "inside" frame for our tent and put out tent up. Rained again today. Moved our equipment and bunks into the tent. Will sleep on a cot tonight for the first time since leaving the old area. Have been sleeping in a "jungle hammock".

"Max" got a bull dozer to start leveling an area for our supply tents this PM.

October 14 The whole company must work on the supply tents today. I am to work on our tent which is to be the "model" for the remainder of the company. Dug post holes and set up the poles for the "flap-frames" for the tent. At noon Bob Hickey helped me put up the cross-member of the frame. Braced the framework this afternoon.

October 15 Bob Hickey & I laid the logs for the tent floor today, building up the low side of the tent. In the afternoon we started to haul coral-gravel for the floor from a nearby shell-hole. Carried 21 boxes of coral. It's hot work but will be well worth the effort when the floor is finished.

October 16 Had to go to Munda Point this AM with Lt. Snow from Bn. Hq. To obtain azimuths and ranges for the O.P. there. Made a range card. The other fellows in the tent hauled coral for the floor. I helped finish the floor in the afternoon. In total, we carried 71 boxes of coral to complete the floor. The tent is really beginning to look swell now. Heard today about the 1000 plane raid our air-force made on Rabaul the other day. 6 warships (Jap) destroyed, many barges sunk, 177 planes destroyed. 350 tons of bombs were dropped.

October 17 Sunday-free day. Went to the airfield today. Heard that the 11th Bombing Squadron was here & that they needed gunners. The rumor proved to be false.

Met a "See Bee" here by the name of Smith. Bob Hickey, Russ & I had dinner with the "See Bees". Ice cold lemonade. First iced drink I've had in over 8 months. Took a few snapshots. Rained intermittently during the day.

October 18 Started attending Div. Chem. Warfare School today. Class started at 8:30 AM. The first half of the period dealt with gas and protective equipment. The second half of the period dealt with the Flame Thrower. Class ended at 11:30 AM

After dinner "Buck" & I built a rack for our combat equipment in the center of our tent. We haven't much more to do now before our tent is finally completed.

"Gagnon's theater" job is coming along good. I was at Bn. Hq. this noon and saw the results of the work there. I believe we'll be able to see movies shortly.

October 19 Chem. Warfare school this AM. Inspected a Jap Flame-thrower which was captured here in N. Georgia. It is smaller than ours and doubt if it is as effective as ours. After a short review of yesterday's topics concerning the flame thrower, we were given a short quiz. When the quiz was completed we were given a demonstration of the Flame-Thrower in action, plus demonstration of the incendiary grenade, smoke grenade and the Jap smoke grenade. After mess I worked on our tent.

Got a package of mixed nuts from Anita this PM. There has been much air activity here lately. Plenty of SBD;s and TBF's flying around here.

October 20 No school today. Worked on the area around our tent.

October 21 Went to Chem. Warfare School this morning. Today's lecture was on Decontamination methods. We get the returns of the quiz which we took Tuesday. Everyone passed the test, which was a rather simple type of exam. Worked around the area this afternoon

October 22 Gas school again this morning. The last of the 4-day school. Lecture today was on the subject "1st Aid for Gas Casualties". After the lecture we were given our final exam.

This afternoon, I had to paint several signs to be posted in our battalion area. Had a Regimental Review at Retreat this afternoon. Colonel Holland gave a farewell talk to the Reg't, as he is leaving us. To be frank, none of us regretted his leaving. He just always seemed to "rub us" the wrong way.

October 23 Worked until 3:15 PM and finished painting the rest of the signs I had to do. We had our first movie here at Munda tonight. Our "theater" (the work at which was accomplished mainly by men from my outfit) was completed this morning. We will have a movie every 4th night. The picture we saw tonight was "Reveille with Beverly", starring Ann Miller. I enjoyed the picture very much.

October 24 Went to church services this morning. Chaplain Burr conducted the services. This afternoon I washed clothes, got a haircut, cleaned my rifle and wrote several letters.

Note: We have not had an air-raid since October 7th. We did have two air-raid warnings but the all-clear signal was given immediately after each.

October 29 Went on "sick call" this morning. Have several tropical ulcers on my leg. Much to my surprise the "Doc" has sent me to the hospital. The infections on my leg caused a swelling of the glands in my side. Temp. 100 degrees. Went first to 118th (Medical Bn) Hospital. From there I was sent here to the 24th Field Hospital.

Had a blood-smear taken at the laboratory as a check for malaria. When the Doc checked me this afternoon, I got another surprise. He said I was a strict bed patient. This the first time in my life that I've ever been in a hospital other than as a visitor.

October 30 thru 19 (No entries recorded for these 21 days except: "Hosp")

October 20 Today completes the fourth year of my service since I enlisted in the National Guard on Nov. 20, 1939. I hope that the blasted war will wind-up before many more months roll by. It certainly will be swell to get back home again.

NIGHTFALL

1

The sun dips slowly 'neath the sea,
Caressing each wave lovingly,
And gesturing with a soft-hued light
Bids his friends, the clouds, good night

3

Fireflies soar thru darkened sky
To light the star-lamps hanging high,
While the moon-boat skipper slowly guides
His golden ship o'er cloudy tides.

2

Deep shadows wrap a purple cloak
Around a distant mountain-slope,
And softly flowing from its crest
Invites the tired earth to rest

4

Nature heaves a tired sigh,
Slowly blinks a sleepy eye,
Gladly then, she turns to keep
A welcome rendezvous with sleep

Munda, New Georgia, November 20, 1943
R. Casco

The days previous, since the 29th to date have been unimportant. Was kept in bed for two days. Since then have been a "walking patient". I feel O.K. Was supposed to be here for only 5 days or so, but I'm still here. The ulcers are slow in healing. Lab reported from smear) the presence of spirocietes & multi-form bacilius. Had been treat with neo-glycerine, that has been changed to mercurous chloride ointment

November 22 Earl Gagnon was discharged from the hospital today. When he left I gave him some money to get me some writing paper and grape-juice from the P.X. Also had him get my mail for me and bring this diary to me.

Got 15 letters and cards today. That will give me something to do, for it will take me a couple of days to answer them. Got a letter from Al. He's been ill. Has a collapsed lung but is getting along well. X-rays showed no signs of T.B. One of the Staff Sgts here is a registered male nurse. I asked him about the causes of a collapsed lung, and he said it was caused by a nervous condition.

November 23 Last night I saw the movie entitled "The More the Merrier" with Jean Arthur and Joel McCrea. Wrote several letters today. The Mercurous Chloride Ointment has been producing good results. I have but one ulcer left on my leg that is in poor shape, and it is beginning to improve.

Had a good meal tonight at mess. Toast, chicken (canned), ice cold lemonade and a sugar-bun. The chicken was perfect and I hit the line for "seconds".

November 24 Moved into one of the new screened-in wards today. Last night saw the movie "Yankee Doodle Dandy" with James Cagney. The movie depicted the life of George M. Cohan. I enjoyed it very much. The movie tonight is to be "Alaska Road", the story of the "Alcan Highway".

November 25 I will be discharged from the hospital tomorrow. At dinner today we had a cheese sandwich & ice water. We will have our Thanksgiving dinner at around three o'clock this afternoon. Last Thanksgiving day I had dinner on the ship "Tyron" while enroute from New Zealand to New Caledonia.

November 26 Saw the movie "Edge of Darkness" with Errol Flynn and Ann Sheridan. It was a good show, and I'll bet it was doggone good "Bond Seller" back in the States.

I was leaving the hospital today at 1:00 PM. Returned to my company this afternoon—just in time to get ready for an inspection tomorrow AM

November 27 We had rifle inspection this morning at 9:30. Had to lay out our equipment on our bunks for a "bunk inspection" which took place at 10:30. The Regimental inspecting officers were very well pleased with "H" Co's showing this morning. This afternoon one of the "Jeep" drivers took me to the 24th Field Hospital so I could bring our boys there their mail.

November 28 Sun. morning. Went to church services conducted by Chaplain Burr. He had a quartet of Negro-singers with him who sang several spirituals. The quartet was very good.

Played double solitaire for a while, before dinner, with Bob Hickey. Bob has been promoted to Staff Sergeant to fill the vacancy left when "Andy" Jelsovsky received a direct appointment as 2nd Lt. Bob Hickey is to receive the "Silver Star" for retrieving one of our MG's when Turner, the gunner, was wounded during a battle on the Munda Trail.

Washed clothes this afternoon.

November 29 Had lecture on the stripping, functioning, and stoppages of the Browning Automatic rifle this morning. This afternoon Russ Akerlind and I went to chorus rehearsal. The chorus is to take part in a Christmas & New Year's Day program.

November 30 Lecture this morning on B.A.R. and M-1 Rifle. Worked on a machine-gun range this afternoon.

December 1 Lectures again this AM. Russ & I went to chorus rehearsal this afternoon. Got paid this today at 4:30 PM. Received two months pay which gave me \$55.22 after allotment and other deductions were taken out.

December 2 Lectures again this morning on B.A.R. & M-1. This afternoon I went to the canteen. Had to stay in line for three hours before I could get a few bars of candy, crackers and some chewing gum.

December 3 Lectures this AM and around 10 AM an "Inspection Team" of officers quizzed us about the B.A.R. and the M-1. "H" Co made a good showing. Chorus rehearsal this afternoon. Got three packages of foodstuffs and cigarettes and a package containing a math. book that Gene & Ann sent me. The other three packages were from Rose, Lucille and Helen & Maurice. It was a regular picnic tackling all that candy, peanuts, etc.

Lucille pulled a fast one on me by enclosing a tiny box of "American Soil" in her package. I had previously made a remark about it in a letter to her.

December 4 Rifle and equipment Inspection this morning. Got a package from Al today containing three rolls of 35mm film, a Medico pipe & filters, and a small set of five different blends of John Middleton's tobacco.

Last night I saw the movie "The Kansan" with Richard Dix, Jane Wyatt, and Eugene Palette. It wasn't a bad show for a "horse opera",

December 5 Sunday. meant to go to church this AM but I overslept. Have been feeling quite on the "lazy-side" today. Did a few algebra problems this afternoon, then answered a half-dozen letters. Holy Cow, there is so little to write about, it really is a task to write a letter!

Heard a rumor that we are to go to Neumea. From there we will get furloughs to N. Zealand. I hope this is true. These rumors, however, have been circulating thick and fast since we finished the New Georgia Campaign.

December 6 Went out to the machine gun range this AM. We are to fire tomorrow. Each man is to fire a belt of ammo. Lt. Maxwell (our C.O.) and I traveled around the boundary of the range to pick positions for the range-guards. The guards are to prevent anyone from unintentionally roaming on the range while the firing is in progress. Bullets ricocheting thru the jungle are plenty dangerous. Chorus rehearsal this afternoon. Movie tonight.

December 7 Two years ago today, the Japs pulled their treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor. Since then they have been learning a lesson about "Treachery does not pay". My outfit fired m.g.'s from 8:00 AM until 11:30 AM today. I left the company area at 6:30 AM to post range-guards along the extremities of our range. Got back in a 12:05 noon. Wrote a couple of letters after supper. One to Mom, other to Anita.

December 8 Rifle company's m.g. sections used our range today. Fired all morning. Again I posted the range-guards. It rained all morning and I returned to the Company area, at noon, plenty wet and plenty muddy.

Went to chorus rehearsal at 2:00PM. We rehearsed "As Time Goes By". It's a swell number, but plenty tough. The arrangement is a bit woo high for my range, and I have to work doggone hard to hit the high notes. Instead of singing 2nd Tenor, I should be singing Bass. It really is a lot of fun singing in the chorus. It breaks the monotony considerably.

December 9 Posted range guards again this AM. Got plenty wet again. It has been raining all week. Glee Club rehearsal this afternoon

December 10 Posted range guards and returned immediately to my outfit. Washed clothes this AM for this PM. I will have to go to glee club rehearsal, and will not have time to get my stuff cleaned for inspection tomorrow.

My 1st Sergeant notified me this afternoon that as of Dec 1, I am a Sergeant. My new job is Reconnaissance Sergeant in Company Hq. I will work with Sgt. Brian King who is Communications Sergeant.

Our glee club sings at the 3rd Bn. Theater tonight at 7 PM.

December 11 This morning we had a "detail-strip" inspection of all our ordnance. Went to the Glee-Club rehearsal this afternoon. Tonight we are to sing at our own (2nd Bn.) theater.

Got a letter from Gene today. In it he enclosed a copy of the "Putnam Woolen Service Letter". It is really a snappy little publication. Full moon tonight. It is really beautiful, far exceeding the scenes pictured in travel folders and magazines.

December 12 Sun. This morning, Barney Klutts, Henry Hayes and I fooled around with a bit of algebra. We had quite a time. Our Glee Club sings at the 1st Bn. Theater tonight. The show went off very well tonight. Next Wednesday we will start rehearsing Christmas Carols for a Christmas program which is being planned.

December 13 Lectures all morning on the nomenclature of the Browning machine-gun (both heavy & light). Didn't do anything this afternoon. Wrote a letter to Gene, after evening mess. Today my application for Aviation Cadet was returned to me. In order to apply for duty as member of the "ground-crew", I need at least 2 yrs of college. That sort of lets me out. I can apply for "Air-Crew", but I'm afraid that my eyesight will ruin that as it did when I applied for "Air student" back in Florida. My eyes are 70/20 & 50/20 correctable to 20/20. Requirements for applicants of "Air Crew" (cadet) are eyes 20/30 correctable to 20/20.

December 14 Lecture this morning on the "Functioning of the Browning M.G." Very interesting subject even if it is about the 9th time I've listened to it.

This afternoon I made eight signs for Bn. Hq. Got a beautiful Christmas card from Ann & Gene today. In it was enclosed a sprig from a Christmas tree.

Got some swell news tonight. We are definitely going back to a rear area soon! Just where it will be I don't know. Probably New Caledonia, and then perhaps will be sent home.

December 15 Again, this morning we studied the functioning of the Browning M.G. I took several pictures of the fellows while the class was in session. Also got a picture of a flight of B-25's and a flight of T.B.F.'s.

Signed the payroll this noon.

December 16 Studied nomenclature and functioning of the machine gun this morning. This afternoon I didn't so much of anything; just "lazed" around and wrote a couple of letters. In the evening I wrote a "letter of thanks" for Henry

Hayes in verse. He wanted to send it to his friends in the Board of Assessors, in Hartford, who had sent him a Christmas package.

December 17 Regimental officers comprising on "Inspection team" quizzed us concerning the Browning M.G. this morning. At the close of the inspection, we were told that we had made the best showing of any of the outfits that had been inspected. That was quite a feather in "H" company's hat

Went to Glee Club rehearsal this afternoon. Sang Christmas Carols in preparation for the Christmas Eve Program to be presented for the Regiment.

December 18 Sat. This morning at six o'clock, during our reveille formation, we received our "Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon. In the ceremony which began at 8 AM this morning, General Barker decorated seventeen from this Regiment. One (an officer) received the D.S.C, six received the "Silver Star" and the remainder received the "Purple Heart". Staff Sergeant Robert E. Hickey from my outfit received the "Silver Star"

S/Sgt Mario Lacassie and Sgt. Johnson, both of "E" Co. also received the Silver Star. Hickey had retrieved a machine gun which a wounded gunner had dropped and which could have fallen into enemy hands. Lacassie & Johnson removed a wounded officer and from out of line of enemy gun-fire. I took several pictures during the ceremony. Hope they come out good. Moved into Co Hq tent this PM.

December 19 Sun. Went to church services, which Chaplain Burr conducted this morning. Brought 4 rolls of film to the Special Services Office this morning to have them developed. They must go back to New Caledonia to be processed. It will take two or three weeks before I will get them back.

It is now 12:30 PM and we are getting a "sweet" rainstorm. The rain is being driven by a strong wind. Shrapnel-scarred trees in our area are being blown by the force of the wind.

December 20 Attended class on nomenclature and use of 81mm and 60mm mortars. Went to Glee Club rehearsal at 2PM. Went to the PX after rehearsal and bought some ink, glue, candy and a couple of towels and face-cloths. Received a letter from Charlie & Betty, and a V-mail letter from Anita. Wrote a letter to the Parker's, Loiselle's and a third to Lucille, after evening mess.

December 21 Attended mortar class this AM. The class was conducted in the mortar platoon's tents due to the fact that it rained all morning. Took a picture of Brian King at his makeshift desk in our tent this PM., F,5.6 at 1/25 second. Wrote a letter to Anita, after mess.

December 22 Reported to Lt. Pepin at "G" Co this morning at 0655. Took a Sgt & six men out to our range to show the Sgt the guard-posts and to post the guards. I took several pictures, at the range, of several Jap dugouts and pill - boxes there. Our range is nestled at the base of three hills where once the Japs had a strongly fortified position. Wrote a letter to Charles Morabito this noon-time. He just got married recently to a nurse, from Saranac Lake, N.Y. by the name of Ethel. Wrote a letter to Al, also. Glee Club rehearsal at 2 00 PM.

December 23 Worked in supply tent this morning, lettering numbers (code & case) on our supply crates. Our company got fourteen bags of Christmas packages today. I received seven packages from the following people: Mom, Loiselle's, Parker's, Ashleigh's, Lucille and Anita. My bunk was covered with everything imaginable. I really got some swell gifts. Wrote a letter to Mom and to Lucille.

December 24 Instructed the men from the weapons sections of the rifle companies of our Battalion, this morning, on the use of the range-finder and aiming-circle.

Rehearsal of our Glee Club at 2:00 PM. Sang carols at the Negro Battalion's services at 6 PM. Sang at our Christmas Eve program at our theater at 7:00 PM. Coffee & cake at our kitchen at 10:00 PM. Sang carols until 11:30 PM. Our Christmas eve has been swell, and I certainly would like to spend the coming Christmas holidays at home. Wrote a letter to Anita.

December 25 Went to church services conducted by Chaplain Burr. After the service I took several pictures of the altar which had been decorated for the holidays.

Roger Hedman, Kitchens, Falconi and I went to the cemetery here on New Georgia, I took pictures of the cemetery and also of the graves of each of the fellows of my outfit who are buried here. Then we rode around the airfield and out

toward Balreko on the new road which is being constructed. At the airfield I took picture of a P.B.Y. which was rather a mess. Watched approx. 60 Dive and Torpedo bombers "come in" after having been out on a mission (Bougainville, New Britain).

Had a swell turkey dinner at 4:00 PM. We were allowed to buy 4 bottles of Pabst beer this PM.

December 26 Washed clothes this morning and took several snapshots around the company area. Got a letter from Ann and Gene this afternoon, also a V-Mail letter from Anita. The weather has been very decidedly wet this afternoon. Wrote a letter to Mom, Ashleigh's and Parker's after evening mess. Went to movies at our "theater". "The McGuerins of Brooklyn" and "In Old Cheyenne". Had see 'em both previously.

December 27 Ordnance inspection tomorrow morning, so we spent this morning in cleaning our ordnance equipment. Glee Club rehearsal at 2:00 Pm. "In The Evening By The Moonlight", "Grandfather's Clock", and "Beautiful Dreamer". Show on Wed & Thurs. Wrote several letters after evening mess.

December 28 Inspection all morning. Got a package from Ann & Gene, and also one from John Marti & his wife. Made a developing tank, out of a Chelsea cigarette can, in which to attempt to develop my 35mm film. Went to movies with Brian King in the evening. Title of picture was "3 Cock-eyed Sailors". English picture, not bad but not too good.

December 29 Made drawings for a lecture on how to go around obstacles when following a compass-course. Received a package from Anita today and also one from John Marti & wife.

8:30 PM- our show went off rather well tonight. Some of the acts were doggone good.

December 30 Gave short lecture on Compass Reading this morning. Cpl. Earl Gagnon returned from the 118th Hospital today. He has a developing set, and so we are going to try developing some pictures tonight after the show.

December 31 The last day of 1943. I sincerely wish that the coming year will bring about the end of the war, and restore peace throughout the world.

At evening mess today we were allowed to buy two bottles of beer per man. The big surprise was that the beer had been brought directly from the refrigerator to us and it was ice-cold.

Saturday January 22, 1944 Today at 9:30 AM, Sgt Brian King, Berthelot & 3 men from 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Platoon, respectively left as advance party to wherever we are about to move. We shall move shortly now; just where to I don't know. This AM the Advance Detail had but ½ hour notice to pack up & leave.

January 26th Lucille's Birthday