As a result of Madsen’s interpretations of science and the park mandate, the NPS in 1936 adopted new fish stocking guidelines to protect native cutthroat trout. The policy stipulated that where native and nonnatives coexisted, only natives would be propagated; that where natives only existed, only natives would remain; and that the further distribution of exotic species in the park was generally prohibited. Two exceptions remained: Managers used stocking as a management tool to reintroduce native species and to maintain fish populations in waters incapable of sustaining a viable population through natural spawning. Despite the adoption of this policy, however, not until 1953 was the actual practice of culling eggs ended and stocking phased out in 1957.

By the 1950s trout Shangri-La had lost the prosaic qualities that characterized it in 1896. After the end of World War II, Yellowstone managers faced the same problems they had upon the arrival of the automobile in the park: visitation boomed, fish populations busted, and catch limits went to five and then three. Culturalists scrambled and started planting catchable-size fish, a deed symptomatic of a fishery’s total failure. Fishing in Yellowstone, aside from aesthetic qualities, stunk.

Yellowstone’s officials now faced a complex world where people, expectations, NPS mandate, and fish were inseparable components in the management of a supposedly wild remnant of America’s once-vast wilderness. Traditions that had stood for over seventy years could no longer sustain both anglers’ demand and great quantities of trout. It now became incumbent on managers to change the people rather than the fish, and the change involved a new philosophy of fishing for the sake of fishing rather than for meat.

Catch-and-release fishing was not instantly popular among Yellowstone’s—hence America’s—anglers when the “Fishing for Fun” program began in the 1960s. In the long run, however, park anglers had little to say about it. The resource was ailing, and managers had no other alternatives: slot limits, restricted catches, law enforcement, and closures only went so far. While early forms of catch-and-release regulation—all voluntary—caused rumblings and even abstinence from anglers used to a “put-and-take” mentality, fish numbers climbed. Changing anglers’ ethics to willfully releasing fish took longer, but eventually they did.

The fishing experience in Yellowstone is in many ways the history of the American relationship with natural resources. Americans formulated ideas about Yellowstone, influenced by those who experienced its grandeur before them and, in turn, influencing those who succeeded them. This experience, as seen in terms of fishing, was not static. It changed over time as American culture changed, proving that anglers and their sport have been—and still are—flexible in meeting challenges. This lesson from our fishing heritage is perhaps the one anglers most need to understand, for it contains solutions to future challenges.

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Despite the best efforts to sustain park fisheries through stocking, by 1950 fish culturalists were forced to plant catchable-size fish, a deed symptomatic of a fishery’s total failure. In response, Yellowstone Park pioneered catch-and-release fishing with its Fishing for Fun program in the early 1960s. Although the voluntary program—described at left on a Fishing Bridge sign—was not instantly popular, eventually anglers came to enjoy the sport as much as the meat.
“It never occurred to me at the time that the National Guard could be sent out of the country to fight overseas,” recalled Kalispell Company F Guardsman Leslie D. Slyter. But in 1942 the Montana National Guard shipped out to the Pacific theater. Officially part of the 163rd Regiment of the United States Army’s 41st Infantry Division, Montana soldiers fought in World War II wearing a regimental emblem with the motto, “Men Do Your Duty.”

Above, members of the 163rd wade ashore at Wākde Island off the northern shore of New Guinea in 1943.

The Montana National Guard, officially designated the 163rd Regiment of the 41st Infantry Division by the United States Army, arrived in New Guinea in December 1942 and soon became engaged in some of the most awful warfare of World War II.

Fighting in the jungles of the Southwest Pacific was not what the young men had imagined when they enlisted in the “Guard” in the 1930s. At that time, the nation was bogged in a deep economic depression, times were tough, and National Guard recruiters presented an attractive offer when even a five-cent root beer could be hard to come by for a teenager on a date: sign up; drill once a week; learn to shoot; attend summer camp; take pride in military discipline, in honor, in the flag and commitment to duty; and receive pay of twenty-one dollars a month. Kalispell Company F Guardsman Leslie D. Slyter, who enlisted at age sixteen from his hometown, later recalled: “It never occurred to me at the time that the National Guard could be sent out of the country to fight overseas.”

While it was true that Hitler’s Nazis were at war in Europe, the United States, led by such prominent figures as Montana senator Burton K. Wheeler, who vehemently espoused isolationism, had once again declared its desire to avoid entanglement in Europe’s never-ending conflicts.

Then, in September 1940 the Montana National Guard, composed of 102 officers and 1,477 enlisted men, received sobering orders to report to Fort Lewis, Washington, for a full year of training, which a presidential order later extended by three months. Before training concludes in December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the Montana National
Guard soon had the opportunity to put their motto—"Men Do Your Duty"—to work. After four months of providing coastal defense, the 41st Division (nicknamed "Sunset" because of its composition of men from five northwestern states) was on its way to Australia aboard the luxury liner Queen Elizabeth, recently converted into a troop ship and poorly provisioned.

Buoyed by their Hawaiian success, the Japanese had slashed their way through the Philippines—taking Bataan and Corregidor in 1942—and then captured other Pacific lands all the way to New Guinea. New Guinea, the second largest island in the world with a land mass twice that of the state of Montana (some 320,000 square miles), lay 1,500 miles southeast of the Philippines. Its interior was covered by dense jungle, and the convoluted Owen Stanley Mountains, like a dragon's spine, divided the island into two plains that sloped down to the sea. Port Moresby on the island's southern coast was only 340 sea miles from Australia. If captured, the port would likely provide a staging ground for a Japanese invasion of Australia and New Zealand.

To meet this threat, the United States, in cooperation with Australian troops, set about retaking New Guinea, as well as the Solomons and other islands, as the first steps in a return to the Philippines and ultimately an intended invasion of Japan. Significant in this strategy were the men of the 163rd Regiment led by Colonel Jens Doe. After nine more months of special training, they arrived in Port Moresby at Christmas time 1942 as part of the 163rd Combat Team. Their assignment from General Douglas A. MacArthur, commander-in-chief of the Southwest Pacific area, was to bolster the weary Aussies, the 32nd Division (a National Guard unit from Wisconsin and Michigan), and other American support troops who had been slowly pushed southwest across the dense coastal plain into the Owen Stanley Mountains, only thirty miles from Port Moresby.

The British lands became known as the Territory of Papua after Britain transferred its claim to newly independent Australia in 1906. The German lands, which came to be known as the territory of North-East New Guinea, were governed by Australia after World War I. Following the end of World War II, Australia granted home rule, and in 1975 Papua New Guinea became an independent nation. The western half of the island, now known as Irian Jaya, was slated to become independent after the era of the Dutch East Indies colonies ended in 1949, but was instead annexed by Indonesia.
Few, if any, Montana boys had known that such a place as New Guinea existed, but after being there, even for a short while, they could never forget it. Airlifted over the Owen Stanley Mountains to the Dobodura landing strip, an airstrip in the kunai grass on the torrid Sanananda-Buna plain, the guardsmen found themselves instantly thrust into wretched jungle fighting. The daytime temperature was often 95 degrees, the average humidity 85 percent. The line of vision through the dense, dripping jungle ranged from five to fifty yards. Insects filled the oppressive air. Necessary supplies of food, medicine, ammunition, and various weapons of war—tanks, flame throwers, bazookas—were inadequate or nonexistent. (To the ire of General MacArthur, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had determined that the European theater received first priority for supplies.)

What the human body could endure was tested to the limit. Sergeant Leslie D. Slyter recalled the misery of daily life: “People can’t live in conditions that were there. Everything that hit on you you picked at and it made you sick. Everything you touched cut you. Everything you drank gave you dysentery. Men groaned at night because they could not control their bowels, and the very worst of all was malnutrition. . . . Fear was present all of the time, but you couldn’t show it, particularly if you were in charge of others.”

Of the initial days in battle, Sergeant Ed Hula of Columbia Falls, who had joined Company F in a spirit of patriotism and adventure, remembered: “At first it seemed good to be going to war with longtime friends. But I soon wished that I were in an outfit of strangers. It was terribly hard . . . to see close friends struck down in action. . . . Ken Felix [of Kalispell] was killed in ambush not far from my position. I . . . remember my shock at the loss of so young a man. . . . And after an engagement you go and pick up your dead. You see, the Japanese were starving and there could be cannibalism.”

Recalling conditions, Slyter explained: “Basic training doesn’t train you [to witness death]. You learn to march well, to salute sharply, but first seeing a guy dead or wounded—you can’t train for that. That was when the flag came down for me.” Under such conditions, the military ideals of patriotism and duty no longer served as motivating factors in the field. As Stephen Ambrose has observed, GIs fought because they had to; what held them together was not patriotism but cohesion—regard for one another.

Out of the Sanananda-Buna campaign, completed January 22, 1943, three Montanans were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, one received the Legion of Merit award, and thirty-four were awarded Silver...
Sites captured from the Japanese provided staging areas for an invasion of the Philippines and air bases to help control oceanic passages between New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The soldiers at right, in a rare respite from the fighting, gathered to enjoy an Artie Shaw performance.

Stars. The 163rd Regiment captured unprecedented amounts of Japanese equipment in what was acclaimed as the first major Japanese defeat of the war. Eighty-five hundred Australian and American men were killed or wounded and an untold number stricken with disease.

For the average soldier, though, these strategic gains seemed almost inconsequential when compared to the daily torments of physical stress and disease. Private Andy Mills of Company F remembered: “You might not get your boots off for a week and when you did the skin come with ‘em. And the malaria took the guys—the company was down to twenty or thirty at one time from a hundred and fifty.” Andy had a serious bout of malaria and was hospitalized off and on for several months. But he was lucky on the score of dysentery, which plagued the troops. His dysentery lasted just a few days, a mild case compared to men who would find themselves unable to function after months of suffering. At the time he and three others were in an outpost foxhole on a coastal point where a river ran into the ocean.

“When I was hit with the need to let loose I shed my clothes, went for a swim in the ocean. I returned through the fresh water of the river and got back into my sack feeling better. . . . Yeah, and lucky not to have been sighted by a sniper!”

With Sanananda-Buna plain secured, the effort to capture the Japanese-held coastal points of Fin-schhafen, Aitape, Hollandia, Toem and the islands of Wakde and Biak intensified. They were stepping stones to the Philippines and rendered air bases to help control the oceanic passage between New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

This phase of the campaign permitted brief, intermittent intervals in rest camps, but respite from the fighting was rare. General Walter Krueger wrote at war’s end that “the absence of leave areas where officers and men could relax from the dangers and hardships they had endured . . . for many months . . . presented . . . a serious problem. . . . The only diversion the troops had consisted of movies and occasional entertainments put on by USO entertainers.”

One of those entertainers was the beloved comedian Joe E. Brown who would go anywhere to perform for allied service personnel. His wide grin and funny antics belied a deep sadness at the loss of one of his sons in the war.

A major success, and an important turning point, was achieved with the occupation of the island of Biak on August 24, 1944. Of that island General Robert L. Eichelberger said he could not believe that the terrain of any other Pacific island could be tougher. There, the Japanese had virtually abandoned 10,000 troops, who holed up in caves and jungle with orders to fight to the last man. Of the Biak fighting, by-now General Doe wrote that the 41st Division had come through with a shining record:
"The infantry soldier was the one who met in hand-to-hand combat the crack troops of the Japanese, threw him from his positions, destroyed him, and gave us our victory." 7

Though praising the infantry, General Doe did not by any means overlook the contributions of the support services—the supply, ordnance, medical, quartermaster, signals corp, and engineering personnel. All in all, it took about twelve people in these various specialties to serve each infantryman. Stellar among these were the members of the medical corps. Said Doe of the medics:

"Their devotion to duty in caring for our wounded is worth every bit of praise we can bestow. The medical personnel of the Division have received more decorations in proportion to their numbers than any other branch." 8

Being a medic did not appeal to everyone. Many young men, in a misplaced sense of bravado (a sentiment that combat would quickly change), thought that being a medic was not sufficiently "macho." Really brave men served in the infantry, they argued, while those afraid of combat, sometimes "conscientious objectors," signed on as medical corpsmen to avoid danger. In theory, personnel treating the wounded received protection under the terms of the diplomatic convention held at Geneva, Switzerland, in 1864. Medical personnel in the field were required to wear an arm band with a red cross on it designating that they were to be spared from enemy fire because of their humanitarian status and restriction from carrying weapons. Medics quickly learned in the Southwest Pacific, however, that these conventions were meaningless. Japanese snipers used the arm band as a target, forcing American medics to carry rifles to protect themselves and their patients. Wherever infantrymen went, the medics accompanied them, ready to perform first aid services on the front lines under all conditions. Of the medics, Leslie Slyter remembered: "We didn’t have enough medics . . . but the ones we had

8. Ibid. Italics added.
9. Slyter interview.
were all very, very good. They were all called 'doc.'

Kenneth Clothier of Kalispell had wanted to enlist in Company F when he heard rumors in early September 1940 that a call-up for training was imminent. Finding it full, he signed on with the Whitefish Medical Detachment of the 163rd Infantry Regiment, intending to transfer to the infantry when the opportunity arose. In time, however, he found that he liked the training and the purpose of the medics.

Clothier recalled the initial landing at Dobodura, where the 163rd Combat Team unloaded, got their stuff, and started hiking into the jungle. From there, "she was fightin' all the time." You dug a foxhole and about six inches down she filled with water. You dug deeper and got more water. Anything that moved after dark was fair game. Had to go to the bathroom you did her right there. If you got out to go some place, you was a dead duck."10

Normally a medic was assigned to each platoon and accompanied its men on whatever action they pursued. The first casualty Clothier saw was a young man from Chicago: "It was just like somebody had took an axe and cut a big piece of pie right out of his shoulder. The arm was just hanging by a piece of skin. In the aid station we patched him up as good as we could then evacuated him to regimental hospital which was not too far away. There the arm was removed." Sometime later Clothier learned that in civilian life the man had been a pianist. What, he wondered, would the fellow do now?11

New Guinea was populated by many tribes of indigenous people. They were often fierce looking, wearing bones in their noses and other adornments novel to Americans. The women were usually bare breasted and most everyone had frizzy hair, earning them the sobriquet "fuzzy-wuzzies." Most of them were inclined to be friendly with the Allied troops, in part because they had been abused by the Japanese. Often they spoke English, having been taught by missionaries, but they really earned the Americans' respect when they proved exceptionally helpful in bearing litters.

"They were really great. Moved gently on bare feet—as gently as riding on an air bus—over rough, muddy terrain with consideration for their American and Australian patients. They were not always particularly inclined to be sentimental about their patients, especially if they were putting other soldiers at risk. Ken Clothier, for instance, recalled a night when "there was a sort of loonie in our outfit who started yelling and carrying on. I back handed him a good one and he shut up. His noise could have attracted a Jap infiltrator."

On another night when action was heavy, Clothier heard calls for a medic. Responding, he found a fatally injured American who had accidentally been shot by a soldier from his own platoon. Everyone was upset; the man's comrades could not accept the accident and insisted that medic Clothier treat him—in effect, bring him back to life. There was nothing Clothier could do but drag the man's body from the immediate area and leave it until daylight.13

Such "friendly fire" killings were always deeply disturbing. Mortars in particular seemed indiscriminate in inflicting casualties. Sergeant T3 Ralph "Sully" Taylor of the Whitefish Medical Detachment recalled an incident on the island of Biak: "A mortar blast killed our own guys. The shell didn't go where it was supposed to, not to where it was pointed. It hit an M Company tent and killed four and wounded seven.

Dr. Kotner and I worked most of the night patching together broken limbs, stopping bleeding and getting guys back to the area hospital. Mortars could be bad news."14

The duties of Technical Sergeant Roy Duff in the Whitefish Medical Detachment, where he was "top kick," the top noncommissioned officer, were primarily administrative, involving lots of record keeping and

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11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

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Fighting side-by-side with Australians troops, the 41st Infantry became known as the Jungleers. They lived in camps like this one in the Sanananda area that might be dry when pitched, but flooded by several inches of rainfall overnight.

“We set up an aid station dug out of the swamp and surrounded by sandbags,” remembered Technical Sergeant Roy Duff of the Whitefish Medical Detachment about landing at Dobodura.

Paper shuffling in the headquarters compound, which was somewhat removed from the line of battle. But he remembers that upon landing at Dobodura the detachment walked to its first battle assignment near the active Fiske perimeter. “Christ, do I remember it. There was bullets whizzing all around and loud noises of gunfire; some of the worst noises came from bullets hitting the big leaves of jungle growth. Sounded like an explosion . . . We set up an aid station dug out of the swamp and surrounded by sandbags. Pete Johnson of Whitefish took charge of the treatment of some of the first casualties brought in.”

In his diary for Friday, January 8, 1943, Duff wrote: “Came up front & helped wounded during attack, my first attack. sure was hell. I sure hugged old mother earth in my slit trench. Treated several casualties, some badly wounded . . . Saw where Yankees and Aussies bayonetted all Jap patients in Jap hospital. Lots of shooting snipers getting few of our men.”

The Japanese hospital mentioned by Duff was the scene of unexpected action led by Major Walter R. Rankin of Bozeman, Montana. While leading a force through jungle terrain in an effort to join Aussie troops, he and his men entered an area littered with dead Japanese and came upon a disheveled Japanese field hospital. Intending to spare the facility out of humanitarian regard, Rankin found himself and his men under attack from able-bodied Japanese who had concealed themselves as patients, even lying next to rotting corpses.

Rankin gave orders to spare no one. Tokyo Rose, the infamous Japanese broadcaster, called the Yank force the “Butchers of Sanananda” and warned that they would never leave New Guinea. Journalists and fellow fighting men of the 163rd dubbed them “Rankin’s Racers.” After more than fifty years, recollections of the horrific sights, smells, and action remain wrenching for those who were there.

A general problem for all was that for long periods the food was sparse and not much good. When the oatmeal was wormy, for example, what you did was put some of it in a canteen cup, cover it with water, and let the worms float to the top. Those you skimmed off. Repeat the process two or three times then cook it, don’t look too closely, and eat it down.

Experienced combatants expressed sorrow for the fledgling recruits, generally draftees, brought in to fill vacant—


16. Roy Duff, handwritten, unpublished March 19, 1942–November 6, 1945 diary, entry for January 8, 1943, generously loaned to the author by Roy Duff. Diary keeping and photography were generally forbidden by the military lest they provide intelligence information if they fell into enemy hands, but on the “Q.T.” not everyone complied.

17. Clothier interview.

18. Ibid.

"They just got off the boat and came in... They'd line 'em up and give 'em a talking to and tell 'em, 'Just forget everything you learned in the States about fighting. Each one of you guys'll be with a guy that knows what the hell is going on. Pay attention to him and you might live till morning. If you don't you won't."18

With the capture of Biak in late July 1944, New Guinea was finally rid of Japanese encroachment, and Biak provided a landing strip for the next thrust into the Philippines. Relatively early in the Philippine campaign, on October 21, 1944, General MacArthur was able to fulfill his oft-quoted "I shall return" pledge when he waded ashore at Leyte Gulf. Thereafter the 41st Division, including the 163rd Regiment, participated in a number of amphibious landings and the capture of many important posts—Zamboanga, Jolo, Palawan, Mindoro, Davao, and others—actions that continued well into summer 1945.

While the fighting could be heavy at times, in general the conditions were not as fearsome as those of New Guinea. As the Japanese were pushed from their strongholds, there was more time for recreation, including baseball games, basketball, and parties. In the Philippines, the work of medics necessarily expanded to addressing not only battle casualties but the ills of the civilian populations and military and civilian prisoners liberated from the Japanese, who needed extended care for disease, mistreatment, and malnutrition.

Medics also found that venereal disease increased alarmingly as the troops moved closer to Philippine urban centers. Roy Duff, by now promoted to lieutenant, and Dr. Goldfein, a local woman doctor for whom he had great respect, were responsible for surveying civilian needs and inspecting the many brothels and devising appropriate responses. They also saw to the inoculation of hundreds of civilians against cholera, even venturing into the hills under armed guard to vaccinate guerilla defensive forces. The condition of newly released prisoners was deeply disturbing. Duff’s diary entry for February 16, 1945, reflects in part the bitterness many veterans felt toward the Japanese: "5 nurses were brought in from Luzon [Philippines] today after being prisoners since '42. 2 pregnant—1 had a Jap kid and other two with venereal disease. These little dinks should have to pay someday."19

Meanwhile, planning was underway for the most daunting challenge of all: the invasion of Japan itself. The 41st Division, including men of the 163rd Regiment, did finally arrive in Japan in October 1945, landing

The Philippine city of Zamboanga, torn by American bombs in 1945 (below), was one of many important posts captured by the 41st Division in their northward advance following the taking of Biak, New Guinea, in late July 1944.
Hundreds of thousands of Americans served in the armed forces in World War II, but it was in the wilds of New Guinea that Montanans who had joined the Montana National Guard faced the grim realities of battle. Major Art Lowe (right) surveys the strafed buildings and trees of Aitape, New Guinea, in 1944. Below, a jeep bogs down on the main road between Dobodura and Oro Bay in May 1945.

Near Hiroshima as a security force some weeks after the atomic bombing of that city. The regiment was no longer “Montanan,” perhaps no more so than 20 percent, for it had been altered by numerous replacements and transfers. As part of the 41st Division, the regiment was officially disbanded on December 31, 1945.

Meanwhile, thousands of Montanans, men and women, had been serving—doing their duty—in various other service branches at sea and around the world. Many of them, too, were lost and many more were wounded in mind and body.

The number of Montanans killed is believed to be about 2,500; the exact number remains unknown. The Montana Historical Society has listed the names of 1,554 known to have died.

If the advent of war and the undreamed-of shipment into a world of violent action had come as a shock for Montana Guardsmen, the end of hostilities and the mustering out of service paradoxically brought its own set of traumas, perhaps more subtle, but nevertheless profound. Individuals handled it in various ways.

Some soldiers, to escape the memories of the fighting, vigorously sought out merriment and other diversions. When heading home to Whitefish by train from Fort Douglas, Utah, Ken Clothier and his buddy Bob Pearson from Kalispell had to change trains in Butte, where they had a three-hour layover. What better than to visit a few bars? There they were treated as heroes, lavished with free drinks, and the three-hour layover extended into three days. Clothier spent much of the following year “partying.”

When Leslie Slyter first returned to his mother’s living room, there was much laughter at his expense as he caught sight of a prominently displayed photo of himself flanked by three bare-breasted, wild-haired Native women. He had mailed it long before with an inscription that said, “They are looking better all the time!”

But homecoming was not all laughs. Joyous to be “out,” the question became, What now? The welcome return to civilian status was a time of confusion for many. Certainly, the state and federal governments recognized the need to help returning soldiers. In 1944 Congress had enacted the unprecedented Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, popularly known as the GI Bill, that enabled millions of returning soldiers to buy homes at low interest rates and to prepare for civilian careers through fully paid education. The Montana legislature passed an act in 1949 to provide a cash bonus to the Montana men and women who had served.

Sadly, the transition from the horrors of New Guinea to life back in Kalispell or another Montana community proved to be a difficult adjustment for many returning soldiers. Some had been away for as long as five years. There were small sons and daughters yet unmet. Relationships, maintained as well as possible by correspondence through the outstanding

21. Clothier interview.
22. Slyter interview.
23. Hula interview.
military mail service and “V-mail” (no postage stamp needed, just write “FREE” in the upper right-hand corner of the envelope), had to be renewed, reconciled, readjusted. Patient, sometimes in short supply, was required.

Thinking of his homecoming, Ed Hula nervously chuckled: “I nearly killed my wife a couple of times in my sleep. I was still fighting the war in my dreams.” More disconcerting was the relationship between the father and the three-year-old son whom he had never seen. As a sergeant, Hula was accustomed to giving orders and having them obeyed. Direct orders to a three-year-old did not go over very well, and the mother had to patiently endure the conflicts. 23

A few vets turned to alcohol and drank up their bonuses in a few short months. Some, like Hula, struggled with recurrent dreams of terror; there were lingering effects from disease, especially malaria; and there had been permanent injuries—loss of limbs, paraplegia, and “battle fatigue,” later known as “post-traumatic stress syndrome.” For some it took ten years or more to feel “normal,” “settled in,” and purposeful. One soldier from Whitefish, Corporal Bill DeVall, now in his early eighties, still struggles with the sensitivities of conscience. On Biak he and six other men of Cannon Company were ordered to lay concealed and stop any Japanese attempt to reach a desperately needed cache of rice. Just at dusk, thirty-seven of them appeared, making their way slowly down a steep trail. “We killed five and the rest fled out of sight.” There was intermittent fire back and forth throughout the night. In the morning the GIs searched the casualties for maps or other information that might be useful. DeVall found a silk Japanese flag that he kept. “This flag ... is something I ... [could not forget.] ... I have carried this burden for too long. In recent years I have felt an urgency to find some family of this soldier so I can put this memory to rest—to return this flag and say I am sorry. ... I would like the families of these men to know that ... [we gave] these men a decent burial. ... We did the best we could.” 24

Not all of DeVall’s compatriots shared his depth of feeling, but his struggle of conscience over his foe’s fate illustrates the ordinary human decency of a young man forced into extraordinary and brutal circumstances. His confession is a soul-stabbing indictment of the extent of war’s evils—as if the shadows of loneliness, fear, pain, illness, hunger, and death were not enough. 25

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Soldiers lived in close, uncomfortable quarters in New Guinea, and even when they returned home, leaving the stifling tent camps behind, many suffered difficult adjustments to civilian life. Some veterans of the 163rd Regiment continue, more than sixty years later, to struggle with the horrors of the war.
Many military personnel, including Crook's troops in 1876, took advantage of fishing opportunities when stationed in the West. Above, Minnesota National Guardsmen show off their catch from "an hour's fishing in Yellowstone Lake" in 1893.

While Custer Was Making His Last Stand
George Crook's 1876 War on Trout in the Bighorn Country

by Ken Owens

A FICIONADOS of the northern plains Indian wars are familiar with General George Crook's role in the army's 1876 summer campaign against the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne hostiles gathered around Sitting Bull. Less familiar is the story of life in Crook's camp, including the diversions that occupied the troops during idle hours. As we learn from the account of Captain John G. Bourke, Crook's adjutant, fishing for native cutthroat trout of the Bighorn country was a primary entertainment, and from Bourke's carefully recorded observations, we can glimpse the nature of early fly-fishing in this part of the West. Using both artificial flies and live bait, nearly the entire command indulged in a fishing binge, forming a rough, mixed-rank democracy of anglers while they caught thousands of fish to supplement their dreary army rations.

Crook's column was one of three independent, loosely coordinated units the army sent into the field that eventful summer. Their mission was to search out, strike, and destroy the last armed Indian resistance to the takeover of the gold-rich Black Hills and adjacent buffalo ranges, a campaign carefully planned by the Grant administration the previous December. In early June, Colonel John Gibbon led the "Montana Column" eastward from Fort Ellis near Bozeman. General Alfred Terry traveled due west from Fort Abraham Lincoln in Dakota Territory with a force that included Custer and his Seventh Cavalry troopers. Crook, meanwhile,
In a Military Manner

by Don Dixon

If ever there were two people that could be described as poles apart, it was George and I. I was 21 at the time, full of vinegar and all that good stuff. Three months had passed since I'd completed my apprenticeship in painting and paper hanging. I was third generation at the trade, loved it, and was looking forward to a lifetime pursuing it, honing my skills, and ready at the first cue to expound on any of the finer points — about which I knew little, but hoped some day to be an authority.

All that life and its importance had to take a back seat. I was called up with the first contingent of National Guard called into service by F.D.R. on Sept. 16, 1940.

We were shipped to Camp Murray, the back pasture of Ft. Lewis, Washington. In late summer we were to establish a camp and quarters that served us through a cold, wet winter in a bleak, undeveloped and overgrown section of the post. The draft program was in its infancy. New accommodations were being prepared. America was gearing for an inevitable war.

I was a line sergeant. I'd earned that rank in the Montana National Guard and until someone with better credentials came on the scene, I was a sergeant in the U.S. Army.

A few weeks after induction, some of the noncoms who had kept their noses clean and weathered the first few stormy challenges, were singled out and offered the opportunity to go to Ft. Benning, Georgia, to attend Officers Candidate School. For some reason, God knows why, I was selected for this dubious honor.

I reported, in my best military manner, to the Regimental C.O. at the designated time. This was my initial encounter with George. He was every inch a Regimental C.O. To George, a career as a commissioned officer in the army was, beyond doubt, the ultimate future that a budding N.C.O. could hope for. I was, I informed him, reluctantly serving the one year that had been designated by Congress, to prepare our youth for the event of war. George expounded on the opportunity I had been selected to take advantage of. I countered with my intention of fulfilling my obligation, then pursuing my chosen profession after the completion of one year of intensive training. I also mentioned my strong feelings to be "just one of the guys" and hoped he could accept my views that a commission, elevating as it was, would sever my true relationship with the "lowly" infantryman. All of this scored no points for me, but he had to accept it.

The spring of 1941 in the Northwest had to be the most beautiful ever, despite its seasonal rain. Winter in a tent city, with temperatures dropping to near zero, sharpened everyone's sense of appreciation. Our new barracks area was nearing completion. The first draftees were being assigned.

I was approached one day by our Company Commander; he had known me since I was a kid. He informed me that George had been assigned a small residence adjacent to Regimental Headquarters. He was very proud of his new quarters, however, being an individual of superior taste, he wanted something a little above what the garden variety Regimental C.O. had. As my Company Commander had seen me grow up in my trade, respected my ability, and could use a few brownie points with the C.O., he recommended me as

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Above: Sibley stove and cot as interior of Pyramidal Tent from Camp Murray. The 41st lived in these quarters during the winter of 1940-41. This display was featured at the museum at Camp Withycomb.

The Jungleer is the official publication of the 41st Infantry Division Association, published in the interest of men who served in World War II with the 41st Infantry Division. It is published quarterly at Lynnwood, WA. Subscription $6 per year. (Subscription is included in the dues.) Mail communications to: Jungleer, c/o 41st Inf. Div. Assc., 4324 - 175th S. W., Lynnwood, WA 98037 (phone: 206-742-1721). Copyright 1991 by Dr. Hargis Westerfield for 41st Inf. Div. Assc. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without permission of the Association.
ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUEST

Mail to: Francis Willingham
Convention Chairman
51925 Eleven Mile Rd.
So. Lyon, MI 48178

Name __________________________________________ Wife’s Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _______________ Zip ______________

( ) Air arrival Chapter ___________ Card No. __________________ Organization _______

Who to notify in case of emergency ___________________________ Phone ___________________

ALL TOURS MUST BE BOOKED 1 MONTH IN ADVANCE

Per Person Number Attending $5.00

Editor’s Note: I have not received any information as to the tours and activities. I also have not received any information as to costs of activities. I do hope to have that for you in the May issue.

GENERAL MEETING, Fri., Sept. 20, 1991, 10 a.m.
BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING, Sat., Sept. 21, 1991, 10 a.m.

HOTEL RESERVATION FORM
Mail directly to the hotel:
Ramada Inn
450 S. Nicolet
Mackinaw City, MI 49701 Phone (616) 436-5535

Name ________________________________

Address ________________________________

City and State __________________________ Zip ______________

Phone ________________________________

Arrival Date _________________ at _______ m. (check-in time after 3 p.m.)

Departure Date _________________ at _______ m. (check-out time 11 a.m.)

Accommodation prior to this time cannot be assured. For reservations please call (616) 436-5535. Ask for Reservations Dept.

FOR RESERVATIONS PLEASE CLIP AND MAIL THIS FORM DIRECTLY TO THE HOTEL OR CALL HOTEL DIRECTLY AT ABOVE NUMBER.

FOR GUARANTEED RESERVATIONS ONLY

I understand that I am liable for one night’s room and tax which will be deducted from my deposit, or billed through my credit card in the event that I do not arrive or cancel on the arrival date indicated. (Note: reservations will be accepted at above rates prior to 8/22/91 or until allotted rooms held for your event are filled, whichever comes first.)

Signed ___________________________ Date _________
Anniversary, Convention Celebration in Pictures

Above: Harry Anderson, 41st QM at Seattle Chapter enjoys waterfalls while on Mt. Hood tour at convention.

Clockwise from top center: National Secretary Nick Russo lays wreath in commemoration of 50th Anniversary. Top right: Scottish band passing in review, Camp Withycomb, Oregon, celebrating 50th Anniversary of federalizing of National Guard, August 16, 1940. Middle right: Members of Seattle Chapter marching behind band at Camp Murray on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary. Lower right: Conventioneers enjoying Grand Party (above) and Hospitality Room (below) at convention. Lower middle: National Guard troops passing in review for Association President Lou Reuter. Lower left: Colors passing in review at Camp Withycomb. Center: The 41st Plaque, donated by the Association, prominently displayed at the front gate of Camp Murray.
FROM THE SECRETARY

It’s that time of year for dues. If your card shows 1990 or earlier, please send in your check to your chapter secretary for 1991. Thank you so much!

The forty-second convention is now a part of the history of the Association. It is now time to be thinking of the forty-third. This is being held in Mackinaw City, Michigan, Sept. 18-22, 1991. The host chapter is Great Lakes and the convention is headed by National President Francis Willingham. Come prepared to have a wonderful time as the Great Lakes Chapter is going all out with many activities. It has been quite awhile since one of our conventions has been held in the middle part of our country. All of you Mid-Westerners and Easterners should take advantage of the location. I hope that I will see many of you at this reunion.

After eight years of constant use, the Association’s computer created some problems. The “B” drive went kaput! It was decided that instead of just replacing the drive, that the unit would be upgraded to a hard disk. I am now in the process of transferring all programs to the new disk. I ask all you secretaries to be patient as I have gotten behind because of this extra work.

To all of you 41st’ers, a very happy New Year!

— Nick Russo

In a Military Manner

(continued from page 1)

a solution to both their problems.

I reported to George’s quarters the following evening to survey the situation and make my recommendations. George was in his shorts and had half a face full of shaving cream. He outlined his ideas. Apparently he was impressed with what I had to offer, so he gave me a free hand to dress it up as I saw fit. Now we were talking business.

The next couple of weeks I saw little or nothing of George. I went to town on the weekend and picked up the brushes and materials I needed. I enameled the kitchen and bathroom, added a touch of color, masculine to sure, to the bedroom and living room. Generally speaking, I made it somewhat more liveable than the G.I. type treatment it had received on the government contract. George loved it and, as I learned on the grapevine, was very proud to show it off.

As I had given my time and expertise and given up several weekend passes to the cause, I felt I was entitled to more than a “thank you” — perhaps some monetary compensation. Granted, I was in the army. I had, however, against my wishes, forfeited a job at $1.25 per hour in civilian life (a fair amount in those days). I reasoned a fair consideration, say 50 cents an hour for labor. I enclosed cash sales slips for all I had spent and delivered it to Regimental Hdqtrs. clearly marked “personal” for George.

Days added up to weeks. Almost a month passed with no reply. I was toying with the idea of sending a past due notice when a runner came to my barracks and presented me with an envelope, for which I signed. It contained a check for full payment. I was really quite relieved, as the thought had crossed my mind that I may not have acted in a prudent military manner.

A full year, give or take a week, passed. We were at war. The intensive training we’d experienced conditioned us for what was in store. We were preparing to embark for God only knew where. Rumors inspired rumors. In all the hustle and bustle and shuffling of personnel, Company “C” was assigned a new Company Commander, Capt. “Scratchy” Hill, formerly with Reg. H.Q. Word reached our barracks during the noon hour that the new C.O. had arrived. Approximately 30 minutes later I received an order to report to the orderly room. For what I hadn’t the vaguest idea. I reported immediately and was told that the Captain wanted to see me. Upon entering his office I threw him a highball, “Sgt. Dixon reported as directed,” I said, and waited for God knows what.

“At ease, Sgt.,” he said, then just sat and stared at me. “I just wanted,” he continued, “to meet the S.O.B. that had guts enough to send the Ol’ Man a bill for labor. He’s after your ass, Dixon, and your stripes. You and I are going to see he don’t get ’em. Incidentally, did he ever pay you?”

I assured him I’d been paid, but refrained from telling him that the check had been signed by Mrs. George.

Several more months passed. Amid uncountable rumors and confusing, often rescinded orders, we packed and crated. We received new issues of various types of equipment, all of which only added to the confusion and rumor mills. My vast experience in the paint field landed me the opportunity to practice my skills stencilling our identifying markings on all of our crates and equipment.

Eventually, we arrived in San Francisco and were placed on alert at a camp in the middle of the city. Limited involvement in anything more than light training and very limited passes granted only added to our confusion.

After about a week of much to do about nothing, the orders came through and we were really put to work. The three rifle companies, each with a platoon attached from the weapons company of our 1st Battalion, were assigned an eight-hour shift of guard duty on a wharf where the Queen Elizabeth, the world’s largest ship, was docked and re-outfitted into a troop ship. From an hour before she docked until half an hour before she sailed, we were responsible for her security.

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Chapter NEWS

Great Lakes Chapter

Our fourth annual chapter reunion to be held in Botkins, Ohio, hosted by Emerson and Jan Koenig (I-186) was more than a success. Forty-two cobbers plus their wives and guests, 12 for their first time in Botkins, enjoyed the small town atmosphere on August 18 and 19. A special feature was the Senior Citizens Band of Lima, Ohio, with their old-time patriotic renditions. Three Aussie war brides present were Golda Berner of Indianapolis, Indiana, Barbara Calwell of Springfield, Illinois, and Jan Koenig, our hostess.

Because of the Koenigs we have several new members from Ohio now in our chapter. Three new B-186 men this year are Robert Newhart, Fred McGee, and Leo Moskala. McGee has furnished us with an old roster of B-186 men. Other new chapter members are Robert F. Dakin (Med-162), Chester Mischley (G-162), Karllos E. Hulko (K-186), Jewell Gaddy (F-163), Earl Smedley (I-162), and Max Zimmerman (G-163). Also we corresponded with and referred Harvey Fuchs to the Midwest Chapter. Harvey was in DHQ.


At least 22 of our cobbers, and most wives, were in attendance at the Portland Reunion on Sept. 12-16. Our WWI buddy, John Kuzara (M-163), now about 91, drove alone from Oxford, Michigan, to the Oregon reunion and was honored at the Saturday night banquet as the oldest paid member of our Division Association. Francis Willingham (F-163) of South Lyon, Michigan, was elected as our new National President but was unable to attend most of the convention. Upon arrival in Portland he learned of the death of his mother-in-law and returned immediately by auto to Michigan. Our condolences to Francis and Rose Mary.

Our meeting and fall dinner on Nov. 4 was an important one. We elected our chapter officers for the coming year, arranged our special 1991 Reunion planning meetings, and finalized activities to host the National Reunion in September in Mackinaw City, Michigan, at the Ramada Inn. The correct dates of the National Convention are Sept. 17-22, 1991.

News of members includes Allison F. Buchanan (D-186) who has moved from Southfield, Michigan to Port St. Lucie, Florida. Waldo A. Gilbert has moved but is still in Rushsylvania, Ohio (F-186). Matt A. Kinnunen (CO of K-186) from Chassell, Michigan, has recently married and introduced his wife to us at the Portland reunion. Matt is the donor of the Japan flag signed by all the 186 officers before Biak. Alan E. Rock (HQ-186) has moved but still in Akron, Ohio. A letter to Stevan Berdynski (186) has been returned undeliverable from Toledo, Ohio, as has one to C. C. Estep from Lucasville, Ohio, one to John Jerdonek (A-163) from Willoughby, Ohio, Earl R. Marr (B-186) from Martins Ferry, Ohio, and William O. Martin (C-186) from Toledo. Anyone know the whereabouts of these men?

—Chester F. Clark

Potomac Chapter

Gettysburg meeting was attended by 24 people: Charles and Emma Bauer; Paul and Dottie Blauser; Al and Lorraine Levanduski; John and Letha Linderman; George and Claire Moore, daughter Diane and granddaughter Elizabeth; Bill and Phyllis Murray; George and Helen Papadoplos; Leo Poremski; Stanley Opszeniktoski; Anthony and Phylora Shippula; Mike and Theresa Vagenos; Chester and Velma Young. Sunday morning Mike Vagenos’ daughter and son-in-law, granddaughter and grandson came to tour the area. A good time was had by all.

Condolences to John J. Fahey who lost his wife in June after 45 years of marriage. Also to George Kraemer who lost his wife in September after 43 years of marriage. Jungleer donations from Dave Camack, Jerome Soper, Ed Debelek. Thank you. Edna Morrow now living with daughter Susan in Decatur, Georgia.

Next meeting Feb. 16, 1991, President’s weekend at Ocean City, Maryland. The annual picnic is scheduled for Saturday, June 1 at Chester and Velma Young’s home in Petersburg, Virginia.

Help Needed. Edward Debelek, 576 Center Hill Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15239 is trying to obtain maps of the area around the Lascon Plantation located northwest of Davao on Mindanao. Any leads or help would be greatly appreciated. Hargis could not help. Can you? Inquiry from Billy T. Skeen. Trying to find a John Ronko, 163 “C” Co. 3rd Platoon. He believes John manually drug him out of a fire fight on Jolo Island where Billy was shot. Can anyone help him? I sent him addresses of four “C” Co. men in Potomac Chapter. No record of John Ronco in Potomac Chapter. Phone call from Mike Moran, Hq 3 163 of Temple Hills, Maryland. He was attending a bowling banquet and one of his teammates was William Shirhart of Clinton, Maryland who was in C, D-163. Will try
and get him to join.

As time goes by a secretary has many requests for information and addresses. I do what I can but never hear of results. Following story makes one feel good. John Busha met Ed Lasecki at the V.A. Hospital in Philadelphia last year. Ed had on his 41st Div. vest and they started talking. Ed sent me his name and address. I printed it in a Potomac newsletter. Around Memorial Day, John was in the hospital in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, for gall bladder. He got word from a corporal and another fellow from around Detroit, Michigan where John was inducted.

"The Corporal was on the front line with me when I got out and was told to go back and get the corporal out when a Jap sniper hit me. They wondered how I got to be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."

So you can see how meeting Ed Lasecki has brought a few Jungleers together again. Your Bar Man, John Busha. Ed Lasecki died August 9, 1990.

— George Moore

Potomac Chapter Gettysburg Meeting Nov. 2, 1990


Front row, left to right: Claire Moore, Velma Young, Letha Linderman, Theresa Vagenos. Back row: Phyllis Murray, Lorraine Leandusky, Dottie Blauer, Phylora Shipula, Helen Papadoplos, Emma Bauer.

- Portland Chapter

Convention notes. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a letter from Portland Chapter President Nick Wheeler which is a report on the convention. Here are a few observations which may not find their place in Nick's report. Harold Stopyra reports that at the unit dinner for HQ-218, the hat was passed for contributions toward the costs of their meeting. They ended up with a surplus of $100 which was donated to the Chapter postage fund. Thanks, guys.

Norm Ross (H-162) told that his father posted the first guard at Arlington National Cemetery. If I can read my notes right, Norm was commissioned and assigned to the 32nd Division.

There were two Carl Gustafsons. One has passed on and the other is alive and well in Aloha, Oregon. He was in HQ-186 and he and I are in the same VFW Post.

Fourteen men of the Association went to the dedication of the Gunner Larson Armory in St. Helens on Sept. 16, the day the convention ended.

Charles Crary sent a copy of General Orders Headquarters 162nd Inf., APO 41, dated Aug. 2, 1945, citing units and individuals entitled to wear the Distinguished Unit Badge. This covered organic and attached units, 1st Battalion, 162nd Infantry. Crary was with B-162 as a private at the time of the orders.

George F. Erbe, who lives at 2 Crooked Lane, Naples, FL 33962, wrote after seeing the notice of our convention. What George wants to know is, does anyone remember the 10th Portable Surgical Hospital? It was attached to 3rd Battalion of 162 in New Guinea in 1943 for the Nassau Bay-Salamaua campaigns. If any of you remember, drop George a line. He said in his letter that he would be unable to attend but really wanted to hear about his unit, and sent his best regards to all.

John Panek was admitted to the VA Hospital in Portland as of Sept. 26. John was with SVC-B-C 218. Drop him a line and wish him speedy recovery.

Message to the Membership from Nick Wheeler. I want to express my feelings of gratitude and appreciation to those members of our Chapter who contributed their time and all-out efforts for our convention program.

Our 50th Anniversary Celebration pre-planning group met on Oct. 6, 1987, in its first organizing effort. the Oregon Military Department joined our effort Feb. 15, 1989. With hours and hours of meetings, making decisions to ensure success, planning our logistical moves in a complete team effort with capable volunteers we have given our Association a convention package that will be long remembered.

We are deeply indebted to Betty and Donald Culp for the their most efficient and capable handling of the overwhelming pre-registration response and the accounting of funds. Hours and hours were donated by them to our cause even

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Chapter News

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before the convention began. Due to the loss of our Secretary because of illness they teamed together to handle the productive and efficient work crew. Having been involved in this effort in the past I can appreciate their deep involvement.

To Bud Lewis, the real work horse, and his wife Janet, who arranged the flower display for our table settings. They worked with dedication. We could never have assembled the gift packs with favors without his contacts with the business community. As the convention chairman his actions were superb and it was a remarkable achievement.

To Ken and Edith Sloan who let us use their home to store and assemble our favors we are deeply indebted. To the assembly crew who donated a full work day in a monumental effort of packing supplies and to Ken Sloan for his experience and help with his transportation crew. To Captain Newsom who gave much of his time and efforts in assisting with our logistics and supply problems.

To Sgt. David Funk of public relations for a wonderful tireless supporting effort. To Kent Freeman and his hours of attention to detail in setting up our printed program, which contains our induction roster.

To the registration and work crew. Some 18 people were involved including the wives of the Guard officers. What a fine effort. I commend Lawrence Grissom, Arnold Thom and the Griffiths who volunteered to serve in working additional shifts and for availing themselves in emergency situations.

To the ladies who organized one of the best ladies luncheon programs ever scheduled in a convention effort. To all of our wives, who were supportive of all our activities, especially to my wife Barbara for being my right hand and her hours of hard work.

To the golf committee, Sherman and Esther Pierce and Howard Bottemiller who organized a classic event. You made us proud.

To the hospitality room crews organized by Tiny and Ella Bates. It was a real effort of organization and supply. For his entire group who volunteered for more than double duty we are most appreciative.

To Harold Stopyra for his long hours spent on the banquet seating, to Bob Miller for his hours of support at the gift table and for procuring and handling of the handicap vehicle. To Bill Procasco for his counsel, advice and input into our fine memorial program. To Bill Johnson for his efforts at the airport greeting and assisting our arrivals over a three-day period.

The military people assigned to us were not only very efficient and courteous, they set a lasting impression of the fine caliber of our youth now serving in the Oregon Guard. the Chaplain James McDonald, the color guard detail who performed brilliantly, the Bagpipers and the entire 41st Separate Brigade of Infantry who performed for us. What a wonderful display. To Gordon Waite who was most helpful and the rest of General Rees's staff we are most grateful for their loyal assistance and support.

To Dick Miller, our master of ceremonies, who did a very commendable job. He helped make our day. And a special thanks to General Raymond Rees for his most loyal support and for serving as our honored guest speaker.

I have been honored and I am proud to have been in a position to coordinate this fine Chapter effort. To all of those who helped in the events at the Red Lion, I thank all of you. It was a wonderful effort and has strengthened our growing Portland Chapter. — Nick Wheeler

More thanks. Seems like we have given up a lot of space here to saying “Thank You,” but as in the case of any large undertaking there are a lot of people to thank. Some of those we don’t want to overlook are those who sent memorabilia for display at the convention. I will probably miss someone but I sure hope not, and I may get some wrong but here goes.

Ralph Connell (Sv-162) for his letter dated March 5, 1943, which included a story of his trip overseas on the Santa Paula. If Ralph says okay I will send copies to those who would like it. He also sent a good copy of a picture of Service Company at Ft. Lewis in 1941, copies also available. Send a small donation to cover costs.

Convention winner. The grand prize for this year’s raffle which was held during the Saturday night dinner banquet was won by Emil “Skinny” Sorenson’s wife (Svc-205) from Ellensburg, Washington. The prize consisted of six beautiful bolo knives that had been brought home from the Philippines. Five were donated by William Baldwin (Svc-186) and one was donated by Arnold Thom (Hq-162) who was leading a unit of the 32nd Division. They were presented with handmade sheaths in a beautiful red velvet background wall display. The knife display was professionally created and donated to us by Terry Bottemiller who is the son of Howard (A-205) of West Linn.

We all remember the beautiful painting that was the grand prize at Kalispell. It was a picture of the 1889-1989 Montana Centennial which was the theme of that convention. It is hard to believe that is was also won by the wife of Emil “Skinny” Sorenson.

Odds and ends. Kenneth Cusick would like to hear from anyone who came to tell him about his brother, Ed Cusick. He thinks that Ed was a Medic in 186, was commissioned and then sent to either 162 or 163. Kenneth can be reached at 2300 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704. Al Grauerholz (M-Sv 162) came to the convention and introduced himself to me and I never saw him again. He is a member of Mid-South Chapter, and was looking for an old buddy? Daryl Morrow and wanted to meet an L. Freeman who did some sketches that he did that Morrow has or had. I screwed up and did not respond to the Growler but will in the near future.

The Growler has a history of the 162 that should be published some time this year. The book’s name will be
"Salamaua Soldiers: American Soldiers Under Australian Generals."

There are some additional souvenir cups available from Portland Chapter at $6 each including postage. There are also program booklets available at $2 each, including postage. Send requests and checks to Kent Freeman. Checks should be made to Portland Chapter, 41st Division Association.

— Kent Freeman

In a Military Manner
(continued from page 5)

The French ship, Normandie, had just been sunk for the second time in N.Y. Harbor. That such a fate did not befall the "Queen E" was the concern of a great number of security people from the top U.S. officials right down to our units. With three gangplanks, our three rifle platoons rotated on daily shifts.

As platoon sergeant of the second platoon, my command post was right at whichever gangplank we were assigned that day. Not a lunch box, case of nails, sling of lumber, or anything else going aboard that vessel went unchecked. Security at the entrance to the wharf was equally as strict, and passes to go aboard were checked and double checked. The screening was intense. Our orders were that absolutely nobody was to go aboard without proper identification and an authorized pass.

The transition from one of the world's most exotic passenger ships to a troop ship took one week. Luxury furnishings, etc., were brought ashore and carted away to be put in storage. These were replaced by literally thousands of bunk beds and mess tables. Latrine and shower accommodations were plumbed in, and God knows what all. The work was performed by civilian labor, all of whom had to be checked aboard each shift.

Although the sailing time was "Top Secret," we all knew as the week progressed, to within a few hours of when she was to embark. When the afternoon of embarkation arrived, I was, with my platoon spotted throughout that portion of the ship, assigned to the main gangplank. We were informed she was to sail at 5 p.m. Excitement filled the air. Dignitaries from the Cunard Steamship Line, government officials, U.S. and British, hustled and bustled about. Military officers I'd only heard about approached, had their passes checked dutifully and proceeded with their missions. My post was right at the end of that gangplank. I'm sure it was no less than 200 yards from the entrance to the wharf through the long aisle, both sides of which were lined with trucks, pallets stacked high with supplies, equipment and I don't know what all. The center aisle, approximately 40 ft. wide was a bustle of traffic and pedestrians, moving as if on conveyor belts between the ship and the street outside.

At about 2:30 p.m., halfway from the main gate, I could see another encounter approaching, a party of five, two of them lovely ladies, bedecked in their garden party finery, both the epitome of what the social photographers from the local press would be tuning in on. The other three were higher ranking officers, two of whom I'd never seen before. The other, all spit and polish, his most amiable air, and for all the world feeling no pain and the perfect host, George. With all his military bearing and authoritative manner, he approached my post, returned my salute, and presented his pass. "These are my guests, Sgt.," he said.

"Yes, Sir," I replied. "Do they have passes?"

George's face began to flush. "These are my guests, Sgt. They have come to see me off. I will assume full responsibility."

I had my instructions: "If the King of England, escorted by Churchill and F.D.R. comes up here without passes, don't let 'em aboard."

"Sorry, Colonel," I shot back. "If they go back to the main gate and are issued passes, I'll be glad to admit them aboard, but as you know, my orders are firm."

George was boiling. "Sergeant!" he began, then controlling whatever it was that had sent his complexion livid, he stopped. For an eternity of at least 10 seconds we both contemplated the situation. "Who is the Officer of the Guard?" he asked.

"Lt. Laum," I replied, inwardly elated that there might be a solution of sorts to this confrontation.

"I want to speak to him!" he snapped.

Fortunately, our command post was behind a row of pallets, approximately 60 feet away, and right outside a large room with toilet facilities we had been assigned for breaks.

I could see Lt. Laum trying to appear inconspicuous, yet hoping against hope that things would adjust themselves. Abruptly, he straightened his cap, readjusted his pistol belt and advanced briskly.

"What is the difficulty, Sergeant?" he asked, then he wheeled, and with an air of surprise, saluted and said, "Oh, Good Afternoon, Colonel."

"Get this...I...ah...Can you relieve the sergeant of his duties, Lieutenant?" he asked.

"Why, yes Sir, Colonel," came the reply, and seeing his entire military career rising or falling in the balance, he assumed command of the entire situation.

"I'll take your post, Sergeant. Go have a cigarette and report back in 10 minutes."

"Thy will be done." Forgive me, Lord, but prayers were answered before said. Three of us survived unscathed for the present.

I've never heard why, but while we were at sea the order came down — that's the direction all of them come from — maybe it was due to a sudden rise in blood pressure, but George was relieved of command.

Our new C.O. met us as we docked in Australia, and I heard George took the first military flight back to the U.S.A.
MAIL CALL

Hello, Nick:

The 50th anniversary of the 41st Division has come and gone but it will never be forgotten by myself and I'm sure a lot of others. Your Portland Chapter did such a wonderful and remarkable job with the hotel arrangements and entertainment, and the day spent at the Guard Armory and grounds were heart rendering. I'm sure that during the parade and the 21-gun salute, many of us shed a few tears in silence in remembering those of our comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice so far away from home so many years ago. Even as I write this letter I feel the tears on my cheeks remembering our fellow comrades.

Through your efforts I was able to locate and join at the convention six of the "Old Guts" that were in our Company 186 Hq. Co. 1st Bn. The last time we saw one another was at Biak Island in November of 1944. Over the past year or so you sent me their addresses and I was able to get us all together in Portland. I just had to write and tell you how much your efforts were appreciated. The fellows I am speaking of are Carl Gustafson, Ed Ragnone, Darrell Morrow, ? Siebert, Mike Maczarich, Hyman Berman and Al Hoffmeister.

Thanks again,
Tony Kuehnle
2322 S. E. 6th Ave.
Cape Coral, FL 33990-2505

Dear Nick:

Along about the middle of September I came up with your name, so I called. Since you were unavailable, I was fortunate in having the opportunity to talk with your wife, Charlene. She was of marvelous assistance and provided me with lots of good information.

Charlene suggested that I write a note for inclusion in the next issue of the Jungleer in which I ask for information about my old outfit — Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 162 Infantry Regiment. But, I think I'll put that off for the time being since I am writing to Hargis Westerfield in hopes that he can fill in a few blanks.

I'm including a small check to cover the cost of a belt buckle and to make a contribution to the Jungleer. I am really looking forward to receiving future issues. Oh, yes, I am also sending a check to Richard Schumann for dues to the Association.

Best regards,
C. H. McCormack
8607 East Via Del Sereno
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Dear Nick:

H Company 162nd Inf. held its annual reunion at the National Convention in Portland this year. We had a great time and in the future we hope to hold our annual reunions in conjunction with the National Conventions.

The unit had their company dinner at the Matterhorn in Portland. Enclosed picture of those attending:

Seated left to right: Joe Proeller, Al Cieslak, Ken McLain, Don Goodwin, Charley Jachim. Standing left to right: Tom Lynch, Earl Norgard, Mike McCarty, Norman Ross, Ken Pinnon, John Markert, Ken Yost.

Ladies, seated left to right: Betty Ross, Elenor McCarty, Iva Yost, Kitty Jachim. Standing left to right: Mary Ann Markert, Mrs. Ken McLain, Frances Norgard, Jeannie Krambs, Mary Alice Goodwin.

Not at the dinner but also making the reunion were George Burg, Bob Schwartz, Zoeth Skinner and Harold Ellingson.

Ken and Iva Yost and Earl and Frances Norgard really showed us a great time. After the convention a few of us spent some days with the Yosts in Terrebone, Oregon.

We are looking forward to next year in Mackinaw City, Michigan.

Charley Jachim (Co H 162 Inf.)
1511 E. Orchard Beach Lane
Rice Lake, WI 54868
Dear Nick:

I am sorry that I forgot to sign and put my unit on the letter with my donation, so this time, I included it in my return address. I was in a hurry to get it in the mailbox before the mailman came to pick up the mail which is why I hate to do things in a hurry because I forget some important things. Enclosed are Xerox copies of articles that appeared in the Clackamas County Review that a cousin of mine who knew about the reunion sent to me. I thought you might be interested in how the newspapers outside of Portland covered the reunion.

As ever,
Earl Legge
5220 176th St. W. 40
Lynnwood, WA 98037

Hi there:

Just a note along with these three clippings. We are losing our former buddies everyday now. But we should be grateful for these added years that we have had after what we all went through.

Saw Sgt. Lavener Walker of H 163rd Inf. at a class reunion in July. Showing some age on him now. I hear Dr. Jenkins who is in Houston, Texas is not in too good of shape. I'll have to go down and cheer him up soon. (He's from 186 3rd Bn Medics.)

I didn't make it to Portland for the convention. The accommodations were a little high for this cobber. A feller could take in two conventions in Montana for what it would cost in the big cities. This subject should be of concern to the next time and place committee.

Closing for now,
Clarence "Doc" Clement
220 E. 7th
Hardin, MT 59034

Thanks, Nick for the Q.M. list (received yesterday). If I can make it to the reunion next year, I will try to get them all to come with a mail-out.

Enclosed is some information for the Jungleer or you might want to send them on to Westerfield.

Sincerely,
Joe Smith
5516 Green Oak Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90068

Editor's note: The following was sent in by Joe Smith.

Japs Brand 41st Division "Butchers"

Col. Fred Roecker of Walla Walla, just back from more than two years in the Southwest Pacific, expressed the belief Tuesday that the monicker "the 41st Division Butchers" will stick to the old Pacific Northwest based unit "as long as the Division remains in existence."

"The Japs gave them the name," said the erstwhile division quartermaster, "and the men are proud of it because it shows that the enemy recognizes their ability as fighting men."

The 41st Infantry Division originally was composed of Pacific Northwest National Guard units and the former Walla Walla Union Bulletin circulation manager paid high tribute for its achievements in some of the most bitter fighting of the Pacific theater, in the face of seemingly insurmountable supply problems.

The division was commanded in peacetime years by Maj. General George A. White, who died two weeks before the Pearl Harbor attack, and Roecker commented:

"I remember General White often said he wished the division would get a distinctive name. I hope he knows that they've earned one — and a good one."

He said he felt that the 41st, commanded by Maj. Gen. Horace H. Fuller, deserved the greatest credit for the final conquest of New Guinea. Roecker himself wears the badge of a presidential citation for a special 41st task force which landed on New Guinea in December, 1942.

"It was really pretty rugged in those days," he said in an interview, "because we didn't have the new, modern equipment which the troops out there have now.

"The only landing barges we had were some we had captured from the Japs and repaired. You might say that we had to go in wearing rubber boots. The troops that followed us could wear carpet slippers after the 41st had cleaned up. The supply problem was pretty tough."

As quartermaster, he faced many problems which aren't "in the book — you just had to improvise the best way you could with what you had."

As an example, he described how gasoline had to be supplied by hauling it around the New Guinea Coast in trawlers and dumping the drums into the water for natives to "swim ashore."

By contrast, he said, "Now they can take big tankers right up to a dock and pump the gas ashore."

In the first New Guinea campaign, it was necessary to handle supplies 14 times to move them 12 miles, and "even after we had corduroy roads it took jeeps six hours to make the 12 miles. I was using 70 jeeps, but the most I could move was eight tons in 24 hours."

In the early New Guinea campaigning, he explained, the Japanese often would dig in beside a trail and attack from the rear after a column passed.

"That was really nasty fighting," he remarked, "but the Japs aren't fighting as hard now as they did at first. Lots of them are plenty glad to surrender. I even heard of one Jap lieutenant who surrendered to an American soldier who was armed with nothing but a club — and the Jap had both a saber and a revolver. But the Tiger division of Jap marines at Salamaua was something else again. All big men, they were really tough."

Roecker said he was relieved as division quartermaster (continued on page 12)
Mail Call
(continued from page 11)

March 21 and assigned to headquarters of the base section. His wife and youngest child, Joan Mary, 14, greeted the colonel here. A son, Capt. Frederick C. Roecker, Jr., 1942 West Point graduate, now is serving in Europe.

Dear Nick:

Just a note to send you $20 dues for the Association. I see by my membership card that I am paid up to Dec. 31, 1990. Joan and I were back in Oregon in June and July this year, but could not stretch our visit to September and attend the convention. I attended the International Rotary Convention in Portland in June. We drove from Portland to Los Angeles in July and stopped off on the way to see all the sights and visit friends and relatives.

Have had a few visitors from the states. Those from the 41st were Andy Hammer, Condon, Montana; Leo Boyce, Baker, Oregon; Dick Rutledge, Caldwell, Idaho; and several from other places and other units. It is always good to see someone from back home.

Don’t think we will be getting back to Oregon for another visit until 1993 for my Salem High School 55th class reunion.

I have been corresponding with Bill Heath in Boise, Idaho, and he said he attended the first day at the 41st convention, but could not stay any longer, due to having to attend the reunion of the 148th FA. He did say if I wrote to you, you may have an extra copy of the reunion program that you could send me. He said it was a very good program. If you have an extra copy, I would appreciate your sending me one.

I am still keeping busy with my research on U.S. forces in Australia during World War II. One thing you may be able to help me with: I need a list of all the units attached to the 41st during the time they were in Australia, Engineers, QM, Med., etc. Add the regiments also.

How time flies — it’s been 20 years since the 41ster’s visit down here in 1970.

Will keep in touch,
Bill Bentson
15 Kapunda St., Toowong
Brisbane, Queensland
Australia 4066

Dear Friends All:

This is a letter I’m reluctant to write. I feel as if I’m letting you down. I must though let you know. Effective immediately I am resigning from the following offices in the various organizations.

Great Lakes Chapter of the 41st Inf. Div. Assn. — As Corresponding Secretary for Michigan, Ohio, and eastern Indiana for the past more than 11 years, I now ask someone else to take over.

Howell Area Archives — As a member of this committee for more than a decade, and actively participating weekly for a couple of years as chairman, I now put these activities in the capable hands of our vice chairman, Duane Zemper.

Livingston County Historical Society — Currently as Corresponding Secretary I now resign this position, and from activities on the board. As long as I am able, I wish to continue my historical column in the Fowlerville paper, and to fulfill talks to organizations and school children already committed.

Livingston County Coin Club — I wish to resign as Treasurer at the first election of officers, a position I accepted as interim when officers were needed.

Michigan State Numismatic Society — As a state board member for I believe 16 years, in this fall’s election I was on the ball enough to run again so this is already resolved.

In having physical tests earlier this fall I learned I have cancer. Then a bone scan revealed bone cancer which has spread. And now each 28 days, under a specialist’s care, I have a $400 tiny pellet shot into the fatty part of my tummy. Actually I feel quite well. Whether this all will be controllable, curable, or whether I’ll have only a few weeks, a few months, or even years, we do not know. I do know no one can take away the nearly 73 years I’ve had — wonderful years — especially working with such folks as all of you. It is my wish now to get all records and materials of these organizations into your proper hands so Yvonne will not have to do this. Also maybe I can dispose of all of my trading stock and even personal collections without leaving this for Yvonne to do.

Most gratefully and sincerely yours,
Chester Clark
3367 Jewell Rd.
Howell, Michigan

Hi, Nick:

It was a great convention. In your article you said you could use some pictures. This one I am sending was from the Grand Party. Front row, left to right: Truman Slotte, Marvin Irby and Matt Kinnunen. Back row: Ted Merydith and Herman Zier. The wives were on the other side of the table. All from Co. L 186 Inf.

Keep up the good work,
T. Merydith
980 Prescott Ln. Rd.
Springfield, OR 97477
Dear Mr. Willingham,

Thank you for taking the time and effort to send me a copy of the *Jungleer* with a report of Paul's death. I appreciate it very much. Best wishes to you and your family.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Paul Kappen

Nick Russo:

Hargis Westerfield suggested I write to you regarding a question I have that has been bothering me for several years.

At the 1984 Reunion in Portland I purchased a placemat with a map to "Follow the Jungleers in World War II." Subsequently, I've seen the same map reproduced in McCartney's book "The Jungleers" (both inside the front and back cover), and again this year at the Portland 50th Anniversary Reunion with a duplicate of this map on the back of a pamphlet handout entitled "41st Separate Infantry Brigade Change of Command Program."

I contend that there is an error on this map regarding the route of the Santa Paula and the Uruguay out of New York, via the Panama Canal, with stops at Bora Bora, Auckland, New Zealand, and ending up in Melbourne. The map shows "Convoy splits — part to Auckland, part to Brisbane" — this is what I believe to be an error unless we had a ghost ship with us! I was on the Uruguay, although I was Exec of AT Co. at the time, and A.T. was on the Santa Paula — this through an omission by the regimental adj. by leaving five of us, who had been at Ft. Benning, and rejoining the outfit at Ft. Dix, off the boarding manifest of the Santa Paula.

Both of these ships left New York together, travelled together all of the way to Melbourne and docked the same day. From aboard the Uruguay I watched the Santa Paula all of the way across the Pacific and do not recall ever seeing another troop ship and have never talked to anyone making this "detour" through Brisbane.

Can you clarify this? Further, if I am correct, and this is an error, any further use of this map should be discontinued, or corrected.

Regards,
Harlan Kness (H - A.T. - Cannon - 162nd)
2516 E. 27th St.
Vancouver, WA 98661

Dear Nick:

Received the dues cards — thank you very much. Also in this letter is a check for $6.50 for the hat. Again, I want to thank you.

I hope my luck runs better than this year’s. On Aug. 23, they operated on my left knee which kept filling up with fluid. Sept. 14, I was back in the hospital with a gall bladder operation. I spent 11 days in the hospital. Now I am recuperating at home and hope to go to Michigan in 1991 if the good Lord is willing.

Sincerely yours,
F.A. Ashman, Jr.
24 Emerson Pl.
Melrose, MA 02176

GENEROUS 41ST’ERS

Patrick W. Campbell
James C. Haley (Hq-163)
John W. Kornichuk (641 TD)
C. H. McCormack (Hq-3-162)
Arthur B. Keller
Philip J. Koltke (41st Sig)
James G. Bilodeaux (Hq-1-146, A-641, 98 CML)
John J. Di Cosmo
Walter E. Larson
Alan R. Morse (Hq-218)
Stanley Hertenstein (G-162)
C. J. Hamilton (MP)
Julius P. Orlando (G-162, CN-162)
Willard Pendleton (B-116 Eng)
Douglas A. Olson (L-163)
Don E. Duvall (Hq-1-163)
Goar L. Kosing (G-163)
Frank W. Hollister (MD-162)
William A. Minner (E-186)
William A. McLaughlin (C-162)
Ben E. Kuhn (41 RCN)
Frank Kraska (H-186)
Martin Chlapecka (L-163)
Byrne J. Barrett (Sv-163)
Andrew McDermaid (F, B-218)
E Co. 162 Inf’s BARman Floyd West never forgot that morning when a Jap Zero pilot flew close overhead and did not slay him. On that morning of 1943, West was in a convoy of LCVs (Landing Crafts, Vehicles) which was chugging up the Guinea Shore to seize Morobe before the Salamaua Operation.

On that sunny New Guinea morning, West’s LCV was helplessly lashed to an immobilized LCV. That evening before in the other LCV, an unaware Yank had lighted his last cigarette and chucked the empty foil pack into the sea. The LCV sump pump had sucked up the foil and plugged itself. Because water leaked under the closed ramp, that pump was unplugged. While the rest of the LCV convoy drove onto Morobe, the mobile LCV with West in it was lashed to the crippled LCV to help hold up the crippled craft.

We did not dare to beach the two barges on that unknown Guinea Shore under dark mountains. Any stragglers, whether or not they had a MG, could murder us all at once. We lashed our two anchors together and let them drag below until they hooked into the shallows at a safe distance offshore.

All night the barges banged and bumped together in the waves. Men like West became seasick from the endless bouncing. Even if the men in West’s barge kept dry and tried to sleep, it was a hard night.

Men in the immobile barge took turns to bail with their helmets all night from the water seeping under the ramp. One man had a flashlight to help start the complicated repairs, but not until morning could they actually work the pump.

Early next morning, out of the west from the direction of Morobe, a Jap Zero flew low less than 100 yards above the helpless LCVs. That Jap Zero flew low less than 100 yards above us. West looked up to see two more Zeros flying at 10,000 feet.

The lowest Zero was low enough for us to see the sunglasses on the pilot’s nose, and his white silk scarf with the red ball of the Jap insignia on his forehead. But the pilot did not strafe us dead in our barges. He flew by and waved his wings, like saying, “You’re lucky, boys!”

In BARman West’s belt was a clip of .30 shells with tracers — MG shells which he could fire in his BAR. But he had sense enough not to fire on the plane. But the Lt. in the other barge shot at the Zero with his .45. Luckily he must have missed, for the pilot seemed unaware of the shot.

West shouted, “Stop that shooting! Look up!” The Lt. looked up and quickly sheathed his pistol. West still rejoices at our luck. If the Lt. had brought down three Zeros on our barges, we 60 men and four crewmen would have been just a temporary bloody spot in the ocean. But maybe the Zeros ignored us because they saved gas and ammo to strike richer targets farther west.

Soon the sump pump was repaired. We chugged on to Morobe and arrived at noon. Five minutes after West landed, he was seasick no longer.

At Morobe, 162 Inf had another notable encounter with a Nippo plane. Every night, “Washing Machine Charlie” flew over, awoke us, and drove us into slit trenches. But a Black Widow Spider — a radar night fighter — called on Charlie. One night we hard gunfire and saw a flaming red ball. Washing Machine Charlie was forever silent.

West bitterly remembers one death at Morobe. One day, some 163 Inf men were swimming in the darkened brackish water near the river mouth. We had a guard for sharks. Suddenly, soundlessly, a man disappeared under the dark water. He had stood just 10 feet from three buddies. A crocodile must have dragged him down to cold, black, agonized death.

By 4 Apr., 162 Inf was mostly based at Morobe, except for detachments back down the coast to Gona, to mop up Jap stragglers. A short way up Morobe River, PT crews had a base to refit their little boats to harass and sink Jap barges. Our 162 Inf’s main task, however, was preparation for Salamaua.

But not until some nine months later did E Co. 162 Inf go into battle for our Division. We were not in 162’s beachhead at Nassau Bay, but we reinforced our 3/Bn whom strong Jap forces had held from capturing Roosevelt Ridge — 3,000 feet of jungle mountain running in from Tambu Bay. On 27 July, 3 162 positioned for our fight to storm Roosevelt Ridge, and on 28 July BARman West was in the attack force. Having outshot the whole 2/Bn, West was assigned the heavy BAR which he could never permanently exchange for an M-1.

His climb to combat on the ridge-crest was heartbreaking. He had to literally crawl up a 60-degree slope hand to hand from one brush clump to another. His BAR weighed 22 pounds, and 22 steel clips weighed almost as much. He wore a 40-pound combat pack with at least four grenades in it.

In the area where “E” fought, the slope was less than 20
degrees, with visibility into the jungle less than 100 feet. As his BAR opened up, he worried about hitting F 162 men in the jungle who might have already taken the ground before him. Yet he had to spray the leafy tangle to cover E Co men, and hope not to hit any Yanks.

Here he expended all of his BAR clips against unseen Japs, and called for more. No BAR clips came, and he refilled his clips with MG cartridges. Every fourth was a tracer. These tracers may have caused him his painful wound.

West continued his fight for Roosevelt Ridge. Again he sprayed the jungle — his gun now so hot that he lightly burned his left hand on the barrel.

West went great now in the magic of combat when a man's own life seems not to matter. He could not hear any other fire over the blasts of his BAR, and his MG bullets seemed to have halted Jap fire completely. West never stopped to think that even if he couldn't see where his tracers were hitting — that the Japs could see where they were coming from.

Then two Jap bullets found West. One really played havoc. The BAR was shot out of his right hand. A bullet hit his partly loaded BAR clip and blew it up while it was only partly fired.

The explosion smashed the knuckle above his right first finger. It stripped 90 percent of the flesh from the other side of the middle finger. Only a couple of strips of the clip remained in the BAR breach. His hand was permanently blackened from powder burns. Small fragments of cartridge casings and clips — dozens of splinters — dug into his right hand and shoulder and chest still to be removed by doctors years later.

He also had a hole the size of a half-dollar in his right cheek. The Medic — West remembers his name as Williams — said, "You're sure lucky. It missed your jugular vein by less than an inch."

Most important first aid that Medic Williams gave West was for the middle finger with its 90 percent of the skin loose and dangling. Probably Williams wrapped the loose skin back with a bandage over a tongue depressant. "I can save that skin for you," he said. "Don't let anybody unwrap it." Despite the offensive odor, West kept the bandage on and saved 90 percent of the skin with but a little scar tissue. He still has a sharp pain when he touches hard surfaces, but the finger has served him well over 40 years.

Leaving Roosevelt Ridge forever on his first day there, West noticed one wounded man with a chunk quarter-size on his bare rear. A mortar fragment had hit that part of his body which a training Sgt had told West is hardest to keep down.

Wounded West found his descent down Roosevelt Ridge easier than the climb, even if he now had just one good hand to grasp the roots of the almost sheer slope. He descended mostly on the seat of his pants.

On that 28 July 1943, he left Tamba Bay by PT boat. He lay forward on the bouncing deck, which bounced like all PT boats even in calm water. After a week in Dobodura Hospital, he was flown over the Owen Stanley Mountains first to Port Moresby, and then to Townsville, Australia.

Again hospitalized at Townsville, West had his purple heart pinned on his pajamas by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Behind among the beds strode two generals, one wearing three stars. As a civilian years later, West still needed outpatient treatment from a doctor. Three times, he had to have sharp quarter-inch squares of brass from the exploded clip extracted from deep in his right hand.

Rejoining E 162 regrouped at Rockhampton after Salamaua, West got a six-day Melbourne leave — all the leave he ever had in four years of military service.

Landing on 22 Apr. 1944 with 162 Inf at Hollandia, West again saw action — this time with a bazooka. At 0750, E 162 led our 2/Bn from the west shore of Jautefa Bay to cut the track from Pim Village on the coast to Hollandia.

Across a narrow mangrove beach covered with Jap supplies, we entered a wide mangrove swamp, not shown on the sand table we had seen earlier. We had to walk on slippery mangrove roots above the mud — hardly 100 yards in an hour. West fell on his bazooka and bent it on a root. But with others' help, he managed to straighten it out between two trees.

Above us on the Pim-Hollandia Track, we saw a Jap HMG firing down the track from a shelf 10 feet above it. Cliffs behind and over the shelf protected the gun-crew. The crew never saw E 162, for they had never expected us to come in from the swamp upon their flank. We were well concealed on a slope 50 feet below.

West loaded a bazooka round and killed the HMG. This was the major act of his war at Hollandia.

When E 162 landed on Biak, West had regained his BAR to use it well. On 27 May 1944, shortly after 0900 hours, West with "E" landed dry at Boxnek Jetty and scouted towards Parai Defile. "E" was securing the inland flank of 3/Bn pushing westward down the beach towards Mokmer Strip.

After patrolling about 500 yards to his left along the ridge above the jetty, West still saw only white cliffs ahead. Then he was recalled. For so far, marching 3/Bn had seen no Japs and thought that they needed no protection.

While falling back, West suddenly heard a noise and rose up to look over a bush. A Jap was up also and preparing to shoot West with an automatic weapon. This Jap "BAR" had a long curved top cartridge clip, unlike West's BAR with the clip under the gun.

Instantly West fired first — squeezed his trigger to loose six shots a second. First bullet hit the Jap near the left shoulder. Other bullets then cut a strip across his body to the right ear. West felt hot blood on his own hands and face. He had beheaded the Jap, and the wind had blown the blood on West.

Slipping around the bush, West saw four Japs including the beheaded man lying with their backs up, like playing possum. The living three lay face down in a six-foot pocket.

(continued on page 20)
"ROCKY"
Fifty years later

In June 1942, some 14,000 men of the 41st Infantry Division prepared to move to Northern Queensland, specifically, Rockhampton. This was for further training and to get acclimated to the hot humid weather of New Guinea. Who can forget the trains we traveled on and the necessity of loading and unloading because of the changes of track gauge at the Victoria-New South Wales border and the New South Wales-Queensland border.

What a problem we created for a small city that was just barely larger in population than the division. We strained the goodness and the largess of this wonderful area to keep us entertained, quench our tremendous thirst and satisfy our enormous hunger. Dear old Rocky met the challenge. In fact, it outdid itself. The men of this division would always remember the area of Rockhampton-Yeppoon-Emu Park and the Shires.

In late 1942, elements of the Division left Rocky for New Guinea. In 1943 the Japanese were stopped in Papua, New Guinea, by the 41st, the 7th and 9th Australian Divisions and the 32nd U.S. Division, eliminating the danger of a Japanese invasion of Australia. The Division returned to Rocky in 1943. The Jungleers were greeted as its family. The welcoming could not have been any greater than this type of homecoming back home. Friendships were renewed, love affairs led to the altar of marriage for many of our men with the beautiful Australian girls. The 542nd Engineers built a chapel for the 41st Division. It was named Saint Christopher's Chapel. There were Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and non-denominational services held in this chapel for the 41sters. The Division again resumed its training, concentrating on beachhead landings.

In early 1944, the 41sters left Rockhampton and Australia for the last time. Up through New Guinea and on to the Philippines. The war ended in 1945. The Division was then assigned to Hiroshima and Nagasaki for Occupation Duty. In December 1945, the entire Division was shipped home to the U.S. Throughout all these experiences, the Jungleers never forgot Rockhampton-Yeppoon-Emu Park and its wonderful citizens. A vow was made that someday the 41sters would revisit their "cobbers" of Rockhampton.

The first group in the 41st Association returned in 1970 with 70 men and their wives. Rocky was once again the gracious host. In 1984, a group of 162 men and wives visited all of Eastern Australia and New Zealand, with the last stop in Rockhampton. This was the 40th Anniversary of the Division leaving Australia for the last time in World War II. This was a tremendous reunion with our cobbers. Again Rockhampton shone as the brightest star of hospitality. It was not the last time that the magic of Australia called the Jungleers back.

Alex Friedt of the 163rd Infantry called to say that many of the men who had served in that regiment wanted to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Division's first arrival in Rockhampton. A letter was sent out, inviting all members of

(continued on page 5)
Dear Hargis:

Received your letter of November 25th, including the Journal Extracts (Zambo, Central Mindanao) Casualty List. Sorry for the delay; I've been reaching back in my memories for answers to your questions; am still quite hazy on some events, but I will do my best.

On our assault on Biak, May 27, Mine Platoon -162- was attached to 3rd Battalion-162, and we landed in the area of Bosnek. One battalion of 186 had gone in ahead of us to secure the beach head. 3rd Btn mission was to drive west to Mokmer airdrome. It's rifle companies led the march. There was a usable dirt road going west, and the one thing I have always remembered about that was the stream of human excrement in the dust of the road. I guess that when the Navy started their bombardment of the beach, the sick Japanese were evacuated from the hospital and marched along that road before our landing. Looked like they defecated as they walked-it was like following a herd of cows that had scours.

On our march to Mokmer we were carrying our mine detecting equipment, but were never called forward to use it. To my knowledge there were no mines encountered on Biak. Our old WWII mine detectors were similar to the treasure hunting type one sees advertised today, except they were much more bulky. The sweep disc was about 12 inches in diameter, with a five foot handle; had quite a heavy back pack with batteries, etc. They would detect anything that would conduct electricity. They gave off an audio tone through ear-phones as well as a dial reading on a guage on the handle. We had quite a lot of training practice with them, but never used them under combat conditions. I don't know if 163 or 186 mine platoons were ever used as such.

Our drive to Mokmer was held up for sometime while the lead companies were trying to get through the Parai Defile. After the resistance was broken we went through the defile and took up positions for the night about a mile beyond the defile. We had a quiet night. One Jap recon. patrol came through our positions and one of them was killed. By the next morning we all thought the Biak campaign was going to be a "piece of cake."

May 28th we continued our advance down the road toward Mokmer. After-perhaps-a half mile, the road went up a steep pitch over a coral bench. It looked like the Japs had recently been doing some bull-dozer work on it. Up to this point we had the high coral ridge on one side and the ocean on the other; now the area became more open-the ridges were still there-but farther away, giving us the feeling of having more room to maneuver in. It was a good feeling to have more open ground, but our good feelings were short lived because we hadn't advanced more than a couple of hundred yards further when we began to receive very heavy machine gun and artillery fire. It was immediately apparent that we were in serious trouble, because there was very little cover, just a minimum of low growing scrub.

We knew their observation of us was good because they were lobbing artillery shells right in the middle of concentrations of our men.
About all we could do to protect ourselves was disperse and take whatever cover could be found. Word was passed that a Jap. force had cut us off back in the Mokmer village area. The bombardment went on for—perhaps—two hours. Some of the bursts had a very different sound to that of the normal mortar and howitzer bursts. I supposed that they were using anti-aircraft guns and firing them at us point blank from the coral ridges above the road. This did not help the situation much. The feeling among us was one of panic, because communication lines had been cut, and we couldn't group up to receive reliable orders from our commanders. Word was passed that one of the battalion officers had said,"Every man for himself." Whether this was true or not it only added to our sense of despair.

Fortunately Col. Haney, 162 Regiment commander was with us and could see that our position was untenable and gave the order to withdraw. We had four Sherman tanks and they led the retreat column. The narrow beach under the cliff by the ocean, gave good cover, so the wounded and equipment was lowered down and evacuated by LVT.

Colonel Haney was in one of the tanks as we began the retreat, & nearing the blockade set up by the enemy we could hear the familiar R-I-P/R-I-P of the Jap machine guns. The tanks went through with their guns blazing at the coral cliffs, but their fire had no apparent effect on the Jap M.G.'s. We foot soldiers ran the fire lanes a few at a time. As I was waiting for a chance to make my run through, a Jap sniper found me in his sights. When his first bullet zipped by me I dived behind a downed log. The bullets were coming in so close that I could see smoke or steam coming out of the log where they penetrated it close to my face. I think he must have been using dum-dums, as the crack of the bullets impact was so loud I had no chance of picking up the muzzle blast from which I could have detected his position. I did a craw-dad over a little coral ledge and headed through the Jap M.G. fire lanes. I ran until I came to Foley who was down with a bullet through the thigh. He was being attended by a couple of G.I's. We moved him to safer ground where the medics could take care of him.

After breaking through the blockade everything was quiet again and we established defences for the night. That night and the following early morning was uneventful. Then about 800-900 hours a strong force of several hundred Jap foot soldiers and-perhaps—ten-twelve tanks began attacking from the area of Mokmer Drome. Mine Platoon was positioned near the road so we saw our Sherman tanks rumble out to meet the enemy. They made contact about 100 yards past our position. They caught the Jap tanks (in single file) on a steep pitch of the road that climbed down the coral bench. The terrain was such that only one of our tanks at a time was able to get into firing position. When the firing started the projectiles from the Jap tanks whizzed just over our position. The Japs were armed with 37mm's and they couldn't even put a dent in our tough skinned Shermans. However, one did get a projectile wedged in the gun turret of one of our tanks, locking it in position, and rendering it useless. I think it was "Murder Inc." He wheeled out so that the next tank in line could take over.

When the U.S tanks started firing they used armor piercing shells, which are normally used against tanks. But they punched neat little holes and went right on through the flimsy Japanese tanks, and didn't give the necessary "kill" effect necessary to our success. The crews of the Shermans switched to high explosive personnel shells. They quickly proved to be the very thing for this situation. They pierced the first wall and exploded inside. One hit-one dead tank. The gunner of the first U.S. tank very alertly, knocked out the rear tank in the Japanese column and those in front of it were trapped and became clay pigeons for our tank gunners. I know of five Jap tank kills in that battle. There may have been more, but I am sure of five.
3.

Fortunately for Mine Platoon, the Jap tank assault was unsuccessful, otherwise the tanks and troops would have come right through our position. As it was when they lost their tank escort they tried a flanking movement and other units of 3rd Battalion took the brunt of their attack. U.S. losses were heavy, but Jap losses were much heavier.

It was during this battle that the Navy, trying to give us support, put a six inch shell into our perimeter. Claude Johnson was one of our men wounded as a result of this effort to help. I heard that the Navy's own fire control officer was killed by that shell.

About this time it was apparently decided that the result of trying to hold this ground would be too costly- with the Japs holding securely to the high ground above us, so 3rd Btn. retreated to the Mandon area, and Mine Platoon rejoined A.T. Company, and went immediately into the Ibdi ridges which your 41st Division History #81, and my first letter covers pretty completely.

While the 3rd Battalion was fighting the Mokmer-Parai Battle, Cannon Company, A.T. 162, was holding ground on the beach corridor. I don't know just where; probably somewhere between Ibdi and Parai Defile. Anyway their position was charged by 100+ Jap combat team-yelling like Banshees. Cannon Company, must have had a pretty good position, because they killed the Jap force right down to the last man. Whoever told me this story, (and I can't remember who) said that the last man came in all alone, still trying to over-run the position, just as steady as the first men leading the attack...kept on coming right up until he was killed. I am sure this would make a good story if you could get a first-hand account of it. You might try Sydney Hermansen. He is active in the Northern California Chapter, and I know he was in Cannon Company.

(Another man who may be able to give a different aspect of the Ibdi Ridges Battles, is Blaine Kessler. He called me from W.Verginia just before Christmas and we got so excited talking about those times that I forgot to get his address. But he gets the Jungleer, so they would have his address. Could be another good contact for you.)

I think the reason Anti-Tank Company isn't mentioned in the Zambo Journal Extracts after March 17, is that we were put into security for Regimental H.Q. I can't speak for all of Anti-Tank units, but I know Mine Platoon had the mission of holding strategic ground around, and leading to, Regimental. I guess the thinking was to stop enemy forces that might try to come in and occupy ground behind our front line. There were many renegade bands of Japs at that time, and our front wasn't all that air-tight.

As I looked over the Zambo Casualty List I saw the name of S/Sgt. Joe Gunia, LWA-29-Mar-4 and it brought to mind the happening.

All during Zambo, and there after I was Platoon Sgt. of Mine Platoon. I had always taken the responsibility for booby-trapping the outside of our perimeter for night time security, but I would usually have one or two men help me so they could become accustomed to the procedure. In the beginning booby-trapping was simply tying a grenade to a tree or a stump and attaching a trip wire to the pin. It was a good warning device but it's three second fuse left a lot to be desired as a kill weapon.

But the time we got to Zambo we had instantaneous detonators. These devices were threaded and would replace the fuse detonators in a grenade, or screw into other types of personnel mines.
On this particular evening we were on a ridge in the Zambo area. I can't remember which one, or where. I was in so many positions and with so many different groups of men, my memory fails me. It tends to roll into one conglomerate. Anyway it was a spooky place; dark heavy rain forest. Our perimeter was to cover a much used trail that ran down the ridge. I had Joe Gunia helping me set the booby traps that evening. We were setting grenades with instantaneous detonators about fifty feet in front of our perimeters of fox holes. We had one personnel mine. It was a block of cast iron about six inches by six inches by ten inches full of T.N.T.; we called it "big bertha". I always put it in the most threatened spot because it was the only sure kill device we had.

This time I put it up on a bank five or six feet from the trail about waist high. Instantaneous fuse and trip across the trail. I still remember Joe and I commenting as we set it out that anyone that hit that trip wire would be evaporated.

It was dusk when we finished the circuit and got back to our foxhole. Word came over the field phone alerting us to the fact that a combat patrol was still out, and might use the trail, so we were to go out and disarm our booby traps. I told Joe to disarm "big bertha" and I would get the ones at the lower end of the trail. No sooner than I had made the trail safe for passing than a thunderous boom rock the ridge and echoed up and down the valley. "Damn! Joe is dead!" was my first thought. I knew it was "big bertha" and I knew Joe had hit the trip wire. Reluctantly I started up the trail berating myself for not having reversed the disarming procedure. I was in no hurry. I could see no need to hurry. I really wanted to postpone what I was going to find for as long as possible. By the time I got through the perimeter I met two Mine Platoon men escorting Joe back in. He did hit the trip wire that exploded the mine. He appeared somewhat disoriented from the concussion but soon recovered. His only wound was a small piece of shrapnel in his little finger. I just couldn't believe it! I wouldn't have put a man's chances at a million to one or maybe ten million to one..............you name your own odds.

When I was drafted into the army in 1942 two brothers and myself had a honey bee operation in California. While I was overseas the bee business did quite for my brothers due to the shortage of sugar. They became interested in, and bought an unstocked cattle ranch in eastern Oregon. When I returned home in October of 1945 I found that my brothers were caught between ranching in Oregon and running bees in California, so we decided to move the bees to Oregon. Too late we found the winters were too cold and the seasons too short for a successful honey bee operation. We stocked the ranch during the Truman administration and selling the stock during the Eisenhower administration, the financial facts didn't pan out. We tried dairying, growing our own wheat and oats and clover hay, which worked out better but the profit was insufficient for three families, so my elder brother, and I (the youngest, left the operation to seek employment elsewhere. Some logging, and in 1955 we came over the mountains to Southern Oregon. After a couple of years odd-jobbing and digging in, I found a job with the Josephine (C Road Department, in the Engineering department, surveying, and have worked there since then.

My wife, Lette, is an Australian girl. I met her on my first leave in Melbourne. We applied for permission to marry when I was back in Australia after the fi

Guinea campaign, but by the time permission was granted I was back island hoppin. It was April, 1947 before she finally made it to the States, and we were married.
We call our home here in Grants Pass, "Westralia" because Lette likens it to Australia in the West. We try to grow things that are reminders of her childhood bush, parks & gardens. We have even found one variety of eucalyptus that is hardy here. We have 12 acres; most of it dry land in the summer, but we keep about 2 acres verdant. We both love to garden, and truly enjoy our pets, 4 little dogs and a cat, and lately two goats and a sheep. (The latter for Lette). I raise about half an acre garden-full of produce, growing most of our essentials, including potatoes and dry beans. We do a lot of home canning and freezing and this year started drying some food-stuff as well. We supply not only ourselves, but our three daughters and their families, as well as numerous friends and work-mates. This is a very sharing part of the nation.

Well Hargis, I will close for this time, hoping that this has answered some of your questions, and with sincere wishes for a Happy New Year,

Sincerely,

p.s. Hargis, I see as I glance back over your list of questions that you asked about our house. It is a large, rambling hand crafted old farmhouse, that we have been remodeling for ten years. There was a large old barn on the South acreage at the Eastern Oregon ranch that Lette and I had planned to convert to a house when things got better. Well, things never did get better, and as already stated we had to leave, but! we always remembered that marvelous old barn with it's hand adzed beams, and square nails and wooden pegs and dove tailed joints etc, and thats what we have tried to include in the home here. We love it, our girls and grand children love it, and animals, both domestic and wild flourish here. It is not a grand, or palatial house, but a warm and sturdy home, with many rooms and beds, and places in it that could yet mean more rooms and beds. Lette has a thing about being able to pull our loved ones and those in need close in a time of trouble, and so turns every corner or closet or shelf into another place to sleep. The whole family tease her about this. We heat with wood and do a lot of cooking on the Frontier heater; there's always beans, or soup, or stew going on the back of the heater top. That's the way Lette remembers her grandparents farm on the island of Tasmania, where she and her sister were raised.

We grow our own broom corn for home broom making...hearth brooms with turned handles are a specialty for gifts. Lette has made our own soap for several years now. Our desire is to be as independent as possible, and if we can grow it, or make it, then we do not buy it. Not necessarily because we cannot afford it (although that is fast becoming a fact to be considered also) but because we like to know how, and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing we can do it ourselves. There are still many things we want to do, and we hope we will live long enough to do them all. We both read a great deal, and have an extensive library, heavy on the historical, archeological, geological, anthropological, with a minor in biographical and good fiction. My favorite people are John Burrows, English Naturalist; John Muir, and Richard Leaky. Lette's are Thomas Jefferson Eleanor Roosevelt, Brigham Young. I could ramble on for hours, but this should give you a pretty good picture of us and our life-style. Tell us about you when you write. You must be a rather exceptional person to devote so much time and effort to the 41st Division.
AMMUNITION AND PIONEER PLATOON

By Tec/Sgt Norman F. Mathews

(The notes and recollections about the history and activities of the A&P Platoon - Hq Company - 2nd BN - 163 Inf. Regiment, 41st Infantry Division.)

The platoon was comprised of a Platoon Leader, Platoon Sergeant, three Squad Sergeants, three Squad Corporals, and six privates in each squad for a total of 25 enlisted men and one commissioned officer.

The following men made up most of the original platoon through the Sanananda, Biak, and/or Southern Philippine campaigns:

Lt. Harlan Milder (K/A Zamboanga)
Tec/Sgt. "Tex" Scourbrough
Sgt. "Tiny" Sironen
Sgt. Everett Klumby
Sgt. Glen Picard
Corp. Laurie Sarella (later Sgt.)
Corp. Laddie Holy (later Sgt.)

PFC Frenchy Bourgon (I/A)
PFC Norman Mathews (later Tec/Sgt.)
PFC Richard Miller
PFC Tony Makjavich
PFC Julie Feld (later Sgt.)
PFC Francis Riggs (later Tec/Sgt.)
PFC Julius Lentz (WIA)
PFC William Crocker (later Sgt.)
PFC Phil Gassmen
PFC Joseph Paradeso (K/A - Zamboanga)
PFC Charles Manuel (later Sgt.)
PFC Gordon Wilson
PFC William Finally (later Sgt.)
PFC Melvin Kenney
PFC Eugene McDowell (later Sgt.)
PFC Harold Marienhoff (later Sgt.)
PFC Ernest Crook

Platoon Duties and Responsibilities:

1. To maintain battalion ammunition depot and disperse same where needed.
2. To construct and maintain battalion headquarter buildings (including officers quarters).
3. To construct bridges, foot or vehicle, or other structures where needed for the advancement of the battalion.
4. To destroy (demolition) any fortifications or buildings seized by U.S. forces that might be of value to the enemy.
5. Maintain battalion flame throwers and assist in their use where needed.
6. Assist in the defense of the battalion perimeter, place and recover all perimeter defensive mines and booby traps.
7. Assist in the removal of any obstructions, mines, or other physical objects hindering the advance of the battalion.
8. Participate in combat and reconnaissance patrols when needed, assist in the removal of wounded personnel.

FIRST ACTION - AITAPE - APRIL 22, 1944

Like many of the new replacements that joined the Regiment in Rockhampton, I was to see my first action in the Aitape campaign. The pre-dawn naval and air bombardment, over the side and down the landing nets into the landing barges, the gut-fear feeling as the craft sped toward the beach and the unknown beyond. The plunge into the sea when the ramp went down, and the eternal run to reach the comparative safety of the beach.

Sounds of scattered firing ahead, all to soon the frightening sight and
shock of a dead soldier, be it friend or foe. Confusion among the troops, as scouts are unable to locate given landmarks leading to the airstrip, and the realization that the landing has been made at the wrong place.

Finally day's end and the advance is halted for the night. A cold K or C ration dinner, foxholes dug, and men crouched in the dark, damp earth. Apprehensive of the silence, yet startled by any slight sound. This was the war we were to encounter for the next day, week, month, year.

TOEM - WAKDE

Second Battalion - 163 Infantry was dug in along the west bank of Tementol Creek, as the battle for Wakde Island raged off shore. Headquarters Company was assigned a section of the perimeter to defend facing thick jungle to the south. Knowing that strong Jap forces were in the area, and having received some Jap mortar fire, A&P Platoon dug in deep and continued to fortify its positions daily.

Early in the fight for Wakde, the order came for A&P Platoon to make ready our four flame throwers for use on Wakde. Japs hiding in caves on the east end of the island were difficult to route out, and flame throwers seemed to be the answer. Quickly A&P men pitched in, the weapons and fuel were made ready, and four operators were assigned, myself included. Then moments before the barge was ready to leave for Wakde, word was received that the operators were not needed, and to send the flame throwers only. Thus we were spared a dangerous assignment on a hard fought battleground.

While 2nd Battalion held the Tementol Creek perimeter, Jap patrols were continually probing at the perimeter defenses, and attempting to cross the mouth of Tementol Creek where it spilled into the sea. Usually these patrols were spotted in time, and either turned back or annihilated.

But one dark night, a small patrol consisting of one officer and seven
enlisted men, did manage to cross the river undetected, and occupied a position to the rear of the battalion defenses. When this trouble spot was detected the following day, the rifle companies were busy with patrols east of the Tementol, so the order came out to Headquarters Company for a combat patrol. Lt. Milder received the call and assembled the A&P Platoon immediately. As we had no automatic weapons, BAR man Barnes was sent to us from G Company to reinforce the patrol.

Not knowing the exact position of the enemy forces, the patrol moved out cautiously led by Milder, Scourbrough and Barnes. After traveling a distance toward the ocean, the patrol entered a relatively open area, when the air was split with Jap automatic and rifle fire. BAR man Barnes fell instantly killed by a bullet to the head, while the rest of the patrol was pinned to the ground.

The Japanese force was firing from a partially destroyed fortification, and opened fire on the patrol as the first four or five men entered the clearing. Had they waited until the entire patrol was exposed, there is no doubt many more Americans would have been killed or wounded.

Lt. Milder immediately ordered return fire, but no clear objectives could be seen in the area where the Japs were concealed. He then ordered the three or four men nearest to him to make a dash for a depression near the beach, about 25 yards distant.

Leading the way, Milder was quickly followed by Sgt. Scourbrough, and Privates Mathews and McDowell. Rolling into the protection of the shell hole, we found it already occupied by two dead Japs, possibly killed the night before. After resting for a few moments, Milder spotted a large log stranded in the surf, almost directly in front of the Jap position. Again leading the way, he made a mad dash for the safety of the log, followed closely by the other three.
Huddled behind the log, Milder asked if anyone had been hit, no one had. Then very carefully he raised his head to survey the situation, when a Jap bullet smacked through the top of his helmet. Finding that no damage had been done to his person, Milder ordered intense rifle fire be directed against the Jap position.

After several minutes of firing from both ends of the log, we noticed that the return fire had begun to slacken. A check revealed that we had two grenades in our possession. One was passed to each Mathews and Scourbrough at opposite ends of the log. In unison the two grenades appeared to land right on target, whereupon Milder sprang up, carbine firing and rushed forward. He was quickly followed by the rest of us, guns blazing.

Against such determined opposition, four Japs broke to run, two being gunned down immediately. A quick look into the fortification revealed four additional dead Japs. Then a mad dash was made after the two escaping Japs who were soon found hiding in a bamboo thicket and quickly dispatched.

Thus ended a brief, but intense fire fight by men of the A&P Platoon, resulting in the clearing of a Jap infiltration position, at a loss of one American soldier dead.

(NOTE: Bronze Star Medals were authorized for this action to Milder, Scourbrough, Mathews and McDowell by General Orders 13, Headquarters 163 Infantry, dated 29 August 1944, which also awarded the Combat Infantry Badge. In a special letter from the Department of the Army dated 7 May 1959, my decoration with Oak Leaf Cluster was presented to me. I do not know if the other men involved ever received their decorations, as I have had no contact with either Scourbrough or McDowell since the war.)

Sometime after the Tementol action, a suspected Jap Headquarters site was located inland about four or five miles from our perimeter on Tementol Creek. This may have come about through Lt's Milder and Leslie air
reconnaissance. A&P Platoon was ordered to form a combination combat and reconnaissance patrol, with order to find and destroy, if possible, the suspected site.

Leaving the perimeter early one morning, (we hoped to accomplish our mission and return before nightfall) the patrol moved out at a fast pace led by Lt. Milder and Sgt. Scourbrough. Following a network of trails, which showed much use by Japanese troops, we traveled several miles without incident, when we came to a rather large clearing extending on both sides of the trail. As we advanced cautiously, we soon began to see huts and buildings scattered throughout the area. At any moment we expected to receive enemy fire, but encountered no opposition. The Japs had moved out.

After making a quick reconnoissance of the site, we were convinced that this was the Jap Headquarters that we sought. Some rather elaborate structures had been constructed, quite obviously for officer use, as well as several barracks buildings for enlisted men. That the installation had been hastily and recently abandoned, was evidenced by the amount of personal and military effects scattered about.

Not wasting any time to souvenir hunt, Milder ordered all buildings torched, and as much equipment destroyed as possible. As the smoke billowed skyward, the patrol prepared to move out. We were becoming concerned now that the smoke might attract the attention of any Jap patrols still in the general area.

The return march was uneventful until we were well away from the headquarters site. Then as the patrol descended a series of switchbacks in the trail, a scout reported some activity ahead. As we looked downward, we could see that a sizeable Jap carrying party was stopped along the trail below us, enjoying a noontime meal. Constant chatter drifted upward, with no scouts or guards in evidence. Slowly we eased into position above them,
and on signal opened fire.

Just prior to this patrol, the A&P Platoon had been encouraged to turn in our Garand rifles, and be re-equipped with MI carbines. Not only did we find these weapons to be ineffective in stopping the enemy, but when fired at a rapid pace, bolt handles had a tendency to fly off. Most had been made by the Westinghouse Company. Our net kill here was a mere two Japs, although evidence showed that several more had been wounded.

After the shooting had stopped, we found large stores of rice and other foodstuffs, as well as medical supplies. After destroying as much of the food as possible, we gathered up the medical equipment and continued our march homeward. Clearly the Jap had been on their way to the Headquarters site, not knowing that it had been abandoned and destroyed. Upon arrival back at the Tementol perimeter, mission accomplished, most members of the patrol, demanded and got their trusty Garand rifles back from the supply dump.
On June 12, 1944, 2nd. Battalion-163 Infantry (commanded by Major Robert Irving) landed at Bosnek Jetty on Biak Island. While companies E,F,G and H fanned out to assigned objectives, Battalion Headquarters set up a beach perimeter on the Coastal Road. Although the landing was observed by Japanese forces in the cliffs above, enemy opposition was light, except for three Jap Zeros which came in low over Bosnek ridge. Concentrating mainly on the American shipping in the harbor, we had grandstand seats of the action, and cheered loudly when anti-aircraft fire sent the Zeros smoking into the sea.

As quick as ships were unloaded, A & P Platoon began to establish the Battalion ammunition dump. Although all Line Companies had been supplied with two days ammunition on loading, heavy fighting would require a quick replacement. A fresh water source existed close to the Battalion perimeter, which had to be guarded and made available where needed.

Soon solid resistance meet the 2nd. Battalion forces, and the call came in for additional, ammo, grenades, mortor shells, rations and water. A & P Platoon filled orders quickly, where possible, supplies were delivered by truck down the Coastal Track. For men dug in high on the Coral ridges, delivery was more difficult, and often meant backpacking up perpendicular cliffs, through dense foliage and along almost non-existing trails. Quite often, several hauls a day had to be made to the front lines, and it was not unusual for the carrying parties to be fired on by friend and foe alike. A & P men often times volunteered to carry wounded personnel back to the Battalion Aid Station. Many of the return trips were made after dark, and getting back through Battalion defensive positions was often a tricky and dangerous mission.

The Jap 75 MM Canon hid in a limstone cave above the Battalion perimeter, began to pound the beach daily. Soon nicknamed "five o'clock Charley", the gun would often open up, just about the time "chow" was being served. One such shell hit in the section of the perimeter occupied by the Anti-tank Platoon. Severly wounded was Eino Johnson, with Parrish, Beaver, Moran and McMahan receiving lighter wounds.

Corporal Reyborn, Anti-tank Platoon, requested permission to try and
silence the Jap Canon, with the platoon's three 37MM guns. The approximate location of the cave was known, and the following day when the Japs opened fire, Reybozn and his crew were ready. A salvo of high explosive shells were fired into the Jap position, and the gun was silenced forever.

As the battle for I'di Pocket raged, requests for resupply of the Line Companies began to exceed the capacity of Headquarters Company to produce. The call went out for additional manpower, and soon a platoon of colored soldiers from Port Battalion arrived to lend a hand. Thses men did excellent service in portaging supplies to the front lines, but were not keen on lingering around once the supplies were delivered.

In addition to the routine supplies, requests came in for flame throwers, bazookas and demolition explosives. Assistance was requested in the use of the explosives, and although A & P men did gallant service in trying to assist in the neutralization of the many caves in the 2nd. Battalion Sector, our efforts were of limited success.

Finally the futility of reducing I'di Pocket by small arms, rocket and mortar fire was realized by higher echelon. The Line Companies were ordered to pull back, while heavy artillery pounded the Jap defenses around the clock. Air Force assistance was also requested, and B25 bombers eventually pulverized the I'di Pocket with 1000 pound bombs.

With I'di Pocket neutralized, 2nd. Battalion was ordered to Korim Bay for patrolling purposes, and further cutting of Jap escape routes to the sea. Battalion Headquarters was established on the beach with adequate perimeter defenses. Patrols were soon operating out in all directions for periods of one to several days.

One such patrol reported the need for a small bridge at a stream crossing on one of the trails. A & P Platoon was ordered to do the job. After falling a number of large trees, logs were floated into place at the desired crossing, and a bridge was constructed capable of handling jeep travel if desired. Patrolling continued almost daily past the bridge site, with occasional Jap soldiers encountered.

It was a cold, wet morning, when Privates Miller and Mathews were ordered to accompany a Rifle Company patrol. We were instructed to carry antipersonnel mines and demolition charges, as well as our rifles and ammunition. After several miles of hiking the patrol scouts reported a Jap gun emplacement at the top of a long slope, commanding a clear view of the trail for several hundred yards. While the remainder of the patrol remained hidden, one squad of riflemen silently approached the gun position from two sides. So far no Japs had been detected. Thinking the emplacement abandoned, one rifleman peeked
over the edge, and was startled to find four Jap soldiers huddled under a piece of canvas out of the rain. A heavy 50 Caliber machine gun, still encased in a waterproof canvas, poked its ugly snout straight down the trail allignment. The Jap soldiers must have been more amazed than the Americans, when they looked upward into the barrels of several Garand rifles. Hands reached skyward and the war was over for them.

Not wanting to move the prisoners along with the patrol, and not wanting to turn back yet, the patrol leader assigned Miller and I, to stay at the gun emplacement, as guards, until the patrol returned. We were two, nervous, wide-awake soldiers for the next several hours until the patrol returned. The Lieutenant then ordered several anti-personnel mines be placed across the trail near the gun emplacement. One Jap soldier, a Sergeant, volunteered to carry the 50 caliber back to Battalion Headquarters. For some unknown reason the gun became the property of the A & P Platoon, and was placed over our perimeter defense. The Japs were placed in a make-shift barbed wire enclosure, and guarded for several days by A & P men until a Navy barge came for them.

Along about this time, it was decided that a trail block should be established at the stream crossing where we had previously constructed the bridge. It was also decided that A & P Platoon should have the honor of manning the position. A number of Japs had perviously been killed at this site, and when the platoon arrived there, the stench of rotting bodies saturated the air. As the platoon dug a defensive line, some effort was made to bury the Japs that had died there. Anti-personnel mines were place along the trail, and were quite effective in stopping several Jap stragglers. Most were in a near starvation condition, living on birds, roots, etc. After one week of duty here, Lt. Milder requested that the trail block be terminated. Request was granted, and the entire platoon was grateful to be back at the beach, for a bath, some decent chow, and a good night sleep.

As the battle for Biak came slowly to an end, 2nd. Battalion moved to the interior of the island, and established a tent camp which was to be our home for the next several months. A & P Platoon was kept busy erecting semi-permanent structures in the Headquarters area, and assisting in the blasting of latrine and garbage holes in the coral rock throughout the entire Battalion area. Men of the platoon were also sent off on detached service to Chemical Warefare Companies, to learn about the detection and disarming of Japanese land and anti-personnel mines. These weapons were expected to be used
extensively by the enemy in the upcoming Philippine campaign.

About the time that the camp construction was completed and the troops were on half-day training schedules, I had the misfortune to be felled with a ruptured appendix. As I wondered late at night through the Battalion Medical quarters seeking help, I had the good fortune to bump into Major Mark D. Holcomb, Regimental Surgeon. After a quick medical examination, he ordered me into surgery. Although the operation was a success, the consequential infection had me laid up for the next two months at Biak's General Field Hospital.
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defending the hills!

By two o'clock we heard the news and we loaded on trucks to take over our mission of guarding the approaches to Davao City. And by evening we found our battalion split into pieces with no semblance of a unit left. For K Company took over a dozen road blocks; I Company took over Flat Top Hill from B Company of the 19th Infantry; AT and Bn Hqs took over Hill 120 along the Davao River; and we in L Company found ourselves relieving A Company of the 19th Infantry on Dry Gulch Hill. To get to our hill we passed over a dozen good roads, past two airdromes, to the Davao River where we had to be ferried across. The Japs had blown up all the bridges two days before!! After a confusing maneouver we found ourselves loaded on trucks on the opposite side. Through the city we went viewing the typical ruins of all wartime cities. Though it was much larger and at one time far more modern, it now is in shattering ruins, no different from Jolo or Zamboanga. And after a nine mile trip we found ourselves turning off the main drag north of Davao, into Dry Gulch Hill, where our morale hit rock bottom. Dry Gulch Hill is about three hundred feet high, absolutely blasted to pieces with only wheel holes and barren tree snags for a setting. The sun beat down miserably hot and the stench of the forty dead Japs buried here made matters no better. And if this is a preview of what the 24th Division plans to do with our little battalion we all can see we're going to have rough days ahead. It's times like these you appreciate your own Division and own Regiment giving you orders, especially in our case. But so be
it, and here we sit on a bewildered hill, Japs on three sides of us, protecting the approaches to Davao! Our nearest friendly troops are I Company of our battalion setting also on a bare knob 1800 yards west of us! How long we remain here remains to be seen, but we do know that we will begin those extra special "aggressive patrols" tomorrow. It was no wonder A Company was so glad to see us arrive on the spot to relieve them! Though the holes and positions they handed over to us were filled with red mud, it was a consolation not to have to dig in. For chow tonight they handed us ten in one rations that we munched on uncooked. Without any ammunition for mortars, machine guns, no hand grenades, no communication equipment, we took over the worst mess I've seen yet. And with such a set up and with Japs on three sides we're definitely in for a "good night's rest!! One can well imagine how our morale is about now, and what feelings we hold for the 24th Division!!

Lt. Arnold rejoined us today as Co. C.O., but he was a little lost with the situation - especially since this was his first experience with a Rifle Company. That too added confusion to the already well mixed mess. McGee is Exec and Steege and I are hanging about carrying out confused orders.

I best close this day before I disclose my complete exasperation and try to calm myself before another day. Here's hoping it's at least a peaceful night and the Nips stay away with such a predicament. I'd like to forget this first day at Davao!
Wednesday, May 16th

After sweating out a day of reorganization of ammunition, supplies, and the like, we now are taking on the color of a combat unit - the way we should have arrived here in the first place instead of having all our fighting equipment crated! The heat and odor here on Dry Gulch are still no better and it's an ordeal just to carry on in such conditions.

Tactically the night was quiet for us (luckily!) and our "aggressive patrols" began at 7:30 a.m. It was the 3rd Platoon's mission and about all that was discovered was the lay of the ground in a radius of 500 yards about us. Towards evening though trouble popped up at one of the outposts where a Jap machine gun opened. Our mortar barrage quieted things for a while but Jap knee mortar fell in on us shortly later and we called on a large scale artillery barrage that did the trick. It certainly took us no time at all to find that we have Nips nearby about 200 yards north on highway 12. About sunset I Company also had trouble as Jap heavy artillery fell in their perimeter injuring three lads. So it is - nothing but combat again and still no aspect of a rest in store for us.

The overall picture of this sector, the second most important in the Philippine Islands shows the 24th Division fighting along the coast; the 31st pushing toward the coast and to the north, about 40 miles inland; the 40th Division up above Panacan trying to join the 31st and 40th. At present our little battalion is attached to the 19th Infantry who attacks north on highway 10 to Panacan tomorrow and Sasa
Airdrome. South of the Davao River, the 34th Infantry is pushing on Ridge 2 and 3; and the 21st Infantry, last of the 24th Division Regiments is attacking west on highway 2 toward Mintal. The 186 and 162 units of our Division are holding ground south of Daliao.

Thursday, May 17th (Happy Birthday to McGee)

Though last night was quiet again it's been a fairly active day. The 1st Platoon took the patrol today at a radius of 1000 yards around us. Though they met no trouble they found themselves within 50 yards of a lot of chattering Japs at RJ5, pulled back and bumped into a lot of dead Nips about 500 yards north of us. They returned shortly after noon with little more to relate here. Meanwhile I Company withheld and held ground against a Jap attack in mid afternoon who attempted to "bonzai" their position.

The bridge across the Davao River was finally completed this morning allowing all our bn. equipment to come across. Bn. HQS. moved into a fine building in town; our kitchens also set up in town; and due to a piece of luck a few from each company can be relieved and go to town for a day of rest and
cleaning up. The latter began today, so I had a chance to get to Davao myself this afternoon. I did little but survey ruins of many beautiful buildings; I also took a gander at some of the markets, shops, and barber shops that are beginning to flourish again. Many natives were roaming the streets, dressed and acting quite civilly compared to other places I've been. Men dressed in white with straw hats; women in flowery dresses with lipstick and rouge. And yet there was lacking the air of friendliness we found in Leyte, Jolo and Zamboanga; and it was obvious too how Davao is known as "Little Tokyo" with its pro-Jap feeling. I ate chow at the kitchen where others who were off for the day were congregated talking of the dry shave the barbers gave; the tuba they found; ... I shave, showered, and in clean clothes I returned to Dry Gulch where it took only a few minutes to find myself back in the groove again.

It was just after I got back on the hill trouble brewed again. I've heard and read a lot of the Jap rockets but not until this evening had I seen or experienced them. The first one came from behind a ridge about 1800 yards northwest of us, and against the gray clouds, the rocket was clearly visible with its stream of red flame and black smoke. You can follow the entire path of the rocket with your eyes for its flight is that slow. The first one came gliding at us and at first you can't figure out whether you should dive for your
hole and hope or wait till its nearly ready to land and run the opposite direction. Most of us chose our hole and as the first one lit about 200 yards beyond us, it shook us and set the brush afire. That terrifying and helpless feeling came over us all as three more came at us, each one coming closer until the last lit only fifty yards away, rocking our entire hill. Mixed in were Nip mortar rounds that felt and sounded like a mere pebble and worried us little compared to the damn rockets. The rocket itself is like a piece of dynamite packed in a container about three feet long and a foot and a half diameter. It has fins that fall during its flight after it leaves the runway where it is fired electrically.

Things are quiet again this evening but believe me we're all in a sweat over this rocket business wondering if they'll continue to fire them and if so if they'll come any closer. There's little else to say here, except my change in duties. Arnold is now at the hospital so McGee is C.O. making me the Exec. And with Steege ill, Mac and I who were shavetails only a month ago are having our hands full running the company. It's rather rough with only two officers present for duty, but things are settling down within the company in a day or two all should be smooth.

I'm about ready to crawl in my hole again for a peaceful night, I hope. My hole these days is a former Jap bomb shelter with palm logs overhead, a rather secure spot. The only trouble is the rats keep you awake all night running all over the place squeaking and rustling. Last night I awoke and found
one sitting on my knee! But enough rambling for this day...

Friday, May 18th

Nothing new on the hill - the common fact of Japs around was further proved today by the second platoon's patrol. They too scouted the Race Track and RJS and found little but rice bowls, Jap boots, and other equipment. It wasn't till they were on their way in they really contacted Japs. It seems that one of our lead scouts bumped into a Jap outpost from the rear; one Jap turned around and thinking it was his relief started chatting to our scout. It was a minute before the dawning came; there was an exchange of shots and then our patrol made its way in, leaving both the Japs and our patrol amazed!

A few more of the boys got to sight see Davao today but other than that most of us stood another day of nervous tension and a hot sun, with nothing but barren and discolored ground to look at. The 19th Infantry meanwhile launched its full scale attack northeast along highway 10 and there were streams of men, tanks, and vehicles passing down the road to our rear. Though they moved okay, Panacan, their objective is a good way off.

Meanwhile we've begun to wonder how long our stay on Dry Gulch will be; where we'll go from here and for why. All in all, why can't we be laying on our a--- with our 1st and 2nd Bn. at Jolo or Zamboanga!!
Saturday, May 19th

Day No. 5 at Davao and on Dry Gulch, both a pain, but regardless of our feeling, the 3rd platoon took off on patrol again and routinely speaking they ran into Japs with a machine gun and other late traces of Jap activity. En. has now "confirmed" that "we must be right" on our reporting of Japs in the area! It seems that 19th Inf. has issued an intelligence bulletin stating how there are 200 Japs at RJ 5, dug in, in tunnels; they have heavy mortars, machine guns, knee mortars, rockets, and light artillery. We could have told them that four days ago! It was nothing startling or new to us as we continued to sweat out the rest of the day with a few more Jap knee mortars bouncing near us.

Sunday, May 20th

Tonight the scene and setting have changed for this day after a quick switch in plans finds us about ready to park down
assembled there ready to enjoy the opportunity. I quickly found myself a bed on the concrete floor and believe me it looked almost like a feather bed after these past twenty days or more. Though we had to have a guard tonight, it would be easy and much lighter on the men too.

So it is again – what a difference a day made, and with tomorrow there'll be more changes for we will then be attached to the 21st Inf. and we move to the Libby Air Strip for the first move. 

There were church services tonight after we all arrived here and the strangeness and the beauty were once again here as the boys sang hymns there on the driveway to this old garage and with the sun setting again in a heavy bank of clouds, it looks like rain tonight, but with a roof overhead it can only lull me into some relaxing dreams!

Monday, May 21st

Nine times out of ten its true. We either land up high on some old hill or way down low in the damndest wilderness. What we thought sounded like a good deal of moving to an air strip turned out to be a nightmare for we now sit in a briary, swampy coconant grove filled with Jap trenches now covered by thicket.

At any rate it was early this morning we started on our way as Phase II of the Davao sector is going into swing for us. On trucks we went through town on highway 10, passed over the new Davao River bridge, past Matina Air Drome, over the Matina and Taloma Rivers, turned west on highway 1 and 3 till
we arrived at our destination about 800 yards west of Libby Willage on highway 3. The usual war town earth and trees were on all sides of us as we came.

And after an afternoon of digging in and cleaning out briars here we sit awaiting our next move. The 21st Infantry who we are now supporting have two battalions of Mintal and one at RJ2 and for the past three days, have been trying to establish a bridgehead across the Taloma River but so far have made no progress. The overall picture is for the 21st to drive to the highground at Hill 250 and at the same time the 34th to drive up Ridges 2 and 3 for the same objective and in that way corner about 4,000 Japs. What part our Bn. plays in the picture remains to be seen. There's no further news as far as we're concerned.

The cigarette and mail situations are becoming worse as each day goes by - The only consolation is this campaign cannot last forever but in the meantime I rather guess we will be suffering.

Mt. Apo and others are now at our sides, beautiful with their snow caps and picturesque slopes, ugly with the thought of someday climbing and fighting for them. Other than that the scenery is usual, cocoanut and bananathickets mixed with briar bushes and cogan grass. And though its hard to picture beauty these day, it's there if only there were moments to relax and enjoy them. For now the mosquitoes are taking over where the flies left off which without fail means it's nearly time to
crawl in. But full moon is approaching and somehow I've learned to keep track of that and look forward to moonlit nights for I always feel a little more at ease with moonlight about, plus it makes a nice setting to remember and reminisce.

Tuesday, May 22nd

After a hectic night of the guerillas fighting their way just 800 yards from us, we awoke, crawled from our holes, wondering how many Japs they killed, for they had us pinned down most of the night. But as usual the answer was zero.

There was little of interest that happened during the day, though for a while we were all wondering how long it would take for the 21st C.O. to say "3rd Bn. you'll spearhead our attack!" In the end what happened was a surprise, for I Company was given the mission of guarding the artillery and the hospital - what most of us dream will happen to dear old L Company, but never see the reality. The rest of our Bn. still sits in tack here at Libby except for one platoon of K Company who are out on a road guard. The 21st meanwhile has finally gotten across the Toloma River and have a bridge-head of four platoons, which was good news for us. And that's about all the tactical news.

Most of us spent the day reading, writing, and chewing the fat, with card games taking shape for the first time in over a month. G.I. talk these days deals primarily with the cigarette and mail shortage. And though its critical, its humorous to see the boys smoking cigarettes on tooth picks or rolling grass.
But the major topic for bull sessions is the possible curtailment of "rotation" and the development of the point system for discharges. Since I'm far from eligible for either I mostly listen downhearted and discouraged - to think I still have 22 to 25 months over here regardless of either set up. But naturally I sympathize with the 30 to 40 overseas months days, for they surely should be given a break.

My knack for descriptions is definitely lacking with such a sad situation confronting our lost battalion and I'm afraid for reading material these notations are rapidly becoming boring, so best I close with immediate hopes for a change in the weather (which is miserably hot then rainy); an issue of cigarettes; some mail; back to garrison life; or more than all that, a going home trip!

Wednesday, May 23rd

What started out to be a peaceful settled day here in our Libby bivouac turned out to be another of those hectic last minute moves. For we spent all day quite comfortably and peacefully till 4 o'clock when an abrupt order came through from the 21st Hdqs. that our company would move to Mintal for the night. So here at another sundown we sit in a delapidated and rubbled village where we form a guard for the 21st Infantry Hdqs., also situated here in Mintal!

But only overnight and that tomorrow we move across the Taloma River.

While we dug in tonight Jap mortar and artillery in heavy barrages fell all about us but fortunately there were no
JAPs INFILTRATE BLEW BRIDGE!

The front line is just ahead of us now and that's not hard to tell with so much firing going on on all sides.

But once again it's as quiet an eventide as can be expected and it's now with anxiety and restlessness for the coming days that I end this one, our 8th at Davao.

Thursday, May 24th

Any day of movement is always a day of excitement and it certainly began early this day, for at 12:30 a.m. last night the fireworks began. It began when our nightly perimeter about the 21st Inf. Hq's. suddenly came to life. It started in the part our company occupied when a barrage of grenades were thrown loose at what we soon learned were a group of Japs trying to infiltrate into our perimeter and knock out our mortar positions. Thus the rest of the night passed; fire then a grenade, till by morning our nerves were nearly at an end. Dawn found things quiet again – the Japs had failed, and neither they nor we had casualties. Just a gentle scrap!!

Early morning found us in a maze of confusion trying to get things organized for our move across the Taloma River to Hill 280. But another startling item faced us. It seems that also during the night five Japs infiltrated through our lines and as a suicide squad they hugged the supports of Bridge I just outside Mintal and with huge charges blew up the vital bridge – the only supply and communications route to two battalions fighting near RJ 7! My first view of the bridge was somewhat of a surprise – for it was so narrow and could
have been so easily protected. Now it lay broken in two and all around it and the bottom of the river were arms, legs, and bodies of the dead Japs who succeeded in their mission, altho quite fatally.

With the bridge out until late afternoon our company was forced to make a "wet crossing" so with bag and baggage we wadded the river in water chest high. By noon our whole company had crossed and we found ourselves on top of a very barren hill, badly battered from warfare. It was here only a day or two ago our forces had succeeded in taking and losing the hill several times before it was decided we held the hill and not the Japs. Consequently it had been a bloody battleground and it was evident from the number of dead Japs laying around. The odor was bad, very bad, but of course the sight of mutilated bodies or parts of bodies covered with maggots and blood is far worse. The whole redgeline along the river had been one of the main Jap strong points and was cluttered with pillboxes and trenches overlooking the river where doughboys had to make their bridgehead. Now it's merely a scene of desolation and cluttered ruins with only barren shell holes, rubbish, and tree snags over the area. When we arrived on the hill that was what faced us and with a burning sun beating down adding to the stench it was obvious what we were in for.

A word of Mintal - the small village we were in last night and which now sits across the river in back of us. In old days it was merely another native village built at an important highway crossing. But when the Japs came they made
Phase II

DAVAO

- Highway 6
- Hill 250
- MINTAL
- Highway 3
- Highway 2
- Ridge 2
- Ridge 3
- Taloma River
- Bun Rest Area
- Highway 1
- Highway 12
- Taloma River
- Highway 20
- EJ 15
- EJ 8
it a center of things and consequently built warehouses, power plants, many office buildings, and even distilleries. Now those things lay in ruins and with tin, pipes, furniture, and machinery laying all over the place, mostly destroyed. Especially along the river banks were there piles of debris along with a good many huge caves filled with the usual Japanese junk. Several knocked out Jap tanks were in the area as well as remains of huge concrete pillboxes, some of them which held fifty Japs during the fight here. And from where we sit on 280 we can look back and see those things, remnants of Mintal with only a few buildings standing, several small monuments that rise from the palm and banana groves.

Tactically speaking we learned that E Company of the 21st was now sitting on hill 240; that A Company of the 21st at RJ 8; the Guerillas spread about the newly built bridge (B-1), and we found ourselves sitting on 280 tied in with A Company. Most of the fighting is being done near RJ 7 where the 1st and 3rd Batallions of the 21st are; at Toghok where the 21st's 2nd Bn. is; and the 34th Infantry pushing north along highway 12 about halfway up Ridge 3. The objective of both Regiments is to meet at and take hill 250. In the meantime we are to sit here half protected by forward troops and yet with the wellknown "exposed flanks" and many "bare spots" between us. By evening we found ourselves settled down for another night, dug in, and peaceful, with only stray sniper and a couple of machine gun bursts to excite us during the day. But more nerve racking at present is the confusion of so
much artillery fire which comes whizzing and whistling over
our heads continually, and though it's late evening looks
like it will continue all night long. And though it's mostly
our artillery there is return Jap too that has us on edge
and in our holes frequently. Thus this day, another strange
one, with not too much to look forward to - and by now most
of us wish we were heading back to Jolo or Zambo into garrison
for a while at least; but those are only wishful thinkings,
which reminds me of the amount I must do before I fall asleep
tonight.

Friday, May 25th

Today nothing of great importance happened for we mostly
sat on hill 280 and shared bull sessions with the A Company
lads.

Last night however was practically a sleepless one for soon after we all had crawled in our holes, Jap artillery
began falling near our area. Artillery barrages are a terrible
thing to sweat out, for always you can hear the report of the
gun going off miles away; then soon comes the few moments of
listening for the whistle of the falling shell, which has
you squirming and hoping; finally the burst of the shell,
perhaps 25, 50 or 100 yards away; then the process is repeated
until eventually your nerves are nearly at an end and you feel
deeply sick in your stomach. It's hard to believe how the Japs
can stand our pounding for our barrages are so much heavier
and far oftener. But in any case that barrage lasted only ten
minutes or so with none of the shells coming closer than 75
or a 100 yards - fortunately, and no one was hurt. Naturally most of us lay awake all night awaiting the next barrage which never came - fortunately.

But last night's barrage lead us to believe that the Japs had their big guns "zeroed" in on either the bridge or the road junction here, scene of a good deal of traffic (RJ 8). A large tree, nearly 200 feet high, stood here on the hill this morning but it was such a fine land mark we decided that the Japs could be using it for a firing sight. So this evening that fine tree is now down, blown away by seven attempts with dynamite and we all feel a little relieved if nothing else.

Other than that there was little doing in our little community of A, E and our Company, except for the all day firing the guerillas did at the bridge. What a trigger happy bunch they are - firing at birds, fish, or anything. In the end all they accomplish is a good case of the jitters for our troops. A Company sent out a small patrol south on highway 12 and ran into Japs about 600 yards out. An exchange of fire there had us pinned down for a while, but that's getting to be a common occurrence. All day the continual popping and whistling of artillery continued overhead and gradually I Suppose we're getting used to it!!

For a view up here on 280, it's similar to others, and yet different. Once again we have a beautiful river flowing by beneath us and all day we can hear the rushing noise of the rapids flowing over huge rocks. We can see the small village of Tagbok, which lies on a broad flat valley, covered with
patches of fields, bananas, and cocoanuts, and beyond that rise the mountains - the huge ones I've mentioned before, extremely high with their snow caps visible frequently. Most of the time though a mass of fleecy clouds hide their peaks even though the sky for miles around is clear blue. All that lies behind us and to the west and in front of us the terrain is monotonous, nearly level with us and covered with underbrush and thicket. I, myself, often find myself staring at the mountains, watching the evening sun sink behind them making a beautiful silhouette or the moonrise that lights up the peaks and slopes so majestically. It's strange how such beauty strikes me compared to days a year ago when luxuries and beauties were everywhere and I had too little an appreciation for them then.

This evening A Company was suddenly ordered to pull out and move up to RJ 7 so with a few adieus we bid them good luck and pulled our perimeter in so that we now sit by ourselves at RJ 8, so once again too, I'm sleeping in a different hole for the fourth straight night.

I wonder now if mail will ever come through.
Saturday, May 26th

Little occurred today on 280. The day was merely hot and dull and though continual fire existed on all fronts about us, it affected us little. We did send out one patrol down highway 12 to contact the 34th Infantry coming closer to us each day now. The results were misleading for our patrol ran into Japs instead and was forced to return. Later on however we received word that the 34th too had run into Japs along the highway towards us.

One bit of excitement happened this evening however when our outposts changed reliefs. During the change a Jap machine gun opened up from across the river and though its fire was high over our perimeter it had us jumping in our holes unexpectedly. It was only a few moments till our mortars were "zeroed" in however and we had the Nips squirming as we watched several of them crawling away. They bothered us no further so we called it quits with our mortar fire.

It's again evening and there's still no hope or sight of a bright future for us. I Company of our Bn. is having a nice go of things back in the rear guarding the artillery and hospital on Libby Air Strip(also eating fresh meat!!) K Company too is getting a break guarding bridges back on highway 10, with part of its company "protecting" our Bn. perimeter. So another day bringing the two-week point at Davao nearer.

Sunday, May 27th

Only a bit of news this day. Actually the first item happened last night but the sorrowful news didn't reach us till
this morning. It seems our Bn. ammunition truck after dropping off a late supply of ammunition here on our hill last night ran into trouble on its return trip to the Bn. perimeter. About halfway between Libby and Mintal the truck was blown up by a group of Japs who lay in wait with a bongalore torpedo. It damaged the truck badly, but it made its way into our Bn. perimeter area. Worse than tho, one lad of ours was killed and another very seriously injured. Such tragedies are sad and hard to understand especially when they occur several miles behind our front lines.

The 34th succeeded in getting a patrol through to us today which made news locally. It meant of course our forces were joined and lines strengthened. Meanwhile the 21st Inf's 1st and 3rd Bn. cleared RJ 7 and are now 1000 yards east on highway 6 and approaching the objective, hill 250.

This evening too our outposts had another bit of excitement when they fired on five stray Japs who came barging up the river toward our position. They were completely surprised by our fire and were helplessly pinned down on the river bank far below us. They crawled away, but we got one, and soon after our fire, a grenade went off in the grass which lead us to believe that another committed Hari Kari.

E Company meanwhile received orders that they would move out tomorrow for Togbok and we in turn would occupy their positions on hill 220. Further complications arose tonight when the guerillas were pulled off of guarding the bridge - our orders of course were to send troops there to replace the
guerillas. Our meagre little company is dwindling to small units compared to the three companies that occupied these areas a few days ago.

Old man mountain is still with us though and my constant view of the mountains and their capes of clouds never tires. Full moon is rapidly approaching again, my favorite monthtime, for there's always that certain comfort when the moon is above you lighting up the countryside when you lay back in your hole thinking yourself to sleep.

Monday, May 28th

E Company moved early this morning and our 1st platoon by 9 o'clock was situated in their positions on hill 220. Our bridge guard of 12 men is also still in effect. The remainder of our company spent the day routinely on hill 280 at RJ 8. Many of the boys started foxhole poker games which lasted all day. Little else happened except that our Bn. wire truck narrowly escaped a bangalore torpedo along the same road and at about the same spot the Nips hit our ammunition truck. The results of this lead to orders that Company must now thoroughly patrol highway 3 between Mintal and Libby all day.

A general reorganization is about to take place it seems for this evening we learned that we would be relieved of all our positions tomorrow by the 34th Infantry. The 21st Infantry in turn will be reorganizing for a push northwest of Togbok back on the other side of the river. What our future is is unknown at the present. In a broader vein, the 31st and
Americacale Divisions fighting many miles inland from here have joined forces and are now about to push toward the coast and join up with the 24th Division to which we are at present attached.

All in all this has been a blue day with lonely hours for me and I'm afraid I'm a bit lonesome for the things of home again, not an uncommon occurrence I guess. Everything from loved ones to ice cream cones to winter snows has passed through my mind this quiet evening and I'm thoroughly ready to call it a day and wish myself sweet dreams.

Tuesday, May 29th

The so called "glorious" day has arrived as we are now happily back in the peaceful and quiet grove of our Bn. perimeter area where we once again can sleep nights and eat at our kitchens normally, though we still have our perimeter holes to man.

Early this a.m. troops of the 34th came marching over the bridge from Mintal some to relieve troops of the 21st up at RJ 7, others to relieve us. AT Company was the "lucky" company who relieved us and by a coincidence AT Company had an OCS buddy of mine assigned. It was a gladdening picture for I also ran into other OCS buddies as other troops passed by. (All of my OCS classmates are with the 34th Inf. except for six of us.)

But phase two of our Davao activities is now nearing a close as we sit peacefully here, unattached to the 21st Infantry
any longer. We are of course doubtful and dumb of our future operations, but hopes of Zambo and Jolo are with us again ever strong. But let things come what well for tonight my nerves are relaxed and I have contentment in heart and soul - a good state of mind to end this day (and still no mail!)

Wednesday, May 30th (Memorial Day)

All day we sat in our Bn. perimeter area near Libby village with little to do but write letters and chat and if you have a few pesos, play a little poker.

Startling news for the G.I. bull sessions came through today - excellent food for many hours of G.I. controversy. "The Point System" in all its glory was handed down to us. Briefly its this. You acquire points for the period of September 16, 1940 to May 12, 1945 for the following items:

1.) each month in the army = 1 point each
2.) each month overseas = 1 point each
3.) each child (up to 3) = 12 points each
4.) each combat award or star = 5 points each

The "critical score" needed for discharge is not announced but for European troops it is 85. And since all points cease as of May 12th I have little hope of anything with my measly 40 points. In fact I'd say it means nothing to me, but to many of the old timers it does, and rightfully so. Of course "Rotation" ceases with the effect of this new plan. The main problem for me I guess is to begin looking for some plan that does affect me and could get me home before the war's end.

A bit of news happened in a military sense this afternoon
when two artillery boys from the 24th Division were out "souvenir hunting" in enemy territory unknowingly. As it happened they ran into Japs way out a beat up trail off highway 3 at a place marked (1) on my Phase II map. One was killed instantly the other lad fled in terror, but worse than all that several more lads cowardly took off in the jeep awaiting the helpless G.I.'s. What eventually happened was normal. Our 1st platoon with Steege in charge made their way up the spooky trail and retrieved the dead G.I. who was found stripped of his clothes and belongings by then. Unusual item of interest was the huge clock found in one of the nearby huts keeping accurate time! The patrol ran into no trouble and returned weary and sweaty.

Meantime too our company has been assigned to bridge guards, one a twelve man guard, the other eight men. The bridges are small and relatively safe from any trouble. The first guard is on Bridge 2; the other at Bridge 3; both on highway 2 leading north to Mintal from highway 10.

There's no more to add at this time but my increased desire for just one little letter. Surely this can't last much longer. But I should be satisfied with another chance to rest well tonight, especially since there's rumor of moving back to a rest area with tents, cots, and all those "fine" things!!

Thursday, May 31st

A pleasant surprise took place this day as what were rumors turned into realities. At eight this morning we
received word of going back into a rest area. At nine o'clock we were loaded on trucks heading to areas in the rear - an unusual sensation heading in that direction!!

It seemed a long ride back but in the end it was a mere five mile jaunt to where we turned off the main drag, climbed a steep little knob - unloaded and began the ever tiring, building a campsite. For some reason I had taken on a bad case of dysentery that left me with an ill feeling and I struggled the day with my legs wobbling. After bulldozers had leveled the ground, men had cut underbrush and put up our tents - the area took shape and once again it was a cool, cleared off cocoanut grove by evening and the G.I. manoeuvres had changed the scenery from good to bad. Our kitchens too are up, though they sit at the base of the hill - a steep climb up and down and during rains a very obvious slippery one. Our location is at RJ 15 on the map about seven miles from Davao and about three miles from the coast - but from our hilltop the blue of the Pacific is clearly visible over the green of the palms stretching toward the sea below us. To our rear there are several small streams for bathing and nearby in a thick growth of trees must be hundreds of monkeys for we can hear them chattering all day. Mosquitoes are bad, a great deal worse than any place we've been here at Davao, but with our occupation perhaps they'll flee (or multiply!!) But above all that rises the thought of our "luxuries" again - cost, dry ground, a decent place to eat, and the like, though we must go without lights at night and
must maintain an outpost both day and night. And with K Company still guarding bridges, our company furnishing guards for several more we have none too many men who can take advantage of the softer life.

Tactically speaking, we know little of our future - where we go from here or when. It could be most anything from garrison in Zamboanga to frontline fighting here at Davao. But at the moment I'd just as soon forget the possibilities and make the most of this life today, which really could be okay. As I write tonight it's twilight time again, many of the boys are jotting their first lines home, others are in card games, and there's a group over by the battalion radio, listening to music for the first time in a long while. And here I sit, deeply contented and relaxed, on my cot, wishing and longing as I write that I could be spending these moments with my loved ones beyond the Blue Horizon and to the East, and wondering too just how many more days I'll be jotting these daily excerpts.

Friday, June 1st

I feel better today but my dysentary is still adding weak spells. McGee, Pussy and Moore and I busied the morning away building an officers Mess - we had found some Jap china-ware nearby which brought on the sudden urge. When we went for the dishes that were in a thatched hut we found an old Filippino with a very young son. He was busy at work tearing down remnants of another hut close by. We chatted with him
and though he could speak little English, but did tell of how he despised the Japs. "Me kill Jap - wrapped in sin - killed my wife - no more home" were his words mixed in with a few of his own private ones. We left him perched high on the frame of his new home weaving on his roof of plams. His, sat dazed and bewildered on the bamboo steps.

By noon though our "glorious" little mess outfit was completed with a table made from the wall of a house, benches from odd lumber. Even a dish rack that we also found with the chinaware. We had dinner, and though it was "bully beef" and dehydrated potatoes, it did taste a little better with the surroundings.

I managed to get off a few letters finally after directing the bulldozer all over the area this afternoon - a wonderful machine, for it can level the ground, build a road, dig a sump or latrine, and many other practical things that would take man hours to do.

But the real joy of the day was mail call with its fourteen letters for me. It took me a long time to read them reread them and absorb every little detail.

Other than improving our camp the outfit did little today and thought less of the future which still remains untold. But let it be so for I'm enjoying these brief days - a chance to rest, relax, keep clean, write, read, and sleep. Not
PHASE II ENDS

exactly the things in line for a soldier I'd say!!!

So another day with the boys settling down for another night, the strains of "My Heart Tells Me" from the radio, and the sun sinking beyond the hills. So ends Phase II of Davao and also another book!
Chapter VI

I Davao on Mindanao (Phase III)

June 2nd, 1945 to
Sunday, June 2nd

Today was the last two all over again here in our rest area with only a couple items to add here.

After passing a lazy morning writing letters, a little bridge, and a couple bull sessions, I went out this afternoon to make some changes on our two bridge guards our company is maintaining. In a jeep I took off to the bridges, located on the road to Mintal. It was a rather routine duty and I returned in the early evening where another batch of grand mail was awaiting me. That once again gave the day new life, and new thoughts of "home".

I need that new life too, for this evening came the discouraging news that our battalion would be committed to action on a drive to meet the 31st Division, some 35 miles away. The actual date of our commitment is not known but will be within a few days. Needless to say all of us lost almost all our morale and relaxation - now comes the time of "sweating it out", or in other words worry and concern over the future. Our brief rest ended tonight for we'll no longer be able to relax and already the boys have become restless and discouraged especially since our battalion was never slated to be in the attacking echelons during this operation. But we're a lost battalion and have little to say being separated from our Division. It will soon be three strange months of combat for us - the maximum usually, but this looks like a much longer tour.

So though our cots are here, the radio is playing, and the
is sinking again - we're very definitely not the same group of men that we were last night. Best I close this discolored day.

Sunday, June 3rd

A quiet Sunday with little to comment on. At ten this morning I attended church services - also dedicated to Memorial Day. It was a comforting hour and yet an also sorrowful one - as they read off the names of the lads who were killed in action during this past year with the Bn. There were names I didn't know but there were names I did know too, names of guys who only a few months back were under my command a very wonderful group of men. I've mentioned them before but let me add them once more - Doc Newmark, Kenny Dahlstrom, Stan Shilladay, Dick Cronin - they brought a huge lump to my throat as I heard their names and how tragic it appears, although there's someone else who knows best and He honors them as we, I know.

Word came too that tomorrow is the day we move out and into action - not exactly happy word. And many of us contemplated what could be in store now? We're to be attached to the 34th Inf. (part of the 24th Div) as part of the attack. Just where it begins and ends is still a question.

With all too many lonely thoughts of home and that future happiness I keep living and looking for, I'll close this day and tonight I must surely pray for that so necessary strength and guidance an ordinary fella needs in these trying days.
Monday, June 4th

Today began Phase III of our activities on Davao. It took no time at all for the picture to change from quiet and peace to swift and moving. It was nearly ten o'clock when trucks arrived to carry us to our coming area of operations. Some 114 men plus Arnold and McGee and I loaded, moved out and soon were passing through Mintal, the little spot we maneuvered in during Phase II. The ride was monotonous, dusty, and hot the scenery was the usual partially devastated and partially unexplored land of thick undergrowth known as "apocca", a tree that looks like a banana tree, but bears hemp instead. On highway 2 we left Mintal, crossed the Taloma River and soon pulled into Ula, a very recent gain of the 34th Infantry, who we are now attached to. The ride was extremely spooky and quickly brought to mind combat conditions again. At Ula we unloaded and prepared to take a walk to where we would relieve "L" Company of the 34th. The 3rd Bn. of the 34th had its headquaters in Ula, with the attacking companies not too far away. Our route lead us down a small trail, dingy and dark with apacca, (Rd-2) until we found ourselves in the midst of a company perimeter, located on RD-1 (a) only a few yards west of the Taloma. There were only smiling faces to greet us - ours were glum! Within a few minutes the physical relief was completed. I had taken Wood's platoon down to the river where one of the 34th's platoon was also
awaiting relief. We were there only a few minutes before the fireworks opened up - for as our relief outpost up on the river bank took its position the Japs opened up with machine gun and rifle fire some 50 to 75 yards away. With a burst of our return fire of Tommy Gun and B.A.R. things were quiet again, but the first of our casualties with a leg hit was brought over the bank. Thus it was, five minutes after we arrived to take over, we suffered our first casualty!

L Company, 34th, took off and I bid farewell to Miller and Stewart, two of my OCS classmates after we had had a brief reunion chat.

Afternoon found us busy digging in and at the same time dodging Jap mortar shells that kept falling intermittently all the while. We had two men slightly wounded. What a wonderful beginning and as yet we haven't even begun to try and gain ground. Needless to say our morale was at a new low. Our little Bn. now an attacking echelon with one of the 34th's, doing non-credit work for the 24th Division.

I Company and K Company were across the Taloma from us on highway 1 about 200 yards short of the 100 ft. bridge(b-1). As yet no one had been able to get to the bridge for K Company had one killed and two wounded in a first try for a K Company patrol.

Orders for the morrow reveal that we will attack along Roads 1 and 2 and attempt to hit the main highway (1) and join K Company. A big order under the circumstances and one that
needs much thought with the night.

At twilight we were in our holes still sweating out Jap knee mortar and wondering all the while what the future held and how many days of this must we endure.

Tuesday, June 5th

With packs and K-rations the 2nd Platoon under Finley started up Road 1 on a patrol to prepare for our attack. This was early in the morning and they had barely reached the junction of Roads 1 and 2 when they were fired on by several machine guns, and after being pinned down a while they returned giving us the sad news - fortunately they had no casualties. But now I know that that was just the beginning of a day of turmoil.

Soon after I started out with both the 2nd platoon under Finley and the 3rd platoon under Wood, plus 3 tanks. We were to push through to highway 1 regardless! Somehow you can sense trouble and Japs. You feel uneasy, that all attempts will be futile and that certain ones of you are soon to be casualties - and that's just as I felt starting out - though I couldn't let the men know that.

After a still artillery and mortar barrage we jumped off heading down Road 2 with the tanks. We had only gone a few hundred yards when the usual happened - the Japs cut loose with everything. Fortunately there were ditches on either side of the little road, we were in them, of course in no time at all. Japs bursts would let loose for several minutes, then during the lulls we attempted to keep moving, crawling
if necessary in the little ditches. The lead tank with Finley's platoon was only ten or fifteen yards from the thick abacca that the road ran into, for up until this time we had been forced to come through open fields, completely exposed.

The Japs of course were dug in securely and unseen in the edge of the thick abacca. It was when the lead tank neared the thickets edge that a huge explosion occurred, drowning out the Jap automatic fire that had us pinned to the ditches! I knew too soon that the tank had hit a mine there was nothing left to do but pull back and try to reorganize, for men now were injured and possibly killed, with an exposed tank now immobile.

After leaving a guard about the tank, the remainder pulled back with the wounded till we were under cover from the Jap fire, though our guard still remained, hugging the ditches about the tank. There were eight men wounded, several tankmen shaken up badly from concussion and one tankman was killed, still in the tank that had to be retrieved. Finley was badly burned and his clothes were completely blown off by the mine.

After a brief discussion and planning we began our attempt to get the damaged tank and our helpless guard back. The plan was for the two other tanks to advance with the remainder of our men and one pull up on either side of the beat up tank, offer covering fire as a bulldozer would come up behind, hook the tank on, and pull it back to safety. It was hardly a
plausible and safe plan, but there was no other alternative.
A half hour later the plan was in effect - an hour later the whole affair was a successful undertaking - no one had been wounded in the maneuver and temporarily we were a relieved group of men, when tanks and men were all safely under cover. This brought events to 2 o'clock to a close but found then that the day was still far from done.

It was decided then I would take all three rifle platoons, plus three more tanks and try it again - this time making a vast flanking movement!!

It was discouraging, but once again we started out; this time crossing Road-2 and making for the apacca some six or 700 yards beyond where the Nips had previously opened up from. We made steady progress and soon found ourselves deep in a dark thicket, hacking and hunting trails for the tanks. There was a major of the tank corps in the lead tank. He was the "know-it-all" type and swore he knew what he was doing. An hour and a half past of this aimless and blind manoeuvring, when we hit on a small path (later I learned was P-1 on the map) - it was dark, swampy, with overhanging bursh that hid even the sky. Confined to the path we strung ourselves in a column of tanks and men (the major's idea()) Endlessly it seemed we wound in and into the apacca and it was getting late - the men were weary, jumpy, and we had to dig in for the night yet too. But the major was determined, "knew what he was doing" till finally the inevitable happened. The lead tank with the 1st Platoon was opened up on by Nips
dug in on the junction of the path with an unexpected road (P-1 and Rd.-3). There were five men leading the tanks - Wilson and McBath and White, among them (My old reliable scouts) - It had to happen though. McBath was hit in his try for cover - the others made it. But Mac was hit, and several times now, lying on the path up ahead of the tank. It was sometime before we could get to him, retrieve him. He had only a breath of life when we placed him on the tank for the ride back - but within a few minutes he died and we were so helpless. Furious at all this unexcused manoeuvring I told the major this was enough, there was much to be done it was already after five. With Japs still all around poking shots here and there, the tanks finally got turned around on the cramped road space and we headed back on the same route.

Forty-five minutes later we rejoined the company near Road-2 - discouraged and I was bitter as I listened to the major offer excuses for his "ideas" and his smiling "good luck tomorrow".

We wasted no time at all in digging in in a cornfield where Roads 1 and 2 meet. I Company meanwhile had taken over our old perimeter we had last night. It rained miserably hard as we dug in, attempted to eat. The men were wholly downhearted for already word was down that L Company would try again tomorrow. We were wondering then if there were any other companies in the in the Bn. for I and K Companies had done nothing except for several patrols of K Company that met bad luck at the 100 ft. bridge.
I thought as I crawled in my water filled hole if maybe tomorrow couldn't be a better day, for I too was discouraged no end with these past two days and the thought that tomorrow I would once again be leading the company again. Only prayers can give you comfort from that kind of thought and that's how I closed this unlucky day.

Wednesday, June 6th

After yesterday's unlucky episode we crawled out this morning preparing to break thru the Nip lines again. Breakfast was snappy and though most of the men had a solemn look, they were ready for our jump off by seven thirty.

Today I had the attacking echelon again and by this time I was beginning to feel the brunt of it, but at eight o'clock away we went, the third platoon leading with three tanks. We wasted no time blasting and firing all we had. We made our way as far as I had gotten with the 2nd Platoon yesterday down Road 2. We passed that point and headed into the deep abacca. Numberous pillboxes were in smoke as we made our way; dead Japs, scarred and smouldered, were in the ditches on either sides of us and the odor was sickening. Once we passed one of our own Jeeps that we blasted with 75's. The jeep had carelessly been driven into enemy land and it had been ambushed, one G.I. lay not too far away, showing signs of decay, he was undoubtedly a casualty in the jeep.

We drove on and on and though it seemed miles, it was actually only 600 yards when we stopped to reorganize for our final push to the main road so near, yet so far away.
We kept the artillery falling just in front of us as we moved along. It gave us the necessary confidence and over abandoned Jap trenches and foxholes filled with the usual Jap junk we made it to the main road, the Riverside-Calinan Highway (hwy-1). When we came onto the road we could look back down and about a mile away could see the K Company men on the road. Up ahead on the road was nothing but crater holes and on either side dense abacca for miles and miles. We came onto the road at RJ-4 and around noon we pushed back down the road towards the 100 foot Bridge (B-1), clearing pillboxes and blowing up Jap vehicles and trench systems. Our mission was accomplished as we reached the river where the bridge as usual had been destroyed.

By one o'clock the entire battalion was on road and our company was sprawled in the ditches on both sides, tired, proud and momentarily happy. We all were exhausted and nothing could have moved us - and nothing did as we munched on K-rations and watched I Company pass through us to push on up the road toward Riverside.

By four o'clock we were digging in at RJ-4, I Company meanwhile pushed ahead about 600 yards and was digging in too after encountering the Japs who now have their defenses some 800 to 1000 yards straight up the road from us. Another line that will probably be costly to break through.

But for tonight, we're sitting 600 yards behind I Company and feel a little more at ease. Surely we'll be able to take it easy after our four days of bearing the brunt for the
battalion. No news to confirm that right now though.

It's raining like hell again and my hole is half filled, so best I close and begin bailing before another rain fills it completely.

Thursday, June 7th

Although most of our company remained stationary, there was enough going on all around us that about all we could do was sweat it out!

I Company moved out early in the attack with tanks but after pushing up Highway 1 only a few hundred yards, they were stopped cold in the vicinity of RJ 15. They got no further for the day and though we hammered the Nips with mortars and artillery, we too suffered casualties. Several casualties of ours were the result of our own mortar shells as our lines are so close to the Japs.

Joe Buckovick, K Company, tried taking his platoon up on the right of I Company, but got up as far as CR-1 after pushing up Road 3 to where we ran into an ambush. His platoon was split to high heavens in the abacca and for hours several of his wounded men were cut off by Jap fire. By evening he was reorganized but was understrength as a result of casualties.

The third maneuver was Brownie's patrol out of our company. He took the first platoon and went up Road 3 early this morning, cut across to RJ 3 where he joined G Company of the 34th Infantry on the Ula Road. He had no trouble, but the way was definitely a "spooky" one.
Meanwhile K Company passed through us shortly after noon in column up the road. They moved up to behind I Company where the new Bn. C.P. is now located. Just as K Company was on the move through us, a short mortar caused one nervous K Company boy to set off his rifle. He shot himself in the foot and was treated by our aid man.

A shift in command also took place today as our present Bn. C.O. left on rotation - replaced by a firey, red headed, houng Maj. Hamilton, full of gum and ambition. He's much too fresh for us weary lads but he's not a bad sort.

At present we stand far too far in the rear to feel comfortable for it can only mean we're next to move into the attacking echelon. And though our new operation in the Riverside area is relatively young all of us are becoming weary and exhausted. The hot chow tasted good this evening, even though mess kits were half filled with the falling rain. My "hole" these nights is a half caved Jap trench, enforced by palm logs overhead. Oh well tomorrow is another day and bound to be a busy one.

Friday, June 8th

Today the veil lifted as our New Bn. C.O. issued his first real order, trying out something new. All morning I and K Company batted their heads against a stonewall getting no where (RJ 15) (CR I) By noon a new plan was in operation quite naturally we (L Co) were involved. We packed our few
belongings in a hurry - marched up Highway 1 as far as the 
Bn. C.P. (area F) and from there our drive to Riverside took 
a new twist.

Smack through the abacca our entire company went almost 
as dark as night, cutting a trail, quiet as possible. Our 
manoeuvre was to be a secret move down on the river bank, 
move up the river a 1000 yards, and then cut back to High 
way 1; thus cutting off the Japs holding up I and K Companies 
from the Nips rear. But between here and there is a long 
hard grind and we knew it as we left the highway and headed 
through the brush to the river's edge. We stood an excellent 
chance of being cut off ourselves!!!

By this evening we had made it to the river silently 
extcept for two shots that killed two Japs. Over vines, 
up and down the steep river banks we went in column, a 
column nearly two hundred yards long, but we were quiet and 
most of the time we even feared breathing. There were plenty 
of marks that showed us Nips were plentiful in the area. 
Rags, rice, uniforms and equipment were all through the brush 
and that distinct Jap odor was all along the river bank. But 
we made 500 yards of our flanking movement and in an extremely 
tight perimeter (area C) we dug in for the night. It's hard 
hearing for the roar of the river going by and yet it also 
conceals and drowns the noise we make. We're perched high up 
on the riverbank in thick brush tonight and how strange it is to 
hear all the fighting going on "behind" us - we're even out 
in front of our own artillery, there's little wonder that most
of us are a bit on the "jumpy" side. If we make it tomorrow we'll be heroes and will have fooled the Nips! Let's hope we do.

Saturday, June 9th

At daybreak we were all up and ready with a hefty K Ration under our belts! We moved out again before seven using the same technique as we did yesterday - one long column creeping up the riverbank, the swish of the river drowning our noise. We moved along okay but it was slow and tedious crossing rock and swamps, slashing vines and all that. Many times we had to stop, take a drink from the river and catch a breath. And all the while our own artillery in support of I and K Companies, now well behind us falling all around sending shrapnel knee high through our company. All we could do was dive for the nearest rock, hole, or tree then move out after each barrage. Mixed in were the cracks of machine gun and rifle bullets overhead that came whistling from the fight I and K Companies were having and getting nowhere fast.

Around ten o'clock we had moved to within 300 yards of our destination and the Jap odor and tracks were becoming more and more recent. Once we ran into six young Jap civilians cuddled on a wood platform, camouflaged, and built on the river's edge. The youngsters, none of which were over six or eight, huddled near a pale glowing gas lamp and stared at us in fright as our column moved by them, then
leaving them behind. There were more clothes, more platforms, more blood and even human waste as we moved on.

At one o'clock our leading scouts reached the bridge where a small road (highway 3) off highway 1 crosses the river - we had made it quickly. One platoon occupied the bridge (B-2) another platoon made it to the junction of highway 1 (RJ 6) and set up there and the rest of us quickly occupied the area in between (D). Our area was low and swampy and we were exhausted, thirsty, but worst of all, sitting 1200 yards out in front of our own troops with plenty of Japs in between and up ahead.

Some of the boys found a small 6" stream flowing through our swampy area - we drank it, but Lord knows I wouldn't dream of it most any other time. We had still one K Ration apiece and our base load of ammunition to hold out on till the rest of the Bn. could come up to us. Our communications are only wire, (it could be cut by the Nips at will!) and radio of which the batteries are over half gone now. All in all we were all feeling mighty low in spite of "mission accomplished" - until the good word came through that the Bn. would follow up our same route tomorrow and join us - what a treat they have in store! Wood has the third platoon out on the Highway 1 road junction (RJ 6) and as I write the first signs of trouble and our position being discovered are taking place. Wood has just been shooting up ammunition at the rate of a dime a dozen at Japs ahead of and behind his position. And from his reports, around forty Nips are busy digging in furiously as our mortars are already pounding
on them.

So another spooky day and most of us have lost another five pounds!! But no ones hurt yet so I can't say we can complain too much, but this is the beginning of what looks like a night of activity and no sleep.

Sunday, June 10th

This has been a long hard strenuous day - a day we hadn't anticipated when we crepted out of our water filled holes this morning. At dawn Woody reported in from his position the results of the nights fireworks that began shortly after dark and continued throughout the night and had us all on edge. Woody counted five Nips dead down the road a piece. The beauties of the G.I. night perimeter are really a comfort during nights like last night.

Just shortly after sunrise, word came from the rear that the Bn. was moving up around the path we came over yesterday. Meanwhile I Company was left behind where they were three days to keep driving on the pocket of Japs that have done a nice job of holding up our advance. Nevertheless we were awfully glad to hear "reinforcements" were on their way, especially after last night's activity and our wire being cut.

Most of the morning we sat in our holes anxiously keeping track of the Bn's progress to our position. By eleven o'clock the head of the column arrived and we all felt the weight on our minds lift - but only for a very short time, for within thirty minutes, puffing Red Dog Hamilton, issued the order
that L Company would shove on to Riverside - some 1400 yards further down Highway 1. We could hardly believe the word!

I Company was battling 1200 yards behind us and units on our right and left were each over 1000 yards lagging - and now we're to push another 1400 yards before dark, L Company at that. Our morale hit a new low, for L Company had been leading this advance continuously and men can take so much of this strenuous tension.

But at 1200 (noon) Brownie started out with the first platoon as an advance patrol. Meanwhile the rest of the Company stocked up on ammunition, more K-Rations, etc. By two o'clock we got word that Brownie, using similar tactics of silent creeping up the river bank, had progressed around 500 yards. With that our company - myself leading moved out to overtake Brownie and together move on to Riverside, if we could, by evening.

Within a half hour we had climbed up and down bluffs covered with jungle thicket and retraced Brownie's steps and joined him. We stopped and hashed over plans to continue and within another fifteen minutes we pushed on. I had the 3rd platoon at the head with me. It was slow going, extremely spooky and several times we were stopped by natural barriers and we'd have to go back away, start out again, each time wondering if the Nips had discovered us yet, for our column made a helpless target. So it went for several hours, then suddenly we broke out of the thicket and into the first corn field I'd seen in the Philippines. But crouched in the
cornfield we could look several miles up ahead. Instead of jungles the terrain suddenly changed to open fields with gradual sloping hills. It allowed us excellent observation (but also for the Japs!) The rest of our advance would have to be partially exposed, a distance of about 800 yards into town proper. From the corn field I could see some of the battered houses and also a tall Jap observation tower, still standing and useable. Squad by squad we crossed the cornfield and crept over the river bank crest and down into the river where we moved on up to within 300 yards of town, where we bumped into freshly dug spider holes and trench systems that seemed to circle the town. There were numerous papers and documents in the holes, untouched by last night's rain. It was definitely a spooky situation though neither the Japs nor us dared make a noise, if there were any Nips! In any case we held up and made our plans for entering the town, it was getting late as well. Soon George Fox and squad moved out, scouted the first buildings still clinging to the cover of the river - our company moved on up on his signal - then Hawko covered more buildings with his squad. Rice, ice boxes, sewing machines, broken bottles, and a general mess were everywhere till finally our company was waiting within 150 yards of the main crossroads (CRJ-16). We could see it clearly with its several bunkers, blown up bridge. And just across the river our vision was clamped again as the jungle thicket began again more dense then ever. The Japs in there could observe us at will and still be unseen. Harley Lemons
and his squad made the last jump to the road junction without opposition and within a few more minutes all L Company was digging furiously to prepare for the Nips before dark. Once again we made our mission without casualty, with luck we had outfoxed the Nips again, though we once again were sitting at a vital corssroads way out in front - we wonder again - who's got who surrounded?

In any case as darkness came on, our holes were dug, deep too, and we were in our "comfortable" perimeter set for the Japs, forgetting all concern over food or water. Once again we're set for a sleepless night and all of us are on the alert. Just as this day ended, just across the river from us we spotted five Japs walking innocently toward us. We fired, killed two, but three are away and probably will have the news of our location to their commander soon. Too dark to write more.

Monday, June 11th

Last night I came down with extremely high fever and nausea and was almost totally out of it with a fever of 104 degrees. For these reasons I can only make my notes in brief today as I am going to be pulled out and sent back to be hospitalized for what looks to be like malaria and dysentery.

Today we layed at Riverside and due to stepped up action, part of our battalion came up for re-inforcements using part of K company. Meanwhile I company continues to push H crossing with tanks towards us. Also during last night it was wild for a time as what looked to be a platoon of Japs attacked our
perimeter. We countered with artillery, mortar, machine guns, and rifle fire. At dawn we found as many as 10 Japs within six feet of our perimeter - too close for comfort. Then during the morning hours one of those lousy Jap artillery bombs landed in our perimeter, killing two of our fine fellows and wounding 13. Wood and Mayfield were the ones killed. It was not long after this the medics pulled me to the rear for treatment - because of the high fever I remember little after being evacuated - it was my understanding that the rest of this day finally became quiet at Riverside.

NOTE:

For the following 3 1/2 weeks I was under close care of the medics and finally pulled through the malaria and dysentery seize. They also found a bad case of jaundice. Fortunately my recovery in that 3 1/2 weeks was successful with no ill effects. This ends my accounts of Davao operations. I also learned that L company and our battalion was pulled out of action at Davao a few days after my illness and the battalion was sent back to Zamboanga in the rest area.
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Monday, May 14th

At dawn we passed Zamboanga heading northeast still - we didn't stop, but it was strange passing into Zamboanga harbor in peace; the last time we moved in on our beachhead. And all day we sailed peacefully toward Davao where we will arrive at sunrise tomorrow. Though it was miserably warm all day it was still pleasant to be away from foxholes and bullets, relax and enjoy the normal things of life on the sea. Our convoy is small with only twelve ships; there seems to be no worry over our trip tho with only the landing and trip to Davao to worry of, for the Japs seem to be harassing the shoreline with artillery and big naval gun fire. Our mission at Davao is still unknown, so I'll omit all possible guesses here.

During the day, Jack Arnold, new Company C.O. took ill with a fever of 104° and as a result was transferred over to the Doc's ship in a fancy naval maneuver. As for myself I passed my day with Mabel, my monk, who has now settled down and gets the greatest delight out of combing my hair for fleas! Other than those brief items, there's little to add besides of course my many thought of home which are far too vast and numerous to list here. In addition my tales in these books are confined to realities rather than dreams, so best I close and make ready for tonight and tomorrow, which will undoubtedly mean a new phase of my experiences. Davao of course is a large scale operation with many possibilities in store.
Tuesday, May 15th

Another D-day is now nearly finished, but our landing of course was administrative, though as we landed at sunrise, big guns were blasting away only a mile or so inland. As we sailed in Taloma Gulf another view of the Philippines was before us. There were the usual coastal plains with palms and fields, but the two outstanding things were the numerous number of houses and villages on the hillsides, confirming the Davao sector being the second to Manila, and the other item of change was the mountains, Jolo, Leyte, Zamboanga, New Guinea, and all the other places I've been had none to compare to these. All of them were extremely rocky and rugged with beautiful caps of Snow. I was nearly amazed to see snow in the Philippines but I was more concerned over whether we'd be fighting on them before long - a rough ordeal to look forward to.

But our ships glided on the beach with no trouble and for the rest of the morning we layed on the beach area unloading all our equipment all the while anxiously awaiting the mission we'd be assigned. We knew only that we would be a division reserve for the 24th Division now in full scale fighting for miles around.

By noon we had gathered enough dope to know that this Davao sector for over eighty miles around is far from liberated as the papers and news had led us to believe, with the front lines running eighty miles down the coastline and only a mile to two miles inland; the Japs of course once again