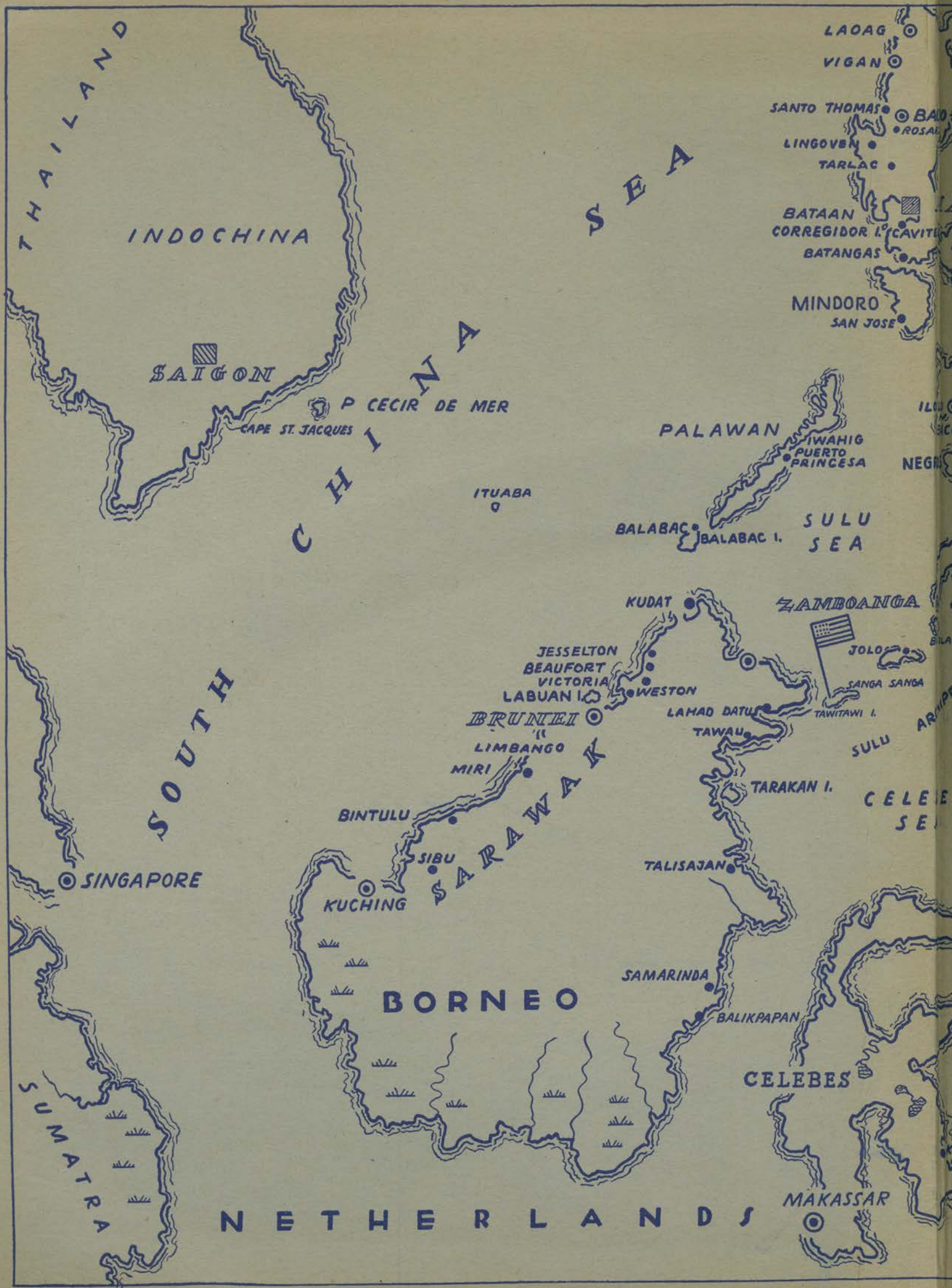
THE CRUSADERS

A HISTORY OF THE 42nd BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)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TAWITAWI I.
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KAOE A/D
KAOE BAY
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MAFFIN BAY
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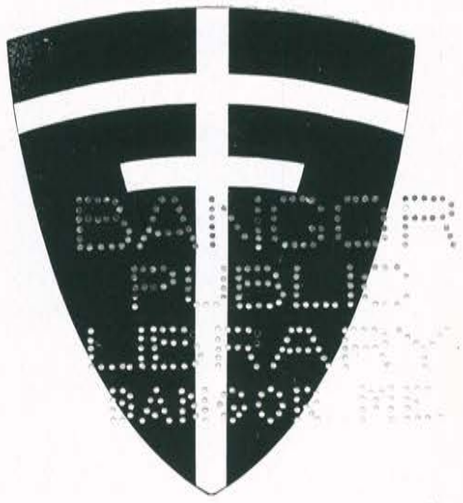
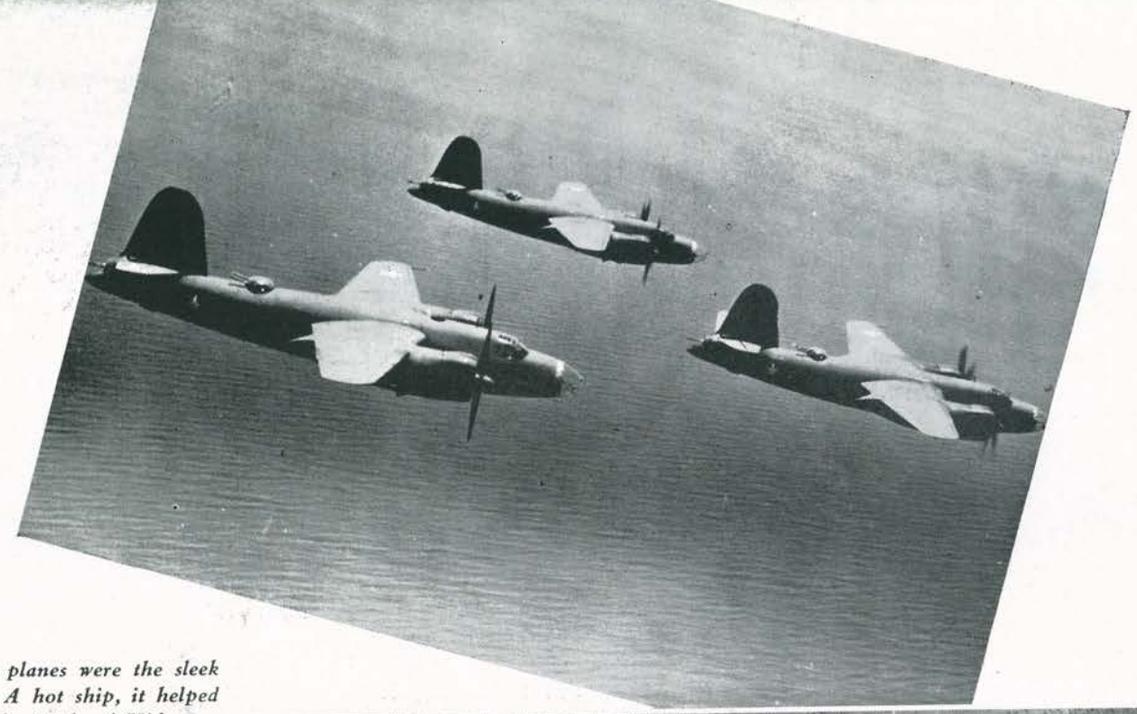
THE CRUSADERS

A HISTORY OF THE



42ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (m)



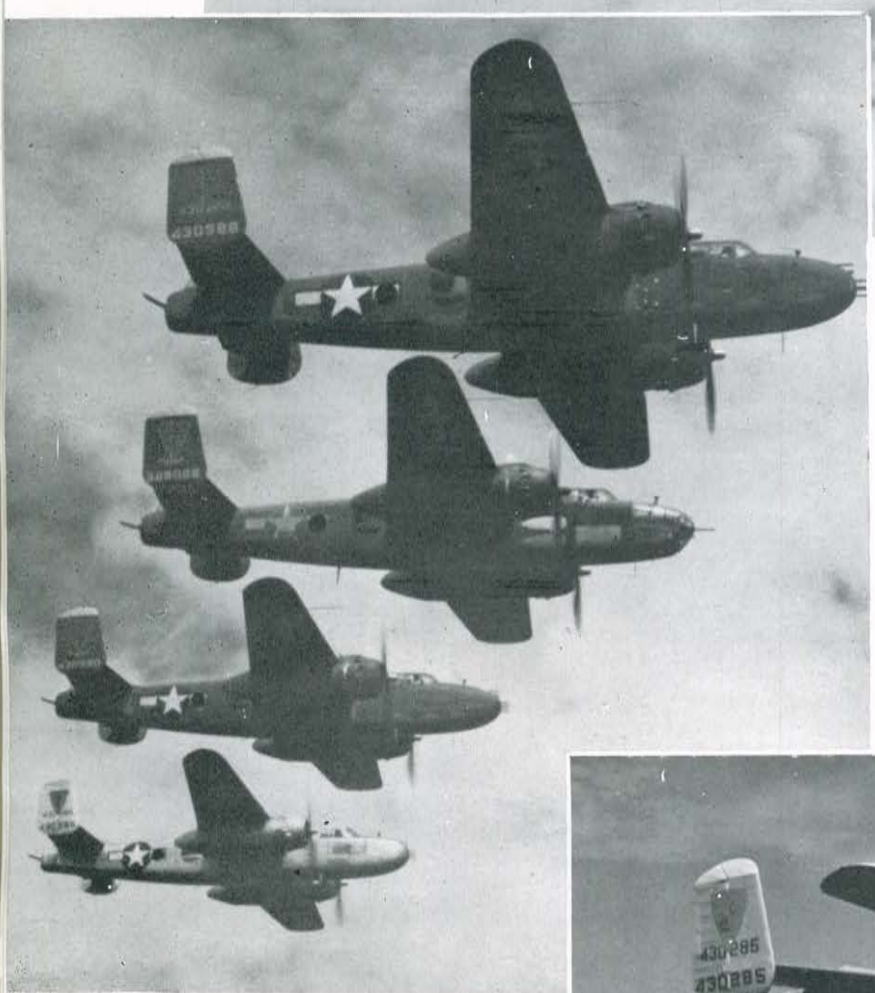
The Group's first planes were the sleek B-26 Marauders. A hot ship, it helped make history at the Battle of Midway.

The first B-25s we had were the venerable C model whose package guns were combat modifications. This was followed by the D.

Old "Pistol Packin' Mama," the H, incorporated the improved 75-mm. aircraft cannon. Tested thoroughly, they were found a little unsuitable for our type of operations.

The J made its appearance during our New Guinea period. Among the other changes, the turret was moved forward.

The J27, built as a strafer, put eight guns in the nose, which, with the package guns and the turret, gave the Mitchell 14 forward firing .50's.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMENDATION

The officers and men of the 42nd Bombardment Group, Medium, whose names appear below, are highly commended for the contributions they made toward publishing this history of "THE CRUSADERS." Words are not adequate to express the appreciation of all the personnel of the Group for this fine accomplishment. However, each person who aided in this task may be sure he has contributed something of real and lasting value, and that this accomplishment will be remembered, together with his name, in the many years to come. Each time an "Old Crusader" reads the many pages of this history and views the many fine photographs he will remember the long hours, night and day, over and above the ordinary line of duty, which were spent in preparing the stirring pages of "THE CRUSADERS."

Major R. H. Cohn	Capt. Marvin C. Wachs
Cpl. Charles W. Strong	S/Sgt. George Crout
Lt. Walter M. Pleiss	Lt. Okey Snodgrass
Lt. Robert L. Smith	Lt. Jack Blake
Lt. Raymond Proctor	Lt. Martin Levine

To Major R. H. Cohn goes full credit for grabbing the ball at the beginning of the Crusaders' trek. Major Cohn, filled with enthusiasm, ideas, and energy, wrote the original manuscript and carried the major burden of the history to approximately June 1945. Without his outstanding initiative many of the exploits and facts concerning the history of the Crusaders would never have reached the printed page. Many thanks to Major Cohn for an exceptional job. He is assured that his remarkable efforts are full appreciated, and we all join in a hearty cheer for "Bobby."

Next man to receive credit for the major burden is Captain Marvin C. Wachs, who picked up the ball from "Bobby" Cohn and carried it to the goal line. To Captain Wachs goes credit for completing the manuscript, arranging the manuscript and pictures, and following through on the many details of actual publication. He spent many weeks of his own time, including his terminal leave, to conclude the final details of getting the Crusaders' history into published form. A real pat on the back and heartfelt thanks goes to Captain Wachs.

To Cpl. Charles W. Strong a large share of the credit is also given. Cpl. Strong, as the able assistant of Major R. H. Cohn, wrote many pages of the original manuscript, and in addition spent many hours typing and preparing stories, securing pictures, and arranging other details for the publication. To Cpl. Strong a sincere "well done" and assurance that he may be proud of his exceptional contributions.

To the sturdy forefingers of Lt. Robert L. Smith, Lt. Jack Blake, and S/Sgt. George Crout goes credit for several of the exceptional news releases which appear in the pages of this history. To these "Old Crusaders" a very sincere commendation from the Group.

To a couple of real "Old Crusaders," known to the records as Lt. Walter M. Pleiss and Lt. Okey Snodgrass, the Group is indebted for the early history of the 69th and 70th Bombardment Squadrons, Medium, the real old timers of the South and Southwest Pacific Battles.

To Lt. Raymond Proctor, Group photo officer, and his photo-technicians and photographers, goes full credit for the many fine pictures contained in this history. To their splendid efforts can be attributed the broad coverage of excellent photographs published herein. It is regretted that many of the fine pictures provided by the Group photo laboratory could not be published because of space limitations. To each member of the "photo lab" goes a big cheer and a sincere "well done."

To Lt. Martin Levine the Group extends its thanks and appreication for the compilation of the subscription list, and for the many other tedious jobs he accomplished in connection with the publication.

The personnel of the 42nd Bombardment Group, Medium, realize that this commendation falls far short of compsensating the members mentioned above for their fine contributions to "The Crusader," but it is desired to again assure them that their efforts are appreciated, and will be appreciated more and more as the years unfold ahead of us.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

T. H. WHITNEYBELL
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps

DEDICATION

To the families of the men of the Forty-Second Bombardment Group, Medium, who gave their lives that justice and liberty might triumph, this record is humbly and respectfully dedicated.

PREFACE

In the most far-flung of the wars that have scourged the earth, fought as it was on and over a dozen seas and a hundred lands by millions of men and women of all colors and creeds organized into thousands of units for every conceivable purpose, it is beyond the human mind to select any one combat organization to be honored above others. In war as in life itself, the lot of some is to do the spectacular, to plant the pennants of victory upon the very ramparts of the enemy's fortress, while to others fall the drab, the everyday, the humdrum, the routine toils and trials that make the glorious and blood-stirring achievements possible. Between the two extremes lie the accomplishments and the experiences of the majority of men and of military organizations. Moments of glory are the fruit of months of plodding.

It is perhaps very nearly at the center of the scale that the record of the Crusaders—the Forty-Second Bombardment Group, Medium—belongs. Ours was not the superb hour in which the Luftwaffe was sent reeling from the sky over London nor the first bomb directed at Tokyo. Rather, ours was the persistent, the day in and day out raid, search, or sweep. Sometimes at the current front, sometimes at a southward or westward focus of resistance, we sought the enemy where we could find him, and steadily, sometimes slowly but always thoroughly, we pounded him and returned manyfold the destruction and disaster he had loosed upon the world. Often we protected a flank, often we cleared the sky over the shipping lanes and the coral beaches, often we flew over the ground troops as they moved in to recover from the invaders what had once belonged to us. Infrequently spectacular, seldom headlined, yet we were always there, always contributing our lot or our little toward the great end of Victory.

In the pages that follow is set forth the narrative of our Group and the part it was priviliged to carry out as its contribution to the common cause.

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 2217)

HEADQUARTERS
FAR EAST AIR FORCES
APO 925
29 NOVEMBER 1945

UNIT CITATIONS

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order No. 9396 (Section I, Bulletin 22, WD, 1943) superseding Executive Order No. 9075 (Section III, Bulletin 2, WD, 1942) and of Section IV, Circular No. 333, WD, 1943, the following units are cited by the Commanding General, Far East Air Forces:

42ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)

The 42nd Bombardment Group (M) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action from 23 June 1945 to 30 June 1945. During that week, the 42nd Bombardment Group (M), operating in support of the Australian invasion of the Japanese oil refinery center at Balikpapen, Borneo, Netherland East Indies, carried out bombing and strafing strikes against enemy shore defenses and other installations. Because each of these round trips, among the longest-range combat missions ever flown by mass formations of medium bombers, involved a flight of more than 1700 miles over open sea, it was necessary to use radio compartment fuel tanks and to make pre-mission experiments to determine the feasibility of loading the aircraft to such an extent. Taking off from a damaged runway, and encountering tropical weather fronts on four of the flights, the B-25 aircraft of the Group braved intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire to reach heavily defended Balikpapen. Without the loss of a single crew member or airplane, making minimum altitude attacks, the Group dropped over 460,000 pounds of napalm and demolition bombs, 91 per cent which fell within the target area, and expended 415,000 rounds of ammunition in strafing. Crews of the 42nd Bombardment Group (M) destroyed gun positions, warehouses, road blocks, fuel and ammunition dumps, a radar station, numerous vehicles, and 73 military buildings, as well as huge stores of gasoline and oil which the enemy had strategically placed so as to be released into shallow pits on the beach and ignited when the Australian ground troops should make their assaults. Flying down the invasion beach under intense enemy fire, the B-25 aircraft of the Group achieved such perfect timing and coordination in giving support to underwater naval demolition teams that not one man of the teams was lost. So effectively did the Group smash Japanese defenses at Balikpapen that the enemy was totally unable to contest any of the landings, and the Australian Seventh Division came ashore on an undefended beach. Credit for the success of the achievements of the Group in this week of intense and dangerous operations is due not only to the bomber crews but also to operations, intelligence, and maintenance personnel who spent long hours planning the missions and preparing and servicing the aircraft, despite inadequate facilities with which to work. In making such a significant contribution to the success of the Allied invasion and seisure of Borneo, one of the most strategically important islands in the enemy-held Netherlands East Indies, the 42nd Bombardment Group (M) brought new honor to the United States Army Air Forces.

By COMMAND OF GENERAL KENNEY:

D. R. HUTCHINSON,
Brigadier General, U.S. Army,
Chief of Air Staff

CHAPTER 1

The birth and the early creeping of the 42nd Bombardment Group, Medium, may well seem lost in the mists of antiquity that hung over the United States before World War II. Indeed to many of our members, veterans of 60 or 70 missions in the Solomons or in the Indies and Philippines, veterans of the long road home via New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, the Russells, Stirling, New Guinea—whether in the air or on the ground—the early history of the Group is an unknown quantity save for shreds and scraps of information gathered from the casual remarks of "old" oldtimers.

But if this history is to be a complete narrative of your Group it is necessary to go back almost beyond the memory of the oldest member. To go back, in fact, to January 15, 1941, when according to the official record, "The 42nd Bombardment Group (M) was activated from the 7th Bombardment Group (H), G.H.Q. Air Force, at Fort Douglas, Utah, under the jurisdiction of G.H.Q. Air Force, with cadre furnished by the 7th Bombardment Group (H)."

At that time the organization consisted of four squadrons: three tactical squadrons (the 75th, 76th and 77th) and Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron. Although there were even earlier commanders, as the Group emerges as an entity we find the following officers in command of the organization and its units: Lieut. Col. John V. Hart was Group Commander, with Capt. Eugene Nall as Group Executive. Capt. Woodrow W. Dunlop commanded Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and Majors Chester P. Gilger, Robert O. Cork, and Major Harry E. Wilson, a name which will be found more and more frequently in the following pages, commanded the 75th, 76th, and 77th squadrons, respectively.

Among the key enlisted men who reported to these squadrons at that time we find names that cannot be omitted from this narrative. For instance, the 75th Squadron received M/S Fred O'Toole, T/S John P. Shadko, and S/S Emil Gratzek (later master sergeants and line chiefs), to the 76th was assigned M/S Norman J. Mitchell, while the 77th roster shows the name of M/S Rudy J. Baros. Group Headquarters received M/S John M. Suggs, and S/S Joseph F. McLaughlin, later master sergeant and line chief of one of our squadrons and still later the first enlisted man of the original ground echelon to be rotated to the United States. It is of interest to note the name of a buck sergeant at this time, Richard E. Eliason, who rose to the rank of captain overseas and became engineering officer of a squadron. Still other names to be remembered are Sgt. William F. Ott, Corp. Earl T. Nicholson, Pfc Donald E. Holloway, and Woodrow L. Nealy, also a one-striper—names that seem odd without the prefixes of Master- and Tech that they later acquired.

While Group and these squadrons were in the throes of organization, the 16th Reconnaissance Squadron, later to become a tactical squadron of the Group, was being organized, drawing its cadre from the 88th Reconnaissance Squadron.

During the Fort Douglas period our history was much like that of other early units. Those were the days when the Army Group Forces drilled with broomsticks and a dilapidated farm cart labelled "Tank" was a tank for purposes of maneuvers. Our position was somewhat similar. We lacked airplanes and we were still drawing in our initial personnel. So while some training was accomplished in conjunction with the 7th Bombardment Group (H), it was chiefly hangar flying and ground training. One hundred and seventy-seven recruits joined the Group, mostly from Kelly Field, and were reassigned to squadrons.

So passed the early months of 1941, collectively a preflight state.

Orders originating in Washington on May 7, 1941, marked the first important stage of the Group's long career. The Group was transferred with its current strength to Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, as a permanent station. The move progressed in several sections. Boise Air Base, later named in honor of the late Lieutenant Gowen of Burley, Idaho, was still under construction when the first elements of the Group arrived. The advance echelon, arriving on May 25, was first quartered at Camp Bonneville, an Idaho National Guard Armory outside Boise, as the barracks at the Field were not ready. Other elements arrived, the barracks became available, and by June 4 the entire Group as then constituted was located at its new base and getting ready for business. The 16th Reconnaissance Squadron also was transferred to Boise along with the Group and accompanied us on the move.

As soon as housekeeping had been set up, the Group plunged into a full time ground training program. While the runways were being completed, classes, problems, drills, and the reception of new personnel, combat and ground, went on apace. In August and September six B-18 airplanes were received and at last we could go to work.

In October, word was received that B-26s were being assigned to us, and crews were immediately dispatched to Patterson Field, Ohio, for accelerated service tests. Completing these, the crews moved on to the Glenn L. Martin plant at Baltimore to take possession of the planes and ferry them back to base. Six crews went out at a time and the process continued until a total of thirty-five B-26s had been ferried to Boise.

The B-26 represented a new challenge to most of our men of that period. Previous experience had been limited to the B-18 and B-23, the latter one of only 50 such aircraft made for the AAF. However, they speedily mastered the new ship, and when 15 newly-graduated pilots

arrived from Kelly Field in November, they were given to understand that they were among old hands.

Then came *December 7, 1941.*

So much has been said and written on the events of that day and their implications that one is very wary of adding to the mass, but the activities of the Group and squadrons on that fateful day and the reactions of our personnel to its developments are a necessary part of this narrative.

According to the reports of Group Operations, only transition flying and routine pilot check-outs had been scheduled for the week. At noon on Saturday, December 6, desks and files were closed and most of the personnel departed the offices and line for the week-end, in those halycon days a fixed institution which lasted from noon on Saturday until Monday morning. Those who lived off the post went home for lunch and golf or whatever the day's plans indicated. The post contingent went to the barracks, to town, or wherever their inclinations led them. Saturday night was normally lively in town, and some Class "A" passes, as usual, decided it was too late to go back to the post.

The events of Sunday, the 7th, and the manner of their intrusion into what was up to then normal Sunday life for men in the service as well as civilians, are well revealed in the following recollection by Maj. Robert M. Clark, Group Personnel Officer, (then Second Lieutenant Clark, Adjutant of Headquarters Squadron).

"I was living at a ranch about fifteen miles from Boise at the time and had been out riding on Sunday afternoon. I was driving back when I first heard the news at about four o'clock. As soon as I reached home I heard additional broadcasts and the announcement directing all members of Gowen Field to return to the post at once. Still in civilian clothes, I drove to the post at once and encountered considerable difficulty in persuading the guard to admit me, for a Red Alert was on. Condition Red lasted until ten that night. Combat teams had been made up, road blocks constructed, and at the corners of drill fields water-cooled .30 caliber machine guns had been emplaced."

T/S Cleo Dugan, of the 390th, provides another view which reflects the day for many. "Most of the boys were in Boise for Sunday dinner, to visit their girl friends, or go to the show. They streamed back to Gowen by bus, taxi, and private car. No one was suffering from too much recreation. A great element of surprise was present, of course, but it seemed to be taken in stride and everyone said "Well, it is here." The full import did not hit us for two or three days. That night between emergency duties and keeping ears glued to the radio there was little sleeping. Every one took time off to listen to the President's speech, and I remember vividly the silent groups of men clustered about radios in hangars, in the alert lounge, orderly rooms and barracks, as over the radio came the familiar voice of our beloved late President Roosevelt."

The recollection of S/S Bob Bender, chief clerk at Group Headquarters, affords a typical and amusing side-light that will be familiar to many as a duplicate of their own experiences. "I was in the barracks at Gowen at about 10 a. m. getting ready to go to town when we heard the first news. Needless to say, I did not get to town. Later in the day we were told to send our civilian clothes home."

James H. Robinson, first sergeant of the 390th, had double cause to remember the day, for while out hunting on this week-end he accidentally shot himself in the leg and went to the hospital. When he returned to duty on January 17, 1942, he found himself in another Army, a war-time Army.

Most of the operational aircraft of the Group were immediately ordered to Muroc Lake, California, on a night flight.

Monday, December 8, found every one extremely busy. The 77th Squadron was immediately built up to full Table of Organization and Equipment strength and alerted for movement to Alaska. The guard at Gowen, as at all other posts, was doubled, training went into a seven-day-week schedule and a good deal of it was carried out on the double. Passes to leave the post were signed by the C. O. only, and were for three hours' duration. Few of those who lived off the post were able to get home overnight. The pace of events never returned to pre-war normal, and it was a long time before the extreme tension relaxed at all.

On December 19, 1941, the 77th squadron left for Alaska, under the command of Major Robert C. Cork. The squadron flew its planes to its new assignment.

Twelve departed and nine arrived. Three were lost to the weather. fortunately without loss of life. The leader of this flight was the nephew of the famous Tokyo air-raider, Lieutenant General Doolittle. 1st Lieut. Glenn Doolittle later became a major in the Fifth Air Force. Becoming separated from the formation in weather, Lieutenant Doolittle and his flight floundered around until practically out of gas and were finally forced to crash-land in an Alaskan snow-bank. After four and a half days of imitating Eskimos, they were rescued and returned to civilization .

One of the pilots, known only to the writer as Lieutenant Avery, had been banged up rather badly in his landing. Upon his discharge from a hospital, he was criticized by his superiors for cracking up his plane. The Lieutenant retorted with what can be called the classic of the crash-lander: "Glenn L. Martin can make another B-26 but Mother Avery is too old to raise another son."

The 77th was one of the first units of the AAF to operate from advanced bases in the Aleutians and was later to go on to a brilliant record in patrol work, but its departure was a parting of the ways, for the Squadron was soon removed from Group control.

CHAPTER 2

Nineteen forty-two opened for the Group with another change of station, this time to McChord Field, Washington, which many an early Group man thinks of as the Group's original home. It was not our original station, but it was in many respects our most important base in the United States, for it was here that the Group gained its first field experience in coastal patrol and shaped itself for the day that all knew was coming—Alert for Overseas.

For the first time the squadrons were not all based together. Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and the 76th were at McChord Field. The 75th went to Portland, Oregon, and the 16th Reconnaissance, by then a part of our family, to Paine Field at Everett, Washington. Our task was to provide patrols for the Northwest Pacific Coast, and it was for this reason that we operated from multiple bases. The ramifications were extended still further with the organization of satellite detachments at smaller fields and with the removal of the Command Section to Seattle, from which headquarters all activities were directed for a time.

From this Command Section grew the Advance Echelon of the Fourth Bomber Command, which later controlled much of the Air Forces' anti-submarine patrol for the West Coast. Leaving Boise on January 10, Group Commander Col. John V. Hart, Group Operations Officer Maj. Holcombe, Capt. Melvin R. Hansen, S/Sgt. Earl T. Nicholson and Sgt. Frank Gall had exactly a day and a half in which to open their office in the County-City Building in Seattle, take over from the Second Air Force, and commence operations. It was from this office that Colonel Gilger, who succeeded Major Holcombe as A-3, set out on his pioneering flight to Alaska in an effort to establish a ferrying route to our Alaskan and Aleutian bases. How successful this flight was is reflected in the first Army Airways Communications Chart and Guide Book which quoted almost verbatim Colonel Gilger's report of his findings and recommendations.

An amusing feature of the first days at McChord was that, owing to overcrowded conditions at the field, a squadron or similar group of men was crowded into one barracks instead of the standard four allotted to a squadron. Not only did the full personnel of the squadron (fortunately under T/O at the time) sleep in this barracks, but the small end bedrooms usually reserved for top non-coms served as the C.O.'s office and Orderly Room. Entering the barracks after lights out was a matter of cautious groping and probing to get past the row of double-deck bunks that ran down the center aisle, over footlockers to your own bunk, where by edging and folding yourself in you could finally take a deep breath again. Only eight inches of space separated the bunks in the side rows. This condition lasted for about two weeks, until the 12th Group moved from McChord and we took over their space.

At this time A-29's were being flown on patrol, and Operations and Intelligence were officed in hangars on the line.

As the patrol schedule progressed, individual units operated under Navy direction at times, the closest coordination being vital in those days when the Nipponese war dragon, the blood of Pearl Harbor still in its nostrils, was deemed capable of rearing its head off our northwest shores. The 16th Reconnaissance, and later the 75th, operated directly under Navy command for a considerable period. Although we had been operating directly with the 16th for some time previously, it was not until March that this unit was officially assigned to the Group, and, by the same order, was converted into a Bombardment Squadron (M), with its Photographic Section becoming a part of Group Headquarters. The 16th also acquired a new name in the process, the 406th Bombardment Squadron (M).

Another important development came in March, 1942—one which some readers may well consider the beginning of the narrative for them—when on the 20th, the 390th Bombardment Squadron (M) was activated, drawing its cadre of 21 officers and 166 enlisted men mainly from Headquarters Squadron. Major Nall assumed command and the 390th became a going concern, ready to take its part in the patrols. S/Sgt. Hubert E. Hall, who later received an in-the-field commission and who rose to the rank of Captain as adjutant of the 70th, came in as first sergeant. Capt. John W. Osborne was the first Engineering Officer and Capt. Jean H. Daugherty, of whom there will be more later, was the first Operations Officer. 1st Lieut. Lewis E. Tiffany was the Adjutant, but was soon succeeded by Capt. Theron H. Whitneybell. 1st Lieut. Robert M. Clark succeeded Captain Whitneybell, who went to Group, and was in turn succeeded by then 1st Lieut., now Major, Roy Harris. On the line we find Donald E. Holloway, then a technical sergeant and later a warrant officer and Assistant Group Engineering Officer. M/Sgt. John E. Hodgin was Line Chief at the time, but afterward left the squadron and Group to accept a direct commission as a first lieutenant and assignment as Base Engineering Officer at Tonopah Bombing Range in Nevada. Another master sergeant from this line also left us, Squadron Technical Inspector John Watson, later a warrant officer (j. g.) and Engineering Officer at the Edmonton, Alberta, ferrying stop on the Alaskan fly-way.

A disaster struck the 390th on May 24th when their beloved commander, who had been promoted to lieutenant colonel only six days earlier, was instantly killed in a take-off accident at McChord Field. To their death with Colonel Nall went the Line Chief of Headquarters

COLONEL HARRY E. WILSON—with whom the 42nd came overseas, and under whose guidance it became an efficient fighting machine. "Light Horse Harry" Wilson carried with him into combat the same spirit that made him one of West Point's all time great backs.

Squadron, Master Sergeant Shepherd, and Corporal Guinn N. Murdock.

Capt. John W. Osborne assumed command on Colonel Nall's passing, but was soon succeeded by Maj. Strother B. Hardwick, Jr., who was to lead the squadron overseas.

In May the 76th Squadron departed McChord in its aircraft to join an Anti-Submarine Command at Miami, and continued its patrol activities under the command of Maj. Woodrow W. Dunlop.

After the 76th had left the lovely northwest spring for the semi-tropical luxury of Florida, the 406th too was not long delayed in leaving McChord and Paine Field, but its direction was north. Commanded by Maj. Harold D. Courtney, the former reconnaissance unit proceeded to Anchorage, Alaska, for temporary duty with the Eleventh Air Force. Its ground echelon moved to a temporary station at Portland Army Air Base and remained there through the summer and fall, before joining the air element in Alaska.

In July the Group Commander, Col. John V. Hart, was ordered to foreign duty as Chief of Staff of the Eleventh Air Force in Alaska, and shortly thereafter Col. Harry E. Wilson assumed command of the Group for the first time.

Colonel Wilson was commissioned in 1928 from the United States Military Academy at West Point where he was an All-American football star in 1927-28. Prior to that he was graduated from Pennsylvania State where his exploits on the gridiron came to the attention of sportswriters throughout America. He was nicknamed "Light-Horse Harry," a name that remained with him and followed him overseas. He won his wings at Kelly Field at about the time of the stock market crash in '29, and was checked out in just about everything with wings that the Air Forces possessed. He was a fighter pilot, reconnaissance pilot, bomber pilot, and we'll venture to say he's toted the mail on more than one occasion. He calls Sharon, Pa., his home.

Through the summer and fall months regular patrols were flown daily, and at McChord training went on in B-18s, B-26s, A-29s, and the early B-25s. The Group at that time also had some PT-17s which are chiefly remembered for the headaches they brought to operations officers every time an enthusiastic pilot buzzed a farm-house or train. These attentions were not appreciated by the good householders and railroaders, but they were good experience for pilots later to strafe Jap airfields and supply bases.

During this period alerts were very frequent, and many oldtimers will well remember the occasion when subs were reported leaving Midway, and everyone started for his station at 4 a. m. in a fog so thick that jeep piloting was next to impossible.

While some units were on patrol duty, others were under rigorous training with new combat crews being assembled for the Alaskan Defense Command. Several crews with ground maintenance personnel were sent to the Fleet Torpedo School at San Diego for training in that weapon, and the 390th Squadron was busy testing incendiary bombs and bombing techniques at the Las Vegas, Nevada, Bombing and Gunnery Range.

In October, 1942, Capt. Jean H. Daugherty flew a submarine patrol that made Group history. Flying an A-29, the old Lockheed Hudson, on the first day that the 390th took over the patrol from the 75th, which had been relentlessly searching the coastal waters for enemy subs for months without making a single sighting, Captain Daugherty had not been on search for more than an hour when he spotted a sub. It was typical of the good hunting luck that the small Texan with the fighting heart was to enjoy throughout his career with the Group; it was also an all-time record for colossal snafus. Captain Daugherty made a two-mile run, opened his bomb bay and released his bombs. All were near misses which would probably have decided the issue permanently, but, unfortunately, in the excitement of the chase, he had forgotten to arm them. Returning to strafe, he swooped in again and the gunner, Sgt. Robert Strempeck, strapped in his turret, got his bead and was set to squeeze his triggers when he discovered that there were no barrels in the guns! The sub crash-dived, and the utterly exasperated and crestfallen Captain Daugherty flew back to base. The royal "chewing-out" he received was a trifle compared with his own disappointment.

On November 20, 1st Lieut. William S. Southern made what is believed to be the Group's first water landing, when an engine cut out on him five or six miles off-shore on the way home from a patrol mission. Sgt. Robert E. Pierce, the gunner, hit the silk and his fate was never learned. The radio operator, Sgt. Albert Povodnick, climbed out onto the tail and jumped, but his chute fouled in the empennage and he was dragged down to his death. His body drifted in several days later and was found at the mouth of the Columbia River. Lieut. Leroy Kline, the navigator, was killed when the plane struck the water, but Lieutenant Southern and the engineer-gunner, S/Sgt. William R. Dart, got clear of the plane, swam approximately half a mile and walked out onto the beach.

The 14th of December brought orders for Colonel Wilson to proceed to an overseas replacement pool, and he said a regretful goodbye to the Group for the first time, handing over command to Maj. Edwin J. Latosewski. The latter was not with the Group long, for the months of December, 1942, and January, 1943, were marked by many changes in the administrative and command personnel. By the end of January, however, the following officers were established in their duties, in some cases to continue them through the entire period of the war:

Lieutenant Colonel Guy L. Hudson—Commanding Officer.

Lieutenant Colonel Bourne Adkison—Operations Officer.

Major T. H. Whitneybell—Executive Officer.

Captain Ray Hamilton—S-2.

Captain Robert M. Clark—Adjutant.

Major Claude C. Sturgis, Jr.—S-4 (Succeeded overseas by Major Charles H. Porter).

Second Lieutenant Willis R. Garber—Communications Officer.

Second Lieutenant John E. Morrison—Assistant S-3.

Second Lieutenant Frank W. Gilliam—Statistical Officer.

Second Lieutenant Carlyle W. McClelland—Special Service Officer.

Warrant Officer (J. G.) Raymond L. Proctor—Photographic Officer.

The Sergeant-Major was Wayne J. Guidry, who was commissioned overseas and left the fold shortly thereafter. M/Sgt. Earl T. Nicholson was Section Chief of Group Operations and M/Sgt. Malcolm McLeod was Section Chief in S-4.

By this time some changes were taking place in the 75th. Private Lundeen, an administrative clerk, had risen to first sergeant, succeeding Lowell P. Kolaks, who was transferred out of the Group. S/Sgt. Richard J. Corr was well established in Tech Supply, and a former private in that section, William H. Paschal, had by now become a staff sergeant, the chief administrative NCO.

It is interesting to note the name Truman A. Spencer, Jr., a newly-made captain who was destined to command this squadron in its overseas trek. The adjutant was Capt. Clifford M. Barrow, who later became a major and Executive Officer of the 70th. In Operations we find Capt. George Hundt with S/Sgt. Gordon Hartford as section chief. Capt. Linwood T. Fleming, then a first lieutenant, was the S-2. Communications listed M/Sgt. Charles Cunningham, section chief, and 2nd Lieut. Harold Zahrndt, Officer-in-charge. In the all-important post of Engineering Officer was 1st Lieut. Arthur Bohnhoff, and M/Sgt. Fred O'Toole was line chief. Armament and Ordnance were run by 2nd Lieut. John Brownell and 2nd Lieut. Richard Grabenhorst, assisted capably by M/Sgt. Hector Handry and T/Sgt. Stanley Quader, in that order. The man responsible for feeding the boys was T/Sgt. Harry Barkowski.

Of the 390th gang in office at this time, Capt. Roy Harris was adjutant; 1st Lieut. Charles D. Bergman and 2nd Lieut. John J. Schirp were in armament and ordnance in that order, and 1st Lieut. Matthias Little handled the duties of the "smart department," alias, Intelligence. Capt. Johnny D. Lee was Operations Officer and Capt. Charles Porter the engineering boss. Richard Eliasen was a master sergeant and line chief, and Charlie E. Gibson, a staff sergeant, took care of the chow details.

When the "Group" learned that "the wild blue yonder" was the South Pacific, they lined up en masse to have their picture taken. Sternness, eagerness, interest were shown in their faces. The months overseas wrought considerable change in most of them.

CHAPTER 3

On February 14, 1943, St. Valentine's Day, we received a very important and long-awaited Valentine greeting, our overseas alert. Previous busy periods paled in comparison with the fever of preparation that immediately ensued. S-1 and S-4 were requisitioning and acquiring new personnel and supplies of all kinds. S-2 and S-3 went into intensified training for six weeks. At this time we were assigned the first of the planes with which we were to make our name, the fighting-hearted Mitchell B-25s—not the largest, not the fastest, but thoroughbreds.

With the alert for overseas came the separation from the Group of the 406th, in Alaska, and the 76th, in Florida. On February 15, twenty-two combat crews from the 75th and 390th, together with ground and additional flight personnel, proceeded to Hammer Field, Fresno, California, for their final polishing. Organized as a training detachment, this segment was supplied with five old B-25s, models A, B, and C, from the 41st Bombardment Group. The training program included skip bombing, aerial gunnery, using towed targets, ground gunnery with turret and flexible guns, night navigational flights and formation flying, and was designed to get the crews as ready as possible for what was to come, short of the lessons which only combat itself could teach. Maj. Frank B. Harding was in command of this detachment and came overseas with the water echelon as Assistant Group operations Officer. He later transferred to the Fifth Bombardment Group (H), also stationed at Guadalcanal at the time of the Crusaders' tenure there. With the Fifth he assumed command of a squadron of B-24s, and distinguished himself as a Squadron Leader over the tough Jap targets of Truk, Yap, and Woleai.

During the Hammer Field period, combat crews from the 75th and 390th were ordered to McClellan Field, Sacramento, California, for some additional training, and there received ten new B-25Cs, which they flew to Hamilton Field. Shortly thereafter, on March 6 to be exact, this contingent took off for Hickam Field, Hawaii. Thus to these crews belongs the honor of having been the vanguard of the U. S.—joined 42nd Bombardment Group (M) to set off for the front. One of these planes fell victim to weather and fuel exhaustion and went down just 100 miles short of its goal. Fortunately the crew were rescued, and all but the pilot were able to carry on with us later. The crew consisted of 1st Lieut. C. F. Smith, pilot, 2nd Lieut. Rex Workman, co-pilot, 2nd Lieut. Clarence D. Shinn, navigator, and S/Sgts. D. J. Stiles, F. W. Berens, Jr., and George Rice. Other Crusaders who ferried these first planes across included Captains Jean H. Daugherty, Joe D. Wheeler, James J. Yeomen, Lieutenants David C. Organ, Alto F. Dolan, Oscar Vordahl, Hugh G. Blackwell, Glenn A. Pebles, Willard O. Johnson, Raymond F. Johnson, William S. Southern, and Martin M. Boswell. All of these men were first pilots. In the co-pilot seats were Lieutenants William J. Moore, Charles E. Laird, Lloyd Wattenbarger, James R. Halstead, Charles Post, Roland C. Shaw, William H. Brokate, Jr., Otto R.

Hartwig, Robert A. Meister, Robert B. Brown, and Rudolph Matlock. The navigators included Lieutenants Melvin B. Cobb, Harold Campbell, Ermine D. Lewis, Morris A. Rossiter, Arthur F. Humphry, John S. Swain, William H. Powell, and Bernhardt Thal.

On March 15th the entire ground organization of the 390th and Group Headquarters said farewell to McChord Field and Tacoma, and with numerous tender good-byes to wives and sweethearts were on their way to the staging area at Camp Stoneman, Pittsburgh, California. We doubt that anyone who made this trip can forget the assembly in front of McChord's spacious hangars. With the 390th in ranks and accounted for, Group Headquarters in rank and accounted for, Colonel Hudson marched us to a nearby railroad siding where a troop train was waiting. Without further ado, we loaded aboard and were on our way. Somewhere along the line the train stopped and more coaches loaded with personnel were hooked on, and once more the monotonous clacking of the wheels on the rails reverberated through the swiftly falling dusk.

The added coaches, it was soon discovered, were those carrying the water echelon of the 75th, which had started their overseas trek from Portland, Oregon, under the command of Captain Spencer. At Camp Stoneman the training detachment from Hammer Field rejoined, and attention was turned to final orientation, rounding out personnel requirements, and obtaining the last items of supply. Here, too, was given the first of many ship discipline lectures, encompassing talks, practice in abandoning ships enacted on dummy constructions strung along an entire avenue of Camp Stoneman, and instructions in the use of the life-belt.

Loading of equipment had gone on for several days at San Francisco, but only a relative handful of men of the organization had been concerned in that. The rest of us were at Stoneman, busy and impatiently idle by turns while the Army mills ground at their seemingly unhurried pace.

Some visited Pittsburgh. In normal times a progressive California town, proud of the industries that gave it its name, Pittsburgh was a little overwhelmed by the prominence into which it found itself thrust by the fortunes of war as the last foot-hold on the land of their birth of so many thousands of Americans. Uniform crowded uniform on its tidy streets. Many of them were new, and, true to Army tailoring tradition, too large or too small; the town's tailors were rushed as never before by those who still had a preference for neat fit. Beer passed over Pittsburgh's bars as fast as the harried barmen and barmaids could open it, and flowed down thirsty throats in unprecedented volume. But all was good-natured. The joshing and the jostling had their place, but beneath it all, young minds were on the serious business ahead.

Then came March 27th. Even for those of us who lived it and thought at the time that no detail of that day, however trivial, could ever be forgotten, it is difficult to reconstruct. A crisp March day in northern California, a little nippy in the early dawn hours for the first risers, warming at noon, and during the march down to the river piers of Pittsburgh and the inevitable Army wait before boarding the *S.S. Catalina,* definitely hot. No sooner were we aboard than a fleet of trucks moved onto the piers and disgorged themselves of countless colored troops. An Army band struck up the tune of the southland, "Dixie," and for 40 minutes thereafter we were serenaded by this band with tunes from the cowboy country, stirring marches from the pen of John Phillip Sousa, ragtime, and jazz from modern contemporaries, songs of the last war and so on. Everyone crowded the port rail, the side of the boat facing the pier, until the *Catalina* was in danger of capsizing before the trip even got started. Upon receiving orders and warnings from the bridge the men were quietly, but speedily, dispersed to less dangerous vantage points. At last the whistle blew and the veteran ship, a once famous excursion craft now bedecked in battle gray, backed off from the pier and started towards San Francisco, where our troop transport was awaiting us.

We didn't see much of Frisco, just a long stretch of covered pier, down one gang plank, up another, down a hatch, out on a deck, down another hatch and into the hold, which was to be our home for the long crossing.

The *S.S. Maui,* with 105 officers and 568 enlisted men of the Group, cleared the Golden Gate the following morning, March 28th, at nine-thirty. We were traveling in company with the *S.S. Sea Witch* and one destroyer until we reached the Farrollon Islands, just beyond the Golden Gate, at which point our destroyer left us and the *Sea Witch* took up another heading. Although at the time we didn't know it, our first port of call was to be Noumea, New Caledonia, and our final destination was to be Guadalcanal. From this point on, until 24 hours out of New Caledonia, we traveled through sub-infested waters, unescorted and alone.

The vast and incredibly blue Pacific! The enchanting South Sea Islands! How many writers have portrayed both so well, but alas, not from Army transports. But that too has been written and re-written. We lived through it, so we'll remember what we choose and stick to the record.

During 16 days outward bound, innumerable alerts and abandon ship drills always seemed to come just when you had found a comfortable seat, or shall we say a place to squat. Some of the alerts were the real thing, but we escaped actual trouble, and on April 15th, Land-Ho! proved a welcome reality.

For most of us Noumea was but a prospect glimpsed from the decks of the *Maui* and from the trucks that whisked us away from the docks, past the Nickel smelter and up the island to Camp Barnes, our first overseas Casual Camp. Few who were there will ever entirely forget the omnipresent red dust that got into everything and onto everything, but we had little time for sightseeing.

We were presented for the first time with the prob-

lems that Armies encounter in the field, with the exception that we did not have to start entirely from scratch. Some tents had been pitched before our arrival. We set about pitching others and generally getting into shape for our first night ashore. Two difficulties were notable. Owing to a jam-up in the unloading of the *Maui,* our rations did not reach us until the next day, and eating that first day ashore was a matter of cadging a meal from neighboring outfits. The neighbors were more neighborly about this than about the matter of latrines. It was hard digging in that soil once you got below the dust, and when we began digging our own the next day we understood their attitude. The first night quite a number of men took French leave to go into Noumea. The attraction was as much the showers at the Red Cross as anything else.

The tents at Camp Barnes were set on semi-terraces of a loaf-shaped hill. This was an oddity in camps which proved a very serious disadvantage when the first heavy rains came a few days later. The water sluiced down the hill and collected in pools at the foot, reaching knee-depth in the mess tent on one historic night. To one accustomed to the rigid anti-malaria S.O.P. of the Pacific of later periods, it is incredible to learn that no mosquito bars were available on the first night at Caledonia. A few experiments in sleeping inside mattress covers to escape the pests, resulted in near asphyxiation. This situation was promptly remedied the following morning, as was the feeding situation. No official record exists of what the first meal served by the Group messes at Caledonia was, but it is a very safe assumption that it was some form of C ration, the first of literally hundreds of such meals to follow.

Two days after our arrival the 75th went to Plaines des Gaiacs, (P. D. G. for short) for temporary duty and further training with B-25s. On the 22nd the Air Echelons of Headquarters and of the 390th Squadron flew to Nandi, Fiji, there to be joined by the nine crews who had flown from Hamilton to Hawaii on March 6th and thence on to Fiji.

Already at Fiji were the 70th Bombardment Squadron (M), back in the rest area from its first tour of action in the Solomons, but flying search missions for the Second Island Command, and the Air Echelon of the 69th Bombardment Squadron (M). These two squadrons, the 69th partially equipped with B-25s and B-26s and under the command of Major Leroy L. Stefonowicz, were assigned to the Group, bringing our strength to four squadrons, with the air echelons of three then together at Fiji.

CHAPTER 4

Both the 69th and 70th had made starts on the brilliant war record they were to contribute to the Group's accomplishments before they joined us. Both had begun their careers as units of the 38th Bombardment Group (M). Both were activated at Langley Field, Virginia, on January 15, 1941. The 70th Squadron consisted of one officer, Lieut. Leroy L. Stefonowicz, a name that is part and parcel of the 70th's early history, and 19 enlisted men. With this complement of 20 men the squadron functioned as an embryonic skeleton that finally attained distinguishable proportions four months later.

The early history and achievements of both the 69th and 70th were, unfortunately for a history of this type, not documented and recorded in detail. Between the fact that these two organizations were moved around the world so rapidly and hectically in the pell-mell rush that followed Pearl Harbor, and the inevitable loss of shipments and boxes, many of which contained the only documentary proof of their exploits and deeds, the records at our disposal leave much to be desired in an accurate account of the 42nd and its family. What information is available and is used in this account we owe to the patience and untiring effort of an early Intelligence Officer, Lieut. Walter H. Pleiss, Jr., who took it upon himself to examine existing records and rosters of the 69th Squadron, and who spent many days poring over details given him by the officers and men who lived those early days. His minute search for corroboration of even the smallest details lends authenticity to his story, written in July of '43, which became the official early history of the 69th Squadron now stored in the Archives of Washington. From him we learn that the story of the present 69th really begins with the acquisition of B-26 airplanes in November, 1941, although it had been an original member of the 38th Bombardment Group (M) like its sister squadron the 70th.

The Public Relations Officer of the Group in 1945 and assistant Intelligence Officer of the 70th in 1944, attempted the seemingly impossible task of reconstructing the early history of the 70th. Aided immeasurably by the early writing of Lieut. Okey Snodgrass, Squadron navigator who excavated and compiled the facts, names, and dates, the official history of the old 70th was completed for the records.

In January, 1942, both squadrons were ordered to leave Jackson, Mississippi, where they had been stationed for several months, and the personnel departed in sections on January 17th, 18th, and 19th, for San Francisco and overseas duty. At this point we print verbatim from Lieutenant Pleiss' story of the 69th.

"The enlisted men of the Ground Echelons were housed upon their arrival in San Francisco, in the Livestock Pavillion, or "Cow Palace," and Lieut. Walter Howard, who became an Engineering Officer of the 69th, was the Officer of the Day the first day, January 23rd. The weather was inclement, and considerable unpleasantness was encountered while erecting the cook tent and setting up the mess facilities.

"On January 29th the Ground Echelon of the 38th Group (M) boarded the Army Transport *Bliss,* formerly the *President Cleveland.* The *Bliss* left in convoy from San Francisco on the 31st and arrived at Brisbane, Australia, on February 25, 1942. The Group then transhipped to Melbourne and thence by rail to Ballarat, where the troops were quartered in private homes for one week. They returned to Brisbane by rail, staying one day at Camp Dumbdon, and then proceeded by truck convoy to Amberley Field, Ipswich, Australia. On May 17 the 69th Ground Echelon returned to Brisbane and departed on a Dutch steamer for Noumea, New Caledonia. From Noumea they went directly by truck convoy to Tontouta, arriving there on May 20, 1942. They remained at Tontouta until June 23, when they traveled to Plaines des Gaiacs, after joining the Air echelon and forming the complete 69th Bombardment Squadron (M) for the first time. It was then that the 69th was detached from the 38th Group, for during their stay at New Caledonia they were operating under the direction of Colonel Rich, Air Commander of New Caledonia, who in turn received instructions directly from ComAirSoPac, an abbreviation denoting the Commander of Air for the South Pacific.

"In the meantime the Air Echelon of the 38th Group stayed at Fort McDowell, California, until March 8th, when the air officers and crew chiefs departed for Patterson Field near Dayton, Ohio. The remainder of the Echelon left Oakland on April 2nd, arriving at Patterson Field four days later.

"At Patterson Field the pilots, crews, and ground men received further instruction on B-26 airplanes, and it was in May, 1942, that the 38th Group was equipped with B-26s.

"During this period the first officers' promotions came through. Lincoln E. Behling and James F. Collins were promoted to Captain, while Second Lieutenants Clifford A. Johnston, Charles F. Lingamfelter, Lewis C. Long, and Fred C. Wright, Jr., became First Lieutenants.

"On May 19th the 69th, under the command of Capt. John L. Burhus, received orders to proceed overseas, and the first flight of three planes piloted by Captain Collins, Lieutenant Long, and Lieutenant Watson left immediately for Hamilton Field, California, and Hawaii.

"It is necessary to recapitulate at this point. Hitherto the Air Echelon personnel of the 69th had been actually the 71st Squadron, but when the order was issued, the 71st was assigned to the 69th Ground Echelon overseas, while the original 69th became the 71st and stayed at Patterson Field. Hence the officers and men of the 69th changed the number of their squadron.

"Shortly thereafter, 45 officers and 28 enlisted men left

in B-26B planes, while a few traveled by American Airlines to the West Coast. The planes left Patterson Field for Fort Wayne, Indiana, to re-load with gas for their cross-country trip. There the pilots and crews named their ships and started for California.

" 'Henry' was piloted by 2nd Lieut. Robert E. Wilmarth with 2nd Lieut. James B. Story and Paul E. Tibbetts as co-pilot and navigator respectively. 1st Lieut. Clifford E. Johnson with 2nd Lieuts. John S. Tkac and Joseph V. Seefried, Jr., flew the 'Yap Trap'; 1st Lieut. Lewis C. Long, 2nd Lieut. Lee H. Wagner, and navigator 2nd Lieut. Thomas N. Weems, Jr., were in the 'Hattie M.'; 1st Lieut. Thomas R. Waddleton, 2nd Lieut. Girard Dumas, and 2nd Lieut. Chalmers W. Gustafson rode the 'Peedoff Patootie'; while 1st Lieut. Fred C. Wright, Jr., with 2nd Lieuts. Joseph H. Moore and Samuel J. Chambers were flying the 'Arkansas Traveler.'

"Capt. Lincoln E. Schling with 2nd Lieuts. Elaine E. Wiesner and Mitchell S. Spadone left in the 'Mormon Meteor'; 2nd Lieuts. Lloyd B. Field, Edwin J. Scharman, and Thomas A. Riles, Jr., flew in 'Judy'; Capt. James F. Collins, Jr., 2nd Lieuts. Colin O. Villines, and 2nd Lieut. Frederick A. McNutt, Jr., rode the 'Winsockie'; Capt. John L. Burhus with 2nd Lieuts. James H. Doolittle, Jr., and Daniel M. Feeley took 'Little John'; 2nd Lieuts. Stephen H. Howbert, Donald White, and Frank A. Morris were in the 'Kansas City Kitty'; while two unnamed planes were flown by 2nd Lieuts. Lloyd E. Whitley, Enders Dickinson, III, and Eugene J. English, Jr.; and 2nd Lieuts. William S. Watson, Leonard H. Whittington, and John P. Schuman. Along with the above crew were nine bombardiers; 2nd Lieuts. James W. Magers, Anthony D. Korumpas, Louis A. Bartha, Irving Kemp, Dayton T. Kert, Robert H. Hudson, John J. Bartos, Oscar F. McDaniels, Lawrence H. Krogh, Charles C. Hughes, and Jerome F. Goldstein. Pilot 2nd Lieut. Vernon P. Martin, Armament Officer William H. Rosar, and Engineering Officer Jasper W. Howard were included.

"Before reaching New Caledonia two planes were lost and two more were damaged and replaced. The first to go was Lieutenant Whitley's, the second was Lieutenant Long's, and the other two, Captain Collins' and Lieutenant Watson's, were lost in the battle of Midway.

"Ordered to take off from Baer Field, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, at 0530 on May 19th for the Sacramento Air Depot without maps or briefing, Lieutenant Whitley and crew were lost over Nebraska in a storm when the radio compass ceased to function. The fuel transfer pump also failed to operate, so despite Lieut. English's successful navigation by use of the Airways Facilities' Chart, Lieutenant Whitley was compelled to land the B26B in a tiny civilian airfield near Fremont, Nebraska. Two rural citizens present at the landing, seeing a medium bomber for the first time, asked if it were a training ship, while another spectator was positive that Lt. Whitley and his men were recruiting.

"After the weather had cleared and the plane had been lightened, Lieutenant Whitley attempted a take off from the short grassy strip. Taking off the wet, slippery field proved hazardous enough in a B-26, and the plane cleared a telegraph pole only after crumpling the plane's port bomb bay door. Lieuts. Whitley and Dickinson brought the plane safely into Omaha, where it was replaced by another B-26B from the Glenn L. Martin plant of that city. Several days later the whole crew in a new plane departed for Sacramento and arrived there without further difficulty.

"At the Sacramento Air Depot the planes were stripped of armor plate, machine guns, and other equipment, while extra gas tanks were fitted into the bomb bays. From there they proceeded to Hamilton Field, where the planes were given a final check by the crew chiefs. They were then refueled, and the first flight left for Hickam Field, Oahu, Hawaii on May 22, 1942. The flight lasted 13 hours and was the first time in history that this particular 2,200-mile hop was negotiated by a medium bomber. Captain Collins, Lieutenant Long, and Lieutenant Watson piloted the three planes.

"From May 22nd to June 10th, the 69th and 70th ferried 26 Martin medium bombers from California to Hickam Field without a single mishap.

"The guns, armor plate, and other equipment which had been removed from the squadron's planes at the Sacramento Air Depot, were shipped from Hamilton Field in two LB-30s, as well as some of the combat crews of the 70th and 69th with their luggage. The first plane reached its destination safely, but two engines on the second one failed shortly after the take off. The pilot's attempt to turn the ship was unsuccessful and it crashed into the mountains, killing some employees of the Consolidated Aircraft Company and 10 enlisted men of the 69th and 70th Squadrons. The men from the 69th who lost their lives were T/Sgt. Clyde Tweedy, T/Sgt. Loren Van Kirk, T/Sgt. Floyd Gerald, and Privates Polk and Constantopoleous.

"During the last ten days of May at Hickam Field Captain Collins' flight had practiced torpedo bombing with their B-26's, and it was not long after that their ability was tested. Having arrived at Midway Island two days before, Captain Collins and Lieutenant Watson with their planes and crews were ordered to participate in the Midway battle, while Lieutenant Long and his navigator, Lieutenant Weems, who had gone along as spare crews, were ordered to stand by.

"Four B-26 crews took off to become the first land-based bombers ever to engage in fleet action with torpedoes. This battle was the pay-off on the weeks of training. Two of the planes were flown by Captain Collins and Lieutenant Watson, while the remaining two were flown by crews of the 22nd Bomb Group who had been left at Midway when the 22nd passed through on their way south. Lieut. James Muri flew one of these; an unnamed pilot flew the other.

"First to take off was a flight of six Marine TBDs. The Martins easily caught and outran the relatively slow Douglases. When they arrived in sight of the Jap fleet,

they were the only American planes in the vicinity. Four Martin B-26's against the entire Jap fleet!

"Collins formed his formation and started in. He and Muri chose a carrier deep inside the ring of destroyers and cruisers; Watson and the fourth pilot chose another. All were certain they would be lost in the battle. Half Four Martin B-26s against the entire Jap fleet!

"Watson was hit on the peel-off and crashed into the ocean. His wingman bored in, released, pulled up over his target, then crashed straight into the water. Collins and Muri went in on the deck with everything forward. Collins' torpedo went into his target and exploded; Muri's followed almost through the same hole. Both pulled up and over, and jinking violently, set a screaming course for base. Behind them, the carrier flamed, rocked with internal explosions, and disintegrated in one final belch of smoke and flame.

With Lieutenant Watson the squadron lost Lieutenants Whittington and Schuman, co-pilot and navigator respectively; Corporal Owen, radio operator; Sergeant Decker, engineer; and Corporal Seitz, gunner. Collins' plane returned with more than 160 bullet holes, and a crash landing was necessary, for the hydraulic system had been completely shot away. None of the crew was seriously injured, though the radio operator sustained facial lacerations from flying glass.

"Captain Collins, his co-pilot, Lieut. Colin O. Villines, navigator, Lieut. Thomas N. Weems, Jr., engineer, Sgt. Jack D. Dunn, and radio operator, T/Sgt. Raymond S. White all subsequently received the Distinguished Service Cross for their exploit, the sinking of an aircraft carrier, as well as accounting for three Zero fighters. Lieutenant Watson and his crew were all awarded the same decoration, and the Purple Heart, posthumously. This action is historically important as the first time in history that land-based aircraft were used for torpedo attacks against surface vessels.

"On June 13 the 69th received orders to proceed to New Caledonia, and the first flight of four planes, piloted by Captains Behling and Collins, Lieutenant Waddleton, and Lieutenant Field, left Hickam at 0700 on June 15. The two other flights departed on June 16 and 18. The planes went to Christmas Island, thence to Canton, Fiji, and Tontouta, New Caledonia. The second flight, for observation purposes passed over Jarvis Island en route from Christmas to Canton. On June 20 the rest of the air echelon, except for Lieutenant Rosar and a few enlisted men, took off in an LB30. Lieutenant Long and crew were left behind awaiting another plane to replace their damaged B-26.

"By June 23 all of the air echelon except Lieutenant Long and crew had joined the ground echelon at Tontouta. On that day a mass movement by air and truck convoy was made to Plaines des Gaiac, 130 miles north of Noumea, on the west coast of New Caledonia.

"It is here that the saga of the 69th, if it may be so called, really began. The 69th Bombardment Squadron at New Caledonia was the first medium bombardment outfit in the South Pacific, and along with the 70th Bombardment Squadron, which arrived at Fiji one week later, was the sole air striking force available for use against the Japanese fleet in the South Pacific during those crucial months before we had taken Guadalcanal and entrenched ourselves there. The flying officers were hailed by the ground forces on New Caledonia as saviors, and miracles were expected from this lone squadron at the time when the Japanese fleet was loose in that part of the Pacific, and when a landing attack was expected daily.

"This squadron was the first to arrive at Plaines des Gaiacs, and with the exception of two galvanized huts housing members of the Hawaiian Construction Co., there was absolutely nothing on the field. Only one runway had been completed, and the north-south strip was still under construction. It was necessary to establish a camp under the most adverse conditions, and quickly, for the squadron was called upon to perform its first mission only two days later, on June 26th. Lieutenant Howbert and co-pilot Lieutenant White patrolled, circling the island of New Caledonia and the Isle of Pines.

"A camp in the woods was set up off the northeast end of the field. Sleeping in tents with only one blanket per man for the first week, the men wrapped themselves at night in flight jackets and built small fires inside the tents to keep warm. The nearest running water was two miles from camp, and often both enlisted men and officers had to hitch-hike to the stream for water since there were no vehicles assigned to the squadron as yet. Crude sanitary facilities were constructed, and mess facilities were also inadequate. Contact with Noumea was poor by road and infrequent by air. Food and supplies were often lacking those first few weeks, and the mess was unavoidably poor. For fresh meat, the squadron depended upon the accurate aim of various officers and enlisted men who returned from hunting forays with large buck deer. Speaking of living conditions, one of the bombardiers quipped, 'It's a vicious circle that has no end, and a horrible fate awaits us all.'

"At that time Captain Burhus was Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Waddleton, Operations Officer; Lieut. Clyde Nichols, Adjutant; Capt. Santo Cuppola, Flight Surgeon; Lieutenant Howard, Engineering Officer; Lieutenant Rosar, Armament Officer, and A, B and C Flight Leaders were Lieutenant Johnston, Captain Collins, and Lieutenant Lingamfelter, respectively. The squadron had by this time lost all contact with the 38th Group and operated under ComAirSoPac through the Island Air Commander, Colonel Rich.

"On June 26th, 1942, there were attached to the squadron 80 officers and men from the aircraft carrier, *U.S.S. Lexington*. These survivors of the torpedoed flattop remained at Plaines des Gaiacs with the 69th until the middle of August, 1942.

"On June 28 the Squadron lost its next plane. Lieutenant Wilmarth, his co-pilot, Lieutenant Story, navigator, Lieutenant Tibbetts, and bombardier, Lieutenant Magers, were about to take off when the bomb bay burst

into flames. The officers and men hastily escaped through side and top hatches, by which time the plane was burning furiously. The bomb bay tanks had been filled with the doors closed, and fumes were ignited by a spark. In a few minutes the plane and its contents were charred, twisted metal.

"By June 30 the Squadron was receiving instruction from the Navy in torpedo bombing. It might be noted here that at that time the 69th and 70th Bombardment Squadrons were the only medium bombers that were being trained to carry torpedoes and to use them against surface craft.

"On July 1 came the first alert, and the ships stood by with bombs and torpedoes. The cause: an unidentified ship which later proved friendly. A day or so later three planes were sent out to find a Japanese submarine. They sighted only a whale in the given location.

"On July 3 the squadron navigator, Lieut. Daniel M. Feeley, went with Lieutenant Stephenhagen, a TBD pilot from the *Lexington,* to confer with Colonel Rich and Admiral McCain aboard the seaplane tender *U.S.S. Curtis* in the Noumea Harbor, on Navy procedure in patroling sectors that were to be assigned to the 69th. It was necessary at that time to arrange for weather service, code agreements, and methods of communication. The squadron had no Intelligence section, and lacked maps, charts, and recognition signal procedure. At one time, in fact, the navigators were compelled to make their own charts when given patrol sectors extending toward Guadalcanal.

"On the morning of July 6 all 12 planes, each carrying four quarter-ton bombs, were ordered to the northwest tip of New Caledonia to intercept the Japanese fleet, which was reported headed for the island. Fortunately the fleet failed to appear. The next day the squadron continued practicing torpedo runs.

"On July 11 an alert was called when an enemy submarine was sighted, and also on that day the last B-26, piloted by Lieutenant Long, arrived from Hawaii. On the 15th Burhus with Lieutenants Martin and Gustafson landed the first bomber on the runway at Efate, New Hebrides. They picked up Brig. Gen. W. I. Rose, Island Commander, and flew over Espiritu Santo, the first army plane to do so. General Rose pointed out a field of stumps that was to become strip number One. Leaving the General at Efate, the plane returned to Plaines des Gaiacs, where the next two days were spent on gas consumption tests to determine whether flights to Guadalcanal and return were possible.

"It was at this time, July 17, that the first list of squadron promotions overseas came through. Lieutenants Waddleton, Wright, Long, Johnston, Glover, Lingemfelter, Nichols, and Saunders became captains; and Dickinson, Story, Whitley, Doolittle, Reardon, Schuman, Tkac, White, Weisner, Field, Wagner, Villines, Howbert, Wilmarth, and Martin were promoted to the rank of first lieutenants. (EDITOR'S NOTE: It may be of interest to note that the Doolittle referred to above is the first cousin of Glen Doolittle, and the son of General Jimmy Doolittle of "Tokyo Raid" fame. Young Doolittle remained with the 69th until August 4, 1943, when he was rotated to the States. Shortly thereafter he received his Captaincy and was ordered to duty in the European Theatre of Operations.)

"On July 19 Captain Burhus with Lieutenant Howbert escorted the first four P-39's to Efate and returned with three F4F's—and 30 cases of beer, to everyone's joy.

"At this time a plan to have the 69th take off from Efate, carrying two 1000-pound bombs or one torpedo, fly to Guadalcanal, and return was projected. Captain Burhus insisted the runway at Efate was too short for a B-26 to take off with that load and that it was impossible to carry enough gas to make the round trip nonstop. He refused to send his men out on what he considered a suicide mission, although he did offer to go himself. The following day he was relieved and assigned to the 65th Materiel Squadron at Tontouta. Captain Collins became the commanding officer and Captain Benling was appointed 'B' flight leader.

"Several days before, on July 15, when nine B-26's, six with torpedoes and three with six 100-pound bombs, were practicing coordinated torpedo runs with the destroyer, *U. S. S. MacFarland,* off Noumea Harbor, an enemy submarine surfaced in their midst and immediately crash-dived. One plane, piloted by Captain Wright and Lieutenant Howbert, with navigator Lieutenant Chambers and bombardier Lieutenant Kemp, dropped their bombs as the destroyer released depth charges. The submarine was destroyed, and the B-26 was credited with an assist.

"On August 2 and for six days thereafter, the Squadron sent four B-26s to patrol a sector that covered 167,000 square miles. Their missions were air cover for an 'important task force' headed for the Solomon Islands.

"On August 5th and thereafter for approximately six weeks, the 69th sent six B-26s on a daily anti-submarine patrol south and west of Noumea. The day before, four B-26's had searched south of the Isle of Pines for two lost Navy planes.

"On August 8 and 12, ships of our fleet were escorted into the Noumea Harbor by the 69th, and on the 13th the squadron conducted a search for the crippled cruiser, *U.S.S. Chicago.* On the 11 a new patrol of three planes daily toward the Solomons area was inaugurated.

"On August 16 six planes conducted a search over a 3,000 mile area for the survivors of the destroyer, *U.S.S. Jarvis,* and on the 22nd the three planes on daily patrol toward the Solomons were called off, while six planes with torpedoes were ordered to stand by.

"Five days later the squadron's former commanding officer, Captain Burhus, was killed. A P-400 (English version of the P-39) which Captain Burhus was test flying at Tontouta burst into flames shortly after the take off. On September 1 the 69th, with a nine plane formation, flew over the U.S. Military Cemetery to pay honor

to Captain Burhus at his burial. The 69th's former commander had achieved the respect and love of every man in his organization. Both his officers and men knew that he showed no favoritism, and they knew that he never demanded anything of them that he would not require of himself.

"On September 5, Generals Harmon and Patch with Colonel Rich came to Plaines de Gaiac to present Captain Collins and his crew with the Distinguished Service Cross for their part in the Battle of Midway. Technical Sergeant White, Technical Sergeant Dunn, and Lieutenant Weems were present, but the co-pilot, Lieutenant Villines, was in the hospital.

"On September 7, Lieutenants Field, Wilmarth, Weems, and Feeley were the first officers to go to Australia on what was to be the only vacation the 69th had been granted in its 13 months overseas. On the 15th nine planes carrying torpedoes left for Efate on an alert. The Japanese fleet again was reported headed southward toward New Caledonia.

"It was the night before that two members of the 69th figured in another incident that helps to highlight the history of the outfit. On September 13th, a crashed B-17E was sighted on a reef 135 miles north of Plaines des Gaiacs, off the shore of Belop Island. Several survivors on the beach were apparently in distress. Captain Lingamfelter. acting Operations Officer, prepared the OS2U-3, which had been assigned to the squadron by ComAirSoPac as liaison plane and crash boat, for take off. Lieut. James W. Magers, a bombardier who was adept at first aid, offered to accompany him.

"Packing medical supplies, food, and water into the plane, they took off and located the survivors late that afternoon. Lieutenant Magers rowed the supplies ashore and attended to two men, finding it unwise to move them. He then returned to the OS2U, which by this time was drifting seaward, for the small anchor would not hold in the coral bottom. The starter switch failed to function, and after 30 minutes effort the officers abandoned the plane, paddling two miles back to shore. After an hour and half struggle against a choppy sea, they joined the survivors on the beach. The next two days were trying ones without sufficient food or water, but on the 15th a PBY-5 landed, taxied into shore, and rescued them.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The rescue of these men by PBY becomes the first rescue of men by Dumbo plane in Group history, a forerunner of events yet to come.)

"Several days later on September 18th the 69th lost its next B-26 when Lieutenant Wilmarth, with Lieutenants Field and Tibbetts and six enlisted men, on a flight to Efate from Plaines des Gaiacs were lost in bad weather. The radio compass was out and after turning the plane around and heading back for what fortunately was land, the crew was forced to bail out over Espiritu Santo. All men landed safely on or near the shore, except one man, Pfc Edwin R. Wilkening, who was lost in the sea.

"On the 21st the nine planes at Efate returned to Plaines des Gaiacs. The alert was off, and the Japanese fleet again had failed to appear. On the 23rd the squadron was supposed to leave for Guadalcanal, but the runway at Henderson Field was not long enough to accommodate a B-26. The following day the squadron learned for the first time that it was to receive B-25s. On September 30 the squadron continued practicing torpedo runs.

"On September 24th the squadron received its first pilot replacement from the States, Lieut. Matthew W. Glossinger, the first man who had been trained in a twin-engine school. All the other pilots, without exception, had been trained in pursuit or attack tactics.

"Two weeks later the officers celebrated the completion of their new club, the result of four weeks' hard work. The 26 by 60-foot building was erected using native materials entirely, except for a cement floor. Hard wood uprights, split bamboo sidings lashed with strips of bark, and a bark roof made this structure original enough to warrant an article about it in February, 1943, issue of *Air Force* magazine. The club was unique in one respect at least. The manual labor required for its erection was done entirely by the officers themselves. A case of whiskey was donated by Colonel Rich for the club's opening, and the celebration included the presentation of a cow bell to the squadron navigator.

"On October 9 Captain Lingamfelter had escorted a squadron of P-39s to Efate and Espiritu Santo. On the 11th, at the direction of General Harmon, the 69th commenced navigation instruction for air transport men in New Caledonia, and in the nine following days several 69th officers navigated C-47s to Guadalcanal, Fiji, and Espiritu Santo.

"On the 17th a P-39K was assigned to the Squadron, while from the 13th to the 21st the 69th was again on alert, standing by with 1000-pound bombs and torpedoes. It was at this time that General H. H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, stopped at Plaines des Gaiacs where he personally commended the men of the 69th Bombardment Squadron for their unstinting labor, excellent morale, and hard work. Specifically he praised the ingenuity of the commanding officer, Captain Collins, and the armament officer, Lieutenant Rosar, for the construction of the improvised forward gun installation made of welded sections of oil drums.

"For months the lack of supplies had made the maintenance of the airplanes a serious problem, and it was only the ingenuity of the officers and men of the engineering and armament sections that kept the B-26s in the air. Oil drum sections replaced cracked exhaust stacks, common fence wire was used for welding rods. The 69th truly operated on a shoe-string.

"On October 25 supplies and food were dropped from B-26s to the survivors of a C-47 sighted on a reef off northwest New Caledonia. During the last weeks of October, Captain Collins, the commanding officer, was promoted to major, and on the 28th the first two B-25s were

assigned to the squadron. By November 10 there were three more.

"On November 10, 1942, the Air Echelon went to Espiritu Santo, and four B-26s made a round trip flight to Guadalcanal, returning the next day. Again there was no place for the 69th at Guadalcanal, for at that time gasoline was so scarce there it was being ferried in by plane.

"On December 2, 1942, the Air Echelon arrived at McDonald Field, Efate, carrying crews, equipment, and fresh meat in the form of live pigs, chickens, as well as some stray dogs and cats. Five days later the Ground Echelon arrived from New Caledonia aboard the *Irving McDowell.* The officers fell to, and for a day or two they turned truck driver, stevedore, and deckhand. The Ground Echelon was disembarked in record time.

"A few days previously Major Collins had departed for Australia to obtain the first modified B-25 at Amberley Field, so when the 69th proceeded to Guadalcanal on December 31, Captain Behling, "B" Flight Leader, was acting Commanding Officer. Upon arrival they were put on an immediate alert, and in less than two hours they took off to bomb Munda. Upon returning from the raid late in the afternoon, they were assigned a camp site. Down in a hollow which had been used as a garbage dump, the squadron crawled in under salvaged Marine tents. With the stench of garbage strong in their noses, the men and officers of the 69th spent their first night on Guadalcanal.

"The next day bombs were dropped on Rekata Bay from 7000 feet, and contact was made with nine enemy float planes. Rekata Bay was to be a fateful place for the 69th. During the next week five more raids were made on Munda, Rekata Bay, and Japanese positions on Guadalcanal. It was during this week that the 69th received replacements, who joined the ground echelon at Efate. They were: pilots, Lieut. Lloyd D. Spies, Lieut. Henry A. Schmidt, Lieut. Albert M. Burbank, Jr., Lieut. Wirt M. Corrie; navigator, Lieut. Edward L. Ostrove; and bombardier, Lieut. Elmer H. Steege.

"On January 7, 1943, Captain Behling and his crew were shot down over Rekata Bay while leading a flight of six planes. The other pilots were; Captain Long, Captain Lingamfelter, Captain Wright, Lieutenant Howbert, and Lieutenant Field. From 300 feet, 100-pound fragmentation bombs were dropped on the Japs bivouac area, and converging automatic AA fire scored direct hits on Captain Behling's plane. Lost with him were Lieutenants Wiesner, Spadone, and Hughes, along with radio operator S/Sgt. Otis L. Sharp, tail gunner Pfc Robert Pietroluengo, and engineer Sgt. Daniel Mulcahy.

"Lieutenant Fields' plane had 37 bullet holes in it, while Lieutenant Howbert's ship was perforated in 64 places. Captain Wright escaped unscathed, but Captain Lingamfelter's ship lost the hydraulic system and gas lines, and his whole crew was forced to bail out over Guadalcanal. This included co-pilot Lieutenant Reardon, navigator Lieutenant McNutt, bombardier Lieutenant Goldstein, engineer Staff Sergeant Governale, radio operator Technical Sergeant Clark, and gunner Staff Sergeant Ritnour.

"With the possible exception of their former Commanding Officer, Captain Burhus, the loss of Captain Behling was the greatest shock sustained by the men in the squadron. Aside from being a superb pilot, Captain Behling was a natural leader and the guiding light in the squadron. A tall, handsome officer with ability and considerable personal charm, he was beloved by the officers and almost adored by the enlisted men. Captain Waddleton, the Operations Officer, became acting Commanding Officer. The squadron had made 11 strikes during this tour at Guadalcanal, and for wounds received in the Retaka Bay attack bombardier Lieut. Robert H. Hudson received the Purple Heart.

"On January 12th the flying personnel rejoined the Ground Echelon at Efate. Here sickness and disease caught up with the squadron, and many men were confined to the hospital with malaria, dysentary, dengue, and a few with psycho-neuroses. Discharged from the hospital at Efate, Lieutenants Field, Weems, Schurman, and Krogh were sent back to the States.

"During the last two weeks in January there were only six navigators for 12 ships, and they did their own jobs as well as that of the bombardiers; occasionally they even rode as co-pilots. For three days from January 27th to 30th the 69th searched for the downed B-17 which had carried General Twining and Colonel Jamison from Guadalcanal to Espiritu Santo.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining, Commanding General of the Thirteenth Air Force, and later of the 15th and 20th Air Force, and Colonel Jamison, later Brigadier General commanding the XIII Bomber Command, were forced down at sea. They spent six days afloat in their rubber rafts before they were rescued.)

"And it was during the last week in January, 1943, that more pilot replacements arrived. They were: Capt. Charles W. Brown, Lieut. Civa Kivipelto, Lieut. Frank P. Jensen, and Lt. Arthur M. Wright, Jr. Major Collins returned from Australia that week and resumed command.

"On January 26th, ground echelon left on the transport *Hunter Liggett* for Guadalcanal, and they arrived on February 9th, after stopping at Espiritu Santo. On the 7th, while they were still unloading, orders came for the ship to leave Guadalcanal, as an invasion force was expected. The ship returned two days later, and the ground echelon set up camp 100 yards from the military cemetery.

"It was then that the squadron's morale sank to its lowest. Officers and men collapsed from sickness and strain; a whole crew had been lost at Rekata Bay, and despite the new additions to the squadron, the announcement of the 69th's return to Guadalcanal, after having been promised relief and return to the States, was sufficient to discourage the most optimistic members of the Squadron. However, there was still some hope, for Major Collins asserted that he had been assured the 69th would

return to the States after its next tour at the Canal.

"On January 30, 1943, the crews returned to Guadalcanal, with the rest of the air echelon arriving on February 5. They learned that Major Collins had been assigned to Thirteenth Air Force Headquarters and that Lieut. Col. Francis L. Rivard was their new Commanding Officer. During this second stay in the Solomons the 69th had only four navigators for eight ships, and during two weeks period there they ran six missions.

"On February 9, the 69th bombed Vila for the first time, and three days later during an attack on the same target, bombardier Lieut. Anthony Korumpas was wounded. On the 15th another attack on Vila was made from medium altitude, and five planes were hit with AA fire.

"Three men in Lieutenant Wilmarth's plane were injured, and along with that goes another little story illustrating the morale of the 69th. Shortly after his plane was hit, Lieutenant Wilmarth called back to radio operator Technical Sergeant Murchison and engineer Staff Sergeant Hamilton; both admitted they had received slight cuts. Pfc. Robert Lawrence, the tail gunner, replied that he was "all right." However, when the navigator, Lieutenant Tibbetts, attended to the first two men and then went to the tail of the ship, Lawrence admitted he couldn't come forward. An inspection of his foot showed that a piece of shrapnel had severed one toe and that another hung only by a thread of flesh.

"On February 19, 1943, the 69th air echelon left for Nandi, Fiji, and Captain Lingamfelter was made Commanding Officer. Captain Waddleton was ordered back to the States, as were Captain Wright, Lieutenant Chambers, and Lieutenant Bartos after sojourns in the hospital.

"On February 27 all the B-26 airplanes were transferred to the 70th Bomb Squadron (M), and new B-25s with crews began to arrive in March.

"On March 22, 1943, by order of the Thirteenth Air Force, the 69th and 70th Squadrons were assigned to the 42nd Bombardment Group (M), commanded by Col. Harry E. Wilson. At this time the B-25s were being modified at Eagle Farms, Australia, and at the 13th Air Depot, Tontouta, New Caledonia, with eight fixed forward firing .50 caliber machine guns. The squadron began a three-month training program of strafing and low altitude bombing.

"On the night of March 27th during a Japanese bombing raid on Guadalcanal, the following 69th Ground Echelon men were wounded when bombs landed in the bivouac area: Pfc. David Brabrock, S/Sgt. Julius Baim, Sgt. Clifford Humphrey, T/Sgt. John Kilgore, S/Sgt. Daniel Nenish, and Cpl. Amos Moore.

"In March Captain Lingamfelter went to the hospital with malaria, and Captain Johnston acted as Commanding Officer until April 11, 1943, when Capt. John F. Sharp of the 70th was appointed Commanding Officer by Colonel Wilson. During April and May the 69th received more replacements to compensate for its losses from sickness, men lost in action, and others relieved.

"On March 12 the squadron had learned from Colonel McCormick of Thirteenth Air Force Headquarters that the promotions of 10 officers, who had been recommended for the second time, would be refused, that no leaves would be forthcoming, and that the 69th would be the first squadron to return to Guadalcanal—for the third time. So the continued practice of skip bombing left no doubt in anyone's mind where the next move would be."

CHAPTER 5

At this point, we pick up the history of the 70th. To the Crusaders who arrived overseas with the 42nd Headquarters, much of this may appear ancient and even meaningless, but to the men who preceded us these pages will bring back nostalgic, possibly even bitter, memories of their lives overseas.

MAY - 1941

On the 15th day of May, seven flying officers bearing the rank of Lieutenants (Sharp, Eddy, Larson, Boden, Hawkins, Jones, and Griffith), plus two flying cadets, Sage and Brown, were assigned to the squadron. Cadets Sage and Brown were the squadron's first navigators.

JUNE - 1941

On June 1, the Squadron was ordered to Jackson Air Base, Jackson, Mississippi. In this new air base, the squadron strength was increased, and two B-18s were assigned for training purposes. It was only a matter of a little more than a month before one of them was sent on detached service to New Orleans. Flight training was carried on then, in the "Reluctant Dragon", sometimes referred to as the "Bucket of Bolts."

JULY - 1941

During this hot summer month, Maj. Flint Garrison took over the command of the unit, and three non-flying officers were added to the list of personnel. They were Lieutenants Wilburn, Bancom, and Glover. They were assigned as Mess Officer, A &R Officer, and Adjutant, respectively. On the 25th, 50 draftees were assigned to duty with the squadron, part of the first group of selective service men to be assigned to a tactical Air Force unit. For the succeeding two months, routine training was carried on in the B-18.

OCTOBER - 1941

About the middle of October, Lieutenants Morrison, Sherlock, Sethness, Treat, Martin, Miller, Smith, Evans, Durbin, and Washington were assigned to the squadron, followed shortly by cadet navigators Viens and Schaper. Soon after this 18 other officers arrived. They were: Lieutenants Otis, Saul, Haynes, O'Connor, Ray, Rudolph, Thorburn, Van Story, Hahlen, Perry, Reardon, Cushing, Quinn, Lindsay, Huggs, Neeld, Mitchell, and Paterson. Such rapid expansion of the squadron was augmented by the assignment of B-26 airplanes to the Group. Some of the more seasoned pilots began to master the eccentricities of these new craft. Initial training in the B-26s was conducted during the month.

DECEMBER - 1941

A hectic period of activity resulting from the treacherous Jap attack on the 7th, marks this as probably the most memorable month in the history of the Squadron. Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Squadron assumed full military status, and activities were conducted with new wartime grimness. On December 8th the airplanes and crews were ordered to Savannah, Georgia, to conduct patrol missions along the Atlantic Coast. After six days of patrols and alerts, danger from that quarter was removed, and the planes and their crews returned to Jackson. All, that is, except the "Reluctant Dragon", which remained in Georgia. Additional changes in officer personnel also took place during the month. Lieutenants Wilburn, Baucom, and Glover left the Squadron, and were replaced by Lieutenants Palmieri and Shockley, Flight Surgeon and Adjutant, respectively. To add to the confusion of this trying period, the group had received orders to pack up in preparation for moving at some uncertain date to some undisclosed destination.

JANUARY - 1942

Just one year after its activation we find the 70th Bombardment Squadron (M) weighted down with problems befitting a veteran organization. On January 10, 53 men were transferred from Keesler Field, Biloxi, Mississippi, into the Squadron, and on the 12th, ten more came in from McDill Field. Orders to complete packing for movement were received, and on the 19th, the Squadron, along with the rest of the 38th Bombardment Group, was moved to Port of Embarkation, San Francisco, California.

Prior to moving, however, Lieutenants McMurdy, Lindsay, Quinn, Neeld, Perry, Cushing, Mitchell, Hahlem, and Paterson were transferred out. Colonel Upthegrove relieved Colonel Knapp as Commanding Officer of the 38th. On January 24, Colonel Garrison was relieved of his command, and Lieutenant Stefonowicz became the Squadron's Commanding Officer again. On January 23, after a four-day journey by train, the Squadron camped in the "Cow Palace" at San Francisco. Six days later the Ground Echelon, composed of three officers, Captain Schockley, Lieutenants Palmieri and Schmedes, and 204 enlisted men, boarded the *U. S. A. T. Tasker H. Bliss. The Bliss* set

sail January 31 for destination "unknown". Meanwhile, the Air Echelon remained behind, pending further orders.

FEBRUARY - 1942

Air Echelon

At about this time Lieutenant Reardon was transferred to the 71st Bombardment Squadron (M) and six navigators were acquired by the organization: Lieutenants Rux, Soles, Ryder, R. W. Koch, Hufstedler, and Lundquist. The rest of the Squadron enjoyed an extended furlough and put in their flying time in BT's at Moffett Field.

Ground Echelon

From January 31 to February 25 this portion of the Squadron sailed across the blue Pacific in defiance of lurking enemy subs. Life on the boat was marked by undulating stomachs, endless chow lines, P. X. lines, barber lines, water lines, and worry lines. Finally, they disembarked at Brisbane, Australia.

MARCH - 1942

Air Echelon

On the 2nd of March the Air Echelon of the 38th Bombardment Group (M) received orders to report to Patterson Field for further training in B-26s. During the five-day journey by train the men were elated at the prospect of being permitted to remain in the States for training, but were still skeptical about their new planes. Arriving at Patterson, their elation was soon dampened by unexpected confusion resulting from poor accomodations and unreliable equipment. The officers were housed in a ramshackle gymnasium where confusion reigned from dawn to dusk. The enlisted men were more fortunate in being placed in tents or barracks. On the evening of March 20, the Squadron's first major accident occurred. Lieutenant Hawkins, Lieutenant Hux, Lieutenant Van Story, and Sergeant Morgan were killed in the crash of a B-26 during a navigational flight. Next day the second calamity occurred. On a ferry mission from Patterson field to Jackson, Mississippi, Lieutenant Jones and Sergeant Gemein were killed and Lieutenant Huggs injured in the crash of the plane on which they were passengers.

Ground Echelon

After being set up under canvas on the Dumbdon Race Track about five miles from downtown Brisbane for a period of six days, the Ground Echelon once again was herded aboard the *Tasker H. Bliss*. On March 3 they departed for a five-day voyage to Melbourne. On the 8th they debarked at this second largest city in Australia, but there was no time in which to tour the city, for the trains were waiting to transfer the men to the Gold City of Ballarat. Arriving at Ballarat on the evening of the same day, all men were soon billeted in homes of hospitable citizens. After eight most pleasant days of living in private homes, all were moved into a recently established tent camp beside the Royal Australian Air Force field, about five miles from town. The rest of the month was occupied in improving the camp facilities. At this time we acquired two new flying officers, Lieutenant Glasser and Hearrick.

APRIL - 1942

Air Echelon

Training in B-26s continued and the command of the 38th Group again changed from Colonel Upthegrove to Colonel Lewis. On the 21st, seven more navigators were taken into the Squadron. They were: Lieutenants Burns, Drewyours, Honett, Lewis, Snodgrass, Sullivan, and Winemiller.

Ground Echelon

By way of training, the Ground Echelon received several lectures on Japanese tactics and rifle practice. On Sunday the 19th, most of the squadron, with the exception of the motor convoy which left the night before, boarded a train for Wagga Wagga. After traveling half way, it was necessary to change trains at Albury because of a different gauge track from that point northward.

MAY - 1942

Air Echelon

On the 8th, twelve bombardiers were assigned to the Squadron. They were all second lieutenants and recent graduates of bombardiers' school. They were Lieutenants Coon, Deblitz, Cooke, Douglas, Ellis, Feldberg, Feldman, Frederick, Gillis, Golden, Schuster, and Wilensky. In addition, Lieutenant Henry Dulac was assigned as Armament Officer. On May 20 the Squadron became a separate Squadron because of the breaking up of the 38th Group. In this new status, Captain Stefonowicz was still in command, with Captains Sharp, Eddy, and Callaham in command of A, B, and C flights, respectively. Captain Callaham, incidentally, along with Lieutenant J. D. Ryder and McNeese, was transferred into the 70th at about the same time the bombardiers were acquired. Also on May 20th, in compliance with orders, the Air Echelon flew from Patterson Field to McClellan Field on the first leg of their journey to the Fiji Islands. In Sacramento, ten days were spent in preparing the planes for the overwater hop to Hickam Field. When the planes were fin-

ally ready, they proceeded in flights to Hamilton Field for final refueling and briefing before the 2200 mile flight. Lieutenants Lundquist and Styler, because of illness, were unable to accompany the Squadron from Patterson and were exchanged for Lieutenants Brinskelle and Weldy, who served as navigators for subsequent flights.

Ground Echelon

The Ground Echelon spent nearly a month in the town of Wagga Wagga. During this time some of the mechanics assisted the local depot in repairing airplanes, while the rest carried on essential squadron duties and sharpened their social wits. At 0400 on May 16, after only 12 hours of preparation, all boarded a train for an overland journey back to Brisbane. Very little time was lost in transferring equipment from train to boat. On the same day, together with the 69th Bombardment Squadron (M), they set sail for New Caledonia on a small, unimposing Dutch steamer, the *Cremer*. On the evening of the 20th the *Cremer* stopped at Noumea, where the 69th was put ashore. The next day found the 70th at sea again, still heading east on the last leg of their overseas journey. On the evening of May 23 they dropped anchor at Suva Harbor, Fiji, for the night and the next day proceeded to Lautoka. At Lautoka, the men and equipment were put ashore on trucks and transported to Nandi Air Base, their first permanent base in the Combat Zone.

JUNE - 1942

Air Echelon

On June 2 the B-26s, with a minimum crew of pilots, co-pilots, navigators and radio operators, took to the air on a feat never before attempted in this type of plane, an over-water flight of 2200 miles in a land-based medium bomber. The indomitable courage of these aerial pioneers brought each of the 13 planes across the wide expanses of the Pacific to Hickam Field without mishap. The crew chiefs, extra personnel and equipment, were sent to the same destination by Ferry Command. The crash of an LB-30 on take-off at Hamilton Field caused the death of Sergeants Mazeikas, Pilareik, Haynes, and Kulis. The B-26s and crews, having arrived at Hickam, underwent additional training in high altitude bombing and torpedo runs. At this time the Battle of Midway was in progress and, although none of the 70th Bombardment Squadron took part in the battle, they were required to maintain an alert.

Ground Echelon

Having successfully weathered the trials of constant movement since leaving the States, the Ground Echelon now proceeded to build a substantial camp in a secluded spot along a Fiji river bank. The camp was unusually well concealed by natural camouflage. However, it was not immune to the ravages of Mother Nature. On June 13, following persistent downpours, the river overflowed its banks and the camp site was inundated. The water rose so rapidly that the camp was destroyed and much of the equipment was lost. Fortunately, there was no loss in personnel. Pyramidal tents were set up on a hilltop for temporary refuge.

JULY - 1942

During this month the Air Echelon completed its lengthy trip to the Fiji Islands. One incident marred the total success of this pioneering venture. On July 3 Lieutenant Durbin's plane crashed when taking-off from Hickam for Christmas Island. Lieutenant Winemiller and Sergeant Arnold were killed and Lieutenants Durbin and Evans suffered serious injuries. In defiance of such misfortune, the flights proceeded on successive days from Hickam to Christmas Island, Canton Island, and finally Nandi Air Base. The last planes completed the journey on July 9.

Here the Air Echelon and the Ground Echelon were united. During the latter part of the month, the Squadron again changed camp sites. This time they moved into a renovated native village which proved to be an ideal location for Squadron activities. On July third, 19 torpedo maintenance men from the ill-fated carrier *Lexington* were attached to the Squadron.

AUGUST - 1942

The Squadron, having finally become oriented at its permanent base, proceeded to carry on training by conducting transition flights for co-pilots, making torpedo runs, and practicing skip bombing. In addition, co-ordinated missions were carried out in conjunction with the R. N. Z. A. F. On August 12, Lieutenant Morrison's plane No. 64, was taxied into a ditch when Sergeant Schwartz was being checked-out in taxiing. This accident cut the strength down to eleven planes. On the 29th, Captain Stefonowicz, still the Commanding Officer, was promoted to Major.

SEPTEMBER - 1942

Training of combat crews continued throughout the month, with occasional time out to maintain alerts because of enemy threats. By the way of social diversions, the officers put on a vaudeville show for the enlisted men. The latter reciprocated with a similiar presentation. By

this time, facilities for a Squadron theatre were installed and then more modern form of entertainment started.

OCTOBER - 1942

On Friday, October 13, a P-39 collided in mid-air with plane No. 90, killing all members of the crew: Lieutenants O'Conner, Otis, Douglas, Drewyours, and enlisted men Ramsey, Spencer, and Howard. This left 10 planes in the Squadron. Just prior to the crash Lieutenant Smith and his crew took off for Australia. He returned three weeks later with equipment for increasing the airplanes' fire power.

NOVEMBER - 1942

This month marked the initiation of the 70th in actual combat maneuvers. On November 13 General Harmon's headquarters ordered the Squadron airplanes to Espiritu Santo. Next day, loaded with torpedoes, they took off in flight order and arrived without incident. At Santo the torpedoes of four planes were replaced by two 1000-pound bombs. Orders were soon given for the Squadron to take off for Guadalcanal. At 1600 of the same day, the planes took off, arriving at the 'Canal at dusk. The night was spent near various fox-holes while a naval battle raged off the coast. On the 16th the Squadron saw its first action in an attack on four transports and their landing parties. Lieutenant Griffith's plane, No. 50, was credited with a direct hit on one of the transports, while the other planes caused considerable damage to personnel and equipment. At noon orders to return to "Buttons" were received and by 1400 all planes except Lieutenant Boden's and Captain Eddy's took-off. A tropical front was encountered and the planes were separated. Captain Callaham's plane, No. 58, developed engine trouble and went down off the coast of San Cristobal Islands. His crew consisted of Lieutenants McNeese, Hufstedler, and Feldman, Sergeant House, Pfc. R. Gray and Private Lawler. The rest of the planes arrived safely at "Santos." On the 17th, just two days later, the Squadron was again ordered to the 'Canal to prepare for a raid on Bougainville Island in coordination with B-17s and P-39s. Unfortunately, only three planes were able to return to the 'Canal. These were: Major Stefonowicz's, Lieutenant Morrison's, and Lieutenant Cressy's. These three, plus the two that were still there from the former visit, were to form the flight for the impending raid. However, Lieutenant Cressy's ship developed engine trouble and couldn't participate. On the morning of the 18th, the four ships took off on the raid, the primary target, a tanker, located in Friendship Harbor. While over the target, several float bi-planes intercepted, two of which were shot down by our flight, one by tail-gunner Kittle in Lieutenant Boden's ship and the other by turret-gunner Doerr in Captain Eddy's ship. All four planes returned to the 'Canal. There they were serviced, flown to Santos, and back to their home base at Nandi.

DECEMBER - 1942

Just one year after the beginning of this maelstorm, the 70th Bombardment Squadron (M) found itself thousands of miles from the States, better trained than ever before, and "still confident that an early settlement of this international dispute will be realized." On Christmas Eve, Lieutenant Morrison took off on a practice bombing mission. Upon landing, his main gear collapsed, and the plane crashed, caught fire, and was completely destroyed. The crew escaped. This accident decreased the plane strength to eight. On December 25 three planes were ordered to report to the 'Canal on temporary duty with the 69th Squadron. Captain Eddy volunteered to take his flight. On the same morning Lieutenant Griffith received orders transferring him to the 68th Fighter Squadron. His plane, No. 50, was taken by Lieutenant Treat with Lieutenant John D. Ryder as co-pilot, and they became the third plane of Captain Eddy's flight. On December 31st "B" flight arrived at the 'Canal, and ran their first bombing mission over Munda Point.

JANUARY - 1943

"B" flight began the New Year by bombing Munda Point again. On January 2, while leading a six-plane formation over Munda, Captain Eddy's ship was set on fire by a burst of AA in the right engine. The pilot headed his burning plane toward Rendova Island and after an attempt to extinguish the fire, held his plane in a glide while his crew bailed out. Captain Eddy left his plane at a very low altitude and luckily parachuted to safety. All members of the crew reached the Jap-infested Rendova with the exception of Lieutenant Hendrick, who was presumably killed in jumping. These survivors hid out on Rendova for three days. Supplies were dropped by Lockheed Hudsons on the second day. On the third night a raiding sub surfaced and took the men on board. The sub was on its way to a two-week raid on Jap shipping in Friendship Harbor. The crew accompanied the sub on its foray and weeks later were finally set ashore at the sub's home port in Australia.

At Henderson Field the remaining two planes under Lieutenant Martin carried on bombing attacks with the 69th. On January 7th Captain Behling of the 69th led two elements in a low altitude bombing attack. Being

without a plane, Captain Behling borrowed Lieutenant Treat's plane, No. 50, for the mission. There was no element of surprise in this raid and the entire flight encountered heavy ground fire. Captain Behling was shot down shortly after releasing his bombs. Two other planes were badly damaged, one completely destroyed when the crew bailed out over Henderson Field. On January 9 the 69th moved back to Efate.

On January 9 Major Stefonowicz, Captain Sharp, Lieutenants Morrison, and Miller took off in planes No. 62, 47, 76, and 69 for the 'Canal. Upon their arrival they made their first raid on Munda Point in a five-plane formation led by Lieutenant Martin. On January 12, Lieutenant Martin became temporary leader of "B" flight. In the meantime a strenuous schedule of bombing was continued.

On January 20 Major Stefonowicz and Lieutenant Smith initiated a new tactic, raiding Jap shipping at night off Bougainville. During full moon these tactics proved highly successful. On one of these strikes the Major's crew attacked and sank a Jap destroyer off Bougainville. These raids continued as long as the weather and the moon permitted.

On January 23, Captain Larson, with Lieutenants Boden and Cressy and crews, arrived at the 'Canal on a C-47. These crews had previously been left behind due to the shortage of planes. Upon arrival, Captain Larson took over as Operations Officer, and acted as Major Stefonowicz's co-pilot. On the same day the camp area was moved from the hollow to a more sanitary spot near the Communications tunnels. Bombing raids were carried on one or two times daily for the balance of the month without a casualty.

FEBRUARY - 1943

On February 2 four planes were ordered to search north of Guadalcanal. While on this search Captain Sharp's plane engaged a Mavis, four-engine Kawanishi Flying Boat, in a lop-sided dog fight. With a large hole in one wing Captain Sharp withdrew, leaving the Jap plane with one burning engine and one shot out. A coast watcher later reported the plane crashed off Santa Isobel Island. Due to a shortage of ground crew and equipment it became increasingly difficult to keep the planes in commission.

On February 4 when orders came through for the Squadron to return to Fiji, only two planes were fit for combat. On the 6th the squadron landed at Fiji.

While the Air Echelon was at Guadalcanal, the Ground Crews moved the camp area to Nandi Air Base. On February 11 Lieutenants Boden, Treat, and J. D. Ryder were given orders to take three planes to Tontouta for repairs. While waiting for the planes, the three crews were given orders to go to Auckland, New Zealand, on detached service. These were the first of the 70th crews to go on rest leave. While in Auckland the officers were billeted in the famed Red Cross rest home, "Kia Ora." The enlisted men stayed downtown in one of the hotels. Three weeks were spent in New Zealand and to coin a phrase, were highly enjoyed by all.

MARCH - 1943

During this month the 70th Bombardment Squadron (M) and the 69th Bombardment Squadron (M) were incorporated into the 42nd Bombardment Group (M) under the command of Col. Harry E. Wilson.

With the formation of the new Group, 70th tactics were again centered on low level bombing and strafing. All the B-26's of the 69th were turned over to the 70th when the 69th received new B-25s. New schooling was instituted by the Group, stepping up the schedule to a nine hour day.

Another early narrative written by a staff sergeant in the 70th Intelligence Section, Meyer Bernstein, deserves a place in this book, if it is to be an all-revealing report on the Crusaders.

"The 70th was one of the first tactical outfits ordered to the war zones. The convoy carrying it to Australia was the earliest to make the non-stop run across the Pacific. Leaving San Francisco 30 January 1942 when the enemy was rapidly advancing south and eastward, their ship was pitifully under-protected. The original destination was Rangoon—railhead to the Burma Road—but that city came under close attack while the 70th was at sea, and the Squadron disembarked at Brisbane, Australia, instead.

"The Yanks were a novelty "Down Under." If a 'dog-face' entered a dance hall, the band immediately struck up the Star Spangled Banner. He had his pick of any partner in the room. The squadron spent four months in the land of the koalas, the wombat, and the platypus.

"The 70th will recall nostalgically the delights of Australia: the beer, the beautiful and endearing women, steak-and-eggs dinners, wholesome milk, the kindness of the country folk. They will remember all the more because for the next 21 months they were on unrelieved duty deep in the tropics.

"The Japs had taken the Solomons, the Gilberts, and the Ellice Islands, and were heading south to cut the Allied supply lines to Australia. The 70th, therefore, was

sent to the Fiji Islands, just below the limit of the Nip advance. A fighter squadron was already there, and the Infantry arrived a few weeks later. All the forces co-ordinated to defend the Archipelago. Allied possession of the Fiji's was one of the "musts" of the Pacific war. Not only did the islands command convoy routes to the South-west Pacific, but the Nandi Airdrome was a stepping stone on the ferry bomber run westward. Without Nandi, General MacArthur could never have got the planes that blasted the Japs out of New Guinea and the Bismarcks. It was at this strategic base that the 70th was stationed.

"Patrolling daily to the fringes of enemy territory on the lookout for submarine and invasion forces, the Squadron played an important part in the struggle to turn the tide of battle in the Pacific.

"Viti Levu, the largest island in the Fijis, is a typical, lovely tropic island, with lofty mountains, high plateaus, jagged volcanic peaks, rolling plains, meandering rivers, mangrove swamps, retreating deltas, coconut groves, and bush country. It is fringed by coral and numerous bays and bars. Half of the natives—the original stock—are Melanesian, a people amiably indolent, generous, and tactful. The other half are descendents of Indian coolies imported by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to work its sugar mills and plantations.

"The 70th acquired its first camp site in Fiji by offering the owners tobacco and chewing gum. After the natives better understood foreign exchange, a similar quantity of smokes and candy would not have paid for a single G. I.'s laundry.

"The Finance Department was slow in getting set up, and as a result the boys received their first pay in Fijian and New Zealand currency. Change was made in matches and shaving cream.

"The Indians are a clannish lot, and the soldiers had few dealings with them other than getting laundry done and haggling over the prices of their exquisite handmade jewelry.

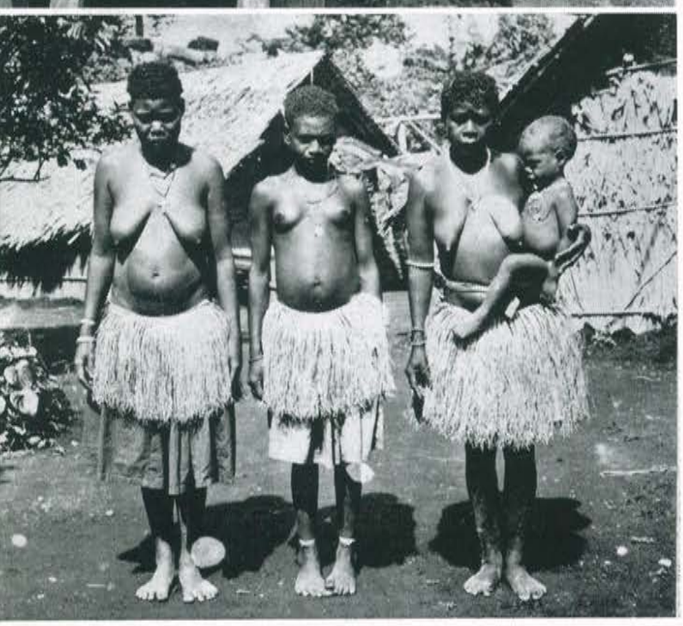
"The Fijians lived in native villages governed by a Turanga, or chief. They held Meke's, ceremonial dances; tra-la-las, social dances; and celebrations of various sorts in the Army's honor. They made gifts of fruits and vegetables: bananas, guava, mango, papaya, pandanus, breadfruit, sago palm, taro, tapioca, sugar cane, pineapple, and uvi or yams. Acceptance was to a toast of Kava, a beverage that tastes like the dregs of concentrated torpedo bilge. Sometimes they would also give a whale's tooth, signifying abiding friendship, and a woven mat to the Commanding Officer. In exchange he would raid the canteen for the goods they most desired; cigarettes, bonbons, and juices.

"Fijians are natural singers, and they have a song of the islands that puts Hollywood to shame. It is called "Isa Lei", and hearing it sung by a group of natives is an experience never to be forgotten. There is scarcely a man in the Squadron who doesn't know at least the opening Fijian words:

Isa, Isa, vulangi lasa dina
Nomu la ko au na rarawa kina
(Isa, Isa, you are my only treasure
Must you leave me so lonely and forsaken?)

"The girls are in their own way homely; the American movie has sadly misrepresented the type. The Fijians have the high moral tone of first and second generation converts to Christianity. Besides, native Tabus (pronounced Tamboo) strictly control and limit the social lives of the people. The result is that native girls keep their distance. Soon, native villages were off-limits for army personnel.

"There was only one city (pop. 15,000, one sixth European) and that out of reach on the other side of the island. Recreation, in the sense of getting away from Army routine, was out of the question. Nor, for the first year or so, was there any beer or coca cola. It became a pretty dull life for an outfit largely composed of unwilling celibates and reluctant tee-totalers. Fiji was no paradise."



THE WORLD IS






FULL OF NATIVES . . .

Algiers, Rome, London, Paris, Brussels had their natives . . . and so did Guadalcanal, Banika, Mono, Moresby, Nadzab, Hollandia, and Sansapor.

Oh well, we didn't have to put up with cold weather.




CHAPTER 6

It is at this point that we attempt again to weave the pattern that will depict truly and accurately the story of the Crusaders. Although it was quite a shock to the men of the 69th and 70th to learn that they were not going home, all men dug in at the business at hand. The combat men perfected skip-bombing tactics, low level attack work, and formation flying, while the ground personnel of the 69th made themselves ready for the move to PDG, the place that was to find them when their rotation orders arrived, 25 months from the day they sailed from San Francisco.

The Air Echelons of Headquarters and of the 69th flew to the 'Canal on June 6th, the latter under the command of Captain Sharp. The Air Echelon of the 390th, with liasion officers of the Group, remained at Fiji to complete plane modifications, as did the 70th, which was still awaiting B-25s to replace their 26s. By June 23rd the 390th Flight Echelon, modifications completed, had reached the 'Canal ready for combat assignments.

While most of the combat personnel brought their own planes from Fiji to the 'Canal, there were some men who were ferried via SCAT airlines, a Marine-operated fleet of C-47s. One of these 47s carrying a dozen of our men came to an unhappy end just short of Guadalcanal, landing in the water off the shores of San Cristobal. Luckily there were no lives lost. This plane ran into adverse weather conditions and attempted to fly non-stop from Fiji to Guadalcanal without benefit of a re-fueling stop at Espiritu Santo. Gas almost exhausted, the stricken plane's radio operator sent the following message. "Am going down before dark. Gas almost gone. Am over water at a position 65 miles south of the southern tip of San Cristobal." The landing was a good one, but only one five-man raft was launched. The men alternated sitting in the raft and hanging on to the side of it dangling in the water. By much laborious effort, they managed to get to shore some three hours later. They spent the night on San Cristobal, and early the next morning three Navy Catalinas effected the rescue. In addition to the C-47 crew, whose names are unknown, the combat men involved in this unexpected initiation to the combat zone included: Lieuts. Austin Eivers, John J. Balfour and William A. Dermody, S/Sgts. James C. Houston, Earl T. Oliphant, Henry O. Brucks, Gilbert H. Elchert, Robert E. Floyd, and John R. Eads, Jr., Sgt. Leo Thibodeau and Pvt. Gerald F. Ansel, plus the 390th Squadron Bombardiering Officer, Lieut. Nathan Ginsburg.

As we pause for a moment upon the threshold of the entrance of the Group, as a Group, into combat, it may perhaps be of interest to review briefly the tactical situation as it existed in the Solomons in June, 1943. Between the initial landing on Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942, and February 8, 1943, when organized resistance finally ended, the Marines and doughty members of the Americal and 25th Divisions did a job of jungle warfare that will live forever in the annals of American history. That ground engagement was ably reported and covered in a best-seller written by Dick Tregaskis entitled *Guadalcanal Diary* and your compilers and narrators have no intention of attempting to reconstruct for you old Crusaders the goings and comings of the Allied Forces during that period. Suffice it for us to touch upon some of the high spots that were born in that period and which became part of the language of the Solomons veteran. Phrases such as "The Tokyo Express," "Washing-Machine Charlie," "The Slot," "Shipping Sweeps," "Condition Red," "Coastwatchers," "Dumbos," "Horses," "Box-cars," and "Streetcars," had rich meanings to our Group and will probably be well remembered.

The term "Tokyo Express" was a name informally applied to the convoys with which the Japs attempted to reinforce their Solomon Island positions. Through 1942 and the spring and summer of 1943 these convoys of eight or ten destroyers and a number of transports came down the chain of islands at intervals of every two weeks or so. Guadalcanal was the southern terminus of the "Tokyo Express." At the time of our entry into this area as a Group, the "Express" was the vital and then flourishing Japanese supply line of craft that, with the regularity the railroading term implies, made their way along the northern coast of New Guinea and thence south of New Britain to Buka, there splitting into the two "limited express" lines that ran northward to Truk and southward through "The Slot." The latter phrase was an expression all used to denote the body of water that ran through the heart of the Solomon Island group, running some 300 miles from the 'Canal to Bougainville in the northwest-southeast direction and about 50 miles north and south, bordered on the north by the islands of Choiseul and Santa Isobel, and on the south by Vella Lavella, Kolombangara, New Georgia, the Russells, and Guadalcanal. Missions were flown up "The Slot," or north of "The Slot" or south of "The Slot," never over the Solomon Sea, the true name for this particular body of water that saw so

many of the Crusaders' flights during the second half of 1943.

The Japanese strip on Guadalcanal that was the scene of such a bloody battle in 1942 had been named Henderson Field, and a new bomber strip had been installed nearby and named Carney Field. The latter field was home both for our aircraft and our bivouac areas, which were situated in the jungles surrounding the strip.

On May 5 the 390th Ground Echelon boarded the naval transport *George Clymer* and arrived at Guadalcanal on May 11. Unloading of the boat was started immediately, but four hours later the *George Clymer's* skipper halted operations and took his ship out of the harbor for a night of constant moving in open waters that provided more maneuverability in case of attack. On the 12th, unloading operations were completed and some dense jungle along the side of a road was pointed out as the living area of the Group's new home. The 75th Ground Echelon were ferried in by a fleet of C-47s, arriving on May 26.

Clearing brush and trees was the order of the day, for a camp had to be hewn out of the jungle. The line area was identical with the camp area insofar as jungle growth was concerned. Here too, trees had to be felled, and brush burned by daylight hours only, for the Japs were still raiding the 'Canal by night as well as by day. The back-breaking and sweat-streaked toil of building a home was to be repeated at least four more times before the ground men of the Crusaders were to go back to the States and the routine was to become familiar. There were supply office, and living tents to be erected, mess-halls to be built, latrines and showers to be installed, a theatre area to be cleared, chapels to be erected, dispensaries and hospital ward tents to go up. But all of these, and more, are a part of the story of the 42nd, a part of the lore that will live with us forever and always, a part of the tradition of the Jungle Air Force, as the 13th AAF was later named.

Within two days, the first of hundreds of Condition Reds that were to be our lot for many, many months to come, was sounded. Sirens were whining, all over, as each squadron, each service unit, each company, spread the alarm of an impending raid. Two lonely Jap bombers came over about 1400 that afternoon, up in the stratosphere some 25 or 30,000 feet. No sooner were they sighted than our protecting guns let go! The booming of our 90 millimeter AA guns were far more terrifying to us than the threat the enemy bombers represented. Needless to say, everyone hit a fox-hole, of which there were plenty. Each of us had made certain that we had a hole to dive into at the first sign of trouble. Nothing came of this raid, and to this day we don't know whether they ever got in close enough to "lay eggs" or not, but at least we were blooded to air raids. We had survived our first Condition Red.

Targets for us in those days were plentiful, for in addition to the Tokyo Express, there were enemy air-strips that had to be kept inoperational, such as Munda, on New Georgia; Vila, on Kolombangara; Kahili and Kara on south Bougainville; Kieta on the north side of that island; and the Buka and Bonis air-dromes on each side of famous Buka passage, plus the Ballale airdrome on a small island between the Shortland Islands and Bougainville. Those were the immediate strips that threatened our foothold in the Solomons. To the west of us some 75 miles, the Marines had seized and succeeded in holding Banika Island in the Russell Group and were operating fighter aircraft off Sunlight Field there. Rekata Bay on Santa Isobel Island, Gizo Island to the south and west of New Georgia, and the Shortland and Fauro Islands all were infested with nests of seaplane bases from whence the Jap sent Jakes and Rufes, enemy float planes, out against our nightly torpedo boat patrols. With our closest base for supplies over 800 miles away, Guadalcanal for some time was a land to itself. The daring, patience, ingenuity, and stick-to-it-iveness that has always characterized the American serviceman, was never more clearly needed than at our first bastion on the Road to Tokyo—Guadalcanal!

Saw mills, such as they were, were quickly set up, and lumber needed for building up our installations was garnered from the surrounding forests. Trees of rich wood—mahogany and teak-wood—were felled and used where

Sohanna Island, Bougainville, gun positions rock under numerous 100-pounders. This was pin-point bombing. Sohanna protected the nearby Buka and Bonis Airdromes.

Chabai, Bougainville, supply dump, personnel area, and barge stage.

and when needed. It was said that a little bridge, hastily constructed across the Malibu River between Henderson and Carney Fields, and which at that point was no more than 30 feet in width, contained enough mahogany, in its green state, to have a cured value of $2,000,000. But be that as it may, wood was necessary to feed our war machine, and whether it be rich timbers, or trunks of palm trees, it all went into the mills as fast as it could be hewn down.

Gas drums, the 55-gallon size, were always in demand. From these drums were made the washing apparatus for cleaning and sterilizing mess kits, kitchenware, pots and pans. Batteries of these drums cut lengthwise through the middle were in front of each mess hall, and streaming raw gas served as the heating units for keeping the water at boiling temperatures. Gas drums became tanks for showers, as did fighter belly-tanks or anything else that could hold water. Gas drums were ingeniously devised and rigged to make laundries, just as efficient as our machines back home, but without the spit and polish that characterized such civilian time-saving implements.

On the line—the all-important line where the sturdy Billy Mitchells were fondled and cared for as cautiously as new-born babies—more inventiveness was needed. Bomb hoists had to be modified to stand the rigors of field duty, time-saving elements devised for quicker, smoother, and more efficient operations, and all were forthcoming. Not the first month, nor the first three months, but before 1943 had run its course progress to that acme of efficiency so necessary a part of a winning team had been made, and by members of the Crusaders.

In April and May, Ballale, Kahili, and other targets had received their first strikes by air from B-17s of the 5th and 307th Bomb Groups who were the heavy duty babies of the 13th Air Force. On June 9 they bombed the strip at Munda in a high altitude daylight raid. Vila Airdrome, located just across the Kula Gulf from Munda, was similarly hit the following day. Night missions against Kahili and Ballale with as many as 20 planes had become standard operating procedure.

On June 14th, 18 B-25s of the 69th Squadron, led by Capt. John F. Sharp, with 24 Corsairs as fighter cover, took off from Carney Field at 0658. The flight dropped 124 hundred-pounders on the barracks and bivouac area of Vila. Damage assessment credited the Mitchells with 94 bombs in the assigned target, 75 well-bunched west of the north end of the runway. Heavy AA came from Vila Point and light AA from Stanmore plantation. Neither scored. And, with that strike the Crusaders' offensive was on.

Until June 25, the 69th carried the ball for the Group, successively sweeping New Georgia by day and night, hunting for Jap barges, bombing Ballale from 12,000 feet and meeting heavy but inaccurate AA, and strafing the north tip of Gannonga. On June 23, the Crusaders suffered their first loss when Lieut. Eugene R. Brogan and crew failed to return from a mission. On board was a cameraman, 2nd Lieut. Harold C. Moran, formerly of the Universal Picture Studios who was assigned to the 13th Air Force Combat Camera Unit under the command of Maj. Frank Lloyd, the man who directed such outstanding pictures as *Cavalcade, Mutiny on the Bounty, The Sea Hawk* and *The Spoilers*. Many of our missions during the Solomon days carried Major Lloyd or one of his men who were busily engaged in filming the war in the Solomon Islands.

On the 25th the 390th took up the cudgels. Twelve B-25s escorted by 16 P-40s dropped 144 incendiary clus-

ters on Vila, meeting no aerial opposition and only moderate, inaccurate AA fire. A copy of someone's letter to a friend on a newspaper at home catches the spirit of that first mission.

Somewhere in the S. Pacific
June 25, 1943

Dear Harry:

Well, it's our turn at bat now. Yes, we are now in combat. Hard-bitten veteran bomber crews of one raid. Gosh, you can't imagine how much it means to be able to take a sock at those Japs after all of the training and waiting we have been through. A year and a half of sweating, watching, working, and learning, all of it for the day when we would become members of an Army Air Force Squadron in a combat zone.

After coming out of the different technical schools we thought we were ready to get into the war. But the powers that be were peeping through sights from another rifle, because instead of shipping us across, the seas, they sent us across a California desert and made us fly so many practice missions, I quit counting them long ago.

Then came more ground schools, classes in first aid, enemy tactics, how to live off the jungle, and all the while getting us acquainted with living and working in hot weather. Then some more missions. Aerial gunnery, more dropping of bombs, more formation flying, more this, more that—hell, wasn't it ever going to end? We began to wonder ourselves whether we were destined to spend the rest of the war training. As a matter of fact, our morale was commencing to come apart at the seams. But the order finally arrived sending us over-seas. We were a cocky, confident lot.

But still we didn't get into combat. They dumped us off on an island two thousand miles from the nearest fighting and started our training all over again. We didn't know it at the time, but that was really a review of our lessons for what you might aptly call our final exams. We practically went through the whole rigmarole over again. Again the practice missions, again the ground school, but now they interspersed in our program some lectures given by fellows who had just come out of combat. We hung onto every word they said, and they were just young fellows like us, 22 and 24 years old, but majors and lieutenant colonels. Most of the stuff they said had been told us time after time back in the "tech-schools" and out in the desert. But it seemed altogether different in these surroundings. We stayed on that island four months before we joined the 13th Air Force and came up to this base.

Well, we were only here one day when the word came that we were going on our first raid. Talk about excitement! You couldn't have caused greater stir by telling us the war was over. Early the next day everybody was down puttering around the ships. Bombs were loaded and checked over and over again. Guns were fondled and caressed as the belts were shoved home and made ready for immediate action. Parachutes and Mae West life jackets came in for their share of attention. Nothing was over-looked in this check-up. We wanted everything to be letter perfect for the scheduled take-off at 2 P. M. The intelligence briefing was set for 1 P. M., but the Squadron Intelligence Officer did a land office business all morning, because after looking at the ships, we all seemed to drift over to his tent.

We saw pictures of our target, maps, pamphlets, bulletins, and I don't know what all. We were supposed to hit an enemy bivouac area, and long before the official briefing everyone knew just what the job was.

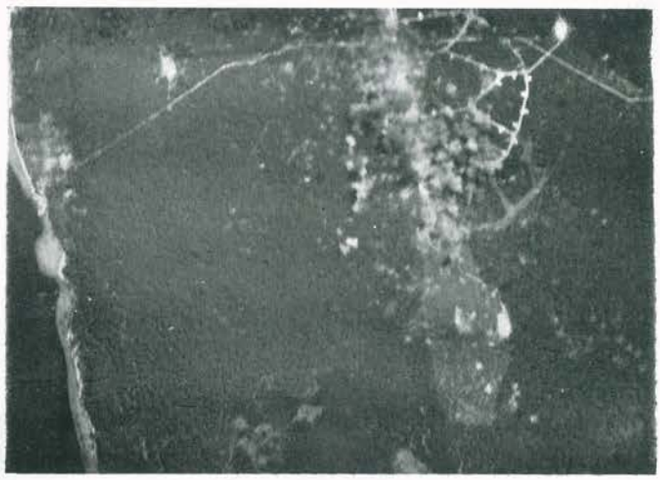
Well, Harry, the take-off was on schedule and we were in the air with the rest of the gang in just a few minutes. Our formation was quickly formed and off we started. We picked up our fighter cover on the way to the target, and all eyes started straining in all directions looking for possible enemy fighter interception. Then before you know it, we saw the target away off in the distance. There was no mistaking it, for it was just exactly as the photographs had shown it. In less time than it takes to draw your breath we started our bomb-run, and in a few seconds came the yell "Bombs Away!" Hell, it was just like all the practice missions we had flown back in the desert. It all came to us so easily and mechanically. I guess that is when I first realized how all the training was starting to pay off.

You know, Harry, I promised you I would get some Japs, and I can safely say that I have now made good on my promise. Because we later found out the mission was very successful, and the target pretty well plastered. It sure gives a guy a super feeling, too. Of course, I know we have just started functioning as a combat squadron, and we will have some tough missions before this is all over, but I also know that we have been taught our lessons carefully and most thoroughly and we are ready for everything.

Until later then, write soon and remember your pal,

Johnny.

Bonis Airdrome, northern Bougainville, gets the customary 42nd treatment on November 20, 1943.



CHAPTER 7

For the balance of June, the 69th and 390th swept around New Georgia for shipping, and on the 30th closed the month with a five-plane medium mission over Munda strip, dropping frag clusters.

June had another memorable feature—the 16th. Bettys, Hamps, Oscars, Tonys, and Zeros—125 of them—swept down the Slot. The coast-watcher had warned us and the ground gunners were ready. The fighters took off, and the most spectacular aerial battle of the Pacific filled the sky over the 'Canal and the Slot for two hours. Everything that could fly took to the air. A stupendous spectacle, it was also a rout for Tokyo. Only 27 of the challengers retired up The Slot; six of our fighters were lost.

July 6th was an eventful day for the 69th. On the night of the 5th-6th a big naval engagement took place in Kula Gulf, when the Japs made their last attempt in strength to reinforce their hard-pressed troops at Munda. During the fray in which we sank at least 2 capital ships, the *Helena,* one of our light cruisers, was sunk. The 69th was on "Alert" that day, with the boys lounging around in the pilot's lobby, actually a crude bamboo shack with an old canvas roof and scrap wire and cheesecloth screens. The navy spotters reported a crippled enemy DD somewhere along the southeast coast of Kolambangara. Four Mitchells loaded with 500-pounders were sent after her, but one blew a tire on take-off and didn't participate in the ensuing fray.

The crews consisted of:

"The Cactus Kid" Flight Leader Capt. Lloyd E. "Stone" Whitley, Pilot.

Lieut. Albert M. Burbank Jr., Co-pilot.

Lieut. Chalmer W. "Gus" Gustafson, Navigator.

S/Sgt. Louis C. Pells, Radio Operator.

Sgt. Robert H. "Packer" Parks, Rear Gunner.

"The Deacon" Lieut. Mathew W. "Gloss" Glessinger, Pilot.

Lieut. Thomas D. Allison, Co-Pilot.

S/Sgt. Donald G. Hammer, Engineer.

Lieut. William J. Mallory, Navigator.

T/Sgt. Leroy Stirewalt, Radio Operator.

S/Sgt. George A. McVay, Rear Gunner.

Plane No. 124 Lieut. Enders "Dick" Dickinson, Pilot.

(Unnamed) Lieut. Arthur J. Cordell, Co-pilot.

Lieut. David "Danny" Kallman, Navigator.

S/Sgt. George I. "Yix" LaRose, Engineer.

Pvt. Edward C. "Eddie" Canavan, Gunner.

The take-off was at 1255, with the flight rendezvousing over the Russell Islands with eight P-38s who were to furnish fighter cover. They then continued up The Slot to Kula Gulf, and sighted a destroyer near the shore further to the west. However, they went on and scoured the Kokovi region without success before they turned back, realizing that the destroyer they had previously sighted was their target.

About this time two Zeros were observed approaching from the West, and two of the escorting P-38s took out to tangle with them. When last seen the Japs were high-tailing it toward Vila with the P-38s right on their tails.

The Jap tincan was lying partially beached in Surumuni Cove, so the planes turned inland and flew in a wide arc to approach the target from the landside. This maneuver with its element of surprise caught the Japs with their pants down.

Our ships came in at tree-top level in single ship formation, at ten-second intervals, dived at about 230 MPH indicated, to below deck level, released their bombs, poured in lead from their eight .50 caliber nose guns, then pulled up sharply to avoid hitting masts and superstructure.

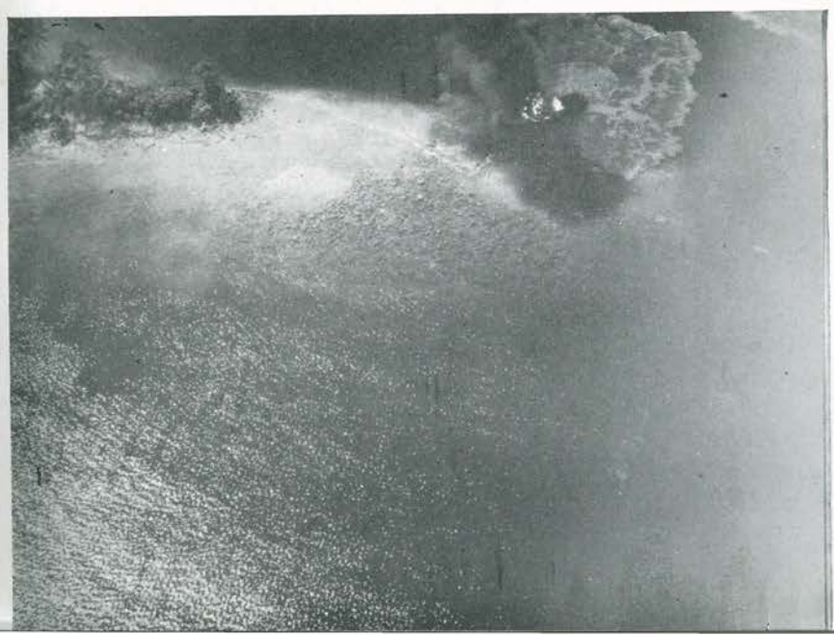
Captain Whitley was first man in and his bombs hung up. Lieutenant Dickinson followed, dropped one 500-pound bomb which hit at the water line about midship. Lieutenant Glosinger came in last, dropped two bombs for direct hits on the deck in front of the superstructure. After pulling out they swung around and made a second pass which was almost a duplicate of the first. Captain Whitley's bombs still would not release, but he got in some good licks with his .50 caliber bursts. Lieutenant Dickinson strafed with his .50 calibers and dropped one bomb which was observed to shoot almost horizontally between superstructure and mast to land in the water about 50 feet away. Following, Lieutenant Glossinger dropped his one remaining 500-pound bomb for another direct hit amidship—score for "Gloss": two runs, three hits, and no errors.

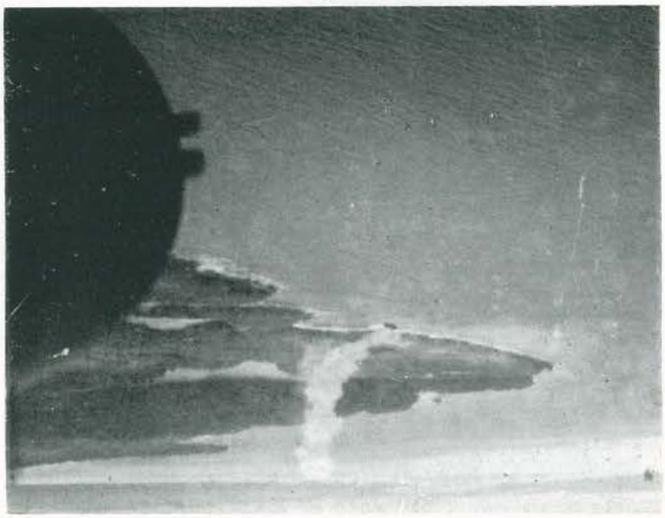
As they pulled away for home the target was a mass of flames, black smoke, and steam. The smoke could still be seen when they were over Rendova 30 miles away. A Navy observation plane in the vicinity reported that after the B-25s left, there was a tremendous explosion and a column of smoke from the burning destroyer rose to 8000 feet.

The flight came across Carney Field in tight formation at about 150 feet in a victory gesture and landed at 1611 a tired but happy gang.

Not every sweep or search found a target—many re-

A series of photos showing the attack on and the eventual fate of a Jap cargo ship west of Baga Island on July 14, 1943, Although the first photos show one ship under attack, the last one groups this and another attack, and shows two ships burning on the reef.





A Jap destroyer, beached and afire, is shown off New Georgia after the devastating 6 July attack.

turned to Carney with bombs and ammunition loads intact as Nippon became warier. The daylight sweeps became less productive, but night probing usually produced at least one lucrative target.

The 69th's mission of July 10th, a low altitude search for enemy shipping reported in the Kula Gulf, found and strafed a beached DD at Surumuni Cove and also strafed the village of Buri. Lieut. H. A. Schmidt and crew crashed into the sea 3000 yards off Koli Point in taking off for this mission. Lieut. H. F. Birlauf, co-pilot, was the sole survivor and furnished the information that the plane struck trees when pulling up and careened into the water out of control. He left the plane underwater and was saved by his Mae West.

A terse and vivid word picture of operations on July 20th survives in Group's official historical documents.

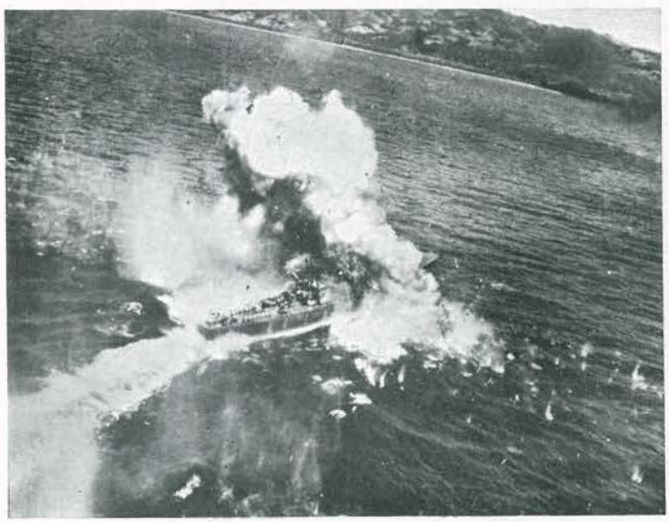
"In the early hours of July 20th, eight Mitchells of the 69th Squadron, standing by on all night shipping alert, were dispatched to intercept the Tokyo Express making its way down the Slot, presumably carrying supplies to the hard pressed defenders of the New Georgia Islands. The force, sighted by the PBY Black Cat patrol plane earlier in the evening, was estimated to consist of four destroyers, one light cruiser, and an unknown number of transports. The Mitchells homed on a signal transmitted by the Black Cat, which had tracked the enemy convoy since the first contact, and at 0330L, under a bright tropical moon which adequately illuminated the target, launched their attacks. Repeated skip-bombing attacks, with quarter-ton bombs driven into the face of a terrific barrage of automatic weapons fire from the warships, were observed by the Mitchell crews and the naval crews aboard the patrol plane to have accomplished the following results: Enemy losses—one light cruiser left burning and dead in the water; two direct hits scored on a destroyer, causing large explosions and certain destruction; damaging hits or near misses on a 300-foot freighter. Our losses: one Mitchell shot down by anti-aircraft. The entire crew of the lost plane, commanded by Capt. L. E. Whitley, after a skillful water landing, made their way by raft to a small island just off Ganongga Island, New Georgia Group, and 28 hours later were picked up by the Dumbo rescue plane.

"At 0720L eight Mitchells of the 390th Squadron found the cruiser damaged in the previous night's action creeping to friendly waters at a speed of 2 knots. Although sorely wounded, her defense was still vicious, pouring anti-aircraft fire from at least 30 stations. Feints at various quarters divided the fire and allowed individual planes to launch masthead attacks. Lieut. Schauffler ended the fray when one of his bombs exploded in the ship's magazine. Two minutes later she slipped into the depths, carrying with her at least 75% of her crew. Lt. Otto Kuhl made the first run from stern to bow, followed by Capt. Joe Wheeler. He was followed by Lieut. Laird, and Lieut. Holstein came boring in from the starboard beam, raking the ship in a daring, screaming, skidding run. Lieut. Schauffler followed Holstein.

List of crews participating in Shipping Strike in vicinity of Vella Gulf 20 July 1943:

P Rocks, Charles R., 2nd Lt.
CP Saler, Frank J., 2nd Lt.
N Miller, Carl L., 1st Lt.
E Floyd, Robert E., S/Sgt.
R Beck, Paul R., T/Sgt..
G McCarter, William V., S/Sgt.

A Jap destroyer escort stops a packet and starts exploding. Note the B-25 racked up on its wing in the upper right corner.



P Laird, Charles E., 2nd Lt.
CP Brokate, William H. Jr., 2nd Lt.
B Eichenour, John M., 2nd Lt.
E Elchert. Gilbert E., S/Sgt.
R Roth, Elwood A., S/Sgt.
G Spina, Eugene A., S/Sgt.

P Holstein Eugene E., 1st Lt.
CP Bernasco, Carl L., 2nd Lt.
N Craig, Robert C. 2nd Lt.
E McCall, Richard T., S/Sgt.
R Harbor, Wayne L., Sgt.
G Stauer, David M., S/Sgt.

P Wheeler, Joe D., Capt.
CP Halstead, James R., 2nd Lt.
N Powell, William H., 1st Lt.
E Tague, Harold F., S/Sgt.
R Koppang, Victor L., T/Sgt.
G Merzlock, Arthur A., S/Sgt.

P Morrison, William T., 2nd Lt.
CP Roderick, Edward N., 2nd Lt.
BN Wooten, Clyde W., 2nd Lt.
E Coffin, Howard, S/Sgt.
R Coyner, Orville J., S/Sgt.
G Armstrong, William I., S/Sgt.

P Kuhl. Otto F., 1st Lt.
CP Wattenbarger, Lloyd N., 2nd Lt.
N Brittian, Lloyd E., 2nd Lt.
E Houston, James C., S/Sgt.
R Keasler, John E., S/Sgt.
G Eads, John R., S/Sgt.

P Vordahl, Oscar E., 1st Lt.
CP Workman, Rex L., 2nd Lt.
N Shinn, Clarence D., 2nd Lt.
E Rice, George, S/Sgt.
R Berens, Frederick W., S/Sgt.
G Stiles, Donald J., S/Sgt.

P Schauffler, William G., 2nd Lt.
CP Lukich, Alexander R., 2nd Lt .
BN Deutsch. Jerome M., 2nd Lt.
E Mitchell, John R., S/Sgt.
R Mason, Allen G., S/Sgt.
G Nicholas, Denzil G., S/Sgt.

Misfortune overtook this flight, however, for on the return to the 'Canal, three torpedo boats were discovered heading towards the southern tip of Rendova. In an attack that followed, Lieut. Schauffler was shot down, carrying with him in death Lieut. Lukich and Lieut. Deutsch. The three enlisted men were saved by a friendly vessel. after being covered from the air by Lieut. Vordahl and Lieut. Morrison and a flight of SBD's who relieved them.

Through July the drive on New Georgia mounted. First

Bombs hit, straddle, and set afire two small cargo ships in Hunda Cove off Kolombangara Island on Juiy 14, 1943. One sank; the other burned merrily.

landings had been made on Rendova and at Viru Harbor and Wickham Anchorage, followed by Rice Anchorage to the north of Munda Point and Lambetti Plantation to the east. Each inch, each foot, each yard was won slowly, and naval guns and air power, such as they were then, were brought into play. On the 25th of July, two squadrons of 12 Mitchells each, led by Major Hardwick of the 390th and Major Spencer of the 75th, accompanied over 200 Liberators, Fortresses, SBD's, and TBF's of the Navy, plus additional Army fighters, in a massed strike on the coveted Munda. Simultaneous and recurrent waves of planes made runs on the troop concentrations east of the runway while five destroyers and three PT's lobbed shells over for good measure. Sixty half-tonners and some 1200 20-pound daisy-cutters churned up a maelstrom of coconuts, coral, camouflaged planes and stores, tents and soldiery, while tracers flew through the turmoil.

This was the most outstanding day, but not the total of the Group's part in taking New Georgia. The Mitchells flew more than a dozen ground support strikes, swooping in over the tree-tops with eight forward guns firing from each of six to twelve planes abreast and leaving delayed action demolition bombs in their wake.

In summing up the month of July we find some very interesting recapitulations, both from the standpoint of the Crusaders' successes as well as reflecting the terrific losses the Nippers were taking in a steady diet of ever increasing dosage. Jap air activity during the month was concentrated on efforts to delay and harass our troops on New Georgia and Rendova and to intercept our medium and heavy bombers in attacks in shipping in the South Bougainville area. The scale of their efforts did not fall

below the high point set late in June, and although they suffered big losses during this thirty day period, the fury of their stand did not seem to have abated any appreciable amount. A new Japanese technique crept into the picture with the disclosure that dusk attacks had been carried out pretty regularly against our force in New Georgia and Rendova. This was a technique that was to follow us through our time overseas. The attacks were generally carried out by medium bombers covered by from 40 to 50 fighters and then followed by one-or two-plane harassing missions the balance of the night.

Another new enemy feature to us and to the South Pacific Theater of Operations was the greatly increased use of night fighters. Although at no time did the night fighter tactics of the Jap become so highly specialized as our own night-birds finally became, they were at this particular period a serious threat to our boys, for reports came in verifying the rumor we had heard of a B-24 and a B-17 having been shot down by Jap night-fighters.

To date interception had not been much of a problem to us, but we knew it was there, lurking in the clouds, watching and waiting for an unwary straggler. The Intelligence count of enemy planes made from photo-interpretation disclosed approximately 480 Jap planes in the South Pacific, with their main base located at Rabaul. In the Bougainville area, photographs, the latter two weeks of the month showed a 25% increase in planes at Kahili over the first half of the month—this despite the heavy toll taken by our Army and Navy Air Forces during the early part of the month, when 207 of the enemy were knocked out of the skies. Enemy fighters sweeps of 50 to 60 planes had been an almost daily occurrence over the New Georgia skies, and as fast as their planes were shot down they were replaced.

On the ground the Jap continued his determined resistance to our forces on New Georgia, hanging on to every yard of ground with a tenacity bordering on fanaticism. It was certain that reserves of men and supplies had been pouring into the Vila-Munda sector via the barge route, and efforts to cut his supply lines by knocking out his barges and small ships had not met with too high a degree of success although the attacks against the larger vessels had been most heartening. The battle for Munda had developed into another Buna Mission (the famous New Guinea battle conducted by Lieut. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger in the first two months of 1943). The Japs had burrowed into the ground as a protection against air attack and only came out to fight when Allied advances began on the ground.

But, actions with Jap Naval units during the month of July proved beyond all doubt that this was no small

The Jap cruiser or destroyer leader was caught at dawn. She sank within two minutes after a bomb was skipped into her vitals. Few, if any, of her crew escaped.

scale affair in the Solomons as far as her grand strategy was concerned. As fast as her ships were sunk, or damaged, she bounced right back with more ships of all types and sizes. Her losses during the month were at least the following:

SUNK: 4 Destroyers, 1 Light Cruiser, 1 Destroyer beached and gutted by fire, 1 oil tanker, 1 seaplane tender, 7 small coastal vessels, and 9 barges. PROBABLY SUNK: 1 Destroyer. DAMAGED: 5 Destroyers, 1 Light Cruiser, 1 gunboat, 3 large cargo ships, 6 coastal vessels, and 4 barges.

Invariably her task force jaunts into the waters of The Slot were covered by fighter escort both at night and by day. Her shipping was by no means limited to the Vila-Munda defense zone, for she continued building positions on islands where small bases had been established, and a regular night route of barge and small ship traffic had been established. These craft traveled by night, hiding out in the coves of the islands by day. It was an ingeniously established supply line which proved to be quite efficient for the enemy and most provoking to us, at least for a while.

Allied aerial efforts during this period, in addition to the Crusaders' work, were devoted to the protection of Rendova, which we took early in the month and where we maintained a daily and constant air patrol of fighters for the protection of our New Georgia positions, sinking of Jap ships, and protection of our own fleet units, as well as attempting to destroy enemy ground installations at Munda, Vila, Ballale, Kahili, and similar targets throughout the South Pacific area. Although at this time

our "availability of aircraft" in the Theater as a whole was about the size of two good Groups according to present day standards, we managed to start an air offensive in late June that continued throughout the month of July, and which late that month succeeded in wresting control of the air from the enemy. Especially is this true near the end of July, for during that time the largest air attacks of the South Pacific War were conducted. The Munda raid of July 25th was composed of 254 aircraft of all types, which rained 500,000 pounds of bombs on the Japs with the loss of but one B-24.

The month of July produced another notable asset in the form of strategic bases for our forces, when a fighter strip was established on the southeastern corner of New Georgia. It was at Segi Point and received the name of Segi Air Strip. Although only 3300 feet in length, C-47's were using it to haul supplies to our New Georgia ground forces, and it was later used by several Crusader crews that were hurtin for a place to land.

The use of PT boats for the blocking of enemy barge traffic to Vila and Munda was inaugurated late in the month of July, when nine PT's began guarding the Ferguson Passage entrance to Blackett Straits, and the southern portion of Kula Gulf, just north of Vila and Munda. With the inauguration of this weapon the answer was finally found for successfully coping with the barge supply route, and which completely throttled the Jap bases once they had been by-passed. PT's were an integral part of the story of the war in the Pacific and their traditions established in the heat of battle will live forever.

To the Crusaders of that day, the unsung heroes of the war in the Solomons were the coast watchers. The latter were commissioned officers of the Australian Navy who at one time had been in the territory as planters and plantation owners. They knew the islands backward and forward, and threw their knowledge into the fray against the Jap invader. Working alone on some Jap infested island, they radioed news of impending raids, the results of our own raids, and new lucrative targets for our airplanes to hit, and were always on the watch for downed fliers. Once they got hold of fliers who had been forced down, they succored them, kept them, protected them from the enemy, and made arrangements for their eventual rescue either by Dumbo or submarine.

To wind up the month of July, the 390th and 69th combined score against enemy shipping is as follows: 9 ships and 3 barges for 390th, including a light cruiser; 3 destroyers, 1 transport, and 2 coastal cargo vessels for the 69th. Crediting a specific pilot with a victory over a ship was most difficult, and in many cases the official records could not give one credit over another.

In late July the 69th was relieved by the 75th, and the 70th arrived two weeks later to relieve the 390th. The 69th went to P. D. G. while the 390th still used Fiji as a rear area. The combat crews of the two squadrons just out of combat were sent to Auckland, New Zealand, on rest leave.

On July 21st, 1943, the 75th entered the combat picture with a mission to Bairoko Harbor on the northern coast of New Georgia, where some Japanese "Imperial Marines" had done a remarkably fine job of pinning down Colonel Liveredge's doughboys. Captain Wilmarth led the 75th six-plane formation in a bombing and strafing attack that was highly successful. On the 13th of August, 1943, the 70th bombed the Rekata Bay seaplane base from medium altitude in what was described by the coast watcher as "an excellent bit of bombing, causing much destruction."

August opened in good style for, by the 5th, the Munda strip was in Allied hands. A paragraph from a Crusaders' mission report wrote the obituary of Munda as a Jap airfield; "four small fires and one large fire were observed in that part of the target area jutting out into the water. One large fire was seen on the Coast line at the extreme north end of the target. Gurasai was left smoking very heavily with one big explosion seen in this area sending dense heavy black smoke to 3000 feet. During the strafing attack hundreds of men were observed splashing around in the water off of Haivo Wharf, also under attack. A TBF was seen to burst into flame and crash in the water 2000 feet south of Munda Point. Another wrecked plane was seen in the water about 600 feet southwest of Munda Point. Five Higgins boats heading towards Rendova on a heading of about 145 degrees with one of the boats burning was observed at 0800 from 300 feet altitude. One barge, unidentified, and one other unidentified boat about 160 feet in length were seen passing between Rendova and Munda in an easterly direction during the attack."

This was action in every sense of the word. Flying through the skies in the Solomons in those days was something that made any man's blood race a bit wilder, for at any moment all hell could break loose. The above strike was one of the early ground support missions flown by the Crusaders, and at that time air support of ground forces gave heart to many a jungle-soaked infantryman inching his way along the treacherous trails. Months after the campaign had receded into history, officers and men of the ground forces involved never encountered a Mitchell crew member of the Group without expressing thanks for the aid and appreciation for the daring skill with which the aerial feats had been accomplished. It was a pattern

that was to become familiar as the battle for the islands progressed and went ever north and westward. In all, the Munda air campaign, coupled with the final offensive to capture the Jap base, lasted 37 days and included the protection of our convoys, the covering of the landings, numerous bombing missions—many of which were on a large scale for this area in support of our troops ashore—as well as attacks on the nearby Jap bases of Vila, Ballale, and Kahili. During this period, Allied forces of all types reported the destruction of 358 Jap planes, while Jap shipping listed 21 ships sunk and 19 damaged. In approximately 30 strikes against the Munda strip, more than 900 tons of bombs were dropped. A total of 100 more strikes of all types also were flown against other enemy targets. From a defensive standpoint, Allied planes flew about 22,000 miles daily on routine searches. During the 37-day period, 33 fighter pilots were recovered of 81 forced down in combat or operational accidents. Many of these were picked up by Dumbos, who were also used to evacuate casualties from the combat area. For the first time in this campaign, transport planes were used to drop supplies and needed materiel, including ammunition and water, to our combat troops on the ground. No Dumbos or transport planes were lost during the entire operation. Air power was beginning to assert itself in the South Pacific Theatre, and with a vengeance.

The high standards of work and the truly great record for maintenance which the squadron's ground crews had already begun was reflected by the remarks of Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining, Commanding General, 13th AAF, on the occasion of the first presentation of awards to personnel of the 42nd Bomb Group, in August, 1943. General Twining spoke at some length on the unprecedented record for "In Commission" aircraft which the group had set in its nightly status reports, congratulating the maintenance crews for their splendid work.

However just as "The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley" a few things would go wrong, and an amusing tale of one Snafu that happened found its way into print.

From the *Milwaukee Sentinel,* August 14, 1943
By JACK MAHON, *INS Staff Correspondent*

GUADALCANAL—(INS)—Life is a bowl of sour cherries these days for Capt. Lloyd E. Whitley, of the Highpoint, N. C., Whitleys.

Whitley is a pilot of the 42nd Bombardment Group here and if things keep happening the way they have, he'll sue for a s parate peace. For the Captain is an eager young man. He flies a bomber sardonically christened "The Fickle Finger" and it seems the digit of fate has marked him for her choicest bits of scorn.

To begin with: Captain Whitley got the bright idea not so long ago of killing two Japs with one bomb. To be more specific, he was assigned to a "snooper mission", in which his bomber flew into enemy territory by the light of the moon to search for enemy shipping.

There is a certain technique for such night flights and very valuable and unexpendable fuses for the bombs used. This night Captain Whitley's bomb racks were heavily loaded.

"The Fickle Finger" searched and searched, but the Nip ships were hiding and soon it was time to turn for home. Whitley did not like this, but was prepared. He had carried along some other type fuses. He turned the ship over to the co-pilot and clambered back to the bomb bay.

"I had made up my mind if we didn't find any ships we could at least bomb a Jap base on the way home" explained the captain, "So I crawled down the catwalk and let myself down into the bomb bay. We had the doors open so we wouldn't waste any time if we spotted a target.

"My troubles started immediately. The damned doors jammed and I couldn't shut them. I could do nothing but sit on the top bomb, prop my feet on the far side of the bomb bay and start changing the fuses. All this time we were flying around over enemy territory and the boys didn't think it a very smart idea.

"I changed the fuses, leaving one as it was in case we ran into shipping. Then I went back to the cockpit and took over the plane again. After I'd been seated my navigator, Lieut. Chalmer Gustafson, Duluth, Minn., rigged up a rope from my arm to his.

"He reversed his drift meter and used it as a sight. We headed for the Jap air base at Vila, on Kolombangara, and came over it at 3000 feet. When Gus got the target in the center of his sight he gave the rope a jerk, I pressed the release and we laid two eggs. I think at least one of them landed smack in the middle of the camp. We got out without getting shot at."

Whitley was very happy at his little stunt the next day when he was called in to see his superiors. They talked quietly for a while of his ingenuity and his spirit—they then literally bawled hell out of him.

It seems a bomber and its crew are very valuable, that Whitley himself was very valuable; too valuable to be sitting over open bomb bay doors in the backyard of the Jap, changing fuses so he can wage some strictly private North Carolina war.

Whitley was very apologetic and, we suspect, more than a little bewildered.

On July 6th, however, came his big chance. There had been a battle in the Kula Gulf, north of New Georgia, and our Navy had cut at least seven Jap ships to pieces. Whitley was told to lead a flight of three Mitchell bombers north to do a job on some crippled Nip ships reported stumbling around the sea.

Up the boys went and there, its nose on the beach, was a Jap destroyer. It was in trouble but not outwardly scarred. The trio flew over. It was time to drop the bombs and Flight Leader Whitley soared over the target with his fingers itching.

He pressed the release. Nothing happened.

He pressed again. Still no action. "The Fickle Finger" was on him again—his bomb racks had jammed and he couldn't drop a single egg.

Over and over they flew, the other two Mitchells dropping five bombs, scoring four hits, and watching the destroyer break in two.

In the lead plane the boys reported Captain Whitley was one breath away from apoplexy. They thought he was going to try and throw the bombs down with his bare hands.

* * *

As a ground engagement, Guadalcanal has passed into American military history, a blood-stained and immortal chapter. Our portion of its story as an American air and supply base is told herein, within the necessary limits. Of actual living on the 'Canal, as our national habit of abbreviation later made it, the narrators can at best give only a few highlights and illustrative incidents as this record goes into print. Those who were there can supply the rest. Those who were not and to whom Guadalcanal was a supply or a fueling stop on a flight, a week of backbreaking labor in a casual camp while awaiting transportation on up, will find in *Limit of Darkness* by one-time Navy flier and later AAF field correspondent Howard Hunt, a portrayal of the physical and natural aspects of life in the Solomons so vivid that the colors, sounds, and smells leap from the printed page, and the reader breathes the very sultriness of the tropics.

Even long afterward, when we had become hardened jungle hands of the first cut ourselves, the heavy humid heat and the extraordinarily miry mud, the highly variable food, the rats, the creeping, crawling, buzzing, burrowing, flying insects—all constantly recurred in conversation. When another hackneyed phrase, later to be abused to the point of meaninglessness, was first used, is not known, but it is probable that the ubiquitous "You-should-have-been-here-when-it-was-rough" first passed the lips of an old Guadalcanaler.

CHAPTER 8

The fall of Munda soon placed previously remote targets within striking distance of the Crusaders' bombs and guns. By staging through Munda, the bases at Kahili, Kara, Buka, and Bonis were now within easy striking radius of the Mitchells. The heavies turned inquiring eyes towards the Jap fortress of Rabaul, but GHQ knew that the first business at hand was to pound Kahili into submission and neutralize all of the enemy bastions in, on, and near the southern tip of Bougainville. From the beginning of August until the middle of December Kahili received far more than its share of American made explosives. The Crusaders ran frequent medium altitude and low level strafing missions against these targets, one in particular which will be long remembered by those who participated in it. It was the dusk bombing and strafing attack of October 6th with Kahili the target. The story of that raid is told in an article written by Capt. Robert Cohn and released through Public Relations channels:

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, South Pacific—And yet still another story of breath-taking thrills, adventure, and war successes comes out of the Allied Gibraltar of the South Pacific—Guadalcanal. The curtain rises on this aviation episode in a 13th Air Force Operations and Intelligence shack. It is the briefing prior to a mission that is aimed at the Japanese air base at Kahili, which lies on the island of Bougainville, the last stronghold of the enemy in the Solomons. The mission calls for a tree-top level bombing and strafing attack, and the mission must succeed.

On this particular mission a bomb and style of release just recently devised was to be used. The bomb was supposed to leave the aircraft at slightly above the tree-tops level, and attached to each bomb was a miniature parachute. Instead of the bomb hurtling forward and downward, the 'chute was to open and check the forward momentum to such an extent that the aircraft could safely get beyond the explosion's destructive area. This then, was the reason for the air of excitement in the crowded briefing shack.

The plan was simply for several squadrons of Billy Mitchell medium bombers to sneak in at dusk, drop their bombs, strafing the parked planes in the area simultaneously, and then sneak out again under the protection of nightfall. But to do this called for the most exact timing imaginable. It was only 300 miles to the target and though all of the distance was over water, it was within view of the myriad of islands that seem to dot this sector of the globe—any one of which might conceal a Japanese outpost that could warn the enemy airdrome of the impending attack. The target had to be reached after sunset, but while there still remained enough light to distinguish objects on the ground. The run to Kahili had to be made almost water level, so that the flight would be less discernable to unfriendly eyes. To arrive too late would mean that the bombing would be inaccurate, for at tree-top level you cannot hit what you cannot see. To arrive too soon, would mean that, although the bombing would be more accurate, enemy fighter planes from the Kara Airdrome less than 8 miles from Kahili, could rise to meet our formation. Actually the attack had been timed for that split moment when night sets in. This show had to arrive and leave within a three-minute period.

The route to and from the target was carefully gone over. The spacing between the formations as the various waves or elements swept across Kahili was discussed and agreed upon. Emergency procedures in the event of a forced landing in the water near the target area were also reviewed. Even though the element of surprise were attained, it was felt that the last two waves of Mitchells would still be subjected to some intense fire from automatic weapons. If the surprise element were lacking, the whole formation would have to run a veritable gauntlet of steel, for the planes would be within effective range of even pistols. It promised to be a good show. If successful, it was anticipated that enemy air opposition in the Solomons would be depleted quite some bit, and the last stronghold of the Japs in the Solomons would get a thorough plastering.

The planes all took off without incident and were soon winging along to one of the small islands which had been agreed upon as a rendezvous point. When all Squadrons had arrived over the island, the Formation Commander, Capt. Charles W. Brown, 26-year-old flier from Waldo, Arkansas, signalled for the formation to proceed on course to the target. They dropped down to water level and were soon skimming along the waves on their way to Kahili. Three hundred miles of "water-buzzing" is no picnic even for the most experienced pilot, and after about 30 minutes the strain of such low flying was beginning to show on many of their faces. Another hour to go.

Many thoughts went flashing through the minds of the men as they continued steadily forward. Lieut. Alto F. Dolan, 22-year-old Superior, Wisconsin, Flight Command-

er, sat tensely crouched over the controls wondering if they had been sighted yet. And little Sgt. "Tony" Moreno, an aerial gunner from Los Angeles, California, was thinking, would they be too early or too late? Moreno, though he was unaware of it at the time, was riding to a date with destiny and was not to come back alive from this one. Back in the navigator's compartment, busy checking maps and navigational instruments, rode Lieut. Donald C. Grant, a Rochester, New York, lad who was attending Princeton University when he heard his country's call. As navigator-bombardier, his thoughts were whether this new-fangled bomb would really work as they had been told it would. Other men were wondering if enemy fighter planes would come hurtling down from above to intercept them. Would the last two waves get through? These thoughts and many others came to mind as the formation passed another check-point on the route to the target, and right on schedule. So far, so good.

After about 75 minutes, when the sun was setting very low in the sky, the island of Bougainville appeared on the horizon. The home-stretch has been reached. The next fifteen minutes would tell the story. Eager eyes searched the heavens above for enemy fighters. And now, just ahead of them lay Ran Tan Island, the last check-point on the schedule and only five miles from Kahili.

Between Ran Tan Island and the target, there was a small mountain of some 1700 feet that had to be crossed. The formation appeared actually to crawl up the side of that mountain, gaining altitude steeply as the mountain became more precipitous. At last the summit was reached, and down in the valley below was Kahili, still visible in the fast gathering gloom. They were here on time. The curtain on the second act was going up.

The throttles were gently eased forward, and the aircraft noses pointed down, heading straight for the treetops. Faster and faster the speedy Billy Mitchells dove, and the wind made a whistling sound whose notes kept mounting higher and higher as the planes kept gathering more and more speed. Now the first wave carried over the target area in a hell-breaking crescendo of sound, as the wind and reverberations of loosened guns and bombs shattered the stillness of the dusk. The element of surprise had been achieved—but only momentarily.

Figures sprang to instant alertness on the ground and rushed to prepared gun positions. And almost before the second wave had crossed the target, angry enemy machine guns spit out long, loud stacatto bursts at the Mitchells. The parachute bombs were working admirably, as witnessed by the number of enemy aircraft exploding and burning on the runway and in the revetment area.

But now the last two waves were over the summit and on the way. There was no surprise element in their favor, and guns opened up even before they had levelled out for the bombing run. Planes were purposely pointed at enemy gun positions that were still firing, and burst after burst poured into them. The bombs were released and still more explosions rent the air over Kahili. As the Billy Mitchells sped out of the target area gathering the folds of darkness ever closer around their sturdy wings, the Formation Leader called Flight Commanders on the radio for a hasty check-up on who might be missing.

With bated breath he waited for the reports to filter through and heaved a sigh of relief when all but one plane were accounted for and in formation on their way home. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Lt. Lloyd D. Spies and crew were lost on this one when their plane was shot down 300 feet off the target, cartwheeling into the water. There were no survivors.) Three aircraft had been hit by AA exceptionally hard, and reported they would land at Munda, the recently wrested Jap airdrome on New Georgia, rather than continue on to Guadalcanal. In addition to that, one man had been killed outright when an enemy 20-millimeter cannon shell exploded inside the plane. It was "Tony" Moreno. But the third act of the drama was still to be played, even though Kahili lay behind them.

Lieut. Willard "Swede" Johnson, big, affable, tow-headed farm boy from Sebeka, Minnesota, was flying in the last wave and on the right wing of Lieut. Austin W. Eivers of Portland, Oregon. Suddenly, "The Swede" heard a tremendous roar over the din of his own motors and saw a huge flame come belching out of Eivers' right engine. Almost instantly, the latter's plane slid down beyond Johnson's view. "The Swede" himself was having his hands full, for his horizontal elevators had received several accurate bursts and at the moment looked more like refuse from the city dump than an integral part of a plane's tail assembly.

In Eivers' doomed plane, busy hands worked speedily. Lieut. William E. Eliason, young co-pilot from Trenton, New Jersey, flying his first combat mission, had been intently staring at the phosphorescent needle of the oil pressure indicator. It had been fluctuating ever since they had left the target. When the motor roared, he realized with a start that the "prop" had run away. He pushed the feathering switch in an attempt to halt the wild wind-milling of the propeller, but to no avail. The oil system had been shot out and the needed pressure for "feathering" was lacking. A situation such as this is dangerous even at high altitudes, but at low-level, and in the dark, it is almost hopeless. The best that could be wished for was a nearly perfect emergency water landing.

Lieut. Johnny W. Malpass, 23-year-old navigator-bombardier from Clinton, South Carolina, quickly sizing up the situation, had the rest of the crew prepare themselves for an immediate crash landing. He then opened the emergency top hatch so they could crawl out of the plane when it settled in the water.

Staff Sergeant Adams of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the aerial engineer of this crew, sat on the floor of the navigator's compartment with his feet braced against the forward bulkhead. He had been wounded in the face, by shrapnel and the smeared blood made him look for all the world like an Indian on the warpath. The gunner, S/Sgt. Earl T. Oliphant from Plymouth, Michigan, a veteran of a previous water landing, and S/Sgt. Lloyd D. Johnson, radio operator from Julian, Nebraska, were at their places in the tail-end of the plane.

Lieutenant Eivers kept full power going on his good engine in order to keep the plane under some semblance of control until the aircraft touched the water, and then, holding the nose up, he cut the throttles and let her hit solid, tail first. The bomber shuddered, skipped about 50 yards, and then skipped yet again before settling. In the meantime, Adams, who was on the floor, jumped to his feet after the plane hit the water the first time, and when it hit the second time, it catapulted the hapless engineer clean out the open top-hatch and landed him in the water about 100 feet behind the spot where the aircraft finally settled.

The men quickly scrambled out of the hatches, fore and aft, and got their Rickenbacker rubber life boat inflated and launched. The bomber sank in less than a minute, but the men were in the life raft and clear by that time.

They paddled towards the spot where Adams was, and found him bleeding profusely and thrashing about in the water. The luck of this doughty crew held out, for just as they pulled him into the boat, three sharks broke water next to the life boat. The scent of blood had brought them there, and had the crew arrived there 30 seconds later, the engineer would surely have been ripped to shreds.

Lieutenant Malpass estimated their position to be about 20 miles from Vella Lavella, an island in the New Georgia Group that still contained pockets of enemy resistance. They paddled in that direction, arriving there just as dawn was breaking the next morning. An Allied infantry patrol operating in that sector found the men about one hour later, and eventually had them returned to Guadalcanal.

And so the curtain dropped on another story of another raid. The score was two planes lost with the crew of one safely recovered, and one additional man killed in action. The results of the raid are best shown by quoting from an official document mailed to all members of the 13th Air Force that participated on the mission. It read:

HEADQUARTERS COMAIRSOLS
Office of the Commanding General
APO 709
October 9, 1943.

SUBJECT: Commendation for Bombing and Strafing Attack on the Kahili Airdrome on October 6, 1943.

TO: Commanding Officer, 42nd Bombardment Group. (Thru Commanding Officer, XIII Bomber Command, APO 709.)

As Commander Aircraft Solomons, I take great pleasure in commending the 42nd Bombardment Group for the excellent results of the parachute bombing and strafing attack on Kahili Airdrome at dusk on October 6, 1943.

This well-timed and devastating attack prevented enemy air operations against our forces during the next two days. The curtailment of his air operations in the New Georgia area was of inestimable value to our forces, as it permitted our crippled destroyers to withdraw safely from the night action of October 6, 1943, made possible the unrestricted rescue operations by motor torpedo boats and Dumbos off the island of Vella Lavella, and enabled the large convoy of cargo ships to safely unload personnel and cargo at Barakoma; all accomplished without enemy air attacks, indicating complete success of the bombardment mission.

The outstanding leadership exhibited and the superb ability of the pilots and crews participating in this highly successful low-level attack, coupled with the courageous spirit shown by all, is exemplary of the highest traditions of the military service.

It is directed that this commendation be presented to all members of your command.

N. F. Twining
Major General, U. S. A.

Pilots of Crusader planes participating on this famous mission were Captains Brown of the 69th, Wheeler and Carmody of the 390th, Lieutenants Christian, Burkhart, Corrie, Eddington, Ferguson, Everett, Doty, Lamkin, Spies, Ernest, and Nordahl from the 69th, and Lieutenants Holstein, Moore, Kuhl, Workman, Dolan, Blackwell, Pebles, Eivers, Johnson, and Dermody of the 390th.

Right after this mission was flown, and before the infantry reported him safe several search missions were run in an effort to locate Lieutenant Eivers. Lieutenant Dermody of the 390th finally located some debris in the water. Upon closer examination he discovered a wheel floating in the water with a man clinging to it. He dropped a raft to the survivor, meanwhile calling for a Dumbo

Left to right: Lt. Carl Fassinger, Sgt. George S. Clayman, Lt. Norman R. Haskell, Sgt. Robert E. Bonar, Cpl. Wright E. Jarnagan.

Left to right: Lt. Fred H. Greene, Cpl. D. H. Dunn, Pvt. Claude Smith, S/Sgt. Lloyd E. Gaston.

Left to right, kneeling: S/Sgt. J. F. Johnson, Cpl. Joseph Foell; second row: Pfc. W. J. Neill, S/Sgt. Harvey E. Cooper, Pvt. Hudson Mansfie'd, Sgt. Thomas E. Porter; rear: Maj. Richard Carmody, Capt. Lloyd E. Brittain, Lt. L. J. Ruff, Lt. Walter Kloc.

BANIKA *was a huge coconut grove, sunny and pleasant. At night enormous rats took over . . . they'd even eat your cake of soap.*

These photos show the 390th S-2, S-3, and Supply Section personnel.

to rush to the rescue. After circling for two hours Lieutenant Dermody spied the rescue plane chugging towards the scene. As soon as he had informed the Dumbo pilot of the location and so forth, Dermody headed for home because his fuel was running low. The rescue was accomplished successfully, but to the everlasting chagrin of one Dermody, the rescued turned out to be a Jap who had just had his plane shot out from under him 30 minutes before the Crusader so graciously arrived on the scene and set the well-oiled American rescue service in motion.

The 69th's two-plane shipping search on October 12th, flown by Captain Everett and Lieutenant Schweikert, found rich meat for the pot—two 8 to 10,000-ton AKs on the east side of Toiokh Island. Twelve bombs and 500 rounds away for the pair on two runs each produced a score later verified as a definite for Captain Everett and a probable for Lieutenant Schweikert.

In October the group made the first move north when the 390th, 75th, and Group Headquarters moved to the Russell Islands. The base was Renard Field, with a pretty coral runway running through the heart of a coconut plantation belonging to Lever Brothers. The Russells were a group of several islands; Banika, the largest, being the new home for the 42nd. A Marine Air Group flying Corsairs had been stationed here, but with the arrival of the Group they moved on to other pastures and hunting grounds.

At first sight, the Russells were thought the best possible spot to be stationed. It was cooler than the 'Canal, and there was no jungle growth to clear in setting up line areas and camp sites. The latter were in the plantation proper and our boys soon discovered that a falling coconut could do as much bodily harm as a well placed Jap personnel bomb. Then, too, there was the problem of coconut rats. They scampered across the tent tops, disturbing one's sleep at night, ate up the soap on the wash stands, and left dung in every possible spot. But still the Russells were quite an improvement over the 'Canal.

Meanwhile there were some notable changes taking place within the ranks of the Crusaders. Capt. George R. Hundt became the Commanding Officer of the 69th, relieving John Sharp, who had been promoted to Major and was being ordered back to the U. S. with several other officers of the squadron to form the cadre for a new organization. Soon after, Lieut. Col. Harold S. Ecklund, who was Base Commander at Carney Field and a former airline pilot, came into the Group and relieved Captain Hundt, who went to the Bomber Command to supervise a special training school for B-25 crews just sent over from the States. Captain Jean H. Daugherty, who had been "A" Flight Commander in the 390th, took over command of the 70th Bomb Squadron and was soon promoted to Major. Hardwick, C. O. of the 390th, became a Lieut. Col. and was shortly thereafter evacuated to America for medical reasons. He was succeeded by Lieut. Col. George H. Bosch.

A roster of the key men of the 70th at this time, as far as can be ascertained from records available to the writers, went as follows:

SECTION HEAD SECTION CHIEF

Commanding Officer, Maj. Jean Daugherty

Operations Officer, Capt. Savell L. Sharp, S/Sgt. Abe Prensky

Intelligence Officer, Lieut. William Trone; S/Sgt. Meyer Bernstein

Engineering Officer, Lieut. Homer H. Noar; M/Sgt. Arthur Jolly

Executive Officer, Capt. Harley Kabrud.

Ordnance Officer, Lieut. Walter Beam; T/Sgt. Chas. M. Williamson

Armament Officer, Capt. Henry Dulac; M/Sgt. Darel Snyder

Communications Officer, Lieut. Wm. D. Davis; S/Sgt. David W. Lynch

Flight Surgeon, Capt. George Sifert; S/Sgt. Melvin C. Ogden

Adjutant, Capt. Howard N. Merritt

First Sergeant, Richard A. Day

Mess Sergeant, S/Sgt. Frederick C. Westbrook.

The 69th Ground Echelon were still at P. D. G. and their line-up at this time looked something like this:

Commanding Officer, Lieut. Col. Harold S. Ecklund

Operations Officer, Capt. Charles W. Brown; T/Sgt. Doyle R. Smith.

Executive Officer, Capt. Charles W. Humble

Adjutant, Capt. Roy B. Harris

Intelligence, Lieut. Reginald Hayes; M/Sgt. Wendell E. Elliot

Engineering, Capt. Jasper W. Howard; M/Sgt. Clark H. Curtis

Armament, Capt. Wm. Rosar; M/Sgt. Carl E. Seibert

Ordnance, Lieut. Chas. W. Hagon; T/Sgt. Kenneth E. Karraker.

Communications, Capt. Harry W. Stockoff; M/Sgt. Philip Kuperberg

First Sergeant, Joseph R. Zwiste

Mess Sergeant, Sgt. Eugene Robertson

Flight Surgeon, Lieut. John W. Anderson

CHAPTER 9

On October 12th the 75th came back into action, and was joined by the 70th Squadron on the 24th. Escorting pursuit aircraft from Espiritu Santo to 'Canal on the 12th, No. 571 of the 75th, piloted by Lieut. Robert W. Wending, was lost in weather with crew and passengers. In addition to the crew aboard, there were two officers from the 390th who were lost, Capt. Charles D. Bergman and Lieut. John J. Schirp, Armament and Ordnance Officers, respectively.

On an early mission from the Russells, a medium altitude bombing attack on Kahili on October 24th, S/Sgt. Robert E. Floyd, Aerial Engineer, met his death. Intense fire was coming up from the target, and a shell (40MM or larger) entered the fuselage on the underside and to the right of the camera hatch, which Sergeant Floyd was bending over. The shell continued through the left top fuselage, just missing some of the control cables. The shell was apparently a dud, for there was no explosion within the plane, and later examination of the type of hole it made indicated it might have been traveling end over end. After clearing the target, the pilot, Lieut. Willard O. Johnson, tried to check the condition of his ship with members of the crew. The interphone was out so S/Sgt. William V. McCarter, the gunner, climbed into the back and found Sgt. Floyd slumped over the camera. He gave the news to the pilot, who immediately broke formation, radioed for an ambulance and landed at Munda. But to no avail, for Floyd was killed instantly; the shell had hit him squarely in the chest.

Later in October Major Daugherty led the 70th on a strafer against the Buka-Bonis area, which is well described in a public relations release written by Capt. William Trone.

AT A BASE SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC—October 27, 1943. Flying continually over 800 miles of water, elements of the 70th Bombardment Squadron, 13th Air Force, yesterday struck Jap-held Buka Passage Airdrome in the Northern Solomons.

Just clearing the palm tree tops, the planes, led by Maj. Jean H. Daugherty, of Dallas, Texas, caught the Japs flatfooted. With all guns blazing, the planes swept over the airfield and revetment area dropping over 5000 pounds of parachute fragmentation bombs, scattering death and destruction throughout.

One cluster of bombs was observed to have exploded in and about an operations hut, completely demolishing it. One aircraft piloted by Lieut. William D. Morrison, Amenia, N. Y., with Lieut. Joseph E. Blackburn, Baltimore, Md., co-piloting, dove on the airdrome control tower, leaving it more like a sieve than a tower. Lieut. Clyde W. Wooten, Louisa, Ky., was bombardier-navigator.

Two parked Japanese airplanes identified as Bettys were strafed and burned. A gasoline dump exploded, sending flames and debris upwards to 300 feet. Black, billowing smoke could be seen 40 miles, towering up to 2500 feet.

Still another plane dove, spewing fire upon 25 to 30 Nips scurrying for cover of coconut logs, the intense fire dropping them. Major Daugherty, pilot of this plane remarked, "It was just like the movies, and those guys were big." But then, anything over 5' 7" looked big to the pint-sized Major, who has to stretch to see out of the windshield.

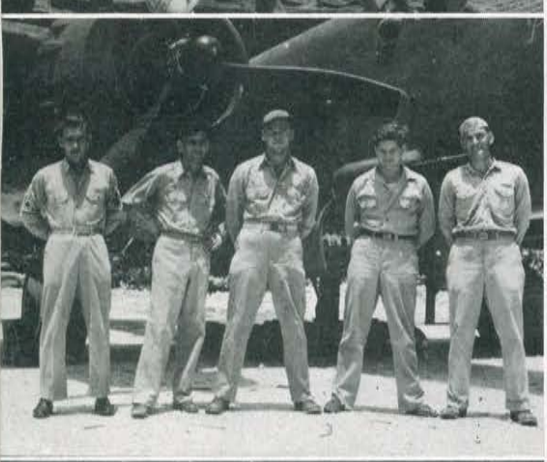
Lieut. Paul D. Ryder, Whitman, Mass., and F/O Roger D. Young, Bandy, Va., attacked a machine gun nest at the end of the runway that was firing upon the attack planes. The nest and occupants disappeared in a sheet of flame and smoke.

P-38s also joined in the melee, sinking one small vessel just off shore, and providing fighter cover for the bombers. All planes returned to base safely.

* * *

The Mitchells belonging to the 42nd Group were soon known as Wilson's Horses; Wilson for the Group C. O., and Horse being the code name for a B-25 just as "Box Car" mean a B-24, "Street Car" a C-47, and so on. And Wilson's Horses soon proved themselves thoroughbreds of the first water, especially where Tojo's shipping was concerned. The best hunting was experienced in a two-day period early in November when they rang up the following scores:

SUNK: Two 300' cargo ships, two 150' cargo ships, one 150' destroyer escort, two 100' cargo ships and six supply barges.




LT. ROBERT L.
HERO OF TOKYO RAID


NOLA

ON WHOSE CREW WERE YOU?

Crews and airplanes, irrevocably bound by a bond of common danger, were a fighting machine that trained together and fought together.

The necessities of warfare sometimes broke up crews who had trained together and who had flown overseas together, but always there was in each man the memory of "my crew," the unit to which he somehow felt he belonged. That was the airplane on which the crew thought the pilots the best damned airplane drivers in the world, the navigator-bombardier a guy who could get them there, put his bombs in the target and get them home, the engineer a man who knew his business intimately, the radio operator a guy who knew his calls, his Q-signals, and what to do under any circumstances, and the tail gunner a gunner who could do his business efficiently and effectively.

DAMAGED: Two 100' cargo ships and seven supply barges.

The above catch is credited the Crusaders in the publication compiled by the Statistical Department of the Bomber Command, the official score-keepers of all bombardment aircraft claims in the South Pacific. More of this kind of warfare is taken from an account of Capt. Otto R. Hartwig, Jr., who participated in many sea searches and successful attacks against Jap shipping. He says:

"Our six Mitchells had been assigned to search the northern coast of Bougainville to intercept the supplies the Japs were expected to send to their forces on the southern end of the island. We took off from the Munda airfield while it was still dark and arrived in the search area at daylight. Almost immediately, a small convoy consisting of a supply ship, an ammunition ship, and an escorting corvette, was encountered. We made individual attacks at mast level, strafing the ships' decks with our forward-firing 50's and dropping a 500-pound bomb, and then repeated the performance on one of the other ships in the convoy. The first bombs hit the supply ship, starting a large fire, but from then on the action was too confused to follow in detail. Within 20 minutes the ammunition ship had been completely destroyed, the freighter was afire from bow to stern and settling rapidly, and the wreckage of the coverette was going down stern first. As much of our ammunition and all of our bombs had been expended, we headed back towards Munda. At Empress Augusta Bay we were intercepted by a superior force of Zeros who attacked us aggressively and resolutely. Three of them made co-ordinated attacks on our plane, scoring four direct hits with 20MM shells and inflicting painful injuries to Lieutenant Gant, the Bombardier, and Lieut. John H. Brownell, Armament Officer of the Squadron, who was flying that day. The turret gunner and the radio operator caught one Zero in a perfect cross fire and sent him down in flames. Right after that the fighters broke off, and we returned to base without any other incidents."

With the offensive in the Solomons rolling along in "high blower", another step up the ladder of victory was taken when, on October 27th, an invasion force combining the force of both the United States and the jungle-wise New Zealanders stormed on the beaches of Stirling and Mono Islands in the Treasury Group. This landing took the war right into the proverbial laps of the Japs, for the Treasury Group was within shelling distance of the Shortland Islands, and only 45 miles from Kahili. Stirling Island, which was to become home for Group Headquarters and three of her squadrons, was a narrow island less than four miles in length and unoccupied except for a few enemy gun positions. A mile away on Mono were to be found a handful of typical Solomon Island natives who spoke of Stirling as "Sick Island", firmly obsessed with the idea that no human could survive for very long on this atoll in the Solomon Sea. Six days later Allied troops hit the beaches of Empress Augusta Bay on the central part of the western coast of Bougainville. The foot soldiers pushed inland far enough to protect the contemplated airfields, and then established a static perimeter. A landing strip was carved from the jungles and swamps of Torokina, and by the 24th of November it was available for emergency use and by December 10th, completely operational. For the first time in the South Pacific War, the Allies established an air base on an island still held by strong enemy ground forces and did not attempt to wipe out the enemy. With the perimeter established, the success of this new type operation was assured. An airbase had been built on an enemy-held island without the expenditure in men and time necessary to knock out enemy bases by direct frontal ground action.

In the last days of October, Kolombangara and Vella Lavella had been evacuated by the Japs, and by November 5th, Kahili and Kara airdromes became unserviceable for the duration. The original "eager beavers" of the South Pacific, the Naval Construction Battalions, hereinafter referred to by a name we will all remember, Seabees, had built a strip on Vella Lavella which was named Barakoma, and were at this time busily engaged in building a strip on Stirling. Their work was something to marvel at and was more than appreciated by the late Lieutenant Swartsfager and crew who made the first landing at Stirling. On a mission over southern Bougainville, Lieutenant Swartzfager's plane was shot up so badly that a crash landing seemed inevitable. Yet a belly landing seemed out of the question, for his plane was dripping with gasoline and the possibilities of fire were very great. With gas gauges soon hovering around the empty mark, Swartz-

fager decided to try a landing at Stirling even though only 1300 feet of the strip had been completed. He succeeded in setting his plane down with consummate skill, and save for a blown tire when the brakes were applied for all they were worth, his plane and crew were unharmed. The construction gang on the strip literally swarmed over his plane, and their pride, when they realized that they had saved human lives by their hard work as strip builders, more than compensated them for their efforts. To the Seabees the Crusaders have always felt as close kin, for not only were the relations at Stirling of the pleasantest nature, but two years later they again teamed up as part of the island force on Palawan.

In the meantime missions were being flown every day, either direct from the Russells or by staging through Munda, and the thrills and chills, the fears and joys that combat had to offer went on.

The 75th opened November with a pre-dawn two-plane strafe of the seaplane bases at Tuha Channel, Shortland Island. It was a successful mission but meant a water landing between Baga and Vella LaVella for Lieut. C. B. Simmons, hit by AA. All crewmen were picked up by a PBY and taken to Tulagi for treatment of injuries.

The 6th was a very eventful day. Six 75th Mitchells led by Lieutenant Matlock, assigned to seek out and destroy two ammunition barges enroute around Buka Island, located two AKs and a gunboat on the west coast and made six runs, scoring seven direct hits, and six near misses. The smaller AK was definitely sunk, the larger AK and the gunboat left burning and listing. On the return trip the six were jumped by eight Zekes and were well shot up, four crew members receiving wounds. Sergeant Harvey, gunner on one ship, got hits on the engine of one of the interceptors, sending it down out of control. Six planes from the 75th also flew on the 70th's mission of this day, led by Lieutenant Morrison, which dropped 64 five hundred-pound bombs neatly on Kara. This mission also met two Zeros at 12,000 feet, but the intruders were diverted by F4U's flying cover. The 70th's four-plane search mission of the day enjoyed a good bag—two barges and three AO's in Natuana Channel and Maldin Bay damaged, 25 barges along shore between Chabai and Pau Plantation strafed.

On November 10th Capt. L. J. Davidson, alias Junior Davidson, led a mission, and his statement is printed herewith:

75th Bombardment Squadron (M)

SUBJECT: MISSION TO MATCHIN

Late in the evening of November 10, 1943, Flight Officers Snyder, Routh, and myself took off from Munda Airfield for a target which looked very interesting: a Jap freighter anchored just off shore from Tarlena Village, in Matchin Bay.

The flight up the coast of Bougainville proved uneventful. As we neared Matchin Bay we formed an echelon to the left and started picking up speed. Making a slight turn to the right, we headed into the mouth of the Bay and saw our target for the first time.

Hugging the water, I started on my run. I received no fire from the freighter, but the shore batteries were putting up a terrific barrage of AA between my plane and the ship. It looked as if we had flown into a trap, but there was no turning at that stage of the game. I opened fire with my nose guns at about a thousand yards from the freighter, covering it with .50 calibre bullets. The AA was bouncing my plane around as I neared the bomb release point, but the run was good. I released two bombs, pulled up to miss the masts of the freighter and made a skidding turn to the right for the protection and to see where my bombs hit. Two near misses. I had made the mistake of releasing my bombs and pulling up at the same time, thereby throwing my bombs over the ship.

Flight Officer Snyder, whose plane was right behind me, probably saved my plane from destruction. Instead of making a run on the freighter he cut behind my plane and dove straight for a concentration of shore batteries which were firing at my plane, strafing and bombing them into silence.

Flight Officer Routh continued his run on the ship, strafing and placing a bomb directly amidship, blasting a large hole. The freighter sank immediately.

We spent 15 minutes mopping up the ground fire by diving straight into the guns, strafing and bombing as we passed. The attacks were made successfully by co-ordination of the three planes. As one plane

strafed one gun position, the other two planes would protect him by strafing the surrounding ground fire.

That evening we silenced approximately 30 guns, blasted two wharfs, strafed, and bombed two bivouac areas, strafed army trucks along the woods, strafed and bombed a large warehouse and sank our primary target, the Jap freighter.

On the last run on a gun position my plane was hit by a 37MM explosive shell, setting my plane on fire. The co-pilot, Lieutenant Jones, and myself were preparing the plane for a water landing before the gas tanks could explode, but the quick thinking and work of Lieutenant Speer and Staff Sergeant Clapper with the use of fire extinguishers, had the fire out before we reached the water. We had had enough. I called the flight together and headed home.

A full moon shining on the placid waters off the southwest Pacific ocean brought contentment to our minds as we flew down The Slot toward our friends and a soft bed.

* * *

The 75th strike of the 23rd, a strafe of Chabai led by Captain Davidson (12 aircraft of the 75th and an element of four from the 70th led by Lieutenant Blackburn) strewed parafrags through the target, meeting intense fire of all calibers which holed three planes. Flight Officer Schaffner and crew, the worst hit, went into the water and were lost.

Another mission with thrills for the participants is written up by Lieutenant William Alfstad, Intelligence and one-time Public Relations Officer of the 70th.

" 'Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea' To the crew of this Mitchell Bomber of the 13th AAF, the old saying had a momentous meaning.

"The story as it happened is almost unbelievable, but to the men who came back, it is stark truth. It happened on the morning of November 24, 1943.

"While bombing and strafing Jap-held Kahila Airdrome, Bougainville, at tree-top level, 'Careless,' a medium bomber piloted by Lieut. James H. Dickinson, Bishopville, South Carolina, suffered a direct hit by anti-aircraft fire. Immediately the left engine burst into flames, and as the plane was turned out over the water, flames swept up into the bomb bay and the navigator's compartment, forcing Lieut. Leslie J. Callahan, 409 Huntoon Street, Topeka, Kansas, to crawl into the cubby hole behind the pilot and co-pilot.

"The fire swept back into the radio compartment, driving the radio operator, turret gunner, and waist gunner into the tail of the plane.

"While the remainder of the attacking planes hopefully watched, Lieutenant Dickinson skillfully made a belly landing in the water. Opening the top escape hatch, Flight Officer Charles R. McCurry, 1510 Mulberry Street, Denton, Texas, co-pilot, crawled out upon the wing, dangerously close to the ever increasing flames, to loosen the life raft which had stuck when the plane hit the water.

"Both S/Sgt. Millard V. Bills, Sechlerville, Wisconsin, and Sgt. William R. Fort, Fortville, Indiana, dove through the bottom escape hatch to safety, but returned to the rapidly sinking aircraft to rescue S/Sgt. Nealan L. Guner, 331 Drexel Avenue, San Antonio, Texas, who had become caught trying to escape through the small waist window.

"Just as all members climbed into the one small life raft, the plane sank from sight.

"Now the torture of waiting for possible rescue started. This is where the devil and the deep blue sea come in. The plane had made a forced landing in the very center of Jap waters. To the northeast a scant seven miles was Kahili Airdrome, southeast seven miles was Ballale Airdrome, and directly south ten miles was the Shortland float plane base.

"One by one the comrades circling overhead had to leave the tossing raft because their gas was growing low. With each disappearing plane, hopes for rescue rapidly diminished.

"Huddled together in the small, pitching raft, the men alternated paddling to keep from drifting towards the enemy. For three, long, hard, nerve-wracking hours, these men waited, actually within sight of the enemy. Finally, after what seemed to be years, two friendly fighter planes appeared, but did not see the small raft. For an hour more the crew waited, and finally ten covering fighters escorting a flying boat came into view; while the fighters flew overhead for protection, the pilot of the flying boat skillfully set the plane down close to the raft.

"Even now it was not all over. Shore guns from Ballale and Kahili started lobbing shells at the plane, each one

drawing nearer as the gunners began to find the range. Finally the crew were hauled safely aboard the plane and it started taxiing into the wind for take-off. The Japs on shore were frantically throwing shells at the plane as it rose into the air and headed for safety.

"Only one crew member, Sergeant Fort, received slight injuries about the legs and face."

The ever continuing barge hunts resulted, on November 29th, in the loss to the 69th of Lieut. Edward P. Ernest and crew, their plane having been shot down and seen to explode in Kieta Harbor following a successful strafing and bombing with 250-pound GP's of Numa Numa, Kieta, and Arigua Plantation. Lieutenant Kivipelto was badly shot up and had to land without a nose wheel, his hydraulic system out.

Staging through Munda enabled the Mitchells to reach many targets that would not have been hit had they been forced to fly from the Russells. Not only was Munda an excellent strip to work off, but a strip for fighters had been established across Blackett Straits on the island of Ondonga, less than 10 miles from Munda. This meant that three strips in close proximity to one another were in full operation by the Allies and ready for use should weather conditions prevent returning aircraft from landing at their originally planned field. And so it went, first one squadron, then another, hitting bombing and smashing enemy installations up and down the Solomons.

On the 4th of December, 17 airplanes, led by Lieutenant Eivers of the 390th and Lieutenant Rogers of the 75th, dropped 140 quarter-tonners at Chabai Village on Northwest Bougainville. On the following day the 69th's Captain Brown and the 75th's Captain Longwill led 17 more Mitchells against the enemy's defensive concentrations near Motupina Point, Bougainville, from minimum altitude in three waves, sending 85 of the 500-pounders and 20,000 rounds into the target. On the 6th, Tarlena Village was hit by 24 planes led by Captain Romstad of the 69th and long, tall Capt. Baron Sailors of the 390th. On the 11th, 16 struck near Kahili, and on the 15th a notably successful raid was staged on the supply and personnel area stretched along the north shore of Buka Passage, centering at Chinatown. This raid was led by Captain Brown of the 69th, Captain Carmody of the 390th, and Captain Davidson of the 75th. One string of bombs on this raid sent flames to 1000 feet and thick black smoke to 7000 feet. Patrol planes, passing the target at a distance of 30 miles almost one hour later, reported the fire still blazing.

A memorable raid as far as Lieut. Albert B. Marx and crew are concerned is the one they flew in December, during which their airplane was shot up so badly that ditching was an absolute must. Two of the crew had been injured, but all six of them made the rafts and were picked up by "Dumbo, I Love You," two hours and 20 minutes later.

On the 69th-75th raid at Maliari of December 17th, led by Major Yeoman, 1st Lieut. Robert A. Meister was hit in the left engine and had to ditch a mile west of Baba; Captain Longwill circled the downed crew until Dumbo arrived. Lieutenant Meister and the gunner, S/Sgt. Charles J. Hughley, went down with the plane; Lieut. F. K. Everett, co-pilot, T/Sgt. C. J. Manhart, and S/Sgt. R. K. Cole were rescued.

Through the balance of the month, Maliai, Shortland, was hit, as were Malevoli on North Choiseul, and Numa Numa. The success of the Malevoli raid was attested by ComAirSols Intelligence Summary of December 29th: "The Choiseul coast watcher reports that the Malevoli radio shack and contents have been demolished by a direct bomb hit. 'Very accurate bombing' is the opinion of the coast watcher in commenting on the strike on December 23rd by six Mitchells. Only three Japs are believed to remain alive at Malevoli." Also on the 23rd, 24 planes dropped 120 150-pound general purpose bombs on Sohana Island, Buka Passage, and started a large fire at the seaplane base. On Christmas day, greetings in the form of 72 100-pounders and 8700 rounds were duly left at a radio station at Motupina Point by the 390th, led by Captain Carmody, while Captain Boswell took the 70th over Target H., Kahili, with 96 frag clusters.

On December 26th we made our first strike outside the Solomons area—seven Mitchells releasing 84 centuries on the radar station at the southernmost tip of Cape St. George, New Ireland, together with 9500 rounds. The tower was toppled by one hit and the shack perforated by tracers. Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer led the attack.

From this mission through the end of the year, it was impossible to hit Bougainville, which was completely

socked in, and the missions that started for the island were forced to hit alternates or to return their loads to base.

A medium altitude strike led by Lieutenant Trubschneck of the 390th and Captain Boswell of the 70th against Bonis Airdrome on December 30th, was weathered off its primary, but got through to rap Kahili again, stringing 62 250-pounders through the revetment area. They received a barrage of intense AA from the bomb release line until out of range with the saki-sippers throwing up a new one, a shell that exploded in the normal manner, but with a mushroom smoke puff that emitted a second projectile which went up another 5000 feet before detonating.

1943 ended rather quietly, as an extract from a Group Summary indicates.

"The months of December, January, and February comprise the rainy season in the Solomons area. The rains came on schedule and the unfavorable weather throughout the month resulted in the cancellation of some missions, the frequent bombing of alternate rather than primary targets, and a slight impairment of the accuracy of the bombardiers. In spite of the handicap, however, the record of the Group in weight of bombs dropped and number of missions successfully completed did not fall below standard."

This Group had three squadrons in the forward area based on Banika Island within striking range of the whole of Bougainville and Buka Island. During the month six airplanes were sent to the advanced air base at Munda each afternoon, and maintained a shipping alert during the dark hours. In the absence of shipping targets these planes were dispatched from Munda the following day to attack a Bougainville target and returned direct to the Russells when the mission was completed. The remaining airplanes hit targets on Bougainville direct from the Russells, with the option of refueling at Munda on the return if necessary.

In the complete absence of any shipping targets, the principal objectives of the group were supply areas, camp areas, and localities in which the enemy was reported to be entrenched. Crews at times became bored with activities against targets where definite results could not be seen, but numerous reports from ground observers in a position to assess damage indicated that enemy personnel were being killed and materiel destroyed by these daily attacks.

It was a lull before a storm, however, as the pyrotechnic period of Rabaul was coming into view.

To complete 1943, it is necessary to say a word about ComAirSols—Commander for Air of the Solomon Islands. This was the top operating staff in the Solomons, (later ComAirNorSols in the Northern Solomons) organized following a conference between Admiral Fitch and Gen. Millard F. Harmon at the first of March, 1943. Successive commanders were Brigadier General Geiger, U. S. M. C., Admiral Mason, Admiral Mitscher, Major General Twining, Major General Mitchell, U. S .M. C., and Major General H. R. Harmon. All Solomons air power was under this command, which was rotated among Army, Navy, and Marines. ComAirSols supplied the coordinated air link of the smoothly functioning air-ground-sea team which pushed the South Pacific campaign into the realm of history. ComAir Sols was located at Guadalcanal in the spring of 1943, at Munda in the early fall, and at Torokina early in 1944.

COMGENSOPAC ADVANCED
APO 709

16 December 1943

SUBJECT: COMMENDATION
TO: The Thirteenth Air Force.

1. From 25 July 1943 to 20 November 1943, Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining by direction of ComSoPac and pursuant to the air employment, directives, and policies of ComAirSoPac, commanded the Allied Air Forces Solomons, Brig. Gen. Dean C. Strother served as Fighter Commander, while Brig. Gen. William A. Matheny was Bomber Commander.

2. During this period, immeasurable damage was done to the enemy. His ships and barges were destroyed, all of the New Georgia Group was overrun by our forces, Treasury was captured and Bougainville was invaded, the Jap was subjected to heavy loss of aircraft and personnel, and his Bougainville airdromes were made untenable. As a result we have materially improved our position for further assaults on the enemy, and we have acquired important naval facilities and many fine additional airdromes, A great share of the credit for these victories goes to the

Air Arm: to the airmen of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Royal New Zealand Air Force, both shore and carrier based.

3. In all this the 13th Air Force, its Fighter Command, Bomber Command, Service Command, and all the officers and men of flight and ground echelons have had a major role. Your contribution to the success of the campaigns of the Armed Forces is inspiring to all. Your courage; your spirit of high endeavor; your patient endurance of discomforts, hardships, and dangers; your cheerfulness through all; and your will to win are a source of pride to all who are concerned with the destruction of Japanese forces, the annihilation of his military power, and the imposition of swift retribution on his individual leaders, his government, and his subjects.

4. The 13th Air Force will continue to carry the fight until the Jap is completely crushed and made to pay many times over for the crimes he has committed against our airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines, and for the bestial deceit and brutality of Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, China, and Malaya.

5. The 13th Air Force, born on the 13th Day of January, 1943, is now almost a year old—and what a year! Many of you men of this force have been carrying on in this area since before our attacks and capture of Guadalcanal and Tulagi. You have worked and sweated through the mud and heat, the malaria, the dangers and hardships of the early days of Efate, Espiritu Santo, and Guadalcanal. You wondered then if our meager force could really stop the Jap. But soon this doubt changed to confidence as the gathering power and momentum of our forces increased, and then you helped to break forever the myth of Jap invincibility and to blast him out of Guadalcanal, the Russells, Munda, and all of the New Georgia Group, and now Treasury and Bougainville. You have seen him defeated in the air, on the ground, and on the seas. The issue is no longer in doubt.

6. Our people at home take just pride in your accomplishments and sacrifices, glory in your victories, and reverence the memory of your comrades who will not go home.

7. God Bless you for your achievements and grant each of you the fortitude to carry on to complete victory. Keep health, keep smiling, and keep fighting.

M. F. HARMON
Lieutenant General U. S. ARMY

AG 201-22 Ist Ind.
HEADQUARTERS THIRTEENTH AIR FORCE APO 719, 22 December 1943.
TO: Commanding Officers, All units, Thirteenth Air Force.

1. It is with considerable gratification and pride that I forward the above commendation from the Commanding General United States Army Forces in the South Pacific area to every member of the 13th Air Force.

2. General Harmon's splendid tribute will be read to every member of this Air Force at the first formation after receipt of this letter.

3. A copy of this commendation will be made part of the historical records of each organization.

RAY L. OWENS
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
Commanding

From the time we flew our first mission in mid-June until December 27th when "Spence" led the boys outside the Solomons for their first mission, the Crusaders flew 228 missions for a total of 2,381 sorties, and dropped 3,689,000 pounds of bombs on the "sons of heaven."

So ended 1943—the year that brought the group overseas—7000 miles and more from home for the majority of its members. From the bracing cold of the Pacific Northwest winter in January to the perpetually steaming and sunbathed jungles and coral reefs of the Solomons, via New Caledonia and Fiji, the Crusaders crossed the Pacific by plane and boat to meet the Jap and drive him back to his own narrow and packed islands whence he had set out to subdue the world. We had taught him to fear our bombs and bullets; Act I of the Group's overseas career was indelibly etched upon the record.

JANUARY 3, 1944

CHAPTER 10

The fall of 1943 had marked the final determined effort of the enemy to maintain himself in the Solomons, keeping Rabaul, his strongest base south of Truk and originally planned as the keystone of the expanding arch that would bring Australia into the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere", safe behind an outer line. How tenaciously he clung to Rabaul is attested by the fact that, although the campaign to neutralize the capital city of the Bismarck Archipelago officially ended in July, 1944, even in 1945 crews from the Far East Air Force Replacement Training Center at Nadzab, New Guinea, were getting their first taste of combat on missions to Rabaul. These officially were training missions, but training of a very realistic sort, for the anti-aircraft gunners still showed no signs of running out of ammunition.

The Allied offensive against Rabaul, if an exact opening date can be fixed, really got under way with the coordinated strike against shipping in Simpson Harbor and

SIMPSON HARBOR AND RABAUL

Blanche Bay on Armistice Day, 1943. It was a combined effort of the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces and the Navy carrier force. Carrier groups from the *U. S. S. Saratoga, Princeton, Essex, Bunker Hill,* and *Independence* began the attack at 0800, followed at 0930 by four squadrons of heavies and 75 Mitchells from the Fifth in waves. It was a successful strike although very little could be observed of results because of cloud cover. From then on, in a crescendo that must have driven Tojo to distraction, heavies and mediums struck, dropping a mounting tonnage.

For the Group, however, the battle of Rabaul started in earnest when Stirling strip was completed on January 6, 1944, and our planes could stage through Stirling before we moved there. On January 1, the 106th Reconnaissance Squadron, soon to become the 100th Bombardment Squadron and to play a prominent, courageous, and altogether fitting part in our activities, had been assigned to Group.

As the 106th, or we might better begin to call it the 100th—for it is as the 100th that this fighting organization's name looms large in the Group's accomplishments—is about to go into combat with us, it is appropriate that

we digress for a moment to recite briefly the history of the unit before it joined our family.

The chronicle of the 106th dates back to World War I; precisely, to the formation of the 106th Observation Squadron at Kelly Field on August 27, 1917, and of the 135th Aero Squadron (OBSN) at Rockwell Field, San Diego, in the same month. The 106th sailed for France on December 17, 1917, and after a somewhat uncertain period, was redesignated the 800th Repair Squadron and finished the war as such. The Squadron did not get a chance to go into combat, but served well until the Armistice, returned to the United States, and was demobilized in July, 1919. The 135th also crossed the pond and took the front as the original "Liberty Squadron". Unfortunately, few details of its actions survive in the record.

The nucleus of the 106th Observation Squadron, which, as an Alabama National Guard unit was officially recognized in January, 1922, as the 135th Aero Squadron (Obsn), was the "Birmingham Escadrille", a civilian flying club of ex-Army flyers from that city. The organization's first commander, as well as early guiding genius, was Maj. James A. Meissner, an ace of the days of the Nieuport and Spad. Through 1922-1937, the Squadron struggled with all the problems of civilian as well as military aviation of the time: poor, inadequate facilities and funds, official and public apathy. But thanks to the unflagging enthusiasm of its members, it gradually improved its equipment and earned a fine reputation in both military and civilian circles. Among its accomplishments of the twenties we note that the Squadron carried on photo-mapping flights over a large portion of Alabama, pioneered early air mail flying, and received high commendation for its flood relief duty in March, 1929.

The Squadron was called into Federal service on November 23, 1940, went into intensive training, and a week after the outbreak of World War II, left Birmingham for Miami, where it flew coastal patrol, later moving its base to Jacksonville. Additional training with stations at Savannah and Tullahoma, Tennessee, followed, including coordinated air support flights during the 1942 Tennessee maneuvers. Then more training at Charlotte, N. C., Fort Myers, Florida, and Greenville, S. C., where the 106th received its first B-25s. Important training-problem-flying in the 1943 Tennessee maneuvers followed, then Chatham Field, Georgia. On October 1, 1943, the CO, Maj. James B. Henson, whose affable bulk was to become a familiar sight to all Groupers, told the Squadron what it was impatiently awaiting—warning orders had been received. The Flight Echelon went to Hunter Field, Georgia, to receive new aircraft while the ground men took the familiar route to Camp Stoneman, thence overseas on the Navy transport *U. S .S. Wharton,* disembarking at Guadalcanal on November 15, 1943. The Flight Echelon took the equally well-trodden air route, and reached the 'Canal in December. After January, 1944, the story of the 100th is the story of its brilliant part in the Group's record. Key officers and enlisted men of the 106th at this time included the following:

Commanding Officer, Maj. James B. Henson

Adjutant, Capt. Earl L. Chapman

Executive Officer, Maj. Joseph J. Stevens

Operations Officer, Capt. Robert E. Shanks; T/Sgt. Horace M. Gray

Intelligence, Capt. Arthur G. Taylor; T/Sgt. Daniel E. Campbell

Engineering Officer, Capt. Arthur H. Deeters; M/Sgt. William P. Slaughter

Tech Supply, CWO John F. Pettigrew; T/Sgt. Robert E. Parker

Armament, Lieut. George S. Good; M/Sgt. John O. Spinks

Ordnance, Lieut. Joseph A. Taylor; T/Sgt. Leo E. Graham

Flight Surgeon, Capt. Joseph Melancon; Sgt. John Hodakowski

Mess, T/Sgt. Wesley D. Stricklin

First Sergeant, 1st Sgt. Jack D. Manasco

Communications, Capt. Wesley Correll; M/Sgt. William D. Norris

From January 6 on, with increasing force until the law of diminishing returns set it, the Group's striking force, augmented by the new Fifth Squadron, was directed to the neutralization of Rabaul and its obliteration as an obstacle in the path of the Allied Forces. From this date forward it is possible to tell the story of our activities almost entirely by extracts from mission reports, public relations, intelligence summaries, and other records available to the authors, and it is felt that this record will gain in meaning and value for you, its actors and readers, because of the personal items and incidents that memory will supply as you look again upon the pages of military history that you helped to write.

The early part of the month saw flights hitting Chabai Village, Mut Mut, the Shortlands, and Buka's Chinatown, from minimum altitude as well as medium altitude. On the 13th, Captains W. M. and R. E. Shanks, Lieutenant Wolfendale and Lieutenant Elliott of the 106th flew as co-pilots with the 390th, hitting Bonis supply area from the Russells. This marked the baptism in combat of the new member of the Group family. It was the

second mission of that day, as Capt. M. W. Longwill of the 75th had led the first, a dawn attack on Lakunai airdrome in the Rabaul area, staging through Stirling. As the third plane of the formation took off, Condition Red (impending air attack) was sounded. The leader contacted the ground defenses and was assured that they would stay their fire until the formation was air-borne and clear.

There was a slight misunderstanding of "clear," for while the formation was still over Stirling the ground guns broke loose, sending up a curtain through which the Mitchells had to fly. Weather conditions forced the formation to split up, and secondary and tertiary targets were hit by elements of two and three aircraft. Describing this unfortunate scramble afterward, Captain Longwill said: "The take-off blanket was worse than the fire over the target." But there was more than just a mix-up at take-off time, for an uninvited guest drew a hand in the night's proceedings.

Colonel Wilson had gone up to Stirling from the Russells on some necessary business relative to the movement of our Ground Echelons, and had taken with him on his short jaunt a co-pilot from the 390th, one Lieut. James E. Cook, Upon arrival there, Lieutenant Cook was asked by Maj. George Hundt, at that time the 75th C. O., whether he wanted to fly co-pilot on one of his Squadron's planes for the Lakunai mission as the scheduled co-pilot had become ill. Cook answered in the affirmative and was briefed for the mission along with the regular crews. Several hours prior to take-off there was an enemy air-raid, and Major Hundt in diving for a foxhole wrenched his knee so seriously as to eliminate him from any forthcoming festivities. Hundt ordered his co-pilot to replace Cook, and one less plane would go on the mission. As a result, at take-off time eleven Mitchells lined up for take-off which was accomplished in the previously-explained Condition Red. But no sooner did the eleventh plane clear the ground than a 12th plane roared down the runway, and Cook's one-man show was on the road! We give you the story as the Associated Press gave it to Mr. and Mrs. America.

ONE-MAN RAID HITS RABAUL; BRINGS CONFLICTING OPINIONS

AN ADVANCED SOUTH PACIFIC AIR BASE, March 5—(AP)—An almost incredible one-man air raid by a young Army flier against the Japanese base at Rabaul on New Britain was disclosed here amid conflicting expressions of official pride over the young man's daring and disapproval of his judgment.

The flier was 2nd Lieut. James E. Cook, 24, University of Iowa graduate of Williamsburg, Iowa.

He took a B-25 bomber, without authorization, on a night attack against the big base at Rabaul six weeks ago, when it was much better defended than now. His take-off was made during a Japanese plane attack on his own air strip, and he flew to Rabaul through a tropical storm that caused five other bombers to turn back.

Arriving over Rabaul alone, he finally located a break in the clouds over Keravat airdrome. He tried a theory of his own, making a glide bombing run on the airdrome, released all his bombs, and headed homeward over the water.

His plane took a Japanese anti-aircraft shell hit which riddled the vacant co-pilot's seat. The hit knocked out all his flying instruments. Then he had to hedgehop over New Ireland and the Bougainville coastline to find his way home through the heavy weather.

Intelligence officers at first refused to believe his report. Then they saw the shell hole in his plane.

His group commander, Col. Harry Wilson, temporarily grounded Cook and sent him to the flight surgeon, Capt. Carl Wagner, of Cincinnati, for examination.

Afterward Lieutenant Cook smilingly said:

"The doc psychoanalyzed me and said I wasn't crazy."

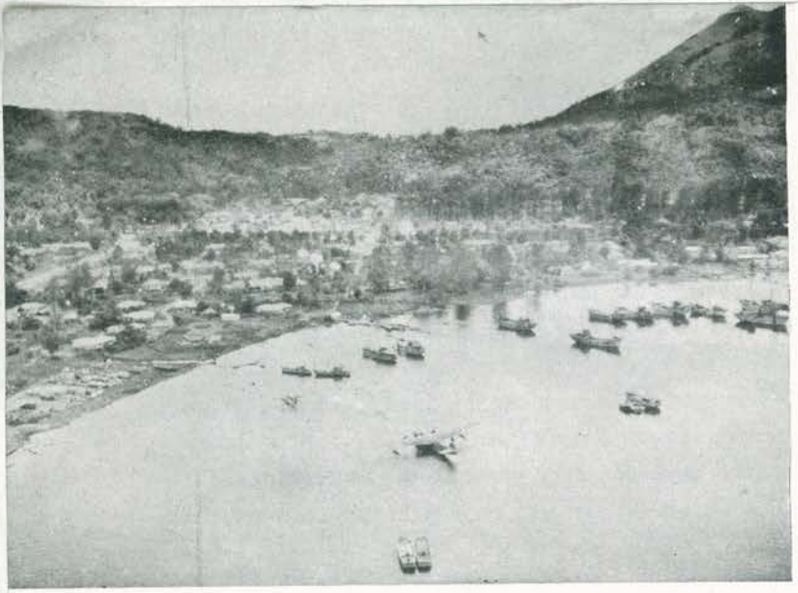
Maj. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon, commander of the 13th Army Air Force in the Solomons, said that "in one brief mission, this young officer has set for us both a very bad example and a most brilliant one."

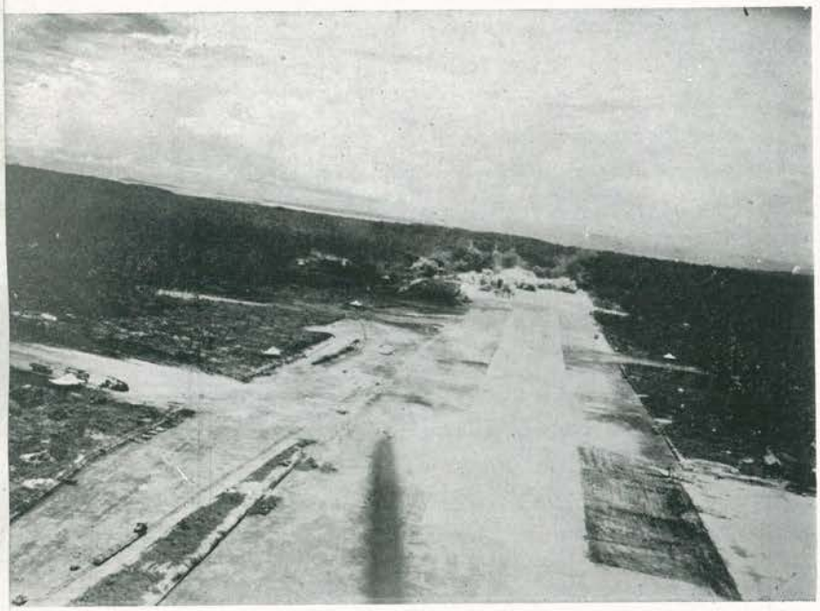
Months later, after Cook had gone home, a casual reader of that staple of the GI library, the comic supplement, looked up from his homework and said to a tentmate: "Hey, here's a story about a guy who raided Rabaul all by himself. You were in on that, did you know this bird?" And so the story of Jimmy Cook started the rounds of a new overseas generation via the comic strip.

The first of the long series of raids against Rabaul hit Vunakanau at dawn January 12. Two formations took off from Stirling for a rendezvous with Torokina based fighters. Capt. Robert (Red) Morris, St. Louis, Missouri, led the 70th, the second element. Weather caused the first squadron to turn back, and Red, after waiting ten minutes in vain for the fighters to join him, went on alone.

Swinging low over the water until they came to the Wanaanga river, the 13 ships (one of the 390th planes had latched on to the formation) swung wide into a company front at the initial point and swept over the airfield. Tactical surprise was complete, and full advantage was taken of it.

In results it was one of the most devastating B-25 raids ever pulled. Jap planes were lined up along the runways and in revetments, wingtip to wingtip. About 25 fighters, some of them with engines turning over, were caught on





These excellent low altitude photos of Rabaul taken during the early strikes show Rabaul "before." At that time the "Pearl Harbor of the South Pacific" had more than 1400 buildings, in addition to its excellent harbor facilities and five satellite airfields—Lakunai, Vunakanau, Tobera, Rapopo, and Keravat.

By the end of February the strips were seldom, if

ever, serviceable, the harbor and docks cluttered with wreckage. By June all supply dumps in the area had been destroyed, and the town had less than 20 buildings with roofs. Its garrison was cut off, surrounded, starving; its military potential nil. Seldom, even in this war, has a city and its surrounding countryside been so devastatingly plastered.

the north apron. In the mission report only those planes seen to burn or explode were assumed destroyed, but at 250 miles per hour complete observation is impossible.

Seven Bettys were seen to explode or burn from strafing and parafrag bursts. Sixteen more bombers and some 30 fighters were thoroughly worked over. Parafrags were seen to drop among dozens of parked aircraft and explode, although no damage assessment was possible.

Besides the destruction in planes, four bombs were dropped into a heavy gun position, a machine gun nest was knocked out, bivouac and engineering tents were strafed, a DF station and two control towers were seived, 15 or 20 barges in Karavia Bay were strafed, and five bombs were loosed into a gun position in the Karavia area.

The mission was over before the enemy was able to put a plane into the air, and the only AA fire received followed the retirement. The action was so successful that it brought the following commendation from Maj. Gen. H. R. Harmon, CG, 13th Air Force:

SUBJECT: LETTER OF COMMENDATION

TO: CAPTAIN ROBERT J. MORRIS, AIR CORPS

1. It has come to my attention that on the early morning of January 12, 1944, you were commander of a formation of B-25s of the 70th Bombardment Squadron, and that your squadron was one of two medium bomber squadrons charged with a combat mission in the vicinity of Rabaul. It appears that for various reasons the leader of the squadron, who was in fact in command of the entire expedition, deemed it advisable to abandon the mission and return with his squadron to its base.

2. I am informed that you on the other hand led your squadron to the objective and delivered a successful attack. Whether or not you were aware that the other squadron had turned back is beside the point. The essential fact is that you carried out your assigned mission with courage, determination, and high devotion to duty. I desire to commend you on your fine leadership and aggressive spirit. We need plenty of both in the winning of this war.

H. R. Harmon
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

Red Morris could fly an airplane with hands or reins, and he liked nothing better than to lead a formation or flight anytime, over any target that could be dug up. It is further noteworthy that when he led, there wasn't a man in the Squadron who wouldn't have followed him through hell and the downtown section of Tokyo. His comments on this raid, an addendum to the Squadron Mission Report, are among the Group's classic examples of understatement:

. . . "We circled rendezvous twice endeavoring to latch on to the lead squadron, but were unable to do so. . . Took a direct route as planned, cruising at high speed to make up for late departure . . . Arrived over target two minutes late . . . Entire area thoroughly strafed and peppered with well-placed bombs . . . Only apparent fire we drew was as we retired over the water, previous to reforming. . . . Several of our escort were mistaken for bogies, so we retired at a higher speed than we normally would have . . . Balance of mission uneventful . . . Fighter escort deserves a lot of credit for the way they covered us, and despite the fact that for a while we could not see them, we were sure they were there, and we depended upon them . . . Weather to and over the target was ideal."

The 14th saw a double-header staged against Vunakanau and Lakunai. Vunakanau was hit, but Lakunai had to be passed up, and the bombs intended for it were dropped on New Ireland and Buka. Lieut. Ross B. Lemmons, Jr., and crew, of the 70th failed to return from this mission. On the 18th the 70th, 75th, and 390th, strafing Tobera, got a Zeke warming up on the taxiway, and in an engagement with six Zekes after retirement, Capt. Joe D. Wheeler's turret gunner scored a probable and Lieutenant Shaw's tail gunner a definite. Lieut. Carter Williamson, Jr., and crew, of the 75th, were lost in a water crash after a direct hit on their left engine.

Dusk missions at this time encountered searchlights, and pilots became very adept as desynchronizing props and alternate climbing-diving turns to frustrate the probers. Oldtimers of this period will also recall a few missions cancelled when word came in from the Navy to "keep the Horses stabled."

The 70th and 390th flew one of the last missions staged through Stirling when on January 20 they hit the Vunakanau airdrome near Rabaul from minimum altitude. This mission carried with it 54 Torokina-based fighters and produced the most intensive and sustained AA fire ever encountered by the Group to that time. From the time landfall was reached until the formation retired over the water, intense automatic, medium, and heavy fire streaked up in sheets. In addition to this, what was believed to be a mortar barrage was also thrown at us. These projectiles exploded just above the tree-tops and threw out phosphorus streamers that sparkled for several minutes. They were very different from the previously encountered phosphorus bombs dropped from enemy planes. The AA fire came from all around the proverbial clock—from Warangoi River, Tobera's guns, Karavia Bay shoreline and the knolls to the west. Ralabang Plantation even threw in its four-bits, tracking the formation for a mile over water on retirement. The fighters ran into an afternoon's work, too. The enemy took off from Tobera to meet the 25s as they came in from the water. Lieut. Paul Nadler's plane was intercepted near Karavia Bay by five Zeros, who closed to about 1000 yards before being dispersed by our fighter cover. Flight Officer Ed

Brisick was also attacked as he was retiring near Tobera. Four Zeros were seen milling around at 1000 feet and three dove for the attack. Two of them closed to 500 yards at 5 and 6 o'clock and followed directly behind the plane. The turret gunner got some good hits with 100 rounds and the tail gunner peppered another 200 rounds, all of which were seen to hit home. The actual crash of the enemy plane was unobserved, so no official credit was allowed for what was felt to have been a certain victory.

Dogfights were in progress throughout the period of our attack and retirement. Although the record is not clear on the point, it appears that at least two of our escorting P-40's were shot down, one over Tobera and one into the water off the target. The plane of Lieut. Earl Swartzfager of the 390th was hit in the tail on retiring and its right rudder was shot away. The plane did a half roll, went into an inverted flat spin and crashed into trees, exploding a few minutes later. It was a severe blow to the 390th to lose Swartzfager, one of its outstanding figures on every count, an exceptional man, and a superb pilot.

The 70th's Lieut. J. E. Warner was also hit by ack-ack as he made an evasive turn after leaving the target. Lieutenant Nadler, flying his left wing, reports that the aircraft lurched and leveled off in its line of flight, causing all ships to the left of it to alter their turn as well and necessarily making them fly nearly over Karavia Bay. Rallying under such conditions was somewhat delayed, and the stricken aircraft was observed leaving the coast near Warangoi River mouth somewhat behind the main body of the formation. Smoke was seen coming from one of its engines, and it apparently was having considerable trouble holding air speed and altitude. Dogfights were progressing in the area and as it left the coast, several bursts of machine gun bullets were seen hitting the water dangerously close to the plane. It is not known whether any of the attacks caused the aircraft to make what was described as a "good" water landing at 1350 ten miles due south of Cape St. George. No one reported seeing the crew climbing out of the plane; however, two additional passes by Jap fighters were made after the aircraft was in the water. Six "blue" fighter planes were left hovering and protecting the area. Flight Officer Brisick was instructed by his Flight Commander, Captain Paxton, to proceed to Torokina to arrange Dumbo rescue. This was done and the crew was successfully rescued about three hours later.

In commenting on the AA fire met on this mission, the report states: "There is no question about the quality of fighting men the Japanese have in this area. This is definitely their first team and its shooting is accurate. They lead the planes with their AA and they throw up a lot of it. Strafing their positions does not seem to silence them as easily as it did in the Solomons. There was absolutely no element of surprise in our favor, and although the formation flew at treetop all the way into and out of New Britain, we never for a moment escaped drawing AA from the enemy. Our fighter cover unquestionably saved our formation from being subjected to some very rough interception as well."

January 22 was a sad day for the 75th Squadron. Lieut. Thomas O. Thompson and crew were lost on a medium altitude morning strike on Lakunai. Four members of this crew were seen to bail out over Rabaul; the others went down with the plane in Simpson Harbor. Lieut. William E. Eastwood, Jr., and Flight Officer William A. Snyder and crews failed to return from a minimum level attack on Rabaul that evening. On the 24th, Lieut. Willam L. Armstrong and Joseph D. Jones, also of the 75th, were lost as the result of a crash during a training flight from the Russells. Sgt. W. J. Sobolewski was rescued.

An evening strafe of Tobera on the 28th fired a gasoline dump and half a dozen Zekes and Tonies on the ground. Flight Officer Leslie D. Gilliland and crew of the 70th did not return from this mission.

A typical mission of later January flown after the Renard-Stirling staging business was a thing of the past, found CAVU weather over Lakunai and spread 792 bombs over the western two-thirds of the runway. Intense and accurate medium and heavy fire came up from the traget, and for a touch, a destroyer lying-to about a mile offshore between Mother and South Daughter craters threw up additional lead. This knocked down a covering P-40. Thirty Jap fighters were in the air and dropped phosphorus bombs into the formation. Some hot gun-play took place as the Zekes made their passes, and most of the Mitchells had some holes to show for the day, but our gunners and the fighters drove them off without collecting any serious damage. Evasive action in the from of a violent diving turn to the left was credited in the report with having withdrawn our ships from the expected line of fire. This was the first full-strength mission for the 100th.

With additional daily raids at medium and minimum altitudes, the month of January wound up in tidy style. By February 30, the Ground Echelons of the 69th and 70th arrived at Stirling from PDG and Fiji, respectively, and the 100th arrived from Guadalcanal, while Group Headquarters also moved up from the Russells to the forward area. The Ground Echelons of the three Stirling-based squadrons serviced and cared for the Flight Echelons of the entire group, until some 425 replacements arrived in March and the war-weary veterans of the 69th and 70th went home. The Ground Echelons of the 75th and 390th remained at the Russells, caring for and servicing all Flight Echelons of the Group that were not in the forward zone.

On Stirling . . . trees fell . . . the surf pounded the coral shore . . .

CHAPTER 11

The job of constructing a camp while operations against the enemy continue, is something most of us would rather not think about. But at Stirling we got a good break by meeting the very competent 82nd Seabee Battalion, who had adopted and taken the 42nd to its heart by virtue of Lieutenant Swartzfager's earlier landing when only 1300 feet of the runway was built. By the middle of February, the 82nd's helping hand had enabled us to have all of our offices and shops set up and all personnel housed fairly comfortably.

Our overall mission for this period was the neutralization of enemy airdromes on New Britain so that landing operations could be carried out on Green Island on the 15th of February, and the building of an air-strip on that island could be accomplished without aerial opposition. In addition to the Green Island operation, there was still the matter of keeping the Torokina, Bougainville, perimeter free from enemy air attack, and this could only be accomplished by constantly hammering Jap airdromes within range of these allied bases. So, each day found 24 Crusader crews carrying "bomb bundles to New Britain," hitting first one airdrome, then another, until by the middle of the month all fields were practically devoid of enemy planes, and "D" day on Green Island was carried out successfully.

This first outstanding raid in February took place on the 4th when with Capt. Wilmot E. Y. Paxton and Maj. James B. Henson leading the 70th and 100th respectively, they smacked Vunakanau at mid-morning from 12,000 feet. One hundred and fifty quarter-tonners were dropped, with at least 21 scoring direct hits on the runway. Many gun positions were blanketed by the rain of bombs.

On February 5 the Commander of the South Pacific, Admiral Halsey, sent the following commendation down to all hands:

"Your bag of Jap planes during the last ten days is most remarkable. Therefore please convey my heartiest congratulations to all AAF personnel on their destruction of Jap aircraft in the Solomons-New Britain area. Your continued effort will have an important and continuous effect on all further operations in this theatre.

Halsey"

On February 11, 22 Mitchells from the 70th and 75th, led by Capt. Robert M. Morris and Lieut. Charles Rocks, pressed home a medium altitude attack against Vunakanau in the face of determined interception and scored hits on the runway and throughout the revetment area. No planes were lost to Nip interception although AA caused Lieut, John H. Van Schaick to ditch his plane in the water just outside of the range of shore guns. His plane sank in 3 minutes, and 55 minutes later Dumbo picked up the entire crew.

The week ending on February 12 was a strenuous one during which all groups of the XIII Bomber Command, with naval forces, struck against possible reinforcements at Kavieng and Ponapai, New Ireland; Talasea, Hoskins, and Gasmata on New Britain; Garove in the center of the Bismarck Sea; and Lorengau and Momote in the Admiralties. During the week five raids hit Kavieng, terminal for Jap convoys down from Truk and the Carolinas. This was part of the process that reduced the base to the "Kavieng Graveyard" in late February.

This drive built to a climax with three major strikes against Rabaul on the 14th by the Crusaders. On this

. . . Living quarters were hidden in the relatively light jungle . . . Jap caves still existed in the coral hummocks.

day the festivities were started off by a surprise daybreak strafer against parked aircraft on the Tobera Airdrome. Led by Lieut. Reed Stevens of the 70th, four Mitchells dumped 36 centuries and blasted over 5000 rounds of ammunition into the target with devastating effect. Thirty Nippers were caught sauntering across the strip, perhaps on their way to get their morning rice. This group suffered the effects of the forward firing guns without benefit of any cover. Fifteen enemy aircraft parked on the ready-mat and in the revetment areas were strafed with certain effectiveness and two more in the area covered by the bombs. The control tower and adjoining buildings were well worked over in passing. The same day two more attacks were carried out against Vunakanau from medium altitude, unloading over 40 tons of bombs on that well-plastered target.

On the 15th, the invasion of Green was carried out successfully and shortly thereafter the airdrome was in operation, an airdrome that was to be much used by Crusaders limping back from Rabaul. The airdrome was given the name of Ocean Strip, and many an Allied plane was saved from the ocean by the location of this strategic field.

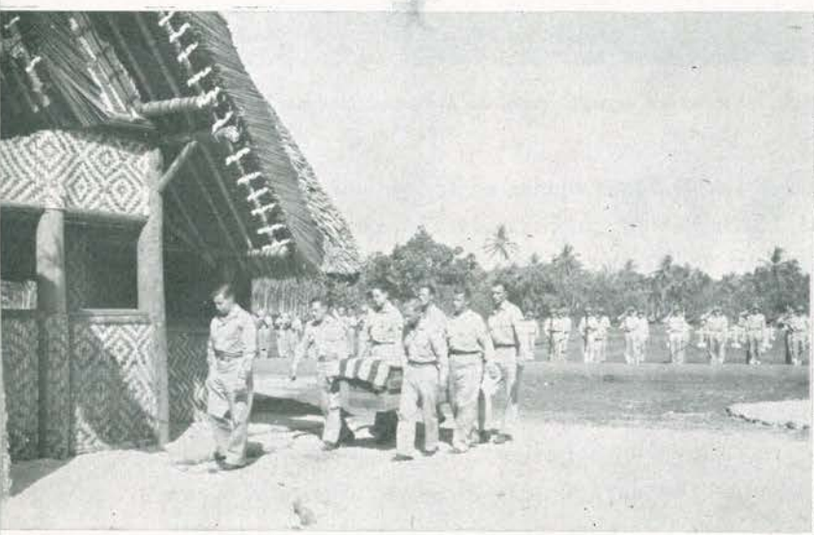
On the 18th, Major Henson and Capt. R. E. Shanks, 100th Operations Officer, pulled another "sneaker" on Tobera, but this time instead of catching them on the ground as Lieutenant Stevens had done, the Japs were in the air with some 15 or 20 assorted fighters. Henson and Shanks were covered by four P-38's who got five of the Japs, while Capt. Shanks accounted for one caught taking off and one destroyed on the ground by strafing.

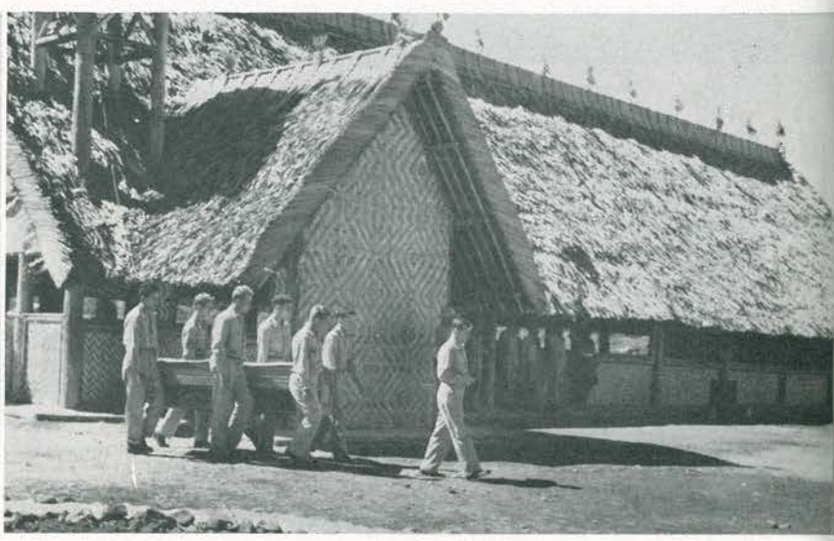
February 20 was a day for Lieut. E. G. Keefer and his crew, all of the 75th Squadron, to remember, for in a long-to-be-remembered raid on Lakunai, he was forced to ditch seven miles off the St. George Channel, where he and his crew were picked up by Dumbo one hour later. The raid was conducted at medium altitude with 35 Mitchells from the 69th and 75th participating. Two hundred and ten quarter-tonners were well placed, and photo interpretation showed 21 hits on the runway, direct hits on AA positions, five large buildings and an indeterminate number of smaller buildings destroyed, a warehouse 95′ by 95′ demolished, and numerous fires in supply areas. Not a bad day's work. There was no interception this day, nor were there any unidentified aircraft seen over any portion of the Gazelle Peninsula. It is interesting to note that from this day on, the Crusaders met no more enemy interception for the duration of the time they were destined to remain in the Northern Solomons.

During the time that the Japs' fighters roamed the sky, the backbone of his interception was the Zeke, with generous interlardings of Hamp and Oscar and a sprinkling, in the later stages, of Tony and Tojo. Although as many as 100 enemy fighters intercepted on several occasions, the usual number throughout the campaign ranged between 40 and 70, lowering to 25 to 40 near the end of his air defense. On February 19, Allied air attacks destroyed 70 per cent of his interceptors, and although photographs showed that he still possessed fighters on the deck, during the ensuing period he entirely abandoned the air defense of Rabaul.

In the raid of the 25th, S/Sgt. Clarence K. Willey, gunner of a 100th crew, was killed at his post by an AA shell, thus becoming the first casualty suffered by this organization since its advent to combat.

In February, also, General MacArthur sent the famous First Cavalry Division into the Admiralty Islands on a reconnaisance-in-force. So completely did they keep the situation in hand that they asked for reinforcements and permission to stay. So, what originally came off the high staff's planning board as a landing for reconnaissance





purposes and then a withdrawal, a la Dieppe, turned into a major operational invasion that would give the Japs one more problem for their limited air resources. Even if the Jap had desired to reinforce the Bismarcks from the West, the continued pounding of Jap airfields along the New Guinea north coast by the Fifth AAF had left Hollandia, 500 miles from Rabaul, the nearest Jap strip where a plane might be based with safety. At home the Jap was turning to the wailing wall for fair, as witnessed by this interesting radio intercept: "We are yielding to the advance of enemy bases. In the Bougainville area, for instance, Torokina, where the American forces have landed, is situated between swamps, and the rear is immediately closed in by mountain ranges. This area is a ghastly jungle belt. In building up this air base their strategy is to intercept our supply lines. Whenever the enemies build an air base on an island, our communications and supply with other islands become difficult. This is the way the Americans operate. They attack us, relying on unlimited numbers of aircraft. Even though we drive them away in air battles, our planes cannot stay up in the air beyond a limited time, so we have to return to base. Therefore, we can hold air supremacy only a short while in a day, and after that, the enemy's fresh aircraft will dominate the air. The essential feature of American air attacks is the employment of mass assaults. They repeat the attacks in waves. Two or three hours after the first attacker has withdrawn they come back with more and renewed strength. They repeat this operation. At first we can take off our aircraft to intercept them and battle it out in the air, but as fuel and munitions run out we have to land our craft. At that time, if the enemy renews the attack on us, the battle will become very unfavorable to our side. Meanwhile the enemy reconnaissance planes will fly over us and report the 'splendid target' by radio to the forces waiting at base and call tens of hundreds of aircraft. This is an everyday occurrence in the Southern Region. Our soldiers are saying: What has happened to the Japanese air power?"

Although as usual the Japs had exaggerated the conditions to some extent to stimulate civilian effort in aircraft production at home, nevertheless it conveyed a picture in part, of our strategy. And the shoe was beginning to pinch the would-be rulers of the world.

By the end of February, the Crusaders were as comfortably set up as they had been at any base prior to Stirling. Much work, hard work, had begun to show some

" . . . was killed over the target." This series of photographs of the funeral of an unknown Crusader shows an inevitable part of war . . . a flag, a white cross, a final resting place among his comrades.

real results. The group theatre under the combined direction of Capt. C. W. McClelland and Lieut. Les Sokler, I & E Officer, was well attended by half of the units on the island. A GI show conceived and staged by Lieut. Reed Stevens and Capt. R. H. Cohn was good for a few laughs although the Chaplains on the island couldn't quite see it that way. This jungle epic played nine nights, a new theatre each night, and moved Sgt. Russ Ahlbum, talented writer and cartoonist on the staff of *The Mitchell,* the official newspaper of the Crusaders to write:

"The Mitchell, on behalf of its three million readers (non-paying) does hereby award to each and every member of the "Stirling Heat Waves" cast, to the 82nd C. B. Band, and to Lieutenant Stevens and Captain Cohn, the organizers and supervisors of the show, the coveted and highly valued honor of being chosen as Charter Members of the Treasury Island Homestead Association.

"This honor, given for unusual service strictly below the call of duty, is our way of showing appreciation for the outstanding work of all concerned. Along with the membership go certain valuable rights and privileges, including a return ticket back to the Pacific's Palatial Paradise (Treasury Islands), and the homestead right on any ten-foot-square plot of ground. Of course, the latter privilege is conditioned on six years of continuous residence on that chosen plot.

"The boys (and girls) of the Heat Waves clearly indicated their right to membership in this select association. Their efforts provided the 'natives' with some swell and slightly risque entertainment.

"In the warped and calloused opinion of this reviewer, top honors were shared by Miss Beverly Eager-Britches (Hal Robbins), Tom Rooney and his distinctive songs, Charlie Imbranone, and the "Rabaul Maidens."

"Scarcity of space makes it impossible to praise all of the performers and they all rate plenty of praise. Lieutenant Stevens and Captain Cohn, the organizers, directors, etc., rate a big hand for their efforts in making such entertainment possible."

In October, 1943, some 440 enlisted men and 10 officers were assembled at Seymour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, North Carolina, and under secret orders were sent to Greenville and Columbia Army Air Bases in South Carolina for "22 days unit training."

The force was split into two equal shipments and ar-

rived at their destination, unheralded and unexpected, November 1.

Greenville and Columbia at that time were B-25 advanced schools, and the men were put to work acclimating themselves to this particular plane. The period at Greenville was a 22-day lark for 220 men who had been cooped up at Goldsboro for from three to six months with few passes, and no place to go even when they had passes.

The editor, by machinations beyond his control, was appointed CO of the contingent on arrival at Greenville, holding that post for three troubled and work-filled days. During that time he had signed Class A passes for the entire group, had got them billeted, had set up a mess-hall, obtained equipment, and with the help of four other eager second lieutnants had apportioned the men about the field in their MOS jobs.

At noon of the third day, Maj. George M. White, former Executive Officer with a heavy group at Boise Air Base, reported in, saluted snappily, and was forthwith handed the entire organization.

On November 22 the two groups again assembled at Goldsboro from whence, a week later, they entrained again, this time for the POE, Camp Kilmer, N. J. The departure was preceded by an address by a corpulent major who congratulated us on getting the chance to go overseas, and who deplored the fact that the exigencies of the service prevented his accompanying us. "You'll live in dirt," he told us smilingly, "you'll eat dirt, and you'll love it." From his address rose the AD736B battle cry, "You never had it so good."

Nine weeks were spent at Kilmer, 30 miles from New York. There was nothing to do at Kilmer. The days were spent in short hikes, close order drill, goofing off, and dodging 104's. The First Sergeant's whistle routed the men out for morning roll at 0630; a retreat formation closed the day. One half the organization was allowed passes each day, officers included.

GI ingenuity made the pass situation a mockery, and only weariness or lack of funds kept a man on the post. New Brunswick, Newark, and New York City were each less than an hour away by train, all with a wide variety of preferred entertainment.

On December 19, half the group, AD736A, with Capt. George Dean in charge, Lieuts. Norman Schussler, Jack May, Ed Vassalo, Wesley Flora, Harry Dole, James Perrott, and John Daniels left New York harbor on the *S. S. Exiria.* Engine trouble kept them in Panama for 10 days, and on February 1, 1944, they arrived at Noumea, repeating the experiences of all who had gone before at the Sixth Replacement Depot and Camp Barnes.

A month later, after Christmas and New Year's in New York, the second half, AD736B embarked from New York on the *SS Robin Doncaster,* getting into Noumea February 25. Major White, Lieuts. Herbert Bender, Fred Green, Gerald Markoe, Earl Cross, Donald Van Dam, Joseph Reiff, and Marvin Wachs accompanied the contingent.

These two outfits ultimately assembled at Stirling Island in early March and took over the duties of the homeward bound "old" 69th and 70th.

From there on, their lives are inextricably bound up with the Group.

March found the Crusaders taking an active part in the systematic destruction of Rabaul Town. This work

A ship burns in Simpson Harbor following a February strike by the Mitchells.

Gun positions on the east tip of Sohanna Island between Buka and the Bonis are blasted by the Mitchells prior to a diversionary night bombing and strafing attack made while the Navy mined Buka Passage.

was completed by the end of the month except for a few isolated buildings which did not warrant further area bombing, and efforts were diverted to surrounding supply areas. These areas were extremely lucrative when first hit, and great fires were the usual results from the bombs. Also the Group was periodically assigned to hit airdromes which had to be kept unserviceable at all times. The Group was particularly successful in this endeavor, never failing to score sufficient hits to put the strip out of operation, and on several notable strikes was able to string bombs from one end to the other, completely plowing up the entire runway. For 30 consecutive days (March 2 to March 31) the planes were able to reach some enemy target upon which they could effectively drop their bombs, and this long period of sustained operations enabled the organization to establish a new high for bombs dropped in a one-month period.

During March Maj. James Barlow arrived with a detachment of Mitchells equipped with 75 MM cannon, and several crews. A barge search was added to the list of Crusader missions, with a pair of cannon-equipped Mitchells searching the Gazelle Peninsula for enemy barges. The only loss during the month came when a plane piloted by Capt. E. M. Shanks of the 100th was forced to ditch after an attack against the dock area of Simpson Harbor. Fighter cover in the area, upon seeing the Mitchell plane land smoothly into the water, were heard to exclaim over the radio, "Jesus Christ! Did you see that landing? Just like a goddam Dumbo!" Many friends of handsome, soft-spoken Edwin Shanks, who later became Operations Officer of the 390th, will recognize his habitual understatement of his own accomplishments in the following remarks on his water landing. He said, "Oil pressure and manifold pressure dropped to 40 pounds. I broke radio silence to inform the other members of the squadron that we would be forced to make a water landing. Then I gave orders to the other members of the crew to toss everything loose overboard so we could stay afloat as long as possible after we hit the water. I couldn't feather the propeller and we lost altitude rapidly. Fortunately we had a smooth sea when we hit the water at 110 miles per hour. We glided over the sea for about 200 yards and came to an abrupt stop. We had plenty of time to get in the life raft as the plane stayed afloat for two and a half minutes. One of our planes radioed to the emergency rescue seaplane base which immediately dispatched a plane to rescue us. Another of our planes circled us for an hour until the Navy plane picked us up. It is certainly a good feeling to know that those Navy boys are right on the job, and a fine commentary on the excellent cooperation which exists between the Army and Navy out here."

This was the second water landing for Lieut. James V. Fairley, bombardier, who had 46 combat missions to his credit in the South Pacific. It was the first mission for Lieut. C. L. Johnston, Navigator, who had recently arrived in this theatre from the States. He commented, "I guess they are breaking me in the hard way." Other members of this crew were Lieut. Antonito F. Alagna, co-pilot, S/Sgt. Norman Gidley, radio-gunner; S/Sgt. Denver D. Bergman, photo-gunner, and S/Sgt. Robert G. Akers, Jr., armorer-gunner.

In speaking of his first forced landing from which he was rescued after 25 hours in a life raft, Lieutenant Fair-

Vunakanau is hit again February 18, 1944. Three elements hit the runway, a fourth hit in the revetment area.

Vunapope personnel and supply area adjacent to Tobera Airfield is plastered with 100-pounders on February 27, 1944.

Lt. Jim Fairley holds the Group record for swimming away from the most landings. Three ditchings within a few short weeks are apt to make one an old man before one's time.

ley said: "We were on an administrative mission and were flying between Espiritu Santo and Guadalcanal when our engines conked out. We rapidly lost altitude and were forced to land in the water 100 miles South of San Cristobal. The radio operator was still sending messages when we hit the water, and broke his leg because he didn't have time to brace himself for the shock. We got everybody into two life rafts and made a sail out of a parachute. We had a pretty harrowing night on the water, for it was stormy and the radio operator was spitting up blood, which attracted sharks. We were prepared to shoot them if they attacked but all they seemed to want to do was rub their noses on the rafts to get rid of lice. We didn't want to shoot them for fear they would attract other sharks. We were picked up the following day by Navy Kingfishers and a PBY. We weren't rescued right away, for as we found out later, our message didn't get through to the home base, but was picked up by chance by another plane in the vicinity which radioed the message in the following morning. We traveled 60 miles during the night and were only 40 miles from San Cristobal when we were rescued."

March 8 also brought one of the few Condition Blacks, when the Japs counterattacked in force on the Allied perimeter at Torokina, Bougainville. The Group played a part in ending this fray, strafing guns and concentrations beyond the perimeter. The attack was soon brought under control but ComAirSols staffers spent some anxious nights in their foxholes, and the Piva strip was temporarily knocked out by Pistol Petes. It was officially estimated that over 5000 Japs were slaughtered in their foolish and desperate attempt to break out of their virtual imprisonment in the fastness of the Bougainville mountains.

On March 20, Allied troops landed unopposed at Emirau Island, northwest of Kavieng, and construction was immediately started on two bomber strips—strips which provided a base much closer to Truk and completed the encirclement of Rabaul. The strategy of island-hopping was beginning to assert itself in no uncertain terms. It was a strategy that became a familiar pattern throughout the hostilities against Japan.

CHAPTER 12

It appears to the researcher of pertinent documents in the Group files that Public Relations, Private Hargrove's old pasture, began to thrive and grow green in March. Your editor was faced with the not entirely pleasant necessity of culling a few representative items from many interesting, descriptive, and frequently amusing pieces. We print herewith and increasingly hereafter, our selections, and are particularly glad to have the opportunity of reprinting those which deal with ground phases of Group life. Without the care and skill and the sometimes amazing ingenuity of the Group's maintenance workers, the flying and bombing accomplishments narrated in this book would never have been possible. Remember the 390th's Queenie?

AT AN ADVANCED 13TH AAF BASE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, March 27—Queenie, queen of them all. This saying certainly holds true in the case of Queenie II, the 'old dependable' in this hard flying Billy Mitchell medium bombardment squadron of the 13th AAF.

Flown to the South Pacific theatre in March of 1943 by Capt. Joe Wheeler she has been on a total of 77 combat missions. When Captain Wheeler picked her up in Sacramento, he named her Queenie II after a sister warbird he had flown in the Alaskan theatre and named for the celebrated burlesque queen. On the ensuing trip to this area it looked as if Queenie II would turn out to be a lemon, but she seemed to take heart in these sunny climes and really hit her stride in the opening of the Northern Solomons campaign. On her first mission Queenie helped sink a large enemy cargo ship at Baeroko Harbor on New Georgia Island in a low-level skip-bombing and strafing attack. As the battle for the enemy stronghold at Munda, New Georgia, increased in fury, Queenie and her sister ships flew many low level bombing and strafing sorties in support of the ground forces. So effective was this firepower that a grateful infantryman came up and kissed one of the B-25 pilots. During this period Queenie and a flight of seven other Mitchells flushed a Japanese cruiser off the coast of Choiseul and immediately swooped down for a mast-head attack. The cruiser exploded and sank within two minutes after a dozen bombs penetrated her vitals. For this exploit, Captain Wheeler received the Silver Star. As time went on and the enemy retreated, Queenie was chosen as lead ship to crack Kahili, the strongest enemy bastion in the Solomons. After a few short weeks of terrific pounding, Bougainville Island became more of a liability than an asset to the Japanese, and once again the B-25's had to look further afield for targets. The Bismarck Archipelago, with its city of Rabaul, was earmarked for destruction. Though many of the older ships were weeded out and replaced with newer models in preparation for this onslaught, Queenie II remained and is still flying with the best of them. It is indeed a tribute to sound engineering and excellent maintenance that Queenie has over 580 hours of combat flying without so much as an engine change. T/Sgt. George C. Hester was Queenie's crew chief.

* * *

Always putting a gay face on trouble, the 70th's PRO takes up a couple of constant problems—tent improvement and horse-trading.

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC—If Johnny's in a bomber base in the South Pacific, don't send him money. Send him a handful of nails and a saw.

At home Johnny may be mechanically ten-thumbed, but when he gets down here and faces Hobson's choice of doing without or making it himself, you'd never know him. His ingenuity flowers like jungle foliage, and in two weeks he can hit a nail with either hand from a standing start.

When he first got here he slept in a tent, generally with a tree root or a chunk of coral where his tenth vertebra protruded. The average American likes a house. With floors. He'll sleep in a tent if he must; on the ground, if he must—but he doesn't have to like it.

Give him a day off, or an evening away from the line, and he goes into the construction business. With a hatchet, a saw and a pocketknife. With scrap lumber, felled trees and limbs of same. The same canvas that gives him and his tentmates a 10-foot square tent will furnish 15 or 16 feet of roof and an overhang. So he puts up four corner posts, frames them around the top, puts a joist across the middle, raises his center pole to the top of the joist, puts down a floor, uses screening sewed to canvas for walls, and whadya know! Johnny's got the snuggest air-conditioned tent in the area. With a house and a floor, he can thumb his nose at the lizards and insects.

He's not finished. Before he's through Johnny will have a cupboard with shelves, a table, chairs, a bookcase, and a bed lamp. Soon all he lacks is a bathroom. But that's not Johnny's fault. There just isn't ample water.

"Give him sufficient water," marvels Col. (Light Horse) Harry Wilson, Commanding Officer of a medium bomber group on a South Pacific island, "and I'll be doggoned if

Medics and Transportation

The Orderly Room, Intelligence, and Operations.

Communications

Mess and Supply

THESE MEN WORKED ON THE GROUND . . .

Engineering

Ordnance

Armament

TO KEEP THESE MEN FLYING . . .

he won't have me subscribing to a Sewer Bond Issue. What a guy!"

* * *

Not that occasional ludicrous incidents of combat were overlooked. This one is an absent-minded professor item to end all A-M-P items.

AT A 13th AAF ADVANCED BASE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, March 22—1st Lieut. Ben C. Speer, Jr., bombardier of a 13th AAF medium bomber, completed his fiftieth combat mission in this theatre by participating in a recent raid on the most strongly defended Japanese base in the South Pacific, Rabaul. This was the Lieutenant's 15th time over that target. The other 35 missions were flown in the bitter campaigns which destroyed the Japanese air base of Rekata Bay, Munda, Vila Lavella, Ballale, Kahili, Kara, Bonis, and Buka. These 50 missions have given the Lieutenant many memorable experiences, but on this incident his comrades are still prone to rib him. His plane was hit and fire broke out near his station. He searched for his fire extinguisher but could not find it. He was using his hat against the flames with some success when the engineer brought up an extinguisher and put out the fire. As the Lieutenant stood up he saw that he had been sitting on the extinguisher. So did the others. A casual remark to "hide this extinguisher for use in a real emergency" still embarrasses the bombardier.

* * *

April got off to a roaring start with two dozen Mitchells hitting the Vunapope supply area, Lakunai runway, and the northwest part of Rabaul town on the first three days, for a total of 711 assorted bombs dropped on the unhappy Jappies. On the 4th of the month, bad weather that persisted through the balance of the month diverted 11 planes from Rabaul to Buka, where their centuries walked down the runway and across the revetment area. On this same day, Lieut. Walter W. Remspecher took Queenie II into the air on a search for a missing B-24 crew, and never returned from his mission of mercy. The B-24 had been badly shot up on a raid on Truk, a target that only six days previously had come into the sphere of operations of our heavy groups of the 13th AAF.

From the 5th through the 11th formations of 23 or 24 aircraft socked the Rabaul targets daily. Lieut. Andrew J. Dudas Jr., F/O Alton V. Watson and T/Sgt. Norman R. Krogel, crew chief, of the 70th, did not return to base from a test hop on the 11th. The 12th brought another score for Dumbo and the exciting story is best told from a PRO release of the 69th:

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC—The crew of "El Croco", a 13th AAF Mitchell bomber, will never recall exactly how they lived through that morning of April 12.

Alone on a photo mission to Rabaul, the Mitchell dove from 9000 to 4000 feet to start its run. When it came out of a cloud the bomber was traveling 300 miles per hour over the center of the big Jap base. It seemed that every anti-aircraft battery in the city from machine guns to 90 MM had been waiting for the plane to break out of that cloud.

Straight ahead loomed a black mass of bursting shells and tracers. Too late to avoid the barrage, the Mitchell traveled straight on into it.

Half of one engine was torn off: the other engine spouted oil and burst into flames. The nose, tail, wings, and bomb bay were peppered. Bomb bay doors, hatch covers, parts of the turret, and a large piece of the tail section were sheared off. The aileron controls were gone, but the damaged rudder and elevator controls remained. Two men were wounded when a shell blast took most of the floor out within a foot of where they were standing and left only the metal ribs. The airstream poured in through large gaping holes in the roof and side.

All that was left was a crippled wing, a burning engine, with a runaway propeller, a few controls, and a questionable fuselage to carry them from the center of Rabaul.

Another barrage and the plane dropped 2500 feet towards Simpson Harbor. The wing banked through 80 degrees and the pilot was certain the plane was spinning into Lakunai Airdrome.

It was nothing but muscle power on the shredded controls that forced the plane away from the city and out to sea.

The bomber hit the water 20 miles from Rabaul without a bounce. The landing was so smooth that the four men in back escaped injury even though they didn't have time to brace themselves. The landing was made on swells 15 feet high. The punctured plane leaked like a sieve and in less than a minute it was under water.

They had been flying parallel to the shore and the co-pilot said they landed so close he could "clearly see the cocoanuts on the palm trees!"

Jap coastal batteries immediately opened up. A formation of passing Allied fighter planes observed the crew's predicament and immediately came down to strafe the enemy guns. The guns stopped firing.

A formation of bombers returning from a mission sent a plane down to circle their location and radio for help.

A Navy PBY picked up the message and went to their aid. Within an hour after the water landing the crew of the "El Croco" was homeward bound.

1st Lieut. Richard W. Reed was the pilot responsible for the miraculous escape. Before the plane had time to stop Lieutenant Reed was pulling open the canopy escape hatch out of which climbed the co-pilot, the navigator, the radio operator, and himself. He had to climb back to release the raft and was in the water inflating it when the crew came out.

Co-pilot 2nd Lieut. William W. Carlisle had his foot jammed between the seat and the control column. It came free at the last minute. He then dived back in to tow the radio operator to the life raft.

Navigator 1st Lieut. Patrick H. Watts tried to warn the crew in the back of the water landing. The plane was losing altitude rapidly; the interphone system had been shot out. The only solution was to crawl back over the narrow passage-way on top of the bomb bay. He squeezed his 190 pounds through the passage, told the crew to prepare for a water landing, turned around and crawled back to the Navigator's compartment. He also helped the co-pilot tow the radio operator to the raft.

The Mitchell, not designed as a camera ship and without a camera mount, had been assigned a large camera to be operated from the side window. It took two men to operate it. S/Sgt. August C. Valentin, a non-flying administrative clerk, was the only extra man available at the time to help the engineer operate the camera. Sergeant Valentin had already finished taking a roll of pictures of another target before they began their run on the second objective, Rabaul. A blast of shrapnel caught both Cameraman Valentin and the engineer from behind as they were busy taking pictures of the city. Sergeant Valentin was hit in the shoulder—most of the floor near him had been blasted away and he could look straight down into Simpson Harbor. Although painfully wounded he swam out of the bottom escape hatch (already blasted off by anti-aircraft fire) and floated until the raft was inflated and the crew safely assembled before he asked for help. Throughout the rescue and the probing for shrapnel after the rescue, the doctor and the crew said "he took it like a veteran."

S/Sgt. William S. Price, engineer, was helping Sergeant Valentin with the camera when he was hit through both legs. The engineer calmly sat down, twisted a turniquet around his own leg, and administered his own first aid. He slid out of the escape hatch unassisted and swam to the raft.

Cpl. Carl A. Cook, radio operator, continued to send out calls for the rescue plane giving details of location, time, and damage. He stayed until the rising water in the plane ruined his radio set and then crawled over the narrow bomb bay out the front escape hatch.

Cpl. Warren G. Johnson, turret gunner, felt the shock of the bursting anti-aircraft and jumped down to see if anyone had been hurt. A second later a shell exploded just above the turret tearing big pieces out of it and the turret gun. Disregarding his narrow escape he began to administer first aid to the wounded cameraman and was so busy he forgot to brace himself for the landing.

A current started to carry the raft towards the Jap-filled shoreline. The wounded men were placed in the raft while the uninjured crew swam it out to sea, and subsequent rescue.

* * *

On the 14th and 15th, the two-dozen took it up again, hitting Rataval and Talili Supply areas and incidentally getting the balance of that stored ammunition. Then the weather thickened again, but on the 17th the flight found an opening at Rapopo and neatly undid the repairs that had been accomplished since our previous visit. And thus it continued throughout the balance of April with the final score showing these results:

1,644,300 pounds of bombs dropped

50,100 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition expended on enemy targets.

344 x 75MM shells spent for good cause.

A sad note crept into the symphony of destruction when Maj. "Jimmy" Yeoman, who had assumed command of the 75th only a short while previously, was shot down while making a low level attack against enemy shipping off of New Ireland on the 28th. With him were the Flight Surgeon, Lieut. William C. Craig, and the Squadron Bombardier, Lieut. Howard A. Goldstone, in addition

At one time, during the attack on Rabaul, the 70th had 18 pilots who had flown 50 or more missions. Fourteen of them are shown here: Kneeling, left to right: Maj. Paxton, Lt. Col. Daugherty, Lts. Risvold and Fletcher; Standing: Lt. Story, Capt. Morris. Capt. Gadd, Lt. Gage, Capt. Nadler, Lt. Hart, Lt. Worbs; Rear: Lts. Young and Brisick.

In a striking photo of pin-point bombing, the 42nd takes out the causeway between Matupi Island and the mainland at Rabaul. Near-misses hit among the supplies and personnel quarters near the beach.

to S/Sgt. Charles D. McKinley, engineer, T/Sgt. James C. Kiker, radio operator, and S/Sgt. Robert M. Duvall, gunner.

Squadron Leaders on most of the missions during the first four months of 1944 included the following:

69th: Captains Oscar Vordahl, Charles W. Brown, Charles T. Everett, Robert D. Reiman, Rolf N. Romstad.

Lieutenants Roy D. Burkhart, John J. Eddington, Vernon W. Fisher, Lynn A. Ferguson, Walter R. H. Berger.

In addition Lt. Colonel Ecklund and Major Barlow led many missions for this organization. During this period, Lieutenant Burkhart was promoted to Captain, and Captain Romstad was promoted to Major.

70th: Captains Robert J. Morris, Wilmot E. Y. Paxton, William S. Southern.

Lieutenants Ross B. Lemmon (lost on Jan. 14th), Paul O. Nadler, Paul L. Ryder, John H. Van Schaick, F/O Edward J. Brisick.

In addition, Maj. Jean H. Daugherty flew as Squadron Leader on more of these missions than he probably cares to remember.

75th: Captains Merrill W. Longwell, Raymond Johnson, L. J. Davidson and Charles Rocks, and Lieutenant Routh.

Major Yeoman led the Squadron both in the capacity of Operations Officer and later as Squadron Commander.

100th: Major J. B. Henson, Squadron Commander, Cap-

tain R. E. Shanks, Operations Officer, Captains Bryce Hedlund, Edwin M. Shanks, Lieutenants Vernon R. Fetner, Charles W. Wolfendale, Andrew Elliott, and Herbert Sunderman.

390th: Major Joe D. Wheeler, Squadron Commander, Captain Richard Carmody, Operations Officer, Captains Austin E. Eivers, William Short, Lieutenants Alto F. Dolan, Hugh Blackwell, William Dermody, Lorin Trubachenck, Raymond Kahl, Lawrence McLaughlin, Rex Workman, and a man who served only a short while in the Squadron, Maj. Richard "Dickie" Jones, ex-aide to General Hubert Harmon, who was in the group to pick up some combat experience.

Again we turn to the 70th's public relations file to recapture the Rabaul days, but it's good reading and brings back nostalgic memories of the days "when it was rough."

Headquarters 13th AAF, South Pacific—With his hands injured by flak fragments, with his plane blown off its bombing run and out to sea by a bursting shell, 1st Lieut. John R. Campbell stuck to his bombsight today, brought his plane back over the target and toggled out his bombs.

Lieutenant Campbell, flight bombardier of a Solomons-based Mitchell squadron, was taking his flight in on the right flank of the formation on a strike over Rabaul when a Jap anti-aircraft shell burst beneath the ship. Fragments struck the nose and rudder just as the pilot approached his bomb release point.

Despite the efforts of the pilot, Lieut. Paul L. Ryder, to hold the ship steady, it swerved, and the entire flight swerved with it.

Cursing softly into the interphone, and wringing his numbed and bleeding hands Lieutenant Campbell guided his pilot back into the target run. For the second time the entire flight leveled off. This time there was no interruption. Cluster after cluster of white hot incendiaries blossomed over the target.

Before today a cocoanut plantation a few miles west of Rabaul was the cover for ton after ton of supplies piled up when the town was still a major Jap threat in the Pacific. When it was last seen today, it was a mass of roaring flames and billowing smoke. All planes returned safely to base.

* * *

FROM THE 69TH PRO'S FILES:

Headquarters 13th AAF, South Pacific—John W. Malpass has recently been promoted from First Lieutenant to Captain.

Captain Malpass, better known as "The Little Rebel" is bombardiering officer in a squadron of Billy Mitchell medium bombers of the 13th AAF. As squadron bombardier he has been instrumental in the destruction of many enemy strongholds, and has flown as lead bombardier on low level strafing and skip-bombing attacks on Jap shipping. Captain Malpass was a member of a crew which was shot down during a low level raid on the Jap-held Kahili Airdrome on Bougainville. After four days of fruitless search the crew was given up as lost, but on the fifth day word was received that they were all safe and on their way back to the base. Malpass gave proof of his devotion to duty by returning to the sinking plane to rescue one of his injured comrades.

Since his arrival in this theatre in March, 1943, Captain Malpass has flown on 50 combat missions over every enemy installation in this area.

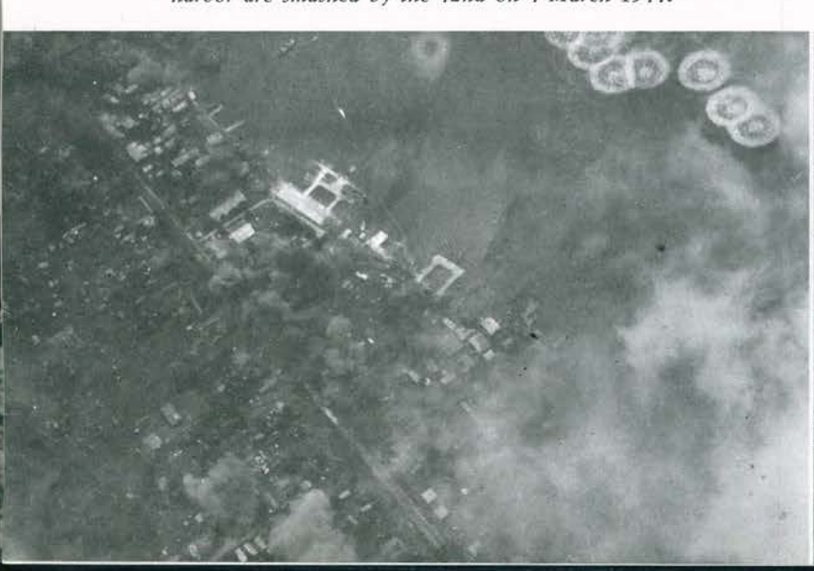
* * *

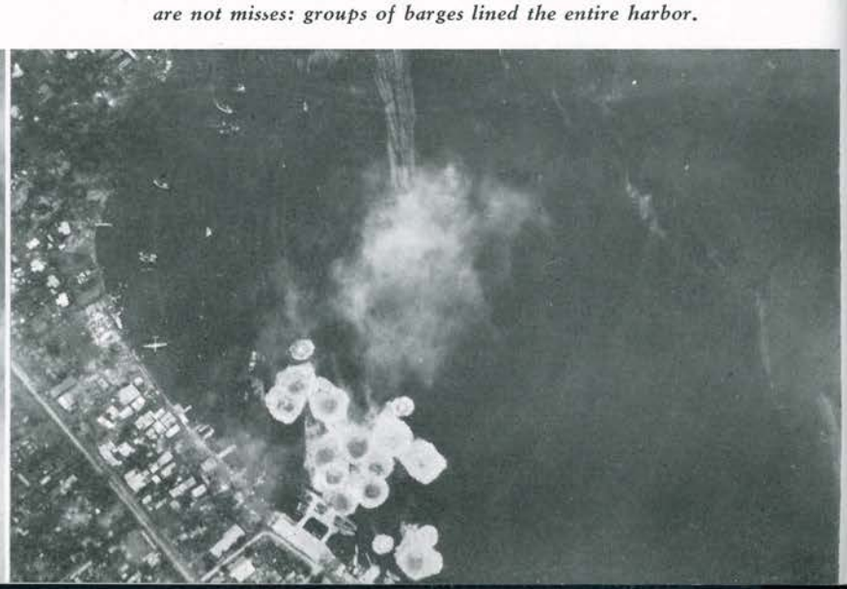
HEADQUARTERS 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC —In one part of the South Pacific the Japs are learning that it doesn't pay to play with fire . . . at least not when 2nd Lieut. Frank J. Clark and his Mitchell "flying cannon" are around.

Lieutenant Clark was piloting his 13th AAF bomber on a routine shipping search of a large Jap-held area. Turning home with negative results Clark sighted a column of smoke arising from a small island. Curious, he dove down to circle the island—his plane was met by a volley of crossfire. One anti-aircraft shell ripped a three-inch hole in his wing, 10 slugs poured into the engine, and

Rabaul's dock area and the supply packed area along the harbor are smashed by the 42nd on 4 March 1944.

On March 5, 1944, Rabaul docks and the barge concentrations take a beating. These bomb splashes in the water are not misses: groups of barges lined the entire harbor.





nine machine gun bullets traced a pattern in the fuselage —one bullet even pierced the bombardier's briefcase as it lay in his desk. No one was hurt and Lieutenant Clark turned the bomber around to make another check on the island before he began the attack.

Sure enough, there were clothes hanging on a line. A little further observation disclosed a group of long buildings, an airplane, and finally a pill-box—the concrete type the Japanese forces used to defend key points.

In three passes the Mitchell dropped three high explosive bombs in the building area, poured over 1000 rounds of machine gun fire into the airplane and pillbox, and, coming in just over the water, lobbed 20 75MM cannon shells into the strongpoint. At least one direct hit was made on a large building and on the pillbox. Clark said that "Japs poured out of the buildings and pillbox and flung themselves on the ground—it seemed that we could almost see arms and legs flying through the air." At least a few Japs in the South Pacific will hereafter try to make their meals without such a large fire and a telltale column of smoke.

* * *

AGAIN FROM THE 70TH

Headquarters 13th AAF, South Pacific—Maj. Jean H. Daugherty, Commanding Officer of a medium bombardment squadron, returned recently from his fiftieth mission against the Japanese.

He sat quietly in the cockpit of his two-engine Mitchell while a grinning crew chief painted another bomb on the side of it. Fifty missions in these waters indicate hundreds of hours flown through sun, rain, and storm, over tens of thousands of trackless miles of the South Seas.

It means that the plane and its crew have faced death from thousands of rounds of all-caliber ammunition fired from machine guns, automatic cannon, and from huge four and five-inch anti-aircraft guns that throw bursting death 30,000 feet into the air. Interception by Jap fighters has been a daily commonplace.

It means that a man has grown older in the business of killing and destroying, without letting that business destroy any part of him. It means that he has kept his superb health and quickness of perception and reaction, for it has been said that in combat there are only two types of men: the quick and the dead.

It means months spent away from all the things that he once knew: his wife, his family, his home, his friends, his dog, and the corner drugstore. It means a kind of culmination of additional months of work and study and discipline spent learning to pilot these tons of destruction through the sky.

It means hundreds of nights spent either in the air or on the ground, when life on the ground was worse than in the air. The danger on the ground is secondary to its boredom. A man can see a few hundred yards of black earth or white coral hacked out of the jungle. What he can see is utilitarian and elemental. Bulldozers have grunted, draglines have rattled, men have sweated, and a runway has appeared. The process was repeated endlessly to get roads, space to stack supplies, clearings for tents and administrative buildings—and in just about that order.

It means, penultimately, that he can take it. Finally, it means that he has been very, very lucky.

* * *

Headquarters, 13th AAF, South Pacific, April 7, 1944. Jap barges were still busy supplying troops stranded in the South Pacific when 2nd Lieut. William W. Carlisle, pilot of a 13th AAF bomber, recently arrived from the U. S. A.

The barges, self-propelled and well armed, were traveling from island to island under cover of darkness. During the day they were camouflaged along jungle shore lines well hidden from snooping 13th AAF airmen.

It was Lieutenant Carlisle's first assignment to hunt out and destroy them. He flew his search just over the top of the water, weaving in and out of bays and river mouths, pulling up only to avoid tree trops.

He found his first barge on his first day of search—a 65-footer tucked deep in the undergrowth overhanging the shore.

Before the bomber closed on the attack Lieutenant Carlisle liberally sprayed the surrounding jungle with machine gun fire to discourage enemy anti-aircraft fire. From a distance the bomber lobbed three 75MM cannon shells into the target, but the plane was maneuvering too fast to observe the results. Zooming in on the bombing run, two high explosive 500-pounders dropped just short of the barge. The only retaliation was four bullet holes in the tail of Lieutenant Carlisle's plane.

On the next run the only remaining bomb scored a direct hit—the plane soared upward quickly to avoid a barrage of flying metal barge plates and assorted machinery! 500 rounds of ammunition were poured into the wreckage for good measure.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC—On the morning of April 8th the Japs had only one completely serviceable airfield left in the South Pacific. By the afternoon of April 8th there were none—thanks to the perseverance of 1st Lieut. Vernon W. Fisher, Morgan Hill, California, pilot of a 13th AAF bomber and the skill of his bombardier 1st Lieut. Carl A. Warnock, Detroit, Michigan.

Lieutenant Fisher led a large formation of bombers to the airfield. Although the sky had been clear on take-off, tropical cloud formations gathered on the outward trip to the target. As the formation approached the enemy strip, clouds began to form rapidly; nevertheless the bombing run was completed amid a barrage of heavy caliber anti-aircraft fire. Turret gunners reported more than 200 black bursts trailing the planes.

But bombs were not dropped; a large cloud had floated over the target completely blotting out all signs of the airfield.

Rather than drop their bombs on a secondary target Bombardier Warnock decided to wait—and, as he had hoped, the clouds momentarily opened.

The formation made its second run over the airfield—and again the ugly black puffs of anti-aircraft trailed along behind. This time all bombs scored direct hits—the formation's bombs paraded down the center of the runway ending their march in a revetment area.

The next day was Happy Easter—but not for the Japs.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC—The crew of a 13th AAF Mitchell bomber are today thankful that the flying skill of 1st Lieut. Walter R. H. Berger, their pilot, was much better than the marksmanship of one Japanese sniper.

On the afternoon of April 11, the crew spotted two well-concealed Jap supply barges along a South Pacific shore. Pilot Berger dove down, just clearing the surface of the water, and opened up with a volley of machine gun fire. He poured bullets into the two barges as long as he could and then pulled up over the tree tops.

The Mitchell climbed to 400 feet in preparation for the bombing run on the target. But one of the two engines seemed to lack power—Lieutenant Berger glanced at the engine to find a fountain of oil spurting out. As often happened on these low level attacks, a sentry on the shore had fired his rifle at them. The bullet had severed the oil line.

Lieutenant Berger feathered the prop of the nearly powerless engine to avoid further trouble. In a few minutes the bomber dropped from 400 to 300 feet.

He salvoed the bomb load in the water and instructed his radio operator to ask for a rescue plane. Overboard went heavy machine guns, ammunition, valuable cameras —two of the crew even crawled into the nose of the dropping bomber to get rid of the nose armament. Parts of the Mitchell were distributed along the water for a distance of 50 miles.

But Pilot Berger not only kept the bomber out of the sea—he managed to jockey the plane over 100 more miles of enemy territory and also climb to 1,000 feet on the single engine.

The surprised rescue planes met the crippled bomber half way back. There were four fighter planes, a Catalina flying boat, a Navy search plane, and another bomber to escort Lieutenant Berger and crew to a safe landing at an Allied Base.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC—Although a veteran of 40 hazardous missions 1st Lieut. Samuel A. Beatty, 13th AAF pilot, has brought his bomber through many barrages of Jap anti-aircraft with scarcely a scratch in his year overseas. Or had until recently.

It all began with a few shrapnel holes in the tail assembly. On the next mission a crew member was barely nicked in the elbow by another piece of passing shrapnel. Then a near miss over the top of the bomber split the turret dome of the top gunner while other shrapnel came within four inches of the gunner's head, glanced off his gun and shattered what was left of the turrent dome. Crew members were jittery but unharmed.

Perhaps it was the big wooden cat pendant Lieutenant Beatty wore on his cap fastened pertly above his ear that gave them all their charmed lives.

On his latest mission Pilot Beatty felt something whiz by his leg. A flight book he had laid on the cockpit floor between himself and the co-pilot was cleanly pierced through its geometrical center by a bullet-like slug of shrapnel. It had pierced the belly of the plane, passed through the floor, made a neat rip in Lieutenant Beatty's trouser leg, came within a foot of his cat charm, and continued on harmlessly.

Lieutenant Beatty may soon be looking for another wooden cat to fasten on his cap above the other ear.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC, April 13, 1945—Flying over Rabaul at 2300 feet isn't the most pleasant way to spend the afternoon, but that is exactly what Lieut. Patrick B. Houser, Flushing, Long Island, did on a photographic mission.

Houser, pilot on a speedy Billy Mitchell bomber of the 13th AAF was requested by higher headquarters to take the day off from bombing Japs, and bring back some pictures. Not stipulating the target, this mission had all the earmarks of a "milk run", so it came as quite a shock when he was given last minute instructions for a low level reconnaissance flight over Rabaul, especially as this was the first time such a flight had ever been attempted. Although Rabaul has been receiving a terrific battering for the past few months, it still remains the strongest

Again on March 11, 1944, the town and docks and barges are smashed. This is a beautiful example of 42nd pin-point bombing as instantaneously fused 100-pounders clean barges and docks from the western side of the harbor.

Streets, piers, docks, shipping, warehouses, and sundry buildings in Rabaul are blasted on March 12, 1944. The four-engine seaplane in the upper right bore a charmed life. Seen in photos as early as January, it survived the entire Rabaul campaign, and is still seen in June and July photos.

base in this theatre, and at 2500 feet its defenders can throw up every type of anti-aircraft from small arms fire to coastal guns.

Speeding in at full throttle, which, incidently, the crew claims wasn't fast enough, he followed a flight of dive bombers as they attacked the town, and got a closeup of the damage they did. Upon returning to his base, he found that he had to make a repeat performance, only this time following a flight of sister B-25s. This mission was a duplicate of the first one, and he successfully got the pictures, evaded the anti-aircraft and returned safely to his base.

T/Sgt. Ben Linden was Houser's radio operator on this flight. Linden, a versatile Boston sportswear manufacturer, is also an artist of considerable ability. Many of his pen and ink sketches of friends are cherished mementos. Although over 30 when he was the unlucky victim of an automobile accident in the States that put him into the hospital for three months, Linden successfully insisted on going overseas and into combat. Radio business was quiet during the two photo run so, lacking a camera, Linden calmly sketched his impressions of the bomb results.

* * *

1st Lieut. John E. Warner of Flourton, Pennsylvania,

On March 15, 1944, Lakunai 'Drome, Rabaul, took another of a long series of beatings. Veteran bombardiers later claimed they could hit Lakunai sighting down a string strung from nose to toe. Under these bomb bursts revetments, blast walls, taxi ways, parking ramp, and the strip itself are engulfed in quarter-tonners.

a veteran of 35 missions and 2 ditchings, went home on rotation during April. The send-off story dispatched by the 70th PRO quotes Warner in an original compliment to the Catalinas that twice pulled him from the drink:

"It's just like calling a taxi," said Lieutenant Warner. "They'll pick a crew out of Tojo's hip pocket."

* * *

Another good Dumbo yarn is related in the going home story of T/Sgt. Millard V. Bills, 70th, which dates back to Kahili.

Sergeant Bills, radio-gunner, was a participant in the first daylight strafing run made on Kahili airfield on Bougainville Island. The plane in which he was flying was bracketed by anti-aircraft fire from the field and from three surrounding islands. The port engine caught fire, and another shell cut the gas lines in the bomb bay setting it afire. Gliding out as near the center of the enemy triangle as possible, the pilot ditched the plane—less than 8 miles from each island. After the other members of the crew were in the life rafts, they began the task of "sweating out" the Dumbo, the awkward Navy PBY flying boat that comes "anywhere, anytime" to pick up stranded crews.

It came. Amid a hail of flak from the nearby shore batteries, the rescued men got aboard. "Let's get the hell out of here," cried the last man through Dumbo's forward hatch. But the navy pilot was not to be hurried. Trained to "check out" each position aboard the plane before it took off, he calmly began his check. Each time his question was all but drowned by the nearby explosion of another shell.

"Radio operator—you all right?" BOOM!
"Yes, sir. Let's get the hell out of here"
"Waist gunner—you all right?" BOOM!
"Yes, sir. Let's get the hell out of here"
"Navigator—you all right?" BOOM!
"Yes, sir. Let's get the hell out of here"
"You new men on board—all right?" BOOM!
"Yes, sir. Let's get the hell out of here"

Unperturbed, the pilot started taxiing and took off amid a hail of shells.

Ask Sergeant Bills about it. He can laugh, too. Now.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC, April 26, 1944—"A pinch of salt, a dash of oil, and a smidgen of pepper."

Before cookery became an exact science that was the way your grandmother turned out some pretty fair victuals.

Bombing enemy airfields from great altitudes is now probably one of the most exact sciences in the world. But when the chips are down, it's the men who can apply rules of thumb methods and still get hits who count.

1st Lieut. Paul A. Dillon was lead bombardier recently on a strike over Rapopo Airfield, near Rabaul, when his whole flight was thrown out of their bombing run by an unforseen incident. His pilot was forced to swing wide, come in on a new heading, at a new altitude, and with his airspeed not the one planned. There was no time for Lieutenant Dillon to go into the intricate mathematics of all these new figures. His bomb bay doors were open. He had to get cooking with what he had.

He took a pinch of airspeed, a dash of drift, and a smidgen of altitude and salvoed his six 500-pound bombs. On either side of him his wing planes did the same thing. Photographs showed that the bombs could not have made a better pattern on the runway if they had been dropped from a helicopter.

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTHWEST PACIFIC—S/Sgt. Lewis H. Spikes, radio operator and veteran of 64 bombing missions over Jap-held bases, recently made a single cash purchase of $2,000 in war bonds.

Not satisfied, Sergeant Spikes three days later bought an additional $2,500 in war bonds.

The patriotic Sergeant saved much of the money during 15 months of combat. Stationed on isolated bases in

On March 24, 1944, Tobera Airdrome, Rabaul, New Britain, was knocked out again by a squadron of 42nd planes that walked its quarter-tonners from revetment areas directly across the runway.

A striking photo taken during the mission on March 25, 1944, shows fires raging from Rataval Supply Area in the foreground to the farthest reaches of Rabaul in the background. Symbolically over all fly two B-25s of the 42nd Group.

the Southwest Pacific, he explained it was the wisest way he could possibly use his monthly income.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC Not a combat flyer, Pfc. Clifford M. Atwood, a 13th AAF parachute maintenance man, long hoped for some excitement to break the monotony of his quiet South Pacific Island. He got his wish.

But Private Atwood never expected to be dive bombed. At least not by a giant flying fox.

To pass the time he casually fired his Garand at a large bat flying a few hundred feet overhead. Instead of continuing on to the nearest tree the bat unexpectedly turned back and dove straight for Private Atwood.

A few seconds after Gunner Atwood began to run the flying fox hit the ground a few feet behind him. It lunged —Private Atwood claims he could clearly see a full half inch of fangs.

It took six bullets before the big bat gave up the chase.

Private Atwood proudly measured five feet of leathery wingspread and called it a day.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTHWEST PACIFIC—It took a war and five years to reunite Father Cyril R. Kavanagh, S. J., with his former student of the University of Santa Clara. They recently met on a small island in the Southwest Pacific more than 9,000 miles from the University.

In 1939 student James D. Barlow graduated with a degree in philosophy. Today Father Kavanagh is chaplain of a navy Seabee unit. His former student is now Major Barlow, commander of a 13th AAF medium bombardment squadron based on Father Kavanagh's island.

Major Barlow, veteran formation leader of 26 bombing missions over Rabaul, was well known for his four years on the University of Santa Clara football team, two games of which he played in the Sugar Bowl.

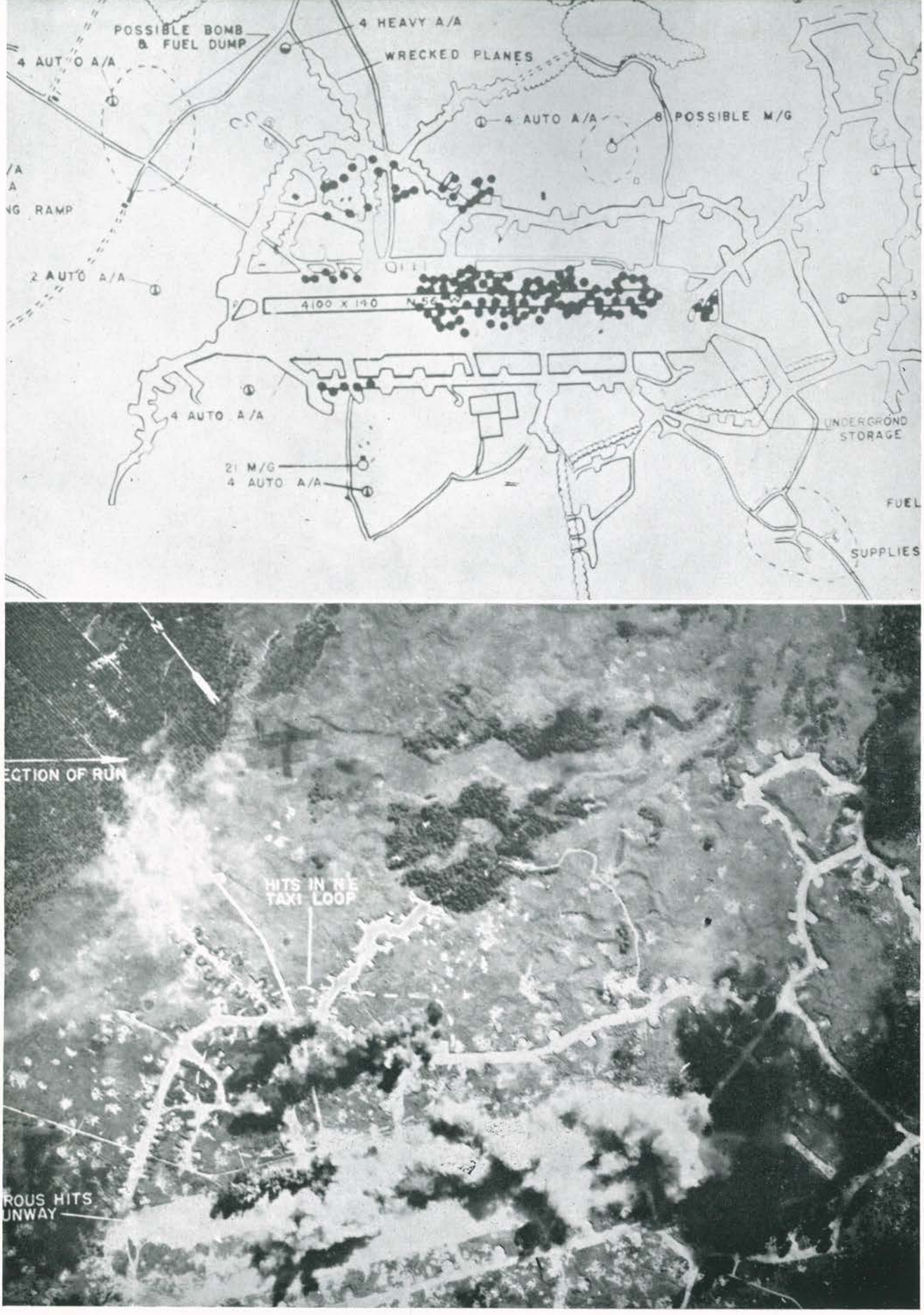
* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC —Even after two years of combat as a radio operator on a 13th AAF bomber, S/Sgt. Charles E. Cowan says he will never recover from his most thrilling experience in the South Pacific.

Recently his bomber was shot down near a Jap-held island. Sergeant Cowan was severely injured and was surprised to wake up alive in a nearby base hospital.

Like almost all the soldiers in the South Pacific it had been a long time since he had seen a woman—white or black. But there she stood—at the foot of his bed! The cutest and most curvaceous little blonde in the world.

The "angel" smiled, talked to him. Next she opened a box containing the Purple Heart, read the citation, and



The bomb pattern that resulted in a special folder put out by XIII Bomber Command. Twenty-four planes flew longways up Vunakanau Airdrome March 26, 1944. Of 132 quarter-tonners dropped, 127 are visible in the photograph. Photo interpretation filed the following report: 87 hits on S-Central portion of the runway; 6 hits on East edge of the North end of the runway; 6 hits on taxiway at NW end of runway, 1 hit entrance to revetment; 4 off south end of runway, one landed in the taxiloop; 11 hits on NE taxiway, 2 revetments hit; 13 hits on NE taxiway. A 25' x 70' building received a direct hit.

gently pinned the medal on his pajamas. Then she kissed him. She talked some more.

It was Mary Elliott, screen actress and USO entertainer, who happened to be touring the island at the time.

Modest Radio Operator Cowan was stunned. His only comment: "She really kissed me!"

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC —Members of the crew of the 13th AAF Bomber "Sweet Pea" recently spent an afternoon entertaining Mr. John Warner of the Australian News Bureau.

Mr. Warner's hosts were: 1st Lieut. Samuel A. Beatty, pilot; 2nd Lieut. George J. Manuche, co-pilot; S/Sgt. James W. Anderson, engineer; S/Sgt. Lewis H. Spikes, radio operator; S/Sgt. Thomas L. Hartley, turret gunner.

Hosts and guests came dressed in Mae West life vests, parachutes, and flak vests for protection from anti-aircraft shrapnel.

The crew pointed out spots of interest to their guest during an aerial trip over part of the South Pacific. Highlight of the afternoon was a few minutes spent over the Jap-held city of Rabaul, where the crew entertained by dropping a ton and a half of bombs onto the dock and wharf area of the city. Mr. Warner was highly attentive to the explosions and resulting fires. The Japs showed their appreciation by contributing a thick barrage of anti-aircraft, one chunk of which pierced the tail.

A community sing was held over the interphone system in the bomber. The bombing mission began with, "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder." Over the target the party sang: "I'm only a Bird in a Gilded Cage," followed immediately by, "I wanna Go Home." Turret Gunner Hartley was off key several times over the target, having been nicked by anti-aircraft fire on a previous mission over the same place.

Mr. Warner thanked the crew for an enjoyable afternoon.

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC —S/Sgt. John P. Shea, 13th AAF gunner, returned from his 26th bombing mission in the South Pacific and casually skimmed over the squadron bulletin board before putting away his parachute.

He glanced at one formal typewritten piece of paper then looked again. It *was* true. The notice:

"TO: S/Sgt. John P. Shea

FROM: Island Communications Center

1. Message just cabled and radioed in reads, DOCTOR SENDS CONGRATULATIONS MOTHER AND BABY BOTH DOING WELL."

* * *

Headquarters 13th AAF, South Pacific—If it will make meat rationing any easier to bear for the average citizen, those sides of beef that have disappeared from the butcher's are turning up at mess tables at forward bases in the Pacific area.

With a bomb bay for a market basket, mess officers are flying to rear supply bases to bring fresh meat—and even fresh eggs—to the plane crews.

"My wife should have my shopping list", remarks Lieut. Herbert M. Bender, Brooklyn, mess officer with a medium bombardment squadron in the Solomons. "The same plane that one day carries a ton and a half of bombs will carry a ton and a half of food the following day. Our refrigeration facilities are limited, so that about one ton of meat is all we can handle at one time. If it weren't for plane supplies we wouldn't have much fresh food; ships don't come up to us often enough."

S/Sgt. Joseph Brunner sees to it that not an ounce of the meat is wasted. "Wasting meat here is like spilling water in a desert. We start with roasts and end up with stews and hamburgers, but so long as it's fresh meat the men don't leave a scrap."

Briefing for a strike on Rabaul. According to the blackboard, Talili Bay supply and personnel area is being hit with centuries from 12,000 feet with the 70th leading, the 75th following. Tobera Strip is the secondary. Take-off is at 0800.

A typical post-strike interrogation. The crews gather around maps and photos to point out what they saw and what they hit. Or at least what they think they saw and hit.

CHAPTER 13

May marked a slowing up of bombing activity. Although the Group averaged more than one mission per day for the month, the missions were more or less routine runs which were not intercepted, and the AA had actually begun to diminish. Our efforts of preceding months were bearing their fruit. Rabaul Town had been reduced to rubble and our job was to keep the five satellite airfields unserviceable and to destroy the supplies that the Nips had dispersed from the Town storehouses when the rain of bombs came. How well we succeeded in keeping Lakunai, Vunakanau, Tobera, Rapopo, and Keravat out of commission and unfit for staging was proved by analysis of reconnaissance photos. Only three aircraft could be found by the photo interpreters and for the first month on Stirling, no "Condition Red" was sounded during May. In addition to the primary Rabaul job, May also saw Crusader Mitchells dropping bombs on Borpop, New Ireland, and Buka Passage from medium altitude. Score for May: 1,218,795 pounds of assorted lethal firecrackers dropped. Lest it be thought that May was the month of the Milk Runs, we hasten to add that 22 aircraft were damaged by AA and one man injured by flak. No planes were lost on combat missions, but in an unfortunate accident on May 11th, Lieut. Kenneth Lattie of the 70th, on a compass check, was forced to ditch when an inexplicable engine fire threatened to spread. PFC. John F. Deaton went down with the plane, but other crew members were rescued.

But, the battle continued, and we again turn to the well written public relations stories that tell so eloquently the individual exploits of members of "The Crusaders," stories written by the Intelligence and Public Relations Officers of the various Squadrons.

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, Southwest Pacific, May 18, 1944—Revenge played a large part recently in the destruction of a Jap gun position on the edge of Buka Airfield on Bougainville Island. During an attack on the same airfield last November, Lieut. Paul Nadler, pilot of a ravaging B-25 bomber in the 13th AAF, watched shells from those guns batter his plane so badly that it had to be junked when he finally landed it, crippled and smoking, at his advanced base.

It was the middle of May before another low level attack was made on the Buka strip. Meanwhile Nadler nursed a fine hate for the gunners who had so nearly taken his life months before. From time to time, as the strip was subjected to repeated altitude bombing, he checked photos to be certain that the guns had not been destroyed. The position seemed to bear a charmed life, for no bombs fell near enough to do more than superficial damage.

This last mission was at night. It called for a low bombing attack. So that the blinking guns would not give away the path of the onrushing planes, there would be no strafing. Before the attack Nadler carefully decided which plane in the formation would be closest to that gun. He asked for that ship and got it.

In a tight javelin formation, the Mitchells left their base just at dusk. The night was black as only a moonless tropical night can be when finally the ships peeled off into the formation from which the attack was to be made. From long study, from true navigation, and from the instincts developed in more than fifty missions flown against the Japs, Lieutenant Nadler drove his ship toward the gun position. His bombing run was marked to begin several hundred yards in front of the Jap guns.

As his Mitchell came across the target area he toggled bomb after bomb—all but the last three. And as his nose guns lined up on the position he opened fire. A thousand rounds of .50 caliber slugs tore into the emplacement. Finally, with the accuracy developed in skip-bombing missions, he salvoed his last three bombs into the target and turned toward home.

A photo ship brought back results the next day. Where the guns had been was a hole. Where the ammunition had been stacked was a hole. Where the gun crews' quarters had been was a shambles.

Lieutenant Nadler feels better. As far as he's concerned, the slate is clean and he and the Japs are even again.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, May 18, 1944—Squadron Intelligence Officer Bill Trone rode along on a 13th AAF strike on Rabaul early in May to get some movies of the bomb hits on Tobera. The wing ship he was riding was to continue on the bomb run after dropping, while he hung down in the camera hatch and recorded the quarter-tonners hitting the runway.

Lieut. "Li'l Arthur" La Fortune, the pilot, kept his part of the pact perfectly. As the formation turned, "Li'l Arthur" kept going straight and level. Captain Trone ground away. Suddenly four bursts hit their altitude and a little to the left. Then four more dead on altitude again and a stone's throw ahead. Meanwhile the bombs started across the runway and Trone was singing out "Beautiful, beautiful."

But when the last four bursts blossomed, the pilot decided enough was enough. "Goddammit, Bill, I gotta turn," he yelled into the interphone, and barrelled the 25 around on one wing and firewalled out to sea. Once safe, he offered to make another run to get some more pictures. Captain Trone looked back at the runway, and then at the polka dotted sky which up till now he hadn't seen. One look was enough.

"The hell with it, Artie. Let's catch the formation."

"Li'l Arthur's" chuckle rattled the interphone. One run on Rabaul was still par for the course.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTH PACIFIC, May 18, 1944—Sgt. Orville Pixley doesn't drop bombs on the Japs or shoot down enemy fighters, but the men in his 13th AAF medium bomber squadron say the war couldn't be fought without him.

Pixley, the Squadron painter, decorates the B-25 Billy Mitchell bombers in his outfit with luscious pin-up girls. No pilot in the Squadron would think of going into action without one of these attractive good-luck charms on the nose of his ship. A self-taught artist, Pixley worked on San Diego construction projects before he entered the Army in June, 1943.

Scantily-clad girls are the favorite aircraft insignia, Pixley says. The bomber crews also favor insignia that emphasize the punch and firepower of their ships. Pixley's latest painting for a ship named "GI Delivery," shows a stork bearing a litter of sizzling bombs to Jap targets. He also painted "Mickey Finn's" insignia, which he describes as "A knockout of a girl perched on the rim of a beer glass."

"You can tell what the men miss the most out here," says Pixley, "by the names of the ships I've decorated. They include 'Paper Doll,' 'Blondie' and 'Dark Eyes.' "

One pilot asked Pixley to paint the portrait of his two-year-old daughter on the bomber named "Baby Jeanne."

"It took me a long time to copy the photograph but the Lieutenant was so proud of the job, he almost cried. I figured it was worth it," Pixley explained.

Although his Squadron's bombers attack the strongly-fortified Jap base at Rabaul almost every day, not one has been shot down or badly damaged since Pixley's good luck charms made their appearance on the aircraft.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTHWEST PACIFIC—Although only casually acquainted 12 years ago, Maj. James D. Barlow, commanding officer of a 13th AAF medium bombardment squadron, recently had no trouble recognizing his new assistant operations officer, 1st Lieut. James N. Thomason.

In 1938 the two men, both football stars, met in the San Francisco's Seal's Stadium at an intersectional game. Major Barlow played left half for Santa Clara while Lieutenant Thomason held down the blocking back position for Texas A & M.

Santa Clara defeated Texas A & M 7-0, but it was one of the toughest fought games in the Seal's Stadium. The Major left the game with a badly injured knee. His rival, Lieutenant Thomason, followed him out in the third quarter. He was on a stretcher, unconscious.

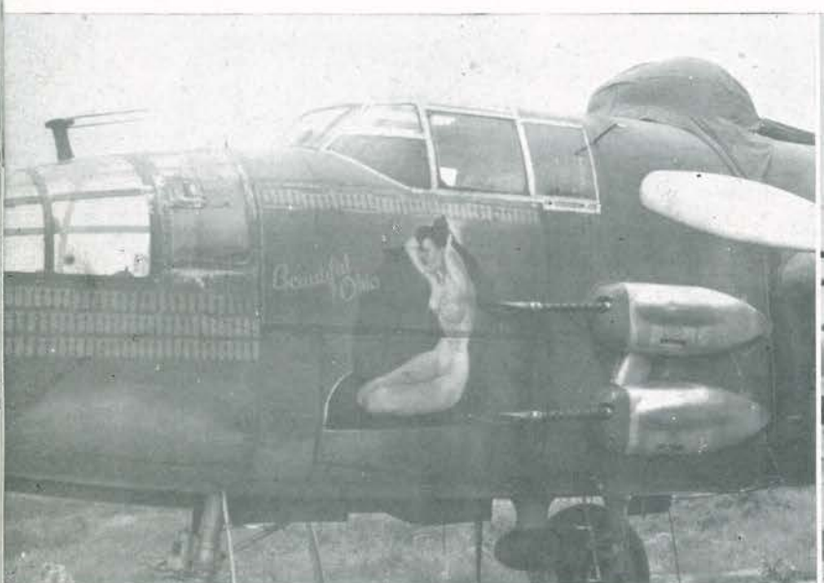
Reunited in the same squadron the two pilots have flown 30 bombing missions together over Jap bases in the Southwest Pacific.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTHWEST PACIFIC . . . And then there was the advanced base mess hall in which the food became so bad at one time that a sign was erected: "A continuation of the practice of bringing food *into* the Mess Hall will result in disciplinary action."

ARS GRATIA ARTIS

Airplanes, Pixley will tell you, have personalities all their own. Although he did not paint the designs on all of them, he could have, Some will be remembered as Liberators that landed at Sansapor, and whose interesting pictures were admired as a new and intriguing type of art.




Glamourpuss


BORNEO
LAWNMOWER


WADDY'S
WANDA-ER


BITEM IN THE ASS


Smoky

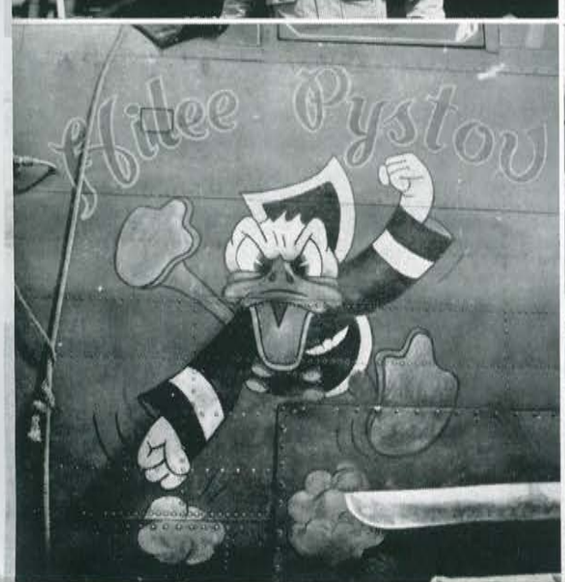

GOIN' HARD


Dear John


OVERSHOT
TOO
BROAD ST CHESTNUT ST


ALPINE MILKMAN


Sorry
TERRBLE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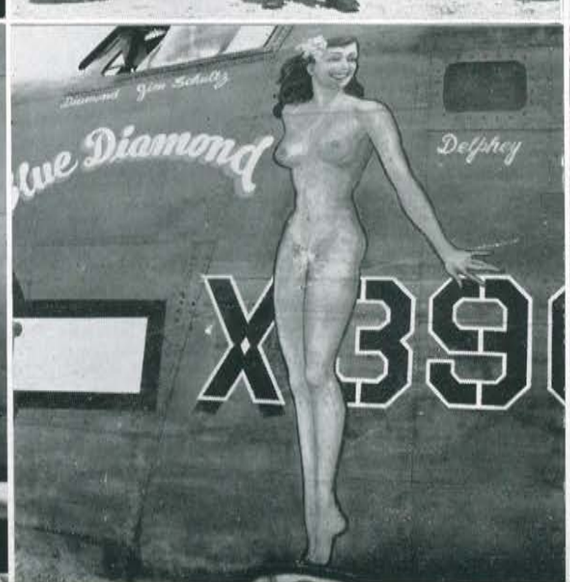

Blue Diamond
Delphey
X39


Hi-Priority Stuff

CHAPTER 14

To 80 replacements who disembarked from the Navy transport *Pinckney* at Stirling in May, 1944, the tiny coral island was not the promised land, but it would jolly well do for the time being. They were one of the early groups of ground men received as replacements when the old timers who had come over on the *Maui* were beginning to find their thoughts turning endlessly on the fact that their second year of overseas duty was well under way, and that the prospects of rotation, like the proverbial weather, were widely discussed but little acted upon. We print their story here because it reflects the activities that had succeeded ours on New Caledonia and Guadalcanal, and because its general features are the common ground not only of their recollections but of the experiences of many men who followed them overseas. Their story also presents a picture of life on Stirling and Banika that perhaps benefits from the fact that fresh eyes, might have noticed things that the old-timers had ceased to notice through familiarity.

These replacements had been assembled at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri—old J. B. that everyone who was ever there remembers for two things: its concentration camp atmosphere and its proximity to St. Louis—and Kearns Field, Utah, joined with several thousand other replacements at Camp Stoneman, and transported overseas in just two weeks on the Army Transport *General J. B. Brook*. The *Brook* was orginally built as a Matson Liner to ply between San Francisco and Hawaii, but was taken over by the Army before a carefree tourist ever stepped aboard her. While she was modern and comfortable compared to the *Maui,* she was still an Army transport, and a night in her hold, on the third or fourth level down, was very much like a night in a Turkish bath with the exception that you couldn't, unfortunately, get up and leave. The original sogginess of the food was helped along by the perspiration that streamed down your face and dripped from your chin into your tray as you ate. In other words their trip over was the standard Transport story, complete with the rumors that an epidemic had broken out and the bodies were being buried at sea off the stern in the dark hours, that the course had been changed because three Jap subs had been discovered operating in those waters, that all Air Force ground troops were being converted to Infantry as soon as they landed. The whole catalog was meaningless and soon forgotten.

In early April they had staggered down the gangplank at Noumea, up the pier, and onto a string of trucks. The first truck was filled, then the second and so on, and the units last off the beat had to plod half a mile to the end of the truck convoy. Why the first trucks couldn't move up a bit is a mystery that remains unsolved—just the old story of the three ways of doing things, the right, the wrong, and the Army.

The fact that they had not breakfasted was soon forgotten as the convoy pulled out, past the nickel smelter and the Tonkinese barracks and up the tortuous and hilly road that wound North for 26 miles to the Sixth Replacement Depot. There was little talking as eyes surfeited with battleship gray and Pacific blue drank in the lush and moist green of Caledonia in the cool of early morning. Those who could read French were pleased at their ability to translate the signs on the little groceries and estaminets along the route.

From the trucks, the 80 staggered another half mile to the tents assigned them and made their first acquaintance with the omnipresent red dust that got into everything. That hadn't changed any. They were allowed to rest for the balance of the day and explorers found the PX, the beach, the shower, and the river where clothes could be washed. Army chow and field-baked bread tasted very good in the bracing air, and oddly enough, while they were treated to Australian mutton on their first day and dried eggs on the second, they escaped Spam for several weeks.

In a week at this camp, muscles slackened from a fortnight of enforced inactivity on the transport soon got into shape, for the powers that presided there as at casual camps everywhere, hated nothing so much as the thought of Joe with an idle hour on his hands. Some built artillery targets on a mountainside, some hauled rations, some peeled and scrubbed the week away in the kitchen, some built roads, but all were cheerful about it and enjoyed their well earned sleep when the pleasantly cool night fell. They stood three formations a day and loud was the cursing when someone putting on a fresh suit of khakis for retreat carelessly let a trouser leg drag in that treacherous red dust. First overseas mail call was a memorable moment and kind words were spoken for the Army Postal System.

One night at retreat they were told to be packed and ready to get on trucks at 0730 the following morning. Swimming trunks and moccasins bought by the fortunate

who had beaten the cadre to the PX when these supplies were unboxed, made barracks bags bulkier and heavier than ever, but few were late, as all were anxious to get into the next phase. They retraced the route to Noumea, this time downhill, and unloaded themselves from the convoy at the Alert casual camp about two miles out of downtown Noumea along the Anse Vata Road, not far from the site of old Camp Barnes. This was an interesting camp because it was pitched on terraces scraped out of a long ridge and looking for all the world like school book illustrations of early cave-dwelling life in New Mexico and Arizona. Fortunate they who drew the lower tiers of tents, for the others had a steep climb up the irregular walkways. Chow time meant sweating out a terrific line to get up to the serving board of the kitchen shack, then squatting on the sand to eat and sweating another line to wash mess kits.

The quartermaster outfits around Noumea really knew the story on labor details. For a week or better the 80 shifted full gasoline drums from one dump to another, filled and unfilled reefers, stacked and restacked cased goods, unloaded a Liberty ship, loaded another, and sailed into other jobs too numerous to mention.

It became a game trying to pick the right spot in the line-up at morning work call so that you would land with the 15 or 20 who pulled a detail downtown or one that involved a truck ride over a new route. One of your scribes drew one that stands out in his recollections as a honey. After days and nights on the lumber piles (remember them?) and at the gas dumps (where did the *empty* drums go, anyhow?) three of us, who had hung together since we shared a Pullman section from Jefferson Barracks to Stoneman, landed on the downtown truck one morning and to our utter astonishment and delight found ourselves a squad of three detailed to the Red Cross for the day. After doughnuts and coffee at the invitation of a genial corporal in charge of details at the Red Cross, (That guy had a job!) a pleasant morning was passed showering in the first hot water since the boat, writing letters, and then lunch on the house. In the afternoon we did shift a few boxes around, then some cold fruit juice and ice cream and that remarkable and unusual day was over.

Those who got into Noumea—strictly taboo for casuals —did not find a great deal, but the civilian clothes and the leisurely town life were a welcome change from canvas, khaki, and GI's. The casual camp CO's warning not to tamper with the local distillates was tested and found to be good advice, as even we older ones who grew up toward the end of Prohibition and could remember the good old scraped-off-the-boat rye of 1920-32 gagged at the fearsome and reeking bottled lightning called Butterfly Rum, that flowed over Noumea's numerous hole-in-the-wall bars. A few who overrated their capacity got into trouble and MPs were not looked upon as brothers.

An evening came two weeks later when shipment orders went up on the board, and an afternoon of mid-April found our 80 boarding the scow that would take them out to the *Tryon* (sister ship of the *Pinckney)* for a short run to Guadalcanal.

By that time if you found a genuine scrap of Jap material on the 'Canal you were the guy who used to find four-leaf clovers, because the former battleground was then a hot, dirty, dusty dump. The four-score got their fill of details on a swing shift deal that had them wondering what the Army thought they were made of. Seven to four-thirty, four to eleven, ten to seven— one shift or another found them at the gas dumps, the ammo dumps, or the lumber pile—sleep in the steaming day if you could. All were glad to board the *Pinckney* one rainy afternoon, at last headed for our tac' outfit.

A stop at the Russells to let off other passengers ticketed for outfits there and then next mid-day, the coral bluffs of Stirling and Mono.

Two sun-bronzed New Zealanders in their wide felt hats watched casually as the 80 men faltered down the gangplank. The brilliant sun glared back from the plaster-white coral roads, but apart from the New Zealanders, little life was visible. After a short wait on the tiny pier, trucks drew up and the 80 soldiers, no longer trainees or casuals, climbed aboard. On the short ride to Group Headquarters a section of the truck road passed through the revetment area and all eyes focused upon the planes parked there—a few P-38's dazzling in the sun, and then the Mitchells. Some were dirty, some torn down for engine changes. Mechanics on the trucks were especially interested as they wondered which ship and what part of it they would be working on a day or two later. All were tired but elated, for while few if any soldiers ever want to go to war, once in uniform most feel that they want to get on with it and to get the worst over as soon as possible.

Gathering in front of Group S-1, the 80 heard M/Sgt. Robert Blackney, then Sergeant Major, read off their assignments. They were split among five squadrons and those who were assigned to the 390th and 75th, then at the Russells, were disappointed because for them the trek was not over—they would have to retrace their steps to the Russells they had passed 48 hours earlier, and they wondered whether it meant another boat ride. These men were temporarily quartered with the 69th and we shall

Lakunai was Rabaul's most important airdrome. Battered constantly, the Japs persisted in filling the craters and making the strip operational. On 6 April 1944, the Mitchells plastered the runway and revetment areas for the umpteenth time.

pick them up in a few lines after they have been ferried to the Russells in two and threes on our Mitchells' administrative hops.

Those who joined the 69th, 70th, and 100th got right to work finding quarters and setting themselves up, at last freed of the uncertainty of the next trip. Within a few days they had been interviewed and assigned (and it may truthfully be said, usually assigned to the work they were qualified for) and had started on their jobs. Wheeling by in jeeps and trucks, running to and from the line, they shouted taunts at their old shipmates waiting listlessly for word on when they would be moved to the Russells. The waiters' morale was helped by the fact that they did not have to start in again on the muscle-pulling details they had grown accustomed to, and they discovered the swimming hole for themselves.

That pretty cove with its underwater coral clusters looking like shrubs and flower beds in the crystal clear water, was a high spot of life on Stirling. Ten minutes' walk or three minutes' jeep ride from the bivouac areas, it could be and was visited for an invigorating dip between work and evening meal. Yes, when you had become acclimated and ceased to think of home so urgently, Stirling more than most others of the Group's campsites had a number of charming aspects. The majestic mahogany and teak trees, unseen and untouched by man and his axe and saw for centuries before our arrival, reached up a hundred and more feet straight and sturdy before unfurling their branches to the sun. You did not cease to marvel that the forest giants could maintain themselves on their shallow though flaring roots. As one turned the corner of "Broadway and Pennsylvania Avenue" and looked down through the 70th's area in the early morning or took an eye-opening shower at the open platform that stood on one side of this crossroads, the lovely baby blues and pinks of daybreak formed a picture that remains in one's memory. Of less aesthetic attractions, Stirling also had a limited number. The large Group theater in the center of the area was as comfortable as bomb fin crate seating will ever make a theater, and thanks to our own Special Service and various trades engineered with other outfits, films—and quite often recent

ones—were shown every night. The Group Day Room was large and well lighted, and on a few occasions was the scene of volunteer entertainment and music that was pretty good stuff for a lot of guys on a tiny island in the middle of the ocean. The Officer's Club was a Quonset Hut with the sides extended and could boast two antiquated refrigerators. The 82nd and 87th Seabees who had cleared the island, built the strip and a good part of the Group's area were encamped a couple of hundred yards away and had a theater of their own, a very good barber shop, and a store where you could buy T-shirts, (an item the QM definitely flubbed) and some other things.

At that time Fat-Cats made occasional runs back to the 'Canal and brought back fresh meat, vegetables, and eggs. The new men were amazed to find fresh eggs at the mess halls on Stirling on fairly frequent occasions, and beef liver (yes, beef as well as sheep) about as often. A gastronomic high spot was steak, good and passed out in reasonably sized-portions, on a few occasions. All in all, if one had to be in the Army and on an islet in the middle of nowhere, and although it was hotter than the hinges of hell on the Strip in the early afternoon—150 degrees inside the planes—life on Stirling was not the worst by a long shot.

As has been noted before, Stirling was only 45 miles from the Jap-held Shortlands. When our 80 men were unfolding their cots for their first night on Stirling the old timers did not fail to give the greenhorns a very artistically painted prospect of what they could expect from Charlie on moonlight nights, and many a tenderfoot saw to it that his tin hat was handy. Actually the alerts on Stirling had ended in April.

Now let us drop back for just a few moments to the balance of our far-from-home 80 who were awaiting transportation to the Russells.

Within two weeks all had been flown down, many taking their first airplane ride. That was something to write home about, a two and a half hour jaunt over the blue, island-dotted Pacific in a Mitchell that perhaps only yesterday had unleashed a ton and a half of packaged fury on Rabaul. Arriving at Banika they found the strip impressive, but frankly the island was a let-down after Stirling. It was largely a cocoanut grove, and hilly, with winding roads. The 75th area was fairly flat, but the 390th at that time was encamped in old Marine tents on a hilltop—whence they had removed when the opportunity presented itself, because their original campsite was low and muddy. It was a long haul from camp to the line and the boys used to leave their mess gear hung on the trees and wire fence around the mess hall, coming down the hill for breakfast and catching the line truck from the mess hall. Returning at noon, they picked up their mess kits and then, after rehanging them on individual nails or a stretch of wire fence, trudged up the hill afoot to hit the sack until the line truck started back at one o'clock. All this was rather strange, but our men were at last assigned and joined to their outfits, and when the strangeness had worn off, life on Banika wasn't too bad.

A bad feature was that it was about eight miles to the only beach, the Navy Recreation Area at Lingatu. For a considerable time trucks made daily trips to the beach, and you didn't have to worry about transportation for a swim on your day off. The 390th theater site at Banika, operated by Sixth Service Group—good old Sixth Service, without a few words of praise for whom your narrators would be very remiss—was a steep hillside and, apart from a few cocoanut trees, the old showman's gag of "Every Seat Ringside" was almost true. The films unfortunately weren't quite so new.

When floored, the tents among the cocoanuts were fairly comfortable, and the water supply was good, so the daily shower was welcome and pleasant. Some entrenchments remained from the time of the occupation of Banika by the Marines and a few Nip helmets and other gear were recovered and sent home. Banika, however, must rank very high on the list, if one exists, of rat population density. The red and gray—and doubtless white and black—rodents, whether they came with their brothers the Nips, or had always lived there on a diet of fallen cocoanuts before we arrived, were everywhere and ate everything not encased in wood or steel. When the lights went out the rats came out to play, and their rustling and scurrying across floors cost collectively enough man-hours of sleep to clear New Guinea of timber. Many and varied were the devices contrived to rid tents of the pests —hot wires, tubs and helmets baited on string, wire, and roll-strips to drown them—these flank attacks were in addition to the unrelenting warfare waged on the vermin by the Medics with their Lucrezia Borgia pastes and powders. Of the cocoanuts: well, the gag about finally getting to the point where you found yourself going Dress Right Dress with them is believed to have originated on the 'Canal, but it might well have applied to the Russells. At the super soda fountain of the future, many a former Pacific warrior will be making up for lost time with a super-dooper, triple pistachio scoop, banana split, topped with cherry and pineapple, pecans and cashews, but please, soda bar cowboy, put that shredded cocoanut out of sight.

On 8 April 1944, the much battered, always repaired Lakunai Airdrome takes another smothering by 42nd 500-pounders. This photo shows the positions of the always maligned Sulphur Creek gun batteries.

It is noteworthy that in the opening phases of these men's service with the Group, our combat operations did not enter very dominantly into their daily activities. That is not to say that those who daily went to the line, whether at Stirling or at Banika, or any other member of the Group, didn't know that there was a war on. This impression meant, rather, two things:—that we had by that time become so smooth-running an organization that the daily business of a medium bombardment group in action was taken in stride, and that the Rabaul campaign was entering its last stage, so far as we were concerned.

June opened with the 69th, 75th, and 100th in combat at Stirling and the 70th and 390th in the Russells.

Lieut. Bert F. Grantham and crew of the 75th were lost to weather on the 5th, last seen in a cloud bank 20 miles from Motupina Point, Bougainville. On the 7th, Lieut. Albert J. Phillips, and crew, of the 69th were also victims of the same impenetrable front. Taking off on the 8th, Lieut. S. F. Slotterback of the 75th had a tire blowout. The plane was damaged beyond repair but all members of the crew fortunately escaped without injury.

Throughout the month Rabaul continued to be the main theme, but Talili and Borpop were also given attention, and the supply areas of Rabaul took a continual pasting, the Nordup and Milim depots in particular. The mission scheduled for Tobera on June 28th had to postpone its takeoff from 0755 until 1004 because of a downpour, but hit the target, encountering meager, heavy caliber fire that was low and trailing. On a second strike the same day, 22 Mitchells of the 100th and 390th smacked Erventa Island with 132 quarter-tonners. Each squadron laid a nicely placed string on the island, one northwest—southeast and one east-west. Rock fragments flew up to 600 feet. Captain Eivers led the 390th formation with Lieut. Walter Kloc, a squadron bombardier, sending the eggs away, while Capt. Charles Wolfendale led the 100th with Lieut. Frank Unetic on the Norden bombsight.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, South Pacific, June 4, 1944—The "Alpine Milkman," a 13th AAF B-25 Mitchell bomber, is being made ready to fly the Pacific for the second time. It recently finished 15 months of faithful service in combat in the South Pacific.

An ammunition dump in the Rataval supply area northwest of Rabaul begins the long series of explosions that eventually threw a ball of flame more than a mile in the air. The strike took place on the morning of April 14, 1944.

Flown from the United States by Capt. Roy D. Burkhart, Del Nort, Colorado, it landed on Guadalcanal as the last few Japs were being driven from that island. Since then it has flown every important mission in the South Pacific, ranging from Rekata Bay, southernmost enemy naval base in the Solomons, to the big supply center at Rabaul. Bombs representing 165 bombing missions have been painted on the nose of the bomber, but Sgt. Nathan Leizerowitz, the bomber's crew chief, claims, "It has flown twice that many missions. The ship flew so many the painters just couldn't keep track of all of them."

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, South Pacific, June 6, 1944—One of the longest personal histories of combat in the Pacific is held by a modest 13th AAF gunner. S/Sgt. Harold Axt is still flying an almost daily schedule of bombing missions over Rabaul.

Sergeant Axt left the United States in December of 1941 as a mechanic—his destination, the Philippine Islands.

Enroute news was received that his air echelon, flying ahead of the ground crews, had been almost wiped out during the bombing of Pearl Harbor December 7th. His boat swung south and continued on to Brisbane, Australia, instead.

From there that part of the squadron which survived the Pearl Harbor attack was sent on to a new organization in India. Sergeant Axt decided there was more action in the Southwest Pacific. He jumped at the chance to be a gunner on an A-24 and in less than a month after he had arrived in Brisbane he was flying his first missions from Java. A week later the Squadron was staging out of Davao to hit the Jap troops approaching Manila. With most of the planes shot down during the Battle for the Philippines, the squadron returned to Java. Things were getting warm in Java too; with only a handful of attack planes left, the Squadron was again forced to move, this time only a few days ahead of Jap ground troops moving down the coast. Sergeant Axt spent the next seven weeks helping patrol the Australian coast around Darwin. When no invasion came he was sent to Sydney to rest and study to be a radio operator. While there he married, but it's been almost two years now since Sergeant Axt last saw his wife.

Malaguna, north of the juncture of Malaguna and Tunnel Hill Road, near Rabaul, has its beach, dock, and storage facilities destroyed on July 5, 1944.

As soon as the Japs began to push across the Owen Stanley mountains, Sergeant Axt, in May of 1942, was assigned as a gunner on a B-25 Mitchell bomber and sent to New Guinea.

"In those days," Sergeant Axt recalls, "The Japs had the upper hand. We had no fighter cover. Pursuit planes were too scarce even then, and they were left behind to guard our bases. Even so, Zeros sneaked in to strafe our airfield near Port Moresby every morning. Some of them followed us back from Lae once, and as we were taxiing our planes to their revetments, the Zeros made several passes. The crew jumped out of the plane in the middle of the taxi strip. I felt safer behind the armor-plate of my gun turret—so I stayed there and fought it out with the little ammunition I had left.

"Our squadron preferred to make strafing and low-level bombing attacks rather than medium altitude attacks on the Jap airfields. Anti-aircraft fire was more intense and accurate, but we met less interception at the lower altitude. I saw six bombers go down in flames over Lae, but on one mission I partly made up for it by shooting down two out of eight Zeros that tried to intercept us, and got a probable on a third."

He also was in on the Bismarck and Coral Sea battles. During that time he participated in sinking a transport and a freighter.

With 16 months of combat in New Guinea behind him, Gunner Axt was ordered to duty in the United States. He returned to combat in the South Pacific just after Christmas Day of last year. He has *80* bombing missions to his credit and is still going strong.

* * *

Maj. C. W. Wolfendale, successively S-3 and C. O. of the 100th Sq., and Group S-3, later amassed a mission record of 95—an all time high.)

* * *

Here is a 69th Public Relations story that showed to what depths Rabaul had fallen as a target for our daily strikes.

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF Southwest Pacific—

The fighting spirit of the Japanese forces at Rabaul is rapidly going to pieces under repeated aerial bombardment, according to 2nd Lieut. Tom J. Wintersole, who has himself flown 50 bombing missions against the Japanese forces in the Southwest Pacific, most of them over Rabaul.

He flew his first mission to Rabaul three months ago. Then he claims his crew regularly reported several hundred black anti-aircraft bursts so close the crack of the exploding shells could be heard above the roar of the engines, and bombardiers would sometimes have to wait until the smoke from a burst disappeared from the line of vision before they dropped their bombs.

"I haven't seen a single burst of anti-aircraft fire in the past couple weeks I've flown over Rabaul," said Pilot Wintersole recently. "One day my gunner said he saw a single burst far behind and low, but I couldn't find anyone else who had seen it."

* * *

The fertile and whimsical pen of "J. B." (Lieut. Jack Blake) of the 69th contributed some Southwest Pacific foot-notes to history in June that deserve a place in these pages.

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, South Pacific—The little black natives so abundant on South Pacific Islands are a constant worry to American negro troops who think they may be confused with them. Several 13th AAF personnel will verify this story:

A curious Melanesian clothed only in a scrap of cloth and carrying a hefty knife approached a negro soldier on guard. The guard paid no attention until the tiny man began to stare enviously at his shiny rifle. When the native showed signs of trying to begin friendlier relations the negro guard could stand it no longer.

"Keep away from me, black boy," the negro growled. "Can't you see *I'se* intelligent!"

The little native grinned and walked hurriedly away.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AF, Southwest Pacific—To soldiers waiting patiently in Southwest Pacific mess hall lines, the "chow hound" is as popular as a Jap.

At one 13th AAF medium bombardment squadron mess hall, two hard boiled sergeants continually bluffed their way to the head of the line. Shortly a neatly written notice was posted on the mess hall door:

"Rushing to the head of the chow line, Sergeant Brown was lately trampled to death by several of his mates, including T/Sgt. Smith who was also hospitalized from an attempt to head off Sergeant Brown.

"We regret the loss of both of these sergeants; however, three full-sized meals a day will be served henceforth due to the abundance accumulated since the exodus of both men."

The suggestion worked.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, Southwest Pacific—Forever popular with fliers in the Southwest Pacific are the jingles made up by some line chief, gunner, pilot, or other long forgotten composer. They are passed along in the squadron from the old to the new combat crews.

Typical are the lines sung to war weary pilots in a 13th AAF medium bombardment squadron who are endlessly telling their troubles to new crews. The "Pilot's Lament" carries much the same tune as "Bless 'Em All:"

"I don't want to fly
I want to go home
I don't want to fly over Rabaul anymore,
Those B-25s they zoom and they roar.
Take me home to my mom,
Where the Jappies they can't get at me.
Oh my—I'm too young to die.
I just want to go home."

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, South Pacific—At a South Pacific forward base 13th AAF men were pleasantly sunning themselves. Suddenly they looked up and ran. Bathers still lathered with soap deserted open air showers and ran towards shelters. Clothed soldiers gazed in amazement. From the scramble some anticipated another Jap bombing raid.

In another minute the disturbance was over. The two newly arrived nurses continued down the camp street as though nothing had happened.

* * *

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, Southwest Pacific—Long used to dehydrated potatoes, a 13th AAF squadron sat down to their first fresh boiled potatoes shipped direct from the United States.

One pilot was busy eating a potato, skin and all, when an officer nearby asked him if he had noticed the small particles of mud that still clung to the hurriedly cleaned potatoes.

"Listen," came the reply, "I've been in the Southwest Pacific for half a year. This is the first *American* soil I've seen since I've been over here and it tastes delicious!"

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, Southwest Pacific—Soldiers in the Southwest Pacific are constantly warned to take every precaution against being bitten by the malaria-carrying anopheles mosquito.

At a 13th AAF theater area, a medical officer recently explained how extremely unpleasant the effects of malaria could be.

The 42nd's final raid on Rabaul. Word was received that the Nips were storing supplies of rice and other foodstuffs along the southwest shore of Simpson Harbor. As a farewell gesture on July 22, 1944, the 42nd flamed the area with a shower of firebombs.

The evening's entertainment, a horror movie, followed the lecture. Dracula in the form of a vampire bat was about to plunge his fangs into the frightened hero.

Then just as the ghostly music reached a climatic patch and the audience was supposed to be held breathless, a skeptical voice loudly commented:

"The fool doesn't know how darn lucky he is—that thing might have been an anopheles mosquito."

* * *

The daily missions through the first three weeks of July were both important and effective, but the edge was off; knowledge that the important chapter in the Group's history entitled Rabaul was drawing to a close was general. At 0700 on the 22nd, a scheduled 24 planes from the 390th and 70th took off Stirling to attack Rabaul target No. 1 from medium altitude at 0900. Lieutenant McDowell of the 390th led the formation, with Lieut. J. H. Short as lead bombardier. Lieut. Paul O. Nadler led the 70th with Lieut. R. H. Petrucka doing the bombing.

Major Clark dispatched the following teletype message, prepared by Major Little, summarizing our final strike on Rabaul.

FROM: 42ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)
TO: COMAIR, STIRLING.
TWENTY-THREE MITCHELLS PLANTED 142 MAGNESIUM BOMBS AT 0900 FROM 10500 FEET ON COMAIRSOLS TARGET ONE RABAUL X FORTY FIVE PERCENT HIT NORTHERN HALF CMA TEN PERCENT IN DEEP SOUTH CMA BALANCE NORTH AND WEST X NUMEROUS FIRES X TWO SENT SMOKE TO 500 FEET X ONE JUST SOUTH OF TOBOI WHARF UP TO 1500 FEET INCREASED AS PLANES WITHDREW X MEAGER INACCURATE HEAVY ABLE ABLE FROM SULPHUR CREEK X ONE MITCHELL TURNED BACK NEAR TOROKINA X TARGET CAVU X ALL HOME XXX

It was the end of an epoch for the Group.

At the opening of 1944, the Rabaul district, including the five splendid air strips at Vunakanau, Lakunai, Tobera, Rapopo, and Keravat, had been garrisoned by an estimated 75,000 well armed and supplied troops and protected by 300 operational aircraft. During the six month campaign, another 300 airplanes had been flown in to replace losses. At the end of July, Rabaul had been eliminated from the Pacific scene as a Japanese base. Its Nipponese population had been reduced to 20,000, and these troops had been completely separated from supplies and reinforcements and forced to devote their efforts largely to a growing problem of subsistence. Incapable of harassing Allied forces now streaming by the once impregnable bastion with its magnificent harbor, the squat and cocksure would-be world rulers ate humble pie indeed as their structures and their program alike crashed upon their heads.

In retrospect, our Rabaul effort resolves itself into four reasonably well-defined phases; January—minimum altitude strafing and bombing of grounded aircraft and airdrome installations. February—medium level bombing of the air strips to keep them unserviceable and deny their use as staging areas for aerial task forces which might attack our growing positions within the Bougainville perimeter and on the Treasuries and Green. March to mid-May—medium altitude attacks to destroy food and arms stores. From mid-May to the end of July—medium attacks on supply and personnel areas and anti-aircraft positions, and further attention to the wrecking of the air strips. To summarize the statistics of the campaign: A total of 256 missions had been flown, involving 4378 sorties, and 8,065,200 pounds of bombs of various types had been released over the target. Unfortunately we do not have any figures on ammunition expended.

The Group and its personnel can justly be proud of their work in the Rabaul campaign.

CHAPTER 15

For permission to quote from official summaries which delineate the tactical and strategic events and pattern of the later periods, the authors are deeply indebted to various officers of higher commands whose names are unknown to your narrators. The scope of these summaries and the always penetrating and occasionally searing wit of these able, anonymous authors, are now, as when first published, a fresh breeze blowing through a haze and fog of turgid generalization and belabored histrionics. While some of the ground covered by these excerpts is not strictly relevant to the Group's activities, they are included for their humor and illustration of the enemy's curious psychology and conduct. And so before we relate the details of the Group's next movement and the next chapter in its offensive, a quick look at the actions of preceding and following months in other sectors is needed, together with a brief resume of the tactical situation and over-all strategy to illuminate the background and the stage upon which our action was to take place.

The over-all "situation review" showed that as each week passed it became evident the enemy's thoughts were centralized on the defense of the Empire itself. With the fall of Saipan and the loss of Noemfoor, the Allied front became deeper and broader. The enemy had conceded

HERE IS THE PACIFIC WAR CALENDAR FROM 1937 TO THE END OF THE WAR

1937

July 7—Japanese begin "China incident."

1938

Oct. 25—Chinese Government moves to Chungking.

1941

Dec. 7—Japs attack Pearl Harbor.

Dec. 12—Guam falls to Japs.

Dec. 24—Wake Island surrenders.

1942

Jan. 2—Manila falls.

Feb. 15—Japs take Singapore.

March 8—British give up Rangoon.

March 9—Japanese overrun Java.

March 17—MacArthur becomes Allied Commander, Southwest acific.

April 9—Japs capture Bataan.

April 18—Doolittle bombs Japan.

May 6—Corregidor surrenders.

May 7—Two-day Battle of Coral Sea ends; each side loses one carrier in first flattop battle of history

June 3—Battle of Midway, decisive engagement of entire Pacific war, costs Japs two to four carriers sunk and eleven ships damaged: Yorktown goes down.

June 12—Japs land in Aleutians.

Aug. 7—Marines land on Guadalcanal.

Dec. 1—Beaten for third time, Jap Fleet withdraws from Solomons.

1943

Jan. 3—Americans take Buna, New Guinea.

Feb. 8—Historic Battle of Guadalcanal ends in victory.

March 4—Airmen destroy twelve-ship Jap convoy in Battle of Bismarck Sea.

May 11—Attu invaded, secured in 21 days.

June 30—South Pacific offensive begins with landings on Rendova, Solomons.

Aug. 15—Americans and Canadians find Japs gone from Kiska, Aleutians.

Sept. 12—Salamau, New Guinea, taken; Lae falls six days later.

Nov. 1—Bougainville invaded.

Nov. 20—Invasion of Gilbert Islands (Tarawa) opens Central Pacific offensive.

1944

Jan. 31—Americans land on Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

Feb. 29—MacArthur invades Admiralties; they become greatest Southwest Pacific naval base and staging area for Philippines.

March 22—Japs attack India as Stilwell pushes into Burma.

April 22—MacArthur lands at Hollandia and Aitape, New Guinea.

June 15—Marines invade Saipan.

June 16—B-29s bomb Yawata, Japan, from China.

June 20—Carrier planes break great Jap task force in Battle of Philippine Sea west of Marianas.

July 21—Gaum invaded; Tinian on the 24th.

Sept. 15—Marines land in the Palaus.

Oct. 20—MacArthur returns to the Philippines, landing on Leyte.

Oct. 23-25—In three separate engagements in Battle for Leyte Gulf Japs lose 24 ships, including two battleships, four carrier, six heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, three small cruisers or large destroyers, and six destroyers; Imperial Fleet no longer a threat.

Nov. 24—B-29s from Saipan bomb Tokyo.

1945

Jan. 9—Americans land on Luzon, reaching Manila in 26 days.

Feb. 19—Iwo Jima invaded.

April 1—Americans land on Okinawa.

July 26—Potsdam ultimatum calls on Japan to surrender.

Aug. 6—Americans drop atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Aug. 9—Russia enters war against Japan; atomic bomb strikes Nagasaki.

Aug. 10—Japan offers to surrender.

Aug. 14—Japs say they'll accept terms.

that his naval losses on June 20th were substantial, and it was evident that his airfields in western New Guinea had been abandoned as permanent bases. While he had hardly hoped to delay the day when he had to face a direct thrust to the Philippines, he probably considered the interim well spent if he could use the Ambon-Ceram-Boeroe area as a trap. It was clear that our capture of Saipan had limited the freedom of movement of his major fleet units. Although expected to give priority to the defense of the Philippines, he was unlikely to neglect the inner Netherlands East Indies either. The oilfields of Tarakan, Balikpapan, and Miri were of great importance to his mechanized operations, and the northern and western Borneo airfields were useful both as steps on the ferry route to Malaya-Sumatra-Philippines and for coverage of the sea routes from the north. To the Jap, the south was of the greatest importance, for if the Allies gained a foot-hold in the Philippines and in consequence throttled sea communications along the Sulu and Celebes Seas, he could attempt to maintain contact with Balikpapan from the south only as long as the Makassar Straits were open.

At the time the Crusaders entered the Southwest Pacific Area, the Jap, believing that the most pressing threat came for the east and southeast, had built up considerable air and ground strength in the Philippines, Halmaheras, and Celebes to meet it. Of opproximately 1000 airplanes in the SWPA, he had over 700 in those areas. Our work was well cut out for us ! !

After July 22nd there was a lull, but not a cessation of activity in the Russells and at Stirling. Engineering sections completed installations of half bomb-bay tanks, a modification that provoked considerable speculation. Preparation for our scheduled move got under way at all squadrons.

By now experienced in living in the field and in the headaches of Army Moving-Day, we were better equipped to decide what to give priority, what to discard, and how to handle bulky equipment. Line and personal property went into boxes, crates, and bags, as everyone got down to the essentials he would need for the trip. Rations for the boat trips were received and stacked. Tents and lean-tos came down, with the mess halls last. Between July 30 and August 6 the Air Echelons took off in C-47s from the Russells and Treasury on the 1400-mile hop to the new and insufferably dusty Cyclops and Sentani strips at Hollandia.

For three weeks, Ground Echeloners loaded the former American Export Liner *Extavia,* the *Sea Perch,* the *George Boutwell,* the *U. S. S. Ripley,* the *Mandan Victory* and *The Balch.* Most of the heavy motor equipment went on the last vessels, which took the "stay-behind-to-clear up-gangs." This variety of ocean-going bottoms presented a conglomeration of problems and experiences.

We now take leave of the ground men and turn our attention to the Air and Flight Echelons who were the cast of our Hollandia program. Shortly we shall again pick up our sea voyagers and, we hope, do full justice to their story.

CHAPTER 16

Second elements of the advance echelon to reach Hollandia found that the first arrivals had done a splendid job with the fine area that had been placed at their disposal. A cleared flat plain of about five acres situated between the Hollandia-Tanahmerah road and the Cyclops Mountains had been laid out, and the first of the straight and orderly rows of tents and squadron streets begun. Meals were eaten outdoors on the sand or on any box or vehicle convenient, with the kitchens under canvas. But soon a community mess hall to serve the five squadrons began to rise. That unfailing and first question—how about showers?—had been admirably answered by Nature, for on the eastern extremity of the area, a rapid, clear, cool stream coursed down from the Cyclops Range.

From a fork in its path, one branch poured over a 20-foot cliff in a sparkling waterfall, and into this small Niagara was built piping and a shower platform. No pumps and no water conservation problem there—the cold rivulet took our rough construction in its stride and having served our purposes, spilled on to a rocky bed and meandered on its way. A board placed over two rocks made a very comfortable hand laundry on the other branch of the stream, where you could give yourself a "tub bath" when you had scrubbed enough.

One by one the Squadron parties arrived and over a two week period a comfortable though close-pitched camp arose on the plain, with the Group administration buildings and Mess Hall at the center.

A word of praise for the organization and administration of the Group's living facilities and the activities of the Hollandia detachment is due at this point to Maj. Roy B. Harris, Adjutant of the 69th, who was the Camp Commander, and to the various junior officers who commanded their Squadron detachments.

When the work of camp building had been completed, the line facilities were set up, and everyone relaxed for a welcome breather while awaiting the planes. Those of this detachment or of the combat crews who arrived at the end of August who were able to get down to Hollandia Town or up the highway to Tanahmerah Bay added unforgetable pictures to their mental photographic galleries—the tortuous highways between the two was a tribute to the perseverance of the Army's road builders. Hacked and scraped out of rugged mountainside, the road curled around rugged razorback hills, bridged valleys between other hills, ran fairly flat and straight past the strips and Lake Sentani. Both at Hollandia and Tanahmerah the road aproached the settlements through a defile and down a long incline of a thousand yards or more, affording a beautiful vista of blue water, of unloading ships and bustling activity in the tiny town at Hollandia, and of the placid inner bay broken by tiny islands and graceful native catamarans paddling across its breadth at Tanahmerah.

Hollandia, as a period in the Group's overseas life, afforded, perhaps more than any other base, a view of the remarkable paradox that modern war brought to New Guinea and to other backward, sparsely populated and little known parts of the world. Roads, bridges, motor vehicles, airfields and the most modern aircraft, oil reservoirs, and other accoutrements of present day technology, were cheek by jowl with the rudimentary civilization of the South Seas. One wondered what the celebrated fuzzy-wuzzies, whom the Group's personnel here encountered for the first time, thought of the mechanized parade of war that streamed by them and over their heads. They weren't awed for long if at all, as they soon learned to ask for cigarettes and food and to raise their thumbs in the best American hitch-hiking technique. Gangs of natives riding to and from work on dusty Army six-by-sixes and weapons carriers soon became familiar sights. "Hello Joe" with a friendly if uncomprehending grin became a familiar greeting, and wandering gangs of small boys, passing through camp were an amusing and pitiable sight. Clad in oversize GI shorts or the remains of discarded undershirts the slight and skinny black and brown boys with their banana bellies often bore on their legs the gaping suppurations of yaws or on their bodies the gray scale of kurap. It was the same at Sansapor later, but the natives there seemed to have suffered less from war and disease than these of more populated Hollandia, where the effects of Jap occupation were more pronounced.

While these activities were going on, the combat crews of the squadrons, at Russells and Stirling, were doing local transition flying, making fuel consumption studies, and late in August, practiced skip-bombing and participated in mock beach-head maneuvers in the Admiralties. Between August 30 and September 4 all the Group's B-25s reached the Cyclops and Sentani Strips and the crew members installed themselves in the tents that awaited them.

Upon arrival at Hollandia, the Group came under the tactical control of the 308th Bomb Wing, replaced within a few days by the 310th Bomb Wing. A certain amount

The 42nd's area at Hollandia, the result of some hard work and devious machinations by Maj. Roy Harris. You don't find prefabs lying around in heaps. The Group was there only a month.

The far-famed Hollandia shower. A waterfall poured down from the left rear, was routed through U-shaped troughs and furnished an abundance of clear COLD water.

of confusion attended this change and this, coupled with the fact that all sections were operating with skeleton staffs, complicated our operations at Hollandia. In fact, original plans had not called for the Group to stage missions from Hollandia, but the tactical situation demanded our assistance, and as usual we went to work with a will.

The operating schedule assigned us involved three types of flying new to the Group. Food-dropping flights in which we carried much needed foods and supplies to parties stranded in the hinterland, interdiction missions which swept the area around the several task forces then moving up to take part in the Palau and Morotai operations and bombing missions in which from one to three of our Mitchells navigated flights of A-20's from the 312th Bomb Group over targets in southwestern New Guinea.

It is difficult to establish precisely which Crusader pilot first took the air against the enemy from Hollandia, but indications are that he was probably Lieut. Lawrence J. McLaughlin, a Royal Oak, Michigan, resident who reached the SWPA and combat via Notre Dame and the Air Cadets. On September 1 Lieutenant McLaughlin, a 390th Flight Commander, flew an "indoctrination"—as it was high-falutingly designated—mission as passenger in the lead A-20 of a 312th Bomb Group formation hitting Nabire Airdrome. Action got under way on the 3rd with Lieut. Joseph D. Wright of the 75th leading 10 Mitchells to Nabire when weathered out of the primary target, Utarom airfield. On the 5th and 6th things were really rolling. Maj. Rolf N. Romstad and Lieut. Edward Powleko led the 69th and 75th to drop an excellent pattern on the Utarom and Nabire runways. Thomas J. Wintersole led the 69th's planes on the interdiction mission, with George P. Picher, Kenneth E. Frick, and Herbert Sunderman of the 100th flying another patrol of this assignment; the 390th was also airborne, but was weathered off its target. The following day one of its planes led 24 A-20's of the 3rd Attack Group on a successful run over Mongosah Airdrome, dropping four 500-pounders of its own.

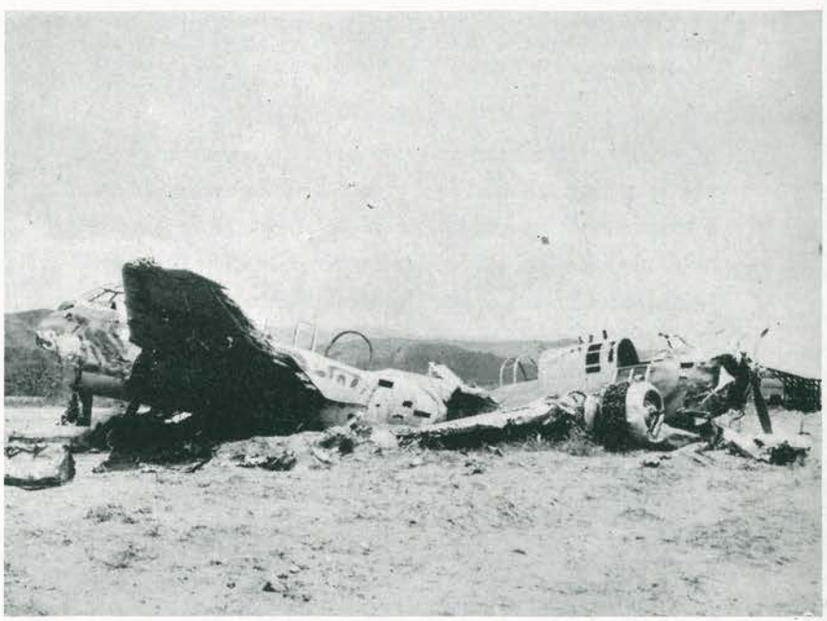
Lieut. Julian S. Whitehead of the 75th drew the honor of flying the first food-dropping mission on this day, flying supplies to a Dutch party stranded on Kebar Plain in the interior.

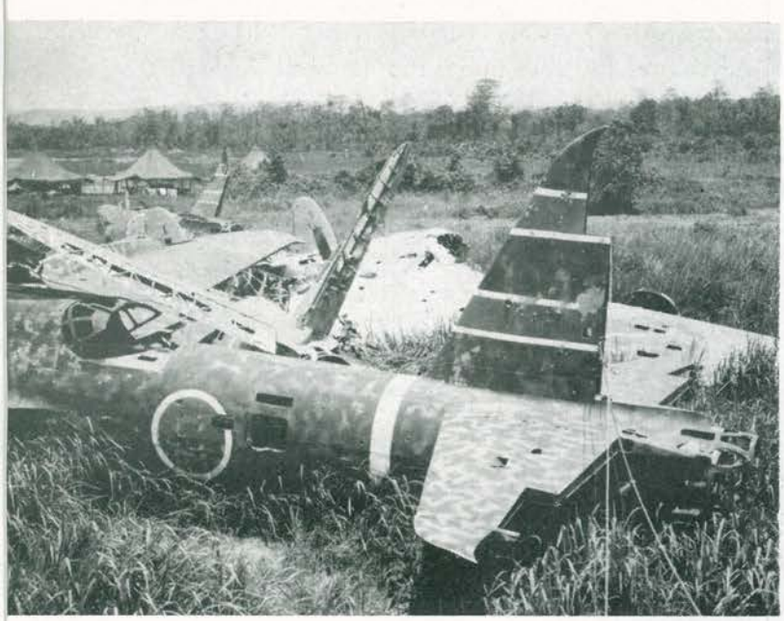
Panels and a smoke signal were displayed by the ground party, and from 300 feet Lieutenant Whitehead dropped his load so close to the designated spot that the retrieve was made while he was still over the area.

On the 6th-7th, Capt. R. E. Shanks and Lieut. L. E. Davis of the 69th investigated bogies over But and Dagua with negative results, while Major Paxton, Lieut. Richard V. Gadd and Capt. Vernon W. Fisher took elements of the 70th and 69th on a raid to Babo.

These two days brought a new and very interesting mission. Intelligence had reason to believe that the Japs intended to send a bomber with important cargo, escorted by two fighters, into the Wewak area on the night of the 6th. To Capt. Andrew Elliott and Lieut. Vincent Jensen of the 70th fell the interception assignment. Taking off at 23551, the pair flew over the Wewak and Boram fields from 0105 until 0630, but the expected express delivery was not made.

Each squadron had a crack at leading the A-20's from Hollandia. Not equipped with bombsights, these ships could not bomb from medium altitude except on a leader. Our usual procedure was to send one Mitchell to lead each squadron of 12, but on some days the schedule of interdiction missions and patrols made it necessary for one of our Mitchells to lead a full two-squadron forma-





At Hollandia and at Palawan, the wreckage of Jap planes lay around in wild profusion. At Puerto a flyable Nick was found hidden in an out-of-the-way revetment.

tion of the A-20's. In these instances the B-25 led one squadron in while the other orbited out of range of possible AA. When the first run had been completed, the lone Mitchell rendezvoused with the second A-20 squadron and went back for a second run with new companions.

On two occasions the single Mitchell led a triple header, with three runs over the target, dropping a single bomb on each run to guide the accompanying Havocs.

The 100th suffered a regrettable operational accident on September 8. Putting in at Noemfoor on return from a Babo strike in weather that was almost zero zero, Lieut. Theo Wright blew a tire on landing. Lieut. R. L. Dillinger, following him in, overshot his landing and crashed into Wright's and another parked aircraft. Lieutenant Dillinger, Capt. R. L. Lawley Jr., and S/Sgt. N. C. Mills were killed, and Lieut. C. W. Duncan was seriously injured.

The scheduled strike on Babo (that place really took a shellacking while the Crusaders were around) for the 14th was forced back by extremely inclement weather, and Capt. Robert W. Thorndyke of the 75th may be said to have closed the book on Group flying from Hollandia with a two-plane relief mission to the party on Kebar Plain the same day. This brought the total of missions flown from Hollandia to 38, involving 243 sorties and the releasing of 259,800 pounds of bombs over the western New Guinea Japs. Not an impressive figure for the Group, but when it is considered that it had not been planned to fly combat from Hollandia, a very satisfactory showing.

The mission schedule at Hollandia shut down abruptly, and the move to our new base was swift. Air Echeloners and combat crews began to break camp on the 12th, and on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of September pulled out in C-47's for the newly-opened Mar Strip at Sansapor, Vogelkopf Peninsula, Dutch New Guinea. The departure of the first elements was attended by an amusing, and very typically Army, snafu. Trucks were efficiently loaded and formed into a tight convoy in the precise order in which the C-47's would be loaded. That was fine so far as it went, but when the convoy reached the Sentani strip, the fun began. Nobody knew the plane numbers and when someone was found who did, nobody knew where the planes were standing. They were found in a hour or two and loading was nearly complete when the inevitable jeep-mounted Paul Revere from the local A. T. C. arrived on the scene with the announcement that the movement had been cancelled. One of your reporters intrudes a personal note at this point to add that this news was particularly lemonish to his party. Our truck had thrown a wheel on the driveway into Sentani and we had shifted our load to another truck. Unloading the plane was the third go at stevedoring for us, and our speed was down to that of a limping snail.

Elements of the truck convoy bounced and jostled back to the campsite, and the plight was laid before Lieutenant Colonel Daugherty. A fast man with the telephone as with his nose guns, the Colonel soon had the higher brass at the other end of the line holding their receivers farther and farther from their ears, and the move was on again. Back we bounced to the strip and with a Shanghai Gesture to the A. T. C. office, loaded up again, this time for keeps.

And now, what of our ground men, bounding over the rolling main? The accounts differ. Let's start with the *Extavia,* and we quote one of the Ship's company: "The trip was an eventful one for everyone. On August 1, a floating mine luckily missed amidships and exploded just off the stern, buckling a few plates."

This occurred off Simbo Island in the Solomons.

The first evidence that things were SNAFU developed upon arrival at Finschafen on August 3rd. Our arrival was totally unexpected by port authorities. A wireless request to Headquarters for information brought a garbled message, apparently directing the *Extavia* to Oro Bay. Docking there on the 5th, we found SNAFU had turned to JANFU (Joint Army-Navy) Neither the Army nor the Navy nor the Australians knew anything about the *Extavia.* Further wireless messages were exchanged over five days, then back to Finschafen we repaired. "You again," said the exasperated port officer, but this time he came up with orders for us to proceed to Hollandia the same day. The *Extavia* put in at Hollandia and a few of the boat travelers paid hasty visits to the camp. Enroute to Hollandia a sub sounding was made and depth charges were laid. Anchored overnight in Maffin Bay between Hollandia and Sarmi Point, the passengers saw their first action in New Guinea. Artillery and A-20's were devastating Nips at Sarmi. After dark, enemy patrols foraged the area and engagements took place during the night, with two air alerts. It was a good show. We could sleep the next day. The *Extavia* dropped anchor off Middleburg Island on August 26th, and by the 28th everyone was ashore on the mainland. Nothing like a sea trip to rest the nerves.

Of the *Mandan Victory* and the *Balch,* bearing motor vehicles and clean-up parties, we learn only that passengers on the former ate with the crew and on the latter set up a field kitchen and cooked their own. Of the stout Liberty Ship *George S. Boutwell,* the record states barely

Sansapor in its heyday was no Miami Beach. Despite our laborious chopping, foliage still obscured the camp. Orient yourself

that she arrived at Sansapor on September 3rd. Of the *Ripley,* deponent sayeth not, A slightly dyspeptic historian sums up neatly the plight of the war-engulfed gourmet aboard a transport in commenting upon the cruise of the good ship *U. S. S. Sea Perch,* once of the United Fruit Lines. Says he: "Our meals aboard ship were terrible. It was the worst food I have eaten in 44 months of Army life."

A 70th Squadron report written months afterward made the statement: "It was generally felt when we arrived at Sansapor that if the world were to be given an enema, this was the spot at which operations would begin." (With apologies to John Hersey). To members of the first shore parties of the Ground Echelons even this observation seems scarcely adequate as a commentary.

Mar Strip at Sansapor came into being by way of an Allied amphibious landing on July 30th. There had been no ground or air reaction to this movement except for one belated reconnaissance on July 31. Strategically speaking, this was the final step in the campaign to retake New Guinea, which began in August-September of 1942 with the expulsion of the enemy from Milne Bay. It was uphill work in the early stages, but since the fall of Lae in September 1943, advances had been made with

from Hotel de Gink (A), left center; the baseball diamond (B), just below the road lower left; and the movie center (C).

great rapidity. With the key points of Milne Bay, Buna, Lae, Finschafen, Saidor, Hansa Bay, Aitape, Hollandia, Wakde, Biak, Noemfoor, and Sansapor in Allied hands, the enemy's forces in New Guinea, lacking both external support and internal cohesion, were little more than dead branches. As a result of the Sansapor move, Manokwari, with its garrison of about 15,000 troops, was cut off as effectively as Wewak. The enemy lost no time, however, in attempting to evacuate to the islands further west, especially to Ceram. Occupation of Middleburg Island by the Allies was carried out simultaneously with the Sansapor operation.

The first clearing details boarded trucks at the beach side of the strip, and were driven over mountainous bumps through a thick cloud of dust and up a bulldozed path into the most dense rain forest they had ever seen. When the trucks reached a point where the path widened slightly and abruptly stopped, the men were handed axes, machetes, saws, picks, and shovels and told "All right men, this is it. Let's go to work." The dismayed squads pitched into their appalling task. Not only did 50, 80, and 100 foot mahogany, teak, lauan, and other trees have to be felled, but before a tree could be cut a dense thicket of underbrush had to be hacked away with machetes.

Top: The first night ashore at Sansapor. The recently bulldozed road ends 50 yards further at a perimeter strongpoint. The jungle in the background was our campsite.

Above: In the midst of life there was Sansapor. Stumps blasted out, the grounds still to be cleaned up, the photo lab's framework begins to take shape.

Top: The photo lab starts clearing for its building in almost impenetrable jungle. A man on the end of an axe furnished the vaunted American mechanization. There were no sidewalk superintendents.

Above: When finally completed, the Photo Lab looked like this. This design is purely functional.

The inches-thick bed of leaves under foot was alive with tiny red mites or chiggers, which enjoyed the feast of their lives on our lower extremities. The leaves had to be raked into piles; then it was discovered that such was the persistent dampness they would not burn unless saturated with fuel oil or gasoline. When the rains fell the unscraped, unrolled paths knifed out by the bulldozers rapidly became mud-lakes as truck and jeep wheels churned through. There was nothing, nothing at all, pleasant about Sansapor for the first arrivals.

First parties returned to the boats for meals and sleep this first night, but a few hardy souls elected to stay in the "area." There had been a scramble in unloading priorities on the beach and various tents and cots of the Squadrons were seized by engineer and infantry units unloading at the same time. We in turn acquired their cots and tentage.

Some infantry jungle hammocks were obtained and fortunate ones among the first to sleep ashore slung these between trees. Others slept eight and nine in pyramidal tents or even out in the open, cots under mosquito bars. The famous New Guinea insects attacked en masse.

Over the weeks the dense rain forest yielded to axe, shovel, sweat, bulldozer, truck, and determination. Mess, supply, and personnel tents rose on frameworks of green timber that had stood on the spot. Unloading was com-

pleted, goods sorted, and the line facilities set up. The seemingly impossible was being accomplished. Areas began to shape up, showers hastily thrown up on arrival were finished off and screened, storage tanks erected, wells cased. Men and officers worked all day on Squadron details, then applied the twilight hours to clearing and finishing off their own tents. Piles of brush, and fallen trees up to three feet in diameter, had to be skirted when walking from tent to orderly room or mess hall, but these soon gave way to dynamite, fire, and drag line.

The Sansapor area received its initial raid during the evening of August 26th, and for the next seven days, with the exception of the 29th, the enemy managed to send a daily average of more than two airplanes over Sansapor and vicinity. All of these raids occurred between 1930-0200.

On August 27th five unwanted Purple Hearts were picked up by some Group officers when the condition red paid dividends to the enemy. Capts. Raymond Jaskoviak and Willis R. Garber, and Lieuts. Raymond Proctor, Richard Grabenhorst, and Les Sokler were wounded by shell fragments. The latter three officers were hospitalized for as long as two months before rejoining Group Headquarters.

At 0207 on the morning of August 31st, two enemy medium bombers attacked Mar and Middleburg strips.

The first bomber came in low from the Southwest and dropped one bomb on Mar strip. No damage was inflicted but one man was wounded. The second bomber attacked from the Southeast dropping one stick of bombs, causing slight damage to Middleburg strip. Two further alerts were issued at hour intervals following the attack, but no other airplanes appeared.

Between 1956 and 2014 on September 1, Sansapor radar picked up an enemy airplane west of Middleburg. This plot was probably caused by the airplanes that bombed the Biak area between 2123-2220.

At 2113 on September 4 an air raid warning was sounded, and one unidentified airplane was indicated to the West, but did not close.

On September 7 a red alert was issued between 2330 to 2346, but no enemy airplane appeared.

On September 10, a single enemy airplane approached from the Southwest along the coastline and dropped six or seven light bombs west of the Wewe river. Also on the same date two enemy airplanes made separate passes at Middleburg. The alert started at 0305, and the all clear was given at 0412. The enemy airplanes were turned back by the AA. No bombs were dropped.

On September 11, one unidentified enemy airplane came from the Southwest along the coast and dropped six or seven small bombs west of the Wesan River. Searchlights and AA engaged without result. Indication of one airplane over Middleburg was received. AA engaged without result. All clear was given at 0419.

When the Air Echelons arrived on the 15th and 16th, tired ground men jibed and taunted, "Ho, softies. You should have been here when it was ROUGH." The trite phrase, already worn from use in North Africa, Italy, Burma, and The 'Canal, was never more aptly applied. But the air travelers did not have it at all easy. Although they had only the brush and thicket to clear for their tents, they made the acquaintance of the chiggers and centipedes and the skin rashes. They hacked and hewed at stumps and roots to pitch their tents, and then went to the dust bowl at the line to help set their sections up. They were regaled at night with the tale of the 70th men who, exploring the jungle in back of the Squadron area, found a dead and decomposing Jap. They were told how ominously close the perimeter was and how many Nips were still in the hills.

Flight Echelons arriving the 16th and 17th landed at Middleburg strip, as Mar was not yet ready to receive bombers. After the areas had been cleared to a point where small details could finish up the work, all attention was concentrated on the line. S-2's and S-3's threw up their own pyramidal tents between revetments and crowded their desks, tables, and maps in as best they could. When the steel matting was ready for the bombers, they hopped over from Middleburg, a mere "split-second" between take off there and landing at Mar. When a Mitchell taxied past a tent at the line to reach its revetment, the tent billowed like a spinnaker in the prop wash and a pall of dust and grit hung for 15 minutes. Two weeks later when corrugated sheet iron had been thrown over native lumber framework, hard-working Operations and Intelligence personnel got some slight relief from incipient silicosis, because their working quarters had in most cases been recessed from the taxi loop enough to eliminate the worst of the dust.

To recite every hardship of the first days at Sansapor would require far more space than can be allotted in this volume. The curtain is about to rise on Act III of our tactical performance—The Indies. Therefore, in the hope that these few words do justice to a month of arduous camp-building against the formidable natural resistance, your editors would like to take leave of this subject with a parting word on the spirit of the men who built Sansapor. Veterans of Caledonia and 'Canal, and replacements who joined the others at Stirling and at Sansapor itself worked side by side through the endless uncomfortable

With the jungle cleared, foxholes tidied up, the camp began to look a little better.

Showers went up, and the 75th's area began to shape up as militarily as possible under the circumstances.

and tiresome hours at line-hut and latrine building, digging and driving, and the thousand other exhausting tasks of camp building, and into their seemingly small, humble, unglamorous task went the same building and fighting spirit that stretched the Alcan Highway north to the Arctic, picked and reamed the Burma and Ledo roads from India to hard-pressed, struggling China, and pushed the railway and highway across the withering Iranian desert to carry the material of war to our Russian Allies.

At this time an old neighbor, co-worker and recent fellow traveler on the *Sea Perch* officially joined the Group family. This was the 886th Chemical Company (Air Operations), which was to share in the Group's life and activities from this time onward as an attached unit.

Old Glory makes her first journey aloft at Sansapor, while the crew that rigged her mast salute.

The 886th, too, had an interesting prior history, and was already well known to us when the official connection was established. The unit was activated in Hawaii in July, 1942, at Hickam Field, as an assigned section of the Seventh Air Force. The original cadre of Lieutenant Martin, first CO; First Sergeant Bozenny and 15 other enlisted men were drawn from the Fifth Chemical Company, one of the few Chemical Warfare units of the peacetime regular army. From activation until May, 1943, the 886th was busily and energetically preparing itself for its job in the war. In addition to training and outfitting itself for the job in the war, the Company took part in the air training activities of the Seventh Air Force, filling spray tanks, providing Chemical warfare demonstrations, and participating in Chemical maneuvers in the Makua Valley. It also carried on its service unit functions, storing incendiary munitions and Chemical Warfare supplies. In October, 1942, the first men of the Company, one platoon, sailed for New Hebrides.

In May, 1943, the balance of the Company embarked on the USAT *Jane Addams* and moved to the South Pacific by way of Samoa and New Hebrides, arriving at Guadalcanal in July. Here the Company became part of the 13th Air Force and the XIII Bomber Command, and was attached to the 307th Bomb Group (H). Their experiences at the 'Canal duplicated those of the squadrons—a dense patch of jungle near Carney Field had to be cleared for a camp area. The Company soon settled down to the tropical island routine of work, air raids, mud, heat, dust, and dehydrated foods.

Immediately upon arrival at the 'Canal the Company began construction operation of a large incendiary and chemical munitions dump with T/Sgt. Nick Cristea in charge. It was in October of '43 that the 886th first became acquainted with the Group, its first work for us being the preparation of spray tanks for experimental

A part of the 390th Enlisted Men's area.

Traveled roads and telephone poles, but the jungle never really disappeared.

smoke screening operations. In November a detachment accompanied the Group to the Russell Islands, where this work was continued. During the above periods Lieutenant Blohm and then Lieutenant Kemmler served as CO's, succeeded in December by Capt. John W. Thompson.

When August, 1944, rolled around, the 886th boarded the *Sea Perch,* and made its way to Sansapor, picking up parties from the Group's squadrons en route.

At this time new faces appeared in the Company and we find the following in the key jobs: First Sergeant Moots; Cpl. Schneider in the Orderly Room; T/5 Thomas E. Adkins, Mail Clerk; T/4 Raymond Ritchie, motor mechanic; T/4 Myron S. Nerby in charge of feeding the boys; T/5 Robert Monks as Company Clerk with T/5 Raymond McKeon as Personnel Clerk and T/5 Edward M. Hoban as Distributing Point supply clerk, while T/5 Forrest M. Hoover was busy as manager of the Company baseball team and looking after Special Services.

Upon arrival at Sansapor, the 886th was attached to the Group. A heavy schedule of preparation of gasoline-gel fire bombs for use in P-38s and B-25s was immediately undertaken, and the Company was able to feel that it has really come to grips with the Japs, for its bombs were doing plenty of irreparable damage to the Nip installations in the Indies.

Lieut. G. L. Swangren and Lieut. Leroy L. Zang joined the unit at this time.

Japanese aircraft strength in the Halmaheras, Celebes, and Philippines was estimated in the late summer of 1944 at 700 planes. After futile attempts to halt our landing at Morotai, the Jap began to withdraw his aircraft from the Halmaheras to the second-ring Indies defense line stretching from Sandakan in British North Borneo through Celebes, Boeroe, and Ceram to the Aroe Islands. Studded into this ring were some 30 airfields, excluding Borneo, and many supply stations. From these fields and bases it was apparently his intention to prevent our reoccupation of the Philippines, or failing that, to delay us as long as possible and at the greatest cost.

These targets had been bombed during the previous months by heavy units based at Noemfoor, Biak, and Owi. The process of neutralization had begun and the Group's assignment was to complete it, keep the airfields out of operation, destroy the remaining aircraft, bomb,

A part of the 42nd's line area and taxiway.

Group Headquarters on a traffic-free day . . . Generally the dust was so thick you couldn't tell who had stabbed you.

The laundry, frequently cantankerous, constantly damned, kept us clean and wrinkled.

The Group water tower. The water table was seldom below 15 feet, so wells were easy to sink.

burn, and strafe the enemy's oil wells, supply and personnel concentrations, and deny the water beneath our wings to his small cargo ships and barges.

The first Philippine beach head was in the making.

The 13th Air Task Force, comprised of the Crusaders and two P-38 Groups, was charged with the protection of the left flank in the "march back."

In accomplishing this, we would also isolate the enemy garrisons on Kai, Aroe, and Tanimbar Islands, and on Timor and Flores to the south and west.

The offensive got under way when Major Paxton and Lieut. George J. Manuche, each leading 12 aircraft from the 70th and 69th, took off from Mar Strip on September 16th to attack Namlea, on Boeroe Island, from medium altitude. It was the opening shot for the Crusaders on the airfields, and supply bases in the Netherlands East Indies.

By the 22nd all the squadrons had got in one or more strikes on Indies targets. F/O Bernard Long led the 75th's first, a formation of six at medium altitude, which hit Langoan Town and Samate Airdrome in trios on the 18th to drop twenty-four 500's. The 390th joined the fray on the 21st with Lieut. R. H. Partrick taking nine planes over Namlea runway at noon to release 36 quarter-tonners. The formation met heavy AA of an intense and accurate variety, three ships being holed and Lieut. John J. Rapp, bombardier, and Sgt. R. E. Hansen, engineer-gunner, getting nicked by flak. The 100th, last of the squadrons to reach the new base, flew its first on the 22nd. These first missions were flown from Middleburg Island, crews in some cases having to get up at 0330 to reach their planes via the Middleburg ferry. Nobody liked this arrangement and everyone was relieved when the Mar hardstands were completed and the Middleburg commuting ended.

A seven-plane barge sweep of the Halmaheras by the 69th on September 21, Lieut. Donald Holloway leading, scored a direct hit and two near misses with centuries on a long fuel barge, and two near misses, with 1650 rounds strafed, on a two-man submarine near Kaoe Bay. Flying a weather mission to Northeast Celebes on the same day, Lieuts. R. E. Overmeyer and Staff, of the 69th, dropped 12 one-hundred-pounders on Manado Town and Kokas Rest Camp, demolishing buildings and starting fires. The pair observed 22 twin engine planes on the Langoan revetments, six apparently serviceable.

Also active on the 22nd was the 70th, with a pair searching Seleman Bay, Cape Celi, Cape Haja, Bara Bay, Mongole, Sanana, Obi Major, and Djoronga and strafing Toedjoeh Island. Lieut. Thomas R. Hatfield led the 75th's nine over Haroekoe at minimum for what the report described as an enjoyable mission. They blew up a frame building, started four fires, and strafed the whole area viciously, giving the tower a particular going over

The 75th's mess took on an almost permament appearance.

Canvas and native lumber houses the 390th Mess at Sansapor.

Mess personnel of the 70th pose in their "whites" after one of those "steak night" meals at Sansapor.

that sent the occupants running for their lives. On the way a 150-foot wooden ship lying off east Haroekoe Strait was also shot up. Two planes were hit by machine gun fire without serious damage. Capt. Gordon M. Dana took the 390th over the same target on the deck to score hits on houses and gun positions. F/O John T. Elson, bombardier, was later awarded the Purple Heart for the injuries he received when small arms fire smashed the greenhouse.

The 100th, which had got in strikes on Haroekoe and a pair of negative searches, hit Namlea on the 24th, led by Capt. Leonard V. Super. Lieut. William H. Meyer made a second run for photos on this mission and got himself well shot up by intense heavy fire, but without a vital hit or personal injury. Lieut. Jack B. Blankenship took the Squadron over Langoan on the 25th for 60% hits, encountering light, medium, and inaccurate AA.

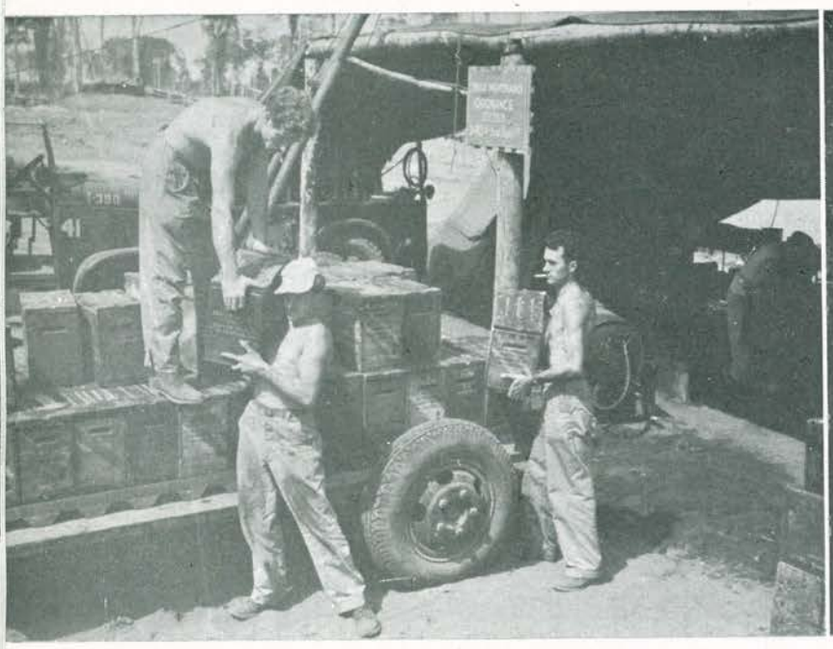
The schedule maintained a fast pace for the balance of the month, with strikes to Haroekoe, and Namlea again, and to Kaoe Bay, Amahai, Boela Tank Farm, Langoan, and Haroekoe. The 30th of September produced the most interesting missions of the month.

While Lieut. J. S. Whitehead, 75th, led six over Sidate, accompanied by Lieut. William H. Meyer and six of the 100th, the 69th and 70th, Lieut. L. E. Davis and Lieut. R. V. Gadd leading, hit Langoan, and the 390th, Lieut. Carl N. Bernasco leading, bombed Mapanget Supply. This is what these Crusaders were doing at 1030 and 1100 that morning: The 70th went across at 10,000 feet and dropped 24 bombs. Two single engined bandits, believed to be Oscars, followed the B-25s through the bomb run, 800 to 1000 feet above and slightly to the right. On the retirement two phosphorus bombs were dropped, which exploded in large bursts, accurate in altitude, but trailing. The bogies stayed with the formation, 3000 feet above, until they reached the coast. During this time a third Jap came 3000 feet above the formation from seven o'clock, continued above and to the right of the formation, looped, started rocking back and forth, and then dived ahead of the formation down to water level. At the coast, with the formation at 9000 feet, the first bogie made three passes from seven o'clock on the second element. On the first pass it fired from 800 to 400 yards and peeled off down and to the right. On the second and third passes it peeled off to the left after closing to 600 yards. Both B-25s fired. The tail gunner saw tracers from one turret gun enter the Jap plane and after the third pass it dropped away, emitting black smoke and apparently out of control. Immediately afterward, the second bandit, which was at three o'clock, made a left turn ahead of the formation and passed within 50 feet of both elements from two o'clock, but did not fire. Two turret gunners fired, and it dropped away to the left and behind the formation, smoking in spurts.

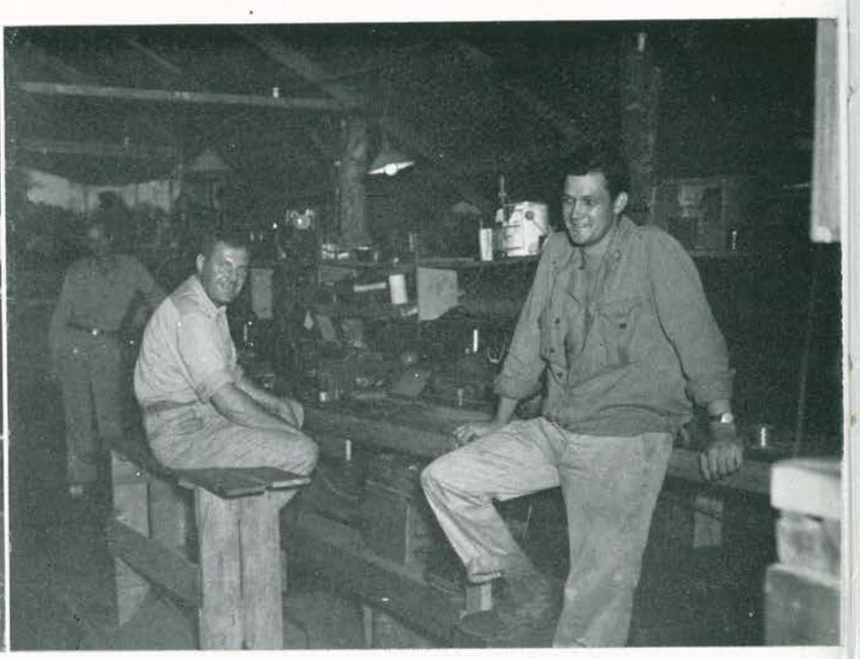
The 70th kitchen and mess personnel

In the parachute shop, Sergeants Felkins and Harris inspect a 'chute.

The grease rack at your corner filing station is probably prettier, but Transportation in New Guinea kept them rolling with a rack like this.



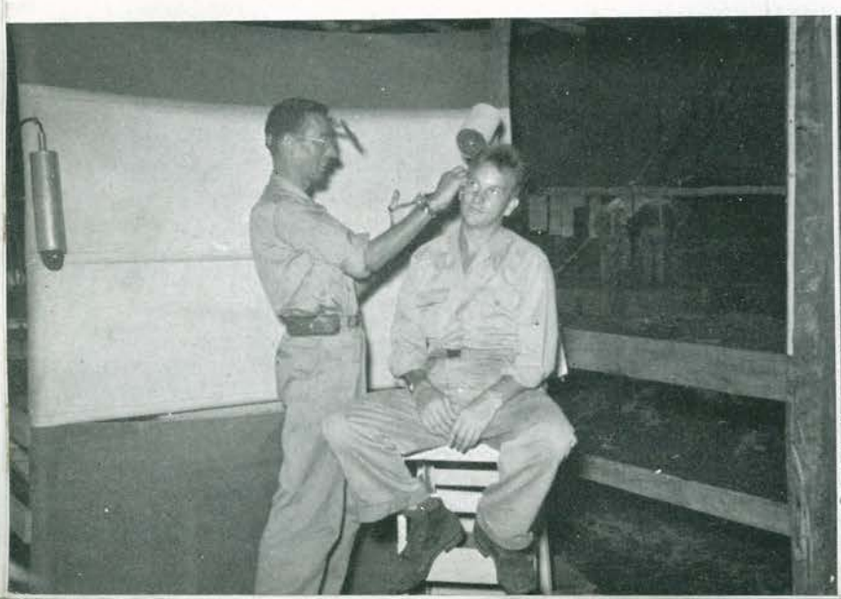
Ordnance loads up for the morrow's strafer. Many, many thousands of rounds of .50's were poured out daily.



Communications keeps 'em talking. Ground support work was entirely dependent upon perfect communications. These men kept our end working.

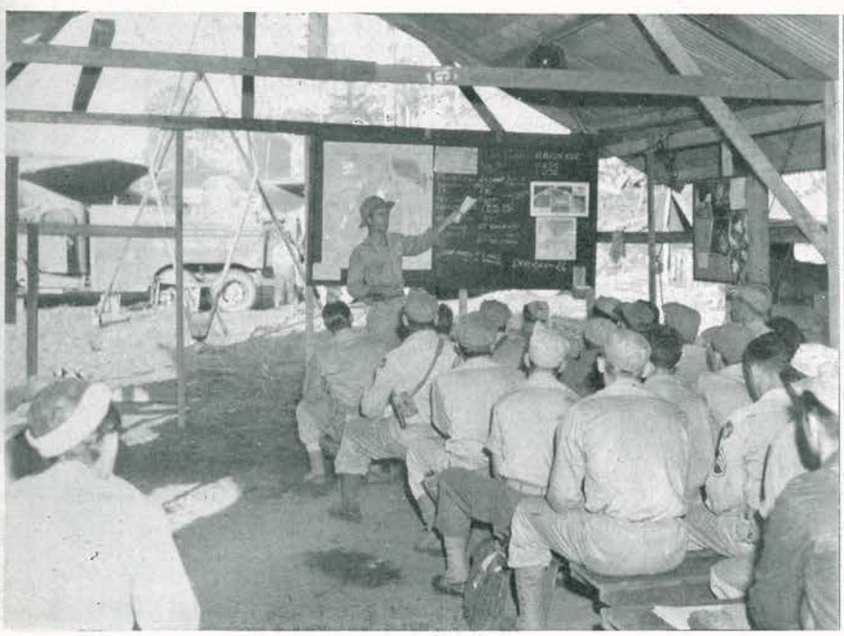
Capt. A. H. Meyer, Flight Surgeon, looks into S/Sgt. Anton Dolik's ear. If he can see out the other ear, Dolik will get rotated.

What! A PX with supplies! An absolutely unretouched photo to prove that it did occasionally happen. Could that be Aussie beer on the top shelf . . . ?



Capt. Gordon Dana, Squadron C.O., and Lt. Norman Haskell prove that nobody works in the orderly room.

A crew chief points out to his pilot that the big Wright's trouble is probably right in there, but it'll be okay for tomorrow's strike.

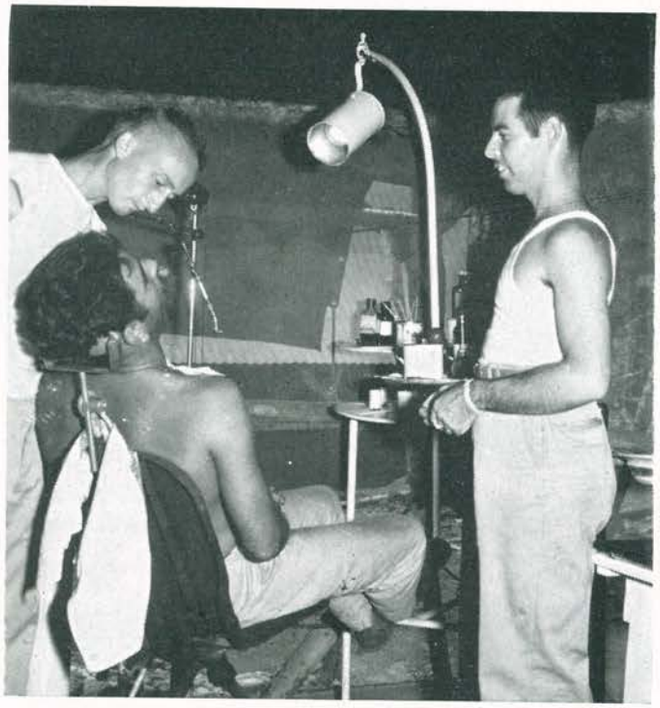


Lt. Wachs, a 70th S-2 officer, briefs crews prior to a strike on Haroekoe.

The most popular man in the outfit, the Squadron mail clerk, Cpl. John H. Knack sorts out the daily sugar reports.

The 390th Power Trust and Associated Light and Water Co. Capt. Earl Chapman, second from left, rear, was later lost on an administrative flight to Manila.

The inevitable trophies, a Jap rifle and battle flag.



"Old Doc Yak" White, the Group dentist, probes into an itty bitty cavity while Sergeant O'Bannon appears just a bit unsympathetic.

Following across at 1048, the 69th dropped 20 on the target and was met by slight, medium, and inaccurate AA. On the bomb run five bursts of white smoke observed falling in streamers were thought to be phosphorus bombs, but no bogies were seen.

Meanwhile the 390th was over Mapanget to drop twenty-four 500-pounders. The formation retired from the target at 9000 feet and made a gradual descent. As they reached the coastline at Lembeh Strait, four enemy fighters were observed at 11,000 feet flying a parallel course 1200 yards to the right. The first attack was made from the rear as one enemy fighter broke away from his flight, diving in from 5 o'clock from 11,000 feet. His attack started at 1500 yards, breaking off at 800 with a left turn. During the attack, at least two guns on each wing of the bogie were firing steadily. One phosphorus bomb burst about 500 yards off the right wing of the rear element during the attack. Six turrets and six tail guns returned attacking fire, and tracers were seen flying all over the sky.

The second attack occurred six or seven minutes after the first, when enemy fighters peeled off to the left. Lieutenant Bernasco turned the formation into the attacking planes, firing a long burst from his nose guns. One bogie came in head-on, pressing the attack from 1000 to 300 yards, firing at least four wing guns. The entire formation fired on him with sure hits. At 300 yards the fighter rolled into a vertical bank with nose high and some appearance of a high speed stall, showing his belly to the formation, which continued pouring tracers into him. As he went into the bank, Lieutenant Bernasco anticipated a phosphorus bomb and drew his formation up 300 feet. The Jap did throw the bomb from the vertical bank and it exploded about 200 feet below the formation. A piece of the plane came off just after he had released his bomb. He went from the bank into a flat spin as the formation lost sight of him. The other two Nips dropped phosphorus bombs far to the left and rear of our formation during this attack. No further attack was pressed, and three of the fighters joined in formation to our right and took the opposite direction. A couple of minutes after the attack a splash was seen in the water. No plane was seen to crash in the water, but as three enlisted men in one crew were discussing the splash they observed a column of gray smoke rising from the spot. It appears that the Crusaders got a plane, but no official credit was given.

While this action was taking place, Lieut. H. F. Watts, 70th, with a formation of four searching for an enemy destroyer north of Ternate Island, was also having some fun. Crossing Kaoe Bay he saw three Sugar Charlies lying off the Airdrome and went to attack, discovering too late that they were hulks. His wingman immediately made good the sighting with another of three barges on the beach between Madjid and Kaoe. These were strafed with 1700 rounds, and numerous hits were noted. The formation rejoined and continued its square search. Enroute to base, while passing over Wor Island, Sgt. H. C. Bowen, Lieut. John T. Mogan's gunner, sighted the periscope and wake of a submarine. Lieutenant Mogan circled, called the formation leader, asked and received permission to attack, sent a flash sighting message to base, and attacked from 300 feet. He toggled four bombs at 50-foot intervals from sufficient altitude to permit the projectiles to enter the water nearly vertically, to gain greater submergence. The third bomb hit directly on the leading edge of the wake. The formation circled after the attack and saw an 80-foot diameter oil slick rapidly expanding, and small casks, boxes, and other debris coming to the surface. Fuel was running low, so no further observation was possible, but there was no doubt in the minds of the crews that the kill was definite.

The 70th seem to have been, without question, the eager beavers of this day. Capt. George Salvo and Lieut. Reed Stevens, also out searching, strafed barges at Mandilio Island and sampans at Biloeloe, in addition to obtaining photos and weather reporting.

The general program for October was a continuation

of the attrition bombing of Ambon, Ceram, and the Halmaheras, and constant shipping sweeps. The usual operations schedule called for four squadrons to send eight planes each on strike; two squadrons would also have a pair out on shipping sweep, another would have two standing by on shipping alert, and the fourth squadron would send a single plane on a weather and photo reconnaissance flight. The fifth squadron would enjoy a day off from combat for ground maintenance.

The first found Lieut. Richard H. Scruggs and Lieut. Joseph D. Wright of the 75th out on weather and photo reconnaissance; nine from the 70th led by Lieut. Reed Stevens and seven from the 69th led by Lieut. R. E. Overmyer hit Doom Island as a secondary, while the 100th's nine, Lieut. John J. Burnett in the lead, reached the primary at Manado. A neat pattern of 9 tons was laid over Manado, causing an explosion 400 feet in diameter with smoke billowing to 3000 feet.

The month opened inauspiciously for sleeping—the only attack of the month, out of several alerts, came at 0200 on the 2nd. A Dinah coming in from the east dove from 13000 to 2000 and dropped several 100-pound bombs on 6th Division Headquarters, killing two officers and an enlisted man and wounding three others. A Sansapor P-61 shot down this or another intruder about 10 miles inland. Two alerts on the 3rd-4th totaled an hour and 35 minutes and another on the 4th-5th an hour and two minutes, but no action ensued, and thereafter the only hindrances to sound snoring were the Guinea insects or noisy neighbors.

The second day of the month brought good shooting. The 69th led by Captain Hedlund, 70th led by Major Paxton, and 75th led by Captain Thorndyke bombed Laha. Leaving the target, the 70th sighted a 75-foot two-masted schooner 25 miles southeast of Amahai. Major Paxton sent the last element, Lieut. Harry W. Devlin, Robert J. Weston, and Sherod Santos, down to strafe. Eleven strafing runs sent 4800 rounds into the mahogany deck house and gunwhales, cutting off the mast and almost sawing the craft in two. Three of the crew dived over-side and started the 15-mile swim to shore after futilely directing light machine gun fire at the attackers. When the final strafing run pulled off, the vessel was listing badly, its decks were awash, and it was sinking fast. Weathered off Manado on the same day, Major Carmody led the 390th's three trios over Jefman-Samate to drop 500-pounders, drawing moderate and inaccurate heavy fire from Doom Island.

Lieut. Lawrence J. Ruff of the 390th was in the lead of a pair of searchers over Ambon, strafing a 150-foot boat at Loehoe Village and the AA positions at Piroe Town.

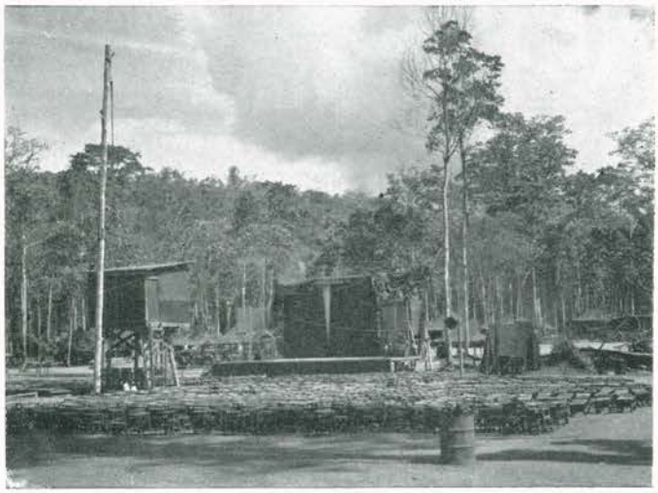
Lieut. S. R. Wadsworth of the 390th ruined a night's rest for Japs at Haroekoe and Ambon on October 3, dropping a ton of bombs in the course of his nocturnal snoop. Lieut. George J. Manuche and R. E. Overmyer of the 69th drew an interesting assignment and some unusual passengers this day. A native had discovered a Jap encampment near Asbokin, not far from Sansapor. The native, who knew neither English nor Dutch, told 13th Air Task Force officers about his findings by diagrams. The discoverer, another tribesman who spoke Dutch, and an English-speaking N. E. I. officer flew as observers with Lieutenant Overmyer. In a Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance play, the first native indicated the target to the second native, who reported it to the Dutch officer, who informed Overmyer, who radioed Manuche, who strafed 200 rounds, and dropped a Rube Goldberg bomb made of a full gasoline drum rigged with phosphorus and a hand grenade and some leaflets. The bomb, unfortunately, did not explode.

Surprisingly enough, the outstanding mission of the month for the 100th was a weather recon and photo mission flown by Major Henson and Capt. Charles W. Wolfendale on the 4th of October. Each plane carried a full load of ammunition and bombs in case a worthwhile target was found. After photographing some 27 planes in the revetment areas on either side of Langoan Runway, they decided to strafe. Maj. James D. Henson took the east side of Langoan Runway and Captain Wolfendale, the west. The Major's crew reported at least seven good hits, Captain Wolfendale's score being four. At the beginning of Captain Wolfendale's run, bombardier Fred F. Foxx dropped one quarter-tonner directly on a camouflaged fighter at the north end of the strip. The explosion got another parked 50 feet away. Light AA fire from the southeast of the runway ceased on Major Henson's strafing. Confirmation was requested for 12 planes damaged and one destroyed.

The 70th's night hecklers, Lieut. Harry W. Devlin and Lieut. Robert J. Weston, augmented their bomb load with ten cases of empty (naturally) beer bottles over Ambon, Haroekoe, and Sorong.

Not only the most unusual event of October, but one of the most thrilling in the Group's history, began on October 5th when Lieut. Col. Spencer took off on a night heckle of Ambon Town. On the return leg Colonel Spencer was forced to ditch by lack of fuel, after losing his way in weather.

When radio contact with Colonel Spencer was lost



Captain McClelland and his Special Services cohorts always had the movie operating as soon as possible. Those bomb fin crates made hard seats.

and it became evident that he was not going to return in the normal way, if at all, a continuing search immediately got under way, which went on until the 13th. Anxious eyes probed every inch of ocean and island that might possibly reveal the Colonel's party in rafts or ashore. The effort put forth produced another rescue not counted upon, when Lieut. John R. Sathern of the 69th, returning from Ambon, sighted a wrecked P-40 on tiny Zeven Island. "This island was so small," one of Sather's crew commented, "that the fuselage and wings divided it into thirds." An emaciated naked figure jumped up when he saw the Mitchell overhead, and, evidently a modest man, disappeared into the brush, re-emerging clad in blue shorts and waving. Sather's crew bundled chocolate bars cigarettes. jungle kits, and even a "Reader's Digest" with a note wishing the downed flier a pleasant time in Sydney on his furlough after the rescue, and Lieut. Leland M. Swanson employed his bombsight to drop the package within a few feet of the survivor. Sathern's radio report brought a PBY quickly to the scene. All Crusaders hoped that Colonel Spencer and his party were faring equally well. Lieuts. John W. Weeks and Grover H. Chamberlain in the 69th's two weather planes to Ceram on October 13th found Colonel Spencer and his party. "Help—Spencer—Food" had been outlined on the Ceram beach. Unknown to us, the party had been sighted by P-47s on the previous day and a Dumbo was already on the way.

The editor feels that he can do no better in telling this remarkable and hair-raising tale than to reprint Group Intelligence Officer Maj. Mathias Little's concise and factual account of it.

WATER LANDING OF A MITCHELL AND THE RESCUE OF SOME OF ITS CREW

The following is a narrative account of a water landing in a B-25J airplane, and the subsequent rescue of five survivors after an eight-day sojourn in enemy territory. The airplane took off with an eight-man crew from Mar Field, Cape Sansapor, at 1906 October 5, to execute a night heckler mission over Ambon Town located south of Ceram Island. The crew was comprised of the following personnel:

Pilot Lt. Col. Truman A. Spencer, Jr.
Co-pilot Lieut. Joe D. Ivey
Navigator Lieut. J. N. Burns (Went down with the plane)
Bombardier Lieut. Mark J. Ingram
Radio Operator S/Sgt. N. J. LoPresti
Gunner S/Sgt. R. J. Joyce (went down with the plane)
Engineer S/Sgt. T. N. Sutton
Intelligence Officer Lieut. C. A. Fiezl (disappeared in jungle)

The plane arrived on station at 2130 and by 2334 had dropped their total load of four 500-pound bombs on targets throughout the area. The last bomb was dropped on Namlea airdrome which was clearly recognized and a course was set for base. No enemy opposition had been encountered over the target area except for a few scattered bursts of AA. The weather was entirely clear over land with a few scattered thunderheads over water areas in the vicinity of the target. The moon was full. An in-flight report stating that the mission had been successfully completed, and including an ETA at 0145 was transmitted and receipted for by Sansapor prior to 2400.

When flying at 10,000 feet over Dampier Straits approximately 90 miles from base, the pilot was on instruments spasmodically and had started a gradual let-down hoping to find improved weather conditions. At 3000 feet, still unable to get into the clear, the descent was stopped and he climbed back to 5000 feet. It was now 0137. The plane was on a magnetic course of 80° and the exact position unknown. The radio operator asked for a (what is magnetic course to steer with zero wind to reach you?) from Sansapor. A reply gave 165° (The approximate magnetic course is 165°). The pilot was hesitant to follow this course as it did not seem correct for the position in which he believed he was, but on the advice of the navigator, he turned to the new heading. This decision started the trouble. After 45 minutes without making a landfall, it was apparent that they were not near base,

and their position was entirely unknown to them. An (I intend to ask for a series of bearings) was sent at 0215 while flying at 10,000 feet. Here the second misfortune occurred. Three stations started sending and in spite of the plane's request for all stations except Sansapor to stay off the air, various unknown stations continued to send, and jammed the frequency. Finally a course of 240° was understood although the transmitting station was unknown. One hour's gas remained at the time the new course was taken up. At 0240 a light was spotted to the south and a course set toward the light. A water landing seemed inevitable so the waist windows were chopped out and guns and ammunition were jettisoned in preparation. During the chopping the radio receiver was damaged, so the operator, observing that his transmitter was still functioning, tied down the key in hopes that the ground stations would get a fix and arrange a rescue. At 0250 from 20 feet the light was discovered to be a burning oil tank. The plane flew down a near-by landing strip and observed a flashing green light evidently inviting a landing. The strip looked serviceable and one crew member suggested landing although all now realized that the strip under them was Boela airdrome. The pilot vetoed this suggestion as he did not feel they could destroy the airplane in time to prevent compromise. A 90° turn to the left carried them out to sea and into a rainstorm. No anti-aircraft fire was received from Boela which, along with the flashing green light, suggests that the enemy was expecting one of their planes or knowing the predicament of this plane, hoped to capture it.

The fuel gauges now indicated empty, but the pilot decided to continue until he was out of the rain and had the benefit of visibility before attempting the landing. With only occasional glimpses of the water beneath, he was unable to judge his altitude. Altitude was lost and before he wished, the fuselage was dragging through the water. The pilot called for flaps, but before he had more than 10°, the water landing was underway. The plane hit at 0308 on a 90° course into easy ground swells approximately three feet high. The position was just east of Boela. The landing was rough and was made without a warning to the crew.

The tail section was torn away in the crash and could not be seen. Although both the co-pilot and radio operatr pulled the life raft release, the raft was not out of its compartment when the radio operator made his exit. He re-entered the plane, which was rapidly filling with water and again gave the release a series of violent tugs, but the raft still refused to break out. He climbed on top of the fuselage and finding the door of the raft compartment unlatched but jammed, forced it open and pulled out the raft. The pilot, the co-pilot, and the radio operator boarded the raft immediately and, guided by the cries of those still in the water, started picking up survivors. The Intelligence Officer and the engineer were picked up in the immediate vicinity. The bombardier was a poor swimmer and in addition had a defective life vest. He expended all his efforts in remaining afloat without regard to his position and had drifted approximately 250 yards away from the plane when picked up 20 minutes later. (One cartridge in the life vest was lost in the plane prior to landing, when he was checking the apparatus; the valve was open in the other compartment and the gas escaped when the cylinder was punctured).

The plane sank approximately 45 seconds after landing. The fuselage was so badly damaged it could not possibly have remained afloat for so long a time except for the buoyancy furnished by the empty tanks.

As soon as all were certain beyond doubt that there were no more survivors in the water, the raft was allowed to drift southeast approximately five miles off the coast. All personal kits were lost in the crash. The emergency equipment in the raft and four pistols were the only supplies salvaged. All were well clothed with shoes and leggings. The entire crew except the pilot vomited from the salt water which they had swallowed. Two syrettes of morphine were administered to the engineer and his wound was sprinkled with sulpha powder and bandaged.

At daybreak all hands had recovered physically and were in good spirits. Various Allied planes passed overhead and the party felt they would soon be spotted. During the morning hours the engineer suffered considerably and at noon the pilot decided to land and attempt to set the leg. The sail was raised and the raft took up a westerly

The water was rough, the beach pebbly, but riding the waves in a mattress cover at Sansapor was top drawer recreation.

Volleyball in the tropics' humidity was a strenuous game. The immense tree is typical of the type of jungle giant that had to be cleared before the camp could be erected.

The Group softball team took everything in the area. They found few teams that could give them any real competition.

course in a good breeze that carried the craft through the Bay of Boela within a mile of shore. No activity was observed on the coast, except that the fire in the oil storage tank which served as a beacon the previous night was still burning. While approaching the beach, several of the crew thought they saw a native watching them, but he was hidden in the fringe of the jungle and they were not positive on this point. In view of later events it seems likely that they were observed at this time.

A beachhead was made at 1730 at a point midway between Bay of Boela and Ingelas Bay on the northeast coast of Ceram. Just prior to landing, a K-ration was opened, but the contents were soaked in salt water and after a cracker per man had been rationed out, no edible portion remained. Three emergency water cans were on hand. On landing, the injured gunner was carried to the beach, the equipment was stacked nearby and the raft was hidden in the mangroves which bordered the beach.

The pilot made a short reconnaissance trip. and on return posted a sentry 75 yards on either side of the party. The bombardier was on the east flank and the Intelligence Officer on the west. The co-pilot and radio operator administered the last remaining syrette of morphine to the engineer and under the supervision of the pilot attempted to set the bone. This caused excruciating pain and after pulling the leg with all their strength in an unsuccessful attempt to position the bone properly, it was given up as an impossible job. They decided to splint the leg with sticks to prevent movement of the bone. They were engaged in this when the sentry on the east gave an alarm, calling out the single word "Japs".

The pilot immediately ran to the west flank and asked the sentry there to rejoin the party. The party gathered around the injured member with pistols drawn; a hurried conference was held with some members wishing to fight it out while others felt it would be best to be taken prisoner of war. The pilot decided on the latter course, as flight with the injured man was impossible and the small party with only four pistols and limited ammunition could not hope to hold off an attack if unable to retreat and hide.

Meanwhile a party of five Japs and one native had jumped the bombardier from the rear as he was guarding the eastern approach to the beachhead. A bayonet was placed across his throat but he managed to give the alarm in spite of increased pressure applied to the bayonet. The Japs did a great deal of unintelligible jabbering as they tied the bombardier's hands crossed behind him with the straps from his Mae West. During the short struggle before he was subdued he attempted to fire his pistol but it would not operate although he operated the slide manually several times. One of the Japs was identified as an officer by his Samurai sword and his complete uniform, including a cap upon which was pinned a bar similar to our First Lieutenant's insignia. The remainder of the group was dressed in nondescript clothing with no uniformity. One was armed with a pistol similar to a Luger; the officer carried the large Samurai sword which all identified, having seen similar weapons previously among battle trophies; the balance of the intruders were armed with bayonets, and all the fliers agreed that each had one more of those weapons. The native wore only a pair of shorts and was bearded. He was described as light-skinned compared to the natives previously seen in the Solomon Islands. He communicated with the Japs by hand signs only. All seemed mostly concerned about the disposition of the American's jungle knife which was attached to his belt, but it is believed that it was finally given to the native, possibly as a reward for his duplicity.

After the capture was completed, the Jap officer asked the captive in good English how many were in the party.

When the American hesitated in his reply, the Jap, perhaps uncertain of his English, hold up two fingers and pointed toward the beachhead. The bombardier nodded affirmatively; this underestimate of the strength of the survivors possibly accounts for their defeat in the ensuing fight. One Jap and the native were left with the captive and the remaining four approached the American party in single file down a narrow footpath.

As the Japs approached, the pilot again cautioned his crew against resistance; all had their hands up (three had pistols in their right hands) and several called out that they desired to surrender. For some reason the enemy showed no inclination to take prisoners. Perhaps they were confused by a larger group than they expected and suspected a trap; perhaps they felt the one officer captive was sufficient for interrogation, and for the glory of the Emperor decided to annihilate the invaders.

They attacked on the run, brandishing their weapons. Several of the defenders fired, but only the pistol held by the radio operator functioned. He shot the Jap officer through the forehead after the officer had hurtled the injured engineer lying on the sand and was about to strike with the sword. The action during the next few seconds is confused. Drawing from the mental pictures retained by the survivors, the following facts are established. The pilot was knocked off his feet and the co-pilot deflected a bayonet plunge aimed at the pilot's back. Meanwhile the radio operator had shot a third Jap through the chest and the fourth in an unobserved spot, but both were out of the struggle. Seeing the party struggling on the ground, he went to their help and shot the last of the attackers point blank under his right shoulder, causing him to relinquish his hold.

The last seen of the Intelligence Officer was at the beginning of the action. He was standing on the edge of the jungle pointing his pistol, which failed to fire, at the oncoming party. All agree he must have attempted an escape in the jungle. Some believe the Jap armed with a pistol fired at him; the bombardier believes he heard only .45 caliber shots, which discredits the belief that the Intelligence Officer was fired upon.

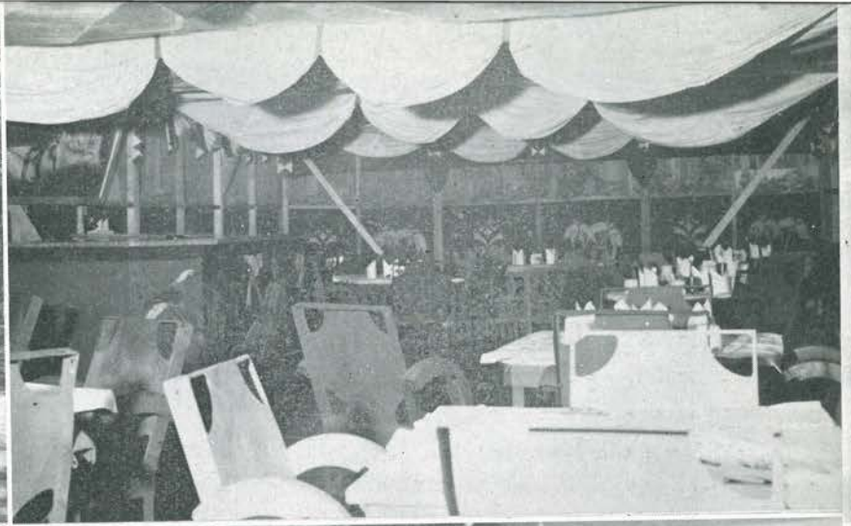
The bombardier was sitting on the ground during the battle with the guard of two nearby. The native seemed unhappy and ashamed about the whole affair and dropped his eyes each time the captive glanced in his direction. The Jap did not speak. After the action was over, the bombardier, certain that the Americans had been taken, arose and walked down the trail with the Jap following. The beach party, equally certain that the bombardier had been executed, were rapidly proceeding to evacuate in case additional patrols were near. As the two approached, the Jap, possibly shocked by what he saw, offered no resistance as the co-pilot stepped forward and connected with a very accurate and very hard blow to the chin, knocking him to the ground. The radio operator now stepped forward to administer the *coup de grace* with the muzzle resting on the Nip's head. The pistol misfired; the radio operator then struck him on the head with the muzzle but the blow was not sufficient to drop him and he scrambled off into the brush at a speed reported by all as amazing. The radio operator, in a last offensive gesture, threw the pistol at the retreating shape and the engagement was concluded.

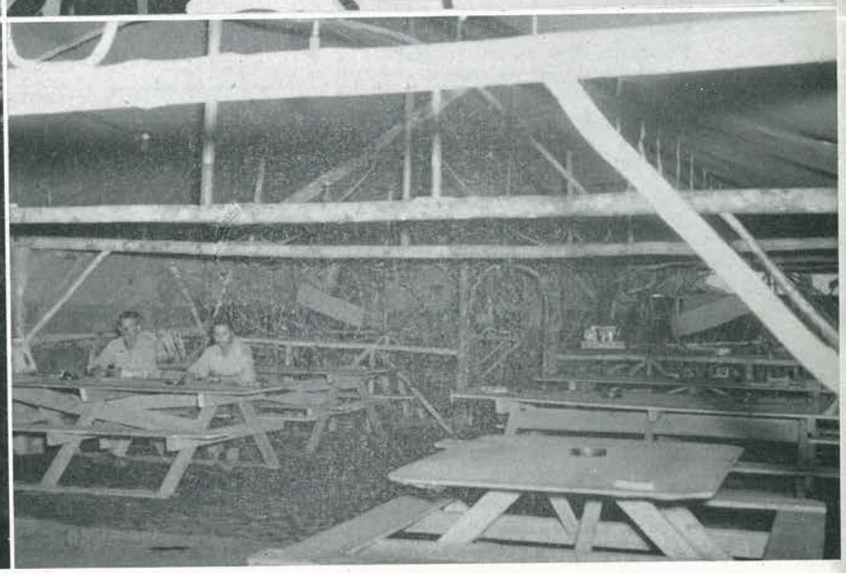
The Japs were described as appearing well fed and in excellent condition. One carried a pair of binoculars. The pilot ordered the party to take no souvenirs and make no further examinations of the bodies or effects, as a hurried retreat seemed discreet.

By 1810 the raft had been pushed to sea with the five survivors aboard. When darkness fell the craft was about two miles off shore; the sea anchor was dropped, and the party prepared to spend the night with no definite plans laid for the following day. This night was the most torturous period of the entire eight days. The engineer was delirious most of the night. The sea was rough, making it impossible to remain dry, and the air and water were very cold. The survivors huddled together to furnish a little warmth to each other.

Daybreak of the seventh was welcome. An inventory was taken and it was found that almost the entire meager supply of emergency equipment had been lost on the beach. No rations, no water, and no first aid equipment were on hand. The raft was discovered to be leaking gas and losing its buoyancy. At 1000 it was decided to try the beach again, but at a different spot. The sail had been lost and all day long the party struggled to make progress on their course. One paddled while two stayed in the water and swam, pushing the raft ahead of them.

Bulldozers aided in clearing this baseball diamond. The Group nine was good enough to take the Sansapor Series.





Top: Holiday Inn, where the elite met to mess. The Group Officers' Club at Sansapor was a very classy joint. Fred dealt out a chicken-fried Spam that was simply superb.
Above: Any rumor that Chaplain Houde was on the Holiday Inn mural committee is sheer canard. These happened when he wasn't looking.

Top: The interior of Holiday Inn had a tasty, if somewhat salvaged, appearance.

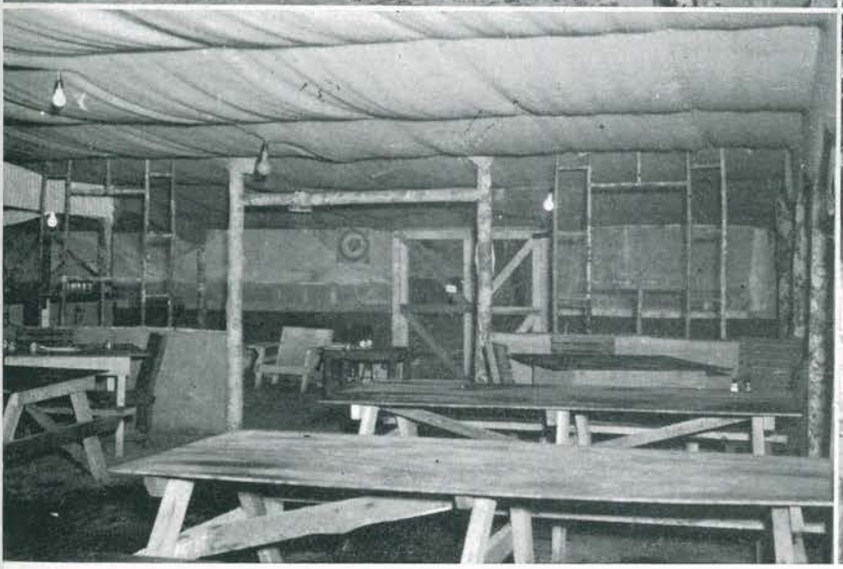
Above: The interior of the 70th Day Room. The parqueted floor was made of bomb fin crate lids.

Shore was reached after dark, at about 2000. The last 50 yards to shore against the swells was described as a nightmare, and exact details are lacking. The raft was almost entirely deflated, and it was feared that the injured member might be lost.

On landing, the party, completely exhausted, left the raft on the beach and made their way 50 yards inland, where the burden of the incapacitated member became too great and they dropped on the spot, falling to sleep immediately. At 0200 they awakened and made another 50 yards inland, but again they found their burden too exhausting and were forced to stop the trek. At this stage a simple litter was constructed and thereafter movement was easier. Before daybreak another 100 yards was covered. All hands retired again, but were awakened at daybreak by a wild pig wandering near their location. This was daybreak of the eighth, the third morning away from base.

The jungle was not dense. Visibility through the trees was at least 25 yards. The bombardier and co-pilot left at daybreak to forage for food, returning about noon with three cocoanuts and a quart of water from a nearby stream. This expedition also picked up a good idea of the neighboring terrain. After lunch the party again moved in an effort to find a camp spot near the stream from which the water had been obtained. A native trail was discovered, and this facilitated the progress. At 1430 a large sheltering tree was spotted 15 yards off the trail and it was decided to make an overnight camp at this point. The two lieutenants again went after water and the party settled down to rest.

At about 1630 voices were heard on the trail and two apparently unarmed Japs were observed plodding along the trail laden with large packs. Hunger almost overcame discretion and an attack on the two with clubs was taken under consideration, but realizing their obligation to the helpless engineer, the men discarded the thought.



Top: Much rustic artistry went into the erection of the 70th Enlisted Men's Club, "Rest Leave."

Above: Interior of the 70th Officers' Mess.

Top: The 70th Officers mess and club. Erected entirely by commissioned labor, it represented a radical departure from local architectural precepts.

Above: The 390th Officers' mess, reading room, recreation hall, bar and cocktail lounge at Sansapor. Leggings were de rigeur for and chigger-carried scrub typhus.

The party rested well that night and awoke the morning of the ninth much improved in spirits. In discussing their situation all concurred in the opinion that they could hide out and live in the jungle until help came. A valuable contribution to the improved morale was the attitude of the engineer, who declared he was feeling much better and that a great deal of his pain had subsided. He joked about his predicament, and this spirit was an inspiration to the rest.

After daylight they again hit the trail and made their way to the stream, which they followed downstream to within 150 yards of the beach. Here their final camp site was established. On the second day at this location a crude lean-to was constructed as a shelter against rain.

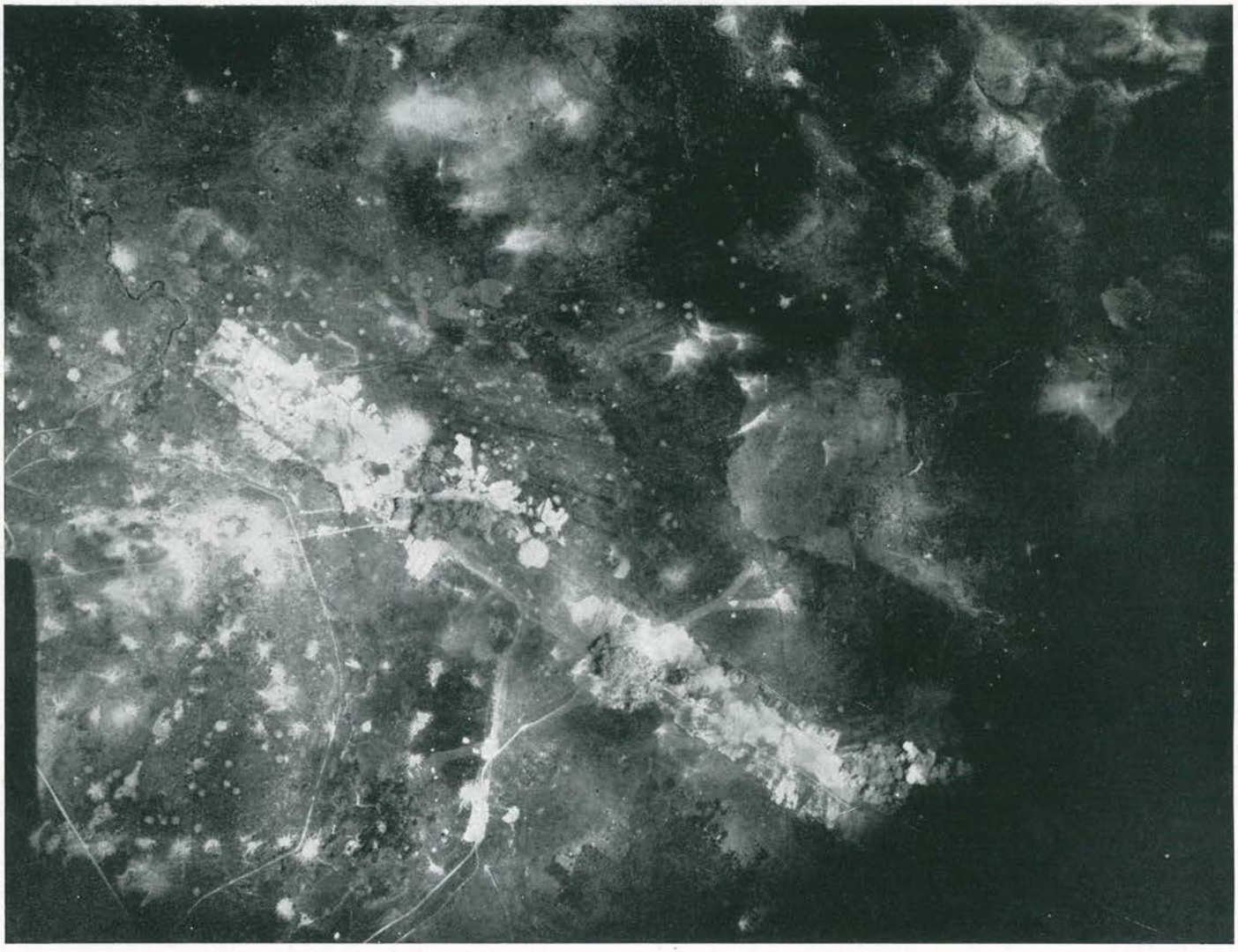
From this time to the morning of the 13th their life was comparatively uneventful. Cocoanuts were found in an adjacent grove, along with a few lemons. The lemons were reported to have furnished a decided pick-up. The radio operator was ill for several days as a result of eating a green cocoanut, but had recovered before their rescue. The engineer's wound showed no sign of infection, but was infested with maggots, which possibly explains the lack of infection. It was powdered daily with sulpha which was becoming so scarce that the others did not use it on their less serious cuts. Water from the stream was convenient for drinking and bathing. Drops of iodine were added to the water for several days, but the vial was lost during the trek, and it was drunk thereafter without treatment and without any ill effects. Chiggers, ants, flies, and mosquitos were abundant and bothersome. Game was plentiful but could not be killed without weapons. Two watchers were dispatched to the beach each day and on the approach of friendly planes scratched out a sign reading "HELP—FOOD." Late one night the party believed they heard a motor-driven barge or a float plane landing at or near Boela.

Many planes passed overhead during the four-day period of waiting. Twelve P-47's flew low over their

position on the morning of the twelfth, and they were certain their message had been seen by at least two. This later proved to be correct. Their greatest disappointment came later the same day when a Catalina searched up and down at low altitude only a mile off shore. Despite a mirror which was flashed at the plane as long as it was in sight, they were not seen.

On the morning of the thirteenth at 0900, two B-25's flew over the area and spotted the survivors. These planes stayed in the area for about 20 minutes dropping candy bars, an Australian jungle kit, and a signal flare. At 1000 a Catalina landed, protected by the two P-47's which had made the sighting the previous day. The two pilots, unable to contact a rescue plane the preceeding day, had returned to base and volunteered to lead the rescue plane to the spot the following day.

A boat was sent ashore, and by 1130 all were aboard ready for take-off. The co-pilot attempted to swim to the plane to avoid overloading the small boat, but did not count on his diminished strength and was saved by the Catalina pilot, who dived into the water and assisted him to safety. The narrative ends with the five survivors receiving hospital treatment at 1430.



On September 16, 1944, Namlea Township Airdrome was ripped from end to end by 42nd bombardiers.

CHAPTER 17

Scheduled bombing had of course gone on during the search for Colonel Spencer, and other heckling missions were dispatched. Lieutenant McLaughlin of the 390th led a successful medium level strike over Kaoe on the 5th of October, followed by Lieut. R. H. Partrick on the 6th. Searching on the 8th, Lieut. J. J. Collins of this Squadron sighted a life raft off Cape Balansoe and summoned Dumbo; this sortie also reported the oil tanks at Boela aflame. Lieut. J. R. Campbell, 70th, had a rough time on the night of the 10th. His left engine cut out near Namlea at 0015. After the crew had salvoed bombs and jettisoned everything that could be spared to lighten the ship, the refractory engine cut in again and pulled a bare 15 inches for a limping trip home in the small hours.

On a weather and photo reconnaissance over Ambon, Laha, Liang, and Haroekoe, Lieut. L. J. Ruff, 390th, dropped bombs among 11 barges and strafed 700 rounds into them, using his last bomb and remaining rounds to strafe the lighthouse on Manipa Island. Lieut. B. Houser was in the lead of his flight of the 390th hitting Laha.

Lieut. John J. Darragh of the 390th, taking off for a late afternoon combat strike on Sorong, met with a take-off accident from which all members of the crew escaped, although three were injured.

It is not often that an opportunity presents itself to relate an instance of the quiet heroism of Air Force medics, although the traditions of the medical branch of the air arm are as proud as those of the ground forces. A remarkable display of courage and devotion to duty

was a feature of this unfortunate accident, which offers a fine illustration of the part the Group medical staffers played in its accomplishments. From a 390th press release:

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, SOUTHWEST PACIFIC.—Three members of a fire-fighting unit who were critically injured and burned in the freak crash of a bomb-laden Army aircraft at a New Guinea airfield, owe their lives to the quick action of Capt. Albert H. Meyer of Brooklyn, N. Y., Flight Surgeon in a medium bombardment squadron of the 13th AAF. Though himself injured by flying shrapnel, Captain Meyer remained at the scene of the accident with two medical corpsmen, rendering aid to other victims until ambulances arrived.

The accident occurred as a flight of Mitchell medium bombers was taking off for a raid in the Netherlands East Indies. Captain Meyer was standing by at the take-off with two medical corpsmen, S/Sgt. Eldon O. Iverson of Papillion, Nebraska, and Pfc. Charles V. Crooks of Manhattan, Kansas, when the last bomber in the formation blew a tire as it was about to leave the ground. The airplane careened to the left across the runway, and Captain Meyer immediately started for the scene in a jeep, followed by his assistants in an ambulance. They arrived on the spot as the plane crashed into an embankment at the left of the runway, bursting into flames.

Leaving their vehicles, the Captain and his aids approached to within 30 feet of the plane as a fire-fighting crew attempted to repel the flames of burning gasoline sufficiently to permit the crew of the plane to escape. The plane carried a ton of high explosive bombs which all knew would be set off by the flames in a matter of seconds. The fire fighters succeeded in driving the flames to the forward end of the ship and Captain Meyer and the men closed in, hoping to assist the plane crew to escape through midship and tail hatches. Airfield workers who did not know that the plane carried bombs also approached to help, and about 30 persons were in immediate vicinity when the bombs exploded.

The Doctor did not know at the time that the airplane's mid-section had broken apart on the opposite side from his position and that this fortunate development afforded the plane crew an extra means of escape which all were able to use before the detonation.

The blast of the exploding bombs threw the aid party and bystanders to the ground, all receiving wounds from flying shrapnel. Captain Meyer received a fragment in the right shoulder which twirled him around and threw him to his knees. Iverson and Crooks were also caught by shrapnel, another fragment opening a deep four-inch cut in Crooks' back.

Captain Meyer was the first to recover, and disregarding his own injuries, assisted Crooks and Iverson to their feet and hastily ascertained that their wounds, while bleeding profusely, could be treated later. The three immediately set about rendering first aid to the other injured. Their ambulance and jeep had been demolished by the explosion, but another soon arrived on the scene and Captain Meyer dispatched the most seriously wounded to a field hospital, continuing to aid other injured until more ambulances and another physician and assistants arrived to take over. Private Crooks was also sent to the hospital, but Captain Meyer and Sergeant Iverson declined to go, and accepted treatment themselves only when the other victims had been attended.

There was an ironic twist given to this mishap, for after the crew got away safely, four bystanders were killed outright when the plane exploded. Another Crusader standing by for "rescue-duty" was Pfc. Thomas Day. Although hurt by the blast, Day stayed on the job assisting in attending the wounded. He was later awarded the Soldier's Medal, while Captain Meyer, Sergeant Iverson and Pfc. Crooks received letters of commendation from General Kenny, Commanding General of the Far Eastern Air Forces.

* * *

One of the Borneo targets that was later to receive our personal attention was the important oil-producing center of Balikpapan. Combined heavy units of the 5th and 13th Air Forces hit this target in mid-October, flying through a terrific concentration of flak, and ward-

Jap oil goes up in flames and billowing smoke after the 42nd bombed the Boela oilfield on Eastern Ceram September 27, 1944.

Laha Airdrome on Ambon Island was an elaborate Jap airfield installation with excellent repair facilities, revetted supplies and personnel quarters. Most of these went up in flames during the 42nd's two strikes of which this photo taken October 2, 1944, demonstrates the effect of one.

Jap supplies and living quarters took a working over on November 9 when Amoerang Town was bombed.

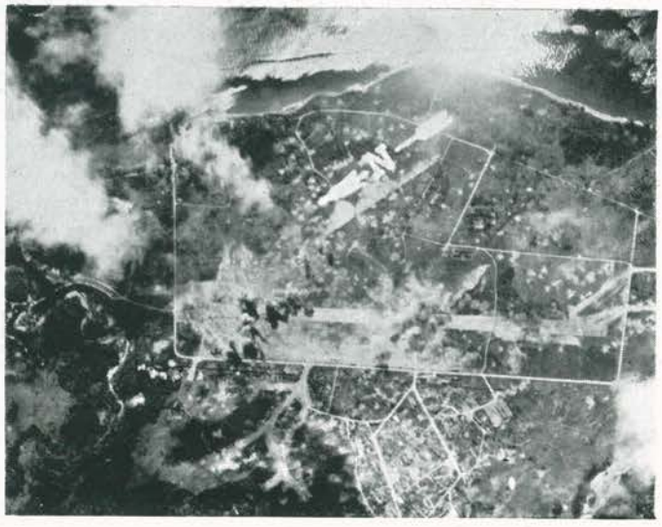
ing off enemy fighter planes in running battles of an hour and even longer. Mar Strip at Sansapor became the sanctuary for the lads in the B-24s coming back from "Balik", for the strike represented a gruelling 15 to 16-hour mission. Low on gas, or carrying wounded personnel in need of medical attention, the hospitality of the Crusaders was extended to these long-rangers on several different occasions. Between the 10th and 15th of the month, one or all Crusader squadrons moved over to Wakde for a night, to permit the B-24 crews returning from the long Balikpapan haul to use the Mar Strip. Group and Squadron Intelligence Officers assisted in interrogating these crews, who were then housed overnight with the squadrons.

During this period the general or "Nan" search was inaugurated. This was a search by sectors of the area west of the Vogelkop, the purpose of which was to maintain vigilant guard against enemy shipping moving either north or south. After the Balikpapan strikes, instructions were given to searchers to be particularly watchful for survivors of ditched B-24s. The importance of the continuing neutralization and destruction of Molucca area airdromes was well illustrated during these first Liberator strikes on Balik. Morotai, Noemfoor, and Biak were crowded with aircraft parked nose to nose at periods during the month, and one enemy attacker could undoubtedly have knocked out many, many times his value in heavy and medium bombers and fighters—had there been a serviceable airfield for him to take off from. No raider made his appearance, and the strategic strikes were accomplished.

An uninterrupted offensive was pushed through the balance of October with first one squadron and then another carrying the ball. Returning from an unsuccessful attempt to reach Ambon on the 14th, S/Sgt. William I. West, an engineer-gunner of the 70th, proved himself a navigator of great capability when he navigated Lieut. John P. Witt's plane home through some of the most difficult weather encountered in the Squadron's history. The initial complication for Lieutenant Witt was a wrong heading given by another plane's navigator and not discovered until considerable fuel had been wasted. With the aid of Sergeant West, the crew cleared a 10,000 foot peak on Ceram, flying on instruments, and made it safely back to base. West received an official commendation from General Kenny for this feat.

On the 17th, the 100th staged a notably successful attack on Namlea from medium attitude. Lieut. Frank D. Unetic, lead bombardier, dropped 90% of his bombs squarely on the target, with the black and white smoke resulting seen to climb to 2,000 feet. The relentless pounding of Ambon cost the 70th Lieut. Harold Watts and crew. In the course of an attack on October 20th, the formation encountered fierce AA from Amahai, Ambon, Laha, Liang, and Haroekoe. Bursts came in triplicate, building up from 9,500, 10,000 and 10,500 almost simultaneously. The fire bracketed the second element. Lieutenant Watts, flying left wing, was hit squarely on the right engine, which exploded. The plane did a falling leaf and fell sharply away, almost on its back. The flaming plane disappeared into an undercast at 8,000 feet. Reports of members of the crew taking to parachutes could not be satisfactorily confirmed.

Records show that on the 17th, a 390th newcomer, Capt. James E. Robison, flew one of his first leads, a shipping sweep of the Halmaheras, which bagged two barges. Captain Robison joined the Group at Hollandia with a long background of flying in the States, finishing up as Assistant A-3 of the Second Tactical Air Command. He attended the Command and General Staff



After the strike of November 23, 1944, the strip at Laha, southwest of Ambon Town was again inoperative.

School before going overseas to make his name as a Crusader and later as the Squadron Commander of the 75th.

The intensive combat schedule of October makes it a trying task indeed to select the most difficult, successful or noteworthy missions without slighting some squadron. On the 25th the 100th marked its first year overseas. Ambon and Piroe Town were well pasted by the 69th, Lieut. James W. Weaver leading; 70th, Capt. Andrew Elliott leading; 100th, led on its 130th mission by Lieut. Herbert J. Sunderman; and 390th, Capt. Short leading. The 69th marked its 300th mission in the Pacific this day. A mild flurry of excitement swept the squadrons on October 26th-27th; an alert was received in connection with the naval battle of the Sulu Sea. However, the Jap fleet was dispersed and the alert ended without action.

The 28th proved a good day for barge harrying. Capt. John F. Wolfe, 75th, out on the northern sector of the Nan search with Lieuts. Robert A. Plympton and Edward Powlenko, attacked three 40-foot barges at the fork of the Ngoala and Kaoe rivers and a camouflaged 75-footer near Pasirpoetih Town, using 2000 rounds on each fray. The 69th and 70th hit Ambon with a spate of quarter-tonners, removing the artillery barracks and occupants from the scene. Lieut. V. R. Fetner led the 69th.

On leaving the target, Lieut. E. W. Johnson, flying wing on Lieut. W. B. Spicer's 70th formation, saw two 50-foot power boats and a 30-foot barge between Poea and Boano Islands. He fired 1100 rounds on two strafing runs, setting one power boat afire and exploding the other.

Lieut. Robert S. Moyna led the 390th's six over Hatetabako runway late on the morning of the 29th to drop quarter-tonners on the north dispersal area. Lieut. R. H. Partrick, out on the Squadron's weather mission, ran into heavy weather and light flak damage over Galela, returning to Sansapor on one engine.

Hitting Piroe again on the 30th, Lieut. V. R. Fetner, in the lead of the 69th, had his hydraulic system shot out by intense, accurate heavy AA. Lieut. A. F. Alagna took over the lead, and with two additional runs succeeded in getting all bombs away.

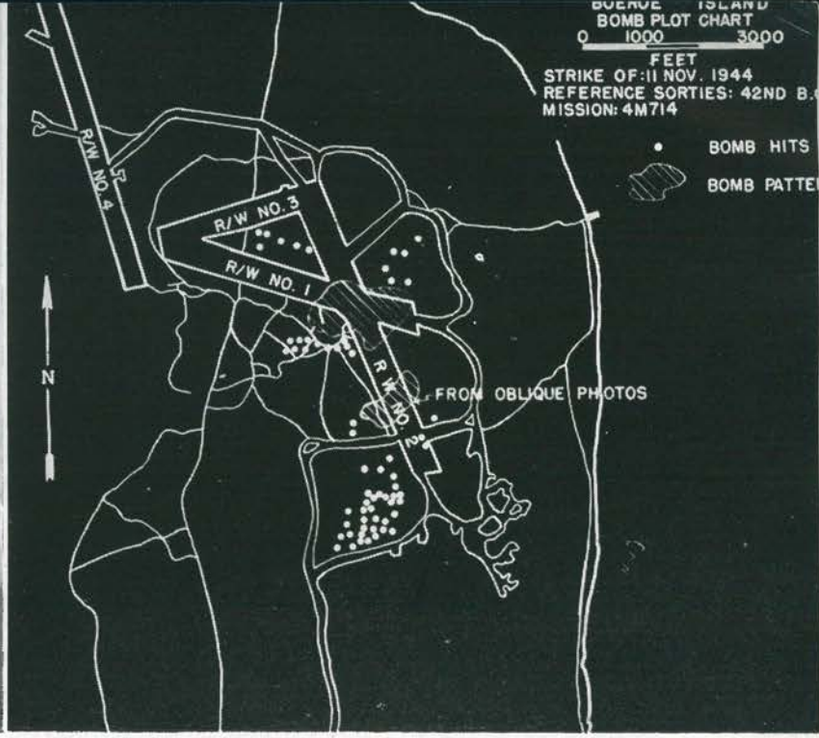
Strikes on Miti, Piroe, and Soebaim, with a variety of reconnaissances, closed out the month. All squadron historians agreed with the Group recorder that October was the busiest month in the Group's history. Five squadrons were kept in operation on a round-the-clock schedule for all concerned. One hundred and seventeen missions were dispatched involving 950 sorties. The total bombing for the month was not impressive by itself, but this was more than accounted for by the large number of photographic and search missions which did not expend either bombs or ammunition. The sections had few idle moments in October, with bomb loading, maintenance, and meals at all hours of the day and night.

A headlined story appearing in the El Reno, Oklahoma, papers in October related a development of great importance within the Crusader ranks—assumption of Command by a veteran of "the other war."

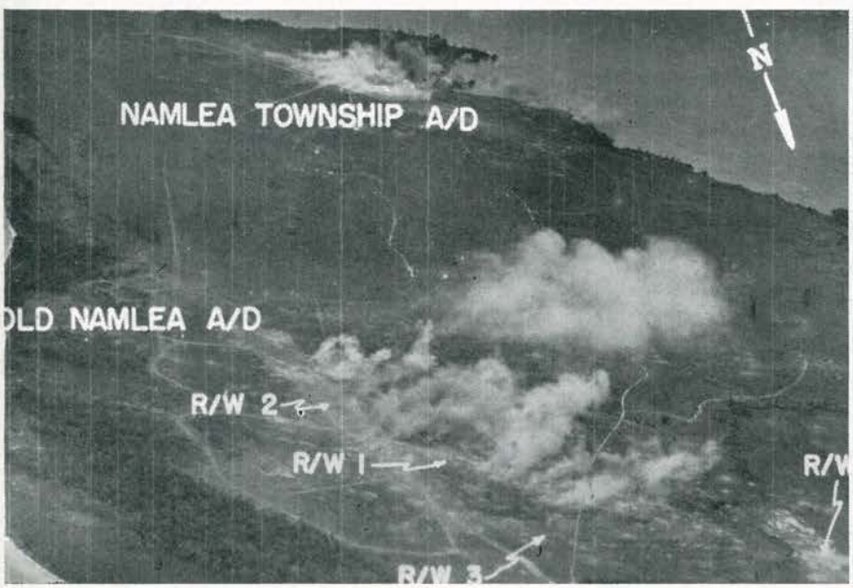
HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS————In October, a B-25 Billy Mitchell banked a sharp turn into the pattern at the AAF's most advanced base in the Netherlands East Indies. Bulldozers and engineers were still working on the strip as the plane greased in to land, tired and empty from a mission to the Jap airfield at Namlea, Boeroe Island.

Col. Charles C. Kegelman, El Reno, commanding officer of the Crusaders, 13th AAF veterans of the Solomons and Rabaul, taxied into a revetment and completed his first mission in his third war theatre.

On July 4, 1942, the El Reno airman led the first American mission to German-held territory, landing his A-20 Havoc on one engine after a wild return ride that made headlines in every American newspaper. For nine months after that, as Squadron Commander, he led his planes against Channel ports and Nazi airfields. When the African invasion began, General "Jimmy" Doolittle sent him to Southern Tunisia, where, with a P-38 fighter group, his squadron of A-20s constituted the entire American Air Force during the early days of the campaign.



Destruction of the five strips at Namlea, Boeroe Island, presented no problem to 42nd bombardiers. On 11 November, runways No. 1, 2, and Township A/D were found operational. All three were knocked out as the result of some pretty precision bombing that smashed the junction of No. 1 and No. 2, and for good measure knocked out three medium gun positions located in the triangle between the runways.



Namlea Town, set on the southwest shores of Boeroe Island, was the supply center for the five strips around the town. This photo shows one of the medium altitude strikes that virtually destroyed the town. The 70th's Lt. Robert Petrucka was on the Norden for the formation.

After three months in North Africa, its planes flown to junk, and without replacements, the Squadron's flying personnel were returned to the States. Here, for the next 14 months, the pilot who had landed in England with the first American airmen as a Captain and had returned a Lieutenant Colonel, imparted his combat knowledge to fledgelings in his own country. Then, at his request, he was transferred to the Southwest Pacific in September, 1944.

New Guinea was a far cry from El Reno, Oklahoma, his home and the home of his wife and parents. Colonel Kegelman was graduated from El Reno High school, attended Oklahoma Military Academy, and was graduated from Oklahoma University in 1936. His desire to fly then led him to Texas and to his wings and commission in 1937. With the advent of World War II he got ever farther and farther from Oklahoma. The Colonel was, inevitably, asked to compare flying in the ETO with the Crusaders' flying in the Pacific, and his remarks are worthy of quotation.

"This is rough country," he said. "Rough to live in, and rough to fly in. I've never known an area to be as

Haroekoe Airdrome, another Jap installation in the Ceram area gets its face changed on December 28, 1944. The strike left it out of operation.

unforgiving of errors on the part of plane crews. In England and Africa we worried about interception and flak, but not about getting to the target or getting back from it. We had accurate and up-to-the minute weather information. If an engine quit over England, it was a rare instance when you couldn't limp into a near-by emergency field; if you "ditched" in the channel, an Air-Sea Rescue Boat was on its way to you before you had your life raft inflated; the worst you could expect was a safe but dreary captivity if you had to bail out over the continent.

"That isn't true out here. There are no emergency strips or open fields to skid an ailing plane into. If you ditch in the Pacific, unless you have planes from your own squadron along with you, you can look forward to hunger and thirst and possible eventual death in an open raft while planes search thousands of square miles of open water for you. If you bail out in sight of enemy gunners you'll never live to touch ground, and if you land in enemy territory you face almost certain death if you are caught.

"Our crews take off with meagre or no weather information. CAVU weather enroute to the target doesn't mean CAVU weather coming home. There's nothing a flyer fears more than the sight of an enormous tropical front filled with rain, turbulence, and thunderheads between him and his base. Whole formations have been forced to fly themselves out of gas to get around them. Navigation here differs from that in Europe; instead of flying from one landmark to another, from a road junction to a power line to a bend in a river, the planes cross mile after mile of open ocean. Errors in navigation are costly. Faulty navigation and weather cost us men and airplanes.

"Most flyers fear the weather more than combat. Our flights are long. When 13th AAF heavies hit Balikpapan, Borneo, from Noemfoor for instance, they flew about 3000 miles—that's farther *to* the target than bombers hitting Berlin from England fly on the round trip. On one of those missions they had a running battle with Nip interceptors for 45 minutes at the end of eight tiring hours of flying, then had eight more hours to fly with damaged planes and wounded men. That's a strain."

The colonel grinned ruefully when the question of months of jungle life and its psychological effect was brought up.

"I think", he declared, "the maddest man I have ever known was an officer who received a letter from a friend in Europe shortly after the invasion began in June. The officer had been in the Solomons for several months, then came to New Guinea. For nearly a year he had lived in nothing but tents, got all his drinking water from a canteen, and shaved daily in a helmet, had never had an adequate supply of fresh water, and could count on his fingers the days each month he had fresh meat, and who, while reading the letter, had to move his bed twice to get away from the rain streaming through new leaks in his tent.

"The friend was complaining bitterly about the rigors of the invasion. He had to live for a week in a tent in an apple orchard in Normandy, and hadn't been able to shave because he hadn't yet found an outlet of the same voltage as his electric razor!

"Not only are the living conditions tougher, the opportunities for civilized relaxation are non-existent. The European flyer, when he completes a mission, can take off for town, drop in at the local pub, go to a dance, or perhaps have a date. When the Pacific flyer lands and finishes his C ration dinner, he can read, go to bed, or join a bull session, or read, go to bed, or join a bull session. At night there's a movie. Hundreds of thousands of men in the Pacific during the past three years have lived that existence.

"Whenever the flyers here think of the opportunities for relaxation and entertainment afforded the flyers in Europe their one desire is to see the reactions of those flyers after V-E Day, when they get out here. Even that prospect is dulled by the probability that some will be

Three who figured in the rescue of fire fighters after the explosion of a B-25 on Mar Strip, Sansapor. They are, left to right: Capt. Albert H. Meyer, Flight Surgeon, Pvt. Charles V. Crooks, and S/Sgt. Eldon O. Iverson, medics.

lucky enough to get stationed in the comparative civilization of even the more remote parts of the Philippines. It's a dead cinch that any comments made by the transferred ETO flyers will be met with the Pacific battle cry, 'You shoulda been here when it was *rough!*'

"Of course, we'll admit that during the time of actual combat, the ETO crews have a tougher time. We pull strafing missions at negligible cost out here that would be fatal over German territory. German fighter pilots are a hardier, more persistent lot, but at the same time they don't show any willingness to make suicide crash attacks such as the Japs frequently make. German anti-aircraft gunners will not duck behind the revetments and cease firing when a strafing plane throws a squirt at them. They'll stick to their guns and trade burst for burst. Point your nose at a Jap position, however, and the Nip turns gopher.

"Pacific flyers do of course get occasional rest leaves in Australia. After each 15 or 20 missions they are sent to Sydney for a week of rest and recuperation. The ear banging that goes on after a man returns from Sydney generally indicates he's had plenty of recuperation, but very little rest. Rest, sleep, or as it is called in the Jungle, "sack time" is a drug on the market in New Guinea, where 12 hours sleep a night is not uncommon.

"Ground crews are not so fortunate. Lucky is the officer or enlisted man who gets to Australia after 15 or 20 months in the bush. The ground crews have a rumor afloat that you can tell when a man needs a rest leave by watching him walk. If he walks sideways between two mountain peaks 20 miles apart, it means that the hills have closed in on him and it's time he got a chance to see a town. Returning GI's say that the most soothing sound in the world is the click of leather heels on an Australian sidewalk.

"Despite the griping, the insidious comparisons made with other combat areas, there is a surprising lack of morale problems, I must say.

"The men realize that they're engaged in a nasty job, but they hold on to the knowledge that 'the damned war can't last forever.' Perhaps a better explanation is the one given me by a Staff Sergeant Intelligence Clerk the other day. He said 'Colonel, after a man takes his first look at a jungle camp, anything that happens to his morale after that is bound to be for the better.' "

This was the slight slim Oklahoman, bearing his eagles so modestly, who was to be the Group's second overseas commander, taking over from Colonel Wilson, who returned home on rotation on November 16.

Various changes in command of the squadrons took place in October. Major Henson left the 100th to become Assistant Group S-3 and Capt. Charles W. Wolfendale, the squadron's ranking pilot, and S-3, became Squadron Commander in his place.

On October 18th, Maj. Merrill W. Longwill went home on rotation, and Capt. Robert W. Thorndyke assumed command of the 75th, with Lieut. Edward Powlenko replacing Capt. Otto H. Hartwig as Operations Officer.

* *

On October 20th came the announcement that every one had been waiting for. Leyte had been invaded by

General MacArthur's troops. The "Return to the Philippines" had begun.

Although no reader who did not play a personal part in the Pacific Air War would or will believe it, a long dawn-to-dusk shipping alert on which no call materialized, and which was spent entirely in reading, writing letters, or trying to catch up on sack time on the hard briefing-benches of the S-2 shack, will often be remembered by a crewman quite as vividly as an alert that did bring a call to go out searching. One of the memorable features of these otherwise blank alerts was the multifarious S-2 "poop", bulletins, extracts, summaries, "Ditching Dope" —the forms were as varied as the content. This history would be incomplete indeed if it did not set aside a few pages in which to recall some of the fascinating facts this welcome reading material offered, and because during our Sansapor period these alerts were most constant, some of the choicest items came to light.

Some of the best laughs came from Axis Radio and Morse intercepts.

If you Have Tears, Prepare to Shed Them Now.

Tokio, In English: "Koiso is very humane in private life and writes to his grandchildren twice a month. Also, whenever he visits the grave of his parents, he wears all his decorations in order to show them to their spirits."

* * *

And Then Columbus Shouted "Banzai"

Tokio, in English: "Electrical wave armaments and optical armaments are of decisive importance in this war. Radio location has become indispensible. You will be surprised to hear that it was invented by a Japanese, Dr. . . . . Yagi."

Nazis still Advancing to Berlin

Tokio, Domestic: "German losses have been great, but Soviet losses were several times greater. In fact, Soviet losses were such that they are now not very far from Warsaw."

* * *

Next Target: New York.

Singapore, in English:—"Well-informed circles in Berlin declare that plans were approved by the Fuehrer to attack New York with robot bombs launched from submarines in the Atlantic."

* * *

Saipan as an Allied Telescope

Tokio in German: "The actual ground of Saipan Island is most suitable for the building of airfields from which heavy bombers can take off. Although Japan is a bit too far for four-engine bombers, yet the new B-29s will easily be able to reach it. Truk, the Philippines are well within reach of Saipan. *The enemy's possibilities of reconnaissance have also been extended. This is serious,* for in the past the Japanese Command had depended to a large extent on the element of surprise in military actions."

Department of Interesting Comparisons

Tokio, in Mandarin:—"The raid over Manchukuo, on the 29th by enemy America, was merely a show off; it did not cause any damage to the cities at all."

Tokio, In English:—"Bomber formations of B-29s of the China-based American Air Force raided Anshan and Dairen in Manchukuo. The loss of one enemy plane over Anshan has so far been ascertained. As announced in the communique, damage was slight and limited to residential quarters."

Tokio, Domestic:—"A few enemy bombers including B-29s came to attack Anshan in Manchukuo and Darien in Kwantun Territory the day before yesterday. Enemy raiders that penetrated to the skies of Anshan, however, were frustrated in their attempts to reach bombing height over the targets owing to activities of our 'air-dominating' units, and they fled after causing destruction to only a part of a factory."

* * *

Women's Association to Be Reorganized.

Batavia, in English:—"It has been decided to reorganize the Women's Association of Java. Those which are working separately will be now united by the Public Service Association shortly. After this, the formation of Girls' Shock Troops will be considered."

* * *

Sober Enthusiasm in Manila.

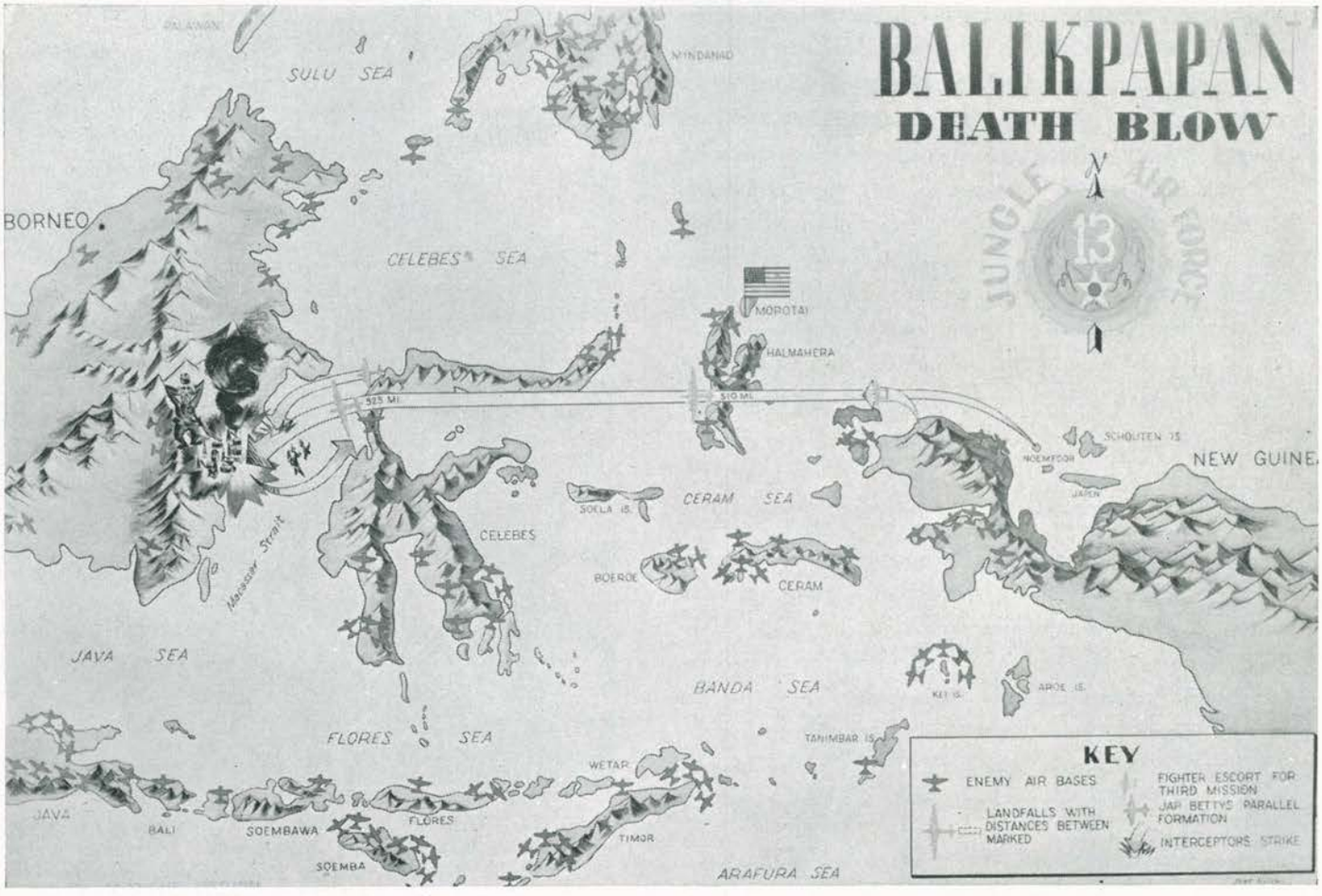
Manila, in English:—"In keeping with the spirit of the times, all night clubs, cabarets, and dancing schools in the city will close starting from tomorrow, in accordance with the executive order issued a fortnight ago by President Jose P. Laurel. Mayor Leon Guinte informed the President that the order was enthusiastically received by the general public here."

* * *

So They Waited a Couple of Days.

Tokio, 6 August, In German:—"The whole Japanese people now are ready to follow the lead of the Government and are only waiting for the day when the signal will be given. However, there is no need for excessive hurry."

Tokio, 8 August, in English:—Extract from Koiso's speech—"The opportunity for which the supreme efforts



This map, prepared by the 13th Air Force Public Relations Section, shows the route of the B-24s on their strikes at Borneo oil. Although the heavies took off from Noemfoor, the P-38s who furnished fighter support after the second mission, took off from Sansapor.

of our 100,000,000 people should be made is now at hand and will, I believe, never come again."

* * *

Department of Interesting Comparisons.

Let's Discuss This Thing Again Divisions—

Berlin, W/T:—"The big naval battle to the west of the Marianas is the most important and biggest since the outbreak of war, and its aim is to break the Americans' temporary and locally limited naval and air supremacy on Saipan. The echo in public allows the conclusion that this aim has not yet been reached in the first assault and that the battle will be continued and perhaps is already continuing at this moment. The whole Japanese air and sea supremacy in the Western Pacific would become doubtful if the Americans were successful in establishing a strong naval base on Saipan. From this, every Japanese can see what is at stake and every Japanese understands why the battle must be continued."

Berlin, in German:—"The loss of the Marianas is not vital for Japan and does not force the Japanese command into impulsive naval action, the result of which would be uncertain in view of American air superiority in the South-West Pacific."

That Fatal Nothing Division

W/T in English—First paragraph of broadcast: "Back from the fierce heat of the firing lines came an Ensign of the Imperial Navy with a battle report of actual conditions experienced under a rain of earth-shaking bombs plummeted from hundreds of enemy planes roaring through the pale blue tropical skies. 'You might think we were "goners" under so many bursting bombs, but it is nothing at all,' the Ensign declared."

Last paragraph of same broadcast, same Ensign:—"The last dying words of men who died on my ship invariably were 'Exact revenge from the enemy. And when you get him strike him one for me as well.' Uncontrollable burning rage—fierce fighting spirit—wells from the depth's of one's heart when one looks upon the dead corpse of a fighting comrade."

To Hell with the Poetry, Get those Supervisors—

Tokio, Domestic:—"There is the term 'bottleneck'

in war times, which is applied when production and transportation are not in smooth operation. However, it is not the fault of those occupied in such work. Bottlenecks can be eliminated when they are studied. That such are thought difficult may also be because of the formation of bottlenecks in the thinking of the supervising officials. It is necessary to instill the spirit of mutual kindness among the men, and everyone should each unto himself be introspective, in order to overcome the various bottlenecks found in aircraft and shipping production. Poems of Emperor Meiji should be read daily, since they would give you the encouragement necessary for self-examination."

* * *

Recognition in Japan

Tokio, 9 August, in English:—"Dai Nippon National Defense Association and Dai Nippon Aeronautical Association yesterday jointly presented a group of four models of enemy war planes each to Prince Field Marshall Norimasa Nashimoto, President of both associations, and Prince Narahuko Higasikuni. These models were submitted by members of the defense patrol throughout Japan in a contest sponsored with the aim of furthering their ability to distinguish various types of enemy war planes."

* * *

A good evening to yourself and what'll you bet?

Tokio, 11 August, in English:—"Despite the wrenching of Saipan from our hands and the current battles on Guam, I can still wish you a good evening. The picture looks dark for us here in Japan. It may become even darker, but we do not forget the enemy's proverb that every cloud has a silver lining. We give the Americans till September or October at the latest, to bask in the glory of their present successes. With the cool winds of autumn, the overhanging clouds will be dispersed as the Japanese Navy goes into action."

* * *

So Was Europe

Batavia, 12 August, in English:—"Japan is keeping her pledge to protect the Philippines. Japan's grand armed forces are ready to fight and Japanese planes are continually patrolling the skies over the Philippines. The Philippines are one impregnable fortress."

* * *

Unthinkable:—What's Your Salary, Nakamura?

Batavia, 24 May, in English:—"Writing in the May issue of *Pacific,* Admiral Nakamura said, 'It is unthinkable that the USA, although they occupy part of the Gilberts and Marshalls, should carry out an invasion of the Carolines and Marianas due to distance and geographical factors in the Pacific.' "

COLONEL CHARLES C. KEGELMAN—who took the group upon Colonel Wilson's return to the States. A veteran of the ETO, Colonel Kegelman led the first all-American strike into German-held territory July 4, 1942. He was killed over Zamboanga on March 10, 1945.

I've Heard That Song Before

"Japan never grabbed even an inch of foreign territory and never had any ambitions at colonial aggrandizement."

* * *

Take-off Times Unchanged

Owi Island Raid:—"Japanese air units attacked Owi Island, northeast of New Guinea and east of Biak Island on August 12th. In defiance of enemy opposition, more than 13 large planes were set ablaze, whilst direct hits destroyed the area of the runway. The whole region was wrapped in flames."

* * *

Chandelle College Graduation Exercises

Tokio, 16 August, Domestic:—Rabaul—"Domei says that in the morning of the 14th some 60 enemy bombers and fighters raided Rabaul and machine-gunned the base."

* * *

New Driving School

Bandoeng, 8 August, in Malay:—"Beggars who had been admitted to the Institute for the Blind are gradually

being trained as useful members of the community. Some of them have already become chauffeurs."

* * *

Think Nothing of it Department

Domei W/T, 14 August, in English: "A single *unarmed* Japanese ambulance plane on 4 August engaged and brought down two U. S. planes which wantonly attacked the ambulance plane clearly marked with Red Cross insignias. Subjected to enemy attacks while transporting wounded to our base, the ambulance plane, although already in flames, adroitly dodged further enemy attacks, and shot down one enemy plane into the Yangtze River. Continuing the struggle against the remaining enemy attackers, our ambulance plane destroyed another enemy plane."

* * *

We Lost Four Planes

Domei, W/T 21 August, in English: "Imperial Headquarters this afternoon announced definitely confirmed results achieved by our interception units during the enemy's air raid on Northern Kyushu and Western Chugoku areas late on Friday afternoon. According to the announcement, the enemy lost 23 out of a total of about 80 aircraft."

Domei, W/T August, in English:—"The enemy China-based air force, which boldly and recklessly attacked Northern Kyushu and western Chugoku areas late yesterday afternoon while there was still daylight, suffered severe treatment at the hands of our alert and indomitable defense units. At least 29 enemy planes were destroyed—25 shot down confirmed, and 5 probables."

* * *

Enemy Confirmation of Kill by P-38s

W/T, 23 August in English:—"On 28 July, Commander Shimada met his end in a gallant action. How it came about is a story that touches our innermost feelings. It so happened that contact was lost with one of his planes combing the seas over a certain area for enemy submarines. Fearing for the safety of his men, Commander Shimada personally took the stick and set out in search of them. On his search, he suddenly ran into a formation of enemy planes heading westward. Nothing daunted, Commander Shimada single-handedly took on 21 enemy P-38s and fought them fiercely for 30 minutes before his plane was hit and caught fire. Seeing his plane spitting black smoke, Commander Shimada attempted to ram against an enemy plane. However, unable to do so owing to loss of maneuverability, the brave commander headed his plane straight down to the sea, and died gallantly in action."

Comment: On 28 July, 17 P-38's sighted a VAL and one unidentified airplane over Elpapoeth Bay, Ceram area. The P-38's reported that the unidentified airplane escaped into a cloud but that the VAL was destroyed.

* * *

Hitler's Choice Shames Hobson

Domei W/T 15 August, in English:—"The Reich has two trump cards in her hand; namely, choice of concentrating efforts on one front at a time or dividing the main forces into two and dealing with the enemy in the east and west simultaneously."

* * *

Gates for Scrap Iron

20 July, in Malay:—"The population of Indonesia has been notified that the scrap iron collection will start its work on 22 July. This work will consist of pulling down iron gates."

Numerology Division; What Language Do You Speak?

Berlin 15 August, in German:—"In Japan the shipbuilding program is carried out with high efficiency, worthy of our deepest satisfaction. It is delightful to see the high wartime standard and the program developing without a hitch."

W/T, 8 July, Romaji:—"The wooden ship construction of the financial year 1943-1944 ended with a poor result, on account of material shortages and for other reasons."
Berlin, 15 August: "Japan today has the largest aircraft production in the world."
Tokio, 17 August, English: "The air power of Japan is roughly one-third that of the enemy."

* * *

Inviolable Japan

Tokio, 25 August, Domestic:—"The book Jinno-Seito-Ki clearly states that this is God's country. A poem states that those enemies who intend to come to Japan must give consideration before trespassing on God's Country.

* * *

Wings of an Angel

The following Japanese wireless transmission, purportedly from an SWPA base, contains several accounts of actions in New Guinea. None of them are dull, but the last one is undoubtedly the best, easily exceeding a previous story that "one unarmed Japanese Ambulance plane shot down two enemy planes."

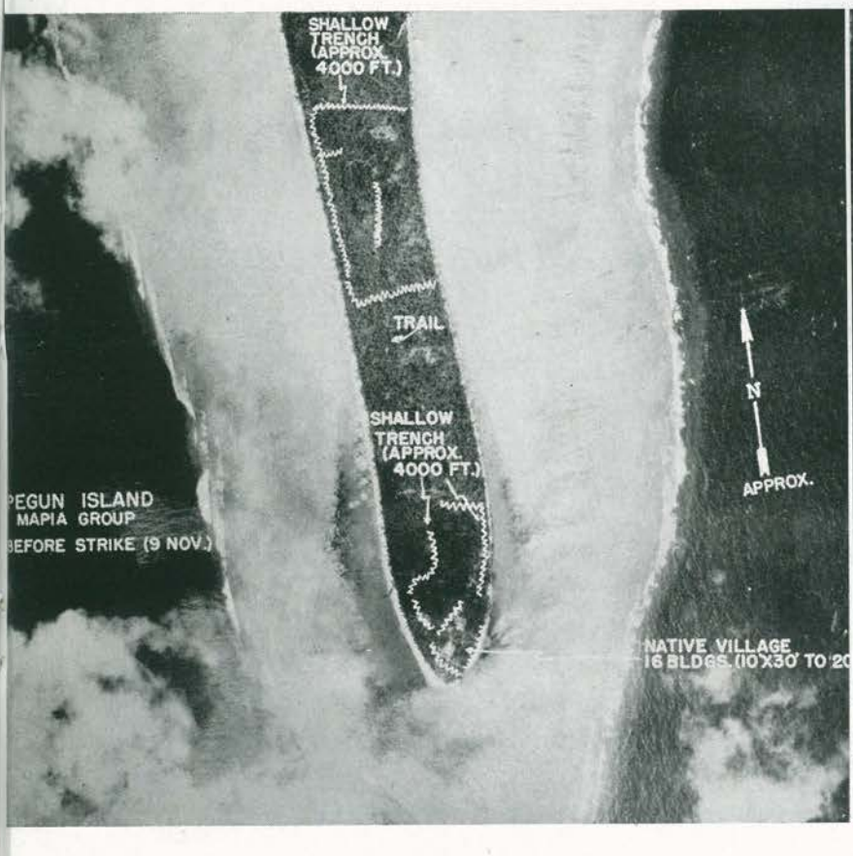
W/T, 31 August, in English:—"Japanese base in Southwest Pacific:—Let us mutually quit night bombing attacks," was the terse unofficial circular dropped at this base by an enemy airman seeking relief from the havoc-wrecking battering of Japanese night assaults on enemy bases in this hotly contested advance front. That wail,

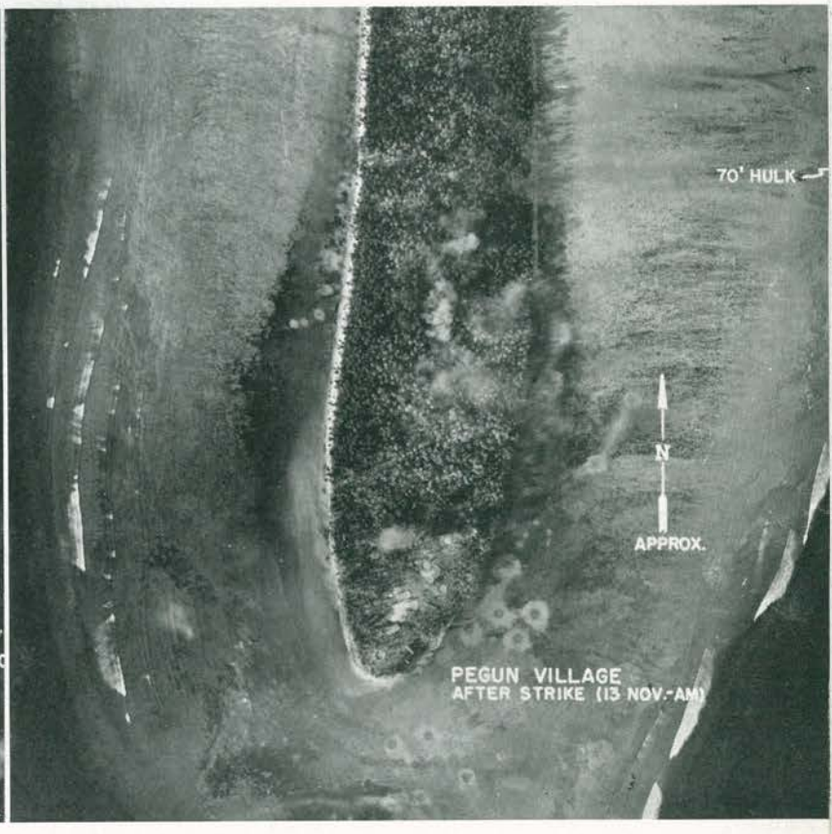
squeezed from the enemy, comes at a time when our air forces steadily impound the sinews of battle for an all-out offensive. A dynamic swing in the tide of battle for an all-out offensive impends, and our airmen are determined to get on the offensive."

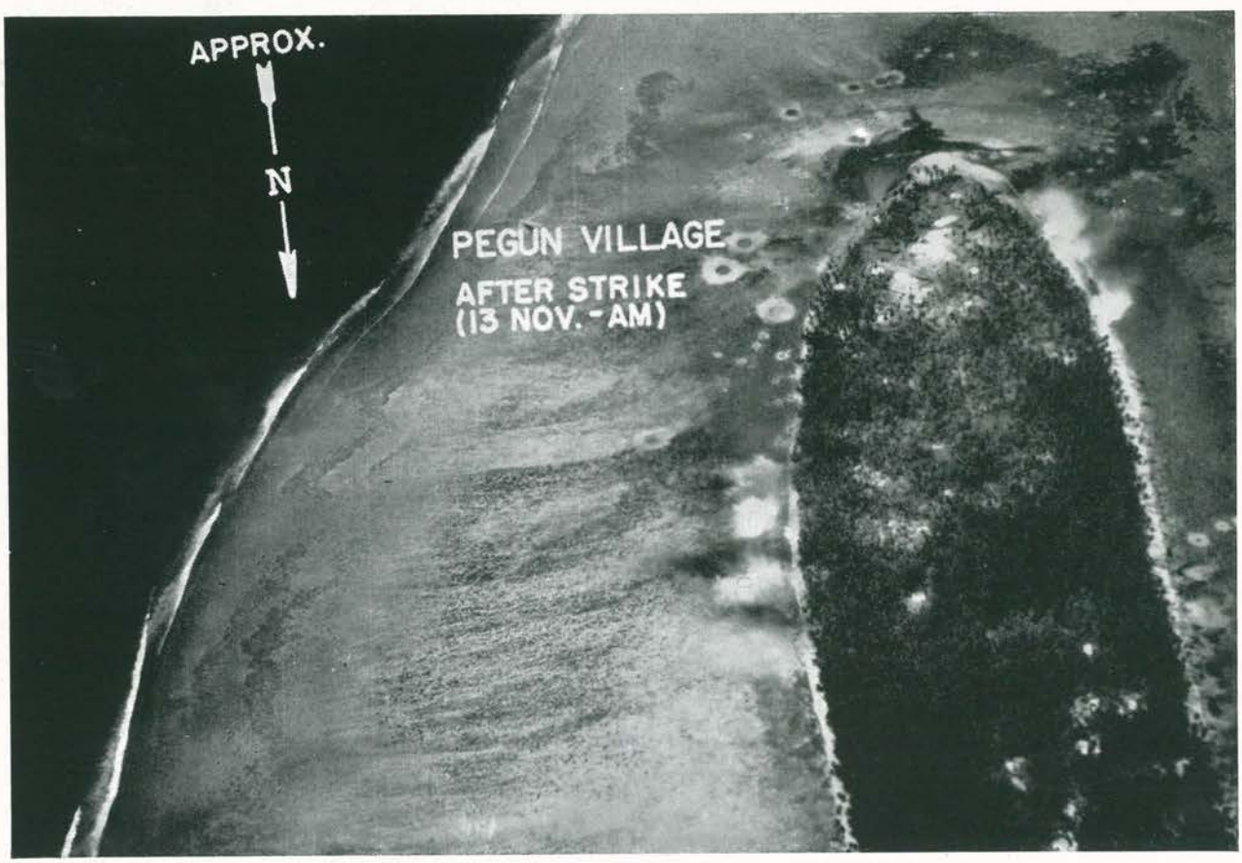
Radio Tokio: "The annihilation of the American Task Force, which is now considered completed, has caused the streets of Tokio to ring with praise for our glorious fleet. In Malaya, the population, wild with joy and exultation, hail the American naval debacle as the turning point in the war. . . This great victory, is however, only a prelude to greater progress and new blows to justify the tactical sacrifices we have made in the Pacific. . . During the week, we sank half a million tons of American warships, destroyed 1000 planes, and killed more than 25,000 men. These figures, the Navy Minister pointed out, are based on the most conservative estimate . . . the Americans learned a bitter lesson in the results of the engagement, for by sending aircraft to attack Taiwan (Formosa), they foolishly weakened the defense of the task force. . . . Our victory has not yet been enough to discourage the enemy's plans. We shall have to strike again and again until final victory."

The Facts

An announcement by Admiral Nimitz brings out this authentic information: "During the past seven days, we have sunk 73 Japanese ships and destroyed 843 planes for the loss of 53 American planes. Japanese opposition has resulted in no damage of consequences and in only very few casualties. The only ships damaged were two which were hit by aerial torpedoes. They were damaged, but have not dropped out of the Task Force. On the three days from Friday to Sunday, when 191 Jap planes attacked, 95 were shot down for the loss of 5 navy fighters. On Sunday alone, 50 out of 60 attacking planes were shot down by fighters and AA. Enemy losses could have been lighter if the Japanese had chosen to come out and fight on a larger scale."







Before the invasion of the Mapia Island Group, Photo Reconnaissance mapped the Jap defenses. The landing tactics demanded that the jungle and Jap positions on the south tip of the island be eliminated. Half ton G. P. bombs were dropped on the fortified southern tip. They hit it, with the devastation shown. On D-Day, the assault troops were able to go ashore with negligible opposition.

CHAPTER 18

November at Sansapor was not marked by increasing crispness in the air, the first snowfall, or the cheering crowds in the Stadium. The nights were cool and damp and the days were the same sun-flooded days that October, or January, brought. The Crusaders went into action promptly on the first. Although a major alert for Jap shipping had been in the air for some time, the call came suddenly—0400 on the first. By 1130 planes of all squadrons had staged at Morotai and were over the water of Mindanao in search of the elusive Jap fleet, reported out again. As usual the fleet failed to put in an appearance, so we went to work on a trio of Jap airfields. During November 1-2 the 69th, led by Lieut. V. R. Fetner, hit Matina airdrome; the 70th socked Davao runway with Capt. Andrew Elliott flying in front; Captain Thorndyke signalled the release on Licanan for the 75th after an unfruitful search of the Sulu Sea; the 100th hit Daliao, with Capt. Charles W. Wolfendale in the lead returning from a Mindanao sea sweep, Major Carmody and the 390th bombed Sasa runway. These were all successfully executed missions. They were the Group's first appearance in the Phillippines. After this initial excitement things went back to normal for a few days, with the unending Ambon-Boeroe-Ceram and Halmahera-Celebes shipping sweeps and snoops again, strikes against Kaoe, Tanamon, Namlea, and night heckling of other Jap installations.

At 0730I on the 5th, Lieut. J. G. McClure and W. L. Blair of the 70th, out inspecting weather and "policing the area," were flying at 2000 feet over Misool Island. Seeing three men on a tiny white beach, they came downstairs to investigate. The three appeared to be light-colored natives, one wearing a fatigue jacket and waving a Dutch flag. McClure and Blair went on about their business. After they had strafed a Tess parked in a clearing north of Tidore Town and a barge near Sidangoli, they flew home, reporting their sighting. On the 6th Lieutenant Bour bird-dogged a Cat to the spot, which picked up the trio and brought them to Sansapor. Later interrogation brought out that they were Javanese, former N. E. I. army soldiers captured by the Japs and pushed into a labor battalion. They had worked in Ambon Town and later on Ceram for their captors, and were able to supply a good deal of valuable information about the enemy's situation on Ceram, some of which was later used as the basis for planning an attack on a supply area and personnel headquarters north of Piroe.

From November 11th through the 20th, two tiny groups of minuscule islands, on most maps mere specks in a wide expanse of the Pacific, were added to the necklace of atolls, islets, islands, large islands, small islands, and sub-continents that was rapidly becoming Nippon's choker-collar. Victory in the Pacific would have been gained without the Asia and Mapia Islands no doubt, but their capture served several useful purposes and is of particular interest because, with no detail lacking, it is a perfect miniature of a 1944 Pacific island operation. In its air aspect, it was almost entirely a Crusader show. Lieutenant R. L. Smith, careful historian of the 100th Squadron, and his amanuensis, S/Sgt. George Crout, recorded this short, snappy, and successful campaign with painstaking attention to minutiae. By adding only certain details of the other squadrons' part in the activity, we give you the gist of Lieutenant Smith's account.

A bit of background on the two island groups is interesting. Pacific Gazetteer doesn't list them. Pegun Island of the Mapia Group (00°-50'N, 130°-15'E) was occupied by 7th Company, 223rd Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, Japanese Imperial Army, composed of 188 officers and men, probably reinforced by a labor battalion. The Asia Group (01°-15'N, 134°-20'E) was also Jap-held. The two groups lay strategically athwart our sea and air lanes between New Guinea—Morotai, and New Guinea —Palau, and were valuable observation and listening posts for the enemy, who thus obtained too clear a picture of our actual and probable operations affecting the Philippines. In our hands, they would be valuable weather-radio stations.

D-Day for the miniature invasion was set up by GHQ for November 15, 0600 as H-hour. The defenses of Pegun, the most fortified and concentrated enemy position, were estimated at 12 grenade dischargers, 12 light and 2 to 4 heavy machine guns. Enemy capabilities of reinforcement were nil; submarine and air harassing attack was possible but unlikely. Our invading force comprised the 2nd Battalion, 167th Infantry, 6th Division; 4 LCI's, 14 LCM's, and a covey of Ducks and Alligators. The Group would furnish both the pre-invasion softening-up and co-ordinated air support during the landings. The plan called for neutralizing the southeast coast of Pegun, which was expected to result in driving the enemy north to Bras Island which would then be treated separately. The plan for the Asia Group was similar, with D-Day as

the 20th and Igi Island scheduled to receive the first bombing.

The Group's operation really began with a plane from the 390th (Lieut. N. H. Traverso and Lieut. G. E. Philipp) photographing Mapia and Asia, respectively, with verticals and obliques on November 9th. Lieut. Raymond Proctor, Group Photo Officer, flew with Lieutenant Traverso, personally checking the photo work. Next came a reconnaissance and leaflet-dropping flight by Colonel Kegelman and Major Henson on the 11th. The 500 leaflets dropped warned the natives to evacuate Pegun. The first strike was made on D-Day minus 3, the 12th. It was home-for-lunch and back-to-the-links from then on, as the following schedule shows:

Date: 12 November

Squadron		*Formation*	*Leader*	*Target*
69th	AM	8	Capt. R. E. Shanks	Igi
69th	PM	9	Lieut. R. E. Overmyer	Pegun
70th	AM	9	Capt. Andrew Elliott	Pegun
100th	AM	9	Colonel Kegelman, Major Henson	Pegun
100th	PM	9	Colonel Kegelman,	
390th	AM	8	Lieut. Patrick B. Houser	"
390th	PM	9	Capt. Gordon M. Dana	Pegun

Date: 13 November

69th	AM	9	Lieut. J. W. Weaver	"
	PM	9	Lieut. George P. Manuche	"
70th	AM	9	Lieut. W. B. Spicer	"
	PM	9	Colonel Kegelman	"
75th	AM	5	Lieut. V. H. Olson	"
	PM	8	Capt. R. W. Thorndyke	"
100th	AM	-	Lieut. Donald C. Robertson	"
	PM	-	Lieut. Kenneth E. Frick	"

Date: 14 November

70th	AM	3	Lieut. Robert Weston	"
	PM	6	Lieut. Sherod Santos	"
75th	AM	9	Colonel Kegelman	"
	PM	9	Lieut. V. H. Olson	Pegun
100th	AM	9	Lieut. George P. Pitcher	"
	PM	9	Colonel Kegelman	"

Date: 15 November

100th	Ground Support		Lieut. Kenneth E. Miller	"

D-Day, H-Hour minus 30, four-plane shifts from the 100th were over the islands for air support, rendezvousing at 0530 with the convoy 3000 yards southwest of Pegun at 4000 feet. The naval bombardment began on the dot of 0530, and for half an hour Red Beach was red indeed with bursting shells. The first troops hit the beach at 0600-0630, using flame throwers. At 0700 supply Ducks pushed ashore. At 0745 the ground commander from the control ship requested one plane to bomb and strafe Bras Village on Bras Island. Colonel Kegelman attacked, dropping all his bombs and strafing 1500 rounds. The Navy then shelled Bras, and the remaining three of the Colonel's flight followed in to bomb at 1015.

By H-Hour plus 6, Ducks and Alligators were using the east and west beaches for half the length of Pegun. At 1700 the entire island had been occupied, troops were in swimming off the north shore, and clothes lines could be seen from the air.

There you have the capture of Pegun Island, Mapia group: a perfect example of coordinated air-ground war in the Pacific, 1944—small to be sure, but complete. The operation continued on the same pattern through the mopping up of Bras and Fanildo of the Mapia Group; reconnaissance, bombing, air cover for the landings on Igi, Fani, and Mairin of the Asia Group on November 17-20. All squadrons participated with the same leaders in front, augmented by Lieut. Harry W. Devlin, Hal W. Townsend, Donald R. Smith, and Robert L. Hausler for the 70th, and with Colonel Kegelman leading a flight a day. On the last mission, led by Lieut. Wilbur L. Coats of the 100th, the planes were dismissed by the ground station now in operation on Pegun: "No targets. Mission completed. Cancel Support."

The entire ground operation was carried out with the loss of one infantryman killed and several wounded. The Ground Commander gave the Group credit and his thanks for the splendid support, adding that the first troops ashore found the two heavy gun positions at Red Beach completely demolished.

Unfortunately the Group's losses were more severe. Lieut. J. H. Carroll, young Portland, Oregon, pilot, and his crew perished in the opening strafing attack of November 12th. Precise facts of the crash could not be determined. Carroll's plane was seen on fire, flames licking along the fuselage with bomb bay doors open; the plane rolled to the right and crashed on its back on the east coast of Pegun. Apart from minor damage to planes from machine gun fire, this was our only loss in the operation.

Asia and Mapia did not entirely monopolize our attention for these ten days, however. Lieut. L. E. Davis led a pair of successful 69th medium strikes against Tanamon and Kairatoe on the 15th and 18th. Lieut. Sherod Santos led the 70th's element of the Namlea raid, Lieut. Harry W. Devlin following up on the 18th. The 75th's Soela shipping sweep on November 18th destroyed a 125-foot schooner and four canoes. The same day Captain Thorndyke took five Mitchells to search for shipping within

50 miles of Tarakan, Borneo, another target that was ear-marked for the Group's later attention.

On this raid Captain Thorndyke bagged one tug, three Sugar Charlies, and a barge.

The 100th's Haroekoe medium strike of the 29th brought a rating of Superior for the bomb patterns laid down by Lieut. Joseph E. Stodola and Lieut. Kenneth O. Vincent, element bombardiers.

This was the day that Capt. William W. Short of the 70th took "Son of Mesa", a New Guinea native chieftain, with him to strafe Asbokin, 55 miles west of Sansapor. where the chief's scouts had reported a bivouac of 400 Japs. Captain Short dropped four magnesium clusters and strafed with 2000 rounds. Results delighted Son of Mesa, a colorful character who had killed many Japs himself and was on his first ride in a "Steel Angel." Undisputed chief of scattered native platoons, the black warrior amused ordnance officers of NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) when he complained at the old style gun issued to him. Given one of the newest automatics, he smiled happily. "Shoot more bullets, kill more Japs," he said.

On November 16th Colonel Wilson bade adieu to the Crusaders as he was ordered back to the United States. Colonel Kegelman assumed command, but unlike his predecessor, he had a well knit fighting organization with which to commence operations. To Colonel Wilson must go much of the credit for moulding this team, for it was under his leadership that the 42nd Bomb Group became a combat team.

Lieut. Col. Joe R. Brabson, a recent Crusader arrival from the 312th Bomb Group (L) became Deputy Commander, while Major Henson took over Group Operations, replacing Lieut. Col. Jean H. Daugherty, who also left for a well earned rest in the United States.

For the final third of the month general results were good. Captain Dana's 390th weather mission on the 21st, to northeast Celebes, administered a thorough strafing to a 50-foot and two 100-foot Nip craft; Lieut. William W. Carlisle's sextet from the 69th delivered a smashing blow to the Halong Seaplane Base together with an octet of the 75th led by Lieut. Robert A. Plympton. The 75th's Soela shipping sweep on the 22nd bagged a 150-foot two-masted schooner with quarter-tonners. Lieut. Willard R. Horne led seven of the 390th's to Laha on the 27th to lay 500-pounders across the service aprons, meeting moderate, heavy AA fire. On this day the 390th bade good-bye to Maj. Richard J. Carmody. It was the end of a long and winding trail for the one-time Second Lieutenant nicknamed "Radar Dick" for his many calibrating hops out to sea from McChord Field. Sixty-four missions, among them some of the Group's hottest, most daring, and most productive, were on the record that placed him at the top of the rotation list.

Capt. Gordon M. Dana, another Iowan transplanted to Indiana, took over from Carmody.

The 100th records as one of its outstanding successes for the month the afternoon shipping sweep, flown in "Dog" weather by Lieut. Thomas S. Zimmerman and Lieut. Theophilus Wright, Jr., on November 29th. At 1515 at Asloeloe, Ambon, they came across three 70 to 80-foot two-masted schooners, and six 50-foot single stickers. In five bombing and strafing runs, 500-pounders were dropped and 6000 rounds strafed. Debris scattered and flew up 150 feet and Sgt. Walter Bejeski, tail gunner, fired a hut for good measure. Lima Village and Bagbela Bay returned slight, light, and inaccurate fire.

To close the month, Lieut. R. E. Overmyer and Lieut. R. J. Weston led two dozen Crusaders of the 69th and 70th over Galela personnel and revetment areas, dropping parafrags and strafing 50,000 rounds. Medium, intense, inaccurate AA was encountered at the beginning of the run. Small arms and automatic AA put as many as five holes into one ship. Lieut. Lynwood C. Smith and Lieut. Harold R. Hatfield swept Waigeo and Ajoe Islands and the Halmaheras during the afternoon with negative results and no ordnance expenditures. Lieut. Juston C. Amato, with eight of the 75th, hit Hatetabako from medium, dust and smoke obscuring their results.

Major Wilmot E. Y. Paxton of the 70th received his "Uncle-Sugar-Able" orders and Capt. William W. Short assumed command of the Squadron.

CHAPTER 19

A criticism of this book sometimes voiced while it was being assembled was that it did not devote enough enough attention to the activities of the Ground Echelons. The editors submit that this may at first glance appear true, but to the thinking reader, no one of the aerial accomplishments in which the history abounds would have been possible without the tireless effort of the ground sections and crews. Excerpts from the squadron histories at this time give an idea of the volume and intensity of this work, as do the many photographs herein. "The mess. . . served 90 regular meals during the month and 25 special meals for early take offs or late landings . . . rationed 445 men . . . 2700 gallons of coffee made . . . 37,761 pounds of food received from the ration dump. . . " Engineering. . . Four engine changes, eight 50-hour inspections, one 200 hour, two 300-hour, one 400-hour, two 500-hour, four 600-hour . . . Two especially tedious sheet-metal jobs repairing flak damage . . . 200,000 gallons metered on the fuel truck . . . T/Sgt. Anthony J. Kaslauskas received a commendation from Colonel Kegelman:

"1. The Group Technical Inspection Section has brought to my attention the results of an inspection made on aircraft maintained by Sergeant Kaslaukas. In a very thorough inspection of this aircraft no discrepancies were noted.

2. It is my desire that Sergeant Kaslauskas be highly commended for his very apparent high standdard of work, which has not gone unnoticed. It is not only valued for having an aircraft in excellent condition, but sets a fine example for all crews of the organization."

"Communications: Additional classes and training within the section for both combat and maintenance crews. . . more efficient operation with few bottle-necks. . . better transmissions." "Armament-Ordnance: Handled in addition to 397,600 pounds of bombs. . . the new M-82, 500-pound fragmentation bomb. . . the new M-17 oil and magnesium incendiary." "Transportation: Nineteen 100-mile check-ups; 27 vehicles greased and serviced. . . One complete paint job . . . 3 jeep and truck tires checked and repaired . . . 6000 gallons red gas supplied." "Medics —400 men received treatment during this 30-day period. Seven confined to quarters, 11 hospitalized, three personnel evacuated . . . Twenty immunizations administered. . ."

Meantime Tokio Rose and other busy Nip broadcasters continued to put forth their own brand of humor.

Thy Need is Greater Than Mine

Tokio, 2 September, In English: "A patriotic Japanese named Watanabe called on the German military attache in Tokio and handed him the amount of 400 yen for the benefit of the German army."

Why We Advance

Tokio, 3 September, In English: "The time is fast approaching when Japan and Germany will deliver a final and decisive blow," declared Lieutenant Colonel Nakajima, naval spokesman, at his regular press conference on Friday afternoon. Commenting on the present war situation, he declared that for strategic reasons the enemy had been allowed to take the initiative in both theaters of war."

What a Waste, Unless—

Tokio, 2 September, Domestic, "Admiral Shiro Takatsu, War Councillor, received a dozen bottles of grape juice from the Emperor at the Tsukiji Naval Hospital at 9:50 p. m. last night. He died at 6:30 a. m. today, according to the Navy Ministry."

Department of Interesting Comparisons

Batavia, 3 September 1944: "Tokio: 1,685 enemy planes were shot down and another 519 damaged by Japanese air forces in cooperation with the land forces of Rabaul, during a ten-month period up to July 15th."

Tokio, 3 September, In German: "In the 10 months from October to July at least 23,500 enemy planes came over Rabaul. Of this number 2,090 were shot down and 344 damaged."

Japan's New Concept of Naval Warfare

W/T, September 6, in English:—"As soon as our Naval Air Arm gets ready, our Combined Fleet will move out to engage the enemy fleets in a decisive sea battle and deal them an annihilative blow, Admiral Ryozo Nakamura (retired), a noted naval strategist, asserted in an article appearing in this morning's *Asahi*. He said because of radical changes in modern naval tactics, the main forces of a navy now comprise its air force, including fleet air squadrons centering on carrier-based planes, and a land-based air corps. It will be suicidal, therefore he added, for our Combined Fleet to engage the enemy fleets in a decisive battle without filling in the disparity in air forces existing between our Navy and the enemy's. He added that armchair strategists express that amateurish opinion that our Combined Fleet should go out to engage the enemy in a decisive battle at this juncture."

Put Down that Mirror

Tokio, August 25, Domestic:—"That the enemy is in a serious predicament in regard to manpower can also be known from the strength of the crew of a B-24 plane. From a full complement of 12 persons, a B-24's crew has been reduced to ten, and then even to eight persons."

* * *

No Deep Sea Divers Needed

Shanghai, September 23, in English:—"In a bombing attack on enemy carriers to the east of Philippines on September 22, Japanese aircraft destroyed or damaged probably several enemy aircraft carriers. Investigations to ascertain the details are now under way." The facts are that the Japanese planes did not get near enough to aim a single bomb at the Task Force.

Philippines The Climax

Tokyo, September 23, in Japanese:—"Should the en-

An outstanding series of pictures showing the destruction by parafrags of a gun position at Goeroea, Halmahera. Besides the direct hit shown, following bombs disrupted the entire battery. The photographs were taken December 8, 1944.

emy land in the Philippines, an unconditionally strategic point will pass into his control, so our forces will oppose him resolutely, to deny him a foothold. Preparations for all eventualities are being hurried, in order that our island garrisons may not have died in vain, and in order that our Imperial life-line, the Philippines, may be protected."

* * *

Japanese War Reporting

Without ever having been told, the Japanese people may be presumed to know that Morotai, Pelelieu, and Angaur were lost. Radio Tokio's pattern had been the old familiar one:

(a) We are annihilating the enemy, (b) we are counter-attacking the enemy, (c) We are fighting fiercely, (d) Silence.

The blame was laid on relative shortage of aircraft, though one broadcast indicated that the real concern was for pilots rather than planes.

As usual, the gloom was lightened by occasional broadcasts of the brightest promises. Selections below:

Who Welcomed Sutton?

Tokyo, September 22, Domestic:—"Our Japanese Colony in California did not succeed, due to the lack of water in that region, but those going to California later overcame difficulties and prepared in agriculture, producing world-famous California fruits and vegetables. Americans are outrageous people for having forgotten their gratitude to the Japanese for making America an agricultural nation."

Department of Interesting Comparisons
We Satisfy Everybody Division

W/T, 18 September, in English:—" 'In the present stage of fighting in the Pacific War Theatre, Japan should cast aside its conservative strategy and instead resort to positive operations', declared retired Admiral Ryozo Nakamura in a recent issue of the organ of the Pacific Association."

Batavia, September 20, in English:—" 'In the present stage of war in the Pacific, Japan's strategy must be conservative rather than daring', declared Rear Admiral Ryozo Nakamura in the organ of the Pacific Association."

* * *

The Kind of Thinking That Led To The Baka

Tokyo, September 20, Domestic:—"Would it be better to have one plane and ten pilots, or ten planes and one pilot? The first would give a plane the capability of ten pilots, whereas the second would always be the strength of one pilot. The increased training of pilots will put us in the favorable ten to one odds. However, numbers alone are not enough, since it would be like a flock of crows. Those who can keep their heads and spirits are desired in air training."

The Big Four

W/T, September 27, in English:—"In the course of fierce counter-attacks conducted by our garrison units on Morotai Island north of Halmahera against enemy troops which effected a landing on September 15, more than 600 casualties were suffered by the enemy against our four killed up to September 26, it was discovered."

Comment: Of the "four" Japanese casualties up to September 26, 12 were taken prisoner and 57 killed. Our casualties—from non-combat as well as combat—up to September 26 were 17 killed, 53 wounded, one missing.

* * *

10,000 Islands, 10,000 Carriers

Tokio, September 26, in English:—"According to correspondent Oneda, the people on the home front are striving in production with renewed vigor in order to make the Philippine fortress a reality, while awaiting the day of victory. The powder magazines of the enemy task forces, their carriers, are probably several times the numbers we have, but they are as inflammable as matchboxes and weak in defensive power. Therefore, the enemy treats his carriers as dolls in boxes, and surrounds them in ring formation with anti-aircraft batteries composed of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, and invades in a courtly procession. It is assured that should these carriers be attacked, the enemy will run in confusion. Countless new unsinkable aircraft carriers have been launched on our side. Even with the strength of bases in the Philippines for example, there are close to 10,000 islands, which, if strengthened one by one by installing aircraft bases, will stand as unsinkable carriers. In addition, there are many aviators awaiting the day when they may follow the principle of sinking one ship with one plane."

Leyte: Views From Home and Abroad

Tokyo, November 2, Domestic:—"The war situation in the Philippines centering on Leyte Bay area is steadily assuming serious proportions. Whether the war in the whole Pacific will turn in favor of America or Japan depends on whichever side can hold out and remain the stronger, and this does not need saying."

Tokyo, November 3, Domestic:—"The fighting on Leyte Island is developing into a testing of airpower on both sides, making it clear that the decisive factor will be the suppy problem of airpower."

Batavia, November 2, In English:—"The U. S. forces now trapped on Leyte Island are now definitely doomed and their complete annihilation is considered a matter of days, if not of hours."

W/T, November 11, in English:—" 'Leyte can be compared to a virtual war prisoners' camp' ", declared Lt. Col. Shozo Nakajima, Chief Army Spokesman, speaking at his regular weekly press conference yesterday. He asserted, 'I firmly believe that in the near future all these American landing forces will be annihilated.' "

* * *

December brought an important change in the type of attack used by the Group, although the targets remained much the same. Over the month the main strike turned from medium level bombing to on-the-deck bombing and strafing. Air Force operations and intelligence had

Photo showing the remains of a Jap fuel dump at Goeroea. Burst drums and blackened, burnt trees show the effectiveness of bombs and strafing.

found that no matter how heavily and how frequently a Jap field was bombed from high levels, Nips managed to get harrassing planes into the air. They also learned that when that same field was worked over with bombs and bullets from minimum altitude, all local operations ceased. This was important in the Ceram-Halmahera-Celebes area from whence Morotai was undergoing repeated nightly attacks. The Crusaders went down to the deck and the attacks ceased.

The medium work had been well done; what remained was a sort of sweeping up process, and when we say sweep, we mean it. The formations skimmed their targets with so little to spare that the Woodcutter's Club came into being. Before the Group moved from Sansapor, about half the pilots became members, willy-nilly, by bringing home assorted samples of the Halmahera, Celebes, and Ceram forests, and in a few isolated cases, coconuts. One object of those strafes was to kindle the camouflaged supply dumps and to put an end to the barge-building activity that sprung up to replace the toll taken by the vigilant shipping searchers. Squadrons also struck out further afield to hit additional Philippine targets and the southeast Celebes.

Intelligence reported that the Sorong-Doom Islands Japs were on the move to Kabarei and Andai Villages on Waigeo, which previously had been neglected as of small importance. The optimistic Nips were quickly knocked back into despondence, and thereafter these two jungle towns were scheduled as secondary dumping grounds for all missions weathered off the primary or returning bombs for any other reasons.

About mid-month another new operating technique went into effect: the shuttle run, bombing a Halmahera target on the way up in the morning, putting in at Morotai for fuel, bombs, and lunch, and hitting the same or another Moluccan base on the return trip in the afternoon. Announcement of a shuttle run was invariably greeted by combat crews with "Oh, my aching back!" The double-headers weren't too popular except with firebrands, but they were effective. They ran like railroad timetables: Depart Mar 0530, Over Galela 0800, Land Morotai 0840. Depart Morotai 1320, Over Galela 1405, Land Mar 1645. What was left of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in the Spice Islands got a thorough salting and peppering.

Rumor of an attack on Morotai on Christmas Eve by Japs trapped in the Halmaheras brought immediate attention to those targets.

You can almost hear the bombs exploding and see the tracers in an official resume of the activities of December 22. We were, of course, only a part of the parade of American aircraft over the Halmaheras on that day, but we need not be modest about our part. This was a very typical sample of shuttle bombing. The following is copied from the 13th AAF Summary of December 23.

II Air Activity

Thirteenth Air Force

"The enemy concentrations of troops, supplies, and small shipping in the Wasile Bay area and his air facilities at Hatetabako and Lolobata were subjected to saturation bombing by heavy, medium, and fighter bombers on 22 December.

"Seven Mustangs and 13 Warhawks of the 82nd Reconnaissance Squadron started the fireworks at 0720, bombing and strafing radio installations, warehouses, and small shipping near Wasile Town. Forty-three Mitchells of the 42nd Group, flying at minimum altitude, moved in at 0800 and spent 30 minutes scattering 516 centuries into AA positions and personnel areas from Goeroea Bay to Hatetabako airdrome. Thirty-one Liberators of the 307th Group followed the medium bombers and concentrated 566 x 250-pounders around and between the Lolobata and Hatetabako airfields. Then came 16 RAF Beaufighters using rockets, bombs, and strafing to score excellent results against AA positions within the Goeroea defense ring. Thirty-seven heavies of the 5th Group attacked the supply areas at Lolobata and Hatetabako from 0834 until 0929, with 65 per cent of 700 x 250-pounders falling into assigned targets. The 347th Group participated in the morning attack by having 25 Lightnings over Goeroea at 1000. Each P-38 dropped 2 x 165-gallon Napalm fire bombs into AA positions and dock installations, starting large fires. At 1020 sixteen Warhawks of the RAAF divebombed Wasile river installations and reported all but one of their 32 quarter-tonners in the target area.

"The afternoon performance began at 1330 when 18 Lightnings, on the return trip to Sansapor, dropped 36 half-tonners on Hatetabako targets. The P-38s were quickly followed by 16 Warhawks of the RAAF 80th Squadron, which struck AA positions in the same area. Mitchells of the 42nd, en route home, flying at deck level unloaded 462 centuries on Lolobata and Hatetabako. Mustangs and Warhawks, having begun the day's work, furnished the finale by dropping 40 quarter-tonners and expending 17500 x .50 caliber over the entire sector which, by that time (1545), was covered with fires and smoke."

A recapitulation of the strikes show 285 sorties and over 250 tons of demolition and incendiaries, together with Napalm fire bombs and rockets, trained against targets in an area measuring not over four square miles.

This intense action meant, of course, that injuries and losses could not be avoided. Capt. H. G. Goodson was

cut up as a result of hitting a tree and Cpl. R. E. Avrocker, also of the 69th, was hit in the knee by stray flak.

Over Lolobata on the 23rd, a shell exploding inside their plane injured T/Sgt. Otis E. Forth, Sgt. Cecil A. Spurlock and S/Sgt. Gerald Russell, also of the 69th.

The shipping hunts and general snoops continued to be a daily assignment. Captain Whitehead, 75th, got a 100-foot schooner at Cape Laroma, Ceram; Lieut. Willard R. Horne, 390th, nailed two barges and a gun position at Manipa Island. The enemy's radar stations at Cape Noesanive. Cape Patak, and southeast Laoet Island got a going over from all squadrons, and Major Henson, flying a 75th ship, destroyed the radar hut at Lolobata. As has been seen earlier, another new wrinkle of December was the radar ferret. It was discovered that the Japs usually turned off their apparatus when they drew a plot on one of our Mitchells, for fear that the pilot would home on them. The single radar ferreter was therefore dispatched ahead of a mission to a target known to have radar protection. While he occupied the air-wave searchers, the strike formation gained an element of surprise in hitting the planned target and caught more Nips at work around the premises.

Also in December, Crusader crews were sent to the 38th Bomb Group at Morotai on detached service, and while our planes were not the carriers, to these detached personnel goes credit for some of the early destruction of Mindanao-Jolo-Sanga-Sanga airfields, Tawao, and Sandakan, and reconnaissance of the Pangutaran Group and the Sulu Sea—a body of water that their fellow Crusaders were to become intimately familiar with somewhat later. The exploits of these Crusaders tilting the lance away from home base did not, unfortunately, go into the Group's records in detail. A few lines from a higher headquarters' summary of the 11th and 12th of December, however, give a few facts:

"After negative sightings on a shipping search along the Mindanao coastline, three Mitchells of the 42nd Bomb Group bombed and strafed Tatalan Island Lighthouse, Zettlefield A/D, and 2 buildings at the base of the jetty.

"The drydock and ship-building area at Sandakan was bombed and strafed by two 42nd Bomb Group Mitchells. Eight 500 pound incendiaries were dropped, starting small fires, and a barge in the harbor was strafed and damaged."

The Morotai DS, while as attractive as Sansapor for those who wanted to pile up missions rapidly, was a poor spot for sack-time. Before rigor mortis set in for keeps, Charlie was capable of giving considerable trouble, and seemed particularly annoyed at having lost Morotai. Note the following:

Enemy Air Action (December)

"Morotai—Red alert at 0243/09 when a bogey approaching the island from the southwest at very low altitude was picked up. As the bandit orbited to gain altitude, a night fighter was vectored into the area and the bandit soon faded away to the west. A second bogey 34 miles south-southwest of the island was picked up at 0305, and a P-61 of the 419th Night Fighter Squadron was immediately vectored there. On first contact the night fighter overshot the target but identified the bandit as a Paul, a twin-float reconnaissance seaplane. A second contact was made at approximately 0310 at a distance of 10,000′ on a heading of 120 degrees and at an altitude of 12,000′, and the P-61 closed to 800′ to fire 300 rounds of 20MM cannon fire, causing the Paul to burst into flames and crash into the sea at a point about 25 miles southeast of Morotai. No return fire was received from the bandit. The kill was witnessed by many ground personnel as well as by another airborne P-61. All clear at 0335.

"Morotai—Red alert at 0302/10 when unidentified aircraft approaching the island from the southwest were picked up. At 0311 one of the bandits flying at 20,000 feet crossed Gila Peninsula from the west, dropping four bombs, which fell on the peninsula. At about the same time two other bandits entered the area on an easterly course from the west, dropped 10 bombs from 20,000 feet, which fell west of Pitoe Strip. and departed to the northwest. At 0332 another bombing run was made from west to east, the three bombs dropped falling to the northwest of Pitoe strip and the bandit going away to the northwest. Window was dropped at 0330 approximately eight miles northwest of Pitoe strip. Searchlights illuminated one bandit on each course and 90MM fire engaged all targets. A P-61 of the 419th Night Fighter Squadron closed to 300 feet on one bandit, but lost the target when extreme evasive action was taken. A tent and personal equipment of a gun section were damaged—the extent of our losses from the attack. All clear at 0356.

"Red alert at 0433/10 when a bandit came in low from the north undetected and in a west to east run dropped an unknown number of anti-personnel bombs on the east end of Pitoe Strip, following with strafing. The bandit turned northeast and went out to the northwest, being engaged by 40MM and .50 caliber fire with unobserved results. Two enlisted men of a gun position were injured in the attack. All clear at 0501."

It wasn't always good sleeping at Sansapor in December either—two of the longest alerts came on the 28th and 30th, lasting more than an hour each. Two bogies came over each night, one decoying our AA fire while the other moved in to drop. Bombs hit the 75th area on the 28th and killed F/O Richard J. Larsen before he could reach his foxhole. A facetious aspect of this raid was the damage done to the Group Officers' latrine. Unfortunately, the remarks of passers-by, in varying degrees of humor, have not been preserved for the record, and this is a family publication, anyhow. The structure was, happily, untenanted at the time. The intruders returned on the 30th, and this time a night-flying P-38 sent one of them down flaming. Those who preferred a spectacle to safety saw the flaming bogey take his last dive, ending up in the ocean.

December was also a month of intensive and difficult maintenance. The schedule called for most or all of the planes to be in the air each day. Sheet-metal and dope and fabric sections were very busy after the strafing

raids, removing splinters up to 2 feet long and patching up.

During the month the 886th continued at its heavy and, for the Japs, fiercely destructive work, sharing the Group's bad and good fortunes with respect to the struggle to establish camp, air raids, Dutch Guilders, a few, very few, drawings for rotation and rest leave in Mackay, fresh eggs, meat, and cucumbers ariving at the Mar district via the Group's Fat Cats. During the month Lieut. David C. Sinding and Cpl. C. H. Staten took a detachment to Morotai to prepare fire bombs for the 18th Fighter Group.

So came Christmas Day at Sansapor, with its increased mess activities. The day itself was saddened for the 100th by the loss of Lieut. Frank E. Hendricks and crew, who took off for a shipping sweep of western Ceram at 0440 and were lost in weather. Intensive searches initiated immediately proved negative.

The 69th terms as its outstanding mission of the month the medium attack on Haroekoe led by Lieut. L. E. Davis on the 28th. Three elements of three, stacked down from 9000 to 8600 and echeloned right, divided the runways into thirds from east to west. Falling in train, 90 per cent of the bombs smacked onto the strip.

The 69th, 70th, 75th, and 390th formed on Captains Hedlund and Elliott and Lieuts. Bob Plympton and Bob Moyna to bomb the Wasile Bay area from medium on the 31st. The 886th's incendiaries were laid down in a tight 700 by 1000-foot pattern on the morning leg of this double-header. The return trip crossed the same target at minimum with 100 pound-demos and found black smoke still rising to 1500 feet, and the pier east of the target aflame from end to end from the morning's attack. Light, medium, and heavy fire met both runs. Mortar fire also came up on the strafing run.

It was a fitting ending for December and for 1944, the year in which the Group spent its second Christmas overseas. If the end of 1943 had seen the Group shaping and hardening into a top-notch medium bomb group, the end of 1944 found it a hardened, seasoned, toughened all-round bombing and attack group that could take anything in stride and make a good offensive job of it. We had suffered losses, yes, but we had extracted very high payment for our proportionately small losses. We had not pulled the Imperial Palace down on Hirohito, but beginning in January at Rabaul and thence through Western New Guinea in September and the Indies at the year's end, we had smashed the pillars of, and brought crumbling down in smoke and ruins, the south and southwest wings of his structure of conquest. We had driven his large ships from our territory and systematically riddled the smaller ones that still dared appear. Our brothers-in-arms had re-established themselves in the Philippines without molestation from our sector, and we would soon join them to complete the job. We had subordinated jungle and coral and rain-forest to campsite and line, and had learned to live among heat, humidity, discomfort. and disease. We had taken our war as we found it, and at the end of December, 1944, 22 months after leaving the United States, we could look upon the results of our work and find satisfaction in a bloody, dirty and vitally necessary job well done.

CHAPTER 20

The new combat year opened with rapid action, and tragedy. Lieut. H. E. Adams and R. E. Gardner of the 69th made a prize strike. On a Ceram shipping sweep they got a 60-foot two-masted ship near Oki Village, Boeroe; two similar boats under construction at West Jaloen River, Cape Salia; three 100-ton SD's in a camouflaged shelter on Ambelau Island. On the third pass at the last target the bombs hit squarely, wrapping the boats in flame and smoke. Lieut. J. R. Sathern, radar ferreter, dropped on Koebi Island. Lieut. V. H. Olson took eight of the 75th over Namlea, incidentally getting two Jap gunners. The 100th with Capt. J. J. Burnett in the lead, the 70th with Lt. Col. Joe R. Brabson, Deputy Group Commander, in the lead of eight, and Captain Dana with eight of the 390th's, hit Haroekoe.

The strike was successful; its aftermath disastrous. Lieut. Edwin L. Haals of the 70th, late at the retirement rendezvous, climbed to catch up. The first 70th element of three, led by Colonel Brabson, flew north across Ceram through weather, with the second element, led by Lt. Robert C. Hausler, following 4000 feet higher. Haals was nearly at the level of the second element. At 9900 foot Mt. Binaija, the highest peak on Ceram, crews in the top element saw three below them, flying formation, emerge from a cloud lying almost against the mountain, hit, and explode. Seventeen men, the crews of Colonel Brabson's plane, F/O Walter C. Gillette's, and Lt. Michael E. Miles', were lost. Lieutenant Miles' plane failed to clear the rise by a bare 15 feet. The five surviving planes landed at base with tragedy reflected in their crews' eyes. There could be no interruption in the schedule, of course. The regular targets were rehashed.

The fifth saw a notable five squadron strike on Manado, and more trouble. Lt. E. M. Eastburn led the 69th; Capt. Sherod A. Santos, the 70th; Lt. R. A. Plympton, the 75th; Lt. H. B. Shields, the 100th; Capt. J. E. Robison, the 390th. An occupied group of barracks was almost totally destroyed, as was a radio station. Fires spread through the supply area.

Lieutenant Shields, on his 73rd mission, received several AA hits ten miles before reaching the target. He knew a crash was inevitable, but with coolness and skill he kept on, determined to do as much damage as possible before going down. More fire came up, hitting the right engine and causing it to run wild since it could not be feathered, and shooting away the lower half of the right rudder. Shields gave the plane full right aileron and full left rudder to compensate for the right engine's being out. A minute later the left engine was hit; the hydraulic system went out, the left wheel dropped, and the oil pouring over the engine caught fire. The left landing gear and upper wing were on fire. Slipping off course, his right wing pulling him to the ground, Shields got his bombs away over the target. With a slight ridge looming just ahead, his left engine began to run away. With tall trees coming up in his face, Shields feathered the left engine, leveled off, and just managed to climb over the trees and ridge. Dead ahead lay open water. Shields yelled into the phone "Prepare to ditch", leveled off again and hit the drink at 130 MPH. The tail struck first and as the ship skidded along the wheels were torn off, the left engine fell out, the rudders broke off and part of the elevator, halfway into the fuselage, was torn away. The plane came to rest 1200 feet from the south shore of Manado Bay. It still—good old Mitchell, a bright day the factory turned this one out—remained afloat for approximately two minutes, enabling the crew to get clear, and into the raft. They paddled toward the center of the bay to get away from the shore guns. Lieut. R. E. Niever and Lieut. Wilbur L. Coats detached themselves from the formation on retirement to fly cover for Shields and his crew. This pair strafed the shoreline to keep the guns out of action until Dumbo appeared on the scene and picked up the ditchers.

Meantime, Lieut. E. C. Beaumont of the 75th also got it in the right engine on the approach. He had to pull up immediately and get out of the formation, heading for the sea and a water landing. Lieut. J. B. Wheeler saw his companion go down and also Lieutenant Shields ahead of him, and noted that they were within easy range of the Jap shore guns. Disregarding shortage of fuel and ammo and the fact that he had no bombs, Wheeler also went down to circle until the 'Cat arrived. While the rescue was in progress the Jap gunners opened up on the helpless crews and the flying boat. When Dumbo began to take off with shells pinging past its tail, Wheeler also made two passes on the offending shore batteries, silencing them on the second attack. Lieut. R. C. Dean of this crew was lost.

Over Mapanget on the following day, Capt. R. W. Thorndyke, Commanding Officer of the 75th, leading his squadron, was hit and forced down into the water off the northeast tip of Celebes in what was described by witnesses as not a water landing, but an explosion

just before his plane hit the water. Somehow three men were picked up, Captain Thorndyke, Lieut. James M. Dowling, navigator, and T/Sgt., William R. Sewell. Lieut. E. F. Fuller, co-pilot; T/Sgt., E. J. Sinitierre, engineer and S/Sgt., F. S. Nelson, gunner, were lost with the plane. Corp. Fred J. Lanzaro, engineer on another 75th plane, lost his left arm from shrapnel wounds received on this raid. Lieutenant Dowling died 48 hours later in a Morotai hospital from internal injuries. It was the end of the road for a Crusader who had seen service in the African Theatre prior to his arrival in the SWPA. Then the 10th opened a frenetic three-day sub-chapter in the Group's history which might be entitled "The Kendari Strafes." They will be well remembered by those who flew over the Celebes target.

This three-day jam session—and the frivolous term is used to denote the tight formations and indicate how little room there was to spare over the target—was opened by Lieut. Jay W. Bishop and six from the 69th, Capt. W. W. Short for the 70th, Capt. R. D. Smith for the 75th, Major Henson for the 100th, and Lieut. R. S. Moyna for the 390th. Taking off Mar, Lieut. Hal W. Townsend, 70th, got 20 miles from Sansapor when his right engine cut out. Turning back, he found he could not clear the trees to set down at Mar, tried for Middleburg, and went into the water. In the impact of landing, Lieutenant Townsend's forehead struck the gunsight and he went down with his plane.

At Kendari the formations went across the target on the trees line abreast at 260 mph. Hell broke loose over Kendari, with bombs exploding and the sky thick with bullets. The bombs walked through the target area, demolishing Personnel Target No. 1 and gun positions at the radio station. Among the more important objects strafed were ordnance trucks, the tower, the radio station, four trailers, an amphibious truck, and a parked motor roller. All the AA positions caught it, and some ceased firing. Moderate, heavy, medium, and intense light fire came up on the approach during the attack and on the retirement. Many aircraft were holed, windows were shattered and elevators riddled. Two unidentified single-engine fighters trailed from Boeroe, but did not close.

The strafers RON'd at Morotai, and repeated the performance the following day. Capt. J. W. Thomason was the leader of the 69th; Capt. R. J. Weston, the 70th; Lieut. John M. Erdman, the 75th; Lieut. Tom J. Brown, the 100th; and Capt. Gordon M. Dana, the 390th. It was another knockout punch; 300-pound demos exploded inside at least ten buildings, sending debris up to the level of the planes, and tracers went everywhere, wiping out AA gun crews and personnel who had run to cover. But still the AA did its damage. Lieut. J. R. Sathern was hit and had to crash-land wheels-up at Morotai. All the crew walked away. Hit in the right engine just after releasing, Lieut. John W. Mangum of the 100th crashed into a 6000 foot ridge west of the target, with no possibility of escape for the crew.

The job was finished on the 12th. Formation leaders for the finale, reading up the list of squadrons were: Lieut. A. C. Redding, Lieut. Gordon F. Brown, Capt. R. D. Smith, Captain Wolfendale, Lieut. Bob Moyna. The attack was pressed abreast again, over the target at 1133. Bombs blanketed assigned targets and the radio station. At least four more buildings were seen demolished and another six fired. Tracers went through everything in their path—houses, a new medium gun position, and the known automatic and medium positions, both active and inactive. Ten Mitchell fuselages were holed, oil lines severed, even package guns were bent and perforated. Lieut. James R. Hartt of the 390th was one whose oil line was hit, forcing him to single-engine to Morotai, where he suffered tire blowouts on landing. A new lieutenant in 390th S-2, William P. Hurley, who held an observer's rating, did plenty of sweating as well as observing as Hartt's passenger. S/Sgt. Ralph A. Taylor in Flight Officer McCreary's 69th ship, suffered a broken ankle, so sharp was the evasive action taken on retirement. Lieut. Philip T. Kilian of the 75th received a direct hit on the bottom of his left engine and had to put down in the water. The landing was accomplished skillfully, but the three enlisted crew members, Corp. Clair A. Gray, engineer, Corp. Ralph W. LeDrew, radioman, and Corp. James L. Goldfinch, gunner, could not be found when the plane came to rest.

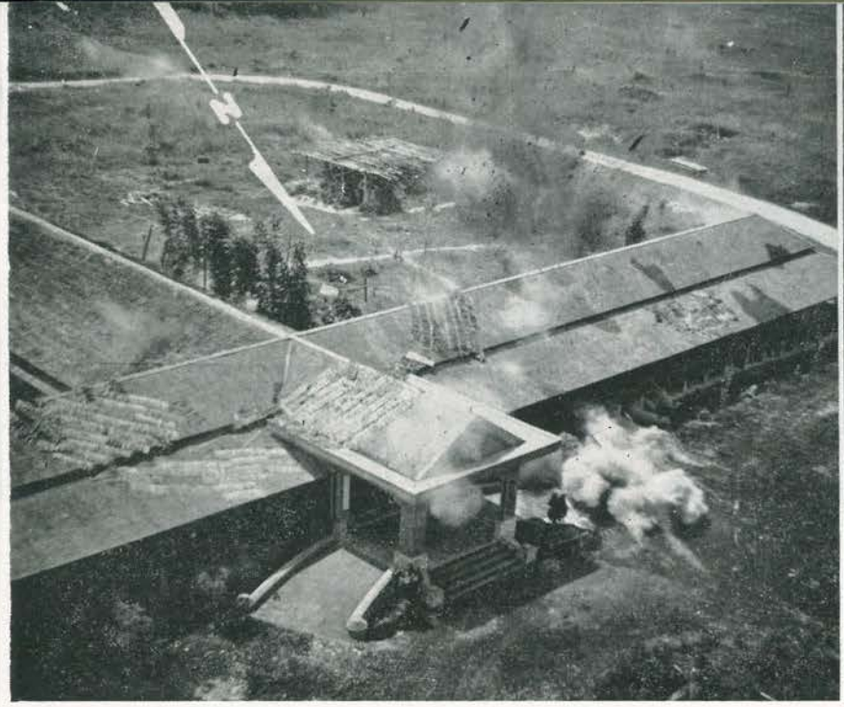
Kendari was a costly engagement for the Group, but as Intelligence reports stated: "The terrific pounding to which this target was subjected undoubtedly eliminated it as a major threat for many months to come."

One man's idea of pre-dawn war doings came to hand very opportunely—

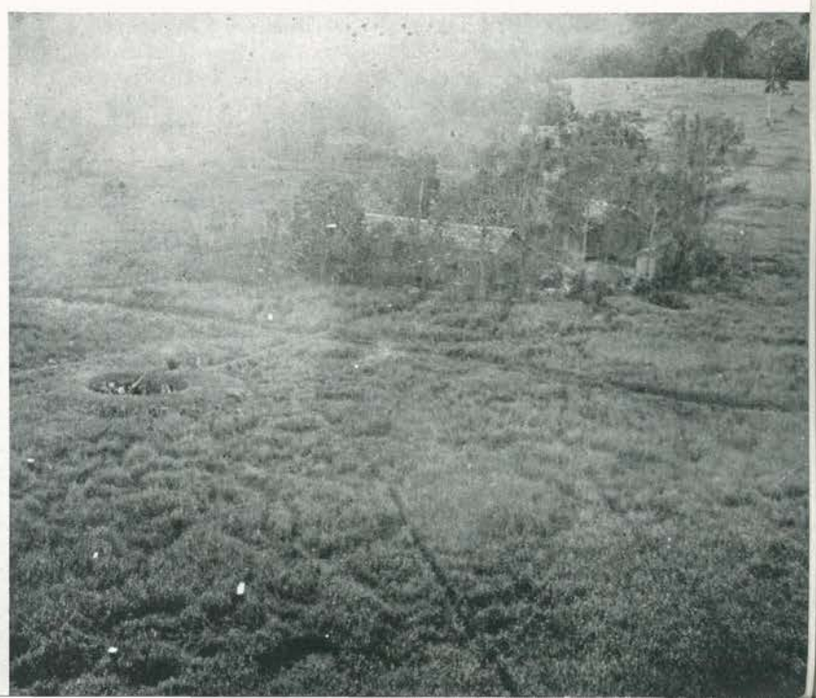
THE STRAFER

And it came to pass in those days that an edict came down from the seat of the brass that many men would be called out into the dawn to pour death and destruction upon their enemies from a low altitude.

And the men went forth among themselves and bolstered up their courage by saying, "Am I listed among those who go?" And "Holy Smoke!" and divers other phrases. For there were those among



Kendari, Celebes, gets worked over from minimum altitude during January. Jap headquarters, living quarters, supplies, and installations were destroyed on successive days. The T-shaped building was destroyed completely by the six bombs in the photo.



390TH ARMAMENT SECTION, JULY 1944

Front Row, *Left to Right*: Pvt. E. S. Parnell, S/Sgt. G. E. Carmody, S/Sgt. H. W. Schoeneman, Pvt. R. E. Leek, Cpl. L. Greenhouse, Pvt. D. A. Magistro, Second Lieutenant Faber Golay, Captain Robert J. Walker, M/Sgt. H. H. Cornwall, Pvt. L. W. Leonard, Cpl L. G. Lynn, Pfc. R. J. Castora, Sgt. H. E. Bumpus, Cpl. J. J. Madden, S/Sgt. F. T. Nelson, Sgt. J. M. Ross.

Second Row: Pfc. F. Campofelice, Pvt. R. V. Mahn, Cpl. J. R. Lord, S/Sgt. R. H. Johnson, T/Sgt. S. M. Rogers, Pvt. R. A. Henrion, Pfc. W. E. Martin, Sgt. G. C. McPharland, Sgt. R. B. Mathis, Pvt. F. T. Plunkett, Jr., Pfc. D. H. Donnelly, Cpl. C. R. Bruder, S/Sgt. L. J. Jones, Cpl. R. R. Hemphill, T/Sgt. T. R. Morrow, Sgt. Joseph Glick.

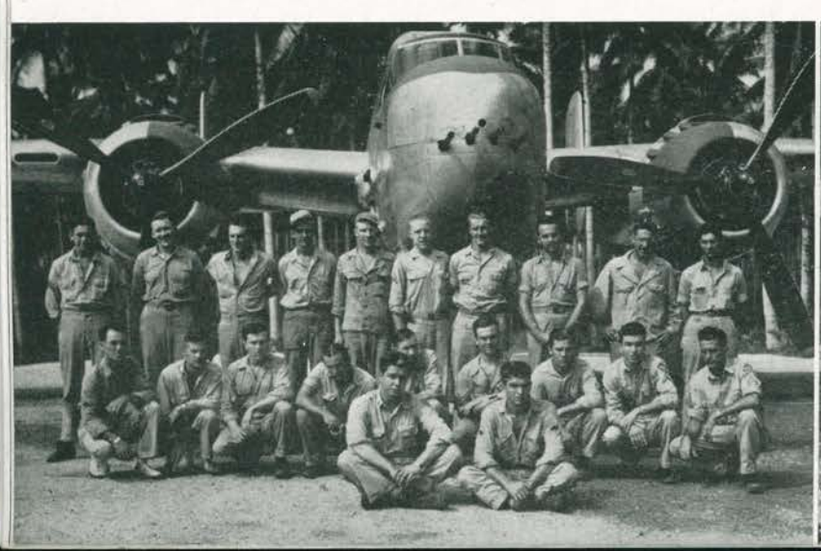
Third Row: Pvt. R. V. Johnson, Cpl. M. F. DelBuono, Cpl. R. A. Large, Pfc. R. A. Frye, S/Sgt. J. D. Jones, Sgt. F. W. Baker, Cpl. A. H. Anetzberger, Cpl. C. L. Alston, Pvt. H. J. Salazar, Pvt. H. H. Cowley, Cpl. B. W. Wilkinson, Cpl. R. L. Gafford, Pfc. E. M. Kubach, Pvt. J. A. Smith, Pvt. R. V. Moses, T/Sgt. C. E. Taylor, S/Sgt. S. C. Kerr, Sgt. D. L. Jamison.

390th Mess Staff, July 1944. Left to Right, Kneeling, Front: Cpl. Floyd W. Sanderson, Sgt. Orville E. Brogdon, Sgt. William T. Adler, Cpl. Philip J. O'Donnell, Sgt. Ralph L. Gross; Standing, Rear: Pvt. William T. Fryer, Cpl. B. E. Lemmons, Pfc. Frank J. Rom, Cpl. John E. Robinette, Sgt. T. L. Hodges, Jr., T/Sgt. Charlie Edward Gibson, Mess Sergeant, Pvt. Rene Yglesias, Pfc. R. C. Rhodes, Sgt. Alvin L. Dandanell, Cpl. Myron F. Gilbert.

390th Headquarters Staff, July 1944. Left to Right, Front: Pfc. Arthur K. Birkland, Sgt. Leo A. Seeberger, Cpl. John H. Knack, S/Sgt. Mayor R. Rihn, Sgt. Philip M. O'Dwyer; Rear: S/Sgt. Robert R. Bender, Major Joe D. Wheeler, Captain George P. Dean, Captain Stelle B. Bush, Jr., First Sergeant Jessie B. Herring.

390th Ordnance Section, July 1944. Left to Right Seated, Front: Lieutenant Otto Laufer, T/Sgt. H. K. Taute; Second Row: S/Sgt. J. L. Reed, Cpl. A. R. Yarrington, Pvt. R. D. Neville, Cpl. John Hrymak, Cpl. T. V. Watson, Pfc. G. G. Erskine, S/Sgt. L. J. Lyke, Pfc. B. D. Rice, Sgt. C. T. Farmer; Third Row: Sgt. J. C. Vaux, Sgt. J. W. Harris, Pfc. L. D. Segina, Sgt. E. F. Pelecky, Cpl. E. M. Habben, Cpl. S. W. Anderson, Sgt. R. J. Carlson, Cpl. W. L. Stefanelli, Pfc. S. T. Nicoletti, Pfc C. F. Anthony.

390th Transportation Section, July 1944. Left to Right, Front: Cpl. J. T. Moring, Cpl. K. H. Lerch, Pfc. F. J. Koziol, Cpl. W. O. Bacon, Lieutenant Otto A. Laufer, Pvt. B. L. Harber, Cpl. B. W. Wilkinson, Sgt. W. E. Patterson, Cpl. T. S. Moomaw; Rear: Cpl. D. J. Gibbons, Pvt. M. J. Shoenfelt, S/Sgt. S. W. Jablonski, Pvt. A. L. Dennis, Pvt. J. R. Gaboury, Pvt. Stetson A. Swan, Pfc. R. A. Woodward, Pvt. James H. Suggs, Pvt. Jesse R. Swartz.



COMMUNICATIONS SECTION, JULY 1944

Front Row, *Left to Right*: Pfc. D. A. Coltart, S/Sgt. R. L. Huddlestown, T/Sgt. E. A. Brown, Cpl. K. F. Deladurantaye, Cpl. E. P. Scherbenski, Sgt. J. R. Bond, Pfc. F. J. Abramo, Pvt. J. A. Gaughan, Cpl. S. P. Cielesz, Sgt. P. B. LeClair.

Second Row: Cpl. F. W. Clark, Cpl. J. P. Turretto, T/Sgt. H. D. Jolly, Pvt. M. A. Sly, S/Sgt. O. H. Edwards, Captain William F. Bretzke, Sgt. R. F. Irvine, Cpl. R. A. Baxter, S/Sgt. A. W. Kelso, Pfc. H. Truesdell, S/Sgt. W. L. Bradley, Cpl. J. Medvesky.

Third Row: M/Sgt. W. F. Ott, Sgt. V. O. Heard, Pfc. R. H. Wiesmann, Cpl. R. G. York, Cpl. A. J. Klimas, Cpl. V. B. Bachus, Sgt. J. F. Guenther, Cpl. D. M. Morton, Cpl. J. J. DeWein, Pfc. J. R. Johnston, S/Sgt. W. L. Gale, Cpl. B. J. Kelley.

Chicagoans in the 42nd: L. to R. Front: Cpl. Gerald M. Donahue, T/Sgt. Anthony J. Kazlauskas, S/Sgt. Archie W. Kelso, Sgt. Joseph Glick, Pvt. David F. Huette. Rear: Sgt. Louis J. Meinhold, Pfc. J. R. Johnston, Cpl. Robert G. York, 1st Lt. Louis J. Helbock, S/Sgt. Robert R. Bender, S/Sgt. Adam J. Dolik.

Eighteen from Wyoming who wore a total of 80 stripes. L to R, Front Row: S/Sgt. Yorkie A. Walters, S/Sgt. Joseph R. Haratyk, M/Sgt. Robert R. Blackney, S/Sgt. Leroy L. Crane, T/Sgt. Jerald E. Wilson, T/Sgt. Edward A. Brown. Second Row: S/Sgt. Walter Christensen, T/Sgt. Spencer W. Alderdice, Cpl. John P. Helbig, Sgt. Gerald Kluth, T/Sgt. John C. Jons, M/Sgt. Clair N. Deaton, M/Sgt. Earl T. Nicholson, T/Sgt. William H. Brown, Sgt. Robert Crosier, Sgt. James H. Smith, T/Sgt. Gaylord P. Rodeman, T/Sgt. Darrell Oliver.

Detroiters in 42nd, October 1944. Left to Right, Front: Sgt. Irving P. King, Sgt. Wm. T. Adler, Sgt. Neal Mandell, Sgt. Peter L. McCann, Cpl. John Hrymak; Second Row: S/Sgt. Lawrence J. Lyke, Sgt. Elmer A. Winekoff, Sgt. Wm. F. Kuhne, T/Sgt. Edward J. Parker, Pvt. Michael W. Kornack; Third Row: Cpl. D. J. Dunn, S/Sgt. Harvey E. Cooper, Cpl. Edward Kilbourn, Sgt. Vern Goff, Jr., T/Sgt. Edward J. Filarski.

390th men from Iowa, November, 1944. Left to right, kneeling: S/Sgt. Gerald Weir, Cpl. Gerald Fitzgerald, Pvt. Ralph D. Neville. T/Sgt. Howard McCaughey; standing: Lt. Allen McAllister, Capt. Gordon Dana, Maj. Richard Carmody, Sgt. Joseph Vaux, Cpl. Elmer A. Shroeder.

Pulling off the target at Kendari, Celebes.

them who liketh it not to get below half a score of thousands of feet when over the territory of the Rising Sun.

There were men there also who had flown the allotted two score and ten missions, and these were cheerful and passing gay, saying one among another, "Thou shouldest have been with me over Vunakanau and one, a burly Boer known as He of the Soft Voice, spake as follows, "Have no fear of minimum altitude. For where ye go, I shall be with thee—from the Tower."

It came to pass that before the sun was risen the C.Q. went forth from his place of watch to the abode of the birdmen and roused them, each in his turn, saying, "'Tis the fourth hour and the briefing comes before the dawn." And he retreated in haste for he was wise in the ways of the birdmen. And the birdmen cursed him in a loud voice for his tidings were not joyful.

For the strike cometh they knew and only the beavers were glad. And the beavers were few and grew less eager at the fourth hour of each day. There was much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and great unhappiness in that place. But a fear for their commissions was in them. And they went forth.

And as they went forth there cometh up to them he of the great intellect who was known as the Intelligence Officer. He was known by other names also.

And one of the birdmen said unto him, "What has thou done unto us? Wherefore beguileth thou us?"

And the I.O. sayeth unto him, "Thus is it done in our country." And he hold in his hands ribbons of many colors and spake thus: "Fulfill us this day and a score of other days and we will give thee this for the service which thou shall render another seven years."

And one of the birdmen sayeth to another: "What manner of poppycock is this that he speaketh? Knoweth he not of the law of averages?" And the other said, "Verily. Amen."

For they were nervous in the service that day and the pouches of their eyes gave witness. And they went unto the Holy of Holies called the Briefing Room. And each as he entered looketh upon the handwriting upon the wall. And each as he looketh sayeth unto another, "Say unto me that it is not so."

But one cometh among them known as Elliott who sayeth, "Yea, it is so. Best we calleth the roll." And there was quiet in the tomb of the prophets.

And he who was called Elliott spake with a tongue of sounding brass. He spake of headings and formations and of times and of D for Ditching and Dumbo and Dinghy.

And they looketh at him with heads of ivory and comprehendeth him not.

And there came another who was called Trone and he spake of restrictions, and of communications and of the fire known as the AA.

And they looketh at him with heads of wood and comprehendeth him not.

But he is wise in their ways and full of understanding of them all. He pointeth to a map and to a photograph and spake: "Behold, I speak not with a tongue of two tails. I telleth thee not that there are only two guns that can bear on thee going in, and two going out. Lo, I telleth thee that men will throw much lead at thee. Be sure that thou ziggest not when thou should zag. Many there are of the enemy who wouldst do thee harm. They come with forked lightning, and with bombs of phosphorous and hammers of the 20 millimeter. Yea and verily, pulleth not up thy nose, for the Lord turneth his face away from him who giveth the enemy no-deflection shots."

Then did the Elliott send forth to know of the men of the Lightnings. "Forsooth," sayeth he, "mayhap the 8 and 30's will be welcome ere the sun setteth." And there were those among them who waggled their heads and said, "It is so."

And it came to pass whereof he spoke.

And thus they goeth in their chariots to the dispersals.

But first some goeth to the small house in panic. And many goeth behind a tree.

And some there are who are called lead and some are called wing and the lead goeth to share his coffee with the wing saying, "The Lord watch be-

tween thee and me when we are absent one from the other, or when thee gettest too close to my tail."

Then each of the birdmen went forth to his bird, counting each part with great care.

But at the hour of pushing of the throttles one of the winged monsters thundereth not. And the birdmen there beateth it with their hands and kicketh it with their feet. But it availeth them naught. In vain the pilot calleth forth his way with the bird, but it lacked revs and putteth not out forty and four inches. Woe betide him who attempteth to take off without revs and inches, for his children and children's children will curse him, and he will curse himself. But they springeth to the back of another bird and take off.

And it came to pass that they went upon their journey and peeleth off into formation above the tree tops, and the area that was called target was before them and their enemies heaped upon them fire and brimstone and there were some whose hands were damp, and some whose faces were damp, and some whose pants were damp. There were many who bent the throttles. And there were some who goeth off from the formation and were called on Channel A. The leader asketh them "Whither goest thou?" and they replied "I go to fly for myself for the heat in that path is passing great." And the leader curseth them and telleth them to come back to the formation.

But they have turned to Channel B and hear him not. And all goeth home by diverse routes to his roost and his ounce and a half of the drip of the corn.

When again they gather in the Holy of Holies, the leader calleth out upon the wanderers and cheweth mightily upon their posteriors and telleth them of a bad show. But though he giveth them Hell in general they are happy to be back upon the ground and make haste to enter their sacks until the call of chow.

* * *

With the Philippines campaign well under way, the Crusaders surged into the ruckus, quietly but most efficiently. Of our January 15th strikes, the 13th Air Force had this to say:

"Our medium bombers were active over Philippines targets during the period, as 23 Mitchells of the 42nd Group split into three flights to hit enemy air facilities in the Mindanao area. Eight B-25's attacked Buayan supplies with 48 x 300-pounders, starting several fires, a second flight of seven aircraft hit Malabang supplies, dropping 36 x 300-pounders, results generally unobserved, and the third flight of 8 mediums dropped 48 x 300-pounders on Cotabato airdrome, hits covering the runway and adjacent dispersal area. One aircraft of the third flight ditched, cause unknown, 8 miles west of Bongo Island. All crew members were observed safe in life rafts."

The ditcher was Lieut. J. B. Wheeler of the 75th, who collided with a tree on the strafing run, almost demolishing his left wing. The water landing was accomplished smoothly and all six crewmen made the raft. Due to communications difficulties at Morotai the rescue could not be made that day and the popular Wheeler and his crew spent about 24 hours in the water within five miles of the enemy-held Mindanao coast before their deliverer arrived.

On the 19th, Lieutenant Plympton, leading the 75th, and Captain Jim Robison, the 390th, got through to La Carlota on Negros Island to fire a Tony and two Zekes on the ground and score direct hits on houses and guns with five tons of bombs and 27,000 rounds.

Reports of enemy activity on Waigeo continued to drift in, and on the 21st, a formation from the 69th led by Lieut. E. M. Eastburn dropped 72 centuries and strafed 9000 rounds as an alternate to the planned attack on Haroekoe. Another loss cast gloom on the 70th when Lieut. Wallace O. Roever and crew did not return from their Ceram photo mission of January 20th. A fragmentary radio message ending in the word "Wait—" gave no clew as to the trouble, and after unrevealing searches, it was presumed that this crew were still other victims of the treachery of Pacific weather.

January 24th brought another adventure for doughty and wiry Capt. C. W. Wolfendale of the 100th. On course to Cape Dore to conduct a shipping sweep of Ceram, he sighted a Type A (Navy) Jap barge making for shore about a half mile off the coast of the Vogelkop. Coming in from land side at 400 feet, the Captain had sprayed about 300 rounds from his nose guns when the barge exploded, sending debris 600 feet into the air. The violence of the explosion and the dense, fuliginous smoke indicated that the Captain's tracers had found their way into a load of ammunition or explosive. Flying timbers and hardware from the barge damaged the nose, wing, and tail of Wolfendale's plane, and bits of bloody bone and flesh came through the nose. Lieutenant Dietzler, bombardier-navigator, was cut about the face and arms and escaped more serious injury only by ducking behind the bomb sight. That was the extent of the injuries received, but all members of the crew were feeling pretty rocky from the stench of burning bodies and powder that filled the plane after the foray.

A highlight of the month was the retirement straight down Ambon Bay on which Capt. William W. Short, 70th Commanding Officer, led his boys. Past Halong, Ambon,

Laha, and Noesanive, crews following forgot their own hot spot in amusement as tracers from both sides of the bay threw up spurts in the water. Without knowing he was the target, Captain Short was jinking from time to time, alternately losing and gaining altitude. As he left the deck, the water spurts would meet under him, and as he lost altitude the tracers would time after time meet in an "X" overhead. By some quirk of good fortune, his plane was hit only once and that a small caliber shell. "I would have bet it couldn't have been done" expressed the sentiment of most of the flight—then they realized they had been along, too.

There were many noteworthy features of January on the ground. . . First it was a damned tough maintenance month. You don't fill up holes in a Mitchell with plastic wood, and they don't pull home on one engine unless that one is in good shape. That was the crux of the engineering problem that resulted from the exclusively low level work. Coconut fronds and logs collected on bomb bay doors ad empennage sometimes required exhaustive re-checks of repairs to make sure that everything was back in balance. It is also a tribute to ground maintenance crews that although there were very, very few Mitchells in the Group in January, 1945, that had not passed their normal performance peak with age and service, there was no organization in the Pacific at the time that was giving its planes the beating that the Crusaders were.

Not only did the strafing attacks take everything the planes could give, but they had to be accomplished with 1100 and 1300-mile round trips to reach the target and get back home.

Yet the month's flying was done without a single accident or loss due to mechanical failure. Other sections were doing a good job too, of feeding men and bomb bays and ammo boxes that invariably came back empty, of keeping antiquated jeeps and trucks rolling. Typical was the 75th's Transportation Section, where S/Sgt. M. E. Martin and his gang earned a Superior rating for the month on their beaverish efforts.

During the month the 886th Chemical lost a well-liked and respected officer who had done much for the Company when Lieut. John Grahamer, Jr., left for duty elsewhere. Among Lieutenant Grahamer's memorable accomplishments were the acquisition of an ice machine and the homemade laundry machine. Further personnel changes in the Company resulted in Sergt. John Groff's becoming Supply Sergeant, Sgt. Don Hintz, Motor Sergeant, and Sherron A. Cossaboon, Tony Mansrantuone, and Joe Maciekowich, Platoon Sergeants.

Another highlight was the improved situation on rest leaves to Mackay, Australia, for ground men, Rockhampton for officers.

Mackay and Rockhampton, the "poor-man's Sydney," came as a delightful surprise to many weary ground officers and men. For some unknown reason, Sydney was considered off-limits to the "men-behind-the-men-in-the-air"; nonetheless, Rockhampton was a virtual Paradise compared to the humid jungle air of Sansapor. The ever efficient Red Cross had built a rest home for enlisted personnel at Mackay in Queensland. Steak and eggs, fresh milk, creamery butter, and leafy vegetables replaced Spam and C-rations for a 10-day period. Regularly scheduled dances (properly chaperoned) supplied the femininity so necessary to the rejuvenation of one's morale. And the never failing "Pub-call" was a delight shared by many vacationing Crusaders.

At Rockhampton, the officers spent some leave on their own, for the only Army representation there was Sergt. Lloyd Lilly, a Crusader who had been installed there for several months as a buyer of fresh food for the commuting Fat-Cats. Here, too, the chief attraction was good food, a real honest-to-goodness bed, and the perennial "pub-crawls." A wide-awake drinker could spend as much as six hours a day in these establishments by the simple expedient of routing himself through the town at the proper time, for pubs would open at various times for short periods during the day. Unfortunately, the accommodations were such that only a very small and lucky percentage of the Crusader roster could get the trip, but for those who did make it down there, it was something to remember for many a month to come.

CHAPTER 21

In February things cooled off rapidly, or at least for a while, with targets at a minimum and planes scarce and needing overdue attention. The schedule relaxed, chiefly with shipping sweeps, radar ferrets, a few night hecklers and an occasional strike, while the line caught up with painting and odd jobs. Within two weeks, however, the welcome rest gave way to initial preparations for another move. The question then became—where? You could get any prediction you wanted to hear. Then S-2's tipped the mitt with orientation and warning talks about the Philippines, and the rumor dealers were in their element. Leyte was a favorite, closely followed by Clark Field. Cynics, however, basing their views on the record, held out for Masbate, Palawan, or a new beachhead in Borneo.

The Group, they correctly pointed out, "had never drawn anything comfortable or near civilization. So, why expect any change? Those Fifth Air Force boys would sew up Manila, Tacloban, and any other spot that would offer any night life." As for us, well, if there was a pesthole of the Philippines five would get you ten that there was where the Group would land.

That business in the orientation talk about the validity of marriages with Filipinas got a laugh.

So it went for three quiet weeks. Sansapor seemed dead with the fighters gone, without B-24's parked in the revetments, with shops and offices closing at 1530I or 1600, and extra days off. The beach wasn't very de luxe, but the strong surf running in February was good sport. Members of 'The Beach Club,' air crewmen grounded preliminary to going home, who had been accustomed to loafing and sunning in relative solitude, had to scramble for seats on the beach truck. The booming surf claimed a victim in Corp. John R. Forsythe, new 69th crewman, who unfortunately went down before his friends could reach him on February 23rd.

A gag rumor drew many a laugh, tinged with slight apprehension, at the massing of Japs on the perimeter. This was not entirely a joke, for the by-passed Nips were maneuvering along the perimeter, and an attempted break through was expected. Guards were posted on back lines of the 69th, 100th, and 390th, which abutted the jungle, and the cocking of carbines just before lights out became a familiar sound. The rumor boys took in many of the gullible with a base canard to the effect that a native runner had staggered into Group S-1 and gasped "Many Jap he come. Shoot much. On warpath," before collapsing in front of Major Clark's desk. The sequel to this hoax was an impending evacuation to Middleburg.

Subsequent to our departure, there *were* skirmishes on the perimeter, and occasional infiltrators sniped at jeeps near the 172nd Station Hospital. Few took these elaborate scares seriously, but there was considerable merriment over a reported defense plan for the 390th which called for all men not posted as sentinels to evacuate to the 70th area. This, it was remarked, would give the 70th boys some excellent wing shooting as the 390th leaped the ditch separating these squadrons.

Lacking a better gag about the shipping sweeps, somebody's remark that we "had worn out the floor" will have to do. These produced a few barges and some lucrative strafes on small Jap concentrations.

On February 6, Major Wolfendale did it again. Searching through formidable weather in the How-George sectors with Major Harvey, they spotted two SD's southeast of Ceram just as the sun looked up. Both Nips were in "high blower" for their shore hideout. The two Majors assisted the Fates in snipping the thread just a wee bit short, using 500-pounders and 250's. Major Wolfendale made several strafing runs, setting one of the Dogs afire, and Major Harvey rang the bell when he sent his last bomb right through the center of the second.

Of the major strikes of early February the most notable was the bombing and strafing of Matina on the 4th, led by Capt. B. A. Hedlund of the 69th.

A Nip monitoring the 69th's Capt. William W. Williams on his return from this strike would have been cross-eyed and cross-eared as well as slant-eyed. "Williams, this is Williams speaking. Do you know if Williams sent out that last radio message? If he has you might ask Williams whether Williams photographed the bomb hits." No, not Gertrude Stein. It seems there were four Williamses in the crew that day: Pilot Williams, Co-Pilot Williams, Radio Operator S/Sgt. G. B. Williams, Gunner Sgt. R. F. Williams.

Attacks on Sassa and Libby airdromes on the 6th recorded 100% accuracy with 94 centuries dropped hitting smack into the target; Major Short led the 70th's nine, Captain Smith the 75th's eight.

Eight of the 75th followed Lieut. J. B. Wheeler to attack shipping in Zamboanga harbor on the 11th, accompanied by Capt. R. J. Weston and the 70th. This was our first trip to Mindanao; later Zambo was to be the scene of some rough missions. It was back to Kendari for a post-mortem on the 16th, with Captain Smith of the 75th, and Captain Burnett of the 100th sharing the honors. A good section of the buildings still standing on the south Celebes 'drome were wiped out on this strike, but its vicious guns extracted toll of Crusader planes and crews. Capt. John F. Wolfe, highly regarded 75th pilot, went down over the target and all were lost.

With this strike, the returns were almost in from Sansapor. Tactical flying tailed off to nothing on the 18th, and executive officers and their assistants took over for the move.

Again the Group could look back on a long, arduous and frequently costly job carried out to the letter of the orders. The Indies campaign, from the 42nd's standpoint, had had much in common with Rabaul. It had

been a systematic pulverizing of enemy potentialities. The payoff on our work was going on in the Philippines, and we were now to join in the final destruction of the Japs in the islands where Admiral Dewey and General Arthur MacArthur in 1898 first raised the American flag over the funeral of an earlier imperialism.

Painting, taking down, crating—the by now familiar business had once again to be done and once again was accomplished with a minimum of trouble. This time again the squadrons would be split up: air and flight echelons to Morotai by organizational aircraft and C-47s; ground echeloners and heavy equipment to the new station by LST.

Capt. L. E. Davis, Lieuts. Harold Hudgins Jr., and A. J. Morganti of the 69th got a nice break during the month. They flew a 25 to Labo to check out an American major who had been in the Philippines since Bataan, living and fighting with guerrillas. On orders they spent a pleasant week eating chicken and native delicacies while the major got his hand in on the controls again.

Lieuts. J. G. McCreary, G. M. Scuffos, and R. D. Chambles, and Corps. J. T. Poff, H. W. Torrible. and J. M. Donato of the same Squadron, also drew a nice one, 30 days TD with the Eighth Army. Based at Tacloban they did nothing more strenuous than drop leaflets, while enjoying the local cuisine. Topping this, Lieuts. Joe Hobbs, A. Ottobre, and Albert Lefler of the 390th, with T/Sgt. Lumir J. Havel, T/Sgt. Herbert E. Carrier and S/Sgt. John S. Fotos pulled the assignment of flying Lieut. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger and members of his staff on a series of inspections and observations of the Philippine operations. Their junket was climaxed the following month by a visit to Manila as soon as it was possible to enter the city.

Between the 19th and the 27th the Air Echelons established themselves in the 267th Replacement Casual Camp at Morotai, while the Ground Echelons loaded LST's, and on the 28th weighed anchor for their voyage. The loading of the ships, one to each squadron, and one to Group and the 886th, was accomplished in one great push, many men working around the clock to complete the job. A regrettable accident in loading the 69th's chattels aboard cost the life of Corp. G. T. Scaramello.

Anything that was ever said by the least inhibited Crusader about vile camp conditions was eclipsed by the remarks of the mildest after Morotai. As this publication may someday be perused by your children or grandchildren we forebear to reprint any of them. Instead we shall attempt the impossible task of describing conditions politely enough that this book may be mailed.

Uncle Dud, who used to stomp around in the Mississippi Mud, would have cut his throat if he had known what he was missing. Whoever picked that campsite should have been made to live in it. No doubt it was a fine Army dust-bowl in September. It was a reeking, clinging, voracious, and ever deepening morass of muck in February and March. When we arrived in February it was just a nice slick mud, one to four inches deep, that a GI boot could take in stride. By March 10th the incessant rains and the endless churning of trucks and jeeps and feet had deepened it to two and three feet. Out of 29 days at Morotai, it failed to rain on *one* day.

The price of rubber boots soared above that of whiskey; sheepskin lined flying boots were an acceptable substitute if you could get them and if you avoided the deeper mud. If you were just a plain bastard with no connections, the best idea was to use one pair of your G. I. shoes for walking and your other pair for inside your tent. However, after a while it ceased to make much difference. The tents leaked and no amount of ditching would keep rivulets from forming pools on your floor. In about three days of back-breaking labor, details of combat men succeeded in laying enough strip matting for walkways. Then you sank only ankle deep.

Combat officers awaiting their orders for rotation were put to work as "S-5's"—Camp Commandants and Transportation Officers. After a few hitches, transportation was unsnarled to some extent by borrowing some negro quartermaster six-by-sixes. These hard-working boys daily and nightly wrestled their lumbering charges through the Morotai muck so that our missions could be flown.

Sawdust and coral promised to make the tent floors reasonably dry and comfortable for about a week; then the ground refused to take off any more water, and the sawdust and gravel vanished under deep pools. One of the few bright spots was a flourishing supply of beer, better than a case per man. While the crews were up at Leyte during the latter part of the Morotai period, the 390th S-2 and S-3 tent, which served as Personnel Supply, P-X, and dispatcher's office, was floored with the cased beer being held for them. By the time they returned, the rising water had submerged the bottom layer of cases. It chilled the beer, anyhow.

Taking a shower at Morotai was a simple matter—after you got onto the system. What saved the day for Crusaders at Morotai was the availability of large number of metal-lined bomb crates. You got three of them ,used two as stilts under your sack. This served the double purpose of keeping you from vanishing into the mud over night or from floating away. The third box made a stand for your belongings. The metal liners caught rain water running off the tent. Then you set a stray board outside, took the old tin hat and dipped your shower up as you liked it. That saved a long plod through the mud to the camp shower, where the water was turned on for about fifteen minutes a day at the whim of the tank operator. If you outguessed him you could get a shower there. The private tank system was more reliable.

Bad as Army food sometimes got overseas, rarely would you eat K rations in preference to the mess hall's offering. Morotai changed that, too. No reliable statistics are at hand on the number of men fed at the huge, hangar-size mess hall that served the casual camp, but the noon line overlapped the late breakfast line and the evening line overran the noon line.

Night amusement was more of a problem than usual. There was a movie in back of this gargantuan mess hall, if you were impervious to water. The orderly room tents, which at first served as S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4, very cozy during briefings, became card rooms at night, for these were sure to contain one at least of the rare electric lights. Through the drizzle there came the nightly wail of a cornettist endlessly and mournfully tootling "Wait For Me Mary" from his candlelighted, dripping tent.

The line was a choice spot, too. When possible the crew chiefs lived in the tin roofed shacks left by preceding outfits. These served as living quarters, engineering office, shops, tech supply, and miscellaneous warehouse. Roomy places.

While the Air Echeloners were contending with the above, the Ground Wing were finding things quite pleasant aboard their LST's. The chief unpleasant features were the limited bunking facilities and the tendency of the round-bottoms to roll and toss. The former was overcome by stretching jungle hammocks in every spot that could be found to accommodate them, and setting up cots on every flat space. This wasn't so good when it rained, but eventually tarpaulins were arranged to provide some degree of shelter. The food was unusually good. Moving out of Sansapor on February 28th, the convoy proceeded to Biak in calm weather and arrived without incident. After a four-day layover there that produced two very welcome items, beer and mail, the convoy started north on the 4th of March and was joined by another fleet near the Palau Islands. Now numbering 85 ships, the combined convoy headed for Leyte Gulf where the Group broke off and proceeded through Surigao Strait to Puerto Princessa, Palawan, beaching there on March 12th.

The tactical situation into which we were moving was not an entirely new one, for the Group's first Philippine strikes had been launched as far back as October and November, 1944. GHQ thought however, that the time had now arrived to match the rapidly progressing drive to northern islands with repeated jabs in the south, leading to the final liberation of the Philippines. The beachheads at Zamboanga and Cebu were in the making.

Before we again pick up the thread of our combat narrative, it seems to be an opportune time to highlight some of the history and interesting facts about the Philippines.

The Philippines, the largest island group in the Malay Archipelago, were brought to the notice of Europe by the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Magellan, who was in command of a Spanish expedition, approached the Philippines from the east and entered the Archipelago through the Strait of Surigao.

After 1521, the Spanish extended their rule throughout the Visayas and northward to Luzon. In 1571, Manila was taken, and the construction of the Spanish walled city began.

For over three centuries, from 1565 to 1895, the Spanish ruled the Island. There were occasional unsuccessful attempts by the Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and English to obtain footholds in the Archipelago.

The port of Manila was opened to ships of all nations in 1837. In 1896 after 20 years of increasing disaffection, the Filipinos rebelled, seeking their freedom from Spain. The martyrdom of Jose Rizal, a liberal Filipino leader and now their national hero, gave them a further incentive. A temporary peace was concluded in 1898, but conditions were still unsettled when the Spanish-American War opened another chapter in Philippine history. The American occupation of the Philippine Islands began when Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay on May 1, and Maj. Gen. Wesley Merritt captured the city of Manila, August 12, 1898.

After the war between the U.S. and Spain, the Philippine Islands were ceded to the U.S. by the treaty of Paris, and as a voluntary consideration, the U.S. paid to Spain $20,000,000. Spain also relinquished to the U.S. on November 7, 1900, all title and claim to the islands of Cagayan, Sulu, and Sibutu, and other islands belonging to the Philippine Archipelago, but lying outside the limits described by the Treaty of Paris, the U. S. paying the sum of $100,000.

American policy has been to assure Filipino self-government. In 1907, to encourage increased autonomy and eventual independence, Congress established the first Philippine Assembly. On the 15th of November, 1935, the Congress began an era of self-government in the islands by the inauguration of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. The Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Roosevelt on March 24, 1934, and endorsed by the Philippine Legislature on May 1, 1934, provided for the independence of the Philippines in 1946. Politically, the Commonwealth is divided into 49 Provinces and 8 chartered cities (Manila, Baguio, Cebu, Iloilo, Zamboanga, Davao, Bacolod and Tagaytay). The provinces are divided into municipalities, and these are further divided into barrios.

The land area of the Philippine Islands lies between 21 degrees 10 minutes and 4 degrees 40 minutes north latitude and between 116 degrees 40 minutes and 126 degrees 34 minutes east longitude. There are 7,083 islands, extending 1,150 statute miles from north to south and 682 miles from east to west. Of this number 462 have an area of one square mile or more; 2,441 are named and 4,642 unnamed.

The Philippine Islands divide naturally into three main groups, occupying respectively a northerly, central, and southerly position in the archipelago. They are:

1. Luzon 2. Visayas 3. Mindanao

The largest island is Luzon, 40,814 square miles. Others are Mindanao 36,906; Panay, 4448; Palawan, 4500; Mindoro, 3794; Bohol, 1554; Masbate, 1255; Cebu, 1695. The chief cities, with their populations as of January 1, 1935, are Manila, 623,362; Cebu, 142,912; Zamboanga, 131,729;

The 100th suffered the first loss early in the offensive when Lieut. Bryan P. Lynch's plane was set on fire, crashed into the water and exploded coming off San Roque on February 18th. Weather claimed Lieut. Louis R. Verzi of the 390th, who became separated from his formation in the front that lay between Morotai and Mindanao. The crew had to be listed as missing in action after days of unsuccessful searching. On the 27th Lieut. Stanley C Dean of the 100th was hit, also over San Roque, and forced to ditch. Cpl. Ralph E. Shepard went down with the plane.

The Nips threw us for a three plane loss on March 4th. Lieut. Edward G. Bearman of the 390th was hit at the start of the bombing run over Zamboanga, completed his run with a flaming right engine, and went down into Basillan Strait, while Lieut. Wilson H. Clampit and Lieut. Harry W. Piatt of the 75th were going through almost the same trouble. The three pilots accomplished as smooth landings as could be expected under the circumstances. Lieutenant Bearman's crew made their raft, Sgt. Stephan G. Deak, engineer, gashing his left leg in exiting from the plane. From the raft they could see Lieutenant Clampit's and Lieutenant Piatt's crews launching their boats. Cpl. Joseph L. Schneiderhan, radio operator of Lieutenant Clampit's crew, was lost. Closer to shore (Lieutenant Piatt landed on a reef, where the plane remained visible for weeks) these two crews were under fire from waterfront guns, and their plight rapidly got worse, for three barges started for them from town. Lieut. J. B. Wheeler promptly remedied this situation by strafing the barges. Also circling overhead were Capt. Gordon M. Dana and Lieut. C. R. Blackard of the 390th, the former with his turret dome shattered.

Dumbo had meantime been summoned, and quickly reached the 75th crews, took them aboard, and then taxied over to Bearman's raft. Taking the third set of ditchers into his already loaded craft, the Cat pilot finally lifted her off the water with her 17 drenched passengers and labored home to Pitoe. Another 390th pilot, Lieut. E. E. Rankin, limped home to Pitoe Strip on one engine from this mission.

A true calamity struck the Crusaders on March 10th, when Colonel Henson, flying a 70th plane, collided in midair with a plane being flown by Colonel Kegelman. The collision sheered Kegelman's wing, and he plummeted to earth carrying with him the recently arrived Lieut. Col. Milton E. Lipps, Deputy Group Commander, and Capt. Cornelius D. Murphy, Group Navigation Officer, in addition to S/Sgts. George N. Muhl, Marvin E. Gray and James Klein, crew members.

The inconsolable Colonel Henson was forced to assume temporary command of the Group.

About this time the Contract Termination office claimed Maj. Mathias Little, Jr., Group Intelligence Officer who had come overseas with the Group.

Major Little established one of the 13th Air Force's outstanding S-2 Sections during a period when Air Intelligence was treading untried ground. His bouyant personality and minute attention to the detail of Intelligence functions were recognized throughout the entire Far East Air Forces.

With him in the Group office were Capt. Raymond Jaskoviak, Photo interpreter, and Lieut. Wesley Flora. These men, 1/Sgt. Philip Meyer, T/Sgt. Alvaro Echeguren, S/Sgt. Daniel Livingston, and Cpls. James Erlin, James J. Lennon, and Robert G. Wilson, carried on under Capt. Arthur G. Taylor, who moved over from the 100th.

On the 7th the Air Echelons had again been split, with crews and a still further skeletonized staff from each squadron going to Dulag, Leyte, for special operations. The crews who went to Leyte enjoyed infinitely better living in quarters provided by the 84th Airdrome Squadron. Gravel or wood-floored tents were awaiting them, and fresh meat and fresh eggs appeared frequently from the kitchens.

This "special assignment" consisted of ground and PT cover attendant upon J-Day at Zamboanga,, March 10th. The route of these support missions will ring familiarly in pilots' and navigators' ears—"Off Dulag, Hindang Town, Camiguin Island, Tambulian Point to Zamboanga, and return via same route."

Port Holland and Lamitan Town were among the targets which received attention from these support missions. Typical was one flown by Lieut. J. W. Dodd of the 390th: "Reported to the MTB's and immediately, at 1300I, was asked to make a strafing run, 290 degrees heading, on Lamitan Town. Port Holland was attacked at minimum altitude at 1500I, strafed, and four bombs dropped, starting two fires with black smoke to 300'."

Or another that did not produce a target: "Off Dulag at 0726I, arrived at Bancunjan Island and reported at 0940I. MTB's had no target ready so area was circled until 1140I, then departing for base." Almost the same words could be quoted from the reports of any squadron, with Lieutenant Sathern, Lieutenant Sherwood, Lieutenant Robinson, Lieutenant Florance, Lieutenant Park, or anyone of many others as the pilot.

Perhaps their highest praise came from a PT commander with whom a B-25 piloted by the 70th's Capt. Robert

J. Weston, El Monte, Calif., was cooperating in reconnoitering the town of Isabella on Basilan Island shortly before the army went ashore there.

The PT skipper called Captain Weston by radio and informed him that the town seemed full of Japs and supplies, and that evidently the Nips were going to use the place as an enormous pill-box.

"How about stirring them up a bit so we can see how well they're fixed?" he requested.

The B-25 had a full load of ammunition and twelve 100-pound bombs. The pilot backed off a couple of miles, lined up longways on the town, chose for his retirement a route out to sea over the docks. Then he dropped to rooftop level and bent the throttles forward, opened bomb bays and guns, and went to town.

The results astounded everyone, including Captain Weston. One bomb caught an ammunition dump, a bomb or an incendiary bullet set a fuel dump on fire, another bomb hit a 100-Jap barracks, two destroyed the docks, the others richocheted their way around in odd directions before their 11-second delay fuses went off.

"My good God," the awe-struck PT captain yelled into the microphone. "You've got the whole town on fire."

Any impression that the Dulag operations were uneventful is erroneous. Things went smoothly on the whole, but there were damage and losses. The 100th suffered another blow on March 10th. Taking off from Dulag in weather, Lieut. Gerald A. Bright and crew did not join their formation, could not be contacted, and were not heard from again.

There were additional bright sides to the picture on the ground however. While the planes were airborne, and sometimes at night crew chiefs and air crews not flying had time to make the acquaintance of their first Filipinos and the Philippine national sport of cock fighting. It turned out that some of the southern and western boys knew a thing or two about the scrapping chickens too, and not all the bets that changed hands in the Dulag "arenas" were headed for the Banco de Leyte. Plenty of them ended in the crew chiefs' pockets. The boys also made the acquaintance of the local beverage "tuba", about which the less said the better. Some very sprightly headgear made its appearance following the return from Leyte, and, minus his greasy fatigue cap or jockey cap, many a husky crew chief seen with his new hat and minus his stripes looked like a hefty construction boss back home.

By the 19th the ground picture at Zamboanga had reached the point where our support was no longer needed, and on the 19th-20th the crews rejoined the Air Echelon in the Morotai mud to prepare for the welcome move out of the Indies and into the Philippines. During February and March, 109 missions, involving 695 sorties, were flown, all at minimum altitude with the exception of a few weather and photo missions.

Three commendations were received for our support during the recapture of Zamboanga Peninsula:

SUBJECT: COMMENDATION

TO: ALL SQUADRONS

1. The Commanding General 8th U. S. Army sent this group three separate commendations for the direct air support furnished at Zamboanga during the recent assault.

2. You and the men and officers of your squadrons made this superior record possible.

3. It is my desire to add my commendation for a difficult job well done.

H. C. Harvey,
Major A. C.
Commanding

Ground life on Morotai was considerably helped by some Intelligence reading and radio material. One of the more interesting bits of applied anthropology that came to hand was the following:

Is He Jap or Chinese?

"Is it really possible to tell a Japanese from a Chinese? In other words, can you tell your enemy from your ally? The answer is simple: Most of the time you probably won't be able to spot the Jap unless he's dressed in the Imperial Army uniform. . .

In many cases, trying to tell a Japanese from a Chinese by physical appearance alone is like trying to tell a German from an Englishman in a shower bath before you've heard either man speak. . .

The Chinese themselves are unable to identify many Japanese, as Japs by physical characteristics alone. . .

The important thing to remember is that the real difference with the Jap is his ideas. The Chinese know this and say that, "If you aren't sure enough to shoot, the best way to tell a Japanese from a Chinese is to ask him."

Death on Morotai

(Paragraph from Jap soldier's last letter to his father)

"I shall distinguish myself by killing many Yanks and will destroy myself at the end. I do not think that I shall ever set foot on the soil of my country again. If you want to see me, come to the Yasukuni Shrine. We will meet there. I have nothing more to say. I shall be praying for your good health and happiness from my grave on Morotai Island. If I come out of this alive, I shall

have some interesting news for you. This is my last letter."

Long familiarity all but dulled our sense of surprise at new and strange manifestations of the deepest rooted of all factors of Japanese military psychology—the tendency towards self-immolation. The incomprehensible will of Japanese soldiers to destroy themselves resulted in the word "suicide" and all its synonyms being the most overworked in the language, so far as intelligence reports were concerned. Every battle account, every captured document, every diary was replete with such expressions as "suicidal counterattack", "combat seppuku", "suicide defense", and the like.

When we remember a phenomenon like the suicide defense of Manila, or the amazing spectacle of hundreds of Japanese soldiers blowing themselves up in the Corregidor tunnels in a mass suicide pact, we recall this strangest of all Japanese characteristics, which to the western mind will always be incomprehensible because of its negation of the basic instinct of self-preservation.

Our concern, however, is not with the broad subject of Japanese psychology, but with the manner in which this national trait was utilized by Japanese commanders for military ends, and specifically with the manner in which suicide tactics were employed in the Philippines campaign.

Many weapons developed by the enemy deliberately attempted to exploit the willingness of the individual Jap to commit suicide. First and most important, in the Japanese air services, there was the suicide crash diver, whose exploits are well known. The Jap at the controls of an airplane who is willing and anxious to die for his country proved to be a serious menace. On the sea, the Jap developed small craft to attack our shipping. Though disguised under a variety of names, this boat was a thinly veiled suicide attack vehicle; a successful attack meant dropping depth charges at such close range as to be certain to blow up the operator and his boat. But it was on land that we were confronted with the greatest array of plain and fancy suicide weapons and suicide tactics. The favored anti-tank weapon developed by the Japanese was a lunge mine whose successful employment demanded an approach to within two or three feet of the target; successful detonation of the mine resulted in the complete disintegration of the lunger.

There were numerous reported instances of Japs with explosives wrapped around their bodies hurling themselves into the path of tanks and even swimming out to attack vessels. The shoulder-pack mine was devised as a more convenient method for the Jap soldier to carry a heavier weight of explosives by which he might blow himself and the chosen target to kingdom come. Explosives were fastened to the end of short bamboo sticks; the Jap soldier wielding this weapon lay doggo in a foxhole until the American tank passed over him, and then inserted it into the treads.

The infiltration of suicide patrols into rear areas, already familiar to us in New Guinea, was stressed beyond all proportion. Literally hundreds of captured orders and documents, as well as actual ground contacts, confirmed that the enemy dignified the tactics of suicide penetration to a position of highest importance. The myth of the human torpedo was constantly held up for emulation and example. Death was accepted implictly as the normal and expected result of such raids.

These tactics were the tactics of desperation. Realizing that fire power and armor plate were after all superior to "spiritual power" and knowing, moreover, that it was too late to develop the weapons to cope with ours, the enemy deliberately based many of his new weapons and tactics, and possibly his principal hope of staving off defeat, upon the strong willingness of the individual Jap to die for his strange ideology.

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CHAPTER 23

Moving from Morotai was a welcome but ill-favoured business. Plenty of C-47s were available, but loading had for the most part to be done at night and in a lashing rain. You looked 40 minutes to an hour for the plane you were supposed to load, in the rain, and then perhaps a load-nervous pilot who did not figure his capacity the way the tech order calculated it would not accept the full load intended for his plane. You couldn't blame him in a way—jettisoning a jeep from a C-47 in trouble isn't exactly simple. With grunts and groans and curses, the heavy crates, jeeps, and water trailers were loaded and sent on their way, and then on a welcome morning, the last of the personnel climbed aboard in the pre-dawn drizzle and lay down on boxes and floors in weariness to sleep off the nightmare. The sturdy Douglases lifted their noses from Wama and took wing for Palawan. Organization aircraft went ahead. Beyond the permanent Morotai-Mindanao front, the sky cleared at once and the Celebes and Sulu seas sparkled in the sunshine.

Seen from the air, Puerto Princessa strip and its surroundings looked extremely attractive to the muddied Air Echeloners, and the new station lived up to its promise. It was a common sight to see an arrival from Morotai step from a 47, kneel and pick up a handful of good dry sand and run it through his fingers with obvious pleasure. At Morotai, you could almost forget there was dry earth.

The really pleasant surprise for the air travelers came with their first glimpse of the new camp area. For the 42nd Group, it couldn't be believed at first. To one coming from Morotai it was another world. Here was a symmetrical, sunny, sandy, cocoanut grove along a stretch of milk-white beach, dazzling in brilliant sunlight and swept by the Sulu breezes.

This time there were no taunts about having it easy. The Ground Echeloners had heard about Morotai from the first air arrivals. Not that they had not had plenty of work to do to get the camp areas into shape. The cocoanut grove, long neglected under the Jap's domination of Palawan, had become knee deep in fallen cocoanuts, fronds, and sprouting nuts when the first ground parties reached the site on March 12th. Puerto Princessa, where the LSTs scraped ashore, was a sad sight—the shell of a once attractive Philippine community. Buildings that had once been the Dominican Seminary, the Palacio Municipal, the large and comfortable homes of traders and prosperous

SOUTH SEA ISLAND PARADISE

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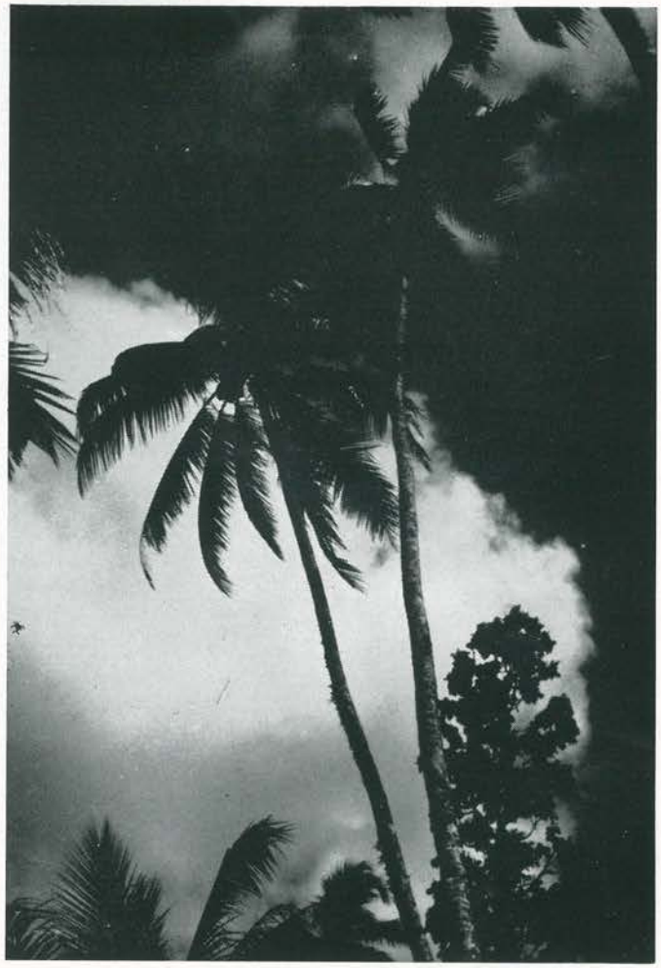
"As he turned his head from side to side, he could see the white sands stretching to the distant curve of the island. The bright heat of the tropic sun was tempered by a soft breeze that blew in from offshore, cooling him and whispering among the palm fronds overhead. In the distance an azure sky leaned down to a lapis lazuli sea, broken here and there with the vari-colored sails of graceful native craft."

That is NOT a travel brochure. Palawan, b'gosh, and we never had it so good. Nowhere had the Crusaders been stationed in such a lovely locale. A cocoanut plantation where each tree was 24 feet from its neighbor, and each row 24 feet apart. The only thing missing was Times Square and the Top of the Mark. Oh, well, you can't have everything.



Filipinos were reduced by bombs, and naval bombardment, if they stood at all, to four insecure walls gaping toward the sky. Piles of debris were all that remained of once polished mahogany and lauan floors and furniture.

While camp building was as arduous as ever, and it got just as hot on Palawan as in New Guinea or the Solomons, the work went on with a high degree of good cheer, even though this was the fifth and sixth go at the task for many old Crusaders, now two long years away from home.

First meals were eaten in al fresco dining rooms under the palm arches. There was a slightly misplaced element of picnic atmosphere about it at moments. It *was* a picnic after some of the camps we had built. Tents were thrown up on the ground and despite the medics' dire predictions, you could sleep the night through without so much as a single mosquito bite. A few centipedes got into shoes and nipped the owner when he pulled them on in the morning, but after New Guinea, this was an insectless island, comparatively speaking. Details, of course, were as hard as ever—latrine digging became a matter of blasting after you got down four feet. The topsoil was powdered so fine that a footstep raised a small cloud, and a passing truck or prop-wash drove the brown and red dust right through clothes. Camp areas shaped up rapidly, however, and soon meals were eaten in new, airy mess halls; showers and their tanks rose; and tent after tent acquired and installed its floor. Whether it was due to new rotation policies which took the combat men off flying missions at the fifty mark or thereabouts, or whether it was due to the challenge for tent improvement presented by the new and attractive area is a question that can be argued. Perhaps it was a combination of both circumstances, but after the first weeks at Palawan some of the fanciest tent finishing—bar none—in the whole damned Army or Seabees could be seen in Crusader squadrons. It was even rumored that some perfectionists carried the matter of home improvement to the point of installing flush plumbing. This could never be proved but inside running water for wash stands became common, and one crew of the famed Golden Mission Club carried off top honors with a job that included bamboo wainscoting, blue frame trim, a double end porch, built-in double decker bunks, enclosed cabinets, running water, fountain Coca-Colas, and indirect lighting. Just cocktail lounge proprietors, these boys.

Beyond argument the laurels for an official structure went to Maj. Charles Humble's "Palawan Pentagon" which housed the 75th's Orderly Room, C. O., Operations Intelligence, Medics, and Supply. This War Department annex of the Southern Philippines had to be seen to be believed.

A photo, taken in March, 1945, of the strip and beach near Puerto Princessa. Our camp was in the cocoanut grove along the beach, about a half mile or so beyond the strip.

At Palawan the 886th Chemical was again with us and enjoying the same break in camp locations after nearly two years in the Solomons and New Guinea.

As soon as camp was set up, the outfit got right to work, for fire bombs were needed in greater number than ever before and the intensive smoke screening operations that were to come with Tarakan were to give the Company some busy days and nights. The 886th was to share, too, in the commendations received from the Commanding Generals of Air Force and Fighter Command for the efficient bombing and smoke work soon to follow.

It is possible to show in a wealth of pictures the various stages of camp building, and a word of appreciation is in order for the able and productive Group Photo Lab staff: Lieut. Raymond Proctor; T/Sgt. Leonard F. Jung, section chief; S/Sgt. T. J. McCadden and Sgt. Irvin P. King, who snapped their lenses at everything and everybody of interest; T/Sgt. Alvin T. Sharp and his gang who did the developing and printing, and the many other skilled and hard-working men who handled the Group's combat, technical, historical, and public relations work. Working at all hours and building their own laboratories, sometimes under dismaying conditions, these men did an extraordinarily fine job, and to their efforts must go credit for a great measure of the interest of this book.

The move to Palawan is remembered for one other thing: the sudden increase in the importance of Public Relations to the 13th Air Force. During the Solomons days, Crusader strikes frequently were referred to in the newspapers as "attacks by Admiral Halsey's land-based bombers." Photos taken by Crusader gunners appeared as "Official Navy Photographs."

Group S-2, the War Room, and S-3 in the process of construction.

Tents under construction. Cocoanut logs cut in our own sawmill furnished lumber for framing.

The Commanding Officer's office and quarters. Lt. Col. Harvey, Col. Helmick, and Col. Champion lived here.

Squadron PRO's were untrained, for the most part, and had untrained personnel. They did heroic work, but were unable to make much of a show against the magnificent output of the European outfits with their professional publicity men.

When the Aussies went ashore in the first Borneo landing at Tarakan, there was a Crusader camera plane flying off shore photographing the landing and the smoke-laying B-25s. These pictures were processed and flown to Leyte the next morning. Several of these shots were radiophoto-ed from Manila to the States 20 hours before news services were able to make it. This was repeated at Brunei Bay and Balikpapan.

One of the first of the new Public Relations Section's longer releases voiced the Group's plaint against anonymity. The "MacArthur's Secret Weapon" yarn received some widespread attention. Because several dramatic and humorous incidents are mentioned in the yarn that have not appeared elsewhere in this book, we are carying excerpts from it:

HEADQUARTERS THIRTEENTH AIR FORCE, PHILIPPINES—Out in the Southwest Pacific there are numerous men, the exact number being a military secret since it is roughly equivalent to the military strength of the outfit, who are in varying stages of irritation over their apparent anonymity.

They are very fed up with getting letters from home plaintively inquiring, "Why don't we read in the papers about your outfit?"

They call themselves "MacArthur's Secret Weapon."

They don't fly rocket ships or jet propulsion craft; they've never dropped a bomb down the smokestack of a Jap battle ship or radioed to base "Scratch one flat top," although their roster of destruction includes every type of Nip war craft except a battleship.

They are The Crusaders, the medium bombardment group of the 13th Air Force.

When finally in 1945, The Crusaders shook the mud and gloom of three years in the Solomons, New Guinea, and the Netherlands East Indies out of their hair, arrived at a travel brochure beach in the Philippines, and were told that it was their new home, teeth fell like hail on the steel deck of the LST they were riding.

Crusader pilots call themselves B-25 drivers; they are so affected by being the Group Nobody Knows that it crops up in all their reports. They're ultra-conservative even when reporting damage. Once during the Guadalcanal days, a pilot returning from a shipping sweep of Vella Gulf admitted under close questioning that he had skip-bombed and exploded "a helluva big boat, a big destroyer or something: I think the gunner got a picture of it sinking." The gunner had. It was a "helluva big boat" all right—one of the Japs newest cruisers.

Lieut. Kenneth Lattie, Mattapan, Mass., drove his Mitchell off a Rabaul target one cloudless day in February, 1944, trying madly to shake loose five quarter-ton bombs that refused to release, and which were interferring with his desire to go someplace else at the greatest possible speed. Jap anti-aircraft in Simpson Harbor and on the shores around it were throwing up everything but Tojo's spectacles. Lieutenant Lattie had dropped behind the formation and was very conscious of being the center of too damned much attention.

He began his own little series of evasive turns. One leg of it took him in the direction of Simpson Harbor, at the time the nest of several Jap warships. He leveled off and gave one last despairing punch at the Salvo button. The bombs wobbled out of the bomb bay and like bosom companions trying to make a lamp post, drifted down and ahead. Lattie paid no attention to them. As long as he got that 2500 pounds out of his airplane they could go any place the law of gravity took them.

A half minute or so later the interphone came alive with excited yips from the "back room." A gunner, with the placid curiosity that pervades all gunners once they're out of danger, had been idly following the falling bombs with his eyes. "Migod, Lieutenant," he yelled into the interphone. "You

hit a boat. I didn't get a chance to see what it was. The bombs kept going down, and all of a sudden this boat blows up. I got a picture of it, but I don't think I got much."

Lieutenant Lattie is credited with "something." The photo showed a cloud of smoke and flame and the indistinct bow of an almost perpendicular ship. Officially, inasmuch as no one could tell what was in the middle of that pall of smoke, Lattie got credit for nothing at all. A nice conservative point of someone's view. He'd give a month's pay if the Japs would tell him what he sank that day.

Another time Capt. L. E. Whitley, High Point, N. C., loaded with 500-pounders, caught a column of three ships of the Tokyo Express off New Georgia. The Nips were trying desperately to reinforce their Guadalcanal garrison. We just as desperately were trying to stop them. In this section of the express were two warships and a transport. "Whit" came up on them from the rear through the proverbial hail of flak, popped a bomb at the last one, hopped up and over, popped another bomb at the next one, hopped up and over, and popped another bomb at the first in line. He stopped two for three, a Jap cruiser and a destroyer, dead in the water to be finished by following planes. The transport also was sunk.

Captain Whitley and his crew arrived at their base several days later, courtesy of the Navy's PBY rescue service. His plane was so badly shot up by the time he dropped his last bomb that he had to land in the Pacific, paddle to Canongga Island in the New Georgia Group, and wait for someone to come and take him off. His first inquiry is recorded, "Did I get that little boat riding third?"

Captain Whitley got a medal of some sort for that. Sheer tradition would have got him a cluster to his Air Medal, or maybe a can of warm beer from his C.O. However, the records show it was a Silver Star; that happened before the more important things like beer got out to Guadalcanal. Only one time did a pilot fail to be conservative, and he got called up on the carpet for it. Headquarters had finally got a bit fed up with the constant understatement of bombing formation reports, "Stop," they said, "radioing that the bombing was 'fair.' We decide from that the target is still active and set up another strike, then we find the target destroyed. Let's not be so modest."

The next mission bombed Buka just north of Bougainville Island. The leader looked back as the last string of bombs exploded on the runway. He then jotted a note to the radio operator. "Bombing good. Island sinking slowly."

It's surprising, and not a little embarrassing to learn how few people know who is primarily responsible for the destruction of Rabaul, who blasted Truk, who knocked out Wolai, which Air Force paved the way for the ultimate wrecking of Balikpapan's refineries so thoroughly that we could capture Jap planes and tanks in the Philippines intact save for their lack of fuel. It's embarrassing to members of the 13th AAF that not one person in 10 knows they handled these little chores. In fact, over Truk and Wolai no other land-based planes ever appeared, until their tactical destruction was complete.

Even fewer people know that after a couple of early raids by the Fifth in late 1943, the B-25s of The Crusaders took over the destruction of Rabaul, the destruction of its airfields, and the destruction of any aircraft that might interfere with Army and Navy plans in the Solomons. They started on January 12, 1944, with a bombing and strafing attack led by Capt. Robert J. Morris, St. Louis, Mo., that caught 66 Jap planes on Vunakanau Airdrome. Continued attacks worked over each of the strips. By the middle of February there were no Jap planes left, even if they had had a runway to take off from.

By March 15, Rabaul was reduced from a city of 1400 buildings to a heap of rubble in which less than 20 buildings had roofs or walls. Its five satellite airfields were daily pocked with bomb craters which the Japs nightly filled for planes that never came in, that never took off. Their laborious shovel work was scattered indiscriminately about the area the following day by more quarter-ton bombs. The 13th's heavies during this period had moved on to hit Truk and Wolai, leaving the whole job in the Crusaders' capable hands. That the job was done thoroughly is history.

The Nips ran out of fighters, but they never ran out of anti-aircraft guns and ammunition. Their shooting was good and they were able to polka-dot the sky as heavily in June of 1944 as they were in December, 1943.

The Crusaders, after Rabaul ceased to exist, leapfrogged to Western New Guinea, where they were for a time the westernmost troops in the Pacific, 300 miles west of Tokyo. From Sansapor they worked over the Netherland East Indies.

The Boela oilfield, tanks, and satellite strips went up in flames, smoke, and bomb bursts. Ambon Town and its great airbase at Laha, the headquarters of the Jap airforce in the South Pacific, ceased to be. Namlea, Boeroe Island, had five strips, and the town itself was a huge storehouse. The Crusaders gave it the Rabaul massage. For three days Nanlea got the Crusader "bombing good." Then there was no Namlea. The Japs had built strips on every level spot in the Halmaheras, it appeared. For all the good it did them, they might as well have stood in Tokyo. Galela was the biggest. A week after the Crusaders started to work, you couldn't have taxied a jeep on Galela.

Meanwhile The Crusaders also had the job of keeping the entire area free of Jap shipping. This they did by sinking everything in the area. Finally the water around Ceram and the Halmaheras con-

Distinguished Service Crosses, Silver Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Air Medals,

tained more hulks than the islands contained Japs.

The Japs resorted to submarines, and Lieut. John P. Mogan, Norwood, Mass., can guarantee that at least one of them is still there. He can tell you, furthermore, what the sub carried. After his four 500-pounders went off under it, boxes, barrels, crates, Japs, and fuel oil formed a maelstrom of cascading debris. His wingman helped him annotate the wreckage. True to Crusader tradition, he asked the Intelligence Officer who interrogated him, "Do I get credit for a submarine?" Someone will probably get busted for it, but he did. His DFC citation read, "Lieutenant Mogan . . . for sinking an enemy submarine. . . . ."

The spirit of genial comeraderie carried over into the flyer's daily lives. For example, there's the time on Stirling Island someone drove broad head nails through the seats of the Group's briefing room benches, and then carefully wired the protruding lower ends to a switch at Col. Truman Spencer's desk.

At the end of that day's briefing, the Group C. O., Col. Harry Wilson, arose. Colonel Spencer closed the switch at the same moment. Every man in the room left his seat, and not all of them landed on their feet.

Immensely pleased with the results, Colonel Spencer wired his desk the same way to discourage friends from leaning against it, or sitting on it. It was a huge success until the day some unknown culprit closed the switch while Colonel Wilson was perched on the desk. The Colonel turned out to be a positive genius at dismantling electrical equipment.

Crusader crews are convinced they fly the best, safest, most versatile airplanes in the world, and that if Washington were smart, only three kinds of planes would be built: Superforts for long range targets, Lightenings for fighter support when needed, and Mitchells for any other odd chores that might crop up.

For effectiveness at bombing above 10,000 feet, they point to airdromes and to towns throughout the Pacific. For low level attacks and strafing missions they point to the twelve .50 caliber machine guns that jut forward from the plane, and the swaths of destruction they have cut through Jap installations. For attacks on shipping they point to their skip-bombing record. For safety they point to their potential speed, the number of Mitchells that have returned to base on one engine, and the enormous number of men who have returned to their squadrons to fly again after landing in the Pacific ocean. In a minimum altitude mission supporting the in-




and Purple Hearts were distributed in Awards Ceremonies from the Russells to the Philippines.

vasions of Zamboanga, three planes were shot down by enemy flak. All three made the ocean, and all three were ditched so safely that 17 out of the 18 men on board were saved. This record is very close to the all-over average for B-25 ditching.

That the Crusaders are not unknown among their confreres in the South and Southwest Pacific is evinced by the heavy sheaf of commendations they have received from higher headquarters of units with whom they have cooperated. They received Admiral Halsey's highest accolade, a radioed "Well done" for their work in the Solomons. A roster of names signed to the commendations in their files would read like a roster of the general officers in the Pacific. For their close support of the Zamboanga invasion they picked up three in three days. A week later they had another for similar support of the Cebu landings where they used their skip-bombing technique to destroy Jap gun positions dug into hillside caves.

Recently a flight of B-25s was seen over French Indo-China. On their rudders the Cross of Lorraine was painted. In the lead ship was Maj. Harry C. Harvey of Mount Kisko, New York, West Point, and various Pacific way stations.

Major Harvey is the new Crusader Commanding Officer. MacArthur's secret weapon is still moving west.

* * *

The combat picture from Palawan was at first a continuation, almost without break, of ground support activity, this time over Cebu City. The first significant mission, however, was not to Cebu, but a bombing and strafing of mortar gun positions on Pandanan Island south of Palawan, flown by the 69th under the lead of Major Harvey. Then it was right into high blower for the Cebu operation, with a night heckler by Captain Dana and two from the 390th on the 25th, strikes by the 69th under Lieut. T. C. Mahl, Jr., the 70th behind Lieut. W. A. Hathaway, the 75th led by Lieut. R. M. Stratton, and the 100th with Lieut. Remauld Sawicki.

Hathaway, after dropping his bombs and strafing the target at Cebu, racked his plane up to 900 feet to observe the effects of his attack. He was at this altitude when he crossed the still Jap-held airdrome of Opon across from Cebu City. There was one 20 mm AA gun on Opon. Two bursts from it left him over Bohol Strait with his right engine on fire. His co-pilot was Lieut. Perry Berg, already the victim of a mid-air collision, and who was later forced to ditch off Tarakan in another flaming plane.

Hathaway took off for the open water in a long glide and managed to set his plane down with only minor

bruises to Sgt. William F. Odim, radio operator, and Sgt. Salvator Salina, tail gunner. Rescue was effected within a few minutes, not by Dumbo, for a change, but by an American destroyer.

The succeeding week saw Crusader planes over Cebu at all hours of the day and night, and some notable work was accomplished.

The 70th calls one of the best at Cebu its mission of the 28th of March. Six led by Lieut. W. E. Scott dropped 60 bombs for clean hits which utterly demolished six Nip trucks, fired three tanks, and got away without damage despite accurate MG fire.

Another first for B-25s was written into the record at Cebu, so far as is known, the destruction of caves by skip-bombing. The 70th claimed two as a part of its bag of trucks, gun positions, road blocks, and many heavy MG's demolished by direct bomb hits.

Remembering that in this theater of war there were no such juicy targets as congested industrial centers, railroad terminals, ponderous convoys, aircraft factories, or Hamburg Docks, our results can be considered very good.

Of March 25th missions, the pilot of the Liberator that directed and covered the attack was inspired to say that it was the best example of air support he had ever seen. Results were also good enough to bring repeated commendations from the commanders receiving the support. From A-2 at XIII Fighter Command, under whose tactical direction we were again operating, came the following teletype message: 42ND BOMB GROUP (M) COMAF THIRTEEN QUOTE ALL REPORTS INDICATE 42ND BOMB GROUP DOING SUPERIOR JOB ON CEBU.

As March ended, new faces and voices again pervaded Group and squadrons.

Maj. W. W. Short became Deputy Commander, Maj. C. W. Wolfendale, S-3, and Maj. Roy B. Harris, S-4.

While April, 1945, in Paris found the French lifting their heads for the first time since the black days of 1941, and American armament and uniforms streaming through the beautiful city's broad boulevards in pursuit of the retreating Hun, the unchanging Pacific tropical season brought an equally glorious recapture of a city. To the north of our station—air, sea, and ground forces closed in and the battle to recover Manila was joined. Ultimately the proud old city by the Pasig River, once the architectural gem of the Orient and now a blackened, burning heap of rubble, was in the hands of American troops led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur. "I shall return" had been made good. Dewey Boulevard, Taft and Rizal Avenues again echoed to the march of American feet, and some of the most joyful moments in all history were recorded as the American prisoners of Bilibid and Santo Tomas cast off their chains.

As these milestones of history were emplaced, the Group quietly pursued its essential, if less spectacular, business. The opening days of April continued the Cebu air campaign, the last large missions being flown on April 2nd and 3rd by the 75th with Colonel Harvey in front, the 69th with Lieut. C. S. Rankin leading, the 75th with Lieutenants Taylor and Tanner, the 100th with Lieutenants Florance, Cockrell, and Abbott, and the 390th with Traverso, Niederauer, and Hanna.

The 3rd brought the month's first combat casualty to the 100th. Lieut. L. E. Orcutt, leader of the first element, and his crew were lost over the Cebu target under unknown circumstances. This was the last mission of the series to this target, although a return visit was paid on April 11th to mop up some guns.

An operational misfortune had marred the opening of April for the 75th. Lieut. J. B. Wheeler, landing at Labo runway, overshot and crashed, catching fire. Only by the quick action of injured T/Sgt. Fred E. Davis, engineer, was Lieut. Morris A. Ross, navigator, rescued. Lieutenant Wheeler and Major Thorndyke, co-pilot, were similarly helped from the plane by several men, among whom was Lieut. Charles C. Cressy, Jr., a passenger. With the exception of this regrettable crack-up, the 75th finished the month with only one plane damaged and Sergt. J. E. Rathjen, engineer, slightly wounded.

April 2 brought another outstanding first. Flights led by Lieut. T. C. Mahl, Jr., of the 69th, Lieut. H. K.

Off the Indo-China coast, the B-25s found this Sugar Dog. A glide bombing effort resulted in some near misses, but strafing had the ship smoking and listing. Meanwhile one of the accompanying P-38 cover tossed a very ripe egg at the Mitchells by peeling off in a screaming dive and planting a 500-pounder under the captain's bunk. The explosion made kindling of the SD.

Prior to the invasion of Mindanao, 42nd planes ranged the roads destroying communications, bombing road junctions. This Jap truck, photographed at the time one bomb exploded under it, is an example of results.

The presence of two planes on Koronadal Airdrome, Mindanao, was a surprise to everyone, including the two sharp-eyed pilots who found these camouflaged planes hidden under trees east of the strip. Both were destroyed by bombs and bullets.

Unruh of the 70th, Lieut. J. W. Robinson of the 75th, Capt. R. D. Smith of the 100th, and Col. Harvey reached French Indo-China. They were navigating P-38s and searching for shipping. They swept along the French Indo-China coast near Cape St. Jacques, gatepost, at the Mekong River delta, of the important, storied city of Saigon, 830 miles from home base. The flight to Indo-China was publicly acclaimed:

"HEADQUARTERS 13th AAF, PHILIPPINES—"On April 2 for the first time in the history of World War II, the Cross of Lorraine, symbol of General Charles de Gaulle's Free French, flew above Jap-oppressed French Indo-China when 13th AAF Crusaders roared over the coastal regions of France-in-China.

"On each vertical fin of the 42nd Bombardment Group's B-25s, the emblem of Lorraine, cross of St. Joan of Arc, soared over the countryside and in and out of coastal waters, seeking remnants of the once vast Japanese merchant fleet that now hugged the coast as they attempted to sneak north to the Empire past the Allied blockade.

"Leading this first armed reconnaissance was the Crusader Commander Maj. Harry C. Harvey, Mount Kisko, N. Y., whose usually short-legged Mitchells remained aloft for nine and a half hours on the flight. Scores of people waved to the low flying planes, and watched from the beach as the planes, accompanied by Jungle Air Force P-38s sank a small Jap cargo ship west of Cape St. Jacques.

"This interdiction of the South China Sea, flown from Philippine bases, cuts once again across Japan's last remaining sea route from Singapore to Tokyo.

"Although two planes were holed, and a navigator injured slightly by anti-aircraft fire, all planes returned safely to base."

For the record, these flights marked the Group's 1186th mission since the maiden attack launched against Vila airfield in June, 1943. From this date onward, navigating P-38s to China or the "Pathfinder" mission as it was termed, became a regular chore, and thus Crusaders became some of the first medium pilots to strike at the Jap on the Asiatic coast from Southwest Pacific bases.

The next missions of April were a mixed lot—photo-recons, a strike on Tarakan on April 4th, led by Colonel Harvey, Captain Dana, and Lieutenant Winston; shipping sweeps of northeast and northwest Borneo which netted, among other prizes, a jackpot for Major Hedlund, Lieut. R. S. McNeil, Lieut. W. L. Love and F/O R. A. Gill of the 69th. They bagged a 1000-ton freighter and one slightly smaller, a 60-foot lugger, two oil barges, and an apparently well stocked warehouse at Brunei Bay. 70th pilots got the radar station off southwest Tarakan and several SDs; barges and small river craft were sent to the bottom by all squadrons.

It will be remembered that this was not the Group's first Tarakan fray, for as far back as November, 1944, five of our Mitchells had raided the oil island, sinking a gunboat and damaging three SC's and a barge.

Other flights were an observer mission to Jolo flown by Lieut. Branko T. Popovich of the 69th on April 7; a single ship photo-recon of Balikpapan, flown from Morotai on the 8th by Lieut. Richard Marron, which drew a commendation from the Second Photo Charting Unit, who ought to know pictures; and additional pathfinders and shipping sweeps. During one of the latter, while attacking at minimum over Brunei Town on the 6th, Lieut. Ward D. Rae of the 100th struck a tree and ditched in the water off the target. F/O Robert E. Strong, T/Sgt. Harold T. Crawford and S/Sgt. Norbert W. Heitz went down with the plane; the others were rescued by Dumbo. Rescue cover was flown by Lieut. S. B. Hunt of the 390th and Capt. E. M. Eastburn of the 69th.

Additional pilots to reach China included Lieut. H. W. Piatt, 75th; 390th Operations Officer C. J. Niederauer; Lieut. Wilbur M. Mechwart, 69th; Major Hedlund, whose flight got through to Cape Pandaran and Cape Varella; and Lieut. Harold A. Peeler of the 75th.

Rendezvousing with the fighters over Saigon at 10,000

feet, Lieutenant Peeler saw seven assorted Nip planes, later identified by the fighters as Franks and Hamps, rising to meet him. Two passed in close enough for tail gunner S/Sgt. William N. Outlaw to get a shot at them before the fighters took over, getting four out of the covey.

On April 8 Lieut. Perry L. Berg of the 70th, already a victim of an air collision and one ditching, took off from Palawan with two others for a shipping search of east Borneo. Probing south of Tarakan, he was hit in the right engine by AA and was again forced to land his plane in the Pacific. S/Sgt. Wayne L. Holmes, and S/Sgt. Stanley Kuzma of the crew were slightly injured in the landing. Lieut. Peter A. Turner, together with a passing B-34, circled the ditchers until fuel supply ordered a return. At dusk Lieut. C. E. Rich arrived on the scene and took up the cover. Twelve shots from the same guns that claimed Lieutenant Berg's ship were fired at him, but caused no damage. Berg and his crew spent the night on the open water under intermittent rain, at times within 150 yards of the Jap sub-pens on South Tarakan.

Lieutenant Turner found the crewmen at 0700 the following morning. Recalling, he said: "Coming in, I could see them paddling desperately to keep away from shore. When they saw me they stopped paddling and raised their sail. It wasn't funny, but their obvious relief made us laugh from where we sat."

At 0900 a PBY landed to make the rescue. The Cat received a gaping hole in its wing and tail from the same guns that shot Berg down, and accomplished the pick up under a hail of MG fire that put 150 holes into the PBY, and injured two of the crew.

On this day the 100th suffered another grievous loss. Capt. R. D. Smith and his entire crew went down into the Sulu Sea while engaged in a routine instruction flight from Leyte.

Then at mid-month an important series of missions turned northeast. Roads, trucks, and enemy concentrations of all kinds were to be the targets in highway interdiction flights in the Malambang—Perang—Cotobato district of Central Mindanao. It was another typical job for us—to harass, cut off, and destroy retreating Japs, pocketing them for the final kill by the ground soldiers. Mission bags ran: "A tractor, two bulldozers, an automobile, a steamroller." "Five trucks, a road-side fuel cache." "Three road-blocks, and possible gun emplacements." Major Robison gleefully remembers one of his hits, a bomb laid neatly onto a truck just as the vehicle entered a cave. Another bit of humor:

"HEADQUARTERS 13th AAF, PHILIPPINES—A red faced B-25 pilot of the Crusaders, 13th AAF medium outfit, is convinced that someone on Mindanao has a sense of humor, exercised at the pilot's expense.

Before the recent invasion of western Mindanao, Jap communications lines were slashed daily by Crusader planes. The anonymous pilot speeding at tree-top height along National Route Five spotted a steam roller, knocked it out of commission by strafing, and dropped a bomb at it, but missed. Two days later, at the same spot he dropped another bomb and again missed. On the morning of the invasion he passed the same steam roller again. It had been painted a bright yellow."

Contrary to arm-chair strategic pronouncements that the Philippines had been taken at this time, we knew only too well the true score. The 100th's Lieut. Daniel Fischer and crew paid the price on the Mindanao targets-of-opportunity strike of the 14th, being seen last near Koronadel.

This work, too, elicited praise from high quarters, and also revived an argument begun at Sansapor when "The Crusaders" was officially adopted as the Group's *nom de querre*. Department of Sanitation, Street Cleaners, Cleaner-Uppers, and other similar, and equally ill-favored, names had been submitted then. They certainly applied to the Mindanao job.

CHAPTER 24

With the end of these Mindanao road-strafes, the business of the Crusaders in the Philippines seemed about to narrow down to living on the southernmost island, with full combat attention turned to Borneo and the China coast.

Vast and largely unexplored, Borneo divides politically into four units—British North Borneo, Dutch Borneo, Sarawak, and Brunei. All of Borneo was once ruled by two native Sultans: the western half by the Sultan of Brunei, and the eastern half by the Sultan of Sulu. Dutch and British empire-building changed this and prior to the Japanese occupation, Sarawak and Brunei were administered by the "White Rajah" and Sultan, respectively, and Dutch Borneo by the Netherlands Colonial Administration. British North Borneo was administered by the British North Borneo Company, only survivor of the British chartered companies.

All Borneo is generally mountainous and heavily forested, with mountain ranges rising to 13,000 feet. Level ground is restricted to broad belts of swamp along the coast and to occasional lowlands behind the swamps and coastal rivers.

Many Chinese had settled in northern Borneo before the war, some 50,000 in British North; 100,000 in Sarawak; 3000 in Brunei. Hundreds of small Dyak tribes live in self-sufficient colonies throughout Borneo. Among these are the Sea Dyaks, Kayans, and Maruts, all tribal warring natives. Other tribes along the coasts are the Kedayans, Tutongs, and Dusans, and in the interior, the Bajaus or Banjans. The tribes are generally Malays.

The coastal population, however, is predominantly Mohammedan, efforts of Christian missionaries over many years apparently having met with little success.

The unique government of British North Borneo is rivalled for oddity and interest by that of Sarawak. When the British returned, the ANS carried the following news release:

"New York, (ANS) The 32-year old White Rajah of Sarawak, British Lieutenant Anthony Brooke, hopes soon to hang an 'Under New Management' sign above his South Pacific empire. Accompanied by his wife and their children, Brooke will return to Sarawak as soon as the Japanese collapse.

"An independent state ruled by an English family since 1841, Sarawak lies in northwest Borneo. It has its own flag, currency, stamps, and civil service and a population of half a million Dyaks, Malays, Chinese, Eurasians, Tamils, Sikhs, and 150 Japanese.

"Young Brooke actually is a nephew, not a son, of the retiring Rajah, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, but the law denies succession to any of Sir Charles three daughters.

"Lieutenant Brooke, an intelligence officer with Lord Mountbatten, has maintained wartime offices for his government in London, intended to stir interest in and attract capital for developing the country along modern lines.

"James Brooke, first of the family to rule over Sarawak, established his rights to the country by driving out other pirates of nearby China Sea waters more than 100 years ago. He attained respectability by offering to relinquish land (as large as England and Wales) to the British Crown. Prime Minister Gladstone regarded it as a liability, however, and not until 1888 did England grant Sarawak its present treaty of protection. Until then the country's defenses had rested in Brooke's own yacht, armed with eight six-pounders.

"Almost solidly jungle, Sarawak is rich in rubber, gold, timber, condiments, and some gems and metals. By happenstance, all of the Brooke family were away when the Japanese struck. Sir Charles was in Australia and had returned as far as Java when his capital, Kuching, fell on Christmas Day, 1941."

British North Borneo, the most developed state, has rubber and other plantations and boasts the only railroad in Borneo—100 miles of track. This latter was a novelty indeed to our pilots on their first missions over this territory.

The Japanese utilized Brunei Bay as a major fleet anchorage and haven; substantial elements of the sea forces which took a beating in the second battle of the Philippine Sea retreated there to lick their wounds.

Borneo is among the world's richest oil reservoirs. The Japanese had had their slant eyes on Borneo's oil for many years before the actual start of the war, and when the island came into their hands, they quickly organized its oil resources to fuel their war machine. In April, 1945, a well-integrated system of producing fields, refining and storage facilities existed.

The most extensive installation was at Balikpapan, which had already been taken under siege by the history-making strikes of 13th AAF Liberators staged through Sansapor, but there were many smaller and proportionately as productive oil centers that had not yet felt Allied Air might. These were centered in the Japanese Borneo Fuel Depot Headquarters at Miri and at Seria. There was also a refining operation at Toranguru, and in a class by itself was the small island of Tarakan, 15 by 11 miles in size, off the northern east coast. Beneath its sandy surfaces lies some of the finest crude oil in the world, oil so pure that it can be piped directly into ships' bunkers without refining.

No wonder indeed then that Tarakan was one of the first points seized by the Japanese in their advance through Makassar Strait in January, 1942.

The softening up of Tarakan at this stage was assigned to Palawan-based aircraft, with the Group as the general utility outfit. From the 16th, which saw a strike on sup-

ply-personnel concentrations, and each day thereafter at least one formation was over Tarakan. Major Hedlund with the 69th, Colonel Harvey and Lieut. H. F. McElroy with the 75th and 100th and Lieut. J. E. Hanna with the 390th, hit Lingkas Tank Farm, barracks and supplies, the Pamoesian Field, and gun positions.

Lieut. Milton F. Fadeley and crew were lost, crashing over the target, on the mission of the 20th.

So it went up to the 30th, with fires, explosions, wrecked and burning derricks, and gaping craters attesting our effectiveness. Meantime, our interminable shipping sweeps were being flown, additional Mindanao ground support was being given, and important entries in the log of Crusader activity against French Indo-China and the tiny fortified islets of the South China Sea were being made. The 70th's mission of the 20th, led by Captain Weston, was a four star entry in this journal. The flight was nearing Cecir Mir Island when an impenetrable north-south front with driving rain was encountered. The planes had to turn back and were ordered to hit a secondary at Itu Aba. Twenty-eight bombs were dropped, and 15,000 rounds strafed, which produced large fires in the building area and a large explosion, believed to have been an ammo dump, that sent brilliant red flames and smoke to 2000 feet.

The exploding dump rocked Lieut. Henry S. Dutch's plane. The floor skin was ripped off, bomb bay doors were torn off, instruments were knocked out and the engines began to run rough. Corp. J. R. Lohmeier, engineer, received shrapnel wounds in his buttocks and Lieut. Jack Tabock, navigator, a broken leg. The interphone went out.

Lieut. C. E. Stein, Jr., co-pilot, waved to the tail gunner to prepare to ditch. The plane was set down for a good landing in four feet of water at Sand Cay barely three miles from Itu Aba. By kneeling with one leg braced against the base of the turret and the other leg bracing the navigator's back, the engineer protected Lt. Tabock from further injury during the landing. The impact took away the remaining flooring and also removed the tail assembly. Equipment was strewn everywhere. In the crash, the radio operator, Sergt. Irvin J. Tripp, suffered a compound fracture of the jaw and lost several teeth. Corp. Wilbur M. Bender, gunner, was deeply scratched on the underwater coral. Lieutenant Dutch and Lieutenant Stein towed the three enlisted men ashore in the life raft, and Lieutenant Dutch applied first aid to the radio operator's jaw. Corporal Lohmeier returned to the plane to help the navigator, who was stretched out on the wing. Using an oar and his shorts, he splinted Lieutenant Tabock's leg and got him ashore, where the splint was bound with parachute shrouds. The break was too high to apply a tourniquet, but Lieutenant Stein, skilled at first aid, did a good job with compresses.

Lieutenant Dutch and Lieutenant Stein returned to the plane to salvage whatever could be found, but met with little success. Gasoline had spread over the water, and it was too dark inside the fusalage to see and too dangerous to strike a match. They had no flashlights. They had hoped to find additional morphine and blood plasma to administer to the suffering members of the crew, for all supplies of these had now been exhausted.

At 1800 a B-25 flew over leading a PBY, and dropped a raft, while the Cat landed just outside the coral reef. Before the survivors could inflate this raft, the PBY pilot took off and circled the island, dropping a note which said that the waves were too high for him to get off with additional weight. Additional rations and a first aid kit with morphine and blankets were dropped.

Shallow trenches were dug in the sand but no one was able to sleep; the wounded were in too much pain and the uninjured had to stay awake to attend their comrades. It was feared that the navigator would not be able to hold on.

During the night, land crabs formed a circle about 25 feet from the party, and an occasional one would venture in for a curious nip and had to be repelled with a handful of sand. A light passed by the island. Fearing it might be a Jap patrol, the men dug their holes deeper. During the digging one of them accidentally fired a shot, but apparently the wind carried the noise away from the vessel, for it continued on past the island.

At 0800 next morning, another B-25 and a PBY appeared. An uneventful pick-up was made and once aboard, the injured received additional morphine and plasma. Upon their return, ashore, the hospital surgeon examining the navigator said little remained for him to do other than remove a few pieces of bone. "The prompt emergency treatment . . . saved this man's life."

Compared to many of our past and future targets, the AA thrown up at Tarakan was not impressive, being chiefly light and MG fire, but the Nips made the most extensive use we had yet encountered of electrically controlled mines as an anti-strafing defense.

The preliminary pounding of the island done, the next problem was the beachhead, to be made by Australian and Dutch troops. The Nips had prepared elaborate, tight beach defenses and were going to make a determined stand behind them.

To enable an Australian Engineer Demolition unit to blast a path through the offshore obstacles, the Group flew smoke screen missions off Tarakan April 30. Carrying the 886th's chemical tanks in their bomb bays, Lieut. Gerald M. Lauck of the 70th led Lieut. R. W. Wilson of the 69th, Lieuts. M. R. Martin and Paul E. Cyphers of the 75th, Lieut. G. J. Dutt of the 100th, and Lieut. Everett H. Lundby of the 390th along the beach while Aussie sappers lay just off the invasion beach. On the same mission was a Crusader photo ship taking pictures of the smoke and the Australians on the beach.

"HEADQUARTERS 13th AAF, PHILIPPINES—April 30—Working with split-second timing, Mitchell bombers of the 13th AAF and combat engineers of the Australian Imperial Forces cooperated today to spearhead the Allied invasion of Borneo.

Beach wire and underwater obstacles offshore at Tarakan Island blocked the single landing beach available to

the Australian Ninth Division, the famous 'Rats of Tobruk.'

Flying from distant Philippine bases, B-25s of the crack Crusaders of the 42nd Bombardment Group, veterans of ground support actions at Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Zamboanga, and Cebu, reached their target area just as the TNT-laden craft of the engineers arrived within range of Jap shore installations. At the same instant Allied warships shelling from off the coast ceased fire. One at a time the planes hurtled down the beach at roof-top level, while streamers of impenetrable white smoke poured from their bomb bays to hide the approaching sappers.

As the final plane pulled off the target, the ships again took up their shelling. Huge shells whistled over the heads of the men on the beach and in the water as they set and fired the charges that destroyed the Nip beach defenses. Within 88 minutes after the first plane loosed its smoke, the engineers retired, their mission completed, still hidden by the clinging vapor."

The almost unopposed attack by the twin-engine Mitchells climaxed two weeks of pre-invasion bombing and strafing. Jap planes, supplies, fuel and ammunition dumps were destroyed in low level attacks that covered every available North Borneo base from which the Nips could hope to counter the long awaited invasion.

The next item on the list shows the fine attention to seemingly small details that saves lives in a beachhead operation. The 70th drew the assignment of an all night heckle of Tarakan, designed to keep the Nips up and sleepless, and consequently less energetic for D-Day, May 1st. The first pair, Lieut. J. E. Coleman and Lieut. W. G. Hathaway, used frag clusters and empty beer bottles, and from 8000 feet started a fire that burned all night. The third man in, Lieut. J. S. Hale, was unable to reach the target and was trying to contact the controller when his radioman picked up this message: "There is an enemy plane in the area. Will you please turn on your lights?" Thinking it was an enemy, Lieutenant Hale asked for authentication, and receiving an obscure reply, kept his lights off. Proceeding back to base at Palawan, he heard another message, also in good English: "This is your heckler relief; turn on your lights." Hale knew that his relief was not due for half an hour and that the voice was not that of Lieut. Clarence P. Rich, scheduled to take over from him. The requests continued for half an hour and the crew was certain that there was a loquacious Jap in the sky near them.

Their surmise was correct, for Hale reached the strip and taxied into his revetment just before an alert was sounded. The invader turned away from base without attacking, however.

The 42nd's Public Relations Officer gave this incident attention in an item quoting Lieutenant Hale: "That Jap spoke such good English it made me suspicious. I knew it couldn't be the other pilot on the mission. He would have said, "Hey Hale, where the hell are you?"

April 28th brought an alert, Red 0253, all clear 0412. One bogey, approaching from the south, became a bandit and dropped an unknown number of anti-personnel bombs, wounding two men and pitting the runway. AA engaged the intruder ineffectively, and the night fighter made contact but lost it in evasive action.

Corroborating the 70th pilots, radar reported bogies at 0037 May 1st. Condition Yellow was declared at 0045 and one P-61 was scrambled, but could not make contact because of the low approach of the intruders. The Nip pair closed in from the southwest, and at 0115 dropped anti-personnel bombs and strafed the length of the strip. Several planes were damaged. Tents in the Sixth Service Group and 14th Portable Hospital areas adjoining the Group were holed by 20MM and 12.7 fire, but without personnel injuries. The 70th S-2 building roof was holed by 20MM, and one of the squadron ambulances received holes in its fender and hood. All clear did not sound until 0200.

Intelligence oddities continued to drift in.

Tokyo Comments on the Bombing of Japan: Things That Make Our Hearts Bleed.—April 1—"According to an article in the March 29th issue of 'Time,' Tokyo looks worse now than in 1922 after the earthquake. It is true, the blind bombing of the city has caused great damage to residential sections. The Americans claim they hit military targets but this is untrue. It is brutal and inhuman, the way the city is being bombed."

* * *

Famous Last Diary Entries

(Last entry in a diary captured at Buriran, P. I.)

"23 April. We have entered the area occupied by guerillas. Everywhere the houses of the inhabitants are occupied by guerrillas."

* * *

How It Starts

(From a notebook belonging to a member of the First Propaganda Base in the Baguio area)

"Visited the Ota Platoon. Distributed Manila paper, Domei News, and Southern Cross to Second Lieutenant Ota. Discussed the war situation and left after spreading rumors."

How It Spreads

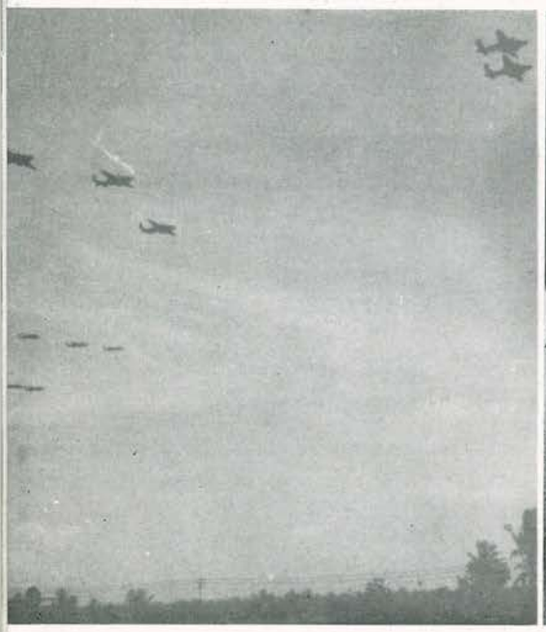
(From a Lance Corporal's Diary, found in Tayabas Province)

18 April. An MP told me the following: He says there are no enemy warships near Japan, and that two enemy divisions which landed on Okinawa have been pinned down and will be automatically destroyed. According to him, the Shimbu Group (Shudan) is to commence a great offensive before the rainy season, and the Fuji Group is to await them in Southern Luzon. It seems that the Shimbu Group is a very strong group and is taking positions to smash through the surrounding area of Manila and then advance southward."

ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT IS MISSING . . .

Off into the night sky or into bright daylight, Crusaders went into the air when the Field Order demanded it. Most of them returned . . . but low loss figures do not tell the story of some of those struggles.

An airplane flown with controls shot away, a ditching within sight of the strip, getting home safely after the pilot and co-pilot had been blinded by an AA burst—those are the things that made the story.



"Off at 30 second intervals, out six minutes, then turn. Pick up your formation and come back over the field on course." And off into the grey dawn flew the strike.

Six men were in the plane at take-off; these three survived a crash landing in the water off Borneo.

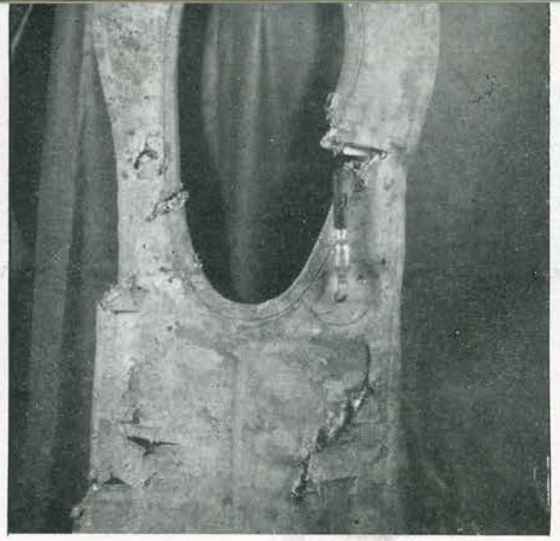
Air-Sea Rescue Squadron's Dumbo picked them up, brought them back. Willing hands help the pilot from the PBY.

The 390th's Lt. Thompson was in the left seat when he stopped this one. Both he and the co-pilot were temporarily blinded by the burst. The navigator had a hand severed. Nose light trim kept them in the air until the radio operator came up to take the controls.

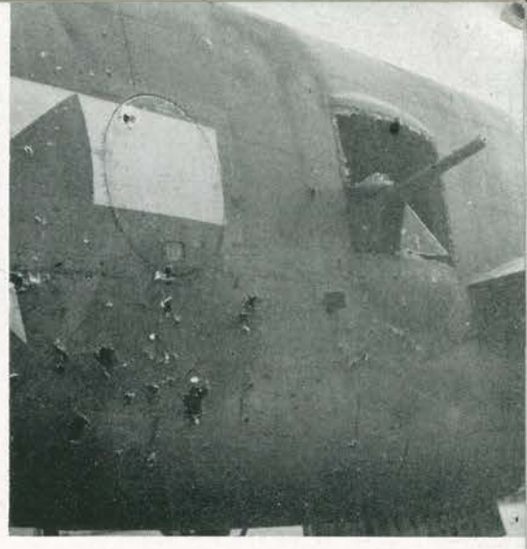
This G almost made it, but you can't lower your wheels for an "almost."

Lt. O'Neill, Texas pilot, checks on rescue charges. Dumbo crews never get arguments about rates.

Down Ambon Bay on the deck, past Halong Seaplane Base, Ambon Town, Laha, and Cape Noesanive. Everyone got out, but the 40-mm. that hit here raised particular hell. There was a gunner at that waist gun.



The waist gunner's Mae West. He was wearing his flak suit under it, and although the metal plates were bent and broken, none was penetrated. The gunner escaped with foot and leg wounds.



The other side of the same plane, where shell fragments ripped through the fuselage and splintered the window.

CHAPTER 25

During April, good-byes were said to airmen who, with 50 and 60 missions behind them, were heading home. They were the last of the pilots and crewmen who had flown over the Solomons and Rabaul. None begrudged them their well earned respite from combat.

It was a new Group in the air, but on the ground the same faces and figures were seen, two years older and grayer than when they left home in March, 1943. A few old timers of the Ground Echelon had been rotated, but it was a very few, and repeated announcements of more liberal quotas—first at 18 months and then at 24—had built up hopes which were dashed to the ground when no movement orders followed. However, a new hope was arising, based on news from Europe. The closing days of April found many ears fixed to radios to catch the latest announcements. The fall of Berlin, and with it the collapse of Hitler's regime, was expected daily and then hourly.

Capt. Alton J. Collins, veteran 69th S-2, went home during the month via the hospital route, and Lieut. S. E. Beall took over in his place. The 70th welcomed an old timer when Maj. Thomas R. Waddleton arrived. Major Waddleton, then a Lieutenant, was an early member of the 69th, one of the stalwarts who flew B-26s to Hawaii and participated in the Battle of Midway. Newcomers listened enthralled to the Major's tales of the "old days" which are a part of this record. Lieut. A. F. Schulman became the 69th squadron navigator, replacing Lieut. C. L. Johnston, who was among those rotated.

In the other squadrons, too, changes were taking place; the old was giving way to the new. Capt. James E. Robison, who had assumed command of the 75th on March 22nd, was now Major Robison; Lieut. R. M. Stratton was now S-3. In the 100th, Captain Burnett became CO on the 8th to hold the reins until Capt. Henry J. Sabotka was ready to take over on the 27th. Lieut. T. M. Cockrell became S-3 in place of the late Lieutenant Orcutt.

May opened with V-E day in the air. To the north Iwo Jima had been taken and turned against the yellow war lords; news of the sanguinary struggle for Okinawa had broken upon the world. Formosa, Hainan, and even the Homeland came under increasing siege from our heavy bombers, while shipping in the Home waters felt the Navy's blows. The Australians were making slow, painful, but telling progress in cleaning the by-passed islands from their Jap infestation.

The 69th deeply felt the loss, on May 2nd, of Lieut. C. S. Rankin and his crew. On a shipping sweep to Sesajap River, Lieutenant Rankin attacked Malinan Town and went down.

* * *

The apt phrases of Major DeHorn, XIII Fighter Command S-2, give a neat picture of May 1st's operations. "All squadrons of the 42nd Bomb Group contributed planes to make Mitchell presence almost continuous over the Oboe 1 objective area, with two four-plane flights on call in the morning and early afternoon. These were released with "No Targets," but three later flights were asked to hit buildings and gun positions, and did so, drawing some light fire from Pamoesian."

The 69th drew another one that higher headquarters pulled out of its hat—Lieut. H. D. Hillman had the honor of flying the Group's first "antiseptic mission", leaving two applications of DDT powder along the beachhead so that the Aussies could fight the Japs without being distracted to scratch their insect bites. Everybody later got a crack at this "crop-dusting".

The Tarakan job demanded and got more attention, with daily air support missions rendezvousing with the controller over the bay and swooping down to erase trouble spots, sometimes accompanied by P-38's and a

D-Day at Tarakan, Balikpapen, Brunei Bay, the Oboe operations, found Crusader planes rattling around taking pictures and potting targets.

lone Liberator. This work went on until the 5th, with Lieutenant Mahl, Vance, Buchloz, Mechwart, Gill, Hathway, Unruh, Coleman, Haslam, Dwyer, Seiler, Tanner, Newsome, Kerr, Phelps, Visser, Davis, Heller, Goodrich, Bryant, Rankin, Callahan, Hanna, Kohlman, Bearman, Wilkerson—new flight leaders from all squadrons—taking turns in front and eliciting "Jolly good job, thanks much" from the clipped-voiced Aussie liason officer.

To use another well-turned phrase of Major DeHorn's on the 1st "The 42nd Group raked potential jumping-off places for red-alerters at Jesselton, Kudat, and Sandakan, netting a sawmill to boot. A single-engine plane was observed carelessly parked on its belly at Sandakan."

Through early May the Kuching area yielded 2 SDs, 5 luggers, a warehouse, a shipyard, and a barge to Crusader tourists on Borneo's west coast. The 70th's strike to Saigon on May 6th threw another new Crusader into the limelight. The formation, led by Honolulu's Capt. J. A. Thompson, found negative shipping at Saigon and hit Ding Hoa at 1310 with seventeen 500-pounders, putting them all in the target amid 20 warehouses. Smoke to 1000 feet obscured accurate observation. Intense, ac-

curate AA from six 20MM guns at the edge of town knocked out Lieut. Robert R. Bethel's left engine. His ensuing trip home resulted in the following lines in 13th AAF's summary:

"700 Miles on One Engine"

" . . . in a five hour and 20 minute single engine flight, jettisoning everything he could get loose, the pilot performed the remarkable feat of nursing the cripple back to within 5 miles of Palawan, where a dead stick landing was perfectly executed, his fuel completely consumed. The crew of six escaped with minor bruises and scratches and were picked up by the Cat within a few minutes." Lieutenant Bethel coolly recorded his power settings and other data that might be of use to the next single-engine returnee.

Cpls. Norman Lauck and Ray Tucholski, gunner and radio operator, provided a laugh when they got to the 390th dispensary for a few shots of Doc Meyer's choicest reserve stock, asking what time it was. It seemed they had missed an appointment to sing in the choir at opening services of the Group Chapel, which they had helped to build. They had come pretty close to singing in another choir.

All were not so fortunate on this day, for disaster struck twice. In taking off from Palawan, Lieut. R. S. Williams, Lieut. Harold Lebo and Sgt. George Reinart of the 69th were killed. Flying low over Tarakan Lieut. Harry W. Piatt and crew of the 75th were lost when a frag parachute hung in the bomb bay. When the doors were closed the bomb exploded. Only the tail gunner survived the ensuing crash.

On the 9th the 69th, with Lieut. J. E. Knapp leading, was weathered out off Cam Ranh Bay, but smashed the remaining buildings at Itu Aba. The 75th went to Victoria Town to score good hits. Major Waddleton radar-ferreted to Balikpapan reporting useful observations at Samarinda.

Borneo became our "milk run"—Victoria, Brunei, Miri shipping, leaflet dropping, Sandakan, Cape Mangkolihat radar, Tarakan again for more mopping up, Kudat, Sibu and Brooketon.

The thunder of Allied aircraft engines and crashing bombs rocked the Home Islands of Japan no more than the news of Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8th. News of the capitulation of the once greatest war machine in history came as the battle of Tarakan Island progressed according to plan; as Allied troops moved to within one mile of the capital of Okinawa; as the first great Allied air strikes were launched at Empire installations on the Asiatic mainland; as Japanese troops were being driven from Burma; as the Chinese successfully counter-attacked in western Tunan Province; as Allied searchplanes inaugurated regular patrol of Japanese waters by sinking or damaging 11 ships in the Tsushima-Shimonoseki Strait and off southwest Korea; and as victorious leaders in the West promised that the all-out phase against the Pacific enemy was at hand.

Admiral Ernest J. King struck the keynote of the day on the home front in his remarks to Navy civilian workers.

"TO ALL CIVILIAN WORKERS:

"General Eisenhower has announced the cessation of organized resistance in Europe. A thrilled and grateful nation is justifiably proud of all who made this accomplishment possible.

"But this is a total war, a global war. We are but half way to complete victory. There remains to be conquered the entire Japanese nation. Men are still fighting and still dying and will continue to fight and to die in the hard push to Tokyo. . .

"Today every worker should rededicate himself and herself to the task of providing these men with the fire power they need to smash the remaining enemy. To delay now in celebration of past success would be fatal to carefully laid plans. We cannot—and must not—pause in discharge of our duty so long as a Jap remains a threat to the life of a single soldier or sailor.

"Let each of us get on with our job."

On this electrifying day the 69th sent seven over Labuan, Lieut. T. C. Mahl in the lead, to drop centuries on the personnel and supply area west of the strip. The first of two flights had Major Robison of the 75th and four over Kuching to lay centuries on the Jap Headquarters building and start five fires in the morning. Capt. Henry J. Sabotka and four of the 100th duplicated on the afternoon shift.

The log for the 10th shows fifteen of the 69th and 70th back to Mindanao in support of ground activities at Cagayan Town. A total of 178 bombs and 21,600 rounds were left in the target. Lieut. W. H. Mechwart returned to base on one engine, having been accidental target for another plane's bomb which skipped and damaged his prop. Eight each of the 100th and 390th, Lieut. Ritchie L. Jones, and Lieut. E. E. Rankin leading, flew the same mission with Tagoloan Town as their objective, while the 75th sent 12 to Tarakan with Lieut. H. K. McElroy leading.

On a Borneo shipping search of the 11th, Lieut. E. G. Bearman bagged a 50-foot barge in Brunei Bay. Four others went to Brooketon, where they strafed a 100-foot tower, and got another SD, a 50-foot launch, and a 50-foot barge south of the town.

Sandakan was given a good pasting by the 70th, 75th, and 390th on the 13th, Jesselton on the 14th, Bintulu and Sibu on the 16th and 18th, Seria on the 19th.

Lieut. C. E. Rich, 70th, contributed a new one to the Group's "Ripley's Odditorium" on the 16th's Sibu mission. Coming in at "rhubarb height," this crew literally went "batty". They stirred up a cloud of vampires and had to fly through, splattering bats and bat parts all over the plane. Part of the mess melted off the plane from the language used by the ground crew who had to clean up this plane.

Six each, led by Major Waddleton, with Colonel Helmick as co-pilot, for the 69th and Capt. H. J. Sabotka for the 100th, got through weather for a shipping strike at Balikpapan May 20th. Two SD's were destroyed, a



THROUGH DARKEST BORNEO WITH GUN AND CAMERA

Borneo memories will bristle with the names of Crusader targets: Tarakan, Brunei Bay, Miri, Weston (no relation to Capt. Robert), Labuan, Kudat, Belait, Jesselton, Balikpapen, Kuching, and a score of others.

Incidents will be remembered concerning all of them, that hairy-eared 360 at Balik, the tunnel bombing that got the only railroad engine in Borneo, the milk runs to Jesselton, the smoke and flames at Balik and Miri, the support missions to Tarakan and Labuan, Berg, Scott & Co.'s unplanned night off Tarakan, and the noisy photo runs over Balikpapen.

barracks area, shipyard, and sawmill at the mouth of the Soember River were bombed and a Fox Tare Able at the harbor pier was seen burning. The month passed busily with strikes to Lawas, Weston, Jesselton, Seria, Kudat, Beaufort, and Tenom. The flat English names mixed with the Oriental rang oddly on ears long accustomed to euphonious Malay polysyllables and unpronounceable Hispano-Tagalog hybrids, but the bomb bay doors opened regularly, and the guns of the new B-25-J2s and J27s spewed regardless of the target's ancestry.

With this strike another name appears in the line of Crusader Commanding Officers. A few days after this Col. Paul F. Helmick took over the Group from Lieut. Col. Harry C. Harvey, who was returned to the States on rotation. Colonel Harvey remained, however, until Colonel Helmick became acclimated, both to the Mitchell and to the tactical situation.

Quiet, efficient Paul Helmick was graduated from Kelly Field in 1936. In October. 1938, he was commissioned in the Regular Army at Mitchell Field. Prior to this he had been with the First Pursuit Group at Selfridge Field, Michigan.

Soon after he was commissioned, he was transferred to Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio into the Engineering Division, where he remained for five and a half years. As chief of the Special Weapons Branch, he was responsible for the experimental work in guided missiles.

Among his projects were those top secret weapons, the Buzz Bomb; the Azon Bomb, which could be controlled in azimuth by its parent plane; and the glide bomb, which Wright and Ordnance perfected.

March, 1943 found him on Temporary Duty with the Eighth Bomber Command, with whom he managed to get in 12 missions before his TD ran out in June. The following February he joined the 15th Air Force in Italy, and by July had accumulated 19 more missions and a Distinguished Flying Cross.

He then returned to Wright, clamoring to get to the Pacific Theatre. On March 4, 1945, he again left the States for Nadzab, three weeks as CO of the 307th Group, and ultimately Palawan and the 42nd.

Early June found the Group and Squadrons under these officers and section chiefs:

GROUP HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer, Col. Paul F. Helmick.

Deputy Commanding Officer, Lieut. Col. Harry C. Harvey.

Executive Officer, Lieut. Col. Theron Whitneybell.

Adjutant and S-1, Maj. Robert M. Clark, M/Sgt. William H. Brown.

S-2, Maj. Arthur G. Taylor, M/Sgt. Phillip H. Meyer, Lieut. Robert L. Smith and Wesley Flora.

S-3, Maj., Thomas R. Waddleton, M/Sgt., Earl T. Nicholson, Capt. Edson Lutes, Jr., Lieut. William E. McLaughlin.

S-4, Maj. Roy B. Harris, T/Sgt. Leroy K. Nelson.

Flight Surgeon, Maj. Carl F. Wagner, T/Sgt. Anthony S. Raia.

Public Relations, Lieut. Marvin C. Wachs, S/Sgt. Harold Bass.

Engineering, Maj. Arthur M. Deters.

Armament, Capt. John E. Morrison.

Ordnance, Capt. William W. Stone, T/Sgt. James P. Wendt.

Dentist, Capt. Robert H. White, Sgt. Russell W. O'Bannon.

Chaplains, Capt. Paul R. Houde and George Ivey.

Special Services, Capt. Carlyle W. McClellan, S/Sgt. Paul M. Gainor.

Air Inspector, Lieut. Col. Theron Whitneybell, S/Sgt. Henry C. Bultman.

Gunnery Officer, Capt. Philip M. Lighty.

Post Exchange, Capt. Raymond Matterson.

What the War Department preferred to call the gasoline-jel bomb, and what we knew as the Napalm bomb, wreaked havoc among the Jap-held Borneo towns, supply dumps, and staging areas. What Napalm hit it burned for keeps.

Awards, Capt. Bill G. Fendall, S/Sgt. Fabian D. Kayser.
Weather, Capt. Jacob F. Blackburn.
Photography, Lieut. Raymond L. Proctor, T/Sgt. Leonard Jung.
I and E, Lieut. Lester Sokler, Sgt. Russell Ahlbum.
Communications, Capt. Sol L. Reiches, Sgt. J. C. Carlton.

69TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

Commanding Officer, Maj. Bryce A. Hedlund.
Executive Officer, Maj. Bennett E. G. Prichard.
Adjutant, Capt. Elijah B. Williams, M/Sgt. Robert R. Blackney.
S-2, Capt. Samuel T. Beall, S/Sgt. Don L. Farrell, Lieut. Lloyd D. Berger, Lieut. Thomas R. Piasecki, Lieut. James E. Logan.
S-3, Capt. Richard T. Purnell, S/Sgt. Larry S. Gills.
S-4, Lieut. John T. Daniel, S/Sgt. John W. Cherry.
Mess, Capt. Elijah B. Williams, S/Sgt. Frank E. Matthews.
Transportation, Lieut. Edward A. Vassallo, S/Sgt. Lynn R. Johnston.
Ordnance, Lieut. Edward A. Vassallo, S/Sgt. Howard J. Rose.
Engineering, Capt. Earl R. Fitzreiter, M/Sgt. Steven T. Chudzinsky.
Armament, Capt. Norman D. Schussler, M/Sgt. Ferdinand Ashera.
Communications, Capt. Harry W. Stockhoff, M/Sgt. Harry S. Robyler, Lieut. James L. Perrott.
Flight Surgeon, Capt. John W. Anderson, S/Sgt. George Ferland.

70TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

Commanding Officer, Capt. Robert J. Weston.
Executive Officer, Maj. Clifford M. Barrow.
Adjutant, Capt. Hubert E. Hall, 1/Sgt. Manuel F. Raposa.
S-2, Capt. William D. Trone, S/Sgt. John R. Connell, Lieut. Jack Blake and Robert G. Honeyager.
S-3, Capt. James A. Thompson, S/Sgt. Ralph B. Frank.
S-4, Capt. Herbert M. Bender, S/Sgt. Donald J. Dunn.
Mess, Capt. Hubert E. Hall, S/Sgt. Earl D. Guinn.
Transportation, Lieut. Joseph M. Reiff, S/Sgt. Albert J. Fritz.
Ordnance, Lieut. Joseph M. Reiff, M/Sgt. Ralph Patterson.
Armament, Capt. William F. Bell, M/Sgt. William H. Wise, Lieut. Donald J. Van Dam.
Communications, Capt. Earle G. Cross, Jr., M/Sgt. Louie Gunn, Lieut. John G. Anderson.
Flight Surgeon, Capt. Alfred H. Richwine, S/Sgt. Thomas D. Dozier.

75TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

Commanding Officer, Maj. James E. Robison.
Executive Officer, Maj. Charles M. Humble.
Adjutant, Lieut. Clarence D. Ring, Jr., S/Sgt. William H. Paschal
S-2, Capt. Linwood T. Fleming, S/Sgt. Ronald Arnett, Lieut. Joseph W. Bizier, Lieut. Martin S. Levine.
S-3, Lieut. Richard M. Stratton, S/Sgt. Gordon W. Hartford, Lieut. Charles O. Corwin.
S-4, Lieut. Jack E. May, S/Sgt. John I. Major.
Mess, Capt. Tom M. Bradshaw, T/Sgt. Ricks T. Pearce.
Transportation, Capt. Tom M. Bradshaw, S/Sgt. Merle Martin.
Ordnance, Lieut. Richard E. Grabenhorst, T/Sgt. Stanley L. Quader.
Engineering, Capt. Arthur F. Bornhoff, M/Sgt. R. John Shadki, Lieut. Kenneth W. Walkoe.
Armament, Capt. John H. Brownell, T/Sgt. Roy Kelton, Lieut. Harlan D. Ray.
Communications, Capt. Harold J. Zahrndt, M/Sgt. C. C. Cunningham, Lieut. Simon M. Kuznetzew.
Flight Surgeon, Capt. John L. Meyers, S/Sgt. Ervin Nehranz.

100TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

Commanding Officer, Capt. Henry J. Sabotka.
Executive Officer, Maj. Joseph J. Stephens.
Adjutant, Capt. Albert W. Rinehart, 1/Sgt. Jack D. Monasco.
S-2, Capt. Thelmer A. Smith, T/Sgt. Daniel E. Campbell, Lieut. William P. Hurley.
S-3, Lieut. Ritchie L. Jones, T/Sgt. Horace Gray, Lieut. Ernest R. Matton, Lieut. Edwin S. Winslow.
S-4, CWO John F. Pettigrew, S/Sgt. Floyd Crooks.
Mess, Lieut. Guy Kramer, T/Sgt. Wesley D. Strickland.
Transportation, Lieut. Joseph A. Taylor, T/Sgt. Earl A. Collins.
Ordnance, Lieut. Joseph A. Taylor, T/Sgt. Leo E. Graham.
Engineering, Capt. Richard E. Eliasen, M/Sgt. William Slaughter.
Armament, Capt. George S. Good, M/Sgt. John O. Spinks, Lieut. Clifford E. Cain.
Communications, Capt. Wesley D. Correll, M/Sgt. William E. Norris, Lieut. Robert M. Croumlich.
Flight Surgeon, Capt. Vaughn A. Aviakian, S/Sgt. John Hodakowski.

390TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M)

Commanding Officer, Maj. Gordon M. Dana.
Executive Officer, Capt. Earl L. Chapman.
Adjutant, Capt. Stelle B. Bush, 1/Sgt. Jessie B. Herring.
S-2, Capt. Robert H. Cohn, S/Sgt. Robert E. Bonar, Lieut. Carl H. Fassinger.
S-3, Capt. Carl J. Niederauer, S/Sgt. Tom E. Porter, Lieut. Robert W. Trowe.
S-4, Lieut. Faber Golay, S/Sgt. Lloyd Gaston.
Mess, Lieut. Faber Golay, T/Sgt. Charley Gibson.
Transportation, Lieut. Faber Golay, S/Sgt. Stanley Jablonski.
Ordnance, Lieut. Otto G. Laufer, T/Sgt. Henry K. Taute.
Engineering, Capt. Harry R. Workman, M/Sgt. Charles A. Horton, Lieut. Victor E. Smith.

Armament, Capt. Robert J. Walker, M/Sgt. Harold H. Cornwell.

Communications, Capt. William F. Bretzke, M/Sgt. William F. Ott.

Flight Surgeon, Capt. Albert H. Meyer, S/Sgt. Adam J. Dolik.

Replacements were always a problem in the 42nd, and with the rotation system operating as it did, there was little use for them. However, one of the best of the army snafus was disclosed by two news stories that appeared side by side, one emanating from the Pacific, one from the Secretary of War's Office.

The Pacific story gravely informed us that men in the Pacific were being rotated as rapidly as replacements could be obtained from the States. The Washington story just as gravely stated that men were being sent overseas just as rapidly as men returning from combat could replace them.

Nevertheless, one man found a replacement. A couple of weeks after Colonel Helmick joined the Group, Maj. Don W. Lyon came over from the Fifth Group to understudy Colonel Whitneybell.

Major Lyon, whose home is in Des Moines, Iowa, was commissioned in the Infantry Reserve in 1933, the year prior to his graduation from the University of Michigan. The war brought him into extended active duty, with tours at Command and General Staff school, and the Army Air Forces Staff school in 1944. He left the States in September of that year.

Strikes to Tarakan and Northwest Borneo occupied the next few days. With Tarakan safely in Allied hands, plans were moving apace for the next two Borneo operations, at Brunei Bay and Balikpapan, in each of which the Crusaders were slated to have an increasingly prominent role.

In preparation for the Balikpapan invasion, orders descended through the chain of Command for low oblique photographs of the entire nearby coastline on both sides of the bay. Briefing for the first attempt, May 22, was probably the most thorough ever held in the 42nd Bomb Group. In preparation for the strike, exhaustive fuel consumption tests had been made in a search for the optimum altitude and power settings.

Including time for the form-up, the total mileage on the round trip would exceed 1,750 statute miles, a greater distance than the heavies flew when bombing from London. For the "short-legged" B-25s it required astute piloting within narrowly defined power setting limits.

Twenty-eight planes would make the attacks. Four were photo ships, 24 were escorting planes that would bomb and strafe AA positions during the photo run. This last was no light job. There were more than 90 positions that would bear on the planes, plus whatever machine gun and rifle fire that could be developed from positions of opportunity.

Maps and overlays indicating every known position were hung in the briefing room, and memorized by the pilots. Times at each check point and at the Initial Point were hammered home, for B-24s were bombing from high level and P-38s were going to do vertical strafing just before the Crusaders struck. Too early and they'd be flying through the falling bombs from the Libs; too late and the "keep their heads down" effect of the Libs and Lightnings would be lost. At the end of 800 miles of flying, the planes had to be at the I.P. within seconds of the appointed time.

The first attempt aborted on May 22nd. Weather moved in after the planes had already taken off. Most of them hit secondary and last resort targets.

Six days later the mission was flown again. This time it went off as advertised. Just to be certain nothing new had been added by the wily Japs it was repeated on June 8th.

After the Balikpapan beachhead was secured, the following news release of the Crusaders' part in the show received wide coverage in the States. Every news service carried it.

HEADQUARTERS, 13th AAF, PHILIPPINES—With the announcement that the beachhead at Balikpapan is secure, it is now possible to release the story of the part played by a small group of 13th AAF flyers.

Prior to the landings at the huge Borneo oil center, Australian army headquarters asked for complete photographic coverage of the Balikpapan coastline. The brass hats insisted the photo ships fly "not further than half a mile off shore, and at an altitude not exceeding 700 feet."

Balikpapan has the greatest concentration of anti-aircraft defenses east of Singapore. Airmen of the 13th AAF termed the mission a "suicide job", and promptly turned it over to the Crusaders, commanded by Col. Paul F. Helmick, Corvalis, Oregon whose B-25's have bombed, strafed, hounded, and heckled the Japs over every important target in the South and Southwest Pacific since Guadalcanal.

Colonel Helmick and his operations officer, Maj. Thomas R. Waddleton, Laramie, Wyoming, decided the job could be done. Since one of its squadrons loaded torpedoes on a B-26 and sank a carrier at the Battle of Midway, the Crusaders have never found a job they didn't think they could pull off.

The mission as planned called for B-24s to bomb from high altitude to upset the city's defenses, for P-38 Lightnings to take care of interception, and for other Crusader B-25s to strafe and bomb the gun positions while the photo-joes, nakedly defenseless, drove straight down the beach "so close we could read the signs on waterfront buildings."

Four planes were set up to take the photos. Two were to cover the crucial east coast, one the west coast of Balikpapan Bay, and a fourth was to stand by to take over either job in the event one of the other planes was lost.

1st Lieut. William K. Robinson, 951 North Parkway, Memphis, Tenn. piloted one of the ships; 1st Lieut. Russell W. Phelps, Emelle, Alabama another; and 1st Lieut. Robert W. Berta, West Chester, Pa., rode the left seat of the third.

A couple of proud inventors demonstrate the sheet metal cutter they devised from some old armor plate, a spring, and a few nuts and bolts. Very superior to shears.

The rocket installation shown here was the last wartime addition to the Mitchell's punch. These, plus 14 calibre .50's and a ton of bombs, made the B-25 an outstanding ground support weapon.

Bombs, bullets, and rockets, and all ready for a trip to Luzon.

Their crews were hand-picked. In a pinch, any man in either of the three crews could fly the ship. That included the engineer and radio operator as well as the navigator and co-pilot.

Robinson's crew carried 2nd Lieut. Allen C. Atkins, 1121 Princess Avenue, Camden, N. J., co-pilot; 1st Lieut. Charles E. Mueller, 532 Devant Avenue, Memphis, Tenn., navigator; S/Sgt. Robert D. Blakesley, 1908 College Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa, engineer; and S/Sgt. James F. Doherty, 1645 North Central Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, radio operator.

Phelp's crew carried 2nd Lieut. Longin Sonski, School street, Somersville, Conn., co-pilot; 2nd Lieut. Jack R. Graden, 465 N. Vista Street, L. A., California, navigator; Sgt. John G. Gaven, 74 Ross Avenue, Plains, Pa., engineer; and Sgt. Ralph A. Metz, Jr., 414 W. Princeton Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio, radio operator.

Berta's crew were 2nd Lieut. Peter H. Klaussen, Center Street, Lewiston, N. Y., co-pilot; 2nd Lieut. Keith L. Anderson, 1017 E. 35th St., Tacoma, Washington, navigator; Sgt. Thomas L. Marney, 1512 N. 3rd, Albuquerque, New Mexico, engineer; S/Sgt. Victor R. Mullins, 216 Montclair Avenue, Ludlow, Kentucky, radio operator.

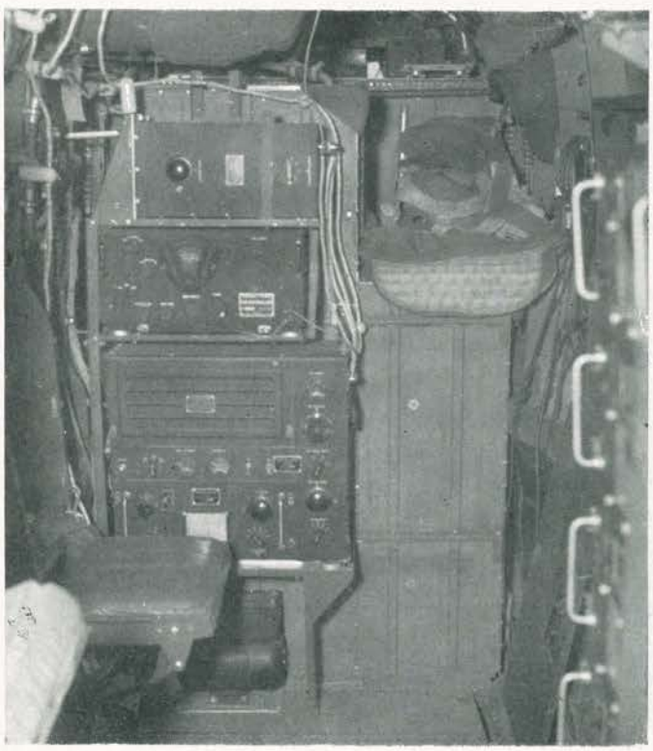
The plan required that the attack be made with split second timing. Every one of the more than 100 planes involved flew from bases more than 800 miles away. Each had to be at, not near, an appointed place at an exact second. If the Japs were given a moment or two to recover after the B-24s dropped their bombs, the big Liberators might as well have stayed at home. If the strafers started their run before the photo ships were in position, there wouldn't be any photo ships coming home.

It worked just as everybody "knew it would."

Twenty-seven Mitchells hit the target line at the same

Sudden death in eight efficient packages. The nose armament of the B-25J2

The radio compartment gas tank that, with the half bomb bay tank, made those Balik and China trips possible.



Tent building and remodeling went on constantly. Here three men with hammer and jungle knife add a few creature comforts.

A part of the taxiway and parking area at Palawan. It took weeks of work by the Seabees before things looked like this.

Twenty-three members of the 42nd who had children they had never seen posed for this photo. Between them they had enough assorted photographs to set up a national gallery.

Although the Texas Air Force was never officially recognized, these ground crewmen were always willing to lie their best whenever their State's name was mentioned.

instant. They were so close behind the B-24s that some of them flew through falling debris from the bomb bursts. Twenty-four of the Mitchells, 15 on one side of the bay, nine on the other, came screaming over the Jap positions at housetop level with 24,000 pounds of bombs and 100,000 rounds of ammunition.

The Japs, upset by the high level bombing, were apparently caught with their guns down by the 250-mile-an-hour Crusader Mitchells. The photo ships completed their runs without even a bullet hole.

Copies of the photographs taken that day were in the hands of every fire control officer in the fleet that pounded Balikpapan. They were in the hands of every beachhead troop commander. They formed the basis of the entire invasion, according to Australian Liaison officers.

Maj. Gen. Paul B. Wurtsmith's only medium bombardment Group received from the Australian forces another of a long list of commendations for an impossible job "well done."

* * *

One incident that occurred to Lieutenant Thompson and his crew of the 390th nearly marred the "no loss" record over Balik. Thompson's axis of attack took him directly over Signal Hill, the most strongly fortified position in the area. Furthermore he was covering it at reduced speed to give added protection to the Photo Joes.

Opposite Pier five, and just after an exploding oil reservoir had tossed him up on one wing, a 40-mm shell crashed through the pilots' escape hatch and exploded. Hell popped inside the Mitchell. Fragments severed the left hand of navigator Lieut. Carl Zwierlein. Both Thompson and his co-pilot, Lieut. Edwin A. Boden, were blinded by the flash and their flak suits were ripped and torn by the fragments. Sgt. Myal Reeves, engineer, was painfully injured in the back of his lap by fragments and jammed up into the turret by the explostion.

For moments the blinded pilots flew by instinct. Thompson thumbed out the rest of his bombs as quickly as he could. Tail-heavy trim alone took them over Signal Hill with inches to spare. Wild signalling to the rear brought up radio operator Sgt. Robert Theis who took the controls of the careening plane from the blinded pilots.

Reeves rendered first aid to the navigator, with Boden's help. Thompson meanwhile washed his eyes with medicine from his jungle kit and water from his canteen. Finally he was able to take over again, and streaked for Sanga Sanga, where Lieutenant Zwierlein was hospitalized.

From XIII Fitcom came the following communication: "Congratulations on a job well done, to all members of your command who participated in or contributed to the outstandingly successful mission to Balikpapan today."

All the missions flown to Balikpapan after this one were post-climactic.

Front Row, left to right: Capt. R. J. Walker, Capt. W. F. Bretzke, Capt. R. H. White, Maj. R. B. Harris, Capt. J. E. Morrison, Lt. C. H. Fassinger, Capt. J. F. Blackburn, Capt. P. M. Lighty, Capt. R. E. Eliasen, Capt. H. E. Workman, Maj. T. R. Waddleton, Capt. F. H. Parker, Chaplain G. F. Ivey, Lt. R. L. Proctor, Capt. W. E. McLaughlin (front), Maj. A. H. Deters (front).

Second Row: Capt. W. D. Trone, Capt. E. Lutes, F. O., D. L. Matthews, Lt. I. Brinn, Capt. W. W. Williams, Capt. N. C. Napier, Lt. H. J. Krummel, Lt. K. Chambers (A.L.O.), Lt. R. L. Smith, Lt. G. F. Meeder, Lt. Col. R. J. Koster, WO. L. Stumbles (A.L.O.), Lt. M. C. Wachs.

Back Row: Capt. H. J. Zahrndt, Maj. R. M. Clark, Lt. W. D. Flora, Capt. B. G. Fendall, Maj. D. W. Lyon, Lt. Col. T. H. Whitneybell, Capt. A. F. Bohnhoff, Capt. C. W. McClellan, Col. P. F. Helmick, Capt. E. L. Chapman, Lt. R. E. Grabenhorst, Capt. J. H. Brownell, Maj. W. C. Lindley, Maj. H. E. Goldsworthy, Maj. T. R. Weymouth, Lt. S. Sokler, WO. D. E. Holloway, Capt. W. W. Stone.

CHAPTER 26

There were other missions in early June. A final mop-up was flown to Cebu at the request of Ground forces there; Tuaran Town, Borneo was blasted with geepees and burned with Napalm. It was one of the first times that the 165-gallon Napalm wing tank was carried. To carry it, another modification was made on the "Jack of all Raids", the Mitchell Baker Two Five.

Racks were built under each wing from which could be hung a pair of wing tanks. Filled with gasoline, these tanks added another two hours' flight to the airplane, and could be salvoed when empty. Filled with Napalm, the hottest fire-producing material man has produced, and armed with an "any which way" fuse, the tanks were a devastating missle. The mix would engulf a gun position, would spread over a wide expanse of defended ground sticking to whatever it hit, and, when used against cave defenses, would suffocate the inhabitants, even when the tank exploded outside the cave.

British Intelligence learned the Japs were using Belait, Borneo, as a supply center and bivouac, so on June 6th, Napalm bombs and wing tanks were caried to the town. Three pairs of wing tanks and 204 hundred-pound bombs left the village a flaming hell. Brunei bluff, a Nip strongpoint, also got worked over the same day, as did the personnel and supply areas at Sibu airdrome.

Elements of the British and American fleets were seen in Brunei Bay June 9th, with another force of landing craft spotted near Balabac, heading southwest. The Crusaders were a part of the invasion force that swarmed onto the Brunei beaches that day. Twenty-four planes worked over two areas with 96 quarter-tonners and 40,000 rounds.

Their first target came as the initial wave of landing boats approached the beaches. Lieut. William B. Tanner, 1315 East California Avenue, Gainesville, Texas, led his six-plane element in a bombing and strafing attack on mortar and machine gun positions burrowed into a hill in back of the landing beaches.

One brigade of the famous Australian Ninth Division, the "Rats of Tobruk", had hit Tarakan; the "Rats' " 48th Brigade went into Brunei.

On the tenth 24 more Mitchells were put under tactical command of the Air Support party. Lieut. Thomas M. Cockrell, Kansas City, led the outstanding example of

close support that day. His mission was to bomb and strafe the north side of a main Jap supply road near the beach. Aussie patrols were working up to the south side of the road, and it was Cockrell's job to see to it that none of his munitions crossed the road. None did.

The Aussies had enormous faith in the Crusaders, according to Australian Liaison Officers. On numerous occasions when ordered to withdraw from a "Margin for Error" area before a bomb run, they said, "The hell with it. Those bloody blokes won't hurt us. They put 'em where they're supposed to." Once two men were injured from bomb fragments, but it failed to dampen the remainder's enthusiastic regard for our aim.

Lieut. Ralph A. Gill, Hollywood, California, led his element over a grove full of Jap reinforcements, and then strafed five loaded boxcars on the "only railroad in Borneo." The ASP called the attack "Beautiful."

Colonel Harvey was still with the Group at this time, and led one of the air support missions. After completing his attack, the bombing and strafing of a column of Japs fleeing along a jungle trail, he was told by the Liaison Officer to stick around. When he asked why, he was told he would receive a very important message to take back to his headquarters.

For 15 minutes his flight circled the area. The pilot said later, "We had just worked over a trailful of Japs, and there's nothing that makes you feel quite so useless as flying over hostile country like a big-eared bird after you've expended your bombs and ammunition."

Finally a voice with a veddy British accent came into his earphones, "Here is your message; please take it verbatim:

"Mary had a little lamb; its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go."

At midnight that night, Colonel Harvey was still trying frantically to find out what the message meant so that he could go to sleep.

The support work at Brunei continued. On the 12th, 24 planes hit Menumbok village, Binsulok Village, and Kimarut Town. The first two were shattered and burned; the latter was completely destroyed. The mission report notes that two Japs were seen running toward a house in the south end of Menumbok. They ran a dead heat with two 100-pound bombs.

Six planes from the 100th squadron on the 12th had more fun than anybody. They found the hidden engine on the Jap-used railroad between Weston and Beaufort. They didn't exactly find it. They diced the track along its entire route without success. This led them to believe the locomotive was hidden in the tunnel at Baun.

They attacked in line astern, skipping bombs into the eastern end of the tunnel. When the bombs exploded, steam and the nose of a locomotive were seen to emerge from the western end, according to the interrogation.

From then until June 20th daily support missions were flown to the Jesselton, Weston, Labuan, Miri areas. Frequently the flyers were unable to observe the results of their bombing and strafing, but it was evidently satisfactory. In instances where damage assessment was possible, either through observation or ground troop reports, results were uniformly good.

On June 21st the ASP asked to have an artillery emplacement near Pujut knocked out. It was difficult to locate the target, but while the planes were stooging around looking for it, the gun obligingly located itself by firing a couple of rounds at the planes. It was dug in between two buildings. Thirty 250-pound bombs were deposited in the area and a few thousand rounds from the nose guns. Both buildings were destroyed, the gun position was destroyed, a nearby MG position was silenced.

From time to time Australian headquarters were able to forward reports of actual damage and numbers of counted dead. After a smashing raid with geepees, napalm, and .50s near Labuan strip in the latter part of June, the Diggers walked through the area next day standing up. They found 395 dead Japs, 20 who were too dazed and shocked to offer resistance, and one confused, but live, Geisha girl. The 70th and 75th got credit for that one.

On July 8th, near Miri, the Aussies again encountered fierce and fanatical counterattacks. After smashing six of these in one day they concluded the Nips were pretty well decimated and started an attack of their own. It ran into a stone wall defense. The Crusader fire department was called. The raid was pulled at dusk. A few days later the Australians radioed a report. The raid had cost the enemy heavily in men. It had taken 36 hours for them to evacuate their wounded. The area was covered with bodies. Four food caches and an ammunition dump were destroyed. The survivors were without food for 24 hours.

While out on his "paper route", as the propaganda leaflet missions came to be known, Capt., William F. McLaughlin, assistant Group S-3, test-fired his guns into a building north of Samarinda. The building erupted Japs from every exit, including a few that were ad-libbed. It apparently was high noon in a Nip mess hall. Mac baked a cake with his thumb on the trigger. Sgt. Billy Penn, in the turret, iced it on about 15 who were still moving after the pass.

The softening-up process for the July 1 landing on Balikpapan started on June 22. For this series of raids the photo missions had been dress rehearsals. The job was of such importance that the 38th Bomb Group of the Fifth Air Force was hauled down to Palawan to augment the 42nd's force.

The Sunsetters, before take-off on the 22nd, were still a bit nervous at the long and rough prospect ahead of them. Briefing had been thorough the night before, and they had been exposed to all the poop acquired by the Crusaders on their previous flights. Nevertheless, the Sunsetters were inclined to believe it was no tea party.

The entire Balikapapan area was bombed and strafed in three waves of 18 planes each. Colonel Helmick led the entire formation, taking off into a low overcast, and

Several Crusaders accompanied a Navy "expedition" to pick up some Jap prisoners on the west side of the island. Gas trucks were carried on LCT's to refuel the PT's. Balabac Island south of Palawan was the rendezvous. Guerillas and troops of the 93rd Division made the capture.

Tojo, a Navy mascot, wasn't especially fond of anyone, and had a particular dislike for photographers.

The Japs were somewhat bedraggled and docile. A naval commander who had lost his ship in Suragaio was among them.

wading through a thick squall line when only 150 miles from Palawan. General hell was raised throughout the entire area with 648 100-pound napalm bombs and 150,000 rounds of ammunition.

"Pilot Special," the controller, nearly snafued the strike when he asked that the attack be delayed just as the planes reached the I. P. To make matters even worse, the leader of each 18 planes had to turn *into* his formation to start one of the most memorable 360's ever made. Somehow, with the outside man fire-walling and the inside man doing push-ups, the turn was made and the attack completed.

On the 23rd, 24 Crusaders and 18 Sunsetters duplicated the mission. Two news releases on this raid will describe the Crusaders' part in it.

HEADQUARTERS 13TH AAF, PHILIPPINES—1st Lieut. Harold R. Sherman, New Bedford, Mass., pilot with the Crusaders, 13th AAF B-25 outfit, is ready to admit that willingness to help a friend in trouble pays off.

While over Balikpapan, Borneo, on a strafing attack, he hit a tree. The plane flew all right; he completed his mission and returned toward base. On the same mission Lieut. George E. Davis, 505 E. Kingston Avenue, Charlotte, N. C., a fellow pilot, had his plane badly holed by fire from Balikpapan's fierce anti-aircraft defenses. His oil line had been hit and one engine seemed ready to quit.

He radioed his flight leader that he was about to go into Sanga Sanga airfield, and requested that another ship convoy him in the event he had to ditch in the Pacific.

Sherman overheard the conversation and offered to cover Davis into Sanga, and to ferry his crew back to base in the event the plane was unflyable.

Both planes landed and taxied up to the base engineering officer's tent. He inspected both planes.

"Who", he inquired, "escorted who?"

When told, he laughed. "Lieutenant Davis' plane is all right. Lieutenant Sherman's plane is unflyable. Leave it here for junking and spare parts."

Sherman's crew, which up till now had remained in the ship, got out with surprised outcries. Inspecting the ship, they found the following damage: nose bashed in, tail assembly badly mangled, radio compass antenna holed, right engine nacelle bashed in, all radio antenna torn off, bomb bay doors so crushed they couldn't be opened. The engineering officer was of the opinion that it would not have made the long trip back to its base.

Lieutenant Sherman and his crew rode back to their own base on the ship they had so carefully shepherded into Sanga Sanga.

Other members of Lieutenant Sherman's crew were: 2nd Lieut. William E. Davies, navigator, Rome, N. Y. Sgt. William C. Rehfield, New York City, S/Sgt. William H. Parkinson, Forrestdale, Philadelphia.

* * *

From the 23rd until D-Day, July 1, the Crusaders worked over Balikpapan and its defenses. Again, as at Tarakan, the beach and surrounding waters were choked with mines and obstacles. Double rows of wire, zig-zag rows of coconut log and steel rail barriers were half buried in the surf so that they would stop or rip the bottom out of a landing boat.

These barriers had to be removed by dynamiting. When the small boats of the demolitions crews moved up to the beach, Crusader planes swooped down to strafe adjacent gun positions. Smoke, bombs, and ammunition kept Nip heads down as the sappers set their charges, lit fuses, and backed off.

Such was the efficiency of the aerial cover that not one man was lost in the demolition crews. Every landing beach was cleared.

In back of the beaches the Japs had set up road blocks, food and fuel caches, strong points, pill boxes, and the thousand and one defenses with which they hoped to delay the Digger advance. One defense in particular was a series of hidden, camouflaged gasoline and oil storage tanks which were to be released on to roads and beaches in a roaring flood of flame after the Aussies had established their beachhead.

It might have worked had not bombs and bullets sieved and burned the tanks before the invasion.

At the same time the Balikpapan strikes were continuing, other formations went to Samarinda, Redeb, Tawao, and any other supporting areas from which the Japs could effectively regroup and refit.

The climax to all this came with a dull thud. On D-Day, not a single combat plane was able to penetrate the weather that lay between Palawan and Balikpapan. All hit secondary targets at Redeb and Tawao. One plane got through. Major Robison of the 75th flew instruments for two hours and, intermittently, at altitudes ranging downward from 50 feet to carry correspondents and photographers.

The Aussie assault teams hit the shore standing up, and moved forward. Manggar and Sepingan airstrips fell within hours, and as the communiques say, from there on the issue was never in doubt.

For a week after July 1 the only missions going to Balik were radar ferrets and those Death Defying Terrors, the bug-dusting DDT missions.

Meanwhile the Aussies had completed the strips at Tarakan and Labuan, and were furnishing their own air support. Four ground support strikes between the 7th and 11th completed our activity at Balikpapan.

And so ended another period in our history. As it developed, it was our last major campaign, for the sands were running out for the Japs in every theatre of war.

Okinawa had fallen with fearful attrition. The Japs in a semi-all out effort to stop the invasion of their home islands had thrown in everything but the kitchen sink. The Kamikaze Corps that first went into action in the Leyte campaign struck at Okinawa in huge numbers. The Japs lost thousands of planes, and they sank or damaged more than 200 of our ships. It was their only and final chance to stem the tide of war, and it failed because we were able to replace our losses instantly while they could not.

At Palawan life was reduced to "box top" missions to Jesselton, Itu Aba, Keningau runway, and Bantanyan, on semi-training flights.

Life, however, was not boring for the ground personnel. Something new had been added. After two years of watching rotation plans come and go, the men welcomed the Redeployment system with its accompanying "point" system. One point for each month's service; one more for each month overseas, five for each medal and/or battle star, 12 for each child (up to three). And 85 was the critical score.

The Group was eligible for five battle stars: the Northern Solomons, the Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, China, and the Southern Philippines. For some there was the anti-sub campaign either off the Fijis and New Cal, or off the West Coast. Claims developed, and counterclaims. The only debatable point was in battle stars. There was one other thing that influenced the first scores, the "old army" idea of "claim everything in sight and see what happens". Until the first lot got out, this system worked as expected.

Then came the reaction. Battle Stars were interpreted to count only for those organization who had appeared on General Orders. GOs had been cut for the 42nd on only three stars, Northern Solomons, New Guinea, and

Freckled Capt. William (Dog) Trone was the 70th's Intelligence Officer when lost on a flight to Manila.

Maj. Arthur M. Taylor, Group Intelligence Officer, was lost with Captain Trone on the Manila flight.

the Southern Philippines. From 15 to 20 points came off scores.

Five officers and 103 enlisted men were the prize winners in the first quota. All enlisted men with more than 113 points, and all officers with more than 123 were on the list.

Several "30-year men" who had voiced a somewhat incomprehensible yearning to make a career of the army found that, despite their high scores, they had been taken literally and would be allowed to remain in the overseas branch of their chosen service. Most of these men left a partial vaccum behind them in an effort to change the records.

Nearly all the men chosen in that first quota were members of the old army who had a child or two and who had come over with the Group. Some 100th personnel with numerous Stateside months and a family made the grade.

Group planes ferried the men to Leyte, and reports filtered back that all of them had got out within 24 hours on a Liberty bound for Frisco. The ship's estimated time en route was 28 days.

Weeks later a letter came in from Colonel Whitneybell. After being waterborne for 38 days out of Leyte, he had got as far as Guam.

During July the Fifth Air Force, whose mediums had been supporting the ground action on Luzon, moved up to Okinawa, and on July 27 the Crusaders took over their chores. The missions were repetitions of hundreds that had gone before, with one innovation. Rocket mounts had been developed for the Mitchell, and we had acquired a few for our planes. When these were first used on Luzon, the Cub-borne controller whooped gleefully, and requested they be brought back the next day—he already had a target.

Also on July 29 an incident occured that resulted in a sizeable chunk of publicity as purveyed by the PRO. It was good schmalz and even FEAF's General Kenney read it and liked it:

HEADQUARTERS, 13TH AAF, PHILIPPINES—They named her "Forever Amber" and she believed it.

For 118 times Amber, a B-25 owned and operated by the Crusaders, famed 13th AAF medium bomb group, took off, completed her mission, and returned. She flew for 916 hours over New Guinea, the Halmaheras, Celebes, Philippines, China and Borneo. She bore a charmed life, and seemed indestructible.

Her eight nose guns, four package guns, two waist guns, two turret guns and two tail guns spewed something over a quarter of a million rounds of .50 caliber ammunition into Jap airfields, supply dumps, barracks, and quite often, into Japs. She had her nose into the invasions of Morotai, Cebu, Zamboanga, Tarakan, Brunei Bay, and Balikpapan. From her bomb bay she dropped around 200 tons of high explosives.

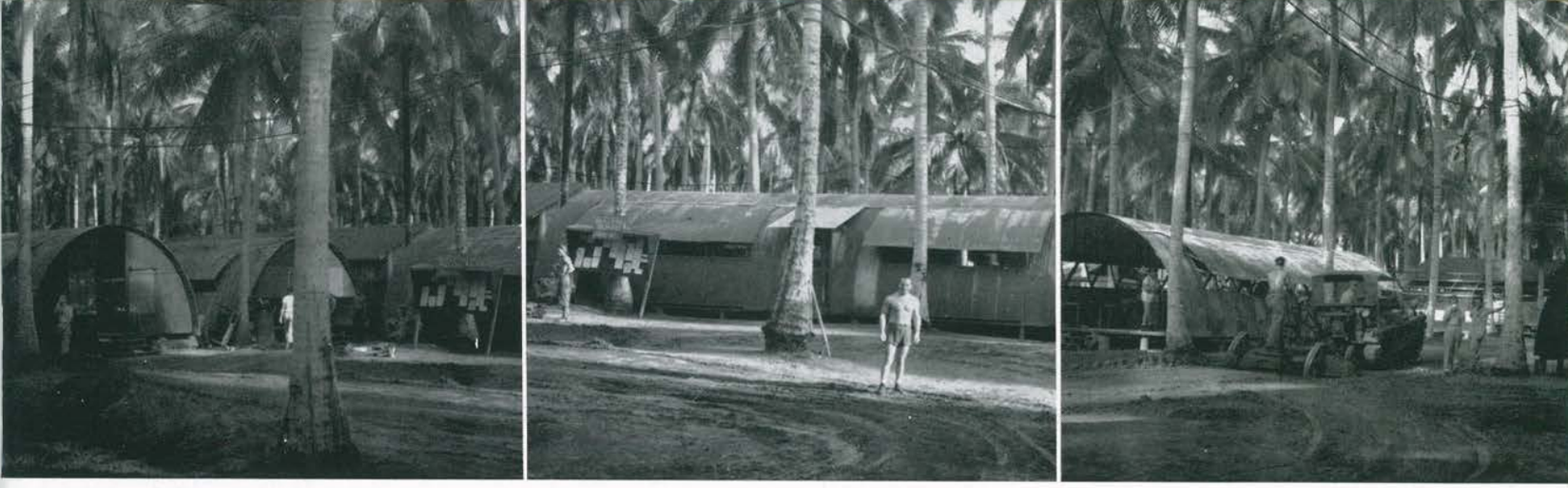
Amber paid her freight, with heavy interest, and she was on the verge of being retired as a "war weary".

Her crew claims she knew she was about to be turned out to pasture, and wanted no part of it. She was built to fight; she loved to fight. She liked to get down on the tree-tops at 275 miles an hour and raise hell. When she quit the war, she quit in a magnificent blaze of glory that the real Amber and the Stuartian court would have loved.

She was a sleek ship, and no matter how old she got, she kept her shape.

Captain Samuel Beall, 69th S-2, acted as Group photo officer when Lt. Proctor picked up his Purple Heart.

Capt. Thelmer Smith, 100th S-2 Officer, had an apparently limitless stock of T-shirts, which he traded to the Filipinos for frying chickens and other potables.



When the war's end halted our move to Okinawa, Group Headquarters were reestablished in quonset huts, and all hands fell to erecting the huts, grading, and building walks.

Then one day her engineer and crew chief hung a pair of wing tanks on her. Two tanks that could be filled with a 1000 pounds of jellied gasoline mix. It made her look like a woman carrying a sack of potatoes under each arm. Definitely not ornamental.

For a few missions she took it. This was war, and war is, well, war.

For her 119th mission she was sent to Northern Luzon to bomb and strafe the Japs still holding out in the hills. She carried her wing tanks full of the hottest fire-producing material known to man.

She carried two new pilots who had never flown her before. Amber was regular. She wouldn't double-cross her old crew. She had on board Maj. Harry E. Goldsworthy, Rosalia, Washington, as pilot, and Maj. William C. Lindley, 405 Ridge Drive, Greenville, South Carolina, as co-pilot. In the back were Sgt. Robert B. Krantz, radio operator, 635 East 211th Street, of the Bronx; Sgt. Oscar B. West, 3914 Becker Street, Austin, Texas, engineer; and Sgt. John H. Graybill, 1310 Pitt Street, Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania, tail gunner.

Goldy took her in over the target and punched the buttons that tripped her guns, dropped her bombs and should have dropped her wing tanks. She let go everything but one tank. An airplane with a half ton more under one wing than under the other has a tendency to act like a drunk who has just stepped off a merry-go-round. The right wing dropped, her nose went down, and she took off across country like a turpentined dog.

Goldy, however, hadn't lived long enough to be a Major without learning how to control obstreperous aircraft. He righted her, rolled in "enough trim to tilt a battleship" and took off on a bee line for the nearest airfield, Clark, near Manila. He wanted to set Amber down and get that half ton of potential flaming death off her before she got temperamental.

He got into the Clark Field traffic pattern, cleared to land, dropped his wheels, and discovered Amber still had an ace in the hole, or at least a typical Amberian trick. Her nose wheel came out, refused to lock down, and also refused to retract. The crew coaxed, wheedled, tried to pump the wheel down by hand, and finally cursed her for an obstinate hussy.

No one in his right mind would land a B-25 with that tank still hooked on, and his nose wheel waving in the breeze.

Again Goldy went off up country, picked out a bare spot and tried to salvo the wing tank.

Amber said, "No tank you," with obvious corn.

She also said, "Isn't my new nose wheel a killer?"

Goldy knows when he's whipped. That was the way Amber wanted it, in cards, spades and big casino, and it was her prerogative. No boneyard of has-been glory for Amber.

Goldy called all stations on the interphone. "We're returning to Clark. I'll level off at 2000 feet. Prepare to bail out."

"Roger, Roger."

For the first time in 20 months a crew prepared to bail out of a Crusader B-25.

Graybill went first. He hit in a rice paddy north of Clark, went up to his knees in soft mud, did two back flips before his 'chute lost its buoyancy, and came up looking just about like anyone would who had done two back flips in a rice paddy. Before he got the mud out of his eyes, two friendly and curious Filipinos hit him full in the face with the contents of a large bucket of water.

It cleaned his face. "It damned near decapitated me," Graybill said later. When he was properly sluiced off, he thanked his willing helpers, walked 200 yards to a road, and hitch-hiked back to Clark. He made it in an hour. He was unhurt.

Krantz went second. He hit in a sugar cane field, tumbled, released his chute, and stood up undamaged. Two Filipinos who had captured three Japs in the same field three days before eyed him coldly, with cocked rifles. Krantz took off his Mae West, waved it weakly, and said, "Hiya."

Two hours later he was at Clark.

West dropped third, landed in an open field, unhurt, was cared for and delivered to Clark by a Signal Corps outfit. Lindley and Goldy went in that order. All were at Clark getting bruises painted within two hours.

Amber, released of her burden, drifted off hillward. Goldy had trimmed her nose heavy before leaving. With her engines roaring, the wind slamming through her open escape hatches in a throaty whoosh, she skimmed a weeded hill and in a rising crescendo of hell-bent noise, she crashed on the valley floor and exploded. A mighty mushrooming pillar of flame leaped a thousand feet into the air as her gas tanks and wing tank went up. Smoke poured high into the air, advertising her pyre to the countryside.

"She wanted it that way," said her crew chief, T/Sgt. Joseph E. Robinson, 4721 Court Street, Birmingham, Alabama. "She just had to be Forever Amber."

Lt. Col. Theron Whitneybell adds up his score on the Crusaders' Tote-Board while Colonel Helmick and three other Oregonians look on. This was taken before V-J Day.

The high point man of the 42nd's Texas Air Force adds up his score. These were the first men to leave the Group under the point system.

Lt. Col., then Major, Goldsworthy, Deputy Group Commander, adds himself up 135 points on the Tote-Board while Capt. Phil Lighty, Group Gunnery Officer, gets a few points of his own holding up the board.

CHAPTER 27

Through July and into August the daily strikes went out to Luzon. Mohair, Trophy, Bygone, Proxy, and the other controllers-marked targets and delivered the ground forces' thanks. Twice leaders returned with the word that the controller had called that day's bombing, "the best support bombing he'd ever seen." That from men who had worked constantly with other bomb groups was indeed high praise. Nevertheless no word came back on tangible results. The most widely used phrase in mission reports was always, "All bombs were dropped in the target, and it was strafed with unobserved results."

Early in August orders arrived alerting the Group for the expected move north to Okinawa—called "Bunkhouse" in the radiogram. Immediately the well-oiled mechanism that got the Group from the Fijis and PDG to Palawan began to function. By August 10 it had reached the point at which normal functions could be carried out, but from which the entire outfit could be moved to the dockside within 24 hours. There is a very fine line between efficient packing and chaos. The Crusaders learned that the hard way.

All administrative and line buildings were down, and operations were carried on from pyramidals. All quarters had their floors removed. A few tugs, an hour's work would have reduced the area to boxes, vehicles, and myriad rolls of canvas.

The movie still operated from its trailer. "The Affairs of Susan" was in the midst of a flashback when all hell broke loose. Yells were yelled, and guns were fired. Tracers from AA positions arced across the sky. Flares were shot off, and people ran around telling each other the war was over! Japan would accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration—if she were allowed to retain her Emperor. That seemed eminently satisfactory to the members of the 42nd Bomb Group; a hurried poll failed to locate anyone else who wanted him.

In Manila parades formed, and GIs, Filipinos, officers and men celebrated in the streets. In Leyte, the customary yelling and shooting went on. In Leyte harbor the Navy cut loose with everything in the locker. The bay was a magnificent display of tracers, flares, searchlights, and aerial bursts, as the news flashed around the crowded bay.

In every tent men leaned over footlockers from whose recesses were brought that last bottle of Stateside liquor. No waiting for the official announcement of surrender. Suppose the Big Three said the Japs couldn't keep their emperor? Hell, let 'em split up another A-bomb.

All during the negotiations the war continued. On the 13th and 14th missions were flown to Luzon. Again on the 15th flights were airborne for Luzon. The cessation of hostilities is covered by two radioed news releases filed that day, and the next.

FROM: BOMGR FOUR TWO
TO: COMAF THIRTEEN ATTENTION PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

LITERALLY STOPPED AT THE BEGINNING OF A BOMB RUN ON A JAP POCKET ON LUZON CMA CRUSADERS RECEIVED OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE END OF WAR AND ORDERS TO JETTISON BOMBS RETURN TO BASE PD MISSION WAS FOURTEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY FIRST SINCE GROUP ENTERED ACTION PD FLIGHT LED BY FIRST LIEUTENANT CHARLES B. KLEIN SIX EIGHT ONE THREE SEVENTEENTH STREET NORTHEAST CMA SEATTLE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED TARGET FROM GROUND CONTROL CMA HAD PLANES IN ATTACK FORMATION WHEN RADIO OPERATOR PICKED UP ORDERS PD STAFF SERGEANT HERBERT TARE ERICKSON ONE NINE ZERO NINE WEST SECOND STREET DULUTH MINNESOTA RECEIVED OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT IN CHARLES WILLIAM FROM RADIO SAIGON PD PARA LAST FLIGHT ON MISSION WHEN WORD REACHED IT CMA FOUND THAT IT WAS OVER BATAAN ACCORDING TO NAVIGATOR FIRST LIEUTENANT MYRON W. HARRIS NINE FIVE SEVEN NINE OLYMPIC BLVD BEVERLY HILLS CALIFORNIA PD QUOTE IT

SEEMED FITTING TO RECEIVE THE NEWS OF THE END OF THE WAR OVER BATAAN HARRIS SAID LATER PD QUOTE A FULL CYCLE HAD TURNED AT LAST PD UNQUOTE PARA CRUSADERS HAD FLOWN ONE FOUR FOUR FOUR THREE SORTIES STARTING WITH BATTLE OF MIDWAY THROUGH THE SOLOMONS AND WEST AS FAR AS CHINA COAST PD DAY BEFORE OFFICIAL SURRENDER CAPTAIN REAN PETER SIELER FIVE TWO SEVEN LENOX AVENUE CMA MIAMI BEACH FLORIDA DROPPED LAST BOMB ON JAPS AT TWELVE TWENTY ITEM PD PARA REACTION OF ENTIRE CRUSADER GROUP SAME AS THAT OF THOUSANDS OTHER QUOTE OLD UNQUOTE MEN IN PACIFIC QUOTE THANK GOD PD NOW WHEN DO WE GO HOME QUERY UNQUOTE WACHS

* * *

FROM: BOMGR FOUR TWO
TO: COMAF THIRTEEN ATTENTION PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER
VICTOR JIG DAY CAUGHT THE CRUSADERS FAMED JIG ABLE FOX MITCHELL UNIT WITH THEIR PLANES UP PD FROM THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY THERE WAS SELDOM DAY CRUSADER BAKER TWO FIVE NOT ON DESTRUCTION BENT SORTIE AGAINST THE JAPS PD THEY WERE FLYING FROM GUADALCANAL IN MARCH ONE NINE FOUR THREE WHEN CAPTAIN WILLIAM ROGER STONE FIVE ONE EIGHT NORTH SIXTY SEVENTH STREET CMA MILWAUKEE CMA ALREADY A FIVE MONTH VETERAN WITH FORTS CMA JOINED THE GROUP PD STONE CMA GROUP ORDNANCE OFFICER CMA WITH THREE FOUR MONTHS AND ONE TWO THREE POINTS IS PROBABLY OLDEST POINT OF SERVICE OFFICER IN THIRTEENTH PD HE HAS SUPERVISED THE LOADING OF ALL OF ONE ZERO ZERO ZERO REPEAT ELEVEN THOUSAND TONS REPEAT TONS OF BOMBS THAT HAVE CASCADED FROM CRUSADER BOMB BAYS SINCE JOINING PD ON VICTOR JIG DAY OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT CAUGHT HIS PLANES AT START OF BOMB RUN LUZON PD BOMBS EITHER JETTISONED OR BROUGHT BACK AS RADIO HALTED STRIKE PD PAR QUOTE THIS IS SWEET DAY FOR ME UNQUOTE STONE SAID AS HE WATCHED THE UNUSED BOMBS LOWERED FROM PLANE PD QUOTE I HELPED LOAD FIRST OFFICIAL THIRTEENTH BOMBS PD I AM GOING TO HELP UNLOAD WHAT I HOPE IS LAST ONE PD PAR QUOTE THE KNOWLEDGE THE WAR IS OVER LEAVES ME NUMB PD I DOUBT IF ANYONE WITH THREE YEARS IN SOLOMONS CMA NEW GUINEA AND HERE IS CAPABLE OF CARING HOW SOON HE GETS HOME PD I HAVE BEEN OUT HERE TOO LONG PD IT IS ALL BURNT OUT OF ME PD UNQUOTE PAR GROUP COMMANDER COLONEL PAUL FOX HELMICK CMA CORVALLIS OREGON CMA VETERAN OF TWELFTH AND EIGHTH AIR FORCES HEARD THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY RADIO PD QUOTE ITS A GREAT DAY AND A GREAT AIR FORCES VICTORY PD IT HAS BEEN ONLY A MATTER OF TIME FOR MONTHS PD NOW THE TIME HAS RUN OUT PD I ONLY WISH COLONEL KEGELMAN COULD HAVE BEEN HERE TO SEE IT PD UNQUOTE PAR COLONEL CHARLES GEORGE KEGELMAN CMA EL RENO OKLAHOMA CMA WAS CRUSADER COMMANDER SEVEN MONTHS PRIOR HIS DEATH OVER MINDANAO MARCH NINE CURRENT PD HE LED FIRST AMERICAN MISSION OF WORLD WAR TWO OVER GERMANY JULY FOUR ONE NINE FOUR TWO PD PAR GROUPS NEWEST MAN PETER FOX CHARLIE WILLIAM ABLE LOUGHRAN CMA EIGHT ZERO ONE NORTH WASHINGTON AVENUE CMA HUTCHINSON KANSAS FORMER GUNNERY INSTRUCTOR CMA NOW PUBLIC R E L A T I O N S STAFFMAN WHO ARRIVED AUGUST FIFTH CURRENT CMA HAD ONLY THIS TO SAY CMA QUOTE ITS WONDERFUL NEWS PD EVERYONE TALKING OF GETTING HOME PD GUESS I WILL BE AROUND A WHILE PD UNQUOTE PAR WHEN

A rare opportunity was grasped the day this photo was taken. All the "gears" were caught in one group. Standing, left to right, are: Lieutenant Colonel Waddleton, S-3; Colonel Helmick, Group C. O.; Lieutenant Colonel Goldsworthy, Deputy Group C. O.; Major Lyon, Executive Officer; Colonel Champion, Colonel Helmick's successor: kneeling: Captain Mclaughlin, Assistant S-3; Major Weymouth, Air Inspector; and Major Cady then S-5, later C. O. of the homebound 100th.

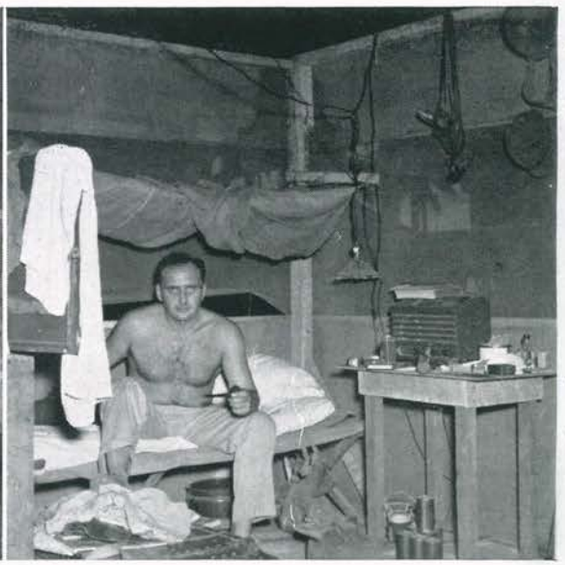
Buck Helmick rides again! Colonel Helmick is shown preparing to take off on one of the Crusaders' frequent visits to Balikpapen.

Major Don Lyon, who succeeded Colonel Whitneybell as Group Exec. is snapped in his office.

Maj. James E. Robison, 75th CO, who won distinction on July 1, 1945, by being the only pilot from the 42nd who managed to penetrate the weather between Palawan and Balikpapen. --He carried cameramen and correspondents to cover D-Day at Balik.

Lt. Col. Thomas Waddleton, Group S-3 at the end of the war, was the first "old" Crusader to return to the 42nd. He was one of the original pilots who landed at Hawaii on the first trans-Pacific hop. He stood an alert at Midway, hoping to get a crack at the train and transport half of the Jap armada, which, however, never came within range. He flew from Fiji and the 'Canal in 26's.

Maj. Charles R. Wolfendale, Group Operations Officer, whose 95 missions set a tough record to beat. He would have made it an even 100 had not Colonel Harvey grounded him on the contention that "anyone with 95 missions ought to stay on the ground."



The lares and penates of a Crusader. Capt. Sol Reiches relaxes among his belongings.

Maj. Roy Harris, Group S-4, whose procurement problems were never light, and whose cheerful disposition seemed never ruffled.

Capt. Carl Fitzreiter, 69th Engineering Officer, whose maintenance record was one of the best in the Group, and who once formed half a duo who brazenly stood in line at a FEASC liquor ration at Hollandia, and made off with 26 guilders worth of loot. Furthermore, he borrowed the money.

Lt. K. B. Chambers succeeded Capt. Douglas Panton as Royal Australian Air Force Liaison Officer with the 42nd. His batman popped into the office each morning at 1000 with a billy of tea.

Chaplain Houde with Pfc. Ed O'Malley and his "family" at Sansapor. His claim for 48 points when his pet dog had four pups was disallowed.

The chapel at Sansapor rose among the jungle giants and twining creepers of New Guinea.

FIRST JUBILANT CELEBRATION WAS OVER HUNDREDS OF CRUSADER GROUND CREW MAJORITY WITH NEARLY THIRTY MONTHS IN PACIFIC VOICED THE UNIVERSAL SHOUT QUOTE HOME STREETLIGHTS SIDEWALKS SWEETMILK PD

* * *

The most devastating war in the history of mankind is over. The writer is going to preach no sermon, nor hold forth on the ardent hopes of all peoples that it is the final one. It's over, finished, kaput, and for the few seconds it takes you to read these words, that's enough. When you raise your head, you're looking into your future, knowing that you're only one man, and that you can't do everything. But you can do something, and, God helping you, you will do it.

* * *

A recapitulation of missions flown, sorties, and weight of bombs dropped by the 42nd Bomb Group follows:

69th	Prior to August	572	3250	4,869,395
	August, 1945	5	36	32,900
	Total	577	3286	4,902,295
70th	Prior to August	491	2858	4,411,980
	August, 1945	6	36	35,650
	Total	497	2894	4,447,630
75th	Prior to August	487	2789	4,460,270
	August, 1945	7	40	41,200
	Total	494	2829	4,501,470
100th	Prior to August	397	2417	3,935,400
	August, 1945	8	46	51,450
	Total	405	2463	3,986,850
390th	Prior to August	500	2927	4,577,475
	August, 1945	8	44	38,800
	Total	508	2971	4,616,275
Group	Prior to August	1461	14,241	22,254,520
	August, 1945	20	202	200,000
	Total	1481	14,443	22,454,520

Most active month for the Group: November, 1944, 169 missions 1134 sorties 1,541,040 pounds bombs dropped.

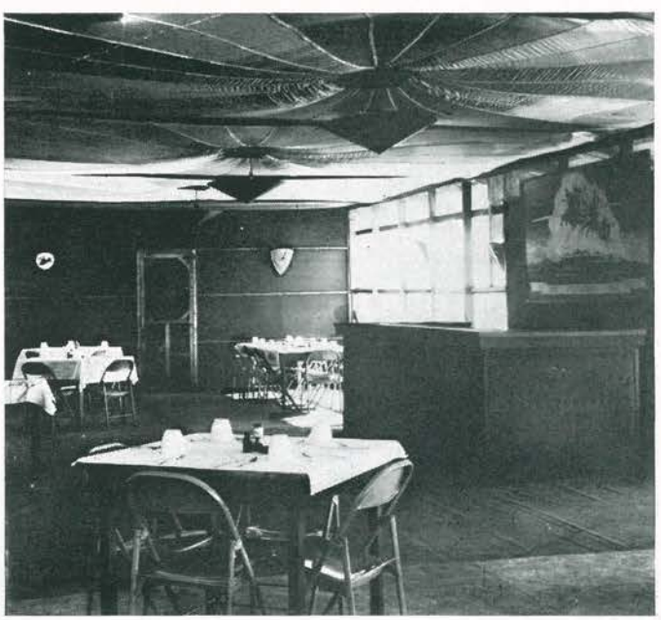
Total number rounds of ammunition fired in combat: 9,674,115

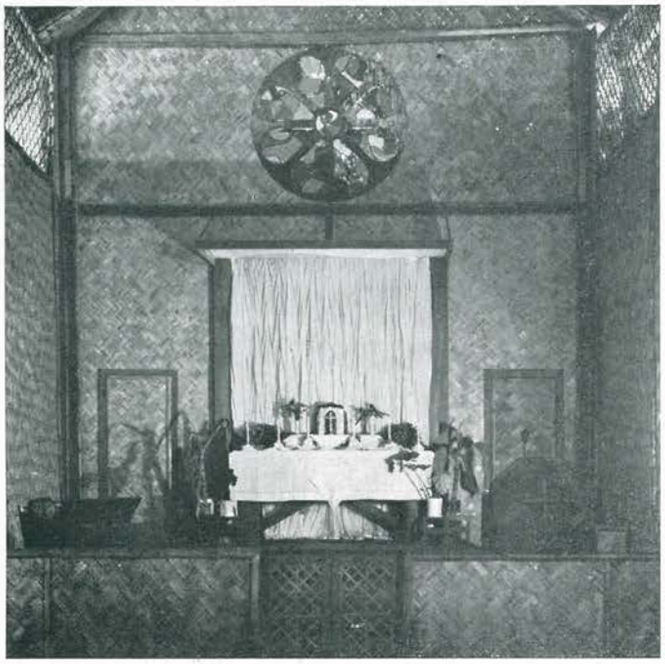
DENOUEMENT

The end of the war did not see the end of operations for the 42nd. The men who had come out with the Group were, for the most part, still in the Pacific, and apparently were apt to stay there. Some changes had taken place. There were new faces here and there, and even in the flush of victory, all who remained did not make it home.

August ran to its close with the customary crop of rumors regarding rotation, but with little being done about

Interior of Group Club and Mess at Palawan. The mural was painted by Sgt. Russ Ahlbum.





The alter at Palawan was an artistic masterpiece, complete with "stained glass" window.

it. Meanwhile the movement was cancelled and re-erection of the camp took place. Quonset huts were obtained from the Navy, and seven of them were erected in the Group Headquarters area as offices. Administrative and line buildings went back up, and the Group settled down to pseudo-peacetime operations.

We were to be the Philippines Occupational Air Force; we were being transferred to Clark Field; we were going to be sent to Hickam Field; we were going to stay where we were until we took root and sprouted coconuts. Rumors were a dime a dozen, and you could take your choice.

In early September a radio came in requesting that all enlisted men with 85 points or more be cleared and sent to Leyte. Weather kept planes grounded, and three times men took off and were returned when the planes were unable to penetrate Manila weather.

On September 8 a news release indicated that officers would soon move out. After the first quota in July, rotation for officers seemed to dissipate. In August the 42nd's quota was 1, but the more sardonic insisted that quota would be doubled in September. Fifty-four Group ground officers had more than the requisite 85 points.

Finally, on September 17 radio orders from 13th Air Force asked for 100 eligible officers from all organizations on Palawan. Our portion of this quota amounted to 23 officers, all with point scores of more than 100. However, before the men could be cleared and delivered to Manila, the orders were rescinded. The island quota was greatly reduced, and three men, Captain Stone, Major Deters, and Lieutenant Proctor took off for Manila September 20.

On September 10, Three Eight Zero took off at 0800 for Florida Blanca Field. Her last position report located her just south and west of Mindoro, on course. Last radio communication of any type was held 25 minutes before her ETA. Three Eight Zero did not arrive. On board her were 10 men, Maj. Robert F. Van Dusen, pilot; Lieut. Curtis V. McEnulty, co-pilot; Capt. James A. Freedman, navigator; T/Sgt. Edward E. Meyers, engineer; and S/Sgt. Harry E. Brunsman, radio operator, who were members of the crew, and Maj. Arthur G. Taylor, Group Intelligence Officer, Capt. William D. Trone, 70th Intelligence Officer, Capt. E. L. Chapman, Group Adjutant, Capt. J. W. Anderson of the 69th, and Lieut. J. L. Schuler of the 390th. The passengers were en route to Manila on official business.

The loss of all of these men was most keenly felt. Bill Trone should not have been on the airplane; he should have been on the first point quota. He had one of the highest point totals in the Group, but an administrative error placed him on the flying personnel list, and he was bypassed.

Art Taylor, another high point man, was sweating out the three months following his promotion to major.

Earl Chapman, who with Major Taylor had come over with the 100th, had well over 100 points, as did Captain Anderson.

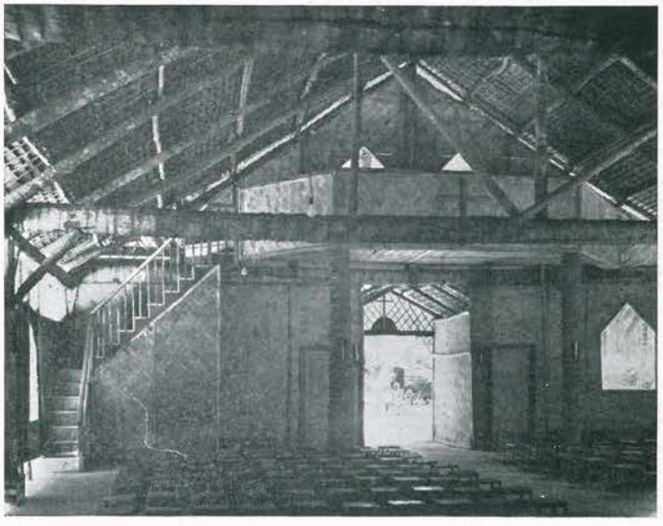
The end of the 42nd Bombardment Group (M) came quickly and quietly. First the 100th Bomb Squadron was made into a Category Four unit, and, late in November was returned to the States with all that remained of the original 42nd personnel.

Soon after, a similar fate befell the 390th.

In January, according to a letter from Lieut. Col. Harry E. Goldsworthy, then commanding, the Group and the three remaining squadrons moved to Osaka, Japan, and became a part of the Fifth Air Force (cf. FOREWORD).

A last letter to the editor from Lieut. Wayne F. Bolton, Group Adjutant, told of the deactivation of the 42nd, its reduction to a One and One status, the distribution of its personnel, either to other organizations or back to the States. *IN PACE REQUIESCAT.*

Interior of the chapel and the choir loft at Palawan. Sawali walls and Nipa roof made a beautiful appearance.



Before the altar the Bridal Party stops. Sylvia is on the arm of Colonel Helmick, who gave the Bride away. The wedding dress was whittled from a "salvaged" parachute.

In her wedding dress, made entirely from an AAF parachute, the bride poses before the altar. Before her marriage to Flight Officer Robert E. Pedersen, Chicago, she was 2nd Lt. Sylvia Martinson, Army Nurse Corps, Kempton, North Dakota.

The couple left next day for a week's honeymoon in war torn, hotel-less Manila. Accompanying them on the C-47 were Miss Rygmyr, four Australian Army Officers, who had to be reassured that they were not "intruding," and 4,000 pounds of high priority freight.

WHITHER THOU GOEST I WILL GO . . .

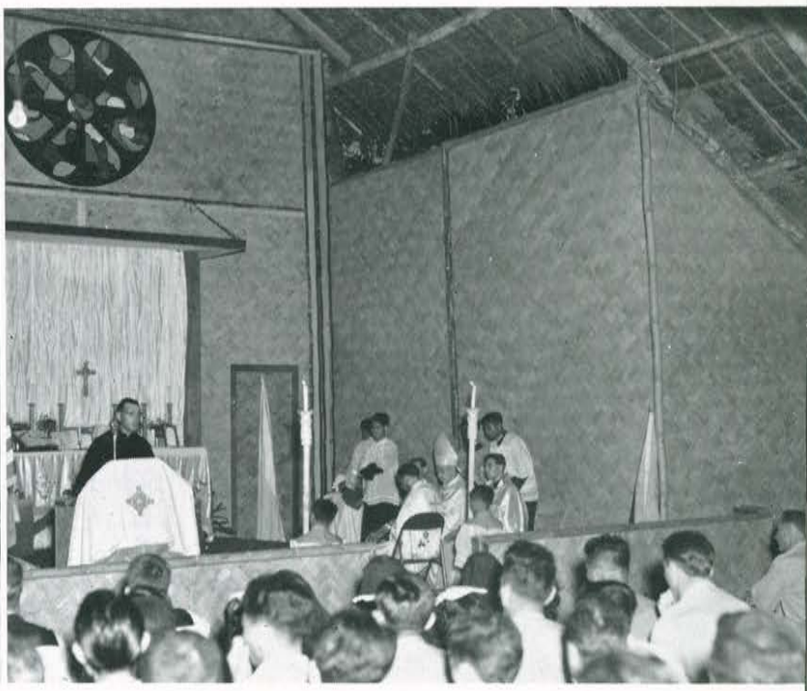
Wherever the 42nd went, the temple of the Lord moved with them. From Guadalcanal to the Philippines, Chaplain Houde made certain that a chapel where men could go to worship sprang up in the wilderness.

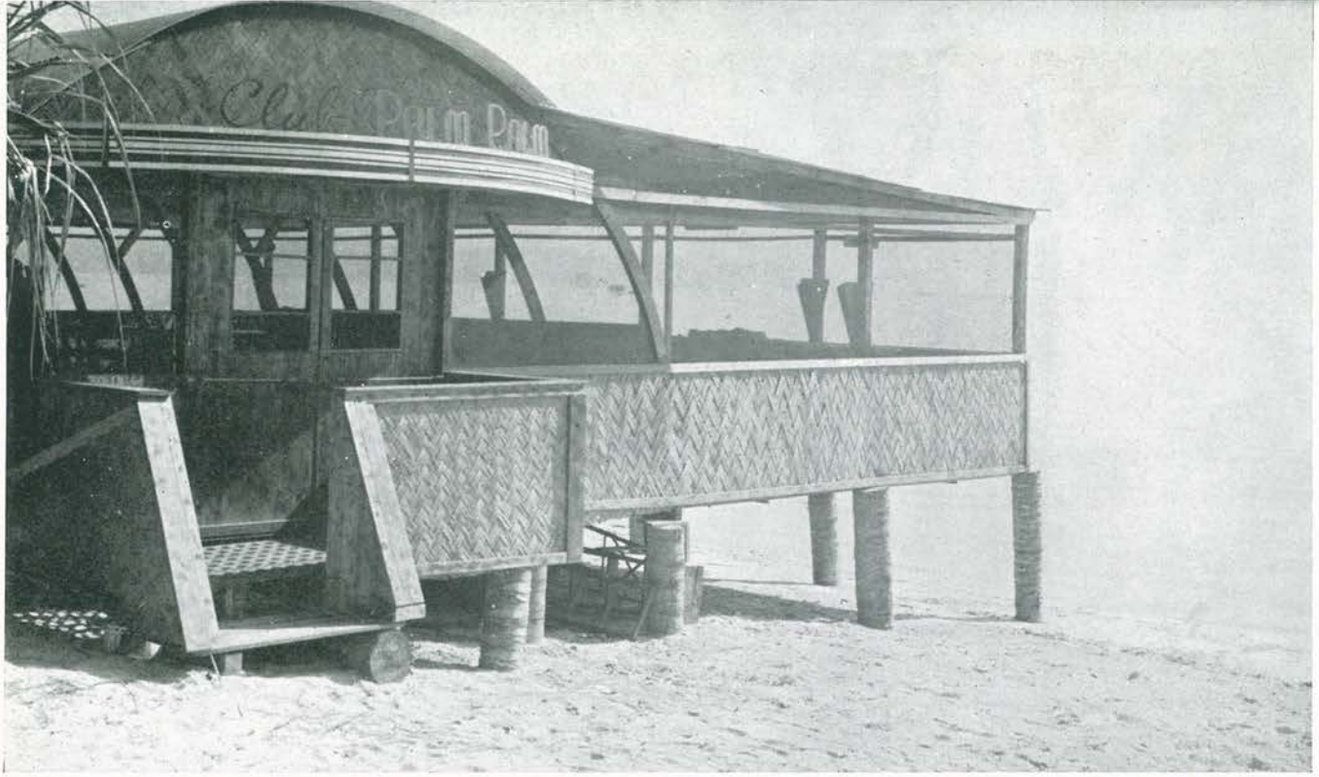
In the Solomons and New Guinea the chapels were rude structures, erected from native timbers and canvas, but sanctified, withal, with the spirit of God.

At Palawan an edifice was built second to none in the islands. Chaplains Houde and Ivey and their band of the faithful labored long and arduously, and when they had finished, the beauty of the new All Faiths Church was the wonder of all who saw it. On the day of its dedication clergymen from all over the island came to assist in the ceremonies.

The high spot of its social calendar was the wedding of Flight Officer R. E. Pederson and his fiancee, Miss Sylvia Martinson, an army nurse. They had become engaged in the States, had been separated by the whims of the service, and had met again by chance in Manila. Chaplain Ivey officiated at the wedding; Colonel Helmick gave the bride away.

Ultimately the 42nd Group moved on, but the church they left behind them will for many years furnish a House of God to the good people in the vicinity of Puerto Princessa.





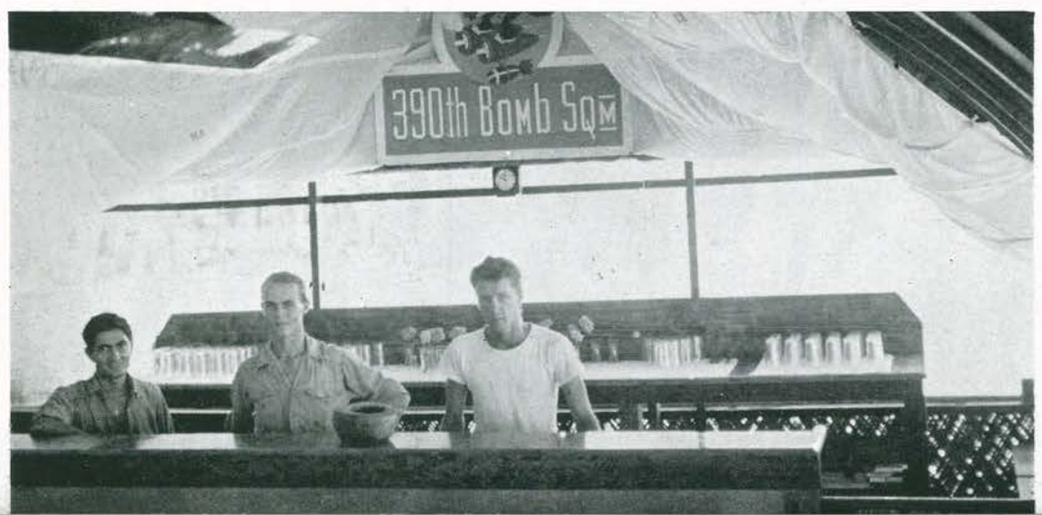
The 390th Enlisted Men's Club Palm Palm was the most attractive on the Island.

WHEN HUMIDITY GETS HIGH IN THE TROPICS . . .

From time to time, to stave off the deleterious effects of boredom and danger, someone would reach in under his bed and bring to light an old can of 3.2 beer or a long hidden bottle of coke, and proceed to have himself a time. Someone would notice him, and remember that coke he'd been saving for a rainy night. Here and there hands would be thrust out of tents to assure the owners that it was raining, or at least the humidity was quite high. Soon there would be a gathering of kindred souls, a little drinking, much hilarity, and the customary swapping of twice told lies. From a hitherto quiet corner, a scream of anguish would indicate that a declarer had discovered all the trumps were in one hand; from another came supplications to Richard from Boston, and Joseph from Kokimo. Eventually everyone got hungry, and next morning everyone named Smith would have a hangover.

It is most unfortunate that all too many of these gatherings were never photographed for posterity. We present a few that were.

The bar in the Palm Palm Club would have graced any similar spot Stateside.



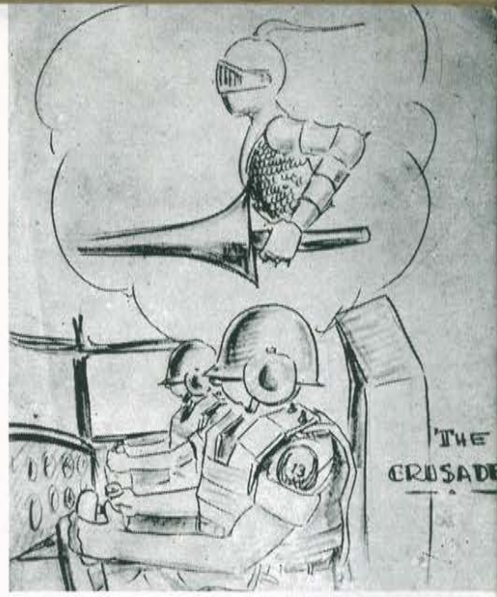

Officers

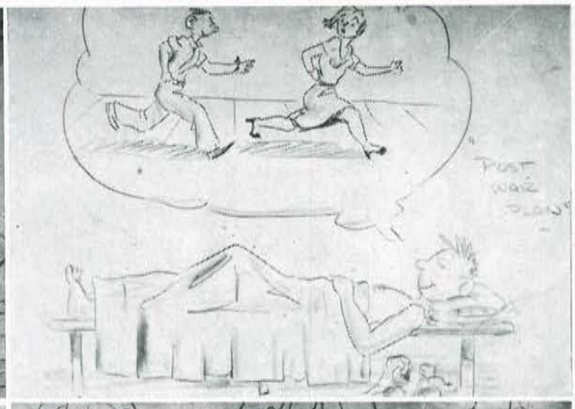
Colonel Champion, second from the left, takes over on the sax to prove he can still tear off a few hot licks.

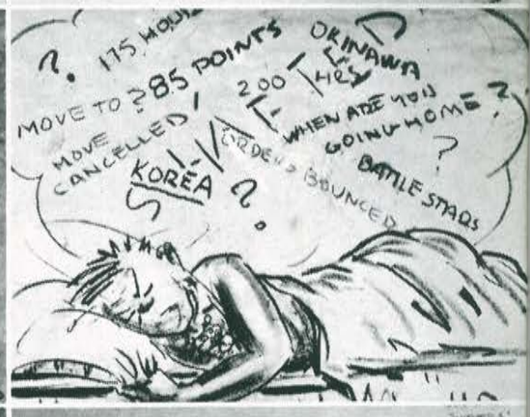
The Crusader Band playing for a dance at the Seventh Fleet Officers' Club, Puerto Princessa. The members are listed below. Front Row, Left to right: Guitar, Cpl. Jack Howard; 2nd Sax, S/Sgt. Frank C. Phelps; 1st Sax, S/Sgt. Irwin L. Sperry, Jr.; 3rd Sax, Lt. J. H. Britton; 4th Sax, Lt. Buet A. Swartz; Piano, Cpl. Ted Farrand. Back Row, Left to right; Bass, Pfc. Darrel Last; Drums, Cpl. Don Lotta; 2nd Trumpet, Sgt. James A. Brown; 1st Trumpet, S/Sgt. Henry M. Carr, Jr.; 3rd Trumpet, Lt. Anthony V. Lorenzo, Jr.

On Sansapor amusement was a personal matter; bridge, a crap game, singing about the piano, occasional beer, a few, a very few nurses, and the inevitable movie took the pressure off the long evenings.

POST-WAR PLANS — By Dave Campbell







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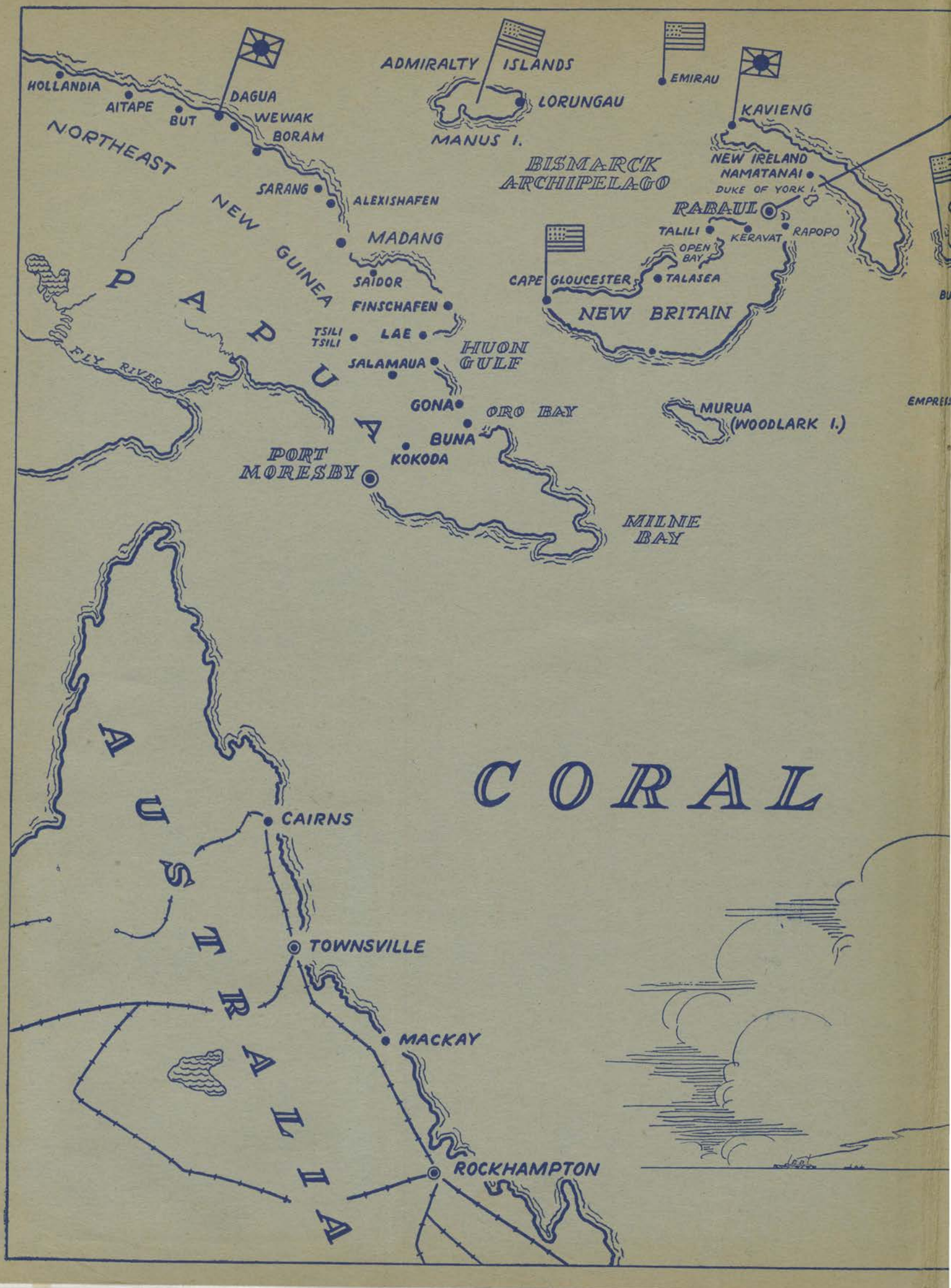
Army & Navy Pictorial Publishers
Army and Navy Publishing Company Building
234 Main Street Baton Rouge, Louisiana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LAE
SALAMAUA
FLY RIVER
PAPUA
GONA
ORO BAY
BUNA
KOKODA
PORT MORESBY
MILNE BAY
ADMIRALTY ISLANDS
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HUON GULF
EMIRAU
KAVIENG
NEW IRELAND
NAMATANAI
DUKE OF YORK I.
RABAUL
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RAPOPO
OPEN BAY
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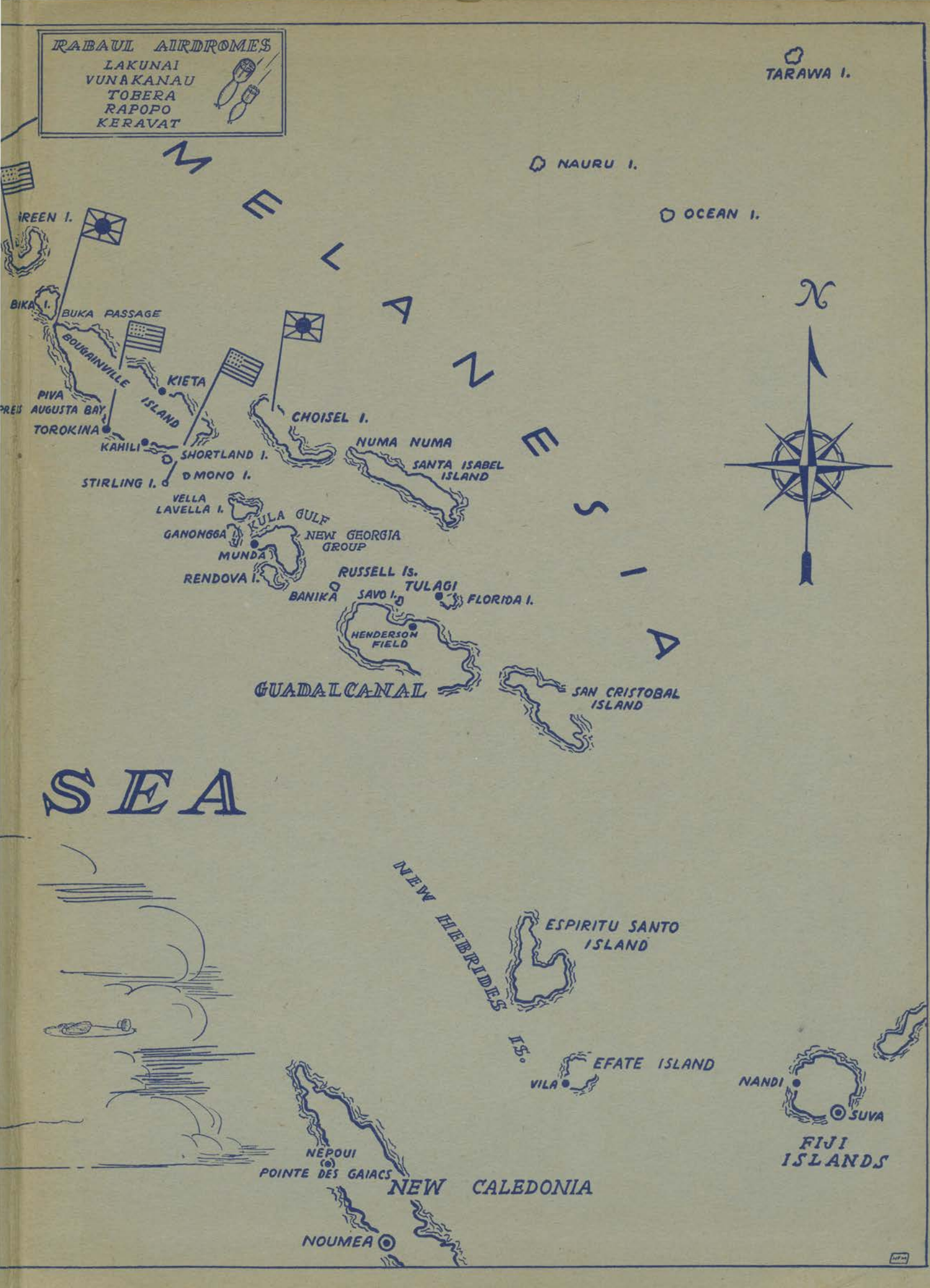
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TOROKINA
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MONO I.
CHOISEL I.
NUMA NUMA
SANTA ISABEL ISLAND
VELLA LAVELLA I.
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GANONGGA
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SAVO I.
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