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164th Infantry News: December 2000

164th Infantry Association

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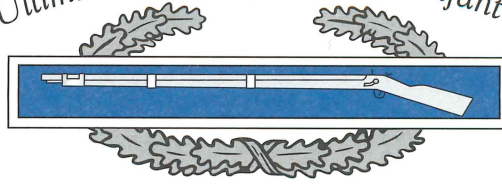
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The Ultimate Weapon the Combat Infantryman



THE 164TH INFANTRY NEWS

Vol. 40 • No.4

December, 2000

White Christmas

Thanksgiving, 1941 in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, had passed into history and men of 164th Infantry Regiment was looking forward to spending a White Christmas back home with their families. Furlough applications had been approved, train and bus schedules had been checked. Few, if any, airline reservations had been made as the cost was too high, plus airlines serviced North Dakota. Suddenly a news flash came over the radio telling the world that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. This act and date changed the lives of thousands of people forever.

Many men in the Regiment would never be home for Christmas as they paid the final price for victory over the enemy. As future holidays approached, many were sleeping on foreign soil, while others were wounded and were in army hospitals along with individuals suffering from malaria or other tropical diseases.

The 1941 Christmas was the last White Christmas the Regiment was to see. Most of the Regiment was on the troop trains or in a truck convoy headed for guard duty in snow country in Oregon, Montana, California and Washington. The purpose of the guard duty assignment was to prevent sabotage by enemy forces.

The holidays for the Regiment, 1942 to 1945 were on Pacific Islands sans snow, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and the Philippine Islands. By 1945, most of the original 164th that sailed from San Francisco on the USS President Coolidge were back home enjoying a White Christmas with their families.

Merry Christmas and thank God for a type of Peace



We would like to wish a Merry Christmas to all of our Family and Friends of the 164th Infantry, and look forward to spending another Great Year Together!



164TH CHRISTMAS

1941 , 42 , 43 , 44 , 45

Where did you spend Christmas WWII?

Les Wichman: B Company

1941 - Camp Pendelton, Co. B Company was on Guard Duty to protect the base and railroads from anticipated sabotage.

1942 - Guadalcanal, turkey dinner served just behind the Front Line on Matanikau Ridge. We came down off the line to eat a turkey dinner served hot in our aluminum mess kit. Every one had to dip their mess kit in the usual 3 G.I. garbage cans of hot soapy water.

1943 - Christmas Day. Saw my first volcano. The thing was smoking and rumbling. I thought, "I hope we get off this island before it (Mount Bagano) blows up and sinks the island." I haven't seen a volcano since and I am not in a hurry to look for one.

1944 - Christmas on Bougainville.

1945 - Christmas, celebrated it with my parents in Lynchberg, ND, population of 5 people. I was a civilian as I had come back to the United States from the Philippine Islands. My mother prepared a wonderful roast goose for our Christmas dinner and I was happy to be home.

(Editor's note: "Les" Wichman and his wife of 50 years, Louise live in Brooklyn Center, MN.)

Arvid Thompson: F Company, joined the 164th in April, 1941 in Camp Claiborne, LA.

1941 - On a troop train traveling from the Cow Palace, San Francisco, CA to Umatilla, Oregon. Every time the troop train stopped at a station, I was put on carried duty to slow the troops down and/or stop them from seeking out stores that engaged in marketing liquid spirits for consumption. Also pulled guard duty on the train. Guards were posted between railroad cars. Christmas dinner prepared by Mess Sgt. in the kitchen car. We walked through the kitchen car, the food was dropped into our mess kits, then back to our seats, finished chow and then hiked back to kitchen car to wash mess kits in the usual G.I. cans.

1942 - Guadalcanal, came off front line in groups and were served turkey sandwiches. Took extra turkey sandwiches back to out dugouts to eat the extra chow. I remember sitting facing the double apron barbed wire hoping the Japanese wouldn't attack. "Pistol Pete" dropped a few shells in the area to keep us on our toes. Very scary.

1943 - Christmas, landed on Bougainville. As I remember F Company was given a turkey dinner before getting on the troops ship. I think we had another turkey dinner after landing on the island with the big volcano. I remember hearing "Tokjo Rose" on the Mesquito Network saying, "you boys of the 164th have had your last turkey dinner."

1944 - Christmas on Tac Lovan, Leyete, Philippine Islands. Climbed over the side of the troop ship into a Higgins boat for

the ride to the beach. Turkey dinner was combined with some type of mutton. Not to tasty.

1945 - July 26, back in US on points, married my sweetheart Virginia in the Fort Snelling Chapel. Father Tracy performed the marriage ceremony. Christmas at home in St. Paul, MN.

"Wes" Rockne: E Company, transferred to the Band on the USS President Coolidge on the luxury cruise to Australia.

1941 - Christmas with E Company on troop train to Miles City, Montana. Member of Sgt. Langer Platoon. The platoon was assigned to guard railroad bridges against anticipated saboteurs. Stationed at Wiboux, Montana. Friends and relatives traveled from Williston, ND to visit us.

1942 - Christmas, Guadalcanal, assigned as a medic. Turkey dinner served with dehydrated potatoes.

1943 - Christmas, Fiji Islands, the 164th Band transferred to the 294th Island Band.

1944 - Returned to States on point system September, 1944. Christmas at home, Williston, ND.

1945 - Married July 25, 1945. Out of the Army, Christmas at home, Williston, ND.

Earl "Red" Cherrey: E Company

1941 - Christmas, on a troop train leaving the prestigious hotel called the Cow Palace in San Francisco, CA, headed for the huge ammunition storage depot in Umatilla, Oregon.

1942 - Christmas, Army hospital, Fiji Islands. I had been wounded in the fighting in the Point Cruz area, Guadalcanal, retaking and securing front line area left unsecured by 1st BN, 182nd Infantry. I was given a cruise on a Navy hospital ship to Espirito Santos, New Heberides then on to the Army hospital, Fiji Islands. The Army hospital unit staffing the medical unit was from the Johns Hopkins facility, Baltimore, Maryland. Cherrey said the doctor treating him was Dr. Gandson, a descendent of the original MD John Hopkins. I returned to E Company 164th March 1943 just as the Navy transportation providing a free trip for the 164th was about ready to set sail for the Fiji Islands.



1943 - Christmas, Landed on Bougainville. The smoking belching volcano caught our attention. Nothing like that in or around Williston, ND. Experienced many ground tremors.

1944 - Christmas on Bougainville with E Company.

1945 - Christmas, Williston, ND with my family. No volcano or earth tremors. Welcomed cold weather and snow.

Pete Grant: G Company

1941 - Christmas, left the Cow Palace, San Francisco, CA on a troop train headed for Umatila, Oregon. Had turkey dinners on the train.

1942 - Christmas Day, G Company was in Regimental and Division Reserve. Turkey dinner served in the Coconut Grove where we were camped. Many of us attended Christmas services. A picture of the services appeared in *Life* magazine.

1943 - Christmas Day, arrived in Emperor Augustus Bay, Bougainville. Went into front line positions to relieve the Marines. Marines left notes in fox holes and dug in positions saying welcome, we made island safe for you or words to that effect.

1944 - Christmas, I think the Regiment was in reserve. Can't remember much about the food served.

1945 - Christmas, returned to US and was discharged August 26, 1945. War was over. Spent Christmas 1945 as a civilian at home in Heaton, ND. I along with 8 other GIs were last of the original G Company to return home.

Ray Olson: H Company

1941 - Christmas, George Hopkins and I were drivers for Lt. Pierce, H Company. We left the Cow Palace, San Francisco, CA as part of the 164th Infantry truck convoy that was headed to Umatila, Oregon. Lt. Pierce was the finance officer for the truck convoy. He had to pay the expenses for the convoy for purchases involving civilian business operators. Hopkins and I were invited to a private home in Bend, Oregon. Great dinner. Lt. Pierce accepted an invitation to a different home. The truck convoy trip was very cold, no heaters in the "recon" command car or in the Army trucks.

1943 - Christmas, Letterman General Hospital, San Francisco. Sent back to US, had medical problem with my feet and legs.

1944 - Christmas, Baxter General Hospital, Spokane, Washington. Married by girlfriend Betty from Minneapolis.

1945 - Christmas, discharged and now civilian living in Minneapolis, MN.

Joe Grotte: A Company, Merrills's Marauders

John G. Holt: C Company, Merrills's Marauders

1941 - Christmas, on a troop train leaving the Cow Palace, San Francisco, CA to the Dells, Oregon. Grotte stated that all the GIs in A Company were broke as they had spent their huge pay checks in and around the watering spots in San Francisco. At the temporary stop at the Dells, Oregon waiting for assignment to guard Bonneville Dam and three railroad

bridges it was Christmas Eve and no money. Captain Rockney, A Company Commander went to a Dells bank and arranged for enough silver dollars so that each man would receive

\$3 silver dollars for Christmas Eve.

No doubt the A Company boys donated a greater part of the silver dollars to charity???

Joe explained that the \$3 had to be paid back next payday. The banker

advancing the silver dollars must have been afraid of an

immediate attack by Japanese forces or demanded full faith

and credit of the US Government to

secure the loan. Many of the good citizens of the Dells invited the GIs to their

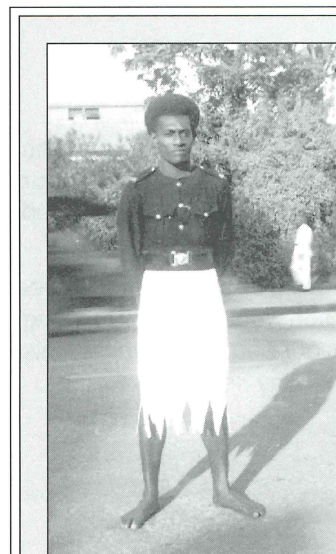
homes for Christmas Dinner.

1942 - Christmas Dinner on Guadalcanal. Hot turkey sandwiches, came down off dysentery ridge (Matanikau Ridge) to eat.

1943 - Christmas, Joe Grotte and John A. Holt accepted an alluring invitation to join an outfit that promised a hazardous mission, when complete a quick return to the US and out of the Army. So Grotte and Holt along with 27 other invitees became part of Merrill's Marauders celebrating Christmas in Central Province, India. This was on the border between Burma and India. Training with the Marauders for a long walk into Burma and severe fighting to attack the Japanese held airport at Myitkyina. The meat course for Christmas dinner was some type of mutton shipped in by narrow guage railroad from Bombay, India.

1944 - Christmas, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

1945 - Christmas, back in Watford City, ND with family. John A. Holt back home with family.



FIJI ISLAND POLICEMAN

Fiji Island Policeman, Suva, Fiji, 1943. With the fancy scalloped skirt many 164thers thought they were Fiji women and were yelling endearments??? and requests for dates as the Navy transport was moving into the docking area in the harbor in Suva, Fiji. The troops were informed by Navy personnel that the person in the scalloped skirt was a Fijian police officer. Case closed.

LETTERS



To The Editor :

October 30, 2000

Dear Ben,

Sorry to be so late with my contribution to the continuance of the 164th Newsletter. The past several months have been a little difficult, due to deterioration of my vision, macular degeneration, extremely frustrating but Wanda reads the Newsletter to me.

Enclosed is my contribution of \$100 for continuation of your extremely interesting paper, you and your staff are doing a great job. Many thanks!

Sincerely,

Ted N. Steckler
221 Prospect Park South
Tustin, CA 92780-3252
(714) 832-6334

(Editor's note: Steckler is a Life Member for more than five years.)

October 14, 2000

Dear Mr. Kemp,

I wish to inform you that Ervin W. Swapp passed away, April 30, 2000. Enclosed is a check of \$10. Please continue to send the 164th Infantry News. I am also enclosing his obituary.

Sincerely,

Mavis A. Swapp
P.O. Box 612
Detroit Lakes, MN 58502

November 10, 2000

Dear Jim,

We appreciated your call in regards to extra copies of the 164th Newsletter for our sons. We thank you for your thoughtfulness. Sounds like this reunion was well attended and a good time was had by all.

If it wasn't for your expertise in the work and dedication to get this publication done, this organization would have folded long ago. We appreciate your efforts on our behalf for keeping this going. Have a good and healthy holiday season.

Best wishes

Willie Sewall
3942 Alabama Ave S
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416-2819

October 6, 2000

Dear Wally,

I got your address from the Americal Newsletter. I hope you can help me out. I joined C Company of the 164th Infantry, Americal Division in early 1945 as an Infantry replacement, on Cebu. The only action I was in was on Negros Island and I have the Combat Badge.

What I would like is to receive any issues of any publication the 164th sends out to members. I would gladly remit any cost, dues that are required for this. I would appreciate any attention or referral necessary to do this.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely

Chester R. Sawyer
54 Powow Street
Amesbury, MA 01913-1627

October 18, 2000

Dear Ben,

I really appreciate your prompt reply. The copy of the 164th Infantry News is great. I recognized names right away. Sgt. Bruce Moore who mentioned Sgt. Stanley Oshaben (Squeak) was in C Company 4th Platoon as I was. My Sgt. in the 60 MM Mortars was from Nebraska at that time. I also found Dick Rucker of Florida in the Americal Locater, also 4th Platoon.

I'm enclosing a check for \$125. \$50 for life membership, \$50 contribution to the newsletter, \$20 for 164th Regimental Flag and \$5 for the 164th Infantry Lapel Pin, if available.

I'm still interested in getting all of the back copies available. If need be I will send a check to start things rolling. Please advise. I think I've missed a lot by not belonging till now. Thanks again for writing so soon.

Very truly yours,

Chester R. Sawyer
54 Powow Street
Amesbury, MA 01913-1627

November 8, 2000

I really enjoy the Infantry News. My father was with the anti-tank company on Guadalcanal. I was in the Navy during WWII.

James McLaughlin
79 28th Ave. NE
Fargo, ND 58102

(Editor's note: Thanks for generous support of the 164th News. Every \$100 keeps things rolling.)

October 17, 2000

Dear Ben,

John didn't have the 164th newsletters that you are looking for. In the reunion book for 1981, Past Presidents start with 1954, that person was Elmo Olson of Finley. I'm sending the Association the books that John kept. His copy of the October 13, 1962 reunion was signed by Peter Edward. This was a memorable time for John. I do appreciate the Association for all of the good times and the brotherhood shown to each and every member.

The first program and reunion of the 164th Infantry was in Jamestown, ND on June 7, 1957. The program is included here. Wish I could have realized how important this was to be.

Thank you for letting the widows of these great men attend and become Associate Members of this wonderful organization. I'm very grateful.

Thank you,

Edith Tuff

315 30th Ave N, #9

Fargo, ND 58102-1538

P.S. I wonder how many others have all of these memories in their homes? Could we ask?

(Editor's note: Yes Edith, we dare to ask any individual that has a complete set of 164th Newsletters or almost a complete set, let Ben Kemp know. Please don't throw anything away as documents, news stories, diaries, letters are valuable history.)

Dear Jim,

Thanks so much for "accepting" my story. I echo Will's thanks for sending copies for Chuck and Bill. Best wishes for the holiday season. Keep in touch.

Sincerely

Myrtle Sewall

3942 Alabama Ave S

Saint Louis Park, MN 55416-2819

November 2, 2000

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is my check for \$20. \$10 for dues for 2001 and \$10 extra for the news. I plan to make the reunion next year.

Sincerely

Clifford Ottinger

Box 234

Corvallis, MT

Dear Ben,

Great issue of the 164th News with Doug Burtell's terrific painting on the cover. Every issue is great but this one was extra special because it put me in touch with my great army buddy Janus Acampora. The friendships you make in the service are to be revered and if it weren't for the 164th News it wouldn't have happened. Many thanks to all the people that have kept this great Army paper going all these years.

Sincerely,

Milton Olan

995 NE 170th Street

North Miami Beach, FL 33162

November 8, 2000

Dear Mr. Kemp:

Thank you for your note and booklets you sent on the 164th Infantry Association.

Enclosed you will find my personal check for \$5.00 to cover the costs of the booklets and also \$10.00 to cover the membership fee and subscription price of the 164th Infantry News.

I am originally from the Bowman area where "Doug" Burtell lives and had the honor of visiting him in his home at our all school reunion this year. He filled me in on a lot of information regarding my husband's service record in the 164th Infantry. In one of the brochures you sent me I called two Washington men who had served in the 164th. A James Klink sent me the October issue of the 164th news and a Mr. Ronald A. Davis stated he would send me information. Both men were great in offering information and securing data for me on the 164th.

I would like to find someone out there that was in "M" Company. My late husband had the names of Buerk and Torgee on the back of a couple of pictures and would like to know if anyone knows about them. I think the pictures were taken at Camp Clayborne. Also, would like to know the "M" Company's role in Fiji.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

Lucille M. Smith

28127 46th Avenue South

Auburn, WA 98001-1145

JUDGE NOT BY THE EYE BUT BY THE HEART.

—Navajo Proverb

October 22, 2000

Hi Ben,

Decided I could not carry all of those newsletters, so I am mailing them. They weigh too much. Will do a note to Mr. Sawyer, as well. Called my son, Bill, he said it was okay, they mean a lot to the men of the 164th. So glad they do understand. My family has always known how important you all were to their dad. Thanks, Ben, for being a friend.

In Christ,

Eddie Tuff

315 30th Ave N, #9

Fargo, ND 58102-1538

(Editor's note: Thanks very much. It is this type of loyalty that keeps the spirit of the 164th alive. Your deceased husband would be proud of you. Thanks and may God always be with you.)

Edith Tuff had copies of all issues of the 164th Newsletter. She was contacted and volunteered to give, donate back issues to fulfill the request made by new member Chester R. Sawyer.



EARTH'S POPULATION

If we would shrink the Earth's population into a village of 100 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same, what would it look like?

- There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Americas, and 8 Africans.
- 51 would be female; 49 would be male.
- 70 would be non-white; 30 would be white.
- 70 would be non-Christian; 30 Christian.
- 50% of the entire world's wealth would be in the hands of six people who would all be US citizens.
- 80 would live in substandard housing.
- 70 would not be able to read
- 50% would suffer from malnutrition.
- One would have a college education.
- One would have a computer.

Read by Harry Vadnie at Bismarck Breakfast Club. Vadnie, Sgt. ND State Detachment, Service Co., went on to OCS, Fort Benning, GA, 2nd Lt. WWII. (Credit Ben Kemp)

"I believe architecture should let sunlight and wind speak."

-Tadao Ando, Japanese Architect

ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS Summary of EVENTS FEATURES

May 31, 1942.
Page Five



American Romeos Rile Aussies Writes St. Paulite

By Alton Smalley

A "YANK IN AUSTRALIA" might be the title of a letter from Pvt. Jerry Conway of St. Paul to Russ Wiggins, Pioneer Press-Dispatch managing editor, shortly before Wiggins changed his "M. E." title for that of captain in the Air Corps.

"Thought you and Al Smalley might like to hear from a few of the boys," Jerry wrote from Australia. "Can't mention our organization or where we are, except Australia."

"Yesterday, Sgt. Les Grue and Pvts. George Wizer, John Wennerlund, Vernon C. Wight Jr., Arvid T. Thompson, Todd Reiland, Franklin G. Erickson and self from St. Paul went downtown.

"An attractive girl was conductor and bus fare was only one pence (1d). We sent cablegrams back to the United States, each one costing about \$2 for five words. Todd and I then visited the cocktail lounges and saloon bars of three famous hotels.

"There'll be no more Scotch and soda in about four months. The advertised brands cost 1/0 (1 shilling) or about 16 cents a drink, or 18/9 (about \$3) a fifth. Most of the natives drink lager, which is about 20 per cent alcohol and is sold in large bottles or silver pitchers at the bars. Liquor sales cease at 6 p. m., except that you may order drinks while dining up to 8 p. m.

"There's a blackout here every night. An American soldier thought he was fol-

lowing a girl up a street in a blackout but, when he reached his 'objective', discovered he had approached a Scottish Highlander. We all got a big laugh out of it.

"The women are not as attractive as back in the States. They sure go for the Am. soldiers. Americans stealing the Aussie girls seems to be the only sore point with the Australian soldier toward us.

"Tom and I had our cigarettes stolen off tables. Tobacco is being further restricted here. Australian cigarettes taste like straw.

"If you're a good fellow, you're known here as being dinky di'. When everything is O.K. you say it's 'fare dinkum'."

Ed Note: All the men in the article were from the 164th Infantry. The 164th had arrived in Melbourne, Australia in April 1942 on board the USS President Coolidge. The troops were marched down into the heart of Melbourne and returned to USS President Coolidge to await transfer to three Dutch ships for transportation to New Caledonia, a free French Island.

EIGHTBALL SOLDIER

By John Stannard (Brig. Gen. Ret.)

This is the story of Joe Miller -- an eightball soldier who turned out to be the finest fighting man in his regiment. It is a true story about Joe Miller and it is a short story, because Joe didn't live long once he got into combat. It is a story that has been told and retold for eighteen years by the men who fought with Joe on Guadalcanal.

Eighteen years is a long time for a dead man to be remembered -- even by his own family -- but the old men of our company still remember Joe. He was the biggest eightball in the outfit until the fighting started and then he turned out to be the best man of us all.

Miller joined the company at Fort Ord in March of 1942. Our regiment, the 164th Infantry, was processing for overseas shipment and Joe was transferred to us from another outfit as one of a group of fillers. Shanghaied out of their old units, these men were unwanted by them and, to put it kindly, viewed with deep suspicion by us. They were an unhappy lot and Miller was the sourest of them all.

Joe hailed from one of our Midwestern cities -- Saint Paul I think. He was a medium-sized man, about 36 years old, dark-complexioned, and handsome in a dour sort of way. A bit overweight, he looked soft, except for his face which was hard as rock. Joe was a loner. Sullen and silent, he kept to himself. He was a guy who had been around and one who wouldn't give you even the time of day if he could avoid it.

On March 19th, we shipped out of San Francisco on the President Coolidge, bound for Australia. It wasn't long before Joe had established a reputation with the NCOs as a shirker, a griper, and a general troublemaker. He had a bad habit of disappearing whenever it was his turn to pull shipboard details. As a result, someone else usually had to go on duty in his place. By the time we docked at Melbourne some 20 days later, Miller had established himself as the master goldbricker of the outfit and was one of the most unpopular men in the company.

We spent six grand days in Melbourne enjoying the warm, wartime hospitality of the Aussies. Then, one night, the regiment was loaded on three dirty little Dutch island steamers and the next morning we sailed for New Caledonia. There were a few men who, by accident or by design, stayed ashore and missed the boatripe. Most of them were our recent fillers and, of course, one of them was Joe Miller.

We landed at Noumea on April 20th and moved north into the Tontouta Airport area. The Japanese were in the Solomons, poised to drive south and cut the lifeline between America and Australia. We spent our time preparing defensive positions, practicing alerts, and doing general field training.

Joe and the other AWOLs soon rejoined us, by courtesy of the Military Police. After a period of paying for their sins with some hard labor, they were put back into the company, training with the rest of us. It was hard work, training and living in the field in that rugged, mountainous country and Miller didn't care for the life at all.

Joe worked every angle he could think of to get out of work and training. He was too smart to get caught in any really serious trouble, but he got away with everything he could and he let everyone know what he thought of the US Army, starting with the company and working right on up the line. His opinion was far from flattering.

Miller progressed from griping and goldbricking to becoming an accomplished sickbook rider. He used the old sickcall standby -- a bad back -- and finally was moved from a rifle squad to a job as a permanent KP. This was a change which brought great joy to the heart of his squad leader, but one which the medics had considerable difficulty in selling to the Mess Sergeant.

In August, our training pace quickened. The Battles of the Coral Sea and of Midway were over and the Marines moved north into Tulagi and Guadalcanal. Joe's efforts were also bearing fruit. Using the back dodge, he worked a transfer to a field hospital for duty as a ward boy. As he left the company, he announced triumphantly that he was through with the infantry forever and that his bad back would get him transferred to the States within six months. We saw him leave with a sense of relief and without regret. He wasn't missed by anyone so far as I know.

Early in October, our regiment was ordered to Guadalcanal to reinforce the First Marine Division. On October 7th, we moved to Noumea, New Caledonia, and loaded on Navy assault transports for the trip north. As we made our way down into the company troop compartment, an amazing sight met our eyes -- Joe Miller -- combat equipped and ready for action.

If we thought Miller had come to offer his sympathies or to brag about some new deal he was working on, we were soon proven wrong. It seemed Joe had transferred himself back to the company, without benefit of orders or the approval of his commanding officer. He had decided to go along to Guadalcanal and had even scrounged up a rifle somewhere.

No one was exactly overjoyed to see Joe and I don't think anybody even bothered to ask him why he had come back to the outfit. Personally, I thought he would be more of a nuisance than a help. Technically, he was AWOL. But how do you punish a man who goes AWOL to get into combat? There are ways of processing after-the-fact transfers in such cases and when we slipped out of the harbor early the next morning, Joe was still aboard ship.

At dawn on October 13th, we sighted Guadalcanal -- rising out of the Pacific like an ugly, crooked head -- and within the hour we began landing on the Marineheld beachhead. I had only seen Joe a couple of times during the trip up from New Caledonia, but he had seemed unusually cheerful -- at least for Joe Miller.

The American hold on the beachhead around Henderson Field hung by a thread in those days.

See continuation on next page

The Marines were weary and understrength and Japanese pressure increased daily. We spent our first day unloading our gear across the beaches and undergoing our baptism of fire from Jap bombers and artillery and -- that night -- Jap battleships from the "Tokyo Express".

We buried our first dead and moved inland. On October 15th, we relieved the 1st Marine Regiment on the line along the Lunga and Tenaru Rivers, east of Henderson Field. Our company was the right flank of the regiment, joining the 7th Marines.

This was a quiet sector at that time. Well dug-in positions faced interspersed patches of Jungle and grassy fields and, beyond them, the twisting Tenaru. We spent our time patrolling, working on our holes and barbed wire, and cleaning our weapons. The beachhead was attacked by bombers during the day and by the Nip Navy at night and Marine Grumman's and Jap Zeroes furnished daily dogfights for our entertainment. We made our acquaintance with "Pistol Pete", the Japs long-range, cave-hidden gun and with "Washing Machine Willy", their nightly bombing nuisance, but we had no contact with enemy ground troops.

I saw Joe a few times during this period and we were together on several long patrols which didn't run into any action. He seemed cheerful enough and did his share of the dirty jobs, such as lead scout, without griping. He still kept pretty much to himself though. One thing I did notice -- his back didn't seem to be bothering him anymore.

On October 24th, our quiet sector along the Tenaru suddenly exploded, as the Japanese Army launched an all-out attack to retake Henderson Field and wipe out the American beachhead.

Striking shortly after dark, the Japs quickly overran the Marine, platoon sized outpost which overlooked the front of the sector. Then, about 9 o'clock, on that black, moonless, jungle night and, in the midst of a violent tropical rainstorm, their main attack hit our lines.

The attack was made in depth and on a narrow front, by the Japanese 29th Imperial Regiment. It hit at the point we later dubbed "Coffin Corner", where our company joined the 7th Marines. The Marines were understrength and stretched thin across their part of the line and Japanese soon began to penetrate their positions. Unless the Marines were reinforced, and quickly, a major breakthrough seemed certain and the entire beachhead might be lost.

Our Third Platoon -- the one Miller belonged to -- was the closest help available. They were rushed into the Marine sector about 11 PM, to be followed by G Company and by our Third Battalion, as fast as they could be moved up.

As the Third Platoon moved in to plug a portion of the line, the men were dropped off in pairs to reoccupy and hold the old Marine positions. The situation was confused beyond description, with Japanese and Americans hopelessly intermixed. Jap soldiers constantly attacked our positions from all sides, while we struggled to hold what we had and to retake lost ground and close the gaps in our line. Rain squalls continued and artillery and mortar fire fell all around. Japanese were everywhere and there was no way of knowing whether the man in the next hole was friend or foe.

Joe and one other man took over an empty Marine hole, covering a trail running through a small clearing. All through the remainder of that black night, Joe and his buddy held their position while groups of Japanese made one banzai charge after another against it. Joe did most of the shooting and grenading, while his partner reloaded the rifles and passed the hand grenades. The attacking Japs sometimes reached the position and, in some cases, even got into the hole, but they died there. Not one got through. As dawn broke, Joe spotted a Nip machinegun dug in about 15 yards to his front and lobbed a grenade into its hole. A Jap fielded the grenade and promptly tossed it back to Joe, who took it on the fly and returned it just in time to blow the gun and crew into kingdom come.

Later in the morning, troops from the Third Battalion took over Joe's position. There were 32 dead Japanese lying within 50 feet of the hole and there is no way of knowing how many others Miller had killed. There was never any doubt about Joe after that night. He had proven himself to all of us and his rapid fire ability with an M1 had earned him the nickname of "Machinegun Joe".

After the Third Battalion sealed the gap, they relieved the Marines in the threatened sector. Heavy Japanese attacks continued for the next couple of nights, but they never again came close to success. The critical phase of the battle was over. We spent the next few days mopping up the remaining Nips, both in front of and behind our lines. When we had finished, the 16th and 29th Imperial Infantry Regiments, veterans of Malay, the Philippines, and the Indies, were broken and scattered.

Our Second and Third Battalions were sent out of the beachhead to the east on November 4th. We were to intercept and destroy an enemy force which had landed at Koli Point, in the area between the Balesuna and the Nalimbiu Rivers. This landing was apparently a too-late effort to reinforce the already beaten attack on the Tenaru.

We made contact with the enemy late on our first day out of the beachhead perimeter. Scattered fighting took place, as we tried to locate the main enemy force and pin it against the sea, while the Japanese sought ways to escape from the trap and move inland to join their other units.

Neither side knew for certain where its enemy was nor, for that matter, exactly where other friendly troops were located. American and Japanese units were intermingled in the heavy Jungle and many small and brief, but extremely violent clashes took place. It was close quarter fighting, ambush and counterambush, with the enemy likely to be met at any time and place and victory going to the men with the fastest-guns.

On the afternoon of November 6th, Miller and I were two of a 15 man patrol sent out from our company. We were to establish contact with another company of the regiment and to locate and destroy an enemy force which was believed to be operating in the area. Our route took us along a trail through heavy jungle -- a place made to order for an ambush -- and we ran into one, head-on.

First, a Jap light machinegun opened up on us from the front, then rifles and hand grenades from the sides and rear.

Six of our men, including the Patrol Leader were hit in less time than it takes to tell about it. It was hot and heavy for a while, with rifles, machineguns and grenades used by both sides. Joe fought like a madman. He was everywhere, protecting the wounded, throwing grenades, and firing his M1 in clip-long bursts. Finally, Just as suddenly as they had attacked, the Japanese withdrew, leaving their dead.

We came out of the fight with five wounded and one dead. With the Patrol Leader down, Miller took charge in his quiet way. Giving first aid, helping carry the wounded, making sure the patrol was alert and ready to fight again, he led us back to the company. It was only after we got there that we found out Joe had been hit. A bullet had gone through his helmet and had creased the top of his head. Except for a slight headache he felt fine and wasn't even griping about it.

The next day Joe was promoted to sergeant and assigned as the leader of a rifle squad. He was jumped over many men who were senior to him for promotion, good, proven men too. They never resented it though. A real fighting man is recognized and respected in a hurry in combat and everyone wants the best possible men in command.

Three days after he made sergeant, Joe and his squad were sent to make contact with F Company, somewhere to our left. They moved off slowly, following a native trail which wound through the Jungle and crossed occasional small clearings.

They had been out about two hours and had not seen anyone, either friend or foe. Joe was leading and was part way across a clearing when, suddenly, a platoon of Nipa appeared on the other side of the opening.

Joe recovered from his surprise first and got his rifle into action, at the same time shouting to his squad to get back into the woods. The Japs reacted fast too and more of them poured out of the jungle, shooting as they came.

Miller backed away slowly, firing as he moved, covering his squad while it reached the jungle's edge. Just as his men reached cover and turned to take up the fight, Joe went down under a hail of bullets. They called to Joe and two of them started out into the clearing to get him. His fatigue jacket was wet with blood, as he turned and shouted to the squad to get back to the company, fast. He got up on one knee, raised his rifle, and took the advancing Japs under fire again. As the squad left, mortar rounds began landing in the clearing.

It's tough to leave a buddy behind in battle, especially if he is still alive. But sometimes it is either one or several and the choice has to be made. Joe was right. This was one of those times.

The squad could hear the roar of Joe's M1, as they moved back down the trail. Clip after clip he fired. The sound blending with the lighter reports from Jap weapons and with the heavier noise of mortar rounds and, finally, hand grenades. The sound of the uneven battle rose to a steady roar and then died off to a few scattered shots and then, silence. The squad moved swiftly back to the company, knowing that the covering fire of "Machinegun Joe" Miller was gone.

The next day we pushed through the area where Miller had made his fight. We mopped up a few Nip stragglers along

the way, but didn't run into any big units. As we crossed the clearing where Joe had made his stand, it was plain that a good sized Jap outfit, probably a company, had been there yesterday. There were also signs that there had been quite a fight, with several casualties. When we reached the far side of the clearing, we found eight new graves. On one of them was an American helmet and a dog tag -- Joe Miller's.

The jungle war was a tough, fight-to-the-finish war, with no quarter asked nor given. In the hit-and-run fighting beyond the beachhead perimeter, neither side had the time nor energy to worry about the dead enemy. We buried our own dead and the Japanese took care of theirs.

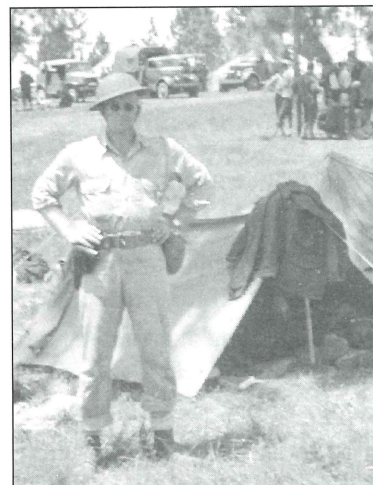
The Japanese might have buried Miller because they planned to stay in the area for a while, though all signs indicated that they were in a hurry to leave. They might have buried him out of respect for a real fighting man. -- I like to think that was their reason.

We moved on to other islands and to other battles, but we never forgot our "Fighting Eightball". For men like Miller and the deeds they do provide the legends and the pride and the spirit that are the heart and soul of a combat outfit.

Decorations came hard in those days, but Joe was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross. Whether or not it was ever posthumously awarded, I don't know, but if ever a man deserved the DSC, he did.

I have served in the infantry in two wars and I have seen some fine fighting men, but of all of them, Joe Miller was the best. Why he changed from an eightball to a hero, I'll never know, but he was the fightingest soldier of them all.

(Editor's note: John Stannard wrote this story about Joe Miller based on his service in E Company, 164th Infantry and the battle at Koli Point, November 1942, Guadalcanal. John Stannard left Guadalcanal, attended West Point and retired as a Brigadier General. Fran Sommers and Bobbie Gerham known as the "Gold Dust Twins" served in the same platoon with Joe Miller and were in the Koli Point battle when Miller was KIA. Joe Miller's Army serial number was 39007921. If anyone has any information about Joe Miller, his hometown or any relatives, please send it to the editor.)



*Sgt. Don Hoff -
Reg. Hqd. Co.
Camp Clairborne,
Louisiana, 1941
Maneuvers. Pup
tent a room for the
night. No Charge.
Photo from Donna
Hoff.*

164th N. D. Infantry In Philippines

The 164th North Dakota infantry, the first army unit to begin offensive action against the Japanese on the long road to Tokyo, is fighting in the Philippines, the third major Pacific engagement for that unit since it left North Dakota in February, 1941.

That became apparent Wednesday when a United Press dispatch from Allied headquarters on Leyte revealed that men of the Americal division are among the 200,000 battle-tested troops estimated to be in the 12 American and three Australian divisions under Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

The dispatch listed the experienced American divisions on which MacArthur probably will place

chief reliance as the Americal, the Sixth, Seventh, 23rd, 24th, 31st, 32nd, 37th, 41st, 43rd, 96th and First cavalry. The Australian divisions are the Sixth, Seventh and Ninth.

These outfits are all veterans of at least one campaign and several have been through more, including the Americal with its three.

North Dakota's 164th infantry won its fame in the bloody fighting on Guadalcanal, where it received the Presidential Unit citation. That citation was given to the marines, who in turn passed it on to the 164th for the vital role the former North Dakota National Guard regiment played in bolstering the marine fighters.

It was there, too, that the first army unit—the 164th North Dakota infantry—took offensive action against the Japanese. The regiment was selected from the Americal division for that campaign. The 164th was joined later on Guadalcanal by the remainder of the Americal division, the only division in the U. S. army not having a number. The division was formed on New Caledonia and the name is a combination of American and Caledonia.

Following Guadalcanal, the 164th rested in the Fiji islands.

Last Christmas day the unit landed on Bougainville, where it fought side-by-side with the 37th division, another of the units an-

nounced as being on the Philippines.

North Dakotans have had some "suspicion" that their fighting regiment again was in action in the Philippines, but the United Press story was the first public confirmation.

However, the 164th today does not have the heavy representation of North Dakotans as in February, 1941, when the national guard regiment left the state for training at Camp Claiborne, La.

Casualties, illness, transfer of personnel to other units and subsequent replacements doubtless have reduced the North Dakota composition of the regiment by 75 per cent.

* * * * *



YANK SUPPLIES UNLOADED ON LEYTE BEACH—Landing craft of various sizes and types are nosed into the beach at Leyte island, Philippines, unloading men and materiel to oust the Japs from the American possession. (AP wirephoto). Fargo Forum, circa 1994 or 1945

* * *

KOREAN VETS

Q How do I apply for the new medal for Americans who served in the Korean War? I was there from August 1951 to May 1952. *From the New York Times and Cox News Service.*

A You're eligible, but you must initiate the process in order to receive the medal, which is offered by the Korean government to U.S. veterans of the Korean War who served between June 25, 1950, and July 27, 1953.

To apply, veterans must provide a copy of their discharge paper (DD-214 or DD-215), National Guard members must provide their statement of service equivalent (NGB Form 22). Applications will be accepted through 2003.

For more information, or to apply, contact the Air Force Personnel Center, 1-800-558-1404, or check online at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/awards; or write HQ AFPC/DPPPRA, 550 C St. West, Suite 12, Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-4714.

Yanks Cut Mindanao In Two

3 Divisions Join;
Okinawa Troops
Storm Into Naha

By UNITED PRESS

Three American divisions joined in central Mindanao, cutting the island in two and sending the campaign for the last big Japanese stronghold in the Philippines into the mopping up stage.

On Okinawa Marines threw two bridges across the Asato river on the west coast and sent infantry units storming into the ruined capital of Naha in force.

Gen. MacArthur reported today that troops of the Thirty-first division, advancing from the south, joined units of the Fortieth and Americal divisions north of Malaybalay, capital of the central Mindanao province of Bukidnon.

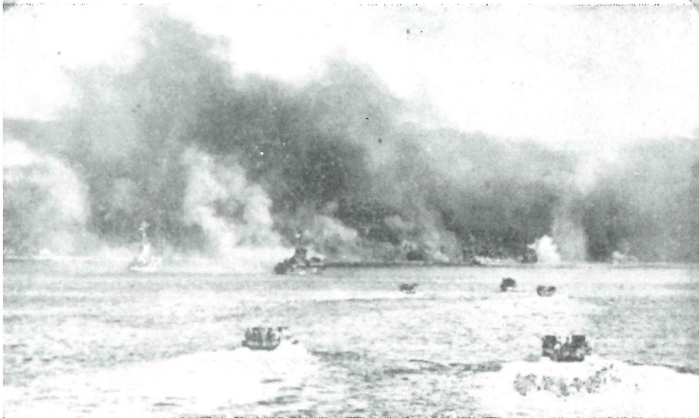
By joining, they split Mindanao from Macajalar bay in the north to Davao on the south and now control the entire central road network of the island extending to Cotabato on the west coast.

At the same time, Twenty-fourth division troops advanced eight miles up the coastal highway to join guerrilla forces near the top of Davao gulf.

West of Davao city, the island capital, the Americans are steadily wiping out enemy defense positions in the foothills. The Japanese are being forced into the hills where the fierce guerrillas, eager for vengeance, wait for them.

The Jap forces remaining on Mindanao, of an original estimated 50,000, are now held in three pockets. One group is north of Davao. A second is in central Mindanao. The third is in the northeast.

NLC'S RACE TO CEBU'S BEACHES



Black columns of smoke mantle the shore line of Cebu island in the Philippines as Navy landing craft race to the east coast of the island to land troops of the Army's Americal division. The way has been paved by a heavy barrage from ships of the Navy's Seventh fleet. The landing caught the Japs off balance and little opposition was met.—U. S. Navy photo.

*Let me tell you something that we Israelis have against Moses.
He took us 40 years through the desert in order to bring us to the
one spot in the Middle East that has no oil!*

—Golda Meir

NEW LAW PROVIDES FUNERAL HONORS FOR VETERANS

To repair a flagrant, long standing discrepancy, a new law mandates funeral honor details for eligible veterans.

As of January 1, 2000, the Department of Defense is required to provide two active service members, one from the deceased's branch at the funerals for flag presentation and the playing of "Taps."

"These services must be requested as they are not provided automatically, said Gail McGinn, from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families and Education.

Veterans' service organizations assisting with honor details can coordinate with the Department of Defense to augment the ceremony, providing firing parties and other elements.

As Legion Resolution No. 68 from the 1999 National convention notes, with membership falling and funerals rising, DoD is urged to surpass minimum funeral participation specified by law.

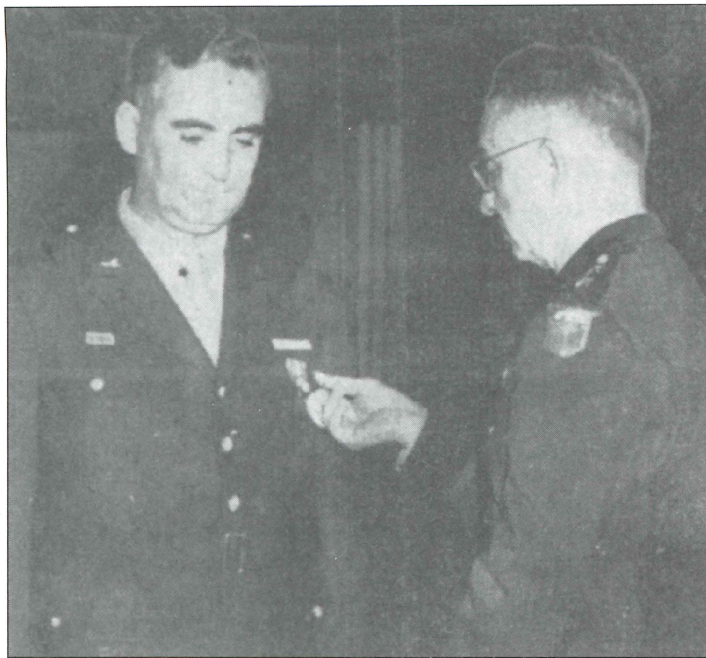
"In developing the policy, we realize the number of requests for military funeral honors was going to increase," McGinn said. "The veterans of World War II are passing away, we're anticipating that there will be about 1500 deaths a day."

Requests for military funeral honors are expected to climb at least 45 percent of those eligible about 250,000 this year alone. Exacerbating the problem is the 33 percent drop since 1989 in the active-duty pool from which to draw honor details, along with a 25 percent drop in the reserves.

"We believe it is important to demonstrate the country's gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country," McGinn said, "we want the department's Military Funeral Honors Program to do that for our veterans and their families."

(Written by Kathy W. Farris and taken from the Americal Legion Magazine issue of March 2000)

*HAVE YOU CALLED THAT BUDDY YET?
TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE!*



FOX HOLE PADRE

A St. Paul chaplain has received the Bronze Star for "meritorious action" on Guadalcanal. He is Capt. Thomas J. Tracy, 1213 Summit Ave., left, shown above receiving the medal from Major Gen. William R. Schmidt, commanding general of the Seventy-Sixth Infantry Division, to which he was assigned. Capt. Tracy now is stationed at Camp McCoy, Wis., but is at present in St. Paul on leave which ends Friday. He was over seas for two and one-half years and returned to his country last May.

ED. NOTE: Father Tracy served with the 164th Infantry Regiment WWII and became known as the Fox Hole Padre. The Chapel at Camp Grafton, Devils Lake ND, was designated as the Father Tracy Chapel.

The 164th Infantry had 3 chaplains when the regiment on Guadalcanal was left with one chaplain, Father took care of all religious needs of men. Father Tracy conducted the all faith services on Guadalcanal shortly before the regiment left Guadalcanal and sailed to the Fiji Islands.

Lessons on Borrowing a Staff Car

Earl R. Sarles, Colonel commanding 164th Infantry (Rifle) Regiment, April 1941, residential area Alexandria, Louisiana.

(Editors note: I had just finished a 30 day restriction to Service Company area along with several other 1st three grader's for an incident involving Colonel Sarles staff car. The incident involved being out on the Louisiana highways without a signed trip ticket. Upon serving my 30 day restriction I obtain a pass (plenty Chutzpah) to go into Alexandria, LA, along comes Colonel Sarles in the staff car. Apparently he instructed the driver Bob Boyd to stop. The door opened and the Colonel said, "Where are you going?" I told him I was headed for town and the Colonel replied, "Get in the car and ride with me." Moving along towards Alexandria, the Colonel asked me what I thought about the Sedan Staff car. I replied it is very nice, clean and rides very nice. (I was very nervous and my heart was pounding.) The Colonel laughed and said, "I understand you and other Sgts took this for a ride about 30 days ago, next time get written permission!" The Sgt. stripes stayed on the sleeve for a



removal date in the future. The picture was taken at the request of the Colonel while traveling in the city as he wanted one to send back to Hillsboro, ND.

SECRETARY'S COLUMN

As many of you know the next reunion will be held in September, 2001, Radisson Hotel, Bismarck, ND. Dues for 2000 are about complete. Some members are not in the paid column as yet. Donations to keep the 164th Newsletter operating are coming in every month. This is very gratifying as it indicates that the membership wants the 164th Newsletter to continue as it is presently operating. Dues for 2001 will be due January 1, 2001. Sending in your dues promptly will save the Association the cost of sending out a dues notice. The Post Office has indicated that 1st class postal rates will

increase by 1 cent, so help the Association cut costs by sending in your dues. If you care to you may include your donation to support the 164th Newsletter along with your dues. With the 1 cent increase in first class mail, all other postal rates will increase.

Thanks

Ben Kemp

Secretary/Treasurer



New Life Members

Sawyer, Chester R. 22 October 2000 Anesbury, MA
WWII Co C
(Chet just heard of the 164th association)

New Members

Smith, Lucille M. 14 November 2000 Auburn, WA
Associate Member

The following individuals have made contributions to the 164th Newsletter.

AMOUNT	NAME	ADDRESS
\$100.00	TED N. STECKLER	TUSTIN, CA
\$100.00	JAMES R. McLAUGHLIN	FARGO, ND
\$100.00	W. MARK DUNLEY, SR	FRESNO HEIGHTS, CA
\$ 50.00	CHESTER R. SAWYER	AMESBURY, MA
\$ 50.00	DR. NEIL A. MACDONALD	VALLEY CITY, ND
\$ 50.00	WARREN VENTSCH	VALLEY CITY, ND
\$ 20.00	HENRY M. WIJK	MINOT, ND
\$ 20.00	V.R. POWERS	HAMILTON, MT
\$ 20.00	HAROLD J. EBERLE	PORT ANGELES, WA
\$ 20.00	JOHN GODOVA	COLUMBIA, MN
\$ 10.00	MAVIS SWAPP *	DETROIT LAKES, MN
\$ 10.00	ROBERT & GEORGIA HILL**	NORTH GLENN, CO
\$ 10.00	CLIFFORD OTTINGER	CORVALLIS, MT
\$ 10.00	MAX F. STRAKA	MAPLEWOOD, MN

* In memory of her husband Ervin Swapp

** In memory of Elvin G. "Bud" Marmon

\$14,224.00 Apr 2000
\$695.00 May 2000
\$935.00 Sep 2000
\$430.00 Nov 2000
\$16,284.00 to date.

Existence Worse Than 'Dog's Life' On Bougainville

Torokina Beachhead, Bougainville -(UP)- Existence is worse than a "dog's life" on this bug-infested, swampy beachhead of Torokina on Bougainville island, the United States marines learned. The dogs couldn't stand it.

A number of the famed Doberman pinschers were brought with the Ninth corps when the marines won the beachhead and the trained animals greatly assisted patrols in smelling out hidden Japs.

But a few weeks of the tropical climate tore down the canines' health, so they were returned to the United States.

Veterans in the Solomons say pedigreed animals don't have a chance for life in the tropics. Only the mutts, mongrels, and alley cats survive.

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR THE YEAR 2001 ARE DUE ON OR BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2001. DUES ARE STILL \$10.00.



The Bougainville Story

Dead Japs Form Human Mat On Barbed Wire Defenses

By VERN HAUGLAND

Guadalcanal, The Solomons -(P)- Five hundred Japanese hurled themselves into certain death upon the barriers before the American beachhead on Bougainville island in the Solomons Saturday, and their bodies formed a gruesome, bloody, stinking human mat on the barbed wire entanglements.

The Americans used rifles, machineguns, booby traps, land mines, flame-throwers, hand grenades and bazookas to halt the repeated suicidal attacks against the northern perimeter around the Empress Augusta bay beachhead. The attacking Japanese knew no hope and had but one purpose—to kill as many Americans as possible before they die.

Their ambition was largely frustrated. American casualties were officially announced as light, while Japanese losses were estimated conservatively at more than 1,000 killed since the initial attacks on the beachhead began March 8.

Fourteenth army corps headquarters announced that 501 Japanese bodies were found draped on the barbed wire in front of Allied positions after the last of the attacks was repulsed. Enemy bodies in the jungle outside the wire were not counted.

Brig. Gen. Charles F. Craig, of the 37th division, said he counted more than 200 Japanese bodies piled knee deep in front of the wire in his sector. Apparently the enemy frenziedly threw themselves at the wire to force it by sheer weight of numbers, only to meet instant death.

There were three main attacks Saturday, the first before dawn and the others during the morning. At least two regiments of Japanese infantrymen, backed by furious mortar and artillery fire, charged in some cases to within 10 feet of the Allied pillboxes.

Some Japanese managed to penetrate the barbed wire and mines and at last report were

keeping the front-line Americans deep in their foxholes with persistent sniper fire.

Except for these isolated breakthroughs, the Japs were halted before noon by infantrymen, mortar barrages and by 105 and 155 millimeter shells lobbed within 200 yards of the Allied front lines.

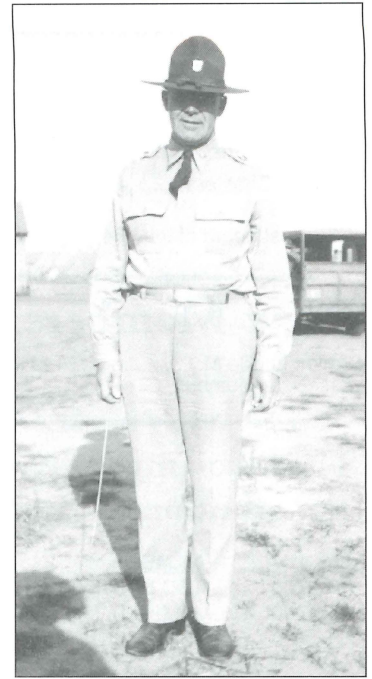
One foe is too many and a hundred friends too few.

—Navajo Proverb



Guadalcanal, 1943. (L-R) Lt. Ben Osborne; Lt. Col. Art Timboe; Captain Pat "Vinnie" McGurran; next two??; Don Staley, Captain. Someone must of had the right connections for the Australian beer. Photo credit Ben Osborne collection.

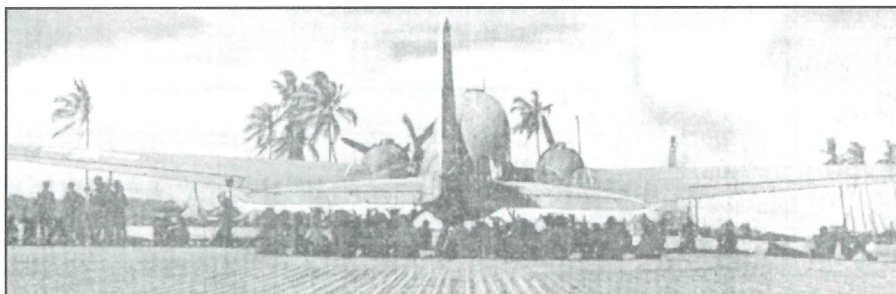
Warrant Officer Gerald Wright, Commanding Officer and Director of the 164th Infantry Band. Wright was from Lisbon, ND. The picture was taken at Camp Grafton, ND. W.O. G. Wright in a training session with the band members told them that they wouldn't be on/or near the front lines during war time, because in WWI, a U.S. Army band was rehearsing or playing near the front lines and several enemy artillery shells hit the band killing or wounding most of the members of the band. W.O. Wrights information did not hold up on Guadalcanal as 164th Band members were told to pack their instruments and were assigned to various infantry companies as stretcher bearers and medics. This information was provided by various 164th Band members. The band members assigned as medics and litter bearers really distinguished themselves in the Guadalcanal battles and were awarded decorations for bravery. Photo credit Ben Osborne collection.



Corporal Robert Hoff, Reg. Hqd. Co. New Caledonia. Photo from Donna Hoff.



Poker Game on New Caledonia, 1942. (L-R) Don Stanley, Capt. B Company, Fargo, ND; Lt. Col. Sam Baglien, Hillsboro, ND; Major Schatz, Medical Officer, West Fargo, ND; Lt. Joe "Red" Myers, Bismarck, ND, A Company. Photo credit Ben Osborne collection.

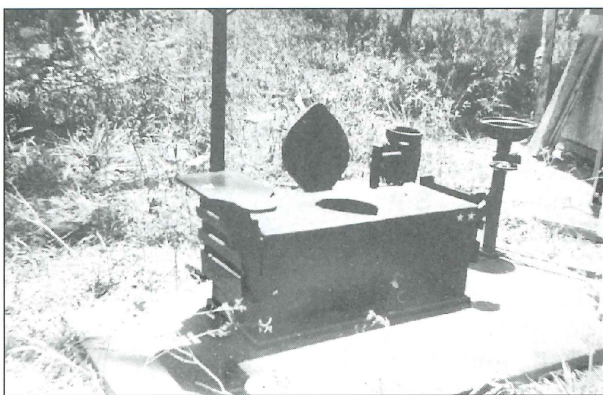


From Bouganville Island, where many North Dakota Troops have been fighting in recent weeks, comes this striking picture. Wings of a Big Douglas of the South Pacific combat air transport provide welcome shade from the strong midday sun as passengers wait on Torokina Field.



February 20, 1941, B Company, 164th Infantry leaving the ND National Guard armory to board the train to Fargo, ND for the trip to Camp Clairborne, LA for a alleged one year vacation that extended to 1945 in Japan end of WWII. Guidon Bearer Corporal "Mel" Revikin, Lt. Ben Osborne, Capt. Don Staley, Company Commanders. Note a couple of sharpies are wearing white scarves and one is carrying a guitar. Could that be "Russ" Elvrum?

B Company, 164th Infantry on cold walk to the troop train waiting to take them to a warmer climate in Camp Clairborne, LA and eventually to much warmer climate in WWII, New Calendia, Guadalcanal, Fiji Island, Bougainville, Philippine Islands onto Japan in the Army of Occupation and back home.



Guadalcanal, 1942, Evacuation facility constructed for Marine Corps General Vandergriff. Note writing desk, magazine rack and wash stand. Pete Benzmiller, Supply Sgt. B Company, nice work. Photo credit Ben Osborne collection.



Testing Facility for the General. Pete Benzmiller, B Company Supply Sgt., testing the facility to assure safety and functional operation. Hazardous duty but most necessary. Photo credit Ben Osborne collection.

We have all walked in that far off, dark world

James Patrick Casey

We have all spoken to demons. We have all been allowed to return with the knowledge and wisdom we gathered in that terrible place. The passing of the years has taught me that, in the midst of that gargoyle world, there was beauty. The beauty is in the lessons of life learned in that place and carried forth into our respective lives.

I have no doubt that each of us has been successful in our respective endeavors because of these lessons. I have no doubt that each of us is viewed in our respective communities with some degree of awe (overt or covert) as having been through what few humans ever experience. I have no doubt that each of us sees life differently than most other humans because of the lessons. I have no doubt that each of us views a child, hears a laugh or observes the simplest things in life differently than most other humans because of the lessons.

We are, each of us, messengers. I think that each one of us realizes this fact. I think that each one of us recognizes and welcomes, with open arms, the enormous responsibility of being such a messenger. One has to be a gentleman to have walked this far. There is no doubt in my mind that you are a gentleman. As proud as I am to have been given the task of the messenger, I am as equally proud to walk with you.

"And yet, and yet, Is this my dream or the truth?"

William Butler Yeats

DRAFT NOTICE

"Everyone will now be mobilized and all boys old enough to carry a spear will be sent to Addis Ababa. Married men will take their wives to carry food and cook. Those without wives will take any woman without a husband. Women with small babies need not go. The blind, those who cannot walk, or for any reason cannot carry a spear are exempted. Anyone found at home after receipt of this order will be hanged." (Haile Selassie's mobilization order during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, 1935.)

(Editor's note: I met The Lion of Judea, Emperor, Haile Selassie in Switzerland. He was a very small man, slightly built, surrounded by tall muscular body guards and they weren't carrying spears. The Haile Selassie mobilization order provided very few deferments and no opportunity to go to England, as a Rhodes scholar.)

A tribute

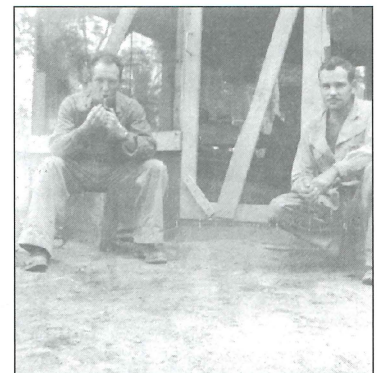
*To all those American crosses throughout the world,
To all those magnificent Americans who loved their country
enough to give up their lives,
To all who answered the call whenever and wherever,
To all who left behind loved ones because they did love them,
To all who suffered the wounds of battle either in flesh or spirit,
To all who had the courage to walk on the Dark Side,
To all who live with the ghosts of that faraway place,
I am humbled by your quiet dignity.
I am awed by your unselfishness.
I am proud to have walked with you.
On this Independence Day, I do not forget you.
Rather I celebrate you.
You are the colors of The Flag
And the breeze that gently moves it.
Thank you, my dear friends.*

God Bless: Charlie Three Zero Out

James Patrick Casey
Vietnam Vet

BOUGAINVILLE BUNGALOW 1944 Residence

(L-R) Eldred "Red" Welch, Bismarck, ND, Service Co. 3 BN S-4 Staff/Sgt.; "Ken" Shaver, Devils Lake, ND, Ammo. Sgt. Service Co. The Bougainville Bungalow was constructed by "Red" and "Ken" from lumber and material liberated from various sources. No indoor plumbing. "Red", now twenty-one years of age can smoke legally. Where did you get the pipe? (Credit photo Ken Shaver)



ELECTION FACTS

It's time to elect a world leader, and your vote counts. Here's the scoop on the three leading candidates.

Candidate A:

Associates with "hospital ward healers", consults with astrologists. He's had two mistresses. He chain smokes, and drinks 8-10 martinis a day.

Candidate B:

Was kicked out of office, sleeps until noon, used opium in college, and drinks a quart of brandy every evening.

Candidate C:

Is a decorated war hero. He's a vegetarian, doesn't smoke. Drinks an occasional beer, and hasn't had any illicit affairs.

Which of these candidates is your choice?

Candidate A is Franklin D. Roosevelt

Candidate B is Winston Churchill

Candidate C is Adolph Hitler

The Prez Sez... Vern Fetch



Hello and Happy Holidays to all. Editor Fenelon tells me it is appropriate for the Association president to write an article for the Newsletter, so I had best do that. In the last 164th Infantry News, I appeared in a photograph sitting on My Honda Goldwing Motorcycle. That article indicated I would be traveling around visiting you fine folks. Well, I won't be able to do that right now because the bike is in winter storage. I will, however, have it available at our reunion in Bismarck in September, and will give rides to those who want one. I especially encourage the ladies to join me on the bike. And speaking of the reunion, plans are progressing smoothly for that event. We will be doing committee work shortly after the holidays, so you guys and gals in the Bismarck-Mandan area, expect to hear from me shortly. I am honored to be serving as your president, and will do whatever it takes to insure a fulfilled, exciting reunion in September 2001. Those dates again are September 21-23, 2001 at the Radisson in Bismarck. Registration Information will be provided to all in the spring. Merry Christmas....Happy New Year.

Rout Cebu Japs In Tough Battle

By RICHARD BERGHOLZ

WITH THE AMERICAN DIVISION ON CEBU—(P)—Veteran doughboys of the Americal division have finally cracked the Jap force on Cebu island in one of the toughest fights in the history of the southwest Pacific.

After stubbornly holding position in the hills west of Cebu City for more than three weeks, the main enemy force has broken and fled in disorganized groups.

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger, Eighth army commander, toured the Cebu front and commented:

"Considering the size of the forces involved, this has been the hardest Jap position to reduce I have ever seen. These positions the japs have dug into the hills are the strongest I have seen.

"Just to see them strengthens my admiration for the heroic ability of the American doughboy to advance against terrible opposition. And it also makes me admire the ability of some Jap officer who planned these caves and tunnels and hill defenses.

"It is because our officers and our men are better than the Japs and have better equipment that we can overcome such obstacles as these."

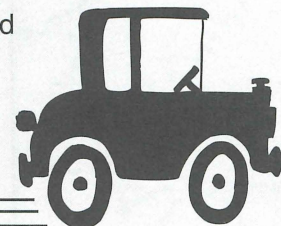
Major Gen. William (Duke) Arnold said fighting for the Cebu hills "was much tougher than anything the division had on Bougainville."

He said about 5,000 Nipponese have been killed in the Cebu City area since March 26.

MOVING

Please promptly send in your change of address. A post office return of 164th Infantry News cost the Association about \$9.20. This about eliminates the \$10.00 annual dues.

Pseudo over head costs cutters, please note underlined information



A PATROL ON BOUGAINVILLE

Jim, do you know anything about this missing pilot or can you help me get some information about him. I took my platoon on a scouting patrol about May 20, 1944 on Bougainville. We left the F company, 2nd Battalion area and crossed the Torokino River east of Hill 250 to scout the area west of Mount Bagana, near the volcano. About 1 or 2 miles east of the Torokino River, after working our way through very thick jungle we found an American fighter plane in a deep, narrow ravine. I think it was a corsair, it had not burned. The wings were forced back against the body of the plane. The canopy had popped open. The pilot was (his remains) sitting up right still strapped in the cockpit. He had been there sometime as his remains were just a skeleton, parts of the uniform and helmet were still clinging to the remains. We couldn't see any indications of bullet marks. Maybe the bullets had penetrated the body and then dropped down in the plane after the pilot remains dissolved in the jungle heat. As I recall the fighter plane was headed in the direction of the airfield. Maybe the pilot had been wounded, ran out of gas and was trying to make a landing and just glided into the narrow ravine where we found the plane. The ravine was very narrow as the sides caused the wings to fold back along the body of the plane. The jungle was so thick in surrounding area that it is unlikely that the plane would have been spotted in the air. I examined the pilot's remains and checked his "dog tags." His name as I recall on his identification tags was ROY DAVIS. I put all the information I could on my report when we, the patrol, got back to headquarters. When I asked about the dead fighter pilot, I was told that the Graves Registration Unit would bring him (Roy Davis) in when it was safe enough to go out into the jungle into Japanese held territory, I sure hope they did. As I have no, or any way of knowing if this was ever done. At that time on Bougainville, it was one patrol after another. Not knowing if the dead fighter pilot, Roy Davis, was ever found and returned to the United States has bothered me for 56 years. If you find any report or information I would appreciate getting it. I read in the *Parade* magazine that a Dr. Patrick

Scannon is researching MIA (Missing In Action) pilots from WWII. I have maps of the general area where we found the plane, but I don't want to send him on a false mission if that pilot was brought in.

Sincerely,

John Paulson

P.S. Sure wish I had the internet hook-up or whatever it is called. If you look at page 127 in the book under the Southern Cross, you will see Hill 250 and the Torokino River. We had to be somewhere in the Pendelton Creek area. Thanks John

Hi Jim, I hope this information I sent you will be helpful in finding Roy Davis, the dead pilot. Thanks for the pictures and maps, it sure brings back a lot of memories. Like I said I don't remember the exact date we found the plane and pilot but it had to be late May or early June 1944.

Best wishes,

John

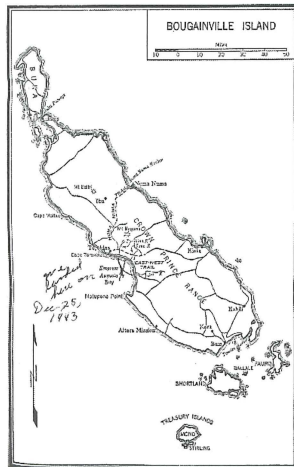
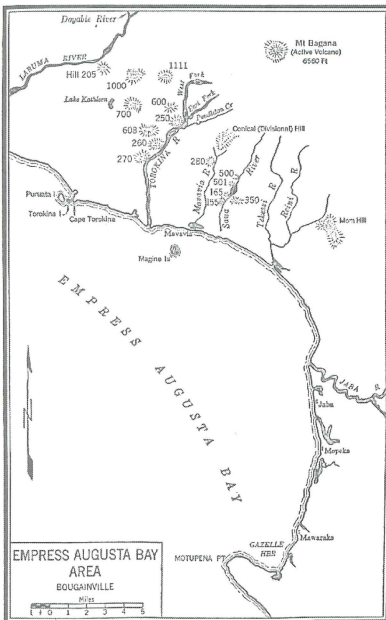
P.S. You do a great job with the 164th Infantry News. Thank you.

Jim, here are the names of some of the men who were in the patrol when we found the plane and pilot. I don't remember them all but sure wish I could.

Patrol members from F company: John Paulson, Ted Otto, Raymond Anderson, Robert Buchhiet, J.C. Carpenter, Dewey Carter, Nephtale Carter, Frank Chrusciel, William Clark, Kenneth Clymer, Bernard Cohen, Murray Cohen, Edgar Collins, Carrol Coolidge, Lawrence Drabur, Ed Evans, Robert Evans, Mickey Espenosa, Vincent Ferrigno, Frank Godova, Roman Graliniski, Steve Horteyec, Obert Indvik, Russell Kalberg, Daniel Hnezovitch, Perry McKecknie, Gordon Hvande, Stanley Nelson. All of the patrol members were from F Company, 2nd BN, 164th Infantry. Many of the patrol members are dead but those contacted remember this patrol very well due to finding the crashed fighter plane and the remains of the dead pilot.

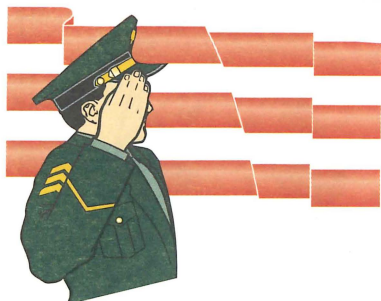
(Editor's note: Paulson provided a copy of a map from the book "Under the Southern Cross", page 127. On the map Paulson made the following written comments on "As I look at the map, I feel the plane was in the area of the east fork of Torokino River and Pendelton Creek. The reason I wrote on the map, I bought the book, "Under the Southern Cross" for each of our children, to make it easier for them to understand where and what we (164th Infantry) were doing on the different islands in WWII. I hope I didn't make a smear of the map." Paulson mentioned that "like other units I patrolled most of this area with my platoon on foot.")

(Editor's note: John, as soon as I have any information about the status of Roy Davis, the dead fighter pilot, I will send it to you. Thanks for sharing your concern of the unusual experience.)





Last Roll Call



Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near... And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear All of my love around you soft and clear. And then, when you must come this way alone, I'll greet you with a smile and "Welcome Home."

Author Unknown

Clayton W. Kingston

WWII & Korean War
25 September 2000
Union, WA

Art Johnson

Medic
24 May 2000
Belle Plaine, MN

Court Marty

Medic
17 July 2000
Moorhead, MN

Erwin W. Swapp

WWII
30 April 2000
Detroit Lakes, MN

Ben Kosanke

Medic
12 August 2000
Lake Park, MN

Jack Shank

Medic
12 October 2000
Indianapolis, IN

Say a prayer for all our comrades and wives for good health and some extra time as they have earned it.

Many of the 164th members are having very serious health problems. Throw in an extra prayer for your old buddies and their wonderful companions.

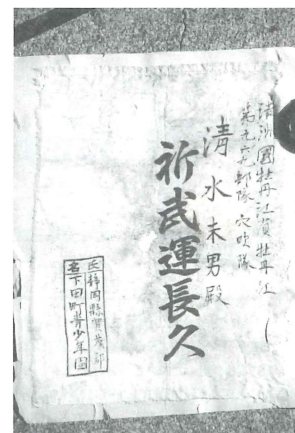


Howitzer, Anti-tank, Stokes Mortar Company, Devils Lake, ND, Maneuvers Camp, Grafton, ND, 1939. Note the WWI breeches and the wrap (wool leggings). Al "Peachey" Strong holding donkey. Others trying to lead the donkey, Nelson, Vernon V. Voss, "Blondie" Fortin (went to pilot training was killed landing a military C-47 in Chicago), Jim Fenelon, John Kirchoffner. These guys were not mule skinnners and probably were not as smart as the mule.

FLAG OF JAPANESE SYMBOLS

Ray Patton, A Company asked to have this translated. Unfortunately, Ray answered Last Roll Call before the translation was accomplished. Sorry Ray.

"Wishing You Good Luck Forever" in the middle. The flag is given to "Sueo Shimizu of the 969th Troops, Anabuki Unit, Manchuria. The sender of the flag is "The Youth Corps, Shimoda, Shizuoka." It seems to me that Mr. Shimizu is a member of the 230th Regiment, the 38th Division, if the flag was picked up on Guadalcanal. If it's on Leyte, he may have been with a different regiment. (Translation by Toshi Kowano, Yokousuka, Japan.)



INFORMATION NEEDED

In conjunction with the planning for the upcoming centennial celebration for Goodrich, ND, a book is being prepared for the "Goodrich Centennial" and will include names and history of Veterans from the Goodrich-Denhoff area. The name and history of Veterans, men/women, from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf Wars will be included in the "Goodrich Centennial" book. Names and information about men of the 164th Infantry is needed. Contact Karen Feickert, PO Box 2601, Goodrich, ND 58544. Telephone number: 701-884-2465. E-mail: k-feickert@yahoo.com.



"I have beheld the agonies of war through many a weary season; seen enough to make me hold that scarcely any goal is worth the reaching by so red a road."

—Thomas Hardy

A Genuine 'Thank You' From Bougainville

Back several months ago, Steve Gorman of the Grand recreation shipped two cases of cigarettes—1,000 packages—to the South Pacific to Fargoans of the 164th North Dakota infantry.

Mr. Gorman received no word for a long time, he began to wonder if the smokers had ever arrived at the destination.

The other day he received three letters from Lieut. Col. Stafford N. Ordahl, formerly of Fargo and Devils Lake; First Sgt. Harold P. Aarhus, a former employee of the Grand recreation, and Corp. Neil A. Tennyson of Fargo. Since then Mr. Gorman has received many cards thanking him for the cigarettes and all saying how much they would like to be back in Fargo and personally thank Mr. Gorman. All messages came from Bougainville.

In his letter, Colonel Ordahl had this to say:

Tunney 'Nice Guy'

"Thanks a lot for the cigs. We got them the other day and I made the break down among the boys from Fargo, about seven packs per man and I'm sure they enjoyed it because good cigs are not too plentiful.

"I imagine you know where we are now. I sure enjoyed meeting and chatting with Tunney. (Recent news dispatches told of Lieut. Cmdr. Gene Tunney, the former world heavyweight champion, visiting Colonel Ordahl on Bougainville.) He seemed like a helluva nice guy. That hike he took was the real dope and take it from me it's a corker. I've made it now three times and each time I swear it will be the last one. (The news dispatch told of Commander Tunney climbing "straight up" Hellzapoppin ridge.)

"We've been doing our own cooking up here but expect the kitchens soon, due to a road they are building, but it sure is slow going for a bulldozer.

"We get a glimpse of an active volcano once in a while. I guess we are seeing lots of things that a few years ago we never planned on.

"We are now in our 23rd month overseas, which in any language is a long, long time. You will never know how much I appreciate the chance to walk in your place and give you the old hand shake. Maybe there will come a day. Let's hope so, and not too far off.

"Lieut. William Boyd is my adjutant, Ed Goff is technical sergeant in my battery. I see Capt. (Elof) Dygve and (Lieutenant Francis) Bud Kane from Fargo;

every once in a while. There really are not so very many of the old boys left.

"The climate here is pretty warm and muggy. It rains practically every day, and I mean rain. A fellow is either in a swamp or walking uphill through dense jungle growth. The morale of the men is excellent and I'm proud to be in command of such a fine lot. We've got a lot of new men, all young, from all parts of the U. S. North Dakota still predominates, however.

"We get an occasional air raid here but none have amounted to much."

Japs, Other Reptiles'

This from Sergeant Aarhus: "It makes us feel good to know you folks are still thinking of us. At Christmas we were well taken care of by the Company B auxiliary.

"You have probably heard that we are again in a combat area—another thickly jungled island, with plenty of insects, Japs, and other reptiles. We are in good health and doing O. K. despite all. We have our 'Canal tan back and hard work has us in good shape. We have been in contact with the Nips here, and have been bombed. So far so good.

"Last night, (the letter is dated Jan. 27), the Big Boss up above tipped his whole kettle down on us at once, and the area the orderly tent covers looked like a miniature lake. We thought for a while that we would have to swim for it. The weather is very uncertain, but for the most part satisfactory.

"There has been a lot of work done on our area—clearing, raking, building, etc. We old fellows think it is a funny way to fight a war—victory gardens and flowers will probably be next. The kitchen is screened and a large mess hall is in the making. Some of the fellows fixed the stream so we have a swimming hole, too.

"We have encountered earth tremors and have seen a volcano in our travels. The jungles here are very dense, and 10 feet of visibility is about average.

"Mustaches and goatees are again cropping out—with a big variety of styles. No full beards are allowed.

"Tables and chairs made of bamboo are making their appearance and most of the comforts of home will soon be had. Fences are being built too, complete with gates. The food has been good—in fact, the mess sergeant has said the mess line seems endless. One fellow has been known to go

through for fifths. We had apple pie for dinner today."

Really Appreciative

And this letter from Corporal Tennyson.

"Just received the cigarettes and thanks a million. The men really appreciate it and are extremely happy to know that the people back home are still thinking of them. Lieut. Col. Ordahl made a survey of the entire regiment, distributed the cigarettes to all of the Fargo men, as you probably know there has been quite a change in the two companies. First Sgt. Harold Aarhus a former employee of yours will drop you a line for the men in "B" Company.

"Now for the news of the men in Headquarters company. Staff Sgt. Carl W. Hoss is now our transportation sergeant. Mel Estergren is a mechanic in the truck pool. Jack Kemmer (Jess Kemmer's son) is our mess sergeant and really brews up a wicked leg of rain jack. I don't believe you know the rest of the men as they were pretty young when we left Fargo.

"The island we are now living on has a little scenic value. We have an active volcano to look at every morning and a few coconut trees. The stream we bathe in is all of two feet deep but there is enough water to wash off a little of the sweat and stink. About every other day we have enough rain to last North Dakota a year. It's a healthy place to live except that we have a few air raids and of course they are not very healthy.

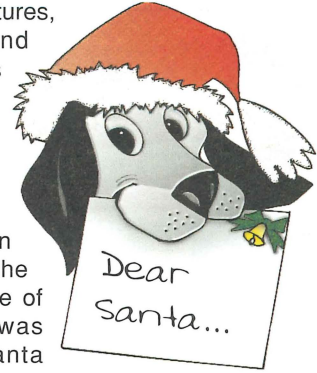
"For entertainment we have no pool tables but we do have galloping dominos. We are fortunate enough to have a movie projector so we have the very latest movies every other night; sometimes we are interrupted by a condition red but who wants to sit and look at a movie with Jap planes over head. The radio reception here is good. We pick up all of the programs from San Francisco. If you don't think that American music is good you should listen to some of that Australian jive. Plenty *gony!!!*"

Among those sending cards were Corp. Melvin Estergren, Tech. Sgt. Brent Knudson, Tech. Sgt. J. Norman Westland and Sgt. Douglas Thompson, Staff Sgt. Robert W. Kilpatrick, Corp. Jerome H. Eggen, Sgt. Joe Jordan, Tech. Sgt. Edward J. Goff, Tech. 4th Grade John E. Korsmo and Tech. Sgt. John C. Enlow.

Credit: Fargo Forum

CHRISTMAS 1943

Let's start early for next year. Need your pictures, news stories and personal stories relating to the 164th landing on Bougainville on Christmas Day. What were your reactions to seeing an active volcano for the first time? What type of Christmas meal was served? Did Santa Clause visit you?



PRAYER ON BOUGAINVILLE—American fighters on this South Pacific island kneel in prayer for their fallen comrades at memorial services in a Bougainville cemetery. Many North Dakota soldiers are fighting in Bougainville. Four have died there.



THE 164TH INFANTRY NEWS

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