WE SPENT OUR EVENINGS AT HOME

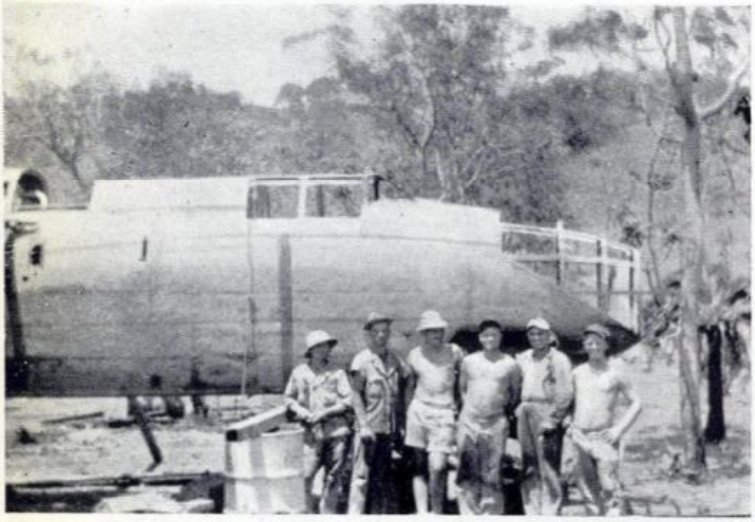
PEAKED tents against the setting sun . . . and in this camp, out in an open valley, we listened to the sound of enemy aircraft and intensely eager ack-ack too often. They made us dive out of our beds one morning, with their simulation of an A-20 attack, because their ships came across over and low, and any man who hadn't dug his trench was out there thirty minutes later with a shovel.

The slit-trench was an accepted accessory of camp life, but it was not as outstanding as the problem of winning a modicum of comfort in a climate that voted against it. In the beginning, a camp site was chosen with regard to concealment. It was advisable to remain out of sight of the enemy cameras and observers. A clump of trees, a ridge-broken area was preferred, because the self-effacing tents were able to merge quietly with the terrain and escape the critical eye of the Honorable Gentlemen of the Emperor. We had one camp merged in so perfectly that it could not be located except by the bend of the

river, and a give-away angle of the messhall that had to be seen twice before recognition was possible. It was hidden beneath the trees of the jungle. Cool days and soggy nights, until we had cleared away the underbrush, cleared away the matting of leaves, decaying wood and grass that makes the jungle a place of damp shadows. It was the ideal camp, until the evening of the rain and the high winds. We had long been accustomed to an occasional tree going down, narrowly missing a tent or a grass-roofed hut, but this time the hundred footers crashed all over the area. Tents and built-up floors were smashed flat to the ground. Telephone and power wires were ripped to tangled shreds. Trenches were filled to overflowing with water that could not be absorbed into the soaked ground. An immense tree fell through the center of the Club Tropical Paradise, and other trees, four feet in girth at the base, crashed across the camp road, causing a detour through deep mud that demanded all the power jeeps and trucks could produce. It was a remarkable storm, for there was damage, but not a single injury to any one of the hundreds of men caught in their tents by its suddenness.

A camp on the edge of a jungle does not have much to offer, except considerable work during its building. There is more to a camp than the setting up of tents. The accepted procedure, when circumstances permitted it, was to send out the advance echelon to the selected camp-site for the purpose of building the water system, the drainage pits, the showers, laying out the necessary camp road, and to prepare the ground for any of the semi-permanent buildings the situation advised. The schedule was planned carefully. The Squadron was divided into ground and air echelons . . . or water and air echelons, with regard for the necessity of keeping the ships available for immediate action. Our A-20's have flown a mission in the early morning of one day, and on the following morning they have flown out upon another strike. from another 89th camp site, five hundred miles farther up the line. A phase of logistics. A very technical and convenient word, which cannot convey its meaning because it cannot picture the sweating men loading their trucks, the cavern-like interior of a ship's hold, the mountainous piles of equipment on a spray-soaked beach or the first sight of the sultry valley assigned to the Squadron as its home.

It wasn't too bad, once the camp was set up and operating, but the building period was always rough with the search for non-available materials, the digging of drainage systems which would keep the floods from running ankle deep through the tents, the nights without lights, and the never-ending work details that drove section chiefs and department heads to bitter profanity. A camp in this area does not demand luxury. A water system, a generator to provide lighting, a well-kept messtent area, and canvas to shield the personnel against the weather. The progress of the war ended us with buildings that were even semi-permanent, but nothing has been able to help us create a new squadron area without the old, familiar routine of work against time, materials, and the prime duty of keeping our ships in readiness. But we were always ready to move. Fighting to move, because each movement forward, to the new areas taken by the infantry, meant that the war was another phase closer to the end. It did not matter if the Japanese were in the hills around the strip or if they slipped down quietly at night in their last desperate raids to create havoc . . . they were on the way out.

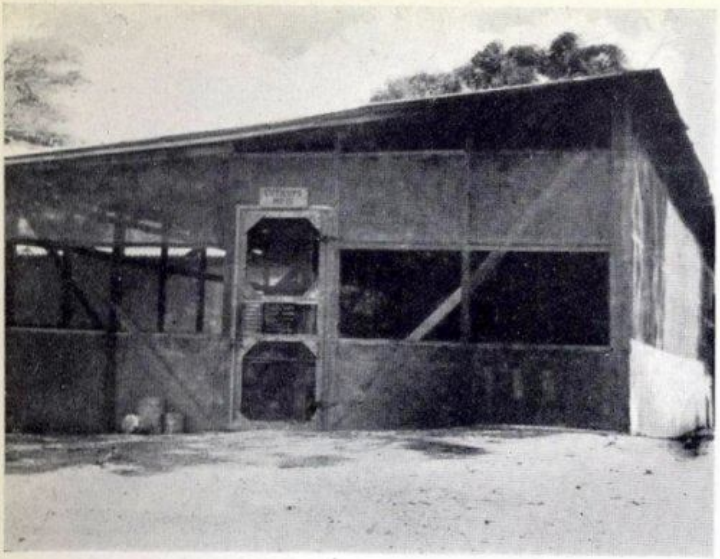


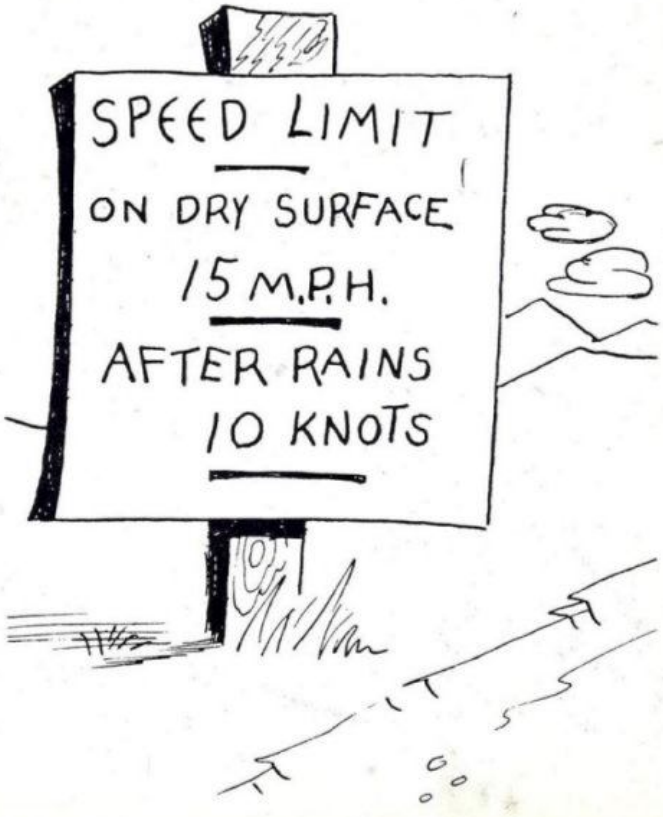
STEAK AND EGGS

Her wings flapped on the takeoff, the plexiglass let in the weather and the rain, she was the tired spirit of a trio of retired combat ships—but she made that run between New Guinea and the mainland innumerable times, carrying the precious freight of meat and eggs and—morale.

"From beyond the dark and dismal horizon of lousy chow shall rise this winged carrier——" the first words of the impassioned dedication speech, given during the ceremonies held beneath the hot, impassive sun of New Guinea. The engineers had taken a wing here, a wheel there, to build Steak and Eggs, in defiance of the tech manuals which advised against originality. They completed the task, watched her go up on the first of the series of test-hops and saw the dark horizon light up with promise of an occasional meal of supplementary rations from the mainland.

She is gone to the Valhalla of all good ships, with her body at rest on an island off the mainland, clear of the surf of the Coral Sea. A good job, done again and again, and we are all grateful that no man went down with her.

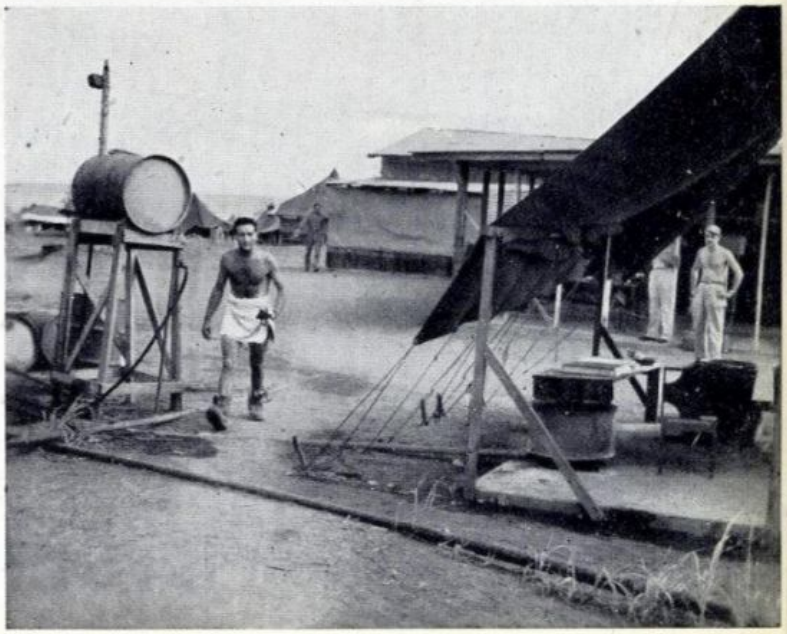



SPEED LIMIT
ON DRY SURFACE
15 M.P.H.
AFTER RAINS
10 KNOTS


SUPPLY
G.I.
UNDERWEAR
F.


CLUB LAKANUKE


KITCHEN
1000 WAYS TO COOK BULLY BEEF
F.



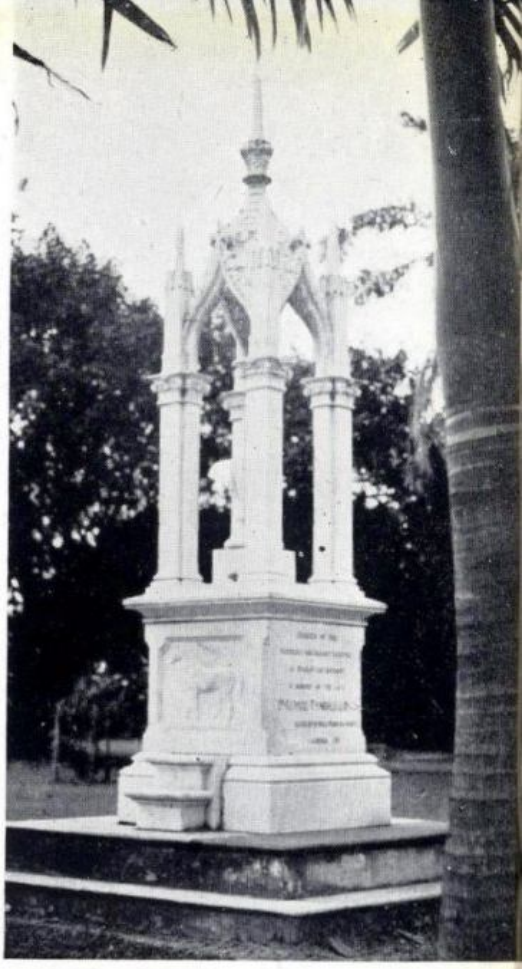
OFFICERS' CLUB AT APO 929

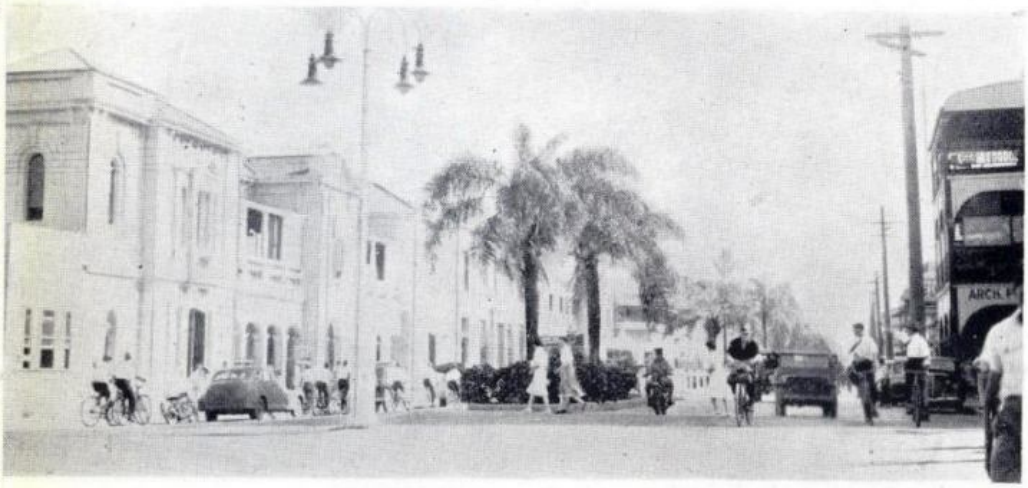
THE DOCTOR MAKES HIS POINT

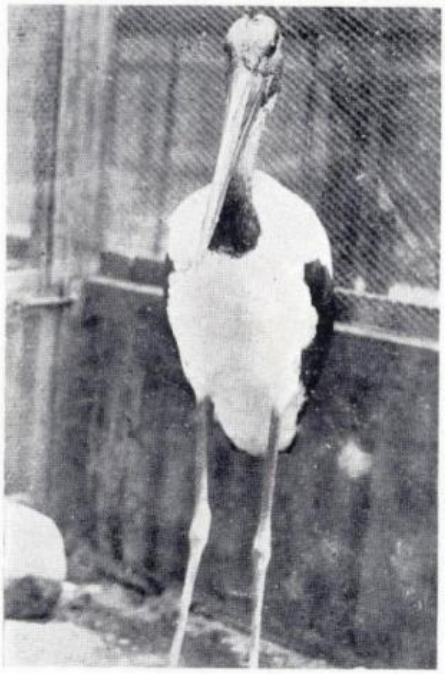
HAND BUILT LUXURY FOR TWO

THIS WAS A BIG ONE

F.





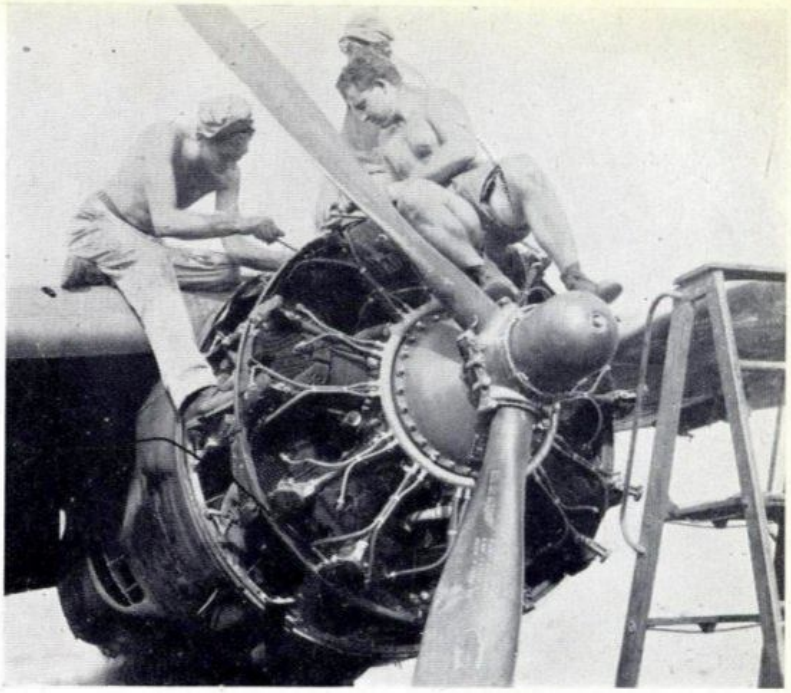


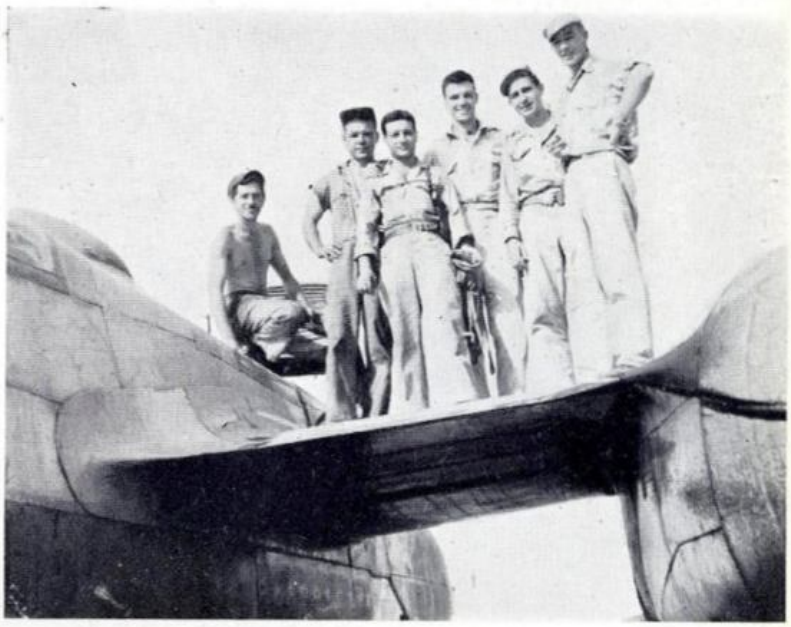
Mackay . . . Townsville . . . towns to stand out in the memory of any man of the ground echelon, because Sydney was too far away and too remote. A fantastic, impossible dream. . . . Instead, they sent us to the more tropical and available towns, which offered only a modicum of beer and song. The food was good, fortunately, because the American Red Cross was in there pitching right across the counter and against ten months or a year on the Big Island, a steak with fresh eggs was enough to make up for any shortage. We walked through the towns, looked at the monuments, the zoo, walked down the sultry main streets—and thought about the familiar places of home . . . ten thousand miles away.

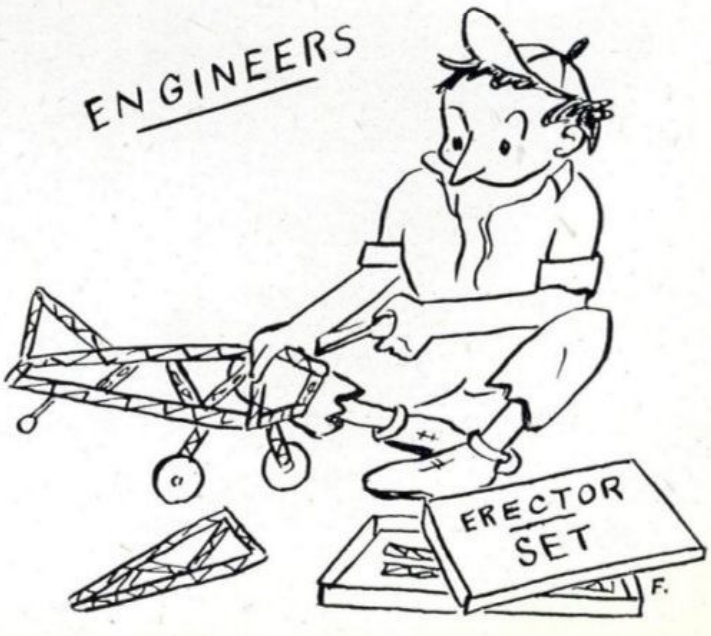
Doc Connors will remember this one. The debate has never been settled between the two schools of thought which offered opposing theories on the most effective methods of identifying night-flying aircraft. The wisest men always expounded their theories from the edge of a convenient trench.

Pastoral scene of idyllic peace, which Shelley and Keats might have immortalized. Darke in the waist of a native canoe, framed against a background of tropical beauty. The picture cannot tell of the heat, or the rank odor of crowded vegetation that was always with us in the jungle. Down below are the rapids of one of the crazily-twisting rivers of New Guinea, which always took the easiest path to the sea. It was always amazing to watch them visibly rise after a heavy rain in the hills, carrying tons of brown silt, and slashing at their vertical banks of soft earth and sand. The erosion-control committees had not reached the island to study its problems.

NEAL AND THE WATER SYSTEM





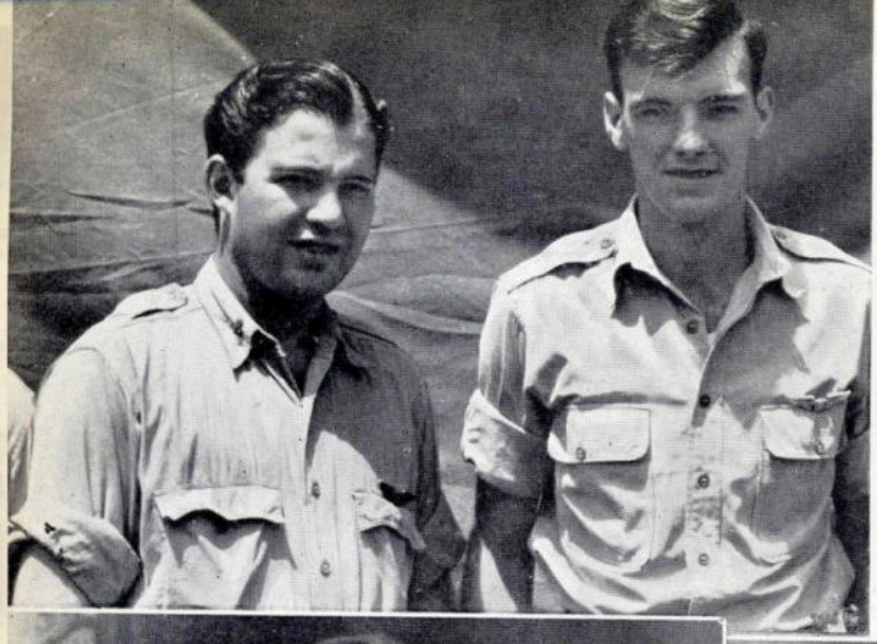


They worked on Tropical Paradise, complete with Neon sign and all, until the roof and the framework of the gigantic U-shaped structure had them licked. It was turned over to the natives, who swarmed over the immense building for two days, and laid it over with sago-palm and palm fronds to a perfect completion. We were fortunate to get the services of an orchestra for the first evening . . . and we heard later, from competent authority . . . that the reverberations of that first evening caused a red alert in Guadalcanal. Then we moved. We always move when a camp is set up and ready to go. Tropical Paradise . . . Lakanuki the Second . . . our camp of sago-roofed barracks . . . were handed on to the following-up outfit with our insincere compliments. A rough and most illogical war.

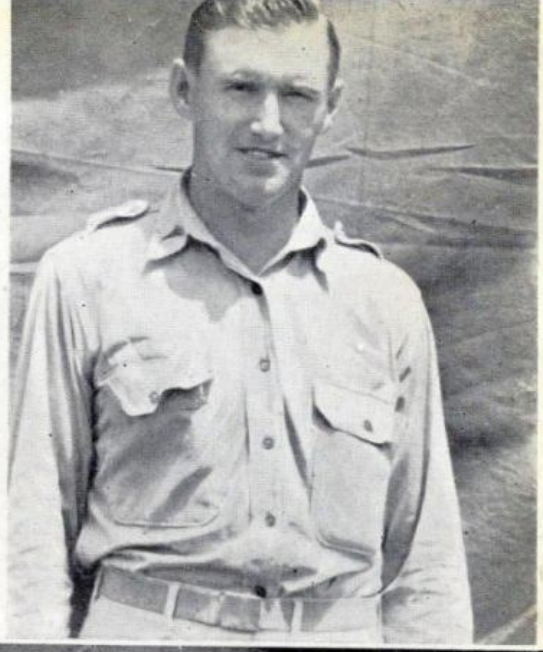
FATCATS . . . from way back. The officers, in New Guinea, had especial privileges. They were permitted to build their own clubs, for one, and their own homes.

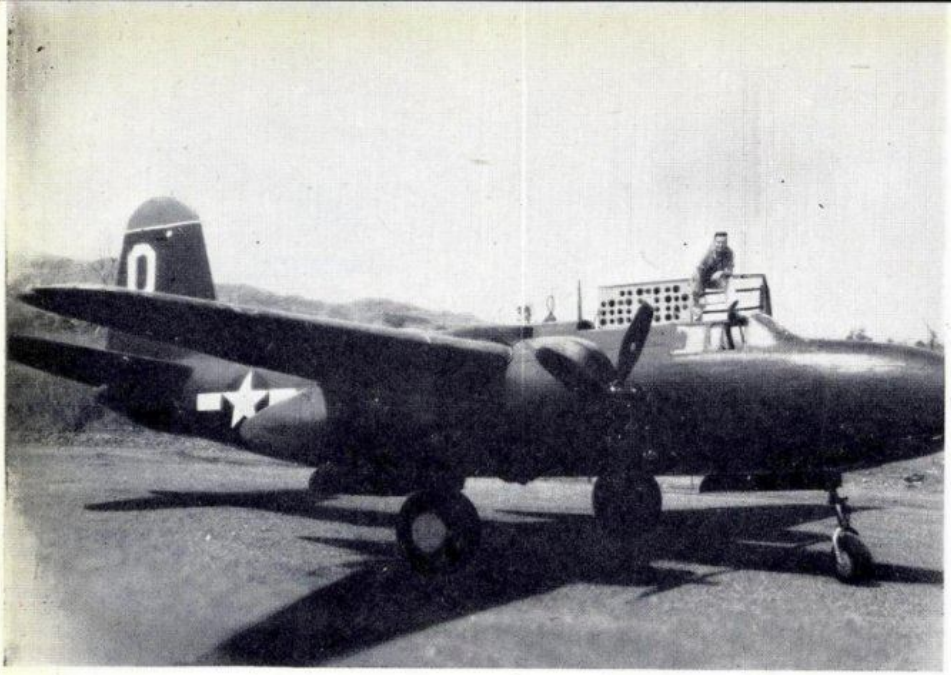
MAJOR WILKINS, Congressional Medal, late commander of the 8th Squadron.

COLONEL HALL . . . THE LATE MAJOR PETRIE, former commanders of the 89th.



COBBERS ALL





George Lockwood—and not forgotten—in the cockpit of "O". A technical error, for the print was reversed, and the hatch is shown opening to the right, instead of to the left. But he would not mind, altho he would have had something to say about it to the editor responsible for the error. . . . King, McEvoy and Davey of Melbourne, actually . . . Dow, Copeland, Hatten and Rod of the Japanese Merchant Marine. Characters. . . .


FARINA

I know I shouldn't write about food, but we had such a wonderful dinner Sunday that I thought you would like to know all about it. We had fried chicken - the way Mother cooks it - hot biscuits, new corn, salad, strawberry short cake, ice cold tea, ice cream and ....

.... All of us were so happy when we saw in the newspapers that you would be home soon. We know that with all your time in the jungles you will be the first to come home under this new rotation plan.....

.....Well it doesn't look like as though I am going to get into this fight after all ... I've been deferred again, I sure wish that I could be there with you, but you know how it is old man. Just keep going, chin up, and remember that everytime you drop one on a Jap that I am right in there, pitching.....

It is so difficult for me to explain Johnny but it just had to come You see he is the foreman in our welding department I tried so hard to fight it off for your sake, realizing that you are over there in those dreadful jungles but Johnny life is too precious to waste I know you will understand and wish us luck

— Well Ol boy I've been in the army five months now. Promotions are kind of slow. I'm only a tech. sergeant — but the old man said the other day that I ought to be wearing three up and three down any day now. Sure can't understand you still being a Corporal, after three years, and with two of them over seas.....

— I am so tired tonight, I was on duty at the U. S O dancing with the boys. How are the U S O Clubs in New Guinea, Darling? It makes me feel so good to know that you boys are not being forgotten...

eager beaver
WHEEL
CHOW HOUND
SNIFF
FARINA
CAT CAT

TROPICAL PARADISE

THIS is the island that conceivably might have been considered as the site of the Garden of Eden. It has everything, and in quantity. Mountains. Rivers. Lakes. Rain and dust . . . and the luxuriant growth of all living things. All things that crawl, bite or fly, stage out of New Guinea at one time or another, if only during their apprenticeship. The Australians call the insects "Wogs". The Scriptures make no mention of Wogs, so the premise that our island could have been the Garden must be discounted. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used it as the locale of his novel of prehistoric times, "The Lost World". He could not have placed the action more accurately. However, since this album has been created to serve as a visual record, and not as a venture into Theology or into the ossified realms of worlds beyond our memory, opinions are not in order. It is a very routine observation, of course, arrived at after more than two years' service on the island, to fully agree with the wisdom of Adam and Eve's move out of their tropical garden, into pastures less violently green. A percentage of us, biased, of course, but in all sincerity, are ready to cooperate to the hilt with any movement that will guarantee the continued position of this island as a Lost World.

It is genuinely beautiful, but does not measure up to the lyrical standards set by the rose-tinted advertisements of the South Sea Travel Agencies. If we could have been spared the mud, the rain, the amazing dust of the raw, hard-used roads built by the laboring engineers . . . if the coral seas had been shimmering lanes to romance beneath the swaying palms, instead of serving only as trackless avenues to the enemy's positions, we might have developed a more lenient attitude, for New Guinea has a grand, primitive

and unconquerable beauty, all its own. It shall not be possible to forget the blue, misted mountains that were forever only a breath away, with their steel-sharp profiles at dawn, and their caps of towering thunderheads at dusk. The rivers which cut so crookedly through the brown soil . . . because their intricate patterns, like half unraveled skeins of brown yarn against a green cloth, are too unlike the more conventionalized causeways of the rivers of the civilized lands. A savage beauty, unforgettable—and studied to best advantage at tree height, throttle forward, because then the Wogs, the rain, the unbelievable pressure of the sun during all daylight hours are neutralized. The Travel Agencies, we discovered, had neglected to mention the natural disadvantages and, unpardonably, the distance that separated us from any settlement that even remotely reminded us of the civilization we once had known.

The one difficulty of living and operating as a tactical unit in this theatre was the fact that civilization was not within a reasonable and easily traveled distance. We moved in, built the camp, remained until ordered to move forward—and built again. In thick jungle. In open valleys high with kunai grass. The three-day pass of the fields of home, the overnight pass that might be of value in other theatres of the war, were forgotten privileges over here. There was no place to go. Precisely. The camp bring-your-own-chair theatre, the church services, the messhall poker games, the nightly bull-sessions—and that was all. Contact with the realities of life at home was on the written page. Widely-spaced leaves and furloughs to the mainland permitted a swift readjustment to the luxuries of the normal way of life. It wasn't logical at all, when we knew that the people at home envied us our travels in this newly found part of the world and all we knew was the necessity of becoming familiarized again with the individual characteristics of new patches of kunai, new valleys and hills and mountains, and nothing else.

The native villages were quaintly interesting, in locations very difficult to reach, for men who had only a half day's freedom from duty. The villages were in the valleys, on the shore of the quiet sea, on the narrow top of a steep, twisting ridge, far away from any roads built by the engineers. We met the native men often, because they worked as laborers on the roads, and were often assigned to clear our new camp areas of the tall grass, and to construct buildings. They were, usually, small and dusty and clad in single cloths that flapped, without offending ideals or morality. They were pleasant and soft-spoken, intensely cheerful, and imbued with the belief that all American soldiers had been created for the sole purpose of distributing largesse, in the form of cigarettes, transportation and two bob. They went on walkabouts on Sunday, which was their day of rest. We grew accustomed to long lines of dark-skinned people straggling along the edge of the road, through the rich, choking dust, their women's feet hitting the earth flatly beneath the weight of the tremendous loads of yams and coconuts they carried in immense snoods on their foreheads. We looked at them carefully, and then always referred again to the letters which came from home, warning us half-seriously against the dangers of the sultry beauties of the South Seas. There was, it seemed, something wrong.