

## “Lum’s Boy”: The World War II Recollections of John R. “Dugie” Doyle

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Article Summary: Shot down over the Pacific and stranded on a Japanese-held Philippine island, Lincoln resident John Doyle found himself in desperate circumstances in late 1944. Decades later, he told his story to fellow Lincoln resident Samuel Van Pelt. This remarkable interview is published here for the first time.

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Photographs / Images: a Curtiss Helldiver circling above an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific, January 1945; Ens. John R Doyle, USN (2 views); Capt. Dixie Kiefer, November 6, 1944; USS *Ticonderoga* launching aircraft, November 1944; map of the Southwestern Pacific Theater, 1944-1945 (Robert Ross Smith, *United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines*, 1993); map of Luzon, the Philippines (Smith); Doyle and four other rescued fliers aboard the aircraft tender at the US fleet anchorage near Leyte, January 1945; Doyle receiving the Navy Cross from Rear Adm. Arthur C Davis at the University of Nebraska, October 26, 1945; a World War II Navy Cross; John R Doyle later in life; inset copy of a letter from Doyle to his parents, written the day after his rescue

Dearest Mother and Dad,  
You will probably have received the  
Navy announcement (sp.) of my  
#1 reaches you,



nights in the  
the coast after making a wheel  
landway in the water. Neither one of  
ever scratched. (Keep up those prop  
together to make

# “LUM’S BOY”:

The World War II Recollections of John R. “Dugie” Doyle

BY SAMUEL VAN PELT, EDITED BY JAMES E. POTTER

## Introduction

U.S. Navy Ensign John Doyle’s chances of surviving World War II seemed bleak on November 25, 1944, as he struggled to hold his burning dive bomber on target over the South China Sea. While attacking a Japanese heavy cruiser, antiaircraft fire damaged his plane but Doyle still managed to release his bomb and score a hit on the ship. Although his excellent flying skills and sturdy aircraft enabled a successful water landing without injury to himself or his crewman, other worries remained. The men floated in a flimsy rubber raft off the Japanese-held Philippine island of Luzon miles from the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier from which they had flown, their prospects for rescue uncertain. As it turned out, friendly Filipinos on Luzon, along with a simple mosquito bite, tipped the fortunes of war in Doyle’s favor and he eventually returned home to Lincoln, Nebraska, as a decorated naval aviator.

John Remine Doyle, later known as “Dugie,” was born in Lincoln on September 27, 1924. He was

the son of Lewis Raymond “Lum” Doyle and Mary Ruth (Fitzgerald) Doyle, both of Nebraska pioneer families. Lewis Doyle was born on July 21, 1895, in Scotia, Greeley County, and spent his early life in Greeley, Nebraska, where his father Thomas was a successful attorney. In the early 1900s Thomas decided to move to Lincoln so he could better provide a college education for his seven children—which he did. Lum Doyle attended the University of Nebraska and was a letterman on the 1914, 1915, and 1916 Nebraska football teams, where he played fullback. He graduated from the University of Nebraska Law School in 1921 and was admitted to practice that May. Thereafter he was a colorful and successful trial lawyer in Lincoln.

Lum Doyle’s son, Dugie, attended parochial elementary schools in Lincoln and later Lincoln High School. In 1942 Dugie graduated from Campion Jesuit High School in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, where he was a running back on the football team.<sup>1</sup>

**Left: A Curtiss “Helldiver” circles above an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific, January 1945. U.S. Navy photo, 80-G-320999**



**Ens. John R. Doyle,**  
**USN.** Courtesy of the  
Doyle Family

Following graduation from Campion, he attended Yale University before enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1942. On October 21, 1993, nearly fifty years after his dive bomber was shot down in the South China Sea during a mission off the carrier USS *Ticonderoga*, Doyle sat down with fellow Lincoln attorney Samuel Van Pelt to tell his wartime story.

### The Interview

**JRD:** I will start in 1942. I graduated from Campion, which is a Jesuit boarding school in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Things moved awfully fast after that. I entered Yale as a freshman in the fall of 1942. That semester the war had been on less than a year, and it seemed like my classmates were going into the service every day. I went to Boston and signed up with eighty Yale classmates in the navy air cadet program in the fall of 1942. I was called and reported for active duty in January or February

of 1943. My first duty station was back in college, at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. They sent us up there for what they called civilian pilot training.

**SVP:** Did you finish your first semester in Yale?

**JRD:** Yes, I finished the first semester and got credit for it. Then I was in navy training, which lasted two or three months at Cornell in Ithaca, New York. We went to ground school half the day and spent half a day flying. We got about forty hours in a Piper Cub. We had a lot of fun up there, a lot of fun! We were living in an old fraternity house and attended going away parties almost every night.

**SVP:** Were there girls around?

**JRD:** Oh yeah, there were girls around. Yeah, it was a big deal! Lots of fun! Anyway, from Ithaca, New York, I went to Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This was an entirely different situation because we were really in a tough navy program. Four hours of athletics every day. We never got into the town of Chapel Hill. We never got a day of liberty all the time we were there. It was seven days a week with no time off. I progressed through that in June, July, and August of 1943. The emphasis was on physical fitness and all kinds of athletic programs. After four hours of athletics each day, the rest of the time we were in school taking classes. I eventually got credit for that as far as the university was concerned because the classes were in navigation, navy regulations, and other courses that were helpful for a liberal education.

**SVP:** You once told a story about Chapel Hill when you were in formation and two dogs got into a fight. The instructors were fascinated by the meanness of the dog that won and cowardice of the dog that lost.

**JRD:** Yes, and it was a reflection on the mentality of the type of officers that trained us. These guys were almost to a man high school athletic coaches. They had gone to as little as thirty days service training and received their commissions and were officers running the cadets around. We called them "jock strap admirals." There were eighty of us going through the training together from Yale as a unit. It was a great way to go into the service and through the training at Cornell and Chapel Hill. We formed up three times a day to march to breakfast, to lunch, and to dinner. One day we were standing in formation at the end of the day, having just completed four hours of athletics with the jock strap admirals yelling at us. There were a lot of dogs around the camp, as there were in lots of military camps because of the good food. A fight broke out between a couple of dogs. After one dog nearly killed the other one, it ran away. I overheard one

officer say to another, “Look at that! Look at that! Did you see that? The little dog quit—he’s a quitter! He ran off and quit!” The purpose of the training was to try to instill in us the will to survive and the will to kill our enemy. These jock strap admirals were so carried away with that mentality that they even criticized the stray dogs.

We graduated from Chapel Hill and went to Olathe, Kansas, which was the navy’s primary flight training center. The commanding officer was Capt. Dixie Kiefer, who was a graduate of Lincoln High School in 1920.<sup>2</sup> He knew my dad, and he knew my uncle, T. J. Doyle, who was a career Annapolis navy man. Captain Kiefer sent word to me that I should come and see him in the base headquarters while I was training at Olathe. Since I was a lowly cadet, I wasn’t about to go see the base commander, and I never did visit him while I was stationed at Olathe. From Kansas, where we finished our primary training, we went to Pensacola, Florida, where I took advanced training. We were in Pensacola for about six months in the fall of 1943 and the spring of 1944. I graduated from Pensacola in April of 1944, receiving my commission, my wings, and my gold bar as an ensign in the navy. From there we went down to operational training in dive bombers at the dive bombing school at Miami, Florida. We were stationed at Opa-Locka, which is just north of Miami.

**SVP:** Why did you become a dive bomber pilot?

**JRD:** They gave us a choice. We put down what we wanted and my first choice was fighters, second was dive bombers, and third was torpedoes. I wanted to fly off of a carrier instead of doing patrol boats and multi-engine flying. I got my second choice, and as it turned out, I am glad that I got into the dive bombers.

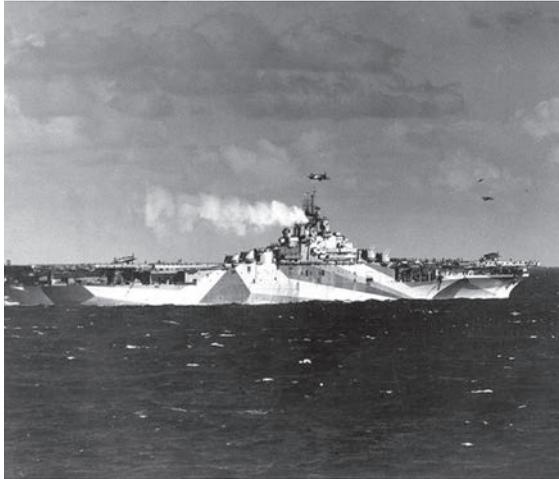
After we completed operational school in Miami, we went to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center on Lake Michigan at Chicago. We spent a day or two checking out on the carrier *Wolverine*, which was a converted excursion boat or coal tender that they put a flight deck on. We made six carrier landings on that flight deck. This was the first time that we took off and landed from a carrier. We had done extensive “shooting-in,” what they called “field carrier landings” on the ground, with a signal officer in the paddles.<sup>3</sup> However, at Great Lakes was the first time we did the real thing on water. There was a difference, of course, but in a way the ship landings are just as easy. You have the relative motion of the ship moving away from you as you turn into the ship to make your landing. The first landings on a ship in Lake Michigan were really exhilarating.



From Chicago I went to a pilot pool in Norfolk, Virginia, and flew there for a while in a different airplane. In Florida and the Great Lakes we had been flying the Douglas Dauntless SBD. At Norfolk in the pool we started flying a newer dive bomber called the Curtiss Helldiver, which was an SB2C. It was bigger and faster and carried more load than the Douglas Dauntless.<sup>4</sup> We flew that plane in the pilot pool, until openings came from the fleet. Along with a couple other guys in the pool, I opted to go into Bombing Squadron 80, which was part of Carrier Air Group 80. The air group consisted of Fighter Squadron 80, Bombing Squadron 80, and Torpedo Squadron 80.<sup>5</sup> Carrier Air Group 80 was to go to the Pacific on a brand new big Essex-class carrier called the *Ticonderoga*. It had been on a

**Capt. Dixie Kiefer aboard the USS *Ticonderoga*, November 6, 1944. U.S. Navy photo, 80-G-317386**

USS *Ticonderoga* launching aircraft near the Philippines in November 1944. U.S. Navy photo, 80-G-301-350



shakedown cruise in the Atlantic to Florida and back before I joined. Who should be the skipper of the *Ticonderoga* but Capt. Dixie Kiefer, my dad's and uncle's friend who had been the commanding officer at Olathe, Kansas. I'll get back to Dixie later. We joined after they had been on the shakedown cruise to Guantanamo Bay and back up to Virginia. They were just ready to go down through the Panama Canal and on out into the Pacific, which is what we did. We were the first big carrier to go through the canal without any damage, which made all the crew and pilots very proud of Dixie because he was a terrific guy. We cleared that canal where the locks were really narrow without scraping off gun mounts or any other objects on the side. The *Ticonderoga* did not have any damage. We then went up to North Island Naval Air Station at San Diego, where we trained and flew for a while. We then headed west to Honolulu in August or September of 1944. We flew and kept training all the way out to the southwest Pacific. When we joined the Pacific fleet in September or October of 1944, we did more training. The fleet was operating out of an atoll anchorage at Ulithi, five or six hundred miles east of the Philippines.<sup>6</sup>

**SVP:** Was your plane called "Lum's Boy"?

**JRD:** Yeah. During our training exercises in the Pacific, before I got shot down and after I had been on the *Ticonderoga* for about a month, I had difficulty with the manifold pressure in my engine. They were turning us up for me to take off, but with the low manifold pressure, I had to give the guy a down signal that I wasn't getting enough manifold pressure. They had to take me down on an elevator. There was always big competition between the four carriers in the task force to see how fast they could launch their planes and recover them during the training exercises. We were slowed down

during that exercise by having to take my plane down on the elevator, although they did it rapidly. When I got down to the hangar deck, a guy came up and said that the *Ticonderoga* commander, Captain Kiefer, wanted to see me on the bridge right away. This was the same Capt. Dixie Kiefer that I had never gone to see in Olathe, Kansas, and had still never gone to see him all the time we went through the Panama Canal and were training out in the Pacific.<sup>7</sup>

I dutifully reported to the bridge and went before Captain Kiefer. One of the guys from our squadron was up there taking this all in and hoping that I would get chewed out. Captain Kiefer looked at me and the first thing he said was, "Oh, you're Lum's boy, aren't you?" I said, "Yes, sir." He asked how come I did not come to see him in Olathe. I said, "Oh Captain, I was just a lowly cadet and you were the head man, the captain up there. I was too nervous, too shy to come and see you." "Well," he said, "you should have come to see me." Then he said, "We have to keep these things moving. We always want to make sure we get these planes launched as fast as we can." He was very nice. He understood the problem with the manifold pressure. He had been the executive officer aboard the *Yorktown* when it was sunk, I think at Coral Sea.<sup>8</sup> The guy from my squadron who was hanging around outside the door heard, "Are you Lum's boy?" and ran down to the hangar deck. They painted "Lum's Boy" on the side of my plane. After that, the name of my plane was "Lum's Boy."

**SVP:** Did the guys in your squadron give you a lot of static about that?

**JRD:** Oh, yeah. They had never heard that before. They would say, "Hey, here comes Lum's Boy!"

**SVP:** Where was the Pacific War taking place at that time?

**JRD:** On October 20, 1944, the United States forces under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur landed on Leyte Island to start the liberation of the Philippines. In the Marianas Turkey shoot—God—we shot down an awful lot of Japanese planes.<sup>9</sup> The *Ticonderoga* came in during the month of October. We did not participate in the turkey shoot, but bombed the airfields and the shipping that was coming from the north to support the Japanese in fighting MacArthur on Leyte Island. He was kind of hanging in there, sort of touch and go for a while. They almost pushed him out. The biggest Japanese battleship, the *Yamato*, poked around the northern part of Leyte and was coming down, but for some reason or another it turned back. Admiral Halsey had us out looking for the

Japanese fleet, and we were looking elsewhere further north.<sup>10</sup> We could have sunk all support ships. It would have been like shooting fish in a barrel, but it didn't happen because the Japanese turned around and went north after their heavy losses in Leyte Gulf.<sup>11</sup> Then we started bombing Manila and Clark Field, along with the shipping that was supporting the Japanese in Leyte. It was during one of those operations on November 25, 1944, that I got shot down.<sup>12</sup>

**SVP:** Describe your bombing routine.

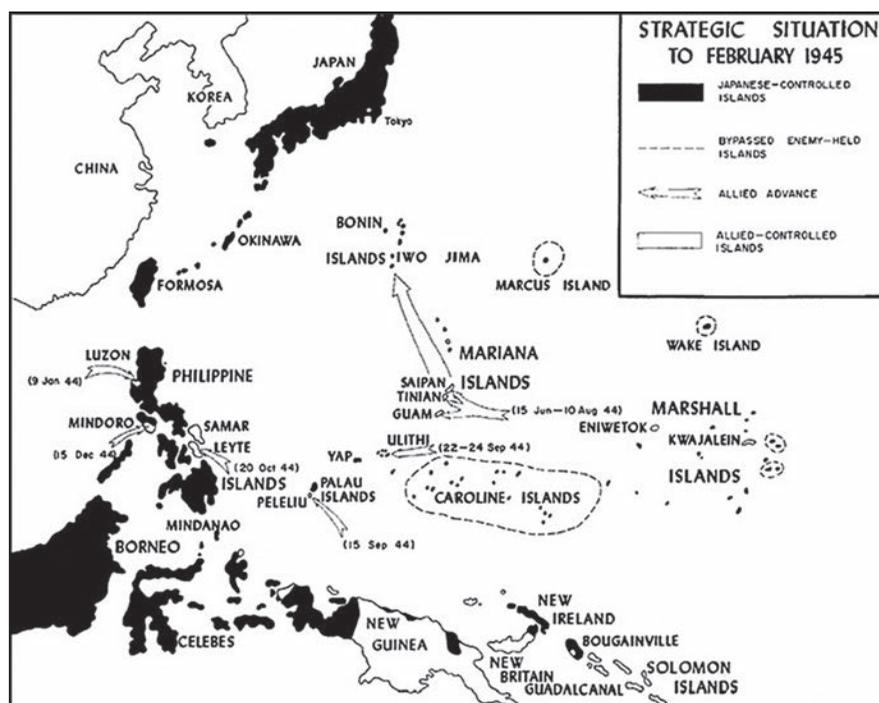
**JRD:** Each day we had what we called strikes.

On these dive bombing attacks, we were supported by fighters to keep anybody off our tail. We pretty well had air supremacy—I mean there was nobody. We used to see *kamikazes* coming the other way as we flew out on these strikes.<sup>13</sup> For some reason or other, the Japs knew where the carrier was, and it was just like a two-lane highway. We would be flying toward the target, and they would be going the other way towards our carriers. They did not care about shooting planes in the air, but wanted to get our carriers. There was a lot of attacking going at the carrier while we were gone before we got back after each strike.

On November 25 I was supposed to go out on a strike in the morning to hit the shipping and look for targets of opportunity. The day before, the crew had parked my plane too close to the plane behind me. Several of our dive bombers were parked, with the wings folded, aft on the deck, clear up on the flight deck. We started our engines with the wings folded, and only after they brought us forward to line us up to take off, we brought the wings down. The ground crew locked them, and we were ready to go. When we started our engines, the guy behind me chewed up a little of the trim tab on my rudder with his propeller, which the crew spotted. They had to take me down, and I did not get to go on that strike in the morning, which meant I would go on another strike in the afternoon. Our pilots spotted a heavy Japanese *Mogami*-class cruiser out there in the morning and came back and told us about it. We went out to get it that afternoon and knew where we were going. We flew across Luzon to a place called Santa Cruz on the western coast.<sup>14</sup>

**SVP:** How many planes were in the formation?

**JRD:** There were only supposed to be twelve, but on this day there were thirteen. There was a guy in our squadron named David Rose who was a standby to fill in as we always had every time we took off, in case what happened to me in the morning would happen again. I don't know how it happened, but he got up in the air ahead of me.



Instead of having twelve planes up there flying in four, three-plane Vs, there were thirteen of us.

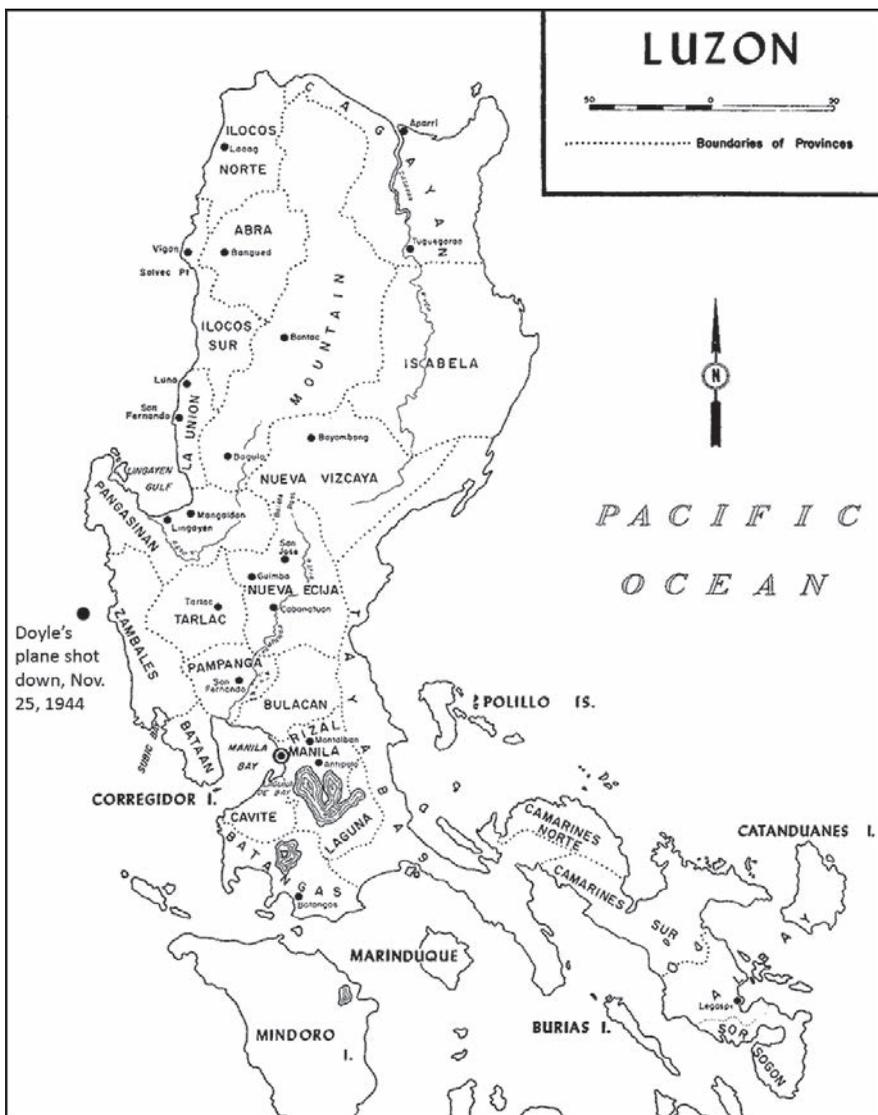
**SVP:** Somebody should have been counting them taking off on the deck or on the bridge.

**JRD:** I really don't know how the hell it happened, but he got in the air ahead of me. I was in the last V-formation, or the last section of the six-plane division with two Vs in each division. When I got up in the air in this last section and tried to form up on my section leader where I was supposed to be, Rose was there. He wouldn't move out.

**SVP:** Did you talk to him on the radio and ask him what was going on?

**JRD:** I couldn't because we had to maintain radio silence. I made a lot of hand signals with my thumb for him to get the hell out of there, but he wouldn't budge. That meant I had to go back and make a diamond out of that last V. It also meant that when we arrived at the target and went into the dive, I would have to slide out and let the other guy on the left of the section leader come over, form a three-plane echelon, and then I would be the last guy on the dive. On this particular day I was the last plane on the dive. As the last guy and number thirteen, they are getting the range pretty good by the time you come down. The leader went in first, and then it was just an echelon. At one time we had six or seven planes stacked up on each other in the dive. We would dive down to eight hundred feet, where we would release our one bomb and pull out.

**The Southwestern Pacific Theater, 1944-45. Robert Ross Smith, *United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1993)**



**Luzon, the Philippines.**  
**Robert Ross Smith, *United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines***  
 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1993)

**SVP:** How high were you when you started?  
**JRD:** About twelve thousand feet. We climbed to that altitude, and that is where the attack began. We dove about eleven thousand feet and released our bomb just under a thousand feet. In this dive when I got hit, I remembered feeling a kind of a bump. However, we used to feel bumps all the time from the prop wash from the planes in front of us, so I did not pay too much attention. Later when I was rescued and got back to the ship, I found that it was a pretty dramatic-looking thing, because we were hit and were on fire. The planes were screaming up and back, and it was only after I pulled out of the dive and had left my bomb that I realized my plane had been hit. I did not see any of it, and getting out of the dive, I could not see behind. I was the pilot-navigator, and I had a crewman behind me who was a rear gunner and radio

man. His name was A3/C W. W. King. He could see the flames and told me about them on the radio. We flew around trying to put the fire out with different ideas.

**SVP:** Were you too far to get back to the carrier?

**JRD:** Oh yeah. We were probably a couple hundred miles away from the carrier because we had flown clear across Luzon, and the carrier was east of Luzon. After flying around for a little while trying to get the flames out, it became apparent that we were going to have to do something. For the first time, I looked out over the side and down at my wing, and there was a hole in my wing as big as that door. I was looking right down through the wing at the water. I figured the fire was eating through the metal and that the wing could collapse if it ate through the main spar. I would have gone into a spin and been unable to get out. I never really wanted to parachute, so I decided the best thing to do was go down and land on the water, wheels up. That is what we did with fighters still circling above us. Our guys circled us for the first ten minutes after we landed. They saw us get out and knew we were okay. They knew we were not hurt, and they contacted the rescue sub.

**SVP:** Were you close to land?

**JRD:** We were probably ten miles off the Luzon coast when we went into the water. I hardly even got wet. The crewman King had a two-man raft out so fast and inflated that I just stepped into it. He thought I was hurt and that I had hit my head or something because he started yelling at me. What I was doing was looking around the cockpit to make sure I could take everything with me that I wanted like hatchets and drinking water.

**SVP:** Did you ever practice landing in the water?

**JRD:** Oh, no. We never had time to do that. That would be expensive practice. The plane landed pretty smoothly in the water, not much worse than a real rough carrier landing. I walked out on the wing and stepped into the raft. I had a one-man raft in my parachute, so we had two rafts.

The last thing that the executive officer said as we left the ready room to go out and man our planes for this attack was that we had this air-sea rescue thing down real good. He said we had a sub stationed out there with the code name "Mellow Moon." He said, "They've got this thing down so pat that by the time we've rendezvoused, they'll probably have you picked up. After the attack and before you are formed up again, I'll have you picked up." Everybody said, "Yeah." Well, we waited for Mellow Moon for a long time, and Mellow Moon never did show up. We were shot down

in the middle of the afternoon, and we waited all that afternoon and stayed out there all night. The next day we stayed there all day until late in the afternoon waiting for Mellow Moon when we were spotted by a Jap seaplane. I found out later that Mellow Moon acknowledged the contact and said they had a couple of other guys to pick up before us. I never found out why they missed us. I do not know if the sub got sunk or what happened. All I learned was that the sub got the message, acknowledged it, and said they were going to pick us up, but nothing happened.

As we were sitting out there the second day with night coming on, boy, all of a sudden, I never saw this Japanese plane coming. He was right on top of us. He was low on the water, so we could not pick up his silhouette against the sky. Boom—he was right there. They zoomed us several times, and we turned the raft upside down. The rafts were painted blue on the bottom to blend in with the water, but that did not make any difference. Hell, they could see us down there. Whether they shot at us or not, I do not know, but they did not put any holes in the raft if they did. They zoomed us several times. One time I came up for air and was looking at the pilot. He was flying an old seaplane with floats on it and an open cockpit. This little Japanese observer was as close to me as that light up there. I mean I was looking at him and he was looking at me, and I went back down under the water again. He had goggles on.

**SVP:** Did he have the silk scarf?

**JRD:** That, I do not remember, but he had the goggles on, and he was looking right at me. I decided that we ought to go ashore because they would be out in a boat to get us, which is what happened. We rowed ashore that night, and we were really exhausted.

The next morning we were not very far from the water's edge when I heard a noise. We got the hell bit out of us by mosquitoes that night. It wasn't very cold even though it was November, as we were in the Philippines. I don't suppose the temperature ever got below sixty if that low, and the water wasn't bad at all. We heard this noise as our rafts had been spotted. I looked out and saw a little old man walking in the shallow water dragging a bamboo raft. All he had on was an old shirt made of burlap that didn't even reach down to his midriff. He was wearing a great big bolo knife around his waist—almost a sword. That was all he had on. I figured this guy was a scavenger looking for stuff and he found the rafts. I thought, "Are we going to take a chance with this fellow?" We finally



**Ens. John R. Doyle,**  
**USN.** Courtesy of the  
Doyle Family

decided to approach him, but he couldn't speak any English. We had patches of American flags on our arms on our flight gear, and we had .38 revolvers and ammunition.

**SVP:** Did you keep all your gear, like your guns and your ax, or did you lose any of those things?

**JRD:** We kept all that stuff and our knives, so we were pretty well armed. The old native didn't have very many teeth in his head, and he had several days' growth of beard. He looked at us, and we looked at him, and I started making sign language like we were hungry and we wanted something to eat and drink. He couldn't speak English, but he rubbed the American flag and said, "Pretty." That was the only English word I heard out of the guy. He elected to go back into the jungle, and we followed

him at a distance through a jungle trail. This was all in a noninhabited area.

**SVP:** Which one of the Philippine Islands were you on?

**JRD:** We were on Luzon, just off of Zambales province, which is on the western coast of Luzon at Santa Cruz. That is where we got knocked down. The capital of that province is called Iba, which we were close to as well. From the coast the terrain rises pretty rapidly up into the hills that are fifteen hundred to two thousand feet high.

**SVP:** Was anyone living there?

**JRD:** No farms or rural inhabitants, although there were barrios—little villages of bamboo huts. I never was in one that had more than twenty huts. This scavenger took us to a small village of huts.

**SVP:** Where were the Japanese?

**JRD:** The area was occupied by the Japanese, but they stayed in the larger towns and cities. They didn't want to get out in the country because they were taking a terrible chance with the natives if they did. They had been terribly cruel to the Filipinos, and any time they [the Filipinos] caught them out there alone, they made short shrift of them. The Japanese treated the Filipinos with what they called the water treatment. They would put them on their back, put stakes in the ground, tie them to the stakes, stick a hose in their mouth and fill them up with water. After they forced the water into the natives, then they jumped on their stomachs. The water would come out of every opening of their body. It was a terrible thing to do! If the Filipinos caught these Japs, they would slit their throat, prop them up, cut their penis off, and sew it onto their tongue. That was the way they would find them.

We took a chance with the scavenger, and he took us to a "guerrilla" leader named Captain Montallia. I later came to the conclusion that Montallia was nothing but a bandit who could speak English. Everywhere we went with him, when his gang went into a village, they commandeered the good chickens and the good food. We had a nice feast as he took good care of us. He did not want any of our guns or our equipment.<sup>15</sup>

The barrios did not consist of more than ten to twenty bamboo huts. We were real celebrities and a curiosity. The children would stand around in a circle and look at us. We did not give them things, as we didn't have anything to give. They did all the cooking and brought us food, and the women waited on us until we had eaten. They would then eat later. We ate rice and sweet potatoes and chicken, which was a big deal. Once in a while we had some roast pork, which was a

bigger deal. This was what Montallia had them round up.

**SVP:** Did they have alcohol, wine, sake or anything like that?

**JRD:** Only on one occasion did I get any alcohol to drink, and it was gin—nipa gin made from the bark of the nipa tree.<sup>16</sup> I drank about a tumbler, maybe twelve ounces of that stuff. We were sitting around a beautiful, idyllic little spring and pool of crystal clear water. After drinking that stuff, I was showing everyone some dives. None of the natives could dive, and I did a backward gainer and a forward flip. I put on a hell of a show! The nipa gin was all I ever drank there.

We had been in the hills above Iba maybe a week or so when a couple of Filipino women came up to visit us. They brought us some eggs, and then they went back. The next day a guy came running up the hill breathless and said that the Japanese were coming. The word got out that Americans were up in the hills. The two women had gone back and sold us out—at least that is what we figured happened. We got the hell out of there just in time.

**SVP:** How many Japanese came?

**JRD:** I don't know how many because we started out fast to the south. This incident made up Montallia's mind to get us down to Lt. Colonel Giles Merrill who was further south, just above Subic Bay and a little bit inland. He had been down there for quite a while after he escaped from the Bataan death march after the fall of Corregidor in May or June of 1942. Lt. Colonel Merrill had been on General Wainwright's staff at Corregidor.<sup>17</sup> During the death march he slipped away and got into the jungle, and had been living there ever since. We ran into him in November or December of 1944, and he had been there for two and a half years.

We could hear the Japs who set up a machine gun and machine gunned the bamboo hut where we had been living and then set it on fire. We could hear all the ruckus and racket. We kept moving fast and walked six to eight miles before we reached Lt. Colonel Merrill, who didn't seem to like to see Montallia very well. He said, "I told you to stay back up there, and I don't want you down around here."

Merrill was a character and had Filipinos waiting on him hand and foot. He had a faithful houseboy named Marcello. Marcello was a regular man servant and seemed to be omnipresent around the colonel. When we reached Merrill, he also had a Dutch marine who had escaped from a Japanese prison ship that had been bombed, who had gone ashore when they sank the ship. A couple of Englishmen had escaped the same way from a prison



ship. Those three were the only non-Filipinos, except for myself and my crewman, King.

While we were with Lt. Colonel Merrill, I spent a very memorable evening after dinner around a campfire. The Dutch marine was a musician and had fashioned his own potato or gourd flute. As a kid I would have called it an ocarina. He had made this himself, and he played the Dutch national anthem, the English national anthem, our national anthem, and then the Ava Maria. I'll tell you, it was a pretty touching thing. He was a terrific musician.

**SVP:** Did you ever hear from him later?

**JRD:** No, I can't remember what his name was. He and the two Englishmen had malaria so bad that one day they would be flat on their backs shaking and sweating, but the next day they could move when they were feeling good. I don't think we ever saw all three of them together at one time because at least one of them was always sick.

Lt. Colonel Merrill had a permanent place made of bamboo and did not move around. He had a large hut up on the top of a hill where he lived. He did not seem to be afraid of the Japanese because this area was so remote and primitive. Down the

hill he had what he called his office. It was a smaller hut where he kept his radio equipment. Every afternoon at five o'clock, the shortwave radio from San Francisco was broadcasting over to the Philippines giving the war news. Merrill was a character and would strap on his pith helmet and his .45. I don't think his waistline was any more than about twenty-eight inches. He was thin as a rail, although he told me that when the war started, he had a waistline of fifty-two inches. It had been reduced because of malaria and real bad dysentery. He said that he counted one day that he went out behind the house 102 times with dysentery. He said Scotch whiskey saved his life. He was able to get a hold of a couple cases of Scotch whiskey, and that pulled him through all of his terrible dysentery. He said it probably killed the bugs in his intestines.

He would strap on the pith helmet and the .45 service revolver and go down the big hill from his hut to a little stream which we had to cross. To cross the stream, we would get on a carabao or a kind of a water buffalo which was a beast of burden in the Philippines. We got on the back of that thing and crossed the stream, which wasn't any

**Doyle and the other rescued fliers aboard the aircraft tender at the U.S. fleet anchorage near Leyte, January 1945 (l. to r.): Maurice Nayland; Doyle; N. J. Roccaforte; P. R. Schleitchy; W. W. King. Nayland, Roccaforte, and King were killed in an airplane crash soon after the photograph was taken.** Courtesy of the Doyle Family



Doyle receiving the Navy Cross from Rear Adm. Arthur C. Davis during Oct. 26, 1945, ceremonies at the University of Nebraska. Capt. M. D. Matthews, commander of the university's naval ROTC program (l.) was also decorated for wartime service. Courtesy of the Doyle Family

more than thirty or forty feet wide. Then we got off and went into the office where he had an old card table with collapsible legs. On it he had a road map, just like you would get from a Shell, Conoco, or Standard filling station, spread out on top of the card table. He sat down with all kinds of pens and markers and pencils. It was a regular war room. He had no electricity but was able to generate electricity by the use of an old bicycle that had a generator back where the rear wheel would have been. This was hooked onto a belt that drove the generator by pumping the bicycle, and thereby turning the generator and creating the electricity which was hooked up to an old radio. I don't know where he got all this stuff—God only knows where he got it.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and it was still very warm.

The colonel had his houseboy, Marcello, do all kinds of things, but the one duty I really remember was pumping the bicycle. Marcello would get on the bicycle and start pumping to generate electricity. He would just be pumping along, and the sweat would be pouring down his face. Every once in a while, the radio would sputter a little bit, and there would be a little static. Merrill would turn to him and say, "Faster there, Marcello, faster!" Poor old Marcello was going a mile a minute. With the news, Lt. Colonel Merrill was following the campaign down in Leyte. It also happened at this time that the Battle of the Bulge was going on in Europe. We got reports on that, which was the big offensive in Germany at Christmas in 1944.<sup>18</sup>

There was also another young man with Lt. Colonel Merrill who was exactly my age. He was a Filipino from northern Luzon and had some connections in Manila. His father was the International Harvester dealer there. They had all fled into the hills. This kid was very well schooled, and we had several talks together. He was someone I could talk to, as he spoke English very well. All the Filipinos that I met really liked the Americans. They wanted to be a part of America, and they wanted to join the military service. Of course they were mad at the Japs, too, and wanted to fight them. They could not have been nicer. They fed us and washed our clothing. They carried us across streams. I mean they wouldn't let us do anything and were doing everything for us. They were very, very good to us. But even at that time on Luzon, the Communists were starting to get their act together.

**SVP:** Did you run into some of them?

**JRD:** I didn't run into any Communists, but I was told by the natives and by one of the flyers that I ran into down on the beach after we left the colonel that the Communists had a flying fortress [U.S. B-17 bomber] which had been shot down. It was up on a mountain and was their headquarters. They had put it together after it crashed and called themselves the Huk Bella Hup, which was the early Filipino Communist party.<sup>19</sup>

**SVP:** Were they advocating land reform as soon as the war was over and the Japanese were gone?

**JRD:** They were getting their toe-hold and attempting to organize the natives against the Japanese. Of course they were going to promote their own agenda, but this was the beginning right then and there.

After we had been with the colonel three or four days, he said that there were three other American

flyers down on the beach on a little uncharted bay called Nasaza seven miles away. We were also a little inland. The pilots had a mirror and some dye markers. There was a huge [Japanese] naval operation in Subic Bay. They figured that when the planes came in to make strikes against the shipping and came out of their dives, they would be able to catch them with a mirror and attract their attention. The pilots then came and looked them over on Nasaza Bay.

One of those on the bay was a fighter pilot off of the carrier *Cabot* named Maurice Nayland from Buffalo, New York. Another was a torpedo plane pilot from the carrier *Franklin* named N. J. Roccaforte from Houston, Texas. The third guy, air crewman P. R. Schleitchy, was off of a torpedo plane from the carrier *Bennington*. They had all been shot down at various times and one way or another found their way to Colonel Merrill. They decided to leave the colonel and get down to the beach at the closed end of Nasaza Bay. For some reason they wanted to get away from Colonel Merrill's command post.<sup>20</sup>

When we left, I said to the colonel, "Why don't you come with us? It is a good idea because our flyers are in there hitting all the time and they will recognize us and call in the position to get us out of there." He said, "Oh, no. I think I will stick around." Of course he was living real good off of the natives. I told him that with the island hopping campaign, every time we go in and secure a place, we can jump another five hundred miles. I told him that our troops were down in Leyte now and would jump clear over us and go to Formosa to the north. He said, "Oh, no, they won't do that." I asked him how he knew, and Lt. Colonel Merrill, who had been on Wainwright's staff, said that MacArthur was too big of a ham. He had told the people, "I shall return," and Merrill said he wanted to ride down the main avenue of Manila waving to the people and telling them that he was back. Sure enough, that is what happened because MacArthur didn't bypass Luzon. He landed up in northern Luzon, waded ashore in front of the cameras, and drove down to Manila for his parade.<sup>21</sup>

**SVP:** Were the three Americans on the beach happy to see you?

**JRD:** Oh, yeah. They were happy to see us, and we were happy to see them. We hooked up with them right away. They had three Filipinos on loan from Merrill that were doing all their cooking. The old colonel had fixed them up real well. They built a little lean-to hut on the beach. It was a beautiful, absolutely uninhabited, virgin, pristine bay, and we were right there in the closed end of the bay.



A World War II-era Navy Cross like the one Doyle received.

**SVP:** Did you swim or go fishing?

**JRD:** Oh, yes, every day. There was lots of swimming and laying around. We told war stories and talked about food. We did a little bit of exploring and looking around, but not getting too far away.

As we came down over the hill led by Colonel Merrill's Filipinos on a path leading five to seven hundred yards down to the beach, in came a P-40 fighter plane. It had recognized the guys on the beach, and it was the first time that they had been spotted. We couldn't figure out where it came from. It must have been down around Leyte Gulf. The pilot recognized them and waggled the wings and zoomed us. I figured, "My God! This is wonderful! We are going to get out of here right away." Well, nothing happened. The recognition by these P-40s was the first of what was going to be several occurrences that never did bear any fruit. God, we had our planes in there. We had navy fighters come in and look us over, and we had navy torpedo planes look us over. They were from the carrier *Cabot*. They dropped shaving kits and money, but then nothing happened.

When they came over, we would catch them with the mirror and get their attention. Then we would write stuff in great big letters in the sand, like "food," "fever," and the code word for a rescue plane in the navy, "Dumbo." Dumbo described the PBV Catalina



**John R. Doyle.** Courtesy of Chick Thorne and the Country Club of Lincoln

flying boat which was used on a lot of rescue missions. They could land on the water and pick you up, which is how we eventually got out of there.<sup>22</sup>

The day before we were rescued by the PBY, which was in early January of 1945, two army A-20s came in, recognized us, and zoomed us.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, instead of making their paths from the land out toward the water, this being the Pacific Ocean on the west side of Luzon, they came in and zoomed from the water up towards the land.<sup>24</sup> We were at the far or closed end of the bay, which was surrounded by hills. One of the A-20 guys didn't make it. He couldn't get up over the hills and tried to turn around and come back out. He stalled out and crashed. Oh God, the plane's ammunition was going off for about three hours. Roccaforte and Schleitchy, who we called "Ski," went up there the next day after we figured the fires were out to see about burying our two pilots.<sup>25</sup> While our two guys were up there, the PBY poked its nose around the far end of the bay, and we caught it with the mirror. They came in and looked us over very carefully and finally landed in the bay. Roccaforte and Ski saw that rescue plane land in the bay and oh, God, they got down there. They must have set the world's dash record coming down that hill. The natives then rowed us in a wooden bark or hollowed log canoe out to the PBY, and we got aboard. I can't remember whether they had more than one canoe, but they got us out there with dispatch.<sup>26</sup>

**SVP:** Did everybody get into the plane?

**JRD:** Oh God, yes. Those planes could hold a huge number of people. After the PBY picked us up, they flew us down to its aircraft tender. The tender was a small boat that would go back and forth to the aircraft carrier. The following picture was taken aboard the aircraft tender. We were drinking the first coffee that we had in two months. The picture was taken on the tender right after we were picked up. Number one is myself right behind Maurice "Moe" Nayland, who is number two. Roccaforte from Houston is number three. He is the guy who went up on the hill with Schleitchy, who is number four. My gunner, King, is number five.

**SVP:** Did you wear those clothes the whole time?

**JRD:** Yeah. God, they were beginning to rot off of us. Those were the clothes I was shot down in. I had malaria, and Ski had a little touch of dysentery or something. But the other guys—my crewman King, Roccaforte and Nayland—were all pronounced fit to try and go back and rejoin their outfits or go home. I put up a terrific argument with the doctor aboard the ship to let me go as well. God, that's all my gunner and I talked

about was what we would do when we got back. Probably the most popular subject all the time we were sitting there on the island was food and what restaurants and bars we were going to go to when we got back to San Francisco. I really wanted to go with him. The doctor said they were going to keep me there for a couple of days. He wouldn't let me go because of my malaria, and I just argued and argued. I said, "My God, I've been living on this island, doing all this stuff, and why can't I go now? I'm back to civilization, and I ought to be able to travel around." Well anyway, he wouldn't let me go.

The three who were permitted to go—King, Roccaforte, and Nayland—went ashore in the aircraft tender from the fleet anchorage off the eastern shore of Leyte, where they were supporting all the operations in Leyte Gulf. There was an airstrip on shore, and the three got aboard a naval air transport. At the same time, there was an army artillery spotter pilot flying a little Cub-type airplane called a Grasshopper. We heard later that he was flying around showing off for a nurse girlfriend who was with him. The artillery spotter pilot zoomed the naval air transport and crashed into the tail after it was only a couple hundred feet in the air. The transport went into the water, and everybody on board, including my three buddies, was killed. We did not see it happen, but saw the smoke. We thought it was coming from a ship that had been sunk by a Japanese midget sub. A couple of times they got into this anchorage and did some damage. But at the time we didn't know that it was the naval air transport. I found out before I left in the next couple of days.

**SVP:** I bet you were numb.

**JRD:** Oh, yeah. God, I would have been on that plane if I hadn't had malaria or had won the argument with the doctor. After that I never felt too bad about contracting the malaria. It was from an Anopheles mosquito, and it saved my life.<sup>27</sup>

**SVP:** How do you treat malaria?

**JRD:** I took Atabrine and quinine.<sup>28</sup> After about four or five relapses, it left. I had three or four relapses in the navy before I was discharged and one at Yale. Each time I got terrible fever and sweating and then the chills—alternate chills and fever. My last episode was back at Yale. I'll never forget—it was after a big football weekend. We were over waiting around for the chow hall to open up, and God, this fever hit me and I had to lay down. Yale had lovely dining halls even though I say chow hall, and they have a foyer before you get into the hall. I was laying down on a

couch covered up with two or three overcoats just shivering to beat hell.

**SVP:** I imagine everyone was very sympathetic after what you had been through.

**JRD:** Well, I was not in my regular dining hall. I was over at a friend's at another college. We had been to the football game, and I was over there having lunch with him when the malaria hit me. They had me all covered up, and I was lying there like I was still full of booze. The guys coming through did not know me and thought I was a casualty from the weekend. That was the last occurrence I had of the malaria. As I said, whoever that Anopheles mosquito was that gave it to me saved my life.

**SVP:** My father, Robert Van Pelt, and other lawyers have said that when you were missing, your father would stop them on the street and tell them that he was certain you were alive. Did he later tell you that?

**JRD:** That was one of the worst things. The first couple of weeks after I had been shot down, boy it just about drove me nuts that I was okay and could not get word to anybody. There was no way I could get out word to my family. I used to sit and imagine all of the terrible things that happened when my family got the telegram which only said, "missing in action." I found out later they got the telegram. The navy did not send it out right away because they thought we might be picked up by Mellow Moon or somebody else. Since Mellow Moon never did show, they finally sent the notice. All my family initially had was this cold telegram from the navy. Then they got a real nice letter from a good friend of mine in the squadron. He told about leaving the scene and that we were unhurt in the raft waving to him. He said he thought we were going to be okay. That really got their hopes up. He was a great guy, and that was a nice thing that he did.

Then on December 28, 1944, my dad received a letter from Captain Kiefer, his high school friend and the commanding officer of the USS *Ticonderoga*. My dad had apparently written to his old friend Dixie and received an encouraging response. It read in part:

Dear Lum . . . It was the most heroic case I have seen this trip and was over and above the call of duty. His plane caught on fire at nine thousand feet from anti-aircraft. Instead of getting over friendly natives and using the parachute, knowing that the cruiser was the biggest type and a very important target, he went on down and scored a direct hit, crippling it so the others could sink it. He has been recommended and

will receive the Navy Cross. He then landed in the water, and was seen by the rest to get clear and in a rubber boat. He waved to the others he was okay. The planes contacted and were acknowledged by a friendly boat ten miles away and then had to leave on account of gas. He may still be in hiding with the natives, or the Japs may have seen him and captured him before the friendlies got to him. I cannot help but feel he is alive unless the Japs cold-bloodedly executed him in revenge.

I saw him several times and we talked about you. I had asked him up to dinner when we got in port but was not able to get in in time. He joined us late but had done a wonderful job in endearing himself to the squadron. He never came up and told me who he was, and I only discovered it by seeing his name on his jacket and putting him to you by his looks . . .

We have avenged Dugie many times over. I'll let that give you slight comfort. I really believe that he is safe somewhere and that someday you will see him again and be very proud of him.

My best wishes,  
Dixie.

Here is the Navy Cross which I received.

**SVP:** The citation was from James Forrestal, the secretary of the navy:

Bomber damaged by enemy fire and blazing furiously as he initiated his dive, Ensign Doyle resolutely continued his bold run over a Japanese heavy cruiser, plunging through an intense barrage of anti-aircraft shells to release his deadly bomb at a perilous altitude, scoring a destructive hit on the hostile warship. He pulled up from the dive and subsequently brought his burning plane down in a well-executed landing on the water.

Was there any ceremony at which the medal was presented to you?

**JRD:** The citation that came with the medal says that it occurred on the fifth of November, when it actually occurred on the twenty-fifth. The ceremony was held after I returned home to Lincoln at the University of Nebraska. The captain in command of the Naval ROTC pinned the medal on me when I was home on leave in February of 1946.<sup>29</sup> After I had been rescued but before I got home, I wrote my dad the following letter [see pp. 214-15], which Joe W. Seacrest framed in glass, and my dad kept it on his desk for the rest of his life.<sup>30</sup>

## Epilogue

Following Dugie's discharge from the navy, he completed college and law school. In 1947 he was a member of the University of Nebraska football team and on October 18, 1947, played for the Cornhuskers against Notre Dame. On December 26, 1948, he married Barbara Benjamin of Los Angeles, California. After his admission to the Nebraska bar on June 21, 1952, he practiced law in Lincoln with his father, Lum Doyle, until the latter's untimely death on April 29, 1954. In addition to a successful law practice, Dugie devoted many hours to his family and friends, and to serving others in need. He was president of the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism, served on the board of directors of the Alcoholism Council of Nebraska, and a term as chairman of the National Council on Alcoholism. In 1994 he received the Award of Special Merit from the Nebraska State Bar Association for his work in establishing the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program. Dugie maintained life-long contact with his dive bomber squadron. In later years he joined fellow veterans in advocating that Ben Kuroki, a Nebraska native of Japanese ancestry, receive appropriate recognition for his exceptionally meritorious combat service during World War II.

John Remine "Dugie" Doyle died on August 28, 2013, one day after playing golf at his beloved Country Club of Lincoln. His wife Barbara, son Timothy and wife Mary, son Louis and wife Diana, grandchildren John, Anne, and step-grandchild Kristin, many friends, and fellow Americans will always be grateful for and indebted to the Anopheles mosquito that gave Dugie malaria in 1944, thereby extending his charming, talented, and generous life for nearly seventy years. 📄

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In May 1953, during an overly exuberant classroom celebration at Lincoln High shortly before graduation, a member of the 1953 class grabbed a shoe and threw it into a heating duct, the screen of which had become partially detached. As his punishment, the student was ordered by the principal to go down to the boiler room, enter the innards of the heating system, and crawl up to the second story where the shoe was supposedly located. On his way he found, still legible on the wall of the large heating duct, the words "Dugie Doyle was here, 1941." Perhaps that helps explain why his parents sent him to the stricter discipline of the Jesuit High School in Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> Here Doyle is in error. Kiefer was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy from Nebraska's First Congressional District in 1915 and graduated from the academy in the class of 1919. "Biographies in Naval History," [www.history.navy.mil/bio/keifer\\_dixie](http://www.history.navy.mil/bio/keifer_dixie), accessed Mar. 12, 2014 (hereafter Keifer biography).

<sup>3</sup> The Landing Signal Officer (LSO) used hand-held "paddles" to direct pilots during carrier landings. The LSO used lighted wands during night landings.

<sup>4</sup> The SB2C "Helldiver" only marginally improved on the SBD "Dauntless" dive bomber's speed and bomb load, though it did have folding wings better suited for carrier operations, which the "Dauntless" did not. The "Helldiver" was heavier and trickier to fly, leading some pilots to nickname it "The Beast." Some 7,140 "Helldivers" were produced, more than any other dive bomber. See Robert Guttman, "Curtiss SB2C Helldiver: The Last Dive Bomber," *Aviation History* (July 2000).

<sup>5</sup> The navy's designation for these squadrons was VF for fighters, VB for dive bombers, and VT for torpedo bombers. The "V" signified "heavier-than-air" aircraft, while the second letter indicated the aircraft type. David Sears, *At War with the Wind: The Epic Struggle with Japan's World War II Suicide Bombers* (New York: Citadel Press, 2008), 81n.

<sup>6</sup> Ulithi atoll in the Caroline Islands, consisting of some thirty islets, had been seized without opposition in late September 1944. By late October the atoll had been readied as a supply and repair base to support future operations by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Keith Wheeler, "The Road to Tokyo," a volume in *World War II* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1979), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Dixie Kiefer (1896-1945), had been executive officer of the carrier USS *Yorktown* during the 1942 battles of the Coral Sea and Midway before taking command of the new carrier USS *Ticonderoga*, which was commissioned on May 8, 1944. Born in Idaho, Kiefer and his family moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where he attended the public schools before being appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy. After his commissioning as ensign, he served on various vessels until becoming a naval aviator on Dec. 26, 1922.

On Jan. 21, 1945, *Ticonderoga* was hit twice by Japanese *kamikazes*. One of the kamikaze strikes inflicted multiple shrapnel wounds and a broken arm on Kiefer, although he remained in command on the bridge for twelve hours. While recovering from his injuries, Kiefer was assigned to command the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. He had not yet completely recovered when he was killed in a navy transport plane crash near Fishkill, New York, on Nov. 11, 1945. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Kiefer had been awarded the Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, and Purple Heart for his World War II service. Keifer biography.

<sup>8</sup> The first USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) was sunk June 7, 1942, during the Battle of Midway. The second USS *Yorktown* (CV-10) was commissioned in 1942 and decommissioned in 1947.

<sup>9</sup> The "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot" took place on June 19-20, 1944, during the U.S. campaign to take the Mariana Islands of Saipan, Guam, and Tinian. The Japanese navy sent most of its surviving warships to repel the U.S. offensive. In what was known officially as the Battle of the Philippine Sea, the U.S. Fifth Fleet, commanded by Adm. Raymond Spruance, destroyed some 400 Japanese aircraft, sank three Japanese aircraft carriers, and severely damaged many other Japanese warships. See Sears, *At War with the Wind*, Chap. 6, "Clearing Skies, June 1944," for firsthand accounts of the battle.

<sup>10</sup> Adm. William F. "Bull" Halsey, commander of the U.S. Third Fleet. This was the same fleet Spruance commanded during the Battle of the Philippine Sea. When Spruance had the command, it was known as the Fifth Fleet. Using a unique command system, the U.S. Navy rotated its Pacific Fleet commanders about every four months to provide them respite from battle. Wheeler, "The Road to Tokyo," 79.

<sup>11</sup> The October 23-25, 1944, Battle of Leyte Gulf developed when the Japanese sent a decoy force to draw Halsey and the U.S. fast carriers to the north while their battleships and cruisers, divided into three task forces, transited the interior Philippine waterways to attack the American invasion forces in Leyte Gulf. Despite the absence of Halsey's carriers, American escort carriers, battleships, and destroyers were able to force the Japanese into retreat with heavy losses. Overall, the Battle of Leyte Gulf effectively destroyed the Japanese navy. Sears, *At War with the Wind*, Chap. 8, "Narrow Straits, October 1944," provides a summary of the battle.

<sup>12</sup> Manila and Clark Field were on Luzon, the northernmost Philippine island, still occupied by the Japanese.

<sup>13</sup> The first Japanese *kamikaze* or suicide attacks against U.S. warships began on Oct. 25, 1944, and would continue throughout the Philippine campaign and during the invasions of Iwo Jima (Feb.-Mar. 1945), and Okinawa (Apr. - June 1945). See Sears, *At War with the Wind*.

<sup>14</sup> The warship was the *Kumano*, one of Japan's four *Mogami*-class cruisers. *Kumano* had previously been severely damaged by air strikes and a submarine attack. It was being repaired in Santa Cruz harbor when the planes from *Ticonderoga* hit it with five torpedoes and four, five-hundred-pound bombs on Nov. 25, 1944. The *Kumano* capsized and sank. [www.combinedfleet.com/kumano](http://www.combinedfleet.com/kumano), accessed Mar. 12, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Dozens of Filipino resistance groups sprang up in response to the Japanese occupation, estimated to total some 250,000 guerrillas by the time of the U.S. invasion in October 1944. Rafael Steinberg, "Return to the Philippines," a volume in *World War II* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1980), 18.

<sup>16</sup> A dictionary definition of this Asiatic palm says that liquor is made from its sap.

<sup>17</sup> Merrill has not been further identified. Maj. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright commanded the American and Filipino forces in the defense of the Bataan Peninsula in 1941-42. After MacArthur was evacuated from the Philippines in March 1942, promising to return, it fell to Wainwright to surrender the stronghold of Corregidor in Manila Bay and the rest of the Philippines to the Japanese on May 7, 1942. Arthur Zich, "The Rising Sun," a volume in *World War II* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1977), 95-97.

<sup>18</sup> The Battle of the Bulge was the December 1944 German offensive into Luxembourg and Belgium.

<sup>19</sup> The Hukbalahaps, or "Huks" were only one of the political factions within the overall Philippine resistance movement, which sometimes led to internal discord rather than unified action against the Japanese occupation. Steinberg, "Return to the Philippines," 18.

<sup>20</sup> *Cabot* was CVL-28, a light carrier constructed on a hull originally laid down as a cruiser. [www.vf31.com/CVL/cabot](http://www.vf31.com/CVL/cabot), accessed Mar. 12, 2014. *Franklin* and *Bennington* were *Essex*-class carriers.

<sup>21</sup> On Jan. 9, 1945, U.S. forces landed on the west coast of Luzon at Lingayen Gulf. MacArthur waded ashore on the same day. His first return to Philippine soil had occurred on Leyte Oct. 20, 1944, both episodes providing photo opportunities. Steinberg, "Return to the Philippines," frontispiece and 78.

<sup>22</sup> The PBY "Catalina" flying boat was nicknamed "Dumbo" after the flying elephant in the Walt Disney cartoons.

<sup>23</sup> The Douglas A-20 "Havoc" twin-engine light bomber also excelled in ground attacks. Ronald H. Bailey, "The Air War in Europe," a volume in *World War II* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1981), 199.

<sup>24</sup> The waters between the Philippines and Southeast Asia are known as the South China Sea.

<sup>25</sup> The A-20 was designed to carry a three-man crew. Bailey, "The Air War in Europe," 199.

<sup>26</sup> Doyle and the other men were rescued about noon on January 10, 1945, according to the letter he wrote to his father dated January 11, which appears as an illustration with this article.

<sup>27</sup> The species that carries and transmits the malaria parasite.

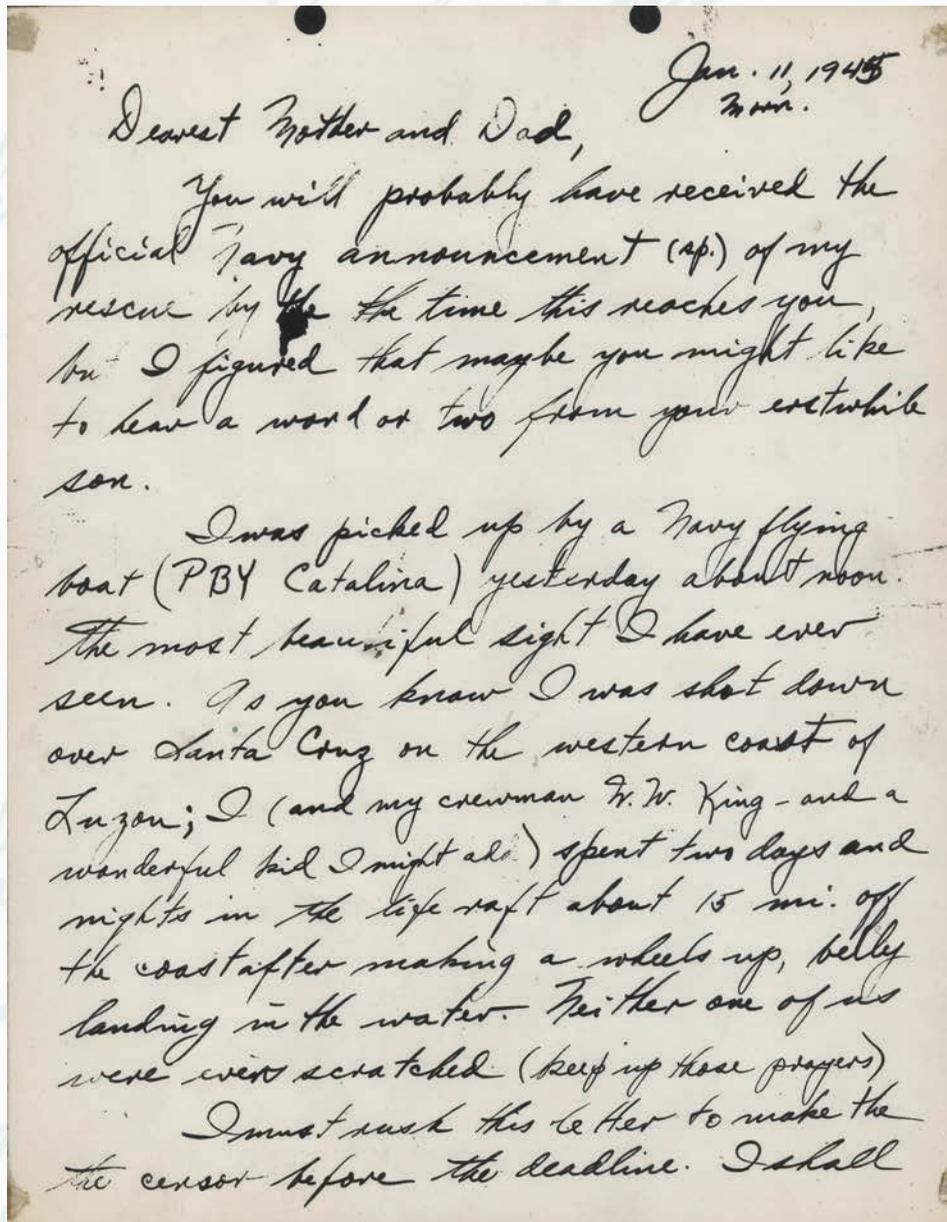
<sup>28</sup> Atabrine is the trade name for a synthetic drug used to treat malaria, while quinine is an extract of cinchona bark.

<sup>29</sup> Doyle is mistaken about the date. He received the Navy Cross on Oct. 26, 1945, at a University of Nebraska "Navy Day" ceremony. The medal was presented by Rear Adm. Arthur C. Davis. The admiral also decorated Capt. M. D. Matthews, commander of the university's naval ROTC program, during the same ceremony. *Lincoln Journal*, Oct. 26, 1945.

<sup>30</sup> Seacrest was publisher of the *Lincoln Journal* newspaper.



Doyle's letter to his parents written the day after his rescue. Courtesy of the Doyle Family



Jan. 11, 1945

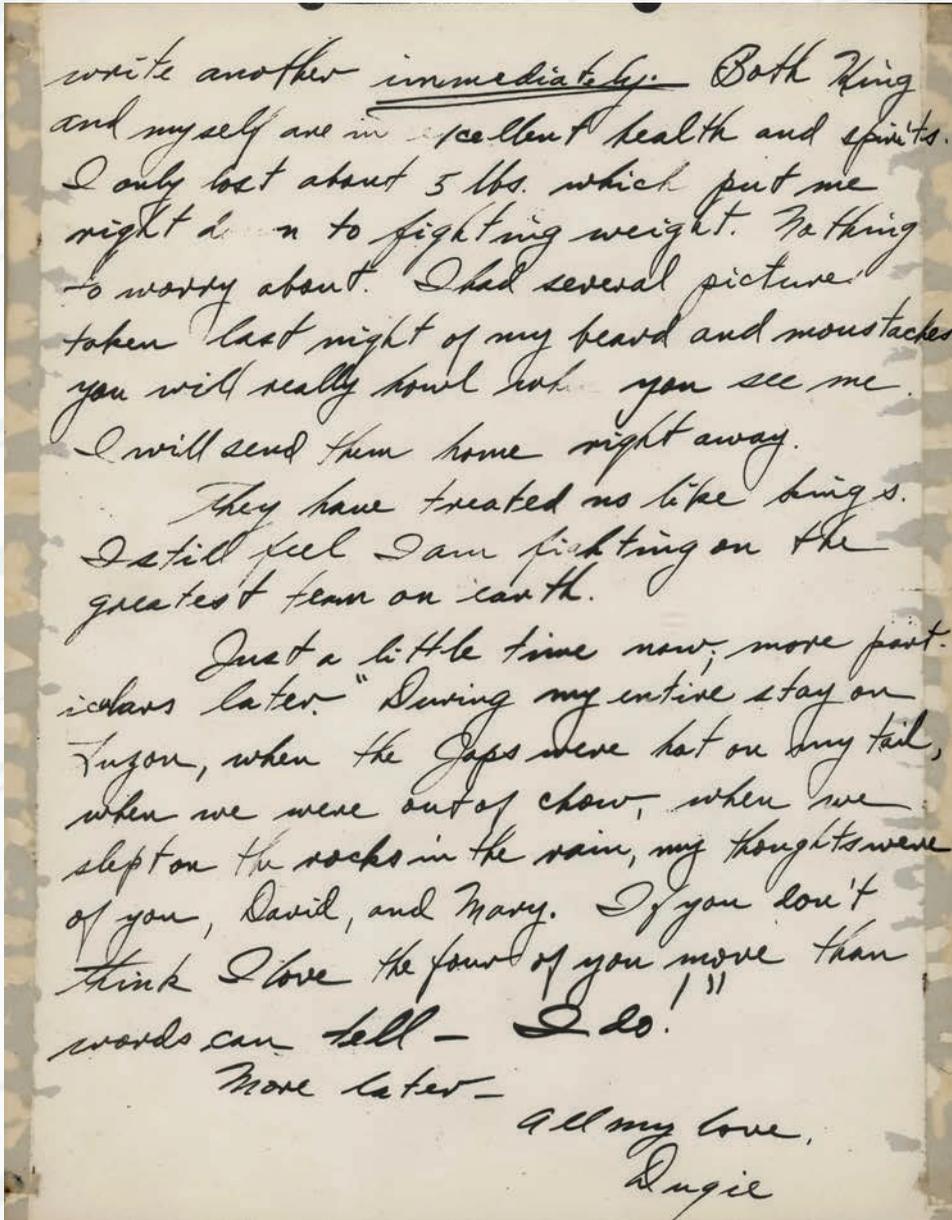
Morn.

Dearest Mother and Dad,

You will probably have received the official navy announcement (sp.) of my rescue by the time this reaches you, but I figured that maybe you might like to hear a word or two from your erstwhile son.

I was picked up by a navy flying boat (PBY Catalina) yesterday about noon. The most beautiful sight I have ever seen. As you know I was shot down over Santa Cruz on the western coast of Luzon. I (and my crewman W. W. King—and a wonderful kid I might add) spent two days and nights in the life raft about 15 mi. off the coast after making a wheels up, belly landing in the water. Neither one of us were even scratched (keep up those prayers).

I must rush this letter to make the censor before the deadline. I shall write another immediately. Both King and myself are in excellent health and spirits. I only lost about



5 lbs. which put me right down to fighting weight. Nothing to worry about. I had several pictures taken last night of my beard and moustache. You will really howl when you see me. I will send them home right away.

They have treated us like kings. I still feel I am fighting on the greatest team on earth.

Just a little time now; more particulars later. During my entire stay on Luzon, when the Japs were hot on my tail, when we were out of chow, when we slept on the rocks in the rain, my thoughts were of you, David, and Mary. If you don't think I love the four of you more than words can tell—I do!

More later—  
All my love,  
Dugie