"Forty-seven Years Late"

A few humorous and non-humorous happenings of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, before, during, and after the first offensive against the Japanese at Tulagi and Guadalcanal from August 7, 1942, to January 31, 1943,-- the start of the long road to Japan.

by Dallas R. Bennett

Camp Elliott, California, was home and training area for the Second Regiment of the Second Marine Division prior to and during its formation. Physical conditioning and combat training, as well as loading and landing operations from shipboard in and around the San Diego area, were conducted during the spring and early summer of 1942. The Second Battalion left San Diego aboard the transport, President Hayes, spending the Fourth of July at sea, and were accompanied by the rest of the regiment aboard the President Adams, President Jackson, and the Crescent City. These transports became known to those Second Marines aboard them as "The Unholy Four." We were fueled at sea near the Christmas Islands as we crossed and recrossed the equator. The crew and "Old Salts" who had crossed the equator before initiated most of us "Polliwogs" into "Shellbacks."

A stop was made in the Friendly Islands at Tonga where we rode out a tropical storm in a sheltered harbor. Even so, the Hayes was blown backward with its anchor out, and it had to run the motors to avoid being grounded. We were given a few hours ashore to become accustomed to land again which turned out to be the last land under our feet until our landing on Tulagi.

A practice landing in the Fijis was called off as we headed for the beach in the landing boats because the surf

was too high. A similar experience by the First Marine Division in the same area was retold in the Guadacanal Campaign Veterans' publication Echoes in the March-April, 1990, issue with about the same results.

A story by Ore Marion (L-3-5), "The First Wave That Almost Missed the Boat," in the Echoes, March-April, 1990, brings the following to mind:

When sighted, the convoy of the Second Regiment aboard the "Unholy Four" with our escort including the North Carolina (?) caused the Fuller and other ships to abandon "The First Wave" on Koro Island in the Fijis. This may have given rise to Marion's comment: "Screw the troops; save the ships."

Koro Island may have been where the Second Regiment of the Second Marine Division was to have our practice landing. Widely known as the "Silent Second" that silence could have let us come up on the First Division unannounced causing their ships to take off, leaving (L-3-5) ashore. It was in the Fijis that we too went over the side on cargo nets and formed our "V" of landing boats. Following that point-boat, we headed for the beach where breakers were very large and there was plenty of "white water" showing. We watched the point-boat being caught in a giant wave and turned sideways. It seemed to be held in mid-air, then it rolled over, and

men and weapons fell into the water, washed, rolled, and struggled until they appeared on the beach. We were waved off and made to circle, and told to keep our heads below the gunnel, and as a result get the full benefit of the diesel fumes. As we circled and waited, I ended up being held over the side; the fumes had done their job, and I fed the fish, too busy to see or care if others had the same fate of casting food upon the waters. It could have been "The Beans and Cornbread" which the Navy rated as their favorite meal and not the diesel fumes that had gotten to me.

As we left the Fijis, we were informed that we were on our way to a place that none of us had ever heard about, "Guadalcanal." We were furnished some recently taken air photos to supplement the very limited maps of our combat area with strangely spelled names from those relayed to us. Aboard our transport, the boredom of poker games had consolidated down to one last game with most of the available money in it. The night of the 6th of August found many of us standing at the rail staring into the darkness watching the phosphorescent wake of our ship. The night's silence was disturbed only by a poker game winner, "Honest John Garcia," skipping his silver winnings off the deck and out into the sea, saying that he didn't want any extra weight as he went ashore.

Dawn came August 7th, 1942, at a place between Guadalcanal and Tulagi, British Solomon Islands which later became known as "Iron Bottom Bay." There in sight was the largest fleet of ships ever assembled in the Pacific up to that time. The support ships divided and began shelling the designated landing areas of "Red" and "Blue" beaches and other targets which I recorded in my diary at 06:15 hours. A report of a 6" gun position on Gavutu was received on our ship. Task Force Groups "X-Ray" and "Yoke" troop transports began to unload first wave troops into the waiting landing craft. Shortly thereafter, the 1st Battalion 2nd Marine Regiment reported to us aboard the Hayes that the first objective had been taken. This report at 08:20 hours heralded the first troops ashore in the entire operation. The next report was that the First Raider Battalion was ashore on the isle of Tulagi at 09:05 hours. This was the start of the long, hard, and costly road to Japan. Being a witness and recording that day, little did I realize that I would in just over three years later, bear witness to the peaceful landing in Nagasaki, Japan.

The role of the 2nd Regiment of the 2nd Marine Division was one of being available aboard our "Unholy Four," combat loaded at a time when time and transports were at a premium. The 7th Regiment of the 1st Marine Division was on Somoa in defense of that area and was the unit that we replaced in

operation "Watchtower." In the following six months we often wondered if it weren't a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This was borne out as time went by. We were the adoptive "Bastard" outfit that was never to be under the control of our 2nd Division General for support and not allowed to land. Protocol ruled and since he would have out-ranked the other generals after Vandergrift's departure, we were still low men on the totem pole and not relieved until January 31, 1943, nearly six months after the landing. Things really began to look up for us when we once again boarded the Hayes and headed for New Zealand. Once aboard, it was like "Old Home Week," having hot water and plenty to eat. This brought about the end of my "handle-bar moustache and goatee" and a start to questions from replacement troops as to,"Who is that strange platoon sergeant?"

Parts of our unit, being held in reserve, spent the day at the ready, not knowing when our turn would come. We did come to know what air strikes by the Japanese against the fleet were like. Sometimes we were on deck to cheer each successful downing of the enemy aircraft by the ship's anti-aircraft batteries or our carrier planes. At other times we were sealed below deck in the water tight troop compartment, not knowing what or how the action was going. At last it was our turn to go over the side and head for

"Blue Beach" on Tulagi. My section was divided into separate landing craft, Lt. Ben T. Owens with some and I with the other. An added responsibility was that of taking Brig. Gen. W. R. Rupertus, the senior 2nd Division officer ashore. "Blue Beach" was at a place where the Japanese had established a cemetery and was heavily forested. Accounts and times of "D-Day" and a drawing of our landing area was made by Cpl. A. Piatek and myself in a diary. These are the only records that we kept of the action and our initiation to enemy fire.

We safely delivered the General to the 1st Raider Battalion Command Post at a house called the "Residence" situated on one of the highest elevations and about midway on this less than 100 acre island. The northern half of Tulagi was densely covered with trees and underbrush. The southern half of Tulagi had been partially cleared with only small clumps covered with underbrush and trees. These did afford cover for snipers, as did the buildings, caves and bomb shelters in the protruding rocks that made up the area called the "Point." A well worn path along the beach encircled all except the northwestern part of the island.

As the night of the 8th approached, we were assembled at an area called the parade ground or maybe King George playing field which was a set-up of self-relieving guard posts, established so that no one moved in the dark. This

proved to be the undoing and death of a Japanese when in the night he attempted to infiltrate by calling, "Corporal of the Guard, post number so and so." Because there was no Corporal of the guard, he was shot without a challenge. Several amphibious tractors in this area afforded some protection from sniper fire and from a light rainfall. The discovery of an ant hill spoiled the comfort of my dry position. This beach location did give us a ringside view of the first of many night-time sea battles off Savo Island.

Many of the buildings were built two-to-three feet above ground-level with metal roofs and water tanks to catch the rain water since there was no fresh water on the island. The Japanese utilized these buildings, their attics, and water tanks for sniper cover. Each had to be destroyed or given a spray of machine gun fire or rifle fire and grenades. One such building, clearly marked as a hospital, contained snipers. Later investigation displayed the bodies where they had taken up their last stand, which proved this method of checking was the only way. A Gunnery Sgt. Jesse R. Glover and old "China Hand" from our "H" company used his unit and grenades to greet these holdouts in their sector. One of the last caves to be neutralized was one of those dug midway through the ground-level passageway cut from "Government Wharf" to "King George Field" on the opposite side of the island. This cut was only about ten foot wide,

and as I remember, it was nearly thirty feet deep. This had been made as a short cut and eliminated going over the higher elevation which extended down the center of Tulagi. Caves dug into the sidewalls of this cut made it almost impossible to approach the caves without being exposed to those who were in the caves.

Dirt thrown from above, satchel charges, and covering fire proved to be the end of those who were isolated in these caves. By this time nearly all resistance had been overcome, and our company was on highest elevation above the point. This location gave us a grandstand view of the impending action across the bay toward Tanambogo. Gavutu was basically secure, and by then shelling by a destroyer had begun softening up the next objective, Tanambogo. The shock waves from this point-blank fire would obscure the island each time that they fired. We could not believe that in such a concentrated bombardment that anyone could survive, but they did. In 1989, I contacted in writing one of the Japanese survivors, Masaichiro Miyagawa, who in the publication by the Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans called The Echoes, gave his account of his escape to Florida Island, his capture by natives, and of his being turned over to the Americans on Tulagi.

Next came the assault by two of our tanks from Palm Island which were tanks of World War I vintage with a 37

millimeter gun as the main weapon. Troops were to land on the north shore, and at the same time units would come from Gavutu across the connecting causeway. This formed a three pronged attack with covering artillery fire from Gavutu. We witnessed the stopping of our lead tank when the defending Japanese jambed the track on one side which caused the tank to spin. Lt. Robert Sweeney kept the 37 millimeter gun of the spinning tank firing into the sand and rocks in an evasive action. A later body count revealed that Sweeney's action killed 42 Japanese before he in turn lost his own life. The second tank became wedged between palm trees and was of little or no use. This was the first use of tanks as a part of the South Pacific offensive.

As calm settled in over the task force "Yoke" area, action accelerated across "Sealark Channel" as the stunned Japanese forces who had fled into the jungles of Guadalcanal realized that Marines of the 1st Division had taken up "Homestead Rights" in their previous settlement. Day and night Japanese air raids and sea battles were on the increase as the Japanese tried to reinforce their beleaguered contingent. Assessment by our command, following the loss of Allied ships on the night of August 8th, determined that the area should be cleared of all ships. Word ashore was, "We can't build more ships, but we can draft more men." The high morale of those ashore

following the successful landings dropped like the ship's cargo when the contents of the nets were emptied into the sea as the ship prepared to get underway.

The limited supplies of food, medicine, and ammunition which was put ashore during the initial landing was not augmented before the ships left. The small backpack cans of rations would be the basic chow. The nearly 8 ounce can was to be shared by two in the morning and a second can was to be shared at night. All who survived on those rations can relate to my discovery about them. Nearly three years later I married while stationed at the Naval Ammunition Depot at Hastings, Nebraska, and as we set up housekeeping and began shopping, I found those same small cans of rations on the shelf of a store. The original Federal contents label had been printed over, "Not for Human Consumption, Dog Food Only."

Medical supplies had been limited to those that were needed to treat the wounded with little or nothing else for all the other tropical maladies that had beset us: tropical dysentery, jungle rot, coral infection, and most of all malaria. During our incoming time aboard transports, we had started a regimen of bulk quinine. There seemed to be an ample supply of powdered quinine, but no capsules. Doctors and corpsmen prepared a 45 caliber shell-casing with a handle which held the desired dosage. This was administered

on the tongue while we were in the chow line. Anyone who has ever had to taste the powdered quinine, much less before eating, will sympathize. I overcame the taste by wrapping my quota in folded toilet paper before swallowing. It was tough to do but it was a way to get it down without having to put up with the taste. Later, the use of "atabrine," the synthetic quinine tablets, made it a breeze to take, even though it still tasted horrible and turned our skin and eyes yellow. We still contracted malaria because our defenses were just plain outnumbered by the mosquitoes.

The ringside seat on Tulagi had many anxious hours during both the day and the night. Many of the 2nd Regiment's units were sent on patrols by landing craft to nearby islands. On one such occasion, I accompanied such a patrol to the far side of Florida Island via the very deep channel that bisects it. Later this channel was used as a safe anchorage under the island's natural camouflage, the overhanging jungle. As we moved along at a very low speed, our coxswain lowered the ramp on our craft allowing us to lie on our stomach and view the colorful tropical sea life that our doctors told us might be poisonous to handle or to eat. This bitter warning to us hungry Marines was extended further to include any thought of having a pork or chicken dinner during our contact with the natives.

Our patrols were to check and maintain as friendly a relationship as possible with the natives in exchange for information and/or Japanese prisoners that they might have captured. This was an area in which the Japanese had failed and had contributed to the natives' resentment and distrust of them. Our instructions were to do everything that we could for them but to leave the livestock, gardens, and women alone. The latter was the easiest to comply with because the women hid when we approached and were seldom seen.

Back on Tulagi, we tried to augment our diet with taro root, a potato-like food, and anything else that we could forage. Our discovery of seed peas in one of the buildings brought visions of a great meal. Not so, after boiling the closely watched pot of peas for several days, they still rattled like buckshot in the container, so we ate them uncooked, centers and all. They no doubt came to the island with the first boatload of Englishmen who set up headquarters there.

Fresh water was non-existent unless it was brought in with all the available "Jerry Cans" by boat from Florida. Some cans had been used to bring gas or other fuel ashore during the landing. The medics added iodine to each of the containers in an effort to purify them. A quick drink, a healthy belch, and your parched, gas-burned throat was

wetted and medicinally treated all in one fell swoop. Our discovery of a rain-filled storage tank of water worked well for a time to obtain drinking water and to brush our teeth. This, however, came to an abrupt halt when a Japanese body was found in it.

To add to all our shortages, the maladies of the island began to take their toll. Military historians of the Army tell of their discovery that coveralls were not a good jungle uniform when dysentery struck. The Marines had already made the change to belted trousers and jackets of the same marine-green, denim material. These were too time consuming when a hurried "nature call" was eminent. We called those nature calls the "Tulagi Trots." Our speedy solution was to use a razor blade to remove the thread from the crotch, skivvy drawers (shorts) having been discarded after the first attack. This too had failures when we, under night-time shelling stumbled, tripped, or fell and found that it was just too late.

Air raid warnings and night-time shellings of Tulagi by the enemy was on a secondary target basis with checks by their naval ships and searchlights. One such daylight check was an inspection by a Japanese destroyer (it looked like at least a cruiser to me) that entered the harbor between Tulagi and Gavutu. We were ordered to go into hiding, showing nothing that would indicate that we still occupied

those islands. We did have some artillery with which to defend ourselves, but we had very little ammunition for it, and we wouldn't have been able to trade fire power with the destroyer. We could count the men on the deck and had to restrain our "H" Company Gunnery Sgt. Glover who wanted to clear the deck with his 81mm mortors. During this standoff, a Cpl. DeLong, also from "H" company, had taken his squad deep into the brush as he awaited a call to defend against a landing or a more welcome "All Clear" call. When that "All Clear" did come, he led the squad back toward their assigned area. He carried his BAR (Browining Automatic Rifle) following the same trail that he and his squad had used when they went into the interior. In doing so, he came face-to-face with a Japanese soldier who was standing upright in the hollow tree with his rifle by his side. A startled DeLong attempted to back up, only to sit down after bumping into a closely following squad member. He later told of making several passes at the BAR to put a shell into the chamber to arm it.

Others said that he must not have lost any time at all, even from his sitting position, as he fired several rounds before the Jap could raise his weapon. This may have been the last known survivor of the Japanese force on the island.

Back near the destroyer in the bay, we were told that a coxswain, returning from taking a patrol to Florida Island,

had spotted the warship and in a quick but clever decision headed at top speed toward that enemy ship. We could only assume that the ship's captain thought that the landing craft was a "PT" boat, and being caught in this limited water, the captain and his destroyer fled the area, much to our relief.

My accounts of these experiences, as I recall them after nearly fifty years aren't always in the proper sequence. Each time that I put them into writing, I find that they serve to generate other memories.

Just how long that we were left without sufficient food has long since been forgotten, but at the time we had only our thoughts of all the delicious meals that we would someday enjoy: dining on steaks and holiday, family meals. There was not a supply of foodstuffs that the enemy had left behind on Tulagi, and it was not until we had gone to Guadalcanal that such supplies were sampled. One of the canned items was heavily oiled and packed locusts which were much like sardines. Needless to say Jim Kangel of Winona, Minnesota, and I were about the only ones who could stomach them.

Our first food shipment to my recollection was by what had been a four-stacker destroyer converted to what was known as a Marine Transport. The forward motors were

removed, as well as much of the armament, and folding bunks were installed. We had had some experience with these transports while in "Dago" and maneuvers off San Clemente, Catalina, and the beaches of southern California. Arrival of the first of these heavily-laden transports with so much food piled in every available space caused the bow to be lower than the stern.

Hand-unloading at Government Wharf by very willing volunteers was something to behold. My section and I soon became volunteers and were also soon known as Ali Baba and my thieves. My "Chief Thief," Jack Lewis (a borderline kleptomaniac from Van Alstyne, Texas and now deceased), has to be one of the most "unforgetable characters" that I've ever known. Each time that the opportunity arose, a case of fruit disappeared, causing an order for armed guards on these supplies.

One thing that was unloaded, but never mentioned in all of our talks of a future dream meal or even as a part of them, was fresh bread. The loaf that I purloined was hand eaten like "Angel food cake;" no additional spread was needed. Tropical butter and Austrailian marmalade were items we came to know and dislike later on Guadlacanal. As our stash of the gallons of forbidden fruit were shared, we found that two of us could consume the entire contents of

peaches or pears at one sitting, not so with cherries or pineapple.

Tulagi was soon to become the focal point for the supply line as more shipping became available. Another addition to this shipping was wooden boats that we came to know as "Yippee Boats." These were loaded from our supplies and would make night time runs across the channel to Guadalcanal, avoiding daylight bombings and night-time enemy sea patrols. On one such a run, a "Yippee Boat" was caught in the spotlight of one of the Japanese warships and had to make a mad dash for the nearest land which was the tip of Tulagi. As they dodged the enemy gunfire of both machine gun and heavier guns, the tip of Tulagi was illuminated as well as our defense foxholes. One of the occupants of such a fox- hole made the decision to stay put. As he was the recipient of the gunfire, he did not want to give them a visible moving target. His next decision was one that not many would have made even in the face of enemy fire. He survived by lying still as a red hot dud rolled into his foxhole with him. By raising up on his elbows, he only suffered burns on his belly.

The return of some of our ships with supplies brought with them officers and men from our regimental echelon. With this influx, privileges of rank filtered down, and those of us who were in the original landing and had been

able to have quarters in buildings that had withstood the battle, now found ourselves taking up quarters under those houses. One of these stilted buildings had a crawl space that was nearly three feet in height, and it had a dry sand floor. The house became headquarters for the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment at an area called Sasapi. Our intelligence and communications sections made this crawl space home.

One of the men in my section, J. J. Clausen from the Chicago area, who learned that my issue Elgin wrist watch had quit, thought that he might be able to repair it. Using a sewing kit and a pocket knife, he found that the main spring had broken. By the use of the point of a needle, J. J. riveted the main spring back together, but as he was reassembling the watch, the tiny balance-wheel spring fell to the sandy floor of the crawl space. After searching the house above him, he found a small tea strainer which he used to sift the sand cupful-by-cupful until he recovered the lost spring. Now that I have a windup watch, I still remember and use his instructions that he gave me when he returned the watch. He told me to wind the watch as near as possible at the same time each day. When I returned to the states about a year later, I took this same watch to a jeweler in San Diego, thinking that I'd replace the riveted mainspring. When he opened the watch, he asked if it was still keeping time. I assured him that it did. He handed

it back saying that it was so full of rust that it wasn't worth the cost of repairs. I have long since lost the watch.

Date - Late Aug-Aug Guadalcanal on Sept 1, 1942

One of the first large supply ships to make it almost into Tulagi harbor was the USS William Ward ~~Burroughs~~ Burrows. When I state "almost," that is just what happened; the ~~Burroughs~~ Burrows went aground. This made the ~~Burroughs~~ Burrows vulnerable to Japanese air and sea patrols, and an all out effort to free her was made. Landing boats were used for "off loading," and material that would float was dumped into the bay.

One of the floating items was large bundles of plywood strapped together and destined to become quonset-hut decks. Being ever alert to anything that would improve our living conditions, James A. Kangel, from Winona, MN, and I spotted one such bundle floating in the bay. We swam out and salvaged it. Through the combined effort of the Intelligence and Communicaiton's sections, we removed every other stud from an existing building, and with these and the plywood, we constructed the first new building on Tulagi at Sasapi. Jim and I had had some building experience prior to the Corps, and we were proud of the structure, but it did lack fly and mosquito protection. This was solved, however, by my "thieves" who drew a "midnight requisition" of a roll of brass screen wire.

"Scuttlebutt" (rumors), always a part of any servicemen's gathering, was rampant, and to dispel this, we were able to "tap" the Battalion Commander's phone line with an ear phone, courtesy of the Communications section. The Communications sections had always worked together with my intelligence crew, dating back to our training days in California when all of their equipment in those days were transported by hand carts. On these maneuvers, our help was always welcome, especially during one maneuver up Palomar mountain. That bond continues between us to this day. This is best demonstrated by my friendship with communications chief of that era, Max Stamps, who now lives in Burleson, Texas. One event in the life of Max and his wife, Mary Louise, was that of my taking them them to be married at Yuma, AZ, in November of 1941.

This couple along with Mert "O" Whitlow and his wife Frances of Tulsa, Oklahoma, have had several mini-reunions with Lois and I, including one in 1989 to the Guadalcanal Veteran's Museum in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Another such reunion was with Stan Wedlock and his wife Angie out in Wyoming in 1988. We also have made several other visits to and written to members of our two sections.

Back to my memories of Tulagi is another of Jim Kangel, my chief builder of the first building. His full auburn beard was the result of necessity, for after the landing we

had no razor or blades. After all, we were only supposed to be there for 72 hours before being relieved. That relief turned out to be nearly six months later on the 31st of January, 1943. Jim's beard was removed after he tried to wash it with sea water and salt water soap, and he vowed never to grow one again. This was a lesson, for those of us who wore goatees and moustaches, that we would never forget, "Don't use salt water soap on them."

Another joint-sections' venture was to maitain a 50 caliber machine gun with which to defend our area. This weapon was our pride and joy, and we were determined to show the rest of our Battalion our knowledge of its cleaning, care, and use. One day, while it was totally "field stripped" we missed our chance to be "heroes." This was the day that a single Japanese plane, unannounced by air raid warning, came flying by at just about tree-top level. It had the biggest "Meatball" painted on it that any of us had ever witnessed, and it was not over 200 yards from our disassembled gun's site. This was one of many incidents that made us very insecure on this tiny island, and it gave rise to thoughts of self-preservation should the island become undefendable. We had visions of those Americans caught in the Japanese invasion of the Phillipines and the guerrilla warfare that the Japanese conducted there.

One way of passing time while we waited and wondered, "What's next?" was to recall songs. One such ballad was one that my Intelligence section officer, Ben T. Owens knew. I have since looked from time to time to see if I could find all of the words. All that I could come up with were as follows: "They fought all that night 'neath the low pallor light, expecting the victor to cheer, but they only drew nigh to hear the last sigh of ~~Abdul the Bull Bull Lamire~~ "ABDULLAH BULBUL AMIR" (over f/copy)." We thought of our homes and families, when we might hear from them, what they were being told of our predicament, and the lack of supplies. My first recollection of sending out mail was of Colonel Pressley giving instructions on what could be written and the furnishing of paper, a rare commodity at that time. These were collected and no doubt screened and placed in one large envelope, and we were told that the letters were sent to his wife who then sent them on in individual envelopes. My impression was that she furnished these envelopes and stamps if required until "Free" and "V Mail" became available to us. Later in the campaign, incoming mail and packages began to arrive as supplies and ships became available. Some arrived wet, moldy, crushed, and with the taste of gasoline or other fuel, depending on what they were shipped with. Nevertheless, the knowledge that they came from home, made them delicious.

Abdullah Bulbul Amir

The sons of the prophet are brave men and bold,
And quite unaccustomed to fear,
But the bravest of all was a man, I am told,
Named Abdullah Bulbul Amir.

When they needed a man to encourage the van,
Or to harass a foe from the rear,
Storm fort or redoubt, they had only to shout
For Abdullah Bulbul Amir.

This son of the desert in battle aroused,
Could split twenty men on his spear.
A terrible creature when sober or soused,
Was Abdullah Bulbul Amir.

Now the heroes were plenty and well known to fame
Who fought in the ranks of the Czar;
But the bravest of these was a man by the name
Of Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

He could imitate Irving, play poker and pool,
And strum on the Spanish guitar;
In fact, quite the cream of the Muscovite team
Was Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

The ladies all loved him, his rivals were few;
He could drink them all under the bar.
As gallant or tank, there was no one to rank
With Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

One day this bold Russian had shouldered his gun,
And donned his most truculent sneer;
Downtown he did go, where he trod on the toe
Of Abdullah Bulbul Amir.

"Young man," quoth Bulbul, "has your life grown so dull
That you're anxious to end your career?
Vile infidel, know you have trod on the toe
Of Abdullah Bulbul Amir."

"So take your last look at the sunshine and brook,
And send your regrets to the Czar,
For by this I imply, you are going to die,
Mr. Ivan Skavinsky Skivar."

Said Ivan, "My friend, your remarks in the end
Will avail you but little, I fear;
For you ne'er will survive to repeat them alive,
Mr. Abdullah Bulbul Amir."

Then that bold Mameluke drew his trusty skibouk,
With a great cry of "Allah Akbar."
And with murderous intent, he ferociously went
For Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

They parried and thrust, they sidestepped and cussed,
Of blood they spilled a great part;
The philologist blokes, who seldom crack jokes,
Say that hash was first made on that spot.

They fought all that night, 'neath the pale yellow moon
The din, it was heard from afar,
And huge multitudes came, so great was the fame
Of Abdul and Ivan Skivar.

As Abdul's long knife was extracting the life,
In fact he had shouted "Huzzah"
He felt himself struck by that wily Calmuck
Count Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

The Sultan drove by in his red-breasted fly,
Expecting the victor to cheer,
But he only drew nigh just to hear the last sigh
Of Abdullah Bulbul Amir.

Czar Petrovich, too, in his spectacles blue,
Rode up in his new-crested car;
He arrived just in time to exchange a last line
With Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

There's a tomb rises up where the Blue Danube rolls,
And 'graved there in characters clear
Are, "Stranger, when passing, oh pray for the soul
Of Abdullah Bulbul Amir."

A splash in the Black Sea one dark moonless night
Caused ripples to spread wide and far.
It was made by a sack fitting close to the back
Of Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

A Muscovite maiden her lone vigil keeps
'Neath the light of the pale polar star,
And the name that she murmurs so oft' as she weeps,
Is Ivan Skavinsky Skivar.

With these thoughts of having to perform guerrilla warfare to survive, we began to assemble a compass from wrecked landing craft and other items. We also planned to go to Florida Island should the defense of Tulagi be untenable.

We did get somewhat of a morale boost with the coming of the PT boats. A close up view was mine at government wharf when several of us came upon the crew the day after a night raid on enemy ships that were shelling Guadalcanal. During that night raid a torpedo stuck in the launching tube and had been prevented from arming itself and exploding by stuffing toilet paper into the vanes of the propeller. We watched as the crew unbolted the tube and removed the torpedo just a few feet from us. My thoughts now are how foolish we were to be in such disregard of danger.

At about this time, orders came for our 2nd Battalion to move to Guadalcanal and leave our newly constructed quarters behind. In it was a British souvenir, a large, brass dedication sign from the playing field. It read in part, "Dedicated to a King and Loving People by King George..."

When and how we crossed "Sealark Channel" was a major move that should have stood the test of time, but it hasn't. One thing I'm sure of was the accomadations were not those

such as we had enjoyed on the transport Hayes on which we came to the Solomons. This harrowing ride on a landing craft or the "Yippee boat" could have been overshadowed with thoughts about what was in store for us on arrival at Guadalcanal. One thing in our favor was that it would be to an area held by friendly troops and not into enemy territory as it had been with the Tulagi landing.

Upon our arrival at Guadalcanal, we were greeted with orders to proceed along the coast trail road to take up a position along the Matanikau River. At times our column could be observed by the enemy where the trail was exposed along the beach. This observation was made by or relayed to the Japanese "Pistol Pete" or Major Akio Tani, whom I now know and correspond with. His artillery began to fire, with the first shells causing water spouts in the water just off the beach trail. Little did we know that this was his method of range finding after having lost his technical equipment during the landing. Once he had the range, he had only to move inland to fire directly on our column. His shelling on our unit forced us to seek cover wherever we could find it. We had been shelled earlier in the campaign while on Tulagi, and Max Stamps, my counterpart of the communications section made the statement on Tulagi that there was no use hitting the deck when the shell with his name on it came along. When I discovered him taking shelter

on Guadalcanal, I reminded him of his earlier statement. His reply was that taking cover this time was to avoid those shells which were marked, "To Whom They May Concern."

A jeep following this road, if it could be called a road, worked its way along our troops with the occupants talking to some us as they advanced. My feeble attempt at answering the driver's questions with as brave a front as I could muster, was that most of the shells were landing in the water. His answer was, "That is where we like to see them." He urged us on without taking any cover. It was then that I realized that this was General A. A. Vandergrift, commander of the entire landing and occupation operation. The General's jeep was the only vehicle to accompany us, not even our Battalion Commander Col. O. K. Pressley rated transportation. During our nearly six months involved with the campaign, one jeep was our entire fleet for the Battalion.

This one jeep was for multi-purpose use, hauling a water trailer and evacuating casualties and the Colonel's transportation to strategy meetings. Even as the roads were improved, I can only remember one or two times that we were trucked as we exchanged positions on the defensive perimeter.

Some areas would afford much needed rest from our attempts to advance or to those under assault by the enemy. Those of us involved questioned the designation of this as a quiet area since these same places came under shelling by the enemy ships as they overshot the primary target of the airfield. Our own anti-aircraft flak falling back to earth on the men, dog fights directly overhead, and the night time visit by "Washing Machine Charlie's" miss of his intended target made this anything but a quiet area.

Driver for our one-jeep fleet was my "Chief Thief," Jack Lewis. Trips to the water or supply dumps provided Jack with a sales outlet for any souvenirs that he could acquire by "hook or crook." The airfield was a lucrative site because the pilots had cash and another commodity, 45 caliber pistols which were in demand by our troops and not guarded by the pilots. An "acquired" Japanese tri-fold billfold was his stash for large denominations of American folding money. His ill gotten gain provided the funds for communications man, Neil Holland, and him to take a two week "AWOL" party upon our arrival in February, 1943, in New Zealand. His "AWOL" party resulted in Jack's brig time when the money ran out. Upon his release, he told me, "Sarge, ah ain't never going to do that again." His release and a payday was enough for a second "AWOL" party. One other side of Jack's personality other than his Texas drawl was for him

to borrow a small pocket knife of mine to "par his nail." When I discovered it was missing after several days, I had only to ask, "Jack, where's my knife," and with his boyish grin he would say, "I was only funin' you all, Sarge," and then he would hand it back.

When he found that I was to be evacuated because of malaria from Silverstream Hospital in New Zealand, he brought a small Japanese hand-held fan with a rising sun emblazoned on it. His presentation was to take it home and "Give it to your mommy and tell her old Jack Ass sent it," and that is what I did. Jack's party partner was Neil Holland, an expert on our communications section's radio. His operation of the key that was used to send Morse code, was used by him to disrupt the Japanese transmission of their radio code. Because it was similar to ours with the exception that it had more letters, Neil inserted his added "dit" or "da" and that would cause them to revert to the international sending of "R's" meaning to repeat the message. This would often drive them off the airway.

On a scavenger excursion by Max Stamps and I to the Lunga beach unloading area, we found some unattended jeeps with keys. One of the jeeps was to our liking and would facilitate the delivery of supplies that we could acquire by Jack's methods for our unit. By this time the M.P.'s had set up road blocks to apprehend such vehicles, so we made a

quick trip to the Regimental sign painter, who gave our newly acquired jeep the same numbers as our Battalion Colonel's jeep. Hugo Genge has since told me that the painter's name was Frank Prewett and that he has since passed away. The use of this same number and my man Jack Lewis being the Colonel's driver provided us with permits to unrestricted passage through the M.P.'s. This system worked well until we became too brave and parked our jeep beside the Colonel's, then came the orders to get rid of it.

On another one of our trips to the beach, we learned of the President Hayes's unloading just off shore. This was the transport that had brought us from San Diego. Our having been on her before proved to be just what was needed to get one of the coxswains to take us aboard her. On our way over to the islands, I had served as liaison NCO between the troops and the "Gedunk" sales. When we told the supply officer of our shortages of health care products, he took two pillow cases and cleaned the shelves of tooth brushes, paste, razor blades, soap, and other supplies, including candy and gum. When we left her, we resembled Santa Claus with our packs of goodies for our troops. We had the good fortune to ride the Hayes again in late January, 1943, to Wellington, N.Z. after nearly six month on Tulagi and Guadalcanal. The officers and men of the "Hayes" surely

were some of the finest in the Navy. My only regret is that I have been so long in giving them "OUR THANKS."

Our static position along the Matanikau River was short lived, as orders to cross it, expand our perimeter, and deny the enemy an unloading area, soon came our way. We had advanced about half way toward Point Cruz through palm trees and sandy soil without any major opposition. The area had been prveviously the scene of a hotly contested battle from the looks of the debris and scarred trees. Our methodical advance was very slow, and it was nearly nightfall when we were ordered to "Dig In." The sand, however, made ideal digging. We had no sooner dug in than we received orders to move to higher ground away from the sand and palm trees. There was a great deal of grumbling about the move to higher ground which was several hundred yards inland where the soil was sun baked and hard and with rocks that made the digging even more difficult.

Leaving the sandy area, I picked up an abandoned Japanese blanket and in our new position found a ready-made foxhole in the rocks which was about the size of a bath tub. It was rough, but it was ready. Padding it with the blanket, I thought that I would spend a good safe night. But this was not to be because the enemy had no doubt discovered our advance from the beach area where we had first dug our foxholes. This was understood when we

received a wake up call of artillery and large mortar fire which was all directed to that grove of palms. We were out of that area, but at an elevation where their shell bursts at tree top level flashed before our eyes. This was not a first in being shelled, but it was one of the most concentrated bombardments, and it would not be the last.

This was accompanied by the usual downpour of rain. How this rain at night in our tropical paradise could be so cold, none of us will ever know. This shivering marine had managed to shake himself into another malaria chill. Morning arrived and it was time to assemble our troops and to move out and continue our advance, when all of a sudden our back-pack radios squealled with what was known as feed back. This happens when two units are too near one another. The sound is reminiscent of incoming artillery, and all of us hit the deck, not taking any chance of it being shells. Our doctor and corpsmen, seeing my shaking body and high fever, ordered me taken to a tent hospital near Lunga Point. This high fever was all that was needed to have a regimen of large doses of quinine. This beach-side tent with cots was called a hospital, and such luxury was most welcome to those of us who were stricken with malaria.

During my stay there and with the high doses of quinine, I was unable to hear others in the next bunk. This deafness screened the explosion of an enemy torpedo that had

sunk what I have now found out to be the SS Masaba an old west coast lumber schooner which was in shallow water at the time. We could see daylight where the torpedo had blown giant holes in it on both sides. The sinking in such shallow water left the deck above water and afforded those who were able, an opportunity to wade and swim out to her. The salvage of mess trays and porcelain cups so that you could drink offee without burning your lips on a canteen was worth the risk of obtaining it.

Each of the many units manning the perimeter defense continued to send out patrols deeper into the jungle sectors of their responsibility. Those not on patrol continued to improve their defensive positions. Any other daylight hours were used to catch up on the much needed rest from nightly enemy air and sea harassment or an occasional probe by them. Those who were fortunate enough to have a deck of cards found that the humidity had caused the cards to swell to twice their original thickness, and to shuffle them was a near impossibility.

The patrols, spoken of before, consisted of from fifteen to twenty men, and it was our section's duty to furnish at least one man. As boredom and sickness set in, it became necessary for the officer or senior NCO to check each man to make sure that he was carrying enough ammunition to defend himself in the event that he came under fire.

Over a period of time, the men had taken less and less of the ammunition so that the inspection became a necessity.

I had several men in my section that either had never been sick or that had recovered from their illness, and whenever it came time for a turn for someone who was less healthy, they would volunteer to go in the sick man's place. Two such men come to mind immediately, S. W. "Bill" Hoag and Osbaldo Paredes. Hoag was later evacuated from New Zealand when we were there for rest and relaxation and to recover form malaria. Paredes, always the one to volunteer, was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for his action during the landings on Tarawa where many of our Second Battalion, Second Regiment were killed and wounded. Others who also deserve to be mentioned should be my two corporals, Bob Moberg and Jim Bayer (who was wounded on Tarawa), Kuhlman, Mellum, Sczewezul (sp?), Kangel, and several others whose names I can no longer recall.

While we were in one of these perimeter defense positions during the daytime, we would leave a few men to observe the immediate front and a few others to rest under the sun shades made from the shelter halves. The men at these locations were usually brought a meal from a rear area, or we would bring enough rations for as long as we were on watch. During one such occasion, I had brought a magazine, either Newsweek or Time which was a condensed

version and which did not include advertising. In one of those, I have remembered an article about all of the initials used in the service, and one such article applied to women Marines. These women were referred to as "Bams." The origin of that name was supposedly from their male counterparts and it meant approximately, "Wide axle Marines." This could hardly have originated from any of us who at that time were on Guadalcanal because I doubt that any of us had even seen a woman Marine.

Back to my lying on my stomach under a sunshade: imagine my surprise as I looked up to discover an iguana looking me eye-to-eye, his tongue darting in and out like the sand lizards of Nebraska except that the iguana was about the size of a dachshund. I looked him over as something that might be good to eat; the large round tail would surely make tasty steaks if sliced crosswise, but I dismissed the thought as I remembered how many things that the doctors had told us were not edible.

The iguana had come for any food scraps, and I soon found him to be as scared of me as I was of him. More on iguanas was a tale of a man in the communications section. His name was "Slim Shelton," and he was also known as the "Human Radar." His encounter with one occurred when he awakened from his nap to find one on his chest. He later

told Max Stamps, his section chief, that he'd do anything but, "Don't send me up with those dragons!"

Slim got his name, "The Human Radar," by always putting his steel helmet on his head minutes before any alert was ever given. He also had a guitar, and where it came from none of us knew. He would entertain us with his "Georgia" style pickin' from time-to=time, only to suddenly quit, don his helmet, and head for shelter or a foxhole.

There were many stories of snakes and alligators, but I never met up with any of them, nor did I look to find any of them. I did see some giant pink clam shells which to me appeared to be capable of crushing a leg bone.

Now that I've dealt with animals, I'll relate the story of Jack Lewis and a bird. Jack, having seen parrots sitting on some of our telephone wires, decided that he should capture one and teach it to speak. Using the crotch of a tree limb, he made a sling shot. He used 25 caliber bullets, that the Japanese had brought to the island to reload their brass shell casings, and began his hunt. His dead-eye aim resulted in the death of several birds before he was able to stun one, only to be told by our doctor to release it for fear that it might have parrot fever. Therefore, another of our not so friendly feathered friends returned to the jungle, where in the black of night it

continued to scream and yell like humans, not that one more would make it any louder. Paekakariki, New Zealand, the town nearest our camp at McKay's Crossing, had a translation of "Pae"=perch or snare, and "Kakariki"=the geen parakeet. When put together the word meant "to snare the green parakeet," a fitting meaning for the parrots of my story.

Now that I have told of some of Jack's many talents, others of which are better left untold, there is one more that, of all the stories about Jack, must be told. I remember our being in an area, not on the perimeter nor the front line, where pyramidal tents were set up just off the end of the new landing strip for fighter planes. According to an account by Lt. Ben T. Owens, an F-4-F came in for a landing and had to pull up because of another plane that was pulling out onto the runway, or perhaps another version of his was that the plane was overloaded with fuel and small bombs and was unable to get airborne. Whichever the case might be, the plane first hit the trees where the tents were and then came down on the tent of a corpsmen. The pilot was unable to get his safety belt harness to release and was trapped inside the plane. A small fire had broken out around his feet, and this "hot foot," not to mention his fear of the bombs and the gas in the fuel tanks, caused him to yell in fear and panic. Most of us had begun to clear out of the area and only Jack remained. He climbed up on

the wing of the plane and patted the pilot on the shoulder saying, "Just take her easy, I'll get you all out." With that he took his Kar-Bar knife and cut him free. How the fire was extinguished, I don't know. The only injury to the corpsmen was one broken collar bone. We thought that this heroic deed should have rated at least a letter of commendation, but none has ever been received. In 1950 I wrote to Marine Headquarters, trying to right this oversight. I wrote again following Jack's death in 1969, asking for help from anyone who knew or witnessed this, in an article in Follow Me, the 2nd Division's Association's newspaper. I still have copies of this correspondence and a letter from Mr. Owens and the reply from the Marine Corps Headquarters.

One of the comforts of home that we enjoyed, was a warm shower courtesy of the Seabees, Marine or Army engineers, but most of all, courtesy of the Japanese if they had conveniently abandoned a power or refrigeration plant that was still in working condition. The large engine received its cooling water from what I think was the Lunga River, and after the water had done its cooling, it emerged at just the right warmth for a shower. When we returned to the river it was piped into a large elevated pipe with small shower type perforations. American ingenuity had installed this pipe at an elevation high enough to stand under, and we usually

bathed with our clothes on, thus doing our laundry at the same time.

The shallow sand at the bottom of the river also provided us with a ready to use "Jeep Wash" for the jeep that had provided those of us who knew of the facility with transportation. This laundry was no doubt the predecessor of "Wash and Wear," only with us it was "Wash and Wear Wet" since we had only the one set of clothes. Any other laundry or bathing was in the rain or any water available. Laundry and bathing were always needed even minutes later to eliminate the constant body odor.

Another of our seemingly constant rest area moves to the perimeter was, as near as I remember, just in from the beach in the Tenaru or Ilo river sector. During our column march into the area, we passed by the emplacements of a 75 mm pack, howitzer unit, which would then be to our rear. Our location was still in palm trees and water as obstacles between us and the enemy. There was no indication of action, and it appeared that we would get that much needed rest, using a minimum of men on the night watch. However, the night soon came alive with shells screaming overhead and exploding in enemy territory to our front. As we observed the light of continuous muzzle blasts to the rear, we decided that it was our 75's giving the Japanese a taste of midnight reveille. This return of the favor was much to our

delight. This bombardment lasted for some time, and when it stopped, we felt even more secure in our belief that any further action was not to be that night.

In the morning, closer examination of our front, revealed enormous shell holes and the death of one of our night watch. All of us had known occasional shelling on Tulagi by Japanese ships and could well determine the size of the ship responsible, be it a destroyer or a battleship. This was not our 75's, but instead had been at least one battleship along with one or more cruisers from several miles out in Sealark Channel. They had been unaware that most of their shelling had landed in what we had considered the Japanese maneuvering area, and once more we had dodged the bullet.

When December came and the island command had passed to Army control under General Patch, the beleaguered troops of the 1st Marine Division embarked for Australia. Ours, the Second Regiment of the Second Marines Division, became the only one left of the original landing force. Our hopes to closely follow the 1st Division were soon dashed as the Army Command returned us to an area not quite up to the Mantanikau River for a planned assault.

A date that stands out was in this area was Christmas Eve. The ground was very damp and covered with large native

trees that had roots starting several feet from the ground and formed a three or four inch thick web extending some five or six feet from its base. A back-pack radio with a head set placed in a canteen cup enabled us to listen to stateside music while lying head-to-head around the cup on poncho's. All went well for some time until the wind came up and the trees began to fall because they had been cut just above the web roots by Seabees and left standing. It was a scramble to find protection between the webbed roots. We continued to use the ponchos on the ground while nestled between the roots to keep the dampness out. Soon we could hear swearing and the hacking of knives and bayonets as we were now invaded by land crabs. Those who have never seen these creatures can only imagine them on the rubberized poncho. As they were trying to move on this surface, they made a bone chilling scratching to add to the misery of the falling trees. All this occurred in what had started out to be a peaceful Christmas Eve but had ended in what we will now call "The Battle of the Land Crabs."

On Christmas Day, we were ordered to cross the Matanikau with this battalion sized patrol. We were to stay on the high ground following that river on an attempt to dominate Mount Austen. This was judged to be a stronghold of survivors of a larger Japanese outfit and an observation post of our entire beach head and perimeter. We were to

take a couple of cans of rations, absolutely no mess gear so that we would eliminate any excess noise, and to lay a telephone line for good communications. Radios were only to be used for emergencies.

We worked our way through an Army unit whose circular defense was around an isolated hilltop. We had made good progress without finding any enemy resistance and probably not being observed because of the cover provided by trees and by generally following a partially dry stream bed.

Coming out from under this cover, we discovered a clearing with kunai grass where we formed a skirmish line to cross the clearing uphill toward another line of trees. A small advance group formed a point to this advance. About half way across this grassy area, we came under extremely deadly enemy rifle and machine gun fire. This appeared to be a well dug-in force with a field of fire covering the entire clearing. We sustained several caualties to our point before we could hit the deck and remained pinned down for several hours from this murderous fire, and we were unable to pinpoint any targets for returning their reception.

As suddenly as it had started it ceased. We were able to move about and attend to casualties for a short while before a second barrage of small arms fire began again.

Taking water to one of our caualties who was on a stretcher, I noticed him roll off the stretcher. He said that he was too high as we could see the grass being cut by the firing just a little higher than our helmets.

A second lull in their firing and we were ordered to leave this exposed area and move back to where we had encountered the Army. As we did this, darkness was beginning to settle in. It was already quite dark under the cover of the trees, and when all but the last of our troops were under way, following the same stream bed that was used earlier as the phone line was made. We contacted our artillery and by directing and locating where their shells were landing, we gave back to the enemy a taste of what they had given us, only we gave it with much bigger weapons.

Movement was made even slower as it was soon pitch dark, and the silence was broken as we bumped into one another or as swearing began by someone who had inadvertently found a water hole. This nighttime maneuver with so many men was a first and last for us as normally nobody moved in the dark. The stumbling and grumbling ended when we were within the Army's perimeter where we decided to lie right down on the trail.

This fitful rest was most welcome and the only movement or noise was that of the doctors and corpsmen attending to

the wounded. The coming of dawn arrived and boats were called to come up the river to evacuate the wounded. Our Army hosts invited us to a breakfast of delicious pancakes, and without mess gear, we enjoyed them using our all purpose steel helmets, a spoon maybe, but more than likely our fingers. They maintained a field kitchen right where they were located, unlike our system of larger galleys in a more secure rear area.

This mention of cooking reminded me earlier of our galleys being the target of "Pistol Pete." When he, Pistol Pete, would observe smoke rising from the kerosene burners used to heat water, since hot water was needed to sterilize the mess gear and cooking utensils from any accumulation of grease to forestall cases of diarrhea, he demonstrated his accuracy. Many a gas field stove was disabled by Pistol's shrapnel.

It became evident that if we were to keep our galleys in business, we needed a repairman. News of my watch repairman, J. J. Clausen, who had performed his genius for others was soon made known, and he now would try to keep us eating. He was able to scavenge parts from one unit to repair another, and he made great progress until an accident while using high test air plane gas severely burned him. He was evacuated to either New Hebrides or Caledonia for treatment and was being returned by ship when he fell into

the open hold aboard it. The next time that I was to see him was in New Zealand at Siverstream Hospital. He was completely encased in a body cast with only the use of one arm. Some time after my visit, I was told that the burns under the cast would not heal and that may have caused his death, a fact that I have never been able to verify. Should this be true, he was the only one of my section to pass away although all of us suffered from all the maladies of the islands and over half were returned to the states from New Zealand as a result.

It's no wonder that "Pistol Pete, Major Tani," in letters to Guadalcanal said, "If I had not been in the 'Hell Island,' I would never have known you."

We returned from our Christmas Day experience that had exhausted all our physical strength and was one of our last major actions, to a more static defensive position. Near the end of January, we were located somewhere near Lungi Point paying our last respects to those who had given their lives during the nearly six months of struggle for what was about to end in a victory.

While in this debarking area, I realized that I had only one Japanese souvenir. To correct this, I made a nearly ill fated trip alone up beyond the Matanikau where fresh green units were advancing along the coast. On this

journey a member of the Army Air Force from Henderson Field had joined in a mutual quest for something to take home. Soon we found soldiers advancing in a formed skirmish line with some 500 yards of break between these lines and the following lines. The two of us thought that if we went forward between these lines, we would have both safety to our front and to the rear. We had progressed some distance beyond Point Cruz and a beached and burned out Japanese supply ship when someone in the line behind got "trigger happy," thinking that he'd seen one of the famous enemy tree top snipers and he commenced firing. The line ahead, fearing an attack from the rear, returned the fire with the two of us hugging the ground in between. When they were finally able to stop firing, my new-found companion decided that he'd do without any further search for souvenirs. My decision was somewhat the same except that I would take a closer look at the area just covered where we had seen signs of a supply dump. On my return trip to this dump area, I found large amounts of the enemey's personal equipment, along with some large artillery pieces abandoned in trees right where they had been taken from ships and barges. Looking closer, the barrel of a rifle that was partially buried reminded me of a possible booby trap, and to overcome that possibility, I tied a wire to the barrel so that by standing behind a tree, I could retrieve it safely. This worked as I had planned and even better yet because it

yielded a total of three carbine type 25 caliber rifles. Picking up a small booklet and some other papers, all written in Japanese, and the three rifles, I soon returned to our area. Next came orders to go aboard the President Hayes, the same ship that we had arrived on a half year earlier.

Not long after getting under way, orders were given to confiscate all enemy weapons that had been brought aboard, and only by quick action and the assistance from the sailor operator of the "Gedunk Stand" was I able to get a safe place to hide the rifles. The price paid for this hiding place was for him to keep one of them; the other two made it safely to our camp at McKay's Crossing in New Zealand.

Later, when Jim Knagel was to be evacuated and returned to the Naval Hospital at Corona, California, I was able to prevail upon him to take the rifles along. The price again was for him to keep one, and on his first leave he would call my brother who lived in San Diego to arrange for safe delivery of the one that I still possess. Jim made the trip by hitch hiking down Highway 101, the rifle slung over his shoulder, to a meeting on Broadway with my brother Howard.

Aboard ship and headed for New Zealand, I enjoyed the luxuries of good meals, clean clothes, and a sharp razor that made the removal of my goatee and handlebar moustsche

much easier than I related earlier in this narrative. Later after telling my family of my "handlebar" and using soap to twirl it, their disbelief caused me to grow another later on during a tour at Kodiak, Alaska. This time, however, I saved the twirl as evidence along with a picture to prove of its existence.

Now after 47 years since leaving the island of Guadalcanal and with the help of "Pistol Pete Tani" who located a son of the owner of the souvenir savings booklet that I picked up so many years ago, I have returned the booklet to the owner's family. Since its return, the son has sent pictures of his family and one of his father who apparently was a casualty on Guadalcanal. He also related that the Japanese government had not notified the family for several years, nor did they return any of his possessions.

The previously mentioned contact with Masaichiro MIYAGAWA, who had survived the assualt on Tanambogo, escaping by swimming to Florida Island, was also made possible by "Pistol Pete TANI," since neither HANZAWA OR MIYAGAWA can write in English. Tani translated all correspondence both from them and to them, all without charge including phone calls.

I had read an account in the Echoes of MIYAGAWA'S escape and wanted to ask him if he might be or at least he

might know of the POW that was brought to us by the natives on Tulagi. The POW had a flare pistol hung by a string around his neck without ammunition. I still have this Japanese flare pistol, but he was unable to establish the identity of the POW that had had the pistol. He also said that none of the other POW's will let it be known that they had been captured, saying that they were of the old school and that capture was a dishonor.

In conclusion, these stories are an attempt on my part to try to establish the fact that the Second Marine Regiment was an integral part of the first invasion's assualt on and capture of the Japanese held Solomon Islands in 1942. Most of the written history has dealt with only that part of the campaign of the First Marine Division that was in command and ignores the important part played by the Navy Seabees and Army units who were the first to reinforce the original landing units.