

We arrived at Noumea, New Caledonia, (French) about 2:00 P.M. on Dec. 11, 1942. We made camp about four miles north of town. Rain, mud, mosquitoes, no chow! A hell of a place to be! The people here are French, Javanese, and natives (Polynesian). The language is French. While in New Caledonia, our work consisted of building our camp, fifteen miles of first class highways hewn from mountain sides and crushed lava rock for gravel, numerous storage warehouses, stevedore work, unloading Liberty ships, building a thirty-two 10,000 barrel storage tank farm and pipeline trestle out into the bay for loading and unloading oil, constructing a floating barge wharf, two 600-foot long docks by the nickle mill, Red Cross Center, beer garden, officer's rest camp and numerous other jobs.

March 28:

We had inspection in full battle dress with packs and rifles. The Commander read commendations from Admiral Halsey and other "big shots" that we had received for our work here. He said that our stay in New Caledonia was rapidly growing to a close, and we would be shoving off for the war zone shortly.

April 7:

24th Rally Night- boxing, wrestling, singing, band and string music, free beer, and cigars. Had a swell time of it!

April 14:

Boarded the U.S.S. McCauley tonight for nine days of maneuvers outside the harbor of Noumea.

April 15:

Still coming aboard ship.

April 16:

I laid around aboard ship today sleeping and resting. Boy, is it hot!! Went over the side twice today.

April 17:

Over the side, down the net, with full pack and rifles into Higgins invasion boats three times today. We make mock landings on the shores of New Caledonia.

April 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22:

On maneuvers going over the sides, unloaded and loaded the ship twice, and stayed two nights ashore in our pup tents. Boy, am I tired, homesick, and aw, heck!

April 24:

Came back to camp today. Everyone is bathing, shaving, and straightening up their tents.

I was placed on a machine-gun squad, Marine Raiders training us. Marine Raiders were in the battle of Guadalcanal.

On Mother's Day, I went to the Air Base and had my first ride by air. I was up for about three hours in a Marine transport. New Caledonia is very beautiful from the air, completely surrounded by coral reefs.

We received 127 replacements the 13th of May from the States.

May 22, 1943:

Orders came tonight for us to pack and leave New Caledonia. A and C companies shall leave camp first.

May 23:

A and C and Headquarters companies are loading on the new type invasion ships (LST's) today in the rain and the mud.

May 24:

Only B and D and half of Hdq. Co. left in camp. We are loading equipment for the docks, cleaning up the camp, and burning the trash. Having chow with the Sixth Battalion, Guadalcanal Fox-hole Veterans.

May 27:

Boy, am I tired! Went aboard ship tonight, The President Jackson, first ship to land amphibious forces on Guadalcanal.

May 28:

Aboard ship, anchored outside nets of Noumea Harbor; on guard now in Officer Country.

May 29:

About 250 Marines and C.A.S.U.—8 came aboard today.

May 30,31-June 1,2,3,4,5, and 6

We practiced going over the side with rifles and making mock landings ashore. Some grind.

June 7:

We weighed anchor and sailed from Noumea at 1400 with four other loaded troop ships convoyed by four destroyers.

June 8:

The sea is very rough.

June 9:

I'm still on guard duty, taking Atabrine for Malaria now. Scuttlebut is Guadalcanal.

June 10:

Caught up with one of our carriers (flattops) this morning and its escorting tin cans. Had "general quarters" about 1800 tonight and lasted until 10:30. We were made to stay below. Jap planes tried to get in to attack us. What a noise the guns made shooting! I began to realize tonight that there is a war going on.

June 11:

Dropped anchor at Guadalcanal at 10: A.M. I stevedored in Hatch No.3, starboard side. All equipment was unloaded. B.Co. got off and boarded the President Adams which was accompanying us. D. Co. which I am in, stayed aboard the Jackson. Commander Whitaker stayed aboard with us. The Army came aboard and took the places of the men getting off. We had an air-raid today, also, but our fighters kept them out.

June 12:

Shoved off today from Guadalcanal. Scuttlebut is that we are going on maneuvers in New Hebrides.

June 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

We were three days going to New Hebrides. The troop ships accompanying us were the "Presidents Hayes, Adams, Jackson," and the U.S.S. McCauley, plus four destroyers for escort and one aircraft carrier. We came into the harbor of Efate on the morning of the 16th. It was the prettiest place that I have seen in the South Pacific. The town was at the extreme end of the harbor nestled on a hillside. Natives came out to the boats by the dozens in their homemade canoes with coconuts, oranges, tangerines, bananas, bracelets, seashell beads, and other trinkets to sell. Everything sold for one dollar. I asked one native where he was from, and he said his name was Joe and he was from Texas. They could speak very little English. We went over the sides here three times a day with full packs and mock landings ashore. We are getting ready for the real thing this time. We unloaded our ships twice and made camp ashore. We stayed ashore two nights. Going over the side at night, you had to be very careful, because if you made one little slip, you would plunge into the water thirty feet below. No lights were used. We left New Hebrides for Guadalcanal on June 26 and arrived on June 29, 1943.

June 29:

Arrived Guadalcanal about nine o'clock this morning. Lots of mail came aboard and was given out to us. I was really proud of my mail because it may be my last to read from my loved ones back home. Our seabags were put on topside, hatch covers opened, landing barges made ready and we pulled out of Guadalcanal at 4:00 P.M. Convoy was made up of seven transports and about six tin cans. We passed the lights of the Russell Is. about ten P.M. The night was an inky black and every thing was very quiet. All you could hear was the lap of the waves as they continually hit the side of the transport.

June 30:

We hit the deck about 3:00 A.M. I immediately went for breakfast because I knew it would be many a day before I got a hot meal. The chow-line formed on topside and it was wound around deck a couple of times. You couldn't see your hand before you and there was a steady drizzling rain.. We could see the dark looming shape of an island over our starboard bow. Landing boats were lowered to the water about 6:00 A.M. and the first wave was off for the beaches and the Japs. I was in the third wave and we hit the beach about 6:30 A.M. I was manning the machine gun on our boat. All I saw to shoot at was a lone duck. There was a hell of a lot of rifle, machine-gun, and hand grenade fire ashore. Bullets were whizzing overhead from Jap snipers on the beach. One bullet went through an officer's pack in my boat, but no one was hurt. We hit the beach with a bang and hit the beach on the double, also! Also, the deck! Boy, was I loaded down, full pack, rifle, machine gun, tripod, and 350 rounds of

ammunition. There was only around 200 Japs on the island, so they were soon wiped out and fleeing to the hills. We worked like mules that day unloading supplies, ammunition, and equipment, and building temporary roads so that we could get it back off the beaches. I worked until 5:30 that afternoon and then trudged to our campsite in a coconut grove, dog-tired; but then I had to put up my pup-tent and dig my fox-hole. After that, it was dark, and night was coming on. What a day! There were continuous dog-fights going on overhead all day and I saw many a plane burst into flame about 30,000 feet up and plunge to the ground in a smoking blazing dive. It started raining after dark. What a spooky night to try to sleep.

July 1:

Rendova: There was a continuous explosion of rifle, machine-gun and hand grenade fire all last night and I got very little sleep. Dead cattle were laying all around camp the next morning, mistaken for Japs. Cold beans, hardtack, and water for food today. We worked on the road corduroying it with coconut logs. It rained practically all day. Air-raids and mud!

July 2:

What a night! Rained all night and water ran under my tent where I was sleeping on the ground so that I look like a pig just out of a hog-wallow. No breakfast and still raining. We had hot corned-beef and coffee for lunch today and boy, did it taste good! I was about starved. Mud is about knee deep all around camp and even in my tent. About 2:00 this afternoon, eighteen Jap bombers slipped in on us and rained bombs all over the place hitting ammunition dumps, dynamite, and oil dumps. Our clothing and bedding was destroyed. It was sickening. Dead, dying, bleeding, screaming, moaning men lying everywhere, I would estimate around 200 killed and the same number wounded. Twenty one of our men were killed and a great number wounded. Lt. Lee and Ensign Stephenson two of my company officers, were killed, two fine men along with all the rest. May God bless them! The wounded were loaded on an LST and the dead were left where they lay until tomorrow. Everyone had a glum face, no smiles, no laughter, no singing, or whistling. There is a look of fright and anger in their faces and eyes. A wholesale slaughter of humanity in its worse. I didn't receive a scratch, but was I scared! And no sleep for me tonight!

July 3:

I was glad to see daybreak. Never slept much because I was nervous, wet, and muddy. Couldn't sleep. Unloaded 155 m.m. shells today off of L.S.T. The big guns have started shelling Munda now. What a terrific bombardment! Guns are set up on both sides of our camp and in back of us. You can hardly hear yourself talk when they open up. Shelling day and night. Saw our dive bombers bomb Jap installations on Munda today, from the beach at Rendova only five miles across.

July 4:

Just another muddy day on Rendova with plenty of work to do. About two P.M., we had "condition red". I was in my fox-hole and looked way out to the west and saw 18 Jap bombers up about 20,000 feet coming over our campsite in a perfect V-formation. The ground trembled and shook with the terrific anti-aircraft fire and bombs dropping. One 9th Defense Marine manned 90 m.m. and accounted for eleven bombers shot out of the sky out of 60 rounds fired. The casualties and damage were nothing like as bad as the second. Only one man was killed out of our outfit but several were shell-shocked. I was in the bottom of my foxhole, clawing deeper, breathing a prayer. Immediately after the Jap raid on Rendova, our bombers flew over and bombed Munda. This was the most outstanding Fourth of July I have ever and ever will experience, I hope! Some fireworks!

July 5:

More rain, more mud! Roads are used only to haul ammunition over. Had "condition red" today, but our fighters kept them out. 155m.m. still pounding away at Munda night and day. I moved my pup-tent up next to a fresh water stream today because it is much higher ground there and not as muddy. This mud!

July 6:

Clear day today but still muddy. Two alerts but no raids. 155m.m. still shelling, and a B-24 bomber in there taking pictures of Munda and dropping them by parachute over here.

July 7:

Enemy bomber came over last night and dropped bombs. It makes a guy afraid to go to sleep. Lots of guys are being evacuated with nerves shot to pieces, but I'm still holding my own. If they get me, there is nothing I can do, so why worry? But I am scared as Hell! Two alerts today. Dog-fights way high. Skipper says we will be out in six weeks. He is trying to boost our morale, but he is a lie.

July 8:

Two alerts last night with bombs dropped. Lots of Ack-ack. Another alert today but no planes came over. Total of 14 alerts on Rendova so far.

July 9:

What a night! We had five air-raids of lone bombers and a big sea battle going on somewhere close along with our 155m.m. shelling Munda. We had another alert at 2:00 P.M. with lots of dog-fighting way high but no bombs dropped.

July 10:

We had three alerts last night with bombs dropped and another alert today at 4:00 P.M.. That makes a total of 24. I am working about two miles out in the bay on a small island, building a P.T. refueling dock. It will take us from two to three weeks to finish. We are building it of coconut logs. Boy! Is the weather hot! Our bombers bombed Munda again today. I could see it all from here.

July 11:

We had one air-raid last night and one alert today. We are allowed to write a letter a day home . Got mail from home yesterday.

July 12:

We had three air-raids last night with bombs dropped every time and another alert this morning. The Navy shelled Munda this morning about 3:00A.M. and our dive-bombers blasted them again today.

July 13:

Had eight air-raids last night with bombs dropped and two alerts this afternoon. Raining like the devil here- still plenty of mud- and the ground is my bed.

July 14:

Not one air-raid last night! It was the first night the Japs have missed coming over in two weeks. 155m.m. still blasting away day and night.

July 15:

Full moon tonight- bright as day. One air-raid last night and eight Jap bombers came over about 5:00 P.M. dropping bombs on the evacuation hospital. Three were shot down. What a life!

July 16:

Had two air-raids last night. Our boys bombed Munda again today . Everyone is calming down now, not so nervous.

July 17:

Had one air-raid last night. Same old hard grind day after day. Thank God I'm still here!

July 18:

Three air-raids last night. Today is Sunday and our first church service here on Rendova. Taps was blown in memory of our men and friends. It made tears come in a guy's eyes. It is hard to realize that they are gone. A. and C. Co. came ashore today from Guadalcanal- came up on L.C.I.

July 19:

Two alerts last night. It is still muddy here, and I am sleeping on the ground. Total of 52 air-raids on Rendova.

July 20:

Five air-raids last night. Making preparations to move 155 m.m. to Munda. The U.S.A. bombed Munda again.

July 21:

Four air-raids last night and today. One L.S.T. was hit and several men killed and wounded. When you hear those bombs whistling down, you are wondering and praying that your name isn't on it.

July 22:

What a night! Six air-raids. Some bombs fell about 50 yards from my fox-hole and bounced me around like a rubber ball.

July 23:

Four air-raids last night. One lasted four hours.

July 24:

No alerts last night nor today. What a relief for a change!

July 25:

I shall never forget this day! Two air-raids last night with about 18 or 20 bombs dropped in our camp. Four of our fellows were killed and quite a number wounded and shell-shocked. This all happened before daylight on a Sunday morning. Sixty Jap dive-bombers tried to get in to bomb us this P.M. but our fighters kept the biggest portion out. What a noise they made fighting up in the air! Five destroyers shelled Munda right off the shore of Rendova this morning, before daylight. What fireworks! Immediately following, wave after wave of our bombers came over to bomb Munda. I don't see how the Japs can live under this terrific bombardment.

July 26:

One air-raid last night. Eighteen of our men were sent out this morning, nervous wrecks.

July 27:

Five "condition reds", but our fighters kept them out. There is a big sea battle close.

July 28:

Two air-raids last night with bombs dropped, but not close.

July 29:

Last night, rest was wonderful! No alerts!

July 30:

No air-raids today nor last night. It rained most all day and sure was dark!

July 31:

Two air-raids last night and one today. One month ago yesterday, we made beach-heads on Rendova.

August 1:

Two air-raids last night and three today. One of our C.P.O.'s was killed, and seven of our men injured. L.S.T. and P.T. boat hit. I'll be glad when I get home! We finished P.T. refueling docks.

August 2:

Six air-raids today and last night. P.T. boats and Jap tin cans had a battle last night off the coast. I think we are going over to Munda real soon.

August 3:

Two alerts today, but no planes.

August 4:

One air-raid last night and one today. Lots of dog-fights in the sky overhead.

August 5:

It rained all night. Lots of mud. I am on perimeter guard duty. Homer J. Hogan from Memphis and I are on the same post from dark 'til dawn.

August 6:

Three "condition reds" last night.

August 7:

Two air-raids. Jap dive-bombers on one raid.

August 8:

One air-raid at daybreak. I think the Japs dropped bombs on our forces over at Munda.

August 9, 1943:

One year active duty up today. Two air-raids.

August 10:

Moved from Rendova to Munda today in personnel barges. What a sight!! It doesn't look as if there is a live bush or tree left standing on Munda. Dead Japs every where and does the place stink! Lots of flies. Total of 108 air-raids on Rendova.

August 11:

Four alerts last night and today. Our new campsite is about a mile north of Munda airfield. I am fixing up my foxhole. It is a very good thing to have around. Lots of coral over here, something like limestone.

August 12:

One alert today. I saw one of our Corsairs explode in mid-air today and pilot bail out. 155 m.m. back of our camp shelling Japs in Baribko Harbor vicinity. We put up a big tent today, and I was issued a cot. Tonight will be my first night's sleep off the ground since June 29th.

August 13:

Friday! Three air-raids. Bombs dropped near airport. Four of our fighters landed on Munda field today. Hoorah! First U.S. planes.

August 14:

Five air-raids last night and today. Lots of anti-aircraft fire.

August 15:

Four air-raids today and last night. I am working moving telephone wires to clear right-of-ways for the road. We have fighters stationed on the field now. Lots of mud and rain. 155.m.m. still shelling. Shells whistle overhead.

August 16:

We had seven air-raids last night and one this P.M.. I didn't sleep hardly any. Lots of bombs dropped and a.a. fire.

August 17:

Three air-raids today and last night. Japs are shelling us today from back up in the hills. 73rd Seabees moving camp to hills. Showers built today. First bath on Munda.

August 18:

Four air-raids last night and today.

August 19:

Our artillery shelled the Japs practically all night and today. First air transports came in and landed on Munda Field today.

August 20:

Two air-raids last night. Bombs dropped awfully close.

August 21:

Two air-raids last night. Lots of rain and mud.

August 22:

Had one alert today. Eighty Jap planes attempted to get in but were turned back or shot down by our fighters. God bless them!

August 23:

One air-raid. Bombs dropped very near. Lots of rain.

August 24:

One air alert.

August 25:

Man! Man! The big guns back of the camp really opened fire on the Japs this morning. Every gun let loose at once. What a barrage! It shook the ground!

August 26:

Three air-raids last night and today. Went over into Jap biouvac area today. Those Japs live like rats. They have some very nice foxholes. They dig caves way back under the hills. There are dead Japs lying all around back there.

August 27:

Jap bombers came over about 4:30 this a.m. and dropped bombs all around. 155 m.m. still blasting the hell out of the Japs on the other end of the island.

August 28:

Another air-raid this morning. Its raining and muddy as the devil!

August 29:

Air alert last night at eight.

August 30:

Two alerts today but no bombs dropped near by.

August 31:

Two air-raids today. Dive bombers, two-motors, four-motors, and fighters passed over today going to Bougainville.

September 1:

One air-raid early this morning. It rained today with a light wind. Trees started falling around camp. They were practically cut in two by shrapnel when we were shelling here.

September 2:

The nights are very dark and rainy. We had one air-raid about nine p.m.. Lots of Liberators passed over today going north to Bougainville and Rabaul.

September 3:

Two air-raids last night and our a.a. fire got one "Charlie". Making a bomber base out of Munda Field.

September 4:

One air-raid this morning. A bomb on one of our P.B.Y's on the field exploded this morning burning up three trucks, four planes, killed around five men and injured some more. The explosion shook my tent. The men were blown to bits.

September 5:

Two "condition reds" today. Went in my foxhole bare-footed. I didn't have time to put my shoes on.

September 6:

Two air-raids last night. Bombs were dropped. I hate to hear those things whistle down, not knowing where they will hit..

September 7:

Four air-raids last night until around eleven p.m.. Our outfit is constructing eight 1000 barrel tank farms and pipelines to dock for aviation fuel. We are building roads and docks, also.

September 8:

Five air-raids last night. The moon is half full. I hate moon-light nights!

September 9:

Two air-raids last night and bombs fell very close. We are having to muster at 5:45 every morning, still dark.

September 10:

Three "condition reds" last night.

September 11

Alert last night from 8 until 8:30. That makes a total of 80 air-raids and alerts since we have been on Munda.

September 12:

One alert last night at 12:00. I am working on the telephone system in camp now, a 30-line switchboard manual.

September 13:

One air-raid last night. It still rains here practically every day.

September 14:

We had a continuous air-raid last night from dark until early morning. Planes came over every 15 minutes. 100 bombs were dropped. One 500 lb. bomb exploded about 200 feet from my foxhole, also personnel bombs. I didn't sleep a wink all night.

September 15:

No sleep last night. Ten air-raids, practically all night long. Bombs dropped all around. They hit the airport, oil dump, ammunition dump and lots of men were killed and injured. I'm tired and want to go home.

September 16:

Three air-raids last night with bombs dropped. Those bombs whistling down will drive a guy nuts.

September 17:

Two air-raids last night. Bombs too close. Ruined some refrigerators of ours in the supply area.

September 18:

Three air-raids last night and an alert this P.M. Personnel bombs were dropped all around camp but no one was hurt. They were 12 lb. bombs.

September 19:

Three air-raids last night with bombs dropped. This hot weather, hard work, sorry chow, and bombing raids are wearing me out fast. We sure do need a rest. Men are being evacuated every day.

September 20:

Five alerts last night with bombs dropped once.

September 21:

Three alerts today.

September 22:

One alert last night.

September 23:

Two alerts today. Received mail from home. Wrote some letters and did some washing.

September 24:

One alert last night. The scuttlebut is that we leave for the States on Oct. 5. Can't believe it though.

September 25:

No air-raids last night, but a person can't sleep well for fear he may sleep through one.

September 26:

Three air-raids last night with bombs dropped. I am an operator on the the camp switchboard now. Sweet racket for a change.

September 27:

No air-raids. Very quiet.

September 28:

One air-raid last night with bombs dropped very close by. Man! Man! What a life! Could be worse !

September 29:

Four air-raids with bombs dropped.

September 30:

Three air alerts last night. We had our first fresh meat for supper last night since on the island. Food!

October 1:

Four air-raids last night with bombs dropped close by.

October 2:

Five air-raids last night with bombs dropped.

October 3:

Four air-raids last night with bombs dropped. Men from A.B.C.D. in N.C. were transferred and arrived with us today.

October 4:

A good night's rest with no alerts. We were issued protective covering today in case of gas attack.

October 5:

Two alerts today.

October 6:

Seven air-raids last night with bombs dropped.

October 7:

One air-raid with bombs dropped. The whistle of the bombs falling woke me up. I hit the deck flat.

October 8:

Five air-raids last night with bombs dropped.

October 9:

Five air-raids last night with bombs dropped. The moon is almost full.

October 10:

I slept well last night. Washed some clothes today and wrote some letters.

October 11:

Four alerts last night.

October 12:

It had rained practically all night and we had two alerts.

October 13:

Our outfit started construction on C.U.B.3, five hundred bed hospital today. They are bring the dead from Rendova over here to be buried in this cemetery.

October 14:

No alerts, but lots of rain.

October 15:

One alert at 10:00 P.M. last night.

October 16:

Very quiet. Good night's sleep.

October 17:

Had one egg straight up this morning. First one since on the Jackson. I'm hungry for some fresh vegetables and milk.

October 18:

Sand crabs tried to carry us off last night.

October 19:

A very hot day.

October 20:

Our tank construction gang went to Ondonga Is. today to put up some tanks for a fighter strip there. 82nd Seabees are there.

October 21:

The air-raids are not quite as often as they were here. We have night fighters up all night now. We had our first movie last night.

October 22:

The 20th, 24th, 37th, 73rd, and the 82nd Seabees are on New Georgia, Island.

October 23:

A quiet day and night. I am still on the switchboard and intend to keep the job if I can.

October 24:

We have all the Solomans now except Bougainville.

October 25:

Had our first air-raid last night for some time.

October 26:

One alert last night.

October 27:

Three air-raids last night with bombs dropped near.

October 28:

Same old grind!

October 29:

Five alerts last night.

October 30:

One air-raid with bombs dropped.

October 31:

Three air-raids with bombs.

November 1:

Two air-raids last night with bombs dropped.

November 2:

One air-raid last night.

November 3:

Chow is awful. No fresh meat. All dehydrated food. No sugar now. Cream for coffee.

November 4:

Received package from Mama today. Lots of soap! Guess she thought I was dirty.

November 5:

Quiet day and night.

November 6:

Three air-raids last with bombs dropped.

November 7:

One air-raid last night with bombs falling near by. Too near!

November 8:

One alert last night. Chow is still bad. Someone is slipping.

November 9:

One alert last night. I received a package from Mary Lee today.

November 10:

Had a very good movie last night.

November 11:

Today is Armistice Day. Memorial Day at the cemetery for the ones killed in the New Georgia campaign. It rained very hard today also. Big air-raid on Rabaul.

November 12:

Caught up with the date in my diary today. Have a movie tonight, "Reunion in France".

November 13:

Very quiet day and night. Chow is bad. We haven't had sugar for coffee in over a month.

November 14:

Man! Man! The ground is covered with sand crabs at night. Last night I had to take a stick and rake them out of the path so that I could walk.

November 15, 1943:

I am 22 years of age today. Last year on my birthday I was in Santa Barbara, California, but this time, Munda. Where will I be November 15, of 1944?

November 16:

Same old grind-- quiet day.

November 17:

A B-25 crashed on the field and burned late this afternoon. Reports are that none of the crew was saved.

November 18:

One "condition red" last night. First one in several days.

November 19:

Saw the movie, "The Sky is the Limit" last night. It was very good. Had an air alert also.

November 20:

Movie "Stormy Weather".

November 21:

Air alert at 4:00 P.M.. Movies tonight- "Air-raid Warden".

November 22, 23, 24:

Quiet, weather is very hot. Dive bombers pass over and take off from Munda Field every day for Bougainville and Rabaul. We have beach-heads on Gilbert Islands. First offensive move in Central Pacific. Seabee Camp in Quoddy Maine named "Camp Lee-Stephenson" after my two company officers, the first two Seabee officers killed in action against the enemy.

November 25:

Thanksgiving on Munda, New Georgia. Last night a year ago was my last night's liberty on shore leave in U.S.A.. Thanksgiving dinner consists of: Turkey, dressing, gravy, fresh cabbage slaw, cranberries, potatoes, bread, buns, and coffee with cream and sugar. Show for the night, "The Falcon Returns". American forces have taken the Gilbert Islands. Four Jap destroyers sunk off Bougainville and Rabaul.

November 26, 27, 28, 29, 30:

Everything has been very quiet and construction work is going at top speed. Munda Field is a beauty and is being enlarged more every day. Three planes take off abreast.

December 1 and 2:

Today, December 2, we had our first air alert which lasted about thirty minutes. First in several weeks. Two-motored bomber crashed into an oil truck on the field today killing all.

Christmas here on Munda for 1943, New Caledonia for 1942; I hope it shall be U.S.A. in 1944. We had a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, ice cream, and beer for Christmas. First beer and ice cream we have had in several months. The next day the whole battalion had dysentery. This is the greatest air base in the South Pacific here. Was down this morning and watched hundreds of dive bombers, torpedo-planes, B-25's, fighters and Liberators take off for the daily raid on Rabaul and Bougainville. The face of this island has changed tremendously since the first day that we landed on Munda.

December 29, 1943

Munda: The siren gave three long blasts this morning at 2:00. First we have had in quite a long time. We could hear anti-aircraft fire far in the distance, but the planes never came directly over us. That makes a sum of 201 air-raids so far for our stay on Munda. The number on Rendova was 108 which makes a total of 309 on New Georgis, Island, for me. We also had several while in convoy which was being formed for the first offensive move in the South Pacific by the Allies against the Japs on Rendova on the dawn of day of June 30, 1943.

January 8, 1944:

Last week a high wind came up about 11:30 P.M..A good many trees fell around camp. Only casualties were Lt.Stovall and Lt. Guy of B.Co.. Lt. Stovall received a large cut across his scalp and Lt. Guy had only ribs on one side broken. Lt. Guy is still in critical condition. Since then Skipper has ordered all trees in camp to be felled. The cry of "timber" has been heard all week as the huge mahogany trees hit the dust. On January 6, I was on duty at switchboard when call came in from message center with a radio-gram: The text of the radio-gram was: 24th Seabees were granted a leave. Transportation for 896 enlisted men and 23 officers which is the complete battalion. We leave Munda and go to Auckland, New Zealand. Everyone is downhearted as we held such high hopes of seeing the States in 1944.

A Brief Synopsis of the American Air Force taking the Offensive in the South Pacific:

June 16, 1943:

Guadalcanal: Over a hundred Jap planes tried to deliver a knockout blow to the U.S. convoy which had just left Guadalcanal headed for New Hebrides on maneuvers for the Rendova Drive on June 30. Company D and B of the 24th C.B. were a part of that convoy. Our fighters met them before they ever reached the convoy and turned the tables on them. Seventy seven Jap fighters and bombers went down under the hail of bullets from our fighters. We lost three fighters, one pilot saved.

June 30:

Rendova: First offensive move against the Japs in the Pacific. 125 Jap planes shot out of the sky on the first day. American losses were 25, a ratio of 5 to 1. I shall never forget that day. The 37th day Rendova- Munda campaign the total Jap aircraft shot from the sky was 259 fighters, 60 high-level bombers, 23 dive-bombers, and 16 float-type planes- a grand total of 358 enemy aircraft. American losses were 71 fighters and 22 bombers, a ratio of almost 4 to 1. Hurrah for the American Air Force!

January 13, 1944:

This morning at 2:00 , I was awakened by bombs whistling down above the roar of a Jap bomber overhead. I was so dumfounded that I thought I was dreaming because it was the first bombs to fall on Munda since November 5. Not a shot from a.a. was fired on the plane. From then until daybreak we had three air-alerts. We could hear the plane in the distance but it never came directly overhead again. The bombs fell on the end of the airport. They were all personnel bombs. Only one person was wounded. Presumably it was a two-motored job from Rabaul.

January 14:

This morning at 12:30 a.m. I was awakened by the shrieking of sirens over the island, three long blasts for "condition red". Air-raids. After about twenty minutes you could hear the rumble of a Jap bomber coming nearer and nearer. We had two P-38 night fighters up, but they never came in contact with the bomber. The bomber is still directly overhead, but there is no lights or a.a. fire. Presumably they are waiting for the night fighter to shoot him down, but no go. By that time the bombs were whistling toward earth, and did I feel little! They all hit the airport. Damage was two P-38's destroyed, two Corsairs, one Liberator, and the oil dump. They made the largest fire that I have ever seen, flames leaping from 100 to 200 feet in the air. The bomb had burned out in about 30 minutes. About 15 minutes after the first bomber had passed over, another came in. This time A.A. Bat. opened up on him and the sky was pierced by a half dozen search lights, but they could never find him. He let go a tremendous load of bombs also down near the airport. Casualties were one man killed and several wounded. A third bomber tried to get in, but a.a. fire kept him out. The raid lasted about one and a half hours.

First U.S.O. show on the island last night. Three civilian entertainers playing clarinet, guitars, and accordin. They were enjoyed by all.

Total air-raids: 314

January 16:

Air-raids alert at 2:00 a.m. but no planes came over.

January 21:

About 60 Liberators came in this afternoon, bombed Rabaul from here all night. Air-raids alert at 4:00 a.m. but no enemy planes were heard.

February 13:

Munda: Jap bombs fell on Munda again last night. Plane came over at 2:30 this morning and dropped 12 bombs. I began to think that they would never quit falling. He dropped his load and got out without a shot being fired at him. Two or three more bombers tried to get in but our a.a. fire turned them.

February 15:

While bombers were taking off this morning for raids on Rabaul and New Ireland, one bomber had a blow-out and ran into a parked fuel truck and set fuel truck and bomber afire. All crew members jumped out except the tail gunner. The bomb load went off and blew everything sky high. The concussion was felt one and a half miles away in camp.

February 18:

News came over the radio tonight of the raid on Truk Island, Japan's Pearl Harbor. May God be with our task forces and bring us through to victory.

March 7, 1944:

Munda, New Georgia: Revillee at five this morning. The battalion marched to Munda Cemetery to hold memorial services for our men who were killed in Rendova-Munda campaign. The ceremony was a very colorful and touching spectacle.

March 8:

Dismantled switchboard this morning and PBX equipment. We expect to leave for New Zealand on the 15th.

March 12:

Attended movie at 72nd bomber group last night and while we were there we had our first air-raid alert since Feb. 13th.

March 13:

The date that Tojo's son was killed on Guadalcanal and he usually sent bombers over on this date for repentance, but he failed to this month. Saw a very good stage show at 73rd C.B.'s put on by 16 Marines from 1st Amphibious.

March 14:

Seabees loaded on trucks this morning and carried to Sasavella for loading on ships. Notice was received this P.M. there will be no ship for 24th Seabees so guess we are stranded here for a few more days, weeks, or months. Who knows?

March 15:

Received a letter from Inez Womack today.

March 21:

Munda! Orders to disembark for New Zealand tomorrow. Today is D.Co. duty day. My post was sentry post on main entrance to the camp. Show tonight, "Frigid Wife"

March 22:

Munda. Revillee at four thirty this morning. Chow at five. Seabees and cots at flag-pole at six and orders to stand by to leave after 8:00. We left camp at 10:30, boarded the U.S.S. at 3:00 P.M. and pulled out at 7:00 P.M., raining.

March 23:

At dawn we are passing the Russell Islands. Three fighters and two submarine chasers joined us there. We arrived at Guadalcanal at three P.M. . The harbor is full of ships and there are lots of installations built ashore. It looks much different than it did the first time I ever saw Guadalcanal. Foster , of C, Company fell through a 48 foot hatch this morning and is in serious condition.

March 24:

Still at Guadalcanal this morning. Left Canal about three P.M. , picked up lots of mail for us here.

March 25:

We are sailing east by south-east this morning. There is an island off our starboard side, way in the distance. Mail call at 10:00 I got lots of papers, magazines, and the box of cookies that Mama mailed me a couple of months ago. Fair condition.

March 26:

Beautiful day. The sea is calm. We passed the Islands today at sunset. We could see the first land of the New Hebrides group.

March 27:

Awake this morning and the island of Esperito Santo lay off the starboard. We started entering the narbor at 6:00. We dropped anchor in harbor at about 8:30. This is a very beautiful place. In fact it is the most beautiful U.S. base in the South Pacific, that I have seen. The harbor is full of ships of every type and description. We loaded supplies, water, and fuel, on here and shoved off about five P.M. . The sea is getting very choppy. We are due in New Zealand the second of next month.

March 28:

The sea is rough this morning. Waves are leaping over the bow of the ship and lots of men are sea-sick. I feel rather funny in the tummy myself but have managed to stay afloat so far. Continued squalls and rough sea all day. Reports are that we contacted enemy subs last night.

March 29:

The ship tossed and tumbled all night long, and she is still bucking this morning. The sea is as rough as ever and there is no sign of letting up. I have been able to hold everything that I have eaten so far.

March 30:

Sea is still rough this morning. Our one escorting subchaser left us at 12:00 today. We shall be alone the rest of the way. It is beginning to turn cooler and can we feel it!

April 1:

The sea is much calmer today. The wind is icy cold and seems to penetrate right through me. Ship's crew had target practice this P.M.

April 2:

Sea is very calm today. We sighted a small island way out on the horizon at sunset.

April 3:

Woke up this morning and New Zealand is off our starboard side. We entered Auckland Harbor at about 2:30 P.M.. We docked and unloaded. Gosh, but the city looks good again! The smell is even good. It's a smell of civilization. We rode to camp on trucks. It is about five blocks from the wharf, and a five minute walk from up town. The sight of beautiful girls walking around on the streets looks very good to me. We had a chow tonight that can't be beat, with real cow's milk and all the ice-cream that we could eat.

April 4:

First night's liberty today. The city looks like any American city with the exception that it can't be as good.

April 5 to May 1:

I had fifteen day's leave from camp during this time. The first was a five day's leave and the second was a ten. On the five day leave, I went to Rotorua, an eight hour ride by train. It is a resort town, and the home of the Maori Race. I saw how the Maori people live, their customs etc., attended a Maori concert and dance and even dated a beautiful Maori girl. I left Rotorua for Auckland after three days. I arrived back in camp, and my company had eight days camp after which my ten day's leave started. I rented me a room in Auckland. Victor Woodward and I stayed in Auckland for this one and met lots of beautiful girls and had a hell of a big time.

May 2:

Leave is over. We board on ship tomorrow. Farewell dance at town hall is tonight for the 24th Seabees. I was there with Joyce. Did we have a good time.

April 3:

Loaded aboard the "Rixie" this P.M.. Joyce came down to the wharf to see me, and I jumped ship that night and came back at four a.m. next morning.

May 4:

We hoisted anchor this morning at eleven and I must say that I hated to see Auckland fade away as we head back north toward the islands. I'm 600 dollars poorer than I was when I arrived in Auckland a month ago.

May 4 through May 9:

The trip from New Zealand to the Russell Islands took us five days. We arrived in the harbor at the north end of the Russell Islands at 8:30 a.m. .This place is a great big mud hole, mud everywhere! Lots of rain. Our camp is in a large coconut grove. It reminds me of Rendova very much. I don't know how long we shall be here or what the score is. We have floors in our tents for the first time.

July 12:

Well, we are still on the Russell Islands. Life here is getting rather monotonous.