

Chapter 1 : Guam in World War II (U.S. National Park Service)

The battle of Biak Island (27 May- 29 July) was one of the most costly of MacArthur's leapfrogging attacks on the north coast of New Guinea and saw a well dug-in Japanese garrison hold out for several months longer than originally expected. Biak Island was a very strong defensive position.

The main aim really is to take control of all the resources and commodities such as oil and rubber within the English and Dutch colonies. The war has now spread to South East Asia. The Dutch government in London declares war on Japan. All men of the Dutch East Indies, who are between sixteen and sixty years of age, are called to take up arms. The Japanese advance swiftly, totally invading the Dutch colony. The Dutch military capitulate on 8 March. They form small groups Party groups who return to the Dutch East Indies and New Guinea in order to gather strategic information about the Japanese. A total of ten such groups were dropped into New Guinea behind the Japanese lines in order to conduct espionage operations. Liberating New Guinea After bombing the Australian harbour of Darwin in , the Japanese move their headquarters to Buna on the north coast of what is now Papua New Guinea and the headquarters of the Allies is set up in Port Moresby on the other side. These towns are divided by the steep Owen Stanley mountain range. The two towns are connected by the Kokoda track across the mountains. Australian troops successfully defend Port Moresby along this trail, when the Japanese try to invade from the north coast. To get the advantage, the Australian carved out steps into the mountain side. The American army lands on New Guinea in January and starts a major attack. However, it takes up until before the Americans can advance along the northern coast of New Guinea from Hollandia to Biak and Manokwari and on to the North Moluccas Morotai from where they attack the Philippines in October. In order to recapture New Guinea, the Allied Forces need to drive the Japanese off along km of fortified coast line. During this battle Japanese soldiers die and on the Australian and American side there are respectively and casualties. There are only aboy Dutch military stationed here with their leader Captain J. The commanders realises that they are outnumbered and they decide to sink their only ship by putting it on fire, keeping it out of the hands of the enemy. After several bombing raids on Manakwari, it is captured and the Japanese set up a considerable army at this location. All the Europeans are taken off and interned on Ambon. However, some of the Dutch infantry KNIL , 62 Dutch soldiers and 17 indigenous Papuans Meja-Arfakkers , disappear into the jungle and for the remainder of the war they organise guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. On 1 April the Japanese invade the headquarters of the guerrilla fighters and their commander Willemsz Geerom is captured and executed in Manokwari at a later date. Sergeant Mauritz Christiaan Kokkelink takes over the leadership. On 18 April the guerrilla group, by then consisting of only 35 men, attacks the Japanese base in Manokwari. Just about every one present is killed. The American counter attack starts on 9 May and Manokwari is turned to rubble because of intensive bombardments. Only three houses actually remain standing. The Japanese are chased out and many escape into the jungle, where most of them are killed off by the Papuans. They score a number of successes but also suffer defeat. Together with the help of local Papuans, the guerrilla fighters collect information about the enemy and they attack Japanese patrols. The men tell her: The last months were the worst; we ate snakes, crocodiles and turtles. Of the original 62 men, only 14 survive. It also has the following text on it: As you will know, the unit at Manokwari never surrendered! Not much is known about the history of these groups. The turning point of the war The battle at Midway is the turning point of the war. The Isei Americans born in Japan. The Americans manage to crack the communication code of the Japanese Marine Force so that they have the advantage. The Japanese loose four aircraft carriers and many of their aircraft. This occurs at the mini battle at Milne Bay in August of The horrific battle which lasts for the next six months, and which takes After this, Japan is definitely on the defensive. The ongoing necessity to send reinforcements to Guadalcanal, weakens the Japanese effort elsewhere. In , this leads to the recapture of strategic positions in Buna and Gona on New Guinea by Australian and American troops. With this attack a whole Japanese regiment went down, along with numerous tanks, armoured vehicles and other equipment. This is constructed on Mount Ifar, at the foot of the Cycloop Mountains. At this spot the five star general Douglas MacArthur comes up with his strategy for the land route

across New Guinea as well as the island-hopping campaign for Admiral Chester Nimitz across the Pacific Ocean. During a big army round-up at Sentani, some Japanese are killed. For many Papuans this period of time is their first encounter with military violence of the 20th century. The 1st Infantry Detachment of the Japanese build three landing strips at Sorido, along the south coast of Biak in order to defend the island. From 27 May to 20 June the Americans fight against the Japanese who have entrenched themselves and are using delay tactics for the first time. The island is being occupied by He decided to let the Americans come ashore without resistance, after which he lures them into an ambush near the airport of Mokmer. This area is full of caves and bunkers, an ideal place to hide snipers with automatic rifles, artillery guns, batteries of mortars and light tanks. But at Mokmer many lives and vital equipment are lost. The American Air Force needs to provide extra assistance with bombardments for weeks on end. In July the eventual balance is as follows: Squadron in Merauke gets bored Even though Merauke is never occupied by the Japanese, it does also suffer from the war. They are used for reconnaissance and are supposed to bombard Japanese positions along the coast. Because the war is drawing to an end, there is not that much action anymore and boredom takes over. Whenever they shoot a pig, there is a big party. The pilots hardly have any contact with the local population because not many Papuans in this region speak Malay. The hope arises among the pilots that they will be able to liberate the Dutch East Indies, but at the Head Quarters of the Allied Forces this is not a consideration. During the deployment at Merauke and later on Biak, the squadron loses a total of 12 pilots. Japanese commander fights from jungle In August the commander Hatazo Adachi of the 18th Army division withdraws together with his battalion into the jungle after the landing of the American troops in Aitape and Hollandia between 22 and 27 April of that same year. Near Wewak on the north coast they become trapped and Adachi surrenders on 13 September to the Australian 6th Division. After a Court Martial has given him a life sentence, he commits suicide in Rabaul on 10 September The Japanese try to stop the Allied Invasion and destroy them but instead the Allied Marines totally defeat the numerically weaker Japanese Naval Army. This battle is often regarded as one of the biggest naval battles in history. Thus this was an important victory and along with the battle at Midway, it spelled the beginning of the end for the Japanese invasion. After the Japanese surrender, the eastern part of New Guinea is once again placed under Australian administration of which the northern part is under a VN Trust Agreement. In the whole of the eastern region, under the name Papua New Guinea, is given national autonomy, and subsequently on 16 September, it becomes a completely independent nation. The western part of New Guinea remains under Dutch administration after Indonesia becomes an independent state in However, under pressure from the United States during the Cold War, it is handed over to Indonesia in Likewise a provision is made under the UN in the form of the Act of Free Choice which was to take place seven years later. This agreement should have led to independence as was the intention under the Dutch administration. However the Indonesians do not keep their side of the bargain and the western side of New Guinea is now divided into three provinces and is still under Indonesian rule.

Chapter 2 : eARMOR â€™It Just Took a Fewâ€™™: the Tank in New Guinea Campaign

"Biak was a battle that gave a terrifying glimpse into the soul of mankind," wrote another observer. "For all man's vaunted civilization and culture, he still retreats into the caves when deadly danger threatens.

Biak is about 45 miles 72 km long and 25 miles 40 km wide. The somewhat smaller island of Soepiori is located to the northwest, across a very narrow strait, and the Padaido Islands are scattered to the southeast. There are no natural anchorages and the island is almost completely surrounded by a formidable reef. The administrative center was Bosnik, on the southeast coast, where the reef was a bit narrower and was crossed by two stone jetties. The indigenous population numbered about 25, in There is a foot 60 m escarpment extending from east of Bosnik This escarpment is about yards m inland along most of its length, but comes close to the shore at Parai Behind the escarpment, the terrain drops to a plateau, about feet 30 m in elevation, which is generally flat but locally rough ground. The plateau was covered with scrub, transitioning to dense forest two or three miles three to five km inland. West of Mokmer village, the escarpment turns north and runs inland for about a mile and a half two and a half kilometers before turning west again and running to the southwest corner of the island. This creates a relatively broad coastal plain suitable for airfield construction. The escarpment is coral with numerous caves, some of which are quite large. The Japanese occupied the island in the spring of and built an airfield on the coastal plain west of Mokmer By there were additional airstrips at Bosnik The Battle of Biak Following their invasion of Hollandia , the Americans discovered that it would take many months to make the airfields at Lake Sentani capable of supporting heavy bombers. MacArthur therefore ordered 6 Army Krueger to execute an expedited assault schedule on 10 May , with a preliminary assault at Wakde on 17 May to secure airfields for local air cover and an assault on Biak ten days later. Fuller was under considerable pressure to ensure that the airfields would be secured by 10 June. Aerial reconnaissance showed that the reef offshore of Mokmer was unfavorable for the passage of landing craft , while the coast further east towards Parai was heavily fortified and the terrain between Parai and Bosnik was mostly mangrove swamp that afforded little room for maneuver. The decision was therefore made to land at Bosnik. However, this meant that the landing force would have to advance a considerable distance along the coast road at the foot of the escarpment to reach the airfields at Mokmer. Subsequent echelons would land at the jetties from 15 LCIs. Engineers and their equipment would be landed on the reef early in the invasion from eight LCTs to prepare beaching ramps for LSTs carrying tanks. They performed well in the actual landing in spite of considerable confusion. Preliminary air strikes were carried out by both 5 and 13 Air Forces from Nadzab and the Admiralties on 17 May A total of 99 B Liberators participated in these raids. Strikes continued almost daily until the landing date, and were joined the last three days by As based on Hollandia. The landing force embarked most of 41 Division on 25 May and sailed that evening. It was joined next morning by the cruiser forces under Crutchley and Berkey. Fighter cover was provided by 5 Air Force from Wakde. Fechteler did not expect to achieve surprise , but the Japanese reconnaissance aircraft that detected his force the next day was not itself detected, and Fechteler incorrectly believed he had achieved surprise after all. The Japanese had expected an assault on Biak following the invasion of Hollandia, but not so quickly. Biak was originally planned to be an important link in the Japanese perimeter, but the Japanese high command vacillated badly over whether to attempt to hold Biak or let it be sacrificed to buy time while a stronger perimeter was established further west. On 9 May Imperial General Headquarters announced that the perimeter was to be pulled back to Sorong , then changed its mind two days after the Allied landings and ordered a powerful naval response. The Biak garrison consisted of 11, troops of whom were combat trained. These were mostly from Regiment under Colonel Kuzume Naoyuki and included a company of light tanks. The remaining troops included artillery , engineers, and 28 Special Base Force with about sailors. Kuzume expected the landings to take place near Mokmer and concentrated his forces accordingly. The invasion of Wakde on 17 May prompted Kuzume to end work on the airfields and begin extensive fortification work. Emphasis was put on the high ground north and northwest of Mokmer airfield with the intent to deny the Allies the use of the airfield for as long as possible. Fortifications included four 4. Other artillery, mortars ,

and automatic weapons were deployed on the escarpment behind Mokmer, with the strongest position in a set of limestone caves yards north of Mokmer airstrip. West Caves had room for a thousand men. Another strong point was located in a smaller cave system "East Caves" directly north of Mokmer village, east of the airstrip, while a third strong point with pillboxes was located just west of Parai "Ibdi Pocket". The latter two strong points were serendipitously located in ideal positions to ambush the American advance along the coast. Elements of 41 Division Fuller began landing at on 27 May Opposition at Bosnik was light except for a troublesome 4. However, the weather was dead calm, and the preliminary bombardment by ships and aircraft of 13 Air Force soon obscured the landing area with smoke and dust. Some rounds of 8" mm , rounds of 6" mm , rounds of 5" mm and rounds of 4. The initial five waves were caught in a 2 to 3 knot current, and landed about two miles 3 km west of the planned landing beach before destroyer Kalk located the stone jetties on radar and discovered the mistake. The first wave found itself in a mangrove swamp but quickly regrouped, and the sixth and subsequent waves were directed to the correct beach. The jetties were found to be in good condition and the remainder of the landing went according to plan. By nightfall, about 12, troops, 12 tanks, 18 artillery pieces, vehicles, and tons of supplies were ashore. The initial confusion during the landings led to the first controversy of the battle. The commander of Regiment, finding himself on the coast well west of Bosnik, recommended that his regiment swap missions with Regiment, so that Regiment would secure Bosnik while Regiment raced west towards the airfield. Fuller rejected the recommendation, feeling that this would compound the confusion. Japanese aircraft put in a modest appearance during the first day. Four fighters appeared over the airstrips at but quickly retreated. Two fighters and four bombers appeared late in the afternoon and succeeded in hitting an LST with bombs that proved to be duds. Three of the bombers were shot down, but one succeeded in crashing into SC , which was set on fire and suffered two dead and eight wounded before the fires were put out and the submarine chaser salvaged. Opposition was so light the first day that Barbey speculated that the Japanese had evacuated the island. This was far from the case. Although the Japanese had spotted the invasion convoy, they were caught out of position and relatively unprepared for the attack. The command situation was further confused by the presence of Lieutenant General Numata Takazo , chief of staff of 2 Area Army, and Rear Admiral Senda Sadatoshi , who were both on an inspection trip from the area headquarters at Manokwari. Numata apparently directed Kuzume to abandon his plans for a defense in depth and carry out counterattacks in accordance with the traditional Japanese emphasis on the offensive. Numata left the island on 15 June, after which Kuzume reverted to his strategy of defense in depth. MacArthur had discounted accurate intelligence showing 11, Japanese troops and light tanks on the island, believing there were not more than defenders. The intelligence was confirmed when Regiment began to close on the airfield on the morning of 28 May The forward elements had gotten within yards of Mokmer airfield when the Japanese defenders suddenly opened fire from the East Caves and Ibai Pocket, ambushing the American column. A platoon of Sherman tanks helped drive back an attack supported by Japanese tanks, but 1 and 2 Battalions were unable to break through to relieve 3 Battalion. Supplies had to be brought in, and casualties evacuated, by landing craft. The naval support officer with Regiment was killed around noon, which greatly hindered cooperation with destroyers offshore. Four of the Shermans covered the withdrawal, which was completed by Destroyer gunfire was unsuccessful in driving the Japanese back during the night, and the Japanese moved 1 Battalion, Regiment to West Caves from its bivouacs to the north and prepared to throw all of 2 and 3 Battalions against the Americans the next morning. The counterattack was supported by light tanks, but these were completely outclassed by the Shermans, which knocked out seven of the Japanese tanks while the Japanese infantry took heavy casualties. However, by noon the Japanese had cut the coastal road at Parai and it was clear that Regiment was in an untenable position. The American tanks were able to cover the evacuation of 2 Battalion in LVTs while the remainder of Regiment cleared the roadblock at Parai and moved back to Ibdi Fuller called for reinforcements for an attack to clear the escarpment. He was given two battalions of Regiment from Wakde, and Parachute Regiment began moving to Hollandia in case it was also need. During the two days it took to bring up the two infantry battalions in LCIs, Regiment regrouped and rested, except for patrol activity that identified the Ibdi Pocket and found two trails across the escarpment. The Japanese also regrouped. The American attack resumed on 1 June , with Regiment advancing west along the

inland plateau while Regiment resumed its drive along the coast. The Japanese survivors continued withdrawing before Regiment and would ultimately end up at West Caves. Thereafter Regiment was more seriously hindered by terrain and lack of fresh water supplies than with the Japanese. At one point, a tropical downpour was all that prevented the advance from bogging down for lack of water. Meanwhile Regiment had recognized that the Ibdì Pocket was a major strong point. By 6 June, Regiment was preparing to advance along the terrace north of Mokmer airfield to clear any Japanese positions overlooking the airfield. However, Fuller, who was under pressure from Krueger to get at least one airfield operational as soon as possible, ordered the regiment to prepare to move south immediately and seize the airfield and a beachhead around it. Because of inadequate patrolling by one of his battalions, the regimental commander failed to recognize that he was in a good position to outflank strong Japanese positions on the ridge north of Mokmer airfield. Instead, Regiment headed directly to the airfield, under cover of an intense artillery barrage, and after occupying the field found itself under fire from formidable Japanese fortifications on the ridge to the north. Furthermore, Regiment had had to abandon its tenuous supply line back across the ridge and the inland plateau to Bosnik, and the Japanese at Ibdì Pocket and the Parai defile had kept Regiment from clearing the coastal road. Additional supplies had to be run in by landing craft under Japanese fire, which was possible only after infantry with tank support had cleared the Japanese fortifications along the beach south of Mokmer airfield. The battle for Biak now became a battle of attrition. Instead, the battalion was hit by fire from East Caves and called for reinforcements of artillery and tanks. Frustrated with the Japanese resistance at Ibdì, Fuller decided to leave a single company to contain the Ibdì Pocket while Regiment cleared the Parai defile, opened the coastal road, and moved west to join Regiment at Mokmer airfield. The Ibdì Pocket would be left for Regiment to reduce when it arrived. On 11 June Fuller launched a major attack by both and Regiments to the west from Mokmer airfield. Each regiment put two battalions into the attack and held the third back at Mokmer airfield as reserves. The battalion had stumbled onto West Caves, and liberated Javanese laborers confirmed the presence of the Japanese stronghold. Company L, Regiment, had meanwhile established an observation post on Hill , directly north of West Caves, and the observation post reported large concentrations of Japanese artillery around West Caves.

Chapter 3 : The Pacific War Online Encyclopedia: Biak

The battle for Biak now became a battle of attrition. Kuzume had 1 and 2 Battalions, Regiment ; 19 Naval Guard Force; and most of his Army service troops and heavy weapons at West Caves and the ridge north of Mokmer, some naval troops and mortars at East Caves, and 3/ Regiment in the Ibdj Pocket.

Robert Young The tank has achieved a well-deserved aura of decisiveness and versatility in the annals of World War II history. A common factor in the aforementioned theaters of war was terrain. All were ideal tank country. All were ideal for vast maneuvers, flanking movements and large-scale armor-vs. In another theater of the war and in far different terrain, the tank also developed into a decisive weapon. In what the U. Army called the Southwest Pacific area, American armor, employed in small numbers – often as few as four and never more than eight – turned the tide of several key battles. Their decisiveness would be proven not only in the battles in which they were employed, but also in those in which they were not. The campaign in New Guinea lasted about two years, commencing in Winter with the Battle of Buna and ending with the Battle of Biak in Summer. Its many successes and failures, both at the strategic and tactical levels, reside with him. He loathed exclusion from the headlines. First, the men he commanded were not experienced, hardened soldiers. The men and commanders were unfit for combat in a jungle environment. Buna was the last place on the planet a commander, particularly one unaccustomed to a jungle environment, wanted to fight a battle. However, the Japanese were turning Buna into an airbase, and two airstrips already existed. Given their ability to interdict the supply and communication lanes to Australia, possession of these airfields were imperative. However, the terrain lent many advantages to the defender. Landings of Allied forces to Western New Guinea, Few areas in the world present so formidable an obstacle to military operations. The jagged mountains rear their tall peaks amid sudden plunging gorges, towering above the trackless jungle that covers nearly the entire surface of the sprawling island. Much of the drier land is covered with a thick growth of kunai grass or plantations of coconut palms. This coarse grass grows to a height of more than six feet, but its height varies greatly, depending on how recently it has been burned over or cut. Its leaves are broad and sharp-edged: Japanese-controlled airfields at Buna would impede any form of buildup on the island continent. The SWPA commander felt that even his inexperienced, ill-equipped troops could deal with the 1, depleted, jungle-ravaged skeletons his S-2 informed him were defending Buna. Why not send in his men, devoid of heavy weapon and armor support which seemed prohibited by the terrain when such a debilitated force awaited them? However, his S-2 missed several important points. Several feet of overhead cover also protected these bunkers from most artillery and mortar ammunition. The commanders of 32nd Infantry Division were unaware of these defenses. Nor were they aware of the approximately 1, fresh troops who arrived in two separate convoys, completely undetected, immediately prior to the battle. A superbly camouflaged Japanese trench and bunker on the approaches to the airstrips. Buna perimeter Misgivings aside, abounding with a hesitant confidence due to the faulty appraisal of the enemy facing him, MacArthur ordered 32nd Infantry Division to launch its first attack Nov. Beginning with the attack of Nov. In the first attack, no definitive information on the Japanese positions existed. After the initial attack, inadequate artillery support there were only two guns available, inadequate ammunition artillery and mortar ammunition were fitted with quick-action instead of delayed-action fuses, which did little more than blow away overhead cover and the forbidding terrain continued to frustrate all attacks. The formerly green infantry of the 32nd were learning the trade of the combat soldier but now faced an even greater obstacle than inexperience: A gallant soldier could advance onto a bunker and drop a grenade through a vision slit. While ultimately effective, it was safe to say, it was a very hazardous undertaking. MG Edwin Harding, commander of the 32nd, knew what he needed: After the Japanese easily repulsed his first few assaults, Harding began pleading with MacArthur for tanks. Stuart light tanks were available, and their 37mm guns could penetrate the bunkers at short range. The tanks would also place the Japanese in a position similar to their American attackers – the Japanese weapons were as ineffective against the tanks as the American weapons were against the bunkers. If only they could be brought to the front. MacArthur told Harding it would be several weeks before they arrived. One virtue sorely

lacking in the MacArthur mystique was patience. Despite never visiting the front or seeing the conditions his men were fighting in, despite denying Harding the equipment he needed to break the stalemate, MacArthur decided to relieve him. His replacement would be Eichelberger, perhaps the most capable American ground commander of the Pacific War. Do you understand, Bob? Time is of the essence! I want you to relieve Harding, Bob. Send him back to America. Relieve every regimental and battalion commander. Put corporals in command if necessary. Get somebody who will fight. When do you want to start, Bob? Eichelberger wanted to postpone any attack until the arrival of the Stuart tanks. MacArthur would not wait. After an attack Dec. Eight tanks had arrived. An mm howitzer with a supply of delayed-action ammunition was also available to support the attack. The attack began in the morning with American and Australian infantry advancing, supported by the newly arrived tanks. A preattack artillery and mortar barrage had the usual negligible effect. However, such was not the case with the Stuarts. They apparently completely demoralized the Japs who fought like cornered rats when they were forced into the open as a result of having their fires masked when the tanks broke through their final protective line. The M5A1 Stuart light tank. This model is at Worthington Tank Museum in Canada , [http:](http://) The heavy enemy small-arms fire, which had stalled the infantry for a month, had no effect on the tanks. Two tanks were lost, one to a molotov cocktail, the other to mechanical failure, but the attack continued. Three of the remaining tanks resumed their advance, blasting various strongpoints enroute. About one-third of the Buna battlefield was now secure. Two tanks were committed there, one of which was quickly put out of action when machinegun fire damaged its vision slits. The three tanks of the main attack, the lone reserve tank and the undamaged tank then went to work. They destroyed half the bunkers at point-blank range. Infantrymen were able to advance to within kicking distance of the bunkers because the tanks drew all the enemy fire. The infantrymen destroyed the remaining positions, and the Japanese could do little to stop them. The antiquated Stuart tank had turned the tide. Armor could not be employed on the entire battlefield since the rest of the Buna area was too marshy. The battle would continue for several more weeks, but the issue was no longer in doubt. Several Stuart tanks tanks that in the European theater of operations were considered relics had ensured victory. Wakde Island Finally victorious at Buna, MacArthur would wait 16 months before his next major operation along the northern coast of New Guinea. In a brilliant campaign that would bring the American army to the doorstep of the Philippines, the tank continually proved its value. Wakde was attacked in May after a relatively effortless operation secured the key points of Hollandia and Aitape. Wakde was needed because its airstrips could support both the bombers and fighters of the U. The small but formidable island of Wakde. Support for this invasion had come quite far since the lean days of Buna. There was ample artillery support two field-artillery battalions, one each of mm and mm howitzers, reinforced by another company of mm howitzers and the fires of two heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, 20 destroyers, three rocket-equipped Landing Crafts Infantry, two rocket-equipped submarine chasers and the Fifth Air Force. The rd also had the help of a platoon of four Sherman tanks. Their 75mm guns, three-inch armor plates and mere presence proved decisive in the coming battle. The island itself is only 3, yards long and 1, yards wide at its widest point. The airstrip dominated the island. Eight hundred Japanese soldiers garrisoned the island, and they erected about bunkers, many of which were reinforced with concrete or coconut logs and concealed by nature and superb camouflage. It was as imposing a position as the one formerly occupied by the Japanese at Buna. However, the American army was not the same force who fought on that battlefield. The landing was relatively easy. Once ashore, Company C, 1st Battalion, made first contact with the enemy. Company C encountered a system of bunkers and cleared them in little more than an hour. This took place in spite of heavy enemy fire. Once they reached the second bunker system, Company C needed help. A new system of bunkers, better concealed and with considerable underbrush, obstructed the advance.

Chapter 4 : Battle of Biak Island, 27 May July

The Battle of Biak was part of the New Guinea campaign of World War II, fought between the United States Army and the Japanese Army from 27 May to 17 August. It was part of General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific command's offensive drive to clear New Guinea in preparation for an invasion of the Philippines.

It was known that early in May the Japanese had ordered the defenses of Biak to be strengthened. The extent of the Biak defenses however, was unknown. It was supposed that most of these troops were clustered around Mokmer Drome, the most easterly of the airfields. The naval elements to transport and support the task force in the initial amphibious assault were commanded by Rear Admiral William M. Two reinforcement groups which would follow included even more ships. If ground reinforcement were needed, it would mainly come from Hurricane Task Force Reserve which included a battalion - from the TH Inf. Newman, landed on beaches Green 1, 2, 3, and 4 near Bosnek. There was minimal resistance; the enemy had been caught by surprise. It was ashore and ready to fire by The rest of the battalion was not far behind [ashore by], but only Battery C actually went into action on the first day. Resistance was feeble that day although the enemy attacked the ships and beaches from the air. Army Signal Corps photo Mokmer Drome on Biak, under Allied air attack, possibly the pre-invasion bombardment the morning of 27 May. Meanwhile, the D Infantry 41ST Division, which had begun landing about, was soon moving westward along the coast as part of their primary mission, to secure the three Japanese airfields. However, it soon became evident that the planners had yet again underestimated the enemy, both in strength and tenacity. After the battle, it was learned that there were about 11, Japanese troops on Biak as opposed to the 4, Japanese the planners had estimated. The assault landings had been relatively easy, because the Japanese commander, with insufficient troops to effectively defend the entire coast, had concentrated his strength inland around the airfields. On 28 May, as the Americans started to push inland and toward the airfields, enemy resistance increased dramatically. Patrols from the D Inf. On 7 June, for example, the st fired over 2, rounds. This Japanese counterattack started about hours on 28 May. However the 75mm guns on the U. The D had just been released from its mission on Wakde Island. Army Signal Corps photo Soldiers from the D Infantry seeking cover as they move westward along the southern shore of Biak. Possibly taken between 28 May and 7 June. Likely taken between 28 May and 10 June, when the Japanese were evicted from the area. Eichelberger arrived on the island on the 15th. Even as he was in the process of taking over command, a particularly bitter battle was in progress, a battle which included a vigorous enemy counterattack employing both infantry and tanks. It is possible that this tank was disabled during the 15 June 1944 attack or the 29 May attack on Biak. It prevented Japanese infantrymen from forming for the attack and neutralized a number of enemy machine guns by firing rounds into the area northwest of the 1st Battalion, th Infantry. Jensen, from Menomonie, Wisconsin, and assigned to Co. Hearing the Japanese had sneaked in behind them, they were able to wreck a mortar position and three 20mm ack-ack positions. He had been a CPL in Co. However, the fight for total control of the island would continue for 3 more weeks. Possibly taken on or after 17 June, when the Japanese were evicted from the area. Likely taken on or after 27 June, when the Japanese were evicted from the area. On 20 August Biak was officially declared clear. On 2 October the battalion reverted to the 32d Division, but it remained on Biak until 13 November, when it sailed for Hollandia. It was put ashore on the east coast on 14 December and was back with the Division two days later.

Chapter 5 : A Day in the Life of a WWII Army Doctor: Cynical Laughs (38)

Our Jungle Road To Tokyo Biak: Battle of the Caves The New Eighth Army Leyte Campaign Ocr ABBYY FineReader

A narrative by a young Colorado doctor swept up into the Second World War: We were called back to help on Biak. From an unidentified newspaper article: The coastal coral strip, Allied goal since the May 27 invasion of the island off northern Dutch New Guinea, fell into American hands Wednesday at 11 a. A Yank column, battling its way westward down island ridges from the invasion village of Bosnek, stormed Japanese position from behind and took the field. Another American column striking along the coast had been halted five miles east of Mokmer. Southwest Pacific headquarters announced that this Japanese block was widely encircled by the inland column which struck from the rear to take Mokmer. From Mokmer and other air fields which readily may be constructed on the flat, low-lying southeastern two-thirds of Biak island, Fifth air force fighters could control all western Dutch New Guinea and to the Philippines, only miles distant. On Biak island, miles east of Manokwari, American forces rushed to repair work on Mokmer strip which they seized from the Japanese Wednesday morning. June 10, Things have quieted down a bit as air activity against us is concerned. It will be a fine place - after several months of work! It will be in a run-down coconut grove with high undergrowth between the trees. It is fine there. There are more mosquitoes than on Biak, but more shade. But such an ill-timed move right when the fighting is going on continually! Anyway they sent for me and the surgery boys next morning. I worked all day until 1: Then the next day we received 50 or 60 more. They will be fixed on the boat. When we had the 2 surgeries with 6 tables going, we could really turn out the work. This morning I had my first bath in 4 days. Dick [McIlroy] and I fixed up a badly lacerated Jap sniper perineum scrotum and penis with severing of the urethra. The boy Mexican will have a slant to the S. I did my first cystostomy suprapubic [a new connection to drain the bladder], of which I should have done some in private practice. We used a small pack in the kidney and brought it out thru a stab wound in the flank. Lots of compound [broken in more than one place] and comminuted [splintered or crushed] fractures - tibia and fibula [lower leg], femur [upper leg], radius and ulna [lower arm], humerus [upper arm], scapula [shoulder blade], skull, ribs, hands, feet, vertebrae. According to him, a few days ago we secured the Mokmer air strip and were clearing out pockets of the enemy. Actually we still hold only one side and the Japs the rest, plus the ridges over looking it [our side of the strip] from which they shell the beach and our other positions with mortars, mountain guns, dual purpose AA and coast defense guns. The trying to come in from behind is meeting terrific resistance. The Japs in their caves have almost perfect protection and have not suffered much from the tons and tons of shells and bombs. Our losses must be several hundred killed and a thousand wound[ed]. I heard of one company men that tried to hold a ridge with a captain and 18 men. The rest were killed, wounded or sick from exhaustion. But at that, malaria, psychoses and exhaustion have caused more non-effectives than battle casualties. But they are gradually going ahead and gaining ground. There are few pill boxes that the tanks can get at to blast the beach at Mokmer drome. Some casualties were treated by the first aid and it was 2 or 3 days before they could be brought back by buffaloes and ducks [semi-aquatic means of transport]. The Negro duck drivers proved themselves real heroes, going right thru the toughest kind of mortar fire. Last night the 12th Portable was to try to land there. Another one had been shelled off the beach a few days before. Shaw said another Jap convoy headed here, was broken up. Lord help us if they get one thru. In a Jap home broadcast and reported by a listening station in the US, they said Biak is of vital importance - that if they lose it their whole N. So the Japs are really making a fight for it. If an airstrip can be secured and used, it will help a lot. In church this morning we could hear the distant boom of the guns in the mad symphony of war. Some time back the 49th Fighter Squadron was bombed, about a mile from us. Gene wrote at the top of the following article from an unidentified newspaper, possibly the Montana Standard, "I treated this chap Comstock. Edward Sivula of Butte, Mont. Sivula is the son of Mr. Victor Sivula, East Broadway. His parents have read this dispatch after having received word only Thursday that their son was missing in action. On May 28, the second day of the Biak invasion, they were in a forward position, observing and reporting artillery fire, when a Japanese counter-attack isolated them. Comstock was nicked in the left arm and leg by an exploding mortar

shell. Sivula helped his companion to a limestone cave on the beach front. While spreading dried palm fronds over the entrance to conceal their position, he was injured in the right leg by mortar fragments. They remained in their hideout four days. Once a Japanese sniper, smoking a cigarette, stepped into the cave, but he failed to see the wounded Yanks. While fighting was still underway, they started back toward their outfit, walking two miles to a jetty at Mokmer village, then held by the Japanese. Dodging machine gun fire they climbed into a wrecked Japanese barge. The incoming tide flooded them out within an hour. The artillerymen again took refuge in a cave, subsisting on a small stream of fresh water trickling through it and on Japanese tinned meat and biscuits. Comstock found a water logged native dugout canoe June 3. Several hundred yards offshore the canoe overturned. A sniper on the cliffs above opened fire as the two Americans waded ashore. The Americans returned to their cave, hiding out for nine more days and nights, while American forces maintained a consistent barrage against Japanese positions near them. They made another break on the night of June Just before dawn, they cautiously approached the beach at Parai village, where they had observed the arrival of some Americans. Then Comstock tripped over a wire. Flames sputtered five or six feet away. It was a booby trap which failed to explode, but they ducked for safety behind a log. They heard approaching footsteps, then a Midwestern voice growled: Git up, git up. They were evacuated to a hospital. Schwatel from the 33rd Div. The "mad symphony" goes on and on.

Chapter 6 : NGB Publications & Forms

Biak was a shitty little malaria and typhus infested atoll about thirty miles long; we landed near the main town of Bosnik, built by the Dutch. The Japs had a couple of airfields there, which MacArthur needed in order to strike at the Philippines with his long range bombers.

On Guam there is an embracing "hafa adai" attitude that welcomes visitors and makes the island a friendly travel destination and a unique place to live in the United States. While Guam is only square miles, the island is rich in history. Only hours after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the Japanese began aerial bombings on Guam. After two days of strafing, the Japanese came ashore and hours later the naval governor surrendered the American territory. The island remained under Japanese control for 31 months until July 21, when the United States returned and liberated the island. Many lives were lost and the suffering was great for all those involved in the battles on Guam and throughout the Pacific theater. They attacked and quickly defeated the Insular Force Guard in Agana. They then advanced on Piti, moving toward Sumay and the Marine Barracks. Governor McMillin officially surrendered at A few skirmishes took place all over the island before news of the surrender spread and the rest of the island forces laid down their arms. An American freighter was damaged by the Japanese. The governor of Guam, Captain George J. McMillan the island governor was always a U. Navy officer , aware that he could expect no reinforcement or relief, decided to surrender the territory to Japanese naval forces. Foremost in his mind was the fate of the 20, Guamanians, all American nationals, who would inevitably suffer if a strong defense was mounted. He felt "the situation was simply hopeless. Even so, in two days of bombing and fighting, the garrison lost 19 men killed and 42 wounded, including four Marines killed and 12 wounded. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, U. The strategic bombing of Japan would originate from captured fields on Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. The new strategic weapon for these attacks would be the B bomber, which had a range of 3, miles while carrying 10, pounds of bombs. The code name of the Marianas operation was "Forager. In January , Admiral Nimitz made final plans for Guam, and selected his command structure for the Marianas campaign. Accordingly, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, the victor at Midway, was designated commander of the Fifth Fleet and of all the Central Pacific Task Forces; he would command all units involved in Forager. Ashore in the North Troops of the 3d Marine Division landed virtually in the lap of the Japanese island commander, General Takashina, whose U-shaped cave command post, carved out of a sandstone cliff, overlooked the Asan-Adelup beachhead. The looming heights dominated the beaches, particularly on the left and center, where the 3d and 21st Marines were headed for the shore. W-Day, 21 July , opened as a beautiful day, but it soon turned hazy as the violent clouds of smoke, dust, and fire spiraled skyward. At an air observer shouted into his microphone: Small arms and machine gun fire, and the incessant fires of two 75mm guns and a 37mm gun from a concrete blockhouse with a four-foot thick roof built into the nose of Gaan Point, greeted the invading Marines as the LVTs churned ashore. The structure had been well camouflaged and not spotted by photo interpreters before the landing nor, unfortunately, selected as a target for bombing. As a result, its guns knocked out two dozen amtracs carrying elements of the 22d Marines. The assault at Agat was treated to the same thunderous naval gunfire support which had disrupted and shook the ground in advance of the landings on the northern beaches at Asan. When the 1st Brigade assault wave was 1, yards from the beach, hundreds of 4. It would be the last of the powerful support the troops of the brigade in assault would get before they touched down on Guam. The 21st Marines in the center held up its advance on 22 July until the 3d Marines could get moving, but the men in their exposed positions along the top of the ridge, seized so rapidly on W-Day, were hammered by Japanese mortar fire, so much so that Colonel Butler received permission to replace the 2d Battalion by the 1st, which had been in division reserve. The 9th Marines met relatively little resistance as it overran many abandoned Japanese positions in its drive toward the former American naval base at Piti on the shore of Apra Harbor. The 3d Battalion, after a heavy barrage of naval gunfire and bombs, assaulted Cabras Island in mid-afternoon, landing from LVTs to find its major obstacle dense brambles with hundreds of mines. Orote The 22d Marines had driven up the coast from Agat in a series of hard-fought clashes with stubborn enemy defenders. The 4th Marines had swept up the slopes of

Mount Alifan and secured the high ground overlooking the beachhead. By the 25th, the brigade was in line across the mouth of Orote Peninsula facing a formidable defensive line in depth, anchored in swamps and low hillocks, concealed by heavy undergrowth, and bristling with automatic weapons. The 77th Infantry Division had taken over the rest of the southern beachhead, relieving the 4th Marines of its patrolling duties to the south and in the hills to the east. Just in case of enemy air attack, the beach defenses from Agat to Bangi Point were manned by the 9th Defense Battalion. The attackers stormed vigorously out of the concealing mangrove swamp and the response was just as spirited. There were deadly and professional attacks as well, with Marines bayoneted in their foxholes. There was one attendant communications breakdown obliging Captain Robert Frank, commanding officer of Company L, 22d Marines, to remain on the front relaying artillery spots to the regimental S-2 and thence to brigade artillery. The 3d and 21st Marines squared away their holds on heights and the 9th Marines July pushed its final way up to Mount Alutom and Mount Chachao. Hubbard, commanding the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines replacing Lieutenant Colonel Asmuth, wounded on W-Day, called down artillery, and, after the barrage, his Marines attacked with grenades and bayonets. They destroyed everything that stood in their path. As the assault force pushed up these commanding slopes, the Marines could spot men of Company A of the 77th Infantry atop Mount Tenjo to the west. Lieutenant Colonel Carey A. Originally, Mount Tenjo had been in the 3d Division zone, but General Bruce had wanted to get his men on the high ground so they could push ahead along the heights and not get trapped in the ravines. He also wanted to prevent the piecemeal commitment of his division and to preserve its integrity. Jump-off for the drive north was July with the 3d Marine Division on the left and the 77th Infantry Division on the right, dividing the island down the middle. The 1st Marine Brigade relieved the 77th Division of the defense of the southern portion of the FBHL and would continue to patrol the southern half of Guam. As the Corps attack moved northward and the island widened, the brigade would eventually take part in the drive to the extreme north coast of the island. Beginning of the End On 4 August, the new frontlines and scheme of maneuver were being set up to keep pressure on General Obata and his holdouts, and make a place for General Shepherd and his brigade. During the afternoon, the brigade reached its northern assembly area and General Shepherd set up his CP near San Antonio. In the final advance north, the brigade would be on the left with its inland flank within a mile of the western beaches. The 3d Division would be in the center deploying its units on a three-regiment front which would swerve to the east to take in the whole northern end of the island and as well support the 77th Division. The Japanese now faced an overwhelming number of attack forces. And there would be plenty of help from the sea and from the air. Priority of fires of corps artillery, air support, and ships gunfire was now given to the Army. These new arrangements were to take effect on 7 August. Making new strides to end the campaign, the 3d and 21st Marines progressed handily but the 9th Marines kept running into dense jungle that was such a tangled mess that tanks passed each other 15 feet apart without knowing the other was there. The division accelerated its advance in battalion columns. On 6 August, it had progressed 5, yards along the road to Ritidian Point, the end of the island and the end of the battle for Guam. As that evening fell, the 3d Division was in visual contact with the 77th Infantry Division, wherever the all-encompassing jungle allowed. Meanwhile, heavy Seventh Air Force bombing as well as artillery and naval shelling of enemy areas had been going on for days. Night fighters were now assigned to support the advance, so even darkness afforded the Japanese no protection. By that same 6 August, the defense line that General Obata had set across Guam had been shattered and overrun. Only isolated pockets now existed before Santa Rosa. No American commander could say on 7 August when the fight for Guam would be over. General Bruce in his attack first to Yigo and then Santa Rosa would have a relatively fresh regiment, the 7th, which had come up from the south where it had patrolled with the brigade. It was in contact with the 9th Marines on the division boundary. McNair, 77th Division chief of staff, was there, too, seeking a site for a division CP and was killed by a sniper. McNair, was killed in France 12 days earlier during an American bombing raid. The attack on Mount Santa Rosa began at noon, 7 August. Bulldozers blazed trails, and tanks and infantry overran machine gun positions. The 77th was dug into positions on the night of August ready for the final attack on the mountain. The expected big Japanese counterattack still did not come. The rapid advance of the Americans accompanied by heavy artillery support likely forestalled that forelorn hope. Two regiments, the 7th and 9th, proceeded rapidly on 8 August. By

, the northern half of Mount Santa Rosa was in American hands, and the troops moved to secure the rest of the mountain. By the Army had reached the cliffs by the sea and could look right down to the ocean. The th infantry had also completed an enveloping move to take the northern slopes of Mount Santa Rosa. Only enemy bodies were found after the two-day fight for Yigo and Santa Rosa. Yet, estimates of the enemy personnel at Santa Rosa had been as high as 5, So this meant that enemy troops in significant number now infested the jungled terrain everywhere on Guam. Worse, some enemy tanks were also unaccounted for. Sharp-eyed Marines noted more than a smattering of enemy movement near a particular hill in the Army zone. This was believed to be the command post area of General Obata. A man roadblock held up the Marines, but was taken out quickly. Searching a corridor between the 3d and the 9th Marines, the 21st Marines came upon the bodies of 30 Guamanians near Chaguian. They had been beheaded. The brigade had it a little easier on the far west, for it found negligible resistance as it advanced along fairly good trails. On 8 August, a patrol of the 22d Marines reached Ritidian Point, the northernmost point of the island. Moving along a twisting cliff trail to the beach, the Marines encountered less-than-aggressive Japanese defenses which they quickly overcame. The 22d Marines was down below the cliffs at Ritidian, scouring along the beaches where there are many caves. The 4th Marines was on the north coast at Mengagan Point and tied by patrols to the 22d Marines. At , 9 August, General Shepherd declared organized resistance had ceased in his zone.

Chapter 7 : Caves and Karst (U.S. National Park Service)

The Buna Campaign: II November-December, VI. "Our Losses Were Light" January-February, VII. The Battle of the Bismarck Sea March, VIII.

First in line was a back to back visit to two beautiful and culturally rich national parks in Central Luzon: The tedious trip was saved by a forty minute stopover along North Luzon Expressway. By the time that we deviated from the National Highway, we saw ourselves inching closer to the mountainous part of Central Luzon. Until our truck hit the dirt road where the park was situated. This is where the katipuneros led by Emilio Aguinaldo fought for freedom during the Spanish occupation. They built their hide outs and headquarters through the several cave systems present in the area. This is the first ever Republic declared in the country and it is where the first constitution was drafted. Locals mentioned that more than a hundred caves can be found inside the national park. Aside from the cave systems, one can enjoy strolling around the main park where statues depicting historical events are found. For the adrenaline junkie, a hike at Mt. Susong Dalaga and Tilandong Falls are a must; or you can challenge yourself by conquering as many caves as you like! The park fees Because we were on a time crunch that afternoon, we signed up for the historical caves exploration. We would be checking out four out of the hundred caves in the area where history transpired the most. We hopped on our truck and trudged the path around the park to get to the jump off point. He answered some of our questions and gave us some tidbits regarding history and the booming tourism in the area. Then, the hike commenced across the fields until we get to a vast plain where we stopped for some group photo ops. Based on its name, it served as the hospital for the injured revolutionists. She gave her biggest contribution to Katipunan by nursing those who faltered in the battle field. The cave is just perfect for its purpose as there was a wide space between two unnoticeable ends. Outside these two ends were perfect hiding posts for spotters and snipers to ward off Spaniards who may threaten to enter the cave. Inside the cave are rock formations which locals refer to as pillars, curtains, chandeliers etc. It is important to note to the guests not to touch any of the shiny rock formations as it would stop the rock minerals from growing. There was also a part where human bones can be found. Here are our pictures inside Hospital Cave: Going around some bamboo and other plants took us to the cave entrance. Imbakan, is the vernacular word for storage. This cave was used to house food, medicine, artillery and other weapons. The spacious cave also had some sinkholes and a good amount of stalactites and stalagmites. Here are our pictures inside Imbakan Cave: Tanggapan is the vernacular for reception area. All neophytes who joined katipunan underwent initiation and were welcomed here. The initiation was the famous blood compact where you will slit your wrist and let the blood drip in a wine and both parties the neophytes and one member will drink from it. Inside Tanggapan Cave This cave was said to be smaller during the Spanish period. It just became wider due to erosion. That explained the names written on the ceiling of the cave which probably date back to several decades ago. So getting into this cave was really difficult, considering the abundant flora that surrounded the park hundred years ago. Instant history lessons, eh? Coming from the third cave, we had to trek until we chance upon the river before curving outwards again to get to the mouth of the cave. Carabaos dipping in the mossy stream There was just a narrow opening and we had to bend our bodies to get inside it. Our guide warned us that this would be the darkest cave, not to mention the longest to maneuver. He constantly reminded us to duck down and be cautious of the head board. We did not want to be head butting some hard stalactites. The darkness and silence inside the cave were perfect for them to stealth and observe. As their enemies come close, they would hear every tiny bit of sound coming from them. And when they drew near the courageous Filipino heroes, within a blink of an eye they would have been ambushed already. We were asked to stay silent and turn off our lights for a couple of minutes. Unfortunately, we had to try too many times before the group could become successful in mastering the art of group silence. Almost at the end of Ambush Cave There was a presence of a ladder near the seemingly exit of the cave. The light from down below was alluring. It was like an opening to a holy tunnel or something. At first I thought that it was an opening that will lead to a church. But we were still inside the cave. A couple more minor spelunking moves and we reached another ladder which was the true exit of Ambush Cave. We

helped ourselves with some balut, penoy, halo halo, softdrinks, kikiyam, fishball and sandwich with a super delicious creamy peanut butter after our four cave stint in Biak Na Bato National Park. Because it was already late, we forego visiting the main park, Aguinaldo Cave and Bat Cave. Half a day is not really enough to check the wonders of this historical park.

Chapter 8 : Biak - The 32D 'Red Arrow' Infantry Division in WWII

Entrance to the East Caves, near the village of Mokmer on Biak. Likely taken on or after 27 June , when the Japanese were evicted from the area. Likely taken on or after 27 June , when the Japanese were evicted from the area.

Koga was killed in a crash over the Philippines at the end of March , and was replaced by Admiral Soemu Toyoda. Once again the decisive battle was to be fought in the Philippine Sea, east of the Philippines. The ideal location would be somewhere near the Palau Islands or in the western Caroline Islands around Yap. This would reduce the amount of fuel needed by the Combined Fleet, and would also allow land based aircraft to play a major part in the battle. The Japanese had around 1, land-based aircraft available, with some based on the Marianas. They came under the control of Vice-Admiral K. Kukuda, who was based on Tinian. If the Americans moved against the Mariana Islands then they would have to be lured further west. The Japanese fleet would be split in two. The first part would sail openly into the area east of the Philippines in the hope that the Americans would advance to attack it. The second, and larger, part of the fleet, would move secretly through the Philippines and be ready to ambush the Americans. When Toyoda took office this fleet was based at Singapore, but Kusaka ordered it to move to Tawi Tawi, at the south-western corner of the Philippines. If more time had been available it might have moved further forward to the centre Philippines. In the meantime the Japanese had to respond to the American invasion of Biak Island , off the north-western coast of New Guinea. The Americans invaded Biak at the end of May , and the Japanese decided to try and get reinforcements to the island. The first two attempts failed and so Admiral Ugaki was dispatched to try and make a third attempt. He took the super battleships Yamato and Musashi and six cruisers. General MacArthur was moving west along New Guinea in preparation for his return to the Philippines, while in the Central Pacific Nimitz was leading the island hopping campaign. Both sides realised that the Mariana Islands were of vital importance. The Americans saw them as bases from where the very long range B Superfortress could reach Japan. Guam had also been an American possession before the Japanese conquest. He had fifteen aircraft carriers at his disposal, split into four task groups TG He also created a dedicated battleship force during the campaign TG This was all on top of the fleet that was escorting the invasion forces. This contained seven battleships, twelve escort carriers, eleven cruisers and ninety-one destroyers and destroyer-escorts. Task Force 58 Mitscher Task Group Lee Task Group One carrier group had to be allocated to guard the battleships. The Japanese Fleet Although the Japanese had nine carriers available to them, only three of these were fleet carrier Taiho , Zuihaku and Shokaku. Zuiho , Hiyo , Junyo , Ryuho , Chitose and Chiyoda were all light carriers produced by converted deliberately strongly built auxiliary warships or liners into carriers Junyo and Hiyo were slightly larger than the other conversions and are sometimes seen as fleet carriers, but they carried fewer aircraft than the three full fleet carriers. The ships for the battle came from two sources. Once the two parts of the fleet had united, Ozawa split his force into three. Force A contained the fleet carriers Taiho, Zuihaku and Shokaku and was under his personal command. Force A contained of the total of available carrier aircraft. It was protected by three cruisers and seven destroyers. Force B, under Rear-Admiral T. Joshima, contained the light fleet carriers Junyo and Hiyo and the light carrier Ryuho. It carried aircraft and was protected by one battleship, one cruiser and nine destroyers. They carried 88 aircraft, and were protected by four battleships, five cruisers and eight destroyers. Ozawa had fighters and around dive bombers and torpedo bombers. Many of the most experienced crews had been lost in the battles of and so his aircraft were flown by newly trained crews. Their only real advantage was their superior range, which meant that the Japanese could launch their attack from a position outside the range of an American attack. In theory they would also be able to use the airfields on Guam to rearm and refuel, but by the time they made their attack these airfields had been knocked out. Build-up to the Battle The Americans assembled two invasion forces for the Marianas. It was to attack Saipan. Conolly was 56, strong and was coming from Guadalcanal and Tulagi. It was to attack Guam. Saipan was to be attacked on 15 June, Guam when the moment was right. The two invasion fleets were the first to move. They then set off for the Marianas, protected by the powerful escort fleet seven battleships, twelve escort carriers, eleven cruisers, ninety one destroyers and destroyer escorts. Task Force 58 entered the

battle on 11 June when Hellcats carried out a fighter sweep over the Marianas to gain air superiority. On 12 June one carrier task group attacked Guam, while the other three focused on Saipan and Tinian. That evening the fleet split. The other two groups remained in the Marianas, where they continued to win control of the air. On 13 June the Japanese realised that the Americans were almost certainly about to invade the Marianas, and Admiral Toyoda issued the orders to prepare for Operation A-Go. The same day saw the Americans complete the destruction of Japanese air power in the Marianas. The Mobile Fleet had already moved forward and was between Negros and Panay when the orders arrived. On 16 June TG They then turned back south and headed for a fleet rendezvous on 18 June. This took most of 17 June. On 17 June the Japanese were spotted again, this time by the submarine USS Cavalla, which found them miles west-southwest of Saipan. Admiral Spruance responded by ordering his troop transports to move east out of danger, while TF 58 was moved into the waters west of Tinian to guard against any Japanese attack. Although the American commanders would have liked to have dashed west to try and catch the Japanese carriers, their main role was to protect the landings on Saipan, so they had to stay close to the island. The battleships were posted to the west of the main line of carriers, with TG By 12 noon the American fleet was moving west. During the afternoon of 18 June Japanese scout planes found TF Ozawa decided not to risk an afternoon attack as this would have involved a night landing on Guam. Instead he prepared for an attack as soon as possible on the following morning. The Japanese had found the American fleet during the day, but the Americans had no firm information about the location of the Japanese. It was then split into two parts. It contained the fleet carriers Taiho, Zuihaku and Shokaku, the medium sized carriers Junyo and Hiyo and the light carrier Ryuho. At first the two groups sailed in the same direction and on the same line, but early in the day they turned south, with the van sailing a little to the east of the main fleet. This attack contained 45 Zero fighter-bombers, 16 Zero fighters and 8 torpedo bombers. Force A launched its first attack at 9. This was the largest attack, with 53 dive bombers, 27 torpedo bombers and 48 Zeroes. Finally Force B sent off a third wave of 47 aircraft at around 9. All three waves were in the air before the first Japanese aircraft reached the American fleet. Further east the Americans were already involved in an air battle over Guam. As planned the Japanese had flown reinforcements in from Truk and other nearby bases, and a few aircraft had even arrived from Japan. In the meantime the Japanese fleet had suffered its first blow. The Albacore fired six torpedoes and at 9. The Hellcats were sent up to intercept them. The Japanese aircraft had been detected when they were miles from the fleet and most of them were intercepted around 50 miles away. These dog fights went disastrously badly for the Japanese. Earlier in the war their well trained pilots had been a match for the Americans, but that was no longer the case. Of the 69 aircraft from Force C, 42 were shot down and none reached the fleet. About 20 reached the battle line, where most were shot down by anti-aircraft fire. A handful reached the carriers and did manage to inflict minor damage on the Wasp and Bunker Hill. Only thirty aircraft from these first two attacks managed to return to their carriers, where they reported great successes. The attack from Force B was a flop. The aircraft had been sent too far to the north and so missed most of the American ships. Half of the force turned back, while the other half eventually spotted the northern end of the American line. A few bombs were dropped, but no damage was done. Some of these aircraft were lost when they attempted to land on Guam. The Japanese suffered a third blow at This time it was the submarine USS Cavalla that did the damage, hitting the Shokaku with three or four torpedoes. The Cavalla was the target of at least depth charges, but survived. The same was not true for the Shokaku, which sank at By now his available forces had been badly weakened, and he could only find 87 aircraft.

Chapter 9 : Bushido and The Butchers of Biak | WWII Scrapbook

*Biak is located in the Schouten Island group; north of Geelvink * Bay, and approximately one degree south of the equator, The island is shaped like a foot, with the heel to the south and the toe pointing to.*

I was an eager young recruit a little too young as I had lied about my age. I was enthusiastically engaged in bayonet training, learning all the right moves. I never forgot it. Never used my bayonet much either, except for opening K rations. I never remember going hungry in the army. We were occasionally short of ammunition in spite of the best advice, and often short of cigarettes, but seldom short of food. We were good at improvising. Ted Funk was our mess sergeant and really knew his way around. He was always so calm about it. And he would always come back with something you could use. Some people were cooks, and some were butchers. But Funk was good. Even the officers from other units came over to eat his fixins. One time we ended up with 56 lbs of bacon in tins. Then took my 22 and shot one of the local chickens. Hailing from Tennessee, fried chicken was my speciality. Pretty soon, stray chickens were showing up in the hands of other GIs who stood in line waiting their turn at the fry pan. So, I recruited the usual bunch of natives, and we went fishing along the Sulu Archipelago. We loaded the little boats with a few grenades and cannisters of explosives. One of the natives swam like a serpent; he would weave around under the water to spot the fish, and then slink onto the boat with such grace it looked he never moved. Once a school of fish were located, it was time for the depth charges. We had enough fish to feed men. Took them ashore, and I filleted them and gave the natives the heads. They had fish-head and rice as a delicacy. When you went in for a landing, the army had given each of us nine K rations; that was for breakfast, lunch and dinner for three days, plus three cigarettes, a book of matches and toilet paper. If you lost your can opener you were in trouble. You could use it for hand-to-hand combat to hit Japs with. The only way we could get it to melt was to shave it. In the Philippines, we bought a young water buffalo from one of the local farmers. Included with the price was the slaughter. A slit was made up the belly, and next the hide was carefully stripped back which made a clean table upon which to dismember the animal. The same haste was used in burial of our dead. He was a pilot with the 7th Field Artillery. He had carried on a one-man war for quite a while in the Philippines. I was in California two months when inducted. Was in Camp Roberts on Angel Island. Got into a fight with Marines Air Force. From California it took 27 days to get to Brisbane by freighter. It was freezing and they needed an overcoat and woolens. The plumbing was very primitive. But the beer was good. We were a pretty salty outfit. Saturday noon everything stopped and we turned on the beer keg; and it never stopped. Just pour it down! The Aussies took to feeding us. Meat still had fur. But they were doing the best they could without refrigeration. It was a poor country in the 40s. Fish and chips were the best option. There was no milk until I got back to the States; that was the food I missed the most. Outside Rockhampton a few enterprising GIs set up a hamburger joint. They had the bakery make special buns. Also had apple pie. But it was a long hike. It took two copper pennies to get a ride to town in Rockhampton. There were 25 guys to every gal. All the gals had teeth problems. The only good set of teeth were false. Mossies were bad in Rockhampton. One night they got tanked up on beer and went running naked through the woods with axes. Tom Parker and I spotted a Jap cemetery near dark. Knew it would rain as it did everyday. Grave had a shelter, so we put ponchos in there. He was really bloated and we had a devil of a time pushing him back down. Felt sorry for the New Guineans; pigs lived better. Soggy, wet and black soil had a track through it from foot traffic. Set up alongside the track. Tom Parker was in a hole with me. Pavonca set up his gen 38 on the other side. We were in a bamboo thicket so thick it was dark at noon; clumps. Tom Parker was the trigger man he was from Watsonville, Ca. Parker and me cut some smaller bamboo and made a little fence in front of our position. That stuff rattled like crazy. Also put trip wire over trail and hung cans with a couple of cartridges inside as an early warning system. I sure remember the ones not killed running through the bamboo and you could follow the sounds of their retreat. Seven or eight were killed, there was no way of knowing the number wounded or how many tempted fate by screwing with E Company. Japs hit it just before daylight. Someone gave out a Rebel yell. Dozing with my back up against the bamboo, I heard the noise and let off eight shots. Pavonka cut loose, and they ran off the trail into the dark like inside of a black

cat. Souvenirs the next morning were great. Carried several, including a 22 into battle. Powers was so small he looked like a turtle in a helmet as it came down on his shoulders. There were 7 or 9 bodies stacked up in front of us. The first one fell on gun; Parker shot him over the top of eyes, tore his head off because he was firing straight up. Japs were trying to get to the coast. Tom Parker and I picked up C ration cans see letter. Killed a couple of dogs that tripped the alarm. Dead meat no matter what it was. Korim Bay they set up a command post. Sorties out and back. Built a prison of barbed wire and coconut logs and kept prisoners. Ran into cannibalism among the Japs who were trapped there. The stockade had prisoners when the boats came and it was time for us to move out. Drew straws in weapons; it fell to one Harvey Licht from Seattle. We cut a wide swath in Japanese items in the gray market; was in no hurry to get home. Made the most money in the soap business. There were drums of gas. An Indian from Montana said to burn it, so I put a grenade on top and shot holes in it.