

"Ill., or Mo. We plodded past Henderson Field where the taxiing aircraft 120 blew great clouds of dust over us. Knee

deep in mud and dust blowing in our faces.

We reached our first bivouac near the Matanikau River shortly before dark and bedded down for the night, making arrangements with our buddies for night security. Every man was quiet and subdued, there was no horse play, or goofing off.

All conversation was limited to the essential. We were now under the ordinate of friendly arty, firing harassing missions, and the shells passed overhead sounding like the ripping of bed sheets. Occasionally there would be a different sound which we were told by our Marine guide was "Fistol Pete", a Jap gun which fired and then moved to a different location before he could be located by our counter battery. The next morning I was shaving and a dud fell in our bivouac area. I had a feeling it was a dud because it made a flub, flub, flub sort of noise coming in. Later on that same



"THE" Brass: l-r, Sec. Navy Frank Knox, Gen. Patch, Adm. Nimitz, Adm. Halsey, Gen. Collins. Note the Sec. gets his tin hat on backwards.

Strength of American Forces at Guadalcanal, 7 January 1943<sup>a</sup>

Unit	Total	Officers	Enlisted men
All units . . . . .	50,078	2,402	47,676
American Division . . . . .	16,196	837	15,359
132d Infantry Regiment . . . . .	2,828	122	2,706
164th Infantry Regiment . . . . .	2,483	116	2,367
182d Infantry Regiment . . . . .	2,638	125	2,513
147th Infantry Regiment (attached) . . . . .	2,233	81	2,152
Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron . . . . .	542	34	508
221st Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	532	34	498
245th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	521	29	492
246th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	516	34	482
247th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	482	28	454
Other units <sup>c</sup> . . . . .	3,421	234	3,187
25th Division . . . . .	12,629	605	12,024
27th Infantry Regiment . . . . .	3,315	139	3,176
85th Infantry Regiment . . . . .	3,306	133	3,173
161st Infantry Regiment . . . . .	2,065	99	1,966
8th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	572	30	542
64th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	578	30	548
89th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	566	28	538
90th Field Artillery Battalion . . . . .	128	10	118
Other units <sup>c</sup> . . . . .	2,099	136	1,963
2d Marine Division . . . . .	41,733	4657	14,076
2d Marines . . . . .	3,626	154	3,472
6th Marines . . . . .	4,430	196	4,234
8th Marines . . . . .	3,605	169	3,436
Other units <sup>c</sup> . . . . .	3,072	138	2,934
Air units . . . . .	41,607	4157	1,450
Naval units . . . . .	44,913	146	44,767

<sup>a</sup> Represents effective strength of organic and attached units. Does not include strength of XIV Corps Headquarters troops, data for which are not available.  
<sup>b</sup> Represents strength as of 1 February 1943. The 221st FA Battalion landed on 4 January 1943, but was not included in strength report for 7 January.  
<sup>c</sup> Composed chiefly of service units, headquarters troops, and miscellaneous attached units.  
<sup>d</sup> Adjusted to correct obvious errors in source data.  
 Source: XIV Corps Strength Reports for 7 January and 1 February 1943. Strength Reports — American Division, 11 December 1942-February 1943.

day I overheard two of the younger troops discussing the incident and one said "And you know, the SOB never even cut himself." That decided me and I never let my beard grow - thru two wars.

"The next day we struggled up a trail, generally following the river, into the foothills toward Mt. Austen. As we moved thru the jungle we disturbed flights of parrots who soared screeching to the tree tops. I had noted this before and found it was impossible for two or more people to go anywhere without it being advertised.

(File) "The only way to sneak thru the brush was alone. As the war progr-121  
essed this bit of woodlore saved my life and it was because of the birds I  
preferred to do all my recon work alone. This habit, of the parrots, also  
came in handy spotting Japs lying in the brush. I tried to impart this to  
others but they started giving me strange looks. At bivouac, that second  
evening, Father John Scannell (the Father Duffy of  
the Wolfhounds) announced that a special evening serv-  
ice would be held for all interested troops. The only  
ones who didn't attend were those on security. Desp-  
ite the size of the group Father John didn't have to  
raise his voice as every man clung to each word.  
There were no atheists there and no denominations.

"The third morning I split the C.F. group up,  
leaving Snyder with the element to accompany Col.  
Jurney and his staff, while I took the commo chief and  
switchboard operator, with the other personnel, and  
moved up into the Marine lines to set up a forward  
C.F. As I moved into position I was met by a young  
Marine Gunny who greeted me with "It's about time you  
people got here. We've been waiting months for the  
Army." I ignored his salutation; however, at a later time we two found  
ourselves in adjacent beds in a hospital and became good friends."



"Top"

The Wolfhounds Zone of Ops was dominated by a 900 ft. high hill mass  
formed by Hills 51-55 and 57 and, because of their appearance on aerial  
photos, the mass was called the Galloping Horse. During Dec. and Jan.,  
Americans had received heavy fire from the vicinity of Hill 52, about  
150 yds. east of Exton Ridge, and XIV Corps believed the enemy would res-  
ist vigorously any attack in this area. Col. McCulloch decided to attack  
south, on a 2000 yd. front, with 1st and 3d Bns.

Rough ground and insufficient transport complicated the logistics  
support and every Btn. initially hauled two units of fire from the ammo  
dump near the Ilu River - a distance of over ten miles for each Btn. The



Gen. Collins (r) discusses mortar situation.





Acme photo



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

These soldiers are wrestling forward supplies via the "U Pusha Maru" line up the Matanikau River. This is part of the elaborate and imaginative logistical grid that supported the 25th Infantry Division's attacks in January 1943.

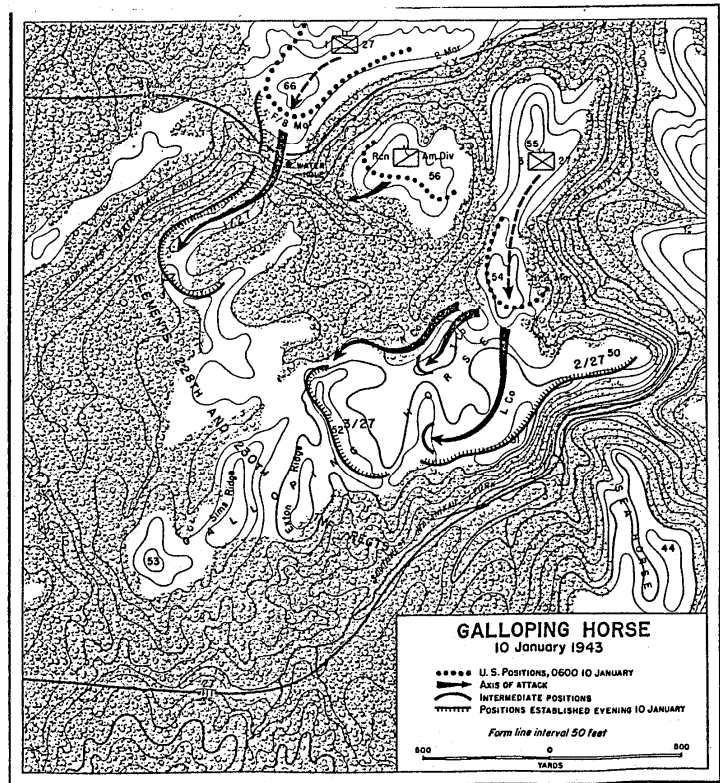
25 Med. Btn. solved the evac problem in the same manner as had the 101 in Dec. Engrs. and medics strung cableways across canyons, rigged skids on light Navy litters so they could slide, and later used a boat (The Fusha Maru) on the Matanikau. Litter squads had to be increased from the normal four men to up to twelve and native bearers were also utilized. Converted Jeeps were used on the roads and trails.



THE "PUSHA MARU" was a supplementary supply line, employing American (left) and some Japanese boats on the Matanikau River.

L/Col. Claude Journey's 1 Btn

would advance, on the right against Hill 57 (about 1000 yds to the south east), over Hill 66, and seize the Water Hole. The 3 Btn., Of L/Col. George Bush, would attack over Hill 54, and then swing in against Hill 52



(about 1000 yds). L/Col.

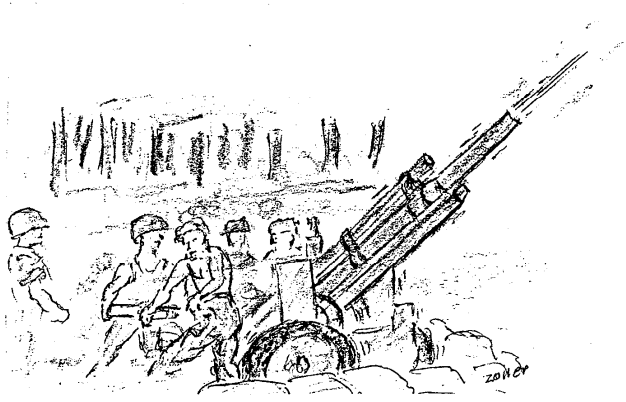
Herb Mitchell's 2 Btn. would hold initially in reserve at the base of Hill 55. L/Col. Louie Aston's 1/161 was attached to the 27th for the role of blocking position.

At 0550, 10 Jan. 1943, a "time on target" (TOT) shoot, which was probably the first Divisional use of this technique in WW II, was employed so all initial rounds hit their targets simultaneously. This technique caused

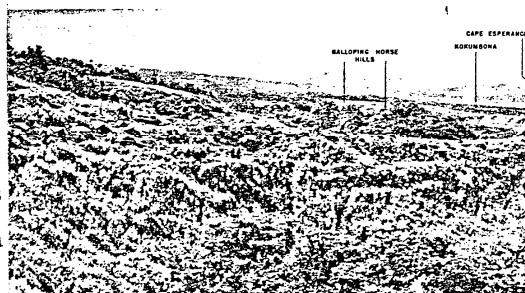
troops, caught in the open, for they were without warning. It was so effective that the 1 Btn. encountered only minor resistance. The 1 Btn. jumped off Hill 66 in company columns with Able Co. leading the way.

Not enough can be said about Arty, the big shots that supported the Regiment so expertly in all the campaigns the Wolfhounds participated in. In the first action, Arty played a new and very important roll, and those units must be acknowledged. The 8th FAB (105's) (hereafter and evermore to be known as "Automatic", a nom de guerre begrudgingly bestowed, by the enemy, in a later war) gave direct support to the Wolfhounds (What a team!) with the 89th and 90th FAB's in general support along with the 75 mm pack howitzers of the 2/10 Marines backing up the Auto 8th as secondary.

The 8th FA, also, landed on 30 Dec. 1942, and went into position in support of the Wolfhounds on a line running from Point Cruz to the Matanikau River. By 9 Jan. 1943, registration of the batteries was completed

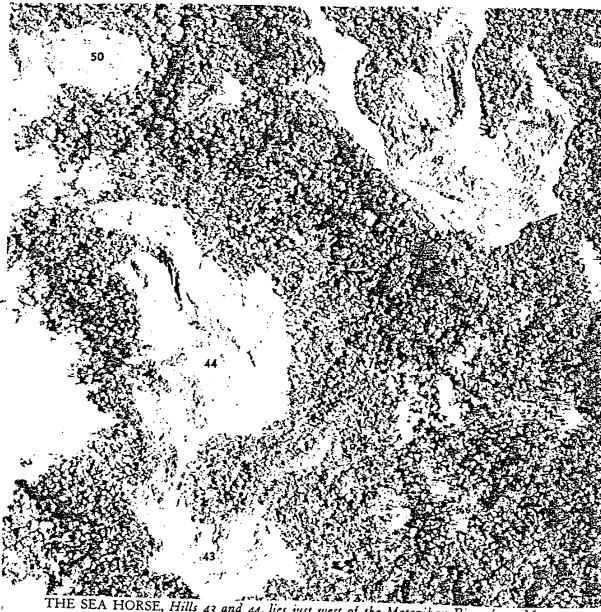


THE FIRST JANUARY OFFENSIVE ZONE was west of the Matanikau and Army fighting was concentrated in the area of Hills 54, 55, 56 (above). From Hill 42 on Mount Austen's northwest slopes, the sector could be seen clearly by 25th Division troops resting before the offensive started.



and the next day all batteries participated in the approximately 30 minute TOT preparation fire which marked the Division's entry in the Guadalcanal Campaign. The Auto 8th contributed mightily during the reduction of the Galloping Horse,

(Phil File) "The arty preparation was forward of the Marine lines, to be followed by the Wolfhounds passing thru their lines, across a deep ravine, and seizing the hill mass called the Horses Hoof. As the lead elements approached the Marine positions four of our planes flew overhead to drop bombs on suspected Jap positions. One plane could not release his bomb still hung up and, just as he levelled off, the damned thing let go. It landed in a nearby Marine emplacement killing two occupants and wounding several men nearby. It was a real tragedy for those men to sweat it out



THE SEA HORSE, Hills 43 and 44, lies just west of the Matanikau River from Mount Austen and southeast of the Galloping Horse, of which Hill 50 is a part. The head of the Sea Horse is Hill 43; the neck extends north to Hill 44, the body.



27TH INFANTRY AREA, 10 January 1942, as seen from the air.

for months and then, with their relief moving in so they could move to the rear, to get it by our own plane. It was unnerving for the 1 Btn. troops as they passed by. The wire men were on the ball, getting commo from the switchboard forward just as fast as the riflemen could advance. Shortly there was a burst of rifle and machine gun fire, punctuated by several grenade bursts and word came back that lead troops had run into a Jap machine gun

identifying the terrain which the general had indicated. "Two rounds on the way, sir." Almost at the instant he uttered the words there were two explosions. Blown up were the trees—and the ammo they had been shielding. "Good work, Captain," the general exclaimed. "Let's have three more over there." "Right away, sir," replied Henry, "and by the way, sir, I'm not a captain." The general grimaced as the rounds struck. "Nice shot, Lieutenant. You got it with the first round." "Sir, I'm not a lieutenant, either," Henry said, practically wringing his hands. "I'm a sergeant." "What?" Collins exclaimed as he reached for his pencil and note pad. "With that kind of shooting you sure deserve to be a lieutenant. What's your name?" "And before the campaign on Guadalcanal was much older, Sergeant Rex T. Henry had acquired the gold bars of a brand-new second lieutenant.

## "Tropic Lightning"

continued from page 29



The answer to the marines' question was here, on a long approach march through the dense tropical jungle south of the perimeter. This image shows typical rain forest on Guadalcanal, towering over a jeep and three marines.

Fighting bareback, à la Davis, seemed to be the unofficial order of the day, and one of those who toiled thus unadorned by either shirt or insignia of rank was a mortar-observer sergeant, Rex T. Henry. He was studying the terrain and looking for likely targets when a visitor popped into the OP and picked up a pair of field glasses to study the jungle terrain. Henry, mindful of his unusual attire, or lack of it, stared numbly at the two glistening silver stars that told him his visitor was Major General Collins, the Division Commander. Abruptly the general turned to Henry. "Captain, I've got a target," he called. "Drop a couple of rounds on that clump of trees." Henry picked up his phone, cranked the handle and gave the gun his fire order, expertly (Continued on page 72)

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continued from page 29

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"with no casualties to our troops."

125

(Joe Klues) "On the first day of attack, on the Canal, our section leader was Sgt. Henry (How Co., Wolfhounds), and Frank G. Macus was a squad leader and so was I. We were observed and congratulated by Gen. Collins for rendering outstanding support fire, during this action, and Sgt. Henry was awarded a field commission to 2 Lt."

There were three machine guns encountered; but, progress was rapid, with the terrain offering the most difficulty. By 1140 hrs., Able Co. reached its objective where they organized their position and delivered supporting fire to assist the 3 Btn.s advance on Hill 52.

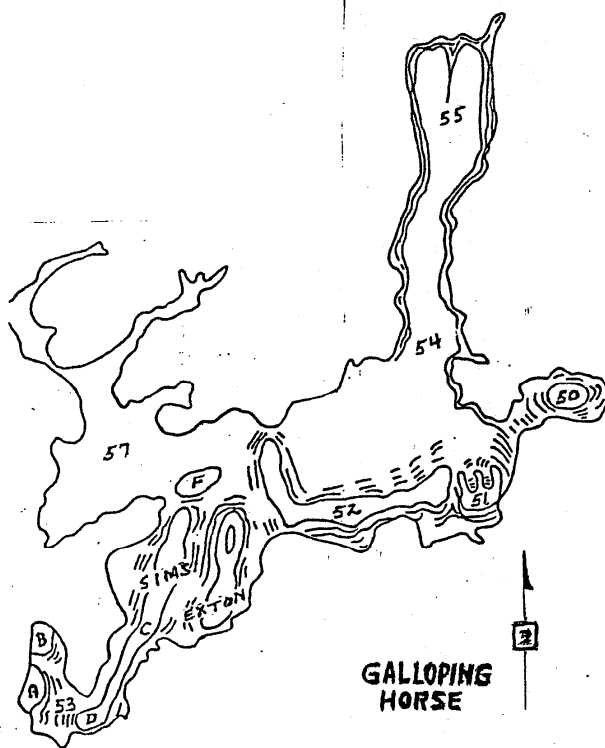
(Fred Edinger) "It was my job, in Fox Co., to keep commo between the Co. C.P. and the platoons. I had a reel of wire, strapped on, which I unrolled while I had my rifle slung on my other shoulder. Of course along with this I had to keep this wire cleared and - in that kind of terrain - it was no cinch. The Nips had a cute little trick of cutting the wire and then sniping at the repair men. I got pinned down for quite a while once - until somebody got the sniper."

The 3 Btn. jumped off Hill 55 intending to take Hills 50 and 51 and then attack west to seize Hills 52 and 53; since Hill 52 was too formidable to be taken by frontal assault, Col. Bush planned to use a double envelopment with L Co. on the left (south) and I Co. on the right (north) with K Co. in reserve. Love Co. established a base of fire from Hill 51, which it had captured without opposition. Capt. Oliver Roholt sent the 1 Plat. to attack Hill 52, but, despite supporting arty, enemy machine gun and mortar fire forced them to retire back to Hill 51. Item Co., commanded by Capt. H.H. Johnson, moved to a small ridge, about 200 yds. southwest of Hill 54, and established a fire base preparatory to attacking Hill 52 from the north.

Item Co. met immediate resistance, mainly from the woods on the north. They had to fight their way along, clearing the edge of the woods to protect their further advance in the open and their supply route. The company had to commit a full platoon, the entire day, to counter enemy sniper fire. It was a day of heat and frustration for the Wolfhound troops. The balance

moved to within 200 yards of the crest of Hill 52 before enemy fire held  
 them up. The double envelop-  
 opment had failed. Col. Bush  
 then committed King Co. to  
 shift further north, their  
 right flank, and make a deep-  
 er envelopment of the enemy  
 and parallel to I Co. This  
 move was supported by mortar,  
 arty, and 37 mm fire, but  
 the Nips put up a stiff fight  
 and King Co. didn't get to the  
 right of I Co. until early  
 afternoon. At 1345, after K  
 Co. was in position a coord-  
 inated attack was planned  
 with arty, mortar, and aerial  
 bombardment to precede the  
 attack. The spotting round, of arty smoke, was delivered, but hit just  
 south of the Btn. OP and barely missed elements of the 2 Btn. on Hill 51.  
 The Heavy Weapons Co. saved the day by dropping an 81 mm smoke round on  
 target and the bombing run was a success. While King Co. maneuvered the  
 platoon from L Co. covered the gap between K and I. The Wolfhounds, of  
 K and I crawled close to the crest, under the supporting fire, and then  
 rushed in and carried the objective with fixed bayonets. By 1635, the  
 3 Btn. had cleaned out the enemy positions on the west slope, killing  
 thirty enemy soldiers and capturing six machine guns.

The 27th Rgt.'s 1 Btn., in its first day of combat, had gained Div.  
 objectives in its zone while the 3 Btn., meeting heavier resistance, had  
 advanced 1600 yards towards its objective and captured Hills 50, 51, and  
 52. Already, over half the Galloping Horse was in American hands.



was faced with a severe water shortage. Col. Bush delayed the attack until after 0900 in the vain hope that water would reach the thirsty troops. Most of the 3 Btn. soldiers had entered combat with only one canteen and it ended up to be an assault with what water remained in their canteens. An arty concentration was fired, and the leading platoon of Love Co., with one platoon from M Co., went thru the ravine to the north of Hill 52. Col. Bush's plan was for Item Co. to attack southwest over the first ridge (Exton Ridge) to the next one (Sims Ridge), 200 yards away, at which time King Co. would pass thru I Co. and proceed 850 yards to take Hill 53. On the right Love Co. would advance abreast from Hill 52 to Hill 57 to make contact with 1 Btn. and then swing south and connect with K and I Co.s. Both I and L jumped off together, following an arty. preparation; but, I Co. got hung up by enemy fire, in a bottleneck between the two hills. Rgtl. and Div. reports vary whether I Co. tried flanking maneuvers on the enemy; which is not relevant to the fact that they were squeezed and mortar rounds were raining on them. Many spent and thirsty troopers collapsed. By noon, only ten men in one platoon were conscious. Capt. Johnson was hit by mortar fragments and was evacuated about 1300. Love Co. had fared no better. The first platoon and a machine gun platoon had secured the right flank, north of Hill 52, and then turned west and advanced to Hill 57. They then turned south where they were halted by heavy flanking machine gun fire from the enemy. They dug in to await the rest of the Co., which did not arrive, so, when dusk fell the two platoons returned to Hill 52. The main body of L Co. had deployed behind Item Co. to hunt down scattered enemy riflemen. After dusk, I Co. and L Co. were pulled back to Hill 52 since their situation seemed untenable to Col. Bush.

(Kellin Doyle) "When we came ashore, on the Canal, it was at some kind of a palm grove with all the tops blown off.

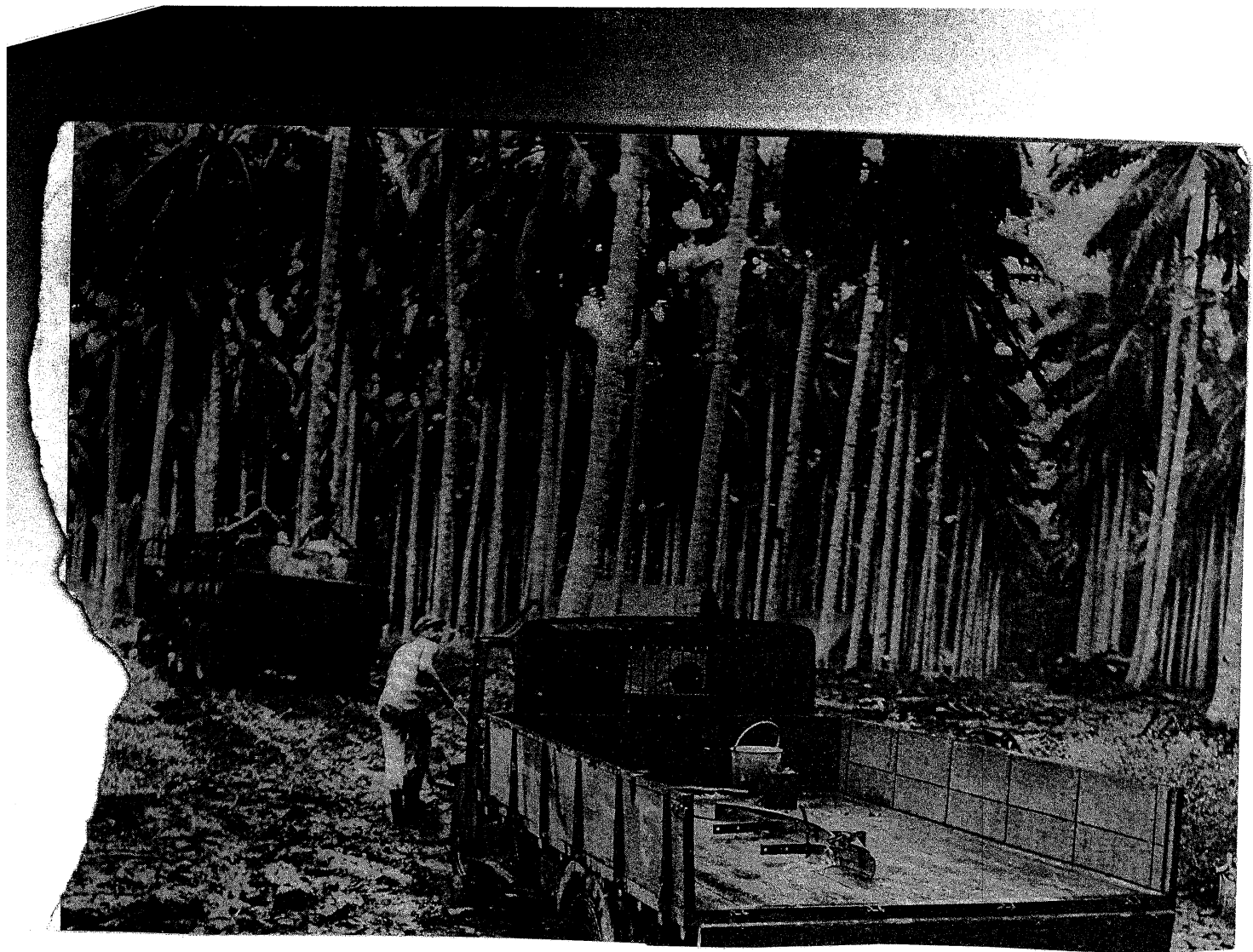
"A few days later we were fighting in a valley, just north of the Galloping Horse, and I had graduated to first scout - and wasn't too happy about it. Billy Goetz said he couldn't promote me since a first scout was too valuable to promote. I knew a bunch of BS when I heard it. The Japs

"used first scouts to zero their rifles on. He said that was nonsense. The Japs shot the second scout and the first scout died of heart failure. He was cute - like a dose of salts. It wasn't so - I got hit two days later and had to go back to the field hospital. When I got back he had made me asst. squad leader. He had had to promote Meason to first scout so I was back to carrying a BAR. As I got to know Goetz better I realized what a really good squad leader he was. One good thing was he shared all the information he'd get with me - as well as the responsibility. Then I realized he was grooming me to take a squad - if I survived."

The next day, 12 Jan., the Rgtl. CO ordered the exhausted 3 Btn. into Rgtl. reserve and the 2 Btn. to assume the attack. Col. Mitchells plan was similar to Col. Bush's with F Co. on the left (south) and G Co. abreast on the right. George Co. moved out from Hill 52, at 0630, after a bombardment, and advanced north and west, despite enemy rifle fire, and by noon made contact with 1 Btn. on Hill 57. Fox Co. attacked Exton Ridge (While Lt. Robert M. Exton was firing a machine gun on this ridge enemy mortar fire blew off his legs. Soldiers attempted to give him aid, but the dying Wolfhound ordered them not to waste time.), but moved too far to the right and, though the Japs had pulled off the ridge, the company could advance no further. Col. Mitchell committed Easy Co. (his reserve) to Fox Co.'s left flank but fire from Sims Ridge held both companies in place.

(Fred Edinger) "I also recall charging up a hill and my buddy got hit and when I stopped to help him the Old Man wouldn't let me. I understand this better now than I did then. Another time we were charging up a hill and arty (I think they were our shorts) dropped on us. Cpl. James Jones\* on my left, was thrown into the air by an explosion, and I don't know to this day whether he was injured, or not. (This did not end Jones' tour with the Wolfhounds. He later succumb to bad feet and given a medical discharge.)

\* When Jones regained consciousness, after being knocked down the hill, with his head bleeding --, he tossed his canteen to one of his buddies - before being counted off. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star.



Division members lauded for capturing Japanese soldiers.



VIET JOURNAL

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me if I'd ever noticed  
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had the same smile; and explained that Burt liked his dentist so much he had taken all his family and his friends to him. We were rather like that, at Dr. Marois's. Dr. Marois—Pierre—was also an ardent Americophile. Largely because he adored superior American technology, upon which he was totally dependent in his work. His apartment was equipped with just about every technological gadget on the American market, and looked not unlike the perfect *Playboy* apartment pictured in Hefner's magazine. He gave his American-style Thanksgiving dinner every year, and if you wanted him to keep on working on your teeth so you could go on eating his dinners, you had better show up. Some American friend working for the peace talks delegation had brought the Weyands.

I was drawn to Fred Weyand because he had commanded my old outfit—the 25th "Tropic Lightning" Division. I had been a member of the 25th when it had acquired its nickname, for the fast windup of the campaign on Guadalcanal. Weyand had been a major general when he commanded it in Vietnam in 1965. I had been a private, pfc, corporal, sergeant, and then a private again in it, in that order, in World War II. This difference in rank did not bother either of us. Weyand had read my first, famous novel and then had read the one about Guadalcanal, *The Thin Red Line*, and before the evening was over I found myself telling him in detail the theme for my third Army novel, that I was even then working on, and which with the other two would make a trilogy on World War II and soldiering. It is too complex to go into here, suffice to say it is a quite tragic theme, and when I had finished telling it to him, Weyand's eyes had taken on a kind

Jane