

## There's no Front Line in New Guinea

**They don't fight that way because the Japs hide all around them—and sometimes stroll into the CP, wearing new American uniforms and whistling "One Dozen Roses."**

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AT THE FRONT IN NEW GUINEA [By Radio] Any school kid can tell you that the equator's an imaginary line running around the center of the earth, but all the brains in the world couldn't locate the front line in New Guinea. There just ain't no such thing.

One newcomer, creeping up through the mud to a grimy, sweating Yank in a fox hole, asked the veteran where the front line was.

"We don't fight that way, buddy," was the answer. "There are Japs up ahead but there also may be Japs behind me and I'm sure as hell there's a couple of them a few yards over to the side. We can't be bothered with technicalities like front lines. We just keep looking for Japs, killing them and pushing ahead."

Jungle fighting is all very informal. There are no elaborate sand-bagged trenches, no dugout living quarters and no fields of barbed wire as there were in France back in 1918. The climate is too blazing hot to go to the trouble of building much more than shallow slit trenches and fox holes. The daily rains would fill up deep trenches. Barbed wire is too heavy; the only way things can be carried here is on your back.

When Americans, Australians and Japs clash, no more than a few dozen men on either side are involved. There's none of that dramatic "over the top" stuff here. Patrols go out every day to feel out the Jap pillboxes and strong points. Then stronger forces come in to knock them out, supported by mortar and light artillery fire.

When the pillboxes and machine-gun nests are gone, more Yanks and Aussies come in to mop up the snipers and occupy the area.

The Yanks, most of them from Wisconsin's thickly wooded country, are beating the Japs with tactics borrowed from America's original fighting men—the Indians. These tactics involve swift, silent movement and sudden thrusts out of the jungles and swamps with the rifle as the basic weapon.

The machine gun has been tried in New Guinea but to little advantage. A handful of light tanks were used by the Aussies in the bitter fight for the Buna air-strip, some of the only relatively open dry ground in the Buna-Gona area. But generally the undergrowth is too thick and the mud too deep to use tanks in many other places.

Few Americans ever went into action with as little equipment as these soldiers carry. Battledress seldom consists of more than a helmet, jungle-green uniform, socks, shoes, rifle belt, extra bandoliers of bullets, pockets full of grenades and a rifle or a tommy gun. Packs are brought up only after an area is occupied.

### **The Japs Pull Some Fast Ones**

During these wet, wearying months of jungle warfare, the Yanks have developed a healthy respect for the craftiness of the Japs they seek to kill. The Americans know the Japs as past masters of jungle fighting, as experts at camouflage, fanatics in their courage and magicians at pulling disconcerting tricks in battle. Several nights during the battle for Buna Mission, the Japs played a machine-gun record on a phonograph to draw American fire. Other times they threw rocks at American outposts after dark or shouted, "What's the password?"

If they succeeded in drawing American fire they spotted the rifle or machine-gun flashes and picked off the men who fired.

For signalling each other the Japs often use bird calls. When a lot of bird calls start filling the jungle air, Yanks usually cheep in with a few more just to confuse the issue. On one occasion this caused a Jap to growl in good English, "Shut up, you American bastards."

On patrol an American ducked behind two bushes when Jap bullets whined close to him. Suddenly the bushes started to move. They were Jap observers covered with brush.

Grinning at his good luck, the Yank casually took a grenade from his pocket and tossed it into the bushes as they slowly moved away. In a second the bushes became two very dead Japs.

### **Truck Driver Nips a Slick Nip**

Pfc. William H. Ford, from Port Royal, Ky., had even better luck in outwitting the Japs. A truck driver, he wasn't allowed to go with his buddies when they went out to attack the Japs, and was left behind to guard the CP.

About dusk he saw someone walk out of the jungle toward the CP humming "One

Dozen Roses" and wearing a brand new American uniform. The clean uniform puzzled Ford because the swamp and jungle living had ruined every shirt and pair of pants in his outfit.

It was too dark to see the stranger's face under his helmet but Ford got a good look at his feet in the moonlight. Instead of American shoes, there were tiny, split-toe tree-climbing sneakers which only the Japs wear.

"'One Dozen Roses', eh!" Ford yelled. "Well, here's three of 'em for you."

"Don't shoot. American!" the stranger begged but he had hardly got the words out when Ford pumped three M1 slugs into him.

Now Pfc. William H. Ford, former truck driver, is fighting right up front in the informal jungle war where anything can happen and usually does.