

## LEYTE DIARY

Lt Colonel Roy A. Green, Executive Officer,  
184th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, U. S. Army

October 1944 through January 1945

Oct 20 - I'm writing by moonlight. It has stopped raining but needless to say, I am soaked through. Numerous lightning bugs sparkle through the trees. Artillery shells are passing overhead, otherwise everything is quiet. The palm trees silhouetted against the sky give an illusion of a beautiful park. Frequent air raids. This morning a Jap plane came over so low I could almost touch the wheels.

Oct 21 - 23, Between air raids, incoming and outgoing reports, and the rain in a muddy slit trench, there is little chance for sleep but I manage to keep going.

Oct 24, The heat, vermin, humidity, and sundry pests are tough out here.

Oct 25, This country is full of swamps, banana and coconut trees, and other tropical vegetation, dirty unkempt natives, and RAIN! With continuous heat, it pours intermittently throughout the day and night. One is soaked with rain or sweat continuously, so clothes are never dry. Plenty of coconuts to eat and the milk does help in quenching thirst. Natives live in Nipa huts on stilts. I'm really very sorry for them, especially the children. I am terribly dirty but in the best of health.

Oct 26, It appears here that the women do all the work as well as produce a continuous string of kids. They wander up and down the roads carrying large heavy bundles on their heads, babies in their arms, followed by a string of children of assorted sizes. The men bring up the rear unburdened. The kids run around with a little short shirt (or nothing) and the inevitable straw hat. Never wear shoes. Many have caribou on which they ride. Few of the men move without their game cocks. I bathed in a river this afternoon and feel much cleaner. However, the moment you are out of the water you are hot and sweating again. I washed my underwear and herringbone twills and put them back on again. They are as dry now as they will ever be. Many little horses are around, and the men are using them to carry equipment.

Oct 27, I almost got myself evacuated this morning when I was using a telephone tied to a coconut tree. Five nuts fell from a great height! Just a near miss! There is a form of small parrot here---some of the men have a few as pets. Natives are everywhere. One just passed through here with a pole over her shoulder. On each end of the pole were two small pigs and five chickens, all alive and very noisy. It is raining hard and I am under a tarp but sweating freely. (Later) There is a little moon tonight. Although it is bright and pretty, I wish it were not out as it helps the Jap planes in their bombing raids. They go over about every two hours.

Oct 28, I found some corn the other day, but continuous corn on the cob is becoming monotonous. The young green corn is good raw, cob and all, and supplies a little green vegetable. It is surprising how one can keep going with so little sleep---the telephone rings all night long and the Japs are over us constantly.

Oct 29, Still chasing Japs. Let me tell of how I prepare for the night. It sounds funny, but is most unpleasant. First I try to place enough branches in my fox hole to prevent entirely lying in the water. Then I place my poncho over the top of the trench to keep some of the rain out while I am getting ready. Next I rub mosquito repellent on my face and hands; put on my helmet; put on my pistol and knife; place a head net over my face and helmet; and finally crawl into the trench and wrap up in a poncho. However, the preparations seem futile; for, if it rains, you are wet through within a couple of hours. The vegetation is beautiful. I saw some wild hibiscus and ginger today. There is a very large tree hereabout fifty feet high with a trunk diameter of at least twelve feet. The bark and wood are light colored, similar to a birch.

Oct 30, Battles are strange affairs. They frequently remind me of duck hunting --- the mud, the rain, and the mosquitoes --- and the waiting. There are many lulls, and times when activity is limited. Those periods may be for only a few hours or may last over an extended period. Any inactivity only adds to one's lonesomeness. For once it is not raining and the countryside is flooded with moonlight --- a bomber's moon --- so we can expect trouble.

Oct 31, I have gotten to the point where I never want to see another coconut. It seems to be the principle mainstay of the Filipinos. They use it for food and water. The shells are used for cooking utensils and for fuel. The husks are used for padding and also for fuel. The leaves are braided and used for making mats and for the sides of houses. The new bark peeled off is used for cloth. The appearance of the Nipa huts demonstrates that only enough work is done to prevent them from falling down. A few more people living in a hut requires only additional coconuts.

Nov 1, We landed with many dogs---one was too light, so we had to dye it brown.

Nov 2, One day blends into the next like one endless chain. Some of the natives are very interesting as they salute all soldiers and then attempt to do an about face, barefooted, in the mud. It is not very successful. One of the men just came in with a bunch of bananas. I tasted one and it was awful. It developed that they were cooking bananas and, like cooking whiskey, not good in the raw, except in case of emergency. Ants! Never have I seen so many ants. There are all types ranging from microscopic size to the 3/4 inch variety. There are many small streams but we do not use them (or the water) as we have discovered that the natives bathe and wash their clothes in all of them. I am sitting on a little hill in the full moonlight. It is a grassy slope studded with immature cocoa palms about twenty feet tall. The shadows are soft, and form grotesque figures on the hillside. The edge of my slit trench is dry and makes a good seat. These lovely scenes

are not in harmony with the war going on here in this area. Occasional flares, droning of planes overhead, a machine gun burst, a few rifle shots, the sound of an artillery concentration---and then stillness again in the moonlight. It is at once beautiful and terrible.

Nov 3, Regardless of battle conditions, the natives wander up and down the roads. Those in one place move to another, while others move in from a different direction; all carrying their belongings on their heads, or on carabou if the own one, and always the que of children behind. Small boys naked, older men and boys wear shorts, the women seem to wear a straight slip --- all barefooted and wearing large straw hats. Those few having shoes wear them hung around their necks. It is noticeable lately that the women are becoming conscious of the soldiers, as a few hairpins and hair ribbons are creeping out along with some brightly colored gingham. They are all very primitive and dirty. When they do bathe, they wade into the streams and wash themselves and the scant clothing on their bodies, all at the same time. They are very courteous and seem grateful for the liberation from the Japs. There is a strip of cloud across the moon which makes it look blind-folded. I prefer it cloudy, as the Jap planes do not operate well under those conditions.

Nov 4, They finally sent up my bed roll and cadet bag. The cadet bag looks as though it had been run through a mangle and is wet, but it is very welcome. I can now have a change of clothing---after two weeks I need it. We are having the usual number of Jap air raids tonight. This last bunch came in quite low. I'll have to dig my fox hole a bit deeper.

Nov 5, We had very heavy rain and everything, including myself, is wet and soggy. If we stay in this spot for a few days I'm going to have the men build Nipa huts to get them up off the ground and be dry for part of the time at least. However, the fox hole is the usual home through necessity. The huts are built from bamboo uprights and frame and held together with cord made from bark. The roof is made from palm and banana leaves and the floor from split half rounds of bamboo. It is like a bird cage but being a foot or more off the ground affords dryness. There was a bit of sun today but sun or not, it is always hot but very humid.

Nov 6, Last night was another wild night---between the telephone ringing constantly and the Jap snipers I had practically no sleep. The Red Cross man just came by and brought me a wash cloth, tooth brush, tin mirror, razor blade, and tooth powder. I really needed them. Had lunch just now which consisted of boiled corn and crackers. There is plenty to eat but the sameness of the menu is a killer. There are large brown worms with many short legs and a hard armor-like shell. They move along like a caterpillar. An air mattress is a good conductor of sound when one's ear is placed against it. At night these worms crawl onto the mattress and you awake with a jump. It sounds like a tank coming down the road. I understand that about once a year the Catholic Fathers here round up all the natives couples living together and give them a blanket marriage ceremony. The fact that some have children does not bother anyone.

Nov 7, Election Day---glorious election day! Reminds me of some of Mary Livingston's poems. Ants, ants everywhere! Out here under these conditions, the election seems a minor thing. All that matters is ammunition and food. I suppose it may have far reaching results, but at present it does not affect us individually nor in small units. Last night I was sitting quite a distance from the phone when it rang. I made a jump for it and fell over a couple of water cans and into a slit trench. I skinned my shins and felt very silly. I'm tanned but am getting very yellow from the atabrine. Had three air raids in a half hour --- they were so low I could see the Japs in the planes---makes one feel mighty queer. A native came by the other day and asked for water to throw over his carabou. It seems these water buffalo have to be immersed in water and mud about every hour or so or they will die. They have a thick non-porous hide which apparently has no sweat glands, depending entirely on external moisture to control body temperature. Incidentally, they smell as bad as the natives (or the reverse). It commenced to rain a short while ago and looks as though we are in for a steady downpour. There is nothing more forlorn looking than an army bogged down in the mud and rain. What a climate! Transportation problems seem unsurmountable. Trucks get water in the motors and wheels bog down hub-deep in the mud.

Nov 8, Still raining so we all woke up wet and muddy---hot coffee was very welcome. The natives have an alcoholic beverage called palm toddy or tuba juice. They tap the branch of a palm tree nourishing the green coconuts and place a bamboo container beneath it. The sap runs out and ferments in about 24 hours, after which they drink it. I suppose it has some alcoholic content but gives the imbiber a violent diarrhea. Our men are not allowed to drink it. I smelled some and it was vile. This evening I'm huddled under a shelter that I have erected over my slit trench. It's a structure composed of bamboo frame, palm leaves and a shelter-half roof. The wind is blowing a gale. I wonder if this will keep up all night. We have tried to tie and stake things down, but it feels as if everything will take off at any minute, including this hovel. One of the men had paid a filipino to help build a Nipa hut and a big coconut tree just came down and caved in the roof. He's pretty sore about it. This storm has one advantage---the ants, insects, and Jap planes are no longer with us. Looks as though this is going to be quite a night, the least of which is water. Trees are falling all around and the limbs of the coconut trees are in a whirl.

Nov 9, Last night turned out to be a typhoon! I did pretty well until about nine o'clock, when the wind blew the side of my shelter in. While I was attempting to repair the damage, a heavy gust of wind hit the end of it and all of my equipment went hurtling through the shelter and out the other side. So I just gave up and rolled up in my pancho and lay down in the water filled slit trench and let the wind blow and the rain rain.

Nov 10, A few minutes ago I took off my clothes and took a bath in one helmet full of water. It stopped raining and is very hot. What a climate! One of the men traded some personal clothing for a few eggs so I had my first fresh egg for breakfast. It was a real treat.

Nov 11, The forest is very beautiful with its varying shades of green. Really its a tropical paradise of bamboo, ginger, cocoa palm, water hyacinths in pastel blue with Chinese red cannas, pampas grass and hibiscus with large clumps of taro like long elephant ears, stately tall mahogany trees growing in a carpet of tall ferns, banana trees interspersed with a type of yellow sunflower and an occasional pandana tree--- all this with a confusion of jungle vines, shrubs and plants. Now I'm doing the thing the army is famous for---waiting. You constantly hurry somewhere to wait. All the metal and leather in my cadet bag are ruined either by rust or rotted by mildew. The lighter flints have all turned to powder. Oh well, the cigarettes get to wet to smoke anyway.

Nov 12, One of the men secured some Phillipine tobacco leaves and I rolled myself a cigar. It was really something. I'm saving some of the leaves for tonight to use it instead of louse powder and insect repellent. When I took my helmet bath today, I was exposed to the sun only about fifteen minutes and now my back is sore. The only time I've had my shoes off is to wash my feet.

Nov 13, The weather was wild last night---thunder and lightning that came right in my fox hole. This morning I woke up to find my hole filled with water, but it continues warm. Issued B rations this morning, so temporarily we eat a bit better. Everywhere you look men are standing around naked wringing out the clothes they slept in. Why am I laughing? Because I'm doing the same thing. We just shot down a Jap plane---quite exciting.

Nov 14, At the moment I'm sitting all huddled up under a shelter half and a poncho. The rain is torrential. Natives say it is called a November monsoon. A native woman staggered by (Sadie Thompson?) and wanted to do my laundry. I told her I could wash it by just hanging it on a tree. Water doesn't seem to bother them at all. Their feet are like hams and the toes look like fingers.

Nov 15, A couple of little natives just came up begging. Poor little guys. I gave them some life savers and a cake of soap. The natives will do anything for T shirts or soap. Had a tough night with very little sleep. Lots of lightning last night. At times in the dark one has difficulty distinguishing lightning from aerial shell bursts. The men have killed a few cobras and coral snakes. I hope I don't meet any of them. We've all had colds but are better now or else in the hospital. A little native boy just came by wearing an oversized pair of Jap riding boots and a Jap leather map case hung around his neck by a string, otherwise naked. They are amusing, but at no time have I seen any of them play. Their childhood is a very serious business of trying to keep alive.

Nov 16, We move along like gypsies chasing the Japs. Found two big centipedes in my fox hole this morning. Close shave!

Nov 17, Lots of action last night---and rain. These natives are dressed (?) in their oldest clothes this morning so guess its going to rain hard. Drip, drip, drip everywhere. It's almost next to impossible to keep dry. These big ants are driving me nuts! Two caribou just stampeded through the area and men started running with loaded rifles and standing back of trees, when a little native boy about four years old ran in, slapped both of them on the nose, and led them away!

Nov 18, Very busy and very wet. Getting up here is really very simple. You stand up, shake off the mud and loosen your clothes so they will dry, remove herringbone twill blouse, and you are ready to go.

Nov 19, This place sure has some evil looking crawly things. There's a big brown beetle the size of a half dollar that sounds like a B-24; snakes from the cobra family---poisonous; vicious looking centipedes four inches long; and black scorpions. Haven't seen any wild animal life yet. Anything fresh would taste awfully good! I look and feel like a ditch digger most of the time. The damned ants have moved in again with their eggs. They are almost as prolific as the filipinos.

Nov 20, I'm soaked through and try as I will I can't get a dry cigarette or a match to light. I guess I'll have to give it up.

Nov 21, The filipinos call what happened to us last night a monsoon. I have a few other names which would not be permitted by postal authorities! Some sewing machine salesman must have passed through here as all these natives her live in squalor but must have a machine. They take better care of them than the women and children. A naked youngster just went down the road in the rain wearing an old straw hat with an inverted old fashioned chamber shoved down on top with the handle at a rakish angle, to keep the hat from leaking.

Nov 22, Its really wet. This is one of those eleven inches a day times. I tried to sleep under a pancho but finally gave it up. Today I had a treat---dehydrated onions and canned stew---at least it broke the monotony. We also had some canned Australian butter. It is better than our canned product. They grow a type of sweet potato here called comotes, but I'm afraid to eat them, like anything else grown in the ground, because of the threat of dysentary. Unless leather is well oiled, it deteriorates and tears like paper.

Nov 23, Had an Australian egg for breakfast. Tasted quite fresh. Their method of preserving is very good. We are well supplied with gum, but like cigarettes and candy its all soggy and wet. It is generally accepted here that today is Thanksgiving. Guess I'll turn a can upside down and eat from the other end.

Nov 24, The natives are having a real holiday with better food than they have had for months, and sitting on their dripping porches watching the wet soldiers in the mud doing all the work. The women sit in a row, back to chest, each picking the lice out of the hair of the woman in front.

Nov 25, I'm under a roof for the first time since October 20th. Just captured a school house. Some of the desks and books still remain but the Japs have lugged off everything worthwhile. Saw some natives in dug-out, outrigger boats, some quite large. Homefront problems seem very distant and unimportant out here where everything is rudimentary, and we are all busily engaged in trying to get a dry place to sleep, something to eat, and staying alive. A sharp razor blade, a helmet full of water, and a dry pair of socks are among the basic things considered luxuries. Some turkeys and chickens arrived here in the front lines the day after Thanksgiving, but due to lack of cooking facilities were not good.

Nov 26, The good dry sleep I anticipated was a myth and a delusion---one air alarm after another. It was a wild night. Saw some pigs this morning. They are short and thin like a razor back, and have little meat on them.

Nov 27, Sleep was spasmodic last night---rain and Japs---back in a fox hole again.

Nov 29, As we move we would nipa huts whenever we can stop long enough. The natives love it because as soon as we go on, they move in---too lazy to build their own.

Nov 30, Not much sleep---air alarms, artillery fire. We are near a stream but I'm afraid of them as we found natives use them for sewers. Many of them have fresh water snails which act as a media for flukes, the organism which is responsible for elephantiasis.

Dec 1, Twenty-four shopping days until Christmas! Over here all one needs is an undershirt or a bar of soap to trade. However, there is nothing to purchase but labor. Rather a wild night, but things have quieted down a bit. I'm terribly sleepy and hope we get a slight rest today.

Dec 2, Rain, rain, rain. I wonder where all the moisture comes from. The mosquitos are quite bad in this area. I would like to get my clothes off. However, I do try to expose my feet to the air to dry them off whenever possible, but then back into wet shoes---no ring worms or trench foot yet, thank God! Right now I'm alongside a swollen stream, banks covered with ferns and green vines with young palms growing down to the water's edge. I forgot about Halloween---too noisy for ghosts out here anyway.

Whoever made the statement that the Infantry soldier in the South West Pacific was a forgotten man certainly knew what he was talking about. I'm tired---get a little headachy frequently and generally am thoroughly miserable, but not as bad as some of the others. However, I'm thankful at this point that I have a whole skin.

Dec 3, Nothing one does will inhibit the growth of vegetation. Every time we stay in one place for a couple of days, everything is trampled down and cut away. Three days later it has grown back and signs of disturbance have disappeared. We were able to get a little flour and baking powder---result: hot cakes for breakfast. Although wet and a little soggy, they were a welcome change from canned rations.

Dec 3 (cont'd) This morning I picked up what I thought was a little brown stone. When I touched it, it moved and upon examination turned out to be a little hermit crab. They move into periwinkle shells, attach themselves, then when moving they come out of the shell and drag it along on their backs. One wonders how they can get so much into one shell. When attacked they completely disappear into the shell.

Dec 4, Proclamations have been posted in all Filipino Barrios opening with the statement: "By the grace of God, General MacArthur has landed in the Philippines". Some wise individual red penciled the following on one of the proclamations: "By the Grace of God, in spite of the Marines, General MacArthur has landed in the Philippines". Ha! It started to rain before dawn and is really coming down. I just took off my clothes and took a bath in the rain---just like a garden hose. This paper is very greasy, but I try to keep repellent on at all times. The day mosquitoes give you dengue fever and the night mosquitos give malaria. It looks as though you can't win. Yesterday I fixed up a new type of fox hole with a top over it with the idea of keeping water out of it. The first time I had to use it last night, I dropped into three feet of water. I guess nothing will work.

Dec 5, Very little sleep last night. I tried to sleep along side of my slit trench to stay out of the mud and whenever the Jap planes or shells came over, I'd just roll into it. The dogs with us get one can of C rations a day and are looking a little thin. When turned loose, they will sneak into a ration dump and steal a can. How they expect to open the can is more than I can understand. This has been a long day. In fact, there seems little difference between night and day---seems like an endurance race---I only hope we can hold out until relief reaches us.

Dec 6, I now have a pup tent and I'm trying to figure out how to put it over a slit trench and make it stay there. So far its unsuccessful. Mail arrived, but none for me. I know what that song meant, "Soldier, let me read your letter"! There are many fireflies. They seem to collect in one tree selected for an unknown reason. About midnight last night I ~~was~~ saw what I thought was a light in the distance. Looking through field glasses, it was a tree ablaze with fireflies. I decided that was my Christmas tree for this year.

Dec 7, I hope we can wind this thing up soon as everyone is becoming a little weary. All of the men have done a fine job. Their work has been superb. They have suffered untold hardships without complaining and have carried on very efficiently. They deserve a much needed rest and much praise. I just saw a Jap plane shot down right over me. Things are moving very fast. I have a hard time keeping up to date. I've seen a couple of Jap suicide planes dive on our boats, miss and crash into the water. Once they start down, they are pretty hard to stop. At present I'm in a banana grove without bananas. If the roots of the banana are to produce more fruit, the entire tree must be cut down when the bananas are removed. Immediately new shoots come up and in a short time, more bananas. I'd give a great deal for a cup of hot coffee as a bracer right now.



Dec 8, I wish the mail would be brought up. Seems an eternity since I've had a letter. At first artillery fire bothers you a great deal, but like anything else you become accustomed to it and it is only the period of stillness and silence that seem anxious and oppressive. I finally got a hair cut. The job was done with an old pair of tailor shears. It assumes a short shaggy effect running in contours around the head.

Dec 9, I have only seen two cats here. Either the rain gets them, or the natives eat them. We are still pushing the Japs back through torrents of rain. It's a slow tedious process of extermination as their entire psychology is to die for their emperor. I found one of those hermit crabs today. Its shell was six inches long and about three inches at its greatest diameter. He has two large pinchers and apparently lives on land near the ocean as far back as five hundred yards. At night on the front lines we use trip flares which are constantly set off by carabou and pigs.

Dec 10, I made a new arrangement of my pancho and a shelter half, and although it rained hard, I remained relatively dry. I think I have the combination, at least until the wind changes. There was only one difficulty---the soil in this spot is sandy and rocky and about midnight half the hole caved in on me. Had a few minutes this afternoon and washed out my socks and handkerchief. Socks are at a premium so I'm watching these closely. I only have two pair and both have holes in them. I expect to get resupplied soon. A couple of live chickens just flew through here with half the army after them. They will most certainly wind up in somebody's pot. Just jumped into a fox hole and all the sand went down my neck. I had to take my clothes off to get it out. It ran all the way down into my shoes. What a life!

Dec 11, The wind shifted last night after I got my pancho arranged, result: It shipped water.

Dec 12, Many things have transpired, all of them unpleasant. I marvel at the superb way men in the front line units conduct themselves. Their thoughts and their emotions are plainly written on their faces, but regardless of their pent up feelings, they willingly continue forward, enduring constant hardships and dangers.

Dec 13, The ocean water here along the beaches is a muddy color, not clear, blue and sparkling as our beaches. I believe the numerous mud banked rivers flowing into the ocean account for this discoloration. We moved on this morning and I'm now in a filipino house of the better type. It is completely constructed of Phillipine mahogany, sides, floor, foundation and all, but mostly unpolished. Windows are large holes with panels that slide over them. A little polishing would help but its filthy dirty and full of vermin---also shell holes. I think its cleaner and safer out in a fox hole even with all the mud and moisture.

Dec 14, I'm still in the house, but what a place! Broken furniture, part of the walls and roof blown out, dirt, filth, and cockroaches the size of ponies. It has another disadvantage - I have to run out and get into a fox hole when there is trouble, which is frequent. Two months is a long time on a diet of C and K rations. There is a new type of C ration---one can has noodles and meat, and one has spaghetti and meat. Any type of food would be better than the present. There is no question as to its nourishing qualities, but the monotony---ugh! Still no mail---its been a long time. Night again. I hope we get some rest. The phone rings all night long and the artillery makes so much noise you can't hear. What a combination!

Dec 15, Only had to bale out once last night so I was able to catch up on a bit of sleep. Breakfast this morning was a new C ration of a breakfast food with milk and sugar as an ingredient, and is to be mixed with hot water. Coffee without cream, and a can of ham, eggs, and potatoes. It was a welcome change. No fresh fruit where we are now. The Japs took it all. Bamboo is used for everything in this place---building houses, frames for vehicles, steps and ladders, water containers, water and drainage pipes, cooking utensils, and many other things. But all of these places smell terrible! The plumbing and sanitary facilities are non-existent, not even a Chic Sales! I did a bit of washing and the tattle tale gray has turned to olive drab. I sewed up a few holes in my herringbone twills---they were pretty well ventilated. It just started to rain again so I'll have to put the things on wet that I just washed---at least I smell better.

Dec 16, You'd think by now the Japs would realize they couldn't win, but they continue to resist stubbornly. This place is full of rats. I found an old piece of mirror and got a look at myself for the first time in several weeks. I'm thinner, older and very yellow.

Dec 17, For once, last night was fairly inactive. Aside from artillery firing overhead, there were no disturbing influences. Early this morning one of our operators tuned in on a musical program. It was very faint and squeaky but is the first music I've heard for many weeks. One of the men has a little monkey. It was a baby of a wild monkey killed by a patrol. Its a cute little thing. All cuts and abrasions in this climate must be treated with antiseptic and covered, otherwise ulcers will form. Feet become sore and cracked unless dried out frequently. The humidity and warmth afford an excellent media for ring worm and athletes foot. There is also much dysentary. What a place. Every time the heavy guns go off this paper jumps like an earthquake had hit. No papers or magazines are available so we are way behind on all news. Shell exploded at Headquarters.

Dec 18, Last night was wilder than usual. The date reminds me that we have had sixty days of this---too long. Some men were digging this morning and found the longest and largest angle worms I've ever seen---over six inches long and as big around as my finger. The person who invented Spam should be tried! The kitchens try all known means to disguise it, but the flavor persists. The natives say the heavy rains will be over the end of December. I sure hope they are right! All lumber where we are now is Phillipine mahogany, even boxes and

Dec 18 (cont'd) fence posts. I'm about to get into my poncho for the night. I wonder what a bed would feel like.

Dec 19, Still pushing on. I sincerely hope the Japs will be busily occupied elsewhere for awhile so we can get some rest. Plenty of little finger bananas here, however, I prefer to get mine from the produce market north of B street. Everything decomposes so rapidly. The flies are in hoards around us.

Dec 20, Fairly quiet today and sunny and it is a relief to see the mud dry up. However, a sunny day rapidly saps the energy of everyone. On rainy wet days more work is accomplished and more territory is covered. The rats are everywhere. One just got tangled up in our telephone wire.

Dec 21, The sun is shining! Our collection of monkeys and parrots is increasing. They seem to fill a needed place in the enlisted military structure. The men seem to derive pleasure in playing with them due to the absence of dogs or other domestic pets. Haven't had a drink since September. Maybe someday when this settles down we'll get some beer.

Dec 22, I heard there would be turkeys for Christmas, but how they'll get them up to us in the front lines, and how we are going to cook them is an unknown quantity. I wore out my leggins but just now managed to get another pair.

Dec 23, Tropical areas are fine for short trips, but as a daily continuous diet become very monotonous. Everyone is a little tense after so long an operation but manage to carry on hoping we can end this soon. This certainly is a hell of a place.

Dec 24, This morning we discovered a few "pests" in our neighborhood, but cleaned them out. More mush for breakfast. We hear there will be turkeys. The cooking problem will be great, but we'll make it. Anything to get it to the men. I was able to get enough oil drums and had one end cut out. They can be placed over a pit and covered with earth and used as ovens. I hope they work. The men appear expectant, as if they expect the war will be called off for tomorrow.

Dec 25, Christmas morning with little difference from any other morning---Same firing, same activities. A few minutes ago a whole truck load of package mail arrived and how the men brightened up! Me, too! This is the greatest thing that has happened since we arrived here. No rain and it is quite warm. I remember other Christmas mornings---Tom and Jerrys and egg nogs, and friends coming by, but here the battle goes on. The chaplains have held many church services today. Only by holding a service for a few men in each place have they been able to cover the regiment. Not many people at home can understand the unhappiness of the men here. Their personal hardships, the lonesomeness and the separation from their loved ones, not to mention the constant danger and life under battle conditions. These men are making a terrific sacrifice.

Dec 26, The turkeys arrived late and the cooks did their best. Took a helmet bath and washed my underwear, but we had to move suddenly so had to put it on wet. There is a different type of palm where we are now. The trunk is like a coconut palm but the fronds have foliage similar to leaves, very strange looking.

Dec 26 (cont'd) Heard today there was beer for us coming up to the front. Two cans per man.

Dec 27, It was quiet last night although it rained continually. This morning the sky was overcast like a warm San Francisco fog. The ants are everywhere. As we advance the natives in front of us all hurriedly gather their belongings and pass to our rear. As soon as we have cleared the area of Japs, the natives re-occupy their old huts and continue living as though nothing happened. In fact, they seem to enjoy it. The battle affords them a holiday and an excuse to do less work than usual. They are all perched in their huts like a bunch of monkeys chattering and enjoying the passing parade of the muddy American soldier. They like to be treated for many real or imaginary injuries and are very proud of a piece of gauze attached by adhesive plaster on the exposed surface of their bodies.

Dec 28, We still press on. Although I have few personal belongings left, it is necessary that one remember where one places each piece of equipment, as when they have to be grabbed at night, the memory and tough system is all that can be used. As a result, the spot I call my bed is cluttered. A little while ago the beer arrived. It's raining, but they feel now that they are not entirely forgotten and there is a mental uplift even though they have to operate with a can of beer in one hand and a rifle in the other. I'm actually hungry today. I wish we'd get a little starch, potatoes, bread or anything of that type.

Dec 29, The vegetation continues to grow and there is nothing can stop it. Fox holes twenty-four hours old have little green shoots in them, not to mention water. I never realized how much one depends on a starchy diet until it is left out. The eighth wonder of the world today. Fresh Hamburger! It was swell. Any improvement in the food always perks the men up. The rain stopped a bit this morning but we're drenched with perspiration.

Dec 30, The moon, hidden behind the hills did not make its appearance until late. I was awakened and startled by a shaft of light shining in my face. My first thought was a Jap flash light but, thank God, it was Mr. Moon. The wild tropical park was flooded with moonlight while dark shadowy palm fronds silhouetted against the sky created all sorts of grotesque gnome like figures. The sky was a galaxy. The hills, immersed in the brightness, appeared soft and seductive under a blanket of palms, belieing their ruggedness. The brown and Nile green tree lizards, seeking companionship, emitted off key bass fiddle notes, unharmonious with the staccato near by rifle fire and the crash of distant artillery shells. Then the rhythmic drone of an airplane reminding everyone to lie low and unseen. An occasional movement or whine of the war dogs arouses one's suspicion of Jap curiosity seekers working around the perimeter. Vision and observation by day give way to nocturnal waves of sound, sounds gruesome and melodious, acquiring familiarity through which tired, calloused soldiers sleep fitfully.

Dec 31, Although sleep was limited last night, I was able to get some rest. We're using Jap alcohol in our lighters which works pretty well provided, of course, the flints don't crumble away, and also that we can keep the cigarettes dry. I'm glad this year is coming to a close. No paper hats or fun out here, but plenty of uninvited noisemakers. The men all accept the situation and are sweating it out with only a few sarcastic "Happy New Years"!

Jan 1, Supply seems to be picking up. Turkeys today. The men are glad. They feel they are not entirely forgotten. Opened some Jap emergency rations today. Rice, fish and shrimp. Has to be cooked and smells like shrimp fried rice. Also found some bottles of saki. Everyone is afraid it may have been tampered with, however----! Heard we were going to get some boots. That's a good idea as leggins and shoes wear out quickly and pants can be tucked in boots to keep out bugs. Flies, ants, and myriads of other insects still persist. Battles are strange things. Human emotions and the process of living go on just the same. A little humor is eked out. Although the war goes on all around them, men worry about their personal problems, and try to derive a little pleasure and relaxation if possible. Comforts and pleasures are basic and limited---an old newspaper passed around or a picture or magazine, a palm mat for softness, a few old boards to build a floor in a dugout, old corrugated iron put over a slit trench as a shelter, a can of beer, extra fresh water, or a stream in which to bathe, a new or fresh item of food, a box latrine instead of a slit trench, or the arrival of a mail truck behind the lines---Rudimentary?

Jan 2, I'm dirty and so are my clothes, but we're very busy so will have to continue as is till this lets up. It has been raining all afternoon and the place is a sea of red mud.

Jan 3, Mail arrived and one Christmas package. These Japs are sure stubborn. Guess they haven't heard the broadcast that the battle for Leyte is over.

Jan 4, I pray this will be over soon and we can get some rest. Men are dropping from sheer exhaustion. Lots of dengue fever also. I was given command of the regiment today. I can honestly state that when General Arnold called me in and told me, I was floored, speechless, and I think I let my mouth hang open a mile. I damn near fell off the box I was sitting on. After twenty years, I'm finally in the saddle. I'm still trying to believe it!

Jan 5, Sulpha drugs and blood plasma are our salvation. There would never be a vacant appointment at a Blood Donor Center if people could see all these wounded men.

Jan 6, The men are so weary. Warmth and water give our feet lots of trouble. Skin comes off and toe nails turn black, but we still push on. I am very humble and proud to lead these men. They have done a magnificent job, suffering untold hardships. I sometimes wonder if the people back home appreciate it.

Jan 7, This is a long drawn out affair. [REDACTED] Very busy today.

Jan 8, Had some close shaves since this began. I'm truly thankful I'm alive.

Jan 9, Had some fresh frozen meat today. It was difficult to get up to the front line but it was surely good. I wish we could get some every two weeks. It would be a big help. It has been pouring all day and we are all soaked. The low boots arrived and are being issued and seem pretty good. Our equipment is badly chewed up as we've been over eighty days in constant combat. I put a low bamboo platform in this slit trench and a tarp over it, so am relatively comfortable, at least it only leaks a little and I do not have to sleep in water.

Jan 10, I'm still chasing Japs. They just won't quit. When we are all assembled again after this battle is over, there will be many vacant ranks---mute testimony to the great job these men have done. Last night was noisy. We are under a tent and it is like a Haman Bath. Don't dare take off my shirt because of the mosquitoes.

Jan 11, The courage and bravery of these men is unbelievable, and they are so tired. Its sunny and hot today but my clothes have been wet for so long my skin is sore and chafed. The men take this stuff wonderfully and without complaint. The terrific mental strain the men have been under is becoming more and more apparent.

Jan 12, Aside from a few bursts of machine gun fire last night was relatively quiet, for which I am thankful. It is raining and some of the men are taking a bath in it, or I should say shower. Soldiers are wonderful people. We chase Japs all day and then try to keep them from infiltrating our lines at night time, playing cops and robbers the serious and dangerous way.

Jan 13, I'm now in a building all shot full of holes and bomb holes in the roof. I have to get out during air raids though, as its a good target. The thing a soldier wants most and is constantly looking for is mail, letters from home. Then and only then can he escape for a few minutes from his battle torn surroundings.

Jan 14, We are near a battery of our own artillery tonight and everytime they fire we are nearly blown out of our fox holes, and what it does to our sleep! Nerves are made taut and jumpy.

Jan 15, Finally got a hair out with ~~my~~ a pair of cloth shears. It's sort of in layers. Think I've picked up some of this fungus growth they have around here, although I hope it isn't.

Jan 16, We've been issued candles and I'm in an old house full of holes. The candle flickers, creating distorted shadows or painting fleeting dancing figures. A lizzard clings silently to the bamboo brace above my head. He looks as lonesome and alone as I feel.

Jan 17

We are all a little thin - our clothing has been ruined by moisture and mildew.

You've never seen such ants - Yesterday I tried to push a big black one off the table and he reared up on his hind legs and bit me and then I did smash him.

The candle is spluttering and my lizard friend is considering walking on the table. He is almost transparent and has little black bead like eyes. Wonder if I could make a pet ~~out~~ of him.

Jan 18

Several air alerts last night and today. It's been a long hard day.

Jan 19

Rain is coming down in torrents and everyone is wet. This is a long drawn out process & everyone will be glad when it's over.

20/

Aside from 2 air alerts, last night was quiet. Every evening when darkness comes, everyone gets tense due to the awful uncertainty. We're still fighting Japs and the men are doing a fine job. They have been at it for over 90 days and the hardships and strain are terrific.

I have worn out one helmet liner since I have been here and the second one is well on its way due to moisture. I have worn a steel helmet night & day for so long my head feels flat on top.

21/

It's been raining torrents and ~~now~~ <sup>tonight I'm</sup> now under a canvas trying to do some paper work. The artillery is firing and it keeps blowing the candle out.

22/

One of the air alerts lasted over a hour last night around midnight so we lost quite a bit of sleep. The artillery moved up & fired intermittently, blowing the mosquito bar netting off of me each time - What a night



However it is very satisfying to have your own artillery firing and the shells passing over your head. It gives you a lot of assurance.

Jan 23

Today I took my weekly look at myself in the mirror. Still the same homely pan, quite a bit thinner + yellow from atabrin, but still enough beef left to call it a face.

The little lizard is becoming more friendly. He's perched on my helmet in front of me. In the candle light, he is a translucent milk green. My imagination paints him as a miniature green dragon, his little toes as grasping claws + his mouth set in a marled head belching the flame of the candle.

Jan 24

Only one air alert last night but things are whipped up to a foam this morning.

Our Jap friend in his plane hasn't come over yet tonight + his motor has a

peculiar sound; we call him "Washing Machine Charlie". He causes us lots of trouble & we should get him some one of these times.

Keeping your feet dry is a real problem, and the boys are having a great deal of trouble.

Jun 25

Some beer arrived this morning & believe it or not some fresh meat at noon. It was boiling beef but the cooks sliced it up into steaks & the men really went for it.

The streams are full of natives washing clothes, the kids all naked and the women clothed in their single dress washing the dress & themselves at the same time. The streams are filthy. The most unwholesome sight is some natives and a couple of stinking carabao in a mud wallow. The natives climb into the sour foul smelling muck with their pet carabao & scoop muddy water over

his partially submerged odorous body.  
It is axiomatic here that a carabao  
receives better care by far than a  
man's wife & children, on the theory  
that he can always get another family.

Today is like a spring day in  
the U.S. It is quite warm & breezy -  
Everything is green & shiny. It would  
very pretty if one cared for this place.  
With the beauty you must accept the  
mingled odors of ginger blossoms, decaying  
animal matter & ~~find~~ native feces  
on the ground under the Filipino havela.  
~~I think I have been here too long!~~

Jan 25.

Today we saw some back news papers  
from the mainland and noted on the Society  
page where the glamorous home folks  
were attending the opera. They even  
described the way some of the men  
were dressed. God! If it pertained to  
us it would go something like this -  
"Opening night for the D-D operatic  
season was resplendent with beautiful

attired G.I.s. Seen loitering in the lobby, with a group of three, was Pvt. Business, resplendent in a wrinkled herringbone twill, the cuffs of his trousers daintily tied around the tops of his shoes with a piece of ornamental native hemp. A belated party, consisting of Sgt Doakes, Corp. Mulwood, Pvt Bath & Pvt affair, having loitered over mouldy cigarettes & coconut milk following the delicious dinner of C Rations at the country estate. By the latrine of Sgt Doakes entered belching pleasantly, and joined the sweating throng. Pvt Enterprise, escorted by T-5 Knize, was attired in an open O.D. shirt, tails gracefully drooping his torso. The bodice was completely open, exposing beautiful wavy red hair coily meeting the top of his trousers at the umbilicus. Pvt Life, enraptured with the performance, featured a stunning ray hat tilted at a rakish angle, presenting a "who the hell care" attitude. Leaving intently forward from his private box atop

the field range, the glistening bare  
shoulders of Pvt ~~Zero~~ glistened faintly.  
A sequin effect was achieved by  
numerous welts produced by the mosquitos.  
The whole was enhanced by a dog  
tag pendant suspended on a glittering  
greasy shoe lace. Not to be forgotten  
was the gorgeous head adornment  
of Pvt Nut, a steel helmet beautifully  
mottled with dribbles of imported  
Phillipian mud. In the dress circle,  
Pvt ~~Zero~~ <sup>done</sup> was draped in a dirty  
huck towel, gathered at the waist  
with telephone wire. Strikingly  
conspicuous by its plainness was the  
shapely nude body of Corp. Ouch, with  
tufts of black hair dotting the ensemble  
in the proper places. Not to be outdone  
was the two tone adornment effected  
by Sgt. Bum, a brown jungle sweater  
and a pr. of mildewed C.K.C. trousers  
atop a pair of dainty No 16 E.E. G.I. shoes,  
the all, crowned with a four week growth  
of hair, producing a shaggy babal  
effect. Nuts! I guess I have been

here too long -

Jun 27

These natives get me down - They go about their useless activity to all intents & purposes as if there were no battle going on at all. They really are a great hindrance in our operations - There is a type of tangerine grown here. The skin remains green but they taste pretty good. Needless to say that with the army here, they are practically extinct even the bananas are all gone. The coconuts however have defeated the troops - there are just too many of them.

I'm looking out across the water in the moonlight - reminds me of the piece "Sleepy Lagoon" only this peaceful scene is broken at intervals with the noise of guns and a few tracer bullets blazing a red ribbon <sup>trail</sup> across the picture.

Mail is coming in water soaked & the

Xmas packages now arriving are badly  
mashed up but they are very welcome.

Jan 28

I'm writing this at night in a blacked  
out tent in front of a candleabra I made.  
It consists of 3 candles stuck in a  
tin can. we have had 2<sup>or 3</sup> alerts already  
so guess will have very little sleep  
tonight. We tried to play some records  
on an old Jap phonograph this afternoon  
but it didn't work out well - I pray  
we hit a rest area soon + can get  
our clothes off at least for a few hours  
at night.

Jan 29

This morning I received a little Xmas tree -  
the candy ornaments had melted but it  
was fine.

In a recent service publication I see  
where the Marines are calling us "the  
army's new secret weapon".

June 30

I'm completely soaked tonight - I had to go to a meeting only a few miles away but as it was raining hard I went in a ~~gas~~ <sup>taxi</sup> + 1/2 instead of a jeep. I made it up alright but coming back got in the middle of a typhoon with the water coming down as if from a fire hose. The rivers were suddenly raging torrents. I made the first crossing and on the second river the truck drowned out with water over the top of the cab - We had to half walk & half swim ashore & then thumb a ride back on a landing barge. I wish I had some dry clothes to put on - Just had an air alert - how a jeep flies can see on a night like this is amazing. Its tough going on the ground on a dark rainy night like this.

June 31

We had services today for our dead boys buried in the cemetery near here. We stood out in a torrential rain while the Chaplain performed the last rites and



taps were blown. Standing there with our still, silent comrades on one side and the strained tearless facial men on the other, I felt a great humble responsibility. ~~at~~ I thought of how precious and dear life is to me, all because of you. Knowing that these men who had made the supreme sacrifice had loved ones & valued life just as highly, and knowing how willingly and unquestioningly they had pushed on forward, fought and died that we might win, on orders issued by us, I realized more than ever the seriousness of each small decision one makes. I know that God has taken care of all of them and they are living on in spirit, marching on with us to victory knowing that they are not forgotten & have not died in vain. I shall keenly miss each and every one of them. I pray that their loved ones will be taken care of and be comforted in the knowledge that their lost ones were fine brave men who had

unselfishly given their all. And  
so we push on, praying for guidance  
and that our casualties will be  
low

Fal 1

We are trying to organize a Q.I. show  
& have moving pictures back behind  
the lines & get the men back on a  
rotation basis - the strain is really  
great after over 100 consecutive days  
in combat - We found a Filipino  
cory who could jitterbug & put them  
in the show - The men will get a  
kick out of it.

The war in Europe is more severe  
in continued shock action but  
compared to this is a gentleman's type.  
When Germans find themselves licked, they  
usually call the game & surrender  
but here, due to the fanatical attitude and  
~~the~~ toughness of the Jap, everything is  
for keeps - He comes out fighting, and  
up to the present time, will not quit.

Feb 2

Last night was so absolutely black with visibility nil that even the Jap planes didn't come over. I'm very thankful for things happen on nights of that type to men on the ground when they have to move around much.

Feb 3

We are still pushing the Japs around - This is supposed to be the dry season here but it rains several times a day. Tonight is quiet and dark - seems as if we are being smothered by a blanket of loneliness.

Feb 4

I would give everything I own to taste a fresh orange -

Feb 5

This morning I had a humorous experience I was awakened by something soft around my neck. I was not only startled but scared stiff. I rared up + made a grab + found

out it was one of the little monkeys the men have around here which had gotten off his leash. The men have made great pets out of them + this one had crawled up on my bed + was trying to snuggle down around my neck. They are cute but very dirty so I took him back outside + tied him up.

Feb 6

Last night had lots of activity going on - I'm sleepy this morning. Sore arm season is here again, regardless of battle conditions.

I have no use for the natives - they haven't one redeeming virtue.

The shadows on the green hills are lovely but one must never forget they also aid as covering for Jap snipers.

Feb 7

I don't mind the excitement of the day but at night the uncertainty, coupled with the length of time we've spent in the front line, increases the tensions in the men.

We could surely use some meat!

Feb 8

Navy men show up once in a while - they are certainly easy marks for the soldiers when souvenirs are wanted - I just caught some men cutting out the centers of old white pieces of cloth + sewing in a red circle center; then copying some Jap writing on the white. They sell them to the Navy for practically any price they want to name - The Navy thinks them real + the soldiers get extra money + everyone is happy - Regardless of battle - "business as usual" - Unless the article has "made in Japan" on it, it was probably manufactured by some enterprising G.I.

Feb 9

It has been raining hard + the streams are raging torrents.

All this moving around + one night stands give me a guppy complex.

Feb 10

Just got in the chow line + had canned salmon, canned beef imitation butter + some bread. Not very filling or appetizing either -

Feb 11<sup>th</sup> into a rest area on coast between  
Dulag and Almyoj - lasted one week.

Feb 17<sup>th</sup> started loading for next mission  
~~February~~ - held funeral services for men  
at burial grounds

February - decorated - cluster oakleaf to  
Bronze star

March 13 - left for next mission

April 1st - Easter Sunday  
L Day on Okinawa

# Okinawa Natives

