

LIFE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK, N.Y.

EDITORIAL OFFICES

February 25, 1944

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you very much for letting us know that
Captain Herman Bottcher has been awarded an
Oak Leaf Cluster.

And thank you, too, for sending us a copy of
the citation. We shall keep it in our files.

Cordially,



Dorothy Wallace
for the Editors

Mr. Harold Smith
Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING
ROCKEFELLER CENTER
NEW YORK

EDITORIAL OFFICES

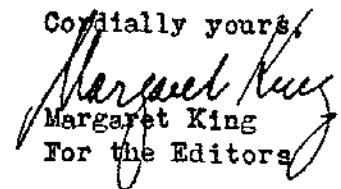
March 6, 1944

Dear Mr. Smith:

Many thanks for sending us the details of Capt. Harman Bottcher's citation for the Distinguished Service Cross. Sorry we received the information too late to make use of it.

Nevertheless, we were interested and very much appreciate your writing to us.

Cordially yours,


Margaret King
For the Editors

Mr. Harold Smith
Abraham Lincoln Brigade
100 Fifth Avenue
Room 1112
New York City

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY, SOUTH PACIFIC AREA

AGO 501
1 July, 1943

GENERAL ORDERS)
NO.....36

* * * * *

II. AWARD OF OAK-LEAF CLUSTER.

By direction of the President, in addition to the Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Captain Herman J. F. Botcher, ~~was~~ Infantry, by the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, as published on Page 1, General Orders Number 64, 1942, General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, a bronze Oak-leaf Cluster is awarded to him by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the Far East, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bulletin No. 45, W. D., 1918). The citation is as follows:

Captain HERMAN J. F. BOTCHER, (0038451) ~~was~~ Infantry, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on 29 December 1942. Although wounded the previous day, Captain Botcher volunteered to lead a detachment of infantry in an attack on an enemy strongpoint in terrain with which he was familiar. He carefully prepared the men for the attack, and then encouraged them by his own example to advance within twenty yards of the enemy emplacements. When the patrol was held up by small arms fire in this advanced position, he stood up without regard for his own safety and drew the enemy fire so that the patrol could move to another area. He was again wounded during this action. Captain Botcher's outstanding courage and leadership were an inspiration to the men under his command.
Home Address: Mrs. Alice Botcher (sunt) 239 Sansell St.
San Francisco, Cal.

* * * * *

By command of General Mac ARTHUR:

R. K. SUTHERLAND
Major General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

L. S. OSTLANDER
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
Adjutant General

January 24, 1944

War Department
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:--

We are informed that Capt. Herman Bottcher, who is a member of our organization, has been the recipient of a second Distinguished Service Cross.

Would it be possible for you to furnish us with a copy of the official citation?

Thanking you in advance, we are,

Yours very truly

HAROLD SMITH
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

A

January 24, 1944

PM Newspaper
67 Sixth Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Att: Mr. Mahon, reporter

Gentlemen:--

We believe you will be interested to learn that Capt Herman Bottcher, a member of our organization and an outstanding hero of this war, has been the recipient of a second Distinguished Service Cross and 3 Purple Hearts, but ~~the circumstances are not revealed.~~

his letter does not reveal the circumstances.
Yours very truly

JACK BJOZE
Executive Secretary

a

Chas Edmundson, Esq Fortune Mag.
Daily Worker -
Clare Booth Luce.
Howard J. Mc Murray.
John McCaffrey
Joseph Clark Baldwin
Chet Hollifield.
Harren Magnusson.
Sir James E. Murray.
Dor D. Fenton.
Henry C. Lodge Jr.
Emmanuel Celler
Claude Rippner

February 17, 1934

Editor
Newsweek Magazine
Newsweek Building
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:--

It has been officially announced that Capt. Norman Botcher, recipient of a Distinguished Service Cross, has been awarded an air leaf cluster which is the equivalent of a second Distinguished Service Cross. A copy of the citation for the second award, is herewith enclosed, for immediate release.

You may be interested to learn that following the original decoration, Norman Botcher was promoted from Sergeant to Captain.

Captain Botcher fought with the Spanish Republican Army in 1937-1938 and is a member of the Robert R. McCormack Lincoln Brigade.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM B. ELLIOTT
Executive Secretary

cc
one.

Time Mag.
Life
Chas. Edmundson & Co. Tribune
Liberty Mag.
Dean Pearson ✓
Walter Winchell ✓
my Daily News
Max Baer, Chicago ✓
my Times
Nation ✓
New Republic

Stephen Carson - my Tribune
Samuel H. Bradford - my Post
AP - U.P. - 11/5 - Selected
Daily N.Y.
Intercontinent - Pass.
Johanne Weil ✓
Wm. Friedman ✓
Spotlight Mag.
Franklin D. Roosevelt
The Popular Mechanics, D.C.

Reddy
Richman

August 10, 1944

Major General J. A. Ulio
The Adjutant General's Office
War Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:--

We have received word that Captain Herman
Dottcher, AS #O-898451 has been wounded in a recent
action, and possibly died of these wounds.

We would like confirmation of this report
from your office.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Sincerely

Harold Smith
Executive Secretary

S/A

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AGPC-G 201 Bottcher, Hermann J.F. WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
(10 Aug 44) O-888,451

18 August 1944

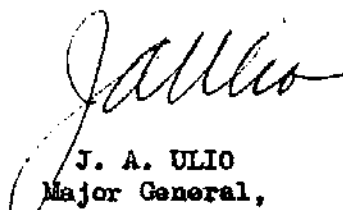
- Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade,
100 Fifth Avenue, Room 1112,
New York, New York.

Gentlemen:

This is to acknowledge your letter of 10 August in which you requested information concerning Captain Hermann J. F. Bottcher.

Casualty reports received in the War Department do not contain the name of Captain Bottcher since the report that he was released from the hospital for wounds received in action on 20 December 1942, in New Guinea.

Very truly yours,


J. A. ULIO
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

By: 



Capt. Bottcher, Hero of Buna, Killed on Leyte

German Born 'One Man
Army' Was Naturalized
by an Act of Congress

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS,
Leyte, Philippines, Jan. 16 (UP).—
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He was known as "the one-man
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Was HE Subversive?

An Editorial

Reprinted from late editions of yesterday's 'Worker.'

The War Department has chosen this moment in history to issue an order barring "subversive" persons from serving in all "sensitive" positions.

The press interpret this order as applying not to real subversives like fascists, but to Communists (the order itself does not mention Communists).

We ask the Army if it is now calling "subversive" those thousands of Communists and progressive trade unionists who served so well in the war so recently won? The hundreds decorated for bravery? The thousands who gave their lives in battle?

Will they call "subversive" Capt. Herman Bottcher, well-known Communist? Bottcher is shown above being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award, by Maj. Gen. William H. Gill for extraordinary heroism and leadership against the Japanese. Bottcher entered the war a buck private. For his superb leadership in the Buna, New Guinea, campaign he was given a field commission, jumping from sergeantcy to a captain's command. Bottcher's Corner is still marked in New Guinea as the place where Herman Bottcher, Communist and veteran of the Spanish war against fascism, led a glorious struggle.

Bottcher is not here to answer the War Department. He lies at peace in Leyte, where he was killed by a Japanese knee mortar in January, 1945, while leading his men on patrol.

Was Bottcher "subversive"?

Does he lie in a "subversive" grave?

Neither the War Department or anyone else can desecrate the grave on Leyte where lies this hero of the war against fascism. No one can tarnish the glory of the thousands of Communists who fought valiantly with their fellow-Americans of other political creeds against the scourge of mankind, fascism.



OUR PLEDGE ON V-E DAY

DAILY WORKER
To Our Comrades Killed in Action

Since Pearl Harbor

DAY 11 1945
David Altman

→ Herman Bottcher

John Delehanty

John Dion

Ben Gardner

Joe Gordon

Joe Hecht

Julius Hene

Max Korb

John Kozar

Sidney Kurtz

Larry Lustgarten

Andrew Miltiades

Tom Rissane

Sidney Rosenblatt

Conrad Silverman

Harry Steinberg

Jerry Weinberg

THE FIGHT SHALL GO ON

Until Japanese Militarism Is Crushed

Until Spanish Democracy Is Restored

Until the Free World for Which You Died Is Assured

Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

Capt. Herman Bottcher Ends 7-Year Fight Against Fascism

Capt. Herman Bottcher, 35, holder of the Distinguished Service Cross and long a legendary figure among U. S. combat men in the Pacific, was killed on Leyte by a mortar shell burst shortly before dawn on the last day of 1944.

Leyte is a long way from Madrid, where Bottcher started fighting fascists seven years ago as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; but his friends are certain that he never regretted a single step along the road, not even its ending in the Leyte dawn.

Bottcher left Spain already a hero in the eyes of his fellow Brigadiers and in the eyes of all Loyalists in Spain and democrats abroad. He was a small fellow, youthful-looking, with enormous energy. He went into Madrid, as a volunteer, because he had ideals; and he lived through the Spanish war, and through these years in the Pacific, because he was a tough soldier.

Bottcher was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in December, 1942, after he had assumed command of an infantry company—he was a sergeant, then—and split the Japanese lines by smashing to the New Guinea coast between the village of Buna and Buna Mission.

He died leading a reconnaissance company against an estimated 3000 heavily-armed Japanese. He has been recommended for a posthumous Silver Star.

Perhaps it is relevant to note that



Capt. Herman Bottcher

Capt. Bottcher, who went into the front lines to fight fascism long before most of us knew what fascism was, or guessed its danger, was born in Landsberg, Germany.

SHAEF News

Asked in Commons whether he was aware that SHAEF censors had been instructed to pass dispatches from the front stating that Allied Progress had been good, War Minister Grigg said he understood dispatches were censored on military grounds only, and not for propaganda purposes.



The National Order
of
Battlefield Commissions



610 Montana Street
Bethalto, Illinois 6201
26 March 1986

Mr. John Tisa
236 C-1 Pine Hove Circle
Lake Worth, Florida 33462

Dear Mr. Tisa:

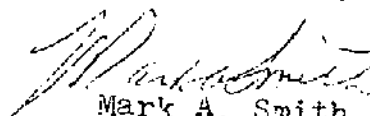
We are in the process of preparing three articles about Herman J.F. Bottcher, for our newsletter, the "Mustang".

According to Peter Wyden in his book about the Spanish Civil War, entitled the Passionate Journey, you were instrumental in saving much of the documentation of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from that war.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could tell me whether you knew or have records that would show that Herman J.F. Bottcher, was a member of that Brigade, or one of the other International Brigades that fought in that war. I am attaching a brief summary of Captain Bottcher's service in the 32d Infantry Division in World War II.

Anything that you could provide to me relative to Captain Bottcher would be of great value to me. I would also appreciate any names and addresses of other Americans that I could contact that might provide additional information about him.

Sincerely yours,


Mark A. Smith
Editor
The Mustang
NOBC

P.S. We discovered your name while reading the above book and contacted one of our members in the New York area, he found the name Tisa in the Manhattan telephone directory, this turned out to be your son and he was kind enough to provide your Florida address.

271

JOHN TISA

236 C-1 PINE HOV CIRCLE
LAKEWORTH, FL 33463

29 March 1986

Mark A. Smith
Editor
The Mustang
NOBC

Dear Mr. Smith:

In reference to your letter of 26 March 1986 seeking information about HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHEr, I am pleased to advise you that Bottcher was indeed an honored member of our organization, the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

However, your letter to me is only a beginning of the trail of digging up his past. Much of our archives is housed in a special collections department at Brandeis University. Please write to Victor A. Berch, Administrator of the Collections Department, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts 02154, for assistance.

You might also write to our national organization, VALB, Room 239, 799 Broadway, New York City, N. Y. 10003, and request that your interest be published in our newspaper, THE VOLUNTEER FOR LIBERTY, for direct communication with those who knew him and could add items of personal interest.

I am sending copies of your letter and this to our New York office and to Mr. Berch, so that they may know of our communication. Your project is so vital that I'm certain you will get the utmost of cooperation. Please put me on your mailing list for all your writings about Bottcher, one who has been kept too long an unknown soldier.

I wish you the very best of luck.

Faternally yours,


John Tisa



The National Order
of
Battlefield Commissions



610 Montana Street
Bethalto, Illinois 62010
4 April 1986

Mr. Victor A. Berch
Administrator of the Collections Department
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154

Dear Mr. Berch,

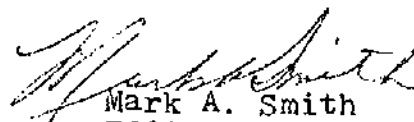
We are in the process of preparing several articles in our newsletter, on the life of the late Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher, who was commissioned on the battlefield in World War II, while serving with the U.S. 32nd Infantry Division in New Guinea.

I am attaching a brief summary of the life of Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher

In order to obtain information on Captain Bottcher's service with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, I have been in touch with John Tisa, who presently resides in Florida. John has advised me to contact you as he states that you do have some of the records from that Brigade and might be able to assist me. John also recalls Bottcher's service with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

I would greatly appreciate any information that you might be able to give me on this matter.

Sincerely yours,


Mark A. Smith
Editor
The Mustang
NOBC



The National Order
of
Battlefield Commissions



CAPTAIN HERMAN J.F. BOTTCHEER

Enlisted Serial#: 29085246 Officer's Serial #: 088451
Company H, 126th Infantry Regiment, 32d. Infantry Division
Company A, 127th Infantry Regiment, 32d. Infantry Division
Reconnaissance Troop, 32d. Infantry Division

Decorations: Distinguished Service Cross W/1 OLC, The Purple Heart
W/2 OLC.

Herman J.F. Bottcher was born in Landeburg, Germany, a small village near Berlin, on July 13, 1909. The village is now part of the East Zone.

He migrated to Australia and then to San Francisco, California, where he worked as a cabinet maker for the Emporium Department Store and was a member of a local Carpenters Union.

His parents were dead. His nearest kin was a sister and an aunt who also lived in San Francisco.

He forfeited his citizenship when he went to Spain and fought for the Republican forces as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, in that Civil War.

Legend has it that due to his outstanding war record as an officer in the United States Army, that he was granted his citizenship by special act of Congress. However, this is questionable. I have a letter from Representative Melvin Price, a member of Congress from Illinois, who informs me that his office checked with the Congressional Research Service (CSR), on this matter and they after careful search of the records from 1942-1972, have informed his office that there is no record of Herman J.F. Bottcher having received his citizenship by act of Congress.

Bottcher while serving as a Staff Sergeant in the 32d. Infantry Division did so distinguish himself by his leadership and conduct while performing as an acting platoon leader that he was promoted on the battlefield to Captain and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

One year later, in 1944, while leading a reconnaissance behind enemy lines on Leyte in the Philippines, he was fatally wounded by mortar fire.

Recently the Veterans Administration advised me that Captain Bottcher had taken out National Service Life Insurance on October 21, 1943, and that a beneficiary of the insurance was still being paid, but that the VA was not permitted to reveal the identity or address of this beneficiary.

Mark A. Smith
Mark A. Smith
Editor The Mustang
NOBC

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Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

*George Watt

*Saul Wellman

*Veteran ALB

The universities names are
for identification only.

April 14, 1986

Mr. Mark Smith
National Order of Battlefield Commissions
610 Montana Street
Bethalto, IL 62010

Dear Mr. Smith,

In response to your query re Capt. Herman Bottcher,
I am afraid that there is little here that would be of
value to you in your research.

Unfortunately, very little of the records
of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade have either survived or
been turned over to this archive.

Unlike the records of official units of the
U.S. Army, the record keeping of the Abraham Lincoln
Brigade was either lost on the battlefields or transported
off to the USSR.

There may be individuals alive today who
served with Capt. Bottcher and who may recall him while
in Spain. I would suggest that you write to the
Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, whose address
you must have, and put out a call for help in their
organ The Volunteer.

Sincerely yours,

Victor A. Berch
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Special Collections Librarian

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Bottcher is not here to answer the War Department. He lies at peace in Leyte, where he was killed by a Japanese knee mortar in January, 1945, while leading his men on patrol.

Was Bottcher "subversive"?

Does he lie in a "subversive" grave?

Neither the War Department or anyone else can desecrate the grave on Leyte where lies this hero of the war against fascism. No one can tarnish the glory of the thousands of Communists who fought valiantly with their fellow-Americans of other political creeds against the scourge of mankind, fascism.



OUR PLEDGE ON V-E DAY

To Our Comrades Killed in Action

Since Pearl Harbor

David Altman

→ Herman Bottcher

John Delehanty

John Dion

Ben Gardner

Joe Gordon

Joe Hecht

Julius Hene

Max Korb

John Kozar

Sidney Kurtz

Larry Lustgarten

Andrew Miltiades

Tom Rissane

Sidney Rosenblatt

Conrad Silverman

Harry Steinberg

Jerry Weinberg

THE FIGHT SHALL GO ON

Until Japanese Militarism Is Crushed

Until Spanish Democracy Is Restored

Until the Free World for Which You Died Is Assured

Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

Who Is

Subversive?

"Extraordinary Heroism" was the Army's citation for Captain Herman Bottcher, a Veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery in World War II.

Captain Bottcher was killed in action in the Battle for the Philippines. If he had survived, he would have lived to hear the epithet "Subversive!" hurled at him by the likes of McCarthy and McCarran.

Senator Pat McCarran, author of the law which is being used to persecute every anti-fascist organization in the United States, proudly wears Franco's medal, for distinguished service to the Spanish fascist dictator. And Franco himself cherishes a few sentimental keepsakes from his old buddy Adolf Hitler.

Published by

The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

23 West 26th Street

• New York 10, N. Y.

A TALE OF 3 MEDALS



FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE — TO AMERICA: Captain Herman Bottcher, a Veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who fought in Spain, was promoted and decorated on World War II battlefield, later killed in action in the Pacific.

SEVENTEEN years ago, 3,000 Americans — "American to the core," wrote N.Y. Times correspondent Herbert L. Matthews — went to Spain to help defend the democratically-elected government from violent overthrow by Franco and his fascist allies.

Two thousand of us are dead—buried on the battlefields of Spain and World War II.

The remaining handful of Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade are today fighting to defend the honor of those who gave their lives for our country in two wars against fascism.

We were scornfully called "premature anti-fascists" when we fought against Franco in Spain. When the fascist axis later attacked America, many more Americans understood that we had gone to Spain to try to stop the spread of fascism before it could threaten our own country.

"The Brigade was right when most of the world proved tragically wrong," wrote novelist Louis Bromfield.

"If the world has a future, they have preserved it," wrote author-correspondent Vincent Sheean, in tribute to the Lincoln Brigaders.

We have gone on fighting for that future—for the American people and all people. We have continued to expose and oppose Franco's fascist regime, and we have been indicting the increasingly pro-Franco policy of our government as a menace to the peace of the world.

That is why, small and dwindling as we are, we have drawn the fire of the Administration's big guns.

For General Franco, Hitler's ally of yesterday, has become the ally of American reaction today. The United States government, which only a few



FOR DISTING
Pat McCarran
bassador to
medal for h
paved the w

short years ago supported a United Nations resolution condemning Franco Spain, is today wooing the fascist butcher with millions of American dollars (*your* dollars) as a bribe for H-bomb bases.

Franco couldn't destroy our outfit, but Franco's ally, the Eisenhower administration, has sworn to destroy us and send our officers to jail. So the Lincoln Brigaders are back on the firing line again--this time on the home front--for refusal to register as a "subversive" organization under the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950.

THE McCarran Act was passed over President Truman's veto. He called it a "thought control" measure, "the greatest danger to freedom of speech, press and assembly since the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798."

Under the Act's definition, you're "subversive" if you and the Communist Party happen to agree that the price of bread is too high, or on anything else by even the remotest coincidence. To comply and register is to declare yourself and your organization "spies and saboteurs"--by the Act's own definition of a "Communist Front." Failure to register is punishable by fines and imprisonment. So you're damned if you do and jailed if you don't.

Among the first of 264 organizations marked for attack under the McCarran Act, the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade will fight every step of the way for its right to exist, and for the right to oppose Franco. These are the rights of everyone in a democracy. If we lose, you lose.

You supported us 17 years ago, when we were facing fascist bullets in the front lines in Spain. Your support now can help us win another battle against fascism.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

WRITE your Congressman asking him to press for the repeal of the McCarran Act.

PROTEST to the Subversive Activities Control Board, 811 Vermont Ave., N.W., Wash., D.C. demanding it find in our favor. **CLIP AND SEND MESSAGE BELOW.**

AND ABOVE ALL WRITE to the State Department and tell Dulles that you are against United States support and loans from your tax monies to Franco Spain.

KEEP THE VETS FREE TO FIGHT FASCISM

TO THE HEARING OFFICERS, S.A.C.B.
811 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

As the late Harold Ickes said: "... they (the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade) were among the first to see the menace of fascism, and certainly among the first to offer their lives in an effort to halt this menace. In the last decade, they have been in the forefront of all the battles for democracy, and they deserve the best this country has to offer."

I feel that efforts to brand them "subversive" are a betrayal of our democratic heritage, to which the Lincoln Brigade contributed at such great sacrifice. I therefore urge you to find in favor of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

GERMAN to AMERICAN

When Herman Bottcher decided to spend his time fighting fascism from Spain to Buna to Leyte, the Wehrmacht lost a great soldier.

By YANK Staff Correspondents

LEYTE, THE PHILIPPINES—This is the story of Herman Bottcher, an American soldier and an antifascist from way back.

In December 1942, when the Stateside newspapers were hailing him as "our greatest hero of the New Guinea campaign," Bottcher, not a U.S. citizen then, said: "I have tried to live as a good American and I want to die as one."

Last New Year's Eve he got his wish in a burst of mortar fire while his company was holding off 300 Japs during the Ormoc campaign on Leyte Island. By that time, Congress had naturalized him by a special act so he could be commissioned. He already had the DSC with Oak Leaf cluster and the Purple Heart with two clusters. At the time of his death, recommendations were in for a promotion to major and for a Silver Star.

The Wehrmacht lost some good material when Bottcher left his native Germany in 1928 at the age of 19. He was a cabinetmaker with ambitions to become something more. After tarrying in Austria for a couple of years, he emigrated to the United States with citizenship in mind. He worked at many jobs and, during the depression, was more than once "on the bum." By 1930, when Franco launched his fascist revolt in Spain, Bottcher had knocked about enough to know which side he was on. He joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, recruited in America to help the Spanish people against German, Italian and Spanish fascists.

In Spain, Bottcher learned a lot about soldiering, participating in seven battles in 25 months. He was wounded twice and decorated three times, and he rose to be a major before the Loyalist Government was overwhelmed. Of that experience, Bottcher said later: "I've always hated dictators. That's why I joined the Spanish Loyalists. Gee, that was a tough war. Now we at least have bullets."

Meanwhile, the American citizenship Bottcher had earned during his first years in the States was revoked because of his enlistment in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. He reapplied and started all over. Living with an aunt in California, he worked his way through San Francisco State College by washing dishes and such. Intending to become an architect, he lacked only six credits for a degree when the Japs struck Pearl Harbor.

One month later he had managed to convince the War Department of his loyalty, despite his German birth and accent, and began basic as a private in the Army. Assigned to the 32d Division, a former National Guard outfit, he became a staff sergeant in a year.

The first anniversary of Pearl Harbor found Bottcher fighting with his company in the Papuan campaign. He turned out to be a terrific jungle fighter. He knocked out enemy machine-gun nests single-handed, slaughtered Japs by the half-squad and rescued wounded comrades

with utter disregard for his own safety. When all ranking officers were knocked out, Bottcher took command of his company and drove a wedge to the sea between two Jap groups at Buna Village and Buna Mission. He held this dangerous position for a week until the battle was won.

He was breveted a captain while machinery was set going to restore his citizenship so he could be permanently commissioned. He was not one of those GIs who scorn the responsibilities of command. "If they'd only commission me," he fretted, "I'd get something done."

But joining the brass did not separate Bottcher from his men. As Pvt. Tex Pitcox from Amarillo, Tex., put it, "there ain't a man in the outfit who wouldn't have followed him through hell carrying a bucket of ice water." When his outfit was being shipped and the men had to sleep on deck, Bottcher spurned his cabin to lie there with them. If the men had K rations, Bottcher, too, ate K rations, regardless of what his fellow officers thought of such conduct. What is more, after the Papuan campaign Bottcher probably could have gotten out of the Army because of his three wounds. His shooting hand was partly crippled.

But, after a rest in Australia, Bottcher was back with the 32d at Saidor and Aitape in New Guinea. While in Australia, incidentally, he thought so little of the DSC coming to him that he didn't show up for the ceremony of presentation. They found him later, working out with some enlisted men on a jungle-training course.

At Aitape, Bottcher led a recon troop behind Jap lines for 87 days, penetrating 36 miles into enemy territory. The men learned to trust blindly their tall, raw-boned captain with the thick German accent. On any patrol Bottcher himself was point man. The outfit boasted of their light losses.

One man said, "I never feel safer out in the jungle than when I'm with Capt. Bottcher." And Pvt. Harold Endres of Madison, Wis., declared, "If the Old Man wanted us to enter Manila Bay in a rubber boat, we would go and, furthermore, we'd be nothing would happen."

In the Leyte campaign, Bottcher was up to his old tricks. For 48 days he led a recon troop, sometimes reinforced by Filipino guerrillas, behind Japanese lines. They destroyed many supply dumps. They ambushed Jap units and killed innumerable enemy soldiers. Their daily reports prepared the way for successful drives at Kanaga, Palompon and other places. And through it all, until the last terrible shellacking the troop suffered on Oct. 31, Bottcher's outfit suffered only four casualties—one man killed (in an accident) and three wounded.

Bottcher's outfit lived mostly off the land, killing game for meat and getting vegetables and tubs (fermented coconut milk) from the natives. Sometimes the Filipinos' enthusiasm was embarrassing. When the Americans set an ambush for the Japs, the natives frequently gave the scheme away by crowding around to watch the Japs catch it.

Although Bottcher was ferocious in combat, he was no brute, as the 12 Japanese prisoners his unit took discovered to their surprise. One of them, a captain, later told intelligence officers questioning him behind the main American lines that Bottcher was a "fine gentleman." Another time a captured Jap private was so grateful for the excellent treatment he received that he voluntarily peddled the unit's electric generator until exhausted. Once a GI found

Bottcher observing a Japanese camp through field glasses. The GI saw a sad little Jap running back and forth between his rupa hut and his latrine trench. Bottcher sighed sympathetically and said: "Don't you know just how he feels?"

On Dec. 30, Bottcher's unit was instructed by radio to return to division HQ, since the Leyte campaign was virtually concluded. No Japs had been seen for several days. At 0235 hours on Dec. 31, the 90 men of Bottcher's outfit were awakened by heavy fire from rifles, machine guns, knee mortars and 90-mm mortars. It was later learned that 300 Japs, trying to fight their way to the sea in the hope of being evacuated safely by boat from the island, had run across Bottcher and his men.

When Bottcher got it, he was about four feet from T-5 Edwin Essman of Portsmouth, Ohio, who was setting up his radio to advise headquarters. There was an explosion and Bottcher called out, "They blew my leg off!"

Lt. Royal Steele of New York twisted a tourniquet on the captain's thigh. Sgt. Tony Gaidosik of Milwaukee, Wis., a medic, gave the CO a shot of morphine. Another medic raced for blood plasma stored in a shack but found the shack and the medical supplies destroyed by gunfire.

Bottcher stopped S/Sgt. Jim Cable of Chattanooga, Tenn., and ordered the troop to leave him and withdraw. They withdrew but, of course, they carried the captain with them. They made it to their main infantry lines just before dawn. A radio call had been sent for plasma but, by the time it arrived by Cub, Bottcher was unconscious. The medics kept up a frantic radio conversation with the station hospital, describing Bottcher's condition and receiving doctors' directions for treatment. But Bottcher's pulse weakened. About 0600 hours no sign of life could be detected.

His men said later they couldn't believe their captain could be killed by the Japs. They didn't talk much about it. They just sat around and stared wearily at the constant drizzle of Leyte.

Bottcher had no wife or parents. All he had was the aunt in San Francisco and a hell of a lot of friends in the Army.



Capt. Herman Bottcher Ends 7-Year Fight Against Fascism

Capt. Herman Bottcher, 35, holder of the Distinguished Service Cross and long a legendary figure among U. S. combat men in the Pacific, was killed on Leyte by a mortar shell burst shortly before dawn on the last day of 1944.

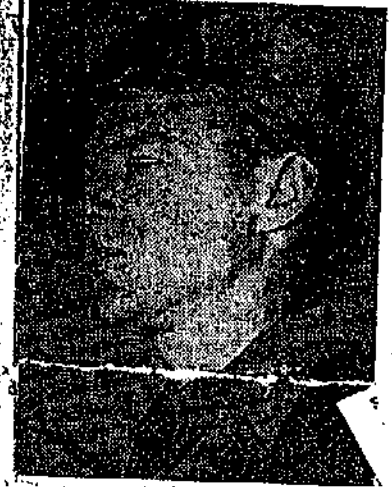
Leyte is a long way from Madrid, where Bottcher started fighting fascists seven years ago as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; but his friends are certain that he never regretted a single step along the road, not even its ending in the Leyte dawn.

Bottcher left Spain already a hero in the eyes of his fellow Brigadiers and in the eyes of all Loyalists in Spain and democrats abroad. He was a small fellow, youthful-looking, with enormous energy. He went into Madrid, as a volunteer, because he had ideals; and he lived through the Spanish war, and through these years in the Pacific, because he was a tough soldier.

Bottcher was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in December, 1942, after he had assumed command of an infantry company—he was a sergeant, then—and split the Japanese lines by smashing to the New Guinea coast between the village of Buna and Buna Mission.

He died leading a reconnaissance company against an estimated 3000 heavily-armed Japanese. He has been recommended for a posthumous Silver Star.

Perhaps it is relevant to note that



Capt. Herman Bottcher

Capt. Bottcher, who went into the front lines to fight fascism long before most of us knew what fascism was, or guessed its danger, was born in Landsberg, Germany.

SHAEF News

Asked in Commons whether he was aware that SHAEF censors had been instructed to pass dispatches from the front stating that Allied Progress had been good, War Minister Grigg said he understood dispatches were censored on military grounds only, and not for propaganda purposes.

copy

JOHN TISA
236 C-1 PINE HOV CIRCLE
LAKEWORTH, FL 33463

29 March 1986

Mark A. Smith
Editor
The Mustang
NOBC

Dear Mr. Smith:

In reference to your letter of 26 March 1986 seeking information about HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHEER, I am pleased to advise you that Bottcher was indeed an honored member of our organization, the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

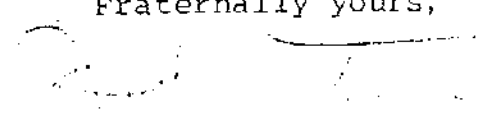
However, your letter to me is only a beginning of the trail of digging up his past. Much of our archives is housed in a special collections department at Brandeis University. Please write to Victor A. Berch, Administrator of the Collections Department, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts 02154, for assistance.

You might also write to our national organization, VALB, Room 239, 799 Broadway, New York City, N. Y. 10003, and request that your interest be published in our newspaper, THE VOLUNTEER FOR LIBERTY, for direct communication with those who knew him and could add items of personal interest.

I am sending copies of your letter and this to our New York office and to Mr. Berch, so that they may know of our communication. Your project is so vital that I'm certain you will get the utmost of cooperation. Please put me on your mailing list for all your writings about Bottcher, one who has been kept too long an unknown soldier.

I wish you the very best of luck.

Fraternally yours,


John Tisa



The National Order
of
Battlefield Commissions



610 Montana Street
Bethalto, Illinois 62010
4 April 1986

Mr. Victor A. Berch
Administrator of the Collections Department
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154

Dear Mr. Berch,

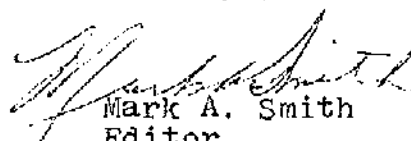
We are in the process of preparing several articles in our newsletter, on the life of the late Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher, who was commissioned on the battlefield in World War II, while serving with the U.S. 32nd Infantry Division in New Guinea.

I am attaching a brief summary of the life of Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher.

In order to obtain information on Captain Bottcher's service with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, I have been in touch with John Tisa, who presently resides in Florida. John has advised me to contact you as he states that you do have some of the records from that Brigade and might be able to assist me. John also recalls Bottcher's service with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

I would greatly appreciate any information that you might be able to give me on this matter.

Sincerely yours,


Mark A. Smith
Editor
The Mustang
NOBC



The National Order
of
Battlefield Commissions



CAPTAIN HERMAN J.F. BOTTCHER

Enlisted Serial#: 29085246 Officer's Serial #: 088451
Company H, 126th Infantry Regiment, 32d. Infantry Division
Company A, 127th Infantry Regiment, 32d. Infantry Division
Reconnaissance Troop, 32d. Infantry Division

Decorations: Distinguished Service Cross W/1 OLC, The Purple Heart
W/2 OLC.

Herman J.F. Bottcher was born in Landeburg, Germany, a small village near Berlin, on July 13, 1909. The village is now part of the East Zone.

He migrated to Australia and then to San Francisco, California, where he worked as a cabinet maker for the Emporium Department Store and was a member of a local Carpenters Union.

His parents were dead. His nearest kin was a sister and an aunt who also lived in San Francisco.

He forfeited his citizenship when he went to Spain and fought for the Republican forces as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, in that Civil War.

Legend has it that due to his outstanding war record as an officer in the United States Army, that he was granted his citizenship by special act of Congress. However, this is questionable. I have a letter from Representative Melvin Price, a member of Congress from Illinois, who informs me that his office checked with the Congressional Research Service (CSR), on this matter and they after careful search of the records from 1942-1972, have informed his office that there is no record of Herman J.F. Bottcher having received his citizenship by act of Congress.

Bottcher while serving as a Staff Sergeant in the 32d. Infantry Division did so distinguish himself by his leadership and conduct while performing as an acting platoon leader that he was promoted on the battlefield to Captain and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

One year later, in 1944, while leading a reconnaissance behind enemy lines on Leyte in the Philippines, he was fatally wounded by mortar fire.

Recently the Veterans Administration advised me that Captain Bottcher had taken out National Service Life Insurance on October 21, 1943, and that a beneficiary of the insurance was still being paid, but that the VA was not permitted to reveal the identity or address of this beneficiary.

Mark A. Smith
Mark A. Smith
Editor The Mustang
NOBC

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*Veteran ALB

The universities names are
for identification only.

April 14, 1986

Mr. Mark Smith
National Order of Battlefield Commissions
610 Montana Street
Bethalto, IL 62010

Dear Mr. Smith,

In response to your query re Capt. Herman Bottcher,
I am afraid that there is little here that would be of
value to you in your research.

Unfortunately, very little of the records
of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade have either survived or
been turned over to this archive.

Unlike the records of official units of the
U.S. Army, the record keeping of the Abraham Lincoln
Brigade was either lost on the battlefields or transported
off to the USSR.

There may be individuals alive today who
served with Capt. Bottcher and who may recall him while
in Spain. I would suggest that you write to the
Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, whose address
you must have, and put out a call for help in their
organ The Volunteer.

Sincerely yours,


Victor A. Berch
Special Collections Librarian

From [Gail Malmgreen_<gm12@nyu.edu>](mailto:Gail_Malmgreen_<gm12@nyu.edu>)

Sent Saturday, March 26, 2005 4:08 pm

To jessica.weglein@nyu.edu

Cc

Bcc

Subject bottcher

Jess,

Could you put this info and sketch into the Bottcher file. Thanks.

Dear Ms. Malmgreen,

About a year ago, you graciously assisted me with my research on Capt. Hermann Bottcher. We have a sketch in our collection of Bottcher that has recently become part of a web exhibition on the work of artist McClelland Barclay. I thought you may be interested to receive a link to the site, in case you would like to add the image to your file. Along with the sketch is a transcription of comments Bottcher made to Barclay while he was sketching him. This was shortly after his actions in the Papuan campaign.

<http://www.history.navy.mil/ac/artist/b/barclay/barclay%207.html>

This is a link to the first page of the group of sketches. Capt Bottcher is on page 10.

Gail Malmgreen

Associate Head for Archival Collections

Tamiment Library/ Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, NYU

70 Washington Square South, NY, NY 10012

(212)998-2636

[Return to Naval Historical Center home page.](#) [Return to Art Collection Page](#)

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY -- NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE SE -- WASHINGTON NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON DC 20374-5060

Works by McClelland Barclay in the Navy Art Collection

"Heroes of the South Seas" sketches

McClelland Barclay made the following sketches that he titled, "Heroes of the South Seas," between late 1942 and June 1943. He mailed them to a friend in the United States shortly before his death aboard LST-342 on 18 July 1943. In August of that year, this friend informed the Navy of her possession of the sketches and suggested they be published in book form, with any profits turned over to Navy Relief. Possibly this had been Barclay's intention as well. The sketches were delivered to the Navy's Office of Public Relations (Pictorial Section). In the mid-1980s, they were transferred to the Naval Historical Center's Art Collection. The Center is unaware that these images were ever published, or even displayed publicly until now.

The labels underneath the images are transcriptions of Barclay's handwritten notes, jotted down on the same sheet of paper where he sketched. Text in italics indicates that Barclay is quoting his subject.

Always one who wanted to improve his art from first-hand experience, Barclay once told an interviewer, *"I have been called a 'pretty girl artist,' but I am going to get in all of the front-line action I can. I want to bring out the idea that wars are fought by men, and not just by their tools."* With the dozens of portraits he created during his service, Barclay managed to bring out that idea very well. The faces of the men and women Barclay committed to paper, along with the anecdotal evidence he recorded in the margins, reminds us that individuals make up a navy. As he told the San Francisco Examiner in March 1943, *"A camera cannot catch the human element of a fight, the sweat and blood and courage our boys expend every time they face the enemy. That's what I'm going back out there now to do."*

ORDNANCE MEN

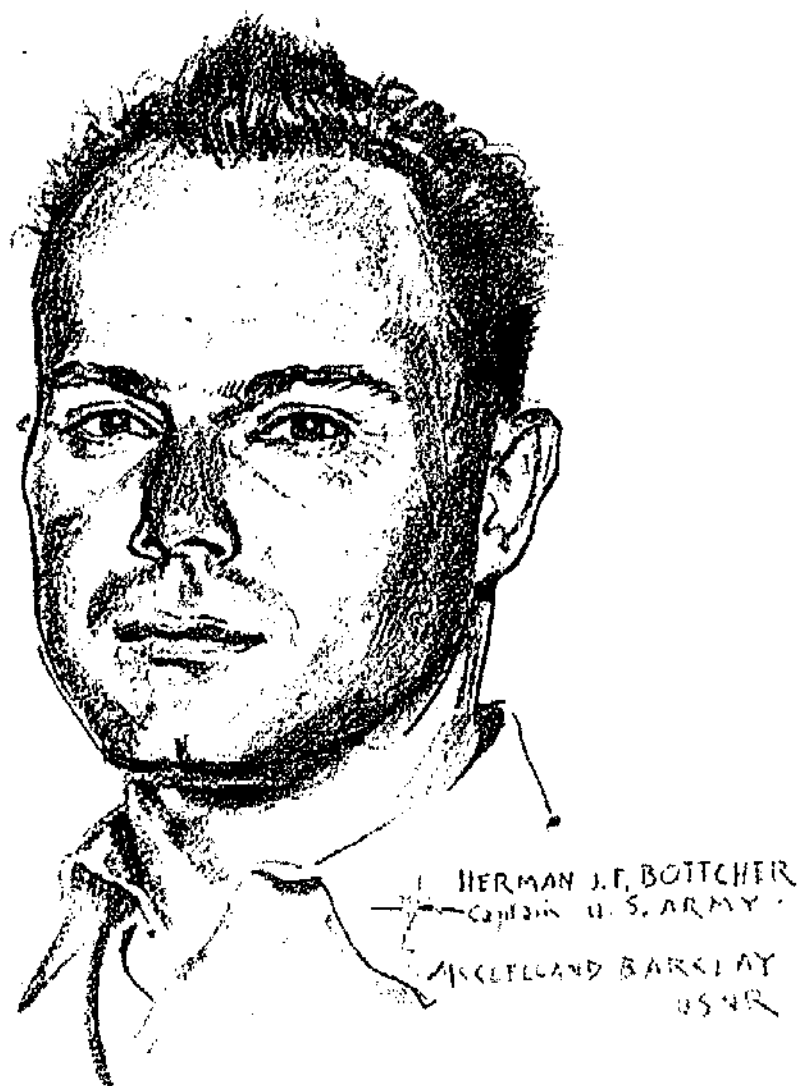


Ensign John William Finn
McClelland Barclay
Conté crayon on paper, ca. 1943
85-236-X

"Mickey" "Slingblotc" NATTCR Norman Oklahoma
Now Ensign John William Finn, USN, formerly Aviation Chief Ordnance Man - since 1935
Joined Navy 17 years - July 1926 of Los Angeles Cal. - 5'9" - weight 155 lb

"I see these old meatballs on the bottom of 'em - this is the real McCoy it's the God damn Japs."

Kaneohe - Dec. 7th 1941 -- Directed and pointed out duties to whatever men were handy.





CAPT Herman J.F. Bottcher
McClelland Barclay
Conté crayon on paper, 1943
85-236-1

5'8" weight 150 - Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher

Landsberg - Germany - left Germany 1929 - arrive US fall 1931 - Spanish Republican Army 25 months - wounded twice - on Madrid Front and Aragon in April - interned by the French.

"Captain in Spanish army, it took about a year and a half; came up much quicker in this army. In Abraham Lincoln battalion - nearly all Americans in the body."

Infantry - US Army - with 32 Division, a National Guard outfit - Michigan and Wisconsin. Enlisted Dec. 8, 1941 - Pvt until end of April - corporal [sic] until end of June - staff sargent [sic] until end of June - made captain on field of battle - was company commander as sargent [sic] for two weeks before captain came thru - 32 Division at Buna.

"Lieut. Cliedy [Cladie] Bailey (Indiana school teacher) received order to cut thru to the beach - the attack bogged down - I was in support of his company. I thot [sic] by looking the situation over it could be done."

What situation?

"Swamp and jungle and we didn't know exactly what was in front of us, so I asked the battalion if it was alright with them if I go - and Maj. Hantelman [Harold Hantlemann] showed me the position on the map. I talked it over with the boys, there were 29 of us, and they said if you go we go too. We cut thru to the beach - hardly any opposition at all, but after we got to the beach they fired at us from the flank. After two days there were only 14 of us left. We got replacements so maintained about 25 men. I was wounded in the 7th day in counter attack - right hand hit - kept on, arm in sling - wounded again 13 days later - hit right arm - put me out for the time being - sent me to a hospital. We captured one and he said 60 were attacking us. We would wait for them until they got within 25 yards. They would shout and scream so we did the same when our boys got out and advanced a few steps to meet them with the bayonet. They didn't come on any further. Bayonet fighting when they came over to get us - some of the boys went into them like tigers. Altogether on the beach pocket 17 days."

[**Editor's Note:** For his role in this action of December 1942, Captain Bottcher received the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military decoration in the Army. Captain Bottcher was killed on December 31, 1944, during the battle of Leyte. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.]



THE HAWSEPIPE

*Newsletter of the
Marine Workers Historical Association*

Volume XII, Number 2

April-May 1993

believe we can balance the budget by charging the merchant seamen for their medals? I think the answer lies closer to the heart of the government officials, and that is that they simply could not pass up an opportunity to kick these veterans in the teeth one more time.

In my den I have a frame of the medals of my late father. There is the Merchant Marine Victory Medal which was sent to him just after the war and it was free of any charge. There are other Merchant Marine awards and there are three medals from England which were awarded to him at no cost. England figured that being torpedoed and suffering from exposure was more than enough payment for a campaign medal. Were my father still living he would perhaps find this latest snub laughable were it not so sad to be insulted in this manner.

Over the past year I have been able to assist two war veterans to obtain medals from Norway almost 50 years later. They were aboard a Liberty ship the S/S "Henry Bacon" which was attacked by German aircraft on the way back from Murmansk. They had aboard a number of Norwegian refugees and there was only room in the lifeboat for so many. In the tradition of the sea many of the crew of this ship, including the Master and Chief Engineer remained aboard the ship knowing full well they were soon to perish in the cold Arctic Ocean. Norway was grateful for the sacrifice of these brave men and the entire crew was awarded the Norwegian War Medal for their service. There was no charge for the medals and obviously Norway did not hesitate to recognize those war veterans.

For many years I had the privilege of assisting our merchant seamen and members of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard to obtain a medal from the former Soviet Union. The medal for the 50th Anniversary of the Great Patriotic War was awarded to about five hundred veterans of the Merchant Marine and Naval Armed Guard for their courage and heroism aboard ships in the various convoys to the Soviet Union during the war. It took some time but the day did come when we gathered at the Soviet Embassy and the first group of men were decorated. There was no charge for the decoration, just a hearty handshake and a heartfelt thanks. It appears that the Soviet Union thought that these men had already more than paid for their medal in service. I gather that no one in our government gave

that much thought.

And there is certainly a greater pain and sorrow that is caused with this long standing petty meanness directed to our veterans of the Merchant Marine. Just to mention one example, I have a friend whose husband was killed in action when his ship the S/S "Stephen Hopkins" went into battle against the German Raider "Stier." The guns of the "Hopkins" roared out in defiance of the man-of-war demanding they strike their colors. In the end both ships went to the bottom and Rudy Rutz along with many of his shipmates gave all they had for their country. I cannot comprehend the callousness of those who would charge this widow for the awards her husband so dearly paid for 50 years ago. And too there are many former merchant seamen who cannot afford the cost of these symbols of courage in their waning years. They thought they had paid the price long ago in exploding ammunition ships and burning tankers.

Over 6,000 war veterans of the Merchant Marine gave their lives for their freedom and ours during World War II and now we find that not a one of those lives was worth a \$20.00 medal. None of those brave men who died in the mustard gas at Bari, none of those who were beaten from pillar to post in the Death Camps of the Far East, and none of those who survived all the enemy could throw at them are worth a \$20.00 medal. How pathetically sad, that for those who suffered a greater percentage of combat casualties than the Army or the Navy, America holds such contempt and insult. ●

REMEMBERING HERMAN BOETSCHER

By
Duncan Keir

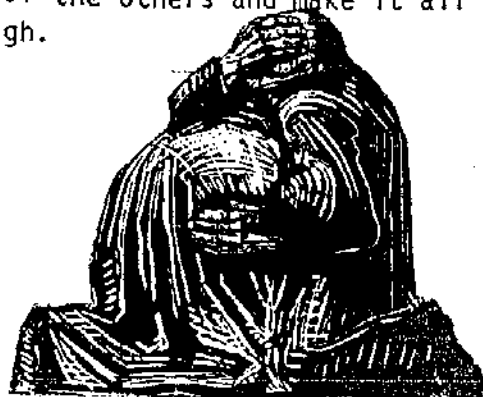
During the Ebro action in Spain, a shell hit the opening of the cave that held the headquarters of the Fifteenth Brigade and I worked with Jim Ruskin and Herman Boetscher to restore the connections with the battalions. Both of these men command a great deal of respect and I remained with them until the end of the war. To give you an idea of the caliber of these two - neither one of them took advantage of the Spanish Government's order which separated the enlisted men from the officers at mealtimes and in the sleeping quarters. Being an anarchist at heart, this went over big with me.

When the Spanish Government withdrew the Internationals from the front and before we got back across the Ebro, Boetscher was asking me to violate the order and go back to the front to hold it. I might add here, I didn't go.

When the United States entered World War II, I was on a Liberty Ship loaded with drums of gas and I heard the news that Captain Herman Boetscher of the mechanized cavalry was coming to Leyte. He had been promoted for outstanding bravery in action. Since I was a mate and we were standing 24 hour watches, I had no difficulty in getting time to wait on "Red Beach" until the troops landed. I met up with Herman on the second day and, since he was an officer, he had an "alligator" or some kind of vehicle and he picked me up and we talked our way to the front in Leyte. He then had them take me back to "Red Beach". I thought I was on borrowed time since our ship had been hit by a bomb on our first day in Leyte but it had not exploded.

I never saw Herman Boetscher again and so perhaps I was the last person to see him alive. There are certain people who stand out in my memory - Boetscher and Ruskin and a few others are special. Another one is Irving Weissman. I am certain there were many others of that caliber but these are the three with whom I had close contact.

When I returned to San Francisco after the Leyte invasion and seeing Herman, I got word that he had been killed at Ormoc in Leyte. I always thought that he'd be like some of the others and make it all the way through.



K.K.

A SURVIVOR

He, not content that death had passed him by
Upon live fingers counted his dead friends
And in his shallow hole restless did lie;
They do not sleep the best who do not die
And it is not for them the battle ends.

KENNETH HOPKINS

BREEZY POINT

By

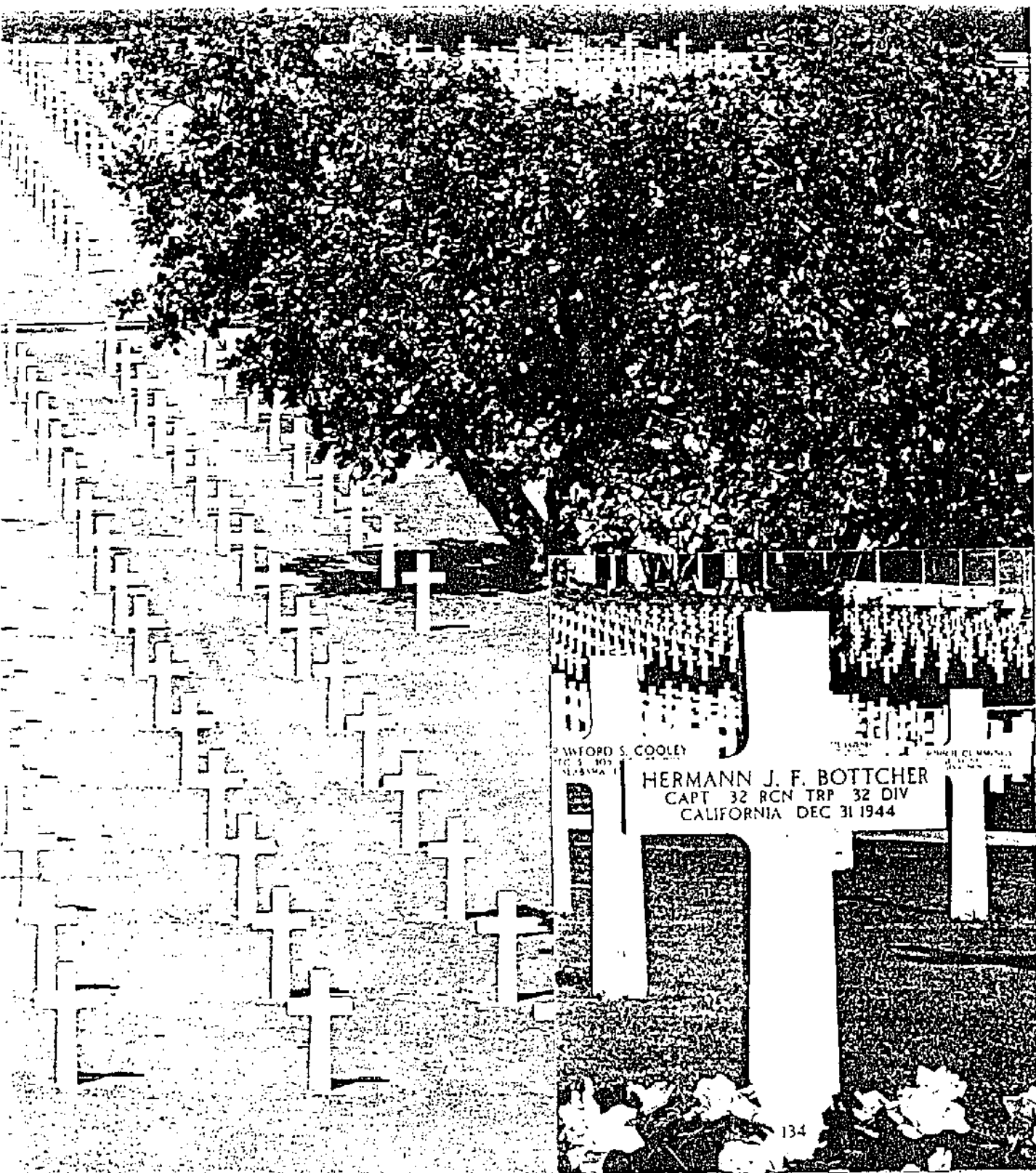
Esther Palazzi

Most seamen consider that the worst run during World War II was Murmansk. Not only were there German submarine wolf packs and dive bombers to face but there was the bitter cold, snow and ice to endure if you had to abandon ship. The odds for lasting long in those waters were against you. If you were lucky to make it you had the problem of making it back and hundreds of sailors did not.

With the end of the cold war, the Russian government has decided to express its gratitude to those who made the trip in appreciation of the hardships endured in bringing our allies the materials needed to fight Hitler. In addition to the services that took place in Washington in December whereby hundreds of merchant seamen and Navy armed guards received bronze medals, on January 31, a similar ceremony was held aboard the old WW II Liberty Ship, the S/S Jeremiah O'Brien in San Francisco. In recalling that time, one of the seamen spoke of the convoy PQ 17 in the summer of 1942. Spotted by the Germans, they sent a battleship, several U-boat wolf packs and a force of bombers against it. The British Royal Navy, thinking they were outgunned, abandoned the convoy. Of the 33 ships that began the trip - only 11 got through.

If you ever wondered what happened to the S/S Argentina - a Moore McCormack Liner - it has had a long history of conversions. Now she has been converted into a floating hotel, known as the Commodore Hotel and will be permanently docked on the Neva River in downtown St. Petersburg, Russia. Operated by Baltic Lines, it will offer 375 rooms and six suites starting at \$140 per person per night. So for those of our members who, at one time, sailed on the Argentina, here is a chance to relive a bit of nostalgia. Fly to Russia this summer and take lodging aboard the Commodore Hotel.

The German Seamen's Union has scored a victory in its drive to organize foreign seamen working on German ships. A group of Filipino seamen signed an agreement with a German shipping company after refusing to work on a loaded containership about to leave the Port of Newark, N.J. The contract was negotiated by the German Seafarer's Union. It gives the Filipinos the same status as German citizens and raises their



WILFORD S. COOLEY
1910 - 1965
ALABAMA

HERMANN J. F. BOTTCHER
CAPT 32 RCN TRP 32 DIV
CALIFORNIA DEC 31 1944

General Orders Number 108, dated 31 December 1944, is the last in the 1944 series.

HEADQUARTERS 32d INFANTRY DIVISION

GENERAL ORDERS)
NO.....1)

APO 32
5 January 1945

AWARD, POSTHUMOUS, OF THE SILVER STAR

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bulletin 43, WD, 1918), a Silver Star is awarded posthumously by the Commanding General, 32d Infantry Division, to the following named officer:

Captain HERMAN J. BOTTCHEE, (0888451), Cavalry, United States Army. Captain Bottchee's patrol was attacked by a vastly numerically superior enemy force. Constantly exposed to enemy machine gun, mortar, and small arms fire, he directed his men so successfully that the attack was repulsed. As the fighting subsided, he arose, and, as he began directing the assembly of the patrol for movement to a stronger position, he was mortally wounded by the burst of a mortar shell. Captain Bottchee courageously gave his life in concern for the welfare of his men. Next of kin: Mrs. Alice Bottchee, (aunt), 239 Ransell Street, San Francisco, California.

By command of Major General GILL:

ERNEST A. BARLOW,
Colonel, General Staff Corps
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

E. W. Hoffman
E. W. HOFFMAN,

MICHAEL D. HAYDOCK
169 Fairfield Court
Voorheesville, NY 12186

8 June 1996

Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
ATTN: Abe Smorodin, Corr. Sec.
Room 227 - 799 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

RE: Herman Bottcher

Dear Mr. Smorodin:

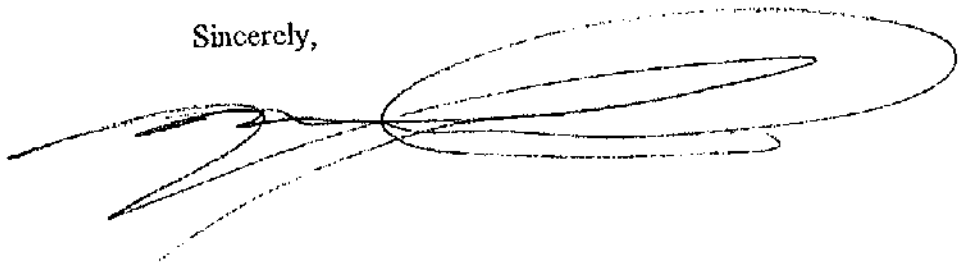
As I promised in my most recent letter, I have enclosed a copy of the typescript of my manuscript of my article on Herman Bottcher. I want to thank you again for the assistance you gave in guiding me to Art Landes' book. It was most helpful.

In addition to the typescript I have enclosed several other items which I uncovered in my research. These are:

1. An article on Captain Bottcher from the May 2, 1945 edition of YANK;
2. A xerox photo of his grave in the Phillipines;
3. Copies of his citations for his two awards of the Distinguished Service Cross and award of the Silver Star; and,
4. A copy of a letter he wrote to his friend "Handy" Hantlemann on Jan 29, 1944.

Herman Bottcher was, indeed, a remarkable man and I learned a great deal about him, and about the times in which he lived, while doing my research for this article. I wish I could thank him for that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of loops and strokes, appearing to read 'Michael D. Haydock'.

Michael D. Haydock
169 Fairfield Court
Voorheesville, NY 12186
(518) 765-3231

**FIRST NORTH AMERICAN
RIGHTS**

2,280 words

HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHEER

A Soldier of Freedom and Justice

by

Michael D. Haydock

Staff Sergeant Herman J. F. Bottcher watched the black bulk of the barge sliding slowly along on the moon-lit sea, heading west from the Buna Government Station toward the village, carrying reinforcements for the Japanese garrison there. He traversed the single machine gun that his small command possessed and began to stitch the barge with bursts of fire. Moments later it was burning and dead in the water so he swung the gun back to where the men had earlier heard Japanese moving toward them along the beach and had driven them off with grenades and rifle and machine gun fire. It was December 7, 1942 -- the first anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor -- and Bottcher and

the eighteen men of the 126th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd Division under his command had been holding a position that cut the Japanese defenses in two since December 5. Theirs had been the single success of an otherwise abortive assault on the Japanese defenses at Buna, on the north coast of New Guinea.

The trail that the men of the 32nd had followed to this battle stretched back over the mist-shrouded, towering Owen Stanley Mountains, where cholera, dysentery, and malaria were as much an enemy as the Japanese, to Australia, where they had marshaled for their assault on the Japanese occupied portion of New Guinea. Herman Bottcher's trail stretched back farther, to a childhood in the Germany which was now a co-belligerent of the Japanese in a world-wide fight against freedom. A year after Pearl Harbor, Herman Bottcher was still a German citizen. But he was not one by choice, and was determined to become an American.

Born in 1909, Bottcher had been raised in a Germany that was shattered by its defeat in the First World War and where rival gangs of Communists and Nazis clashed frequently and violently in the streets. He trained as a cabinetmaker and, in 1928, left Germany for Austria. Two years later he immigrated to the United States, hoping for a better life, and for American citizenship, there.

During the Great Depression, which began with the Wall Street Crash of 1929, Herman was often "... on the bum ..." as he would put it later, but that didn't prevent him from taking out his first papers to become a naturalized American. His life changed in 1936, when General Francisco Franco launched his fascist revolt against the Spanish government. Herman Bottcher knew exactly what side he was on in that fight.

"I've always hated dictators," he said.

Bottcher dropped his college studies in California and enlisted for service in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of volunteers to fight against Franco in Spain. It was an uneven

contest. The Franco forces were supported with arms and men by the dictators Hitler and Mussolini while arms to the Loyalists were under embargo by democratic nations not yet awake to the dangers of Facism.

In the twenty-five months that Bottcher spent soldiering in Spain he participated in seven battles. In one, the Brigade performed a fighting retreat for five days, through the towns of Belchite, Caspe and Alcaniz. It was cut off five times and fought its way out on each occasion, only to retreat again. The battalion kitchen was blown up and the men had no food for the entire duration of the retreat.

When the withdrawal was over, Herman Bottcher received commendations from the Brigade and Division for " ... outstanding courage and meritorious service in the face of the enemy."

During the early morning of September 24, 1938 Spanish troops of the 46th Army Division replaced those of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade all along the line they were holding in the valley of the Jarra River; the Spanish government had determined that the war would be fought by Spaniards against Spaniards, and the International Brigades were to be repatriated. Herman Bottcher joined the long line of foreign volunteers heading back from the lines to the bridges over the Ebro River, to be sent home.

By the time he left Spain, Bottcher had been wounded twice, decorated three times, and had risen to the rank of Major in the Spanish Army. When he returned to the United States he found that his application for citizenship had been revoked because of his participation in the Spanish Civil War. Bereft of foreign volunteers, deprived of arms and munitions by the embargo, and facing an enemy whose support from Hitler and Mussolini never lessened, the government of Spain fell in 1938.

By the time it did Bottcher had moved in with an aunt, Alice, who lived on Ransell Street in San Francisco. He worked at odd jobs and washed dishes to finance his studies in

HAYDOCK

architecture at San Francisco State College and was six credits short of graduation when the Japanese blasted the United States into the war with their attack on Pearl Harbor.

He tried to enlist immediately, but it took some time to convince the United States Army that he was an acceptable candidate to be a soldier. He was, as a German citizen, an enemy national, and his participation in the Spanish war made him suspect in the eyes of some.

After a month he managed to convince the War Department of his loyalty and was sent off for basic training, then assigned to the 32nd Infantry Division, a former National Guard unit from Wisconsin which had seen service against Germany in the First World War at the second battle of the Marne. The 32nd wore a shoulder patch showing a red arrow piercing a line and it was the proud boast of the division that it had pierced every enemy line that it had ever faced. The lines it would face in this new war would not be German; the Japanese tide of conquest had swept over the Philippines, the East Indies, and the north coast of New Guinea to threaten Australia and New Zealand; and the ANZAC troops were far from home, battling Rommel in the desert wastes of North Africa. On April 22, 1942 a convoy of grey ships slid out of the harbor of Herman Bottcher's adopted home town of San Francisco. The 32nd had embarked for Australia.

As the 32nd trained there for the coming fight against the Japanese, Herman Bottcher proved to the American army that he could soldier; he was rapidly promoted to Staff Sergeant in the second battalion of the 126th Infantry Regiment, in a company commanded by Captain Harold "Handy" Hantlemann, an officer with whom he would remain close friends throughout his career. On August 13, 1942 the Japanese on the north coast of New Guinea began a drive south over the Owen Stanley Mountains toward Port Moresby. The 32nd was thrown into the battle and, in an attempt to eliminate the Japanese threat forever, was moved to bases east of Buna. Except for the 2/126th --

Bottcher's unit. They were assigned to fight the Japanese back along the rugged trail over the Owen Stanleys, under conditions none of them had ever dreamed existed. In the mist of the jungle their clothes were always wet, grew leaden from the rain, and sprouted mold. New shoes rotted off their feet in five days, and as many fell to cholera and dysentery as fell to enemy action. When they reached the north coast near Buna, forty-two days after they set out, most had no more equipment than their weapons and ammunition, a mess cup and spoon, and the tattered and molding remnants of the battle-dress fatigues they had set out in. The battle for Buna was not going well and they were put into the line almost immediately, and their casualty lists grew longer. An all-out assault on the Japanese positions was ordered for December 5. Bottcher's group of eighteen achieved the only success of the day. Turning aside from a futile attack on the village they took a position that commanded the beach between the government station and the village, set up their single machine gun, and began to beat off repeated counterattacks. In one of the first, the counterattack developed from both directions at once, and the position was nearly overwhelmed but, in the middle of the action, Bottcher calmly stood up and began to fling hand grenades at both of the advancing forces. He was wounded, but refused to be evacuated, and the lonely American position held. For his dogged capture of the commanding position that came to be known as "Bottcher's Corner" and for directing its defense from December 5 to December 11, Herman Bottcher was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross -- the second highest of American combat decorations. He had still not realized his ambition to become an American citizen, but the commanding general gave him a direct, battlefield, commission as a temporary captain in the United States Army, while machinery was set in motion to gain his citizenship so that the commission could be made permanent.

The assault on Buna was still stalled on December 20, and Captain Bottcher had been wounded again on the preceding day. The wound didn't deter him from volunteering to lead a detachment of infantry in an attack on a position he was familiar with. He had brought the detachment to within twenty yards of the enemy when the attack bogged down in a hail of Japanese small arms fire. Bottcher calmly stood up to draw the fire so that the detachment could move forward, and was wounded again.

For this action, Herman Bottcher received an oak leaf cluster denoting a second award of the Distinguished Service Cross. He was also sent back to Australia for treatment of his three wounds, including one which partly crippled his right hand. Although his wounds would have enabled him to avoid further combat, Bottcher rejoined the 32nd Division for the battle of Aitape, serving as commander of the 32nd Recon Troop. During that battle the recon troop spent fifty-seven days behind enemy lines, penetrating up to thirty-six miles, and the unit boasted afterward of its light casualties and of its faith in its captain with a German accent.

"If the Old Man wanted us to enter Manila Bay in a rubber boat, we would go," said Pvt. Harold Endres of the 32nd Recon. "And, furthermore, we'd bet that nothing would happen."

During the battle of Aitape, Bottcher found time to answer a letter from his old friend "Handy" Hantlemann, and let his former commander know that, "I finally got my c. papers. I had almost given up hope."

"I can proudly raise my head and exclaim that I fought for my right to call myself an American," Bottcher wrote.

Later in the letter he said, "So far my lucky star hasn't forsaken me. If my time should come to go, it'll be in the happy realization that it was for an ideal, for justice and freedom for all."

HAYDOCK

With the Japanese finally cleared from New Guinea the 32nd Division moved on to the invasion of the Philippines. During the battle to take Leyte Bottcher's recon troop spent forty-eight days behind enemy lines, ambushing patrols, destroying supply dumps, and radioing division headquarters information vital to their successful operations against the objectives at Kanaga and Palompon. During that time Bottcher and his men lived off the land, killing game and buying food from friendly Filipinos. During the entire operation they suffered only four casualties -- three wounded and one dead in a non-combat accident.

By December 30, 1944 the Leyte campaign was nearly over; Bottcher's troop had had no contact with Japanese troops in several days and they received a radio message to return to division headquarters the next day.

At 0235 hours the next morning their camp was swept with small arms and machine gun fire and bombarded with 90 mm mortar shells. A party of 300 Japanese who were trying to make their way to the beaches in hope of being taken off in small boats had stumbled on the camp in the tropic dark. Bottcher rallied his men to repel the initial assault, then began to organize a withdrawal to a stronger position.

Tech-5 Edwin Essman, Bottcher's radioman, was setting up his gear to get a message about the attack off to division headquarters when a mortar round dropped directly into the position. He heard Captain Bottcher yell, "They've blown my leg off."

One of the recon company's officers, Lt. Royal Steele, put a tourniquet on Bottcher's leg and the company medic, Sgt. Tony Gaidosik, jabbed his captain with a shot of morphine as Bottcher was ordering his men to leave him and withdraw.

It was an order they didn't completely obey. They withdrew, but they carried their wounded leader with them to their new position. There, Gaidosik kept working on Bottcher, trying to stem the bleeding. The division surgeon, Col. John F. Wurz, gave

Gaidosik guidance over the radio, but the wound and the bleeding were profound and the company's supply of plasma had been destroyed in the Japanese attack. Captain Bottcher died at 0600 hours on the last day of the year 1944. His lucky star had winked out.

The remains of Herman J. F. Bottcher, whose fight for freedom and justice had taken him from the stony hills of Spain to the steamy, fetid jungles of New Guinea and the Philippines is buried under a simple military issue cross identical except for its inscription to those that mark the graves of thousands of his fellow American soldiers in the military cemetery at Manila.

Long after Bottcher died the general who commanded the American forces at Buna wrote of him, "He was one of the best Americans I have ever known."

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GO 64 GHQ SWPA

an attack on enemy positions; Staff Sergeant Bottcher personally led a unit which cut off communications between enemy forces at Buna Village from those at Buna Government station; On succeeding days, he repeatedly repulsed strong enemy counter-attacks on this vital position. During one simultaneous attack from both hostile forces, he calmly stood up in the face of enemy fire and threw hand grenades at the advancing enemy. Although wounded in this action he remained with his unit until it was relieved. His outstanding leadership and personal heroism repeatedly inspired his men and was primarily responsible for the success of the defense.

Home address: Mrs. Alice Bottcher (aunt), 239 Ransell Street,
San Francisco, California.

JOHN E. HARBERT, (0408634), First Lieutenant, Ordnance Department, Headquarters 32nd Division, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Cape Sudest, New Guinea, on November 16, 1942. When enemy airplanes attacked and set fire to a small ship, First Lieutenant Harbert organized a party of men to pull to shore a barge loaded with men and ammunition. Through-out repeated strafing by hostile planes, he refused to take cover and continued his efforts. When flaming debris from explosions of munitions aboard the ship fell on the barge, he remained aboard and personally assisted in throwing the fragments overboard and in extinguishing the flames. His courage and calmness set a heroic example to men who had sought cover and so steadied and inspired them that work was resumed and the unloading of the badly needed ammunition on the barge was successfully accomplished.

Home address: Mrs. Grace Harbert (wife), 13 Union Court, Pontiac, Michigan.

THOMAS E. KNODE, (0349328), First Lieutenant, 126th Infantry, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on December 5, 1942. During an attack on Buna Village, First Lieutenant Knode led his platoon with conspicuous bravery. When wounded in the leg, he disregarded the wound and continued to lead his platoon in the attack. When he was again wounded, in the foot, and was unable to go on, he refused to be evacuated until he had given final instructions to his platoon.

Home address: Mrs. Catherine Knode (wife), 2216 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W.,
Washington, D.C.

PAUL R. LUTJENS, (0888449), Second Lieutenant (then First Sergeant), Company E, 126th Infantry, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on December 5, 1942. First Sergeant Lutjens led a platoon in an attack on Buna Village with conspicuous bravery. In spite of heavy enemy fire, he exposed himself without regard to his personal safety, in urging his men forward in the attack. When severely wounded by a grenade, he refused to be evacuated until he had given instructions to his second-in-command.

Home address: William Lutjens (father), 911 Marion Avenue, Big Rapids, Michigan.

IVAN W. HENDERSON, (19059271), Corporal, 408th Bombardment Squadron, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action in New Guinea on May 28, 1942. When the assigned gunner of the crew of a bombardment airplane became ill, Corporal Henderson volunteered for a dangerous combat mission as tail gunner. When the formation was attacked over Lae airdrome by fifteen enemy fighter

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA

A.P.O. 500,
December 28, 1942

U.S. M.P.A.
AL. 12 1208

29 DEC 1942

GENERAL ORDERS)

NO.....64)

Awards of the Distinguished Service Cross..... Section I
Award of the Distinguished Service Cross and Oak Leaf Cluster.. Section II
Award of the Silver Star..... Section III

I. AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS.

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918 (Bul. No. 43, W.D., 1918), the Distinguished Service Cross is awarded by the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, to the following named officers and enlisted men:

JOHN J. CAREW, (0126433), Colonel, 114th Engineer Battalion, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Cape Sudest, New Guinea on November 16, 1942. When enemy airplanes attacked and set fire to a small ship carrying United States Army personnel and supplies, Colonel Carew personally organized a volunteer crew to re-man the ship's life-boat, which had already taken a number of men ashore. Without regard to his personal safety, he helped to row the boat toward one of the burning ships, in spite of repeated bombing and strafing by enemy planes, approaching it closely although explosions of ammunition aboard threw flaming debris in all directions. Colonel Carew's leadership and courage saved the lives of several men and inspired others to greater effort in rescuing survivors.
Home address: Mrs. Jennie F. Carew (wife), 24 George Street,
Medford, Massachusetts.

MERLE H. HOWE, (0131962), Lieutenant Colonel, General Staff Corps, Headquarters 32nd Division, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on December 5, 1942. During an attack on Buna Village, when men of a rifle company short of company officers were checked by heavy small arms and mortar fire at close range, Lieutenant Colonel Howe personally exposed himself to the enemy fire, moving among the advanced groups and encouraging the men to resume the attack. He then led them in an attack, gaining ground which, held and consolidated, assisted materially in an advance on the succeeding day.
Home address: Mrs. Virginia Howe (wife), 621 Fleming Street, S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHEE, (0638451), Captain, Infantry (then Staff Sergeant, Company H, 126th Infantry), United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, during the period December 5 - 11, 1942. During

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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

GENERAL ORDERS)

A.P.O. 501
1 July 1943

NO.....36)

Section

Awards of the Distinguished-Service Cross.....I
Award of Oak-Leaf Cluster.....II
Citations for Gallantry in Action.....III
Amendment to General Orders No. 18.....IV

I. AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS.

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bulletin No. 43, W.D., 1918), the Distinguished-Service Cross is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the Far East, to the following named officers and enlisted men:

Lieutenant Colonel CHESTER M. BEAVER, (020887), (then Major), General Staff Corps, Headquarters 32d Infantry Division, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on 5 December 1942. After extensive and useful activity at the hazard of his life during the battle on 5th December, Lieutenant Colonel Beaver, late in the afternoon, organized a patrol from the Cannon Company, 128th Infantry, for an attempt to outflank an enemy position. Crawling through mud and water, under heavy fire, this patrol worked its way within a hundred yards of Buna Village and materially assisted the attack. Lieutenant Colonel Beaver's daring leadership was an inspiration to the men of the command.
Home address: Mrs. Gladys M. Beaver (mother), 402 East Ninth Street, Yankton, South Dakota.

Colonel JOSEPH S. BRADLEY, (012428), General Staff Corps, 32d Infantry Division, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on 28 December 1942. To further an attack by an infantry company against a strongly fortified enemy area, Colonel Bradley left his command post, went to the most forward positions, personally aided the progress of the attack, and contributed materially to its success. While under heavy enemy fire he moved about among the men continually risking his life to encourage and assist the advance in every way possible.
Home address: Mrs. Joseph S. Bradley (wife), Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

Private First Class JACK K. CUNNINGHAM, (38046690), Company E, 127th Infantry, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Tarakena, New Guinea, on 11 January 1943. Private First Class Cunningham, with one other soldier, volunteered to swim the swollen and rapid Konombi River at night in order to tow a rope and secure it to the opposite bank. The enemy was entrenched across the river, and detection meant exposure to heavy fire. Despite the hazards, Private First Class Cunningham and his companion swam the forty-yard stream and tied the rope, thus assisting their unit to establish a bridge-head.
Home address: Mrs. M. V. Cunningham (mother), 2340 Honeysuckle, Fort Worth, Texas.

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was wounded in this action by fragments from a rifle grenade.

Home address: Mrs. Dorothy M. Smith (wife), 209 S. Hewett Street, Neillsville, Wisconsin.

Private LAWRENCE F. SPRAGUE, (35280076), Company C, 127th Infantry, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Tarakena, New Guinea, on 12 January 1943. Volunteering as a member of a small patrol, Private Sprague swam the swollen and rapidly flowing Konombi River in broad daylight and under heavy enemy fire. With complete disregard for his own safety and armed only with a pistol and hand grenades, he assisted in towing a rope to the opposite bank to aid the crossing of the river by a platoon of infantry. The successful accomplishment of this dangerous mission permitted the advance of the entire company and the securing of a bridge-head on the opposite shore. Home address: Mrs. Marie Sprague (mother), Tontogany, Ohio.

II. AWARD OF OAK-LEAF CLUSTER

By direction of the President, in addition to the Distinguished-Service Cross awarded to Captain Herman J. F. Bottcher, 126th Infantry, by the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, as published on page 1, General Orders Number 64, 1942, General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, a bronze Oak-Leaf Cluster is awarded to him by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the Far East, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bulletin No. 43, W.D., 1918). The citation is as follows:

Captain HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHER, (0888451), 126th Infantry, United States Army. For extraordinary heroism in action near Buna, New Guinea, on 20 December 1942. Although wounded the previous day, Captain Bottcher volunteered to lead a detachment of infantry in an attack on an enemy strong-point in terrain with which he was familiar. He carefully prepared the men for the attack, and then encouraged them by his own example to advance within twenty yards of the enemy emplacements. When the patrol was held up by small arms fire in this advanced position, he stood up without regard for his own safety and drew the enemy fire so that the patrol could move to another area. He was again wounded during this action. Captain Bottcher's outstanding courage and leadership were an inspiration to the men under his command. Home address: Mrs. Alice Bottcher (aunt), 239 Ransell Street, San Francisco, California.

III. CITATIONS FOR GALLANTRY IN ACTION.

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bulletin No. 43, W.D., 1918), the following named enlisted men are cited for gallantry in action and are entitled to wear the Silver Star Decoration. The citations are as follows:

Staff Sergeant MILTON O. CLINE, (20650715), Company K, 128th Infantry, United States Army. For gallantry in action near Buna, New Guinea, on 26 November 1942 and 5 December 1942. Home address: Mrs. Blanche B. Cline (mother), Route No. 1, Woodford, Wisconsin.

Staff Sergeant LOUIS H. POLLISTER, (20115721), Company A, 114th Engineer Battalion, United States Army. For gallantry in action near Buna, New Guinea, on 28 December 1942. Home address: Mrs. Mary Pollister (wife), 166 Oak Street, Foxboro, Massachusetts.

RESTRICTED

"I HAD a very pleasant experience this morning," Lt. (j.g.) Harry Silver of the Navy wrote home some time ago. "I met General Eisenhower. He was

ACTION

25, Infantry, of Hartford, Conn. In

REBACH, 20, Navy, of the Bronx. At medical aid to wounded men.

Army Air Force, of Kinston, N. C. board a B-24, Lt. Diamond held a

0, Infantry, of New Orleans, La. In

Infantry, of Brooklyn. In Germany,

T, 20, Marine Corps, of Minneapolis, the mopping-up stage of the battle. In close encounter, when a Jap sniper killed Goldblatt and others were carrying a case of white phosphorous grenades which saved the Americans' lives. R, 19, Marine Corps, of Cleveland, O. hville.

, Navy, of Brooklyn. At sea. TZ, 32, Mechanized Cavalry, of New

ISKY, 18, Infantry, of the Bronx. In ze Star for heroic performance.

5, Infantry, of Manchester, N. H. In y awarded the Bronze Star "for heroic my." He was a light machine gunner. ovack on three occasions risked his life action which cost him his life, he saved was "of invaluable assistance to his or- the success of operations against the

colonels and brigadier generals waited till he finished his coffee.

Now comes the sad part of Harry's letter:

"I'm afraid I got a couple of double exposures because I was a little nervous talking to a five-star general, and I think I forgot to wind the film."

Tribute

CAPTAIN HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHEER was mortally wounded, somewhere in the Philippines. The unit which he commanded had been out on reconnaissance behind the Jap lines for forty-eight days. The group had killed seventy-five Japs and had sent in twelve prisoners. Now they were returning to their own lines.

It was early morning. Enemy forces, outnumbering the Americans five to one, sent two machine guns cross-firing on the Yanks and shelled them with mortars. When the unit was three-quarters surrounded, Capt. Botcher got up to tell the men on the firing line to pull out. A Jap mortar shell landed right under him and blew off his leg.

A Jewish sergeant in the unit, named David Bindman, then held the line and directed fire as other members of the patrol carried the dying captain away.

For his heroism in protecting the fatally injured captain, Sgt. Bindman has been awarded the Bronze Star.

"He tried to get us to leave him," Bindman said, "so we could get out faster. But we couldn't have done that. He was the kind of soldier a man would die for."

When the patrol got to the American lines with the captain's body, they learned that his promotion to the rank of major had just come through.

tion. During a counter-attack he helped evacuate the wounded under enemy fire.

Colonel Decorated for Vital Orientation Work

LT. COL. SAMUEL JACOB BRISKIN, of Los Angeles, Cal., is a recipient of the Legion of Merit for meritorious service as Commanding Officer of a photographic detachment. He helped to select and train personnel for this work, having had much technical and executive experience with the motion picture industry before the war.

"Through the exercise of his unusual talents and ability," said the award citation, "he was largely responsible for the production of an important series of orientation films designed to create a will to win throughout the military service."

Medical Officer Hailed For Valiant Service

MAJOR HAROLD J. BARKER, 24, of Cleveland Heights, O., has been decorated with the Bronze Star for heroism at New Georgia Island in the Solomons.

He was sole medical officer at an infantry casual camp and, during combat with the enemy, he "distinguished himself by his exceptionally meritorious service in the face of tremendous difficulties in duties above and beyond the normal call of his assignment."

He ministered to as many as 451 patients in one day, visiting each soldier in the camp at least once every 24 hours, and he worked without sleep for days and nights on end, carrying out his work, despite enemy bombardment, shortages of supplies, lack of equipment, and shortage of personnel.

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Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher

Enlisted Serial No. 39085246 Officer's Serial No. 0888451

Company H, 126th. Infantry Regiment, 32d. Infantry Division

Company A, 127th. Infantry Regiment, 32d. Infantry Division

Reconnaissance Troop, 32d. Infantry Division

Decorations: DSC w/1 OLC, Purple Heart w/2 OLC.

United States citizenship was of great concern to Herman J.F. Bottcher. Born in Germany, he first migrated to Australia and then to San Francisco, California, where he joined the Carpenter's Union, worked as a cabinet maker for the Emporium Department Store and obtained his first papers for citizenship. His parents were dead. His nearest kin was a sister and aunt who also lived in San Francisco. He forfeited his citizenship when he went to Spain and fought for the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War. However, due to his war record it is said that the U.S. Congress by special act, granted his citizenship (This is questionable. I have a letter from Representative Melvin Price, member of Congress from Illinois, who informs me that he checked with the Congressional Research Service (CRS), on this matter, and in a letter to me dated December 10, 1985, Representative Price informed me that CRS had checked the congressional files from 1942-1972 and found no mention of Herman J.F. Bottcher and citizenship for him by act of congress).

Bottcher while serving as a Staff Sergeant in the above division, did while in the vicinity of Buna, New Guinea in the 5th and 6th of December 1942, he performed his duties as an acting platoon leader in such a manner that he was promoted the following month to the grade of Captain and decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross.

One year later, in 1943, while leading the 32d. Reconnaissance Troop behind the enemy lines on Leyte in the Philippines he was fatally wounded by mortar fire.

Recently the Veterans Administration advised me that Captain Bottcher had taken out National Service Life Insurance on October 21, 1943, and that a beneficiary of the insurance was still being paid, but that they were not permitted to reveal the identity or address of this person.

Bottcher was born on July 13, 1909, at Landsberg, Germany, a small village near Berlin and now part of the east zone.

Mark A. Smith
-Mark A. Smith
Editor The Mustang
NOFC

Moe Fishman re Herman Bottcher: Herman and I didn't meet up in Spain. I was already wounded in the Brunete action and in the hospitals till July, 1938 when I went home. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXIXXXXXXXXXXX~~
Herman came to Spain sometime after Brunete.

He was part of the Lincoln Battalion during the retreats of March 1938 when large numbers of Americans (amongst Spaniards and the rest of the International Brigades) were killed or wounded. After the actions Herman Boltcher was among those "who received awards from the Brigade and the Division for outstanding courage and meritorious service in the face of the enemy."

I met up with Herman in the spring of 1940 after having spent two years in and out of hospitals in the New York area mending a bad leg wound.

I went to work as assistant bookkeeper and helper in all departments. One was in charge of volunteers for mailings. And sure enough, Herman Gottcher was a consistent able helper for three months until he was drafted in the Army.

The next I heard he had received a field commission of captain in the U.S. Army for "extraordinary heroism and leadership in action against the Japanese in the South Pacific."

He later was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He died leading his men on the island of Leyte in the Phillipines.

Early on I became aware in Spain of the special drive of our German comrades to fight fascism, and Hitler's German volunteers particularly. They felt particularly driven to avenge their many comrades who had suffered under Nazism, including themselves.

Through the years we have honored so many of our comrades who have played outstanding roles in the fight against fascism - in Spain - in World War II - in the many years since then at home and abroad. Bottcher has held a special place in our hearts. "He was a good man!"

Moe Fishman re U.S. Attorney General's Subversive List; In 1947, Pres. Harry Truman, by Executive Order (Congress was not consulted) had his then Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, issue a Subversive List of some 300 organizations deemed to be "subversive" - some dating back to the U.S. Civil War. At the top of the list was the "Abraham Lincoln Brigade" and the last was the "Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade."

Loyalty forms were then printed and distributed to all U.S. government employees, listing all 300 organizations, and they were asked to swear under oath that they had not belonged or contributed to any of these organizations.

If they said "yes", they were fired. If they said "no", they were threatened with prosecution with the use of informers, and faced jail terms.

This law was not enforced until Truman won the election in 1948 and his new Attorney General, Tom Clark, was the enforcer.

The Joint Anti-Fascist REFugee Comm., which undertook to aid Spanish and International Brigade refugees, after the defeat of the legally elected Spanish Republic, was the only organization to take on the U.S. government in the courts to seek to constitutionally abolish the list.

They hired distinguished counsel and were thru the Federal courts and on their way to the Appellate Division when two things intervened. The Executive Board of the JARC was hauled before the House Un-American Activities Comm. and they wound up fighting their right to withhold the names of U.S. donors and anti-fascist Spaniards in Spain receiving their generosity, on First Amendment grounds. And they lost and had some 10 board members serve from 3 to 6 months in jail, especially the leaders, Dr. Edward K. Barsky and Helen Bryan.

This is now 1950 and they are bound for jail and looming in Congress is passage of the McCarran Anti-Subversive Activities Act, so they dropped the suit against the Attorney-General's list.

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Born and raised in Germany, Herman J.F. Bottcher gave his life in battle for his adopted country.

By Michael D. Haydock

Staff Sergeant Herman J.F. Bottcher watched the black bulk of a barge slide slowly across the moonlit sea from the Buna government station west toward the village, carrying reinforcements for the Japanese garrison there. With the single machine gun that his small command possessed, he began to stitch the barge with bursts of fire. Within moments, it was burning and dead in the water, and he swung the gun back to point toward the beach. Earlier, the men had heard Japanese approaching from that direction and had driven them off with grenades and rifle and machine-gun fire.

Born in 1909, Bottcher had been raised in a Germany shattered by its defeat in World War I. Rival gangs of Communists and Nazis had clashed frequently and violently in the streets. He trained as a cabinetmaker and, in 1928, left Germany for Austria. Two years later, he emigrated to the United States, hoping for a better life and American citizenship. Even as he fought for his adopted country, Bottcher was still a German citizen, but not by choice; he was determined to become an American.

During the Great Depression, Bottcher first applied to become a naturalized American. In 1936, when General Francisco Franco launched his fascist revolt against the Spanish government, Bottcher knew exactly which side he was on in that fight. "I've always hated dictators," he later said. He dropped his college studies in California and enlisted for service in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of volunteers to fight against Franco in Spain. It was an uneven contest, since the Franco forces were supported with arms and men by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, while arms shipments to the Loyalists were under embargo by democratic nations not yet awake to the dangers of fascism.

In the 25 months that Bottcher spent in Spain, he participated in seven battles. In one, his brigade fought for five days as the



Just promoted to the temporary rank of captain, Herman J.F. Bottcher receives the Distinguished Service Cross from Maj. Gen. William H. Gill for heroism in action at Buna in December 1942.

men retreated through the towns of Belchite, Caspe and Alcaniz. It was cut off five times and fought its way out on each occasion, only to retreat again. The battalion kitchen was blown up, and the men had no food for the entire duration of the retreat. When the withdrawal was over, Bottcher received commendations for "outstanding courage and meritorious service in the face of the enemy."

During the early morning of September 24, 1938, Spanish troops of the 46th Division replaced those of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade all along the line they were holding in the valley of the Jarma River. The Spanish government had determined that the war would be fought by Spaniards against Spaniards, and the international brigades were to be repatriated. Bottcher joined the long line of foreign volunteers heading to the bridges over the Ebro River to be sent home. Bereft of foreign volunteers and deprived of arms and munitions by the embargo, the Spanish government quickly fell to Franco's forces.

By the time he left Spain, Bottcher had been wounded twice, decorated three times and promoted to the rank of major in the

Spanish army. When he returned home, he found that his application for citizenship had been revoked because of his participation in the Spanish Civil War. Bottcher moved in with his aunt Alice in San Francisco. He worked at odd jobs to finance his studies in architecture at San Francisco State College and was six credits short of graduation when the Japanese blasted the United States into World War II with their attack on Pearl Harbor.


Bottcher tried to enlist immediately, but it took some time to convince the U.S. Army that he was an acceptable candidate. He was, as a German citizen, an enemy national, and his application for American citizenship had already been revoked. After a month, he managed to convince the War Department of his loyalty and was sent off to

basic training, then assigned to the 32nd Infantry Division, a former National Guard unit from Michigan and Wisconsin that had seen service during World War I at the Second Battle of the Marne. The 32nd wore a shoulder patch that showed a red arrow piercing a line, and the division proudly boasted that it had pierced every enemy line it had ever faced.

The lines the 32nd would face in World War II would not be German. The Japanese tide of conquest had swept over the Philippines, the East Indies and the north coast of New Guinea. It also threatened Australia and New Zealand, whose troops were far from home, battling German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in North Africa. On April 22, 1942, a convoy of gray ships slid out of San Francisco Harbor, and the 32nd was on its way to Australia.

As the 32nd Infantry trained in Australia, Bottcher proved to the American army that he was a soldier. He was rapidly promoted to staff sergeant in the 2nd Battalion, 126th Regiment (2/126). His company commander was Captain "Handy" Hantemann, with whom he would remain close friends throughout his career. On

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August 13, 1942, the Japanese on the north coast of New Guinea began a drive over the Owen Stanley Mountains toward Port Moresby. The 32nd was moved to bases east of Buna and thrown into the battle—except for Bottcher's unit. The 2/126 was assigned to beat the Japanese back across the Owen Stanleys. Conditions were horrible. The jungle mists kept them perpetually wet. Their clothes grew leaden from the rain and sprouted mold, and new shoes rotted off their feet in five days. As many men fell to dysentery as to enemy action.

By the time the Americans reached the north coast near Buna after 42 days, most had only their weapons and ammunition, a mess cup and spoon, and the rattered and rotting remnants of the combat fatigues they had set out in. The battle for Buna was not going well, and the 2/126 was put into the line almost immediately. The casualty list steadily lengthened.

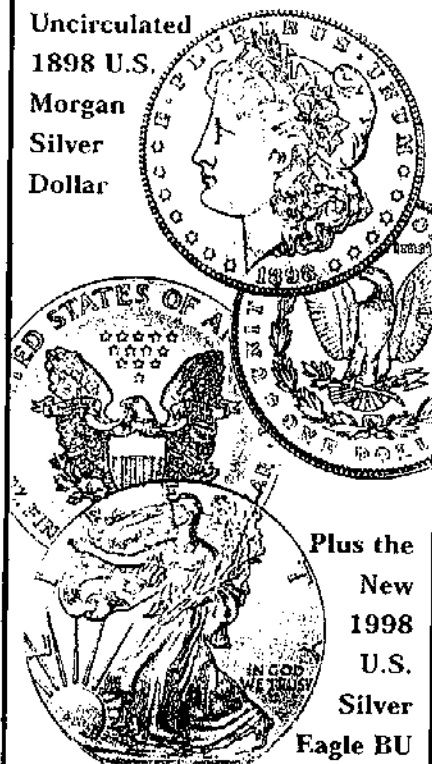
Bottcher's group of 18 achieved the only success during an all-out assault on the Japanese positions on December 5. Rather than making a futile attack on the village, they took a position that gave them command of the beach between the government station and the village, set up their machine gun and began to beat off repeated counterattacks. One of the first counterattacks came from both directions at once, nearly overwhelming them. In the middle of the action, Bottcher calmly stood up and began to fling hand grenades at both of the advancing forces. He was wounded but refused to be evacuated, and the American position held. For his capture of the commanding position, which came to be known as Bottcher's Corner, and for directing its defense from December 5 to 11, Herman Bottcher received the Distinguished Service Cross—the second highest American combat decoration. The commanding general gave him a direct battlefield commission as a temporary captain in the U.S. Army, while the machinery was set in motion for him to gain his citizenship so that the commission could be made permanent.

The assault on Buna was still stalled on December 20, and Caprain Bottcher had been wounded again on the preceding day. That wound did not deter him from volunteering to lead a detachment of infantry in an attack. He brought the detachment within 20 yards of the enemy, but the attack bogged down in a hail of Japanese small-arms fire. Bottcher calmly stood up to draw enemy fire so that the detachment could move forward, and he was wounded again.

For this action, Bottcher received an oak leaf cluster denoting a second award of the Distinguished Service Cross. He was also sent back to Australia for treatment of his three wounds, one of which partially crippled his right hand. Although his wounds would have enabled him to avoid further combat, Bottcher rejoined the 32nd Division in time for the Battle of Aitape, serv-

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A member of the 32nd Division fires at the Japanese sniper who downed his comrade. Bottcher led the 32nd Recon Troop while he was with the 32nd in New Guinea and the Philippines.

ing as commander of the 32nd Recon Troop. During that battle, the recon troop spent 57 days behind enemy lines, penetrating up to 36 miles. Afterward, the unit boasted of its light casualties and proclaimed its faith in the captain with the German accent. "If the Old Man wanted us to enter Manila Bay in a rubber boat, we would go," said Private Harold Endres of the 32nd Recon. "And, furthermore, we'd bet that nothing would happen."

During the Battle for Aitape, Bottcher found time to answer a letter from his old friend "Handy" Hantelmann. He told his former commander: "I finally got my [citizenship] papers. I had almost given up hope.... I can proudly raise my head and exclaim that I fought for my right to call myself an American." Later in the same letter, Bottcher wrote: "So far my lucky star hasn't forsaken me. If my time should come to go, it'll be in the happy realization that it was for an ideal, for justice and freedom for all."

With the Japanese finally cleared from New Guinea, the 32nd Division moved on to the invasion of the Philippines. During the battle to take Leyte, Bottcher's recon troop spent 48 days behind enemy lines ambushing parols, destroying supply dumps, and radioing division headquarters with information vital to successful operations against the objectives at Kanaga and Palompon. Bottcher and his men lived off the land, killing game and buying food from friendly Filipinos. During the entire operation they suffered only four casualties—three wounded and one killed in a non-combat accident.

By December 30, 1944, the Leyte campaign was nearly over. Bottcher's troops had not had any contact with the Japanese in several days when they received a radio message to return to division headquarters the next day. At 2:35 a.m. on December 31,

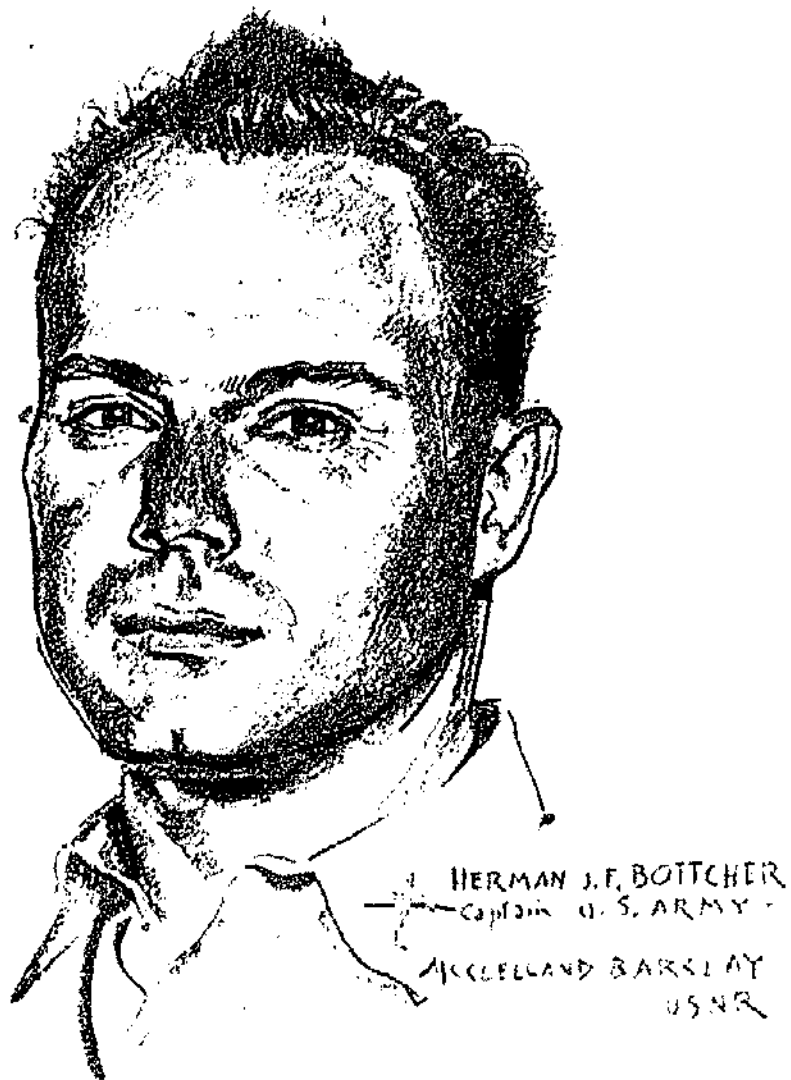
their camp was swept with small-arms and machine-gun fire and bombarded with 90mm mortar shells. A party of 300 Japanese, trying to make their way to the beaches to escape the island in small boats, had stumbled onto the camp. Bottcher rallied his men to repel the initial assault, then began to organize a withdrawal to a stronger position.

Edwin Essman, Bottcher's radioman, was setting up his gear to get a message about the attack off to division headquarters when a mortar shell dropped directly into the position. He heard Captain Bottcher yell, "They've blown my leg off!" One of the company's recon officers, Lieutenant Royal Steele, put a tourniquet on Bottcher's leg, and the company medic, Sergeant Tony Gaidosik, jabbed his captain with a shot of morphine as Bottcher was ordering the men to leave him and withdraw.

They withdrew, but they carried their wounded leader with them to the new position. There, Gaidosik kept working on Bottcher, trying to stop the bleeding. The division surgeon, Colonel John F. Wurz, gave Gaidosik guidance over the radio, but the wound and the bleeding were profound, and the company's supply of plasma had been destroyed in the Japanese attack. Captain Herman Bottcher died at 6 a.m. on the last day of 1944. His lucky star had winked out.

The body of Herman J.F. Bottcher, whose fight for freedom and justice had taken him from the stony hills of Spain to the steamy, fetid jungles of New Guinea and the Philippines, is buried under a simple cross, identical to those that mark the graves of thousands of his fellow American soldiers in the military cemetery at Manila.

Long after Herman Bottcher died, General Robert Eichelberger, who commanded the American forces at Buna, wrote of him, "He was one of the best Americans I have ever known." □



CAPT. H. BOTTCHER 0.888451
CO. A 127th INF. A.P.O. 32
SAN FRANCISCO - CALIF.

NEW GUINEA, 29.1.74

DEAR HARRY;

THE ARRIVAL OF YOUR LETTER OF WELL WISHING WAS A HAPPY SURPRISE INDEED. I AM REALLY GREATLY INDEBTED TO YOU FOR ANYTHING THAT I ACHIEVED. WITHOUT YOUR HELP I WOULD NOT HAVE AMOUNTED TO ANYTHING.

WELL, I FINALLY GOT MY C. PAPERS, I HAD ALMOST GIVEN UP HOPE. THE LITTLE DRAMATIC CONVERSATION THAT LT. COL. H. SMITH, YOU AND I HAD NEAR BUNA IN RELATION TO MY STATUS IS STILL VIVIDLY IN MY MIND. THIS TIME HOWEVER, I STAND FREE, BECAUSE I CAN PROUDLY RAISE MY HEAD AND EXCLAIM THAT I FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO CALL MYSELF AN AMERICAN.

CONDITIONS UP HERE ARE INCOMPARABLY BETTER THAN WE EXPERIENCED. ~~JUST COASTAL REGIONS~~

ROADS, DECENT TENTS AND EXTRA ORDINARILY GOOD FOOD. WE HARDLY EVER GET BULLY BEEF, ONLY TWICE A WEEK C-RATION. THE REMAINING MEALS CONSIST OF VARIOUS CANNED OR DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES, SPAM, HOT DOGS AND TWICE WEEKLY FRESH MEAT (FROZEN OF COURSE). YESTERDAY WE HAD DELICIOUS FRESH TOMATOES, THE FIRST SINCE AUG.

WITH TIME WE LEARN MORE AND MORE ABOUT THE JUNGLE; WHEREAS IT WAS A FORDIDABLE OBSTACLE AND A HORRIFYING PLACE FOR US LAST YEAR, IT HAS NOW BECOME A FRIENDLY PLACE WITH A BEAUTY AND CHARM ALL ITS OWN. IT IS STILL A DANGEROUS PLACE WHERE IT IS PERMEATED WITH AND POLLUTED BY THE ENEMY.

YOU PROBABLY CATCHED ~~BY~~ ^{FROM} NEWS REPORTS OUR WHEREABOUTS. WELL, SO FAR MY LUCKY STAR

short years ago supported a United Nations resolution condemning Franco Spain, is today wooing the fascist butcher with millions of American dollars (your dollars) as a bribe for H-bomb bases.

Franco couldn't destroy our outfit, but Franco's ally, the Eisenhower administration, has sworn to destroy us and send our officers to jail. So the Lincoln Brigaders are back on the firing line again—this time on the home front—for refusal to register as a "subversive" organization under the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950.

THE McCarran Act was passed over President Truman's veto. He called it a "thought control" measure, "the greatest danger to freedom of speech, press and assembly since the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798."

Under the Act's definition, you're "subversive" if you and the Communist Party happen to agree that the price of bread is too high, or on anything else by even the remotest coincidence. To comply and register is to declare yourself and your organization "spies and saboteurs"—by the Act's own definition of a "Communist Front." Failure to register is punishable by fines and imprisonment. So you're damned if you do and jailed if you don't.

Among the first of 264 organizations marked for attack under the McCarran Act, the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade will fight every step of the way for its right to exist, and for the right to oppose Franco. These are the rights of everyone in a democracy. If we lose, you lose.

You supported us 17 years ago, when we were facing fascist bullets in the front lines in Spain. Your support now can help us win another battle against fascism.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

WRITE your Congressman asking him to press for the repeal of the McCarran Act.

PROTEST to the Subversive Activities Control Board, 811 Vermont Ave., N.W., Wash., D.C. demanding it find in our favor. CLIP AND SEND MESSAGE BELOW.

AND ABOVE ALL WRITE to the State Department and tell Dulles that you are against United States support and loans from your tax monies to Franco Spain.

KEEP THE VETS FREE TO FIGHT FASCISM

TO THE HEARING OFFICERS, S.A.C.B.
811 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

As the late Harold Ickes said: "... they (the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade) were among the first to see the menace of fascism, and certainly among the first to offer their lives in an effort to halt this menace. In the last decade, they have been in the forefront of all the battles for democracy, and they deserve the best this country has to offer."

I feel that efforts to brand them "subversive" are a betrayal of our democratic heritage, to which the Lincoln Brigade contributed at such great sacrifice. I therefore urge you to find in favor of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Who Is

"Extraordinary Heroism" was the Army's citation for Captain Herman Bottcher, a Veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery in World War II.

Captain Bottcher was killed in action in the Battle for the Philippines. If he had survived, he would have lived to hear the epithet "Subversive!" hurled at him by the likes of McCarthy and McCarran.

Senator Pat McCarran, author of the law which is being used to persecute every anti-fascist organization in the United States, proudly wears Franco's medal, for distinguished service to the Spanish fascist dictator. And Franco himself cherishes a few sentimental keepsakes from his old buddy Adolf Hitler.

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