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the first plane laden with supplies landed three hours after they had begun the job. Next day I arrived at Popenetta in one of the 58 planes which landed on the new strip between dawn and dusk.

The Orokaivas kept on the job of making other strips, slaving in the blazing sun from sunrise to sunset. Then, in the "cool" of the evening, scores of them would arrive at the Allied advanced casualty clearing stations just behind the Japanese lines to carry wounded back 10 or 12 miles to the waiting transport planes. And the tenderness which these huge, fierce-visaged head-hunters showed for the Australian and American wounded was the perfect expression of how much the Orokaivas had changed.

Today the greatest individual act of heroism among the American forces in New Guinea came to an end when a grimy party of twelve men under the leadership of a tough sergeant who can scarcely speak English were relieved in the salient on Buna beach that they had held against an overwhelming force of Japanese for seven days and nights. The establishment of that tiny salient and the holding of it might well prove one of the vital factors in breaking the Japanese grip on the entire Buna sector. Sergeant Herman Bottcher, of "Bottcher's Salient," richly deserves the D.S.C. he's going to be awarded, and also the promotion to commissioned rank which is being rushed through the "usual channels."

Bottcher is 37 and he comes from San Francisco. He is German-born, from Landsberg, near Berlin, worked in Australia for some years in the late "twenties," and then went to the United States to try his luck. He knows modern war, because soon after he received United States citizenship he lost it when he enlisted with the International Brigade to fight against the Axis in Spain. He was a good soldier and a brave fighter for the Republicans, in whose army he rose from the rank of private to that of captain. He enlisted later with the United States Army and found himself in Papua, fighting his second war against the Axis.

Bottcher is of medium size, wears a magnificent black beard, looks at you with fierce eyes, and speaks almost unrecognizable English with a thick German accent.

On December 5 the Americans were hammering in vain at the strongly defended Japanese posts outside Buna. The enemy held the

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village on one side and the Government station on the other. There had been a disheartening series of failures by the Americans to breach the defenses. Bottcher was in the thick of it. He came back to get a pail of water for some of his wounded and saw two or three American officers sitting on the ground trying to work out ways and means of assaulting the enemy line. Bottcher glared at them as he filled the bucket. "If you guys would get up off your goddam tails and start fightin' maybe we'd get something done!" he snarled and strode back to the forward positions.

Bottcher decided to do something himself. He called for volunteers to drive a wedge right into the Japanese positions and through to the beach. It was a tough job. Many men volunteered and Bottcher picked twelve of them.

They squirmed through the swamps and coconut palms toward their objectives through a hail of heavy fire, but the tommy guns and grenades of Bottcher and his men cleaned up enemy machine-gun posts, and brought snipers toppling from trees. After several hours of heavy fighting the little force reached its objective, where Bottcher ordered his men to dig in on the beach and stay there.

Trenches and weapon pits were dug. At dawn the Japanese attacked from both flanks, one force rushing from the village and one from the Government station. Both attacks were repulsed by fierce machine-gun fire, and the Japanese retired, dragging some wounded with them, and leaving forty dead on the beach. A few hours later a Japanese machine-gun post brought harassing fire to bear on the American post, so Bottcher crawled out with a pocketful of grenades, squirmed across the bullet-torn sand, and blew the post to pieces with grenades. He crawled back to his little garrison.

That night the watchful doughboys saw enemy barges moving offshore, and opened up on them with heavy machine-gun fire. One barge was set on fire, and Japanese could be seen scrambling from it on to the other, which escaped at full speed to the northward.

Next day a party of Japanese was seen sneaking across a bridge over Buna Creek, and Bottcher's guns brought down six of them before the others fled.

All this time the little beachhead was constantly under fire from strong enemy positions on both sides, but the thought of retiring never occurred to the German-born sergeant who had been wounded

Bottcher's Salient

D.H.

John D. ...

several times. The American post was causing great concern to the Japanese, and on the night of December 9 another double attack was made from both sides. Again the Japanese were driven back in confusion.

Next morning Bottcher and a few of his men crawled out of their trenches into no-man's-land. They counted seven more Japanese dead added to the pile of corpses in front of their weapon pits, and found two abandoned Japanese machine guns with ammunition. These were dragged back to the post to increase its armament.

Once or twice Bottcher had visitors. On one occasion the American commanding officer—General Eichelberger, a brave man and a fine soldier—crawled along to Bottcher's Salient, and did a bit of useful sniping while he was there! But most of the time the thirteen men were alone, with hundreds of Japanese all round them.

Today a stronger party of fresh troops went in to relieve them. But before he came out Bottcher was able to get a final crack at the Japs. For some hours they had watched the Japanese building a heavy timber barricade leading from Buna Village toward the American post. It was obviously their intention to launch an attack from behind the barricade. Bottcher got his mortars ranged and waited until the palisade was almost completed. Then he sent over a string of bombs and blew the timber wall and all the Japanese working on it to pieces. Since then the Japanese haven't attempted to begin the job again.

By a conservative count it is believed that Bottcher and his twelve men have killed more than 120 Japs from this little salient. Now the Americans have attacked in force through the salient, and have completely cut the main enemy line, dividing the village force from that fighting from the Government station. Thanks to Sergeant Herman Bottcher, late of the International Brigade. The next time I see him, according to all reports, he will be *Captain Herman Bottcher, D.S.C.*

Massacre at Mambare

The Japanese lost one north coast beachhead today, with the fall of Buna Village, and gained another at tremendous cost well up the coast near the Mambare Delta, 53 miles away. Attacking in force from Bottcher's Salient, the Americans smashed right through Buna Village to the coast, completely cleaned up the area, which is

littered with the bodies of hundreds of Japanese, and effectively isolated the enemy's Sanananda force from the main garrison which holds a strong line from Giropa Point to Cape Endaiadere. General Eichelberger practically led his troops into the attack. This is every man's war up here. Senior officers will be found in the trenches with the troops, and right in the front line you will see commanding generals directing machine-gun and mortar fire and blazing away with tommy guns at Japanese snipers in the tree-tops!

The Mambare landing appears to have been a very costly Japanese attempt to establish a coastal staging point for the barges which run between Salamaua and Buna carrying reinforcements down and bringing the sick and wounded back. The landing was attempted by five warships, two cruisers and three destroyers, but very few of the enemy troops reached the shore, thanks again to our overwhelming superiority in the air.

Bodies of hundreds of Japanese troops are strewn along the beaches and mangrove swamps of the Mambare Delta or floating in the sea, where they were slaughtered in scores by the blazing gunfire of Australian-manned Beaufighters and Havoc dive-bombers, and American bombers.

More than 100 Allied planes were in action against the Japanese landing force, which arrived shortly before dawn. Two big motor landing barges were already packed with stores, lowered from each warship, and were taken to the beach four miles away. At the same time floating metal drums of stores tied together in rafts of forty, with wooden cases lashed alongside, were pushed over the side from the warships, to be floated ashore.

The landing barges returned to the ships to ferry troops ashore, fifty in each barge. Ship's lifeboats were also used, but the troop movement had scarcely been started when the first of the swarms of Allied planes came roaring in with the first streaks of dawn.

About three hundred Japanese, wearing only lifebelts, had jumped over the sides of the ships, and were attempting to tow the clumsy store rafts ashore, when two Australian Beaufighters began the fierce air blitz. Almost touching the waves each of the Beaufighters swept in with ten guns blazing. Japanese troops, some of them wearing packs and tin helmets, dived out of the barges into the water. Others were killed in the boats. Five barges went to the bottom.

Mark Tibergien

Moss Adams LLP

1001 Fourth Avenue, Suite 2700

Seattle, WA 98154-1199

(206) 442-2618



(206) 442-2618