



Men who call themselves "seagoing engineers" pilot small flat-bottomed boats through the island channels, carrying men and supplies.



With supplies landed and positions established, a mortar squad goes into action. Mortars are vital in jungle operations against the Japs.

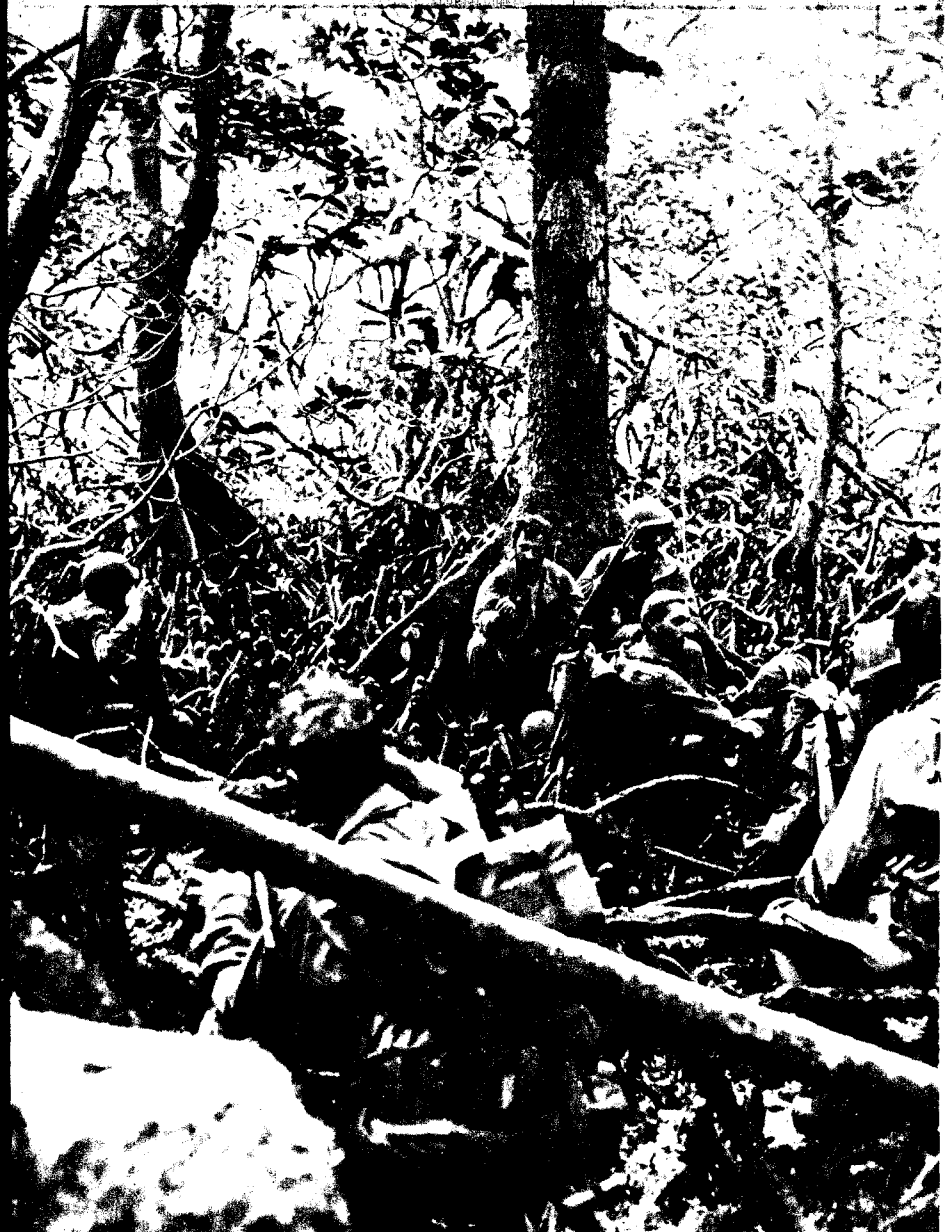


Standing knee deep in salt water under the branches of a mango tree, a weapons company commander spots the bursts of mortar fire.

# Jungle Mop-up



Two gunners get their light machine gun into place behind a fallen tree and wait to open up at the first sign of Japs in front of them.



Infantrymen wait among mangrove roots. Although there's no evidence of it, the Japs were near and their fire would not have been unexpected.





Two infantrymen, Cpl. Lewis Niovich of Seanor, Pa., and S. Sgt. Anthony Cavallero of Woodbridge, N. J., lie behind a log awaiting developments.



A light machine gunner peers through the sun-flecked jungle, trying to locate a target, but the Japs, only some 50 yards away, are quiet.



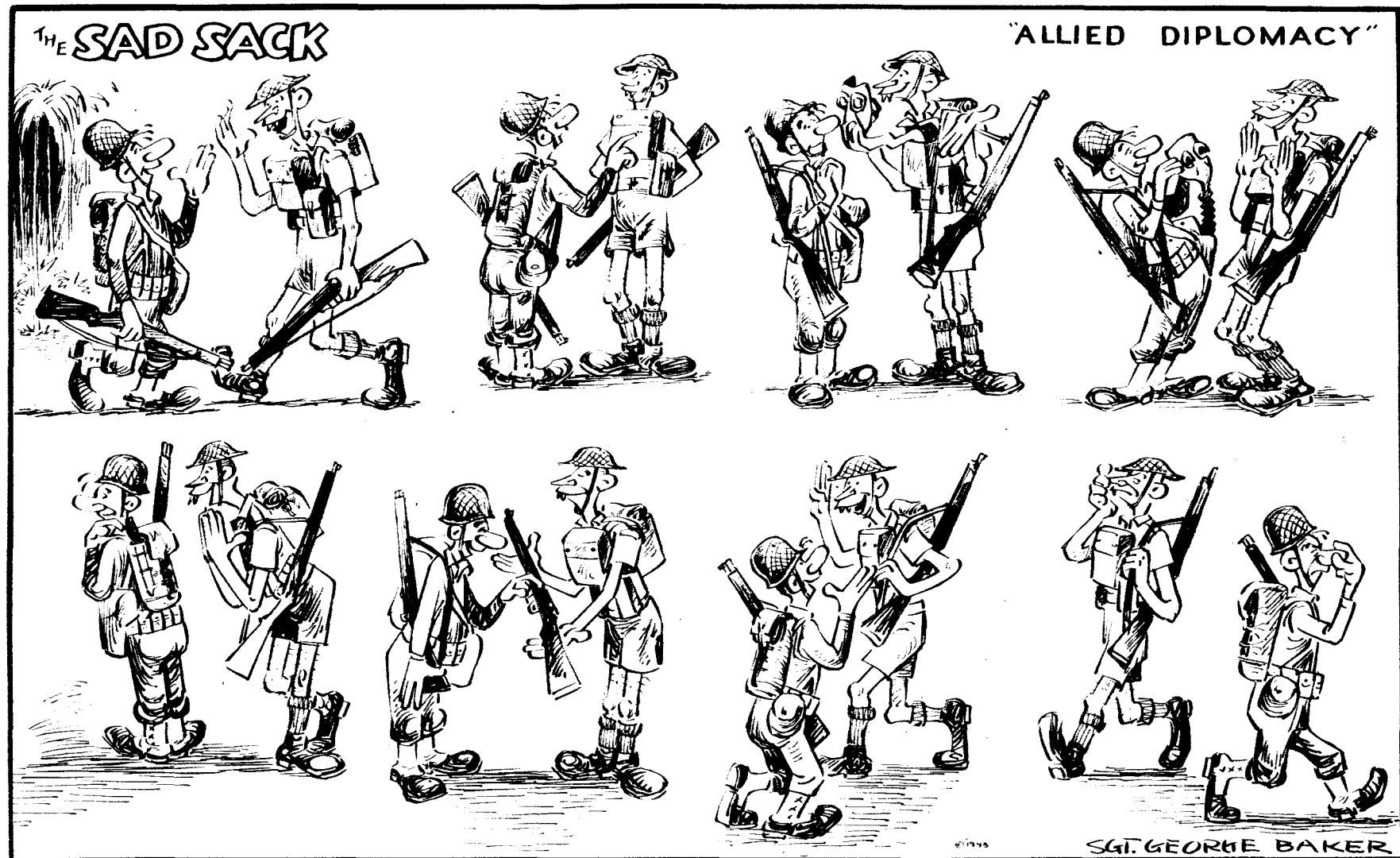
Some wounded are evacuated. Sgt. D. S. Jackson (left) killed five Japs before he was hit. Sgt. E. B. Lovett's helmet was creased by a bullet.



But, sooner or later, the enemy must open fire, and casualties result. A company aid man (left) gives a stretcher case a welcome cigarette.



A Jap in the open. Wounded, he was left behind as his fellow soldiers withdrew. This is how his dead body was found, invaded by flies.



By T Sgt. EDGAR L. ACKEN

THE whole length of the one-story narrow stone barracks that served as guard-house dormitory hummed with conversation from the groups sitting on the steel cots, smoking and talking and occasionally horsing with one another. But Jake paid no attention to the others. He had a listener—bought and paid for with Bull Durham. The listener knew it. He was out of smokes and Jake had the makin's.

Jake waited until his victim had rolled a smoke and lighted it. Then he began:

"A frien'a mine come off a furlough an' tol' me. He says, 'Jake, I hear ya ol' man ain't feelin' so good.' So I says, 'What they do, catch him drunk and jug 'im again?'—jokin', see? An' this fella says, 'No, honest, I hear he's sick.' So when I hears that I goes outta the mess hall—I was doin' a week KP; that damn cap'n again, jus' cause I missed reveille. Anyhow I goes to the orderly room an sees the firs' sergeant.

"I tol' him how it was, how the ol' man was sick, had pneumonia or somethin'."

An accidental listener on the bunk behind Jake interrupted him: "Howja know he had pneumonia?"

"Oh, I dunno. Guess this guy tol' me or somethin'. Anyway, I tol' the first sergeant about it,

and he tells me to see the comp'n'y comman'er. So I do.

"Lotsa good 'at done me. The CD looks at me fishy like and asts me where the letter was. An' I says, 'what letter?' An' he says that letter that tells me that my ol' man's so sick. So I tells him how it was—I didn't get no letter, this guy tells me.

"He keeps lookin' at me funny, an' then he says, 'I tell yuh, yuh can't get no furlough unless yuh got proof that ya ol' man's sick. Now if yuh wants yuh can go see the Red Cross an' get them to send a wire an' see if ya ol' man is sick. If they say so yuh can get a furlough.'

"So I went back to the mess hall madder'n hell. Here that cap'n wouldn't let me off jus' 'cause he hated me. My ol' man sick an' all didn' make no difference to him."

The second interrupter spoke up again: "Did you go ta the Red Cross?"

Jake turned. "Nah! Whatsa use? If he was sick the cap'n'd said he wasn't sick 'nough or somethin'." Jake settled in a position where he could face both his listeners. The first one had finished the cigarette and had slumped on the bunk, now and then putting an interested look on his face. The second man seemed the more interested of the pair, and Jake concentrated on him.

"Anyways," he continued, "I got madder an'

madder. There I was, peelin' them spuds an' scrubbin' floors an' washin' pots, an' my father ready to die. I didn' do nuthin' then, though—I couldn'. But that night I borrowed fi' bucks and got in a crap game and won 10, an' I took the 15 an' went to town.

"I had a few beers an' messed aroun' some, but all the time I was mad. Fin'ly I made up my mind. I says to myself, 'Maybe the ol' man's dyin' or somethin'. So I started out. I caught a freight up into Kansas and was goin' on into Colorado where the ol' man's at, an' then I happened to think maybe the MPs or cops might look for me there. So I gets off at Wichita an' gets a flop.

"Then I was broke. So I got me a job in a hamburger joint. I figgered on maybe writin' the ol' man an' if he was all right, I'd come on back. So I work on there an' I had a little dough an' I was ready to come on back, an' I goes into a beer joint an' I has a coupla beers an' somebody clips me f'reverthin'."

"Were you drunk?" his new listener asked.

"Nah! I had a few beers but I don't get drunk on beer. Why I can drink a whole case of beer an' don' hardly feel it. I 'member—"

"What did you do then—after you got clipped?"

"Oh, I went back to the hamburger joint. I couldn't come back with no money, could I?"

"You coulda taken a freight back, couldn't you?"

JAKE looked hard at his interlocutor. "You know how dirty yuh get on a freight," he said. "Yuh wouldn't expect me to come back to the comp'n'y all dirty, would yuh?"

"Yeah," the other said, "I guess ya right. Got the makin's?"

Jake felt the wrong pockets first. "I guess I got a little som'eres." He found the sack and held it out.

The other rolled a smoke and handed the bag back. "Then what happened?"

"Oh, I was workin', and a guy gets flip in the joint. He claims I short-changed him. We has an agyment an' damn if he don't call a cop! The dirty louse!

"The cops take me in. Then they fine out where I'm from, an'—here I am. Jus' on account the cap'n hates me an won't lemme see my sick ol' man, I'm in here."

"How is he?"

"Who?" asked Jake.

"Your father."

Jake got up. "I dunno, I ain't heard from him in a coupla years an' I never did get ta see him."