



ISLAND NATIVES ENTERTAIN MARINE PILOT

Lt. S. pursued the *Vals*, shot at about seven of them, and scored three. Before he could raise the ante, *Zeros* attacked. The Marine lieutenant made a left turn, maneuvered to avoid the *Zeros*, and then headed west. His plane had received many hits—one of which knocked out the oil system, and he was forced to bail out. Lt. S. was picked up by natives that evening, and returned to base the following day. His experiences describe combat conditions which fliers can expect to find in the Pacific.

I was with Capt. C. when we first sighted the enemy, followed him in his original dive away from the flight, and was on his wing when we made our attack on the bombers over X base. I didn't fire when we followed them in on X base, but on peeling off, there were nine to a dozen *Vals* about fifty feet off the water heading in an easterly direction. Didn't see Capt. C. after our initial run; however, someone to my right and slightly behind me was firing at the *Vals*.

They skidded from side to side in front of me attempting to avoid my fire. I put good long bursts into five or six that were about fifty feet off the water. I was anywhere from 100 to 1,000 feet. I saw one plane catch fire, but couldn't see what happened to the others, because I had terrific speed and passed over them. Capt. C. must have

MARINE CORPS REPORT

been with me, but behind, as I could see his tracers passing me. On one *Val* I made a very fast beam run, at about 90-degree angle from the left, but pulled up over it before I could see what happened. I fired at a couple of *Vals* after this, but don't know what happened to them.

After making these last two runs, I pulled up to the left to go back when two *Zekes* attacked me from the rear, above and slightly to the left. I was at about 1,000 feet and the *Zeros* were at 1,500 to 2,000 feet. When I first saw them, they were just getting in range and started firing at me. I still had terrific speed. A bullet hit the windshield in front of me. I pulled up as abruptly as I could, made a wing over, in hopes that I could fake a crash, leveled off and gave the plane everything it had. One *Zero* stayed on my tail, but I was able to outrun it. I was headed in a southerly direction when my oil pressure started dropping, so I knew then that I was either going to have to make a water landing or bail out. I first decided to make a water landing, but changed my mind and climbed to 1,500 feet to see if my engine would keep going; at this time

I jettisoned my hood. I had about 140 knots. My engine started coughing, so I rolled the plane over and parachuted, landing safely in the water about one mile off the northeastern tip of Y island. When I decided to parachute, I misjudged my position, and thought I was over Z, so I called over the radio that I was parachuting in that area.

All my reserve equipment worked perfectly. I got into my rubber boat and made my way to a small island. Shortly after reaching shore I made myself as comfortable as possible. Just as I was preparing to spend the night, a native found me and took me to his village.

The natives presented me with a package of Twenty Grand cigarettes, prepared special food, and even offered me Army rations. While we all ate a native kid played a ukulele and sang to me. One of his songs was "Say Good-by, Say Farewell," another was "The Girl of My Dreams." He played well. After a good night's rest I started on my way and eventually returned to base.

As an experience, it wasn't bad at all. I received no serious injuries—just wrist abrasions, resulting from the bullet that hit my windshield. A couple of my guns in the right wing stopped once, but worked after I recharged them. The plane worked all right until it was shot, but the radio wasn't working.