

NO BANQUETS IN NEW GUINEA

Don't Get Idea That Boys
Are Dining in Style on
Our Sacrifices.

By GEORGE WELLER
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WITH ADVANCED AMERICAN
TROOPS IN NEW GUINEA, April
6 (Delayed).—One American air
man was killed and another wounded
last week by stray Japanese sol-
diers still living a vagabond exist-
ence in jungle dugouts near the
portable hospital with forward

American troops
where this writer
is at present confined under treatment.

But the most
disturbing phenomenon during
convalescence under a torrid tent in northern
Papua is not the possibility that
the Japs may emerge from the surrounding
jungle seeking food and knock off
your correspondent on his canvas cot. It is, rather, the plain Amer-
ican G. I. dogfaces who are similarly
obsessed with food problems
who surround the writer's cot, can
openers in hand, and peer through
the tan mosquito net demanding:

"Is this that jerk correspondent
who wrote all the so-and-so about
the rich French food we are sup-
posed to be getting here? "We're
looking for that liar."

It is a combination of circum-
stances that has evolved this pecu-
liar situation that, while salvage-
minded American civilians appar-
ently reach with delight for every
tin can, the American soldier's re-
action is to wish to kick firmly in
the teeth the next man who offers
him one.

No 'Luxury Living'

Canned willy and broken crack-
ers and water flavored with orange
extract are part of the war scene
and accepted as such.

What gripes the slouch-shouldered,
green-clad, dog-faced who are fighting off malaria, bush typhus, anemia and hookworm is being told by either letters from
well-meaning relatives in the United States or handout thinkers in Washington, or able trenchermen covering the Papuan war from "somewhere in Australia"—American correspondents in New Guinea now total in round numbers two—how luxuriously he is living in the jungle and what sacrifices are being made by the American and Australian public to keep him fat and jolly.

Meat may be scarce and expensive in America, as letter writers tell us, but it is not because the army in Papua is living from Fridtjof Nansen's famous diet. Fruits and vegetables may have upped in price in Australia, but it is not because the American soldier in New Guinea is eating them up.

Temperatures Rose

One of the wardmen in the next
thatched hut received today a letter
from his girl saying, "tenderloins
have almost disappeared in America,
but we are glad to make this small
sacrifice for you to have them."

When he read this passage to
fewer patients, they were impelled
to rise and do something violent,
but only their temperatures rose.

The catalog of fresh food that
has reached your correspondent
during the past fortnight may be
interesting to those who think that
the American soldier is eating them
out of house and home. In 13 days,
your correspondent has glutted on the following uncanned proven-
der: One piece of meat, one egg,
two apples, one pear, one beet, one
dish of cabbage, two split plums,
12 individual grapes. One of those
apples was obtained dishonestly but
the rest was regularly acquired.

There's Some Hope

Everything else was canned.
The situation is not without some
hopeful signs. An agricultural ex-
pert recently arrived in New Guinea
to plan the beginning of those gar-
dens which are a standard part of
the Jap peasant army's procedure.
Mike Lyons of Syracuse, who pos-
sessed a growing hand nearly as
able as his poker hand, has started
several gardens among the air corps
establishments.

But the general reaction to those
benevolent statements from the United
States about how delicious de-
natured food can be is summarized
in what one dogface said yesterday
afternoon, as the writer and him-
self listened to a USO crooner sing-
ing the popular melody, "Ma, I Miss
Your Apple Pie."

"I hope," said this G. I., morosely,
"that I don't get a letter from her
tomorrow saying that she has sent
it to me already—canned."

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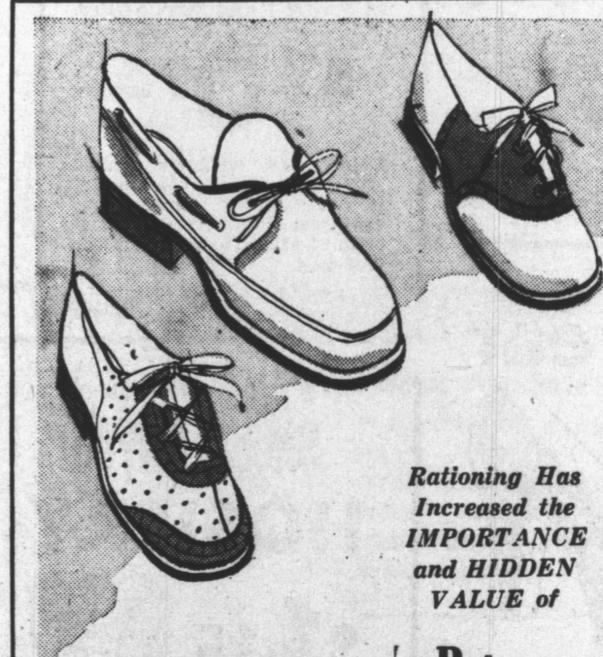
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