

William Robert Hamilton - RAAF #60489 75 Squadron

Personal diary of active service in New Guinea & Philippines, September 1943 – January 1945



At Forest Hill, Wagga 1942, Bill is 3rd from the right second front row.



Wed. 29.9.43.

Posted 2 ED

Fri. 8.10.43.

Left 2 ED

Wed. 13.10.43.

Arrived Townsville 1- Rpp

Fri. 15.10.43.

Left 1 Rpp, arrived Milne Bay by aircraft same day.

Wed. 20.10.43.

Left Milne Bay, arrived Goodenough Island same day.

Thu. 21.10.43.

Joined 75 Squadron, then was attached USN Patrol Torpedo (PT) Boat "Nevada", just as we landed 4 Jap Bombers came over. We made ourselves scarce.

Fri. 29.10.43.

Went up the coast to Salama (Salamaua) & Lae

Sat. 30.10.43.

Had a scare today American Submarine cut the water astern thought we were bound for Tokyo. Same night, again bombed by Jap bombers, caught us unaware at picture show at Lae. We made our getaway very smartly.

Thu. 4.11.43.

Frank missing.

Tue. 9.11.43.

My birthday all quiet for a wonder.

Thu. 11. 11.43.

Armistice Day. What a day, off Madang, was dive bombed & strafed by new type Jap Bomber no casualties quite a few misses very nerve racking.

Wed. 17.11.43.

Had severe raid today, again off coast of Madang. One of our boats severely damaged by cannon fire on our way back put in at Buna mission stayed the night had quite interesting chat with missionary there.

Fri. 19.11.43.

Again at Salama (Salamaua) & Lae; had quite a good look around Lae, heaps of wrecked Jap planes & tanks, trucks, etc. A real junk heap, had word of Frank and party today & also P. T boat supposed to have been badly holed & driven ashore near Bougainville Island, no details regarding fate of crew.

Wed. 24.11.43.

Visited Kirawena (*Kiriwina*) Island today, it is rather pretty coral island situated in Tobriand group & is about 12 miles by 16. Same night we had another heavy raid met Max Strachan & Les Moore who were with me at Wagga, we met in a slit trench what a place for a reunion.

Wed. 1.12.43.

What a rude awakening, back with 75 Squadron again. Left Lae by aircraft for Nadzab in Markham Valley area. Had a series of raids; 10 raids in 36 hrs, & only last night we were looking at Gary Cooper, Una Markell & Phillis Brookes, but tonight we shall sleep in slit trenches. Quite desolate country here, & a lot of damaged trucks & Jap Aircraft, have seen quite a lot of signs of action here, where paratroopers landed, quite a few Nips buried here, also a few of our boys & Yanks.

Wed. 15.12.43.

My closest call - was working on a bulldozer, when a Jap Dinah dropped 2 bombs. One fell direct on one of our aircraft, killing the observer, seriously injuring the air gunner. The other one fell about 20 yards from where we were working & only a heap of dirt saved us from injury we are fairly busy here getting landing strip ready.

Sat. 25.12.43.

Christmas day at approximately 7 am one of 8 squadron's bombers crashed when landing and blew up, all the crew were killed. 7.30 pm Christmas dinner consisting of turkey, roast potatoes, cabbage, pudding, cordials, whisky, gin beer, lollies, nuts and cake.

Sun. 26.12.43.

Sunday what a happy day, went out with USN PT boat Nevada at approx 10 pm Cruised about with 3 other craft for about 5 hours then went in with 1st Marines patrol to establish beach front for barge landings that followed us in at 5 am, made a landing at Borgen Bay, Cape Gloucester capturing the airstrip, met very little interference from Nip at this point

Sun. 2.1.44.

Sunday; went in here also with 6th and 7th Marines at Seidov Harbour about 3 am, main barge landings were made 1 hour later at 4 am, no opposition, few casualties, Marines captured another air strip about 2 miles inland on our return. Ran into quite a few Jap fighters and dive Bombers just off the coast of Arawe. They dropped some bombs and did some strafing, our crowd accounted for 4 shot down for sure and two made for home in a very sorry plight.

Wed. 12.1.44.

Went with US PTs and done over Womberewa Harbour. We sank at least 10 barges filled with supplies and a ten thousand ton supply ship. Ran into a storm off Sio and was beached got ashore with what we stood up in with exception of some we left at Cape Gloucester.

Fri. 14.1.44.

When we returned here found our camp had been raided by Nip, found the louse strafed us a few times here, so there is not much of our belongings left here. Looks like a new issue.

Thu. 18.1.44.

Back at Lae, very peaceful and quiet here having a very good rest here. Mail held up.

Wed. 26.1.44.

Still at Lae, mail question prayers answered, have received mail, very infrequent of late.

Thu. 27.1.44.

Good time here ended, reported again for duty under secret orders, destination unknown suspense ended.

Sat. 29.1.44.

Wednesday; rather a good trip and went into Rabaul Harbour at midnight, could not see very much. No shipping of much account so got what information that was necessary and left.

Wed. 1.3.44.

We are once more back at Gloucester for another rest camped with 7th Marines and boy are they good to us, would give us anything. Found out we were the first Australians that have landed in New Britain. Sold our hats for \$3 as souvenirs to the boys.

Thu. 9.3.44.

It's on again. We went in again with the Marines, landed troops on the North beach at Lorengau Island. Met quite a lot of shore opposition here, put out to sea again Naval bombard went terrific at different spots, very pretty sight all colours of the rainbow.

Fri. 10.3.44.

Barges went in again at 4 am after very heavy fighting captured airstrip. We never got ashore here.

Fri. 17.3.44.

Kavieng; Went in here with naval craft had a few close calls. We landed here with Marines under fire but took no part in fighting. Took wounded off, some very bad cases but all cheerful.

Tue. 21.3.44.

Went in again to Kavieng in barges to bring more wounded off quite a few Jap officer types with this bunch and look as if they have just about had it.

Wed. 22.3.44.

Marines took Kavieng today so back once again to our base. I hope for a good rest this time.

Tue. 28.3.44.

Back again at Lorengau, met severe opposition from enemy dive bombers. Sank one of our Corvettes and two PT boats.

We were only strafed the once, wounding two of our gunners. We also shot down 6 of their aircraft.

Fri. 31.3.44.

Landed with RAAF Ground staff at Momote Beach Los Negros Island. Went inland about 4 miles, Flight Lieut. Irwin was in charge of party. We came across a number of dead Jap that were killed by our naval bombardment amongst the dead were several Japanese women - may have been nurses. Had a remarkable escape here, went down some steps into one of their fox holes when one of our chaps touched a step that was loose and his presence of mind saved the party from goodness knows what. When he noticed it was loose he jumped on the next step. Very gingerly we looked about for secret wires could not find any We prized out the next step and found it was a huge Jap booby trap, a land mine, enough T.N.T. to blow up an army of men.

Sat. 1.4.44.

Once again we got orders to return to 75th Squadron at Cape Gloucester. After spending sometime on patrol activities around the Caroline Islands we ran into quite a lot of enemy opposition and lost two W.E. Boats and one P.T. Boat with all crews.

Sat. 15.4.44.

Back once again with the RAAF after a few days at Finschhafen P.T. base. Squadron on the move. We are doing a special commando course with Bren Owen and Vickers guns today. Was picked out as Section leader for No 3 platoon. It looks like an invasion move.

Tue. 18.4.44.

No longer in doubt embarked on 3 L.S.T. Barges each carrying 600 men bound for some place unknown. Looks like a big move all right, 90 ships in our convoy 6th American Army Mobile Works Squadrons.

Fri. 21.4.44.

Well, I guess it's on, dropped anchor at 4am off the coast of New Guinea, got my instructions to go ashore on Aitape beach, with lines and communication crowd at 7am and dig in, wait until American troops clear a passage from the beach and then make for the old Tadjji Airstrip, 3 waves; one company commanded by Flight Sergeant Davidson one by Lac Hansen and one by myself.

Sat. 22.4.44.

Today I will endeavour to piece together past happenings. The Yanks went in at 6.30 am, we followed at 7 am and met very little opposition, only one Jap machine gun had to be silenced. Apparently the Nip had left this area some days ago. We captured the airstrip at 9.30 am, two hours after we went in - rather amusing incident here. We took two Japanese labourers prisoner and they loved to talk English and after our IQ questioned them they said "we go now" and one of the boy's said "wherever to" and one guy said "to tell Jap Officer over there Armies have landed" so some of our boys went over and threw a few grenades into a fox hole and out staggered a Jap Captain and two other lower ranked officers they were very cheeky and believe me I would have loved to have put a burst of lead into them. The Captain could certainly talk marvellous English and said "Japanese Army will have Aitape back in one week from now" That is over a week ago so we have given up hope.



Cpl Bader, LAC Troy, Hamilton, Lancaster, Aitape



Photo taken from prisoner



With some natives at Aitape

Sun. 23.4.44.

Well, we have certainly been very busy. We had to clear a Jap hospital today. Believe me we had to use bulldozers and respirators, There must have been 40 dead in heaps including 7 nurses they were riddled with bullets. Looks to have been killed by their own troops before they left. It was absolutely putrid the mess, so the Americans sprayed 100 octane spirit over the whole issue and set it on fire. The sequel was that one Jap got up and fled, but an American soldier shot him down in his tracks. How in the name of goodness he lived in that filth I would like to know.

Mon. 24.4.44.

Well, today we have commenced to make the old Tadjji Airstrip serviceable. We are working flat out night and day - 4 shifts.

Wed. 26.4.44.

First aircraft landed today. We are getting on real well with the strip, the Doug's have brought in supplies and mail. I received 13 letters. The supplies were very welcome after biscuits and bully for over a week. We are getting a great more service this last few days, plenty of coconuts and wild pigs but we will not be allowed to go any further than 1/4 mile. American troops are bringing back quite a lot of P.O.W.s the American army is much different to the Marines, they never bother taking prisoners.

Fri. 28.4.44.

First air raid tonight 3 Jap bombers came over and dropped bombs on one of our supply ships. One of the Jap kites was shot down by an Anti-Aircraft ship which was in the bay at the time rather nice shooting display to the Nips sorrow.

Wed. 10.5.44.

Rejoined DE boats today after a few weeks rest from the sea. We are based at Aitape and do escort duty to Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea. So should see some fun.

Sat. 13.5.44.

Saturday rather an unlucky day: 60 of 80 Squadron was killed and we were sent out to look for Pte. Gregory of 75 squadron. We found him, he was OK, also one of 8 squadron's Beauforts which carries our mail also went in, not trace of the crew.

Sun. 14.5.44.

Went out again tonight. Located and picked up crew of Beaufort, they were all in, but soon recovered.

Tue. 16.5.44.

Pulled into Humbolt bay, Hollandia. We are escorting along with 7 destroyers 22 PT boats and 9 Corvettes, about 90 LST and liberty ships. Looks like another invasion force, all American personal. Hollandia is a very nice place, was quite a township at one time but almost in ruins at the moment. We met some Dutch missionaries also Nuns. It's quite a pleasure to meet some white folks for a change. Hank, my mate who hails from Texas went out after souvenirs and got bushed, but turned up. This is the place that was invaded the same day as we invaded Aitape on the 21st April 1944.

Wed. 17.5.44.

Still with convoy this morning.

Wed. 24.5.44.

Back at Hollandia again after a very hectic time at Wadau Island contacted the Jap a few times. We cleaned up about 8 and brought back 8 prisoners. On one occasion we were walking along the beach when we heard some chatter. One of the Americans killed one, I had a crack at the other one and wounded him in the arm, he dropped his rifle and tried to get away but after another shot over his head he came back with his hands up. The ones we took prisoners were unarmed and had no clothes on at all. They explained they had lost everything trying to get away from the island. We brought back 16 prisoners including 2 officers.

Wed. 31.5.44.

American army which is in our convoy made a landing at Wadau Island, after destroyers and cruisers had shelled the island for two hours. They met slight opposition captured airstrip within 30 minutes. 4 Americans killed 65 wounded 112 Jap were taken prisoners and 22 killed, Wadau is only a small island about 1 mile in length by 3/4 mile in diameter.

Sat. 3.6.44.

Had a good day today. Went up off coast of Biak, to bring off the wounded in LST landing barge. We were shelled by Jap 75 min guns and had a few near misses. We loaded about 120 wounded and injured American army personal and got under way. When about 30 Jap fighters and bombers appeared, 78 squadron and a Yank P38 squad attacked and drove them off, the Jap lost 7 fighters and 2 bombers, they were shot down in flames. The best show I have seen so far.

On our way back to Wadau island one of our PT boats picked up an Aussie pilot who was shot down in the do, but thought he could make Wadau airfield but had to land in the sea. He was OK and we took him on board, after a rest he was quite himself again. That makes 4 pilots of our own and two Yanks our craft have-saved in 10 days.

Sat. 17.6.44.

Had rather a busy day today. Sank 3 Jap barges off Biak Island, loaded with Jap. They were a force of Japanese Royal Marines. But pleased to say our little Armada of 7 PTs accounted for the lot, also a supply transporter. I received a nasty smack on right leg and left arm from a flying piece of steel off one of our gun turrets which was hit with a piece of HC shrapnel, we had one killed and 4 seriously injured and 3 of us got a few bruises.

Sun. 18.6.44.

At Biak convalescent depot. Waiting transport back to Hollandia, not too healthy here. We are only about two miles from front line. Quite a lot of wounded Yanks and Japs coming back. At the moment I am talking to a Javanese labourer who was captured by the Japs and this is part of his story. "I was in Javanese garrison artillery in Java when the Japs came. We fought on for two days against terrific odds but in the finish we were overpowered and taken prisoners of war. They worked us all very hard with little food, until we unloaded supply barges and ammunition trucks, took us almost 3 days. After that we were marched through dense jungle underground, to build gun pits and defence posts. We were for 3 days without food and little water and when we did get food it consisted of rice with dried salt fish. This made us all very ill. We were unable to work the next day, when a Japanese captain ordered 7 of my mates to be shot for refusing to work for Japan. This went on for some days and quite a number of our soldiers were either shot or tortured. We were then sent to Biak to build airstrip which was very hard work. When American bombers came over if any one was to leave their post they were mowed down by automatic machine guns. The result was lots of my comrades were killed in air raids. I am pleased that I am once again amongst friends but for my wife and family I do not know what happened to them, or other members of my family. My name is Tambi Malairoo.



Japanese Zero shot up at Biak



Japanese bomber at Noemfoor

Tue. 20.6.44

Once again back at Hollandia, much quieter here. I am at present a patient at M.C.C.S. hospital which means Military Casualty Clearing Station. My arm is very painful but no bones broken. A few days rest and I guess back again to goodness knows where.

Sun. 2.7.44.

Well it's Sunday morning, we are on our way to Noemfoor Island with a convoy of American task forces, if every thing goes off OK I will complete the description of landing. At the moment there is a very severe bombardment of the island which looks only small. Quite a lot of Australian destroyers are in this do. 6 am is zero hour for attack and it is now 4 am, so we will soon know what's what! It is now 9 am, we came through OK, American task force landed on time. Quite a number of air-borne troops are being dropped at the moment, rather a pretty sight. The Americans are meeting fairly heavy artillery and mortar fire. Whilst I am writing there are hundreds of bombers and fighters doing the island over. Midday, we are out at sea again after covering the landing. On our way back to Biak which is 95 miles away. This was the best sight we have seen since Gloucester landing, there were no air-borne troops in action there.

Wed. 5.7.44.

Last night we had a very heavy raid, Makhomer air strip was the objective, we were in slit trenches for 3 hours and in heavy rain. About 30 bombers came over 5 were shot down, one landed about 100 yards from our trench and blew up. We have had 4 raids here in a week this is the heaviest yet, but very little damage was done. No aircraft was damaged.

Thu. 6.7.44.

Another exciting morning, had hardly any sleep, went back to Noemfoor Island.

Mon. 10.7.44.

Out again tonight to search for one of 75 Squadron's pilots who was shot down about 7 miles from Monakwarrie (*Manokwari*), well within bombing range. The sea is very rough and a few of our new hands are fairly sea sick and also scared. Well today being the 11th we completed our mission, sank 3 Jap barges full of troops and also picked up P. G. Wheeler the lost pilot, he was OK but mighty wet. We arrived back Noemfoor Island which for the time being is our temporary base.

Sat. 15.7.44.

Well today I have received orders to report to 10 operational group, the transfer from PT boats to a shore job, I have served over the specified time of 6 months. Received word to report back to my old squadron which is 75, or better known as the "Butchers of Milne Bay", they have just moved in here so I will not have to travel very much, they are acting cover to the American 6th army, met quite a few of the old boys including Terry Walcott Homes (old mate), quite a few heard that we were lost off the coast of New Guinea. Thankful to say it was not true, although we certainly got a terrific scare.

Mon. 17.7.44.

It looks like I may remain on dry land now until I go home, I was working on the old Kitty Hawk kite today, I guess it will be quite a monotonous. Night of the 17th, I think this crowd are Troppo, one cannot sleep for rifle and machine gun fire, they reckon the Japs were all around them, but the only nip here are about 3 miles away and they will not worry anybody, there are about 400 including a General and his staff, they are holed up in limestone caves and when asked to surrender told the Yank Colonel in good plain English to go to hell, so it looks like them getting there first.



Merv Hinds, me, Sid Powell at Noemfoor



75 Squadron mob at Noemfoor

Sun. 23.7.44.

Today is the day I have been looking forward to, I received a telegram that we have a baby son, so I guess I am the most relieved person in this world. To know that all is well with Margaret and baby.

Mon. 24.7.44.

A great lot of excitement tonight, one of my mates and I went about half a mile from the camp to get some wireless fittings which were at a Yank dump. When we heard a rustle in the bushes near by, we lay very quietly for about 1/4 of an hour when we noticed it was a man, so we waited until he came closer and Sandy, my mate sang out halt, but the Nip (which we found out later) had other plans so he made off and Sandy opened up with a Tommy gun and needless to say the old Nip did not get very far he just cracked up, so we thought there may be more so we waited. By that time a crowd of Yank patrols came up and had a look and found out the job of bringing the Jap back again from the land of the rising sun, went through his clothes to find out any information he had, but found nothing of importance, only a revolver, an old watch, a fountain pen and a few Jap notes.

Mon. 31.7.44.

Had a fair size raid last night, Nip came over with about 5 kites and dropped a few eggs. Set a small petrol dump on fire otherwise never done any damage.

Tue. 1.8.44.

Another two small nuisance raids last night, one was shot down by one of our night fighters, which are called the "Black Widows".

Wed. 2.8.44.

I believe Tokyo radio has sent out a warning to all RAAF on Noemfoor Island to move out within 24 hrs. otherwise they are coming over to do us over. So we shall just have to wait on further developments. I don't think we will move from here for quite a time.

Thu. 3.8.44.

Went out today to what is more or less the front line here. There are crowds of Nip holed up in caves along the beach including several high ranking officers. The Yanks are preparing to drive them out in the same manner as they did at Biak. With 100 octane aircraft spirits and flame throwers, so it should not be long before Nip vacates Noemfoor Island now. They won't give themselves up, so it's the only way. At any rate a few more Nip killed will not matter.

Fri. 4.8.44.

Another raid tonight at about 2 am, Nip came over with two kites dropped a few bombs doing no damage. One of our Black Widows shot down one Tony.

Sat. 5.8.44.

One of our pilots went into the sea off the Nth end of airstrip, got out OK but mighty wet.

Fri. 8.9.44.

Left 75 Squadron early this morning by transport plane, to join the USN PT boat "Moorlands" at Sansapor. Went out on patrol.

Sat. 9.9.44.

Tonight like old times again, quite a good crowd.

Mon. 11.9.44.

Went into a small Island West of Pelan and blew up two small Jap Naval craft, and also wrecked a wireless station. There things got a little bit hot, so we got away as quick as possible.

Tue. 12.9.44.

Back at Sansapor and ready to move out at a moments notice.

Fri. 15.9.44.

Well we have had rather a busy day. Went in this morning with convoy of American Marines and army to attack shore position on Nth East beach at Pelan Island. Quite big move here with lots of opposition. Quite a few of the first wave that went ashore were practically wiped out. Two of our party PT boats went in too close and were blown clean out of the water. 7 were rescued out of 18 this is certainly a very dangerous landing and it looks like curtains for quite a few of the boys.

Sat. 16.9.44.

We got our own back on Nip he had a crack at us from the air but our crowd downed two of his kites and the American air force done the rest. We at least saw about 30 kites shot out of the sky one of the gunners on our boat was badly wounded looks like a homer, trust I get through OK but this looks like a few will go under if it keeps up. This is the only time I have felt much fear. Nerves are more or less on edge all the time. Midnight, same date; on patrol a few mile from Pelan Island.

We picked up 4 Nip airmen they could speak good English and were only young chaps one was very badly wounded and doubt if he will recover. He has about 8 bullets in him one of the others had his leg smashed badly. The other two never received a scratch, at the moment they are very subdued and are frightened, just the same as any ordinary person would be.

The Yanks on board wont give them much of a go, especially our Commander, his brother was shot down over here and never heard of since. I think the Nip would only want to make a move and he would not give them a chance. Him and I are in the same boat in that respect. I have seen some of the most brutal acts that could be done to human beings, but the Nips we have picked up of late seem to be more cowed down than others we picked up earlier in the war.

Sun. 17.9.44.

Back at Sansapor for a few days, as we have given up our prisoners to the Marines. The two wounded are still alive. This is a fair sized island and the stench of dead Japs is wicked. Shall be glad to be at sea again, there was certainly a fair sized battle went on here. I don't know how many Nips they killed but I guess quite a few.

Sat. 23.9.44.

Took a RAAF patrol unit out last night to Monakwarrie (*Manokwari*) which is about 60 miles away. We went in under darkness to try and capture a few Nips to find out the strength of the Jap defences. There 7 Nips were captured off shore in canoes, but not before they opened up on us with a machine gun. After a few small calibre shells we dropped off their bow, they gave themselves up. One was wounded but the others were OK and gave out quite a lot of information to the extent that there would be in the vicinity 40,000 Jap still trapped in there so we had a very successful night.

This is an extract from the "Brisbane Courier" dated 22.6.44 (?)
"Torpedo boats perilous Cruise to save crew of RAAF Beaufighter.

An epic story is told about a perilous trip right into enemy occupied territory by USS Lieut. Commander Watkins of California USA to reporter of the Brisbane Courier during a strafing raid over Monakwarrie (*Manokwari*) by Australian manned Beaufighter Squadron, one of the planes was hit by flak from anti aircraft fire and was forced down on a beach at Monakwarrie (*Manokwari*). Our patrol torpedo boat being the only one in the vicinity at the time was called upon to go to the rescue. Under my command at that time was Tech. Sergeant Merlin, N.F. Wireless opp. Seebers, R. and Gary, Green and Wass, GAUSA and four Australian ground staff who are attached to our unit from a very famous RAAF Kitty Hawk squadron LAC Barnes, A.F. Engineer, LAC Hamilton, W.R., Col Wheulzlec and LAC Rowe, Engine Fitters. When the question was put to the boys, they said "lets go, what are we waiting for", so we changed course and headed for the spot where we were to pick up the crew, after some cruising around off shore for about two hrs the aircraft was spotted with its nose dug into the sand so the 4 RAAF boys and myself went ashore in a small boat. We found two members of the crew who were smashed beyond recognition but all we found of the others were some tracks leading into the jungle. So we did what was possible for the fallen and returned to our boat and in the whole affair we never once came up against any enemy fire which for our own sake was a good thing."

Comment: this is only one of the thousand risks those brave boys take every time they go on patrol. Good luck boys and happy hunting – signed Editor, Brisbane Courier Mail.

Fri. 29.9.44.

For little manoeuvre we did on night of 23rd in bringing in Jap prisoners for interrogation all members of the crew of the PT boat and RAAF received special recommendation today. We were all lined up on the airstrip at Morotai and had quite a nice lot of things said about us by Air Commodore Cobby, also Air Marshall Scherger. We actually done nothing but by these two we apparently done a lot. The speech went something like this from Scherger, he said "For sometime now some of our picked ground staff personnel unknown to the outside public have been operating off enemy infested territories and waters, with PT boats. Sometimes going in at the risk of their lives and just trusting to luck and the efficiency of their mechanics and speed of their craft to get them away in time. They are called upon to do some of the most dangerous jobs in the war such as finding out the strength of enemy defences and also the numbers of shipping in some harbours, and for this heroic deed which was carried out by Lieutenant Commander Briggs USN I wish to commend both him and his crew who volunteered to go into enemy infested territory to bring back prisoners for interrogation by our IQ. It must be understood that the enemy is known to be in large numbers where this gallant little crew went and the prisoners they brought back gave us some very valuable information. I wish to thank officers and crew for this gallant manoeuvre." With that he shook us all by the hand and wished us luck and said trust in the very near future you will all be back in sunny Australia and the United States with your loved ones. The boys are all amused as this was the easiest job we ever had.



Morotai October 1944, Bill centre at back in slouch hat

Tue. 17.10.44.

Left Marua in night for destination unknown. Joined convoy at 3 am

Wed. 18.10.44.

We are on our way again with one of the biggest convoys ever seen in Sth West Pacific.

Thu. 19.10.44.

We are at the moment at anchor, it is midnight I think we are somewhere off the central Philippines, gosh it's dark. 4 am only half our convoy here, must have split up during the night, just received word we are to go in at dawn with Task Force and are to land on beach to East end of Mindanao.

6 am, a terrific bombardment is going on at the moment and also hundreds of planes are bombing all along the coast, the Nip seem to be putting up very severe opposition. Two liberators shot down by Ack Ack. We'll give an account of the landing if we don't get our issue. We are to move in, in 5 minutes so this may be it, we can only hope for the best. 5 pm 19th back at sea again, the landing was very successful and we are thankful to say are all safe and sound but the landing party that established the beach head were bashed about quite a lot. We never encountered any aircraft opposition at all so that makes quite a lot of difference. We struck a few shore guns but we silenced them very smartly.

Sun. 22.10.44.

Well everything is going fine, the landing at Mindanao completely misled the Nips, also our unit but the main landing was made at the same time at Leyte.

Wed. 25.10.44.

We are now established at Leyte and it is quite nice here. Quite a big town but it's badly knocked about. There are numbers of mixed breeds here, we also encountered a few American nurses and civilians who were left here. They were all in a bad way, one young nurse about 22 has two Jap children. It does seem a shame the nurses are all only young but I am afraid they are old now and have lived a lifetime in the two years Nip roamed around here. The poverty is wicked, no supplies at all. We have been on half rations, so they could have something to eat. The Nips are laying dead and wounded everywhere and the stench is awful.

Mon. 30.10.44.

Today I was made an acting sergeant, the boys all seem to be quite pleased with their new sergeant, and it seems awful to have to wait until some poor beggar gets killed before one gets promotion. Sergeant Gerald was killed at the landing with a piece of shell and it had to fall to my lot to take his place, why, I do not know. Because the other boys did just as good a job as me poor old Merv Gerald said to me just before he went under that he felt like it was the finish and I was kidding him that we would get through however it happened about 5 minutes after and he never had a chance. His other mate had a miraculous escape, he was on one of the 20mm guns and another piece of shrapnel tore his tunic right down none side and he never got a scratch but a heck of a fright.

Wed. 15.11.44.

Leyte: Japs have been for 3 days trying to reinforce their army here. We are not allowed any distance from the camp area, the main battle line is only 5 1/2 miles from here. We get no sleep for there is one continual barrage all the time. Jap aircraft this last few days have appeared in increased numbers. We saw 8 shot down yesterday by American manned Lightnings and Thunderbolts. There has been an air raid about every hour since Sunday. One is continually in a slit trench. 26 Americans were killed and wounded yesterday a direct hit on the air raid shelter, so things are mighty tough. With Nip, the food shortage, the civilians are suffering very much, poor beggars are just skin and bone. One of our crowd has fallen for an American nurse. There are numbers of French and Javanese here, we thought the Javanese were Japs and nearly let go with machine guns, they were coming in to give themselves up and we don't want any live Japs to share our supplies.

The Yanks think us Australians are a blood thirsty crowd, our CO gave us orders to take no prisoners. I think the food shortage is the cause, at any rate we do not need much of an excuse.

Thu. 23.11.44.

Left Leyte today for Ormoc Bay, very heavy weather and raining heavens hard in fact it has been raining here for days, our camp site is one great pool of water and we have been wet through for 3 days. A very heavy sea is running outside. We have had quite a nice stay at Leyte, bombed on average of 3 times each day and twice at night. Seen rather an amazing sight today, a Jap convoy of 4 transporters with two destroyer escorts with about 30 aircraft as top cover, our Thunderbolts and P38s and also B24 went out in strength and shot up the whole convoy. Shooting down all of the planes

with exception of 5 which made off. The 4 transporters were set on fire and sunk very quickly, one destroyer seemed to be blown clean out of the water, the other made off, but never got very far before it was disabled.

We had a grand stand view of the whole affair which I will tell something of the disorder of the Jap transports, we passed through miles of wreckage and dead Japs, must be some thousands of dead Nips.

Sat. 9.12.44.

Back once again at Leyte after a very strenuous 5 days. We got ashore at Ormoc but were under artillery and shell fire for two days and nights, we were all scared stiff. We had been under shell fire a few times but this was the first time we got close enough to have an actual land fight with the Nip. They seemed to run right into the Marines fire and were mowed down, we were manning a machine gun. I think we accounted for a few, at least we helped capture about 16 Nips, 8 wounded and 4 alive with the other 4 dead. We only had one chap wounded in the right arm.

I at least got some snaps or at least some films of one dead Nip, will get them developed and see what happens, may have some snaps of real live Jap for our family. Now something about our surroundings, we have been allocated new quarters in the town area here, we are at the moment camped in one of the biggest buildings here, namely Provident company's building, There are lots of company here in the Philippines, Americans, Javanese, Burmese, poor beggars it is pitiful to see them, the women folks in rags and just skin and bone. This was a jolly prosperous town at one time and some of the buildings are in remarkable condition with well laid out streets' parks and gardens, but now it just a city of misery.

Wed. 3.1.45.

Mindoro, we had rather a narrow escape from Jap today. We went out for a tour, when we were going through a jungle track, we were fired on by Jap patrols. Two of our crowd were slightly wounded, at any rate we opened up on them with automatic rifles, accounted for 8 and took 3 back as prisoners. It has created more or less of panic. One truck from an American unit with its men is missing. We only arrived here from Leyte a few days ago, It's rather a nice place plenty of amusement and plenty of supplies. This seems to be one place Nip kept in fairly good condition. We have our quarters in which used to be a large guest house and everything is in very good order, even to hot and cold water system, electric lights. A few booby traps have been located. One in the centre of a large clock, it was connected to the mechanism inside of the clock, would have been wound I guess, the person who did so would have been killed, no mistake. There are some very pretty gardens here; at one time there must have been lots of white tourists here.

We managed to get one of the cars going; it's a beautiful job, a large Packard sedan. We will sure go places in it if it is not taken off us; the boys are also busy running one another around in Rickshaws. We may round up a few natives later and go around in style.



USAF Camp Cyclops at Hollandia



Leyte Cemetery, Philippines

28 Aug 1945 'On demobilization',

Cook's Assistant	19 Aug 1941	PROMOTIONS AND RECLASSIFICATIONS:
		AC1 19 Aug 1941
		LAC 01 Mar 1942
		CPL 01 Aug 1944

2RC	Sydney	19 Aug 1941
2RD	Richmond	19 Aug 1941
2ITS	Bradfield Park	19 Sep 1941
7RSU	St Marys	15 Sep 1942
5AD	Wagga Wagga	10 Dec 1942
2BD	Sydney	25 Sep 1943
1RPP	Townsville	12 Oct 1943
75SQN	Port Moresby	18 Oct 1943
75SQN	MOVED Nadzab	10 Jan 1944
75SQN	MOVED Tadji	02 May 1944
75SQN	MOVED Hollandia	25 May 1944
75SQN	MOVED Noemfoor	22 Jul 1944
75SQN	MOVED Morotai	10 Dec 1944
2PD	Sydney	20 Feb 1945
RSTN	Rathmines	30 Mar 1945
2PD	Sydney	22 Aug 1945

HONOURS AND AWARDS: 1939-45 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal 1939-45, Australia Service Medal 1939-45, Returned from Active Service Badge.

Certified that the above is a true and correct statement of the service of the abovenamed airman, who in World War II served outside Australia.

WCB
FOR OFFICER IN CHARGE OF RECORDS

RAAF official record



Location Legend for PNG

1. Milne Bay
2. Goodenough island
3. Lae
4. Buna
5. Kirawena (Kiriwina)
6. Nadzab
7. Borgen Bay, Cape Gloucester
8. Finschhafen
9. Rabaul
10. Lorengau (Manus)
11. Kavieng
12. Momote
13. Aitape
14. Ferguson Island
15. Hollandia (Jayapura)
16. Biak
17. Wadai Island/Madang
18. Noemfoor Island
19. Manokwari (Monakwarrie)
20. Sansapor
21. Morotai



Location Legend for Philippines

- 22. Mindanao
- 23. Leyte / Ormoc
- 24. Mindoro



Post WW 2

Bill was discharged from the RAAF on compassionate grounds whilst posted to 11 Squadron (Catalinas) at Rathmines. He resumed employment at the Railway Commissioner's Blue Metal Quarry at Bombo, NSW. Having gained RAAF 2E fitter qualifications, he was able to take a job as Diesel Fitter / Lorry Driver until retirement in 1968.

Quite a few Kiama service organisations benefited from Bill's volunteer work as an office bearer, such as the Rugby League club, RSL and Scouts, and he always made the effort to attend the Anzac March in Sydney, although his overseas service had a significant effect on his overall health.

Bill died of complications from Parkinson's disease on the 21st April, 1972.

"Bill's son Lester Hamilton (lesterhamilton@bigpond.com) is very keen to hear of others who served as RAAF crew on PT boats, or of any published works covering their service."