

What They're Saying about *Rough War*...

"*Rough War* presents a highly personal view of air combat and daily life in the WW II jungles of Burma. Walt Shiel skillfully blends a history of that war with young fighter pilot Paul Eastman's personal diary, letters, and photographs. An engaging history of a small part of a global war."

Robert F. Dorr, Author of *Mission to Berlin*

"History, combat memoir, intense love story; they're all here in *Rough War*. The diary entries, the love letters, the beautiful poetry and the pictures that portray a world at war come together to paint a poignant portrait of a man's life. The format that brings it all together is both novel and extremely effective. The war, the China-Burma-India theater and the challenges of the events in the lives of the participants are brought together and will leave the reader with new understanding and a deep sadness at the almost inevitable outcome. *Rough War* is a rare achievement and offers a rewarding, creative approach to history that should be a model for more writers."

Ed Rasimus, Author of *Palace Cobra* and *When Thunder Rolled*
(Veteran of combat in the F-105 and F-4)

"Constructing a memoir based on wartime jottings is a daunting challenge: what does the author condense, what does he elaborate? It is to Shiel's credit that he included the minutiae of everyday life recorded by Eastman. From the details of flying halfway around the world to his wartime assignment, told with the wide-eyed astonishment of a youngster who until two years previously had not been beyond the borders of Wisconsin, to descriptions of exotic cultures, Eastman is the quintessential innocent abroad. But tales of flying from jungle airstrips, of bombing and strafing missions against the Japanese, of being shot down behind enemy lines, of comrades killed in action and accidents give *Rough War* a rip-saw edge that can only be truly appreciated when the poignant epilogue is reached. In the annals of WWII aerial warfare *Rough War* is a jewel that has been missing for far too long."

Jim Hooper, Author of *A Hundred Feet over Hell*

"Pieced together from letters, diaries, and official records, *Rough War* is far more than the story of a typical American World War II volunteer who served as a fighter pilot in the largely unsung China-Burma-India Theater. It is a story of the war generation, of the forgotten theater, and of the terrible things just being in a war does to people."

Eric Hammel, Author of *The Road to Big Week*

"*Rough War* presents a unique history of the making of a combat fighter pilot. Interspersed with World War II events and in-theater events from the rarely mentioned CBI theater are writings from Paul's journals and letters home detailing his journey into and through combat. While aviation technology changed for America's next war in SE Asia, the threats of the jungle, monsoon, and a determined enemy created similar issues during my own fighter-pilot experiences in Vietnam."

William H. Lawson, Brig. Gen., US Air Force, Retired
(Veteran of combat in the F-4, F-16, & A-10)

What They're Saying about *Rough War*...

“*Rough War* brings back lots of memories of my time in that part of the world. In '66-'67 our combat maps of Vietnam and Laos still had large holes of data, and we had to work our way to the war and home just like Paul did. I really enjoyed the format—chronological, big picture, CBI, and Paul's War helped put it all in perspective. Here's to you, Paul. As we say in 2011: Thanks for your service and a job well done.”

Ace Rawlins, Col., US Air Force, Retired
(Veteran of combat in the F-104 and F-4)

“Paul Eastman was a WW II fighter pilot, one of millions of anonymous Americans who answered the call, did their duty, and returned home. He flew in China and Burma, lost in the shadow of the glamorous 'Flying Tigers,' but had little opportunity for aerial glory. He shot down no enemy aircraft, and his name remains largely unknown. But this book provides a rare perspective, setting Eastman's personal story against the global and regional conflict. His logbook entries and especially his letters home bespeak an era long past and quickly fading. For that reason alone, *Rough War* is worth reading.”

Barrett Tillman, Author of *Whirlwind*

ROUGH WAR

Other books by Walt Shiel

Fiction

Once a Knight: A Novel of Aerial Combat and Romance in World War I (2010)

Devil in the North Woods: A Novel Based on the Tragic 1908 Metz, Michigan, Wildfire (2005)

Pilots and Normal People: Short Stories from a Different Attitude (2005)

Nonfiction

T-41 Mescalero: The Military Cessna 172, with Jan Forsgren and Mike Little (2006)

Cessna Warbirds: A Detailed and Personal History of Cessna's Involvement in the Armed Forces (1996)

Also

Flying for France: With the American Escadrille at Verdun by James R. McConnell

(a modern reprint edited, and with new historical notes, by Walt Shiel)

ROUGH WAR

The Combat Story of Lt. Paul J. Eastman,
A “Burma Banshee” P-40 and P-47 Pilot

by Walt Shiel



Rough War by Walt Shiel
Copyright © 2011 Walter P. Shiel
All Rights Reserved

Letters and diary entries quoted in this book and photos reprinted in this book (unless otherwise attributed) are copyright © 1943-45 by Paul J. Eastman, used by permission from his daughter, Denise (Eastman) Hardies.

No portion of this book may be copied, reproduced, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise, including recording, photocopying, or inclusion in any information storage and retrieval system, without the express written permission of the publisher and author, except for brief excerpts quoted in published reviews.

First Edition
Manufactured in the United States

Information: Jacobsville Books
an imprint of Slipdown Mountain Publications LLC
www.JacobsvilleBooks.com
1-866-341-3705

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shiel, Walt.

Rough war : the combat story of Lt. Paul J. Eastman, a "Burma banshee" P-40 and P-47 pilot / Walt Shiel.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN: 978-1-934631-15-7 (pbk.)

ISBN: 978-1-934631-38-6 (e-book: ePub)

ISBN: 978-1-934631-39-3 (e-book: Kindle)

ISBN: 978-1-934631-40-9 (e-book: PDF)

1. Fighter pilots—United States—Biography. 2. United States. Army Air Forces. Fighter Group, 80th. 3. World War, 1939-1945—Campaigns—Burma. 4. World War, 1939-1945—Campaigns—India. I. Eastman, Paul J. II. Title.

D811 .S54 2011

940.54—dc22

2011902252

*Dedicated to Paul J. Eastman,
with gratitude and respect for
his service to his country,
and to his family,
who preserved the
priceless material that
made this book possible*

800K

27 MAR 1945

102

708806



CLERK, CIRCUIT COURT
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLA.

1945 OCT 30 PM 2:38

RECEIVED

02225

Army of the United States

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that

PAUL J. EASTMAN O 803 360 1st Lt.

80th Fighter Group, 90th Fighter Sq, 10th Air Force.

honorably served in active Federal Service

in the Army of the United States from

28 MAY 1943

to

3 SEPTEMBER 1945

Given at SEPARATION CENTER, Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

on the 3rd *day of* SEPTEMBER 1945

OFFICE OF REGISTER OF DEEDS,
DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Received for Record
A. D. 1945 at 120 o'clock P. M.
and recorded in vol. 7
on page 102
A. D. Baker

P. F. HURLEY
MAJOR INF.

Contents

Foreword by Walter J. Boyne	xi
Preface	xiii
Introduction	xvii
PART ONE: Burma Falls to Japan	1
Chapter 1: "We got a hell of a beating"	5
Chapter 2: Eastman Solos While Anakim Flounders	9
Chapter 3: Paul Eastman, Fighter Pilot	13
Chapter 4: Heading for Combat	17
Chapter 5: A Little Dot in the Middle of the Ocean	25
Chapter 6: Italy Surrenders	31
Chapter 7: Getting to Know India	37
Chapter 8: A Ton of Gold	45
PART TWO: The Allies Push Back	55
Chapter 9: Into the Fray	59
Chapter 10: Holidays in Burma	65
Chapter 11: Burma Heats Up	73
Chapter 12: War is Hell	97
Chapter 13: Watch Out Now, Ye Nips!	109
Chapter 14: Thunderbolts	117
Chapter 15: R&R At Last	125
Chapter 16: In the Burma Jungle	137
PART THREE: Moving Up and Moving Out	151
Chapter 17: Second in Command	153
Chapter 18: A New Year in Burma	161
PART FOUR: Homeward Bound	177
Chapter 19: Day of Days!	179
Chapter 20: Time is Unbearably Slow	205
Chapter 21: Back to Civvies	213
Epilogue	223
Maps	229
Index	235
About the Author	247

Photographs and Illustrations

Paul's diaries	xiv
Paul at 6 months & at 11 years	xv
Paul's father in WW I	xxiii
Paul before WW II	xxiv
Paul's Army portrait / Paul with Joyce	2
MacDill Field directory	3
MacDill Field Motor Pool	4
CBI shoulder patch	8
PT-17 Stearman / Paul's Cadet Squadron Commander certificate	12
Class 43-E graduation notice	15
BT-13 Valiant / Link Trainer / AT-6 Texans	16
Paul's P-47 training accident	21
Paul during flight training	22
Paul with new pilot wings	23
Newspaper article about Paul	24
C-54 transport	29
Paul's GI-issued flight computers	30
Paul's "short snorter"	34-36
Paul & P-40 at FOTU	44
Receipt for gold	52
List of Paul's combat gear	53
Paul's USAAF ID / Paul's receipt for his sidearm	54
Paul in India during FOTU	56
Paul's logbook with his first combat mission	57
Mission planning / Intel debriefing	58
Paul with "Death's Head" P-40	64
Native boy adopted by 80th FG	71
CBI radio frequencies & call signs	72
Paul in quarters at Teok	86
Paul, Joyce & 1941 Dodge / Joyce / Gas ration card	96
Forward bases in Burma / Paul in headhunter outfit	105
Article about Paul in Stoughton, WI, paper	106
Shaddup, Burma, airstrip / Pilots in mess tent	107
Wrecked P-40 "Oh! Red" / "Old Hindu Eastmen"	108
Lord Mountbatten arrive at Burma forward base	115
90th FS P-47s in Burma	116
Paul & three other pilots who successfully attacked Lashio on July 4th	123
Results of two P-47 landing accidents	124

Paul on R&R in India	134
Airfield at Tingkawk Sakan	135
Paul with his P-47	136
90th FS officer with Japanese battle flag	144
P-47 maintenance at a forward base	145
Paul with his P-47 (more photos)	146
Lt Lyon with P-40 / Lt Joseph in P-47	147
80th FG recreation in Burma	148
Burma USO show / Tower officer on duty in Burma	149
Warhawk on the Warpath	150
Pilots of C Flight / Paul with L-5	152
Hunting party / Wash day in the jungle	160
Jinx signing Lt Hammer's P-47 / Lt Weston in P-47	171
Paul with his P-47 left side ("Bunny Dunny")	172
Paul with his P-47 right side ("Lady Esther")	173
Paul in P-47 / Lt Bell / Explosive Christmas gift	174
Dining with the Brits / 1944 Christmas card	175
Typical jungle base in Burma	176
Paul & crew chief with P-47 "Bunny Dunny"	178
One of Paul's V-Mail letters	201
90th FS "Auger Inn"	202
Capt "Doc" Zwerner / Officers on clean-up detail	203
Aftermath of P-47 stall/spin accident / Ledo-Burma Road	204
Paul with "Lady Esther"	211
Order grounding Paul from further combat	212
Paul's final Individual Flight Record	217
Security Dos & Don'ts letter, pg 1	218
Security Dos & Don'ts letter, pg 2	219
Welcome Home letter	220
"We're here to help" letter to returning servicement	221
VD warning message to returning servicement	222
Paul & Joyce after the war	226
Paul after the war	227
Map of Paul's journey to combat	230
Map of CBI theater	231
Map of Burma	232
Map of Paul's return journey from combat	233



Above: Paul and Joyce with their 1941 Dodge shortly after their wedding.

Right: One of the photos of Joyce that Paul received while in the CBI.

Below: Portion of a gas ration card that Paul received before leaving for overseas.



IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS		A BASIC MILEAGE RATION	
<p>1. Coupons can be used only in connection with the vehicle described on the front cover. Detached coupons are VOID.</p> <p>2. If you stop using your car, this book and all unused coupons must be surrendered to your Board within 5 days.</p> <p>3. If you sell your car, this book and all unused coupons must be surrendered to your Board. The purchaser will not be issued a gasoline ration unless he presents the receipt which you receive at the time of such surrender.</p>		<p>UNITED STATES OF AMERICA OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION</p>	
NAME OF REGISTERED OWNER		F. J. Eastman	
ADDRESS—NUMBER AND STREET			
CITY AND STATE			
LICENSE No. AND STATE		YEAR MODEL AND MAKE	
Holder must fill in any blank spaces above before the first purchase of gasoline.			
OPA Form R-525 C	T 0012417	OPA Form R-525 C	T 0012417
MILEAGE	A17	MILEAGE	A17
(License No.) (State)	d	(License No.) (State)	d

Chapter 12

War is Hell

The CBI War

By early April, exhausted from their grueling thrust into central Burma, virtually every man in “Merrill’s Marauders” suffered from dysentery and tropical diseases. They expected to return to bases in India to recuperate. Instead, they found out they were to be redeployed back across the hazardous Kumon Range to attack Myitkyina. They were to support Stilwell’s “End Run” plan by finishing off the Japanese in the north while the Chinese X Force pushed them south, with the ultimate objective to reopen the Ledo-Burma Road.

British Gen. Orde Wingate’s 3rd Indian Division (Long Range Penetration Groups also known as Wingate’s Chindits) had just completed an equally debilitating push down the western flanks of Burma to Indaw. In addition to their physical distress, their morale had reached a new low after Wingate’s death in a B-25 crash on 24 March. Gen. Joe Lentaigne assumed command of the Chindits for a difficult series of bloody engagements as they pushed northeast to join up with Stilwell’s X Force.

Paul’s War

On 1 April, Paul wrote to Bunny that “another month has passed my Darling—another month closer to our great day, whenever it may be. I have seven months behind me now—seemingly seven years.” He also noted that he had forgotten about his parents’ 5 April wedding anniversary and asked her to call them and to send a card for his father’s 23 April birthday. He closed with: “I haven’t been doing a hell of a lot lately. Kinda bad

weather, but we are eager as hell to do all we can before the monsoons hit us—and slow us down considerably.”

Sunday Evening, April 2nd, 1944

Dearest Bunny,

That pilot of ours who went down in Burma a while ago which I told you about, returned today—bewhiskered, hungry, wanting a smoke, and happy as hell. We have been listening to his escapades all evening, and he certainly has some exciting adventures to relate. He certainly is a lucky man!

Boy, a Sgt in this outfit gave me three rolls of film tonight—so I’ll be taking pictures like mad for a while now. It’s 35mm film—18 exposures to the roll—so oodles of pictures will come your way soon. I have borrowed a 35mm camera for a month so now I’m all set. If you possibly can—send some F2 contact paper in a letter to me. Get it wrapped in small packets—but get all you can and please hurry it.

I had a day off today, and drove to a village a hell of a long way from here to see if I could buy something—but didn’t find a thing. Sure am tired now.

Golly, Darling, whenever I am in my tent and see your pictures—I live all over again in my mind individual little incidents we had together. Happy as those days were—those coming for us will overshadow them completely. You absolutely monopolize my tent—my eyes are drawn automatically to your pictures. Oh how I love you Bunny Mine—guess you know that.

The weather held us back today, but we are always in there pitching whenever there is a break in it. Are you reading much about our war over here now? I presume you are!

Forever,
Paul

The CBI War

During the lull in action brought on by the bad weather, 71 members of the 80th FG received Air Medals from Brig. Gen. John F. Egan. Gen. Egan noted that the men had

“accomplished with distinction more than 25 combat missions over enemy-held territory of Northern Burma.” He continued, “In the execution of these flights, they have with eagerness and vigor attacked enemy installations. In aerial combat they have succeeded in driving the enemy from the sky.”

In the same ceremony, Gen. Egan presented Lt. Phillip R. Adair the Silver Star for his solo action in which he “singly and repeatedly attacked a formation of 24 enemy bombers and 35 enemy fighters with skill and determination.”

Paul did not receive an Air Medal at this event, having completed only 13 combat missions by that time.

The 13 April issue of *CBI Roundup* noted that *Life* magazine had recently published two articles about the war in the CBI Theater: “Elephants at War” by Phillip Wynter that discussed the use of elephants in lieu of mechanical construction equipment on the front lines and “War In Burma” that included photos by Bill Vandivert of Lt. Gen. Stilwell and Col. Rothwell H. Brown, commander of the Chinese tank detachment. This was welcome news to the American forces in the CBI, who often felt they were fighting an invisible war with minimal press attention back home.

Paul’s War

5 April: We bombed and strafed Namto today. This raid gave me my first glimpse of the Jap ground forces, for as we came in for strafing, we could see lots of Japs kneeling down shooting their rifles at us. They would stay in their foxholes until we passed over, then immediately jump out and start shooting. We fooled them though, by strafing both ways at once with two ships, catching them beautifully. A few more “good Japs” we left there.

**We fooled
them**

Also on 5 April, he received a letter from Joyce—dated 11 November 1943— and in his letter that evening, he noted gratefully that “get here it did—and that is what is important.” In the same letter, he wrote, “We’ve really been raising hell with ‘Yo Jappie’ lately—wish I could write you all about my missions, but naturally cannot.”

Two days later, Paul joined a large Tenth Air Force contingent of P-40s that provided close air support for the ground forces struggling through central Burma. He flew twice that day, once to Myitkyina and once to Kamaing. He reported that they “bombed then strafed, and burned up at least 50 *bashas* and houses...some light—possibly .30 caliber machine guns—ground fire was seen, but no hits on our aircraft!”

On Easter Sunday, 9 April, he told Joyce in a letter:

This has been a very restive and peaceful day for me. This morning, myself and four other Catholic officers “Jeeped” our way 50 miles to a mission Chapel for holy mass. It was really lovely. The mission had been founded here in India some time ago by Jesuit missionaries, and since we moved to our new field we happened to find it. It is an adobe and plaster building which reminded me of the Texas chapels of Spanish monastery. The altar was strictly beautiful—every bit as pretty as any back stateside. A choir made up of a Jesuit priest and four Jesuit nuns lent really a stateside air to a very beautiful High Mass. Among the attendees were many converted Indian natives, praying as any Catholic, and also a few British tea planters and, of course, many American soldiers. This is the first real church I have seen since arriving over here, and throughout it I felt as though I was again in America attending Sunday Mass as I have so often.

By the way, Darling, what name would you like me to name my ship? I will soon have my own, and I would love to have you name it. Think it over and when you decide let me know.

11 April: Went after storage areas today, but I believe the [Kamaing] target was misinformation for it surely looked like a blank. All we could see was dense jungle—excellent camouflage of course—but we didn’t even start a fire. This afternoon we again hit Myitkyina. There are swell targets left here and we hit some nice big *basshas* and houses. Lots of large fires were started by our strafing.

On 12 April, he explained to Joyce why he would be unable to write her every day for the foreseeable future:

Lately, Dearest, I have not been writing you daily as I wish to do—not because I do not have the ambition, but because I have not had the time nor the opportunity. Running missions from our own field does not disrupt my daily writing, but when we run them from other fields it does—for we stay overnight usually, and there is no chance to write for there is no light or stationary at the places I mention. In fact—there is nothing but a tent in the jungle with a rope “sack”—just enough to hold us until we can again takeoff.

So, from now on Darling, because of our increased activity over here, I may not be able to write daily—and sometimes for two or three days at a time, but I feel that you understand and will take everything into consideration...I carry your little pictures with me always, and every night I set them before me and just dream and think of you...I do not even try to guess how long it will be before I return now, Darling, for events over here have changed so rapidly and will continue doing so for some time to come I am afraid, and no one knows exactly how long or short our stay over here will be...I am not living here! I “exist” in a monotonous daily way of life—each day passing means nothing to me except that I am that much closer to returning. Every mission completed means that much less war to be fought.

Nothing at all in the way of living here can or does make any impression on me—all I want is to get it over with as soon as possible. Yet I am healthy—and am satisfied, for no one who is an American would be satisfied doing anything else but fighting. The point I am bringing out is that though I miss you very much and want to return as soon as I can, yet I feel I could not return just yet nor within the year and feel satisfied, for I have yet to do much more before I quit.

My morale is OK—I will always get along OK whatever the conditions... So don't get the impression that I am sick of war and want to give up for that is not at all the case. Rather realize that I am lonely without you—miss you terrible—and love you very much.

13 April: Bombed and strafed west of Kamaing today. We hit what was either a gas dump or ammo dump, for we started a large fire. Not much to see there, but the Japs have everything well camouflaged in the dense Burma jungle.

On 14 April, other Tenth Air Force P-40s again employed the 1000-pound bombs to hit the Japanese airfields at Myitkyina and Manywet. The attacks were reported as successful, rendering the runways at both sites unusable.

15 April: Took off at 9 am to hit Mogaung, but had to jettison our two 500-pound bombs because of Zeros in the vicinity. We climbed to 20,000 feet, but made no interceptions. A Jap was captured only four miles away from here today. No one knows whence he came from, but we are all on special alert now, carrying guns and gas masks with us day and night.

The pace of combat increased during the last half of April, and the pilots all assumed that the rumored push into central Burma would be launched soon.

On 17 April, Paul flew two combat sorties (numbers 20 and 21) in “support of ground troops,” one of 16 P-40s that damaged the bridge at Kamaing, attacked the Japanese-held town of Nanyaseik, and hit the northern approaches to the railroad bridge at Namti (a rail line that connected Mogaung and Myitkyina). He dropped one 1,000-pound bomb and two 250-pound bombs and fired 1,450 rounds of .50 caliber ammo in strafing attacks. That evening he wrote to Bunny how pleased he was to receive a batch of photos of her, “luscious as ever,” and their car (a 1941 Dodge). He also wrote:

I sure would love to get behind the wheel right now, but Stateside where the roads are good. You will have to check me out in it when I return Joy Girl, for over here we drive on the left side of the road exclusively. It sure would seem funny to me now to drive on the right side again. I'd probably cause a grand _____-upped traffic jam first thing!

In the same letter, Paul wrote that he was scheduled to fly the “Dawn Patrol tomorrow and how I hate it! It’s too damn early for man to even be moving but we have to fly over three hours. Really rough!”

According to his logbook, that mission was a weather reconnaissance mission across northern Burma that lasted three hours and fifteen minutes—in a fighter cockpit with no air conditioning. That evening he wrote to Bunny:

We have to get up at 4:15 every morning now, and stay on the line until after 7 p.m.. Fifteen hours a day is no snap—in fact it is rather rough! During the monsoons the days are even longer, so we will be on the line even more hours. Woe is me! Tomorrow is my day off though—so I am really going to stay sacked—but late.

With Mother's Day approaching, Paul also asked Joyce to send flowers to both of their mothers: "I haven't any dough right now, so you'll have to take care of both for us. Make up a couple of nice sentimental cards to enclose, with about five dollars worth of cut flowers for each—from Joyce and Paul." He also asked her to send a birthday card to his sister Lorraine, as he was worried he would forget.

The next evening, after his day off, he wrote:

I slept until 9 o'clock this morning—the latest I have slept for a long time now, and believe me, it sure felt good to stay in the sack when the rest were getting up at 4:15—Umm Ummm! Ha! I just rolled over and ignored the mob.

I mixed up a complete new set of chemicals today for our darkroom, and developed a few rolls of film for the men. Sure wish some film and paper would get here soon!

Tonight we have a movie—as yet I do not know what it will be, but I am writing this before the movie so that I can hit the sack right after, for 4:15 comes awful damn quick! Sleep over here is getting to be a real problem. Or the problem is—how to get it. It seems as though we are up and on the line all of the time. Then too—about once every two weeks we get night alert also—which means we are on the line 24 hours that day! Really getting to be a rough war—and I do mean really!

We do not hear any of your radio programs. Occasionally we can hear the States—but about 7 in the morning because of the time difference. About all we can actually get are rebroadcasts of "command performance" and rebroadcasts of other programs sent out from New Delhi. Even a good old commercial would sound good to me now. We get good music from Japan and Germany though—and get a big kick out of their "news broadcasts." They are really funny, for they are so obviously cooked up. The phonograph in our Club is by far more popular than the radio.

In the same letter, he complained about the content of their typical meals:

We had chicken for dinner this evening—the only fresh meat we ever get over here. We can get no beef or pork up here now—why I do not know. About once a week we have chicken—the other days we have the hated Spam—and more hated “corned willie.” All I can say for the grub is that it keeps us filled—other than that the words describing the grub are unprintable.

Note: “Corned willie” was a slang term for canned corned beef, a term that apparently arose during World War I among the British soldiers.

For the next week, Paul flew nine more “bomb and strafe missions mainly to the Myitkyina area consisting of Myitkyina, Mogaung, and Kamaing,” noting that “big things are cooking in that area.” He expected a “balls-out push against Myitkyina” soon.

27 April: On April 21st, I was number 2 in a flight of four, bombing and strafing an area just a little NE of Kamaing. Number 1 went down and dropped his bombs, I followed and then I saw number 3 (Lt. Weller) go down followed by number 4. We

**We could
find no
trace of
him**

then went in to strafe, but when we pulled up number 3 (Weller) was not there. We circled and called him on the radio, but receiving no answer we went down and searched for him. We could find no trace of him—no fires—no nothing, so we finally had to return to Assam as our gas was short. We immediately regassed, loaded escape bombs (a simulated bomb painted yellow containing guns, ammo, blankets, first aid equipment, and food which we drop if we spot a downed pilot) and went back and searched. We searched continuously for five days but never found a trace of him. It is a great mystery how a plane could disappear so completely. We have now given him up as “missing in action.” It sure hurts us all—he was a swell guy and very personal friend of mine. That is particularly rough in a fighter outfit, for we pilots are so darn “buddy-buddy” as there are only about 30 of us.

Oh well—war is hell!



Typical forward airstrip used by 90th FS pilots.



Paul in tent at a forward base.



Paul in his "Naga headhunter" outfit.

SENDS THANKS FOR CARTON CIGARETTES

Second Lieutenant Paul Eastman Writes "Thank You" Letter from China; Tells About Black Market in Cigarettes

An interesting letter has been received by Harry Chapin, chairman in charge of the cigarette fund distribution at Christmas time to Stoughton service men and service women, from Second Lieutenant Paul J. Eastman, who is serving with the armed forces in China. In that country, American cigarettes are selling on the "black market" for \$20 a carton. His letter, written Feb. 24, follows:

Stoughton Community,
Cigarette Fund,
Stoughton, Wis.

Dear Friends:

"Today I received a much appreciated carton of cigarettes from you, my neighbors and friends, and I wish to thank each and every one for this thoughtful gesture.

"You would never know just how much we men overseas appreciate your thoughtful gifts of cigarettes unless we write and tell you, so I am doing just that. Cigarettes mean a great deal to men subjected to almost continuous strain, and many of our remote camps and battlefields, we get all too few.

"A short time ago I landed in China, and found that American brands of cigarettes were selling on the 'black market' for that incredible sum of 400 Chinese dollars, or about 20 American dollars, a carton. Rest assured I did not 'stock up' and every place we go over here, Burma,

India, or China, American cigarettes are our password to making friends. To the Naga natives they represent 'bakhshees' or gifts in lieu of pay, and a native Indian 'bearer' will carry heavy loads many jungle miles for a package, so not only do they soothe and rest the nerves after a battle, but pave the way towards battle.

"This probably sounds much like a tobacco advertisement, but it is a true picture, and my way of telling you just how much your gifts are appreciated, and I am sure I speak for many or all of my fellowmen in arms who are receiving them.

"Here's hoping that within the coming year we all can arrive 'home' in Stoughton and thank you all personally. Until then, may this letter reach you all pulling for victory, and carrying on your fine work.

"Very sincerely yours,
PAUL J. EASTMAN."

Paul wrote this letter to the Stoughton Community Cigarette Fund expressing his thanks for the cigarettes they sent him. Cigarettes were expensive in the CBI due to the black market. This article was published in the Stoughton *Courier-Hub*, his mother mailed it to him, and Paul taped it into his diary.



Above: A forward airstrip used by the 90th FS at Shaddup, Burma.

Below: The 90th FS pilots in their mess tent in Burma.





Above: 90th FS P-40 “Oh! Red” with the death’s head skull nose art after a landing accident precipitated by battle damage.

Below: Paul in a photo he captioned: “Old Hindu Eastman with a water pipe, a bamboo pipe, and a Gurkha knife..”

