



CAPT Herman J.F. Bottcher
McClelland Barclay
Conté crayon on paper, 1943
85-236-I

5'8" weight 150 - Captain Herman J.F. Bottcher

Landsberg - Germany - left Germany 1929 - arrive US fall 1931 - Spanish Republican Army 25 months - wounded twice - on Madrid Front and Aragon in April - interned by the French.

"Captain in Spanish army, it took about a year and a half; came up much quicker in this army. In Abraham Lincoln battalion - nearly all Americans in the body."

Infantry - US Army - with 32 Division, a National Guard outfit - Michigan and Wisconsin. Enlisted Dec. 8, 1941 - Pvt until end of April - corporal [sic] until end of June - staff sargent [sic] until end of June - made captain on field of battle - was company commander as sargent [sic] for two weeks before captain came thru - 32 Division at Buna.

"Lieut. Cliedy [Cladie] Bailey (Indiana school teacher) received order to cut thru to the beach - the attack bogged down - I was in support of his company. I thot [sic] by looking the situation over it could be done."

What situation?

"Swamp and jungle and we didn't know exactly what was in front of us, so I asked the battalion if it was alright with them if I go - and Maj. Hantelman [Harold Hantlemann] showed me the position on the map. I talked it over with the boys, there were 29 of us, and they said if you go we go too. We cut thru to the beach - hardly any opposition at all, but after we got to the beach they fired at us from the flank. After two days there were only 14 of us left. We got replacements so maintained about 25 men. I was wounded in the 7th day in counter attack - right hand hit - kept on, arm in sling - wounded again 13 days later - hit right arm - put me out for the time being - sent me to a hospital. We captured one and he said 60 were attacking us. We would wait for them until they got within 25 yards. They would shout and scream so we did the same when our boys got out and advanced a few steps to meet them with the bayonet. They didn't come on any further. Bayonet fighting when they came over to get us - some of the boys went into them like tigers. Altogether on the beach pocket 17 days."

[Editor's Note: For his role in this action of December 1942, Captain Bottcher received the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military decoration in the Army. Captain Bottcher was killed on December 31, 1944, during the battle of Leyte. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.]