

CAPTAIN HERMAN J. F. BOTTCHEr

1909-1944

He never served in the Wisconsin National Guard. He was not from Wisconsin. In fact, he was not even born an American citizen. But no one in the Thirty-second Division was more highly respected as a soldier or regarded as an individual than Herman Bottcher.

Born in Germany, he fled to Australia in 1920 and arrived in San Francisco a few years later. In 1937 he began his life-long crusade against fascism by serving with the Loyalist Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain.

As a Staff Sergeant in Company H, 126th Infantry, Bottcher participated in the infamous march of the Second Battalion across the Owen Stanley Range. At Buna he led a small group of men through Japanese lines to set up a machine gun position on the beach. By holding this position against repeated suicidal attacks, Bottcher and his men were able to block the exchange of reinforcements and supplies between the village and mission. As a result of this action, Bottcher was awarded the first of his two Distinguished Service Crosses, and promoted to Captain. Several wounds also netted his first Purple Heart. Because of his wounds and malaria, he could have rotated home. But he elected to stay with the Division, and became commander of the Recon Troop. For the rest of his service he operated behind enemy lines. On the 30th of December, 1944, Captain Bottcher was killed in action. He was posthumously awarded a Silver Star for heroism.

Capt. BOTTLER



Here is a picture of Capt. Botcher with his men.

They set out under a line of
- line - sometimes for weeks at a time.

When I had Dec 31st, 1944

of Botcher's death we were playing cards
I felt so bad and left the game and
made my way to a little tent set up
on the Casuarina Bay. The MP's were
willing to give us and prepare to engage
the Japs who were ready to land.

I was the only look around but I
made us and never moved back.

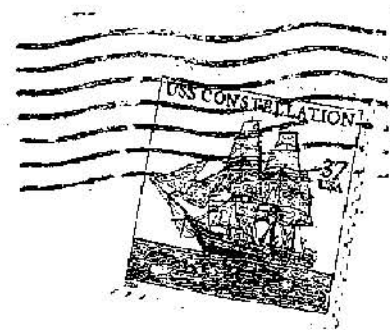
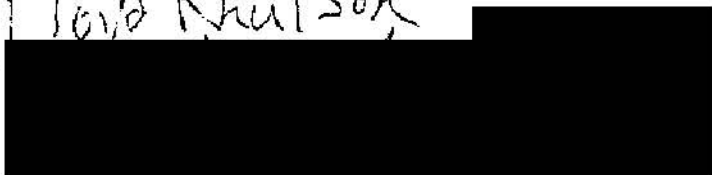
It was pretty scary until all of a
sudden the beautiful Casuarina air-
battalion shined out over my head.

The Japs up and fled.

- PJK



1 Lord Knutson



Lee Allen



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