

Wilson Pilot Lives to Tell A "Thriller"

APR 5
1943

Dunbar,
Harvey

If not the luckiest guy in the world then he's surely the guy right in back of the lucky one. That's about the sentiment of the entire Army Air Corps when they heard the story of Lieut. Harvey L. Dunbar of 1510 Washington blvd., Wilson Borough.

Lieut. Dunbar was one of the fighter pilots under the command of Lieut.-Gen. Millard F. Harmon, commandant of the Army Air Forces in the South Pacific area when he started out on the evening of Dec. 31, 1942, as part of an escort on a bombing raid on Munda, Japanese base in New Guinea. Before reaching their objective, Lieut. Dunbar was forced to turn back with his element leader when their motors developed trouble. Before reaching their home base, however, Dunbar's plane crashed into the sea and he was forced to swim in the icy water to the nearest island, about a mile away. While he was swimming, his element leader flew overhead shooting his guns at anything which he saw moving in the water as a protection against sharks.



LIEUT. HARVEY DUNBAR

In the words of Lieut. Dunbar, "I spent New Year's Eve on the small island, beating off swarms of mosquitoes and attempting to keep warm in the chilling rain."

RESCUE PLANE ARRIVES

The following day he was picked up by a rescue plane and as they returned to the harbor, and while Lieut. Dunbar was sipping hot coffee in the cabin of the plane, the plane suddenly went out of control and crashed into the harbor.

He later explained this crash in these words, "As we approached the harbor, I was sipping hot coffee and blessing my good fortune when without warning the plane went out of control and crashed. I was thrown to the floor and stunned but was roused when water began pouring over my body. A member of the crew grabbed me and we swam about until picked up by a landing boat."

Unfortunately, however, the pilot and four other members of the crew were not as lucky as this Wilson lad. They were killed in the crash.

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