

turies-old fighting fashions of a band of Solomon Island head hunters.

BY CAPT. ROBERT QUINTON

A few of us were hunting along a river in the Solomon Islands, when the whole surrounding jungle suddenly resounded with the yelling of scores of savages. A shower of arrows hurtled over our heads. It was worse than useless to attempt to escape to our boats, for the savages could shoot at us, under cover of the trees, without exposing themselves.

We dropped down behind the bank, just as a second volley of arrows sped over our heads. The head-hunters, thinking we had taken to our boats, dashed forward and received a volley of shots from our guns, which brought down several and made the others dart back into the bushes.

This was not because they were afraid. It is their custom, when they are losing, to run away as though they had given up the combat, but this is only a ruse, for invariably they will steal back, like a tiger stalking its prey, and make a new attack.

Knowing this, we stealthily hitched a rope from tree to tree, about 30 inches from the ground, directly in front of our position.

For a few minutes everything was deathly still. Then a third series of

wild yells suddenly resounded upon our right hand and so close to us that we were thunderstruck. As the savages dashed forward the foremost ones landed on their heads, over the rope, and our crew cut them down as they struggled to regain their feet.

I came in collision with one of the savage beasts myself and he instantly aimed a blow at me with his war club. The helmet I wore helped to break the blow. At about the same instant he struck me I cut him across the face with a cutlass and he never struck anyone again, I can assure you.

The head-hunters now retired as rapidly as they had come. Four of our crew were killed outright in the skirmish and every one of us was wounded more or less severely.

The strangest case of all was that of a Fijian who received a poisoned arrow through the calf of his leg. The leg shriveled until all the muscle disappeared and the skin appeared to be drawn tight to the bone. He did not complain of much pain, and the leg, after a time, filled out again and became as well as the other.

(Capt. Quinton's next adventure, to be printed in this paper Wednesday, concerns a marine battle with cannibals.)