Guadalcanal Case Study Packet

Those who fought across the Pacific had to contend with staggering heat, disease, lack of sleep, food shortages, and a battle-hardened enemy who made each advance difficult and costly. You will read firsthand accounts of the struggles that men, only a few years older than you are, had to endure to ensure victory. Be sure to answer the questions below in full sentences. If you do not know what a word means, please ask.

**Drawing, Howard Brodie, Litter bearers on a jungle trail at the front, 1942**
Library of Congress (2004661732)

1. What is happening in this image?
2. What are some of the risks involved with being a litter bearer?

3. Why are some of the litter bearers armed and others are not?
1. After reading the letter, what are some of the hardships Pete and his friends faced?
2. Pete said, “Sometimes I wish every fellow I knew could spend just one day and one terrifying night out here with us.” After reading his letter, how do you think you would feel about those back home not fighting? How do you think you would do at Guadalcanal?

3. Why do you think Pete would not want to know that 564 people did not show up for work in New Orleans? How would you react to this news?
Diary entry from Japanese soldier, November 24, 1943
Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs
National Archives and Records Administration (Record Group 165)

November 24, 1943

“The whereabouts of each platoon leader is unknown. We are surrounded by tanks but will stick it out to the finish. . . . We did not care about the fire from the machine guns and the guns on the tanks. . . . We're still alive today. We know that we are to die so therefore we are the second suicide unit and plan to fight to the beautiful finish.”

1. What do you think the soldier meant by saying “the beautiful finish”?

2. After reading this entry, what do you think the mindset of this soldier was when it came to war? Do you think most Japanese soldiers felt this way? Do you think the Americans fighting them felt this way?

3. As a commander, you would likely be aware of the unwillingness of the Japanese to surrender. How would you prepare your men to go into combat? Would you tell them about Japanese suicide attacks?
1. What can you guess about the living conditions on Guadalcanal from this image?
2. Why do you think the American soldiers would walk past a dead Japanese soldier without burying him?
Synthesis Question:

Tie together all four of the documents to answer the next question. If you had to write a letter home to a loved one what would you say? Would you tell them what life was really like on the Guadalcanal? Would you leave some of it out? In the space below answer this question and write a letter to a loved one.