

ORGANIZING AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM FOR SURVIVAL

Read the following diary entries describing the actions of three airmen — Davis, Cooper, and Evans — whose plane crashed on an uninhabited island in the Pacific Ocean during World War II. This is a true story. In a brief essay on a separate piece of paper, discuss how these men established their own economic system. In your essay you should address the following questions: What rules did they agree to? Was the economic system they established a command economy or a market economy? What incentive was there to produce? Did the economic system allow for private property and profit? What entrepreneurial skills did Davis, Cooper, and Evans exhibit?

Diary Entries

8/7/44 We are forced down on an uninhabited island about a mile long and half a mile wide. There is little plant life, no fresh water, but plenty of driftwood. We have almost no supplies.

8/8/44 We took inventory and found we had a box of matches, a knife, a small ax, a fishing kit, some empty cans, and a first-aid kit. We had no food and only a little water.

8/10/44 Our water is gone. We had no luck fishing but did trap a few crabs, which we ate.

8/12/44 We are becoming dehydrated, but Davis caught a three-pound fish, which we shared.

8/13/44 Davis caught one more fish today. Evans is making an evaporator from a fuel tank. Cooper has the job of fire tender.

8/14/44 The evaporator Evans built produces about three ounces of water, which we share.

8/16/44 The evaporator must be fed wood all day long. The supply of driftwood nearby is running low. We have to work all the time to gather wood and are not able to fish.

8/21/44 Evans and Cooper took the evaporator apart to try to make it more efficient. Davis caught a fish that all share, the first food in days.

8/22/44 The evaporator was put back together and produced almost a gallon of water in the first day. Davis is able to fish full time.

8/23/44 We produce one and a half gallons of water, and Davis catches three fish. We all take a rest for the afternoon.

9/27/45 We are rescued by a passing plane but have made nets, blankets, and a shelter. There is a month's supply of water and smoked fish.