The Wars of Our Generation

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By members of the Senior Men's Club of Birmingham, Michigan who served in World War II and the Korean War.

2004

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Dedication

The history of nations is scarred by many wars. When nations war, it is the young men and women in the "flower of their youth" who are called to do the fighting, and also to perform all of the support activities for military operations.

The 1940s and early 1950s were the years of youth for members of the Senior Men's Club of Birmingham who have contributed to this book. Those were the years of World War II and the Korean conflict - "the wars of our generation."

For the authors, writing for this book has brought memories, good and bad, of the experiences and hardships they faced, most as "citizen soldiers" and we are proud to share those experiences. The book also honors our comrades in the defense of freedom who did not survive or who came back wounded in mind or body.

We hope our book is read by our children and grandchildren and by other young people. It is important that they not only understand our contributions to the cause of freedom in the world, but also of the terrible costs and futility of wars.

Lest we forget.

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-PREFACE-

World War II 1939-1945
Six Years and 17 Million Military Dead

World War II was born in the bitter ashes of the armistice of World War I, the failure of the League of Nations and the world's Great Depression.

Adolph Hitler, when he rose to power in 1933, rearmed Germany, stepped up military production and prepared for a war of conquest. In the 1936-39 period, Germany and Italy made a series of conquests.

Germany annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia. Italy conquered Albania and Ethiopia. Together, they supported the fascist forces of Francisco Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War.

Clearly, the appeasement policies of Great Britain and France had done little more than fuel the expanding fires of aggression. Great Britain created an anti-aggression front, including alliances with Turkey, Greece, Romania and Poland.

Too little, too late.

World War II Begins

Then, on September 1, 1939, without provocation, the Germany "blitzkrieg" demolished Polish resistance. France and Great Britain declared war on Germany and its alliance. That was the official beginning of World War II.

Over the next few years, the war was very difficult for Britain and France. The English survived the Battle of Britain; a sustained aerial assault by German fighters, bombers and the V-1 and V-2 unmanned rocket bombs. And there was massive retreat of British troops by sea at Dunkirk.

America was not yet directly involved. But while maintaining a policy of neutrality, it was providing increasing amounts of war materials to Britain. German submarines relentlessly attacked ships carrying these war supplies. In the meantime, America was frantically gearing up its puny military forces and production of military equipment for a war it knew was coming.

In the Pacific, Japan had held parts of China but now occupied Indonesia, Thailand and additional parts of China and came under heavy criticism from the United States.

War Comes to U.S.

The fact that America was not ready for war was probably one of the reasons that on December 7, 1941, Japanese air and naval forces assaulted Pearl Harbor, a protectorate of the U.S. The attack seriously crippled American military strength in the Pacific area for some time.

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the sneak attack "a day that will live in infamy," and declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy.

In 1942 and 1943, Allied forces faced difficult times. And many members of the Senior Men's Club of Birmingham, Michigan, fought in these battles or in support activities.

Year 1941

Germany, despite a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, invaded that country, as Napoleon had done nearly a century before. The invasion of the USSR was one of Hitler's most critical mistakes of the war as it had been with Napoleon.

Year 1942

Japan joined Germany and Italy in the Axis alliance against democracy. The Japanese quickly conquered the Philippines, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia and a number of Pacific islands. In addition to the awesome destruction of U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces also destroyed an Allied fleet in the Java Sea.

Doolittle Raid on Tokyo

On April 18, 1942, the United States sent a chilling message to Japan. It came through a daring raid of 16 B-25 medium bombers that hit Tokyo and other Japanese cities. U.S. Air Force General Jimmy Doolittle led the raid. In addition to widespread destruction of property and people, this raid provided a huge boost in morale for all Allied peoples, and particularly their military forces.

The attack also was a clear message that Japan's home islands could be reached by American bombers.

At home, America shifted into high gear with its production of military equipment. Congress authorized a national draft, symbolized by posters portrayed a stern "Uncle Sam" pointing his finger at you and saying "I want you!" "Buy War Bonds" was another popular slogan. Rationing of food, gas and other goods necessary for the war effort bought the conflict to American citizens and their daily lives.

Year 1943

This was a turnaround year in the war. The 8th Air Force, stationed in England, sent an increasing number of B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers to hit targets all over Germany. The goal: to cripple the manufacture of war products and oil refineries. The 9th Air Force, also in England at the time, provided fighter support for the bombers and also attacked German targets it could reach.

German forces were defeated in North Africa, opening launching sites for the invasion of Italy and a new southern front.

In the Pacific, the U.S recaptured the Solomon Islands, launching a two-year campaign to liberate the island countries taken by Japan earlier, included New Guinea, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima and Guam. These victories represented stepping-stones to shortening the flying distance to the home island of Japan.

Allied forces also scored major victories against the Japanese navy in the Coral Sea and near Midway Island.

Year 1944

This year was dominated by preparations for the invasion of "Fortress Europe," which occurred June 6, 1944.

D-Day on Normandy Beaches

In April and May, 1944, beach and inland fortifications on France's Normandy beaches were pummeled by relentless Allied fighter and bomber attacks. Over 1,000 aircraft and 12,000 airmen were lost in these attacks.

In the early morning hours of June 6, a thousand Allied air transports dropped paratroopers to support landing forces. Five thousand Allied ships-from battleships to landing craft-participated in the assault.

Troops landed along a 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast, including three American and three British-Canadian assaults, supported by heavy naval and aerial bombardment.

176,000 Allied Troops

The World Book Encyclopedia estimates that 176,000 Allied troops were landed on the beaches on D-Day and they suffered more than 10,000 casualties, including 2,500 deaths. The fighting was among the bloodiest of the war, but the determined Allied forces were successful.

After the beaches were secured, Allied armored divisions and troops began the liberation of France and other occupied countries on the road to Germany's Rhine River and beyond. Sicily and Italy fell to American troops, thus opening a new southern front against Germany.

Air Power at Peak

The 8th Air Force in England and the U.S. 9th Air Force now stationed in France, stepped up their bombardment of Germany. Special emphasis was on marshalling yards, airplane and munitions factories and a powerful array of oil refineries.

By mid-1944, the Luftwaffe was virtually destroyed. Most factories had been taken out. Allied fighter planes, particularly the P-51 Mustangs which provided escort cover for the bombers, were very successful against Germany's fighters, including their foremost Messerschmitt-109. And U.S. heavy bombers, took their toll of enemy fighters.

These planes were aptly called "Flying Fortress" because of the awesome firepower their gunners could inflict attacking fighters when flying in close, stacked formation.

Germany's most effective weapon against Allied bombing from mid-1944 was a huge arsenal of anti-aircraft guns. At their peak, more than 2,000 heavy anti-aircraft guns and thousands of smaller weapons protected key German targets.

On the Eastern Front, German forces had been driven out of Russia, and surrendered most of the territory conquered earlier. Now, the Germans faced an increasingly critical task - defending itself from the west by the Allies and the east by the Russians.

Battle of the Bulge

German military leaders knew that their war was over, but Hitler and his staff had one last push left. The German troops attacked U.S. forces in a major assault on December 15 in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium. They were defeated in "Battle of the Bulge" after six weeks of tough combat.

Germany was finally defeated and agreed to unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945.

Japan on Center Stage

Now came the big and ugly task of invading Japan's home islands. Military experts predicted that this action could cost at least a million Allied casualties. The United States, after extensive deliberations, decided that the human cost was too high.

Accordingly, on August 6, 1945, a U.S. B-29 high-altitude bomber dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and three days later, on Nagasaki. Japan officially surrendered on September 2, 1945.

The Price of Freedom

World War II was finally over - after six years (four for the U.S.). More than 16 million Americans had served in the various military branches, according to World Book Encyclopedia.

A total of 17 million soldiers from all combatant nations died, according to the World Book Encyclopedia. And probably two or three times that many civilians died, including Nazi concentration camps.

The Soviet Union reported 7.5 million military deaths, followed by Germany—3.5 million; Japan—1.2 million; U.S.—405,000; Great Britain—329,000; France—210,000, and Italy—77,000.

It was a staggering price to pay in the cause of freedom.

- Alvie Smith

Sources:

U.S. Army Campaigns in World War II-Center of Military History—World Book Encyclopedia

www.ddaymuseum.com

Guns Were My Business

Bradley Ballard

I served 28 years in the United States Navy in active and reserve duty spanning both World War II and the Korean conflict in support activities for the naval units which took the war to our enemies, particularly in the Pacific area.

My time in the U.S. Navy began in September 1934 when I was still in high school. I was sworn into the U.S. Naval Reserve as an apprentice seaman. My training was at the Brodhead Naval Armory in Detroit, including two summers on the USS Dubuque. I worked my way up to seaman 1st class, striking for 3rd class petty officer, coxswain. The USS Dubuque was built in 1904 as a gunboat for service on China's Yangtze River, but had been refitted and maintained as a training vessel on the Great Lakes.

Going on inactive status in the Naval Reserves, I attended Purdue University for four years, graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering and was commissioned ensign on June 7, 1941.

After graduation, I was immediately called to active duty, putting in 4-1/2 years of active service, mostly as an ordnance officer. Early tours of duty included the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where I took basic officer's training, and at the Naval Gun Factory at the Washington Navy Yard in Anacostia, D.C. Soon after, I reported to the Navy Department's Bureau of Ordnance in Washington, D.C.

Pearl Harbor Attacked

I managed a three-day leave in the fall to marry my sweetheart, Carol, on November 21, 1941. I was shopping in a drugstore on Sunday afternoon, December 7, when I heard a radio bulletin announcing the attack on Pearl Harbor. The next day I put my civvies away and donned uniforms as my daily attire for the next four years. In my new assignment at the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance, I became the contracting officer for procurement of the 5"/38 caliber twin gun mount. This weapon was the secondary battery on battleships and heavy cruisers and the primary battery on aircraft carriers, light cruisers, and destroyers (starting with the 2,200 ton class). The 5"/38 was used principally as an anti-aircraft weapon, but also for shore bombardment and surface combat. I dealt with such companies as Carrier and Willys Overland in procuring components such as the shield (turret-surround), ventilation equipment and projectile hoist. Another officer was in charge of procuring the gun barrels. The 5"/38 fired the Navy's largest fixed-case projectile, five inches in diameter in various forms including proximity-fused and armor piercing.

Missile Work Observed at Cal Tech

In June 1943, I was ordered to report to the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena, California, for a one-year study of advanced engineering subjects. Cal Tech was the center of rocket and missile development, and I was exposed to some of this work, much of which

was carried on by foreign nationals, among them a large number of German scientists, who were closely monitored by the U.S. government. This missile work was quite primitive by today's standards, although the "Sidewinder" was well along in its development, and the "Tiny Tim," a 14-foot long, 14" diameter air to ground missile - went into action soon afterward. While at Cal Tech, I had the same privileges as the faculty and a rewarding opportunity to gain new knowledge of the missile field.

I learned later that the government weather station on the Cal Tech campus was the one that collected the weather forecasts that determined the date for dropping the atomic bombs on Japan.

After completion of this tour, I served in several temporary additional duty (T.A.D.) assignments including rocket development centers in the Mojave Desert, at Camp Pendleton and on rocket-attack ships practicing assaults on the cliffs near San Diego. Rocket technology was still somewhat primitive, and these practice firings were in preparation for future attacks across the English Channel. They were used to support the D-Day landings.

Build a Model for Contract Termination

A surprise assignment came in 1944, when I joined a small group of naval officers on the East Coast whose mission was to terminate a contract for the manufacture of the Swiss-designed Oerlikon 20-mm machine gun. Our goal was to establish a model for future contract terminations as the war neared its end. I didn't finish this assignment, because I received a telephone call from the Bureau of Ordnance to drop everything else and report there the next day.

At the Bureau of Ordnance, I was assigned to take over the maintenance desk for the 5"/38 weapon. At that time much damage was being inflicted on our ships by the Japanese, particularly by their kamikazes. My job was to enable prompt repair by providing replacements of the 5"/38 twin guns and components damaged in battle. The Navy maintained many supply facilities on islands scattered around the western Pacific, and part of my job was to provide the replacement parts or kits and have them shipped to the port where the damaged ship could be repaired and quickly returned to combat. By faithful reading of *The New York Times*, I often learned the extent of major battles and sometimes the name of the damaged ship weeks before the damage report would come through top-secret channels.

Test Firing Guns on New Ships

I had my "sea duty" in going out on new ships on shakedown runs. On these runs the armament was proof-fired with over-loaded charges. If they didn't "blow" — or, in official terms, if the guns performed satisfactorily — they were turned over to the fleet. My experience here included several kinds of ships - destroyers and several classes of cruisers.

Once, while on a new heavy cruiser armed with 12-inch guns, and no destroyer escort, after test firing, the ship steamed to an east coast "degaussing station." Degaussing is a process to de-magnetize the ship to discourage magnetically detonated torpedoes. Several of us were no longer needed onboard and were put ashore someplace south of Norfolk, Virginia, by small boat, a certain tip-off to coast watchers that saboteurs were landing. Fortunately, there were no trigger-happy Americans in our sector of the beach.

I was asked to stay on in the Navy on active duty as a lieutenant commander after the war ended, but I was anxious to return to civilian life. I returned to Detroit and my active service ended January 1, 1946. I remained in the naval reserves until I retired in February 1962 with the rank of commander.

I am proud of my 28 years of total service to my country with the United States Navy.

PEARL HARBOR ON DECEMBER 7, 1941

DAVID W. ZIMMER

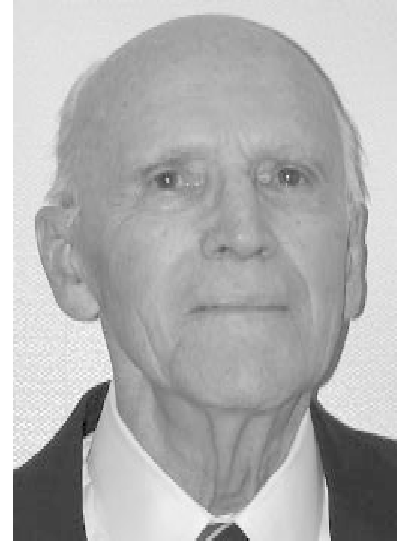
After graduating from Northwestern University in 1940 with a degree in ecology, I immediately went into active duty as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy. The war was intensifying in Europe, and I felt that the U.S. was going to be in it soon. I believed that it would be best if I gained experience in the Navy before we were actually involved in combat. Although the nation tended to lean toward isolationism, I couldn't see how we could avoid becoming involved on the side of the Allies.

The Day That Will Live in Infamy

I received orders to the destroyer USS Worden, based at Pearl Harbor. At 8 a.m. on December 7, 1941, I had just gotten into my uniform when general quarters was sounded on the Worden. We were one of five destroyers from Destroyer Squadron One, tied alongside the destroyer tender USS Dobbin. My battle station was on the bridge, several levels above my quarters. While proceeding to my station, I passed a gunner's mate who was removing Browning automatics from a small arms locker. He said that the call to man battle stations was either a drill or we were under attack.

As I continued taking ladders to my station, I looked aft and saw several ships tied alongside Ford Island. One of the ships was the battleship USS Utah (an old ship used as a target for drills.) On further observation, it appeared that the Utah was listing to one side. At the same time I observed several aircraft, and as one of them banked it revealed a large red meatball as its marking. The Japanese attack was well underway!

A bomb barely missed our ship, with the explosion close enough to raise the stern. During the attack, we were unable to man our main 5"/38 caliber guns. We were able to man our 50 caliber guns and were credited with shooting down two Japanese planes. We were about 400 yards from the battleship USS Arizona when it was bombed. The exploding ammunition from her magazines sank her.



After the Attack

The day following the attack our ship was ready to set sail. Members of our crew and the Dobbin had completed repairs. We departed, passing the sunken Arizona, the sunken West Virginia, the capsized Oklahoma, the sunken California, and the beached Nevada. The Nevada was sinking and was run aground so that it would not block the entrance to Pearl Harbor. The harbor was covered with oil and debris, and small craft continued to search for survivors. We joined a task force including the carrier USS Enterprise which had been 200 miles west, on her way to Pearl Harbor.

Following our assignment with the Enterprise, we returned to Pearl Harbor where extensive cleanup and salvage operations were underway. The Japanese had inflicted little damage to the major repair operations.

Along with the destroyer USS Henderson, we were assigned the task of escorting the fleet tanker USS Neosho and the seaplane tender USS Curtis to New Caledonia. Here we were hit with a hurricane but damage to the ships in the harbor was minimal. Shortly after, we returned again to Pearl Harbor.

Flight School was Next

Before heading to New Caledonia, I had been advised that my orders to flight school had been received. The ship's captain said that he could not release me until there was a replacement officer. On our return to Pearl, however, an officer from the capsized Oklahoma was assigned to the Worden, and the captain released me to carry out my orders. To attend flight school, unfortunately I had to resign my reserve officer commission to become an aviation cadet.

I received my naval aviation wings in March 1943, and was again commissioned as an ensign. The irony of resigning my previous ensign commission, was that during my flight training as an aviation cadet the order was changed which would have allowed reserve officers to keep their commissions, but the order was not retroactive. Aviation was my way of life, and I enjoyed every day of flying. It would have been nice to continue the seniority I had earned as an ensign, but that was not to be.

In Action Again

After receiving my second ensign commission, I received orders to Anti-Submarine Squadron VB-133, operating out of Trinidad where we flew Lockheed Venturas. We were soon transferred to the Pacific where we were primarily involved in bombing operations in the Marshall/Gilbert Islands.

While operating out of Roi Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll, we made many strikes on Japanese held islands. On some occasions the tactic used against targets was a coordinated multi-plane glide bombing run, reaching speeds of up to 350 mph in a 45-degree dive. Bomb loads were usually six 500-pounders dropped by the pilots in a "train."

There was some humor, even during serious combat. We had returned from a glide bombing raid on Wake Island and had been debriefed. It was hot, and as usual after a flight we always took a brackish water shower. We had removed our flight outfits, draped towels over our shoulders, and proceeded in the nude to our showers. As we approached a dirt road, we stopped for an oncoming Jeep and waved to its occupants. As they waved back, we realized that occupants were four female nurses. I understand that later one of them told a pilot that we looked much better in uniform.

My Brother a War Casualty

After returning to the states I was stationed at NAS Green Cove Springs, Florida to train in Corsairs. Here I was advised of the death of my younger brother. Earlier in the war he had landed in Normandy the day after D-Day and was wounded in a hedgerow battle there. He was later wounded a second time and recovered in a London hospital. However, in March 1945, a month before the war ended, he had crossed the Rhine and was killed by a German sniper in Altweid, Germany. A true war hero was lost.

After the war ended, I was transferred to NAS Banana River and qualified as a plane commander in PBMs (Martin Mariner seaplanes.) I requested reclassification from reserve to regular USN status, and it was approved. My naval career continued with duty in both Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. I flew with two squadrons that were standouts for me — Patrol Squadron Five (VP-5) out of Florida, and Airborne Early Patrol Squadron Fourteen (VW-14) in Hawaii. We flew Neptunes in VP-5, with our missions being anti-submarine warfare. Although stationed in

Jacksonville, VP-5 deployed to Argentina, Newfoundland, Canada, Malta, and Puerto Rico.

In VW-14 we flew four-engine Super Constellations. Our mission was airborne early warning, and the aircraft was equipped with search and height-finding radar and electronics countermeasures. Our mission was to fly an airborne barrier between Midway and Adak Islands in the Aleutians. This was a 12 to 14 hour round-trip out of Midway. At this time the Russians were over-flying the North American continent, so there were airborne early-warning wings in both the Pacific and Atlantic.

Close Shaves

There were two significant close calls during my naval career. In the first, I was piloting a Neptune on instruments due to the weather. Approaching Argentina, I contacted Approach Control and requested clearance. I was cleared to continue my instrument approach and to land. We were in our final approach, descending and at about 500 feet with zero visibility. At that moment a red wing light passed our aircraft, so close that if we had been on the wing tip we could have touched it. We were able to continue our approach, and we landed. Control had erred, and my conversation with them will not be written.

My second close call was while flying the Pacific Barrier in a Super Constellation. While approaching radar range of Adak, we experienced engine problems on our #3 engine, so we feathered it. We tried to locate a field somewhere along the Aleutians. Conditions were extremely poor, low visibility, blowing snow, gusting 40 mph winds. While trying to decide, our #4 engine started cutting out so it had to be shut down and feathered. Both were on the starboard side.

There was no alternative but to land at Adak. We were advised that the ceiling was 100 feet, visibility less than a quarter mile, with a surface wind gusting at 40 mph. As we continued our approach, we were advised that ceiling and visibility were zero/zero. My co-pilot picked up the strobe light which centered the runway and the threshold orange lights which was the pre-runway lighting. Thankfully, the landing was one of my best ever.

Calling it a Career

My marriage to my wife, Dorothy, has been vital to my family life and career. She did a remarkable job in raising our four sons, and our family remained complete because of her strength and loyalty. She had accepted many of the relocations during my naval career but we decided to not move the family of four boys in 1959 to Iceland, so I retired with the rank of commander even though I would have soon been up for captain.

I logged more than 10,000 flying hours prior to my retirement, having flown 25 different types of planes. I had received the Distinguished Flying Cross and air medals. I was fortunate that I was never wounded despite the action, but I never forgot what a dangerous business the military was and is. The extreme loss of life during the war always deeply affected me, and I consider myself a very fortunate individual.

Luck Was a Lady for Me on December 7
Memories Punctuated by Near Misses

John Lavrakas

I was in my quarters when the news came in over the loudspeaker. "This is no drill. The Japs have attacked Pearl Harbor. This is no drill."

We immediately manned battle stations. I went to the engine room. My ship, the USS Salt Lake City, was supposed to dock in Pearl Harbor that afternoon. We were low on fuel. Our task force commanded by Admiral William "Bull" Halsey had been at sea for over two weeks. We were returning from Wake Island where the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise had delivered 18 Marine fighter planes.

Admiral Halsey must have had an idea something was up, because the first night out of Pearl Harbor he had us man battle stations. We manned our battle stations every sunrise and sunset while we were under way.

After the attack, we circled around out there in relatively calm seas and went in the next morning. Fortunately, the Japs didn't hit the fuel depot.

Vivid Memories

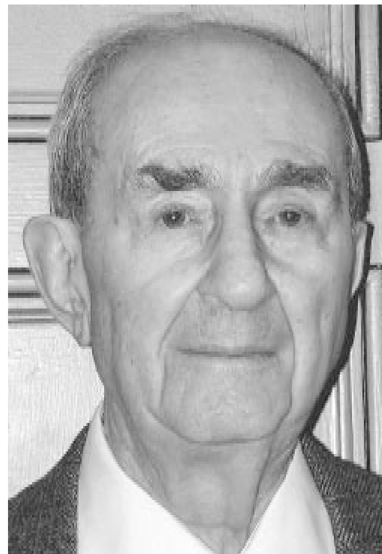
When we were going into the channel, I was topside, watching. First thing I saw was the battleship Nevada. It had been hit, but the captain wisely ran it up on the beach so that it didn't block the channel. Next thing I saw was the USS Oklahoma upside down. There was a foot of oil in the harbor. The taste of fuel oil in the air was as strong as the smell.

The ship's print shop printed postcards that read, "I'm okay." We were permitted to sign, address and mail them to our families. I sent one to my parents.

I had been commissioned an ensign on June 6, 1941. As an engineer officer, I was sent to study diesel engines at the University of California Berkley. I picked up my ship, the USS Salt Lake City, in Long Beach in September of '41 and sailed to Pearl Harbor. We then operated out of Pearl Harbor.

The War Unfolds

On December 8, we anchored, fueled, and got out of Pearl Harbor. We left on Tuesday and thought of going to help Wake Island, but we found out there was a big Jap task force waiting to jump on anyone coming to help. Our group wasn't strong enough to undertake it. Meantime, we looked for subs.



In January, we helped provide cover for 5,000 Marines that we accompanied to Samoa. From there we went to attack various islands, hit and run. We bombarded one of the Marshall Islands and then turned around and returned to Pearl. On June 15 I was promoted to lieutenant junior grade, and promoted to senior grade lieutenant the following March.

Military Facts: Served in U.S. Navy active and reserves from March 1941 to July 1972, when he retired with the rank of captain. Won Pacific Theater Ribbon and 11 battle stars.

That first year was the worst part of the war. We didn't have many ships. The battleships that were sunk or damaged December 7 were not a serious loss, except for the tragic loss of life. Cruisers, destroyers and aircraft carriers could do 33 knots. The old battleships could only do 18 knots. The battleships we lost couldn't keep up with the fast task force.

Press the Attack

In February of 1942 we made an attack on Wake Island. That April, we escorted the aircraft carrier, the USS Hornet, to within 700 miles of Japan to launch Jimmy Doolittle's B-25 attack on the Japanese mainland. We were supposed to get to within 500 miles, but we ran into a group of Japanese fishing vessels. Admiral Halsey was afraid we would lose the element of surprise because the fishermen could have radioed our position, so we sank the fishing fleet, and the Hornet launched its B-25 attack bombers. We were in heavy seas and the B-25 takeoffs were timed to when the bow was rising.

From there we dashed to the battle of the Coral Sea, but we missed it by a day. We then went on to Australia, then to New Zealand where we escorted troop ships with Marines to Guadalcanal. There we were engaged in the First Battle of Salvo Island, just off Guadalcanal.

Night Duel

We got into a night engagement, just after midnight. It lasted about an hour. We took some hits. We sank one of their cruisers. They sank one of our destroyers. The USS Boise, a light cruiser, took really heavy hits. But it made it back to the states.

Below decks, in the engine room, we weren't too concerned about bombs, unless it would be a direct hit. But I was always deadly afraid of a torpedo attack.

New Assignment

Eventually, I went back to Boston to commission the USS Baltimore. The Baltimore, a heavy cruiser, took me back to the Pacific through the Panama Canal, and on to the Gilbert Island invasion, the capture of the Marshall Islands, the attack on Truk Island, and the invasion of Saipan and Tinian Islands.

In July of that year, 1944, our ship was pulled out of the Saipan invasion. We were astonished to find that we were to be the host ship for the President, Franklin Roosevelt.

We took him first to Pearl Harbor where he met with General Douglas McArthur, Admiral Chester Nimitz and many other generals and admirals. We stayed in Pearl Harbor one week before heading to Adak Island in the Aleutians. We touched base at Kodiak Island and then went to Juneau, where the President transferred to a destroyer.

The president was on board our ship for three weeks. I saw him practically every day. He stayed in the captain's remodeled quarters. Ramps were made so he could wheel his wheelchair up and down the deck. He had his dog, Falla, with him.

He addressed the entire crew and thanked us for our dedication. He wished us "good hunting." I was about 10 feet away when he was preparing to disembark at Juneau. He didn't look well at all.

Three Major Events

While on the USS Baltimore, an old football shoulder injury needed surgery. I was sent to Chelsea Naval Hospital in Boston, my hometown, in September 1944. While recuperating, I dated Catie, whom I first met in June 1941. We were married October 8, 1944.

I returned to active duty aboard the aircraft carrier, the USS Yorktown, known as “The Fighting Lady,” as assistant chief engineer. While off the coast of Japan, in March of 1945, in the China Sea, we lost 25 people when a 500 pound bomb hit alongside the ship.

I was still on the USS Yorktown when the atomic bomb was dropped, on August 6, 1945. You never heard such a loud cheer. We had been informed that something was going to happen, and to stay at least 500 miles off the coast of Japan.

It Was Over

But when the war ended I was in a hospital on Guam where I stayed until I passed a kidney stone.

Still, it was President Roosevelt’s stay on our ship that I will remember. His stay on the USS Baltimore had been a great morale booster for the crew.

My last tour of duty was as the executive officer for the Inspector of Naval Material in Detroit, from 1952 to December 1953.

I left active duty and went to work for the Ford Motor Company. However, I stayed in the naval reserves for another 19 years. In 1960, I was promoted to captain, and retired from the Navy in July 1972.

To serve my country all those years has been a great privilege for me.

From Panama to Pacific to Washington, D.C. There Were Bad Times, There Were Good Times

Al Baur

The doctor put his hand on my head, and said, "It's warm. They'll take you." That diagnosis came during an examination I had scheduled to determine whether or not I was likely to be drafted into the U.S. services. That was in 1941 when the draft was started and I had been issued a very low draft number.

Having been told that, I decided to contact a friend who was commanding officer of the Naval Aviation Cadet Selection Board in Chicago. He had been selling threads to the Johns Manville Corporation while I was employed there in Alexandria, Indiana. He said if the draft got close, to join the naval reserve, and he would get me assigned to his operation as a yeoman 3rd class. The draft got close and I joined the naval reserves on June 2, 1941.

Panama Canal Duty

In August 1941, I was ordered to the U.S. Submarine Base, Coco Solo, Panama. I was sent to New London, Connecticut, to be shipped to Panama. I took the train to Norfolk, Virginia, where I boarded a Liberty ship that stopped in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and then went on to Panama.

The main duty of our submarines was to protect both the Atlantic and Pacific entrances to the canal. We had sweeping patrols set up 100, 200 and 300 miles out from each entrance. We hadn't expected anything. So it was a surprise when, on December 7, an officer came into the personnel office and advised us that we were at war. We were scared, mostly about being attacked by air. That's when they told us to go mount 20 caliber machine guns on top of the buildings, but they wouldn't have stopped anything.

Military Facts: Philippine Action Battle Star.

I was commissioned an ensign on May 2, 1942, and transferred to the 15th Naval District in Balboa, in the Canal Zone on the Pacific side of the canal, and was assigned to communications. We had front seats to the Battle of Midway, for we were picking up the messages that were being sent to Pearl Harbor. They furnished us with a detailed account. That was an interesting experience because all these messages were coming direct from the ships in code.

We were receiving information more about our losses. We lost a lot of planes. We were afraid that we were losing because we didn't have reports about what damage we did to the Japanese fleet.

Time to Marry

In November 1943, when I was given a 30-day leave, I thought I would be transferred back to the states for a year. So I married Martha Emison, whom I had met while attending Wabash College, on November 20, in Scarborough, New York.

Time to Ship Out

I had to report to San Francisco five days later. They told me I had to report to Port Hueneme, near Ventura, California. We were on the next train going south. I didn't know whether or not I was going to leave on that day. For seven days I returned to Martha, not knowing whether that night was the last night we would be together. On the eighth morning, we sailed.

Before the ship left, however, we officers got together and decided we should create an officer's club, and we sold $25 shares to be used for buying booze. We sent two officers to San Francisco, and they used all the money we

collected from selling shares for buying booze. It was to be sent on a later ship.

We arrived at the Russell Islands, on Seggi Point, wondering when our shipment of booze would come in. Marine and Army units were also stationed on the island. We were afraid they would steal our booze, so we stationed a guard to check each truck used for unloading cargo from arriving ships. The Army and Marine units were doing the same!

The Booze Finally Arrives

We were on that island most of 1943 before the ship with our supplies arrived. By that time, another officer and I were the only two shareholders left. When other investing officers were transferred out, we bought their shares for as little as $5 each.

Meanwhile, my unit, ACORN 19, — I never knew what that name stood for— set up operations to manage the airstrip built by the Seabees. We outfitted, refueled and repaired carrier-based aircraft that ran out of fuel or were shot up or in need of repair and couldn't return to their carrier. We were 30 miles northwest of Guadalcanal. The strip was so short that if pilots didn't touch down at the water's edge, they would go into the bay at the other end. Four Army planes overshot the runway and were lost.

We Ran for Cover

Real danger came sporadically when a Japanese aircraft would bomb and strafe our site. We ran for cover in bunkers covered with palm tree trunks and dirt.

I traveled to 7th Fleet headquarters on Guadalcanal frequently to arrange for replacements. I rode with my commanding officer in a torpedo plane. Coming back to Seggi Point, he would make a run on our airstrip. He powered to full speed, as if in attack, and flew as low and as fast as he could over the length of the runway. Then he would swing around and come in. I lost my stomach on those first passes. While at Seggi Point, I was promoted to full lieutenant.

Ship Out, Sell Low

Finally, the liquor arrived just before we were shipping out. We had to sell it. We could have made a killing, selling bottles at $25 or more. But our skipper didn't want us scalping, so we had to unload it a top price of $5. It killed us, but we were happy to have that. We had to leave, and there was no time to negotiate. Still, we came out smelling like a rose.

We stopped at numerous islands on the way to New Guinea, where we were joining ships for a run up the islands to the Philippines. We went to Minodo Island, the large island south of Manila. Our airstrip was on the southern tip. It was for planes patrolling the China Sea.

Thinking I could get to the states if I were reassigned, I kept putting in for transfers to the submarines or the Naval Air Force. My commanding officer would consider such a request only if Martha approved. She thought it would be too dangerous. She never approved.

The End Approaches

Finally, I was transferred. I arrived at a naval air base in Oakland, California, on May 9, VE Day, trying to catch a plane to Chicago and the 9th Naval District. I entered a training program to prepare for demobilization. When I arrived, Martha hardly recognized me because I was so yellow from the quinine we took all those months to ward off malaria.

I was assigned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C. That was a very plush job. We traveled in the secretary of the Navy's plane. We lived high off of the hog. A team of four officers would travel to different bases around the country: Houston, Seattle, Denver and Long Island, where I was on VJ Day. We didn't do much celebrating there, but Martha was having a ball in Washington. I was discharged on December 31, 1945.

Somebody Had to Do It
I Took to the Air with the Greatest of Ease

Robert G. Campbell

On Labor Day 1941, I reported to the U.S. Navy at Kansas City, Kansas, where they gave us 10 hours of flight training to determine if we took to the air. I was commissioned an ensign in August 1942, and on that Labor Day I was flying with the fleet in Pearl Harbor. I was assigned to a utility squadron, which was part of the service force. I started with the Grumman Duck, the oldest design still flying in the Navy at that time.

My first assignment was to land at every airstrip in the Hawaiian Islands. Why? My commanding officer wanted me know where they were in case I got lost or ran out of gas.

Somebody Had to Do It

Later, I was towing targets. The ground gunners were to wait until those of us doing the towing were over their heads before starting to fire at the targets. We patrolled the harbor to look for Jap submarines. Our job was to find our friendly subs, then follow their torpedoes as they went under the target ship, and circle it when it ran out of fuel. The nose came up so we could see it and circle it until the recovery boat arrived.

One day the sky to the south was filled with black particles. It turned out that Mauna Loa on the Big Island had blown its stack. Of course we had to go look at it, and it was quite a spectacle to see the lava flow down the valleys of the mountain. We were able to see the dust and dirt for about 200 miles. There was no mention in the local newspapers for fear of creating unrest, which might be exploited by the Japanese.

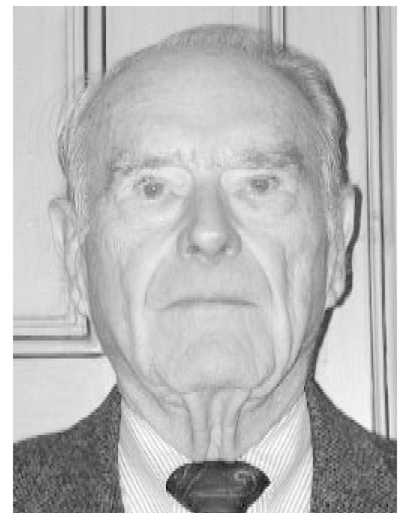
We returned by boat back to the states to ferry new Martin B-26's to the islands. This latest model, two 2000 hp P&W engines, enabled us to fly from the states to Pearl in 11 1/2 hours. This was possible as we stored four 250-gallon auxiliary fuel tanks in the bomb bay.

Long Flights Over Water

From Pearl Harbor, we headed for the South Pacific with a crew of two. The planes were not equipped with armaments, oxygen or automatic pilots. Our first stop was Palmyra Island, about 950 nautical miles south of Pearl. The next day we flew across the equator to Canton Island (777 miles). Then we went to Funifuti (645), the next day to Espirato Santo (822) and then to our destination, Henderson Field on Guadalcanal (560).

One of our jobs was to tow targets for an Army anti-aircraft group that had never fired at a towed sleeve.

We had many trips to the various islands. One time, we found an large, old circular mill saw. One of our enlisted men knew how to work a mill saw, and we had time to cut one large piece of mahogany before boarding our ship for departure.



Because these newer fighter planes had navigation equipment suitable to working with moving aircraft carriers, I got

the job of escorting a group of fighter planes to Esperanto Santo. It was a nice trip and I had about 40 fighters following me.

On one assignment I was to ferry a New Zealander to Milne Bay, New Guinea. It was foggy, so we went to nearby Kiriwana Island for the night. We had had little contact with the island natives, but this trip was the only time I actually saw young bare-breasted girls with grass skirts.

Back for More Planes

Reassignment found me on a new Army transport ship on a 17-day trip to San Francisco, then on to Widby Island northwest of Seattle.

In the summer of 1945, we went to Long Beach for new planes. But the war was over, and overnight they stopped building planes. I was ordered out to Guam, a delightful place, where I enjoyed Sunday lunch with a native and his family. Chicken was served on a leaf from a tree. The husband said that his grandfather was a captain in the Spanish army.

After the war, things were a bit more relaxed. The commanding officer on Tinian Island, about 100 miles away, complained about a lack of palm trees, so we filled our PBY with coconuts and delivered them.

One day I was going back to Eniwetok (1,080 miles) for some reason. We had a new member just out of flight school. About an hour out, he came forward and said we had to turn back as the newer, more sophisticated, radar was not working. We continued and got there OK. He could not operate the radar, and we barely knew what he was talking about. Somehow, we managed.

Our group had the same commander for two years, a rarity in military service. Our commander had been on a submarine in WWI, and was a pilot in this war. He arranged for all his men to take tours on a submarine. Nonetheless, one day, a stranger appeared and introduced himself as our new commanding officer. He asked if I was a PBY pilot and I said, "Yes, sir." "Ever been to the Philippines?" "No, sir." "Want to go?" "Yes, sir." "Tomorrow take a new PBY to Sumar."

We delivered the plane and then waited three days for a return trip. They said to board the plane by rank. By the time they got to me, the good seats were gone and I went to the rear end of the plane. Soon after the takeoff, I got on top of a pile of mail sacks and had a wonderful sleep all the way to Guam.

It was time to come home, and the Navy wanted the B-26s returned. I was in charge of five planes. Our first stop was Eniwetok, then to Wake Island and then to Midway (1,380 miles).

The next trip was to Pearl Harbor (1,143 miles). I returned to San Francisco, enjoyed dinner at the Cliff House, and went home for Christmas. I was back in Ann Arbor in January.

I was with a great bunch of guys and had a wonderful commanding officer. I was lucky to be a small part of the war and see much of the Pacific Ocean. I have not flown a plane since I landed at Pearl. I liked flying, but I returned to our family business.

Rain of Fire: Mt. Vesuvius, Then German Bombers Laid It on Us

Donald E. Clark

March 22, 1944, one of two dates scorched in my memory. A muffled thunder in late afternoon. That's when black clouds of smoke and red hot lava rock shot into what had been an overcast Mediterranean sky. Mt. Vesuvius really blew.

A few minutes later ash, red hot cinders and, sometimes lava rocks, rained down on the entire field as all of us grabbed our helmets and ran for shelter. Our shop area was in shambles. Every eight minutes Vesuvius would let go again. Then came more ash, cinders and lava rocks. It was a spectacular sight. This eruption cycle repeated many times.

There was no time to fly off the planes, including those we had repaired. Soon 80 planes were damaged and unflyable. The ash weighted down plane tail sections to the ground and elevated the nose. The area was covered with ash and cinders, sometimes well over two feet deep.

All but our engineering section of the 324th Air Service Squadron, were evacuated to Vesuvius Airfield about eight miles north. The Corps of Engineers cleared pathways so planes could be towed to the main road (also dirt) leading to Vesuvius Airfield. The Corps widened it enough to accommodate a B-25. One by one we towed the planes to the "new" field. In less than three days all the planes were moved.

Work had already begun cleaning out ash and cinders, replacing broken plexiglas and replacing the fabric covered ailerons and tail elevators. When our first plane was repaired, I went on the flight to see that everything worked. More replacement planes soon arrived.

Others arrived, too. But they weren't ours.

It was shortly after midnight on May 12. We heard planes. Then several parachute flares lit up the whole field like day. The first Nazi bomb fired up an 80,000 gallon 100 octane storage dump.

Methodically, they mutilated our airplanes, getting most of them.

Then a couple of JU88s, twin engine attack bombers started on our personnel area. My tent mate, Warrant Officer Worley, and I watched as a JU88 stitched a string of bullets right across a 50-caliber heavy machine gun emplacement less than 50 yards away. Luckily the two gunners weren't hurt.

The bombers dropped Molotov cocktails (big bombs filled with small anti-personnel bombs). We then saw another JU88 strafe down the adjacent railroad cut where many of our men had sought cover. It was then that Worley and I said, "Let's get out of here," and ran down a slight slope to an underpass under the tracks. I got there and waited for Worley. He didn't show up. As soon as the planes left I returned to the tent. No Worley. An early dawn search party found him. He had been hit in the shoulder by an anti-personnel bomb and died instantly. One man

was killed when the gas dump blew. Eighty-seven men were awarded purple hearts. Most of them were survivors from the railway cut.

My men joined the crews in repairing their damaged planes. By mid afternoon we had 12 planes in the air. With repairs, and some replacement planes flown in from the north over three days, we ended up with four squadrons with a total of 64 planes.

On VE Day I was in Rimini, Northern Italy. A month later I was in the states. While on 30-day leave in Colorado with my wife Genivieve, the bomb was dropped in Japan. Upon returning to base, instead of going to assignment in the Pacific, I was discharged.

SERVICE IN FOUR BATTLES IN THE WAR ON A BATTLESHIP

GEORGE C. PETERS

I saw considerable action in the invasion of France in June and August of 1944 and also in the American recapture of Okinawa and Iwo Jima in 1945 — all aboard the U.S. battleship USS Nevada.

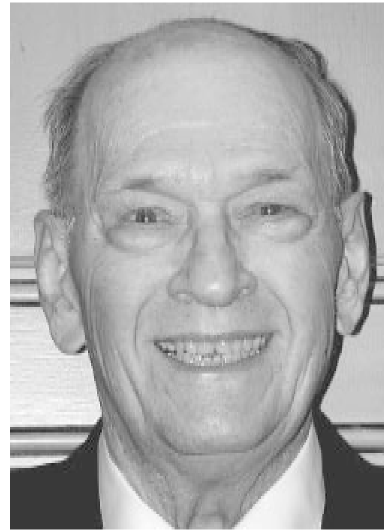
Before the United States entered World War II, I was a high school graduate. I began working in the Jackson, Mississippi office of GMAC, the financial arm of General Motors. In danger of being drafted, I started taking college classes at night. I joined the Marine Corps in November 1941, and boot camp shortly afterwards.

On the night of December 7, 1941, we trainees were walking the beaches off San Diego (sans rifles), looking for any possible invasion. Upon completion of basic training, I was assigned to Camp Matthews in nearby La Jolla as a rifle instructor on the new Garand rifle.

USS Nevada in Europe

In November 1943, I graduated from the Officers' Candidate School at Quantico, Virginia, was commissioned a second lieutenant and received advanced training in various aspects of military life. On June 8, two days after D-Day, I was assigned to the Marine detachment on the battleship USS Nevada, joining the ship in Normandy, France. We were supposed to be a part of the D-Day assault, but mechanical problems delayed us.

Our ship was just off Utah Beach, where so many brave Allied soldiers had endured a brutal battle to establish a beachhead. Our mission was to direct fire from our heavy 14-inch guns to hit German targets to make it easier for our troops. Our barrages were directed by aerial information by Allied planes. We experienced no air attacks, as the Allies controlled the skies completely.



We then went into Cherbourg harbor where we were subjected to severe fire from German guns encaved in the mountains. We sustained no loss of life and no direct hits, but the ship took a good beating. The Nevada fired 112 rounds from her main battery and 958 rounds from five-inch batteries.

After re-supplying at Belfast, Ireland, we sailed to the Mediterranean to join in the invasion of Southern France on August 15, 1944. While the landing of troops went relatively smoothly, there was a lot of enemy fire in the air and shore battery action. The French battleship Strasbourg (taken over by the Germans) was moored in Toulon Harbor and creating serious problems. The Nevada was ordered to fire on the Strasbourg. This we did successfully and the ship sank.

Military Facts: Served on active duty with U.S. Marine Corps November 1941 to May 1945, followed by a number of years in the reserves, retiring as a captain. Earned four battle stars for Normandy, Southern France, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Our main battery guns were almost completely worn out and needed reboring. We returned for repairs to the Norfolk, Virginia naval shipyard.

Iwo Jima, Okinawa

Then, it was back to the battle again but in another part of the world. We sailed for Pearl Harbor, where we learned our next assignment was the invasion of Iwo Jima.

We arrived just before the invasion on February 15, 1945, and spent 19 consecutive days — before and after the invasion — smashing pill boxes, gun displacements and airstrips. We used our main battery five-inch guns. We also did gunnery exercises to protect our underwater demolition teams by firing live ammunition over their heads to discourage enemy actions.

A Japanese shore battery shot down one of our spotting planes, and we lost our first casualty, Senior Aviator Hugh Sheldon. We also sustained a few air attacks.

The Nevada then joined in the invasion of Okinawa on April 9, 1945, where there was intensive action. We shot down three planes, but also took a direct hit by a kamikaze plane. Our Marine gunners shot off one wing of the Japanese fighter plane, causing him to miss our bridge. But the damaged plane still hit the ship, causing extensive damage and explosions. The damage was devastating: 17 men were lost and many others were wounded.

So, we returned to Pearl Harbor for extensive repairs, after which we sailed to the Philippines to prepare for the invasion of Japan, scheduled for the fall of 1945. It was there that we learned that the U.S. had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that Japan had surrendered on August 15, 1945.

Our ship returned to San Pedro, California, assignment to Camp Pendleton, where I and most of our detachment were discharged and went home.

I am proud to have served my country as a Marine.

From D-Day Casualties to Celebrities

Dick Thomas

It was a strange war for me. I provided support for the severely wounded following D-Day and also was forunate to meet a number of celebrities from Hedy Lamarr to Joe Louis.

It began when I moved from civilian life as a banker to induction into the Army on November 28, 1941 at Camp Custer, Michigan On December 6, a trainload of us ended up at Camp Barkley, Texas, assigned to a newly-formed Medical Replacement Training Center.

A group of Michigan National Guards greeted us and kidded us because they were going home and we were just starting. Of course, the attack on Pearl Harbor the next day changed all that.

Training Medical Recruits

Upon completion of basic training, a number of us were sent to Camp Robinson, Arkansas as cadre to start a new medical replacement center. I was assigned as a platoon corporal to train medical recruits.

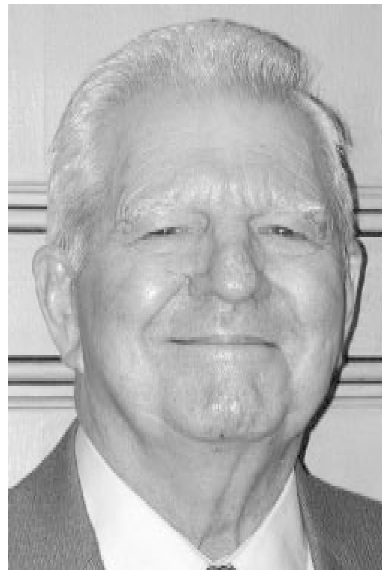
I was chosen to attend an Officer Candidate School on the post, finished the training and graduated but then was disqualified due to an abnormal respiratory condition. A few weeks later, however, I was promoted to staff sergeant and with this sizeable increase in pay and benefits, I married my fiancée on December 12, 1942 in a chapel on the post.

In July 1943 I was assigned quartermaster supply sergeant of the 55th General Hospital being activated a half-mile from where I had been for 19 months. Eventually we acquired 90 nurses, 70 medical and administrative officers and 500 enlisted men. Six months of training was largely at the base hospital.

Learning Show Business

Besides my supply functions, I was given the pleasant task of providing entertainment programs for our own unit and for future patients. I was sent to Camp Hood, Texas to attend a "soldier show conference" taught by noted Broadway and Hollywood personalities. The conference showed us how to improvise and make do with talent and material on hand at any given time.

I met and mingled with Hedy Lamarr, Ray Bolger, Perc Westmore, Margaret Whiting and Phil Foster. While the conference was very informative, I doubted if any of us would ever become another Flo Ziegfield.



In February 1944 we went by train to Camp Miles Standish, Massachusetts and later boarded a Liberty ship for England. Using our band, talented nurses and enlisted men, we put together nine shows for the entire ship during the 10-day crossing.

We were sent to Llandadno, Wales. We arrived at midnight and were greeted by hundreds of villagers really glad to see the first contingent of Americans come to their

area. At first, we were billeted in private homes.

British Built Hospital for U.S.

The British built our 1,000 bed hospital and our living quarters at Malvern, England on a portion of the Worchestershire golf course, which unfortunately I never got to play.

My department negotiated with local companies for laundry, dry cleaning, shoe repair and other services. I made trips to London during the blitz to secure clothing, shoes, equipment and sundry items to prepare for the expected number of patients we would be receiving.

Although we were non-combatants, we worked very hard, knowing our efforts would eventually help save lives of our fighting men. A bright spot for me was news that on May 15 my only daughter was born back home.

We were ready when the invasion began on June 6. Within days we received six trainloads of wounded servicemen. Regardless of normal job or rank, all hands took care of the large number of patients, and we had to procure ward tents to accommodate the overflow.

When the activity settled down to a normal pace, we built a theater to show movies and hold conferences. We staged soldier shows and sing-a-longs for our own unit as well as for our ambulatory patients. On one occasion, Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, came to speak to us. Another time, Joe Louis also came for a short visit with our bedridden patients.

VE Day came on May 8, 1945. Our patient load decreased rapidly and we expected orders to go to the Pacific. Instead,we replaced a hospital unit in Mourmelon, France, a short distance from where the armistice was signed.

Soon after the Japanese surrender, I was fortunate to have enough points to be one of the first to leave the 55th. I left Marseilles in November 1945 and was discharged at Camp Atterbury, Indiana on December 1 to end four years of military service.

I resisted the urge to go into show business but have always been particularly interested in stage and television productions. Instead, I spent 45 years with Comerica Bank, ending as vice president for commercial loans.

Communications Vital to Military Success General Patton Needed Mine Detectors

Harry Mitchell

The Signal Corps of the United States Army is responsible for personnel and materials for military communications operations all over the world. I am proud to have served with the organization during all of World War II — at home and in the Pacific theater.

I graduated from Purdue University in 1939 with a mechanical engineering degree. Because of my ROTC training in field artillery, I also received a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves.

The threat of war in Europe was ominous as Germany conquered its neighbors one at a time. When it attacked Poland in September 1939, World War II began. But my civilian life was the important thing at that time and I went to work at the General Motors Delco Radio operation in Kokomo, Indiana where I was involved in the mechanical design of automobile radios.

On December 16, 1941, right after Pearl Harbor, I received orders to report to the Army Signal Corps (SC) headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1942, the headquarters were moved to Philadelphia. My responsibilities were always related to procurement and supply of materials, both in the U.S. and overseas.

During my tour of duty, I was able to see first-hand the strong alliance between the military and civilian suppliers, an indispensible link to successful military operations. Here's a good example.

Mine Detectors for Patton

One of my most interesting experiences occurred early in my service (1942), when I was serving in Philadelphia. It was an event that demonstrated the dedication and patriotism of civilians to the war effort.

The Signal Corps headquarters was staffed with regular Army personnel but included mostly civilian workers. I was the officer-in-charge of a group that administered the supply and status of high value Signal Corps equipment in critically short supply.

Saturday morning in mid-October 1942, my commanding officer confronted me with a serious, high-priority problem. General George Patton had called the Army's Chief Signal Corps officer in Washington and described a calamity that occurred at the seaport of Norfolk, Virginia.

The First Armored Division troops were departing from the U.S. for the Allied invasion of North Africa. General "Blood & Guts" Patton said that during the loading of supplies, all of the division's 16 mine detectors were dropped into the harbor

Military Facts: Served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps from January 1942 to April 1946 when he was discharged as a major. He was awarded the Pacific Theater Ribbon with battle stars for New Guinea and the Phillipines campaigns.

waters. He said emphatically that his troops would not depart without these detectors to protect their tanks and troops in North Africa.

Patton demanded a new supply at the port by noon on Sunday, the next day. And as history would prove, whatever Patton wanted, Patton almost always got.

Detectors Scarce

Mine detectors were a brand-new defense weapon for the U.S. Signal Corps, and production was in a very early stage. There were probably no more than 32 units scattered throughout the U.S. with no more than four units in any one location. Trying to gather 16 detectors and arranging transportation to meet such a deadline was a tough assignment.

One possibility I explored was whether detectors might be available with the manufacturer, but no luck. However, the manufacturer (Atwater-Kent) said it could probably produce 16 units at its radio plant in Philadelphia in a "long day."

More than 100 civilian workers reported to the factory immediately and worked Saturday night and Sunday morning to produce and test more than 16 mine detectors. A waiting truck carried the detectors to Norfolk before General Patton's deadline.

The crisis was solved by committed, patriotic civilians and our war effort went on. It is hoped that General Patton became aware of this contribution. It was an inspiring experience for me.

War Heats Up in Pacific

In 1943, the war was heating up in the Pacific Theater of operations as Allied forces began assaults on islands captured by the Japanese in 1942. Every island recaptured — such as the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, Guadalcanal, Guam, Iwo Jima and the Phillipines — were a stepping stone on the road to Japan. And each of these recaptured islands also stretched the critical pipelines which supplied our troops — including important communication links.

Additional Signal Corps personnel were moved to the Pacific in July 1943. I was assigned to SC headquarters at General Douglas MacArthur's command center in Australia. Later, the headquarters unit moved to New Guinea, and finally to Manila in the Philippines. I was released from military service in April 1946.

My Best Day of WW II

John Crawford

Thousands of Japanese troops were bypassed on the island of New Guinea as General Douglas McArthur headed to the Philippines. After our successful invasion at Aitape, New Guinea, my L.C.T. Navy craft (Landing Craft-Tank) was detailed to attempt the rescue of 200 troops from the 32nd Division who were trapped on the beach about 30 miles from the point of the Aitape invasion. Our landing craft had a tank deck long enough to hold the 200 troops. Along with four P.T. boats, we headed down the beach to attempt the rescue.

It was a clear morning, and we had no difficulty spotting our surrounded troops on the beach. There was absolutely no enemy resistance, so we headed to the beach and made a clean pickup of the troops and their wounded buddies. Prior to our landing, the P.T. boats strafed the adjacent areas near the surrounded men so that the evacuation of the men could take place safely.

Our craft retracted from the beach without incidence, and our navy crew of 12 men were feeling pleased with the rescue of these 200 American soldiers. As we headed to sea we gave the beach another pounding with our machine guns to ward off Japs that might come to fill the void.

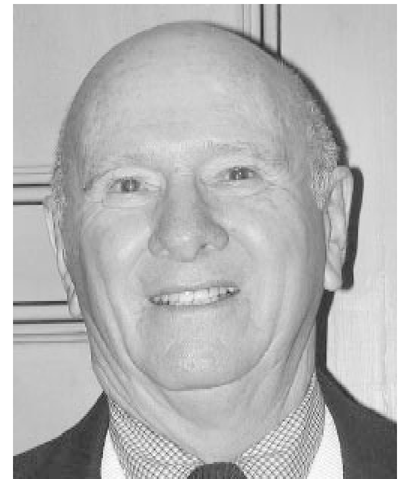
Unbeknown to us, the enemy had set up mortars in the foothills behind the beach. Our timely rescue turned into a hell at sea. The Japs unloaded a barrage of mortar shells at us, and we were in perfect range for their revenge. Bracket firing of the mortars had us pitching in the water, and we expected a direct hit as the shells moved, oh so close. The P.T. boats with their speed were not an easy target, but we were like a sitting duck on a pond.

A miracle happened! The P.T. boats circled us with a dense smoke screen, and the shelling stopped soon after. With our engines going at top speed, we finally got out of mortar range. The petrified expressions on the soldiers' faces began to leave, and they realized that the rescue was a complete success. We beached our L.C.T. back at the American lines and unloaded 200 happy soldiers.

In spite of the horrors of WW II there were happy moments like this one. I was involved with other rescue events in my Navy days, but no day was as happy as this one. I will be forever grateful that we all survived.

The Other Days

All the rest of my Navy days began in early February 1943 when my draft board yanked me out of my freshman year at Denison University. I went through training for amphibious craft at Little Creek, Virginia and was assigned to an L.C.T. After much training, our L.C.T. was tied down on the deck of a larger ship, and we departed San Francisco for Brisbane, Australia where we underwent more training.



The mission of our troops on New Guinea was to deal with the thousands of Japanese troops stranded there by General MacArthur's island-hopping

strategy. The role of an L.C.T. was to move troops, equipment and supplies to the points where they were needed. My L.C.T. arrived in New Guinea in February 1944 and immediately began that kind of service.

By mid-1945 two others of the crew and I had accumulated enough time for a 30-day rest-and-relaxation leave. We went to Honolulu on our way home, and there we first heard of the bombing of Hiroshima. On our second day out of Honolulu, bound for L.A., we heard of the bombing of Nagasaki. The day we arrived in Los Angeles, President Truman announced that the war was over.

With the war over, I am grateful that some wise officer decided I shouldn't go back to New Guinea, although I did not have enough service time to be discharged. I was offered duty at a number of stateside locations and chose the discharge center in Toledo, Ohio. My Navy days ended there as a boatswain's mate first class on February 3, 1946, three years to the day from when I started.

NAVAL EXPERIENCES IN THE PACIFIC

HAROLD TWIETMEYER

At the time of Pearl Harbor, I was a senior at Purdue University, scheduled to graduate in June of 1942. My draft notice arrived in February, and the draft board would not grant me the three-month delay to allow me to graduate. I decided to enlist in the Navy (my first choice, anyway) and that allowed me to finish college and then go to midshipman school in New York. After successfully finishing midshipman school, I was sent to diesel school at Cornell University.

Before my next duty I was given a ten-day leave during which I was married. My new wife and I enjoyed a short honeymoon before I had to report to S.C.T.C. (Sub Chaser Training Center) in Miami. From there I was sent to a factory school in Beloit, Wisconsin where the Fairbanks Morse Company was building diesel engines for destroyer escorts.

Training, Training and More Training

There were more trained officers than ships available for assignment so, after six more weeks at S.C.T.C., several of us were sent to the Amphibious Base at Solomons, Maryland. After a short training period we were sent to Bayonne, New Jersey to put newly-built LCIs (Landing Craft - Infantry) into commission. Returning to Solomons, Maryland, our LCIs were designated as training ships for newly-formed crews. Our flotilla remained in the Chesapeake Bay area for about a year (until late '44), operating as training ships. I began as an engineering officer on LCI 534 and later became captain of LCI 504.

LCIs were designed to carry about 250 troops and land them on beaches. This proved satisfactory for European operations where the distances were short. However, when the war emphasis shifted to the Pacific, distances were much longer, and also there were now more appropriate ships to ferry troops to shore. LCIs were converted to either flagships or rocket ships. Ours was converted to a flagship at Norfolk, Virginia and then dispatched to Hawaii via the Panama Canal and San Diego.

We arrived in Hawaii in February 1945 and were based in West Lock to await assignment. While waiting, we were given temporary inter-island duties such as flagship for LCT training exercises, and special delivery of oil and gasoline drums to the Marines stationed on Nihau.

Invasion of Japan

In July of '45 we were designated flagship to a flotilla of LSTs in preparation for the upcoming invasion of Japan. We were to land near the naval base of Sasabo, Japan on the southernmost island of Kyushu. Then, thank God, the dropping of the atomic bomb ended the war.

We set sail immediately to occupy the area we had been preparing to invade. Mine sweepers and a few Marines had preceded us into Sasabo, so of course there was no resistance. But on the shore there was the chilling sight of hundreds of Japanese suicide boats about 15 feet long, powered by Chevrolet engines that had been disabled by the Marines prior to our arrival.

Through the Typhoon

Our flotilla of LSTs was dispatched to the Philippines to load bulldozers and construction equipment and return to Sasabo. We encountered a typhoon en route. The eye was heading east and our course was south, traveling at a speed of 10 knots. Our captain

decided to try to outrun the storm by continuing our course south. The waves were at about 30 feet, which was higher than our bridge. When the ship was in a trough between the waves all we could see was a wall of water all around, towering over us, with all the other ships out of sight. Then we would be lifted like a cork to the top of a huge wave, with the wind blowing the crest horizontally. This would reduce visibility to a minimum, though occasionally we would catch a glimpse of another ship.

We had previously secured heavy lines around the deck for those who had to go from one compartment below deck to another, as there was no internal passageway. Everyone stood his watch, seasick or not, and stayed in our bunks the rest of the time. The bunks had straps to keep us from being tossed out by the ship's rolling and pitching. The galley was closed except for the coffee urn, with crackers and apples available for those who could eat. The worst of the typhoon was over in a few days, and fortunately it crossed our course 24 hours after we did - so we were about 200 miles from the eye. We were supposed to go to Linguyan Gulf but went to Subic Bay to wait for calmer weather, then back to Sasabo.

Sasabo and Nagasaki After the Bombing

Sasabo had been firebombed with only one air raid, but the entire center of the city was burned out except for one reinforced concrete structure which remained standing. Indeed, entire blocks had been bulldozed to rubble. I saw a few old cars which ran on charcoal. They had generators in the trunk to produce carbon monoxide which was piped to the engine. The people seemed friendly, and I was amazed that the high school kids could speak English. One boy told me that it was taught since it was the language of business.

I was able to take a train to Nagasaki where the second A-bomb had recently been dropped. This one exploded above the ground and incinerated a massive area. When we arrived, we saw nothing but the twisted structural steel of many factories. Fortunately for the Japanese, however, the center of Nagasaki was protected by hills, and there did not appear to be too much damage there.

Shortly thereafter (about Thanksgiving '45) I acquired enough points for discharge and sailed for San Francisco where my service career ended.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT DOWNED NAZI PLANES

CYRIL D. DUFFY

I enlisted in the U.S. Army in Pontiac, Michigan in April 1942. After basic training at Camp Wallace, Texas, I was selected by a board of officers to attend the Coast Artillery Officer Candidate School at Camp Davis, North Carolina.

I became a "90 day wonder," receiving my commission on November 1942 after completing the three-month course. Then I was a "shave tail" at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and in February 1943 reported to the 456th Anti-Aircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin as a platoon officer in a firing battery.

We went to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for maneuvers with the Second Infantry Division and that summer participated in maneuvers in Tennessee. After several weeks of target firing at Camp Stewart, Georgia, the unit sailed for England.

Landing in Liverpool in October 1943, we spent seven months in the English Midlands continuing our training and furnishing anti-aircraft protection at several air bases.

Utah Beach

The unit sailed from South Hampton, arriving at Utah Beach in Normandy on June 29, 1944. Enroute, Battery "C," one of our firing batteries, struck a mine in the English Channel and suffered many casualties.

The training was over, and from here on, "it was for keeps." We entered Normandy as part of the U.S. First Army and became a unit in the Third Army under the command of General George S. Patton.

Our battalion saw its fiercest action providing anti-aircraft protection of the bridges crossing the Seine River at Mantes-Gassicourt, east of Paris, when the German air force came out in large numbers.

Patton Commendation

The battalion destroyed 20 planes with eight probables over a three-day period. As a result of this action, the unit received a commendation from General Patton for its great performance.

Our assignments were primarily affording protection for Field Artillery Batteries as we pushed eastward toward Germany. We had a short stay in Luxembourg and had gun positions in Ingolstad, Germany, when hostilities ended.

Memorable among humorous battalion stories while we were stateside was an enlisted man in "C" Battery who had a brief moment of glory. His name was actually General Leonard Wood. After complaining of severe stomach pain during obstacle course workouts, he was sent to the post hospital.

At check in, he identified himself as General Wood. When friends visited him, they were surprised at the pleasantness of his accomodations. When the hospital staff learned that his first name was not his rank, they hustled him to quarters more befitting his enlisted status.

Service Mostly in Europe

My length of active duty service was 3.5 years, two of which were spent in the European Theater. I received the European Theater Battle Ribbon with five battle stars as well as the Bronze Star Medal. I was a platoon commander with the rank of first lieutenant and I served briefly as a battery commander after hostilities ceased.

The 456th Battalion in which I served was officially deactivated on October 21, 1945 at Fort Patrick Henry, Virginia. It was a great outfit and I'm sure most of the men were proud to have been a part of it. I certainly was.

I was honorably discharged with the rank of captain and served in the reserves for 19 years, commanding a 105mm howitzer battalion during the last three years of active reserve. I hold the rank of lieutenant colonel in the retired reserve.

And though I became an automotive body engineer for 35 years, I am still attracted by those search lights that sweep the sky at dealership and shopping center openings and fondly remember my old anti-aircraft days.

Some Funny Things Happened on My Way to Japan

George Lumsden

Sherman was right when he said that war was hell. Anyone who has ever tasted of it will agree that most other activities are more pleasurable.

Yet, those of us who served in wartime will agree that some memorable times were funny — funny/unusual or funny/humorous. I managed to work my way through World War II without being killed or court martialed - although too close for comfort on both counts, as this essay will later show.

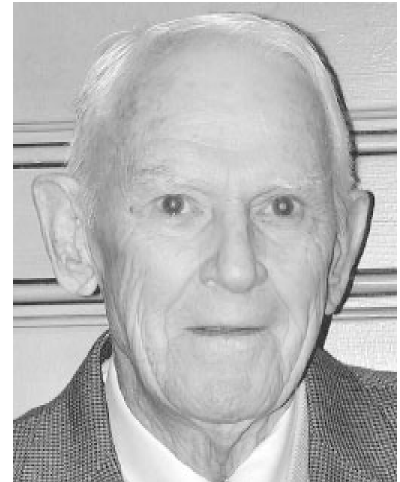
Enlisted in 1942

I enlisted in the Navy in 1942. We lost so many ships at Pearl Harbor that they didn't need manpower right away, so I was called up in 1943. The fact that I had a good bit of my degree already put me in that select group destined for commissioning, so my first duty station was at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. One semester there, learning which was my left foot and which was my right, and then a period at Portsmouth Navy Yard before going up to New York to Columbia University's Midshipman School as ensign, then to Small Craft Center in Miami, and Anti-Submarine Base in Key West, Florida. By then, I talked Navy, walked Navy, and was Navy enough to be assigned to the USS Gladiator, a minesweeper in Pearl Harbor. My war began.

Entertaining Experiences

On the way, however, a number of unusual and entertaining experiences...

As apprentice seamen, we were supposed to be still in boot camp, not on the street. We spent a lot of time explaining to shore patrolmen who we were. And at Portsmouth, they didn't know what to do with us most of the time, so we'd be free at three o'clock in the afternoon — so we got to the pool tables and the bar and the slots before the real sailors got to the PX. This resulted in our barracks having a sign thrown at it — "This way to the main gate."



In New York, we learned how to be New Yorkers — an exercise in survival. Saturday was our ticket to freedom, so we would go out on the town. After inspection and a parade on Saturday, we'd crowd the subway, and as the train came into Times Square, the conductor would shout, "Astor Bar," and what do you know, that's where we wanted to be. A beer or two, then on to a shopping trip to the theaters where we'd get balcony seats at a bargain. Sheer fun!

French was Difficult

One night a group of us went to an expensive French restaurant. We were trying to figure out how much each of us owed, and a Texan, who had had one beer too many, offered to handle the money. He told each of us how much, and we threw the dough into the middle of the table. As we were retrieving our hats at the checkout, the little waiter came up and said, "Did you forget somezing?" Tex asked the waiter what was missing. "Ze gratuity, monsieurs. Did you forget?" To

which, Tex replied, "I left it all on the table." "Oh, yes, monsieur but six cents is not very much." We all dug in and saved the day.

On Broadway

I did some writing for the Midshipman School "yearbook." We were feted at a dinner in town, after which, our drill officer asked if we'd like to see the Fred Waring Show. We went to the theater and saw a line halfway round the block. "We'll never get in," I said. "Oh, yes, we will," said the officer. We went to the stage door, he asked for Patty. This cute gal took us in, got us seats, third row, center. Great show. "Write Patty a note to thank her," said the officer. We did. Now, I happened to be engaged at the time and after graduation I was married. Down in Florida, Marge, my new bride, and I opened the mail one day to find a picture of this cute singer with the inscription, "All my love, Patty." It took me a little work to explain that one away.

San Francisco and Hawaii

We went to San Francisco where I would catch a ship to Hawaii. Marge was ill, so I put her on a train home. I had to report daily to the Federal Building, so I would stand in front of the old St. Francis Hotel to get a ride down there. It was the same every morning — the cab would pull up. "Anyone for the Federal Building?" The military would step forward. "You there," the cabbie would shout at a civilian. Yes, he was going to the same place. Three or four military, one civilian — and the latter always paid the fare. Never different. What a country!

I caught a Dutch merchant ship to Honolulu. At Pearl, I waited several days for my own ship. When I saw her, I was impressed. It was 220 feet long and looked more like a destroyer than a sweeper. We carried 100 men and 10 officers. I was the new guy aboard, so I picked up all the crummy assistant-type jobs in addition to my number one assignment, anti-submarine warfare officer. It was in the latter category that I spent most of my tour of duty; we convoyed ships to invasion sites — before and after the invasions. By then, we had pushed the Japanese fleet far enough west that submarines weren't too much of a problem. We were vigilant, nonetheless.

A common military gripe has always been a superior officer-period. Mine was no joy to serve under. I was a lowly ensign, he a lieutenant commander. He seldom issued a direct order, but you knew if things weren't going right. He tried people on. He liked to win. We'd have "friendly" poker games in the wardroom while at sea, and I've seen good hands thrown in by players who saw the captain raising the bet. Let him win, was the name of the game sometimes. He was sneaky, smirky and insinuating. He was a know-it-all who really didn't know it all.

Outfoxing the Captain

One night, I was called to his cabin. "Decode this message," he said, and handed me a piece of paper and a little decoding device. I had seen the thing before. "There's a little booklet that goes with this," I said. You could read his face - stupid kid. He reached for a phone, and called the wardroom. "Have Mr. Loveland come to my cabin." Dick Loveland was communications officer, and I was his assistant. Dick came in.

"Show Mr. Lumsden how to use this device," the captain said. Translated, that meant, "this stupid guy doesn't know how." "Yes, sir," Dick said, "But I have to go below to get the little booklet that goes with it." Stony silence. I was right and the boss was wrong, and that wouldn't do. My popularity was doomed.

Okinawa Costly for the Navy

Whenever we had a sonar contact, I was called to the bridge as was the captain. He always thought it was a sub. The sonar man and I — trained to know the difference — would call it a whale or a school of dolphins.

The old man couldn't tolerate having someone know something he didn't.

This played itself out in a serious way after we swept mines at Okinawa. We were deployed to picket duty after the invasion - looking for kamikazes. They caused more damage than mines. Okinawa was the Navy's costliest battle — 34 ships sunk, 368 damaged, 4,907 men killed and 4,824 wounded. Our ship destroyed three kamikazes.

Not involved with submarines, my battle station was with a mid-ships 40-mm gun crew. One afternoon, we spotted a Jap plane. My gunners mate and I agreed it was enemy, not friendly. I called the bridge for permission to open fire. "Permission not granted," was the reply. By then, the little so and so had banked over and was headed for us. "Open fire," I shouted, and we sent up a barrage. The kamikaze did an unusual thing — strafed us coming in. We lost one man and three were wounded. My gunners mate had a crease in his helmet, and I had the collar of my life jacket blown off. We had thrown the Jap off course enough that he flew over us by thirty feet and landed in the sea.

When we secured from general quarters, I went below, met the captain in the passageway to the wardroom. In his characteristic manner, he sneered and said, "Well, you were right." I was so annoyed that I pushed him up against the bulkhead and said, "You're damned right I was right," and stormed into my room.

I had hurt my back handling heavy ammo cans. I was sent temporarily, to an attack hospital ship in the harbor, (the USS Pinckney) while our ship had some repairs done. I drank a lot of coffee, smoked a lot of cigarettes, and slept fully clothed for hours at a time. The second day, I was wakened by a loud noise, the ship shuddered, and the lights went out.

A sailor with a battle lantern came running through the passageway. "Follow me," he yelled, and I followed. Up on deck, chaos. The superstructure was ablaze. We were given life jackets and told to go to the stern. We went over the side on ropes and were picked up by small craft. Survivors got a ticket home. My war was over.

Not killed, not court martialed, a sore back, and a few good memories. I sing the Navy hymn with sensitivity. Amen.

An Experience That Spanned World War II

Chris Montross

I was involved with both the beginning and the end of World War II. In 1941, I was studying radio and theater at what was then Wayne University. Several months before Pearl Harbor, I got my first professional job as an all-night announcer at WJBK - once a week on late Sunday night.

As luck would have it, my shift fell on December 7 and I was the only person in the studio from midnight to 6 a.m. on December 8. Besides pulling the latest news from the wire and reporting it on air, I also read commercials, answered the phone and took requests, found music and played it, and went to the bathroom when I could.

Normally, this was a very quiet shift but that one was frantic. I filled the air with regular newscasts and special bulletins as two wire service machines spewed out further details of the U.S. and the world's reaction to Pearl Harbor.

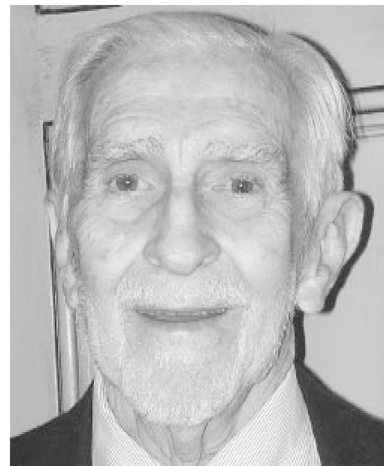
I applied for officer candidate training but the Air Corps needed pilots so I began flight training in December 1943. I graduated from Jackson Army Air Base in Mississippi and was assigned to B-24s.

Upsized to B-29s

In June 1945, I shifted to B-29s at Maxwell Field, Alabama. The B-29 was a much more advanced airplane and considerably more "pilot friendly." Because the B-24 was so difficult to fly I have always said shifting to a B-29 was like going from a truck to a Cadillac.

I went to the Pacific theater in February 1945 and arrived on Guam the day before the first atomic bomb fell on Japan. I had almost 1000 flying hours of training when World War II ended.

I had only one offical mission; a "fly over" in which I joined many other B-29s to cover the sky above General MacArthur as he accepted the the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2. I was reminded of this when I recently saw the movie "Lost in Translation" based in Japan. It had aerial photos of Tokyo and its endless panorama of exciting skyscrapers.



What a contrast from our "fly over" when all that was standing after the continuous B-29 fire bombing were a few smoke stacks and the emperor's palace.

I was discharged in April 1946 but didn't continue civilian flying because I couldn't afford to rent a B-29 or a smaller plane, either, so I returned to Wayne and graduated with a masters in communication. I later was a television director at Detroit's Channel 7 for 34 years.

A Recognition Officer Spotted Planes in the Pacific

George R. Mosher

I was in my senior year at the University of Oregon when the war began, and I enlisted in the V-7 officer training program of the U.S. Naval Reserve. This allowed me to graduate in 1943, and I went on active duty. After receiving training at the Northwestern University Midshipman School in Chicago, I received my commission as an ensign and was assigned to the USS Swazey, a destroyer escort in Galveston, Texas.

Destroyer escorts were used for convoy escort duty as anti-submarine and aircraft protection. They had a complement of approximately 300 sailors, with 12 officers. Every man served on watch (four hours on and eight hours off) twice each day. The duty officers were responsible for operating the ship during their watch, whether at sea or at the dock.

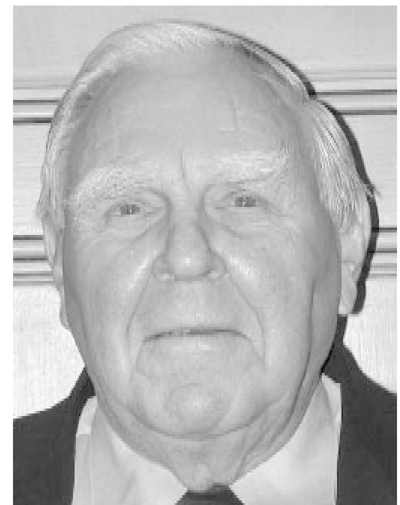
Anchors Aweigh

We outfitted the Swazey in New Orleans and then undertook a shakedown cruise in Bermuda waters. We were then sent to New York City where we soon escorted a 100-ship convoy to the Mediterranean and Casablanca. While this was without incident, on the return trip the destroyer USS Turner, which was with us, was sunk outside New York Harbor on New Year's Day, 1944, with a large loss of life. We tried to rescue survivors but there were very few. It was agonizing to watch the ship roll over and sink, with most of the crew below deck, and lost.

For the next three months, I attended Submarine Chaser Training School in Miami, followed by three months of Ship and Plane Recognition School at Ohio State University, and I ended up as a recognition officer. After this training, I was sent to San Diego to be transported via a small aircraft carrier to Pearl Harbor, then on to the Marshall Islands to board my assigned ship.

Aboard the USS Manlove

At Eniwetok Atoll, I reported to duty aboard the destroyer escort USS Manlove (DE 36) which was to be my floating home for the next year and a half. My primary duty was assistant communications officer, supervising ship communications including encoding and decoding radio messages. As recognition officer I was responsible for training ship personnel to identify aircraft and ships.



One of the more interesting jobs for the officers was censoring the crew's mail before it left the ship. This was especially interesting because many of the crew were not at all bashful in describing their amorous desires. Other than that, it was a taxing assignment due to the volume of mail, as crew members were constantly writing long letters home.

With three other destroyer escorts, we were soon underway to escort a four-ship convoy of tankers assigned to refuel other ships at sea. After returning to Eniwetok, we again escorted a seven-ship convoy to Saipan in the Mariana Islands. This type of assignment

continued during the summer and fall of 1944, as we constantly sailed to various Marshall Island atolls and Pearl Harbor to escort tanker convoys refueling the 5th Fleet. In December, we escorted the damaged attack carrier USS Intrepid to Eniwetok for repairs after it had been hit by a kamikaze.

Keeping Sharp

While we had seen no action in recent weeks, we attempted to keep our crew sharp by practicing anti-submarine tactics and anti-aircraft gunnery. We occasionally searched for downed planes, rafts and survivors. We found a downed U.S. PBM seaplane and rescued the crew. We attempted to tow the plane but couldn't, so it was necessary to sink it by gunfire.

There was some humor in our Pacific adventures. Our hard-nosed Yale educated captain always had a small sailboat on board so that he could sail it alone while we were in port or anchored in a safe harbor. He was not well-respected by the crew, and they later referred to him as "Captain Queeg." (He was evidently not well-respected at home, either, because after the war when a crew member tried to contact him for a ship's reunion, his wife answered the phone request by stating "Thank God, the son-of-a-bitch is dead.")

Involved in Action in 1945

During 1944-45 we escorted convoys and participated in the invasions of Guam, Saipan and Okinawa. Americans captured Iwo Jima and Okinawa after months of battling for every rock and cave. In Okinawa, the U.S. suffered 12,500 dead and 36,500 wounded, the heaviest American loss in the Pacific war.

At Okinawa we conducted frequent sonar and radar picket patrols and had constant air raid alerts from daily kamikaze attacks in the area. Our gunners were credited with shooting down several Japanese aircraft.

On one occasion in Okinawa, two planes were circling the ship. Our captain was unsure about whether they were friend or foe so he told the crew to hold off on shooting at them since they looked like U.S. P-47 fighter planes. While I was not on deck at the time, as the ship's recognition officer, I had already instructed the captain and personnel that there were no P-47s in the area. However, the captain did not wish to be accused of shooting down an Allied plane so he held the gunners off until the planes banked and headed for us. They indeed were Japanese Tony kamikazes so our gunners quickly opened up on them. We downed one, but the other crashed and exploded off our port side, hitting the ship. Unfortunately, this caused considerable damage to the ship's radar equipment and gun shield, killed one crew member and injured nine others. The wounded were transported to a hospital ship, and our fallen crew member was buried at sea. A very sad day for the Manlove.

More Convoy Support

Despite the damage to the ship we were able to escort the battleships Maryland and Nevada in a convoy to Saipan, then we sailed back to Guam for repairs. We returned to Okinawa and continued radar and sonar picket duty as we escorted convoys between Guam, Saipan and Okinawa. In June 1945, we headed for Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, enduring a typhoon on the way. We were in dry dock there for a few days to finish our repairs, then we went back to Okinawa. We fired on several floating mines to destroy them.

While transferring mail to the battleship West Virginia, we raked its port quarter. We lost our starboard anchor, dented our main deck, and punctured a hole above our waterline. (This was quite an embarrassment to the captain, who of course blamed the executive officer when the admiral asked for an

explanation!) We continued our support of several battleships, cruisers and destroyers which were shelling Okinawa until June 1945 when we were assigned to head back to Pearl Harbor and Seattle for overhaul to prepare for the invasion of Japan.

The End of the War is Near

In July 1945, the Allies issued an ultimatum to the Japanese, threatening total destruction unless they unconditionally surrendered. However, it was not until August when the awesome destruction of the two atomic bombs which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that Emperor Hirohito announced their surrender. On September 2, the Japanese signed the surrender document aboard the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay. When the first atom bomb dropped, I was home in bed in Yamhill, Oregon.

My Final Assignment

At war's end our ship was in dry dock at Bainbridge Island, Washington, and large numbers of our crew were being transferred from the ship to the receiving station at Puget Sound. In November of 1945, the Manlove was placed out of commission. I received ribbons for duty in the Atlantic, European, North African and Pacific theaters, including battle stars for Guam, Saipan and Okinawa.

My last assignment was as a troop train commander responsible for escorting naval personnel from Seattle to various separation centers across the U.S. for discharge. This turned out to be quite a challenge but very interesting, as I was able to visit many cities such as Memphis, San Francisco, Chicago, New York City and Jacksonville.

The Father Superior

Militarily, I was in charge but I was supported by three shore patrollers to enforce discipline, and five cooks to establish kitchen facilities in a baggage car and to cook for the long trips. I told the sailors that if they behaved themselves, they would be out of the Navy in a few days - otherwise they might be in for a very long time. This helped, but as the train made stops across the country, many of the guys would leave the train to hit bars or purchase liquor. We would lose 4-5 guys during each trip, but they always seemed to be able to catch a ride on the next train and meet us at a future stop. We never lost a sailor.

Since I was able to select the destinations for the escort trips, on one trip I selected New York City so that I could get familiar with Columbia University. Shortly after discharge as a lieutenant j.g. in May 1946, I entered Columbia under the GI Bill and received a law degree in 1948. My military duty was a fascinating experience which I very much enjoyed, despite the circumstances.

THE LIFE NOT TAKEN
MY BUDDY'S SHOUT, A TIMELY TURN

CHASE C. COOPER

I knew the next shot would get me and I would be knocked off at age 23. The feeling was not so much fear as sadness about all the good things in life I would miss. I zigzagged down the hill in a crouch, protected by the ridge. His next five shots missed.

But I've gotten ahead of myself. Events leading to this close call on Okinawa all started at Fort Riley, Kansas, in September 1944, when they formed the 4105 Quartermaster truck company. There was a captain, three lieutenants, a first sergeant, several other seasoned sergeants, and more than 100 recruits who came directly from induction centers.

It Started Here

I was a second lieutenant, supply officer, mess officer and platoon leader. After three months of basic training we were introduced to the tools of our trade, 50 two-and-a-half ton, 6x6, GMC trucks, and taught how to drive and service them.

In February 1944 we reported to a staging area on Puget Sound, north of Seattle. The Sea Flasher, one of 2,700 medium size freighters built by Kaiser, would be our home for more than a month as we moved into the South Pacific. We were packed like sardines into the ship's hold.

Seasickness in the Hold

We hit heavy seas on March 12. Havoc in the hold was awful as many boys got seasick big time. Calm seas and three days in Hawaii was a respite short lived.

We headed southwest at a snails pace. There was nothing to do — no radio, no reading material, no recreation, no fresh water for bathing. The days melded into weeks as we stood in long lines for meals. It was hot and monotonous.

One day, early in April, the PA system announced the death of President Roosevelt.

Our Destination Told

The next day we learned that we were going to Okinawa. No more information was given except that the invasion had begun April 1. We arrived at Hagushi Bay on April 15, thirty days after we had set sail. The harbor was black with ships. The Sea Flasher was escorted through a maze of ships to a mooring where we began using landing nets to small craft. I remained aboard to gather duffel bags and other company property. Unloading was a tedious process, so I went aft to nap on some duffel bags.

Suddenly, all hell broke loose! Every ship in harbor was firing a wall of lead into the sky. They hit a Jap Betty (a war plane), high up. The plane started down and I lost sight of it. At this moment, the Sea Flasher shuddered violently. I didn't know what happened until I saw blood running down the scuppers. We had been hit.

Friendly Fire

An eager sailor on the USS New Mexico, manning a rapid-firing poom poom gun,

continued shooting right down to the plane's crash. We took eight eight of his 40 millimeter shells at mid ship. Eighteen were killed and many more wounded. The wounded were taken ashore at once. The dead were covered and remained on deck for three days because of a "condition red" during which all harbor traffic stopped.

The loading cranes were knocked out by the shelling. All cargo was unloaded by hand, an eight-day task. Finally, after 39 days on the boat, I went ashore to see, and be part of, the devastation and carnage that was the Battle of Okinawa.

This was the largest invasion by sea in the Pacific Campaign. From April 1 to surrender day June 21, more than 100,000 Okinawa citizens perished, 107,000 Japanese soldiers were killed and 10,000 Americans were killed. Over 38,000 Americans were wounded. This momentous death toll and the fierce resistance of the Japanese, probably was decisive in the use of the atomic bomb a short time later.

Supplying the Front Lines

Working from dawn to dusk, I directed my vehicles from ship to supply dump or directly to the line of fire. In May the monsoons began. Heavy rains fell for weeks. The roads, bad to begin with, turned to gumbo and became almost impassable. The rear area, Kadena Circle, was a bog. Supply of material to the front line was endangered.

I was sent with 22 men and 15 trucks to deal with this problem. Our LST (landing ship tank) went up Buckner Bay to the burnt out city of Yanabaru in the north. We made camp nearby and began moving material from LSTs to the 7th Division on line.

The battle had moved from our location several days before. Bodies were seen everywhere. The Japs were largely left to rot in the sun. American dead were stacked on a railroad track near the wrecked station where we drew our food rations. The stench was stomach turning.

A Fateful Decision

Because there was some infiltration of the Japs through the lines at night, and from some bypassed caves where they still hid, I would circle our trucks at night like the old covered wagons. The trucks were equipped with 50-caliber machine guns that our guards fired into the nighttime darkness as my men would gather around my tent, seeking solace from the boss.

As supply lines extended, we moved our campsite closer to the front. Preparing for one such a move, I headed out in my Jeep with two men, accompanied by another lieutenant with two men in his Jeep.

Along the way, we spotted two Japs standing by a cave entrance and made the fateful decision to go get them. I tossed a smoke grenade into the mouth of the cave and called for surrender. One came out with his hands up.

A View Nobody Wants

My buddy lieutenant saw a second Jap fleeing the rear of the cave and gave chase. I went looking for him. I spotted him at the cave exit where he had the Jap with hishands up.

I was standing on the crest of the hill. My friend said "Cover him, Coop. I think he's got a grenade on him." I turned to comply and found myself staring into the muzz1e of a Jap-held rifle about five yards away. He fired just as I moved my arms. I caught the bullet in the left arm instead of the chest. The impact of the shot knocked me down over the ridge. I rolled over and...

Well, that's where you came in.

I returned to the cave entrance bloodied and weak. A tourniquet was applied. My men took off to get the guy that got me, leaving the Jap

prisoner and me alone together. I pulled my trench knife. He knew I didn't have the strength to use it. I yelled for help and the boys returned just as he was moving toward me.

The Route Home

I took the Japanese soldier's identification tag (they called it a "chop") as a souvenir before they moved me to an aid station first, then to a field hospital where I had a cast put on. Later, on Guam, a body cast was installed.

The next and last stop was Fletcher General Hospital in Cambridge, Ohio. There I endured four operations on the arm to put back together the shattered forearm and elbow. I spent one year in the hospital and was discharged as a first lieutenant in July 1946.

I am very grateful to have had the very full life I almost missed.

Notebook of European Service

Edwin H. Hoagland

June 1942 — Navy V-7 program, Notre Dame Apprentice Seaman School.

August 1942 — Abbott Hall, Northwestern University, Midshipmen's School. Medical discharge in September 1942 for hypertension.

November 1942 — Army draftee, private. Camp Custer, then Camp Campbell, Kentucky, 12th Armored Division, 152 Signal Company.

Fall 1943 — Maneuvers in Nashville, Tennessee. Air Force General Carl Spaatz needs pilots. Four-day pass to Nashville for tests sounds great! Not nervous! Passed the blood pressure test. Now I am in the Air Corps, wow! Never passed another blood pressure test.

March 1944 — England, with 40th Mobile Weather Squadron radio operator. On pass to London experienced the first buzz bomb attack. Should have stayed at the airfield. Twenty four shots of scotch with beer chasers in four hours. Never had a drink of scotch since.

June 1944 — St. Lo, Normandy.

September 1944 — Paris, France. Our little unit of two officers, seven radio operators and 12 weather observers "liberated" Paris! The foot-slogging GI's were chasing the Jerrys and couldn't stop. We accepted the French gratitude for what our GI's had done for them.

March 1945 — Kassell, Germany. I had pictures taken at our dirt airstrip about 25 miles from the Rhine River near Remagen. General Eisenhower flew in on his five-star C-47. Bradley and Hodges were in another C-47. General Patton flew in his little L-5. A convoy of Cadillacs had entered the area shortly before. The four generals were looking at maps laid out on one of the car trunks. They were planning the crossing of the Rhine. The next night the sky was lit up equal to the Fourth of July display over the Detroit River. I was delighted to be in on a part of history in the making.

I received a Bronze Star (undeserved).

Arming Navy Planes for Battles in the Pacific

Jack Loviner

I received an ensign's commission in the U.S. Navy Air Corps in May 1942 following graduation from Ohio State's engineering school. After my indoctrination at Cornell University to become a "60-day wonder," I reported to Naval Air Station (NAS) in Jacksonville, Florida, for aviation ordnance school. Next stop was NAS Norfolk, Virginia, to serve as assistant ordnance officer.

Ordnance for Airplanes

I was subsequently assigned to NAS Coco Solo, Panama and promoted to lieutenant j.g. My duties included the arming of Navy warplanes for surveillance and depth bombing of German and Japanese submarines in the Caribbean and near the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal in coordination with Navy Air Stations in Colombia, Honduras and the Galapagos Isles. Pursuing an alternative to ineffective depth charges on German submarines, the U.S. Navy designed a metal-seeking torpedo that destroyed many enemy subs.

After a stint with the Navy's Personnel Department in Washington, D.C., I transferred to the NAS Norfolk Air Group for training and eventual deployment on the USS Cabot aircraft carrier (CVL 28). The Cabot was built on a cruiser hull in the Philadelphia Navy yard. It was fast (33 knots), extremely maneuverable, and carried 33 planes (F-4-Fs, TBFs, and SBDs). Although the SBD, a dive bomber, was an old design, it won the naval war in the Pacific.

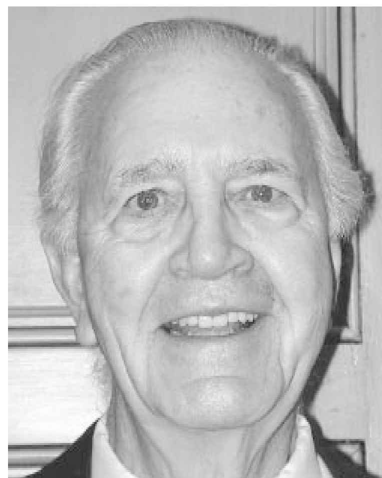
Save the "Lady"

After the war, the Cabot was given to the Spanish navy and used as a training ship until it was returned to the U.S. about 10 years ago. An association was formed to save "the Lady," and we tried to promote it as a tourist attraction in San Diego or New Orleans. However, a large carrier was selected. The Cabot was recently scrapped, the last survivor of the Independence class of nine aircraft carriers.

My next stop was the NAS Opalocca near Miami, Florida, upon my promotion to lieutenant. I volunteered for the underwater demolition, the forerunner of the Navy Seals. "Frogman" training at Fort Pierce, Florida, was rough. On the first day, all recruits were taken a half mile out to sea and ordered to jump into the ocean and swim to shore. At the end of training, many of us returned to our original stations to be mobilized into underwater demolition only if needed for the invasion of Japan.

Pacific Assignments

I was reassigned to Hawaii, then Saipan, then Tinian, where I was an ordnance officer at the Navy Operating Base. On Tinian I witnessed the arrival of the atomic bomb destined for Hiroshima, and I met the admiral in charge of delivering the bomb on the USS Indianapolis. One of the most tragic stories of the war was the sinking of the



Indianapolis by a Japanese submarine with the loss of 1,200 sailors.

My next assignment was in Okinawa, where supplies and material were stockpiled for the invasion of the Japanese homeland. The tonnage of stuff and troops seemed more than enough to sink the island into the Pacific.

The battle for Okinawa was very destructive. All infrastructures, along with the Japanese defenders and many Okinawans, were destroyed. There were no Okinawan men aged 17 to 60 left because the Japanese had shipped them off to build fortifications throughout the Pacific. None of these men returned. I was officer of the day during the "Big Typhoon" on Okinawa. Debris from an entire Marine base blew down onto our area, and our Quonset huts blew out to sea.

The Army officers loved to be invited to our mess hall on Okinawa, as the food was much better prepared. We declined reciprocal invitations to the Army mess hall, with its chow lines and tin plates in contrast to our servers and white linen. A week after the typhoon, our Army friends were still on cold "K rations." They called and asked what had become of our officers' mess. We replied that we were out of white tablecloths and linen napkins for three whole days! Go Navy!

In "Frogman" training, I injured my right foot on coral. The injury did not heal and was worsened by too much x-ray treatment in Hawaii. I walked like a duck for 30 years until I had an operation at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan by a great plastic surgeon.

Was Truman Right?

I have mixed emotions about President Harry Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb. I guess it could encourage a terrorist nation or rogue dictator to drop one, but Truman's action saved a lot of American and Japanese lives by ending the war without an invasion of Japan. I've often wondered whether a demonstration of the atomic bomb's power in the Sea of Japan, near Tokyo, could have ended the war with fewer civilian casualties — probably not.

I was very glad when the war with Japan was over. As they say, "war is hell" — and the loss of Navy friends is hard to forget. I served over four years in the U.S. Navy Air Corps and am proud of my service in defense of our country and victory over the Axis.

The end of the war and my return home to Columbus, Ohio, provided a wonderful feeling of being one of our millions of fellow veterans, or as NBC's Tom Brokaw said, "the Greatest Generation." God bless America.

Notes from the Coding Rooms the Communications' Nerve Centers

Russell H. Fisher, II

I didn't feel a thing. I didn't know that a kamikaze plane hit us on the port side at the waterline until the guy with the headphones told me.

Fortunately, no one was injured. The Japanese plane—"One-Way Charlies" they called them, blew a hole in our "blister," the rounded false side big ships used to create space to store water and fuel, and to protect the hull.

My battle station on the USS Idaho was in the combat information center, six decks down. It was so low that, when they outfitted it, they cut a hole in the bottom of the ship to bring equipment in. My regular duty was in the coding room where I supervised decoding and distribution of incoming messages, and the coding of outgoing ones. The Idaho was my home for two years.

Kamikazes at Okinawa

Meantime, bursting shells and smoking Japanese planes that fell twisting into the sea darkened the skies above. Our guys shot down nine enemy aircraft, five in four minutes.

The battle for Okinawa was underway. Three days before anyone went ashore, our twelve 14-inch guns were firing at the beaches where Marine and Army units would be landing. I couldn't hear the big guns, but the ship shuddered each time we fired. That, I could feel.

Military Facts: Asiatic-Pacific Ribbon with 2 stars; Korean Service Medal with 4 stars, United Nations Service Medal. Separated as full line lieutenant.

Battleship to Battleship

This bombardment started on Easter, April 1. On April 6 we were ordered north to intercept the biggest Japanese battleship, the Yamato, with 18-inch guns. That meant we would be outgunned. Even our newer battleships only had 16-inch guns. Frankly, I was scared. But some of our crew thought we could make history by engaging in what they thought would be the last shootout between battleships.

We understood that the Yamato was on a suicide mission to Okinawa where the captain planned to beach it and make a last ditch effort to protect the island with its guns.

But we hadn't got to within 500 miles of it when we learned that our carrier planes from Task Force 58 had taken care of it.

We were ordered back to Okinawa and arrived in time for the three-day assault by the kamikaze planes. It was on the third day of that attack that our ship was hit.

Kamikazes Get Through

Several weeks earlier, while anchored at the staging island, Ulithi, I was watching a movie topside when two kamikaze planes,

skimming the waves to fly under our radar, slipped undetected into our anchorage. One plane killed 34 men when it crashed into the aircraft carrier USS Randolph. The other fell on a small island.

Prior to that, our destination had been the Philippines, but we were diverted to Iwo Jima where, as we would do later at Okinawa, we bombarded the shore in advance of the invasion. We earned battle stars for our participation in those two campaigns.

The hole in our “blister” was repaired in a floating dry-dock at Guam, and we returned to Okinawa where we continued shelling at the direction of land-based spotters.

Out of Beer for the Celebration

Later, we steamed on to the Philippines. That’s where we received news of the atomic bombs hitting Japan. The sky lit up like the Fourth of July as our ship and all the others in the bay celebrated by firing off all their pyrotechnics. By that time, though, the allotment of beer we had, 500 cases of Colonel Ruppert Beer, had been consumed earlier by the crew who had received a ration of two cans per man.

When surrender ceremonies took place on the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, we were about 10 miles away. They had all the ships spread far apart because they remained cautious that the signing could be a plot to draw us in for one final assault.

How I Got There

Events leading up to these actions started June 26, 1942, when, while a student at the University of Michigan, I enlisted in the Navy’s V1 program to avoid the draft. I had been in the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at the time. The Navy called me to active duty July 1, 1943. During the 32 weeks in that program, I wore regular Navy enlisted men’s jumpers and the white sailor hats with a blue ring around them. We had khakis, too.

I was commissioned an ensign in February 1944 and was off to Harvard for 16 weeks to study communications. I lived in Lionel Hall, on Harvard Yard, with two marine and two navy officers. All that schooling qualified me to serve as a coding board officer; communication watch officer; signal watch officer; ship secretary, and, eventually, ship’s communications officer.

Secret Stuff

I wound up in Seattle working with a group of WAVES in coding board operations. I also was often dispatched to nearby Bremerton Naval Base with a satchel full of top-secret documents chained to my wrist.

When orders came to join the USS Idaho, I went to Pearl Harbor by way of San Francisco where I boarded a Dutch cargo ship. I waited a week at Pearl Harbor for the Idaho to return.

During all the activity that followed I was able to meet up with two of my brothers at different locations in the Philippines. Donald, a gunner’s mate on a PBY amphibian, couldn’t eat with me because I was an officer. My brother Bob, was an ensign. I got permission to take a local scow to visit him at Jimoco. It took four hours. When it came time to return, I was lucky to hitch a ride back to the ship on OS2U Kingfisher, a reconnaissance seaplane assigned to our ship. It took 15 minutes.

Easy Duty, Then Out

Eventually, I was assigned to serve as assistant to the admiral at headquarters of the 16th Fleet, Norfolk, Virginia. I handled an assortment of duties, including shore patrol for region.

I was separated on September 2, 1946, and returned to the U of M to complete my schooling. Meanwhile, I was still single, and remained an active member of the Navy Reserves, attending drills at Broadhead Armory at the foot of Belle Isle.

Then, Back In

So, after the start of the Korean conflict in June 1950, it didn't take long for me to be ordered back to active duty. In November, I again went to the Pacific. I remained in communications and was assigned to Admiral Edward Ewen's Task Force 77 in the Sea of Japan.

The admiral's offices would move every one to eight months from aircraft carrier to aircraft carrier. I served on five carriers whose planes were used for interdiction and bombing. The coding boards were situated on the half deck between the hanger deck and the flight deck.

We never came under enemy fire, but violence was never a stranger. There was any number of operating mishaps. A crash aboard the USS Essex killed the pilot and 20 other crewmembers.

How it Happened

I was eating dinner in my room when general quarters was sounded about 6:30 PM. I went topside and saw the fires, the confusion. The pilot did not lower his landing gear and was waved off. But he came in anyway and went through two barriers, careening into aircraft parked on the flight deck.

My career ended at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center where I was commander of the 103rd Battalion from 1952 to June 30, 1953, when I was released to inactive duty.

I enjoyed the Navy, and didn't mind being called up again.

Advancing in the Pacific

Richard R. Golze

When the U.S. entered World War II, I was working for Detroit Edison and was in my senior year at Lawrence Tech. Aspiring to be a fighter pilot, I enlisted in the Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet on August 7, 1942. Basic Army training and then primary, basic and advanced flight schools took months and months until, finally, at Eagle Pass Field in Texas I received a pilot's wings and a commission as a second lieutenant. My ambition was to fly the P-51 Mustang fighter, but first came transition training in the older P-40.

From Fighter to Bomber

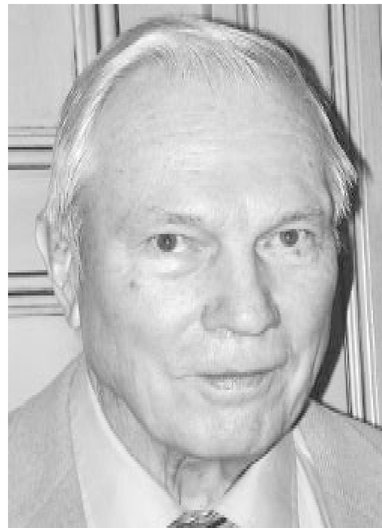
Aerial gunnery was a critical part of fighter pilot training. I was able to set a training command record for proficiency in aerial gunnery. A classmate from Eagle Pass and I were asked if we would stay on and teach aerial gunnery. The bait was that, if we taught one course, we would be recommended for P-51 training which we both longed for passionately. We took the bait. One month later without explanation or apology both of us were transferred to Lowrey Field, Denver, Colorado for B-24 co-pilot training! This was followed by several months of phase training in which a ten-man B-24 crew learns to function as a team.

Orders came in April 1945 to move to Salinas, California where we picked up a brand new B-24M made at Willow Run. The crew went through lengthy check out procedures for all systems and equipment, and finally we were ready for overseas duty. At Mather Field in Sacramento final preparations were completed, and we took off on April 15 for Honolulu and the South Pacific.

Moving with the Front

Our first operational base was at Nadzab in eastern New Guinea. From there our principal targets were in and around Wewak, about 200 miles away. As Allied forces advanced, recovering Pacific islands from Japanese conquest, our bases were moved closer to new targets. First we moved forward to Clark Field, Luzon, in the Phillipines, from which our main targets were on the major island of Formosa.

When priority targets in Formosa were nearly destroyed, and Okinawa was reasonably secured, orders came for us to move closer to the main island of Japan. In preparation, for several weeks ground personnel had been trucking spare parts and other non-essential items to Subic Bay, north of Manila. On the set date all of the remaining material was loaded on trucks. Half of our Air Force squadron and all of the planes were already at our new destination, Ie Shima, located off the northwest corner of Okinawa.



On the way to Subic Bay by land, we traveled down Zig Zag Pass, in the mountainous part of Luzon. There was still sporadic action in the area from some Japanese troops that remained in

the area. On the side of the road there was a picket fence, and on each picket a human skull had been mounted, reminding us of the action that had transpired there. It was a gruesome sight.

At Subic Bay we were directed to an LST that was beached with its bow doors opened and ramp lowered. Two naval officers on board looked down on us and yelled that we had to load all of our material on board by high tide, just a short time away. At high tide the LST was to pull off the beach and anchor in the bay. I asked the two officers who the loading officer was (we would need him to get our load balanced properly). One of them said, "You are (the loading officer)!" I didn't like his attitude and response; this was no time for joking. But he wasn't joking. So I positioned myself by the LST's elevator and kept it in the down position to permit our trucks to pass to the rear of the ship. We got loaded in time. I was rewarded for our effort, however; the captain assigned me to bunk with the gunnery officer. That permitted me to sleep on a leather divan under clean white sheets, changed daily. The Navy goes first class.

An LST: No Place to be in a Typhoon

The gunnery officer commented that there was a good possibility of bad weather en route toward Japan. I felt that bad weather would not be a problem for us; we were used to being shaken up by aircraft that were always in motion. I asked him how I would know when there was rough weather? He said I would know when the rails on the dining table were positioned up, as though for the soup course. Then he said the real indication would be when the drawers of the dressers began to fall out onto the floor.

Almost 59 years have passed, but I still remember, vividly, that typhoon. The captain would not permit any Army passengers on the bridge, but by the second day over half of the Navy men didn't report for duty. The captain asked for assistance in the engine room. The typhoon had hit with a vengeance. By the second day, alone in my quarters, I knew that for sure. All of the dresser drawers were on the floor, and the floor was covered with clothing. I had awakened that second morning with pain in my arms, chest, and back. The crashing sea had rolled me violently, back and forth, against the divan guardrail and the hull. Everyone on board was glad to reach Ie Shima. It was early July.

From Ie Shima we could bomb targets on the island of Kyushu, the southernmost major island of Japan, and mainland targets even farther north. Our 17th and last mission was to bomb a manufacturing plant on the north shore of the home island of Japan.

The Mysterious Haze

That last mission went as planned on August 12. We flew in loose formation until we got into the range of Japanese fighters. At the designated initial point we formed up into bombing formation. Each four-plane flight had a specific target.

After the mission had been successfully completed and on the way back to base, we saw a gray haze-like cloud to our south. This was not a cause for alarm at the time, since one sees all manner of meteorological phenomena. When we penetrated the haze, however, we smelled an ozone-like aroma. Ozone is associated with electrical fires. The last thing anybody wants is an electrical fire in a bomb bay. Aircraft do not burn; they just go "poof" in a fireball. The engineer was directed to find the problem, but he could find nothing. Our plane was flying lead, so we decided to break radio silence and request our wingmen to locate the source of the fire. The airwaves then became full of reports of the problem emanating from everyone.

When we landed we were taken to debriefing, as was standard procedure. The next day we

were told that a B29 from the 20th Air Force had dropped a single bomb on Nagasaki and completely obliterated the city. We didn't believe the tale. After all, we were professionals; we knew how much damage a 2000 pound bomb could do. We subsequently learned that a single bomb had indeed destroyed the city, and a bomb dropped previously had destroyed Hiroshima. The gray clouds we encountered had been fallout from the bomb dropped on Nagasaki to the west of us. The prevailing westerly wind had drifted the fallout into our flight path.

Standard procedure was to service an aircraft as soon as it landed. WWII aircraft were serviced from the top of the wings, and ground personnel climbed on top of the wing, many wearing shorts. Fortunately neither we nor they suffered radiation problems; no one reported nuclear burns from the exposure of our group of planes or the subsequent exposure of our ground personnel.

How Tough was the Mission?

It was easy to tell how tough each mission had been. Outside the debriefing room the flight surgeon would set up a small bar. The bar contained 15 or 20 shot glasses, filled to overflowing with American liquor. After the ten-man crew had been debriefed, they could drink as much as time permitted (the amount of time it took the next crew to be debriefed). If the mission had been an easy one, the shot glasses remained mostly filled; only a few men drank-sometimes none. But if it had been a rough mission with heavy flak, a lot of the shot glasses were emptied.

Returning Home

With the war over, squadrons were rapidly being moved back to the states, and the personnel discharged. I returned to civilian life on December 11, 1945 with an Air Medal for those combat missions.

On February 15, 1951, I enlisted in the Air Force Reserve, thinking the United States was going to war with the Russians. I served in the reserves until I was discharged as a first lieutenant on May 16, 1955.

Serving in the Naval Armed Guard

Bill Bratton

During World War II, I served in the U.S. Naval Armed Guard. Very few people know about this branch of the Navy, so let me explain what it is and what we did as Guardsmen.

Created in Time of War

In 1941, Congress repealed the Neutrality Act, which had been designed to keep us out of the war. In anticipation of war, the Navy in October of that year armed the first merchant ship since World War I. At that time, the Armed Guard was created to protect these ships. We were the crews that manned the guns on armed merchant ships. At that time there were 1,375 merchant ships sailing under the U.S. flag, but by the end of the war there were over 6,000...and about 145,000 men would have served aboard them. Of these ships over 1,700 were sunk, and 2,085 Armed Guardsmen were killed, with many more wounded.

Early Training

I enlisted in the Navy in September of 1942 in my home town of Philadelphia, and was sent to the Great Lakes Training Center near Chicago for basic training. Later, I was soon sent to Gunners Mate School in Newport, Rhode Island for 12 more weeks of training, and graduated as a gunners mate 3rd class. The duties of a gunners mate include being certain that the guns are in good working order under all conditions - ice, snow, heat, heavy seas or enemy fire.

At Sea on the Molino del Rey

I went to sea in April of 1943 aboard the tanker "Molino Del Rey." My training had also included four weeks of special training at the Armed Guard base at Little Creek, Virginia, on a new gun, the 5"/38 caliber dual-purpose mount. This gun had a range of 18,000 yards at 45-degree elevation and 10,000 yards at maximum elevation of 87-degrees. It was effective against both surface craft and aircraft, hence the term "dual purpose." I was in charge of this gun. Our ship was also armed with a 3"/50 caliber dual-purpose gun and eight 20-mm anti-aircraft machine guns.

There was no range-finding equipment on merchant ships, so gunners mates had to estimate range and fuse settings for firing at surface crafts or planes.

Our ship was classified as a T-2 tanker, 520' long and 67' across the beam, with a capacity to carry 10,000 barrels of petroleum products. The Molino was a midget by today's standards, but a giant in her time. Since this was a new ship with clean tanks, it carried such products as gasoline and benzene and made several voyages between the Dutch refineries in the Caribbean and Swansea, Wales with gasoline for use by Allied aircraft.

Princess Juliana on Board

On one trip in July of 1943, we took aboard a very distinguished passenger, Princess Juliana of the Netherlands with her 6-month-old daughter, Margriet. They were being sent in

secret to the safety of the Dutch island of Curacao in the Caribbean. As soon as we headed west into the Atlantic Ocean from the Irish Sea, the wind picked up to gale force and stayed with us for several days. The baby became so dehydrated from seasickness that we were fearful for her life. (There were no doctors on merchant ships — only a purser who may have had first aid training.) However, as we approached warmer water the seas settled down, all was well with both mother and baby. As a matter of interest, Princess Juliana became Queen of Holland in 1948 after the abdication of Queen Wilhelmina because of ill health.

Tossed by a Hurricane

Later in 1943, while carrying a deck cargo of airplanes to be delivered from Bayonne, New Jersey to Aruba in the Caribbean, we ran into a full-blown hurricane off Cape Hatteras. (This area is called "The Graveyard of Ships," and we could see why.) The mountainous waves demolished the planes, and wrecked our lifeboats and life rafts. All the ships in the convoy sustained similar damage. When we arrived in Aruba, the dockworkers thought we had been attacked by a German submarine. We were refitted with new boats and rafts in Aruba in September 1943, and soon were underway. We continued to deliver gasoline to the U.K. until December when our crew was relieved.

Normandy was Next

I next served on a Liberty ship, the Willard Hall, beginning in March 1944. A Liberty ship was welded together rather than riveted like fighting ships, since this allowed the shipbuilders to create them faster and at less cost. This created more risk, of course, when we were in heavy seas since the welds could rip apart much easier than a riveted structure.

While aboard the Willard Hall, we arrived at Utah Beach, Normandy a few weeks after D-Day, with military supplies. It took several weeks to unload, so we were still there when the battle for St. Lo, Normandy began in July of 1944. This was the first major battle after D-Day and turned out to be very costly. Indeed, our ship was ordered to stand by in case of an evacuation of Allied troops. Eventually the Allied forces prevailed, and we continued to shuttle supplies from England to Utah Beach.

A Family Death at St. Lo

I later learned that a young man named Kenneth Schmook, who would have become my brother-in-law after the war, was killed at St. Lo. Little did I know how lives and events would later connect until I met Kenneth's sister, Evelyn, who later became my wife. Adding more to this twist of fate, Evelyn was working her way through college during her summers by helping to manufacture 20 mm shells at Armstrong Cork in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. These of course were the type we used on our ship.

Toward the end of the war, I also served on the tanker, Cherry Valley. All of my time at sea on this ship was in the Pacific. The interesting part of this duty was in realizing the vastness of that ocean. For example, from Panama to Ulithi (a small atoll in the Marianas) the round trip was 12,000 miles and took six weeks. We saw relatively little action aboard these ships but were always on the lookout for enemy submarines because of our cargo. The destroyer escorts usually took care of the subs which came nearby, by the use of depth charges. We also had a few air raids but were never hit.

After the War

As stated earlier, the Armed Guard was a special unit about which little was known. There were no photographers or journalists on our ships, no Ernie Pyles following us around, and no reports in the news by Walter Cronkite or Ed Murrow. As quickly as the unit was formed in 1941 for the purpose of

protecting the merchant ships and moving Allied supplies, it was just as quickly disbanded at the end of the war. As a result, the records were indiscriminately destroyed by inexperienced archivists, making it impossible to reconstruct the contributions of the Armed Guard to U.S. military success.

Fifty years later, however, Congress recognized the importance of the U.S. Naval Armed Guard by passing a resolution hailing "the unheralded heroes" of the Guard and their critical role in the war.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve in the greatest Navy in the world. I am also proud of the organization of which I was a part for four years. It was a unique service, and I feel that we made a significant contribution to the final Allied victory. I was discharged as a gunners mate 2nd class in February 1946.

Naval Aircraft Engines and Japanese Surrender Photos

Walter Cornelius

My Navy service in the U.S. and the South Pacific involved making and maintaining aircraft engines. I recall three memorable incidents while I was stationed at the Naval Air Station on the Philippine Island of Samar:

The day after the Japanese surrender ceremony aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, a senior naval officer who had taken close-up photos of the proceedings flew into NAS Samar and asked if I could develop and print his negatives in our dark room. I quickly agreed, and he and my staff enjoyed some of the first photos of this historic event.

The sinking of the cruiser USS Indianapolis took place close to Samar on the last day of the Pacific War but was not known officially for several days. This ship had carried the atom bombs across the Pacific Ocean and the Japanese were eager to sink it. Many of the survivors were rehabilitated at our unit's housing facilities.

Earlier, on a flight to Cebu Island, I viewed up close a large white monument on a neighboring island covered with Japanese expressions celebrating the slaying of Magellan by Asians during the passage of his Spanish fleet around the world.

From Engine School to the Pacific

Commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve on September 24, 1942, I reported for active duty in November 1942 at the Naval Indoctrination School at Dartmouth College and was assigned to the Pratt-Whitney Army-Navy Aircraft Engine School in Hartford, Connecticut.

In May 1943, I was appointed resident representative of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics at the Turbo Engineering Corporation in Trenton, New Jersey. There I represented the U.S. Navy in the successful development and construction and operation of a manufacturing plant for a unique turbo supercharger for naval aircraft engines.

In October 1944, while at the Pentagon, arrangements were made for my transfer to an Aviation and Repair and Overhaul Unit, AROU-2, as the engineering officer. I reported to Alameda, California and shipped out for the Naval Air Station on Samar, in the Philippine Islands. Our unit serviced aircraft of all the carriers on duty in the South Pacific.

Enroute to the Philippine Islands, our unit was temporarily detained in the Admiralty Islands. While there, supporting another AROU unit, I met my older brother, Lieutenant Francis V. Cornelius, who was the commanding officer of the Navy Seabee Units on the island.

At Samar, I was promoted to lieutenant senior grade and served as engineering officer and later as surplus property officer until I returned to the United States.

30 Years of Navy Service

I was released from active duty at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center on June 16, 1946 and placed on the inactive service list.

In March 1948, I requested and returned to stand-by duty with the Naval Air Reserve Program. I performed engineering and administrative duties for fighter, bomber, attack and transport squadrons and served on the Wing Staff at the Naval Air Station on Grosse Isle and later at the Selfridge Naval Air Facility.

I was promoted to the rank of captain on July 1, 1963 and retired on July 1, 1973, completing 30 years of credited naval service.

Three War Years in the Air

George Jobin

I enlisted as a naval aviation cadet in January 1942, shortly after the war began. At the time, the enlisting officer told me that the Navy had no room for additional pilot training and advised me to go back to college.

At the time I was in my third year at Wayne University studying mechanical engineering. I already had a private pilot's license, obtained through the government-sponsored CPT program. I enrolled in an advanced course to learn aerobatics which later proved to be a tremendous help after I started flight training.

Flight Training

I was called to active duty in September 1942, for preflight training at the University of Iowa. I spent three months there learning Navy protocol, navigation and airology, as well as having extensive physical training. I was then assigned to flight school in Pasco, Washington for primary training. The Pasco base was so new that when we arrived in December in a snowstorm, our group of 20 cadets was assigned to an unfinished building with no heat or hot water.

Because of my earlier aerobatics training, I was the first one of our group of 20 from Iowa to finish primary training (April '42) and I was then shipped to Corpus Christi, Texas. Here I went through qualifications in formation flying, instrument flight training, and twin-engine seaplane training in PBY patrol planes.

Now a Commissioned Officer

Upon receiving my commission in June 1943 as an ensign in the Naval Reserve, I received orders to Naval Air Station-Anacostia, near Washington, D.C. There were only two of us who were ensigns in the flight squadron of 25 flight officers. All the other pilots were either Reserves with at least two years of experience, former enlisted pilots who had been commissioned, or graduates of the Naval Academy. Indeed, half of them had already seen combat.

Flying the Brass

The other ensign and I were surprised to learn that our duty would be as co-pilots in executive-type transports: R4D's (DC-3s), R50's (Lockheed Lodestars), JRBs (twin engine Beechcrafts), and our passengers were to be congressmen, senators, presidential cabinet members and Washington admirals. In the following months, as a co-pilot I was involved in the transportation of the following VIPs:

Frank Knox and James Forrestal - Secretaries of the Navy

Harry Truman - U.S. Congressman (prior to being named as Vice President)

Admiral Ernest King - Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy

Artemus Gates -Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Aviation

Vice Admiral John McCain - Commander, U.S. Naval Air Operations

Vice Admiral Bill Halsey - U.S. Pacific Fleet

William Heber - Louisiana Congressman

Colonel Charles Lindberg

Rear Admiral Richard E. Bird

Lord Louis Mountbatten - Commander, British India Troops

Bernhard Baruch - Financial advisor to President Roosevelt

While I was stationed at Anacostia, Winston Churchill's plane landed at our seaplane landing facilities for a meeting with FDR in Washington.

My co-pilot and I were told we had been selected for this duty because we had gone through flight training with no down checks at any time, and had an academic standing in the top 5% of our classes. Our basic duty at Anacostia was the predecessor to the current Air Force One duty. The Army Air Force had a base adjoining the Naval Air Station. In fact, our north-south runway joined the Air Force runway with a 500-foot taxi strip. The Air Force had a pilot group who were doing the same type services as we were.

I became qualified to fly a number of different types of aircraft; single-engine combat fighters such as F6F Hellcats, F4F Wildcats, F4U Corsairs, R50 twin engine transports, SBD dive bombers, TBM torpedo bombers, R4D twin-engine transports, JAB twin-engine transports and JRF twin-engine amphibians. I had instrument flying qualification to fly in the regulated airways throughout the world.

Experienced Pilots

Most of the pilots in our group were fleet returnees. One had been at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He received a Navy Cross for taking off in the middle of the December 7 attack in a twin-engine amphibian, with six sailors firing rifles. Two pilots of our group were flying from San Diego to Pearl Harbor that day, and another was on Johnson Island just south of Hawaii.

Another of our pilots was in the Philippines on December 7. He left there shortly after the attack in a single-engine float biplane, flying only at night. It took him several weeks to get all the way to Australia, and he received a Distinguished Flying Cross for this accomplishment. He ended his naval carrier as a vice admiral in command of the Pacific fleet.

There were other pilots in our group who also received decorations such as a Congressional Medal, another Navy Cross, a Distinguished Service Medal, several Distinguished Flying Crosses, Air Medals, Purple Hearts, and a British Distinguished Flying Cross.

We lost one pilot and an enlisted man from our group. This occurred when our commanding officer was getting an instrument flight check and an engine failure occurred.

At the time of my assignment to Anacostia, one other ensign accompanied me; he stayed in the Navy and retired as a captain. Two months later, two other ensigns were assigned to the same duty. We were the only ensigns assigned to this duty during World War II.

Duty on Christmas Day

A particularly interesting incident occurred on Christmas Day 1943. I had stand-by duty in our flight operations squadron along with three other pilot officers. I showed up at our prescribed time of 0800 hours; however, there was emergency-type activity going on all over the base. I went up to the pilot ready room, and it was filled with every pilot in our group, all in flight gear. They had not called those of us who had duty that day — they

had inadvertently called only the off-duty pilots.

They told us that Naval Intelligence had been informed that a German aircraft carrier had been sighted off Cape Hatteras, and all Navy and Army Air Force bases were on red alert. We had several Navy fighters armed and prepared to go, and another 20 SNJ fighter trainers. I was assigned to one of these trainers, which had a single 30-caliber machine gun fixed to fire forward and a flexible gun in the rear seat. These were prepared to help defend Washington, D.C.

We sat around in the ready room until about noon when we were told “all was secure.” It turned out that an officer in Naval Intelligence had done too much celebrating on Christmas Eve and thought he would test the east coast defense preparedness. I heard later that he was court-martialed for this.

A Transfer of Duty

During the last six months of my duty at Anacostia I was made a plane commander. I was then sent to Naval Air Station-Hutchinson, Kansas to undergo training to become a patrol plane commander flying the PB4Y-2, the Navy version of the Army’s B-24. I began my training on August 1, but the war ended shortly thereafter. My commanding officer asked if I wanted to be commissioned as an officer in the regular Navy. I selected not to do so, and was discharged as a lieutenant j.g. in November. Several years later I was promoted to lieutenant, retired.

Our squadron at Anacostia was awarded the Secretary of the Navy Unit Citation for outstanding service from 1942 through 1945. I received a Personal Secretary of the Navy Citation for a flight I performed in June 1945. At the time of my discharge I had 1,940 military flying hours in many different types of aircraft and weather conditions.

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. TO OKINAWA

FLETCHER D. STREET

I was inducted into military service in September 1942 in Philadelphia, and was assigned to the Headquarters Company AGF, Army War College, Washington, D.C.

A temporary building housed the officers of the various corps making up an Army Division. It was their responsibility to designate and requisition all equipment for operational divisions.

That Christmas season a small choir was organized from the headquarters company. We were invited to attend the ceremony on the lawn of the White House where President Roosevelt, with the assistance of his son, James, lit the Christmas tree.

In the spring of 1944, a good percentage of the local military was ordered overseas. After Officer Candidate School, I shipped with a Quarter Master Company from Fort Lee, Virginia, to Rheims, France, and then to Dusseldorf, Germany.

While there, I visited Marseilles and witnessed a Bob Hope outdoor revue. He had a Russian Drill Platoon in his group.

To the Pacific

Next, our company was shipped to the Pacific and we transported 100 nurses with us. While docked in Pearl Harbor at Honolulu, word came that the Japanese had surrendered. Nevertheless, we sailed on to Saipan, and eventually to Enewetok, a staging area for ships awaiting final destinations. We anchored in Naha Harbor, Okinawa on a beautiful sunny afternoon in September 1945.

Suddenly all anchors were raised and the boats formed flotillas and left the harbor. Shortly thereafter, we were struck by a typhoon that raged all night. In the morning we found we were accompanied by a single small ship off our port stern.

After approximately seven months service in Okinawa, I was mustered out of the service in the spring of 1946 at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Hell's Road Across Europe the Real Fight Was to Stay Alive

Sherwin Vine

I had to stand on the train all the way from Camp Attaberry, Indiana, to Detroit where an older brother and younger sister waited with my widowed mom.

I had great expectations and a chest full of medals. But it didn't seem to have significance to anybody when we came home. It didn't seem to mean anything. There were so many men returning. It was just, "So what?"

After months of thinking of nothing but how to stay alive, it took a while to get adjusted. It took a while to get adjusted, too, when, in October of 1942, I was drafted. My induction was deferred so that I could complete law school at Wayne State. I was so grateful for being allowed to complete school that I did not take a two-week furlough they granted, and reported early.

I went by train to Camp Custer, Michigan, where I was processed in three days of confusion. Another train to Camp Polk, Louisiana, and I was with a strange assortment of college educated accountants, back woods Southerners and Northern Michiganders. Many of them shouldn't have been there, and, in the end, were never sent overseas.

Training, Tedium and Fun

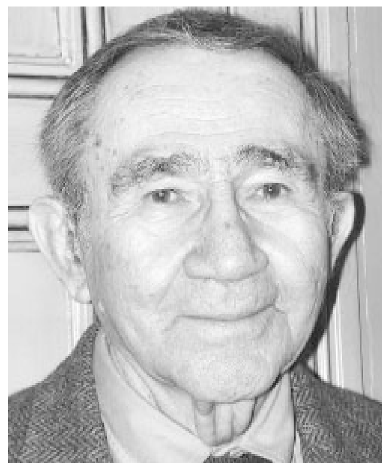
I was in the armored infantry. Training was monotonous. We went over the same things: rifle practice and maneuvers.

To escape tedium, many crawled under a fence to a nearby honky tonk, got in fights, and crawled back. When we left camp, we had a good cadre of soldiers.

Our training continued at Camp Barkley in Texas where we were issued halftracks and weapons. Things were going bad in Africa at that time, so we were sent to a camp in the Mojave Desert in Eastern California. Gambling was rampant. One soldier lost his car in a poker game as a group of Italians from the east pooled their money and cleaned everyone else out.

Report to England

It was Yom Kippur. They stopped our train as we approached New York so that we could have service. Standing in the tracks alongside the train, we found ourselves involved with very serious prayers.



We crossed the Atlantic on a cruise ship. Going over in a convoy, we kept dropping depth charges. It was very frightening. We didn't know what was going on. It was crowded and there was a general surliness toward officers. It was an unpleasant experience.

We wound up in a little town in the countryside of England. One night they arranged a dance. But the local girls all went

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Military Facts: Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and three battle stars. Discharged in January of 1946 as staff sergeant.

to another dance held by quartermasters who had access to food and goods civilians couldn't get.

On to France

We arrived in France and were rushed to guard some Germans who were cut-off. Instead, it turned out, our unit, the 11th Armored Division, 55TA Armored Infantry Battalion, was part of Patton's 3rd Army. We found ourselves in the middle of the Bulge on New Year's Eve.

The sky was lit up like the Fourth of July. It was hard to tell anyone as a GI as the Germans were all around in captured uniforms. We helped in the relief of Bastogne, where I was wounded by white phosphorous fire.

The bitter winter cold was worse than the enemy. German 88 millimeter guns were deadly. The opened up on us once, as we filed down a road. We hit the dirt. An 18-year-old kid directly in front of me took shrapnel in his leg and died before anyone could help. He couldn't hold on in the cold.

Escaping Frostbite

The leather Army boots would get soaked. Many men suffered frostbite. I avoided foot injury by wearing galoshes only and wrapping my feet in strips of blanket. The 88s kept coming. Sometimes we rode in the halftracks. Other times we walked in the shelter of tanks. German and American bodies were frozen in grotesque configurations.

We were never at rest. Often, we were in a state of semi-consciousness. I would have been run over by a tank that turned suddenly if an old guy behind me hadn't pushed me out of the way.

Freeing Death Camp

After a fierce fight to cross the Moselle River, there wasn't an officer left in our company. A six-man rifle squad from my company was the first American unit in the Maulthausen Concentration Camp, and, in effect, liberated the camp.

Letters with pictures and boxes with cookies and socks arrived from time to time from my family. It helped very much. It was my only link with civilization.

Finally, war correspondents joined us, signaling that the war was coming to a close.

Still Dangerous

About that time, we were coming out of some woods and had to cross a clearing. Young, zealous German students, opened up on us. We were pinned down for a fraction of an hour. Many were killed. So close to the end, it was a terrible waste.

We joined up with the Russians, but they pretty much kept to themselves.

I had limited duty after the fighting stopped, and arrived in Boston in December 1946, after a stormy Atlantic crossing in a small Liberty boat. It was so small that when I first saw it, I thought it was just taking us to the "big" ship.

Thinking back, there were thousands of men who did what I did. I did what I had to do. What I learned is that there were a lot of guys who performed well in training, but often never performed well under fire. In combat it was often the 8 balls that did the job.

We lost one medic as he tried to save the men who ridiculed him, and gave him a hard time back in training.

Now, in retrospect, after learning about all the things that went on, it seems more significant than it did at the time. I am proud to have been a part of this historic and important event.

Liberating France and Holland

Henry Barnes

(Unfortunately, Captain Henry Barnes passed away in September 2003, just prior to the publishing of this book. This is his story, excerpted from materials he wrote.)

I initiated my undergraduate work at Albion College in the late 1930s, as the winds of war were gathering in Europe. I graduated in 1942 and joined the Army in October of that year, one day after my 22nd birthday. I received basic training as an enlisted man at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, then later received my commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the Medical Corps at Camp Barkley, Texas.

The "Screaming Eagles"

After first being assigned to the Adjutant General's School at Ft. Washington, Maryland, I was transferred to Camp Shenango, Pennsylvania. Here we learned about the elite 101st Airborne Division (the "Screaming Eagles"), and I soon volunteered for it. Within six months, my dream became a reality and I was assigned to the 326th Airborne Medical Company (a unit of the 101st Airborne) in Hungerford, England. We were slated to participate in the initial assault of Europe on D-Day in Normandy.

Preparing for D-Day

To prepare for the assault, my unit trained in Waco gliders. I was soon strapped in a co-pilot's seat, practicing wheeling and banking above picturesque English countryside. We practiced our glider landings in southern England since it was an area that was similar to those in Normandy selected for the invasion. For weeks, we studied secret maps and sand tables, and committed to memory the entire invasion area in preparation for the assault in June 1944. While we didn't know that D-Day was precisely two weeks away, we were excited and ready for the big show, whenever it came.

However, the Allies' high command had received intelligence that much of the landing zone had been compromised by being flooded and mined, so the training was discontinued. To my dismay, I was transferred to the 81st Airborne Anti-Aircraft and Anti-Tank Battalion and was soon whisked off to a small Welsh coal-mining village near Cardiff, Wales. There we began a hurried re-orientation of the Normandy assault from water rather than the air. We waterproofed guns, Jeeps, trucks and tanks, re-studied sand tables, and were issued French "invasion money."

Shortly thereafter, we boarded a ship that steamed down the west coast of England, destined to rendezvous with 5,000 other ships targeting the Cotentin peninsula of France. Our ship was delayed for a day when General Eisenhower made his famous decision to postpone the invasion for one day due to bad weather. As our first taste of war, we saw a capsized German submarine floating astern in the channel, with several bodies floating nearby. A destroyer ahead of our ship had depth-bombed it.

D-Day, Normandy

The next dawn we awoke to find our ship with thousands of others stretching as far as the eye could see. Each had a small barrage balloon swaying gently overhead, all facing in the same direction. The ship's radio announced that the invasion was on and the troops were moved to landing crafts.

As the gate of my landing craft dropped down, I surveyed Utah Beach about 100 yards away. Just ahead was my commanding officer and driver in their waterproofed Jeep, ready

to drive through the water and onto the coast of France. Our lead officer shouted "Follow me," so the driver gunned the Jeep and off the ramp they went. There was a loud splash and the Jeep disappeared, leaving only a froth of bubbles. My driver and I in our Jeep were next in line to go. I quickly made my first command decision, ordering the Navy personnel to reverse the landing craft and move five yards to port. I was not going to start my personal invasion of France by running over my own commanding officer in the water! With the landing craft repositioned, we drove our Jeep off the ramp. In the shallower water, our waterproofed Jeep chugged onto the mainland of France, in the process passing my captain and driver wading ashore.

Treating the Wounded

Noise, carnage and death were all around us as we followed a trail up Utah Beach. A few miles inland at Chateau Colombieres, I acted as a medical officer and set up a battalion aid station. There we survived many bombings and retrieved wounded soldiers despite orders to stay in our trenches.

Following the assault on Carentan, France, our unit continued to treat many wounded men on the battlefield. We braved snipers, and learned the horrors of wooden bullets and miniature remote control tanks loaded with explosives. On that day, 9,000 men were to die, but the Allied victory changed the course of history.

After Carentan, I was transferred back to the 326th Medical Company, and was once again in the 101st Airborne. In July 1944, my division returned to England. At Newbury my group transferred to trucks which drove us back to our familiar manor near Hungerford. Unfortunately, tragedy again awaited. There at the grenade range, a group of glider pilots learning combat techniques had a grenade accidently detonate in their group. Without even a stop at our barracks, my group was driven right to the range where we immediately treated a dozen wounded men. Having only our medical kits, we had to improvise splints and litters. It was a long ride in the army truck to the hospital, but all of the injured were saved.

The Liberation of Holland

I was soon promoted to first lieutenant. Sixteen alerts and two months later, it was decided that the 101st would take part in "Operation Market-Garden." The First Allied Airborne Army would drop in advance of the British Second Army into Holland.

As part of the first wave, I was back in the co-pilot's seat of a glider, heading into the liberation of Holland. After bouncing over four barbed-wire fences and a ditch, my glider and the others made their landing in Holland. All 52 of my fellow personnel arrived safely, including an attached surgical team. The gliders arriving an hour afterwards were not so fortunate. We began to take the injured to a temporary hospital that we had established 16 miles behind enemy lines until we could move them to a small hospital in Zon.

After ten days of evacuating wounded, my division was placed under the command of the British Army. Moving into Nijmegen, my medical company encountered two horrible new weapons - the Schu mine and the "screaming meemies" mortars. Overhead we also heard the new V-2 rockets, but they traveled too fast to see.

Action in Bastogne

In December 1944, starting the drive down Hell's Highway, we were on the road to Bastogne. Briefings we attended were beginning to mention the fluid front, and tell about an enemy bulge in the lines, indicating an imminent attack by the Nazis. By dawn the next day we began to see the effects of the

Nazi breakthrough. First, it was scattered Allied vehicles roaring down the road toward us, followed by troops fleeing in panic and disorder. Still we drove on, arriving at a crossroad near the outskirts of Bastogne, marked on our map as our destination.

I left my company hidden in the woods and proceeded to the 502nd Regimental Headquarters. There we were happy to see Major Davidson and the other regimental personnel again. By midnight I had four patients. Since Major Davidson was discussing evacuation plans with me, I sent the four wounded men back with my sergeant. Two hours later, the sergeant returned, his face ashen. He blurted out that the company had been captured.

Surrounded by the Germans

The major left, seeking medical replacements but before he could return with any, the town was surrounded by the Germans. The next few days were a nightmare. The town was shelled incessantly, and machine guns peppered fire at the crossroads. Yet we risked a drive to Neufchateau where I was able to round up eight ambulances to replace the vehicles that had been captured. We used these to transport wounded to the church where a few remaining doctors treated them. Despite the odds against us, the troops organized into a cohesive unit that withstood whatever came. No doubt this attitude helped inspire General McAuliffe's famous "Nuts" reply to the German request that the 101st surrender.

On Christmas Eve, we assisted in the evacuation of the casualties all around the perimeter of Bastogne. We dreaded the open stretches of ground, as these made us a target for snipers, and the new fallen snow obscured landmarks which made finding the wounded more difficult. Nighttime was the worst, as the sound of the Jeep engine always drew enemy fire.

The Tide was Turning

On Christmas Day, I was back at Chateau Rolle checking on the wounded when the noise of firing, explosions, and shriek of incoming shells increased. Due to low batteries, seven tanks had made it over the mined bridge, without the mines detonating. We started a small bonfire in which to burn the medical books of tags to prevent the enemy knowing how many men our unit had lost. Suddenly an enlisted man ran in, shouting "We're getting them," causing us to whoop in delight. When we peered out, we spied four German tanks smoking and the ground strewn with bodies. We started packing up the wounded to take them to Bastogne. There we encountered more tank fire but continued to transport the wounded.

Christmas prayers were answered on December 26, when Patton's Fourth Armored Division reached Bastogne. On December 30, we saw General Patton himself at Chateau Rolle giving both General McAuliffe and Colonel Chappuis the Distinguished Service Cross. By New Year's Day, 1945, the tide had turned, with the Allies now on the attack. On January 20, we were in a convoy moving in bitter cold out of Bastogne and headed for Alsace-Lorraine.

Citations and Awards

After being first into Normandy, first into Holland, and the first to stop the German breakthrough at Bastogne, my division received the honor of being the first division in the history of the American Army to be presented the Distinguished Unit Citation by General Eisenhower. Although many of the units had won it individually in Normandy, here it was awarded to the entire division. I was then promoted to captain and awarded a Bronze Star, four battle stars, and two presidential unit citations.

After the war, I continued to serve as an officer in the National Guard for four years.

Back in civilian life, I continued my education, receiving a masters in psychology from Wayne State University.

Captain Barnes was interred in September 2003, at the Ft. Custer Armed Forces Cemetery in Custer, Michigan receiving a three-gun salute from the military. His wife, Eva, subsequently received a Recognition Certificate signed by President George W. Bush, expressing the nation's "gratitude for his heroic service and honoring his memory as a national hero."

MILITARY HISTORY OF FRANK W. GARLAND

FRANK W. GARLAND

I enlisted in the Army Air Force on November 4, 1942.

Since my draft number was coming up soon, I decided to enlist in any branch of the service that would take me. I checked with the Army, Navy and Coast Guard but they all rejected me because each winter I would get eczema and they were afraid to take me in any branch of service. I heard on the radio that the Army Air Force wanted 80,000 good men. I went into Detroit to the recruiting station and signed up. I explained to them my health problem. The Air Force accepted me. I have no regrets.

I enlisted in Detroit and after processing at Fort Wayne, I was sent to Ft. Custer in Battle Creek, Michigan. There, I got my shots and gear. I spent about a week doing such tasks as close order drill, K.P. and latrine duty before I shipped to Lubbock, Texas. I was never sent to basic training but went to work on the flight line as an airplane mechanic (a bit of fate was in my favor). The only explanation I have to the situation is that I was working at the Willow Run bomber plant as an aircraft parts inspector at time of my enlistment. At Lubbock I became a member of a line crew that was in charge of servicing a C-60 cargo plane that was used to tow CG4A gliders whose crews were in training before going overseas.

Airplane Mechanics Training

After working at the Lubbock base for a few months, I was sent to Amarillo, Texas to the airplane mechanic school. After a three month crash course in airplane mechanics, I was sent to Burbank, California, for an advanced course in airplane mechanics on B-17 bombers. From Burbank, I was sent to Provo, Utah for gunnery training. My next stop was Seymore Johnson Army Base at Goldsboro, North Carolina, for more bivouac living and more long walks and hiking. In early December 1943, a number of us at the Goldsboro base were headed for New Orleans, Louisiana, to go overseas.

We shipped out of New Orleans late on December 23, 1943 on the S.S. Florida, a passenger ship in peacetime. While we were sailing in convoy, (our ships captain was supposed to be in charge of the convoy) on Christmas Eve, the ship shuddered as if it had been hit by some great object. It turned out that a ship loaded with munitions was crossing just off the ship's bow. The captain of the S.S. Florida was celebrating Christmas early. Thanks to our bow watch who saw the munitions laden ship and gave the first mate a signal. The first mate put the ship in reverse at full throttle. Our captain failed to change course after signaling all other ships in the convoy to change course. Our first stop was Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

After we left Guantanamo Bay, our captain took off for Puerto Rico at a high speed without a sub-chaser escort. Upon arriving at San Juan, Puerto Rico, a number of us changed ships. Our new ship was the

S.S. Virginia, a boat used to ferry people across the Chesapeake Bay in peacetime. We dipped water on the top deck for the first 20 miles out of Puerto Rico because of the ocean swells. We sailed into the harbor at Port of Spain, Trinidad, disembarked and were trucked by the Army to Waller Air Field to await our next assignment. About a week later, a group of us flew to Atkinson Field, British Guiana, an air base 25 miles south of Georgetown, British Guiana (now Guyana). This was to be my home base for the next 20 months. Atkinson Field was just one of many air bases on the flyway (southern route) to Africa, Europe and Asia. This route was used particularly in the winter months when the weather was bad in the North Atlantic.

Salvaging B-29s

My first assignment at Atkinson Field was to join a crew to salvage a B-24 that had crashed in a coconut grove east of Georgetown, B.G. Five members of a crew of eleven perished in the crash. After completing the salvage job, I returned to the air base to work on general repair of combat planes that came our way, including A-20s, B-26s, B-25s, C-47s, etc.

After five months, I was assigned the task of repairing an OA-9 (an amphibian plane) that came to our base from Caracas, Venezuela, with a broken high-pressure oil line. My crew and I completely overhauled the aircraft. After completing the work, our base pilot and my crew delivered the plane to Major Art Williams in Georgetown, British Guiana. We landed in the Demerara River. Lieutenant Maitland, our base pilot, had never flown an amphibian before but did a good job of landing in the river. We picked up Major Williams and returned to Atkinson Field. I said to Major Williams, "It was a pleasure to meet you." He said, "What do you mean? You are going to be my crew chief. You have 20 minutes to get your gear, and you are going to Georgetown to live at the military Police Station."

Barnstormer

Major Williams learned to fly while in France during WW I. After that war was over, he became a "barnstormer" who flew civilian planes in various air shows around the United States. Sometime between the two World Wars, Major Williams took a dare and flew under the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City, and as a result of such action was barred from ever flying in the United States. He and his partner, Harry Wendt, eventually purchased three amphibian bi-wing pusher airplanes, called Ireland. Major Williams and his partner established a commercial airline called British Guiana Airways Ltd. in Georgetown, British Guiana, South America. When WW II broke out, Art Williams was commissioned a major in the U.S. Army Air Force and asked to patrol the northern coast of South America from Venezuela to Belem, Brazil with his commercial airplane.

Major Williams was working military intelligence in the northern part of South America when I came upon the scene. We transported U.S., British and Brazilian VIPs about the area for conferences.

During my year working as the crew of the OA-9 stationed in Georgetown, Major Williams and I were instrumental in arresting two saboteurs who had infiltrated northwestern Brazil from Argentina.

Some Human Interest Stories

On an occasion before I moved to Georgetown, our 37th Airway Detachment Group had just repaired a C-47 that had been headed for combat as a troop carrier when orders came to our detachment that we were to transport a contingent of native police soldiers of British Guiana to Manarie on the Savanna, 180 miles to the south of Atkinson Field. They were to do bivouac training. The commanding officer of Atkinson Field was to fly a B-18, converted to a cargo carrier, while Lieutenant Maitland was to fly the C-47 that

had just been repaired. Both airplanes were loaded with native police soldiers along with their camping gear and rifles. The flight they were to take was considered routine.

As they neared the mountains, a thunderstorm was in progress, and the pilot of the B-18 turned around and returned to Atkinson Field. Lieutenant Maitland asked Sergeant Lamb, acting co-pilot, “Have you ever been through a thunderhead?” Sgt. Lamb said, “No.” Lt. Maitland said, “Buckle your seatbelt. We are going in.” The C-47 was tossed about in the thunderhead. The native police soldiers along with their gear were tossed about the cargo section of the airplane. The natives’ rifles pierced the skin of the plane, and we thought we had another salvage job ahead of us. About a half hour later we heard the most wonderful sound to the southwest of Atkinson Field. I was the first to reach the C-47 when it taxied to the parking ramp. As the troops climbed out of the airplane, I asked if they would like to take a plane tomorrow to Manarie? To the man they said, “No mon. Me walk!”

Sabotage in Brazil

On another occasion, we went to Boa Vista, Rio Bronco Territory, Brazil, to refuel our airplane only to find that our transfer pump had been sabotaged. Sugar in heavy paper had been placed in a transfer hose. Had I been able to pump fuel through the sugar our plane would have crashed shortly after take-off. The Germans sympathetic to Hitler were infesting the Venezuela countryside just a few short miles north of Boa Vista, Brazil. We learned very quickly never to leave any unsealed gasoline drums or transfer pumps unguarded at any outpost.

In early August 1945, I was informed that I had to take R&R back in the states (45 days). I was on the flight line waiting for a ride to the states when VJ Day was declared. I landed in Miami, Florida the next day. A few days later I was on my way to Traverse City, Michigan.

While home in Traverse City, I received orders in October to report to Santa Anna, California. I spent a few weeks there, planning to be reassigned to Bakersfield, California, but I had enough points to be discharged. I left the Air Force on November 10, 1945.

SERVING IN TWO WARS

JOHN HORISZNY

Growing up in Lansing during the Great Depression, my three older brothers and I took odd jobs to help the family. Our father cultivated produce on an empty lot and raised rabbits for food. My first real job came during my senior year of high school where I posted stock and grain prices for Merrill Lynch. By the age of 18, I was employed in one of GM's Lansing plants, and by that time all of GM's plants were involved in manufacturing vehicles and material for the war effort.

From GM into the Army

In early 1942 I attempted to join the Navy but was not accepted for health reasons. (I did not have a strong enough bite with my teeth, to climb a rope.) Late in 1942, however, I was drafted into the U.S. Army. I received basic training at Atlantic City, New Jersey and Greensboro, North Carolina, where we went through physical training, and training in basic weapons and sharp-shooting.

Subsequent training in 1943 occurred at several locations throughout the U.S. I was then transferred to Hamilton Field, California for extensive training in air transport such as learning priorities in air traffic, and learning the features of the "U.S. workhorse" DC-3 airplane. At completion, I was granted a 10-day leave to return home before I was flown to Newfoundland, Scotland and England.

Stationed in Europe

My European tour of duty was for the most part more educational than dangerous. The closest I got to actual danger occurred in London when a German V-2 Rocket exploded about a block from us. Other than this event, I was never really afraid of being killed or wounded. I served in the Air Transport Command at the London airport, and at Land's End before being shipped to Leige, Belgium.

Once stationed in Leige, a typical day's work included unloading shipments of parts from transport planes, and cataloging the parts to be sure they were sent to the correct destination for the Allied troops. Importantly, this included shipping proximity fuses to be used in our rockets to intercept German V-2 missiles. Our shifts were routinely 10-12 hours.

European Tour was Educational

I was moved throughout Europe for the next several months. London was an extremely interesting city, though the constant noise from planes and bombing made it difficult to sleep. Since I had never traveled outside of Michigan, I had a strong desire to travel and to go sight-seeing. I was able to visit Hyde Park, Marble Arch, and the Cliffs of Dover, as well as spending time at Oxford and Cambridge.

Belgium was not very interesting since it seemed that there was ammunition stacked everywhere (General Montgomery's trademark). I was able to take leave for seven

days to sightsee in Lucerne, Switzerland and Rotterdam, Holland. I saw the tremendous destruction in Berlin before I was shipped back to the U.S. I visited the Brandenburg Gate where photos of Churchill, Stalin and Truman were prominently displayed.

While waiting for orders to return home, I took some business classes in Biarritz, France at the American University. This helped to develop some of the basic skills that I would later use in my civilian career. My background in military transport and education allowed me to take a four-year course in materials management at General Motors Institute (now Kettering University), and later to become a manager of transportation at General Motors and Texas Instruments.

Back to Civilian Life

I was discharged from the Army in April 1946, with the rank of staff sergeant. I received a European Theatre Ribbon with bronze star and a letter of commendation from my commanding officer.

Called Up Again

Shortly after WW II ended, my best friend who had been in the Navy talked me into joining the Naval Reserve. I graduated from General Motors Institute in 1950, but before completing my 5th year thesis I was again called into the Navy because of the Korean War. I was on active duty for 19 months at the Great Lakes Training Center near Chicago, doing personnel/clerical work. Of the 77 reservists from Lansing, 75 were shipped overseas within two weeks of being called up. Fortunately, I did not have to go overseas.

At Great Lakes I was able to live off the base with my wife in Waukegan. It was here that my son, Tom, was born in December 1951. When not on duty, I took a part-time job as a night watchman at Abbott Labs to supplement my income.

I was discharged from the Navy in April 1952 as a petty officer, 1st class.

WELL-TRAVELED RADIO TECHNICIAN

JOHN M. RADY

"It's Ready, Admiral"

"Admiral Spruance's plane just pulled in with a transmitter on the fritz," said our chief radioman, "and you're needed PDQ. Get your can over there and fix that thing." I was an aviation radio technician first class, a member of VJ-9 Utility Squadron Nine, stationed at a huge airbase.

We were supporting the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet, located near the town of Guoin (pronounced "Gee-wahn") on the Island of Samar in the Philippines in mid '45. How did I know what to do so that the good admiral could go on his way? It all began with bad eyesight!

If my eyesight had been normal in November 1942, the Navy examiner at Detroit's Book Building would have passed me for the V-6 program that would train me as a "90 day wonder." Many of those junior reserve officers were killed or wounded in the course of the war and, in all probability, had I passed the eye test, I wouldn't be around now to write these memories. "Go take the Eddy test," the examiners said, directing me to the Federal Building in downtown Detroit. I completed the one-hour 6-page exam on grammar, algebra, math, electricity, physics, and radio and soon received a letter saying I could enlist as a radio technician second class — the equivalent of an Army staff sergeant — paying $96 per month rather than the $54 received by apprentice seaman. It took me 19 months to earn the rate!

Armistice Day in 1942 saw me starting a nine week boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Training Station, followed by a l0-week wait to begin my education in electronics. Having completed three years of college, I was a natural for company clerk during the latter period. Radio schooling began with an intensive, four-week math refresher course at the foot of Randolph in downtown Chicago; followed by a highly academic three months at Primary Radio at Bliss Electrical School in Washington, D.C., then seven months at the Navy's Secondary Radar School in Corpus Christi, Texas; and, finally, three months in Radio Aids to Navigation in Gainesville, Georgia, and Spartanburg, South Carolina.

More waiting for permanent assignment followed at Norfolk, Virginia, where I worked two days for the C&O unloading boxcars, and two weeks in a lumberyard. Norfolk businesses, short of labor due to the war, borrowed sailors awaiting assignment and paid them $5.08 a day in cash.

At Recife, Brazil, I spent a month as the Baker radar man, then was sent to Belem at the mouth of the Amazon to help install a radio range for planes bound for Africa. That required me to work with native laborers (paid 60 cents a day) and to work stripped to the waist on top of telephone poles wiring up the system. After two months there the Navy sent me to Milne Bay, New Guinea, where I

censored mail for three weeks for two companies of negro stevedores at a place called "Gamadodo." After several more weeks as a master-at-arms at Manus in the Admiralties — north of New Guinea — I found my first real permanent assignment at Pityilu — an Admiralty Island smaller than Detroit's Belle Isle — as part of Utility Squadron Two.

Mid-1945 saw me transferred with the squadron to Samar to a very active, huge, airbase where Admiral Spruance's plane had dropped in. I was a big hero when I fixed his transmitter after a half-hour of trouble-shooting! The problem: humidity in the South Pacific causes green mold to form on any surface, including relay or switch contacts. The solution: a light sanding of the contacts with emery paper. It took 19 months of Navy schooling to equip me to solve the admiral's modest problem.

Great People

Building up radios or fixing them was pretty dull on most days. But the people I met were not. In the course of my travels over three years I had occasion to meet and get to know many of my fellow Americans. Here are just a few who deserve mention because of their backgrounds, skills or unique personalities:

ERNIE RETTBERG, from Divernon, Illinois, whom we called "Little Muscles" because of his unusual, muscular physique, and who had been a State of Illinois speed-typing champion as well as a champion ping-pong player.

KENYON KARL PRICE, of West Palm Beach, Florida, whose father built the Hialeah Race Track in Miami. At age 12, Karl had the honor of being the first person to ride around the new racecourse, which he did on a pony.

GEORGE GOSLING, of New York City, who, when a freshman at Rutgers University, inherited a seat on the New York Stock Exchange from a deceased uncle. Although the seat was worth only $18,000 in the depths of the Depression, he dropped out of school, learned the business and developed it into a seat-and-a-half, having one in partnership with another trader. At the 4:00 p.m. closing bell, George would head home to Rye, New York, where his houseman would have his evening clothes laid out on the bed and a Scotch and soda ready to follow his shower. We reminisced during the 16-day voyage from San Francisco to Milne Bay, New Guinea about our favorite meals: his was to go aboard the Queen Mary or Queen Elizabeth lying in port for a gourmet dinner and dancing.

ARTIE PERA, of Duluth, Minnesota, whose life was changed for the better in the Depression by service in the Civilian Conservation Corps. "Jobs were few and far between," said Artie, "the CCC saved hundreds of us from a hopeless future."

UNNAMED STAFF SERGEANT, on a train westbound from Chicago to Pleasanton, California. To relieve the monotony of sitting in the coach car, we'd often spend time in the men's restroom smoking cigarettes and talking with other servicemen. One afternoon, three or four of us were so occupied when there came a loud knocking on the door of the small room where the toilet was located and a voice crying out, "Let me out — let me out." The staff sergeant tried the door, said it was stuck, and we sent for the conductor. He came rushing in, opened the door and found no one inside! The staff sergeant had thrown his voice like a professional ventriloquist — fooling all of us.

TWO SAILORS at Tejipio, a receiving station for the 4th Fleet, one hour's drive outside Recife, Brazil, where I spent several weeks awaiting assignment as an aviation radio technician. The Navy had taken over a brand-new hospital designed to be a TB sanitarium.

I was in a room with two other sailors — one Italian and the other Jewish — both from New York City, and, by coincidence, both had been beginning standup comedians on the Borscht Circuit. When they practiced their routines on me, I laughed whenever we were together!

JOSEPH K. of Boston, Massachusetts, who was probably 35 years of age. Joe regaled us with tales of his early life working as a telegrapher for Mackay Radio at Biarritz and Monte Carlo. He had a constant source of easy money: when sending stories of banquets, balls and other social events back to London — participants in those doings would pay him to list their names first. At another period in his life, Joe played guitar in a group called “The Society Four” with Alec Templeton, the blind pianist. Joe said Alec drank steadily throughout any engagement but, somehow, never went to the bathroom. Joe wrote in a fine, Spenserian hand and could take a straight pin in his fingers and inscribe one’s name or initials on a pipe, fountain pen or pencil. Joe was a charming ladies’ man who said “goodbye” at his rented quarters to three (count ‘em) three ladies the night we left Gainesville, Georgia. And, finally...

TONY PETTUS, from Overland Park, Kansas. Tony, aged about 30, was married with a wife and one child whom he missed greatly. I had much sympathy for married men whose wartime sacrifice was magnified by their married state. Tony graduated first in a class of 300 at Bliss Electrical School, a primary radio school, and was especially proud of doing so, using a $1.00 slide rule rather than the more expensive K&E radio rule the rest of us used.

35 Bombing Missions Over Germany February 3, 1945—Berlin Ablaze

Alvie Smith

My introduction to the late stages of the European conflict in World War II was a chilling one.

It was October 4, 1944, four months after D-Day, when our crew arrived at Deenthorpe AF base about 100 miles northwest of London. We were flying practice missions in our new B-17 which we had picked up at Hunter Field, calibrated its instruments and flew to England.

The war was going well and some even talked about being home for Christmas. But the war against Germany was far from over.

On October 7, while our crew was still flying training missions, the 401st Heavy Bombardment Group flew its deadliest mission of the war to bomb Politz, Germany's second largest refinery. It was part of an 8th Air Force thousand-bomber armada, which attacked six major oil refineries in Eastern Germany. Losses from anti-aircraft fire and fighters were heavy at all locations, mostly from anti-aircraft fire.

Of the 142 bombers in our bombardment wing, 17 were shot down and 80 sustained major damage. The 401st Bomb Group of 36 planes lost five and dozens suffered damage, mostly from anti-aircraft fire. But we scored solid hits on the sprawling oil refinery.

Welcome to the war!

35 Bombing Missions Over Germany

Very quickly, our crew learned that the primary goal of the 8th Air Force at that time was to destroy Germany's transportation capabilities. This meant railroad marshalling yards, factories which built tanks and other military vehicles, and, highly important, the oil refineries, which fueled them.

Our crew flew 35 missions between October 12, 1944 and March 7, 1945. Our B-17 "Diabolical Angel" - took us on 14 missions to bomb oil refineries and 19 marshalling yards, bridges and highway interchanges. Our bomb load usually included six 1,000-pound general demolition bombs. There were nine members on our crew. Our missions averaged about eight hours.

Thousand-Bomber Raid

We also were in a thousand-plane raid on military targets in the heart of Berlin on February 3, 1945 and cleared some massive concrete pillboxes in southern France to free General George Patton for his drive across the underbelly of France all the way to Berlin. Ten of these missions were to provide tactical

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Military Facts: Enlisted November 17, 1942. On active duty with USAF April 5, 1943 until September 1945; remained in USAF reserves until November 1963 when retired as a major with 21 years of service. Won five Air Medals and the European Theater Ribbon with four battle stars for European Air Offensive, Central Europe, Southern France and Ardennes-Alsace.

support of Allied troops in the Battle of the Bulge by destroying transportation links.

We bombed military targets in big cities like Berlin, Hanover, Cologne, Hamburg and Frankfurt and small towns we'd never heard of - like Soest, Siegen and Eisfeld. We bombed the huge oil refineries at Merseburg (near Leipzig) three times until we got it right.

By the end of 1944, the 8th Air Force was regularly sending 1,000 B-17 and B-24 bombers to multiple targets across the German empire. The Luftwaffe has been virtually destroyed but the anti-aircraft fire was intense. Germany had an estimated 2,000 heavy-duty guns and thousands of smaller anti-aircraft weapons massed around their major targets. On our 35 missions, our crew saw no fighters, although parts of our group were attacked. But we did suffer moderate flak damage on many of our missions.

Out of my combat experience, two are the most memorable.

Berlin-February 3, 1945

As the bombardier of a B-17 "Flying Fortress," I had a circular seat in the front of the nose looking out through a plexiglas nose. I operated a remote-controlled dual 50-caliber machine gun. The nose glass gave me little protection from bullets or anti-aircraft fire (called "flak"), except for a slab of bulletproof glass below my waist, protecting the family jewels.

But my perch up front did provide me with the best view of what was happening in a 180-degree arc in front and to the sides of the plane. That was both a pleasure and at times, a horror.

Ringside Seat for Death

The most dramatic example occurred February 3, 1945 when we had a thousand heavy-duty bombers attacking Berlin and several hundred P-51 fighter planes providing escort protection. And the city was defended by a heavy concentration of anti-aircraft guns. The 8th Air Force suffered moderate losses, most of them from intense anti-aircraft fire.

As we turned onto our bomb run, the center of the German capital was covered with flames and smoke. Ahead and to the left, I could see a steady silvery stream of B-17 and B-24 bombers turning off the target and heading home. And to my left, another solid river of bombers was following us to the target.

It was a remarkable display of aerial power in action.

Templeton Marshalling Yards

Our group's target was the Templeton marshalling yards, jammed with civilians fleeing the city and with troops and supplies moving to support German forces in the raging battle in the Ardennes Forest, popularly known as the "Battle of the Bulge." Targets of other 8th Air Force bombers were virtually all of the military buildings in the heart of the city.

In front and below me was a wing of B-24 bombers. The anti-aircraft barrage was as heavy as I had seen in my previous 23 missions. Dozens of planes pulled out of formation, most of them spewing smoke. Others, badly crippled, headed for the friendly safe haven in France. One scene I will never forget: one B-24 swerved out of formation, evidently having suffered a direct anti-aircraft hit and exploding almost immediately. No parachutes opened. But one of the engines came off the plane and headed in a fiery spiral toward earth. I watched - entranced, for seconds that seemed like hours.

I was sure our "Flying Fortress" wing would suffer similar brutal anti-aircraft fire as the next bomber group now on its five-minute

bomb run. Fortunately, our group was about 6,000 feet higher than the B-24 wing ahead of us. And before the German gunners could readjust their 105 and 155mm anti-aircraft guns to our different altitude, we were out of the flak trap over Berlin.

How did we do? In my scrapbook, I have a front-page aerial photo of Berlin, which appeared in the "London Times" taken of Berlin two days after our massive raid. In the large central core of the city, virtually all the rooftops were gone. Every target had been destroyed. It was a very successful mission, even with anticipated civilian casualties.

Scariest Mission

Every time we flew a mission, the lives of our crew were in jeopardy and, in our case, from enemies we couldn't shoot back at-ground anti-aircraft gunners. And they were good.

However, the real near-death experience of my combat duty came on December 28, 1944, even before we reached enemy territory. We were on our way to bomb the marshalling yards in Cologne, a vital passageway for supplying German forces in the Battle of the Bulge.

"Diabolical Angel," was the plane we had flown over to England and used for all of our missions. She was "Miss Reliable."

But on this day, she was "off her game." Two of the four engines were not pulling their full load, when all of a sudden, engine no.1 "ran away." This plunged our B-17 into a steep dive, and our pilots struggled to pull out of the dive. But still the pilot alerted the crew members to "prepare to abandon ship." Unfortunately, the centrifugal force of the dive prevented any movement to escape hatches-we were stuck at our locations.

Besides, nobody in their right mind wants to parachute or ditch in the English Channel in the peak of winter. The survival period is only about five minutes from hypothermia, and it would be a miracle for anyone to rescue us in that length of time.

Fortunately, our wonderful Pilot Jack Comer, and the late Copilot Frank Matthes, righted the plane despite being in total overcast weather and with no instruments for several minutes after recovery. Battered but not broken, "Diabolical Angel" limped home.

It's ironic. That was our most dangerous mission, but we didn't even get credit for it because we were not over enemy territory. But as Comer said, "We are lucky to have survived and lived to fight another day."

Mighty Air Power

World War II showcased the tremendous power of aerial resources and proved its value, in both strategic and tactical warfare. This was even more dramatic in the more recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Intense and incessant missiles and bombs helped achieve speedy victories without heavy loss of lives by Allied personnel.

Pacific Night Fighter

Richard W. Smith

My military career began in November 1942. A group of us sophomores enlisted in the Reserves in the hope that we would be able to finish out the college year. However that was not to be. We were called to active duty in March of 1943. After a brief stint at Ft. Custer, we were sent to a tent city outside of St. Petersburg, Florida, ruled over by a sergeant who had a 50-word vocabulary. In all my life I have never known anybody able to express themselves with such a limited vocabulary, yet still be able to chill the marrow in your bones.

Extensive Training

Basic training was at the Belle Air Biltmore, a large resort hotel, taken over by the Air Corps. Then followed a series of schools, and I found myself back in Florida — first in Orlando, then Kissimmee and finally, Ocala. And I became part of a night fighter squadron in training. We were flying P-70s at that time, waiting on a complement of P-61s (Black Widows), which were designed as night fighters. They required a three-man crew; pilot, gunner and radar server. Being rather young and quite foolish, I decided being a gunner would be a kind of glamorous thing to do. So I applied and was accepted into training. We were there at Ocala for some time, then we were shipped to California.

We were first sent to Fresno, where training continued. There I joined the 549th Night Fighter Squadron, which was a combat squadron. We were there for various assignments, and then sent to Bakersfield, California, and on to Ft. Lauten, Seattle, Washington, which was our port of debarkation. Sent by ship to Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands, we were based at a small airstrip called Capapa, built after the Pearl Harbor attack. The strip was cut in the middle of a pineapple field. Our quarters were little six-man huts. I finished my training at the Capapa base, and I managed to lose my commanding officer's Jeep, as a result of a New Year's Eve party when we were "making rather merry," as Bob Crachet once said.

A close friend of mine from home was in the 5th Marines and had been shipped to Pearl Harbor from Maui for shipment overseas. He looked me up, and I spent some time with him and a number of his friends. And then suddenly they were gone, as it turned out, to Iwo Jima. Not too long after that, we were shipped out, also to Iwo Jima.

The Bitter War on Iwo Jima

The first landings on Iwo Jima occurred on February 19. We arrived there in the first week of March, while the fighting was still going on. Iwo Jima had been viewed as a 72-hour operation, but it took 31 days to secure the island. It was the scene of the most vicious fighting that took place at any battlefield during World War II. The number of casualties the first day exceeded the casualties at Omaha Beach on its first day, and only 20% as many men went ashore at Iwo Jima. On about our

fourth day my friend from home looked me up. I went back with him to see the Marines I had met at Oahu — of the ten I had met, only two were still alive. Our planes arrived about the 10th of March, and we started flying immediately. Our missions were to intercept and divert or destroy Japanese aircraft making night raids on our ships and Marine positions on the island.

200-300 Japanese Left

We were living in tents, heavily sandbagged. Later in March some Marines started to leave the island. A little old master sergeant said there probably were 200 or 300 Japanese left alive on the island. He said the first moonlight night you get, there will be an air raid; then when things settle down toward dawn, they will come out. On the 17th we had a moonlit night, and sure enough we did have an air raid, and after things got settled down toward dawn, we began to hear gunfire. I was not flying that night and heard the gunfire. The sound was familiar, almost normal, but there was enough this time that I sat up in my bed. The next thing I knew the top of our tent was torn apart by machine gun fire. The Japanese had left the north end of the island and were marching along the same road the Marines had taken. They killed our perimeter guards, got to our area, proceeded to slash tents, throw grenades in, and fire on the men as they came out. They got into two or three tents. The day fighter pilots fared even worse.

Bayoneted While They Slept

They were in six-man tents and the Japanese got into their tents and bayoneted them while they slept. When medics called for additional supplies, I foolishly volunteered to go get them. I got the supplies and had headed back, when a marine sergeant and several other Marines stopped me and asked me to join their party; they had a number of Japanese holed up beyond the ridge and needed some help in getting them out. I did go with them, and we accomplished our mission. That was 45 minutes of infantry combat which convinced me that I was in the right branch of the service. Flying was a much safer proposition. My admiration for the Marines is limitless.

Atomic Bombs—Views Up Close and Long Range

The atomic bombs were dropped in early August. There are those critics, even today, and I suspect more in the future, who think that the dropping of the atomic bomb was a horrendous act — something that we should never have done. Those critics are wrong.

Once in Japan, the Allies found hundreds and hundreds of aircraft, all armed with warheads, to be used on troop transports as we came in. The citizens were armed with every conceivable weapon, to be used against the invaders.

The Japanese military, almost to the man, was vehemently opposed to the surrender. It was only the intervention of the emperor that brought about the surrender. And even then, there were rumors of a coup against the emperor, which was unheard of in Japanese society. When surrender did take place, a great number of high-ranking Japanese officers committed suicide.

I fully expect I would not be here today if it hadn't been for the decision Harry Truman made to drop the bombs. My outfit was slated to occupy Atsugi Airport near Tokyo by the 17th of December. There is no question in my mind that the casualties in the attempt to take Japan would have been greater than all the casualties we had suffered up to that time — in addition to millions of Japanese civilians.

The tenacity with which the Japanese had defended the islands and atolls certainly led us not to question for a second the tenacity with which they would have defended their home island. In spite of what some critics

have said, I believe the atomic bombs saved literally millions of lives.

Going Home

In January 1946, I was mustered out at Fort Sheridan with the rank of staff sergeant. Getting home, I followed the same course that millions of other GIs and sailors followed: got married and went back to college under the GI Bill (which is probably the greatest value for the dollar that the government ever got), finishing up at the University of Michigan.

To this day I take great pride in being a veteran. It was an experience I wouldn't have missed for the world. But at the same time — one I would never like to repeat.

Driving the Germans Out of Holland the European Theater

E. LeRoy Wheatley

I was drafted into the U.S. Army in November 1942, when I was 24 years old, married, and a graduate of Drexel University. I had been employed for two years by Burroughs Corporation and was anxious as to what the future might be.

I was assigned to the 104th Infantry Division, 414th Regiment, Cannon Company and served in the European Theater from August 1944 to July 1945, accumulating 195 combat days.

Secure Port of Remagen

The 104th Infantry Division landed in Europe in early September 1944 at Cherbourg, France. It was committed to combat on October 23 to relieve units of the First British Army in the Netherlands. The objective was to secure the port of Rotterdam by driving the Germans beyond the Mark River. This was accomplished on November 7. The division then joined the U.S. First Army near Aachen, Germany and became a part of the great offensive to penetrate the famous Siegfried Line. By December 14, the west banks of the Roer River near Duren were secured. Two days later the Battle of the Bulge began just south of the Division sector. The divisions on both flanks were pulled south to help stem the Bulge and the 104th front was tripled in width. The order was to prepare an all out defensive position, which was maintained until February 23, when the attack resumed.

Military Facts: Served in the U.S. Army Infantry from November 1942 to October 1945, when he was honorably discharged with the rank of first sergeant. Served in European theater and was awarded four battle stars for Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe.

Ten days later, the city of Cologne fell and the Rhine was soon crossed at the Remagen bridgehead. In nine days the great Ruhr industrial area of Germany was quickly encircled preventing the escape of over 300,000 enemy troops. The division units moved rapidly toward the east liberating the slave labor concentration camp at Nordhausen. It was here that the Buzz Bombs and "V" Series rockets were manufactured. Over 4,000 corpses were among the 6,000 inmates of this camp. The city of Halle was taken and the division was ordered to stop at the Mulde River to await the arrival of the Russians. The link-up occurred on May 6 and combat was terminated.

Price Was High

The price of this action was high. Out of a division of over 14,200 men; 1,491 were killed and 4,776 were wounded.

The most memorable event for any soldier is his first entry into live combat. The division's first action was to relieve British units on the Belgian-Holland border. Our objective was to drive the Germans out of Holland to secure the port of Rotterdam. As we moved "up," the roads were clogged with civilians, mostly women and older folks, walking and pushing two wheeled carts loaded with small children and

family belongings. They were moving to the rear and hopefully to a place of safety. This added to our anxiety.

Natives Were Hungry

Stopping along the way, we entered an abandoned butcher shop and found two large sides of beef hanging that had just been dressed. We moved to an adjoining room and there neatly arranged on the floor were four hooves from a horse. The beef quickly took on a different identity. We then realized how the civilians were suffering from lack of food, as well as the loss of homes and family. This did affect us and really put us into a situation we had never experienced or even imagined. Also, as we crossed one of the dikes, we witnessed our first sight of one of our own GI's who had died in battle not many minutes before our passing.

The terrain in front of the regiment's line was mostly open farm land. Besides the occasional out buildings, there were patches of wood and numerous ditches. My first assignment as platoon sergeant was to place two 105mm Howitzers in position to support the troops of the 1st Battalion who were making the attack. We were near a barn. Also there was a haystack in the foreground. We were warned to be continually aware of snipers. We could hear the machine gun and rifle fire to our front and the whine of ricocheting bullets. Mortar fire was falling just a short distance forward. We were jittery and nervous and soon we thought we were under fire from a sniper (which I now seriously doubt). However, we took immediate action.

Sniper in a Haystack?

Sergeant Ternes jumped behind the 50-caliber machine gun that was mounted on the Jeep and Sergeant Campbell was to take a couple of men and flank the haystack ahead where we suspected the enemy was located. Ternes started firing and the tracers started a fire in the haystack and out jumped a pig. We won our first encounter with the enemy "hands down" with no casualties on either side. While it is now amusing, the immediate reaction was "dead" serious.

Nights Were Scariest

It was the loneliness that was most scary. At night, we had to put out guards and we slept on the ground or in the trucks. There were no friendly military units around us and our only contact was via the radio.

It was at night that we saw our first German soldier. Our guard stumbled over his dead body that had not been removed. This certainly caused a bit of conversation and consternation. Let's face it, we were frightened and terribly uneasy as we lived through the first days of the war.

However, after a month or so, we soon became hardened and learned what to fear and how to handle it. I remember one incident that illustrated how some of us did not lose our sense of compassion. We were about 10 miles west of Cologne and were bedded down in a farmhouse and barn.

The civilians had already left but we turned all the animals out of the buildings and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. There was very little military action but there was the infernal bawling of a cow.

Our gun mechanic, who was a farm boy from Texas, without saying a thing, left the barn. Soon he returned and the bawling had ceased. When asked what happened, he explained that the animal was in terrific pain because it needed to be milked. He took the time to do in the middle of the night when he could have as easily destroyed her.

Can you imagine our reaction? When a company of men live together under combat conditions for months at a time they learn to honor and depend on each other because

they know that each other is really all they have.

Lest We Forget

Here is a positive sequel to the war. A number of us who passed through Holland now maintain E-mail communications with a group of Dutch citizens who live in the towns we liberated. They have formed a foundation called "Friends of the Timberwolves." (The timber wolf is our divisional insignia.) They also have established a museum of WWII military items and have an annual celebration of their liberation at the memorial to the division in Zundert. The citizens also have a warm welcome for members of the division when visiting their land.

The Dutch citizens obviously wish to keep the memory of our division alive by passing on information to schools, groups and associations in the Netherlands.

It is a touching tribute for which we are grateful.

Supplying the Pacific Fleet

Luel Simmons

Marian, my steady girlfriend, and I were in our senior year at Kalamazoo College on the afternoon of December 7, 1941, when we heard on the radio of the attack on Pearl Harbor. We realized that our lives, and the lives of every American, would be drastically changed.

I was able to finish college, and then enlisted in the Navy V-7 midshipman-officer program. It was composed mainly of recent college graduates who were to be trained as Navy line officers. I was ordered to active duty at Columbia University in New York City, on December 7, 1942.

Shortly afterward, the Navy established a yearlong course at Harvard University, combining nine months of accelerated classes at Harvard Business School with the three-month Naval Supply School. To the consternation of the line officers at Columbia, almost half of the school applied for the Harvard program. After being lectured that we were to be line officers and that our applications had been thrown out, we were given a chance to reapply, and several hundred did. Some 400 were given a battery of tests, 200 were interviewed by a team from Harvard and Washington, and 90 of us were fortunate to be sent to Harvard. After a grueling year, 78 of us graduated and transferred to the fleet.

In February 1944 I was ordered to San Francisco for temporary duty on the USS Lynx (AK-100). Marian and I had been married in September, and we were by then expecting our child. She was with me in Cambridge, and we were faced with the decision of whether she should go to the west coast, knowing I would obviously be going to sea. Luckily, she chose to go along, because the Lynx was delayed for several weeks and we had a glorious honeymoon in San Francisco.

Ordinarily, a newly commissioned supply corps officer would spend a year or so under an experienced superior officer before being sent off on his own, but in my case the 90-day temporary duty on the Lynx was supposed to substitute for that. At least I would know port from starboard and how to open my safe that contained the cash with which to pay the crew — not to mention how to feed them.

Loading Dangerous Cargo

The USS Lynx was a Navy cargo ship, and while I was on her we carried supplies to Pearl Harbor. There we still saw evidence of the Japanese attack. We tied up near the USS Arizona, a battleship that is, to this day, still sunk in the harbor, and beside the USS Oklahoma which was being readied to be towed to the mainland for rebuilding.

When we returned to San Francisco, we prepared the ship for a trip to Australia. We loaded cargo, including artillery shells in two of the five holds, at the Navy's Port Chicago

Ammunition Depot in Oakland Bay. I was shocked by the careless way the ammunition was handled, banging it against the side of the ship and carelessly dropping it into the hold. When I asked one of the depot officers supervising the loading why he allowed such dangerous treatment of ammunition, he said, "If we chastise the men they just show off more. Besides, as you know, this is secret ammunition (newly invented proximity fuses which allowed enemy aircraft to be destroyed without a direct hit) and we have to account for every shell. We have to send down divers to recover any shells which are dumped when loads hit the sides of ships."

One evening a few weeks later, our home shook and we thought we were experiencing a mild earthquake. Then we learned that the Port Chicago Ammunition Depot had blown up with the loss of 350 lives, leaving no trace of the three ships that were being loaded there. We were happy that it had not happened while we were there. The Port Chicago catastrophe was in news again this year because the off-duty stevedores, whose barracks were some distance away, then refused to load more ammunition. They were court-martialed, and now are asking that their trials be expunged from their records. I have long wondered if the terrible explosion was caused by the kind of carelessness I saw.

Officer on a Concrete Ship

It was recognized that my three months of temporary duty would expire while the ship was enroute to Australia, so the executive officer asked whether I wanted to leave the ship in Australia or be transferred off first, in San Francisco. Imagine! The Navy gave me the choice. It was easy to make, since I would be sent to a ship under construction and might still be there when our baby was born.

After leaving the Lynx, I was assigned as supply officer and second in command of the pre-commissioning detail for the USS Barite (IX-161). This ship was unique because it was made of concrete. People have asked, "How could it float?" The answer is that it floated the same way a steel ship does: the weight of the water displaced is greater than the weight of the ship. It's a little-known fact that Henry Ford produced concrete ships in the first World War. We would be towed by large, sea-going Navy tugs.

After being commissioned and loaded, the USS Barite left San Francisco. Our daughter, Marylu, was three weeks old at the time. Since we knew that I would be away for the duration of the war, Marian returned to Kalamazoo.

Federal Express to Pacific Fleet

We were assigned to Service Squadron Ten, a huge support force for the Third and Fifth Fleets, which were making the Navy's drive westward across the Pacific while the Seventh Fleet was coming up from the south. We moved from Eniwetok to Ulithi to Saipan and then to Leyte Gulf in the Philippines to prepare for the attack on the homeland of Japan.

For a period of time we warehoused and distributed lubricants in drums for the fleet. Many types of oils were required for large and small combat ships, submarines, amphibious vessels and aircraft, and we were the supplier. Later we became the "Federal Express" of the day, receiving airfreight sent to the fleet from the United States and distributing it when the fleet came in. It was an around-the-clock activity.

Our Pacific tour turned out to be quite safe for us, despite the hazards. We were aware that we had traveled unescorted on the same route from Saipan to Leyte shortly before the USS Indianapolis was sunk with the loss of 800 sailors. And one night in Leyte Gulf an

adjacent ship was struck by a Japanese kamikaze suicide plane.

Of course those of us serving in the Pacific were thankful when the war ended in Europe in May 1945, but our great celebration came with the surrender of Japan in August.

A Great Christmas Homecoming

I then received orders to Singapore, but convinced the commander of Service Squadron Ten that, shortly after arriving in Singapore, I would be qualified to go home. Luckily, I was given transportation as a passenger officer aboard a DE (Destroyer Escort) and arrived home in Kalamazoo at midnight on December 23, 1945, for a joyous Christmas with Marian and our 16 month old Marylu, who wasn't sure at first about that stranger who was moving into her home.

I was discharged from active duty in February 1946. Later that year, a Naval Reserve Training Center and a new armory were established in Kalamazoo, and I went on reserve duty as the supply officer while continuing my job as purchasing agent at Borg-Warner.

When the Korean War broke out, 12 of the 14 officers were ordered to active duty. I was left behind, with standing orders to immediately report to the armory in the case of an all-out war to mobilize the Naval Reservists in Southwest Michigan. After surgery for lung cancer in 1950 I was discharged as a lieutenant commander.

Although the war disrupted our lives, the men of my generation took pride in protecting our great country. Our sacrifice was small compared with that of our friends, classmates, and relatives who were seriously injured or killed.

It is impossible to imagine today's world if Germany, Italy and Japan had prevailed. Let us hope that the generations to come will remember what was done, and what needs to be done in the future, to keep us free.

Support Forces Aided Drive from Beaches Quartermaster Corps Supplied Fuel, Equipment

Charles R. Gates

I landed on Utah Beach in 1944, not on D-Day, but a month later on July 6. I was part of a mission by troops of the U.S. Army Transportation Corps to build supply lines to support the troops that had conquered the Normandy beaches and were headed for Germany.

My military service began with my induction in January 1943, after which came basic, truck driving and maintenance training. I also graduated from OCS (Officer Candidate School) and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps.

In late November 1943, I was assigned as a platoon leader in the 3573 QM Truck Company at Camp Bowie, Texas. I was the youngest and least experienced man in the company at the age of 20 years and 5 months. Among themselves, the men referred to me as "junior," but I had no trouble having my orders followed. In many ways, the men probably took care of me. After the war, as a first lieutenant, I was the company commander until the unit was deactivated.

Landing at Utah Beach

On July 6, 1944, D-Day plus one month, we landed on Utah Beach from an LST (Landing Ship Tank) and were bivouacked near St. Germaine de Varriville, near the beach. Before leaving England, we had prepared our 55 vehicles to drive through the surf by waterproofing the electrical wiring, fuel vents, and carburetor intake and exhaust systems to run under water. Our vehicles included 50 one-ton trailers and 2-1/2 ton trucks. Many of the ships in our convoy had barrage balloons attached by steel cables, which would make it difficult for German aircraft to strafe the ships.

July 6th was a clear, smooth sea day and our LST grounded about mid-afternoon, just after high tide. An hour later we drove off onto wet sand where engineers had marked out lanes that were clear of mines. At that time, there was very little damaged equipment in sight, as Utah Beach had not been heavily defended by the Germans on D-Day. After dark we saw a brightly lit German POW (Prisoner Of War) camp nearby. It was a barbed wire enclosure in an open field with guard towers at each corner, about two acres in size.

My first major assignment after landing was to pick up soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division and transport them to the beach for redeployment back to England. We traveled under blackout condition, at a slow speed all night.

The General Said "Nuts"

When we arrived at the designated beach area, a man (without insignia) climbed out of the first truck and asked me where we were and where the beach was. I showed him where we were on the map and pointed to the beach, which was not visible from where we stood. "The man" gave orders and everybody responded. Later I learned that the man who had asked directions was General Anthony McAuliffe, later famous for his

"nuts" response to the German demand to surrender at Bastogne.

The Gasoline Brigade

When the invasion force broke out of Normandy, late in July, we transported gasoline in five-gallon cans to the tanks of both the 6th and 4th Armored Divisions in their advance to Brest and across the Brest Peninsula. In both instances we passed the infantry and drove up to 30 miles before we met the tanks stopped along the road. We unloaded the full cans and the armored troops emptied them into their vehicles. We picked up the empty ones and drove back to the POL (Petrol, Oil & Lubricants) dump in Normandy and turned around and did it again for several days.

During this period each man of our company was armed with a 30-caliber carbine. Every 4th truck (16 total) had a 50-caliber machine gun on a ring mount over the passenger side of the truck cab. One of the two men in these trucks was trained to fire at aerial targets. During this period the Germans were either defending or attacking somewhere else. We did not see any enemy troops or aircraft during the day. However, our convoy was bombed one night by German aircraft, but none of our trucks were hit.

Company Nearer Front Lines

In September we exchanged our 2-1/2 ton trucks for 10 ton semi-trailer trucks, which were not intended for off-road use. In November, our unit was relocated to Tienen, Belgium, about 30 miles east of Brussels. We were part of the truck transport operation out of Antwerp, which was the major port used by troops in the ETO. During the Battle of the Bulge we were at Tienen, which was about 30 miles from the furthest German advance. The German V1 and V2 weapons were present and overhead and caused some distraction until the Allied advances overran their sites in Holland and Germany. They could not be aimed accurately and were targeted at geographic areas.

Heavier Armament for Convoys

We crossed the Rhine on a Pontoon Bridge (which American engineers had built). After delivering a load of munitions to an ammo dump in Germany, my 40 trucks were commandeered by a major to carry ammo to another forward dump. We were instructed to follow two tanks, with two tanks in the middle of our trucks and two tanks behind. If we were fired on, we were to continue and let the tanks do their thing. As we followed the tanks we saw that the infantry was lined up in the ditches parallel to the road we were driving on. This was the Germans last stand and there was not any firing. The war in Europe ended in a couple weeks.

While leading a convoy of semis, loaded with 240mm Howitzer ammo, on the Autobahn, an American observation plane flew low overhead and landed on the roadway ahead of us. A bird colonel flagged us down and demanded to know why we were traveling empty, going forward. I explained that we were fully loaded but that (because the weight of the shells, about 150 pounds each) only one layer on the floor of the trucks was a full load. He took off and did not say anything more to me.

Four Battle Stars

The 3573 Truck Company was awarded 4 battle stars for Britain, Normandy, Bulge and Northern Europe. While in Tienen, hauling loads out of Antwerp, the 3573 Truck Company was commended for having all their vehicles available for use daily during the months of November and December.

I was released from active duty on June 1, 1946 and completed my reserve duty in 1953.

NAVIGATOR OVER GERMANY

JAMES (JIM) F. PETERS
(AS TOLD TO DICK JUDY)

Jubilation is the best way to describe the day of April 21, 1945, when I crawled from my cramped cuddy near the nose of my B-24 and jumped to the ground. Having just completed my 30th combat mission with a bombing raid over Salzburg, Austria, I joined my buddies, my fellow crewmen, in slapping each other on the back, even hugging one another to celebrate completion of our 30th run, the then-regulation tour of duty for 8th Air Force bombing crews. Earlier in the war, a tour consisted of 25 missions.

My 30 missions spanned an eight-month period from August 27, 1944 to April 21, 1945. Only 17 days after that final touch-down, World War II would formally end in the European theater. Except for flying our B-24 back to Houston, the war was over for me and the other eight crewmen who had risked their lives on one mission after another.

"Lassie Come Home"

I was the navigator on that particular B-24 for each of those 30 missions. She was painted the usual olive drab above and powder blue underneath. On her nose she carried a sketch of a handsome collie dog and her name, "Lassie Come Home." We put in a lot of hours in that airplane, figuring that in addition to training time, each of our bombing missions took six to nine hours in the air.

Looking back on those war years, I wonder why I chose the Army Air Corps, as the Air Force was then known. I had just graduated from the University of Detroit with a degree in economics and accounting. I grew up in Detroit, had never been in an airplane but was drawn to the air service, I suppose, because I thought it would be a fascinating line of duty. It was fascinating, all right!

Navigator in the Making

So, at the height of war-time action, on a cold January day (January 27, 1943), I enlisted in Detroit and almost at once headed off to sunny Florida. I went through basic training in the Miami area and took gunnery training in Ft. Myers, Florida. It was at that time that I first took to the air, for gunnery practice. Probably because of my schooling in accounting, I was classified as a navigator. I went to pre-flight, soloing once, and navigator's school at Selman Field in Monroe, Louisiana, where I completed the training. In July 1943, I was commissioned second lieutenant, then later promoted to first lieutenant in the European theater.

On July 2, I was assigned to the 791st Squadron of the 467th Bomb Group. Soon afterward, the crew members who were to fly together were assigned an aircraft. After months of intensive flight training with "Lassie Come Home," we took off from Lincoln, Nebraska, crossed the Atlantic and set down on August 13, 1944, at an airfield near Norwich, England, which was to be our home for the balance of our European tour.

Our plane captain was Lieutenant Billy Williams, a fine pilot who thought first about his crew. Like most other 8th Air Force bomber crews, ours didn't rest on formality. Whether commissioned officer or non-commissioned officer, we addressed each other by our first names or nicknames. I was "Goony," which, as I recall, was the nickname for all navigators. Our squadron commander was Colonel Albert J. Shower.

The B-24 was a big, sturdy airplane. It had a wingspan of 110 feet, was 66 feet long and stood 18 feet from the ground to the top of the fuselage. It weighed 32,000 pounds without a load and 50,000 or more with a full bomb load. The B-24, or Liberator, had a top speed of 300 miles an hour. It had twin rudders; those of the 791st were painted red with wide diagonal white stripes and bristled with ten 50-caliber machine guns, forward, under the belly, in the tail, on top of the fuselage and on each side in the waist.

First Mission over Germany

Two weeks after landing at our Norwich air base, we flew our first mission, over Oranienburg, Germany. The flak, as always, was disconcerting, but I was always so busy getting the plane to the target and away that I seldom had time to think about the danger.

Less than two weeks later, the target was Karlsruhe, Germany. During October 1944, we flew five missions over Germany.

The American bombers flew daylight missions; the British flew mostly at night. Either way, it was cold, really cold at our usual bombing altitude. The wind whistled through the ship, and the roar of the four big, 1,200 horsepower Pratt and Whitney engines made casual conversation difficult. We had our intercom radios, of course, to warn everyone of anti-aircraft fire or approaching enemy fighters, but there was no idle chit-chat.

We almost always were accompanied to the target and back by our own fighter escort. It was very comforting to see the American P-51s or P-47s sweep up to meet us, flying protection above and below. Even so, especially in 1944, enemy planes often would get through the screen and make passes at our bombers, machine guns and cannons blazing. But we had our own machine guns and used them to defend ourselves. A flight of B-24s can put out an awful lot of firepower.

It was the flak that caused us the most concern. Big, black bursts, with red centers. Ugly stuff. Some of the targets were very well protected by anti-aircraft fire and had a reputation for being high risk.

Nose Turret Takes a Hit

In the raid on Cologne, October 14, 1944, the flak was especially heavy. The Germans were determined to protect the city's industry. My navigator's space was just behind the nose turret, occupied by the bombardier, Lieutenant John Smith, who manned the twin 50-cal. machine guns if necessary. I had a small table for my maps and charts and navigating equipment and only two small windows, so my view of the target was limited. As we approached the target, I experienced a jolting bump that almost knocked me flat and then felt the cold wind rushing through the little door between me and the nose turret.

"Check on Smitty," came Billy William's voice over the intercom. I opened the door, looked into the turret and saw that Smitty was beyond help. He was gone, just like that.

I reported to Billy that Smitty was dead. The plexiglas of the nose turret was badly shattered, and cold air continued to rush through. As we turned away from Cologne to head home, I dragged Smitty's body back through the door and beyond my station. Nothing I could do, and I had to plot the way home.

Sure, I was scared at times. With the flak and German fighter planes buzzing around, you never knew when your plane would get hit. Over the months that it took us to complete 30 missions, we picked up a lot of holes, but nothing serious enough to jeopardize the airplane.

Leading the Bomb Group

After our first nine missions, we were selected to be the lead crew, to lead the entire squadron of B-24s. We were usually the first over the target. Our new bombardier had to be tops, because all of the other planes released their bombs when we dropped ours. Being lead crew, we had one extra crewman. On our 17th mission, and often thereafter, we led the group. By the fall of 1944, a raid typically consisted of 100, sometimes hundreds of bombers. Weather conditions sometimes made bombing more difficult or even impossible. I was by then a lead navigator and one of the few navigators to be trained to use the "G-Box," a special instrument to assist the bombardier with the bomb sight in bad weather bombing. I used it on several raids.

Magdeburg, Germany, which the 467th struck three times, was a memorable target because it was such a long flight. It was well-protected, too, because it was revered by the Germans. I was so wrapped up in my job that I didn't have time to think much about flak or fighters.

With a complete tour of 30 missions behind me, I left Europe on June 17, 1945, a few weeks after the war ended in that theater, trusting "Lassie Come Home" to take me safely across the now peaceful Atlantic. I was mustered out of the Air Corps on November 6, 1945. I had three brothers who also served in the military in World War II.

After the war, I married Eleanor (September 30, 1947), secured my C.P.A. certificate, moved to Beverly Hills, Michigan, and practiced as a C.P.A. until retiring in 1985.

Somewhere in my mementos, I still have the relics of the air war - the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 4 clusters, and the every-day European Theater ribbon and Good Conduct Medal. Just some old reminders of duties done, memories dim.

Destroying Enemy Supply Lines Goal of 10th AF in China-Burma-India Theater

Guilford W. ("Chip") Forbes

At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor I was an 18 year old college freshman at St. Lawrence University in northern New York. The next fall I enlisted in the Army Air Corps Reserve, expecting to finish more than five semesters of college before active duty. That didn't happen. Within 90 days I was in basic training. It was February 1943.

Training in the Southwest

Training was primarily in Houston, Texas; Carlsbad, New Mexico; Yuma, Arizona, and Pueblo, Colorado. Being classified for bombardier training, rather than as a pilot, was a bitter personal disappointment. Other than the hot, humid weather, my clearest recollection of Houston was a huge parade on Armistice Day, 1943. Our ranks were eight abreast, and I was on the extreme right, walking nearest the sidewalk. People were waving flags, and women cried. The war was not going well then. In New Mexico I vividly remember flying in hot, bumpy air and finally getting over air sickness. We were at Yuma just for six weeks, fortunately, as the town was so small and the base population so large that we were not allowed off the base. Pueblo was our base for training a full B-24 crew of ten.

Going overseas in January 1945, I was in on just the tail end of the war. My departure was delayed by perhaps four months by a chain of pure chance events over the course of training, including being assigned to the China-Burma-India Theater, rather than to Europe or the Pacific where most B-24 crews went. Compared to the 8th Air Force bombing Germany, our missions were at a lower, more comfortable altitude and with far fewer participating aircraft. Enemy fighter aircraft appeared rarely, and then when they did, they went after the larger B-29s. Our base for the 9th Bomb. Squadron, 7th Bomb Group was near Asansol, about 115 miles north and west of Calcutta. Our targets were mainly military supply areas, bridges and railroads in Burma and Thailand, often concentrated around Rangoon which British and Indian ground forces were battling to recover from Japanese occupation. Following are descriptions of two out of my nineteen missions.

Longest, Highest-Risk Mission

A long rail line from Bangkok to Singapore was essential to supplies reaching Japanese occupied Singapore. The Isthmus of Kra is the narrowest part of the peninsula between those cities. On March 19 we were to go after railroad bridges there at a ridiculously low altitude for a B-24; 400 feet. We had no instruments and not much practice to assure bombing accuracy. We heard that the strategy for this raid came right from the top commander in the CBI, Lord Mountbatten, and we griped mightily about his "misuse of B-24s." A B-24 lumbering along at about 185 mph 400 feet in the air is a pretty easy target.

And sure enough, some soldier or civilian on the ground with a pistol or rifle broke three fuel lines in our bomb bay.

With the bomb bay doors wide open and fuel spilling, our plane was a big-time atomizer. We were afraid the next hit would make a spark, and the plane would go off like a firecracker. As we pulled away from the target, "Pop" Shearer, the flight engineer, and I were to find the leak, not easy because the bays contained two huge extra fuel tanks for the long flight. We groped around until our eyes burned and our clothes were getting saturated. I went back to our pilot and said, "We can't find it!" He quietly said, "Then when we get to the coastline, we'll have to ditch." I was terrified at the prospect. "Pop, we've got to go back and find it." My fingers, not my eyes, found it, and Pop knew which valves would shut off the flow. In a short time the fumes blew away, the bay doors could be shut, the fuel evaporated from our clothes, and things got near normal. To read the available fuel with three fuel gauges out of commission, we leveled the tanks, read the one working gauge and multiplied by four, a risky method. The flight took 17 1/2 hours. The next day a news announcement said the mission was the longest B-24 formation flight ever made in this theater.

Small Targets: Radar Equipment

On March 22 we were sent to Great Coco Island at the northern end of the chain of Andaman Islands. We bombed from an altitude of just 3,800 feet. Our two targets, about a half mile apart, were very small: 10' x 6' trailers on which operating radar equipment was mounted. The normal procedure in a bombing run was for the Norden bombsight and the plane's automatic pilot to be electrically connected so that direction changes initiated at the bombsight are instantaneously executed by the autopilot. On this day our autopilot was not working. So the pilot flew the plane under manual control, maintaining constant air speed and altitude, and turning left or right as signalled from the bombsight. We had bombs for three passes at our assigned targets. Everything worked perfectly; two passes, two bullseyes. For the third pass we picked out a building that surely was a shop or supply location for the radar trailers and made another bullseye. I really believe we could have hit a pickle barrel that day.

Just ten planes went on this raid, each with its assigned targets. The weather was absolutely ideal; bright sunlight, sparkling sea and gentle breeze. On its third pass the tenth plane (Murphy's) took a direct hit from enemy fire and plunged into the sea with all on board. Photographs showed later that, even before that final pass, all targets had been virtually destroyed. Murphy's crew didn't know that.

An S-2 (intelligence) officer, visiting from 7th Bomb Group headquarters, was to go on this mission. From the truck which took crews to their planes, the S-2 officer got off with his gear and found he was at the wrong plane. He decided he would go instead with the crew where he was. He was with Murphy.

The loss of Murphy's crew after all the targets had been destroyed and the death of that S-2 officer who was with Murphy just by the purest chance demonstrate to me that war has such an awful cost in lives.

Missions End

In mid-May 1945 the 9th stopped bombing missions and moved to Tezpur in Assam to haul gasoline over extremely mountainous terrain (called The Hump) to China. Gunners and bombardiers essentially stopped flying. Pilots, engineers, navigators and radio operators got the duty. My combat time was over, and I was by then a 1st lieutenant with a Distinguished Flying Cross awarded for events of the March 19th raid.

After the war ended in August, the welcome order to return home came in early September. Three others of our crew and I were assigned to a ship in Calcutta. It took 28 days to reach New York Harbor. I was mustered out in November and reentered St. Lawrence University in February.

A Crew Bonded Together

The strongest, most durable effect of the whole experience was the personal bonding of our crew. Sad to say, our co-pilot lost his life in a plane crash with another crew on a flight over The Hump for which he had volunteered. So the remaining nine of us returned home without injury. The long hours of training together and then the excitement and risks of combat were shared experiences that made us like brothers. Over the years we have had seven reunions at various places throughout the U.S. Even our wives came to enjoy these reunions, I think because they sensed and appreciated their spouses' feelings. Now, alas, only four survive. Long live Crew 92!

Flying P-51 Ground Support for Chinese

By James O. Nordlie

In February 1943, like thousands of other young people at age 19, I found myself on a troop train bound for Miami. I had enlisted in the Army Air Corps, following two years at the University of Michigan School of Engineering. I expected to do two things - to serve our country in a time of need, and have an experience unlike any other.

During the next 14 months of training, I received my pilot wings and commission in March 1944. The next five months were spent in what is termed "transitional training."

Exotic Training Junket

In September 1944, at government expense, I began my round the world tour, leaving from Miami, passing through Bermuda, Casablanca, and Cairo; then on to Abadan, Saudi Arabia, Karachi, and Ondal, India.

After a month of further training, we ferried some new P-51 fighters over the hump to Kunming, China. After a short stop for squadron assignment, we flew to Chengtu, and finally, Hsian, in north central China.

Replaced "Flying Tigers"

When we arrived in China, we replaced the original "Flying Tigers" which had been disbanded.

After the brief period in Chengtu, we moved up to Hsian, China, which was the capital hundreds of years ago. Hsian was our base of operations, flying missions deep into northeast China, the whole of which was controlled by the Japanese.

We did what was called "interdiction," with some ground support for the Chinese military. For single-engine fighters (we were flying P-51s), we flew some shorter ground support missions for the Chinese army, as our base was only 60 miles from the Japanese line, on the other side of the Yalu River. Most of our missions were longer, running from three to six hours.

Mostly Low-Level Attacks

Our work was all low level, mostly dive bombing and strafing — bridges, rail yards, airdromes, warehouses, and military installations. Besides "ground fire," our biggest problems were bad weather, mountains, dust storms, lack of navigational aids, and shortages of fuel.

Were we ever involved in any historic event? I would say, no. Not historic, but every mission was exciting, as we worked the whole northeast quadrant of China, from the Yalu River bend, up over the Great Wall, all the way to the sea in the east, and back to Hsian at the end of the flight.

Was I ever wounded or captured? No. However, I was pretty banged up when the engine in the P-40 I was flying quit on take off, down in India.

Most Memorable Fright

Some days were scarier than others. My most memorable fright occurred when I was strafing in a railyard out on the coast. We had

dropped our auxiliary tanks for safety reasons previous to strafing.

Unfortunately, I had forgotten to switch to an inboard tank. I was right down on the tracks, and my engine quit cold. In a panic, I switched tanks, my engine caught, and I scraped my way out of the yard and got back to my home base.

We operated out of Hsian until the end of the war. At that time we flew planes down to Shanghai, and turned them over to the Chinese air force. After three weeks in Shanghai, we proceeded by escort carrier to Hawaii, and finally docked in Seattle. After a week there, I flew to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, to be discharged in January 1945.

I was in service just over three years, with approximately one year spent flying in north-central China with the 14th Air Force.

In 1945, after the war, I returned to the University of Michigan and finished in 1948.

To me, the service was an invaluable experience. I learned the real values in life, how lucky we were to be born in the U.S.A., and the disciplines necessary to move forward in this long and wonderful adventure we call life.

My Journey to Iwo Jima and Beyond

Amos O. Winsand

This article is based on excerpts from Amos Winsand's book of the same title published in 2001 for his family and close friends.

I was born in a log cabin in west central Wisconsin. My parents were proud first generation Norwegian American farmers and I shared their patriotic views. My father was a World War I veteran. I joined the U.S. Marine Corps in February 1943 before finishing my senior year in high school, but was granted my high school degree in absentia at graduation.

During the usual basic training I was selected for special training at Marine and Naval schools to study electricity and electronics that eventually led to a unique role in the war. I was trained in DODAR (Detection of Deflection and Range) for artillery control, a highly covert operation. The system was developed by the Department of Physical War Research at Duke University. I was a class of one with no curriculum or textbooks. I had to commit information to memory as no notes were allowed. There were no records kept of this activity and my class schedule varied. Nothing went out of the physics laboratory except what was in my memory under an oath of secrecy.

When the staff was satisfied that I understood and could transfer my knowledge into action, my training was complete, and I returned to the Marine base at Quantico to implement the use of the DODAR equipment. The operation was reclassified "confidential." I put my knowledge into action training five Marine divisions to use the equipment in the field. The last group I trained, the Third Sound Ranging Section, went with me to join the Third Marine Division on Guam in mid-1944.

Electronic Control of Artillery

One difficulty I had on Guam was convincing the "old time tough Marines" that electronic control of artillery via sound detection was practical and reliable. I also had the responsibility of safe guarding four black boxes, which contained classified electronic equipment for the DODAR operation. They were never out of my control and were my constant companions during the entire tour of the Pacific, and by my side at night in the repair tent where I slept. On Guam, the 3rd Marine Division was training for a landing on an unknown destination.

In early 1945 a major and first lieutenant from Division G-2, the intelligence arm of the Marine Corps visited me in my repair tent. They informed me that the Japanese had learned about DODAR and knew my identity. These are sobering occasions for anyone about to go into combat. I was given a detailed indoctrination of conduct in the event of capture. I could expect torture and horrendous interrogation to reveal the secrets of DODAR, since I carried no records and everything was committed to memory. My instructions from that point on were to carry five grenades with me into combat. If it appeared I would be captured, four grenades were to blow up the DODAR black boxes and the last one was for my discretion — self-defense or self-destruction. The choice was

mine. We were days away from loading equipment onto the ship for a landing, destination unknown. It was a very somber and dark day for me.

The "Talkers" Go to Work

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Marine Corps realized that they would carry the brunt of the amphibious landings in the Pacific war against Japan. Communications between the islands and during the landings were critical to saving lives, so it was decided to use the oral language and dialects of the Navajos (code talkers). In early 1942 the Marine Corps inducted the first small contingency of 29 American Navajos and by the time the war ended they numbered over 550. This select group served only in the Marine Corps. Their language and military terms were combined and committed to memory by selected personnel.

My contact with the code talkers occurred on Guam in 1944. The information was strictly limited on a "need to know" basis. That meant that I received no more information than was absolutely necessary. The details of code talkers and DODAR operations were not revealed to each other except for the knowledge that we both existed. We would have operated in full cooperation in combat if my team had been unable to communicate from our DODAR command tent to the 12th Marine Artillery Regiment Command post. Fortunately we were always able to employ a separate, special telephone line laid and concealed by a wire crew that reported to me. This allowed instant safe communication without delays or risk of the enemy decoding our information.

The Marine Intelligence had reported to me that the Japanese knew we had a DODAR system, but did not know the scientific details of the equipment. The Japanese also knew that the Marine Corps was communicating via radio in a code language they could not understand or decipher. It was the Marine's secret weapon — the Navajo's oral language. The United States knew the details of the Japanese operations because they had broken their codes during the Pacific campaigns, which gave us tremendous tactical advantages.

Off for Iwo Jima

In early February 1945, the Marine divisions departed for Iwo Jima as a floating reserve for the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions. The casualties were so high on the landing that the 3rd Division came in with reinforcements on the third day. My group, the Third Sound Ranging Section, and I with our equipment landed on the fifth day. This was the day the flag was raised on Iwo Jima.

During the battle for Iwo Jima, the Sound Ranging Sections for the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Divisions were credited with pinpointing and locating dozens of hidden Japanese gun emplacements as well as controlling artillery fire when ammunition supplies were low. At times supplies were replenished via parachute by planes based at Guam and Saipan.

Almost 7,000 Marines died as a result of combat at Iwo Jima, considered one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. The Marines had two cemeteries. One had 3,000 gravesites and the other 2,000 gravesites. Each grave had a white cross on it with the name of the deceased Marine in black letters. Most of us visited the cemeteries before we left the island. It was a humbling walk past the crosses as I read each name to honor my fallen comrades. I recognized many of the names. I walked alone in full combat gear — my carbine, five clips of ammunition, five grenades, and my trusty knife — between the rows and rows of crosses, with my helmet in my hand in respect to those who died. It was a heavy price they paid.

The series of tunnels throughout the island had been sealed off, entombing 20,000 dead

Japanese troops. This was their cemetery, but I did not visit it. During the Iwo Jima campaign we captured approximately 200 Japanese prisoners.

The 3rd Marine Division returned to Guam for rest and rehabilitation in preparation for the landing on Japan. Loading equipment aboard ships started in early August 1945. It was a good news day when we heard on the Armed Forces Radio that the U.S. had dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. The 12th Marine Regiment did not celebrate, but sat in solemn silence knowing how this decision impacted us. Other units celebrated, but it was premature. Our headquarters company welcomed the news with solitude and retired to taps for an evening of private meditation.

We continued to load equipment even after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. The Marine Corps expected that eventually we would be sending occupation troops into these areas. Let me assure you the Marines respected and praised President Harry Truman for making the decision to drop the atomic bomb. V-J Day (Victory in Japan), September 2, 1945, ended the terror of a horrendous war, and jubilation and joy filled the hearts of all Americans.

The war was over, but we were briefed anyway on the invasion plans for our division.

Scheduled for Japanese Landing

We were scheduled to land on southern Kyushu, Japan, October 10, 1945. Another Marine division was to join us, making a total of 40,000 troops, along with a second division of 20,000 troops in a floating reserve. Intelligence, later confirmed, that 60,000 Japanese troops plus armed civilians were stationed in the area. That landing would have been catastrophic. With this news we were doubly grateful to President Truman for his courageous decision to drop the atomic bombs.

My stint ended in January 1946, when I headed home on the U.S. Bunker Hill that sailed from Saipan to Los Angeles in a record six days. The journey home and discharge from the Marine Corps was welcome and it was a relief to be home and in a safe haven.

Forty years after World War II ended, a Japanese businessman who had served with the Japanese military visited me at home during a business trip to the U.S. We had a friendly, but revealing conversation regarding the Japanese philosophy during the war. He said, "The U.S. was a young 200 year old country and the war was a big event in their history, but Japan considered World War II as a small blip in the eons of Japanese ancestry and history."

War brings misery and suffering. It also makes heroes and patriots, but peace is wonderful and far more productive. My journey to Iwo Jima was a unique and terrifying experience that I will never forget nor do I regret, but I have no desire to repeat.

Why Did I Live and Not Joe? The Haunting Question Impossible to Answer

Roy Albert

It was one of those things. You'd bump elbows here and there. Off and on we'd see one another. You see the same man like that, exchange a few words, you feel you know him.

I saw this person hit. I helped move him to the rear with several others, many of whom I thought died. I never saw him again. There were a lot of "Joes," guys, we thought we knew, but knew them only as "Joe."

Then in 1995, at our outfit's 50th reunion, his name, Joe Kelsoe, showed up in the 35th Divisionaire, a bi-monthly tabloid, promoting our reunion to be held on the Queen Mary in California. I made contact and arranged to meet him there. But he died two weeks earlier. Efforts to reach his family failed.

It Reminded Me

I felt alone, again, the way I felt in the POW camp, around Christmas of 1944, when the last of my buddies were killed when a misguided Allied parachute, or "flare" bomb, intended to hit a nearby German V-2 rocket installation near Kaiserlauten, drifted into our compound. I was the only one of five from my unit to survive that blast.

Earlier, a dozen of us, many wounded, from Company B of the 134th Infantry Division, 3rd Army had been taken prisoner on December 12. We survived a flanking attack by crack German SS troops deployed there to protect German soil. We had rowed across the Blies River near the border towns of Saaregemines and Forbach, to the German side, and established a beachhead. However, under cover of heavy enemy shelling, the SS troops slipped up along the bank and came at us from behind. More than 100 of our men died.

In the German Homeland

The Blies River crossing was our fourth. It would be our last. Until this firefight that wiped us out, the crossings had been very successful. My outfit, which I commanded after I saw our lieutenant go down, had captured some 50 Germans. They returned to their own lines upon our capture, and the SS troops, aged between 25 and 30 took care of our more severely wounded. Although I was sprayed with shrapnel and hit in the knee, they didn't touch me.

The SS troops were superb soldiers. And they were a cocky bunch. They said, "Well, you got this far, but this is as far as you're going to get."

After the bomb blasted away the last of my buddies, I, with other prisoners, were marched and shuttled in trucks and railway boxcars from camps near Frankfort, Luckenwalde and Potsdam.

Although I was down to about 130 pounds, having lost 45 pounds and weakened, I tried twice to escape the wire-wrapped compound. I had

taken one semester of German at the University of Michigan and thought I could use it. We weren't getting much food in the camp. I thought I could do better on my own. Guards would come after us with dogs. But I was too weak to hide and flee effectively, and the neighbors were turning us in.

On May 9 we were able to walk freely out of the camp. The German guards, mostly older men, fled when they heard that the Russians were fast approaching. Two of us from our work group decided to walk to the American lines.

He Pointed the Way Home

We came across a Russian tank commander who pointed us in the direction of our lines, and we headed toward them. Once we found a bicycle. I rode on the handlebars because of my bad knee, and my buddy peddled until it collapsed under our combined weight. Another time we commandeered a Mercedes and drove it until the fuel ran out, then we walked to the Elbe River. The bridge had been blown up, so we rowed across the river into American hands.

I never again saw my fellow escapees, but when we made it to our lines, medics tended to us, and those of us who had been POWs were given a variety of options: Stay in France, go to a hospital in England, or go home. By May 20, I was on my way home. I was regaining weight, but I was mentally devastated.

Significantly, I still had my combat boots. Those boots were so good that we protected them as if we were washing our teeth. I had cleaned and oiled them every night, and cared for them even while a prisoner. German guards, and those who captured us, kept trying to get my boots. In prison camp, I think, in part because of my injured knee, they would give up their efforts and let me keep them. But I really had to argue with the SS soldiers who captured us. There were some good hearts in the German forces.

Eagle Scout Training Helped

I was fortunate. I also was lucky in the training I received in the Army. I was a freshman at the U of M in 1943 when I was drafted into the Army March 8. I wound up in the Army Air Corps, went through all its training, and was ready for soloing when they called everything to a halt and said the Army needed men for the infantry as the invasion of Europe was imminent.

While I was disappointed, talks with my father, who had been a quartermaster in WWI, helped me reconcile myself to the change. But, I told them I would agree to the transfer only if I could get more intense training to prepare for the coming invasion. They then sent me to glider training school, medical field work, ranger and parachutes. I felt this extra survival training was as necessary as the work I did when I became an Eagle Scout.

This specialized training came in handy as we went over the sides of our attack troop ship into the bobbing landing craft. I felt sorry for some of the guys because I knew that they didn't have the same intensity of training that I did. Carrying a full pack, weapons and ammo down a rope net on windy seas was more difficult than it seems.

A Walk Through Omaha

I soon got a sense of what was to be in store for us. We landed at Omaha Beach 30 days after the initial assault. A wide passageway had been roped off to indicate areas cleared of mines. We were sent to different groups, depending on how badly the ranks in those groups had been depleted in fighting for the ground we walked on.

In those four months I was in Europe before being captured, the fight to get off the beach, through the hedgerows, and beyond the 40 to

50 towns we rolled over, was a devastating experience. Every day we faced new challenges to stay alive, to protect one another as we ran from hedgerow to trench, from rubble piles to buildings. The loss of life was never forgiving.

Valued Letters Saved

I found time, though, to write as regularly as I could, and I managed to keep the letters I received. They are carefully protected in my file in a file drawer.

Upon returning home, I was soon to marry the girl who sent many of those letters, Marianne Hoener, whose German cousin, it turns out, was in an U.S. Prisoner of War camp while I was a POW in Germany. My ancestors were German also. They came from the Saar Valley where we were fighting. A letter from my father indicated that I would be in the area my grandfather left when he was five. The thought came to me that I may have been firing at my own cousins. The thought proved unnerving.

My medals and commendations were never a concern to me, nor were they forthcoming. I discovered, however, that they are important to my children and grandchildren, if not me. Last year the Veterans Administration presented me a Bronze Star, Purple Heart, POW Medal, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with a Bronze Star, World War II Victory Medal and, Combat Infantryman's Badge and Honorable Service Button WWII.

I was informed in two recent phone calls that my field promotions would be honored. My records were destroyed long ago in a fire at an Indianapolis, Indiana, repository. The Army also will acknowledge my promotion to staff sergeant. My field commission to 2nd lieutenant will be honored also. They told me I would be receiving a Silver Star.

Yet, with all that, there remains the longing to see again my fallen buddies. That, I know, though, is probably not to be in this world. And still, nothing eliminates that haunting question: "Why did I live and not 'Joe'?"

SERVING IN WAR ON TWO FRONTS

CLARENCE G. CARLSON

Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, rang in a new era and abject change that engulfed the world. To a sophomore at the University of Michigan, the pall of war changed careers, habits, fellowships, unfettered material plenty, sense of security, as well as the conviction that freedom and national omnipotence were unassailable. At the same time, the fervor of American patriotism, love of country, and the willingness to set aside the interest of self for the nation's common good rose "like a sleeping giant," with a prevalent sense of invincibility.

Having had some ROTC training, I joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps on September 1942, and was called to Army service on March 15, 1943.

Introduction to military basics as well as artillery ordnance and cadre training at Aberdeen, Maryland, demanded I prepare for the rigors of Army life, dim the heartache of separation from home and family, and accept the implicit personal and material self denial. But nothing could prepare us for the leveled towns, the mass of displaced persons walking, with their possessions on their backs, the byways, the pervading suffering, or the awesomeness of an Army on the move, that we would encounter.

Extensive Training

Following extensive testing and interviews, I was accepted for the Army Specialized Training Program and was sent to the College of William and Mary in Virginia and then to the Virginia Military Institute. In November 1944 I completed their courses in electrical engineering, having been elected president of the graduating class. Then, I was transferred to Camp Crowder, Missouri, for radio repair experience.

The war was progressing with a fury in Europe and the Pacific. Because of manpower shortages, the War Department in 1944 dissolved the Army Specialized Training Program and over 73,000 trainees were assigned to the Army ground forces.

On December 16, 1944, the German army launched a massive offensive through Belgium's Ardenne Forest, which became known as the "Battle of the Bulge." American forces facing this assault suffered heavy casualties which required immediate front line replacements.

In December 1944, I was transferred to Camp Gordon, Georgia, for six weeks of intensive infantry training. This included many 25 mile forced marches with several simulated combat problems. Getting enough rest and sleep (in a pup tent) was a valued lesson; an overnight pass was a cherished relief.

On March 7, 1945, I departed the United States on a troop ship as a rifleman replacement. We traveled in a convoy that included, reportedly, a French aircraft carrier and other escorts.

Disasterous Crash

After about three days at sea, in the dark of night, the French aircraft carrier, in a heavy sea, swung around and rammed our ship and split the side of the hold that contained me and a large number of sleeping soldiers. The side of our ship flapped in the waves, the soldier bunks were tiered on a flooring that became unstable, and a section of the troop enclosure became a veritable bathtub.

Troops fell from above onto troops on floors below. There was no firm flooring because the outward movement of entering ocean waves churned the enclosure. Even good swimmers could not resist the waves, and as a consequence, 97 men, we learned, washed out to sea. Twelve men were later rescued at sea by a destroyer escort or other craft in the convoy. One of the men I knew from VMI was picked up and taken to Liverpool. However, some 85 men, many of my friends, perished.

I was a witness to much of this since I was on a top bunk, with light overhead and floor beneath that held me long enough to collect my thoughts and allowed me to climb on an inner bulkhead with foot weldment to a ledge that led to a portion of one of the ship's stairways. Though torn apart, this served as an escape route on which I climbed to an upper deck. I thought we had been torpedoed, but "topside" no one knew, at the time, of the loss below.

Our ship "limped" into the Azore Islands and its troops, many threadbare and weaponless, were ultimately transferred at sea to the Athlon Castle, a ship out of Australia, and carried to Liverpool; then they traveled by train to South Hampton and to LeHavre, France, on the Polish ship, Sobieski. We arrived in the European theater on March 31, 1945—crossing time, 24 days.

Assigned to Signal Corps

We were delivered to a staging area, likely Camp Lucky Strike, given new uniforms, pack equipment, and used rifles which "we zeroed in" on the range. Later I was assigned to the 97 Infantry Division's Signal Company as a member of a wire team which assisted in the repair, construction, and installation of all field wire communication for the 97th Division. The Division was given an award for the Rhineland Campaign.

One of my service highlights while in Europe was to receive my AB degree (in absentia) from the University of Michigan; the mail advising of the award was delivered to me while in "the field" living in a pup tent. On April 13, I well remember, while on guard duty, being told by a little German boy passing by, that our president, Franklin Roosevelt, had died, a loss we felt very deeply.

The 97th Infantry Division was involved in early phases of the Battle of the Ruhr Pocket. It crossed the Sieg River near Bonn, and in advancing toward Dusseldorf (and among other towns), attacked Siegburg, Drabenderhohe and Troisdorf, crossed the Wupper River, cleared Solingen and then seized Dusseldorf.

Guarding Czechoslovakian Border

Thereafter the division was transferred to the 3rd Army Sector along the Czechoslovakian border to help protect the left flank of the 3rd Army. Cheb was taken, and then the Division proceeded to invade Czechoslovakia, halting northwest of Pilsen.

On May 7, all offensive operations were halted; the war in Europe ended May 8, 1945 (VE Day). After the war in Europe, I was detailed to serve with a survey team charged with appraising German civilian communications and restoration.

In June 1945, the 97th shipped out of LeHavre for Camp Shanks, New York. After a three day furlough, we reassembled at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to prepare for the invasion of Japan. Fortunately, the war ended August 15, 1945 (V-J Day). The Division was, nevertheless, shipped to Japan to serve as part of the occupation forces. I recall we sailed there through a typhoon with most troops seasick.

I served in Ojima, Japan, until February 6, 1946, principally working on ordnance material, and then was discharged from the service on February 28, 1946.

My decorations and citations included the European-Africa-Middle Eastern Theater Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Service Medal, American Theater Service Medal, and the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Service Medal.

Commissioned as Ensign

On November 18, 1949, I was commissioned an ensign (CEC) as a U.S. Naval Reserve Officer. After my military discharge in February 28, 1946, I was employed as a stress analyst for the GM Truck & Bus Division of General Motors for six months, and then, taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, I returned to the University of Michigan and earned an engineering degree in 1948, and later a Juris Doctor degree from Wayne State University in 1958.

I often think of my military experience, in some respects, as one of my life's finest hours, when devotion to a cause of historic import stretched and enlarged self and provided a platform to, in a small way, repay and give of myself to this great nation.

Tales from an Aircraft Armorer

Jack Corey

My draft notice came when I was 18, fresh out of high school. I was inducted into the Army on March 13, 1943, and reported to Fort Custer, Michigan. It was determined during basic training that I would become an armorer for aircraft. Soon 200 of us were on a troop train heading for Denver, Colorado.

Specialist in Weaponry

There were two months of training on every type of machine gun and cannon that was used on different aircraft. We also were trained in the loading of bombs and how the bomb racks functioned. I was then sent to a new squadron, the 647th of the 410th Bomb Group, that was being formed in Oklahoma City, arriving in September 1943. This squadron was to train with Douglas A-20 "Havoc" attack bombers. The plane had a pilot, a gunner in the upper turret and a gunner for the open hatch in the belly.

A Year of Training

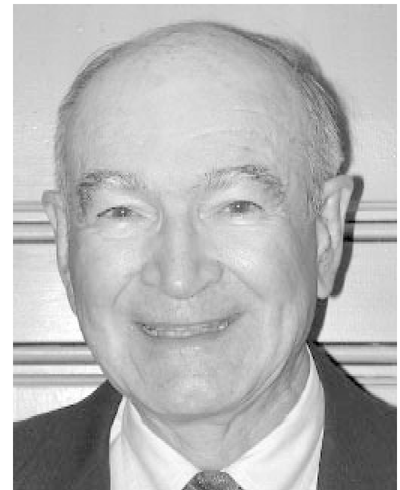
Although I was pleased to be assigned to the Army Air Force I had no idea, early on, that it takes 10 people on the ground to keep a plane in the sky. The training took us to airfields in Oklahoma, Mississippi and Florida, as we kept moving to get good flying weather. This was necessary since the pilots had to get the required flying hours by February 1944.

I was fortunate to get to go to school in Tampa for training on the maintenance of the turret on the Havoc bomber. During my Florida assignment I was advanced to the rank of corporal, receiving an enormous raise of $10 per month. After a one-week furlough to Detroit I was moved to a port of debarkation in New Jersey, ready to leave in March 1944.

Off to Europe

The squadron boarded the Saturnia, an Italian passenger ship that was retrofitted as a troop carrier. It was not a pleasant trip since there were very high seas and we were not able to go up on deck. The convoy had Navy escort ships on each side as we crossed the north Atlantic at 10 knots. It was tense, as enemy submarines had sunk many ships in the Atlantic and troop carriers were definitely a prime target. After two weeks we landed at the Firth of Clyde, Gourock, Scotland and were greeted by a bagpipe band.

A train ride took us to Gosfield, Essex County, England. We had good living accommodations in a Quonset hut equipped with electric lights, stove, bunk beds, mattresses and pillows. After a week, twelve new Havoc bombers arrived, and we spent three days and nights getting the guns cleaned and ammunition loaded. There was very little sleep until the planes were ready. Within a short time, the planes were assigned targets, and we loaded four 500-pound bombs in each bomb bay and a bomb on each wing.



Bombing Raids

It seemed that, weather permitting, every day was the same...two flights per day, all

daylight raids. The targets for the A-20s were railroad marshalling yards and bridges in France and Holland. The planes had a lot of flak damage, and every so often a plane would not return. Sometimes one would return but the wheels would not go down, resulting in a belly landing with bent props and lots of damage. In our first two weeks of preparing for flights we did more work than we did during the six months of training in the United States.

Our airfield was between London and the channel in an area called Buzz Bomb Alley. Every night the air raid sirens would sound, and we were supposed to get out of our bunks and jump into the six-foot deep slit trenches dug for air raids. Of course we never knew if there were bombers or rockets overhead until they arrived. After a week we decided that the Buzz Bomb VI Rockets were headed for London and not intended for our airfield. At that point we would sleep through the night.

D-Day Finally Arrives

All of the bombing had been to soften the Nazi's fortifications in preparation for D-Day. On June 6, 1944, we were awakened in the dark to hear that the day had arrived. The planes went up three times each day for quite a few days to support the ground troops. This was also grueling for the flight crews.

After the liberation of Paris by the Allied troops it was decided that we should move to an airfield outside Paris. We boarded an LCI and were off to France. This was a very rough ride as we headed for the Cherbourg Peninsula. My seasickness reminded me that I was glad I was not in the Navy.

The landing was to be at Utah Beach, and when our LCI ramp was lowered everyone went down the ramp and into the water. This was with a full field pack, rifle, gas mask and helmet. When we hit the beach we walked for eight miles to a safe site to camp for the night. We were told to quickly vacate the beach to avoid the possibility of being strafed by German planes. Along the way we passed all of the minefields that had not been cleared but were identified. There were several cemeteries that were grim reminders of the deadly battles in June and July.

It Wasn't Cushy

We were airlifted to our new airfield between Coulommiers and Paris. It had been a German airfield, complete with hangers but when the Germans retreated they blew up all of their buildings. We salvaged a lot of the wood to build floors for our tents. The potbelly stove was to be our source of heat for the winter.

France was not to be as pleasant as England. There was no running water, so virtually all bathing was done from our helmets. We could count on one hand the number of showers available in France. Any hot water came from a can of water on the potbelly stove. We did have folding cots and filled a mattress cover with straw that came from a local farmer. My pillow was my gas mask and a jacket.

The mess hall was in a farmer's barn which allowed us to have a dry place to sit down to eat. The cooks were very good when you consider what they were given to prepare a meal. We all complained, but the cooks did a fine job baking bread all night by mixing water with eggs, potatoes and milk...all powdered from the U.S.

Many Pilots and Crews Didn't Return

There were very busy days with the planes providing close support for the ground troops. When the ground forces would encounter heavy resistance they would call for fragmentation cluster bombs and the planes would go in at 3,000 feet. This was always very dangerous, since there would be heavy flak. The normal bombing run was at 10,000 feet with 500 pound bombs. We frequently

lost planes and their crews. Indeed, only one plane out of our 12-plane squadron was flyable at war's end.

It was a cold winter for working outside. It was December when we were issued complete fleece-lined clothing and boots. For the tent, we had timbers for firewood from a nearby barn that had been blown up by a bombing raid. We spent the winter cutting wood with a crosscut saw in our spare time. The wood lasted most of the winter, but no one could burn it in the tent during the day. Since our fire would go out during the night, the water on the stove would freeze. This meant no water in the morning until we could warm it up.

The End of Hostilities

In February 1945, we moved to another airfield closer to the front lines. While we were in Reims on May 8, 1945, we heard the people laughing, screaming and waving flags, but didn't know why. We later learned that the German, American and British generals had signed the peace treaty in Reims while we were there.

We realized the full significance of the war's end when a British plane landed on our airfield to refuel. A lot of thin, gaunt Australians got off the plane, and some of us walked over to talk to them. They said that they had been taken as prisoners-of-war in 1940 at Dunkirk. That was a famous retreat by British, Canadian and Australian troops, where small boats from England picked up many of them. However, these soldiers were still on the shore and were captured by the Germans. As a result, they had to endure five years of captivity.

Homeward Bound

The war in Europe was over, and after a stay in Belgium we boarded the liberty ship USS Fannin on July 30, 1945, to head to the U.S. During our trip, the two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, a prelude to ending the war. There was much jubilation and it was a very pleasant trip back to the U.S. in time to hear that the surrender agreement had been signed by the Japanese. Our squadron received the Distinguished Unit Badge and the European theater of Operation Badge, with one Silver Star and one Bronze Star.

After a one-month furlough, I was sent to North Carolina to be discharged as a corporal on October 7, 1945.

From Stumbling Start to Victory in the Pacific

Donald J. Grant

My Navy experience gives testimony to America's "can-do" spirit, devotion, and capabilities that earned the victory in World War II.

My ship, the USS LST 130, was manned by 130 or so men and officers who were totally inexperienced, except for one officer who had served as an enlisted man on a Navy cruiser.

We were given a powerful, sophisticated piece of machinery - and in effect told, "Here. Sail it." During the first few months we were inefficient and mistake-prone. But gradually, the officers and the 16 to 18 year old boys from various big cities and rural farms became seasoned, coordinated, and capable of executing critical orders as an effective unit.

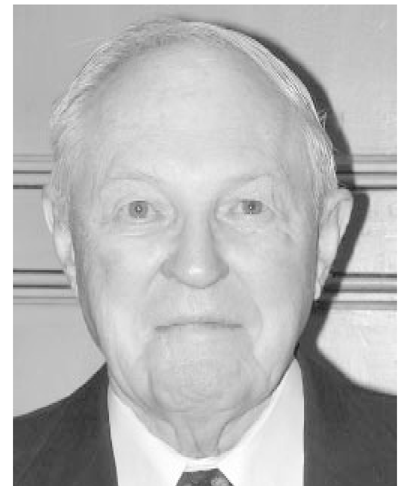
I probably should have avoided service. I was too old, having finishing graduate school and been admitted to the bar in 1940. I was married with a daughter, and serving as assistant to the general manager of a plant manufacturing engines for military aircraft. But, following the example of my father who wrangled his way into the Army in World War I after being refused for health reasons, I entered the Navy in March 1943.

After midshipman training at Northwestern University, I was commissioned as an ensign on July 1, 1943. With special communications training on Solomons Island, Maryland, I was assigned as communication officer of the LST 130, then being constructed in Evansville, Indiana.

A Dubious Beginning

After LST 130 was launched on the Ohio River, we proceeded to New Orleans, then to Guantanamo, Cuba, through the Panama Canal and north along the coast of Mexico to Long Beach, California.

Our captain was selected because he was the oldest officer. In civilian life, he was assistant dean of a law school. He had never driven a car, let alone a ship. In addition, our ship had a defective steering mechanism. Many calamities resulted.



On the way to Panama we lost control of our steering and nearly collided with an ammunition ship. In California we ran aground on rocks while practicing landing on San Clemente Island, putting us in dry dock for a month while our bottom was rebuilt.

Later, while entering Pearl Harbor, we entangled a mine field and again had to be extricated by tugs. Twice in Pearl Harbor, we collided with another LST and sent the same ship into dry dock two times.

While making practice invasions on a nearby island, we and many other ships were caught in a storm, causing many of the LSTs to unexpectedly launch LCT's (160-ton landing craft) which all of us had lashed to our decks. The LCT's were lost with many Marines who were sleeping on board.

Later, while still at Pearl, a number of LSTs were lost near our anchorage, with crews and Marines aboard, when ammunition and other explosives being loaded at a nearby depot blew up through some misadventure. Such was the prelude to our first invasion. But after that, LST 130 sailed through plenty of action with success, and good luck.

Invading Saipan

On May 25, 1944, we left Pearl Harbor to invade Saipan with Marines of the 2nd Marine Division aboard.

On June 15, we invaded Saipan. On the first day, the lead officer of our Marines performed an incredible act of heroism. After we put the Marines ashore on a beach, they were proceeding inland when a Japanese light tank appeared and proceeded to attack the Marines. This noble officer ran across a meadow to the tank, forced its top open and threw grenades into the tank, ending that peril.

The fight to secure Saipan continued day and night with the naval forces bombarding the Japanese and bombing them from the air. The Marines continued to drive them to the cliffs at the east end of the island where finally, on July 9, most of the Japanese, including civilians and women, threw themselves into the sea.

Saipan was of great significance. It, and a companion island, Tinian, were to be the airports for the immense B-29s which were to bomb mainland Japan.

On July 24, 1944 we invaded Tinian, putting Marines ashore as before. During this invasion, we were fired on from shore with minor damage only. Two men were slightly wounded. By August 3, the Marines had secured Tinian and work commenced on the airport, which became the base from which the atom bombs were dropped on Japan.

Hazardous Transport

We next returned to Eniwetok, a giant atoll in the Marshall Islands, to take on a load of 2,800 drums of 100 octane aircraft fuel. We also took on a substantial amount of fulminate of mercury, which was so sensitive that we had to keep it frozen in a food freezer. A spark or even a substantial blow would have sent us to cloud one. We left to deliver the cargo to General MacArthur's forces in the Philippines, where we arrived on December 6.

After some miscellaneous assistance to the Army in the Philippines, we took a load of wounded and ill soldiers to Guam for medical attention. At Guam we were put into a quarantine anchorage because one of the soldiers died of polio en route.

On December 31 we left Guam for Pearl Harbor, where we underwent some repair work to our ship.

On to Okinawa

On February 4, 1945, we headed for the ultimate target of Okinawa - a large island which had been occupied by the Japanese for hundreds of years and was thoroughly fortified.

We proceeded first to Babel Thaup, a large island in the mid-western Pacific, in the Palau group, which our forces had bypassed even though more than 60,000 Japanese troops were there. By that time we so dominated the Pacific that the Japanese could not supply or remove them.

Occasionally the Japanese on Babel Thaup would attempt to build boats or rafts to attack our ships while we were anchored nearby. So we had small craft with machine guns and other light weapons constantly cruising about the island, blasting any such attempts. It was there that we lost the only crew member who died aboard our ship. A cable broke while we

were lowering a landing craft, crushing him against the ship. We proceeded on to the Philippines where we were loaded for the invasion of Okinawa.

A Frightening Mission

Our orders were frightening. Six days before the invasion of Okinawa we were to invade the Kerama Rhetto, an atoll about 25 miles from Okinawa, and land an Army group which was to put land-based artillery pieces in place to shell islands nearer Okinawa on the day of invasion. We had to go in with several smaller vessels, and without any protective force of Navy aircraft or armed vessels. We had only 20 mm and 40 mm anti-aircraft guns as protection. There would be nothing to protect us from Japanese fortifications or troops.

Kerama Rhetto was about 20 miles in diameter and had only one opening to the sea - about 1,500 feet wide and defined by pillar-like rock formations about 500 feet high at either side of the opening. Anyone on either pillar could drop rocks, grenades or bombs on us as we passed through.

We passed through at about 5:00 a.m. on March 25, 1945, fully expecting we would be blown to bits. But the Navy intelligence was right, and nothing happened to LST 130.

We completed our mission and delivered the Army group with their artillery. But instead of merely setting up their post, since they had encountered no resistance, the fools went poking around and found a cave which seemed full of attractive prizes. They entered and were blown to bits. Only hours after we placed them ashore, the colonel in charge, the doctor attached to the group and its first sergeant were dead and many others severely wounded.

Invading Okinawa

Several days later we invaded other parts of the Okinawa group, without encountering resistance. On March 31, we anchored off Okinawa with hundreds if not thousands of naval ships.

Late that evening, Japanese planes flew over gathering intelligence. All our ships fired upon them until ordered to stop. We never saw such fireworks.

On April 1 we invaded Okinawa with the others, depositing our troops where assigned. The fighting on Okinawa was ferocious. Ernie Pyle, the beloved journalist, and General Brudsner were killed while we were there.

The ships anchored and maneuvering about Okinawa were under constant kamikaze attack and many ships near us were hit. Some of the attacks were aimed directly at our ship, but fortunately they missed.

Late one afternoon a large hospital ship left the harbor at Okinawa a short distance from us. It was gleaming white, bore immense red crosses on both sides and was floodlighted; obviously it was not a ship of war. A few hours later we received a radio message from the ship saying it had been hit by Japanese suicide planes and was seriously damaged.

When we had no immediate duty at Okinawa we were directed to sail southeast to get out of the area, for days sometimes. When we were needed to support and supply our forces on the island we were directed to return to the area of conflict. This occurred several times.

On April 15, 1945 we were ordered to invade nearby islets and landed troops and supplies on Ie Shima and Mona Shima. During these exercises we were fired on by Japanese shore artillery. On three occasions, shells fell five yards or less from the bow of our ship. On one occasion, projectiles from a Japanese plane wounded two of our men.

As the War Ends

On April 29, we were ordered to return to

Pearl Harbor, arriving on June 22. From there, we were directed to San Francisco to have our own ship outfitted for the invasion of Japan, and to tow an LST which had been torpedoed in for repair. At five miles per hour it took us 16 days.

We were sent to the Marc Island Naval base on San Francisco Bay for repair and fitting for the invasion of Japan. While we were there, the atom bombs were dropped, and Japan surrendered.

LST 130 later returned to the Pacific and returned aboriginals to their homelands from the Pacific Islands. But since I met the age and service requirements, I was relieved of duty on its crew. I was discharged from the Navy as a lieutenant j.g. on November 3, 1945 and returned to civilian life.

“We Build, We Fight”

Arthur Leonard Held

As an officer of the United States Navy Civil Engineer Corps in World War II, I reported for training at Camp Peary, Williamsburg, Virginia as an ensign in March 1943. That August, I joined the 119th U.S. Naval Construction Battalion, a Seabee group. The battalion trained at Davisville, Rhode Island and Passamaquoddy, Maine.

In February we boarded the USS West Point at San Pedro after leaving Port Hueneme, California, and landed at Milne Bay, New Guinea. Four months later the battalion sailed to Hollandia, New Guinea as part of the invasion. Having built the Seventh Fleet headquarters in Hollandia, we boarded five LSTs and sailed for Manila as part of that invasion.

There, we erected a radio tower, one thousand feet tall, a fleet post office, a hospital, and quarters for the Seventh Fleet. We restored the house for the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines. In August 1945, the war ended as we were training for the invasion of Japan.

On the USS West Point

The ship upon which we had sailed to New Guinea, the USS West Point, had been the SS America. A new luxury ship in 1939, they converted her to a troop ship. As such, she made more than 100 trips carrying a total of 300,000 troops throughout the world during the war, all without being attacked and all without protective convoys. Using the ship’s speed and maneuverability, her crew outwitted hostile craft at sea.

Eight thousand military personnel were on board, including Army nurses. The librarian was Lew Ayres who acted in “All Quiet on the Western Front” and in the Dr. Kildare series. A conscientious objector, he served in the Medical Corps.

They built our state room (originally designed for two people) with five tier bunks, housing me and 24 other officers. Water was scarce. Each of us hung his water canteen on a bunk post. We served four hour duty watches. No lights were allowed; we often dumped canteens inadvertently as we climbed bunks to reach our beds.

We set up camp in the tropical swamps of Milne Bay in the torrential rains. In one 24 hour period I measured 24 inches of water in what had been an empty drum the day before. Japanese were in the area; we had sentries guarding the battalion. Once, at midnight, the sounds of many shots awakened us. We grabbed our carbines, ready to fight the Japs only to discover that a huge python snake, twenty-two feet long, and eight inches in diameter was trying to invade our camp.

Built Roads, Bridges and Oil Tanks

At Milne Bay, we built roads, docks, and oil tanks. Supplies were unloaded from ships. Chief Warrant Officer Luke Higgins of Brooklyn, New York was assigned to unload a

ship from Australia. The cargo contained blankets, food of all kinds, and what was to prove Luke Higgins' undoing, a large supply of beer. At the end of the day, when Higgins turned up missing, he was found on the ship and in no shape to navigate. We placed him in a cargo net and lifted him to the dock.

The battalion entomologist and I were jointly assigned care of a Jeep, and one day we drove and parked at an Army warehouse to replace our worn out shoes. We were issued shoes; we lost the Jeep. Close by, Army personnel were loading an Army ship with supplies that pulled away before we could inspect the cargo, which we believed included our Jeep.

Two weeks later, two Liberty ships were loaded with our construction equipment (bull dozers, cranes, trucks, road graders and other heavy equipment) and the Battalion sailed for Hollandia, New Guinea. Upon our arrival, the cargo included a large wooden box labeled "Saw Mill Equipment." It contained a spanking new Army Jeep. Our loyal and street wise Seabees had quietly and deftly "acquired" this Jeep at Milne Bay.

In March 1946, I reported to Great Lakes Naval Training Center, separating from the service as a lieutenant, senior grade.

INTELLIGENCE CAN BE TEDIOUS

BILL CRABTREE

Not all of us saw combat during World War II. In fact some of us were pretty much assigned to the back waters and didn't feel like we made any great contribution to the war effort. But our story is a part of what happened to our generation; and the question is whether it should be told or ignored.

I have chosen to tell my story with tongue in cheek humor, which may strike some of you as unfunny sour grapes. That is not what I intended. I intended with perhaps some exaggeration, to laugh at myself while reserving to those, who saw combat or otherwise made a real contribution, the credit they deserve.

My Story

I was a Signal Corps T-3 (a staff sergeant with a "T") in Hawaii engaged in counter intelligence regarding our own wireless communications in the Pacific area of operation. Our activities were classified, and with memory fading, I can not give you any details, except to say that the Signal Corps Cryptographic Service played a vital role in the war. I played a very small part. But I remember the lighter side of my army experience, which this is an attempt to recreate.

Induction Into Service

With bad eyes (I couldn't read the big "E" on the eye chart) I could not get in the Navy V-7 or Air Force V-5 program, so I volunteered for the Enlisted Reserves, which were called into service in March 1943.

After induction and standing naked in a long line for a physical (I was asked to cough and if I liked girls), and having refused limited service, I was fitted with a gas mask with prescription lenses and qualified for infantry training. I thought I had outsmarted myself by the "bravo" of refusing limited service.

Basic Training and Stanford University

After basic infantry training I was sent to ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) at Stanford University to study Japanese. We were assigned to units which taught Japanese, Malay and Chinese, plus the history and culture of the Pacific area countries. We were pretty puffed up because we thought we were being trained to be junior intelligence or military government officers.

But after a year the program washed out and most of my friends were sent to the infantry, and thence to Europe where one of my friends was killed.

Camp Crowder, Missouri

The fortunes of war, which are unfair and arbitrary, determined that I should be sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri, to take refresher Signal Corps basic training. Refresher Signal Corps training consisted of (1) lying down in a row before a slow moving tank, rolling out of the way just in time and simulating placing a sticky grenade on the rear thereof to disable same, (2) throwing a live hand grenade, (3)

firing three shots with a machine gun, (4) shooting a 22 caliber rifle at model airplanes being pulled on an overhead wire, (5) crawling in the mud though an obstacle course with live ammunition zinging overhead and (6) personally being instructed by the company captain on how to clean urinals.

Vint Hills Farm Station, Virginia

I was next sent to Vint Hills Farm Station, Virginia, the Signal Corps Intelligence training unit, which trained officers and enlisted men in traffic analysis and code breaking of enemy communications. In my case, Japanese. The training was classified. In the Pacific area graduates were sent to stations in Hawaii, the Philippines, India, China, Australia, and other locations as the war advanced.

We attended classes with officers either for cryptography or traffic analysis. The enlisted men were all ex-ASTP students. The Yale ASTP students were delayed a month because they had all been sent to Cooks and Bakers School.

The business of code breaking and intercepting enemy wireless communications was classified. Consequently, I couldn't tell anyone what I was being trained to do. By this time I had been promoted from buck private to private first class, which in letters home didn't indicate any rapid rise in rank or social status.

Incidentally, traffic analysis and code breaking played an important part in the U.S. victory at Mid Way and the shooting down of Japanese Admiral Yamamoto's plane. Even without breaking the enemy's code, you can tell a lot by analyzing the volume, etc., of enemy traffic.

After graduation we were formed into groups of 15 to 20 enlisted men with two or three officers for operations in the field. It was a bit unclear how the secret things we were trained to do would apply to field operations. We didn't ask our officers because they didn't know either.

We were then sent to Sacramento, California, to be transported overseas.

Back to Camp Crowder

But a hitch. At Sacramento we were attached to a telephone pole and wire stringing outfit under a Signal Corps major (whom we later affectingly referred to as "Major Hubba Hubba,") for the sole purpose of being transported overseas. But, the telephone pole and wire stringing outfit had flunked its overseas readiness test. After I pulled several days of K.P. in Sacramento, the pole line outfit, with our unit attached, was sent back to Camp Crowder for additional training.

At Camp Crowder, since we were classified, and couldn't tell anyone what we were trained to do, we were known as the "Secret" or "Intelligence" Bastards.

Except for several efforts to teach us how to climb telephone poles, we were assigned makeshift duties, such as barracks orderlies, latrine duty and chaplains assistants. Chaplains assistant was particularly popular because Padre was usually out saving souls, and you could read your paperbacks or hold bull sessions with other self appointed chaplains assistants.

Ten of us were assigned to rewrite every enlisted man's service record so as to qualify the outfit to go overseas. We were given the I.B.M. forms for all the enlisted men, ours included, in the Battalion (or whatever it was). We were given a list of all the training activities each man should have completed. If he didn't have it, we gave it to him. We were told to delete all references to ASTP, so my service record has a blank where I did nothing for a year.

The outfit was now ready to go overseas. Major Hubba Hubba called the battalion

together in a large auditorium and said, "How many of you men believe that six weeks from now you will be digging latrines in the Philippines?" No one held up his hand. With that every captain and lieutenant in the auditorium jumped up and said, "You heard the major. Hold up your hands." With that we all held up our hands, and the Battalion thereby was finally qualified for overseas duty. Two days before Christmas 1944 we were in Seattle ready to embark.

The Smokey Johnson

We embarked from Seattle on the USS President Johnson, which rumor had, was captured in World War I from the Germans, and which smoked so badly it was not allowed in a convoy. (GI's lived by rumors. We had two kinds: Official and Unofficial. This was an official rumor.)

We were given shots for typhus, cholera and the plague and one sea sickness pill, which we took while still tied up at the dock. Consequently, half of the "troop class" passengers got violently sick when we hit monstrous seas two days later, many throwing up in the chow line, so that one had to slip and slide across the floor and hold the plate on the table with one hand while eating with the other.

Another slight inconvenience was that the EM latrine was a wooden shack bolted to the foredeck with sea water running through the elongated operative parts. Except, during rough weather the sea water did not run, but slouched from one end to the other with predictable results.

On New Year's Eve, the officers and nurses sang "Auld Lang Syne" to us on the public address system, while sea water cascaded down the hatch to the bottom deck where I made my home; so we knew that all was right with the Smokey Johnson. Considering that it was wartime, I considered the voyage a thoroughly enjoyable event.

Hawaii: We Do Our Thing

We were relieved when the Smokey Johnson stopped at Hawaii. We had expected a longer voyage.

After our little group of traffic analysts (fifteen or so enlisted men and three officers) reported for duty in an adjunct to Fort Shafter, a signal corps general poked his head through the door (the lieutenant and captain shot up to attention) and said, "Where have you men been? I have been looking for you." He then said that he was assigning us to counter intelligence on U.S. wireless communications in the Pacific. We were to monitor our own wireless communications (not Japanese), and if we came up with anything giving the "show away," it would be reasonable to believe that the Japanese, who aren't dummies, would come up with the same thing.

So for the next two to three weeks we EM wrestled with a way to monitor our own coded wireless messages, which were flying every which way in the Pacific theater of operation.

This was in January 1945. We continued this monitoring operation for seven months until the end of July. Another T-3 and I would write a report, which we would submit to the lieutenant, who submitted it to the captain, who sent it off to somewhere important, we assumed.

Finally, the war moved so fast that in late July the whole intelligence operation was washed out. We were to be sent to the Philippines for whatever reason for the invasion of Japan. We were standing a "show down" inspection to be flown to the Philippines when news of the "bomb" came. We never went. The war ended. The EM in the drivers pool replaced

the cooks, who went home on points. Our unit in Hawaii was broken up. I was shifted around to various army units until I was sent home in February 1946.

Home

Home in February. I couldn't start law school until the summer of 1946. Meantime, I met an attractive 18 year old co-ed at Vanderbilt and we were married in September 1947 at the beginning of my senior year in law school and her senior year in undergraduate school. We have now been married for 56 years and have three grown children and eight grandchildren.

Speaking French Helpful to this Italian-American

Paul Cicchini

My father was born in Italy but immigrated to the U.S. to become an American citizen prior to the war. As was the case with many immigrants, families were split between Europe and the U.S.

In 1938, on one of his many trips back to Europe to be with our family, my father saw what was happening under Mussolini's fascist government, so he began to make arrangements for me to immigrate to the U.S.

My Early Years in the U.S.

In 1940, I was 16 years old, and my father knew that I would soon be drafted to serve in the Italian army. However, the immigration request was approved and I was sent to the U.S. on the last immigrant ship allowed to enter, prior to the start of World War II. Even though I was fluent in Italian and French, I could not speak a word of English, so I studied language at night school after working in a tailor shop in the daytime.

In June of 1943, even though I still was not an American citizen, I was drafted at the age of 18 into the U.S. Army. I could have refused the draft but would have been interned as an Italian. This was not acceptable to me, as I was anxious to serve the U.S. by becoming a soldier.

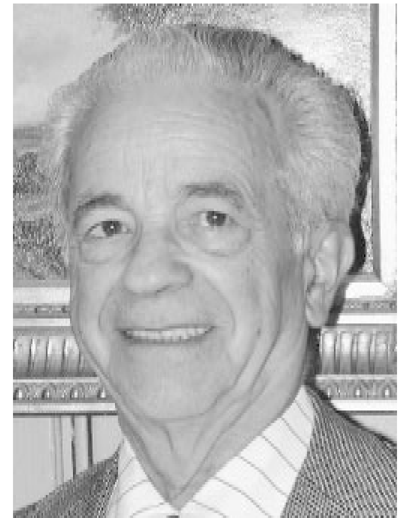
Becoming an Infantryman

I was sent to basic training at Fort Lee, Virginia, and after a few months was shipped to England as an infantryman. I was sent to Belfast, Ireland for more training, then back to England. Our unit was soon alerted that the troops were to prepare to cross the English Channel for what we later learned was to be the D-Day invasion of Normandy. I informed my captain that I was reluctant to see action until I had become an American citizen.

I was soon loaded into a Jeep and driven to the nearest American consulate in Liverpool where, in a matter of minutes, I was made a very proud American citizen. As it turned out, that delay of a few days to get my citizenship may have saved my life. When we later crossed the Channel and climbed down the ship's nets to get into the LSTs to land at Utah Beach, Normandy, most of the action had already occurred and no one was shooting at us.

In full battle packs, we assembled on Utah Beach. We soon marched several miles inland to a temporary destination, and dug trenches for protection. There was little fighting at that time in our area, but we had to stand watch to prevent being picked off by German snipers who were still a threat.

An Italian who Spoke French



After digging our foxholes, I noticed a group of puzzled G.I.s gathered around a very young girl who was shouting excitedly in French. No one understood what she was shouting, but as I listened I realized that she was saying that her mother was having a

baby in a nearby farmhouse and needed help. I told the sergeant and he loaded the girl and me into a Jeep and we drove to the farmhouse. Sure enough, the mother was alone and giving birth. We of course assisted, saving both mother and baby. My four years of French in the Italian school system served all of us well, and particularly the baby.

Becoming the Official Interpreter

From that point forward, I was designated as the official interpreter of our unit, a position that became important to my unit and me as we proceeded further into France throughout our campaign.

As we made our way to LeMans, passing through Rennes, Dijon, Nancy, Rheime and Metz in France, it became very helpful to be able to interpret for our command what the French citizens and members of the French underground were telling us. We also marched into Luxembourg.

There were a lot of Italian prisoners who had surrendered to the Allies, particularly in Africa, because they were unwilling to fight on behalf of the Axis. As POWs, they often collaborated with our troops and provided information, and I served as interpreter for the exchanges in Italian. Indeed, many of the prisoners ended up driving trucks, doing office work, and serving as cooks for the Allied troops, freeing up our soldiers for action.

Major Action for Our Unit

My assignment as translator often kept me back at headquarters while our unit was sent on missions involving varying degrees of danger. However, after a considerable number of close shaves caused by heavy bombing from the Germans, I became shell-shocked and was moved to a nearby hospital for two weeks of recovery. Our campaigns took us through northern France and the Rhineland, and our unit was involved in the Battle of the Bulge. We also had to control uprisings of German prisoners when the enemy was counter-attacking.

Locating My Family

My unit was in Nancy, France in May 1945, when the Germans unconditionally surrendered. Our unit was told that we might be sent soon to the Asian theater to fight the Japanese. I realized that it was a good time to try to locate my family in Italy before we were shipped out to Asia.

My mother, sister and brother lived in Italy during the war, and of course we had heard nothing from them for three years. In August 1945, I learned that there was an American base in Bari, Italy which was within traveling distance to my home town.

My captain got me a temporary assignment to Bari, though he said it was up to me to figure out how to get there. I hitchhiked to Marseilles, caught a flight on an English plane to Foggia, Italy, then hitched another ride to get to Bari. The base commander there arranged a furlough for me and transportation to my home town of Vasto. I surprised my family, and found them to be in fairly good condition.

I was the only American soldier that the town had seen, and there were many questions from the town folk as well as from my family. While I was there, we learned that the Japanese had surrendered, so I soon left to get back to my unit in France. All in all, it was a wonderful experience seeing my family again.

Serving Out My Time in France

In 1945, I had earned enough points to come back to the U.S., but instead I chose to serve my last months of military service in France. I returned to LeMans where I had met a cute young French girl, whom I later convinced to marry me. I consider her to be my most

precious souvenir of the war, and we have now been married 58 years. I was discharged as a technical sergeant in March 1946, as a disabled American veteran. I earned two battle stars on my European Theater Ribbon, a fact about which I've always been proud.

Naval Duty on a Rocket Gunship

Ernie Bergan

I enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1942, and was called to active duty as an apprentice seaman in July of 1943. My first assignment was to a Navy V-7 program at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In April 1944 I reported to the Midshipman School at Columbia University in New York for classes to become a deck officer. My studies included navigation, seamanship, communications, ordnance and damage control. In August 1944 I was commissioned an ensign, USNR. At that time, one out of every 15 officers in the Navy was a graduate of the Columbia School.

Assigned to My Ship

After three months at the Amphibious Training School in Solomons, Maryland, I traveled to Portland, Oregon for assignment to a new rocket gunship, LCS(L)3-60. Our ship was number 60 of the 130 ships that made up the class of landing craft support ships. I was one of the six officers and 65 enlisted men who participated in the commissioning service — we would spend the next 18 months on sea duty together.

Unofficially, this class of ship was called “Mighty Midgets,” a name coined by Vice Admiral Turner. Others referred to them as “Vest-Pocket Battleships” because of their tremendous firepower. The ship had ammunition magazines for 240 4.5" rockets, 300 3"/50 caliber shells, 8,000 rounds of 40 mm shells, and nearly 15,000 rounds of 20 mm shells. In the bow of our ship was its main battery, a 3"/50 cal. naval gun. Behind it were 10 shore-bombardment 4.5" Mark 7 rocket launchers. The LCS also had director-controlled twin 40-mm guns and four twin 20-mm guns.

Our ship was commissioned in November 1944, and we were ordered to sail to the San Diego Naval Base for training and shakedown.

To the South Pacific

After the shakedown cruise, we sailed to the South Pacific for amphibious duty, making stops at Pearl Harbor, Johnston Island, Majuro Atoll and Eniwetok. We arrived at San Pedro Bay in the Philippines in a convoy of 50 ships bound for Morotai in the Netherlands East Indies. During this journey south of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, we saw flashes of light from our battleships’ massive 16" guns. A fierce battle to retake and liberate the Philippines from the Japanese invaders had begun.

The Borneo Operation

Our operations in northern Borneo began in April 1945, and were designed to seize Balikpapan and Brunei Bay, and deny the Japanese the fruits of their conquests in the Netherlands East Indies. Also, we needed to establish a naval air and fleet base there, and to capture petroleum installations.

In May our LCS arrived at Morotai where many British, American and Australian ships

were gathering for the invasions of Borneo to the south. After practice for our invasion duties, we joined the invasion force of over 50 ships. During the night of June 6, (exactly one year after D-Day, Normandy), our invasion force was joined by four cruisers and 12 destroyers.

Working with Minesweepers

Our ship worked with minesweepers close to the beach that was targeted for invasion. We had air cover as we demolished a number of mines. We also strafed the beach with our guns. When one of our shells hit an ammunition dump, it seemed as if the whole beach had blown up in front of us. Black smoke, sand, stone, wood and flares of fire filled the sky.

On the morning of June 8 we took teams of under-water demolition swimmers (now called Navy "Seals") to within 500 yards of the invasion shore. These swimmers jumped into the ocean in pairs, swam to the bottom and destroyed any booby-traps, cut the cables on mines, and removed underwater obstacles that might impede our troops from getting to the beach. Only one "Seal" failed to return.

During this pre-landing phase of this operation, one of our minesweepers, the USS Salute, struck a mine and sank with many casualties. Two of our LCSs made unsuccessful attempts to save her. We continued minesweeping the next morning. While moving toward the beach we sighted several contact mines and detonated them with rifle fire. Each time we blew up a mine, water and black smoke would billow sky-high.

Waves of Amphibious Landings

On June 10, 1944, our flotilla of LCSs made four simultaneous amphibious landings on four Borneo beaches. Except for minor opposition at Labuan Island, our landings were made without incident.

Our amphibious landings were made under the cover of guns from Australian and American cruisers and destroyers. We were unnerved by the sounds of numerous shells whistling overhead. Our ship and 24 other LCS rocket gunships in our group were deployed parallel to the beach. Many waves of "Amtrak" (water and land troop carriers) were strung out behind us.

The LCSs made up the first wave, and we led numerous waves of Amtraks to the landing beach. Each Amtrak carried about 25 soldiers to the beach. When our ship reached a point about 100 yards from the shore we stopped, disengaged our engines, strafed the beach and fired our rockets. Each rocket had the power to kill anyone within 50 feet of where it detonated. It was an awesome sight to see hundreds of Amtraks swing by us and go on to the beach. Our job was done. All we could then do was to wish those brave men our best. We were told that General Douglas MacArthur had gone in with the fifth wave.

On June 16-17 we worked with mine sweepers detonating and sinking 380 mines along the Brunei Bay shore. On June 20 our ship participated in the invasion of Sarwak in northern Borneo. We landed 1,800 Australian soldiers there and secured the beachhead. From Sarwak we left for Subic Bay in the Philippines where we stayed for most of July and August.

The Atomic Bomb Ends the War

On August 6, 1945, the Air Force B-29 bomber "Enola Gay" dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. At that time our LCS was in Subic Bay, Luzon, which is the Philippine island closest to Japan. There we made practice landings with army troops that were planning to invade Japan. We understood that as many as a million casualties could be expected during this invasion. As always, our ship would be in the first wave, firing its rockets.

There of course was exuberant celebration that night when we heard the news about the bomb drop on Hiroshima. That bomb carried the equivalent power of 20,000 tons of TNT. It was almost mind-boggling to think that we might be able to go home soon.

More Mine-Sweeping

But that was not to be. Japan accepted the terms of unconditional surrender on the deck of the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on August 14, 1945. Immediately thereafter we began three months of minesweeping in the China Sea around Korea (the harbors of Jinsen, the port for the capital of Seoul, and Pusan in southeast Korea.) We also swept mines around two port cities in Formosa and Hainan Island southwest of Hong Kong.

Medals Good - Typhoons Bad

The Navy Department awarded two battle stars to the 71 of us who served on our ship. One was for the Borneo operations and one for the above-mentioned mine-sweeping duties. During the 18 months of sea duty we compiled books filled with treasured memories. Special among them were those of the two typhoons we endured. One struck us in the middle of the China Sea, and another major one struck while we were anchored in Buckner Bay, Okinawa, in September of 1945. These were harrowing experiences.

We began our homeward journey in March 1946 in a group of 12 other LCSs. Our ship was designated as lead ship, because our Captain, Bill White, an Annapolis graduate, was the senior officer present. By virtue of this, I was named the navigation officer to lead our group of ships home to San Pedro, California. It would be an understatement to say that this was a very happy journey. In July 1946 I was discharged with the rank of lieutenant j.g.

Tales from an Ammunition Specialist

Donald R. Doty

In June 1943, after graduation from Michigan State University, I received a commission as an ensign in the Naval Reserve in ordnance.

Ammo Training

In July, I began a series of training programs; chemical warfare and ammunition handling. I also had five weeks of training in bombs and fuses at the American University in Washington, D.C. This was the basis for my first assignment at Crane Ammunition Depot in Indiana, where I supervised the making of bag charges for large guns.

In May 1944, my commanding officer granted me a weekend leave to allow me to go to Detroit, Michigan, at which time Ruth Merrill and I were married.

I was soon ordered to Yorktown, Virginia, to board an LST (Landing Ship, Tank), to be responsible for ammunition-type cargo. The ship was to join a convoy to cross the Atlantic, presumably to Italy. On my first morning after boarding the ship, I was awakened by one of the crew who yelled, "Get up, Don, your cargo is on fire in the tank deck, and it's filled with smoke."

Hoping I was making a correct decision, after viewing the smoke-filled deck, I requested that the numerous exhaust fans be turned on for venting the smoke. These would normally be turned on to exhaust the gases from the vehicles that occupy the deck during a landing. This did the trick. The source of the fire and smoke was "floating smoke pots" that would be jettisoned from a ship during warfare to create a smoke screen. About 50 of these smoke pots had to be replaced.

Crossing the Atlantic

A few days later, we set sail to join the convoy outside of Norfolk. While waiting for the convoy to proceed, I was down in the tank deck checking the location of fire equipment and other essential material when I heard a hissing sound, and one of the smoke pots went off again. We took it topside and the ship was ordered back to Norfolk because of this ammunition problem. The convoy left without us.

We unloaded all the floating smoke pots and replaced them with other cargo and smoke items. (It was determined, later, that the cause of the smoke pots going off was that they had been shipped in an open barge to Norfolk and had gotten wet.) Three days later we proceeded to cross the Atlantic Ocean with one other ship, a converted Coast Guard cutter.

During the crossing, our LST lost power in one of its two engines, and until it was repaired, we felt like the ship was a "sitting duck," traveling about 4 knots.

Although I was assigned to the LST as cargo officer, when the ship got underway the

captain had me take over some of the duties of the ship's first lieutenant who had contracted measles and was quarantined to his quarters for about two weeks.

When we reached Gibraltar, after about 15 days of travel, we were ordered to Oran, Africa, where our cargo was unloaded and troops came aboard. The ship, I believe, was to be involved in the D-Day landing. However, my assignment was completed so I was ordered to fly back to the United States and to the base in Indiana.

Removing Defective Fuses

I had another frightening and possibly explosive assignment back in Indiana, when I was placed in charge of changing fuses in a boxcar filled with fragmentation bombs. These bombs were in clusters of three in a humidity-controlled sealed box. The instructions were to remove the defective fuses at one location, place the bombs on a conveyer, push to another location to add the new fuses, and then box them again. Since the job could not be done in one day, no unboxed fuses were to be left at the end of the day. One day I found an arming wire on the floor where the bombs had all been re-boxed. Reporting this to the base captain, instructions were given to search the re-boxed bombs for the single missing arming wire. It was critical that this missing wire be found because these bombs were to be shipped for combat. I was very much relieved when it was found.

The Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot in Nevada was my next assignment. Twice I had the responsibility of riding freight train cars, once to take ammunition from Hawthorne to Indiana, and the other from California to South Dakota. Another scary experience was smelling to detect leaking gases from ammunition magazines. At about this same time, I was promoted to lieutenant junior grade.

Assignment to Hawaii

I was then assigned to Hawaii, where, for one month of the seven spent there, I was deployed on an LCT (Landing Craft, Tank) with a work crew, dumping old and obsolete ammunition into the Pacific about 10 miles out of Pearl Harbor. On one of the trips, about half of the crew became seasick due to the slow rhythmical Hawaiian waves, and hung over the ship's railing. During the other six months, I was in charge of loading or unloading ammunition from trucks into or out of magazines. This was at the Naval Depot at Lualualei on the western side of Oahu.

Back to Civilian Life

After the war ended in 1945, I returned to the United States in February 1946. And while I had seen no actual war action during the three years of my enlistment, I had spent most of my naval career in "tense" situations since I was an ammunition specialist. My return home was extra special because I was able to be on a ship that returned via the Panama Canal to the East Coast. I was discharged from service at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois.

One Lucky Soldier

Benjamin E. Ewing

I turned 18 on February 20, 1943 during my senior year of high school in Winter Park, Florida, but was deferred by my draft board until after graduation in June. My math teacher, Ruth Baxter, told us about pre-induction tests that could qualify us for the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), whereby we'd attend college following infantry basic training. I must have scored well or been lucky, for after a hot summer of basic training at Ft. McClelland, Alabama, the Army sent me to Texas A&M where I completed two accelerated terms of engineering before ASTP was disbanded and I was shipped off to the infantry.

Along with others, including my new friend from A&M, Thomas H. (Tim) Hubbard, I was sent to the 103rd Infantry Division which was just starting advanced divisional training at Camp Howze, Texas. A vivid memory of field training there was having to dig foxholes in the midst of a sea of black widow spiders and making forced marches in scorching hot weather.

Training Completed

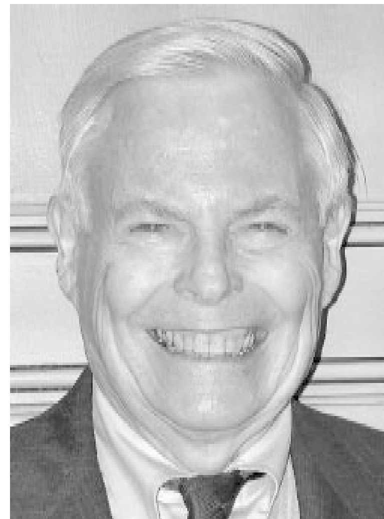
The three months of basic, six at college and six in advance training delayed my entry into combat beyond the D-Day landings. But my time would come.

We sailed in October 1944 from New York to Marseilles in a convoy that took 21 days to make the crossing.

Military Facts: U.S. Army, July 6, 1943 - January 31, 1946. European Theater, October 20, 1944 - September 12, 1945. 103rd and 45th Infantry Divisions. Tech sergeant, Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Our trip to catch up to the fighting took us north toward Paris on a train riding in box cars labeled "40 hommes et 8 chevaux" (40 men and 8 horses).

My first day of combat was on Armistice Day, November 11, 1944. Our company went into position the night before, with orders for a frontal attack at dawn the next day. The German army welcomed us to the front lines with intermittent artillery and mortar fire throughout the night, resulting in the death of our first sergeant. He was sitting in a large foxhole between our company commander and his runner, neither of whom realized that the sergeant had been hit until morning, when they found him dead with a tiny hole between his eyes. This might have warned us that we were in for a bad day, which indeed we were. Of the 160 men on line that morning, by the end of the day and after repeated unsuccessful attempts to take the hill in front of us, we had suffered 100 casualties, including 10 dead. As one of the unscathed survivors, I was promoted to buck sergeant and after another later battle to staff sergeant.



The morning after our first day of combat, I looked at Tony Hrannak over a canteen cup of

coffee and thought he had aged 10 years from the happy-go-lucky Tony of two days ago. Later, I noted the difference in the eyes of teen-aged replacements after their first day of combat. You could see their apprehension, yet at first there usually was also a sense of excitement, even exhilaration. A day of being shot at is a very sobering experience.

The "Dear John" Letter

A few weeks later, sitting in a foxhole on a bitter winter day in the Alsace Mountains, I received a "Dear John" letter from my high school sweetheart. Only later did I realize how lucky this was for me as it left me free to meet, fall in love and marry the love of my life and mother of my children, Julia.

A moment of epiphany for me occurred one day when our reduced platoon was pinned down in a field which offered as cover only gently rippled soil unplowed for several years. Two 88's to the left and right ahead of us plus at least two machine guns all seemed to be firing at once.

Unable to move forward or backward, we also started taking mortar fire when, seemingly out of nowhere, there appeared a squad of African-American troops with a weapons carrier pulling a 90 mm gun. A heroic, young black lieutenant directed the set-up of the gun, and even though an enemy shell fragment shattered his arm, he used the gun to rout the Germans who had been about to do us in.

Without a word, the squad reattached the gun and was gone. For a southern boy who thought that blacks served only in the quartermaster corps and likely weren't too brave, this was one big awakening that changed my attitude for all time.

While leading my squad on a reconnaissance patrol behind the German lines, we got turned around and wound up about a mile or so from our outfit. We were exhausted and sought some rest in the barn of an English-speaking, very pregnant French farm wife who was chopping wood when we arrived. We had all fallen asleep, but she awakened someone to flag down a G.I. Medic to help her deliver. We missed the delivery and woke up several hours later to the crying of the newborn and, amazingly, the sound of the new mother again chopping wood.

Saved by a Snow Squall

In December 1944, our company was sent to try to break out the remnants of a trapped battalion. In a mountainous, heavily wooded area in Alsace, my platoon got out ahead and stopped to let the others catch up. I sat down with my back against a tree. Hearing a twig snap, I dove forward just as a machine gun opened up and stitched a line across the tree I'd been leaning against. About 20 of us were pinned down by what seemed like the whole German army. Once again, my luck held out when suddenly the heaviest snowfall I've ever experienced obscured the battlefield, allowing us to slip away and reach our unit.

In late January 1945, together with other combat veteran non-coms from two divisions, I was transferred to the 45th Infantry Division to help re-staff a battalion that had been badly cut up in one of Hitler's last major attacks. We had about 10 days to prepare some newly minted second lieutenants and green riflemen for combat. After telling them everything we could about how to improve their chances for survival, we still lost a lot of them in the first few days of combat. Some wouldn't listen. A very young officer, fresh from Ft. Benning OCS, refused to take off his shiny gold bars, stood up and blew a whistle, shouted, "Follow me, men," and was immediately killed by a German sniper.

Cracking our segment of the Siegfried Line took two days, during which I was promoted to platoon sergeant. "Wilkie" Wilkens, one of our squad leaders, was largely responsible for

our successful attack due to his incredible bravery — for which he earned the Medal of Honor. Sadly, it was awarded posthumously because he was killed during the fighting in Nuremberg.

Shocking Sight of Woman at War

At the battle for Aschaffenburg, I saw a woman in a farm dress step out of a barn with a German bazooka (shoulder fired rocket) and blow the track off one of our tanks. A female combatant isn't unusual today, but at the time it was a real shocker, just as it was to see the woman killed by the machine gun on another of our tanks.

Our next major action was at Nuremberg, a city that was bombed heavily by our Air Force.

Block after block of the city was rubble, albeit very neatly piled rubble. Nuremberg must have been an extremely bad experience for me, because I remember it as a cakewalk. Members of my platoon 50 years later, at a mini-reunion at my home, told me that we had a very difficult two-day fight there. Certainly memory can be selective. I remember seeing Wilkie get killed, but the rest of Nuremberg is just a blur.

On our way from Nuremberg to Munich, we were diverted to the Dachau Concentration Camp and the associated Allach Labor Camp to be involved in their liberation on April 29. Images of Dachau burned into my memory include: the horrible sight and stench of 40 box cars filled with 3,000 starved, emaciated bodies, the crematorium with stacks of teeth and clothing piled at the entrance, the freed inmate swinging at a former guard and literally knocking a brick from the corner of a building with his fist, and the SS commander's home with first floor office, a beautiful lawn adjacent to the inmates' barracks and, upstairs, the living quarters complete with nursery, crib and, unimaginably in the center of a concentration camp, on the wall, a crucifix.

Starving Prisoners Scramble for Food

On April 30, we resumed our move toward Munich, with a brief stop at Allach where I saw starving, slave laborers digging into a potato hill and stuffing dirt-covered, raw, root vegetables into their mouths.

Our unit encountered no resistance in occupying Munich. For us the European war ended a full week before Germany's surrender. The division was scheduled to return to the states for three weeks leave before deploying for the invasion of Japan. While waiting in France for our ship home, the atom bombs were dropped, and my war was over.

When I was released from service, my old friend from Texas A&M, Tim Hubbard, encouraged me to come north to Hobart-William Smith College in Geneva, New York. Thanks to Tim, it was there that I met Julia, so I owe him thanks for my wife, children and grandchildren (one of whose middle name is Thomas in honor of Tim). In 1960 when I was changing jobs, Tim suggested I investigate the Molded Fiber Glass Companies, which I joined and which were absorbed by Rockwell International, so Tim also gets credit for pointing me to what became the major part of my business career.

It was the war that brought me Tim's friendship, so his story is central to my war-time experience and memory. (Note: Tim died January 14, 2000.)

Despite all the misery and horror involved in my World War II experience, my predominate feeling is that I, in so many ways, was one lucky soldier.

Ugly War from Beautiful Islands

Greg Prior

(Editor's note: John Prior, a long time and active member of the Senior Men's Club, died in 1999. John's son, Greg, is familiar with his father's military history and prepared the description printed here.)

Born January 2, 1923, John R. Prior grew up in Columbus and was the oldest of four children. He was attending engineering school when WWII broke out. His younger brother, Paul, immediately enlisted in the Navy at age 17, but John stayed at his studies until his draft notice arrived in the mail. Without opening it, he then enlisted in the Army Air Corps.

Navigator in a B-29 Bomber

John wished to be a pilot but was not accepted for pilot training. He chose navigator school over bombardier training as he felt this might be more useful after the war. While he never formally used his navigation training after the war, he could point out the stars in the night sky from memory the rest of his life. He trained at a number of schools and received his commission. He was sent to Alamogordo, New Mexico for B-29 training in 1944. In February 1945 his B-29 crew was randomly selected and assembled with many other crews on Valentine's Day for the 58th Bomb Wing, 462nd Bomb Group, 770th Squadron.

The new crews were sent to Topeka, Kansas in May 1945 where they received a new B-29 which the pilot, Captain Louis Newman, named "L'il Tex" after his baby son back home in Texas. They then flew back to Alamogordo, New Mexico for more training before flying overseas to Tinian in June 1945 arriving on the 24th. They stopped in Sacramento, Honolulu, Kwajalien, and Guam before arriving at West Field Tinian.

Liking Tinian but Not Firebombing

The crew flew five firebombing missions before the war ended and two show-of-strength missions after the war. (A sixth combat mission to Yawata was aborted prior to takeoff due to a fiery crash of a bomber in line ahead of his plane at takeoff.)

June 28-29, 1945

Okayama—This was a "sandbag" mission where the new crews were split up and one each flew with an experienced crew.

August 1-2, 1945

Hachioji—This was the first mission flown as a crew. They almost ran out of gas and had to land at the Navy's fighter strip on Tinian, by then completely out of gas.

August 4-5, 1945

Saga—Several enemy fighters were spotted. They saw smoke to 12,000 feet from the bombs.

August 7-8, 1945

Fukayama—The plane almost crashed on take off from confusion over shadows cast by spot lights during the night takeoff.

August 14, 1945

Hikari—The arsenal at Hikari was bombed just after the emperor began his broadcast announcing Japan's surrender.

August 30, 1945

Tokyo area—This was a show-of-strength mission. No armaments were carried. John took Kodachrome slides during this mission.

September 2, 1945

Tokyo Bay—Flew over the USS Missouri during the signing of the surrender.

After the war the 58th Bomb Wing was dissolved, and he was transferred to the 313th Bomb Wing on North Field Tinian. He served in various functions as groups of men were discharged. During this time he enjoyed the lush and exotic tropical island surroundings. The weather was generally mild, but several big storms and a typhoon hit the island causing much damage. He was later transferred to Clark Field in the Philippines. While in the Philippines he saw fields of new P-51 fighters burned and buried since they had become unnecessary during peacetime.

Being only 23, single, and with low seniority, he was not discharged until October 13, 1946. He sailed home to the states, docking in San Francisco. A train ride took him to Chicago where he was diagnosed with acute appendicitis. As a recently discharged veteran, he was entitled to free medical care in an Army hospital, but he chose instead to pay four hundred 1946 dollars out of his own savings to have his appendix removed in a civilian hospital and not be in the care of the military again.

John graduated in mechanical engineering from Ohio State after being discharged and went to work for General Motors. He and Frances Cloys were married in 1951. They have four children. He spent his career at the Milford Proving Grounds, the Cadillac tank plant in Cleveland, and finally GMC Truck and Coach in Pontiac until his retirement.

John expressed pride at having served during the war, but regretted the war ever happened. He loved the look and sound and feel of the B-29, but was deeply disturbed by the horrors of the fire bombings. For all his life he felt a kinship with the men he served with, but wanted out of the service as soon as possible. He respected the great U.S. military leaders but was open about how grating the regimen of military life was for him. He was patriotic in his outlook, but against all war as someone who had seen war. He found nothing glorious or wonderful in it at all.

He met a Japanese firebombing survivor in later life, and they spoke as two people who had taken part in something they'd rather not, but without blaming or resenting the other. They had left the hatred and horrors of the past behind. His youngest son met his wife while teaching in Hachioji, a city he had bombed.

He often spoke of Tinian and how beautiful it was. He wanted to visit the island paradise he remembered from his service years. He began to make firm plans to return to Tinian on August 12, 1999. The next morning he died suddenly and unexpectedly. He finally made it back to Tinian in peace.

Chasing the Germans Across Europe

Robert Pullar

My combat service in World War II was with a U.S. tank battalion from the fall of 1944 until the end of the war in Europe, chasing German forces eastward and involving some unforgettable experiences.

I entered the Army at Camp Custer, Michigan, in the summer of 1943, after one year at the Engineering School at the University of Michigan.

After infantry basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, I was sent to the Army Specialized Training Program with the promise of an engineering degree and an officer's commission. However, after a semester at the University of Cincinnati, the program was abruptly ended and we were sent to fill vacancies in the 47th Tank Battalion of the 14th Armored Division, which was preparing to ship overseas.

Arkansas Hillbillies

We were assigned the jobs that no one else wanted. I was made a recognizance agent, a job that only rated a private first class rank. The outfit was made up largely of Arkansas farm boys used to working with farm equipment. They ate onions in hand as I would eat an apple, had a still in the barracks boiler room and had a radio playing "The Great Speckled Bird" loud enough to drive me out of the barracks. They took particular pleasure in throwing knives close to those of us that were "college boys."

We shipped out and landed at Marseilles, France and after getting the tanks ready for combat, we moved out as part of the 7th Army. We traveled to the front lines slowly by train in "40 & 8" box cars (40 men or 8 horses). There was barely room to lie down and no washing facilities or heat and we had to keep the door open for ventilation.

The "Joys" of Combat

Once in combat, it was surprising to find that few of the officers could read a map, so our platoon was responsible for locating the enemy, getting our battalion into combat position and maintaining contact with friends and the enemy.

During the fall of 1944, when we began our long trek across southern France and into Germany, it rained almost constantly. This forced our tanks to stay on roads to avoid getting stuck. Sometimes, we were stationed at intersections for hours directing the vehicles to make the proper turn. One of my buddies was an American Indian who would steal a chicken, gut it and roll it in mud with all the feathers still on and them stick the mass into a bonfire we used to keep warm and alert our forces.

The mud hardened like an oven and after a few hours he would peal away the mud and feathers and we would have a feast. This was particularly good when we did not have field kitchens and were forced to eat canned stew or beans, heated if possible, for about six meals in a row. Also, since we were unable to carry more than one change of clothing in our

Jeep, it was an effort to keep clean. After about six months of combat, we were rewarded with hot showers and a change of clothing.

Door-to-Door Combat

During the door-to-door battle for the small town of Hatten, Germany, we were used as infantry at night to protect our perimeter. Because there was heavy artillery fire, we dug deep foxholes in spite of the frozen ground. One night a herd of sheep came at us and we thought the enemy was advancing. The sheep made sounds like a person stumbling, so quite a few of them were shot for not giving the password of the night.

Once we were on the move again, our forces would stop for the night to re-supply and refuel. When we were advancing rapidly, the Germans would stop two towns away, so four to six of us would occupy the town in between us and the Germans so we could alert our forces if the enemy made a move. We spent the night in farmhouses and ate with the family, sharing rations and rabbits we shot.

When advancing against heavy resistance, we stayed in the same town as our tanks, always setting up our platoon in the local tavern. This helped the officers find us as we set up a communications center and ran dispatches to units in other towns. We also maintained contact with the enemy by night patrols. (So, we never had a shortage of beer.)

Facing 88mm Anti-Tank Gun

One morning when we drove to the next town in our Jeep on patrol, we rounded a bend to find an 88 anti-tank gun about 80 yards ahead and pointed at our Jeep. Fortunately, the gun crew was drinking coffee, so we were able to turn and burn rubber. They got a shot off, but the gun had been aimed for tanks so the armor piercing tracer shell went over our heads with inches to spare. My buddy in the back seat of our Jeep got singed by the tracer and had to be evacuated in shock.

On another such venture, we came over a hill to find a Jeep approaching. It turned out to be one of theirs, and I put 10 or 20 rounds from our machine gun into them. The passenger was a ranking officer, so we took him back to our medics for treatment and interrogation.

Free 110,000 Allied Prisoners

One of the highlights of my experiences was taking the town of Moosburg, Germany, where we freed 110,000 Allied prisoners. The guards surrendered to our squad but could not open the gates until the tanks arrived and crashed through into the compound.

By then, so many Germans were surrendering we had a hard time figuring out what to do with them. Our platoon collected pistols in pillowcases and laid rifles along the curb with the breech open. Then a tank would run over them bending the breech and making them useless. We then proceeded east and captured guards marching U.S. officers further from the front.

As we approached Muhldorf, a plane with the high-ranking German officers was taking off and we chased it down the runway but could not bring it down with our machine guns. Next to the airport was a “stalag” with hundreds of skeleton-thin Jewish prisoners. They were happy to see us but too weak to do much. A few days before the war ended we were rolling onto the bridge over the Inn River when the Germans blew it up, stopping our advance.

Open Grave with Hundreds of Bodies

When we scouted the area, we found a large open grave with hundreds of bodies in it. The townspeople did not believe the Germans had killed so many people so the able-bodied men were forced to build wooden coffins for the bodies. We then made every man, woman

and child line the town streets to view the caskets as they were drawn through the streets on farm wagons. Many were sick from the experience and the stench was unbearable. The adults were also made to take part in the burial in a new cemetery.

With the active war ended, I was sent to the 774th Tank Battalion in Bad Reichenhall, a resort town in the Bavarian Alps. By playing guard on the football team, I was relieved of regular duties and received superior food. Our outfit had captured a German cavalry unit, so we had excellent horses that we could ride through the countryside and even had a rodeo in which I tried “bulldogging” cattle.

After spending the winter in the Alps, I was sent home and discharged in March of 1946. I did receive a Bronze Star and a number of combat ribbons.

I was glad my war was over.

Log of an Engineering Officer

Frank M. Allen

I enlisted in the U.S. Navy in August 1943, shortly after graduating from the General Motors Institute's engineering program. My naval experience began with a training program aboard the decommissioned battleship USS Illinois, located on the Manhattan shore of the Hudson River. The initial program included navigation, semaphore, signal flags and naval nomenclature. After completing the course in early 1944, I was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

After a course in diesel engine engineering, my next assignment was to the Naval Landing Craft training program at Little Creek, Virginia, where our crew was assembled for eventual assignment to an LSM (Landing Ship, Medium). That training included numerous trips on Chesapeake Bay aboard an LSM, practicing the beaching operation for which the ship was designed.

Major War Equipment Advances

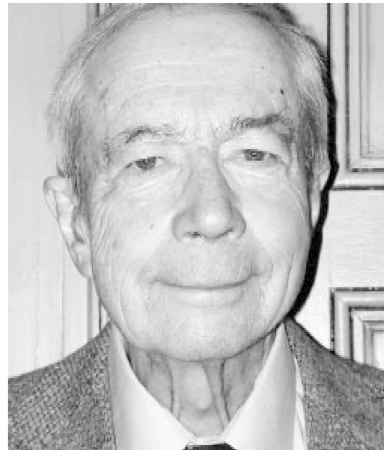
One of the great military advancements of the war was the design of various naval amphibious craft that had the ability to land at a variety of beaches, unload the men and equipment, and then retract from the beach. This approach would avoid the overtaking of well-defended enemy ports in Europe for the landing of men and equipment, and it made landings in the many islands in the Pacific more practical.

The beaching procedure of an LSM begins with the ship underway at low speed headed for the beach. At an appropriate distance the stern anchor is dropped and as the ship proceeds, the cable is fed out at the same rate as the speed of the ship and is stopped when the ship has gone aground. Two large bow doors are then opened, the ramp is lowered, and the cargo of tanks or trucks is driven down the ramp onto shore.

The ship is retracted from the beach by placing tension on the stern anchor cable plus reversing the ship's propellers. The holding force available for the anchor depends on the quality of the sea bottom and in some cases a higher tide is required to aid in removing the ship from the beach. It is therefore important to take the tidal condition into consideration when making any beaching operation.

Assignment to an LSM

My next assignment was at the naval amphibious training base at Little Creek, Virginia. There we made numerous landings aboard an LSM training ship, and our crew was assembled for assignment to an LSM under construction in California. After a few shakedown cruises and landings to check the operation of all the equipment, we received orders to take a load of supplies to Honolulu. I was made engineering officer of the ship.



The trip was uneventful, and after a few days there we had orders to take a load of supplies to Noumea, New Caledonia. We were routed

south and crossed the equator where we went through the traditional Navy indoctrination procedure which changes Pollywogs into Shellbacks! This included liberal use of fire hoses, so the whole crew was soaked when the ceremony was completed.

On to the Philippines

From Noumea, we made a number of island stops on our way north to a destination in the Philippines. One stop was in the Solomon Islands. Here the natives were quite friendly and were willing to climb tall palm trees to retrieve several coconuts in exchange for a Navy tee shirt—the old barter system at work!

We finally reached the Philippines where we began a series of trips moving mobile equipment from one island to another in a plan for the final invasion of Japan. On one of these trips the ship had made the beach landing and the cargo had been driven ashore. The captain wanted to leave the ship beached overnight so that he had the freedom to go ashore and return at his leisure.

I cautioned him that the severe change in water depth from the tide could put us in difficulty without electrical power. He insisted in going ahead with his plan. After a few hours the tidal change had reduced the water level sufficiently to uncover the water inlet for cooling the engine driving the generator. The engine/generator set had to be stopped, so the only power remaining was from a few batteries supplying emergency lights scattered about the ship.

There was no circulation of air in the ship, so the crew spent the night on the open deck. In order to retract from the beach we had to wait for the rising tide. Needless to say, I never again had a similar request.

Worst Naval Disaster in U.S. History

While operating in the Philippines, it was alarming to hear the report that on July 30, 1945, the battle cruiser Indianapolis was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine and sank in 12 minutes in the Philippine Sea. The Indianapolis had delivered components of the atomic bombs (later used against Japan) to Tinian Island and was proceeding to the next destination in the Philippines when the torpedo attack occurred.

Of about 1,200 men on board, 300 went down with the ship. About 900 men were floating in shark-infested water without lifeboats. The survivors were spotted by accident four days later, and only 316 men were still alive. It was reported as the worst naval disaster in U.S. history.

At some point the military command decided that the island of Iwo Jima needed to be invaded.

It was one of the last island strongholds of Japan and would be a strategic location for U.S. bombers. The island was well-fortified with many underground passages. Our flotilla of LSMs was to be a part of the invasion force. However, two of the ships in the fleet were not required for the operation, and somehow our ship was one of the two.

Last Battle of World War II

The last major ground force fighting between the two nations was the U.S. invasion of Okinawa, the bloodiest conflict of the war in the Pacific. Over 12,600 Americans were killed, 45,000 wounded, and 100,000 Japanese plus 100,000 Okinawa civilians were killed. The conflict was an indication of what the huge losses would have been had the U.S. invasion of Japan taken place.

After V-J day, we made two trips to Japan with occupation equipment. On the first trip we entered Tokyo Bay just one week after the signing of Japanese surrender terms on the Missouri. Many of us wondered if the war was really over - and we learned that indeed it was!

On the second trip I had shore leave one day to go into the business section of Tokyo. The store clerks were quite friendly, and while we didn't understand them it demonstrated that a friendly contact between us could exist though our two nations had been at war for the past four years.

After our return to the Philippines, two large refrigeration units were installed on our deck. The purpose was to supply U.S. Marine occupation forces on Chichi Jima with fresh provisions. Our ship was then stationed at Iwo Jima where we would wait for a refrigerator ship that delivered the fresh provisions.

The trip from Iwo to Chichi was overnight and we always had more supplies than the Marine units could handle. Our ship was left with the surplus and, since our supply officer did not have to account for it, the quality of meals improved during this operation.

Disposal of Equipment

Another assignment for our ship was to haul some of the older small amphibious craft that had no further use into deep water and sink them with 40mm gunfire. This required numerous well placed shots.

We were finally given orders to decommission the ship. For the engineering section this was a most difficult assignment since we had to get the bilge dry enough to satisfy the decommissioning inspector. It was necessary to give the ship a list to one side, then the other, so that we could start the bilge pump on the low side to extract the water that had accumulated there. We then had to use portable pumps in many compartments, and discharge the remaining water into buckets. After we completed this laborious process the inspector was satisfied and the decommissioning was completed—the final end to 18 months aboard an LSM!

Return to U.S.A.

My return to the U.S. began with flights via a Navy PBY (flying boat). Because of the slow speed, it required three days to get from the Philippines to Hawaii. Two island stops were made along the way for fuel. The trip from Hawaii to the U.S. was then via a troop transport. A most welcome sight was that of the San Francisco Bay Bridge as we approached the port. In a few days I received orders to proceed by train to my home in Ohio (another welcome sight) and to be discharged after a total of 33 months in the service.

LUCKY

WILL BRAISTED

I love a good poker game. I will usually join a medium stakes game. Most of the time I am lucky. However, on a troop train from Kansas to New Orleans I lost $400, but on a continuing ship I won $1000. I have played in drawing rooms, boiler rooms and under ship ventilators. The craziest place I ever played was in a coconut grove. We were under barrage by Japanese pack 75's. We did not break up the game even though we had to duck flying coconuts. However, I owe my life to the fact I did not rejoin a later game.

Anchored in Lingayon Gulf

We were the 756th FABN (Field Artillery Battalion) on board the USS Warhawk troop ship which was part of a major convoy anchored in the Lingayon Gulf. We were scheduled to invade Luzon the next morning. Our battleships were shelling the beachhead, and we were under fire from Jap shore batteries. I was fascinated with the scene but soon went below and joined a poker game.

Torpedoed

I played for a couple of hours but had to leave to go up to the main deck to pull guard duty. On completion of the duty I returned to the game, but I decided I was too tired and went three flights below to my bunk. I couldn't sleep. It was very hot; we had a busted fan. I took my Thompson and shoes and went to the bow and found a cool, empty bunk. I didn't sleep long. There was a tremendous explosion. The boat listed, and I was thrown to the deck. I took my shoes and my gun and ran up to the main deck. Leaning on the rail, I was amazed to see a Jap PT boat strafing a boat beside us. They soon realized they had the wrong boat and turned their guns on us. I ducked behind a perivane as bullets ricocheted all around. We had been torpedoed. We were sinking. It was difficult to return fire on the PT as we were in a tight convoy, but it left the area. About this time we were bombed and strafed by a Betty bomber which started a fire on our fantail and killed our power generation. We abandoned ship—over the side—down the rope ladder and into rising and falling landing craft.

I Was Lucky

The men in the poker game I did not rejoin were all killed. I was lucky. The bunk that I abandoned was in an area that lost 42 men. I was lucky! The landing craft dropped its ramp in deep water, and some men could not swim with all their heavy gear. I had only gun, shoes and skivvies. I was LUCKY.

Amazing Sight

We walked ashore. It had to be the least defended beachhead of the war. There were no Jap defenders—only cheering Philippinos. I stared at a young girl waving her arms wildly, while she was nursing an infant. I must have been in the boondocks too long. However, as I proceeded inland, I noticed an old cathedral that had been devastated by our shore fire. One of the towers was partially gone, and much of the roof was caved in. I

was curious, so I proceeded inside. The floor was covered with stone and crossed beams, but near the altar was an amazing sight. Here stood a life-size statue of Christ, completely enclosed with framed glass—not a mark on it—the glass was not broken. I guess it must have been protected by a force greater than luck.

All this good luck in the military started in August 1943 when I left the University of Michigan as a draftee. Basic training in artillery was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. On completion I was sent to Fort Ord, California where I was assigned to the just-forming 756th FABN. My rank was T-5 when we were shipped to New Guinea in late 1943, ready for the Philippines campaign. Later we made the invasion of Luzon. We helped clean up Clark Field and were some of the first into Manila. We were in combat for a continuous 123 days. Happily and luckily, I returned home in January 1946.

A Shoebox of Old Letters

John Dudash

I remember reporting to Miami, Florida, with my newly commissioned rank of ensign. I was to catch a flight to join the light cruiser USS Marblehead, based in Bahia, Brazil. German Sea Raiders were plundering freighter traffic in the South Atlantic, particularly in the Caribbean, and the Marblehead's charge was to find and outgun those raiders.

My seat on the NAS (Naval Air Service) airplane consisted of mailbags that easily conformed to the body, making my flight south to "Gitmo" (Guantanimo, Cuba), comfortable.

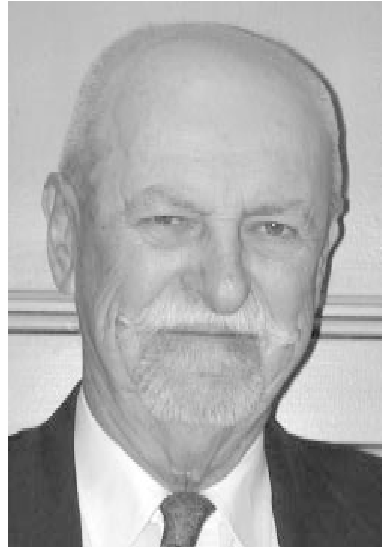
I suppose I recalled those bags of letters through "association" when I discovered my wife Gladys had brought out her collection of the letters I wrote to her about my indoctrination into the Naval Reserve at the United States Naval Academy. While she had been reading these letters, it seemed that our 59 years of marriage improved. I was curious as to why. Now, I had to re-read these letters—carefully.

The first letter from her neatly filled shoe box is dated 9-5-43. The stationery is gray-yellow from 60 years of aging and carries the detailed, still shiny, beautiful gold crest of the Naval Academy. It is in its distinctive, original small envelope. In place of a stamp is the hand-lettered word "Free" and is addressed to Miss Gladys Halstead (then attending Marygrove College).

The return address is:
John G. Dudash
Room 4045
Naval Reserve Midshipmen School
United States Naval Academy
Annapolis, Maryland

Excerpts from Letters

I just about passed out standing at attention. We just had a series of immunization shots, and I was the "Mate of C Deck." The ensign kept us at full attention for over half an hour. This means rigid, immobility, not moving even your eyeballs. You cannot shift weight. You cannot look or focus on anything within range. I can still remember the phrase, "Eyes in the boat, mister." It is burned into my memory.



Ah! Food. Plenty to eat but not enough time. They have a small publication called REEF POINTS officially but is really called the PLEBE BIBLE. It must be memorized by the regulars and repeated from memory on demand.

Sample:

Q: "How long have you been in the Navy?"
A: "All me bloomin' life, sir! Me mother was a mermaid, me father was King Neptune. I was born on the crest of a wave and rocked in the cradle of the deep. Seaweed and barnacles are me clothes. Every tooth in me head is a marlin pike and the hair on me head is hemp. Every bone in me body is a spar, and when I spits, I spit tar! I's hard, I is, I am, I are."

Today during infantry I got the first complaint from the guy marching right behind me who said, "Dudash, down butt." The other end of my rifle, the bayonet, was coming too close to his face.

On Sunday morning, the Catholics rose earlier to go to St. Mary's in Annapolis. Only fifty out of the 300 reserves went to the Catholic Church. At this mass, including the regulars, the Navy filled the entire church. We marched to church with our steps sounding off the cobblestone roadbed of the side streets of historic Annapolis. I can still visualize the slight wisp of fog drifting in, from the water front on that early morning.

I was placed in command of our infantry platoon. While marching we passed close to another platoon. One half of our group heard the other group's order to change direction and obeyed. The remainder of our group continued on. The drill instructor told me, "Do not take the simple way, (Halt, Dismiss and Reassemble). Try to get them together by commands." I succeeded!

A beautiful day for infantry drill: a military brass band kept us in step, wind raised white caps on Chesapeake Bay, sloops and three masted schooners cut through wind-whipped white caps. YP boats were aligned in the channel and overhead, a formation of military planes passed. Across, at the mouth of the Severn River, a Catalina Flying Boat was warming up. The band was playing "Dixie," "Yankee Doodle," and "My Maryland."

After class this morning, we marched back in time to the military band. The birds were chirping. We just got town liberty for one hour. Fine stuff.

Rifle range this morning: demo of the 20-mm Oerkeron Automatic Cannon, with explosive shells. Hell of a noise. Shook the teeth out of the gun man. You can see the projectile travel. The shells explode about 300 yards away. If he shot high, he would wipe out some commercial radio towers in the background. So much for descriptions of the first of four months at Annapolis.

Other letters in that old shoebox, which my wife is reading gradually now, cover the rest of my Navy career.

Sea Duty in the South Atlantic

The plane followed a string of islands to British Guyana. Crossing the mouth of the Amazon River took our plane fifteen minutes. We got into Natal around midnight. My ship was out on patrol, so I was temporarily assigned to a Navy Rest Camp just outside of town until the ship returned to port.

After boarding the Marblehead, we sailed down to Rio and then immediately back to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where we were equipped for duty in the North Atlantic.

North Atlantic Convoy Duty

Again at sea, we were well-armed, compared to most ships in convoy duty. However, we would have been no match for the German battleships, had they come out of Norway's fjords. This was an unsettling risk during our time in the North Atlantic.

We made several convoy trips to Ireland. The North Atlantic was rough all the time. White caps disappeared when their tops were blown off horizontally into a spray. Duty hours were tough. Four hours on duty, eight hours off, interrupted by general quarters at dawn and sunset.

Mediterranean Cruise

A welcome change in orders turned us into the Mediterranean. Under control of a local pilot, we first put into the North African port of Oran. We heard and felt an explosion as we were entering the harbor. We learned later that these random explosives were set to discourage swimmers from attaching destructive bombs to hulls.

We joined a group of six British and American cruisers making high-speed patrols. Our wake churned up plankton that would glow. It was visible for half a mile after the ship's passage.

When we entered Palermo, Sicily we were not allowed to distill sea water for consumption, because there were dead bodies floating in the harbor.

Before Allied forces landed in southern France, the Marblehead joined the bombardment of shore installations for almost three days. We opened fire at dawn of the invasion, closer to the shore than the rest of the fleet.

King Neptune

Soon after the invasion the ship was returned to the soft, warm waters of the South Atlantic, south of the equator. King Neptune has special ceremonies for crossing the equator. Both officers and enlisted men, crossing the equator for the first time, must be introduced to the King and His Court. It involves some ridiculous costuming, parading in chains, butchered haircuts by the Royal Barber leaving little or no hair, a swim with severe ducking by strong swimmers and other humiliations.

Duty in the Philadelphia Navy Yard

In early October 1944, I was reassigned from sea duty to the Philadelphia Navy Yard where ships were being converted and refitted for the invasion of Japan. The Navy had a design office, and the work was executed by civilian contractors. My responsibility was the coordination of these two groups, to have the Navy's plan well presented to the contractors and understood by them, and to see that what was done was according to the Navy's plan.

The war ended nine months later, but work in the yard continued, converting some ships and decommissioning others. For more than two years I continued in this work. Finally, in February 1947, I was discharged with the rank of lieutenant j.g.

Christmas Eve in 1944

Jack Fawcett

My story of my WW II experiences focuses on just two days at Christmastime in 1944, in Germany. I was a T/5 in the U.S. Army and a wireman/switchboard operator in a heavy artillery battalion. Wiremen were the soldiers who laid the phone lines for communication.

The Battle of the Bulge

We were in the Battle of the Bulge in Germany near the Belgian border. Two of us had just laid a reel of wire for about a mile through very deep snow - perhaps 12-18 inches deep. It was extremely cold. Our unit had 155mm guns that could shoot for a distance of 18 miles. The shells for these guns weighed about 100 pounds and were six inches in diameter. We had just turned our guns toward the enemy's position.

Ten of us were stationed in a switchman's office building by the side of a railroad. Fortunately, it was made of brick but it only measured 12 x 15 feet. This is where we slept because it had a stove, and because the brick would ward off any shrapnel unless we happened to receive a direct hit.

Christmas Dinner Waited Outside

About 150 feet past our building, eight Army trucks were lined up alongside the railroad tracks. These trucks were loaded with Christmas food — turkey with all the trimmings that could be provided in wartime. It was Christmas Eve, very still and very cold. We were sitting inside, leaning against the walls and catching some sleep since it was so quiet. Piercing the quiet, one of our phones rang and we received a message from our fire direction center, telling us where to shoot at the enemy. I immediately phoned our gunners and shouted, "Fire mission," relaying the commands from our lieutenant. All four of our 155mm guns responded.

The Germans Burnt our Food

Right after we fired, the Germans of course fired back. They hit all eight of our trucks, completely obliterating the turkeys and our Christmas meals. As a result, we ate beans out of cans on Christmas Day.

Despite the poor meal, it was a blessing that we did not receive a direct hit. The Germans evidently targeted the trucks, not the building. All 10 of us survived, and we were all certain that the Lord was in our little house with us on Christmas Eve, 1944.

OLD EXPENDABLE

ROBERT SERAZIN

Long before the invasion of Iwo Jima the USS Salt Lake City was sent on missions to that island without support. Iwo Jima was one of the volcano islands in the north Pacific, south of Japan. Our mission was to sink any ships in the harbor and scout the Japanese defenses for the coming invasion.

The ship was at battle stations, mine being on the first deck, under the well deck, and directly over the forward boiler room. We were linked by phone with the bridge, both boiler rooms and engine rooms. Soon the bridge passed the word that three Jap torpedo boats had left the harbor and were headed in our direction. The men in the boiler rooms anxiously asked which side the Japs were coming in - port or starboard. A torpedo that hits below the waterline in the boiler rooms or engine rooms is deadly for the crew manning those spaces.

The only defense was to move to the opposite side of the ship from the torpedoes. After a prolonged lack of information from the bridge about the torpedo boats, my phone "talker" asked and was told, that they had turned back. The sigh of relief was almost audible.

After we had sunk all shipping, we headed south back to Tinian. In retaliation, Jap land-based bombers from Japan would reach us in the twilight hours. Then came the deadly game of zigzag to avoid their bombs. We were never hit although we bombarded Iwo Jima six times by ourselves.

After the first such mission, the ship's dentist was heard to exclaim that he had learned that the Salt Lake City was considered to be "expendable" because of her age, and that he was "getting off." In a matter of months he obtained a transfer off the ship. It pays to have friends in the right place.

Iwo Jima - Bombardment

After the initial invasion of Iwo Jima, it soon became apparent that the island was very heavily fortified with many guns and troops. At the beginning of the invasion, our sister ship, the Pensacola, took a direct hit from a shore battery into the bridge.

As the days progressed and the Marines took heavy losses, our ship was ordered to head, bow first, as close to the beach as possible.

The idea was to use our ship as a stationary gun platform to fire at the Jap batteries, hidden in the caves. The Salt Lake City had the most 8-inch guns of any heavy cruiser in the fleet; a total of 10 — 5 forward and 5 aft. The forward two-turrets of 5-guns were used, firing directly over the bow with very little elevation. I don't remember how effective our fire was but all the paint on the

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Military Facts: Served in U.S. Navy from September 1943 to April 1946. Lieutenant j.g. Participated in Philippines, Okinawa, Iwo Jima and Saipan action. Medals: Phillipines Liberation and Asiatic-Pacific with five battle stars.

deck was burned off from the flash and the ship's bow further weakened. There was an LST (Landing Ship, Tank) beached next to us with its doors open, having discharged its tank. As our ship rolled in the swells during the shelling, the sharp upper corner of the LSTs hatch door gouged the steel skin of our hull.

Iwo Jima was a volcanic island that rose straight out of the sea on one side so that we had the deep water needed to bring the ship in close to point-blank range. The beach used by the Marines for the invasion was on the other side of the island.

Okinawa: D-Day and After

Okinawa was the largest of the Ryukyu Islands in the north Pacific, southwest of Japan; taken by U.S. forces April-June 1945 in the last major amphibious campaign of World War II. The invasion of Okinawa in the pre-dawn was an awesome sight. Our Salt Lake City was one of a large task force against the kamikaze planes. They were members of a corps in the Japanese air force charged with the suicidal mission of crashing their aircraft, laden with explosives, into an enemy target, especially a ship, during WWII. In Japanese "kamikaze" is the combination of the words kami (divine) and kaze (wind).

Our ship was at battle stations. I was located amidships on the first deck under the weather deck. Below us was the forward fire room (boilers). In our damage control area we had a crib with damage control equipment such as sledge hammers, wedges, firehoses and Handy-Billies — portable gasoline engine-powered pumps to control flooding if required. We also had phone communication with the two fire rooms and the bridge. As usual at battle stations, many chain-smoked cigarettes, non-filter, lighting one off the butt of the previous one.

Soon we heard our anti-aircraft guns firing. These consisted of 5-inch 25s, 40mm and 20mm quad mounts. My curiosity got the better of me, and I broke a prime rule; to keep all hatches battened down. In a large rectangular hatch used for access to the well-deck was a small round hatch just large enough to allow a man's shoulders through. I opened this far enough to see the sea and sky around the ship. Our ship was in single file with other warships heading for Okinawa. The sky from horizon to horizon was filled with tracer shells and bullets being shot at Japanese warplanes and kamikazes attacking the invading force. The tracers gave the gunners direction on how to correct their aim and hit the enemy. As I watched, a kamikaze approached the ship directly astern of us from the port side at low altitude, then crossed the ship's stern in a graceful turn and hit the ship on the starboard side about mid ship. I closed the hatch quickly and lit another cigarette. The other ship survived though badly damaged.

Okinawa is remembered also for the surprise we received one night. After many days on alert, increased watches and lack of sleep, the situation was considered secure enough to allow the ships to resume normal activity. We were all at anchor in Buckner Bay when general quarters sounded about 2:00 a.m. It appears a Jap reconnaissance plane had avoided all the radar by flying low and had flown directly over all the fleet in the harbor at mast height and was gone before a gun could be fired.

At this time also, a well-remembered typhoon was occurring July 17-21, 1945. The entire fleet was ordered to leave the harbor and head for the open sea without any semblance of order. Battleships and minesweepers were side-by-side leaving the harbor. More than one man was swept over

the side and was picked up by the ship following. We survived that one, too, even though we were top heavy with anti-aircraft guns, added after the ship was designed and launched. I believe some destroyers were lost due to capsizing; they were fast, relatively small, warship armed, originally designed to destroy torpedo boats, then used as escorts in convoys and in anti-submarine duties.

Recovery of Jap Marines

Amidship of the Swayback Maru was positioned the well deck. On each side of the well deck there was an aircraft catapult used to launch the ship's reconnaissance planes - the OS2Us. A crane was located aft of the well deck to retrieve the planes from the sea after completion of a mission. The crane and well deck were also used to hoist aboard any cargo. Directly adjacent to the well deck were the blowers used to force air into the boiler rooms and engine rooms.

On the day in question, word swept the ship that a party of eight dead Japanese marines had been spotted floating and were to be retrieved and searched for useful information. Most of the ship's company lined the well deck. The launch was dispatched to attach slings to the bodies preparatory to hoisting them aboard by the crane.

All eyes watched as the first body was hoisted over the ship. The pitiful, broken body in its green uniform was extremely bloated. The flesh fell off the exposed hands and splashed on the deck. Finally the first body was resting on the deck, and the ship's doctor began to cut off the uniform for military information.

An indescribably sickening odor filled the well deck and was delivered by the blowers to the boiler and engine rooms below decks. Immediately, protests came from below via the intercom headsets about the odor. Unfortunately, no relief was obtained until all eight had been searched and buried at sea.

Aircraft Carrier Near Collision

Our Salt Lake City often operated as a part of the protective task force with aircraft carriers. On such occasions we were required to achieve 30+ knots in order to maintain station with the carriers when they launched and recovered their planes.

The Salt Lake City was the oldest heavy cruiser in the fleet, built in 1929 as a result of the treaty of Paris. With eight boilers and four screws she still was hard put to maintain speed with the newer carriers during flight operations.

My watch the day of the incident had been the mid-watch from midnight to 4:00 a.m. My orders from the chief engineer were to increase the boilers "on line" from four (two forward, two aft) split system for normal cruising to the full eight on my watch. Thus we would be ready for the speed required for the dawn launch of planes and their recoveries after a sweep of the area. After my watch, I had taken a position on the well deck to watch the carriers launch their planes. It soon became apparent to the observers that something was seriously wrong.

The two carriers that had been on a parallel course with us on our port side had turned to starboard into the wind in order to launch. The other ships in the task force had also turned. Our ship did not turn. We all watched helplessly as the giant aircraft carriers approached our ship from the port side. Suddenly, we heard our boilers' safety valves "pop" or open at the top of the stacks.

We realized that, belatedly, the order had gone from the bridge to the engine rooms for an emergency "full astern" from an ahead "flank speed." This order required the men on the turbine throttles to close the "ahead"

throttle (a large wheel three-feet in diameter) and open the “astern” throttle (a smaller wheel two-feet in diameter). For a short time, the requirements for steam from the boilers had been eliminated.

All eight boilers with all burners in use began blowing off the excess steam through the safety valves. Once the astern throttles had been opened the safety valves closed, and the four turbines and four screws began slowing down from 330-rpm forward to full astern. Everyone on the ship felt the reaction of the screw reversal. The deck began to buck six-inches as the screws tried to stop 12,000 tons speeding at 30+ knots. As the ship slowed, the carriers were almost directly ahead off the port bow.

A voice from the bridge over the P.A. system directed us to brace for a collision. I leaned against a bulkhead on the well deck and watched the carrier looming above us, her flight deck 60 feet above me. At the last minute, both ships took effective action to avoid a collision. Our ship turned to port to aim her bow behind the carrier. The carrier gave left rudder to swing her stern to starboard and away from our ship. I watched, my knees trembling, as the carrier’s massive stern slid by on our starboard side. Had a collision occurred, both ships would have required repair at a shipyard. We never learned whose fault it was that the Salt Lake City had missed the signal to turn into the wind.

Magic Carpet

Three developments suddenly altered the entire course of the war. One was dropping the first atomic bomb by the U.S. Air Forces on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, followed by the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9; Second was Russia’s entry into the declaration of war on August 8 against Japan; Third was the broadcast by Japan’s Emperor Hirohito on August 15, 1945, that he would accept Allied surrender terms. After Japan capitulated and the war was finally over, GIs all over the world wanted one thing - to return to the U.S.A.

To expedite the return of Army and Marine personnel from all the countless Pacific atolls the Navy initiated the “Magic Carpet” exercise. This consisted of using Navy warships to transport the troops from the atolls to the mainland, U.S.A., in addition to using regular troop transports.

As a result the Salt Lake City was assigned to proceed to some forsaken atoll to load Army troops. As we approached the atoll, the anti-submarine net was opened to allow us to enter. Mooring practice in all atolls was similar - a shaped coral reef or a string of closely spaced small coral islands enclosing or nearly enclosing a shallow lagoon. The ship did not drop anchor but tied up to a buoy in the middle of the atoll in deep water.

As the ship was maneuvering to bring her bow next to the buoy, landing craft loaded with Army troops followed astern in our wake. It was almost a pitiful sight only slightly exceeded by their joy in seeing their passage home in front of them.

Somehow the ship managed to accommodate approximately 500 troops and all their gear and souvenirs on our already crowded ship. They and their gear were stowed in gangways and between decks. As luck would have it, as we followed a great circle course on our return to Astoria, Washington, for Navy Day, a storm followed us eastward across the Pacific.

All went relatively well until we approached the coast of Washington State. We were to proceed up the Columbia River and discharge our passengers at dockside in Astoria. The Columbia is a wide, mighty river with a

strong current that carries miles into the Pacific. A pilot was required on the bridge to navigate the ship up the river.

I had just come off the 4:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m. watch and was taking a shower when the Columbia's force hit the ship broadside. Over the months one becomes accustomed to the rolling and pitching of the particular ship and when that rhythm is broken an alarm bell goes off in your head. Our ship rolled over to port, farther than normal, almost to the critical capsize angle, and did not immediately recover with a roll to starboard. It just seemed to remain in a port list for an eternity.

By the time I had dressed and reached the weather deck, the pilot had corrected his error and the ship was on an even keel once more. But the damage caused by our rapid heeling over was evident. The chairs in the wardroom had all flown through the air and ended up against the port bulkhead. The Army troops gear and souvenirs, all brought to the weather deck preparatory to disembarking, had gone over the side. Fortunately, no personnel — Navy or Army — had been lost.

To compound the error the pilot took us up the Columbia at excess speed. Our four screws created enough wake to destroy and wash away buildings on the banks of the river. Everyone was relieved when we finally tied up at a dock in Astoria.

FATE FAVORS CHANCE OVER SMARTS
A TRANSFER TO ACTION SLIPS AWAY, FORTUNATELY

NORRIS LEE

There were many amenities to shore duty such as liberty every other day. You knew your friends in ship's company would be around for six or eight months.

I worked in the supply office for Carrier Aircraft Service Unit 36 (CASU 36) in Santa Rosa, California, so I didn't have to stand watch or have morning inspections. There was a lot more freedom. But I wanted to go overseas or get to the fleet.

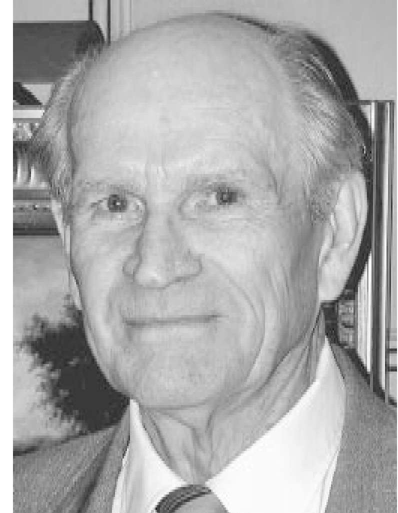
We serviced air groups as they trained to fight as a team before being sent back into combat. One of these groups was getting ready to go aboard a carrier. My supply officer was anxious for sea duty, and he asked me if I wanted to go with him and work as his aide. I jumped at the chance, and he filed my request with his.

Fate

At the last minute, he was not assigned, so my deal was off. We did not leave with Naval Air Group Five when it departed for duty aboard the USS Franklin. Sometime later, the supply officer was sitting in his office as he took a phone call. He slumped in his chair and went as white as the papers on his desk. He was just told that the Franklin took a direct hit on its flight deck elevator. All the planes in Air Group Five had been loaded with bombs and torpedoes. Explosions had ripped through the hanger deck. Metal had ricocheted off steel everywhere. Almost all the men in Air Group Five died. We were devastated.

Storekeeper's Friends

Meantime, I was enjoying the fact that issuing flight clothing meant the non-flying enlisted men wanted to buddy up to you in the hope of getting a special favor. But we had procedures, especially to control distribution of the more expensive items like binoculars and wrist watches.



Following contrary orders from my lieutenant, I once jokingly refused a first lieutenant's order and it didn't take long for me to be called to the first lieutenant's office. Pointing to the star over the two gold lieutenant's stripes on his sleeve, he began a major chewing out and I learned the star meant he was a line officer, senior to non-line lieutenants and as first lieutenant senior to all lieutenants on the base.

I also learned about the danger of preparing for war. There were accidents. One accident saw 30-caliber machine gun bullets fired into a nearby barracks when a crewmember, warming a plane, accidentally gripped the trigger on the joystick. It was mid afternoon, though, and the barracks were empty

"Smart" Answer, Rapid Reply

A few weeks before the war ended, personnel was looking for volunteers to go overseas and published a roster of those eligible. Much as I wanted to go, I had been working on getting

a leave and wanted first to go home for Christmas. I wrote next to my name on the list, “No! No! Hell no!”

By 1300 hours that same day they informed me I was going to a supply depot on Samar Island in the Philippines. Personnel said I was chosen because they wanted someone “who was eager.” Before shipping out, I was playing softball when a squadron of planes roared over us at treetop level. Sailors shouted and ran toward us. That’s when we learned the Japanese surrendered.

Aboard the USS President Jackson, halfway to the Philippines where I would end my duty on Samar Island, our church service was ended with the singing of the “Navy Hymn.” The ship eased its way through gentle swells. A few clouds dotted a brilliantly blue sky.

An Unforgettable Mental Imprint

My head filled with memories of those men who would never return: those in Air Group Five; my high school buddies from the football team who were drafted. The “Navy Hymn” refreshes that memory whenever I hear it. I cannot forget it, nor do I want to.

Other memorabilia that I keep in a footlocker contains a rock I picked up on my last date with Nancy Eutsler Furry just before I enlisted in October 1943. There is another rock from that softball field on VJ Day. They are symbols of the alpha and omega of my wartime Navy duty that ended May 24, 1945.

My mom and dad welcomed me two days later when I walked through the front door of my home. Eventually, I married that Furry girl with whom I shared more than 1,000 letters.

A "Nurse Maid" to Bombs and Gas Masks

William F. Gray

My nearly two years in the Pacific theater in the Chemical Warfare Service ranged from being a storekeeper of high explosives to becoming swamped in a sea of gas masks.

I was inducted in Milwaukee in October 1943 and sent to Camp Siebert, Alabama. Memorable from basic training was the realism of crawling under live ammunition fired 18 inches above the ground from a machine gun. Also, I was nervous while crouching in a foxhole that I had just dug, as a tank ran over the foxhole to make sure it would not collapse. Happily, it didn't!

I went to Oakland, California and then to Oro Bay, New Guinea, arriving in June 1944. We set up our company location in eight-man tents, a mess tent, headquarters, motor pool and decontamination equipment - which we used as a laundry.

Our mission was to supply high explosives to the infantry which was fighting at the other end of New Guinea. We stocked 4.2 high explosive mortar shells and smoke and white phosphorus hand grenades. We also repaired flame throwers.

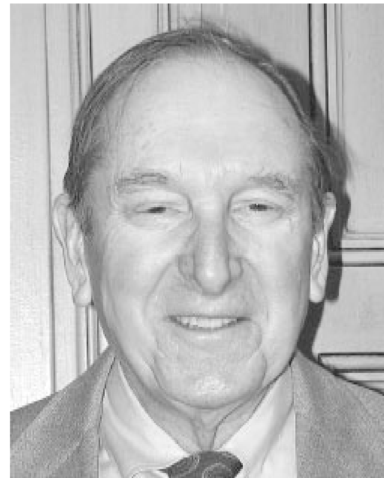
Even Mustard Gas

And from Australia, we acquired custody of old 500 pound mustard gas bombs which of course were never used in the war. They worried us, though, because sometimes these bombs would leak a highly dangerous fluid that would burn though anything. We were happy to pass them off to another supply depot.

In July 1945, we moved to Manila in the Phillipines to set up a munitions depot to supply operations in Leyte. And in November we went to Nagoya, Japan where we were attached to the 25th Division "Tropical Lightning" Infantry. We set up a supply depot in a Mitsubishi factory. We processed discharge forms on the basis of "points" for company soldiers returning to the United States. Another of our assignments was to receive gas masks turned in by the infantry.

Quick Promotions

Because of General MacArthur's order that any soldier stationed in the Pacific for six months be promoted, I became private 1st class. A week later I was promoted to staff sergeant. Because so many of our group had already been discharged, we were down to three men. I was really busy because I was the only one who could type!



We were deluged with over 20,000 gas masks that filled 20 trucks. Counting them was virtually impossible. We eventually forwarded them to another supply depot.

I returned to Seattle in March 1946 and took a train to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin where I was separated on April 4. I received a battle star for the Buna Campaign in New Guinea.

My favorite memory was swimming on off-duty Sundays in the ocean at Oro Bay. There were sharks, but happily none ever bothered us while we were in the water.

I Fought My War in Dayton, Ohio

Kenneth E. Brooker

I was most fortunate, at least in one way. An eye injury at birth precluded me from ROTC in college and enlisting in the service at the start of World War II. A military related program at the Fisher Body Division of General Motors eliminated the need of deferment from draft. The young engineers were simply sworn into service and placed on inactive status.

Reviewed Designs for Medium Bombers

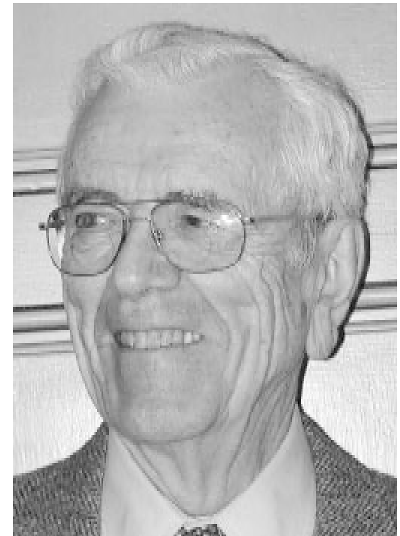
At Fisher, I was involved in the source and design approval of magnesium and aluminum castings and control cable assemblies for Boeing B-25 and B-29 bombers. The inactive status did not last long as the program was suddenly reversed by the U.S. Adjutant General Office in Washington. On December 23, 1943, I was called into limited service and restricted to the U.S.

Training in Miami Beach

I was also fortunate in another way. As a member of the U.S. Army Air Forces, I took eight weeks of basic training in Miami Beach, Florida and was then assigned to the Air Material Command at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. There I was assigned as an engineering aide to the Service Liaison Branch of the Aircraft Laboratory. This department was comprised mainly of civilian engineers under Gerald Haschke, who had worked with Boss Kettering at National Cash Register. I reported to him. He in turn reported to a Colonel Warburton, a former General Electric engineer. Both were fine men and I respected them.

Trouble-Shooting Airplane Problems

My work, essentially, was trouble-shooting problems and design defects on military aircraft in combat. Unsatisfactory reports were issued in the field and forwarded to us for investigation and corrective action. They were mostly mechanical and hydraulic problems on components such as brakes, landing gear, and control assemblies on both fighters and bombers.



Enlisted men were required to report for a 6:30 AM roll call and physical training-rain or shine-every day. Promotions, it seemed, were slow in coming but I eventually obtained the rank of staff sergeant.

I was honorably discharged on May 3, 1946. Luckily, I had placed an order for a new car with a Dayton dealer who indicated he would sell every third car he received to a veteran. Shortly after my return to Detroit, he wired that a beautiful Chevrolet coupe was available for $769 and I lost no time getting to Dayton to pick it up.

I felt it was my reward for fighting the war in Dayton, Ohio. I must add, however, that the people of Dayton were particularly nice to service personnel. It was a great city in which to do my bit for the war effort.

One Hurricane; No Combat

Maurice Allen

Thanks to Harry Truman and the atomic bombs, I did not experience combat during my U.S. Navy service. But I did survive a major hurricane on my 21st birthday.

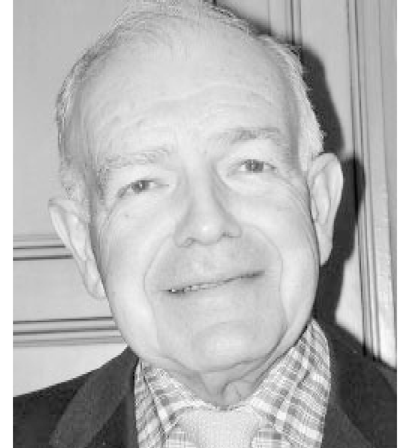
I joined the United States Naval Reserve and entered a Navy V-12 unit at Western Michigan College in Kalamazoo on March 1, 1944. Then, from October 31, 1944, I was in the Navy ROTC unit at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana, graduating as an ensign on June 1, 1946.

I was assigned to the destroyer USS McKean (DD784), DESPAC 5, at San Diego for sea duty and training in anti-submarine warfare with the Pacific Fleet. We were engaged in war maneuvers from February to April of 1947.

During war maneuvers in March 1947, my destroyer flotilla and the fleet were in a major hurricane. I stood the first watch on my 21st birthday in the violent sea and winds, when suddenly there was a calm. The stars appeared. We were in the "eye" of the hurricane. But ahead the winds were furious.

The ship's pitch and roll was extreme and persisted for several days in raging seas that beat the paint off the hull and threatened the safety and lives of the crew. At last we reached Pearl Harbor and could survey the damage to the ships. Our flotilla was ordered back to Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco for repairs and new fittings. Lots of bruises and a few injuries, but no lives lost.

I was lucky enough to have sustained no wounds during my Naval career. Nor did I earn any official honors or awards, although as sonar officer aboard the USS McKean, I did receive a verbal commendation from our captain for "sinking an enemy sub" on maneuvers in 1947. Wow! I was also credited with rescuing pretty girls in South Bend, San Diego, Honolulu, and San Francisco.



Seriously, I met and made friends with many wonderful men in the Navy. Too many of them are no longer with us.

I was released from active duty in June 1947 and entered the University of Michigan that September, graduating with a degree in architecture in 1950.

THE FINAL PUSH THROUGH GERMANY

NORMAN CLARKE

Inducted into the Army in March 1944, when just finishing high school, I was trained as a radio operator at Camp Wheeler, Georgia. I served in the 99th Infantry Division Signal Company as a T5 radio operator and truck driver, going to Europe in September 1944.

My unit had 150 days in active combat during which the Division had 84 percent casualties. I was awarded the European Theater of Operations Ribbon with three bronze stars for the Battle of the Bulge, the Rhineland, crossing the Remagen Bridge, and the Ruhr Pocket. My unit also was awarded the WWII Belgian Fourragere and Meritorious Unit Emblem.

When the war ended in Europe, I was fortunate to attend for nine weeks in the summer and fall of 1945, the American University of Biarritz, France. This educational institution was established by the U.S. Army with American professors. Credits earned there transferred to the University of Michigan where I earned my BS in 1949 and M.D. in 1952. I was discharged from the Army in May 1946.

My Story in a Letter

My story, a nineteen year old in 150 days of combat, is best told in a letter I wrote to my parents, which appeared in the Birmingham Eccentric on May 21, 1945:

Norman E. Clarke Had Lot of Fun, Work and Close Calls Driving

Army Truck On Final Campaigns of War Up Through Germany

Corporal Norman E. Clarke, Jr., writes his parents, Dr. and Mrs. Norman E. Clarke, 1076 Glenhurst, of thrilling days as the American Army drove through Germany during last days of the war. His letter follows:

Germany, May 21, 1945

Dear Folks:

Well, here is a letter in which I can send you any kind of information I wish; it will not be censored. Censorship is off now, happy day.

I don't think I will be able to write all the things I couldn't in the past but I shall start.

We arrived at Liverpool, England, the 12th of October in the night and we were escorted into the harbor the following morning. Around noon we disembarked. We took a train and arrived in the south of England at Shillingstone around midnight. There we lived in Nissen huts and more or less ran the town. Saw Bill Brewster at Rainbow Corners.

On a rainy November 2nd morning, I loaded up my truck with radio supplies and left with the Co. advance. Drove to Weymouth and boarded an LST about noon. While waiting to go on we were given coffee and doughnuts by real American Red Cross gals. We never expected to see any of them again,

but we've seen them all over the battle fronts.

On the LST I slept in my truck out on deck and swiped the sailors blue of all the food we could find, also jackets. On the morning of November 3rd we glided past mines and sunken ships and beached on the shores of the harbor of La Havre, France. Then the drive across France and Belgium to Aubel where we stayed in the woods for about a week. A couple of men were killed on this drive because of night driving. We could hear the front from these woods.

On November 11th we went on the lines, moved to Butzenbach, Belgium, where Div. Headquarters were. We lived about 2 miles from the town and had a good life, the lines were quiet. I used to make a few trips up to the regiment and I operated with 393 at Kolterherberger near the German border. Luckily I went back to Div. about a week before the "break thru" because our boys there were cut off and had to fight their way out.

On the morning of December 17th there was a hustle in the air and we were told to get ready to pull out on a moment's notice. Around noon it came and we pulled out. As we pulled out of our house we received a few farewell shots from the house across the street where some jerries had sneaked in during the night. We pulled back about five miles to Camp Ellsenborn. That was the first time I was strafed. I saw this jerry coming in but all I could do was hold on to the wheel and watch the bullets rip along about two or three yards from the truck.

We reached Ellsenborn and found some good thick walls to sleep under. For a couple of weeks until January 4th, taking the 88s and bombing and strafing, then the 2nd Division took over Ellsenborn and we moved back a couple miles to Saarbrodt and set tight until February 14th. We got some shells the first morning there. Had the dickens scared out of me again. I lived in my truck during this time and was quite happy to have such a good place, as many of the fellows slept with cows.

On the 14th of February we went to Aubel, Belgium, and had a swell rest. On the 28th we moved out and entered Germany by way of Aachen and Duren, two towns that don't even have shells of buildings left. Then came the chase to Cologne across the plain. The first night we stopped at Elsdorf and had the dickens bombed out of us. Lost four trucks and a few men, but we moved on the next day. We went like mad until Gohr where we stopped, our troop had hit the Rhine above Cologne.

On the night of March 13th I drove for six solid hours in a blackout. We moved our whole Division about 70 miles in about 10 hours to Mechinghem. The First had crossed the Rhine at the wrong place and so we were rushed into position to cross at Remagen. On the morning of March 14th we left for Remagen, one vehicle at a time down that long winding road to the Bridge, and a few yards of ground on the "other" side. For the last mile we crept in under deadly shell fire. The medics crouched by the road ready to pick us up. Sgt. Curt and myself were eating cigarettes and sweating it out. Then there was Ludendorf, like a battered giant, feeding a struggling few men on the other side. It said speed limit 5 miles per hour, but I saw all the trucks that didn't make it and away I went with my heart in my throat, shells landing in the water around us. In the middle, I went off the tracks for an instant but I quickly regained the bridge and got the hell out of there. Once off the bridge it wasn't bad.

We drove a couple of miles down stream to Linz, where we dug in and were told we weren't going back. We all had our positions to take in case we had to make a stand but luckily we had a fairly good time. I used to go up to my foxhole in the afternoon and watch the jerry jet planes and Me 109s try and knock

out old Ludendorf and the pontoon bridge, but they couldn't do it. They got one of our boys there, he was on a 50 cal. machine gun.

Then came the chase. We had them on the run, their last run, up from the Rhine, out of the hills. We went like mad and stopped just short of Kassel. From there we went to the Ruhr Pocket where we had the time of our life chasing jerries all over the place, seeing them come in by the thousands, and finally surrendering completely. The day after we finished the pocket we made a 300-mile drive to the Third Army. Went thru Frankfurt and many other beat-up joints. Went back on the lines on the 3rd Army front about April 16th, and again we went on a merry chase. Crossed the Danube and then our merry chase for all times at Giesenhousen. May 1st we put away our part of the war for history and started to become garrison soldiers even before the war was over May 8th. May 11th we moved here and that is the story in brief.

Your son,

NORM, JR.

On the Brink: Preparing for the Invasion of Japan

King Ruhly

During the entire two years I served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, I was training to participate in the eventual invasion of Japanese home islands. We didn't know at first because the war was still raging in Europe, but in the last year of my service (in 1945-1946 period) the message came louder and clearer. And the words of a popular song, "Goodbye Mama, I'm off to Yokohama" was a constant refrain among us Navy guys.

I was 25 years old, married, with two children, in the spring of 1944. I'd taught school for two years and gone to work in a defense plant (Vickers). When my draft status was changed from dependency deferment to essential war worker, which I considered spurious, I went into downtown Detroit the following day, applied for and received a commission as ensign in the United States Navy.

The only thing I remember about that process (approval being automatic for any male college graduate who could breathe and walk) was being asked why I chose the Navy. My thoughts were not on "eat hot and sleep dry;" I truthfully replied that I only owned black shoes, none brown. The 10 days between receiving my commission and orders were spent purchasing uniforms, blues, whites and greys. I reported to Fort Schuyler, the Bronx, New York for indoctrination school.

Military Facts: Served in the U.S. Navy from April 1944 to April 1946, earning rank of lieutenant junior grade.

Commissioning New LST

Two months of learning how to be an officer and getting into fair shape were followed by orders to Small Boats School in Fort Pierce, Florida. Having completed that two month training, I escorted four 4-man crews for LCVP's (Landing Craft-Vehicles/Personnel) to the Great Lakes Base in Illinois to join the crew of a new Landing Ship-Tank (LST 1144) then being launched at Seneca, Illinois.

The ship's complement was 120 enlisted men, 10 officers. Only three of the former and one of the latter were regular Navy, the balance being reserves. Many had seen prior action.

Only one of the officers, other than the captain, was a competent ship handler. So, with a pilot aboard we sailed down the Illinois River to Ohio and finally down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Our shake-down cruise was in the Gulf, returning to the Crescent City and over to Mobile, Alabama to load our tank deck with ammunition for points west.

In addition to being the small boats officer, I was also assigned as the recreation and chief censor. The latter job was onerous, but I did

learn more than I cared to know about the crew's love lives and domestic stresses. The former job gave me the opportunity to distribute boxes of paperback books and wear out three records of Phil Harris's Dark Town Poker Club, which was memorized by everyone aboard.

Off to the Pacific

Although only our top officers knew exactly what our orders were, all aboard were aware of our ultimate destination: somewhere in the Pacific. We later learned we were en route to Guam/Saipan to join the armada for the invasion of Japan and/or the recapture of various Pacific Islands.

We sailed through the awesome Panama Canal and on the Pacific side joined up with five other LST's for the voyage to the Orient. The six lumbering ships steamed westward at 8 knots. Only two officers on our ship (not I) knew how to operate a sextant to navigate celestially. The closest we ever came to combat was when our flotilla was ordered to proceed in a zig-zag pattern due to enemy subs in the area.

After six or seven days, LST 1144 developed serious engine trouble with one of our twin diesels, and we were ordered to limp into Pearl Harbor for repairs. Authorities at Pearl wouldn't allow us to berth there due to the explosive nature of our cargo. So, we chugged over to the opposite side of Oahu, Kaneohe Bay, where we spent a month getting repaired. While there we learned that "the bomb" had dropped. We also heard that our sister ship, either LST 1143 or 1145, had been sunk in a kamikaze attack off Okinawa.

An observation about the Navy and the south: our crew had two colored men—both steward's mates. In my naivete, I thought that was their choice; pretty good living. I learned later that the Navy would not allow black men in any other role. I was also astounded, having lived in Detroit all my life, to encounter "Colored Only" and "Whites Only" signs at restrooms and drinking fountains at naval bases in Mobile and other southern cities.

Back to New Orleans

New orders sent us back through the canal to our home port, then unloading, discharge of many men, then replacements, and more new orders - really welcome ones.

We were to pick up and deliver armaments, such as captured two man Japanese submarines, to dozens of naval stations from Maine to Florida, including stops at Bermuda, Curacao and Guantanamo Bay. This was such attractive duty that my best friend, our exec, elected to remain aboard, skipping his discharge. After six months of such cruising, which included a few stormy days in the Atlantic dumping ammunition, we returned to our home station in New Orleans.

And Back Home!

Some time at sea, I'd become a lieutenant j.g. and returned home as such, despite the Navy's enticement of full lieutenant to stay in the active reserves. In the spring of 1946 I was reunited with my family, no hero, but with two years of naval service, of which I was quite proud, under my belt. I worked a year at the veteran's administration as a training officer, placing veterans into apprentice programs, before entering my late career in sales in the chemical industry.

A Chemical Engineer Worked on The Manhattan Project

Clifford Armstrong

While I did not enter the service until 1944, my contribution to the war effort began well before that time. I had graduated from Michigan College of Mining and Technology in 1942 with a degree in chemical engineering, and went to work at the Hooker Electrochemical Co. in Niagara Falls, New York. I received a two-year deferment from the draft since my project there was considered vital to the war effort. I was assigned to work on the development of the atom bomb in a national effort called "The Manhattan Project."

Hazardous Working Conditions

Our assigned project was to develop an electrolytic cell for production of elemental fluorine. The fluorine was used to generate a reaction with uranium to form uranium tetrafluoride, which is a gas. This gas would then help to separate U-235 from U-236 uranium isotopes. Our project was a necessary part of the process to develop radioactive U-235, which is the basic ingredient for the atomic bomb. The assignment was classified to the extent that prior to leaving work each day my drawings were locked in a vault.

One day, while working on this project, I had a close call with sudden death. I was using high voltage in my inspection of a 1000-gallon glass lined steel reactor to determine if there were any pinhole leaks. I entered through a manhole at the top, while wearing a safety harness and a fresh-air mask. A maintenance man stood on top of the tank holding a rope tied around me to pull me out in an emergency. After breaking for lunch, we returned to finish the inspection. As I was putting on the air mask I found the air unfit to breathe. It seems that plant air had been used to pressurize a tank containing thionyl chloride to transfer contents to another tank. A different operation using a large amount of plant air dropped the plant air pressure below that in the "blow tank." This allowed vapors of thionyl chloride to contaminate the plant air. If this had happened when I was in the tank, I would have died before I could have been pulled up. As a result of my close call, the Hooker Co. immediately issued a rule to stop using plant air for breathing in this environment.

This plant had other risks, too. When I sat at my desk I often wore a gas mask since there was a bleach chamber in the adjacent building. Nevertheless I often went home with a sore throat from breathing chlorine gas. When I walked in the plant yard I always had a gas mask with me to use if I saw a cloud of fumes. I often caught fly ash in my eyes from the short stacks on the powerhouse. Periodically there was a leak of aluminum chloride which produced a thick white cloud of hydrochloric acid and aluminum oxide. As it turned out, these working conditions on The

Manhattan Project were as tough as any that I would experience throughout my service career.

Into the Service

My work at Hooker came to an end in June 1944, when the draft board decided that the military needed me more than Hooker did. I entered the Navy in the Electronic Technicians Mate program after undergoing training at boot camp at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. Then I was assigned to take courses at Hugh Manly High School and at Navy Pier in Chicago, as well as at Oklahoma A&M University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

At boot camp I contracted scarlet fever but it was misdiagnosed as pneumonia. This resulted in: (1) exposing me to pneumonia; (2) exposing pneumonia patients to scarlet fever, and; (3) delaying treatment of my scarlet fever although I had a high fever, delirium and heavy skin peeling from my toes and fingers. At this point, while I had seen no military action, I'd encountered a lot of hazardous duty of one type or another.

My training continued for another year, and this included learning the installation and maintenance of radio transmitters, radio receivers, sonar and radar systems. I shipped out of San Francisco on a Navy attack transport ship. It was riding high, like a cork, since it was relatively empty. We encountered rough seas almost immediately, and the ship was tossed in every direction. Most of the crew was seasick for much of the two-week trip to Japan.

The War Had Ended, but More Hazards

I arrived in Tokyo Bay after the war had ended, yet another hazard awaited. Since we were placed in an open landing craft to be transferred to the battleship USS New Jersey, we encountered a lot of spray from the waters in Tokyo Bay. Since the water was heavily polluted, most of us came down with dysentery. Christmas of 1945 was spent on the battleship.

On Two Battleships in Tokyo Bay

A personal friend was with the crew that was reconditioning the Japanese battleship Nagato in Tokyo Bay, which had been damaged in a battle with U.S. ships. The U.S. crew was bringing the battleship to sufficient seaworthiness so that it could be towed to a Pacific atoll test site. Here, along with other enemy or obsolete ships, it was to be used to determine the effects of an atomic blast on large ships. My friend invited me to visit the ship, which was very interesting. Indeed, on this visit my friend took one of the best photos of me while I was in the Navy, as it shows me sitting on one of the Nagato's biggest guns before the ship was sunk. I obviously enjoyed being on the New Jersey much more than on the Nagato.

When on liberty, I would place cigarettes in my shoes before leaving the ship, to exchange with Japanese merchants for souvenirs, one of which was a Japanese bayonet. It was necessary to take our own C rations and water from the ship since we were not allowed to enter any Japanese restaurant.

In Tokyo I saw the palace of Emperor Hirohito. I also boarded an electric train to go to a fishing village and saw the picturesque sight of fishermen mending their nets beside their boats. This was quite a contrasting sight, compared with seeing Japanese soldiers and sailors as the enemy. As a tourist, I climbed up inside the statue of a bronze Buddha.

Signing the Surrender Papers

My ship, the New Jersey, was stationed in Tokyo Bay prior to the signing of the unconditional surrender papers by the Japanese. Since President Truman was a

native of Missouri, he had the New Jersey replaced by the battleship USS Missouri for the official signing of the surrender papers. The crew of the New Jersey of course felt very disappointed, but this quickly passed since we were so relieved that the war was officially over.

One of my observations as I neared the end of my military career was that, despite all the training I had received regarding installing and repairing electronic equipment, I had never had to employ this knowledge to install or repair anything of significance. It is a tribute to the U.S. Navy that the personnel who manned the ships were so well-trained themselves that it was unnecessary for me to use the expertise I had gained.

Returning to the U.S.

In early 1946 the New Jersey left Japan and sailed to Long Beach, California. For several weeks the members of the crew were slowly transferred to various points for discharge. While there, I was assigned such duties as serving on Shore Patrol, mostly involving the assistance to intoxicated sailors to get them back to their quarters.

I was then shipped out on a destroyer escort, the USS Cates, headed to Newport News in Virginia. Going through the locks of the Panama Canal took all day and was very interesting. We enjoyed liberty in Panama City, Panama, before we sailed to the east coast. It took many hours in Newport News to unload our large cargo of munitions which included anti-submarine depth charges.

Finally Discharged

Then we sailed to Greencove Springs, Florida so that our ship could be decommissioned there. In June 1946 I was discharged from the Navy with the rank of electronic technicians mate 3rd class. I returned to Detroit to live with my parents, and began a new career at Sharples Chemical Co. in Wyandotte, Michigan.

The Timing Was Lucky

Robert M. Hebert

Timing is everything, they say. It's why I never saw the combat for which I was trained as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army infantry.

In 1942, I applied for one of the programs where students were allowed to complete course work and be commissioned as officers in the armed forces. But I was rejected because I was not a U.S. citizen, having come from Canada in 1939 to study engineering at the University of Detroit.

Lucky Timing Begins

Then my lucky timing started. I left school to await the draft and started working for Bell Labs on radar designs for controlling 90mm anti-aircraft guns. This work deferred my being drafted for about two years.

I was drafted into the U.S. infantry in July 1944, shortly after I married Mary Ruth Bachelor. After four months of basic training at Camp Hood, Texas and four months of officer training at Fort Benning, Georgia, I was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry. At the same time, I was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in a Columbus, Georgia court.

Lucky timing again; Graduating second lieutenants in classes prior to mine were immediately air-shipped to Europe and the "Battle of the Bulge." But the European war ended at the time of my graduation.

So I was assigned to Little Rock, Arkansas where I trained a class of draftees for four months. We training officers and the draftees were being prepared for combat in the Pacific theater. But lucky timing again; the Japanese war ended during our last week of training. And what a happy group of trainees and officers we were!

I was then sent to Manila, Philippines, in October 1945, to replace combat officers. Lucky timing again; my voyage to Manila was on the former luxury ship S.S. Lurline, with an air conditioned dining room and staterooms. There were 400 female Red Cross workers and nurses on board with us 2,000 officers. Dancing under the stars every night!

Assignment: Anti-Aircraft Batteries

When I reported for duty in Manila, the assignment officer looked at my record and said, "Since you worked at Bell Labs on gun directors, you are exactly the right person to take over the anti-aircraft batteries." But I had never even seen a 90 mm gun! Anyway, as a company commander, my job was to disband a 90 mm anti-aircraft battery and a 40 mm gun battery at Clark Field.

For most of my stay in Manila, I was assigned as personnel officer for a unit handling claims against the U.S. The claimants were Filipino individuals or businesses who were not paid for services or equipment used by U.S. forces while the Japanese were over-running the Philippines. In one claim, the owner of a cow

claimed that it quit giving milk due to the invasion activities. We paid the claim; General MacArthur's orders!

While I was in Manila, Mary Ruth and her mother were residing in Petoskey, Michigan. In February 1946 I received a telegram that my first daughter, Jeannie, was born. With considerable difficulty, I was able to talk to Mary Ruth at Little Traverse Hospital.

The best timing of all came in October 1946. I received orders to go back to the U.S. where I was discharged as a first lieutenant. The GI Bill enabled us to buy our first house and complete my engineering degree from Wayne State University.

From Guarding Prisoners, Picking Up U.S. Trash, to Sergeant Teletype Operator in Germany

John Slocum

In July 1944, I was accepted in the Enlisted Reserve Program (ASTP) to be called to active duty in the Army Air Corps Cadet Flight Program upon turning 18 years of age. June 1945, several months after reaching 18, I was called to active duty.

Living in Grand Rapids, I was shipped by train to Detroit, and then on to Fort Custer for induction and processing, and then by troop to Keeler Field (Biloxi, Mississippi), for basic training. Of course, we had been issued wool uniforms and wool blankets for our stay in Mississippi in July and August.

Because the war was winding down, cadet programs were also shutting down. Cadets were now assigned to putting us through basic training. After completing basic training and waiting for further orders, I was issued a carbine to guard prisoners riding on a trash truck, picking up trash on the base and riding to the dump.

Chose Teletype Operator

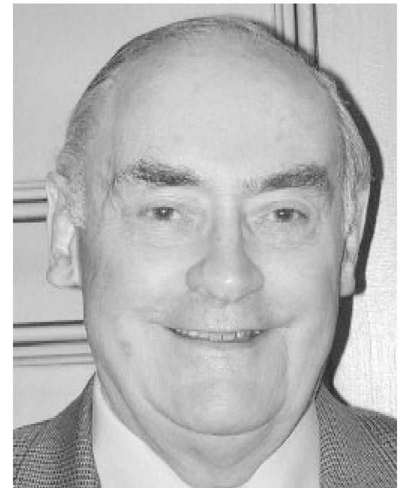
I had a choice of further training now; of being a rear gunner on a bomber, camera repairman or teletype operator. I chose teletype school and took my training at Scott Field, Illinois (East St. Louis, Illinois). Upon completion, I was transferred to Fort Dix, New Jersey; and on December 31, 1945, sailed out of New York harbor into a storm - headed for Germany.

I arrived at Le Havre, France, after nine days at sea, and in a snowstorm, boarded 40 and 8s (that's 40 men and 8 horses, sometimes) for a train ride through France and into Germany, arriving at Munich three days later - surviving on K rations.

My assignment took me to Wiesbaden, Germany, where I spent the rest of my time as a teletype operator with the 25th Communication Squadron, as a sergeant. I was fortunate in being able to spend seven days in August 1946, sightseeing in Switzerland.

Back to the USA

In November 1946, I shipped out of Bremerhaven, Germany, on the troop ship George Washington. Arriving back in the U.S.A., I was discharged at Fort Dix, New Jersey, from the Army Air Force, on November 22. Back home by train to my parents who were living in Detroit. I arrived at the Michigan Central Depot, greeted by my family carrying a large banner, "Welcome Home."



MEMORIES OF THE WAR YEARS

JAMES S. SLOSBERG

I had always hoped no one would ask, "What did you do in the war?" I guess this was because I wasn't involved in any of the fighting, so my story deals with the everyday events associated with wartime service.

With all the turmoil that had been occurring in the 1930s, and the idiocies in foreign policies in Germany, Japan, Italy, Russia and Spain, you couldn't help but see what Winston Churchill called "The Gathering Storm."

At the age of 13, when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, the impression it made on me was, a fear of another Great War, and a repeat of my father's experiences in World War I. As it happened, all of my friends were to go into the armed services.

In his writings, Stephen E. Ambrose, author of "Citizen Soldiers" and many other books about the war years, noted that World War II was fought by the high school classes of 1942, 1943 and 1944. I was in the class of 1944. The draft age was 19, when my brother (the class of '42) was about to be called up, in the early summer of 1943. He elected to sign up with the Marines. Sometime between then and when I turned 18, the draft age was lowered to 18, and that is how it was, when my birthday came up, a month before the Allied invasion at Normandy.

Navy Was My Choice

We had five days to register for the draft or else. I opted to go into the Navy and was called up in September 1944. As a little side story, I had won a poster contest (the Statue of Liberty) in school, a few years before, and never saw the poster again — until the day I walked into the draft board office — and there it was hanging on the wall.

Navy inductees from Buffalo were sent to the training center at Sampson, New York, on the eastern shore of Lake Seneca (one of the finger lakes). About a million sailors and WAVES were trained there. It is now a state park and may be turned into a veteran's cemetery. I was assigned to the 5th Regiment (Company 587), or otherwise called "G" unit (Gilmore). As it turned out, this was the show case regiment for Samson.

Later, we heard that Walter Winchell, the radio commentator, had said there was only one legalized concentration camp in the USA, and that was the 5th Regiment at Sampson, New York. It was tough. But, that is where I learned the basics to become a sailor, such as: if it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, paint it; and by all means hurry up and wait.

Basic Training

Basic training lasted ten weeks, after which we were given ten days leave. Within a day or so, after returning to Sampson, we were all lined up in the drill hall and told we were going directly to fleet replacements. There would be no training for the Battle of the

Bulge or Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. The drill hall line got cut-off one man before me, and as the others went their way, the rest of us boarded a train of converted boxcars with bunks, and headed to San Diego.

There was no dining car on the train, so the schedule called for a stop at various train stations along the way at meal times. Typically, tables were set up on a railroad station platform, where the local folks were waiting for us. The ladies from nearby towns had prepared meals and fed us like kings. Surely they had sons who had gone off to war, as we were doing. It was just a wonderful example of heartland hospitality.

When we arrived in San Diego, our small group, again, thought we would be sent directly to ships, but instead we were taken to the Navy Repair Base, where we were to be stationed. There were no complaints. In the evening, when work was over, I would often go to the docks to see what ships were in. One evening, I saw a destroyer that had been hit by a kamikaze. And there, standing on the deck, was one of the fellows from my boot camp company.

It was then that I realized just how fortunate I was. It was also fortunate that, through the Red Cross, I was able to find my brother, whom I had not seen in over a year and a half. He was at the Miramar Air Station, outside San Diego, and was about to ship out for the Okinawa campaign.

Good Duty Was Over

The good duty was about to end. In July of 1945, the "scuttlebutt" was that we all would be shipping out for the invasion of Japan. But then the atom bombs brought an abrupt end to the war. It was timely, as only a few weeks after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I was sent to a distribution center outside of San Diego to be transferred overseas. We left San Diego in September and 23 days later arrived at Samar, in the Philippines. After a short time of "hurry up and wait," I caught up with the LST 957. This ship was part of Flotilla Seven, operating out of Subic Bay, north of Manila.

From then until June of 1946, we shuttled between most of the islands in the Philippines, picking up any units that were closing down their operations. We transported these units to Manila, where the Japanese prisoners of war would do the work of unloading our cargo. Then we would go back to Subic Bay to "hurry up and wait" for another assignment.

One night, when we were on the beach at Manila, we challenged another LST crew to a baseball game, at a nearby recreation area. There were high fences in the outfield. On the other side of the fence, the Japanese prisoners were also playing baseball. Once in a while we would hit a ball over the fence, or they would do the same. They threw ours back and we reciprocated. They bowed at the waist — we waved an acknowledgement. Was this the forerunner of President Nixon's ping-pong diplomacy? Now there's a stretch.

Time to Go Home

In June 1946, our crew was being depleted, as each man accumulated enough points to be separated from the service. The order was given to decommission the ship. The 40-millimeter anti-aircraft guns were removed and the ship was rafted with other LSTs, to be left in the Philippines. A troop ship hauled us back to the states. We were on it 38 days, stopping at Pearl Harbor and then moving through the Panama Canal to Norfolk, Virginia. From there we took a train to Lido Beach, Long Island, where we were formally discharged.

Prior to separation, some pressure was put on us to "ship over." We were told there might be a war with Russia, and by signing on we

would hold our rank. Having reached the high rank of seaman first class, I opted out. After all, how much lower could you go?

Another train ride, to Buffalo, ended my service in the Armed Forces of the United States. I was discharged in August 1946. It was an honor to have served my country. I did my duty, and have never forgotten how lucky I was. Fate was kind to me. But for our generation and most of our classmates of '42, '43 and '44, the war years were an extremely thorny experience, and too often a fatal one.

My Mysterious War Experience

James B. Hinkamp

When I am asked, "What did you do in World War II?" I say my war years were spent battling molecules amid an occasional lab explosion, rather than on some exotic foreign battle field.

After graduating in chemistry and mathematics from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, my home town, I won a teaching fellowship to Ohio State University. In 1941, I was in graduate school at OSU working on a doctorate in organic chemistry. The problem assigned to me involved the synthesis of large liquid molecules of unusual stability.

It developed that these compounds were of great interest to some secret government agency. Like other chemists on this project, I was never told any details of how our research would be used.

More Mystery

The mystery deepened when I was called up for the draft not once, but twice. Each time my name was withdrawn, once after passing the physical exam for Army induction. I decided I must be doing something essential to the war effort. In fact, after receiving my Ph.D., I was ordered to stay on the job at OSU, working many 12 hour days, sometimes seven days a week.

The only difference was that I was now paid by "The Manhattan Project" - whatever that was - and my checks were drawn on a "petty-cash account." I was certainly at the bottom of the totem pole of the work involved, but was it necessary to rub it in with that "petty cash" designation? As time passed, it developed that we were working for the Atomic Energy Commission.

When the first atomic bombs exploded over Japan in August 1945, the news was a surprise to our research group because we had been given to understand that our project had very great potential, but that the chance of its being successful was exceedingly small.

Ethyl Corporation

I later joined Ethyl Corporation Research Laboratory in Ferndale, Michigan, and worked there for 39 years, while living in Birmingham. I met other Manhattan Project officials while with Ethyl, and in the 1950s spent time at Oak Ridge studying radio-tracer techniques.

I still consider what we did on the OSU project to be "classified" and keep the details to myself.

Drawing Board Designs Play Key Role
Concepts Become Reality

Ken Holloway

We were dealing with concept missiles. The Germans had them, the Buzz Bombs. Our guidelines specified that it should carry an 11,000 pound bomb with a diameter of just under six feet. I did a preliminary design of one with stub wings and ramjets added onto the ends. It never occurred to me until long after Hiroshima that it might have been a preliminary concept for transporting the atom bomb.

It was 1944 by then, and I had finally applied for and received my commission. I was at Wright Field, near Dayton, Ohio, and was in charge of preliminary design for one of the ramjet missiles being developed.

An Early Hand in B-29 Development

Another forerunner of the use of the atomic bomb was when, four years earlier, I worked on the prototype of the B-29. That was in 1940. I had applied for the Army Air Corps flight school at Randolph Field near San Antonio, but I failed the physical exam because of high blood pressure.

I was 19 then, having just graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in mechanical engineering and four years in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). Because I was underage, I could not yet qualify for an Army commission. So, I hired on with Boeing as an engineer at their aircraft plant in Seatle. I performed structural analysis on the components for the landing gear and for the frames that secured the engines to the wings. Boeing was just given specs for range payload and speed. It was to fly far and carry heavy weight.

Our focus at the time was on developments going on in Europe. I had no idea that I was helping to develop a plane that would deliver an atomic bomb.

On Wings of Dive-Bombers

After working on the B-29, I joined Curtiss Wright in St. Louis and worked on the design of the C-46 Army Cargo Plane and the wing structure of the SB2C Navy Dive-Bomber. In December of 1944 I applied for the Army commission for which I had qualified through the ROTC program.

Since my Army commission was in the Ordnance Department, I was sent to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. Because of my four years experience as an aircraft engineer, I applied for a transfer to the Air Force. It was granted and I was assigned to the Aircraft Lab at Wright Field.

Test Pilot Solves Problem

We were working on supersonic missile and aircraft design. We were concerned that when the aircraft was going through the sonic shock waves that they might disrupt controls. However, during this time, Chuck Yeager piloted a Bell rocket plane into supersonic flight successfully, allaying our fears.

The missile program was eliminated for the time being when the war ended in 1945. I married Fran Emory a month prior to being

separated, and we headed to Boston where, with funds from the GI Bill, I entered graduate school at Harvard in pursuit of a masters in business administration.

I retired from Ford Motor Company at 65 in 1986, having been hired in 1949 through a contact with a professor I had at Harvard who by then was an executive at Ford.

Helping the British and Chinese Drive the Japanese from Burma

Gus Grozdon

My most active service in World War II was as a scout in an Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon (I&R). This unit was part of the 124th Cavalry (an activated Texas National Guard Regiment), which was part of a Provisional Brigade named the Mars Task Force. The unit was formed to assist the British and the Chinese to complete the campaign to drive the Japanese from Burma.

Picked for Specialized Training

In 1943, while a senior at Detroit's Redford High School, I passed a series of tests for entrance into the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), which was held at the University of Wisconsin.

As I was only 17, I joined the Enlisted Reserve with the intent that I would be called up and sent to the ASTP when I turned 18 and had graduated. These two events took place in January 1944 and I was soon called to active duty.

At Fort Sheridan, I learned that nothing was definite in the Army until it actually happened. My surprise was that the ASTP program was closed, as the Army had all the officers and specialists they needed, and I was to be shipped to a training camp for basic training. For whatever reason, I was sent to Fort Riley, Kansas, for basic training in the Horse Cavalry. I spent 17 weeks in dreaded fear that I would be thrown from a horse, break some bones and never see any action. I did have one nasty fall; I was thrown from a horse as it stumbled and was thrown over its head. No broken bones resulted though.

Jungle Training

I was relieved to end the training, get a 10-day leave and go home. After my 10-day leave, it was a train trip to Los Angeles, a 39-day transport trip across the Pacific to India, followed by a plane trip to Ledo, Assam, for jungle training. All of this for an 18 year old kid who had never spent more than two days away from home — and now had his first train, boat, and plane ride.

Although the war started for the United States in 1941, the Japanese had invaded China in the 1930s and had occupied most of the eastern part of the country. The only way to supply the Chinese army was by the Burma Road that went from Rangoon, Burma, up into Kunming, China. After the Japanese attacked the United States and England in 1941, they also occupied French Indo China, Burma, and parts of India. As a result, the Burma Road was closed and China had to be supplied by planes over "The Hump." It was

Military Facts: Served in U.S. Army from February 1944 to March 1946, when honorably discharged as a private first class. Decorations: Bronze Star (Meritorious); Combat Infantry Badge; Asiatic Pacific Campaign Ribbon with four battle stars; Good Conduct Medal, Victory Medal, China War Memorial Badge and Ribbon (issued by Chinese Government).

decided that a better solution to the problem was to drive the enemy from northern Burma and build a road from Ledo, in the northwest part of India, and then to China.

While I was taking basic training, this effort to build the road and clear the enemy was underway. Merrill's Marauders, the only ground combat unit in Asia, had captured the major Japanese airfield at Myitkyina after a 78-day siege in August 1944. The 200 survivors of the original 2600 Marauders were used along with replacements to form the 475th Infantry. I joined the 124th Cavalry, which was in India, after arriving from Texas. These two regiments, along with smaller support units, formed the Mars Task Force.

Building Roads, Jungle Fighting

We flew into Myitkyina, took additional training, and were told our mission. We were to march in battalion-size groups through dense jungles, cross 7000 feet high mountains, and end up at the Old Burma Road. There were no vehicles in the group. Heavy weapons, communications gear, etc., were carried by mules. We were to be supplied every three days by airdrop. The march was to be approximately 500 miles. When the units reached the Old Burma Road, they were to occupy the adjacent hills and prevent the Japanese from moving south — where they could defend Rangoon, which was threatened by the British.

After a month of fierce fighting and constant artillery fire from the Japanese, the Task Force seized the hills along the road. Control of the hills enabled us to control movement on the road, which forced the remaining Japanese to break down into smaller groups, leave their equipment, and attempt to escape on foot around the road.

Helping the Chinese

The original plan was for the Task Force to continue their push south to help the British to take Rangoon. With the northern part of the road now open, China's Chiang Kai Shek lost interest in Burma, and wanted his troops to return to China as the Japanese were moving further west. In addition, he also wanted our unit to also go to China.

Attached to Chinese Units

When we got to China, the danger from the Japanese had subsided and we were broken down into smaller groups and assigned to various Chinese units. I along with 10 other men were sent to the French Indo-China border where we joined the 52nd Chinese army as advisers. Fortunately the atomic bomb was dropped, and the war ended before we had to accompany the Chinese in battle.

I came home in March 1946. I took advantage of the GI Bill, went to college and graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1950. I got married in 1951 to my wife, Lucille. I started work at the Timken Detroit Axle Company. Stayed three years and got a job at General Motors where I stayed for 33 years. Most of those years were in the computer area. My wife Lucille and I have two children and two grandchildren.

After almost 60 years, some events of my service days are as vivid as if they had happened yesterday. I belong to the VFW but am not an active member; I don't want to rehash old days.

What did I get from this chapter in my life? I am proud of my service to our country. I traveled halfway around the world, saw how people lived in India, Burma, and China. I met some of the greatest people that I have known in the service. I went to college and had a successful career. I have a wonderful family and have had a great life.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Rhine
Laughter in the Face of Death

Robert Bentz

My "Longest Day" was not June 6, 1944, but a day early in April 1945.

I was a member of the 168th Combat Engineer Battalion attached to the Third Army. We were informed early one evening that we were going to make a surprise assault, crossing the Rhine River later that night under cover of darkness.

We traveled quite a distance in convoy to the area of operation. We got out of our six-by trucks and were told to wait in line if we wished to take communion. Everybody did. (We discussed later, wondering whether the guy with the bread and wine was a priest or a minister or even a rabbi.)

All Hell Breaks Loose

The assault boats and the paddles were carried down to the shore of the Rhine and we waited —12 infantrymen and three engineers to each boat. The signal was given. As we slid the boats into the water, all hell broke loose.

How many machine guns does it take, with their tracers, to light up about a quarter mile of Rhine shoreline? I don't know. What I do know is that I was about thigh deep in the river when the boat would no longer respond to my urging.

If you wonder if Army training is effective, hear me out. The three combat engineers (trained to go ahead no matter what) were tugging at the assault boat, and the 12 infantrymen (trained to dig in when coming under fire) were on the shore digging in. Since the idea was for us to take passengers across the river, the three of us went back to the shore and tried to crawl into our steel helmets.

Conversations with God

The bullets kept flying from the east bank, but they were shooting high. Why, we didn't know. I mentioned it to God and thanked him.

About then I made the following deal with God — I really don't mind if I die, but I'd like to know whether we had a boy or a girl. This was of utmost importance to me because the last letter I'd received from my wife informed me I'd probably be a dad the next day.

So, there I was. Lying with my buddies on the shore with an absolute fusillade of bullets sailing just barely above our heads. I was so scared my knees were shaking. This seemed ridiculous to me, so I stiffened my legs. But then I began to shake from head to toe. I remember thinking that the Germans may have been shooting high because I might be a distant cousin. With my face buried in the dirt, I began to laugh, a kind of crying laugh.

Contagious Laughter

Now, this was nothing humorous. But between the wasted enemy bullets flying over our heads, and the loaded boats stopping their forward progress when we lost the help

of the infantry guys—80 percent of our rowing power— and me laughing, it became contagious.

Thoroughly surprised and scared out of our britches, the suppressed laughter moved both upstream and downstream from where I lay. It was catching. An officer came crawling up and started to ask, “Who?” He saw me and didn’t ask. He started laughing, too.

The firing had been going on for some time. We were lucky! Turned out one infantry guy had an errant tracer (regular rounds follow true, tracers sometimes corkscrew) go through the front of his helmet and crease his scalp. There was a lot of blood, but the medics told us later that the injury was not serious.

A Big Decision

The guys in charge decided that paddleboats were not the answer; we’d wait for outboard motors. That meant we needed only one engineer for each boat, but he had to have had special training at a center recently set up in Trier, Luxembourg. I didn’t have that training, so they wouldn’t let me captain a boat. Though I volunteered, that desire didn’t qualify me and they had more than enough guys who had the necessary training.

A tank destroyer arrived to support the crossing. The crew asked us to identify the location of the enemy fire, for example, “the white building with the black roof.”

I was standing at the rear of this tracked, self-propelled gun, watching the unbelievable point blank accuracy, and thinking thank goodness for this support. Suddenly, three or four German 20mm shells hit the front of the vehicle. I could see three guys lying there dead. The tank destroyer took off for cover.

I ran and leaped over a stack of three coffin-size boxes holding huge outboard motors. Corp Engineers had just dumped them in the road. My Olympic-size jump didn’t quite clear the far side of the stack, and I ended up with my face scraping the blacktop.

Purple Heart Worth Five Points

The aid station was down on the riverbank in sort of a resort-style boathouse. For reasons of my own I wouldn’t give the medics my name and serial number when I was treated. I wouldn’t have argued, though, if I had known that the information would have added five points to the calculations that determined how fast I would be sent home: that’s how many points they gave for receiving a Purple Heart.

While at the aid station, a buddy and I were asked to fire half of our ammunition from the “porch” of the aid station, shooting at the east bank of the river at anything we could spot. Then our platoon leader asked the two of us to go downstream about a quarter mile and lie on the shore and pull out any dead or wounded GI’s that floated by.

It was early afternoon. We had little sleep while riding in our trucks to the river. We positioned ourselves, lying side by side with our feet against one of the broken concrete and rock walls used to terrace the riverbank.

Asleep on The Rhine

We both fell asleep. When I woke up, I couldn’t move my legs. I shook Jimmy and said I must be shot because I could only move my arms. He couldn’t move either. We weren’t shot. We were covered with broken rocks and concrete up to our waists. It was debris from the wall that was chewed up by bullets.

German machine gunners had been firing at us as we slept in plain view. They must have fired hundreds of rounds at the two of us, but they were all high by something less than a foot. I’m not real religious, but this deal with God?

It's a Boy

A few days later, our backed up mail arrived, and I found out many times over that I had fathered a son. I have a cherished photo of my squad, each man holding a bundle of unopened mail, congratulating me on the news.

The first time I was able to hug my son, and the first time in too long a time I was able to hug my wife, was Christmas night in 1945.

This son was a captain in the army of occupation in Germany 23 years later. It was peacetime, and, as an officer, he was able to bring his wife over there. Their first baby, my first grandchild, was born there in Germany, 20 miles from where I was under fire and afraid I might never know if my wife and I were blessed with a boy or girl.

Lucky me? I don't know. Blessed? You bet!

The Good Life on Guam

Donald E. Cox

I served in the Army Air Force. Entering as an Aviation Cadet in June 1945, just after graduating from high school, it was too late in the course of the war to keep training pilots. My time as a cadet ended abruptly. I entered cryptography training, but that program was scratched too. Late in 1945 I was sent to Guam and, because I could type, was made a clerk-typist, assigned to Headquarters, Twentieth Air Force. This was okay, but not the sort of experience I was hoping for.

Early in 1946 we got a group of former infantrymen who had been stationed in a remote area on Leyte in the Philippines. Among them was Dick Harper, current President of the Senior Men's Club, although we did not know each other then. I remember we had a hard time assimilating them as they had MOS's of anti-tank gunners, Browning automatic-rifle operators, etc., not quite related to the Air Force. I also remember that some seemed upset at being sent to the Marianas and assigned to the Air Force. We thought they would be thrilled to get out of the infantry and into the Air Force. After being discharged, I met a fellow who told me a story which may explain their disappointment.

Culture Shock

The Army had their own supply ships which delivered supplies to Army units throughout the Pacific. My friend was on one of these ships. He told me about one time when they docked at a remote location on the southeast coast of Leyte. They were unloading supplies for a group of infantrymen who were stationed there. While they were unloading supplies, the local natives came to the beach to watch. The natives were very friendly as they would smile, wave, and talk to the troops. There was one problem. They wore clothing which did not cover anything above their waists. The captain of the ship was concerned as they had been delivering supplies in many remote areas, and it had been a long time since his men had even seen any women. He was concerned that some of his men might attempt to jump ship; so he came up with an idea. He ordered that the natives be given T-shirts. He could not discriminate; so he gave white T-shirts to all of the natives. They were most appreciative and thanked the troops profusely. As it was getting late, the troops stopped unloading supplies for the day, while the natives returned to their village.

The next morning the troops went on deck to continue unloading only to find the natives there smiling, waving, and yelling to the troops. They were all wearing their new T-shirts. The problem was the women had all cut out two large holes in theirs. I guess that shows that we Americans sometimes are not quick to sense the underlying values and habits of other cultures, as today we are finding out in the Middle East.

Promotion!

With the war over, the headquarters staff of the 20th Air Force was not the busiest

organization. Radio operators, many of them licensed hams, set up and operated their own ham station. In my spare time I went to the radio shack and listened to their talk, worldwide. It was interesting, and I learned a lot. Soon some of those fellows were sent back to the states. I was told I was being made a radio repairman. “Hey, wait a minute; I’ve had no training or experience at all,” I confessed. “That’s okay; you are interested, aren’t you?” And so I became a radio repairman and a corporal!

A Corporal in Command?

Somehow or other a B-29 round trip to Shanghai was made, and the crew said the shopping there was too much to resist. Weekly trips to Shanghai were then planned. One enlisted man was to go on each trip. We drew lots to determine who would go on which trips. I drew Trip #3. Trip #2 was enough to get the attention of our general, and he said he wanted to go on #3. So I got bumped. While the general was away on the trip, our captain who was watching the store said I should sit in the general’s office in case the telephone rang. That was fine, and there was much of interest to read there. Then the captain said, “I can’t hang around here all the time; I’ll be over at the Officer’s Club.” So there I am, alone in the general’s office, with all the trappings of command. I wish I had had my picture taken then.

Discharge

The good life on Guam could not go on forever. I returned to the United States in December 1946, still a corporal and loving every minute of it, but eager to get on with civilian life.

A Home Land Slice of World War II

Jim D'Allemand

I was a 14 year old 8th grader in Loveland, Colorado when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Loveland was a small farming community of about 6,500 people, 30 miles from Rocky Mountain National Park, and a long, long, distance geographically, from the war.

Over the next four years everyone I knew felt actively involved in the war. The feeling of patriotism and concern is hard to describe to those who didn't live through it. We listened to reports on the radio and read them in the newspapers. We all personally knew friends, relatives, neighbors, church members, etc. who were in the thick of it, and some who were not coming back.

My buddies and I knew that as soon as we turned 18 we would either enlist or be drafted. And we couldn't wait! In the meantime we had paper drives, scrap metal drives, wrote lots of VMail letters, built wooden models of American, German and Japanese planes for aircraft spotter training, and spent a lot of spare time debating which branch of the service would be best.

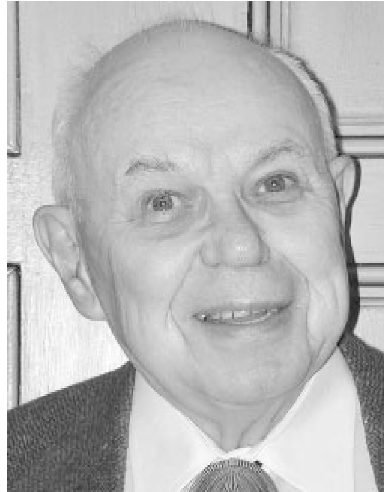
Each year the senior class was getting smaller; many who turned 18 did not wait to graduate. Most of us younger kids had after-school jobs because there was a real shortage of guys ages 18-40 to fill them.

Where to Enlist?

High school was even delayed one month at the beginning of my junior year so we could go out and help harvest the sugarbeet crop.

Many things were rationed: sugar, meat, shoes, tires, and gasoline. Our transportation was the bicycle.

As we approached 18 years of age, our goal was to enlist in something to avoid being drafted into the infantry. I got accepted into a USNR Radar Technician program which allowed me to stick around through my high school graduation. In my class of 75 there were only seven boys present for graduation, and all but three had enlisted.



I was called to active duty in June 1945. The atom bomb was dropped while I was in boot camp at Great Lakes, and Japan surrendered as I was on my way back to Chicago from boot leave. So I had a rather unusual 13-month hitch in the Navy. I spent it all in Electronics Technician Service Schools while the Navy tried to decide what to do with us.

"Opportunities" Declined

In numerous "assemblies" we were given the opportunity to enlist in the regular Navy and "get some of that valuable sea duty," or remain in the USNR and "probably get discharged only to go home and get drafted into the infantry."

Those of us who declined got sent on to the next school. I actually was less than a month away from graduation as an airborne electronic technician's mate when I was

discharged in July 1946. I joined the Navy reserve but was never called to duty.

In retrospect, I was treated extremely well by the United States Navy. I saw no sea duty, and had six months of weekend liberties in Chicago when everything was free for people in uniform. I got nearly a year of free technical education and got some college credit for that training. By loading up with extra hours, I was able to get my BA degree mostly paid for under the GI Bill. And I know I matured faster in those 13 months than I would have in a freshman college year straight out of high school.

During those teen years all my close friends and I really did feel that helping fight World War II was the right thing to do. And maybe we felt a little bit cheated that we didn't get the chance to do more. But we deeply respected those who did.

And I well realize that things would have been much more serious if I had been one or two years older.

I later wound up at the General Motors Research Laboratories where I worked for 33 years.

World War II Vet - But Not a Hero

Joe Maertens

The day after I graduated from the Richmond Michigan High School in early June 1945, a buddy and I traveled to Detroit to enlist in the U.S. Naval Reserve. The war was winding down, and it seemed like everyone that was drafted was going into the Army Infantry. The prospect of life in the Army did not appeal, so the Navy seemed to be a better choice for a hitch of military life.

The war in Europe ended in mid-June, so it was July before I was called to Detroit for my pre-induction physical. The call to active duty came early in August. Boot camp was at Great Lakes Naval Training Center. While I was there the war with Japan ended. At Great Lakes, the Navy decided which skills each of the recruits possessed to best serve their country. The officer who interviewed me learned that I grew up on a farm and asked if I enjoyed hunting, which I did, and decided I must like guns, so he assigned me to Naval Ordnance.

In October, I was assigned to Banana River Naval Air Station in Melbourne, Florida. I became a member of the group that managed a complex of 25 storage magazines where depth charges, bombs and machine gun ammunitions were stored. Our unit ordered and dispersed these munitions in support of the Naval Air Station. Because I could type I became the yeoman and did office correspondence and maintained inventory records. That was my job from October until the following July when I was discharged. Not a glamorous job but someone had to do it.

The most significant fact about my hitch in the Navy was that it entitled me to the benefits of the GI Bill. A major provision of the GI Bill provided vets with the opportunity to go to colleges and universities where most expenses were covered. The program gave veterans the means to get a good education that perhaps would not have been possible without the help of the GI Bill. In my case, with just a year of service, I did not qualify for a full four year college education, but with two thirds covered it allowed me to get a college education which otherwise would not have been possible.

Many of the veterans at college stated that the GI Bill of Rights provided the incentive to go back to school and gave them the tools to get a better job and live more productive and happier lives.

Military Facts: Seaman first class, U.S. Naval Ordnance, June 1945 - July 1946.

Serving After World War II

Gerald Heller

After graduation from high school in June 1945, I wanted to serve my country by enlisting in the military. We had no money for college, and I was only 17 years old. I was the only son of divorced parents, living with my mother. I begged her to let me enlist, and she finally relented on November 16, 1945. That same day, I joined the U.S. Army Air Force.

I took my basic training at Shepherd Field, Texas, and attended the Cryptographic Technician School at Scott Field, Illinois. Here, I learned how to transmit and decode classified communications and handle the receipt, storage and protection of classified data.

Assignment in Germany

I was then assigned to the Army Air Communications Service and became part of the 8th Air Force Occupation Army headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany. Our command was responsible for all communications between the ground and aircraft. We had bases throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa under the Fifth Wing.

My specific responsibility was classified communications from confidential to top secret. I was part of a team of 10 men assigned to the "Code Room" which we operated 24/365.

Berlin Airlift

The most exciting time of my military career was in June 1948 when the Russians had blockaded Berlin. No ground transport was allowed. But the air lanes were open and the "Berlin Airlift" was organized to help the residents of the city. The troops of our wing helped load coal, flour and other foodstuffs on C-47s at Wiesbaden Air Field to be flown to Templehof Air Field in Berlin. I flew to Berlin twice and back.

At that time, we were going to war with the Russians, so the classified communications about that possibility were frightening.

The last assignment before my discharge was to participate, along with the wing intelligence officer, in the evaluations of the security procedures at Air Force bases around the world. This provided me with many opportunities to travel throughout Europe, Africa and Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Back to Civilian Life

I was honorably discharged in early August 1948 but served another four years in the reserves, ending up with the rank of staff sergeant.

While in the reserves, I was notified that I was going to be recalled to active duty because of the Korean conflict. But the call never came, and that was OK with me.

In General MacArthur's Honor Guard

Spencer Berg

In November 2003, I returned from the 12th reunion of General Douglas MacArthur's Honor Guard, held in Las Vegas. Over 55 years had elapsed since our days in the Guard, but the pride and camaraderie that we had as Honor Guardsmen are as prevalent today as they ever were.

What is the Honor Guard?

General MacArthur's Honor Guard was short-lived. Formed in Manila in early 1945 after the general's return to the Philippines, it was disbanded six years later when President Truman removed MacArthur from his command. The Guard was formed through an act of Congress in early 1945, and an order went out to the various combat divisions in the 6th and 8th Armies directing them to select 10 men to be sent to the general headquarters in Manila. The men thus selected were to form the Guard of Honor for General MacArthur, other general officers, and visiting dignitaries.

The selection criteria for these men were high. The candidates were required to have test scores equivalent to that required to enter Officer's Candidate School, have an unblemished service record, have combat experience, and be between 5'10" and 6'2".

While I was not one of the original Honor Guardsmen, not being able to enlist until completion of high school in 1946, I was able to qualify after I arrived in Japan later that year since the combat service requirement had been dropped due to the demobilization of the wartime army.

Honor Guard Assignments

One of the early assignments to the Honor Guard was, oddly enough, to protect the Japanese delegation which came to Manila to confer with General MacArthur's staff concerning the cessation of hostilities, the peaceful occupation of Japan by the Allied powers, and the signing of the formal surrender documents. It was an Honor Guardsman by the name of Howard Bierweiler who had the personal satisfaction of relieving the Japanese delegation of their sabers and holding them until all negotiations were completed. For many Guardsmen, this was the first time they had looked at the Japanese except over a gunsight but, despite the obvious anxieties, the duties were carried out perfectly.

Most members of the Honor Guard on September 2, 1945, were on duty on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay during the signing of the surrender documents. Those not on duty were there as spectators at this memorable event.

Until March 4, 1946, the title "Honor Guard" had been an unofficial one, and not until that date did the Secretary of War authorize that this company of Guardsmen be officially known as the "Honor Guard." At the same time, the Secretary also authorized the use of the gold-embroidered Honor Guard shoulder patch, and the Honor Guard scroll signifying

that members of the company had served well and faithfully.

My Assignment to the Honor Guard

Each day after I first arrived in Yokohama in 1946, I would go to the bulletin board to see if my assignment to a military unit had been posted. When my name finally appeared as an Honor Guard, most of us did not know what it was. After many fruitless inquiries, a couple of knowledgeable GIs told me that if I liked “spit and polish” I’d be in heaven, that the Honor Guard was a great assignment, and that I should consider myself “really lucky.”

The following day I was on my way to Tokyo and the Honor Guard, and I soon found out the true meaning of “spit and polish.” But I didn’t mind. There was tremendous pride in this organization and I was delighted to be a member.

Protection of Tokyo Buildings and Staffs

During the occupation, there were three Tokyo buildings that were protected by the Guard. These were: the Dai Ichi Building, the Finance Building, and the American Embassy.

The Dai Ichi Building, perhaps the most beautiful and finely-crafted building in all of Japan at the time, was the general headquarters and the site of General MacArthur’s office. We were in charge of keeping this building secure and protecting General MacArthur’s office.

The Finance Building is a huge structure with three courtyards. Built in 1936, it is the Japanese version of the Pentagon. During the occupation it housed 2500 U.S. troops, including the 1st and 2nd platoons of the Honor Guard Company comprised of about 100 men.

General MacArthur and his family resided at the American Embassy along with the 3rd and 4th platoons of the Honor Guard. These platoons were responsible for the security of the embassy itself, the entire embassy grounds and the “unofficial MacArthur family.”

The Official and “Unofficial” Families

The MacArthur family was comprised of the general, his wife and son. But who was included in the unofficial family? According to an International News Service report, it consisted of, “three American officers, a vivacious Englishwoman, a half dozen Filipinos, a sprinkling of Japanese and 200 hand-picked U.S. Honor Guard Troops.”

The primary duty of the Honor Guard was to protect the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, his family, and other general officers from all dangers that might occur. However, there were other duties that also kept the company in the limelight during those occupation years. One of those was to serve as escorts for dignitaries visiting Tokyo. We served as Escorts of Honor to Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and George C. Marshall, ex-President Herbert Hoover, President Sygman Rhee of Korea, Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royal, and Father Flanagan of Boys Town. Without exception, they all had unstinting praise for the Guardsmen.

Another duty of the company was the unusual “Guard Mount” performed every Friday afternoon at the main courtyard of the Finance Building. Witnessed by hundreds of spectators, these formations were an exercise in precise military maneuvers. On patriotic holidays, during parades, and during reviews for visiting dignitaries the Honor Guard always played a primary role. We felt that during such festivities we represented our country well in the eyes of the Japanese citizens and, of equal importance, in the eyes of our fellow GIs.

The Guard was not all “spit and polish.” We did have our days off as well as our

humorous moments. One of those moments happened in 1947 when a *Newsweek* article referred to us as "yellow-helmeted." This became a sore spot to us Guardsmen, as we were extremely proud of our glistening GREEN helmet liners with the red, white, and blue stripes of the GHQ.

But, when looking back at my days in the Honor Guard, I feel it was those things that had to do with "spit and polish" that gave us our defining character. We took pride in our tailored uniforms, white gloves, knife-like creased trousers, shiny combat boots, and glistening green helmet liners. It was this sense of pride that engendered the undeniable spirit of camaraderie in all of us.

The General Himself

I am often asked for my opinion about General MacArthur. All I can say is that he always treated me extremely well, and as "family." He referred to me as "son," never by rank and never by name. While his demeanor, hat and corn cob pipe are often referred to as manifestations of ego, nevertheless he was keenly aware of our esprit de corps and often paused on his way to headquarters to comment on our "fine military bearing." The general always had high regard for those who served and fought under his command.

The general, who had such an outstanding military career, is revered in Japan to this day for the rebuilding of that nation from the ashes of defeat to what has become one of the world's most prosperous nations. This was truly one of his finest accomplishments.

He was an avid movie fan. He especially enjoyed westerns and, if John Wayne was featured, he enjoyed it even more. Movies were shown at the embassy residence six evenings a week, and about 30 chairs were set-up for Guardsmen who wished to attend. A brief discussion of the movie usually followed, and any and all opinions seemed welcome.

Return to Civilian Life

When I returned from Japan in 1948, while I had no decorations I did return with the coveted Honor Guard Scroll signed by General MacArthur, and this is one of my most prized possessions. I also have a number of photos of him and me that bear his signature. Most important of all, I returned with the memory that I served in one of the finest and most elite units ever assembled by the U.S. military.

A Salute to the Ladies Who Serve

A time-honored tradition at the weekly Friday meetings of the Senior Men's Club of Birmingham is to have a light lunch together. The meal is served by a group of much-appreciated volunteer hostesses, many of them wives or widows of members of SMC. Three hostesses, Jeanne Swanson, Helen Gibiser, and Helen Parish served their country in military services during the 1940s.

They were part of a surprisingly large group of women "more than 400,000 strong" who served in all branches of the U.S. military during World War II, according to a study by Rutgers University. About 50,000 women served in the Korean War.

We are proud to include these patriotic ladies in this book.

A "Girl's" View of the War
Those Who Wore Skirts Also Served

Helen Gibiser

There were boat whistles, water spouts. Flares and rockets from ships that stretched unseen beyond the horizon lit up the sky. They were loaded and had been waiting to leave Hawaii for the invasion of Japan.

It was VJ Day. It was an unforgettable moment, to be by yourself, looking out at this. I was sitting on the steps of my barracks, all by myself, crying. When I would go home, the boy I cared for was not going to be there to greet me. He was killed early in the war. My life would be starting all over again.

It was after the death of my fiancée in 1942 that I considered joining the service. I didn't know what to do. I was 22. I saw all of those ads about the WAVES and the WACS. I thought I would check it out. My dad said, "Go for it, Helen, this is the first time women would be serving in the Navy."

I Made the Decision

I left my father, mother and brother at home in the Bronx and went to the recruiting office. There were about 50 women there. Half went to Hunter College in Manhattan; the other half and I went to Stillwater, Oklahoma.

I went in as an apprentice seaman. We marched, did exercises, had locker inspections, learned to type— faster than you can think—and shorthand. We mastered letter writing and protocol for every position up to president.

After four months I was sent to the Naval Air Station in Atlanta, Georgia. I was one of seven women in a contingent of 1,000. I was a receptionist for Navy and Marine officers who arrived to take night instrument flying instructions. I processed their papers.

Thrill of a Lifetime

That's where I had a thrill of a lifetime. "May I help you, sir?" I said. He said, "Yes." I knew I knew him. He was just like the imagined "boy next door." But I didn't know from where. Then I saw his name on the papers. My mouth gapped open; I was frozen in a stare. The whole office was laughing. It was Tyrone Power, the movie actor. He was laughing, too.

Later I was transferred to the Ford Island Naval Air Station, Hawaii. My duties there were similar to those in Atlanta, except that I processed enlisted men as well as the officers. People want to know if there were differences between officers and enlisted men. They were about the same. Men were men.

These Waves, Waved

Ford Island was a focal point for ships returning for repair and refitting. Often they would have us girls (those were the days we were called girls and were delighted to be called that) go down to the dock and wave welcome to the returning servicemen.

It was a big deal for the young boys, lining the rails with arms in a sling, or propped up on crutches.

I saw the aircraft carriers, the Hornet, Enterprise and Franklin return. The Hornet had a hole in it as big as the whole outdoors.

Then They Became Friends

During my assignments, I never noticed office politics. When first called in, I encountered some resentment from men, knowing they would be moved eventually to a combat situation.

All I could do was tell them, “If not, me, it will be somebody else.” A couple of those men looked me up in Hawaii and we remained good friends.

We never had a problem with men making a pass at us. I don’t know what’s with women today.

Important Calculations

After VJ Day, I calculated the service points the men accumulated for various lengths of time and types of action. These calculations determined the priority for discharge.

I met many a fine young man who was anxious to get home to family or the girl he was going to marry.

It Was Over

I came back to the states on the hospital ship, USS Rescue. I took the train to New York, where my parents met me. I was discharged in November 1945.

Thinking back, I learned as I went along that war was a terrible thing.

Managing Navy Money
Getting In Took Time

Jeanne Swanson

In February 1944, I decided that I was going into the Marine Corps. I obtained all the information, and when I informed my parents of my decision they were not exactly supportive. Since I came from a three daughter family, I think it was very unexpected and surprising to them. However in April 1944, I applied to go into the Navy, and at that time it was very acceptable to my family. They had gotten used to the idea.

On May 4, 1944, I joined the United States Navy Reserve. I was accepted to go to Smith College, Northhampton, Mass. For midshipman training. The training lasted for two months and was very thorough. I graduated in June 1944, as an ensign, USNR.

Working and Enjoying It

Temporary orders sent me to the submarine base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Two other ensigns and I had a great and beautiful summer in Portsmouth. We visited aboard a couple of submarines, did lots of sightseeing as well as working and learning about the Navy.

In August, my orders came for training in the Supply Corp School at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While at Radcliffe, we worked and studied during the week. On weekends we were able to visit a ranch in Vermont where a horse ran away with me. We toured the Queen Mary which was docked in Rhode Island. It was so huge, and the crew treated us like royalty. We also went sightseeing in Newport and around the Boston area.

In December, I was sent to the United States Navy Disbursing Office in Baltimore, Maryland. I was disappointed, because it was so close to my home in Alexandria, Virginia, just forty miles away. I had joined the Navy to see the world!

In Baltimore there were no quarters for Navy personnel, so I ended up taking the apartment of the officer I relieved. Her roommate was a lieutenant j.g., and we got along very well. The office I worked in had about 15 employees most of whom were civilians. I worked for a lieutenant j.g. and with a chief petty officer. Both were career Navy men.

This was not always the most comfortable situation in which to work, because they were not accustomed to women in the Navy. I had many different duties. I signed and paid many vouchers and requisitions, payrolls, transportation requests with meal tickets and travel expenses for persons being sent to various stations in the Navy. I also transferred AWOL prisoners to Norfolk, Virginia by ship. I was in charge of the Foreign Money Exchange for large numbers of Merchant Marine sailors returning from overseas. I transferred large amounts of money to New York each month. Our office paid per diem to many Naval personnel who were waiting for their ships to be converted from LSTs to repair ships.

Then Marriage

In January I paid one young ensign his per diem, and in a few days I received a "Requisition Afloat" (an invitation to dinner) signed by the ensign's commanding officer. Peggy, a civilian friend, was also listed on the requisition and I accepted the invitation to a January 18, 1945 dinner. We had a very nice time, and I continued to date the ensign. We saw each other very frequently, and on February 14, 1945, with both sets of parents present, he presented me with an engagement ring and asked me to marry him. This took place at my parents' home. At first we were going to wait to get married until he came back from overseas, but shortly that changed, and on Sunday, February 25, 1945, we were married at my home in Alexandria, Virginia.

After a short trip to Kansas City, Missouri to visit his parents we returned to Baltimore, found an apartment, and both of us continued our work. In April, his ship, the USS Ulysses, was ready and became the ARB-9, a repair ship. It left the port in Norfolk around the end of April en route to the South Pacific. It was pretty lonesome, but of course my work went on as usual. Fortunately I had a quite a number of friends by then, and I was close to Washington, D.C. where my grandmother lived, and I spent some weekends with her.

Time to Go Home

By the end of April, just before my husband shipped out, I learned we were going to have a baby. I requested a discharge from the Navy, and my orders from the Bureau of Naval Personnel were completed June 4, 1945. My first son was born on December 17, 1945.

I really loved my time in the Navy and have always been proud to have served my country even though it was for a very short period of time. Regarding our quick wartime marriage, my husband and I had two more sons and enjoyed 36 years together until his untimely death in 1981.

When a Kid from Brooklyn Hits Paris Everyone Just Holds On

Helen Parrish

The war had already started when I joined the Army. I took my basic training in Camp Polk, Louisiana, which Walter Winchell called "The Hellhole of America," and he was right. The training was rough.

After basic training, we got tired of chopping down trees to kill time while waiting for our orders, so I took things into my own hands. I made up a song and 20 of us girls stood beneath the CO's window one night and sang it:

Gee, Mom, I wanna go home

The CO is a captain

She has her silver bars

Where the hell are ours?

Back to the Stumps

I was called into the commandant's office and thought I was going to be thrown out of the service. Instead we were all reprimanded and had to dig stumps out of the ground for a few days.

My next orders were for the Air Corps in Florida, where I tracked flights in and out of Fort Lauderdale. After that I was in New York for awhile. Our platoon went to one of the big NYC theaters for an evening event and were each introduced to Eleanor Roosevelt before she gave a speech giving credit to women for joining the Army. She talked to us briefly before her speech and promised to come back afterwards. When she returned, she remembered everyone's full name without any cues! She was a bright woman.

Off to Paris

I was sent to France. I loved France. A friend and I were able to take side trips on leave to Belgium, Holland, and Italy. We hitchhiked, rode in the back of stars and stripes trucks, and sneaked into the trucks at night to sleep, pulling tarps up to hide ourselves. Private Helen Ferguson, (that's me!) did cryptography, aircraft warnings, and recruitment. I also used to do the officers' hair because I was good at it.

I met my husband Doug in Paris. I was out walking with a friend along the Champs Elysees one night when all of a sudden I felt a nudge on the back of my shoulder. It was a handsome young man. He said, "Would you like a piece of Wrigley's gum? My grandfather was C.K. Wrigley." I said, "If your grandfather is C.K. Wrigley, I want the whole pack!"

Center Stage

We went with him and his buddy to the Belle Tabarean nightclub, the most exclusive nightclub in Paris. Doug's buddy asked Doug if he could dance with me. We were dancing the swing, me in my big Army shoes, and having a good time when all of a sudden I was aware there was nobody else on the stage but my partner and me. Can you imagine?

This is the fancy Parisian stage where the girls come down in baskets in the skimpiest of clothes. The audience was filled with officers. We danced up a storm and everyone loved it! (So did I. I found another stage later at Birmingham's Village Players, where I was involved in all aspects, and where Doug's art adorns the lobby walls.)

Good Soldier

I was in the service 2+ years. I was a very faithful soldier. I think I stirred things up though. I always standing up for things I

didn't think were right. My commander, Colonel Stretch, was a short, stocky, tough old broad. But I liked her so much. When she was giving out the Good Conduct medals and she got to Helen Ferguson, (that's me!) she presented the medal to me, saying a few words. Then she looked me right in the eye and added: "But I don't know why I'm doing this!"

Doug was in combat and survived the Normandy assault on D-Day. By the time the war ended I was a sergeant. I loved the Army and wanted to stay, so I applied for lieutenant, but the girls with college degrees got the jobs, so I returned home. Doug and I got married and remained married for 55 years. All from a stick of gum!

-PREFACE-

THE KOREAN CONFLICT 1950-1953
THE FORGOTTEN WAR

Korea is no stranger to war. It is a land in eastern Asia, which has existed for more than 30,000 years and has been constantly conquered by the major powers, which surround it.

The Korean peninsula is the size of Kansas, with a combined population of 39 million, with 30 million in the south. Under Chinese domination for most of its history, Japanese military forces conquered Korea in 1941. As part of the peace agreement after World War II, the country was taken from Japan, and disarming of Japanese troops in Korea became the responsibility of the U.S. in the south and Russia in the north. Both became "sovereign nations;" South Korea became a democratic country and North Korea communist.

War Begins

War erupted in Korea on June 25, 1950, along the 38th parallel that separated North and South Korea. As North Korean units pushed deep into South Korea, the United Nations Security Council, at the instigation of the United States, condemned the North Korean invasion and called on members to assist South Korea.

U.S. President Harry S. Truman, without seeking congressional approval, committed American forces to the conflict. Command of the UN forces was given to General Douglas MacArthur. Eventually nearly 1.8 million Americans would serve in Korea, of whom 54,200 were killed, 103,300 wounded, and 8,200 missing in action, according to Clay Blair in "The Forgotten War."

15 Nations Join UN

Besides the dominance of American and South Korean forces, military units from 14 other members of the United Nations fought in the conflict.

The North Korean offensive in the summer of 1950 drove from the 38th parallel to the Naktong River. But reinforcements and air power crippled North Korean supply lines and the UN and South Korea launched a counter attack that included an amphibious assault at Inchon and the advancement of ground forces north toward the Yalu River border.

Now came the bad news.

China Joins North Korea

Communist China intervened in late 1950, and the Chinese sent six armies with an estimated 180,000 troops to support North Korea.

UN forces from 15 nations had reached nearly 700,000 by July 1942 - including 260,000 Americans and 75,000 South Korean troops.

However, General MacArthur was not happy with the stalemate and "demanded" that Truman allow him to bomb Chinese industrial targets.

Truman Fires MacArthur

The president and the Joint Chiefs of Staff strongly disagreed. So, in April 1951, Truman removed MacArthur and replaced him with General Matthew Ridgeway, head of the U.S. Army in Korea.

In the spring of 1951, the front lines became almost stationary but hard fighting continued.

This was primarily in the “Iron Triangle” and “Punch Bowl” regions just north of the 38th parallel. The two most savage battles resulted in Communist defeats - “Heartbreak Ridge” in the fall of 1951 and “Pork Chop Hill” in April 1953.

United Nations forces maintained solid control of the seas and skies, with the American Air Forces carrying on strategic bombing campaigns.

Peace Talks Begin

In the summer of 1951, it was obvious that both sides wanted to stop the war, but each on its own terms and so negotiations began. But it took two years of haggling and posturing and quibbling to reach an agreement.

An agreement was finally signed in July 1953. But the divisiveness and hostility between the two parts of what was once a unified nation continued for the next 50 years.

- Alvie Smith

Sources:

U.S. Army Campaigns in the Korean War-Center of Military History—World Book Encyclopedia

“The Forgotten War in Korea: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility and Command,” by Clay Blair—World Book Encyclopedia

THIS MASH WAS REAL
LIFE AND DEATH IN THE TENTS

DR. JOHN H. MCLAUGHLIN

In 1950, I completed my hospital internship and was called to active duty as a young naval doctor assigned to the 1st Marine Division.

We were soon on a troop ship enroute to war in South Korea, where the North Koreans had begun to overrun the country. Newly engaged to Peggy, having no military training or background, and facing the prospect of encountering a rapidly advancing enemy, I had little neither enthusiasm for, nor confidence in our mission.

I became friends with a young Marine lieutenant on our ship. Each day the ship newspaper reported the advancement of the Communist troops. The eagerness and confidence of young Lieutenant Nolan, who could scarcely wait 'til we landed and the Marines would then turn the tide, buoyed me.

Inchon: My Friend Returns

We arrived in mid-September as part of General Douglas MacArthur's successful Inchon landing, well behind enemy lines. My unit, D Med Company of the 1st Marine Regiment, with five young doctors quickly set up our makeshift station, organized like a MASH hospital.

It did not take long for the terrible realities of war to sink in; one of my first patients brought in on a stretcher was my friend, Nolan, who had part of his neck and shoulder blown away.

When our unit was most active we would often operate for eighteen or twenty hours uninterrupted, taking time to drink tomato juice from a can between or during cases.

The Worst Can Happen

On one such occasion my patient was one of our ambulance drivers who had extensive intestinal injuries from a mortar wound. In the midst of this long and difficult surgery a jolt caused the lone light bulb above the operating table to explode, showering the open abdomen with hundreds of shards of fragmented glass and creating a much greater problem than his original injury. I remember the feeling of near despair at that moment, knowing the impossibility of removing all of the glass and the consequences of this as well as the delay in getting to the mounting numbers of other critically wounded Marines.

There was no question in my mind during these highly charged days that we were serving with an exceptional group of fighting men. Their morale and esprit de corps was contagious.

Truly, a Bulldog Leader

Our commander, Colonel Lewis "Chesty" Puller, was reported to be the most decorated living Marine. His men revered him, having come up through the ranks beginning as an

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Military Facts: Discharged as a lieutenant with Letter of Commendation.

enlisted man. One of his awards was the Congressional Medal of Honor. While in the field, Colonel Puller received notice of his promotion to brigadier general, and he came to me for his qualifying physical exam. On his arm below the shoulder was the tattoo of a large Marine bulldog; somehow, this seemed appropriate.

Gradually, the tide of the war, (or United Nations "Police Action" as President Truman called it), changed and we advanced out of South Korea into the mountainous North Korea, and into the cold of winter. The Marines were in an area called the Chosin Reservoir where we faced the challenge of keeping warm in 35 degree below weather.

Tide Turns at the Yalu

We were heading for the Yalu River, separating North Korea from China, which was the source of supplies for the North Korean Army. General MacArthur had wanted to destroy these enemy supply lines by bombing north of the Yalu. President Truman believed that such action would expand the war, possibly leading to a much greater war with China and even Russia.

Many others and I at that time had mixed feelings about this, but even then we knew that the president could not be overruled by the military and ultimately MacArthur was replaced.

It was in this cold and hostile northern environment that calamity suddenly struck in the form of hordes of Chinese Communist soldiers who came down from across the Yalu and threatened to overwhelm us. As we forced our way out of the mountains, Marine Division General Oliver Smith said, "We're not retreating — we're advancing in a different direction."

It Was All I Could Do

One of my poignant memories was unrelated to the battle. Our medical unit had taken down the hospital tents, the last of our non-walking wounded had been evacuated by helicopter and we were making our way down the tortuous mountainside when a Marine was brought to me with what I felt sure was acute appendicitis. In the wild chaos of that night there was nothing I could do for him other than give an injection (unlikely to help) and urge him to get down as fast as he could with the rest of the troops. It bothered me that I was unable to make contact with him after that.

Letters

Our biggest morale booster came when mail arrived. This was usually several days or sometimes weeks apart. Peggy wrote to me every day I was in Korea and sometimes ten or more of her letters would arrive at once. Many remain stored in our basement. Though I was grateful to be able to serve, when I was replaced the following year I was happy to come home.

INCHON STORY

CHUCK KIRKPATRICK

I was on active duty through the three years of the Korean War, 1950-53. My first ship was the Eldorado (AGC 11) - an Amphibious Group Command ship - whose mission was to carry a rear admiral and his staff that directed amphibious operations.

Early in the war, my ship directed landings in Inchon (west coast of South Korea) and in Hungnam (east coast of North Korea). Bob Hope welcomed the Marines to the beach in Hungnam, but they (the 7th Marines) then went on up through North Korea to the Yalu River, prompting President Truman to fire General MacArthur because he let the Marines go all the way to the Chinese border. Because there was no winter gear for the 7th Marines when they went ashore, they suffered badly in the early winter of 1950.

Beachmaster

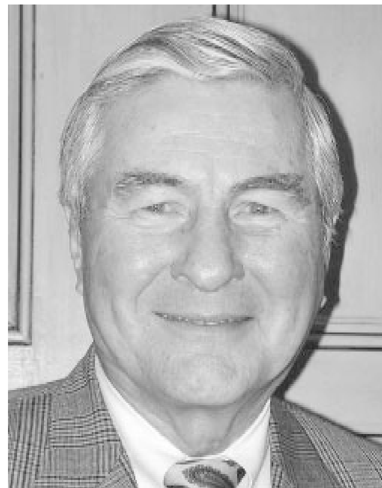
Back in Inchon, where the 7th Marines had first gone ashore, the September 1950 landings went well, and the fighting moved 20 miles to the north, around Seoul. I was sent ashore to live with the Army's 2nd Engineer Special Brigade for a couple of weeks to act as a beachmaster, beaching civilian-Japanese-operated LSTs that were bringing in artillery shells. The LSTs would sit high and dry on the mudflats from one high tide to the next (Inchon had 32-foot tides), while an endless line of Korean civilians walked onto and off the LST, each carrying a wooden box on his shoulder containing two pieces of fixed ammunition.

Bar Operations 101

When my beachmaster days ended, the skipper sent me ashore again (I was the junior ensign on board) to open a bar - an officers' club. My boss, the ship's first lieutenant, a reserve lieutenant from San Diego, thought it a terrible waste of manpower to send a regular Navy officer off on such duty when he should be back on the ship learning about the Navy, but I didn't mind. It was another adventure.

The skipper sent another man ashore to open an enlisted men's club. He looked around town and found a warehouse that still had a roof. His source of supply materialized a few days later when a tanker entered Inchon's outer harbor. Its open decks were covered with beer, and it was piled six or eight cases high.

Meanwhile, I was a farm kid from Indiana fresh out of engineering school. Other than being experienced at tapping beer kegs, I didn't know beans about bars. But we had storekeepers on board. And one of them had an MBA. (They know about bars.) So I got two storekeepers, and we went ashore to open a bar.



My friends from the Engineer Special Brigade hauled a rail passenger car down to the beach for us and helped us remove every other seat. We ended up with a series of booths on both sides of a center aisle. All we lacked was a

bar, and we found one out in town that was about six feet long, which we could readily install at one end of the rail car. We were equipped.

Our stock of consumables was already available. In Japan the skipper, who was paid to anticipate needs, had filled his linen closet with bottles. That was enough to last us a long time. But then came the management decision: how to mix the martinis. I sought advice in the wardroom, where several of our staff officers hung out. (The ship's company didn't have time to hang out - they had to work for a living.) Opinions varied on how to mix the martinis. Some suggested 2:1 or 3:1; the marine colonel said they should be mixed 7:1. We mixed them about 4:1.

Each morning the two storekeepers and I would go ashore on the ten o'clock boat. The storekeepers would take turns dropping off at the bar and, with the Korean kid that we hired, mixing the martinis in glass gallon jugs. The other storekeeper and I would borrow a Jeep from the Army and go look around town. At one o'clock we'd be back at the bar to open for business.

They'd come from everywhere. Not only were there Navy people from the ships in the outer harbor - Americans, British, and Australians - but there were Army people - Americans, British, Australians, Belgians, Turks, and even some South Koreans. These guys would have a drink, talk about promotion policies in various countries, talk about weapons, have another drink, and pretty soon they're passing sidearms around. Then some clown shoots a hole through my overhead! We had to take their weapons. "Hats off; guns off," our new sign read. We'd pile them up in a little phone booth-sized compartment at one end of the rail car.

One afternoon the admiral came in. He had a Korean lady in tow. She was dressed in a beautiful long white oriental gown, and she probably thought she was being taken to a nicer officers' club than our old rail car. But she and the admiral and a couple of flag types seemed to have a good time. They didn't come in until a quarter to five, and five o'clock was closing time. That was the only evening we stayed open a little late.

I wonder if that old rail car is still there on the beach? One thing for sure - I found one thing I didn't want to do for a career: run a bar.

In January 1952 I returned to the U.S. and went to Submarine School in New London, Connecticut for six months. Then followed a year on board an anti-submarine submarine, based in New London but nearly always at sea. In August 1953 I returned to civilian life to go to graduate business school, still determined not to run a bar.

Naval Service - For the Good of Mankind

Curtis L. Lundy

I served in the United States Navy from September 1950 until August 1956.

This was during the "Cold War" between 1945 and 1991 when there was mutual distrust between the Eastern communist block of nations and the Western democratic nations. Also, North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950 and the United States became fully engaged in a fighting war until July 1953.

"Cold War" on My Watch

My active duty came after the Korean War but did include that tense, unstable period when Russia and the United States accused each other of wanting to rule the world. I saw no fighting in Korea, but did have minor naval service roles in furthering democracy and international scientific endeavors in foreign lands and I am proud of this contribution.

At the time of my high school graduation, the U.S. Selective Service was drafting high school graduates and college men into the Army. I wanted to continue my education in college and I had no particular interest in joining the Army anyway, so I entered the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps as a midshipman at the University of Michigan and pursued studies in mineralogy and geology. In the summer of 1953, I took part in a six-week midshipman cruise on the destroyer USS Gainard in the Caribbean. The ship made one stop at Guantanamo (Gitmo), Cuba, the location of the present Camp Delta prison, which is no vacation spot.

Upon graduation in 1954 with the rank of ensign, I was assigned duty onboard the USS Kankakee, a WW II fleet oiler, commissioned in 1942. Since 1951, this ship operated with the U.S. 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. The ship was equipped with saran-lined tanks and carried only "clean" aircraft jet fuel.

Learning Ship Operations

I was one of the thirteen officers in the crew. My duties included standing four-hour watches on the bridge, four hours on and eight hours off. All ship operations are controlled from the bridge, both on board and with respect to other ships in the task force. I also spent time learning the various communications, steering, propulsion and emergency systems on board. I assisted the navigator in shooting stars and in plotting our position. I was the assistant gunnery officer and had certain responsibilities for four 40mm guns.

Fuel for Sea and Air Ships

After joining up with the several other supply ships in the Mediterranean, the Kankakee would frequently steam alongside a fleet oiler and transfer some av gas while moving at 10 knots at a distance of 80 to 120 feet apart, day or night. The fleet oilers then would rendezvous with the aircraft carriers and cruisers to supply both boiler fuel and av gas during the same underway transfer.

There were also refrigerator and ammunition ships in our fleet that delivered all needed supplies to the fighting ships. This is how our modern day nuclear carrier task forces are supported around the world today.

Spreading Goodwill

A major function of the Sixth Fleet during the "Cold War" was the creation of goodwill and assurance among the peoples of the Mediterranean. Therefore, the shore-leave policy was liberal and I was able to visit numerous ports, such as Athens, Naples, Almeria, Oran, Palermo, Barcelona, Ismir, Leghorn, Cannes and even Paris. At each port of call, the Kankakee was open for visitors and I felt like a true ambassador to the world promoting our democratic way of life.

The Kankakee returned to the states in June 1955 for decommissioning, and I had received orders to report to Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Chicago.

On to Antarctica

On the return trip, word was received that the Navy needed personnel for ships going to Antarctica in support of the 1957-58 International Geophysical Year. Since Chicago was only 200 miles from my Lansing, Michigan home, my studies were in geology and I was single, I requested and received assignment to a Navy ice breaker scheduled to go south to the bottom of the world. My parents commented at the time, "Curt, are you crazy?" They believed that a trip to Antarctica was as risky as going to the moon.

I boarded the USS Glacier at Boston in mid-October 1955. After the ship was loaded with two snow cats, a weasel, a caterpillar tractor, a small airplane, two helicopters and drums of fuel, she departed Norfolk for New Zealand and points south. We sailed through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific, passing the equator, the international date line and the Antarctic Circle; all requiring special "celebrations" for the uninitiated.

We arrived at McMurdo Sound, Antarctica on December 18. We found it completely frozen in by sea ice approximately fifty miles from shore. Several days were spent on reconnaissance trips to map out the ice distribution. Weather was generally overcast with blowing snow and temperatures in the 20s.

Light 24 Hours a Day

At 76 degrees south latitude, it was light 24 hours each day. Soon, continuous operations were begun to off-load building materials from the cargo ships and transport them by large caterpillar tractors towing sleds across the sea ice to land.

Thus was a friendly invasion to build a campsite to house scientists during the severe dark winter was underway. It was here that I was privileged to control the Glacier with remote controls on the bridge during ice breaking operations; a procedure where the ship repeatedly moves back and forward to ram the reinforced hull up on to the ice.

Another adventure occurred when the Glacier steamed easterly along the Ross Glacier escarpment to the Little America camps previously established by Admiral Richard E. Byrd.

Previous Camps

Four previous camps were built between 1928 and 1947. Upon arrival, a flag raising ceremony was conducted for previous Byrd party members. Evidence of the first campsite was found by an exposed tip of a 65-foot radio antenna just visible above the snow. Weather here was clear and cold at 13 degrees fahrenheit on December 28. Admiral Byrd and his son did join the Glacier for several days during these operations.

Upon selecting a good snow ramp to the top of the 100 foot high glacier, materials were unloaded from a cargo ship to build the new Little America V campsite. At both locations, materials and supplies were moved ashore at breakneck speed around the clock.

Navy Seabees (construction workers) were also assembling buildings and equipment before the severe winter weather arrived and the ships had to leave for home. The icebreaker Glacier departed McMurdo Sound on March 29, 1956 and sailed westerly around the Antarctic coastline, stopping to check on several possible future landing sites.

Upon reaching the Atlantic Ocean, a course was followed northerly to ports of call at Montevideo, Rio De Janeiro and Barbados. The Glacier completed her "around the world" trip near Norfolk and arrived home in Boston early in June.

I found great adventure in the trip. Feeling like the great explorer and that I contributed to the international science effort, which continues to this day. I almost hated to be discharged from the Navy.

I completed my active service with the rank of lieutenant j.g. in August 1956, and later during President Kennedy's administration was advanced to the grade of lieutenant.

I Did Something for My Country, but My Country Did More for Me

David A. Schwartz

My military service began during the Korean War, immediately after my graduation from the University of Detroit. My degree was in civil engineering, but the U.S. Navy had few openings in the Civil Engineering Corps at that time. Recruiters advised me to apply for Officer's Candidate School as a line officer. I was told there was a good chance of my being accepted in the Civil Engineering Corps at a later date. As a result, I was sworn into the U.S. Navy in July 1951, and boarded a train for Newport, Rhode Island. My rating was seaman recruit, the lowest enlisted man's rating in the Navy.

For the following four months, my days began at 5:30 a.m. and "lights out" was at 10 p.m., or in Navy lingo, "22 hundred hours." Officer Candidate School classes were intensive, and covered all facets of Navy life. There was no free time except on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. When we were not in class we were eating, studying or sleeping. Saturday mornings were for learning to march or target practicing with M-1 rifles or .45 revolvers.

Saturday night was our only chance for recreation in downtown Newport. We usually spent the evening crowded around the piano bar in downtown Newport, singing all the old favorites. Often, we spent Saturday night sleeping in a bunk at the local YMCA. By November, we learned all about naval etiquette, naval history, ship propulsion systems, torpedoes, radar, sonar, gunnery, and every type of ship in the Navy. I became a "120 day wonder" and was commissioned as an ensign in the Line Officer Corps.

On Board USS Navarro

My first assignment was aboard USS Navarro (APA 215), a 12,500 ton amphibious ship. The attack transport vessel was designed to assist amphibious landings on enemy beaches. Our ship personnel consisted of 41 officers and 350 enlisted men. It also had sleeping accommodations for up to 800 Marines. Using our 26 small boats, we hauled Marines to the beaches in amphibious landings. After a few weeks aboard ship, I was sent to Amphibious School at Little Creek, Virginia, for a month. We learned about LCMs (landing craft, medium) and LCVPs (land craft, vehicles, personnel).

We operated these small craft, learned how to maneuver them, set up formations, and the intricacies of amphibious landings on enemy beaches. We got to know timing was everything. Hit the beach too early, and our forces would be pounded by our own naval bombardment. We arrive too late, and then the enemy has time to recover after the bombardment. The allowable window is plus-or-minus one minute.

After graduation, I returned to Navarro at Norfolk to begin my career as a line officer. Although the war was in the Pacific theater, we were soon heading to the Mediterranean Sea as part of the 6th Fleet. Usually, we were underway in formation with three or four other ships. As time went on, I learned to find our location with the use of a sextant, and how to take control of the ship as Officer-of-the-Deck. In the Combat Information Center we learned to track other ships and aircraft with the use of our radar, and track submarines utilizing our sonar. Our work was not only educational, but also fascinating.

Amphibious Landings

During our tour in the Mediterranean, we carried out amphibious landings on Crete, Cyprus, Malta and Sardinia. One of my duties was lead officer, on the lead boat, on the first wave of boats to "hit the beach." The other ships would also supply small boats and Marine personnel, so there was typically up to 50 small boats in the operation, with each wave consisting of eight to 10 boats beaching in unison.

My most enjoyable duty was being athletic officer for our naval personnel. The athletic officer for the Marine battalion and I were responsible for finding athletic fields for our enlisted men where they could play softball or tennis while at liberty ports. Occasionally we would challenge an aircraft carrier to a basketball game on their flight deck, but we had little chance of defeating them.

During seven months in the Mediterranean, our home port was Golfe Juan, on the French Riviera, one of the most enjoyable liberty ports in the world. Other ports-of-call included Marseilles, Gibraltar, Naples, Athens, Genoa, Bari and Algiers. On two or three day leaves, we were able to visit many historic cities including Paris, Rome and Florence. We returned to Norfolk in November 1952, after a brief liberty stop at Bermuda.

In December, I got a 30 day leave to wed my college girlfriend, Dorothy. We honeymooned in Florida, and in January I returned to the ship. We rented a small apartment above a grocery store in Norfolk. Dot, a registered nurse, went to work at a local hospital.

After my vacation, we visited Cuba and Jamaica. In March I had a weekday off and took a quick trip up to Washington, D.C. At the Pentagon's Bureau of Naval Personnel, I had the opportunity to interview for a transfer to the Civil Engineering Corps (CEC). About a month later, I received my orders, transferring to the CEC and assigning me to the Ninth Naval District at Great Lakes, Illinois.

The Construction Business

I left the ship in May, and after a short training period at Great Lakes, I was off to Denver, Colorado, the Naval Air Station at Buckley Field. I served there as resident officer in charge of construction, or ROINCC. My office personnel were two construction inspectors and a secretary. During the remainder of 1953, we supervised completion of the design and construction of a control tower; a fire and rescue building; an aircraft hanger; and an asphalt overlay on all of the airport's concrete runways.

Dot and I lived off of the base, in a small apartment. Weekends were spent camping in the Rockies, sleeping in a tent, fishing and enjoying the fantastic scenery. They were some of the most invigorating and wonderful days of our lives. Near the end of 1953, I was transferred once again, this time to Reynolds Metals Co. in McCook, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. It was contracted by the Navy to roll aluminum sheets that would ultimately become the skin of new naval aircraft. A large

building addition was to be designed and constructed for a new rolling operation.

Architectural Duties

My duties, again as ROINCC, included selecting the architect/engineer, supervising the design along with plant executives, overseeing the bidding and award process, and supervising the inspection team. During my work at Reynolds Metals, I was advanced to lieutenant (junior grade).

Life again was good. Dot and I lived in an apartment, not far from the plant. She worked again at a local hospital. Weekends were free to enjoy the good life offered in the Chicago area - Museum of Science & Industry, Shedd Aquarium, Brookfield Zoo, Wrigley Field, Soldier Field, downtown shows, restaurants and many other great things.

Every two weeks I drove up to Ninth Naval District headquarters to review progress of the design and construction projects. Plans and specifications were reviewed, along with budgets, progress schedules, and recommended revisions. In addition to the expansion project for the new rolling mill line, other projects included raising the roof of a building by 20-feet high, and construction of foundations for a variety of large equipment.

Back to Civilian Life

In November 1954, my three-year tour of duty as an officer in the Navy was completed. I received my honorable discharge, and Dot and I returned to Detroit and civilian life.

My military service in the U.S. Navy was an experience I would recommend to every young man. As a line officer, I learned how to take command and give orders. In Civil Engineering Corps, I expanded my education in building design and construction, and prepared myself for a work life in this field.

I started out trying to do something good for my country, but as it turned out my country did even more for me.

I Was a Boogie-Woogie Man with the USO

Robert E. Seeley

I was too young to participate in WWII. I was 13 years old and starting piano lessons when the war started in 1941, and it ended six months before I before I reached the draft age of 18.

However, my contact with WWII was through the USO, which served centers of entertainment and a home-like atmosphere for U.S. soldiers all over the world.

I had been on a city-wide boogie woogie contest promoted by the famous Frankie Carle, the piano-playing band leader, at the Michigan Theater in downtown Detroit. I was 17 at the time, and was runner-up in the finals.

I won $100 and a kiss from Margarie Hughes, Frankie Carle's good-looking daughter. As a result of this exposure, I was invited to join a USO troupe that toured the military bases and hospitals in Southeast Michigan and Ontario. The troupe had a magician, a comedian, a tap dance trio (very pretty girls), a concert pianist, and me, the Boogie Man.

Music for Hospital Patients

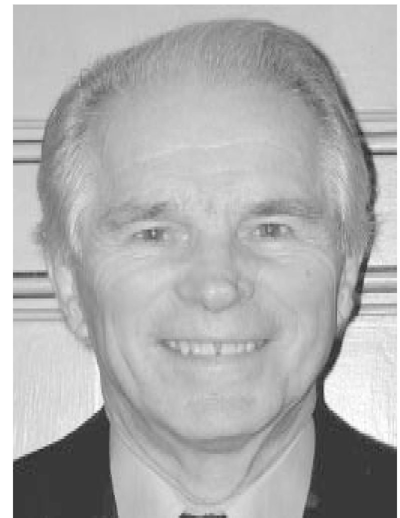
In the hospitals, we had an upright piano that was wheeled into the wards. One ward was for quadriplegics, no arms or legs. Very sad. Another was a psychiatric ward, where I had to stop playing boogie as the patients were becoming very agitated. However, it was a great experience and impressed upon me the horrors of war. I joined the Marine Corps in March 1952, while the Korean War was going full blast. My brother, three years older and a WWII veteran, advised me to learn typing before getting in.

I studied a typing instruction book for 30 days prior to entering the Marines, and got up to 30 words per minute, which entitled me to take a test in boot camp to qualify for the Marine Corps typing school. Being extremely nervous when taking the test, I did manage to get over the line for qualification for the school, with the help of a kindly corporal who was monitoring the start and stop times of the test. (He whispered to me to keep going).

I will forever be indebted to this man who kept me out of the infantry. I then learned to type 120 words per minute and became an "office pinky" in the Corps.

Marine Boot Camp

Boot camp was at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego. While there, three of us were offered Officer Candidate School training, but refused, as it meant an extra 18 months in the Corps. Not being convinced that Korea was a threat to the USA, I was not enamored of military life, and wanted out. Music was on my mind.



After boot camp, I was sent to the Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina, working for Colonel B.Z. Redfield in

Marine Air Group 35. While there, the base held a talent contest, which I won by playing the "Honey Dripper" and a fast boogie version of the "Marine Corps Hymn" (I thought I'd either win with this one or be sent to the brig, but I was desperate!)

Most fellows on the base did not have a car, but I had a 1951 Plymouth convertible. As many men were from the New York City area, we would run a ferrying service from the base to Manhattan on weekends when we could get a pass to leave the base. Round trip fee was $25 per person (I could take 4 people) and gas expenses were $25, so I'd make a net profit of $75. We'd leave the base at 6 p.m. Friday, and arrive in NYC at 5 a.m. the next morning. I'd go to a relative's house and enter (no doors were locked back then!) and go directly to the guest room for sleep.

Saturdays on 52nd Street

Saturday night was spent on the famous 52nd Street in Manhattan, the home of many jazz nightclubs where the greatest pianists would play. Sunday at 5 p.m., I would pick up my passengers at a designated point on the New Jersey Turnpike and drive all night to get back to the base just in time to go to work. Monday at work was a day of misery, drinking coffee and Cokes to stay awake.

I must confess, I left the Marine Corps with the greatest of respect for the men, the tradition and the history. It is one of the finest military organizations in the world. I was lucky enough not to see combat, and have total respect and awe for the men who did. I am very proud to be able to say that I'm a Marine Corps veteran.

God Bless America's Veterans

As a final note, a few years ago I was in Normandy, France, at Omaha Beach, the site of the invasion and battle. There were German pillboxes, and many white crosses marked with the ages of 18 and up. This land is owned and maintained by the USA. At 6 p.m. every day, they lower the flag by playing "Taps," then "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and finally, "God Bless America."

By that time, everybody has big tears in their eyes. Nobody is dry eyed. The French friend who was showing this to us (about 40 years old) had been there 17 times and was bawling like the rest of us. Very emotional. It makes one proud to be an American.

Every American should have the opportunity to see Omaha Beach. It took America's power to win WWII. We are the greatest country in the world. We must always honor the servicemen. They keep us free, safe, and strong.

I've been lucky to visit France, Austria and Germany many times. I'm struck by the fact that the Austrians and Germans, who were once our mortal enemies, are now great democracies, and wonderful, friendly people. I associate with musicians who are the offspring of the Axis fighters, who are now playing American derived music. We are like brothers to each other. It's our military servicemen who brought this about, along with a great idea called the Marshal Plan, which provided assistance from America to help rebuild Europe after the war's destruction.

Hopefully, mankind's attitude toward each other will change in the future (maybe not in my lifetime) to where we will help each other, rather than try to destroy each other. In the meantime, let's all keep America strong.

HOW TENNIS KEPT ME FROM HARM'S WAY

DONALD L. FOEHR

Having played tennis in high school and having won the city men's singles title in Portsmouth, Ohio, I considered myself "hot stuff" on the courts when I entered Michigan State College. I was a 17-year-old freshman in the fall of 1948, and of course, I tried out for the MSC tennis team.

I practiced with the varsity team and did fairly well as a freshman. Then two Hawaiian boys who played tennis since birth came to campus, and I soon learned that my poor country boy's game wasn't quite good enough. From then on, I played socially at State, and more seriously during summers back home, where they still considered me "really good."

Since MSC was a "land grant" college, all male freshmen and sophomores were then required to enroll in ROTC. I requested Air ROTC, but since I did not have 20/20 vision, I was placed in the Quartermaster program, somewhat matching my major in hotel and restaurant administration.

That became significant in June 1950 when North Korea invaded South Korea and the United States became involved in it's first-ever "police action." (Loosely defined that's a war where the politicians strategically manage the conflict from the safety of Washington, while the troops get killed over worthless terrain. Granting "sanctuary" across the Chinese border to the North Korean enemy also came into vogue, so as not to upset the Russians or Chinese. "What a country!")

Continuing in the ROTC program beyond the required two years, I was deferred from service until graduation in June 1952, when I was commissioned a second lieutenant.

Waiting for the Orders

I was ordered to report to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, in July 1952 and told I would be reassigned to Fort Lee, Virginia, for basic officers training after a month or so. But when I arrived at Camp Atterbury, my college major of hotel and restaurant administration was noted and I was assigned to be assistant club officer at the camp's officers' club. Sure, it was tough duty, but somebody had to do it!

After getting the hang of my new responsibilities and bringing the club's accounting records up to date, I began frequenting the three adjacent tennis courts. Because of the limited number of courts for play, doubles was the game of choice. Over the first couple of weeks I played with several different partners, but soon I became "Joe's" partner whenever he showed up, which was frequently. As it turned out, "Joe" was a bird colonel and the base commander!

The allotted month passed quickly, but the expected orders to Ft. Lee didn't come. Months two, three, four and part of five likewise passed —with a lot of tennis, but no transfer orders. When they finally did come in mid-December and I was processing out of Camp Atterbury, I asked about the delay in

being transferred. The response was, "Why lieutenant, I know of at least three times you were taken off orders." Thankfully, good old Colonel Joe liked to win.

Cruising to Korea — At Last

While I was spending the next eight months at Fort Lee in various specialized training programs, the forever-negotiated "armistice" was finally signed at Panmunjom, in July 1953, ending the "police action" in Korea.

At the conclusion of the training, I was granted a short leave before reporting to Fort Lewis, Washington. That was the embarkation port for a memorable 21-day pleasure cruise to Korea. Nothing could beat sailing with 1,800 seasick troops.

In Korea, my unit had a minor participation in the "prisoner exchange." Most of my duties were rather mundane, and I took far too many drab pictures.

My Korean service turned out to be a lot less exciting that it might have been if I had not spent those extra four months at Camp Atterbury playing tennis with good old Colonel Joe.

Boom of Big Guns in Korea Still Unforgettable

Robert Janover

I entered the Army in August 1952, at age 22, as a second lieutenant of Artillery, called to active duty following graduation from Princeton University via the ROTC.

Since the Korean War was in progress, all of us, as reserve officers, were called up. I spent time in the U.S. at the Artillery School at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma and then at Ft. Lewis, Washington prior to being sent to Japan and then to Pusan, Korea.

When I arrived at the front lines — the "main line of resistance" in Korea — I was assigned to the Third Infantry Division, the same division that recently distinguished itself in Iraq, and then to the 9th Field Artillery Battalion.

I arrived at the front in July 1953, about a week before the cease-fire. The battery was in the so-called "Iron Triangle" slightly north of the 38th Parallel. Fortunately, I was assigned as assistant executive officer of a firing battery of 155 mm Howitzers.

I say "fortunately" because most of the other new lieutenants were sent on as "forward observers" to the infantry units, some of which were South Korean army infantry outfits, which were in front of us. Some were killed, wounded and captured in the final days of the fighting.

A Non-Stop Thunderstorm

We were engaged in intense back and forth fire with the Chinese, the incoming and outgoing shelling went 24 hours every day with peak activity taking place in the dark and early morning hours. The firing sounded like a thunderstorm, day and night.

There were six Howitzers in our battery, which was spread out over an area the size of a football field. We of course couldn't see the enemy and depended on forward ground and air observers for our target selection.

Each gun made an ear-splitting noise when fired individually and at the beginning of each salvo, all six guns were fired together and the ground would shake as if in an earthquake.

It is impossible to describe to anyone who has not actually experienced it, the volume or decibel count of the explosions from artillery pieces. It must be hundreds of times louder than you hear in the theater when you see war movies or in TV footage. Ours were 105mm Howitzers called "medium artillery." There WAS even heavier - and louder - artillery in the Korean War; 240mm Howitzers and 8-inch guns.

Most of the soldiers who had served with the firing battery for months were at least partially deaf. Some could hardly hear anything at all. They all hoped that their deafness eventually would wear off; but after the cease fire and cessation of firing there was no improvement in their hearing and they realized that they were permanently deaf.

Since I was only in combat with the battery for a few days, my hearing even today remains normal.

The Battle Field Fell Silent

When the cease-fire was signed the war continued for another day and stopped at 10 p.m. on the next day. We kept blasting away until 9:45 p.m. and waited warily for the Chinese to stop firing at us. We were not certain that the war was really over. The Chinese unloaded all of their ammunition on that last night and stopped at 10:00 p.m. on the dot. The battlefield fell silent.

The next day; we had to withdraw two miles despite heavy rain in which the Howitzers sunk in the mud and had to be pulled out by winches and steel cables attached to Jeeps and trucks. The area where we had been positioned became - and still is - the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

After the cease fire, I served in a variety of capacities including artillery instructor at the Third Division NCO Academy, also called the "Leadership School," and at the battalion headquarters until returning to the U.S. in February. I left active duty in the Army on March 2, 1954. I remained in the Army Reserve for several years while attending Harvard Law School and then during my first years as a practicing lawyer.

But to this day, I vividly remember the boom of those Howitzers!

Witness to the Atomic Bomb

Jim Holden

As a Korean War draftee between 1952-1954, while training as a military policeman at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, I was thrilled to be selected from the many who wanted to be part of the Army's nuclear testing and research program.

Atomic Bomb Blast in Nevada

With 550 troop observers from all the armed services, I was going to Nevada to observe an atomic bomb test. We flew in a chartered plane filled entirely with MPs, all armed with Colt .45 pistols in their holsters.

We were sheltered in tents in the desert outside of Las Vegas. After the first day's dinner, most of the GIs were driven into Vegas to enjoy casinos along the "Strip." Some of us had to stay behind for KP duty, but we enjoyed hearing their stories.

On our first work day, there were preparatory lectures. On the second, April 25, 1953 — long before dawn, we were awakened and driven to Nevada's Yucca Flats for the test, officially designated "Shot Simon."

Blast Set for 4:30 A.M.

We entered trenches which were five or six feet deep, and about two miles south of the 300-foot-tall bomb tower. With detonation set for 4:30 a.m. it was too dark to see the tower.

From loudspeakers in each trench we heard scientists announce from somewhere behind us, "When the time comes, squat down, cover your closed eyelids with your hands. You will hear a 10 second countdown. Do not get up until we tell you."

Dirt excavated from our trench made a small berm along its north side. The soldier beside me took out a bridge deck and set up some cards along the berm. We tied handkerchiefs around our clean pistols before holstering them.

Finally, we heard the order, "Squat, cover your eyes." It was at 4:30 a.m. The countdown began. Soldiers went silent. Tension grew with each count. The blast came after count one, and I was taken by surprise. I expected a count zero.

Intense Light Before the Sound

Prior to any sound came the intense light. It penetrated our hands and closed eyelids. We saw our finger bones appearing like X-ray shadows in a haze of pink.

Then the earsplitting sound arrived. It was much too painful for uncovered ears. This was the moment I thought I made a mistake to volunteer. Would I be forever deaf?

Next came whistling sounds from stones and debris, flying overhead like airborne bullets. Soon the speaker said "get up and look at it." Thick dust was swirling and rising from our trench. Some GIs said the trench twisted like a snake. Our pistols became so dirty with pressurized dust that, despite our wrapping, the underside of all screw heads was packed with soil. With clasped hands we now hoisted one another to ground level.

After the Blast

One of the cards that had been set out on the berm lay nearby. It was the ace of spades, and the ace image was now seen clearly on both sides. The black areas absorbed the heat so quickly as to avoid burning.

Tall saguaro cacti were in flames as far as we could see, like candles on a cake. We saw the immense fireball resting at ground level. Then it floated skyward, like a giant hot air balloon, trailing a column of dust. Surrounding the rising ball and moving with it were radiated particles of sand and dust, like twinkling lights of blue and purple. An awesome sight, it resembled a giant mushroom with fireflies.

Geiger counters were swept over the ground ahead of us as we advanced toward ground zero. Parallel fabric tapes outlined our walking trail, an allegedly safe area. Before turning back at about one mile from ground zero (1,830 meters) we toured the display area that had been exposed to the bomb's impact.

There were overturned Army trucks with tires ablaze, a damaged house, and living sheep with only one side burned black. They had been protected from flying objects but not from heat.

Glad it was Over

Heading back to our camp, we were pleased with the adventure but glad it was over. The next day, April 26, 1953, was my 24th birthday.

Blast Larger Than Expected

In 1987, 34 years later, a letter from the Defense Nuclear Agency advised: "The Simon device produced a nuclear yield of 43 kilotons, significantly larger than expected. Because the wind shifted at the time of detonation, radiation levels in the Desert Rock trench area were higher than anticipated."

So, we had been exposed to unexpected danger, but fortunately for me there have been no apparent health effects.

My active duty ended after nine months near Stuttgart, Germany, as a corporal at the MP headquarters.

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