

One Marine's Story Of World War II

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Pre-War

World War II was well under way during my high school days. It was discussed in history classes and I followed it closely in the newspapers, magazines and radio. The United States was heavily involved supplying the European Allied nations with armament, ammunitions, Jeeps and tanks among all the other necessities.

I started working on the Delaware and Hudson Railroad as a brakeman while taking a post graduate year at Whitehall High School missing some school sessions in favor of working. When I finished school in June 1941 I was able to work at least full time and some overtime. While it was possible that I didn't work every day, I worked enough overtime to fill in the blanks. There were many "extra" trains being called that were delivering military supplies to Canada for shipping to England. Many of these trains were composed of just flatcars loaded with tanks. As I recall, there were two tanks on each flatcar and there would be about 120 cars in the train with at least two steam engines in the front and, at times, one or two in the rear as pushers when going up hilly terrain.

Most of my road trips were to Rouses Point on the Canadian border. There were some Mohawk turn-crews and trips to Oneonta plus yard jobs of switching cars to make up a train. When I was on the road, I just had to sit on a box seat in the engine's left window so that I could read block signals that were on the blind side for the engineer and I also had to closely watch the wheels of the train for fireboxes or anything that may be going wrong with the train. I felt sorry for the firemen during these times because they seemed to be working so hard and I would get down to shovel coal for them to give them a rest. With their instructions, I improved to a point of being a respectable fireman and could go indefinitely. There were times when we had a "straight shot" with no dropoffs or pickups and I would tell the fireman to sit down and I would fire the trip for him. Somehow, the word got around and one evening Dispatcher Bobbie Moore phoned me to see if I would fire a pusher on WR1. I told him that I was a brakeman and that he was making a mistake. It was no mistake. All of the firemen were working, or off sick, and they wanted me to fire. I agreed to do it if I was provided with a good steaming engine and had a good engineer and was assured that it would be that way so I said OK.

When I was approaching the yard office to sign on for work, I saw the 1084 engine on the dump lined up as pusher engine. I went directly to Bobby to verify that I was going to wrestle with the 1084 because that was the worst steaming engine on the D&H. Then he told me that Buck "Bearmeat" Saunders was to be the engineer. Buck hated brakemen - especially me - since we had locked horns more than once and he usually lost. He did everything he could to make things miserable for me once we got underway and it was quite a job keeping the required minimum 165 pounds of steam on the gauge. I had a nice looking fire but when we stopped at Port Henry to take on water, I found two holes in it which I filled in and I packed up the rear corners real good. As we went up Westport Hill (about 12 miles) I gained more pressure very slowly and when we broke over the top and

the train's pressure lessened, the gauge hit 215 and the engine "popped off". Buck had his head stuck out his window all the way from Whitehall and he almost fell out of his seat when he heard the pop. He looked at the steam gauge and then the water gauge and asked me how I did that. I told him that it wasn't easy the way he was operating the engine. He got down from his seatbox with difficulty (he had a club foot and was a big man) and took the shovel out of my hands to use it to fan the fire and look it over. Then he told me to get on my seat and eat my lunch as he hooked up the engine to operate more like it should be operated. When we got to Rouses Point, he treated me to breakfast and we got along real good. The trip back to Whitehall that afternoon was a cinch with a light load and the 1054, a creampuff of a steamer. In Whitehall he told Bobby Moore that he would be glad to have me as his fireman anytime he went out.

Eventually December 7th, 1941 arrived and I was called to work the 8a.m. to 4p.m. switch-engine at Tub Mountain in Whitehall. Everything went routine until early afternoon when I brought the engine to the yard office at the north end for new switch lists. The clerk surprised me by bringing the slips out to me. As he hurriedly approached me he said that the Japs had just bombed Pearl Harbor. I said, "So what?" and he said that it belongs to the U.S.. When I asked him where it was, he replied that it might be in the Pacific somewhere. I went home after work and told my father and mother about the attack and we immediately turned on the radio to see what they might have to say. It was about an hour and a half before there was a newsflash without many details except that there may have been heavy casualties and property damage. I told my parents that I was going to join the Marines but my father said a definite "NO" and he wouldn't sign approval for me at that time.

Enlisting in the U.S. Marines

Things went on their routine ways through the summer of 1942 before my father finally gave his approval for me to join the Marines. I went to the recruiting station in Glens Falls to get the necessary paperwork, a friend from Whitehall was the sergeant in charge. He gave me a looseleaf notebook with colorblind tests to read for him. I flunked the test royally. Couldn't read one of the pages. When I told my father, he seemed happy about the failure. I returned to Glens Falls two or three times a week with my friend's permission so that I could memorize the charts before going to Rutland, VT to sign up. I had great confidence when I went to the Rutland recruiter and recited all of the color charts in order as I turned the pages. The recruiter stopped me about half way through to tell me that I had all the right answers - but on the wrong pages. The pages hadn't been put in that book in the same order as Glens Falls had done it. I was rejected and dejected. My father went to Rutland with me a few days later and after a long talk and a lot of pleading, the commissioned officer in charge called Washington, DC to see if anything could be done. They asked if I had any hobbies and when I said photography I was advised that a photography school was in the wind for Quantico and that I would be allowed to go there after boot camp. If I came up to Marine Corps standards at the completion of the

schooling, they would find something for me to do. The papers were filled out and signed and I was sworn in. I had about a week at home before getting on a train at Rutland which went to Grand Central Station in New York City. We had to walk to Pennsylvania Station where we boarded a troop train with nothing but Marine recruits heading for Parris Island, SC.

Parris Island, SC - Boot Camp

Being welcomed to Parris Island was like no other welcome, before or since. There was no kindness or respect from anyone, just insults, swearing and run, run, run. Our first accomplishment was surviving the issuance of all our gear and trying to learn how the Marines did things. A quick change for many was getting a Marine haircut. The barber that serviced me asked if I was a wiseguy because I already had a brushcut (I had it since I was 12 years old). Before I was sworn into the Marines, my parents spent much time and money having Dr. Yellen fix up all my teeth but when we went to the USMC dentists the first Sunday on base, they drilled and filled 22 of my teeth in one sitting. Eating and drinking were problems for about a week. My platoon had two knowledgeable "Old Salts" for Drill Instructors. Our sergeant was going to Officers Candidate School when he finished with us and his assistant was a PFC who had just returned from 14 years of China duty. They showed us no mercy until the day they said goodbye to us when we graduated without further ceremony.

Our first few days on the drill field were embarrassing. We were sloppy and disorganized when compared to other platoons in our vicinity. We quickly learned the difference between a rifle and a gun and not to put our hands in our pockets unless to get something out of them (We weren't supposed to have anything in them anyway). There was an embarrassing drill for those who were slow distinguishing between a rifle and a gun. Those who were caught with their hands in their pockets were warned the first time only. When caught the second time they had to fill their pockets with sand and sew them shut which usually made the thighs quite raw after drilling that way all day. Other goof-ups had to get their pack from the barracks and fill it with clothing and shoes, then return to the drill field with full pack and their rifle so they could run with the rifle at high port to the far end of the drill field and return. Generally, when they returned they were informed that they had not done it fast enough and had to do it over again. Doing the Manual of Arms with our lockerboxes at 2:30 in the morning or a trip to the Boondocks were popular events when the DI's returned from a night on the town in Yamassee or Port Royal.

Movie actor Sterling Hayden was in a nearby platoon and we saw him on occasions. He was tall, skinny and a good Marine. There was scuttlebutt that one night at a movie, one of his DIs made some remarks about Hayden's wife who was in the movie. He was quite disturbed with the DI and told him to knock it off. The DI made a challenge out of it and invited Hayden outside for a fight. Hayden reportedly did a job on the DI.

At least once a week we stopped by the hospital for one or more shots for various diseases. One day we received a couple of shots just before noontime and returned to our barracks for a half hour break before chow formation. I got quite sick very quickly and when the DI came in and saw me he had two of my buddies practically carry me over to Sick Bay because I was too weak to stand by myself. It was determined that the Dengue(?) Fever shot had reacted on me and I was in the hospital in tough shape for about a week before returning to my platoon. There was a period that I hallucinated from the fever.

Our training progressed rapidly. Our DIs really knew their business. Our number 2 DI did a great job with bayonet fighting. He was a slight built man who was like Fred Astaire on his feet and was reportedly one of a few who had been honored with a chance to spar with the colonel who established the standard procedures for bayonet fighting. We became quite proficient at the lockerbox drills at two in the morning.

Our week at the rifle range started out OK but the weather kept getting worse as the week passed which caused problems. We received very thorough training before even getting on the firing line. Much time was spent on the proper care of the rifle and how to adjust the sights of the 03 Springfields (30.06 cal.). Practice sighting was done with our rifle resting on sandbags while a DI sat about thirty feet away straddled on a box that had a sheet of plain white paper facing us. He held a pencil in one hand and circle piece of tin with a pin hole in the middle and a small wooden handle on it. We would assume a prone firing position and direct the moving of the bullseye (the tin circle with the pin hole) across the paper until it rested on the front blade of our rifle sights. Each time we were satisfied, we said "Mark" and the DI would stick the pencil point through the hole in the tin and make a mark. This was repeated three times to see how close we could get the marks. They were required to be coverable with a dime. It would indicate that we were "holding steady" with our sighting. There was dry firing at small targets that were nearby while in the prone position and some actual shooting of .22 caliber rifles. Sunday afternoon was a treat as the DIs had a team competition among themselves with the losers providing a beer party for all. The shootout was in the standing off-hand position at 300 and 500 yards. They were good!

The first few days on the firing line were a shock to many of us. When a group was on the firing line, there was a 'ready group' about 10 yards to their rear who were using the smudge pots to blacken the front sights and making sure that their leaf sights were properly adjusted. The 03s were loud and sounded like field artillery to those of us who had not fired anything more than a .22. It was tough getting off the first round but I gritted my teeth and soon got accustomed to it. A few boots actually cried as they were forced into squeezing off the first round. I did good during this period, easily shooting Expert scores. The day before preliminary firing for score it started to rain and my score dropped down a bit but remained in the Expert category. It was raining steady and it was very cold on preliminary day and my score dipped to Sharpshooter. Record day presented

the worst weather to be encountered during the entire eight weeks of Boot Camp. It was raining very heavily. It was colder than the day before and there was a dense fog. The targets were barely visible at 100 yards. What were we going to do at 300 and 500 yards? Our 10 o'clock schedule was delayed until noontime when we broke for lunch and were re-scheduled for 2 p.m. at which time conditions were worse, if anything, but we had to go on because of an unchangeable schedule of days. There was one Marine who qualified as Sharpshooter and less than 25 of us who made Marksman that day. We had to accept the fact and arrangements were made for the others to have another chance at qualifying. I was very disappointed because I wanted to qualify as an Expert to match my father. He made expert easily in World War I and was kept on the range after Boot Camp as a DI.

Boot training was greatly improved on returning to our regular barracks after the range schooling. The finishing touches to becoming a Marine found us being treated somewhat better by the DIs and we were given a few liberties such as going to the Post Exchange, with permission, and seeing some movies. The last day at Parris Island was nothing special except that we felt pleased with ourselves for having survived the experience. The oldest boot of our platoon was in WWI and the DIs presented him with the service ribbons for his awards during that war. We were given our transfer orders and shipped out by train. I was sent to Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, VA for photography schooling.

Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA.

Quantico was a strange new world. I said, "Sir" to just about everyone met as was required in Boot Camp and I was constantly reminded by all but the commissioned officers that it wasn't necessary any more. The change was difficult to accept. Two days later was Saturday and I was given a pass to go into Washington DC for the evening. Another boot and myself made the trip together, just to see the city. We spent most of the time just walking the streets to see the sights. It was crowded and tough on us as we saluted anyone who wore a uniform that may have been an officer, even doormen at hotels. Marines are told to give a greeting when they salute an officer. Three Navy nurses were passed and I said, "Good evening, Sirs" like a good Marine, before realizing what I had said. I turned around to see if there was going to be a reaction on their part. There was. One of them said that she was not a sir, she was a ma'am. I said that she sure was, saluted again and went on my way.

The photography school was located in one end of a long, wooden building - what there was of the school. It was just being assembled. I was the only amateur photographer and I had to compete with 15 or 20 others all of whom were professionals before enlisting. As I recall, there were only four cameras available that were in carrying cases and available when we received an assignment. Each had a flashgun. A few color filters were the only other accessories on hand. The darkrooms were adequately supplied for general processing (black and white). A group of the professionals were having big problems trying to get a black and white negative from a 4"X5" color transparency. It was a shot of

a church altar beautifully decorated with flowers for Christmas Mass which the Washington Post wanted to run on the front page for Easter. It appeared that they were making a difficult job out of what seemed to be relatively simple so I asked them if I could take a stab at it. They said that I could because they were about to give it up as a bad idea. An hour later, I presented them with three very good black and white negatives. Their immediate response was, "How did you do it?". I told them they were the pros and should be telling me how to do it. I never did tell them.

Another assignment found me down at some dock where smoke screen tests were going to be conducted for evaluation. We were assigned in pairs with one man being assigned the project and a second man as backup. There was but one set of filters available for us so I told my backup to use them as I would try something different. He was more experienced than I was and I figured that his shots would be used anyway. It was an overcast day and the smoke screens were spectacular, but blended with the sky. I underexposed and overdeveloped my shots to increase the contrast to make up for the lack of a filter. They came out great! My backup wasn't too successful with his efforts and my shots were used.

One early evening I received a call from the school's commanding officer. He had forgotten about a basketball game that was to be covered that night on base. The available cameras were all on assignment except one which had no flashgun so he told me to use the stroboscope. No one used that. Dr. Harold E. Edgerton of Boston invented the strobe light shortly before that and had six made up for evaluation. The CO was a friend of his who received one and he would allow no one to use it, but tonight was my night (if nothing happened to the strobe). The shots came out a little thin on the negatives but printed up real fine. We hadn't learned yet to compensate for the extreme short duration of the flash and the fact that the silver salts on the film surface was unable to react properly.

Another assignment involved Ted Williams, a big league pitcher with the Detroit Tigers(?). He was going through OCS at the time and made a good subject. He was very cooperative and was of great assistance in making the job easy. Our paths crossed again when we met on the island of Majuro in the Marshall Islands after the invasion.

A day came when five of us were given travel orders to go to LIFE magazine in New York City for advanced training with their photographers.

Life Magazine - New York City

Duty in New York City was probably the best that anyone could ask for. Many of the people on the streets thought that Marines were troops from another country because of the recently adopted uniform called "Greens". They would ask us where we were from, or if we were Marines since some had heard of the new uniform. On several occasions a

former Marine would approach me on the street to invite me to dinner at a restaurant or offer some other benefit. I accepted a couple of dinners and heard stories of their activities in WWI that were very interesting.

We were put up at a hotel with time outside school activities strictly of our choice. School hours were something like 8 to 4 Monday through Friday. There were some after school assignments if we desired them. I used my railroad brotherhood pass to take a train home each weekend that I was in NYC.

My roommate was from Kansas City. We got along very good since we had similar interests. The first thing he wanted to do was see Times Square so in the evening we walked the few blocks from the hotel to the Square and he really enjoyed himself. He had seen it all by about nine o'clock and was interested in bowling . We found a bowling center on the second floor of a building just off Times Square and spent the rest of the evening bowling there. When we finished, we went to the lunch counter to have a bite to eat. A little old lady about 50 years old was the proprietor. She took a liking to us after a couple of nights (we spent all our evenings there) and invited us to her side kitchen behind a curtain where she had prepared goodies for us. We would sit there and talk for about an hour before returning to the hotel for the night and I often mentioned my favorite pro bowler, Andy Varipappa, whom I thought was the greatest. A few weeks later as we were in the side kitchen, Andy came through the curtain. I almost fell out of my chair as I recognized him immediately from the movie shorts that I had seen him in. It turned out that he was the proprietor's cousin and when he phoned her that day to let her know that he was in town, she told him that he had to come over that night to meet me. We had a great evening together.

Conditions for photographers were exactly what they should be at Life. Each student was issued a fully equipped carrying case which remained in the custody of the students during their stay at the school. We kept the case with us at all times and were allowed to shoot whatever we thought might be of interest for evaluation.

There was one wet, snowy day when I went to Times Square to have a field day. Snow was piling up on the ground and traffic was a mess. I shot vehicles and people and stressed the difficulties they were having before deciding to put it all together. The Flat Iron Building on the south end of Times Square was eyed for possibilities and I decided to go to a window facing the Square that was just above a ledge near the top. I counted the windows to that level and entered the building to take the elevator to that floor. It turned out to be a dentist's office and he begrudgingly let me open the window to crawl out on my belly for several shots.

Pepsi Cola had a large service center for military personnel on the ground floor and basement of the building at the north end of Times Square. I spent a lot of time there. They were nice people and there was always something going on for free, or dirt cheap.

They had tickets for just about anything that was worth seeing in NYC and it merely required asking for one, or two, while they lasted. I was an avid fan of Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians who were on the radio each weekday night from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. I took a ticket for this at my first opportunity. I had to check my camera case at the ticket booth because cameras were not allowed in the theater and found myself an aisle seat in the balcony. I was early and had time to make friends with the usher. Naturally, I asked him about taking some pictures even if I had to sneak them in. He told me that Mr. Waring only allowed professional photographers that privilege when they got an appointment. Just before the show went on the air, it was announced from the stage that there would be an additional show for the audience following the broadcast. The broadcast was great, as usual, and there was a fifteen minute break before the audience show started. During this time, I again talked to the usher about maybe sneaking in just one shot of the show. After thinking it over, he said ok on one condition and, of course, I agreed. He said that he would give me a highsign just before the end of the show and I could get my camera and take my chances on getting out alive. I agreed to this and he disappeared for a few minutes before returning to tell me to get my equipment and take all the pictures I wanted. I couldn't understand this until he told me that he had talked to Mr. Waring on a phone to backstage and received his approval. This was unbelievable but I decided to take the chance anyway.

I went downstairs and picked up my case, attached the flashgun to the camera and with Mr. Waring in center stage getting the show introduced, I started down one of the aisles. When I was about a third of the way down the aisle he abruptly stopped talking and stared directly at me. I stopped where I was and squatted down by the closest seat. He resumed talking in a few minutes and I went further toward the stage but he stopped talking again and looked me in the eye with no emotion or indication of what he wanted me to do. I again squatted and waited. The audience began to rustle around and I was getting nervous with everyone looking at me, even leaning over the balcony. He started talking again and I decided to take my chances so I loaded a flashbulb as I went all the way to the front. While I was focussing, the entire orchestra got out of their seats to crowd around and in front of Fred and assume weird poses. I made an exposure and held my breath. The orchestra went back to their seats and in the meantime Fred had mussed his hair, loosened his tie and looked all messed up. I took another picture and the audience clapped their hands and guffawed. They thought it was part of the show. No one came after me and I took about 75 pictures in the next hour. When it was finished, I went to the stage door on the right side of the stage because that was where Fred exited and asked the usher if I could thank Fred for his generosity. The answer was the same. No one goes back stage. A voice came from the top of the stairs wanting to know what was going on. It was Fred and he told the usher to let me come in. I thanked him and we had a conversation before he invited me to dinner with him and a group of his friends at Sardi's night club. Of course, I accepted. What a time that was with about 25 musicians and actors and actresses. On either side of me were Danny Thomas, who had just finished a huge success in a Broadway show, and Virginia Field. They were both heading for Hollywood to make their

first movies. When it was over, Fred invited me to return to the show whenever I wanted to, with or without a ticket. I attended the show at least twice a week and ate with him a couple more times.

The schooling at Life Magazine was a unique method of teaching. We had a gathering the first day during which the operations were explained and we were assigned a "darkroom box" the same as the regular staff photographers used. We did no darkroom work. Their specialists did it all and they were good at it. They could take negatives that were very thin or very dense and make excellent prints from them. After finishing exposing a film, we would put it in our box and could return an hour later to view the results. A punch system on the edge of the negatives indicated to the darkroom people our desires for what we wanted printed and what size we wanted. A few hours later these prints were in our boxes. Everything was rush, rush. As I recall, each week on Tuesday the picture editor would listen to sales talks from the staff photographers who displayed their prints and described what they had in mind for an article. This was the start of the next week's issue.

That was the last organized classroom training we had at Life. The rest of our schooling consisted of reporting into the office each morning for an assignment when we went with a staff photographer as an assistant on his assignment. I frequently went with Herbie Gehr (he may have been requesting me as we got along very well together). Herbie was the first known photographer to use multiple flash for photography. His first such photo was of the fish market in NYC, early in the morning before daylight as the traders set up for the day. It covered a large area. His second photo was of a railroad train on a hairpin curve to the left. It covered an even larger area. Both were excellent shots. One weekend Herbie asked me to stay around Saturday for an assignment he had to do. It was my birthday and I did not go for it because I wanted to go home. He pestered me to stay and I finally did. On Saturday morning we went to a hotel and a rented room. A professional model was there and he shot her showing the best way to wash clothing with the least amount of soap and water in a bathtub. Before he finished he decided that he needed a male model for the ending and the model agencies' offices were closed. He decided to use me as the model's husband and we rung out clothes for about an hour. He booked somebody for \$50 to pay me for modeling and said happy birthday. Then he talked the model into having dinner with me at a restaurant. It was a good birthday and I went home for the day on Sunday. On another occasion, Herbie and I spent a couple of weeks photographing parts of Radio City Music Hall. He had me light up four cigarettes at a time to set up a cloud of smoke in front of the light beams coming from movie projectors in the booth. He used some kind of a fan that he had rigged up and he placed it in front of the lens to increase the depth of field. Then there was the day that the Rockettes were being shot in the lobby. Herbie set the camera on a balcony to look down on the Rockettes and I had to go hither and yon among the Rockettes with a flashlight so he could check his focus on the groundglass. One Rockette was particularly nice when I was near her so I asked her for a date. She said ok and I was to meet her at some evening hour at such and such a door. The next morning we had some more shooting of the Rockettes and the one I was supposed to have had a

date with was quite cool to me. I asked her what was wrong and she said that I stood her up last night. I told her that I was only kidding and she said that she wasn't. She was really upset.

There was a group session at the studio of Jon Mili, a staff photographer. He was an electrician by trade who had a strobe light brought in to him for repairs. He was fascinated by it and made his own units with permission of Dr. Edgerton. Jon came up with a new style of 180 degree lighting that went over pretty good and we were there to learn it. It was fascinating. It gave sort of a three dimensional effect.

Fritz Goro was another Life staff photographer whom I assisted from time to time and one day I met Margaret Bourke White in the Life offices.

There were something like 85 students at Life Magazine from all services in the U.S.A. and some foreign countries. The grades at the end of our schooling had me in fourth place for the class. I then returned to Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, VA.

Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA.

I was greeted with open arms when I returned to Quantico and was immediately told that I was to be an instructor at the school. I indicated my disfavor of the idea and told them that I was there to do my part in the war. I was told that I could best serve the Marine Corps as an instructor and I insisted that my place was overseas. This went on for a few weeks until my CO approached me to say that there was going to be a staff meeting that night to make the assignments for those of us who were qualified to do a job on our own. I told him that I insisted on going overseas when he asked me if I would reconsider. The next morning he told me that I would be sent overseas for one year only and that after that I was to return to Quantico as an instructor. I thanked him very much. Within a week, I received travel orders to San Diego by train. It took a week to get there.

Camp Pendleton, San Diego, California

I had a very short stay at San Diego before boarding a freighter at Catalina Island named "Kitty Hawk?" to go to Hawaii. After only a day or two we were issued an M-1 Garrand to bring with us and were taken by boat quite a way out in the bay to board ship. There were a few planes on board and this was the first trip on the open seas for this coastal freighter. We slept on the deck under the wings of the planes. The ship's crew had gotten a fund together to purchase an electric phonograph and a few records for the trip. One of the 78's records was "That Old Black Magic" which we heard over and over. Not only that but every other night for a week we sat through a movie that featured that song. We were at sea for a week before arriving at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

Nothing of importance happened during our short stay of a few days at Pearl Harbor and five of us were put aboard a tanker full of airplane gasoline for a trip to Palmyra Island which was about four degrees north of the equator and 900 miles southerly of Hawaii. Barrage balloons were scattered liberally around the harbor area. A guy in the barracks with us claimed to be involved in a military trial that was coming up connected with the lack of radar warning for the islands on the day of attack, December 7, 1941.

The tanker we boarded for our trip really shouldn't have gone to sea. It was very small. Three members of the small crew were stationed on the bow with a fifty caliber machine gun where they had to stay all week since the well deck was under water the entire way and that was the only path between fore and aft. They had their own provisions. We five passengers were also quite limited with no place to go except where we were on the fantail which was a small deck with a vent from the galley coming up through mid deck. The vent had padded cushions around three sides which we had to sleep on at night. The other two passengers were provided with folding cots that barely fit in whatever space remained. To top it off, the ones on the cots were awakened every hour, on the hour, to fold up the cots and allow the changing of the guard on a .50 machine gun on top of some lockers that surrounded the deck on three sides. We borrowed some heavy cord from the crew and fashioned a fishhook out of some wire they gave us and hooked on a chunk of fat from the galley to try fishing as we went along. We caught two fish in seven days.

Palmyra Island

At the end of a week at sea, we found what looked like a swamp off to starboard. One of the crew told me that I was looking at my home for the next few months. When I asked him where the main island was, he said that I was looking at it. I again asked where the main island was and he repeated that I was looking at it so I figured that I would have to wait and find out where it was when I went ashore. On shore it was obvious that this was all there was to the atoll. There just wasn't any more! The whole thing was a group of very small islands shaped like a pearl necklace and was a mere one half mile wide and three quarters of a mile long. It was possible to stand on a shore of all but one of the islands (Eastern Island) and throw a stone clear across that island into the ocean on the far side. The Navy had dredged out the lagoon and placed their diggings in a pile that they flattened out to make a fighter strip and called it Sand Island. I reported to Captain Aton who was from Texas and was a grounded pilot who commanded the three inchers (anti-aircraft and artillery guns) that were being replaced with 90 millimeter guns in the same positions. This was my first permanent organization, the First Defense Battalion. It was half of the First that was commanded by Major Devereaux, Executive Officer of the First,

that was attacked on Wake Island. They were on Wake setting up the three inch gun positions for the 11th Defense Battalion who were still in the States. Their equipment was already on Wake and time was getting short with threatening war conditions. These guns were used for anti-aircraft and surface firing at ships.

The Captain didn't know what to do with me and had to check the Table of Organization to verify that Combat Photographers did, in fact, exist. He said that he would order equipment and supplies for me and it would probably be a matter of a few months before I got it all together. He said that I could hang around in the meantime or fill in on one of the guns. I chose the guns and he assigned me to Gun #1 (90mm) in Fox Battery where he was located. The gun captain for Gun 1 was a sergeant who was in the battle of Midway and he was an exceptional gunner with credit for sinking two Jap ships as I recall. Each day at dawn and dusk the whole island went to general quarters for an hour and occupied the gun pits doing drills with dummy shells. The sergeant looked me up and down and said that I looked like a second loader. In that position, I was given a quick rundown on what to do and how to do it. At the end of the hour I was doing fairly good and he told me that that would be my position until further notice.

90mm guns were being installed to replace the three inchers which were removed from their pits. They were placed on the shoreline facing out to sea. In about a week we manned the three inchers to shoot at a surface target that was being towed behind a small boat that was maybe half or three quarters of a mile out. Loading the first round of live ammunition proved to be a problem for me as I took the shell from the fusepot very delicately and put it in the breech the same way. The Captain yelled at me from the background and told me in no uncertain words to load the damn thing like I had been doing during the drills. I told him that I might not line things up right and goof things up. He said if I did none of us would know anything about it if it exploded so I said to hell with it and did my job. One of the other gun crews rammed a ruptured shell into the breech of a gun that had been fired a number of times and the Captain sprang into action. The shell was stuck and wouldn't go in, nor would it come out. The Captain had the crew elevate the gun about 20 degrees and use empty shells to get sea water and pour it in the muzzle for cooling. He straddled the breech with a prybar in his hands and pried real hard while one of the crew held the end of an ammunition box to the breech so that the shell, which was overheating, would not drop to the ground and explode. As the shell came loose, boiling water was sprayed around and the crewman with the box end screamed as he let the shell to the ground very slowly. He was severely burned and after a hospital stay was shipped back to the States.

A squadron of SBDs, Douglas Dauntless Dive Bombers, were based on Palmyra. They went on patrols each day and if they spotted anything that might have been Japanese they returned to the island and we would go into general quarters as they were no match for aerial combat with fighter planes. We were strictly on the defensive during this stage of the war with not much to offer for defense. The anti-aircraft guns would have to contend

with any invaders. Eventually we got some F4F Grumman Wildcat fighters that made us feel a little more secure. A PBY (Consolidated Catalina, an amphibious patrol bomber) brought our mail once a week. It also serviced Fanning and Christmas Islands to our south.

Within two months of my arrival to Palmyra my equipment and supplies arrived. I was told to design a darkroom which was going to be located in a head (men's room) that was adjacent to headquarters. It was quite dirty and seldom used by anyone. The darkroom was well constructed and I got to work as soon as things were stashed away. I was left pretty much to myself for my activities and I kept myself busy. Sgt. Bill Harris was my war correspondent partner. He was a winner. He came from Georgia and didn't get very far in school because his father died when he was young and he got a job at a newspaper doing odds and ends. He played with a typewriter at every opportunity and got proficient with it. One day he talked his boss into letting him cover a story and did well enough that they made him a reporter. He later finished up in Washington, DC on the staff of the Washington Post before taking a position as a secretary to a congressman and that is where he entered the Marines. Bill typed with the index and middle fingers of both hands only (his thumbs kept the spacebar busy) and was the fastest typist I ever saw on a mechanical typewriter. He always had a cigarette hanging from his mouth and a cup of coffee at his side. He was good at recognizing people as exhibited one day as we walked down the road and passed four sailors going in the opposite direction. Bill hollered, "Hey" to them as they went by and when they turned back to us Bill pointed to one of them and said, "You're...ah...ah...Cochran...Freddie Cochran aren't you. The guy said, "Yes". He was lightweight boxing champion of the world at that time and we did an article on him for the papers back home.

I was kept quite busy by the recreation section who set up a fund for me to photograph individuals and groups for publicity purposes in hometown newspapers. Much time was spent taking shots at each unit all over the island and Bill would add a story to each picture before it was forwarded to the States. The guys thought it was great and their morale was way up when they would bring a copy of the hometown paper to show me their picture and story.

One day, a gunner from the SBD squadron came to the darkroom to feel me out about developing a film for him. No one was to have a camera without authorization and the only authorized personnel were in my position. His story was that he had just arrived at the island and the film had been exposed in the States. It was obvious when I developed the film that it was not shot Stateside and I told him so as I gave him the negatives and prints. He then asked if I would process other films that might be brought to me. I said that I would develop them at no charge but I reserved the right to censor them if it was necessary. We had an understanding that resulted in about 25 films being brought to me the next morning that were labeled with many different names. Since I wouldn't accept pay for my work, they told me that any time I wanted to go for a plane ride I would be very

welcome. I took advantage of the situation to do a lot of flying. I was fortunate one day to be with a pilot who made a practice bombing run on Kingman Reef which was about 50 miles from Palmyra. He made a couple of passes where he strafed the reef on the way down and I strafed on the way back up before he dropped the 500 pound bomb. He practically landed before releasing it. Upon releasing the bomb, the plane took a sudden lurch upward as the weight was released and the bomb was a direct hit. We were so close that I could feel the concussion on my face (the gunner generally faced the rear in a seat that went in circles on a track). I flew so much that each month I had enough air time that I qualified for, but could not collect, flight skins.

I did considerable work for Major Waugh(?) who had charge of a new fangled thing called radar. He was a vice president of the National Broadcasting Company when he enlisted and was an electronic genius. As a result, he studied the circuitries, made experiments and tests and had me photograph the whole process. He eventually was the first person to track a submerged submarine with radar. One of his requirements for me was to photograph long, enclosed tablelike equipment that held hundreds of tubes and had glass sides. It was located under a camouflaged mound in a room that was about four and a half feet high and barely large enough to contain it. The quarters were quite cramped and I had to shoot from one end. Flash was out of the picture so I used a tripod and available light from the tubes for a time exposure. The many shots that I took at various locations came out good and had a dramatic effect to them. His very thorough report of piles of text and pictures resulted in his transfer back to the States a few weeks later.

The executive officer of the battalion was a lieutenant colonel who seemed to have a dislike for me from the day we met. Maybe it was just his way but it was unpleasant. One day as I was processing prints he opened the door and entered the darkroom (he came at unannounced times for a cup of coffee that I always had going). He ruined two packages of print paper as a result. I later put a sign on the outside of the door "Knock and wait for permission to enter). A week later the colonel again barged in without notice and ruined a bunch of exposed film that I was processing. I jumped all over him. He got upset and ordered me to clean the head every morning until further notice and he would inspect it each day. I did this seven days a week until we left the island. In the meantime The CO called me to his office shortly after the incident to hear my side of the colonel's story because the colonel wanted to court-martial me. When I finished he said "I thought so" and ordered me to have a sign made up for the door that the darkroom was restricted territory that would not be entered by anyone under any circumstances without my permission. The court-martial never came about. In the meantime, I took pride in cleaning the head and each day saw improvements in its appearance. Eventually it became NCO country and later was restricted to officers only. There was a day when the first sergeant came to me and said the first of drafted Marines were coming to the island and did I have any shit work they could do. I had him get me some paint and six of the new guys sanded and repainted the whole area. It looked great.

An admiral, who as I recall may have been "Bull" Halsey, came to Palmyra one day on a tour of inspection. I met his plane when it landed at our little airfield and followed him around on foot as he rode a Jeep making frequent stops. I had to run all the way and worked up a pretty good lather in the tropical sun. I must have been carrying at least thirty pounds of cameras, film, flashgun, and other photographic necessities. My uniform and I were soaking wet from perspiration long before the inspection was finished. I think the admiral was pulling my leg when he pointed to me and asked me if I couldn't keep myself more neatly appearing like a good Marine.

I was assigned to take some oblique aerial photographs of Palmyra so that a tabletop three dimensional map could be constructed. I flew the mission in the co-pilot's seat of a JR2 amphibian "Goose". The pilot asked me how high I wanted to fly and at what angle to the island. I told him that his guess was as good as mine because I had never done anything like this before. He made several passes from different angles at about 500 feet elevation and perhaps about 400 yards off the shoreline. The resulting shots received raves and I said that the pilot deserved all the credit because he made good decisions. The reply was, "Yeah? How many pictures did he take?"

Seven months after my arrival to Palmyra, we packed up to leave the island to return to Hawaii. The artillery was to remain for the U.S. Army units who were to replace us. Everything else had to be packed for transporting. It was a tough task.

When the day came, several ships lay just off the island (the lagoon was too shallow for them). Half of the Marines and their gear boarded ships that immediately weighed anchor and left the area. Then half of the Army units went ashore. The next day, the rest of the Marines boarded ship and were replaced by the remainder of the Army. I was with the first group and was aboard a small passenger ship. Word was received the second day out that Palmyra had been inundated by a tidal wave that created heavy losses. We rode on rough seas for the remainder of the voyage. A sailor told me that the best place in such conditions was midship so I occupied such a spot on the starboard side and weathered the conditions quite well.

Camp Catlin, Hawaii

We were trucked to our new quarters in wooden barracks at Camp Catlin where we set our seabags down near a bunk of our choice. I was near a door on a hallway. On the other side of the hallway was an outfit that was fresh out of the States. They were to increase our numbers as our name was changed from the 1st Defense Battalion to the 1st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion and we were going to be an offensive unit.

Some of the guys from the replacements (they had been there for about a week already) came in to get acquainted and when I said that I was from Whitehall, NY, was told that there was a member of their group from there. I jumped up and followed them and was re-

united with A.J. Soothcage, with whom I had played football on the WHS football team. He was a member of a searchlight team. It was a great occasion until I started getting quite sick so he and I walked to Sick Bay. A corpsman checked my temperature, blood pressure, etc. and said that I was perfectly healthy. During the conversation he asked if I had just gotten off ship and rough seas. When I said yes, he said that I was probably "landsick" and would come out of it naturally. The next day I felt much better. I visited A.J. at his searchlight position several times and always found him polishing the lens, or lubricating or fixing something so that the light would operate perfectly when needed. He told me that it could put out 800,000,000 candle power!

There wasn't much photographing for me to do at this location and I spent considerable time at Kodak Hawaii, LTD. on the other side of Honolulu near Waikiki Beach. The first day after arrival at this base, I was given a special pass to take several boxes of negatives to Kodak for making many hundreds of prints for distribution. It was decided that everyone could have their choice of scenic, personal and other shots that I took on Palmyra. I made up one copy of all shots that would be made available, put them in several books and numbered them for identification when they made their choices. Bill Harris was a heavy drinker, a pastime that was very limited on Palmyra. He begged and pleaded for a pass to go with me and was finally granted one. We made an emergency stop at a hotel bar for him as we went through Honolulu. We had a maximum of three drinks of beer and left but Bill had to use a men's room that was down a flight of stairs in an alley next to the bar. I waited for him at ground level and suddenly started getting very sick. I passed out before he returned and he couldn't wake me so he called for a Navy ambulance to take me to Sick Bay. When I recovered they wanted to know what happened and when I told them the story, they determined that somebody had probably slipped me a "Mickey Finn". We never got to Kodak that day but made the trip the next day with no stops along the way. Everyone in camp heard of the deal we went through and a few days later when half of the battalion were granted leave, most of them went to the bar and tore it to pieces. There was hell to pay about this and everyone was assembled for a loud and long talk from the CO. The other half of the battalion were made to wait a couple more days before they were granted liberty which came with strong warnings.

A tennis tournament was conducted on the macadam courts at the base. It lasted several weeks with me finishing as champion. That was about the only recreation that I had while there.

An open air theater was completed on the base and there was going to be an entire afternoon of entertainment for a starter. I arrived very early with four friends so that we could get seats up front. A pretty, young Hawaiian girl interrupted her song and dance to beckon me to join her on the stage. I didn't care much for the idea until my friends picked me up bodily and deposited me there. I was so shook up that I didn't remember much except she put an enlarged baby bonnet on my head and sang, "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby". There was also a Marine 1st lieutenant who was a hypnotist. He did

some unbelievable things and I suspected trickery. I spent the next week at Honolulu Library researching the subject and found that it was not trickery but the real thing.

A few days later, I was told that the colonel who was CO for the base wanted to see me in his office at 1000 hours the next morning. I make a practice of never being late since my father worked for the D&HRR and made me nervous as he was never on time for work. I arrived at the colonel's office at 0955 and the first sergeant said that he would let the colonel know that I was there. I heard a loud outburst from within and the sergeant returned to tell me that I could go in now. I said that I hoped that tumult wasn't for me. He said that it was and I went in anyway. That was the start of a fifteen minute, loud reprimand for being early. *When the colonel said 1000 hours, he MEANT 1000 hours. Not one minute before, nor one minute after, but 1000 hours.* I can still hear his voice, vividly. Just as suddenly, he lowered his voice and talked to me like a close friend as he opened the top drawer in his desk to give me an 8"X10" picture of me n the stage with the Hawaiian girl.

There was an air raid alert one evening at about 11:30 p.m. Sirens sounded for what seemed a long time so I tuned my radio to a frequency that was just outside the broadcast band where I was able to listen to the island command post. Three bogies (blips on the radar screen that didn't have a "Little Joe" [a small radio induced blip along side]) were approaching our location from the south. Searchlights combed that area and several anti-aircraft rounds were fired. The planes went in different directions before again approaching Hickam Field at zero elevation, barely off the water. They managed to land at Hickam without further incident and were B-17s whose Little Joe had malfunctioned. The All Clear signal sounded immediately but not before several reports of parachutists were received from various parts of the island. Some people were still jittery. In February 1944 we boarded ship to be a part of the Marshall Islands invasion.

The Invasion of the Marshall Islands

Our transportation to the Marshall Islands consisted of four LSTs (Landing Ship Tanks) and one little DE (destroyer escort). It was a routine trip until we arrived in the Marshalls area. The LST rode solid in the fantail but anyone who walked forward of midship became aware of unusual walking conditions. LSTs had shallow, flat bows which slapped against the water as the bows rose and fell as ships do at sea. This caused a rough vibration as it dropped to hit the water. Anyone who attempted to walk in this area had great difficulty since the vibration was so intense that it was impossible to maintain foot contact with the deck surface.

In about a week we were at the northern end of the Marshalls which consisted of two strings of atolls running generally north and south. Our course took us down the middle of the two chains. In the afternoon before "D" Day the lookouts spotted a whole fleet of ships on the western horizon. The four LSTs were in a box formation as the DE swept

back and forth in front of us. On frequent occasions it would make a tour around the LSTs looking for Jap submarines and then resume its activities in front. It made me think of a little dog in front of his master. When general quarters sounded for the ships on the horizon, the DE stopped in its tracks facing the fleet as if the little dog didn't know quite what to do to protect its master. After fifteen minutes or so, signal lights started flashing between them and us and it turned out that they were U.S. Navy and our little puppy went back to work. During the night we anchored off shore at the atoll of Majuro. Before daybreak about a half dozen of us went ashore in a boat. It was learned that we had the native chief's son with us and arrangements had been made to talk with the chief for information on any Japs who were on the island. There were none. They had departed the island a week before we got there. In the meantime the other part of the invasion met a severe battle for Kwajeline Atoll to our north.

While we were getting established, there was a constant unloading of equipment and supplies from ships in the lagoon. I had charge of the Marines in our area from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. with no lights and no moon. It was dark! Food and other supplies were stockpiled right on the beach about 50 yards inland. Army, Navy and Marine Corps supplies had to be separated into separate piles to be picked up with trucks during the daylight hours when labels could be read. A few nights after we started this operation, one of my men asked if he and some friends could open some fruit cocktail to supplement the K-Rations we were limited to at that time. I approved the request and qualified it by saying "Open only as many cans as you will consume. There will be no waste." Shortly a voice came out of the dark that asked "What in hell is going on over there?" When he came closer I recognized him as an Army major. I tried to explain what was going on and he blew his top because we were eating Army food. A Marine officer heard the commotion and came to investigate. When he heard the story, he told the Army major that he was trespassing on Marine soil and to get back in his own territory. He then told me that what we were doing was reasonable and he saw no trouble if we continued as we were.

The Japanese had controlled the island for twenty years before our arrival and the natives were a mess. Immediately after our takeover, the natives were all confined to one end of the island and no one other medical personnel were allowed in their area until further notice. It was estimated that 97 percent of them had syphilis, gonorrhea, clap and whatever else. The few who were not contaminated were used as interpreters and rendered several services for the medical people. I was on that island for six or seven months and never saw but a very few of them. The natives were also very religious and would go to the beach every evening to sing religious songs with great harmony. The missionary who was there twenty years ago before the Japs took over had certainly done his job well.

I was notified one day that there was to be a wedding ceremony at a native assembly thatched hut which was going to serve as a church. The ceremony involved twelve couples

who were all senior citizens. Their children and grandchildren stood up for them and were ring bearers and ushers. The Japs allowed no religion in their presence so there was a twenty year gap with no marriages. One of the pictures that I took that day was run full page in ASIA magazine for the feature article. I never knew the author but he must have picked it up from my files in Washington, DC. This was the only picture that I took that I know which had the by-line "Official U.S. Marine Corps Photograph by Corp. Alan B. Manell". Photographers names were generally never used, just the official designation.

I occupied a pyramidal tent when we got settled down and a small darkroom was constructed along side that was a 2X4 framework covered by pieces from another pyramidal tent that were cut to size for the purpose. The darkroom had absolutely no ventilation and could not be used in the daytime because the chemicals were well above a usable temperature. It necessitated the taking of pictures during the day and evening hours and developing sometime after one a.m. when their temperature was still high but the chemicals were usable.

Two large 14'X14'X14' steel tanks were set on stilts to the rear of my tent area. They were pumped full of sea water every morning to be warmed by the day's sunshine and had shower heads installed so we could shower before the evening meal. We also built a sizeable raft for the lagoon and that was a popular sight in the afternoon. One day I was shaving from my helmet with a small metal mirror, stark naked after a shower, when several musicians from the band finished showering and were returning to their tents. Kalina, a bartender from Chicago who played a good trumpet, said, "Hey Manell. What have you got on your fanny?" I thought he was kidding, we often did, until they got out of sight and I used the mirror to take a look. There was a nasty looking blotch there so I put some clothes on and went to Sick Bay. It was ringworm and it was an epidemic which occupied the entire island for weeks. A corpsman painted it purple and told me to return the next morning and join the lineup. They added more purple and said to come back the next day. After a couple days of this, I was hand washing some clothes in my tent one evening and noticed ringworm on the label of the Clorox bottle. Clorox is a good drying agent and with the proper dilution and application by a soaked towel for fifteen minutes it should do the job. It did. The itching stopped immediately and in a few days there was no sign of the ailment. I got in line at sick bay the next morning and dropped my pants on order. The corpsman couldn't believe it and asked how I did it. I just told him to read a Clorox bottle some time for the answer. He must have done it right away because the epidemic was eliminated in less than a week.

Another day I was swimming off the raft. We were furnished salt water soap for cleaning ourselves and it worked very well. I always spent more time swimming under water than I did on top and had trained myself to hold my breath for a little more than two minutes. A skiff came into the area for several days with three Merchant Mariners in it. One day they approached us at the raft to see if there were any divers available. The boatswain wanted to get some of the beautiful coral that was down about 30 feet and none of his men could

get down that deep. He wanted to bring a supply back to the States and make jewelry with it. I went with them and used a pinch bar, chisel and heavy hammer that they supplied to fill up the boat several times. The bos'n couldn't have been happier and wanted to pay me whatever I charged. I didn't charge. He said you're still on K-Rations aren't you and I confirmed the fact. He invited me out to the ship the next Sunday to eat with him. His boat picked me up and what a meal I had! There was a blackboard covering an entire bulkhead with two menus on it with no limit on whatever anyone wanted including seconds, thirds, or how hungry can you be? I thanked him very much when we finished and conversed a while and said that I had better get back to reality. He said not yet and snapped his fingers which caused six gallons of ice cream to appear for me to take with me for my friends on the beach. Another occasion found me with three small octopuses that I picked out of the swimming area. There was an entrenching tool nearby that I prodded them with it one at a time and they would wrap their tentacles around the blade. I then threw everything on the beach. I took them up to my tent to show the guys how they would change color every time they were touched. The word must have spread fast because in about twenty minutes a Jeep pulled up outside and the Phillipino who was the Naval Captain's cook (The Captain was the highest command on the island) jumped out. He wanted to buy the octopuses as they were a rare Phillipino delicacy. I gave them to him at no cost and the next afternoon he returned with a fancy silver tray full of cubes of octopus for me. I wouldn't accept them and am sorry now that I didn't even taste them.

Soon after we got settled in on the island, four LSIs (Landing Ship Infantry) were overloaded with 50 Marines standing in a welldeck that was capable of accommodating 35. To say the least, no one could move. The trip out of the lagoon went ok but as soon as we entered the open sea, those LSIs bounced around something terrible. There were few, including the crew, that didn't get seasick to the point of heaving, but all could not make it to the rail and there was a terrible exchange. We were on our way to several of the Marshall atolls to search them out for Jap activity. Luckily we found none. We had to wade through the seas between each island of each atoll and that was how we managed to bathe as it was impossible aboard ship. There were times when we would step into a hole in the reef and go out of sight underwater. About the fifth day out we were off Wotji Atoll and watched a heavy bombing that was a distraction to give us some protection. It was not far away. When we finished beating the bush, we were given a chance to go swimming to be clean when we got back to Majuro. We all stood on deck naked, except for a bar of saltwater soap, waiting for the word to enter the water when the lookout hollered, "sharks!" from his high vantage point near a mast. we waited a while but they remained near us and we had to put our filthy dungarees on again. It was great to get back to our permanent quarters and clean up.

The Navy Seabees (CB - Construction Battalion) made a great name for themselves on Majuro. They came ashore with brand new equipment and a strong desire to accomplish their mission of clearing a space in the jungle and making a large air strip in six months. They blasted palm trees day and night for weeks and dragged them off to the side. Then

they leveled the ground and used earth movers to scoop coral from the lagoon to surface the airstrip. It was quickly leveled, smoothed, watered and steamrolled to make a very fine strip. Coral is a substance that increases in hardness each time it is wet down and rolled. It was, at least, as good as concrete. They did the six month job in only three months and there wasn't much left to their equipment after all of the salt water that it had absorbed. A ceremony was arranged for a day when the Navy was going to bring in several squadrons of planes from flattops that were to be based on Majuro. However, a Marine fighter plane had been severely damaged in combat the day before and couldn't make it back to his flattop. The new airstrip looked inviting so he landed and upset the Navy's plans to be there first.

The island of Jaluit was to our south and nearby (about 50 miles away). It was occupied with Japs who had no usable artillery after many air strikes from Majuro. They were limited to small arms fire power. We used this island for bombing practice instead of invading it because they couldn't go anywhere and were no threat to anyone. After weeks of bombing there was no sign of any activity from the island so the bombing was cancelled. Two days later a PBY went in for a low level run and a close look. It came back with thousands of bullet holes and every crew member wounded and one dead. No one knows how they survived at all in that plane. An F6F (Grumman Hellcat fighter plane) returned from patrol one day to make a pancake landing without wheels. His CO raced in a jeep to the side of his plane and the pilot was helped from the plane. He was 19 years old and a new pilot in the unit. The CO asked if he was wounded (no), was the landing gear locked in place (no) and it was no to some other questions. The pilot admitted that he forgot to lower the gear and the CO gave him good cause not to forget again.

Every body had their share of time on watch on a beach post, or roving patrol, or in a tower at treetop level. I stood a tower watch. Each tower was equipped with a BC scope on a tripod. I spotted a bunch of masts on the horizon one afternoon that were barely visible and appeared as sticks on the horizon. I reported this to the control center by landline. They called me back in a few minutes to ask if I could still see them. I could. They asked how many ships I saw. I didn't know but there were a lot of them. They called again to see what direction they were moving. It was toward my left. An additional call asked if I could still see them and verify their bearing. I did. Following about a half hour of this conversation, they called again to tell me that they thought I was getting "rock happy" because radar had not detected the ships until just now and I was the only post that had reported them.

Bob Hope visited our island during a tour of the Pacific. A covered stage was erected for them and everybody turned out early to get a seat (on a log). I was at the airstrip when the entertainment troop landed and started shooting pictures immediately. I took somewhere near a hundred shots during the show which included Francis Langford, Patty Thomas, Tito Guizar and Jerry Colona. The only pictures that were published in magazines and newspapers (that we became aware of) were mine. In the January 1945 issue of LIFE

magazine one of my shots was run full page as one of the outstanding news shots of 1944. There was one picture of Patty that I did not forward to Washington. Everybody on the island had a copy of it pinned up near their sack and it proved to be a morale-keeper-upper. She had a beautiful shape and was wearing a mini costume.

Back to Hawaii

We returned to Pearl Harbor on an auxiliary flattop. This was the biggest transport for me in my two years in the Pacific. I stood a watch in a guntub for morning and evening dusk general quarters. The ship's executive officer was a transferee from the Marines to the Navy. He came to my position during each session and we had some fine chats. I was impressed with the ship's accommodations, smoothness of the ride and the speed that the big ship was displaying. I asked him how fast the ship could go at top speed and he said, "Well, running downhill with a good tailwind, it might reach 32 knots." We cruised at about 25 knots for the trip. There was a very noticeable tip of the deck toward the outside of turns that were made. An elevator for planes was lowered to the hanger deck and we had a softball game between the planes. The meals were the best of my sailing experience. It took about a week to arrive at Pearl Harbor.

Pearl Harbor

Camp Catlin was a tent city rest camp lying between Pearl Harbor and Honolulu. It was directly inland from Henderson Field which was clearly visible from the camp at all times. I was awaiting assignment to return to the States for a thirty day leave as a result of having been in the Pacific for 24 months. The time was somewhere around January or February 1945.

One afternoon, a runner came to my tent with a message that the camp commander wanted to see me. At headquarters, the colonel told me that my listing for returning to the States had been cancelled, as had all others, and no one would be going back to the States until at least one more invasion had been completed. As a matter of fact, all Marines had to be re-assigned. He expressed sorrow for my situation and added that he had reviewed most USMC units in an attempt to advise me of the best possibilities. He suggested the new 6th Marine Division which was being formed on Guadalcanal and I accepted.

The ship that I boarded crossed the equator while in transit to the Canal. The ceremony for crossing the equator was a tough experience which resulted in necessary first-aid to several who endured it. There were only a few men aboard who had crossed before, so the word was passed that those who have completed the process could join those who were dealing out the penalties. I was one of the first to finish and was immediately assigned to challenge the executive officer of the ship who had crossed many times but one of the crew had removed his proof from his stateroom so he could not prove it. He was taking a

shower when I found him and, of course, he couldn't find his billfold so I allowed him to put some clothes on and he went through the gamut. He later showed me where he had been across the equator in excess of twenty times.

Guadalcanal

We were escorted to the Guadalcanal coast by about a dozen porpoises who playfully sidled up to the ship's bow before sliding off to the side and again getting in line to take their turn again near the bow. The Canal was a pleasant experience. Dirt roads and tent settlements ranged throughout the island as I was trucked to the northeast shoreline for my temporary lodgings near the beached Japanese ship "Kyushu Maru", a relic of the Coral Sea battle. Japanese ships bear Maru like their American counterparts bear USS.

On meeting my new immediate commanding officer, I was told that the 6th Combat Engineers had just completed a training project of constructing a road into the jungle that was about five miles long and ended with a Bailey Bridge across a small stream in the hills. He wanted me to check out a vehicle at the motor pool and photograph the road, especially the bridge at the end. I got a recon from the motor pool and completed my assignment three days and two nights later. It was a difficult trek over a sloppy, muddy road that had been soaked with two weeks of rainfall. It was necessary to unreel the cable from the front winch on the truck to wrap it around a tree and my only progress was by rewinding the winch while in low gear, four-wheel drive. When I turned the pictures in to the CO, he said, "Where the hell have you been?" and after looking at the photos said that he had better watch what he said to me since he was only kidding and considered it an impossible assignment because of the preceding weeks of rain that had made the road a mudhole.

There was no training for me, just a lot of work. I was assigned a large box semi-trailer that was set up to handle my supplies and it also contained a fully equipped darkroom. There were about five other trailers of similar size alongside that were equipped for Reproduction and Printing. It wasn't long before they all became my responsibility. The Table of Organization limited my rank to corporal and I had several of higher rank in the group. Much of my work at this time was making twenty contact prints (11"X18") from negatives that were taken (of our then unknown objective of Okinawa) by aerial reconnaissance planes. Some of the shoreline scenes had to be redone several times to get a favorable shading for Marine Corps Intelligence which was trying to determine the nature of the land surface in preparation for an invasion.

Ulithi Atoll

In early March, we boarded an AP or a PA ship for a trip to Ulithi Atoll (A really big one) where we met with many other ships that obscured the horizon in all directions. A few

days later we were taken to the island of Mog Mog (One of Ulithi's) for a free beer party on the Navy. On the way we went past the aircraft carrier Franklin which had limped in from the China Sea with a large gaping hole clear through her hangar deck and looking a total mess. I later learned that a schoolmate of mine named (?) Bartholomew had been a crew member that was killed during the battle which was off the coast of Okinawa.

Following about a week stay at Ulithi, we again put to sea in a northerly direction as part of a huge fleet. A few days later found us in the unfriendly China Sea where the waves were so high that ships went out of sight in the wave troughs. The screws of our ship rattled everyone on board as they came out of the water on the crest of each wave. Tables in the galley were on poles that ran from the deck to the overhead. They were raised to chest high and the benches were removed requiring us to stand while eating. We also had to hang on to our dinnerware or it would be flung from the table.

Invading Okinawa Jima

About a day later we were required to hit the sacks early in the evening. Reveille was sounded at 0100 that night which heralded April 1, 1945, Easter Sunday and April Fool's Day. I immediately went topside and out on deck in the total darkness to witness a bombardment like I had never seen before. I was told that this was Okinawa. The shelling was so intense that hills were clearly defined as hundreds of shells landed almost as one. This had been going on for weeks before our arrival.

As dawn broke, the shelling eased off and planes filled the sky to drop bombs and strafe the shoreline and other nearby locations. It was impossible to determine if there was any ground fire being returned toward anyone.

Landing craft of all types were loaded and remained near their mother ships. I went down a cargo net to an LCM that carried us to our landing site at about 0820. This was the first wave of the invasion. The Sixth Division had been designated to take most of Yonton Airport and was given three days to cross to the east shore, cutting the island in two. We were surprised by being unopposed and had reached the eastern shore by noontime. Word was passed that there was heavy combat on our right flank to the south. The First Marine Division and three Army divisions were in that area. By mid afternoon, the Sixth was digging in for the night and further instructions. I returned to Yonton and the top edge of the shoreline hill where we had landed.

As dusk approached, I was with about five others from my group and we were eating K-Rations and talking over the day's events. The invasion fleet covered the surface of Buckner Bay off to our west. Shortly, I noticed puffs of anti-aircraft fire among the clouds over the fleet and I told my friends that there might be a Jap plane up there somewhere. Almost instantly there was a burst of flame in that area of the sky and a plane came down in flames. Two additional planes were then seen in the same area and one peeled off to

come down and over our heads to land at Yonton. The other continued over the fleet. There was a burst of gunfire near the plane that landed and as I got to that location I was informed that the pilot of the Zero had been killed. Later word the next day indicated that the gunner who killed the pilot was on the carpet since the pilot was in no position to do much damage and he could have possibly furnished some useful information.

In the ensuing days, the Sixth turned their drive northward and met scattered resistance. Two of our regiments were on the line at all times with the third in reserve and getting resupplied and whatever rest they could for a week before they replaced one of the regiments on the line who returned behind the lines for a rest. Each and every day, I would leave my base of operations (Wherever it happened to be located) to go from one unit to another in search of information to photograph for Marine Corps Intelligence and secondarily for Public Relations (Newspapers and magazines releases). This routine continued for days. The word that was passed each day was that there was heavy fighting to the south.

At Motabu Peninsula we found a narrow dirt road along the shoreline that rapidly developed into heavily forested hills on going inland. The 29th Regiment was advancing westward along the south shoreline making frequent stops to send platoon patrols into the hills in search of signs of the enemy. A fighter plane had made a low pass ahead of the 29th and spotted a sizeable cave some distance ahead of them. I was directed to go to the cave to see if it had any purpose. A lieutenant and a sergeant accompanied me in a Jeep. We stopped at the head of the 29th's column which had progressed to the east edge of a valley that ran northerly into the hillside to let the CO know what we had to do and to give our best estimate of a return time.

The cave was near the road and easily found. No enemy was sighted. The cave was an ammunition depot that was heavily stocked with many boxes and crates. I took photographs and tried to copy some of the writing that was on the boxes for additional information. We didn't stay any longer than what was absolutely necessary before heading back to the 29th. As we neared them we thought we were being fired on and we stopped the Jeep to drop behind a road shoulder for protection. I noticed that we were not being fired at because there wasn't any dirt flying so I suggested that we go up the hill where we could be behind the Japs and perhaps do away with whomever was firing on the 29th. We got to a point where we could see about fifty of the enemy and were about to open fire when we heard shots above and behind us on the hill. We decided to return to the Jeep. As soon as we got there, there was heavy Naval fire starting from a light cruiser and a destroyer who had drawn up off shore. The barrage lasted about fifteen minutes and stopped with a snap of a finger. There was no further noise from the hillside other than some crackling from a small forest fire that had erupted. We jumped into the Jeep and raced across the valley opening to re-join the 29th. The CO de-briefed us before we went to the rear to file our reports. He told us that one of his platoons had been annihilated as they went into the valley headed for the hills and reconnaissance.

Other units of the Sixth continued advancing northward while meeting scattered resistance. The terrain was hilly, much like the Adirondacks, and offered ideal conditions for nuisance warfare by the few troops located there. It didn't take many more days to reach the northern tip of the island. At noontime, a few of us were enjoying our K-Rations near the beach when five Jap Zeros were noticed coming out of the north at about 200 feet altitude. A single F4U (Vought-Sikorski Corsair fighter plane) came screaming down from a much higher altitude to take on the Japs single-handed. It wasn't but seconds before he had the enemy scattered and the situation well in hand. We saw him destroy three of the Jap planes single-handedly.

The Sixth had completed all of their assigned tasks for the invasion much ahead of schedule and were ordered to locate at the base of Motabu Peninsula in a rest area mode. Army units were about to make an amphibious landing on the very small island of Ie (pronounced ee-ay) which was close to the western tip of Motabu. I went to an area of Motabu that was closest to the landing site to observe the activities. As I recall, it was less than half an hour when word was relayed back that Ernie Pyle had been killed soon after going ashore with the invading troops.

My photo assignments were comparatively rare now because of our in-activity and somehow I became permanent sergeant of the guard with full responsibility for the Combat Engineers Headquarters perimeter of defense. Scattered night activities by the Japs surrounded us as trip flares that had been put out would occasional be activated. One morning-after we found a stray dead cow that had tripped one. There were a couple of experienced butchers in our group that provided us with steaks that supplemented the K-Rations for a few days. A couple of stray horses were used to herd some cows which were then butchered. I downed my first Jap of the campaign at daybreak one morning. He had been wounded by one of the .30 cal. machine guns on the south side of our defense. My .45 pistol was quicker than his hand grenade. I have the grenade as a souvenir.

Another night, I was awakened at about 2330 hours, while sleeping in my jungle hammock, by one of the duty personnel from the perimeter. He said that there were signs of considerable activity in the wooded area in front of their machine gun position. Before my feet hit the ground, all hell broke loose from all sides. The foray lasted about three hours and casualties were high. Our group had about fifteen wounded and a couple of fatals. Daylight revealed 100 or so Jap bodies and the size of their forces was never accurately determined but similar conditions erupted over much of the island that night.

The battle to our south had developed into a fierce encounter and advances were slow, if there was any at all. However, the 27th Army Division was being driven back which created an unhealthy condition on the lines. They were on the western edge of the line which was facing south toward Naha, the capitol city. The Sixth was ordered to put two regiments on the line immediately to replace the 27th units who were then assigned as

back-up to the Sixth until the rest of the organization could get there. Artillery of the 27th remained in position and were kept active in the battle. The Sixth was told to hold the line for 24 hours. They did. The next day required the Sixth to advance and even up the front line. They did. Just after dusk that evening, the Sixth was caught in a crossfire from fore and aft. The 27th had failed to close the gap that was created and the Japs made an amphibious landing between the Sixth and the 27th inflicting heavy casualties on the Sixth. The 27th lost their colors as a result. Scuttlebutt that circulated indicated that there was some sort of an on-going conflict between the officers and enlisted men in the 27th. I recall a battery of small artillery (maybe 37s or 75s) that I had talked with the previous day that was wiped out during the night. The whole incident was quite demoralizing.

Just east of the Sixth lay Sugar Loaf Hill which was a juggernaut. Sugar Loaf was one of three hills which formed a triangle of perfect natural defense by their locations. It was impossible to attack any of these hills without being under fire from the other two. Marines attacked to the top of Sugar Loaf about a dozen times before they could hold it. Several times they had to re-take it because there were Corpsmen who would not come down without the wounded. This battle was part of the Naha-Shuri-Yonabaru Line which was almost impossible to cope with since there were sheer stone cliffs rising approximately 800 feet that contained a maize of caves and tunnels with heavy artillery that were part way down from the top. A field piece would make a short appearance from an opening to fire a round and disappear to re-load and appear at another opening to fire again.

The terrain in front of the Sixth was not as formidable and we were ordered to advance. There was a Bailey Bridge across a small stream, near what was a sugar processing plant with a tall smoke stack. Each time a bridge was erected, it was blasted by a few rounds of artillery and destroyed by the Japs. It was thought that the smoke stack could be a sighting indicator so a demolition team knocked it out of there and the bridge was not destroyed again even though it received heavy fire at times.

There weren't very many civilians observed as we moved about the island and they were generally accepted as possible friends as we travelled between locations. Mostly they were seen in the fields looking for vegetables or fruit for their meals. It was not known if some military personnel mingled with them or if some of them sympathized with the Japs, but it was not unusual to receive gunfire from someone in their group after we passed them.

We received sporadic shell fire from Jap 150s almost any time without warning, no matter where we were. Generally, it was only 2 or 3 rounds but could be maybe 10 or a dozen except for dawn and dusk when they routinely laid down a barrage. One afternoon, the adjutant, the first sergeant and I were visiting one of our friends in a field hospital when the hospital received about 8 rounds of 150s. We took shelter at the rear of a tent and about half the shells were duds, we heard them thump and hit objects as they continued on their way after a ricochet. The Japs used picric (?) acid as their explosive chemical which was very undependable in times of high humidity.

The capitol city of Naha was on the southwesterly shore in a pocket of low hills that opened to the sea. As the Sixth advanced southerly past Kadina air strip, Naha wasn't too far away. Resistance became more intense and attempts to get down the hill and into the city were met with precision artillery fire from the south side of the city. It seemed that anything with a two-way radio was a prime Jap artillery target. As soon as a tank or a Jeep approached the lines, they attracted artillery fire. Any attempt to place some tanks into the northern edge of Naha met with heavy shellfire so it was decided to try sending them down at midnight but the dirt road had been mined. The next night, same time, a detail had completed de-mining the road and the tanks made another attempt to enter the city but the roadway had been re-mined as they returned to give the all clear. The tanks finally made it to their destination by having the mines taken up as they followed close behind.

Marines of the Sixth joined the tanks on the northern edge of Naha to set up a forward line and it was determined that the only reasonable way to take the city was with the cover of darkness and a quick drive to the south edge during the next day. The only drawback to racing through the city, which had been leveled except for a few buildings, were two rivers that had to be crossed. Plans were formulated to put Bailey Bridges across these streams as quickly as possible during the night so that troops could advance as far as possible under the cover of darkness with hopes of minimal daylight exposure before reaching the hills to the south.

Three combat engineers and I were assigned to try to get to the first river and determine the type of land surface that was on the shores, the speed of the current, and get photos for reference. After advising the front line of our purpose, we set out toward our objective. We went a mere hundred yards before picking up rifle fire apparently from the area of a small hut to our left. The engineers promptly hit the ground. I told them to get up and keep walking because I saw the bullet hit to our right and he was shooting high. We would take cover when he got down to our level, but he never did and we got out of his range. Mortar shells seemed to be coming from the south ridge but were falling short. They were replaced as we continued by a 150 field piece. The first shell was considerably short. The second one was closer and the third went beyond us. We took cover behind a small knoll that was about 25 feet high. The engineers occupied a shell hole and I took up a position behind a large tree stump on top of the knoll. The next round blew about 30 feet from me to my right and I knew that I had been hit, but I couldn't feel anything. It was about 1520 hours on May 24th.

I was unable to see anything because my eyes were covered with blood that reacted like honey as I tried to wipe it away. I blindly ran back to the lines where a marine stood up to catch me in his arms. Calls for a Corpsman had two of them working on me very quickly. They put me on the ground and asked where I was hit. I didn't know because there was no pain yet. They asked if I was hit in the face but I didn't know so they carefully cleared my eyes and I saw that I was complete red with blood from top to bottom. Wounds were

uncovered on my head that were bandaged and I refused plasma at that time. I was given a two ounce bottle of whiskey in place of the plasma. All my clothes were stripped from me for further evaluation (The Corpsmen found a piece of shrapnel in the top of my forehead and my left ear was torn in two) before I was brought to a nearby location just to the rear of the front lines. It was a square "U" shaped area of plowed up ground that offered some protection from enemy fire and there were about a dozen wounded marines already there.

In about twenty minutes an amtrack arrived and six of us were put on board. That was considered a capacity stretcher load. We were taken out of Naha to an aid station just over the top of the hill from which we had entered the city. My bandages were replaced as I was leaking through and after again refusing plasma, I downed another whiskey bottle before boarding a litter Jeep to be brought to a field hospital in a deep ravine where I spent the night. Early the next morning I was loaded into an ambulance for a ride back to the Yontan area and a complete tent hospital unit where they operated on me at noontime. Anesthesia was in short supply making it necessary for a painful operation without any.

The surgeon made an opening across the top of my forehead to remove a piece of shrapnel about the size of a dime. After sewing this, he went to my torn left ear and tore it in two with his fingers. It had a durable scab where it had been torn. He scraped all the crust away and took four stitches in my ear before wrapping a turban-like bandage on my head.

The operating table was at one end of a long hospital tent and side by side cots were placed along both sides of the remainder of the tent for patients. Mine was almost half way down the right side as we left the operating area.

On my right was an old guy, about fifty years old, who was a Marine in WWI and was involved in Belleau Woods and Chateau Thierrri without receiving a scratch. He was denied enlistment in WWII because of his age but he wanted to do his bit. The American Red Cross enrolled and trained him and Okinawa was his first assignment. He had arrived the day before and while sleeping in his tent that night he was struck in his big toe by a bullet from a strafing Jap plane. He joked that belonging to the Red Cross was more dangerous than being a Marine.

Periodically there were long, loud screams from other tents in the area that would last about an hour. I was told that they were dying members of a black Marine unit that was unloading ship in Buckner Bay. They availed themselves of some alcohol that was being unloaded to have themselves a party. They didn't realize that it was denatured alcohol or some similar type and was toxic. There was considerable and constant rain for a number of days which resulted in the hospitalization of many infantry troops who were getting trench foot. They were very smelly as their shoes were removed.

There was a Marine patient in the same tent as I was. He stood about six foot two and weighed about 200 pounds. Both of his hands and his right cheek were heavily bandaged

after he received white phosphorous from an artillery shell. Every hour his bandages were removed to remove some flesh from his wounds to rid them of flesh eating action caused by the chemical. Then a heavy layer of salve was applied before redoing the bandages. Word had just been received that his mother had reported him missing several years before. He had run away from home to join the Marines at age 13. He was part of several campaigns, was wounded several times, was very courageous, and now was 16 years old. His next stop was Stateside for discharge and return home until he was old enough to enlist legally in the Marines.

Many of the wounded who were coming in bore news that the Sixth was suffering heavy losses and that replacements were being depleted so I repeatedly requested to be released so that I could get back on the lines. I was told several times that I was not yet ready for discharge but after a stay of one week they finally allowed me to return to my duties with my head still bandaged. When I got to the quartermaster to get resupplied, he welcomed me back and said that the men on the front line had sent a present to him that was for me if I showed up again. He reached under the counter and gave me my original helmet that he said was retrieved about 75 yards from where I was hit. He then gave me a new one saying that I could no longer shave in the old one because of the hole in it so it would make a good souvenir.

My base of operations was now located just to the rear of the front lines. I also was very gun shy. Small Jap aerial bursts about twenty feet overhead that sprayed shrapnel were the only enemy activity at this time. No one paid much attention to them except me. I was gunshy now. I entered one of the Okinawan tombs, which were made of concrete and shaped like a female womb. Each tomb contained glass jars with the ashes of family members who were generally cremated. After a couple of days, I was advised by a doctor that I had returned to action too soon. He recommended that I go back to a hospital where I would be interviewed and probably surveyed back to the States. He cited a number of questions that I would be asked and told me the right answers to respond with. When asked those questions at the hospital, I told the doctor after I answered the first couple that my answers weren't exactly the truth and when I told him the correct story, he said that sounded reasonable. He suggested that I stay at his hospital until I felt comfortable about going back to the lines and if that time never came, I wouldn't have to go back up. I returned to my duties three days later.

The Sixth was now south of Naha and putting the finishing touches to the capture of Okinawa. Only scattered hot spots remained and they were under control. Then word came that we had a victory. Someone said that the Sixth had suffered 314 percent casualties and had secured 84 percent of the land surface of Okinawa. I was eating K-Rations at noon while sitting on the ground with some friends when an R4D zoomed by low over our heads while spraying DDT or something similar. We had to cover our food until the mist hit the ground. I think it was the 4th of July that we boarded ships to go to Guam.

Guam

It took a sea voyage of about a week to arrive at Guam where it was the talk of the day that we were to be re-inforced and trained for an invasion of Japan itself. Some said that we would spearhead a drive into Tokyo Bay. A tent city had already been erected for us on Guam.

It seemed like bucking a brick wall as I repeatedly requested my long overdue thirty days back in the States. Frequent meetings were held with the sergeant major, adjutant, and executive officer but they would only maintain that they wanted me to stay with them until after the invasion of Japan. Finally, the sergeant major and the adjutant offered me a field commission that would replace the 30 days at home. I turned down the offer several times. The Table of Organization had only two ranks for a combat photographer, corporal and lieutenant. I insisted on 30 days at home as soon as possible so that I could get back in time for the invasion. After four days on Guam I was given travel orders and a detail of four others for the first available transportation to the States.

We went to the airport where we were told that we would be flying on a plane that was to leave in a few hours. About an hour later we were told that senior commissioned officers had claimed our passage and there was nothing else in sight that was going to the States. It was suggested that we go to the port authority and try for a ship. The port authority had a ship that would be unloaded just before sunset and immediately leave Guam for the States, non-stop. A small boat brought us to a Merchant Marine Victory Ship. We boarded it and were assigned bunks. We stowed our gear and went topside to watch the activities. The ship's bos'n and I became friends and he said that they were unloading beer from the number 2 hold and would be hoisting anchor when they finished. He later came to ask me if I could get him some beer for the trip because he liked beer. I said that I would try and discovered that the detail that was unloading the ship were friends of mine. The bos'n's cabin was filled with several cases of beer and he was quite happy.

About an hour later, a skiff pulled along side with some twenty Navy personnel led by a chief. As they were boarding, I got my first sight of the ship's captain. He was on the bridge with a bull horn and hollering at the chief to ask who said they could come aboard. The chief replied that the port director had. He told them to go no further as he was not going to have any part of the Navy on his ship. The chief said he had no place else to go. The captain told him to standby where they were and signal lights started flashing between the ship and the shore. After a while the captain's gig was lowered into the water and he went ashore. I heard that he had made unreasonable demands for extra supplies that he needed to accommodate the Navy personnel. When he came back, all Navy personnel were ordered to leave the ship immediately. The Marines in my detail asked me what to do and I told them to get out of sight, this was going to be one time that we were not part of the Navy.

22 Days to the U.S.A.

Unloading the ship was completed and we were well underway by darkness. The bos'n took good care of us. We ate with the crew, who had the best food that we had seen in a long time. In exchange we did odd jobs to help the crew and the bos'n tried to keep us out of the captain's sight. Things went quite well until about three days out the captain came in to the messhall for something and blew his top when he saw us. He asked why we didn't leave the ship when he ordered all Navy personnel off and I told him we were not Navy but were Marines. The bos'n backed me up and said that we were doing our part and were causing no trouble. The captain calmed down because he couldn't do much about it anyway and by trip's end he was quite friendly.

It was a 22 day jaunt to San Francisco without seeing land or another ship once. Many things happened in the meantime. I had an appendix type pain for about two weeks and there was only one of the crew with first aid knowledge, the purser. It eventually faded away. The daily mimeographed newsheet that was handed out told about an unbelievable super bomb called an atom bomb that had been dropped on Japan. A day or two later the paper said another one had been dropped. We thought it was propoganda. Then came the afternoon that I was almost asleep while sunbathing on a hatch and suddenly there was heavy gunfire from the ship. I saw no airplanes, ships, or anything where the shells were bursting so I ran to the 3 inch 50 on the bow and asked what the problem was. The war was over!

The remainder of the trip to San Francisco was uneventful. Upon landing, we were trucked to Treasure Island to spend the night before continuing to San Diego. One of my detail kept waking me to say that there were bedbugs in his sack so when it was six a.m. back home, I called Viv to let her know that I was back in the States. We talked about an hour..

San Diego and Quarantine

The train ride to Camp Pendleton in San Diego was quite routine. One of the men in my detail was insisting that he had to get a pass to get into the city because one of his buddies in his outfit back on Guam had problems that he couldn't get out in the mail and wanted his sister who was in the Marines at El Toro Air Base to know about. I told him that we were going to be in quarantine for 30 days and he might better forget about it during that period of time.

He kept after me for a pass during the first few days and I finally consented to go to the base headquarters to see what I could do for him. At noontime I went into the office which was almost empty because of lunchtime. The standby on duty turned out to be

"Peanuts" Edwards from Granville who I recognized from high school days. We had a good reunion before I told him of my situation. He said that there was no way for any of us to get a pass because of being quarantined, he had passes right in his desk but the old man would never sign one. The end result was that he would make out two passes and let me try to duplicate the old man's signature from his pass card. He insisted on two of them, one for me, so that I could be with him at all times when he was off base to make sure that he got back to the base.

When my detailer phoned El Toro, he made arrangements to meet the BAM at some nightclub where he spent a couple of hours giving her whatever information was so important and we returned to base. He and I made several other visits to the city for a few drinks and seeing the rest of the world while in quarantine. On one occasion, a female nightclub photographer wanted to take our picture, for a price. My friend said there was no way that he would have his picture taken so we made a deal where he would take a picture of her and me as a joke on Viv.

Memories of Pendleton are few. All I can recall is a lust for milk and V-8 of which I downed many quarts. One day I was walking the long walk across a parade ground with one of the base Marines when I asked him what the wind sound was that I heard every so often and felt no breeze. He told me that it was a jet plane.

Going Home

The day came for us to return to our homes for a 30 day leave. I was assigned a detail of almost twenty for the trip by rail. It was long and tiresome. Our layover time in St. Louis was a lengthy one, something like ten hours so I gave each man his travel orders in case someone didn't make the connection they could still get home. I wasn't about to try to keep these guys together for that amount of time so I just turned them out on their own. I walked into the city with another guy to see what it was like and on the way back to the train station a female came running out of an alleyway screaming that somebody was chasing her. She accompanied us to the nearest policeman who delayed us with a lot of questions and we missed the train by minutes. We got another train about an hour later and finished the trip home.

Whitehall

It was great to get back home to my family and friends and Viv. Many of my male friends weren't around since they were still in the service like me. Concern for the war had apparently died down quite quickly since no one asked about my wounds or were not too concerned about where I had been. The war was a thing of the past for them.

Plans were quickly enacted for Viv and me to get married on September 16th at Notre

Dame des Victoires church in Whitehall by Father Pelletier. At a meeting with the priest, who had a strong French accent and an air to go with it, we were told to get a blood test and he would take care of all of the other arrangements. The blood tests were taken the next day by Dr. Seligman and the favorable results were received a few days later. All seemed to be in readiness.

The wedding party arrived at the parsonage early. Lorraine LaPoint and Dave Bartholomew (who was home on leave from the Navy) would be standing up for us. The priest got behind his desk and asked for the license so we could complete it only to find out that he didn't get it. We were supposed to, so we all piled into my grandfather's car and another car and went looking for a town clerk on Sunday, no less. One was finally located in the Town of Clemons but she was out in a boat fishing and had to be called to shore to help us. We speeded back to the church and while going across the South Bay Bridge, the car's hood popped open. We stopped to put it back in place and continued to the church for the wedding.

Viv still looked beautiful in her wedding gown and I was wearing a set of dress blues that were borrowed from Joe Grady who wasn't home on leave. I had seen him on Okinawa one day when I was in a Jeep going back from the lines. I have no idea how he recognized me from the top of a telephone pole about 100 feet from the road, but he gave a husky shout and we stopped for a short talk. As I recall, he was with the Third Amphibious Corps which included the Sixth Division among other Navy and Marine Corps units.

Anyway, the ceremony went smooth. I choked up more than when I was in combat. In combat I got quite nervous at times and damned scared other times but marriage was something else as I wondered if this was the right thing to do. After the reception Viv and I took off in my father's car to spend the night at a hotel in Rutland, Vt. as we headed for Hampton Beach, a resort area in Maine. The next morning when we got across the street to where the car was parked overnight, we found a big red ticket for illegal parking. It said that I had to appear in court at 9:30 a.m., just 20 minutes after we found it. A cop on the corner told us where to go. I finished in a room with a long counter and a sergeant behind it talking to a commissioned police officer. When they finished, the senior officer asked what he could do for me. When he saw the ticket he read it and wanted to know why I illegally parked. I told him that I had never heard of such a law and was in strange territory on my honeymoon. He replied that as I had just gotten married I was going to have my share of problems without the ticket and he tore it up and said get out of here.

We had to stop at a doctor's office during the day. Viv said her chest was bothering her. The female doctor told Viv that she had three broken ribs and strapped her up. We got to Hampton Beach just about at dark only to learn that all activities were shut down the night before we got there. The place was dead. We spent the night at a hotel and the next morning took off to go through northern New England and the White Mountains (?) of northern Vermont or New Hampshire to Rouses Point to say hello to my father. The next

day we went to a double-header baseball game in St. Johns, Canada. It was a weird display of baseball as the visiting team scored 24 runs in the first inning and there weren't three outs yet as the game was called off. The same two pitchers started the second game and it was a pitchers' battle that ended something like 1-0. At the end of the week, we were back home at 16 North Street in Hudson Falls to a nice little apartment that Viv had fixed up in a corner of her sister Bert's home. Probably the outstanding occurrence while we were there was a spaghetti and meatball dinner that Viv prepared for us and Bert. It was terrific until we finished eating and it was noticed that some of the pepper specks in the bottoms of our dishes were moving around.

Getting Discharged

My orders had been changed before I went on leave and instead of returning to overseas duty, I was to report to Iona Island, a small island in the Hudson River about 25 miles from Times Square which was an ammunition depot. As soon as I arrived on a Tuesday, I was informed immediately as I checked in, that I was to be very careful while smoking and with anything I did because if there was an explosion, the whole island would go at once and probably shatter windows in Times Square.

This was much different than combat duty. The buildings were made of brick generally, the living quarters, galley and rec rooms were all immaculate, and all we had to do was guard duty every couple of days. I can recall patrolling along railroad tracks in the rain as each storage area was checked very closely.

I didn't spend much time at Iona. My records arrived the next day (Wednesday) and I had so many discharge points accumulated that Thursday morning I boarded a train to go to the Brooklyn Navy Yard for discharge. We were credited with one point for each month of active duty, plus an additional point (making two) for every month overseas, plus extra points for being wounded, etc. I had about 100 in all as I recall which put me at, or near, the top of any list.

Brooklyn Navy Yard

The Navy Yard could not house the large numbers that were pouring in for discharge which resulted in overnight leaves for everyone and we were advised to put ourselves up in New York City and return in the morning for an 0700 roll call when some of us were given some minor assignments to do before we were free for the day. My most memorable assignment was to take an honor guard detail to New York City for a parade that ended on the steps at City Hall with President Harry Truman giving a speech on the steps. My squad was positioned directly in back of him. West Point cadets and representatives of all services were part of the occasion but none received more recognition from the onlookers

than our small group of Marines. One early morning as I was walking down a street in the Navy Yard I spotted the major from Palmyra Island ahead of me. I yelled, "Hello Major!" to him and he called me by name in return to my surprise. We talked for a few minutes before I noticed that he wasn't wearing maple leafs any more - they were now stars. He informed me that when he left Palmyra, he was ordered to Washington D.C. where they promoted him to general and he was made director of all Marine Corps radar. Large numbers of medical discharges were coming in and, of course, they received priority discharges which left the rest of us just waiting. At the end of about three weeks, I was transferred to Portsmouth Naval Prison for discharge which was the closest base to my home.

Portsmouth Naval Prison N.H.

The transfer was supposed to be to the Portsmouth Navy Yard but a typographical error sent me to the Prison for duty. The Prison was inside the Navy Yard. The Yard maintained their discharge list by total points and again I would have been near the top. The Prison didn't care how many points you had, you went to the bottom of the list.

My quarters as a guard were immaculate. There were about a dozen other guards in my large room, each with his own area and bed, and there was an honor prisoner assigned to take care of everything in our room. He spent the day there making up our beds, sweeping and mopping the floor, cleaning our clothes and shining our shoes, and any other chores that might be evident. There was a 1st sergeant with us who was just perfect in everything he did. Shortly after I was discharged I was surprised to see him featured in LIFE magazine as being chosen the #1 Marine in the Corps. He never mentioned it to any of us. Viv and my parents drove over to visit one Sunday morning. It was snowing lightly at the time and they noticed that the snow was piling up everywhere except on the roadways and sidewalks. These areas had steam pipes just under their surface which were activated to keep them warm preventing the formation of ice or a snow pileup. My duty at the prison was to post a guard and then maintain a position at the main gate where I controlled who entered and left the premises, and in one case sounded the alarm when three were unaccounted for at the hourly count. They were found in a potato bin peeling potatoes. My name got on the discharge list after about three weeks and once again it was held up. This time, the word came that no Marine was to be discharged anywhere except from Bainbridge, MD, Great Lakes Naval Training Station, or San Diego. I was sent to Bainbridge.

Bainbridge, MD

Bainbridge appeared to be a large base. They had a very large drill field that I had to cross to get from my barracks to the mess hall and most other activities. Everyone was quite cordial and the time went quickly. I was discharged in a little less than a week. My

discharge pay and my travel expenses came to a sizeable sum. I decided to save what I could so I bummed a ride to the railroad station and used my railroad union card to travel as far as Albany, NY where I just missed a sleeper, maybe #7. Since today was November 21, Viv's birthday, I was quite anxious to get home as soon as possible so I inquired about hitch-hiking. I was advised to go a short distance to a loading dock where they were loading a paper delivery truck that was going to Glens Falls. Locating a driver I learned that they couldn't take passengers. He told me to walk around the end of the building and wait for about ten minutes until he finished loading and he would slow down as he went by so I could jump over the tailgate. A few miles down the road he stopped and told me to get in the cab with him. We arrived in Glens Falls, after several stops along the way, at about 6:00 a.m. Hudson Transit buses were going great at the time and I waited less than twenty minutes to catch a ride to Hudson Falls at 26 LaBarge St., Viv's family homestead.