

MY WAR
A PERSONAL DIARY

ABRAHAM AARON 'AL' GOLDSTEIN

Copyright © 2025 John Diestler
All rights reserved.
ISBN: 9798279395033

DEDICATION

This collection is dedicated to my family and friends who
listened to these oral tales long before they were written down.
And especially to my favorite and beloved listener, my daughter Sherry.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i	
Ch. 1	May 1943	4
Ch. 2	June 1943	5
Ch. 3	September 1943	9
Ch. 4	October 1943	14
Ch. 5	November 1943	17
Ch. 6	January 1944	19
Ch. 7	March 1944	23
Ch. 8	May 1944	31
Ch. 9	June 1944	37
Ch. 10	August 1944	43
Ch. 11	October 1944	47
Ch. 12	January 1945	50
Ch. 13	March 1945	52
Ch. 14	April 1945	56
Ch. 15	June 1945	59
Ch. 16	August 1945	61
Ch. 17	October 1945	63
Ch. 18	December 1945	65
Ch. 19	The Boys & Credits	67

MY WAR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge all the veterans from all the wars, and the civilians at home who support them at home.

CHAPTER 1- MAY 1943



New York, on honeymoon

May 11 to 16, 1943

After passing physical exams and being sworn into Army, Anne and I spent our belated honeymoon in New York. What a hectic 5 days we spent. Both Anne and I became ill Friday evening with colds. We flew back Sunday evening and I was bedridden from the 16th to the 22nd of May. As a result, my induction was postponed one week.

May 23, 1943

Said good-bye to friends. Mrs. Moore, a dear family friend, gave me a good luck piece I shall always carry. Left Sunday for Ft. Meade by myself.

MY WAR

May 25, 1943

Arrived at Ft. Meade, and after eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner, didn't do a thing but lay around all day. Wrote to Anne.

May 26, 1943

At last I'm a soldier. I was issued uniforms today. Drilled, learned to salute. Also took classification test. Took out a \$10,000 insurance policy on Anne and Mother. Also made out an allotment to Anne. Wrote letter home. I feel proud of my uniform. Tonight I have barracks guard from 12:00 to 3:00 am.

May 27, 1943

After several days of boot training, a group of us boys are told to pack up for a trip to basic training camp.

CHAPTER 2- JUNE 1943

June-August, 1943



June 1, 1943 (approx.)

Arrived at Camp Edwards, Mass. All of us rookies were extremely anxious to find out what branch of the service we were assigned to. To our surprise we found that we now were a part of the Amphibian Engineer Command. Our duties were best described by our unit motto, "Put Them Across." In brief, we were landing forces from friendly ship or shore to hostile shore. Our

MY WAR

uniform consisted of regular Army issue, supplemented with the famed paraboots worn by the paratroops.

A few days spent at Casual and we were taken to our permanent barracks and then went through the sweating, groaning, and inevitable griping period of every soldier in Uncle Sam's Army.

Our basic consisted mainly of drilling, close order, military courtesy, first aid, and most important of all, rifle marksmanship.

A new feature of the Army's training program is the showing of motion pictures, which I believe will expand after the war into standard for teaching in our public school system.

After several weeks training in sighting, breathing and trigger squeeze, nomenclature, etc. of the new Garand rifle, we shot for record. My first efforts booled out in a miserable 140. Two weeks later I made marksman with a score of 160. All this covered the month of June. In July we transferred to Camp Cotuit, about 10 or 12 miles from Camp Edwards, for 6 weeks of boat training.

We all looked forward to this phase as it ended our basic training days and brought us to advanced training stage. Now we learned to rough it from comfortable barracks to tents. Six in a tent.

My tent mates were Pvts. Shinfield from Philadelphia, Beck from California, Pete Sewell of Colorado, and Lugero, a Spanish boy from California. We had lots of fun together, especially on Pete's part, who never did feel quite right in the Army.

Our first two weeks consisted of theoretical teachings in boat nomenclature, nautical terms, beaching, and retracting landing boats, maintenance, navigation and seamanship. These lessons were extremely interesting, as this was an entirely new field for me. We had various tests, and I came through very well in all, but navigation which stumped me a bit.

During these two weeks I got a weekend pass and I arranged for my wife Anne to meet me in Boston. I was very excited about seeing my beautiful wife again and our reunion in Boston at the Statler after two months absence was certainly heaven for this soldier.

MY WAR

We had dinner and then went to the Tic Tac Club where a fine colored band, my favorite entertainers, were featured. Sunday we spent walking through Boston's old fashioned downtown section and took pictures in Park Square. After a good dinner at the Statler, I took Anne to South Station to catch her train back to Pittsburgh. Certainly a weekend I shall never forget. First chance Anne had to see me in uniform.

The power of the free press was immediately felt upon declaration of war. 1,900 dailies and 10,000 weekly and semi-weekly newspapers and magazines provided a united front in support of our troops. An estimated 150,000,000 words on the war's progress passed through the print media. Over 60,000,000 radio sets brought the war into the nation's living rooms. Hollywood produced over 15,000 features and 20,000 short subjects in their war effort. The industry produced movies for military training, some for war plant training, and some for entertainment. Over 8,000 movie industry personnel served the nation in uniform.

Corporate and labor leaders worked together to create war production plants, in many cases filled with the wives of men in uniform. Ship building increased dramatically on both coasts. In the Richmond, California shipyard, a ship a day was launched from the ways.

The next two weeks were the most interesting of advanced training. We were taken down to the docks and given a chance to see the landing barges, and get familiar with same. The barges we trained on were the same type used by the Marines in their first assault on Guadalcanal. The next few days we learned how to run these marvelous, ingenious craft. For me it was a great experience as I got a big kick out of bucking the seas, and becoming master of a motor boat. We were graded every day and I came through very well. Our instructor, Griffin, rated me as coxswain, which is equivalent to 1st. Sergeant.

This I really enjoyed our lessons in handling these boats and hope to get a chance to run one in a theater of operation. Next two weeks were spent at Popponessett for machine gun firing. We learned to take apart and assemble the 30 and 50 caliber Browning water cooled gun. The 50 caliber is quite a weapon. We liked its performance. Our target was a sleeve towed by an airplane. During our stay there, sleeping in our shelter halves, I had Anne meet me again in Hyannis, Mass., a well known summer resort. Again our reunion is something I'll never forget. Anne wore a beautiful play dress in two pieces. she looked stunning in this outfit made by her mother. I thought it was

MY WAR

a knockout. We went out with Sid and Ruth. Had dinner at the Panama Club then to our rooms.

The next day (Sunday) we went swimming and had a good dinner at the Hyannis Inn. I introduced Anne to several of the boys, and she made a definite hit with them all. Anne and Ruth left Monday for home while Sid and I took a cab back to camp and our pup tents.

Our last day at Pop-ponesett we were told we were to get five days furlough and the company would be split up. As we expected, Sid was shifted to A Company, while I remained in C Company. We rode back to Cotuit, and the next day, August 8th, I received the one thing I wanted most, a furlough.

My week at home on pass, was simply swell. I really appreciated everything that I had hardly noticed before and all my friends and relatives treated Anne and I marvelously. Met Burt Goldman and we had a chat about various buddies and events. Wound up the week by a reunion of those still out of the service and myself. It sure was nice and I enjoyed every minute that I was home.

Back to camp and the next two weeks just killed time in review. Finally it came. Our company lieutenant assembled all of us in the mess hall and announced we were officially on alert. Despite this, I walked into a three day pass, and with 80 cents in my pocket, I made it home to see Anne again. This reunion was the best of all. I told the folks that I expected to be shipped out soon and this might be the last time I'd be able to visit. Anne and I took pictures together at Gimbel's and then the whole family had a delicious steak dinner at Hymie's Steak House. Benny, my nephew, gave me a gift of a compass and sewing kit which I treasure very much. Anne saw me to the station on Sunday morning and after telling her that I loved her and not to worry, I went back to camp. This was the last week in August 1943

The first weeks in September were spent in gathering a complete change of clothing and equipment, dental care, glasses, filling out papers, wills and last testaments in preparation for our trip. Rumors were rife that it would be California, then southwest Pacific. And again we were told we were to be attached to Service and Transports, whatever that is.

CHAPTER 3- SEPTEMBER 1943

September 6, 1943

We left Cotuit and went back to Edwards. We were scheduled to leave Labor Day but instead loafed a solid week in camp doing nothing but eating and playing ball, (etc.). I called mom and Anne on Friday night. On Wednesday, September 9th, the Italians surrendered unconditionally and thus a big milestone in this war was passed. Italy was now out of the war. Saturday night we were notified we were to leave. Well, I had made my calls and now I was all set for come what may.

September 12, 1943

Sunday. We rode down to the train and after lining up, marched into our cars. The band was there to see us off and also Colonel Savage. Prior to that, Lt. Haas made a farewell speech and told us we were the finest group he had trained. The band played "The Fighting Engineer" song, and "Over There." That kind of got to us and we let out a big yell. How prophetic that might turn out to be, as we're all convinced this is it and over we were going.

Our train consisted only of four Pullmans, a baggage car, and a kitchen car. I was assigned to a berth with Cliff Green from Erie, Penna., and Three Irons a full blooded Crow Indian from Montana. Three Irons took the upper and Green and I slept in the lower. It was my first Pullman ride and quite a novelty to me. We made up our berths in New York and when we awoke on Monday morning we were near Buffalo, NY, right off the Canadian border.

September 13, 1943

We were aroused at 7:00 a.m. and found the train was nearing the Canadian border, off Buffalo. While eating breakfast we passed the Falls and entered on the Canadian side. About 3:00 p.m. we stopped at the Customs office between Canada and Port Huron Mich. and exercised off the train for fifteen minutes. We got under way and I spent the next few hours playing poker. Lost 75 cents. About 6:00 p.m. we arrived in Chicago and lay over for several hours. Had dinner and candy. Smoked and read latest issue of LIFE magazine before turning in.

September 14, 1943

Woke up in Missouri and had breakfast. We spent most of the time chewing

MY WAR

the fat or reading. Wrote another letter of the days events to Anne. About 11:00 p.m. we arrived in Kansas City, MO. Laid over for an hour and we did some more exercises. The rest of the day was spent riding through Kansas. Approaching the border of Colorado we turned our watches back another hour and turned in for the night.

September 15, 1943

Awoke in Pueblo, Colorado. And after washing and cleaning up, we spent an hour watching as beautiful scenery as one could wish to see. We were going through the Rockies and the formations of age old rock and streams and colors were something to see. Our train wound through narrow gorges with rock formations on both sides and a stream flowing alongside. It was only 7:00 in the morning and quite beautiful. All day we rode through scenery as beautiful and majestic as I shall ever hope to see. We were still in Colorado when we fell asleep. I was scheduled to go on guard duty at 5:00 am.

September 16, 1943

Awoke at 5:00 p.m. Relieved the guard on post 5 and stood on the steps looking into the City of Salt Lake. Reminded myself to write Anne about the number of wives the Mormon men took for themselves. Wanted to let her know she is the only wife I ever want. We turned our watches back another hour and the train resumed its journey. At 7:00 p.m. I was relieved and went back to my own car. Shortly afterwards we crossed the border into Nevada. I had quite a conversation with Three Irons and he repeated his invitation to visit him on the Crow Reservation in Montana after the war. I know Anne would get big kick out of such a trip.

September 17, 1943

Finally we crossed the Nevada border into California. Impression is one of rolling hills and valleys. Passed through Sacramento and finally arrived at our destination- Pittsburg. Ironic to travel thousands of miles to hit a place called Pittsburg. We disembarked from the train and Lt. Goldine bade us farewell and luck. Then we marched over to Pittsburg Replacement Depot and took another examination. Afterwards we were classified and I, too my astonishment, was classified as a heavy machine gunner. We slept in barracks and after an orientation talk hit the hay.

Over the weekend, Chas Jaeger, Dick Cors, Weiss and myself took the bus into San Francisco to spend the weekend. Frisco was about an hour drive away and we passed through Berkeley, Oakland and crossed what I thought

MY WAR

was the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco. Quite a city. We ate at the first likely looking restaurant and met three of the burlesque queens playing across the street. The dining room was crowded and we graciously squeezed them into our booth. Had quite a few laughs during the conversation.

After we left, we secured beds at Hospitality House and then went to the show to see what the girls really looked like. Pretty fair show. We left and walked through Chinatown, quite impressive and colorful. However, Dick and Weiss were picked up by the MPs for not having passes. So, Jaeger and I went back to Hospitality House and bedded down. We gave Cors and Weiss' beds to two sailors. Awoke early Sunday.

Went over to Victoria Hotel, ordered breakfast and placed calls to our wives. Poor Jaeger's wife wasn't able to talk to him because of the lady below who refused to call her to the phone. Fortunately, I got through to Anne and it was heaven talking to her. We spoke for quite a while, and I hated like hell to close the conversation. But all good things come to a close and we regretfully hung up. Finished my breakfast and we walked out. Chas felt so bad about not getting his call through, that he broke down and cried. Felt very sorry for him but we sent her a telegram and that cheered him up. Then we went to Chinatown and brought our wives necklace sets that were made in China. A very nice Chinese girl wrapped our packages and we mailed them out. This was for my wife and our 1st wedding anniversary. I hope she likes it. Afterwards Chas and I went to the Pepsi Cola Center for servicemen and we made recordings of our voices for our wives. They turned out swell. We visited Stage Door Canteen and had lunch and entertainment. Then we took the bus back to Camp.

The following week we spent in brush-up work and just plain loafing around. Visited Pittsburg a night or two but found it just a small town with not much in the way of entertainment. It has a nice USO and the Dugout was a nice clean cocktail lounge where we spent a little time. Drank a new drink called "Singapore Sling," composed of brandy, grenadine, and whiskey float. Good drink.

September 27 to 30, 1943

The Jewish Holy Holidays were approaching and I was anxious to go to the synagogue as this holiday means a lot to me. The army allowed us two day passes to observe Rosh Hoshanah. I applied for one as did Chas, Jaeger, Weiss, Kippur and Hall. We were taken by bus Wednesday evening to

MY WAR

Oakland from where we rode over to Frisco and got rooms at the Pepsi Cola Center. We wanted to be together as families were taking one or two boys. Thursday morning we went to what is considered one of the world's most beautiful synagogues, the Temple in Frisco's Jewish section. We were given front row seats and I was immensely impressed by the splendid grandeur, and beauty of this temple. An unusual feature was the playing of the organ and a beautifully voiced choir. We also took off our hats as this is a Reform Temple. The praying was in both Hebrew and English, and I followed it very easily. Afterwards the Rabbi gave us a stirring sermon on the world today and our future. I was very much impressed with the entire ceremony and wrote to Anne to tell her I wanted to worship in the reform manner when I returned to civilian life. Afterwards we had dinner at Weiss's and then back to town. Walked around a bit and then back to the Pepsi Cola Center.

CHAPTER 4- OCTOBER 1943

October, 1943



October 1, 1943

Friday. Reformed was closed so we went to Orthodox. Ate in restaurant and back to town again and sleep.

October 2, 1943

Saturday. Jaeger and I went to Berkeley to see USC vs UCB with USC winning it 7-0. Nice stadium and very colorful setting. Governor Olsen was there also as were a lot service men. Met the people who gave us a lift over

MY WAR

after walking through the campus, and rode back to Frisco. Saturday night Jaeger and I get stinking drunk in Chinatown. Very colorful place. Sat upstairs in a little balcony and it looked very much like old China. Back to camp and turned in for being A.W.O.L. for one day. However it was overlooked as we had a good reason.

October 17, 1943

After a few more days in Casual we went over to Camp Stoneman and this was the final take off place for us. Here were all branches of the service preparing to go over. We went through various stages of training, such as debarking from nets, etc. On Yom Kippur I fasted all day and went to the chapel for services. Tried to call Anne on our anniversary but again the lines were tied up for hours. Felt bad about it as it was our 1st anniversary, the tenth of October. A week later we were alerted and left Stoneman on the 17th of October for overseas. I tried to call Anne but couldn't get out, so here it was at last, on a Sunday morning.

We wore full field packs and helmets and marched down the streets of Pittsburg to the river for the boat to take us to San Francisco. One incident I'll never forget is the girl who when we passed. said very sincerely, "I take my hat off to you fellows." That made us feel very good. The band played us out onto the boat and about 3:30 a.m. we cast off. Down the river to Frisco. Passed right by Alcatraz and it impressed us with its cleanliness and well kept appearance. Pulled up along side the U.S.S. Republic at the docks and stepped off United States soil. Up the gang plank, down into the crowded compartments, where there were three decker bunks and narrow isles and the heat was plenty.

Up that morning an hour and half before sunrise for Abandon Ship drill. Rest of the morning spent wandering around deck and eating. Pulled away and headed out the Bay and under the Golden Gate bridge for the open sea. First night slept badly.

October 18 to 20, 1943

Monday. When we awoke we saw no sight of land. Water all around us and Major Barnes notified us that we were now in a Combat Zone and would have Abandon Ship drills.

MY WAR

Tuesday. Assigned to spud locker with Green, Garlock and several more Amphibians. for 6 days, peeling spuds, onions, and other vegetables for 5,000 troops. Never saw so many vegetables in all my life, but we had lots of fun and time passed quickly. Still traveling unescorted, although rumor has it that two subs are ahead of us as convoys. Plenty of wild talk about the ship getting torpedoed or bombed.

Wednesday. Decided to sleep on deck with Jaeger, Green, Gill, and Garlock. We really told some tall tales about our civilian life in these evening get togethers and the boys especially liked my stories. Our evenings are spent sitting on the deck, (the hatch), eating candy, reminisce of home, and tell stories and listen to the ship's recordings over the loud speakers.

October 25, 1943

Monday. Second week out young Jaeger felt pretty blue and started to cry. We let him have it out and looked the other way. After a bit I cheered him up and we got our favorite sitting place on the rear hatch. We sighted another ship far off on the horizon and speculated on what it might be. Turned out to be friendly as both ships commenced signaling to one another. That evening we GIs decided to form a club for the purpose of meeting yearly after the war.

Tuesday. Relieved of detail and now hoped to spend the rest of the voyage as a tourist. Saw movie in the ship's theater on A Deck, "Crossroads," with William Powell and Hedy Lamarr.

October 27, 1943

Wednesday. We sighted a formation of planes. Immediately the Navy was ordered to battle stations and troops told to lay below. Turned out to be our planes, probably coming from a carrier. Later that evening sighted a lone American plane. Plane flew directly over our ship and dipped his wings in salute. We waved back enthusiastically and felt good seeing our own planes.

About 7:30 p.m. that evening we crossed the Equator for which we received membership cards in the Equator club. Slept on deck again. Often just lay there looking at the dazzling display of clouds and think of Anne and how much I loved her and missed her.

October 28, 1943

Thursday. Spent most of the day playing cards with Jaeger and watching the sailors putting rookie sailors through Equator initiation ceremonies, shaving

MY WAR

heads, painting their bodies fantastic shades of color and putting them through the old hazing grind. Very funny. That afternoon we were given booklet on Australia so that finally confirmed our guesses as to where we were heading for.

October 29, 1943

Friday. We gather around for the evening bull session, and sleep under the stars on the aft hatch.

CHAPTER 5- NOVEMBER 1943

November 5, 1943

Friday. No Thursday. Crossed the line. Quite a few jokes as the boys claimed they couldn't see the line and others pointing it out as the ship's loudspeakers solemnly blared out- "We are crossing the International Dateline." It's now Friday and 6.5 hours behind Pittsburgh time. Washed clothes in the usual salt water. How I wish I could shower and wash in fresh water.

November 6, 1943

Saturday. Another boxing show. Spent the evening in bull sessions and found out we were expected to debark on Wednesday.

November 9, 1943

Tuesday. A destroyer pulled alongside and escorted us all evening and finally on Wednesday, the 10th of November we sighted the coastline of Australia, near Sidney.

November 10, 1943

Wednesday. We docked about 5 o'clock and at 8 disembarked in a drizzling rain. Australia after 23 days at sea.

Got off the boat and climbed into trains. All along the route we were greeted by waving lanterns and yelling Aussies. We felt very good about this. Finally we reached Warwick Farms and the race track, where we were to stay. It was a drizzling rain. All the G Club managed to get into the same tent and we had lots of fun and laughter.

November 11, 1943

Thursday. I cabled Anne, telling of my safe arrival. We traded our money in for Australian money the next day, and became very impressed with their monetary system. The food was heavy and consisted of meat in the main. The next day we took off for town and met some Australians for the first time. Very friendly and hospitable people.

November 13, 1943

Saturday. We entrained again and rode to Brisbane, Camp Ascot, another race track. We had lots of fun on the way up. We stopped at railway stations for our meals and threw coins and gum to the kids. After we were settled in Ascot

MY WAR

and assigned to tents, we led a life of details and more details. After two weeks, Goldy, Garlock, Grass, and Gill were transferred to Ship and Gun crews, and assigned to Camp Mooraka on the other side of Brisbane. Aussies were very friendly but disliked MPs. Spent a lot of time at the Red Cross. Ate good meals there and went golfing, horseback riding to the fights and horse races. Usually with Goody. Bought Anne material for a dress and sent it on. Christmas worked K.P. and spent New Year's Eve in camp and saw a movie with Green and Goody.

The Japanese High Command had fully expected that the U.S. and her Allies would soon tire of the costly assaults against the increasingly powerful jungle fortresses rimming the widespread Japanese perimeter. They had planned for a negotiated peace, leaving Japan with most of her conquests and the U.S. and Australia safe from attack. However, there was never any thought of a negotiated peace as far as the Allies were concerned. In fact, since a large naval buildup against Hitler was far less appropriate, the primary focus for naval strength had shifted to the Pacific. The original plan of keeping a defensive posture against Japan, while having an all out offensive effort against Germany, began to be modified. With the success of Midway, Marines under Admiral Nimitz, began a stepped up assault against Japanese held islands, and the U.S. Army, under General MacArthur, moved up from Australia to challenge the Japanese holdings in New Guinea, in order to eventually move against the Philippines. If the Philippines could be recaptured, the Southern Resource Area would be lost and the Japanese Empire cut in two.

CHAPTER 6- JANUARY 1944

January 1, 1944

Got Christmas cards, \$10.00 and birthday cards from home. Finally on the 15th of January we left Brisbane for New Guinea. We took ten days traveling on a dilapidated Dutch steamer with Grass and Three Irons as gunners on the ship.

Goody and I slung hammocks below decks and spent most of the trip there, reading, and sleeping. The food was lousy. Indians that acted as crew were dirty and often urinated on the decks and smelled up the entire ship.

January 25, 1944

Tuesday. Finally we reached Oro Bay and DUKS took us off the ship and up to headquarters. Here we were assigned to our outfits and again split up every which way. On Sunday, Goody and I took a jeep ride all over the island and found it very interesting. Also visited Buna.

Again we were taken up the coast in LCMs to the 542 Headquarters Co. and spent a couple of days there. This was Finschhafen and our first night in experiencing an air raid. I was fascinated by the bright red colors of the tracers. No damage done.

Finschhafen was occupied by the Japanese on March 10, 1942. On March 15, 1942, General MacArthur was appointed supreme commander of the region. On October 2, 1943, Finschhafen was recaptured by Allied forces and the road up to the Philippines was open. This campaign was a splendid example, on a small scale, of combined operations, land, sea, and air, featuring deception and surprise.

The Fifth Air Force isolated the Japanese from their strongholds at Madang, Wewak, and Rabaul, while also directly supporting the ground troops at Finschhafen. Over 10,000 Japanese troops were engaged; more than half were killed, and the rest were driven into the jungle.

On Sunday, January 2, 1944, Saidor, 110 miles above Finschhafen, was seized by another combined air, land and sea operation. The Japanese were unable to visualize so many rapid, powerful strokes. Arriving at Saidor meant that the Japanese troops on the north coast of New Guinea were trapped between the

MY WAR

Americans at Saidor and the advancing Australians, with no source of supply or reinforcement. MacArthur had successfully avoided the Japanese strength and cut off supply and support, letting the Japanese troops wither in isolation.

February 1944

We boarded LSTs, the first of many trips in this type of landing craft. After an uneventful trip, we arrived at Saidor and joined my outfit at long last. Saidor is where the 32nd division outflanked the Japs being driven up the coast by the Aussie 7th and 9th Divisions. Our area was a sea of mud and tangled jungle, right off the beach. The boys slept in and we were given the same. I found the jungle hammock with it's mosquito netting and rubber roof quite an invention and fairly comfortable & cozy sleeping.

It rained every night but our hammocks kept us dry. There was nothing to do and the first Friday there Father Hallinan had me over to services where I met Norm Bergman and we developed a fast friendship. I was surprised at the number of Jewish boys in the other company of the Regiment. In my company there was Mike Goldberg, North Carolina, a good natured generous guy, Markowitz, Gilbert, Diamond and two others. Bergman conducted the services and I was very much impressed by the conditions of this first night of worship, the rough hewn chapel, the wild surroundings, and the six of us gathered around in a solemn ceremony.

After the services we sat around and talked for several hours. The boys wanted to know about the States as they had been here for quite some time. Of them all, Bergman interested me the most. Norm told me all about his stage career. He was a dancer and showed me pictures of him and Eleanor Holms at the Aquacade, and other stage personalities. One I thought very original was a letter from the four King Sisters with their lipstick impressions and notations underneath, such as "Collect the real thing after the war." Finally we broke up and every night thereafter Norm and I visited each other and became very close friends. He told me of the landings they made here.

They didn't know what to expect and as this was their first mission they were naturally apprehensive. He described to me the Naval bombardment and air bombing prior to the landings. He was among the first to go in as he volunteered for the demolition squad, but upon landing found nothing but a few dead Japs. When evening fell the boys had all dug in and waited nervously for the usual counterattack. Due to their inexperience and natural reaction to imaginary movements in the jungle, the boys became trigger happy and wee

MY WAR

shooting at each other. Several boys were killed unfortunately, and this was a lesson I took great heed of. Don't move out of your foxhole at night, even to urinate. Norm got caught on the beach and had to lay there all night afraid to move for fear of being shot by his own men. He told me stories of Jap infiltration tactics and also the story of Junior Van Noy who killed lots of Japs attempting a sea landing at Finschhafen.

Junior Van Hoy, a baby faced, quiet, 19 year old, was the only Medal of Honor winner in the Engineer Special Brigade. During the landings at Finschhafen, a Japanese counterattack was attempted by landing Japanese forces on the beach behind the front lines. Only the small engineer force held the beach itself. The watch could barely see the Japanese boats coasting in out of the mist. Junior Van Hoy had the machine gun post that was directly in front of where the landing would take place. Careful not to fire too early, Van Hoy let the lead landing craft actually beach and even waited until the ramp came down with troops jumping out. At that point Junior opened up, ignoring the counter fire and grenades. One wildly tossed grenade did wound him severely in the legs, but Junior ignored that and continued to shoot at the Japanese landing party. Eventually all was quiet, his company found Junior dead with an empty machine gun, and lots of dead Japanese soldiers.

The first officer I met was Father Hallinan and under unusual conditions, he seated in the latrine. He gave me a very nice smile and hello, and then I noticed his chaplain's insignia. Norm worshipped him and told me how highly the boys thought of him. As the months rolled by, I found Norm's praise more than justified. I became fast friends with this Catholic chaplain, who reminded me so much of another Catholic chaplain from the last war, Father Duffy. Father Hallinan got me a Jewish Bible just before Passover, with best wishes inscribed, and it's one I shall always keep to remember him by.

Father Hallinan later became the Archbishop of Atlanta, Georgia, and was instrumental in the resolution of the civil rights issues in the 1960s, negotiating meetings between Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and various state and federal government leaders.

February 29, 1944

We were addressed by our commanding officer, Colonel Fowlkes, who said another mission was coming up. Shortly afterward we packed up, boarded LSTs and sailed back down the coast to Oro Bay. Here we were given an area and told it would be our permanent camp, so we went to work and built it up

MY WAR

into a comfortable camp, complete with showers, movie area, and PX. Our stay there was nice and for the first time I received lots of precious mail from home. I mailed Anne fifty dollars as money meant very little here. Also a picture.

One day we were told to put on clean khaki's for a presentation of awards to various members of the outfit. Major Long, our battalion CO, received the Legion of Merit. One of the stories told of him concerns his volunteering to man a captured Japanese barge arm it with a half of a dozen 50 caliber machine guns and sail into a Jap barge area, doing as much damage as possible and then getting away. However, this never came off, the brass would not allow it, as Major Long would have certainly been killed, but apart from that it was a good idea. During the month of March, Oro Bay conducted championship fights for all of New Guinea and I enjoyed seeing some terrific fights in a natural outdoor amphitheater. The crowds were huge, sometimes 20,000 to 30,000. Norm and I enjoyed the shows a lot. Then, John Wayne and several girls came over from the States to entertain and had a rousing reception. Norm helped him with the show and Wayne took a big interest in him. One day Norm brought one of the girls over to our area and the boys flooded around them. Paddy Flynn, our mess sergeant stealing the show. Before leaving for the States, Wayne wanted Norm to go back with him and tour other theaters. Due to red tape this was impossible at first, but with several highly placed letters of recommendation from John Wayne, he was finally shipped to Australia and from last reports is back in the States and thus I lost a good friend until after the war. Norm lives in Cleveland but I don't have his street address as yet.

CHAPTER 7- MARCH 1944

Late March, 1944

We were told to prepare for our next mission, we didn't know where but made plenty of guesses. I received a letter from Goody telling me that Holmes was killed in the Admiralty Bay landing, which was the mission we were originally scheduled to make but missed as we pulled out of Saidor too late. However the story proved to be false and at this date Holmes is still very much alive. So again, we boarded LSTs and rode over to Goodenough Island, a staging area for the Sixth Army. We made camp and were assigned to the 24th Division, fresh from Hawaii, for the coming mission.

While here I was given the job of burning out the incinerator, which struck me as funny. We spent our time re-equipping ourselves and getting ready for the mission. Also we were issued carbines, which I liked very much as they're light and shoot fifteen rounds per clip. Went to services every Friday evening at Station Hospital, where at one time a Jewish Aussie flyer conducted services. It was nearing Passover and arrangements had been made to have a real Passover with wine, matzo and fish that a nurse offered to make for us.

During this time, I stumbled into the best and most interesting job I've done in this army. Headquarters wanted a relief map made of the area we were to take which would give all involved a better picture of what was there. I had happened to speak to a friend about my sculpting, and he suggested to Capt. Chatterton of S2 that I might be of great help. The Captain had me attached to this work, which I did with the help of Lt. Ferris and Sgt. Strickland, a former artist. I made all sorts of landing craft we were to use on the mission and helped with ideas for presenting the map clearly to those involved.

We did a bangup job and received warm compliments from Col. Fowlkes and General Heavey. Then began the process of briefing the boat crews, shore crews, Navy and officers. I attended all the briefings and helped manipulate the model boats in their approach to shore. I learned a lot from these sessions and knew it was going to be a big operation and felt plenty proud of my share in the project. The fellows and I all tried to figure out where it might be. The guesses ranged as far as the Philippines. I thought it might be Wewak or Hollandia, and Hollandia it was.

MY WAR

Our particular group, machine gunners, communications, bull dozers, etc, were to come in on the third wave, preceded by two waves of infantry. Behind us would come LCIs and then the big LSTs with the heavy stuff. The infantry's objective was to strike for the airfields from Tanahmerah Bay, our landing point, and effect a juncture with the 32nd who were going to hit Hollandia proper. A third landing was going to be made by the 41st at Aitape, several miles below Hollandia, thus effectively outflanking the Japs. The date was set for April 22, and we were to be on our way at zero plus fifteen, which was fifteen minutes behind the first two waves of infantry.

April 4, 1944

We were packed and ready to board the various ships and landing craft. Our wave was assigned to the newest type of landing craft, a LSD, Landing Ship Dock, which was one marvel of American ingenuity. Two thirds of this ship was a seagoing dry dock. It had a huge well deck and the LCMs and Buffalo tractors rode right into the ship, tied up, and then all the water was let out and all the landing craft (which included about 20 LCMs, rocket boats, and 10 Buffaloes. The food was excellent, best we had for months. The ships store also had ice cream and Coca Cola, which were non-existent on land. We made ourselves as comfortable as possible under the crowded conditions and then we were told that we were going to make a practice landing, a dry run, on a site approximating the territory we were to take.

April 8, 1944

Before dawn on Saturday, we were all set, everything ran very smoothly. We were in our boats in orderly fashion and as the huge gate opened, the Buffaloes churned their way out. Then came the LCMs and we too, floated out of the ship into the water.

We circled for our rendezvous, and then we were off. We could see the first two waves of LCVs returning, and then we hit the beach. Quickly and smoothly, we got everything off and docked several yards up the beach past several black Fuzzy Wuzzies and their families, who were calmly sitting in their huts watching the crazy Americans charge past with rifles, tanks, bulldozers, etc. After everything had run to plan and we waited to return to our ships the natives set up a rousing business of selling coconuts, themselves for pictures, etc. I was greatly amazed at all this. These natives were on the ball. After a bit we packed our machine guns back on our LCM and rode back into the LSD.

MY WAR

Here we lay around for a week aboard ship, reading, sleeping, cleaning our equipment and even some swimming off the open ramp of the ship. Finally we set sail in the evening and were told that Hollandia, Aitape and Tanahmerah Bay were our objectives. Well the guessing was all over now and we were all set. The next day dawned and we gazed with awe on the most tremendous flotilla of ships that I ever saw. All you could see was ship after ship, ranging from LSTs to big aircraft carriers. Later I learned that this had been the biggest amphibious operation in the South West Pacific. We feinted towards Palau to throw the Japs off balance and then swung west towards Hollandia. The Friday evening before we were to land, I took myself below deck and read the Friday evening services to myself. I prayed for success in this mission and all that were with me. Later that evening we were told Saturday morning at 6:00 a.m. was D-Day and D-hour, and that we would be called at 4:00 a.m. for a breakfast of fresh eggs. After sitting around on deck, watching the silent silhouettes of the ships, I hit the hay.

April 22, 1944

Saturday. We were awakened and had breakfast and during the night the convoy had split into three objectives. I and hundreds more stayed on deck waiting for the Navy barrage. It hadn't come so we started towards the well deck to board our landing craft. Then I got an inkling of what was to come. The Navy had let the sea in before half of us had gotten into our boats and the rough sea was banging us and knocking the boats fearsomely against each other. I got to the ladder but couldn't make any progress because other GIs froze on the ladder, afraid to try getting into the bouncing boats. Several were crushed on the ladder by the boat and somehow I managed to jump clear and got into the boat without getting smashed.

The fumes and darkness only added to the confusion and my boat was the one directly ahead, not the one I was on. I climbed up the ramp and tried to worm my way over to my boat, but the boats were slamming into one and another with terrific bangs. I figured to hell with it, as I wasn't going to be a casualty this early in the game. So I stayed on the boat under the ladder.

The kid next to me was groaning piteously and in a strained voice told me that he had been crushed coming into the boat under the ladder. I and several others held him up and as we passed under the well deck we called for first aid. The Navy boys let over a basket and while we jounced around, we lifted him within the grasp of the sailors, and they got him over the rail into the

MY WAR

ship's sickroom. This certainly wasn't the smooth performance we had on our dry run, I said to myself. We got out into the open water and rendezvoused for our turn to go in.

Here I was, with no weapon, and all my equipment on another boat. I looked around and saw Lt. Dorsch and others who had also missed their boats. We were in the proper wave all right, but on the wrong boats. Later, I learned that Manning, our gun corporal, had to jump from the railing to get into his boat. I picked up a carbine that was laying on the deck of the LCM and felt somewhat better. Lt. Dorsch told me to head for my group as soon as I got off, which was in the center. Schoonover's bunch was on this boat and they were to land on the extreme right flank. Lt Dorsch also told me to keep low and watch out for snipers. That didn't make me feel any better. Then we started the long journey in to the shore. It was daylight now and I could see a destroyer banging away on my right. Other than that, there was no other bombardment that I saw, although they probably hit the high spots as we rocked in Tanahmerah Bay. As we neared the beach, with each boat's flag waving defiantly, I could see returning LCVs and the coxswains giving us the thumbs up which indicated that they got through in good order. Overhead we saw flights of fighters protecting us from air attacks.

We hit the beach nicely and I helped Schoonover's crew out with a load of ammunition. Then I took off for the middle of the beach and my own gun crew. Right behind me came the LCTs and the infantry poured out. We had met no opposition and everybody was busy at their various tasks. The bulldozers were widening the path, the infantry plunged ahead, and the ack ack crews set up their guns and communications. I joined Manning, and after brief discussion, we dug our pit for the 50-caliber gun. Sweat rolled off us, but the job had to be done before enemy fighters appeared. We had our gun set up in good order and dug slit trenches for the night.

In the meantime, the big LCT's beached and poured out their volumes of supplies.

The Japanese High Command decided to make an all-out effort to hold western New Guinea. The Second Area Army under Lt. General Jo Imura, had established a major supply and maintenance base at Hollandia, 500 miles west of Saidor, and beyond the reach of U.S. planes, whose range was about 350 miles. Knowing that MacArthur had never made an attack beyond the reach of his fighter cover, the Japanese felt confident at Hollandia and had

MY WAR

few defensive troops guarding the three Japanese airfields they had built there. Most of the Japanese Eighteenth Army, 65,000 strong, was between Madang and Wewak.

However, MacArthur had gotten Nimitz to “loan him,” Task Force 58, under Admiral Mitscher. The Task Force’s carriers had just completed a devastating attack on the Japanese held stronghold on Truk, virtually eliminating the naval force harbored there, and the pilots were primed and ready for more action. Because of the danger of operating carriers so close to Japanese land-based aircraft, the carriers could only stay four days.

MacArthur would have to be successful or pull out quickly. Thus, it was essential that the airfields be captured, so that land-based U.S. aircraft could support the landing forces. Aitape was just barely in range of U.S. aircraft from Saidor. If Aitape fell then aircraft could be moved up to support the landings at Hollandia after the Naval carrier force left. MacArthur decided to simultaneously invade Aitape, Hollandia, and the airfields near Tanamerah Bay.

The entire beach, as had been shown on the map, was only 300 yards long and the congestion was terrific. Piles and piles of ammunition and food stuff were sitting side by side. This wasn’t good, as one bomb could have blown us to hell and back. I saw my first Jap, a wounded one, and our medics were pouring precious American blood into him. Somehow or another we didn’t like the idea, but after all we are a civilized nation. A little later, General MacArthur strolled down the beach with lots of brass to give everything the once over. I was caught by surprise, seeing him coming down the road. All I could do was stare at him. He looked like his pictures but seemed somewhat shorter.

We ate the rations and settled down for the night. Nothing happened although I saw that day my first American dead. One had been shot by a sniper, another drowned with his equipment fording a stream, and one was killed accidentally when a BAR gun went off.

It rained hard all the first night and several nights thereafter. Our only shelter were our ponchos and shelter halves, but despite these coverings and sleeping on the ground, we always awoke soaking wet. After the third day, multi-fifties came in and took over our gun positions. We dismantled our gun and each group bivouacked on the beach with nothing to do. The only thing that

MY WAR

marred our sleep was the noise of the artillery shooting at the airstrips 10 miles away. Every time one would go off we would jump. Slinging our hammocks up right off the beach, we were fairly comfortable.

One night we had an air raid, but the Japs dropped their bombs well out on the bay. After a week or so our kitchen was set up and we had better meals. I particularly liked the captured rice and sauce that Paddy made so well. Our PX opened, and we were the envy of the bay with candy, cookies, etc. We had lots of fun trying to beat the natives in trade, but they always came out ahead. One day Huberty and I took a boat ride to the far end of the Bay and visited the native village which had been deserted because of the bombardment. We went through all the huts, the Dutch missionary school, and they even had a jail. Everything was neat and in order, although we found plenty of evidence of Jap occupancy. Old equipment, rice, etc. We took pictures and met the chief of the village who was wearing American captain's bars, which highly amused us.

We heard that the 24th had joined with the 32nd and had taken the airstrips. Prisoners were being brought in every day, and some of them looked sad. Out of the hills, a white couple came to our lines and told an interesting story.

They had been captured by the Japanese and had been prisoners for over two years. They finally escaped into the hills and lived with the natives till we took over. They were one happy couple and told many interesting tales of the Japs. The Red Cross sheltered and fed them until they could be returned to better quarters.

A couple of weeks later a group of us went over to Red Beach 1 to look at the Jap prisoners in the stockade. The Yanks had also captured several Filipino, Javanese, and Chinese girls with the Japs. They had free run of the beach and when we came upon them, they were washing their clothes. Several of the Filipino girls were extremely pretty. The Japs were kept in a huge hut surrounded by barbed wire, MPs, and curious GIs. Some were cooking rice, and most of them looked husky and well fed, although all were shorter than I expected. By this time, it was raining pretty hard, and after some more gawking, we took off back to our beach.

The Hollandia operation was one of the most brilliant of World War II. An entire Japanese army was encircled and its effectiveness completely destroyed. Yet because of excellent planning and skillful coordination of land, sea and air

MY WAR

forces, the actual combat actions were relatively small, and only insignificant Japanese forces were engaged and defeated.

Our days and evenings were spent swimming and sunning. We built a little fire in the evenings, made some coffee, and ate cookies and crackers and furiously chewed the fat. One of the Bofor gun crew next to us developed a close friendship with us. He was a Mexican and we called him Poncho.

Poncho had lots of color and could carve beautifully. He carved an Esquire girl for me out of soap. We used to have lots of laughs at his broken English and attempts at playing cards. He called me Holstein and we liked each other a lot. I suggested he go into business for himself, carving in Arizona, and thought I could interest one of our department stores in his stuff if he could make it in quantities.

Finally, towards the end of the third week in May, Lt. Lancaster came over to our little camp one evening and told me I was to pack up and leave for Hollandia the next morning to go down to Brigade Headquarters. I was puzzled for a while, and he told me he thought it might be another map.

The next morning Sgt. Strickland and I, with all the company commanders, boarded an LC and took off for the twenty or thirty miles down the coast to Hollandia. We had with us the Swiss couple and they were evidently being taken to Sixth Army headquarters for disposition of their case. About two o'clock in the afternoon we arrived in Hollandia and we were taken to headquarters where Lt. Ferris and Captain Chatterton gave us a big welcome.

As I thought, it was another map which naturally meant another mission. So we started to work the next morning. Looking over the photos I saw Biak printed on the back. I looked over a map and found Biak, the largest island in the Schouten Group, only 800 miles from the Philippines. There were plenty of signs of activity on the photos, and I learned that a crack outfit of Japanese Marines held the island and airstrip. It looked like a tough nut to crack, which later proved to be true. After a week we finished and it was a bang up job.

In the meantime, I learned that my outfit had arrived in Hollandia and camped in the worst hellhole I've ever seen. It was called Pancake Hill, and was composed of dry red soil which clung to everything there. I stayed with headquarters for another week, in case there were last minute changes to the map.

MY WAR

Finally, I went back to my outfit on Pancake Hill. I arrived to find the boys filthy with the stuff and looking like the blackest of the black. It was a mess. I also learned Lew Ayres was nearby, working as a chaplain's assistant in the Evacuation Hospital. The next day we were to board the LSTs and take off. In the meantime the boys plied me with questions, and I told them where we were going and expected a rough party.

The next day we boarded our ships and I learned I was assigned to Sgt. Fife and Drapeau with the water purification system. We took off that evening with the 41st Division, which made the mission one with experience. After two days of sailing we neared our objective and planned to land the next morning.

CHAPTER 8- MAY 1944

May 1944**May 27, 1944**

On Friday night I took out my prayer book and said my prayers which made me feel better and more confident.

Saturday. This morning, before dawn, we were awakened (I slept in a truck), and given breakfast. Biak loomed before us about three miles off shore, quiet and ominous. The destroyers, cruisers, and landing boats maneuvered into position ready for the attack.

Promptly, at 0600, while we stood on deck watching, the Navy opened fire on the stretch of beach before us. Round after round poured into the beaches. Rocket boats crept closer firing streams of rocket shells faster than the eye could follow. Destroyers, sub chasers, and cruisers were really pouring it on now and we watched in amazement at the carnage on the beach. Through the filtering light of dawn, smoke, and haze, we could see giant coconut trees snap like match sticks; flames and explosions rocked the beach and cliff behind it. For forty-five minutes the Navy really poured it on. How could anyone survive a bombardment such as this? Just as the last rounds tore into the

MY WAR

beach, we heard a tremendous roar of engines. Looking skywards we saw flight after flight of B-24s drop their eggs smack on the beaches. Explosion after explosion rocked the beaches while we stood wildly cheering, "Give it to them, the dirty bastards."

In the meantime, the infantry clambered over the sides of our LST and into the Buffaloes, which were amphibious tractors. The use of the Buffaloes was necessary because of the coral which jutted from the beaches for fifty yards out. The landing craft would have had their bottoms ripped out on the sharp coral. The Buffaloes headed for the shore just as the last bombs were dropped. In a steady line abreast formation, we watched them churn their way through the water, reach the coral and ponderously rock and sway over the reef with the troops aboard huddled low, ready for anything. Offshore, several destroyers were creeping closer, ready to open up on any fire from shore. The second wave of Buffaloes started in just as the first wave clambered onto the beaches. The doughboys hopped off and were immediately pinned down by machine gun fire. The Buffaloes' guns and the infantry opened fire at the caves, where the surviving Japs were deeply entrenched.

The offshore destroyers opened up at point blank range and silenced some of the Jap guns, enough so that the infantry could advance and outflank the caves. In the third wave, our company went in with 50 caliber machine guns, communications, and Fife to scout for water. We would come in with the equipment on the LSTs as soon as the letter companies in our outfit attached the floating docks to the Jap piers so we could bring in the heavy stuff.

Things were clearing up on the beach, and we could see them plugging along the road to the airstrip, 14 miles further down the beach. Finally, after some delays, the big LSTs swung into shore and the first thing off was our water purification trailer. Walking to the edge of the beach, where it met the cliffs, I saw a dead Jap lying fully stretched out with his fly open and penis stuck out. He looked clean and well built, but walking around him I saw that half his head had been blown off. Their billy cans were partly filled with rice; evidently the bombardment had caught them unaware and in the open. I walked over to their cave dug into the side of the cliff and saw several more bodies sprawled every which way, dead. By the time the trailer was pulled up on the beach, Westfall, Hunt, Corrigan, Sicora, Drapeau and I got on and started down the beach looking for Fife.

MY WAR

The boys on the beach were digging in gun emplacements, unloading supplies, scurrying back and forth with the confusion and hard work that is so much a part of the first day landing.

We met Fife and he took us back almost 50 yards off the beach to a muddy stream where we quickly set up our machinery and started pouring out vital water. It was now about three o'clock and we ate some of our K-rations, and watched the Jap machine guns chattering away in their caves on the cliff about thirty yards away from us. Since their fire was ineffective, due to our infantry, and out of range to us, we went on about our work unconcerned.

The struggle for Biak was one of the most bitterly contested battles of the Pacific war. The Americans suffered more than 2,700 casualties, the Japanese nearly 10,000. The action continued for over a month, with enemy aircraft attacking the beach heads nearly every day.

Over the ridge, a patrol of infantry saw an apparently empty cave but decided to investigate it. Foolishly, the sergeant in charge peered into the cave, only to take a bullet in the forehead. Immediately the rest of the squad surrounded the entrance and yelled for someone to bring up the flamethrower. Several of the Japanese inside the cave, probably understanding English, dashed out madly, only to be mowed down by a hail of bullets. The flamethrower came up, and, while the boys covered him by firing into the cave mouth, he crept close, let go a burst and slipped, sliding down the hillside. The Japs, badly scared and screaming crazily, rushed out of the cave to meet their fate- bullets and death.

In the afternoon, while the infantry advanced over the ridge after the retreating Japs, we were sitting around chewing the fat. A big six-foot colored came down from one of the ridges with a pair of Jap rubber boots too small for him, but just right for Fife. He gave them to Fife, and we offered him some rations and sat around a fallen coconut tree listening to him talk. He was very amusing to me and a nice guy.

After an hour or so, about 4 o'clock, we heard a tremendous roar of engines. Glancing up we saw four planes sweeping in low, and as quick as a flash, the colored boy yelled "Zeros!", and dove into a small foxhole. I was stunned and stood open mouthed, fascinated by the red ball of fire insignia on the planes as they roared up the beach, guns blazing and dropping small bombs.

MY WAR

They had come in so fast that they had caught the entire beach by surprise. GIs were ducking, hiding, dodging every which way.

They were past the end of the beach and already banking for a second run; by this time, I recovered my senses and dove into the same foxhole as the colored. When I banged on top of him, I found Siroco underneath the Negro, squeezed in real tight. The plane's gun made a hell of a racket and I thought, "The sonnaofabitches were aiming them all at me." A split second later, a flying figure landed with a thud on me, which made four of us in a hell of a small hole. It was Drapeau and all he had in was his head, as his rear end was sticking way up in the air. After the raid was over, I had to laugh like hell at the funny sight he made. Meantime, I was embracing my colored friend more so than my wife Anne!

We heard a shout go up and jumping out we saw a welcome sight. All four planes had been hit and were aflame. One Zero smashed sickeningly into the coral just off the beach. Another was banking gracefully in a blaze of fire and almost gently crashed into the water. The third, burning furiously, banked and in a dying effort tried to crash into a destroyer as a hail of ack-ack followed him around. We watched spellbound as the plane just missed hitting the destroyer. We could see all the sailors ducking, and then the plane crashed into the side of a sub chaser alongside the destroyer. The fourth plane, smoking badly, disappeared over the ridge and crashed into the jungle.

It was all over now, and we jumped around talking excitedly about the action. I looked around and there was Hunt, crawling out of our water stream, soaking wet and covered with mud. We had a long laugh at his expense and then we moved twenty some yards to the beach where we really dug in, waiting for the usual Jap counterattack and bombing raid.

Drapeau and I dug a double foxhole, "N" shaped, and spreading our shelter half, our carbines, knife and helmet closeby, covered ourselves with our ponchos and tried to sleep. We could hear the Jap woodpeckers blazing away every now and then, rifle fire from the ridge where the infantry had their perimeter. It began to drizzle somewhat, and then, as expected, the bombers came over. We could distinctly hear the peculiar sound of the Jap motors and then it seemed as though they were directly overhead. We hugged the bottom of our foxholes as our 90s opened up. The noise was deafening but effective and the planes left after dropping their loads harmlessly in the ocean.

May 28, 1944

Sunday. The next day, while the infantry slowly advanced and artillery on the beach banged away at caves, ridges, and airfield, the beach assumed an orderly appearance. Supplies were pouring in, bulldozers were already working on the skimpy Jap roads. We were kept busy putting out water; although it was terrible tasting stuff, it was certainly better than none at all.

That afternoon, word was passed down the beach that a B-25 was going to fly over the beach head to drop some vital maps. All ack ack crews had supposedly been warned not to open up. About 1400, the big silver skinned plane appeared over the water and circled into the beach from the left as we stood watching. She came in slowly along the edge of the beach, her American star as big as life. About midway she dropped the bundle of maps. Suddenly, from the far end of the beach, a number of 50 calibers opened up. Then all the guns in that sector went into action. While we looked on horrified and yelled down the beach to stop, the plane burst into flames and started to fall. The crew never had a chance and in desperation or anger, the tail gunner fired back as she started in a downward glide to crash, killing the entire crew of five, a major, captain, two lieutenants and a staff sergeant. The tragedy left us shaken and angry. An investigation was apparently started and found that the crews had been ordered to fire by a jittery lieutenant, who later, I understand, was busted to private. Later in the week, a P-47 almost met the same fate, but luckily the fire missed him. He derisively radioed in that he wasn't going to drop anything until they ceased firing. Upon being ordered to stay away, he contemptuously remarked, "Tell them guys on the guns, they're piss poor shots." Those of us listening in had to roar with laughter. Again, that night the Japs came over and this time one of their bombs landed in a Bofors gunpit, killing one and seriously injuring the others. One Jap plane was hit by ack ack and went down.

May 29, 1944

Monday. Fife found a spring coming out of the coral ridge just at the beach, so we dismantled and set up there. This was a good set up, as the water wasn't brackish and but for a slightly limish taste, it was cool and pure. We bivouacked on the top of the ridge, setting up our hammocks and fixing a sandbagged foxhole that couldn't have stopped a rock but physically gave us a feeling of protection. Large enough to hold all six of us. We ate 10 in 1 rations now and that was a relief after eating K-rations. That evening we didn't bother to try to get any sleep. The Japs kept us in our foxholes continuously. We

MY WAR

heard them coming and lay there waiting for the shooting to start. Suddenly we saw a flare drop off in the distance and one every couple hundred yards. As they dropped lower they lit up the entire beach as light as day. Damn if that wasn't a hell of a feeling. We looked up and felt as though the cruel eyes of the Japs were figuring out which ones to knock off. The flares just seemed to rest in midair; then our guns opened fire, shooting at the light. After several minutes and excellent marksmanship, all of the flares were put out. We waited for the bombers to come in and let go of their eggs behind the flare plane but nothing happened. Can't figure the Japs at all. Here was a beautiful setup for bombing and they missed the boat.

The next day and several days afterwards, we were continuously raided by the Japs. Any planes that came over in the daytime were dead pigeons and our guns shot them to pieces. The beach had guns everywhere, I never saw so much firepower concentrated on one beach head. Meanwhile, we set up our tanks and piping and had the water situation well in hand.

Having more time to look around, we picked up several significant souvenirs, an opium pipe, needles and dope. It seemed every Jap dugout contained such articles. The big sake and beer dump, where thousands of the bottles were piled high, was guarded by the MPs while thirsty GIs looked on enviously. Seeing all this, I arrived at the conclusion that the Japs making their famous suicide charges were either doped up or drunk or both. All the evidence pointed to that fact.

CHAPTER 9- JUNE 1944

June-July, 1944



June, 1944

One evening about 1500, without warning, a Jap plane roared along the water's edge. Every gun on the beach opened up. We all ducked but came out of our holes as we saw the Jap plane wasn't interested in doing any damage, but was trying to get the hell out of there. He was flying over the water the length of the beach, desperately wiggling his plane trying to avoid the terrific hail of fire.

We stood up yelling fiercely for the KO, but to our amazement the plane was intact as he almost painfully continued onward. The greatest amount of flak I had ever seen was thrown at this guy, and I even felt a little sorry for him, as he didn't even have a sporting chance. But he roared past, and still intact. he streaked for home. But several miles away we saw him smoking and shortly afterwards the Navy reported him down. A colored boy standing near me,

MY WAR

exultantly threw his cap on the beach and yelled. "Man oh Man, the Boss man's gonna have to beat the hell out of that boy to get him to come back here again." I roared with laughter over that one.

June 5, 1944

We heard the second front had been started in France. Skeptical, I went over to the radio tent to hear the evening news. By gosh, to our joy it was true. We heard Pres. Roosevelt lead the nation in prayer and talks by General Eisenhower and others. The initial assaults had been successful without the expected casualties, and we listened every chance we could in the days to follow for the news of our boys' progress.

A few days later, word was passed that a battalion of infantry were pinned between the Japs on a by-passed ridge several miles from the beach head, and the Japs defending Mokmer Airstrip. Their situation was desperate but our Buffaloes saved the day by evacuating them by sea. So now the Japs on the ridge had to be cleaned out before our boys could advance to their objective, the airstrip.

One day, shortly after supper, 16 Jap planes came over and all hell broke loose. The Japs lost half their planes to our ack ack, but one of our boys in our own company was killed by a strafing 20mm shell, and died instantly at his 50 caliber machine gun. Fife came up from the beach and told us the news. We all felt pretty bad as this was the first outright casualty in our company. During the raid, I had Huberty's camera and tried to shoot some pictures of the action from our foxhole, but I couldn't get the camera opened. By this time our infantry was having one hell of a time trying to flush the Japs out of their caves and dugouts. One war correspondent termed it tougher than Guadalcanal.

Father Hallinan went up to the front lines to give the boys confidence and spiritual guidance, and came back a week later with wounded on Buffaloes. Just as they neared the beach, a lone Jap plane dove out of the clouds, heading straight for Father Hallinan's Buffalo. The bomb fortunately missed and landed between two Buffaloes. The Jap streaked off when our surprised ack ack crews opened up on him. I saw Father Hallinan when he landed on the beach, bearded, haggard, and black with dirt, completely fatigued. No wonder I admire him so; he had plenty of guts, that priest did. As he supervised the unloading of the wounded, the air alert sounded again. I helped the wounded get into holes for safety, and my heart went out to them. Several boys had to

lay on the exposed Buffaloes because of serious wounds, one in particular had half his rear end blown off. Fortunately nothing happened, and the wounded were taken to medical stations for treatment and evacuation.

June 10, 1944

We received startling news. For the first time in a long while the Jap's fleet, or parts of it, were spotted heading our way, either to reinforce the garrison here, or evacuate what they could. Immediately, all the guns on the beach were pointed seaward, ready to blast any attempt to land troops. Whole outfits were evacuated to the hills off the beach, to minimize the casualties from Naval gunfire, which, judging from our own fleet, was terribly potent. Fife came up and told us we were to evacuate the water point and follow the infantry back into the hills. So we hurriedly packed our packs with bare essentials, after debating whether to follow the infantry, which was pulling out in trucks, or to go back into the hills with the Negro quartermaster troops. We decided on the infantry, as the colored boys were a little too trigger happy for us. Just as we were boarding the trucks, Lt. Dorsch called us off and asked us where we were going. I told him Fife had ordered us out. After changing the order, Lt. Dorsch told us we were to stay with the water point, which suited me and the others. He explained the situation, telling us the Jap Navy had been spotted several days ago, and at that moment our heavy bombers were flying out from our newly recaptured airbase at Hollandia to meet the Jap fleet. Also, portions of our fleet were steaming toward these waters from Hollandia, where they were based to meet the enemy and stave off just this kind of counterattack. If their fleet should get through, we were to stay with the water point till he sent for us to evacuate with the Company.

So back we went to our positions and opened up a bottle of Sake to forget our troubles. We got feeling pretty good and even hoped the Japs would try to land here. That night the beach was ominously quiet, waiting. About midnight a Bofor on the beach opened fire to seawards. We looked out from our foxholes and saw answering fire from a destroyer and immediately thought the Japs had snuck in. We got out of our flimsy foxhole, ducking into a huge shell crater nearby for better protection against shelling.

I remember telling the boys to keep cool although we were all pretty scared. However, nothing happened and we later learned that our own fleet was patrolling these waters and had sent up flares, which we mistook for gunfire, to notify us that they were here. We felt a hell of a lot better then and even

MY WAR

tried to get some sleep, but the colored boys back of the ridge, in the jungles, were having their usual hand grenade battles and firing among themselves, so sleep was out of the question. The next morning they filed past our position, and I asked one how they spent the night. He gave me a flashing smile and said "Grenades and bullets were whizzing all night. Yeah man, it was rugged," he said. We had to laugh. They're good boys but they get scared too easy. We also learned our Air Force had found the Jap fleet, sinking four warships and causing the others to run. This ended one of the most exciting, anxious days I've spent.

The Japanese had attempted to lure a naval engagement by sending a task force in the direction of the recent successful operation in the Biak area. However, land based aircraft easily turned the task force back. The Japanese were also diverted by the strong show of force at Saipan. After a bitter fight, with over 3,100 U.S. casualties, Saipan was taken. More than 27,000 Japanese were killed, hundreds of civilians committed suicide by jumping from cliffs, and only 2,000 troops were captured. The reports of so few Japanese soldiers surrendering had an enormous impact on future invasions of Japanese strongholds.

General Saito, the 31st Army commander also committed suicide, as did Admiral Nagumo, the attacking commander at Pearl Harbor. Admiral Ozawa's attempt to counter attack at Saipan ended with his loss of 350 aircraft and two carriers. Aside from the material loss, the death of more than 450 trained combat pilots signalled the end of Japanese Naval air power.

Later on we learned the Marines had landed on Saipan, a Jap island that was strategically very important. As they progressed we could sympathize with them because they had to fight under the same conditions as we here, caves and ridges and fanatical Japs.

A few more days passed quietly, and then one late afternoon we got the red alert. Shortly afterwards, 14 Jap planes came over, and all hell broke loose. We in the water point ducked into our foxhole and tried to watch the fun. This was the most furious attack of them all, and our boys were really pouring lead into them, as we could see five already knocked down. Finally, after strafing and bombing, two more were down and the rest hot-footed it out of there. After the excitement died down, Fife came up and told us that Poquette had been instantly killed by a strafing 20mm shell while manning his gun. If he had been on the right side of the ammunition feed he would have never gotten hit,

MY WAR

but that's the way it goes. We all felt badly about that as Poquette was a good, fearless boy.

From then on it was sporadic raids, hardly any damage done, although boys were being killed, except one night we almost got it. A Jap plane came over and dropped two bombs not fifty feet away, in our water area, hitting Corrigan and Sicora with shrapnel and killing an artillery lad about 100 ft. away. When we climbed out of our hole we saw our bivouac area, hammocks, and tent splattered with mud and felt a bit shaky at the knees. But a short while later we heard the yell for medics and learned the second bomb had landed on a kitchen, killing one with two others right alongside that were untouched. A curious thing about it was that, the lad killed didn't have a mark on him.

One night after visiting with our gun crews on the beach, I saw the natives put on a dance for a group of GIs and I really enjoyed seeing an authentic primitive dance. Only the males were in it, including some wee tots who had lots of pep. They chanted a melodious tune and had beautiful rhythm. Several times in the morning or evening I stood watching them at sea in their funny but very seaworthy boats rowing in perfect rhythm to this chant. Quite an interesting sight.

The infantry had taken Mokmer and lost it several times. The General in charge was relieved of command and replaced by a two star and reinforcements of the 24th Division. The fighting continued, hard and dirty. Japs had to be dug out of caves and strong barricades. This sure was rough terrain for fighting.

June 29th, 1944

The last of the Japanese troops were eliminated or captured on Biak, after a full month of continuous action.

Late July, 1944

1st Sgt. Colflesh told me I was to go back on the gun to replace Poquette. Perkins wanted me badly and raised a rumpus until the Captain gave in. Meantime, Fife also wanted me with him on the water point, but had to give in to the CO. So I reported to Perk's position about the middle of the beach near the water's edge, and talking to Zook, he told me how he had narrowly missed being hit by the plane that killed Poquette. The gunner Austin had

MY WAR

been all broken up, so he was taken off the gun and given something else to do. Perkins, an old army and marine veteran, with an eagle eye look and white hair, was quite a character. He was absolutely fearless and nothing delighted him more than banging away at Jap planes with his 50 caliber machine gun. He liked me a lot as I always gave him all the dope I knew on my map work, and he also thought I was a good man on a machine gun. So a week passed, with a few harmless raids, and I was really itching to fire at some enemy planes. One night, a Jap raider was caught by our searchlights but was too high for me to have a crack at him and I had to stand by and watch our 90s miss him as he turned tail and run. Several Japs who had been shot down and bailed out sang but good. They had been told the ack ack over the beach was slight, and when they came over they claimed they never saw so many bullets and shells in their experience. As a result, they were sore and gave us some good G-2, including the statement that if we retook the Philippines, they would give up. Incidentally, these boys were from the Philippines themselves, having flown from there from bases close to Biak.

CHAPTER 10 AUGUST 1944

August-September, 1944



Early August, 1944

One evening, Sgt. Koteles, our gun sarge, asked Perk if he wanted to go with his gun crew down near the air strip, where D Company was to build jettys. Our purpose was to give D Company air protection.

Naturally we agreed, and the next morning we took an LCI and rode down the coast past the high cliffs the Japs still controlled, preventing us from using the road. After arriving, we set up our guns and since it was getting dark, settled down for the night. Perk slept on a cot, while we others lay on the ground with ponchos over us. We were taking no chances on wild shooting at night. We kept our carbines loaded and at our side, because the Japs were just over the ridge. The infantry and part of D Company had a perimeter set up on the ridge, but knowing the Japs, we knew some were liable to infiltrate and do damage. It was

MY WAR

dark, and since we were tired, we fell off into a rather sound sleep, each of us taking a two hour watch. Zook had the midnite to two shift and was laying beside me. I was sound asleep. Suddenly through a haze, I heard Zook mutter, "I don't like that," and I heard the roar of motors diving right above us. In a flash I was awake and diving into a foxhole two feet away, Zook right behind me. We huddled frozen as we could hear the flutter of bombs dropping. This was it, I thought, and braced myself for the shock. The first one hit just off the beach, giving us a jolt as we were only about fifty feet away. The other two landed further out in the water, we could see the flash and spray. That one was a close one all right, too damn close and we were greatly relieved no one was hurt. Perk had laid on his cot the whole time. A cool customer was Perk.

We went back to sleep and it rained the rest of the night, and in the morning, I awoke wet and miserable. The sun came out shortly and we dried off and set up a shelter for the five of us. D Company had set up their kitchen and we had nothing to do but eat, pull our watch and lay around doing nothing. Our job was to protect D Company against strafing planes, while they worked on the jetty.

The next few days we went down the road a piece, to view the Jap tanks knocked out in a battle a short while ago. We were warned the Japs had the tanks zeroed in but went anyway. All along the road lay rotting Jap corpses. The odor was sickening and I had to smoke furiously to keep from puking. But Perk and James were peering into every dead Jap skull and taking out any gold or silver teeth. We approached a fantastic sight as we went on. Seven Jap tanks in a row with their turrets blasted off, gaping holes, overturned, etc. All lined up in a row. Two of our Sherman tanks disposed of them in short order. Walking around among the carnage, I picked up a few souvenirs.

The next day Zook and I decided to walk up to the air field where the fighting was still going on. We fell in with an infantry outfit and stopped where they did to bivouac just off the strip. We could see the Jap's mortar fire at times; the field was still no man's land. On the way up we saw clusters of dead Japs and also two Americans who hadn't been picked up yet. Wasn't a pretty sight at all. We talked with the infantry boys, the ones that really fight this war the hard way, and they all agreed this was one tough nut.

MY WAR

They told stories of Jap infiltration's, of being bombed by our own planes and fired at by our own destroyers. I sure take my hat off to those boys.

Coming back we saw an escort of troops with fixed guns, viewing the dead Japs strewn along the road. In the meantime, we saw in the middle, General Eichleberger and General Krueger. They gave us a pleasant nod and then walked on. When we got back to the gun, two cooks who had followed us but had lingered behind and were fired on by a Jap woodpecker. They hit the dirt and got themselves all scratched up and plenty scared, although they fortunately weren't hit. I decided to stay put; this island is far from taken.

Sleeping at night was a restless affair; we could hear the Jap dogs howling and all sorts of screaming and yelling. A hell of a place this. D Company had a perimeter set up and we never had any Japs sneak through, although the outfit down the road were catching one now and then. Finally, after a week, the pier was completed and our job done. We packed our guns and returned to the company.

Late August, 1944

Most of the time in July and August, we unloaded boats. Sometime near the end of August, we moved to the airstrip. On the fourteen mile trip, I was amazed at the change. The roads were swell and the airport thriving with planes. The entire force moved up to bomb the N.E. Indies and the Philippines. Our area was, as usual, a mess. But after the bulldozers cleared the area, we started to build for comfort. It was then that I developed jungle rot on my head, and what a time I had. I shaved my head and took treatments for a month before it started to clear up. While there, Bob Hope with Jerry Colonna, Frances Langford, and Pat Thomas put on a marvelous entertaining show for us. I really enjoyed it. Also saw an interesting picture of our fighter pilots shooting Japs out of the sky.

September, 1944

I was told to go back to the water point, still in the original place I had left it in Bosnek. Drapeau wanted me and I was glad to get back. This is a good set up; we live by ourselves, five of us, completely on our own. I learned the rudiments of water purification before, but now I

MY WAR

concentrated on learning it completely. The holidays came around and with Green, one of the radar boys we messed with, went to services. We had a Jewish chaplain, took pictures, and I really enjoyed the ceremonies.

CHAPTER 11- OCTOBER 1944**Oct.-Nov.-Dec., 1944****October, 1944**

I took pictures which I sent to Anne. She liked them. Our letters were terrific; we sure are in love. The rest of the month passed uneventfully, eating well, ice cream every day, movies, boxing bouts, USO shows. Furloughs are being given, hope I get one. Our second anniversary came on October 10th. On October 20th, the Philippines were invaded.

November, 1944

Got lots of packages for Christmas. Sent Anne three hundred dollars for a fur coat. On Thanksgiving, Sid Shinfield's boat docked, and we visited each other. Had dinner with me and on the next day I had dinner aboard his ship. Had a swell time visiting with him. Also met Beans Reardon, a National League umpire, who knew my brother Chappie, I told him to tell Chappie hello and that I was all right, the next time he saw him. Beans was trooping with

MY WAR

Franklin Lewis, sports writer, Steve O'Neal, Detroit Manager, and Stainback and Johnny Lindell from the Yankees. They toured the island and refereed some good ball games in the Biak League.

A story not in the diary but often told to the family... "One day I was looking down the road- you could see quite a ways, watching for the mail truck. I could see it coming from way off, but something was different. There was a pole sticking out the side of the truck with a package dangling from the end of the pole. As the truck pulled up to stop, the driver yells out, 'Goldstein, this is yours,' I took the package from the end of the pole and it stunk to high heaven. I unwrapped it only to find a green, rotten salami that my mother had sent me. Stinking for quite some time, but hey, they still delivered it. I took quite a ribbing for that."

December 4, 1944

We had three hours notice to pack up and get ready to leave for Leyte in the Philippines. I said goodbye to the radar boys and promised to write to Joe Kulp. Sure hated to leave that gang. They fed us swell, and were a happy bunch, all but two of them that Drapeau got drunk with and had some trouble with, which is a story in itself.

It was dark when we left and got on our LCT. From the LCTs we rode out to the Landing Ship Dock where we entered and found sleeping quarters. We stayed anchored overnight and then pulled out, just our Regiment in 5 LSDs with several destroyer escorts. The trip was uneventful but rough. I developed a sore ear, which, on top of the miserable food we were getting (the worst I've ever had from the Navy), made me pretty sick. It was a five day trip and rough and raining all the way. As we neared Palua, and the lower Philippines, we were constantly on guard for Jap air attacks, but luckily nothing happened.

December 10, 1944

This morning we arrived in Leyte harbor and were amazed at the hundreds of ship at anchor here. After a brief delay we floated out of the miserable LSD and hit the beach where the 24th had first landed. It was raining, and our temporary area was a sea of mud. We put up tents and wearily fell asleep. About three o'clock in the morning a terrific explosion awoke us, and I instantly rolled off my cot and hit the ground thinking a bomb had been dropped. Phillips dove into a foxhole filled with water and got soaking wet. The force of the blast, an accidental gas explosion nearby, knocked down all of our tents and shook us up quite a bit.

MY WAR

A few days later we moved down the road right off the beach and set up our permanent quarters. I visited Lexus from the 532. Good seeing him, and we had a long talk together. He's pretty sick and old, and in my opinion should have never been over here. He told me about the landing; it was rough all right. He told me that Goody is in the hospita. Must look him up.

We took our motors apart over the next few days and gave them a thorough overhauling. A couple of days later we moved down the beach with the motor pool, dug two wells, set up our equipment, and settled down, only supplying the regiment after careful purification as the water is bad here. Went into Palos and Tacloban, the two towns here. They are both nothing but small country towns to me, although this is the first sort of civilization I've yet to see since Australia. I was amused at the merchants and their pitiful display of goods. The government had set up two GI houses and long lines of GIs waited their turn. A great many of the colored boys had the run of the girls there; some of the white boys are kinda peeved at that.

December 25, 1944

We had a dandy dinner of turkey and all the trimmings. The best meal I've had in the army. I took pictures of it and also little Conception, a Filipino girl who does my laundry. For Christmas, I gave her some parachute silk to make a dress for herself, as she is a nice kid and in need of some clothes. She brought me bananas, fish cooked on a stick, and some sugar cane for my Christmas. I was very touched and pleased and gave her a few trinkets for herself. Made Sally's spaghetti for dinner.

That night Philips, Drapeau, and James got drunk on Jungle Juice and later Philips got out of hand. We had to give him a fearful bracing, finally KOing him and getting him to bed. It had its comical side too; he's just a country boy. The Japs came over continuously, all Christmas night, interrupting mass and celebrations. We were pretty angry at that.

New Year's Eve, 1944

I had Conception bring me some chickens and eggs for a chicken fry New Year's Day. The Japs hammered away at us all night then too. Sure would have liked to have spent New Year's with Anne, how I miss her. New Year's Day and the boys were still drinking. At supper time, Weeks and me, and the Water Point boys fried our chickens, and we pitched in for a bottle of good American whiskey. For the first time I got high as a kite, and finally went to sleep soundly. We had a swell time though, just us fellows. Pretty good bunch.

CHAPTER 12- JANUARY 1945

January, 1945

Dug a foxhole with Phillips, because Jap raiders were still coming over us regularly and often had to seek cover. On January 10, we heard the news of landing at Luzon. I believe the 3rd brigade made that one. Going very well I understand. Captain Brayshaw called Drapeau and told him we were taking over another unit's water point at White beach. So Drape left me in charge of this one and took James with him. I like the responsibility of having my own water point now and I am doing a good job. I have another man assigned to me, Corp. Herbcha. Received some bad news when I heard Sid Lobel, a Jewish boy from F Company, was accidentally killed unloading sheet metal on a LCT. Just had seen him the other night too. Well, that's the way it goes. Funeral services were held for him and I attended, naturally, as we had often gone to services together. Father Hallinan, Col. Fowlkes, his officers and men from his company, paid him a final tribute at the American cemetery in Tacloban. Quite a few bodies waiting for burial. Not a pretty sight at all.

Spent evenings enjoying movies, talking to Lex, who described his D-day experiences to me. He sure had a rough time. Weeks Crawford stayed with us, and I enjoyed his stories with the 37s at Saidor and Biak. I hear he is up for lieutenant. I hope he makes it, as he is our best non com. The Russians are moving fast now, only 90 miles from Berlin. On the Western Front, our boys have wiped out the Ardienne salient and have pushed the Germans back into Germany. On Luzon we're only 40 miles from Manila, having taken all of Clark Field. The war is going well for us. The Stillwell road is now operating from India through Burma to China.

February 3, 1945

Our boys took Manila and freed several thousand American prisoners. Great news for us and we're all tickled. The First Cavalry Division were the first troops in. Good fighting outfit. Lex was over, and he and I went up to brigade headquarters. On the way we saw a Filipino funeral. Two men were carrying a small box sling on a pole. Unusual and probably a child. Also passed a Jap prison camp. Several of the Japs were working in the field and they sure looked rugged. Took a picture of the camp, and at Brigade, our record of landings. Lex visited with me that night and he, I, and Weeks Crawford

MY WAR

exchanged stories of combat action. Note his Aussie patrol shooting two Jap officers & nurses. American nurses freed in Hollandia from Luzon. Also the Nuns. Lex experienced on the beach here, at Leyte, a Jap suicide bombing and the inevitable shooting down of our own planes. Weeks account of the Saidor first night, where they shot up some LSTs. Also when Col. Roosevelt of the 41st asked for our 37s to set up a tank trap for a threatened Jap tank attack against the 41st.

Had to laugh at the motorpool boys. Walker brought around a Filipino girl who laid any and all comers. They did business in a tent across the way, and it was amusing to watch the line of boys as they waited their turn.

Moved back to Drapeau's point and found Drapeau had gotten drunk. Drew a courtmartial and busted. Fife is in charge now and has put James next in command, which made me feel bad, as I thought I deserved it and felt I had done a good job when I ran it on Red Beach. The Marines have landed on Iwo Jima, only 750 miles from Tokyo. My brother Lou wrote and told me of Mr. Moore's death. Felt bad.

CHAPTER 13- MARCH 1945

March, 1945

A Jap plane snuck in and dropped some eggs on the first day of March. He caused quite a bit of excitement, I slept through the whole thing, missed it all.

About the 3rd or 4th of March, we heard some rumors of another mission. Sure enough, a few days later I was called to Regiment for S-2 work. Lt. Ferris explained the situation to me and showed me where we were going and the photographs from which I was to work with. The island of Cebu was our objective. Briefly our mission was to land at the only feasible point near Cebu City, which was a stretch of beach and mud flats five miles south of Cebu City, the second largest in the Philippines. At D plus 6 we were to move into the city, which has fine docks and harbor facilities. I started to work, and by now I was very familiar with making relief maps. Did a very smooth job of the beach head. Lt. Ferris and I made a good team. He's a good officer and listens to all my suggestions after asking for my opinion, before we make the next step. He figures scale and layout, while I do the actual work of building the beach head, so our men can be briefed properly and familiarize themselves with the sort of terrain and territory we show. The beach head terrain is similar to Leyte but the landing will be a wet one as there are long, gradually sloping beaches and mud flats. As a result, all motor vehicles are being waterproofed and plans are being made to run pontoons in for a dry landing if possible.

Captain Chatterton reminded me not to talk as Sgt. Birr and I were the only enlisted men to know all the plans, and there was too much talk around about where we were going. I was pestered by the boys but kept my mouth shut. The Americal Division, the outfit we were to make the landing with, had done some talking, I understand. At any rate, later photographs showed the Japs evidently knew we were coming because the beach, which had in earlier photos showed nothing, now abounded in tank traps, pillboxes, gun emplacements, etc.

After making necessary changes, I finished the map of the beach head. Col. Fowlkes told us to make one of the city of Cebu as well. I liked doing that, the first one we made of a city. As it turned out, we did a beautiful job, everybody that saw it commented on it. The IG recommended our map work, and although I was just on detached service with Lt. Ferris and Captain

MY WAR

Chatterton, they tried to get me assigned to them with sergeant rating. In fact, they told me they had been trying to get me assigned to them since Hollandia. However, the TO had no room for me and as long as they could get me anytime, the matter dropped there. Col. Fowlkes congratulated us on our work, and we were to have pictures taken, but by the time the briefings were over we were told to pack the city map and take it along with us the next day.

I returned to the water point, packed up with James, Phillips and Cornell, and went up to the Company to await orders. We were to pull out at evening so our C.O. told us we could take in a movie, and we saw "Miracles of Morgan Creek," a hell of a funny movie. About midnight, we piled on trucks and moved miles up the beach, where we were told to sleep on the beach while the boats were being loaded with our equipment. Gagnon and I laid down, talked for awhile, and hit the hay.

In the morning we walked around the village there, had breakfast and lunch on board, returning to the beach and our packs. Finally, we boarded ship and I made myself as comfortable as possible between our trailers and a truck. Our rear echelon brought a movie aboard, "Yankee Doodle Dandy," one I had seen before, but enjoyed again. Spent the next day still beached, but pulled out that evening at a very slow run towards our objective.

March 26, 1945

Sunday morning, we were awakened at 4:00 in the morning. The entire task force were to be grouped, ready for the landing. The shore could be easily seen, all was deadly quiet. After a silent breakfast, we moved up on deck waiting for the usual Naval bombardment. As it grew lighter and the shore was plainly visible, the Navy opened up. Shell after shell tore through the trees, hit on the ridges and hills and raised plenty of hell.

The bombardment was slow at first, increasing in tempo as time went by. For an hour and a half, the guns pounded steadily away. H hour was at hand and the first wave of Buffaloes and LCVs and LCMs went in. In the meantime, 5 miles north we could see our planes and several destroyers shelling and bombing the city of Cebu. Every now and then we'd see huge flashes of flames as later on we found out the Japs were systematically destroying everything they could in the city. James, Fife, Phillips and Cornell went in on the second wave with shovels to dig a well, leaving me to bring in the trailer and equipment.

MY WAR

We could see the infantry pinned down and milling around on the beach. When my gang got in they hit the dust as the Japs had the beach zeroed in with mortar fire. The place was thick with mines and tank traps. After a few boys were killed by mines, it was easy to pick them out, they had two small boards nailed in a triangle sharp, setting over the mine. Our shore engineers started sapping the mines, and soon had hundreds stacked up in piles. A few mine detectors paved several narrow lanes so the infantry could push inland. Meantime, Fife and the boys went inland about 100 yards with a mine detector and started digging the well.

On board as we got ready to go in but we couldn't make the beach, owing to the shallow draft. Our boat retracted and made another try, but still no good. We pulled out and waited for our shore engineers to float a pontoon pier in. As we lay off shore the Japs opened fire on our LST. We could hear the whistle and splash as they bounced all around us, missing by just the narrowest margin. I lay crouched between our trailer and truck, expecting any minute to get it. It was a hell of a feeling, sitting out there like a duck on a pond. I silently cursed Fife for about five minutes for letting me out here to sweat it out. Finally our skipper pulled out and steamed out of range. We were then given orders to take off as midget submarines were on our tail. So we steamed away and it was midnight before we started back for the beach. We finally managed to run up against the pontoon, and in the quiet of the night, pulled off and lined up on the beach, ready to take off to our various positions at daylight. It was three in the morning before I got off. I lay on the back of the trailer, gun and ammunition in hand, ready for anything. Nothing happened, and except for the subdued clatter of vehicles coming off our ship, all was quiet with occasional noise from the artillery.

Dawn broke and Fife met me on the beach. I gave him my two canteens of water as the boys were dog thirsty and we got the trailer up to the partly dug well. After more hours of digging, we were ready to operate but the water tasted lousy, brackish and sour tasting. I gingerly walked around and gazed with amazement at the vast amount of work the Japs had done to hamper our landing. Sapped mines were strewn thickly over the entire beach head for yards in. Huge coconut logs formed a fence barrier the whole length of the beach. The cemetery, which we were near was heavily mined and pillboxed, but only one Jap was found defending it. The rest evidently took to the hills.

MY WAR

That night we dug foxholes and each man took turns guarding. Nothing happened except it was a miserable night, what with the mosquitoes and the lousy water we drank. We found a artesian well the next day and moved our equipment over to it, about 100 yards away. There was the remains of a village there and we set up house keeping in the house closet to the well. About dusk two Jap planes roared over the beach but were driven off without doing any damage. This water was good and we were beginning to like it there, especially living in a house, that was a real luxury for us. However, the next night we were told we had to move into the city that afternoon. So again we packed up and took the five mile ride over fairly good roads to the city.

CHAPTER 14- APRIL 1945

April 1, 1945

When we arrived the city was a shambles, hardly a building standing intact. What our bombers hadn't blasted, the Japs did before they took to the hills. It was sickening seeing all this wanton destruction. We set up in a well in St. Augustine Mission, the oldest church in all the Philippines. Very picturesque. The next few days I took some pictures and roamed around the town. The people have lost almost everything here, some are in actual poverty. One particular case, a young girl with two babies, her husband captured on Bataan and she has never heard from him. Existing mostly by stealing, I gave her some food for her and the kiddies. How the little ones did eat our GI biscuits. One morning she told me her father had died awhile ago and had no one to bury him. The eventual wind up was that I buried him, the details of which I won't reveal in this diary.

Met some of the wealthy families here also. Invited to their houses for some native dishes and it was good conversing with some intelligent, informed, people again. I gave them my copies of Time and LIFE, which they hadn't seen in years. Most of the population fled to the hills when the Japs came and only now are coming back. The infantry is having a rough time in the hills, we may have to set up our 50's and 37's yet.

Every morning the Nip would shell the town. Just a few rounds, and very ineffective. although it would wake us up in the morning, hearing the whistle as she went over.

April 12, 1945

We read the shocking news that Pres. Roosevelt's death. All I can say is that it is a distinct loss to the entire world. May he rest in peace, which he so richly deserves. At our services the next day, we said prayers for him.

I get the impression from the people here, both rich and poor, that they would prefer to not be independent of the U.S. In fact, they look to us to rebuild their country. Can't help but notice the usual greed and avarice of some of the wealthier people. Very disappointing. It seems the poor get it in the neck all the time.

Had a refresher class on the mines and booby traps the Japs had planted on the beach and elsewhere. Some were very ingenious. Our boys set a record in

MY WAR

cleaning the minefields which received praise from the higher ups and played a great part in winning the campaign.

The war in Europe goes well. Our troops are all over Germany, and chasing the Nazis out of Italy too. Mussolini was put to death by a people's court, the first leader to fall.

May 1, 1945

Captain Brayshaw told us we were going on another mission. Just when we were nice and comfortable here. Well, that's the way it goes.

May 4, 1945

Packed up and boarded LSTs and took off to Ormoc. Here we stayed with the 40th Division. After laying around a couple of days, we took off. Aboard ship, Capt. Chatterton told us our destination was Mindanao, the northern tip, Macajalor Bay, where the 40th was to meet the 31st and 24th, driving the Japs toward the center of the island. This was a quick move, no time to make maps, just photos and information from the guerrillas roaming that area.

Heard the news that the war in Europe was over while enroute to Mindanao. The morning of May 10th we lay off the huge bay of Macajalor, near the town of Cagayan de Oro. The Navy opened up with everything she had. As usual we were topside, watching the show. Mindanao looks very rugged, level near the beaches, running sharply into hills and mountains. We could see the battered plant and piers of the Del Monte pineapple factory. Here they had the largest plantation in the world.

Next our planes came over, giving the flank areas particular hell. After the planes left, the first wave of Amph tracks went in. They found no opposition whatever. Soon we landed, took off to our left flank, found a swell, clear stream, and set up within an hour. The infantry pushed on up the mountain towards the Del Monte airstrip.. After a bit we were joined by the 110th Infantry Philippine Guerrillas.

We met several of their officers, they were setting up a perimeter around the beach area. Since we were on the extreme flank we asked Capt. Mortiz if he could spare us some guards for the water point. Very obligingly he gave us five men, one was called Pop, a very good diver, who stayed with us for five weeks. Nothing happened the first night, for once we felt fairly secure with the guerrillas guarding us. The next day the guerrillas rounded up many collaborators.

MY WAR

Capt Mortiz had his temporary headquarters in our tent, where they were brought in, if they wore good clothes, Pop and the other ragged soldiers would make them strip, giving them their rags, while they enjoyed the spoils of war. We got a kick out of this. Jap prisoners were being taken here, some were weak, some surly and rugged. One of the guerrillas gave me a Jap rifle, quite a story to that, concerning an American guerrilla Major. All the guerrillas had a deep respect for Colonel Festy, who organized them, the best guerrilla organization I've seen. They were tremendously fond of us, we gave them whatever we could spare, such as ammo, clothing, etc. They sure needed supplies badly.

After we were rolling smoothly we did lots of dynamite fishing off the Del Monte pier, catching lots of fish. Pop and Golden Gate came along to dive for the fish. Had lots of fun. Sometimes we'd take a native boat, ride way out to the point, fish and barter for bananas, eggs, chicken, etc.

CHAPTER 15- JUNE 1945

June, 1945

The point score came out. I had 53, and 80 was the magic number. Fife was the first to go, he had 110. Got notice to pack up at 10:00 in the morning, gone by 12:00 pm. Captain Mortiz's Co. moved out, he left Pop, Golden Gate and Ronald with us. We didn't actually need them but they were good company, all played the guitar. joked, sang, we had many pleasant evenings in our tent listening to the boys sing and play. It seems all of them had several wives, real playboys, these guerrillas. What a gang!

June passed quickly enough, Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler were dead in Europe. Other Nazi criminals were captured, the one big War was all washed up, however we had no feeling of respite. It was very much War over here. This place was to be a big base for the 1st Army, coming from Europe.

July, 1945

Sid Shinfield's ship came in with a load of chicken. I had a native row me out, climbed on board, surprised him. For a week we visited, I stayed overnight several times, ate my meals with them, had a good time. Sid's crew figure their ships due to go back to the states for repairs. They all had their fingers crossed, had been disappointed before. I gave Sid my Jap rifle, told him to get it home for me.

July 25, 1945

When I returned from the ship to the water point, the boys were half packed, we were moving out, back to the outfit on Cebu. We boarded LCMs, our trailer, and we four, and took off the next morning. Coincidentally, Sid's ship also pulled out for Leyte. We convoyed up in our landing craft. Rather nice trip up, smooth sea, I sat in my chair on the stern of the boat, reading. In the afternoon we reached Bohol's capital city. We pulled alongside the long pier, tied up our boats and went in to look the town over. Some of us took a pony cart ride around the town. Japs had left this island fairly intact, except where our bombs hit their headquarters. Early next morning took off, arriving at Cebu about two o'clock. Piled into trucks and rode 10 miles out of city to our new area.

Good to see the boys again. Lt. Lancaster called me in, asked me to take over Sgt. Matheny's Special Services job for the company. Matheny had become

MY WAR

Regimental Athletic Director. This is a good deal, have a neat recreation hall, Happy, a Flip, to keep her clean, serve bar, take care of my stuff. Matheny asked me to write a sports column for the regiment paper, also help him get up a recreation program. We arranged softball, volleyball, and table tennis tournaments. The letter companies also had teams entered in the Americal softball tournament, which I covered for our news sheet. With Drapeau's help, I got the natives to build an annex for a table tennis court, also built volleyball court, had bamboo furniture made for the club. Arranged

CHAPTER 16- AUGUST 1945

August, 1945

The first week in August we heard of a new secret weapon used by our forces. One atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, completely wiping it out according to the radio reports we were hearing. The details say, one bomb weighing in the pounds is comparable to the bomb load carried by 2000 Super Fortresses. It sounds unbelievable, this new bomb has the power to destroy the entire world. Can't see how Japan can take a beating like that.

August 8, 1945

We hear the Russians declared war on Japan and already have smashed into Manchuria for miles. This is news we have been waiting for a long time, surely combined with the atomic bomb, Japan is in a hopeless position.

August 9, 1945

Another atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, wiping out 60% of the city.

August 10, 1945

Great news. Japan has offered to surrender unconditionally, providing that the emperor retains his standing. We went wild back here, I had open house, sent Happy after whiskey, we drank, talked, listened to the radio all night. What a party. Drapeau, Benson, Mac, Schooney, the entire company whooped it up. We hung around all day waiting for our country's reply, confident they'd accept. During the day we were amazed to hear reports that 60% of the people back home favored not accepting their terms.

To say we were angry is putting it mildly, we felt as though our people didn't give a damn for us. This piece of news has altered my opinion of the people back home, I've lost faith in a good many citizens who evidently feel the prolonging of this war is to their benefit.

However, our State department accepted Japan's terms, with the condition that the Emperor take his orders from the Allied Supreme Commander. This was August 11, we soldiers were elated. Smart diplomacy that, the main point in our estimation is getting the Jap soldier disarmed, then we can talk turkey. So again, we pitched in and bought liquor, celebrated all night long.

The next morning, Sunday, Drapeau and 10 of the old timers left to go home. I said goodbye, gave him Anne's phone number. Kind of hated to see

MY WAR

Drapeau go. He was lots of fun, drunk almost always. I hope civilian life straightens him out.

Now we really sweated out Japan's final answer. Two days passed and still no reply. Finally on the morning of August 16th, at 8:15, we heard a flash over the radio. Pres. Truman has just announced Japan has accepted our offer and the war is over. Again, we went wild, we all got the day off, I stayed in camp to keep up with the news as did our usual radio fans.

General MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander. He ordered Jap envoys to be flown in white planes to the American base at Iwa Jima, where Ernie Pyle met his death. From there they'd take American transports to Manila for a surrender conference. We listened to the broadcast of Jap planes landing at Iwa Jima. It sounded odd.

At the conferences in Manila, MacArthur instructed the Japs that he was heading American troops into Japan by August 26th. First Airborne troops, then two days later, followed by Army transports with Naval and air force personnel. I'm sure that we'll be among the first troops in.

August 28, 1945

Got orders to move out for Japan. We boarded APAs troop transports along with the Americal Division. Spent two days aboard ship in the harbor, waiting for the numerous transports and ships to load up.

CHAPTER 17- OCTOBER 1945

October, 1945

The doctor told me I could leave in a day or so, the next day I was released from the hospital, taken back to the outfit just in time to see some 87 pointers and better leave for the 4th Replacement Depot. Got a big welcome from the boys, only a few left. Everybody was disgusted about the brigade holding everyone as they definitely were going back to the United States as a unit, to become a part of the regular Army. It seems Gen. Heavey was trying to hold the 80 pointers although they were eligible since September. He had promised them the Brigade would go back home on October 15th, but the 80 pointers wanted to out immediately for which I couldn't blame them.

I went into Tokyo with Hans Herman. It's badly smashed, except for the heart of the city. Tokyo and Yokohama are in complete ruins. Tokyo must have been a beautiful city, very modern, up to date. Stopped at the Imperial Hotel, where we had tea and sandwiches, very good. Walked over to the Emperor's palace grounds, took some pictures, gawked at the biggest goldfish I've ever seen in the outer moat. Everywhere I went the Japs all wore uniforms of one kind or another. Stopped in to the Domes News Agency, where they had some fine pictures of the surrender, which I managed to get. Stopped into various shops and bombed out department stores on Ginza, the Broadway and Fifth area of Tokyo. The prices were very steep as usual, the sailors were buying everything regardless of quality or price. Some clever Japs opened a beer room, where American speaking Jap girls served as bar maids. I was amazed at the countless flirtations going on. GIs and sailors were draped across the bar, kissing the girls, feeling them and having a helluva good time. A juke box sounded off with American jazz, quite a party. Hans and I took the train back. It was jammed. The people push, shove, women with children strapped on their backs get the same treatment. Several times it seemed to me, the babies would be crushed but fortunately not. I'll not ride those trains again if I can help it.

October 15, 1945

Well, Oct 15th passed and the Brigade is still here. Now Gen. Heavey tells us definitely around Nov 15th. Has the orders and all. The 80 pointers are pretty sore, several of them seen the IG about it. Finally on Oct 23rd all the 80m pointers are told to pack up for a trip to the Replacement Depot.

MY WAR

This took quite a chunk of the old timers. Lt. Lancaster put me in charge of the supply room, to take Chuck Humason's place. I hated to see this bunch leave, several were real good friends of mine. I gave Schoonover my address. He is to call Anne for me.

Went into Tokyo again with recreation truck. On the way back the boys stopped off at the joints near our camp. I had to laugh at the way they had to take off their shoes before going into the room with a girl. The girls all wore kimonos, some very very homely, one or two fairly attractive. The place left me cold, I looked around some more and walked back with Pete Sorel.

Before he left, Chuck explained the intricacies of supply. The rest I had to learn on my own. He got along pretty good with the boys at RSO. Goldy, Murray and Cliff Green were a good bunch and I could get anything I wanted. I issued winter clothing to the boys, picked up cigarette rations and in general had a pretty soft go. The paper work wasn't too bad, everything goes smoothly.

November, 1945

The first week in November, Lt. Lancaster left for home, Lt. Keller took over. The Lt. put me in for another stripe, which Col. Edwards, who liked my work, put through for me. At last I have a decent rating, Sgt., T-4. Really believe I should have had it right after the Hollandia landing, but that's the way it goes. Hendley, Passons and I took off in a jeep for the trip to Fujiyama. We packed rations, started off about 9:30 in the morning. It was a bright sunny day, but very cold. We drove through Yokohama and many small towns, along the coastline where we could still see evidence of Jap defenses such as barricades, caves, radar, big guns, etc. Very beautiful country, not a bit of land wasted, everything cultivated. We drove about 40 or 50 miles near the base of a mountain next to Fuji, which on a clear day can be seen in Tokyo, and started the big ride up the picturesques mountain, with its narrow road, high waterfalls, deep gorges and scattered villages. Finally we neared the top, we stopped and had some lunch. Resumed our trip near the top, went through a tunnel and out the otherside was Fujiyama, a very impressive sight, snow capped and still towering above us, several thousand feet up. Took some pictures, gawked some more, and then started down the mountain again, stopping at a village now and then. Got home about 6:30, throughly tired and cold, but it was a day well spent, enjoyed myself.

CHAPTER 18- DECEMBER 1945

December, 1945

After seven weeks in Japan, we were told the remaining G.I.s had accumulated enough points to be shipped back to the good old U.S.A.

We boarded the aircraft carrier Intrepid and we all enjoyed the much shorter trip back to America. The food was good and wandering around this aircraft carrier was extremely interesting. This had been a real fighting ship.

As we neared the West Coast of America, we were told we would be passing underneath the Golden Gate Bridge and a reception was awaiting our entry into San Francisco Bay.

Sure enough, as we stood on deck that morning, passing underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, we saw the magnificent skyline of the city of San Francisco, I finally realized I was home after over two years of overseas duty.

Then we watched a flotilla of tugs and boats with beautiful dancing girls and rousing military bands, welcoming us with songs, waving arms and blown kisses as they escorted us to the docking of this huge ship. How nice and most of us were really touched and choked up at this outstanding reception.

We were then shipped up to Camp Stoneman for a fantastic steak dinner with all the trimmings.

December, 1945

After a short stay at Camp Stoneman, Cliff Green and I were taken by train to Fort Knox, Kentucky for honorable discharge, January 6, 1946.

Our wives drove down from Pennsylvania to take us home. We stayed overnight at the best hotel in Louisville, Kentucky for an unforgettable reunion and then home to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At last, my war was finally ended.

Reflecting on my war experience fifty years later, I marvel at the magnificent efforts made by all the citizens of our country.

The sacrifices of our front line soldiers, the efforts of most Americans to keep us supplied with all the necessary equipment, food, transportation, weapons,

MY WAR

aircraft, ships and perhaps most important, their love, moral support and doing whatever it took to keep our soldiers and sailors backed to the hilt.

I was impressed by the leadership of President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill of England, and of President Truman. General George Marshall, General Ike Eisenhower and of course, the General I served with, MacArthur, did a brilliant task of directing this war. Admiral Nimitz and his outstanding

Navy and Marine Corps did a great job against the Japanese forces under tremendous pressure of catching up to their overwhelming superiority at the beginning of this war.

I firmly believe that our country, when the occasion arises, can pull together to overcome any disaster that befalls us and that we are a God-given country for the betterment of all peoples in this world.

CHAPTER 19- THE BOYS & CREDITS



The Boys:

Wayne Austin, Columbus, Wisconsin
Russell Barrett, Douglas, Wisconsin
Norm Bergman, Cleveland
Beck, California
Edward Benson, Chicago, Illinois
Robert Binney, Rustin, Maryland
Dick Cors,
Frank Coupe, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia
Ervin (Weeks) Crawford, Timpson, Texas
John Davis, Bentonia, Mississippi
Richard Drapeau, Meriden, Connecticut
Alva Fife, Washington, DC

MY WAR

George Flynn, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Bertram Forman, Memphis, Tennessee
Brandon Gagnon, Torrington, Connecticut
Gervis Garlock, Oswego, New York
John Gill, Albany, New York
Gene Giorgi, Ascampa, California
Mike Goldberg, North Carolina
Francis Goldy, Lafayette, Indiana
Robert Gorretti, Lyons, Illinois
John W. Graue, Greensburg, Kansas
Grass,
Clifford Green, Erie, Pennsylvania
Stanley Hobby, Glastonbury, Connecticut
Chas Humason, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Chas Jaeger, Jersey City, New Jersey
Ernest Koteles, Cleveland, Ohio
Walter Kuzan, Cleveland, Ohio
Lugero, Colorado
Harry Major, Lanford, Pennsylvania
Garrett McDowell, Pontiac, Michigan
Sylvester Manning, St. Louis, Missouri
Irwin Nelson, Oakland, California
John O'Brien, Oil City, Pennsylvania
Gayle Perkins, Little Rock, Arkansas
Walter Schoonover, Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania
Pete Sewell, California
Sid Shinfield, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
John C. Smart, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Enoch Stolarski, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania
Raymond St. Pierre, Chicopee, Massachusetts
Arthur O. Sulzberger, New York, New York
Jack Sutton, Denver, Colorado
Leonard Synder, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Three Irons, Montana
Warren VanCamp, Tifton, Ohio
Jack Walker, Guadalupe, California
Weiss, California
Colonel Savage

Lt. Haas
Charles West, Brockton, Massachusetts
Carliss Zook, Portageville, Missouri

Sources:

Diary of Abraham Goldstein

History of World War II, Francis Trevelyan Miller, 1955
Official War Office Record

The Encyclopedia of Military History, R. Ernest Dupuy
and Trevor N. Dupuy, 1970.
Harper & Row, New York, New York

Photographs:

Goldstein Family Archives
Official U.S. Army photographs

Edited by: John M. Diestler

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abraham Aaron Goldstein was the middle son of Jacob and Ester Goldstein. Brother to Chappie, Louis, Sally, Helen, and Florence. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA, he married Anne Berkover, and had son Robert, and daughter Sherry.