The Way It Was

NAME: Rodney C. Barrett
UNIT: Co. A, 27th Infantry
TIME PERIOD: 1944
SOURCE: Packet of letters and photos sent by Mr. Barrett after his July 7, 2004 visit
DATE RECEIVED: 8 December 2004

Excerpts from Mr. Barrett's account of the taking of Balete Pass.

The tactics we used in this campaign to clean out the retreating Japanese forces from their dug emplacements in Balete Pass was to systematically move units of our forces through the pass, to engage the Japs in their holes or caves and to set up perimeters on the high ground. When a unit (company or platoon) secured a hill or mountain, they would dig in, placing foxholes a few feet apart, around the edges of the hill. Other units were doing the same thing all across the pass. When a line of secure hills was formed across the pass, other units would move through these perimeters to take the high ground ahead of them. Each time a unit was to take a hill, they would move up into the secured perimeter ahead of them and get into the foxholes with the unit that had dug them, all of us taking cover together. Then the artillery would start shelling the terrain that we were going to take. When the shelling stopped, it was time for us to move out and make our push.

While the artillery shelled the area in front of us, we could tell when they were about to stop (or hoped they would stop) as the shelling got closer and closer and the shrapnel flew overhead (this was done because if there were any Japs in the shelling area, they would move up as close as they could get to our emplacement). So we always prayed that the artillery shelling would stop but not too soon or too late. When we got up to move out, the area around us looked much different as the shelling cut down much of the trees and shrubs ahead of us. I wondered how anyone could survive out there after a shelling (I learned later that they could).

Each unit did not make a push every day and sometimes we did not have to dig a new foxhole for 3 or 4 days. We spent those days in our perimeters or on short patrols around the lower areas of the perimeter. During the day, if not on a patrol or watching for snipers (there were men on sniper guard during the light hours), we would try to make our perimeter more comfortable by taking C ration crates, tearing them up and laying the boards on the bottom of our foxholes, making them a little dryer area to lie on. When it rained and it often did, we would try to cover our foxholes with our shelter halves to keep them dry. (A shelter half is one half of a pup tent, a pup tent is a two-man tent). We dug latrines (a narrow trench that you squatted over to dispose of your solid waste). We would mark them by placing branches on the ground around them and putting empty C ration cans on them so no one would step on this sacred ground. There were other things that we used the empty C ration cans for. Sometimes we would take string and hang the empty cans together, then string them in the bushes around our perimeter so if the Japs would crawl close to our perimeter, we would hear the cans rattle.

On the 18th of May, 1945, my platoon was to take a hill in front of a machine gun nest of our heavy weapons emplacement. The squad that I was in was to lead the platoon. I was second scout and Brownie was first scout. Brownie was in the lead and I was behind him as we walked

along the trail that lead along the side of a dry ditch. We were moving just below this machine gun emplacement when someone from our machine gun nest started shouting about a Jap that they could see in front and to the side of us. Brownie and I squatted down and looked toward the dry ditch but could not see him. There was some argument about why they could not fire at him from the machine gun nest, something about not being able to get the machine gun down low enough. Sergeant Mahoney ran down to us and told Brownie to take a position nearer the dry ditch at the left and told me to go to a tree about 10 feet down the trail. I took the prone position alongside the tree, noticing that there were large tree roots to my left shoulder. Then Mahoney took a position between us about 3 to 5 feet behind me. The BAR man took a position to my right about 6 feet and about 5 feet back.

Mahoney threw a grenade toward the area that the machine gun nest was yelling that this Jap was in a hole, but none of us could see the Jap from where we were. After Mahoney threw the first grenade they yelled, "A little further out." Mahoney threw a second grenade, then they yelled, "About 5 feet to the right." Then I heard Mahoney say, "What the hell is this, a ball game?"

In front of me about 10 feet down the trail I saw this head of a Jap looking up at the machine gun nest. He did not see me. It was my first time to see a live Jap. I knew I had to shoot, I took aim and fired, the impact from my rifle knocked my helmet over my eyes. I had to push it back to see if I had hit him. I knew I had hit him because I heard his helmet fly off and roll down the hill. Then I heard all of this yelling in Japanese and throwing the bolts on their rifles, but I did not hear any firing from their direction. Then I heard a shot from my left, the Jap that Mahoney was trying to get had fired at me through the roots of this tree. Evidently he could not see anything but my legs and was trying to hit me in the head. The bullet went through the roots of the tree, splattering wood slivers into the left side of my face and cutting through my GI jacket, through a towel that I had draped over my shoulder under my jacket, and into my shoulder for about five or six inches from the edge of my shoulder to about an inch from my neck. At the time I only knew that I had been hit.

I turned back to tell Mahoney that I was hit. When I looked back, Mahoney's helmet was off. His head was laid back on a tree stump and blood was running down the side of his head and out of his ear. Then I heard someone whisper, "Mahoney is dead." I looked to the right and saw the BAR man wiggling back. I looked to the left and saw Brownie moving back as well and I thought, "They think I'm dead and they're leaving me."

Just then, someone from the machine gun nest shot off a phosphorus grenade from a rifle. I looked over my shoulder and saw the grenade flying in the air. The fins of the grenade hit a vine causing it to lose flight and drop down, right onto Brownie. He got up screaming and ran back. At that time I knew that I had to get up and run, fearing the Jap would notice he had not killed me and try again. But evidently he was running, too, so I got back to Brownie as our squad leader came running up and told us to build up the fire power while medics came down to get Brownie.

The BAR man began firing into the terrain along this ditch and I began to fire my rifle as well. When the medic had Brownie on the stretcher, he was screaming and was in horrible pain. The

medics gave him morphine and plasma. He was burnt from his ass down his legs to his kneecaps. The medics picked up Brownie and started carrying him back up the hill. We went back up the hill as well, firing down toward the area we were retreating from. When we got back up the hill with the rest of the platoon, the BAR man said, "I thought you were dead." I took off my shirt and he put sulfa on my wound and bandaged it with the packet that we all carried.

When Brownie was stable, the medics and I carried him back to an ambulance where we both were taken to a field hospital. At the field hospital they took the worst cases first so they admitted Brownie first and later, when I was admitted, I went to another tent. I did not see Brownie until the next day. He was in terrible shape, screaming and cursing because he was burned by our own grenade. They took him to a general hospital that day. I felt that he would make it. I learned, when I returned to my unit, that he had passed away from pneumonia.

The Way It Was

NAME: General J. Lawton Collins
UNIT: C.G. 25th Infantry Division
TIME PERIOD: Guadalcanal, 1942-1943
SOURCE: Letter from the Archives

Gen. Collins' silver stars.

Before leaving Hawaii for the South Pacific in World War II, I had a friend in the navy yard at Pearl Harbor make for me a set of small silver stars which I wore at Guadalcanal on the jacket of my green fatigue suit, the same kind of suit worn by officers and men alike. In the Pacific officers did not have the insignia of rank painted on their helmets as in the European theater; they would have attracted too much attention from Japanese snipers.

Just before the division sailed from Hawaii, we had been brought up to full war strength by an influx of new soldiers who had no chance to get to know the senior officers of the division.

After relieving the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal, the 25th Division, making the main effort of the Army's XIV Corps, aimed at driving the Japanese off the island, launched an enveloping attack against the enemy's south flank that had been threatening Henderson Field.

The 35th Infantry, under Col. Robert B. McClure, quickly surrounded the "Gifu" strongpoint in the Lunga River valley and on Mount Austen overlooking the airfield. The Japanese regiment holding "Gifu" was completely isolated. Using an interpreter, we broadcast over loudspeakers an appeal to the Japanese to surrender, pointing out that they had no escape. This did not work, so the 35th Infantry had to wipe them out.

The final morning of the attack I drove up a trail to Mount Austen with Bob McClure. We left our jeep on the trail and walked forward as the attack progressed. We could see little but could hear the sound of firing as our men closed in from all sides. When the firing died down we went over the top of Mount Austen, which had been cleared of enemy and down into the Lunga valley where our men were assembling.

It had been raining all morning, as usual. Colonel McClure and I were soaked, covered with mud, and indistinguishable from our soldiers.

We chatted with some of the men as they assembled. They were flushed with victory and were rightly proud of their success. To prove their prowess they had torn the cloth tabs with the insignia of rank from the collars of some of the dead Japanese. A private Jap soldier wore a single small bronze star on his collar; a private first-class had two bronze stars; and a superior private first-class wore three bronze stars. Our soldiers were boasting of the number of stars they had collected as souvenirs.

As the companies moved out to return to their bivouac areas, I tagged on to a column of men going up a steep slope on a narrow trail. I t was still raining and the trail was slippery. The man ahead of me slipped. To keep him from falling I grabbed his arm. He turned and for the first time he saw the twin stars on the lapels of my jacket.

He exclaimed, "Gee! Silver stars! Where'd you get'em?"

I said, "Son don't you know what this insignia is?”

"Nope" - Evidently he was one of the new men we had not indoctrinated properly.

I said, "This is the insignia of a major general, and I am General Collins, your division commander."

That stopped him cold. He looked me over from head to feet, shrugged his shoulders, and said "Well - I hope you're right!"

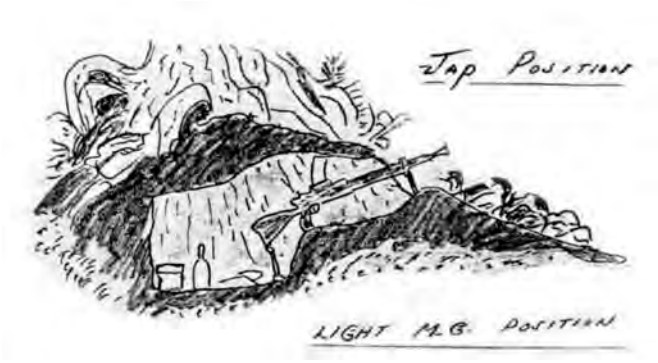
Ever since, when I get to feeling proud of myself, I laugh again at that soldier on Guadalcanal, and it brings me back down to my proper level.

The Way It Was

The Way It Was

NAME: Sgt. James P. Cundari
UNIT: 161st Infantry Regiment
TIME PERIOD: February – May, 1945
SOURCE: Excerpt from Mr. Cundari's memoirs
DATE RECEIVED: 22 May 2007

Our advance was slow, deadly and tedious. At one point, we took one of the high positions on our way to Balete pass. However, the next hill, which was higher than the one we had captured, had been prepared for a major defense with a series of dug out caves and connecting tunnels half way up the mountain face, which were interconnected. Although highly camouflaged, we could see the caves that had been dug into the side of the mountain. The Japanese had determined the height from the bottom of the mountain that would be most advantageous for them to observe our movements, either on the road or the hilltops that we advanced to. Their 75mm and 105mm artillery pieces must have been hoisted up the sheer cliff sides to the dug out cave openings. There, they could observe all the activity on the land below them. Whenever they saw any movement of our soldiers, they would move the artillery gun to the mouth of the cave and fire a couple of shells at our positions. This usually happened as we would leave our forward positions on the front part of the hill and make our way over the crest of the hill to get to our kitchen unit that had prepared a hot meal for us.



Even in advancing at a slow, laborious pace, the caves on the higher hillside were still a major force to deal with. The main dirt road that was cut through the side of the mountain was zeroed in by the Japanese defense forces. Too many of our first troops in the area had many casualties. Our 65th Engineer group followed right behind us as we penetrated the mountains on both sides of the highway. They built new dirt roads right behind us as we advanced up and down the mountains. That was the only means that our supply force could keep bringing up ammunition and supplies to us. At times, they would be right in back of us and I remember them only stopping for a short while if the firing was too intense. As soon as the firing would let up, they would get back on their bulldozers and continue pushing down trees and continuing the road. There was one spot where even their best efforts could not construct an easier grade for the 2 ½ ton trucks to navigate. They resolved that problem by leaving several large trees to one side at the top of the steep incline. The trucks would take their front winch cables and fasten them to the anchor trees at the top, and then pull themselves up the very steep incline. This place was called "Winch Hill." As the road went up and down the many hills, it became known as the roller coaster road since it resembled a roller coaster ride in an amusement park. We were fortunate that most of

this activity occurred in the dry season. Otherwise, the roads would have become too slippery to use. The Japanese had never thought that our forces could build a road so quickly in back of us.

We were in this one position for quite some time. Since we were subject to intermittent shell-fire, we dug a foxhole for protection. The hole was dug on the forward slope of the hill, facing the enemy caves across the valley. We limited our moving around on the crest of the hill in back of us. At least on the forward slope we had vegetation to limit enemy observation of our position. I made my hole more elaborate as each day went by. I made a rectangular hole that was my height, and dug it deep enough that I could stand in it with just my head, arms and shoulders being slightly exposed. I also had sandbags at one end of the hole to, hopefully, catch any shell fragments that might come my way. Any time the shelling would start, we would immediately sit down in the hole under the sandbag cover. After a while, I dug out an area at the bottom of the hole that I could partially lay in, with dirt protecting me, while I was stretched out.

Shelling went on intermittently. You could hear the crack as the shell left the artillery piece and you knew a shell was coming. The shell had a very distinctive sound, like a fluttering sound, as it came towards your position. Then, when the shell hit the ground, you heard the explosion. Needless to say, it was very unnerving to live under these conditions, knowing they could spot our positions all the time.

My foxhole was on the right side of the ridge and was the last hole on the line. Not only did I have to worry about the front of my position, but also, my right flank. It wasn't so bad during the day since you had eye contact with other soldiers in their positions on the hilltop. We dreaded the nights. We were paired off so that one would remain alert while the other one slept. On the surface this sounded good, but after the first four hours of one hour being alert and the next hour sleeping, you almost lost track of time, and it seemed that the night was forever. Since it was pitch black, with the background of trees and heavy underbrush, you could not really see anything. All we could do was to keep our ears open, listening for any sound that was not the usual night sound of insects and the slight hum of the night wind rustling through the trees. If there was a different sound than the natural night sound, it meant that it was possible that an enemy was approaching our position. There was no conversation between us since our voices would carry and give away our position. We would awaken one another, when the hour was up, with a slight touch. Cigarette smoking was completely forbidden at night since the glow of the cigarette could give away our location

Our ammunition and artillery and mortar shells were in short supply. We could use our artillery on a limited basis, with only a few shells allocated to each gun per day. At one point in time, when our rifle companies could not advance due to a determined entrenched enemy, it was decided to hold up our firing for a few days to accumulate a supply of artillery, mortar shells and ammo for our machine guns. They arranged all of our weapons on a single line, and all units

were ordered to concentrate all of our fire on the hill that was giving us so much trouble. At the given hour, all weapons opened up on the one hill, and the barrage continued until we had used up all the allotted munitions. It was quite a sight to see the many explosions all over the hill ahead of us, as well as our machine gun fire racking over the terrain. We called it "giving the hill a close haircut." After our bombardment ceased, our rifle companies advanced up the hill and eliminated any remaining enemy soldiers.

Since we were in a stalemate, our higher command came up with a new plan to overcome the cave positions that were stopping our advance. We suddenly saw a strange activity taking place right behind our position on the crest of the hill, still heavily wooded. They cut down many large trees of two-foot diameter, and the bulldozer placed them in position, such as you build up a fort. After the front, back and sidewalls were in place, they built a roof on top of it and placed sandbags on all sides and roof, etc. When all was complete, they placed a 90mm dual purpose anti-aircraft gun in the enclosure and aimed it out through a small opening in the front. With all preparation completed and the 90mm gun fully protected from enemy artillery and mortar fire, it was aimed at the cave openings. One by one, each cave opening was blasted and eliminated. Of course, when the firing commenced, the enemy fired back, locating the gun. However, the fully protected gun position was able to withstand the artillery and mortar shells. The careful planning and implementation of the idea was completely successful, and accomplished what many weeks of prior effort could not.

While we were on the hill, we were surprised to see some replacements join us on the front lines. We could tell they were new because of their clean green combat fatigues and, in particular, their new paratrooper type army boots. Naturally, being new and inexperienced, they had many questions of what it was like being in combat. It is hard to describe, and unless you go through it, there is no description that will convey what actual combat and being under fire actually is. One young replacement mentioned that he was scared. The Sergeant told the new soldier that he, the Sergeant, was also scared. This surprised the recruit. "How come you are scared, you have been through combat many times, why are you scared?" The sergeant simply replied, "You are right, I have been through combat, and I'm scared since I actually know and realize what can happen to me."

Around the middle of March, we were given a copy of a note from our Regimental Commander, Colonel Dalton, that he was leaving our Regiment for a new assignment. We were sorry to see

this news, but we later learned that he was made a Brigadier General and Assistant General in charge of our 25th Infantry Division.

Once the caves were neutralized, we were able to move forward to the positions where the Japanese had been in command for so long a time. Once we took over their positions, we looked back, and we could see what the Japanese cold see during those two months. They could see every position that we were in since they were on the higher elevation hill and we were on the lower mountains. Anytime that there was any movement, they could see us. We found their maps, and the maps showed the coordinates for firing on every position of the road and each hill below them. This all had been carefully prepared by them in the months preceding our invasion of the island. General Yamashita had prepared well. Our objective of Balete pass was within reach. .

Balete Pass was finally taken by our Division on May 15, 1945. The last remnants of the Japanese force defending the area were either killed or retreated to the other side of the 75 foot wide pass. There was still a very sizeable force of over 100,000 soldiers that would continue to fight us. However, they were denied the advantage of the natural mountain defenses once they were in the valley. Our armored forces could be better utilized in the valley, and since their one armored tank division had been defeated in our January-February engagements, it meant that our armored forces would be a potent force in driving them back up the valley, towards the Port of Appari on the northern tip of the island. Since our naval forces now controlled the seas around the island, reinforcements and supplies from Japan were completely cut off. It would be just a matter of time before they would be completely eliminated as a viable fighting force.

With the capture of Balete Pass, General Dalton decided to take a look at the Japanese defenses at the Pass. Although the area was essentially under U.S. Army control, there were still some individual Japanese soldiers in the area. The General was accompanied by an aide and others. After examining several of the fortifications, they were suddenly fired upon. They immediately took cover, but in moving from one spot to another, they again drew fire. General Dalton went down. His aide checked him and found he had been shot through the forehead by a sniper. The General, who in his prior command as Regimental Commander for the 161st Regiment had been exposed so many times to extreme danger, was suddenly killed in his moment of triumph. In a war of this type, even Generals got killed.

If you would like to read the complete story of Sgt. Cundari's experiences, please ask a staff member for his memoirs.

The Way It Was

NAME : Edward F. Davis, 1SG US Army (Ret)
UNIT: 8th Field Artillery
TIME PERIOD: December 7, 1941 and following days
SOURCE: Sent by Mr. Davis to the museum after a friend told him we were looking for first person accounts.
DATE RECEIVED: 22 March 2002

I was eating breakfast in the mess hall at about 8:30 a.m. when several explosions occurred (The Japs had started to bomb Wheeler Air Force Base about one mile away). At first, none of us were too alarmed by the explosions, some of us making comments like "Sounds as if the Air force is having a little practice." And the explosions continued, so many that most of us went outside into the patio archway to see what was going on. But with numerous buildings and coconut trees blocking our line of sight, nothing could be seen at first.

I walked to the front of the patio archway facing the quadrangle. It was about that time that I first heard the low flying aircraft. The plane drew near, and I looked up and saw the red circles marking its wings, while its fuselage was cutting loose with its roaring machine guns. Men began to shout; "The Japs are attacking! The Japs are attacking!" The first plane to hit us with strafing fire came in so low that I could see the silhouette of the pilot's head in the cockpit. The bullets began to ricochet off the blacktop road, off the cement walls, off the barracks, and off the metal bunks and wall lockers inside the buildings. Many men were hit, falling both inside and outside the barracks. I was very aware of the soldiers being hit while standing out in the open quadrangle. Already, a constant file of the soldiers had formed, streaming into the Aid Station with those in tow who were wounded by the attack. I remember wondering where all the blood had come from, the blood that had run down both sides of the Aid Station doorway and wall, the blood that had formed a pool on the floor.

Many men were hit when they ran out into the quadrangle to see what was going on. The initial machine gunning inflicted a heavy toll on the troops before they realized the reality of the situation, that the Japs had attacked. Having heard the bugle call, I left the soldiers at the Aid Station, and ran to our barracks. Word was passed on to all troops to arm themselves. I drew my .45 caliber pistol and a box of ammunition from the supply room. This pistol was the assigned weapon for the artillery troops. I stuffed mine in my shirt. Our arms room also contained seven Springfield Single-Action Rifles, and a few BARs (Browning Automatic Rifles). These rifles were issued first, and the soldiers receiving them were sent outside, or to the rooftops, to fire on the Jap planes as they made their passes over the barracks. Unfortunately, I did not see any favorable results stem from their efforts. Although the Japs fired thousands of machine gun rounds at us, and wounded and killed a lot of men, no bombs were dropped on us, and no fires were started in our area. Had the Japs dropped their bombs on us, our casualties would have been extremely high.

We picked up the ready-made packs that always hung by our bunks, and filled out barracks bags with a change of clothes and a blanket, just as we had been taught in pre-arranged practice. We then headed for the Motor Pool. En route, we came upon our company mascot. The dog lay in a

pool of his won blood with his hind leg shot off. One of the GIs pulled out his pistol, and relieved the poor dog of its suffering.

We arrived at the Motor Pool, and quickly loaded our wire truck with communications equipment, as we were assigned to do. All the while, I could hear the continued strafing of the Jap planes shooting up the base. The order came to assemble in our truck on the parade grounds and disperse to await further instructions. It was at this time that I saw the first of our planes airborne, flying low overhead and trailing smoke. I followed his progress across the sky until he disappeared over the hills towards Pali. After about a thirty-minute wait, I was told to move out to Fort DeRussy, our pre-selected war time position, as it was called. Being in the communication section, we were the first truck to leave to set up communications to the gun batteries, the headquarters, the fire direction center and the observation posts located on top of the Punch Bowl, and the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Once the communications were set up, firing could then commence as soon as the artillery guns were in position.

Months prior to the attack, we had established telephone lines, cement gun emplacements and observation posts along Waikiki Beach and the Punch Bowl. This was our designated area to defend on the island. We had practiced using the area many times prior to the 7th of December, 1941. We left the parade area, and drove past Wheeler Field Air Base. The Base was completely engulfed in flames and smoke, and the planes, hangars, and barracks were in a state of complete devastation. In despair, we proceeded past the horrific sight, down the main highway, past Pearl Harbor, en route to Waikiki Beach. Pearl Harbor was a mess. Ships were in the harbor grouped three side-by-side. Some were leaning, some burning, and some were capsized. Oil, fire, and smoke obscured my vision everywhere I looked. It was a very depressing sight. Many eyes remained focused on the skies, but the Jap planes had already departed by that time.

We proceeded on to Roosevelt High School which was located at the front of the Punch Bowl that overlooked Honolulu and Waikiki Beach. We set-up our switchboard in a locker room under the bleachers on the athletic field. I then drove up to the observation post on top of the Punch Bowl, set up the phone communication with the switchboard, and left a soldier to man it until the artillery observer arrived. The artillery guns soon arrived, and were positioned, as were the corresponding phone lines. We were ready to defend the beach against an invasion, providing our supply of ammunition held out. Rumor had it that we had only had enough ammunition to last three hours. The validity of the rumor, where it started or what it was based on, I did not know. After the guns were in position, and all communications had checked in, we had nothing to do but wait. I settled down near the switchboard in the locker room, and made it my home for about the next six months.

The evening of our arrival, explosions were heard, and we all expected the Japs were trying to establish a beachhead on Waikiki; but nothing transpired that night except for a lot of tension and even more lost sleep. Later, it was rumored that the Japs had sent more planes over Honolulu, but I don't know whether this is fact. What I learned on December 7, 1941 and the subsequent days, and have carried with me to this day, is just how fragile life really is; and, how easy it is to die.

Next stop for me was the Guadalcanal. The Guadalcanal is where I really found out what combat on the ground was all about. I already knew how the fear of death felt.

Continuation of the Life of Edward F. Davis

A few months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, our outfit, the 8th Field Artillery 25th Division, left Waikiki Beach and returned to Schofield Barracks. We began intensive training to prepare for combat. In ran and sunshine, we climbed the mountains around Schofield Barracks. We ran through obstacle courses, engaged in artillery practice and practiced small arms fire on the rifle range. We were each issued Springfield rifles, 1918 vintage, and were trained to become proficient with the weapon. The use of the rifle came to me like it was second nature. Being raised first with a B.B. gun in my hands, then a .22 rifle; this was a piece of cake.

In the fall of 1942, we were issued dress uniforms. In truth, some of the dress uniforms issued were from World War I. I now realize that the issuing of the dress uniforms was intended to make the men think that we were returning to the States. Instead, in November 1922, we boarded a troop transport, and sailed zigzag for 32 days, all the way to Guadalcanal. Life aboard the troopship was unpleasant at best, the majority of unpleasantness being caused by the severe over-crowded conditions. Each soldier carried 2 canteens of water: one for emergencies, the other to drink and brush his teeth with. Water was rationed. The water fountain was turned on once a day in the morning, and for a few hours only. If we wanted to shower, we had to shower in salt water. As for bathrooms, the ship had temporary latrines, built about three feet high on platforms, on the deck. The latrines were often used for shade. All the troops were chased topside every morning during daylight hours, except when there was an alert for enemy planes or submarines. I remember one such alert when the ship alarm went off. We rushed below deck to lay on our tier bunks. We lay there listening to the loud thump of the depth charges that had been dropped and exploded. The detonations of the charges made a horrendously loud sound against the side of our ship, and I watched, and I waited, to see if the water would push in the steel side of the ship.

Our lives aboard the troopship were dull. We used to wait between 30 minutes to two hours in the chow line twice a day. I recall one meal that consisted only of half a steamed potato, and two hot dogs. We carried three-day emergency rations in our backpacks; but most of the men had already eaten the rations before we landed. The troopship was manned by Merchant Marines. When the Merchant Marines discovered we were rationed on water, they began selling cold water for $1.00 a glass. Some men were creative with what they were issued. We were given lifebelts that contained two capsules of compressed gas which, when broken, inflated the belts. When it was discovered that canteens could be cooled by breaking the seals on the capsules, some men took to using the capsules in this manner.

Our ship stopped at the Fiji Islands for a few days. We were taken off the ship, and were forced to road march to regain some strength. We had been cooped up aboard that ship for more than three weeks. Christmas, 1942, came and went. We spent it aboard the transport. When we crossed the Equator, we were given certificates from Neptune as having done so. It is the custom

of the sea to initiate those who crossed the Equator for the first time, but we were too many to participate in such a ritual.

Next stop was Guadalcanal. We pulled into the bay and lined up on deck with our combat gear. We climbed over the side of the ship, down the rope nets, and onto the landing crafts. The sea was very rough, and the small landing craft bounced up and down like a cork. Getting from the rope net to the landing craft was no easy task. We had to time our release from the rope net to meet the landing craft on an upswell. An error in judgment could mean getting yourself mangled between the troopship and landing craft in the process.

We hit the beach, and we were met there by the 1st Marines. We hike inland a short distance, and set up camp. As soon as that was accomplished, we got to digging foxholes and picking up our combat equipment. They had warned us about dysentery, dysentery that may be caused by a chill in the lower intestines. I wrapped a sweater around my waist each night prior to crawling into my foxhole or bunk. Even with all the precautions, I was the first one to get Amebic Dysentery. As it turns out, the information I had gotten was wrong.

When all our equipment arrived, I was sent with few men to set up a forward switchboard on the front lines. This was located on top of a mountain (not a hill). We carried everything on our backs. I set up the switchboard in a foxhole that had been vacated by the marines, and ran a wire-line to the artillery forward observer. I should mention that prior to leaving Hawaii, our work uniform was a blue denim blouse and trousers. The infantry was issued green fatigue clothing. We artillerymen still kept our blue fatigues. This was what we wore when we went to the front lines. One day, after a sniper pinned us down, I acquired a set of green fatigues from a marine who had no use for them anymore. I decided I wanted as much camouflage as possible for safety's sake. There just weren't too many denim trees around for me to blend in.

The 25th Division replaced the marines, and the marines left Guadalcanal. We finished the campaign a few months later, contrary to popular belief. While we were on Guadalcanal, we endured a flood that stopped the war completely for almost a week.

Night bombing of the island by the Japanese was common occurrence. We called the plane 'Washboard Charlie' because of the sound of the engine. We suffered our first casualty when a cook had his head blown off during an air raid. Our 1st Sergeant went out of his mind when one of our men accidentally shot another soldier in the mouth while cleaning his pistol.

In order to get supplies, mostly water, up to us on the front lines, we used local natives to carry the loads. They were a godsend, and performed an outstanding service. I saw one of the natives who was white: he had teeth filed to a point, and unusual tattoos on his face and body. After the campaign, while we were still on Guadalcanal, our job was to unload LSD ships filled with supplies of food and ammunition. Some men were guilty of stealing some food and bringing it back to our base camp. A big investigation was launched, the results of which, I never found out.

Our food was not all that good, nor was it plentiful. I remember the Air Force had a dump where they threw away their excess K-Rations. I used to go there and collect tins of jelly, cheese, and crackers. Our rations lacked these luxuries. That brings to mind when I was on the front lines. Our diet consisted of C-Rations dated back to 1918 and the First World War. We only had three choices of C-Rations: meat and beans, meat and vegetables, or meat and hash. Each also included a can of hard biscuits, and a brick (same consistency) of coffee. During that time, I contracted Yellow Jaundice; my guess is from my diet. In addition to this, my skin turned yellow because of the anti-malaria pill, Antibrane, we had to take daily. Some men secretly did not take the pill so that they might contract malaria and have to be evacuated from the front lines.

We took up positions at the foot of Henderson Air Base on Guadalcanal, close to an anti-aircraft position. Every time the Jap planes came over to drop their bombs, the anti-aircraft guns opened up, and the spray of shrapnel from the exploding shells fell upon us like hot, metal rain. We had to stay in covered foxholes, or bunkers, to keep from being hit, not only from the fallout of friendly-fire, but also the bombs from the Jap planes.

One half of our division had gone on to Munda, and had routed out the Japs on that island. The next stop for us was R&R (Rest and Recuperation) in New Zealand, where we enjoyed the hospitality of wonderful people. They opened their homes to us, and treated us like family. I met a very nice girl there by the name of Alma McGifford. I enjoyed my stay in New Zealand, except for a short bout with malaria. Then, our new orders came to ship out. Next stop: New Caledonia, a former French prison. We picked up replacements, and underwent intensive training for both open warfare and jungle warfare. We were stationed near a stream where we could bathe and wash our clothes. This was a blessing. After this, it was back to the troop transport, and off to the Admiralty Islands, where we assembled in a great convoy of troopships and navy warships. It was an awesome sight to behold, with ships as far as the eye could see.

We were en route for the invasion of the Philippine Islands. The infantry hit the beach first. We artillerymen landed on Ligayan Gulf. We pushed inland on a forced march, and we marched so far that I had blood blisters on my feet. We stopped at a blown-out church, and dug-in in the courtyard for the night. In the morning, it was back to the front lines where I spent the next 160 days in combat with my five-man forward team. Our daily routine consisted of laying communication wire to the forward observer, digging foxholes, setting up guard posts around our switchboard at night, and moving up with the infantry as they advanced.

I was assigned a communication-wire truck, and it came equipped with a .50 caliber machine gun mounted on the bed. One day, we came upon a village that was held by the Japanese. And they were well dug in. To reach their positions, we had to cross an open rice paddy. About mid-way out into the rice paddy, our forward artillery observer was dug in, and he was completely pinned down. He was trying desperately to call down artillery fire on the Japanese lines. I cautiously laid my communications wire to his position, enabling him to call in the artillery fire. In the process, the communication lines became cut many times by Jap mortars, and artillery fire. I went in and repaired the line, time after time, through small-arms fire, machinegun fire, and mortar and artillery rounds, to repair the broken wire.

We eventually took the village, but we had suffered a lot of casualties and wounded. I was later awarded the Silver Star for my actions on that day. another night, while still in that village, after we had dug our foxholes and set up guard positions along side the river that ran nearby, we settled in for well deserved sleep. That night, the moon came out large from behind the clouds. Then the Jap patrol hit our position. They had followed the trail of our communication wire into our area, after first breaking the wire to disable our communication link. The Japs fired rifles, and threw hand grenades into our position. One of the Japs threw a grenade at my foxhole, and it landed less than twelve inches from the head of my hole in the ground. I shrunk down in cover, but the top end of my rifle rested above the lip of the foxhole, and the wood casing was severely riddled with shrapnel.

I felt that my gun was too damaged to use safely, so I pulled out my trench knife to defend myself in case the Japs decided to follow up the grenades. Fortunately, my truck driver, who was dug in close to me, opened fire with his submachine gun and wounded the Jap. One of my men, Garvin P. Whittemore, was hit in the back with shrapnel. He was forced to lay there, wounded and bleeding, throughout the balance of the night, since no one could safely move in the dark. Next morning, we discovered a pool of blood in the area where the Jap had been shot by my truck driver, but we could not locate the wounded enemy soldier.

Another time, we were dug into foxholes, and a battery of four M-14 Tanks, mounted with 105 cannons, took up position in our area. The Japs had a spotter that must have observed the movements of the tanks. We began to receive incoming artillery fire like rain. It was the worst shelling that I endured the entire war. About halfway through the shelling, the tanks pulled out, but the Japs continued to shell our position.

That attack ended, but other shellings would come. We found ourselves on another part of the highway of Northern Luzon; and we were fighting for a place called Balete Pass. There was a spot in this highway we all called “Torpedo Junction.” Torpedo Junction was a well-traveled intersection that the Japs shelled frequently. The shelling had knocked out our communications wire, so I went with one other man in to repair the line. The Japs began shelling again. I was just leaving the area, after repairing the wire, when I heard the shell coming. I took a dive, face down, in the dirt. I felt the concussion of the blast as my helmet was knocked off my head, and my repair phone was sent flying from my shoulder. I lost another man from shell shock around that time.

One night when we were dug in and set up, the artillery observer came to me and said that the phone line was dead, and that our commanding officer called the artillery observer on the radio and told him to send out a repair team to re-establish phone communications. I knew it would be very dangerous to go out in the dark, especially with a truck . Danger: from our troops, as well as from the Japs. I asked for two volunteers to go with me. My truck driver, Smith, and my machine-gunner, Bert Snider, came through. The word was passed to the infantry that we were coming out, and to hold their fire. We set out without any lights, and followed the highway back toward the artillery gun positions. About halfway to the site, we found where some trucks had pulled off the highway for the night, and in the process, had broken the wire that was set back

along the side of the road. I had my men continue to go back to the headquarters after repairing the line. It would have been too dangerous to try to return to the front line.

One of my men was laying wire along a jungle trail when a Jap appeared along the trail. The Jap saw him, and put his hands into his jacket, looking as if he were reaching for a grenade. My man, Ed Lebor, shot the Jap. We later found out that the Jap was a woman. When the old man gave him hell for shooting a woman, I din not fault Ed for his actions. A Japanese woman could kill you just as dead, and just as easily, as a Japanese man could.

We dug into a hillside away from the front line when an artillery battery of four 105 Howitzers from our outfit set up at the foot of the mountain. The Japs must have had an abserver right on top in the tree line. The next thing I knew, Jap artillery came raining down directly into the gun pits. It was a disaster. The guns were all destroyed, and the crews dead. I had a ringside seat to the whole affair. It happened right below my foxhole.

While we were still in this area, our cooks served us a pot of ground meat. A lot of guys ate it; but I just had a few bites, and refused the rest. A few hours later, the men who had eaten the meat began to have severe stomach cramps, and got so sick that they had to be taken to the hospital. It was an uncomfortable feeling to sit in our foxhole, and wait to see if we were next to get the cramps. Our unit was out of action for several days after that. I was one of the lucky ones. I did not get sick, at least not from the food. Later, I picked up a severe case of fungus in my eyes. it left me with blood-red eyes that burned like fire. It was a long time before it healed. The CO, my commanding officer, had to bring me back to the rear headquarters to rest and heal. That ended 160 days straight that I had spent in combat.

With my healing done, it was back to the darkness of the front line. Sleeping in a foxhole in the rain was no fun. I did discover that the parts of my body that were under wear, and in the mud, were much more warm than the exposed part. We did not wear raincoats because the noise of the rain hitting the raincoat cold give away our position. This was also the reason we put tape around our dog tags. Any slight noise could kill you.

We picked up a lieutenant, in our ¾ ton truck, while checking our wire line for breaks. He sat on the passenger's seat in front. I stood on the running board along side of him, and bent over him slightly to hang onto the folded down windshield and the back seat slats. The lieutenant had his rifle between his knees with his finger on the trigger. Suddenly, our truck hit a major pothole in the road, and the lieutenant's rifle discharged right in front of my face. Life can be measured in inches, and just a few more inches in my direction would have found the bullet hitting me full impact. Things there ran from the very dangerous, as you can see, to the very ludicrous. For example, when we could pick bananas, which were a rare find, we could not keep them overnight because the wild monkeys would steal them from us.

In many places lay the bodies of the dead Japs; and where there were the bodies of the dead Japs, there was an enormous amount of flies. This presented a big problem. The air was so thick with flies, you had to wave your hand over your spoon all the way to your mouth, while trying to shoo them away from your plate and C-Ration can as well. Strangely, I don't remember mosquitoes

being a problem at all. But still, I was faithful in my taking of my anti-malaria pill, Antibrane, every day. They were as bitter as gall, and turned my skin yellow; but the alternative was far worse.

Incoming mortar shells were the hardest thing to cope with. Mortar shells couldn't be heard on the way in. The flight of the mortar was almost all vertical, coming in with a nearly straight up and straight down trajectory. This differs from artillery rounds, which are almost always shot at a low angle. When artillery is inbound to your position, you can hear it coming, and hit the ground in time to avoid damage. Not so with mortar rounds. The mortars are on you before you know it, or can react. If you were lucky, you could also hear a Jap throw a hand grenade. This is because the Japs had to hit the grenade on their steel helmets to break the acid vial inside the grenade that ignited the black powder. This is what I heard the night the Jap threw a grenade at me. Fortunately, I knew to stay down inside my foxhole.

I did take away with me some sights form Guadalcanal that were non-military. Some very impressive sights in Guadalcanal were the beautiful wild orchids and very colorful birds, especially the parrots. I did see some lizards that ran in lengths of up to about six feet. They reminded me of pre-historic monsters. The jungle was teeming with life, though so mcuh death was going on within it. The nights were full of noises from monkeys, and other animals I never encountered. The jungle is not a peaceful place.

When the rotation plan came into effect in 1945, it authorized anyone who had accumulated enough points to either rotate to the United States or to be granted a 30 day leave before returning to his unit. I already earned 127 points. The requirement was only 90 points. Points were determined by the length of time spent in a combat zone and time overseas. The decision was not easy to make because we had shared so much pain, hardship and death together. We had established a brotherhood with our fellow soldiers that had surpassed any closeness to family or friends. In my mind, I had chosen to return; but , circumstances developed over which I had no control: like the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. With the subsequent surrender of the Japanese, I was sent back to the troopship for processing out of the Army. I had spent 4 years, 11 months and 29 days overseas, of which three and one-half years were spend in a combat zone in the South Pacific.

I was sent back to Manila. There, I turned in my combat equipment, and boarded a ship for the States. It was a much nicer trip home than the one over. We received good food, which was a big treat and well received. And the over-crowded conditions we previously suffered on the way over were non-existent. We landed at Angels Island in San Francisco Bay. I still remember seeing cars on the San Francisco Bridge. It struck me that they weren't colored olive drab. It had been 4 years, 11 months and 25 days since I left my United States, my home. Running water from a spigot, real flush toilets and electric lights with a switch to turn them on and off: these were all a novelty to me. I boarded a troop train in Los Angeles, and spent the next five days crossing the United States by rail. We disembarked at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Upon arriving, I was put into a hospital, suffering from a rapid heartbeat that would not slow down. It turned out to be a mild case of shellshock and nerves. I was treated, and released with an honorable discharge on 26 July, 1965.

The Way It Was

NAME : Robert Dockeray
UNIT: 4581st Service Company
TIME PERIOD: 1942-1945
SOURCE: Sent by email after a visit to the museum
DATE RECEIVED: 31 July, 2001

To understand how and when I arrived at Schofield Barracks requires going back to the beginning.

Prior to my sojourn in the army of World War II, the "Big One" as my friend Bill Rose used to say, my background should be stated. I graduated from Greenway High School located in Coleraine, Minnesota, which is located on the Mesabi Iron Range. By my own election I was heading for a work life associated in the automotive world. I proceeded on to Dunwoody Industrial Institute where I specialized in fuel, ignition and electrical systems of cars, trucks, etc. Two years later I gained employment with the Cleveland Cliffs Mining Company to service the Euclid Diesel trucks used in excavation of iron ore. When the ore season was shut down during winter months I worked with the electricians crew performing a multitude of tasks. This employment was interrupted in July of 1942 with my induction into the armed services.

Induction: July 17, 1942, Fort Snelling
I was all of 20 years old when inducted into the service at Fort Snelling, St. Paul, Minnesota. By no means was I a world traveler; so to say the least, the world had become very large in my eyes. I had never considered venturing very far from my roots.

After the usual indoctrination in to the service, I found myself in classification relating my education and work experience. Not too long after I was on my way to Fort Frances E Warren, Cheyenne, Wyoming; a Quartermaster Camp. After basic training I was assigned to the automotive training school.

The service seems to be obsessed with reviewing your background on a regular basis. So the first thing encountered was an interview by a civilian instructor. At the end of the interview he turned to a stern-looking Staff Sergeant and said, "looks pretty good, huh?" The response was "We'll see." Of course, I ended up in the Sergeant's class.

At the completion of training I was assigned as an assistant teacher waiting for an assignment. When I finally received shipping orders the commanding officer told me that I wouldn't be doing this for some time. Very strange comment.

Enlisted Reserve Corps: October 27, 1942
I ended up at Camp Kearns, Utah, where some 1,500 army personnel who had worked in the mining industry in civilian life were transferred to the Enlisted Reserve Corps and hired into the copper mining industry. This was the result of a shortage of manpower in the critical mining industry. Some two years later after having worked first at breaking slag with a sledge hammer in the furnace area, then as a brakeman on the in-plant railroad, then unloading ore at the

flotation plant, and finally as a construction electrician (which had been the reason I was included in the beginning), I was transferred back to active duty along with all the other guys who had been so involved.

Reentry Active Service: July 14, 1944

The first action was to run us through basic training once more. However, a new experience occurred when going through classification again. I was asked if I had a preference as to the branch of service. I requested Air Corps with my automotive background and told that was not possible because of my age. By this time I think I may have been all of 22. I asked what was available and was told infantry. Well, that didn't sound too exciting and I asked if I could go back to Quartermaster. With this, a review of the records was made and the guy discovered I had worked as an electrician, giving me a classification number 078. He further advised that it was a critical number and I would be held for assignment to that classification and no other.

Herein began a saga of unbelief. Two months later I was shipped to Camp Lee, Virginia thinking I am now an electrician. Wrong. After basic training once more, found myself back in automotive training. This being my main thing I did not mind. On completion of this training, I am sure you can guess, Classification. Out of curiosity I had to ask about the Spec #078. An immediate reaction on the part of the interviewer, "How did you get here and where have you been?" My classification again became Construction Electrician #078.

Waiting for assignment, I guarded German prisoners until I asked for a four-day pass and was immediately shipped on a delay enroute for overseas. First to Camp Beal, California, then Vancouver Barracks, Washington, then on a Merchant Marine ship 11 days to Oahu and the 13th Replacement Depot. Some of the regulars at the depot felt sorry for me, as I seemed to be not going anywhere soon. They arranged for me to ride on a truck down to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, where I could spend the day on Waikiki Beach. They gave me a few dollars, instructed me not to lie on the beach unless I turned over every ten minutes. I did fine until I fell asleep. I didn't sit or sleep on my backside for quite some time. After a sojourn of waiting and several shiploads of guys going through, I was once again called to classification.

Schofield: May 6, 1945 – March 2, 1946

Now begins the Schofield Saga. Once in classification I was told that an outfit, as it was put, "Had been on this rock for forty-four months and was being rotated back to the States. It is a Service Company. While it is not one where your #078 applies, it does have a position for an automotive supervisory classification #014, which you have. If you would forget about the #078, we could transfer you to Schofield Barracks and the 4581st Service Company immediately." By this time I had become quite attached to the climate, etc. and was most happy to accept. This long tale explains the crazy route of landing in Schofield.

I replaced the the Technical Sergeant in charge of maintenance. I was a Private and it wook some five weeks to move up to Staff, one grade at a time. The 4581st was located in an area I think between B Quad and Wheeler Field.

It was intended that the company was to have been a truck company. However, a truck company only had 60 vehicles. Ours had 128 and therefore was established as a service company. There were jeeps, reconnaissance cars, weapons carriers, 6x6s, tractor trailers, fuel tankers, buses and a General's car. We performed 3rd and 4th echelon service.

I only saw the General once. To give the company a high level treat, he agreed to make a courtesy inspection. I remember coming to a startled attention, tipping over my desk chair and stammering something when he congratulated us on the operation of our unit.

The Company area was built on two levels. The company headquarters, supply, mess hall, shop and non-commissioned officers quarters were all on one level. The barracks and parking on a lower ground level. There was an Engineer Company beyond our area. The buildings were quite old wood buildings that were not the same vintage as the buildings of World War II, known as the quads. A railroad encircled the company area. I remember a switch engine being used to announce the end of war in Europe and also the war in the Pacific. This usually happened in the middle of the night, with the engine whistle blowing as it progressed through the barracks.

Daily activity was more like being in a civilian world, we performed our functions, hauled the assigned cargo, serviced the vehicles. The one main reminder of military within the company was standing reveille, retreat and saluting the Captain on payday. I just recalled that the commanding officer's name was Caldwell; Captain, that is.

Our closest contact to actual war-like actions were the practice flights made by the Air Force practice bombing runs over our area. They would fly so low with their bomb bay doors open it looked like you could reach up into the plane. Also, there were night flights so the search light companies in the mountains could practice spotting the enemy.

The Captain was quite a regular guy and took an interest in the Mess Sergeant and myself. The Mess Sergeant and I shared quarters and traveled together in off-hours. The Captain cornered the two of us on payday and questioned what type of whiskey we were drinking. He explained that he thought we were becoming quite squirrelly. We told him that we changed off between Club Special and 99, both were cane whiskeys. He arranged for us to obtain Stateside whiskey through the Officers Club. The agreement was that we could keep it in our quarters if when he came through on inspection and sat on one of our bunks, we would share a drink with him. There was never an outright request for a drink, it was just an unwritten agreement between us. We had a lot of fun during these inspections playing dumb as to why the Captain would set down when inspecting our quarters.

Both of us borrowed money from the Captain on a regular basis, so on payday a good share of our pay would be returned to the Captain, and of course, we would borrow it back.

I reported initially to a Second Lieutenant who was quite proud of his background as a professional piano player and that he had no understanding of the mechanics of servicing or vehicles. He told me just keep things in order and he would not closely supervise my activities. His favorite act of involvement was to look out of the office window and holler "Muy Pronto" at

the Puerto Ricans who worked in the car/truck wash. He really got a charge out of seeing them jump and go to work. Anyway, at one point he called me down for what he thought was exceeding my authority without advising him. Not long after, the Captain called me into his office and advised that the Lieutenant was being transferred and he wanted to know if I thought there was need to replace him or could I handle my area and report directly to him. Of course, I allowed how that sounded like a very acceptable approach. It was never suggested that I had anything to do with the Lieutenant's transfer.

The cargoes hauled were gasoline, fresh meat and food products form Honolulu Harbor and a bus service for civilian personnel that worked on the base. The gasoline and possibly other types of fuel were hauled in large Diamond T semi tankers. Don't remember the source but we delivered all over the island. The fresh meat and food products were transported from Merchant Marine boats in Honolulu Harbor and stored in food lockers back in the mountains and then hauled back to the ships as needed. I don't recall now, however, I am sure there were other items transported as well as Army personnel. The bus service brought in workers to man the laundries, post exchanges, etc. The drivers would take their passengers home, say at a Coast Artillery post on the north end of the Island, then pick them up in the morning and bring them back.

My assigned vehicle was weapons carrier and the Captain had a jeep. One day when we were doing a repair requiring painting a portion of the Post General's car, the Captain commented on the fact that the General's car had high gloss OD paint and thought that if he could have high gloss, why couldn't we have the same? Shortly thereafter, we had the only weapons carrier and jeep on the island that had high gloss OD finish.

All went well in our little compound until one evening some of the younger guys got high and decided that they should go down to the engineering compound and dirt derby with their vehicles. The vehicles ended up damaged and covered with mud. It was suspected that some of our guys wee involved. In that no one admitted to being involved, a search was performed and sure enough, muddy clothes were found in a few of the guy's lockers.

The outcome of that little mission resulted in our entire group being moved into B Quad where closer supervision could be assured. That didn't go down well with those of us who had really enjoyed our lifestyle.

When the time arrived that I was to be rotated back to the States for discharge, Captain Caldwell tried to get me to re-up. Even to the extent he thought he could get me a higher grade, a ranch style home like his, and send for my family. That all sounded good, but I was actually very interested in returning to civilian life and starting my own auto repair shop, which was my greatest dream. I did start a business, which lasted for about four years when a deep recession set in and I sold and went to work for another company. That all led to a long career in the automotive industry far from continuing my desire to be just an auto mechanic.

I was rotated back to the States in early March 1945 and was discharged at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin on March 16, 1946.

NAME: Major General Samuel E. Gee
UNIT: 25th Infantry Division MP Company
TIME PERIOD: 1939 - 1943
SOURCE: 25th Military Police Association
DATE RECEIVED: 2000

Major General Samuel E. Gee

I arrived Aloha Towers, Honolulu on USAT Republic 10 December 1939, with my wife , Gladys, and 4 year old daughter, Kathryn (Kacky) Ann. I was assigned to Hawaiian Division Military Company, Schofield Barracks. I was a 1st Lieutenant, and, at the time, the lowest ranking officer in the Company. Our new home became Quarters # 440, Baldwin Road, Schofield Barracks. We occupied these quarters for more than two years until the family was evacuated in late March 1942. During the assignment, I was promoted to Captain in October, 1940, and our second daughter, Jane Clarke, was born 8 September 1941.

On 1 October 1941, the Hawaiian Division was split with the 21st Brigade becoming the basis for the 24th Division, and the 22nd Brigade becoming the basis for the 25th Division. All stayed in Schofield as well as Post of Schofield Barracks to which all other units and tasks were assigned.

Hawaiian Division HQ Company and 25th HQ & MP Company stayed at Schofield furnishing personnel for the many Post functions. Captain Clifford Blackford was the 25th Company CO. formerly he was CO, DIV HQ Company. He had no MP experience. I was his Executive Officer. That was our situation on 7 December 1941 with a large shortage of personnel, equipment and units including the 3rd Regiment in each Division.

We stayed in place until the battle was over. The 25th Division deployed to the southern half of the island of Oahu, from Kaina Point to Laia O Kaio on the east side of Oahu. I was left at Schofield to head up the MP's there. In January 1942, I was given command of 25th Division HQ & MP Company, which was located at Aiea. The MP's were located at the Girl Scout Camp in Pearl City.

In May 1942, the table of organization authorized a Major as Company Commander of HQ as well as HQ Company. A separate Major was authorized as Division Provost Marshal commanding the MP Company. I was then promoted to Major. At that time I became the Provost Marshal and the commander of the MP's. I was then moved to Pearl City. Major General J. Lawton Collins became the Division Commander. He was later Chief of Staff of the Army.

In September 1942, we were alerted to move overseas, we knew not where. We were relieved on Oahu by the 27th Division which had been on the island of Hawaii. We were told to get an overcoat and some winter clothes to carry with us, so we assumed, mistakenly as it turned out, that we were heading for New Zealand. We left Oahu in late October in convoy. The MP's traveled on the Dutch ship Noordam and we spent several weeks en-route to New Caledonia. While we remained in port there, General Collins went to General MacArthur's headquarters in

Australia. When he returned, he had all the staff and senior commanders at a meeting to tell us we were going to Guadalcanal. This news was not released until the ship actually sailed from New Caledonia.

I got all the MP's together in their quarters that night and told them where we were going. Their reactions were unbelievable. They cheered and said they were glad to be taking some action that would get the war over. We finally landed in Guadalcanal on 17 December 1942, and took over from the Americal Division and 1st Marine Division on Christmas Day. The war ended in Guadalcanal on 9 February 1943.

There were two officers with the MP's, beside myself. They were Captain John H. Smith and Lieutenant James I Sikes. Sergeant Hewitt was my senior enlisted man. I was reassigned as G-1 Americal Division on 25 January 1943, and turned the 25th Division MP's over to Captain Smith.

The Way It Was

NAME: Anshel (Al) Goldberg
UNIT: 90th FA
TIME PERIOD: World War II
SOURCE: Email copy of his dairy entry from his daughter, Jennifer Levey
DATE RECEIVED: 14 March 2007

It was while I was working for the Pennsylvania Railroad that the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor happened. From that job I enlisted on February 10, 1942 in the United States Army being sent to Fort Bragg, North Carolina for basic training. From there I was sent to Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii to join the 25th infantry regular Army Infantry Division. So I was ensconced at Headquarters Battery, having escaped field duty because I was an excellent typist and was assigned as a battery clerk.

In December 1942 our entire division was sent to Guadalcanal where the Japanese had established a presence and where the US marines had invaded in order to stop the Japanese advance to the south. I spent almost a year in Guadalcanal with the 90th Field Artillery Battalion of the US Infantry Division during which we were under aerial bombardment almost every night (1 to 4 bombers). Our division invaded Bougainville, New Georgia, etc successfully. We were advancing so slowly that I seriously believed that this war would drag on for 10 years (it actually had 2 1/2 years to go.

In December 1943 our division was assigned to New Zealand for R&R (rest & relaxation). My closest friends in my battalion included Leonel Peloquin, SamS., Sol Horowitz, Sam Terry, among others. Coming to New Zealand was a revelation. We saw city lights for the first time in 2 years. We dated civilian New Zealand girls and enjoyed a great country.

After New Zealand we moved as a division to New Caledonia where I was sent back to the States for reassignment in June 1944. I was sent to Ft. Dix, Lake Placid, Atlantic City, and finally to Keester Field in Biloxi, MS. There I was trained in aircraft mechanics, having shifted to the US Air Force as Tech Sergeant. From Keester Field I went Douglas Aircraft in Inglewood, CA to train as a mechanic on the A-24 bomber being built there. From Douglas Aircraft, I went to Moody Field in Georgia. While I was there, the Japanese phase of the war ended with the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In October 1945, I was honorably discharged from the army and returned to civilian life."

The Way It Was

NAME: James H. Haycraft
UNIT: 19th Infantry, 24th ID
TIME PERIOD: Nov. 28, 1942- 28 July, 1942- SB
28 July 1942- Australia, then Goodenough Island
SOURCE: Walk in visit by Mr. Haycraft. Notes by Adam Elia
DATE RECEIVED:

Training at SB. Took basic training on east range. Camped in eucalyptus forest. Lived in 3 room shacks, plywood, possibly Kahukus. Spent a month at Schofield Barracks in the barracks. Trained 5 days week.. Strung barbed wire on weekends. Went to tent city just prior to leaving.

Got passes to go off post. Went to Honolulu, but everything was blacked out.

Went on Lurline to Australia. Arrived Aug. 10 in Melbourne, frost. Went north after a couple days, built a tent camp. Left after Jan. 1943.

1st combat 23 April 44. New Guinea. Combat for whole year, then to Leyte, Phillipines. Then to Mindoro island. To secure and watch an air field.

Japanese started using Kamikaze planes. Saw one dive into one of their ships on the way from Leyte to Mindoro.

Another plane dove into a ship- he didn't see it, but ship sank in 5 minutes.

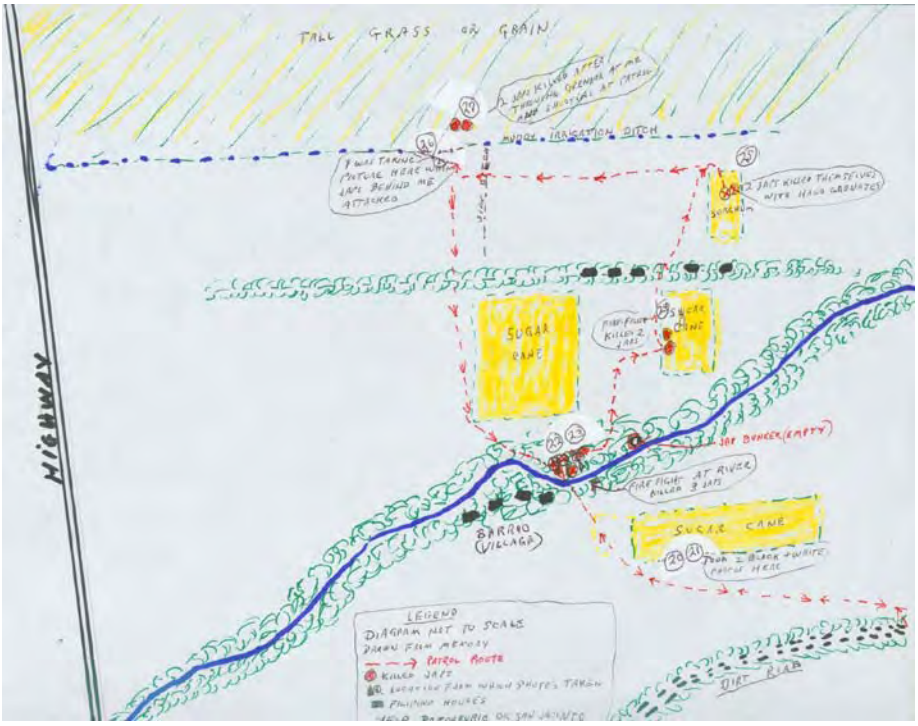
In Leyte, pinned down for 18 days.

Wounded in Mindinao on 29 April 1945. Sent home by plane. Stopped off in Hawaii

The Way It Was

NAME: Herbert G. Hunt Jr.
UNIT: 3/27th S-2 NCO
TIME PERIOD: 1942 - 1945
SOURCE: Herbert G. Hunt Jr.
DATE RECEIVED: April 19, 2007

The Patrol left the dirt road in the lower right corner of the map and headed across the open field toward the barrio where the Japs were last reported. The arrows point both ways because we retuned along this same route later. I ran ahead toward that patch of sugarcane on our right and snapped two shots of the patrol but you can see in the photo that the patrol was too dispersed to get many of the eighteen soldiers and the six or eight Filipinos in the shot. We then advanced to the Barrio at the edge of the river. There was an old Filipino in the river watering his caribou. When one of the Filipinos with us asked him where the Japs were he pointed across the river to our right and indicated that they left at about seven am. At this time it was about noon so we figured that they were long gone. Lt Kaza and I went down into the river which was only about knee deep at this point. I noticed our point man "Fireball" wading across the river to our left. The Lt and I talked for a moment and he decided to split the patrol with one half going up the river and the other heading down. Then if one group ran into the enemy the other half could act as a maneuvering force to come back and hit the enemy from the rear or flank.



As the Lt returned up the north bank of the river to reorganize the patrol into two groups I looked to my left but could not see the point man so I decided he must have gone on up the opposite bank of the river in the area he had been heading. The old Filipino with the caribou was nowhere in sight. I assumed that "Fireball" was up on the south bank so I decided to take a look to the right where the old Filipino indicated the Japs had left. There was a narrow path that slabed up the river bank but before starting up I noticed wet boot prints in the silt path that were made very recently. I decided to move back along the base of the bank to my left for about twenty feet to where there were some roots hanging over the edge that I could reach. Slinging my carbine over my shoulder and poking a toehold in the bank with my boot I grabbed the roots and pulled myself up to where my head just cleared the bank. There not three feet in front of me was a Jap

soldier with an expression on his face that must have mirrored that surprised expression on my face. The only reason I did not get shot between the eyes is because he was crawling out to see where I was and had crawled on the top of his rifle which was flat on the ground under his body.

I immediately let go of the roots and dropped back into the river, calling to the Lt and telling him the Japs were over my head in the bamboo. That was an assumption because I had only seen the one, but it proved correct. Soon a firefight was in full force. I could see Japanese muzzleblasts all up and down the river. I knew that if I tried to go back across the river the Japs could easily shoot me in the back so I stayed close to the base of the steep bank. As I crouched there against the bank one of the many things that went through my mind was "what happened to our point man "Fireball"? Also, what if the Japs tossed a hand grenade down into the shallow river where I was crouching? As soon as the firing slackened off I pulled the pin on one of my grenades and tossed it as high as I could into the tops of the bamboo. There was a moment of silence during which I could hear the grenade falling through the bamboo and hitting the ground. It seemed like ages before it exploded. When it did, our patrol opened up with every thing they had because the Japs who could got up and ran off into the brush. The firing soon died down but I stayed where I was. After a few minutes I noticed Lt. Kaza starting to cross the river with the rest of the men following. At the time I noticed "FireBall" crossing the river again at about where I thought he had already crossed before the firefight erupted. I realized then that I had been all alone on that side of the river during the action. I stayed right where I was until most of the patrol had crossed the river and entered the woods where the Japs had been.

In that area we found three dead Japs. One of my duties as Battalion Intelligence Chief was to search the enemy dead for documents. When I completed my job the Filipinos would arm themselves with the Japanese weapons and equipment that they could use including their shoes. Very few Filipinos had shoes at that time.

SSG Hunt observes Guerillas removing ammo and equipment from two Japanese killed during 2nd contact near San Jacinto

One of the men reported seeing a log bunker on the edge of the river off to our right. Lt Kaza ordered the soldiers with the rocket launcher (bazooka) to fire a round into the bunker. There were no Japs in the bunker so it was a wasted shot.

As the patrol moved out into an open field between two patches of sugar cane when another shot came out the sugar cane to our right. I saw the round hit in the dirt not far from Lt. Kaza who immediately gave the signal to charge into the sugar cane with assault fire. In this action everybody walks fast firing a round about every other step in the direction of the enemy. The men with automatic weapons fire shot bursts. This had the desired effect on the Japs as we could see the tops of the sugar cane being knocked down as those that could got up fled out the back side of the field. In the sugar cane we found the

bodies of two more Japs. The Filipinos removed the ammunition off the belt of one of the Japs we killed in the sugar cane. The other Jap is laying on the ground in the rear of the photo where you can see a soldier sitting on the ground.

We then moved out and passed through a barrio in a tree line and into a larger open field. To our right was a patch of sorghum about six to seven feet tall. We assumed that some of the Japs were hiding there so the Lt. ordered two of the men to move down the length of it while the rest of us covered the sides and rear. As they moved into the sorghum firing a few rounds with each step there were two explosions ahead of them and I could see the body of a Jap fly a few feet in the air and land partially in the open field. Shortly one of the Filipinos pulled another body out of the sorghum and laid it beside the one that was blown out. Evidently both of these Japs had committed harikari by holding grenades to their lower abdomens.

Our next move was out to our left across the open flat land and parallel to the main irrigation ditch and across the smaller side ditch. I ran out ahead so I could get a better picture of most of the men in the patrol. I ran across the open ground as far as I dared to before turning to take the picture. On the other side of the ditch, in which there was no water, was grass or some sort of grain about 30 inches tall for about as far as we could see. The bottom of the ditch was covered with soft mud. I snapped the picture and folded the camera and put it back into the case inside my blouse. At the same time one of the men advancing along the ditch was about 30 feet from me when he stepped across the ditch and picked up some Jap equipment laying in the grass. Just as he said “Hey, look what I found”, there was a sharp crack behind me that I recognized as the fuse of a Jap grenade being set. After the Jap pulls the pin on one of their grenades they have to strike the end of it on something solid like the butt of their rifle to set the fuse. When I turned around toward the sound there were two Japs, not more than 20 feet away in the grass. One of them was up on one knee with his other foot out in front of him and a smoking hand grenade in his right hand throwing it in my direction. At that moment I noticed the other Jap firing his rifle at somebody else. From the time that grenade, which was cast iron casing and is full of high explosive, hit my right knee and fell into the mud at my feet I have no memory until I was laying on my stomach a few feet out in the open field wondering what had happened.

I could see all of the men of the patrol were laying flat and were firing into the grass. I quickly realized hat there were two Japs laying in the grass on the other side of the ditch. Although I could not see them I knew approximately where they were located. I fired a full magazine in their direction (15 rounds) then put in another magazine and fired about six more rounds when my carbine jammed. If my gun had not jammed I think I would still be laying there firing.

All the firing had now stopped. Looking back across the open field I noticed the Lt. slowly rising and pointing his rifle in the direction of where the two Japs lay in the grass. As there was no movement or signs of life from the two the rest of us arose and milled around the bodies. At this time I felt no kind of pain or numbness. The Lt. decided that we should return to our unit because most of the men were low on

ammunition and if we ran into more Japs we would have to fire and run.

We took a fairly direct route back to where we left our unit only to find that the unit had been moved to another location. They left a ton and a half truck and a jeep to transport the patrol to the new location. The Lt and a couple of men rode in the jeep while the rest of us rode on the truck. I sat on some folded canvas on the tailgate, which was down, with a couple of other men. When we reached our new location I slid off the tailgate to the road and felt a terrific pain in my right foot and leg. It was so painful that my eyes began to water. As I stood there trying to figure out how I could have hurt myself dropping off the tailgate for that short distance the battalion commander came over with Lt. Kaza and asked "what the hell happened to you, Hunt?" Lt. Kaza had already told him about my taking pictures. I was trying to think of what to say to the Colonel when the radio operator, Ken Ocker, said "when that grenade went off I thought your right leg was blown clear off your body. I asked "what grenade?" At that moment it came back to me about seeing the smoking Jap grenade coming at me and hitting me in the knee. As the grenade dropped down into the mud at my feet I was sure I was going to die. From that moment until I come to out in the field I have no memory. I did not hear the grenade go off. Ken Ocker said I fell over my back and scooted away from the grenade but when it went off the mud blew my foot and leg up in the air and rolled me over onto my stomach. The mud and heavy soles of my boots must have absorbed any shrapnel because there was no blood on any part of me. The Colonel gave me hell for taking pictures and stated that he did not need photos of what we did, just an oral report by the patrol leader. He also said he could not award me a Purple Heart medal because my injuries did not draw blood. I told him I was just glad to still have my foot attached to my leg. I did have a badly sprained ankle and unknown to me at the time I had a torn ligament in my right knee where the hand grenade struck it before it fell into the mud and exploded. The medics bandaged up my ankle and I stayed close to the battalion headquarters for a few days until I could walk on it again.

This is an abbreviated account of what happened during just one day out of 167 days our division was committed on Luzon in the Philippine Islands. I was with our division (25th Infantry Div.) at Pearl Harbor during the attack on December 7th 1941. We spent the next year there in Hawaii training for combat in the British Solomon Islands which included action on Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Arundel and Kolombangara Islands (Dec 1942-Nov 1943). Then three wonderful months rest in New Zealand (Nov1943-Feb 1944), followed by nine months more training of all our replacements for the campaign in the Philippines (Feb 1944-Dec 1944). We then sailed for Luzon and our 167 days of continuous combat. (Jan 1945-Jul 1945.)

There were many days that were so boring that all we could do was to dream of home, a hot meal, a bed to sleep in, a hot bath or ice cream soda. I took many photos during the four years and three months that I was out of the States in the Regular Army. I hope to make this account a part of my full story in an illustrated book.

The Way It Was

NAME : William W. Laxton, PFC
UNIT: 3rd Bn. HQ Co. 27th Infantry
TIME PERIOD: 1944
SOURCE: Account written by Mr. Laxton in 1948
DATE RECEIVED: 26 September 2002

TOWARD BALETE PASS

In Fall of 1944 the 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning) was given the mission to secure Balete pass in Northern Luzon and on to the final objective of Santa Fe.

We were all bivouacked around San Jose replacing and repairing equipment lost in the combat since landing at Lingayan. I had a field artillery observer friend, Jack, who arranged a recon flight up to Balete and invited me to join him. There was a beautiful lush valley stretching north out of San Jose, rolling hills to the left and right. As we went further North the hills on each side became more rugged, and covered with heavy forestation, and the valley was narrowing.

We could see Balete pass ahead. Jack was surveying the situation and pointed to a very wooded high hill about 2 miles southeast of the pass, "that hill right there, is the key to securing the pass" and it was. When we got back, it had been decided the attack on Balete would be conducted with the 27th Inf. Regt (Wolfhounds) to the center, 35th Inf. Regt on the east with the 161st on the west.

The campaign continued tediously as infantry and engineers slugged their way up the hill. The Wolfhounds were moving relentlessly through pockets of resistance, snipers, and counter attacks, while the 65th Engineer support was building a supply road sometimes almost ahead of the advancing infantry. The word was that the engineers suffered higher than normal casualties in cat drivers from the numerous snipers who were infiltrated behind the advancing troops.

I was assigned to an ammo detail about 6 miles behind the advancing Wolfhounds. Daily we would load a deuce-and-a-half with the up front requirements with always the parting order from Capt. Morse "Load a few extra rounds of 81 mortar shell, they always use 'em all anyway." By this time the Wolfhounds were to the east; we loaded aboard and headed up the 65th Engineer

road which took well over an hour to travel those steep, twisted 6 miles. Occasionally we would past a dozer straightening out a turn or pushing rock into sink holes. At the top, in that steep up turn, the first few days, they were winching us for about 200 feet.

When we got to the top, we unloaded the ammo and moved the truck to the 3rd Bn. Aid Station. We had a few moments, and I went to find my friend Benny. We'd sit and chat a few minutes, then I was back to the truck for the haul back down the hill. The medics had loaded the wounded in the truck and tied the litters to the truck bed. It was my custom to ride in the back of the truck or with the driver on the trip down the hill. One day on the return trip we passed a tracked personnel carrier lumbering up the road. It was armed with a 105mm howitzer and two .50 caliber machine guns.

Wednesday, we were ready again; all the ammo loaded including 105mm and .50 cal for the personnel carrier. It was a routine trip up the hill and after unloading, I headed over to find my friend. As I approached, Sgt. O.B. Stallings said, "Bill, you won't find Benny over there." I was about to ask when he continued "We had an attack last night and Benny didn't make it, I'm sorry." Boy, was I shook; I sat for awhile and was interrupted with a call to "load 'er up."

I got to the truck and found that one of the wounded was a lieutenant who was going to ride with the driver. Cpl. Linder came by in the commo jeep and asked if I wanted to ride down with him and the other commo guy. I agreed and jumped in the back of the jeep, but we had to wait for the truck to start down the hill. We compared what we had heard about last night's raid and remembered about Benny and the others. The truck finally started down the hill with us following about 100 yards behind. We had gone about 2 miles down the road when our chatter was interrupted by the stutter of a Japanese light machine gun. The truck was out of sight around a curve. We had heard at least four bursts of machine gun fire then the crash. We had immediately stopped and bailed out on the down slope off the road. A quick estimate of the situation left us with two alternative courses of action: to get to a radio and stop all traffic on the road or protect the truck and wounded in it. Our weapons included one M1, carbine, and pistol with normal amounts of ammunition for each. I volunteered to check out the truck if possible and left saying "If I'm not back in 15 minutes you guys go back up the road and stop traffic."

I made my way about 50 feet off the road down about 80 yards where I could see the truck had gone off the road on my side. I could see no Japs so I crawled up and opened the door to the cab. The driver and lieutenant were dead. I looked through the opening to the bed of the truck- much blood but no sound or movement. I could hear Japanese talking from across the road. Figuring there was nothing practical we could do for the truck or its passengers I made my way back to the others and together went back up the hill but staying off the road till well clear of the ambush area.

About a mile and a half up the road we finally found a recon platoon with a radio to Headquarters who stopped all traffic on the road. It was dusk by now and the fellows from the platoon were sharing blankets and food with their drop-ins. Later that evening, a couple of officers from Headquarters came down to talk to us and determine the location and other

information about the ambush. They left and we dug in with borrowed tools and spent the night on the side of the hill.

The next morning there was a flurry of activity and several more platoons of men gathering. We were 'invited' to join our recon friends on the sweep back down the hill. We were spread from the edge of the road east for about 20 yards. Suddenly from up the hill came the sound of a tank-- not really a tank but the personnel carrier from the front. As it passed, a platoon fell in behind and the sweep down the road began. It took until afternoon to get down to where the ambush took place, where we met groups making a sweep from below.

In total there were 21 sons of Nippon eliminated from further participation, also 2 machine guns, 2 small mortars and assorted rifles, pistols and grenades. The truck and jeep were destroyed and casualties were transported to the rear. This ended another episode on the way toward Balete.

At the time of this event, I was a PFC 3rd Bn. Hq. Co. 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division. I was awarded the Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, and several campaign ribbons for action in the South Pacific.

Submitted by: Major Bill Laxton, AUS RET

The Way It Was

NAME: Orin Love, Ssgt
UNIT: 35th Infantry Regiment
TIME PERIOD: 1944-45
SOURCE: Cassette tape recording by Mr. Love.
DATE RECEIVED: 19 January 2007

Discharged as a Staff Sergeant

I joined the unit, the 25th Division, while it was on New Zealand. It was January of 1944, I believe. I was assigned to the anti-tank company of the 35th Regiment of the 25th Division. We stayed there for a while. Went up to New Caledonia for training and new equipment. Stayed there until about December of '44. Moved on down to Noumea and waited for ships to go. We didn't know where we were going, but ended up in Luzon, Lingayan Gulf. We did a lot of training up there in New Caledonia. Got to know the guys that had been on the Guadalcanal campaigns. Learned a lot from those boys, believe me. Most likely saved my life.

We landed in Lingayan Gulf January 11, 1945. We never got off the ships until the second day. There was no opposition on the landing. We didn't see a Japanese person for a long time, couple weeks at least. The first encounter was out in the plains country. We moved to about the middle of the island and was there, we were going to head out of there.

One night we were bivouacked in an area with absolutely no cover of any kind. So we all dug us a little slit trench, grabbed some sleep. Somewhere during the night the Japanese had stampeded a herd of caribou, water buffalo, over the bivouac area. Lucky me woke up just in time to holler and the caribou did a little side step in mid-air to keep from stepping right in the middle of me. That was pretty close! Scared the heck out of me, however, it didn't stop me from going back to sleep.

We kept moving north up through the plains country without engaging any Japanese until we got to a little barrio called Lupao. There we did get into some combat. The Japanese had 33 tanks dug in as pill boxes. The reason they were dug in, we were to learn after awhile, was they didn't have any more petrol, gasoline. So they did the best they could with them. They just dug them in and made very secure pill boxes out of them. Tough going for a couple line companies. There was one line company and the anti-tank company. At that time we didn't have our anti tank rifles with us so we were used as a line company also. However, we did have support from a cannon company. They were equipped with 75mm guns and they were self propelled. They did a lot of good for us there.

Well, moving on, we moved up north on Highway 5 to the beginning on the south end of Balete Pass. The Japanese had moved up there and had dug in. Every little hill and bump you could think of they had a hole dug and pretty well fortified. Took us about 100 days to get through this Balete Pass and it couldn't have been all that far. I can't remember in actual miles or kilometers what it was, but that was a son-of-a-gun, believe me. The company was perimeter guard for the regimental headquarters. We had encountered no armor up till then, but we deployed our 37mm

anti-tank rifles as defense for regimental headquarters. The company was also used as guards for backpacking rations and ammunition up to the line companies. We usually got two to three of those details a day. Had to keep those boys supplied up there.

Every once in awhile we'd get a little break in the boredom. One day, someone spotted a Japanese patrol on the hills up above us. So we quickly formed a search and destroy patrol, which I got to be part of, and we went up after them. They were hid out in a bamboo thicket that was so thick, that I laid down next to the guy on my left, my head was even with his knees. He's shooting, and shooting, and shooting. I didn't see a thing to shoot at. After it was all said and done, they had eliminated a 17 party Japanese patrol apparently out for food and ammunition. They captured a couple of light machine guns, rifles, and a couple of the ring mortars. It was quite an afternoon.

Later on, a few days, week--, time goes by so you can't keep actual track of it-- the Division determined that the bridge on Highway 5 may be booby trapped. So they sent an engineer squad up with TNT. They were just going to blow the bridge. That way if it was booby trapped, we'd destroy the whole thing. They sent a squad of my company out as security for these people. There was a lieutenant who was in charge of the engineers. They were going to set the explosives and we were just going to guard them until it was time to light the fuses and depart the area. Well, the Japanese had that one figured out real good. They had that bridge zeroed in with a 47mm anti-tank rifle Japanese style. We had just about got the machine gun set up when we caught incoming. We got 26 rounds of H.E. into that little area. One of the rounds destroyed my machine gun air-cooled jacket and blew it from out between my legs. So help me, the good Lord was watching over me; I didn't get a scratch.

All the rest of the people departed the area. There was one other person left besides myself. I stayed to watch the gun and was going to maintain a field a fire if they decided to come down and have a look. Well, time meaning nothing any more, the sergeant that was in charge of our patrol yelled at me from across the road and asked me if I was o.k. I told him affirmative, I was fine. Suggested we get the heck out of there. I asked him to come down and start up our prime mover, our weapons carrier. He said, "I don't know how to drive." He'd been in the service since he was about 15 or 16 years old, never learned to drive. Anyhow, I told him to come on down, get in the ditch. I would get the machine gun out of the tripod, join him, and we'd get that thing going. I knew how to drive, in fact I'd had a government driver's license before I went into the service. That was a nice little ride home. We didn't have anymore incoming. Come to find out, one of our big guns up on the hill had spotted the Japanese firing out of this cave that they had been in, and they had destroyed that set up for them. But we didn't know that. We didn't know that for about three days later. Word filtered down. So here we are running away from nothing. It was a little scary. It took a long time to get through that Balete Pass. Those people were dug in, every little nook and cranny had a cave. You had to destroy it one way or another before you could move up another 20 feet. We made it on over the top. Went into the town of Santa Fe where we bivouacked a couple days.

Then we went into some more training. They re-equipped us. They gave us some new people to bring up the squads to strength. After that, we moved down to the beach on Lingayan Gulf . We

were to be in the second wave of the invasion of Japan. Well, President Truman kept us from that little number. For that I'm very thankful. We went on to Japan and landed at Nagoya. And then we went north out of there about half way up to Tokyo. A little town about 4 miles off of the beach called Fujita where we sat up in the Japanese airfield barracks. That's where we spent the time in Fujita doing guard duty. After that it must have been Christmas time, around '45, my rotation numbers came up and I got to go home.

The Way It Was

NAME : MG Aubrey S. Newman
UNIT: 24th Infantry Division
TIME PERIOD: 1941
SOURCE: Correspondence between Herbert Garcia and MG Newman
DATE RECEIVED: 25 May 1985

Initial letter and Mr. Garcia's questions were addressed to Major General Irving, commander of the 24th Division at the time. MG Newman has responded to them.

HG: While doing research on the history of Schofield Barracks, your name was given to me as a valuable resource. Most certainly as the first Commanding General of the 24th infantry Division, there is a wealth of material from which to tap. At this particular juncture, I wish to solicit your assistance in finding the answers to a few questions. Any information which you may give will be greatly appreciated or any other source upon which we may draw, would be most helpful.

AN: Major General Irving forwarded your letter to me for reply, as I was in Hawaii at the time of Pearl Harbor and he was not. I was the first G-2 of the 24th Division, and later became the Chief of Staff in July 1942.

HG: After the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions were formed on 1 October 1941, where were their respective headquarters located?

AN: 25th Division: Somewhere in the South Sector. I do not know where.
24th Division: Temporarily remained in a one story frame building in the lower post for the approximately two months before Pearl Harbor. But when the attack came moved into the first floor of one of the artillery barracks (to obtain overhead protection.)

We remained there until an underground headquarters was dug into the side of a gulch on the road to Haleiwa, about a third of the way from Wahiawa to the beach, and off to the right of the road as you approached the beach.

HG: Did the 19th and 21st Regiments remain in their old Quads?

AN: Yes, until the Pearl Harbor attack. When they moved out to their defensive location, the 21st Infantry in the Haleiwa area and the 19th Infantry to the right of the 21st Infantry, but leaving the coastal area behind the Koolau Mountains largely undefended along that remote coastline.

Note: I recall making a G-2 estimate of the situation, and pointing out that the way the Japanese operated against Singapore and elsewhere that this was where they would probably land and push over the Koolau mountains-- thus coming in behind our positions and into our artillery positions from the rear.

HG: At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 24th had responsibility for the security for the northern coast of Oahu. Can you tell me where the Regimental Command Posts (CPs) were and where your HQ was located?

AN: The two regimental headquarters were moved into the field, roughly behind the center of their defensive positions, as described above. The 24th Division CP moved to the underground location from the artillery barracks, as indicated above.

HG: Another thing that has come to mind is what was the determining factor in giving the 24th Division the old Hawaiian Division's shoulder patch as opposed to giving it to the 25th?

AN Probably the fact it was the lowest number. That would be the normal way to do it in my view, but I can not state that was the reason.

HG: Any other information you can provide concerning that first year at Schofield will be deeply appreciated.

AN: As to the general question in your final paragraph:

In retrospect, I recall thinking the war would begin with the capture of Hawaii, which is also what I thought before Pearl Harbor (see following article.)

Further, I did not return to the Philippines (where I had been stationed in 1929-30,) because, as I said, "I did not want to start the war in a Japanese prisoner of war camp."

The Japanese lost the war when they did not plan to follow up the Pearl Harbor attack. From reflection, and what I have read, their tentative plans in that regard were to capture one of the other islands for a base, then attack Oahu at their leisure, after softening up and cutting off our supply line.

As to what happened at Schofield when the attack came, see my article as published in ARMY.

Incidental note: During the attack on Pearl Harbor some of the shells from Navy ships landed at Schofield, though not many. One landed on the roof of the 3rd and 2nd floors, and came to rest on the floor of a kitchen on the ground level… still unexploded. I saw it. About a 5" or 6" size.

The Way It Was

The Infantry Journal May 1949

"Blue Alert"
By RIPOSTE (pen name of A.S. Newman)

It happened more than a year before Pearl Harbor. I was a captain on the staff of an infantry regiment at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. On this day our regiment was having a sort of tea dance at the Officer's Club. You know, with receiving line and music and refreshments. Very nice.

The party was one of those 5-8 p.m. affairs but, being a bachelor, I decided to say on to make the most of an evening begun so pleasantly. Thus, dressed in my full blue uniform, I was still in the club when two things happened: the Club announced that it was closing for the night and I heard the retreat gun fired five times , which was the signal for the General Alarm.

Knowing this, I passed the word along and was told it was "just another alert." But since alerts were supposed to come by phone, I decided to report at once to my regiment, which was only a couple of hundred yards away.

Of course, being in blue uniform posed a problem, but I decided that if "this was it" I had better not waste time trying to get properly dressed for the occasion. So I arrived at Regimental Headquarters and found it dark and empty.

So I called the guardhouse and ordered the sergeant of the guard to send runners around the quadrangle to turn out all companies, and told the sergeant to get on the phone and call all officers of the regiment. Then I called the Regimental Commander, told him the general alarm had been fired, that I had the regiment turning out—and assured him that the situation was well in hand.

That accomplished, I went to my office where I kept a campaign hat and one of those old double-strap field-type Sam Browne belts hanging on hooks behind the door.

So I donned the campaign hat, and put the double Sam Browne over my blue uniform. Then I got my pistol out of the safe, attached its holster to the Sam Browne—and found I had no ammunition.

However, the Headquarters Company supply room was just downstairs, so I went down there and asked for three clips of pistol ammunition. The supply sergeant took a look at my blue uniform, campaign hat, and double Sam Browne—and said he didn't have any ammunition. We had a few words. I got kind of emphatic, and ended up with the ammunition. One clip went into my pistol, and the other two into the pockets of my belt.

Back in my office—loaded and ready for bear—I sat down, stuck my feet on the desk, tilted my hat at a belligerent angle, and nonchalantly lit a cigar. A few minutes later the Adjutant came striding into headquarters, looked in my office, and said: "Well, General Grant, where did you come from?"

It soon developed that the General Alarm had been fired by mistake, and so everybody kept on "alerting." Pretty soon the Regimental Commander arrived and was briefed on the situation. One of his first actions was to quietly tell me he thought I could spare the time to go home and change uniforms.

Well, they called me General Grant for quite a while, but since December 7, 1941, I haven't been quite so apologetic about jumping the gun on war.

Army December 1967

"The Forward Edge"
by MG A.S. Newman

The Battle of Schofield

Many of the wars in the past hundred years have started with a surprise attack, so there's no reason to suppose the next won't begin in the same way. My experience, limited to one such attack, was less than heroic. But there are lessons to be learned from my worm's-eye view in a ringside seat on that unhappy occasion.

When the Japanese attacked ships in Pearl Harbor and planes on the airfields of Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, things happened elsewhere, too, which have been overlooked by history. For example, until you read this, you probably have not heard of the battle of Schofield Barracks. This is my previously unrecorded after-action report as G-2 of the Army division at Schofield.

On that historic Sunday morning I was reading the newspaper in bed, my black cat asleep at my feet. Around five minutes before 0800 there was an explosion, with the feel of a real concussion.

Another explosion. Then a sharp staccato sound, unlike any other in the world. This snarl of sound—unmistakable to the professional ear—was a burst of machine-gun fire as the plane which dropped the first bomb strafed the off-post town of Wahiawa where I lived.

I jumped from bed, scattering cat and bedclothes, and headed for the porch. From there I could see nearby Wheeler Field, and the flaming destruction of the surprise attack.

One of the first bombs hit the oil storage at Wheeler, and a mushrooming cloud of black smoke boiled upward, leaping red flames at its base. An airplane dived toward the hangar line, pulled upward, and another bomb exploded on target. How could it miss? The range was about that a hen uses when she lays an egg. On each wing of the airplane, sharp and clear in the morning sunlight, was a red disk—the Rising Sun of Japan.

Defense plans went into automatic operation, troops dispersing to planned positions. In any battle, especially a first battle, there are curious incidents that stem from psychological shock and chance circumstances.

As a Japanese plane flew low over the barracks area, after laying its eggs on Wheeler, the G-3 of our division held a Garand rifle he had just drawn from the supply room. He saw the plane coming, and attempted to push a clip of ammunition into his rifle. But the Garand had recently replaced the bolt-action Springfield, and he had never had one in his hands before.

"Holy cow, Red!" he said later, "here I was an expert rifleman, a semiautomatic rifle in my hands. That guy drifted along, almost dragging his wheels on the barracks roof, just asking for it. My chance to be a hero—and I didn't know how to load that damned rifle!"
There were some irrational reactions, too. Like the supply sergeant, with the concussion of exploding bombs quivering in the air, who wanted receipts before he would issue arms and ammunition. Or the young lieutenant who shouted to soldiers setting up a machine gun in the barracks quadrangle, "Don't shoot—or they'll shoot back!"

These minor aberrations live as "war stories." Who wants to hear about men who met the shock of violent surprise with quiet courage and efficiency?

After that first savage blow at Wheeler Field and machine-gunning of Schofield Barracks and Wahiawa, no more air strikes hit us. However, the battle continued to rage at Pearl Harbor, Hickam and other airfields—outside my view and knowledge. These have been duly chronicled.

Concurrently with violent action elsewhere in the battle known as "Pearl Harbor," our division headquarters moved into a concrete barracks at Schofield. In peacetime maneuvers G-2 was, at best, tolerated. Now my status changed. What did I know? What was the situation?

There were reports of troops landing by parachutes and gliders. This did not make sense. From what base could they have come? It's still a puzzle to me why half a dozen such messages were received; one of them ended, "This is a confirmed report." But all proved unfounded when checked.

One artillery OP (Observation Post) reported a submarine offshore and called in data to bring fire down on it. The fire was reported "on target;" next, that the submarine had fired back at the shore; finally, that it must have sunk, because swimmers were in the water.

As nearly as I could determine, what happened was this: The OP sighted the black back of a large porpoise offshore, erroneously identified it as one of the Japanese midget submarines—but gave correct fire data. When the sub "fired back," it was one of our artillery shorts landing on shore. "Swimmers in the water" were porpoises, understandably excited about artillery shells falling around them.

By 2200 that night I didn't believe what nobody said about nuthin'—when the blacked-out door to headquarters was yanked open by the middle-aged chief of a technical service staff section.

He was fat, white-faced, out of breath, and gasped, “Gas! Gas!” as he staggered across the room and scrambled into his gas mask.

Others went for their masks too, but not I. I was immune. Until I could call the post S-2 on the phone, but could not hear him clearly. “Make a noise,” I said. “Speak up! I can’t hear you.” “I’ve got my gas mask on,” the S-2 said.

At this I looked to see if my gas mask was handy, then back-checked the gas alarm. Without realizing it, I was following correct procedures: chase every phony report or rumor back to its source and along the way, make everyone eat it who passed it forward unchallendged or unchecked.

The gas alarm started at the post dump, still burning as night increased tensions. Because of the black-out, a water hose was turned on it. Water on the burning refuse generated a peculiar smell, so an officer and a sergeant went out to investigate. As they walked in the dark the smell got stronger, and the officer said to the sergeant: “This may be gas, and we might both be overcome. You stay here. If I don’t come back in fifteen minutes, give the alarm.”

So he set out bravely, bending over near the ground now and then in a sniffing “test for gas.” A sentry saw the stooped, sneaky-looking figure, and snapped of a shot at it. The officer dived into a convenient ditch, stuck his head up, got shot at again—and went back into the ditch to stay.

The sergeant, not knowing this, gave the alarm: “Gas!"—and in minutes, thousands of men were wearing gas masks.

Many other things could be reported. I doubt if there was ever a night of so much sweat and so little danger. The Navy had taken the brunt of the losses, in lives and ships. The Air Force (then Army Air Corps) had been hit hard too, mostly in planes destroyed on the ground and men killed in the bombed barracks. But Army losses were light.

While the “Battle of Schofield Barracks” sounds like comic opera, remember this: thousands of fine soldiers who lived through it would never see their homes again—for they had their date with eternity on the bloody battlefields of the Pacific yet to come.

Now, as to the lessons learned.

The mental and emotional shock resulting from a sudden and unexpected attack is often far more devastating in effect than the physical damage justifies. That’s why one of the principle of war is Surprise.

It’s this psychic shock, many times magnified, that we must guard against at national levels in a sudden nuclear attack—if it comes. A grave miscalculation could result from tremendously exaggerated estimates of damage, thus setting the stage for possible premature decision to end the war. One anonymous pundit said it this way: “The side with the poorest communications will win, because the other side’s surrender message will arrive first.”

The Way It Was

For another lesson from Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Schofield, consider this parable.

Suppose you put a small boy in a room with a cat and a canary, with orders for the boy to watch and be sure the cat doesn't get the canary. Sooner or later the cat—who can wait for the right unwary moment—will get the canary. You can't depend on human vigilance alone, but must give the canary some passive protection. Like a cage.

In Hawaii parked airplanes and ships massed in Pearl Harbor were the canary, while the great Japanese carrier fleet was the cat in the Pacific. In addition to fallible human vigilance we needed adequate passive defense, like underground hangars for our strike-back planes and dispersion for the fleet. Then there would have been no Pearl Harbor; thus no Battle of Schofield Barracks either, because successful surprise attacks fall only on the vulnerable and unprepared.

This raises the multi-billion-dollar question for today's missile and nuclear era: What kinds of passive protection for our strike-back capabilities do we need? How much and where? And do we have them?

The Way It Was

NAME: Charles L. Palmer
UNIT: Company B, 21st Infantry Regiment
TIME PERIOD: 1939 - 1942
SOURCE: Excerpt from Mr. Palmer's autobiography
DATE RECEIVED: 24 June 2001

The Years In Hawaii

We were loaded aboard the US Army Transport Grant on September 7, 1939, six days after World War II was declared in Europe. The Grant was a German ship which was in a U.S. port when World War I was declared. There were linoleum-covered floors in the sleeping area, widely spaced double deck bunks, to which our duffel bags were fastened. All our clothes were in the duffel bags.

The trip from San Francisco to Honolulu took seven days. Meals were served in the galley. We stood while eating, and tried to keep our plates and utensils in front of us. Everything moved with the roll of the ship. A large kettle with a faucet at the bottom provided coffee for breakfast, tea for lunch, and soup for dinner. It all tasted the same.

No one knew how the war would affect the U.S. About the third day out, a submarine surfaced to one side of the ship. We were eating lunch, and could see it out of the portholes. The galley emptied fast. It was one of ours.

Movies were shown on the foredeck after dark. I had the best seat in the house on the first night out. I was on the top of the hatch with my back against the bulkhead. We were just off the Farallon Islands, the ship was rolling, and the deck was crowded. I started to get seasick. I put my hand over my mouth, made noises, and headed for the rail. A path opened through that crowd, so fast you couldn't believe it. I didn't see the movie, but the trip was fine after that. The ocean was so blue, dolphins chased each other in the ship's bow wake, and we had nothing to do except watch the flying fish, play cards, sleep, and eat.

The ship arrived in Honolulu, and docked at the Aloha Tower. We were welcomed with leis in the Hawaiian fashion, and shipped to our assigned units. I was assigned to Company B, 21st Infantry Regiment, stationed at Schofield Barracks in the center of the island of Oahu.

Schofield Barracks housed the Hawaiian Division which consisted of four infantry regiments and a field artillery battalion. There were the Field Artillery Battalion; the Nineteenth, the Twenty-first, the Twenty-seventh, and the Thirty-fifth Infantry Regiments. The barracks for each regiment was in quadrangle form, and three stories high. The top two floors were open sleeping quarters, toilet, showers, and a line of washbasins that were so close together I had to stop using my straight razor and switch to a safety razor. The bottom floor contained the office, the kitchen and mess hall, the supply room, and a day room. A pool table was in each day room, and there were chairs and tables for reading and writing. The day rooms were long and narrow, at the back of the company barracks, and faced a lawn and the street, not the quadrangle. There were

screened porches above the day room on the two upper floors. In the infantry barracks the buildings on each side of the grass-covered quadrangle housed a battalion. Each of the three combat battalions consisted of three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company (mortars and machine guns). The fourth side housed the headquarters battalion, the regimental restaurant, and the barbershop, both of which faced on the entry hall. There was a road in front of each battalion with an entry or exit at each corner of the quadrangle.

The quadrangles were in a row in the order listed above, and were next to Wheeler Field, the Air Force fighter base, which formed a "T" with the Division barracks.

Each regiment trained its own recruits. This training lasted about two months, then we became involved in the regular company training exercises under the company officers. We had only one, the Company Commander, Captain Theodore R. Kimpton. The sergeants ran the company. All the units were at half strength, or there-abouts. The Army supplied cleaning rods and patches, for cleaning the rifle bores. The individual soldier supplied everything else needed to keep himself and his equipment in shape.

We were issued new, tropical (khaki) uniforms, which had to be tailored at our own expense. At that time each soldier had a clothing allowance from which to buy his uniforms. If you had the money ($5), it was cheaper to have a tailor make your uniforms, than it was to buy your GI (Government Issue, or soldier) uniforms and have them tailored. At $21 a month, who had the cash money?

Each man had a footlocker (a trunk) and a wall locker. The footlocker sat on a shoe rack at the foot of each bunk. The field (work) and garrison (dress) shoes were lined up on the rack, some facing forward and some backward. Those facing forward were highly shined, but never worn. They were for inspection. The backward facing shoes had to be polished, too, but not to a mirror finish. The footlocker had a tray, which when the lid was open could be moved back a few inches to display the clothing underneath. That clothing, socks and underwear, was never worn. They, too, were for inspection. The clothes you wore were out of sight. We had to buy the inspection clothes as well as the clothes we wore. Uniforms and hats were kept in the wall lockers. They were inspected every Saturday morning, too.

We spent a lot of time and a significant amount of money getting and keeping our gear in shape. The issue bayonets were black. We had to burnish all the black off, and make them shiny. This was done with a burnishing tool, made of hard steel links (like chain mail) attached to a 3 ½" square leather pad with loops at opposite corners for your thumb and little finger. It took hours of burnishing before a bayonet could pass inspection.

We were off duty on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and all day Sunday unless you had KP or guard duty. We often went to Wahiawa, a town just east of the barracks. We went to a Japanese restaurant where we ate saimin noodles, drank Japanese beer, and roller-skated at the rink. I spent a lot of time there, but never learned to skate backwards.

We were paid in cash. During the month we could buy PX (Post Exchange, a store) coupons and theater tickets on credit. This credit had to be paid off. We also contributed 25 cents to the Old Soldier's Home. We might have $5 when we left the pay table. That was just enough for a trip to Honolulu. Taxi $1 each way, a couple of drinks at 50 cents each, and a visit with the girls, $2. We might get involved in a fight, either with or against the Navy. The sailors fought a lot. When a fight started, someone called out "fight" and sailors came from everywhere to join in. A very exciting life we led.

On payday the crap and card tables came down, and the gambling started. Nickel and dime games were played on someone's bed. The money slowly worked its way upward to the professional gamblers at the big tables. I have seen $5,000 in one pot, when a private soldier made $21 a month, and didn't get to keep much of it.

The theater showed top run movies. The officers, and their wives and girlfriends dressed formally to go to the show; we were more informal.

Sports was a big thing, everyone had to participate. Boxing and Basketball were the popular sports. There were several boxers in B Company. I chose track because I had been on the track team in high school; besides, I always lost the fights I was in as a kid. I ran the 880-yard (half-mile) run. There was a disadvantage. Football and basketball players and boxers had special diets. They ate well during the season. The track team ate lightly before training and a track meet. I could run the 880 in two minutes or a little more. I was fast enough to beat the crowd, but not fast enough to beat the really good runners. I didn't have a finish kick. Our coach had been in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He paced me, trying to increase my speed and stamina. When we finished, he wasn't breathing hard, but I collapsed.

We still had the Springfield bolt action rifles, and wore the British WWI helmets. We spent time on the rifle and pistol ranges, and had bayonet and hand grenade throwing practice, and learned about weapons and range safety. We did a lot of dry run practice; squeezing, rather than jerking the trigger, was drilled in. When the trigger is squeezed, you don't know the exact split second the gun will fire, your body doesn't flinch, and the shot goes where it was aimed. It gets to be automatic after awhile.

Firing positions were offhand (standing) at 100 yards, kneeling and sitting at 200 yards, and prone at 300 and 500 yards. The longer the range the greater the importance of correct windage allowance and range settings on the sights. Body stability and breathing were major factors in accuracy. You arranged your body so that the bone alignment took as much stress as possible off the muscles, and you held a half breath while squeezing the trigger. We practiced until it all became automatic.

Each company had a number of .30 caliber water-cooled machine guns for beach defense. They could be converted to shoot .22 caliber bullets. These were fired on one of the porches in the barracks, with a metal bullet trap behind the target. The targets were a series of squares, maybe 1" or 1 ½" to the side. The object was to group all the shots within a square. To do this you can not grab the pistol grip on the back of the machine gun. The bullet strike patter will be much

bigger if you do. To keep the bullet pattern small you squeeze the trigger by placing your thumb on the back of the pistol grip and your forefinger on the trigger and squeezing gently. The technique was the same, but the results were different when we fired .30 caliber ammunition on the firing range. The gun's recoil had a big effect on the group size, but the squeezing remained the same.

When the day's work was over, our rifles were locked in the racks. We showered, shaved, and put on clean uniforms. The rest of the day was ours to do as we liked, if our equipment was in good shape, and if we hadn't been on the firing range. If we had been, cleaning the rifle or pistol was the first order of business. The barrels had to be cleaned and all the parts lightly oiled to prevent rust in the humid Hawaiian climate. We had two shaving brushes; one for lathering our faces when shaving and another for oiling our weapons.

One day four or five of us sold our theater tickets- at a discount- to raise money for some booze. We went to a liquor store in Wahiawa. Someone spotted a bottle of sloe gin on the shelf, and wanted to try it. I was the only one who knew what it tasted like, and talked against buying it, but I was overruled. We bought it, and went into an "off-limits" woods to drink it. The bottle went around twice, before they had had enough, so I finished it. Talk about being sick, I spent the night with my head in a toilet.

When I first joined the Army the person in charge of the regimental motor pool had the rank of Private First Class Specialist First Class. A private First Class had one inverted V stripe on his uniform sleeve. If he was also a Specialist First Class he had six rockers under that one stripe, and drew the same pay as a Master Sergeant (there was only one in a regiment), but had no authority outside of the motor pool. About the time the draft started the specialist ranks were eliminated and a T (for Technical) was added to the chevrons of the equivalent line rank. These Technical ratings ranked with and below the equivalent line rank.

We swam at Soldier's Beach near Haleiwa. Another favorite swimming beach was at the "Blowhole," south of Kaneohe Bay. The beach was small, and large breakers crashed onto the shore. When waves went under a rock shelf with a vertical hole at the back, water was forced through the hole and shot thirty feet or so into the air. Once I was caught by a wave that broke over me, tossed me around, and dragged me on the bottom, and then released me when I was about out of air.

Duke Kahanomoku's brother brought a troop of Hawaiian male dancers to the post. We saw an hour of the best, and sexiest hula dancing I have ever seen.

We hike over a lot of beautiful and breathtaking country. Sometimes we walked on mountain ridges three or four feet wide; if you missed a step you could fall 50 to 100 feet. You had to be very careful. Some of these ridges are shown in the movie "Tora, Tora, Tora," the Japanese planes are shown flying over them while approaching Pearl Harbor.

Our regiment's beach defense area was on the northeast end of the island, from Kahuku to Laie near the Mormon Temple (the only one outside the continental US at that time).

When we were to bivouac, we carried full field packs (one blanket and half a pup tent included), our rifles and canteens, and marched the twenty five miles or so at the rate of a half mile every ten minutes with a ten minute break every hour. It was a ten hour march, so we started early. We pitched our tents in a military manner (all lined up), washed our feet in our helmets with the water left in our canteens, and there had better be some.

Foot care was very important in the Infantry, and athlete's foot (a fungal infection) was prevalent then. No one wore a pair of shoes or socks two days in a row. The best cure for athlete's foot was to run in the surf every day when possible. In Schofield we went on sick call in the morning and soaked our feet in a pan of purple medicine which peeled the outer layers of skin off in a matter of days.

The Banzai Pipeline was a few miles north of our bivouac area at Laie. There was a very high (15 to 20 feet) fence along that section of the beach, with signs saying KAPU (forbidden). Now it's one of the best surfing beaches in the world. There was a small lake with falls flowing into it near our bivouac area where we sometimes swam or rode the falls.

Sugar cane was grown in this area. We stood guard in the cane fields at night. The mosquitoes were huge and vicious. We wore mosquito nets over our campaign hats, and tucked into the neck of our shirts. Shirtsleeves were tucked into our gloves and tied with string. Pant legs were normally bloused over the tops of our canvas leggings. Seemingly there was no way for the mosquitoes to get in, but they did, and they made life miserable for us. At night we could hear them outside the pup tents, arguing whether to come in and get us, or to carry us off tent and all.

The draft was initiated in 1940 or 1941, and the services issued life insurance for $10,000 to each soldier, sailor, and marine and the clothing allowance was discontinued. We were paid the amount left in our allowances in cash. Captain Mucci promoted me to corporal on July 1, 1941. About two weeks later I finished a course on light machine guns. They were new, air cooled, and low to the ground. I was assigned a light machine gun squad and became a weapons instructor. I taught assembly and disassembly of every weapon we had, including the .50 caliber machine gun. I taught bayonet drill, how to throw hand grenades (not like a baseball), how to fire the pistol, the BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle), and the Tommy gun (Thompson submachine gun, or the Chicago piano, because it was used by the Chicago gangsters).

We were issued the new style steel helmets and the new Garand (M-1) gas operated, semi-automatic rifle at about the same time. The M-1 was perhaps the best rifle used during WWII. It accepted a clip of eight rounds and fired every time the trigger was squeezed until the clip was empty. The clip was then ejected. You could put in a new clip and resume firing much faster than with bolt action rifles, and they held more cartridges. I had trouble firing the new rifle at first. The stock was shorter than the Springfield rifle stock, so you had to be more nearly behind it. I got a beautiful black eye from the recoil while learning.

Corporal Curran was a quiet guy. He was saving his money to buy a chicken ranch when he got out of the service. His two years in the Islands were up and he didn't have quite enough money,

so he extended his hitch by six months. The troop transport was hardly out of port when he went completely off his rocker and ended up in the loony bin. I went to see him when I was Corporal of the Guard (I couldn't have gotten in, otherwise). He stared right through me without seeing me. It was scary.

We went on formal maneuvers, and I was leading the point for the regiment. There was a heavy fine for stealing pineapples from the fields. We weren't against taking one when maneuvering through a pineapple field. I had one in my pack when we approached the reviewing stand where all the regimental officials were sitting. When we were fired on (blank ammunition), we all hit the dirt and my pineapple flew out of my pack and rolled too far away. Bye-bye pineapple.

I was given two weeks in rest camp on the Big Island, Hawaii, in the fall of 1940. We traveled on a submarine tender and learned to drink torp (torpedo) juice. We stopped in Maui and were there on Election Day in 1940, when FDR was elected for his third term as president. There were no liquor stores open so we had a cabdriver buy whisky for us, and he charged 50% over his cost. Three of us were met on the dock by a family who would give us a tour of the island and take us to their home for dinner the next day.

For me, the events of December 7, 1941 started several months earlier. In the spring of 1941, our navy lost track of the Japanese Navy. The 19th, 21st, 27th, and 35th Infantry Regiments were issued live ammunition, and put on motorized patrol of the roads all around the island. Our area was on the northwestern part of the island (our normal bivouac area).

A buddy of mine, Bob Baer, from Hershey, Pennsylvania was seriously hurt in a truck accident. The gallon of sake that we had partly consumed may have influenced the driver to go too fast and clip a power pole. Bob was thrown from the back of the truck, flew through the air, hit his head against a tree, and dented his steel helmet. His rifle was stuck, muzzle down in the mud a foot from his head, and his leg was broken just below the hip joint. The truck ended up in a poi patch. Poi is grown in standing water like rice. We lost the sake jug in the water a long way from the truck, and carried Bob under the power lines back to the road. There was nothing handy to make a body splint from, so his break may have been further damaged. He ended up in the hospital and later got a medical discharge. We returned to barracks.

Several weeks later the "call to arms" was sounded in the middle of the night. We fell out ready to repel an attack, but stood inspection instead. This was repeated every so often until the real thing happened.

My two years was up in September. I still didn't have a plan for my life so I extended for another six months. Considering the possible consequences of not extending, it was a good decision.

Sunday breakfasts were different: hot cakes cooked on the stovetop were served. This was a slow process which the cooks hurried up by not completely cooking them. This Sunday morning, just after payday, I was lying in bed contemplating half-raw hot cakes or a decent breakfast at a restaurant, when I heard a plane diving, then pulling out. "Sounds like a dive-

bomber," I thought. Then I heard the explosion. These sounds were repeated again and again. I got up, got dressed and went down to the quadrangle to see what was going on.

Everyone was standing around gawking at the open cockpit, fixed landing gear airplanes with big red circles on their wings and fuselage. The pilot's heads were clearly visible as they flew over the barracks at about a hundred feet headed toward Wheeler Field (the Air Force fighter base for Hawaii). Smoke was visible from the leading edge of the wings. There was no flag or flagpole. We commented that this was a very realistic maneuver.

A group from the Second Battalion were firing their M-1 rifles at the planes. After all the false alarms, the comment from us gawkers was "They're going to get in trouble." Suddenly we woke up; this was the real thing! We were being attacked! Someone broke down the Supply Room door and started passing out ammunition. The rifle racks were opened, and the light machine guns were placed on top of stacks of ammunition boxes. Everyone was firing. A squad from another company had a heavy machine gun on the roof. The Colonel, the Regimental Commander, came into the quadrangle signaling "cease fire," no one paid any attention to him. It was now dangerous for any airplane, friend or foe, to fly near the barracks, although I doubt that we were scoring many hits. We hadn't been taught how to lead airplanes, so we were probably shooting behind them.

Soon the attack was over. We got organized, loaded into trucks, and headed to the beach. In leaving Schofield Barracks, we passed Wheeler Field. The Air Force General had recently been replaced. The old general had built revetments for the planes and scattered them all over the field. The new general had them lined up, military fashion, wingtip to wingtip beside the hangar. The pile of junk that we passed could hardly be recognized as having been P-39s and P-40s, and there had been many Air Force personnel killed in the mess hall when it was bombed.

After the attack, our battalion took up positions from Kaiaka Bay to halfway to Kaena Point; the westernmost point on the island, and B Company had the easternmost position. We were at half strength and didn't have the manpower to cover any more ground. We were on the beach, with nothing but our own ingenuity. We dug trenches to sleep in, found some old tarpaulin to wrap around us and our blanket to keep the wind and ocean spray off us. We had just the water in our canteens to drink, so we didn't bathe or shave. After a few days we were pulled back to company headquarters.

Company headquarters was in the garden of the Dillingham Ranch. A field had been cleared to make a temporary airfield, and the pilots lived in the Dillingham house. One of the P-39 or P-40 pilots was Dillingham's son. They often took off across the field, under the power line, and over the trees. They like to live dangerously. Pilots were the only ones who could buy bottled booze in large quantities. They would drive to Honolulu and come back with booze and women. They had some wild parties there.

The attack was successful because the newly installed radar station was being shut down for Sunday. The operators picked up a signal of a formation of incoming planes, and thought they

were a flight of B-17s coming in from the States. A report was made and ignored, and a small two-man submarine was sighted and sunk. That, too, was ignored by the brass.

The P-39 Bell Air Cobra had the engine mounted behind the cockpit. A long drive rod ran from the engine, beneath the cockpit, to the geared propeller. A 20mm cannon was mounted to fire through the prop hub.

The P-40 saw service with General Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers in the Chinese Air Force (with the shark's teeth and eyes painted on the air scoop) before we got into the war. It devastated the Japanese Air Force. These planes also saw service in North Africa; and were, according to one of its pilots, a match for the Me-109 below 10,000 feet. We watched both fighters dive bomb and shoot at waterborne targets. There were a lot of A-20s and A-26s flying around. These were ground attack planes. I don't remember seeing any in Europe, either in the air or on the ground. We did see an occasional Grumman Wild Cat, the hot Navy fighter planes which were later replaced by the Hell Cats.

We started digging pillboxes all along the coast for the heavy, water-cooled machine guns we had just been issued (our company had been the reserve company, so we didn't have them earlier). Logs were needed for the pillbox construction in loose beach sand. These were cut from a forest on the plateau, by Philippine sugar cane workers who contracted to work in Hawaii for two or three years. They had their families with them. They had communal bath houses, one side for men, the other side for women. The men moved in with the women when we started using the men's side.

I was promoted to Sergeant on January 12, 1942 and put in charge of the light machine gun section (two guns). Being in reserve, I was in charge of getting the cut logs (9 feet long) from the forest to the various beach positions. The Luna (foreman) was a big husky fellow and I weighed 130 pounds. He would pick up the big end of the log and walk away with it while I had the little end and staggered behind him.

It was hard work digging in the soft beach sand; it seemed as though one shovel full slid back for every two thrown out. But the holes grew slowly until it was time to start building the log walls and ceiling. It's a good thing we weren't attacked, the pillboxes right on the beach would have been the first things to go (we were still a peacetime Army). Eventually, the pillboxes were complete and there was the inevitable inspection. The inspecting officer thought that a better field of fire could be had if they were moved five feet this way or that way. So they were moved. Then there was another inspection by a higher ranking officer who also thought that a better field of fire could be obtained if the pill boxes were moved a few feet in some direction. This farce was repeated several times, just to keep the men busy. We also strung several rows of barbed wire in the two to four hundred yard stretch between the ocean and the road, and had to train new men as they were assigned to us.

For the first week or two we had only the amount of ammunition called for in the table of organization for one day's combat. The Japs could have walked onto the Islands any time they wanted to, if they had brought troops. The only military was on Oahu. The Japanese supply

lines would have been way too long to maintain if they had. But we would have lost our mid-ocean base, and had to operate from the West Coast. It would have been a different war. As it was, a couple of two-man submarines were discovered an hour or so before the attack, and nobody sounded the alert. Neither the High Command or the soldiers were mentally prepared for war!

The Japanese did both us and the European nations a favor. They destroyed our battleship fleet in Pearl Harbor and changed the civilian attitude from anti-war to pro-war. Our admirals had a battleship mentality left over from World War I. They had to change their thinking or drop behind. Admiral "Bull" Halsey, in charge of the aircraft carriers, kept his fleet at sea. They came in for refueling just a few days before the attack and immediately went to sea again.

After about two weeks we started getting ammunition; it came by the truck load. We received ball, tracer, incendiary, and armor piercing. We loaded it into cloth machine gun belts. The mix from one belt to another was hit and miss. No one knew how much of what kind of ammunition was in what pillbox. But the Supply Department wanted to know how much and what kind of ammunition each Company had (it was still a peacetime Army).

At different times, three different sergeants, including me, were sent to find out. It was imperative that we provide the answer in one day. We had nine or ten pillboxes, a half mile or more apart, and no wheels. Each pill box had perhaps eighty machine gun belts of 250 rounds each, in boxes containing four belts, all loaded differently, plus the rifle and pistol ammunition, hand grenades and flares with Very pistols to shoot them with. Probably over 20,000 rounds in each pillbox. An impossible task, but they wanted the information yesterday. The totals never matched the total that had been sent out. And every one down the line caught hell!

We patrolled beyond the last pillbox. The road continued on, I never found out how far or where it went. We came upon a Globe Wireless Station. We talked to the wireless operator. He was typing as we talked. I asked what he was typing. He nodded across the room where a telegraph key was clicking away and said "That's what I'm typing." It was incredible, that he was talking and listening to us, and at the same time transcribing and typing the incoming code message.

On another patrol, we heard a truck coming. I deployed the men on both sides of the road, and then stood in the middle of the road to stop the truck. I was staring into the business end of a light machine gun, and several rifles. The truck was from another company and I didn't recognize any of the men, but some of my men did. They jumped out shouting greetings. Fortunately, no one squeezed the trigger.

The Air Force wanted to enlarge the landing field so bombers could take off and land there. We had to move back into the foothills. There was scarcely a spot to put up an eight man tent. The ground had to be dug out and leveled off. The Air Force brought in a lot of construction material, including lumber.

One evening I took two trucks and about ten men, and went to the Air Force Supply Depot. We pulled up besides the lumber pile, jumped out, and started loading the kinds of lumber we wanted

for tent floors and side walls. We made a lot of noise and acted as though we had a right to the lumber. The guard didn't say a word. The trucks were nearly loaded when we saw officers coming out of their headquarters building, start their jeeps, and head our way. I got the men back in the trucks and we were gone! I would have hated to be that guard! But our camp improved a lot.

We went back to Schofield for R and R (rest and recuperation). Soldiers from the Sates had occupied our barracks. They had broken into our wall and foot lockers, and stolen everything we had left behind. Captain Mucci had been married just prior to the attack. His wife was in Honolulu. He got leave, gave me a pass, and took me to town with him. He told me that he would pick me up at a certain time and place, then added that I could stay a day longer if I wanted to. I wanted to. Naturally, I wanted to.

We caught the taxis to Schofield at the USO (United Service Organization) building which was set 100 feet back from the sidewalk and couldn't be seen until you were in the exit driveway. A taxi drove up, the back door opened, and I stepped in without breaking stride. Four others were in in a flash, the door closed, and the taxi on its way before the 100 or so GIs waiting for a cab could grab and kill me.

New money was issued. It had HAWAII printed on both sides, and the seal and serial numbers were in brown. This money would be NO GOOD if the Japs captured us. These were Silver Certificates, payable in government silver.

Captain Mucci submitted my name, along with several others, for Officer's Candidate School (OCS) just before he was promoted to Major and transferred to the MPs (Military Police). [Lt. Colonel Mucci led the relief forces of Army Rangers and Philippine guerrillas which freed the American prisoners from the Cabanatuan prison camp 30 miles behind the Japanese lines in the Philippines shortly after General McArthur's forces landed. The prisoners were in bad shape as were the Jews in Hitler's extermination camp. The story is told in a book "Ghost Soldiers" by Hampton Sides, published in 2001 four years after Mucci's death.]

Lt. Bingston was made Company commander. He was 14 years out of West Point, but had never commanded troops. He was very GI. He demanded that everyone cut his hair to one inch or shorter and refused to pay anyone whose hair was longer. It was unheard of for anyone to go to the Inspector General, but about 1/4th of the company did. It was easy, because we were in Schofield. The Colonel was overheard telling him to shape up if he wanted to live. To back that up he walked into his office one morning to find a highly polished .30 caliber cartridge, with his name engraved on it, sitting on his desk.

Back in the field. We were issued a WWI British 75mm cannon. It was to go on a fairly level spot on the brow of a hill, just above our headquarters. The Engineers sent in a demolition crew to help us blast out the rocks, without disturbing the trees and shrubs. We hand carried loose dirt and sprinkled it about. I had been working with the engineers and had learned a little about the work, but I didn't know anything about moving rocks without destroying them. We were finished except for rolling an eight foot diameter rock down the hill. We had been using 40%

dynamite. This morning they had nitro-starch, which turned out to be more potent than the dynamite we had been using. The rock didn't roll down the hill when I pushed the plunger, it shattered, taking the carefully preserved camouflage with it. We spent the next few weeks making camouflage from strips of dyed burlap woven into strong cord webbing.

The Battle for Midway occurred in March. The B-17s took off and returned to the new Dillingham air field. These planes didn't have chin, ball or tail turrets; instead they had tunnel gunners who couldn't do the jobs of the ball and tail turrets very well. Being flat on the floor and facing backwards, they were vulnerable to enemy fighters which approached from below. Some of them were pretty well shot up, but made it back, others didn't. This was a big Naval battle in which we lost a couple of flattops, but did more damage to the Japs than they did to us. The ball turrets were added early in the war but chin turrets on the B-17 were added near its end.

About this time my transfer to OCS came through and I was on my way back to the States on the US Navy Transport Grant. It was a completely different ship from what it had been three years before, when it was an Army transport. It could carry more troops than it had before, in a fraction of the space.

The only thing to drink available in Ship's Stores (the Navy's version of PX) was pineapple juice in large cans. At first it was very refreshing, but by the time we reached San Francisco we were SICK OF IT. We were back at Fort McDowell, and recruiting posters started to appear on walls all over every town.

The Way It Was

NAME : John D. Peterjohn, PFC
UNIT: Co. L, 27th Infantry, Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon
TIME PERIOD: WWII: 1944, Luzon Philippines
SOURCE: Sent by Dan Peterjohn, after he interviewed his father.
DATE RECEIVED: September 5, 2000

Q: How did you come to enter the Army?

JP: During the first years of the war, I was attending High School in Cleveland, Ohio. The draft was in effect at the time. I registered and was given a number. You were called up for duty when your number came up. There were no direct enlistments at the time, you had to go through the draft.

Q: How long did it take the government to draft you after you registered?

JP: Well, it was about six months. In early February 1943 I registered and in June I got my pre-induction notice. It was generally two to three weeks after the pre-induction that you were notified to report to camp.

Q: How thorough was the physical examination?

JP: Doctors listened to your heart and there were some psychological tests they gave to see if you were fit. There was no extensive testing that I can think of. They would say that as long as you could move and answer questions, you passed it.

Q: Where did you go after the physical examination was completed?

JP: You went back home and then you got your notice in the mail to report for the induction ceremonies back down at the Armory. For the induction ceremony, we were lined up in a room and the Officer in Charge came in and administered the oath. They made it into a big deal, they had a number of officers there. After that you left right from the Armory to

the train station. From there we left Cleveland for Fort Hayes at Columbus, Ohio. Down there was further physical testing, shots, issuing uniforms and things like that

Q: Where did you go for further training?

JP: In my case, it was Camp Croft in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Basic training there lasted 18 weeks. It was regular recruit training, close order drill qualifying with your basic infantry weapon and squad level maneuvers. After this, I was sent to the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) school. It was basically advanced infantry training with a lot of patrolling. Map reading, compass work and so forth. That lasted until early February 1944.

Q: Was your Basic Training adequate?

JP: I thought they did a good job, especially in qualifying us with weapons. I don't think there was enough time for squad and platoon tactics. I was always glad that I went to the 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightening) after they got back from their campaigns in the Solomons to reform and retrain. That gave me the chance to get more experience in tactics. It would have been pretty tough to go right from Basic Training to a company or a platoon already in combat without any further training.

Q: How did you find out you were going overseas?

JP: You got orders at the end of the training cycle that you were to ship out. You also got a ten-day furlough. At that time, overseas orders were almost exclusively to the Pacific Theater. We first went to Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, California near San Francisco. That's when they started censorship of your mail and we were cut off from all phone calls. We were then sent down the Sacramento River to San Francisco where we boarded our transport.

Q: What was your transport like?

JP: It was an old Dutch tramp steamer that had plied the island in the Dutch East Indies. They had escaped just ahead of the Japanese Navy. The crew were all Indonesians who couldn't speak English. The captain and the first mate were Dutch. The ship was armed with a five-inch gun with a Marine crew. It was really a tub! We got on board in the evening and started out early the next morning. For the first day and a half a blimp flew overhead on submarine patrol. There was no naval escort, we were strictly on our own. I think there were about 2500 to 3000 men on the ship. There didn't seem to be enough lifeboats for us. We all had life vests that you had to wear all the time. There was one kitchen set up on the stern so we had to eat in shifts.

Q: How was the food?

JP: Well, if you weren't seasick, you could eat it. So many were seasick that for along time out, we really didn't care to eat it. It was about 34 days from San Francisco to Noumea, New Caledonia. We dropped south and then west almost to New Zealand and then back up north. We skirted the bulk of the islands that the Japanese had in the Central Pacific. There were no real submarine scares that we knew of, but every morning at sunup and every evening at sundown, we stood submarine alert. Everybody was up on deck until it was dark. Apparently, those were the times the submarines chose to go after shipping. Perhaps that was because the ships were silhouetted against the sun.

Q: How did you feel about going to the Pacific?

JP: I wanted to go to the Pacific. For one thing, the 37th (Buckeye) Division was over there and my brother, Bob, was assigned there. Also, at that time we had more feeling against the Japanese than for the Germans because of Pearl Harbor and Bataan.

Q: What happened when you got to Noumea?

JP: We pulled right in and then we unloaded, got on trucks and went to the Replacement Depot. They set you up in tents and right away assigned you duties. Then when they got a call for so many men to go to different outfits, they would send them out from there. In the meantime, they did more testing, work with basic weapons and so on. You also pulled KP, guard duty and whatever they had going. Once I had to guard American prisoners at the stockade. They had the main stockade for the Pacific area there for all the hard cases. There were about 200-300 in the stockade, most of them were there for insubordination and desertion and I suppose fighting with Officers and NCO's. Out of the Replacement Depot, I was assigned to the 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds) of the 25th Infantry Division. They loaded us on trucks and took us to our units. I started out with L Company. I was assigned as a B.A.R. man (Browning Automatic Rifle). On our first payday, the First Sergeant called four of us out of the payday formation and told us to report to the Battalion Headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment. We were going to the patrolling school. It was an outfit all of its own in a different section away from the other battalions. They had troops from all three battalions in a reconnaissance training section. Captain Kuntz, a veteran of Guadalcanal, was the head of it. He explained what it was going to entail. You had the option to go back to your original company if you didn't want to get into that type of patrolling or reconnaissance work. I stayed because it sounded interesting. It sounded a lot better than a rifle company. A rifle company is a tough deal, then and now, I think. Frontal assaults by that time did not appeal to me much.

Q: What other training did you have at this school?

JP: There was a lot of map reading and compass work and learning to sketch route maps and terrain features. In addition to classroom work, you'd put it into practice. They'd put you in trucks at night and dump you of somewhere in either 3 or 6 man teams. You'd have to find your way back while making route maps. Sometimes they'd give you a destination

and you'd make maps along the way. The patrols lasted anywhere from overnight to a week or ten days. Also, there was further work with our weapons.

Q: What other training did you have?

JP: After graduating from Recon School, we went back to Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry to do squad, platoon, company, battalion and even regimental maneuvers. A part of the training, a good part of it, was amphibious training. We had practice landings where we spent two weeks on an English transport ship making landings every day. The platoon I was assigned to was called the Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) platoon. The platoon was a combination of an Antitank Section and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance section. We normally operated separately, but we scouts did some work with the antitank guns. There were two squads of 12 men in the I&R Section with a Lieutenant and Platoon Sergeant in the Platoon Headquarters. In the Antitank Section, there was a section Sergeant and 12 men serving two 37mm antitank guns one per squad.

Q: How old ere the members of the I&R Platoon?

JP: Well, I know there were two of them, Steve McDonough and Lottie Hill, they were 36 and 37, they were the oldest. I think the youngest were just 18, almost 19. I think the bulk of the platoon were replacements/draftees outside of the NonComs and three or four of the privates in the Antitank Section.

Q: How where your patrols organized?

JP: Usually on a recon patrol, we would take half a squad of six men. Sometimes it would only take three, but mostly it was six. On a combat patrol we would take a full squad of twelve. There was always one guy as the point man. It was his job to precede the patrol and make the first contact. Normally, it seemed that the same guy was always picked to be the point man although it was up to the patrol leader as to who would be point. Normally, the point man and the second man in the file would trade places during the patrol. One guy was called the anchorman. His job was to cover the patrol as it crossed an open area. The ammunition/pioneer platoon in the battalion headquarters carried special weapons like flame-throwers and bangalore torpedoes. We drew those special weapons with operators when we needed them, but there were only a few occasions we had to do that. Normally, we relied on basic infantry weapons such as the M1 (Garand) rifles. When we first went into combat, the point man had this submachine gun we called the "grease gun" (M3 Submachine Gun.) That didn't last very long. Everyone ended up carrying the M1 Garand or the M1 carbine rather than carry that. The grease gun used up ammunition too fast and it sounded too much like a Japanese Nambu light machine gun. If you were up a trail in the jungle and fired the grease gun, it would draw too much fire from both sides. Everyone would be looking to get that weapon once they heard it. Besides everything else, it wasn't even accurate. It was probably all right for close in fighting, but for our purposes, even the M1 carbine was better than the grease gun. I

carried the M1 Garand rifle. I usually tried to carry three units of fire for it. That made 240 rounds or thirty clips of M1 ammunition. I also carried two, three or four grenades, whatever you could get. We carried two canteens of water and one day's rations.

Q: When did the training on New Caledonia end?

JP: I got there at the end of February or the beginning of March 1944. In the latter part of October 1944 it came down that we were going to invade an island off the coast of New Guinea called Halmahera. We had the vehicles roped down, struck the tents, moved into pup tents, and were issued new clothes. At the last minute, just as we were getting ready to get on the trucks, they canceled the whole thing. In late November 1944, we got the word that we were to get ready to ship out. We didn't know then that it was going to be the Philippines. We got on trucks and went down to the nickel docks at Noumea to board the ships. We headed north and had practice landings on the beaches of Guadalcanal. We spent some time before Christmas on the coconut plantations there. I think it was period to get acclimatized. We took off again and spent Christmas off Florida Island's Purvis bay. After Christmas, we took off again and headed north and anchored at Ulithi. They had recreation for us there. There were parties and we spent the day on the beach. In that time, on board ship, it came down that we were scheduled to make a landing in Lingayen Gulf on Luzon.

Q: What were your feelings about returning to the Philippines?

JP: I suppose everybody hoped it would be there, especially since the Army had already gone into Leyte. Luzon was the next step. I think everybody wanted to invade Luzon, especially since they still had prisoners there from Bataan and Manila.

Q: What was the landing like?

JP: It wasn't very exciting. It was virtually unopposed, although we didn't know it would be that way. We left Ulithi with 400 ships in our convoy alone. The other convoys with the 37th Infantry, 1st Cavalry and 41st Infantry Divisions, I think, made the initial landings the day before we did. This made things really crowded in Lingayen Gulf. They had worked the beach over thoroughly with cruisers, battleships, and air power. I don't think there was a palm tree there with a frond left. When we landed, there was a bunch of Filipinos waving us in.

Q: What did your Regiment do during the Luzon Campaign?

JP: After the landing at Lingayen, our primary mission in the Central Plains of Luzon was to protect the flank of 1st Cavalry and 37th Infantry Divisions' run to Manila. They landed and took off for Manila. I think the high command was afraid that if they didn't have their flanks protected, the Japanese would come out of the mountains and would catch the forces going down to Manila from behind. What we did was to cut the island in two. We did this to protect the troops going down to Manila and to stop the retreat of the bulk of

the Japanese into the mountains in the northern part of the island. Once we cut the island in two, we were to go north and pursue Yamashita's headquarters. Our final objective was Balete Pass and the town of Santa Fe on the other side of the Pass. We were to keep pressure on the Japanese, to support the 32nd (Red Arrow) Division attacking out of San Manuel and San Quentin on what we called the Villa Verde Trail. The Villa Verde Trail went up through the mountains from Baguio and ended up in Santa Fe. However, the 32nd Division got up into their pass and couldn't dislodge the Japanese. Because of this, they changed the 25th Infantry Division's mission. Instead of maintaining pressure on the Japanese, we were to take Balete Pass and Santa Fe.

Q: What kind of missions were you assigned?

JP: Mostly route reconnaissance, also to bring back information from towns that weren't occupied yet and to recon areas like the far side of a rice paddy. Also, we reconned river crossing sites and looked for the best routes to bring up trucks. About three weeks after the landings, we began to hit opposition. Our job was to set up trail blocks, river blocks and conduct combat patrols.

Q: How fast did you patrol?

JP: We traveled at a real slow walk, just a little bit at a time making sure we checked everything out. Most of the time, in the mountains, you couldn't see more than five or ten yards off the trail you were on. You had to check everything twice. During training, they used to tell us we should "bull ahead" aggressively to find the enemy with the fastest, most direct methods. Well, we didn't do that. The guy who thought up that tactic should have tried it himself! It's a different story when you're out there faced with a real enemy with real weapons. When we were on patrol, we went out there and did what we were supposed to do. We did the job, but we did it at our own pace.

Q: How did you feel about your leaders?

JP: Everyone thought the platoon leader was a little bit radical. He wouldn't ask anyone to do anything he wouldn't do himself. He had some far out ideas. In fact, he got relieved in the first week we were operating. The first patrol we went on was about 1000 to 1500 yards out. We were to check out the Agno River. We were to check out the bank. There was nothing in the order about crossing over the Agno. I don't know if he got excited or what, but we found nothing on the one bank so we crossed over and reconned another 200-300 yards farther than we were supposed to. As it was, we didn't hit anything, but he didn't carry out the mission as it was laid out so they relieved him. I suppose the river was 30 yards at it's widest point, not very deep but it was all in the open. If we had run into anything, we wouldn't have gotten any help. He felt bad, he thought he did a good job but that wasn't what he was told to do.

Q: Did you see any General Officers?

JP: Down on the Central Plains outside of San Manuel we saw MacArthur from a distance. We were on patrol and we came up on him. He was in a jeep with his Filipino bodyguards. He was across the rice paddy and he didn't see us with his guards, we didn't go over to him. He looked like he was all alone. Then, one time in Balete Pass we saw General Stilwell, Vinegar Joe. Of course, Krueger from Sixth Army was there with Stilwell.

Q: Did the I&R Platoon perform any unusual missions?

JP: Once, in the mountains, we were sent out to pick up a P-47 Thunderbolt pilot who had bailed out. He was about 3500 yards or so out in a valley area. He was as happy as hell when we found him! Although we knew where his plane went down because of the smoke, it was pretty hard to find where he actually landed. Other special missions included accompanying tanks into the hills. We were to take out Japanese that had pole or satchel charges they used to blow the track off the tanks. Once we had to take out a pillbox with a flame-thrower. We laid down a base of fire for the flame-thrower operator as he crawled up and sent his flame into the pillbox. He thought he got the pillbox and started to walk back toward us. They were still alive, though, and as he was walking back, they set up their machine gun, opened up on him and shot the heels right off his boots! He was lucky to get back, but he was madder than hell since his boots were brand new! The next day he went up again with us in support and he stuck the nozzle right into the hole in the pillbox. He made sure he got them.

Q: What was a pole charge?

JP: Apparently the Japanese did not have a weapon comparable to a bazooka. A pole charge was used against tanks. It was an explosive charge tied on the end of a pole. I don't know how they set it off, it must have had a plunger type detonator. They would run up to the side of the tank and try to hit the drivers and bogies of the tank to disable it. It was pretty much a suicide weapon.

Q: What were the Japanese tactics during this campaign?

JP: They were in retreat. I found afterwards that their orders were to pull back into the mountains. They had an area picked out in the most rugged mountains in the northern part of the island. They conducted mainly delaying actions as they pulled back to the mountains. In the Central Plains, they would pick certain towns out and defend them with a small number of troops armed with automatic weapons. In the hills, they would do the same thing, they would pick out some defensible high ground and put in four to six automatic weapons with crews to man them. They could hold off a battalion for, well… almost indefinitely. They were dug in so well that bombing or artillery didn't seem to phase them.

Q: What kind of weapons did they have?

JP: For heavy weapons they had mountain guns, mostly 75mm. They also had 120mm mortars and their knee mortar. They were good with them and they got the most out of them. They could wreak a lot of havoc. They didn't have a great deal of artillery and no air power at all. Their automatic weapons were Nambu light machine guns. They had two kinds of rifles. There was a .25 caliber rifle and the more elite units were armed with heavier rifle… about a .31 caliber with a heavier punch that was comparable to our .30 caliber Garand. There were few Japanese that were really good shots. Those that were good were used as snipers. They could raise havoc, but for the most part, the Japanese soldiers were poor shots. They were also tired, sick and they didn't have enough food to really fight effectively.

Q: Did you ever see a Japanese prisoner?

JP: Only once really, and that was before we got into the really heavy part in the mountains. It was down in the valley at a hospital. Somebody had picked him up and brought him there, I suppose to treat and question him. He was lying out in the sun and they took their time before treating him. There wasn't a great deal of sympathy for him.

Q: Did anyone ever consider being taken prisoner as a practical course of action?

JP: NO!! There were too many instances, even on Luzon, where the Japanese didn't take prisoners. In fact, on one occasion, I know they killed our wounded. A medic driving a jeep full of wounded soldiers made a wrong turn and drove into a Japanese position. They killed him and bayoneted the wounded as they lay on their litters. Hospital and aide men didn't mean anything to them so there was no thought of surrendering to them under any circumstances.

Q: Did you see any Japanese tanks?

JP: Yes, they had a light tank but there wasn't much to it. In the Central Plains at the town of Binalonan, there was a tank that had apparently been bypassed or overrun. We saw this tank break out and it was coming down the road at us. The Antitank Section got on him and hit him, stopping it dead. Two of the crew came out of the hatch as the tank burned. Everybody shot at them but one guy escaped. He jumped off and ran into the cane field. It was wonder we didn't kill each other. We'd ringed the tank and everybody on all sides started shooting. The Filipinos got him that night. They tortured him all night long and brought us his head in the morning. They didn't take any prisoners, either. We also saw tanks in our first big firefight. The regiment was moving to take the town of the Umingan and the I&R platoon was conducting reconnaissance in front. We held up at a small village called Pimienta and waited for a rifle company to clear the village before moving in. We didn't even bother to dig in. We started getting contact about 4:30 in the afternoon. By 8:00 that night, Japanese tanks and artillery joined the fight. We were located near the battalion command post and I could hear the battalion commander calling for artillery. First he contacted Division headquarters, then he called on the radio asking for his "Uncle Ira" at Corps headquarters. Apparently, "Uncle Ira" was a high

ranking member of I Corps. Soon, a Piper Cub came over to spot the artillery. Since it was a bright moonlit night, the pilot could see the situation. I heard the pilot yell over the radio, "here it comes!" and suddenly all the artillery in the world hit the Japanese at once. They had 105's, Long Toms, 75's… everything. The fight lasted until 4:00 in the morning but the artillery had destroyed the Japanese tanks. We were sent in the next morning to check the results. The Japanese column had been blown to pieces by the artillery.

Q: did you ever work with American tanks?

JP: I worked with a tank one time when we went up a ridge line to where we thought a machine gun was located. This tank rolled up and instead of going after the machine gun nest, the damn tank came after us with machine gun fire. He started to swing his big gun around and kept raking up and down the ridge with the machine gun. Miller, one of the guys from the squad, went down there, climbed up on the tank and pounded on the hatch with his rifle butt calling for the commander to come out. He told him that if he didn't come out, he'd start shooting through the slit. We never found out who screwed up.

Q: Did you have much contact with the Philippine population?

JP: We had four Filipinos assigned to us. We got them about the second week we were on the island. Their names were Del, Greg, Ruffino and one other I can't remember. We signed them up, paid them a dollar a day and gave them a uniform. Del was assigned to our squad. He was a Philippine Scout who was on Bataan, surrendered there and was on the Death March. He was able to escape and spent time in the mountains on the Bataan peninsula until the invasion when he came out. He was good in the jungle, he was good anyplace. He knew what was up and knew what to do. The other one, Greg, you had to watch because the Japanese had killed most of his family. He was really wild and he would go after the Japanese. Ruffino, he was there for the dollar a day. He had a real knack for figuring out when something was going to happen, then he had to go home because his caribou was sick. We also had carrying parties of local tribesmen when we got up into the mountains. The Igorods would bring up ammunition, water, and other supplies for us. They were really able to climb those hills. The women were better than the men at hauling things. Down in the Central Plains, once we got moving, there were few contacts with the populace. Either the Japanese had moved them out or they knew enough to get out of any areas where there might be any action.

Q: How much were you paid?

JP: I thing that at the time the basic pay was $30 or $50 a month plus you got combat and overseas pay which was $5 and $5. Also, I got Private First Class on Luzon so I think it was somewhat over $50 a month for me.

Q: Did you see the Japanese commit "Banzai" attacks or infiltrate at night?

JP: Yeah, outside the town of Pimienta they had a banzai attack. We didn't really get into it, the Antitank Section did. They were firing canister. Up in the mountains, when we took a hill called "The Scar," we had banzai attacks. We used so much artillery that it took off the top of the hill. It looked like a plowed field. There were also occasions when we had infiltrators. One night we had to go back and guard the artillery pieces along with a rifle company. It really rained hard that night. For some reason, somebody set off a flare. There must have been a hundred of them right in the middle of our position to order a banzai attack. They had fifty or more left and we cut them down. On another occasion, just above Balete Pass, we had set up a perimeter to guard the battalion command post. The Japanese tried to infiltrate there, too. We spent most of the night throwing grenades back and forth. We didn't fire because we couldn't see anything so we used grenades. This was good reconnaissance on their part. About three days later they put artillery in on us. They got the information they wanted and used it well.

Q: What about ambushes?

JP: There was one in particular. We went into a hill mass up in the mountains. We were crossing another stream. This was a fast stream, perhaps 10-20 yards wide. We were to cross it and go up this trail leading up into the mountains. We walked right into this ambush. There were six of us on the patrol and three of us were caught in the ambush. Del, the Philippine Scout, was walking behind the first three members of the patrol. He picked the Japanese up and kept telling me that, "They're over there! They're moving! Shoot them!" I remember thinking, "Hell, I can't see them!" He started shooting, then I started shooting, then a sergeant came up and threw a grenade in there. We kept getting return fire so we pulled out. We went back across the river and there was a platoon from a rifle company there that had a radio back to Battalion. We told them what we found and they said "Go back!" We asked them to put in some mortar, which they did. We went back in twice and still picked up fire. They had a heavy machine gun, two light machine guns, and 25 riflemen. We wouldn't have been able to handle them with six guys. We did have them pinpointed pretty good.

Q: Did you ever get a good fix on the enemy?

JP: There was one patrol that was really significant. We circumvented their main line of resistance. The 25th Division was stopped cold in Balete Pass. We hadn't moved fifty yards in thirty days. Earlier, we had great success using flanking movements. At places like Putlan and Digdig we did what we called the end-around. Up in the mountains we couldn't maneuver like that. I learned in later years that the regimental commander was looking for a way around the Japanese positions. He got into a Piper Cub and flew up the Cagayen Valley along Highway 5. He thought he saw a route where there was a possibility. He came back and gave our battalion and the Second Battalion a mission to send out patrols based on his suggestions. We went up this river all the way past the ridge lines that ran down to the road the Japanese had covered. We practically got into Balete Pass itself. On the way up, we could hear the Japanese off on the side talking. Also, I don't know if it was mess kits or what, but we could hear metal sounds as well. A

couple of days later, we led the whole battalion up the route. That time, we were almost up there and we spotted a Japanese soldier. He took off with us after him. I don't know to this day if anyone ever got him; we never found him. It was too late to do anything about it so we just kept going. We got up behind them and they discovered too late that their main line of resistance was breached in battalion force. Still, it was tough going for a while after that.

Q: How did you get wounded?

JP: We got up on some high ground near Balete Pass we called "Wolfhound Ridge." We could see the pass from up there. B company was just to the east. They had a sniper holed up in a cave. We came up behind to see if we could assist them. There were a number of Japanese in there, we had lost the Division XO, Brigadier General Dalton, the day before in that area. He had been shot in the head by a sniper. We went past the crest of Balete Pass some fifty yards beyond where we thought the cave was. B Company was coming the other way. B Company had a bazooka man who put a couple of rounds into the cave. It turned out the cave was an ammunition dump because the cave exploded and blew the whole side of the hill out. Flying rock from the explosion broke my leg and blew me into a ditch. A platoon from B Company was caught in a landslide caused by the explosion. I guess that two or three of them were buried alive and killed. When the rock stopped falling, I tried to get the hell out of there. I tried to get up and run, but I went down and tried again. That was the first time I realized something was wrong with me. One of the guys in the squad, Stanley A. Stanczyk came to help me. He grabbed hold of me and pulled me into a cave by the side of the road. Stan was my pinochle buddy and a weight lifter. He went on after the war to win a gold medal for weight lifting n the 1948 Olympics and the silver medal in the 1952 Olympics. After awhile, the battalion surgeon came down with some medics and put me in a jeep and took me to the Collecting Company and from there to the Clearing Company. I was put in a Piper Cub and flown out down to the Field Hospital down around Lingayen Gulf. I was evacuated from there to Leyte. I was out of the mountains on the same day I was wounded. Others weren't evacuated so quickly. The previous day a rifle company had gotten into trouble and they had a number of casualties. They asked for volunteers to help the medics as litter bearers to bring these guys in. The guy on the litter I had was shot in the head. We brought him back to battalion and they supposedly took him back from there on the trails. The next day, I got hurt and in the afternoon when I got in the ambulance, there he was on the floor of the ambulance. He was still alive, but it took them all that time to carry him down the trails to the road. They had to carry him by litter most of the night down those steep trails to the road. Of course, it was dark and they had to go slow to keep from running into anything.

Q: When did you find out the war was over?

JP: I was on the hospital ship. It was before Hawaii that the word came down that they had dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. There was rumor that the Japanese were going to surrender but the rumor was premature. In between Hawaii and San Francisco, the

second bomb was dropped. When we landed in San Francisco, we learned that they surrendered. They let people who were ambulatory out of Letterman Hospital to go into San Francisco. Things were so wild that people started to get hurt, so they canceled all leaves.

Q: How long were you in the hospital after you were wounded?

JP: From May 1945 until I was discharged in April 1946, so about 11 months. Strict hospitalization lasted probably 9 months. There was a period of rehabilitation where I had a little more freedom to get out on pass.

Q: How many casualties did your platoon suffer on Luzon?

JP: Out of our platoon, figuring 50-55 men, we lost 15-20. I know on one day they got First Sergeant Bernie Bernier, Sergeant Steve McDonough, Mendoza and a Lieutenant, I never knew his name. They were hit by an artillery treeburst right over our position. Steve McDonough was in the hole next to mine. At first light, I had to leave my foxhole because I had dysentry so bad. The rounds hit while I was gone. When I returned, I couldn't even recognize Steve. Over a period of five months, we lost somewhere in the neighborhood of 30%.

Q: In 1983 you went back to the Philippines. What were your thought and feelings during that visit?

JP: I think right up in Balete Pass I got a feeling of, not so much fear, but of anxiety. I remember so many things up there. Down on the Central Plains, the thing I couldn't get over was the number of people there. We saw very little of the people at the time. Now they're just overrun with people. I also got a kind of eerie feeling up in the mountains. You could feel the fear all over again.

Q: There's a monument to the 25th Division at the crest of Balete Pass about 200 yards from where you were wounded. What did you think about when you saw that?

JP: I thought about all the ones I knew that were either killed or wounded. I think that it was nice that the government at the time put a monument up there. To pick one division out of all that were on the island is quite an honor.