

"THEY HAVE SEEN THE ELEPHANT"

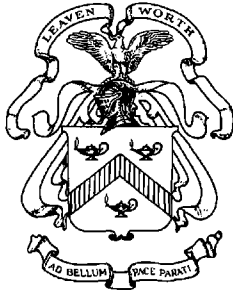
VETERANS' REMEMBRANCES
FROM WORLD WAR II
FOR THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY
OF V-E DAY

1985

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"They have seen the
elephant"

"THEY HAVE SEEN THE ELEPHANT"

**ALEXANDER THE GREAT, 328B.C.
REFERRING TO HIS MACEDONIAN WARRIORS
WHO DEFEATED THE ELEPHANT MOUNTED
ARMY OF KING PORUS, MEANING THESE
MEN HAVE BEEN TO WAR FOR THEIR
COUNTRY.**

**VETERANS' REMEMBRANCES FROM WORLD WAR II
FOR THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF V-E DAY**

1985

**LYNN L. SIMS
LOGISTICS CENTER
HISTORIAN
FT. LEE, VIRGINIA**

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Dedicated to the "buddies" who now live only in memories.

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FOREWORD

While reading these stories, I was struck by the diversity of experience, and the personal sacrifice made by so many. Overshadowing everything was the spirit of patriotism. I know these veterans don't think of themselves as special, but their generation preserved our way of life. They produced the weapons, carried supplies around the world, and met the enemy in battle -- everything necessary for victory.

I find books like this, about ordinary experiences, instructive because they show each of us as part of a larger endeavor. As individuals we are important, and together we have a great strength and ability to defend America, no matter the place or time.

I applaud those who served our country during World War II. I thank those who have taken time to share a feeling or experience.

Thank you, Honored Veterans.



LTG Robert L. Bergquist
U.S. Army Logistics Center
Commanding

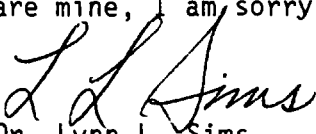
LTG Robert L. Bergquist made this book a priority task since it fits into a Logistics Center goal of learning from the past. These stories happened over 40 years ago, all over the world, and they are set down here so they can remind us of other times and places where Americans fought for their country. No single soldier "won the war," rather each was trained, went where he was told and did his job when needed.

War became a way of life, an opportunity for undreamed-of travel, a time in which many grew up, some received equal treatment for the first time, some enjoyed working as part of a team, some felt proud, but for all it was an experience few would have wanted to miss, but none would want to repeat.

This book was an enjoyable project. The veterans were helpful and patiently explained their part in the war. They all insisted their story was "average," I assured them, that was all right.

The Fort Lee Civilian Personnel Office searched their files for a pre-1924 birthdate, and a veteran's preference. That gave me a list of 276 names. All were contacted by mail and these 68 carried through the oral history, and agreed to have their story published. I interviewed most by telephone, typed the conversation, and mailed it to them for corrections. The returned stories were proofread and retyped in final form. The stories were then divided by theater of operation, European, Pacific, and all others went into a third section. Within each division the stories are alphabetical.

Dr. Steve Anders, Quartermaster School Historian, interviewed several men and read all the submissions. Sharon Sims proofread the copy. Sandy Robertson and the ladies of the Word Processing Center gave their best advice and assistance in the typing process. All errors of commission and omission are mine, I am sorry for them.


Dr. Lynn L. Sims
Command Historian
US Army Logistics Center

"And while I am talking to you mothers and fathers, I give you one more assurance. I have said this before, but I say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, in Boston, October 30, 1940,
(13 months before Pearl Harbor).

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"Readiness, obedience, and a sense of humor are the virtues of a soldier."

Brasidas of Sparta

Speech to the Lacadaemonian Army
at the battle of Amphipolis, 422 B.C.

EUROPEAN THEATER

Grover C. Boone

I am originally from Petersburg and took my basic training at Fort Lee. I was assigned to a Service unit, the first one to go over to England. Our men were trained as cooks, drivers, mechanics, and had many more skills, including infantrymen. Any unit needing us would get to use us and then we'd go back to our unit. On 6 June, I was assigned to the 3238th Quartermaster Service Company in Liverpool, England, at a staging area pulling maintenance on equipment due to go to France. Our unit was also waiting to go over, as we did on about D+5.

When we first got to France, we set up and they began pulling our men away for all kinds of duty. One day they came looking for truck drivers and mechanics. That was my specialty. I was assigned to a new unit created for the purpose of getting gasoline and supplies to General Patton. They called us the Red Ball Express. We drove 2½-ton trucks, 2 men to a truck. We hauled mostly gasoline but took other supplies too. We would make a run up a marked route, deliver our load, and return as soon as possible. The road was guarded all the way, but occasionally we'd hit an ambush or get some fire from the air.

Everyone knew Patton was depending on us so we would speed right through. One day, I got to the end of the run and there was General Patton and his staff waiting. We used to form what we called a "human pipe line" to offload the cans of gas right to the waiting tank. This day, Patton himself helped to unload my truck. When Patton worked, everybody worked! There was no one standing around with their hands in their pockets. We would pass the cans to the tank and bring the empties back to the truck. I would then return to the supply point with the empty cans and I'd do it all again, but never as fast as the day Patton helped to unload my truck. I really respected General Patton; he got the job done. The only way to get it done was to work together, especially in wartime.

The most scared I ever was, was when we were in camp outside of Paris and the Germans were sending over V-2 rockets or "buzz-bombs". They sounded like a freight train coming in. When they'd run out of fuel, they would light up in the air before they hit. One fell about 300 yards from my tent and exploded. That was the most scared I ever was.

After the War, I got out of the Army but went back in and retired in 1971 as an E-5.

Rocco R. Caponigro

I enlisted at age 18 from Montclair, New Jersey. I did basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. I was part of a new Infantry Division, the 100th. They had cadre with 12 to 14 years of service who had been promoted from PFC to SGT or in some cases to First Sergeant. Many were short on education and didn't know how to handle men or the responsibility. The enlisted guys were generally sharper and sometimes ran the sergeants.

I went to Ft. Jackson for 7 months, then to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma for 6 weeks of advanced training, then joined the 100th at Ft. Bragg. I was trained on the radio to do forward observer work. I went on the Tennessee Maneuvers in November and December of 1943 and it was bitter cold and wet. We weren't allowed to make fires, and at one stretch I didn't have a shower for 3 weeks. We stayed busy. Towns people at Murfreesboro were very nice. They'd pick up soldiers, take them home, feed them, and let them sleep in a real bed. I remember Christmas Day I ate turkey in the rain with water running off my helmet into the gravy. We had orders not to get in or under a truck. We had 2-man tents. We heard the story about putting rope around the tent on the ground to keep snakes out. It doesn't work, we got a couple in our tent.

I was scared to death, it was my first real time away from home. I wasn't homesick because it was all a new adventure; I was with the same guys for 3 years, some from New Jersey and some from Connecticut or New England. In September 1944, we went overseas but we had no idea where we were going. I think our orders were changed while we were on the way. The ride over was bad. For 30 years I couldn't stand the odor of boiled eggs nor the smell of oil in gas stations. Those were the smells I remembered from the trip. Our convoy lost 2 ships and we could not stop to pick up survivors. We had to stay in our life jackets for a long time. We could only go as fast as the slowest ship.

We landed in Marseilles in southern France. Eight days after landing we were in the line near Aix. Our first combat was at Rambersville above Marseilles. Our division helped take the citadel of the town of Bitche in France and we were all made members of the society of the sons of Bitche. I still have my membership card. The first time I was in combat I was scared to death and never got use to it. The darkness made it even more eerie. I remember miles and miles of nothing, no birds, no animals, just devastation of the war all around. The first time I saw a German I was surprised he wasn't over 6 feet tall. I am Italian and short and had certain ideas about ethnic groups all my life.

USO shows were great. They came to the guys in the second echelon, not the front line or the rear area. A show lasted 2 to 2½ hours. I saw Ingrid Bergman and fell in love with her, Jack Benny was good and Marlene Dietrich played a musical saw while wearing long johns--it was bitter cold. She really looked good in long johns. There were anywhere from 200 to 500 who'd watched a show. It was always a surprise when a show came. They didn't publish schedules and after the performance, they'd get on trucks and go to the next bunch of

soldiers. The shows weren't too serious, just entertaining and didn't make you think about home. It was just good entertainment and the good feeling lasted for several days.

We liberated a couple of places where they had Polish POWs and some of the healthier ones followed us unofficially. They helped with the KP and other work and got food in return. We sort of adopted them. I learned a little German and Polish and saw a few Italians. When the war ended, I was outside of Stuttgart with a group of 4 or 5 sitting in a field. I remember it was early in the afternoon and we were without shirts listening to one of my radios. When we heard the news we just sat there for 2 hours and did nothing. No yelling, or throwing things in the air or getting drunk. Just sat there.

I rotated back in December 1945 and was discharged on 18 December at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. I was in a rush to get home so I didn't consider staying in. If they had made me come back in a couple months I might have stayed in but the initial urge was to get home away from the Service. I had 3 brothers in the war at the same time. An older and younger brother were wounded within 4 days of each other, one in the Navy and the other in the battle of the Bulge. They were not serious wounds but that did a lot to undermine my mother's health.

To me the war was a big process, not any one thing really stands out. I never got the 52-20 club or any other benefits because I never had occasion to. Never asked for anything.

Harry P. Carroll

I'm from Lynchburg, Virginia, and when I was to report for my physical, I had just gotten over the flu. I guess the effects of that showed up because I was classified 1-B and the Army didn't take me. I tried to go into the Marines but they looked at my classification and turned me down. Finally, I challenged the classification and I was drafted. I worked for a meat packing company before the war, I went in the Army Air Corps as a private for \$50 a month. We were stationed in the South and I had a real bad heat rash, so I applied for any type school to get me out of there. I applied for OCS, got on the list, and came out of the war as a major.

After OCS, I was assigned in Massachusetts to the 356th Fighter Group. All we had were empty hangers at first, but we soon got three squadrons and a service group attached to us. We had P-47s.

We got over to England in June 1943 and settled into a base near East Anglia which is close to Ipswich. I went over on the "Queen Elizabeth." It took 5 days. It was thrilling when we saw British Spitfires come off the coast of Ireland to greet us. The night we got to England, Lord Haw Haw welcomed us to England on the air. They dropped a lot of booby traps on the base that night, like fountain pens that would blow your hand off and exploding watches. One time, the Germans dropped about 2,000 sticks of incendiary bombs, but about 25 percent didn't go off because of bent pins, no pins, no caps, or some other defect. We figured they had been assembled by forced labor and were duds on purpose.

We used P-47s in England, then when we began covering longer bombing runs, we switched to P-51s for the added distance. I was the Group's Assistant G-3 in June 1944 when I got a call from General Orton who asked to speak to the commander. He finally had to talk to me because no one else was around. He told me to take a certain number of planes and paint a black stripe under the wing. A little while later, he called back and said paint every plane we had with the stripe.

I was living off post and I remember I had just got home when I got a call telling me to return to base right away. When I got there, we all sat around a table and opened a big manila envelope and there were maps of Utah and Omaha Beaches.

We flew escort for bombers on D-Day. We also had a section near St. Lo to keep clear of German airplanes. The Germans were using ambulances with red crosses to move ammo and reinforcements up to the front so we had orders to shoot anything that moved. D-Day we started early. You could look up at the sky and see lots of stars, all moving the same direction. Our planes were divided into three groups, one over the target, one going, and one coming back. We took off just before dawn and the last plane landed right before midnight.

Our heaviest losses were in support of operation Market Garden. They made a movie about that, "A Bridge Too Far." We lost 22 of 48 planes over the target in 30 minutes. Quite a few of our planes had to make belly landings and many came back with no fuel left because we cut the amount pretty close. We had a forward base near Lille where I stayed in England all the time. As we liberated POW camps we found some of our pilots, and we had them back to the base for a day, I remember. We did a lot of dive bombing of trains, trucks, and things like that.

We were located in what was called buzz bomb alley. In one night, we shot down 20 from our field. The British had a jet plane and the buzz bomb had a gyro compass. The British plane would fly under the buzz bomb and nudge its wing and that would throw the compass off.

We were there 2½ years and after Germany surrendered, we got word we had the "honor to be selected" to go the Pacific. But it ended there too. We split up in England and I came home on the "Queen Mary." We came back to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and they didn't let me out until they had given me a good physical exam. They noticed I came in the Service with some problems and they wanted to pronounce me OK so they wouldn't have to pay claims later I guess. I stayed in the hospital at Fort Meade for 30 days and was released.

I stayed in the Reserves for 10 years but I had a traveling job and it was hard to keep changing units so I got out.

Jules Cohen

I was drafted at age 18 and finished 16 weeks of basic training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. I was in the Armed Services Training Program which was suppose to lead to a commission. I think the buildup for D-Day cut that short. I was put in a replacement unit at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. We went to England in convoy in mid-April 1944 on the "USS Sea Porpoise."

I was an acting staff sergeant until we got overseas, then I went back to being a private. I was trained in demolitions, but really did about everything. On 6 June I was on the docks in Southampton, England, waiting for something. I was a kid, I didn't know what was going on. I guess I went over on D+1 and it wasn't until we were in the channel that we were called on deck and told this was the invasion.

We got off the British ship and climbed down netting to a smaller boat that took us to about knee-deep water and we waded ashore. We were on Omaha Beach. I remember heading for a rise behind the beach. We flopped down and just stayed there much of the first day. There was some enemy fire coming in. Later we moved a few hundred yards forward and settled down again. It was here I was assigned to a unit and began my walk across France.

The 358th Engineer Regiment did jobs for other units. We would go in a company or a smaller size unit, do a job, and come back to the 358th. We worked a lot for the British in the Belgium area. We blew the remains of concrete bridges and other obstacles. At first we used dynamite, then TNT and mostly Composition C, which was new and real good. You could form it like putty and stick in a fuze. One time a guy rowed me out to a half-demolished abutment in the middle of a river, set a charge with a kinda short fuse and yelled "OK, let's get out of here!" He froze. I had to get him going. I still remember that. We climbed a lot of poles stringing wire. We never picked up old wire or retrieved any equipment that I can remember.

What I remember most were the relationships with guys in my unit. I was in a unit made of Tennesseans. It was quite a change for a Brooklyn kid. My pup tent mate was a 43-year old farmer, Homer Johnson, from western Tennessee. He was a great father image for me and others. I learned a lot from the guys in my unit. They could live off the land pretty well. We did a lot of foraging and trading, small stuff like that. I sang a lot of Baptist songs all the way through the war.

I've tried to block the ugliness out of my mind and when I say it was all worth it, I mean my relationships with the other guys. They were closer than brothers. No one would leave you; there was no place to go. I haven't experienced that feeling since. We got real close. I use to write letters home for a couple of the men who couldn't write. I was scared all the time. I cried enough. But it was a good experience if you remember only the pleasant side. It was marvelous being with people all closer than good friends.

As far as I know the Army didn't try to send Jewish soldiers to the Pacific. No one asked me. I never really thought about being Jewish. I was angry at what was being done to the Jews but so was everyone else. My dog tags had the letter H for Hebrew and I had plans to get rid of them if I was captured. But we were winning and I really didn't dwell much on that. When we began taking prisoners, my knowing how to speak Yiddish came in handy. As soon as I opened my mouth the German POWs knew I was Jewish. Their worst fears were realized--a 19-year old Jewish kid with a loaded rifle giving orders. They all towed the line. I used Yiddish often and never had any trouble with POWs.

I had one experience I didn't think much of at the time but now it's one of my pleasant memories. On a Jewish holiday, I forget which one, I and two other GIs were in a religious service with half a dozen Jews who had just been liberated from a concentration camp. An Army priest did the service and I remember shaking hands and hugging everybody. That's a good memory even though I didn't understand fully at the time.

I came home on a troop ship and we landed in New York Harbor on New Year's Day 1946. We all thought they'd let us off the ship for New Years but they didn't. We did a lot of grumbling and there was some minor rioting, nothing big. We were all anxious to get home and I lived so close. They told us when we finally did get off that we'd be able to keep only one souvenir weapon. So I and several others threw a few pistols in the New York Harbor. Then when we got off, they didn't even check. A few years later the New York Police Department asked for all working souvenir pistols to be turned in, and I did. It had just lain in a drawer.

I was discharged 6 January 1946 at Fort Dix and made a clean break with the Army. I went back and finished college. I'm not military and actually am surprised I work for the Army now.

Isaac A. Coleman

I was drafted in May of 1943 while living where I'm living now, in Warfield, Virginia. I was 18 years old at the time and had not finished high school but was working in the Quartermaster Depot in Richmond.

We didn't have a public school for blacks where I grew up so I went to St. Paul's Episcopal School in Lawrenceville. It went from elementary through college. If my father hadn't paid for me to go to school, I couldn't have. Many blacks couldn't pay and didn't get any schooling past grammar school. Some black families bought a bus to take their children to St Paul's. Before the Army I had one year of high school. My father could only afford to send one child to school at a time, so I dropped out and my younger brother went. I used to read a lot and was in a lot of church groups. I was always serious about what I did, so I got a good education here and there.

Before being drafted I rode a free train to Camp Patrick Henry from home on a work detail every day. We were remodeling the Camp. They took out a 5% victory tax from my pay to help the war effort. You never got it back.

At Ft. Meade we got uniforms and went on a troop train to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. At Ft. Wood we lived in barracks and took 6 weeks of basic, then I got more training in supply services. From there I went to Ft. Knox, Kentucky, and that's where I got into the 377th Engineer General Service Regiment. It had men from all over. We left for Camp Shanks, New York, in October 1943. We knew only we were going to Europe. About 20,000 of us went over on the "Queen Elizabeth." They zigzagged and you could look back and see the zigzag ship's wake. We landed in Glasgow, Scotland, in November and went by train to Lands End, England, in Wales. We stayed in Quonset huts and slept in our clothes.

D-Day was a big surprise. We went to Plymouth and on 14 June we crossed the channel in an LST and landed at Utah Beach. We took our equipment through the surf and went to St. Lo. That night we slept in foxholes, firing was going on all around. I was the regimental supply sergeant.

The 377th had about 1,400 men total, 2 battalions with 3 companies each. Our biggest problem was getting supplies to our units at the front. We did it mostly at night with no truck lights. We carried up C rations to our units building bridges or clearing mine fields. Some were killed. At one time we had about 4,000 POWs in a wire compound we had built. We fed them and used them for work details. Most were glad to be out of the war, a lot were young. They used their own people for cooks. The ones working for me would help breakdown rations, and clothing. I remember one who tied his pant legs to his ankles and filled his pants with butter.

We were with the Third Army in the communications advance section. We were in 3 campaigns. We worked out of the backs of trucks, or railroad cars. We set up in fields, orchards, anyplace. At one time we had our office in a box car. We even had men sleeping in the cars.

The war was quite a travel experience, even though what I saw was mostly destroyed. Many times they got ready to use us as combat soldiers because of a German attack. We did run across German supplies and ammo dumps but we never used it. We gave it to POWs or civilians. Civilians begged for food but our policy was not to give them anything. We could only give food to POWs. Actually, many times we did give food to civilians, and some American troops sold rations to civilians on the black market. We had several guys caught about to sell a truck load of rations. They were busted of rank and privileges and put on work details. There seemed to be lots of poker games, but we had blackout conditions at night so that cut down the gambling.

I had most of my pay going home for allotments. As a Master Sergeant I got about \$140 a month. I had a class Q and a class E allotment. Class E came from my salary. For a class Q, you put in part of your salary to go home. I put in the maximum, \$17 and the government would put in \$16, so \$33 went home. I kept about \$15 a pay period. The folks at home needed it, and that's the only way you could get a class Q, on need. They checked my parents' situation first. My parents had 14 children, I was the next to oldest. Only 2 of us could send allotments home, so the 2 oldest did. We had people verify we had given our money to our parents before we were drafted so we could get the Q allotments. It was a volunteer thing, my father farmed.

I moved up in rank, I think, because I was ambitious and did my job the best I could. I was obedient and accepted responsibilities. I read the supply manuals and understood the system. Others called me "Uncle Tom" or worse, and I had a few run-ins with black soldiers but I was satisfied. Promotions came every 30 days until I got to Master Sergeant. I had to take a test to get to the top 3 grades and my commanding officer interviewed me. I got into supply because of the experience I had had at Bellwood and also because of my supply training at Ft. Wood. I started as a file clerk and then I was assistant supply sergeant, and the supply sergeant got sick so they moved me up. I was in the S-4 sergeant major position. I made Master Sergeant when I was 20.

I came back on a Victory ship and was seasick for 5 days. I was in charge of 444 men down in the ship's hold. I had a bunk up top. When I went down the odor would hit me in the face. Everyone was sick, and that made me sick too, really bad. Going over, the ship carried black and white troops, but they were in different sections and had separate messhalls.

We came back to Ft. Story, Virginia, in January 1946. The unit was disbanded and we turned in equipment. The CO and I carried the unit's records to Ft. Meade then I was discharged and came home.

When I got home about 7 p.m. there was snow on the ground and a white fellow at the bus station gave me a ride home. My father came out barefoot and picked me off the ground. Daddy cried and we visited and saw everybody that night. Daddy had 7 boys in the war, 6 overseas at once, and we all came home safely. I wouldn't have minded staying in but my wife was a teacher and didn't want to quit, so I gave in. I bought a farm with the GI Bill.

Richard J. Connaughton

In 1942 I was attending the University of Notre Dame but I enlisted in the Army Air Force thinking I could finish college. After 1½ years I was called up in March as an Aviation Cadet. Eventually I went to bombardier school at Childress, Texas, which was good for a commission which I received in December 1943.

In March 1944 the 483d Bombardment Group (Heavy) went from the States to Italy. We flew B-17Gs over, but when we got there we exchanged them for an earlier model, B-17Fs. The B-17 was the "flying fortress" with a crew of 10. Our plane was named "Fearless Fosdick," and we flew missions into France, Yugoslavia, Romania, Italy, and Austria. Mostly we hit oil fields, railroad yards, marshalling areas, and bridges.

On 2 June 1944 we got orders to fly a mission and then land in Mirgirod, Russia. We had 4 squadrons of about 15 planes each in the Group. We landed in Russia where a support element had set up and were waiting for us. We lived in tents, ate GI food, and kept separate from the Russians. We did manage a bottle or 2 of vodka. We had no restrictions and went into town and took some pictures. The town had been invaded by the Germans and retaken by the Russians so it was pretty much destroyed. I saw a burned out tank but couldn't tell whose it was.

We flew a mission on 6 June as a diversion to the Normandy landings. We bombed an oil field in Romania and were jumped by some German FW-190s on the way back. We didn't lose any bombers that day and our gunners got one confirmed kill and one probable. So on 6 June I was on oxygen about 20 to 23,000 feet over Romania and was cold--cold--cold.

On 11 June, we flew another mission from Russia, and this time landed back in Italy. We flew in the daytime and usually carried about 4,000 pounds of bombs. My bomb sight was a Norden, the most modern available. I would look in the scope on top and line up the cross-hairs on the target. I would set the altitude, wind velocity, and other factors on the bomb sight. I kept adjusting the cross-hairs to stay on target, and the bombs would release automatically. Another one of my jobs was to open the bomb bay doors before we dropped the load. I always remembered to do that. A run was not too long. We could dump them all at once but we didn't usually do that because there was a chance of them hitting together in the air and exploding close to the plane. That happened once when we were covering the invasion of southern France. Usually, we would set them to release one at a time and hit about 100 yards apart on the ground.

I was wounded twice in my 50 missions, the first by flak and the second was when another bomber overflowed us and dropped their bombs on either side of our fuselage. One bomb fin came through and hit me on the leg. Overall we were fortunate, we never had anyone killed and all 10 of our crew came home.

The biggest event in my career, as it was with most others, was counting the missions so we could rotate back after 50. Usually a mission was worth one point, but some, by nature of the target or the defenses, were worth 2 points, never more. After the war I stayed in the Air Force and retired in 1963 as a Major.

Leslie M. Cooper

I was inducted 6 March 1942 and had basic training at Fort Lee, Virginia. I was also commissioned after OCS at Fort Lee. At that time there wasn't a Transportation Corps. That function was split between the QM and Engineers. Because I had experience working on cargo ships before the war, I was assigned to the 5th Mobile Port unit at Boston in July of 1942.

I left for England in September, 1942 on the "Queen Mary." She was fast, so we went unescorted across the Atlantic with 15,000 soldiers. I still remember passing the Statue of Liberty. That thrill has stayed with me all this time. Officers stayed in state rooms, and the enlisted men spent 12 hours on deck and 12 hours below. We rotated at 0600 and 1800, two people to a bunk, sleeping in shifts.

We arrived in Greenock, Scotland 6 days later and off-loaded in open barges to the landing point. We had several hours free that day and 4 of us went to see the town. I asked an attractive young lady which bus to take to the American Red Cross Soldiers Center and she told me the bus number. I boarded the double-decker bus and while gawking at the sights, I saw the same girl running after the bus. She met us at the next stop; she had given us the wrong number. We got off and were amazed she would run 5 blocks to correct such a small error. It was a good beginning and we felt at home, an impression that grew throughout my stay. In England and Scotland, people were friendly and helped us in every way.

When I first arrived I was in Hull, Yorkshire, at the Station Hotel. Then I went to the 12th Port HQ on the Bristol Channel. I was involved in port operations and rail movement plus doing a little coastal work. Eventually I got to about all of the ports. Sometimes we were told to prepare for 50 to 60 incoming ships only to have 10 or 12 arrive. The rest had been sunk. I was also in charge of some salvage operations of beached ships. That was dirty, greasy work to get out what was still usable. I had some all-black salvage and port units. They were the best workers. I used to set a quota of work for the day, and any time after the work was done was free time. Those guys worked like crazy to get an hour or so off.

When I heard my first air raid warning, I went running up 5 flights to the roof to watch. Shortly after I heard my first bomb whistle, and shortly after that I careened down 6 flights of stairs to a basement shelter where I was supposed to be in the first place. It was quite a shock to see a whole city with no lights. The blackout was strictly enforced, not a glimmer of light could be seen anywhere.

In early June I saw my first flying bomb, the V-1 commonly called the Doodlebug or Buzz bomb. It was a small, pilotless aircraft with tremendous speed and loaded with explosives. They came day and night and caused lots of damage. Sometimes the RAF blew them up off the coast. The V-1s were followed by the V-2s in August. They gained great heights and plunged down at high speed with no warning. The devastation was frightful.

On 6 June, I was at the Royal Albert docks in London loading a ship. They used to mislabel the contents and destination of cargo. There was a code, known but to a few, of what the labels really meant. A lot of stuff was marked for North Africa. Rarely did we know the destination of a ship. Later that day I heard about the D-Day invasion on the BBC news.

The English were closed mouthed about giving information. You'd be looking for a unit's location you knew was in the area, but no one would give directions. There were infiltrators, but I never had any sabotage in the ports. Most of the damage came from bombs and that was usually to warehouses or rail yards. Seldom did ships get hit. During what was called the "Easter Blitz," I was unloading ammunition near London. I was scared then, but it's funny how you'd get use to danger--actually become hardened to it.

I was most scared one day when I was living on Baker Street in London. There was an air raid, and bomb blasts were all around. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy, so I decided to leave my flat and make for a shelter about 1½ blocks away. As I stepped onto the street, I heard empty rocket cannisters ricocheting on the cobblestones and against the houses, so I stepped back in my doorway. The shelter I was heading for took a direct hit which killed over 250 people--scary.

On V-E night, I remember seeing London lit up for the first time. Blackout curtains were off, and powerful searchlights drew big arcs in the sky. Crowds celebrated and Piccadilly Circus was elbow-to-elbow. At midnight thousands of people were outside Buckingham Palace chanting, "We want the king--we want the queen." That was impressive. It gave me a real pleasant feeling.

I got out in 1945 as a captain, but went back in 2½ years later. Eventually I retired as a lieutenant colonel.

William A. Craft

I was living in the mountains of Allegheny County, Virginia, when I was drafted in November 1942. I went to Roanoke for my physical, then to Fort Lee for uniforms, then to Camp Blanding, Florida, on a troop train. I loved traveling on troop trains; that was the best part of the Army. It was the first time I had been away from home and had never ridden on a train.

I took basic in Florida and was assigned to the 79th Infantry Division at Blanding. They were set up in a tent city. Then we went to Arizona for desert training because they planned to send us to North Africa. We came back to Camp Phillips, Kansas, then to Camp Forrest, Tennessee, for maneuvers, then to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and that's where we shipped out.

We went in a convoy that formed in the ocean. We did a zigzag course over, got to England in April of 1944, and had some more training. We reached Cherbourg, France, on 14 June, about 8 days after D-Day. We rode on small landing craft that opened in the front. We got out in the water with shells still falling. Most of the D-Day wreckage was still there.

I was a rifleman with 3d platoon, Company K of the 314th Infantry Regiment, scared to death. I was 21 at the time. There was plenty of destruction and plenty of Germans. We walked several miles inland. We carried a lot of equipment with us and dropped it along the road. Gas masks, extra shoes, we dropped everything like that. I guess it was a way of getting stuff over.

The first night at the front we started to dig in. The area had phosphorous from artillery still burning. When we began to make noise with our shovels we found we were in front of a German machine gun and some 88s. They almost blew us away. We didn't even know where to shoot, we couldn't tell where the fire was coming from. We just waited for the daylight. They had moved out by then, but we had a lot of casualties. The 88s just threw a person in the air.

Each night we had to dig in. In the winter we'd stay in houses. If we made an attack we'd have a church service anytime of the day or night, and the chaplain would be there. He knew some would not be there tomorrow.

I never saw a USO show. I heard they were good, but they didn't come to the front where I was. I do remember, after the war, sitting on cinder blocks in the open, watching movies.

They must have replaced my unit 3 or 4 times. I believe I was the only one in the company to come all the way through without getting wounded. We stayed in the front all the time. We were either fighting the Germans or riding tanks to catch up to them. I did see General Patton one time. Word came down that if we'd get the Germans out of the hedgerows, he'd take us to Berlin. We fought through those hedgerows a long time. An artillery observer came up with us and called in fire 200 yards in front of us to hit the next hedgerow. That was close. I didn't believe in getting out of my hedgerow to run over and get

the German out of his, because he might not want to go. I'd let the artillery do it. I remember a plane flying low strafing us. I got in a hole, and looked at him. No one shot back but the more I think of it, I believe I could have hit him. He never came back.

The only time I left the front was near the Rhine River when we started the rotation. There was a sergeant ahead of me who had been over there longer, but he got wounded that night and the next morning I got rotated home. That was the best part of the war for me. I spent 7 days in a Paris hotel, then flew to England, then home on the "Queen Mary." I rode back overseas on the "Queen Mary." I crossed the Atlantic 4 times and rode both the "Queen Mary" and "Queen Elizabeth." It took me 90 days, 30 days going, 30 at home, and 30 returning. I had a choice to go back to Europe or to the Pacific. I thought the war would end soon in Germany so I went there. When I got back they had crossed the Rhine. I missed all the action around Bastogne and all the cold weather. I was lucky.

I was most scared at the very first, then I started to get a little use to it. Night was a bad time. We captured a lot of Germans, they'd just come out with their hands up or waving flags. Sometime we had recruits new to the front and they would shoot at them. We stopped that because if you shot at them they would go back and fight harder because they thought you were going to kill them. We learned just enough German to make them follow orders. It was good to have someone around who could speak a little German.

We went over to do a job and we did it. I was a BAR man at first. That got heavy, so I set it down and picked up an M-1 and no one missed the BAR. There were a lot of displaced persons. I had some friends who were captured and they said they were more afraid of our artillery than the Germans while POWs. Everyone in front of us was enemy. Many times I was point man for my company. It's a wonder I'm here to tell you that. I used to have people get close to me, they thought I was lucky. I left a foxhole one night to protect a tank stuck in a ditch. We guarded it so the Germans wouldn't take it. When I came back, a shell had landed right in my hole and killed a guy who was there.

I went to a rest camp for about 7 days once and got some good food which gave us all diarrhea. There were some good times. I learned a lot. I came back in December 1945 and was out by January 1946. I was scared to death coming back, because we were up near Prague, Czechoslovakia, and we came out in trucks. The roads were icy slick and it was dangerous.

There was a lot of gambling. We came back the short route, the North Atlantic, and we got into some waves as big as the Blue Ridge Mountains. That was scary. I never was seasick but I've seen a lot of it. You could hardly walk on the decks and stairwells because they were so slippery from men throwing up. I used to get peoples' meal tickets and go through the line 2 or 3 times. I had never been on a ship, but it never bothered me.

Afterwards I just wanted to get out, but sometimes I wish I had stayed in.

Harry P. Daley

In December of 1943, I was drafted at age 18, while living in Brooklyn, New York. I took my physical in Manhattan and went to Ft. Dix, New Jersey, for my induction. From there I was sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri, on a troop train. This was the first time I had been outside the New York City area, so it was all an adventure for me. After basic I went to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, but was there only about 2 weeks and then went to Ft. Breckenridge, Kentucky, where the 1271st Combat Engineers were forming. I was a bridge carpenter and also operated a mine detector.

In October 1944 I went overseas from Camp Kilmer, straight into Southern France on the "USS Mariposa." After the war the ship was used to carry war brides back from Australia. We went up to Nancy area where we started working. We built a pontoon bridge across the Necker River and put Bailey bridges all over the place. We used bridging material strictly from the States, we didn't get any locally. Time was important and we couldn't find stuff to "make-do." We had to have it there and be accustomed to working with it. After us, a bridge company would build a real fine bridge. We used no local materials.

There were a lot of by-passed German troops, and we were with the 100th Division helping to mop them up. We were assigned to the 7th Army and they farmed us out for jobs.

On Christmas Day 1944, we were in France and came upon a mine field with what we called "S" mines. It had 3 prongs that stuck out of the ground and took about 9 pounds of pressure to set it off. It was an antipersonnel mine, and there were a whole field of them. When we located them, we'd put a piece of white tape on them, then go back later and blow them in place with TNT. We were feeling sorry for ourselves because most of the unit was in camp eating Christmas dinner and we had C rations. I was eating and heard an explosion. One of the guys had stepped on a mine and the full force of the explosion came up because the ground was frozen. The mine was supposed to pop up out of the ground and explode. We called it a "ball-buster" for obvious reasons. He eventually lost his foot. He was my ammo man and best friend so it spoiled my Christmas.

Combat engineers carried the heavy 30-caliber, water-cooled machine gun which weighted 90 pounds. I carried the whole thing.

There was this old Medieval town called Bitche with walls about 4 feet thick. We use to watch shells bounce off it. In December of 1944, the ground was frozen and the Infantry couldn't dig foxholes so we went up with what we called "beehive" charges. It's a shaped charge and all the force goes down. We blew a lot of holes, one charge would make a 2 man foxhole. The Germans would see that and start shelling us so we'd have to wait until they stopped, then do some more. We did that for about 2 days and nights.

I remember going into Colmar and someone took a shot at us from a house. We nearly blew the house apart and the firing stopped, so we kept going. We came upon Dachau shortly after it had been liberated and the smell stuck with you. I remember we went around the town and knocked on doors asking if anybody knew anything about what went on there or did they know any of the people who were in charge, and of course no one knew anything. We kept going and wound up the war in Austria.

They sent us back to Germany and we stayed in the "SS" barracks at Dachau. We stayed there about a month, then went to Ulm where we were in charge of a POW battalion putting ice-breakers on bridge pilings so the ice flows on the Danube would break up and not wreck the bridge. We used a German engineer battalion which had surrendered intact. They worked well because we fed them. They were eating better than most of the people in Germany. I stayed with them for about 3 months, then went to Berlin in October 1945. This time we just ran a group of POWs cleaning up the city. We used to put POWs in the back of a truck if we took them anywhere, and had to put a guard back there too. But they weren't going to escape, we fed them, so we stopped guarding them. If they had wanted to escape I'm sure we would have let them go.

I was an NCO, and for some reason all the entertainers at the NCO club lived in the Russian sector of Berlin, so we had to pick them up and take them back. This meant we had to go through Checkpoint Charlie. Our orders were not to stop because that was the Four Powers agreement. One time the driver said to me, "They're pointing their guns at us," and I said, "I'm pointing mine too, so keep going." Nothing happened; they stepped out of the way. They were playing games. I guess we were too because we were making trips we didn't have to make. I left before they closed the road.

The German people were very tired of the war. I talked to a lot and never found a single Nazi. We set up headquarters on one side of the autobahn when we were in charge of POWs and people passed by all day long. We'd give out a little food, especially to the females. Sometimes it was a trade. But in all that time I never found a Nazi.

I came home in May 1946 on a Liberty ship. I was sick for a day or two then was OK. The first day on ship, for breakfast, the guy next to me had what he thought was a hard boiled egg and he cracked it open and it wasn't cooked. I took one look at that and got sick. But that was all.

I thought we would be at war with the Russians within 3 years so I joined the Reserves and was called back in 1950. I joined an engineer battalion in Brooklyn, New York. I stayed in and retired as a W-3 with 25 years.

Robert H. DeWolf

When I was 16½ I lied about my age and got into the Service, but my parents found out and got me out. I was living in Miami, Oklahoma, and it was just one of those things kids do, I guess. When I was old enough I volunteered, and this time I went for basic training at Fort Sill. I eventually became a squad leader. I wanted to be in the Infantry, so I was sent to Camp Roberts, Arkansas. I went for airborne training at Benning but that wasn't for me. I figured I could walk better than I could fly. After leaving airborne school, I went overseas on the "Queen Mary"; she traveled by herself.

I was a replacement for the Third Army which was in France. I landed first in Scotland and went across the Channel on a British boat. I remember I got sick on the sea because all they had to eat was hot dogs and pea soup.

I went to the 76th Division and walked all the way across Germany. I remember mostly the dead bodies and the dead horses. There was a lot of German equipment on the sides of the roads. I saw a lot of PWs going back as we were going up. I remember we came on Dachau and the smell was the bad thing. You could smell those camps miles before you saw them. The first time I was there I didn't know what it was, looked like a factory with a lot of smoke stacks. We went in and there were a few inmates, but the MPs didn't want you to hang around there. You weren't suppose to talk about it, the MPs and my CO told us not to talk about it.

We took a lot of incoming artillery and I got a concussion; shell shock is what they called it. They said I was unconscious for 3 days. I remember waking up in a hospital and the nurses weren't speaking English and had on funny stripped uniforms. I thought I had been captured; I was really scared. The guy in the bed next to me said "Well I'm glad to see you come around." I said "Where are we?" He said we were in an American hospital and these people were French.

After the hospital I went to the 102d, the Ozark Division. I couldn't stand so much noise so they made me the Captain's driver but that wasn't much better. I asked if I could work in the kitchen, they made me a steady KP. I was a PFC then. A man from Tennessee, named Grady Hobbrook, asked me if I'd like to be a cook and I said, "Yes." Before I left there I was a Tech 4, all on-the-job training, I liked it. They said I was the best pot and pan man they ever had.

I remember I was in the hospital when FDR died, and we were in the field when the war ended. There was a lot of shouting. I remember the sleeping bags were just a blanket thick. There were eggs and chickens but not too many rabbits around. The thing that sticks in my mind the most was seeing one of my buddies leaning up against a tree on a break and an 88 cut the top of his head off. I don't remember his name but I have some pictures of us together.

I never picked up many souvenirs, I was scared of booby traps. I had made my mind up to come back. I didn't pick up stuff. I didn't trust anything. I don't remember anyone getting hurt by booby traps but we were told it could happen.

I remember when it was time to come home they loaded us on a big cattle truck, a semi, and took us to the railroad. We got on a 40X8, then we got on more semis and they took us to the boats. We came back on a Liberty ship. The trip back was better than the trip over. Going over no one knew what to expect, but coming back, you knew where you were going. I got my ruptured duck at Fort Dix. That meant you were discharged out of the Army. I still have my Company book. I reenlisted and stayed in 27 years. I was promoted to E6 in 1950 and eventually became a mess sergeant. I moved around to a lot of different posts, many in the 5th Army area. I made E7 in Vietnam, but the stripes had changed and the old E6 was now the E7. I didn't have to change stripes after 1950.

I haven't thought about the war too much, I try to forget it.

Augustus R. DiMino

I was living in Norristown, Pennsylvania, when I was drafted in October 1942. After basic training I was in the Quartermaster School. In March 1943, 77 NCOs and I were assigned to Camp Plauche, Louisiana, near New Orleans. We were part of the new Transportation Corps. Our job was to train longshoremen, mostly Irish from Boston, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, a tough group. They were going to be used for the invasion of North Africa and France.

The thing I remember most about the war happened right in New Orleans. It was 17 December 1943 on Lake Ponchartrain. There were 2 barges loaded with about 70 soldiers on their way across the lake to Camp Slidell for rifle practice. It was about 7 miles across, and during the crossing one barge sank.

The weather was chilly and the waves were choppy. I was the supply sergeant back at camp, when about 9 o'clock I got a call about the accident. I was told to prepare 4 barracks as temporary hospitals, get the temperature up to 90°, and put shelter halves between beds for privacy and to prevent the spread of germs. The hospital staff assisted, and hot food and soup were given to the survivors.

Twenty-seven soldiers drowned. Some had shed their equipment and tried to save those who couldn't swim. The recovered bodies were brought in to be identified. We laid them out on the floor. Seventeen of the 27 soldiers were from the same neighborhood in Brooklyn. The bodies were sent back just before Christmas 1943. New York newspapers had the story as headlines.

The barges were overloaded; the waves were high and water was washing over the sides which made them too heavy and they sank. We lost a lot of the field equipment and rifles. There were investigations, generals all over the place. We had 2 companies on leave and 2 there training. I had 2 friends from my hometown, but both were saved. That was really something.

In August 1944 my 766th Railway Shop Battalion went to Buycens, Ohio, from Louisiana to run railroads for on-the-job training before we went to Europe. At Marsailles, France we put together prefabricated railroad boxcars. There were 120 men in C Company, a car repair section of the Railway Shop Battalion. We didn't find much of the German railroad stuff usable. I heard a lot of conversation here about using foreign equipment but we didn't, and I don't think we will if there is another war in Europe. Nobody is going to help us, we're going to have to do it ourselves.

We did use POWs for labor. We had 14 locations or assembly points out on the pier. I was the First Sergeant of C Company. We'd assemble all the box car parts, turn the frame upside down and put the wheels on, then with a crane, flip it over, and roll it on tracks. Every 22 minutes a whistle would sound and the frame and wheels were pulled to the next point by tractors.

We used hot rivets and had a lot of injuries at first because we weren't so good at throwing and catching them. We'd put on sides, doors, roofs and keep the cars moving. At first we completed only about 11 per day. By the time we left, 5 months later, we could do 55 a day. We would stencil on the serial numbers and the boxcar would go straight to the warehouse to be loaded with supplies and food for Germany.

We started in April 1945 and finished work in September, then we were transferred to Darmstadt, Germany, to operate the German rail repair yards. That's where we began fixing up German passenger cars to go to Berlin and pick-up GIs going home. We worked on Eisenhower and Patton's special railcars. They always took our repairmen along when they used them. We used to see Ike and Patton every Saturday sitting in the grandstands at the Army's football games. They had a big time, it was pretty good football, much like today's professional teams.

John D. Figuietas

I went to North Africa as a PFC in September of 1943. First I went to Casablanca, then to Oran, and from there to Naples, Italy, in November, where I was assigned to Company E, 141st Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division. We prepared for an assault on Mount Casino, across the Rapido River.

On the night of January 21, at about the same hour the battle for Anzio was getting underway, we headed toward the Rapido. We carried rifles, machine guns, mortars, and rafts. We had to pick our way through a mine field. Some of the tapes marking a safe route were missing and we had to take our chances in spots. One group behind us unfortunately tripped a mine.

When we got to the Rapido, we found the current was too swift and our equipment too heavy for the rafts, so combat engineers built foot bridges. That took 4 hours. Before dawn, around 1,500 of us made it across and dug in before the Germans blew the bridges. We were cut off, with no chance of getting back. Soon we were pinned down by fire. We still had ammo and called in artillery, but it didn't do much good.

When daylight came, German snipers started picking us off. In my little group, they got 5 in about a half hour. I took a bullet through the arm, straight in and straight out. It didn't break any bones, thank goodness. A medic treated me on the spot.

By afternoon we simply ran out of ammunition. When the firing died down, the Germans started rounding up prisoners. There was nothing left to do but stand up and surrender. By nightfall, we were 15 to 20 kilometers behind their lines, in a little barbed wire prison camp. Of the 1,500 who crossed, I think only about 500 survived and were captured.

The next day they marched us about 20 kilometers to another camp where they took our name, rank, and serial number. They loaded us onto railroad cars, 48 to a car, and took us up through Brenner Pass, Austria, into Germany. Once the train was strafed, and we had to take cover by the tracks.

Our final destination was a place called Stalag IVB. There they finished processing us, deloused us, and took care of our wounds. An American doctor, captured in North Africa, checked my arm and gave it the OK.

About a month later, 26 of us volunteered to work on a farm outside Wusterwitz, Germany. We figured it couldn't be any worse. Besides the exercise and change of diet might be good. I had lost 35 pounds and weighed only 100 pounds.

At the farm, we lived in a converted horse stall with a stove in the middle, double-decker bunks, and a 5-gallon can for a latrine. Outside was a tiny fenced-in courtyard. Two of the home guards watched us, one of them spoke good English. He was a magician, and had played the States before the war. Life on the farm was a little better, but we were under constant guard and

locked in each night, 6:30 in the winter and 8:30 in the summer. I was the group's cook until my arm healed. After that, I worked in the fields.

They had a fair-sized distillery on the farm, and a couple of us shoveled potatoes and sugar beets used for the mash. In a few months, we had put together our own still. One of the French prisoners made us a sterilizer of sorts, and I scrounged some copper tubing. We got the mash from the distillery, and we distilled 180-proof alcohol from time to time.

Around December 1944, I came down with yellow jaundice and was sent back to Stalag IVB. By then, the Germans were losing ground to the Russians, so they marched everyone out of camp. On the third day, I had to fall out. I was still weak from jaundice, so they put me in a local jail. Funny thing is the guards didn't even lock my cell. They must have figured I wasn't going anywhere. Nobody paid much attention even when I walked outside. I guess maybe because I didn't look like an American GI--with my hobnail boots, British jacket, and knit sea cap.

One day though, I was feeling a little too self-assured. I gathered up my stuff, strolled outside, and walked through town toward the railroad yard. My plan was to hop a freight going west. It didn't quite work. A home guard captured me in the freight yard. The next thing I knew, I was escorted back to jail at gun point.

A few weeks later, when I had recovered sufficiently, I was out on the road marching with various groups of prisoners, English and foreign legionnaires, presumably just a step ahead of the Russians. I marched for 71 days straight until I rejoined my original group from Stalag IVB. Once we camped out in a fenced-in woods area, which was an ammo dump. None of us knew it until an air raid and the German guards beat us to the fence.

Finally, I wound up in Stalag IIB. You could see the Russians at night driving trucks through the woods. They didn't bother keeping their lights out or holding down the noise. The Russians liberated us.

Rumor had it the Americans were not far off, so small groups filtering out, going off on their own. Five of us started out walking, graduated to bicycles. Later, we commandeered a railroad handcart, one with the handles that go up and down, and away we went. When we got to a place where the tracks were destroyed, we just carried it around. That's how we got across no-man's land. It took us 5 days to reach the Elbe River. Once there, we bribed a German civilian to let us use his rowboat and rowed to the American side.

That was it, 16 months after being captured, I was a free man. We were flown to France and a few weeks later I was stateside, on a convalescent furlough and was discharged in a few months. It wasn't until 1961 that I learned I had been promoted to corporal and awarded the bronze star in addition to 4 battle stars, a purple heart, good conduct medal, and combat infantry badge. That's how long it took the paperwork to catch up with me.

Richard M. Good

I was barely 18 years old when the Army drafted me in November 1943 and I went off to Ft. McClellan, Alabama, for basic training. In the spring of 1944, I was sent to Brockton, Massachusetts, a staging area en route to Europe.

I, along with about 8,000 others, boarded the "USS America." I had never been on anything bigger than a rowboat. It didn't take long to discover that I got seasick. We were 9 days getting to England and I was seasick the whole way. Many of the guys going over worried about getting hit by German torpedoes. Me, I was so sick I was afraid they weren't going to hit us!

We landed in Liverpool, then went to Southampton, another staging area, where huge masses of troops were waiting to go to France. Eventually, I was assigned to Company I, 12th Infantry Regiment, of the 4th Infantry Division. We started across the channel on June 10th and landed on Utah Beach, 2 days later--D+6.

The LCIs stopped about 200 yards offshore and dropped us into water over our heads. We were loaded down with equipment, so it was impossible to swim. You had to hold your breath and walk under water and breathe in between waves. It was an eerie feeling.

Hitting the beach, we still saw plenty of evidence of what had taken place a few days before. It was pretty gruesome, seeing the dead and wounded floating in the water and lying on the beach. This was the first time it really dawned on me what might happen. I didn't dwell on it though. The thing was simply to survive.

My regiment was sent to help "clean out" the Germans still holded up in Cherbourg. From there, we went to Carentan. The Germans had flooded much of that area, so when American glider pilots landed, many cracked up in the hedgerows and some drowned. In fact, I've still got a piece of one of those gliders at home. Also, at Carentan, I happened to be with some troops who overran a German airfield who left in such a hurry we captured intact an M109 Messerschmidt. That was the first jet plane any of us had ever seen. Later they took it back for inspection.

By then we had already moved on to Mortain. Here the Germans counterattacked and things got real confusing. Nobody knew quite where to shoot. Suddenly, my company found itself caught right in the middle of a tank battle, with German tiger tanks firing on one side of us and Shermans on the other. The noise was deafening. That's when I got wounded in the arm and eye, and had to be evacuated. It took a while for my hearing to return to normal.

After a few weeks in the hospital, I rejoined the 12th Infantry Regiment, but with a service company this time rather than a rifle company. There I met a captain from my hometown, Richmond. He needed a driver and asked me if I

could handle a jeep. "Sure," I said. Of course, I'd never driven one before in my life. But, I figured I could learn quick enough--if it meant staying with the service company instead of going back to a rifle company.

The captain was the chief motor officer in charge of convoys, and picking spots for maintenance crews to set up. Often he and I drove reconnaissance along the front looking for places to put the company. On our way back, it was not uncommon to find engineers sweeping the roads for mines--the same roads we had driven over a few hours before! I told him we should nickname our jeep "Mine Sweeper."

During the big push on St. Lo that summer, I remember being overawed by the Allied saturation bombing. You had to see it to believe it. The sky was filled with bombers. It looked like a giant flock of birds, and when the bombs hit, the whole ground shook and everything vibrated. We were in trenches but it really didn't make any difference. Four or 5 guys were nearly buried alive. A few others suffered broken arms and legs as a result of the shock waves and dirt and things hitting them.

Following St. Lo, my regiment joined the Free French in liberating Paris. That also was a sight to see with swarms of people and cheering crowds all around us. At one point, I managed to go up and actually sit on the steps of Notre Dame cathedral. It was all very exciting. Later, though, when it came time to pull out, we had a hard time rounding up all our people. They had just kind of dispersed into the city--disappeared.

But the war wasn't over for us by a long shot, as we soon learned. The 12th had an even rougher time of it that fall and winter up around Aachen, Cologne, and in the Huertgen Forest. I happened to be in Bastogne on December 16th, the day the Germans launched their final offensive, at the start of the Battle of the Bulge. About 7 o'clock in the morning all hell broke loose.

We were in the process of loading trucks with ammunition to take down to Luxembourg, when the artillery started pouring in. The fellow there told me: "You got two trucks loaded. Better get out of here. I'm blowing up the rest." We high-tailed it out of there. The highway had already been cut, so we went across country, and used back roads to Luxembourg.

Following the Ardennes campaign, I spent the last days of the war down around the Brenner Pass rounding up Germans. By then thousands were giving themselves up daily after a token show of resistance. For a while, it looked as though I would be serving with the Occupation Force. We had even started to train for that when the 4th Division got orders for the South Pacific.

I left the port of Le Havre on a small tub, the "USS Seabass". It seemed to bounce all over the place, and it was much slower than the one I came over on. So this time I was seasick for 16 days! While on leave at home, the Japanese surrendered. It was all over. I was home free.

Lloyd C. Guerin

I was working at the Letterkenny Ordnance Depot at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, as a guard. In 1942 I wrote a letter to my draft board at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, and asked for a voluntary induction. When I got a letter to take the physical, my wife thought I was drafted, but I told her before I left I had asked to be drafted.

I wanted to go in the paratroopers but I was 34, 2 years too old, so I went in the Infantry. I didn't want a desk job, but wanted to fight the war. I took my basic at Fort McClellan, Alabama. It was hard, but since I was a security guard, I was in pretty good shape so I made it OK. Most of the soldiers were between 19 and 22 years old, so they called me "Pops."

We landed in England and moved a few times before we crossed to France. I wasn't assigned to a unit until I crossed the Channel. They called names and told us what unit we were in. I went to the 9th Division. It was D+4 when we landed on Omaha Beach; there was a lot of noise from artillery, and wreckage was all over. We walked to the front at night. I was so scared.

I remember a tanker came back and said there was a sniper keeping them from cleaning out some mines, and they wanted the infantry to get him. My squad leader saw me and another guy and said, "Hey you two, go up and get that sniper." He might as well told me to build a stairway to Heaven. I didn't know what to do. We crawled about a 100 yards up a ditch. I looked back and the other guy wasn't there. When I got a little further the sniper stopped firing. I don't know what happened--either someone shot him or he left. But the tankers said it was OK so I went back. The squad leader asked me what happened and I said, "Job completed," or something like that.

At first we fought in hedgerows. Most of the time we were one hedgerow away from the Germans (70 to 200 yards) but sometimes at night, we were on opposite sides of the same hedgerow. Some of our soldiers looked to me like their father. They'd ask advice, especially the new ones. We learned a lot the hard way. The Germans would shoot tracers in about a 35° arc over the hedgerows. But they had another machine gun firing right over your head. It was a German trick. We'd tell the new guys, "If you hear shooting keep your heads down." Some would get nervous and look over and get shot. If a recruit made it for 2 days he'd probably be OK, but many of them never saw daylight on the line. We also found it was safer to get close to the Germans because we could get under their mortar fire.

After we broke through at St. Lo, the fighting changed to towns and forests. I don't know which was worse. We found town and street fighting was better at night--we had fewer casualties but it was harder on the nerves.

I was wounded 3 times. The first was on 9 September when I was in the Hurtegen Forest and was shot in the leg by a machine gun. I crawled back a few hundred yards then walked. I spent 3 months in a hospital in England.

It was a real revelation to see that hospital workers and truck drivers had the latest uniforms and equipment while we at the front were living in a hole. The "Stars and Stripes" said the new stuff was going to the Infantry, but I was in the Infantry and didn't have any. We were allowed to buy 4 packs of cigarettes a week--the hospital ward boys could buy 7 packs. It was hard to get cigarettes sent by mail, there was just too much black market.

Another time we had an assignment to take some high ground while my squad was leading. We were half way there when about 10 of us got cut off. The Germans let our patrol through, then they sealed us off. We had a walkie-talkie, and our commander told us to dig in and stay put. I was wounded in a knee and leg by a mortar shell fragment, and a little later was wounded in a wrist. On the fifth day, a cargo plane dropped some ammo and food to us. We put out panels where we wanted the stuff dropped and they did good--put the parachutes within a couple hundred yards. We never saw the Germans who cut us off. We took the high ground and came off the hill on the fifth day. The Germans had pulled out. I stayed in a hospital near Paris 5 weeks that time.

My unit was among the first to cross the Rhine on the Remagen Bridge. It was being shelled when I ran across. Planes were also trying to hit it. The bridge held up for 10 days before they got it, but by then the engineers had a pontoon bridge built.

We had been on the Elbe River about 2 weeks waiting for the Russians to take Berlin when the war ended. The bridges were out, but we had boats to cross the river to capture Germans. We didn't have any trouble, most wanted us to take them so the Russians wouldn't. We only saw the Russians from across the river.

About 20 days after the war, I went into one of those concentration camps. It was pretty awful. We had heard rumors about them and we all wanted to see one. The smell was the big thing you remember.

You know, it's a funny thing, on a rainy night I think about the war. I think it's because we were wet all the time and usually cold. Also, it was raining the first night I went to the front. Another rainy night a machine gun was shooting at us from a house. It hit our medic, so we got up to the house and threw in a couple grenades. When we got inside there was a dead kid, about 12 or 13. He was the only one there, so he did the shooting. I got to thinking about my kid about the same age. That was, and still is, pretty emotional to remember.

When the war ended in the Pacific I came back to Norfolk and went to Indiantown Gap, 11 days later I was discharged. They asked me to join the Reserves, but I got out. I think just about everybody did. If they had waited awhile and asked, I might have joined. The war was a good experience, but I wouldn't want to do it again.

William C. Hale

I graduated from Rutgers ROTC program in May 1942 and went on active duty June 5th. After finishing the infantry officer basic course at Fort Benning, Georgia, I served as a tactical training officer until February 1943. Then I went through parachute school. In May 1944, I was sent to Italy with the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment to prepare for an airborne operation into southern France. We spent the whole of June fighting in the area around Piambino and Castageto Carducci.

Originally, it was planned that we would be dropped into southern France at the same time the Allies launched the invasion at Normandy. That would have made a 2-pronged attack, but there wasn't enough transportation. So they waited to send us in. The so-called "Champagne Campaign," of which I was a part, got underway later in August of 1944.

When aircraft became available, they finally dropped us into southern France on the morning of August 15 on the Riviera around Nice and St. Raphael. That was my first and last actual combat jump. It was about 4 a.m. when we flew over the drop zone. It was still dark outside, and some pretty dense fog still covered the ground. As it happened, I was the last man, in the last plane, in the last stick, standing clear in the radio operator's compartment.

The crew chief told us we had gone in over the coast and were about on target. When the green light came on, we started to hookup. I guess I was halfway down the cabin before I managed to get my snap fastened around the cable. Then I went out the door like an express train! The shock was something else. The plane wasn't supposed to be going over 95 or 100 miles per hour. But, in fact, it was going closer to a 125 miles per hour.

After that shock, for some reason I had completely forgotten that we had gone in over land. And as I looked down at the fog, I swear all I could see below was water. In my mind, I could even hear the others screaming and hollering as they hit the water. All I could think was that this Air Force S.O.B. had just made a widow out of my wife!

I started pulling on the risers and at the same time brought my knees up under my chin--like a cannon ball--waiting to hit the water. Right then, I broke through the ground fog...and landed right on my butt. In the middle of a grape vineyard.

It hurt like hell. Even so, I felt lucky. One guy actually landed astride one of the stakes. He came walking into the aid station holding himself together. It was about 6 weeks before he got back with the unit.

There was plenty of confusion still that afternoon. We narrowly missed getting into a firefight with the British. It wasn't until nearly 3:30 p.m. that we all managed to link up at the regimental CP.

Later that fall, our regiment moved into the northern part of France. Just before Christmas, we were elected to join those already fighting at the Ardennes. Some really hard fighting in January caused a lot of casualties. The weather was good but awfully cold and miserable.

A lot of things happened in the weeks ahead. Had some close calls, few mishaps along the way, and met some real characters. Once during a mortar attack, General Gavin himself happened to be walking down the road in his cotton jumpsuit. He spotted a couple of us in the ditch. "Lieutenant, what are you and that private doing down there?" "Sir, they're shellin' the hell out of the road!" "Follow me," he said. So we did. Turned out all right.

Still as I look back now, the thing I remember most was the first combat assault. Me, a first lieutenant in the paratroopers, making a grand rear entrance into the south of France. I stayed in the Army and retired in 1967.

Ralph W. Hampton.

I served with the 4th Infantry Division from September 1943 until January 1946. In June 1944, we staged near Bournemouth, England, and crossed the Channel on D +1. I went ashore, as an artillery forward observer, but we took so many casualties driving on Cherbourg that I was forward observer, battery commander, and liaison officer to the infantry by the time we got there.

During the next 11 months, I saw more front line duty than any officer in my battalion, perhaps the division, and was the only one never wounded. I was so lucky soldiers gathered around me--and most of them got hit. Maybe that's the reason I was never wounded. By the end of the war I served with 10 different infantry battalion commanders.

The 2 things I remember most about that year of constant fighting were the hedgerow battles and the fall of Cherbourg. I remember the hedgerows because we couldn't see more than 50 yards. You had to use a map to know where you were. The map had lines on it for each hedgerow--looked like a spider's web. Those hedgerow battles were very severe, with "screaming meemies" and poor observation. In the fighting for Cherbourg, the enemy turned round their anti-aircraft guns and wiped out the whole infantry battalion headquarters, except the colonel, S-4, and myself. We got replacements and by midnight we entered Cherbourg.

The 4th Division was on the move following the saturation bombing and breakout at St Lo. We would be so tired, going 15 miles a day at times. Patton, on the Brittany peninsula had only about 10 miles between him and the ocean and 3 German divisions attacking his flanks. The 30th Division was the only one to protect his flanks, but they were outnumbered 3 to one. The 30th was in trouble, plus they had a lost battalion.

They decided to divert one regiment of the 4th Division to help. General Barton, our division commander, pleaded to send the whole division and not just one regiment--because we had taken many casualties, and were short of experienced soldiers. But they wanted to continue to exploit our breakthrough, so they sent only one regiment--mine.

The Mortain battle was probably the biggest bluff for a long time. We were down to approximately 50 men per company, yet we would attack every morning. I can remember the orders even today. "The 30th Division, with the 12th Regiment of the 4th Division attached, will attack." That was it; every morning. We didn't have enough to attack, but we would jump off anyway. I had lots of artillery ammunition, so I shot up a storm, just like for a major attack. We might gain a 100 yards, but couldn't fight and dig-in at the same time, so we'd have to fall back. That went on for 4 days and nights. On the fifth morning, we attacked but the Germans had pulled out. I remember Patton didn't seem to appreciate our sacrifice.

Other things I won't forget are the liberation of Paris and the fighting in the Huertgen Forest--also the crossing of the Siegfried Line. We had dug in

just outside the Siegfried Line one evening. The Germans put some air bursts over our heads. That worried me because I thought they were doing a high-burst registration, so I advised the infantry to dig foxholes, but make some cover overhead. Well, as it turned out, we didn't, they may have been short of ammo.

The next morning, there was such a heavy fog you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. Here we were with maps we weren't too sure of, couldn't see anything, and still attacking. I knew we would have a hard time knowing where we were. So, all day I counted my steps and kept track with my compass. By evening, we had penetrated the line and were uncertain of our position. I had an excellent battalion commander--LTC Charles L. Jackson, a West Pointer, one of the best combat commanders I ever supported--and a good map reader. It was one of the few times we disagreed where we were. But I had kept track all day and was fairly certain.

We put up a little tent for blackout, got inside--the battalion S3 and myself--stretched a map and lit a candle. There must have been a hole in the tent. We were down on our knees looking at the map and a German patrol fired and put a row of holes about 2 feet over our heads. We blew out the candle and got out of there. We were bothered with enemy patrols the rest of the night.

When we began the attack next morning, I was making radio contact with my forward observers and listening to the Second Battalion liaison officer. There was quite a battle going on. All of a sudden, the liaison officer said, "Hey, are you attacking?" And I said, "Yes." "So are we," he said. "My God, do you think we're fighting each other?" We were all pretty lost. "I don't know," I said. "We're shooting 81-mm mortars and rifle fire." What are you doing?" "We're using 60-mm mortars and rifle fire, and some rifle grenades." Finally I said, "Mac, tell your commander to stop and see what happens." We did, and an entire company of Germans came up between us with white flags. We didn't know they were there. That's why we had been disturbed by patrols, they were trying to get back to their pillboxes.

After the infantry left, I went into a pillbox looking for maps, or anything I could find. While there, the telephone rang. "Uh oh," I said, "anyone speak German?" They said, "No, not that good." So, I said to get out fast, because the minute they don't get an answer, they'll know something's wrong and put a prep on this place. We got out and rejoined the infantry. Sure enough the Germans hit the place. We guessed that one right.

As I look back on those 11 months, I'm grateful for the experience, but I wouldn't go through it again for anything. But having volunteered only for ROTC, and having been everywhere because of that, it was an awesome experience. Above all, I'm grateful for God's guidance because I'm convinced that's the only way I went through such combat and keep my sanity was by putting my faith in God and letting Him work out the details. Finally I'm grateful for His giving America great soldiers, draftees mostly, who fought day after day.

David M. (Bucky) Harris

I took basic training at Fort Lee in 1942 and also went to Quartermaster OCS there in 1943. I shipped overseas in September 1943 and ran into my basic training Master Sergeant, now a Major, who had recommended me from OCS. I didn't have a job in England; I was in a pool with other QM officers, so he said he'd fix me up. I became the Mess Section Admin Officer for SHAEF, General Eisenhower's HQ for planning the D-Day Operation Overlord.

The event I remember most about D-Day began early, about 4 a.m. on 6 June, when we heard a lot of airplanes flying over constantly. At daylight, we saw wave after wave of fighters and bombers flying support for the invasion. We saw a few coming back. Those planes kept flying to France until about 3:00 that afternoon. At 10:30, a friend of mine who was in charge of Eisenhower's private mess called the Yankee Doodle Room, called me to come over to headquarters as they were expecting some visitors I might like to see. I had trouble getting by the more-than-usual guards, but then I knew the officer in charge of security so finally got in. After about 15 minutes, we heard the sirens of a motorcycle escort and then 2 big black sedans came through the main gate and stopped at the SHAEF entrance.

Field Marshall Jan Smutts got out of the first car. I recognized him by pictures I'd seen. The second car stopped and out stepped George VI, King of England. He was in full naval uniform with medals, sword, and a big plummed hat. I stepped back into the hallway as they walked past into the War Room where the D-Day invasion was planned and progress checked with large maps all over the walls. Evidently, they were told the details and progress of events. About 2 hours later, they came out and I managed to be back in the hallway as they left.

All that day, we got pieces of information about the landing. We would corner anyone leaving the War Room to try and get news. From the beginning, it looked as if it would be successful and all the speculation was over the casualties. On 6 June, Ike was at the coast with the troops, not at headquarters.

I stayed with SHAEF HQ and went over on D+40 to set up headquarters in Granville, France. The headquarters moved to Reims, but I stayed behind and went directly to the headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany. I saw Eisenhower 3 or 4 times a week in England, as well as many other generals. I saw General Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., whom I much respected, several times before he died shortly after D-Day.

I remember one day there was an Allied dinner party, celebrating the first anniversary of the complete victory in North Africa. This was before 6 June but right after General Patton's "face-slapping" incident in an Anzio hospital. There was some kidding of Patton and when the talk died down, Ike got up and said, "Listen George, you can be a sergeant in my Army any day you want to."

As I remember, Patton didn't laugh; as a matter of fact, I never saw him laugh during the whole war.

I stayed in the Service and retired in 1962 as a lieutenant colonel.

Joe Hirn

I joined the New York National Guard while I was living in Queens, New York City. I had tried to get into the Service twice before, but my mother wouldn't sign for me. On the third try, she saw I really meant to get in so she signed the papers. This was in September 1940 before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It was only for one year and wasn't the Regular Army, it was the National Guard.

So I signed up and left for Camp Pendleton the day we were federalized. Pendleton was at Virginia Beach; they had an old National Guard rifle range there. I was in Company C of the 244th Coast Artillery out of New York City's 14th Street Armory. We trained on the big 155-mm guns at Pendleton, shooting at targets out in the ocean.

I was there for 4 months and on 15 January, 103 of us left on an advanced detail to Camp Lee. We were the first troops there, before the QM group from Philadelphia came. We opened the Post. I went into Quartermaster supply. There used to be another street in front of where Mifflin Hall is today, on the end, near the museum, was the Quartermaster Office. The fourth barracks down was where I slept and our messhall was where Mifflin Hall is now.

At Ft. Lee I was a clerk in the 1326th Quartermaster Combat Battalion. I transferred back to Pendleton, then they shipped us to Alaska via Camp Murry, which is near Ft. Lewis and Tacoma, Washington. After a few weeks there, the Japs attacked Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands. We headed to an island called Unalaska, and from there we took power barges to our camp, Ft. Glenn on Umnak Island.

Going up to Alaska we had a ship full of soldiers and one nurse. She must have been 60 and she wore a grey wig. She was very nice and after 2 weeks on ship she began looking pretty good. We were at Ft. Glenn up there for two years, 1942-44, and the only women we saw was when Bob Hope came with his troupe. The USO show was the talk of the camp for 2 or 3 months after it left. I remember the Air Force used to fly in whiskey and we'd pay \$70 a quart. The Air Force made their money there.

While we were there we didn't see any action and most of us were looking for action. We had a DC4 Cat for pulling barge cables to get the barge to shore. One day one of the guys fell off it onto the tracks. He had no chance, it couldn't stop, it rolled right over him. We buried him there. That was the only death we had.

I wanted to see some action, so I joined the Army Air Force. I was an aviation cadet and went to Amarillo, Texas. I was there 3 weeks when General Esterbrook, head of the Army Air Force, sent a blanket telegram to all training areas stating the Air Force was overstrengthed and the Army needed fighting men, so they would transfer everyone of us who were not in flight training to the Infantry.

In March 1944 I went to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, outside of Muskogee. I was assigned to the 42d Division, the Rainbow Division, the Oklahoma National Guard, but I was transferred to the 1280th Combat Engineers. We put in Bailey bridges and then took them down. Lifting those bridge panels was the toughest job I ever had in my life. We practiced putting bridges over the Arkansas River.

We got to England on Thanksgiving Day, 1943, and the cooks gave us a full dinner. We didn't expect it; it was real nice. I remember watching the planes fly over for the D-Day invasion, thousands and thousands of them, but we didn't go over until March 1945.

We left Plymouth on LCTs and landed at La Harve and went to Camp Twenty Grand. Then we went up through Aachen and bombed out towns to the Rhone River and unpacked there. We set up headquarters at Rubinack, then moved near the Remagan Bridge where we made a landing field in 18 hours for the Air Force. The Air Force was so pleased with our work they said they would give each of us a plane ride.

I was talking to a group about how I wanted to get a ride with someone who would do a lot of rolls and tricks, and a pilot heard me so he said he would take me up. We were in a 2 seater, L-17. We took off straight up into a loop and from there he flew every which way. When we got back I thanked him and said it was the best plane ride I had ever had, and took off running straight for the latrine. I had to. While I was up I saw the devastation around the area, and it was real bad.

We took down the pontoon bridges beside the Remagan Bridge after the original bridge was repaired. That was one of the biggest projects we did. It took us about a day and a half.

I was the first man in my battalion to come home because I had 10 extra points for being in the Guard before the war started. I went ahead and stayed in for 20 years, it was real hard to find a good job after the war.

The last year of service I was assigned to the Army Pictorial Service in Long Island City, New York. I went on assignments in Greenland where we were on the ice cap and I remember seeing the sun rise at 11:00 and set one hour later--the shortest day I ever saw. I also spent 3 weeks flying around Columbia, South America, photographing bench marks on tops of the mountains. That was for the Inter American Survey Group out of Panama.

All in all it was an exciting career and I made a lot of good friends. I still write to some around the world.

Browder R. Holland

In April 1943, I was drafted by the Russellville, Kentucky draft board. I went to Ft. Ben Harrison for induction. They asked me what kind of Service I wanted and I said the Air Service, meaning the Air Corps, but I ended up at Camp McCall, a part of Ft. Bragg as a member of the 17th Airborne Division. That was their interpretation of the Air Service. At that time, the 11th, 13th, and 17th Airborne divisions were formed or being formed.

We lived in tarpaper huts. I left the division after my airborne training and ground force exercise in Tennessee, to go to signal school. There was a request for 30 of us to go to Butner, a replacement center, then up to Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey, for signal training. I was selected, and made Tech 5 while in signal school. After school, I was assigned to the 3188th Signal Service Battalion which used teletype, radio and crypto. We trained near Redbank, New Jersey. In early fall, we went to England and in December we got ready to go to Europe.

After Christmas we went on a liberty ship with the 15th Army HQs Group for the continent and were torpedoed in the English Channel. It was about noon, 26 December, and the torpedo hit the stern. Our escort ships took off after the sub. A French frigate pulled up and lashed beside us. Everybody got on the upper deck and as the swells would rise and fall, we were told to jump all at once when the ships were even. Some panicked and jumped at other times and went between the ships and were drowned or crushed. They got us to an LST, the sub came back and hit the liberty ship again.

By this time, the captain was the only one on board. He was supposedly guarding the medical stores which included a lot of Scotch. When the second torpedo hit, we saw him thrown up in the air and off the ship. He was picked up with little injury. During the confusion there was an Army captain who panicked and cut away all the life rafts. We ended up in La Harve. I never touched the water.

As a unit, we went all around supporting different units. We wound up in Marseilles supporting the movement of people out of Europe to the Pacific Theater and also the shipping of material back to the US. When a ship was dispatched out for the US, we'd have commo with it out a certain distance. From what we could tell, ship after ship would go out headed for the US loaded with Army equipment and inside of 2 or 3 days it would be back empty, ready to load again. They carried mostly automotive equipment. This was from the fall to December of 1945.

I returned to the US in December 1945 and was discharged and went back to the University of Western Kentucky.

David L. Holzner

I was with the Virginia National Guard, Company G, 176th Infantry, 29th Division, when it was federalized in 1941 and went to Fort Meade. I took a short discharge in June 1941 and reenlisted in the Army Air Corps. I completed aerial gunners school at Chenault School, Illinois, as a sergeant. I was with the 41st Bomb Group but it was disbanded. The B-25s were sent to Langley Field to train for carrier takeoffs. I was put on the ground as a motor sergeant in a fighter and reconnaissance outfit early in 1943.

In December 1943 I was sent to England on the "Queen Elizabeth" with 24,000 other troops. It was a rough trip, rough seas with the threat of German subs, but the "Queen" could travel 40 knots. They assigned me to a vehicle waterproofing school in Scotland. We treated vehicles so they'd run in 4 to 6 feet of water.

On D-Day I was in a staging area at Southampton watching planes fly over and thinking it was going to be one hell of a bombing raid. There were planes from the US, England, and Canada, I didn't know there were that many planes in the whole world! There were cargo planes towing gliders, bombers and fighters, just everything. This lasted all day and night and the next day.

My unit, the 162d Tactical Reconnaissance unit of the 9th Air Force, landed on Omaha beach on D+15. There were about 600 of us and our job was to find targets for combat airplanes. Usually we had six P-51s with cameras that flew from any where in England that a landing mat could be put, but when the weather was bad we would have to go out on foot, jeep, or whatever, and gather information. As part of the 9th Air Force we went all over Europe. We were shot at a lot but I was never hit. I carried a rabbit's foot all through the war, and I guess it worked.

One day I was in a 3/4-ton weapons carrier waiting to cross a steel mat landing strip after a P-51 took off. As the plane came even with me, one of the 2, 500-pound bombs under the wings came loose and began to flip down the runway like a big watermelon. The thing blew up in front of me. I wasn't hurt but the cloth top of the carrier was blown off and I got one hell of a concussion. When the dust cleared there was a hole in front of me big enough to bury the truck.

In France, we were on our way to Saint Mere Eglise and got on the wrong road so we had to turn around. I was driving the last vehicle in convoy, a wrecker, so I backed into a side lane, and headed the other way a little distance and waited. The next truck did the same; but the third truck hit a mine and it blew apart like a balloon. I guess me and the second guy straddled the mine and the third truck ran over it.

Toward the end of the war I captured 2 Germans who said they were farmers, but they had on uniforms and were carrying guns and that was good enough for me. I took them to the rear to turn them over to a compound but every one I

came to was full. I had those guys 2 days. I thought I was going to have to bring 'em home with me! Finally I found a place to leave them.

The war was an experience. I wouldn't take a million dollars for it and I wouldn't want to go back through it for 5 million. I don't think we ever had a good time. The whole place was like a city dump, all blown apart. I was discharged 9 September 1945 at Ft. Meade as a Staff Sergeant.

Thomas A. Johnson

I was drafted into the Army on 8 March 1944 while living in Richmond, Virginia. I went by train to Fort Meade, Maryland, and was assigned to the infantry and sent immediately to basic training at the Infantry Replacement Center, Camp Blanding, Florida.

After 17 weeks of basic I went to the 65th Infantry Division at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and was assigned to the 3d Battalion, 261st Infantry Regiment. I was at Camp Shelby until the late fall of 1944, then shipped out with the division to LaHavre, France. On the way over a couple of ships in the convoy were sunk.

Once in Europe we went into camp near LaHavre. About 6 weeks later the division was assigned to the Third Army and we moved up into the line on the Saar River, a position we held until the Battle of the Bulge ended.

The winter of 1944-45 was bitterly cold; the wind blew, and it snowed a great deal. There was no way an infantryman could stay warm or keep his feet dry. The best you could do was keep your feet from freezing or from getting trench foot. Actually we were better off than most, because for part of the time our position was in the French Maginot Line. The pillboxes were damp and cold, but at least we could keep out of the wind and snow.

After the bulge closed, we settled into a defensive position in the Saar River valley. In early March the Third Army began its move to the Rhine River and crossed Germany, then into Austria and Czechoslovakia. Once we started we stayed on the offensive until the war ended in May.

It is a source of great personal pride to me to have served in General George Patton's Third Army. It was the smallest US Army in Europe, but it had the most spirit. Third Army captured more prisoners and inflicted more casualties than any other Army.

I saw Patton a number of times. He would appear even during a firefight. Once while we were resting, he drove up and asked how things were going. As he drove on, he stood up in his command car and yelled back at us, "Give 'em hell!"

By the end of the war, my unit had fought its way farther to the east than any other US unit. On 6 May we were on the Enns River in Austria, about 10 or 15 miles east of Linz. The Danube and the Enns Rivers were the dividing line between the US and Russian zones. By 6 May, the Germans on our side of the river surrendered. The 261st Infantry then deployed along the west bank to await the Russians who were coming up from lower Austria.

The German Army, keeping ahead of the Russians, began to move to our side of the river by crossing a railroad bridge that had been converted for vehicles. For 2 weeks they streamed across by the thousands, day and night. Sometimes in whole units, at other times in small unorganized groups. It was

all pretty rag-tag. They crossed in cars and tanks, but most walked, ~~everyone~~ from privates to generals, and every branch of Service--a tired, worn out army. They were ground down to a frazzle, old men, boys of 13 or 14--all combat veterans.

On 8 May, when the war ended, I was a sergeant first class, acting platoon leader, pulling duty at the control point. The Germans came past me on the bridge, still carrying their weapons because the Russians were behind them. Once across the bridge, they tossed their weapons onto piles along the side of the road. Those piles grew as large as one-story houses. Most had thrown away their helmets earlier, because wearing a steel pot meant you were still fighting. Once across, the soldiers were sent to a series of field PW enclosures for processing and questioning.

It was around 13 May when the Russian Army appeared on the east bank of the river and closed the bridge to further traffic. But a lot of people continued to swim or float across at night.

During the next 3 months when I stood on my side of the bridge, with the Russian outpost on the opposite side, I pondered the fact that we were the farthest east of any US Army troops in Europe. I stayed in the Army of Occupation until May 1946, when I returned home for separation.

Clarence Joyner

I volunteered for Service in February 1941 before Pearl Harbor. A bunch of us guys that hung around together in Richmond joined at the same time. I had my basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. On 7 December when the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor, I was at Ft. Lee.

I was a stevadore in the 564th Port Company. We unloaded ships in Liverpool, Naples, and Oran. We stayed the longest in Marsailles, France. That's where I was when the war ended. When we were in England, we were in some enemy air raids and would often run to shelters when the buzz bombs came over.

We worked 24 hours a day unloading ships, so with 2 shifts, we had some time off to go into town. My job in unloading was to be down in the hold and hook the crane onto the cargo. They would wrench the cargo up through the hatch door and swing it over the side onto amphibious vehicles that would take it on to shore. It would take us about 15 or 20 minutes to get a tank up and out. We used to handle bombs and all kinds of ammo. I don't ever remember anything breaking or spilling. Everything was packed real good. Also I never saw a dead person and don't remember anyone in my company even having an accident.

Every once in a while we'd see POWs go past. I was a quiet type and didn't get involved with crap games, but enjoyed watching the other guys. For a while I did run a donut making machine for the Red Cross; that was a good job. What I liked best was men working together to do a job. That was the first time I had worked with so many people to get a job done and it felt good.

After the war I wanted to stay in, but we all came home in July 1945 and I got out as a PFC. I guess I just did my job and came home. I never got in the Reserves. I enjoyed going all over the world and working with lots of people.

Harold H. Kolb

I was living in Columbia, Missouri, and volunteered in August 1940 while on a 2 week summer service at Ft. Riley, Kansas. I had a chance to sign up for one year active duty and took it. I had one year of schooling left at the University of Illinois which I thought I could pick up anytime.

I reported to Ft. Bragg and while I was there the war started and I was extended for the duration. The Ninth Division at Ft. Bragg was in tents. Showers, messhall, everything was in tents.

The last part of 1941 General Westmoreland came into our battalion as a captain. I was commo officer for the 34th Field Artillery Headquarters Battery. He use to ask a lot of questions. We called him Westy. He was a confirmed bachelor and rarely went into town. On December 7, some of us were driving into town when the radio program was interrupted with the news the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. Two days later I married the girl I had been visiting in town.

Westmoreland said he liked the field artillery but preferred the airborne artillery and years later got into that. He asked questions he didn't know answers to, really picked your brain. I remember standing a long while with Westmoreland waiting for FDR to come by; and he asked questions about communications which I had recently learned at school. We all liked him, he was nice looking and very serious. He made battalion commander as a LTC about May 1942 just before I left the unit to become battery commander in the 78th Division Artillery.

I went from Bragg to Butner then to Rucker and left for France. I was in combat by March 1945 in Germany near Essen. I was in the Twelfth Corps Headquarters, part of the the Fifteenth Army. One night we stayed in a captured German building and before going to sleep I heard there were showers set up in the basement. So I made my way there, the light was bad and the door to the shower looked like a bank vault. While in the shower I realized I was in a combination shower and gas chamber.

There was a lot of swapping of things going on. I had a bunch of cigarette lighters I had gotten for not much, and another guy had a watch. I traded him 2 lighters for the watch but it ran only 10 minutes. I got it fixed for about 30¢. Then the English came in with a bunch of Lugars. They wanted only watches in trade, so I traded the watch and I still have the Lugar. I also got a Lugar for 2 cigarette lighters.

The English were OK. They had a couple good drinkers and challenged us to a bout. We put up a man and next day we looked for him and couldn't find him. That evening we found him asleep behind a couch. He didn't win.

I left Germany and went to Belgium to try to go back to the States as I had plenty of points. I was waiting for transportation and went into a QM unit as

a Depot Utilities Officer. We had German POWs working for us and we were losing some but didn't know how. As it turned out, they were loading sacks of flour and food in boxcars at the depot and would build an igloo with the sacks in the middle of the floor and hide several men in each car. They had enough air and of course plenty of food to last. Some Germans working in the office would tell them where each car was going. They dyed their clothes and hid and when they got to the destination, bingo they were civilians. We put a stop to that.

I came home on a victory ship that hit a big storm and lost half the life rafts, had propeller trouble and broke a mast. I came back to New York and got out in 1946. My wife was in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I stayed in the Reserves until 1951 when they began giving periodic physical exams. I was getting asthma shots and they said I would either have to get out of the Reserves entirely or go in the Honorary Retired Reserves. I took the latter. A friend of mine, I found out much later, had a similar deal offered and he went to see Westmoreland who was then Commandant of West Point and told Westy his story. The next day my friend was back in the Reserves.

As some of us said on the way home from Europe after the war, "We got a million dollars worth of experience, but wouldn't take a million to do it again!"

Ronald J. Lee

I entered the Army as a draftee in September 1941 and went through basic training at Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyoming. I expected it to be a limited tour: "Goodbye, dear, I'll be back in a year." But Pearl Harbor changed all that. I went to OCS instead and graduated from the Quartermaster School at Fort Lee in August 1942.

When the Allied invasion of Normandy took place 2 years later, I was stationed at Fort Shelby, Mississippi, serving as a supply officer for the 65th Infantry Division. Within 6 months, however, we received orders to join Patton's Third Army in France.

We arrived at the port of Le Havre in December 1944, and I had my first look at Normandy Beach. From there, we went directly to a large inland cantonment known as "Camp Lucky Strike"--one of the original tent cities. It was a massive staging area with few comforts. It was the middle of winter, cold, and many of the tents lay flat under the weight of snow--a pretty depressing sight.

During the next several months, on into the spring and summer of 1945, I participated in operations in southern France, Germany, and Austria. With the Germans constantly falling back and our own supply lines extending further and further inland, I managed to see a great deal of the countryside from Strasbourg to Salzburg. Here and there beautiful country estates stood untouched by the war. Bavarian farmers coming from the fields would nod respectfully to GIs on the road. They knew the end was in sight.

As a quartermaster supply officer, I guess the thing I remember most vividly was how wasteful American troops were in a combat zone. We think of today as a "throwaway society" but the same was true back in World War II. For example, GIs in Europe usually discarded their winter overcoats at the first sign of spring. Our men constantly were picking these up and stacking them in piles along the roads, so salvage units could transport them to the rear. Before long, we had accumulated literally mountains of discarded clothing.

The same was true of any other equipment which the troops found to be extraneous. Often they threw away gas masks and kept the carrying cases. The latter, it seems, were better suited for carrying candy bars, cigarettes, and other small things.

I have to contrast that with German soldiers. Whenever we came across a captured German, I noticed that he almost invariably had all his gear intact. He didn't throw anything away. It amazed us to see them carrying, and sometimes wearing heavy overcoats in the heat of summer.

Aside from that, what sticks out most in my memory are the many problems which had to be overcome in order to keep the supplies moving. Mainly, I dealt with Class I and III supplies, rations and petroleum. It was almost impossible

to get an accurate count for rations. We had to feed not only our own troops but also other units passing through, plus hundreds of prisoners of war and displaced persons (DPs). We tried to provide one type of ration for GIs, another for working PWs, still another for nonworking PWs, and so on.

Of course, many of the troops who were tired of K rations and powdered eggs "liberated" fresh produce, from the local populace. Supply discipline was always a problem, so was looting. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to take home a cherished dagger, Luger, or some other souvenir from Europe. It got so bad at one point, I remember, the order went out to do "More shootin' and Less looting."

After V-E Day, the fighting ended but not the problems. People still had to be supplied, fed, and clothed during the occupation. DPs in growing numbers had to be cared for, deloused, and looked after. Masses of German civilians moved from one occupied zone to another. Each day grew more frustrating as QM units were suddenly demobilized or transferred to the Pacific. At the end of the war I was sent to a quartermaster unit in the 9th Division where I served until June 1946.

Charlie V. Lewis

I was living in Elmira, New York, when I was drafted on 27 January 1942, at age 22. I had completed high school and was an electrician's helper. I went to Ft. Niagara for my induction, then took a troop train to Camp Croft, South Carolina.

The first 6 or 7 weeks was basic infantry training, then I was trained as a radio operator for 13 weeks. From Croft I went to Ft. Devens, Massachusetts, and joined the 179th Infantry Regiment, Company B. It was part of the 45th Division, the Thunderbird Division, made up mostly of men from Oklahoma and Texas. I trained with the 179th as a rifleman all summer.

The unit went to Pine Camp, New York which is now Ft. Drum. It was really cold there, but we had well-insulated barracks. We were there until the spring of 1943 when we went to Camp Pickett. I was selected to go into combat deception service. It was a small group, and we went to Little Creek and were trained by all 3 Services. We had Army officers and Navy personnel in our unit. We trained using radio deception, and we employed decoys and fictitious units, mainly communications.

From there we went to Ft. Eustis and then got on a ship for North Africa. They broke up the unit there, and I went back to the 179th which was in Sicily, as fighting in North Africa was over. We landed at Salerno, Italy in about September 1943. It was an unopposed landing, but we weren't sure what we would find. We set up a perimeter and moved inland until we hit a German unit. I couldn't tell the difference in fighting Italian or German troops. We fought up to Monte Cassino and there we were pulled out and sent around to Anzio.

We landed in boats on D+1 and the fire wasn't too heavy at first. The terrain was not good as the beach was surrounded by high hills. We didn't push-in and capture the high ground. We fought a holding action for a long time. We were there months.

At Anzio we had a perimeter of 3 or 4 miles radius and about a half mile inland. I was on patrol one night and me and one other guy went to investigate an out-building of a farm house. We were fired on. I returned the fire but my buddy took off. Eventually we both returned to the squad.

In February we attacked as part of VII Corps, Fifth Army. I was still there in late February 1944 when I was wounded and sent back to the hospital. By that time the Germans had brought up artillery with observation posts on the surrounding hills. It was pretty bad, they were looking down our throats.

I was hit in the side of the head with a piece of an artillery shell and no doubt the helmet saved my life. It looked as if someone opened my helmet with a meat cleaver. I walked back to the aid station. I was surprised to find how nice the doctor was. He even shared his food with me and acted like I was his only patient. My wound was a gash, no fractured skull, it didn't even knock me out. I was stunned and scared because I did not know how bad it was.

They evacuated me to a hospital near Naples. They kept me there not so much for the head injury, but because I had a bad case of trench foot. Trench foot was fairly common. My feet had never been warm or dry and that caused a circulation problem. I wore the conventional boot and we waterproofed them, but standing in water all the time would ruin any shoe. When we dug-in, you'd always hit water in 3 feet, so we stood in water most of the time. Blood doesn't circulate properly and your feet turn purple.

I was in the hospital for a couple weeks, then I went to a replacement depot near a race track near Naples, Italy. It was a very big replacement operation. When I went back to B Company the personnel had changed drastically. It seemed to me 75% had gone. I was a squad leader so got rid of the BAR and took a much lighter M-1. I still wasn't 100% well and an officer sent me back. I had bad hearing before I came in, and now it was difficult for me to tell where sound was coming from, which was death for a rifleman.

Most of the time we ate C rations and that got old; it surely did. I remember once they brought up some fresh bread and I had half a loaf. It was delicious, just like cake. I tried to save some for the next day but it was so good I ate it all. K rations got old too. One time we were issued some captured German rations and I had a can of meat and got dysentery from it. I don't think it was poisoned but I got very sick. We were given German rations to break the monotony of our own rations, we never ran out of US food. There were 4 cigarettes in each K ration, sometimes you'd get a pack.

I went back to the replacement depot and was temporarily assigned to a signal company. I was with them for a few months. While over there I did tour Pompeii. Then in July 1944, those of us ineligible for reassignment to a front line unit came back to the States. There was a fairly large number of guys like me. We came back on a Liberty ship that took 25 days to cross, and landed at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.

I remember occasionally we had a holiday meal. It wasn't that the food was so delicious under combat conditions, but what I remember was the kids gathering up the scraps after we finished. Some of the GIs spoiled their leftovers on purpose. That bothered me, but I guess more GIs gave food to the people. We didn't see a chaplain much but I went to services when I could.

At Camp Patrick Henry I got 21 days delay en route and went home before reporting to Camp Butner, North Carolina. From there I was assigned to an MP unit in New York City, part of the 1240th Service Command Unit. I kept the troops in line in bars or wherever. We had our own police station and didn't use the city's. I was there for a year, until October 1945. I remember V-J day was wild, but we were lenient. After I got out I went home to Elmira.

Irvin R. Lewis

I volunteered when I was living in Hopkinton, Rhode Island in September 1940 and joined the 243rd Coast Artillery at Fort Adams, Rhode Island. I had not finished high school and was working in a CCC camp to help out financially at home. Then, for adventure reasons, I enlisted in this National Guard outfit that had been called to active duty for a year's training. I stayed in Rhode Island until 1943; but wanted to see action, so I transferred to the 106th Infantry Division which had just been activated at Fort Jackson. We went on the Tennessee Maneuvers, then convoyed to Camp Atterbury, for a few months, then on to Camp Miles Standish near Boston. The whole division went over to England on 2 ships in November 1944.

We picked up our equipment and vehicles at Liverpool then loaded in LST's for the trip to La Havre, France. We convoyed through France by 2½-ton trucks to St. Vith, Belgium, where we relieved the 2d Infantry Division on line. They said they had not seen much action, and we didn't either for the first 4 days. Then the Germans decided to make their last big push--and the Battle of the Bulge began.

The 106th took a real beating. I was in the 592d Field Artillery; we had 155-mm and could shoot 15 miles. I worked the switchboard. Our CO didn't like to move too much, so we'd go right up behind the Infantry and the light artillery would be firing over us, but the light artillery would eventually pass us, and then we'd move up real close again until we ran out of range. The 106th had been on line covering a 27-mile front for 7 days when we were hit. We took 50-percent casualties. We lost two battalions, two light artillery battalions, two infantry regiments, plus supporting units.

I was on the switchboard when the last message came from Div Arty HQs just before they were overrun. "We're pulling out. You're on your own. Good luck." We pulled out too. The firing batteries regrouped in Nancy, France. We were then given priority for equipment and replacements, and we were back in business. We were sent to the First Army and began working only for First Army HQ. We fired support where ever we were needed. We saw plenty of action.

After the surrender we took over a POW cage for about 2 months. We had 2,000 to 3,000 in our holding area. Eventually we shipped them to the Russian cage at Mannheim. We got an occasional SS trooper dressed as a Wehrmacht soldier and we put them in the cage with the Wehrmacht people, and if the Wehrmacht found out who he was, they would kill him, literally beat him to death. We would segregate them if we could, but sometimes they didn't identify themselves. There was a lot of hatred because the war had gone badly.

It was a good war, at least we knew who the enemy was for sure. I went to the 69th Division, but it was scheduled to go home and I didn't have any pressing business back in the States, and I didn't want to return, so 6 of us volunteered and were sent to Marseille, France, where they were beginning to ship troops to the Far East. But the war ended, so I went to La Havre, and

came back on the "USS Santa Rosa", a Grace Line cruise ship, which had been converted to a transport.

In New York Harbor we passed lots of tugs with bands, I remember the first song I heard was "Roll out the Barrel." We went by the Lady who received many a blown kiss.

My dad was working at the Atwood Machine Shop, making valves for submarines, and they were going to give me a job for \$1.25 per hour. But after 3 weeks, life began to get boring so I went down to the recruiter and they still had their quota to fill for that month, so I got sworn in again as a Tech 4th Grade and went to Fort Devens. I stayed in for 24 years. I asked for QM, and they sent me to Fort Eustis. Then I was selected by name in 1946 to go to Los Alamos, NM for a guard, MP duty, and driver. For me it was a new place and a new challenge. When we first arrived there, they confined us for 3 weeks while they checked us out. There were about 50 of us.

My first job was to drive the Railway Express truck every day from Santa Fe to Los Alamos and back. They wouldn't let civilians on base, so I drove about 40 or 50 miles. Then I had a job driving for a special detail. I would drive what we called the Black Maria. It was a 1½-ton Chevy panel truck painted black with no markings on it. We always drove at night. We went different ways each time. We'd drive for 4 to 5 hours, stop by the side of the road, meet another truck and the drivers would switch, and we'd go back where we left earlier. I don't know what I was hauling. I did that for about 5 months, once or twice a week. Sometimes I wonder what we had on board, but I guess what we didn't know won't hurt us. They changed our jobs often, I guess so one person wouldn't get too familiar with a routine.

I stayed there about 1½ years, then went to White Sands for 11 months until they closed that place. I was transferred to Trinity Base, which is now the northern part of White Sands Missile Range and stayed there for about 10 months. When they closed that I went to Sandia Base and my 3 year tour was up in New Mexico.

The Korean Conflict began and I volunteered again, another war, new places, new challenges. I gave Uncle Sam 24 years and the only regret I have is that the war ended in Japan before I could make the complete trip around the world. But I darned well tried.

Harold J. McClellan, Jr.

I was drafted at age 19 while I was living in Sheffield, in northwestern Pennsylvania. I took my physical in Erie and went to the induction center at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. From there I went for basic training, about 12 weeks, at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas. I got into a medical training unit there. I didn't especially ask for it they just assigned me there. From there I went to Camp Rucker for medical and surgical technician school. Then I was assigned to the 312th Station Hospital at Rucker, and we later went to Camp Miles Standish near Taunton.

We left the country on a British luxury liner from Boston. We were part of a large convoy. There were no problems going over. I was seasick the first 5 days. We landed at Liverpool then moved into the Midlands at Stafford. At that time I was a corpsman on a ward.

We took over the 36th Evacuation Hospital; it was redesignated the 312th. That hospital had some North Africa casualties in it. It was a neuro psychiatric hospital with shell-shocked patients. The war had been too much for them. The Army recognized that problem and was sympathetic. Major Douglas Kelley who later sat in on the Nuremberg Trials, was the Chief of Psychiatrics.

We went over to the continent in July 1944 and set up at Ciney, Belgium, and reformed as the 130th General Hospital. People in the unit were from all over the US. We stayed at Ciney until the war was over.

We had to evacuate the hospital in December 1944 because of the German breakthrough. We moved the patients we could, but 21 of us stayed behind to tend those who couldn't be moved. They asked for volunteers, and my buddy from New York City told them both he and I would stay behind, so I couldn't say no.

During the Battle of the Bulge, we did the work of 3 Evac hospitals. We evacuated most patients by train, about one and a half miles across town, to the French coast. We thought we were going to be overrun. A couple of our worst cases died. After 5 or 6 days, we walked out under cover of darkness. The hospital was never occupied by the Germans, but they were in the area. We were away about 10 days and then came back. The hospital had been looted by civilians and soldiers. We started again. I was still a corpsman.

We had female nurses there. We worked 12 hour shifts and had little time to think or become involved with the casualties. The hospital ran 24 hours a day. I remember sometime when it was real busy the surgeons had to quit scrubbing their hands because they did it so much their hands were raw. They just changed sterile gloves.

Black troops were not segregated in the hospital because nobody stayed there that long. We would get soldiers in their uniforms and we'd cut them away. When you stripped them down you could hear metal hitting the floor where fragments had been caught in their clothing or equipment. I got so I could

look at a soldier and tell most of the time if he was going to make it or not. We didn't save any bullets we removed to give to the soldiers.

Not everybody is suited for that type of work, but it didn't bother me at all. The hospital was in a permanent building, but I lived in a 12-man squad tent. We had some wounded POWs, and they got the same treatment as GIs and were very grateful. They were kept by themselves. The hospital didn't know when a big operation or push was coming. We just took cases as they came in.

One of the nurses was from my hometown and there was a trombone player who came through for the Special Services Army Band who also was from my hometown. There was a B-51 pilot from Sheffield who visited one day from a nearby base.

There were lots of USO shows. I especially remember Marlene Dietrich. They all put on good shows, and they would make us both happy and a little homesick. When the war ended I went to Camp Twenty Grand near Rouen, France, where we got a ship that was to take us back to the States for 30 days, then to the Pacific. Before we could get on board, one of our planes flew over and dropped leaflets saying Japan had surrendered. In a week we were on a Liberty ship heading home. I dreaded the war itself the most. When it ended we were all happy, but there were no parties.

Coming home I didn't lose all my money gambling. There was a lot of gambling, and usually one or 2 would end up with most of the money. We came into New York Harbor right past that beautiful lady, the Statue of Liberty. She looked good.

I went to Camp Kilmer and got a 15 day leave, then they added 15 more days onto that and I reported to Fort Indiantown Gap where I was discharged as a T-4. Fifty-nine days later I reenlisted as a PFC but was moved right up to a T-4. I stayed in for 20 years and retired at Ft. Lee.

Paul L. Meadows, Jr.

I was drafted in April 1943 when I was 18 and living in Hopewell. I took my physical at Virginia Union University in Richmond, and they found out I was color-blind. So I couldn't get into the Navy. It seemed most were trying to pass the physical, only one of the 20 or so from my area was turned down. He had a heart murmur.

I had just been married the first of the year so I was pretty lonesome. It was the first time I had been away from home. I was a mechanic before the war. My father and I had a shop in Hopewell. I knew I'd be drafted and thought about volunteering but my girl friend, who turned out to be my wife, didn't want me to, so I waited and we got married.

I reported to Ft. Lee for uniforms and went to basic at Camp Hood, Texas. I had basic training with a tank destroyer unit. After basic they split us up and I was part of the cadre training the next bunch of recruits through there. Eventually I went overseas as a sergeant with the company I trained.

We were in convoy and 2 or 3 ships went into La Harve, France, in January 1945. I was in the 869th Ordnance Heavy Auto Maintenance Company. We worked on tanks, trucks, amphibious vehicles, automobiles, and just everything. We supported the Sixth Army through Belgium, Holland, and Germany. Most of the Sixth Army was British but we worked on US equipment because the British used a lot of our stuff.

We worked on the amphibious vehicles used to cross the Rhine. They didn't have bridges. The amphibious jeep worked pretty well. We had most of our parts and equipment with us and usually worked just one shift. In Belgium, we were set up in a slaughter house and boy was that cold. They were still slaughtering animals in part of it, and we were living in the other part as well as working in there too. There was always lots of snow in the winter.

Most of the time, vehicles that were hit by enemy fire were no good, there was no saving them, you just left them. We had a team of inspectors out all the time making decisions on what to bring back and what to leave. Sometimes I was on the team as the automotive expert. We traveled all over. The largest cause of broken down vehicles was ignition problems, nothing real big. Usually it just wouldn't start. I was in automotive repair, but we repaired small arms and just about anything.

Most of the guys in my unit were from the Detroit area. I think I was about the only one from Virginia. Many had worked in automotive plants and they were real good.

We had air raids. One time we were moving up and my truck got lost from the convoy and was heading for the enemy lines when a GI stepped out and warned us not to go further down the road. We eventually found where we were suppose

to be, but it took us a day and we had to sleep in a hay pile in a cellar for a night. I don't think anyone in my unit got wounded.

I saw Mickey Rooney in a show in Germany. I saw others too but his was the one I remember. One day I was driving a truck out in the country by myself after the war and a rear wheel came off. I got a German farmer and his horse who were in the field, and together we got the truck up so I could fix the wheel good enough to get back in. I chained the rear axle up and just put it in front wheel drive and it was OK. I couldn't speak German and the farmer didn't understand English, but we got by. My unit sent out a search party to look for me and I passed them on my way in.

I was in Germany when the war ended. There was a big black market and cigarettes and candy were hot items. You could get most anything you wanted with enough of these. We were suppose to go to the Pacific so we didn't celebrate on V-E day. They put us on a train and took us to Marseilles, France, and then we took a Liberty ship through the Panama Canal without stopping in the States. We did stop in Panama for 2 days and it took the MPs to get us all back on board. Most didn't want to go to the Pacific. They felt they had done their part in Europe. Lots had to be rounded up in town and escorted to the ship. Some did jump ship there.

We got to the Philippines and set up to support the invasion of Japan. We got crates of disassembled truck parts and put them together. We were set up pretty good, then we had to move. Actually we moved twice, from the southern part to the northern part on the other side of Manila and set up on the beach. When they dropped the bomb, it was all over and we celebrated then. We were slated to go into Japan early, so we were glad to see it end.

I came back under the Golden Gate Bridge on a troop ship. It was so foggy close to shore we ran into the back of another ship and a few guys were hurt. Then crossing the country my train derailed in New Mexico. I was in doubts if I was going to get home or not!

I was mustered out at Ft. Bragg and came home. A few years later I joined the Marine Reserves and was called up for the Korean War but stayed at Camp LeJeune working on Post vehicles for about a year. Then I got out of the Reserves. I probably would have stayed in if I hadn't been married. I didn't dread it.

Herbert L. Miller

I was living in Petersburg working for Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company. I volunteered in September 1942 when I was 20 and was called to duty in October. I went to New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, for induction. After about 10 days, we shipped out to Camp Young, California.

I enlisted in the 530th Ordnance Company which had about 65 men from Virginia and 15 from West Virginia and some from Pennsylvania. The unit was formed by the Virginia State Highway Department. Different companies and organizations sponsored units so you could be with people you knew. I saw an article in the newspaper about the Highway Department unit and asked about it because I knew my draft number was coming up soon. It was a good deal, we had a lot of fellows from the same area with a lot in common. It helped to make you feel like you were at home. The first time I was homesick was when they busted up the unit after the war and some went home and some went to other units.

At Camp Young they taught basic and desert training. We went on maneuvers twice there because they were planning to send us to North Africa, but the war there ended. We were shipped to Warminster, England, on the "Frederick Lykes." Going over we had a couple scares at night when they got us all up on deck because subs were supposed to be nearby.

In England I was the company clerk, the unit worked on tanks that were to be part of the D-Day invasion for the Third Army. We had a Pennsylvania hillbilly in the unit. He couldn't have weighed 125 pounds, and he drove the biggest thing we had--a tank recoverer. They were too big to take into a field so we had them parked on the road side with a camouflaged net. He was a good driver, and could handle that thing like it was a passenger car. That retriever was his, nobody else's; he thought the world of it.

A lot of Air Force guys were in the staging area with us. One day a bunch came by while he was sitting up on top of the cab, and one said to him, "What are you going to do with that big thing when you get it over to France?" He looked down and said, "Well, I'll tell you what we're going to do. I'm going to haul Berlin down to the coast so you can get to it, to bomb it." That story circulated all through the unit and I still think of it and laugh to myself.

We fabricated extra armor, maybe 2 to 3 inches thick, to put around tank ammo boxes and around where the personnel sat. It added a lot of weight. We tried to make floating tanks. There was a big lake there to see if they'd float and about half did. We also experimented on making trucks, jeeps, and weapon carriers run underwater by putting the exhaust up in the air and having breather pipes for the carburetors. We did a pretty good job on that. We also did chain flails, driven off the front sprocket of the tank, to explode mines in front of the tank. We did some more things to tear up hedgerows after we set up shop in France.

Three weeks after D-Day we landed at Treviers, France, and set up a collection point to retrieve the knocked-out tanks and those brought back for repairs or for parts. We didn't get enemy tanks, they were probably getting their own. We really didn't have a weapon that was effective against them so we didn't knock out many. The German 88s were more effective than our guns.

We had two M16 tank transporters with armor-plated cabs that weighed hundreds of tons each. They had 28 wheels and each one weighed 950 pounds. We'd get a call giving us a tank location, but we tried not to get in any shooting. We did get some with bodies still inside. One day they brought in a tank you could smell a mile away because its crew of 4 was dead inside. It was summertime and it had been sitting about 2 weeks. One of my guys went in but couldn't stand it so we called graves registration. The bodies were falling apart. I never forgot that odor. I haven't smelled it again, but I never will forget it.

We'd get about one tank a week on an average. Most of them went for cannibalization. One day they brought in one that had taken an 88 in the front, and it had gone clean through the tank with the nose sticking out the back. You could stop a Sherman by jamming the sprocket with a heavy piece of pipe.

Next we set up near Paris at the Vincennes racetrack. Then in March 1945, we went into Germany near Mannheim for 2 months. We looked for a big indoor space to set up in, and found an old railroad shop. When the war ended we were near Ulm, at an airfield in a large hanger. We used US stuff because Germans had the metric system and we didn't. The only civilians we had working were cooks, but after the war we had POWs working.

The war ended in May, we left in November and were discharged in December. They broke up units in July, and in August the war against the Japs ended. Our unit was coming back to the States, so they transferred out those of us who didn't have enough points to come home, and replaced us with wounded or those who had enough points.

We came back on a Navy cruiser, the "USS Philadelphia" because the Maritime Service was on strike I think. The Navy volunteered some ships and we came home in 6 days as opposed to 14 going over. There were 1,500 on the ship when we came into the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I went to Camp Kilmer, then to Fort Meade, and came home to Petersburg. I made a clean break and got out.

Grayson G. Morrissett

I completed the Aviation Cadet navigator training program and was commissioned a second lieutenant in December 1943. I joined the 863d Squadron of the 493d Bomb Group (Heavy) in McCook, Nebraska and trained with my crew. We left the States with new B-24s in late May 1944. When we got to England I was put on a lead crew. I only flew one mission with the crew I trained with in the States. Lead crews flew the number one aircraft in each squadron and the other ships flew formation off them. This was a responsible job so the lead crews had 2 navigators and 2 bombardiers in a crew of 12.

I flew my first mission on D-Day. It was the first mission the group flew, previously we had flown only practice missions. Our target was near a town called Liseux in France. When we got over the target we couldn't see the ground. We had strict orders not to drop our bombs if we couldn't see the target, because we didn't know exactly where our troops were. So we turned around and came home. On the way over the Channel, 2 planes in the same element of our group collided and we lost the planes and 20 men. It was our first mission and we were inexperienced. The weather was bad too.

We landed with a full load of bombs. We never dropped bombs in France, Belgium, or the Netherlands, unless we could see the target. When we carried long delay fuses, we had to be careful. The fuses involved a vial of acid breaking and eating through a metal disc. The delay time depended on the thickness of the disc. You never knew if the vial had broken accidentally, so you always dropped those somewhere in the Channel.

Usually we got up about 11 at night, had breakfast at 12 or so, and began the briefing at 1 a.m. It was light by 4 a.m. and we'd take off by 4:30. We flew a lot in the summer of 44. Our worst mission was bombing oil refineries in Germany. We were in flak for over one-half hour one time. Another time we had to abort our mission because we had an engine shortout and couldn't fly the lead with 3 engines. The rest of the planes finished the mission.

British planes had lighter armor plate and less firepower. They had a few 30 caliber machine guns for protection, so they flew at night. The British did saturation bombing; that is, they would bomb an area. A Pathfinder plane would drop incendiary bombs to mark the target. A "Master Bomber" would circle the target and call in the planes to bomb a certain area. We had heavier armor plate and a lot of 50-caliber guns and flew in the daytime. We did precision bombing. We bombed a specific target rather than an area.

When we flew 30 missions we could go home. I finished 30 and signed up for 30 more. The war ended before I started my second tour. Our base was in the northeast of England. After the Germans were pushed back from the coast they launched their buzz bombs from underneath aircraft. The buzz bombs would pass over our base on their way to London. We had one crash by the gate to our base without exploding. You could hear it coming and when the engine quit, you'd just wait to see where it would land. You could see them at night, and generally searchlights would be following them.

There were a lot of air bases in northern England. From the air all the fields were similar and you had to be real careful. We were flying one day and were in radio contact with our tower and landed on the wrong field. That was pretty bad for a lead crew. We took a lot of kidding about that.

We left England 4 July 1945. The whole group flew back. We turned in our planes and went on leave. On 15 August 1945 we were in Chicago on our way to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on a troop train when we heard the war had ended. I eventually came back to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland and was discharged. I went into the inactive reserve as a first lieutenant. I went back to VPI for 2 years and finished my degree in engineering.

Gerard E. Noble

I graduated from Pennsylvania State University with an ROTC commission and planned to make a career in the Army. My father and I both felt a war was coming, so instead of going into civilian life and then into the military, I went directly into the military. Eventually, I made a career in the Army Reserves. I was from Philadelphia. When the war broke out, I was in the 16th Infantry part of the First Infantry Division at Fort Devens, Massachusetts.

In April 1942, I left the division and became part of the cadre of the new 76th Division, after spending 7 months at the Fort Benning Infantry School. From Boston, we shipped out for England on Thanksgiving Day 1944. We landed on the continent in January 1945 as part of the Third Army.

The 76th Infantry Division was part of XII Corps. We were to cross the Sauer River, which divides Germany from Luxembourg. At the time the river was at flood stage, 90 to 180 feet wide. Our crossing site was at Echternach. We were to attack German pillboxes, part of the Seigfried Line. The first wave of infantry crossed in 8-man assault boats and reached their objective later that day.

From 11 to 17 February 1945, the 385th replaced the 417th because they took heavy losses of men and equipment. We had pushed nearly 2,000 men across the river, and the only bridge was one footbridge. Resupply became a problem. At that time I was a major, the regimental S-4 for the 385th, so it was my problem. I used 400 troops from our reserve battalion to carry K rations, water, and ammo over the footbridge. Each man carried from 40 to 60 pounds on pack boards while following tape through mine fields, down and up some slippery slopes, all the time under artillery fire. Each man made several trips, and we got about 10 tons of supplies across that day. Later they completed a Bailey bridge so vehicles could cross. It was a good effort, with only a few strained backs and skinned knees. Without our "human supply line," the 385th could not have hung on.

Our unit was lucky because we had the same people for a long time and they were very good at their jobs. We had the best equipped regiment in Europe, we had things no other regiment ever had. We had captured a shower, a laundry unit, and a mobile machine shop where we could fabricate any part we needed. Also we had gotten a huge trailer, so we could pick up a vehicle and take it back and rebuild it.

We really fought 2 wars, one against the Germans and one against our Army. We had to move our illegal stuff at night. We changed the paint on the German vehicles from light sandy color to OD and put phony GI numbers on them. We had about 15 big pieces of captured equipment we had to keep out of sight. We had 3 German trucks and a lot of trailers. The only German food I ever ate was some anchovies and sardines. I had an occasional bottle of champagne. Really, US rations were better than the German rations. After the war, we turned in the German stuff. We had about a dozen more vehicles than we were suppose to. I was the S-4 and tolerated it, winked, and looked the other way.

We eventually ended up in an area that later was part of the Russian sector, so we were pretty far east. After we crossed the Rhine, things got easier as the German resistance was crumbling. When the war ended in Europe, I was regimental S-4 at age 25, fairly young for a major at that time, but I stayed that rank for 15 years.

The 76th was deactivated, so I volunteered to go to the Pacific with the 30th Division. I came home early on a 45 day leave, and while I was home the Japanese surrendered. The 30th Division was in the middle of the Atlantic so when they got here, they went to separation centers. Only a few men showed up at Fort Jackson where I was. As the division G-4 I helped close down the unit. When I got out in June 1945, I went immediately into the Reserves from which I retired much later as a colonel.

Dallas B. Pigge

I was drafted in December 1943 while living in Alexandria, Virginia, and went for a quick induction at Ft. Meade. From there I went on a troop train to Camp Blanding, Florida. We were almost frozen when we got there.

It was only infantry training at Blanding. We were there 17 weeks in 5-man huts with lots of discipline and a very rigid program. From there we went to Ft. Meade then to Camp Shanks, New York, which was our port of embarkation. We went over on the "SS Argentinian." There were so many GIs you could barely walk. One time we were in the hold and heard a tremendous explosion. We just knew we had been hit by a torpedo. Actually, the crew was having gunners' practice. We panicked, people scrambled in every direction.

We landed at Liverpool shortly after D-Day. We got new rifles, and boy were they good. Ours were worn out. We landed at Omaha Beach and joined the 29th Division at St. Mere Eglise as replacements. They put me in K Company of the 115th Infantry Regiment. Most guys were my age but some were pushing 40.

We walked a lot and crawled a lot too. We also dug a lot. Colored truck drivers took us to the front. When they heard the first shot, they stopped the trucks and we walked to the front where we were assigned to squads. My first order was to crawl up to the crest of a little rise to look over. The Germans opened up and dug up dirt all around my head. I never will forget that.

We were out in front attacking. No one seemed to care about the company's strength, just attack, attack, attack. On 3 October, we attacked this village. It was a company attack, and we had 2 light tanks. Compared to the German 88s they were like pop-guns. We had to go across an open field to this village that was supposed to have been empty. We were across the field and half-way through the village when the Germans counterattacked. It was then night.

Our company commander, Captain Schmidt, said we had to hold so we set up a defense. He had a "300" radio and talked to battalion all night, asking them to let us pull back, but they refused and said there was no reinforcements so do the best we could. An artillery duel lasted all night. It really got heavy toward morning. We felt the counterattack coming.

K company was no push over, we gave a good account of ourselves. We drove them back the first and second time, but the third time they had Tiger tanks. Ours had been knocked out long ago and we had taken casualties. Captain Schmidt said "For God's sake, get something white out the window." So we did. I was in a cellar because I had been hit in the shoulder and was bleeding. We went out with our hands up. I remember walking up those stairs with a German tank pointing its muzzel down the steps. It looked as big as a 55 gallon drum. That was the end of K Company.

As we were marched away, Captain Schmidt was killed by an artillery shell fragment. The same explosion killed a BAR man in front of me and a German on my right. We thought we would be shot, but they marched us hard all day and

put us in an old barn. Later, a German told us they had it in for the 29th since Normandy. He said if anyone tried to escape they'd shoot everybody. No one tried to escape. We were moved in boxcars. In an air raid the trains would stop and the guards would run for the woods and we'd be locked in. It was good the American pilots caught on, and would attack the engines, not the cars.

We went to a camp at Limburg, a real hell hole. Nothing to eat, no water and we were dying of thirst. We then moved to a big camp next to Munich called "Mooseberg" with different nationalities. We stayed there a long time on starvation rations. My wound fortunately was a flesh wound, all that was ever done to it was a US medic sprinkled on a little powder, and pasted some toilet paper on it. We were at Mooseberg most of the war.

We worked every other day because there were so many of us. I got sick with yellow jaundice. One day I was named to go on a special detail. That might have saved my life because on a small detail, you had a little more food, potatoes, and black bread. Death from untreated wounds, air raids, starvation, or disease in a POW camp was a daily thing. There was no medical help for us. We did a lot of railroad work repairing bomb damage. Then we were moved to Landshut out near Regensburg.

We had to battle our own air force. There were lots of air raids. We went into the woods, with women and children, and babies crying all night in the cold and snow. We were there a little over a month before the spring of 1945. One night the air raid sirens sounded but stayed on extra long. We found out from a guard it was a tank attack. They moved us to a little island in the Danube River. In a day or so we saw a German convoy moving to the front. It hadn't much more than gotten out of sight when it turned around and came back. We saw way off in a field what looked like two tanks. After the German convoy left an American jeep and tank came up to the river bank.

They turned us loose but the only thing they could tell us was to go that way and we would run into friendly troops. People took off in all directions. There were not many Americans in the group of about 200 prisoners, but we walked, rested, and kept going until we got to our lines. We were told to stay put and they would send help. They trucked us into Regensburg, and gave us food. You'd have thought we could eat a whole lot but we couldn't. We could only manage one or 2 bites. I was down to 115 pounds. I was checked in Paris and my wound was OK. We got a complete examination in New York. My wife was living in Richmond, near DuPont when she heard I was coming home.

The government had told my family they thought I was a POW but couldn't be sure. I was a prisoner for 7 months and 2 days. I had a chance to join the German Army to fight Bolshevism, which meant the Russian Front. No one joined.

Paul A. Reed

I was living in Amboy, Illinois, and volunteered in November 1943 when I was just 18 years old before I was drafted. I tried to get in the Navy but I was color blind. I was inducted at Fort Sheridan and from there I went to Camp Walters, Texas; that's near Mineral Wells. During basic training I volunteered for jump school. It meant \$50 extra a week. I went to Fort Benning where jump school was 5 weeks. I remember thinking there's no way they're going to get me out of a plane in 5 weeks, but they did. There was a very high drop-out rate. During the 5th week we would jump in the morning and pack our chutes in the afternoon for the next day.

After jump school I went to demolition school at Benning. I was picked for that, I didn't volunteer. Then I went on furlough. I was a big deal at home right after D-Day, with my jump boots, basking in the sunshine of what others had done. After the furlough I went back to Benning and then overseas. We staged at Fort Meade then went to Port of Embarkation, Camp Shanks, and boarded the "Mauritania" the largest ship in the British Navy after the "Queens." We were in England until Christmas Eve 1944. I had joined the 17th Airborne in England. We flew to France and went by truck to the front line. At first we were guarding the bridges at Verdun. That was the time they were jumping in Germans in GI uniforms to cause trouble. If I ran across any of them they were friendly. We got to the front at a place close to Bastogne. There were lots of guns firing. For miles you could see where the front was. We saw our first combat at Flamierge about 2 January. Most of the fighting was by artillery, but my regiment, the 513th, made its first attack and we got the hell shot out of us. I got a piece of white phosphorous on my nose and hands. It was from our own shells. I was on a 30-caliber, air-cooled machine gun at the time.

We were making a night attack and it was a bright moonlit night. We had white issued uniforms at this time and there was about 3 or 4 feet of snow on the ground. We came up on a little knoll and a machine gun opened up on us. The squad leader called me and my buddy John to bring the machine gun up and return the fire. I put the belt in and pulled the hammer back and it went "click." Frozen. I remembered hearing that a guy with a frozen gun urinated on it so I tried that and just about that time a buzz bomb came over and boy it was a mess. Never did get the machine gun to work that night.

I can remember German POWs, walking to the back. When they slowed down someone would take a tommy gun, shoot a burst at their feet and they'd speed up. I was in the bulge until February, then pulled back because we were supposed to make the jump across the Rhine on 24 March. They filled up all the vacant spots in my unit and gave us some new weapons. I think we were the first ones to use the hand-held rocket launchers. We were pulled back to France. We jumped on 24 March right by the autobahn in Germany. In fact, one of our missions was to cut the autobahn. They were shooting at us and we lost a lot of planes before we got to the DZ. My stick never got out. The lieutenant was suppose to shove out these heavy equipment packages (we had C46 cargo planes so there was a door on each side). He got the equipment package

jammed in the door and couldn't get out. So we went back, landed, and came to the front by truck.

It took a couple of days by truck to get to the front. That probably saved my life because my unit had been chopped up quite a bit. We were fighting with the British Coldstream Guard. They had tanks and we'd ride them until we came to the woods and we'd jump off, walk through the woods, and on the other side get back on and go like hell.

We were supposed to jump into Basle. German resistance was crumbling and many of the soldiers were old or young. Every now and again you'd run up against some unit's rear guard and they were tough. We were heading for Munster and were the first Allied troops in the city. We did some town fighting. The airborne stayed up until we couldn't keep up. We didn't have any trucks. We ended up as occupation troops and were in Oberhausen when the war ended. It was kind of a relief. There was not a whole lot of celebrating because we were one of the first units slated to jump into Japan. We were in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean when the war ended in the Pacific.

I went home for 45 days, then to Fort Bragg, and then to Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois, where I separated. I didn't have a single thought about staying in; just make a clean break. No regrets.

Richard G. Ross

I was drafted 3 May 1944. I went to Ft. Leavenworth then spent 13 weeks basic infantry training at Ft. Hood, Texas, and then went to the replacement system in Europe. I got there in September 1944.

I have some vivid memories of when our train stopped where there was no plumbing facilities so we weren't welcomed by the local townspeople, as many trains went through each day. Then we transferred to 2½ ton trucks and got close enough to hear the artillery, and we realized for the first time it was German artillery. Then we walked.

Eight of us reported to the 12 man 1st squad, 3d Platoon, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 318th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division. It had 4 people left. We went into the line just east of Metz, France, and were told to dig a foxhole and hold. I naively asked what happened to the men we replaced and never got a vocal answer but the silence and the eyes confirmed that this was front line combat and our mission wasn't training.

My squad leader was 19 year old Sergeant Rhodes from Ohio. He was deeply religious, at least in combat, but he became a casualty in a matter of days. He had selected me to be assistant squad leader so I moved up. Our first combat was to defend a knoll in French farming country. We stayed out in the rain and cold in October 1944 and fortunately the area was only attacked by the weather, which seemed formidable enough.

My squad was told to clean out a part of a forest so we spread out about 8 yards apart and walked through firing at anything that moved in front of us. There was nothing in the area. But on the other side of the forest there were wounded all over the place, both German and American. We kept going because we were under fire ourselves. I remember the screaming and moaning of the severely wounded.

We could distinguish the enemy at a distance by their long overcoats, almost dragging the ground. When we got closer we could see the difference in helmets. They seemed almost as scared as we were to shoot first knowing the other side would shoot back.

I remember there was a little village between Metz and St. Arnold in Alsace-Lorraine that changed hands several times. The people had 2 sets of signs. When the Germans came they put up "Faulkenberg" and when they left they called it the French name, "Falquemont." They were just trying to survive.

Eventually we moved south and then the Battle of the Bulge began and my squad was convoyed in 2½ ton trucks at night going to relieve the 101st. I remember watching the dog fights overhead and saw the most brilliant firework show of my life. But the security and entertainment didn't last long.

The Germans had a better 88mm mortar and I remember one night my squad was dug in between 2 freshly plowed fields and we were taking a lot of artillery rounds. But when they hit they just plunged into the soft dirt and mud and didn't detonate. We laughed. We were desperate for humor.

I ate a lot of K rations because they fit into the side pockets of our fatigues, and when you hit the ground and rolled, it was more comfortable than with cans of C rations. One night while moving toward Hagenau we stayed with a French family in Alsace-Lorraine. They had their houses and barns joined I remember. They gave my squad heated milk. That was the first time I had ever had heated milk and I enjoyed it. We gave them some field rations.

The people we stayed with, and others we saw, were scared to death just like the couple of prisoners we took were scared. Like us, everybody was scared. I noticed the Germans were more concerned about hygiene than we were, and generally better shaven than we were even though they were under pressure from the air that we weren't.

I got the measles right before the Battle of the Bulge and was spotted, so I was pulled out and sent to a hospital. By the time I got back the battle was over. Those measles spots may have saved my life. Later I went to an administrative job at SHAEF Headquarters near Paris, largely because I could type. I had had a little college at Ft. Hays State in Kansas.

Right after the war I was one of the 4 American and a few British to be the SHAEF Mission to Denmark, at Copenhagen. I married a Danish girl whom I met on 12 May 1945, 7 days after the armistice. My future father-in-law was a high school teacher. Danes speak many languages so that was no problem. I got out of the Army 2 years to the day and went with the civil service.

I had been commissioned 10 December 1945 so stayed in the Reserves and retired in July 1979 as a Colonel. I commanded the 300th Support Group at Ft. Lee, a part of the 80th Division, my World War II unit. World War II uprooted me from what undoubtedly would have been quite a different life in eastern Kansas.

Lawrence P. Sarver

I was living in Roanoke when I tried to volunteer for the Marines. I weighed 120 pounds and was too light. At that time each geographical area had a quota to meet. In Roanoke, they told me the stations further south in North Carolina were behind in their quotas, so I tried to enlist there but had no luck.

Eventually I passed the physical and got in the Army Air Corps and took my training at Miami Beach. We were in the area where the tourists didn't go. It wasn't anything like you would think of Miami being today. From there I went to Salt Lake City to be part of a crew and train on B-24s. We went to Casper, Wyoming, to Advanced Gunnery Training where I was the ball turret gunner. Someone had to help you down in the ball and lock the door after you. You needed someone to help get you out too. I was small so that helped, but there were some pretty big men who were ball turret gunners. The gun rotated 360° and had a sperry gun sight, one of the most accurate.

I was a corporal when we flew to Topeka to pick up new B-24s to fly them to England. When we got to England we had to turn them into a pool. I flew in a lot of different planes during my 30 missions. Upon our arrival we had 30 days of advanced training in Ireland and then I was assigned to the 8th Air Force stationed near Norwich. I saw the V-1 and V-2 rockets come over our base on their way to terrorize London. I went through a few air raids myself while visiting London.

When we started flying missions, I was moved to nose gunner and bombardier. They sealed up the turret gun because the German planes didn't attack from below. The nose gun had twin 50-caliber guns. We were shot up pretty badly twice, once with a bomb left hanging in the bomb bay. Sometimes the Germans would follow us to our base after a raid and wait to fire on us until the runway lights were on and we were landing.

On bombing runs we would release our load when the plane in front opened its bomb bay doors and released their bombs. We did saturation bombing during the day. The first few missions were exciting and I wasn't scared. As the missions kept mounting I became more aware of the danger of getting hit and was more scared. The real scary ones were the last few, wondering if you'd make it to the magic 30 missions so you could come home.

[Mr. Sarver kept a diary of his missions, and the following are brief excerpts from the 30 missions recorded in that diary.]

September 9, 1944--Fifth mission, target was a railroad yard, Ordnance Depot in Mainz. Awake at 3:15, take off 7:10, bomb load 12X500, bombing

altitude 23,000 temperature -30°. Bombs away at 10:41, flak very intense and accurate. Had flak 3 different places. Lost 4 ships, one broke in two pieces at the waist windows in front of our ship. A ship on our right wing got a direct hit in the bomb bay and exploded. Our tail gunner saw 4 or 5 chutes from the ship that broke in two. We were lucky, we had one flak hole in bomb bay door.

October 7, 1944--Twelfth mission, target was a tank factory in Kassel. Target heavily defended; our number 3 engine was knocked out. By pouring power on the other 3 engines we kept in formation until after bombs away. It was too much strain on the other engines to stay in formation, so we broke away and were escorted back to the North Sea by 4, P-47 fighters. Over target, saw one ship go down with number 3 engine on fire. Pilot tried to dive and put out fire but when he pulled out one wing came off. Didn't see any chutes so we presumed the entire crew was lost.

November 4, 1944--Twentieth mission, an oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen--never saw so much flak. They had a new way of shooting at us. About an 8-gun battery would start at 20,000 feet and go up slowly to 25,000, making a huge black smoke column in the sky. We also had grey and white smoke; the whole sky was covered with smoke. Had some real close ones. Saw one jet plane attacked through formation. They had only enough fuel for one pass then had to land. They were extremely fast, passed through the entire formation in a matter of seconds. Lucky to get them in your sights for even a short burst. Landed at 2:10.

Frank W. Slaw

I was drafted in 1943 while I was living in Blackstone, Virginia. I went to Richmond for my induction and then reported Ft. Meade. From Meade I went to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, on a troop train. That was definitely an experience. It was the first time I had been away from Blackstone and there was no one on the train I knew. But as soon as I got there I saw a fellow who lived on the next farm. I didn't even know he was supposed to be there. It was very nice to see a friend.

Basic training was about 13 weeks. I was part of the 258th Engineer Battalion. From there we went to Camp Shanks, New York, and shipped overseas. Guys were from all over, but a lot in my unit were from Pennsylvania.

It took 14 days to go and 7 to come back. We went to England for Christmas 1944. We landed in Southampton and trained there in laying and picking up mine fields. On New Year's Day we went to the continent on a flat bottom boat and once in France went up into Aachen, just after it had been taken. We were part of the 9th Army and followed them to the Rhine River. Then we went back into Belgium to train for river crossings on the Meuse River. We were planning to cross the Rhine as ours was the only section that had not been crossed at the time. We carried the 30th Infantry Division across. That was the Dixie division from down South. Their patch was a D and a backwards D.

We began crossing the river on 24 March by getting to the dike on the Rhine, carrying our boats. They began to shell us from the other side at about 11 a.m. I was in the first wave that went across. We laid by our boats until about two in the morning and it was so bright from firing I could read my Bible. We had storm boats with 50-horse-power Evenrude or Johnson motors. They were bolted to the floor, so if the motor blade hit something, the motor would kick up into the boat. The boat's front was shaped to go up on the beach. It was a plywood boat that carried 12 soldiers and two engineers. I was the sergeant who ran the motor and steered the boat.

My instructions were to head as fast as I could for the other side, about 100 yards away, and after the soldiers got out to just stay there. The Rhine was fast there. We had little bags of chemicals we put water in and shook it and it heated up. We'd put that against the spark plug to warm it up so it would start the first time. I did that, but mine didn't start until the third pull. By then we had drifted down river some. The soldiers got uneasy, but it started and I didn't see anyone around me. It was black as pitch and everything was quiet. The artillery had stopped at 2 o'clock exactly just like somebody had cut off a radio.

I landed in a real good place and put the nose of the boat right up on the beach. I jumped out with the soldiers and dug a hole to stay in. They were shelling us with mortars and some boats were hit on the way over; everybody just disappeared. After the fourth wave we turned around and all came back. We didn't want boats going in both directions and having accidents. It worked

fine, but I didn't go back anywhere near where I started. We did that again, so I was in the first and fifth waves.

After it began to get light we took our boats back behind the dike where we began and waited to see if they would need us to bring them back. But the GIs advanced about five miles and soon we had bridges in and it went real well. I was more frightened there at the river crossing than I ever was in my life. I wasn't scared enough not to do my job. There were no holes in my boat. The engineers used pontoon boats and that was the first time we floated track vehicles across the water.

After that, we went across and began to remove mines from the roads. Those people had been there a long time and set up some kind of network of mines. They had them in all the good places and the Dixie Division lost lots of people from foot mines. To remove a mine, we blew it in place or pulled it. We didn't try to disarm it. I spent the rest of the war picking up mines. I didn't have enough points to come home, so I went back into one of those cigarette camps and they put me in the 347th Engineer outfit, which was a general support unit. We put up buildings, Quonset huts, and rebuilt roads.

We supervised POWs after the war, had them doing road repair and other work. Nine days after I had my points I was back at Camp Kilmer, sick all the way. I stayed in the National Guard and got to be a captain. I have 23 years in now and start drawing retirement in 1985.

William E. Stewart

I was drafted in November 1943 while living in Wollaston, Massachusetts, which is near Boston. I was 18 and had dropped out of school in the 10th grade to go to work in the Bethlehem Steel Yard in Hingham. I had been working since I was 9 years old because of the Depression and I had to help with the family's income. My father was partially disabled due to a World War I injury when he served with the Canadian forces. Both my mother and father came from Prince Edward Island, Canada.

I really loved the water but I was flat-footed and color-blind which kept me out of the Navy, so I was put in the Army. I was inducted in Boston, then went to Ft. Devens, where I got uniforms and left on a troop train for Camp Shelby, Mississippi. The train to Mississippi was a real experience. We went a very round-about way, because of the war situation. I think they were trying to fool the enemy. At Shelby, I took 10 months of training with C Company, 265th Combat Engineers, 65th Infantry Division.

In August 1944 I volunteered for the 106th Division at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, because they were scheduled for Europe and I wanted to get out of Mississippi. Only about 6 of us volunteered. We got more training getting ready to go to Europe. I was a combat engineer. We went to Camp Miles Standish at Taunton, Massachusetts, and from there to Boston where we headed for Liverpool, England, on the former luxury liner "Manhattan" which had been converted to a troop ship.

We moved into the Cotswald area of England where we set up camp in a farmer's pasture. We went to Weymouth and crossed the Channel on LSTs which took 18 to 22 hours. They were slow ships and traveled in convoy. We travelled resting in our vehicles. When we got there we boarded ships and went up the Seine River to Rouen, France, where we dispersed in apple orchards and spent about 4 days. We then went up the road by motor convoy to Auw, Belgium, on the German border near the Hoertgen Forest.

The 106th was called the "Golden Lions," but after our first combat defeat by the Germans, we were referred to as the "Hungry and sick sack lunch division." "Hungry and sick" sounds like "hundred and sixth", but not to our foe.

On 12 December we relieved the Second Division which had been on line for sometime. They said it was a piece of cake, and they were right; it was, but on 16 December 1944 the bottom dropped out. I was on a detail to go up to the front to clear snow from the road so the Infantry could get by. We went in 2½-ton trucks, no top, with a ring-mount 50-caliber on the cab top. We met the German advanced party of the 294th Regiment in a column of about battalion strength.

The road was narrow and we had to turn around. We were surprised and took fire in the windshield until we could get turned around. We shot back from the

rear of the truck and took the 50 caliber, which couldn't go 180° and remounted it on sand bags over the tailgate. I was firing my M-1 just to lend to the fire power. We had been lulled into a sense of security, then to meet the enemy head on was really a shock.

When we got back to the Division there was pandimonium. We were told to dig in but we had only a little ammo. So we fought for a while until a German self-propelled gun literally blew us out of our positions. In the dusk and confusion, me and 3 others took shelter in the loft of a barn. We watched the Germans advance around us, but we stayed put until the following evening. Talk about scared. We could keep track of what was happening by peeping out of the cracks.

I had dysentery, and while hiding in the barn I didn't want to foul my hiding place, so I had the other 2 guys hold me out the window. I remembered how scared I was thinking some German might shoot me in the backside. I don't remember the names of the other guys with me but one of them was my foxhole buddy for a little time afterwards. We were afraid if we were caught we would be killed.

The following evening, about 10 o'clock we left the barn and headed through the woods to St. Vith, where we linked up with remnants of other units. That was scary. I was a city boy and didn't have a compass or much knowledge about the woods, so we just kept the sounds of battle behind us. We had M-1s, the clothes on our backs, and very little ammo. The whole battalion had just gotten a basic issue of ammo, but M-1 ammo was scarce and bazooka rounds didn't exist.

We were rounded up by some US officers and formed into a rag-tag unit to defend the roads leading to St. Vith. There were about 200 of us. A few days later I was pulled out of my foxhole and given some hot food and clean clothes I hadn't showered or changed for 2 weeks. It was at that time the medics found I had frostbitten hands and feet, so I was evacuated. I hadn't felt my feet for days, but there had been other things to worry about--the enemy and dysentery from spoiled rations.

I was medically evacuated to England, was treated, and returned to my division, or what was left of it. The remnants were formed into a POW guard unit in Limberg. The 106th was later disbanded. I joined the 346th Engineer German Service Regiment and was rated a noncombatant because of my frostbite. Under the "Red Apple" program, I took a leave to the States. I had only 69 points and some had as many as 140 points. The Army needed an occupation force, so they offered a 90-day leave in the States if you reenlisted for Europe. I was with the occupation force in Frankfurt area. In March 1946 I left the Army, but 14 months later I went back in and retired in 1968 at Ft. Lee as a E-7.

Lewis E. Sullivan

I came into the Service in March 1941, before the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. I wanted to get in and get the year's service behind me so I could get a decent job without my employer worrying about when I was going to be drafted. At the time, I was living in Morrisonville, Illinois, about 200 miles southwest of Chicago. In 1941, I was 19 and had been working on a grain farm since I dropped out of school. I didn't think a war was close.

I did my basic training at Ft. Riley, Kansas. When they saw I was from a farm, they wanted to put me in the horse cavalry, but I said, "No sir, I've had enough of horses."

I was in the Fourth Armored Division at Pine Camp, New York, near Watertown. I was a truck driver while I was there. I got extended after 7 December and stayed in the States for 2 more years. I went on maneuvers in Tennessee and California. While I was in Needles, California, P-51s would fly over and wake us up, and I thought that would be a good Service to get into.

I took a test in Los Angeles and got in the Air Corps as a pilot cadet but was washed out. I wasn't close to the top man in the class because I had only 9 years of schooling. Instead, they sent me to mechanics school in Amarillo, Texas. At Amarillo they had a war bond drive. I was getting \$64 a month and had \$40 of that going home. Me and another fellow were told to change our allotment to buy a bond. We refused, so we were sent to see the general. The other man changed his mind, but I didn't. I told the general I don't mind giving my life for my country, but until I can see in black and white where I have to buy a bond, I'm not going to buy one. And I didn't. The general said, "Soldier, if you were in my outfit I'd see you never got a rating." I was there just as a student.

Mechanics school was a 13-week course, and then I joined up with a crew of the 620th Bomb Group. They flew B-17s. We got a new B-17 plane from Savannah, Georgia, with only 12 hours on it, and flew overseas.

Even though I went to mechanics school, when I got to England I was top turret gunner. They called me an aerial gunner. I had a twin 50 caliber. When we first got over, they put an experienced pilot with an inexperienced copilot. Our copilot got shot down right away. I remember seeing one plane in our group have its wing fold up and go into a dive, but all the crew got out. I flew 5 missions then was on another that we aborted. We had to carry our bombs back, but we had a special field to land on.

On one mission we had an engine lose power and we dropped behind the rest. We dropped the bombs over the target all right but on the way home we got hit by a Messerschmidt. He shot down through the top of our left wing, the wing caught fire right away and I thought, "This is where we're going to leave this baby." The fire went out and the gas tanks still had 4 to 6 inches of fuel in

them. The air coming in the holes in the leading edge of the wing must have put out the fire.

I had just traversed my guns to the front of the plane and the only thing I saw was the German plane turn belly up and head down. I surely was scared. The tail gunner saw him coming but he hadn't tightened up his "push-to-talk" button that morning so he couldn't warn us. The plane made just one pass and our fighters went after him. When we landed, we saw the plane was full of little holes, about one-eighth by one half inch.

I was in England only 2 months when they sent me back to transition on B-29s. But because I had a lot of Service time, having come in before the war started, I came back in May 1945 to process out. I flew back to Ft. Dix, New Jersey, and had a 30-day leave. When I was being processed out they found I had high blood pressure so I had to stay in a hospital in Tampa, Florida, for 3 months then I was discharged.

When I left the States I was a T-4. In the Air Corps when you went overseas you were made a sergeant and that's as far as I got. I tried to save some money while I was in because I didn't have anything when I went in. I've kept in touch with my pilot and I saw him in 1983 in Colorado Springs. He's Albert Bischoff, I hadn't seen him in 36 years. He had stayed in the Reserves.

I had enough, no complaints. It was interesting, and I saw a lot of the country I never would have seen. It was OK. After the war I took a factory job in Decatur, Illinois.

George L. Thomas

I went in the Army in May 1943 and had 16 weeks of basic training at Fort McClellan. I went home for 6 days and then in November got on a boat at Norfolk and left for North Africa. We just stayed there a short time and got on a British ship and went to Italy, where I joined the Division. I don't remember exactly where they were but they were holding a hill. I went on the front line New Year's day 1944. I was 18 years old and was number 2 man in Company H, Heavy Weapons Company, 81 mm mortar section. The mortar came in 3 pieces so we had 3 people to a section and had anywhere from 4 to 6 men carrying ammo. A full crew was about 7 to 10 people.

We were mostly on the offensive and the 142d Regiment had 400 days in combat. Often we would dig in to hold what we had but generally we moved forward. The first time I saw a dead person it was bad, but the most scared I was happened one day my buddy and I were digging a pair of foxholes for the night. An artillery shell landed between us, and the dirt from the explosion covered him up in his hole. I remember yelling for him and running over and digging him out with my hands. He was unconscious when I found him. That was a scary thing. He eventually was all right.

We went through Italy and into France, Germany, and were in Austria when the war ended. Mostly we ate cold C rations. We would get a hot meal when we were pulled back for a day or so. We could also shower and change fatigues. We wore the same clothes for days at a time. It got to be pretty bad. In Italy we were supplied with ammo at night by mule. Mules were used to bring us rations, water, and just about everything. The country was real rough and the mules did just fine. Later on in Germany, trucks would bring us ammo.

The unit came back to Norfolk and we went to Fort Meade, Maryland. I got out and went home to Bedford, Virginia on 20 Dec 1945.

"For who ought to be more faithful than a man that is entrusted with the safety of his country, and has sworn to defend it to the last drop of his blood? Who ought to be fonder of peace than those that suffer by nothing but war? Who are under greater obligation to worship God than soldiers, who are daily exposed to innumerable dangers, and have most occasion for His protection?"

Niccolo Machiavelli

"The Art of War", 1520

PACIFIC THEATER

George R. Bain

I enlisted on 5 February 1941 while I was living in Nashville, Arkansas. I went to the induction center at Little Rock. I really don't know why I joined the Navy. I suppose it was because I had been living on a farm all my life. I was stationed at the old naval hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia, after completion of basic hospital corps school.

I went through boot camp at Norfolk, then was a seaman on the destroyer, DD432, "USS Kearney." She was one of the two destroyers that got torpedoed in the North Atlantic before World War II started. I left her 4 or 5 weeks before that happened, I went to the hospital corps school for 16 weeks. I had put in for that when I first came in, but was not accepted at first.

I was home on leave when Pearl Harbor was bombed. We stood what was called "Port & Starboard" duty--half would have off Christmas and the other half have off New Years. I was off earlier because I volunteered to work on both holidays; which were 7 days each, I took a short time to go to Arkansas. After Pearl Harbor all leaves were cancelled.

In February 1942 I went to Puerto Rico and until mid-1943 was stationed at the naval dispensary at the San Juan Naval Air Station. We got some casualties from U boats but most work was routine. Then I went aboard the "USS Mulberry," a 165-foot net layer with a crew of 65. The nets we laid were to catch torpedoes. They were made out of heavy wire cable and suspended on bouys.

We went through the canal to the west coast and from Seattle went to the Aleutian Island of Adak. That's where we laid the nets. We didn't pick them up as well as I remember, they were put there to protect the task force. We were the only net laying ship in the area. In those days every small ship had a hospital corpsman, no doctor. There was always a blackout on the ship. My battle station was on the mess deck, but we didn't have much firepower.

Adak was a secure island at the time of our arrival, it was all barren, no trees. Things were pretty much monotonous. On Adak we had what we called Armytown, Navytown, and Civiliantown--not real towns, but bases. Civiliantown was a bunch of construction workers; no females. I remember the V-mail. If you wrote a letter home it was censored. You couldn't even discuss the weather or anything. So in V-mail you checked blocks, "I am well" or "I have been ill but am feeling better." There were about 6 blocks. You could sign it and there was nothing to chop out.

I left there in March 1945 and went back to the States. If you had 3 years continuous overseas duty, you got 6 months shore duty, so I took that. Then they asked me where I wanted to be assigned, and I said close to home. So I was assigned to a naval weapons station in Camden, Arkansas. It was a rocket plant, but it was only 75 miles from home. Most workers were civilians. The Japs surrendered while I was stationed there. At Camden I worked in an industrial dispensary.

We didn't have any serious problem with drugs or alcohol, but we had them aboard and inventoried them once a month. I was an operating room technician but spent most of the time as a general hospital corpsman and later attended the School of Hospital Administration, NNMC, Bethesda, Maryland where I specialized in food service. I stayed in for 20 years and retired as a Chief Hospital Corpsman. They use to be called Pharmacists Mates in the 40s. I had a younger brother who was wounded in the shoulder at Okinawa at age 18.

Donald S. Bloch

I volunteered as an Aviation Cadet several months before Pearl Harbor 1941 while living in Roxbury, Massachusetts near Boston. I was 21 and I knew I'd get drafted, so I volunteered to choose my branch of Service. My father had been in World War I. I didn't have enough college to be accepted without testing. So I had to take mental and physical tests, all before Pearl Harbor. I was caught up in the glamour of the Army Air Corps. I wanted to fly, I had never done that. I got my orders on 2 December to report on 12 December.

They put us on a train for the west coast for pilot training. I had primary flight training at Oxnard, California. It took 2 months and there was about a 60% washout rate. Then I went to Minter Field in Bakersfield, California for basic training, then to Luke Field in Arizona for advanced training. That's the way it was, primary, basic, and advanced.

At Luke Field, we were flying single engine AT-6s, training to be fighter pilots. Our last flight was in a P-36, the forerunner of the P-40. I enjoyed it and graduated in June 1941, class of 42F, and was assigned to a squadron at Davis-Monthan Field in Tucson, Arizona. A group of us were switched to bombers because they needed bomber pilots, so I flew B-24s on training runs.

In February 1943 I went to Hawaii, but I thought I was going to Guadalcanal. From Hawaii we searched for subs and other enemy boats. I did manage to bomb a whale. I didn't know what it was until we got back and saw the pictures. We thought it was a sub going down. I didn't bother to paint a whale on the side of the plane. Others had done the same thing.

We knew what shipping was in the area and bombed anything else. We searched in a Y-shaped pattern. From 6 to 12 planes would go out each time. Every day we went about 800 miles at 1,000 feet; we were on every other day. Never lost any planes. We also bombed Wake Island after staging from Midway. We also staged out of the Ellice Islands. I flew out of Funifuti.

Our first mission from Funifuti was to an island called Naru where there was a phosphate plant. That mission was to be a surprise; however we were met by about 20 Zeros. Flak looked like cotton balls. I was the copilot and we didn't have a fighter escort. One Zero came down through our diamond formation; we were in the back. I remember ducking under the instrument panel, which was silly now that I think of it. We came back with one bullet hole.

After that mission we returned toward Guadalcanal to confuse the Japs as to where we came from, but it didn't work. The next night we were bombed. That was my most harrowing experience. No foxholes, Marine fighters were not night fighters so they couldn't go up. The first bombs hit the anti-aircraft fire control center so we couldn't shoot back. They bombed us for 20 minutes and another wave came in 15 minutes later and bombed for another 20 minutes. By the second wave, I had a foxhole. Quite a few of our planes were destroyed.

We were stationed on the Ellice Islands prior to the invasion of Tarawa, flying against the Gilberts and Marshalls. We bombed Tarawa airfields about 2 days before the invasion. The next day the naval task force shelled the island and naval air bombed. Then the day before the invasion we went over to bomb anything we saw. We got the heaviest opposition I have ever seen. Zeros, lots of flak, and we had to fight our way home. I was piloting the B-24 then. The next day when the invasion began we bombed the beach ahead of the Marines. I think the Marines miscalculated the tides because they had to wade about 100 yards to shore where there were machine guns waiting.

If we had to ditch there were always subs around to pick us up. We had a special frequency to tell them we were going down. The B-24 bomb bay door was outside, so when a plane hit the water, the force would rip the doors off and it would fill with water and sink very fast.

I went on emergency leave and while I was gone my crew bombed Wake Island and never came back. I was on a boat heading for Hawaii when "Thumper" was lost without a trace. Another time a pilot took my place against Meloalap in the Marshalls. No one came back. Not too long after that I got into base operations. I went to Palau Islands, and was on a little island called Angaur.

From there I went to Iwo Jima. The thing that stands out most in my mind is the rumors that went around before they dropped the A-bomb. We had the second bomb on Iwo and we were all itchy. It was up on the north end of the island. We tried to see it but couldn't get near it. We had been bombed on Iwo and we didn't know if the A-bomb would explode if it was hit. We were very happy when it tookoff. If we invaded Japan, we would be one of the first in to set up an air base. So we were happy the bomb ended the War. It was hard to believe the War was over after 32 months overseas. It had become a way of life. When we dismantled our antiaircraft guns I was nervous.

From Iwo I went to Saipan to catch a boat home. I played poker all night and lost all my money, so another guy and I took a jeep and went to get a partial pay. When we came back they had all boarded a ship for home. We could see the ship 100 yards out, but they wouldn't come back for us. It was a ship with all officers. The next day I got on a ship with mostly enlisted men so I had officers' quarters and it was a lot nicer.

I came back to Seattle and then went to Ft. Devens, Massachusetts. I stayed in the Reserves but never got enough time to retire. I used my GI Bill to go to Boston University then to the U. of Chicago for an MA in Sociology.

Clifton G. Bryant

After I finished Stafford High School in Stafford, Virginia, I volunteered for the Service. I was raised on a farm and was a little tired of farm work, but there wasn't too much for a young man to do except go into the Service. I went to Norfolk, took the physical, and later also did basic training there. In Norfolk, in 1939, everybody knew something was going to happen but no one knew any details about the coming war.

My first ship was the "USS Texas," a battle wagon. We went on a neutrality cruise in the Caribbean and Panama. Then I transferred to a destroyer, the "USS Trockson" and headed for Greenland to do patrol work. In the North Atlantic, we would radio back when we found something and planes would fly out to investigate. Then it was back to Norfolk.

When they were looking for submarine men--that's what I'd volunteered for at first--I was selected and went to New London, Connecticut, for basic sub training. That was a different world. I took training aboard the "USS 20." They hadn't started to name their subs yet. I had 16 weeks of that, we got an extra \$32 each month for the duty. That added to my regular \$68 made an even \$100 a month. I went on the sub "USS Marlin," back to the North Atlantic again doing patrol work. We were out 120 days. While back at New London, I was transferred to the "USS Catfish" and went to Pearl Harbor. On the way we went through the canal.

We were in on the invasion of Guam, sinking Japanese ships. We got some tonnage off Guam. My special job was to be in charge of both engine rooms. We had about 75,000 gallons of fuel. We had very little engine trouble. Our biggest problem was purifying enough sea water to take care of the crew. Most of the time we were submerged patrolling. We ran with electric motors and would come up at night to recharge the batteries. That's when we used the diesel engines.

We were fired on by depth charges quite a few times. About the only thing we could do was to go as deep as possible and stay there. As long as they exploded above us, there wasn't much to worry about, but if they got under us they could lift us to the top. If we could get down 150 feet we were safe. Anything from 90 feet up and we were in trouble. Most of the places in the Pacific allowed us to go deep enough. The explosion would rock us around pretty good and give us a headache, but most of the time we got by pretty good. The deepest I ever went was 350 feet--that was for testing.

One night we were off the coast of Japan and somehow surfaced in the middle of a mine field. After it was all over we laughed about it, but it wasn't funny at the time. The lookouts picked it up right away and we submerged and got away.

Our crew stayed the same unless someone didn't perform well. At that time there were 90 in a crew, counting officers and men. Ninety-five percent of the crew stayed together. We had no doctor on board but had a medic.

The "Catfish" was one of the largest subs of the time. We could go 18 knots submerged and about 28 on the surface; not too fast. A lot of the time we did recon work close to the shore using the periscope. On V-J Day we were off the coast of Japan doing recon work for the planned invasion. We checked shipping lanes. We were wondering when the war was going to end so we were glad they dropped the bomb. It was a relief to me.

Sub duty had bad living conditions, the quarters were cramped, and everyone had to know everyone else's job. At the end of boot camp you had one final exam to pass, if you failed you didn't get on board. They would put you in a sub with an NCO and no lights and you'd have to point out everything--all the dials--and tell what each thing did. You really had to know the sub. I suppose 30% washed out at the final test. No mistakes were allowed because one was all it took to kill everyone.

We had a mess steward who, when we were taking a pretty bad beating from depth charges, cracked and wanted to get off, right then in the middle of the Pacific. Mess stewards were usually black or Filipino, and the rest of the crew were white.

We couldn't take on survivors; one hole in the hull and you were gone. Sometimes we would turn the machine guns on survivors in the water and kill them. Couldn't afford to take prisoners. We couldn't take the chance they might have a handgrenade. If they lived, they'd become guerrilla fighters on the islands. Most of the time we'd just let them be, depending on how much of a beating they had given us. We knew they would have shot us if they had the chance, couldn't trust them. One time we were strafed by a Jap plane off the coast of Japan, but that was our fault. We could get under to periscope depth in 30 seconds if we were "riding the vents." If you were look-out on the bridge, by the time you pulled the hatch closed, water was coming in.

We went 90 days without mail or contact. Once we left port we didn't have any contact with anyone until we came back in. The only time we got any orders was if the fleet commander would break radio silence and tell us to change from plan A to plan B. That rarely happened. Very few submariners were taken prisoners. If something happened, it was curtains. You took a big drink of water and forgot about it.

When I got out I had ulcers and my nerves weren't too good. I didn't want any benefits, never applied. I just took my lickings and that was that. After the war, I began working for the government and have been doing that ever since. There are a lot of things you want to forget.

Clell O. Buchanan

I was drafted on 25 February 1944 when I was 19, living in Kenbridge, Virginia. I had a choice and selected the Navy. I went to Richmond for my physical and then out to Great Lakes, Illinois, for 7 weeks basic training. It was the first time I had ever been away from home. We went through the mountains. It was quite a trip. I had never been anywhere before.

After basic training we went by train from Chicago to Oakland. It took 6 days. From Oakland we went on a Coast Guard ship to Pearl Harbor for assignment. There were about 4,000 of us on the ship going to Hawaii. A lot of people got seasick, but I never did.

At Pearl we were all put in a large field and given numbers. I guess there were about 2,000 of us. Then we were assigned to ships. They would call out numbers, from so-and-so to so-and-so go on this ship. Then we would get in trucks and they'd take us to the ship. I was assigned to the "USS Tennessee," a battleship. That was the first time I'd been on a ship, except for the trip over.

I was assigned to the eighth division of the deck section handling 40-mm guns. They were the kind that had 4 barrels. My job was to load 4 round clips into it. After firing, the empty shell casings would go down below deck so we wouldn't slip on them. Later we would crate them up and give them to an ammo ship when it came around.

The first time I was on the guns was when we were heading for Saipan, which was our first operation. We had to wear helmets and life jackets. About 3 days later I was in an action off Saipan. We were shooting support fire for the troops landing, but my gun was also shooting at Jap planes overhead. We had to stand by until they secured the island. The battle of Saipan lasted 7 days, from 16 to 22 March 1944. I didn't get much sleep, only short naps. The noise was pretty rough on us, we put cotton in our ears sometimes.

They didn't have kamikazi planes then. I think the first time we saw them was at Okinawa. We had 6 destroyers as escort ships around us. It was good to see them. The Jap planes mostly were torpedo planes and fighters, called "Bettys" and "Zeros." They attacked early in the morning with the sun but we were ready for battle before sunrise. They would come in close to the water with the sun. They were hard to see. At Saipan we took 3 direct hits from 5-inch shells. They all hit mid-ship, but we didn't have any casualties and kept on operating. Those 5-inch shells blew our kitchen apart and there were spuds all over the place.

Iwo Jimo was right rough. We were there and took on the wounded and dead. They buried the dead Marines that night at sea. We never picked up people in the water, we weren't even allowed to stop and pick up our own people. We would have to call over a destroyer and by that time it usually was too late.

We had to replace all our guns before Okinawa because they were just worn out, burned up.

At Okinawa we got hit by a suicide plane that blew off the whole starboard side. I remember we were all busy at the guns and the planes were diving into ships right and left. I happened to look up from loading, I was on the bow, and I saw this one right on us. We were shooting them down as fast as we could but this one slipped by. We still continued to fire. It did right much damage. At Okinawa a bad storm came up, and we had to go to sea to get away. I was sitting on my bunk with water up to my knees trying to write a letter home. My bunk was on the 0-1 deck, that was the one above the main deck.

The assault and recapture of Leyte, Philippines, was a tough 16 days too. I was never wounded. I was scared but all I wanted to do was my job, that was the most important thing. After Okinawa we went into the East China operation, that was the last one. Our ship was credited with two Jap battleships and several cruisers. Our guns shot down about 15 planes.

When the war ended they were going to sign the peace treaty on our ship, the "USS Tennessee," but because President Truman was from Missouri, they signed it on that ship and we watched. We were right next to the "Missouri" and could watch with glasses or even without them. We had to stay over with the occupation forces for about 3 months. The "Tennessee" and the "Pennsylvania" were the only 2 ships awarded commendations. Ours was from 31 January 1944 to 21 June 1945. It was the Navy unit commendation. I was on the ship from 13 March, just before the Saipan battle.

After the war we sailed around the world. It took 90 days and we made port at Singapore, Colombo, Ceylon, crossed the Equator and on to Cape Town. Then we sailed back to Philadelphia and to Norfolk where I got out and went home. I had done what they asked me and that was enough. I had 4 brothers and 3 of us were in the war and 2 others were in the Korean War. Three of us were in the Navy and 2 in the Army. We all came home all right and all got out. The most happy times were when we were going home.

I used my GI Bill for on-the-job training on the farm.

James E. Caudle

I knew I was about to be drafted, so I dropped out of William and Mary in late 1942. I got my notice shortly and reported to Fort Lee. From there, I went through basic training at Camp Howze, Texas, with the 86th Division, then to Camp Livingston, Louisiana, for advanced training and maneuvers. It wasn't until April 1944 that I went overseas to join the 37th Infantry Division.

We were packed like sardines on the ship; no privacy. We slept in the hold in bunks stacked 10 high. Everywhere you looked there was a chow line. It took a long time to feed us, and the food wasn't that good.

Our destination was New Caledonia, a beautiful French Island in the Southwest Pacific, a staging area for replacements going to combat units. We spent a pleasant month there with lots of entertainment, USO shows, and recreation. It was a good respite between maneuvers and joining a combat unit.

From there, I went to Bougainville in the Solomon Islands, and joined Company F, 148th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Division. They had been overseas 2 years. It was distressing to see the poor condition of the men. Many looked sick and everyone had a yellowish tint from taking malaria preventive atabrine tablets. I wondered if I was going to look like that. Surely enough I did, but it was far better than malaria.

Bougainville had been secured, but there were still about 20,000 Japanese on the other side of the island. There had been no major engagement since the "Battle of Hill 700," a victory for the 37th that secured the island. The Japs just lived on their side of the island, and we lived on ours with a well-established perimeter defense. Sometimes a couple of them would slip into our open-air theater and watch movies, or scrounge for food. They were more or less harmless. Their supply lines were hopelessly cut and pilots destroyed their gardens. They were slowly starving.

In the meantime, the 37th was scheduled for the Luzon landing, so we did intensive training at Bougainville. Toward the end, we practiced getting on and off LCIs, and made beach landings. We drilled day in and day out. We left in mid-December 1944, on ships more tightly packed than the earlier ones. We had everything on board for the invasion. People were sleeping on the deck, in the backs of trucks, wherever you could. It seemed like a long trip.

The actual invasion took place on January 9, 1945. We were virtually unopposed and made the landing without too much difficulty. Civilians had been warned in advance, they knew what was coming, so most left the area. There weren't too many casualties. The Navy had done a good job laying down a heavy bombardment before our landing.

What worried me most, I guess, was the threat from the air. We controlled the skies, but we heard a lot about kamikazes, and surely enough, some of them

were out that day. Coincidentally, my brother was on the "USS Louisville", supporting the landing. The "Louisville" was hit by a kamikaze. Fortunately he wasn't hurt, but the ship went back to Hawaii for repairs.

We marched from Luzon to Manila, our first objective, about 100 miles away. By the time we took it, much of the city had been destroyed. I remember the excitement as people poured into the streets to greet us. More thrilling for me was releasing American POWs after years of brutal captivity. Some were in really awful shape, suffering from severe malnutrition, and other ailments. Freeing them was one of General MacArthur's principal objectives.

After Manila, my company fought in the second phase of the Luzon campaign, the assault on Baggio. It was hilly country and the Japanese hid in tunnels, so it was very difficult to make headway. We suffered many more casualties there than in the fight for Manila. The third phase was to take the Cagayan Valley. By now, the Japs clearly were on the run. Paratroopers had dropped behind them, and we kept pushing them. They were in terrible shape--cut off and in a vice--many suffering pitifully from disease, and hunger.

During this operation I was wounded. Our platoon was at a river crossing, and a mortar round dropped in. I was lucky. Both of the men by me were killed, I only received some shrapnel in my shoulder. That was my company's last combat. We were pulled from the line the next day, and when I left the hospital, the A-bombs had been dropped. Just like that, it was all over.

One guy I'll never forget we called "Long John," from Atlanta. He had been in the Pacific over 2 years when I met him. He had had too much combat and was very shaky to say the least. I had some bad times with him. Once near Manila, I came off guard and there he was, standing in the dark with a 45 trained on me. It happened again and I told the sergeant, "Look, you've got to put me with someone else. This guy's going to shoot me before it's all over."

We had about 40 casualties in our company around Baggio in one day, and everybody was on edge. That afternoon it didn't take long to dig in. Hours later, at 10 p.m. Long John was still digging. "I know they're coming in here tonight," he said. He was a pessimistic soul.

Later on during the Cagayan operation, Long John was in the back of a truck next to a couple inexperienced riflemen--twins actually. The truck lurched, and everyone was thrown around and one of the twins accidentally pulled the pin on a hand grenade. Ole Long John immediately came out of that truck in a swan dive. He caught some shrapnel in his tail but it didn't matter. He was one happy soul, he had his "million dollar" wound that sent him back to Atlanta.

My most memorable experience was my platoon sergeant announcing President Roosevelt's death. The sergeant was short on education but he called a formation and in solemn tones said it was his sad duty to tell us our commander-in-chief had died of cerebral hemorrhoids. To our credit, not a man cracked a smile, and we never told him FDR had not died of a pain in the ass.

Henry C. Evans

I was drafted in February 1943 from Mecklenburg County, Virginia. I was living in Union Level. I took my physical in Richmond and went home for a week, then I reported to Norfolk. I didn't really have a choice of Services because I was 5 feet, 5 inches, and the doctor thought I'd do better in the Navy. Actually I wanted to go in the Army. I was 21 when I went overseas. It was right after the Depression and the Navy was a pretty good job.

After basic I was trained to be a cook and also a petroleum man. I was on a floating dry dock, the "USS ABSD #1." It was a big ship, over 150-feet wide with a crew of 1,000 counting those who worked on the ship. We were a repair ship and we set up in harbor. We didn't get in any shooting combat but enemy planes did fly over sometimes. My battle station was with the 40-mm anti-aircraft gun.

We were sent to the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. I got to the Philippines, New Guinea, and through the Panama Canal. I was only seasick for the first few days. What helped me get over it was eating sauerkraut. It also helped some others I knew.

When we first got there a big section of the dry dock fell away with 50 or more men on it, but nobody was killed. There were 13 cooks who took care of the officers, they had more cooks for the crew. The cooks were a mixture of blacks, whites, and Filipinos. I got to know about everybody on the ship, and we were all friends. I was getting \$96 a month. I took a test overseas for steward cook and I passed, but only one steward was allowed on the ship and that was already filled. That's why the officers tried to get me to sign up for 4 more years, so I could get my own ship. When I got out I was a steward mate first class.

We were there a little over 2 years, then we left for the Philippines. Once we got over there they welded our ship to others to make this dry dock so we had to come home on another ship. I came home from the Philippines. Coming home they had 2 shifts of cooks and we took turns. I came back to Washington State, then took a train to Norfolk. That's where I was separated. I did work after the war for a while as a cook, but I didn't like it for a career. I used a little of my GI Bill for farming. We raised tobacco; our allotment was about 8 acres then.

Louis A. Gould

I volunteered for the Navy in January 1943 when I was 19 years old. I was living in Owego, New York, but took my physical in Albany. Then I went to Sampson Naval Station near Ithaca, New York, for 8 weeks of basic. They took about 100 of us in a gym and gave us a musical-like test to see if we could tell whether one note was higher or lower than the next. I had played the guitar for a few years, so was one of the 4 or 5 selected to go to sonar school.

I went to Key West, Florida, for sonar training, which was a new field. Sonar school was 8 weeks and we learned how to build, repair, and run the units. They had some little yachts with sonar units mounted on them. They were pretty primitive, looking back now. There was a big steering wheel, like on a truck, that would turn the sonar head under the water to point the beam in various directions. They had 6 or 8 subs running around for us to "ping" on. We used earphones at first and later, around 1944, they had screens we could see. It was pretty accurate.

They put me on a sub chaser and I worked out of New York City for 6 months. We never had any sub contacts there. Then I went to Key West for a refresher course and then to Houston, Texas, and got on a destroyer escort. Those ships were about 310-feet long with a beam of 60 or 70 feet and a crew of 225. I was assigned to it before it was finished.

We went to Boston, then to Bermuda and Norfolk, and through the Canal to the Pacific and Honolulu. I was 19 and interested in living. We pulled escort duty for supply ships and aircraft carriers. We had depth charges.

On 25 October 1944, my ship was sunk in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. There were Japanese battleships and cruisers firing all over the place. We took a hit that knocked out the sonar, so I walked out on the deck and saw a Jap cruiser fire 3 of its 8-inch guns at us. The shells landed 200 yards away; that was something scary.

We were hit at mid-ship, then took one in the engine room. I just stepped off the side of the ship. I had a flotation belt around my waist that kept deflating, and I remember I had to keep blowing it up. I got to a raft and stayed in it for about the first hour and a half. We had cork nets and life rafts; we were in the water about 48 hours. The nets were ropes woven together with 4-inch diameter corks, so you could hang on to it. It wasn't much good, you couldn't get on it, just hang on. We lost 120 men.

That morning, before we got hit, we saw some breakers off in the distance, so we headed in that direction even though we couldn't see land. After the ship sunk, there were 25 to 50 people hanging on to this net, some wounded. One guy died the first night and we hauled him off, and took his life jacket for someone else. It was a matter of need. I didn't see or feel any sharks, although some thought they did. Eventually, 3 of us started to swim, then

someone saw a ship coming so we were picked up. It was a US ship, and it headed toward shore. We had no clothes, we were oil soaked. I was given a pair of dungerees cut off at the thighs and split up the side, with a piece of rope holding them up. After they picked us up it was a day's trip before we got to land. We had floated quite a distance.

On shore, I saw this hospital ship in dock so I went and stood in line. When I got to the head of the line they issued me a bunk, a set of pajamas, and put me to bed. The next thing I knew I was on Holliandia. If I hadn't stood in line I would probably have gone to another ship, or maybe back to the States. I came back to Oakland on the "Lurline" and then went to Great Lakes Hospital in Chicago. I was in the hospital about 2 months but I wasn't hurt.

I got 30 days convalescent leave, then on to California where I picked up another ship, the "William C. Miller" (DE259), another destroyer escort. When I went out to the Pacific I was still a sonar operator. I remember looking off the fantail when we left shore; it looked so beautiful--the lights--and you knew all the people on shore were having fun. All you could see ahead was darkness, and it wasn't a pleasant feeling.

We headed for Japan and were 300 miles off the coast of Japan when they dropped the bomb. When they signed the treaty we were in Tokyo Harbor. Everybody was on alert; they didn't really trust the Japs, even then.

After the treaty was signed I came back to the States and the ship was decommissioned. I then went back to Norfolk to help decommission other ships and was discharged in Norfolk.

Once I thought about staying in--when I was on the fantail coming back home and we were standing 4 hours on and 16 off with 2 people on every watch, and movies every night, lights all over the place. I thought, this isn't bad. Then I said to myself, "What's the matter with you? You just finished 3 years of the worst kind of living you ever had." So I didn't think about it again.

In 1950, I did join the Air Force Reserves and was recalled for the Korean War. So I went ahead and stayed in for 22 years and retired as a Master Sargeant, E-7.

Early R. Hartley

I went into the Service in February 1943. My mother thought I was drafted but actually I asked to be drafted. I was 19 at the time living in Wilmington, North Carolina, and all my friends had been drafted.

I had made a good score on the Army General Classification Tests, so I had a choice of Services. I selected the Army Air Corps, and went to St. Petersburg, Florida, for basic. I was in charge of a 100-man unit. I had had high school ROTC so knew a little about drilling. I remember one guy who couldn't read or write and also was a kleptomaniac. He'd have 6 gas masks under his bunk. I asked why he stole and he said, "I don't know." Anytime something was missing we'd go to him and usually find it. He didn't mind. I wrote letters home for him and read those he got from a neighbor; his parents couldn't read or write either.

Training was very fast and simple. I took a series of aptitude tests to determine my best assignment. I took all the tests I could because it was either that or drilling, and tests were easier. I could have gone to almost any school I wanted. I chose photography school at Lowry Field in Denver.

Lowry Field No.1 had bomb sight maintenance and photography schools, Lowry Field No.2 had an armament school. We learned everything in 3 months from taking pictures to overhauling aerial cameras. I came out as a camera technician and went to a replacement group at Hammer Field in Fresno, California, where I had to take basic training again. But at Hammer Field there was a photo laboratory, so I worked there until I was reassigned.

The testing for the cadet program was at Amarillo, Texas. I got more basic training because no one had noted on my records I had it. At Amarillo we had tests to measure psychological stability and motor skills. We were assigned to guard duty for 24 hours, 4 on and 4 off, then to KP from 4 a.m. to 7 p.m., then we started the tests at midnight. Maybe they did that on purpose.

About 50 of us went to Drake University at Des Moines, Iowa, to the 345th College Training Detachment. We took regular college courses and about 10 hours of flight training. There were regular students there too. We had to wear our uniforms. There were about 300 in the detachment there for 6 months.

From there I went to Santa Ana, California, for preflight training, Morse code, aircraft recognition, and related subjects. I washed out there for physical problems but I stayed on for 60 days then went to Amarillo again. They said they didn't have a record of my basic training, so I did it again. This time I made sure it went on my record.

I went next to a replacement depot in Lincoln, Nebraska, as a camera technician. Finally the 505th Bomb Group (VH), needed me. They were in Harvard, Nebraska. This group flew B-29s but had a few B-17s. In October 1944 I went to Seattle, Washington for embarkation to Tinian. The island was not

secured so we stayed 15 days on Einewetok. On Christmas we were in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, preparing for dinner, when we had our first air raid.

We lived in pup tents. Very uncomfortable on coral rock. Our landing field was made by the Seabees, they literally moved small mountains of coral, working day and night to complete the field. The Seabees stopped only if it was a necessity, and the Bettys were nearly overhead before their lights went out. Fortunately we had only 3 or 4 air raids.

Our job was to maintain the photo equipment, and install cameras in bombers. When a plane returned, we were in and out before the air crew got off. We rushed the film to the 315th Wing Photo Lab for developing. We never got a camera shot up but I did see a plane come in with one hanging. They thought they had thrown it out, but they hadn't disconnected all the cables. It broke in a million pieces when it hit.

We destroyed Tokyo by fire storms almost as completely as Hiroshima. Those fire storms in Tokyo were something. We were bombing just about everywhere in Japan but we lost a lot of planes.

After a mission crews could break radio silence. The missions were 2,800 miles and a head wind could ruin gas consumption. We took all the paint off the planes to lighten them. Often they would throw the camera, guns, everything, overboard, and still losing altitude. Later on a crippled plane could land on Iwo. North Field, Tinian, must have been the biggest field ever built. It had 4 runways each 2 miles long.

After we were there about 6 months, the 509th Composite Group came over. They were organized to drop the A-bomb. To increase speed, their planes had no guns. They had a big arrow painted on the tail, our planes had circles on the tail with letters. The 509th flew with us for practice. The Japanese quickly learned the planes with the arrows didn't have guns, and a few aircraft were lost before they got out the paint and made them look like us.

Behind our Quonset hut the 509th built a wind break. They dug a big hole and put in a hoist. We sat on our back steps and watched them bring out a big bomb, lower it, pull the plane over and raise the bomb in the plane. We were dropping 1,500 pound bombs we couldn't believe the size of these. They had yellow concrete bombs for practice. One day the bomb service truck came with MPs. They had a real bomb. We didn't know until the next day we had seen the A-bomb loaded into the "Enola Gay." Our planes went along to take photos.

By December 1945, I had enough points to come home. We went to Hawaii on LSTs, equipped with wall-to-wall canvas cots. At Hawaii we loaded on the "USS Nevada", a battleship. Troops were sleeping everywhere, even on the ammo conveyor belts. We got to Los Angeles on December 21, 1945 and immediately got passes. A bigger thrill than seeing the US was seeing the girl I had met before in Santa Ana. We married shortly after Christmas.

Frank R. Hartman

I'm from Romney, West Virginia, and volunteered to be drafted in July 1943 at age 19. I had not finished high school at the time. I went for the duration plus 6 months. I took my physical at Clarksburg, West Virginia, and had a choice of Services. I chose the Navy and went to Great Lakes for basic training.

While there I remember they filmed a movie on the mock ship they had there for us to train on, the "USS Neversail," and they used us for extras. I can't even think of the name of the movie now, but it was used for recruiting.

From there I went to cooks' and bakers' school for 16 weeks on Navy Pier in Chicago. I learned to do everything, including to butcher animals. Then I went to Newport Rhode Island to wait on a ship being built. It was a 10,000-ton cargo ship, the "USS Propus," AK 129, commissioned in Jacksonville, Florida, in early 1944. That ship is tied up down the James River now.

I remember a boy from Rhode Island got seasick after we left Jacksonville on our way to Norfolk. We were off Cape Hatteras, which is always rough when we hit a squall. He was hanging over the side and lost his false teeth, both uppers and lowers. He got a new set in Norfolk.

At Norfolk we loaded up 650,000 cases of beer and took it through the Canal to Hawaii. We hit a hurricane in the Carribean and I got sea sick. It lasted 3 days and I thought the ship was going to sink. We had to stay below while water washed over the decks. We had to keep the hatches closed or it would have flooded the lower decks. We unloaded the beer in Hawaii and picked up a load of clothing and food, then we went out to the Seventh Fleet Headquarters.

Our ship had 186 enlisted and 10 officers. We had about 6 cooks, some of them strikers who were on-the-job training people. Cooking for 186 men was very very simple. All you had to do was to go by the receipt. The Navy makes its own meals, not like the Army which has a master menu. In a fleet, every ship could be serving something different. If you didn't like what was served on your ship, you could see your buddy on the next ship and he'd feed you.

The officers had Filipino cooks on our ship. Sometimes the officer cooks were blacks. They had a different kitchen in the officers' ward room. The black cooks lived in their own section and we rarely had contact with them.

After we would unload our cargo we'd come back and pick up another load of general cargo. We would come back empty, riding high, but the Pacific is as smooth as glass, so it didn't bother us. On the way out we picked up some more items in Hawaii, plus a payroll to take out to the Fleet. That's when the "Mt. Hood" blew up. The word we got was that Japanese planes came in over Manis Island just before dawn. All the US ships maintained radio silence with lights out and had orders not to fire, but one allied ship didn't get the word and

started to fire. One turret of guns didn't raise high enough, and a salvo hit the "Hood" and it blew up. It was an ammo ship.

When we were converted to an ammo ship, we couldn't travel in convoy and had to run a zigzag course. We went only about 6 knots fully loaded and pulling a barge. They sent us to Stockton, California, and we went up to Port Chicago picked up a load of ammo, and took it back down the river and headed for the Seventh Fleet. We had 10,000 tons of ammo in the hold plus we pulled a concrete barge which was also loaded with ammo.

The second time we went to Port Chicago in 1945, we loaded early in the morning and headed for San Francisco. We were a good distance away from the ammo loading dock when the ammo dump blew up. It broke windows all over the area. We heard the explosion and could feel the vibrations even out of sight where we were. They determined the explosion was sabotage. When it blew, there wasn't any question what had happened. I don't remember checking our load to see if there was a bomb on board.

We had 40-mm antiaircraft guns, a 3-inch rifle, a 5-inch 38, and a whole bunch of 20-mm and 50-caliber machine guns. My battle station was the second loader on a 40-mm antiaircraft gun. A second loader was inside the turret. Someone would get the ammo from inside, pass it to me, and I'd give it to the first loader who would drop it in the gun. Then I went to the 3-inch 50 as a hot shell man for a while, then as a gunner on a 40-mm. The hot shell man took the brass away when it came out of the weapon. We just threw it out of the way. Later we'd crate it and take it to the closest port. We didn't want to drop it over the side because an enemy sub could pick that up quickly with sonar.

We were happy when they dropped the bomb because it meant the war would end. I was in Honolulu when the Japs surrendered. We had a ball. The people opened their doors to us and there was a lot to drink. It was a wide-open town. I had a younger brother on the "USS Iowa" and he lived through all right. I also had 2 uncles in the Service and they both lived through.

After the war I stayed in, although many times during the war I said if I ever got home I never wanted to see the Navy again. But it was a pretty good life; I had finished high school and was getting promoted regularly so I stayed. But when you're married and raising a family it's no good for a home life, so I switched to the Army in 1957 and retired with 20 years of service.

Paul L. Lewis

In June 1942, I enlisted in the Navy Air Corps (V-5 Program) after I graduated from Valley Forge Military Academy and Junior College. I was sent to pre-flight at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, for a Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) course. The CPT course lasted 2 months at the end of which all 14 of us got our civilian pilot rating. We would learn later that flying Piper Cubs is different from multiengine aircraft.

From there 7 of us went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for physical training. It was hard training; the day I arrived they were having a funeral for one of the cadets in the last class killed on a trampoline. We got in good shape. They had a vicious obstacle course, plus you had to box and wrestle. I had 2 front teeth loosened doing that. At Chapel Hill we got our uniforms. They were Navy blue with a gold star on the sleeve, the same uniform I would put a stripe on 1½ years later.

One day 2 Steermans collided in midair. One pilot didn't open his chute. He was left handed, and when they found him, his leather flight jacket was all torn to shreds on the right side where he was looking for the rip cord which was on the left side.

After 2 months at Olathe I took 2 weeks leave at home, then went to Pensacola. There must have been 1,200 in the class there. The base supported the town and also Mobile, so the people were nice to us. They'd invite us home for meals. We had a lot of flight time plus Link training which was little boxes on hydraulics. They put you in, made it dark, and you "flew" by instruments. You could even hear the roar of the engines; it was realistic training. I had at least 50 hours of that. The first time I "crashed."

After Pensacola, there was a choice of Marines, Navy, Coast Guard, or flying blimps, which were used to hunt subs. I chose to stay in the Navy and fly seaplanes, so went to Whiting Field. I was waiting for some unit slots to open up in Alameda, California, to fly the Martin Mars, the biggest seaplane then flying. For 2 months I went to the Naval Air Station in Atlanta for flight instructor school, then orders came for me and 2 others. Before I went to California, I took leave and married. I stayed in Alameda for the war.

My job was to fly blood plasma and supplies to the Pacific. I started flying a 4-engine Consolidated Coronado, which had a wing span of about 80 feet. Then I got into testing with the Martin Mars. Its wing span was 200 feet, 4-inches, just a little smaller than the "Spruce Goose."

We flew supplies during the test phase. Only on landing and takeoffs is there a difference between seaplanes and regular planes. The Martin Mars took 2 miles of water to get up. The choppiest the water, the easier it was to get off because roughness broke the surface tension. Surface tension is what allows you to "float" a needle in water. When the water was calm, you'd have to rock the plane to get it up. When you landed, you wanted surface tension.

The planes weren't armed, but we didn't go anywhere not secure. We flew the Coronados to most of the islands, including Australia. We brought back high-priority passengers, not wounded. The Mars went only to and from Hawaii. We would go for one or 2 nights, then have a few days off, then do it again.

There was only one Mars at this time. They built 10 more later. The prototype had a double tail, but the next 10 had a single tail. It took 4 pilots to fly it. There were about 20 of us flying the Mars and a lot more flying Coronados. The first Mars cost 7 million and was built originally as a patrol bomber, but it was too big for that.

We cruised at 155 knots for 12 to 13 hours to Hawaii, and carried 10,000 gallons of gas in 6 tanks. We could carry 178,000 pounds of supplies. The Mars had no wheels. It took 400 gallons of gas to get it up, and then it burned 178 to 200 gallons an hour. It was good for 15 to 20 hours in the air.

There were 2 decks in the Mars with an elevator. It was one of the first planes to have hydraulic steering, and that did 80% of the work. In rough weather, without the hydraulics, it took both pilot and copilot on the controls to handle it. With the hydraulics it was easy for one man, just like power steering in a car. We had hydraulic systems backing up hydraulic systems.

After takeoff, during the whole 13 hours we played cards while it was on automatic pilot. We flew at 8,000 to 10,000 feet. The higher you got the more gas you'd burn with the old engines without superchargers. Every once in a while you'd see a ship, that was about it. When we landed we'd hook onto a buoy and in some cases we had nose ramps to unload passengers and cargo.

To fly out to the Christmas Islands it took about a week round trip. We'd make a lot of stops. I never had an emergency, but if we had landed in the ocean, a 10-foot swell would have broken up the hull. We never really knew what we were carrying. One time we carried 18 English WACs to Australia. We got their weights, by name, on the manifest and they were 185 pounds, to 200 pounds. We were wondering until we found out that included baggage.

I was on Kwajalein when we thought the war in the Pacific ended, but it was a false alarm, before the bomb. I saw them drive jeeps off aircraft carriers, everybody was feeling good. When the war really ended, I was in California.

I loved the work, but I had a child and that was reason to get out. I didn't know if there was to be another war but I wanted to fly commercial planes, which I did. I flew seaplanes, the Clippers, from New York to Brazil. During the Korean Conflict I was recalled to the Coast Guard and learned to fly helicopters. After Korea, I flew for New York Airways off the top of the Pan-Am building in New York City. In 1969 I was grounded for high blood pressure and haven't flown since. I don't really miss it.

Alan R. Loper

I was 18 years old, living in Minnesota, at the time I was drafted. After basic training in the summer of 1943 at Fort Benning, I got accepted into a specialized pre-engineering program and started taking courses at the University of Wisconsin. But the program didn't last long. In March 1944, I was reassigned to the 96th Infantry Division stationed at Camp San Luis Obispo, California.

Toward the end of our stateside training, we started getting amphibious training. Because of the nature of Pacific warfare, all divisions preparing to ship out were given this type training. In addition to the regular amphibious training, I was one of those picked for rubber boat training. Six or 7 of us would man a rubber raft. Each of us had a paddle. There was no motor or oarlocks. We had to paddle in unison, canoe-fashion. In theory, we were supposed to land from a submarine offshore at night, check for mines, chart paths, then go back out to the submarine. We never had an opportunity to put this to the test, as it turned out, but the training was interesting none the less.

We sailed from California on July 27, 1944. The division went to Oahu for jungle training and practiced landing on Maui. There we loaded ships for battalion landing teams. I was leader of one of the landing crafts. We left Hawaii for Yap, but they changed our course mid-way and sent us to the Philippines instead. It took 41 days to get there. We had no fresh water for bathing or shaving. They exercised complete blackout at night, and we slept below deck (in bunks 5-high) without air conditioning. There was nothing to do on ship except try to find a cool place in the shade. The thing I'll never forget is that we had the exact same breakfast menu every single day. After we left Hawaii, we were completely loaded for an amphibious landing. Each ship constituted an entire battalion landing team.

My battalion landed at Leyte on October 22d, 2 days after the initial assault. Nothing was secure on the island when we landed except the immediate beach area. We started moving inland seeking out the enemy as soon as possible. From there on, it was fighting day after day.

I was one of the new guys in the division. That's probably why they made me a scout. There were 2 scouts to a company. We walked a good ways out in front of the rest. It was very frightening at times being out there by yourself. And, of course, you were walking along trails you were not familiar with, a lot of foliage and everything, so you couldn't see very far. You didn't know what was out there, if someone was in a tree or dug in. You couldn't see the enemy. You fired where there was a likelihood or possibility of someone. You always had a scary feeling because you didn't know what was around you besides your own people. It was even scarier at night, as you lay there in a shallow hole with very little protection.

During the entire assault phase, from October to around January, we were constantly on the move. We had no kitchen, no tent, no change of clothes, nothing--only what we could carry on our backs (no packs even). All we carried were a weapon, a shovel, a poncho, and 2 canteens. Our only food was the assault rations. It wasn't until about December that we got a break and were pulled off the line for a few days. Then we got our first hot meal, could relax, and wash our clothes and ourselves in the river.

At one point, the skin on my face developed white blotches, so I went down to a tent hospital to have it checked out. They told me it was an allergic reaction to the local bananas I had been eating. Later, I had to be treated for intestinal disorders and diarrhea--a problem I suffered with for several weeks. No doubt, it resulted from poor sanitation. The constant fear and high protein and high energy diet didn't help. All of this combined caused me to lose weight. When I checked in at a field hospital to be treated for exhaustion, weight loss and a shrapnel wound, I was down to 100 pounds. (I did weigh 130 plus). They stopped the bleeding, did tests, fed me, and got my weight back up.

I did get wounded superficially. We came under mortar attack while on patrol. I hit the ground with my arms sticking up instead of flat out and a piece of mortar shrapnel hit me in the left arm. Another fellow about 2 feet over--his head popped right off--that's the sort of thing you remember. During that same campaign, the assistant division commander--a brigadier general, was shot by a sniper. You never know. There's no real safe area. Incidentally, my Purple Heart didn't catch up to me until much later, when I was back in the US going through OCS at Fort Lee.

I guess of all the things the most memorable was being a point man for the battalion, going down a trail by yourself. It's a very sobering, intensive feeling. You don't have a great deal of confidence, except in the people you work with. But that's all you know. You can't influence much yourself. You're subject to a lot of unknowns out there. And then, of course, when I saw that fellow lose his head, his head fell off...like that. It's one of those things.

William R. Porch

I was drafted in August 1943 while living in Vienna, Virginia. I was only 18, but had finished high school. I had my choice and I selected the Navy. I think my father talked me into it. He had been in both the Army and Navy, but did not make a career of either. I took boots at Bainbridge, Maryland, which was 9 weeks long. Then I went to Jacksonville, Florida, to be an aviation machinist mate. I didn't make the pilot's physical. I also went to aerial gunnery school in Hollywood, Florida, and ended up as part of a flight deck crew on a carrier.

I went on a troop train to the west coast and left from Treasure Island, San Francisco, in a troop ship. It was the first time I had been away from home and it was different and fun, just being a kid. We were headed for Hawaii, and on the way over we saw some debris where a ship had been sunk a few days earlier, but we didn't have any problem. I never got seasick.

When we got there they put us in a big hanger where we slept. It was a few weeks before we were assigned to a ship. Most of us who were machinist mates were assigned to the carrier. The blacks on shipboard were stewards, only for the officers' mess. We kept separate, the blacks had their own compartments and everything. A whole different world. We had movies on board that we had picked up when we were in port. We would trade them with other ships while at sea.

I was assigned to the "USS Corregidor" (a baby flat top), CVE (Carrier heavier than air escort). We had F4Fs and TBMs and we qualified Corsairs, F6Fs and F8Fs (Bearcat), which never saw action.

My job on the flight deck crew was "hook observer." It was my job to be with the landing signal officer, who guided the planes onto the deck, to see the flaps, wheels, and hook were down before a plane tried to land. If they weren't down, I'd holler to the signal officer and he'd give them the wave-off. At night we had to look for certain lights, and it was a bit more tricky because you still had to see the flaps; no lights there. They were almost on the flight deck before we could see flaps.

They had 3 barriers to catch the planes if something went wrong. We did have a plane hit and snap a cable. It whipped around and wrapped up a fireman in an asbestos suit and threw him overboard. They found just the lower half of him. The landing signal officer had a net to jump in if the plane came too close, but I had to stay up and release the backstop. Everyone would be in the net and I was suppose to be standing there doing my thing. If a plane went over the side I'd grab a smoke bomb, hit the end on a nail, and throw it overboard to mark the spot. We'd keep going. A destroyer escort was supposed to come and pick up the pilot. We usually had 3 destroyer escorts.

We were around the Marshall Islands, Gilberts, Marianas, in that area. Our planes were mostly doing submarine patrols. The landing signal officers were pilots. When we qualified new pilots, they would come aboard and make so many landings and leave, we'd never see them again. Many of the pilots would come and get a critique from the landing signal officer. Anytime you had to land on that little-bitty deck you earned your pay.

We never were in a battle; our danger came from subs, but we never got hit by them. My battle station was in the ammo room, loading 20-calibers on the flight deck while someone was shooting them. We didn't have a real gun crew, just cooks and mechanics fired them.

We stayed out to sea mostly. We looked forward to holiday routine. If we passed the international dateline and caught 2 of them together and it would be Sunday, we'd have Sunday again when we came back and get 2 holiday routines in a row. That was something to look forward to. That was just during peace, there was no holiday routine during war.

The thing I remember most was the typhoon we went through. Before the typhoon hit we pushed some wrecked planes overboard. We were headed for the Philippines when it hit us and it was touch and go for a few days. It cracked the ship's hull and we had to return to Pearl Harbor. We missed the action in the Philippines. During the typhoon you could look straight up and couldn't see the sky, it was nothing but a wall of water in front of you and you'd wonder how a ship could get through that. Our escort ships were with us and one requested a tow but we had to refuse because it was impossible. It was a good sight, when the morning cleared up, to look out and see all 3 escorts. During a time like that, fear takes over and you aren't seasick as much as scared.

I can remember saying after the A-bomb dropped, the next war would be a push-button one, no more sea duty. After the war we still stayed out and qualified pilots until about April 1946. We came into Norfolk where they put the ship in mothballs, and I caught a bus home and made a clean break.

My brother stayed in, and if I had it to do over I would too. I got out as a seaman first class.

Karl B. Schroeder

I was drafted in 1943 when I was 18 and living in Brooklyn, New York. Along with 3,000 others, I took my physical at Grand Central Station. Because of all the confusion I was inducted, but I shouldn't have been, because I was born in Berlin, I was an enemy alien! I wasn't suppose to be drafted but I was, and that was good, because I became a US citizen on 26 April 1944. Otherwise, I would have had a hard time until the war was over.

When they sent me a draft notice I was tickled pink and I reported, passed all tests, and away I went. They found out I wasn't a citizen when I was ready to leave for Italy. They jerked me out of that unit and sent me to Providence, Rhode Island. Two days later I was a citizen and sent back to the 121st. My parents were citizens but I wasn't. It was in my record that I couldn't be sent to Europe even though I didn't have any relatives there.

I had no choice of Service. I remember, every third guy went into the Navy. On 10 December 1943, I reported to Newport, Rhode Island, as a whale boat instructor teaching recruits how to use oars in case something happened to their ships. I had lived on the water and owned a row boat. I guess that qualified me.

In February of 1944, I was transferred to the Seabees. I did that largely because it was too cold out in the bay in those open whale boats and the Seabees were looking for volunteers. That was when that Service first began. The Seabees were located across from Quanset Point, so I went to Camp Endicott, Rhode Island, then to Camp Peary, Virginia, and finally to the 121st Construction Battalion (Seabees). I learned to operate a bulldozer but had to know how to do everything else too. I went to Fort Hueneme, California, and got my military training there.

I was in on the invasion of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam in June of 1944. The Seabees would go in first and direct the Marines who would follow. I took part in Iwo Jima too and was wounded twice on Saipan. I reported one wound but not the other. I was wounded on the beach by a shell fragment. Seabees would go in first in a small landing craft (LSI), and after we secured the beach, we'd bring in the LSTs and equipment. Then we would knock down the jungle and build some roads off of the beach. We were always under fire and had rifles with us all the time.

Once the Marines got in it wasn't so bad for us. On Saipan they had a place called Mapie where the Japs committed suicide by jumping off a cliff. Some natives jumped off too. We tried to stop them, but the Japs had convinced them we would do bad things to them. The natives were of Spanish origin and Roman Catholic at that, so it surprised me they would jump. There was no way to get to where the bodies were because the waves and breakers were bad.

I had to bulldoze over caves where there were people who wouldn't come out. Also at Camp Soupie, all we did was bury them in their caves. There was a town on Saipan named Garipan where we bulldozed a lot of them. As I remember, after they were sealed in, we didn't have any dig themselves out. We buried our dead on Saipan. Iwo was the last island, and then I went back to Saipan.

We had our longest runways on Tinian, and after the initial push on that island, I went back to Saipan. The two islands were close; you could throw a baseball from one to the other. After we secured the island, I was in charge of maintenance at the Mapie air strip. Then I was given control of the maintenance crew for three air strips.

We had air raids for 63 straight days, day and night. They'd last for 2 or 3 hours each. That's why we went to Iwo Jima where the Jap planes were coming from. At first we stayed covered up, but most of the time they were after the ships in the harbor, so we got used to working through the air raids. We had one B-29 base, Easley Field, and they bombed that often. Our B-29s could hit the mainland of Japan and they wanted to stop that.

We repaired holes in the runway with coral. Other Seabees would dig it up, crush it, and it would come to us in dump trucks. We dumped it in the holes and packed it down, then watered it and rolled it. It was awfully dusty, dirty work. We did that all day long, every day. Once the island was secure, we worked normal duty hours unless something happened.

I got out in April 1946 and came back to the States on the "USS Poik." Gambling went on like you wouldn't believe. I won about \$70 and was discharged at Camp Shumaker. I had a good time there with my money. I stayed in the Los Angeles area bumming around, spending my back pay. Then I came back to New York in November 1947. I joined the Reserves in 1948 and was recalled for Korea, then went to school. In 1957 I joined the Reserves again.

Raymond E. Toms

I volunteered for the Marine Corps, but I had to go through the Selective Service System. I lived in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and took my physical in Baltimore. The first time I failed the physical because there was something in the chest X-ray. I came back a month later and passed all right. I had just turned 19.

I had been in ROTC at VPI before the war and finished 2½ years of academics. I wanted to get in the Service and get on active duty so I wouldn't miss the war. After I was sworn in, on 10 June 1943, they sent me to Parris Island. The training was tough but good. Boot Camp was divided into 2 parts; during the second part we lived in tents. We had just gotten the M-1 rifles.

Basic training was from 25 June to 21 August. From there I went to Cherry Point just to wait for an assignment. There I got into navigator bombardier school. I left Cherry Point for Quantico in October, I was the only one in my class to go, and I was the only one in my group to pass a pretty tough set of mental and physical tests. I finished school at Quantico on 8 December, it was a short, intense course. Everything at Quantico was strictly ground. They had simulators for the Norden Bombsight. That sight had 2 gyroscopes and was extremely accurate. It had a series of knobs; all you had to do was get your cross hairs on the target, adjust the knobs to keep the sight on the target, and you were assured of a hit. The sight took into consideration the altitude, speed, wind drift, and such. It was a little awkward to operate in that you used both hands at the same time. Each hand controlled two knobs, one inside the other one. You had to manipulate four knobs at once while looking through the peep sight and it all had to be done pretty quickly. I finished second highest in the class and after a 3-day pass, I was back at Cherry Point.

At Peter Field I was attached to squadron VMB443 with which I stayed. It was a medium bomber squadron. We flew PBJs which were what the Marines called B-25s, and we trained for torpedo flying in Florida. They weren't built for that, and we never used them for that, thank heavens.

In February, we transferred to El Centro, California, where we had intensive high-altitude bombing training. We bombed the desert outside of El Centro, using sand-filled bombs with smoke explosives. We made 85 drops at desert targets. In the middle of May we shipped out. We had 2 crews for each plane (15 planes, 30 crews), so half of us flew and half went by boat. I went by boat. We went straight to Espirito Santo in the New Hebrides chain on a Dutch merchant ship, the "MS Brastagi." I remember it had wooden teak decks. We waited there for about a month (all we did was play softball), then we took another ship to Emirau. The island had been secured 4 months when we got there. The Seabees had built a couple of coral runways and a base camp. We bombed Rabaul, the big Jap base, and Kavieng. We were never assigned to one special plane, we used any one that was flying. It was often a matter of which plane was flying and which crew was due to go up that day.

On 2 September, we had 3 squadrons. When we first got there, we went on missions with our PT boats to get an appreciation of the work they did so we wouldn't confuse them with Japanese. One time I was along when they put a "bushwacker" on shore about 4 miles from some very heavy Jap guns at Kavieng. He was an Australian who had worked on a plantation before the war and was not going in to gather intelligence. After they dropped off the "bushwacker," they went about ½ mile off shore, turned on all the searchlights and started firing at the shore with a 50 caliber just to see if they could attract some fire. They were crazy. In the South Pacific everybody did their own thing. These guys had taken off their 30 caliber and replaced them with twin 50s. They mounted a 75-mm in the bow and something huge in the back end, all stolen from somewhere in Australia.

I remember at Pulawat Island we located some Jap ships. We went in low level, 200 feet in 2 plane sections. Antiaircraft and automatic weapon fire was very heavy. When the antiaircraft shells burst, it looked like a small black cloud. Shrapnel was hitting water, and it looked like a heavy rain. I could see the Japs running for cover and their gunners firing at us. We dropped a bomb on the second run. One hit the deck of a ship but bounced off due to a delay fuse. We dropped 4, 500 pounders. We all wore heavy flak suits and steel helmets. Our biggest fear was that the engine would be shot up. Six enemy fighters took off and hovered above us without attacking. Coming home we had to make an emergency crash landing because we had the right tire shot out. Later, we found out we had only 10 gallons of gas left in one tank. There were 12 holes in the right side of the plane. I remember I had to use celestial navigation to get home, 1,100 miles, 8½ hours in the air. We sank one ship and left one burning. That was my baptism of fire. We lost one plane that had to ditch in the ocean--4 of the 6 crew members were picked up 3 days later.

In case we had to ditch they had "Dumbos," the PBYs, the old amphibious planes. These guys were great; they'd land close to shore fire, just anywhere to get you. I flew 45 total missions. Really, it never occurred to me that I'd get hurt. We had a log of emergency landing strips plotted. The big fear was a gasoline leak somewhere in the plane.

On VE-Day I wrote in a log that now they could bring all our planes to the Pacific, but it would still take 2 years because the Japs were so fanatical in their resistance. In my case, all I had to have was 10 months combat flight time, but they were so short of navigators I stayed way beyond my regular tour. I was on my way home when I received word the Japs had surrendered. I got out, then after a while I joined the Reserves. I was activated during Korea and made flights from the west coast to Japan.

"I love soldiers for their virtues' sake and for their greatness of mind... . If we may have peace, they have purchased it: and if we must have war they must manage it."

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, c. 1600.

OTHER AREAS

Lawrence J. Bragg

In 1941 I was working as an apprentice carpenter on the Pentagon. I was driving through Fredericksburg, from my home in Victoria, Virginia, when I heard we were at war. They were selling extra-edition papers on the street. After that, I worked nearer home at Camp Pickett as an apprentice carpenter and later as a vehicle operator in civil service. My brother was farming and had an accident, so I was deferred 90 days to do his work on the farm.

I took my physical in Richmond and went to Camp Lee in July 1943. I was the only one from Lunenburg County inducted at that time. I went to Ft Leonard Wood, Missouri, for basic training and then to Camp Reynolds, Pennsylvania, and Camp Patrick Henry near Hampton, Virginia. From there, we left 12 February 1944 on the "Daniel Chester French." There were only 87 soldiers on board, the rest was cargo. It was an old Liberty ship and we zig zagged across the Atlantic.

We were out 22 days; the third day in the Mediterranean the ship's captain called us all on deck. German subs had sunk the 2 ships in front of us. The captain could see a torpedo coming at us, so I was on deck when it hit. It blew up the stacks and moved cargo around on deck.

We tried to let down the lifeboats but the sea was rough and the boats would go down one end at a time and fill with water. It took the ship about 20 minutes to sink. It went down nose first. We knew we were supposed to try to get away from the ship. I remember hanging on the rail of an overturned lifeboat along with others who were cussing the Germans. That was about 8 a.m.

The next thing I remember I was on a British tug boat with no clothes and a blanket wrapped around me while someone was trying to pour rum down me. That was about 2 in the afternoon. They said some stayed in the water until around 4 that afternoon. The sailors said they had orders not to pick up anyone who wasn't helping themselves. I was hanging on so I guess that counted. We lost 15 soldiers and 24 sailors. The tug went to Bizerte and I went ashore barefooted and was led to the 81st Station Hospital where I stayed for 2 weeks. I was so covered with oil I looked black. I got the bronze star for that.

The 70 of us who survived got on 40X8 boxcars with a little straw and C rations and headed for Algiers. We spend 3 days and 2 nights traveling. We got on a ship for Port Said in Cairo and then to Camp Huckstep, a recreation place.

Then we headed for Iran on the Persian Gulf, part of the Persian Gulf Command. I did a little sightseeing in Egypt, and we went by train and trucks into Iran. We went to a replacement company. We were a mixed-up group with cooks and finance people with a lieutenant in charge. In Iran, they sent us out a few at a time, and I went to Camp Low in Ahwaz, Iran. The temperature got up to 171° in the middle of the summer. The record was 187°. You could wash your clothes and by the time you got them hung out they were dry, ready to put back on.

I was assigned to the 762d Railroad Shop Battalion as a carpenter. We would make boxes for equipment to be shipped in. We were shipping a lot of stuff by rail to the Russian border for them to use. We had to stop there and it was loaded on to their railroad cars as they had different gauge rails. I have a record of supplies we sent, over 5 million tons. We shipped 4,879 planes, 166,760 cargo trucks, 17,326 other vehicles, and 275 million gallons of high octane fuel.

In July 1945, I was transferred to the 754th Shop Battalion in Teheran, and I thought I was going home. But when the outfit went home, I was pulled out and put on fire watch on the docks with the 662d Port Company. We left there the last day of December 1945. You could go home if you had 50 points; I had 49. That was the ground rules in Iran. When I got to Naples, they were going home with 45 points so I got to come home. We landed in New York where the temperature was 25°! I got out of the Service at Ft. Meade, 28 January 1946. I still live in Victoria, Lunenburg County, Virginia.

Ernest J. Connelly

I was drafted on September 14, 1942, and reported to Camp Lee. Then I was shipped to Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, up on Cape Cod, where I received basic training. The weather got to be horrendous during the winter, but I loved the Cape.

Unfortunately, during basic training I got an infection in my lower back and wound up in the hospital for the next 8 months. There wasn't any penicillin available, so they used a sulfa compound and covered my back with a paste. While I was stuck there flat on my back, the unit I had been assigned to originally--the 3d Engineer Amphibious Command--shipped out and took part in the North African invasion.

I spent the best part of my first year in the Army in the hospital. It wasn't all bad though. The Red Cross provided us with plenty of good entertainment. As soon as I was ambulatory, I was assigned to permanent KP.

After I got out of the hospital I was assigned to a Casualty Detachment (the 1468th Service Command Unit). The unit was made up of a number of fellows who were physically unfit for overseas duty, but wanted to stay in the Army and serve where they could. Some of them were real sickly. I remember one fellow who had asthma so bad I thought every night he wasn't going to make it. Another fellow whose chest pressed against his heart was in this unit. These were unqualified people, crippled or sick, and it was my job to see that they had a place to stay, know where the messhall was, and get their supplies. A sergeant and I were responsible for them. We even issued them passes when they needed to go off post.

In the summer of 1943 when I was a corporal, supply clerk, the whole Amphibious Command moved to Camp Gordon Johnson in Florida, which is in the swamps almost due south of Tallahassee. It was a terrible place. The heat and humidity were almost unbearable--insects and reptiles. I felt like I was in the South Pacific. The nearest town was a place called Carabelle. It had one bar in it. That's where everyone went for a shot of "white lightning." I spent the next 2 years there, doing what I had been doing with the Casualty Detachment. I have no fond memories of Camp Gordon Johnson. It is gone now, praise God! The sand fleas and mosquitoes can have it back.

My experiences were all on the home front, since I never made it overseas. I had it pretty good, enjoyed what I was doing, and felt like I was making a contribution even though handicapped.

Milton I. Fogel

On 6 June 1944 I was assigned to the Ordnance Officer Candidate School at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. After I graduated I was on orders to join a unit but the orders were changed and I was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Ordnance at Frankfort Arsenal in Philadelphia. I was put in charge of updating what was called Ordnance Standard Nomenclature Lists (SNL) 7, 8, and 9 publications. These were supply catalogs for major end items. Many hadn't been updated since World War I.

The office was about 80% military and there were a lot of business executives in the office who had been called to duty from industry. It was interesting work. I was one of the few who had completed college. That might have been why I got the job, because I had no experience at all in the field of publications or cataloging.

We were working with 40-mm, 90-mm, and 120-mm antiaircraft guns, plus all the fire control equipment. That was our responsibility. My job called for some travel. We had to go look at equipment failures and talk about engineering parts and difficulties. I was given a job to do and largely by on-the-job training I'd do the job, then get another one. By the end of the war, I was running the publication division, which had grown from 22 to 146 people.

At that time, the Ordnance soldier got only a little rifle and gas training with the Ordnance courses. An Ordnance unit was overrun at Kasserine Pass, Africa, largely because they had no perimeter defense training. They were supposed to be in the rear, but in war that's not always the case. As a result, the training changed during the war to include combat unit training.

It was a good feeling during those years. The country had a job to do and my generation did it. We were proud to wear the uniform. I really didn't know what the Army was about. The expertise I eventual accumulated kept me in the job. In December 1946, I got out and went into the inactive Reserves. I was recalled for the Korean War and stayed in, and eventually retired as a colonel in 1973.

Odis P. Hamlin

I was 21 years old living in Disputana, Virginia, and in November 1942 I was drafted. I went to Ft. Meade, Maryland, where there were quite a few from my area. My whole outfit was made up of men from the Virginia, Maryland area. I came home for 2 weeks, then reported to Ft. Meade, got uniforms, and went to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, near St. Louis on the Mississippi River.

We were there about 6 weeks for basic training then we went to Greenville, South Carolina, for advanced training. At the time we were under the 10th Air Force. My unit, the 848th Engineer Aviation Battalion, was formed here in the States and I was in it when I did basic training. We took more training at Greensboro, North Carolina, where we had some on-the-job training extending the runway on the airfield. I guess it was a kind of test because when we finished we got orders to ship overseas.

We left from Camp Shanks, New York, on a large British ship. There were a lot of soldiers on board. I remember one night they cut off the engines and drifted because they were afraid of a pack of subs. Nothing happened. We first landed in Rio de Janeiro then stopped at Capetown, South Africa, then on to Bombay, India. That was a good experience for someone from Disputana who had never been away from home. I think it helped me with the rest of my life.

At Bombay we got on a train and headed for the jungles. It was a 3 week trip inland by troop train. My first impression was shock because there were thousands of people starving to death. We gave them some of our food, but there was so much suffering. There was a lot of disease in the country, and we pretty much stayed clear of the people. We came to Chawar where we made camp in a rice paddy. The only way we were bothered by Japs was by air, but our pilots chased them away every time.

At Chawar we maintained several airfields. There were both fighter and bomber bases around us. The planes would fly over the Himalaya Mountains, the "hump," from our bases into China, mostly delivering supplies. I operated a road grader, bulldozer, and ditching machine, plus I drove heavy trucks. My favorite was the bulldozer. "We were one busy outfit." We worked 7 days a week because the runways would get worn down fast from so many planes using them. While we worked we kept our rifles with us.

We did get to Calcutta for R&R. It was depressing to see the people, but I remember the sights. The Indian people didn't make any distinction between blacks and whites, at least not that I could notice.

Very seldom did we get fresh food. We ate C rations and canned food all the time. Only once did we get fresh eggs and that was at Christmas. We had a good recreation program, but we were tired most of the time. Softball was a good sport and each unit had a team. We had only one USO show, and I remember the stars were Paulette Godard and Pat O'Brien.

We lost one man to sickness. Then there were the kraits to look out for, it was a little poisonous snake. We fired our rifles for practice. My battle station was on an antitank gun. Mostly the young children would come around. There were lots of different tribes of people. You could learn a few words of a language and several hundred yards down the road they would speak a different dialect.

We came back as a unit and were discharged as a unit after 27 months over there. I remember when we left we got coffee and donuts and the band played to send us off. We came back to Ft. Dix, New Jersey, in October 1945, and stayed there one night and then went to Ft. Meade and got a 45-day leave. After that I reported back to Ft. Meade and processed out. I didn't stay in, I was glad to be home, I have no regrets. I went back to farming, raising peanuts, corn and soybeans. My unit hasn't had any reunions, but we should.

William S. Lawton

I volunteered from St. Petersburg, Florida, where I lived in July 1943. They sent me to Milligan College in Johnson City, Tennessee. The Navy had taken it over completely and had about 300 people there. It was the only college the Navy took over completely. I was there for 8 months then went to Duke University for 8 months more.

The Navy had what they called V-12 and V-5 (Aviation) programs in which you took Navy and college courses at the same time, both military and academic training. You only had to pass classes. If you failed, they sent you to boot camp. There were thousands of men throughout the US in the program, all major universities had it. Some from our program went into ROTC units and graduated from college too. There was ROTC at the same schools when we were going, but they turned us out faster if we didn't get into ROTC.

I was aiming to be an officer and was commissioned as an ensign at Columbia University in New York City. I was in San Francisco when both A-bombs exploded and ended the war. I was assigned to the battleship "USS Mississippi." I got on the ship in November 1945 at New Orleans. We were to be the fire support for the invasion of Japan and were to be 15 to 20 miles off the coast shelling the shore. They changed our orders and we went to Norfolk. I stayed on board for 2 years. I extended an extra year because I enjoyed it.

I got the GI Bill and went to Duke and stayed in the Reserves for 11 years on submarine duty.

The good times were weekends. The people in east Tennessee were good to us. We could always get an invitation to a home for a meal. Eastman Kodak would send a bus for us at college to go to the Saturday night dance. I remember in New York City I didn't have to pay subway fares and there was lots to do on weekends for not much money. My whole family was in the war effort; my father worked at McDill Field, my mother worked in a Douglas Aircraft factory, and my sister was a WAVE.

Bernard N. Levine

I remember I was stationed at the Naval Air Station in Memphis, Tennessee in 1943. I was working on the line with the old biplanes and one of my supervisors said, "Our new division officer writes books. See that old white-haired guy down there. His name is William Faulkner." He had been recalled to active duty and was a line division officer. We were doing training for pilots. His job was to take care of personnel. I was 17 years old and didn't associate with him. The only thing I knew was--he wrote books. I never talked with him; I wouldn't know what to say. I was just looking for a day off to go to town.

I was one of those kids that the Service was good for. I dropped out of high school, and World War II was a chance for me to get away from home. Later I got a BA and even some graduate credits.

I joined the Navy to keep from being drafted into the Army. I was from Chelsea, Massachusetts, just above Boston. Times were still hard and not everybody went to college, so the Service was good. I did my basic training in Newport, Rhode Island, for about 13 weeks in February 1943; slept in a hammock there. From there I went to Memphis and through Aviation Machinist Mates School, which was 21 weeks long. We were in Millington, about 18 miles from Memphis.

I remember the last days before a pay period when you were broke you'd go to the USO Center in Memphis and play pool and such. You could usually get invited to someone's home for a dinner. Actually, in Memphis we were popular and people wanted our company. I remember bus fare was 7¢ and I used to save my pennies. I think I was payed \$50 a month. We had to wear a uniform because we didn't have civilian clothes.

For a short time I was in a Patrol Boat Mariner (PBM) on the West Coast and did a lot of patrol work. But there was a draft for men to go the the East Coast, so I was sent to Jacksonville, Florida, and was put in a training squadron. We trained pilots to land on water. Some pilots were so good they could land on the tip of a wave and bring you in with no problem.

I wasn't particularly disappointed that I wasn't in the shooting war. I was always busy and I was happy. After the war I went back home, but that was a slow life, so I got back in 20 months later. They needed aviation machinist mates, so they gave me my old rank without any loss.

World War II was a popular type war. There was a feeling of comradery. Someone would always give you a hand. Just about everybody who was able was in the Service; it was a popular war. It was a living and an opportunity. During the war, and for a few years after, everyone was caught up in that glory; it was the right thing to do. I stayed in and got out as an E-8. I used all my GI bill, about 47 months worth.

Dewey T. Matthew

I was inducted in the Army out of high school and saw my 19th birthday in the Army. They were taking a lot of guys like that. I lived in Blackstone in Nottoway County and had to go to Richmond for my physical exam. The whole bus load of boys was from my area and there was a lot of drinking going on. There had been a lot of drinking the night before too. Some were trying to flunk the physical. A few of the boys, sons of pillars of the community and football players, the "in-crowd", put octagon soap between their cheek and gum and it was supposed to make your temperature go up. A few did flunk, I don't know if it was because of that, but that really shocked me.

Later, I processed in at Camp Lee and we went to Camp Wheeler, outside Macon, Georgia. It's not there anymore but we stayed there 13 weeks. Macon was a big city to me, so I never went into town. We shipped out as replacements for the 45th Division. I think they had a lot of their troop ships sunk going over and needed replacements.

We boarded the "Chateau Thierry," kind of a little ship, in Brooklyn, and had a meal there--must have been something wrong with it because we all had dysentery going over. We were in the hold, normally used for baggage. They had canvas cots that would fold up against the wall and they were stacked 8 high. They were so close together you couldn't sit up straight on one. It was pretty bad. We used our duffle bag for a pillow. It took 13 days to go over.

Another guy and I would buy a gallon of ice cream every day and split it. It came in a tin and you had to turn in the empty tin to get a full one. So, we had to hide our empty tin each day. I think it cost 50¢ a gallon. Once we spotted a bunch of subs and the whole convoy turned around and headed back. We lost them and then went on toward North Africa.

We landed in Oran, Africa, and stayed there a short while. Then we moved across North Africa, going through Algiers and finally to Bizerte, Tunisia. One evening we loaded on ships and landed on the southern coast of Sicily the next morning. There wasn't supposed to be any danger while we were in the staging area of Licata, Sicily, but we took some incoming artillery and it killed several men and gave me a bad concussion. I was shell shocked, so they shipped me back to a station hospital then to Holloran General Hospital in Staten Island, New York. From there I was transferred to Deshon General Hospital in Butler, Pennsylvania and my folks came up to visit me.

Eventually, I went home to Blackstone and was restless for a long while. I tried to finish high school but couldn't settle down. I got a job, lived in the YMCA in Richmond, and went to Smithdeal-Massey Business College. At that time, you didn't have to have a high school diploma to get in. I got into civil service and stayed there. I did get some GI benefits but that eventually stopped. When the Korean War came along, I tried to enlist in the Air Force at Byrd Field but was turned down because of my previous medical record. I often wished I had stayed in.

Edward J. Naulty, Jr.

In April 1943 when I enlisted in the Navy, there were only 3 jobs you could volunteer for: submarine duty, underwater demolition, and armed guards on merchant marine ships. I chose the last. Liberty ships made up most of the convoys and I crossed the Atlantic several times during the war. Mostly we carried cargo but sometimes we carried troops. I had a 20-mm antiaircraft gun which was a rapid fire weapon, like a machine gun.

My father was drafted before me and was one of the original Rangers that invaded North Africa in November 1942. He was 35 years old in 1941. There was an 18-year difference in our ages. He was wounded in Tunisia, 30 April 1943, 10 days after I joined the Navy. He had 2 flesh wounds in the right arm and while recuperating, was assigned to guard an ammo dump.

My first trip to sea was to Orzu, 35 miles north of Oran, and there my mail caught up with me. I got a letter from my father saying he had been wounded but he couldn't write too much because of the censors. Actually he had been wounded a second time and was in a field hospital somewhere in North Africa. I showed the letter to a soldier and he said my father must be close, because the APO number on the envelope was the same as ours.

I got help from the Red Cross and found his hospital in Oran. I talked my way onto one of the daily runs there. So here's a sailor in a jeep bumping along in the middle of the desert. At the hospital I found out he had just been put on a ship for the States but the ship hadn't left yet. I still didn't know about his second wound. I hitched a ride to the pier, found the hospital ship and was told he was down in the hold. I really was scared wondering what kind of wound he had, but when I found him, it was OK. His second wound was battle fatigue. He had been at the dump when it was attacked and blown up. He dove into a trench when the explosions began, and he was shell shocked. I spend about an hour with him before the ship left. They let him stand on the fantail and wave to me. He got back all right and retired with a disability.

On 6 June 1944, I was waiting on my ship the "SS Abraham Lincoln" in England to support the invasion. There were a lot of ships in the harbor before D-Day. We knew something was up. The only time we got attacked there was if we went into the channel. It wasn't until about D+3 or 4 that we left for Normandy. We unloaded by bringing the cargo over the side with booms and into the waiting LSTs. We were carrying C rations and other cargo and had some jeeps on the deck. We had air superiority so we weren't bothered. The Germans bombed the Normandy ports and beaches at night. After our one run to Normandy we came back and waited a day or 2 for a convoy to form which was going back to the States.

I made several trips across the Atlantic, went into the Pacific through the Panama Canal and also spend a lot of time in the Mediterranean Sea. Once we took POWs out of Italy to the States. We traveled mostly in convoys and were attacked several times. The German planes usually attacked at dusk or dawn, so we were always at "general quarters" then. I saw a German pilot on the wing of his downed plane but we couldn't break formation to pick him up. Our ship was credited with several "kills."

I remember I was in Cuba, picking up sugar in December 1944, and when the war in Europe ended I was in Pearl Harbor. We came back to San Francisco and loaded for the Pacific. As we were sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge, we got word the Japs had surrendered, so we were ordered back. A few months later, just before Christmas 1945, I was discharged. I left the Navy but joined the Army and retired in 1966 as a Master Sergeant. My father has passed away, but there is a Edward J. Naulty, III.

Kenneth L. Norris

I enlisted in Baltimore and volunteered for the Air Corps. I had 3 weeks basic in November 1942 at Duncan Field, San Antonio, Texas. Then I went to Administration School where I took exams for all types of special training. I qualified for what was then a kind of secret school--maintenance and repair of computerized power turrets for both the A-26 and the B-29 bombers.

The school was in Indianapolis and usually 24 hours after graduation, you went overseas because there was such a shortage of repairmen. A week before graduation I was put in the hospital so they held me back, and during that time my orders for pilot training came through.

So back I went to San Antonio for pre-flight and primary at Bonham, Texas, basic at Sherman, Texas, and eventually advanced training at Lubbock, Texas. I was in the class of 44-B. After graduation they divided the class in thirds, part went to fly the "hump" in China, part to be instructors for pilots and navigators and the last part to bombardier school. It was just the luck of the draw as to where you went.

I was in the last group and stayed 9 months at Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana, with the 2530th unit, flying for navigator's school. We flew in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas either 4 or 8 hour trips. While flying a night mission for 3 navigation students and their instructor, we took-off over Main Street of Midland, Texas, on a busy Saturday night. We encountered something strange. Instantly, all power on the plane ceased including lights, radar and both engines. I don't know how long it remained off, but mysteriously it came back on as if nothing happened. In accordance with testimonies of pilots with similar experiences, I must have flown under a UFO.

I volunteered for B-26 Transition school at Del Rio, Texas. I flew over Mexico often, but once I swooped down to see a large hacienda that I didn't know was in a dead-end canyon--had to turn 180° and barely got out without crashing.

Once on a B-26 take-off in Enid, Oklahoma, an engine caught fire and after a vertical 360° landing, I learned the fire had burned through the firewall and melted the carburetor. Fortunately the B-26 was the only American plane with a German designed carburetor so it didn't catch fire and saved our lives.

The B-26 was being replaced in combat by the A-26 so I was the second class to go through A-26 transition training at Florence, South Carolina. While I was in school the European Theater ended and because an A-26 couldn't reach Japan from any island we controlled, we kept up our proficiency flying in the US. I was still in Florence when they dropped the bomb and also there when the war ended. There were big celebrations both times.

From there I was sent to Westover Field in Springfield, Massachusetts, for reassignment to occupation duty in Europe. I could go to Europe or get out, they had a million pilots by then. I wanted to go to college so I got out in December 1945, and went to the University of Kansas in February 1946 on the GI Bill. I started in architecture and stayed in the Air Force Reserves for the next 24 years, and eventually retired as a LTC.

William C. Ruble

In March 1944 I was drafted at age 18. I was living in Lexington, Virginia, but actually had grown up in Greenville, about 25 miles north of Lexington. I was raised by my grandparents and an aunt and had moved to town to attend high school. I graduated from high school when I was 16.

When I was drafted I had my choice of Services, and chose the Navy just because I thought I'd like it better. My father had been in the Army in World War I and did his training at Camp Lee. I took my physical in Roanoke and reported to Richmond. There were about 20 of us from my area and the man said they needed 5 men for the Marines. No one volunteered so we counted off, and every fourth man was put in the Marines. I missed by one.

I had my basic training at Camp Peary, Virginia, near Williamsburg which at that time was a Seabee base. Even though I wasn't in the Seabees, we were trained by drill instructors from the Marines, Navy infantry. That was true of all the Seabees, who were the Navy engineers.

From Peary I went to Bainbridge, Maryland, and was there about 8 weeks in pharmacy school and graduated as a pharmacist mate. Now they call them medics. From there I went to Little Creek Amphibious Base near Norfolk and stayed there the rest of the war.

During the war we got routine cases in the hospital but also got some survivors from the torpedoed ships along the coast. At that time, Hampton Roads was inside a steel net laid across the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. They built convoys inside the net until they got maybe 100 ships, then they'd leave for Europe. Most were commercial cargo ships but there usually were 8 to 10 Navy men, called "armed guard crews" to man the guns. Sometimes it would take 6 to 10 weeks to get ready to convoy out, and we had to care for the Navy men on the ships because they were without medical facilities.

I got a 20-foot power boat and went around the harbor and became known as the "doctor of Hampton Roads". There was a lieutenant in charge of the small boat and a half dozen seamen on it. I was the medic. I went around Hampton Roads 6 days a week looking for a white flag with a red cross, meaning medical attention was needed. When I found one, I boarded and provided medical attention or took the sailor to shore to see a doctor. I could put in a few stitches as long as it wasn't on the face. I did that for about 6 months. I was scheduled to go on a hospital ship in the summer of 1945 but didn't because the war ended. I later found out the ship sank in a typhoon.

Usually the Navy was strict. I remember laying out my clothes every Saturday morning for a complete inspection before going on liberty. I remember the Chief walking through the barracks with a white towel over his arm and the officer with a white glove on one hand and he'd rub it on something and wipe it on the towel. Every drawer in the pharmacy had to be opened and checked closely. You worked every other day from 8 in the morning to 9 at night. That was called port and starboard. We worked 7 days a week during the war and had one weekend off, Saturday afternoon and Sunday, a month.

After the war ended but before I got discharged, I moved from nursing patients to the pharmacy where I filled perscriptions. A doctor looked over my shoulder most of the time because a wrong prescription could kill someone. I was 19, a country boy who saw my first flush toilet when I went to high school.

I got out in 1946 because I didn't have enough points to get out earlier. They had frozen the medics so we could give the discharge physicals to the rest of the Navy. Paperwork was a problem. We gave a very lenient physical as fast as we could; no one wanted to argue, they all just wanted to go home. We wanted to go home too. For the eye exam, it was "Can you see the chart?" At that time the Navy didn't furnish eye glasses. If someone showed up with VD or said he had a problem and wasn't going anywhere until it was fixed, we'd keep him until a doctor solved his problem. If you were sick you stayed.

One day the ward was full of "sick" people and a month later no one was there. We had trouble finding people to run the place. We were discharging hundreds a day as fast as we could process them out. You were suppose to go out by how many points you had. Some people have told me the day the war ended they just stood up from their desk, walked out and never looked back.

While in the Service, I ran into a distant relative, a warrant officer, who had served his 30 years and been recalled to the war. He was a personnel specialists and he came across my name he called me in his office to introduced himself. He said instead of being discharged, I could go to pharmacy school at Bainbridge, Maryland, and in 18 months I'd be a registered pharmacist. He'd fix it. A Navy pharmacist didn't need a college degree then. But I chose to be discharged rather than be a pharmacist at age 21. No regrets.

After the war and because of my experience, I went into pre-med at Washington & Lee University, but didn't stick with it and switched to another major. In the Service I just did what they told me to do, and never really had too many choices. I did an awful lot of growing up in the Navy.

George E. VanArsdall, Sr.

I'm from Crewe, Virginia, and was mustered in the Service at Camp Lee. We went to what is now Lackland AFB, Texas, then to Seattle, and then by boat to Nome, Alaska. We were crowded on a boat leaving Seattle when an oil tanker ran into us at night in the Puget Sound. There was a big hole in the ship so we limped back and were reloaded on a steamer, the "USS Yukon," which had staterooms. The trip was quite nice.

I was a Tech Sergeant with the 398th Service Squadron, part of the Air Transport Command. We were a stopover for lend-lease planes going to Russia. Russian pilots would pick up P-47 in Fairbanks, and fly north to Nome where they would stop for fuel and minor repairs if needed. Then they'd take off the same day for Russia. Flying time in Alaska wasn't always good so they would come in spurts and we'd be real busy, then not so busy for days. We kept tires, spare parts, and mostly fuel. We had mechanics on line all the time.

The Russian fliers were officers, generally young and seemed to be good. I never remembered one crashing. We got along well with them. There was hardly ever any fraternization and most didn't speak English. They had some weather station people there who did speak English. We got along well with them too.

I was in charge of stock records. I used a card-x file system which was better than cards in a box. We got our stocks from Wright AFB in Ohio, and we never ran out of parts. We would use an awful lot of fuel. It came in on freighters. Nome didn't have a port so it was unloaded by tugs in 55-gallon drums. We used it right out of the drums.

I spent 21 months at the Army Air Base in Nome and was eventually discharged from the old Richmond Air Base. I'm sorry I didn't stay in.

Virginia Watry

I was in the class of 43-W-4, of the 315th Army Air Force Flying Training Detachment (AAFFTD). My class was the first to train under the 170-hour program for women. Nancy Love Harkness started the training, flying light planes. She and Jacqueline Cochran wanted to prove women could fly planes as well as men. Cochran went to General "Hap" Arnold who sponsored the program and gave us the same training as the men.

Before the war, I worked in Atlanta, where I took a plane ride, liked it, so began flying lessons. I supported myself and a son, flight time was expensive, so I kept books for the flying company and got my private license logging 200 hours.

When I had my interview, I was living in Nashville, Tennessee. Another girl from there also joined. We rode a train and reported to the Blue Bonnet Hotel in Sweetwater, Texas. At sunrise the next day, we went to Avenger Field in a big cattle truck. It was a pretty picture with the blue and gold low-wing Fairchild planes parked perfectly in a line. My class graduated 112 girls, the largest class in the program. We went through primary, basic, and advanced training at Sweetwater, flying the PT 19 Fairchild, the BT 13 Vultee (Vibrator), the AT 6 North American trainer, and the AT 17 twin engine Cessna.

We were busy flying and didn't have much time for a social life. My quarters were next to an engine repair shop but once I got used to the noise, it was OK. While in training, 6 girls lived in a bay and 2 bays were connected by restrooms and showers. In the morning, one group went to the flightline and the other to school. We ate in a messhall and got cadet pay. We were given officer privileges. We had exercises every day in the hot Texas sun. We wore pants and shirts, we had bought. We were issued "zoot suits" and coveralls. We couldn't alter them so we folded them up, and held them in place with belts. Then we got our Jacqueline Cochran designed uniforms: Santiago blue skirts, slacks, blouses, suitcoats, and a specially designed cap. They were very pretty. We also got blue coveralls and our own zoot suits that fit.

We were assigned a lot of places. I went to the 5th Ferrying Group, Love Field, Dallas, Texas. We were the first women in that command. At Love Field, the "powers that be" tried to wash us out. When we got to Love Field, we were PILOTS. We had gone through exhaustive training to qualify as PILOTS and PILOTS we were. Jacqueline Cochran came to our rescue.

The entry requirements into the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, (WASP) program were demanding. We met the toughest AAF men's physical and intellectual standards and trained as strenuously and thoroughly as men. We had no rank, health care, pilot's salary, or pension rights. We paid our board, and even our fare to Sweetwater to start training. Avenger Field was the only all-female cadet air base in history.

At the 5th Ferrying Command, I flew C-47s which were like DC-3s with a co-pilot. I flew the Avenger and at pursuit school, I flew P-47s and P-53s. We had a girl killed there. I had the most fun flying the Beechcraft C-45.

We picked up planes at overhaul and repair depots; took them from the factory to bases; flew "VIPs" around. We had one pilot to a plane, except when ferrying the C-47s. I got about 1,000 hours flying in the Ferrying Command. To pick up a plane, we would go by air or train. We had priority on airlines, but I spent many nights trying to sleep in the coach section of a train.

Some of the girls towed targets for anti-aircraft practice; some flew B-36 bombers (the formidable B-36); the fellows had trouble with this one. We were assigned as First Pilot and Co-Pilot on the B-29 Super-fortresses, and some were test pilots. I never heard of a WASP turning down an assignment. Men take chances better than women, I think, but women follow procedures better.

Also, we were anxious to do well. We tried harder, and put up with any harassment they gave. I remember having to park at the end of the field which was about a mile walk to the hanger, carrying my B-4 bag, parachute and briefcase, and having a half-empty Jeep pass me. Sometimes you were the very last to get a plane; sometimes you had to wait the longest at operations; little harassments.

I was most proud of my record of no mistakes. I never had any trouble or near crashes. Just before I graduated, I needed 4 hours, so they gave me a plane, and after I made my first turn, the engine sputtered, but I landed OK. They had given me a plane that was in for maintenance. One time my plane's wiring crossed and the panel didn't show my landing gear was down. So I came in prepared for a belly landing, but really they were down. Big relief.

When the war ended, they gave us a big send off, but we were a little bitter. As soon as the male pilots returned to the States, we were "let go." I flew from 23 February 1943 until 20 December 1944. The risks were high, 38 WASP's died in the 2 year period, mostly due to mechanical failure. I have been told no compensation was given to the surviving families. Sister WASP's, in one instance, even paid for a body to be sent home.

When I got out of the Service, I had no job offers to fly. The Air Force didn't need us and didn't even recognize us as veterans. The last class of women in training, 44-W-10, graduated but never flew. There were about 1,020 to graduate in the program. A fellow in Nashville wanted to pick up Fairchild trainers in Huron, North Dakota, and fly them to Ponca City, Oklahoma. So 3 of us ex-WASP's contracted the job. After 4 flights, the job ended.

Thanks to some great lobbying in Washington, we are now Air Force vets. In May 1984, I received 2 medals, the World War II victory medal, and the American Campaign medal plus the honorable discharge lapel pin. There is a restaurant outside Wilmington, Delaware, with walls full of WASP photos. The WASP reunion is every 2 years, there are over 900 active.

Frederick G. Wolf

I was commissioned from Valley Forge Military Academy and entered the Army Infantry in April 1942. In February 1943, I was assigned to the Army Air Corps as a training officer. In October I went to England and was assigned to the 444th Sub-Depot supporting the 303rd Bomb Group,(H)(AKA "Hello Angels"). I was a Tech Supply Officer in charge of aircraft equipment and supplies for B-17 aircraft.

I remember the night of 5 June 1944 because they provided a "liberty run" for the first time after a 3 or 4 month restriction. We returned about 11 that night and had to detruck and file past a lot of guards showing our ID cards and dog tags. We didn't know what was up. Later I understood they picked up 6 individuals trying to infiltrate the base during the night.

Early on 6 June I was awakened as there was a lot of noise getting the aircraft ready for a maximum mission. I also heard a lot of planes in the air. When I went for chow all 72 of our planes had gone, which was unusual. Generally, only about 60 would go on a mission. About 8:30 someone said the invasion had taken place and we began to see planes returning.

Our aircraft returned about 10 that morning and the air crews stayed at the dispersal area for the next mission scheduled that afternoon. Fuel, ammo, and food were delivered to the planes and by 2 that afternoon they were off again. As they were taking off, another load of bombs was readied for a third mission. We didn't lose any planes that day and even though we planned for 3 missions, we had to fly only 2. The air crews said there were so many ships of every description in the channel, you could walk to France. On 7 June only 60 planes were able to fly because of maintenance and some combat damage and crew fatigue. Some men were wounded, but we didn't have any deaths.

I remember one night in mid-August, several of us had supper in a Red Cross club in London. That night the Germans fired some V-2 rockets and one explosion knocked me right out of bed. The next day we saw a big hole where the Red Cross building had been. Just nothing there.

The 303d Bomber Group left England in July 1945 for North Africa to help set up an air base to shuttle troops back to the States. The 303d Bomb Group was the first group to reach 300 missions over the continent. I was at Port Lyautey in French Morocco by the Sidi River. Our base had originally been French, and our Navy had used it; now we kept troops in tents until they could get a ride to the States. We had about 200 squad tents set up with cots and mattresses. The locals would rip up the mattresses, steal the cover, and leave the stuffing.

One night after most of the troops had been flown home, LT. Johnson and I were patrolling along the river next to the tent area. I was walking close to the river and Johnson was to my side about 15 yards away from the river. A jeep's headlights flashed on us for a split second and Johnson yelled "Look out!" I spun around and there was a man lunging at me with a raised knife.

Apparently he and others had been swimming the river, cutting the mattresses, and selling the cloth to make clothes. We had seen people in town wearing that type of cloth. Shortly after, I was rotated to the States and returned to civilian life. I then went into the Air Force Reserves and was recalled for Korea and again for Vietnam. Altogether I had about 9 years active duty and retired from the Reserves as a LTC in 1970.

Louis T. Zecca

I registered for the draft on my 18th birthday, and 34 days later in April I was drafted into the Army. I was living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and took my physical in the courthouse there. The physical wasn't much. They were taking a lot of categories of men then. I remember I traveled with a man from my neighborhood who had 2 children. We went to Ft. Meade, Maryland.

My basic training was at Atlantic City, New Jersey. At that time the Army had a big push on to develop a band under Glenn Miller. In the Brighton Hotel, where I was, there were a lot of musicians who played for big name bands and hoped to get in the Glenn Miller band. With all those musicians, we always had good music and saw a lot of famous people.

After basic training I went to signal school at Camp Crowder, Missouri, which was way down in the corner of the state by a town named Neosho. We went to school in 3 shifts, starting at 8 in the morning. They were putting out signal people as fast as they could. The training included a lot of things. I started in pole line construction, then did wire splicing, then was an installer and a repairman. I was trained on the radio, semifore, and teletype. Training covered about all fields. I liked it all, from climbing poles to operating equipment. After Crowder I went to California to another school. Then they formed 20 detachments of 22 men each. Detachments from one to 10 went to Europe and 11 to 20 went to the Pacific. I was in number 15.

The detachment's job was to set up commo in the forward areas before others came up. I was first in Australia, then into India, then up into the country. The concept of detachments wasn't the best because we lacked protection and had to do at least 3 different jobs. They disbanded this concept.

I caught malaria and went to the hospital in Calcutta. My unit kept going so when I got out of the hospital I was assigned to the headquarters for the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater in Calcutta. It was good in some ways, but the bad part was, in those days you were part of a unit, and when I came out of the hospital, I went to a big unit which wasn't the same. My detachment was broken up anyway, so it really didn't make much difference I guess.

I was with the 424th Signal Company (Aviation) as the NCO-OIC of the Commo Center. I was an E-6 at the time. We talked to the states and all the other commands. We had three lieutenant generals, so it was a big headquarters. I stayed there for the rest of the war.

There was a lot of poverty in India. People would die in the streets and they would take the bodies to the burning "gats" to cremate them. There were sacred cows wandering in the streets and there were rich Americans. It was an experience. My duty station was about 10 miles from the town, and we went into town often. It was very much a rich and poor caste system. People were still under British rule, so there was a wealthy British class and also a class of wealthy Indians. I was young and had never been away from home. This culture was so different. I grew up a lot.

When the war ended, I was in Calcutta at a place called Hastings Mills which use to be a jute mill. The military was using it as a headquarters or compound. I remember Tony Martin was stationed there. He was the actor who was married to Cyd Charisse. Melvin Douglas, an actor, was there as a major at the time. He was in charge of what is now morale support. We lived in an old warehouse, but we didn't have to sleep in tents. It was pretty good.

When the A-bomb was dropped, we were completely shocked. Being in commo, we had access to all the intelligence traffic and thought we had a good picture of what was going on, but no one had any information on the bomb. We read about it in the "Stars and Stripes," and it was a big surprise.

We never gave a thought as to how long the war would last. We were told there were 3 ways to get home--when the war was over, in a box, or swim. There was no rotation of troops. We ate on the economy frequently because there were some restaurants that were approved; others you had to watch. Whenever you were on the streets you were pestered and followed by beggars. You never got use to that, you only tried to ignore it. Usually you would find someone who, for whatever reason had a twinkle in his eye, and you'd give them a coin or candy, or depending on how you felt, give them paper money.

We had an R&R place called "Dargelian" up in the mountains. Everyone had a horse for transportation, because there were no good roads. We could get fresh milk, and it was a relaxing time. My friend and I were riding and his horse ran into a child. We felt bad, and gave them \$5 but it was a fortune to them.

I came home on a troop ship which was very crowded. I was an E-6, and on the trip back I was made compartment commander. I was just 21 years old and weighed maybe 130 pounds. My compartment was F and the smell of bodies was always there like a gym locker room. It was very crowded and there was a lot of gambling but after 4 days or so just a few had won all the money. One of the guys sold his accordion to this big black guy named Rufus Moxley. I never will forget it. Moxley could play the piano, so he thought he could play the accordion too and he kept practicing. You could tell what he was playing but he wasn't good and some began to complain. I had to tell Rufus to quit playing. He came up to me and said, "If you're not careful I'll dot your eyes," and he put up two fingers close to me. Then he said, "I'll cross your T," and he pushed his fingers on my throat. Then he said "Your head will go singing, 'I ain't got no body.'" So I thought, I've come through this war unscratched and I sure ain't going to get hurt now. That was the last day I slept down there. I went up to sleep on the deck for the rest of the trip.

I came back to Seattle then to Camp Atterbury where I was discharged. I stayed in the Reserves and was recalled for Korea. I stayed in and retired with over 30 years as a Chief Master Sergeant in the Air Force in 1978.

"There is an invisible but real wall between the man who has been there and the man who has not; and the man who has been there is likely to feel closer to the men on the side of the line across from him than he does to his compatriots back home."

Irwin Shaw, "New York Times", June 12, 1977.



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"They have seen the
elephant"

