

MY LIFE IN THE ARMY AIR CORPS

DURING WORLD WAR II

BY

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I had to report back to Atlantic City on Nov. 1, 1942 so you can see that it was a very short leave.

The Air Force had taken over Atlantic City. I stayed at The Hotel Dennis. They had taken all of the furniture out of the hotels and replaced it with Army cots and etc. We trained on the beaches, parking lots, boardwalk and when it rained, we went into the huge Convention Center.

When I got back to Atlantic City, my orders were to report to Fort Myers, Fla. for Gunnery School.

I left Atlantic City on Nov. 3, and arrived in Fort Myers on Nov. 5th. and started school on Nov. 9th. My notes state that I met Bill Morris from Chadwicks and Al Liddycoat. I remember who Bill Morris was but don't recall Al Liddycoat. Bill Morris is brother of Vic Morris who still lives in Chadwicks.

It was while I was Fort Myers Gunnery School that I met Jack Ryder from Waterville, N.Y. This was the start of a long very good relationship which continues today. While at Gunnery School, the final test was air-to-air Gunnery. We flew in an AT-6 and fired at a tow target being towed by another AT-6. I had bad luck with my air-to-air Gunnery and had to repeat the test

On December 20, 1942, graduated from Gunnery School and promoted to Sergeant, and received my Aerial -Gunner wings. This is one of the so called "Perks" for going to Gunnery School. After a final inspection at Fort Myers on December 23, 1942, I left for Denver, Colo. to go to Armament School. Up until this time you only need to go to one school for training to become an Aerial Gunner. That all changed and now two schools was required. I had no choice of what school I wanted to go to, so it was off to Denver, Colo. with other class mates including Jack Ryder.

Thursday December 24, 1942 traveling on train to Denver, Colo. Most of day we are traveling through Georgia and part of Tennessee. Friday, December 25, 1942 Christmas Day. Still on train. This is my first time away from home on Christmas. We stopped at Evansville, Indiana. The people there treated us very well. I don't remember if we got off the train for dinner or if we had dinner on the train. Saturday, Dec. 26, 1942 traveled through Ill., Missouri, and part of Kansas. Weather is starting to get a little cooler.

Sunday, 12/27/42 we arrived at Lowry Field, Denver, Colo. We had traveled 2240 Miles. Already we noticed that Lowry Field was much better than Ft. Myers Fla. Lowry Field is a very old field while Ft. Myers was a new field built after the war started. We are stationed at the new part of Lowry Field called Lowry II. We are at an Armament School where we will learn all about guns, turrets, and any thing related to the armament on airplanes.

Monday, 12/28/42 Started school today. I am on the late afternoon session. We start late in the after noon and finish about 11 PM.

Friday, Jan. 1, 1943 New Years Day. No snow and not too cold. Went to school at 4 PM. Even though it is New Years Day, we still had school. . 1/4/43 Monday , my day off from school.

I want to mention here that Denver was a very nice place to be stationed, and I was very lucky to be stationed there for school. It was the only school in the United States that I know of where students had a Class A pass. A Class A pass entitled you to leave the Base any time you wanted to without any questions as where you were going, as long as you went to school and met all your other formations such as drill, calisthenics, etc. This was not the case in Fort Myers where we were allowed to go to town only once while we were there. 1/06/43 I got Jane's Christmas present. A very nice gold Identification Bracelet. Written in diary " I think that she is a swell kid". Also got \$2.00 from Blanche and Stan Champ, and \$1.00 from Gertrude Perry.

1/15/43 A little colder and some snow. Denver is a "Mile High" city and the air is much different here. It can be very cold but the humidity is low so you don't mind the cold weather as much as back home. I sometimes questioned that. 1/19/43 Started fourth week of school.

Sat., Feb. 6, 1943 School today. I am not feeling good today. Feel cold in back and shoulders. One of the fellows said while we were on supper break. Lets go on sick call. They will send us back to our barracks for a few days. So off we go to sick call. I had a temperature of 102 Degrees and ended up in the hospital for a week. He didn't have a high temperature and was sent back to school.

Feb. 14 ,1943 Got out of hospital today. Swore off of going on sick call again. Weather very warm today.

Feb. 15,1943 Started back in school again . Nothing new.

Feb. 16,1943 to March 6, 1943 still attending school during this time. When not in school made trips into the city. Worked in mail room some days during hours not in school. Weather cold and some snow.

March 6, 1943 Graduated from school and left for Salt Lake City.

March 7, 1943 Arrived at Salt Lake City

March 15, 1943 Left Salt Lake City for Tucson, Arizona . Arrived Tucson March 17.

March 22, 1943 Started school again at Tucson. When not in school went into city of Tucson and sometimes went to the movies.

March 27, 1943 I had my first airplane ride in a B-24 from 5:30AM to 9 AM.

While at Tucson, was assigned to a Bomber Crew.

One day while I was going into the Orderly Room, which is an office for the base, I met Jack Ryder coming out. It was the first time I had seen Jack since we got off the train when we arrived at Denver, Colo. back in December 1942. I asked Jack what he was doing there and he said that he was waiting to be assigned to a Bomber Crew. Our crew was lacking an Aerial Gunner, which Jack was, same as myself. I told him I would talk to our pilot and see if he could get Jack assigned to our crew. I talked to our pilot and within a couple of days, Jack was assigned to our crew. Thus, started a long lasting friendship which continues until this day.

May 14, 1943 our training group left Tucson for Blythe, California. While at Blythe, we did quite a bit of flying, and also some more school. School consisted of practicing shooting different types of guns, and learning many other things about the B-24 airplane.

It seems that we were always in school. From one Air Base to another somebody thought that we did not know anything and off to school again.

Our stay at Blythe was very short. We were out in the desert away from any town. We were living in barracks that were not very well built. It was very windy and the sand was always blowing, and it was very hot. The base was built for a Fighter strip. The runways were not very thick and the heat and weight of the B-24 was breaking up the runways so on May 31, 1943 our training group, The Harrison Provisional Training Group, moved to Salinas, California, about 100 miles south of San Francisco. The base was right outside of town and we could walk into town which we did at every chance we got. The weather here was very nice. A lot like home. It was warm during the day and cool at night. We lived in tents, the six enlisted men of each crew, living together in a tent. Sometimes we would take off in the middle of the afternoon for a training flight and when we got ready to return to base, the fog was so bad we could not see the landing field. This created quite a problem. Some times we had to go to Bakersfield, California and land and stay there until the next day. Sometimes this was something that we did not care to do so we would fly south from Salinas about 50 miles to King City, drop down to a lower altitude to get below the fog and then fly up the valley to Salinas. This was a little scary at times because of the low altitude we were flying we had to be careful that we did not crash into something.

While in training we flew over the desert and mountains of the south and northwest. We were restricted to the area that we were allowed to fly over. The training that we had required us to fly during the daytime and also at night. The training was fun, but there was also some sadness. Once in a while a plane would crash on landing or takeoff and some of the crew would perish. This happened on June 10, 1943 while at Salinas and six crew members were killed. This also was the day that I was promoted to Staff- Sergeant.

On July 14, 1943 our training group left Salinas, California and went to El Paso, Texas. I enjoyed being at Salinas, and hated to leave there.

On July 16, 1943, we were assigned a new B-24D and on July 23 we finished our training.

We flew our new B-24 to Lincoln, Nebraska, and were given a furlough to go home.

Jack Ryder and I flew home for our furlough.

We returned to Lincoln and on August 17, 1943, left Lincoln for, if I remember correctly, Susan-Fairfield, California. This was our starting base for our trip to the Pacific Ocean Theater of War.

We stayed there until the weather cleared enough so we could fly to Hickam Field, Hawaii. We took off one night but the weather got bad after we took off and could not make the trip, but because we had a full load of gas with two extra tanks in the Bomb Bay, we had to keep flying until we used up most of the gas. We were restricted to the area we could fly and it was very small, so ended up flying in mostly a circle.

We finally took off for Hawaii on August, 24, 1942. It was a twelve hour flight over nothing but water. This is where you wanted to make sure that you had a very good navigator, which we had. I want to note here that our navigator John Porter, I considered the best in our squadron. Our combat missions and sea search missions were over many miles of nothing but ocean and he always knew where we were, even if it was day or night. We always got back to our base with no problems

When we arrived at Hickam Field, we stayed for 18 days, while our airplane was being modified. It was discovered that the B-24 lacked machine gun protection in the nose of the airplane, so the tail turret was taken from the tail and mounted in the nose. I, being the tail-gunner, now became the nose-gunner. One day while at Hickam, I was talking to the fellow in the next bunk, and asked him what outfit he was in and discovered that it was the same outfit that Sherwood Wadsworth was in. Sherwood lived only three houses from me back in Washington Mills. His brother "Bud" was my best buddy. Sherwood was a B-25 Pilot. He told me that Sherwood was on the base and so I left the barracks to go find him. I stood on the street corner, got a ride on an army truck that was being used for a bus. I went only a few blocks and there was Sherwood walking down the street. I got off of the truck, went up to him and saluted him, he was an Officer. We exchanged greetings, and we went to his barracks for a talk. That night he took me to dinner at the Officers Club. The next day he gave me a ride in his B-25 and let me sit in the copilot's seat. When we started to land, I started to get up, and he said stay there. So I was the copilot for the landing. I had never been allowed to do this all during the many hours of flying with my own pilot of our airplane.

We left Hickam Field on Sept. 11, 1943 and started our long journey to our base in the Pacific. Our first stop was at Christmas Island. The next day we left for Tahiti in the Samoa Island Group. We crossed the Equator that day. After our all night stay we went to Nandi in the Fiji Group. This time we crossed the date line.

On Sept. 15, we arrived at Espiritu Santo, in the New Hebrides Island Group. I was first assigned to the 23rd Bomb Squadron, on Sept. 23 transferred to the 372nd Sqdn., 307th Bomb Grp., 13th Air Force, in which I stayed during my entire tour of combat duty. October 14, 1943, Jane's birthday today. Charlie, nick name, for Jap Bombers was over tonight.

While at Espiritu Santo, we had more training, and did some flying. Oct. 23, 1943 received a newsletter from church back home and read that Fred Weigel, from Washington Mills, was in the hospital for an appendicitis operation. Fred was on the same Island, so I went to see him. Fred was in the Navy.

Oct. 24 moved up to Guadalcanal Island. We were flying combat for six weeks and then would move back to the rear area for six weeks for more training and rest leave.

October 25 went on my first combat mission. When a new crew that had never been in combat before went on their first mission, the crew was divided up and each crew member was assigned to fly with an older crew. I was assigned to fly as nose gunner with Capt. Pennington. I will never forget my first time flying a combat mission. We had been in the air for a while and I spotted some land. I thought that we were over an enemy Island, but later found out that we were still over Guadalcanal. We did not reach our assigned target for the mission due to bad weather and had to return to base. A sad note, we lost an airplane and the entire crew due to the bad weather.

The weather could get very bad and sometimes we were not able to get through the storm and had to return to base without completing our mission. We also lost a number of planes and crew due to the weather.

Oct. 31, we were on another mission and I think that this time we were flying together as a crew.

When not flying combat, we had duty such as cleaning the guns on the plane, checking over various parts of the plane, more school, and relaxing, going swimming, playing cards, playing volley ball, etc. I became very good friends with two ground crew members, Fred Quist, from Amsterdam, NY and John Kelly from South Bend Indiana. I spent a lot of time visiting with them.

I would like to tell about our crew. The crew was made up of four officers and six enlisted men.

When the crew was first formed, the rank of each man was as follows. Pilot Lt. Eugene Link from Portland, Oregon. Co-pilot Lt. Lionel Lalaberte Waterville, Maine. Bombardier Lt. Thomas Wickstrom, Warren, Pa. Navigator Lt. John Porter Price, Utah.

Flight Engineer Sgt. Adam Fromm N. Merrick, NY. Assistant Flight Engineer Sgt. Quintin Hengen Biloxi, Miss. Radioman Sgt. LeRoy Maguire Collingdale, Pa. Assist. Radioman William Wilson Joplin, Missouri. Armament Aerial Gunner Sgt. John Ryder Waterville, Ny. Armament Aerial Gunner Lewis Smith Washington Mills, NY.

From the time our crew was formed at Davis-Monthan Air base Tucson, Arizona, the six enlisted men on the crew became a very close group. In addition to flying together we shared the same living quarters, which usually was a tent, went on leave together, ate together, played cards, participated in sports together, and other numerous activities.

The six enlisted men upon completing one school became Sergeants. Upon completing the second school and completing training, became Staff Sgt.. The Flight Engineer and Radioman later became Tech. Sgt.

Our pilot became a Captain after we had completed some of our combat missions. The rest of the officers became 1st. Lt. and possibly some of them a higher rank.

Continuing from Oct. 31, 1943, we flew combat missions for six weeks and then returned to Espiritu Santo for six weeks of rest, more training, and a rest leave of about nine days in Auckland, New Zealand. We were rotated back to combat after our six weeks. This is how it was worked. Six weeks in combat, and the back to the rear area for six weeks. I went to Auckland again, and also to Sydney, Australia once.

The 13th. Air Force was a very small Air Force compared to the Air Forces in the European Theater. We had only two heavy Bomber Groups, of four Squadrons each, and also B-25 bomber Groups and Fighter Groups

The Pacific Theater consisted of the Central Pacific with the 7th. Air Force. The South Pacific 13th Air Force. Southwest Pacific with the 5th. Air Force.

Our main theater of combat operations was in the Solomon Island Group, and other large Island groups. We always called it, "Flying Up-The Slot"

The islands consisted of New Hebrides, Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Russell Islands, New Britain, Bougainville, and other many small Islands.

Espiritu Santo, in the New Hebrides Islands was our rear area when I first arrived in the South Pacific. Guadalcanal had already been secured and it was from here that I flew my first six weeks of combat duty. Our targets were Japanese Air Bases mainly on the larger Islands, such as New Georgia, Rabaul, on New Britain which was very well fortified, Bougainville and many Air Bases on the smaller Islands. We made many missions to Rabaul, a lot of them at night. We also made missions to a Jap Navy Base on the Island of Truk, in the Central Pacific. This was another very well fortified base and was called, "The Jap Pearl Harbor"

Nov. 1, 1943, We were up early 7:30AM, and were on alert all day. This meant that we were ready to fly in a minutes notice.

Nov. 2, 1943, Went on raid to Kahili. No interception but quite a bit of heavy Ack! Ack!. Got paid \$77.50.

Nov. 3 to 10, 1943 flew missions to various targets, as well as did maintenance on Airplane. Evenings was spent going to the "Outdoor Movies".

On Nov. 10, 1943 we went flew to the Island of Munda in the New Georgia group. We stayed there all night and was supposed to go on a mission to Rabaul in the morning, but trouble with the airplane prevented us from going on the mission.

Rabaul was a very heavy fortified Jap base. It was the most important base for the Japs in the South Pacific at that time My notes state that one plane went down near Rabaul, and another near Munda, but all but two were believed to have bailed out. The pilot was wounded and the copilot killed.

In the above paragraph about the mission to Rabaul, I mentioned about an airplane going down.

I would like to tell something about this airplane. The airplane was "Shehasta". Which meant that she had to get the crew there and get them back. A book was written about this mission and the airplane by one of the crew members. The book is 'MISSION OF SHEHASTA". It is written by Lyman "Ace" Clark one of the Gunners on the plane, and describes how their airplane was hit by a Jap fighter, causing a lot of damage to the plane, wounding some of the crew, his bailing out of the plane and being rescued by an American Destroyer. Sgt. Clark, who was the ball-turret Gunner, was in the ball-turret at the time the plane was hit. The pilot, co-pilot and one of the gunners stayed with the plane and made a water belly-landing near Munda. The gunner that stayed with the plane later died from injuries he received when the plane hit the water.

Reading from my diary, The raid to Rabaul on Nov. 11, 1943 Armistice Day, was a ship-ping strike. One ship( meaning airplane) had quite a few holes in it, and two wounded slightly. One ship(plane), we sometimes referred to an air plane as a ship, was believed to have gone down near Rabaul, and another went down near Munda, but all but two was believed to have bailed out. Quoting from Sgt. Clark's book. This was to be a tough mission, almost the maximum range of our B-24's, with no fighter escort. We would be the first B-24's to hit Rabaul. All four Squadrons of the 307th Bomb Grp. with a total of 36 planes . It was an all out strike at the heart of the Jap's stronghold in the South Pacific.

In the preceding page, I devoted a lot of space to the mission to Rabaul. I wanted to show what we were up against in the Pacific. 36 planes from the 307th was all we could send on the mission. Compare this to the 100's that were on missions in Europe. The reason that we went to Munda ,New Georgia from Guadalcanal, and stayed over night and took off from there, was because the distance from Guadalcanal to Rabaul was so great that we would have to add an extra gas tank in the bomb bay , thus decreasing the amount of bombs that we could carry. This was the case on many missions later where we would have to stay over night at another Island in order to reach our target.

The afternoon of the 11th, we returned to Guadalcanal. On the 12th, cleaned guns on the plane and then spent some time with Kelly and Quist. During my tour with the 307th., I became quite acquainted with two fellows who were on the ground crew who took care of the planes. Kelly was from South Bend, Indiana and Quist was from Amsterdam, NY. and I spent quite a bit of time with them.

Nov. 14 started on mission to Kahili, but did not reach target because of bad weather. Many times we were unable to complete our mission because of the clouds ,rain storms, and just plain unflyable weather.

Nov. 16 Mission to Bonis, which was a very good mission. Nov. 18 mission to Buka. Nov. 20 briefing for mission to Island of Nauru. Nauru was a very important island for the Japs. It was from this island that they got their phosphate. Nov. 21 Started for Nauru but had to turn back because of bad weather. Nov. 26 big ammunition dump fire which started in mid morning and was still burning late in evening. Nov. 27 mission to Bonis and on return we strafed Northern coast of Bougainville .This was something that we very seldom did. Nov. 29 mission to Kieta. On this mission we dropped fragmentation cluster bombs which was used to start fires. Dec. 4 we completed our first six week tour of combat and returned to Espiritu Santo.

Dec. 11, 1943 went to Auckland, New Zealand for nine day rest leave. This was one of the luxuries that the ground personnel did not have. Dec. 22 returned to Espiritu Santo. Time was spent going to school, working on plane, and just resting. Dec. 25, 1943 Christmas Day. Had a very good Turkey dinner with all the trimmings that go with it.

Jan. 1, 1944 The members of the 307th that were stationed at Espiritu Santo started to prepare for our move to Guadalcanal. Everything had to be torn down, packed and loaded on a boat.

Jan 5 The move completed we flew to Guadalcanal, and began to unpack and set up our Squadron Area.



Until the area was set up on a permanent basis, with the tents set up on wooden platforms with screened in sides, living conditions were not the best.

Jan. 13 We went on our first night mission to Rabaul. This was the first time that our crew flew on a night mission and it was quite different from flying in the day time. Jan. 17 went on another mission to Rabaul where we stayed over night at Munda, and then flew to Rabaul the next day.

My diary states that we were getting a lot of rain during this time. Almost continuous day and night. quote from diary "I never thought that it could rain so damn much." For every mission that we flew we were allowed two ounces of whiskey. We did not take it then but saved it until we had enough for a party. From my diary, drew the rest of our liquor today. I imagine that there will be a pretty good party to night.

Jan 20, 1944 Capt. Sherwood Wadsworth, who I have mentioned on page 5 flew over to Guadalcanal from Russell Island where he was stationed for some supplies and came to look me up. Sherwood was a Pilot of a B-25. Time did not permit him to stay very long but here we were next door neighbors meeting on an island in the Pacific Ocean many miles from home. I rode back to Henderson Field with him and stayed until he took off.

Jan. 28. The base at Munda, New Georgia was now completed, and that meant packing up again and moving. By moving up again that meant that our flying time for mission would be shortened.

The next entry in my diary is date May 1, 1944 and states very briefly, "still here, nothing much has changed." Till this day, I do not know why I stopped writing in my diary, and from here on it will be from memory, which at this age of life is not too good. Don't ask me what I did yesterday, so trying to remember what I did 58 years ago will be hard to do.

From here on is from memory, from Sam Britt's book, Diary of the Long Rangers, the book, Thirteenth Air Force Story, and other articles and books about the 13th. Air Force that I have read.

As I have mentioned before, the time that I spent in combat was broken up into six weeks of combat, six weeks in the rear area for rest and training.

My first period, or as I have referred to as a "Hitch" of combat on Guadalcanal, was from 10/25/43 to 12/3/43, second period 1/13/44 to 2/21/44 and the third from 4/2/44 to 8/24/44 when I returned to the United States.

I mentioned earlier that between the first and second period I returned to Espiritu Santo and had a rest leave to New Zealand. During the second period I had another rest period in New Zealand, and about the end of the third period rest leave in Sydney, Australia. I remember I was in Sydney on the fourth of July 1944 and that it was during their winter. The entire crew went on these rest leaves but not always together.

We traveled on whatever transportation was available to and from these rest leaves. Usually it was a C-47. I remember that while returning from the second rest leave, the airplane that we were flying on developed engine trouble , and we had to land on Norfolk Island, a very small 3 mile by 5 mile island between New Zealand and New Caledonia and stayed there for a week until the airplane was repaired. It was a base for New Zealand Air Force. A lot of decedents of Mutiny on the Bounty settled there.

It was while our crew was in New Zealand at this time that the raids were started on Truk Island, and because of the importance of these raids , and the need for the crews for these missions , some rest leaves were cut short.

The missions to Truk were very long , ten to twelve hours, and because of this we had to leave Munda, fly to Bougainville, stay overnight, fly to Truk, return to Bougainville, stay overnight, and then return to Munda. Many of these missions were flown at night.

At the end of April 1944 , there was no longer any targets left in the Solomon Island area that we had been bombing including Rabaul, which was bypassed and we moved from Munda, New Georgia to the Admiralty Islands. From here it was a lot closer to Truk and we started bombing a new area of the Pacific, We hit targets on Biak Island, which is West of New Guinea, and islands in the Caroline Island Group, such as the Palau Island group and the Yap Island Group.

I flew my last mission, Number 50, on July 15, 1944 to Yap Island. It was a twelve hour mission and one of our toughest missions.

I had mentioned before how on Espiritu Santo I had looked up Fred Weigel from Washington Mills and my meetings with Sherwood Wadsworth. While returning from Sydney, Australia we stayed over night at Townsville, Australia. I had mentioned before how the Messiah Congregational Church in Washington Mills sent out a newsletter and remembered that Freemont Lockwood from Mallory Rd. in Washington Mills was stationed at Townsville in the Air Force and looked him up. Who would believe that two people from little Washington Mills would meet so far away as in Australia.

In August 1944, it was time for the 13th Air Force to move again. No combat missions were flown during the middle part of August and the 307th Grp. was preparing to move to Biak Island.

I had completed my combat missions and on August 24, 1944 my orders came returning me to the United States. Ryder, Hengen, and myself were the only ones left from our crew. Ryder's name was not on the orders and the next day Hengen and myself, along with others, got on a plane for home. We changed planes three times flying from island to island and landed in California. From there I went to Fort Dix, N.J. by train and then was given a 30 day furlough to go home.

At the time I left the Admiralty Island for home, transportation back to the States was very scarce and later I found out that I was lucky to be able to fly home. When Ryder got his orders to go back to the States there was no air transportation available and he finally got on an aircraft carrier that was returning to the States and it took him 30 days to get home.

I had orders to go to Atlantic City for reassignment upon completion of my furlough, but a very bad storm hit Atlantic City and I received orders to go to Miami Beach, Florida.

One of the fellows who came back to the States with me was Joe Bastarache from New Bedford, Mass. He was at Miami Beach with his new bride .

After about a week at Miami Beach we got on a train for Denver, Colo. In all there were two pullman cars full of us which was attached to a regular passenger train. Quite a few fellows had their wives with them and I got to wondering, along with some other fellows, how we were going to manage it when night came and how were the women going to get prepared for bed. It all worked out some how with no problems. One very interesting incident happened on the trip to Denver which I will never forget. The fellows who had their wives had orders that permitted their wives to travel with them. One day an Army Military Policeman and a Navy Shore Patrolman came aboard the train and wanted to see our orders. When the Army MP saw the women on the train, he became very upset and said that he had never seen anything like it and did not believe the orders allowing the women to travel with the men and was going to stop the train and make the women get off. Now here we were two cars full of Air Force Combat Fliers , no one under the rank of Sgt. , just returning from at least a year in combat and having an MP state that he was going to make the wives get off the train. Things were not going too well about this time and I did not know just what was going to happen. I thought that when we reached the next city our two cars would be disconnected from the train and that we would have to wait until the matter was cleared up. All this time the Army MP was doing all the talking and arguing, and the SP did not have much to say. Finally the SP spoke up and wanted to see the orders again. After looking them over and deciding that they were all in order, he talked to the MP and said he could see nothing wrong and that we should be allowed to continue as we were. The MP finally agreed and that everything was in order. I have told this story many times and to this day thank the SP for sticking up for us.

After I left and came back to the United States, the 13th Air Force moved many times each time closed to the Philippine Islands.

At the end of September 1944, the 13th Air Force was assigned the task to destroy the Japanese oil refineries at Balikpapan on the Island of Borneo. These oil refineries were considered to be the "Polesti oil fields of the Far East". The 5th Air Force also participated in these missions. These missions were 1250 mile missions over water and unescorted. It was the longest daylight formation bombing mission ever flown by B-24s.

They continued to bomb targets in the Philippines, Halmahera, and Celebes. In July 1945 the 13th Air Force and 307th Bomb Grp. was planning to move to Okinawa to be closer to Japan, but the surrender of the Japanese on August 15, 1945 changed all of this.

Back to our train trip from Miami Beach to Denver. Everything went well for the rest of the trip. We had no idea what we would be doing at Denver. We all had been in combat but they would not discharge us. I had been in Denver before to the Armament School and that is where we ended up. We went through the school again and after finishing school had our choice of staying there and becoming instructors or shipping out to some other base to work, or whatever, on airplanes.

I liked the life very much at Denver so elected to stay there and become an instructor in the B-24 school. The instructors that were there had been there a very long time and now some of them ended overseas. After a while, the B-24 school was closed and I was assigned B-29 school as an instructor.

In May 1945, I went home and got married and Jane returned to Denver with me. A friend of mine had an apartment in Denver and his wife was returning home so I was able to rent the apartment that he was moving out of. It was a very small basement apartment. Because I was permanent party, I was allowed to live off base. It was like having an eight to five job, with weekends off. Travel was very restricted during the war, but we did manage to go to Colorado Springs and there was a trolley that went to Golden, Colo. and it was a very nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

When the war with Japan ended, I was discharged from Denver and returned to Washington Mills.

Jane had an Aunt living in Hollywood at the time and I was considering going to Hollywood to pursue a career in the movies, but Jane wanted to go home. "Big Joke"

The 13th Air Force was a very small Air Force in comparison to the Air Forces in Europe. It consisted of two B-24 heavy bomber groups, one B-25 medium bomber group, two fighter groups, one photo recon group and one transport carrier group. From the first American offensive to the end of the war, units of the 13th Air Force-often called the "Jungle Air Force" had been there. Their planes attacked every type of Japanese ship, from barge to battleship, and had flown in action with planes of four other air forces-the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, and the Navy and Marines.

They had operated on both sides of the equator, and over the immense distance of 56 degrees in longitude(nearly a sixth of the way around the world) and 45 degrees latitude. For the period from the time of activation of the 13th A.F. , January 1943 to the end of the war 97,038 combat sorties had been flown with 61,929 tons of bombs dropped on targets ranging from 15,339 tons on the Philippines to 6 tons on Kyushu and 4 tons on Shanghai. Claims against enemy shipping were 355,745 tons sunk , 213,325 tons probably sunk and 780,060 tons damaged. A total of 1,439 enemy aircraft had been claimed destroyed in the air and on the ground, and from all operations 525 aircraft had been lost in combat.

Life in the Air Corps was not as harsh as that in some of the other branches of service such as the infantry or marines. Living quarters while in training in the states was mostly in a barrack type of building where we had good sleeping quarters, and good bathroom facilities. Meals were in a large building , referred to as a mess hall.Meals were served cafeteria style, where you would stand in line with a tray waiting to get served. Sometimes the line would be long meaning that you would stand in line for a long time. That is why today most ex-servicemen do not like to stand or wait in line for something. Meals while not like home, for the most part were not to bad.

While overseas, living quarters were in a tent, but the mess hall was a building with screened sides, concrete floor, and for the most part a good roof. Again the meals were not to bad, which depended how good the cook was in preparing what he had to work with, or if there was someone who could do some baking. Bathroom facilities were not like home but at least we had showers,even if it was cold water. When we returned from a mission ,we knew that a good bed, a decent meal, and a some what secure area to live in was waiting for us. That is something that those who were serving in the infantry or marine did not always have.

Combat missions in the Pacific Theatre were quite different form those in the European theatre.Our missions were long, over many miles of ocean water , while those in Europe were not as long, and over mostly land.

Survival from having to make a crash water landing, or having to bail out of the airplane over the ocean was at a minimum. If you did have to bail out chances were that the Jap fighter plane would stafe and kill you. If you made a crash water landing , the B-24 airplane would not float very long, and then after you did out , and into a rubber life raft,you were subject to being captured by the Japenese. The Japenese took very few prisoners.

Those who served in the Air Corps in the Pacific theater did not get the recognition, or the medals, that those who served in the European,other theater's of war did, but we not think about the medals that we might receive ,or becoming heroes. We had a job to do, and we did it.

Looking back,I felt it was my duty to do my part to win the war as I am sure everyone had the same feeling.

It was something that I had chosen to do, was trained for, and considered it my duty to carry out what I was trained for. I had very much confidence in the other members of our crew. I have no regrets doing what I did.

All though the 13th A. F. was small in numbers and got very little credit for what they did. I am very proud to have been a part in it.