

Memoir of Richard N. Roth, radio operator 307<sup>th</sup> bomb group, 370<sup>th</sup> bomb squad. Written in 2001.

"On looking back over two and a half years, memoirs, travel, combat military engagement, training, murder and or suicide."

I wanted to be in the Air Force, so 6 months before being drafted I enrolled in a school called "Casey Jones School of Aeronautics" believing that type of school would look good on my "resume" before the induction board. I was also influenced by the songs of the day -- "Off we go into the wild blue yonder--live in fame or go down in flames."

My adventure began at Bergen St. School, Newark, N.J., Apr. 17, 1943.

I reported for duty leaving from the draft board (Bergen, St.) by bus and then by train on Apr. 24, 1943 and arrived at Fort Dix, N.J. tent #220, along with many other recruits. We received our GI issue of uniforms, blankets, pillows, shoes etc. Next, we received our immunization shots for anything imaginable, leaving us with stiff sore arms. Welcome to the animosity and discipline accorded any new recruit. We did our marching, viewed health films, marched some more, pulled KP duty -- endlessly, peeled potatoes, cleaned latrines, more shots, more marching. Some of us were transported by train to Atlantic City, N.J., basic training

for the Air Force. Maybe my enrollment in "Casey Jones" helped my acceptance. We were assigned to the Hotel Dennis, rooms 288, 201a and 273. Room #273 was a suite. Six of us were in this beautiful ocean front room with an attached patio, overlooking the beach and the Atlantic Ocean. Our duties at Atlantic City were upgrade (no shots). We did our share of KP with more intensive longer hours, different atmosphere, working in the bowels of a giant hotel that probably served 30,000 meals a day. Recruits would come from the surrounding hotels, and either walk up or take the elevator up to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, then wend their way down to the lovely dining room and the lovely chow.

KP duty was around the clock. We also did our marching in formation, usually down St James Pl. to Atlantic Ave., over the bridge into Brigantine. March, march to the rear, to the rear, to the right flank, to the left flank and on and on. I became quite good at it and became a part time drill instructor. On rainy days we would assemble in Convention Hall and drill and exercise some more. Humorous things happen also. One of our room mates in our luxurious suite, ignorant of basic hygiene or personal cleanliness. On removing his clothing, he would simply put them back into his locker, avoid the shower room...avoid the laundry etc. We finally took him bodily into the shower and with a healthy lathering with GI soap tried to turn his mind set. I don't even want to say where he came from. Occasionally we got to go out on the beach, under restriction or sometimes on the

boardwalk under blackout conditions. Atlantic City was a grand vacation place with all of the luxurious hotels, different from today as a glitzy gambling mecca. Our stay was over and we were destined for different training places.

I arrived July 14, 1943 at Norwich University College Training Detachment, Northfield, Vt., Jackman Hall, rm. 15, an ivy covered Dormitory. Four of us in one room. This was cadet training. We attended classes, college curriculum, science, history etc. .... flight training and the inevitable marching in formation. We did not have KP duty. Our training also included dining in a "gentlemanly" manner, in a quiet mess hall. Marched in, sat down by the numbers, learned to dine with etiquette in a cadet-like robotic manner. Example: one hand in your lap when you take the food from the plate to the mouth with your fork. Really excellent training for dining etiquette. Norwich U. was a beautiful old military college in the hills of Vermont, ivy covered dorms on the upper level and classroom buildings on the lower level along with the parade grounds, marble steps connected the lower and upper levels. On one step riser was the name of Admiral Dewey, an alumnus. We received our diplomas on Oct. 9, 1943. Some of us were sent to Nashville, Tenn. for assignment. My lodging: Sq. I-1 Barracks I307. I opted for Radio School and arrived at Scott Field, Bellville, Ill. Nov. 10, 1943, Barracks 1331, 4<sup>th</sup> area, 11 T.S.S. The next seven months were dedicated to becoming a radio operator and radio repairman. We spent the months in a glass cubicle

and classroom mastering Morse code and in-flight repairs. I became proficient in Morse code and could do about 30-35 words per minute. Morse code sounds like a rhythmical song when you get up to speed. Music being one of my hobbies, made it easier to learn .-./-./-./ my initials RNR. At Scott Field, schooling went on 24 hrs. a day. Memorably, we did not have KP, but the mess hall was open 24 hrs. a day, in a two story glass sided building, shining as a beacon all night. We left Scott Field on June 6, 1944 and arrived by train at Yuma, Ariz., our training was about half over. We arrived June 9, 1944, tent H-12, Sq. 4, Yuma was a primary gunnery school, Yuma had to be one of the hottest places on the planet, 110 to 115 degrees in the shade, day in and day out.

Our training was exciting. We learned to dismantle and reassemble a 50 caliber machine gun -- blindfolded, learn the names of all the firing parts such as pawl and detente pawl. After we got that down pat we spent time at the firing range, and then our instruction was at an oval track about a mile around. We climbed onto Jeeps that were mounted with shotguns, and around the track we would go, similar to a moving skeet range. Every one hundred yards or so some one up in the tower would release clay "birds" and we would fire at them from different angles, learning to shoot at targets from the rear, from the side, from the bottom, etc., the same way that you would lead an aeroplane in flight. We also went aloft in a B-17 bomber and fired at

a sleeve target towed by a B-26 bomber, usually piloted by a pilot who had fouled up in the squadron and this would be a form of discipline or punishment. Towing a sleeve target was not a sought after job. Who knows where a few errant rounds of .50 cal bullets would go?

After this stint at gunnery school some of us were assigned to Westover Field, Chicopee Falls, Mass., arriving Aug. 17, 1944 assigned to Section H Barracks 296 and then Sec. E Barracks T-20, our crew #412. At Westover I met up with other members of our crew. Pilots from pilot training schools, bombardier, navigator, engineer, armorer, all assembled from their respective schools and training. We flew simulated bombing missions, plotting courses from Westover Field down towards the Washington Monument in DC and then out over the Atlantic to the Bahamas and then NW back to our base. Certain missions were designed for submarine searches going north towards Nova Scotia then out over the Atlantic and then back to Westover. Our crew worked as a team and our training was smooth, without any incidents, everyone performing their specific duties.

Our Crew:

Pilot - Glenn Donaldson, tall Texan from Arlington, Tex.

Co-pilot - Amos de Rouen, Jr., drawling Cajun from Lake Charles, La.

Navigator - Sinclair Weeks Jr., Boston blue blood, Boston, Mass.

Bombardier - Robert McCarthy, Boston blue collar, Boston, Mass.

Radio op. - RN Roth, New Jersey product, Newark, N.J.

Engineer - Gareld Kling, apple farmer, Voorheesville, N.Y.

Armorer – Dean Humphrey, corn field guy, Deep River, Iowa  
Gunner – Robert Miller, tough guy, Peoria, Ill.  
Top turret – Richard Luker, big smile guy, Mobile, Ala.  
Tail Gunner – Robert Larkin, youngest crew member, Hillsboro, Ohio

Our training was over after four months at Westover, our aeroplane that we would be assigned to was a B-24 D, wingspan 110 ft., max. speed 300 mph, length 66 ft, ht. 18 ft. wt. 60,000 lbs. fully loaded, range 2,850 mi., armament, ten . 50 cal. machine guns, bomb load approx 5,500 lbs. the most widely used American bomber, 18,188 produced by Consolidated, North American, Ford and Douglas. The plane's duties went far beyond conventional bombing, used for Naval recon., bombing missions and anti-submarine warfare. At present (2001) there is one B-24 in existence, which was resurrected from the mud in Turkey, and was restored with 750,000 man hours and now tours the U.S. as a flying living history museum.

During its service the B-24 was not the most popular of bombers, it had very complex construction and could not take much punishment. If hit by anti aircraft fire in crucial places, it would give way completely; in certain WWII photos you can see the wings fold back, like a wounded butterfly and plummet earthward. The design featured a twin tail, dual landing gear, four machine gun turrets, nose, tail, belly and top. The plane was powered by four 1250 h.p. Pratt & Whitney radial engines.

We were transported to Mitchell Field, Long Island, NY, Nov. 23, 1944, Barracks T-64 Sec. 8. Our orders stated that we were to be assigned to the 15th AF in Italy. We had fake I.D.s prepared with our hair ruffled in civilian clothes, so if we were ever shot down we could assimilate into the partisan underground. As we were on the tarmac getting ready for our flight to Italy, each crew member was presented with a Bunsen burner, a small portable cooking unit, by Sinclair Weeks, Sr. who was our navigator's father, and at that time was Secretary of Commerce, under President Roosevelt. During this farewell ceremony we were notified that our orders were changed and that we were to be assigned to the 13th AF, South West Pacific area. We then embarked on a cross country train trip and arrived at Hamilton Field, Cal. Dec. 9, 1944.

We left Hamilton Field Dec. 14, 1944, arriving at Hickam Field, Honolulu Hawaii by C-54, Bar. 21, stayed in Hawaii over Christmas and New Years, 1945. We witnessed the devastation that the Japanese left in Pearl Harbor. We spent some time in Honolulu sightseeing under a wartime atmosphere. We then transferred over to John Rogers Field, Honolulu barracks 23-1 - this traveling was very exciting to me. As a teenager, a trip to Belmar, N.J. was as far as I went. We left Honolulu Jan. 6, 1945 and arrived at Casady Field, Christmas Isle, stayed over night, then flew to Canton Island, stayed over night and the flew to Hawkins Field, Tarawa, tent #2, as we moved further into the Pacific

theatre you could notice the devastation on these islands in taking over these islands and then being retaken by our U.S. Marines and Army. Beaches shot up, bomb craters, wrecked military equipment, military cemeteries. We left Tarawa and arrived at Guadalcanal (Carney Field). As we traveled on, the devastation became worse, the cemetery on Guadalcanal was mind boggling to me, as far as you can see in any direction -- rows and rows of crosses. We left there Jan. 11, 1945 and flew to Nadzab, New Guinea, where we spent the next day and a half in a jungle survival setting with Australian soldiers in command, showing us how to survive in the jungle if we were ever shot down or forced to bail out. For example, we learned what jungle fruit or vegetable to eat and what growths not to touch, since some were poisonous. We were taught how to put together a shelter and how to be alert to any Japanese soldiers who were still on the island. We left Nadzab and flew to Biak on a C - 46. This was our last stop before our final destination, which was Morotai Isle, in the Halmahera group of islands (also called the Dutch E. Indies). Our airfield was Pitoe airstrip, 9000 ft. long. We were members of the 307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 370<sup>th</sup> bomb squad (H) also known as the Long Rangers. Our first few days on the base were in becoming oriented with our coming combat missions, coincidental with our arrival, there was a commemorative celebration held at the "Long Ranger Outdoor Theatre" recalling the first two years of combat activity in the south and southwest Pacific area,



since the 13<sup>th</sup> AF was formed. This speech was given by our commanding officer:

Excerpt (from a programme dated February 13, 1945): "Two years ago today---6 B-24's raided Shortland Harbor, fifty per cent of our planes did not return to Henderson Field. From this first mission in the South Pacific area, a month and a half before we had raided Wake Island from Midway. The longest mission that a formation of bombers had ever flown to that time. Every plane returned, a medal mission. Our first missions flown with the 13th AF were very rough. Two days later we lost two ships. One crew hit the silk and one crew made a water landing. We had received our rebuke, tactics were changed. We flew at night, -- night after night, the Japs flew at night also. "Washing Machine Charlie" we called the Japanese raids---we don't know what the Japs called us --but we bombed the hell out of them, for six months, we kept up these harassing raids. We hit them during the day also. Munda. Kahili, Kiku, Bullale, Shortland Harbor. Soon we were specializing in daylight missions, the Japs outnumbered us at first. Our gunners shot them down, soon there were few left, and few fields still serviceable. We received orders to knock out Rabaul, day after day we hit airdromes on the Bismarck Archipelago, pulverized the town of Rabaul -- the business section and the red light districts, anti aircraft fire was wicked. Barrages holed plane after plane. Then came Truk, the unknown, unhit Japanese Pearl Harbor. The first attempt at

Truk, every bomb hit its target, we destroyed 49 planes on the ground, 31 were shot down in one of the hottest air battles of its kind in the Pacific. Truk was hit day after day; Truk the mightiest Jap fortress of the Pacific. was reduced to a "Wewak" or practice run for new crews coming into the S/W Pacific.

We then turned Truk over to the 7th AF. Then came Yap, and also Palau, with the "Bomber Barons" and the "Long Rangers" made the 13th AF longest range air force in the world. 2400 miles round trip, 16 hr. over water missions, were the norm. From the Navy came this message—to Gen. Street from Adm. Carney, Chief of staff 3rd fleet, quote, "damned 13th AF has just about spoiled the war for our carriers, particularly at Yap," and he adds, Admiral Davison's task group has left Yap in disgust after the first day, because our 13th AF had not left any decent targets," unquote. While knocking out Yap and Palau, we also neutralized Noemfor, spearheads for the beachheads there. Then we moved to the treeless island of Wakde. From this "Devils island" we knocked out everything within range, the 5th AF got the credit, moving to Noemfor we hit rough targets, the roughest of the S/VV Pacific area. Balikpapan, Borneo was the "Ploesti" of the Pacific. Fires were started, 20-30,000 feet soared the black oil smoke.

We went after that Jap task force in the Sulu Sea, and hit it good. The Navy claimed that we did more damage than we took credit for, we saved the day for our new landings in

the Phillipines, and we are still hitting them; for the first time, B-24s turned back a task force unaided. We were the first over Corregidor and blew the hell out of it. Today is our 460th mission in the S/W Pacific area. After two years, the 13th AF as Gen. Arnold stated "been whipping the Japanese any place and any time, slugging them under any conditions, shows the courage of the 13th AF, to wade into the enemy. We have flown 460 missions, 6200 sorties, we have hit over 100 different targets, every where from Munda, Kahili, Shortland Harbor -- to the Phillipines, we started at Wake, we've circled the Pacific.

Tarawa, Mauro, Ellice Isle, Bouganville, Rabaul, Truk, Noemfor, Halmaheras, Celebes, Borneo and the Phillipines, and now Luzon. We shot down 482 enemy aircraft -- 341 sures, 86 probables and damaged 51 more on the ground, we have destroyed 169 Japanese ships we have gone after everything from a barge to a task force, sunk 17,275 tons, damaged 106,615 tons of shipping in two years, we have dropped 13,300 tons of bombs over targets, eight campaigns and the Philippine Liberation. The 307th and 5th groups are the longest flying, hardest hitting bomb groups in the world. Rough as a cob, that's us. Most traveled "heavies" in any theater -- communique for Gen. MacArthur, We've given the Japs hell and made Tokyo Roses radio program. We call 13th AF the "Jungle Airforce" and still we continue, Cebu, Samar, Balikpapan, Tarakan .....

end of excerpt from celebration.

Our first bombing mission was to the totally decimated Wewak, New Guinea. This target was assigned to new air crews as a practice mission. The time of the mission was 5 hrs and 15 min., distance 1100 mi, no flak or fighters encountered, Take off and landing was perfect. Our second mission was to Corregidor, Philippine Islands, return distance 2400 mi., time 12 hrs. and 20 minutes. We encountered three passes by a Japanese Zero fighter. Our mission was not escorted by our own fighter planes, but we were able to blunt the attack. We did not have any anti -- aircraft fire due to the fact that the Navy was off shore pounding the shore installation. Manila was on fire. Our bombs hit our target dead on. The return flight back to our base was uneventful. 99% of our missions were over water. Sometimes we would pass over a small island, with natives tending the rice paddies, probably under Japanese control.

There were Japanese gunboats, disguised as fishing boats, patrolling the waterways in and around many of the islands that were controlled by the Japanese. As we neared our home base of Morotai, preparing to land, most of our crew were in the waist section of the plane -- listening over the inter com for the pilot's landing instructions .... "landing gear down and locked, air speed, etc", we heard our pilot, Donaldson, screaming to our co-pilot deRouen, "use the flaps, use the flaps!" As the plane neared the beginning of the runway, Donaldson took back control and landed us

safely. As was the flight procedure, it was the pilot's responsibility to share flight rules and regulation with the co-pilot (call it on the job training) so that the co-pilot would be as capable at handling the plane. Failing to use the flaps correctly upon take offs or landings could be disastrous. Anyone that has flown commercially could agree that take offs and landings are the most anxious and stressful parts of a flight. As our crew headed back to our tent area from the flight line the talk was all about the landing incident.

Mission #4, Feb. 24, 1945,

Target -- Mangar Airdrome, E. Borneo. Time 10:00 hrs., distance 2000 mi. return, no flak or fighters, one B-24 exploded on takeoff, a grim reminder of our previous incident on landing. Our next mission took place on Mar. 8, 1945. During our preflight briefing, the briefing officer, after describing our primary, secondary and third targets for this mission, described certain procedures to follow if we were forced to bail out, crash land or ditch at sea. We were instructed to avoid certain islands in the Celebes, as they were still controlled by the Japanese, to ditch at sea and try and stay afloat in the rubber rafts, and to wait for the "Ruptured Duck," a seaplane that loosely trailed each mission. This day our primary target was Oelin Airdrome, S/W Borneo, time 13:20 min. distance 2600 mi.

Today the anti aircraft fire would be fierce. As usual, we were picked up at 5:00 am., and taken to the flight line, checked our plane – fuselage, outer antennas. bomb bay, navigators gear, turrets etc., revved up the engines to capacity, released the brakes and headed down the runway (approx 9,000 ft long). About a quarter of the way down, we could hear our pilot Glenn Donaldson shouting to the co-pilot, de Rouen, to "use full flaps!" "use full flaps!" "not just right flaps!"...By then we were headed for the edge of the runway. After more screaming, the pilot took full control and headed straight down the runway, just lifting off at the water's edge, where there were reminders of previous takeoff failures: planes lying in the surf.

We arrived over our target at about 1:30 in the afternoon, there were some Jap fighter planes in the area, but none ventured to attack our formation. We deposited our bombs right down the center of the runway. The trip back to our base was filled with anxiety, anticipating whether we would have to ditch or bail out. (I can still feel my knees knocking.) It seems that we left the target area with approximately 800 gallons of fuel knowing that it was not nearly enough to get back to our base. However, we arrived back at our base with approximately. 400 gallons of fuel. Upon examination, the incorrect reading was attributed to a faulty fuel gauge. We also angrily and cautiously confronted our pilot as to the near disaster we experienced on takeoff, hinting at our reluctance to have the co-pilot

actually fly the plane. What if there was an emergency -- and he really had to command the plane? We did not know how high up the chain this frenzied complaint would go.

Although we would fly combat missions approximately twice a week, the time between missions were spent in a tropical jungle atmosphere, about two degrees above the Equator. We had our basketball court, we had our baseball field, we had our outdoor theatre, all dug out of the jungle, aside from the tropical rainstorms that would appear as monsoon proportions - flooding -- huge palm trees falling over, the general weather was great 90 -100 degrees, balmy breeze. Sometimes we would walk to the shoreline and practice firing our .45 caliber automatic sidearms at fallen trees and stumps. In the distance about a half mile away, there was another small island with about 25,000 Jap soldiers isolated along with the natives that inhabited the island; they were subjected to cannibalism and prostitution and whatever other inhumanities that could be heaped upon them by the Jap soldiers. Through out the Pacific, the retaking of the islands was a hopscotch method. In reclaiming the Pacific, certain islands would be captured and some would be avoided, thus leaving some Japs isolated on some of them. In our march across the Pacific (there were hundreds of islands and atolls) we took the islands with the airdromes and air strips, which were more important than the others. From our shore we could sometimes see natives from the island adjacent to Morotai floating across on dug out logs --

women, babies and usually an older man trying to row the log across the waterway. The natives were mutilated -- bitten up by insects. When they reached our shore they were taken to the medical unit and treated.

Sometimes we would play baseball at our field, one particular day, our co-pilot (deRouen) came by to observe and suggested that he join us. You have to know that we were suspect of him. That day he informed us that he had shaved all the hair from his body, then just strolled off, pretty odd behavior, fueling our thoughts of homosexuality about him.

Mission #25 On our last few missions we have we hit targets on Java, Bali, Mindanao, E.Borneo, and E.Celebes and shipping in the straits of Java. On these runs, there was much anti aircraft fire. Our group lost 3 B-24s. Since the particular mission that almost ended in disaster for all of us due to the co pilot deRouen's error or inability to perform with under stress or whatever psychological or physical reason, on this mission and in future, the pilot (Donaldson) had the wisdom or common sensibility to exclude the co-pilot from the controls on takeoffs and landings and to be very wary and alert to his actions during flight. It was still very risky to carry him as a passenger. By this time our navigator (Weeks) and our bombardier (McCarthy) became aware of deRouens homo sexual tendencies. Our target on Mission #25 was Balikpapan Harbor, time 10:45 return distance 2100



miles. We really had a big show today, we went after A/A positions, co—ordinated with B-25s and P-38s, oil dumps and warehouses blowing up all over the place. We dropped 500 lb. bombs, and incendiary bombs. Two more bombers from our group were shot down and exploded in the harbor, we were holed in the left wing, about an 18 inch gap, and we lost power in one engine. When we left the target area, the smoke was rising to about 15,000 ft. Quite a bit of damage was done, but the return to base was without incident and we landed safely.

Mission #34, June 27, 1945 Balikpapan, E.

[[According to log, this may be mission #32, not #34]]

Borneo—shore defenses, distance 2300 mi., time 12 hr. and 30 min. This oil rich target is being softened for the imminent invasion which is due to take place July 1, 1945. We flew into the harbor again and did some strafing of Japanese gunboats, disguised as two-masted fishing schooners. We also dropped three huge bales of propaganda leaflets, that were designed to break apart upon leaving the bomb bay, to flutter down as a snowstorm, to alert the natives of the impending invasion. The trip back to our base was made amid a hurricane and rainstorm. We landed at Pitoe Airstrip at about 6:30 pm, attended the mission debriefing and returned to our tents -- by this time, inundated with water, with palm trees and coconuts falling all over the place.

Mission #36 July 1, 1945 [according to log, date was July 14]  
Balikpapan Shore defenses, distance 2400 mi.,  
time 12 hr. and 50 min.--our co-pilot Lt. deRouen was not  
on board this day, having called in the previous evening  
ailing - we had a substitute co-pilot. Today was what you  
could call D-Day for this fortress, once protecting these  
oil rich fields. We have hit this target many, many times.  
So far we have been on every invasion in this area from  
Corregidor until today. Today we were flying cover support  
for the Naval vessels that were bombarding the shore and  
the landing vessels and soldiers going ashore. We arrived  
back at our base approx. 7:30 pm. went into debriefing to  
assess the days damage. It was then that we were informed  
that our co-pilot (deRouen) had committed suicide. One .45  
cal. bullet to the head. He had already been buried by the  
time that we returned from our mission. We rode back to our  
tent area, in awe, in shock, amazement sadness and suspicion  
and whatever other emotions took hold. The next day we were  
notified that our tour of duty was completed, and we were to  
await further orders, we were amazed and at the same time  
relieved that our combat tour was over. We were slated to do  
40 missions. Our tour of duty was over, Phew! On looking  
back, and thinking of the events and happenings of the past  
6 months of combat...the near hits...the near misses...The co-  
pilot's (deRouen) actions, his lack of ability to pilot an  
airplane, maybe because of the pressure, maybe because the  
discovery of his homo sexual tendencies -- in those times  
that discovery could be a disastrous happening. In the

service in those war years===60 years ago from today, 2001!  
Could this be too much to cope with...one bullet to the head  
as at suicide or maybe not a suicide! The military's outlook  
as to homo sexuality was frowned upon and it was not  
uncommon to hear of horrendous beatings or killings.

On July 25, 1945 we received notice that we were to go for  
"R&R" -- rest and relaxation -- to Rockhampton, Australia.  
We left Morotai, NEI and arrived in Merouke, New Guinea  
for refueling for the second leg of our trip to Australia.  
There were the six enlisted crew members from our crew and  
officers from another crew piloting the plane aboard a C-46.  
(The reason for a C-46 was that on the return flight to  
Morotai, we were to pick up food supplies for air base...  
mutton, rabbit, vegetables, canned food etc. and secretly load  
on cases of liquor that we could sell on the QT, shhh. The  
plane was called the "Fat Cat" on the return trip. After  
fueling up in New Guinea, and taking off for Australia, the  
navigator on the flight fell asleep! As we neared where we  
thought we should be at this time of the flight (our flight  
was entirely over water) no visual sights appeared. The  
navigator had plotted the course incorrectly. As radio  
operator, I attempted to raise any flight towers in the area  
by voice, to establish our proper position. Finally, after  
lots of anguish, we raised a tower operator and adjusted our  
flight direction and soon landed in Rockhampton. We  
registered in the Scarriff Hotel, rm 23 and were put out  
due to a little noise. We then registered at the Swan Hotel,

for the rest of our stay. Rockhampton was like an old time wild west city: unpaved streets, wooden sidewalks with wooden overhang. We did get a chance to see a soccer match and attend the horse races. Wagers were taken by men with derbies on and elastics around their sleeves, pre pari-mutuel system.

The same day that we returned from Australia, we received our orders to return home to the US., we left Morotai Aug. 3, 1945, and arrived in Manila. P.I. tent A-9, we were there for a few days, which allowed us time to sight see and view the devastation — bombed out buildings and streets and to see the civilians rummaging through refuse cans for food or clothing. We left Manila aboard a troop ship named "Cape Douglas." There were about 200 of us on board, on a vessel that could easily transport 2000 troops. We had the run of the ship. A few of us opted for sleeping in the "brig," which seemed a lot more comfortable than down in the hold, where we would be stacked up like pancakes. We then started our 27 day "cruise," stopping at many islands for supplies and fuel. Some of us became seasick, as part of the trip was through rough seas and tropical storms. We arrived in San Francisco, Cal. and went to Camp Stoneman. We left there Sept. 1, 1945 by bus to McLellan Field, Sacramento, Cal., and the next day took off by C-47, stopping at Tucson. Ariz., Dallas Tex., Nashville, Tenn. to Newark Airport and then to Ft. Dix., NJ., where it all began two and a half years ago, then back home to Newark, my home, for leave. I then

received a telegram from the AF allowing me to stay on extended leave, due to the fact that I had accumulated enough combat "points" and could not be reassigned for duty, and the war was coming to a close in the Pacific. On Oct. 20, 1945 I received orders to report to Greensboro, NC. AAF Separation Center, I received my discharge Oct. 28, 1945 and arrived home in Newark the next day. WHEW!