

INVASION

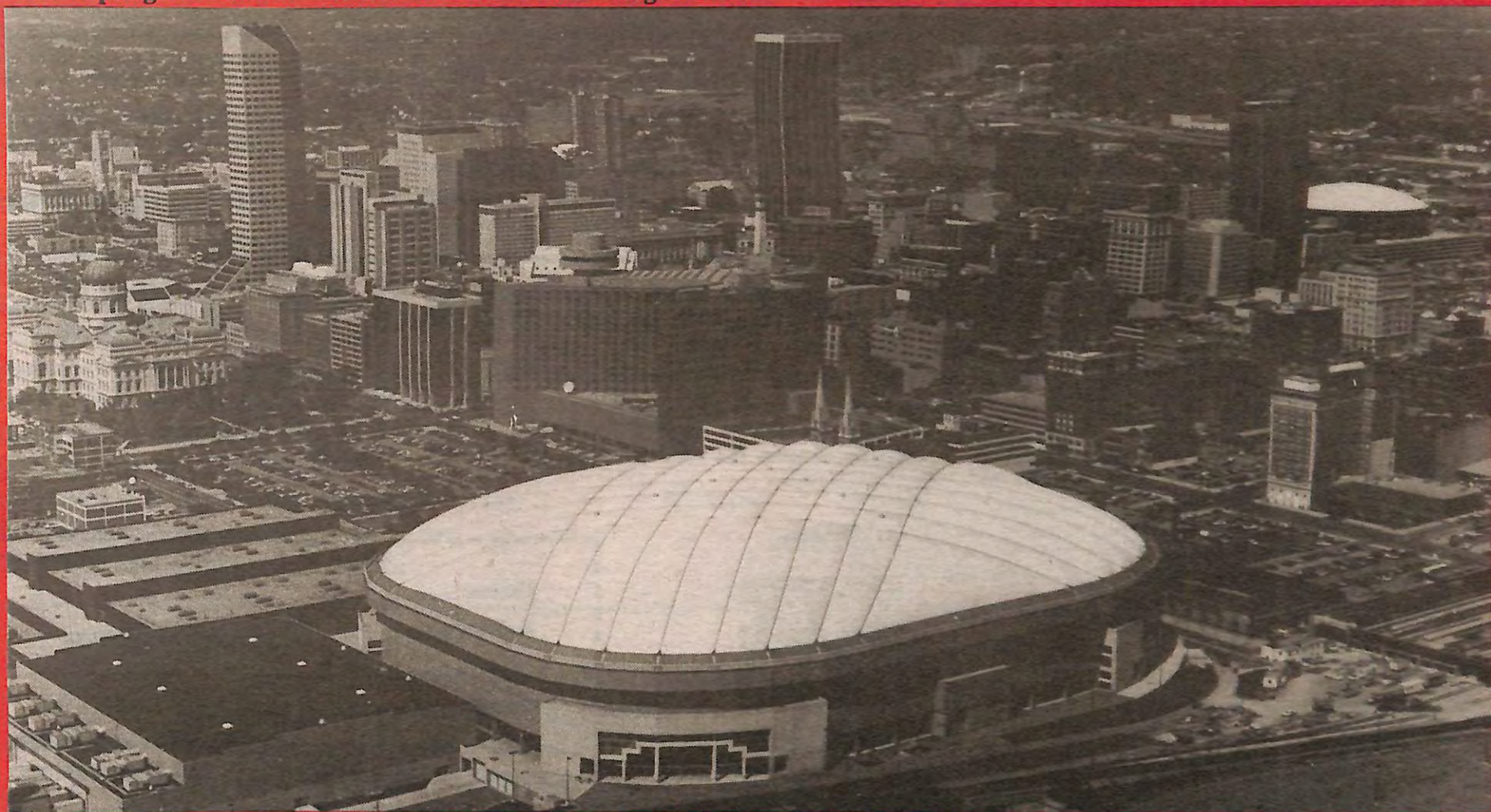
THE WORLD WAR II
TIMES



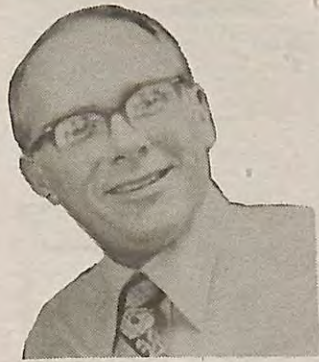
**Reunion 1991
Special Issue**

OUR VETS LAND IN INDIANAPOLIS

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, June 6 — (AP) — U.S. veterans of World War II will gather in Indianapolis, June 20-22, to launch a national observance of the 50th anniversary of World War II. Noted Gospel singer Sandi Patti will launch the observance with her stirring rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.



Indiana's own Sandi Patti to Launch 50th with Song



Dateline Indianapolis

Elbert L. Watson

Time to have a little fun

There is a great show for those of you coming to **WORLD WAR II REUNION 1991**, June 20-22 at the Indiana Convention Center and Indiana State Fairgrounds.

Here's a small preview.

To kick things off, at noon on the 20th there will be an old fashioned Homecoming Parade in downtown Indianapolis.

Later, at 6:30 at the Fairgrounds, there will be a festive, colorful program, including World War II type airplanes and tanks, ragtime piano, fireworks, balloons and capped off with a sterling rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" by Indiana's own Sandi Patti.

Across the page is a partial list of renowned World War II heroes, some of whom survived against all odds to emerge from the war and get on with their lives. They'll be here for the Reunion.

The three day event also includes World War II Memorabilia and Collectors Show and entertainment and Big Band music styled for 1940's nostalgia enthusiasts.

WORLD WAR II REUNION 1991 makes Indianapolis the only city to put on a community-wide observance this year. This is an impor-

tant beginning.
Everybody is invited.

Thank You

In its May 1989 editorial entitled "Beachhead '89," the **TIMES** remarked: "One would conclude that a war — terrible though it was — which produced so much in our favor, would be touted at the national level as we approach the 50th anniversary period. The voice at the top speaks with deafening silence. No proclamations! No resolutions! No commissions!"

Well, that was two years ago and things have changed a great deal. Those of you who read the **TIMES** regularly know that Representative John Myers of Indiana and Senator Robert Dole of Kansas introduced a Joint Resolution in the 101st Congress establishing June 2-8, 1991 as the date for the national observance this year. President Bush later issued an Executive Proclamation supporting the Joint Resolution.

Our thanks go to Representative Myers and Senator Dole and all their colleagues who recognized



Congressman John Myers



Senator Robert Dole

the importance of the 50th anniversary of World War II to our nation's history.

In his remarks to the House, Representative Myers noted: "The events and people who participated in the most tremendous undertaking in American history have shaped our economic, political, and cultural institutions as we know them today. A national recognition will enable us to understand contemporary and international events better and to pay tribute to many of those people."

Senator Dole stated: "During the next four and a half years, millions of war stories will be told. It will give young Americans the experience of an earlier generation's rendezvous with destiny. We have the responsibility to ensure that the lessons of that time are not forgotten."

These statements aptly sum up what the 50th anniversary is all about. This effort must continue.

World War II Times

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REUNION 1991



**JUNE 20-22, 1991
INDIANA CONVENTION CENTER
AND
INDIANA STATE FAIRGROUNDS**

Great heroes of World War II

Ensign George Gay - only survivor of Torpedo Squadron 8 at the Battle of Midway, June 4, 1942.

General Austen Shofner and Captain Sam Grashio made a daring escape from a Japanese P.O.W. camp, 1943.

Captain Bert Bank spent three years (1942-1945) a prisoner of the Japanese.

Sister Mary Theresa rescued from Guadalcanal, 1942. Gave 50 years missionary service to Solomon Islands.

Bill Winchell (waist gunner) of the famous MEMPHIS BELLE B-17 "Flying Fortress."

Major General Wendell Phillippi, U.S.A. Retired, European Theatre.

Plus the Andrew Sisters of Tulsa, Oklahoma - noted Jazz pianist Jimmy McDaniel - Ragtime Piano and Swing Set Big Band.

And a BIG World War II Memorabilia and Collector's Show at the Indiana Convention Center. Approximately 100 Booths.

Cost for various functions:

**Memorabilia Exhibition and Collector's show \$4.00
Thursday-2p.m.-6p.m. Friday-9a.m.-5:30p.m.
Saturday-8a.m.-4:30p.m.**

**Friday Luncheon 12:00p.m. \$19.00
(Salute to Veterans)**

**Friday Dinner (Salute to America) \$26.00
Cocktails/cash bar 6p.m.-7p.m.
Dinner 7p.m.-9:30p.m.**

**Saturday ("Thanks for the Memories") \$29.00
Cocktails/cash bar 6p.m.-7p.m.
Dinner/dance 7p.m.-11p.m.**

More information:

**REUNION 1991
1010 East 86th Street, Suite 61J
Indianapolis, Indiana 46240
Call 317-848-9361**

Public is invited.



Sandi Patti to sing at Fairgrounds opening ceremony.



Chad Colley, former National Commander, Disabled American Veterans, speaker.

No admission charge to State Fairgrounds program. Begins at 6:30 p.m., June 20. Includes C.A.F. Fly over, World War II tanks and armored vehicles, artillery demonstration, color guards, Gordon Grow and Ragtime Piano, and more.



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VISIT ELVIS

While you're at the station, visit the Elvis Presley Museum on Tour, June 20-23. Also, our self-guided historic walking tour and "ghosts" retrace memories past.

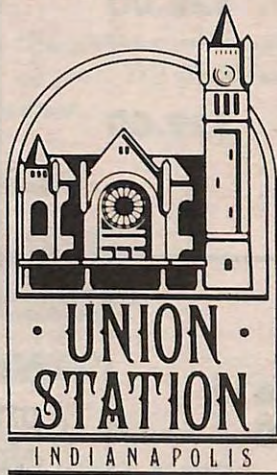
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Tough Marine

At 12:00 noon May 6, 1942, the bastion fortress Corregidor surrendered to the Japanese, marking America's final defense of the Philippines. A radio operator tapped out the pathetic message:

"We are waiting for God knows what. Damage terrible. Too much for the guys to take. Going off the air now. Goodbye and good luck." Then only silence.

It would be almost two years until Americans would know the fate of the brave men who fought to the end in the Philippines. During that time of dark silence, loved ones back home could only hope and pray.

Finally in 1943, 10 American POWs miraculously escaped and told a horrible story of atrocity, starvation, and outright murder of their buddies by Japanese soldiers and prison commanders.

Their amazing escape was first recounted by Captain William Dyess. *The Dyess Story: The Eye-Witness Account of the Death March from Bataan*, stunned Americans to find the Japanese capable of carrying out such sadistic torture.

More shocking was the widely circulated story chronicled by *Life* magazine (February 7, 1944), "Death was Part of Our Life," written by two escapees, Commander Melvyn McCoy and Lt. Colonel S. M. Mellnik. Though admitting that the story did not make "pretty reading," *Life* graphically detailed how the prisoners managed to outwit their captors to reach freedom.

Commander McCoy told of Captain A. C. Shofner, USMC, coming to him in March 1943, to report that he and five Army and Marine Corps officers were planning an escape. Included were Dyess, Marine Lieutenants Jack Hawkins and Michael Dobervich, and Army Lieutenants Samuel Grashio and L. A. Bolens.

McCoy and Mellnik and two Army sergeants, Paul Marshall and R. B. Spielman, already were toying with the idea of an escape, so Shofner's information brought good news. As the senior officer, McCoy was selected to lead the escape.

McCoy wrote: "We were not too enthusiastic about our chances for a successful escape. On the other hand, neither were we too enthusiastic about our chances for staying alive if we remained."

Shofner, a member of the 1936 University of Tennessee football team, recently commented to *The Tennessee Alumnus*.



General Austen Shofner

PRISONERS OF JAPAN

TEN AMERICANS WHO ESCAPED RECENTLY FROM THE PHILIPPINES REPORT ON THE ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY THE JAPANESE IN THEIR PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMPS



LIEUT. COL. S. M. MELLNIK



LIEUT. COL. WILLIAM DYESS



CAPTAIN L. A. BOLENS

Corregidor surrendered at 12:00 noon May 6, 1942. In the final hour a radio operator tapped out the last broken message: "We are waiting for God knows what. Damage terrible. Too much for guys to take. Going off air now. Goodbye and good luck." Then there was silence.

Last week that silence was broken. In the third year of war, censorship finally lifted the curtain on what happened at Corregidor and Bataan after the American surrender. The story did not make pretty reading. It was a tale of atrocity, murder and starvation inflicted by the Japanese on their American prisoners.

Beginning on the next page LIFE prints the detailed account of a group of 10 Americans who managed to escape. It was written by the party's two senior officers, Commander Melvyn H. McCoy, a graduate of Annapolis, and Lieut. Col. S. M. Mellnik, a graduate of West Point. Some of the notes for it were dictated by Colonel Mellnik from a bed in Washington's Walter Reed Hospital. When it was finished, it was submitted to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, who took it to President Roosevelt. The decision to release to the press last week a preliminary summary was made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and represents a major change in information policy for the British and American Governments. The statements in LIFE's article, however, are made on the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the War or Navy Departments or the U. S. Government. The proceeds from LIFE's purchase of this story, together with all future book or movie rights, will be divided among members of the party.



COMMANDER MELVYN H. MCCOY



MAJOR AUSTIN C. SHOFNER



SGT. R. B. SPIELMAN



MAJOR JACK HAWKINS



CAPTAIN SAMUEL GRASHIO



MAJOR MICHAEL DOBERVICH

LIFE magazine on February 7, 1944, chronicled the amazing escape of 10 Americans from a Japanese P.O.W. camp.

TO PAGE 24

Daring escape



Sam Grashio in the idyllic days before Pearl Harbor could hardly have believed what awaited him.

Sam Grashio

We went out the main gate in two parties. I cannot say I was not nervous, but I felt exhilarated too. Save for a few terrible occasions later in the swamp, I never really doubted that we would make it. We soon found our stashed gear. We rolled it, heavy and sodden, into packs, and waited for our Filipino guides who were 45 minutes late because they had to attend a roll call.

We soon found the entrance to the trail and began moving briskly along it. Somebody, trying to be optimistic, remarked that even though the path was muddy and slick the rain would cover our tracks. A more realistic soul observed wryly that we had not made many tracks yet.

Soon the trail became dim and the going more difficult. The ground was slippery, paths had to be slashed through the undergrowth, and we slid into gullies filled with water. Stream after stream had to be waded or bridged. Brambles tore at our clothes and flesh, mosquitoes badgered us ceaselessly, and huge leeches fastened onto our arms and legs.

As hours passed a feeling of uneasiness grew over us. What sort of trail were we following that was as difficult as this? Were we really on the trail at all? Skepticism increased. Anxious remarks were exchanged. Then we saw footprints in the mud; our own. We had been thrashing through the jungle in a circle.

In semi-panic we huddled. We studied a map which had been given us. Commander Melvin Mc-

Coy thought he knew about where we were, and recommended that we head for the railway that ran around the southeast side of the swamp. It was a measure of our current desperation that this was the route we had originally rejected on the ground that it was too obvious and dangerous.

We started off northeast, with McCoy holding a compass while Ben and Victor (Filipino guides) chopped away at the dense jungle undergrowth with their bolos. The humid heat beat down on us with the same merciless intensity that we had experienced during "sun treatments" on the Death March. We plunged on doggedly, desperate to get as much distance as possible between ourselves and our presumed Japanese pursuers.

It seemed to me that there were jungle streams every few hundred yards, all of them swol-

len by the heavy rain. Several times we had to fell a tree to cross them. On one occasion the tree trunk was slippery. I was last in line. Everyone else got across but I was so exhausted that I lost my footing and fell into the muddy torrent.

Shifty (Austen) Shofner, still a strong man despite our generally weakened physical condition, grabbed my arm and hauled me out. He immediately named me "Surefoot," and added some pointed remarks about what kind of pilot I must have been if I had insufficient sense of balance to walk on a log.

By early evening we were wading in ankle deep water. Then we came to a stream too big to cross quickly. We decided to pitch camp, eat, sleep, and get up early the next morning so we could cross the stream in daylight and put more distance between ourselves and the Japanese.

The next day was one of the worst in my life. It had rained heavily during the night. We awoke with our sodden shelter halves flattened on top of us. They were hard to roll, heavy and burdensome to carry. The water was up to our knees, and the mud beneath it was soft and yielding.

Ben and Victor continued to hack a path with their bolos. In mid-morning the short bushes gave way to sword grass, a plant which must have been invented by Satan personally. Our Filipino guides wrapped their forearms with burlap to protect them as they wielded their bolos, but they were soon bleeding from the razor edges and points of the terrible grass.

Soon the water was halfway up to our thighs, then to our buttocks, then waist deep, and especially sinister progression for me since I was the shortest of the whole group. We could not see more than two or three feet on either side; over the grass not at all.

The water deepened because we were going with the general flow of the swamp. Mike Doberovich suggested that we change course slightly to the north so we could cross the flow of the water rather than go with it.

Early in the afternoon the end seemed near. We had been hacking the dreadful grass for hours but had advanced only a few hundred yards. Ed Dyess was staggering. He said he would have to abandon his pack if he was to go on. Mike insisted that this would be suicidal, and took Ed's pack onto his own shoulders. McCoy was so exhausted that he



Two buddies from Bataan were reunited shortly after the war, when Bert Bank (left) and Sam Grashio got together

collapsed onto an underwater obstacle and just sat there, in water up to his lips, his mustache full of mud, not caring if he ever moved again.

When human beings are sufficiently determined or scared they are capable of prodigious feats. Even so, there are absolute limits to human endeavor and endurance. About 3:00 p.m., it was clear to all of us that we had to quit or we would fall, exhausted, and drown. So we halted.

Paul Marshall managed to climb atop R.B. Spielman's shoulders so he could see over the devilish grass. He spotted a huge fallen tree, perhaps eight feet in diameter, lying half submerged no more than a hundred yards away. We summoned our last reserves and hacked our way over to it.

Once we managed by a sheer act of the will to clamber atop the log we lay there for what must

have been two or three hours, utterly motionless, as thoroughly spent as if we were corpses. But man is hard to kill and human recuperative powers are marvelous. At length, thought began to return, then movement. We decided to cook a nourishing meal as our slender resources permitted, cut some nearby saplings to make a sleeping platform, and sleep.

Shortly after supper we heard several violent splashes in the water that surrounded us. Fearing that the Japanese had discovered us at last, we grabbed our bolos. It was only mildly reassuring to discover that the noise had been caused not by Japanese but by crocodiles. Nobody had even thought about them. With our luck so far, we should have stepped on a couple.

No sooner had this alarm faded when an outburst of gunfire replaced it. By now we were so

jumpy that the shooting shook us to the marrow of our bones. Eventually McCoy calmed us somewhat with the backhanded observation that the gunfire could hardly be coming from Japanese who had discovered us, since we didn't know where we were ourselves.

At this juncture, when we had eaten but were otherwise still frightened, uncertain and worn out, with night coming on, Shifty suggested that we pray. Dyess then said he believed I was the most religious member of our group; therefore it would be appropriate for me to lead the prayer, if I wished. I knelt on the log and said the Memorare, one sentence at a time, with the others responding.

After this prayer we said others, formal prayers and improvised ones, together and individually. All those who have written about our escape have remarked how much more calm, secure and hopeful we all felt almost immediately. I thought the miracle had occurred. I felt sure now God would save us.

We slept 11 hours and had a hot breakfast of tea, rice and canned cornbeef. Despite our stiff, aching joints the sword grass looked less dreadful than the day before. This was illusory. It was just the same! We hacked at it for hours.

The going was dispiritingly slow, but we did not grow despondent again. And there was one mildly encouraging material development; the waist deep water did not get any deeper. Before long it was only ankle deep and we were moving briskly. Abruptly the swamp ended. We were back in the jungle with the leeches.

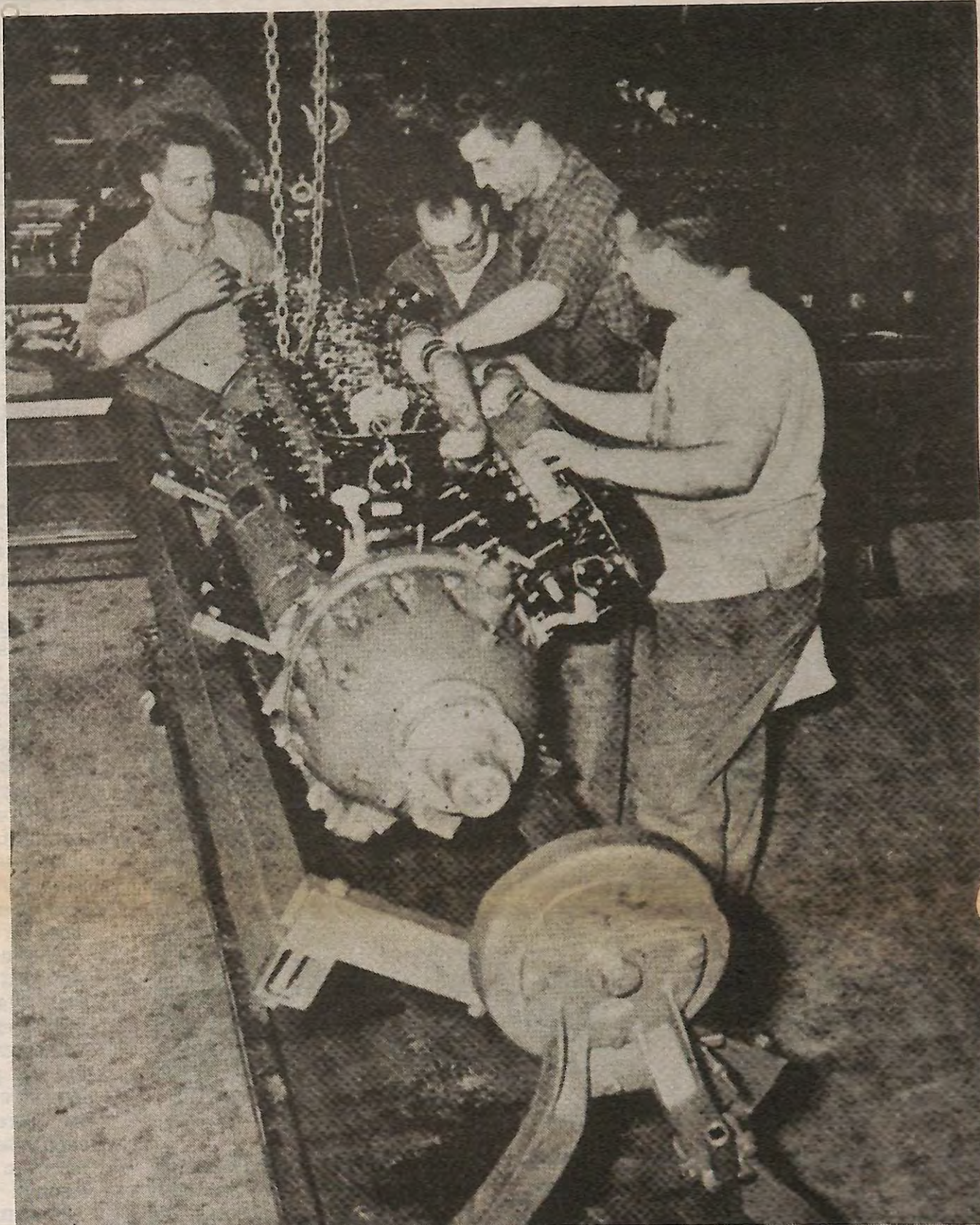
Next morning, we moved cautiously down the railroad track. Soon, two figures appeared in the distance coming our way. All of us dashed into the bushes save Dyess who continued to walk on, much like the sheriff in "High Noon." He made the "V for Victory" sign. One of the oncoming figures raised his rifle, then lowered it. Both then turned and ran. Convinced that they were Filipinos, we all ran after them.

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Against all odds



Captain Bert Bank spent three years a prisoner of the Japanese.

Visiting with Bert Bank in his Tuscaloosa, Alabama office, one finds little hint of his World War II experience as a Japanese POW.

A highly successful businessman and community leader, Bert prefers to talk about Alabama football and sports greats he has known across the years. His walls are covered with pictures of notable athletes dating from the 1940's.

Since 1952, he has served as both producer and director of the University of Alabama Football network, which includes 73 stations in Alabama and 12 in other parts of the South.

"Football, and particularly Alabama football, has been my great love for as long as I can remember," he remarks with a broad grin. "You know, football is a kind of religion here with Alabama and Auburn. You 'get religion' with either one of these teams and nobody ever backslides from the straight and narrow path"

Paramount among the sports luminaries seen on Bert's wall is

Paul "Bear" Bryant, who coached the Tide from 1958 to 1982 and became the country's winningest coach with 323 victories to his credit.

Bryant died in 1983 shortly after he resigned his post, but his memory casts a long shadow across the Alabama campus and into Bert's office.

"Bryant and I were at the university together during the 1930's during the famous Howell (Dixie) to Hutson (Don) era," Bert recalls. "Paul played end. He was one tough hombre, but Hutson was the flashier performer and he had hands that could rope in a pass yards beyond the normal reach of an athlete.

"Bear and I became close friends soon after he came to Alabama, after his great coaching stints at Kentucky and Texas A.&M. We only had about 20 radio stations on the network at that time, but interest blossomed immediately with him in the state."

"I never competed in college football, but it served as a strong motivator to me. Thoughts of it helped get me through my imprisonment by the Japanese — that and the prayers of my Dad and Mom back in Tuscaloosa."

There's no question that football shook Bear Bryant loose from economic poverty in Moro Bottom, Arkansas, a piece of bottom land on Moro Creek. Born there in 1913, he was one of 12 children.

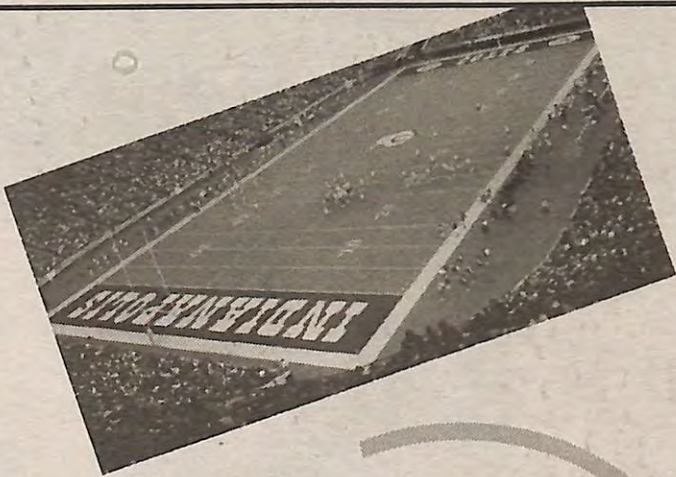
As the youngest son and only boy left at home, Bryant's job was to drive the wagon for his mother to peddle vegetables in nearby Fordyce.

Fortunately, this environment made Bryant a fierce competitor. He got his nickname "Bear" after actually wrestling a bear at a Fordyce movie theater. Eventually the family moved to Fordyce where Bryant became a star football player. He put cleats on his only pair of shoes and wore them to practice, church and school.

The University of Alabama came calling and gave Bryant a four year scholarship. While at the university he met and wooed a popular, attractive co-ed, Mary Harmon.

After college Bryant began his career as a college football coach. He had a brief stint at tiny Union

TO PAGE 20



FUN FOOD FACILITIES

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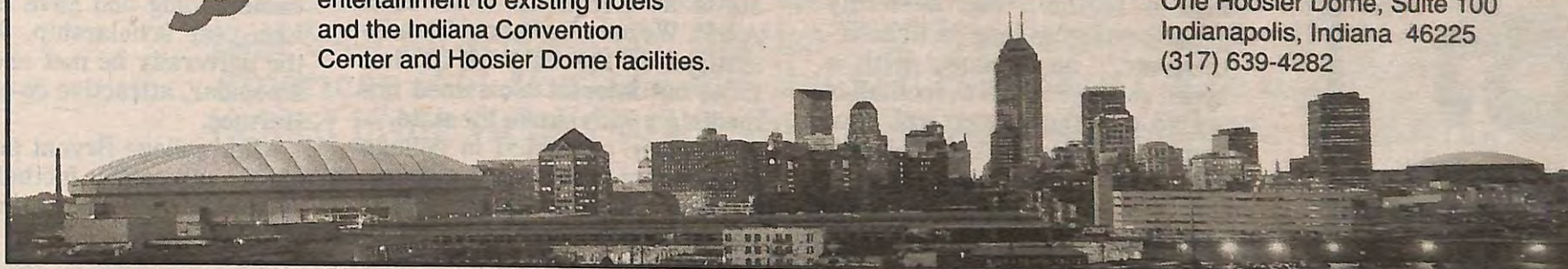
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WORLD WAR II VIDEOS

AIR WAR FILMS

AWF - 1 The Memphis Belle (Color, Approx. 45 min.)

While stationed with the 8th Air Force's 91st (H)BG based at Basingbourn England, Hollywood director William Wyler conceived, wrote and directed this documentary on B-17F 'Flying Fort' bombing operations over German occupied Europe. He filmed the 25th mission of the crew of the 'Memphis Belle' flown by Capt. Robert Morgan of the 324th (H)BS.

AWF - 2 Combat America (Color, Approx. 45 min.)

Hosted and narrated by Capt. Clark Cable, USAAF, this rare color aviation documentary depicts the 351st (H)BG flying B-17F's in stateside training, crossing the Atlantic, and their combat tour with the 8th Air Force in the Summer of 1943.

AWF - 14 Target For Today (B & W, Approx. 60 min.)

Back on Oct. 9, 1943, the 8th Air Force's B-17 and B-24 bombers flew deep into Germany in a raid with three targets. The aircraft factories at Anklam and Marienburg got paged by 215 B-17 bombers. Meantime, the shipyards at Gdynia in Poland got smashed up by the B-24's.

AWF - 15 Attacks and Escape (B & W, Approx. 66 min.)

Here is a historical report on three incidents that occurred during America's air war in the ETO. Firstly: The 8th Airforce's heavy bomber raids on the important ball-bearing factories located at Schweinfurt cost over 100 heavy bombers shot down. Secondly: The 15th Airforce's air raids cost 277 heavy bombers to destroy Germany's crucial source of oil and gas located at Ploesti, Rumania. Thirdly: When 1100 captured American airmen escaped from Rumanian POW camps when Rumania changed sides in Aug., 1944.

AWF - 16 The Air Force Story (Five Films, B & W, Approx. 70 min.)

As told by five episodes of 'The Air Force Story' ('The Tide Turns', 'Maximum Effort', 'Prelude to Invasion', 'D-Day' and 'Victory in Europe'), this is a film record of the highlights of the combat career of the 8th and 9th Airforces based in Britain during 1942-45.

SEA WAR FILMS

SWF - 1 Naval Action (Two films)

Seapower in the Pacific (B & W, Approx. 30 min.)

This documentary is an information film illustrating the mobile striking power of the US Navy's surface and air seapower in the battle for supremacy with the Japanese Navy during the war in the Pacific.

Greyhounds of the Sea (B & W, Approx. 25 min.)

This is the history of the US Navy's destroyers from DD-1 'USS Bainbridge' of 1898 to the DD-931 'USS Forest Sherman' of 1952 as depicted thru historic naval archival film.

'WHY WE FIGHT' SERIES

In 1943 the big question for many draftees was 'Why drag me into this war?' The Army needed to give a reason for these men to fight. Lectures by officers had failed. So General George Marshall approached Hollywood director Frank Capra to produce a series of orientation films to explain the reason why!

WWF - 1 Prelude To War (B & W, Approx. 60 min.)

WWF - 2 The Nazis Strike (B & W, Approx. 60 min.)

WWF - 3 The Battle of Britain (B & W, Approx. 60 min.)

WWF - 4 Divide and Conquer (B & W, Approx. 60 min.)

WWF - 5 (The Battle of Russia (B & W, Approx. 80 min.)

WWF - 6 The Battle of China (B & W, Approx. 67 min.)

Circle Selections

AWF - 1	WWF - 3
AWF - 2	WWF - 4
AWF - 14	WWF - 5
AWF - 15	WWF - 6
AWF - 16	LWF - 1
SWF - 1	LWF - 3
WWF - 1	LWF - 6
WWF - 2	LWF - 11

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LAND WAR FILMS

LWF - 1 The North African - Italian Campaign (Two films)

The 34th Infantry Division (B & W, Approx. 50 min.)

The U.S. Signal Corps photographed this war record of one US Infantry division's battles in the 'MTO' during 1942-45.

Battle of San Pietro (B & W, Approx. 20 min.)

San Pietro was a small Italian town in the Liri valley that had the misfortune to be a German stronghold blocking the road to Rome.

LWF - 3 Southwest Pacific Action (Three films)

The 24th 'Infantry' Division (B & W, Approx. 20 min.)

Assigned to General MacArthur's 'SWPA', the 24th found itself in New Guinea fighting for the Hollandia airfields.

Return to Guam (B & W, Approx. 20 min.)

This is a true story. Radioman George Tweed was on Guam island on Dec. 11, 1941 when the Japanese captured Guam. He hid out in the jungle for 31 months.

Brought to Action (B & W, Approx. 20 min.)

Long ago and far away (Oct. 24-25, 1944) the American and Japanese Navies clashed in a gigantic air-sea-land battle. The 'Battle of Leyte Gulf' was triggered by the Americans landing at Leyte in the Philippine Islands.

LWF - 6 European Campaign Action (Three films)

The Big Red One (B & W, Approx. 30 min.)

Back in World War I the 1st Infantry Division did its part to end the Kaiser's Imperial Germany. Then in 1942 they came back again.

30th Infantry Division (B & W, Approx. 18 min.)

Here are some of the highlights of the career of the 30th division. Baptism of fire came on June 15, 1944 in the hedgerows of Normandy beachhead. 'Operation Cobra' was the codename for the Breakout from Normandy.

The 83rd Infantry Division (B & W), Approx. 20 min.)

Landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day plus 12, the '83rd fought the Battle of the Hedgerows till the Normandy Breakout.

LWF - 11 Battles in the Pacific (Three films)

Action At Anguar, (B & W, Approx. 27 min.)

This combat documentary was made by soldiers during WW2 who did not like the Japanese. This is a hard-nosed depiction of just what it was like to fight the suicide-crazed enemy. It's the story of the 81st 'Wildcat' Division, US Army.

'Battle of Midway' (Color, Approx. 20 min.)

On June 4, 1942 Hollywood director John Ford was stationed by the Navy on the tiny island of Midway - 2,000 miles west of Hawaii. With his cameramen, he was to photograph a great naval-air battle that US Naval Intelligence knew was about to happen.

We Said We'd Come Back (B & W, Approx. 15 min.)

The time is July 21, 1944, and the US Navy has returned to Guam with a huge task force of warships.

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We Remember Tor

Ensign George Gay's own story of survival against all odds

Elbert L. Watson

If I had had my deer rifle, I could have picked off the Japanese one by one. I was that close to the battle scene at Midway.

Several years ago I heard those words from an authentic Ameri-

can hero, Ensign George H. "Tex" Gay, who miraculously survived the Battle of Midway, June 4, 1942.

Gay and I met during a colorful Naval weekend at Patriots Point, South Carolina. He was there,

along with other heroes of the Pacific War, to be honored for meritorious service.

Like most authentic American heroes, Gay is quite modest, playing down his role in the fight. "Actually, I got shot down early," he said. "From my 'ringside spot' in the water, I watched the other fellows do the work on the Jap fleet. They deserved the recognition, not me."

Gay stands straight as an

The real importance of the story of the damage it did to a Japanese carrier but the carried out its mission. It is a story of a welded a group of relative youngsters from into a fighting unit to defend it, in a time th conditions that were none too favorable. I cans, brought up in a world of peace and sa battle and, when they found it, flew unlincl be for most of them certain death. This is th tell.



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torpedo Squadron 8

story of Torpedo Squadron 8 is not the reckless heroism with which it was led by a veteran U.S. Navy pilot who came from the four corners of his country at a time that was all too short and under honorable. It is the story of young Americans who sought the danger of an unflinching into what they knew must be won. This is the story that Ensign Gay has to

Life Magazine, August 31, 1942

arrow. There's a slight twinkle in his eye to go with his southern humor (he grew up in Houston), when he recalls certain events of that epic day.

It was a deeply moving experience for me to have an exclusive interview with him on the flight deck of the great carrier Yorktown, CV-10.

Gay was a member of Torpedo Squadron 8 which operated off the carrier Hornet. Although the

group had never flown combat, they had a tough leader, Lt. Commander John Waldron, who drilled them relentlessly while the Hornet plied the Pacific waters toward her date with destiny.

On the night of June 3, Gay attended Waldron's last briefing. All of the men knew that the next day would bring the inevitable showdown with the Japanese. Gay was a little nervous, kind of like one feels "just before kickoff

at a football game."

June 4 is forever etched in George Gay's mind: "There was a lot of confusion that morning about the location of the Japanese fleet. We didn't get off the Hornet until about 8 o'clock. There were 15 'Devastators' in our squadron."

"As a 'boot' ensign this was a new experience to me. I worried — not so much about what I was



Sister Mary Theresa



Pre-war view of the mission station — all destroyed by the Japanese.

Bold rescue

Harry Horsman, USMC
Guadalcanal vet

One little known story of the fight for Guadalcanal concerns a group of Marist Nuns (Roman Catholic Order of St. Mary's). Their story is a tale of extreme hardship and heroic travail against great odds.

This is not a script. This is the way it really was 48 years ago.

"May they be remembered,
For that we're sure they shall,
Here lie the boys who fought so brave'

On the isle of Guadalcanal."

It would seem only right that along with hundreds of U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines who are immortalized in this touching epitaph, we should include the following names: Rev. Father Henry Oude; Rev. Father Arthur Duhamel; Sister Mary Sylvia; and Sister Mary Odilia.

These missionaries were ruthlessly murdered by the infamous Ishimoto and his thugs in August, 1942, while at Ruavatu Mission east of Koli Point.

While this atrocity was being committed, another group of Catholic Marists stationed at Visale, near Cape Esperance, was forced to leave their mission station because of the approaching Japanese. They fled to another station on the southern coast of Tangarare, an arduous task undertaken over a treacherous

mountain trail.

Those of us who were on the island at that time were too occupied with our own travails to notice what was happening on the other side of the place.

The 14 Catholic sisters and missionaries had steadfastly refused to leave the station because of their Society's principles which opposed abandonment of duties, regardless of circumstances. The group included three Americans: Sister Mary Theresa, Sister Mary Evangeline, and Sister Mary George.

The party was evacuated from Tangarare by Lieutenant D.C. Horton of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve. In the early evening of October 3, 1942 Horton, in his 16 foot craft "Ramada," and six Solomonese volunteers, left Lunga and headed west to pick up the evacuees.

If no problems arose, they would pass Visale before the run of the "Tokyo Express" and reach Tangarare at daybreak, pick up the missionaries while it was still light when U.S. Marine planes were available to fly cover if protection was needed.

The evacuees were terribly unkempt and disheveled after their harrowing experiences. Included in the group was an American pilot who had bailed out of his plane but had not been able to get back to his base. He had hidden in tall grass and after the Japanese search party had passed, he lo-

cated an empty canoe and finally made it into Tangarare.

The nuns were put on board an American plane in Fiji headed for Suva. This was Sister Theresa's first plane ride and several U.S. generals, all top brass, were also on board. It was a frightening experience, but she would not admit it and played the good soldier.

Arriving safely at Lunga, the group boarded the Australian ship SS FOMALHAUT and was taken to New Caledonia. Six of the Sisters remained there until 1945 when Guadalcanal was declared safe to return.

In 1943, Sister Mary Theresa was sent to Fiji to study Hansen's disease (leprosy), in preparation for opening a Leprosarium in the Solomon Islands when the war was over.

For her Solomon's return, Sister Theresa was placed on board an aircraft loaded with celery — no brass, just celery and few passengers. They touched down at Lunga, were taken to a waiting jeep, and driven to Tenuru behind Hell's Point. There, they were left in a fenced area called "No Man's Land," which turned out to be the Nurses Quarters.

Finally, they were back home to continue the work which they had left off in 1942.

But things were not the same. The Mission Station was completely destroyed. A leaf house became their new home and a bunch of banana stalks, tied to-

gether with a rubber hose, served as the temporary shower house.

Soon a Higgin's boat arrived with cases of mosquito nets, cots, blankets, food, and even a small organ. There also was a rifle to kill pigs for food. The rifle may have had another use because the soldiers were leaving the island and there were no firearm laws on Guadalcanal.

It was an uphill fight to rebuild the mission station but gradually everything came together. Phoenix-like there appeared a school, a dormitory, and a dispensary.

Sister Theresa continued her work in the Solomon's until 1983, when she retired to the Catholic Sisters Home in Waltham, Massachusetts.

In a recent letter Sister Theresa commented: "I wish to tell you how grateful we are to all the men who came to Guadalcanal to fight, to give their lives to save others. Such brave young men they all were of the Army, Navy, and Marines.

"God bless them all!"

Today, Sister Theresa remembers quite vividly the great sacrifice made by others to assure that one day she would be permitted to continue her special calling in life.

The brave men, living and dead, who came to Guadalcanal to fight a vicious foe are in her thoughts daily. They were conquerors; she was more than a conqueror.

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Our Betty

Hollywood was tailor made for World War II. Its powerful publicity departments early on saw the importance of creating legendary sex-symbols who, today, live on in the minds and hearts of the veterans.

Lana Turner was dubbed "The Sweater Girl," Greta Garbo "The Face," Ann Sheridan "The Oomph Girl," Dorothy Lamour "The Sarong Girl," and Marie McDonald "The Body."

Pretty heady stuff, don't you think?

For Betty Grable it was far and away "The Pinup Girl."

Betty was never much of an actress, nor was she particularly gifted in song or dance.

But she had a wholesome, innocent quality which made her the quintessential "Girl Back Home" — and she had two legs which figuratively and literally made her a well heeled movie star.

Her most famous photo was carried by G.I.s all over the world. It is classic Americana. She stands there in a backless one piece swim suit, looking over her shoulder with a sweetly inviting smile.

Today such a pinup picture would scarcely merit a second glance. But those were different times. For thousands of frightened American boys in distant lands, it was something to fight for — the living embodiment of mother-love, apple pie, and God. This girl, or any American girl, must be protected.

"Pin Up Girl," released in May 1944, gave her the opportunity to show off her beautiful legs. In the musical, Betty played Lorry Jones, queen of the USO clubhouse in Missoula, Montana. The simple plot had her sending out pictures of herself autographed with "scads of love" to G.I. friends.

As movies go, "Pin Up Girl" was only so so, but at the box office it was a solid hit since it provided escapist fare to civilian and military audiences who wanted to forget their cares and be entertained.

Betty used her legs to climb to the top during the 1940's. Predictable, her fortunes began to wane once the war was over. Wholesome beauty alone won for her a special place in history for inspiring fighting men.



Master Sergeant
Bert Strickland
and his No. 1 Pin-up.



Against all odds

College in Tennessee, then was offered an assistant coach's position at Alabama under his former coach, the great Frank Thomas. After four years he joined the staff of Red Sanders at Vanderbilt.

Bert and Bear spent a lot of time together during those idyllic days around Tuscaloosa. It was the best of times for two young men on the way up — Bryant on the football turf; Bert a cracker-jack advertising solicitor for the Tuscaloosa NEWS.

America's entrance into World War II sent them in opposite directions. The day after Pearl Harbor, Bryant joined the Navy and rose to the rank of lieutenant commander.

Bryant never saw combat, but while enroute to North Africa his troopship the USS Uruguay almost sank when it was struck by another vessel in the convoy. When he was discharged from service in 1945, he accepted the head coach's slot at the University of Maryland.

Comparatively, Bert's war experience made Moro Bottom look like the Garden of Eden. He joined the Army in 1941, and rose to the rank of captain. Fate dealt him a tough hand when he was captured on Bataan in the spring of 1942.

"What happened to me as a Japanese POW is well beyond my ability to describe, even today. It was by the grace of God and an inward determination to live to see Tuscaloosa again, that I came through," he quietly remembers.

Bert's unit was rounded up and sent off to Japanese prisons on the infamous Bataan Death March. Fortunately, he was a little farther north when captured and only spent five days and nights on the march.

"We saw atrocities committed by the Japs that we thought could never happen to Americans. They would not let the strong help the



Bert, center, with his 1981 Tide Broadcasting Team of Jerry Duncan, Tom Roberts, John Forney (announcer) and Doug Layton.

weak. If a strong man attempted to help the weak they would shoot both of them. Anyone who fell out on the march was instantly killed.

Bank was incarcerated in prisons at Camp O'Donnell and Cabanatuan. There were no medical supplies or sanitation facilities and disease swept the prisons. During his imprisonment he experienced 20 bouts with malaria.

In October, Bank was among 2,000 prisoners shipped on box cars to Davao penal colony in Mindanao. The capacity of the cars was 75 but 125 men were herded inside. Many suffocated to death during the trip, and the cars were covered with filth because men were ill with diarrhea and dysentery. Reaching Manila, they were taken from the cars and marched like cattle through the streets.

Bank spent a year and a half in Davao in virtual slave labor. Sadistic Japanese guards inflicted cruel and inhumane punishment on the hapless prisoners. Bert's weight dropped to 102 pounds.

On the morning of June 6, 1944, the day American G.I.s were storming ashore in Normandy, Bert was taken blindfolded to

Lysand and thrown into the hold of a ship. Packed like sardines, the prisoners were transported back to Cabanatuan.

Hope began to surge in Bert's breast on September 21, 1944 when hundreds of U.S. airplanes suddenly appeared on the horizon and shot up several Japanese aircraft on the airstrip.

Freedom for Bert came with striking suddenness. On the night of January 30, 1945, 100 men of the Sixth Army Ranger Infantry Battalion, assisted by 200 Filipino guerrillas, infiltrated 28 miles behind Japanese lines to rescue the 511 surviving POWs.

The Rangers' fire power lasted approximately 13 minutes. The prisoners lay flat on the ground, not knowing what was going on.

One Ranger spotted Bert in a ditch and shouted, "What the hell is the matter with you people, don't you want to be free?" Hesitantly, Bert asked if he was a Yank, to which he replied, "I'm from Oklahoma." "That is good enough for me," Bert shouted, and ran "like hell" for the main gate.

The liberated men were loaded on trucks the next day and sped to safety. On the way, they saw for the first time in three years an American flag on a makeshift stand alongside the dusty road.

"Every man in those 40 or 50 trucks stood at attention and saluted with large tears rolling down their cheeks," Bert vividly recalls. "It was an emotional moment I've never gotten over. Seeing that flag made me feel that my suffering had been worth

something."

Bert came home and never looked back. When he showed up at the Tuscaloosa NEWS he breezed in with a hearty laugh and healthy handshake, just as he had done when he bade farewell to his friends four years earlier.

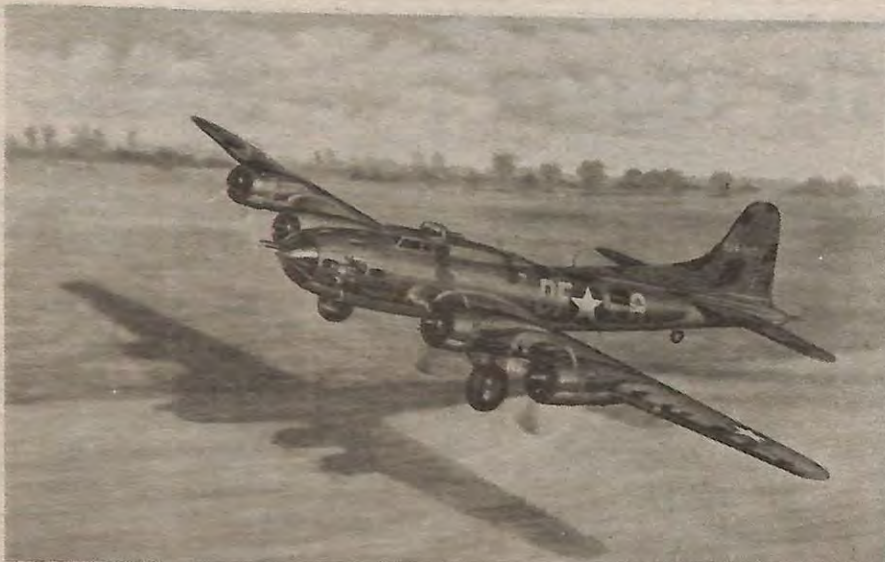
He wrote a small paperback book *Back From the Living Dead*, and dedicated it to his parents and friends whose prayers were responsible for his deliverance. Physical recovery, however, did not come overnight. Malnutrition had seriously affected his vision and he was in and out of hospitals for three years.

The years since World War II have been good to Bert. In addition to his successful business interests, he served in the Alabama House of Representatives eight years, and the State Senate two years. He garnered 47% of the vote in a statewide race for lieutenant governor in 1978.

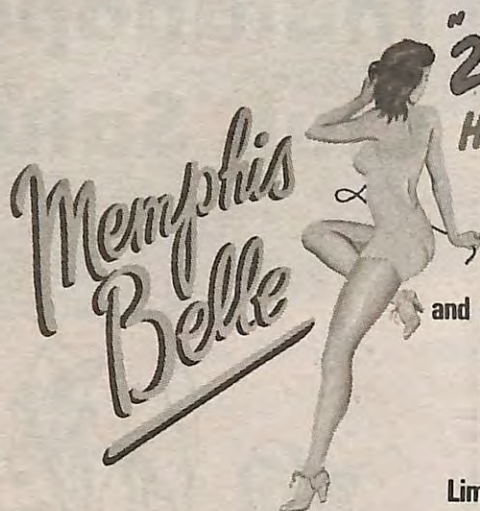
Today Bert has time to serve on several boards, frequent the golf course, and promote civic activities. Traveling with Alabama's football team during the season brings him special satisfaction — "They are still 'Bama, part of a rich tradition, of which I am fortunate to have a part."

Bert's membership in the "American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor" is an emblem which he wears with special pride. Regularly he is found on the speaker's circuit with an intensely patriotic speech "What America Means to Me."

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Tough Marine

"The mission in the Pacific was not a good one to be on. We were just there to delay the Japanese. It was a sacrifice mission. Our torpedoes didn't work — we had World War I equipment. That was the result of a Pacifist nation.

"In my battalion, only one other officer lived through prison camp. A prisoner interned by the Japanese had a 10 times greater likelihood of dying than those in German prison camps.

"Twice a day we'd get a slim portion of very watery rice. It was unwashed and sometimes it had in it little worms with white bodies and black heads. We called it stew."

Sunday, April 4, 1943, was the date set for the daring escape. The men went out the main gate which led from the prison confines to the prison farm. Once out of sight they ducked into a coconut grove and began to crawl Indian-fashion toward the place where they had concealed their equipment.

With the equipment stuffed inside their clothing, the escapees had to cross a road which was always patrolled by a Japanese sentry. They marched boldly into view, gave a sharp salute, and penetrated into the jungle as soon as they were out of sight. The ruse worked.

The men joined up with two Filipino ex-convicts who agreed to serve as guides. In the jungle, they encountered all kinds of obstacles. A huge swamp severely slowed their progress. Rough terrain limited their progress to only 12 miles away from the P.O.W. camp after four days.

Not all was bad, however. Along the way the men passed through remote Filipino villages and were given large portions of food.

After 35 days they teamed up with a band of Americans who had not surrendered and had started a guerilla operation. Shofner was made a judge.

On November 15 an American

submarine, the USS Narwhal, tied up at a pier on the northern coast of Mindanao in broad daylight and rescued the men.

After a period of recuperation and military schooling, Shofner was back in the Pacific five months later. He was an assault battalion commander on Peleliu in September 1944; was assigned to the U.S. Army for the landing on Luzon in January 1945; and was with the First Marine Division to help lead the assault on

Okinawa, April 1, 1945.

For his heroism, Shofner received the Distinguished Service Cross; two Silver Stars; the Legion of Merit; and the Purple Heart. In 1947 he married Kathleen "Koky" King, a 1938 UT beauty queen. They raised five sons, all of whom graduated from college with honors.

Shofner retired from the Marines in 1959. Today, at 74, he lives in Shelbyville, Tennessee and works 12 hours a day.

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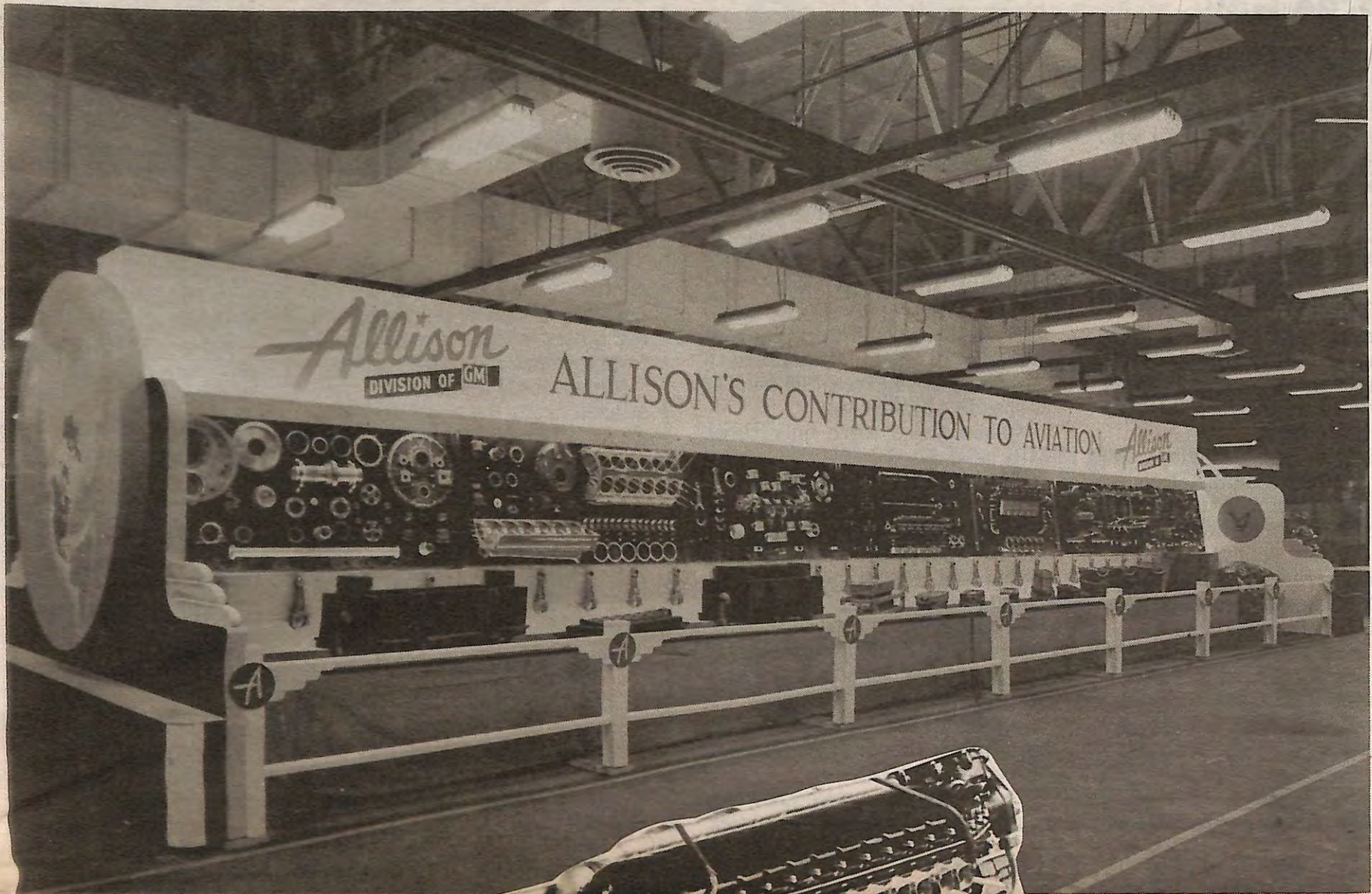
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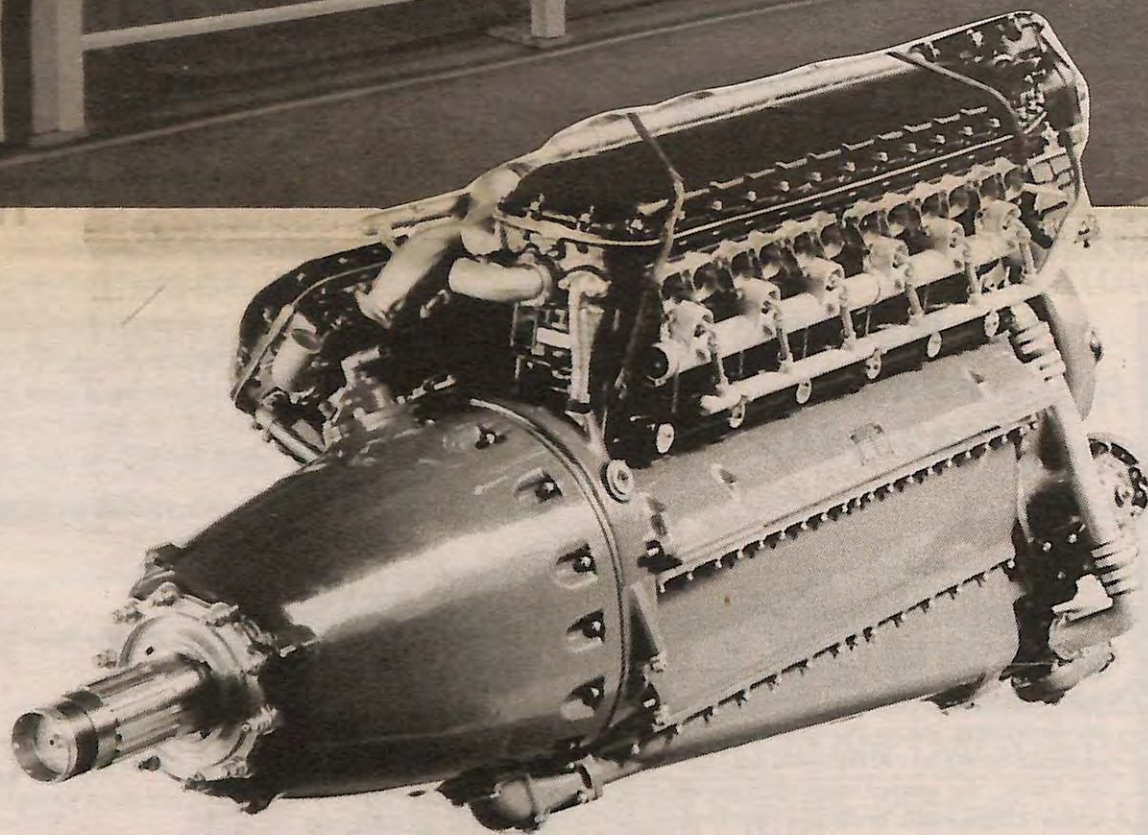
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When the Allison V1710 went to war, no other engine was in service in so many different combat areas. It was at Pearl Harbor and participated in the defense of the Philippines. It was in Australia, the Libyan Desert, and the jungles of the South Pacific. It also flew bomber escort missions over Germany and Western Europe.

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George Gay

facing out there — but how I would get the plane off the carrier with that big torpedo underneath. Not only had I never flown with one before, I had never even seen one. But we got every plane in the air.”

Leading the way, Waldron searched for the enemy. An hour passed. Expecting to sight something soon, the commander formed his planes into a long scouting line, with Gay bringing up the rear. Soon columns of smoke were seen beyond the horizon off to the right.

Waldron waggled his wings, the planes joined up again, dropped down and swept full throttle toward the Japanese fleet's outer screen of destroyers and cruisers. The anti-aircraft fire was intense but the squadron pressed on toward its target.

“We were out there all alone,” Gay remembers. “Without a battle plan we were confused but determined, mostly because we believed in Waldron. He was a great leader.”

Then it happened. “Suddenly about 9:30, during our long sweep

toward the Japs, we were jumped by 75 Zeros coming down from high above us. They were faster than anything I had ever seen. We were sitting ducks.”

In his stirring book, *Incredible Victory*, Walter Lord dramatically captured the last agonizing moments of Squadron 8:

“Then another went, and another. It was always the same: That sheet of flame, the blur of erupting smoke and water, the debris swirling by to the rear. George Gay could only think of the time he was a boy and tossed out orange peels from the back of a speeding motorboat.

“Soon there were only three TBI's — Gay and two others. Next instant the others were down and there was only Gay. Bullets slashed into his plane and rattled against the armored back of his seat. His gunner Bob Huntington was hit, and Gay felt a sharp pain above his left elbow. He fumbled with his torn sleeve; the bullet was spent, and he easily pressed it out.”

Incredibly Gay continued to fly on through the destroyer screen directly for the carrier.

His electrical system shot out, Gay somehow jammed the stick

between his legs and yanked at the manual release. Finally a torpedo was on its way.

“During the next brief, very brief, seconds I thought I might actually get out of there. The Japs had not downed me. I had broken through their screen and was still flying. I got down close to the water and tried to get away.”

He couldn't make it. Struck by another round of fire from the Zeros, Gay's plane pancaked into the water a quarter of a mile from the fleet and began to sink.

Miraculously, he extracted himself from the mess, inflated

his Mae West, pulled a piece of the plane's deck padding over his head, and settled down to watch the action unfold before his eyes.

Finally, at day's end the Japanese gradually slipped out of the area. Almost exhausted, Gay inflated his yellow raft and climbed in. The next afternoon, about 3:30, a PBY pilot landed in the water and rescued him.

George Gay's Midway experience was over. Against almost unbelievable odds, he had survived to tell his story to help energize America's fighting spirit at home and abroad.



“We Will Stand by You”

“We Will Stand by You”
Serving in the *Pawnee*,
1942-1945



Theodore C. Mason

Serving in the
Pawnee,
1942-1945

by
Theodore C. Mason

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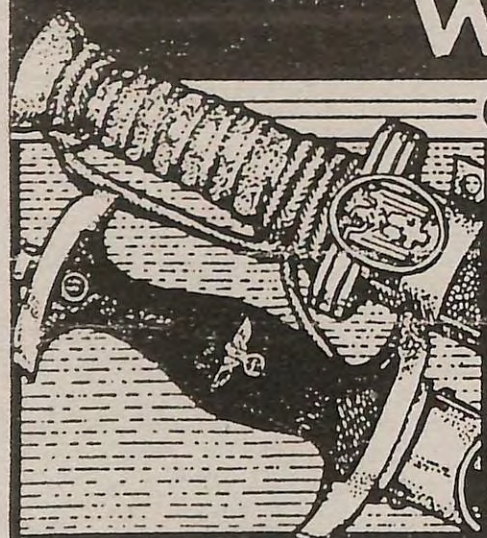
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The American Legion:

Visionary war vets shaping the future



Legionnaire Joe Chilelli provides a flag, a smile, and neighborly help in West Covina, Calif.

WWII veterans provide continuing leadership

American Legion membership doubled in 1946 to 3.3 million as World War II veterans came home. Today WWII veterans still comprise the largest percentage of the more than 3 million Legionnaires. And, these veterans knew what was needed when American forces found themselves deployed to the Middle East in Operation Desert Storm.

Opening the Family Support Network of The American Legion, a national toll-free telephone hotline, Legion volunteers responded to more than 27,000 calls. From simple household repairs to extraordinary hardships, Legionnaires met the need.

A new generation of war veterans learned quickly the compassion and understanding of those who had ventured into harm's way nearly 50 years ago.

Creative community programs meet multi-generational needs

As The American Legion has grown since its founding in 1919, so have the Legion's programs designed to assist every part of society.

From its veterans affairs and rehabilitation services which have benefited succeeding generations of those who have answered the nation's call to arms, to enhancement of advanced education opportunities for the nation's youth, to disaster assistance to countless communities, Legionnaires consistently meet all challenges.

Boys State, American Legion Base-

ball, the National High School Oratorical Contest, School Awards, the National Emergency Fund, the Child Welfare Foundation, and the Citizens Flag Honor Guard are just a few of the Legion's programs which meet special needs, just as the Family Support Network filled the bill for families of Desert Storm forces.

The American Legion presents a unique opportunity for war-time veterans to channel their special talents and interests to benefit America as we move toward the 21st Century.



National Commander Robert S. Turner (left) explains the Family Support Network of The American Legion to a service family facing separation due to Desert Storm deployment.

America's war veterans hold vivid memories of battle. Those memories underscore the steadfast resolve of the men and women of The American Legion —
"We Remember the Vets So No One Forgets."

