

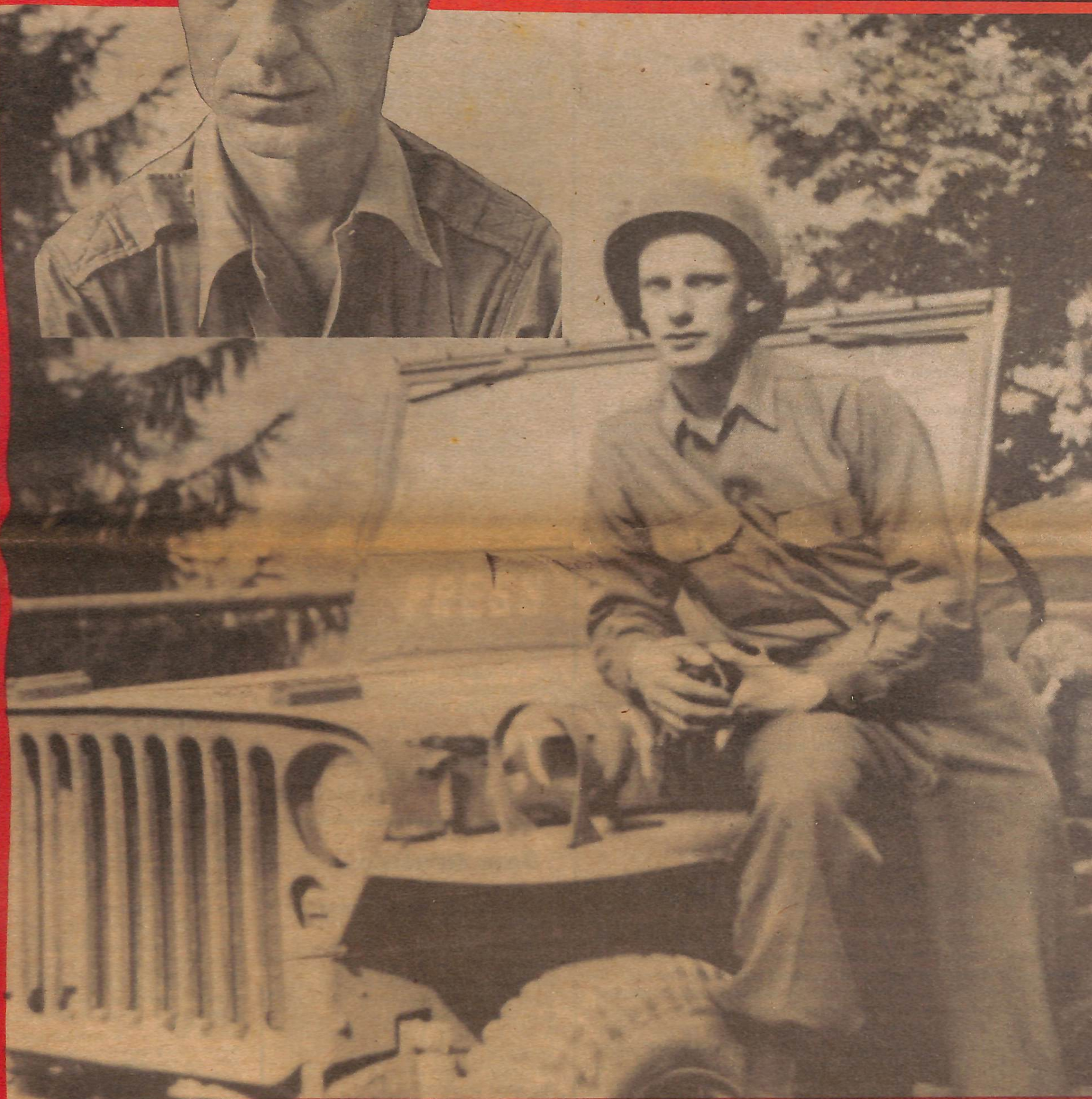


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# TIMES

THE WORLD WAR II

Volume 4, Number 6 November, 1989



**Jim Farmer covers the war in Europe**  
*Noted war correspondent becomes TIMES "Ernie Pyle"*





## Thoughts from a Royal 440

Elbert Watson

### Was it the "good war?"

General William Tecumseh Sherman, that sage of military wisdom, was right when he proclaimed: "War is hell!" Jonathan Swift called war "a mad game the world so loves to play." And Benjamin Franklin added: "There never was a good war."

Ironically, as wars fade into our history they become part of American folklore. This is especially true of our country's Civil War. Blue and gray uniforms, kepi caps, and unloaded blank-firing muskets are a far cry from the noise and clamor of battle at mighty engagements like Gettysburg, Antietam, and Chickamauga.

By calling for a national observance of the 50th anniversary of World War II, we are not honoring war. Rather, we are calling for a national tribute to 9 million veterans who are yet with us. This is not asking too much of a great nation which called upon them to serve, in the days of their youth, in strange and distant lands.

Fifty years ago we were on the threshold of World War II. It had already begun in Europe, and Japan was sweeping across Asia. In those innocent days, we could hardly visualize the consequences which that war would bring once we were forced into it.

That we were victorious is a fact of history. We won and the other side lost. Throughout the war, we conducted ourselves in a manner befitting a great nation. The homefolks supported the men who were gone; entertainers traveled millions of miles to cheer the troops, instead of playing rat-a-tat-tat with enemy anti-aircraft guns; and many clergy sailed the seas and followed the front, instead of showcasing glitzy television performances.

One cannot separate the war from the era in which it was fought. Those heady days when Americans both gave and expected the best deserve to be remembered, commemorated, and honored for what they were — a special niche in history, unlikely ever to be repeated.

Any national movement usually begins at the grassroots. More specifically, it begins with you, an individual, who takes up a cause worth spending a little time and energy to advance. All we are asking is for our Nation, our President and National Congress, to speak, as one, in calling for a national observance of the 50th anniversary of World War II.

You can make a difference. Let me hear from you.

## Welcome Jim Farmer

Readers of the **TIMES** are in for a real treat effective this issue. Noted World War II combat correspondent Jim Farmer of Indianapolis, begins a series of columns covering the war in Europe. Originally published in the Indianapolis **STAR** during the war, the articles have been updated in places where new information is available. Written in a style similar to his fellow Hoosier, Ernie Pyle, Farmer's personalized accounts will rekindle many memories for those readers who fought and marched across Europe. Others will be inspired to know what life was like "over there" at the front or behind the lines.

Jim Farmer's "War in Europe" columns are a welcome addition as we begin the 50th anniversary commemoration of World War II.

## We get letters

### Not Forgotten

We are enjoying the **Times** so very much. We know we can count on you to publish the best paper on the war and especially the people who fought it or were otherwise involved. We are inspired by the story of Sallie Davis, her dad and his crew. I am going to use it for some Veterans Day programs. Many have "A Dad Not Forgotten."

Your professionalism is very evident in the **Times** and we appreciate your efforts. It takes a lot of your energy but the fruits show forth and your friends and all readers should say thanks. They probably feel grateful but don't express it often.

Jack Harrison  
Watauga, TX

### Food for thought

I read your editorial, "Let the nation speak," with great interest. Your comments were direct and to the point. There is a lot of food for thought in what you said. It is unfortunate that the citizens of this great country are fast forgetting what sacrifices were made by the World War II veterans.

One of our members in upstate New York recently met with one of his legislators. The meeting was in relation to legislation to appropriate necessary funds to renovate the "Old Brig" at the Sampson State Park for a memorial to honor those in our group who served there during World War II. The legislator replied: "You are a dying organization."

This leaves us all with something to think about. What has happened to make people forget so easily?

William R. Russell, President  
"Sampson" WW-2 Navy  
Veterans, Inc.

### Likes reviews

As a voracious reader of books ranging from John Toland's war histories to novels, I find "book reviews" the best source to make choices for purchase or library loan. Your review feature carries the finest written reviews in print.

Why? Because in their straightforward lean prose they report what the book is all about and what the reader will discover upon reading. There is a minimum of subjective reaction to what has been published, no snooty references to other works on the same topic and a complete absence of reviewer's smart-ass syndrome whereby he waves the flag over his self-generated erudition.

After reading the **TIMES** reviews, one knows exactly what the book offers. And that's a rare happening with the average look-how-smart-I-am current general reviews.

W.H. Gregg  
Kirkwood, MO 63122

### An Example

Just a note to say that your "Anniversary" issue of the **Times** was splendid. I wish other states would follow the example of Indiana in honoring World War II before all of us are gone.

Keep up the good work. The **Times** is very special to me and doubtless to many others.

Ted Banks  
Stone Mountain, GA

World War II

## Times

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The **TIMES** is a national journal which depicts the military and social history of the World War II era. American servicemen and servicewomen are the central subjects of each issue. We welcome your stories and photographs.

### Sam Grashio and the flag

For thirteen months we had gone through hell for our nation or, to be put more accurate, we had been put through hell by the enemy. We had seen many despair and die along the way. We had been near death ourselves on many occasions. Now, suddenly, we saw our national flag in the most unexpected place. For the first time since April, 1942, I felt like an American again rather than a prisoner of the Japanese perpetually on the run.

For more on Grashio and the flag, turn to page 12.



## Jim Farmer covers the war in Europe

This edition of the World War II Times begins the printing of a series of wartime articles written by noted World War II Army Correspondent, James E. Farmer of Indianapolis. They are being published with their original datelines of Italy, France and Germany. Written contemporary with the action in Europe, it is believed they may recapture some of the spirit of the courage and hardships of the American soldiers there.

Farmer's Army Correspondent services began after the invasion of Europe at Salerno, Italy, by the 36th (Texas) Infantry Division. He was on the Headquarters G-2 staff of that division, and became enlisted man head of a press unit established by the division. The press office served visiting civilian War Correspondents. They included Scripps-Howard's Ernie Pyle, and Pyle's stopover during the Monte Cassino operations was to produce his famous column on the death of Captain Waskow.

Leaving Italy, Farmer served briefly with the Public Relations Branch of Allied Force Headquarters at Algiers.

Then he was assigned to his press duties with the Sixth Army Group in France. He scouted American army units for stories shared as background with civilian reporters or dispatched by embassy pouch to the United States and to home newspapers of G.I.s named in the reports. Also he wrote feature stories exclusively for *The Indianapolis Star*, the newspaper he left for military service, and most of the articles to be printed here will be such dispatches.

He moved into Germany as the Allied advance progressed, and on Victory-Europe Day he was stationed at Heidelberg. There he received the Bronze Star Medal in recognition of his news reporting. It cited his visits to "isolated groups of infantry elements to bring back vivid reports of their activities for the American press." He ended four years of Army service, including 28 months overseas, a Technical Sergeant.

His career since has included work as a reporter and assistant city editor of *The Star*, as information director of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, as chief assistant to Governor Roger D. Branigin (1965-69), and as Senior Vice President of the public relations firm of Howard S. Wilcox, Inc., Indianapolis. He currently is Public Relations and Legislative Counsel for the Indiana State Bar Association.

The Times deeply appreciates Mr. Farmer making available this valuable material.

Elbert Watson



G.I.s of the 4th Armored Division become "old men" after several combat operations.

## Transition from boys to men in the 36th

**D**oughboys of this 36th Division have learned through hard battle experience that a change from garrison soldier to combat soldier is in fact a transition from boy to man.

On September 9, 1943, under an early morning mist these soldiers stormed the shores of Salerno, Italy. They were green, untried. Yet this baptism of fire transformed them into gritty combatmen.

They pushed inland — infantrymen with bazookas and rifles fighting tanks; mortarmen on the flat shoreline terrain combatting well-emplaced 88mm. cannons in the hills. In 13 days, they made secure the first American beachhead on Fortress Europe.

Reactions to first combat were varied.

"I felt like I was on maneuvers," said one private. But when I saw my closest buddies getting wounded and killed right at my side, I said to myself, 'Hell, this ain't maneuvers!'"

A sergeant recalled, "I was climbing over a barbed-wire entanglement and my pants got caught. I tried to free them carefully from the wire. A machinegun opened up and I felt bullets whizzing by my ears. 'Look at yourself, Mike,' I said. 'Watching out for your pants when your life is at stake.' I plunged forward over the wire and tore the entire leg off the pants. But, here I am today."

"Salerno was something of an adventure to me," said another private. "That was because I didn't really know what I was going into. I was told on the ship what my outfit was to do. I did my part in that. I didn't think much about it until after the 13 days were over — then I felt rather scared."

Since those early days, these doughboys have seen action that has challenged more of the man in them.

One infantryman was trapped in Altavilla, a mountain city, considered as a "no-man's land" at the time. He lived to tell about tremendous bombardments he underwent there. These

included four days of firing by combined Allied ground and naval artillery, German artillery, and a dive-bombing attack by 60 American planes. This same infantryman since has experienced artillery concentrations in the mountains around Cassino. He considers the latter more severe.

Men of one infantry company went 72 hours without more than the food and water they had on hand — rations for three meals. German artillery had knocked out their mule supply train. Rain water was caught in C-ration cans and helmets for drinking purposes. The food was made to last.

An artist in civilian life, one soldier recalled experiences during rugged mountain operations. He said, "I was in my fighting hole for two days. It was cold. My feet were in two inches of icy water. My sergeant told me to go on a patrol. I was so tired I thought I couldn't move. Somehow, I got up and left. Before that time, I didn't realize my body could stand so much."

Growth into man for some has meant more than the personal risks of warfare and the personal privations of climate and terrain. To the platoon sergeant and the squad leader self-preservation has become second





Combat ready U.S. troops pour ashore on beaches of Salerno.

nature. Responsibility has made him develop a knack for looking out for others — the members of his combat group.

"Out in the field you've got to think six different ways from Sunday," one platoon sergeant explained. "You're moving up a slope in attack. A machinegun opens up. You've got to think — see where the best cover is; where and how close the German gun is; how it can be knocked out; where Joe is with the automatic rifle, and Bob and Tom with hand grenades; where to place the other guys to protect flanks and rear. You have no time to get scared yourself."

Doughboys of the 36th have the habit of referring to a soldier who's experienced several combat operations as an "old man."

## B-26 MARAUDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

We're looking for anyone connected with B-26 units during World War II to help us promote the MARAUDER'S place in history.

For information contact

Nevin Price

P.O. Box 1786

Rockville, Maryland 20850

# Heroes pull off daring feats in heat of combat; Kelly, Gonzales two examples

**H**eroes who have been born out of some 100 days of combat with this 36th "Texas" Division have proved that a man doesn't have to look like a hero to be one.

They can be shy and inconspicuous, but in the heat of combat they display the guts and calm which enables them to pull off daring feats.

This outfit's two star battlefield performers are anything but warlike in appearance and manner.

Technical Sergeant Charles E. Kelly of Pittsburgh, Pa., is just a 23-year-old Irish kid who shaves once a month. Staff Sergeant Manuel S. Gonzales of Fort Davis, Texas, who is of Mexican-Indian descent, is a shy, likable guy whom his buddies say "wouldn't harm a fly — unless it was German."

A man who knows Kelly just about as well as anybody is a fellow Irishman who was with him during the action which brought Kelly the Congressional Medal of Honor. That man is his company commander.



Jim Farmer

When Kelly first joined his outfit, the captain hardly knew he was around because of his quiet, backward nature.

"During garrison and training days you know only the loud ones," the of-

ficer said. "I didn't really begin to know him until combat days when the usually-speechless Kelly would continuously volunteer for patrols." He continued, "Kelly is probably the most fearless man that ever lived."

In the lengthy War Department citation which described Kelly's "one-man Army" stand at Altavilla during the taking of the Salerno beachhead, was a statement on his use of 60 mm. mortar shells "as hand grenades." Ordnance experts who studied this "unorthodox method of firing the mortar shell" said that that in itself was an indication of Kelly's daring and ingenuity.

The mortar shell has two safety pins, the first of which is easily removed by hand. To remove the second safety, Kelly had to bang the tail end of the shell on a hard rock, jolting loose a catch pin which allowed the safety to spring out. "Anyone who will do that with TNT has a special type of guts," one ordnance officer observed.

Perhaps the driving force to the



heroic with 27-year-old Sergeant Gonzales was a feeling for "watching out" for his buddies.

When three slugs from a German machine pistol painfully wounded him in the groin during combat near Cassino, he was on a search for a younger member of his squad — a man who was seeing his first action. Gonzales walked some seven miles over mountainous terrain to a medical aid station. He had refused to be carried on a litter because he felt some other wounded soldier might need it more than he.

Gonzales explained his Salerno invasion action of knocking out four machineguns, one mortar and one 88 mm. gun with simple logic. "Someone had to do it," he said. "If it hadn't been me, it would have been someone else. I was there first, so I went on ahead."

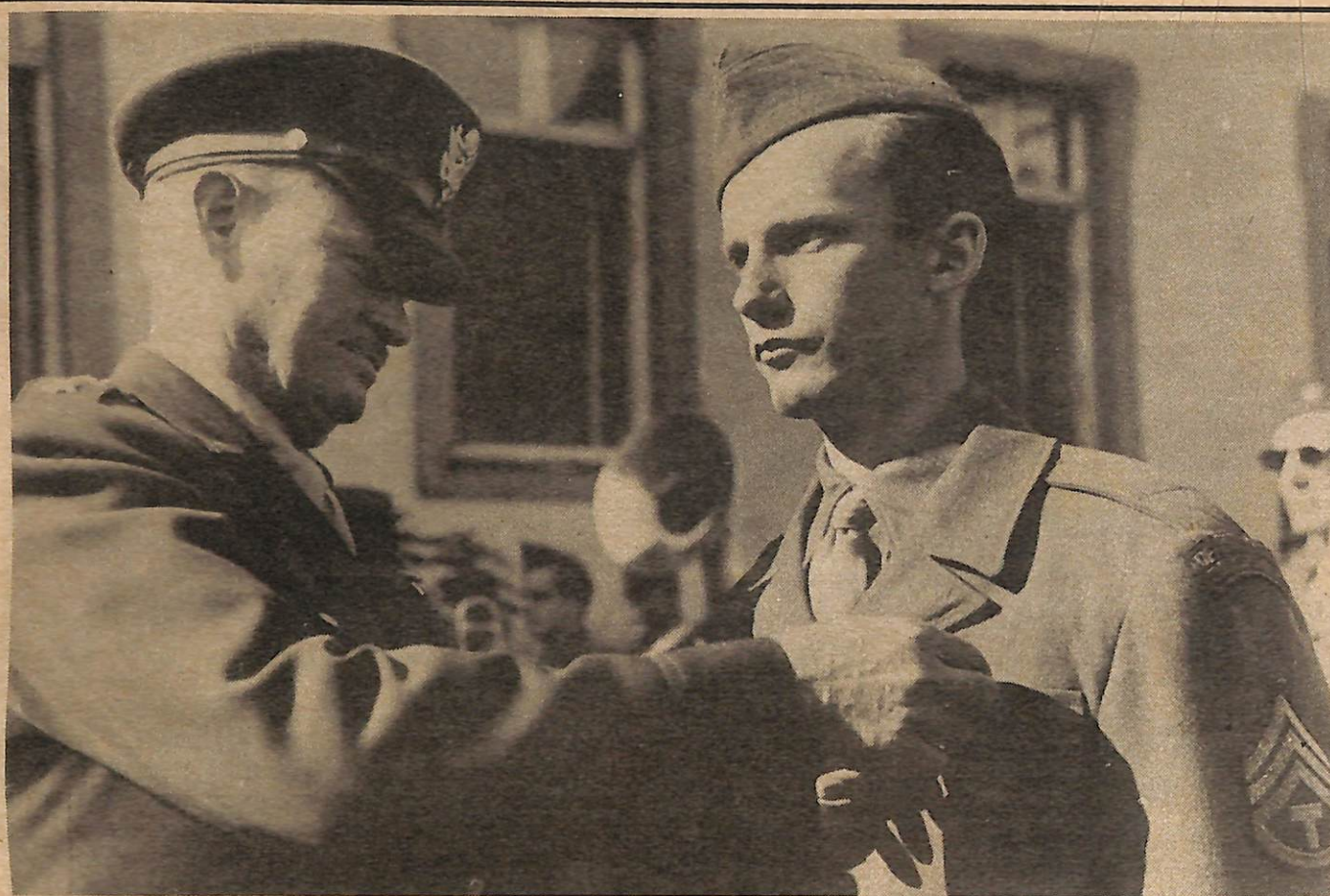
He had gone "on ahead" in the face of withering machinegun fire that came so close that the pack on his back was set on fire by a tracer that pierced a can of lighter fluid. Fragments from a German concussion grenade wounded him slightly, but he had moved on to single-handedly neutralize two machineguns and one mortar with automatic rifle fire, and two machineguns and one 88 mm. gun with hand grenades.

This Mexican-Indian could well

have been one of the Americans who caused the Germans to dub the Salerno invaders as "wild men from Texas." Brown-skinned, black-haired

and grim-faced, Gonzales is a determined soldier during combat. Out of combat, he is the No. 1 jester of his company. Adding a special twist to

his joking, he makes himself the goat of most of his cracks. "You're almost as ugly as Gonzales," is his often heard remark.



Major General David G. Barr pins Bronze Star on Army Correspondent Farmer.

## Soldier 'Close-Call' Tales Rest On One Bullet

A strange type of German shell or bullet which bears no certain soldier's "number" has been described here in a grim jesting by infantrymen of the 36th (Texas) Division. This kind of missile bears a number which is either one digit above or one digit below "your number."

The shells and bullets are those mentioned in the narrow-escape stories of combat veterans. Some sound like tall tales, but they're all true.

Probably the "Prince of Close Calls" is a Texas Irishman called "Old Folks" by his buddies. He affirms that he has foiled German attempts to do him in with concussion grenades, artillery shells and land mines. And all he has had to show for the experiences have been a few bruises and a hole in his helmet.

Here is Old Folks' story:

"Our platoon was pinned down behind a ridge by a machinegun. I was sent forward to locate it and knock it out. The moon was so bright

you could read a newspaper by it. I crawled over the ridge and up a small incline toward a wall-like structure at the town's edge.

"All was quiet, strangely quiet. I quit crawling and decided to lie flat, to locate the machinegun's crew by sound — by waiting and listening. Then I heard something plop at my side. It was an egg-shaped object, a German concussion grenade. I knocked it out of my range with my hand and then it exploded. Another plopped at my side and I knocked it away, too.

"I knew there must be a German looking down on me from above, carefully tossing grenades at me like he was throwing cards into a hat. The third grenade plopped farther from my side. I picked it up and tossed it in the direction of the German. A fourth grenade landed out of reach. I ducked my head in a shell hole and waited for the explosion.

"There was a 'bang' and I felt something hit my leg. It seemed like my leg was partially torn off. I dared not move it. I was afraid it might not be there at all. But when I did feel it, I discovered it was completely whole and only bruised — not even any blood! I aimed where I thought the German was peering over at me and fired. All was quiet again. Then I was ordered to rejoin my platoon."

Old Folks' story goes on with him in position on the flat top of a knoll where four German artillery shells hit

within a 400-square-foot area. Luckily, they were all duds. Said Old Folks, "I've heard of two duds falling in succession. And maybe now and then three duds, one after the other. But that was the first time four ever fell like that."

His platoon was crossing an open field when a buddy in front of him stepped on a mine. Somehow by instinct Old Folks dropped his head forward as the mine exploded. A fragment hit the front of his helmet, penetrated the steel and inner liner and then stopped just short of entering his forehead.

Another infantryman owes his life to a small Bible he was carrying in his shirt pocket over his heart. A German bullet spent itself in the book's pages. Similarly, a map saved a signal wireman who had driven through an intense shelling. He stopped his jeep to refer to a map in his hip pocket. Lodged in the folds of the map was a piece of shell fragment.

A shell hit inches away from one "double foxhole" in which two soldiers were lying. It burrowed into the ground under their hole, threw them into the air and then peeked its nose out on the other side of the hole. The shell was a dud.

Another dud landed between the legs of an artilleryman who was crawling up a mountain slope to his observation post. The shell came so close it bruised both legs.

But what they called "instinct or just plain luck," two doughboys told how they were at the right place at the right time. They'd been lying in their front-line foxholes for many hours under many shellings. They decided they'd give their bodies a stretch by crawling a few yards behind them to a building. Another shelling opened up after they reached the building. When they returned to their holes a few minutes later, they discovered a shell had made a direct hit on one hole and that a tree had fallen into the other.

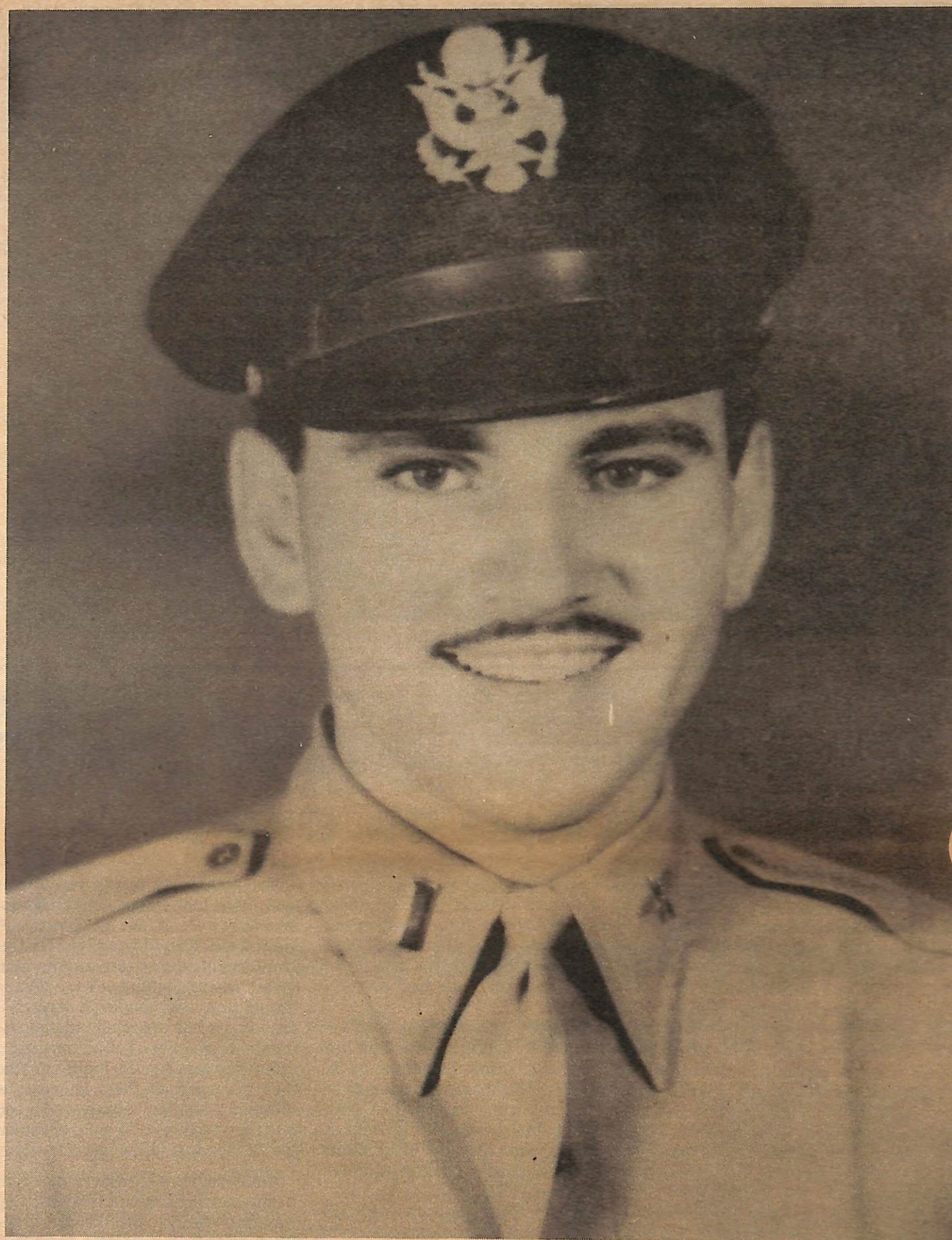
Many soldiers here have marvelled at the luck of Sergeant Charles (Commando) Kelly, the Congressional Medal of Honor winner, who went through more than 70 days of the fiercest combat with no more than a scratch on his nose. Kelly's complete lack of fear meant he was "sticking out his chin" at the Germans more often than most soldiers, they rationalized. Once when the Pittsburgh hero was out on a patrol — and closer to the enemy than the buddy who shared a foxhole with him — the pal was killed by a direct shell hit on the hole.

Most of the narrow-escape survivors make the same observation as Old Folks: "I don't know how I could be so near 'my number' and yet be so far from it. I really believe a sort of Divine guidance has brought me through."

American  
Red Cross







Bob Palmer was a handsome Army Air Force officer who flew 76 combat missions.

# Limping home on "TWIN NIFTY'S"

**Elbert L. Watson**

**D**r. Robert Palmer, a prominent Indianapolis physician, often thinks of the positive experience he gained from serving in the Army Air Force during World War II. Though he was in some of the heaviest air action (76 combat missions and 100 reconnaissance and training missions), Palmer credits his war service for opening up opportunities for later achievements.

Like other veterans who have survived heavy combat, Palmer regards "war as terrible for its stench, devastation, and death. But in World War II we were fighting inhumane, fanatical people across the two oceans. We were called upon to whip them. I believed then, and believe now, that my sense of right against wrong gave me the will to rise above the wreckage of war and make something of my life when I got home. I am not a hero, I simply did my duty to the best of my ability."

A strong sense of self-worth was instilled in Palmer as a child when he was growing up in rural Minnesota, the fifth of six children of an itinerant Methodist minister. Because of the Depression most of his childhood was lived in poverty.

"But we were only short of money," he reflects — "never poor in spirit. We all worked at any job available and never lost our sense of humor or faith in the future. My parents gave me a priceless sense of self worth which has enabled me never to envy any other human being."

Palmer was also blessed with a strong competitive spirit. In high school he was a top football and basketball player.

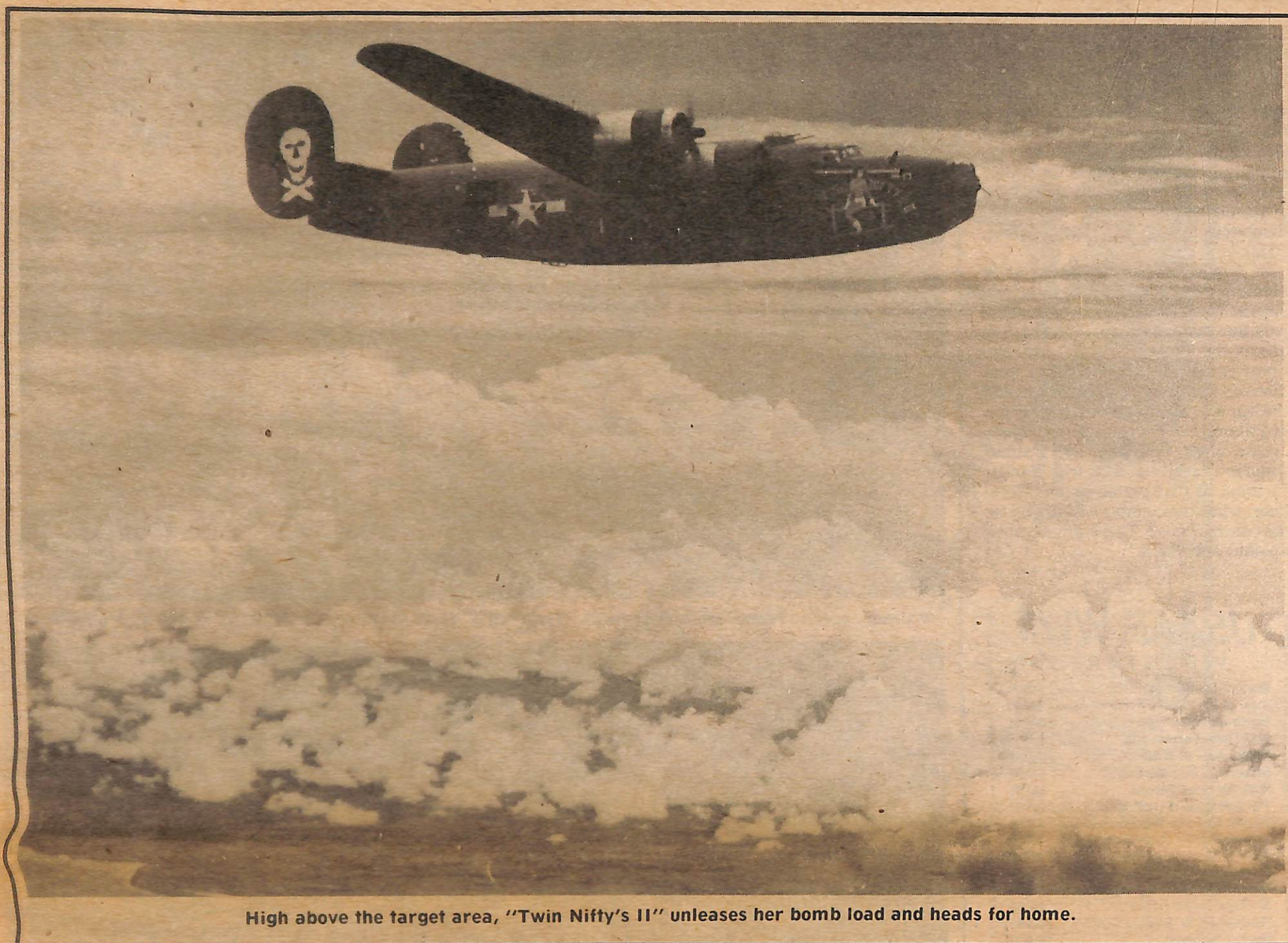
Palmer was a 19 year old truck driver hauling farm machinery between Minneapolis and Chicago, when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor. His salary of \$75.00 a week was a hefty amount in those days, enabling him to set aside substantial amounts for college.

"Though I was shocked with the reality of war, I quickly realized this was an opportunity to do things I had never done before — places to go, things to see, perhaps get some training which would equip me for life. I could hardly wait to get into the Army."

So he joined up on December 9, requesting service in the Army Air Corp. Called up in the spring of 1942, he was assigned to San Antonio, Texas for pilot's training. His dream of becoming a daring fighter pilot, however, was dashed when his unit was sent to Clovis New Mexico, to learn to fly the fabled B-24 "Liberator."

In the summer of 1943, Palmer was shipped out to Port Moresby, New Guinea to the 90th Bomb Group, 400th Squadron, of the 5th Air Force, which had been organized in Australia in 1942 by surviving elements of Philippine-based U.S. Far East Air Forces. General George C. Kenney took command in August 1942 and deployed the Fifth to support the Allied advance in New Guinea, a real





High above the target area, "Twin Nifty's II" unleashes her bomb load and heads for home.

hot spot.

Japanese strong points and airstrips were struck; troops and supplies were brought in from Australia to Port Moresby; and attacks were made on enemy convoys trying to reinforce the New Guinea garrison. In the Battle of the Bismark Sea, March 2-4, 1943, combined forces of the Fifth and Australian Beaufighters wiped out every ship in a 22-vessel convoy. By the time Palmer got to New Guinea, the Fifth had intensified its bombing against Rabaul, a Japanese bastion on New Britain which had been captured on January 23, 1942. Rabaul's two harbors, Blanche Bay and Simpson Harbor, enabled the Japanese to dominate the New Guinea-New Britain-Solomons area, and threaten Australian and U.S.

lines of communication to her Pacific bases. Obviously, Rabaul was a key consideration to Allied planning.

Understanding this, the Japanese by September 1943 had upped their forces to approximately 300 planes and 10,000 men. Rabaul's shore defenses were deemed too strong for an Allied amphibious operation; hence U.S. military strategy centered on heavy air strikes against Rabaul.

Palmer remembers it all quite vividly: "Those were not milk runs against Rabaul. That place was a hornet's nest of destructive anti-aircraft and Zeros. I flew co-pilot on my first mission and the fire-power was so intense against us that the full realization of war came to me for the first time. Those people were trying to kill me! I had a strong fear of the imminence of death — something which I had never felt before."

Palmer was promoted to captain and flew with the 90th Bomb group, the "Jolly Rogers." He and his crew named their plane "Twin Nifty's II" and painted a buxom, half-nude crossbombs were painted on the tail.

They needed it that Easter Sunday, 1944 when they flew out from a base off the northwest tip of New Guinea.



He's Dr. Palmer today.

"That was my worst experience during the war. Over the target we were struck by anti-aircraft fire and attacked by Zeros. My right landing gear was knocked out and part of the rudder torn off. the No. 3 engine was destroyed, began burning on the way home and we started losing altitude.

The No. 4 engine also was hit and was of little use. The greatest tragedy was that our flight engineer sustained serious wounds and died later."

The lives of those aboard depended on Palmer and his co-pilot, Bill Parks, getting the plane back to friendly territory. The B-24 shook terribly and wind whistled through approximately 250 holes. Fortunately, the Zeros cut off pursuit once the plane got away from the target area. Had they not done so, "Twin Nifty's II" proved a tough gal on the rocky road home. Refusing to give up or go down, she lumbered on for what seemed an interminable period of time. "It was a test of my sense of survival," Palmer reflects — "to stay on top of a near hopeless situation. Parks and I pledged that if "Twin Nifty's II" could sputter, we could improvise enough with what was left of the plane to bring her in fairly intact."

And they did! Palmer ordered the crew to bail out to lighten the load. He stood on the left rudder to keep the plane from veering off to the right, while Parks handled the wheel. Down they came, landing in heavy kunai grass which gave them the sensation

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of dropping on a bale of hay. For this courageous feat, Palmer was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

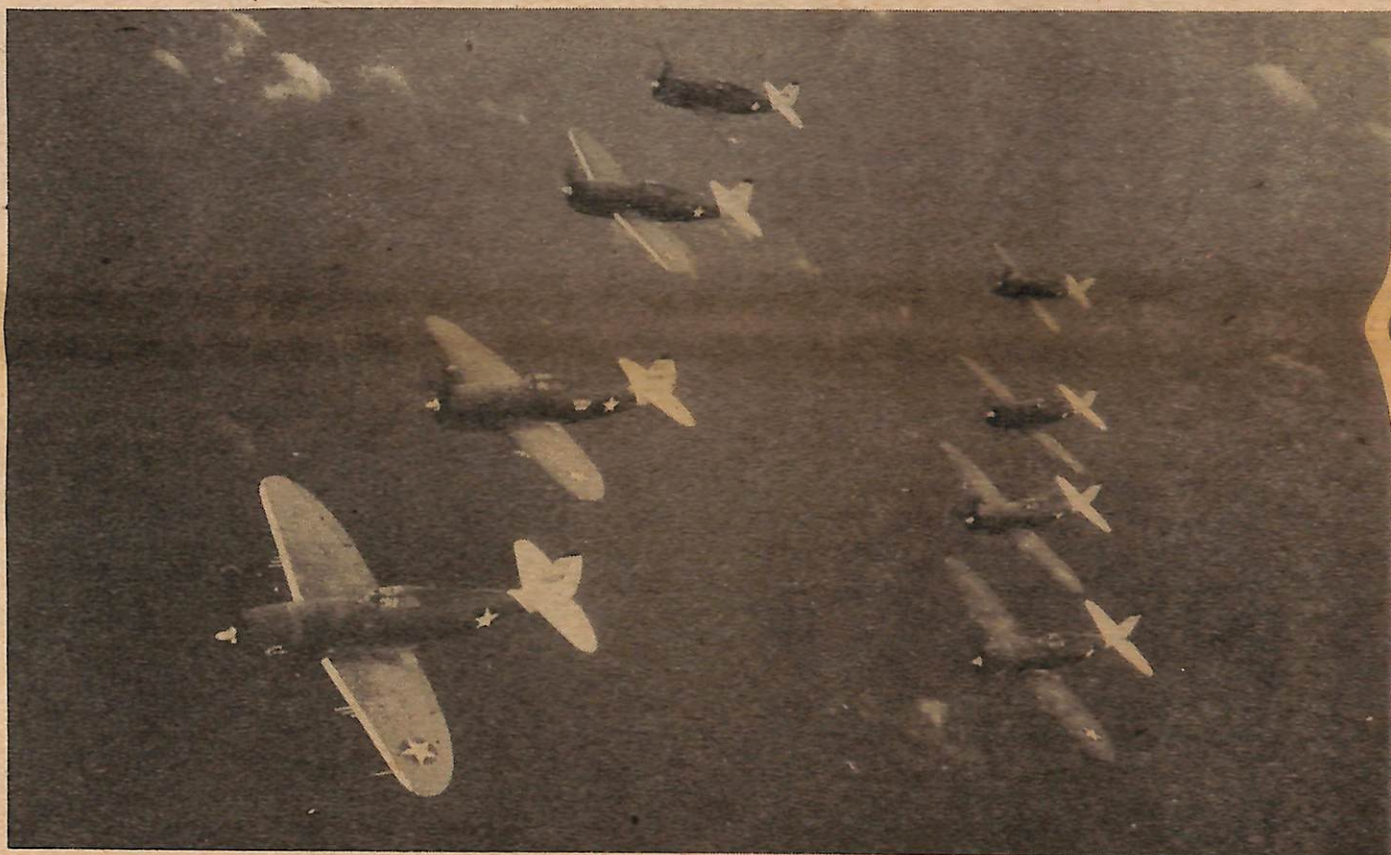
Palmer later had another brush with death. He was selected to fly a heavily fortified B-24 around Manus Island and take photos from approximately 50 to 100 feet above the water, 300 yards off shore. Though eight P-47s accompanied him, the highly dangerous mission gave him a felling, "This is it."

In August 1945, Palmer was at Ie Shime during preparations to invade Japan. The missions of the past would pale into insignificance with what lay ahead, he knew. But the invasion never came. The atomic bombs went down on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the war was abruptly over to the relief of Palmer and his courageous crew.

Like other veterans, Dr. Palmer frequently reflects on World War II: "I think of that period as our finest hour, when the country was united for the common good. There will never be another one like it."



Palmer, second from left, and crew of "Twin Nifty's II." Co-pilot Bill Parks is on Palmer's right.



Fighter escort for Palmer's squadron included noted air ace Richard Bong.

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# Can you believe this?

**I**t's been 44 years since PFC George W. Green made the headlines with his all-time record completion of 20 USAFI correspondence courses in only 15 months, depicted in Robert L. Ripley's internationally syndicated cartoon "Believe It or Not!"

Perhaps it is time for an update on this unusual story.

Recently the Times ran into George who is now retired from General Motors and lives with wife, Pauline, in Dearborn, Michigan.

As a front-line rifle grenadier and runner in Company E, 334th Infantry, 84th Division in General Simpson's 9th Army (European Theater), he contracted severe bilateral trench foot while fighting just inside Germany.

Evacuated through the hospital system to Holland, Belgium, France and eventually England, he spent four months recuperating. While still hospitalized, he started to take correspondence courses from the University of Wisconsin Extension Service and continued after being discharged and transferred to the Army Air Corps where he was assigned to drive a truck and work in the warehouse.

But let's let George tell his own story at this point. "This all came about," he reminisces, "through a unique combination of four very disparate factors:

1. "Romance. I was stuck overseas, so I proposed to my future wife in a letter and instead of going into Liverpool to have a good time, I stayed back to read my books in the day room. I guess some of the guys did consider me a little weird!;

2. "Physical Disability. I literally had to learn to walk all over again and I wasn't too keen on extensive foot work for awhile so the courses were really therapy for me;

3. "Boredom. There weren't very many books or magazines available, so I decided to spend time on the free courses, hoping to get college credit for these when I returned to the states and

4. "Unusual Memory. Probably an inherited trait, I guess.

"I certainly never set out to establish a record, just while away lonely evenings and long weekends at Warrington."

All together, Green served in the Quarter Master Corps, Military Police, ASTP, Infantry and the Army Air Corps. He was awarded the Bronze Star.

Upon being discharged, George married Pauline Selman of Rome, Georgia. They have a daughter, Norma, who lives in Evanston, Illinois and teaches journalism and com-

munications courses at the college level. His sister, Mary, lives and works in Toledo, Ohio.

George attended night school under the GI Bill two nights a week for five years and has his Bachelor and

Master Degrees in Marketing (latter cum laude) from the University of Toledo.

His versatile career has included work in the varied fields of marketing, sales, sales promotion,

training, advertising, marketing research, management consulting, public relations, media analysis, journalism, etc.

George does some freelance writing and his articles have been published in over 20 consumer and business magazines. He has also co-authored a book.

Putting all this history in perspective, George has some observations: "I never studied any subject that didn't come in handy somewhere along the line in my business career or personal life. I'm literally amazed at how this story keeps popping up after so many years have gone by.

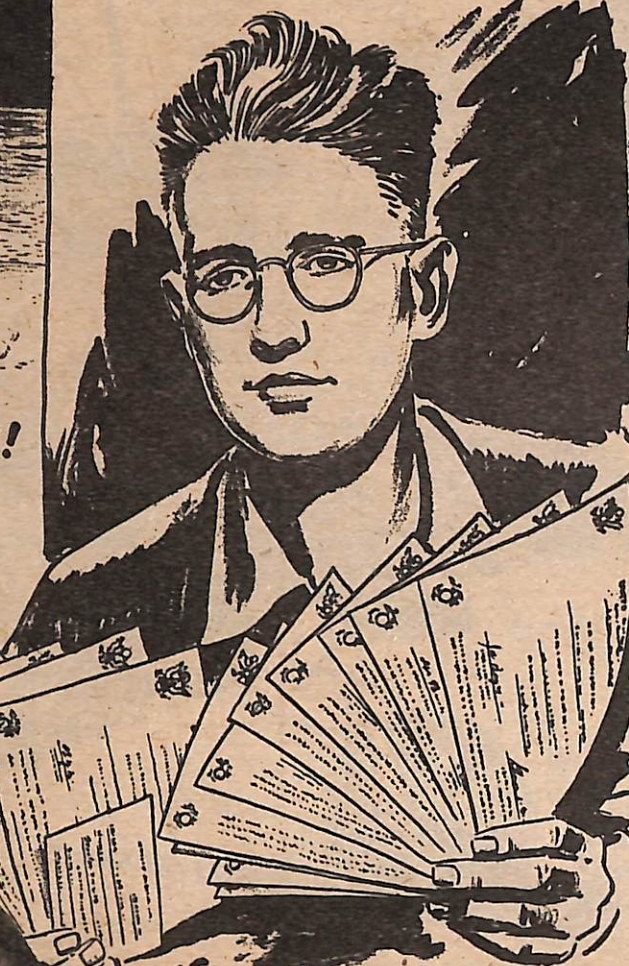
"Recently our local cable Channel 11 contacted me to record a half our 11 contacted me to record a half hour interview

"But possibly the most ironic twist of all is that I was a corporal in the ROTC when I was 14 and attending Columbia Military Academy in Columbia, Tennessee, yet I went all the way through World War II as only a PFC, "BELIEVE IT OR NOT!"

## Ripley's Believe It or Not!

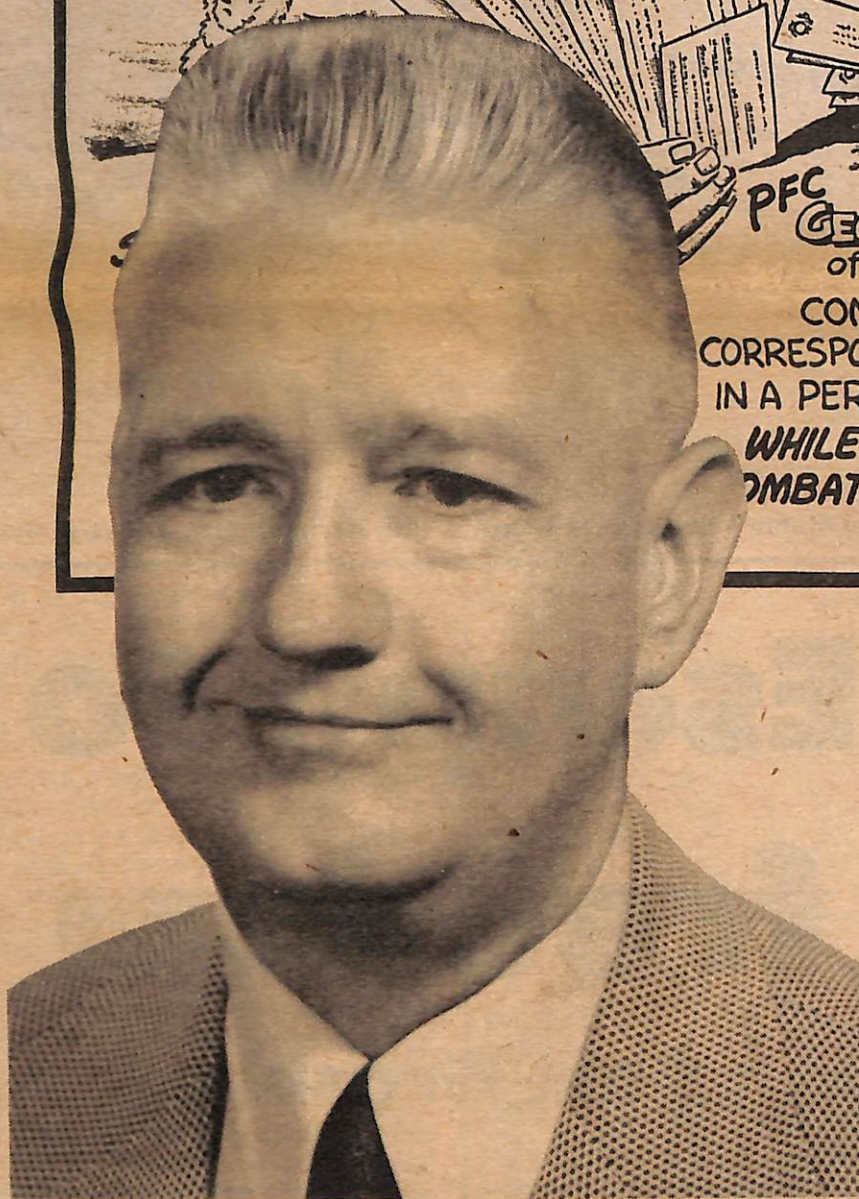


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CORRESPONDENCE COURSES  
IN A PERIOD OF 15 MONTHS  
WHILE SERVING AS A  
COMBAT INFANTRYMAN!**



George Green, "Believe it or Not."





Only "Pistol Packing Mama" took aim at Grashio, left, during pre-war days in the Army Air Corps.

## Part 3

In previous issues, General Austin Shofner (USMC Ret.) and Colonel Sam Grashio (USAA Ret.) told of their daring escape from a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines. We pick up Grashio's story after the 10 Americans and two guides meet friendly Filipinos.

**W**e followed, at a walk, down the trail they had taken until we came to some cleared ground where a Filipino hunchback was working in a field. Ben (the Filipino guide) went up to the man, told him who we were, and said we wanted to meet guerrillas. The man replied that he could not take us to them but would go himself and relay our message. Meantime we should wait until his wife fixed us something to eat.

We saw a well behind the house and

began to haul buckets full of water for impromptu baths. The sensation was nearly as delightful as feeling solid ground underfoot had been the night before.

While we were still bathing a sharp whistle rent the air. Suddenly we were surrounded in the best theatrical style, by several dozen ominous looking characters brandishing a variety

of weapons. They were led by a tall, husky man, much larger than most Filipinos, who carried a .45 revolver at his waist and a Browning automatic in his hand. This was our introduction to the guerrillas of the Philippines.

After assuring themselves that we were really Americans and not German or Italian allies of the Japanese,

the guerrillas unbent. Their leader said his name was Casiano de Juan, commander of all the guerrillas in that locality. He and his followers were amazed to learn that we had crossed the swamp.

Some of our new friends told us some interesting things. They had ambushed the Japanese patrol that had been sent to hunt us down and had killed ten or fifteen of the enemy, at no cost to themselves. The gunfire we had heard two nights before had come from that clash.

Ordinary Filipino people were overjoyed to see us. They regarded us as heroes for having escaped the enemy, and were greatly honored when some of us consented to be godfathers to several village children.

Casiano de Juan told us there were other guerrilla bands in this part of Mindanao, all of them under the ultimate control of a Philippine Constabulary officer named Claro Laureta, who lived several days' march distant. Laureta, de Juan assured us, would be able to get us to

# Escape to freedom Sam Grashio



Australia.

Mike Dobervich was sick with malaria by now so we started for Laureta's headquarters at a leisurely pace, loaded with food and gear that were carried for us by porters supplied by de Juan.

Every time we stopped at a village the local people fed us, treated us kindly, and if possible staged a fiesta in our honor. After twelve months of brutality, starvation, and degradation, an abrupt change to such hospitality left us midway between tears of gratitude and utter bewilderment.

After about three days we reached the town of Kapungagen where we met Senor Eligio David, a well educated businessman who spoke English and who had fled from Davao City to this remote area when the Japanese had landed. Senor David had become the mayor of Kapungagen. He fed us sumptuously, and staged what seemed by now the inevitable fiesta in our honor.

The end of the evening was profoundly touching. Our host suggested that we all sing "God Bless America." All of us were deeply moved during the singing. I recalled how many times I had heard Kate Smith sing that song so beautifully. When it ended Melvin McCoy rose and immediately suggested that we all sing it again but change the words to "God Bless the Philippines." There were no dry eyes afterward.

One day three big, strange looking men arrived armed with Browning automatic rifles. They viewed us with suspicion, questioned us at length and insisted on searching our persons and baggage. We complied with some reluctance and much wonder. They turned out to be scouts for Laureta, dispatched to make doubly certain that we were really Americans and not Germans or Italians.

Soon after, Laureta himself arrived. He questioned us at length about our escape and intentions. He agreed that the world should be told what went on in Japanese prison camps but he did not think it likely that we could ever make it to Australia in an open sailboat. He asked us to abandon our plans to go fifty or sixty miles east to the port of Cateel and to go instead 125 miles to the north coast of Mindanao. There we could contact more numerous and better organized guerrilla groups led by American officers. He added that by now U.S. submarines appeared off the coast there occasionally. Laureta was equally confident that we could make the north coast in about three weeks even though the intervening jungle and mountains were marked "unexplored" on the maps.

We discussed the advice Laureta

## Thanks

"Thank you Lord for bringing us through the storms, and the darkness and the uncertainties," — Rev. Jack Harrison, B-17 pilot (18 attacks) and POW 13 months.

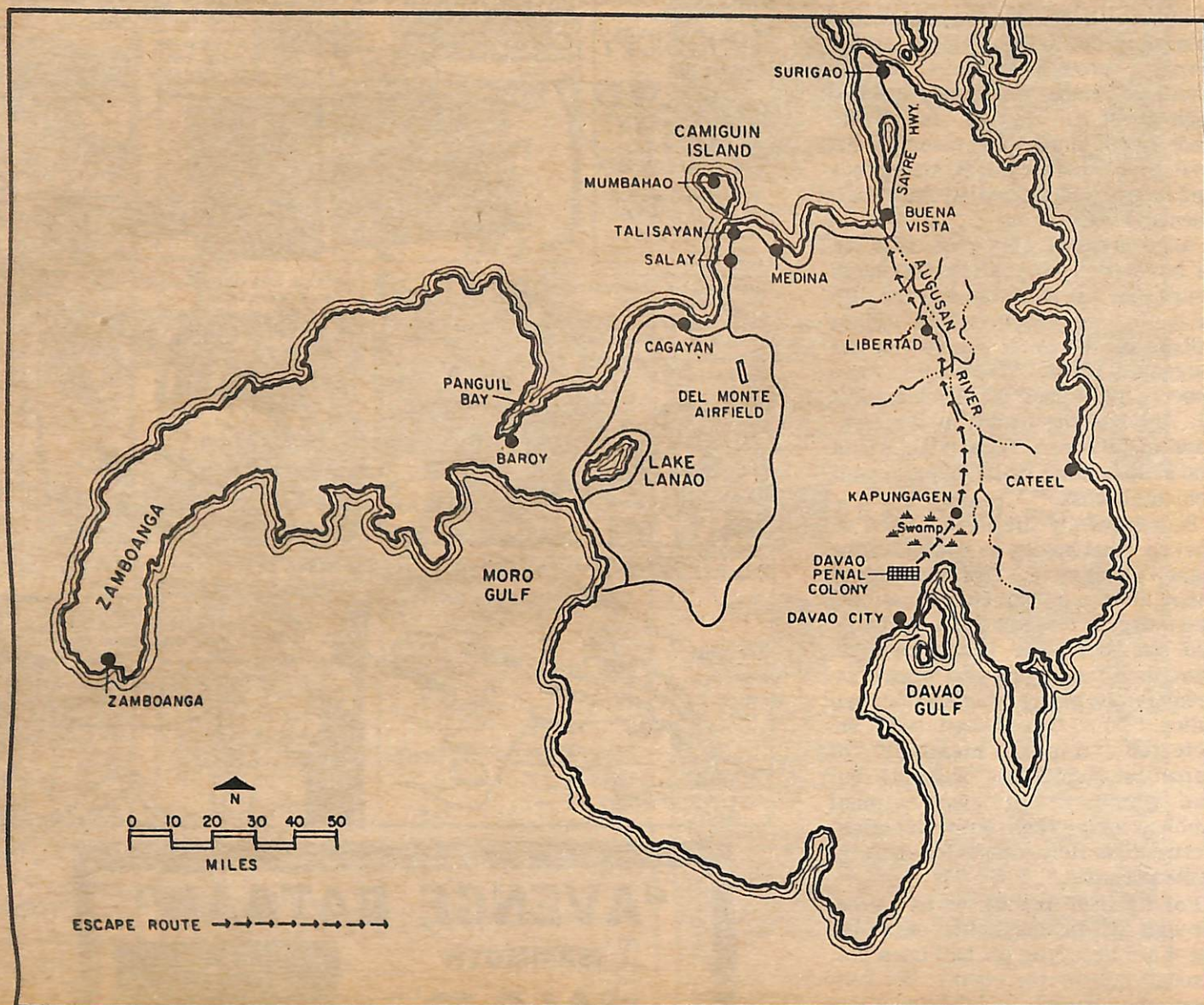
had given us and decided to take it. He then began to outfit us extensively. We would need about twenty armed men as guards, he thought, to deal with potential troublemakers of whatever sort, a couple of Philippine Army guides who had some knowledge of this part of Mindanao, and eighteen Ata cargadores.

(Atas were primitive people who lived in the wildness. They were about four feet tall, weighed about ninety pounds, and were strong, wiry, and agile as cats.)

Our journey northward through the interior was varied. The first three days were fairly easy. We went up a small river in dugout canoes. Now and then we had to pull the canoes through shallow water and sometimes we walked in the stream instead of riding.

Once we saw a few Ata tribespeople pass us going downstream; to fish, our guide said. The only other people we saw in the interior were an ancient white man clad in a white sheet like Mahatma Gandhi and three old, nearly toothless Filipino women who were with him. He said he was a veteran of the Spanish-American War who had fled from Davao City to escape the Japanese. Here he subsisted on camotes with his antiquated harem as his only companions. They lived in an open ended shed roofed with leaves.

At the end of the third day we had to leave the river since we had come to a



Artist's conception of an incident Grashio saw on the Death March.



mountain range. We went up mountains and down them again, across rivers, through swamps, across plateaus where the closely packed high trees had choked out all the underbrush until they resembled a well kept German forest. Our hands and faces swelled from myriad scratches and insect bites.

After crossing what seemed to me to have been our fiftieth mountain range, but was probably only the fifth or sixth, we reached Libertad, a village on the lower reaches of the Augusan river. There we were ushered into a guerrilla shack to meet Lt. Antonio, the leader of the local band of fifty men. He had American and Filipino flags on the bamboo wall behind his desk.

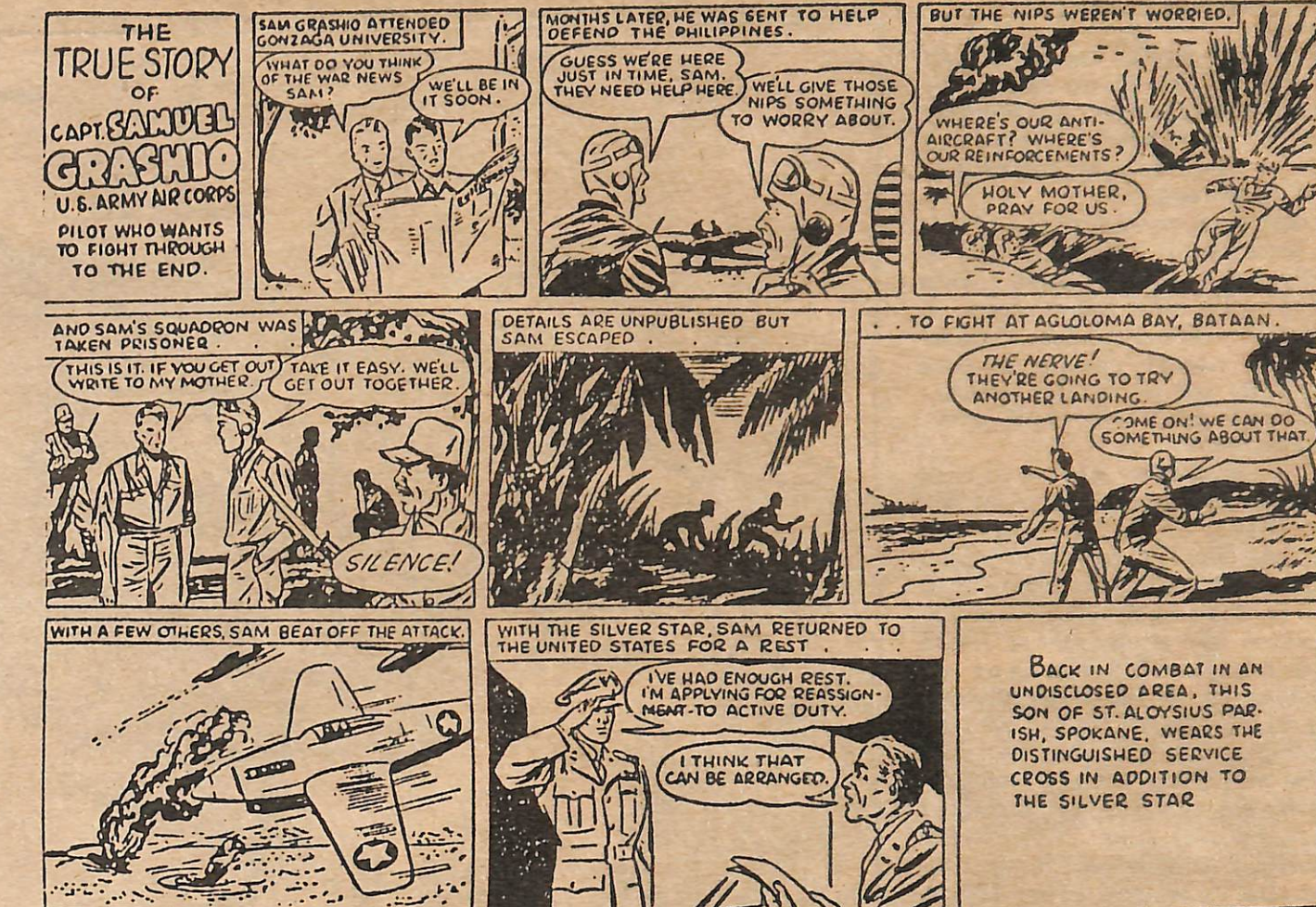
Seldom in my life have I been so shaken emotionally as I was at the sight of our flag. This may seem maudlin in our time when national patriotism is discounted by so many. But the last time I had seen an American flag flying had been thirteen months before when Bataan had fallen. Since then I had seen the detested "flaming meatball" of Japan on numberless occasions but had glimpsed our own national emblem only when our conquerors were deliberately using it for some ignoble purpose.

For thirteen months we had gone through hell for our nation or, to be put more accurate, we had been put through hell by the enemy. We had seen many despair and die along the way. We had been near death ourselves on many occasions. Now, suddenly, we saw our national flag in the most unexpected place. For the first time since April, 1942, I felt like an American again rather than a prisoner of the Japanese perpetually on the run.

The next five days were a welcome respite from the toil and hardship of the previous week. We simply floated down the Augusan river on bamboo rafts. It was restful and we regained some strength. On the fifth day we stopped. A local guerrilla leader told us we should make for Medina, a coast town which was headquarters for American guerrilla activity in North Mindanao. We were advised further that it would be safer to approach our destination indirectly, by going over the mountains to Buena Vista, a smaller place to the east where we could be picked up by boats and taken to Medina. Three days later we staggered into Buena Vista.

Our boat arrived several days later. It was a forty foot banca, powered by a diesel motor, with auxiliary sails and out riggers. Its skipper, a boisterous Filipino named Vincente Zapanta, said we had to keep close to the coast so we could make a run for it if we were intercepted by any Japanese gunboats that frequented the area.

For two hair-raising days we sailed inshore, dodging shoals and reefs, trying to avoid the Japanese, and wondering if we could survive shore-based gunfire from guerrillas who



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repeatedly mistook us for the enemy. Finally we reached Medina.

We had scarcely set foot on the beach at Medina when we were swept into the world of the guerrillas. The leaders were an exotic lot. Some of them had been tribal chieftains; some were mere adventurers, even bandits. Before long they were joined by an array of comparably unconventional Americans. Some of these were civilians who had lived in the Philippines before the war. Many more were men who had escaped from Bataan or Corregidor or who had simply

taken to the hills when ordered to surrender after the fall of Bataan. Most of the latter were hardy, self-reliant young men from the farms and small towns of south and west.

The most influential of them was "General" Wendell Fertig, a mining engineer from Golden, Colorado, who had been an important mining consultant in the Philippines in the 1930's.

The guerrillas had few arms and little ammunition but they did enjoy widespread support and sympathy. Many Filipinos had been willing to come to terms with the Japanese in-

itially, but once it became evident that the victors were much given to torture, rape, and lesser brutalities, civilian Filipinos grew increasingly willing to sell or give food to the guerrillas, to furnish them with regular information about the Japanese, even to join guerrilla bands themselves.

The whole guerrilla operation on Mindanao was "coordinated" from Australia by Gen. Courtney Whitney, a prominent Manila lawyer before the war who had become head of the Philippine Section of Intelligence on MacArthur's staff. Liaison between him and Fertig was maintained precariously by Cmdr. "Chick" Parsons, USN.

Authorities in Australia wanted the guerrillas to avoid contact with the Japanese and become gatherers of information, but native Filipinos wanted them to fight the invaders. Caught in the middle, Fertig had to disobey the orders of his superiors periodically or forfeit the civilian support without which guerrillas cannot operate at all.

So the irregulars ambushed Japanese patrols, picked off individual Japanese soldiers, made roads and trails unsafe for the invaders to travel, and attempted to restrict Japanese influence to the seacoast towns.

As soon as we arrived in Medina we were met by a local American military entrepreneur, Lt. Col. Ernest McLish. He had been attached to a Philippine Army Regiment in Mindanao when Corregidor fell. He was young, brave, energetic, and an able commander of troops, though deficient as a strategist.

In the next issue, Colonel Grashio will tell of his specific duties with the guerrillas, boarding a submarine, and eventually reaching safety in Australia.





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Climbing toward his ultimate fall, Adolf Hitler ascends to podium at Buckeburg in 1937 to harangue thousands of followers. Two years later his Nazi legions would flow across Poland to demonstrate to Europe the awesome power of his air and land forces.

# "And the war came"

Lincoln's second inaugural

LIFE magazine called World War II its longest story, tracing its beginnings to Francisco Franco's bloody assault on Madrid and Barcelona in 1936, and Imperial Japan's slaughter of some two million Chinese in 1937.

Historians place the official start of World War II to Nazi Germany's assault across Poland at 4:45 a.m., September 1, 1939. Without any formal declaration of war, Hitler launched Operation "Fall Weiss" (White Plan) with 53 battle-ready divisions.

Though fighting continued for a couple of months, the campaign was an unequal contest. By November 1 Germany announced the formal annexation of western Poland. Russia, then Germany's ally, incorporated eastern Poland into the Soviet Union.

Thus began the war which would engulf the world and claim 55 million lives before it ended in September 1945. A conservative estimate of the economic cost reaches \$2 trillion. Compounding the tragedy, is that more civilians perished than did military personnel.

Why did it happen? The simple answer is that peaceful loving countries, like the United States, stood aside and failed to condemn the militaristic forces which were infecting Europe and Asia. In the end, we paid a great price for our indifference.

It is up to competent historians to research the era and give us the factual answers.

Today, the shadow of World War II hangs over us like the Ghost of Yesteryear. As the TIMES goes to press stirring events are changing the

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# 50 years ago

political face of Eastern Europe.

Without exception, these events find their origins in the World War II era. Thus, in order to understand what is happening before our eyes today, we need to know history and the vital role America played in the political, economic, and social changes which occurred because of World War II.

The TIMES has two main goals for the 50th anniversary years: (1) to honor the veterans and (2) to develop an educational program to give modern Americans a better understanding of the World War II era. You can play a vital part to help us reach these goals.

Beginning with this issue, a regular column "50 Years Ago" will give short accounts of major events transpiring during that period. Too, we invite readers to send us their stories of their activities at home or abroad during those innocent months leading up to Pearl Harbor.

## NOVEMBER 1939

Nov. 1 — Germany decreed formal annexation of Poland. Under the occupation, Poles were barred from such simple activities as carrying briefcases, wearing felt hats, walking in public parks, participating in athletic events, and calling from phone booths.

Nov. 4 — The U.S. Congress repealed our neutrality law. The new policy permitted "cash and carry" purchases, a move favorable to England and France. President Roosevelt issued a proclamation defining zones

of combat: Bay of Biscay, waters adjacent to England and France, the English Channel, the North Sea, and the Baltic Ocean. U.S. ships were barred from those waters.

Nov. 8 — Hitler barely escaped assassination in a Munich beer hall. A bomb exploded 20 minutes after his departure. Nine people were killed.

Nov. 20 — German Luftwaffe planes began dropping magnetic mines into the Thames River estuary. An ironic first casualty of the mining came the next day when the Japanese passenger liner "Terukuni Maru" struck a mine.

Nov. 26-30 — Russia charged Finland with hostile acts near Leningrad, a charge denied by the Finns. The Soviets broke off diplomatic relations on the 29th, invading Finland the next day to launch the "Winter War."

## DECEMBER

Dec. 14 — Hitler ordered his High Command to investigate taking possession of Norway, a move encouraged by a former Norwegian War Minister, Vidkun Quisling.

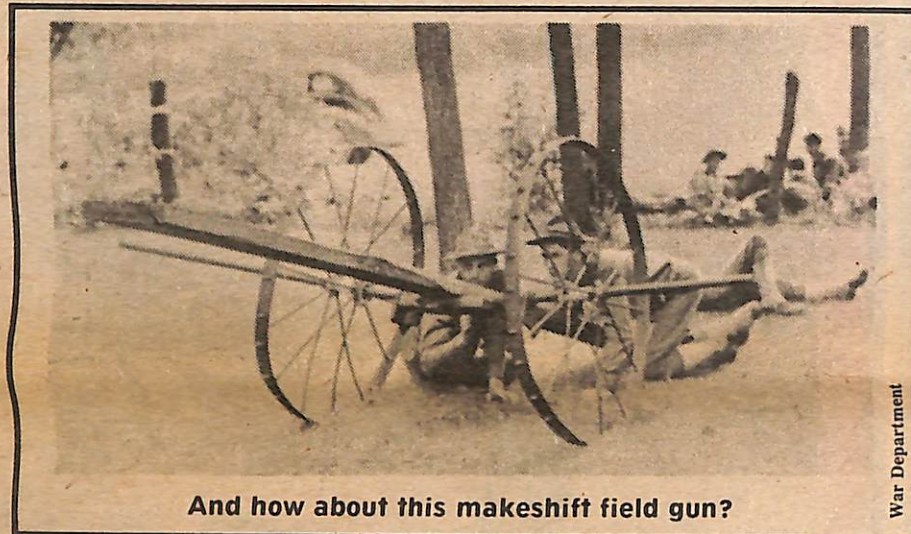
The League of Nations expelled Russia and branded her the aggressor against Finland.

Dec. 29 — Finnish forces soundly defeated a Russian army at Suomusalmi.

Dec. 30 — China's air force sustained a heavy defeat over Liuchow. Forty Chinese fighters challenged 13 Japanese Type-96 planes. Fourteen Chinese aircraft were shot down without any loss to the Japanese.



Woefully unprepared for war, the U.S. Army used a wooded tripod as a 60 mm mortar for this squad in 1939.



And how about this makeshift field gun?

War Department



American sailor at Pearl Harbor...casualty of the "good war."

## Reunions

Americal Division (WWII-Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Philippines and Japan; and Vietnam), June 7-10, 1990, Marriott Hotel, Oak Brook, IL. Contact: Joseph G. Micek, 4935 Frank Pkwy, Norridge, IL 60656. (708) 457-0453.

48th Anniversary Guided Historical Battlefield Tour, Aug. 7, 1990. Veterans — Guadalcanal, Hawaii, Figi, Gulagi, New Hebrides, Gavutu-Tanamobobo. Contact: Lt. Col. Joseph N. Mueller, USMCR 10562 Jordan Ave., Chatworth, CA 91311.

U.S.S. MUSTIN (DD-413)/U.S. HORNET (CV-8) survivors. May 3-6, 1990, Irving, TX. Contact: Vic Egger, 1228 E. Farnham Ct., Irving, TX 75062. (214) 255-6016.

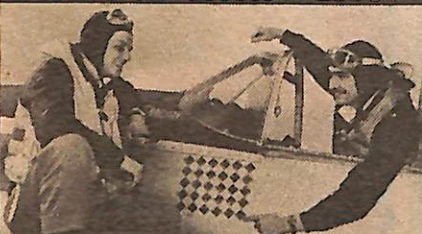
COMPANY E, 28th MARINES ASSN. Reunion Feb. 22-25, 1990, Westpark Hotel, Arlington, VA. Contact: Col. D.E. Serverance, Box 1972, La Jolla, CA 92037.

MARINE/NAVY WORLD WAR II PARATROOPERS. Reunion, El Tropicano Hotel, San Antonio, TX, Oct. 26-29, 1989. Contact: Col. D.E. Serverance, Box 1972, La Jolla, CA 92038.

USS COLORADO (BB-45) 1990 National Reunion, San Antonio, TX. Contact: Chris Barker, 709 Apache Drive, Independence, MO 64056.

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