BAND LEADER ARTIE SHAW, CENTER, AND MEMBERS SIGNAL THAT BIG BA

Swing was the

Rex Redifer

They carried their memories, their music, their visions of Betty Grable's "million dollar" legs off to war with them.

It was a time of high spirits and heartbreak and the sweet sentiment of song was solace to a millions of young men uprooted from their homes and sent to far and remote places to fight a grim war.

World War II's ugly reality was an ironic counterpoint to the "sweet sound" that had them dancing to Glenn Miller's "String of Pearls," listening to Helen McConnell's haunting Green eyes.

"In The Mood," "Sentimental Over You," "I'll Never Smile Again," "Moonlight Cocktail." It was the stuff of "back home" and the girls they left behind them. The music embraced all the loss, and longings of that generation.

It was a sound that crystalized a time and place in the lives of millions of Americans during the war years — those who went away to fight the war and those who stayed at home, worrying, waiting.

Benny Godman, Artie Shaw, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Harry James, Woody Herman, Sammy Kaye, Kay Kaiser, Vincent Lopez, to name but a few, left a musical legacy that still echoes through the years.

The "Swing Era" ended, for all purposes, with the war. Part of it, perhaps, died with Glenn Miller, the Iowa farm boy, so instrumental in developing the new "sound" in the late 1930's.

Miller broke up his band in 1942 to join the Army Air Force, but organized a popular service band. On December 15, 1944, he took off in a small plane from England and disappeared into the English Channel en route to France.

Miller's was without doubt the most popular of the Big Bands, having the smooth, controlled "sweet" quality that people loved to hear.

But the war, having changed the world, changed America's music. Although the big bands have carried on through the years — Ralph Flanagan, Ralph Marteri, Les and Larry Elgart, Les Brown, Stan Kenton, Billy May, Count Basie and others — they were never to dominant us the way they did in the pre-war years.

The Big Bands put out a big sound. They were comprised usually of between 16 and 18 pieces — brass, reeds, percussion and rhythm sections. Sometimes strings were added, but rarely.

They were showcases for consumate musicians, around which a sweet, liquid sound was molded.

There was a wide variety of musical interpretation, each band headed by a charismatic musician who stamped his sound with a particular style.

Goodman, Shaw, and Herman were reed men; Tommy Dorsey, trombone and trumpet; James trumpet; Stan Kenton and Count Basie, piano. They vied among themselves to recruit the nation's premiere musicians.

Along with Miller, probably Goodman, the "King of Swing" reflected the era at its best, while the Tommy Dorsey band was recognized as most danceable.

It was Goodman who probably established the credentials of swing by taking his band and other top jazz performers into New York's fabled Carnegie Hall on January 16, 1938.

The concert rocked the staid old auditorium with numbers like "Sing, Sing, Sing." Only months earlier Goodman had attracted national attention packing New York's Paramount Theater where it had fans jitterbugging in the aisles.

Goodman had all the ingredients. He had fine musicians in James and Ziggy Elman on trumpet, Gene Krupa on drums, Jess Stacy and Teddy Wilson on piano, Lionel Hampton, vibraharp and vocalists Helen Ward, Helen Forrest and Peggy Lee.

But much of the Goodman style was attributable to the arrangements of Fletcher (Smack) Henderson, a black former bandleader.

Goodman's "Let's Dance," "One O'Clock Jump" and "Goodbye" rank with the best of the era.

Tommy Dorsey, along with brother, Jimmy, also left his indelible mark on the times. Dorsey was an excellent trumpeter, but was best known for trombone. Brother, Jimmy, was a clarnetist and sax player.

They were a tempestuous pair who played with Jean Goldkette, Paul Whiteman, Rudy Vallee and Andre Kostelanetz, before forming their own band in 1928, only to split and form their own bands in the mid-1930's.

Bud Freeman, Bunny Berigan, Max Kaminsky, Yank Lawson, Joe Bushkin were among the notables who played with Tommy's band. His star vocalists included Frank Sinatra, Dick Haymes, Jo Stafford and the Pied Pipers.

"I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "I'll Never Smile Again," "This Love of Mine" were among the many Tommy Dorsey hits.

These were but a few of the most memorable, but there were many more who played a big role in creating the era of "swing."

To understand the death of "swing," however, is to try to trace its roots.

In a way, the history of America could be told in its music.

From Civil War days it has been a lusty, rowdy, rollicking stew of sound reflecting the restless shifting energy of a people. It is in constant flux and flow, like some contradiction of time and place. It is as timeless as it is passing, as interlocked as it is varied, as old as it is new. It is all things to all people.

The days of Tin Pan Alley, with its tinkling pianos in small studio storefronts in New York (so many, they sounded like clanking tin pans to passersby) who pushed songs were not a lot different from today's twanging guitarists and songwriters in

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The advent of radio, the automobile, World War I, the migration from country to city life, a revolt against Victorian values, expanding lifestyles, and a desire to dance, all combined with the hustle and bustle of changing times to create a new and different music in the 1920s.

It was an era of good times and people wanted to be entertained. Mostly, they wanted to dance — and they wanted music to dance to.

And so the jazz age was spawned — an age of itinerant musicians crisscrossing the country like armies of ants playing the vaudeville circuit, the movie houses, the clubs, the hotels, the resorts, the casinos, the colleges — anywhere that people danced.

From the south came Dixieland, Gospel, Negro Blues; from Chicago came hot licks, from Kansas City and St. Louis lowdown blues; from Indianapolis, fine instrumentalists from "The (Indiana) Avenue."

It was looseleaf, unstructured music in its formative years — uneven, spontaneous sound that fed on its momentum — small four and five-piece groups creating a potpouri of "jazz".

Some purists claim that the jazz era died in 1931 with legendary coronetist Bix Beiderbecke in a Manhatten hotel room. But, if Beiderbecke symbolized its beginnings, more disciplined musicians would follow and interprete the music into larger areas.

By the late 1920s, Paul Whiteman was the King of Jazz. He had formed a large organization of the best and most accomplished musicians in the business. With his rendition of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" in 1928, he would set a trend which was later forged into an era of Big Bands. He, along with such pioneers as Ben Pollack, provided musical stables from which many future band leaders would emerge.

Radio had broken down barriers and brought the nation together musically. Sound had made movies the national passion, and bands made dancing the national obsession.

The depression struck a heavy blow; yet, the hard times kept the nation at home and tuned to the radio. And dancing was an escape valve. The nation loved to dance to forget its cares. The record industry almost perished in the mid 1930s, but then the jukebox arrived on the scene to bring the sounds of Goodman, the Dorsey brothers, Shaw, Guy Lombardo, Sammy Kaye and dozens of others to every small town canteen and confectionary in the nation.

While Asia and Europe were caught up in war, America jitterbugged and boogy-woogied into the 1940s.

The 1930s also saw the birth of much more sophisticated tunes. Jerome Kerne, Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Hoagy Carmichael and many others were turning out beautiful songs. Composers and arrangers were molding them into pearls of music. By 1938 more than 600 dance bands were touring the country. The music makers had become jewelers of a fine and unforgettable art form in pre-war America.

And it was Miller, who failing with an original band in 1937, regrouped in 1938, to perfect more than any other the new sound. He was a musician, but musical arrangment was his special gift. He had worked previously for Ozzie Nelson, Glen Gray and others, and he had perfected his craft.

He built his band around musical arrangements, and enlisting some of the most talented arrangers in the business — Jerry Gray, Bill Finnegan and Billy May.

They put together all the parts and manufactured a "sweet" music: "Moonlight Serenade" featured sidemen Tex Beneke (tenor sax and vocals), Billy May (trumpet), Hal McIntyre (alto sax), Ray McKinley (drums) with vocalists Marion Hutton, Paula Kelly, Ray Eberle and the Modernaires.

There followed a series of classics: "Moonlight Cocktail," "Tuxedo Junction," "Serenade in Blue," "In The Mood," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," "Pennsylvania 65000," "Little Brown Jug" and others — all of which were indelibly stamped on the nation's conscience.

Young Harry James, out of Texas, played the trumpet like the angel Gabriel, and became the envy of male America when he married Betty Grable in 1943. By the early 1940s, he had one the most popular of the big bands. All bands had their featured vocalists, but up to that point they had remained sidelights — a part of, but simply an extension to the instrumental music.

A skinny young singer out of Hobokon, New Jersey would change all that. Frank Sinatra — a crooner in the footsteps of Bing Crosby — became the first of the Big Band era's singing superstars. He eclipsed the importance of the band and put the

TO PAGE 32

Ask the Colonel

Colonel Jim Shelton,
Indiana Wing,
Confederate Air Force

Q. *What movie star flew missions with the Eighth Air Force to gather material for an aerial gunnery film, and had a $5,000 bounty placed on his head by Goering to any Luftwaffe pilot who could shoot him down?*

A. Clark Gable, who was given the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal.

Q. *What much critized Naval officer said in a letter to his superiors in February 1941 that a surprise attack by sea or air on Pearl Harbor was a possibility?*

A. Admiral Husband Kimmel, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl in December, 1941.

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Q. *"Horrified," believe it or not, was a secret code name used by the Allies during World War II. What did it refer to?*

A. Sicily, as the Allies prepared to invade in July, 1943.

Q. *The "Hooligan Navy" was a slang expression used during World War II. What did that term refer to?*

A. It was the name the Navy gave to volunteer yachtsmen who searched for German subs off the eastern coast during the early days of World War II.

Q. *What were the only two professional sports prohibited during the war?*

A. Auto racing and horse racing.

Q. *After the atom bomb drop on Nagasaki August 9, 1945, what third city was considered as a prime target?*

A. Several cities were considered but Tokyo seemed to be the primary one. This was not necessary as the Japanese did the smart thing by surrendering.

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Q. *Many people thought President Roosevelt flew to the conferences in Cairo and Teheran. Actually FDR traveled by ship. What great Navy ship did he use?*

A. The superbattleship USS Iowa.

Q. *A tasty treat we all enjoyed tried to help the war effort by placing only military-oriented prizes in each box. What do we call it?*

A. "Cracker Jacks," created by F.W. Rueckheim in 1873.

Q. *What man, who later became one of the NFL's greatest coaches, was a co-pilot on B-17's in the Eighth AAF?*

A. Tom Landry, he survived a crash landing in France that tore off both of the aircraft's wings.

Q. *What was considered even more important to the Allies than food and water in the heroic Battle of the Bulge?*

A. Gasoline — an armored division needed up to eight times more gasoline than food, to win. Our supply convoys did a superb job in transporting the fuel.

HAVE A QUESTION? The Colonel will answer reader's questions. Send yours to "Colonel Jim," 1010 East 86th Street, Suite 61-J, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Please be concise.

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Everything about the Alaska Highway was big. It began as a big dream and a big topic of conversation in mining camps, around pot-bellied stoves, and in the statehouse at Juneau. Fifty years before Pearl Harbor, people talked about their big dream of building a road across Alaska.

An influential, though controversial, voice participated in the discussion. General William "Billy" Mitchell testified before Congress on February 13, 1935, prediciting Japanese encroachments in the Pacific.

He warned: "They will come right here to Alaska...(which) is the most central place in the world for aircraft, and that is true either of Europe, Asia or North America. I believe in the future he who holds Alaska will hold the world and I think it is the most important strategic place in the world."

Mitchell argued that a road to Alaska was absolutely necessary to protect America's Pacific Coast, stressing it should be built for military rather than economic reasons. Unfortunately, Congress did not heed his plea.

Finally, in 1938, Canada and the United States agreed to investigate potential routes for a highway. An international commission came up with the measuring sticks of cost, engineering feasibility, tourist potential, and agricultural and mineral possibilities.

The commission recommended a route through Canada's Rocky Mountain Trench to meet the requirements for a highway, but nothing materialized beyond the talking stage.

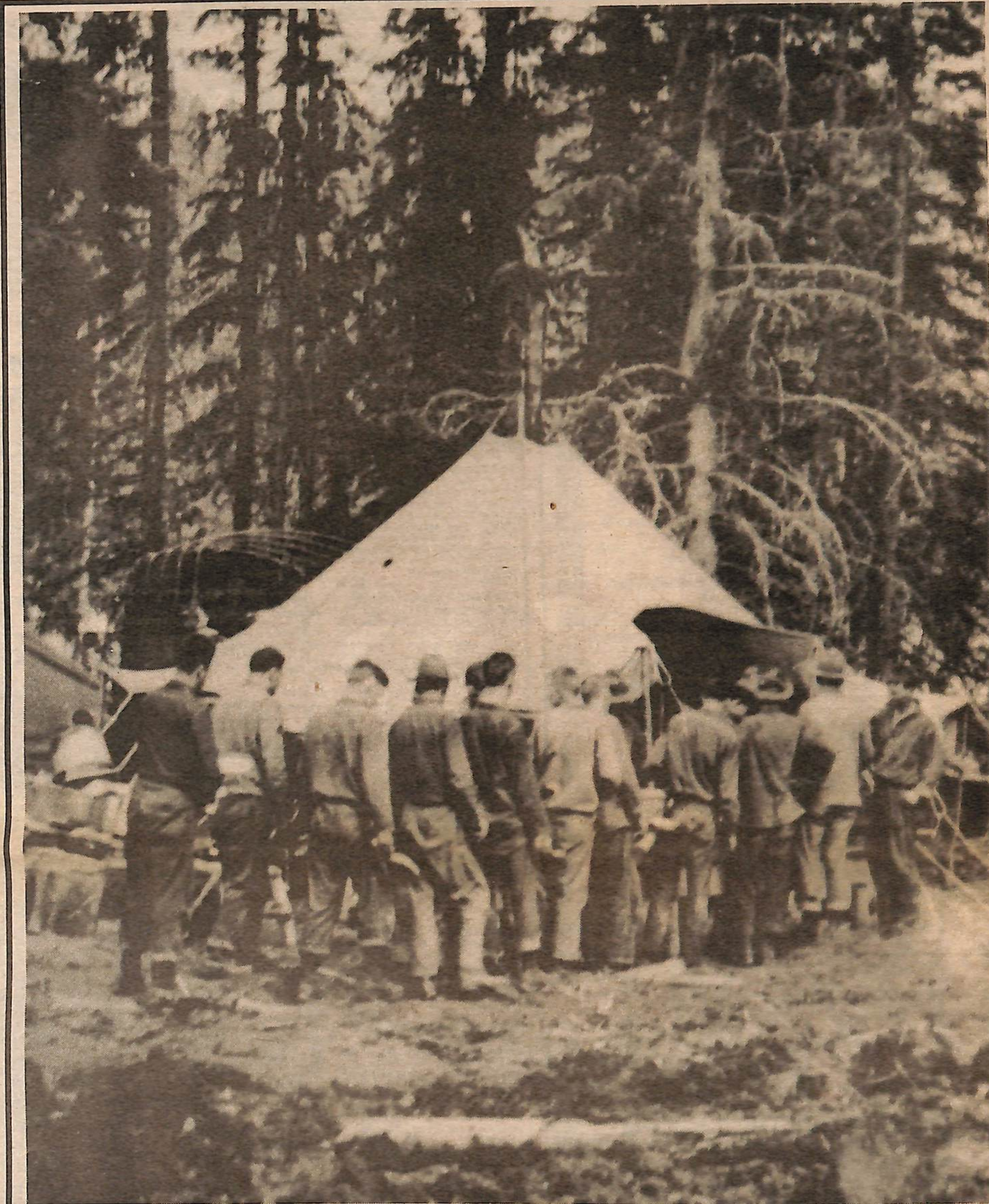
Pearl Harbor finally set the wheels in motion for the Alaska-Canada military highway. On December 8, 1941, General Simon Bolivar Buckner of the Alaskan Defense Command wrote: "At dawn this morning I watched our entire Alaska Air Force take to the air so as not to be caught on the field. This force consisted of six obsolescent medium bombers and twelve obsolete pursuit planes."

The only ground protection from Vancouver to the Bering Strait was a cannon that stood on the lawn of the capitol building in Juneau. It faced the sea and was used as a flower pot.

By February, 1942, the concept of the Alaska-Canada Military Highway (Alcan) was approved by the United States and Canada. The route selected, however, would link a series of airfields between Edmonton and Whitehorse, thus protecting the highway from attack and serve as supply depots.

The U.S. War Department took the lead in constructing the highway and developed a two-phase road plan. Phase one called for the Army Corps of Engineers to build a pioneer road. In phase two, civilian firms under contract to the Public Roads Administration would build a gravel road 20 feet wide.

Construction began in March 1942. Eleven thousand men were divided into seven regiments, including three



Alaska highway construction crew lines up for chow.

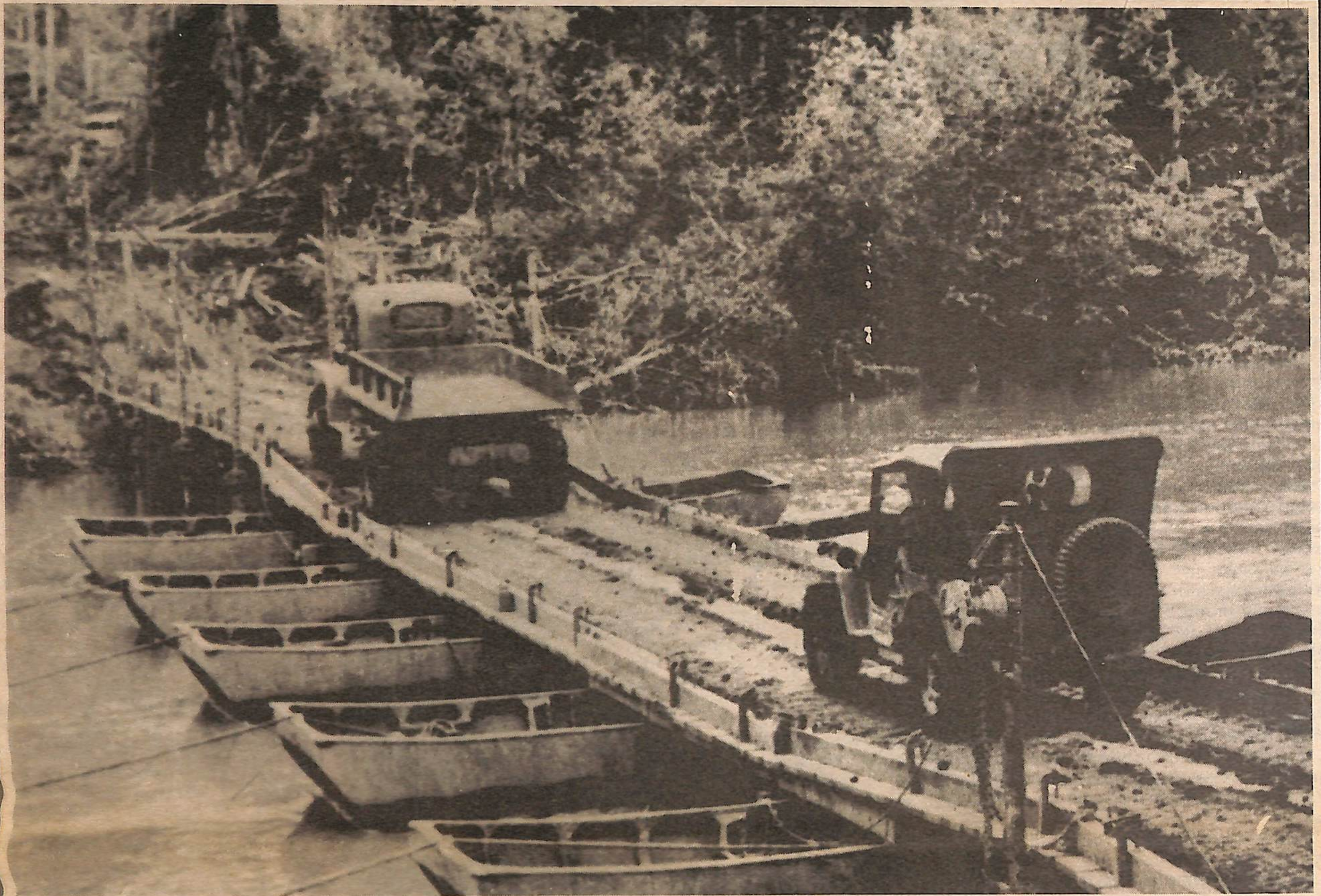
Oh, it was BIG

Kathy Warnes
Times feature writer

black regiments assigned to six different areas. Within each area, six construction crews worked quickly to get the road underway.

Locating parties marked the right of way, then advance tractors cut 50-100 foot swathes through the dense forest. Bulldozers rumbled and lurched along the paths, leveling and grading the right of way. Ditching and culvert crews provided essential drainage and grading teams finished off grades. Then came bridge-building crews.

A contractor's sign in his hiring hall warned: "This is no picnic. Working and living conditions on this job are as difficult as those encountered on any construction job ever done in the United States or foreign territory. Men hired for this job will be required to work and live under the most extreme conditions imaginable. Temperatures will range from ninety



Improvised bridges helped Alaska Highway workers overcome tough obstacles.

above zero to seventy below zero. Men will have to fight swamps, rivers, ice and cold. Mosquitoes, flies and gnats will not only be annoying, but will cause bodily harm. If you are not prepared to work under these and similar conditions, do not apply."

In spite of the warning, men applied. They trekked north to British Columbia to join one of the U.S. Army Engineers regiments. They began to smash their way through the thick woods. Behind them, ready to smooth up their work, came 30,000 civilian laborers brigaded under 54 different contractors.

The workers had to solve some tough problems. How do you fix a carburetor at 40 below zero? How do you raise a two-ton earth mover out of the mud? How do you build a bridge across an 1,800 feet wide river when you can't sink pilings because the steel shatters on the river bed of ice. How do you get equipment into inaccessible places?

Construction of the road became more urgent when the Japanese launched a carrier-based attack on June 3, 1942, against the U.S. Naval Base at Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians. Though aircraft at Illiamna and Cold Bay repulsed the attack, the Japanese captured the outer islands of Attu, Agattu, and Kiska.

Troop trains rolling into Dawson Creek transformed it into a boom town, placing U.S. troops on active duty in Canada for the first time since 1812. At night men and women jitterbugged in quonset huts on the edge of town, causing war time romances to flourish.

Even though they didn't have to battle the Japanese, the soldiers and civilians waged a losing battle against Mother Nature. Tractors, cats, and earthmovers got stuck in the mud, causing the two-phase building program to disintegrate as quickly as solid ground did in the spring.

Through trial and error, the engineers had to learn about permafrost and muskeg. They discovered that muskeg had to be removed prior to constructing a stable roadbed, but if the insulating blanket of muck was removed from permafrost, the surface became soupy when the sun thawed the frozen ground.

Some men lived in camps made from insulated plywood, others in tents or shacks mounted on skids. Eleven hour days were the rule rather than the exception. Mail delivery was infrequent and no entertainment troups came to the soldier-engineer, as was provided the men at the war fronts.

The biggest problem was supply. Main suppliers were the White Pass and Yukon Railway. Whitehouse became the operational headquarters for the road. When the small railroad could not meet the army's demand because of lack of manpower, the army leased the railroad and pushed its equipment to handle more than 2,000 tons a day. It also built a new railroad outside Whitehorse.

The Pioneer Alcan Military Highway was completed on November 20, 1942, eight months after the first tree was chopped down. More than 1,500 miles were opened to military traffic.

The War Department removed all but two regiments as the Public Roads Administration pushed to finish the road. Eighty-one contractors employing more than 14,000 civilians struggled with a task nearly as big as the pioneer road.

Sadly, the Army's road proved substandard and inconsistent in quality. Drainage was poor. The road was not well located and bridges washed out with the spring breakup. The natural insulation of permafrost had been disturbed in places and all corduroy had to be replaced.

The Public Roads Administration eventually relocated and reconstructed much of the pioneer road, and built and additional 1,000 miles of road to connect the highway to the all-weather port at Haines.

The Alcan formally became the Alaskan Highway in July 1943, and was maintained by the U.S. until six months after the war ended.

The highway proved to be less usefuly militarily than anticipated. It provided an alternative to ocean transport in case of Japanese attack, but never seriously competed with the White Pass and Yukon Route or the Alaska Railroad.

Aircraft and communication technology advanced so quickly that airports along the route grew obsolete before the war ended.

The highway bypassed the producing areas of Dawson and Mayo, so after the war it failed to attract local traffic. It did live up to expectations in the movement of high revenue commodities like meat, produce, petroleum products, and tourism.

(Despite these shortcomings, the Alaska Highway today still is regarded as a big adventure and a tremendous accomplishment 46 years after its birth.

Testing of a Marine

C.W. Davis memoirs
Part 3

Recapturing Guam

In May 1944, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade boarded ship for the invasion of the Marianas Islands. I was aboard the assault transport APA 34, **U.S.S. Simon Bolivar.** We learned we were to recapture Guam.

The Marine divisions invading Saipan to the north of Guam went in first. They ran into unexpectedly difficult fighting. I recall hearing of wicked resistance around the town of Garapan and around a sugar factory. There were strong rumors that our division might be diverted to reinforce Saipan.

Our landing on Guam was delayed. For a month or more our convoy circled and cruised the open Pacific at reduced speeds to conserve fuel.

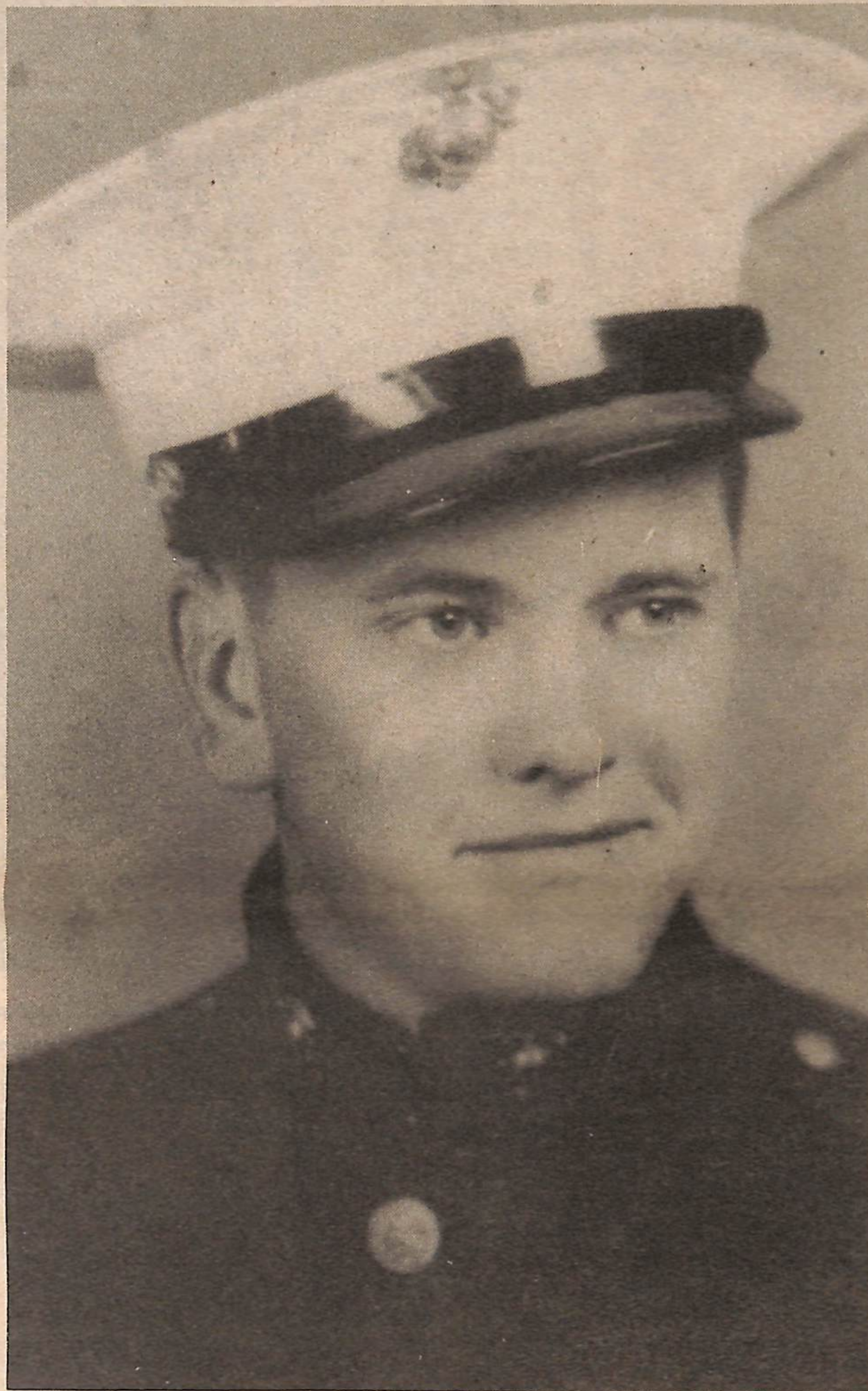
Once we sat dead in the ocean while our landing craft ferried provisions from a big supply ship a mile or two away. Only a few craft could be loaded at a time so after awhile, some of our work parties were invited aboard the supply ship to be fed while we waited.

Because of the lack of any duties except roll call, calisthenics and boat drills, our officers went over with us again and again our landing assignments, the day-by-day objectives, maps, intelligence reports and estimates of enemy strengths and dispositions.

It was during this period that Lieutenant Vaughn brought to me the Red Cross telegram telling me of the death of my brother and step-brother. There were no details. For the first and only time, I talked with a chaplain but the meaningful consolation came from Jack Vaughn and my fellows. They said very little but their caring attitudes said it all.

All but the most experienced dressed, checked their packs and weapons hours ahead of time as if expecting to be called on deck immediately. The old salts waited more casually. Many men wrote letters but felt selfconscious about it.

Before dawn, the calls began from a distance then were repeated closer and closer, echoing through the passageways, ordering group after group to their debarkation stations. All the groups in the compartments began to stir and mill around.



Writing this I'm still surprised at how vivid these memories are! It could have been a month ago instead of the 41 years that have gone by!

Finally, we were called. We hurried through the passageways dimly lit with red and went topside to form up at our station. The flash of the naval gun fire flared in doughnut rings from a long line of invisible ships. Explosions along the shore line were continuous.

With daylight we could see the smoking beach erupting with shells and bombs from diving aircraft. I sketched a view on the back of an envelope as we waited. It was July 21, 1944.

At last the first wave of troops scrambled down the cargo nets into the LCVP's (Landing craft, vehicle and personnel) and the LVT's (landing vehicle, tracked).

We watched for what seemed hours while the landing craft circled in small precise groups like so many pin wheels, just out of range of Japanese shore batteries. At last, at some signal from a control craft they formed into a line and began their slow furious beating toward the beach.

The naval gunfire stopped as the first wave neared the beach. The precise line began to curve and undulate but moved inexorably toward the shore. Patrol craft and small command boats raced back and forth behind them, parallel to the line.

Geysers of water and exploding shells from shore batteries began to spout around the approaching craft. The Japanese gunfire was not yet heavy but here and there we could see boats damaged.

Suddenly an LVT near our line took a direct hit. Debris and bodies and water flew back into the ruptured surface of the sea. A groan arose from all of us at once! We had seen our first deaths in battle. Then someone said, "It wasn't one of ours!" Somehow we felt relieved because it was some other men, not our friends who had died.

As the first of the assault craft reached shore we began to clamber down the heavy cargo nets. Holding grimly onto the vertical ropes to prevent the men above from stepping on our hands we struggled down, overloaded with heavy packs, helmets, ammunition belts, hand grenades and rifles.

The first men down grabbed the nets to keep them taut as the boat heaved up and down in the waves and a screaming coxwain tried to hold it against the side of the ship.

Once loaded, our boats went into their rendezvous circles in groups of 6 to 10. Time dragged on as the remaining assault boats were loaded and took their positions. At first all of us stood, looking over the sides at the beach then at the transports and warships as we made the circle.

Suddenly the powerful engines roared to full throttle. We were heading for the beach! All of us stood again.

The circles of LVT's settled into lines, their rotating tracks throwing a curtain of water into the air on each side. They seemed to set dangerously low in the water and their forward progress appeared to be agonizingly slow. I was glad to be in an LCVP.

As we came closer to the beach we were ordered to stay down. Now only the exposed Navy coxwain and Platoon Sergeant Kimlin could watch our progress and look for the beach markers that were to guide us to the correct landing. (I never did know what brave guys in the earlier wave had set up the 6 to 10 foot square markers mounted between two poles. I can only imagine how vulnerable they were as they worked in a wide open field of fire).

The sound of machine guns and small arms fire came nearer and nearer while the plunging bow ramp threw cascades of sea water into the

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boat.

A small artillery round or a mortar shell exploded midway along the side and shrapnel tore away a chunk of the gunwale on the left side but no one was hurt.

Then suddenly the boat lurched, the sound of the engine subsided then instantaneously roared again, straining to push forward. In a split second the loading ramp crashed down, the engines scream softened and we were rushing into the water.

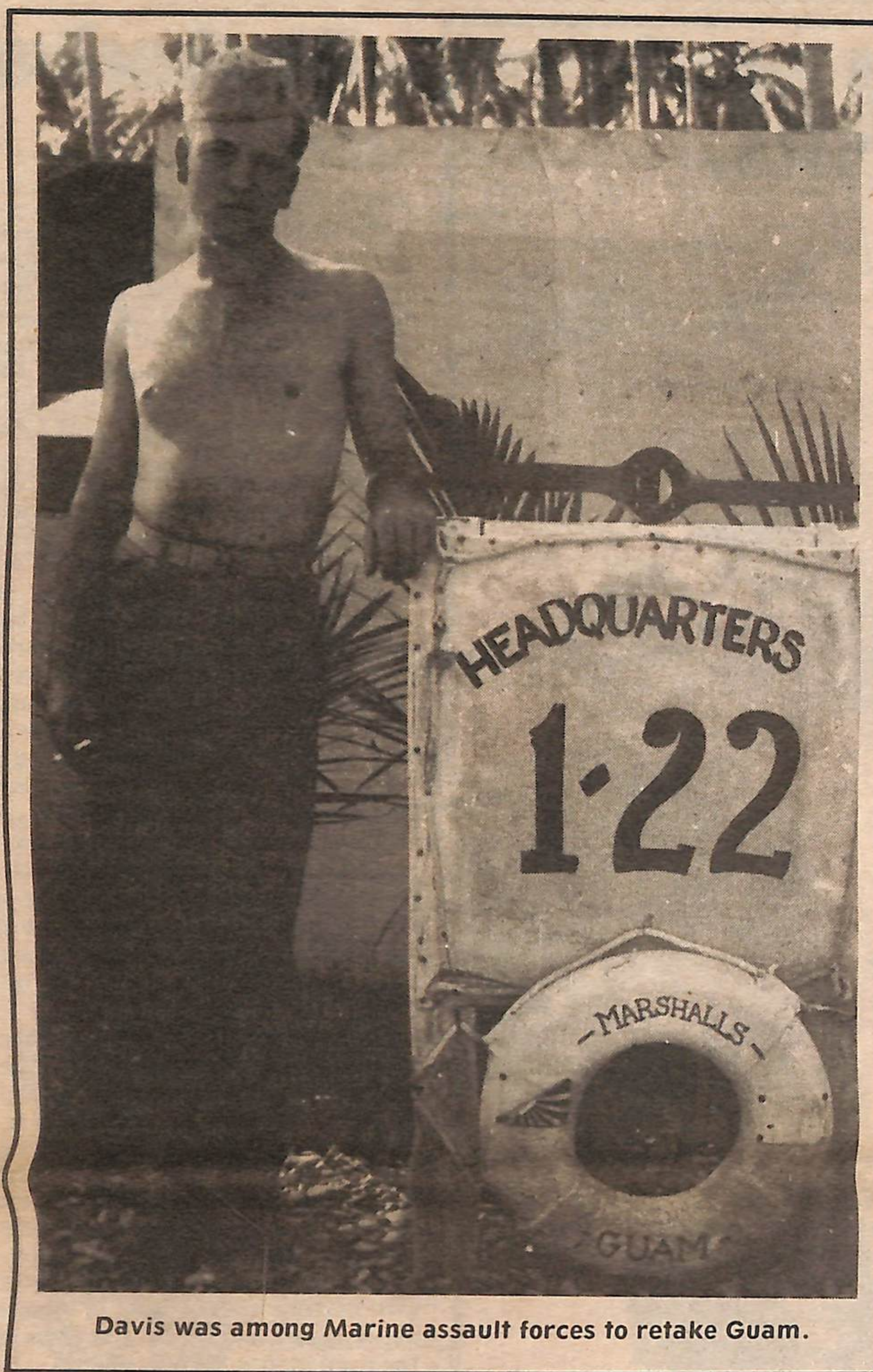
The water was about 2 or 3 feet deep and we were about 75 to 100 feet from the beach. We thrashed madly ashore. The sandy beach was 30 to 50 yards wide and then the typical hummock of palm trees and vegetation rose. All of the trees and plants had been blasted into a tangle, providing a barricade line of protection. We threw ourselves into this narrow haven.

Looking back to sea, we saw some of the boats had grounded much further out than ours and men were struggling ashore in chest-deep water.

Along the beach and in the water, shattered landing craft lay abandoned. The beach and the water's edge were strewn with crates of supplies. Bodies of dead Marines lay in the sand and floated in the water in curiously relaxed form.

The noise was chaotic. Over the sporadic staccato of small arms fire, occasional mortar rounds and the explosions of friendly fire, a few dozen yards inland, N.C.O.s and officers were yelling out "3rd platoon Able company over here!", "Where is George company?" "Is there any 81mm mortar ammo down that way?" and on and on.

Amid all the fire, many of these men stepped back onto the open beach and stood waving or gesturing for their men.



Davis was among Marine assault forces to retake Guam.

We had been put ashore some distance from the rest of our company but we didn't know in which direction.

Kimlin sent me crawling down the beach to our left and Sgt. Harold Ludke went to the right.

I had crawled only a short distance when I found a major who told me we were too far to the left. I returned to our group.

Kimlin then took off after Ludke. He soon found Lt. Vaughn and returned to lead our little group back along a long interval.

Reunited, we were ordered further down the beach. Eventually we were settled into a position just after darkness. Unbelievably, the day had passed! None of our platoon had been hit but Sgt. Ludke was still missing.

In front of our position we could make out the outline of a mound about 25 yards across and maybe 12-15 feet high. Three or four hours into the night a Nambu machine gun and several rifles opened up on us from the tangle of logs and rocks on the mound. The Marines in the front line between us and the mound returned the fire with a vengeance. All would be quiet for a while, then the Japs would fire again.

Ben Wiseman and I lay on our backs in our all-too-shallow foxhole with our rifles held along the length of our bodies while tracers zipped a foot or two above our faces time after time.

Each time the firing stopped, we expected a charge but none came.

Late in the night, Sgt. Ludke came staggering down the beach drunk, alternately singing and calling out for our company. He finally got near enough for someone to drag him to safety.

Ludke was a career Marine about 30-35 years old. He had been stationed on Guam before the war and had ridden horse patrol all around the island. He had many acquaintenances among the natives around Agat. Some of these Chamorro men had come down to the beach south of us to greet the invaders. They had brought some booze with them. Harold held a homecoming with them!

His unscathed survival that night is an affirmation that God protects little children and drunks.

Over the next four or five days our units fought east into the hills then north to meet Marines from the landings near Agana. Our combined lines then pushed northwest onto Orote Peninsula where the old Pan American airfield and hotel were located.

Reggie Bryant was wounded in an unlikely way in this area. As his squad was attacking across a clearing toward the Jap-held jungle edge, Reggie rushed forward to take cover behind a large palm tree. As he fell to one knee behind the tree, the jagged bottom of a Coke bottle tore open his entire knee cap. Reggie was a nice big kid from LaFayette, Louisiana, and he always called his medal his Coca-Cola Purple Heart.

In this same area Ben Wiseman and I, along with a number of others, were pressed into duty to take ammunition to the front lines, possibly 300 or 400 yards to our front.

As we hurried along the narrow trail we came upon the fork of a broken limb across the trail. Ben was much taller than I and he stepped across the entire limb. As I came to it I started to place one boot inside the fork when I saw a glint of glass where my foot would land. I threw my body forward and fell to the ground on the opposite side of the fork.

The Japs had placed a mine between the forks where a shorter person such as one of their soldiers (or me!) would naturally step!

Another man and I dragged the heavy limb forward very gingerly until the fork was nearly over the mine where the crotch was too narrow to step into. We shoved a dead stick into the ground a foot or so away from the mine and I hung a piece of a map on the stick as a warning before we went on.

About this period it began to rain almost every day. I remember because the Army's 77th Infantry Division moved through us to take over the lines. They were fresh troops, I think, but they were wet and miserable as they slogged past us, heavily laden and poncho-covered. We sat alongside the muddy trail as they passed, grumbling and cussing. We were tired and wet too, but we were hooting at them and laughing because we were coming off the line.

Our regiment now turned east into the hills in the center of the island. There was no organized Japanese line of resistance. We were dispersed in platoon, or even squad size patrols to clear the hills of small units and stragglers.

Some days there were three or four short sharp fire fights. Other days there might be no contact at all.

In a widened spot in the trail near the top of a mass of hills, we came upon a group of five or six Japanese bodies on stretchers. Our lead man prodded a couple of bodies with his rifle muzzle as the rest of us more or less sauntered up. As the eight or 10 of us milled around the bodies, one of them rolled to his side and fired directly into the face of the Marine standing over him, killing him instantly. In wide-eyed frenzy, the men began firing into the wounded Jap and all the other bodies.

I was probably 10 feet away with a holstered .45 so it was over by the time I got my pistol out. I'll always remember the stiff jerky movements of the Marines as they jumped around firing into the bodies on the ground.

The entire act must have taken only a few seconds but the abrupt rat-tat-tat of rifle and carbine fire, the metallic clang of empty slips being ejected from M-1's and the shouting seemed to last much longer.

Some 20-25 days after the landing we rendezvoused with some trucks in a large meadow in the hills. The trucks brought to us the first hot meal we had since landing.

After 30 days, the island was secured and I was transferred temporarily to the Civilian Affairs operation, caring for civilians displaced from their homes and interrogating them about Japanese military units, occupation acts and other things they might know about.

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Tanked up in Europe

FROM PAGE 9

ploit it. And we sure did.

The 92nd Recon led as the division poured through the hole and drove toward the Rhine River, behind German lines. My platoon, and a platoon of "E" Troops assault guns, supported troop "D" of the 92nd in the three day drive to the river, and were awarded the "Presidential Unit Citation" for this action.

This unit spearheaded the 12th Armored Division's drive from Trier, Germany to Worms, on the Rhine River, a distance of 72 miles. They overran three large columns of retreating enemy, broke through two well defensed positions, and captured over 1,000 prisoners. They captured or destroyed 18 75mm and 88mm guns, sixty motor vehicles, seven ammo trucks, and 300 horse drawn vehicles.

That was a real rat race, very dangerous, as we were greatly outnumbered by the enemy, but overpowered them by sheer speed and surprise. More than you can believe of the German tank crews were out of their tanks making coffee and eating when we came tearing around corners and over hilltops.

After crossing the Rhine River, the 12th Armored still spearheaded the drive deeper into Germany toward the Alps Mountains. This was rolling farmland with patches of woods, good tank country. On the 22nd of March two or three Troops of the 92nd and my third platoon of Company F were on outpost duty in the village of Mutterstat, Germany, a farmers town with manure piles in front of almost every house, and horses and cows in the combination barn and house.

The civilians in this area looked and lived like peasants. Our tank was parked at the last house in town with the cannon pointing down the road toward the next village about three miles away.

Through our binoculars we could see a German trank and soldiers walking around over there. I was in my gun turret, talking to Pat Mozetti, my driver. My bow gunner, Jim Hanks, (a Crow Indian), was behind the house making coffee on our single burner Coleman stove. I could see some activity in the next village, and climbed down to hand the binoculars to Pat to look through.

We could see puffs of smoke and suddenly high explosive shells began landing nearby, and shrapnel flying every which way. It made a buzzing sound as the fragments flew by, and one hit Pat in the chest, making a hole you could put your fist in. Blood gushed out, and Pat dropped, gasping to the ground. He wasn't three feet from me, and I dropped to my knees beside him, and tried to pick him up.

More shells came in and the shrapnel was richocetting off the tank and breaking windows in the house. I kept yelling at Pat and trying to get him straightened out on the ground. He was a big boy, about 185 pounds, but I couldn't leave him there, so tried to drag him behind the tank. I yelled for Medics who were half a block away, and stayed with Pat until they came.

All the while artillery shells were peppering the whole village. We called for our own artillery to pound the next village, while I stayed with my tank and corrected the shots by radio. My tank commander, George Faletto was back at the Command Post, getting instructions, and Jim Hanks continued to make coffee. This is part of the reason I was awarded the Bronze Star.

On the last day of March the British Broadcasting Company's news report said: The U.S. 7th Army's 12th Armored Division, near Wurzburg, is the farthest Allied unit into Germany, at this time. We were meeting only sporadic resistance but some were fanatical SS troops who would rather die than surrender, and many of them did.

We never knew what was around the corner — one time we looked right down the barrel of an 88mm gun on a King Tiger Tank. The crew was behind the tank, working on the engine, and drinking coffee. They just put up their hands, coffee cups too, and I shot a few holes in the tank tread.

Only in America

"He drove his German car made of Swedish steel and interior of Argentine leather to a gasoline station, where he filled up with Arab oil shipped in a Liberian tanker and bought two French tires, composed of rubber from Sri Lanka."

"At home, he dropped his Moroccan briefcase, hung up his Scottish tweed wool coat, removed his Italian shoes and Egyptian cotton shirt, then donned a Hong Kong robe and matching slippers from Taiwan."

"More comfortable now, he poured a cup of hot Brazilian coffee into an English coffee mug, set a Mexican placemat on an Irish linen tablecloth atop a Danish table varnished with linseed oil from India. Then he filled his Austrian pipe with Turkish tobacco, lit it, and picked up a Japanese ballpoint pen with which he wrote a letter to his congressman demanding to know why the United States has an unfavorable balance of trade."

Planning a Reunion involves questions

Bill Masciangelo
Sheraton Hotels
Part 2

So, you decided to have a reunion. Or, perhaps, you just volunteered to be next year's reunion chairman. Either way, congratulations are in order.

However, before taking another step toward planning your reunion, there are a few very important questions that should be asked and then answered.

OBJECTIVE/GOAL: Why are you having this reunion? What do you want to accomplish? Who will attend?

FORMAT and SCHEDULE: How many days will it last? Will you have meetings? Will there be special meal requirements? How much free time will there be? Will you have a banquet, hold elections, play golf, have a parade, and end the event with a grand banquet for thousands?

After answering the above questions in detail, you are now ready to discuss the following:

ADMINISTRATION and LOGISTICS (The care and feeding of the troops). What are the physical requirements of your reunion? How many sleeping rooms will you need? Do you need meeting rooms, suites, audio-visual support? Are ceiling heights important? What about the number of restaurants, recreational facilities, storage areas and transportation connections? Do you need to have a military base in close proximity?

WHEN and WHERE? These may seem like easy questions, but they are important. You should consider such factors as time of year, weather and holidays. Do you go to the city, the shore, mountains, or stay at an airport location? Are you going to be on the West Coast or in the nation's capital?

Once the area and location have been selected, you can start visiting hotels. Armed with the answers to your key questions, you will be able to focus on the ability of a hotel(s) to meet those requirements.

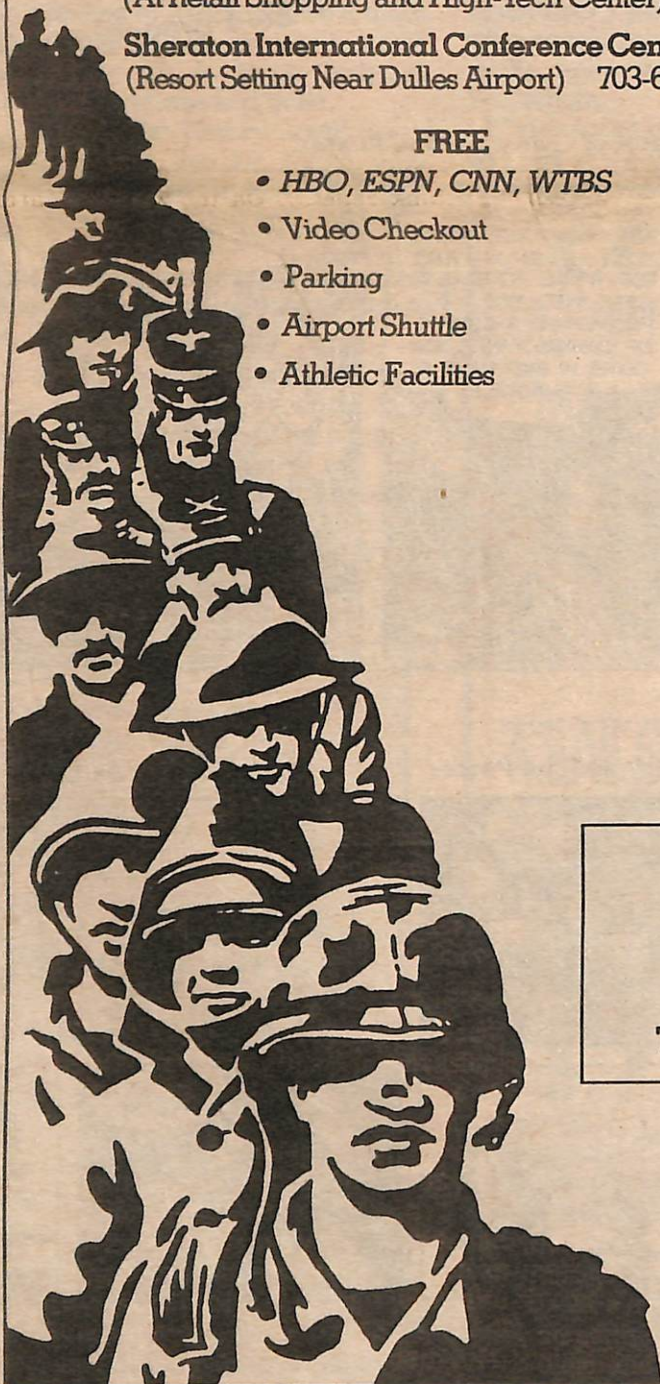
Site inspection is one of the most important parts of the entire planning phase. The check list below is not a complete one, but it will give you a general idea of what to look for and possible questions to ask.

It is a good idea to bring this list with you when visiting a hotel. This way, you can evaluate and compare hotels easier, and it shows the hotel staff that you are organized and know what you are doing. This will help in the negotiation process.

SITE INSPECTION (what to look for):

How are you treated?
Size of registration area.
Is hotel automated (registration and reservations)?
What are the basic amenities?
Overall cleanliness
Security[safety
General maintenance.
Pride and cheerfulness of the employees.
Condition of rooms (sleeping and meeting).
Types of sleeping rooms available (king-size beds, double, or mix of room types).
Fire safety.
Ice machines (Are they conveniently located and do they work properly)?
Special rates for certain periods (ask).
Complimentary room policy (ask).
Available audio-visual support.
Room service 24 hours?
Access to public transportation.
Shuttle Service.
Menu selections for meal functions.
In-house movies, etc.
Can you bring in your own liquor and if so, is there a "corkage" fee?
General decor of the hotel.
Appearance of the outside of the hotel.
Gift Shop.
Bell service.
Will reservation cards be provided for your group?
Safe deposit boxes.
If you want to be thorough, ask to see the work area of the hotel, such as the kitchen, engineering (power plant, heating and air conditioning units).

Next month: How To Negotiate.



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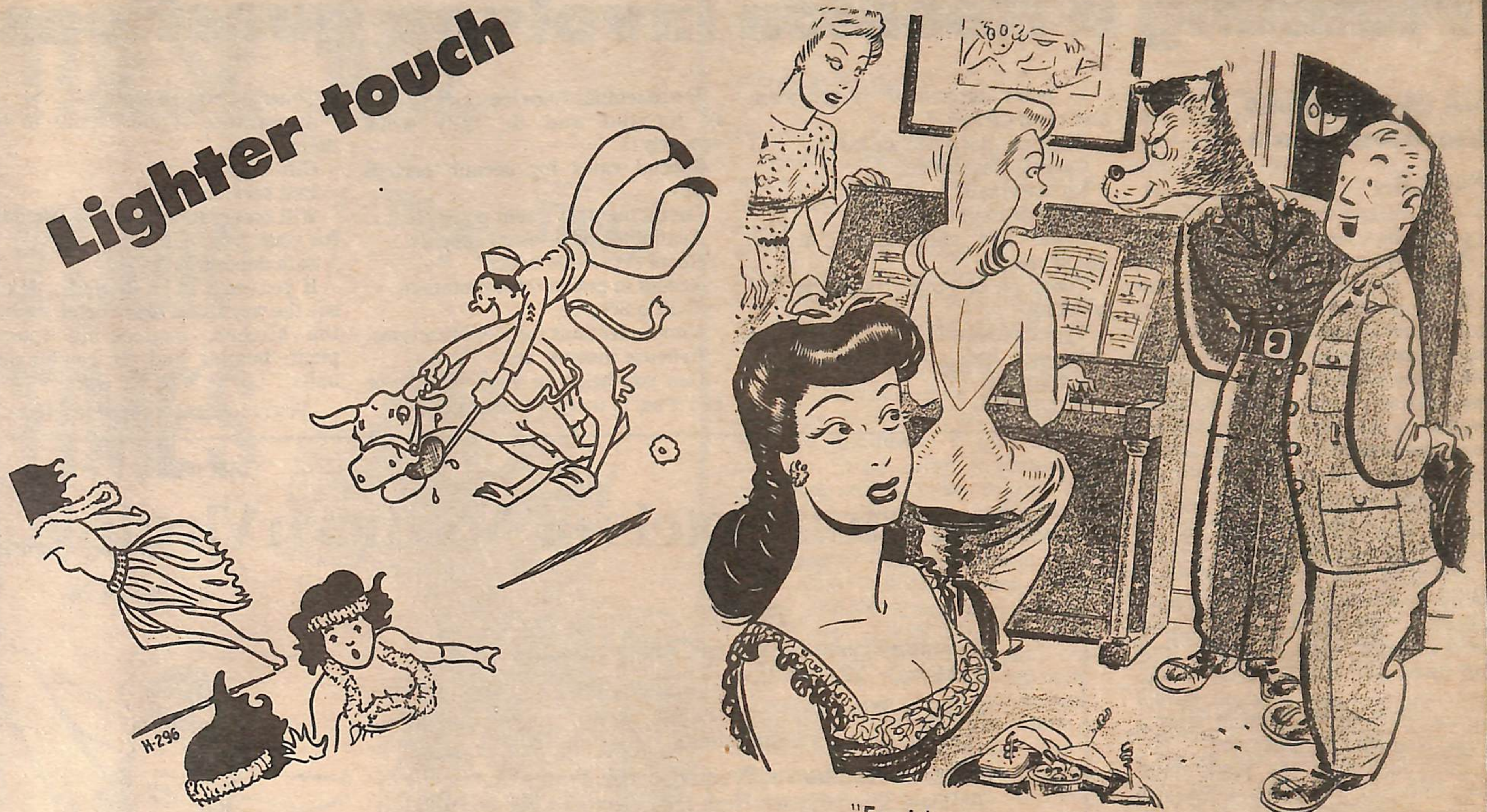


"Er—I brought my friend along!"

Male Call

by Milton Caniff, creator of "Terry and the Pirates"

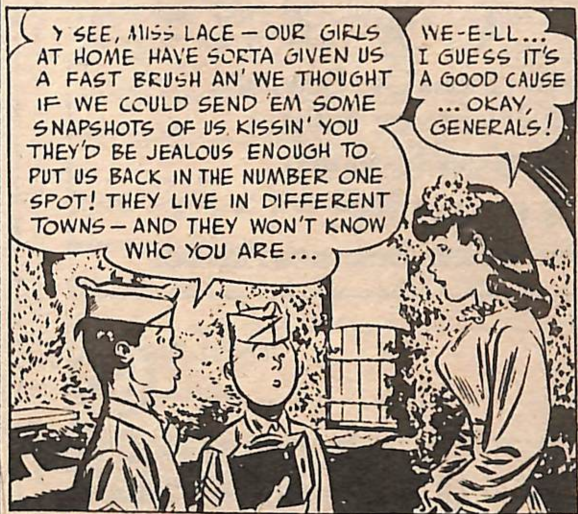
Pets Beget Whet Threat

9/17/44

Male Call

by Milton Caniff, creator of "Terry and the Pirates"

Dry Run—But All Under-water Shots



9/24/44

Yamamoto Mission

FROM PAGE 5

Kenji says he saw a P-38 lock onto the tail of the bomber carrying Yamamoto, and assumes that the pilot must have known which airplane was carrying Yamamoto, because he (pilot) continued firing into it until it crashed into the jungle.

(3) Barber's combat report indicated no fire from the tail gun of the bomber he attacked. Lanphier, on the other hand, reported "...and out of its tail was puffing a steady series of shots from cannons lodged back there."

In a letter dated September 10, 1984, Singo Suzuki, Chairman of the Aerospace Museum Committee of Japan and a diligent investigator of the Yamamoto shootdown, quotes Mr. Hamasuna, the leader of the rescue party that found the Yamamoto Betty.

In answer to Suzuki's question about guns or tail gunners, Hamasuna responded: "When we entered the fuselage we were surprised at its width and emptiness; there were no seats nor guns."

Writes Suzuki: "From the above report, I think (although I can hardly believe it myself) that the leader Betty carried no guns inside the fuselage in which at least three guns at the center part must be carried."

Therefore, it is my conclusion that Rex Barber, alone and unassisted, *shot down Yamamoto.*

The certain proof lies in the wreckage of Yamamoto's bomber, *which is still* in the jungle on Bougainville.

I contend that the U.S. Air Force Historical Research Center at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, has as its primary mission to determine accurately the history of the Air Force.

The downing of Yamamoto is dramatically recreated in this painting "Rendezvous Over Bougainville" by artist Shigeo Koike.

The question of which pilot shot down Yamamoto is of great historic significance to a large body of military historians and buffs.

Currently the Victory Credit Board *of Review* of the Air Force gives *Barber and Lanphier equal credit* for the Yamamoto shootdown.

The VCBR Historical Research Center should send a properly qualified Crash Investigating Team to the Yamamoto wreckage.

If the right wing was still attached, it unquestionably proves that Lanphier did not shoot off the wing of Yamamoto's plane. Thus, the inelectable conclusion must be that Barber solely and unassisted shot down Yamamoto.

The downing of Admiral Yamamoto was one of the great fighter missions of World War II. We owe a salute, even today, to the brave men who volunteered their services to assure that the dangerous mission would be an important factor in turning the tide of the Pacific War.

Back to Bougainville

On April 10 an expedition of 11 people will return to Bougainville to examine the Yamamoto crash site.

The group consists of a qualified crash investigator, two historians, an audio visual crew, a VFW representative, and two mission pilots, Rex Barber and John Mitchell. Also included are George Chandler and Eugene Moyihan, officers of the Second Yamamoto Mission Association.

A highlight of the trip will be the reflying of the route from Fighter Strip 2 on Guadalcanal to Bougainville. The expedition wants to determine if today's aircraft, with sophisticated navigational gear, can accomplish the same results as the 339th Fighter Squadron did in 1943.

Once on Bougainville, the group will trek through the jungle to the crash site, and spend approximately one week conducting an examination of the wreckage. The data will be turned over to the Office of History, USAF.

Later, SYMA plans a series of programs about the mission. Information on availability of speakers can be obtained by contacting Eugene Monihan, 4207 Sudley Road, Haymarket, Virginia, 22069, (800) 446-2206.

The July issue of the Times will carry an extensive account of the expedition and its findings.

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9:45 a.m.	OFFENSIVE ACTION, Elbert Watson "D-DAY Remembered," Battle of Normandy Museum Commission
10:45 a.m.	BREAK
11:15 a.m.	"We Also Served," Women in Military Service
12:15 p.m.	CHOW — on your own
1:30 p.m.	SECOND WAVE, Elbert Watson "The Shootdown of Admiral Yamamoto," *Second Yamamoto Mission Association*
2:30 p.m.	BREAK
3:00 p.m.	"Island Hopping the Pacific," USMC Historical Division
4:00 p.m.	TAPS TO FALLEN COMRADES
4:15 p.m.	OVER NIGHT PASSES FOR A BIG NIGHT ON THE TOWN, Bill Masciangelo
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Cass Daley, USO Star

"Superfortress" offers first rate B-29 history

SUPERFORTRESS, The B-29 and American Air Power. By General Curtis E. LeMay and Bill Yenne. McGraw-Hill Book Company, (173 pp. plus tables).

Book Shelf

William Rooney, Review Editor

Here is a compact history of the B-29. In hardly more than 170 pages, the authors trace the bomber as an instrument of war from the concepts laid down by General Billy Mitchell, through the development of the B-29 to its fulfillment of those concepts in battle.

Yenne has previously written a corporate history of Boeing. This qualifies him to write the detailed history of the development of the B-29 from the airplane manufacturer's side. LeMay's contribution comes when he picks up the story of how the plane was employed as an instrument of warfare.

It seems inevitable that every book written about strategic bombing, in order to get to the work done in World War II, has to trace the concept back to its origins and theory. Sure enough, LeMay/Yenne take the story back to the leadership given to long range flight and heavy bombardment by Mitchell. The authors attention to dates contributes to an appreciation of the narrative of events.

There is a wide divergence of point of view when an event is looked at from the eye of the eagle (LeMay's) looking down and the eye of the worm (a B-29 squadron member) looking up.

Thus there is some difficulty in reconciling such things as LeMay's view of how the B-29 was maintained, as seen from a command position with that of someone who actually stood around the planes in the squadron while maintenance was being performed. This in no way detracts from LeMay's story of how the B-29 was used in combat.

LeMay gives some interesting insights into the business of strategic bombing when he quotes from General Haywood C. Hansel and the Air War Plans Division documents of which Hansel was the author.

To paralyze Germany, 124 individual targets were initially selected plus another 30 needed to cripple the German air force. To accomplish something like 90% probability of destruction, planners had to figure out how many sorties would be needed and how many planes, bases and air groups would be required.

Then, this had to be translated back to facilities, raw materials and manpower to produce the needed number of planes (7,500 strategic bombers).

In contrast, LeMay points out (when turning to Japan) because of the secrecy and isolation of Japan prior to the war, little was known of the whereabouts of their strategic targets. In one of the luckiest happenings of World War II, Captain Ralph Steakley and his B-29 crew, converted to a photo recon plane and designated an F-13, arrived in the Marianas.

Steakley convinced Hansel that his crew was ready to go in spite of the fact that they had just arrived from Kansas. It was one of the rarest events of the war that the sky over much of Japan that day was completely clear.

Steakley spent 35 minutes photographing Tokyo alone, in addition to shooting a great portion of the other Japanese urban areas. That mission provided the basic photo data for a great many of the later combat missions against "The Empire."

Twenty-nine appendix pages contain interesting tables covering B-29 specifications, missions flown, etc. Although the author asterisks them with the information that they are based on official USAAF records, the listing of combat actions is in error.

Specifically, one table shows actions on October 14 and 17, 1944, as being against targets in Japan. Both of those missions were flown against Formosa.

MacArthur's Commanders covers mystery men

WE SHALL RETURN. MacARTHUR'S COMMANDERS and the DEFEAT OF JAPAN by William M. Leary, editor. University of Kentucky Press, 1988.

The American reader is familiar with the names of Generals Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley and others who directed the nation's efforts in World War II in Europe.

But what about Krueger, Eichelberger, Spruance, Kenney, Whitehead and other military leaders famous in their own right? They all served in the Pacific under General Douglas MacArthur, who did not want to share his victory headlines with subordinates.

Now comes an excellent book out of the University Press of Kentucky that tells of the leadership, heroism and brilliant maneuvers of some of MacArthur's helpers. It also reports some of the friction that went on between the two top Army commanders, General Walter Krueger (Eisenhower was once his chief of staff) and General Robert L. Eichelberger.

Once when MacArthur did praise Eichelberger, **Time** magazine put Krueger's picture on its cover and the New York **Times** commended him as a "master of amphibious warfare," Eichelberger then wrote his wife, "If he is a great general or has any of the elements of greatness, then I am no judge of my fellow man."

Eichelberger also attracted the media's attention and when **Life** put him on the cover, MacArthur sent for him and said, "Do you realize I could reduce you to the grade of colonel tomorrow and send you home?...Well, I won't do it."

This book of eight essays by nine writers is not all negative and contains many positive statements that MacArthur said about his generals.

It is all too easy for us to forget the role of the Australians in the Pacific effort. **MacArthur's Commanders** gives a good chapter to General Sir Thomas Albert Blamey. He was responsible for the defense of his homeland that was once seriously threatened by the Japanese.

Under his domain were offensive land operations and the training and development of his army, which grew to 12 divisions. In addition to serving under MacArthur, he was military adviser to his prime minister.

Any study of the Pacific War brings up the two B's — bypass and bases. Post-war critics have long wondered why we attacked so many fortified islands when some nearby ones were unoccupied or lightly held. Why didn't we bypass the heavily held ones more often? We know now of the heavy casualties suffered when we went into Saipan, Tarawa and other heavily fortified islands.

Admiral Chester Nimitz bypassed many islands in his area and the book notes: "He had leaped forward roughly twice as far in eight months as MacArthur had in nearly two years."

The Navy wanted to bypass the Philippines and secure bases nearer Japan, but MacArthur had promised, "I shall return." He did with a high toll of casualties. However the American people, in the main, were in favor of such a maneuver to free the nation we had liberated in 1898.

Other chapters center on General George C. Kenney, premier airman for MacArthur; Lt. General Ennis C. Whitehead, aerial tactician; Vice Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, Amphibious warfare expert; and Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, master of Naval warfare.

The mystery men of the Pacific emerge in this brilliant volume that pays a long overdue tribute to the heroes, dead and alive, of the Pacific War. It also pays homage to the heavy sacrifices of the Asutralian forces, which also have gone largely unrecognized in American and British publications.

Wendell Phillippi
Major General, Ret.

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Reunions

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ALLIED AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION — July 7-9, 1989, Harrisburg, PA. Contact: Mark C. Lenze (814) 834-7469.

U.S.S.L.S.T. 47 REUNION Pittsburgh, PA, Aug. 9-13, 1989. Contact: Gus Sellitto, L.S.T. 47, 510 Bayview Ave. Inwood, L.I.N.Y. 11696.

HQ. BTRY. 31st DIV. ARTY, (formerly 56th F.A. Brig.) WORLD WAR II. Nov. 10-12, 1989, Orlando, FL. Contact: Gerald H. Elliott, 2930 Clarement Rd., Raleigh, NC 27608. (919) 782-2623.

MERRILL'S MARAUDERS ASSOC. 5307th, 475th INF. & SUPPORT GROUPS. Sept. 2-4, 1989, Louisville, KY. Contact: Raymond V. Lyons, 11244 N. 33rd St., Phoenix, AZ 85028.

709th TANK BATTALION WWII, Sept. 21-24, 1989, Louisville, KY. Contact: Paul E. Claster, 19 Towne Terrace Apts. Middletown, NY 10940. (914) 343-4879.

U.S.S. STARR (AKA-67), April 20-22, 1989, Charleston, SC. Contact: A. Burnell Johnson, R.R. 1 Box 17, Gayville, SD 57031.

U.S.S. SIGSBEE DD 502, Oct. 6-8, 1989, *Indianapolis, IN. Contact: Lyle Buss, 4493* Aldrich Rd., Bellingham, WA 98226.

U.S.S. *Enterprise* CV-6, Ship's Company *& Air* Groups, Aug. *15-19, 1989,* Norfolk, VA. Contact: *H.W. Childress,* 4143 Ewell Pt. Rd., *Virginia* Beach, VA 23455. (804) 464-1970.

24th INFANTRY DIV. 5th RCT, 555 FA BN. & 6th TANK BN. WWII & KOREAN WAR, Sept. 13-17, 1989, Hyatt Regency, Ft. Worth, TX. Contact: Kenwood Ross, 120 Maple St., Springfield, MA 01103-2278. (413) 733-3194 or FAX at (413) 733-3195.

DIV. REUNION ANNIVERSARY, AMER. DIV., June 1-4, 1989, Orlando, FL. Contact: David Rossi, 10280 S. Hill Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34608. (904) 686-3651.

P-40 WARHAWK PILOTS ASSOC. REUNION, Oct. 6-8, 1989. Quality Inn — High Q. 5905 International Dr., Florida Center, Orlando, FL 32819. (305) 351-2100. Contact: Bob Williams, 600 Valley Forge Rd., E., Neptune Beach, FL 32233. (904) 246-6093.

148th ORD. M.V.A. of WWII, 7th ANNUAL REUNION, Louisville, KY, Oct. 9-15, 1989. Contact: Jerome K. Paulson, R. R. Wallingford, Iowa, 51365. (712) 867-4432.

27th TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON, WWII, (CBI), Quality Inn, Tucson, AR, Oct. 25-28, 1989. Contact: Lester J. (Rip) Van Winkel, 126 Riojas Dr., Kerrville, TX 78028. (512) 995-2558.

P-47 THUNDERBOLT PILOTS ASSOC. REUNION, May 12-14, 1989, Minneapolis Marriott City Center, 30 S. Seventh St., Minneapolis, MN 55402. (612) 349-4000. Contact: Marvin Rosvold, 600 S. 13, Norfolk, NE 68701. (402) 371-6633 or 379-2825.

An emperor's legacy

A General Look

Wendell Phillippi

How many World War II veterans ever thought the American press would go ape over the death of Emperor Hirohito, who was on the throne when his planes bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941?

Or witness our commander in chief join other world leaders in paying homeage to the individual who played God?

Hirohito was the ruler whose soldiers inflicted torture and starvation on American boys on the Bataan death march?

He was the leader whose soldiers brutally treated citizens of Great Britain — the country which had done so much to develop world markets and safe sea lanes and who, along with America, had given Japan many possessions in the Pacific after World War I?

The list is endless and boggles the mind.

It is hard for many Americans to comprehend a world which is now seeking favors of a former enemy who killed and maimed so many human beings.

American veterans are not alone in showing disgust over the homage paid the emperor. Dr. Moriteru Arasaki, President of Okinawa University, recently wrote of his upbringing in Tokyo when he was taught absolute loyalty to the emperor, although his parents were from Okinawa.

Dr. Arasaki, who was nine years old when Japan surrendered, notes: "In February 1945 with Allied Forces closing in, (on Okinawa), Prince Fumimaro Konoe, former prime minister and imperial confidant, urged Hirohito to end the war quickly.

"The monarch refused, insisting on a last ditch attempt to improve Japan's bargaining position on the battlefield. The fateful decision turned the Ryukyus into a killing ground."

It used to be a joke to say that Germany and Japan won World War II. Now World War II veterans wonder why they served for $21 a month and gave up many years of their life and civilian pursuits to make the world free from dictatorship.

Many of them lived to see one of those dictators go down a hero to the modern world press.

Most Americans have been conned into the idea that Hirohito had nothing to do with the vicious war lords of his country. But one voice in the American communications system—public broadcasting—has come forth with the truth about the emperor.

In a recent program we were reminded of many of these facts in history.

The Japanese made us pay a high price for the conquest of Okinawa in April, 1948 in order for our troops to secure bases for the final drive to the mainland without hint of surrender intentions by Japan.

But it boggles the mind how quickly we can forget and forgive wicked men in a modern civilized world!!!!

Phillippi, a retired Army major general is former managing editor of the Indianapolis News.

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Swing was the thing during the war

FROM PAGE 17

vocalist in the spotlight. It was not long before the vocalist became the focal point and the band a simply musical backup.

Because of the war, large bands were unavailable, so small studio groups were increasingly used to back up such singing stars as Sinatra, Crosby, Dick Haymes and Perry Como. People began to dance less and listen more. Radio and records replaced dance bands as musical entertainment for war time America.

But that was only one of the factors that killed the big bands. There also developed a pivotal power struggle between organized musical artists (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers — ASCAP, formed as far back as 1914) and radio in a battle over royalty rights.

In the late 1930s the music business was a fairly closed organization with a small group of composers supplying much of the popular music. Radio did not want to pay ASCAP royalties, and during the early 1940s began not to play the copyrighted music. Instead, it drew from the common domain of pre-copyrighted music, and in 1940, formed Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), which turned to other outlets.

New performers along with new styles began to flood the airways. Big bands lost their dominance to country, pop, rhythm and blues and old, old standards that came back into vogue.

Many of the Big Bands that had disbanded during the war, tried to regroup afterwards, but times had changed. A new trend had started in their absence. The expense of big bands was prohibitive, the musical atmosphere less formal. The public ear tuned to a more casual style.

Then, by the early 1950s, television had begun to take over the entertainment business; Rock 'n Roll had invaded the airwaves and the Big Bands were largely a thing of the past.

In recent years there has been a rebirth of interest in the era as new young musicians have rediscovered the Big Band sound. Many radio stations around the nation are airing the old favorites to the delight of the seniors; but whether it is a rebirth or simply passing nostalgia, only time will tell.

Chances are it was all a time and a place.

Bob Hope, who carried so much of America's music to servicemen around the world during World War II, probably sums it up best in his theme song from the times:

Thanks for the Memory...

Is this Gran'pa and Gran'ma back in 1941? Surely not!

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