THE WORLD WAR II

TIMES

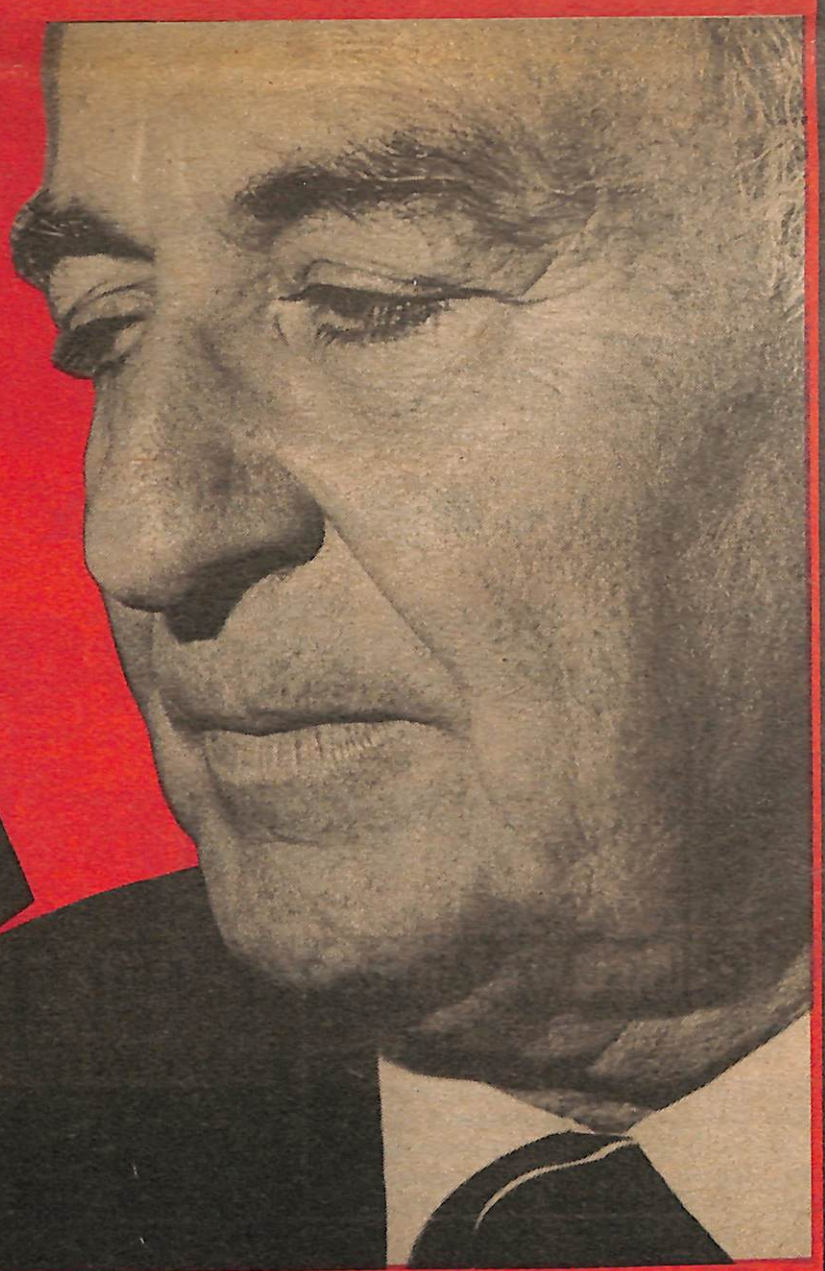
We salute the POWs

Bert and the Bear – winners

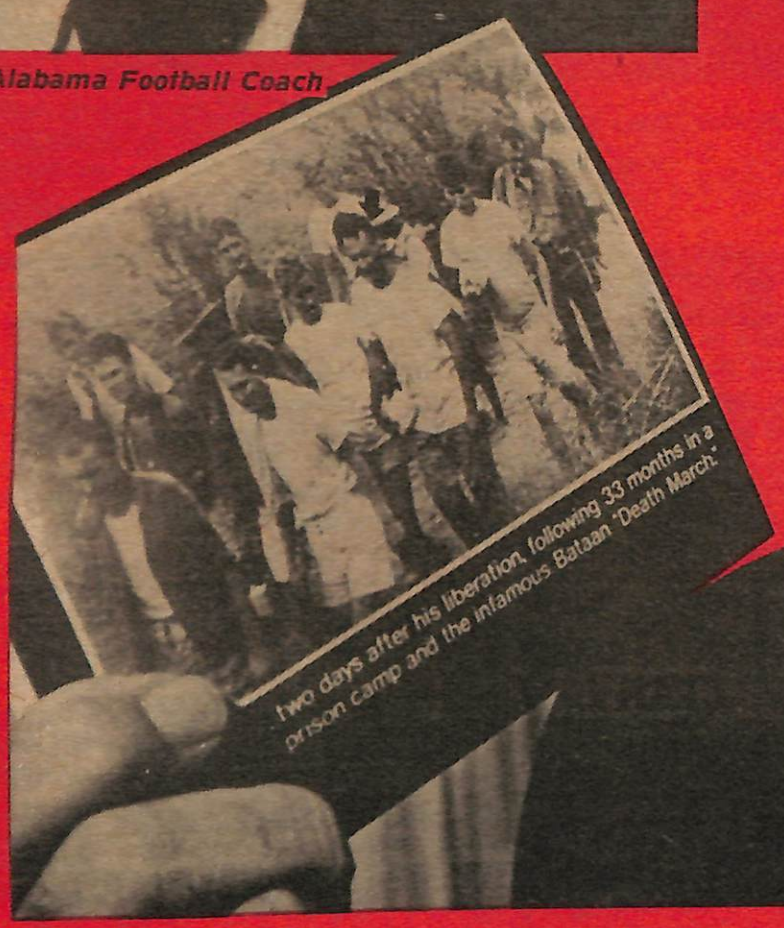
Shofner and Grashio: bold escape

Adams on the River Kwai

Paul "Bear" Bryant, Alabama Football Coach



Bert Bank, Bataan Death March Survivor



Inside

C.B.I. – Forgotten Theatre

Flag Tributes

More

July, 1989

Vol. 4, No. 4

Thoughts from a Royal 440

Elbert Watson

Only a symbol?

Dateline, Iwo Jima, February 26, 1945.

After three days of hard fighting, a patrol of Marines from Co. E, Second Battalion, 28th Marines, struggles up the steep slopes of Mount Surabachi, the primary objective of the fighting.

Laden down with weapons of warfare, the men are bone weary, fatigued in mind and body. They carry a precious burden — the flag of the United States of America.

The apex of the mountain, their destination, offers no protection from random snipers. Death pervades the landscape. But they press on.

Their mission is to raise the flag atop that mountain.

"Only 100 yards to go," the patrol leader calls out.

Looking around, he sees his men pausing 100 yards behind him. What the hell is going on with these guys, he thinks.

"Get off your duff, you guys. We've got work to do."

"Sorry, Sarge," one calls out, "not this time, it's too dangerous up there to raise the flag."

"Are you guys nuts?" Get the hell up here on the double. This flag has got to go up. The Japs need to know we mean business."

"And get shot? Not this time. Maybe on a beachhead. After all, the flag is only a symbol." The Supreme Court just said so."

Only a symbol back in 1945? Hardly. The flag in those days stood for something. It was something. It was America.

America has many symbols, visible things which stand for that which is indivisible.

The National Capitol is visible. Try throwing black paint on its stately walls as a protest and see what happens.

Take your chisel over to the Lincoln Memorial, start chipping away for souvenirs and prepare to pay the price for your indecent act.

The flag is a special symbol of our nation. Websters dictionary defines a symbol as an "authoritative summary of faith and doctrine; something that stands for, or suggests something else by reason by relationship."

Repsect for our national flag has eroded *over the years since World* War II, and so have traditional values which brought the country to its finest hour during that heroic period.

In 1945, the Supreme Court never would have considered handing down a ruling favoring abusing the flag as a proper expression of protest.

But times have changed. Today it is the flag; tomorrow it will be the pledge of allegiance; next week will come the Constitution and Bill of Rights — and where will it all end?

A contrast in symbolism

We're fighting back

Recently a special guest dropped by my office, Mark Voightman of Channel 8 News Indianapolis. Well, he didn't exactly drop by; he called and within 45 minutes he and his cameraman were interviewing me. We talked about the 50th anniversary of World War II and the role the Times plays in focusing attention on that era.

Mark picked up on one of my statements about the diminishing numbers of Americans with no recollection of World War II — approximately 70% at last count. For a war that touched not only great nations but small islands, that's quite a large number and it will increase.

Apparently these figures impressed Mark, for in his background comments over the air he remarked that "Elbert Watson is fighting back."

That "fighting back" statement got my attention. I never had thought of myself that way but maybe that's what it is all about for those of us committed to preserving World War II's great legacy — when speaking primarily of Americans, of course.

G.I.s during those euphoric days never thought we would be in this position. It was assumed that Americans of succeeding generations would memorialize the people and events which marked a nation's finest hour. How could we ever change?

Most of the problem facing us lies in historical revisionism so rampant today, or the wiping out of the historical record. The trumpets of victory have grown strangely silent at times.

So we, like others, are fighting back on beachheads here and there. Like you, we expect to prevail.

Looking up and ahead

It is always gratifying to share positive information with our readers. Those of you who have been with us since December 7, 1985, may know we started in a standard two room office. Now we have six rooms which interconnect with each other. They provide office space, work areas, a library/archives, and a conference room. Most importantly, they are beehives of activity, thanks to support provided by the World War II Round Table and Big 5-0 Team.

The Times spawned the above mentioned groups. The Round Table was organized in 1987. Today, it numbers 125 members. With the Sheraton-Washington program under its belt, it is ready to become a national organization. You'll hear a lot about the Big 5-0 Team as we launch the 50th anniversary years of World War II.

Thanks to Ernie Baker, a former B-24 pilot, we are setting up an in-house computer system to handle the Times, Round Table, and Big 5-0 Team. I don't understand computers, so I am glad someone is on board with that expertise. Within a few months we should be much better organized. In the meantime, I'll continue to punch things out with my fading Royal 440.

Another person whose name you will see more often is Sterling Gossett, an Army veteran of World War II and retired bank executive. Sterling has a solid track record of accomplishments in military and patriotic projects. He'll be in this mode with the Big 5-0 Team.

Also with us is Harry Swanson, a free lance artist of Washington D.C. who will do our editorial cartoons on a regular basis. Harry's first offering appears in this issue. We've seen several flag cartoons recently in response to the Supreme Court decision, and none in our opinion compares with his work.

So things are looking up and we are looking ahead. We thought you would want to know.

Two winners in life — Bear Bryant (left) escaped from the throes of poverty, and Bert Bank escaped from a Japanese prison camp.

Bert and Bear; Two Winners

Elbert L. Watson

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

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

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

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

Paramount among the sports luminaries seen on Bert's wall is Paul "Bear" Bryant, who coached the Tide from 1958 to 1982 and became the country's winningest coach with 323 victories to his credit.

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

"He'll never be forgotten," Bank reflects. "He was such a dominant figure to the university, his players, and the rest of us who had the privilege of knowing and working with him. He's the Knute Rockne of the South."

Bert's and Bear's careers became intertwined when Bryant came to Alabama in 1958 to lead the Crimson Tide back to football greatness. The previous three years, 1955-1957, had seen the Red Elephants mired down with a record of 4 wins, 24 losses, and 2 ties.

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

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

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

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

As the youngest son and only boy left at home, it was Bryant's job to drive the wagon for his mother to peddle vegetables in nearby Fordyce. His father was too ill with high blood pressure to do even menial tasks.

During the winters, Mrs. Bryant would heat bricks to keep them from freezing to death on the wagon.

Though Bryant never heard his mother complain, he hated growing up in a place which offered no hope for the future.

Fortunately, this environment made Bryant a fierce competitor. He got his nickname "Bear" after actually wrestling a bear at a Fordyce movie theater. Eventually the family

→

Coach Bryant gives a touching salute to Pat Trammell — Baye Trammell in quiet reflection.

Pat Trammel

Trammell ideal leader

In 1959, his second year at Alabama, Bryant was looking for winners. If spirit could win games, Alabama had that coming off its 5-4-1 season the previous year.

But the team was still young and light. One player, a speedy half-back named *Marlin Dyess, only weighed 145 pounds.*

Bryant found the ideal leader in his sophomore quarterback, Pat Trammell. Pat and teammates Lee Roy Jordan, Billy Neighbors, Richard Williamson, Jimmy Sharpe, Tommy Brooker, to name a few, as freshman set a goal to win a national championship for Alabama.

In later years Bryant said that bunch was the best group he ever had in terms of character and dedication. And for Trammell he had special praise: "As a quarterback he had no ability. He couldn't do anything but win. He was not a great runner, but he scored touchdowns. He didn't pass with great style, but he completed them."

With Trammell at the helm, Alabama won 26 games, lost 3, and tied 4. The team went to three bowls and won the National Championship in 1961. Pat went onto Med School, married a lovely Alabama coed, and appeared set for life. But it was not to be. He was stricken with cancer and died in 1968.

"Pat Trammell was everything known to man," Bryant later recalled. "Everybody loved him. He was 28 years old when he died. I still miss him."

moved to Fordyce where Bryant became a star football player. He loved the sport. He put cleats on his only pair of shoes and wore them to practice, church, and school.

Football was his key to get away from Moro Bottom. The University of Alabama came calling and gave Bryant a four year scholarship. While at the university he met and wooed a popular, attractive co-ed, Mary Harmon.

After college Bryant began his career as a college football coach. He had a brief stint at tiny Union College in Tennessee, then was offerred an assistant coach's position at Alabama under his former coach, the great Frank Thomas. After four years he

A person's character

"Coach Bryant's belief in me was totally responsible for the belief I have in myself today.

"One of his philosophies that has stuck with me over the years is this: 'You don't measure a person's character by how hard he gets knocked down; but how well he gets up.' I will always remember him, not as the greatest football coach that ever lived, but as my friend and encourager."

Marlin Dyess

joined the staff of Red Sanders at Vanderbilt.

Bert and Bear spent a lot of time together during those idyllic days around Tuscalosa before Pearl Harbor. It was the best of times for two young men on the way up — Bryant on the football turf, Bert a crackerjack advertising solicitor for the Tuscaloosa News.

America's entrance into World War II sent them in opposite directions. The day after Pearl Harbor, Bryant joined the Navy and rose to the rank of lieutenant commander, serving under Commander Tom Hamilton of USS Enterprise fame.

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

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

During the next three years, Bert existed in a virtual hell as he struggled to survive against all odds.

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

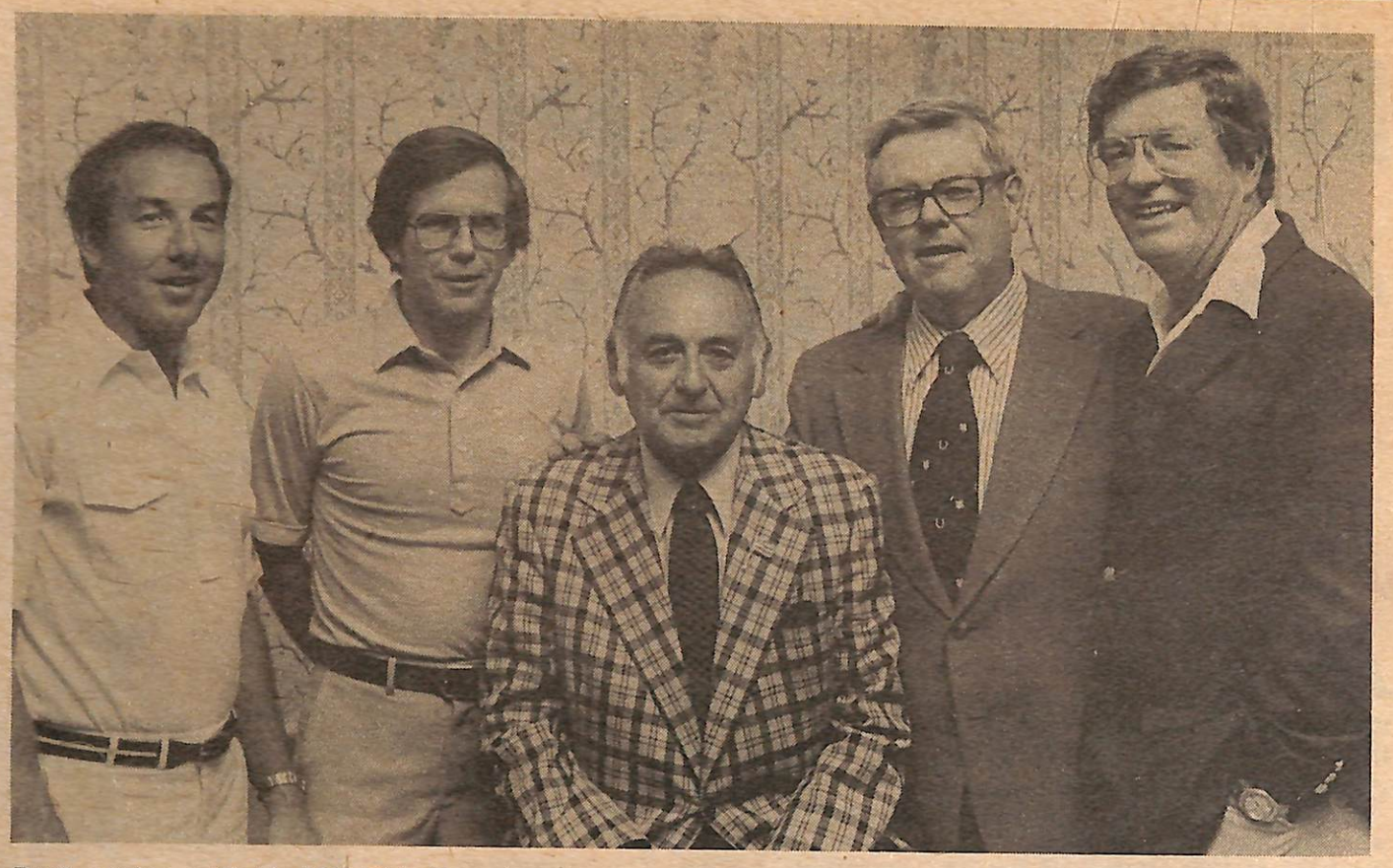
Bert's unit was rounded up and sent off to Japanese prisons on the infamous Bataan Death March. Fortunately, he was a little farther north when captured and only spent five days and nights on the march. Other survivors marched up to 10 days and nights.

"We saw atrocities committed by the Japs that we thought could never happen to Americans. They would not let the strong help the weak. If a strong man attempted to help the weak they would shoot both of them. Anyone who fell out on the march was instantly killed."

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

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

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



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

Bert and his attractive wife Gertrude on the Alabama campus.

On the morning of June 6, 1944, the day American G.I.s were storming ashore in Normandy, Bert was taken blindfolded to Lysand and thrown down into the hold of a ship. Packed like sardines, the prisoners were transported back to Cabanatuan.

TO PAGE 28

Bold escape to freedom

10 brave men lived to tell a gripping story

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

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

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

Finally in 1943, 10 American POWs escaped and told a horrible story of atrocity, starvation, and outright murder of their buddies by Japanese soldiers. Their amazing escape was first recounted by Captain William Dyess. **The Dyess Story: The Eye-Witness Account of the Death March from Bataan,** stunned Americans to find the Japanese capable of carrying out such sadistic torture.

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

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

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

McCoy wrote: "We were not too enthusiastic about our chances for a successful escape. On the other hand, neither were we too enthusiastic about our chances for staing alive if we remained." The decision was made to go forward.

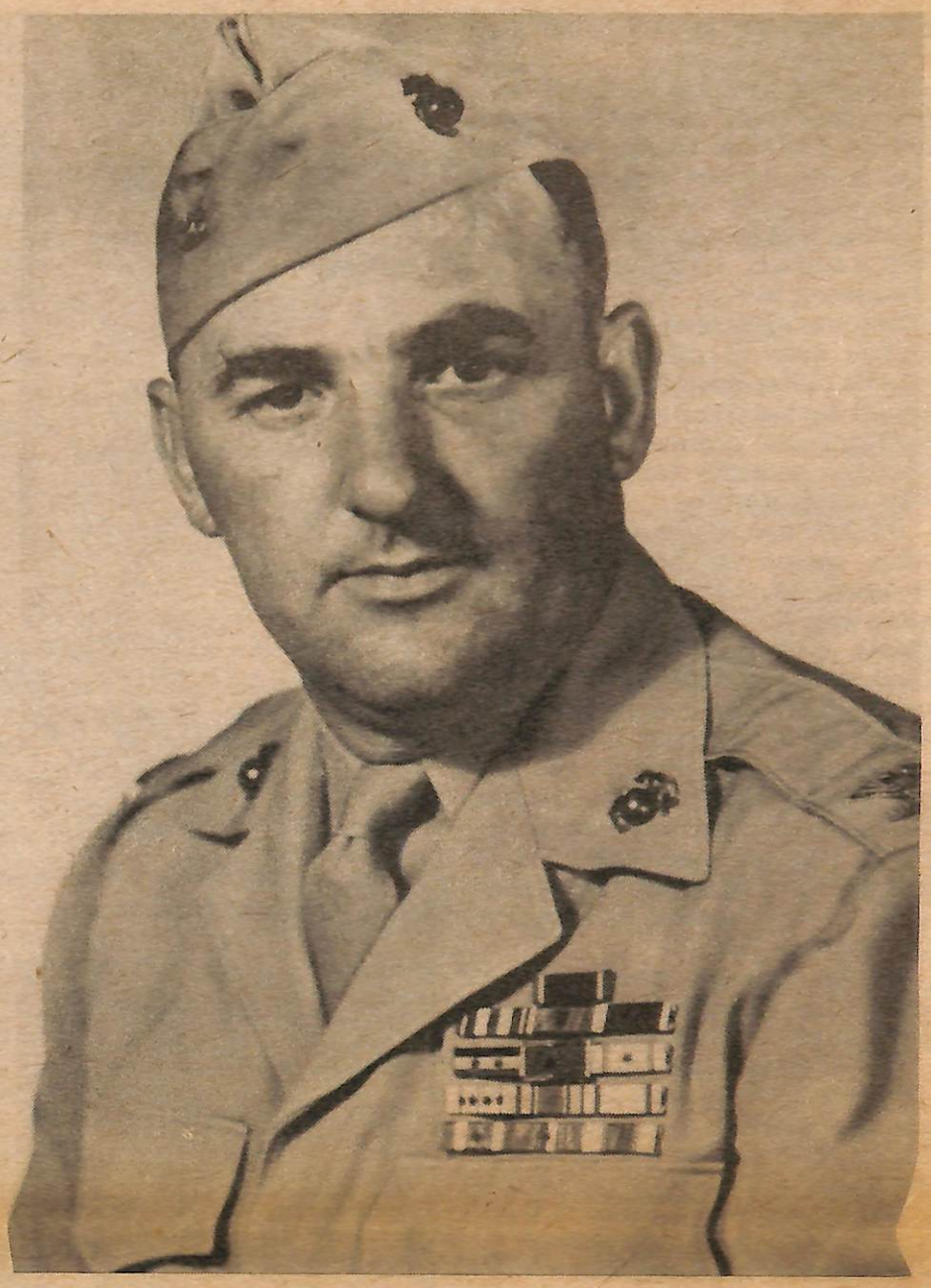
Shofner, a member of the 1936 University of Tennessee football team, recently commented to "The Tennessee Alumnus."

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

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

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

Sunday, April 4, 1943, was the date set for the daring escape. The men went out the main gate which led from



Ever the Marine, Shofner proudly displayed his service ribbons at war's end.

An artist's depiction of the fate which would befall the 10 escapees had they been captured.

the prison confines to the prison farm. Once out of sight they ducked into a coconut grove and began to crawl Indian-fashion toward the place where they had concealed some equipment.

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

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

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

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

On November 15 an American submarine, the USS Narwhal, tied up at a pier on the northern coast of Mindanao in broad daylight and rescued the men.

After a period of recuperation and military schooling, Shofner was back in the Pacific five months later. He was an assault battalion commander on Peleliu in September 1944; was assigned to the U.S. Army for the landing on Luzon in January 1945; and was with the First Marine Division to help lead the assault on Okinawa April 1, 1945.

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

Shofner retired from the Marines in 1959. Today, at 73, he lives in Shelbyville, Tennessee and works 12 hours a day.


LIFE

Vol. II, No. 6 February 7, 1944

PRISONERS OF JAPAN

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

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

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

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

COMMANDER MELVYN H. McCOY

MAJOR AUSTIN C. SHOFNER

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

In war there was LIFE

Once again we are reminded of the outstanding role LIFE magazine played in recording the story of World War II, in picture and word.

War brings destruction and death, and reveals the baser sides of our natures — man's inhumanity to man, we call it.

But through it all, there was LIFE in sad moments and triumphant ones. The record LIFE made for itself makes the magazine an essential part of that era's legacy. It's a record which will never be surpassed.

Mad Americans

Life was flooded with letters from incensed Americans who had learned for the first time the magnitude of Japanese atrocities against helpless P.O.W.s. A sampling follows from the magazine's February 28, 1944 edition:

Congratulations on the story. It is, to my mind, the final clincher in any argument against the "humanitarians" who still persist in claiming that the best way to handle the enemy after the war is with kid gloves. It should be obvious that a nation which can produce such an infinitely brutal man as the Japanese soldier can never comprehend the American way of life.

CPL. R.A. Cavalli
Lincoln, Neb.

I hope that 20 or 30 years after this war we shall remember the Jap atrocities as well as we do now and that you and the rest of the press will not engage in an atrocity debunking campaign such as occurred after the last war.

Jane Mallett
Toronto, Canada

To think the Japanese were once our respected allies! It only dawns on us now how terribly we blundered after the first World War in permitting and actually helping Japan to establish herself in the Pacific. Blunders which will take rivers of precious American blood to wipe out.

H.E. Soltau
Hoboken, N.J.

When the end draws near, I'm afraid all the Nips will hara-kiri themselves into the beyond. I hope our men in the Pacific get their revenge during the war and I think they will.

Josephine C. Lee
Glen Head, N.Y.


A standout player on Tennessee's 1936 football team, Austin Shofner needed all the skill at his command to escape the Japanese prison.

She's in focus

Elizabeth is outflanked by some of her vet "boyfriends." Left to right Col. Thomas P. Garigan, Battle of Normandy Committee; Earl C. Hedland, Lt. Gen., USAF Ret.; and Chuck C. Morelli.

Max Desfor, noted combat photographer during World War II, had nothing on Elizabeth Lawder at the Sheraton Washington's "Stage Door Canteen" bash last June. While Max was working his way through the crowd and cutting a rug now and then on the dance floor, Elizabeth was handling the camera end of the occasion.

Elizabeth watched the festivities while making her way around the room in search of photo opportunities. This gave her the chance to meet briefly with many veterans, who, true to their World War II style, never turned down an opportunity to talk with an attractive young woman.

"I had a great time," Elizabeth recently recalled in her public relations office at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. "Though I was working, I got the chance to whirl around the dance floor a bit between shots. I'm not a bad dancer, but those veterans knew steps that boggled my mind. The Big Band music was terrific. I almost wish I'd been around when that type of music was the rage."

At 23 years of age, Elizabeth is definitely an up and coming young professional. She grew up in Garden City, New York and attended Lafayette College where she majored in English and psychology. Following a summer internship at the Sheraton Washington, she decided to pursue a career in public relations.

"I have a genuine interest in people and am outgoing by nature," she says. "My position with Sheraton gives me a new challenge every day.

Elizabeth works with Brian Howie, sales account manager responsible for World War II reunions.

Hard at work in the public relations office.

Have an idea???

We're looking for stories and photos of people and events connected with World War II. Though our veterans get special attention, there's room in the Times for much more than the military side of the era. Social history is a vital part of the total picture.

Too, we try to focus attention on the contemporary scene to encourage modern Americans to take a serious interest in World War II. Sometimes we meet folks like Pat Trammell, who came under the influence of a veteran when facing a severe test.

So, look around, there may be a story down the street, or a faded photograph in an old trunk.

The Iwo Jima Memorial is one of Elizabeth's preferred subjects.

"I'm exhausted!"

Many different groups use our facilities, ranging from the IMF/World Bank to an annual square dancers convention. This diversity of interests changes the atmosphere of the hotel on a weekly basis. By working with many of these groups, I learn a lot about our country and this world."

Elizabeth gained a sense of World War II history in 1986 when she travelled abroad during her junior college year to study journalism. She spent time in London, Paris, and Rome.

In her spare time, Elizabeth enjoys taking pictures in and around the nation's capital. "Washington has so many monuments, memorials, and attractions, there are always interesting subjects to shoot."

The Iwo Jima Memorial, for example, is just a short jog or bike ride from Elizabeth's northern Virginia home. "Iwo Jima is always crowded with visitors, whether veterans, foreign travelers or local residents. I especially like this memorial at sunset when the lighting casts dramatic shadows."

Elizabeth is looking forward to the 50th anniversary years of World War II. "I've always thought World War II veterans were special people, but now I'm taking them much more seriously. The ones I met are very outgoing, lead interesting lives, and tell fascinating stories.

"I'm beginning to understand why many people call the World War II era a special time in our nation's history."

Geoffrey Adams prior to his capture by the Japanese.

River Kwai's sad memories

Geoffrey Adams

Sitting on the balcony of the restaurant on the bank of the River Kwae-Yai, enjoying an ice-cold beer, anticipating a grilled fish fresh from the river, it is easy to have one's memory recall the past, whilst surveying the present.

The distant Bilak Taung mountains, with their jagged peaks, mark the foothills of the area of the valley of the River Kwae-Noi ("the little Kwai"), the scene of past sufferings and endeavors of a quarter of a million men British, Australian, Dutch and American POWs, Asiatic labourers, and 15,000 Japanese soldiers.

These men, Japanese excepted, slaved unwillingly, to create the infamous Thailand-Burma Railway — The Railway of Death — for Imperial Japan. In sixteen months, 4 million cubic metres of earth were moved, 10 miles of bridges constructed, 30,000 tons of rail track laid — by hand, and 400,000 tons of ballast laid — by hand.

The 415 kilometres (260 miles) railway linking the Gulf of Siam to the Indian Ocean was completed on 17 October 1943, at a cost of over 100,000 lives. It was an engineering triumph, and a monument to man's inhumanity to man.

Before me stood the great steel bridge, on which I had worked in 1943, to forge the vital link over the Kwae-Yai ("the big Kwai") shown on some maps as the River Mae Kheaung. Bombed in 1944-45, it had been repaired, postwar, by Japan, and today it carries its daily trains for commerce and tourists.

It was not destroyed by commandoes as was depicted on that famous film "Bridge on River Kwai" now was it designed by POW!

The wartime sufferings have not been in vain. One hundred twenty-four kms of the railway, from Ban Pong to Nam Tok (Tha Soe to POW). are still in use. The last World War II steam train ran in 1975. Now diesel locos pull the freight trains, with one or two old passenger coaches attached, and, with the nearby postwar roads, they have opened up the once remote interior of the benefit of Thailand.

Gone are the old tracks with their rickety bridges. POWs would marvel at the steel and concrete road bridge near Lat Ya, which they called Rajah, where they walked on a wooden bridge in 1942.

Two of the historic steam locos, C5631 and C5644, have been repatriated to Japan — one to Japan's "Cenotaph" Yasukuni Shrine, the other to operate a service into Japan's "Southern Alps" in Shizuoka, on the Oigawa Railway.

Whilst the rails now end at Nam Tok, the road continues up to the Thai-Burma border at Three Pagodas Pass (300 kms point).

In 1943, one group of 7,000 POWs, half-starved, sick, ill-shod, scantily-clad, carrying all their worldly possessions, were force-marched these 300 kms, by night in the rain, to work on the railway — 3,000 of them were to die within the year.

Today they might be said to have 'yomped', but that implies full logistical support, and being men in perfect physical condition.

What the POWs took 20 or more days to cover, in tropical heat and monsoon rains, today can be done in a few hours in a Land Rover, or, more likely, its Japanese copy, or alternatively, by speedboat or helicopter.

Now, as one travels, many fascinating scenes unfold, made possible by the trials and tribulations of World War II.

At Kanchanaburi (50 kms), a provincial capital, once a railway base camp, is a good and air-conditioned hotel "Rama of the River Kwai."

At Tha Makham, and the steel bridge, is the large restaurant and souvenir shop, run by a lady born within sight of the POW camp and AA gun sites.

Moving on, one passes Bankao (88 kms), where two Dutch POWs in 1943, discovered traces of early Neolithic peoples, circa 2,000 BC; a small museum now shelters the findings. Near Tha Kilen, in an area opened up by the railway, are the more recent, 1955, excavations of another civilzation of 2,000 years ago, circa 55 BC.

At little railway stations, or at villages along the road, it is possible to purchase fruit and vegtables — and even Coca-Cola! The ever-friendly Thai peoples are there, smiling as ever.

Large tracts of land along the river valley have been opened up for cultivation of many crops; vegetables, fruit, kapok, tapioca, sugar, peanuts. There is an experimental cattle farm where efforts are made to improve the stock.

Travelling northwards, one passes waterfalls, bat-caves and groves of bamboo, whilst new teak forests flourish to replace the 500,000 cubic feet of timber used between 1942 and 1945.

Road and rail meet for the last time at the present rail terminus, Nam Tok. This "town" sprouts a few TV aerials, but otherwise is pure "Somerset Maugham" and sits on the banks of the muddy-brown River Kwae-Noi.

It has electricity and a telephone service, and a bus service to Kanchanaburi; the elderly buses might fail a British MOT test however, though the fares are ridiculously low, and they are driven by "Grand Prix" enthusiasts.

*Past Nam Tok lies on the very rugg*ed terrain where POW sufferings increased by the kilometre, as the railway track entered higher, more remote mountains. Not a single tunel was built, but incredible hair-pin bends, cuttings and gradients were necessary.

Soon one reaches by road, or by river, "River Kwai Village," a modern 168-bed motel-boatel, air-conditioned, H & C, European or Thai food, bars, even a swimming pool. It stands near to the side of the infamous Tonchan POW camp (130 kms), of which no trace remains, except the spring that gave pure water.

From here the traveller may take excursions by fast, noisy, 'long-tailed' river craft (powered by Japanese engines) to Sai Yok to see more waterfalls, caves and a floating bamboo bar-cafe.

The scenery is quite splendid. The fauna, driven away by man and his explosives 40 years ago, have returned to their habitat. It is possible to catch a glimpse of deer, monkeys, egrets; the black panther is there, unseen. Orchids and other flora

The writer

Goeffrey Adams of Great Britain was a Japanese P.O.W. during World War II, assigned to constructing the famous bridge over the River Kwai. He writes extensively on subjects about the Far East during the war.

proliferate.

Should one wander, on foot, from the road, it is possible to find sections of the railway of World War II; remains of a small bridge, rotting sleepers, ballast and rail spikes, though all is long over-grown as nature has reclaimed its own.

The greatest postwar achievement is seen at Khao Laem (220 kms) near the POWs' Takunun (218 kms). Here rises a mighty dam, 1,000 metres wide, 90 metres high.

Proceeding further up-country, one reaches Three Pagodas Pass, where Thailand meets Burma. The ancient pagodos, familiar to some POWs stood only feet from the railway tracks. Now a school there uses an empty wartime bombcase as a school bell.

We have reached the limits of travel, for Burma does not encourage visitors to this remote area.

There are three "monuments" to the POWs. One in Burma, at Thanbyuzayat, 40 miles south of Moulmein, with the graves of 3,035 men. In Thailand are two cemeteries, Kanchanaburi, with 6,957 POW graves and memorials, and Chunghai, with 1,740.

There is no cemetery for the estimated 100,000 Asiatics who died in the railway construction. The luxuriant tropical undergrowth hides thousands of 'unknowns', whilst many POWs died in Singapore after returning from the railway, and are buried in Kranji war cemetery, where the "Memorial to the Missing," with 24,000 names, remembers those who worked on the railway, and were subsequently lost in ships taking them to Japan, to work, in 1944.

These POW cemeteries are beautifully maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Those in Thailand and in Singapore, Malaya, Hong Kong and Japan, and elsewhere, are easily accessible by scheduled air, road and rail services.

Will the Khao Laem dam and the steel bridge at Tha Makham be the great modern monuments to the sufferings and sacrifices of POW of World War II on the Thailand-Burma Railway?

THE BIG 5-0 TEAM: Seated — Lisa Judd, and Jan Cotton. Standing — Elbert Watson, chairman; Ernie Baker, vice-chairman; Sterling Gossett, vice-chairman; Bob Palmer, and Jerry Sargent. Not shown Bob Currie and Jim Shelton.

We're getting organized to launch a 50th anniversary program of World War II in Indianapolis this November. We'll talk history during the daytime, then let our hair down with a "Stage Door Canteen" — Big Band and all — that evening. Seventy-five people have signed up for "Beachhead '90" so far. Fill out the form below and come aboard.

Yes

sign me up for the team.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

MAIL TO: BIG 5-0 TEAM
1010-East 86th Street, Suite 61-J
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Ahead in the Times

A DAUGHTER'S SEARCH

Sally Davis was nine months old when here father died in a B-29 raid over Japan. She's looking for facts.

ENTOMBED IN ICE

Veteran tells the remarkable story of aircraft locked in ice for 45 years.

I WAS A GERMAN P.O.W.

Gordon Allen bailed out of his bomber and sat out the war. Amazing pictorial record.

A modern Betsy Ross

Pat Roeller

Patricia Roeller of Indianapolis recently kicked off a spirited campaign to return pride to the Flag.

She's enlisted hundreds of truckers who gather at area truckstops to fly flags on their rigs.

Why truck drivers?

"Like circus elephants, those rigs are noticeable. We don't overlook trucks like we overlook cars," she says.

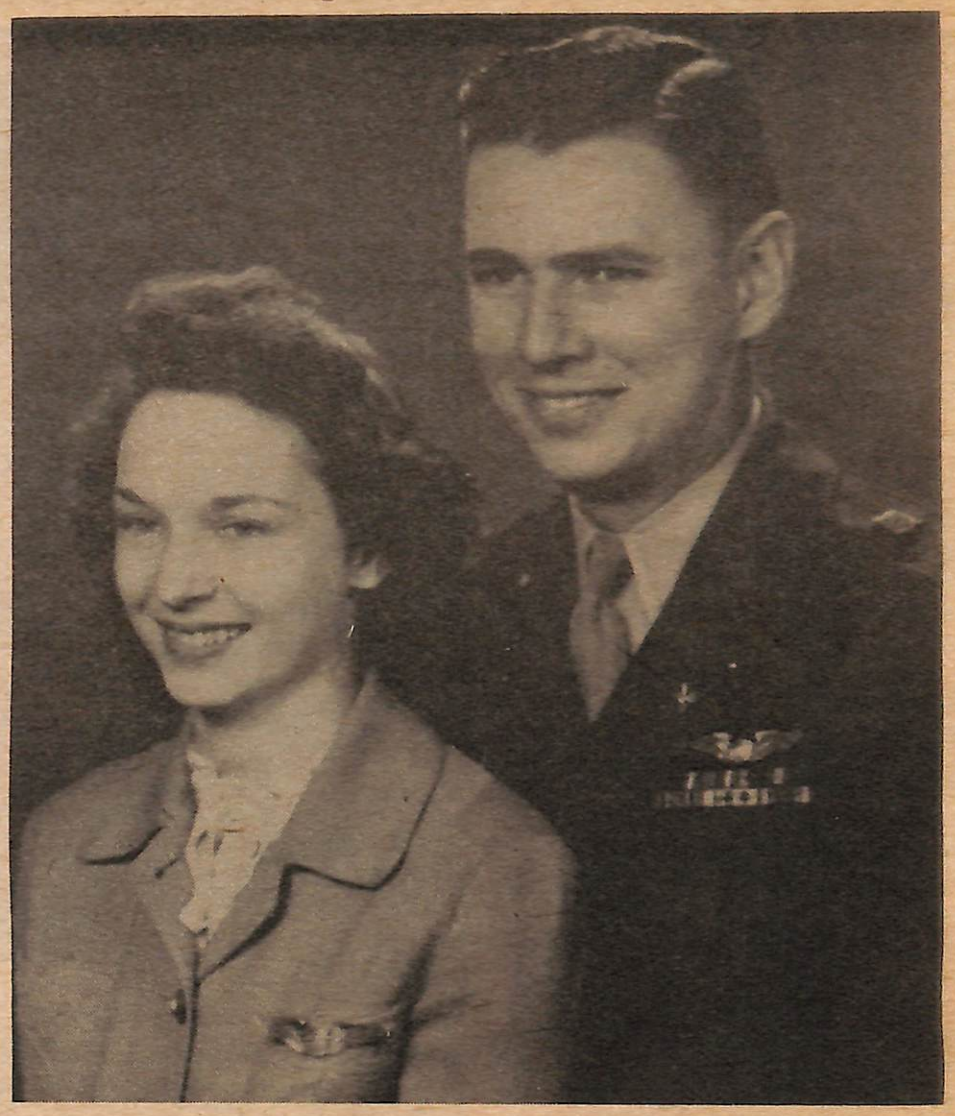
"I'm proud of my Flag and mad at the Supreme Court for its decision. When a "Good Morning America" touched the subject, I got the idea to distribute flags (5 by 7 inch) to America's truck drivers."

Pat needed to purchase 25,000 flags at a cost of $3,500. Local radio stations and newspapers drummed up support and the cash arrived from Valvoline Oil, Don Schneider of Schneider Trucking, and Ron and David Whiteford of Whiteford Trucking. The American Legion donated 6,000 flags.

The flags arrived in time for mass distribution over the July 4 weekend. Volunteers handed them out at five Indianapolis truckstops.

Truckers enthuse Pat. "Next to cowboys, they are about as American as you can get. They're enthusiastic and patriotic, almost to a man.

"I want them to show America that Indianapolis loves its flag. It is time we start fighting for this country, or we can end up without having it."



Breedlove and pretty bride, Alma

One down, 49 to go

Paul Breedlove

During May 1944, 14 B-24 crews arrived in Pandavaswar, India, 120 miles northwest of Calcutta. We were assigned to the 482nd Bomb Squadron (H).

The following week we were briefed on procedures, intelligence, and mission.

The evening of June 6, operations advised me to fly co-pilot on my first combat mission. I was awakened at 0500, ate breakfast at 0530. The briefing began at 0615.

All the crews (six from our squadron) were seated in the briefing room waiting for the curtain to open and reveal our target. This was my first mission so my adrenaline was flowing.

The operations officer announced firmly: "Your target for today is Bhamo in northern Burma on the China border. This is a Jap supply base, so anti-aircraft fire is expected, however, it is not radar directed. Fighter opposition is doubtful!

The squadron navigator briefed the route to and from the target. The weatherman stated that the area should be clear, but some cloud buildup might occur enroute to our target.

The weather was cool and I was wishing I had worn my light jacket. But the pilot stood there sweating in a short sleeve shirt — I wondered why.

We borded the aircraft, buckled ourselves in the seats and revved the engines. Other aircraft taxied by. Fianlly, it was our turn to join the line.

At 0800, the lead aircraft began its run down the runway. Thirty seconds later, the second aircraft started down the runway, followed by the rest of us at 30 second intervals. Shortly we were all airborne.

Our IP (initial point) was east of Bhamo. When we turned to cross the IP, we would be on a course toward home. Since anti-aircraft guns were positioned around the target, our mission was to pass the town far enough away to confuse ground gunners about our intention. If the ruse worked, we might not be fired on.

We held tight formation and headed for the drop point. Half way there, puffs of black smoke began to appear below the formation. Bombs away and we were shortly out of the range of the ground fire.

Eight hours and 30 minutes after we departed that morning, we touched down.

One mission down and 49 to go for me.

Air Force Sgt. Sare was an adventurous C.B.I. er

Lighter side of C.B.I.

Bill Sare

My duty in CBI, while stationed at Barrackpore Air Base, India, was that of teletype operator and message router, until I volunteered to run the movie projector at a small living area. As you can see, the operation would have failed without me.

Time off was spent in Calcutta where I met a Chinese-Australian girl who needed to get married before she could head for the United States. Since I was always volunteering for various jobs, I became her proxy husband.

One night at the Calcutta Hospital, two nurses were leaving work and I offered transportation. One nurse had an American father and a Burmese mother. One night I took her to dinner at the Czechoslovakin Village and there she met her future husband. So I was part of a "second marriage."

One of my best buddies put my name in the box for the P.X. monthly prizes while I was at Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and I won the chance to buy a 35mm Kodak camera. Arriving on base the same day of the draw required me to borrow $33.00 from my buddies to purchase the camera. In 1949, I sold it for $78.00 that's capitalism at its best.

The Burmese WAC detachment down the road once invited us to share an evening meal with them. What would have been my third date with a WAC was spoiled by an M.P. While I was in the dining hall at breakfast an M.P. came in and called my name. My shipping orders were a week old and I had previously missed a flight. He and I spent the rest of the day together to make sure I was on the next flight — and I was!

My military life as a 19 and 20 year old in India may seem insignificant, but it was a job that had to be done by thousands of G.I.s like me. Today I am proud to be a member of the C.B.I.V.A. and also the Army Airways Communications Systems (AACS).

Male Call

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

Moral: Keep Your Brass Warm

2/7/43

Male Call

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

Solid Sender

2/14/43

"If that's basic English he's teaching them, I'm 4-F!"

Big jump for nurse

Kathy Warnes

Little did Florence Maliszewski suspect that her nursing career in Winona, Minnesota would take her to some of the great battlefields of World War II.

After receiving her B.S.N. from the College of St. Theresa in Winona, Florence moved to Great Falls, Montana, where she taught in a school of nursing.

In July, 1943, duty called and she enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps as a second lieutenant and did basic military training at Camp White, Oregon. This training consisted of classes, drilling, and infiltration. She explains infiltration as "crawling up a hill wearing a full pack under live fire."

Completing basic training, Florence was assigned to hospitals at Camp Groat, Illinois, and Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. In October, 1944, her unit arrived in Liverpool, England, after surviving Atlantic storms and zigzagging to avoid Nazi U Boats.

Her unit was trucked to South Hampton and loaded into boats to cross the English Channel. They passed through Omaha Beach to Cherbourg, France and finally to Le Mans. There they set up camp and opened a nursing station in a cow pasture to care for wounded men exposed to wet, dank weather.

Florence's duties also included caring for German P.O.W.'s, who lived behind a barbed wire fence in pup tents in the U.S. camp. They cooked, laundered, and helped construct camp buildings. She also worked in the chief nurse's office, preparing a procedure book and instructing non-commissioned officers about nursing care.

Florence vividly recalls a group of captured German women who helped care for the wounded. "Their clothes were from the bodies of dead German soldiers," she remembers.

Near the camp lived a French countess in a 13th century castle complete with moat and drawbridge. Her husband was one of the first German aviators in World War I, and was killed in action. The countess was frequently a subject of discussion among the nurses.

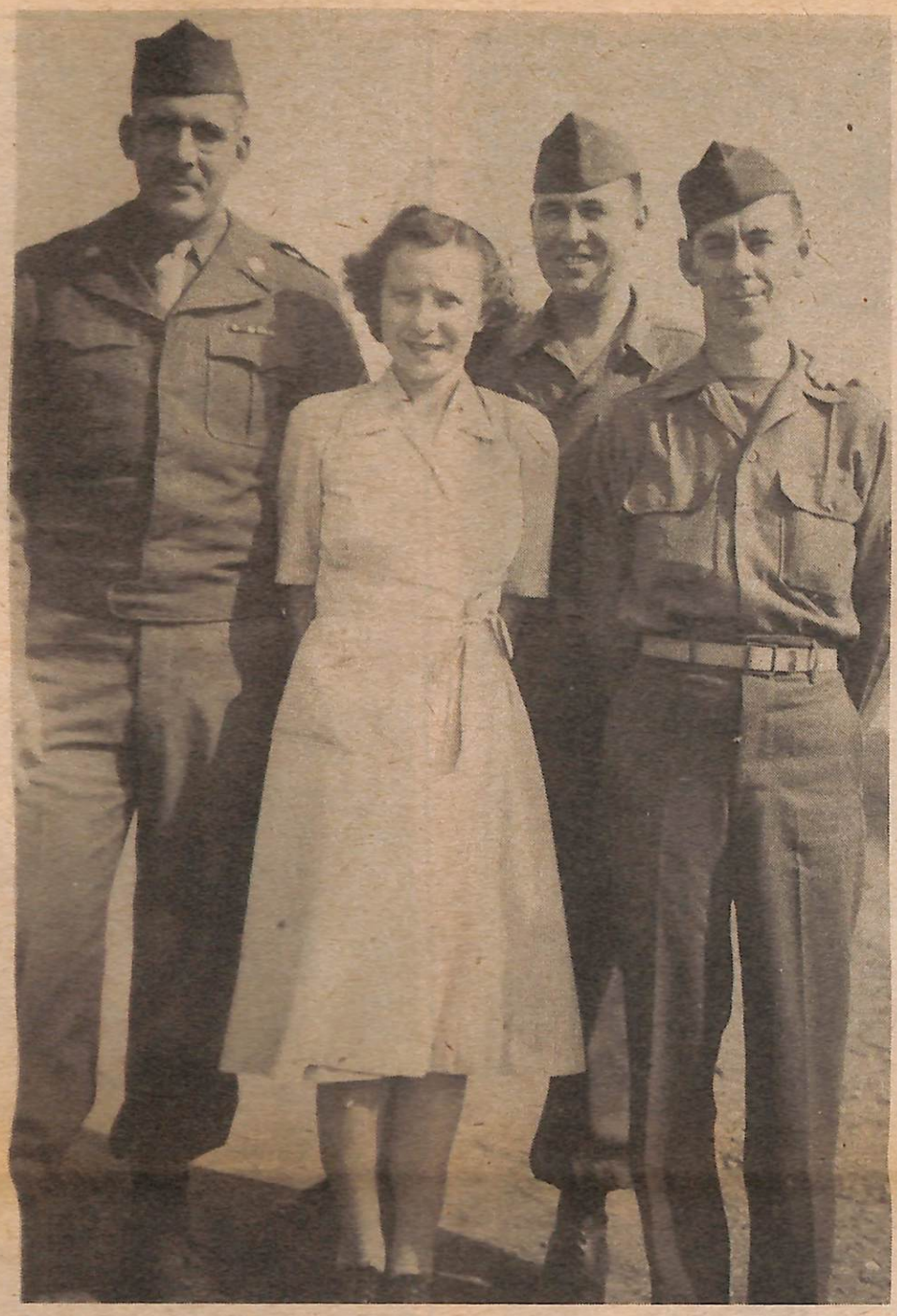
At war's end, Florence was a chief nurse assigned to the 91st General Hospital, which returned wounded soldiers home on the John J. Meany. She was discharged from the Nursing Corps as a Captain at Camp Groat, Illinois, in January, 1946.
1946.

Forty-five years later, her impression of the American G.I. is as sharp and distinct as a contemporary photo. "I admired our American soldiers for the fearlessness, mobility, zest for life, warmth, friendliness, humor and appreciation. The G.I.'s had to muster faith and trust in us. They were patient, uncomplaining and always grateful."

Using the G.I. Bill of Rights, Florence earned her Masters Degree in Nursing Science at the University of Chicago. She taught administration and nursing at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and pioneered in gerentological nursing. Some of her courses included "Health Care of the Aged," and "Teaching Health Care of the Aged."

Today Florence is "fully as busy now," as she was when she taught. She works with older parishoners at St. Phillip Neri Church and is a member of the Marquette University Retired Faculty Association. She is a 17 year member of Jane Delano Nurses Post and serves as Post Chaplain.

Florence sums up her army experience with a smile: "Being in the army made me come back home very service oriented and with a legion of firm friendships, both G.I.'s and nurses. I'm glad I was part of that era."



Florence Maliezenski and G.I. friends in Le Mans, France.