D-Day Plus Sixty:
Stories of Our Own
Greatest Generation

The Purple and Gold
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We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers

“This story shall the good man teach his son; And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by, From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered — We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he today that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so lowly, This day shall enable his rank. And gentlemen in England, now abed, Shall think themselves accursed they were not here; And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.”

Henry V - William Shakespeare

We’re not big on celebrating Saint Crispin’s Day or the Battle of Agincourt* (except as the memorable scene out of Shakespeare’s Henry V above). For that matter, we don’t make very much out of the more contemporary events of Vietnam or Korea or Desert Storm. But World War II is different. That war was different. We think of it as the last universally accepted “good war” for freedom and justice and noble cause.

The dedication of the new World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington on Memorial Day Weekend 2004 seemed to garner unprecedented news coverage. That it coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day, the invasion that began the end of the war on the European front, did nothing to lessen the emotions. Commentators talked of this being the season of our collective remembrances — of wars and warriors gone by, whose lives helped to shape our own, whose acts of heroism, great and small, amuse in us a sense of hope.

In his book The Greatest Generation, Tom Brokaw wrote: “As I walked the beaches with the American veterans who landed there and now returned for this anniversary … and listened to their stories in the cafes and inns, I was deeply moved and profoundly grateful for all they had done. I realized they had been all around me as I was growing up and that I had failed to appreciate what they had been through and what they had accomplished.” Brokaw later wrote, “They answered the call to save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled, instruments of conquest in the hands of fascist maniacs. They faced great odds and a late start, but they did not protest. They succeeded on every front. They won the war; they saved the world.”

Helping to save the world, nearly 4,000 Chi Psi Brothers were members of the United States Armed Forces at some point during World War II; of that number, 147 Brothers made the ultimate sacrifice.

Some say that the only way to understand war and to understand a generation is to understand it as its smallest part — as one soldier at a time. But veterans of war don’t often talk much about their experiences when they return home. They tuck those memories back into deep crevices and get about the business of life deferred by war. A few stories may leak out at reunion gatherings, and family and friends may pull out a few others, but the process isn’t all that easy, especially for the tellers.

“America’s Historian,” the late Stephen Ambrose, Iota ’57, who often focused on friendship, said, “There is a form of friendship that I’ve never experienced, though I have spent a lot of time talking and writing about it. The coaches told us during football practice in college that what we were doing was as close as young men could ever come to being in combat. We believed it at the time; today I know how utterly false that is. It is not like combat. Nothing is… Only in combat is one in a position in which youngsters his age he doesn’t know, has never met, are trying to kill him — and he is trying to kill them.” Ambrose tells of Mike Ranney treasuring his remark to a grandson who asked, “Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?” “No,” he answered, “But I served in a company of heroes.” This makes for a very special, lifelong friendship.

The Purple and Gold of the 1940s did a great job of collecting and listing all the names of those who served and who died during the war, but there were precious few stories of the war itself, few personal experiences. This Spring, we issued a call to surviving veterans of World War II to share their experiences — whether storming the beaches of Normandy, sweating it out on South Pacific islands, serving on a destroyer, flying DC3s, training troops in Texas, or working in support jobs. We asked for the stories — and we received a great variety. Some came in as a few bullet points, others as entire published books, several as newspaper stories, and one as a radio dramatization broadcast recording. Since there wasn’t room for every word, what follows is a sampling of highlights, some excerpts.

We have made no attempt to sort these entries into groupings of Alpha, theater, rank or style. Since we provided no style guide for the authors, some entries read as parts of a resume, some as chapters of a novel. Certainly each is as different as the individual Brother.

Our apologies for not being able to share every word. If you have a WWII story to share, but haven’t sent it in yet, please send it to the Central Office, and we’ll add it to the collection. Our plan is to share the stories more completely in coming months at our web site: www.chipsi.org. We wish there were some way to bring all the authors together in one place, as if sitting around a Lodge fireplace, after a grand banquet feast. We want to sit at their feet, ask just enough questions to keep the stories flowing, and bask in the glow of our own Greatest Generation. — WSH
The classic D-Day photo taken from a landing craft arriving at Omaha Beach in the first wave of the Allied Normandy Invasion on 6 June 1944. While a great many Chi Psis were in that invasion force and in the waves that followed, the stories beginning on page five are from Chi Psis who served their country wherever they were needed, at home and abroad.

**D-Day Plus Sixty:**
Stories from Our Own Greatest Generation

**Bomber Talk**

David B. Magee, Kappa Delta ’49: I really hesitate to write of my experiences as a bombardier, as I never went overseas and would not wish to compare myself with so many great war heroes. However, I did have some interesting experiences while in training.

I went to bombardier school in Big Spring, Texas. I was making my bomb run at a target in the desert. I dropped the bomb and was looking through the bombsight to watch the impact. To my absolute horror, a huge American Airlines DC-4 Flagship flew right over my target. Fortunately, the plane flew by after my bomb was dropped. Obviously, the pilot was off-course and in a restricted area, but for a few moments I thought I would need a change of underwear.

At a later date, I was stationed at Westover Field in Massachusetts, training in B-24s. Toward the end of that training period, I had to drop a few bombs to fill out my quota of ten I think. I dropped the ten bombs and told the pilot that I was finished. I then remembered that the ground crew loaded 20 bombs before takeoff. I tried to close the bomb-bay doors, but they would not close. The cotter-pins in the bombs had to be replaced before landing, I did not wish to climb out onto that narrow catwalk, nor did I feel I could order one of the gunners to do so. I had shut down the bombsight and told the pilot that I would drop them visually into the Quabbin Reservoir, which we used as a practice range. We did so, but to my horror I realized that I had missed the reservoir, and had actually bombed Amherst, Massachusetts, by mistake. Fortunately, all we hit was a dirt road!

Perhaps you are familiar with the poem “High Flight,” written by my elder brother Pilot-Officer John Gillespie Magee Jr. shortly before his death in his Spitfire in December 1941. (DBM – Rye, New York)

**War in the China-Burma-India Theater**

John Clark Alberts, Pi ’44: It’s nice to know that someone acknowledges that we did fight a war in “CBI” – China-Burma-India. The WWII issue of The P&G (Summer 2004) carried a story referring to this forgotten theater.

I flew 106 trips over “The Hump” to Burma in C-47s (actually, that’s 212 trips, since you have to come back) and several months with CBI Jungle Rescue in B-25s.

Generally when I mention it, it takes too long to explain as it seems few have heard of us and our enemy, weather, logistical problems, and forgotten-man troubles. Then we were assigned to the Army of occupation in Bavaria. (JCA – North Barrington, Illinois)
When Baseball Intervened

David A. Brennan, Epsilon '47: It was 5 October 1944 in Sansapor, Dutch New Guinea. The 42nd Bomb Group strafers of the 13th "Jungle" Air Force were taking aim on the Western Pacific as the elimination of Japanese airfields and shipping was a vital prologue to MacArthur’s return to the Philippines.

Sansapor—don’t look for it on the map—was an airstrip carved out of a rainforest about 20 miles North of the equator.

We sat on our cots draped with mosquito netting reading our bi-weekly mail—our link with the real world. How we cherished every line. My Aunt Hazel, true to her promise, enclosed the daily comic strips for Chester Gould’s “Dick Tracy” and Milton Caniff’s “Terry and the Pirates.” The Dragon Lady was giving Terry a hard time and Shakey was eluding Dick Tracy and his sidekick, Pat Patton.

I would post comics on the squadron bulletin board for all to see. While groping for the last thumbtack, Lt. Carl Rasch from G-2 posted his own ominous sheet. We had seen these sheets before—big letters at the top, STRIKE, and below 12 crews by flight assignment. Curran, a good low-level man, would lead. I was assigned to B flight. The bottom line, briefing at 0900.

After chow the rain began. A wet night was good news. The Japanese who bombed us always came by night, weather permitting. The rain would spare us foxhole time.

With the outdoor movie cancelled, some of the troops started a crap game in the mess tent. The betting was most unique. The regulars were paid in Dutch guilders, the new replacements had U.S. dollars, and those back from leave in Australia had pound notes. Two guilders for a dollar, five dollars for a pound, and five guilders for a half pound. As fast as the game went they kept it straight.

The morning briefing began promptly as today’s target was Ambon airfield on the island of Ceram. From Ambon, Japanese planes guarded the vital oil routes from Indonesia and Borneo. With pointer in hand, Rasch displayed recent reconnaissance photos verifying numerous enemy planes dispersed about the airfield. Some were partially covered with camouflage netting.

Capt. Ryder added a few reassuring comments: “As these photos attest, the Japanese have some of the latest Hamp and Zeke fighters at Ambon. Be alert for interception. The periphery of this target is bristling with 40 mm anti-aircraft batteries. Fighter at Biak will not be providing escort as this target is too distant from Biak.”

We synchronized our watches and boarded Jeeps for the flight line.

The B-25 attack bomber was an aerial gun platform and explosives delivery machine. Armament comprised of 12 .50-caliber machine guns, eight firing forward, two in the waist and two in the tail. The bombs today would be Gen. George Kenney’s clusters. These “daisy cutters” went off on impact spraying a 200-foot radius with shrapnel.

I checked with Gil Dobbs, our navigator, who agreed to plot the route. Should we become separated, Gil could give us a heading back to Sansapor.

The plane next to ours, also in B flight, was Gillette’s. Gillette was up to his standard stunt, opening a case of cigarettes and placing the 10-pack cartons in his bomb bay. We had a tent filled with cases of cigarettes patriotically sent gratis from manufacturers to “our fighting men overseas.” Gillette just thought it would be nice to give the Japanese some Virginia burley.

The last of the 75th Squadron’s twelve B-25s was airborne at 1010 hours. We formed up on Curran at a cooler 8,000 feet and headed south.

About three hours later we saw Ceram Island. The Ambon airfield was on the southern coast and we would make our run from west to cast.

To minimize detection we descended to be about 100 feet above the Banda Sea. Few Japanese forward areas had radar but they did station aircraft spotters along the coast surrounding their airfields and ports.

As we swung west of the island, we test fired our guns. Sgt Paul Smith, our tail gunner, leaned over the bomb bay with a thumbs-up indicating the waist and tail guns were ready.

Approaching the coast, the B-25s re-formed line abreast, skimming over the Ambon banana and coconut plantations. Ahead of a clearing, and beyond, the Japanese airfield.

The clearing had a baseball diamond, apparently with a game in progress. Standing spectators and players ran for cover. But the player on second base, one foot still on the bag, just watched the air show as Gillette’s cigarette cartons exploded all around him.

The baseball game was good news. Quite simply it meant we had caught the Ambon defenders by surprise.

The Japanese had a surprise for us too. On the airstrip we found only a few planes, probably stripped shells that had been cannibalized for spare parts. Serviceable aircraft, our intelligence later reported, had pulled out to Kendari in the Celebres.

The return to base was without incident.

In the debriefing tent they poured the usual post-strike whiskey ration. Gillette’s comment: “You’ve got it all backward; we should have the whiskey before the mission, not after.”

Ryder and Rasch conducted the debriefing, reflecting genuine disappointment as the crews reported an empty target.

Ryder desperately inquired from the airmen something tangible he could put in his report. “Gentlemen, did you hit any key areas, supply areas, fuel dumps – whatever?”

After an embarrassing silence I volunteered, “Well, we did break up a baseball game.” And that broke up the debriefing.

Outside the tent we finished our whiskey and talked about the day. I asked our tail gunner about the man on second base. Smith said the base runner never moved. His final comment, “That was probably the only hit they had all day and he wanted to be on second when the game resumed.”

None of the crews reported firing on the baseball game. Perhaps it all happened too fast. Or maybe for a fleeting moment we were kindred spirits sharing a sympathetic pause for a common cause, baseball. (DAB – Redondo Beach, California)
War As I Saw It

William R. Throckmorton, Chi '41: In early 1942, I enlisted in the Army of the United States while working in Kansas City, Missouri. I attempted to enlist in the US Navy, the Air Corps, US Marines, but was rejected because of my eyesight.

Upon arriving at Camp Marines, Outside Little Rock, Arkansas, I was assigned to Company B, in the 67th Training Battalion.

My first shock as a recruit was finding sixty Japanese recruits in my training company. I wondered then why were they there? We were supposed to be at war with Japan. I soon found out that they were Nisei, born in the United States and that their parents were in a detention camp in California. I was surprised to find out that they spoke excellent English and could carry a pack and a rifle with the greatest of ease. Very tough soldiers.

These same fellows were assigned to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which was the most decorated unit for bravery while fighting in Italy.

At the end of basic training, I was picked to attend OCS, Officer Candidate School, also known as “90-Day Wonder” school. Somehow or other the only branch that was not filled was the Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

After the basic training I had just completed, OCS was not very tough. Although it was pretty physical and very disciplined. The weather in August in Georgia made the bayonet practice and other outdoor pleasures very sweaty to say the least.

My OCS class 79A was graduated minus quite a few of the other fellows who had started. Some of them were glad to return to the ranks. We also had one commit suicide.

I spent the next year and a half as cadre for the “Century” 100th Division at Ft. Jackson, SC. I served in the Regimental Anti-Tank Company, in the 399th Regiment. I was also made Motor Officer as I had attended a Motor Maintenance School back at Benning. At that time I never dreamed that this schooling would be so important.

In early 1944, I was on the shipping list for Anzio Beachhead. However a throat infection put me in the Ft. Story V.A. Hospital for a couple of weeks. I was then assigned to the “Lightning” 78th Division at nearby Camp Pickett, VA. As a company officer I was assigned the heavy weapons platoon. Here I spent much time on the mortar range.

In August of 1944 I was shipped out as a replacement officer to the ETO. The crossing of the Atlantic was on the fast troop ship USS Marine Raven. Landing at Scotland, it was not too long before before I was moved up the Repple Depple toward the front.

Arriving in France via Omaha Beach I dug my first slit trench in a Normandy apple orchard. I was with my buddy, Lt. John Holden, from Cincinnati, OH, and a Yale graduate. We were just going to sleep that first night when “Herman the German” came over and started to drop cluster bombs. John and I then decided that it would be better to be below the surface of the ground.

After traveling up the Red Ball Express Highway with a stopover at another Repple Depple at Melun, France, we were deposited at the 30th Infantry Division HQ. We then passed on to the 119th Inf. Regiment, then sitting on the border of Holland and Germany, namely the Siegfried Line.

At 110 on the 2nd of October my regiment and the 117th attacked on the division front. I remember the wet, muddy, cold and soggy weather. Shortly before the attack my company lost our mine platoon leader. He and his sergeant were in his jeep that was hit by a German shell. I was surprised when they gave me his spirit ration for the month. After severe fighting among the pillboxes, machine gunfire and mortal fire, we drove south toward Aachen. At this time my division was transferred from First Army to the newly formed Ninth Army under Lt. Gen. W.H. Simpson, the 30th Division’s old commander.

The fighting for Aachen was brutal and costly for both sides. The fighting in and around the towns of Bardenberg and Wurselen was desperate. We lost many men by mines and booby traps.

Lt. Dennis, my mentor and leader of the 3rd platoon and I were forced to stay in a potato cellar two days and two nights before we could leave because of the heavy shelling.

The breaching of the Siegfried Line and the encirclement of Aachen took sixteen days of continuous fighting during which my regiment suffered 661 casualties. Of these, 45 were KIA, 482 were WIA, and 134 Missing in Action.

Our regiment had reduced 131 pillboxes, 73 fortified positions, and had taken 1,243 enlisted prisoners and 26 officers. Without the drive of our division from the north, the First Division could never have taken Aachen.

Shortly after the battle for Aachen, I was called to the company CP and informed that I would be the leader of the 2nd platoon. I took over the platoon that was in Kohlsheild, Germany, at that time. I had three men, three 1-1/2 ton ammo trucks, three 57mm guns.

After the Siegfried Line fighting I was put to the test, in the Battle of the Bulge.

Memories of the Bulge Fighting:
- The cold and deep snow and efforts to keep warm.
- The day I saw them bring down the 86 bodies of the GIs murdered by Col. Jochen Pieper’s 1st SS at Baugnez, Belgium.
- The sniper that fired and missed my driver and me at Malmedy.
- The howl of the Screaming Meemies from the Kraut Nebelwerfers.
- The civilians, including little children, killed by the SS at Styer and Targnon, Belgium.
- The bodies of fifty SS soldiers frozen and stacked 5 high in front of the Stoumont Sanatorium.
- The joy of seeing the contrails of hundreds of our B17 bombers flying high over us to bomb Germany.
- The total destruction of the 1st SS Spearhead at La Gleize, Belgium. What few SS troops that were left had to walk out to their own lines.
- The joy of fighting alongside the 82nd Airborne Division.

The Lieutenant Gets Dropped On:

One night I bivouacked my men in a
barn with temperatures below zero and foot-deep snow. I placed my bedroll in the loft. The next morning I found that the dropping I thought was snow melting turned out to be a rafter full of hens that were making deposits on me. (Such is the life of an Infantry Platoon Leader.)

Shortly after the Battle of the Bulge I received a promotion to 1st Lieut. And was assigned as the Company Recon. Officer. I was very glad to take over this position, as I would only be responsible for my driver and myself.

After the Roer River Crossing, I was informed that I had been chosen as the Division Motor Officer in charge of convoys and maintenance of HQ vehicles. This job was truly heaven on earth after service with the front line battalion.

After VE Day the division was moved from the Magdeburg area down to the Weimar, Germany area. This entailed leading a 150 truck convoy some 100 miles.

After R and R leave to southern France, I was chosen to be in the advance party for the trip back to the States. We shipped back on the USS Sea Robin. How wonderful to see the Statue of Liberty again! (WRT, 1st Lieut. Inf. 1942-51 – Belmont, Michigan)

East Meets West – A Tale of Two Chi Psis

John E. (Jack) Dale, Eta ’42: In June 1943 I reported for duty as a young disbursing officer aboard the USS Washington, one of our Pacific Fleet’s newest battleships which was then berthed at Pearl Harbor where it was being fitted out with some additional anti-aircraft guns to better fight off the Japanese air force. I was assigned to a room with one of the communications officers by the name of Duane Duke. I soon learned that both he and I were Chi Psi Brothers, he from Theta Delta at Washington and I from Eta at Bowdoin. It turned out that we had more in common too. He and his wife Elizabeth were living in Oswego, New York, whereas the first nine years of my life had been spent in Oswego, New York. Furthermore, we shared the same battle station and both stood watches in the ship’s code room, three decks below the main deck. Duane and I spent the better part of two years in the same close quarters aboard ship, playing many games of gin rummy when there was little action going on against the enemy, which was most of the time. However, we did have one really traumatic experience. It occurred in early February 1944 one morning shortly before daybreak. We were members of a task force that had been involved in bombarding the island of Kwajalein in the Marianas Group to soften the Japanese positions prior to a marine landing there. If memory serves me correctly, Duane was on watch at the time and I was sound asleep in my bunk when suddenly I was violently jolted awake by a loud bang that caused the whole ship to shudder. Sure that we had been torpedoed, I bounded from my bunk as general quarters sounded, grabbed a few clothes, and made a dash for the ladders leading down to the code room. Soon after reaching the code room all water tight doors were sealed behind me. This was done throughout the ship to prevent water invading anywhere but the damaged areas.

As it turned out, it had not been an enemy torpedo but a collision with one of our own ships that had caused the problem. A terrible error had been made by either the navigator of our vessel or that of the USS Indiana, which proved to be the other battleship with which we collided. Apparently the Indiana had been changing course from that of the main task force in order to take on fuel with which we collided. Apparently the Indiana had been changing course from that of the main task force in order to take on fuel from a tanker and one of the ships zigged when it should have zagged before it was too late. The bow of our ship hit the Indiana squarely amidships, a part of the ship most heavily protected by armor plate. Unfortunately, our bow was not so protected and it immediately crumpled causing the main deck behind it to collapse like an accordion and crushing all the space behind it for quite a distance. This also included seven enlisted men and one officer who happened to be there and were instantly killed by the impact. Duane and I realized how lucky we were since our room was one of those most forward in the ship that was undamaged by the collision. The Washington did manage to limp into Majuro Atoll where the repair ship Vulcan rigged us up with a false bow which enabled us to reach Pearl Harbor for further repairs and ultimately back to the States for a complete overhaul.

The day following the collision all hands reported on deck to witness a very solemn occasion – the burial at sea ceremony for the
eight brave Navy men who had been victims of the accident. The chaplain gave a brief but dignified blessing, Marine guards fired a farewell salute, and each man wrapped in a white shroud was slid down a chute into the sea.

As a result of the collision, the skippers of both ships were relieved of their commands, the Washington spent nearly three months in drydock, and it wasn’t until late in May that we rejoined the fleet in preparation for the assault on Saipan.

Duane is somewhat senior to me in age, but we are both in our 80s. We still correspond, and our families have visited each other several times on both East and West coasts. We also met quite by chance when we were both vacationing in Hawaii. I have always had a warm spot for Duane and his family, and I believe the feeling is mutual, although, sadly, my wife of 58 years, Dottie, passed away in 2003.

(Brothers Meet in South Pacific)

Paul E. Fitting Jr., Pi ’50, writes: Here is a photo and news article about my brother John and me, taken in 1943. In the vast Pacific war area, we found each by chance. I was stationed on Stirling Island in the Treasury’s just south of Bougainville Island and John was based at the Torokina airship in central Bougainville. 

From the newspaper article:

Major John Fitting Jr., USMCR, and his brother, Sgt. Paul Fitting, Ordinance, U.S. Marine Aircraft, had the good luck to meet “somewhere in the South Pacific” recently. Both boys had been in this theater since last Fall in different units. Unsuspectingly, Major Fitting, as executive officer of a fighter squadron, had been escorting bombers in Paul’s squadron, but only about a month ago he was able to locate and identify his brother’s outfit.

During their short visit together on one of the many Pacific islands from which American forces are operating, the USMC public relations photographers took pictures of the two Marines.

Major Fitting has participated in a number of engagements against Jap-held territory throughout the South Pacific area. Several weeks ago he was advanced to commanding officer of his squadron.

According to their reports, the brothers are in excellent health and spirits, but are looking forward to furloughs in Chappaqua.

(PEF – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

Shell Shocked at the Roer

F. Lee Campbell, Theta Delta ’44: When World War II broke out in 1941, I was in my second year at the University of Washington. I was a Brother at Alpha Theta Delta, having pledged in the Fall of 1940. As I entered my third year, I was accepted into the advanced ROTC program and was assured that I would receive a commission upon graduation in 1944. Six months later I was called to active duty and sent to Camp Croft, South Carolina, for basic infantry training, as a private. Upon completion of basic, I was sent to Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and I received my commission in May of 1944.

My first assignment was to the 76th Division at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. After three months of training I was notified that I was to be sent overseas as a rifle platoon leader replacement. There was a dire need for junior officers in France because of the high number of casualties during and after D-Day. I arrived in France around the end of August. There were no French ports yet ready to receive ships, so I was put ashore at Utah Beach, courtesy of a Navy operated LTC. I recall that there were seemingly hundreds of German prisoners on the beach, waiting to be transported to England. The war was over for them and they enjoyed waving and laughing at us as we stepped ashore. We spent a few days in a field near St. Mere Eglise, waiting for orders. Eventually the Army replacement system went into action and I began a slow move eastward, knowing that I would end up being assigned to an infantry division involved in combat.

Sometime around the end of October, I was assigned to the 102nd Infantry Division, as a weapons platoon leader in a rifle company. We then were in Belgium, and the division was headed for Germany. I recall going through the Siegfried Line and then into and through many small villages and towns. The fighting was very sporadic and the Germans seemed to be in a definite retreat. The weather was miserable, with constant rain. Most of our time was spent in foxholes, and it seemed that we were constantly wet and cold. Shortly after the first of December we fought our way up to the Roer River. The river had been flooded by the Germans, making it almost impossible to cross. We were dug in along a high bluff on the west side of the river. The Germans decided to hit us with heavy artillery both day and night. The conditions were terrible.

I recall someone telling me that one of my machine gunners had been hit by shrapnel and no one knew if he was dead or wounded. I decided to go up to the battalion aid station to inquire about him. We were receiving much artillery fire at the time. I recall running down a street, in the town of Linnich, when I heard a round coming in. I must have dropped into a recess alongside the curb, although I could not recall exactly what I did. The next thing I remember was sitting in the back seat of a jeep, next to a medic who had his arm around me. It was raining hard and the jeep was flying a huge red cross flag. My next recollection was coming to in a monastery, with two nuns attending me and others. I then was transferred to a field hospital just outside of Leige. After a few days I was feeling good again and was told that I would be going back to my

(U.S.Troops landing at Normandy)
I am a very lucky guy! (FLC – Medina, Washington)

me what I did to deserve the medal, I always tell them, “I survived.”

Combat Infantry Badge and a Bronze Star. Whenever anyone asks

Brothers during my stay in England and France – Bill Christensen

served us well. I was lucky enough to meet two of my pledge

in the Army. Several times I ran into others wearing the ring. It

an administrative job in Paris, of all places. I returned home in June

events, I did not make it back to the front lines and ended up with

have been right in the center of their advance. I cannot tell you

how fortunate I felt.

After a while in England I was placed back into the replacement

system and returned to France. Through a series of very fortunate

I wished I might have wanted one last battle.

As I was about to be sent back to my division, I was notified that

the entire hospital was being evacuated because of “emergency con-

ditions.” The next day I was put aboard a C47 and flown back to

England. I recall seeing two P38 fighters escorting our plane during

the flight. It was only after we arrived in England that we learned

that the German salient had commenced (the Battle of the Bulge)

and their forces were headed for Liege. Our field hospital would

have been right in the center of their advance. I cannot tell you

how fortunate I felt.

I should mention that I wore a Chi Psi service ring while serving

in the Army. Several times I ran into others wearing the ring. It

served us well. I was lucky enough to meet two of my pledge

Brothers during my stay in England and France – Bill Christensen

and Kent Aust. We shared many great memories of our pre-war days

in the Lodge. While going through all of this, I received both the

Combat Infantry Badge and a Bronze Star. Whenever anyone asks

me what I did to deserve the medal, I always tell them, “I survived.”

I am a very lucky guy! (FLC – Medina, Washington)

Choo Choo Station Photo

Thomas C. Watson, Alpha Delta ’44:

I don’t really have any war stories that I

think would be of interest. I never ran

into a Chi Psi serviceman during my military

career, although I was stationed at Camp

Mc Coy, Wisconsin, for a time and visited the

Lodge at Minnesota, which was still open during

the war (most were closed). The members there

were unusually hospitable to me.

The photo is circa 1943, and as best I

remember I made it by placing a quarter in an

automatic photo machine in the choo choo station in Chattanooga

when my train had stopped to take on coal and water. (TCW –

Atlanta, Georgia)

Chief in the Pacific

Russ Fisher, Epsilon ’44: (known to Epsilon Brothers as “Chief”):

I entered the University of Michigan in the Fall of 1941. I

graduated from high school in June 1940 and worked a year

for the New York Central Railroad. My high school was Baldwin HS

located in Birmingham, Michigan. At the U of Michigan, I entered

the Naval ROTC program which led to a commission as an Ensign

in the Naval Reserve. Other Chi Ps in NROTC were Brothers John

Galbraith, E’45 and Bob Anderle, E’45.

I got three years of college in before receiving my naval commis-

sion in February 1944 because the Navy needed officers for the

invasion of Europe in June 1944. I went to the Pacific instead. I

attended Naval Communications School at Harvard in Cambridge,

Mass., for four months (March thru June 1944). In June 1944 I

made a trip from Boston to New York City. I partyed with Chi Psi

Brothers Bob Summerhays, E’42 (also an Ensign) and Army Lt.


unit. Fortunately I was not hit by shrapnel; I was simply a severe

shell shock victim. I believe that curb saved my life.

As I was about to be sent back to my division, I was notified that

the entire hospital was being evacuated because of “emergency con-

ditions.” The next day I was put aboard a C47 and flown back to

England. I recall seeing two P38 fighters escorting our plane during

the flight. It was only after we arrived in England that we learned

that the German salient had commenced (the Battle of the Bulge)

and their forces were headed for Liege. Our field hospital would

have been right in the center of their advance. I cannot tell you

how fortunate I felt.

After a while in England I was placed back into the replacement

system and returned to France. Through a series of very fortunate

events, I did not make it back to the front lines and ended up with

an administrative job in Paris, of all places. I returned home in June

of 1946.

I should mention that I wore a Chi Psi service ring while serving

in the Army. Several times I ran into others wearing the ring. It

served us well. I was lucky enough to meet two of my pledge

Brothers during my stay in England and France – Bill Christensen

and Kent Aust. We shared many great memories of our pre-war days

in the Lodge. While going through all of this, I received both the

Combat Infantry Badge and a Bronze Star. Whenever anyone asks

me what I did to deserve the medal, I always tell them, “I survived.”

I am a very lucky guy! (FLC – Medina, Washington)
Panama Canal and then to Norfolk, Virginia for Navy Day 1945.  
I helped put the Idaho in the “moth ball fleet” in October, November, and part of December 1945. In mid-December I was assigned to the Commander, 16th Fleet at Norfolk, and sent to Yorktown, Virginia, as the administrative assistant to Capt. Bayshaw, group commander of the moth-balled transport and cargo ship in the York River. I was in charge of shore patrol for Yorktown, Williamsburg, and the area. I was also detailed to supply the ships in the York River with water and provisions. I was released to inactive duty in August 1946 so that I could continue my education at the University of Michigan. Brother Fisher was called to active duty again for three years during the Korean War, serving in two years in Korea and a year in Chicago. (RHF – Bloomfield Hills, Michigan)  

**Nagasaki Bomb Core Courier**

William A. King, Iota Delta ’33: Bill was drafted January 22, 1942 from Queens Village, Long Island, and sent to Ft. Eustis, VA, for basic training. In June 1942, rather than go to Officer Candidate School (O.C.S.), he accepted an assignment as Sgt. Agent, in civilian clothes, in the C.I.C. (Counter Intelligence Corps, Third Service Command, Baltimore, MD.  

At the CIC training, his roommate in the lower bunk was Fred “Dusty” Rhodes, a young law school graduate from Baltimore and Washington, DC. They became friends and a few months later, Fred received orders to go to O.C.S. The commanding officer asked Bill to give Fred a one-week crash course in the “basics” of military training, because Dusty had never been in uniform or had any prior military training. In September of 1942, Bill was transferred to the Pittsburgh C.I.C. office, and remained there until the summer of 1944. He received a number of special assignments including background investigations for personnel in the Manhattan Engineer District (M.E.D.). Knowledge about these cases was to be strictly limited to his CO.  

Other assignments included providing discreet surveillance of civilian personnel as they moved through the Pittsburgh airport. During one such case he was shadowing a man dubbed “the absent-minded professor” who was changing planes in Pittsburgh. The scientist’s code name was ‘Nicholas Baker.’ Sitting in the waiting area, he immediately became lost in a book and seemed to disregard the reboarding announcements made over the loudspeaker, calling him by name. Afraid the professor would miss the flight, Bill decided to move in and “accidentally” stumbled across the professor’s feet to get his attention. Then, as Bill helped the professor to stand up, Bill told him quietly he had “better get on the plane” and directed him to the gate. Bill found out after the war that his charge at the airport was the Danish scientist – and Nobel Prize winner - Neils Bohr, who had been smuggled out of Denmark to England. He played a significant role in the early research and development leading up to the creation of the atomic bomb and was a frequent visiting consultant at Los Alamos.  

In the summer of 1944 Bill was ordered to Baltimore for an interview regarding attendance at a Military Police Officer Candidate School. Intending to turn down the OCS offer, he and his pregnant wife, Emily – a native New Yorker who had just learned how to drive – drove to Baltimore. However, his friendly interview with the Lt. Col. was terminated with the comment that the Transportation Corps needed privates on the ALCAN Highway in Alaska, if he was not interested in MPOCS. Bill laughed, shook hands, saluted, and accepted orders and tickets to leave that night on the train for Fort Custer, MI. Emily had to drive back to Pittsburgh alone.  

At OCS, which moved to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in October, there were rumors of some special assignments to be made at graduation. Bill and a new acquaintance, Larry Smith, a young lawyer from Brooklyn, agreed that this would be worth trying for. After graduation, quite a few of the new 2nd Lts., including Bill and Larry, were sent to Camp Ritchie, Maryland, to attend Military Intelligence Class #25.  

In early February 1945, the new 2nd Lts. were interviewed for a special assignment. But by late afternoon only Bill was left in the waiting room and the WAC receptionist said all interviews had been completed. His ego totally deflated, Bill prepared to leave when the office door opened and several officers entered, led by his old friend, now Major, Fred “Dusty” Rhodes. They laughed when Dusty said, with a straight face, “I thought you knew – you were already pre-selected!” It was a gag that Dusty had set up for Bill. The other Major with Fred was Frank Smith, the brother of Bill’s friend Larry, from Military Police O.C.S. The two majors were key assistants to Col. John Lansdale, the Security Intelligence Officer under Major General Leslie R. Groves, head of the Manhattan Project. That evening over dinner and drinks Bill took a good ribbing from his friends.  

Bill’s new assignment was to the Intelligence Security Division, M.E.D., Area Engineer, New York City branch office. But on May 21, 1945, Bill was ordered by the Adjutant General of the War Department to be relieved of his duties with the M.E.D. and was sent to Washington D.C. Two days later he was assigned to the 1st Technical Service Detachment by order of the Secretary of War. All documents, orders, etc. showed no connection with or reference to either the Manhattan Project or the 509th Composite Air Force Group. The purpose of the 1st Technical Service Detachment was to serve as the connecting link between the two organizations. It was clear to Bill by the end of May that, assuming the bomb program stayed on track, he would be going overseas for some official purpose. Bill was cleared at this time as an official courier by the War Department and Major General Groves signed the order. Bill’s first courier activity (May 31 through July 19) was by water – on a cargo ship from Port Chicago, California, to Tinian. The ship transported classified material - high explosives, bomb casings, electronic equipment, etc. Bill traveled back to the states via a 509th Green Hornet C-54.  

Events specific to the movement of the “Fat Man” core started on July 23, 1945 when orders came from the War Department. Bill was ordered to proceed to Albuquerque to await air transportation to Guam, Marianas Islands by special plane. He flew from Washington, D.C., to Albuquerque by commercial airplane and was issued a .45 pistol and a hunting type knife. He was driven to Los Alamos in an Army staff car and stayed overnight at Fuller Lodge. The next morning, a small group of Security Intelligence Officers at Los Alamos - (names known at the time but now forgotten) – took him to a small storage shack – actually an “icehouse” – on the shores of Ashly Pond within the highly classified Tech area. They
brought out a container which Bill jokingly called the “bird cage.” It was a steel rod frame with a sphere in the middle, approximately 8 to 12 inches in diameter and between 2 to 3 feet in height. The lead lined sphere contained the plutonium, for what was to be the heart of the Nagasaki bomb – “Fat Man.” The group headed for Kirtland Field in Albuquerque escorted by a few cars with Military Police guards. The only delay en route was a flat tire as they descended the winding mountain road from Los Alamos to Albuquerque.

A Green Hornet C-54 was waiting at Kirtland Field to take Bill and the “bird cage” to Tinian via San Francisco and Hickam Field in Hawaii. They landed at Hickam in the early morning hours and were met by a friend of Bill’s from Pittsburgh. The Honolulu Counter Intelligence Officer, George B. Raisin, and a contingent of guards, were ready to watch over Bill and the plane. While the plane was refueled, the guards cleared the dining hall at 3:00 A.M. so that Bill could eat and wash up – with the bird cage always at his side.

Also at Hickam Field that early morning was an Army Colonel in transit from recent fighting in the Pacific, looking for a way to move his men back to the states. He heard about the C-54 sitting on the runway with only one passenger. Pushing his way past the guards around the plane, he started up the steps to the plane’s doorway where Bill was positioned. Bill requested the officer to back off and not attempt to enter the plane. But the Colonel was determined. Bill finally unholstered his .45, cocked it, and said, “You can’t come aboard this plane!!” After some further “discussion” in front of the “shaking” .45 automatic, the Colonel backed down and left the C-54. Bill turned to the 19 year old Italian pilot from Brooklyn and told him to “get this plane off the ground and out of here, or I’m going to get in trouble!” They took off.

During the flight from Johnson Island to Tinian, they ran into bad weather and the flight became a bit rough. Bill was afraid the opportunity to use the hunting knife he had been issued might develop. The “bird cage,” which had floatation and signaling devices built in should it be necessary to jettison it or ditch the plane, had been strapped down to the plane’s floor. The knife was to be used to cut the straps. The plutonium was not be lost, no matter what.

Upon arrival at Tinian, the “package” mentioned in his orders was turned over to its rightful owners, the technical personnel of Project Alberta. Bill stayed in Captain William “Bud” Uanna’s tent. (Uanna later worked in the Personnel Security Program for the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C., at the same time that Bill ran the Personnel Security Program at Los Alamos.)

Bill hoped that he would be on Tinian when the “Enola Gay” completed its mission of dropping “Little Boy” on Hiroshima on August 6, but he was recalled to Washington DC to deliver documents to General Groves. When he arrived in Washington, he knew that the mission had been successful from the atmosphere and the conversation among the personnel in the General’s office.

Bill then received orders on August 10, 1945 to move from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco for another potential trip to Tinian with another plutonium core, located at Mare Island Navy Yard. He was at station there for a few days awaiting final orders to go. Finally his driver arrived to pick him up at the Fairmont Hotel, but as they prepared to drive away, the car had a flat tire. While they were changing it, word came to cancel the trip and Bill checked back into the hotel. Within literally a matter of hours the town started to celebrate as word of Japan’s surrender hit the airwaves. The delivery of the second plutonium core for the third bomb was unnecessary.

After checking with the Oakland California Security and Intelligence staff, Bill was assigned as a Security Courier, with the tasking of collecting all Manhattan Project sensitive and classified material, explosives, documents, and equipment from the West coast facilities to other more secure locations. Material was moved by automobile, truck, plane and freight train.

In October 1945, Bill returned to Washington, D.C., and received compliments from General Groves. Instead of being re-assigned to the MED New York Office for termination of his military service, Bill asked for and received a transfer with his family by private auto to Los Alamos. He was assigned as Post Intelligence Officer at Los Alamos in March 1946. He stayed on as the first civilian employee and Security Branch Chief in the Intelligence and Security programs and later stayed on with the Atomic Energy Commission. (WHK - Rocky Hill, Connecticut)

Training Others

George C. Stone II, Beta Delta ’43: In 1943, I attended Officer Candidate School for the Army Air Corps at Miami Beach for aircraft maintenance. I went to B-17 Transition School at Sebring, Florida, B-24 Flight Cruise Control School at Lowry Field in Denver, and B-29 Flight Engineering Transition School at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama. With secret clearance, I also had special training for in-flight service at Wright Aeronautical Corp. at Patterson, N.J. for the most powerful engine used in WWII and at Minneapolis Honeywell for automatic pilot operations.

My entire service was within the continental U.S. in training and training others for overseas duty. After the war, I helped to reactivate Alpha Beta Delta, serving as the first #1 and initiating the first batch of pledges. (GCS – New Canaan, Connecticut)

Flying P-51 Ground Support for the Chinese

James O. Nordlie, Epsilon ’45: In February 1943, like thousands of other young people at age 19, I found myself on a troop train bound for Miami. I had enlisted in the Army Air Corps, following two years at the U of Michigan School of Engineering. I expected to do two things – to serve our country in a time of need, and have an experience unlike any other.

After fourteen months of training, I received my pilot wings and commission in March 1944. The next five months were spent in what is termed “transitional training.”

In September 1944, at government expense, I began my round the world tour, leaving from Miami, passing through Bermuda, Casablanca, and Cairo; then on to Abadan, Saudi Arabia, Karachi, and Ondal, India.

After a month of further training, we ferried some new P-51 fighters over the hump to Kunming, China. After a short stop for squadron assignment, we flew to Chengtu, and finally Hsian, in north central China.

When we arrived in China, we replaced the original “Flying Tigers” which had been disbanded.
After the brief period in Chengtu, we moved up to Hsian, China, which was the capital hundreds of years ago. Hsian was our base of operations, flying missions deep into northeast China, the whole of which was controlled by the Japanese.

We did what was called “interdiction,” with some ground support for the Chinese military. For single-engine fighters (we were flying P-51s), we flew some shorter ground support missions for the Chinese Army, as our base was only sixty miles from the Japanese line, on the other side of the Yangtze River. Most of our missions were longer, running three to six hours. Our work was all low-level, mostly dive bombing and strafing—bridges, rail yards, airfields, warehouses, and military installations. Besides “ground fire,” our biggest problems were bad weather, mountains, dust storms, lack of navigational aids, and shortages of fuel.

Were we ever involved in any historic event? I would say no, not historic. But every mission was exciting, as we worked the whole north-east quadrant of China, from the Yangtze River bend, up over the Great Wall, all the way to the sea in the east, and back to Hsian at the end of the flight.

Was I ever wounded or captured? No. However I was pretty banged up when the engine in the P-40 I was flying quit on take off, down in India.

Some days were scarier than others. My most memorable flight occurred when I was strafing a rail yard out on the coast. We had dropped our auxiliary tanks for safety reasons previous to strafing. Unfortunately, I had forgotten to switch to an inboard tank. I was right down on the tracks and my engine quit cold. In a panic, I switched tanks, my engine caught, and I scraped my way out of the yard and got back to my home base.

We operated out of Hsian until the end of the war. At that time we flew planes down to Shanghai and turned them over to the Chinese Air Force. After three weeks in Shanghai, we proceeded by escort carrier to Hawaii, and finally docked in Seattle. After a week there, I flew to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, to be discharged in January 1946.

I was in service just over three years, with approximately one year spent flying in north-central China with the 14th Air Force. In 1946, after the war, I returned to the University of Michigan and finished in 1948.

To me, the service was an invaluable experience. I learned the real values in life, how lucky we were to be born in the USA, and the disciplines necessary to move forward in this long and wonderful adventure we call life. (JON – Birmingham, Michigan)

Navy in WWII and Air Force in Korea

Cyrus R. White, Nu ’49: I was in the Navy as a V-5 in World War II. Later I graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1949 and received my US Air Force Wings in 1950. I flew one hundred combat missions in Korea, flying the F-86, with two kills on MIG 15s. I received the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross and retired as Captain. (CRW – Burlingame, California)

Submariner’s Brush with Death

Robert H. Cooley, Psi ’50: It was about 6:00 in the morning of 15 May 1945 when the submarine USS Sea Poacher 406 surfaced off the Kurile Islands and engaged in a battle with six small Japanese freighters. I was a 19-year-old, third class signalman, and was a sight-setter on a five-inch gun on the bow of the 300-foot submarine. I was wearing a helmet to protect the telephone I was talking into as I took information from the tower. If I hadn’t had that helmet, I would not be here today.

The opening range was 600 yards. It was foggy. You’d go into a fog bank and come out of a fog bank. As I fired my five inch shell, others fired guns on a deck above me and at other locations on the boat. We all shot at the same time.

One gunner shot a .20 mm gun on the cigarette deck above me, but the first shot that he fired didn’t leave the barrel of the gun. Ice had formed within the gun’s barrel. The second shot exploded the first, shattering the barrel and sending shrapnel flying. I was hit, I opened my eyes and all I could see was a pool of blood. Then I blacked out. I don’t remember anything until I came to, below.

I later learned that I was nearly thrown overboard by the gunnery officer. You can’t jeopardize the life of 62 men for one man. He felt my pulse and I had none. My eyes were rolling back in my head. But as the gunnery officer prepared to throw me over, another man intervened.

Ted Zung, a big kid from Notre Dame, picked me up and moved me under the cigarette deck. I lay there until the battle was over. After the battle the chief pharmacist came topside and picked me up. Two other men had been injured, but suffered superficial wounds that could be treated on the boat. I had to be taken to a hospital at Midway, where I stayed for six weeks. All three of us received the Purple Heart.

After recuperating, I went home on leave and then returned to Pearl Harbor to finish out my service, serving on the USS Sea Lion.

The event, which occurred so many years ago, has had a lasting impact on my life. I don’t let things bother me. I think I know how fortunate I am to be here. My life could have been over when I was 19. Instead, I went on to marry Carolyn, my wife of fifty years (as of 17 April). We have two married children and a grandson. I’ve been active in my church, sold life insurance for forty-four years, and was the announcer at local high school football games for a number of years.

My close brush with death makes me grateful for each day. I had a second chance. (RHC – Tampa, Florida)
**Forecasting Weather from the Azores**

William A. Blair, Epsilon Delta ’39: I served in WWII in the Air Force as a Weather Forecaster in the Atlantic, Azore Islands at Hagena Base as a Lieutenant First Class. (The Azores, nine hundred miles off Africa, were owned by Portugal and considered a neutral territory.) We were the most used airport in the last stages of the war. Planes from the States to Europe had us and Iceland as routes to Europe.

We provided weather forecasts to North Africa, France, and England. Prior to the Azores, I was stationed in Boston, Long Island, and Canada. As I was married in 1938, I was exempted until 1943. So I went for training at the University of Washington and at U.C.L.A. in California. After serving for three and a half years, I was discharged in June 1946. (WAB – Santa Barbara, California)

**Globe-trotting**

Voit Gilmore, Sigma ’39: WW2 made a globe-trotter out of me. The first three years with Pan Am Airways, flying Miami-Cairo-Kunming as an air operations officer, with residences in Brazil, Africa, and India. The last three years (1943-46) an officer in the Navy, Naval Air Transport Service, from Honolulu to Guadalcanal to Manila to Yokohama to Bikini Atoll. Survived an air crash in Sudan and back to North Carolina safely. (VG – Pinehurst, North Carolina)

**Marseilles to Dachau with Munich**

Cranston F. Jones, Epsilon ’48: I went into the service in 1942 and was inducted at Ft. Sheridan, Illinois. After basic training in Florida and a stint at “map-making” in South America, I came back to the USA and was sent to Camp Campbell, Kentucky, to train in a new armored division to be sent overseas. After training we went to Europe on a troopship, which left New York in October 1944 and landed in Marseilles, France.

I was in the 14th Armored Division of the 7th Army. I was trained to be an artillery forward observer (something never to be). We were assigned to an infantry company and directed the firing of our guns, which were about four miles to our rear. The guns mounted on our mobile M-7 tanks were 105 Howitzers. Needless to say, the firing directions were crucial so that our infantry would not get hit (nor would the “forward observers”). We had to see the enemy to direct correct firing of our guns. We fought going north across France and into Germany. We crossed the Rhine River and came south and east ending our battles near Munich, Germany after liberating the Dachau concentration camp. Fortunately the war was over in May of 1945. Our division was in combat for over 150 days.

I traveled across Europe for a few months trying to get back to the States and finally made it on a troopship out of Antwerp, Belgium, in January of 1946. Unfortunately, the troopship cracked up in the North Atlantic storms, and we were forced to be towed by the US Coast Guard to Argentai, Newfoundland, to get it repaired. After two weeks we finally left Newfoundland and limped into New York harbor. You can rest assured that there was not a dry eye on the ship when we saw that Statue of Liberty.

I resigned from the Army and returned to Michigan, graduating in 1948. After graduation, I took a direct commission as a LT in the Air Force Reserve and completed my twenty years of federal service. Currently, I am a major in the Retired Reserve of the US Air Force. (CFJ – Bradenton, Florida)

**Japanese Language Course to Medic**

Robert D. Thornton, Alpha ’39: In early 1944, I was taken from my preparation toward Harvard’s doctorate in English Philosophy as Naval Agent, and started on my way to the Navy Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado, despite the fact I had been classified 4-F because of a heart murmur. “No matter,” encouraged Commander Hindmarsh as he signed me up for Japanese program. I became a Yeoman, 2nd Class.

Learning Japanese as quickly as possible was tough. Each week demanded five fourteen-hour days of classes and homework and a long Saturday morning of examinations. Completion of each volume of the course brought tests over the whole and a decision as to whether or not the axe should fall. My studies suffered an interruption when the Navy quixotically decided to advance every student from enlisted-man yeoman to officer ensign. Here again my heart murmur was caught and given as the reason for my dismissal from the Navy and to stand by for a review board. Week after week, cut off from classes, I awaited the board. When at last it met, an elderly admiral called me back in and asked, “Well, Thornton, do you still want to stay in this God-damn Navy?” So back to Japanese, cold as could be, laboring, never again to regain my “A” ranking.

Ultimately I graduated with a fistful of credits towards a third M.A., this time in the Japanese language. I was sent on to the Navy Advanced Intelligence School. With never having learned how to fire any kind of weapon, but loaded with a trunk of dictionaries, I was flown to Pearl Harbor, where I served under Admiral Nimitz, in the Japanese section of Joint Intelligence Pacific Ocean Area. By the Spring of 1945, I had become a Lieutenant (j.g.); it was then that the serious fighting began on Okinawa. Word went out for volunteers as additional language officers. I was accepted.

My preparation could have lasted no more than that one hot day before my departure. Those of us flying out to Okinawa were issued battle clothes, heavy boots, helmet, and a knapsack for this and that, then pricked with shots. Last but not least, a Springfield rifle with ammunition was handed out. Somehow I found an hour or so to get over to West Loch, where my younger brother, transportation officer at the Navy Ammunition Center, knew about weapons. He required no more than a minute or two to see that I would be dead before I could fire my Springfield. Taking the big rifle from me, he substituted a carbine, the much smaller and lighter device, as well as several clips of bullets. Soon thereafter it was a takeoff to Guam and then to the northwesterly takeoff to Okinawa in a huge plane loaded with blood.

On our approach to land, the pilot announced, “You may have noticed that we have started to circle; we will continue doing so until the Japanese cease causing trouble at the airstrip. By the way, that’s the Battleship Missouri down there bombarding away.” We could observe the recoil from each firing of the 16-inch guns spreading out across Pacific water. Then we landed at Kadena, the main airport at Shuri being under attack.

Toward the north of Okinawa, Americans had set up a very temporary prisoner of war stockade to contain those Japanese POWs too severely wounded to keep up with their comrades being taken to a regular stockade. On a spot of bare ground, out away from brush and trees, a barbed-wire enclosure had been raised with a pit dug out in one corner as a primitive toilet facility. Soldiers of the US Army stood guard at the single gate. Now under order orders of this army, I assumed command of the stockade.

The POWs lay on the soil in dire distress. Exposed to all weather, they had the essentials of rations and water; but few could benefit...
from the same because of their encrustation from hiding and the fly-blown putrefaction of their wounds. Most evidenced heavy pain; some had fallen unconscious and were dying. One could see the stoical and gaunt, the proud, the pale and unshaven, the tattered and rotten clothes. Where were the doctors? Where were the palliatives? Where was the hygiene? Was every one of these Japanese soldiers to lie there until dead and carried away by the guards?

I got busy. First off, I sought an American authority responsible for treating the American wounded. Our brief encounter ended with my requesting, “What help can you give me? What doctors? What supplies? What anything?” The reply was genuinely considerate: “Lieutenant Thornton, our hands are more than full with our own casualties. The only help that I can possibly offer to you is medical supplies and sanitation aids.” Making good, he laded me up.

Once back at the stockade, I was eager to take a second step. This was to gain my superior’s permission to hold back any POW whose training was that of a Japanese medic in order that he might aid me in treating his fellow soldiers. Such authority was readily forthcoming. Early on, behind the barbed wire, I had noticed that one of the prisoners seemed to be aiding others worse off than he. As he leaned over them, he appeared to be easing their pain. So I caught up with Seichi Ozawa, a Japanese medic, a typical enemy, bushido-proud, tiny and wiry, cold and distant. But willing.

Sitting down alone with Seichi, I struggled in my broken Japanese to tell him what I had brought back from the American field hospital and why I had to have someone like himself at my side. Then we set about the work before us, and I knew right off the bat that there was one lesson that had to be learned. Seichi had led me over to the first prisoner, one with a gaping wound to a leg, and he had reached out to turn that leg into my full view. The prisoner gasped and tried to withdraw, whereupon Seichi struck him across both cheeks before I pulled him away. Then and there I made my point: this stockade was in American hands, not Japanese.

Treatment of the wounded would be my way, not his. Rather sullenly, he came to this understanding. Then we really went to work. And what a partnership it proved to be!

Somehow I arranged for water to be heated so as to cleanse about the wounds as well as the persons. I did what I could to replace rags with something more substantial and clean. And I upped toiletry and toilet, rations and bedding. Seichi had soon examined what I had brought back for him to work with on the wounds, arrested further deterioration wherever he could, then bandaged as he was able with sterilized gauze and tape. Cutting became pretty much my specialty, although there were times when I trusted him with a knife or scissors under my eyes.

Each day we worked long and hard. I wish I could say we achieved miracles, but we did not. Hardly a day did we go without another arrival or two; hardly a day without another body to remove. Just soon enough, both my work and my spirits were enlightened by getting to know several Nisei (second-generation Japanese-Americans) soldiers, themselves interrogators in branches of the Army 1st Division. Often when I found myself stuck, they unstuck me.

It was from these same Nisei that I accepted my first invitation out: supper with them. Outside they had a roaring fire with a large pot over it at half-boil. Ready to go in was a huge, bright green cabbage not long out of a neighboring Okinawan garden. At last something fresh! And, surely, saki as well as hard stuff to set off an assortment of standard rations. I stuffed myself with the cabbage and had nary one thought for what I was to remember about the night soil.

The acute infection hepatitis knocked me for a loop. Just when, I can no longer be sure. I vaguely recall that I made it back to the stockade before succumbing, but how I got to the nearest field hospital I’ll never know. By aid of a Nisei? A guard? Somehow at any rate. I was brought in unconscious, and I remained unconscious for the next six days. When I came out of the darkness and back into the light, I was looking up at an Army doctor-major, a smiling Texan, red-haired, tall and strong, in clean khakis with creases, no less. I am not one to forget his first words: “You know, Lieutenant, we thought we had lost you.” He bent over and injected me. I fell fast asleep and never came to on the long flight by hospital plane back to Pearl Harbor via either Saipan or Guam. I knew no goodbye to my stockade nor one word of thanks to Seichi.

For my next awakening, I was in a very white bed at the Air Naval Hospital above Pearl Harbor. A naval officer nurse in a very white uniform stood by the side of a rather old doctor, who must have returned himself to service. This kind gentleman told me that I was on the mend.… (RDT – Cheraw, South Carolina)

Dancing in the Dark

Louis Head, Chi ’45: 16 March 1945 – Today’s mission is a special assignment for the 451st Heavy Bombardment Group. We are to be the single formation responsible for destroying the target. As the war in Europe nears its end, the intensity of military operations increases both for the Allies, who exert full-strength, maximum-effort attacks, and for the Germans, whose contracting territories concentrate more troops and armaments into a smaller space. The majority of our missions are maximum efforts employing the entire 15th Army Air Force for raids on large target areas. Operating as a single group is out of character.

We know today is different when breakfast is at 8 a.m. instead of 5 a.m., takeoff time is to be at 10 rather than 7. Our task is to strike a synthetic oil refinery, Moosbierbaum, upstream from Vienna. Although bombed before, barges are once again photographed moving coal in and gasoline out of the area. Because there are only
50 flack guns at the target, we assume it will be an easy bomb run. Auxiliary escapee kits containing large chocolate candy bars are left behind. I forget to take my wallet with my St. Christopher coin. We do not foresee the need for these particulars.

Traversing the Adriatic, at 24,000 feet over the Alps, with air speed 160 miles per hour, our formation approaches the check point from which our bomb run is to be lined up. We hold the No. 4 position, just behind and below the lead ship. Additional crew members assigned for the mission are a bombardier and a bomb site, a camera man, and photographic equipment. Should circumstances dictate, the No. 4 plane will be able to lead the bomb run and record a picture of the bomb pattern on the ground. Added crew bring the number of men aboard to eleven; all are nearing the halfway point in the assigned tasks of striking the enemy.

By doing this over and over again, the initial impact of being under fire lessens so that a more objective view of the events is possible. We are becoming an experienced combat crew. The barrages of antiaircraft bursts through which we had slowly flown proved to be less damaging than at first appearance since the black powder smoke from shells, whose fragments long ago had fallen to the ground, continued to hang in the upper atmosphere. Most of a mission consisted of eight hours of formation flying to and from the target with only minutes spent under fire. Altitude was important. The higher we were, the less accurate the enemy's barrage. Fighter plane opposition remained on the ground. F-51 fighter plane escorts and the fifty plane formation with its 500 machine guns kept the Germans from attack. The enemy needed to use its gasoline to best advantage. Attacking B-24 formations was a waste of men, planes, ammunition, and fuel as no 15th Army Air Force Group turned back because of fighter plane opposition. However, gun crews on the ground knew that anti-aircraft protection of their important industrial areas was necessary and effective. It severely disrupted bombing accuracy. As the enemy frontiers contract, the concentration of guns at major targets increased.

After the checkpoint, the group goes through a gentle 300-degree turn, holding airspeed and altitude meticulously. Since the gun crews on the ground cannot predict where the bomb run will start, a 50 gun barrage through which the entire formation would have to fly cannot be used. They are forced to track each plane separately. There is ample time for them to set their fuses to the exact altitude and to accurately calculate the formation's air speed. At the last minute before the bomb run, the lead ship climbs 200 feet and increases air speed from 160 to 170 miles per hour. There is no time for gunners below to change their fuses. Their antiaircraft fire is all behind and below the formation. The run is relatively undisturbed. Bomb run photographs and later recognizable data show the target destroyed. The formation does receive damage, but only one plane will not return to base.

Shell bursts from guns tracking our plane fall into the empty air below and behind us. However, above and in front of our plane, those intended for the lead plane fall close by. There are no direct hits, but concussion waves from close bursting shells rock our plane. There is the gravel-like sound of shrapnel striking the underside of our B-24. After bombs away and the steep right turn and the loss of altitude to clear the target area, all crew members are contacted. None are injured. Damage assessment reveals the No. 2 engine is without manifold pressure and not functioning. It is feathered—shut off. No. 3, smoking and considered on fire, is likewise feathered. The 100 octane gasoline floods the bomb bay area and leaves streams of fuel flowing into the sky behind us. Fifteen minutes later these leaks spontaneously stop.

Since the remaining two engines continue to run, the main fuel tanks are considered intact. Auxiliary supplies in the wing tip tanks are thought to have emptied from injured connections to the automatically balanced main tanks. We steadily lose altitude. There are poor responses from the controls on the flight deck. In the waist area, a sixty-eight inch defect had been torn through the plane's aluminum siding. It disrupts the control cables to the tail section. The engineer and his assistant splice the major cables together, while the gunners throw all unfastened equipment out the waist windows. The navigator gathers his broken navigational instruments from the floor. The radio operator calls his base radio for a heading to Russian-held territory not far east of the target.

There is a calm objectivity on-board our plane. The Austrian Alps reach for our plane as we rapidly surrender altitude from 24,000 feet. The Alps are the single source of terror. These mountains with their picturesque villages, their grand vistas, tall peaks, and deep valleys impede travel should your purpose not be a vacation and your journey not be along the thoroughfares or beaten paths. As flyers we had to clear them, for friendly landing fields are found only in Switzerland, far to our west. There is no turning back. We either hold sufficient altitude and clear them, or we crash land or bail out into inhospitable terrain.

Turning the switches to windmill the No. 2 engine, it does not start. The No. 3 engine does. There is no smoke or signs of previous fire, and the altimeter needle becomes steady. As the restarted engine pulls its share of power, it becomes possible to clear the mountains. A serenity then settles in. The Alps, most often seen from over 20,000-plus feet are now close at hand as we pass them by only 9,000 feet. Covered with snow, their clean whiteness smooths the landscape, rounds the sharp precipices, and creates a sense of relaxation and peace.

But the reconnected cables cause permanent adjustments to the controls. What we never suspect is the adverse effects of having them set in exaggerated positions. The new position makes the plane uncontrollable and cable repairs are released. The plan is to return the plane and crew as close to base as possible, and there is an emergency landing strip fifteen minutes away at Zara, Yugoslavia. Our plane remains stable, but it is not flying straight and level. The inboard engine on our left wing is not running, and the balance of power between the wings is not even. We cannot trim the plane because the cables were severed, but we hold air speed and maintain altitude.

As we start to let down from 8,000 feet to approach the landing field at Zara, we are unsettled as if flying to discordant music. Our rhythmical life is shattered. The condition of the plane removes us from the predictable return formation and landing at Castelluccio. Damage to the hydraulic system, landing gear, tires and breaks is unknown. Our ship, despite its damage, easily maintains air speed.
and altitude. We are thankful for that and for the three engines that are working well. Because we are free of immediate challenges, we forget about the streams of 100 octane gasoline that flowed from the bomb bays as we left the target.

From a communications standpoint, silence supports the sound of the running engines moving at a ground speed of 200-plus miles per hour. So, with a sudden lurch of the plane as each engine, out of gas, abruptly stops (a seat-of-the-pants sensation that lifts you tight against your seat belt and throws your shoulders forward towards the control column), the abandon-ship bell sounds.

Speed is one of the ingredients essential for the flying formula, as are the shape of the wing and the measurability of time. Movement through the air produces the lift to raise the plane from the ground. Without the engines, speed precipitously evaporates. Air speed is held just above a minimum flying speed. Altitude falls rapidly as we maintain 120 miles per hour.

Standing in the bomb bay, girding myself to leave the plane, it seems unreasonable to abandon ship and unsafe from a common sense standpoint. Notwithstanding that the plane is destined to crash, an overpowering impulse to hold onto familiar machinery damps my enthusiasm to jump into the unknown. We nursed our plane all the way from the target. A landing field was minutes away. The thrill of parachuting was the furthest thing from my mind. To be forced to leave is a disappointment almost as distressing as being afraid to jump. Staying with the plane was a terminal pathway if there ever was one. All of us instinctively knew that such a route was to be avoided. The bell sounds. Each of us is free to abandon the airplane. Once the plane’s trajectory is established, the pilots will leave and the controls will be unattended.

I dive headfirst through the open bay doors at a time lapse that positions me some distance from the others from the ground. With the chute opened, the terror of abandoning ship ended. The thrill of parachuting was the furthest thing from my mind. To be afraid to jump. Staying with the plane was a terminal pathway if there ever was one. All of us instinctively knew that such a route was to be avoided. The bell sounds. Each of us is free to abandon the airplane. Once the plane’s trajectory is established, the pilots will leave and the controls will be unattended.

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into our first experience with the German Volksturm. That night, we billeted in Wehen and in the middle of the night listened to an hour or so of a beautiful roar. The Fourth Armored Division was moving through us. We were off the front for the first time in a month!

Much earlier in my Army days, in bayonet training at Camp Butner, was when I first met Captain Charles Brosseau. He had those thick glasses that gave him a wild look to start with. “You stick that Kraut in the belly, pull out his guts, smash his head in, smash his throat – then sit down on him and have a cigarette!”

I remember him again that first day of combat on the Mosel: We were digging in our 60 mortars along the railroad tracks when I had the first 88 aimed at me. I couldn’t believe the sound! I thought maybe the devil had come up and roared at me. We took about four of them, all close (About a second or two of sound before they hit). A few minutes later the Captain came steaming up: “Bessey, get your mortar and come with shells! I got a Kraut machine gun spotted across the river! We’ll climb up those vineyards and draw his fire! You nail him with the mortar!”

No chance to think that over. Up we went, slipping and scrambling (those vineyards are mostly shale), the mortar on one shoulder and four shells in a carrier on the other. Brosseau was giving some Texas yells: “We’ll get the son-of-a-bitch!” Guess what we got – that’s right – two more 88s right at us. Brosseau let out a “Wahoo!” and we went sliding down that steep bank back to the town. I couldn’t help giving out a few “Yahoos” myself. It may be the only time I got a kick out of being shot at.

I didn’t see Brosseau again until a reunion in the mid-1980s. At the reunion I recognized him, and it just popped out: “Brosseau, you son-of-a-bitch, what happened to you?” He said, “Hell, Bessey, there were people getting killed up there. I went back to S2 (regimental HQ).” (WCB, Ph.D. – San Francisco, California)

**Commanding Convoys**

**Lewis M. Andrews, Alpha ’39:** In 1940, age 22, I was rooted in the belief that the U.S. would be in a war that was threatening to engulf the world, and I had the conviction that I should create my own billet rather than have it created for me. The Navy was most appealing, and I did thirty days at sea on the battleship New York as an apprentice seaman, to qualify for Midshipman school.

My duties as a Navy officer were varied. My first assignment was in 1941 as Executive Officer on a small minesweeper, a training ship at the Naval School of Mine Warfare in Yorktown, Virginia. After a few months, I assumed command of the minesweeper. In early 1942, I was transferred to take command of 110 foot subchaser, being completed in Stamford, Connecticut. We convoyed merchant ships in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, difficult times with marauding U-boats. In early 1943, I was ordered to be Executive Officer on a Corvette in Quebec. We brought her to Boston, and then to convoys from New York to the Caribbean. In late 1943, I was ordered to the destroyer Sims (DE-154) as Executive Officer. We had eleven officers and 200 men, and duties were to convoy across the North Atlantic. I took over as Commanding Officer in early 1944, the height of my Navy career and promotion to Lieutenant Commander.

During the war, I wrote a number of sea stories for the *New York Times*. I received eight medals, including Russian gratitude, Combat at Sea, European-African campaign, and the Queen of England for the Battle of the Atlantic. (LMA – St. Petersburg, Florida)

**Organizing Cargo Operations**

**Stephen C. Cook, Eta Delta ’39:** After training at the Naval Net Depot at Tiburon, California, I was stationed at the Naval Airbase in Maui for nineteen months. After four months in Oakland, I went through Pearl Harbor on my way to Roi-Namur, Kwajalein Atoll, from February 1944 through September 1945.

At the Atoll I served as Cargo Officer; coming ashore during the invasion on an LST, and I organized the unloading operations. At the time the assault forces withdrew, there were no facilities for the orderly handling of cargo, since the Japanese facilities had been destroyed. It was left to me to organize the cargo operation and carry out the discharge with rapidity and efficiency, despite limited facilities and lack of trained personnel. (SCC – Asotin, Washington)

**Convoys and Minesweeping**

**Seth Taft, Kappa Delta ’44:** As a Chi Psi at Yale, I joined the U.S. Naval Reserve, married a Vassar graduate Naval Officer (she consented to marry me AFTER I got my stripes) and chose “Atlantic” duty because she was stationed at the Midshipman School on the Smith College Campus in Northampton, Mass. I chose “Destroyers” because I was a sailor and wanted the smallest vessel that was a REAL ship. I did convoy duty for twelve round trips of the rough North Atlantic Ocean. We managed to avoid the German submarines, but did a “feint” on southern France in June of 1944 to divert Germans from the Normandy Beach. Our destroyer was converted to be a destroyer “minesweeper” and sent to the Pacific to “lead” the invasion of Japan, in FRONT of our big battleships. A million casualties predicted! When we got to San Diego,
Bugles and Radios

John F. Schwanhausser, Rho ’49: I was with the 104th Infantry Division during WWII, and I am quite involved in its veterans’ association, being elected president this summer. We will celebrate our 60th reunion in September 2005.

In basic training at Camp Carson, the first sergeant got up in front of the company and said, “I’m looking for somebody that can blow the bugle. I need somebody to send to bugler school.” I thought, “Why not?” One of my buddies said I’d be sorry; never volunteer for anything. But there were two of us who did volunteer, and reported to the sergeant after formation. He said he needed two guys to send to bugler school and didn’t want any f—ups. “You’re going to Georgia every day. I’ll keep you off KP, but if you miss bugler school and try to go somewhere else, you’ll have steady KP from there on after.” So we went, and nobody there could blow the bugle as well as I could. The lieutenant who was in charge of this thing found that out after he asked some of the people to blow calls. He said, “Now you see that hill over there? I want your guys to go over that hill, every day, and stand on the other side and blow in the opposite direction. And yes, Schwanhausser, you teach these guys how to play the bugle.” So I got out of an awful lot of training and forced marches.

Originally I was an assistant BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle] man, because I was big and could carry the extra belt of ammunition. Two days before combat, while we were sitting in Belgium, waiting to go into combat in Holland, the then-communications chief wangled himself a job in battalion. His best buddy became communications chief and suggested I be a radio operator. Anything but a BAR man, and as far as I’m concerned, that’s what saved my life. Of 190 guys in the company, only six of us came back without Purple Hearts, and I was one. I was one of the people actually on the front line, the rest of them were cooks.

Two or three days into combat, in November, I was in a large shell hole, a bombshell hole, with four other guys, where we had taken cover. The captain went forward and called me to come with him. I heard something coming in, so I felt right on my face on the downside of the hole. It happened, and I was okay, so I got up and followed the captain and didn’t think any more about it. Later the radio began to fail and I sent one of my runners back to battalion to get me a new battery because the one I had was dying. Three-quarters of an hour later, when the new battery arrived, I went to take off the battery cover to replace the old battery and couldn’t get the cover off. Well, there was a piece of shrapnel that had gone through four inches of battery and was sticking out on my side. I found out later that those other guys in the hole were all killed. So, once again, I was just lucky. I mean, here’s a piece of shrapnel. The radio literally saved my life.

The 104th was committed to combat in late October of 1944 in Holland to clear the Germans from areas above Antwerp so that port could be used to support the European offensive. We accomplished that mission in two weeks and were then committed in the Auehden, Weisareiler, Eschusiter area and cleared the area by the Roer River by 14 December when the Battle of the Bulge began. After other units reduced the Bulge, we crossed the Roer and drove to and occupied Cologne. When the Bridge at Remagon was captured, we crossed into and broke out of the bridgehead, driving East to Marburg and then North to Paderborn, encircling the Ruhr Industrial area. From there we drove East and met the Russians at Torgau. The division was returned to the States in expectation of joining the Japanese War, but was disbanded after V-J Day. (JFS – Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

Bombs Over Europe

Emlen L. Martin, Eta ‘49: In 1942, I enlisted in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program. Following training I became a Martin Marauder (B-26) bomber pilot.

Our crew was formed, picked up a new plane from an east coast depot, and flew it via the northern route to Europe. Here we were assigned to the 344th Bomber Group of the 9th AF. I flew 50 combat missions from England, France and Belgium in support of the Allied push from Normandy through Germany. I returned to the U.S. shortly after VE day for discharge and college entry via the GI Bill. (ELM – Exeter, New Hampshire)

Circling Sharks

Clark E. Pardee, Epsilon ’45: The son of a World War I veteran, I enlisted at age 19, hoping to become a pilot, but after washing out of flight school, I trained as a B-24 engineer. In February 1945 I was stationed on Morotai, a small, coral island in the Dutch East Indies between New Guinea and Borneo, and began a series of bombing missions over Japanese-held territory.

The fact that our 27th mission fell on Friday the 13th of June was no big deal. Of more concern was the target: an emplacement of anti-aircraft guns and artillery on the hills above the harbor at Balikpapan, Borneo. The harbor, one of Japan’s principal sources of oil, was said to be the most heavily defended in the Pacific. The mission was to knock out the big guns, preparing the way for an amphibious landing.

At 6:40 A.M., we left Morotai and nearly six hours later rendezvoused with others, forming a phalanx of 25 bombers. As the planes approached the coast of Borneo, we began the bomb run, descending to 14,500 feet and opening the bomb bay doors. Ahead we could see bursts of anti-aircraft fire. Doubling as a gunner, I was in the top turret watching for enemy fighter planes, which followed from a respectful distance, apparently radioing the bomber’s precise positions to the anti-aircraft gun crews.

As we approached the target, the bombardier lined up the cross hairs on the bombsight on the big guns below, and we switched to
We all voted to jump.

As the last engine sputtered, we bailed out, landing in the water scattered over eleven miles. I floated in the water buoyed only by my “Mae West” life jacket. In my haste to leave the plane, I had jumped without my one-man raft. At first I saw no one else, but as I rose on a 15-foot swell, I spotted other crew in rubber rafts. For several minutes I struggled to reach them, and finally they spotted me. I was able to climb in one of the tiny rafts with another crew member.

The pilot of our plane was the last to leave the craft, and he had snagged his gear on a fire extinguisher. Just as he freed himself, the then-unpiloted plane went into a spin, and the centrifugal force pinned him against the bulkhead. But then the plane turned on its back, throwing the pilot through the bomb bay. He bobbed to the surface, and found himself alive, but with a cut to the bone from knee to ankle. At the moment he heard the hiss from his leaking raft, he also saw a big shark, apparently attracted by the blood in the water. His emergency kit, including rubber patches, had gone to the bottom of the ocean with his parachute, so he took out his Boy Scout knife, cut a piece of rubber from his heel and stuffed it into the hole in the raft. He breathed more air into the raft, allowing it to float, barely. For nearly four hours, he watched the shark circling and passing close enough that he could have touched the dorsal fin. If so inclined, the shark could have easily overturned the tiny raft.

Another B-24, also damaged when we were, had been trailing along with us, and we in the water drew assurance from the sight of it circling in the distance, but then that plane disappeared, leaving us alone in the Pacific as the darkness approached.

Unknown to us at the time, the other B-24 had radioed a distress call for us. Nearly four hours after our B-24 went down, a seaplane arrived (accompanied by the other B-24), at the southern end of our bail-out path, eleven miles from where the shark still toyed with the pilot. Once on the water, the pilot of the seaplane was unable to see any of the rafts, because of the high swells. So the other B-24 flew the length of the path 100 feet above the water, dipping down over rafts to mark the spots.

A few days later, the seven surviving members of the crew posed for a photo. The navigator and a military photographer (not normally a member of the crew) were never found. We figured the sharks got them, but we’ll never know for sure.
of the survivors were still around for the fiftieth anniversary, and held a reunion with members of the crew that rescued them. (CEP – Troy, Michigan)

**Flying the B-17, B-18, B-24 and B-29**

W

inton R. Close, Gamma Delta ’38: He received his pilot wings and commission at Kelly Field, Texas, in August of 1939. After a year as a B-17 co-pilot at Langley Field, Virginia, he was transferred to Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, where he served as a B-18 pilot and squadron commander. He flew B-24s with the Atlantic Ferry Command in 1941. From 1941 until 1944, he served successively as squadron commander in B-17, B-24 and B-29 units in Panama, Guatemala and in the United States.

In 1944, he became a B-29 squadron commander in the China-Burma-India theater. During 1945 he was group operations officer in the Marianna Islands. He returned from WWII after 600 combat hours and 35 missions. He retired in 1968 as a Major General after a distinguished career. (WRC – Bluffton, South Carolina)

**The Flying, Fighting Hattendorf Brothers**

W

. S. Hattendorf, Zeta Delta ’38: In the spring of 1941, I drove down to Sewanee to pick up my brother, Rich, when school was out at the University of the South. On the drive back to Wheaton, west of Chicago, we got to talking about the war in Europe and how it seemed likely that the U.S. would get involved eventually. Flying a plane had much more appeal than slogging it out on the ground, so we decided to check out the Air Corps; and went to its recruiting office in Chicago the next week. We both passed the written and physical tests and soon received orders to report to a new primary flying school at Vernon, Texas.

Pearl Harbor occurred as we completed primary and our training was speeded up as we went to the famous Randolph Field at San Antonio for basic training and then on to Lubbock, Texas for twin engine advanced work and ultimately our “wings” and 2nd Lieutenant’s bar. A brief stint on the west coast introduced us to an active Fighter Squadron and the famous twin engine P-38 Fighter plane. Soon we were on our way east to Ireland, England and Africa – following the invasion of sameur. One of our adventures caught the eye of the producer of Gene Autry’s radio program, Melody Ranch, and they turned it into a short radio drama:

**Gene Autry’s Melody Ranch**

Anouncer: Good afternoon. Today, Sgt. Gene Autry of the United States Army Air Forces is going to entertain you and several hundred members of the Army Air Forces from the Army Air Base in Muroc, Calif. That’s a base where men are trained for combat flying in the famous P-38s.

Later in the program, after you’ve heard some of Gene’s songs, you’re going to hear a thrilling story about two pilots of those P-38s. . . And now, Doublemint gum turns this broadcast over to the Army Air Force and Sgt. Gene Autry. (Applause & Music)

**Gene Autry:** Well thank you very much, boys. Say that’s what I call a real welcome. Folks, for weeks, now, we’ve been looking forward to our visit to this spot at the Muroc Army Air Base. Because out here on the sparkling sands of the famous Muroc Dry Lake where automobiles and motorcycle speed demons used to race at break-neck speeds of over 100 miles an hour, is the spot where our fighter pilots are training with that great American fighting plane, the P-38. Under skillful, experienced officers, these boys are learning the last word in combat fighting. (Music Intro)

You know, on this program, we’ve often talked about teamwork: teamwork between the men on production lines at home and on the fighting lines at the front. Teamwork between Army Air Force ground crews and flying crews. Teamwork among the men who operate our Flying Fortresses, our Liberators and our other bombing craft. But there’s another kind of teamwork in our operations that’s equally important. In a story that recently came from North Africa illustrates it pretty well. It’s the story of fighter pilots, each an individual in his own airplane, but each depending on others, not only for success in combat, but often for life itself. (Exotic music)

Wilbur and Richard Hattendorf of Wheaton, Illinois, were brothers. They joined the Air Force together, they trained together, they were commissioned together, and together were assigned to active duty in North Africa. But there were times, during some of the wild dogfights with Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs that took place in the Tunisian skies when they frequently fought separately. Not only from each other, but from McAnulty and Stevens and other men of their squadron. They were flying P-38s, these Hattendorf brothers were. And one day, a few months ago, they were a part of a group of 33 Lightnings escorting a bombing mission against Axis ships off Bizerte in the Sicilian Narrows. Two German ships were sunk and three other vessels hit, as German fighters swarmed up.

**Squawk box:** Attention all planes, attention all planes. Enemy fighter craft coming in at three o’clock. Flights A, B and C, stay on course to protect bombers. The rest of us will go meet ‘em. (Plane dive-bombing noises and dramatic music)

**Autry:** Within three minutes of that warning, a score of Lockheed Lightnings were striking through a formation of 35 German Messerschmitts. The sky was filled with whirling, spitting airplanes. Then, one Messerschmitt went down, and another. The few Nazis that managed to get through to the bombers found the going just as difficult. More than a half-hour passed, and when the German squadron finally turned for home, more than ten of their planes were missing. But there were American planes in trouble too.

**TM:** McAnulty calling Blue Leader. McAnulty calling Blue Leader.

**BL:** Back to McAnulty. Go Ahead.

**TM:** I can’t get back into formation. Badly disabled.

**BL:** What’s wrong?

**TM:** I’ve got one engine and one gas tank. There seems to be something wrong with my elevators and rudder. Not much control.

**BL:** Well, head for home. You’d better hide in the clouds as much as you can. There may be some more MEs hanging around.

**TM:** Yeah, This could be one coming up right now. Talk to you later. (Noise)

**WH:** Mac, Mac, look around, I’m covering your tail.

**TM:** Who is it?

**WH:** Will Hattendorf. Looks like you’ve had a pretty rugged time of it.

**TM:** You can say that again. Next time, don’t sneak up on me that way. I thought at first you were an ME.

**WH:** Yeah, I’d heard your call. I thought I’d see if I could give you some help.

**TM:** You can, brother. Looks like I
gotta go home the hard way. I haven’t got enough gas to make it if I go around the long way.

**WH:** We’ll have to bluff our way through. I’ll check in with the leader.

**BL:** Don’t bother, I’m hearing you. Stay with McAnulty, Hattendorf. Take the shortest route home.

**WH:** Check. Okay, Mac, we’re on our way.

**TM:** Here we go. On our way back we’ll have to do some shootin’ if they send up anybody to intercept us.

**WH:** Yeah, but there’s just one thing wrong with that theory.

**TM:** What do you mean?

**WH:** I’m afraid my shootin’s over for this trip. I ran out of ammunition ten minutes ago. (Dramatic music)

**Autry:** Ernest McAnulty’s P-38 nearly shot up beyond control; Will Hattendorf’s in good flying condition but completely out of ammunition. Between them and their home air base was a series of Nazi air fields. A hundred miles of hostile lands and air. But the situation left them no choice. They started cloud-hopping to safety.

**WH:** So far, so good, Mac. Fifteen minutes more and we’ll be in.

**TM:** I hope it’s only fifteen. We’re not making much time. And there’s something else to worry about.

**WH:** What’s that?

**TM:** Take a look ahead. I looks like visibility unlimited from here on in. Not another cloud to hide in.

**WH:** Fine thing. Never thought I’d see the day I’d be unhappy about good weather. (Dramatic music and shooting noises)

**WH:** Hey, Mac, seems like we’re being shot at.

**TM:** So I noticed. We must be coming over an enemy air field.

**WH:** Yeah, I see it. Pretty good job of camouflage.

**TM:** Not bad anti-aircraft defense either. Are they sending up any fighters?

**WH:** No. In fact there don’t seem to be any on the field.

**TM:** Good.

**WH:** What’s good about it? If they’re not on the field, they must be in the air, and we’re liable to run into them any minute. (Music)

**WH:** Hey, Mac, how’s your gas?

**TM:** Not good. We’ll have to put down at the first air field we come to.

**WH:** Another five minutes and we’ll be okay.

**TM:** Hey, wait a minute. Take a look out there. Ten o’clock.

**WH:** MEs. Must be on patrol or there’d be more than two of them.

**TM:** That’s enough to finish us off. What are we gonna do?

**WH:** Maybe we ought to bluff them. Maybe we ought to start after them and make them think that we’re gonna chase them.

**TM:** Remember my gas. Besides they’d be able to tell in a minute that I’m in trouble.

**WH:** Okay, then I’ll go after them.

**TM:** Don’t be insane. Besides they’d probably call our bluffs. Let’s just keep on going the way we’re going and hope that something happens.

**WH:** It’s going to happen, all right. They’re getting close.

**TM:** Yeah, but they don’t seem too anxious to come in. Hey, there’s something funny about this. Look, they’re bearing off.

**WH:** Probably just to get a good run at us. Brother, now I know what a clay pigeon feels like.

**TM:** But they’re not coming in. They almost look like they’re going to the USS Northampton, CA 26 in the South Pacific. It happened just beyond the hill.

**WH:** Hey, Rich, is that you?

**BL:** Yes, brother, are we glad to see you!

**WH:** Hey, Rich, how’s your gas?

**BL:** Fine to the USS Northampton, CA 26 in the South Pacific. It happened just beyond the hill.

**WH:** Hey, Mac, how’s your gas?

**TM:** Well, I’ll be dog-gonned. It’s another 38.

**WH:** Well, brother, are we glad to see you!

**TM:** Not bad anti-aircraft defense either. Are they sending up any fighters?

**WH:** Probably just to get a good run at us. Brother, now I know what a clay pigeon feels like.

**TM:** But they’re not coming in. They almost look like they’re going to the USS Northampton, CA 26 in the South Pacific. It happened just beyond the hill.

**WH:** Yeah, look at those MEs high-tailing it out of here. I guess three P-38s were too much for them. Even though one was shot up and another one was out of ammunition.

**WH:** What do you mean another ONE? The only ammunition I had was splattered all over those tankers way back. Between us, we couldn’t even worry a seagull. (Music)

**Autry:** Ernest McAnulty’s P-38 nearly shot up beyond control; Will Hattendorf’s in good flying condition but completely out of ammunition. Between them and their home air base was a series of Nazi air fields. A hundred miles of hostile lands and air. But the situation left them no choice. They started cloud-hopping to safety.

**WH:** So far, so good, Mac. Fifteen minutes more and we’ll be in.

**TM:** I hope it’s only fifteen. We’re not making much time. And there’s something else to worry about.

**WH:** What’s that?

**TM:** Take a look ahead. I looks like visibility unlimited from here on in. Not another cloud to hide in.

**WH:** Fine thing. Never thought I’d see the day I’d be unhappy about good weather. (Dramatic music and shooting noises)

**WH:** Hey, Mac, seems like we’re being shot at.

**TM:** So I noticed. We must be coming over an enemy air field.

**WH:** Yeah, I see it. Pretty good job of camouflage.

**TM:** Not bad anti-aircraft defense either. Are they sending up any fighters?
that Tom Owan, Theta Delta ’40 was also aboard the Admiral’s staff. The Northampton was torpedoed and sank at the Battle of Tassafaronga, Guadalcanal on 1 December 1942. Of the five cruisers that were involved in that engagement, only one escaped the Japanese torpedoes. The survivors were shipped to Noumea, Calif., where I was put on staff as a communications watch officer.

My next assignment was to the USS Washington, BB56 as a communications watch officer in March 1943. The Washington was Admiral Lee’s flagship, and it required much activity keeping the Admiral informed. After an accident at sea with the USS Indiana, I became the Radio Officer and CR Division Officer until the end of WWII. During my tour of duty on the Washington, we participated in twelve engagements supporting the various troop landings in the South Pacific. (More about the story of the USS Washington from his friend Jack Dale, Eta ’42, on page 7.) (DCD – Lake Oswego, Oregon)

How I Won the War

William P. Sutter, Kappa Delta ’45: I was in my freshman year at Yale on December 7, 1941. That was a Sunday, and some of us were listening to a pro football game on the radio. I was actually doing some homework, when noises in the Old Campus yard led me to discover that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and the war had become real. One of the aspects of the “old Yale” was that any unexpected major event was an excuse to go to town and trash the Taft Hotel. The war was no exception, and a fair amount of damage was done to the lobby by exuberant (and possibly slightly inebriated) youths. Others marched to the President’s house and were told to continue their studies until further notice. Of course, some students immediately departed to enlist, but the rest of us did, in fact, go on pretty much as before, at least until the spring of 1942, when we learned that Yale would go on a 12-month calendar.

By spring of 1943, I had completed through one semester of my junior year. And then came a letter saying, “Greetings,” the opening words of one’s draft notice, even though I was enrolled in ROTC. I was to be sent to basic training at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Basic training was not precisely what we Yaleies felt we deserved. The war had interrupted what we had anticipated to be a wonderful four-year experience at Yale. We had joined the ROTC to get a commission and here we were as privates undergoing all sorts of unpleasant things such as KP, washing garbage cans, enduring extreme heat and a very nasty Sergeant Sher who hated our guts. Of course, to be fair, he had some reason, because we hated him too, and went out of our way to make his job of making us into soldiers difficult. Thus, the helmet liners, which we wore daily and which bore our last names on the front, were exchanged on a regular basis. Sergeant Sher would shout “Sutter” at one of us, only to have the one he thought was Sutter turn his head and appear to be “Sample.” He was utterly unable to get our identities straight, which gave us inordinate pleasure, although it meant that at times the wrong person would wind up on KP.

One Friday, an old friend from Evanston, John Hunt, and I spent some time indulging in a beer or two at the PX (post exchange – the source of anything available for purchase on an army base) that evening. The PX was a large wooden hall at right angles to one row of barracks, setting them off from a giant drill field that ran across all twenty or so rows. At the end of each of the other rows, similar wooden buildings were used as lecture halls, mess halls, etc. When not in use, these were locked.

By sheer chance, however, after we felt that we had had sufficient beer – around 11:30 that evening – we discovered that one building was open. Proceeding inside, we found that behind the stage at one end was a small room with a record player and connections enabling the record to be heard out on the drill field so that marching drills could be conducted to music. More importantly, we found connections enabling a record to be heard on loud speakers attached to all of the buildings at the end of the rows of barracks.

We also found a recording of the artillery song, The Caissons Go Rolling Along. Well, being patriotic artillerymen, we saw our duty clear. We had locked the entry door when we came in so as not to be found where we did not belong, so privacy was ours. We then connected the record player to all of the loudspeakers on the drill field, turned the volume to high, placed the record on the turntable, dropped out the window, closed it behind us and vanished into the night as the entire camp was treated to the stirring martial music of our selected anthem.

As it took the MPs a considerable time to find which building, all of them locked, contained the source of the music, and as the record player was equipped to continue playing over and over, the concert continued until midnight or so, and John and I, in our bunks in our respective barracks, enjoyed every bar. Unfortunately, the officers’ quarters were on the opposite side of the drill field in the direction the speakers were aimed, so they may have found the music less rewarding.

The ensuing day, Saturday, all classes of basic trainees were at strict attention on the drill field. On a stand in front of the central building, the Colonel in charge of the camp informed all present that he had been an ROTC instructor at some college, that he knew there were many ROTC students amongst the trainees, and that he enjoyed a college prank as well as anybody, but that this was the army and the events of the previous evening could not be disregarded. Therefore, he suggested, if the perpetrator or perpetrators would simply step two steps forward, the entire group would not be confined to base for the weekend instead of having a day and a half leave as usual.

My eyes strained to the right where I assumed John Hunt was at strict attention with his eyes straining to the left. Perhaps not surprisingly, there was no motion on the entire drill field. Leave was cancelled and we were all dismissed, but Saturday afternoon when it appeared that no stoolies would be able to finger the guilty parties, leave was reinstated only a few hours later than normal. This was the first time that I learned that, even in wartime, the army can sometimes be fun.

But all things pass, and ultimately basic training was concluded. Eventually, in January, 1944, OCS opened up, and I went to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, in Class 110 of the Army Artillery OCS. OCS consisted of a 17-week program of courses in everything from motors to map reading to management of an artillery battery, but the longest program and supposedly the most difficult was the gunnery course. It ended four weeks before the end of the entire 17 weeks, and traditionally, those who successfully passed gunnery were assured of receiving their commissions. Actually, for us college men, the course was quite simple, consisting largely of math. We had just finished a semester of math at Yale, so we all passed with flying colors. The next event was the traditional gunnery party held to celebrate those who now expected to become officers. This was held at a resort area of the Ft. Sill base, known as Medicine Lake. No sooner had we unloaded and entered the dance hall, when the waiters offered to supply us with firewater. You must understand that Oklahoma, where Ft. Sill is located, was dry in those days, so this was an offer that we could not refuse. As we indulged in various beverages of
our choice, it soon became apparent to the Yalies in the group that listening to the music had become a tad boring – we, after all, had no one to dance with and, as OCS cadets, we were not officers entitled to cut in on true officers' wives or sweethearts. For this very good reason, other entertainment appeared in order, even if it required making considerable such entertainment by ourselves....

Well, afterwards were those in the Army who took a dim view of the gunnery party. After gunnery, there were only four more weeks of OCS, and the Army devoted all of those weeks to considering whether the entire membership of Class 110 should be ejected and sent off to the infantry as buck privates. In the final event, Class 110 graduated and we became officers and gentlemen, perhaps in the nick of time. Only Suds, who had soiled a high-ranking officer, and perhaps one other were denied such status.

Over a year later, in Manila, I was chatting with a young artillery officer who asked when I had gotten my commission (I was by then a first lieutenant). When I responded that I had been a member of Class 110 at the Field Artillery School, he gasped and said, “110! It is a legend at Ft. Sill. There has never been a gunnery party since.” So again we see that it is not impossible to enjoy life in the Army and even to leave one’s mark.

Eventually I was ordered to Manila, and the view of sailing away from San Francisco Bay was a sight not readily forgotten. All of us officers were on a small ship which, for unexplained reasons, was sent from California to Manila entirely on its own, without any escort. As we boarded, we were given colored cards that determined our living accommodations. Virtually all of the officers wound up below decks in one or another hold where bunks were three deep and there was one large john (head in the Navy) with a few salt-water showers which were available only at a few selected hours daily. However, those amongst whom I found myself who received the right color cards wound up in a large room above sea level. This room was airy (during the day – at night the ship was of course blacked out so that the door to the deck was closed), had bunks only two deep, had many tables and chairs, a sizeable library of paperbacks, and a john with fresh-water showers useable at any time. All in all, this was the place to be.

As everyone who has ever been in the service is well aware, there is the right way, the wrong way, and the Army way of doing things, and there is no explanation for the latter. Thus it was that after a month in the depot, my orders sent me, not to the mountains north of Manila, but into an office in the middle of the city. This office, staffed entirely by civilian Filipino employees, was a censorship office engaged in reading and censoring all the out-going mail from the armed forces in the area. There were only a couple of Army officers around and I never knew what they did, because I never knew what I was supposed to be doing. My only real chore was, once a week, to take my loaded .45 pistol and ride shotgun for a WAC (Women’s Army Corps) captain who was the paymaster for the employees when she went to pick up the payroll. Talk about boring – except for borrowing some of the mail to snoop into for something to do, I spent most of each day doing nothing at all.

It was also on the third floor that, listening to a battery-powered radio that someone owned, we heard the Armed Forces Radio announce that an atom bomb had been dropped on Japan. Nobody seemed to know much about what this meant, or to get terribly excited, but I was an old sci-fi buff and I knew that this was the end of the War. As it turned out, there had to be one more bomb, but I was essentially correct. Destroyed though it was, Manila was, or had been, a beautiful city, with a boulevard running along the bay and with what had been luxury apartments on the opposite side. The big hotel which was the first building as the boulevard began was MacArthur’s headquarters. You could see Corregidor out in the bay, but while I was there it was not yet possible to go visit it. The boulevard looked a lot like the boulevard in Chicago, except that the bay was due west rather than the lake being due east. This caused one to be easily confused as to directions.

One of the few drawbacks of the type of career into which the Army had sent me was that there seemed to be no reason for me ever to be promoted. Consequently, I spent more time as a second lieutenant than almost anyone in the armed forces. Nevertheless, while in my final office (where we sorted out the messages), I finally got a silver bar. Then, when it had finally become time for me to be sent home, some 15 months after I left San Francisco, they offered to make me a Captain, if I would stick around a while longer. However, as it appeared likely that I could get home only a few weeks after Yale had started the 1946-1947 college year, and that I could make up the missed time fairly easily, I opted to return.

Naturally, as good things come to good people, when boarding the ship for the voyage home, I again drew a first-class card and had the best available accommodations.

In any event, I arrived home, was met by my family and my hometown true love, Ditty Manley, and we all had dinner at the Drake Hotel’s famous seafood restaurant. It was really good to be home again, to see Ditty again, and to think about getting back to Yale for one final year. However, when asked about my beloved dog, Pepper, there was an awkward silence until Mother told me that Pepper was gone. Since then I have parted with a lot of pets and, believe me, nothing is harder. (WPS – Winnetka, Illinois)

First Daylight Berlin Bombing

Thomas Sullivan, Epsilon ’37, upper left

Thomas C. Sullivan, Epsilon ’37: After graduating from Michigan, I married a classmate, Harriett Hathaway, and we went to Schenectady, N.Y., where I was employed by General Electric. I entered the U.S. Army Air Corps in September of 1942, and received my Wings in May of 1943. I received my crew and went to England of 1943 as a pilot of a B-24 Bomber. I flew thirty missions over Europe, including the first daylight raid over Berlin. I flew twelve missions out of England with the 8th Air Force and flew eight more missions from Italy. I returned to the U.S. and resumed employment with General Electric. (TCS – Tucson, Arizona)
We would appreciate having other WWII Stories from Chi Psi’s Generation...

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