

**James Howard Council**  
**November 15, 1916 – March 1, 1999**

**U.S. Army- Air Corps**  
**July 15, 1941- December 2, 1945**



My father grew up in rural Arkansas and migrated to Southern California in 1936. He was drafted and inducted into the Army in summer 1941, and served through the duration of the war. This service to his country was among the proudest moments of his life.

Like many soldiers, he bounced around a lot. Sent to basic training in Aberdeen, Maryland, he was then assigned to Ordnance and transferred to Hamilton Field, California. On December 7, 1941 he was loading armaments on airplanes bound for Hawaii. While on short-term loan at Oakland Airport in January 1942 he met his future wife, Leona Heaney, went out on three dates with her, and never saw her again until December 1945, after his discharge.

His route included assignments at Wilmington and Myrtle Beach, North Carolina, then Venice and Fort Myers, Florida. He requested to go to photo school, was selected, and shipped out to Fort Lowry, Colorado, followed by time in Salt Lake City, and Kearny, Nebraska. He promoted along the way to Technical Sergeant, and was next transferred to Peterson Field outside Colorado Springs to help staff, organize and train the new 28<sup>th</sup> Photo Reconnaissance Squadron.

In January, 1944, after a stint in Oklahoma City, his unit shipped out of San Francisco, California for duty in the Pacific. Fortunately for him (and his progeny) he drew the tough assignment of serving on Oahu for the next year. This ended when his squad shipped out in April 1945 for Okinawa, site of the bloodiest battle of the Pacific. Though behind the lines managing a photo reconnaissance lab near Yontan Air Base, he still had some hair-raising experiences. And, most notably, he and his crew developed the first photographs of the devastation at Nagasaki.

After his discharge he headed to Oakland to see Leona. After 3 dates, 4 years of letters, then 5 days together again, they were married December 9, 1949. They were married 53 years until his passing, raised four children, and lived in Livermore, California, where he was one of the first 50 employees at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, working first in refrigeration and later as an Engineering Technician in weapons testing.

My father wrote the following history of his military experience. I added the headings and photos (all from his cache)- otherwise, these are his words and story.

Paul Council- Redwood City, California

### **1941- Drafted, Inducted, Basic and Ordnance Training in Aberdeen, Maryland**

July 15, 1941 was a day in my life that was to be remembered, it was the day of my induction into the Arm Services for one year that turned out to be four and one half years. In Sept. Congress changed the draft law from one year service to two years and of course December 7, 1941 the Pearl Harbor attack changed it for the duration.

On the day I was inducted into the Army, I reported to my draft board office at 3622 East Slauson Blvd., Maywood, Cal. The draft board # was 267. We were given tickets for the street car to ride to down town Los Angeles, where we had our first Army Medical, we went by bus from there to the Induction Center at Fort MacArthur, in San Pedro, Cal. had been sworn into the Army by 6pm. The next day proved to be a little trying for me. We went through the First Air station and got our shots, you walk through a door, after a short arm inspection, and as you try to hold your pants up with one hand and hold undershirt and shirt in the other, the medic on each side of the door hit you in the arm with a shot. From there you were sent out in the hot sun to wait for further orders. Well soon after I got out in the sun the effect of the shot hit me and I passed out but good.



I was sent one week after induction to Aberdeen, Md. for basic training. It was the Ordnance Center for the Army. The trip was a hot one. We had been issued wool uniforms in Cal. and had to wear them to Aberdeen before we were issued Summer uniforms. After 5 days on that train wearing wool uniforms, they smelled us before they could see us. It was hard to believe they would do a thing like this to a soldier, but it happened. We did our basic training and then went into schools for special Ordnance Training. While there we had to build an obstacle course in the swamp area nearby, it was loaded with poison oak and most of us had it. First Aid give us a solution for it but it did not work. We went on a week-end camp out and I went swimming in the bay which was salty water and the poison oak cleared up.



I have been interested in History all my life and from Aberdeen I could go in any direction and find something of interest from the stand point of History. Washington D.C. was 80 miles, Baltimore, Md. was 40 miles and New York City was only a couple of hundred miles away and with a fast train running between N.Y.C. and Washington it was easy to go to N.Y.C. I made two trips there, one trip by car with two friends to New Jersey to a Polish wedding and reception, we arrived too late for the wedding but just in time for the reception. That was one of the most interesting receptions I have ever attended. When we arrived my two friends made me go in first, as I entered

the door a man on my right handed me a glass and the man on my left gave me a fifth of liquor, which was for the three of us. The party was at a night club they had leased for the night and they served chicken dinner or at least they told me it was chicken, we had finished off the fifth by this time and was feeling no pain. By the time we finished dinner we were cold sober and remained that way the rest of the night, even if we were drinking Boilermakers. We got about three hours sleep Sunday AM and drove to New York City, saw a little of the city and drove back to Aberdeen that night.

The other trip to New York City I went alone on the train. I went to see a stage play "The Corn is Green" starring Ethel Barrymore, Sat. afternoon and went to a dance at the Roosevelt Hotel Sat. night. Sunday I spent sight-seeing and of course went to the top of the Empire State Building which was the tallest building in the world at that time. My impression of N.Y.C. was, an interesting place to see once or maybe even twice, but after that it is for the "BIRDS". I would not there for any reason. I could give a lot of reasons why I would not live there, but for the lack of space and time I'll use one see; It was on a Sat. Night on "Times Square" I watched a cabbie trying to make a right turn at a traffic light, the sidewalk in this area was about 20 to 25 feet wide and the foot traffic was so heavy and did not stop and go with the light, that it took the Cabbie 30 minutes to inch his cab through that cross walk. For a Cab driver to take 30 minutes to go about 25 feet is no place for this "Farm Boy".

The cities in the East was different than anything I had seen in the South or West. The highrises, as I walk along the street, impress me about like a row of Redwoods do an ant walking at the base; "Why go so high and block the beautiful sun?". The stories I had heard about the marble steps of homes in the East, about the way they scrub them every day must be true. I was in Baltimore Md. many times and every time I would see people scrubbing marble steps, they were clean even if the buildings were black from the smog.

Washington D.C. I enjoyed very much. I made several trips to the Smithsonian Bld. They have everything thought of that is connected with our History. The Lincoln Memorial is something everyone should see. It is the most outstanding points of interest in Washington. To me he is the greatest statesman this country has ever produced. I did not see as much as I should have in that area. If I ever go to that part of the country again I would spend some time in the area of Virginia where the Council Family settled when they came to America.

We had a forced 20 mile march while in training at Aberdeen. We come in from a days work in the shops and found a notice to assemble at 7pm for a 20 mile hike. The orders changed three times between 4pm and 7pm as the uniform and pack for the hike. We did leave at 7pm and hiked 20 miles returning at 12:00 Mid-night. We went to the mess hall and had coffee and cake, later I washed out a work uniform, wrote a short letter and went to bed at about 2am. At 4am they called me out for K.P. duty and I spent 14 hours on that duty and about 90% of the 14 hours, I was on my feet and by the end of that day my dogs were barking.

### **1941-42 Basic Training Complete- Assigned to Hamilton Air Force Base, Meets Leona Heaney**

At the end of our training we were to be assigned to units, and ask to list three choices of bases we would like to go to, every one might not get their choice but they try to give it to us. I ask for bases in California. I got my second choice, Hamilton Air Force Base just North of San Francisco.

I arrived at Hamilton Air Base on Nov. 28, 1941 and was assigned to the 692<sup>nd</sup> on Summer Maneuvers along the East Coast, the ground crews had return to California and the planes arrived on Nov. 29 and put on some show as they returned. They had the old P-40 Fighters and they could real fly 'em. Within a couple of days they went out to bases in Northern California, to such fields as Moffett Field, a field near Sacramento, and Oakland Airport, and of course ground crews were sent out. I stayed at Hamilton Air Base.



Saturday, Dec. 6, 1941 I work all day with an Ordnance crew, loading bombs, machine guns and parts on B-17 Bomber Flight that left Sat. night for the first step of its trip to Clark Field, near Manila, P.I. They arrived at Hawaii during the attack on Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, they were to land at Hickman Field but was sent to Hilo on the Island of Hawaii.

A second Flight of B-17's were lined up, wing tip to wing tip on the field at Hamilton, Sunday AM and we were loading them the same way and they were to leave Sunday night. At 11am Sunday we left the line and went to early lunch and then went to the barracks for some shut eye before going back to work. At 12:50pm I was about half asleep on my bunk, listening to some

nice music on the radio, when the tune was interrupted and the announcer started telling about the attack at Pearl Harbor. It was about a 5 minute announcement, and after which we ran to our trucks and raced back to the line at 60 miles/hr. for the few blocks we had to go. What we found was a surprise, the Planes which were parked so close together when we went to lunch, had been moved as well as the other planes at the base, and parked in such way that no two airplanes was with 100 yards of each other.

The next few days we were rather busy. The Ordnance had to remove the Bomb and Ammo. storage from the base to a country road side near the Base, haul in a larger supply of Bombs, Ammo., and guns from the Arsenal at Benicia, Cal. The guns were all solid packed in grease for long term storage and had to be cleaned. We set up a system to clean them and had to work 24 hours a day for the first 87 hours of the war. After that we received help from an Ordnance Co. that was a sea when the war started on its way to Manila, P.I., they were sent back to Hamilton Air Base and their arrival gave us a chance to get some sleep. When I did get to bed for sleep, I did not wake up until 23 hours later.

In early Jan. 1942 one of our men was brought back from Oakland Airport to be transferred to another Co. and I was sent to Oakland to replace him. I was there for one month and met Leona M. Heaney, we had three dates during that time and after the first of Feb. was sent back to

Hamilton Air Force Base and I did not see Leona again until Dec. 4, 1945. We corresponded for that time and when I returned from overseas and received my discharge form the Arm Services, I went to see Leona, which I will cover later.

### ***1942- Wilmington and Myrtle Beach, North Carolina***

Feb. 7, 1942 our company left Hamilton A.F.B on a troop train to Wilmington, North Carolina. We arrived there Feb. 14, 1942. Our Station there was a small City Airport about 5 miles from town. We lived in tents on one side of the runway and a few hundred feet the other side was a big swamp. The weather was cold that winter. We had about a five inch snow, which was the first in years and when we went to town that night it was still snowing and we had a ball. Everyone was out through snowballs.

We were still with the 20<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, which one Sqdn. come in later and one Sqdn went to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We were (rumors had it) to later go to a staging area in New Jersey and when the Normandy Ship was ready, would sail on her to Ireland. Later when the Normandy Caught fire in the New York Harbor, the schedule changed. I was sent to Myrtle Beach, S.C. for about one month and came back. We loaded depth charges on the bombers that come in to our field, that was on patrol along the Eastern Seaboard.

The "U Boats" hit a lot of ships along the Eastern Seaboard. I was on guard duty at 11pm and saw the fire of one that was hit. Later the work load declined and for the need of something to keep us busy we work for the Base Hq. Sqdn. I ended up being in charge of the Base Post Office and a Harold Eppely from Michigan work with me. After the schedule for us to go overseas had been changed the 692<sup>nd</sup> Ord. Co. was to be dis-banded as of July 1, 1942 and everyone had been assigned to new units. Harold & I had been assigned to some small outfit at Ft. Bragg, N.C., which was a hell hole of a base. When the 1 at Stg. of the Hq Sqd. ask us to join his group and



stay on the job at the Post Office, we decided to do it. This meant transferring from Ord. to the Air Force.



### ***1942- Transferred to New Squadron- Venice and Fort Myers, Florida***

The new Sqdn. moved to Venice, Fla. In early Sept., and in two weeks we moved to Ft. Myers, Fla. While there, Harold was going home on leave and ask me to go with him. I had never been to Michigan and having heard so much about it from him, I decided to go. We had a good time and I went Pheasant hunting

for the first time. I left his home a day early and went to Detroit where I visited with a family I knew in Ark. many years before. I met Harold in Detroit and we went back to Camp. The next move for the Sqdn. was in Dec. 1942, we moved to Dale Mabry Field near Tallahassee, Fla. I ask to go to Photo Training School and on Jan. 2, 1943 my orders come through while we were out on a training trip. They rushed be back and I caught a train for Denver, Colo. that night.

***1943- Assigned to Photo School- Lowry Field, Denver, Colorado***

I arrived in Denver on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Jan. and didn't have to report to the Base (Lowry Field #1) until the 6<sup>th</sup> so I stayed in town that night. When I reported at the Field on the 6<sup>th</sup>, with in a half hour they lost all my papers and would not assign me to the Sqdn. or Class until they could find, so I had no place to sleep that night. I was a Sarg. And knew my way around a little so I talked them into giving me a pass so I could go to town for the night. The next day they located my orders and assigned me to a class.



The class I was assigned to was day shift, and had 76 students, 75 enlisted me and one officer. I was the ranking N.C.O. in the class so was assigned as class N.C.O. in charge to see the class was marched from the living quarters to school and back again. They would assign a whole class to K.P. duty and when my class got it, I had to march them to the mess hall at 4am with a list of the men for the mess hall records, and turn one into the school and one in to the Orderly Room. After all this was finished I had the rest of the day off to do as I pleased.

Before the war the school was a years course but during the war they condensed it to 3 months without cutting out much of the class room work. They assigned to each class one Officer, 2 enlisted me and 3 civilians as instructors, 5 of the instructors were in the class at all times and when one got tired of lecturing , another one could pick it up without loss of time or train of thought. Out of 4 hours we had a 10 min break each hour. I had to spend a lot of time at night studying to stay with it. I had to spend 5 days in the hospital with the flu and of course that really loaded me up with work to catch up with the class. We had an eight inch snow the first week I was there and it went to 20° below zero.

***1943- Photo School Completed- Assigned to Overseas Replacement Center- Salt Lake City Utah, then to Kearney, Nebraska, then to new 28<sup>th</sup> Photo Recon Squadron- Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado.***

After completing the school, I was sent to an Oversea replacement center near Salt Lake City, Utah, where most men was assigned to some unit already somewhere in the Pacific. Within 3 days I was assigned to an "Airdrome Sqdn." in Kearney, Neb. I was there until last of June, 1943 and was sent back to Peterson Air Base near Colo. Springs, Colo. Peterson Field was a training



base for Photo Sqdns. Early July a new Sqdn. was started, 28<sup>th</sup> Photo Reconnaissance Sqdn. I was a member of the Cadre of 4 N.C.O.s and 2 Officers assigned to the new Sqdn. It was our job to acquire and train the men for the new Sqdn. In the following 6 months we had to filter through 600 enlisted men to get the 200 that we needed for the Sqdn.

While stationed at Peterson Field, I would go to Colo. Springs, 6 miles, or Mantua Springs about 11 mile away or to the Garden of Gods, a state park, which was approx. 12 miles away. The scenery was beautiful. The towns were small and overloaded with service men, thus you had to stand in line

everywhere. I had a girlfriend there and went to her home some to get away from the crowd.

Sept. 1943 the Sqdn. had picked up about half of our men and we were transferred to Will Rogers Air Field near Okla. City, Okla. Okla City was a fun town. Lots of girls had come to the city to work and if you didn't have a date every night it was your own fault. Okla. was a dry state, you could buy beer, and they had lots of beer joints, but you could also buy all the liquor you wanted on the post, lots of bootleggers around.

The rules were, the service men had to be off the streets by 11pm and could not come in the gate at the field from 11pm to 6am without being reported late. If you could not get through the gate by 11pm then you could stay in town but you should have an overnight pass to be legal. Our Sqdn. went a little wild when we arrived at Will Rogers Field. I was one of the first to come in late. We came in at 11:02pm and an Officer was with us in the Cab. The M.P. at the gate booked all of us, and a couple of days later I was called in to see our Commanding Officer.



He had received notice from base headquarters about me coming in late and requested a return notice on what action taken. Our C.O. was a small young man, smaller and younger than I was, so he ask what was my excuse. I told him I had been in the service long enough to know that you don't give excuses. He frowned and said; "You do have an explanation, don't you"? I said: "Yes Sir but I'm sure you wouldn't believe it." C.O.: "Try me". "Well Sir it is the old story, I was with a girl and waited too late to start back to camp by about 3 minutes". Again he frowned and said: "Council you are a S/Sgt. and suppose to set an example for the other men in this Sqdn., I'm giving you a week restriction to the Base, and I don't want to see you in here

again for something like this". I made sure I didn't get caught in anymore traps. So many of our men got caught in the next 2 weeks, that the Base C.O. demanded that anyone caught coming in late would be busted back to a buck private.

Early Nov. we went to western Okla. on a Field Problem. I went with the first section of about 15 men to set up camp. We arrived just before dark at the site, too late to setup tents so we ate and unrolled our bed roll and went to sleep after the long drive. The next morning the frost was so heavy it look like snow on the grass. Late that afternoon the rest of our Sqdn. arrived and we had tents set up and part of the Lab. ready to go.



The next day our Planes started flying missions and for 3 weeks we work some long hours. My schedule was to eat at 11am and be at the Lab. ready to work at 11:45am to take over the film development while the other fellows went to lunch. I work until early chow at 4pm, after that I had to work until all the film shot that day had been processed. Usually I would finish up at about 5 to 6am and go to sleep until 11am and my day would start over again. Most of the night I was there alone. It was cold as hell every night. Usually drop well below freezing, and we had to work in tents without heat. When I finished to washing of a roll of film I had to dry it. That was the bad part of the work, The dryer was in a tent that was so small that I could only get from my waist up, inside. The air in the tent had to blow on the film at about 125 degrees F, so while half of me was in 125°F air, the other half was hanging out in air that was

anywhere from 28 to 20 degrees F. I was surprised that I went through 21 days of this with out getting a cold. I didn't shave for the 3 weeks and my face itched the whole dam time, I just didn't do much of anything but work, eat and sleep when I got a chance. Did I enjoy a hot shower and shave when we returned to the base. I have never really tried to grow a beard since. So now in the present time when everyone seems to be slappy happy about growing long hair and beards, that one experience was enough for me to the point I will never be interested growing either.

On our return to Will Rogers Field, we were told to get ready to go overseas as soon as possible. We had been scheduled to go to India and from there we would move in to China. Our equipment had been sent to India. So we started getting ready to go. We did take time out for a Christmas Party in Okla. City, and had hope to celebrate the new year in Okla. City, but at 10pm Dec. 31, 1943 we loaded on a troop train on Field and left for the West Coast to catch a ship to

the Pacific. This was a bit of a blow to everyone, Okla. City was a fun town and we had look forward to spending New Years-Eve there. Enroute to the west coast we ran into some snow and lots of cold weather. On the Salt Flats west of Salt Lake City the last two cars of the train got disconnected from the train and it was some time before we got back to pick up the two cars. They were stuck out in the middle of nowhere, without heat and snow all around them, and of course worried about another West bound train hitting them. They were real happy to see us come back to pick them up.

### ***1944- Preparing to Go Overseas- San Francisco, California***

We arrived at Pittsburg, Calif. about 8pm and as we left the train we had to line up for a short arm inspection and then in another line for Dental Inspection. That was really something to see, you would walk up to the Dentist and open your mouth and he would check your teeth, using a G.I. flash light to see by. Well the number he gave me, I later found out meant that my teeth was so bad that they would pull all my teeth, and I had a mouth full of good teeth.

When we were assigned to our bunks, our Officers came in and gave us a Quartermaster form and we had to throw out all clothes and discard anything that was not almost new, and fill out the form for new issue. We finished with this and went to bed at about 2am. We had to get up at 6am and the rest of the day we went from one thing to another to get checked out, gun inspection, gas mask inspection, haircuts were in order, and that night we had to get our pay, and later pick up our new issue of gear, and this meant that most of the men didn't get to bed until after mid-night. The next morning we finished the little things felt to do and was ordered to fall out at 11am for early lunch in uniform and with our packed gear. We to lunch, and at 12 noon we left the base to board a ferryboat which would take us to San Francisco where we would board a ship. We had been in Pittsburg 40 hours, which we were told the shortest time any sqdn. had spent there.



The Ferryboat arrived in San Francisco and pulled into the slip south of the Bay Bridge late in the evening. We left the boat, walk through a warehouse on the dock and boarded the troop ship on the other side of the warehouse. The warehouse was empty and the Red Cross was there and gave us a cup of coffee and a doughnut, we stop just long enough to eat it and went aboard the ship. We thought we would be sailing during the night but we didn't pull out of the slip until 8am. We could hear the "A" train on the Bay Bridge that night at the dock. It would run with in a half mile of Leona's house in Oakland and I had not seen her since Feb. 1942 and was now Jan. 5 1944. Our C.O.'s girlfriend lived in San Francisco and we both said if that ship

stayed a second night at the dock we were going to find some way to get off and go see our girls.

### ***1944- Shipping Out, and One Year at Oahu, Hawaii***

At 8am Jan. 6 1944 the ship pulled away from the dock without fanfare and sailed through the Golden Gate. Had very little fog that morning and we enjoyed being able to see the bridge as we left. The trip to Hawaii took 6 days and some of those days were boring. The weather was nice and the Ocean was calm most of the way. We did have some excitement on the way. We were in a good size convoy, and the only fighting ship in the convoy was a D.E. (Destroyer Escort) It sure look small, maybe a little larger than a Harbor tug boat. Rumors had it, the Jap Subs followed every convoy that left San Francisco, so we didn't feel too safe with only one D.E. to do our fighting for us. The ships in the convoy a 5 inch gun on board but that would only be good if we were attack by surface craft.

One night about 12:30am our boilers quit and we like a setting duck on the Ocean. The convoy could not stop for us but I guess did slow down a little. After about one hour of work the ships crew repaired it and we caught up with the convoy about day light. At noon that day the same thing happened but it took less time to repair. Another time we had a little excitement. The D.E. was ahead of the convoy, all most out of sight, one of the men noticed the Radar screen on the mast of another troop ship had centered in on something between the two ships, of course we went on as if nothing was wrong, and the D.E. came racing through the convoy and start throwing out depth charges about 100 yards past our ship. In a couple of hours we all had our color back and we went the rest of the way without incident.

When the force was ready to take the Marshall Islands, a flight of our Sqdn. went along to do the photo work, and they stayed there, and later went to Saipan with the invasion force. The rest of our Sqdn. stayed on Oahu until April 1 1945 when we left for Okinawa, in the Ryukyu islands, located 500 miles south of Japan.



### **April 1945- Okinawa, Japan**

Our Sqdn. was assigned to the 10 Army to go Okinawa. The assignment came about the time I come back from a camp in the mountains on the Island of Hawaii, about the middle of Feb. 1945, April 1, 1945 we sailed from Oahu, our first stop was Eniwetok Island. I went ashore on one of the little Islands next to Eniwetok for the afternoon and we sailed from there the next day. Our next stop was Saipan, the rest of our Sqdn. was on a ship waiting for our convoy to join us for the trip to Okinawa. We arrived at Okinawa, May 6, 1945 and landed on May 8, and went to an area we had been assigned to. About two weeks before we arrived, a few of the men from the Flight at Saipan had been sent to Yantan Air Strip to start operations on a limited basis, until our convoy could arrive. We set up our camp east of the First Marine Div. Cemetery, approximately 250 yards away.



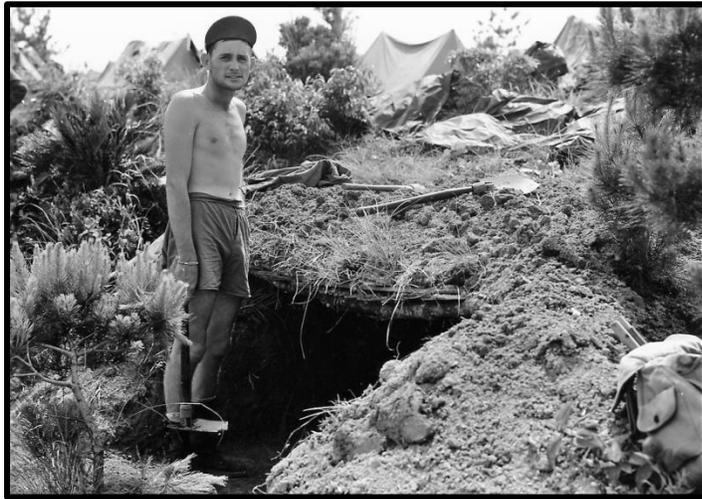
We ate with a Marine Anti-Air Craft Battalion by us the first few days, and many of them had been in the field two days and the wind was blowing toward us from the cemetery. The battle was pretty heavy at the time and the Marines were having a heavy loss of men and most of the time they were behind with the burial, and the bodies would be there at least a couple of days, and many of them had been in the field two days before that, so the odor was pretty bad. The first week or so I just could not eat there, so I would take K rations and go down the little hill we were on and eat to get away from the odor. After a couple of weeks, I think I could have sit down in the cemetery and eat without much problem.

We set up our tents to live in and the Lab. to work in and settled down to some long hours of work to supply the front lines an up to the minute on what they faced. The planes went in just above the tree tops to photograph the area and when had an attack planned for the next day, we would supply them with thousands of prints of that area so most of the men taking part had a chance to see every rock or ditch that a man could take cover in. It was something to see some tough Sgt. look at these pictures and had tears roll down his cheeks because he was happy for a view of the land before he had to go in and take it.

At night the Japs would send planes down from Japan which was only 500 miles away, to try and bomb the area. Sometimes they were turned back by the Black Widow Night Fighters which was like P-38 Fighter only larger, they were a two man plane and equipped with radar so they could pick off the Jap bombers, but a bomber would get by them once in a while and come on in. At first when air raid alarm went out we would get up and get in a dug out, for protection from the 90 millimeter anti-air craft guns that surrounded the area. When their shells exploded, the shrapnel from them come down on us. I have a piece that come through the tent and landed in the middle of my bunk, needless to say I was dam glad I was not in it at the time.



I got tired of spending so much of my night in a dug out, so would not wake up until the 90mm's would start fire and this would give me time to take cover. Well one night I got caught.



The all clear signal sounded and I was still asleep and one lone Jap plane came in from the opposite direction and of course caught the gun crew off guard too, and they dropped their bomb load. One of the bombs hit about 150 yards from my tent, that was the first one I heard. I had always wondered what would be the first thought when I hear one. Well that night I found out. I was sound asleep and the noise of the falling bomb woke me up and my first thought was "to late to run for the dugout" so I rolled under the bunk as

possible, and as I did the bomb hit. The shock waves hit my stomach about like some beating on a drum. It all happened so fast that it was after it was all over that I got scared.

Our camp was not far from the China Sea and a lot of our ships were there all the time unloading supplies, we watched several air raids on them. Another thing that happened every night for some time after we arrived at Okinawa, was at 7pm every night some Jap gun crew would roll a big gun out of a cave in the hills and zeroed in on the runway of Kedena Air Field, south of us a couple of miles. Our camp was in line between the two Air fields. The Jap crew would shoot 4 to 5 shots just to knock holes in the runway and then roll the gun back in the cave, it took some time for our side to locate and put out of action that dam gun.

I suppose the most excitement we had while on Okinawa, was the night the Japs tried to land troop transport planes on Yantan Air field. Several of the transports got by the night fighters and come in, We had a good view of it. Our camp was on top of a small hill about one mile from Yantan Air Field., so we were out watching. One of the planes was hit by Anti-air craft guns and caused it to under shoot the runway, as it crashed into the hill side, it burst in to flames and we could see Japs running away from the fire. One or two planes landed on the runway and the attack force started out to knock out as many of the U.S. planes as they could, with hand grenades, but they did not get many. An infantry company was camped at the edge of the Field and they really went into action fast and they cleaned up most of the Japs in a few minutes. Of course a few got away and hid out.



The next morning one of the cameramen working for me went to the field to get pictures, he was photographing a transport that broke up when it crashed off the field. A family tomb was only about 30 feet from him and he put his gun down to take a picture and while he was taking the pictures a Squad of the Infantrymen come up and went to the tomb and found a Jap soldier hid there. My cameraman was still white as a sheet, an hour later when he come back and told me about it. On some of the bodies they found maps showing the location of the planes that the soldier was supposed to knock out. We had two men from our Sqdn. that was on the field that night. They were there to guard our P-38 Photo Planes. They had to be taken there before dark and stay until daylight, one would stand guard at a time and the other would sleep in a bunker a few feet away. The next morning they were still white too. They both stayed in the bunker when the Japs come in but they were not afraid of the Japs as much as they were of the Infantry as they searched the Field, they shot at anything that moved. The search was going most of the night.

I had 6 men working in my dept. and the next day after the "A" Bomb was dropped at Nagasaki, Japan in 1945, our Warrant Officer call me to come to my Lab. at about 7pm. When I arrived he ask me to round up as many of my 6 men as I could with(out) causing any problems and bring them to the Lab. for some night work. I found my gang and went to our Lab. The Warrant Officer explained to us that the man with him was civilian Photographer, and he had photographed Nagasaki from an airplane that afternoon and we would develop and print his pictures, after which he would get on an Airplane and fly to Washington D.C. to report directly to the President. He also told us that the pictures we would see were classified top secret and we were not to discuss them amount ourselves and not to mention to anyone in the Sqdn. what we did that night. We were told to do the work and try to shut out of our mind what we had seen.

Of course it was not possible to see some of the strange pictures that we saw that night and then forget them. They were indeed some odd pictures for us to see. In later years I have seen 2 or 3 of those pictures published, but that is about all. One I have seen published, was a picture of a hospital still standing which had some pock marks in the concrete but the impressive thing about it was shadow of a pole on the building. Another one was a picture along the water front. It was a warehouse, that part of the building was still standing. At one end the warehouse was standing with ever little damage to it as you move from left to the right in the picture, the building became more and more damaged, first to where the walls were burned away and the steel beams were still in tack and then showed where they were hot enough to start to sag, this continued to the point where the beams were melted flat on the floor, one of them had been tied in a loop almost like a knot. At the right side of the picture the building was just ashes on the floor.

The Photographer and the Warrant Officer stayed with us all the time. After the film was developed, it or the prints were never out of the sight of the Photographer. Every test strip and print good or bad was finished and accounted for to him. As soon as we finished he took everything and left for the Airfield. We went to bed but it was some time before we went to sleep, it was difficult to forget what we had seen.

Another exciting moment was some days later when we received the news that Japan was ready to surrender. I was at the Lab. that night doing some paper work when I heard all hell break loose. It sound like every gun on the Island had cut loose, I was in a portable building that the roof would not stop the shrapnel so I ran out and got under one of the big trailers parked alongside my building, it was just after dark and the sky was lit up from gun fire. It was everything from rifle fire to the big guns that was on the Island. One of my cameramen ran out with a camera and took a time exposure of it and it was some picture. The firing went on for several minutes.

Our Sqdn. was attached to a Marine Air Wing for the operation and we were around them more than the Air Force, we run into the "Leatherneck Magazine" often, one day I found an article about an International Cemetery the Marines had found across a stream from the out skirts of the City of Naha, which was several mile south of us. So I took a camera and went to Naha and shot several pictures of the city and then went looking for the Cemetery. It had been clean up and a White picket fence put up around it. I shot several pictures there. When Admiral Perry went to Japan and forced Japan to open Tokyo Bay to World Trade, some of the men died at sea and he buried them at this cemetery on Okinawa. An Englishman was buried there as well as several people from other countries.

In the rubble in the city of Naha, I was surprised at the number of old foot powered singer sewing machines I saw. It seems that every home had one. All the homes were destroyed in the city, about the only thing standing was concrete steel re-enforced buildings. Because of the Typhoons there, the homes have rock fence around the house, some as high as 6 feet.



We had two typhoons while I was at Okinawa. One (of) them was a little rough. The wind started blowing early in the morning and by noon the rain join it and the wind velocity on the increase. We had the tent flaps pulled out on a wood frame and had screen wire on the sides. By mid-afternoon the wind was blowing the rain on a level right straight through the tent and we were soaked to skin. At 7pm we decided we should go down the hill and stay in one (of) the Jap caves. We took dry clothes in a rubber bag, a gas

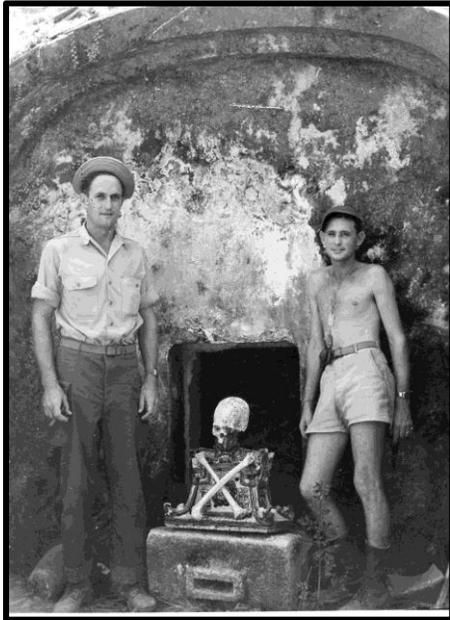
stove I had some coffee and soup and took off down to the cave. We thought once or twice we were going to lose some of our equipment, but when we did get it there we changed into dry clothes and made coffee and soup and being back in the cave we didn't have to listen to the noise of the wind, we were able to get some sleep. The typhoon hit its peak at 11pm and by the next morning it back to just a good breeze. We heard later that the Navy clocked the wind at Buckner Bay (which was across the Island east of us) at 130 miles/hour. I went to Buckner Bay and shot pictures of the damage done to the ships that stayed there. Some had been blown or washed up and left on land.

Some of the customs of the people of Okinawa interested me. I went to an Island off shore for a weekend and shot a few feet of movie film and some still shots of their native dance. These were the people that filtered into our lines and were sent to the off shore Island to keep them out of danger of the fighting going on. It was an interesting visit there. They have a custom also that I had never heard of before, it is in regard to the Family Tomb. They were caves dug into hill sides, the opening was usually just large enough to crawl through, but a large room inside. The Tomb was a tip off as to the wealth of the family, as our own customs are in this country. A wealthy family would spend more money and time on it. Some Tombs were nothing more than a hole in the hillside and a very small room inside. From the outside the shrubs or underbrush all but hide the entrance.



Before describing it I would like to tell of some of the belief that went along with them. The people think that as long as man is born from a woman's womb, after death you should re-enter nature's womb and the tomb represents this. At the time of a death in the Family, the

body is placed, usually in a box and placed in the tomb to decay. Later when that step is over, they clean and polish the bones and place them in an earth urn and replaced in the tomb alongside the other family urns. At this time is when they have some sort of what we would call burial service. I'm not sure how much of this is true, but I did look into several different tombs, and I'm sure some of it is true.



I did see a body in a box just inside the tomb and a row of urns in the back with bones in them. The U.S. Forces were very strict about any one touching anything in the tombs. The outside of the tombs of the wealthy look the same but vary in size and amount of work and materials used. The most fancy one I saw look something like this; A flat area in front with a concrete or stone wall enclosing three sides of the flat area and the fourth side was a cut into the hillside and was also held by a wall of the same material, this way it would be about 3 to 4 feet high, and from the top of it the hill side was slopped up and was covered with concrete, the distance up depended on how far the room ran back inside. The shape of the concrete cover above was almost in the shape of a half circle or hemisphere, with base starting at the top of the wall on each end. The front wall of the flat area had an opening to walk through, and in line with it would be the opening in the back wall which was the

entrance to the tomb. Inside the tomb the room might be 15 to 20 feet across and 10 to 15 feet deep (front to back) and across the back of the tomb the floor 2 to 4 inches higher and about 18 to 20 inches wide, this is where the Family urns were places. We were interested in seeing this but everyone I met (U.S. Servicemen) respected these tombs very much and never went any farther into them than to look inside. One of the tombs were within 20 yards of our living quarters and I'm sure nothing was touched inside while were there.

### ***1945- War Ends- Heading Home***

When the war ended, the people that had been held as prisoners in Japan were the first to go home. All transportation facilities used to get them home and then came the people with the most points. Service men received one point for each month of service outside the war zone and two points for service in the war zone (outside the U.S.A.) and received 5 points for each campaign they were in.



I had been in the service at the time of discharge, 4 years, 4 months, and 17 days (7/15/1941 to 12/2/1945) and had spent 22 months of that time overseas, this accounted for 72 points for me. In addition to that I got 5 points for the American Eastern Seaboard defense against the German subs. Received another 5 points for the Campaign at Okinawa. This give me a total of 84 point, and everyone with 80 or more points were sent back to the U.S. as fast as transportation was available. In our Sqdn. of 200 E.M. only about 10 men had enough points. I believe it was Oct. 22, 1945 when I went aboard ship to sail home. When I left my Sqdn. everyone give me the old song, "You lucky guy, going home and we have to stay here." I told them well they may beat me home yet, that I was going home that slow boat from China.

Little did I know that it would come to pass. After I left, orders come through giving credit for another 5 points and this made everyone in the Sqdn. eligible to come home except 10 men. So these 10 men were transferred to another Sqdn. and the 28 Photo Recon. de-activated and the men sent home. They were lucky enough to get Air Transportation and they arrived in the states in November and I arrived in Los Angeles Harbor, Nov. 26, 1945.



The extra 5 points had come in, after I left, for our part in locating the Jap fleet, near the end of the war. Admiral Halsey of the third U.S. Fleet had been looking for the last of the Jap Fleet without any luck. Our Photo Planes had been flying missions daily over three areas that had been picked for the next invasions they were the: China Coast, Korea and Kyushu Island (the southernmost of Jap home Islands). On the way back from mission over Korea, one of our Pilots saw the Jap ships and decided they were the Fleet Halsey was looking for, so he turned on the cameras and got some good pictures of them and took off full speed for Okinawa. He called in and told them he had something hot. The Lab was notified and cleared the work on hand and made ready for a crash run of the film.

When the Plane landed, he pulled off the runway and they unloaded the film and brought it to the Lab. Within one hour we processed the film, ran a print, Photo Intelligence dept. checked it and word sent to Admiral Halsey of the location of the Fleet, and of course the Admiral went in after it. This last 5 points was never put on my records, because a copy didn't catch up with me before I was discharged.

On the way home we stopped at Guam for one day and at Oahu for 7 days. While there we were "Processed" which meant we received winter clothes in place of the summer clothes and check our records and tried to bring them up to date, so as to speed up the work at the separation centers. While at Oahu we went ashore every night, so I had a chance to go to Yee Hops, and enjoy their draft beer and fried prawns which I had missed so much while at Okinawa, and of course it was good to see a live city again.

***1945- Discharged December 2; Marries Leona Heaney December 9***

Our ship arrived at San Pedro Harbor at 8am Nov. 26, 1945. We docked across the channel from Fort MacArthur, where I was to be discharged. They loaded us on a train that I'm sure the chair cars dated back to the 1880's and went to Camp Anzio, near Riverside, Cal. I was there until Thur. Nov 29, and went to Fort MacArthur. That night I went to Long Beach to see my cousin Millie and Dempsey Watson. Sunday at noon Dec. 2, 1945 I received my discharge, but signed up for the Reserves, which was for three years. That afternoon I went to Long Beach to see Mark Davis. I had written him from overseas that I would like to go to work at the Ford Motor Co. as soon as I had visited home, after getting a discharge. Well he told me I could go to work the next day if I wanted to.

Sunday night I went to Maywood to see Harold Oliver. Monday Dec. 3, I left for Oakland, Cal. to see Leona. I arrived at her house Tues AM. We decided to get married, so at 3pm Sunday Dec. 9, 1945, we were married in Oakland.

