

WWII -YEARS SERVING MY COUNTRY

It was a sunny day on May 7, 1944 when I climbed aboard a bus heading for Ft. Snelling, MN. There were forty-eight of us young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty years. This was the beginning of a real learning experience as we were to hear the phrase, "this is the army, sir" so often.



My then girlfriend, Bonnie Lou, had picked me up at my home, which was fourteen blocks from the bus station. Before my departure, we were sitting in her car having a coke. A guy, to whom she was engaged, drove up, with a couple of his friends. This made me a bit nervous as I assumed he was trying to show me he could beat my time with the girl I thought I was in love with. At this time I had not been informed of her engagement to this guy. After kissing BL goodbye I saw my family drive up across the street. Mom was sitting in the car crying; remember - I was eighteen years old and her oldest child. Dad and my two younger brothers crossed the street to say goodbye.

On the bus my buddy, L.M., was seated next to me and said, "lets give ourselves a good sendoff". We squeezed our bodies through the bus windows and managed to shake a few hands before the bus was ready to leave.

Mr. M.A., the draft board director, came on the bus, walked the aisle, gave each of us a handshake, except the one fellow that did not wish to go in service at this time, and wished us God speed and good luck. Little did we know how much we would need this with what lay ahead.

I had requested an extension from the draft board only for the purpose of seeding crop in on our farm. I was advised that 10,000 men were needed at this time - which was now. A new invasion was expected at any time. In this group were 18 high school students who would have graduated in three weeks had they been granted an extension. Now we were on our way to Fort Snelling for enlistment with the US Army.

A buddy and I had volunteered for the paratroops, which my Dad was not at all happy about as some of the neighbors had told Dad I was trying to commit suicide.

FT. SNELLING

On our journey to Ft. Snelling, MN, we stopped for lunch, and encountered an inebriated, rowdy guy. He was making uncalled for remarks such as, what a sorry bunch of fighting men we would make. Now, L.B. had about reached his capacity for all this and told the guy he must be 4F. (This means someone unfit for military service.) Well, with this remark the ole' boy went ballistic challenging *everyone* to a fight right then and there unless we were all yellow. Now, that is fighting words for young men, unhappy, and half scared of what lay ahead of them. I was ready to answer when the guys in the boot advised me to keep quiet. This loud, rude guy was at least 100 pounds over my weight of 160 pounds.

FT. HOOD

From Ft. Snelling most were sent to Ft. Hood, TX. Upon arrival, we were escorted to the auditorium where we were advised that within 20 weeks we would be on one of the battlefronts as one of the best-trained soldiers in the world. From then on we learned how to cope with Texas heat rash!

Our second stop was Kansas City, MO and two sergeants were in charge of a nine-car trainload of new GI trainees. One of the sergeants was so inebriated that there was really only one sergeant to control the troop train group. This gave all of us the incentive to help the lone sergeant as much as possible. We all disembarked with instructions to be back on board the train in six hours. I'm sure orders were obeyed, as I never heard that anyone was missing.



After our critique in the auditorium, we were assigned to a barracks in Company B location with instructions that lights were out at 10:00 P.M., reveille at 4:30 A.M., inspection at 5:30 A.M., breakfast at 6:00 A.M. and on our way to instruction at 7:00 A.M. With all this completed, we marched across the fields of Texas to a new location every sixty minutes for study on different methods of warfare. Also we were quarantined for the first four weeks. This meant we stayed in our barracks everyday. When the four weeks were completed we were issued our weapons. This was an M-1 rifle we were charged with and if we lost it the cost would be deducted from our pay of \$50 per month.

Lowell, Camp Hood, Texas, 1944

Now we were allowed to visit the (PX) Post Exchange to buy beer by the schooner, which represented about 6 glasses of very green beer. On a dare I concealed a bottle, taking it out of the PX. This was prohibited.

I was holding the bottle inside my pants leg with my hand in my pocket, going down the Company street and pleased as hell until we met two 2nd lieutenants. They stopped and asked why I did not salute and I explained that having been in the army only two weeks, and looking very scared, they walked away in disgust. I then decided it was now time to get rid of the beer, so I dropped the bottle and kicked it in the ditch. Whew!! I got away Scot free. I caught up with the rest of the guys who had continued to walk on as they were unaware of my situation. They kept trying to tell me how very sorry they were that I got caught, but mostly because I had lost a good bottle of beer and never did salute the officer.

Each day was a new experience for us. Word got around that seven of us were going on for further training in the paratroops. We were always the guinea pigs for test purposes; like demonstrating how to go over an 8-foot wall on the first try. We did not

dare fail because the paratroopers would be collecting double pay, etc. Also we were volunteers so nothing was too great to ask of us in the line of duty.

A pass off post was seldom received, and as a result, four of us had expired passes from the previous weekend and thought it worth the risk. When getting on the bus it was so crowded that we ended up standing in the aisles. When the MP (military police) stated everyone off the bus without proper passes, it seemed that about nine of the 12 GI's got off. I just sat down in a vacant seat and took my chance of getting caught. The MP's were in a hurry and just scanned most, but missed me. We all had a good time in Lampasas, TX that weekend. Coming back to camp I remarked how we had beat the system when one of the guys replied that I was the only one without a current pass.

After completing seventeen weeks, a GI, whose father was a high-ranking officer in the Navy, got each of us a 6-hour pass to visit the local town of Killen, TX. We were at a carnival pitching rings to win a prize or money. My buddy got carried away, and lost every dollar he had to go home on furlough. He was going AWOL until I suggested we get the MP's to recover the money he had lost at the game. After finding two MP's and approaching the manager, our only defense was that the game operator allowed him to go over the \$5.00 posted limit. My buddy got his money back!

The last day we were in Camp Hood, TX two of us were on a work detail cleaning latrines because of some minor infraction. The infraction was issued by Cpl. Normensell. Orders were to work all night, but about 11:00 P.M. we were advised to put our mops away and turn in for the night. Our reply was that we were sticking by the original orders because we wanted to leave Camp Hood with one last opinion - that camp was a latrine training camp along with all it's cadre. At 3:00 AM we were ordered to get our barracks bags and load aboard a troop train on its way to Ft. Benning, GA.

FT. BENNING

Upon arrival in Columbus, GA., the temperature was like 80 degrees and no shade in sight. We were assigned to the Frying Pan Area at Ft. Benning.

Number one rule - we were now in a state with more venereal disease than any other in the nation. The troops who contracted VD would be automatically transferred out of the paratroops.



Some of us were so afraid we hardly dared go to the latrine until we were assured you could not contract VD from a toilet seat. This was a grossly exaggerated statement we later learned.

Fourteen hundred of us began training on the first Monday morning after our arrival. It was calisthenics before breakfast, followed by a one mile run. The following morning it was a two mile run and by Friday it was five miles with no stopping or breaks. Each day involved learning how to fall from greater heights at greater speeds – and it became

more rigorous each day. Some of the guys became sick and would vomit. Seeing this, the training cadre would demand the individual pick his vomit up with his teeth and carry it off the area. During the four week period of training the lieutenant in charge was losing control of our platoon, when the company had him replaced with a sterner lieutenant.



While marching to a training center, our platoon met a platoon of WAC's going in the opposite direction. When one of the guys whistled, the new officer in charge immediately brought us to a halt and proceeded to make every one of us do twenty pushups. We arrived at the hangar on the airstrip and were instructed to pack our parachutes, and when we were done, to go on pass to the city of Columbus, GA.

Paratrooper

This packing procedure began at 6:00 PM and was expected to last three hours or until all parachutes were packed and ready for use the next day. There were six of us to a group, and we were organized so that each of us had a particular duty for each parachute. Within forty minutes all parachutes were completed, and passes were issued - with orders to be back on post before 1200 PM. Our group was first to leave and was advised we would use the particular parachutes that we had packed the next day. When getting aboard the plane the next day, I was advised that I would be the first out of the plane. Needless to say my hope was that the parachute was packed properly.

In the air, the jumpmaster tried to lift our spirits by getting us to sing some rowdy off-colored song, which we gave about fifty percent effort. The green light came on, which was the signal to stand up, hook up, and stand in the door. The jumpmaster yelled, GO, and within seconds we were twelve hundred feet above the area where we would land. After counting three seconds, if your chute had not opened you were supposed to pull the reserve chute, which a few did. Floating down to earth, I could see an ambulance had moved into the area where I would be landing, so I pulled on the risers to spill air and steer away from the problem. The trooper next to me began the same procedure, only in the opposite direction and our chutes became entangled about one hundred feet from landing. One chute collapsed with the two of us hitting the ground in one chute.

I remember waking with a couple of lieutenants standing above me asking if we were o.k. and we said we were before thinking. That evening I saw my new friend in the chow line walking on a wooden peg on the bottom of his foot, which was meant to repair a broken ankle.

The jumps continued for the next four days, and a real scare happened when we saw what was called a "streamer". This is a partially opened parachute, and it means it failed to open completely. Luckily the trooper pulled his reserve chute in time. I can still see the jeep racing toward the area where the unfortunate trooper dropped and lived to tell his story. The last jump was at night and we were told not to look at the ground, but watch the horizon until we hit the ground. It was also necessary that we jump from a low flying altitude, like five hundred feet. My jump landed me in a nice, soft peanut field

just a few feet from a drainage ditch. This was the final jump before we received our wings and we could go home on furlough.

It is now the first week of November, 1944 and we are leaving Columbus, GA by Pullman train. It had windows that allowed all the coal smoke from the engine to seep in until we arrived in Chicago, IL. In Chicago, I boarded the Hiawatha Streamliner for Minneapolis, MN. This was the Cadillac of trains in 1944. It was necessary to change trains in the middle of the night near Duluth, MN. The wind was blowing and snow was coming from every direction when a conductor waved a lantern and called to us to cross many railroad tracks to get to his train and continue to our destination.

We arrived in Bemidji at 5:30 AM, and getting off the train was a cab waiting to take me home. The farm was six miles from town and before I could get inside the house, Mother had to call Shep, our dog, as she was not about to let me in the area of her domain. It was almost 7:00 AM and the family was all around me except my two sisters who are away at school. (Northwest School of Agriculture in Crookston, MN., where they boarded to finish high school.) My two younger brothers wanted to know all the exciting events that had happened to me in the last six months.

It was decided I would drive to the city of Crookston, ninety miles away, and bring my sisters home for the weekend. This was very convenient for me because on the way I could see my girlfriend who worked for the telephone company in the city of Red Lake Falls. It was after dark when I arrived in Crookston. I found my sisters in their dormitories. My arrival interrupted their weekend plans and Cheryl did not really care to come home, until she thought better.

On Saturday - the fourth day of my furlough also happened that two buddies, Lowell Knutsen and Oscar S. from school, were also home on leave from the Navy. After partying in a neighboring town, we were coming home when the local police pulled along side us and we dutifully stopped. They were going to give us a ticket for speeding on icy roads when my friend, L.K., told me to just tell the officer that I was sorry. So I just said, "Gee officer, I'm sorry." He just looked at me and said, "Sorry, hell", and proceeded to drive off.

The weekend was about over and time for me to drive my sisters back to school with Mother insisting on going along. Returning home we stopped in a small town and I mentioned that I would take a bus there to Red Lake Falls where my girlfriend was to meet me. Mother would have to drive the balance of seventy miles home alone. Now she told me that this wasn't going to happen as I was only eighteen years of age and not an adult, according to the law, and she said, "I'm telling you to take me home." She was totally correct. At this time in 1944 you were not of legal age until you were twenty-one.

My girlfriend, Bonnie Lou, was very cool about my standing her up and about six months later she advised me that she had married a former boyfriend who had given her a ring which she had returned to him while dating me. This wasn't too much of a surprise as the last time Bonnie Lou and I were out together he had met us at a nightclub. L.G. had grabbed her and forced her into his car. When I was made aware of this I went outside and threatened to break his windshield unless he opened the door

and let Bonnie Lou get out. After a few minutes he stepped out and was ready to fight. I asked him to hit the first blow, which he refused to do. I think we were both happy about this.

While home my two brothers, Dad and I went on a short hunting trip. The weather was so cold and snowy that it was a very short trip and we returned early.

Dad was very disappointed with me for joining an outfit like the paratroopers and asked me, point blank, if I was trying to get myself killed. When I tried to explain that we believed when a person's number was up, the end of life comes. Then he replied, "why are you trying to help it along," and I could see that Dad was very disappointed. A few years before he and Mom had gone to the Minnesota State Fair and the last event of the day was a parachute jump and the chute had failed to open. The individual hit the earth, bounced about ten feet - instant death.

After returning to Ft. Benning from furlough we continued training. One course involved graduating from Killers College. This was practice in street fighting in a mock-up city with buildings and every problem you could possibly have when getting overseas.

One day I was kept back at camp for some dental work and my buddy J.H. came in that evening saying he had signed me up for Demolition School training - the greatest favor anyone ever did for me in my short Army career. Having this special training kept me out of the line company personnel when in combat. We were always about five hundred yards to the rear near the Regimental Command Post waiting to be called for assistance with Flame Thrower Rocket Launchers - TNT - to blow bridges or anything else that needed to be destroyed. This was an additional three weeks of schooling which kept us in the States that much longer - plus it was a forty hour week.

We had a two-day weekend pass just about every weekend while Stateside. During this time, J.H. fixed me up with a blind date, which I reluctantly accepted. Most of these had been bad luck for me and when I met this gorgeous brunette, I thought it was Scarlet O'Hara out of the movie, "Gone With the Wind"! This was the girl of my dreams. The last three weeks at Ft. Benning, I had weekend passes (except one) plus some six hour passes. It was only thirty minutes to her residence where this lovely damsel lived with her older sister whose husband was away in service. The time we spent together was the greatest!

On one weekend pass I did not dare return to camp as curfew was eleven P.M. and I was late. Before I decided it was time to catch the bus back to camp it was too late and the Military Police would pick anyone up after curfew. My Scarlet suggested that I sleep in sister's bed and her sister could sleep with her. When sister arrived home I don't think she was too happy about someone in her bed. Our dates continued and big sister suggested we all go home to meet their parents. We planned this for the next weekend but I didn't get a pass. This was the time we were all alerted that all troopers were to be shipped overseas to the regular unit.

During the following days of training we were required to make two parachute jumps with maximum explosives or weapons used with Demolition. On the last practice jump, I hit the ground so hard that for the next two days I could hardly walk.

We were about to march out to a training area when an announcement was made for all Catholics to step out and go to special Mass in honor of December 7th. I, being a non-Catholic, stepped out. We walked across the company street to the Chapel where this special Mass was to be held. After sitting down, I thought what a wise move, all this comfort, with my aching knees. All of a sudden a bell rang and everyone had to kneel. I thought surely I would pass out it hurt so much. The prayer was short. A bell rang to be seated. This blasted bell rang three times to kneel, three times to be seated, and my knees were hurting so bad I was about to cry. Finally we were ordered out, and to my amazement I was walking with no pain and thinking, these Catholics have really got something going to be cured of my problem so quickly.

We proceeded to train for a night exercise near the Chattahoochee River with no water ration for twenty-four hours. With no drinking water, four of us ducked out of camp at about midnight and went to the river, filled our canteens and went for a swim. Returning to the bivouac area, we were up the next morning with so much water in all canteens that we offered some to our cadre. While crossing the river that morning, the Company Commander advised us to stay away from the river as it was full of water moccasin snakes. We were told it was sure death if you ever experienced its bite.

LEAVING GEORGIA

Again we boarded a troop train that seemed to be going west, so the fast rumor was that we were to cross the Pacific. We were advised not to mail any cards or letters when getting off the train, if it should stop. While going through Dallas, TX., a lieutenant stood by the mail box to make sure no one gave away our location as we were informed that there were spies everywhere. Before the train left, we gave our postcards to a nice little lady on the platform. As we were getting back on the train the lieutenant met her coming through and picked up all the cards and letters, gave them to the engineer to throw in the firebox. The following two days we lived on crackers and water twice a day until we arrived in Ft. Ord, CA. I presume this was punishment for the cards and letters the nice lady gathered.

The reception committee was a second lieutenant who had been trying to get overseas since the war began and for some reason was always held back. We were advised we would be going overseas as replacements units. The two units were the **503 PRCT** (Parachute Regimental Combat Team) and the 11th Airborne Divisions. Both were



engaged in major conflicts. For the next two weeks we would be going through rigorous training, starting the day with a half mile infiltration course where live ammo was fired overhead. We were to stay below the line which was to be eighteen inches above ground.

Of all the replacements that came into the Ft. Ord Camp, we were, as paratroopers, only about a fifth of the

total. We would be the last group to enter the course and the other four groups would start ahead of us, in eighteen-minute intervals.

When all completed the course, the first three hundred through would be given passes to visit the town of Salinas or Monterey, CA. This definitely put our group at a disadvantage. We were seventy-two minutes behind the first group and it was now 6:00 P.M. Our officer in charge told us that live ammo was being fired thirty-six inches over ground surface and we could do as we pleased, at our own risk. As you may have guessed, the paratroopers group finished ahead of everyone else and used all the passes that evening.

As each day passed our training became more competitive with the other replacements in the regular infantry line companies. The replacements for Mechanized Calvary seemed to get in our way most often, especially when the bars became crowded in the towns where we went on pass. Fights started - always group confrontations - until the MP' s took many to the stockade.

LEAVING THE U.S.

When the ship arrived, we were to go to San Francisco, CA. The officer in charge advised us that we would be leaving early in the morning and anyone late for revelry would be dealt with accordingly. Also he was more than pleased that we were going overseas as our kind was not needed stateside.

When the morning bugle call came, to impress the officer in charge, we were on the company street in front of the barracks in record time. We did this by coming through the doors and windows en masse, which was a surprise, as this had not happened before.

After a short trip by train, we arrived at portside of a Dutch ship named M.S. Pennant that had been captured by the Germans, and later captured by the Americans from a port in the Philippines. It was converted into a troop ship manned by the Merchant Marines. It was now late in the afternoon when we were all counted aboard which we numbered five hundred troops. There was also a Railroad Company that numbered about two hundred men with an average age of thirty-six years against our average age of twenty years.

That night we departed going under the Golden Gate Bridge sometime near midnight to get through the breakwaters before dawn. That was enemy submarine territory, which was the most dangerous part of our voyage. All of us were issued life vests with instructions to never be without it. The first days at sea were cold with winds that kept us below deck. I always took a top bunk so nothing would fall where not wanted. The ventilation left something to be desired. After a few days the weather improved and most of us were staying above deck twenty four hours each day. The Railroad replacements stayed on the starboard side of the ship; their own domain they called it. While going through our calisthenics, some off color remarks were made from the Railroaders, which immediately started a fight, but this stopped when one was about to be thrown overboard.

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Each morning at dawn men were appointed to battle stations in the gun turrets looking for submarines. That was when we expected an attack, if any. By this time we were well south of the Hawaiian Islands near the equator where we were issued shellback cards (a long-standing maritime tradition of 'crossing the line' wherein those embarked on a vessel that is crossing the equator are transformed from 'pollywogs' into 'shellbacks'). After being put through the usual ritual of minor torture to become initiated. By this time there was limited fresh water so all showers were with salt water and also on a ration of two meals per day.

While going through Guadalcanal we noticed the ship turning around while the rear cannon was shooting at a large box floating in the water about a half-mile away. We imagined seeing a periscope on a submarine, but it turned out to be a false alarm. Many of us were running around looking for our life jackets though.

The following day we observed land for the first time in twenty-four days, which turned out to be the Island of Guinea. The ship slowed down immediately when the anchor was dropped. This was late afternoon, the sun was setting, and the land with palm trees was a very impressive sight to all of us. The ship moved into port that night and one of our guys jumped overboard in his Class A uniform thinking all the native girls were waiting for him. Immediately he was put in the Brig aboard ship. We were now in the Finschhafen area of New Guinea which was very much alive with our military personnel which were attached to a temporary hospital. Before morning we were out to sea and we joined a convoy of ships in stormy weather as far as we could see. I remember seeing our Navy destroyer weaving back and forth in front of our convoy to intercept any enemy torpedoes that might come our way.

After a few days we landed at Tacloban, Leyte in the Philippine Islands. Within a few days we were sent to our regular outfit. I remember having dysentery and did not care to eat, but would accept some kind of fruit drink. While going through the line to the mess hall one of the servers accused me of trying for second servings until I showed him a clean mess gear and said all I wanted was liquid and nothing more. Finally, he caught on to my predicament.

About half of the troops were flown to Luzon to the 11th Airborne and the remainder of us to Mindoro Island to join the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat team. They were just returning from capturing the Island of Corregidor and we were the replacements for their many casualties. The first Sergeant took us to our assigned area. Ours was Regimental Headquarters Company with the Demolition Platoon and Sergeant Bronoman was in charge.

March 15, 1945: we were given time to get acquainted with our new outfit and its personnel. It was a time for R&R (rest and relaxation) as most of the men were in a rundown condition after the battle on Corregidor. Within ten days we were alerted for a new campaign on Negroes Island.

We were about the third group to leave within a three-day period. The Island was secure as the Navy was quite active moving troops as designated. I recall crossing the channel to get to Bacolod City, which was about a two-hour crossing and I slept most of the way. We reached port at dusk and were waiting for transportation from the 40th Division, which did not arrive. The mayor of the city came to greet us and advised us of some nearby buildings we could use for the night.

It was now dark and we were all settled and the trucks did arrive from another part of the Island. After we were all loaded and started off across and through the jungle, we were met by a somewhat hysterical soldier trying to tell our commanding officer the safest way to go. He was told to get the hell out of the way and join our column. About 3:00 A.M. we were stopped on the side of the mountain and bedded down to sleep. At dawn the machine guns were firing in the distance, about one half mile away. Shortly, Colonel Jones was standing on the hood of a jeep advising us of the condition we were about to face, with the enemy less than a half a mile away.

FIGHTING

It was almost noon before we got started. In the meantime, a light plane known as an L-4 was flying wounded to the hospital at Bacolod City every few minutes. Finally, the Demolition Platoon was made ready and our call to advance to the front line, which was about a third of a mile away. We passed what was left of a crawler type tractor that was being used for opening and widening the road. It ran over a land mine and the only part one could recognize was the cross type frame. The tractor operator was killed by the concussion.

Arriving at our destination point we were met by a medical officer who immediately put all of us on stretcher detail carrying wounded back to the aid station.

The line company had just advanced over the next ridge and the dust began settling, when someone yelled, "JAP!" This Nip soldier had jumped into a bunch of bushes while trying to escape. Sure seemed like a long time before someone found a weapon to kill him. We were still carrying wounded when our non-com in charge complained to the officer that we were a Demolition team and not with field medics. We were all scared until an officer stood up in clear view and explained that as long as we kept moving a sniper would not get a bead, or sight, on us. Now the first officer had sent us on our way to do Demolition duty.

We are now about five hundred yards from the fighting. Our machine guns would continue to fire when the Japanese would stop. One could always distinguish which side fired first as the Japanese guns were much more rapid firing.

About five of us were designated to sit on a small hill until called. We were talking and cleaning our equipment. While "keeping watch" we saw two dive-bombers making passes against the side of the mountain across the valley. They were trying to hit a large gun that the Japs would fire about every thirty minutes. When I realized the other troopers weren't making any comments about our activity, I noticed they had moved over the hill. They told me a sniper had us in his line of fire and a bullet had hit on my

right and to the rear of where I was sitting. We tried to locate the sniper, but it was now 1500 hours and impossible to see against the sun.

At sunset we reorganized and prepared for the night to take turns standing watch. Between the hours of 3-5 A.M., the moon disappeared and it was totally dark. As a rule this was the time the Banzai attacks started. My foxhole buddy told me to wake up, as my snoring was much too loud. After asking them what I should do he said, "you must sleep lighter". Now it was totally dark except for a few stars. The temperature was approximately 60 degrees and the further we moved up the mountain for each ridge of land the line companies were taking, it became cooler during the night. At sunrise the Japs would open fire. Our troops were facing the bright sunlight, and this was to the Jap advantage, plus their ammunition was the smokeless powder type, making them harder to locate. Their guns and automatic weapons would discontinue firing before ours.

At about 9:00 A.M. the medics began to bring the wounded back to the aid station, which is near the command post to the rear of our location by about 300 yards. At about 11:00 A.M., Sgt. Bronoman, our squad leader, advised me to check out a rocket launcher as we had been called up to the line to meet with the "line officer". We had a supply of rockets and began a fast hike forward. On the way we had to cross a tank trap, which was about eight feet deep and the same width. We were crossing over on some poles tied together and lying in the bottom of the trap was a corpse. It was much larger than the normal size Jap. This man had been a member of the Japanese Imperial Marines and appeared to have been dead only a few hours. When we arrived at the end of the road where we were to meet the line officer, he was not present. I asked Sgt. Bronoman if I should try to locate the officer and his answer was, "we were ordered to this point and this is where we will wait". While waiting a trooper was coming across the ravine with several bandoliers of machine gun belts and griping about the lousy job and conditions of everything. His last name was Chupa and he came from a wealthy family in New York State. He was one of these guys who had been spoiled as a kid. He had been given his own way as he lived among rich people, which he always said was not his fault. He continued on his way and I never saw him again.

While waiting at this location for more than an hour Sgt. Bronoman said we were going back to our camp site and wait for another call. Now I understand why the Sgt. made very little effort to find the line officer. He had 89 points after being overseas for three years and was about to be rotated home and undue effort to get into a more dangerous situation did not appeal to him at this time.

By now we had been overseas for a whole three weeks and had our first mail call. Everyone in our squad received letters from home except one of our squad by the name of Dobis. He received a short note from his wife stating she could no longer wait for him and she was marrying another man. From that time on, Dobis was inebriated, drinking anything that would make him drunk. Tuba juice was fermented cocoanut oil that always seemed to be available. One night Dobis broke all rules by not staying in his foxhole, moving around looking for food and at that time came very close to being shot by one of our own men.

In the mornings someone would start a small fire so we could have something hot to eat from our K-rations. I remember buying eggs from the natives, which we mixed with

powdered milk. Bread was shipped up by the bakery which turned out to be French toast. To this day, French toast is my specialty.

I always kept in touch with Darwin Hence, who was the Regional Radio operator. He always knew our battle plans, when we should be prepared to move up to the next line of defense, along with special orders. I would tell a Spanish trooper, by the name of Roberto Burraro, what was going to happen the next day and he thought I was physisic. Unbeknownst to him, my information was received from Darwin.

It was not uncommon after a long firefight, for a jeep to come by and have three stretchers, with wounded, moving very slowly back to the aid station. One of the men on a litter called out to someone he knew in our group and a big smile said, "I am going home". We knew that he would have an arm or leg amputated.

Darwin and I received an overnight pass and hitched a ride to Bacolod City, which was about ten miles away. After seeing the city near dusk, we began looking for some kind of hotel, which was not available. We were advised by the Military Police to find a place to stay in the temporary Army hospital outside the city. Arriving there we found a couple of folding cots, and after setting them up, we were told to move so some more wounded could be brought in. One trooper was carried by with that ashen gray look of death. When they placed him on the operating table, set up a plasma bottle, and after what seemed like only a few minutes, his color came back and he actually sat up and looked at his abdominal wounds. There was so much activity all night long that morning came too soon.

We caught a ride back with the 40th Division supply truck and found our squad on a new hill and not very impressed to see us back and lucky enough to have received an overnight pass. We were informed that one of the sergeants from another squad had volunteered to lead a patrol the day before. Parson had been working for a field commission and some of the Old Timers did not have much time for him. An Italian trooper in our squad made a statement, "I am glad he got it".

Some of the squad continued to hassle me about being so lucky to get the overnight pass, they wanted to change my name to "Lucky". I told them all to go to hell and retired to my foxhole. I decided to clean my 45 weapon, and fired it into the wall of the foxhole upon hearing this they called my name and I answered, "what the hell do you want"? It seemed very amusing to them, thinking I had taken some drastic measures.



Colonel Jones informed us to prepare to move to the other side of the mountain as our outfit, the 503 PRCT was relieving the 40th Division. We were picked up by the famous Army six-by-six trucks and taken down through the capitol city where crowds of people greeted us, cheering us on. Now the Philippine army was taking up our old positions, in theory that is. They fired away thirty days ammunition in less than four days and did not advance any further.

We set up our new camp near an anti-aircraft gun, which fired into an activity on the mountain. Our first order was to go into an area to set up explosives and enclose caves that the Japs had found necessary to move out of post-haste.

The Filipino children would sell any kind of food available, like breadfruit and bananas. Only one item can I remember eating out of the K-rations was a dried fruit bar. This was part of the reason my weight dropped from 165 pounds to 118 pounds in a period of sixty days.

FIGHTING STILL

We in the Demolition Platoon were billeted in a Japanese barracks previously occupied by the Imperial Navy. Jim Leonard, a radio technician, and I arranged with the natives to take us on a sailing expedition out in the bay between going to trouble spots out on the island.



June 1945, Las Negroes Island, Philippines. Lowell on left, front row.

Jim followed the lieutenant in charge of a “live” company when the fighting was going on, until the lieutenant was killed in action and the 503 Regiment pulled out to the other side of the mountain. Later a new officer was placed in charge until we were unable to go further back into the mountains so far that it was impossible to get our wounded out in time to save their lives.

Jim was in the process of being sent home when he came down with malaria and had to be hospitalized and sent to a hospital in the Hawaiian Islands. After arriving home he attended the University of Florida and studied journalism. In 1957 he married a girl he had known for seven years. Jim joined a banking group and worked there for many years, until they dissolved and his job was abolished. He also had a position with Marine boating works for a couple of years. After retiring Jim and his wife moved back to his hometown of St. Augustine, FL where they are both retired and live near their two children.

The American Army 40th Division was on the other side of the mountain attempting to run the Japanese off the top. After many attempts, we could see very few trees on the top. According to rumors, our commanding officer made the statement that if the 40th Division cannot get the job done, let the 503rd take over.

It was now the month of April and we just received the news that the President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had died. The Japanese must have heard the same, as that night there was a lot of movement. They were caught behind our lines as far as one half mile and drunk on sake. The information received by the Japanese was that without our leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt, we would not continue to fight. We did continue to have many wounded and dead.

There was a lot of boat traffic coming across the China Sea and they were all sail craft. They were suspected of smuggling drugs, and as a result, it was necessary to patrol the docks where these craft would tie up for the night. The activity was questionable to me as I was on guard one night and there was twenty craft at the docks that night, but the next day all were gone. I often wondered why there was only one sentry posted on the pier that extended out in the ocean for at least a quarter of a mile. I was called into the G2 (information center) and questioned for almost an hour as to what the activity was while I was on guard the previous night.

About mid morning, a jeep with a loudspeaker system came up the mountain with two officers and a very healthy Japanese that had been captured and was now going to call across the valley with instructions to his Japanese comrades to surrender. After a short time the POW returned, and seeing the prisoner close up I was impressed with their seeing the POW so fat and overweight.

The area we were now in gave us plenty of room to set up the large paramedical tents that we used for our quarters on one side of the road and across the road was the forward command post with the emergency aid station. Sometime during the night the barking of a dog awakened some of us and we could see, against the skyline, someone walking and coming forward. It had to be the enemy as no one moved after dark. Sgt. Bronoman did not allow anyone to fire a weapon, as there was too much danger of hitting troops across the road. At this time two men were appointed to stand guard until morning. When we inspected the roadway, it confirmed that the person had been a Japanese as they wore a split toe shoe, and the shoe print was there to be seen. The first order was to lay a mine field over the ridge, as it seemed possible for the enemy to scale the high bank on this side of the valley.

It was obvious that most of our troops were not getting out in time after being wounded as the distance was too far from the aid station. The Japanese were now so far into the mountains that they could not be located very often, so it was necessary to call in the Air Force to bomb any activity sighted by spotter plane. We would take turns watching a mountaintop through the telescope near an anti aircraft gun. When we saw activity, we would swing the gun and point it to the target, and the Japs would run in every direction, as they were also watching us.

There was a call for an air strike when a bomb did not release as the plane came out of a dive. It turned and came over our position, at which time the bomb let loose and fell on

friendly troops. After that time, the Air Corps were told never to fly over our position, and to fly parallel with front lines on the enemy side.

In the middle of May the rainy season had begun. We were ditching with our trench tools to keep the water away from our tents. There was also a shortage of cigarettes because we non-smokers had been trading them for food from the natives, and our ten in one ration had only so many cigarettes. Tempers were flaring until Don Peterson made a loan of two cartons until the next shipment came in with rations.

After over sixty days on the line, we were ordered to move down the mountain to a rear area until further notice. The Army Corp of Engineers, in the last two months, had built what seemed like a super highway that moved us to an area near Bacolod City in what seemed like not much more than an hour. Previously the trip had taken most of the night. Immediately there was a new Tent City made up of what was left of the Regiment, only temporary quarters we hoped. In a short time replacements arrived. All were second lieutenants direct from West Point, U.S.A. arriving in the first two trucks. Up until that time, our lieutenants were termed "ninety day wonders", and many of them not available any longer as a result of casualty. The next six trucks carried enlisted men. By now, the replacements were talking to us Veterans of Combat who were Battle Tested and eligible for the Combat Infantry Badge.

The first new man I met was Hal Brumbelow, a couple of years my senior, who was anxious for some action. Hal had served one year in the Merchant Marines until his draft number came up, then he volunteered for the paratroops. Hal had a good brain and had been sent to several specialist schools and the Demolition area was where most men were now needed. One thing we both had a weakness for, was the good seafood available from the local natives. Shrimp would take a part of our Army pay considering we paid two hundred pesos, which was equivalent to one hundred American dollars.

Regimental Headquarters was assigned to move into a vacated Japanese Navy barracks located on the beach with a great view of the Philippine Sea. The Demolition Platoon was given Military Police duties with eight hours on and sixteen off. Some of our other duties would be to go out as Patrol Units to the surrounding Islands. Hal asked for this kind of duty because all the weapons he had been trained to use were much too idle, and now was his chance to, at least, earn a Combat Infantry Badge. Hal brought several troopers for fire support, and were dropped in a small boat near the shore of one of the surrounding islands and rowed in to land where suspected enemy were holding.

After making contact, the Japs ran off into the hills. It was totally dark when the operation began, and now it was near 2:00 A.M. Upon returning to the boat on the beach, they found the tide had gone out, leaving everyone high and dry. After carrying the boat about one hundred yards, they were again in deep water to rendezvous with the amphibious craft that was to pick them up at the appointed time. Upon returning, they had a great story to tell about their adventure, even though it was a failure by military standards. From then on, we in the Demolition section had duties such as walking the streets of Bacolod city and stopping in on all the wild parties to keep law and order. We encountered a tall trooper by the name of Tex who was waving his six-shooter at one of the many parties, and had half the people in total fear (the native

civilians). I called him aside, asking for his weapon, with the understanding that he could pick it up from me the following day. After admitting to being very drunk, he gave it up, and did not remember where it was until the following week. This did control his actions though.

On our off hours, the Amphibious Duk outfit, down the beach from our barracks, would pick several of our squad, go out in the bay while we would toss small blocks of TNT overboard, while turning in a tight circle. The fish would float to the surface, and many of us would dive in and throw a Red Mackerel species into the seagoing craft. Upon our return to the beach, we would exchange our catch for prepared shrimp with the local restaurants. This was standard procedure during the months of June and July. As acting MP's, we were advised to check all civilian motor vehicles with red stained carburetors. This would be proof that our gasoline was being stolen, and this was later proven.

I continued to depend on Darwin Hence for information of our next moves for special duties, but he came down with an attack of malaria and this was caused by his not taking his Atabrine tablets, which was medication to combat malaria. It had a terrible taste unless swallowed very fast. Our skin would turn a yellow jaundice color after taking the medication for a few days, but this would ward off the dreadful illness. Darwin was sent away and hospitalized in the states. This was the last we heard of him.

A favorite game we played was dropping the Atabrine tablets in the mouth of anyone snoring too loud in the barracks. This solved the problem for the remainder of the night and happened to me quite a few times.

A lot of crazy things happened when we were near the front lines. As I have mentioned before, it became very dark between the hours of three and five A.M. I recall waking to the sound of a man screaming with every breath, off in the distance. I listened for what seemed like five minutes and thought; "will he ever run out of breath"? Changing positions, I realized that it was my nostrils making the noise. We were always told our sight and sound faculties were what kept us alive. (Note: Lowell's wife and children can attest to the fact that he snored like a train!)

The quarters for the Colonel were located away from the Capitol of about five miles, and the only protection was two sentries. One night another guy and I were on duty and the wind was from the north, which brought the stench from the sugar mill that had been blown up by the Japs. The mill was less than a quarter mile away and the aroma from the fermenting sugar vats had an odor all its own.

The market places seemed to be in the center of the city where all the food was brought to be bartered. The meat seemed to be fish and buffalo, and live chickens. Fruits and vegetables plus the tuba juice, which was an alcoholic drink all added to making the entire area having a rotten smell.

One evening while I was on patrol, Lt. Sullivan told me to go to the south end of the island to find a soldier that was absent without leave from the 40th Division. I was ordered to bring him back for trial. The following day I was able to get a ride with a US Army truck that was going to the city where the soldier in question was to be. The city was approximately thirty miles away. As we drove along one of the better highways, the

Afro American GI seemed very interested in my duty as an MP. At the same time he was making fun of me a nineteen-year-old going after this well known AWOL that had been missing for several months.

Our traveling speed was about 40 MPH, and the driver asked if I could fire my 45 at one of the palm trees that were spaced about thirty yards apart and hit one of them. I agreed, only on the condition he advise the Motor Pool to have transportation available, with or without my prisoner, by the end of the day to return to the Capitol city. He agreed and I fired hitting the palm tree - the bark flew. He was very impressed. From then on it was my problem to explain to the officer of the day why I was short one round of ammo.

It took only a short time of inquiry to find the AWOL man, as the natives were very cooperative. The soldier was living with a native family, parents of his girlfriend. Catching him by surprise, I explained that if he came peacefully that was the only way I was bringing him back. Also as an AWOL his charge was much less than desertion. As we left the native residence the girlfriend and her mother were crying, afraid they would never see him again. He tried to explain that he would soon be back.

I hired a native to take us to the Motor Pool where Lt. Sullivan was waiting with a jeep to return our prisoner to the stockade back near Bacolod city. The stockade guards were advised that if their prisoner ever escaped the guards would serve his time. When the final report came out, Lt. Sullivan was given full credit for capturing the prisoner.

James Mee, one of the troopers in our outfit, was very intelligent and had a masters in the art of self defense as a boxer. Always quiet and very reserved, he came into the barracks, waking everyone, and announced the war was over. This was reason to celebrate, so the beer I had been allotted, two cans per week, had filled my barracks bag. This was the appropriate occasion for a celebration. The barracks bag was opened, the beer was brought out and we partied until the beer was gone. Waking the next morning we were told the news was a false alarm. Tests were being made that a bomb we now had was so powerful that it had left particles in three states. Lots of the men were over-drinking and became unruly. Those with wives and children were concerned at the invasion of Japan as heavy losses were expected, and all rumors told us paratroopers would be first to go in. Finally, news came that two atomic bombs had been dropped, and I say, "thank you God, for the atom bomb!" The Japanese had surrendered.

SURRENDER

It was the first week in September 1945 when I was advised by my company commander, Lt. Sullivan, that I was to escort thirty six Japanese prisoners, by air transport, from Los Negros Island to Tacloban on the island of Leyte. The Japanese were sending ships to pick up troops that had surrendered and Tacloban was the only place near that had a stockade and facilities. In a short time their soldiers came out of the mountains and assembled in a designated area. For many days the Army trucks from the 40th Division transported the Japanese troops to temporary stockades on the island near a port or airstrip. The prisoners were all very humble and polite and bowed frequently. They appeared emaciated, but overall I think fairly healthy.

While searching the enemy, some of the MP'S would remove their rings and watches. In an effort to give protection to the Jap soldiers from the Philippine civilians, it was necessary to fire in the air to frighten the civilians as some were very bitter because of the treatment received the past three years from the Japanese occupation.



After the prisoners were loaded on the plane and in flight, I recall some American soldiers advised them on not too friendly terms, that if any of them became ill they would be asked to exit. Flying over Leyte we could see armored equipment and supplies of every description as far as the eye could see. It had been stockpiled for the planned invasion of Japan. This was no longer necessary because of the atom bomb. Upon landing, when all prisoners were finally off the plane, I ordered them to follow me and heard the words, "non de deska" which means "do not understand". When I stated we were going to dinner, they followed like sheep. They did understand me when I told them it was time to eat.

The day following the announcement of the Japanese surrender, Brumbelow and I were in the control tower at the airstrip when a twin engine Beech craft type plane landed with six high ranking Army officers. Two were Generals. They were picked up by a Command Car and were in the city for about two hours. Upon returning they were all highly inebriated; very drunk. As they climbed into the plane one said they were going to buzz the tower. A Filipino boy watched as they revved the engines. When the plane made a complete turn around, one brake did not hold. The pilot got out of the plane and asked us which was the original heading. After explaining, he stated he would buzz the tower. The Filipino who was in the tower with us said, "me no like Americans, me want to live, me not want to die". Immediately he jumped out of the tower, which was a distance of about fourteen feet and ran for his life. The plane came toward us while we signaled with the red warning light, and we were missed by several hundred feet.

It was common knowledge the Air Force was flying in liquor from Australia. In lieu of payment, the pilots would accept Japanese souvenirs. After all the Japanese troops had been evacuated from the area of our responsibility, Brumbelow and I were sent ahead to the south seaport to prepare the area for loading ships to Japan. We passed through the town of La Carlota where I had been a few weeks earlier to pick up the AWOL prisoner. He was now being tried for desertion during the time of war. We arrived at the seaport town of Dumaguete at approximately eighteen hundred hours, and began stringing wire for lights. We had the wire stripped from a wrecked jeep. That night the ordinance vehicle brought in a large army tent with cots and provisions to last a couple of days. The following day several ships arrived and one of them rammed the cement pier so hard that serious damage was done to the ship and pier. This ship had, as part of its cargo, potatoes. A medical officer came out to inspect the potatoes, which looked fine, but ordered them all taken out in the bay and dumped. I recall that every cafe in the city had potatoes on their menu that night. We did partake of these potatoes, as we had not had this kind of food for many months.

We noted that not many of the old timers were around anymore. Those with over seventy-five points had been sent home. To build our regiment to full strength, new replacements were coming in from the states. As a result, more large tents were being set up and small groups of troopers were being sent to outposts around the southern part of the island. It was near mid September when an LST (landing ship tank) came into port to move our regiment to Japan, along with two more LST type ships.

The rainy season was coming to an end except for a few typhoons that occasionally passed through the area. Traveling north toward the China Sea we stopped at Manila Luzon to take on supplies for less than twenty four hours. When well out to sea, we met Japanese ships coming to pick up the remainder of their scattered armies.

Of the three LST's, we were caught in a storm with waves so high that the doors fell off one of the ships that was following us, leaving only the inner drop down door sealing out the water. This ship turned back for repairs.

THE MONKEY

Our chaplain would always go through the chow line ahead of the troops with his pet monkey. This gave us enlisted men an inferiority complex and as a result, the chaplain's monkey turned up missing. Nearly everyone knew that it had been thrown overboard. Shortly the man of the cloth came down to the main hold of the ship and announced to all that unless we found his monkey, it would go hard for us plus consequences to pay! Someone began to laugh, and suddenly everyone was hysterical and with catcalls such as, "monkey lover say a prayer", etc. The poor chaplain walked away. All the time he was in our outfit I never saw him smile or associate with any of the other officers. This was why he was still a second lieutenant at the age of forty.

JAPAN



Our destination was now known, and it was Yokohama, Japan. While on the China Sea there was little room on board to do any exercise drills which left us lots of time to play chess. One night while on guard duty, a Japanese ship met us and passed so close on our starboard side that you could reach out and touch it. This was told by the guy on guard and we all began to wonder if hostilities had really ceased.



Camp Haugen

It was during the night when Yokohama came into view and the devastation was unbelievable. The railroad station was a short distance away and we were on our way to northern Honshu to the city of Monika. It was a one night train ride to Camp Haugen, which had been a Japanese University complex, but now converted for our quarters for the next six months. We felt our first earthquake tremor within a few days. The dormitory was built Japanese style and adjusted to minor quakes; which came often at certain times of the year.

Each day the snow line on the mountains would come down lower, and outside temperatures colder. We wrapped our raincoats and ponchos over the cots to keep warm at night because our only heating system was barrel stoves that only kept the chill off.

There was always a bunch of the guys sitting near the barrel stove playing cards until all hours of the night and drinking sake. This was stored in five gallon cans conveniently placed to be kept warm near the stove; which is the way to appreciate its flavor best.

Immediately after our 503rd regiment joined the 11th Airborne Division, orders came down that all new troops in the 11th should turn in all souvenirs to the supply room. I kept my two samurai swords concealed in my barracks bag, but had to turn in my Japanese Lugar and a Japanese parachute.

Barrels of water were located around the dormitory (barracks) for fire protection and the guard on duty would keep the ice broken in the barrels on his rounds. Our fire drills included equipment of the eighteen hundred vintage.

It finally happened! Someone dropped a cigarette between the floor boards and the dry timbers on the barracks next to our building, and it began to burn. Before morning two barracks, the aid station building, and the supply rooms where my Japanese Lugar and parachute were stored all burned to the ground.

Brumbelow and I were kicking through the ashes of the supply room and found my Lugar; totally burned with all temper "lost" on its inner mechanism. There was no sign of the parachute. The only reason our barracks was saved was because of our supply of water stored in the open barrels.

SKIING



By now the snow was in great supply. One day during a general inspection, our company commander announced that there were over three hundred pairs of Japanese army skis for one and all, providing someone would volunteer to act as instructor and be responsible for the ski program. They would work under the guise of special service, which meant freedom from inspection, but no chance of a rating or pay increase. I had grown up on skis and thought to be quite knowledgeable so I suggested to Brumbelow that we volunteer

the position. He laughed in my face and said that the nearest he had been to snow was in the mountains over twenty miles away from his home in California. I promised to teach him everything that was necessary to know each evening for a week.

After this time, we approached the company commander and told him of our qualifications. We were accepted, mainly because no one else had volunteered. We each were given an auditorium in the area and Hal and I agreed to teach all safety rules first. There was always a smart lieutenant asking technical questions so to quiet him down I would call him up front to demonstrate, on stage in front of everyone, what he was attempting to get across to the group. As an end result, we all learned something.

It was necessary to check out the ski resort area, service, repairs and the electric tow motor. This was in Hal's line of expertise and everything was working in due time. We were required to teach four hours a day, five days a week. The mountain area was near Morika and was used seven days a week by enthusiastic skiers.

Army trucks would carry us from Camp Haugan, five miles up in the mountains twice a day seven days each week. The morning group would ride back down when the afternoon group came up, and many times several of us would ski down the mountain through the evergreen trees, on the best new powder snow one could imagine. Then we would ride up again on the returning trucks after this speedy three mile stint. This activity continued through the winter with no injuries to anyone. When the season was over, I had worn out three pairs of Japanese army skis. Their skis did not have metal edges like the modern skis of today.

The snow began to melt so Hal and I tried to make our duties last so we could avoid regular duty. We did this by servicing the equipment for the next year; even though we knew we would be going home in a couple of months.

One evening while we were eating dinner, which was about 5:30, the Company Commander came rushing in, very excited, telling us that a sixty foot smokestack had a broken guide wire and he wanted it blown down before it fell and injured someone. I followed the captain to the site and explained that the buildings could be damaged when the stack was blown down, due to the charges of TNT that it would be necessary to use. Little did he care about the buildings, as his only concern was that he would be held responsible, no matter what happened. I did not want any problems, as it would be a short time before I would be going home to the states. I certainly didn't want anything to delay my departure. I placed all the necessary explosives in the right places, and by this time a large crowd had gathered for the falling of the stack.

When the blast came, the stack blew sideways for about four feet then telescoped in reverse to the ground, not touching any of the buildings surrounding it. Another "thank you, Lord"!

The following day the company clerk informed me that I had been promoted to Tec5 which was a surprise to me as Brumbelow thought we were still assigned to Special Services. That same day a new shipment of replacements arrived and the first thing that evening we were all eager to hear how we had won the war.

Through some of the propaganda spread by Tokyo Rose during fighting and near the end of hostilities, we picked up her threats of what their troops were planning to do to those of us that were in specific areas. It was a great concern to us as to where they were getting classified information, but one item that really amused us was the statement that back in the U.S. the women had taken over all the jobs, taken control of the monetary situation and our wives and girlfriends had run off with our best friends. This came over short wave radio every few days and only for a short period of time, due to the fact that if they transmitted too long from one place, this would reveal their location.

The day we were waiting for finally came and we were sent to Tokyo to board the ship Marine Swallow. It took all of eight days to reach the port of Seattle, WA. During that time many of the savings were lost rolling dice on the way home. The weather was cool as it was the first days of May and we took the northern route just south of the Aleutian Islands. This was different from our going overseas with the high temperatures and very humid plus the fact that we were on watch for enemy submarines. Our concern was the railroad strike that was about to take place, causing us a delay. Luckily, President Truman made another right decision, forcing trains to keep moving.



Instrument No. <u>152812</u>		UNITED STATES		Filed for record this <u>21</u> day of <u>May</u>	
To		LOWELL E BJELLA 37 594 437		A. D. 1946, at <u>1:00</u> o'clock <u>P.M.</u>	
				By <u>A. S. Helvorson</u> Register of Deeds.	
				By <u>Vera Lundmark</u> Deputy.	

Army of the United States
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

This is to certify that
LOWELL E BJELLA 37 594 437 TECHNICIAN FIFTH GRADE
503RD PARACHUTE REGIMENT & COMBAT TEAM

Army of the United States
is hereby **HONORABLY DISCHARGED** from the military service of the United States of America.
This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at SEPARATION CENTER, CAMP MC COX WISCONSIN
Date 11 MAY 1946

Charles A. Fanning
CHARLES A. FANNING
MAJOR, INF.

ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL BJELLA LOWELL E	2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 37 594 437	3. GRADE TEC/5	4. ARM ON SERVICE INF	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION 503RD PARACHUTE REGT & COMBAT TEAM	7. DATE OF SEPARATION 11 MAY 46	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION SEPARATION CENTER CAMP MC COX WISCONSIN		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 1403 BEMIDJI AVE BEMIDJI MINNESOTA	10. DATE OF BIRTH 7 FEB 26	11. PLACE OF BIRTH BEMIDJI MINNESOTA		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT SEE 9	13. COLOR HAIR BROWN	14. COLOR EYES BROWN	15. HEIGHT 5-2 1/2	16. HAIR 162 LBS
17. MARITAL STATUS X SINGLE	18. U.S. CITIZEN X YES	19. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. STUDENT HIGH SCHOOL X-02		

MILITARY HISTORY

20. DATE OF INDUCTION 7 MAY 44	21. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 7 MAY 44	22. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE 7 MAY 44	23. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE FORT SNELLING MINNESOTA
24. SELECTED SERVICE DATA X YES	25. LOCAL S. S. BOARD NO. # 1	26. COUNTY AND STATE BELTRAMI MINN	27. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE 1417 BEMIDJI, BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
28. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. DEMOLITION SPECIALIST 1533		29. MILITARY QUALIFICATIONS AND RATE (U. S. Army, Air Force and Navy, and other military branches, etc.) PARACHUTIST'S WINGS COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE, RIFLE-9S	
30. RAFFLES AND CAMPAIGNS SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES			
31. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS ARMY OCCUPATION RIBBON (JAPAN) ASIATIC-PACIFIC THEATER SERVICE MEDAL GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL PHILIPPINE LIBERATION RIBBON W/ONE BRONZE STAR			
32. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION NONE			

33. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES		34. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN	
SMALL POX NOV 44	TYPHOID JUN 44	OTHER DISEASES CHOL FEB 45 TYPH -	DATE OF DEPARTURE 14 FEB 45
35. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE		36. HIGHEST GRADE HELD TEC/5	37. DATE OF ARRIVAL 19 MAR 46-45
CONTINENTAL SERVICE		38. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN	39. DATE OF ARRIVAL
YEARS MONTHS DAYS	YEARS MONTHS DAYS	RESTRICTION S W P T O	6 MAY 46
0 9 12	1 2 23	USA	

38. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION
CONVENIENCE OF GOVT RRI-1 (DEMOBILIZATION) AR 615-365 15 DEC 44

39. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED
DEMOLITION SCHOOL FORT BENNING GEORGIA
PARACHUTE SCHOOL FORT BENNING GEORGIA

40. LENGTH OF PAY PERIODS		41. UNTERSTEN OUT PAY		42. SOLDIER DEPOSITS		43. TRAVEL PAY		44. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DEBITORS OFFICER	
YEARS MONTHS DAYS	TOTAL	YEARS MONTHS DAYS	TOTAL	NONE	19.65	295.45	H L OLDENBURG MAJ FD		
2 0 4	300	1 00	100						

INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT: IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WITHIN THIRTY-DAY PERIOD, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND PAYABLE TO COLLECTIONS DIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.


45. KIND OF INSURANCE X	46. HOW PAID X	47. EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY 31 MAY 46	48. DATE OF NEXT PREMIUM DUE 30 JUN 46	49. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH 6.40	50. EXTENSION OF VETERAN TO X
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51. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in (F. D. Directives)
(PRINT)
LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED
ASR SCORE (2 SEP 45) 29
TWO (2) OVERSEAS SERVICE BARS
ONE (1) DAY LOST UNDER AN 107

52. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED Lowell E. Bjella	53. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) Winifred M Healy WINIFRED M HEALY 1ST LT MAC
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SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM App. not req.
ORIGINAL

Local Board No. 1 004
Beltrami County 007
001
Bemidji, Minnesota 1-10
(Local Board date stamped with code)



CERTIFICATE OF FITNESS

Lowell Elson Bjella 12100
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name) (Order number)

Having been forwarded for preinduction physical examination and having been examined, I hereby certify that you have been found:

1. Physically fit, acceptable by Army for general military service.
2. Physically fit, acceptable by Army for limited military service.
3. Physically fit, acceptable by Navy, including Marine Corps, Coast Guard.
4. Rejected, physically unfit.
5. Rejected, physically fit but unacceptable for other reasons.

5 APR 1944
(Date of examination)

Name R. Hart
Induction Station Commander.

Rank: 1st LT WAC FOR GEO. W. FRIED, MAJ. CAS
Station: ALIS - FORT SNELLING, MINNESOTA

DSS Form 218 GPO 16-27951-1

NIELSON BAKING COMPANY

309 AMERICA AVENUE

Bemidji, Minnesota

WHOLESALE BAKERS
OF
QUALITY BAKERY
PRODUCTS

January 21, 1944

To Whom it May Concern:

This certifies that I have known Lowell Elson Bjella for the past ten years. He will be eighteen years of age this coming month, and I have never heard him make a statement detrimental to the Government of the United States. I am positive that he is a good American citizen.

I have known his parents for a good many years, and have visited their home many times. His father is a veteran of World War I, and they are good American citizens.

Very truly yours,
John C. Nielson
John C. Nielson

JN:jn