

Lew Jinks'
World War II Story on Iwo Jima



By
Lew Jinks
&
Bill Wright

PREFACE

Of the hundreds of thousands, and probably millions, of World War II GI's returning home from the war, only a minority talked or shared their experiences at that time, however, the majority did not want to share those sights and feelings. Maybe that was their way of coping with all the gruesome memories. As years went by, some began to share their experiences, both horrifying and humorous. I remember as a young teenager and as the years went by, that Lew talked and shared a few things about his "hitch" in the Army, but, not at great length or in detail. The only thing that I ever knew about Wilbur, Lew's older brother and my other uncle, was that he was in the Navy and all he would say, was that he "just" drove a landing boat to take soldiers and supplies into the beaches, and then he would drop or change the subject. Basically, all I knew about Lew's military service was that he was a medic in the Army and had been on Iwo Jima.

After many years of wondering, seeing recent movies, TV documentaries and specials, as well as reading several books written by people that I have known for many years about their personal war experiences, I decided to ask Lew if he would share his personal experiences and story with me so that we would have it recorded for our family history and genealogy. About two years ago, he graciously agreed to share some of his experiences with me in a very informal conversation at his home. This intrigued me to want to learn more and document it for our family and friends. On November 8, 2007, we sat down in Lew's home and recorded 2-1/2 hours of stories and experiences on a small cassette recorder.

Lew and I are not professional writers and our hope is that those who read this small book will continue to remember all who served both at home and abroad and those who paid the ultimate price for their country. May they never be forgotten.

I am honored and consider it a great privilege to be able to work with Lew on this book and will always cherish these thoughts and memories that he is sharing with all of his family and friends. To me, Lew has not only been an Uncle, but a best friend, counselor, advisor, golfing buddy, and

a second Dad. If it had not been for Lew, I would not have gone to college and be where I am today. I am forever grateful.

Thank you, Lew.

Bill

Quote from Internet site: www.historyofwar.org

“When you go home, tell them of us and say: ‘For their tomorrows, we gave our todays’.”

John Maxwell Edmonds

INTRODUCTION

There have been thousands of books and stories written about the various battles and operations of World War II. Each has its own special place in the history of the war and some have been considered more important or critical than others by historians, but to all of the men and women who fought and died for their country, each and every day and battle was important.

The following was taken from the website www.historyofwar.org and is a summary of the battle of Iwo Jima. It is to explain why “Iwo” was so important and the cost in lives and casualties paid to win this battle.

“Among the Americans who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue.”
Admiral Chester Nimitz.

With the final attack on the 26th March, organized Japanese resistance was finally at an end. Fighting would continue in small skirmishes well into June when the last few Japanese were captured (such as Lt Musashino, commander of the 2nd Mixed Brigade's Pioneer Company) by the US Army. Airfield No. 2 was expanded and the infrastructure of the island was greatly improved. In the last few months of the war, the island underlined the reason for its capture as P51 Mustangs joined the B29 Superfortresses on the final leg of their journey to Japan and some 2,400 Superfortresses, with crews totaling over 70,000 landed on the island who might have otherwise have to ditch in the sea.

The Americans had completely underestimated the timescale and cost of the operation as well as the determination and preparedness of the enemy. What had been envisaged as a short, decisive battle became the costliest battle in the history of the US Marine Corps and the role played by Lt General Kuribayashi cannot be underestimated in this. He had planned the defence (sic) of the island and had foreseen how the campaign would unfold to perfection. He was the only commander to inflict greater casualties on the Marines than what was suffered by the Japanese garrison. The Marines suffered some 23,157 casualties (5,885 killed) and the US Navy suffered some 2,798 casualties (881 killed). For the Japanese, out of an estimated garrison strength of 21,060 personnel, some 216 Navy and 867 Army personnel were taken prisoner, leaving one to

conclude that 19,977 were killed. Twenty-seven American personnel (22 Marines, 4 Navy corpsmen and 1 Naval Officer) received the Medal of Honor (13 posthumously), a third of the total awarded to the US Marine Corps in World War Two. The intensity of the combat on Iwo Jima was a stern warning of what was to come on Okinawa and what may well have awaited the Allies in an invasion of the Japanese mainland. Such an operation was already in its advanced planning stages, has been code named Operation Downfall and was due to take place in November 1945, the initial phase of which (itself code named Operation Olympic) was the island of Honshu. The enormity of the casualty lists from Iwo Jima made it a priority that if an alternative means of ending the war could be found, then it should be pursued. That means came in the form of the Manhattan Project and the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese formally surrendered on the battleship USS Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. The Second World War had finally come to an end.

The following is another saying or quote that I received from a friend which I think speaks greatly of the sacrifices of the American military personnel during World War II. I have not verified the authenticity of the quote since it came via email and presumably from the internet, however, it sums up the effects that World War II had on the world.

In case we find ourselves starting to believe all the anti-American sentiment and negativity, we should remember England's Prime Minister Tony Blair's words during a recent interview. When asked by one of his Parliament members why he believes so much in America, he said:

“A simple way to take measure of a country is to look at how many want in.how many want out. Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you: 1.) Jesus Christ, 2.) The American G.I.. One died for your soul, the other died for your freedom.”

THE EARLY YEARS

Lewis Robert Jinks was born April 23, 1923 on a small farm south of Viola, Illinois, the son of Clarence Monroe Jinks and Barbara Orinda (Smith) Jinks. His father was a hired man on a farm and worked for a dollar a day or \$30 per month. He plowed the fields with a team of horses since they did not have a tractor at that time. Their home was furnished as well as meat (beef and hogs butchered as needed), milk from the family cow for butter and cheese and vegetables from their garden. History tells us, times were not easy in those days. Life was much simpler in a lot of ways. Many people survived the rough times and enjoyed the good times with neighbors and their churches.

His two older sisters, Dorothy age 9, and Grace age 7, rode a horse to school about 2-3 miles from home. His older brother Wilbur age 4, rounded out the family of six. Prior to the birth of Dorothy in 1914, his parents endured one of the most horrific hardships that any couple starting a family could ever imagine. Their first child, Marjorie, was born March 25, 1910 and their second child, Lawrence, was born August 2, 1913. When Marjorie was about 4 years old and Lawrence was only 5 months old, they both died within a few days of each other. Lawrence died January 13, 1914 from pneumonia and Marjorie died January 19, 1914 (6 days later) from scarlet fever. The story has been passed down through family members that their mother almost lost her mind and the good old country doctor's advice and remedy to the situation was to keep her busy and to not leave her alone. Lew's father would take her out to the field with him and she walked behind him and the horses while he was plowing and working the fields in preparation for the spring planting. The doctor's other suggestion was to get her pregnant again as soon as possible so that she would have another child. Hence, Dorothy was born on November 7, 1914 and the other children later. Tragedy struck again in 1933 when Lew's mother gave birth to Barbara Jean and within 3 or 4 days after birth, Barbara died.

The Great Depression came along and economic times were very hard for everyone. One might look back and say that those who lived on farms at least had a roof over their heads and food on the table. They had to burn corn in their stoves since it was only 5 cents per bushel and cheaper than buying coal.

Bill's friend who is in his 90's once said his daughter complained they were poor because she had to wear "hand-me-down" clothes from an older sister. He replied, "We were not (poor), we just didn't have much money."

About 1929 the family moved to Rock Island, Illinois and rented an apartment on 5th Avenue and 31st Street, which was just across the street from the Rock Island Train Depot. Shortly thereafter, Lew's folks bought a house at 1536 – 15th Street, Rock Island. Like so many families, during the depression, they lost the house and had to move into another rental house at 8th Avenue and 14-1/2 Street. After a few years they moved to a home at 12th Avenue and 14th Street.

Lew attended grade school in Rock Island, Franklin Junior High School and Rock Island Senior High School thru his junior year. His family then moved to Port Byron, Illinois where he finished his senior year of school and graduated from Port Byron High School in May of 1942 at the age of 19.

After moving to Rock Island in 1929, Lew's father went to work at the John Deere Wagon Works in Moline. One of the reasons he was able to get the job was because he knew how to harness and handle or drive a team of horses. His job was to harness his team of horses, hitch them to a wagon and shovel the wagon full of scrap wood that was left over from making wagon wheels and the wooden farm wagons. He would then take the load of scrap wood to either a superintendent's or foreman's house or to a company officer's home and they would burn it to heat their homes.

Bill: Was the depression about 1929 or 1930?

Lew: "Well, it was getting close. The shops didn't really start shutting down until 1931, and then they really shut down everything in '31 and '32. That's when the folks lost everything. It was like Dr. Ted Grevas, a high school classmate of mine, was telling me that his folks had bought a house in the early 1930's for \$3,000 and fortunately they put enough money together. His father and two uncles worked as waiters and everything else until they got their own restaurant business which was the Toasty Shop in downtown Rock Island. When things started

going bad real quick like, well, they were still able to maintain the house because they had it paid for. They struggled through the Depression also, like everybody did.

Even if you had a little business, things just weren't moving too good. The only business that was half way decent was the saloon business after President Roosevelt got in office in the 30's. He got rid of Prohibition and the taverns started opening up. Things would start sliding around a little bit then.

Bill: Did you move to Port Byron then because the shops and everything were shutting down?

Lew: No, this wasn't the case, everything was going pretty good. My dad had a job and everything was going pretty good then and the reason that we went to Port Byron, my dad was working at the John Deere Spreader Works in East Moline then. And the first job he got when things started picking up after the Depression was working in a foundry at the John Deere Spreader Works and that was shoveling sand into what they called a sand cutter for the molders and that was in the foundry. Very hot work and very menial but it was a job. So the employment manager was a guy by the name of Archie Simms and he was from Viola. He knew my father and there was a Mrs. Goldberg, I think it was, had this little farm up in Port Byron, and it was an old dairy farm and they weren't making it and she had given it to the Girl Scouts and they were making it over into a girl scout camp. They needed someone to live in the house there, all rent free, just to look after the property to make sure there was no vandalism or things like that. When they discovered that the folks had a teenage son, well, they said maybe we'd better think this over.....like sending a teenage boy to the girl scout camp is like sending Attila the Hun to the Virgin Islands. Not quite, but it didn't work out that way. So we were there about a year and for my entire senior year of high school.

After I graduated and left home, the folks stayed on until the war was almost over or about the end of 1945. Since all of the kids were gone from home, it was real lonely for my mother and she was getting the "drearies", so they decided to move back to Rock Island because they had saved some money by then. That's when they bought a house down in the West End of Rock Island on 19th Avenue.

Bill: Didn't Grandma Jinks work in the factory at John Deere during the war?

Lew: Yes, my mother worked there also. That was when we were living in Port Byron and she would ride into work with Dad and worked in a department where they started the artillery shells. I'm not quite sure exactly what she did. My Dad ran a large hacksaw machine that he would put in these big round steel bars or rods that would be at least 4-5 inches in diameter and he ran four of these hacksaw blades at

the same time. His job was to keep these machines full because they were automated and just kept running and these were the beginning of a mortar shell. They were the projectile. Then they had to be machined down and the interior drilled out for the powder and explosive and then threaded. There was a lot to the processes. There was never any loading of ammunition. They just made the projectile. And then they were shipped out to a munitions company that put the charges in. They also made a nose-cone for it there. It was all threaded and this was like a big nose-cone where part of the explosive was put in later. These were primarily 60 mm, 80 mm, and 90 mm mortar shells.

Then in May of 1942 I graduated from Port Byron High School. I turned 19 years old April 23rd before I graduated in May. I enrolled at Worsham School of Mortuary Science in Chicago to become a funeral director. I started classes in September and it was a nine month program.

THEN HERE COMES THE DRAFT

Conscription was established in 1863 during the Civil War. General conscription was reintroduced in World War I with the Selective Service Act of 1917. All men from 21 to 30 years of age (later extended 18 to 45), inclusive, had to register. Exemptions from service were granted to men who had dependent families, indispensable duties at home, or physical disabilities. Conscientious objector status was granted to members of pacifist religious organizations, but they had to perform alternative service. By the end of World War I about 2,800,000 men had been inducted. The United States first adopted peacetime conscription with the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. From 1940 until 1947 – when the wartime selective service act expired after extensions by Congress – over 10,000,000 men were inducted.

Lew: In April 1943, I turned 20 and my number had come up and so I got on the train and came back home and went to the draft board and told them that I was not trying to stay out of the service, but I would like to finish school, otherwise, if I don't, I'm going to have to come back and start all over again. And the guy said, "Well, we can give you a deferment" and so he did. I don't remember exactly how long it was...maybe a couple of months later, I got another notice that I was A-1 again. So I came back home again and the guy said, "Well I can't give you another deferment." I said, "Well, I graduate in June (1943) and I take the state board exam on June (such-and-such), early part of June and if I can do that, then I am willing to go. I'm all done then." He said, "Well, I can't give you another deferment, but I can see that your number doesn't come up." I said, "Well, that's fair enough."

JINKS FAMILY 1942



1942 Jinks Family

L. to R. Front row: sister Grace, mother Barbara, sister Dorothy.

Back row: Lew, father Clarence, brother Wilbur.

CAMP GRANT, BASIC TRAINING & CAMP STONEMAN

Camp Grant was located 120 miles northeast of Rock Island, IL and approximately 90 miles northwest from downtown Chicago. It was a U. S. Army facility located in the southern outskirts of Rockford, IL and named in honor of General Ulysses S. Grant. At one point it consisted of over 18,000 acres and in operation from 1917 to the late 1940's. During World War I, Camp Grant served as an induction and training center. It was closed as a U. S. Army facility by December 1923, but in January 1924 was turned over to the Illinois National Guard. From 1933 thru 1935 it was used by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

In October of 1940 Camp Grant was re-activated as an induction center. Physical exams and medical training post for draftees was the main focus. It is estimated that 100,000 medical corpsmen were trained at the camp. During World War II it also served as a POW detention center with an estimated 2,500 POWs. After the war, Camp Grant also served as a separation center for returning GIs. The Rockford International Airport now sets on the site previously occupied by Camp Grant.

Lew: I graduated from Worsham School of Mortuary Science one day, took the State Board Exam the next day and then met the train from Moline in Chicago with all the guys from there the next day and was inducted on July 30, 1943. Went back home for a week or two and then headed for Camp Grant.

Bill: How long was your basic training and what all did it involve?

Lew: It was 12 weeks of basic training and included all the medic training and getting into good physical shape. We went on hikes, exercised and got all of our shots. See the routine was at the induction center. One side of Camp Grant on this side of the tracks was the induction center and you went in there and the guy would holler out, "All you guys seen the clap picture?", played with the pulley blocks, and counted the marbles. That was the IQ test. You had to see the clap picture because that was the indoctrination into venereal disease. And so you get all your shots and everything and they call you out and some guys were sent on to other places and we packed our bag and walked right across the railroad tracks to the Camp Grant Basic Training Center. It

was the big induction center and the medic basic training school. You could have been assigned to hospitals or other different things. Our basic training was primarily first aid and removing people. Getting them out of places and that sort of thing. It was rather easy and you didn't have to work or apply yourself. I probably left Camp Grant somewhere around the first part of November, 1943. From there I headed to Camp Stoneman in California.

Camp Stoneman is located in Northern California near the City of Pittsburg, 40 miles northeast of San Francisco. The site was used as a staging area and rifle range for troop training by the Army, as well as a personnel replacement and reclassification depot. The function of the post was to receive and rapidly process troops for overseas service by completing paperwork and updating records, arranging for last minute training, providing medical and dental care, and issuing and servicing equipment. Camp Stoneman was the principal "jumping off point" for more than 1 million American soldiers destined for military operations in the World War II Pacific Theater. Camp Stoneman was capable of accommodating 20,000 troops at peak capacity. The average stay for troops bound for overseas was one to two weeks.

Bill: How did you end up in the infantry?

Lew: The reason I got into the infantry, was because when they shipped us from Camp Grant to Pittsburg, California, it was an embarkation point and was called Pittsburg Replacement Depot and it was right across the street from Camp Stoneman. We could either go on hikes or make sidewalks or you could do a little bit of this or that to keep us busy and finally one day a guy said, "anybody want to go on the rifle range?" Well, Fogg and I said, "why not!" I mean if you're going to get shot at, you might as well know what our weapons looked like anyway. So we went on the dry run course and assembled and disassembled the M1 rifle and so then we went on the rifle range. We both qualified. I wasn't a sharpshooter fortunately and so they kept me back and when we went to New Caledonia, to the replacement depot in New Caledonia. I was the last guy there. And I had several opportunities to do other things, but no, I turned them down because I wanted to stay with the guys that I took training with. Well, they all went every direction that you could think of and I was the last one. So who gets to go to the infantry? Ole Lew. It was on my record that I qualified with a rifle. So the first thing I did when I checked in with the 147th Infantry Regiment, they sent me over to the Regimental Headquarters for the

medics and they said, "do you want a rifle?" I said, "you betcha". And so they were handing out carbines and I had a carbine all the time I was in the service.

Bill: Do you remember the date you left San Francisco?

Lew: When I left Camp Stoneman, it was about the end of January 1944, and I hadn't been there very long. (*Official records from the National Personnel Records Center in Saint Louis, Missouri show January 25, 1944*). When we left, we boarded trucks that took us to the ship. The ship was a paddle wheeler, the Delta Queen which plies the Mississippi....well, it did. It isn't on the river anymore because it was all wood.

Bill: Where did you get on it?

Lew: Way up in the bay, near Camp Stoneman or Pittsburg. It just took us down to Oakland or San Francisco, one or the other. We walked onto the Delta Queen with our barracks bag and everything we had in it. And so you had to sit on your bag and then for lunch, the guys would start throwing sacks of sandwiches out and you had to grab one if you were going to get anything to eat. We probably went to Oakland and it pulled in on one side of the pier and our transport ship was on the other side of the pier and we all walked off of one ship, across the pier, and onto the transport ship.

The ship we got on was called the West Point and it took two weeks at sea or better. They named it the West Point but what it was originally, was the U.S.S America. It was a cruise ship, the largest ship that the United States had at the time and was a luxury liner. They stuffed you in there and they had bunks welded to the deck and the swimming pool was full of supplies and the officers had the staterooms and the grunts had the bunks clear down in the hole. We were way down there. Everyone on that ship was a replacement and so no one knew where they were going or what unit they were going to be with. No idea whatsoever.

Bill: So where did that ship take you to then?

Lew: New Caldedonia.

Bill: So you were basically a little over two years there in the South Pacific before you got back. Were there any other islands that you were on?

Lew: New Caledonia, Emirau, Iwo Jima and we came home from Okinawa. That's it entirely. There was never any rest or recreation islands at all that we shipped to because we were never quite that traumatic.

Bill: So was Iwo Jima the only island that there was fighting on?

Lew: Yes, even though there was no fighting on Emirau when we got there, we were the closest troops to Japan and there was not a rifle shot fired there but it was a matter of just being there and occupying the place and maintaining the stair-steps and moving forward towards Japan. It was here that the Marine Corps had an airstrip and where Joe Foss was stationed.

Bill: So basically, you were a little over two years in the South Pacific and about six to seven months on Iwo Jima.

Lew: New Caldedonia. That's where I got to the 147th. I went to a replacement depot. I have no idea where it was and I was there quite awhile. When I say quite a while, maybe a month and finally was assigned to the regiment because they were drawing down replacements out of everything. I was in a tent with a fella' that reminded me of Harpo Marx. He had curly hair and he was the funniest man I have ever seen in my life. We had a work detail and we were filling in these latrines. He had the wheelbarrow and he did everything with that wheelbarrow but drop it down in there. Everybody got to laughing so hard, the sergeant finally says, "God dammit, go back to your tent. I can't get anything done, just go back to your tent". That's what he would do. So we'd fall out in the morning and they'd have roll call, count and they'd ask if anybody wanted to get on the sick book to go over there and fall in line. So he'd fall out every morning and stand in this line. Finally, I said, "How in the hell do you do that?" He says, "Just follow me, tomorrow just follow me". I said, "Okay". So the next day when they asked who wanted their name in the sick book to fall out, we'd fall out. We'd stand in line and we'd start getting up close to the book, he'd say, "You don't look like you feel good". And the guy behind us would say, "No, I'm just sicker'n hell". He said, "Why don't you go ahead". And finally after everything was dismissed, we'd fall out of the line and go back to the tent. He never did work. I still think it is this comedian who makes movies and I am trying to think of his name now. Oh, I'll come up with it in a little while. I would like to know if he was ever in the South Pacific and the reason he was in the replacement depot, I think he had malaria and so they'd sent him back to the

hospital. He'd go over to the PX (Post Exchange) and they'd only sell you a couple of beers at a time and they'd open 'em, they wouldn't let 'em stay shut so he'd take 'em over and set them behind a tree and he'd go and get a couple more. So he'd get a case of beer. He'd find a box someplace and he'd bring a whole case of beer back to the tent and he'd sit there and drink it all! He was trying to get sick so he'd get his malaria back so he wouldn't have to go. He was absolutely hilarious. He was just a natural.

The 147th Infantry Regiment had been to Guadalcanal and from there, they went to American Samoa for a rest camp. When they left there they came back to New Caledonia to get replacements and to fill out their company. They had a cannon company with them. They had these 75 mm pack howitzers. The reason they called them a "pack howitzer" is because you could take the barrels off of them and they were actually from WWI where they had horses and mules. They would take the barrel off and take the carriage apart and then strap the barrel and carriage parts on to the horses and mules to move them and then when in place they would re-assemble them. That thing was so low velocity that you could stand in back of it as they were firing at the range and you could see the shells go out. We had a .50 caliber that they were using also. The reason that I knew all this ordinance is whenever they went on the range with any of these weapons, they had to have a medic with them and so I would go along. I enjoyed demolitions. They had this one .50 caliber that they were firing and they burnt the barrel on it. By the time the shell hit the target, it was going sideways. The barrel was so worn out. You couldn't fire those for long periods of time. It had to be very short bursts because they'd burn up the barrel.

As I said earlier, I first arrived at New Caledonia and was in the replacement depot and the 147th was there and I didn't get assigned to them right away. Then shortly after I was assigned to them, they started going on maneuvers and playing around. I can't remember the exact dates we left there, but we went to an island called Emirau. We were in about a three or four ship convoy. It took about four ships to take us. We had a service company, a cannon company and then the entire regiment. It took pretty close to four ships. And these were not big troop carriers. These were mostly converted cargo ships and the like. This was kinda' interesting. We pulled into a harbor in Guadalcanal and I always like to stand on deck when everything was working and people were working and so they were lowering in the anchor and this sailor was standing

there and you had the fella' who was running the winch, anchor winch, I guess you'd call it, and he'd holler out "so many fathoms and no strain". And the fella would start letting her go out again and it'd get to runnin' on him and pretty soon the end of the chain went right down into the water...lost anchor, chain and all! You talk about a mad captain. So then they had to lower the anchor on the other side to keep the hook in so we could lay at anchor at night. They had a boat over the side and they were dragging and trying to find it. The next morning, you could hear them cranking that thing back in. How they got a line and hook on it with a pretty good rope and how they got the very end of the chain to get it fed back into the hull and winch, I just don't know how they did it, but they did it. It had to be down there very deep, but they weren't going any place with just one anchor.

We were on this ship going somewhere, it may have been going to Iwo, I don't know, I can't remember, but there was this sailor and all sailors had their name on the back of their shirt and he kinda' looked like somebody I'd seen before. You know how you see someone and you think that you might have known them from somewhere before and maybe you had and maybe you hadn't. The name on the back of his shirt was Novak and I knew a Novak in Rock Island. Finally, I went up to him and said, "Is your name Novak?" He said, "yes." I said, "where are you from?" He said, "Rock Island." And I said, "I went to school in Rock Island thru my junior year of high school and then graduated from Port Byron High School." So anyway, after the war, I was getting my hair cut down on seventh avenue and this kid walked in and I said, "aren't you Novak?" He said, "Yeah." Then I told him where I was and he said, "I heard that you had been killed." Well, who the hell knew?

Lew: One of the funniest things that happened on this little island called Emirau. They had to build roads and so you had heavy equipment going through first. And so they had trucks that would bring us in and so they'd decide, well, we'll put a bunch of guys here and a bunch of guys somewhere else and so they dumped off some cots. We had our own gear with us and so I had this cot and I had hung up a mosquito net between some trees and put it around this cot so the mosquitoes would be outta' there. I was just standing there eating some cookies of some kind and I look around and here was this native standing beside me. I have no idea where he came from. All he had on was like a big ol' dishtowel around him and he looked at me. I handed him a cookie. He said, "Thank you." I said, "You speak English?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Where

did you learn that?" He said, "We had some missionaries here." He was good at it. He was just covered with ringworm. I mean his skin just looked terrible. Then I turned around and the first thing you know he was gone just as mysteriously as when he arrived.

On that same island after we got things all set up, the communications guys, the Signal Company, would run these lines along the ground, just roll them out on the ground from one unit to another. So after they had everything all laid out, well, the linemen had to go bundle these up and you'd have a lineman climb a coconut tree and then tie them into the tree so they'd be off the ground. And I was working in the aide station one day and I came back to the tent and they had a photographer there from some newspaper and a little bit of everything else and they had this huge snake. This thing was a constrictor of some kind and it was 12 feet long. And I said to this guy, "Where in the hell did you get that?" He said, "Well, one of our guys climbed up the tree and had all these wires on his shoulder and put his belt on and leaned back like this and this snake was looking him right in the eye!" And he said, "Man, he went back on the belt like that." And he said, "Shoot him, shoot him, shoot him!" The guy said he was too close, we couldn't take a shot at him, afraid they would hit the guy on the tree. So they had these big wire clippers and he was getting desperate by this time because this snake was getting a little more curious and hauled off and hit that thing in the head with his wire pliers, apparently knocked it silly because it fell out of the tree. I don't know how they killed it. They must have just hit it in the head because it wasn't very mutilated. So then they decided to bring it into headquarters. The work was all done for that day.

Bill: Everybody had to come in and see it.

Lew: Everybody quit then. While running the aide station you had a chance to see everything. Everybody would get what we called "crotch rot". It was a fungus type of ringworm or was like you'd get jock-strap itch. The same basic thing, you were wet and sweaty and it would just really get sore. This one sergeant, he was always kind of an ass, and he had it on the cheeks of his rear end and all over so we had a solution called salicylic acid and that really got it but it was like turpentineing a cat. We got this guy's trousers down and said, "Bend over". And he had his underwear off and everything, bent over, and then we started swabbing real quick like and it was like with turpentine- God, he took off, trying to run, didn't make any difference, it was still going to hurt. He coulda' drug his rear end on the ground like a dog and it still wouldn't have helped

because it was burning but it cured it. Then I got sent up to the cannon company so I was an athlete's foot specialist up there. Everybody had athlete's foot and the solution was... you get the guy... and say, "Bring your helmet in". and we'd get some warm water someplace, put it in his helmet and dissolve potassium permanganate in it. You'd soak your feet in that. It would make you...it would be like painting your toenails with iodine-it kinda' looked like iodine after you got 'em out because it would stain but man it would heal it. And so I got to be the athlete's foot specialist. The only guy I had to run down, they had these, so called grease guns and they were a short machine gun, cheap made. If you had the cap down, that was the safety, that kept the firing pin and ejection arm from going forward. And he should not have had it loaded when he was getting on the truck, but he did. He was getting on the truck and accidentally the cap or safety pulled up and the gun discharged hitting this one kid in the elbow. All I could hear, I heard a bang and I was looking around to see what had happened and this guy was running and somebody hollered, "Medic!" and I was trying to get there. By the time I got there this guy was half way down to the other end of the camp so I had to try to run him down. I finally got him down on the ground and took a look at his elbow and the bullet hadn't even gone through but it was still there and lodged in the back of the elbow. I got a bandage on it and a tag and I got him down to the regimental station where the doctors were. We had a dentist and two doctors.

Bill: For about how many men? The whole regiment?

Lew: Yeah, the whole regiment. It was good enough.

Bill: How many was in a regiment at that time? Did you have four companies?

Lew: Yeah, there was probably at least 50-60 men to a company and then we had service company which was 50-60 because we had trucks and the whole works. And then we had the cannon company which was 50-60 so we had a bigger regiment than you would ordinarily have if you just had riflemen. So we had probably 300-400 men. Maybe not quite that many.

Bill: What was the worst weather that you endure?

Lew: Typhoons. The worst one was this big one on Okinawa. We'd had this big aide station up and...that we built a frame of 2 x 4's and then the bottom part, you'd have plywood along the

bottom so it was up this high and then screening. Had these big tents, they were probably from the bedroom clear to here long and...

Bill: 40-50 feet long.

Lew: Well, not quite 40 but pretty close anyway. Anyway, the wind got to blowing so hard and this storm was coming and so we dropped the center poles because it was going to go down anyway and then the canvas would kind of all fall in the center and you'd form some rooms like this on both sides and you'd have your Coleman lanterns. Coleman lanterns were a lifesaver. The mantle lantern. You had gas and you'd pump it up and you had a nice bright light. So that way we were able to have somebody in the aide station all the time. The big tent where I was staying came down and I thought I would just stay in there for a while until a rat got to biting on my foot and I decided I'd better get out of there and I went to the aide station. That night, they were having fish so I didn't eat. I ate my own ration. It was a good thing because these guys got sick, oh my God, they were going at both ends. And the only thing you could do for them was give them soda bicarbonate.

Bill: From the fish? They got bad fish?

Lew: They got food poisoning. It had probably thawed some place on the island and got refrozen and they didn't know it. Fish smell bad anyway to me. One of the worst incidents, the men would make the latrines out of steel barrels. The 55-gallon barrel was the Americans secret weapon. They did a lot of things with it. And so they'd weld two of them together, cut the inside...three of 'em, weld them together, put it down into the ground but in the top they'd cut a hole and generally would put a wooden frame on it so that you could sit on it and we had some six-holers that way. You always tented it around, screened it around, to keep flies and stuff out. And they'd burn 'em out every once in awhile. This one guy had to go real bad and the frame wasn't on there and he was burned!. I tell you, he had the biggest circle around his rear end that was burned. And he came in there and he could hardly walk and we were supposed to put something on it. The worst part of it was that you got to laughing so damn hard you could hardly contain yourself and he said, "well, what's so god damn funny?"

Bill: It wasn't funny to him. So did you ever have any trouble with, like malaria, in the two years you were there?

Lew: Most of the places we were on didn't have malaria. The mosquito wasn't there or something. They had something called Dengue Fever. We didn't know what it was. I think I had that once. You had a high temperature and were sick for about three days but it coulda' been most anything but I never did know what it was. *(From Internet Website: Dengue Fever (pronounced DENG-gay) is a disease caused by a family of viruses that are transmitted by mosquitoes. It is an acute illness of sudden onset that usually follows a benign course with headache, fever, exhaustion, severe joint and muscle pain, swollen glands and rash. It is prevalent throughout the tropics and subtropics. It is not contagious and cannot spread directly from person to person but is spread by person-to-mosquito-to-another-person pathway.)*

In New Caledonia, there was one campsite that we had that was right by a stream and as this stream made a curve like this, there was a real deep spot there and the hospital guys built a diving board there and they hauled in sand or they found sand somewhere, made a nice little sand beach and so we would always take our baths in the creek. Like on some days, some of the nurses would come down to go swimming. We had one, she was a blonde, nice looking gal. We called her Peggy the Pig. She was a little bit of an exhibitionist. She would get on the diving board and dive, and the first thing you know she had a crowd of about a hundred guys sitting around there watching her and they would applaud. She was at the general hospital. Never did know what her name was, they just wanted to set and look because they hadn't seen a woman in a long time.

Lew: At this one hospital, there was a doctor in the laboratory that was doing research on a disease called "filariasis". *(Definition taken from the Internet source, Wikipedia, is as follows: Lymphatic Filariasis is a parasitic and infectious tropical disease, caused by three thread-like parasitic filarial worms called nematode worms and transmitted by mosquitoes. It is extremely rare in Western countries.)* I think this is the term for it. It is carried by mosquitoes and you will get a little obstruction in the lymph glands in the lymph system and your legs will swell or get big. It is like a lady who has had a mastectomy and the lymph glands have been removed and their arms get big. The organism will block the lymph glands and the legs will get big or the testicles can get very large and some men had to be castrated. These were natives of the South Pacific. So every morning you'd feel your scrotum to see if it was enlarged and if it was, you went right to the medics real quick and then he would have a physician remove a lymph gland

and then run it through a microscope to see if you had that organism. So he was trying to develop a test where you didn't have to do this operation and so he would have these natives get a dog for him and these were wild dogs, mongrels, then he would kill the dog and would inject the dog's heart with boric acid crystals and it would just kill it right quick. Then he would do the autopsy and in the heart was these heart worms and every dog over there had them. We didn't even know the heart worm thing in the United States back in that time. And then he would run them through a process and he was trying to develop this skin test. And so I think, he asked me where all I'd been and I told him what islands I'd been on and the like, but he used me as a guinea pig and I think I was one of the controls. I thought I had the salt water, and anyway he was trying to develop this test and I don't know whether he ever did get that process. I think maybe that the war was over before he was able to complete his research. He was a Harvard man. I didn't know whether he ever taught at Harvard, but he had a medical degree and I think a Ph.D degree from Harvard. He was a very bright man.

Lew: How old is Janice? (Bill's youngest sister).

Bill: I think she is 62. (She was born on March 22, 1945).

Lew: Well here is another interesting story. I was on one of the islands before going to Iwo Jima and I got this letter from your mother and a picture of her in with the letter. And so I wrote back to her and said, "What are you going to name it?" I could tell from the picture that she was pregnant again and the letter didn't mention it. So she wrote back and said that she hadn't told anyone she was pregnant at that point and no one else knew she was pregnant. It sure is something, when you can tell that your sister is pregnant from ten thousand miles away and nobody else knew it. So you be sure that you get this in the book as well. (Author's note: This would have been about October 1944 and when Janice was born, Lew had already been on Iwo Jima for a couple of weeks.)

ON TO IWO JIMA

Lew: Before we landed on Iwo Jima, we had an orientation on board ship and one of the things we were told, was to never pick up anything because it could be booby-trapped. Little things like that which you might do without thinking about. And as the old saying goes, sometimes people learn things the hard way. We had this one situation where we had been there for a little while and the standard procedure was to have the changing of the guard post during the day and not at night. You would set up a guard post and generally dug in someplace, and the order was that you shot at anything that moved at night. A new group of soldiers had been brought in by the Air Force to guard the parked aircraft. We asked them where they would be so that we would not accidentally shoot into them. Their Air Force sergeant told us they were going to have walking guards, we told them no, but to set up some sort of fortress of barracks bags or whatever they could get for protection and then put eight men in there, all armed and for the night. Then anything that moved, you shot at, because the Japanese were infiltrating at night. No one told the Officer of the Day and he went out to inspect the troops and they shot him. Now days, they call it friendly fire. It was their first night there and these types of things, no one ever writes about.

Bill: How old were you when you were on Iwo?

Lew: Let's see....about 22. I had my 21st birthday on an island up past Guadalcanal. I think I was about 22.

Bill: Do you remember when you landed on Iwo?

Lew: Not the exact date. It was in March and they had said that it had been secured and we went in and I think that was around March 15th if I'm not mistaken, but it coulda' been a little later than that. And we landed on the opposite side of the island from where the original invasion was. Let's see, have we got that other book with the big picture? (Lew points out various places on a map of the island). This one was the side of the original invasion and we went in about here on the other side of the island. Mount Suribachi was on our right hand side as we went in. So we were basically on the West side where the little bay was and the other side

was where the first landing was on the beach and that was why it was so fortified. It was in here someplace because there wasn't any roads at that stage of the game and the Americans had a cemetery right up in here. There was a big cliff that you had to go up, just a narrow path and only one guy could go up at a time or a line...single file and here they tried to invade the whole thing at one time. But the sand was softer over here on the other side where the Marines landed and they had this big sandstone cliff back in here and well fortified. Where the Marines landed, the Japs had 90 mm, several 90 mm anti-aircraft guns aimed at the beach. And they had them firing point blank on all the landing craft and anyone that was going in there and anti-craft shells would explode and that was raising all kinds of hell with these guys. Plus you'd sink into that sand about, not up to your knees, but way past your ankles. It was like trying to get through mud.

Bill: In one of the articles that I had read, they said that one of the things that the Americans did not think of or they had underestimated, was the sand on the beach. It was the volcanic sand and the stability of it was much worse than they thought and the men couldn't get thru it and they had a difficult time getting the equipment and machines over it.

Lew: Yes. But there was one thing that no one that I know of, has ever written about, and that we did not have to lose one man on that island and we could've taken it and that was with poison gas. There was not one Japanese that we saw or killed that did not have his gas mask with him. They knew we were going to gas that island. And with a lot of our poison gas, it would sink right down into those caves. It was heavy and it would go down into foxholes and everything else. But see, the Japanese had already used gas in China and violated all rules of war.

Bill: Did you say they all had gas masks?

Lew: Yes, they DID have - everyone of 'em had a gas mask. That's why they thought that we were going to gas the island. They would have thrown their canteen and water away before they would have thrown away their gas mask. The Japanese had already gassed people in China and they had done some real atrocious things in China to the Chinese and so it didn't make any difference to them, they just knew damn good-n-well, we were going to gas them. Regardless, you would've got some even if they had their gas masks on, because some of that poison gas would go right through their skin. They could drop poison bombs and then it would just spread

all over and it would also depend on how the wind was blowing, they could plan that one out on a right day. But no one has ever seemed to discuss that. Well, it must have been against the Geneva Convention, and that was the reason they didn't do it. But it didn't make any difference to me whether you kill a guy with a rock or gas, you know, he's dead.

Lew: When we first went on the island, I think it was about the middle of March, 1945 and we went in and you didn't have any tents or anything, you just had your little shelter half and so you would find a hole of some kind and put the shelter half over it and get down in there. At night, there was all kinds of noises and gunfire and everything going on around you and just scared you half to death.

Bill: Had the Marines left by then?

Lew: Yes, when we went on, they left. Well mainly it was just the cooks and bottle washers that were left there. But anyway, another fellow and I, can't remember his name right now, we put out tents together-shelter halves- over this hole and we were only about that far below the surface (about 2-3 feet), but at least you were below any fire that might be coming your way. I had a blanket but I couldn't get comfortable. There was always something hitting me in the middle of my back and I couldn't figure it out so I thought, by God, the next day I'll find out what it is. If I'm going to be here for a while, at least I'm going to try to sleep. So we took everything down and I started digging around and there was the knee of a dead Japanese and I'd slept all night with that.

The so-called General's cave was clear back in here at the North end of the island, right back in here someplace. That was the most sophisticated of the caves and underground bunkers made with a lot of concrete, because General Kuribayashi was a mining engineer. We would blow up the entrance and they'd dig it out the next day or during the night, they would have it dug out again. We'd blow it up in the daytime and they'd dig it out at night and the Japanese would get out of there and they were told that if they could get down to the sea, the submarines would pick them up. Well, there were never any submarines but they were always trying to get down to the sea. Naturally, they were moving at night and so we went around to find all the air holes that they could find that they thought was connected to that cave, started blowing them up, all except

one. Then they blew the entrance. No, we didn't do it because there was a demolition group that did that.

Bill: Did you have to go out with the demolition groups?

Lew: Well some of them but not the big blasters. Someone else did because I think they had their own company and so then they started pouring diesel fuel down this air hole. I don't know how many barrels they poured down there and then they poured a barrel of gasoline and threw a phosphorus grenade down there and that thing made one hellish boom. It burned all the oxygen out of there. So then we blew up that air hole and we didn't see any more activity. Congress decided they wanted to see what was going on in there. So we got the assignment to re-open up that cave again. We ended up dragging out about 35 to 40 bodies. We got it open and we didn't destroy the interior of the cave, it was just that we burned all of the air out of it. They had gas masks on which didn't help 'em a damn bit because there was no oxygen. Their gas masks just didn't work. We hauled them out of there and we had a huge cemetery. We just took a bulldozer and dug a huge square pit. They would put a layer of Japanese and then a layer of dirt.

The scary part was the night ambush. They had these little land crabs about six inches big and you could hear them. It sounded like a guy crawling through the damn bushes and I think that it was maybe about the first night, we were out on a night ambush, and we found this rock pile. It was kinda' like a column up in the air and it was at least eight to ten feet high. So we got up in there and piled rocks around so we had a little parapet. (*Webster's dictionary definition: par-a-pet. An earthen or stone embankment protecting soldiers from enemy fire.*) We had about eight guys. A couple of guys went ahead and set up a 30 caliber machine gun. In the middle of the night, some guys could sleep, but I couldn't! No way, was I gonna' sleep. And I could hear this crawling down below some place and all of a sudden, KABOOM! And this one kid had a hand grenade and he pulled the pin, not telling anybody, and rolled it over the side and it just scared the hell out of all of us. We thought we were all going to get blown up. But he wasn't saying anything to anybody and he was going to get whoever it was that was crawling down there.

What we would do was set up these flares. We had round canister flares only so big and you would run a trip wire from the flare to a rock, say ten feet away, or something that you could hook it onto and then you would set that and if anything touched it, even if the wind was blowing

too much, it would go off. It was that sensitive. As soon as it would go off, our guys would send up one of these parachute flares. The thing that was really getting to us if anything, was you knew that something was out there because the flare went off and you're waiting for movement and all of a sudden you would hear this POP! And the Japanese hand grenade had a little pin in it, a forked pin. You could pull it out and you could hang on to it all day long. You had to hit the top of it and it sounded like a cap gun. So then you had so many seconds to get rid of it. When we would hear that pop, boy, everybody was hiding because you had no idea where it was going to go. These guys were putting it under their chin and blowing their heads off! One guy had two of them and put one under his chin and the other one under his breast. He was scattered all over the place!

Bill: So you would see them the next morning when daylight came.

Lew: Oh yes! Hell, if he's not afraid to kill himself, why in the hell wouldn't he be crawling in the hole with us...trying to take as many of us with him. But he 'd have a hell of a time trying to get up the bank because we were trying to take the rocks away or we could have rocked him to death.

Betty: Well, actually the Japanese started suicide bombing, didn't they?

Lew: Yes, the suicide bombing was the Kamikaze plane and these poor guys were just killing themselves.

Betty: They didn't want to surrender?

Lew: Well, it was a disgrace to surrender. We had this Japanese prisoner that spoke very fluent English. And so we asked him one time after we had been out on patrol, you know if it is such a dishonor to surrender, why in the hell did you surrender? He said, "Well, I was in this cave and I heard the Marine call for a flame thrower and I wasn't going to stay there and burn to death! I was going to get it over with real quick. And when he ran out, one of the guys hit him in the head with a rifle butt, and knocked him out and when he woke up he started saying, "just a minute....saying something", so he became very valuable. He actually saved a lot of Japanese lives because we would go out on a daytime patrol with this man and there would be two other Japanese prisoners that did not speak English. And so we would find these holes and they would

have them covered up and camouflaged, but if you looked close enough, you could find them. And we would dig out the rocks and said, "Well, the guy's down in there". And the famous word was "Hoi" and I don't know what it meant unless "Hey" and then pretty soon you could hear this first POP and then the man we sent in would come running out of the there like a gopher right out of a hole because he knew that this hand grenade was coming his way. They would try to kill him. We never did lose one down the hole, but if we did, he was not an English-speaker, so there was always more of them.

Bill: So you kept the English speaker and kept him protected.

Lew: Yes. But the closest, I think, that I ever got to being killed outside of on a ship one time was we discovered this hole and they were working the hole and trying to get it opened and the fellas speaking Japanese in there and about that time, right next to me, I was standing about like this and there was a bush there and all of a sudden, BOOM! The lieutenant yelled, "Who fired that shot?" You know, he didn't want anybody shooting. So pretty soon, this Japanese prisoner we had started jabbering and then this guy came out of there and he had peed his pants. He had this pistol and he was so damned scared that he squeezed off a shot. He really peed his pants, he was that scared. He was well camouflaged and I had walked right close by him and I didn't even see him. You get to the point where you're not quite alert all the time and you're wandering around and it's sort of a blind thing.

Bill: Well I suppose you didn't get very good sleep at night either.

Lew: Well, back at our tents we got pretty good sleep because we had everything all set up. We would go out on these day patrols hiking around and you would find a little hole and one I saw...first of all, a fella' and I were looking down this one hole. It was kind of like a mat of some kind underneath it and he said, "There's somebody underneath it." And I said, "No, there isn't anyone underneath there". There was! And so he shot at the mat with a sub-machine gun and this body jumped and he was killed instantly. Then there was a guy by the name of Dewey Cavaylis....his last name was Cavaylis...he might have been from Dewey, Oklahoma....we never did quite figure it out. He was standing about eight to ten feet away and was standing right in front of this hole and he goes, BANG, BANG, he fired all the rounds out of his M1 rifle and there were two Japanese soldiers in there. He just really took care of them. They both had hand

grenades on them. We had another one where there was a Japanese soldier trying to throw a hand grenade out at us, and what our guys should have done was just put in a frag in there, but he threw a phosphorus grenade in, which would just burn the hell out of them. It explodes and the phosphorus gets into their skin. And then finally, they did shoot in and once you got that one in there and it was burning, they just shot all of them in there. I think that we killed six or seven that day in these holes.

Bill: You call them holes, but were they a kind of cave or were they hand dug holes.

Lew: No, they were shell holes or whatever.....sometimes a small cavern and they would make a foxhole out of it and make a camouflage cover over it. This one guy, Cavaylis, after they got the top off of this one hole with a dead Japanese soldier, I said, "Pull him out of there". He said, "I ain't gonna touch him!" He was scared to death. I reached over and grabbed him by the collar and started to pull him up and his arm flew up and it was all bloody and it hit this kid right in the face. I thought he was going to die! But then he started to take souvenirs off of them, going through their pockets. They didn't even think of it as killing a human being at that time.

Bill: Wasn't Iwo a critical island to get?

Lew: Well, it was such a strategic spot according to all their planning and everything that has been written and documented in other books. The flight from Tinian, Saipan and Guam was about a six or eight hour flight each way and it was around twelve hundred miles. We were about six hundred and fifty miles from Japan. So they could take off with a little less fuel and carry more bombs, go to Japan, turn around and come back and land on Iwo Jima. (Lew points out on the map) This was the original landing strip that the Japanese had and then they made another big one along here. And they extended this one way out into here so they could land the B-29's coming back.

Bill: Somewhere in the reading that I've done, a lot of people questioned the lives of Americans that were lost, but then they said that many thousands of Air Force men landed there coming back rather than going into the sea.

Lew: Even if the plane was crippled and could not land, of which there was a lot of them, they would fly over the island and the crew would bail out and they would try to put it on automatic

so that the pilot and co-pilot could get out of there. They did that with the first few of them and then finally one day after everybody had bailed out, this plane...instead of going out to sea... where the Black Widow fighters could shoot it down, it turned around and crashed on the island so that was the end of that way of doing it. The Black Widows would pick it up just outside and wait until he came in and made sure that everybody got out and the pilot would get it going out, and as soon as he got it out over the water he bailed out, then the Black Widows would shoot it down. There was one that was on this side of the island and I was over in here for some reason or other, and he was in pretty low as the guys were bailing out and they were bailing out over the water because we had rescue boats waiting there for them and the pilot finally got out and I still don't know how he ever did it because the plane had started to wing over and he just bailed out and his parachute had no sooner opened and it must have opened just seconds before he hit the water. And the plane just cart wheeled across the water. It was a B29 and was quite an air show!

Bill: Sounds like you saw all different aspects of the Air Force or Army Air Corps and their operations on the island. All the planes coming in, going out and the crippled ones coming back.

Lew: You see all of our escort fighters were here and as the B29's would come over, they could fly faster naturally, so they would fly escort over Japan and they had enough fuel to get back and so it served two purposes. The B29 crews could land here, get refueled, and pick up their fighter escort. We were sitting here the night the Enola Gay went over. (*Internet records show the Enola Gay went over on August 6, 1945*).

Bill: Where did the Enola Gay come from?

Lew: It came from Saipan, I think. That's the one that dropped the atomic bomb.

Bill: Did you see it?

Lew: No, we just heard it. You just heard one plane, one bomber going over and we were sitting there watching a movie because everything was pretty taken care of and wasn't too many guys floating around and we were just watching the movie and heard this one plane going over. We thought that was a little unusual because ordinarily there would be just hundreds of them, one wave after another.

Bill: Could you tell the difference in sound of an American plane and a Japanese plane?

Lew: No.

Bill: Did you ever have any Japanese bombers come over?

Lew: We only had one bomber come out and try to bomb the island. In fact, you talk about ridiculous things, in back of the tent we had a big old foxhole just below the ground level. These tents were close enough together that the tent stakes and ropes were criss-crossed between the tents. Instead of raising the back of the tent and getting into the hole, I went out the front and then had to go through these ropes and stakes to get to the damn foxhole. I thought I had been had because high overhead there was this hellish explosion and flash and it was an anti-aircraft gun shooting at this bomber. I finally made one dive. I thought, "Man, I've been had" but I didn't feel anything until I landed in the rocks. They did shoot that one down. There was this "gallows humor" or "war humor" or whatever you want to call it. The next day we went up on the airstrip and at that stage of the game, we were down here on the north end near the original Japanese airstrip. We walked up a pretty big cliff overlooking the airstrip to look at the wreckage because it crashed on the airstrip. Some clown had already had one of the crew's flight boots on already. He had pulled them off of one of the Japanese officers. They were beautiful brown leather boots. And something else, we had this guy by the name of Sgt. George until he got busted. He was an artist and the most articulate man I think I've ever met. He was from San Francisco and I think his name was Leland George. And what we would do, when we sent up these flares at night, the next day, we would go out and pick up the little parachutes. They were made out of fine silk and were about three feet by three feet and Sgt. George would make these nice big red sunset Japanese flags with various Japanese characters on them. Then the Air Force pilots would come in looking for souvenirs and he would trade the flags for whiskey. One of these flags was worth three or four fifths of whiskey. Some of these guys got these flags home and think they have a genuine souvenir from Iwo Jima. Then one day he got drunk from the whiskey for flags, and was suppose to be out on patrol and they court-martialed him and put him in the stockade. He was really upset because here is our enemy out there walking around, going all over the damn place and I'm locked up in here. He didn't think that was justice.

Bill: You talked earlier about a "scoop and carry" situation.

Lew: We had these so called first aid bags that you carried and you could extend them out to about five to six inches and what we really were, out in the field, was a "scoop and carry" operation, and if a guy was bleeding, you would try to put some sulfa on it. Treatment was sulfa powder and bandage. That was about it. That was the standard procedure. That was all you could do. Trying to get those poor devils out of there if they got hurt. At one time, They decided that the only way we could get them out, is if I carried one of these litters and this damn thing was heavy. They would fold up as compact as possible, but still very bulky and they would extend out quite a bit and I had this thing strapped on to my back. And if you would go over rocks, that thing would hit the back of your head and knock your helmet off.

Bill: So it was big and awkward to carry, so you would put it on your back.

Lew: Well, I did anyway. You could try to carry it down by your side, but that damn thing was heavy. Then one day a guy who felt sorry for me said, "Well, I'll trade you. You can carry the B.A.R. and I will carry the litter". Well, the B.A.R. was damn near as heavy, but it at least had a strap! So for about thirty minutes, I was a B.A.R. man. (Browning Automatic Rifle).

Author's note: At the end of our last interview, Lew made the following statement; "The most sobering experience and the lasting memory of Iwo Jima was when we first walked on the island and the smell of death. All these Marines were laying there on the ground in shelter halves and had not been buried yet. They had been there quite some time and they were being processed by the Grave Registration people. The Marines had and used war dogs (Doberman Pinschers) and their dogs were buried in the same cemetery with them, up near the flag pole".

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE 147TH INFANTRY REGIMENT ON IWO JIMA

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The 3rd Division and Army infantry would move into the 5th's sector and continue the mopping-up. The Army infantry of the 147th Regiment, through April, flushed out 2,469 of the enemy, killing 1,602 of them and taking 867 prisoners. The Marines, in their five weeks of fighting, had captured another 216 for a total POW count of 1,083. At least 20,000 enemy defenders (perhaps as many as 22,000) had met violent deaths; the exact number likely will never be known.

O. SACKETT recalls some details of the final mop up of the last enemy resistance:

The 147th Infantry took over the cleaning up of Iwo from the Marines late in March. For the next few months, hardly a day went by when Japs were not killed or captured on Iwo.

Many of the Japs so disposed of had been caught on forays after water. Driven from their caves by thirst, the Nips raided our water supply tanks, many of them carrying G.I. five gallon cans and canteens. Other of the enemy were taken from caves or sealed in. One cave on Suribachi was so dangerous that it was flooded with smoke and water and then guarded for three weeks with searchlights playing on the entrance at night. When no Japs were seen to emerge, the cave was considered neutralized and an "OFF LIMITS" sign was posted so no G.I would venture down its mined passages.

The last sign of Japs still alive on Iwo came in July. On the 17th a Jap was discovered in a hole near an anti-aircraft outfit's mess hall. He was fired upon, wounded twice, and taken prisoner. In the hole with him were 30 enemy dead. On JULY 22nd, six Japs were found in a cave on the eastern side of Iwo. Three committed suicide and the three who yielded themselves were all in excellent physical shape and armed with grenades.

The books were closed on July 24th when three emaciated Japs were taken out of a cave near the central airfield. After three months underground they had to be carried out on stretchers.....

The May 5, 1945 issue of the MIDPACIFICAN printed an article by staff writer John L. Duke on the clean-up work of the 147th Infantry.

Today we witnessed a scene the Emperor of Japan said no Americans would ever see. From a cave at the northern end of this island we saw 12 abject Japs file out with their hands up. This was one of the largest groups ever to surrender at one time since the war began.

...Those who surrendered were a sorry-looking lot, although they apparently were not suffering from lack of food or drink. They were just ragged, dirty men who were worn out and had no fight left.

...Lt. JAMES J. AHERN of Philadelphia led the foray into one of the last Jap strongholds. They are dug in, in the wildest and most rugged terrain imaginable. Dramatic rocks stand alone, in front of towering and ragged cliffs pocked with caves. The sides of these cliffs are strewn with great rocks shattered from the hill by naval and air bombardments.

...With Maj. MARVIN W. AYERS of Cincinnati, a battalion commander, as our guide, we went down a narrow road overlooking the northernmost part of the island. Down toward the beach we came across a dead Jap's fly-infested body lying in the road. His left cheek was blown away and his eyes were staring at the sky. He had been killed during the night by the major's ambush patrol.

Along the beach we stuck to the not-too-straight, but narrow, path through the mine fields. Then began a tough climb up over loose boulders to the cave in which it was known Japs were hiding. Men of the battalion were on guard there and they had brought along a couple of prisoners taken earlier. These P.O.W.'s were calling into the caves and telling their fellow Japs to come out "for the benefit of the new Japan."

The big entrance to the cave was in a narrow defile and a group of G.I.s stood with guns leveled at the opening. We scrambled up one of the steep sides of the defile to where we could look down the other side and see another group of G.I.s standing guard over a small hole which was an exit from the cave.

Since no one answered the urgings to come out it seemed a good idea to encourage the Nips to make up their minds. A couple of smoke grenades were tossed into the main entrance. Immediately everyone was enveloped in choking smoke which poured from a dozen crevices. Even on the far side of the defile from where we stood we could see smoke rising from various places - when we were finally able to see anything at all.

Results were almost instantaneous. A Jap popped out of the little hole and after a few words with the interpreters he called back into the cave and another Jap promptly scrambled forth. He had on a helmet with grass stuck in it for camouflage. Both were stripped and searched and the first was allowed to go back again to fetch the rest.

....Slowly, the group in the cave came out - one by one. Their impassive faces showed neither fright nor unhappiness.

....The infantry unit took 14 other prisoners yesterday. The group was headed by a naval lieutenant commander.They were all flushed from a cave deep in the same area at the northern end.

....A demolition squad led by Lt. Joseph T. LeNoir of Watonga, Oklahoma, did the trick with 30 torpedoes, after negotiations, handled through a previously captured prisoner, failed. The prisoner voluntarily went into the cave to try to talk the Japs inside into surrendering. He was taken captive by them, but another Jap emerged and told the interpreter the Japs inside demanded three days grace.

Maj. Richard R. Morrison, operations officer, refused any concessions and gave the Nips the choice of coming out or being blown out. No Japs and no answers were forthcoming so "Pappy" LeNoir, aided by T/Sgt. Carlos J. Harper of Milton Fla. , planted the torpedoes near air vents of the cave. When the torpedoes were set off the Japs came a-running, even before the smoke and dust had started to settle. This bag, plus today's 24, brings the number of prisoners captured by this outfit to 56 in 10 days of mop-up operations; 428 others have been killed by patrols and ambushes....

Everett Borah was a Sergeant with Company F of the 147th Infantry, and notes some interesting facts about this Army Regiment:

The 147th started its Pacific tour in April of 1942, and saw action at Tonga, Fiji, Guadalcanal, British Samoa, Wallis Island, Emirau, New Caledonia, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

The 147th was the most advance Army unit on two occasions: On Emirau in the Bismark Archipelago from April through July of 1944; and on Iwo Jima it was the closest Infantry unit to Tokyo when Japan accepted the Potsdam Agreement.

The 147th while on Iwo earned three Silver Stars, 40 Bronze Stars, two Soldier Medals, and 121 Purple Hearts (with two Oak Leaf Clusters).

On 11 April, 1945 Maj. General F. B. Erskine, Commanding General, 3rd Marine Division, sent a Letter of Commendation to Maj. Gen. J. E. Chaney, Army Island Commander. The letter reads:

1. During the period from 21 March to 4 April 1945 the 147th Infantry Regiment, USA, was attached to this Division for operational control during operations against the enemy on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands.

2. Throughout the period their performance of assigned duties and missions was outstanding and reflected great credit on their planning, training, and professional skill. The 147th Infantry Regiment displayed in their debarkation, movement into position and execution of assigned missions a fine spirit of cooperation and a commendable eagerness for combat.

3. The Commanding General takes this opportunity to commend the Officers and Men of the 147th Infantry Regiment for their splendid performance and devotion to duty. Their keen understanding and ready execution of missions assigned was an inspiration to all hands.

From Iwo Jima on to Okinawa

Bill: How long would you estimate that you were on Iwo, from the time you got there, until you left?

Lew: From March until, well, I don't know exactly. The war was not quite over yet. Yes, it was. I think they had already done the signing and the war was over and we were on the way to Okinawa and I can't remember the exact dates. It had to be in the fall when we left and so I'm guessing it was about September or October, so I would have been on Iwo for about six to seven months approximately.

Bill: I can't remember when they invaded Okinawa. When did the bomber go over you on Iwo and when was the atomic bomb dropped on Japan?

Lew: It could have been sometime in 1945, because I spent Thanksgiving and Christmas on Okinawa.

Author's Note: Following taken from Internet sources. The first invasion of Okinawa was on April 1, 1945. It lasted eighty two days and ended on June 21, 1945. The Enola Gay dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. On August 15, 1945 Japan announced their surrender and on September 2, 1945 the formal surrender was signed on the battleship Missouri.

Lew: When I got to Okinawa, they assigned me to a big general hospital. They put me on, of all things, an officers' ward. These guys, most of them, were just trying to get out. They were faking it and trying to get out. There was one old colonel that was not well. Another fella had both legs broken right up above the knees and was in a cast arched way up and he couldn't even roll over. I said to him, "Well, what the hell happened to you?" He said, "Well, we were sitting in our tent and my friend was cleaning his pistol and he was pointing it down there and finally I said to him, don't point that sucker at me!" and he said, "oh, it's not loaded". He said, "See? and he pointed it and BOOM, it went right through both of my legs. He did have it loaded! There were a lot of accidental gunshots. So I really felt sorry for this guy.

We had one guy that was kind of interesting. They had sent over from the intensive care ward or someplace to our ward to die. He had kidney failure. He was an officer and a pilot. He didn't

know anything. He had uremic poisoning. He just didn't know nothin'. So we had him up in a private room. This one nurse, she was not the best looking woman in the world, but she was a tough old broad. She said to me, "Go in and take his temperature rectally". I looked at her and said, "I don't know how to do that". I got off on the wrong foot because I was not wanting to be there and finally this one gal who was a captain said, "Well, what do you know how to do?" I said, "I don't know nothing, I just don't know nothing!" She said, "Okay". So I was a bedpan jockey. Anyway, this ol' gal said, "Go in and take this guy's temperature rectally". I said, "I can't do that. I don't know how to do that." She said, "Well, it's a cinch you don't put it in his mouth!" So anyway, I had to go do it and you had to measure everything he took in and everything that came out. He was just in la-la land and didn't know anything". Finally the kidneys started working and he was just pissin' all over the place and he started coming out of it. Once he came out of it, he was just so happy, he said, "How long have I been here?" We tried to tell him everything. We said, well you were hurt very bad. He just couldn't be more gracious and thankful. He was a captain and a pilot. I said, "What the hell happened to you?" Because everybody had a story of some kind to tell.

He said, "Well, we had come over from Iwo Shima and three of us went to the motor pool and got a jeep. Two were in the front and I was sitting in the back and hanging on to all this beer. We were going to go down to the beach and get drunk." A big old six by six truck ran them off the road and rolled them down a bank and he got hit right across the back in this accident and it paralyzed his kidneys. I said, "What the hell were you doing over here from Iwo Shima?" "Well, we just came over to get some recreation. I had been grounded". I said, "What was the problem?" He said, "I couldn't take off. I was really sweating it out". And the war was all over with but they were going on training and all that business. So he said, "I was grounded. Once I got in the air, I could land it all right, but I couldn't take off. I would panic." Another fellow that we knew in Rock Island verified this story because he was there and was a pilot also. He said, "You know, we had this test pilot from Republic Aircraft that had tested this plane for this, I think it was '47 or something. He called it the "Jug" - great big radial engine. It was a pretty good plane. He said he was going to come over there and show us how to take this airplane off with more bombs on it and less fuel. He said this guy was so good that he could fly the crate the plane came in and he was the test pilot. He had flown it more than anybody else. He said our routine was at the other end of the runway was a big cliff over the ocean. We would go to the

end of the runway, sit there, put the foot on the brakes and rev this thing up as fast as you could to get wound up and then finally let off the brakes and get going and get the speed up and then you had to hit a water injection to get more power and then we would finally just get off. This guy said, "Hell, I'll show you how to do that." So he said, "We were all lined up there watching and he got in this plane and he was a swashbuckler and he went up to the end of the runway and whipped her around and didn't even stand on the brakes and started shooting the fuel to it and went right off the end of the runway into the ocean and got himself killed. He said, "If he can't fly it, I can't fly it!" That's why he was sweating it out. But another fellow told me the same story on this guy. But anyway, once he came to, man, he was going to give us his flight jackets and everything else he could think of. I said, "All I am is a ward boy". I was just measuring it from both ends. He said, "Well you looked after me". I never did know what happened to him after that.

Bill: What rank were you when you got out?

Lew: Well, it was hard to get ahead and some never did. Finally after the war was over, and we were on Okinawa, this Pete... I can't remember his last name...got to be a first sergeant. So one day, he said, "How would you like to be a corporal?" I said, "Fine". So he made me a corporal. Two days later, he asked if I would like to be a sergeant?" And I said, "Fine." So I went from a private to corporal to a buck sergeant in just a week. Then he was going to make me staff sergeant and finally the captain said, "Well, don't you think we ought to give the pharmacist a promotion?" It turned out to be a good thing for me because when I was in Aledo, and Jim Roberts was a good friend, and they had a National Guard artillery unit in Aledo and they were needing a commanding officer, so this guy from Monmouth Headquarters was trying to get someone to go into the unit as a commanding officer. He could have made me an officer if I had been a staff sergeant. But I was only a (T4) buck sergeant and I was a medic and I didn't know a damn thing about artillery. All I knew was you pulled the lanyard and got the hell out of the road. Anyway, it was a good thing because they were filling out this outfit to go to Korea! He didn't say anything about that. It was just a way to pick up a little extra money and you were starving to death anyway.

Bill: Earlier you said that they were sending the men in your regiment home based on the point system.

Lew: Yes. While we were on Okinawa, they started to send the various regiments home. They were doing it on a point system and the basis was that you got two points for every month you were in the Pacific and five points for being married, if you were, and five points for each combat zone you had been in and the magic number was sixty, and good ol' Lew came up with fifty six.

Bill: About when did you start back to the states?

Lew: I must have been there about three or four months and about the middle of December we boarded the ship for home. They finally told us to get our stuff together and get on these trucks and we went down to a landing area and they loaded us on this big old LST (Landing Ship Tanks). They packed us in there and took us out to this baby flattop that took us back to Seattle. It was an old aircraft carrier built by Kaiser and they had pushed all the planes over the side and welded bunks all in the hanger deck and these bunks were all six to eight feet high.

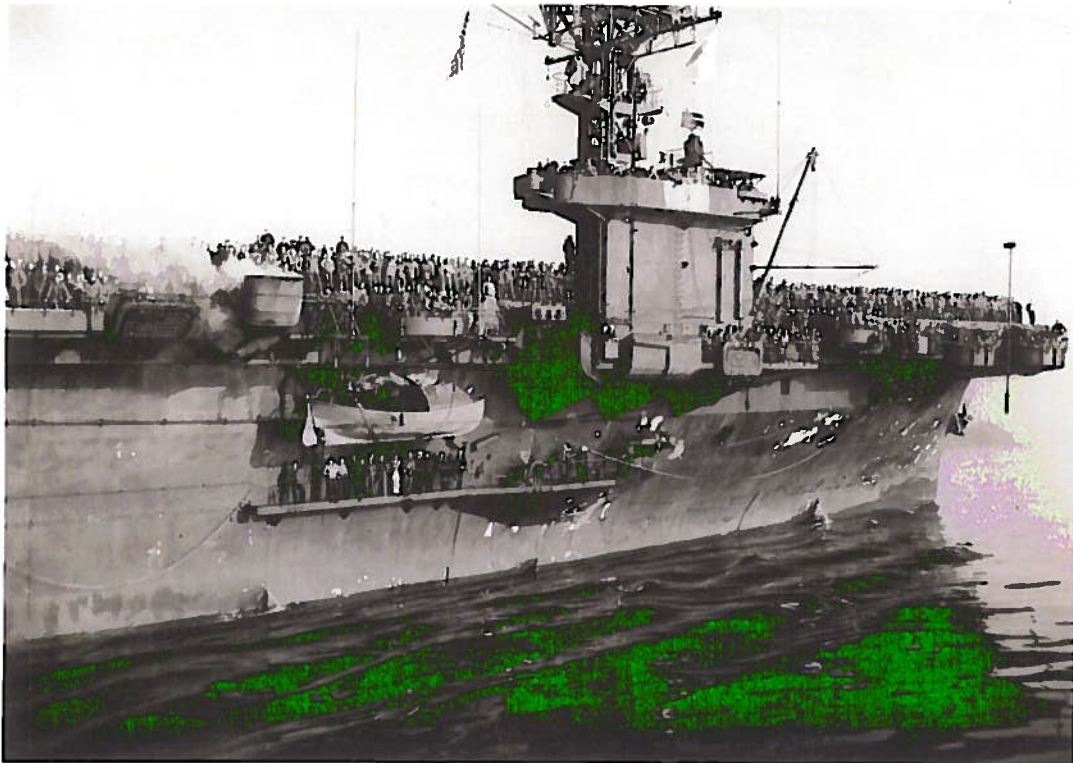
Bill: You said they pushed the airplanes over the side into the water?

Lew: Yes. They didn't bring anything back. They said to get rid of it. We have no use for it. They had what they called a sponson (*Webster Dictionary: spon-son, Noun. Any of several structures that project from the side of a boat or ship, especially a gun platform*). It had a door that opened into the side of the ship and it had a platform and then a catwalk down. Well, not a catwalk, but a stairway. Then the captain got on the horn and said, "You guys get on board and we will get out of here this evening". The small boat or LST was going up and down and so I had my duffel bag and when the LST came up, I put my bag on this platform. Then our small boat went down and the next time up, I grabbed the railing and I was on board. I wasn't going to turn loose of that. So then I got in and got a bunk and the other guys were coming up the stairway and it was tough trying to get on there because you had all of this heavy stuff. We didn't have any weapons, they were all gone and we were headed out of there. We were heading out and I can't remember what night it was, but we were in a storm and this ship was just rolling big time. They were top heavy to begin with. We could hear this clunk on the side of the ship and pretty soon these sailors opened this door on the side of the ship and this thing started filling up with smoke and the bells got to ringing and the alarms went off and said, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" I thought, "Jesus Christ, here I am on my way home and the ship's going to sink!" Anyway, I

walked up an inner wall stairway from the hanger deck and I wasn't going to get clear up on the flight deck, but I was someplace in case I could get off if I needed to. It ended up that this was a big smoke pot that was on the side and it hadn't been secured and it was slapping the side of the ship and it went off. So every time they opened the door trying to push the thing over, the smoke would come into the hanger deck. There really wasn't any fire but they had to give you the fire alarm to get the crew down there to get it over the side. It didn't take them long and they had it under control.

Bill: How long were you in getting back to Seattle?

Lew: I'm not sure. I know that we were on that ship on New Year's Eve and Day. We came into Seattle, Washington and it had to be a couple of weeks. These were slow moving jobbers. They were not very fast. Here is the picture of that ship. We had to buy these pictures. Now you can see how they were all over this damn thing.



Lew: From the ship they took us by truck to Fort Lewis Washington. One evening after we got there, we went into town and none of us had any campaign ribbons or anything else in fact. We didn't have anything. They gave us new uniforms and we didn't even have any rank or stripes to put on them. So when we got into town, we thought, well, hell, why don't we just see what we could buy. You could have bought the Congressional Medal of Honor in this damn store! They had all the medals you could think of. You could have walked out of there looking like a Russian general. So we didn't buy anything. Then they loaded us on trains and we came the Northern route through the mountains and it was a beautiful sight to see and back to Chicago.

Lew: I had different opportunities. When I was at Camp Stoneman near Pittsburg, California, my Aunt Lida and her daughter and husband were in nearby Stockton, CA. He was a medical doctor on a hospital ship. And so my Aunt had found out that I was in California and where I was stationed. So one day, I heard over the loud speaker, "Private Jinks, report to the so-and-so (company headquarters). Captain Montgomery is looking for you". And when someone, such as a captain, is looking for you, you head straight for the office... I happened to know who it was... but they didn't. When I got there, the 1st sergeant said, "what the hell did you do?" I said, "I don't know." But anyway, he called and came and picked me up and we went to their house for Thanksgiving, or it could have been Christmas, before I left for overseas. He said, "what are you?" and I said, "I'm just a basic medic. I'm just nothin'." He said, "I can get you on the hospital ship." And here again, I thought, "well, I want to stay with all the guys that I had gone to basic with. How naive I was." And so I turned him down. I said later on, probably at my age, it was a good thing I wasn't on a hospital ship.

Later on at New Caledonia I was working in this laboratory where we would have to stain these specimens and then they would go through a slicing machine and we would put them on a slide and then the pathologist would look for different things in the specimen which had been removed from surgery. And then one day, the pathologist looked at me and said, "kinda messy, isn't it?" I said, "well not too bad." So he said, "well what did you do?" I said, "well I went to school to be a mortician." So the next day, he came up to me and said, "this ship was coming into the harbor here at New Caledonia and struck a mine, and went down and there are several bodies that drown in the hull." They were bringing them out and he asked me, "would you like to go with me down to the morgue in New Caledonia?" I said, "well I wouldn't mind." So I went with him and when

we came back, he said, "I can get you into that morgue if you want to." Here again, he was trying to save my ass. I was already in the regiment, but we hadn't left and he knew we were going to go somewhere and he was trying to get me out of there to go to the morgue and be in the Graves Registration group. After he left, this fella was doing blood work with the microscope, and he looked at me and said, "are you Jewish?" I said, "no, why?" He said, "he thinks you are." I said, "why is that?" He said, "he doesn't do anything for anybody unless they are Jewish."

Bill: The doctor was Jewish?

Lew: Yes, he was a full colonel and he was a pathologist. He was just trying to help and he knew that we were going somewhere and it wasn't going to be good, because we were a rifle company for God's sake. But there were two opportunities that I had to get out of combat if I was goin' to go, or whatever was gonna' happen, I could've been in a safe spot. A hospital ship is a lot safer than places I'd been, so would've been the morgue. I had been to the morgue and all they were doing were autopsies on the bodies and then they would put 'em back together partially, wrap 'em up in a shelter half and put 'em in a box and take 'em to the cemetery. They were keeping track of 'em. That way, later on, they would dig 'em up, dig up the box, put it in a metal container and then they were sent back home after the war was over. After the war was over, they were asking for morticians to go do this, go back to the South Pacific in the repatriation program. I was thinking about it because I was only making \$25 a week and they were offering \$100 a week. I was thinking about it and then I thought, "Aw hell, I'd been out there for two years and I didn't want to go back." So I didn't, but there were opportunities.

I was going to tell you that I was sending for these ribbons one day, and my friend Abe Lang who is also a carpenter and was building the deck on the back of the house overlooking the river, and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I want to get my good conduct medal and they never even gave me a good conduct medal." So I got all these damn medals and one was a Bronze Star.

Bill: What was the Bronze Star for?

Lew: Meritorious service. It was issued two ways. One was for valor or meritorious service and mine was for meritorious service because I didn't do anything heroic. I said to Abe, "All I wanted was my Bronze Star." He said, "Lew, they had more buckets of Bronze Stars than they

had good conduct medals." Here, I have them in a frame, I'll show you. After I had sent the letter asking for the Good Conduct Medal and the Bronze Star Medal, they sent everything.

Author's note: (From Internet Source, Wikipedia).

The COMBAT MEDICAL BADGE is a decoration of the United States Army which was first created in January 1945. The badge is awarded to any member of the Army Medical Department, pay grade Colonel or below, who are assigned or attached to a medical unit (company or smaller size) which provides medical support to a ground combat arms unit during any period in which the unit was engaged in active ground combat. Awarded for performing medical duties while being actively engaged by the enemy. In 1947, a policy was implemented that authorized the retroactive award of the Bronze Star to soldiers who had received the Combat Medical Badge during the Second World War. The basis for doing this was that the Combat Medical Badge was awarded only to soldiers who had borne combat duties befitting the Bronze Star Medal and also that both awards required a recommendation by the commander and a citation in orders.

SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE OF MEDALS AND DETAILS

DECORATIONS AND AWARDS



Combat Medical Badge

Good Conduct Medal

Bronze Star Medal

Asiatic - Pacific Campaign Medal
with 2 bronze service stars

Marksman Badge

with rifle Bar

WW II Victory Medal

Army of Occupation with Japan Clasp

Not Shown is the World War II Service Lapel Button

LIFE AFTER THE WAR

Shortly after returning home from the war, Lew began pursuing his life ambition of being a mortician and funeral director. He first began in Aledo, Illinois with the Davis Funeral Home. On March 7, 1948 he married Betty Clauson in Aledo and they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this past year. He worked for several years in Rock Island and Milan, Illinois for Larson Funeral Homes. He then started buying funeral homes of his own, and eventually ended up with funeral homes in Aledo, Joy, Viola, Reynolds, Keithsburg, and New Boston, Illinois. He owned and operated these homes until he retired in 2002.

Lew and Betty raised two baby girls, Liz and Tina, to be beautiful young professional women. They now enjoy life overlooking the Mississippi River just South of New Boston, their grandchildren, the barges going by and the many eagles that winter there each winter. They have a beautiful log home with a big stone fireplace to relax by on a nice winter day. He stays active by cutting firewood on their eighty acres of big red oak timber and told me recently that their 2008 -2009 winter heating bill for propane was around \$80.00. He still plays golf occasionally with his friends and his 72 and 73 year old nephews. He jokes now about using the "Senior" tee boxes, but still plays a very respectable game of golf. His favorite golf joke is, "If you can't play good golf, keep score."

LEW'S TIMELINE

April 23, 1923 - Born at Viola, Illinois

April 23, 1942 - Turned 19

May 1942 - Graduated from Port Byron, IL High School

Sept 1942 - Entered Worsham School of Mortuary Science

April 23, 1943 - Turned 20 and draft number came up

June 1943 - Graduated from Worsham School of Mortuary Science

July 15, 1943 - Passed State Board Exams

July 30, 1943 - Inducted into the service

Aug., Sept., & Oct. 1943 - 12 weeks of basic training at Camp Grant

Nov. 1943 - Would have arrived at Camp Stoneman about Mid-November and was probably there for 2 - 1/2 months. (Longer than most)

Jan. 25, 1944 - Shipped overseas and was on New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Rabaul, and Emirau islands until March 1945

Feb. 19, 1945 - Marines landed on Iwo Jima

Mar. 15th - 20th, 1945 - Marines leave and 147th Infantry Regiment comes on Iwo Jima

Aug. 6, 1945 - Enola Gay dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan

Aug. 15, 1945 - Japan announces their surrender

Sept. 2, 1945 - Japan signs formal surrender agreement on USS Missouri

Sept. 15th - 20th 1945 (approx.) Lew leaves Iwo Jima for Okinawa. Been on Iwo for 6-7 mos.

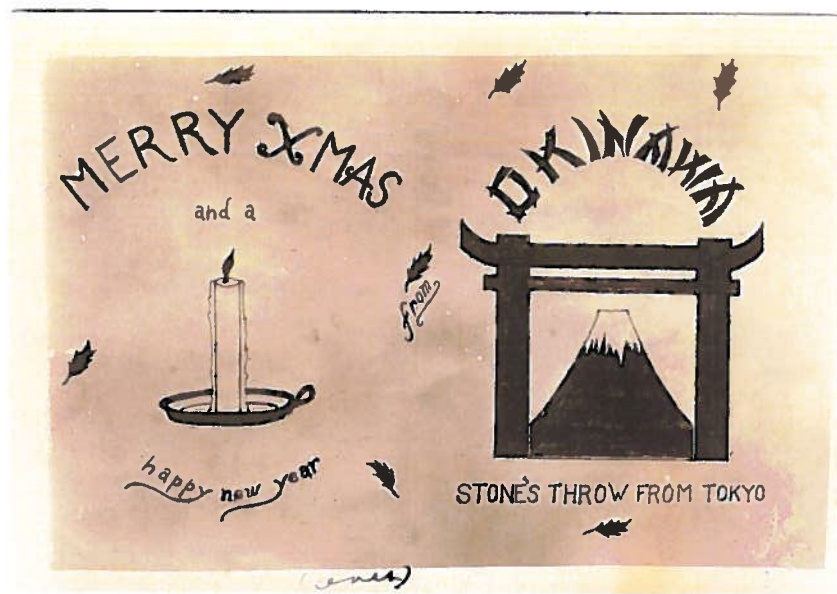
Sometime late Dec. 1945, Leave Okinawa for the states. (On Okinawa about 2-1/2 - 3 months)

Probably spent Christmas 1945 and New Year's Day 1946 somewhere on the Pacific Ocean

Official records from the National Archives and Records Administration show the following:

Overseas service from January 25, 1944 to December 29, 1945. Participated in the Eastern Mandates and Northern Solomons campaigns. Dates of Service: July 30, 1943 to January 23, 1946. (2-1/2 years)

January 23, 1946 - Discharged from Military Service.



Dear mom and Dad;
as I set here and look at
this card I wish that it were
a far greater token of my love.
but as you see to say to me,
"If wishes were horses beggars
would ride."

may God bless you both.

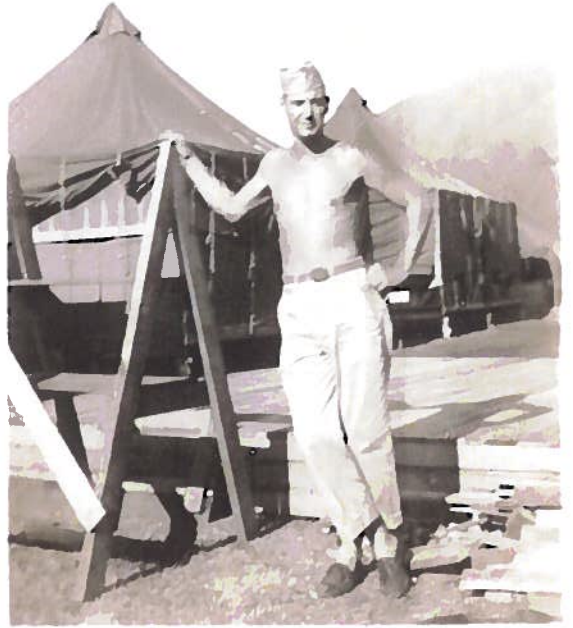
Your son
Louis.



Please see page 22 for details.



Please see page 33 for details.



One good looking guy!

EPILOGUE

As is stated in the very first sentence of the Preface, *"Of the hundreds of thousands, and probably millions, of World War II GI's returning home from the war, only a small minority talked or shared their experiences at that time, however, the majority did not want to share those sites and feelings"*. This is the prime or ultimate example of that situation.

During the research for the book and after my first visit with Lew, I was lucky to pick up a USA TODAY on November 7, 2007 and low and behold, there was a big article in it about the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Ave. St. Louis, MO. 63132-5100. I was so impressed with it that I talked my wife into driving down to St. Louis to visit the center and then on back home to Glenwood Springs, CO. After visiting the center I learned that most of Lew's records had burned in the devastating fire of 1973 that damaged or destroyed 18 million Army and Air Force files. The records of approximately 6 million plus military personnel files of those who served before 1946 were made public November 2007 by the National Archives. The newly released records are part of the second phase of a program to gradually open more than 57 million individual military files stored at the National Personnel Records Center, the largest National Archives facility outside the Washington D. C. area. Privacy concerns had kept the files sealed except to veterans, their immediate families or historians and others with special permission. A 2004 agreement with the Pentagon allows the National Archives to release personnel files to anyone, 62 years after a service member leaves the military.

They could not give me any of Lew's records there that day, but gave me the forms to be filled out. I then sent them to Lew for his signature, which he signed and forwarded to the NPRC and they in turn sent me only 2 or 3 pages and said that his records had been destroyed in the fire. So the book is based on his recollections, tape recordings, and various research on the Internet.

And now comes the interesting part. Since I had some written correspondence from the NPRC which had a name and telephone number on it, I decided to call and talk to the person and see if I could get Wilbur's records as well. His response was that I couldn't, because of being a nephew and not a sibling, mother or father, or his spouse. He had pulled it up on his computer and said, "Wait a minute Bill". (This took place in late November or early December 2007.) "Wilbur was discharged on December 27, 1945, and if you wait until after January 1st, it will be 62 years after his discharge and anyone can request his records; you send me your request and I will send you the short version of his records and a dollar amount for the photo copies of the entire record. Then you send us a check for the copies and we will send you his entire file." This took place over a period of about 3 to 4 months and I finally received Wilbur's entire military records of 95 pages.

Wilbur was born October 8, 1919 in Viola , Illinois. He married Marie Shuda on June 27th, 1939. Daughter Carol was born March 22, 1940 and son Jerry was born March 7, 1941. His children were ages four and three when he voluntarily enlisted and was inducted into the Navy on July 20, 1944. He entered the Navy as an Apprentice Seaman, earned the ranks or ratings of Seaman 2/class and Seaman 1/class. He was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Medal with 2 Bronze Stars and the American Theater Victory Medal. He was Honorably Discharged on December 27, 1945.

Then one day as I was going thru Lew's timeline that I had sketched out, it dawned on me that there was something in Wilbur's file that was similar. So I went back thru Wilbur's file and found that they both were at Iwo Jima and just 2 or 3 weeks apart. This really grabbed me. So the next time I was back to Illinois, I told Lew what I found. Then when we were back in November 2009, the first thing that Lew said when we sat down to review the last draft copy, was, I want Wilbur mentioned in the book also. Wilbur died on October 11, 2005. I mentioned this to my sister Barbara who had always been very close to Wilbur and Florence and she mentioned it to Florence about a year ago. Florence said that in the 40 years they had been married, Wilbur would never mention or talk about it with the exception that one time they were down to Harlingen, Texas visiting his sister Dorothy (our mother) and decided to stop at the very large and impressive Iwo Jima Monument and the only thing that he said while walking around it was, "I was there".

My sincere hope is that all that read this book can appreciate and never forget what Lew and Wilbur along with millions of other World War II veterans have done for our country and our freedoms.

So I have attached four pages that details a summary of Wilbur's Navy service and the correspondence that I received.

December 5, 2007

Ships History Branch
Naval Historical Center
805 Kidder Breesse St. SE
Washington Naval Yard, DC 20374-5060

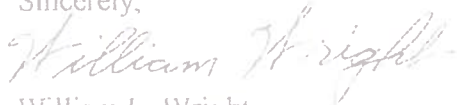
Dear Sirs:

I am writing a book on 2 of my Uncles who served on Iwo Jima in World War II. One uncle served with the 147th Infantry Regiment as a medical corpsman. The other uncle served on the USS Darke (APA 159) from 4 Nov. 1944 to 20 Apr 1945. After some research on the Internet, I believe that he was there for the first invasion landing on 19 Feb 1945. Please send me any information that you can for this ship and it's involvement at Iwo Jima.

He was later transferred to the USS PCS 1417 for a short period of time (29 Sep 1945 to 17 Nov 1945 and I have been "totally unsuccessful" in finding anything on the Internet about this particular ship. Therefore, I would greatly appreciate any and all information that you could send me on both of the above referenced ships.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



William L. Wright
2121 Bennett Ave.
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Phone: 970-945-7027
Email: bcwright@rof.net

5758
Ser NWD/SH/ 00081
24 Jan 08

Mr. William L. Wright
2121 Bennett Ave.
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

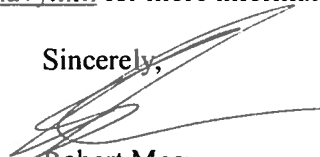
Dear Mr. Wright:

I am writing in response to your request for histories of DARKE (APA-159) and PCS-1417. I have enclosed a copy of DARKE's history from *The Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS)*. *DANFS* is an encyclopedia of U.S. Navy ship histories compiled and published by the Naval Historical Center. It can be accessed in its entirety online at <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/index.html>.

I have also enclosed copies of the ships data card for PCS-1417, as well as pages of a similar vessel, PCS-1397, from a publication of the U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office.

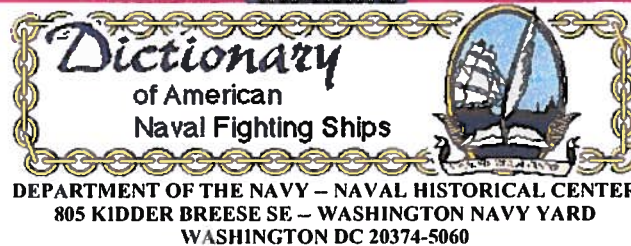
Please contact my office if you have any questions. Visit the Naval Historical Center's World Wide Web site at <http://www.history.navy.mil> for more information on Naval History.

Sincerely,



Robert Moss
By direction

Enclosures: 1. *DANFS* history of DARKE (APA-159)
2. Ships Data Cards for PCS-1417
3. Entry of ex-submarine chaser PCS-1397 from *Oceanic Vessels of the World*



Darke

A county in Ohio.

(APA-159: dp. 6,873; l. 455'; b. 62'; dr. 24'; s. 17 k.; cpl. 536; a. 1 5"; cl. *Haskell*)

Darke (APA-159) was launched 29 August 1944 by Oregon Shipbuilding Corp., Portland, Oreg., under a Maritime Commission contract; sponsored by Mrs. J. Hanson; transferred to the Navy 10 October 1944; and commissioned the same day, Captain McF. W. Wood in command.

Departing Port Hueneme, Calif., 4 December 1944, December to 27 January 1945, then sailed to Saipan for rehearsal landings. On 16 February she cleared for Iwo Jima, landing men of the 5th Marines during the assault on 19 February. She lay off the bitterly contested island unloading cargo and receiving casualties until 25 February when she sailed for Saipan, arriving 5 March. She sailed to Espiritu Santo to embark Army troops, and carried them by way of Saipan to Ulithi, staging point for the invasion of Okinawa. *Darke* landed these men as reinforcements at Okinawa from 9 to 14 April, returning to Ulithi 23 April to replenish. Loading two new LCMs at Guam, she got underway for San Pedro Bay, Leyte, arriving 29 May for duty training Army troops until the end of the war.

From 27 August to 6 October 1945 *Darke* made two voyages carrying troops from San Pedro Bay to Japan for the occupation. Assigned to "Magic Carpet" duty returning servicemen eligible for discharge to the United States, she cleared Hiro, Honshu, 11 October, embarking passengers at Guam, Guadalcanal, and Noumea and arriving at San Francisco 18 November. From 30 November 1945 to 3 February 1946 she made two more voyages to bring home veterans from Pearl Harbor, Eniwetok, and Kwajalein. On 10 February she got underway from San Francisco for the east coast, arriving at Norfolk 27 February. *Darke* was decommissioned 17 April 1946 and transferred to the Maritime Commission for disposal 22 April 1946.

Darke received two battle stars for World War II service.

Name JINKS, Wilbur Monroe
945 95 70 S1c, V6 SV USNR
Rate
(Serv. No.)

9 March 1945 - Crossed equator in
U.S.S. DARKE (APA 159). QUALIFIED AS A
"SHELLBACK".

16 March 1945 - Participated in assault
and occupation of IWO JIMA during period
19 - 25 February 1945.

14 April 1945 - Participated in assault
and occupation of OKINAWA during period
9 - 14 April 1945.

W. F. Crosson
W. F. CROSSON,
Lieut., USNR,
By direction.

Lew and Betty celebrating sister Dorothy's 93rd Birthday

November 7, 2007





Taken from the book "Flags Of Our Fathers"

By

James Bradley with Ron Powers

