

WAR CLOUDS

World War 2 was on in Europe (1938-1939), somewhere near that date. It made one think, maybe the U.S. too would be involved. German submarines began sinking U.S. Merchant ships. So the Merchant Marines start asking for protection for their ships. Ships to be armed and U.S. Navy personnel to man the guns, they were called Armed Guards. December 7th, 1941.

Richard B. Johnson and myself were up in the Baldwin area hunting jack rabbits - not too much luck, but when returning to the home of R.B. Johnson, Gloria, Richard's wife came out of their house saying the Japs had struck Pearl Harbor - December 7th, 1941. R.B. Johnson and myself, Leonard Finseth, were working at the Eau Claire Tire plant. I guess about that time it was called United States Rubber Co., previously it had been called the Gillete Rubber Co. I started working there in March of 1937.

December 8th, a big lay off at the tire plant; as rubber would soon be impossible to get, rubber came from foreign countries and had to be imported. It appeared like the company knew of something in the making as I for one started parkerizing molds-tire molds, for storage, etc. As I had been doing that for a month or two previous to the War, I was soon thereafter laid off and after a period of a few (2-3) weeks started drawing Unemployment Compensation of \$11.00 per week. As this plan had just commenced, as was Social Security, I started paying in Social Security at 1937. Think I've been entitled to what I'm receiving now. So I was off of work, staying to home and was wondering about the Draft, etc. Was soon

to have an examination for the war, etc.

I think the doctor was Dr. Strand. The unemployment check were of a short duration. I probably received about 6 or so.

February 1 at 1942, R.B. Johnson and myself decided to go and enlist in the Navy. So went to Chippewa Falls to enlist as Eau Claire had no Naval Recruiting Office. After filling out countless sheets of questionnaires, physical exam, etc, I passed. R.B. Johnson did not pass; reason not enough teeth, they required 2 molars on each side for one thing. The weight was my problem but by stating I had been laid off, etc., they decided that could of caused a few extra poundage. Peace time regulations, requirements were in effect yet. One also had to be able to read a certain amount without glasses too. So I passed and was to soon to be sent to Minneapolis for a final examination, the Wold Chamberlain, anyhow a Naval establishment. So notice came for me to report at the Chippewa Falls Recruiting Station for tickets to go to Minneapolis for exam so I was taken to the Depot of the Soo Line Railroad. This being my first train ride and the first time out of the state of Wisconsin!. Meals were furnished, hotel rooms and given a return ticket to Eau Claire, then I went by bus. Returning to Eau Claire, I got a ride to Chippewa Falls so I could get my car the 1930 Model A, which I still have to this day, 1978. This mans name was Karl Kleiner who drove me up to get my car. So returned home and waited to be called. April 6th, 1942 was the day I was called to report to the Cities. I didn't mind going, as from what some W.W.I. veterans told me - Endre Endreson for one said join the Navy, saying it to be better than walking, sleeping in the mud, etc, that's how come I joined the Navy.

I no doubt could of worked out a deferment of some sort but no. The call came on a week-end so we from aways off were one day late. A large group at the Cities was on hand and they were held over a day waiting for us - more besides me.

A full train load of us left during the early night, troop train as called. We had sleeping coaches, porters making our beds, etc., woke up different times from jerking, slam-banging and what not. Next morning was down in Missouri, seen cotton fields for the first time. They fed us good, they would call ahead for meals, and we were side-tracked different times, as war goods was top priority, anything vital to the war was number one. It was at least a 5 day and 6 night ride before we got to San Diego. We left Kansas City, Mo., on the Over-land Route. This was during the days of steam locomotives, 2 engines were used in the mountains, saw some awful big engines in the mountain area, they were used as pushers, we crossed even the Pan Handle of Texas and Oklahoma, saw some snow even there - mountain areas. In the States of New Mexico and Arizona at the cities where we stopped sometimes for hours, Indians would come walking down from the mountains, hills trying to sell nice woolen blankets and what not. They did nice work. Moving on to San Diego, two locomotives were used like at LaHunta, long pulls and steep and places crooked, click, clack, along we rolled finally getting to the West Coast. Think we came in near Los Angeles, then downward to San Diego, No lights of any kind were to be used. The talk was that Jap Submarines had been sighted, they once had shelled the coast line. It was midnight arriving in to San Diego.

We were "herded" to a barracks, we got about 2-3 hours of sleep, Reveille on the Horn-Bugle, everybody "Hit the Deck". Distinct

and clear, first Muster, then in columns of 4 abreast marched to the Mess Hall for chow, then marching back to the Barracks, ordered out for policing duty - side by side we'd have to police the area - patio - Blacktop, ordered to pick anything on the patios. Lots of Sea Gulls there, The Hair Cuts, fitting of uniforms, sending back our civilian clothes. By the way, I was in Co. 197 - Enlistees, before policing the grounds, patios, etc., we were told "you asked for it", as we enlisted. Before getting our uniforms a physical exam again. The first camp was called Camp Paul Jones. We got lots of shots - vaccinations, they strike us from both sides, then exercises, Manual of Arms, etc. Grinder was called the place where we did the marching, right oblique, left oblique and what not. At Camp Paul Jones for about 3-4 weeks, then to Camp Decatur, later to another camp - Camp Faragot. At Camp Faragot we would be hauled to Camp Pendleton, I believe for rifle practice, pistol shooting and machine gun practice firing.

I did fairly well on the rifle shooting - 30-06 Springfields, also fair on the machine guns - 12 shots at 4 targets, I'd manage to have 2 shots for the 4th target. That was for 3 weeks we did rifle, pistol and machine gun. This was a Marine Base, our noon-time meal was trucked to us, we had to be careful not to swallow flies, flies by the millions- the Marine Base sewage disposal unit was "very close by". We washed our own clothes - by hand, our clothes line was inspected too to see if the white clothes were white "not gray-like". One can't get the whole history of Boot Camp write-up done - would be quite long. While at Camp Faragot and Decatur, we went to school. I chose Ordnance, gunnery, one week of electricity, Gunnery, Torpedos

and Machinist. I qualified for Gunnery-Ordnance. So I had a full two months of Gunnery. Lots of studying and some Big Bore instructions - they had a few 3" 50's and 6" guns - Shore Batteries. Then after all this was moved to Balboa Park, housed in some old Ancient buildings of Spanish Mexican Design. We went through the Park saw lots of animals, birds, etc. While there I got acquainted with Ed Johnson who was a machinist Chief R. Also met Eddie Rud who worked at an airplane factory. Eddie and I were invited out to Ed Johnsons for dinner twice, they served rabbit meat and it was good - like chicken. At this Balboa Park we did a lot of marching. Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox was there on a trip, Inspections. Was quite lucky here - the Marines needed 20 men out of our company of 160 men, they picked one standing next to me, whew, close shave, I didn't want no part of the Marines for a couple of reasons, at least.

That's sort of a summary of the Boot Camp training. I had taken exams for Submarine Duty and passed the test.

Soon orders came to go for Norfolk, Virginia, a group of us. Thinking back the first 3-4 weeks we were grounded to the Base. No liberty at all - we were getting all those vaccinations. Was quite a treat when we could go into town - San Diego. Guards at all Navy Bases were Marines, we were really searched when entering our Base. The Marines are a branch of the Navy. As Harry S. Truman said, the Marines were the Navy's police.

Next - shipping out to Norfolk, Virginia.

I came out of the San Diego Base as a Gunners Mate striker so I was definitely being assigned to the Gunnery Division.

Rate of pay during my 6 months thus far was \$21.00 per month. An insurance of \$10,000 to be taken out of this \$21.00 per month, didn't leave too much spending money, our first set of clothes - uniforms were issued free, there after we had to buy our own.

Then came the big pay increase of \$54.00 monthly and I was automatically given Seamen 2nd class, thereafter one had to take exams. Seaman 2nd class to Seamen 1st class was a waiting period of nine months of 4.0 conduct. So - one had to do what was told and get in no brawls, etc., if so one's waiting period for advancement was set back - delayed. Stayed at Norfolk Navy Base for about 2 weeks or so, would go into Norfolk, Portsmouth and places, were fed pretty good at that Base.

The Submarine Base School was by now filled, couldn't take in any recruits so no sub duty for me, maybe lucky at that. Soon orders came for 3 Gunners Mate Strikers, 3 Torpedo Strikers. So on Oct. 1, 1942 was assigned to the ship called U.S.S. Pocomoke Av9 - a Seaplane Tender - a Seaplane Tenders duty was to take care of Seaplanes, their use was of Patrol Duty. Came aboard during the night, as usual lots of confusion, etc. The next day got to see the ship, get acquainted, Mustering locations. Everything quite different and new to us. Was assigned to the F Division - Gunnery Division. Our ship had only 4 - 3" 50 calibers, 5" 38 anti-aircraft guns, 20 20mm, 2 quads, 1"1"s each mount had 4 barrels, was fun to watch these 1.1s in action, the firing would start out even, pretty soon they'd get out of time like.

Chow here on board ship was the best so far, pretty good. A lot

better than on the Bases. We also had 2 Lewis Sub. Machine guns on the Signal Bridge. We could still go on Liberty as the ship was in the Harbor - Cheseapeake - Hampton Roads.

One evening while on Liberty I witnessed a genuine brawl, tables, stools, chairs, and beer bottles were a sailing through the room. See one Chief get the bottom of a beer bottle in the eye area cutting it wide open, bled, whew. Another fellow and I were on the way out, right now. Places were posted as Restricted to Navy Personnel - meant - Stay Out. I was assigned the Port - left side 3" 50 cal., gun, the upkeep of the gun, the gun mount, painting of the guntubs, Ammunition Ready Services Lockers, etc. Was a lot of washing to be done daily as soot from the boiler rooms - flues was a constant pest like.

The ship was steam propulsion, escaping steam on gyro's wheels like - enclosed - a shaft of 18" steel 250 feet long from the Engine Room to the screw-propeller. The ship was 500 ft. long. Was told the rudder weighed 40 ton, the screw about 16' diameter. The rudder was operated by the Helms man electronically.

Soon the ship was to get under way for a Shake Down Cruise out in the Cheseapeake Bay Area - Hampton Roads - an area for ships to navigate in. Here we go then - our ship had a lot of men on it from Green Bay, so it was called the Green Bay Ship for short.

So we felt like we were from the same area. One of them told me to eat all you can get into one, keep full, drink lots of water. I thought maybe he was pulling a fast one - "I'd have more to heave up" but no it worked, I didn't get sea sick!

Also to stay in the center of the ship as the ship didn't roll or pitch as bad there, either end of the ship one would go up and down 15-20-30 feet, so no sea sickness for me, lucky. They do get awfully sick, I see plenty of that during 3 years plus on the ship as now and then we'd get a new Sea Draft - more recruits.

Soon on our way for Cuba, wasn't too long, few hours and the Coast Line of the United States faded away, sometimes one would wonder will I see the U.S. again. Our stop in Cuba was only about a week - 10 days. Unload cargo, pick up cargo, etc. While at Cuba we were sent out on a Rifle Range. A Rifle Range close by with a gruffy Gyrene - Marine giving the orders. I shot quite well as I had been a member of the Eau Claire National Rifle Team so I hadn't forgotten yet how to squeeze the trigger. Was told there at the rifle range in Cuba, I should have been a Sharp Shooter in the Marines. I didn't use my wrist watch as was told because they wouldn't stand the recoil. I sent it back home after arriving at the next port. We were now or had been in the Guantanamo Bay, stacks and stacks of sugar on the docks - wharfs, etc. waiting to be shipped out, but the Merchant Marines weren't too eager to risk their ships - due to German Subs.

Had a good conversation with a Norwegian Captain. Their ship was in Dry Dock there in Cuba for repairs. It wasn't a government ship, it was a whaler, only about a 200 footer or so.

Now onto the Panama Canal, first city on the Atlantic side is called Colon - through the Canal on the Pacific side is Panama City. We traveled through the Gulf of Mexico.

Here on this trip we had an escort, a destroyer escort, depth charges were used on 2 occasions as it had picked up Submarine signals, one felt scarry sort of, one didn't feel too safe. My duty besides keeping my area in shape was a sky lookout. Two sky lookouts on Port, two on Starboard using Bosch and Lamb binoculars, always straining to look for something, one had to be on ones toes, constantly on the look-out. We'd be in the sky look-out tubs 4 hours, then 4 hours off, 4 on, 4 off continually. By the time we arrived at Colon - the Panama Canal. We were about fagged out that's quite a grind 4 on, 4 off around the clock. That reminds me our time was now different. The clocks hour hand would revolve only once in 24 hours like 0000 to 12 ok. One PM would be 1300, 6 PM - 1800, 12PM - 2400. 2355 would be like our 5 to 12 midnight.

After days of sailing, 6-10 days we reached Colon. Here I see the Panama Canal or the beginning of it. The day of this writing started on the 19th of October, 1978.

October 19th, 1945 - I arrived back to the good ol United States.

October 19th, 1950 - Alverne was born so October 19th is quite the day.

Trip through the Canal to follow, bed-time for me, October 24th, 1978.

Going through the Panama Canal.

Entering the Canal from East to West like huge gates - 2 of them were wide open so in this 1st lock is sea level soon as the ship entered 4 electric like tugs fasten to the ship, 2 on port - 2 on starboard and run on a gear like track. They hook on after the gates

aft of the ship are closed then water begins to fill this lock - No. 1. When this lock is full it then is the same level as lock No. 2, then the gates forward of the ship open and the ships power is used for forward motion and being guided by tugs as I call them, these tugs keep the ship from bumping the sides of the locks. Remember of seeing fish being tossed in the air when the propeller - screw was put in motion. Lock No. 3 same procedure as the first two. On the Ithmus level is a huge water storage - a lake to furnish water for the Locks. It's a full days operation going through. This canal now can't accommodate the newer, larger ships. The fortification, anti-aircraft batteries and what not is in abundance - lots of artillery'. Colon is a so and so city, filth of all descriptions - you can figure that out - "filth and descriptions". On the Pacific Ocean side in Panama City a somewhat more beautiful city - citie. It's a very damp area along the canal, humid and any kind of a cloud has rain in it and very hot. I developed quite a cold, really a humdinger, so went to the ships doctor, they had two doctors and one dentist. The doctor checked me over and gave me something for the cold but said you must have trouble getting air through one of your nostrils even without a cold. I said I did, he said a little surgery could correct the problem - I had a polyp obstructing air passage. So in a couple of days the polyp was to be removed. It must of been the size of a good sized grape as it fell in my mouth and was in Sick Bay for two days.

So being I was in Sick Bay when crossing the Equator, steaming for Galapagas Islands so I was excused for the rituals. It's a ritual crossing the Equator for the first time only, glad I didn't have to go through that ordeal, but this is observed by doctors so as to be

not too severe as some one getting hurt, they have dunking tanks made up and what not.

Heading for the Galapagos.

We had an escort of 25 PT boats - Torpedo Boats and they were fueled underway. Finally got there with cargo, etc. It lays close to South America - Chile. In the Harbor there I see sharks swimming around that one fin showing. Was there a few days, some got ashore, I didn't. Its a lot of small brown goats on the Island and slo iguanos sort of a lizzard like creature about 2-3 feet long.

Now heading back to the U.S., City of San Diego where I had only 5-6 weeks ago had left from, San Diego was home like to me, was acquainted there some. Was there about a week unloaded cargo and loaded cargo. We were still on 4 hours on and 4 hours off watch duty, "sky lookout". But at San Diego we got a Sea Draft - a group of recruits that helped, our watch duties was 4 hours on and 8 hours off then.

Now heading for Pearl Harbor - note we steamed in to Pearl Harbor December 7th, 1942, exactly 1 year after the Japs struck. Diamond Head is first seen entering Pearl Harbor, a lot of destruction was seen all over the harbor yet. Big battle ships on their sides. Oklahoma for one, the Arizona is still there on it's side yet today and will be eternally I imagine. The Arizona lays by Ford Island - 11-12 hundred bodies still in the ship yet today. Memorial Services etc., are held yearly.

It's possible I could be mistaken of the Arizona and the Nevada, I think though it's the Arizona, Pearl Harbor is quite an affair. A

A U.S. Naval Base. The Japs knew that and they did damage. Got around some there too. Lots of sugar grown there. A section of the city has a China Town, really heard a good argument once there. Two Chinamen were having it out, everything, but not coming to blows. Their section was quite filthy, garbage along the walks, dead cats even. We were presently hauling aviation supplies. In a weeks time we loaded cargo and headed for Frisco - "San Francisco". From Frisco down the coast to San Diego. We then to Pearl Harbor again, we made 3 complete hauls - "trips" like that. This was pretty nice goings. But from San Diego our next stop was the FiJi Islands, a long ways to go. Traveled with an escort a D.E. "Destreyer Escort". On the way we stopped at Samoa and unloaded a Sea Plane. The Samoians are a short, husky build (type) of people. A slightly bronze-colored people. I'd say people of India's background. On our way to the FiJi Islands. What a sight there to see in the harbor. Seeing the first battleship and quite a few of them. I'd say they were staying there as I'd say for protection as they had no anti-aircraft batteries or guns, only for shore bombardness. At New Caledonia also at anchor were numerous old type battleships and cruisers.

We got ashore there, that was something, native villages like grass roofed huts, went along a street like dirt road - "trails". First came to a hair dresser, the Fijians take great pride in their hair, the one getting groomed lays on the ground and the operator sits cross-legged and with a card like, carding wool, they pull the card upward like, that gives them the bushy head, their pride. Next into a better part of the town like or village. Strolling by buildings etc., people were sitting in the shade, as we neared them they would

raise their heads and say Bula Bula - meaning hello. They had a Narrow Gauge Railroad there! Train crews would push the empty box cars by hand. They were barefooted and the railroad or track beds were crushed rock, good sized rock $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-2-3" but that didn't seem to bother their feet any. By the way do you know that Raymon Burr - Ironside, owns 2 large island of the Fiji group? I forgot now what we hauled going back to the States but anyhow we were headed for the U.S.A. and the ship was to go into dry dock for repairs and some changes were to be made. Flash shields were to be put on the 2 after mounts - the 3" 50 caliber guns, these were mounted on the Sea Plane deck. On the main deck on the fan tail we had a 5" 38 cal. gun, ~~were was~~ knocked out by the 3" 50 cal. guns directly above us and slightly aft. of us. The blast was awful, only about 10' over our heads that broke my outer ear drum - left ear. So shields were to be put on too for that purpose.

I'd say it was about January when we got to the States and were to get a furlough of 13 days to go home on. Well, that was something. Well the 13 days didn't seem like a very long time as at least half of that time would be used up on traveling and which of course was true. I thought January would be something different than what we were used to - we had or have been in pretty hot climates. No one knew at home that I was coming so when I got to Eau Claire I called 6043, I remembered my Bros. phone number, Arnold Finseth's. I guess the time was about 8-9 p.m. and Arnold drove to the depot to get me and stayed at his house that night. And that was quite a surprise, it sort of "shook everybody up" and was it cold "Jagu vor de kalt". Next day got home then. The big meals I had to go easy on, there didn't seem to be room for these kind of meals. I was already trimming down on ^{was it ever cold}

weight and eating only 3 meals in the Navy no lunching or "between snacks" so I presumed my stomach was a wee bit smaller, hah. The time went fast one wants to get here and there. Was quite a thing to be home again - but, soon had to go again. Left by train for Chicago, had quite a wait like, a train man told me to go to his house and have a nap, I had about 6 hour wait. This fellows house was only a block or 2 from the depot there, I think he rented a room there so I found it and was wakened in time for the train heading for Kansas City. By now it was about 8-9 A.M. so I found a place for breakfast, soon boarded the train and onto Kansas City. Then changed trains, time enough for a bite to eat, then I think it was the El Capatan train, on the Overland Route anyway it was about 7 days spent traveling and about 6 short days at home. Soon as we got back to ship the other half of the ships crew went on furlough. So then almost 2 weeks to look Oakland, California and San Francisco. Would have breakfast aboard ship, maybe a few things to do, have a noon meal, dress up and take one of the A, B or C trains over to Frisco - electrified trains. Meals were free of course aboard ship, a specialty was fresh milk and all we wanted. The powdered milk those days wasn't very good on one's cereal. It had a grayish color, taste none "no good" but when only powdered ^{milk} was available we did use it. Market St. and Ferry St. were the main drags like in Frisco. I took the cable car a couple of times up and over the hill and was down to Joe Dimagios Resturant. Quite a ritszy place on Fisherman's Wharf. This car was turned at each end of the run by hand, one man only, a turn table. It was a black, about 6'4", he'd do it alone. In Oakland one day in a pawn I bought the gold hunting case watch that I have - a perfect hand engraved case, a Hamilton-17 jewel and a good time piece. In Frisco

was a place where one could get all the Pepsi Cola free - sort of a Service Men's Center. A good place to rest up as one did a lot of "browsing around". Go to a good respectable place for supper like, take in maybe a movie, get on the train and get back aboard ship. It (the ship) was in dry dock, completely out of water. Soon all set for a shake down cruise. Then we started hauling Fighter Squadrons, planes and men to distances unknown to us, generally in a day or two out we'd find out where we were headed for. Later on I'll write down some of the places where I've been. On one trip - (run) we hauled Major Foss and his unit to an airbase - I forgot now. It was Leap Year. On February 29th, we were crossing the International Date Line so we had no February 29th. Going West - South West we'd always lose a day, coming back we'd have like 2 Sundays. I remember of having 2 church services aboard ship - 2 days in a row. In Eniwetah we encountered the enemy so our anti-aircraft batteries were in action. Most all times it was at night time. The Japs would drop flares, the flares would light up the whole harbor - almost like day. They were on the lookout for big ships to bomb.

At Christmas Island the President Tyler W.W.I. Troop transport run aground, it had been chased by Jap subs and it couldn't make the narrow channel, maybe it is still there. It had been shot at or shelled numerous times, thinking it was at sea. Christmas Island has only one navigational point - a palm tree otherwise it is flat and only a few feet above sea level.

One one trip we picked up a group of soldiers who had been stationed on a small island as anti-aircraft duty and had been there so long they were actually goofy, we took them back to Pearl Harbor. Different times we'd take men back to Pearl Harbor. Took back quite a

group from Tarawa, these were Marines. I saw rifles - M1's get thrown overboard, lots of them and quite a few were left aboard ship and these were turned in to me.. As by now I was the ships Armorer G.M. 3 class - Gunner's Mate 3 class. My pay now was \$97.00 per month! From Tarawa we took back 4 Japs - 2 officers and 2 enlisted men. These were put in the Brig (jail). I had my turn as guard over them, I carried a 45 cal. Colt pistol, when food was brought in to the 4 men, I was first to go in and last to go out. This guard duty was divided among 4 of us Gunners Mates. This was a 24 hour deal for about 2 weeks before coming back to Alameda, Calif. where the Marines came aboard and took them. -These Japs all had been wounded but could walk - barely. One had been shot through both legs, one had had a bullet gone through his jaws, one side through the other side, had teeth shot out, one a shoulder wound, the other I can't remember but he was not too bad off. They were taken to the Naval Hospital. When the Marines came down to the brig to get them, they got scared like, got uneasy, they feared the Marines, not us too much. One thing when leaving the brig after they had been fed, I'd always back out, taking no chances. One thing, out of the trip returning from Taraws, those rifles that were left aboard ship one of them got home by help of a Lt. Commander. I picked out a good one for him and a good one for myself. It was sent parcel post but not through the Fleet Post Office, complete with bayonet, clips, and ammo. This I have to this day, a remembrance of Tarawa. The Marines had had a tough fight taking Tarawa, heavy casualties. The Navigators were at err, they started storming the island on low tide, the Japs had concrete pillars, pests obstructions of all sorts. The L.C.I.'s (Landing Craft Infantry) boats got hung up on all the obstructions

in the water so a lot of the boats were "sitting ducks", an easy target for shore batteries or guns. That island looked like tooth-picks punched in the ground. The Navy laid down a devastating barrage of gun fire but it's hard to get all the Pill Boxes - Gun enplacements. Now and then words will be found that are not correctly spelled. It's been a long while since I finished the 8th grade school (50 some odd years). I think I finished 8th grade in 1926 or 1927, now its 1978.

We were kept busy transporting troops, supplies, etc. When hauling fighter units, we'd have about 1,000 men aboard. The ships complement required about 500 men. At times of hauling fighter units, we'd have a 1,000 men on for 2-3 weeks before discharging so it was men everywhere, crowded like. Soon we were to bet our "P.B.Y." seaplanes used for patrolling. These had bomb racks for bombs and depth charge equipment. So Esperatos Santos was the designation. When we arrived there soon the PBY's came about 25 seaplanes in all, we were then equipped to supply them, repairs, maintain them. We were there for about 4-5 months anchored in a bay like, pretty good duty but kind of boring but soon as the Guadalcanal Islands got secured, things got better so every 4th day we could go ashore, hike along some trails, etc. It was a ball diamond there also so some played ball, some would go swimming in a river, about the size of Eau Claire River. While there small groups of natives in V formation would come trying to sell banannas or trade for anything.

Well, the first 2 months was so and so. It was known whenever a large Man-O-War ship would enter this harbor and anchor, Cruisers, Battlewagons, Destroyers and Flattops, that there was spys - Japs or someone on the Japs side that would get the message to the Japs as when night would come one could be sure of a visit of aircraft.

First they would drop a flare and soon planes would somehow get through and drop a few bombs, trying to hit the largest ships. Those flares could light up the Harbor like day. Lucky we weren't hit but a few bombs dropped not too far a distance away. So night after night that would go on. Numerous times the big ships would pull out about nightfall so then it would be a better night, "we'd get more sleep". Things got better, soon we could then get ashore for a little recreation. We found a full case of .45 cal. pistol ammo. the 3-4 of us, along some trenches, they were dug, prepared for a land invasion which never came - but we'd the 3-4 of us would go ashore, I'd disassemble a 45 pistol so we'd each take a part of the pistol - go to the case of ammo. and do quite a bit of pistol practice. I got fairly good with the 45 but it was hard on ears as the jungle was dense - the report of the pistol couldn't escape very far. A white handkerchief was used as a target. Palmolive Soap Co. at one time owned a tract of land here, lots and lots of cocoanut trees. At one time there had been a few people, laborers I imagine who lived there as I did see 2-3 cows, quite old and one crippled one. Saw some hogs, glimpses of them, as they were crossed with wild hogs, "luckily they were scared". So every 4th day 1300 to 1600 was a day ashore, of course now and then we'd have to go on a working party, going in a motor launch to a supply ship for supplies, food, etc. We depended on them for our eats, did happen a supply ship would get sunk so our supplies ran low.

A quarter of an inch, $\frac{1}{4}$ " of butter from a quarter pound stick was our daily allowance of butter per day was all we got for quite a spell, 5-6 months, marmalade, ground up "orange peelings", I called it, was our main bread spread.

The pastries were real good aboard ship, one would though check the slices of bread for worms even though they were baked - a black head and a clear like body $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " length.

I think next we headed for Florida Island for a breather like, some ship repair as by now they were hauling floating Dry Docks out to different harbors. At Esperatos Santos 2-3 cruisers were hit and quite bad, they were repaired there good enough or sent back to Pearl Harbor where a complete bow would be fitted on, 30-40 feet of the bows were shot off or damaged. At Florida Island we got off a little we got off a little, saw some bats about the size of crows, wild mocking birds, wild monkeys, - could they ever go through the trees when scared. I meant will parrots instead of mocking birds. There had been some fierce fighting here "surely some good evidence".

A long shallow valley had been filled up with Jap bodies. It stated how many and the caterpillar tractor was left there on top of the mound. We carried a huge amount of bombs, aerial torpedos and headed for Guadacanal and unloaded our bombs. At Guadacanal we got ashore as it was suppose to be safe, 2-3 of us ran onto or found a dead Jap, this one hadn't been found, it was all flattened out, decayed. ^Y One fellow said, "I'm taking his shoes, he won't need them" ^{whew.} he said, the other took his belt. I took his canteen half filled with rice, may sound rough like, but I said he won't need his rice either, but I didn't get the canteen home with me. It got to be just too much to carry along. It was quite large, made of aluminum. In harbor one night I felt an earthquake. I was up near the Sick Bay walking on the Main Deck and I about got stopped by the movement of the ship, funny feeling. We were yet attached to the 7th fleet. We still were tending sea planes. After a trip or two to Pearl Harbor, we were supplied outfitted again and were

then assigned to Task Force 58. That sort of jolted us, we knew something was up. We were all called to quarters - a daily affair anyway and was told, the Invasion of Sipan was next. Everyone was very quiet, the moral tensed, everybody quite sober, soon underway, ships so many they could not all be seen. About a 150 ships all told. The fighter planes on the Flattops were in the air at all times, some landing, some taking off, etc. Before getting into Sipan, we picked up a pilot whose plane was just shot down, he had parachuted down and his life raft is what kept him floating. There was and had been plenty of fire works going on. It had been softened up considerably a day or two before we arrived. Land fighting was in "full swing". Soon as we anchored in the Harbor called Tanapac Harbot about evening time. That night General Quarters sounded. Everyone to their designated battle stations. A Jap plane was way up overhead dropping flares, the Harbor was lit up like day and of course they were taking pictures. Some ack ack fire but he made it safely away. Our P.B.M.'s arrived in a couple of days to start their mission. They were equipped to handle the Electric Fidos, a battery run torpedo with an aerial of about 2' long and when dropped from the plane at close to water levels, it would go and seek subs as metal objects in the water. Two of the Fidos could not be released at the same time as they'd ram together. They were small, only about 12' long, 18" diameter with a warhead of 275 lbs., Topex a very potent explosive. We sat out about 37-40 air raid alerts - night time only, so we were up nights constantly so we'd get some sleep during the day. But soon the Japs were swimming to some of their sunken ships whose super structure was some above water, ships that were sunk but not

capsized and they'd fire their anti-aircraft guns at us. I had the Port Gangway watch on ship and one afternoon projectiles began dropping all around the ship and exploding. "Impart fuzes". This was fire works "before my eyes", they were close too.

One day all of a sudden 6" gun batteries- coastal guns began firing at us, an orange flame could be seen soon the shell casing exploded, as I could see fragments spraying the water, 2nd round fragmentations. Shrapnel bursting closer, a few pieces hitting the ship, 3rd round went over the ship and exploding by and our ship, then the Colorado Battleship opened fire with all 9 16" guns and the Japs coastal guns got silenced. A projectile weighing about 2100 lbs. went through the Bunker-Block House, a structure built of steel and a 24" of concrete. In about 2 weeks time, maybe close to a months time, I got a chance to go ashore and look things over. The Japs had a 6" gun made in Liverpool, England, captured it from the British, it had been positioned around Hong Kong and the Japs had moved it to Sipan, ^{Singapore} Tanapac Harbor the other 6" was an exact duplicate of the British gun with Jap markings and numbers. On Tanapac Island I picked up a souvenir which I have to home, a 27mm anti-aircraft shell and projectile - 25mm equals 1 inch. This spent shell was under a head of a Jap who had gotten killed by one of his anti-aircraft guns, I kicked the head off of this shell, seems just like yesterday, I'll never forget that and in their ammo boxes I removed a projectile, so I had a complete looking shell like. "I guess one sort of got hardened in". One would do things then and wouldn't think too much of it.

Battle for Tinian going on also, a cruiser close by took a direct hit from a coastal gun, 60+ some casualties. Battle for Sipan tapering off, Japs hanging on stubbornly. The Japs were finally pushed off of one end of the Island down a cliff like or end of the mountain and on the flat beach. They met withering fire by the Cruisers using 8" anti-personal shells, $\frac{1}{2}$ " steel balls packed in powdered rosin inside of the cast iron shells set by nose fuze to detonate at a fixed distance.

Japs were seen floating around in the Harbor, bloated, would go out with the tide and return again.

So it went, nightly visits by Hiro Hitos Night Pilots, about 4 months or so Peledu Island was next. We were escorted in the Harbor there by Mine Sweeps, small ships probably 100-150 foot wooden built boats so as to not trigger off the mines that were in the Harbor. A steel bottomed ship draw these mines up, magnetic like. Saw a few mines that were cut free by the mine sweeps, a shear like device that would travel on a cable from one mine sweep to the other mine sweep. It took 2 mine sweeps to clear a passage for our ship to safely get to our anchoring spot or area.

When a mine was cut loose, it would sometimes float up then we or one of the mine sweeps 3" 50 guns would shoot it and what an awful explosion. If one was tripped off in the water, a big rise in water could be seen like a hill showing up in the water before the explosion reached the surface. That too was risky business. One night there at Pelilu Japs had swam over to one of our Destroyers and fastened detonating charges to the screw-propeller-~~propeller~~ and rudder and

swam off, and, I imagine a time setting device was used so they got clear before the charges went off, considerable damages to that ship also. A 4 month or so in the harbor there.

Our ship was in need of repairs also and also some altering and what not and ordered back to the States after another 2-4 months anchorages one at Port a Princes southern post of the Phillipines and, at another anchorage, I think at Bali. Then back to the States, when arriving at the Alameda Dock which was of cement, stationary and I got off and started walking, I got dizzy, felt funny, just being used to the ships movements, gradual rolls and pitches for so long a time, I guess did it. Note - I had a stretch of 9 months that I was never on land. "I had sea legs only" for sure.

Spent 2 weeks at Valejo, Frisco, Oakland, spent nights aboard ship, ate breakfast and dinner then off to one city by bus or train or taxi. Was "cheaper" to eat aboard ship that was free. The other $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ships crew went on furlough this time and we were the last to go this time. Two weeks was along wait, being a chance to get home was in sight.

Of the 44 months I was in the Service, I got 27 days leave all told. This last furlough I flew by air, as now we could fly by air. A big plane (DC 4), a 44 passenger from Frisco to Omaha.

Well, getting ready for the 14 day furlough, a few things "packed up", a few extras". A bus from the airport came to Valejo, picked us up, headed for the airport and boarded a DC 4. Got to Omaha, Neb. then onto a Mid-Western to Minneapolis but had to lay over in Omaha

for 8-10 hours as I as a Service man didn't have enough priority. Got sort of "bumped off". Finally got home, the 14 days goes fast as traveling time enters and one has to allow a little extra time. That time went fast while on furlough, one tries to get here and there. The big meals home cooked and goodies - "wow" - I had to though eat light and it seemed like my stomach was smaller, (shrunk up like) as aboard ship it's 3 meals - "no in-betweens". But I had trimmed down in weight considerable. Time to go back, took a bus from Eau Claire for the Twin Cities, boarded a plane for Omaha on a Mid-Western again (a 21 passenger) then onto a big plane - for those days - a DC 4 (44 passenger plane).

The ship was now equipped with new guns and quadruple 40mm each mount had 4 - 40mm's, a very good anti-aircraft batteries. My job was good duty, a ships armorer, keeping the officers 45 cal. pistols in shape. Rust is a problem at sea, the salt water and sprays. Was in charge of Ordnance Spare Parts, records of all gun mounts, inventories, ready arms locker for boarder attack. Really a good job. Ship soon got underway for destination, unknown to us, soon as a ship left the Harbor the papers were ready so the "higher ups" knew soon it trickled to us.

Anyhow on a mission of war. I had my fiddle along, at times got to play some, it depended where we were at, etc. There was a couple of Hillbillies who had a guitar so we got together now and then. We arrived again in the Phillipine Islands. There is in all over a 1,000 islands in that group, it's really spread out. We entered the Manila Bay, Jap ships were here and there all over the Bay, sunk

by the U.S. Navy, Airforce, etc. The Manila Bay is quite shallow so they were out of the water, some. While waiting for our PBM's to arrive, we got ashore, at a landing the Philipino's would be there for taxi service- a small horse and a horse cart like of a fair size - a 2 wheeler though it had a seat for the driver only and a back seat actually for 2 people but 3 of us did squeeze in so into town we went, soon it was to go over a railroad crossing grade it was quite steep, the little horse pulled us over but his front feet were in the air as the hills were lifting up on the horse and the weight of us helped matters along.

I paid 50¢ for a bottle of Coke there in Manila. Whiskey from aboard ships was sold ashore for \$25.00 per quart and some of the ships crew would buy it back for \$50.00. Note - at one run or trip out. Dr. Horace Fuson, a doctor from Eau Claire, Wis. - was aboard and got off at Eniwetah, group of islands and later I was told, was a Dr. on an oil tanker. I was sure I saw him one day along the life lines, he had a cap on and little did I think it was him, way out here in the Pacific.

From the Phillipines we were ~~to go~~ with Task Force 58 but was relieved of that and were put back in the 7th Fleet. Lucky for us, the Relief Ship wasn't, she took a bomb. Then we headed for Borneo. We were anchored in a bay- harbor in the Chine Sea, one evening we were ordered out as a big sea battle was shaping up. At night it looked like an electrical storm - 9-16" Salvos firing and quite a few of them really lit the sky up so on the other side of Borneo we anchored and soon our PBM's arrived to do patrol duty. They were again equipped with the electric fido's, they were dropping them now and then. While at anchor, we took aboard a fighting unit of Commandos

from Australia who were to make raids on small islands as "clean ups" of Jap units or gun crews who were yet on the islands - the Aussies were trying to wipe them out, at first they had success, later on not so good. One evening only a handful returned, they got shot up and were done as guerillas, but they said Australia has nothing to fear as long as there is an England (this was said as we were having chow). A fellow next to me said (a U.S. Navyman) "England will be saved as long as there is a U.S.A. The Aussies were good fighters though.

Borneo was quite safe now, soon we could get ashore. We were allowed 2 cans of beer, (beer could not be consumed aboard ship) but all it was there again was palm and cocoanut trees and walk on ground. One time a group of us gave our ration of beer to a "king", like of a tribe and got him drunk, he soon put on a dance, dancing wildly. Thirty plus years later that same dance got started here in the U.S.A. The women folks got scared of him, "their eyes big as dollars". There was poverty, living in filth, eating insects and what not. Soon they found the spot where we'd haul our garbage out to a little island, a dot one may say, and they were cleaning it up! Anything that was chewable they ate it. More could be said of this deal. I got some souvenirs while around Borneo and also around Tawi Tawi, with the natives we would trade a ripped sack-mattress cover for a Balo or a Kris. I have 1 Balo and 2 Krisses, a Kriss is a terrible looking knife. Somehow they got the iron from old oil wells and fashioned them into knives and with some fancy engraving on the handles and also the cases. The natives would use the mattress covers as a sail on their outriggers. An outrigger was like a canoe, hollowed out of a large tree and 2 cross arms. We attached

crossways and a pole the length of the outrigger on each side so as to keep it quite sea worth, so they wouldn't tip over. They would have big nets like about 20-30 foot square, that they'd lower in the water, then raise it up quickly as they could hoping they would have some fish in it.

Reports of Head Hunters were still on Borneo. They (the natives) would come along side ship trying to sell fish, frys galore. The youngsters would be quite grown up before they used clothing.

At a time once in the Philipines, we went on a cruise up a small river as an outing, in this river we found 3 Jap boats that were used for hauling rice, no matter where a Jap had been one could smell pepper, it seemed like to me, further on up we ran or come upon a village of Filipinos. It was supposed to of been people up in class, mahogany boards were used to walk on up to the house from the road, porches and steps were also made of mahogany. One place had a piano (out of tune). A native was seen coming into town (village) with a water buffalo and a 2 wheeled cart - "He looked straight ahead, he was more than an average person". The wheels were made of boards and planks nailed crossways, etc., then trimmed round so it would roll. A few chickens could be seen but the Japs hadn't left them much to live on.

A few of the islands where I have been; Cuba, Galapagas, Hawaiians, Fiji Islands, Christmas Guam, Johnson, New Hebridies, New Caledonia, Canton, Palmyra, Somoa, Elise, Gilbert Islands, Tarava, Kwajelien, Eniwetak of the Marshall Island group, Guadacanal, New Georgia, Florida, Efate, Lifee, Munda, Palakiela, Marianas, Siapan, Finian, Palau, Ulithi, Pelilu, Philipines, Borneo, Tawi Tawi, Port-a-Princesa., Bali, Corrigador, Batan.

When arriving at Port-a-Princesa, they started burying U.S. soldiers who had been prisoners of the Japs, Japs had ordered them into trenches, had poured gasoline on them and set them a fire. This was a gruesome sight.

The Philippines covers a 1,000 islands. These were written from a letter I had sent home in March, 1945. This letter was to be saved as now we could write and mention where we had been. During the War our letters were censored, no cameras were allowed, no dumping garbage at sea, no blowing of the flues in day time, no lights used at night. Movies were allowed, when things were quiet, (out of war zone). At times the officers could go out fishing. At times they'd catch enough fish to feed 500 men - our regular compliment. At times fishing was done on ship, over the side. One time I remember one fish was hooked that could not be landed or even close to be landed. The red snapper was a good tasting fish. One night while standing the port gangway watch, some were fishing and the officers' cooks fried up quite a few so I got to taste the fish Red Snapper, real good. The gi dunk stand was open in safe waters, where one could stand in line and get a Coke float, they made ice cream out of powdered milk but quite a treat at that. Candy became available, it had been aboard ship for quite a while and had turned a moldy color but was decided it was fit to eat. The ship had 2 doctors and one dentist, a sick bay, hospital, laundry, post office, pay master. Very little money was used as no place to spend it, the Navy paid out \$2.00 bills. The ship had a cobbler so was a fairly well contained unit.

They had a radio, we could hear Japanese and Tokeyo Rose. She was always telling us to quit fighting as we'd lose anyhow.

At the States I once bought a jar of Ingrams Shaving Cream that lasted for a full year, only a little was used, it was good.

Maybe I've mentioned before at the close of war I was Gunners Mate 1st Class and was recommended for Chief Gunners Mate but I turned it down as I wanted out soon as possible. The food so & so, the pastries were good, beef was good but when they served goat meat that wasn't too good. The best of all went up on the upper decks. Eggs when being boiled would wake one up, they were 3-4 years old, taken from cold storage, they didn't have no feathers in them though. The coffee was good, we lived it through. The doctors were good. Dentist could pull or break off teeth, as happened to me once. Had a tooth giving me trouble, jaw would swell up and go away. This time the swelling persisted, wouldn't go away. This tooth, a molar, had been treated by a dentist in Mondovi when I was about 16 years old. It had decayed so bad that the nerve was exposed. The doctors name - (believe it or not) - an article in the paper was put in by Mr. Ripley - of a dentist and the dentist's sign read:

C.A. Costley Dentist, Mondovi, Wis.

Back to the tooth extraction, the novocaine had no effect, so the dentist aboard ship, after having waited and waited finally broke it off, a sidewise twist, I almost raised out of the chair - this I felt, a piece of jaw bone came out too and numerous pieces, dig em out, pry em out, etc. He then gave me a shot of brandy and ordered me to the sick bay for the night. The tooth had a crooked root.

One day we were ordered to fire at some shore installations, which we did. Another day it was to destroy an ammunition dump or storage, and another ship or two. Anyhow, the ammo. dump was hit and the concussion was fierce, every piece of loose clothing on one was flattened tight against ones body. I was about 3,000 yards away, it was cloudy and fog like over the mountain and when the ammo.

dump exploded the clouds blew apart - quick like - that was quite a sight. *This was on Sipan*

The flies were bad there even out where we were, a $\frac{1}{2}$ to a mile from shore, fine netting, cloth like material had to be hung over all the hatches to keep them out - some of them, otherwise we'd apt to swallow some - quite true.

One of our men got killed in a Jap ammo. bunker. A land mine had not been detected. We were there just for recreation. The Japs had small houses like, buildings, that they used for making saki, a potent drink that would make them crazy like for kamikaze and the dagger which they would use on themselves before surrender. Saw planes shot down, some would crash and a big ball of fire.

While I was aboard the U.S.S. Pocomoke in the Bay area there and Tanapack Harbor, seeing projectiles from Jap anti-aircraft batteries bursting around the ship and now and then they would let a 6" incher go at us and the other ships. There on the mainland of Siapan Island was a soldier by the name of Francis Foss of Route 1, Blair, Wisconsin, fighting the Japs. I did not know the man then (Francis Foss), a few years after the war we became acquainted. I think we first met at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Olson also of Route 1, Blair, Wisconsin. It was a jam session of (some sort of musicians). Francis Foss plays accordian and good too. Arnold Olson plays fiddle and banjo (good), Evelyn (Mrs. Arnold Olson) plays piano and accordian (good) and myself playing the fiddle. At the Olson's the first night we played I had LaVern Lardahl with me on the guitar. We played and recorded 2 hours of taping. I have this tape, Arnold Olson gave me a copy of it. (Was playing some tunes then that I

had forgotten by now, more fun than we had in the war years)

Was glad when the Siapan & Tinian invasion was over, we were up so much night and many of them. Seeing floating Jap bodies going out with the tide and returning in. Floating mines were a nuisance, one floated past our ship quite close, maybe 100 feet but was ordered not to shoot it. It had gotten too close before being detected. If detonated that close it could of damaged our ship or killed some men, they are fierce. They have numerous prongs on them and if one prong touches metal or bump up on something solid, off they'd go and if hit by a gun that will ignite them. At Tawi Tawi natives were used to untie the mines, then when the natives were clear we'd shoot the mines, Whew!, 2 friends of mine were killed at Tawi Tawi.

Mines were about 6 feet in Diameter

At Tawi Tawi we spent 4-5 months at anchor, a long time to be in one spot, while the PBM's patrolled, etc. There is where we were when the war ended, at evening every ship was firing V's, ^{Victory -}
V.J. Day. Japan had been hit with the Atomic Bomb and the 2nd ^{Star Shell}
Atomic Bomb did it. More to follow. Have been writing this write-up from memory and it's a lot of things forgotten or left out. Date of writing, November, 1978.

Soon we headed for the Phillipines for discharge. Was a good feeling, the war over and one looked forward to going home, and alive. Was at Cavities, a U.S. Naval base. It was nothing to do, oh, look around. I found a few \$1.00 centavos. I have Japanese currencies, paper, yes, etc. Some Colombian coins, a coin from the Leper colonies. The Centavos were found in some ruins. The other money was found here and there. Was at Cavities U.S. Naval Discharge Center for about

10 days, maybe 2 weeks. The food was more rank there sort of, scrambled eggs had a greenish color, tasted okay. Bully beef in plenty supply. Men were being discharged right and left. Quonset buildings being erected swiftly. The chow line grew and grew, I am sure the chow line got to be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ mile long. Soon as having had breakfast and returned to the barracks or quonset huts, it was time to get in line for noon chow and likewise for supper. Very good climate in the Phillipines, balmy like. For shower facilities that was an outdoor set up! In the open with an overhead system of piping and sprinkler type of set up on a concrete slab, size of 50' by 100'. The Phi;ipinos would walk by and "gaze" (and would continue on). In the Harbor, being shallow, many Jap ships were seen here. and there. One of our ships got stranded on top of a ship that lay on it's side. The ships bow was riding quite high, still flying the Jack - a Navy flag. I imagine it got salvaged. Time was getting close now for boarding a ship for the U.S.A. We were called according to the length of time one had been in service, years, months and days. I had been in a fairly length of time. Soon my name was called. I had the Sea Bags and everything ready to go. Were picked up by trucks and must of traveled about 10-15 miles to where this ship was, got aboard with all my belongings including the fiddle. The fiddle actually was of more nuisance than-good, an extra item to watch out for, being a delicate instrument. That fiddle, I have it yet, has been $\frac{1}{2}$ way around the World. This fiddle was made in Eau Claire by a maker named Tom Johnson. Tom Johnson's nephew, Jerone Johnson of Eau Claire, who lives on I believe Rist Ave., has a mate to the one I have. Tom Johnson made very good fiddles. He had lived on either Chippewa or Niagara St. Well, homeward bound, about a weeks of traveling a group of us got desperately ill. It

was traced to ham which had been packed in tin cans. We were asked to lay in the passage and the doctors, pharmacies were giving us the needles, we got over it. This food poisoning can be something and it really was. That trip took about 3 weeks by the route they took and not too really a fast ship. It maybe seemed slow to us being homeward bound. Well finally coming in to Frisco, pretty cool weather here, saw a few small whales, a gray whale.

On the hillside we could read "well done boys". White painted rocks had been placed to read, well done boys, by our own men who had been put in the brig (jail), as undesirables, bad conduct, etc. We tied up at the man-made island in the Frisco Bay area and boarded a huge ferry to take us to the barracks. Soon as time came for chow, I believe the chow line to be $3/4$ to 1 mile in length. Fresh milk tasted good, we could go back for the 2nd cup, fresh eggs tasted good, "food of good texture". We got over to Frisco, Oakland and a few places before leaving for Chicago by train. The train was no streamliner, it sort of took it's time and was routed to the less traveled roads, from Frisco we headed south to San Diego, south to Tijuana, Mexico, back in the U.S. again. A 57 mile incline, through tunnels, one could look back and see the end of the train, sometimes see part of it coming out another tunnel. On we went. We were still eating Navy chow - Wednesday mornings and Saturday mornings - beans for breakfast, cereal and fresh milk, 3 figs, corn cake (Johnny bread) coffee, etc. Homony grits a breakfast food also. Finally getting to Chicago. Railroad tracks galore, the most I'd ever seen. I heard it was about 40 sets of tracks, getting cleared through them at last and headed for the Great Lakes Naval Training center where

we were discharged. This took about 2 days, the food was good, could have all we wanted. Had some badly needed rest, one don't sleep too good on the trains, we had Pulmans though.

Was discharged October 26th, 1945.

Now on the way to Eau Claire on the passenger train, the 400. Home at last, what a change, folks looking older. One was restless for a few days, but soon got oriented to civilian life. I reported back to work on 2-1-46. We were paid \$100.00 per month for 3 months, then were to report for work at the U.S. Rubber where I had worked before the outbreak of the war. (By the way the \$300.00 I got was paid by the War Dept.) I received a \$600.00 War Bond for furlough time I didn't receive as one is entitled to 30 days per year. I had 27 days in 44⁺ months. After a couple of days buying up some clothes my uniform was laid away, for good I hoped. Received 3 letters from the Navy Dept., chances to re-enlist again. I had had it, I thought. I returned to the Curing Dept. again started out on an easy job, inspecting tires after they were debagged, \$1.25 per hour, \$10.00 per day. Night bonus, 3 cents per hour extra. Oswald, my brother, had the use of my Model A coupe during the war. The title got transferred in the Gulf of Mexico by ^a Provost Marshal, I believe and when arriving at Colon, Panama, it was sent off to the States. In the 3 months grace that I had, Oswald bought a 1929 Model A. 2 door. When I started driving again I was sort of scared as I hadn't driven a car for quite some time.

Soon it was around the clock work at the U.S. Rubber Co. This name was later changed to Uniroyal. I retired 1973, having worked there for 35 years.

The war was quite an experience, somethings won't be forgotten. So some of it was okay and some not. One war is enough - too much for one's good.

Weighed in at 198 lbs., 170 at discharge.

Written November, 1978 - Leonard A. Finseth

Leonard A. Finseth