

Part #6

FO: You want me to read this list to you? Is that what you want? I think I told you I joined in Kansas City. I was in the Marine Corps, sworn in and couldn't find the quarters the first day. Remember when the guy had to use the wrong restroom and we had to stay there for a week. He took a treatment and then we boarded the train. We took our scenic route on the train out to San Diego. Got to stop at all of the sights along the railroad that were listed we stopped at so it was really a nice trip out to San Diego.

We got to San Diego and we lit the heaters and made the place black. I got up the next morning and I started my boot camp training. While I went to boot camp training I was given a chance to go to a school up in LA for 12 weeks. That was a 12 week course that Bell Telephone was teaching, so I went up there. I went to that USO Factory (?) every night and visited my sister which I was glad I could get on a streetcar and run to her house, take a visit, then go over and see a movie star and then work my way back home. I'd go pick up my slip and put it in my pocket. The next night I'd go put it back in the basket and go again.

I made the trip from San Diego that took me to the furthest point from home that I've ever been. That's Noumea, New Caledonia. It's a long way down there, long trip. I'd say a rather uneasy or dangerous trip because we took that ship out through the Pacific Ocean with the U-Boats and the warships that were out there, that you to wonder. We got there with no trouble but we stretched the life(?) one end of that thing to the other. That's where I should have gotten my first purple heart, when that telephone pole broke and I thought I was being a good guy and took the corner post and when the boy pulled the line; he broke the post off and put me in the hospital. Fell right in front of a jeep which was a hospital jeep and he just reached over and picked me up and put me in the jeep and took me to sickbay.

Then we go to Guadalcanal and establish a base site and we go back and forth from one operation to another and back and forth. If I could remember how many times we were on Guadalcanal, it almost seems like a home spot to me where we had a permanent tent. The tents were up and stretched all the time. If you ever got back there you had a place to sleep and to stay. Kind of like a hotel away from home. Went to Bougainville and made that landing. I wasn't there too many days and when we did come off there and I came off there with blood poisoning and I had a big, big stint in Guadalcanal again where I went to the hospital and get through that.

After that I landed with the Third Division on Guam. The first part I call a successful operation because we had Americans that we had freed - taken over a place that they had possessed - American soil and personnel and equipment and everything and it was kind of a turning point.

But then we turned and sail back to Guadalcanal again. And those old land crabs still come by on Bougainville. Every year they'll come and take over your campsite and go up in the hills and lay their eggs and go back to sea and die.

Then on Saipan and Tahiti like I told you I think before, I was only on stand-by. I boarded a ship and made the trip and waited and waited and waited and waited until they were through and then they let us return back to Guadalcanal.

From there we started training. We joined a Signal Unit, 6th Division, met Pierson met a lot of lieutenants that loved to play basketball and then we went to Okinawa. Made the landing on Okinawa and back to Guadalcanal and helped my group load the ship and while we were loading the ship to occupy Japan I got hurt again, another purple heart I should have had. When Jan wrote Truman all those letters she kept mentioning, "What about this one? What about that one?" He said, "I've got a record of one and I can send you a purple heart for," and he did. But that's the only one. I was glad she dropped it and all. It wasn't that much to me but it seemed important to her at the time that I should have every Purple Heart that I deserved for everywhere I was wounded. But that tore my hand up quite badly, I thought. I lost my fingernails on my left hand and it was kind of a painful thing. I might say to you about those guys that went to occupy Japan from my unit, after we loaded the ship, they got aboard and left. Then I was headed for the United States.

They came back when we were living in LA and Jan was expecting Donovan and she was working in a place downtown in a clothing store. They called and said, "We're coming though LA and that's where we're splitting up and going our separate ways. Is there a way that we could get to see you?" I took off work and went and picked Jan up from the store and we went to see them. If I remember right Bob Webber was in the group and Don Goodwin, Max Love and I just cannot recall all of them but there were six of them that stopped and waited until I got there and visited with them for awhile.