WORLD WAR II AS I SAW IT
IN THE MARINE CORPS
1943-1946

During my last year at Proviso I heard about the Platoon Leaders Program the Marine Corps had for graduating high school seniors and students in the early part of college. Under this program I was to go to an accredited college on my own until the Marine Corps called me to go to OCS at Quantico. I enlisted at the Marine Corps Officer Procurement Office at Chicago on 4 March 1943 and was assigned serial number 541591. I don't think my mother would have signed for me to enlist if it hadn't been for the "college" part of the program.

It took all day to get enlisted. There were about forty of us that started out in the morning. We took the same physical as the aviation candidates and officers being promoted. My blood pressure was high- so high that I was taken into a special room and checked twice again. The last step of the physical was an personality interview by a medical officer. He reviewed my file, wrote something on a slip of paper and stapled the ends of the paper together. I saw all I wanted to see- the "PASSED" on that slip of paper. The sergeant to whom I presented the slip opened it and, looking at me sadly said, "Didn't you know about that heart condition?" When I didn't quit smiling, he chewed me out for sneaking a peek at the slip. About twenty of us were sworn in as privates in the Marine Corps about five PM that evening.

Upon returning to high school I told several people about the program. Only Claude Hesse was interested and he went down to MCOPO and enlisted the next week.

At the end of May I got a letter from Headquarters, Marine Corps. I opened it with a great deal of anticipation. It did not contain orders to Quantico but rather orders transferring me to the Marine V-12 program at Western Michigan College.

The V-12 program was basically a Naval Officer procurement program ("V" was the Navy's code for such a program and "12" described the program itself; i.e., V- 5 was the program for college men, V- 7 for aviation cadets, etc.). .High school students who were interested in the program took a test in the spring of 1943. Applicants were able to designate "Navy" or "Marines" on their applications but I understand that is was necessary to assign some of those accepted to the Marine Corps.

Several of my friends in school were interested and applied for enlistment in the program (or the Army A-12 program). From them

I heard about the program and if I hadn't already been accepted into a Marine Corps program, I would probably have been interested. Now, however, I wasn't particularly pleased to be assigned to the V-12 because I knew it would delay my active duty. At the time; V-12 didn't seem too bad because it only involved four semesters (17 weeks each) before Quantico although I had expected to have a commission by that time. It did, however, settle the question about where I'd go to school.

The orders assigned me to the Marine Detachment at Western Michigan College in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In 1943 Western Michigan was not the major school it is today. There was one campus. It was located on the west side of town on the Chicago-Detroit highway. The campus had three classroom buildings (one of these buildings was a laboratory high school which had more students than there were civilians in the college) an industrial arts building, two dormitories, a student union, health center and fieldhouse There was a football stadium (about the size of the Richardson High School Stadium) and a rather small athletic field.

As I remember, there were probably 150 marines in the program organized into four platoons. There were about four times as many sailors at the school. We Marines were quartered three to a room in Lavina Spindler Hall, the women's dorm. My roommates were Bob Lounsberry and Bob McKee.

I came close to being surveyed out of the Corps at this time. In the month after graduating from high school and before reporting, I had a case of migratory joint pains. They were pretty bad but they had just about run their course when I had to report. We did a lot of running, walking and work (getting the place ready) and after a couple of days, I had to turn into sick bay. The pain in my ankle wasn't bad but I did have trouble walking.

After a day or two my problem had passed but the young Lt.(jg) doctor the Navy had assigned to Western Michigan was thinking of sending me home even though I had passed a physical on reporting. The Navy had set up a sick bay with the doctor and a couple of corpsmen in the Student Health Center. One of the occupants at the time was a young man (a new sailor) who had apparently flipped over being called up. He was getting more and more agitated.

About four PM he was talking to the doctor in the treatment room when he saw a platoon of sailors marching past. He was sitting next to an open window (it being July). Shouting, "There go my men, I must join my men!" He knocked out the screen and, before the doctor could do anything, he jumped out the window. He picked himself up and began running down the lawn. The "jg" ran

to the door and called to the corpsmen to catch him. Both of them ran to the door and gave chase. I was right at the room door and saw what was happening and went out the open window after the fugitive sailor.

I hit the ground running and ran faster than he did. After about fifty yards across the grass, I caught and tackled the fugitive. He was a stunned because he hadn't seen me and I was able to wrestle him until the corpsmen came up. Finally about six of us hauled our sailor back inside and put restraints on him. The doctor, who had watched the chase, ordered me back to duty in time for dinner.

The station commander was Commander J.T. Tuthill, a reserve naval officer and Long Island socialite who had spent the war to this point as a public information officer in the Naval District headquartered in New York. He tried to act like a real salt but he came across pretty much as a snob. Our Marine O. in C. was Captain Ralph Britt. Although he had never been overseas he was a sharp officer and most of the men in our detachment were impressed by him (I later heard that he was killed in an artillery accident in 1944).

Our hero, however, was Marine Gunner Leon J. Gaynor. Mister Gaynor had spent more than 30 years in the Corps and had campaigned in China, Haiti, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. He liked to spin tales of the Banana Wars and he had an appreciative audience. I believe that he is the reason that I've had an abiding interest in Marine Corps history.

We also had several enlisted men on the staff. Most of them were old timers- and I mean too old for active duty. There was one quartermaster staff sergeant and the rest of the group worked in the office. In addition, there were a number of men from the fleet who had taken a demotion to private in order to enter the V-12 Program. They became our platoon and squad leaders and we had little contact with the staff.

Our schedule included school Monday through Friday, a field day Friday night and quarters inspection on Saturday morning. We had drills by platoons for short times at off hours and we went to chow in a separate building (the Student Union) by platoons. Every third week or so we'd have a station review on Saturday afternoon. We got liberty on the other Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Once a month we could get a pass to leave Kalamazoo on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. There was no military training (other than close order drill without arms) and we had no military gear available to us.

We had a basic college program which would probably be called pre-engineering today. It included mathematics, physics,

English with emphasis on communication, history and economics. We also took a course called "Naval Organization" taught by Commander Tuthill that described the Navy and our place in it. Our second semester was a continuation of the first.

The Allies set their first priority on the War in Europe. Even so, the US Joint Chiefs determined that the Japanese must be stopped in the Pacific. Australia could not be sacrificed in order to use all available men and equipment against Hitler. The Japanese had begun to establish a number of air bases preparatory to moving south. The Joint Chiefs decided that an offensive strike must be undertaken to slow the Japanese down. They selected the air base on Guadalcanal as their target.

The First Marine Division with elements of Paramarines, Raiders and the Second Marine Division invaded Guadalcanal, Tulagi and Florida Islands (all close together in the Solomons) in August of 1942. The Navy pulled out of the invasion without unloading all needed material, food and ammunition. The Navy also lost a number of the U.S.'s few available ships in night battles around Guadalcanal. The campaign was very slow because of this lack of supplies and ships.

The Marines were relieved shortly after the first of the year but Guadalcanal was not considered secure until much later. Naval and aircraft losses had been high and with the Japanese offense blunted, our leaders decided to build up strength during most of 1943 and wait to invade the Gilberts until the fall of the year and the Marshalls early in 1944.

The Second Marine Division invaded Tarawa in November of 1943. While we were having snowball fights with the sailors that winter, the US began its invasion of the Marshall Islands. MacArthur had begun his return to the Phillipines through New Guinea. On March 6th, the First Marine Division invaded New Britain at Cape Glouchester.

Considering what others were going through in the Pacific and over in Europe, we had good duty but most of us were eager to finish school and get out to see "our war". In January we were given a set of tests and were asked about attending engineering school. We found out that the Marine Corps was looking for men to send to Engineering school. I indicated no interest in this program whatsoever and, in an interview with Captain Britt, told him that I wanted to be a line officer and pretty damn quick, too. Captain Britt allowed as he was also anxious to go back to general duty.

At the end of the semester. my name appeared with several others on a list on the buletin board. Instead of going to Quantico, we had been transferred to the University of Michigan as en-

gineering students. In my case, I was to study mechanical engineering. This meant a little less than two more years in school. I went to see Captain Britt again but he indicated that when the Marine Corps sent you somewhere, you went. He reiterated that he was also trying to get out of V-12.

About the first of March a few of us from Western Michigan were sent up the road to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. The V- 12 unit at Michigan was similar to the unit in Kalamazoo but also different. Both the Navy unit and the Marine detachment were larger and there was also a NROTC unit with us. We were assigned to platoons but primarily because we ate in the same building in which we slept (the Men's Dorm.) we operated almost entirely as individuals. Discipline was very lax. There was none of the interaction between sailors and Marines that we had at Western. Indeed, even the Marines didn't do much together. Life was a lot easier here because we were just civilians wearing uniforms.

I don't remember the name of the Navy captain commanding the station but the Marine O. in C. was Captain Hoffman. He looked and acted like a history teacher who had been commissioned by mistake. He seemed embarassed to be a Marine officer and realized that he was at a college because the Corps didn't really know what else to do with him. We also had a Marine Gunner who was XO but he was almost as bad as Hoffman. There was a steady stream of guys slipping out at night without liberty cards, the XO knew it (and even watched them go) but he didn't say anything because he too apparently had no respect for Captain Hoffman and "wanted to know something the Captain didn't know."

We lived three to a room in a section of the Quadrangle, the men's dormitory (the Navy occupied the rest) just off the campus. My roommates were Don Dowd and Dean Arden. My best friend was a regular who had served in the Second Division on the Canal and Tarawa named Bill Carlson. A surprise addition to the Marine Detachment was Claude Hessee from Proviso High School. He had been transferred from Miami University in Ohio but he was assigned to a first floor room (I was on the fourth) and I didn't see much of him.

The reason that the military nature of our life at Michigan had changed was the change in the nature of our studies. At Western most of us were taking the same subjects; at Michigan we began to broaden our studies. At Western, the Navy's classes were added to the school's regular program; at Michigan the regular program was altered to fit the Navy's requirements. At Western, there were almost no civilians in our classes; at Michigan about a third to half the students were civilians. My program was basically the first year of engineering oriented to mechanical

engineering. Subjects included calculas, chemistry, etc.

As our first semester at Michigan ended, the Normandy landing was made in Europe and Second and Fourth Division Marines assaulted Saipan. A little more than a month later, the Marines landed on Tinian. The Third Marine Division went ashore on Guam on 21 July. The war in the Pacific was speeding up. I became desperate to get out of the V-12 program.

My requests for a transfer to general duty were granted at the end of my second semester at Michigan in October of 1944. My grades were also not of the highest since I had lost interest in continuing on at Michigan. On the first of November, three of us were on our way to boot camp in San Diego. After we got there we were busy drawing clothing and 782 gear, buying the required list of PX supplies (given to us in a bucket without any decisions on our part), getting medical checks and shots, visiting the barber and other miscellany.

We were then formed into a platoon and given into the care of a Senior Drill Instructor and two assistants. Our platoon was #789. Our senior D.I. was a seagoing platoon sergeant named Alred. One of our junior D.I.s was a platoon sergeant from the First Raider Battalion who was still recovering from wounds recieved on Guadalcanal. He impressed me as one of the toughest men I'd ever met. The other J.D.I. was a corporal who had never served outside the U.S. and was a real bully.

I remember only a few things about my time in "boot camp". We wore pith helmets and our DIs carried swagger sticks which they used to pop us on the helmet, particularly when we were out of step while drilling or moving in formation. Ocasionally the corporal would hit one of us but not particularly hard or seriously and he yelled a lot. We did a lot of running at "High Port" and had quite a few night-time "Sea-Bag Drills" (pack your sea bag, run around the area with it on your shoulder, then go in and dump it on your bunk).

Personally, I remember being caught talking in chow line and, as a result, standing in the "platoon street" with a bucket over my head counting cadence at the top of my voice. I also remember the traditional, "This is my rifle, this is my gun . . . done by others in the platoon.

Our first three weeks were spent at MCRD in San Diego. Early on we spent most of our time drilling and on physical conditioning. There were also classes covering basic military subjects. We were up at dawn and went to bed quite early. We made our bunks up- that is, mattress and blankets folded at one end. No one sat on a bunk during the daytime.

At the end of the third week we got another haircut. My hair was very soft and would not stand up. I was a Smart A-- and went into the barber shop with my hair combed. It was a real challenge to the barber. It's a good thing we went covered or my head would have sunburned.

At the beginning of the fourth week we went to Camp Mathews for marksmanship training. I had never fired a rifle larger than a .22 before (and never very often) and really enjoyed my time on the range except when we were "dry firing" (no ammunition). When we shot for record I put three clicks of left windage on my sights when it should have been right on the 300 yards rapid fire prone line. I wound up with a beautiful group in the three and four ring on the left side of the target. My coach kicked me several times in the usual place because, it seems, he had bet on me with the coach on the next target and he lost due to my stupid windage mistake. I did qualify because I scored very well on the 200 and 500 yard lines. I also won the platoon "pot" when we fired the BAR for record the next day.

Our last two weeks were spent in MCRD, San Diego. During this period we spent more time in class. One of our DIs took us to a movie one night. During the seventh week I remember passing out in the evening chow line. I was sent to sick bay and put to bed. I went right to sleep and slept until noon the next day. I was given the choice of going back to my platoon or staying in sick bay for a couple of days and joining a later group. It wasn't much of a choice, really.

The most memorable thing about boot camp, however, was the final inspection and "pass in review" as we graduated. It gave us a tremendous thrill to march with the flags waving, guidons flapping and the band playing.

After a ten-day furlough, I was assigned to an infantry training regiment at Camp Pendleton. We were quartered in #16 area- the old Fifth Division artillery area. We spent all of the time on the art of combat- by fire teams, by squads, by platoons and by companies. We fired a lot of blanks during this period. We worked ten days and were off two.

About the only other thing I remember about Pendleton was its size. One night I had a date in San Diego. The liberty buses usually entered through the main gate, wound their way through the base and exited through the San Clemente gate. Sixteen area was right next to the gate and when we got our passes I had plenty of time to get to Oceanside and then to San Diego. This night, however, the buses reversed their route and picked us up first. I was still on the base when my date got mad and walked off. I never saw her again.

One of my friends bought a '34 Ford V-8 (his father was a noted obstetrician in Boston). For a couple of weeks we had no gasoline problem but then the FBI broke up the counterfeit gas stamp ring headquartered in Pendleton. We were forced to blend kerosine in with our gasoline. A 50-50 mix wasn't too bad (it smoked a lot and there wasn't a lot of power) but we didn't even get that much gas. One night we were trying to pull a hill off the coast and all we got was a billow of black smoke. The owner turned the car around and we coasted to the town in the valley. He accosted the first person he saw and sold the car for what the guy offered- $25. We rode the bus back to Oceanside.

Toward the end of my time I fell in with a young man by the name of Harry "Moe" Schlaudeman, who lived in San Marino in the Los Angeles area. I started going home with him when we got liberty. Moe, his folks and I would play bridge all day (or what was left of it when we got up) and go cabareting until the wee hours. Moe got sick on Guam and left our unit. He was assigned to an aviation engineer outfit and I saw him once later. After the war he became a high-level member of the State Department.

This time passed rapidly and I was sad when we could no longer go ashore (have liberty). We got more shots, a physical/dental exam (I lost a wisdom tooth) and were assigned to a replacement draft (probably the 57th).

We left San Diego on a transport (a PA), the Admiral C.F. Hughs. It was in the early part of April 1945. This was an unusual ship in that all the uniformed services except the Coast and Geodedic Survey were represented in the crew. The ship was "owned by the army and had a Transportation Corps office with a Captain aboard. The crew was Coast Guardsmen and the medical people were Public Health Service. There was a Marine detachment and the Navy had assigned a chaplain. There were lots of troops- army and Marines aboard. We only got two meals a day and one of them was only horsecock (balogna) sandwiches.

The ship hit a swell leaving San Diego and I got so sick that I was afraid I was going to die and then, as the story goes, I was afaid I wasn't. We were quartered in one of the lowest holds and slept in small, canvas bunks five deep. I was too sick to go to the head on the second deck so I puked into my helmet until it was full. On the third day or so I began to get my "sea legs" and by the time we put in at Pearl Harbor I was feeling great. The skuttlebutt had it that our stop was unscheduled,that we had burned out a bearing and needed repairs. It didn't make much difference why, because the stop was long enough to put me back on my sack, sick again.

Our destination was Guam. We went to a Marine Replacement

Depot. We weren't on Guam very long. I had mess duty for the few days we were there. We did no training at all.

Our replacement draft went aboard an APA and sailed in convoy north. We were battalion size and the only troops on this APA. I remember the day we landed quite well. Japanese kamakazes attacked the transports as they sat off shore. I got caught in the head on the second deck (they closed all compartment doors) right under one of the ship's dual purpose three inch guns. There was a tremendous explosion and I thought, "My God, we're hit". Then there was another loud "BANG" and I was relieved because I felt we were still firing. Then another major explosion and loud response. This went on for some time. When we were let out on deck I saw my battle. The big explosion was actually the 5" gun directly over the head firing and the smaller sound was the ejected shell casing hitting the deck.

I remember thinking how beautiful the island of Okinawa was on my first look. It was lush green, the sea was deep blue, the sky was lighter blue and our naval guns and artillery were laying down a barrage on the Japanese lines with resulting orange flashes and white smoke in the midst of the green. Occasional white phosphorus shell bursts with their white streamers added to the colorful picture.

A little before noon we began to disembark. We went down a cargo net into an LCVP and then to the beach. After landing we spent the afternoon unloading LST's. There were continuing air attacks throughout the afternoon but we paid no attention because they were against the ships and not the shore. At dusk we moved off the beach and camped (without tents or other equipment) about a half mile inland.

We landed in the rainy season. The roads were a sea of mud and even tracked vehicles could barely move. It became increasingly difficult to supply the front line units by normal means. It became necessary to resort to old-fashioned ways- using mules and men. In this case, Okinawan donkeys and us. We manhandled water cans, rations and ammunition to the forward areas.

We were told that we were going to the First Division. The First Division had relieved the 27th Army Division about the First of May. They held a a portion of the line from in front of Shuri Castle to the coast. Shortly thereafter, the Sixth Division took over that portion of the line adjacent to the coast. The Army's XXIV Corps held the left of the line and the III 'Phibs the right.

After a few days a group of us was sent forward and met by a Lieutenant Hamberger. He was from the First Regiment and adjutant of either the second battalion or the regiment (he was

a mustang and old China hand we found out later). He assigned about a dozen of us to E Company. I do remember a staff sergeant (straight rate) who was with us complaining to the adjutant that he was a refrigerator specialist and shouldn't have been assigned to a line battalion. Hamberger told him. "When this campaign is over I'll get you all the refrigerators in the division to fix, but until then you're in the infantry." I saw him later in China (he didn't go to our company) and he was a platoon sergeant- he must have liked it in a rifle company.

The second battalion was in the line and we replacements were held a mile or so from the line for three or four days. While we were camped here the rain continued. I think it was raining when we met what was left of E Company. About five of us were assigned to the third platoon. I turned in my M- 1 and was handed a BAR. I was put in a fire team in the first squad of the third platoon. I don't remember having a platoon leader at that point and our platoon sergeant was Algie Wheeler, a buck sergeant.

We stayed in this area for several more days while we did a little training with the company. We moved up into the Shuri area and took some artillery fire while on the move. Lum Netherington, a member of our replacement draft that I knew fairly well, was killed by a shell. Although I wasn't near the spot, it was rather unsettling when we heard the report.

As the campaign progressed we all got to look pretty ratty. Nobody had shaved, had clean clothes or a haircut since they hit the island. All of us had fleas. They rose in clouds from the Okinawan homesites. We discarded our leggings because we couldn't get at the little bugs crawling on our lower legs. Most of us smoked and, because of the tobacco ration (a few packs of Raleighs, fewer cigars, lots of chewing tobacco and some pipe tobacco; no one had a pipe) and the urge for tobacco at night, many of us chewed. My teeth turned dark brown.

I feel lucky and proud to have been in the second battalion and particularly in Easy Company. We got done what we were supposed to do. We had excellent night and fire discipline. Typically, whenever someone fired at night, bursts of firing would go down the line or one flare would generate enough more to make it like daylight. It also always stopped at our part of the line. This was to our advantage because we very seldom gave away our position.

The high quality of our service was due to the leadership and professional quality of our senior officers. Our company commander, First Lieutenant "Dick" Watkins joined for Cape Glouchester and made Peleliu before Okinawa. He was mentioned

in the material I read about those two campaigns. I believe that our battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel James Magee, was one of the top in the division. We didn't see him much but I remember the battalion executive officer, Major Bernard Kelly visited us frequently, asked questions and apparently reported back because some of the information was used.

Our platoon leaders (we had two) were young men fresh from Quantico. Lieutenant White was typical. He was quiet and confident. He basically stayed away from us but he listened to suggestions when briefing us on a mission. We knew nothing about his personal life.

We didn't have many staff NCOs. Our top was a real old timer. I remember that in China after we got greens with no chevrons but with hash marks, he was furious because Marines who looked at his string of hash marks and slick upper arm said nasty things to him. He wouldn't take the hash marks off because he was proud of his service. (I don't remember his name but I can still see him). Our gunney was an old timer too. He was always very calm and steady. The platoon only had one sergeant, Algie Wheeler. He was a loud Tennessee mountain type but he was everywhere when we were in action. I believe that he won the Navy Cross. The only time I ever saw him really excited was after he got his hand wound.

Our people were largely replacements. When I joined, the platoon (I am totally unfamiliar with the rest of the company but I assume that the situation was similar) had a corporal and two PFCs that were veterans of Peleliu. Only these three and four other PFCs and Privates had come ashore with the battalion on April 2nd. There was no one who had been with the division at Cape Glouchester.

We had a protestant chaplain assigned to our regiment during the "blitz". He was Lt. Turner and he spent a good deal of time with us when we were in rest and reserve. He also conducted services on Sundays when we weren't in action. There may have been "no athiests in fox holes" but not many Marines (of the 2nd battalion) went to church. I enjoyed Turner and his services so I attended whenever I could.

On May 22nd, shortly after Shuri fell, the Japanese began to pull back to form a new defensive line. They were spotted on May 26th and the Americans caught them on the road with artillery, naval gunfire and close air support. We saw a lot of Japanese bodies on the road after this as we moved up.

After we joined, supply problems continued for the IIIrd Amphibious Corps. Stocks of ammunition, water and food were in short supply. At one time I got down to two rounds for my

automatic weapon. Things were so critical that torpedo bombers were loaded with containers of water, food and ammunition. They tried to fly the supplies in to us. According to official reports this program worked well. In our area, however, the aircraft seemed to come over from our rear, begin their turn at our line and dump the supplies over the Japanese lines. Occasionally the stuff was close enough for us to go out and get it, but most of the time it was lost. We got so frustrated that we started shooting at the planes as they'd fly over.

The company continued to advance and we took a ridge overlooking a small village on the enemy side, probably Iwa, about June 6th. Once on the hill we took a couple of mortar rounds which did no damage but thereafter it was quiet. The Japanese continued their withdrawal toward the south end of the island. We prepared positions along the crest in the rocks strewn there.

The first night we mounted only two guard posts in our front. Both covered paths up from the village which were the only method of access to the top from the village below. The leader of our first fire team and I drew the last watch of the night- from four to "everybody up". at one of those posts. The two of us sat at a place where the trail turned 90 degrees. Here we could see and hear anyone coming up the trail (there was a good moon as I remember) and could hear anyone trying to climb up the hill through the brush away from the trail. We sat in silence for most of our watch.

A few minutes after dawn (we could see but there were lots of shadows) my buddy (I don't remember his name; he was one of our Peleliu vets) grabbed my arm and said, "Let's get out of here!" I didn't argue and we ducked up the hill behind some rocks. We had hardly hit the ground when a Japanese artillery round hit exactly where we had been sitting. Shrapnel and bits of rock flew everywhere but no one was hit. The Japanese traversed three more rounds and then searched three (this was a usual pattern by them early in the morning and at dusk when the muzzle blasts would be hard to see). All of the rounds fell out of our area but caused casualties in the unit next to us. At this point things got personal with me.

We stayed there a couple of days. We were hit by some accurate shell fire and we could see a number of natives in the village. We felt that there was an OP in the village below. Our platoon mounted a patrol of half a dozen of us with Algie Wheeler in the lead, to scout the village out. We found several civilians in the village and our patrol split up. One group escorted the civilians back to our lines. Algie took a couple of people and went right toward the edge of the village.

I went left by myself toward the road which connected the

village with the rest of the island. I was edging down a street on the far side of the village (away from our lines) when I came across some Japanese communication wire. I followed it toward our lines and found a Japanese soldier with a field telephone. He wasn't paying much attention to his business and hadn't heard me come up. As soon as he heard the first report from my Tommygun he started to turn but there were already a couple .45 slugs in him. He passed away shortly thereafter. I picked up his rifle and took several souveniers from his body.

The shots scared up several civilians who made for the road. I got them rounded up and headed for our lines. One old lady was a little reluctant to go. She edged down the road away from me. As I went after her she said something which ended with what I thought sounded like, "American soldier". I said, "Hell no lady, I'm a Marine." She gave a little squeal and started running. It took me about 50 yards to catch her. By this time I was getting a little edgy about being alone so I pushed the civilians back down the road through G Company's lines.

On June 11th E Company moved up to reinforce F Company attempting to take Hill 69. We were the reserve platoon and after the Hill was taken we moved up to close a gap which an advance had opened in our line. This move trapped a number of Japanese and about midnight they started to try to get back to their own lines. We hadn't done any shooting that night so they didn't know where we were.

I was "foxholing" with my assistant BARman. I was asleep when he shook me. I woke up to see several black shadowy figures creeping toward us. One of them was only two or three yards from our hole. I didn't have time to turn my BAR around (it was facing out toward the Japanese lines) and my buddy was shaking and couldn't do anything. I got a hand grenade, pulled the ring, counted three and tossed it at the figure.

When she (it turned out to be a Japanese "nurse") heard the "pop" of the striker of my grenade, she threw a "potato masher" at the sound. Both grenades went off; mine first. There was lots of shooting over the next half-hour or so, most from around the company CP and our machine gun section next to our hole which had turned its gun to the rear. We were wide-awake facing front and rear but we didn't see anything at which to shoot. We saw some figures but they were close to the Company CP and already taking fire.

The next morning we found twenty or so bodies in our immediate area. Two were women- the one who died about five feet from the end of my foxhole and another about 30 feet away. The majority of the dead Japanese were around our company CP which was about 40 feet behind us.

The nurse's grenade had gone off about 18 inches from my head. The concussion knocked off my helmet, rang my ears and dug a 4 inch deep hole. This was the second time during the campaign that I really felt that I had seen death and cheated it.

This action is described on Page 413 of "The Old Breed", the First Marine Division history by George McMillan:

"The result," says the monograph, "was one of the most exciting nights of the campaign for E Company."

What started the action was an attempt by a large number or Okinawa "civilians" to pass through our lines. Every fifth "Okinawan" was a Japanese soldier and "some fifteen or eighteen of the enemy attempted to charge with fixed bayonets and drawn sabers," says the 1st's report.

In the scramble, "many of them [the Japs] seemed as amazed as we were. Our machine guns were going full blast to the front and rear. There were screams and shouts and general confusion but our men held their ground, unscrambled the mess, and knocked hell out of the Nips. It was amazing how we kept out of the way of our own bullets."

The company commander killed two Japs while talking over the telephone to battalion. Some of the Japs carried satchel charges and exploded when hit. Two women sprang from a cave and were shot; later they were discovered to have been carrying grenades and satchel charges.

We continued moving up with minor opposition (I don't remember any casualties) until we got to the edge of the valley which divided us from Kunishi Ridge. We sat there for a day or two pushing patrols into the valley. It was, as I remember, about a quarter to half a mile across mainly rice paddies without much cover and under Japanese observation all the way. No one wanted to attack across that open space. We heard that the Seventh had made a night assault and that we'd join up with them as they moved up.

Our skipper, Lt. Watkins, had a platoon leader/NCO meeting describing the program. White and Wheeler came back and about 1600 told us that we were going across at night to ease the pressure on the Seventh. Our platoon was to lead the battalion advance. The plan was for our squad to lead; the first fire team was to move into the platoon objective- a crown-like pinnacle of rock about twenty feet across at the crest and the rest of us would push up the ridge to set a perimeter for the rest of the assault companies (E and G) to push through.

Nobody slept much that night. Our platoon leader, Second Lieutenant George A White, Jr. who had been with us for about two weeks, took the point. Our squad led the platoon with the lieutenant in the lead. Right after the lieutenant was the first fire team led by the Marine who sensed the shell coming on

the hill. With him was Dick Hyde. I remember Dick because he had a CAR (an automatic rifle similar to the Browning but made by Colt) which I had tried to trade him out of since I joined the platoon. The next man was called, "The Old Man" because he was in his mid-twenties and was married and had children. I believe his name was Hatten.

Next in line was our fire team (we only had three men in a team) led by a pfc named Boisvert (or Boisfort) from Nashua, New Hampshire, the other veteran of Peleliu . Then there was me and my assistant BARman. The rest of the platoon followed.

When we took off at about three in the morning of June 14th, the first flare went up. We had been told that there'd be no flares fired up as we crossed. It seemed that they were shot up regularly until we got to the base of the ridge although I do remember walking in the dark. We used the berms between the rice paddies for part of the way and a road for the rest.

About two-thirds of the way across, a mortar round landed what I thought was a great distance away. Later Boisvert told me that it exploded behind him and that he was surprised that I was still behind him. I'd guess that it exploded in a rice paddy and was smothered by the water. Other rounds landed in the valley but they were all behind us.

It was still dark when we got to the base of the ridge. Lieutenant White hit the right spot and led us up the ridge in open formation by fire teams. When the first team hit what I suppose was the top of the ridge the Japanese opened on us with small arms. We were about ten yards off the crest when the shooting started. Our fire team started ahead but Lt. White grabbed Boisvert and told us that the first fire team were casualties and we'd have to move to the right to take the platoon objective. The three of us headed for it and climbed into the middle of the crown and set up a small perimeter.

White then led the rest of the platoon onto the ridge. I don't know what happened then as the three of us were by ourselves in the dark. There was a lot of shooting and I could hear bullets hitting the rocks over our heads but we were under cover and they buzzed rather harmlessly.

Just at that time, about dawn, when objects were beginning to stand out (five thirty or six) Lt. White came into our position with another member of our company (his name was Nardini, I believe). The rest of the company was pinned down and needed some covering fire. Nardini pointed out a rocky area just becomming visible to the left of our position as the target. I stood up (the rock protection was three to four feet) and White came over beside me and we began to fire. I fired one magazine

and had just started on a second when there was a "bang" and the sound of a body falling. I knew that someone was hit and asked who it was. I heard, "It's me, Whitie."

I looked around and saw him on the ground. I dropped down beside him and opened his jacket. He was shot through the lungs and blood was coming from the wound in a pray as air was leaving his chest. I got his poncho out to cover the holes (entrance and exit wounds) but he stopped breathing before I could get this done. We thought that White had been shot from the direction we had been firing so we located facing that way. At this point Algie Wheeler came up with three or four other Marines and told us to stop firing and spread us out in the pinnacle.

Lt. White was carrying a .45 automatic and I decided to take it. While I was picking it off his belt I noticed the carbine he was firing when shot. The stock was splintered from the back. I looked closer at his wounds and they appeared to be inflicted at close range; Lt. White had been shot in the back from behind us. About this time I began to think, "Why him and not me ?"

By now it was full daylight. A Japanese heavy machine gun began to fire from what must have been a carved out position right below us. We tossed several hand grenades over the side but nothing happened. We also looked for a way around to the cave but could see nothing. I now feel that a Japanese heard us, crept out of the cave on a ledge we couldn't see and shot upward to kill the Lieutenant.

The machine gun ceased fire shortly. The gun was probably sited south as most of the Japanese defenses were and could not bear on our people to the north of the pinnacle.

In our area things were quiet and about noon we had set two lookouts. The rest of us were sitting in a circle in the bottom of the crown. Into the center of our group came a Japanese concussion grenade thrown from the cave below (we had kept dropping grenades throughout the morning). One of our people picked up the grenade to throw it out of the area but it went off in his hand. It didn't blow it off but it looked like a piece of hamburger (two fingers were gone) with blood flowing rather plentifully.

When I saw the grenade all I could do was turn my head. I was about six feet away initially but about four feet when it burst. A piece of shrapnel sliced away a small piece of the bridge of my nose. The area bled profusely but not seriously as a face wound will. I couldn't hear because my ears (particularly the right one) were ringing like bells in a belfrey.

Everyone else in the pinnacle was wounded except our lookouts. My assistant BARman received the full blast and he had at least 30 wounds- mostly small. He had several around the eyes and couldn't see. Algie Wheeler had a nasty hand wound and the other Marine had several wounds- serious but not life threatening.

All of us were able to walk (some with much assistance) to the aid station located at the base of the ridge and we were treated almost immediately. Our corpsman, HA 1st Robert Walker who was mortally wounded later that day, did what he could and put three on stretchers to be carried out on a tank. Algie walked out. After he looked at me, Bob told me he'd evacuate me because of my hearing but I decided not to go. It wasn't that I couldn't bear to leave the place but snipers were shooting anything that moved in the valley below and I felt a lot safer going back to the pinnacle.

I think that I made a wise decision although Algie and other walking wounded squeezed inside the tanks. A number of our wounded on litters were killed as they rode out on the tanks. I understand that this action caused the Corps to build armored ambulances.

I went back to the pinnacle and joined what was left of our platoon in a depression at the base of the rock. By this time a tank with a 75 mm gun had pumped several rounds which silenced the machine gun and pulverized the crown of the rock. Later in the afternoon we were joined by a lieutenant (Paul LaFond, I think) from one of the other companies. He took a look at me and suggested that I evacuate but my hearing was almost back and I wasn't any more interested than before.

Here another replacement, Bob Smith, a former 7th Marine who had been on the Canal and evacuated from Cape Glouchester with scrub typhus, was assigned to our fire team (with Boisfort). We were the anchor of the right of our line and we stayed there until shortly before dusk when we were withdrawn and the three of us (our squad) assigned to a hole near the company CP. We were assigned to defend the CP. We stayed there through the next day. We were pretty well protected from the knees up but our lower legs were exposed and I expected for one or all of us to get shot during the day but the only thing that hit our hole was a rock kicked up by a mortar that hit my shoe. It startled me but did no damage.

This was our second day without food. We had a can of ham and eggs with potatoes but it was so bad we couldn't eat it. It was the morning of the fourth day before we got anything to eat. We had dumped our packs sometime back and had only our dungaree pockets (they were the old style) to carry anything. No one had

a toothbrush, razor or similar personal item.

The night of June 16th we were replaced by the second battalion of the Fifth Marines. We pulled out with the CP and walked back across the valley and into a small valley where we were allowed to get some sleep. Early the next morning we were rudely awakened by an artillery fire mission. It seems that our valley was on the muzzle side of a hill shielding a battalion of Corps artillery.

The next day we began to walk north. We were assigned to furnish a perimeter around army or corps headquarters (we were told). We walked to the "rest area" and shortly after leaving our initial bivouac were a strafing mission by an Air Corps P-47. Fortunately he was as bad at gunnery as he was at navigation because he didn't start shooting until he got to G Company at the end of our column and then he missed them completely.

When we got our perimeter set up we were able to take stock of our situation. Boisfort, a PFC, was our platoon, squad and fire team leader. Smitty and I were the rest of our team and there were three other members of the platoon left. We had two machine gunners from the machine gun squad assigned to our platoon for the campaign (one of then was Narcissas Cuneco from Chicago) and one light machine gun. We had four BARs, six Tommyguns, seven .45 automatic pistols and that light MG.

Okinawa was declared secure on June 22. In addition to our perimeter guard we were making patrols through the countryside. We didn't discover anything but other military units- most of them Army and most dressed in Khakis and living in nice campsites. We were allowed to visit two such camps to watch movies. It was amusing because we had to go everywhere armed and our hosts were in starched khakis.

There were several events during this period which I remember. One night I was on watch in my hole when I saw a figure diving into the deck. Then I spotted another and another. No one was getting close but I thought we were being surrounded and it was just a matter of time. I decided to find out so I told Smitty and the guys in the holes on either side that I was going out. I took my .45 in my hand and rolled out of my hole and began to "snoop and poop" forward. Then I saw my enemy- several small pines were blowing over as gusts of wind blew. I crawled back and didn't say a word.

Someone had discovered a pool of water among the rocks and it provided blessed relief to dive in and swim underwater to the other side leaving our fleas behind. It didn't do much good for long until we got new dungarees (none of them fit).

During this period we got an issue of "white light", 190 proof grain alcohol. Our platoon (eight of us) got a whole tin of the stuff which meant a canteen cup for each of us. We cut it with lemon powder from K rations and everyone got stoned. Some one saw (or thought he saw) a Japanese sneak out of a tomb between us and F Company. Alcohol did what night on the line couldn't; we began to fire at that poor little fellow. No one got hit and it's a good thing that nothing serious happened that afternoon.

We got a draft of replacement officers. Our platoon drew a young Second Lieutenant named Blackwell. He was clean, neat and fresh from the ship. Somewhere he must have heard of young second lieutenants being shot in the back by their men. We were really pretty rough looking and he decided to make friends right away. Nothing would do but we had to call him "Blacky" (nobody did) and look at pictures of his new wife (all of us did that, she was cute). After the war was over "Blacky" got real "GI" requiring strict military courtesy be observed. We thought this was pretty "chicken" after his "please like me" performance.

A few weeks later I got into trouble with "Blacky". We were exploring some tombs in the area and came on several cases of our "frag" grenades. One case was minus the pitch which usually sealed the body to the firing mechanism. We disarmed several to play with and I pulled the pin almost loose and hooked the spoon in my belt. When I got back to camp several men from our platoon were sitting around a fire. I knocked the grenade loose and yelled, "Fire in the hole." The striker hit the primer and the grenade sizzled. Most of the people just hit the deck but Blacky ran- about 50 yards. He was furious when he saw everyone watching him. I've never been too bright in this regard.

We stayed here listening to rumors about going "stateside" or to Hawaii or back to Australia. Most were from our chaplain, "Bum Dope" (self-described) Turner. At the end of June we were sent north to build our camp on Okinawa. We were trucked to the site. We met relacements and returnees here to bring us to almost full strengh.

Our campsite was in the Okinawa countryside and we had to clear the land. Several of us were detailed to blow cisterns and buildings. This lasted until one evening when we used all of our charges on one cistern and blew rocks and reinforcing rod all over the area. We were then shovel men.

Our battalion site and company area were pretty grim. We had eight man tents with about twelve men in them. The tents had no floors and our area was low so when it rained we had a real problem. We "strongbacked" our tent by putting a log mounted on posts set in the ground opposite the tent entrance. The night of the big typhoon we were called out to look for survivors from

a YMS that was supposed to have foundered off the coast. While we were gone our "strongback" pulled out and was draped across our cots. Our tent group always had a five gallon can of "jungle juice" brewing, buried in our "garden" behind our tent. A lot of folks came drifting into our tent because of the aroma drifting through the area from our brew. Tom Palmer was the senior man in our tent.

After a while our galleys were set up and we got a meal of steak and eggs. That evening we got hamburgers and fried potatoes. The next morning each company had to send messmen to the galley. Smitty and I volunteered.

The previous day's meal was the last fresh food (except bread) which we had on Okinawa. The food was pretty bad. Breakfasts were powdered eggs, pancakes and orange marmalade and French toast also with orange marmalade from Australia. Dinners were canned stew or fried Spam or Vienna sausages in sequence. One day we had weevils in the cereal with our eggs. When a complaint was made, the OD replied, "Quit complaining. We haven't had fresh meat in the officer's club for a month."

Smitty and I had a good life though. We had our own tent near the galley and just handled the mess gear water. Our playhouse was broken up when we had to return to the company for the move to China.

One of my tentmates got a package from home. We opened it with great anticipation (not many packages were coming through in any kind of condition). It was full of cans of Vienna sausage. I hope my friend's mother never learned that we took the cans she had spent her meat points on were used for pistol target practice.

Because I couldn't see my teeth when I smiled, I decided I needed my teeth cleaned. I trotted over to the Division Dental Office where I found a Dental Officer with his feet up, reading a comic book. Upon hearing my request, he said, "We're so busy we're only taking emergency cases", recrossed his legs and turned the page. I was unarmed at the time. I went back to my tent and scraped my teeth with my K-Bar knife.

While we were gone we got another 2nd lieutenant. The Corps wisely decided to assign two platoon leaders to each platoon. They both would train with the platoon and the junior would stay at the CP until the senior went hors 'd combat. Our draw was a recent graduate of Quantico we called "Sleepy" (why, I don't remember). We soon had much more confidence in him than in Blackwell.

The war finally ended after a couple of false alarms. Smitty

and I had gone to the 5th Marines movie (they had 35 mm and a good supply of films; the 1st Marines had 16 mm and only a couple films). A sergeant got up and announced that it was all over. There was no celebrating- we just wanted to see the movie.

About a month later we left for China. I went as a Prisoner-at-Large. One evening a day or so before we went aboard ship I was on guard at the battalion officers mess. A rat ran across a power wire between two pole lines. I snapped in on that rat just as 1st. Lt. Tebbs, the full-time Treasurer of the Officer's Mess, came around the corner. He asked for my weapon and was furious when I refused to give it to him and suggested that if he tried to take it, he would rue the day. Tebbs' proper move was to have me relieved and then take it. He didn't.

He charged me with attempted manslaughter because the rat was between me and the 5th Marines tent area. My "trial" was delayed until after we got settled in China. At trial time I was called to the company office. The Top (first sergeant) marched me in to the Company Commander's office where 1st. Lts. Watkins and Robbins (our XO) were sitting. I breathed a sigh of relief when Watkins ordered Robbins to defend me. The trial was all over in a few minutes and I about faced and marched out a free man. From what was said, I felt that they felt the matter ridiculous and that Tebbs was a real jerk. I don't know when Tebbs joined the battalion but I do know that he had no regular assignment at the time.

In the 1930's the Chinese central government was fighting the Chinese Communists in central and north China. The Communists were beaten and undertook a long march under horrible conditions into northwest China. Over sixty percent of those beginning the march reached the Communist's sanctuary in the northwest. There they remained quietly building up strength until the Japanese invasion in 1936. The Nationalists thought that the Communists were finished as a major force in the land.

The end of World War II in the Pacific produced a major dilemma for the Allies. Chou En Lae and his followers were ready to come down out of the mountains. They wanted the supply of arms and ammunition held by the Japanese in North China. They also wanted to stop the supply of coal to the south. For many years under both Chinese and Japanese, coal was mined in North China and sent by rail to Tsingtao. There it was loaded aboard ship and carried to power plants in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Canton. Disruption of this process would be very serious for the country and Chiang's effort to hold it.

Chiang had neither the transport nor the people to move north and occupy the cities, accept the surrender of the Japanese

people and supplies. It became necessary for the United States to send in a sufficient force (letting the Soviets in was unthinkable). The closest force of sufficient strength was the First Marine Division camped on Okinawa. The Third Amphibious Corps was designated the occupation force and the First Division assigned to garrison Peking and Tientsin and to protect the mines and railways in the area. The Sixth Marine Division (less the Fourth Marines assigned to occupy Japan) was ordered to move from their camp on Guam to Tsingtao. The third division in the 3rd 'Phibs (the Second) was made part of the force occupying Japan.

The news of the move spread through our camps like wildfire. Most of us, even the long service people, wanted to go. We shipped out of Okinawa on September 26th. We went by truck through cheering Okinawans using all the dirty words the Marines could teach them (not knowing what the words meant). Our battalion boarded the APA USS Effingham. I particularly remember the ship because of the captain's attitude about feeding the troops. The meals aboard ship were great.

Most of our time was spent watching the ships of the convoy dodge mines. We had three or four destroyer-minesweepers leading the convoy. When they swept a mine, the sweepers would explode it with gunfire. Occasionally, a ship in the convoy would have to swing suddenly to avoid a floating mine but there were no incidents during the voyage. It was unusual, however, to have the ships' running lights on at night.

About half way to China we had a brush with a typhoon in the South China Sea. The sea became extremely rough and I was one of the few who was able to continue to eat. I was amazed because of my mal de mare on leaving the States.

The convoy reached the Chinese coast off Tanku on September 30th. At the time no one knew whether we would be greeted by the Japanese or the Chinese Communists- and if was the Japanese, whether they would accept the general surrender or not. The feeling, however, was upbeat as we were able to sail to a point off the city unmolested. Our regiment was fully armed and equipped including grenades and extra ammunition. One battalion was designated the assault unit and would make the initial landing. We were assigned as the support battalion for the landing.

The actual harbor at Tanku is very shallow so we went down cargo nets into LSTs. As the landing ships were loaded they circled off the wharf area of the city. The assault unit went in as we were circling. Our LST kept drifting out of the circle and we went aground twice. The second time it was necessary to be towed off. We could hear the assault units on our radios so

that as our LSTs circled until our time to land we knew that the landing was peaceful.

We landed and marched directly to the railroad yards. We waited while the railway workers put a train together for us. In the early afternoon we were off to Tientsin. Our train huffed and puffed slowly up the line.

We were, I believe, the first infantry unit to enter the city. We began a triumphal parade from the railroad station to the British Barracks in the British section of the city. The station was close to the International Bridge and it was a good distance to the barracks. The street was full of cheering Chinese. At first they were orderly and we were able to march in step and in good order. By the time we'd gone a half mile or so, however, the crowd pressed in on us and we were fighting our way through the crowd one at a time. It was all very good natured and both Marines and Chinese (primarily kids) had a good time.

We got to the British Barracks as dusk was gathering in the afternoon. Quarters were assigned in a squadroom formerly used by the Japanese. We slept on mats laid on platforms built about 18 inches above the floor. I remember a sign on the wall describing the Northumberland Fusaliers from the happier years of peace.

The first order of business was to establish a guard around the barracks. I was assigned a post (as a PAL I shouldn't have been used) in the intersection outside the barracks. My tour was from four to eight although it was probably about six PM when I first went out to try to clear the intersection. It was packed with people just wanting to look. The sergeant of the guard went out with me and we didn't get more than a few steps from the gate. We were mobbed; the children took hold of our arms and tried to climb on our shoulders. More men were sent after us and we finally had eight men on the post.

We had to keep the intersection open because trucks and equipment were being driven in from the coast. If we stopped to talk or even looked friendly we were mobbed; eight to twenty kids would hang on to us- three or four on each arm and they would try to climb on us. When I went out at four in the morning (by myself) there were still a number of people in the street. As dawn was breaking a man brought a shy little boy to meet me. The man told me (he spoke English) that people had been waiting 48 hours to greet us and most of the first 20 hours were in the rain. I was able to pick up the little boy and talk to him.

Tientsin was established as a treaty port in the latter half of the 1800s. The major powers (Japan, Russia, Austria, Italy,

France, Great Britain and Germany) each owned and controlled a section of the city. The foreign area was the center of commerce and rather modern, built displaying European architecture. Streets were broad and paved. There were large houses with walls around them. Before the war Europeans and wealthy Chinese lived surrounded by luxury and servants. All of the clubs and restaurants in Tiensin were in this area.

Prostitution was a big business in China. There were several houses of ill-repute a block square and three or four stories high and many smaller ones in the foreign area. There were few bars as such when we arrived but after a while many of them sprang up after a few weeks. Beer was obtainable but local vodka was much more widely available. A few bottles of Scotch were on the market but they were suspect.

The units in the British Barracks began to get liberty shortly after arriving. Along about dinner time that first day the drunks began to arrive. There were so many and they were so far gone that the gate guard couldn't handle them. I was on another relief of the guard but was ordered to report with the rest of my relief to help. I've never seen so many men so drunk. Most of them made the gate in rickshas but couldn't make their units. If they could stagger they were just sent to their units. Those who were "out" were put in the guardhouse. Soon we were layering the drunks. Many were sick and it was really bad. We finally got several Marines from each unit to meet their buddies and cart them home.

When we got liberty Cpl. Palmer (our squad leader), Harold Chute and I went into town and ate $2,000 (Chinese) worth of ice cream. We got back early and gathered outside of our billet around a fire with a group from the platoon. Smitty, who had been married before returning overseas, had gotten drunk and gone to see one of the local ladies of the evening. The Marine Corps issued condoms and prophylactic (pro) kits to combat venereal disease as we went ashore. They also set up a pro station where users could get treatment. After Smitty had indulged he had taken a pro. Then he had a pro at the pro-station which was next to the guardhouse at the gate as he returned to the Barracks. Now he was ashamed of himself and worried about venereal disease (about which we were warned in no uncertain terms). Soon we saw him trying to give himself another pro. We got him calmed down (or so we thought) but soon we missed him. We looked around but couldn't find him. One of us had an idea and we raced for the gate. Nothing in the pro shack but we heard a noise in the guardhouse. There was Smitty holding up the officer-of-the-day (our junior platoon leader) and banging him against the wall yelling, "Gimme a pro, Doc."

A few days after our arrival the Second battalion of the First

was designated to provide the honor guard for the Japanese surrender in North China. I felt that this was quite appropriate. Each company furnished about a quarter of its people for the guard. We marched down Victoria Road to Third 'Phib Corps headquarters. We stood at attention in the street in front of headquarters. A table had been set up where the Japanese commander and General Rockey, the corps commander, signed the surrender document. After it was over we shouldered arms and marched back to the British Barracks.

The First Division then divided its units to handle its mission. Our battalion moved into a school in an area of the old city (or Japanese section) populated by Japanese. The rest of the First Regiment stayed in the British Barracks. The Fifth Marines had gone directly to Peking. The Seventh Marines went to the coal fields and rode the railroads. Most of the division's other units headquartered in Tientsin with units supporting the Fifth and Seventh. The Eleventh Marines moved in to the French Arsenal outside Tientsin. The First Motor Transport Battalion was at the race course and Tanks may have been there.

Our school had electricity but no water or sewer2. The enlisted men used schoolrooms for squad rooms. Staff NCOs and officers lived in the teacher's homes next to the school building. The whole installation was surrounded by a fence. Buildings and fence were brick using a strawed mud for mortar. There was a football field and parade ground. Our heads were built along an outside wall and refuse was carried away by "Honey Carts" built for the purpose. Drinking water was available from tank carts and canvas Lister bags. No one was allowed in the area except with an armed patrol. We were taken downtown by trucks for liberty.

The regiment and that part of the division based in Tientsin would get together on Saturdays for a review at the racetrack in the British section. We were trucked in for these events. The area inside the track was big enough for us to "pass in review" without any difficulty.

There was a Japanese living area across a small stream from our compound. Our mission was to maintain order and guard Japanese installations. Shortly after our arrival we faced off against a platoon-sized group of Chinese communists. They had taken over a factory which restocked rifles and built mortar shell fuses. Our platoon was sent to remove them. When we deployed they packed up and left. Blackwell did a pretty fair job of handling the situation although our interpreter did all the talking.

About that time our battalion began the protection of Japanese installations in our area. There was an arsenal, the factory, a

brigade headquarters and a hospital. After the Navy began to send sailors from the fleet for liberty in Tientsin, we also set up a guard post on the north bridge across the river. We had a pleasant relationship with the Japanese and even had a meal in a Japanese home. There was a Japanese club where we spent many pleasant evenings.

We broke up a number of riots by the Chinese in our area of the city (my left foot appeared in a picture published in Time magazine describing the situation in North China). The Chinese didn't seem to mind firearms; I had a Tommygun most of the time and they paid little attention to me. A bayoneted rifle, however, really got their attention. Chinese police frightened me because they carried their sidearms (primarily old Mausers) with the safety off and their fingers on the trigger.

A friend of mine, Sam Lefcourt, talked Colonel Magee (he said) into letting him put out a battalion newspaper, the Crackerjack (our code name in the China operation). He asked me to help; Sam was the publisher and I was the editor. It was Sam's only duty but I did it in my spare time. I did most of the original writing (such as biographies of men in the battalion and descriptions of our activities) and Sam collected other articles and pictures and took care of the printing.

The paper (it was four sheet, letter size) was printed by a Chinese firm. It was a pretty good paper if I do say so, and it was eagerly awaited by the troops. We almost lost it, however, when Sam decided to publish a clever but caustic editorial critizing the Colonel for one of his actions. I knew, and I believe I told Sam, that the critizsm was unjust and unfair. Colonel Magee had really acted in our best interests. We printed it anyway and the Colonel was furious. We denied writing the editorial (it was signed "Socrates" or some such name) but we wouldn't identify the writer- it was his personal clerk.

One of my memories involved baseball. Early, early one morning I had a "head call". It was outdoors and as I crossed the parade ground I saw a light where one shouldn't have been. Walking over I saw that it was coming from our radio jeep. There were two of our radio people listening to the World Series- Chicago (my team at the time) and Detroit. It was the last time the Cubs won the pennant.

Thanksgiving week I was selected to take a four-day trip to Peiping. We went by train and had no trouble (we tourists weren't armed but there were guards on the train). While there we stayed in the Palace of Prince Tuan and we were taken on tours. We could hear the Communist/Nationalist guns north of the city so we stayed pretty close to the city.

One morning in Peking ("Northern Capital") I had an unfortunate experience with Chinese justice. As a buddy and I were walking through the square in front of the Forbidden City (we called it the Thieve's Market because of the kind and amount of things for sale). I had just put a wad of bills in my field jacket pocket (it was an old-style short jacket) and when I put my hand back into my pocket and there was another hand in it. I grabbed the arm and began to swat the owner about the head and shoulders. He was yelling and I was yelling when a policeman came up. He took the pickpocket in charge and, although he didn't speak English, he got the idea. An English speaking Chinese came up and explained the situation and, as the miscreant was taken away wailing, my informant told me that his hand would be cut off.

The Marine Corps also had an unfortunate experience with Chinese justice early in 1946. One of the Chinese workers was caught leaving the post with a case of cans of condensed milk tied around his waist. He was caught at the gate as he was leaving. The Colonel or the Corps decided to turn the man over to the local authorities. He was sentenced to 100 lashes at the scene of his crime. The police tied him to one of our football goalposts and beat him with a bamboo pole. At about 85 the pole broke and they finished with a tree limb. Then the policemen threw him out into the street. We could hear him screaming all over our building. Most of the Marines were very upset and blamed Colonel Magee. This time the Crackerjack was able to calm the situation by printing the truth.

The Chinese people were generally very passive and drab. Since petrol was very scarce, there were few automobiles or trucks other than Marine Corps vehicles on the streets. We seldom went outside the French or British sections of the city. We went from place to place using pedicabs. We spent time in the Red Cross Club because it had the best "American" restaurant in the city. The International Bazaar was generally our choice for shopping.

In February I got a joint pain in my left ankle. I couldn't walk so I turned in to sick bay. The battalion surgeon sent me to the 1st Field Hospital for tests which showed a high blood sedimentation rate. The pain lasted about a week and, because we were having a big parade at the race track, I decided to try one more no-duty slip. Instead, our battalion surgeon sent me to the hospital. The doctor who examined me there said, "If you have what I think you have, you'll be going back to the States." I thought, "I don't know what you think I have, but I've got it."

The First Field Hospital was operating in a building previously used by the Japanese for the same purpose. There was one medical ward and one surgical ward on the fourth deck. The rest

of the space was devoted to treatment of venereal disease. I made friends with our night corpsman and he took me to see some of these cases. It was really bad.

After about three weeks I went back to the battalion to turn in my weapon, ammunition and 782 gear. A group of us was put on a Marine R4D and flown to Shanghai. A friend, Neil Moberg, had pernicious anemia and I was diagnosed with rheumatic fever; the rest of the airplane had venereal disease cases. We landed in Shanghai and the Marine pilots frightened the Corpsman with us by landing the "goonie bird" like a fighter.

We went aboard the Repose, a Navy hospital ship which was the receiving medical facility for the Asiatic Fleet. The ship was anchored in the HuangPu River just up from the Bund near downtown Shanghai. Nobody knew what was wrong with me (nothing) because the Ward Doctor was too busy diddling his nurse in the examing room to worry about his patients. All we heard from them were the grunts and groans of physical pleasure. No patients ever got off the ship so all we could do was stand at the rail and watch the Chinese world go on around us.

A few days later my China experience was over.

In about a week a group of us were put on a Navy R6D and flown via Okinawa to Guam. It was a fun flight; when we landed in Okinawa the pilot bounced the tail of the airplane. When we took off most of us were standing in the cockpit. Landing on Guam we were sent to Fleet Hospital 111. I was sent to a "heart" ward and examined. The doctor indicated that there was nothing wrong with me but since I had enough points for discharge, it would be easier and better for me to go through the medical system.

After a couple of weeks we went aboard a hospital ship for our return trip. I was a class 5 patient (class 1 is complete bedrest, 2 is head privileges only, 3 is up around the ward, 4 is allowed around the hospital and 5 is work and liberty) and was assigned cleaning duties aboard ship. Although the ship's crap game was right by my sack, it was a good trip. We landed in San Francisco and it was still near enough to the war's end that we were met by a small boat crowded with waving civilians and a Navy band playing on the dock.

We went to Oak Knoll Hospital in Oakland. The Navy told us to ship our sea bags home and even gave us Railway Express tags and paid for the shipment. The Marine Corps gave us about a three-quarter issue of clothes and one blanket. After an examination I was confirmed as a class 5 patient and scheduled for liberty Thursday afternoon. Thursday morning we were loaded aboard a hospital train and sent on our way to Chicago. It was

quite a ride. We beat the time of the City of San Francisco by four hours.

Our car was destined for Georgia and was placed on a siding for a day and a half. The Army nurse and soldier on the car wouldn't let any of us off- even for a phone call. The train south was as slow as the train from the coast was fast. We could actually walk along side. The last leg of our trip to the Naval Hospital at Dublin, Georgia, was a bus. We had a fuss about seating before we left because we had three black men in the group. The bus driver wouldn't leave until the seating conformed to Georgia law. After a short discussion we left.

Along with three or four other rheumatic fever patients, I was assigned to the largest ward in the hospital. All of us raised hell about being classified "1" patients here. We were quickly made Class 3 but that's all the ward doctor (also a China vet) would do until the Hospital's First Lieutenant asked to have some Marines assigned to him. It seems that several patients had gone AWOL and been caught. The Navy wanted them in the brig but had no guards. I was made a Class 4 patient.

We ran a taut brig. I had the four to eight watch as turnkey one morning. I woke up about eight (each turnkey woke his relief by phone and Marines used as guards could sleep in). I rushed down to the brig and found the prisoners milling around in the bull pen, the lockup door open and the turnkey in a cell asleep. The hospital was full of Marines and Sailors who hadn't been in service very long and really didn't understand the meaning of "duty".

I finally got a chance to get my teeth cleaned. I went to the dental office but they refused because I was a transient. I found a fellow patient in my ward was a dental tech assigned to the dental office. After hearing my story he indicated that he could do it on his own time. We went in after evening chow one night and I got into the chair. I had hardly opened my mouth when a dental officer came in and shut down the procedure.

I remember chasing some prisoners one evening in the hospital office. One of the disbursing storekeepers who was a guard for the cash payroll got interested in my .45 pistol. He said he carried one when the payroll was picked up but he had never had seen one unholstered. (mine wasn't, of course.) I spent about an hour with one eye on my prisoners and the other holding school on the .45 for the storekeeper.

After I complained loudly about the Doctor's capability (while he was standing behind me) I was made a Class 5 patient. Little changed, however, since liberty in Dublin, Georgia, wasn't too great. We were reassigned to stand guard on the lock ward which

wasn't as nice as the brig.

About May 1st I got a 30 day R&R leave. After I returned to the hospital there was a week of examinations and such and three of us were sent to Charleston for discharge.

Charleston Naval Shipyard was a nice post. The barracks were tropical style with big verandas. Mess was family style (except desserts) and on Wednesdays we got turkey and all the trimmings (steak every once in a while), free cigarettes and all the beer we wanted. I understand that the money for the extras came from our PX fund. The Marine Detachment had two companies- the guard company and the 1st Casual Company (composed of transients- we dischargees as well as Marines passing through; Charleston was the receiving station for the Atlantic Fleet). I had been the 2nd Casual Company of the Charleston Barracks at the hospital at Dublin. There was also a base brig which also received prisoners from the Atlantic Fleet.

The only problem for me was personnel. We were top heavy with rank both post personal and casuals. There were more sergeant-majors and tops than privates and PFCs. Only staff NCOs could pull gate guard.

We were issued rifles (full of cosmoline) and pith helmets (shades of bootcamp) on our arrival. It took about a week clean our rifles and to get our discharges- they came from (and read) MCB Parris Island. While we waited we pulled guard duty one day and chased prisoners the next.

Both my friend Gus(tafson) and I almost got into trouble, He was an officer candidate who had finished all the requirements for a commission at Quantico before getting sick. He was sent to the hospital at Dublin. When he returned to duty at Charleston the adjutant applied for his commission but HMC disqualified him as an officer. They did authorize his promotion to platoon sergeant (I couldn't understand that). They caught a young man in the house of the Navy Captain in charge of the station hospital. When asked how he got in, he pointed to the gate where Gus was guard and said. "The guard let me in." Poor Gus knew what an officer did but not what a platoon sergeant should do; he sweat blood but was discharged.

My problem started when I said that I and my three prisoners were carpenters. Charleston was getting a new CO who raised dogs rather than gardening as did Col. Muldoon. We were changing a tool shed and garden to a kennel and dog run. Our Marine participants decided to have a coffee break, leaving the four of us. It was a hot day, we were thirsty and there was a milk truck nearby. I bought a quart of milk and we shared it behind the tool shed/kennel when who should come around the

Colonel's office (I nearly died because Gus has been pressing his only clean trousers when he put a big iron-burn right on the seat. The Colonel gave us a nice speech and passed out our discharges; the adjutant gave us the rest of our papers, a railroad ticket home and a check for unused leave and the Corps took us to the station.

I was a civilian on 24 July, 1946. How did I do by going to the hospital? Sam Lefcourt had the same number of discharge points that I did. He stayed for one draft after he should have gone for discharge. He was discharged in the last week of April.