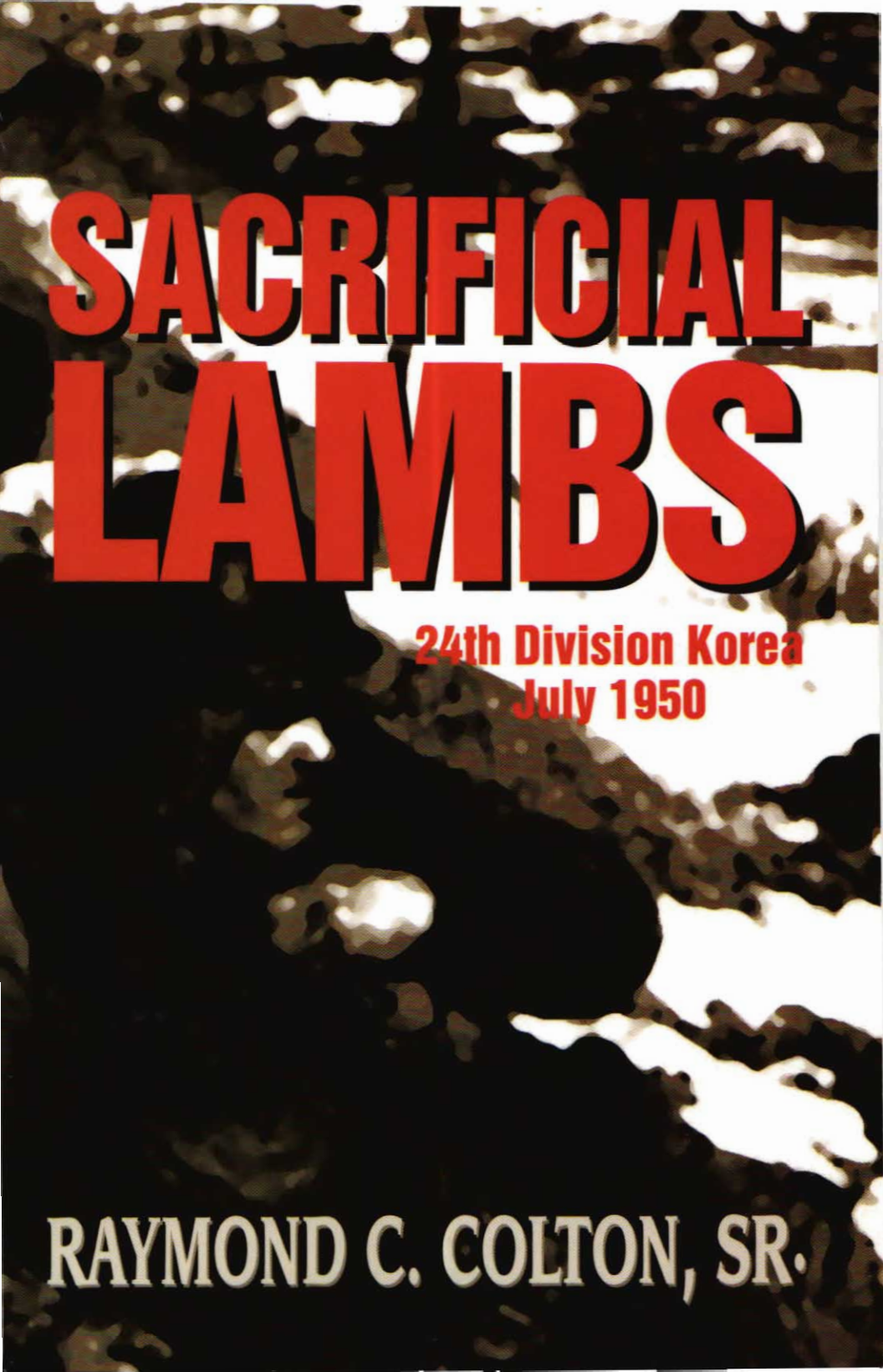

SACRIFICIAL LAMBS
24th Division Korea
July 1950
RAYMOND C. COLTON, SR.

Sacrificial Lambs

Raymond C. Colton, Sr.

www.ivyhousebooks.com

PUBLISHED BY IVY HOUSE PUBLISHING GROUP
5122 Bur Oak Circle, Raleigh, NC 27612
United States of America
919-782-0281
www.ivyhousebooks.com

ISBN: 1-57197-349-4
Library of Congress Control Number: 2002113072

Printed in the United States of America

The president and congress, responsible for the low budget and untrained, poorly equipped, and misinformed troops in the far east, in 1950, should be recorded by history as responsible for the deaths of fifty-four thousand troops in Korea, and they should be accorded the contempt they so justly deserve.

The purpose of this book is to tell the truth, expose the lies, destroy cover-ups, and reward the image of those who gave their all in a war that they were not allowed to win or lose. All incidents are as truthful and accurate as a memory dulled by fifty years can recall. In most cases, names have purposely been omitted and those times where names have been mentioned, the names have been changed for the purpose of privacy.

Poverty to Military

LIFE for me was a blur of hunger and the incessant horrors of poverty. This was not my parents' fault. They were married during the height of the depression and I was the result of furtive sex between my fifteen-year-old mother and my seventeen-year-old father. My mother's sixteenth birthday occurred just two months before my birth. All of the memories of my youth are happenings that you work diligently to erase from your mind, like the neighbor's wife screaming for five hours in childbirth without any help because the nearest doctor, Harry Beepel, lived three towns away. Aside from that, there was no money to pay him. Once, this same neighbor and my dad went hunting for a deer. Imagine our joy when they were successful and dragged a medium-sized doe out of the woods. By the brook, at the edge of the woods, they skinned it and cut it up into porrions. The liver was divided and provided a meal for both families. I had observed the cutting process and literally drooled at the image of the potential for fried steaks and delicious roasts. But no, liver was the first meal. I still dislike liver to this day. My mother had enough ingredients to prepare some johnnycake to go with the liver. The last two small bags of supplies needed to make johnnycake continued to give us a semblance of regular meals with the venison.

My brother and sister were extraordinary contrasts in personality. My brother was laid back and lovable, while my sister was combative and competitive with me. I presume a lot of this was caused by my mother's protectiveness of me from my father's abusive actions, which may have seemed to indicate that my mother favored me. When I left home, just as I began my teens, to escape my father, I became the topic of most conversations. Therefore, the gap between my sister and I widened. This situation was magnified when I entered the service and continued to be the topic of most conversations. When I was wounded and my mother received the infamous telegram, the gap took another quantum leap. My sister married a fine man. Her only child is a wonderful, lovable lady, and I wish them all well. Perhaps when we both die, the good Lord will tell us to shape up and become a family again. My brother has managed, with awesome energy, to develop and expand a slaughterhouse and a tree cutting service, and to do chores on the farm. He works fourteen or fifteen hours a day and feels that this work habit is perfectly normal. Behind a gruff manner, he is a caring and lovable man. This has resonated into a prodigious circle of friends, which is constantly growing. He has a large family of wonderful children and devotes his life to them. I consider myself blessed to be his brother.

On the walk to and from school, I regaled my little friends with many tales of the great things that I was going to do. I advised them that one day, I would be the president of a corporation. At the time, I had no idea that this would really happen. My company is certainly not a match for General Motors, but it is a respectable, real corporation.

My mother and her father-in-law were strong-willed adversaries. Neither of them would give an inch in their demonstrations of dislike for one another. My mother's stronger will, my grandfather's stronger finances, and our financial needs achieved the balance. My grandfather always

believed that my mother forced his son into marriage with her pregnancy. I guess Gramps figured that she should have used a club to fight my dad off. My mother's mother assured Gramps that his son had planted the seed and therefore was responsible for the final crop; and, if necessary, a court would decide the responsibilities involved. My grandfather was very determined, but he saw no advantages for him or his son with the matter being adjudicated in court. With this decision made and a justice of the peace employed, my birth as a bastard was avoided by two months. Although my father, many times over the years, saluted me with the title of "little bastard," this apparently had more to do with my behavior than with my parentage.

None of my mother's strong will ever passed to my father and this may be because such a large portion was passed to me, which resulted in my leaving home at a very early age and my early view of my father as a wimp. I carried this view for most of my life. This was put to rest by a real reconciliation a few years before his death. If anything prompted this reconciliation, it was probably sympathy for the role my father was forced to play all of his life, first, by his father and then by my mother. This role relegated him a minor player who had to be supportive, but never authoritative, and to always be a shadow in the background. When my mother wasn't near, my father used any excuse to beat me bloody. This, I guess, was the only way he could express his frustrations.

My mother was the motivating force in our home. Though just a teenager, she had awesome courage and determination. We could not afford clothes, so my mother reworked hand-me-downs to a level of acceptability. I'm not sure if the children at school knew about my clothes, but I did. I always saw myself as the outsider who had to struggle to meet the requirements of the system.

We had a 280-acre farm, which was located about a mile up a sparsely populated crossroad. Every spare dollar from the checks was used to pay down the balance on the mortgage. Our property adjoined a six-hundred-acre farm, which faced the main road. A man who was something less than sociable with his neighbors rented this farm. For weeks on end, we noticed him going to a portion of the property that adjoined ours and faced the crossroad. We thought that he was cutting wood for his stove, but we never saw him take any home. One day, my father took a stroll through the woods to determine what was going on. He was shocked at what he discovered. There on a bank, above Wood Road, was an immense pile of logs. A quick guess was a value of maybe a third of what the farm could be purchased for. My father took a ride, visited the owner, and gave him some indication of what was going on. The owner had his attorney notify the renter to leave without removing anything that was part of the property. My father's guess had been right because he sold the logs and managed to come up with a third of the purchase price for the property. Now we had 880 acres including the two farms. Our future looked promising.

I walked for miles to old abandoned dumps to find pieces of metal to sell as scrap for the war effort. I also traversed miles of the creek to find milkweeds. Their pods were used to create life preservers to be used on ships. I picked many a bag and envisioned sailors saved with this material in the life preservers. The metal and the milkweed pods created many dimes for defense stamps and it was a glorious feeling when I had acquired the sufficient amount to trade for a savings bond. All of this was done in the waning hours of the day after laboring in the field to get the farm work done. I may have been exhausted, but I was safe and I knew that I had to try to help

the people who were keeping me safe. I think President Roosevelt's Fireside Chats helped drive us all to make greater efforts.

I was thrilled with the kingdom of ours, but my enthusiasm diminished at the start of World War II. When harvest time arrived in Clare, many cooperative things happened to get the job done. As the man with the threshing machine arrived at each farm, the neighbors rushed to help. All the wives created their best dishes and rushed to present them. My memories were of tremendous efforts that were enjoyable because of the teamwork. The meals made it all worthwhile as the action moved from farm to farm. In this way, the labor, unaffordable to any single one, was accomplished by this effort for the success of all. What a nice feeling when the silos were filled with the corn and all the oats were bagged. Now they were ready for the stock to carry them through the winter months. The potato picking, the final cleanup of the garden, and the finishing of the canning, with only the butchering of a hog left to do, we thought, *Come on winter and do your worst.* My father went to work as a truck driver for Clifton Iron Ore Works. It was wonderful to think that the iron ore from home was going to Pittsburgh to make the steel that would be used for tanks, cannons, and ships. Some of the glamour of it all diminished when my mother and I had to face the work that was building on the two farms. The paycheck from this job produced a steady delivery of necessities to our home. I call them necessities because nearly all families required these items, but to the very poor, steady meant quality food and necessary clothing. All other items were unheard of luxuries. I was eleven years old, but had to replace my father on the farm. My mother and I managed to get the job done. I remember loading hay, tailing the loader, forking the hay, and pushing it forward to my mother, who was driving the wagon and shaping the load. With every load, we would have to stop once or twice to replace a broken slat in the loader.

Every young man in town volunteered to enlist in the service of our country. As each prepared to go, he was feted with a huge party at the town hall. Everyone in town was there and all the ladies brought their best dishes. The tables groaned with the weight of the wonderful food. It was a memorable night of demonstrations of love. These young men were touched to the point of tears and I am sure they never forgot their send off. More important than the food, our prayers were offered daily for their safe return. These prayers must have been constant and sincere since all of our men escaped the jaws of death and returned to their loving homes in Clare. At the end of the war, our country was victorious, but dairy farmers lost because the reduction of the work force cost my father his job. The war had produced many shortages. We had enough gas coupons to allow for the daily trips to the cheese factory to deliver our milk. The cheese factories paid enough for the milk to cover dairy farmers' basic needs, but the dairy business certainly wasn't making anyone rich. After the war, the cheese factories started going out of business one by one. The remaining option was to bring your milk to the condensery, where acceptance was a given, but the price paid was about sixty percent of the cheese factory price. How do you deal with this and continue to stay in business? For one thing, many of the raw materials that had been necessary were discontinued because they were unaffordable. Many of the feed and grain stores went out of business. Commission sales barns enjoyed a new burst of business as herds were culled repeatedly to keep the farm going. After a while, even this was not sufficient and the next step was reached when dairy farmers had to get outside jobs in order for the farm to hang on. Even this pain wasn't able to keep the sinking business operating. Most herds were sold off and some farms converted to raising beef cattle, but the majority of dairy farms were just closed down.

Today, most of the farms that once were productive have fields that have converted back to brush, the way it must have been when the original settlers took it from the Adirondack's Algonquian Indians.

What brought this all about—some alien force or international conspiracy? No. It was apparently just an industry taken over by huge corporations who priced the little guys out of business. Pricing control was determined in corporate boardrooms and the retail customers paid the price. It should be said that huge corporations had the means to develop some efficiencies that were not available to the little guys. In some cases, the prices paid by the consumers for their cheese may even have lowered. I hope there is some justification for wiping out the hopes and futures for thousands of people. In September 1949 when I enlisted in the Army, my folks and all the others in the town of Clare enjoyed neither electric nor telephone services. When I returned home on convalescent leave from the Army hospital, kerosene lamps and lanterns were items for discussion only since the town enjoyed both electricity and telephone service, but most had very little means to pay for either.

Elections in the town of Clare held a unique level of mystery. There was a locked box with a slot in the top where you dropped your vote. Then, there was the unlocking of the box and the counting of votes by the town officers at the end of the day. Every year, the count was the same—one Democrat vote to the remaining balance of Republican votes. During the full year between elections, a multitude of theories was advanced to locate and identify this undercover Democrat. Most days, world affairs and national scandals took a back seat to plans for uncovering this traitor in our midst. Nothing in the realm of legal and fairness could be advanced to solve the mystery. Finally, Mother Nature solved the mystery for us. A

very nice lady died and for the first time during an election, we had a one-hundred-percent Republican vote. This should have been the end of the discussions on the subject, but to this day, it comes up in conversations. The discussions now are how such a nice lady could cast a Democratic vote. This mystery will never be solved.

The numbers of my family in the town represented the controlling votes in an election. My grandfather served as highway commissioner for sixteen years and he did such a great job that I thought he would hold the job until he died. One night, a large group of family members met at the town hall and decided that although Gramps was doing a good job, it was time for another member of the family to serve. They appointed my great uncle Vernon to the job. The following night, Vernon went to my grandfather's house to secure the keys for the town garages. He went in the back of the house, through the woodshed, and reached to knock on the door. He never completed this move because the door opened and my grandfather's fist flew through the air and connected with Vernon's nose. With the point made, Gramps closed the door, dismissing his brother. The next morning, Vernon went to Canton to get a locksmith and some medicine for his damaged nose. My grandfather lived another twenty years and at the time of his death, he still had the keys to the town garage in his possession.

When my fifteen-year-old mother, pregnant and scared, went with her mother, a very determined lady, to call on my grandfather (my father's father), he told them that they could go to hell. My grandmother informed him that the options for his son were marriage or jail. Gramps could not push this problem aside, so I was born seventy-two days after the marriage. My grandfather never forgave my mother, but I think that in later years, he admired her spirit that was so much like

his own. When he was restricted to bed, in his final days, my mother arrived many days to feed him, clean his bedding, and clean the house.

When I visit the town, I check to see where the lines are drawn and who is fighting with whom. Even then, words have to be chosen carefully. You see, members can call each other everything under the sun and you can nod in agreement, but you had better not attack a member of the family because divided ranks will close instantly and you will be searching for your damaged head. We do things our way. Perhaps that is why the town of Colton, which was founded by one of our ancestors, doesn't have one Colton living there today. They all live two towns away in the town of Clare. It's a strange way, but it's our way. With the English, Scotch, and Irish blood flowing through our veins, we still get along better than the people of these countries, and we're better for it.

The aftermath effects of my troubled childhood left me with a disposition that always dwelt on the edge of eruption into fury, a situation that caused many instances of mental and physical abuse for my wife and children. I believe this may have given me stronger survival skills in Korea, and if this theory is correct, then there was a dividend from all of my beatings.

My children have dispositions with milder levels of fury than my own because of the calming effect of their mother's genes. Because I love my grandchildren very much, I am very pleased with this improvement to their dispositions and the improved outlook for their futures.

Today, sixty years later, on two or three occasions each year, I enjoy visiting Clare and my family members who still live there. On these visits, my mind goes back to the poverty-stricken eight-year-old who boasted to his classmates that

someday he would be a corporate president. Well, this sixty-eight-year-old man is a corporate president who has never forgotten his roots or the wonderful people of upstate New York. These people manage to overcome any adversity piled on them and still greet each new day with a smile. This area trained me to never stop pressing forward, never assume things will get better if left alone, and to always try to do better until you achieve what you need for final satisfaction.

The first job that I actually received money for was working in the oat field pitching oats. It was backbreaking work, but I received seventy-five cents per day. This would cover the cost of a movie, ice cream, or several cokes. I was thrilled to be receiving money. I started putting a portion of my earnings into a bicycle fund.

The first serious job that I had was working on the town road at seventy cents per hour. What a thrill it was to have change jingling in my pocket. Most of the time, my work was shoveling gravel with a short-handled shovel into dump trucks. As soon as one truck was filled and pulled out, another one would take its place. There was very little resting time. Before long, we had muscles like "Tarzan of the Apes" and ours were still growing. My grandfather was the highway commissioner and he was a fair, but demanding boss. One day, he returned from a trip to the county headquarters and found us taking a brief rest. He informed us that we could continue our break, but we had to work harder afterward since we were now making eighty cents per hour. There were eleven of us on the scene and we all cheered so loud that I'm sure we could be heard for miles. Our duties included snowplowing, sanding, grading dirt roads, cutting brush, resurfacing the tar roads, and battling with the beavers. At one location in particular, the beavers drove us nuts. This area was very swampy and had a small stream that flowed under the road through a corrugat-

ed culvert. The beavers would dam this up on the right end and the water on the left side would rise to the point where it would flow over the road. Our method of correction required a half stick of dynamite with a short length of fuse attached to a small pole. We would light the fuse, jab the pole into the dam, and run like hell. After several years, the corrugated steel culverts became egg shaped and were eventually replaced. I have no doubt that the problem still exists today. Our biggest problem was that the beavers worked even harder than we did.

Eddie Stone was my dearest friend and the only one that I allowed to know the real me. We enjoyed each other's company whether we were at work, playing sports, fishing, or hunting. Ed's mother was disabled with a twisted leg, a result of polio from her youth, and she required crutches to walk. She was a quiet lady and was somewhat withdrawn, except for occasional flashes of fury, primarily against Ed. This fury was usually because of some of the things that he and I wanted to do. Ed's father was a Native American and was completely withdrawn. I don't believe that I heard him utter one hundred words total in all the time that I knew him. I thought that he was subdued by his wife's temper, so I felt affection and pity for him.

Some of the things that Ed and I did together made little sense when re-examined today. We would walk five miles to the nearest general store to buy nickel Cokes, and then we would walk five miles back home. We didn't think it was a big deal then, but I wouldn't think of doing it today, not even for one hundred shares of stock in Coca-Cola.

Ed was a great friend to have in the midst of a fracas because of his unbelievable strength and his ability to shake off painful blows. He told me of his desire to enter the service and I was excited by the concept. From that moment on, that subject controlled most of our conversations. He was one year

older than I was, so when he was eighteen and eligible for enlistment, I was only seventeen and required my parents' signed permission. After some difficulty, I obtained the necessary signatures. We were then ready to join the recruiting sergeant to start our adventure.

We were all to meet at the intersection by the post office and theater in Canton. The recruitment sergeant picked me up from the road crew where I was working. My grandfather, the boss, and the rest of the crew had not been advised of my plans, so there was much consternation when I entered the car and waved good-bye to them all.

When we reached Canton and looked for Ed, he was missing from the appointed spot. The sergeant calmed my concern by saying that he would leave me there to meet Ed while he went to the court house where he had some business to take care of. To make a long story short, Ed never did show up. In the winter of 1950-51, I received a letter from Ed bemoaning the fact that he had been drafted. I nearly created a hernia from laughing so hard. Ed had the last laugh as he was assigned to an AA outfit and spent his entire enlistment in the United States. After our services were completed, we saw each other on a limited number of occasions. He worked for General Electric in Schenectady, New York. A few years ago, sometime after the fact, I learned of his death. I hope that God holds him gently and lovingly because he was a good man, and above all, a good friend.

My father and I developed an animosity level that was barely tolerable. This was because of his plodding way of life and my drive and aggressiveness, inherited from my mother. These tendencies created a schism that couldn't be closed. Just after my thirteenth birthday, we had an argument ending in blows, which prompted my exit. I returned, after quitting school in my senior year, with the necessary papers for

approval to enter the Army. My father said he would not sign them and stormed out of the house. I pointed out that my primary objectives were to get away from poverty and obtain a better life. I also pointed out that I would enter the Army as soon as I reached eighteen and wouldn't need parental approval. I said, "Mom, I will get out sooner if I can go in now." Although this was painful for my mother, she went to the barn to talk to my father. In about ten minutes, they returned. My father signed the paper, turned on his heels, and returned to the barn. My mother wished me well and tearfully admonished me to make her proud as long as I lived.

The recruiting sergeant picked me up in Canton and deposited me, for the evening, in a hotel in Ogdensburg, with instructions for me to rise early in the morning and go to the recruiting office down the street. I was so impressed to be staying in a hotel for the night. Obviously, I was making the right move by going into the service because I was already acquiring a new impressive way of life.

The next morning, six other potential soldiers and I were placed on a bus, which carried us to Syracuse, New York. We had been directed to go immediately to the Chimes Building for additional requirements necessary for enlistment. Upon our arrival, we were surprised to hear that we might not be accepted in the Army. It appeared that physical and other requirements were very high, partly because of the reduced size of the military services. We were given a thorough physical examination and background check. At lunchtime, we were given vouchers for the Chinese restaurant next door and were told that we would be advised if we were acceptable when we returned. Even the experience of eating in a restaurant couldn't mask the anxiety. All of us were advised that we had passed and were taken to another room adorned with flags, pictures, and plaques. We were told to raise our right hands

and swear to defend our country and the Constitution with our lives, if necessary. We were congratulated and told that we were soldiers in the United States Army.

I was given a folder with the group records, tickets for the train, and was told to go to the station nearby. All of us in the group had been told when we enlisted that we would be trained at Fort Dix in New Jersey. We expected a short journey since New Jersey was the adjoining state. The following morning after much travel and several layovers, we were still going. I asked a military policeman who was moving through the car when we would arrive at Fort Dix. He snorted with laughter and told us that we were about to arrive at Fort Knox, Kentucky. In upstate New York, a man is judged by his word. Apparently, the military didn't believe in shackling themselves with such requirements. I asked myself if I had made a good decision by entering the Army.

Our platoon sergeant told us that we were the worst bunch of shit heads that he had ever seen. He informed us that we were obligated to be the best in everything because we were in the First Platoon. During the sixteen weeks of basic training, I never saw this man smile or utter a friendly word. I didn't have any doubt that he was trying to kill us all. We were informed, multiple times each day, that we were at a lower level than animals. He expressed doubt that he could make a soldier out of any of us. We were told that we had "better get with the program" if we wanted any chance to survive.

We had two recruits in the company who previously served in the navy. All of this training was familiar to them. They were from Little Falls, New York, and one of them owned a new Pontiac. We also had a man from Batavia, one from Massena, and I was from Clare. When we received our first weekend pass, the five of us were off. Our route was from camp to Elizabethtown, to Louisville, then north to Covington, Kentucky, over the bridge to Cincinnati, Ohio, then to Columbus and Cleveland, to Erie, Pennsylvania, to

Buffalo, New York and to Syracuse, New York, where we dropped off the Little Falls couple. Then, with their car, we were on our way to Utica, Lowville, and Clare. Then, the last man was on his way to his home in Massena. One of the best rules for the trip had to do with alcohol consumption. Until each man had completed his portion of the drive, he could not have a drink. The guy from Massena couldn't drink at all on the way home, but he would be the first to have a beer on the trip back. When we arrived home, we had to immediately count the hours that we had before starting back. It was crazy, but we were at a crazy age and all of this made sense to us. The amazing thing was that the Little Falls guys had to pay for the bus rides home while we traveled in their car. So, why not do it once and call it quits? We did it three times and would have gone again except graduation separated our team.

At some point, this ridicule and training removed the last vestiges of *civilian* and began the process of developing a *soldier.*

The movie *Battleground* had its premiere in Louisville, Kentucky, and a detachment from Fort Knox was invited to the parade. Our platoon was one of those chosen. We worked hard to see that our uniforms were in perfect condition and that our shoes were shining like stars. The formation was crisp and colorful and we really enjoyed it. The only distractions were several signs, in front of the huge mansions, instructing dogs and soldiers to stay off the grass. When we passed the huge probing lights and the well-lit theater, we stepped off as though we were old regulars and we may have looked the part. We received a lot of applause and much of it was from very attractive young ladies. When the party was over, we boarded our busses and left this exciting life behind.

Our platoon sergeant seemed to single me out for punishment. The man seemed to have a particular dislike for me and I was astonished to find that he had recommended me for leadership school.

We marched twenty-one miles from our bivouac area. The trail went over two large hills, which seemed to be more like mountains. They were called Agony and Misery, and they were well named. We were introduced to pup tent sleeping and we were not too thrilled about this. We were not apprehensive about the return march and started with an aggressive stride. Before long, the sweat dripped down our backs and our equipment seemed to have doubled in weight. When we started, we noticed an ambulance following the company column and we wondered what that was all about. After two-thirds of the march, everyone understood the reason for the ambulance. There were also trucks following us. We were told that we could fall out at any time and ride for the balance of the march, but we would then be required to repeat eight weeks of basic training. This admonition put a new spring in my step. I was convinced that I could not finish the final two miles, but somehow I summoned enough energy to finish. At the end, I collapsed, but this luxury was short lived as our commanding officer yelled for us to fall out and proceed to the gym for our final physical tests. We were required to do sixty chin-ups, sixty pull-ups, thirty squat jumps, and thirty-eight count push-ups. With the final push-ups, I reached a point where I just could not continue.

Our commanding officer came down the line and stopped by me. He pointed his finger, glared at me, and told me that I had better finish. It was not possible, but somehow I did it. We fell out for our graduation ceremony and we beamed with pride at our accomplishment. The following week, I was scheduled to start as a student in leadership school.

Members of the leadership class were given turns as class sergeant with the responsibilities of marching the class to and from classes and insuring that that time schedules were rigidly upheld. A small amount of time, late arrival of the class would lower your grade. We were each required to give a lecture to the class and instructors who were grading us. I warned the other members of the class that they had better demonstrate great support with lots of applause when I gave my lecture or I wished them well when they gave theirs. I gave a fifteen-minute lecture on the fragmentation hand grenade. I think the instructors were surprised at the enthusiasm this subject generated. At that point, the classroom material had produced a good grade for me. It was then time to go to the basic training unit for a month of assisting a veteran platoon sergeant and to learn the science of training troops. I was assigned to the Third Platoon D Company, Seventh Medium Tank Battalion. I was very impressed with the platoon sergeant that I was to assist. He appeared to be in his late thirties and his friendliness and obvious knowledge suggested an opportunity for me to gain a great deal of ability and a good grade for my school course. Less than thirty minutes had lapsed when the sergeant received an urgent summons to go to the orderly room. Shortly after, a clerk came over and grabbed some of his uniforms. I was advised to report to the company commander. It was all a mystery to me and I hurried to the orderly room and asked to see the captain. He said that one of the sergeant's parents had died and the Red Cross had prepared transportation for him so that he could rush home to give his family support.

The captain asked me if I felt that I could handle the platoon if they brought over another kid from the school to assist me. I told him that I didn't know if I would be successful, but that I would give it everything I had. He said that I had bet-

ter or I was in deep shit. I thought that it wouldn't be great fun working for this man, but since I didn't have any recourse, I was determined to keep him off my back by doing a great job.

My first screw-up occurred as we were bringing the troops in from the field. I had prepared the command in my mind for the ninety-degree turn to the left onto Battalion Street. The command was "column left, ho," but somehow it came out "left flank, ho." With this misguided command, instead of the file of troops pivoting for the left column onto the street, the entire column turned to the left and literally pushed me into the ditch until I managed to scream, "Column halt." I fell them out and re-formed them onto the street. I gave them "forward, march" and then "column left, march." As I looked forward, I saw the field first sergeant whipping his head back to front. It was not fast enough to please the commanding officer and he seemed to enjoy chewing on my butt. Maybe this helped me keep the nasty attitude that I needed to train the troops.

One evening, I went to a movie at the Patton Theater and returned directly to the barracks. Although it was after lights out, there was some buzzing going on, which indicated the troops were still awake. In my Cadre Room, I rushed to get my clothes hung and jumped into bed. I saw stars for a minute as my knees slammed into my jaw and as my head cleared, I was aware that the troops had short sheeted me. I listened intently for a moment or two, but the barracks was as quiet as a tomb. I got up, fixed my sheets, and went back to bed.

When the C.Q. (Charge of Quarters) woke me in the morning, I used the latrine and then I woke the troops so that they could make their bed, shower, shave, and dress for the reveille formation that would follow. After reveille and chow call, we cleaned the area and then were assigned an hour to work on equipment. A few minutes later, I went upstairs to see a recruit who had an electric iron. He was using it at the time, but said that I could have it in a couple of minutes. We

exchanged friendly banter and he gave me a big smile and complimented me on being such a nice guy by not raising hell about the short sheeting. I responded that anyone with a decent sense of humor had to laugh at it and I wasn't about to pick on the troops about it. Through my laughter, I asked him whom the hot shits were who had done it and he gave me the names. At this point, the laughter and the need for the iron ended and I rushed downstairs to award the three guilty recruits with special duties for the balance of basic training. I'm sure that they developed an aversion to latrines since they cleaned ours every morning. At leadership school, they taught us that if you were liked by your troops, you could not properly train them and their deaths in combat would be on your head. None of my men were allowed to like me because I really worked at it. After graduation from the school, I was prepared to return to training troops, but an order came for my transfer to FECOM. The Far East Command interrupted my plans.

During the part of leadership school dedicated to working with a platoon sergeant in actual training of troops, I came to understand and appreciate the way the system worked. You had to break the man, the civilian, and start the building blocks to create a soldier.

Before leaving Fort Knox for overseas shipment, we received seven shots for all possible health problems that we might face in the Far East Command. The medics had a cute trick. You would step forward between two medics; the one on the left would give you the injecrion. When you flinched from his needle, you drove the other needle into your arm. After completing the line, we were marched outside and given twenty minutes of push-ups so that our arms wouldn't stiffen up. It was just one of those fun days.

Me, after completion of basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky.
(Photo by the U.S. Army.)

Transferred to the Far East Command

AFTER thirty days of leave, I received orders for overseas shipment to the Far East Command. The time had expired, except for the amount needed to cross the country and report at Pier 91 in Seattle, Washington. At that time, the first available ship would be used to carry us to new assignments in Japan.

My stay in Seattle, which was to have been measured in days, turned out to be many weeks in duration. This came about because of an argument over a trivial matter, which I should have distanced myself from, with another soldier waiting for shipment overseas. I was kidding him over a silly matter and his response overheated because he was suffering from a bad headache at the time. Our final verbal exchange took place at the top of the barracks stairs. I was knocked down the stairs, so I picked myself up at the bottom and prepared myself. When he came down the stairs, I greeted him with a spirited left jab. A fire shot up my left arm and it fell useless to my side. During the remainder of our fracas, I had only the one arm to use. I did manage to get in one good punch during the encounter, which redesigned his nose to a new slanted angle. He did a fine job of beating me thoroughly until sever-

al others intervened and stopped us. I was taken to the Fort Lawton Station Hospital by ambulance. The broken bone in my left wrist was immobilized with a plaster cast. I learned to shoot pool with about only one inch of finger exposed out of the cast. The soldier, who had been in the encounter with me, came to see me several times until he was shipped out. On his first visit, he advised me that the candy and magazine gifts

Me, after my stay at Fort Lawton Station Hospital for a broken wrist.

would be continued only if I resisted laughing at the nose cone on his face. I never saw him again, but I hope he is having a great life.

Seattle was an attractive city with clean streets and well-kept buildings. From Eastmont Way, high on the hill by Fort Lawton Station Hospital, the view of the harbor at night was breathtaking. A near circle of lights outlined the harbor and the lights. A sprinkling of ships added to this "Arabian Nights"

scene. I still can't adequately explain what I mean, but there was an Asian quality to this picture. The great mountains were faintly dotted on the edge of the horizon and the rain and mist, so much a part of Seattle, kept everything a constant green. I think no other city can match all of these attributes and certainly, a visitor can never forget this lovely place.

One of the patients of the station hospital was a guy from Elmira, New York. He told me that his girlfriend was coming to see him that day and that she was bringing her friend with her. The friend visited with me and we had a very pleasant chat. She asked me if I would like for her to return to see me. I told her that company was deeply appreciated since the place was lonely as hell. On succeeding visits, she brought candy, cigarettes, and magazines. We became good friends. We had only one occasion that we met outside, but nothing of a serious or emotional nature took place and certainly nothing approaching sex. In conversations, I told her that my parents owned an 800-acre farm with 110 dairy cattle. She was very impressed and noting this, I hastened to assure her that property values in that area were very low. She was interested in New York State because her father lived there somewhere near White Plains. I did not tell her when we were shipping out and I was quite surprised to see her on the dock waving goodbye. In the winter of 1951, she traveled to Canton, New York and called my parents telling them that she was my fiancée. Since I was engaged to a local girl, my folks were quite surprised, but they took her in anyway. They spent a considerable amount of money on her, which they could ill afford. The climax came when she and my real fiancée met in the lobby of the local theater and had a screaming, hair-pulling contest. My father helped her to get a job in Canton and after working about three months; she left to seek out her father. I hope that she found him and enjoyed her life because my real fiancée was quite explicit when she wrote and told me where I could go and what I could do when I got there.

There was a small group of guys in the barracks at Pier 91 who told stories of how they had gone out to attract homosexuals, then mugged them for their money. I didn't know if the stories were true or not and resolved to keep my nose out of it. The idea of mugging anyone rubbed me the wrong way. I didn't know any homosexuals. I would avoid them if I did and I certainly would not attack them. Just a few days later, a large guy from the bunk to the side announced that he was going for a shower. Another kid said that he was going, too. It couldn't have been more than five minutes before we heard loud crashes from the direction of the showers. Several others arrived at the scene before me and we saw the one kid lying unconscious on the floor with the large guy, Okie, looking down at him. Okie said the guy had gone to his knees and grabbed his (Okie's) cock. After a shocked second, Okie's fist sent the kid to rock-a-bye land. Someone had gone to headquarters and returned with a squad of shore police. They grabbed the kid, who was beginning to stir, flopped him onto a stretcher, and hauled him away. We heard that he got an undesirable discharge.

We received only a few hours' notice before we had to board the victory ship to carry us overseas. Within hours after sailing, we were greeted with what the navy guys called "a little cross-sea." Some of the waves looked like they would sink us because they were higher than the ship. The expense of feeding us must have been slight as most of us spent the voyage hanging over the rail. My system handled it decently and my nausea was controllable. I asked a sailor if he wanted a smoke. He accepted the cigarette with thanks and conversed with me for a couple of minutes. Before moving on, he advised me to volunteer for the bakery shop when duty assignments were being handed out that day. I took his advice and

volunteered, to everyone's surprise. I received the assignment for the entire voyage. The chief baker was a pleasant, middle-aged Englishman who ran his department like a Swiss watch and never raised his voice. As well as being my boss, he became my friend. He put me on his anti-vomit diet right away. One of the primary components was a dry sweet roll and he cautioned against eating anything greasy. His diet instructions kept me away from the rail while most of the troops were heaving their guts out. My only severe problem came in the evening when I went to bed. My bunk was located in the bow of the ship and you could feel the ship's nose rising, rising, rising, and then dropping like a stone. I could handle this as long as I kept my eyes open, but nausea would commence the minute my eyes closed. I would keep my eyes open and never know when I fell asleep.

We saw a large group of whales off the coast of Alaska. I have to admit that they were large, but I was not overly impressed. Yokohama was first a dot, a cove, and then a whirling dervish of activity. Welcome to Japan.

Japan

THE instructors at the leadership school in Fort Knox, Kentucky told us that if we thought their course was tough, we should just wait until we were sent overseas and became part of an infantry line outfit. Therefore, it was with a great amount of apprehension that I arrived in Yokohama, Japan, to join the U.S. Occupation Army. I traveled by train the length of the main island, Honshu, then through the connecting tunnel to the southern island of Kyushu. The trip was uneventful with the exception of the trip through the seventeen miles of the Kyushu tunnel. The water dripping on the walls reminded you that you were traveling under the ocean. A thought of the walls collapsing kept the passengers awake and alert. When we returned to solid ground and sunshine, it was a joyful change.

We arrived at a warehouse looking place called the School Center where we would receive our assignments. We were suddenly organized into military rank and told to stand at attention. A general with two stars appeared and ordered us to stand at ease. The general introduced himself as General Dean. He was the division commander, of the Twenty-Fourth Division. He welcomed us into the division, came down the line, and conversed with each man. I was extremely nervous when he stopped in front of me. He asked me where I came

from in the U.S. I replied that I was from Clare, New York, which was near the Canadian border. To my amazement, he said that he was familiar with the area and thought the entire St. Lawrence Valley was beautiful. I was very impressed and I thought, *Boy, I would protect this man with my life.* But, of course, there would never be another war. This whole affair took less than thirty minutes.

As soon as he exited the building, the staff got us organized and dispatched us to our assignments. I was sent to the defense platoon, a part of division headquarters. I was directed to the second floor of the building where that platoon was quartered. I reported to the squad leader, Corporal Lumly, who accepted the record folder that I presented to him for the first sergeant. Lumly greeted me warmly and then directed me to my bunk. Everyone was lying on their bunks. They just offered me a nod and then went back to resting, reading their letters, or listening to their radios. The radios were tuned to Armed Forces Radio. At mid-morning, I noticed a discussion between several members of the squad and a decision was made that it was Private Brown's turn to go to the ice cream factory for the squad's ice cream.

After lunch and ice cream, we were to go to the field for training. This proved to be a false assumption because after lunch, we returned to our bunks. I didn't understand this sitting around, but perhaps this was a light day to allow the new men time to settle in. After supper, we walked out to a retreat formation. We didn't march in the normal military fashion and I didn't understand this laxness of regular procedures. The bugler arrived and started the retreat refrain as the flag was lowered. At least we stood at attention while this occurred. After it was completed, the troops ambled back to the barracks. When we got back to our bunks, I asked Brown, the guy in the next bunk, how often we had to pull KP duty. He informed me that we never pulled kitchen police duties because this was done by the Japanese. He also stated that we

didn't go to the field for physical training. I didn't know how to react to this dream world. This was so unlike the training and discipline of units in the U.S.

The next day was Wednesday and I was informed that we were given Wednesday afternoons off. Corporal Lumly assigned Brown to show me the ropes in Kokura so I could get going on my education. Brown informed me that the city had a population of a quarter of a million people. He also told me that Kokura was the target for an atomic bomb and they were saved by the fact that the city was overcast on that infamous day. I said that they should have a holiday each year on that day. He said, "They do. They spend most of the day in thankful prayer."

Brown led us out the camp gate and down to what he said was Six Lane. We turned right, went two blocks, and then turned right again to enter a building that housed a tailor shop. He slid the door open and was greeted by a middle-aged Mama San who gave him a big hug. She then gave me a smile and a bow. Brown spoke to her in Japanese and then she left. A moment later, I saw her dispatching a youngster out of a back door. She then returned to chat with us in nearly perfect English. Brown had told me earlier that she liked American soldiers and always made them welcome. In less than ten minutes, the youngster, who Mama San had dispatched, returned and was accompanied by a pretty, young lady. She shuffled by us and went up the stairs. Brown turned to me and instructed me to go up and try her. I asked, "What are you talking about?" In an exasperated voice, he told me to go up and fuck her.

He said, "If you like her, you can have her."

It was no small amount of trepidation in my thinking as I slowly eased up the stairs. The young lady had shed her robe and was lying on a mat with pillows. After I stood there for a minute or two, she motioned me to join her on the mat. My entire sexual experience to that point had consisted of watch-

ing farm animals engaging in sex, reading titillating, books, and bragging about my imaginary conquests while making he-man talk with the guys.

A million thoughts raced through my mind. *What laws would I be breaking? Would I contract venereal disease? What complications could emerge from this encounter?* My biggest concern, however, was that I didn't know what to do and she would surely detect this in seconds. As if grasping my embarrassment and uncertainty, she extended her arms and with a warm smile, beckoned me to her side. For several minutes, I did nothing more than stroke her shoulder and her side. The only part of me that was eager and prepared to go forward was my penis, which was pulsing and was as hard as a steel rod. She rolled me to my back and gently eased herself over me, engulfing my pulsing member. There were only brief seconds before the explosion. After the enjoyment of the moment waned, my next emotion was shame because I had performed so poorly. We lay side by side while, I suppose, we both wondered what to do next. After a minute or two, she started a gentle stroking of my thighs, which shortly brought on a new erection. I was pleased that more time would pass. I didn't want Brown to know what a dud I was with this woman. The second encounter took only a minute or two, as I suppose is the case with most "loss of virginity encounters." After a brief pause, she rose, secured a wet cloth, and washed my entire groin area. I then dressed and went down stairs where Brown was waiting.

He gave me a huge wink and smile as he asked, "How was she?"

I replied, "She was very nice."

He asked if I wanted to keep her. I responded that my mother would not be very pleased if I were to write and inform her of my intention to marry a Japanese girl.

Brown looked at me as if he thought I had totally lost my senses. He spat, "You do not marry moose-a-maes; you just feed and fuck them."

After a few seconds to regain my composure, I asked him, "What do you know about this young lady?"

"Well, first of all, Mama San said that her name is Zietan Michiko and that she lived a year with a sergeant who has finished his tour of duty and was shipped back to the states. Michiko needs only food and rent."

I responded, "I only make seventy-two dollars a month, so obviously I can't do it."

"You have a lot to learn. You can do it for less than twenty-five percent of your salary. Plus, you can walk away at any time. That gives her a real incentive to keep you happy if she wants the arrangement to continue."

I asked him, "Are Wednesday afternoons the only available times?"

"You can see her any time. All you have to do is request the time and you are all set. Don't worry. Everyone turns a blind eye because no one really cares. You have to understand that we are sixty-cent soldiers. If there was one dollar involved with the cost of troops training in the field, the cost was only sixty cents when we just lie on our bunks. You see, there are two factors involved here. First, our Army's main effort is in Europe where the Russians present the only real threat. Second, the president and Congress have reduced our military budget to the same level as Mexico's. So, don't worry about it, Man. Just go with the flow. Enjoy yourself for your whole tour. After a few months, you will be scheming to find a way to extend it. Hell, old Harry Carson just wrangled a transfer out of the platoon to become an assistant pool manager. Another thing, Colton, we are presently talking in English. From now on, you will speak only Japanese in the barracks. In a few weeks, you will also be conversing in Japanese. So, Man, you had better learn Japanese or you are fucked."

After a brief stay in Kokura, I understood why there was so much cooperation and understanding between the occupation forces and the Japanese. The Japanese performed our

repairs, maintenance work, and kitchen police tasks. Japanese police manned camp gates, walked patrols around the camp, and manned trucks bringing in supplies. The bars and clubs flourished from the business brought in by service men, and of course, there were many young ladies whose food, entertainment, and rental needs were being taken care of by GIs.

I don't know if the support that we offered was a plan of MacArthur's for rebuilding Japan. For the first time, there was land redistribution for poor farmers and voting rights for women. Japanese men were allowed to wear their war uniforms as long as the insignias were removed. This was probably the only clothing that they had to wear. The Japanese people were starving at the end of the war. They were coming back, slowly, as their country was being rebuilt. The people were industrious and friendly, making it difficult for anyone to refuse their friendship.

The days and nights flowed with numbing monotony with only the thoughts of home that were introduced by the retreat formations each evening. That's the time when you think of the fact about home being over eighteen thousand miles away. Jones asked me if I would like to go with him to his shack and meet his moose's sister. I said that Michiko would have a bird if she were to hear of it. He said, "Oh hell, Man, we're going to be on the other side of the city and there is no way in hell that she will ever find out."

We went with the girls to a community bath, which produced a number of surprises. The first was that everyone, including men, women, and children, were naked. No one seemed to think anything of it. My worry was that I might get an erection. I knew that I would die of embarrassment if that were to happen. After a few minutes, I realized that there wasn't a single person looking at me, so I relaxed and enjoyed myself. I received my next surprise when I headed for the pool.

Before I could enter, I was pulled back and told that I must wash first. I was seated on a small three-legged stool and was washed thoroughly and then rinsed. The pool was very hot at the beginning, but was very pleasant after a few minutes. Watching the families enjoy themselves was very pleasant.

When we returned to Jones's shack, the girls provided us with additional entertainment. It was nice, but I was uneasy, so I excused myself and left. On my way back to the barracks, I decided to check in on Michiko. I called her name several times from the door. She didn't answer, so I went in and went upstairs. She was lying on the floor in a drunken stupor. I found this surprising since she had always been timid about drinking. When I stopped in the following evening, a neighbor, who after several bows, begged to tell me that a pedicab operator had reported to Michiko that he had seen me with Jones and the girls. It seemed that the Japanese system of conveying information matched or surpassed the normal ways of Western communication. Well, so much for fooling around.

Michiko was a very nice lady and I was fond of her, but for some reason, our relationship had begun to cause me concern. For one thing, there was the old man in the tailor shop. He was Mama San's husband and had been an Imperial marine. He survived Guadalcanal physically, but not mentally. Apparently, he had a severe case of combat fatigue. He just sat there all day on a bench. He never moved or spoke; he just swallowed the food and drinks that Mama San fed him, spoon by spoon, twice each day. For him and Mama San, a tragedy brought pity from our soldiers. I felt sorry for him, at the beginning, but then I thought of the eighteen hundred young Americans whose bodies will remain, for eternity, in the sunken frame of the battleship *Arizona* and then I became indifferent. The war was over, but I still hadn't forgiven Japan. All of this played on my mind so that I continued to pay the rent and food, but I visited fewer and fewer times.

I managed a ride on the Coca-Cola truck out to Eta Shia Air Base. I had been told that this was a major base for the Kamikaze, who attacked our Navy fleet at Okinawa. Several old "'Betty" bombers were still rusting beside the runways and the barracks also still stood where the Kamikaze pilots were housed. I was told that these volunteers, for the glory of the Emperor, left fingernail clippings and a lock of hair for their families' shrines. They were given a shot of sake and a respectful salute before mounting their aircraft for their dramatic final flight. The idea of volunteering for death begs respect although the act is rejected by Christian minds. I enjoyed this trip and managed to make it again.

After three months, I had fit into the occupation picture rather well. I was beginning to get the basics of the language and frankly, I was in no great rush to leave.

The Japanese culture was very different from that which we were accustomed. Before entering a Japanese house, you sat on a little ledge and removed your shoes, placed them on a shelf, and stepped into slippers that were there for you. Because of removing your shoes, floor mats were less worn and remained cleaner. Your shoes were secure at the entrance of the house because the owner would spend everything he owned to get them back and save his honor. Most of these unusual habits struck us as being very strange, but at the same time, they generated our respect. Sex in Japan was looked upon as a basic everyday necessity and the Japanese were amused at the way American soldiers saw sex as a private, undercover secret that was joyous and more important than anything except life itself. At that time in Japan, young girls, primarily from the country, were sold into a many faceted industry. The money derived paid off debts and provided for future needs of their families. The most astonishing thing about all of this, from a

GI's viewpoint, was that these young ladies looked upon all of this as a necessity and continued to hold their parents in high regard. In fact, they were pleased that they were assisting their fathers in maintaining their honor. The male dominance was difficult to believe. When men walked down the street, their wives or sweethearts walked several paces behind them out of respect. Women went out of the house to shop or went out for medical needs only. Your moose would greet you with a bow and lowered eyes when you entered the house. Your every need was foreseen and serviced. You were made to believe that you were a member of royalty.

The theater showed movies in Japanese, but had English script across the lower portion of the screen, which was easy to follow.

The men, women, and children of Kokura would stop and bow as you passed them on the street. Hopefully, the first occupation troops who entered Japan received this same treatment. We hadn't earned it, but they paid a heavy price to earn such respect. I gradually learned that these measures of respect were sincere. The Japanese believed that the Imperial Forces, defeated in the war, had been outstanding and so their defeat demonstrated a new superior level requiring great respect for the Americans.

Crime was non-existent in Kokura. There was no crime at a time when the majority was impoverished and many were hungry. Apparently, a major part of this was the inbred Japanese respect for authority. Another reason was their system and the way it worked. I saw officers working from a small box backed to a building on the street that had space enough for one officer and some equipment. One would patrol to the left and pass an officer patrolling to the right. As soon as a patrolling officer returned to a box, he would take over and the relieved officer would patrol. Capping this successful crime prevention system was its crowning achievement.

The relationship between the people and the policemen was friendly, helpful, and respectful. The public promptly conveyed anything that was out of order to the police.

In our country today, we have huge police forces, expensive equipment, a huge number of technically equipped cruisers, and a huge number of crimes. Would the old Japanese system work here? Well, at least it would afford the policemen the respect that their demanding jobs require and build a binding contract with the community. It may be an over simplified solution, but it should bear some consideration.

On 25 June, we were resting on our bunks and listening to Armed Forces Radio. The almost continuous broadcast of hillbilly music was suddenly interrupted and an announcer's voice rang out, "Seoul, Korea! Kimpo Air Base has just been bombed and strafed. An American PFC has been seriously wounded."

Silence followed for a full minute. I asked. Corporal Lumly if he knew where Korea was. He said that it was right across the Japanese Sea and that the Twenty-Fourth Division had been in occupation there until only a few months before. The only thing there now was K.M.A.G., which meant the Korean Military Advisory Group. K.M.A.G. was a small force more for training than anything else. What a prophetic statement that turned out to be.

Less than ten minutes passed when we were roused from our bunks by a cacophony of whistles and sirens. We were told to check our equipment and be ready to move in a matter of minutes. We were also told to take just our fatigues and leave our names and serial numbers on our footlockers so that they could be warehoused if it became necessary. All of our questions were answered with, "We don't know and when we know, we will let you know."

When we opened the ammo magazines, we were shocked to find that everything was covered with rust. The metal belts of machine gun ammo were so locked with rust that they were useless. We found a half dozen canvas belts of ammo. I guessed that we had better not need to do any firing.

Shortly after, a rumor made the rounds that some Americans had been evacuated and were returning on a Japanese freighter. This appeared to be the only means of transport available. We were told that their belongings were going to be stored in a huge warehouse in Kokura. The following day, the rumor was confirmed as we were assigned guard duty on the warehouse. We were issued live ammunition when we went on duty and this really got our attention.

My tour at one end of the block-long warehouse was uneventful, but this was not the case for one of our soldiers. The rumor was that one of our men saw some Japanese going into the warehouse. He waited patiently as they lowered a lot of material with ropes from the upper windows. Then, when they started to follow, he opened fire. I thought that this was a good man to be with if we went to war. I later found that he wasn't a tiger when the people at the other end fired back. It seems he was just a little on the cautious side. Possible court-martial for the deed was discussed, but never happened.

The next afternoon, a long line of 2.5-ton trucks lined up. We were parceled out to the individual trucks and were told to mount and sit. As we passed through the open camp gates, we were surprised to see crowds of young girls with tears in their eyes, waving sadly as they called, "Sayonara." Many hours later, we arrived at Moje Harbor and were loaded onto several freighters. Ours was the Yama Mura Maru. Someone joked that it only floated because they had life preservers on all the rats.

We found the ship completely dark and we shuffled around looking for comfortable spots to sit. We were underway in a surprisingly short time and the ship moved quickly.

Shortly after we left the harbor, an officer appeared and asked if anyone had fired a machine gun. I said that I had fired them while I was in leadership school. He said, "Fine, we are going to lash down an ack-ack mount and set up a .50-caliber."

We were then told that a group of troublemakers had violated the truce line at the thirty-eight parallel and we had to go over to make a show of force and, if necessary, arrest them all.

Great, now we were members of the police department. Anyway, those guys were sure going to be sorry when they saw all of us coming.

The officer returned when the gun position was secured and advised me that I had to be extremely alert in case enemy aircraft attacked us. My first thought was, *Please don't let them come.* My second thought was, *How come some troublemakers had their own air force?*

Shortly after daylight, we entered Pusan Harbor and tied up at a wharf. After disembarking, a downpour of very heavy rain greeted us and we were rushed into a large warehouse. We noticed that the floor was largely covered by straw and so we lay down to get some rest. This didn't last long because someone yelled that the straw was crawling with bugs. So much for resting. After about forty-five minutes, the rain stopped and we were moved in a long column to the train station. In short order, we were mounted and started out of the city. The train wobbled a lot and someone said it was because it was a narrow gauge railroad. It certainly didn't measure up to the New York Central Railroad. I believe that we were all in decent spirits because we knew the Army wouldn't lie to us. A couple of hours later, the train pulled off onto a siding and another train moved by. We couldn't believe how loaded it was. There were people everywhere, including the roof, and most of them were bandaged. That sight quickly changed our thinking.

Taejon

AT THE Taejon Station, we disembarked, marched down Main Street past the government building, and progressed several more blocks. We stopped for a break and observed some South Korean soldiers with three prisoners. They were siphoning water into one until he actually bulged. Then, they jumped on his stomach. His scream was the most agonizing thing I have ever heard. The other two prisoners discovered their tongues and starting a furious chatter to the delight of the South Koreans. I found the whole thing horrifying and wondered why we were supporting these animals. My thinking would soon change.

Our company commander had a radio conversation and got us going again. One block further up Main Street, we turned right through some stone gates into what was, as we later learned, a Japanese college that had been built during their occupation of Korea. Some sentries were posted in all directions and the rest of us went into the building to get out of the punishing sun. We couldn't have been there more than one hour when we heard a shot and a scream on the northern side of the building. We ran out to investigate and found that the sentry standing by a large wooden post was paralyzed with fright. The bullet had hit the post next to his head and apparently, all he could do was scream.

Seeing nothing down the street, a half dozen of us started down slowly and carefully with three on each side. There were wooden fences on each side of the street, a ditch, and then the higher surface of the street. When we came to the intersection, we stopped, looked, and listened. After a couple of minutes, we saw some Koreans start out into the next intersection. One of our soldiers fired and the Koreans scooted back around the corner. Some light firing commenced and we returned it for several minutes. It must have been five minutes or so when I realized that the firing from our position had stopped. When I looked around, I found I was the only one there. My mother didn't raise any fool, so I scrambled to my feet and started to run back toward the school. In short order, bullets started snapping past me and I threw myself into the ditch on the right. With even a slight movement, a huge volley would slam into the wooden fence over my head, literally throwing sawdust on me. I knew that I had to do something, but what? I also feared that if I continued to lie there, someone could creep up on me and throw a grenade or shoot me in the back. I saw no way out and I could picture my poor, dear mother receiving that horrible telegram from the state department. Suddenly, I heard the voice of a black soldier holler at me, "Man, when I open up, you run like hell." The .50-caliber machine gun commenced firing and pieces of roof were flying in all directions. As I bolted to my feet for the race of my life, I saw the large black guy firing from a ring mount on a duce-and-a-half. I didn't run back through the gate. When I arrived at the compound, I flew through it. I was just getting my breath back when our commanding officer gave another soldier and me an assignment. He told us to go down the street to set up a 2.6 rocket launcher in the ditch. I thought, *Great. I fired one of these things once with dummy rockets at a mattress hanging from a line.* Oh well, I did hit the mattress, so if the target was at least that large, I had a chance to hit it. My assistant tied the two wires to the contacts and then slapped me on

the helmet to signify that the weapon was ready for firing. It couldn't have been more than a minute later when we heard a clanking noise coming from the right, which was rapidly approaching the intersection. I concentrated on trying my best to hold my hands steady and waited for it to appear. It had slowed and eased into the intersection and I was getting a good lock on it when I noticed the beautiful white star on the armored personnel carrier. I said, "Oh, my God, how close I came to squeezing it off." Shortly afterward, with darkness commencing, the old man sent a runner to tell us to pull back into the perimeter for the night. Other than an occasional firing at a noise, the balance of the night was uneventful. The following day, with the area to the north apparently cleared of snipers, we had detachments sent out for roadblocks. Some went toward the airport and others, including myself, began to establish roadblocks, first at the south bank of the Kum River and then back to a commanding slope north of Taejon.

I'll never forget an incident that happened there. One of the refugees going through was a grandmotherly looking lady with a chain and cross. I had instant feelings of sympathy for her terrible journey. One of the South Koreans working with us went out and started to frisk her. I was about to scream at him when he found two grenades under her blouse. He took her behind the hill for an instant court martial. The shot that we heard signaled that the sentence had been carried out. *War is not very nice.*

That night, we had to dispatch a couple of squads to form a protective perimeter around the hospital where a substantial number of wounded were being cared for. The night remained quiet. The following night, the squads went back and received some sniping. We had a substantial firefight until we realized that the MP Company and our company were firing at one another.

Task Force Smith was the initial force to make contact with the North Korean Peoples' Army (N.K.P.A.). The

N.K.P.A. was trained and equipped by the Russians. If the North Korean forces were without armor, Task Force Smith wouldn't have had a chance. The N.K.P.A. force did have tanks—lots of them with 85 mm cannons, machine guns, and armor that was too thick for our 2.36 rocket launchers to penetrate. We also heard that the basic weapons failed to work in nearly half of the cases of the men in Task Force Smith. That there were survivors was a miracle, and after other men in the Twenty-First Regiment viewed the survivors and the tank stories went around the Oson area, the men began to realize that they were going to die. Of the roughly four hundred men of Task Force Smith, we heard that nearly half were dead or captured. What a way to go from happy peace to hellish war. The Twenty-First Regiment was hit by two plus divisions and didn't have a chance. After the first four days, there were less than a thousand men left. The Nineteenth Regiment went into action at the Kum River and was overrun and butchered. The Thirty-Fourth Regiment was drawn up and united with the Nineteenth Regiment's survivors. They tried to hold the Taejon Airport and the city. We have since learned that about 240 men walked away. Later, half of them went to the Nineteenth Regiment and half of them went to the Twenty-First Regiment. General Dean had been asked to buy two more days by holding Taejon. The Twenty-Fourth Division had demonstrated their guts and the Koreans had ripped them out. We brought the time, but we paid a terrible price. Our division motto is "First to Fight" and now you could add, "First to Die."

At this point, the few survivors of Task Force Smith had been withdrawn. The Twenty-First Regiment had been hurt pretty badly and had pulled back to the south side of the Kum. They had absolutely nothing to fight the Korean's T34 tanks with, as our weaponry could not stop them. Division sent them a message that they should stay down and let the Korean tanks roll by. I guess no one ever told them that infantry, with

very nasty bayonets, followed the tanks. The eyes of the dead became glazed. A unique thing about the North Koreans attacking north of Taejon was that their eyes glazed while alive. We concluded that they were drugged to make them fearless. This would also explain why they would rush to attack machine guns in broad daylight with no cover and very little chance of survival. I have never heard of any proof one way or the other. We were told that the units on the Kum had run out of flares and the damn North Koreans were all over them. At this point, the Nineteenth Regiment was involved and received a pasting. The Thirty-Fourth Regiment had suffered and was pulled back to protect the airport.

With several roads north of Taejon to cover, to avoid flanking maneuvers by the North Koreans, General Dean had to split his vastly outnumbered and under strength units into several blocking forces. Just as Custer learned at the Little Big Horn, it's not healthy to split your forces in the face of an army with greatly superior numbers. I'm sure the general was aware of this, but with his orders to buy some additional time for the Eighth Army to deploy some additional under strength units, he had few options and none that made good military sense. The enemy, on several occasions, used air force units against our ground forces. They had large numbers of T34 tanks punching through our lines for their infantry forces. The Twenty-Fourth Division forces had only 2.36 bazookas to defend against them and from the beginning, it became obvious that that weapon was totally ineffective as good hits just bounced off the thick armor of the Korean tanks. Armed with weapons worn from long use in World War II, our troops found, on many occasions, that they failed to work. I had long believed that General Dean's personal tank hunting on the streets of Taejon was a move that was much criticized by experts. This was his way of sharing the impossible situation that he had been forced to inflict upon his men. Just as huge

numbers of these troops had been surrounded and captured by the North Koreans, Dean himself was surrounded, captured, and spent long horrible months in a POW camp.

A war correspondent reported that there was some unprofessional behavior by some troops and even reported that on some occasions, their officers deserted some men. She was apparently unable to understand the fear of tanks and the craziness of the situations when huge enveloping forces overrun position. Later in the Puson Perimeter, she came close to being killed by just such a break through. She was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for her charges of our behavior. Huge numbers of the Taro Leaf Division did not live long enough to hear these comments and of course, this applied to the many men who didn't survive captivity. For those of us who survived those horrible days, we wonder at her inability to factor in our lack of training, junk weapons, our vulnerability to enemy tanks, and the massive numbers of the enemy. Many, many officers and non-coms died valiantly with their men at their positions without any chance for survival. Reporting that would not provide the shock appeal and certainly would not give her the chance to get the Pulitzer Prize, so her reporting was understandable, but not acceptable to our survivors.

The following day we were told that an MP on the main thoroughfare was directing traffic. A tank turned a corner and approached. The hand and arm directions, to the tank, were beautiful until the tank's canon fired. The word was that the MP did a swan dive into a six-by-six garbage dump, slime and all. Since he had survived, we thought it was okay to laugh.

The cargo plane, whose cargo included the new 3.5-inch bazookas, circled the Taejon Airport. It was piloted by individuals who were unhappy with the appearance of the airport because of its many shell holes. The word, which later filtered through to the troops, was that General Dean instructed them to come down or be shot down. The pilot made the reasonable choice and landed with the precious weapons. We later

heard that the 3.5s had been tested at Aberdeen proving ground and were known to be capable of knocking out the Russian T34 tanks that we were faced with. We wondered why so many men had to die because we had not been equipped with this weapon. My guess is that the American forces in Germany were equipped with them because of the Russian threat. However, since we were the unneeded show troops in the Far East, where there was no concern over enemy action, we didn't receive them until thousands had died or been captured. This weapon could have made a difference.

Our White House occupant, the ninety-six members of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and all of the government agencies responsible for protecting this country and armed forces overseas, flunked this simple test of protecting the United States. The cost of this near-sightedness had to be paid for with the lives of these young men of the Twenty-Fourth Division.

On one of our roadblock days, we were given a box of twenty and one rations. We opened everything in the box and put them into a square can. There was meat, spaghetti, cheese, crackers, et cetera. The only thing that we didn't throw in was the toilet paper. It could have been because we were so hungry, but I swear that I have never tasted anything so good in my entire life.

It was our last meal for several days. Later, we subsisted on little round melons and developed record amounts of diarrhea. We didn't have time to lower our pants so we just kept marching and let it trickle down our legs. It wasn't a great embarrassment because we all had the same problem.

The escape from Taejon wasn't beautiful or orderly since every intersection was a firing range. Not everyone made it out, including our beloved General Dean. We managed to get over the mountains back to Yongdong where we heard that General Dean was missing. Everyone wanted to volunteer to go back to look for him. Of course, the officers realized the

futility of even trying, so we just had to suffer the loss in agony. We loved this man. He wasn't the Army's; he was our general and he was the very best.

General Dean, of the Twenty-Fourth Division, trying to decide the best way out of Taejon for us. He chose a wrong turn himself and became a prisoner of war for three years.
(Reprinted with permission from the 24th Infantry Division Association Taro Leaf, Editor Ellsworth "Dutch" Nelson.)

Pusan Perimeter

A RUSH of thoughts went through my mind as we headed back to action. *I don't want to die. I am only eighteen years old. I've never married, never been treated as an adult. I never completed my education. I never had sex with the girl back home. I don't want to die, but I don't want to let my buddies down. I don't want to be judged yellow. As scared as I am, I don't have a choice. I must face the worst danger and try to be the type of soldier that I always dreamed I would be. I know I have lots of company.* With the way that we were trained and equipped, and with our grand pay of seventy-two dollars a month, it's asking a lot for us to go through hell day and night. Also, you must realize that we had been offered up as "sacrificial lambs" who must die, if need be, to buy a few more days for our Army to get more soldiers to the action. Certainly, the United States, a great world power, could not stand the embarrassment of defeat by a peasant army. Our military was in a horrible state thanks to budget cuts. Beyond safety and common sense, little else mattered. Our best equipment and highly-trained troops were all in Europe where the Russians presented the only danger that Washington was able to see. Since a price had to be paid, we were directed to pay the price for this bungling error, and pay we did. Our three weakest regiments were chopped to pieces and our division commander became a pris-

oner of war. Those who were not dead, wounded, or prisoners of war, made their tortured way back to Yongdong where we met the First Cavalry Division, also weak and totally unaware of the hell that was about to swoop down upon them. We had long disliked those in the Japanese Occupation Army because they were MacArthur's pets and were rated far above us. I prayed for them and hoped that God would favor them. They were going to need it. One regiment of our division was less than a battalion in size and the Thirty-Fourth Regiment was less than a rifle company. We became known as an anti-guerilla force and we prayed that there were few guerillas.

The temperature, which was well over one hundred degrees, was appropriate for the hell that we had left and the hell that was coming. Some stupid reporter stated that things would improve greatly since we now had as many men as the Koreans. The Koreans were better trained, better motivated, and had the attacker's option of massing forces wherever they wanted to overrun a position. Our motivation was less than zero. Houston had the Alamo, Lincoln had Fort Sumter, and World War II troops had Pearl Harbor. We were the lack troops. We lacked training, adequate weapons, motivation, and the ability to understand why we were being sacrificed in a land that we had never heard of, for reasons that we didn't understand.

Everyone in the column out of Taejon prayed that the head of the column was making the right turns to get out of the city. The view of countryside and lack of firing allowed everyone to breathe easier. The road was twisting like a snake as it moved higher into the mountains. On one of the highest pitches of the mountain, a turn brought into view a long line of vehicles, many of which were burning. Sounds of an intense firefight indicated a serious ambush. We could not see any of the Koreans and most of the GIs were on the side or under the vehicles. We soon started to draw fire and immediately, Bob pushed Preston and me off the side of the .75-ton vehicle we

were riding on. The three of us rolled rapidly down the very steep slope. By some miracle, we managed to avoid breaking necks, arms, or legs. We moved to the river, slid over the bank, and huddled even with the edge. The water was not deep, but was fairly swift and cool. There were a lot of rocks sticking out of the water, which indicated little depth anywhere across the water.

Above, the firefight was increasing in intensity and more and more vehicles exploded with fire. The men under the trucks were not in position to return fire and it was obviously a losing cause. Grenades were being thrown down and some were rolling under the trucks, exploding them. It seemed like we waited forever for the darkness to come. Even with the start of darkness, we were reluctant to move because we felt the movement might be detected. Another thing that concerned us was that the firing had ceased and we were fearful that a patrol, examining the convoy in the road, might come down the slope looking for survivors. It seemed like a very likely thing to do and we were surprised that we were able to move down the bank of the stream without seeing the enemy or being seen by them. After considerable time spent inching down the bank of the river, we finally took the chance of climbing up on the bank and moving at a much faster pace. We had no idea of the length of the ambush, so we continued along the river, perhaps longer than we needed to, before we took the chance of moving up to the road. Once on the road, we made better time. We trotted for most of the journey. On one of our walking breaks, we were frozen in place by the unmistakable sound of the full cock of a machine gun. Without even thinking, I screamed, "GIs!" Within seconds, a voice in English advised us to advance slowly and to make no sudden movements. We asked them who they were. They said that they were a roadblock for the First Cavalry Division. They also wanted to know who the hell we were. We said that we were deuce-four and for all we knew, maybe the only sur-

vivors of the convoy that we were in. The young lieutenant in charge seemed to get nervous and got his people back in position and on high alert. He told us that they were about to be relieved by replacements and that we could ride in the same trucks back to Yongdong. We were taken to another school compound in Yongdong where Twenty-Fourth Division survivors were gathered. We received some rations, and while we were resting and eating, we witnessed a sudden flurry of movement. We then heard that a radio broadcast had just announced that General Dean was MIA. A shocked and sorrowful silence followed the announcement.

Yongdong was our temporary exit from the war and the introduction of the First Cavalry to the game. We disliked them intensely in Japan because we felt that they were MacArthur's pets. Their shoulder patch was a horse's head with a line across it. We said it represented the horse they never rode and the line that they never crossed. Of course, after their introduction to the war, all of these feelings were forgotten. They became one of us.

One day, as we marched south toward the perimeter, we met the advance unit of the Marines. We were half-starved, ragged, filthy, and stinking, while they stood in their vehicles in their beautiful pressed and pleated uniforms. They also had some absolutely gorgeous weapons, including flame-throwers, which we had never seen before. They sneered and told us that the men had arrived and the kids could go home. One of our men lifted his B.A.R. to fire. Three of us grabbed him before he could wipe out the whole vehicle. After they swam in blood for a while in the Pusan Perimeter, we forgave them.

The Pusan Perimeter was hell in every possible conception. On many occasions, there were shortages of food, water, ammunition, reinforcements, and hope. Having just survived the "bodies for time" command formula, the ragged, exhausted, hungry, and hate-filled members of the Taro Leaf Division waited to die. I don't know of anyone who expected to survive.

Everyone I knew shared my hatred for the country that had offered so many of us to buy nineteen days for the U.N. The one exception may have been the female correspondent who had used several gallons of ink talking about how we ran compared with our enemy. For the most part, she was badmouthing the dead, but then she was well paid and received the Pulitzer Prize. I hope that when she dies, she will get the reward we Taro Leafers wish for her.

One of the hot byproducts was the constant lack of water. The great irony was that you could look in every direction from your mountain and see huge amounts of water. At the end of the day and the arrival of darkness, the first order of business was to send out a patrol for water. There was tape around the outside of the canteens so that they would not make noise if they bumped against one another. Getting the men down to the water and bringing it back was not the big problem. The enemy also needed water and they knew we would be coming for it. First, they got their water and then set up an ambush for us. It was a deadly game that we played every night and many men died for water. Food was still bad, but was better than the first thirty days. I guess this was because as we were driven back closer to the sea, we were closer to Pusan and supplies.

The days seemed to last forever. The extreme temperature would melt your flesh and the darkness seemed to do little to help. So, at a time when the heat increased dramatically, the need for water also increased. However, we had a definite shortage. Heat stroke was a formidable enemy in the perimeter.

The cavalry was having a hell of a time trying to hold Teague. We heard that fighters taking off from the airport had to immediately nose over and go into the attack against the North Korean Infantry who were trying to punch through the cavalry. General Gay, commanding the First Cavalry, met with General Walton Walker, the Eighth Army commander. He

was instructed, "Get back to your troops and win." He was told that if he left the front line again, he had better be on a stretcher.

The Marines were called upon to take several mountains. They did take them. You didn't have to like Marines, but you surely had to respect them.

One of the events that we heard about and marveled at was the move made in the direction of Chinju by Mike Michaelis and his regiment, the Twenty-Seventh Regiment of the Twenty-Fifth Division. His regiment was called the Wolfhounds and they were well-led and motivated by their leader. At a fork in the road, the instructions were for them to take the road to the right, but Michaelis had fears that the enemy attack would be coming down the other road. He gambled and took the road to the left. There he found the entire right flank of the North Korean forces and he stopped them dead in their tracks. He had some tanks that helped in his success. We had received some of the tanks and they were attached to the Nineteenth Regiment of the Twenty-Fourth Division. The other half had gone to Mike's Wolfhounds. The tanks had been collected from islands in the Far East where they had been parked at the end of war and mothballed. They were collected, brought back to Japan, and then put through some Japanese factories in Tokyo to be cleaned up and repaired. These same factories that had produced thousands of weapons to fight us with in World War II were now working like animals to get these weapons ready to help us win in Korea. These tanks were a blessing and helped the Wolfhounds win the battle. If the Wolfhounds had taken the wrong road and the enemy attack had broken through to the rear of Eighth Army, all may have been lost. By making such a clever move and winning the battle, Michaelis saved the day and turned his Wolfhounds into tigers. Later that fall, he was

rewarded with a promotion to brigadier general. We were most pleased that he had guessed right because the Nineteenth Regiment was on the other road.

The courage demonstrated by John Wayne and other Hollywood stars was something none of us wanted to copy. I know that I was scared to death and I knew that any courage I displayed was from desperation to save my life and the lives of my friends.

The Pusan Perimeter was a horror show for the Eighth Army. At the same time, correspondents noted that our strength matched that of the enemy for the first time. Their ignorance of infantry combat was obvious. We were divided over a substantial area trying to maintain an adequate defensive line. While the enemy could concentrate huge forces to hit and wipe out any area that they selected, we didn't have any choice with our tactics. They could exercise multiple choices at any time. Then, the famous command came down: "We will stand or die as there are no ships to take us off. If we get pushed off these peaks, it will be the most horrible slaughter in history."

One of the impressive sights was one of the small division spotters. These were observation planes flying low over an area to try to draw enemy fire. What did they have for their protection? They had no weapons, armor, or speed, but they would still put their lives on the line to expose the enemy.

Earthen walls separated rice paddies with narrow paths on top. If you used the path on the walls, you were terribly exposed, but if you dropped into the paddies, you had better not have scratches or cuts because the water was loaded with human shit. What a wonderful choice for someone to make!

I was a moderately tall youngster and a bit on the skinny side. When I arrived in Japan, I weighed 140 pounds. When I left for Korea three months later, I weighed 182 pounds.

Good Japanese beer, fine food, and a total lack of anything resembling exercise created this flab. Putting it on was great fun, getting it off, with the agony of ascending many of the mountains, was near death. Each ounce was lost through rigorous climbing and heat so intense it caused many deaths.

Most of the columns of South Korean civilians were infiltrated with members of the N.K.P.A. in civilian dress. Sometimes N.K.P.A. units drove civilians ahead of them as shields. What a horrible dilemma to chose between civilian welfare and having enemy forces attack your flanks or rear. It became apparent early in the war that some people in the south were less than loyal to their country. But I guess we can't be too proud since less than forty percent of Americans were supportive of the Revolution Army in our fight for freedom from the British.

We had a tangle of emotions whenever we thought of the Air Force. Unlike the force flying support for the Marines, our Air Force had apparently not been trained for ground force support. Gradually, they did acquire some expertise, but they never allotted force to this kind of work in numbers that approached the marine support. I think that we were very pleased to have them arrive to work over an enemy position, but we were bitter as we watched them depart for their base in Japan with their ladies, warm beds, and great food. One day, a flight was working over the next ridge with bombs followed by rockets, napalm, and .50-caliber machine guns. When the final plane made his strafing run, he didn't pick up from the dive, but went on in to crash with a huge ball of flame. I believe that we saw them in a new light after this event because they had lost the mantle of invincibility that we had pictured in our minds.

At about this time, I saw, for the first time, some troops of the Fifth RCT who had been added to our division to replace the valiant Thirty-Fourth Regiment who came out of Taejon with only a few men. As the army states, the unit was reduced

to paper elements. This small handful of survivors was divided between the Nineteenth Regiment and the Twenty-First Regiment. The replacement Fifth RCT was made up primarily of Hawaiians of small stature. They surely didn't look very impressive. Only weeks later, we were extremely proud to count them as part of us. Man, they fought like demons and they kicked butt like you can't believe.

We had just arrived at a new location for rest and were catching our breath and watching a jeep approach. Since a two-and-one-half ton truck was also approaching and the road was quite narrow, the jeep pulled well out on the shoulder. The noise was immense and even more spectacular was the jeep rising higher than the trees. The mine that did this damage must have been meant for tanks because it was much more than was needed to wipe out a jeep. Every time that I rode on a truck after that, my mind would picture the same happening to us. I prayed that the driver would not pull out onto the shoulder.

One day, we were asked to break up a roadblock behind the Marines so that they could get their wounded out. I can't tell you how pleased we were to get this assignment. In our drive up the road, through the passes, we didn't encounter a single gook and did not hear a single shot fired. When we arrived at the aid station, we noted a tracked vehicle with quad fifties mounted and I went over to look. When I was about five feet away, a sniper's bullet ricocheted off the steel and over the top of my wrist. When I felt the searing pain, I screamed out, "I'm hit! I'm hit!" Our sergeant came over, looked at it, and said, "Put a fucking Band-Aid on it." I nearly died from the shame. When the convoy was ready to exit, the commanding officer wanted a ridge runner on each side of the road and slowed the movement of the convoy. The runners would trip any ambush. With the shame of my behavior, I vol-

unteered to run the left ridge. After the successful exit from the pass, I was put in for the Bronze Star Medal. On many far more serious occasions in the future, I didn't even receive a thank you. That's the Army for you.

We heard that our dead were buried in Chinju, Korea, but I have since heard that they were disinterred for shipment to their homes in the United States. The majority went to the Punch Bowl National Cemetery in Hawaii. I have seen pictures of this cemetery and I am pleased that my friends are at rest there.

We left the perimeter and crossed the Naktong on a bridge that couldn't be seen unless you were right on it. The bridge material was probably three feet under the water and this idea was so good that we later copied it.

Yalu

WHEN we advanced from the perimeter over the Naktong River and headed north, we could think of only one thing—to re-take Taejon. Although a task force from the First Cavalry was much closer, they were ordered to hold up and let us take back the city. It sure was a mess and we couldn't believe the horrible smell.

It didn't take long for us to find where the smell came from. The North Koreans had used our trenches on the north of Taejon as a killing ground. They had put most of their prisoners, particularly professional, government, and military, in the trenches and forced them to pull the mounded dirt back into the trench around them until they were covered up to their armpits. They were then shot in the back of their heads and left to rot. Was it a warning to the civilians left alive or was it just an expression of their basic nature? Who knows? We only knew that many, many persons had been butchered. The bodies reached numbers that were larger than an Army division. We were not allowed to see the bodies, but the word got around and the volume of butchery that was reported left us all speechless. How did the U.S. Army react to this horror? They immediately informed us not to talk or write of this. They also said anyone with a camera who took a picture would be court-martialed. The following day, a group of civil-

ians took hundreds of pictures. By the way, they were all over the area. One of our officers reported that they were U.N. members and that we were not to talk of it. I have never seen a mention of this in any publication in the United States. If anyone has a clue of this crazy U.N. behavior, I would love to hear it. If we had planned a new version of the Nuremberg Trials, we ended up disappointed since we didn't win this war. Why did we not disclose this type of butchery after the Korean Truce was signed? I suppose that the government would say they remained silent because they still had over eight thousand Americans missing in action. Well, it soon became apparent that we weren't going to get the MIAs back. Our government had to know it since they weren't even trying to get them back. Of course, I believed at that time that any American serviceman or servicewoman who believes anything that the military tells them has his or her total mental facilities missing.

We soon started to move north again. We had realized, after passing mile after mile of knocked-out tanks and trucks coming out of the Pusan Perimeter, that our Air Force was making the enemy pay a terrible price for trying to use the roads. We were then able to use them with the ease of going on a holiday drive back home.

Occasionally there would be a sniper or two who would hold up a column for a few minutes until they were flushed out and killed. For the most part, it was like taking a cruise down the boardwalk in Atlantic City. Soon, it was wonderfully boring because you could not find a North Korean to kill. To go from losers in the world's press to cocksure winners in just a couple of months was exhilarating.

One of the big shocks early in the war was the discovery of *kimchi*. We were checking the houses in a village when the large earthen jars behind the houses drew my attention. I lifted the cover of one and the smell that was released nearly knocked me down. I heard that this concoction was made from fermented cabbage, red hot peppers, and other ingredi-

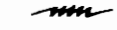
ents that made a very hot seasoning for bland bowls of rice. I loved kimchi, not because I had ever tried it, but because it announced the arrival of North Koreans. It seemed to drift in the air for hundreds of yards and gave us time to prepare an adequate greeting for them.

We were just eighteen miles from the Yalu River on the Manchurian border when Thanksgiving Day arrived. MacArthur pulled off one of his unbelievable achievements. We all received Thanksgiving dinner just like Mom would have prepared. We had everything, including turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and gravy. The only difference was that we didn't see the faces of our loved ones and we had to rush to eat because the steam rising from our food demonstrated the arrival of Korean weather that we were not going to like. Along with this wonderful food with relish, the rumors going around said that we would be on our way back to Japan within a few days.

An American patrol was found dead with their hands tied behind their backs. This caused an immediate re-examination of our Christian principles. Apparently, not many North Koreans wanted to surrender after that because very few prisoners were taken. Of course, many engagements in the perimeter had few, if any, survivors from either side.

General Walton Walker, Eighth Army commander, certainly proved his ability in the perimeter campaign. He was constantly shifting his limited reserves from threatened point to more-threatened point and the fact that it was successful was an accomplishment probably beyond the talent of his military peers. His death, in a jeep and truck accident, saddened all of the Eighth Army and we were fearful of what the future would hold with his replacement. Well, it seemed that the great World War II Army that produced him also prepared his successor, General Mathew Ridgway. He demonstrated his ability in very short order.

"Hey, you" became the standard address as we had all decided, that knowing one another well, only increased the pain when you collected the dog tags from dead bodies. When I took over the second section of the machine gun platoon, I didn't know the names of anyone, and when I left this was still the case. The only person that I knew by name was my buddy and platoon sergeant, Robert A. Sargent. After I was hit, he wished me well and I have neither seen nor heard from him since. He was a great friend and an excellent soldier. I hope that he has experienced a wonderful life. With the courage that he demonstrated in Korea, he deserves nothing less.



Is there a point where your fear of death no longer restricts the performance of your duties? The answer is yes. When you come to grips with your fear and begin to realize that there is very little chance of survival, you buckle down and await the inevitable death that has destroyed so many of your comrades. If you survived wounds or you reached the necessary guidelines for rotation back to the States, the very first emotion was surprise—almost shock—and then gratitude to God for letting you live out your normal life. The next emotion was guilt because you had survived and so many wonderful guys had been forced to make the supreme sacrifice. Every combat veteran, to some degree, has suffered this "survivor's guilt" and many have required professional help to overcome this horrible shame. Even survival has a cost that must be paid.

Chinese

THE fascinating images created by these wonderful rumors were soon rudely interrupted when we noticed a number of officers rushing back and forth. Soon we were told that we had to saddle up and move out as one of the cavalry regiments was surrounded by Chinese and our men had to rush up to try and get them out. I didn't know why the Chinese had taken a hand in our game, but I can tell you that it scared the hell out of me because I knew that we were talking about a country that made up a substantial part of the world's population. I read about the many accounts of Chinese brutality during their civil war with the Nationalists and that assured me that a nasty time was at hand.

Seemingly overnight, the ravage of the North Korean winter was upon us. The breakthrough all over the front line brought home the realization that all units were combat units even if they were not designed to be. Also adding to the fright were the cases of frostbite rushing to surpass the wounded passing through the medics. Soon, frostbite was the primary problem by far, and there was no way to fight this enemy. As instructed, we changed our socks daily and replaced them with dry ones. The wet ones were placed against our stomachs so that our body heat could dry them out. The Army's great invention, the snow packs, looked good to us at the begin-

ning. It turned out that they were terrible. In my opinion, most of the foot frostbite cases were caused by military stupidity, as the nice warm socks that they had issued to us would get soaked with sweat after walking just a few hundred yards. Then, when we had to stop, here came the frostbite.

At this point, my buddy, Bob, and I decided to request transfers up to the front. Bob had friends in the Twenty-First Regiment, so we requested to be sent there. We were told that the Nineteenth Regiment needed men desperately, so we would have to go there. Both of us had come to the realization that since we were already being shot at, we might as well be up with the real professionals, the front line infantry. Being poorly informed on what life was like at the front, I suppose our stupidity in requesting this transfer could be understood. We were assigned to M Company of the Nineteenth Infantry, and then we were assigned to the machine gun platoon. Since we were ignorant of the weapons in the other two branches of the company, 81 mm mortars and recoilless rifles, we were happy to be with weapons we understood. We soon learned the reason for the many smiles when we asked for machine guns. The life of a first gunner in a firefight was measured in seconds. I should amend this statement by saying that not all were killed, but the wounded were seriously wounded as the position of lying behind the gun to fire exposed the head and shoulders. When I became a first gunner, I placed my head directly behind the water jacket of the gun per the advice of an older guy who had been in World War II. Generally, this only left the shoulders exposed to enemy fire. But again, back to the other enemy, the weather. Over thirty minutes on the gun guaranteed frostbite, so thirty minutes became the schedule. A gun that is too frozen to fire will punch your exit card very fast. How could we overcome this life-threatening problem? With urine—that's right, good old-fashioned piss on the

breach block would start the action slowly and then bring it back to normal within seconds. The smell created by this action would curl your hair, but at least you were alive.

How did we manage to punch through frozen ground to create foxholes? One of the easiest ways that we found was with the use of grenades. All of these survival tricks were important as we went through two and a half weeks where the temperature never rose over twenty degrees below zero. Who was the first man in our unit to develop frostbite? Obviously, it should have been one of the southern boys who made up nearly our entire unit, right? Wrong! It was I, the Yankee from upstate New York on the Canadian border. Oh, the shame of it all! No one in this country except Korean War vets and the Battle of the Bulge survivors from the "Big War" truly understands what the full meaning of cold is. Cold was a Chinese patrol of eight men standing dead and totally frozen. Cold was prisoners and some refugees without shoes walking in stilted fashion on blocks of frozen flesh. Cold was an enemy that must be fought second by second and the battle never ended. Cold was the adhesive that instantly glued you to any metal part that you touched. Cold was the force that, for a period of time, put the war on hold. Our memories of cold from our youth was the brief discomfort that you endured, worst case scenario, by the end of the day, when you went to your home, had warm drinks, basked in the warmth of the house, and enjoyed your wonderful life. Here, there was no end of the day respite, no warmth of a cozy home, and no wonderful life. Two things must be acknowledged about cold—it kept the Chinese underground and out of our faces. It also did a marvelous job at suppressing bleeding from wounds. Without a doubt, many guys who might have bled to death owe their lives to the cold. Fifty years later, I still cannot stand the cold. I will not endure the cold and I can never forget.

Over the centuries, man has developed shelters, from the first caves to the present day mansions. Always the primary

motive for improvement was creature comfort and in the fifties, the ultimate had been achieved. Going from their comfortable homes to Army barracks that were certainly austere in comparison was somewhat of an emotional struggle for the young soldier. The next level of shock was the pup tent in the field. Each soldier shared half of a shelter and when united with his buddies, the two would form a tent. This was a very primitive shelter and one to be avoided as much as possible. In combat, there are no homes, no barracks, and no tents—only a hole in the ground. In the summer, this gopher type of living, filth, and wetness was accepted because the hole was protection from bullets. In winter, the hole in the ground was insanity. Animals in the ground bored to a point where some semblance of comfort could be achieved. The foxhole does not allow for any form of comfort in the winter. The surface of the ground was frozen and the walls and bottom of the foxhole were quickly frayed. The primary thought in winter was to dig deep and get out of the wind. The size of the hole was important since most were for two men. Also, there had to be stomping room, which meant that there had to be enough room to jump up and down. There also had to be enough room for flailing around to keep the feet from freezing. In the worst of the winter, the Army brought up to the front some "warming" tents so the men could be brought back, from time to time, to warm up. Nothing more sadistic could have been dreamed up. This haven of warmth and instantly being sent back into the hell of freezing would have pleased Dr. Mengela as he had experimented with some of the same tortures in the concentration camps where he tested survival levels for the glory of the Third Reich. Could some form of heater have been produced to lower the horror of these holes from hell? Probably not since we had less value than such expensive equipment and the military budget was already so low.

The necessary stomping went on without halting throughout the day. During the forenoon, I had the painful stinging

of very cold feet, but late in the afternoon, the pain stopped. I stomped like mad, but nothing seemed to help. When my relief arrived and I tried to get out of the hole, I found that I had great difficulty trying to stand upright. I felt like I was standing on stilts and I didn't need a medic to tell me that I had frostbite. I remembered the time back in Clare when I had suffered a frozen ear coming home from school. The walk was one mile to my home and after a while, the ear stopped hurting. When I got home and stood by the round oak stove, I screamed with pain and my ear swelled up to look like it belonged to an elephant. Oh yes, I knew what frostbite was and I wasn't looking forward to the treatment.

The next three weeks were spent at Regimental Aid where I was administered warm water soaks and alcohol rubs, which I guess was the standard for mild frostbite. I enjoyed the peace and security very much, but the price for it was high when I reacted, as a stupid fool, each time there was incoming fire. You heard it if it was going over or if it exploded to the front, but you only heard it for a split second if it was going to punch your ticket. After a time off the line, you had to acclimate yourself all over again. A shell that's going to be several hundred yards over, and you hit the ground like a pancake, does not demonstrate a resounding reason why your men should have confidence in your leadership ability. About the time that my senses were returning to hellish normalcy, a new problem erupted. The bottom of my feet became so sore that I could hardly walk. I even experienced some bleeding, particularly in the area of my toes. I went back to Regimental Aid where I again had warm water soaks and alcohol rubs. When I first arrived there, I was informed that I would receive a Purple Heart. With this second visit, we were all informed that the Army was rescinding our awards, except in cases where amputation, to some degree, was involved. I guess that the Army was shocked at the amount of patients with frostbite. I wasn't happy with the thought of losing my medal because I wanted

to keep it as proof of my sacrifice. Oh well, soon I was to get one that they couldn't take away. My treatment for this new malady, which the medics called immersion foot, was brief and I was soon to be back with my peers at the front line.

The nights presented a dual face. On the one side was the feeling of security that darkness brings and on the other was the fear that you could not see. From nights not long past, we knew the creeping, silent killing ability of our enemy, for we had lived and died through the many nights when such decisions of fate were realized.

Although the night remained silent and motionless, it caused all that it enveloped to move. Literally, this was not the case, but a direct gaze at any time produced movement so that these phantoms of the night would dance one by one with all your fears. Crucial decisions hung on whether a movement was induced or actual. These judgments from foxhole to foxhole depended on acquired instinct to shelter life itself. Our eyes, so necessary to our lives, when overburdened, can bring about our deaths.

Working alone or in tandem with our eyes were our ears, the other major tool of surveillance, as well as another tool to fan our fears. The normal use during the day produced tens of sounds. The pronounced use compounded by fear produced thousands during the night. The next duty was the analysis as to cause. Was it a breeze, bird, animal, or the enemy? If the sound was that of an oft-heard night bird, was it real or a copy used as a signal for an enveloping force? Of course, your ability to analyze the make up of the night was not the only security needed. Your buddy in the foxhole also had to have developed these skills because when he was on alert, you were sleeping and trusting him with your life.

Replacements were placed in a hole with an experienced man and the training was rapid and intense. To put two green men in the same hole was akin to asking for disaster. If there was a green man in the hole to your right, and it was his turn

to be on alert, you skewed your eyes and ears a bit to the right. This was not only because of lack of confidence, but also because you knew that the green man had been cautioned severely not to make a knee-jerk reaction to a fear that would give the position away. After a few dozen nights and several firefights, the green was washed away and the replacement was really one of us.

Everyone who served in Korea has an outstanding piece of horror that stands out in his mind. That is, of course, in addition to the cold that we all place number one on the list. Mine came one morning when things were quiet and a man had gone down the back slope to the slit trench to relieve himself.

Apparently, the gook mortar round exploded just slightly ahead to his left. A shard of shrapnel from the round sheared off an angled piece by his right eye. From his eye socket to halfway to his ear, the piece of his scull was cut off. The medic informed us that the wound was not life threatening, but the image was so shocking that it affected us all. The eye was dangling and with every jump uphill, the eye bounced against his cheek. I have wondered many times over the years if the eye itself was damaged and if not, how they possibly managed to get it back to its proper position.

"Swoosh" was the only warning you received, for a split second, before the explosion that could rip off an arm or leg or open a stomach to display the corded intestines. Bullets could be nasty or neat, but the mortars were never neat and I feared them more that any other weapon. After July and August 1950, we were constantly in the mountains. Enemy tanks were not a concern and we were not subjected to much heavy artillery. However, the Koreans and the Chinese seemed to have tens of thousands of mortars and an unlimited supply of shells. Murphy's Law should have warned me that when my wounds would come, they would be from a mortar round—and so they did. The mantle of heroism was sought by none and acquired by many in the daily tasks of fighting, winning,

and saving the others in your unit. If individual acts could have been segmented out and illustrated to the public, heroes would have been produced by the thousands. The timing of your actions and the importance of the results were always what brought forth the big medals. More important than medals were the efforts you advanced that saved your buddies' lives or the key action that saved the hill. Your reward was the knowledge that you had saved others, just as you know they would have saved you had the situation been reversed.

Our first lieutenant was O.C.S. created. After his speedy death, a West Pointer who was a real dud replaced him. All of his men considered him a danger to himself and prayed for his early demise. He was even saluted on the front line in the hope that a sniper would take the hint. He lived a charmed life until one night, under a probing attack, when a grenade rolled into his hole and he died in the best tradition of the Point. His successor was a mustang, which means that he had received a battlefield commission. He had served throughout World War II and our receiving him turned out to be a stroke of luck that saved many lives.

Our trip back through Seoul was painful, particularly since the Al Jolson ponroon bridge had to be blown. We had been told that Mr. Jolson was warned that a visit to the troops in Korea could mean losing his life. I guess that he was a good soldier since he came and entertained the troops anyway.

One of my greatest impressions was the feeling of pity for the thousands of refugees, like an undulating flow along the highway, particularly the little children. Many soldiers, including myself, went cold because we had thrown our blankets to the kids. I saw so many GI blankets along the refugee column that I wondered if Eighth Army had any blankets left. The worst of the winter weather saw several fighting withdrawals by Eighth Army. We were convinced that we were

heading back to the Pusan Perimeter again. This time, we had better have ships to take us off. We had no illusions about beating the Chinese. They came at us by the thousands and shortly after hitting our front, they were going around both of our flanks. They came in waves and there was no stopping them. We gradually learned their procedures of controlling their troop movements with blasts of their bugle. God, how we hated to hear the damn things. We had to hand one thing to the damn Chinese; they were excellent soldiers, the best that I have ever seen.

How could an all loving and all caring God allow such ungodly killing to go on? Couldn't He bring down immense storms to stop the war? There had been enough blood spilled already to float a battleship and there was no end in sight.

My belief in God was self-induced as neither of my parents went to church and the only time I had seen the inside of a church was a church social box lunch. I went because I wanted to bid on a certain girl's box lunch. I was outbid and she ate with someone else. My only association with religion was a Bible that I found in a house we had moved into. I must admit that my first reading of it was because we had nothing else to read. Like a seed, once planted, it began to grow. I studied it more and more. My initial conclusion was that a faith that so many were willing to die for had to be accurate and worthwhile.

While I was in Seattle waiting for my overseas shipment, a young lady took me to mass in a Catholic Church. I couldn't understand a bit of it, but it cerrainly was impressive.

Combat in Korea brought back the belief and the appeals to God. Whenever a Chaplain was on the backside of the hill, we took turns and went to services. We didn't ask if he was Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish; we only knew that he worked for the Boss that we were praying to each day and we wanted to be on best terms with Him. I prayed for my survival each night and for the survival of my men, and I made many

promises to God. I hope I have lived up to them. I always said a special prayer each time I saw a GI's body rolled up in a blanket. I prayed that the young man had gone to live under the loving care of God.

While I was a bed patient at Murphy Army Hospital, I decided to join a church and asked to see the Catholic Chaplain. He came to see me and started me on a program of instructions. In 1953, I was baptized at Our Lady of the Afflicted Catholic Church in Waltham, Massachusetts. I try to be a good Christian by treating my fellow man as I hope my Savior will treat me. I chastise myself from time to time for not being better.

General Walton Walker, Eighth Army commander, certainly proved his ability in the perimeter campaign. He was constantly shifting his limited reserves from threatened point to more threatening point, and the fact that it was successful was an accomplishment probably beyond the talent of his military peers. His death in a jeep-truck accident saddened all of Eighth Army and we were fearful of what the future could hold. Well, it seems that the great World War II that produced him also prepared his successor.

As improving weather gave us hope for spring, the military gave us a blessing; they assigned a new Eighth Army Commander, General Matthew Ridgway. Like Patton's pearl-handled pistols, this general had his trademark also. It was grenades hooked to his suspenders. When we heard what he looked like, we wondered if he wore the grenades to bed. The laughing about him soon stopped as he stopped Eighth Army's retrograde movements and started attacking in several areas. Before we knew it, we had the momentum again and were kicking Chinese ass every day.

Some potential future songwriter came up with a little ditty containing more humor than malice. It went as follows:

We will reach the Yalu;
there will be no ifs or buts.
We will do it with GI blood
and Ridgway's guts.

Actually, there was a bit of affection for Matthew because he had given us back our pride and turned us back into tigers. Then we went into the phase-line portion of the Korean War, going from phase-line Utah to phase-line Omaha, et cetera. With the weather improving as we approached spring and with us on the attack, everyone's spirit was elevated. Make no mistake about it; this was no cakewalk since there was a price in infantry bodies that the Chinese charged us for each hill. One hill took us three days to capture because the other two battalions had pushed up the flank ridges until they threatened to cut off the Chinese retreat. Many were killed and wounded on that hill, including men from my unit. A helicopter was called in for evacuation of a seriously wounded man. The chopper pilot could not set it down because of the steep slope and also because of occasional mortar rounds landing on that slope. The pilot had to hover above the ground so that his rotors could clear, also where the medics could still get the wounded man into the pod. I'm sure the difference between success and crash for the chopper was a matter of a couple of feet of elevation. God love him, that pilot had the guts of Alvin York. He got the patient out and hopefully the patient survived.

The ledge where I set up the gun was probably a good six hundred yards below the further height of the final peak. Two-thirds up and mid-slope was a formidable looking bunker and although it was mostly camouflaged, a communication trench could be seen from both sides of the bunker. It formed the shape of a smile arching back to the summit.

When the first two squads rushed out to try securing the bunker, they were quickly destroyed. A half dozen were still lying out there dead or badly wounded. Our gun was provid-

ing covering fire and within a period of fifteen minutes, we had three gunners wounded. They all had shoulder wounds. I took over the gun, and keeping my head well behind the water jacket, I continued to fire at the bunker and along the communication trenches. Nothing seemed to lower the rate of return automatic fire. I switched my fire to a patch of woods well to the right of the bunker, but before I could make an evaluation, I was literally pulled off the gun. The man who grabbed the gun was sobbing, "Those are my men out there and I have to get them back. They're going to die if I don't get them back." All the while, he was sitting up behind the gun making a great target. In less than a minute, he was struck by several bullets and flew backwards with a grunt. My first thought was, *The stupid bastard deserved it,* but then I realized that his concern for his men had driven him into a frenzy that robbed him of common sense. His fate was more disturbing because in just a few minutes, we were ordered to withdraw. The people that we left behind were assumed dead. Why we weren't able to apply some artillery fire is a question that I cannot answer.

The M1 was a fantastic weapon. If it was filthy, all you had to do was shake it around in a puddle and it would fire. The carbine was a light weapon and was fun to fire, but it was highly susceptible to dirt and it just didn't have the killing power. With the carbine, unless you hit a bone or a definite killing spot, you couldn't stop a charging Korean. When you hit one, with a round from the M1, he was going down. There was one shortfall of the M1, however. When the clip was emptied and it ejected from the rifle, it made a very loud noise that the Koreans learned to take advantage of. While you were extracting another clip from your cartridge belt and inserting it into the lock in position, you were using enough time for the enemy to approach and do his dirty work. The solution was easy and was we learned fast. While one man reloaded, his buddy rose and fired, giving no opportunities to the enemy.

The individual weapon on the crew was a side arm, generally a .45-caliber. I lacked confidence in it, so I lugged the M1 with me up and down the mountain. Like a member of a loving family, the M1 would never let you down.

The .30-caliber water-cooled machine gun was an awesome weapon. It had a firing rate of 750 rounds per minute and it could cut down men just like a mower cutting grass. In a firefight, when I would commence firing the gun, the pistol butt would start slamming my hand. I would scream like a crazy man and when the firefight was over, I would be so hoarse that I could hardly speak. The Chinese learned a lesson, just as the British learned during the battle of the Somme in World War I. In one day, the British had fifty thousand casualties from German machine gun fire—so, the Chinese learned the same lesson.

Our lieutenant was appalled at the procedures for the machine gun platoon. In our first rest area, he stuck his neck way out and told the battalion commander that the system was a widow maker and a unit destroyer. He demanded the opportunity to put on a display that would prove his point. On the face of a small knoll, the officers gathered to watch the display. First, he had us put a gun into action using present procedures. We all rushed up to the skyline at the top of the knoll. The first gunner leaned over and placed the light tripod, the second gunner mounted the gun, and the ammo bearers milled around, depositing their cans of ammo. With all this manpower grouped at the gun position, it was obviously a tempting display for enemy fire.

Next, he had us do it his way. The first gunner ran to just below the crest, extended the tripod, and placed it into position. The second gunner extended the gun and locked it into position. Both men were barely exposed and neither at the same time. The first ammo bearer reached up from the prone position and extended the first box of ammunition. The bal-

ance of the ammo bearers tossed him their cans, one at time. It was an operation of precision and beauty and went over very well.

Then he dropped the next bombshell. He said that his men were commanded by him to refuse to open a firefight as had been expected before. He pointed out that the machine gun, properly used, could save a company. If used stupidly, it could lose a company. He stated that the moment a machine gun opens up, the enemy must destroy it or their attack will fail. Therefore, the guns should never fire until that crucial moment when the line was in danger of being breached. At that point, the machine gun could be the deciding factor in a matter of seconds.

All of this made so much sense and was so obvious that we were confident, as we watched them leave, that they must agree. They did agree, but I think they were unhappy that the demonstration had also made them look stupid.

The attack up the valley followed the road and moved slowly so the units on both sides of the road could keep up. This made me nervous from the beginning. First, going down the road in the open seemed very risky. It also seemed too risky for the supporting units to be talking on the radio. When the road could be seen from each ridge, why were we going up the middle in broad daylight? There was a bit of a rise at the other end of the valley with trees on both sides of the road. We couldn't see if there was anyone in the woods, but if there was, they could see us from over a mile away. It must be wonderful to be in charge and make such clever decisions. As we approached closer, without a sound, our advanced platoon reached the wood line and we all began to breathe easier. Then, shots rang out with high volume and intensity and everyone hit the deck. We couldn't see the action, but we heard enough to realize that there was a good-sized force in the woods. Several mortar rounds that barely missed the front of the Rifle Company followed the enemy fire. There were times

when we would lose it and this was one of those times. I screamed, "Let's get the hell out of here" and then started to get to my feet. Bob's open hand hit me alongside my head. I saw stars as well as how close I had come to making a complete ass of myself. Moments later, the word came up to withdraw. Our advance platoon was pulling back from the woods. One of the sergeants with a sixty mortar with just the base and tube would hold the tube with his hands and fire a couple of rounds. He would pull back to the other side of the paddy, set up again on the wall, and fire again. He continued this for several minutes and probably deserves the credit for our limited number of casualties. I had completely recovered my composure by this time and I was so happy that Bob had rapped me on the head. I owe you one, Bob!

The second gunner sharing my gun hole developed a major problem. He had such severe cramps of his bowel that emptying it became a necessity. The problem was that the whole ridge was exposed to enemy fire and leaving your hole probably meant leaving this life. He finally thought of a solution to this problem. He removed the helmet liner from his helmet, sat on it, and let go. When the smelly job was done, he tossed the liner out on a slant to roll it down the mountain. It was a clever move and he was quite proud of it, but then we were ordered to pull off the hill. As he ran, his steel helmet rapped him in the front and then in the back of the head with every jump. He had one hell of a headache by the time we reached the highway. There was a helmet lying by a body rolled up in a blanket and the helmet liner, though it had a bullet hole through it, solved his problem.

The lieutenant and twenty-three men stopped, covered their back trail, and fought to catch their breath. The mad and somewhat crazy dash from the ambush site had been more the product of instinct rather than that of a thought out plan. Checking weapons and ammo supplies occupied the next few minutes. Everyone looked to the lieutenant for instructions.

He seemed to be totally involved in scanning the landscape. Suddenly, we leaped to an alert position as a group of five more GIs virtually ran into us. Thankfully, no one had put too much pull on a trigger. Confusion turned quickly to impressed silence as everyone noted that there was an officer in this latest group. The heads all swung to him and one man voiced the concerns of everyone, "What the hell do we do now, Sir?" The officer, possibly a paper man, just looked confused. After a full minute, he replied that there was nothing that could be done except to surrender. He asked if anyone had a white cloth. The lieutenant looked at him with total disgust and said, "The only way that the Chinese are getting us is to grab our dead bodies. I thought, *If I have a choice of dying in a firefight or in a stinking prison camp, then bring on the Chinese.* The officer sat down in the snow and held his head in his hands, rocking back and forth, emitting little sobs. The last that we saw of him, he was still moaning. The lieutenant's plan was simple and basic, but everyone thought that it made sense. The slope that we were on was a real high one, so we had to go around. Around to the left was the highway side, so the chinks were probably massed there. The saddle to the right was possibly clear. We needed to run the minute we drew fire and could not stop for anything. If we stopped for wounded, they would have us. We were told, "Don't fire unless they're blocking our way." The lieutenant, in typical fashion, stated that he would lead and instructed us not to worry about bunching up, as mortars were probably the least of our worries at that moment. We hurried without running until the first firing began. To everyone in the group, what followed was a running, falling, rising, screaming, and sliding crazy mix of horror. After probably a thousand yards and without doubt in excess of everyone's physical ability, the panic stricken group literally collapsed in the snow. Everyone examined every bit of his body for wounds. It was unbelievable, but no one was hit. The lieutenant had two bullet holes through the side of his

field jacket and the stock of his rifle was shattered. He ended the party by reminding us that the Chinese could run too. We needed to get the hell out of there. It was bitter cold. Who cared? We were hungry. Who cared? We were lost. Who cared? We were alive, we were free, and we were heading south. Best of all, we were with the lieutenant several days before we made contact with organized forces. Mostly what we ran into was other fragmented groups like ours.

I should mention a weird thing about the machine gun platoon. We watched the infantry going forward on the attack and we were so thankful that it wasn't us. The infantry, in turn, knowing of our casualty rate, stated that they wanted no part of our operation. The command that would be passed back, that we dreaded, was "Mike machine guns forward." We heard it many, many times.

Most of our rations and ammunition were brought up to us on a mountain by Korean laborers, or "chuggie bearers," as we called them. The loads that these laborers could carry on their A-frames were unbelievable and shortly after securing a hill, we could look forward to new supplies of food and ammo. These people had awesome development of their leg muscles and they seemed to climb the highest mountains with ease. I hope that we paid them well because they certainly were major contributors to our successes.

Early in the war, we received a lot of "K" rations. These rations were meant for survival only, in my judgment, as they certainly failed to impress anyone with their appearance of flavor. One impressive feature was that their age was mostly mid World War II. Age helps most wines, but seemed to do little for this garbage.

Now, a word about the famous "C" rations. The activity on Wall Street has never matched the trading level of the entrees from these rations. I personally preferred beans and frankfurter chunks, but unfortunately, these were very popular. The next critical lesson learned was to place your can on

the side of the fire and turn it often. The famous bulge rule governed from there. The can, as it heated, would bulge and recede. The third bulge was the signal to remove it quickly. Failure to remove it promptly would guarantee that beans would be dripping off your nose. One added problem was the survival rule associated with the necessary fire to heat rations. We had to use small and very dry wood for minimum smoke, we had to have total daylight, and we had to be on the backside of the hill location. These were all crucial to avoid a gook mortar round directed at any detectable smoke. If you were unable to comply with these rules, you ate it cold because life is more important than taste.

One day, with two companies attacking two fingers from a ridge, we were attached to the Reserve Company on the back slope. We could hear a lot of mortar explosions, and then we could see a file of walking wounded going back past us. Of course, it was obvious that we would soon get the call. Just a few feet away, the Rifle Company commander was resting against a tree. Suddenly, he started to cry. Imagine our shock. This man had been in the Big War and had, in the several months with his company, demonstrated outstanding courage dozens of times. A couple of medics rushed over, rolled him onto a litter, and rushed him down the hill. There was a long silence while no one wanted to break the silent grief. I guess that he had one fear too many, one day too many, and battle too many.

How did we prepare a welcome mat for our friends, the Chinese? The great defensive features of mines, concertina wire, and flares were wonderful, but required time to prepare. Often in the defense, we enjoyed these features. First, we sent a couple down a ways on the front slope for early warning as they dug foxholes and prepared defenses. Location of the machine gun sections was a critical decision because the enemy's most probable approach routes and our best fields of fire had to be considered. Aiming stakes had to be secured so

that the guns could not be traversed right or left far enough to endanger our own riflemen. Good grenade throwing distance down the hill was a good place to run a wire across the front with cans attached with small stones inside. The slightest movement would produce a nice warning. One of my favorites was the grenade tube special. Necessary tools were wire, a firm anchor at each end of the area to be covered, and of course, the grenade and its tube. We fastened the wire to the anchor on the left and ran the wire at about knee height across the area to the other anchor. We removed the tape from the grenade tube so that the top could be removed. The grenade was removed and we attached the tube in a horizontal position facing the left. Then, we tied the wire around the neck of the grenade. Finally, we removed the pin and slipped the grenade back into the tube so that the handle was held in position.

Now, if the enemy came up slowly and pushed the wire, the grenade would make a slow arch to greet him. If he rushed, the grenade would fly to his location and perhaps land in his pocket.

The mountain was high, but the report that it was free of Chinese made the climbing more agreeable. After little more than four hours, the summit was just ahead. The next moment, all hell rained down on our company. Not only did the Chinese control the mountain, but there were also lots of them.

When forces were re-aligned on a lower shelf, the old man called for artillery support and in just a few minutes, shells were raining down on the summit including air bursts, which were colorful and very effective.

The second climb was greeted with an occasional shot, but the lead platoon quickly secured the summit. The whole event prepared us to understand that our intelligence information was not intelligent.

A few men were quickly sent down the back slope for listening posts and the rest of us dug in as rapidly as possible

since we were sure the Koreans would counter attack rapidly. We went from one hundred percent alert to fifty percent and then back to one hundred percent alert to fifty percent and then back to one hundred percent in the early morning. All remained quiet and we were surprised and happy to see daylight coming over the hill instead of Koreans.

The first thing after securing a new mountain and digging in the defensive positions was to register the approaches to our positions. After you have coverage of the front, you know exactly where the rounds are going to hit when you call for them and you can eliminate an attacking force. One of the artillery things that impressed me the most was air bursts. If we were trying to take a hill and it proved difficult, we pulled back a bit and called for some air bursts over their defensive areas and then after the designated number were fired, we were up there kicking ass until the hill was ours.

I have a very high regard for the artillery, not only for their effectiveness, which was often critical to success, but also because many times during the Korean War, artillery perimeters were attacked by the break through of enemy forces. The gunners had to double as infantrymen. And many times, they had firefights with North Koreans and fired supportive fire for our front line at the same time. God love them, they saved us many times and I hope that their lives have been happy and that the government has been supportive of their needs.

After two more hills, we were pulled back for a five-day reserve. Oh, how wonderful. No period on and off, no one hundred percent alert, no fifty percent alert, just sleep, sleep, sleep, and wonderful sleep. Add to that bonus, we received hot food and plenty of it. Surely, we had died and gone to heaven. Of course, the five days passed in what seemed to be five hours and then we were back at the front.

The second section of the machine gun platoon, at full strength, called for two squads of eight men and the section sergeant for a total of seventeen men. We had a shortage of five

men at the time we first heard that President Truman had called for a complete integration of all blacks into white infantry units to bring them up to full fighting strength.

We were at the base of a mountain when five blacks were brought up to me to join the second section. I instructed them to fall into line in the column and told them that they would be assigned to their respective squads when we set up on the mountain. Four of these new men were of slight build and the fifth was stocky and much heavier. They began to suffer from the beginning and I responded to their moans with instructions to not look up. I told them to keep their eyes on the ground and just keep putting one foot in front of the other. The moaning and complaining continued and finally, they said they could not make it. I told them that this was normal for everyone and that they had to continue putting one foot in front of the other. It was nearly a four-hour climb and they protested all the way, but along with the rest of us, they made it to the top. While we were catching our breath, one of the black youngsters came to me and said that the stocky guy was hanging down. I didn't have a clue as to what he was talking about and told him to slow down and tell me again. He said the whole bottom of the guy's stomach was hanging down. What I saw shocked me terribly because I realized that although I wasn't familiar with the medical terminology of what I was looking at, I realized that it was very serious. I called for a medic. When he arrived, he took a quick look and organized a litter team to evacuate him from the hill. I apologized to the guy and asked him why he hadn't said anything. He said that he didn't want to be a baby and bother me. I resolved to pay a lot more attention in the future when people complained of pain.

My section was made up of men from the south and that area was, at that time, inflamed with prejudices. I was never more aware of that hatred than when my people displayed hatred for these blacks. One of our men told them that if he

was hit, none of them should go to his aid since he would rather die than owe his life to a black man. I was shocked at this raw hatred. Blacks were scarce in upstate New York and we had no hatred for them or any other group.

My rebels informed the blacks that everyone looking forward was friendly and would not be shot and everyone going south was the enemy and would be shot. When it came time for the blacks to come on the gun because of massive wounded, they took their turns and performed as well as the rest.

A few days later, we were waiting for a new assignment with a rifle company. We were just about a mile south of the Imjin River. It was nearly dark when we got the orders to move up. The old man said that we were going to replace a company from the Fifth Regiment that was on a ridge about a mile north of the Imjin. Replacing another company in the dark was a pain in the ass. The next ridge was not very far away and with all the slipping, falling, and cursing involved with the exchange, the enemy helped speed up the process with their mortar rounds.

In early March, we captured a few Chinese and one of them told a story of how they had captured a 75 mm recoilless rifle and managed to get it loaded. Perhaps a dozen Chinese stood behind the weapon to observe its first round, which was fired at its former owners. The weapon was fired and the lethal back blast killed a half-dozen of them and mangled the others. The prisoner was given a can of beans because he had made our day. The mountain was more of an enemy than the Chinese force holding it.

My God, what a climb! It was the end of the day when a quick rush and heavy fire secured the summit. People literally dropped in their tracks with a heavy chorus of panting that went on for several minutes until everyone had restored normal breathing. Although we should have been ordered to dig in right away, we were allowed a further wonderful rest.

The counter attack was on us before anyone was aware of its existence. One of the first to go down was the rifle company commander who had attracted attention to himself while rushing about screaming orders. The night folded about us long before the firefight ended. The machine guns could not be used because we were in the midst of the riflemen and we would have been mowing down our own men. It was now hand-to-hand combat and bayonets were being used, along with screams that matched the screams of the wounded and dying. I became aware of a body lurching toward me rapidly and I quickly thrust my bayonet. The collision nearly knocked me down. The movement ceased after some light moaning. As the action drew to a close, everyone started digging and looking after the wounded. Evacuation possibilities were considered for the wounded and then discarded because there were Chinese all over the hill. The company commander was wounded in several places and his only chance was to be carried off. He must have screamed for three hours until he finally died.

We waited and expected another attack probably just before dawn, their favorite time. I waited for daylight to view the body lying in front of me. I prayed that I had not bayoneted a GI. First light displayed a very dead body in a quilted Chinese uniform.

About twenty-five percent of the company was dead or wounded. It was a heavy price to pay for a lax minute and certainly was an error that should not be repeated. Most of the killing was done by people you hardly saw or didn't see at all and this mix-master operation against Koreans right in amongst you produced a certain level of shock, even looking at the bodies in the morning. Some of the riflemen were going through the pockets and the one in front of me had a family picture. I thought, *Better him than me.*

The noise was real and our response was rapid and smart because not one round was fired, but at least a basket of hand

grenades was thrown to the spot about thirty yards down the slope that marked the area where the movement had occurred. Ears were strained for some time, but silence had returned to the front slope. The rest of the night at fifty-percent alert was uneventful. As soon as the morning light was bright enough, three men were dispatched down the slope to check. They reported within a few minutes that they had viewed the casualty and that it was a small deer, which was only slightly larger than a big dog. The brush in the area was close cropped and there wasn't enough of the deer left to make a hamburger. A few weeks later, we relieved another company on the hill and they gave us a couple of cases of grenades that they didn't want to lug off the hill. A couple of hours later, word came down from the command post that we were going to advance in the morning. After a distribution of the grenades to everyone's satisfaction, the balance was used up with a series of noises during the night. You see, we didn't want to lug the balance of them either.

A couple of days later and another high ridge to the north, we found ourselves looking out on a plain that seemed to extend for miles to the north. It was only a couple of hours before dark when we first saw what appeared to be millions of Chinese. As the overwhelming size of the Chinese attack became obvious, a soldier jumped to his feet and started running away, screaming all the way. His platoon leader shouted for him to halt and then shouted the command two more times, firing after the third command. Two rounds hit the frenzied soldier, killing him in his tracks. It was obvious that the lieutenant was within his rights because of the danger of mass hysteria by the troops.

I heard later that the same officer, leading a charge against a Chinese roadblock behind the Fifth Combat Team, was shot in the back and killed. The kid's buddy had done what he felt he had to do.

When the British unit joined us at the apple orchard, they were a remarkable sight. They came up the road with their flashy kilts and bony knees and in perfect cadence with their piper, who led the column. Some of our people found the sight humorous, but I was tremendously impressed. These people were in their late twenties and just exuded professionalism in their every move.

Cooking and baking facilities were made available to them and soon the smell of fresh bread and other goodies wafted around the area. Later in the evening, they invited several of us to join them in celebration of a rum ration that they had just received. They were just super nice people, although some of their English was difficult to understand, due to their accents. The only interruption in the pleasantries was when one of our guys stated how funny the knobby knees looked as they came up the road. One of the Brits delivered him a knuckle sandwich and that was the end of the laughter.

Later, when the spring offensive started, these same men acquired the same stature as the "Light Brigade," with a display of courage never equaled by anyone. When Eighth Army's line fell back about twenty miles to pre-pared positions, the one exception was the English at Gloucester Hill. They continued to hold until they were out of ammunition. We were told that the survivors were divided into three groups under the control of the three surviving officers and had selected different routes to attempt to regain allied lines. When the one group made it to our front, we fired because we thought they were the enemy. Some very loud and colorful screams cleared up the mistake and they were helped with their wounded. We were horrified that we had fired on these people and asked the Brits how many people had been hit. They refused to answer the question and simply asked for hot tea and assurances that their wounded would be cared for. Thank God that they were on our side.

The battalion commander had a temporary command post right behind our machine gun position and I could hear him as he pleaded with the regimental commander on the radio for permission to withdraw to prepared positions in the rear.

My machine gun section was attached to Item Company. The ridge that we occupied was the highest, with Love Company on the next highest ridge to the east and King Company was in the saddle connecting the two peaks. The Chinese attacked the most vulnerable, King Company's saddle position. It took several waves to finally knock them off. The next part was a nightmare. We could plainly hear the screaming as the Chinese bayoneted the wounded. We were on one hundred percent alert all night. Except for a couple of probing patrols that withdrew after setting off flares and mines, the night was quiet. We continued to withhold our fire so that the Chinese couldn't get our position.

With morning light, the battalion commander received his orders to withdraw. We moved down the ridge to the left with only one open area subject to fire. It was an area of a couple hundred yards and we traversed it at a dead run, one man at a time. The man ahead of me seemed to stumble a bit as he was crossing, but his rapid movement to the road at the bottom of the ridge convinced me that he was all right. Imagine my surprise at the bottom when I saw him leaning against a tree with the whole front of his shirt soaked in blood. We moved in good time back south on the highway for approximately ten miles to prepared positions that were awesome. Meanwhile, our Air Force was blowing the Chinese to hell with 250-pound bombs, rockets, napalm, and .50-caliber machine guns. Later, we heard that the first twenty-four hours of their spring offensive cost the Chinese fifty thousand dead. They came at us for three more days and on the final day, 25 April, they managed to take me out of the war.

Shortly after the beginning of the firefight, two infantrymen from a foxhole to the right of our gun demonstrated why you should never put two green men in the same hole. About one hundred yards to our direct front down the slope, was something that gave me concern. A large tree had fallen directly down the hill. The root structure, with large amounts of dirt, made a fan shaped structure that was probably eight feet across. This made a perfect shield for an enemy approach. My second gunner would occasionally throw down a grenade to guard against Koreans crawling by and up the hill. The guys in the hole to our right were obviously nervous about this dandy hiding place, so they decided to throw an illuminating grenade down there. Apparently, the one who threw it did not want to expose his upper torso since he must have thrown it from down in the hole. It hit the front lip of his hole, rolled a few feet, and then exploded. Suddenly, we were as exposed as if we were on Fifth Avenue with its thousands of lights. Another problem was that we had a new gun hole that was only about waist deep. It couldn't have been more than a couple of minutes when we heard the first mortar tound thump as it was fired. It struck on the front slope. Seconds later, a second thump was heard as round two was fired. That one fell on the back slope directly to our rear. I heard the thump of the third round and seconds later, I was floating in an orange cloud. Shortly after, consciousness returned to me and was followed with the feeling of a hot poker going through my chest. That's how it felt to be hit, but the good part was very little consciousness to have to suffer through. The medic was crying because he was out of just about everything, including morphine surrettes. Believe me, medics take their jobs seriously and they were some of the greatest heroes in Korea.

The column moved down the road slowly as the wounded supported and assisted one another to make each tortured

step. The powerful incentive for each step was the further removal from the killing and the reception of care—giving, loving arms that were waiting somewhere ahead.

Suddenly, the line froze in step as a large group of Koreans was spotted coming down the road toward them. Panic gripped them as each man noted the lack of weapons anywhere in the group. The one exception was a kid from New Jersey who was carrying a carbine. This guy had been talking with his family and friends back home in Jersey, and the shrapnel in the side of his head had removed him from the others mentally, if not physically.

When an attempt was made to take the carbine from him, it was discovered that he had a death grip on it and his fingers could not be pried loose. A suggestion was made to cut his fingers off with a trench knife to secure the weapon. Before this could be done, the Koreans suddenly took a left turn down to the Imjin and started to cross the river, stepping from rock to rock. Apparently, they were "chuggie bearers" carrying supplies up to some unit up on the mountain.

After passing the next bend of the road, a group of our tanks came into view. They were fairly close to one another and were dug in by the rear to elevate the guns for use as artillery. They were not firing at the moment, and many tankers stood around watching the walking wounded coming down the road, but none made a move to assist in any way. One of them moved a bit to the side, dropped his pants, and started to relieve himself while watching the wounded, with interest, all the time. Another five hundred yards and we approached an intersection with another dirt road to the left. At this same moment, three jeeps approached and its occupants, upon seeing the wounded, stopped and assisted them aboard. Who would have dreamed that so many persons could be placed on a jeep? Picture three persons lying across the hood. These vehicles were from the triple nickel and their drivers were fantastic people. They slowed even slower, crossed

the Imjin River, and proceeded to the Aid Station that was a short distance further. With the arrival at the station, to the waiting arms of the medics, the steam ran out of the group. The adrenaline that had pushed us beyond endurance stopped its flow and they collapsed. God is merciful and God is good.

At Battalion Aid when they cut off my field jacket and my pile jacket, huge balls of coagulated blood rolled out. After being loaded into the ambulance, I soon determined that the damn thing didn't have any springs. Every bump generated huge pain. I guess I was a baby with pain since I was moaning a lot. The guy riding next to the driver asked me what in the hell was the matter. He wanted to know if I got a shot. Before I could respond, he checked my casualty tag and a shot had not been recorded, although I knew that they had given me one. I didn't say a thing because I wanted another. This was a big mistake. I found that you do not want to throw up multiple times when you have a hole in your chest. I then went to sleep.

Jutlandia
(The Heavenly Stay)

MY FIRST consciousness returned in a M.A.S.H. (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) hospital at Suwon Air Base where they were treating me and waiting for an evacuation plane to take me to K9 Field in Pusan. Shortly after, I gazed around the large tent and noticed that the guy in the bunk to my right was looking very pale. A corpsman came in with a shepherd's crook stand and a plastic bag of plasma. He approached me and swabbed the inside of my right arm. I told him that the man to my right needed it more than me. He said, "Shut the fuck up. He's dead." So much for my brief experience with M.A.S.H. I was flown to K9 Field in Pusan, which I don't remember, then by rail down to the wharf, which I also don't remember, and onto the Danish Hospital Ship, *Jutlandia,* which was a blur.

The nurses on the *Jutlandia* were truly angels of mercy. They gave us our penicillin shots in our front thigh muscles. They gave us the shots in a slow, gentle manner; they were so sweet and beautiful that we just gritted our teeth and kept on smiling. Most of them didn't understand English, but they sure recognized dirty or swear words. One of the corpsman spoke and wrote letters for those of us who, because of our

wounds or supportive equipment, were not able to write our own. I had him write to my mother, assuring her that I was in good shape and doing fine. What a mistake! My mother, seeing that it was not in my handwriting, was instantly convinced that I had lost one or both of my arms. The best of intentions can mess up badly.

When I was taken up to surgery, I was in a doped up condition, but two things stick out in my memory. First, I was held to a fluoroscope machine and could see my own bones along with the piece of shrapnel that had gone through my right lung. It's a weird sensation to see your own bones. The next image concerned an old surgeon who slowly fashioned a cotton-trimmed probe and dipped it in a solution. I fully expected him to coat the area surrounding the hole in my chest. My scream and swears when he pushed it into the hole was cut off by blessed unconsciousness.

A young ranger lieutenant lay in a bunk in the center of the ship's ward. He had a breathing tube in his throat and was suffering from both head and chest wounds. He was in and out of consciousness for a couple of weeks. With every breath during his conscious periods, he cursed his captain, the Army, and the United States government. It seems that his commanding officer of the Ranger Company, positioned several thousand yards in front of the Eighth Army line, decided that when he saw the waves of Chinese approaching his position, they should hold, regardless of the cost, to allow more warning time for the main line. Their stand lasted only a short time and only a few men managed to survive and reach the line. Some of them were wounded. Their stand was heroic, but was it well advised? Certainly, our young lieutenant, who died after two weeks and Herculean efforts by the surgical staff, was convinced that his men had died for nothing. We were shocked at hearing his verbal hatred for the U.S. although we shared it to some degree.

The drainage needle that they had placed in my back to drain my chest cavity seemed to produce only pink bubbles, but the nurses approved, so I assumed that it was working well.

One of my humorous memories of the hospital ship concerned the nurses. There was apparently no recovery room, so patients were returned directly from surgery and placed back in their bunks. As the anesthesia commenced to wear off, the patients would issue a lot of verbal material containing some very colorful language as only soldiers can do. As soon as it became apparent that consciousness was returning and the language would start, the nurses would scurry off to the office, close the door, and drink tea until the soldier was fully awake. Of course, at that point, he would not use any of this talk in front of them.

The doctors decided it was best not to remove the shrapnel from my chest. They advised me that the present nerve involvement would be multiplied considerably by additional surgery. Leaving it where it was would do no harm. In fact, it would be perfectly safe to leave it. Therefore, as soon as they were convinced that all the blood had been drained from my chest cavity and there was little chance of any infection, they bid me farewell and I left with warm feelings for them and their country. I was soon returned to the zone of the interior, or in civilian language, the United States of America.

Murphy Army Hospital

(They restored my faith in my country.)

I ARRIVED at Bedford Air Base in Massachusetts, and was transported by ambulance to Murphy Army Hospital on Trapelo Road in Waltham, Massachusetts. It was to be my home for the next twenty-seven months and was the site of my meeting with a pretty, young lady who became my wife.

I had shrapnel in my right chest, back, and left arm; a puncture wound in my head; and 2 2/3 inches missing from my left upper femur. Murphy's surgeons had only to apply the right patches. Captain James Fisher was my doctor. He was cheerful, a practical joker, affectionate, a workaholic, and a medical genius. All of his patients loved him dearly.

The temporary wire-type splints holding my leg together were removed and after X-rays, I was rushed to the operating room for stabilizing surgery. When I awoke in the recovery ward, I was in a full body-spiker. This was a plaster cast from both fully spread legs to my chest, and even to my armpits. Only my toes extended from the cast. It was my second skin for seven months. I met dozens of wonderful guys there and I treasure my memories of them. I still converse with some of them today, forty-nine years later.

Murphy Army Hospital was a medical "Promised Land" with a staff of the very best, from Colonel Redland, the com-

mandant, down to the sweepers and particularly some loving nurses. Captain Fisher, my orthopedic surgeon, performed all of my many operations, including one for an ingrown toenail that had become infected. None of us will ever forget Dr. James Fisher. An example was demonstrated when at a surgeons' convention in New York, pictures of the group of surgeons appeared in the paper. Five veterans from the area, whom he had treated, recognized his picture, called, and begged for the chance to take him to lunch. I know that he worked on hundreds of patients and saved many arms and legs. A little irony—ten years later, an orthopedic surgeon pinned and stabilized a near compound fracture. That was my four-year-old son, Ray, Jr., and the surgeon was James Fisher. He was then a civilian in the firm of Fisher and Huff in Springfield, Massachusetts. At Murphy, Captain Fisher was always pulling hot-ticket escapades, which helped to keep patients' morale high. One of our super nice nurses was a rather stout lady by the name of Lepinsky. Captain Fisher would dance her around to her great consternation. She would protest loudly. "Stop, Captain Fisher, these patients won't have any respect for my rank." At that point, he would pull her close and say, "Don't fight it; it's bigger than both of us." Then he would leave, to the applause of all the patients. One day, as the captain was approaching a patient, Ernie Morin, he dictated into the machine, "Comment on Morin, hair pulls from patient's leg freely." He then grabbed some hair and pulled. He was a character and we treasured him. Another of our nurses had been awarded a Bronze Star for fighting through a roadblock in Korea with a carbine in order to get an ambulance of wounded through.

One of our patients, Teddy Rolf, won the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism. He looked like he wasn't over sixteen years old. He was a good friend and when I converted to Catholicism, he became my godfather. He was from Brooklyn, New York. Brooklyn certainly never had a finer soldier return

from war. Even though he had a thumb and finger missing from one hand and his body was loaded with shrapnel, his spirit never seemed to falter. One night, three of us patients were leaving Murphy for a couple of hours to have a few beers at the Hilltop, which was our favorite haunt. As we passed Teddy's ward, we saw him lying there with his leg up in skin traction. Our hearts were touched that we couldn't take him with us. After a few more steps down the hall, the question was asked, "Why can't we take him with us?" Getting him out of the skin traction wasn't as difficult for us as it was painful for him, with much of his hair coming off with the tape. We bunched a couple of pillows under his blanket to simulate a body, and then we placed Teddy into a wheel chair and hurried to the dock where I could back my car so that we could put him into the trunk. We told him that he would have enough air to get past the MPs at the gate and also enough air to get up the hill to the bar. At the Hilltop, we asked a couple of husky guys if they would carry our buddy into the bar. They agreed, went outside, and asked us where he was. We replied, to their surprise, that he was in the trunk. They carried him in and sat him on a stool. A salesman, sitting at the bar, who had made a substantial sale that day, informed the bartender that he didn't want to see that kid's glass get empty. When we left, using the same procedure, Teddy was nearly paralyzed. Back at Murphy, we didn't try to be quiet since we were positive that we would be caught. We returned him back to his bed, put him back in traction, and left. The following morning, the nurse pricked his finger to get a blood sugar count before going into surgery. It seemed that his blood sugar had achieved a new high. There was no surgery that day. My hope is that he married the prettiest girl in Brooklyn and that she was filthy rich.

Ernie became my best friend. He was easy-going and didn't have a self-indulgent bone in his body. His easy ways made him an excellent pawn for my humorous escapades and we

made a team that must have driven the hospital staff to consider applying for insanity treatment for themselves. Many nights, our beds were wheeled out to the hall for creating too many disturbances for the other patients. This was a terrible thing to do when we were obviously just trying to increase morale. We probably received our largest applause the evening of the fruit cocktail event. We were finishing our supper meal when Ernie asked me if I wanted my fruit cocktail. I asked him if he wanted it and he said, "Yes, I love fruit cocktail." The dish made a perfect flight and dipped at just the right moment. The image of the pieces of fruit rolling off his nose begged an encore and the whole ward, not to be outdone, joined in with fervor. It took a full half-hour for all the food to be cleaned off the walls.

The little guy next to Ernie had only one arm, so he wasn't able to match our abilities, but we had to give him a big "E" for effort. This young man had only a small stump left to his left arm. We all had very warm feelings for the little guy, not just for the loss of his arm, but because of the incident with his mother. His mother had come from Rhode Island to see him. He had been with us for some time and Rhode Island wasn't that far away, so we already held her in low esteem. Shortly after she arrived, she gave him a peck on the cheek and seated herself in majestic fashion next to his bed. She made our hate list of all time. He asked her, "Where's my girl? Didn't she come?" His mother replied, "No, she didn't. You can't blame her, can you?" The whole ward was dead silent for moments while many considered ways of murdering the bitch. She may have saved her life by exiting after only a few minutes and never returning. The little guy put up a brave front during the day, but shortly after lights out each night, we could hear him sobbing, sometimes for as long as one hour. Now I understand why our alcohol consumption increased markedly.

Harry Frost was a SIW (Self Inflicted Wound) patient. It seems that he decided that a carbine shot, in his thigh, would

be a quick and easy trip back to Vermont. Two problems interfered with his plan. First, he shot himself too high and created a nasty wound that bled a lot and totally restricted his movement. Second, the Chinese, after a brief firefight, took possession of the hill and Harry Frost. Although they did give a little food and drink, nothing more was provided. After five days, his former unit managed to re-take the hill and Harry. Aware of his actions, they gave him the SIW tag and sent him back to the U.S. At Murphy, he was treated as a pariah. No one spoke to him or assisted him in any way, except for the staff. Spare bits that we didn't need were projectiles to reign down upon him. Once, he asked for a bedpan. The nurse brought it and enclosed his bed with a privacy screen. One of the patients going by in his wheel chair stopped and gave a little tug on Harry's weight rope from his skin traction. The resulting mess to Harry's bed was spectacular. You see, it's not considered cruel to do these things if you are of those who have given nearly all and you're administering to one unwilling to give any.

Our deliveries of "joy juice" were delivered to the sun porch at the back of the ward and after the money and bottles were exchanged, the material was placed in Bony Butt's wheelchair. This guy was so skinny that plenty of room was left on both sides of his fanny to store the whisky. He would place it in the proper sequence and then wheel from bed to bed delivering the goodies. I kept my bottle inside my body cast and each morning, the corpsman would take my bedside thermos with him when he went to breakfast. After eating, he would fill the thermos with ice cubes and coke. Then, he would bring it back to me. I would pour from my bottle and, voila—I had Coke highs for the day. One evening, a nurse sat down by my bed as our cubicle enjoyed the showing of a Western movie. When the first reel was finished and the operator turned on

the light to mount the final reel, the nurse took one look at me and said, "Where in the hell did you get it? You see, Pal, you can have a few drinks when I'm on duty and it isn't a problem, but you had better offer me one whether I want it or not." She enjoyed a couple of drinks and told us that she had slept with every officer in the Bachelor Officers' Club. One of the patients pointed out the fact that the Chaplain had quarters in the Bachelor Officers Club, to which she replied, "That's right, he does." She was the nurse who had won the Bronze Star for heroism in Korea, and she was one hell of a great person.

Teddy had two young ladies coming in to see him several times a week. They had two major things in common—they were best friends and they were madly in love with Teddy. Teddy would take them out on the sun porch section and would post a person in the third section of the ward to watch for nurses or doctors. A loud whistle was necessary for warning. It also advised patients to turn around since the deck was occupied. The outstanding thing about that procedure was that one of the ladies would sit in a chair and watch television while Teddy had sex with the other. After having a cigarette, the girls would change position and the second girl would take her turn on the couch. Teddy was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and an article about his heroism appeared in *Reader's Digest.* It was amazing how the ladies flipped over him. One lady had cakes delivered to him regularly and gifts from other ladies poured in, to his amazement and delight. I imagine that Teddy felt that since he was a medic, it was his duty to take care of the needs of all these ladies. He was underage when he enlisted and so he stood to receive a bad discharge and would not be eligible for any benefits if this were disclosed. He went through medical training in Texas and then went to Korea where he was sent up a mountain to join a rifle company. Shortly after joining his new outfit, he was appalled

to see several men of an advancing unit hit and lying out there under fire. The fire was so intense that no one was able to go to them. That is, no one but Teddy. You see, in medical school, they tell you to go to the wounded and treat them. They don't offer instances where you need not do this. Teddy crawled out to them, dragged them back one by one, and placed them in a bunker. He treated their wounds, stopped the bleeding, and administered shots of morphine. The heavy mortar round that hit the bunker that minute killed all five of the wounded. Shrapnel showered Teddy's entire body, severed the thumb and index finger of his right hand, and one large piece went through his leg. So, in the first hour of the first day in combat, Teddy had produced the heroism that won him the D.S.C. and the acclaim of the country when he came home. How his age matter was resolved was a mystery, but all of his friends were so pleased that the Army realized that his actions required stretching the rules so that he could receive the benefits his actions, pain, and his long period of recovery certainly entitled him to.

We had a patient named Robby who was a reserved, gentle soldier; who was very proud of his corporal stripes. On a weekend leave to Amsterdam, New York, through no fault of his own, he returned one half hour past his allowed time. He was charged as AWOL and the result was that of a young man without corporal stripes. Rob, during the balance of his stay at Murphy Army Hospital, had thirteen court-martials with a maximum penalty of death. There was one significant thing about these court-martials; Rob won them all. Most of his minor charges involved fights and the legal officer at the hospital got him off all of them. The incident of the general court-martial started in innocent fashion. Rob was playing a pinball machine. He had lifted the end piece, pried up the glass, and continued to contact a bumper until he had racked up the maximum count of free games. He had only one more game to play when "Dick Tracy" told him that he had to shut

it down as he was closing up. Dick Tracy was a civilian policeman employed by the hospital. He was a bit of a power hungry, conceited ass, which was the reason that the patients referred to him Dick Tracy. Rob stated that had he had only one game left and then he would shut it down. Dick Tracy reached over, shook the machine, and tilted it. When the first MPs arrived, Dick Tracy was against the wall in a seated position and was only partially conscious. His face was like hamburger and Rob was continuing to form it into patties. The initial group of MPs was unable to contain him and they had to call for more support. They finally clubbed him into submission and dragged him down to a cell. When the day of the court-martial dawned, the Military Police brought Rob from his cell and seated him at the table in front of the area where the board would be seated. Soon, the legal officer who was assigned to his defense joined him. Dick Tracy and his attorney also arrived. Dick Tracy's attorney informed him that he must testify against Rob or his job would be in jeopardy. Rob told Dick Tracy that if he testified, he would die. Dick Tracy refused to testify and the board had to find Rob innocent of the charges brought against him.

The next serious charge against Rob could have cost him his life. The first thing was the scene observed by the nurse as she stepped out of her office. Rob was standing over a young Irish kid who was a bed patient in our ward. He somehow ticked Rob off. Rob had his fist cocked and was pleading for him to say anything, which would give him an excuse to punch him. The nurse rushed to the phone to call the officer on duty. The major arrived in just a few minutes. He rushed to Rob and grabbed him by the shoulder. It happened so quickly that it was almost a blur. The fist that had been menacing the Irish kid struck the major with a loud crack and he skidded across the room on his buttocks. Surprisingly, he jumped right up and instructed Rob to follow him. When the court-martial finally convened, Rob's legal advisor gave the

reason and the full account of the event that led to the court-martial. He stated that Rob was only kidding and did not intend to strike the kid. When the major grabbed Rob's shoulder, it threw him off balance. The real fear, attributed to patients with bad legs, is that they will re-injure their legs. When Rob was thrown off balance, he was reaching for support and never intended to strike the major. This presentation was so convincing that the colonel commanding called events to a halt and stated that he felt it would be proper for the major to offer an apology for the charge and for the fact that it had progressed so far. Rob was gracious and accepted the major's apology.

My folks finally let me know that my Grandmother Ruth was dying of stomach cancer. I loved her dearly and pitied her for her hard life. My grandfather treated her badly and her own family had disowned her years before when she married my grandfather. It seems that two young males of the family in Ireland had thrown a bomb into a police station that housed the "Black and Tans." Within hours, their trial was over and they were shot. My grandfather was English, but he would not have known what you were talking about if you mentioned "Black and Tans." In any event, her family wrote her off as though she had died. They never spoke to her and never visited her when she developed cancer and refused to attend her funeral. They were stupid, dumb animals that were no better than the "Black and Tans."

Rob was going through the ward and seeing the suffering on my face, he stopped to find out the problem. After I disclosed the story, Rob asked if I wanted to go to the funeral. I said that I would give anything to be able to go. Rob backed his car up to the side of the ward, rolled down the window, and began to slip me (in my body cast) onto the back seat of the car. Half way through this operation, the nurse spotted us

and things came to a close. They pulled me back through the window, put me into my bed, and instructed Rob to park his car and report to the office. When all the facts were disclosed, it was decided that no punishment was necessary. Rob was told that his action showed a lot of heart, but was crazy and should never be repeated. I am sure that they forgot his action. I never did.

My buddy, Ernie, was in the bed to my left and he had to remain fairly immobile as his wounds affected the area of his lower back and damaged two of the vertebrae of his spine. The surgeons performed a fusion of the vertebrae and Ernie had to lie still for the healing process.

I was in a body cast at the time. Obviously, my movements were extremely limited. The warm summer weather required that we be covered with only a sheet. I moved an inch or two to my left and after another minute or two, with Ernie's interest elsewhere, I repeated these incremental moves. I continuously measured, with my left eye, the distance between my possible reach and Ernie's sheet. A few minutes later, when I felt that I could make it, I grabbed the sheet and yanked it off Ernie. He lay there in his entire naked splendor. Ordinarily, this would not have been a big deal except that visiting hours had commenced and we could see visitors coming into the ward. The panic in his eyes was awesome and suddenly, he grabbed the pillow under his head and covered his crotch with it. He promised me, with a great deal of passion, that he would pay me back and that it would only be a matter of time. Today, fifty years later, I am still on alert when I am in his presence.

The physical reconditioning area at Murphy was near the bottom of a very long, downhill hall, starting from the main

square near the cafeteria, going down to PR and the clothes storage room. Halfway down the hall were double doors with double springs that allowed the doors to swing both ways. One day at the PR, I was with a large group of guys who used canes, crutches, and wheelchairs. Ernie was there, lying flat on a bench press, pressing large weights. Ernie's injured back was okay as long as he kept it on the bench. When he finished, he asked if the guys would push him and his gurney back to the ward. It was a long push up the hallway and some of the guys were puffing a bit. They chided Ernie for giving them such a hard job and he told them to be quiet and keep on pushing. This was not particularly well taken and the suggestion was made that he ought to be given a flight down the hall. Ernie quickly realized that he had made a very serious error and he tried to calm the group. After an exchange of glances, the consensus was "give him the ride." The gurney, by the time it slammed into the double doors, was flying like a rocket. Ernie's screams as the gurney ricocheted from wall to wall, could have been mistaken for an air raid warning. He wasn't harmed, but I think that his fear at this time surpassed any fear that he had in Korea. To his immense relief, shortly after this incident, he was able to propel himself in a wheelchair. Not long after, he was able to walk unassisted.

One day, Ernie was very bored and suddenly his eyes lit up as he conceived a great new plan. I thought his idea was ridiculous, but he was resolute to go forward with it. He picked up the phone, dialed the operator, and asked to speak to her supervisor. The connection was made. Ernie began his tale, which was so moving that the lady was close to tears. Ernie told her of our horrible disabilities, many operations, and our great loneliness. She responded by asking what she could do to help and a campaign was prepared. Some of the young operators came to the hospital to see us. Following Ernie's explicit instructions, they each had several nips taped to their legs. The highballs were delicious and the party began

and was enjoyed by all. Sometimes in unguarded moments, they would take a few steps and you could hear the clink of the bottles rubbing on one another. We called these young ladies the "clinkers." I think of them often and hope that they realize how much they improved our morale. Ernie's crazy idea wasn't so crazy after all.

Miss Connor was a super nice nurse who developed a thing for Ernie. We don't know if she saw him as a son, a lover, or as a patient that she was concerned about. She cared for his every need. Ernie spent time dreaming up more outlandish requests for her and she delivered all of them. We tried to determine what his great draw was, but he would only say that it was part of being French and we would never understand. I have thought of asking his wife, but I guess that would not be proper, so it will just have to remain a mystery.

Ernie contributed his pay to me, each month, via poker and blackjack, so I took care of his needs including toiletries, cigarettes, movies, soda, et cetera. One evening, we attended a movie that was extremely bad. I tapped Ernie on the shoulder and whispered that I was going for a soda. A room with soda machines, pinball machines, and a jukebox was located next to the PX. This room stayed open when the PX was closed. As I got my soda from the machine, I noticed a young lady looking down at the selections in the jukebox. She was wearing the shortest shorts that I have ever seen and a halter-top that was even smaller. She sensed my presence and asked me if I would like to see her suntan. After a short reflection, I said that I thought it would be a good idea. She lowered the short-shorts and lifted her halter-top. I had to admit that it was an outstanding suntan. As I headed back to the ward, I met Ernie and filled him on this event. I didn't get to finish because he was already on his way. The interest that this suntan generated was quite amazing. One day, a ward nurse discovered this same young lady having sex with a patient. The nurse screamed for them to stop. They replied that they would stop

as soon as they finished. The hospital commandant was notified and he assured the young lady that there would be instant police attention if she ever returned to the hospital. I guess the commandant didn't like suntans.

Joe Shanes had a unique disability. He had been hit in the shoulder and must have been bending his arm at the time since it drove out the bone from the elbow to his shoulder. He had some drainage out of his back, but the front was in good shape. He could put his right hand on a steering wheel with his left and then exert some pull on the wheel. He just couldn't push with it.

One day, when he and couple of other patients were down town in Waltham at a bar enjoying a few beers, Joe decided to wind up his arm, which instantly drew the attention of the whole bar. The windmill effect of the arm shocked every person in the place. After viewing this sight, several may have taken the pledge.

Joe had a 1947 convertible. Coming back from downtown one day with a substantial load of alcohol in his belly and a high reading on the speedometer, he arrived at the stone wall that surrounds Murphy. Apparently, he couldn't decide whether to go left or right, so he went into the wall. He had a lot of cuts and bruises, but still gave us all a smile as they wheeled him by on a gurney.

My many furtive dashes to the men's room during the day were not for relief of the usual bodily functions. After securing myself in a stall and insuring that I was alone, I would cry. I didn't know why and I didn't know how to solve this problem. Providence supplied me the means because someone apparently heard my cry. I was told to wheel myself to the psychiatrist's office. She was a Chinese lady of middle age who

had an easy manner. She quickly put me at ease and talked with me about my many experiences. She picked one in particular and concentrated on it. It was an incident where many guys had been killed and only a few guys, including myself, had survived. She discussed my less than John Wayne performance and queried me as to whether a greater involvement by me would have saved anyone. I responded, "Of course not, it would only have added one more body to the count." She also asked me if I had served to the best of my ability during this war. I replied, "I sure as hell gave it my best effort." She asked, "Don't you see that you made a decision that was for the betterment of your unit and your country? If you had decided to do otherwise, you would have accomplished nothing for either." She went on to explain that this fairly common condition is called survivor's guilt. The amazing thing was that those few minutes with her solved my problem. Did I totally erase that from mind? No! I stored it in a tight cubical in the back of my mind. That is where you put things of impact that are not germane to successfully living this way. Hopefully my Maker did not waste His efforts in creating me. It is important that I do things well so that my dead comrades will not be ashamed of me when we meet in the next life.

In February, the major that we referred to as "the boob" came to my bed, and after some hemming and hawing, told me that, regretfully, my leg had to be amputated. I told him that no one was going to amputate my leg and I would just lie there and let it rot off. I further notified him that the next person to approach my bed would go down for the count. The next morning, a very nice corpsman approaching my bed with a pitcher of water, received a very heavy glass ashtray to his forehead. He was out before he hit the floor. My bed was moved to a small room next to the nurse's office. I was not allowed any visitors and even the professionals refused to

speak to me. After one week, I was desperate and literally begged to be allowed back into the ward so that I could see my friends. The attack to the corpsman was a shameful act, but one that ended as a blessing. That week, an orthopedic specialist from Boston, who was rated as one of the best in the world, arrived for his scheduled visit. He would only advise on surgical procedures and leave the actual operating to military doctors. He discussed the several cases presented to him and as he prepared to leave, Captain Fisher thought of my case and discussed it with the specialist. The result of this saved my leg. A vertical piece of tibia was removed from my right leg and this was the primary graft material. They flapped skin from my right hip. Also, they sliced off a large portion of the ball of my hip to be used as protective material around the graft site. I was told that the tibia provided for soft, easy grafting bone and the hipbone, or iliac crest, was protective because it was the hardest bone in the body.

My left hip was sliced and a large flap exposed the hipbone. A hole was drilled into the upper femur and a stainless steel pin was hammered in down to the area of my knee. A plate and eight screws were added to secure the grafted site. Then, a hole was drilled through the side of my leg so that a pin could be driven through the leg a few inches above the knee. An extension of the pin on either side of the leg allowed a large U-shaped clamp to be attached. An attached cord ran down and through a pulley at the end of the bed connecting to a bag of weights. Both legs had to be up in traction. The right one needed traction because the graft sight of the tibia had lost a lateral piece, which was approximately one third the diameter of it. This graft, at the upper third of my left femur, took several months to meet the necessary requirements of Dr. Fisher. His announcement of the success of this operation made 1952 a banner year in my life. When I regained consciousness in the recovery room, after the operation, I had a tube with blood going into one arm, another with glucose

going into the other. During the operation and in recovery, I received twenty-eight pints of blood. I am deeply grateful to all that donated the blood.

An hour or so, later Captain Fisher popped in and chatted with me for a minute. He assured me that I was doing great. After three weeks, I was returned to my regular ward. As it was ward rounds day, two packets were dropped on my bed, one for X-rays and the other for medical records. I took a quick peak at my records and saw that Dr. Fisher had recorded, "The patient's condition after surgery was stormy." When he came by, I asked him if stormy meant "just great" in medical parlance. He gave me a smile, a pat on the shoulder, and then he hurried on. This doctor was always in a hurry. I'm told that on most days, he spent over twelve hours in the operating room. He just couldn't spread himself thin enough to exact all of the miracles that his mind clamored to perform. "Never have so many owed so much to so few," Winston Churchill's praise of the R.A.F. Allow me and all the other patients who were at Murphy Army Hospital to express one conviction, which is that this same phrase applies to the staff of doctors and nurses who served there.

In July 1952, my friend Ernie told me that several members of family were coming to see him. He said that some of them might bring some little bottles of booze with them. A half-dozen of his family members came to his bedside and many hugs and kisses were offered with much love. One of his guests was a pretty, young lady. From the kisses exchanged with Ernie, it was obvious that this young lady was his girlfriend. After Ernie introduced me to his relatives, the young lady came over and chatted with me for a few minutes. What do you say to your friend's girlfriend? I exchanged pleasantries about the weather, politics, the hospital, and other mundane subjects with her. When visiting hours were over and everyone

had gone, I complimented Ernie on his girlfriend. He chuckled and said, "Irma is not my girlfriend; she is my cousin." I told him that where I came from, people who did all that kissing had better be married or leave town. He informed me that French Canadians consider this to be normal procedure. I thought that this little French girl was the most gorgeous girl I had ever seen. I knew that I had to see her again.

Just a short time later, we were informed that the hospital needed extra space for a surgeons' convention so that everyone who could walk, by whatever means, would receive a seven-day leave. Ernie asked, "Are you going home?"

I said, sadly, "The trip is beyond my abilities now."

"Are you going to Boston?"

" I don't know anyone there and I can't afford it anyway."

After a minute or two, his eyes brightened and with a huge smile, he said, "You must come home with me."

I hastened to say that I couldn't impose on his parents. He assured me that they would be most pleased to have me for a visit. Another friend who lived nearby dropped us off at Ernie's home in Saunderville, Massachusetts. His mom and dad were very gracious and most pleasant.

The following morning, a bus pulled up outside and Irma got off. This was a stroke of luck that she should visit her aunt and uncle at just this time. She was polite to me, but little more. When we went to the drive-in that evening, somehow or other, Irma and Alda, Ernie's younger sister, sat in the back seat and Ernie and I sat in the front. Could there be a more ridiculous picture than that? The next morning when Ernie and his family left to attend a birthday party for Ernie's godson, Irma volunteered to stay behind and keep me company. After a conversation of not more than thirty minutes, I confessed to her that I loved her. I said, "I know that you will think I am crazy, but I want you to marry me." She replied, "I would be happy to be your wife." We were engaged without

ever being on a date. I say this because two boys in the front and two girls in the back of a car does not constitute a date. We planned our wedding to be on 25 April 1953.

Three weeks before that date, Dr. Fisher came to see me and informed me of the new operation that had been successfully completed at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.

My wife, Irma.

It was called a quadriplasty. It was done to repair a totally stiff leg by cutting the quadriceps muscle, allowing the knee to

The doctor is pointing out the results of my four quadriplasty operations. (Photo by the U.S. Army.)

bend. At this point, a plastic piece was spliced to each end of the quadriceps muscle ends to reconnect. The operation was a success and a considerable amount of knee bend was restored. The new problem to be dealt with was the inability to move the leg. This problem was overcome by taking me to a pool where the buoyancy of the water assisted in slowly re-establishing the normal movement of the leg. After a time, I developed enough muscle movement to churn the water to froth. When I tried the same movement on a regular exercise bench, I found that I could hardly get any movement. The air doesn't supply buoyancy like water does. I worked in a frenzy to improve as our new wedding date of 2 May 1953, was soon approaching. My doctors were amazed with my record of achievement and they gave me a forty-five day convalescent leave for my marriage and honeymoon. (On 2 May 2003,

Irma and I celebrated our fiftieth anniversary). When I returned from my leave, the doctors were astonished to find that I had acquired an additional twenty-five degrees of knee bend. I was awarded a new forty-five day leave, with the instructions that I was to continue whatever it was that generated the twenty-five degrees of knee bend during my previous leave. The building up of the muscles in the leg was a painful and time-consuming affair. Most of the pain that I had was from the large amounts of scar tissue developed during the long period of inactivity and the several operations.

I sat down at a table with a WAC (Women's Army Corps) and we conversed in a friendly fashion over our meal. Suddenly, a second WAC joined us and asked me who the hell I thought I was by going after her girl. My response was slow because for a moment, I didn't realize what I was dealing with. I then responded that I wasn't going after any girl because I was married and happily so. In a pained silence, I moved to another table. This was my introduction to the problem that existed at Murphy in the WAC detachment. Shortly after that, an incident brought the whole situation out into the open and corrective steps had to be taken. It seems that each new girl coming into the detachment had to play the game whether she wanted to or not. One new girl just refused to play the game and so they beat her nearly to death. The corrective investigation ended with a major portion of the detachment leaving, for I don't know where. The rumor was that they were cashiered out of the service.

One of my friends, who shall remain nameless, demonstrated his feelings one evening for the WAC detachment. He obtained a pair of scissors from somewhere and snipped each of the dozens of bras that were hanging from the clotheslines, between the cups. There was a long drawn out investigation, but the culprit was never caught.

On one of my trips to Canton, New York, a kid from Plattsburg, New York and his friend, Wally Kreck, joined Irma and me. They had a lot in common. They were both great guys and they both had a leg missing. We were pleased to take them and enjoyed their company.

We were in line waiting for the ferry in Burlington, Vermont, which would carry us across Lake Champlain to a spot near Plattsburg. While we were stopped in line, a youngster who was offering shoe shines approached us. I believe the price was one dollar and fifty cents. The guys asked him how much it would be to do one shoe. The confused youngster said one fifty per shoeshine. They again inquired how much to do one shoe. Because the kid obviously thought that they were being smart-asses, they opened the car door so that he could see that they each had one shoe. The kid's shock was so great that he ran off and left us with no shines. In 1998, I saw Wally's name, address, and phone number in the Twenty-Fourth Division's Association Magazine, so I contacted him. There was also a picture of Wally and other amputees taken with General Dean. Wally was a courageous soldier in Korea and a real good man who has since, like all of us, found the extra strength needed to fight for normalcy from terrible disabilities.

As soon as I was ambulatory, in a wheelchair, I managed to get a job running the projector and showing movies in the different wards. I received fifty cents for each showing and was pleased to get this added income. On the first occasion that I showed a movie in the mental ward, I was very shocked at the behavior of the patients and watched dumbfounded as they tried to grab the line of light coming out of the projector that advanced the image to the screen. The projector received as much attention as the movie. I spoke to a doctor in the ward about how horrible this must be for the insane patients. He

advised me that I was dead wrong. He said that the patients were living in their individual happy dream world. To them, every day was Christmas, birthday parties, Mom, Dad, and all the wonderful memories of their youths. They embraced these things when they blocked out the horrors of the world that they could no longer endure.

There were two locked doors that had to be opened for you to go into the ward. Again, I was assured that locked doors didn't bother these guys, and that they didn't feel confined or restricted in any way.

The dead and dying friends, the constant hell of combat, the never ending fear and knowledge that you would be next to be hit. The assurance that you had little value as your Army threw you into action as they would throw in chips in a poker game. Yes, all of this and more, gone. All this hell totally erased from the mind. All their old lives gone and their new lives embraced with jubilation. To the observer, this has to be one of the saddest by-products of a war. I beg your pardon, "a police action."

As my situation improved, I was allowed to select the persons who were to be bussed to Boston Gardens for events and then I was placed in command of the convalescent ward. There were a few duties to be assigned of the clean-up type. The worst was the latrine. There were two men in the ward who were always silent and detached. They struck me as persons who were still fighting huge mental problems left over from combat. It didn't take a genius to realize that these two were best left alone since just looking into their eyes gave a feeling that death and mayhem were just below the surface. One had a recovering leg wound and the other had a very bad shoulder wound and two other flesh wounds in his body. I left them alone and they were not assigned any duties. A few weeks later, we were called outside for a formation where the one with the shoulder wound was issued the Distinguished Service Cross, this country's second highest award for valor.

A day later, I awoke, and from my bunk in the first cubicle, I saw a gumball machine in the third cubicle. This thing had a post rising from an eighteen-inch diameter base and crowned with a large glass ball containing gumballs. Within a minute or two, a nurse and the officer of the day arrived, clambered for attention, and demanded to know who was responsible. We had one kid with one leg, a weight bag hanging from his stump, and a missing arm. One of the patients told them that he heard that Smitty had done it. The gathering staff was already getting MPs and planning action against Smitty. It was asinine that they would believe this nonsense, but as soon as it became apparent that they were buying this, I approached them and asked them if they were crazy. I told them that Smitty, who was small in stature, would have been unable to handle the damn thing if he had two arms and legs, and that in his present condition, this story was a joke. No one was ever disciplined for this incident. I found out later that the previous evening, Smith and Evans, under the influence, had decided to take the booze smell of their breaths with gumballs and the machine withheld one of the gumballs. With one gripping the top firmly, the other banged the post with the car bumper until all the bolt holes were broken loose. They then put it into the car and brought it back to Murphy. There is never a dull moment when you're having fun.

One afternoon, I received an order to dress in a Class A uniform and report to Colonel Redland's office. I had no inkling of the reason for this, but I hastened to reply in less than thirty minutes. In Colonel Redland's office, I was surprised to see the famous actor/singer, Burl Ives. He was someone that I had long admired. The commandant introduced me to Mr. Ives and asked him if he would like to pin on my medal. After the commendation, Mr. Ives pinned on the Bronze Star and then the Purple Heart. The hospital photog-

rapher took several pictures during this ceremony and I was pleased to look forward to this wonderful souvenir. I thanked the colonel, offered him a hand salute, thanked Mr. Ives, and left. Several days had passed and I had not heard anything. I met the photographer and asked him for copies of the pictures. He replied that he was unable to give me the pictures because the man was a "pink." I asked him what a "pink" was. He said that Mr. Ives had been called before a Congressional Committee and was asked if he was now or ever had been a member of the Communist Party. His reply was a request for the protection of the First Amendment. I was boiling over, so I went to the first sergeant's office and demanded justice. I stated that a check of the manual had established that a civilian could legitimately decorate a soldier with the Purple Heart, but this was not allowed in the case of the Bronze Star. I said that if I were not allowed to have the pictures, I would call the Boston newspapers and inform them of this travesty. The first sergeant informed me that they could not stop me from doing this, however, they could make me wish that I had not. I couldn't argue with this logic so I declared "finis" to this matter. I was still pained later at the notice of Mr. Ives' death for I had not forgotten the thousands of miles that he traveled to entertain troops and the dozens of military hospitals where his love was dispensed to patients who really needed it. Many great entertainers came to perform for the benefit of the bedridden.

Often, the convalescent group, of which I was a member, was bussed to Boston Garden for shows. Some of us were allowed backstage to meet the famous entertainers and we were surprised and pleased at the devoted attention that they afforded us. At one of the picture taking ceremonies, my Canadian style crutch tore a piece of lace on Patty Page's dress. I'm sure that the dress was very expensive. She was so gracious about the matter and gave me a nice hug for the picture. And then there was Perry Como. What a wonderful man! He treat-

Patty Page posing with myself and two of my fellow patients from Murphy Army Hospital. (Photo by the U.S. Army.)

Perry Como is trying to get me to take a Chesterfield cigarette, the sponsor of his television show, even though I gave them up for Lent. (Photo by the U.S. Army.)

ed us as if we were royalty and it was so obvious that it was not put on. We also saw Eddie Fisher at one of the shows. He didn't come within thirty feet of us. He was in his military uniform and sported a Korean Campaign Ribbon with three battle stars. We knew that he was only allowed to entertain troops there. We were not thrilled with him and one of our group wanted to rip the medal off. We convinced him that the pleasure of this deed would not be enough to justify some jail time. We did give Fisher some looks that seemed to unsettle the jerk.

For the most part, when Korean veterans returned home, they were greeted with indifference. When you have served and suffered, you expect some indication of thanks, or at least approval. When you have seen thousands of men die, it sickens you to hear that they were in a police action, not a war. Certainly, each death was as final and important as any death on Normandy Beach. We shouldn't have been forced to endure the ridicule of a lesser value.

We loved and admired our fathers and uncles who served in World War II and this love has continued to this day and will expire only as we do.

One day, driving down the highway, my mind drifted to the days at Murphy Army Hospital and I thought of all the shenanigans that we pulled off without being caught. Suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue, I realized, for the first time, that we were allowed to get away with them. After all, there wasn't anything that was harmful or costly about our high pranks. The effect on our morale had completely taken our minds off our medical problems. Certainly, I cannot prove this, but it would explain why highly intelligent people on the staff at Murphy were unable to see the over-friendly lady guests, never were able to find the bottles of booze, and never uncovered any of our other schemes for "hot shit" times.

Murphy ceased to operate as a hospital and was used for a few years as an office for a number of federal agencies. I heard that it was finally closed down. I don't want to think of it. It's just too painful.

Murphy, to me, will always be the home of the wonderful staff, which repaired and nourished me, until my love for my country returned.

The Medical Board at Murphy Army Hospital assigned three fours to my physical profile, which meant I was physically unable to perform any military duties. The board assigned me a fixed eighty percent disability rating. The Veterans' Administration Board, which works with slightly different numbers, assigned me a permanent seventy percent. The Veterans' Administration percentage was of a fixed figure whereas the Army's was based on a percentage of a person's military pay grade. Since I was only a corporal, the VA figure was slightly better. When I first had my presentation to the VA Board in Providence, Rhode Island, I was assigned a temporary rating of one hundred percent. I was to receive compensation based on this percentage for five years. My final permanent rating of seventy percent was supposedly based on a norm between my present condition and the best possible condition that I might acquire in future years. I was medically retired and told that I would be weight bearing with crutches and a brace for the rest of my life. I worked out on my bed for an hour or more each evening for many years and the results were very gratifying. Almost all obstacles can be overcome in this life if you strive with total concentration and an unwavering will. The VA felt that my condition could not be improved. They were right and wrong. They were wrong because of my never ending determination not to be handicapped and they were right because of their medical mistakes that caused me to finally have to acknowledge that I am handicapped and will be for the rest of my life.

Veterans' Administration

COLLEGES were prepared for the returning veterans after World War II. Planning for disahled veterans included wheelchair accessibility, first floor classrooms, and special parking. There was even special consideration for extra time between classes for the disabled. The needs of the Korean Veterans were not considered until they were on the scene and then the confusion was horrible.

I went to the Veterans' Administration Regional Office in Providence, Rhode Island and told them that I wanted to attend college, but I had no idea whatever aptitudes I might possess that would direct me to the correct profession. They assured me that this was not a problem since they had an aptitude test they could give me that was very accurate and would give the proper direction for my future. I finished the test and turned it in. Within minutes, I was informed that I had been born to be an accountant and by a stroke of luck, Bryant College's School of Accounting, was only seven blocks down the street. Another piece of luck was the opportunity to take Bryant's entrance exam right there at the VA. My score on the test was quite acceptable and I rushed home to advise my wife that our future was secure. I went to the office at Bryant and had a brief meeting with Dean Gelski, who impressed me as a bright, caring man. My first problem at Bryant was trying to

carry my many textbooks and still manage to walk with my crutches. I reported the problem to the VA and they had a carrying case prepared for me with a small diameter handle so I could hold the grip on the crutch at the same time. The major problems, at Bryant, were parking and time intervals between classes. We had twenty-three disabled veterans and many were with crutches or canes. I had a full-length brace and crutches. We had one student who had a suction type artificial leg. Most days, we were forced to park four or five blocks from our classrooms and those of us with crutches had difficulty getting from classroom to classroom within the allowable times, particularly when sequential classrooms were on opposite sides of the street. I noted a parking area directly behind the administration building that had a capacity for sixty cars. I requested a meeting with the dean. At this meeting, I advised him of our parking problem and requested action on his part to provide the proper relief. He astounded me when he said that the janitor handled parking. I searched his face for a smile, but he was serious. I thanked him and left to search for the janitor. When I found him and explained the problem, he was very friendly and assured me that he would do whatever he could to solve the problem. He said the minute there was an opening, he would assign it to our most needy. I asked him why there would be an opening. I assumed that young men whose daddies were alumni and donated bucks to Bryant filled these spaces.

I got the guys together and we formed a Veterans' Committee with myself elected as chairman. I went to Dean Gelski and informed him of the latest. He said he was sorry, but there was nothing that he could do at that time. I said, "If we have to walk four or five blocks from our cars to classes, it's not much further for us to march to the VA Regional Office. When we get there, I will also ask why they sent us to a school

that has proven itself anti-veteran. I'll also ask how come all of us took the aptitude test and were informed that we were born accountants."

Within forty-eight hours, the required number of parking spaces was made available. My group was tight and we really looked out for one another. The vet with the suction stump had a lot of trouble because his stump would get sore around the sides although the suction was supposed to hold the stump tight. The outside of the artificial leg had a petcock that you opened when you pressed the stump into the hole. After the stump was firmly in place, you closed the petcock and the suction held the leg in place. It was not a good arrangement, but when the amputation is high, up to your thigh, there is no other way that you can control an artificial leg. If you wanted to walk, this was the only way. My campaign for our Veterans' Committee was very successful, but it also secured some attention to me that was not helpful. Dean Gelski and I became very well acquainted, but he never put me on his "Christmas list." Most of the instructors were excellent. I am speaking particularly of an attorney who taught Business Law. Mr. Monty was a teacher who made law interesting and he interjected just enough humor to make it fun. One day in his class, I developed severe pain in my left arm. I had a piece of shrapnel that had been pain free and was shaped like a marble under the skin for four years. I had started feeling pain a few weeks before, but hoped to reach the end of the semester before having surgery. That day in class, the pain became more intense. The next thing that I knew, people were looking down at me asking if I was okay. I had passed out, tumbled from my chair, and scared the hell out of the class.

I was taken to Davis Park Veterans' Hospital on the hill in Providence, Rhode Island. After three days of nothing being done, I asked to be operated on or sent home. The next morning, I went into surgery with two surgeons and two nurses. They did the job neatly and wheeled me back to the ward.

After one day, I asked if I could have a weekend pass. Their initial response was negative, but I told them that my wife would drive and that I would stay home for the entire weekend and that I would exercise extreme care. I got the pass. That was forty-nine years ago and I still haven't gone back. I just want them to know that it was nothing personal.

The Veterans' Administration began, in my opinion, as a warm, dedicated representation of the American peoples' love. It has become primarily a bureaucracy, at this point, without the credentials of caring that made it so successful in earlier years. Some VA employees operate contrary to this bad image and are appreciated a great deal by dependant veterans. Unfortunately, there are many employees who treat disabled veterans with disdain and see their job requirements only as punching a clock, exercising maximum control over this herd of powerless vets, and making it very clear who is in charge.

Can the dependant veterans speak up if their rights are questioned? Nearly all disabled veterans are so dependant on their care and their pitiful compensation checks that they fear any reproach of the system that could possibly take it away from them.

Amputees, veterans with parts of their feet missing, and many resigned to wheelchairs are informed that they will be seen when the clerk decides. If they have waited for an hour and a half or two hours past their scheduled time, they have no recourse. Whether the doctor is free is not the only factor. The governing rule is when the clerk decides that it is the appropriate time. Appointments with VA doctors, which have been arranged by nurse practitioners, allow the veteran to meet a doctor who is probably working on his case for a couple of appointments and then replaced by a new face. If you meet a doctor who was born in the U.S., it is an exciting event. I do not wish to diminish the abilities of these international doctors, as many seem to be well qualified. It's just that before you get to know and trust a doctor, they have left the staff.

New doctors, who must struggle to grasp enough of your medical background to make well-informed decisions for your best care, replace them.

In addition to intolerably long waits at the VA, there is also the problem of coming to the VA for an appointment and finding that there isn't a doctor available in the department that you need. In earlier years, many cases of this type were experienced. I tried to get a primary care doctor and was referred to a nurse practitioner. She was well qualified, but was overloaded with parients. On my next visit, she was happy to inform me that I could see a doctor. A very pleasant Chinese doctor discussed my needs and rescheduled me for another appointment about three weeks later. My scheduled time was 3 P.M.; at 4:30 P.M., I lost patience and inquired at the desk. After a quick apology, I was informed that the doctor had to leave. The clerk rescheduled me for three weeks later. I arrived for the appointment and was told that regretfully, the doctor no longer worked there. On another occasion, I arrived for an appointment at the GU Department. Again, I received an apology for their not calling to tell me that they no longer had a doctor for this department. When I pointed out the many previous events that abused my needs and my time, the clerk snapped at me and said, "Well, you didn't show up one time, I have it right here on the screen." I informed her that I had never missed a scheduled appointment.

Is it understaffing of clerks and/or doctors? If so, how can it be justified? The new entrance at the Newington VA is an awesome sight. I am sure that the entrance to Congress or the White House must pale in comparison. Wouldn't the veterans, being cared for at Newington, prefer to have more compassionate and better care than an elaborate building? Is the taxpayers' money being spent wisely? Is the staff at the VA trained and supervised to insure respectful care for these suffering veterans? Many of us have considerable distances to drive for our

appointments. The VA no longer provides a mileage allowance, so it is indefensible for many of these trips to be for nothing.

If there is any part of the VA that is worse than the health care, it is the Compensation Board. Unlike the system of years ago, the present board does not assist the veteran in ways to promote his claim even if he has records available to prove his case. If he has any questions that require additional information, does the board ask for it? Of course not, because the lack of answers was just what was needed to deny his case.

Do they question any non-VA doctors who have presented evidence? My doctors tell me that they have never been contacted. I have a case of seizures, which a specialist diagnosed as related to service connected wounds. My claim was denied because the specialist's diagnosis was based on my verbal account. I presented evidence from my service medical records to my specialist who repeated his original diagnosis as being service connected. The board is now reopening my case. Will I be pleased if the board awards me compensation in this case? I believe shocked would be a better word, followed by surprise.

Presently, I have another claim before the board that came about as result of my complaints of back pain to the nurse practitioner. She scheduled me for a series of tests and then sent me to the Podiatry Department. I met with a new doctor and he impressed me greatly with his very thorough measurements and analysis. He performed measurements of my short left leg, which indicated an exact figure of a shortness of 2 2/3 inches. It was the first time in the forty-one years that I have been going to Newington VA that an exact measurement of this type was performed. I informed this doctor that the VA doctors had lowered the built-up portion of my left shoe many times over the years. The doctor was shocked and said that this should not have been done. He stated that the shortness had to be compensated for. He informed me that he would imme-

diately order new shoes that would have the proper buildup to compensate for the leg shortness. This doctor informed me that I should have the new shoes in approximately three weeks.

When two months had passed and I had not yet received my new shoes, I tried several times to contact the Podiatry Department by phone. Finally, by working through the nurse practitioner's office, I was transferred and managed to talk with a lady in Podiatry. I informed her of my problem and she told me to hold while she checked it out for me. She returned to the phone to inform me that the reason I had not received my new shoes was that none had been ordered. I'm afraid that I vented my frustration for a moment and then, realizing that she was free of fault, I apologized to her. She said it was okay because she had not been listening to me anyway. I relayed all of this information to my nurse practitioner. By the way, she is excellent. She called the chief of podiatry and informed him that she had a very angry man, and that he had better see me. The chief said that she should send me to his office. In about ten minutes, I was directed to his office. He started by informing me that they were under the impression that I was getting my shoes made on the outside. I stopped him before he could carry this charade any further and I informed him that his Podiatry Department had been having my shoes made for forty-one years and it was nothing less than alarming if he didn't know that. He calmed me down and pledged to resolve this problem. He said he would get some answers. He promised to call me the moment that he had the full picture of what had transpired. He called me at mid-morning on the following day and acknowledged that a vendor had made a terrible mistake in 1985. It seems the vendor had made the insert piece for the shoe, but that none of the build up to the bottom of the shoe was done. In other words, a mistake of approximately two inches was made. I informed him that I could co-operate with this line, but that many cuts to my shoe height had been made

over forty-one years. The nurse practitioner informed the chief that the diagnosis, made by a spinal specialist, came from a full exam and multiple X-rays. He diagnosed a malformation of the repair work to my left leg that had been performed at Murphy Army Hospital and he stated that my back pain was caused by the error made to my left shoe. At this point, the chief of Podiatry informed me that based on this vendor error, he could not argue with the diagnosis made by the spinal specialist. He recommended that I reopen my case and obtain additional compensation. I called him back in a few days and requested that this information be in writing so that it could be sent to the Compensation Board. After more than a week had passed, I received the letter and was surprised at how anemic it was compared to his earlier admission. All of this material has been submitted to the Compensation Board and I have not heard anything since.

Based on the damage to my leg and back from this terrible error, I expect that it will soon be necessary for me to return to crutches and eventually to a wheelchair.

A Veterans' Advocate at the hospital gave me the application forms to establish a "tort" for one hundred thousand dollars against the VA for their culpability that is so harmful to my health and well-being. Apparently, this is the set amount that they find reasonable to cover their major mistakes.

I have not done this. My primary concern is that the level of care that my comrades and I receive at Newington will develop and improve to a level where Newington, with justification, can call itself a Veterans' Hospital. I don't wish to charge all the faults to the staff because it is obvious that this sub-standard care could not continue if proper management was exercised.

My nurse practitioner arranged an appointment for me with the psychologist, Dr. Guapp. One of the doctor's assistants issued me a test, which required one and one half-hours to complete. A couple of weeks later, my nurse practitioner

called to announce that I had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. I inquired as to medical treatment and was informed by Dr. Gaupp's assistant that there is no cure. He said that there are some over the counter items that can be taken, which probably perform more of a "feel good" function than an actual benefit for the problem.

After a period of five months without any medication being prescribed by the VA, I approached my nurse practitioner with an article that my wife found on the Internet about the medicine touted to slow the advance of Alzheimer's. I may be wrong, but this neglect of a disease worse than death demonstrates contempt for my needs. I have been told that I will be tested again in one year to confirm the diagnosis. Somehow, this seems to me to be like a doctor withholding bandages from a patient who is bleeding badly on the possibility that the bleeding will stop. Of course, the doctor would be right, as the bleeding would stop when the patient's blood supply was exhausted. I have now been issued the medicine, which is known to slow the Alzheimer's process of mental deterioration.

A VA neurologist has since seen me for my Alzheimer's and seizure problems. This doctor rushed out of her office twice. After the first exit, she apologized and mumbled that it was a problem that had come up that needed her attention. There was no comment when she returned after her second exit. She had administered a mini version of the Alzheimer's test, which was easy for me to control, having learned how the test worked in my previous test. She expressed doubt about my Alzheimer's.

This neurologist said that she was doubtful that my problems were related to my wounds of 1951. She said that the possibility of such a thing was very remote. The specialist who had diagnosed my seizures had stated those serious injuries to the head quite often causes problems later in life. All that I know for sure is that I am in the middle. This VA neurologist

has impressed me with her desire to have some additional tests run in order to improve the picture. I fully expect these tests to be scheduled many months in the future, certainly after the Compensation Board has struggled to find a reasonable excuse to deny my renewed claim.

The spinal specialist who has concluded a definite connection between the malformation to my leg and back trauma, the terrible error made by the VA with my corrective shoe, has hopes for some improvement after the shoe height has been corrected. He stated that he didn't feel additional surgery was required at this time. Even a simple analysis of this projection leaves little room for hope.

I am not blessed with medical expertise, but I am, however, able to judge my pain and my reduced ability for even a semi-normal life. As time passes, with the support of a cane, I find that I am able to walk a reduced distance without pain. When I was subjected to high levels of pain during the twenty-seven months as a patient at Murphy Army Hospital, it was a part of my recovery and I accepted it. The pain and trauma of my leg and back, because of this Veterans' Administration error, leaves me with a gloomy forecast and absolutely no hope of dedicated support by their staff.

These descriptions of neglect by the Veterans' Administration are based solely on my opinion and observations. Wherever my accounts may be harmful to others, I have shielded them by changing their names or by not using names at all. I will let the staements of others and copies of my records provide support for the impressions that I have gained. If the reader gains the impression that I have grown bitter because of my association with the VA, they are correct. My accounts are more protective of my comrades than they are self-serving. I will continue to advance Veterans' Rights as long as I draw breath.

I have been a member of the Disabled American Veterans for forty-seven years. One of our governing principals is to

only speak well of fellow members of the D.A.V. I have held many positions including chapter commander, State Department member, and secretary treasurer of the United Veterans' Council. In the early years of my membership, the D.A.V. would make presentations to Compensation Boards in support of disabled veterans and would aggressively dispute unfair ruling. Today, the Veterans' Administration has become a bloated bureaucracy and the D.A.V., from its close cooperation and supportive association over the years; I fear has become an adjunct of this bureaucracy. I will not enlarge on my comments as to do so would be in violation of the rules I have sworn to obey, which is not to speak ill of my comrades.

Receiving the gavel as I was being sworn in as Disabled American Veterans Commander in Rhode Island.
(Photo by the Disabled American Veterans.)

Those Who Serve

YOU must survive! How do you survive? You dig deep, shoot straight, and use care not to waste your ammo supply. You never have an unguarded moment. You have to treat the day as being as dangerous as the night. You carefully check off the safety functions before every evening. You do a count of objects, of any size, in front of you so that a recount many times each hour will guard against unwelcome company. You must avoid dozing off by any means necessary painful twist of the gonads works very well. Don't wait for an order to put your bayonet on, leave it on. Don't hold anything shiny during the day. Use only dry twigs for a fire to avoid smoke. By all means, stay off the skyline. Do not talk at night. People know what to do, so they don't need to be told. Keep a grenade on the shelf in your hole. Eat everything that you have because the next ration may not arrive. Keep some morphine surrettes in the pouch with your field dressing. Be on extra alert after 4 A.M. The Chinese loved to make early morning house calls. Don't shoot in the dark when you can use a grenade. Why give away your position? This is only a small part of the total list.

These protective habits stay with you in civilian life. You build a protective shell around yourself. You demand perfection of function from family and friends. You always arrive

early and always look for the worse possibilities. You are selective and very cautious with friendships and demand total loyalty. You don't relax because your system is trained not to. Don't trust. The Army and the government have taught me that. The Veterans' Administration, and any other government agencies, should be approached with the same care and caution that you would use in a minefield. This is my belief.

You see, for us there was always the early morning fear and the need to be alert at all times. We could never be at ease. We could never be complete civilians again. Could the people understand? How could you understand hell if you have never seen it? How could you feel true despair unless you've lived it? The only way to remove it from your mind was to lose your mind. Many, many of us had done just that. God bless them!

The poor providing the mass to rush forth to their deaths, in the military, is not a new situation. During the Civil War, three hundred dollars would buy a person out of his military obligation and send a pauper in his place. Is it a secret to anyone that money has saved the lives of the affluent in every war? The population of Canada increased substantially during the Vietnam War with the infusion of the thousands of rich young American men. During World War II, how many doctors increased their savings by sending medical reports that secured deferments to the draft board for some young men? How many rich young men suddenly became involved in critical war work that obtained them deferments? If you have money, you have power and without it, you are dependent on the charitable contributions of the government. Its inclination to be charitable has decreased of late. One honest politician summed up the reason for this—veterans do not vote. The chains of subservience to the government is so power-robbing that veterans have given up their right to vote. This can change and it must change. The government must be made to realize that we were their employees, even though they owe nothing to the poor souls who gave their all. To those who limped

home with horrible wounds, total commitment is needed and obligated. If our representatives and senators can't be made to see this, then the veterans must warn the young men in our country that they should avoid the military as they would avoid the outbreak of the plague. This country needs more students of history. Isn't there anyone who knows what created the "Star Spangled Banner?" The "shot heard around the world" was not the creation of the privileged few. The men who saved "Private Ryan" were not lords of Wall Street. The flag rising on Mount Suribachi was not an achievement of politics. The young men who were untrained and ill equipped who died in Korea cost the government only the ten thousand dollars of their life insurance policies. In my opinion, they died to save the face and correct the stupid policies of our government. To those young men, who continue to embarrass their legislators by surviving the war and requesting help for their wounds, "Shame, shame that you didn't die and save your nation the monies that could have been spent on pork projects that really produce votes."

Would you send a policeman to work without training or a gun? Would you accept a teacher without credentials? Would you accept treatment from a doctor who is without instruments or years of study? Would you be comfortable with a judge who doesn't have an understanding of the law? Would you want to study with a professor who doesn't even have a high school education? Then why did our government and military send young men, the future of our country, into action without proper weapons or training? Our young men faced a well-armed and well-trained enemy of combat veterans led by officers who were willing to accept huge losses in order to wipe out the U.S. Army. This Chinese force had acquired combat experience in its successful war with the Nationalists and also with the Russian Army against Germany in World War II.

Our government cannot defend itself with proclamation of surprise that the Chinese had entered the war. It is a matter of record that our government was warned by Indian diplomats that the Chinese were going to attack if we approached the Manchurian border. Apparently it wasn't deemed necessary to pass this critical information to General MacArthur. This was a rather serious oversight. What justification can be offered for this lapse of caution that invited a new war that we are still paying for fifty years later?

One hundred times life was on the scale and one hundred times death was denied its rite of passage. For such service, can denial show its ugly face? For each returning Korean Veteran, whether whole or disabled, the welcome was indifference.

Should crowds hearken warm welcome when such persons are no longer needed? Be their wounds in the body or the mind, they have finished their usefulness. Each veteran competed to blend into the populace of seekers for wives, homes, children, cars, televisions, and the necessary education.

This country began by providing health care, compensation, and education. As the disabled veterans grew older and diminished in strength, their care and benefits also diminished. Although they are dying at the rate of a thousand a day, this rate is not fast enough to reduce budgets and provide more funds for pork projects so near and dear to the government's heart.

So, hearken my fellow disabled veterans, can you not speed the meeting with your deceased comrades, stricken so long ago? Come on and be useful to your country again.

Myself, second from left, and three others from my company in Korea. I had not seen them in over fifty years, and I was teary-eyed at this reunion.

A rush of thoughts went through my mind as we headed back to action. I don't want to die. I am only eighteen years old. I've never married, never been treated as an adult. I never completed my education...*With the way that we were trained and equipped, and with our grand pay of seventy-two dollars a month, it was asking a lot for us to go through hell day and night. Also, you must realize that we had been offered up as "sacrificial lambs" who must die, if need be, to buy a few more days for our Army to get more soldiers to the action.*

Sacrificial Lambs is the true account of Raymond C. Colton's experiences both in and out of the U.S. Army. Colton enlists at an early age, and soon learns that the army life he envisioned was in error. His first deception by the army comes when he boards a train bound for Fort Dix, New Jersey, to begin basic training. He later learns that he is actually going to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Colton is involved in active combat during the Korean War. Severely injured, he returns to the United States, where life is a constant battle with recuperation and the challenges of being a disabled veteran. Colton struggles not only with his own physical limitations, but with the U.S. Government and the Veteran's Administration.

Sacrificial Lambs vividly portrays the hardships thrust upon our young men during this terribly difficult time in our nation's history. Relive Colton's experiences and get a taste of what life in the army during the Korean War was really like.

ISBN 1-57197-349-4 $15.95
90000>
9 781571 973498