

Love and War

It is difficult today to imagine the situation of the nation and of Joseph Barreca Sr. on December 16th 1942 when he answered the call of duty at Jefferson Barracks, just south of St. Louis on the Mississippi River. Today it is a park with numerous military related buildings. In 1942 it was the induction center for thousands of American boys headed to the War. This was the Greatest Generation coming of age. Just over a year before on December 7th, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy” as President Roosevelt called it, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.¹ Induction centers, such as Jefferson Barracks, were immediately inundated with volunteer soldiers ready to defend the country with their lives.

The United States Armed Forces were extremely well organized and the war effort reached into every household in the United States. Still, the battle lines were constantly changing on all fronts and decisions had to be made and remade continually to succeed. The outcome was by no means certain. The same can be said of 22 year old Joseph Barreca. He already knew from his failed attempt to enlist in the Navy that he was red-blue color blind. This condition disqualified him for service as a pilot. Having lived next to an airfield all of his life and worked in an airplane plant up to the day of his enlistment, he was very familiar with aircraft and wanted to serve in the Army Air Force. The decisions he made during the course of that service largely determined the rest of his life. In this period the history of the United States and the history of our family were welded together, not just in the fate and fortunes of each but also in the patriotic fervor and spirit of self-sacrifice that made that victory possible.

Our father entered military service at Jefferson Barracks, St Louis three days before Christmas, 1943. Presumably it was a cold winter day. Within a week, he was training in Saint Petersburg, Florida, probably the furthest he had ever been from home and probably much warmer. He has good memories of the time:

Anyway, I ended up goin' to Jefferson Barracks and then down to St. Petersburg Florida. And that was a great time even though it was basic training. Because I liked the music and I liked the way they sang and we'd march along. And I remember passin' review with everybody out there and the music, dadada dun da dun da dun da dada da dun. I hope you can pick that up and type it out (laughter from Jeannette, typing, and from Evelyn and Anita in background of tape. Evelyn: I'm worried about the arm movements). Joe: the old first sergeant would say, "PASS AND REVIEW!" And then it would start.²

In St. Petersburg the Army started sifting out who was going to do what. Besides exercise, discipline and protocol, inductees were tested for their different skills. In this case it seems to have been the Army's decision that our father would be good at languages and therefore

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infamy_Speech

² Tape 2, Page 3

good at radio. I think this was more about using the radio than fixing it. (Our mother turned out to bet better at that – but that is getting ahead of the story.) Dad’s account is:

Anyway, from there they tested me and they said I was gonna be good at radio. I ended up in radar but I was supposed to be good at languages and I was supposed to be good at radio. I wish they had gotten me into languages instead of radio.

But anyway, they sent me way up to Truax Field in the middle of the winter in Madison, Wisconsin. Truax Field with tar paper barracks and cold winter and we’d have to get out of those barracks at I think it was 6:00 in the morning or maybe earlier. And you’d have to get out and they’d take the roll call of this whole row of barracks and they’d have the so-called leader of the barracks report. The captain would say, “Make your report!” And one guy would say, “All present are accounted for, SIR!” And then the next guy would say “All present are accounted for . . .” “Are accounted for” would take care of everything, I mean whether they were out there or not, you know.

And then we’d go marching. We’d have to go march for calisthenics, and doing jumping jacks and stuff like that, way out. And then we’d come into breakfast. One thing we did; we ate good. Three full meals a day and I gained about sixty pounds or somethin’ like that. I went from about 120 pounds or 130 pounds to 180 pounds, no doubt about it. That’s where I gained most of my weight.³

Truax was taken over by the Army in 1942 and named in honor of Wisconsin-native Lieutenant Thomas L. Truax, who was killed in a P-40 training accident in November 1941. So it was only a year old, that explains the tar paper barracks. Originally known as "Madison Army Airfield", Truax Field was activated as an Army Air Forces airfield in June 1942 during World War II. During the war it was used by the Army Air Force Eastern Technical Training Center, a major school operating at Truax AAF for training radio operators and mechanics, and later expanded to training in radar operations, control tower operations and other communications fields for the Army Airways Communication Service. A special unit established in 1943 trained radio operators and mechanics on B-29 Superfortress communications equipment. The host unit on the airfield was the 334th (later 3508th) Army Air Force Base Unit. On September 17, 1945, the airfield's mission was changed to that of a separation center, and it was closed as an active AAF airfield on November 30, 1945. Today it is the Dane County Regional Airport in Madison Wisconsin.

Already, Dad was on a path toward working with equipment on the newly developed B-29 Bomber, a project that had been in the works for several years by this time and one that was justifiably expected to be crucial to victory in the Pacific.

Anyway, from Truax Field they sent me to Scott Field, Illinois, where I learned the Morris code. De-de dee de de-dee de. “Pay day today,” that means dot dash dot dash. But I guess it’d come back to me. I knew the Morris code and I could listen.⁴

³ Tape 2, page 3

⁴ Ibid

By August of 1943, after 8 months in the Army Air Force, he was promoted to corporal and sent briefly to Scott Field in Illinois. This was a base famous for radio communications training. After September 1940, the primary wartime mission of Scott was to train skilled radio operator/maintainers; to produce, as the Radio School's slogan proclaimed, "the best damned radio operators in the world!" Scott's graduates flew in aircraft and operated command and control communications in every Theater of the War, and were often referred to as the "Eyes and Ears of the Army Air Forces."⁵ But he was not destined to become a radio operator:

But then they decided that I was gonna learn radar, which was a new secret at that time. Radar was unknown at the time by the regular public, but with that radar wave going out, it would come back and you could tell what was out there. You could tell if it was metal; if it hit metal it would come right back. Or if it hit something solid like earth, you could tell the coastline and the mountains and everything, and other airplanes. I tell you we ended up with the B-29s with the APQ-13 with the big bubble in the bottom and that was super secret at that time. Anyway I ended up being a radar mechanic. I couldn't fly because I was color blind, but I could be a radar mechanic and take care of the APQ-13 and the other radar on the airplane.⁶

This decision had huge implications. As operators of super secret equipment, radar technicians got special treatment and more importantly didn't fly missions on the B-29's, which as we shall see was a dangerous assignment. Also, Dad shipped off to Boca Raton Florida for special radar training August 15th, 1943. And that's where the love part of this "Love and War" chapter began.

We went from Scott Field down to Boca Raton Florida and I was on the overnight pass and went to Palm Beach. And that's where I met your Mom, a pretty Coast Guard girl that I met at a USO in West Palm Beach. And her friend (Bonnie) and my friend were dancing upstairs and we were downstairs playing Chinese checkers or having a coke or something like that. And then I got the chance to walk my girlfriend, which was your Mom, at that time across a bridge across Lake Worth. And she never wanted to go in, we never went in, until it was absolutely the last minute before curfew or whatever it was. It was probably about either 11:30 or midnight, I don't know. [Evelyn: No, it wasn't that late, it was earlier.] But we were out there sittin' in the bench and huggin' and stuff and then she'd go in.⁷

I wish I could say that this was "Love at first sight." Actually it wasn't. Evelyn's impression was that Joe was "so arrogant that breaking up would have done him good." They did make plans to get together again. But those didn't go so smoothly either. Here is how Mom tells it:

I first met Joe after a movie with Bonnie and a stop at the USO. Bonnie told me about this wonderful tall Coast Guard man she had met while I went to Jacksonville to meet my brother, who was back from overseas duty as a Marine Pilot for a short R & R. Bonnie talked me into going with her to see her new friend's patrol boat. He had invited her to come see his boat. He was the Captain and had one shipmate. Bonnie said it was a short bicycle ride but it turned out to be a long one, which made me miss another date with Joe.⁸

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Air_Force_Base

⁶ Tape 2 page 3

⁷ Dad Tape 2 Page 3

⁸ Mom's friend Bonnie, Page 2.

But Evelyn stood Joe up three times running. At first they were for fairly good excuses. The first time, her brother Aubrey, had stopped by for a surprise visit. The next time she was asked to chaperone her friend Bonnie on a date with what turned out to be Bonnie's future husband. But the third time she had been restricted for staying out late. (Rumor has it that Evelyn Jones was somewhat of a hooligan.) Evelyn did however explain these circumstances to Joe. And eventually they got together for regular bicycle trips around Lake Worth.⁹

[This is an awkward part of the narrative. In my outline I had a whole chapter on Mom's early childhood and entry into the Coast Guard. But it is pretty much another story line that merges into this one right here. I could flashback to it in this chapter, add it as an appendix or rewrite the end of Pattonville to foreshadow Mom's entrance on the scene then add in a chapter on her. For now, I'll just make this note and carry on with Love and War.]

Joe found that unlike most women he had met the longer he knew Evelyn Jones, the more he liked her. Three months later on New Year's eve, 1944, Joe and Evelyn were both invited over to Bonnie and Count's house in West Palm Beach. (Bonnie and Counts had married and Bonnie was pregnant, which gave her a medical discharge, so they had a small house together where Dad and Mom went to visit.) Dad gave Evelyn an engagement ring at breakfast. They spent the day at the carnival, rode the Ferris wheel and started a new year and a new life full of its own share of wild rides. Soon the war got in the way and it was quite a bit worse than being stood up a few times.

Dad's radar section was sent to Salinas Kansas to join the 793rd bombardment squadron. Never intimidated by distances, Mom found a way to stay with a friend's parents and went out to see him. Not much later the 793rd was sent to India. When looking up the history of this military campaign, you need to orient yourself to the divisions. The 793rd Squadron was one of 6 squadrons that were in the 468th Bomb Group which was under the 58th Bombardment Wing, a major part of the XX (20th) Air Force.

Let's take it from the top: Established on 4 April 1944 at Washington D.C, 20 AF was a United States Army Air Forces combat air force deployed to the Pacific Theater of World War II. Operating initially from bases in India and staging through bases in China, 20 AF conducted strategic bombardment of the Japanese Home Islands. It relocated to the Mariana Islands in late 1944, and continued the strategic bombardment campaign against Japan until the Japanese Capitulation in August 1945.

The headquarters of the XX Bomber Command had been established at [Kharagpur](#) India on 28 March 1944. The commander was General Kenneth B. Wolfe. The first B-29 reached its base in India on 2 April 1944. In India, existing airfields at Kharagpur, [Chakulia](#), Piardoba and Dudkhundi had been converted for B-29 use. All of these bases were located in southern [Bengal](#) and were not far from port facilities at [Calcutta](#), (now spelled Kolkata).¹⁰

Joseph Barreca was part of an elite group sent ahead to Kharagpur. This trip halfway around the world was one of the most exciting trips of his life. While most of the crew went by ship,

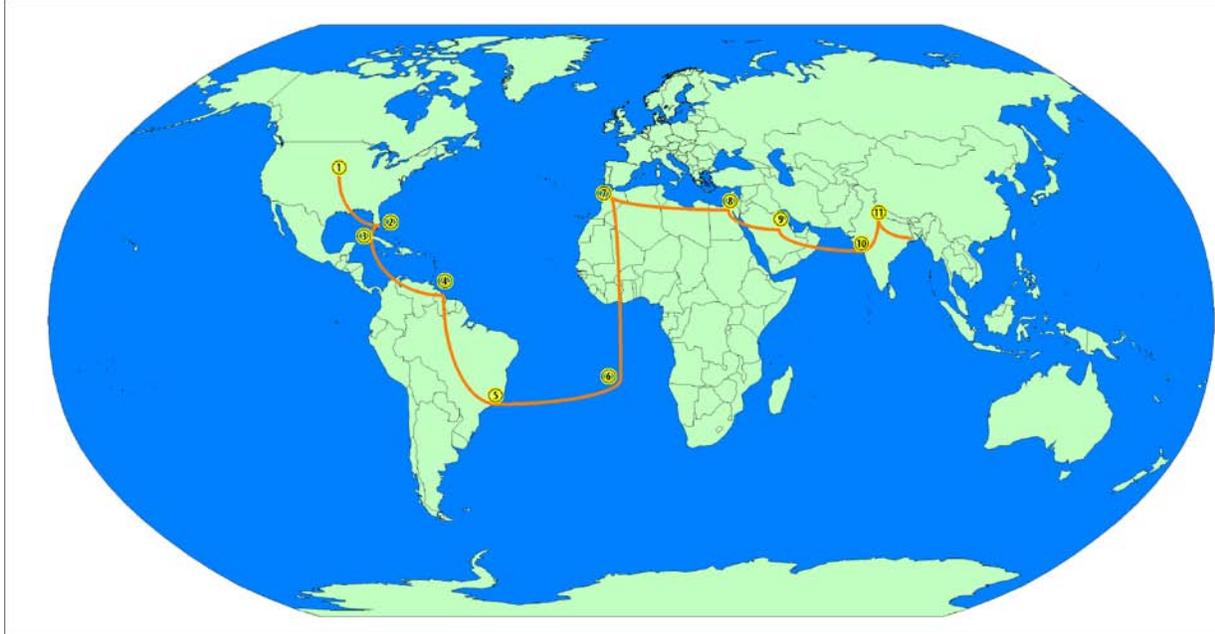
⁹ Barreca, Joseph & Evelyn 50th, page 1

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twentieth_Air_Force#World_War_II_operations

the top brass and the radar guys went by plane. They stopped once more in Florida where Mom and Dad said good-bye for almost two years. The 793rd took a route which included:

1. Salina Kansas to Miami
2. Miami to Havana Cuba
3. Havana to British Guiana
4. Guiana to Rio de Janeiro
5. Rio to St Helena
6. St. Helena to Casablanca Morocco
7. Casablanca to Cairo Egypt
8. Cairo to Riyadh Saudi Arabia
9. Riyadh to Bombay (Mumbai) India
10. Mumbai to Agra India (the Taj Mahal is there)
11. Agra to Kharagpur

This might not have been the shortest route, but it avoided the war in Europe and hostile territory the whole way. One B-29 was even sent over England to make Axis intelligence think



that they were being used in Europe, when really the B-29 had been envisioned from the start as a weapon needed to defeat the Japanese. The 468th Bombardment Group (792nd, 793rd, 794th and 795th Squadrons) arrived at Kharagpur on 13 April, 1944. This turned out to not be such a great plan, but it was an impressive achievement. Our Father's experience was not all he expected either.

And when we got to Calcutta, here we were those super secret radar technicians and they gave us our tools, which happen to be a pitchfork and a pick and we had to make little ones out of big ones. We had to dig grease pits for the mess hall for the group that was comin' by boat. And they were gonna be there a month or two months later. They had to come around and evade all the Japanese submarines and so forth on a troop ship. We avoided all that and we got to play volleyball with the captains and the majors and the high brass there. But we also had to make those grease pits.

I remember the first thing we did. They gave us C-rations which were hardly edible after how spoiled we were in Miami and other places. And we'd hold out our mess kits and couldn't eat most of it and were gonna throw it in the garbage. But before we'd get to the garbage can, these vultures would come down and swoop down and grab that stuff out of our mess kits.¹¹

Kharagpur, less than 100 miles from Kolkata, was not at all like any place these GIs had ever been. The area was impoverished and torn by civil strife. Consider this excerpt from the history of Kolkata. “The city and its port were bombed several times by the Japanese between 1942 and 1944, during World War II. Coinciding with the war, millions starved to death during the Bengal famine of 1943 due to a combination of military, administrative, and natural factors. Demands for the creation of a Muslim state led in 1946 to an episode of communal violence that killed over 4,000. The partition of India led to further clashes and a demographic shift—many Muslims left for East Pakistan, while hundreds of thousands of Hindus fled into the city.”¹²

The firsthand view was less academic:

We experienced also the smell of those, we called them wogs, and they were smokin' betel nut cigarettes there and you could smell 'em a mile away. Anyway that's India for you. The little kids with their little pot bellies and naked. They'd come around and they'd say, “bok shee Saib, bok shees” and you'd have to give 'em somethin' you know. And whatever you'd give them they were happy as could be. And I remember sayin' that those little kids didn't know how miserable they were until some of us would tell 'em. They thought they were happy little kids, you know.¹³

Soon after arriving in India, Dad was able to send letters back to Evelyn Jones. Regular contact with his girl back home was a boon to his morale; a huge achievement for the Army Air Force; a great source of information since Mom kept most of Dad's letters and a somewhat public communication since the letters were censored to make sure no strategic information was being sent home. Now, 70 years later, we can correlate what was happening in the war with what was written in the letters. Much of what was happening in the war was not even known to folks back home or even at the foreign bases, but I'm sure what was known made the hopes and dreams discussed in these letters all the more poignant.

On April 26th, writing from Kharagpur, Joe Barreca was on his 46th letter to Evelyn. (We don't have all of the letters but Dad kept count.) The guys at the new air base were making their own furniture. He was wishing Evelyn was there since she was the better carpenter and he missed her. His buddies were giving him a bad time about being so dependent on the next letter. Meanwhile British Troops were pushing back the Japanese from the borders of India and the Americans were fighting for the Caroline Islands just north of New Guinea and just south of the Mariana Islands, which include Tinian, where Joe would spend the majority of the war.

A few days later (5/9/1944) Dad is responding to a letter from Mom where evidently she was thrown in the water as a prank by her fellow Waves. He is glad that her first thought was to check to make sure that the engagement ring he gave her was still on. On the Eastern European front, The German Army was evacuating Sevastopol the largest city under their control on the Crimean peninsula on the Ukraine and an important port on the Black Sea. The fact that Germany is in retreat shows that the war in Europe is going our way. D-Day the Invasion at Normandy, June 6th, 1944, is less than a month away.

¹¹ Dad Tape 2 Page 3

¹² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#History>

¹³ Dad Tape 2 Page 3

Mom has already written a letter on May 4th and sent it by V-mail.¹⁴ Dad got away to buy some things in town, though he can't mention the name of the town.

May 21st finds Dad who is usually sleeping from midnight to 6AM has worked till 6AM. The 468th had not yet flown its first mission: *"Overheated engines plagued the B-29s in India. The entire B-29 fleet had to be grounded en until the cause was found. By mid-May the B-29s were again ready. The initial mission of the 468th in India was to use their aircraft to haul bombs, fuel, ammunition and spare parts 1,200 miles to its advanced base at Field A-7, Pengshan, Szechwan Province, China. Six round trips were necessary to deliver enough fuel for one airplane to mount a combat mission from China – an impractical logistics concept for an aerial campaign, particularly with an airplane plagued with an unreliable engine."*¹⁵ Poor logistics and unproven equipment were just the beginning of the obstacles the Twentieth Air Force would overcome in the course of the next year. This had to be stressful on the men, but you don't see much evidence of it in Dad's letters.

The May 22nd, letter was longer than most. He had received letters written on April 18 and 30. Stanley Foreman was about to move ahead, though he doesn't say where to. Joe will miss him because "He was the only constantly cheerful boy in the tent".¹⁶ There is news that Evelyn might go to NY, which did eventually happen. Dad expects that it will be a very good thing.

May 25th, 1944: Wind blew tents apart and dust everywhere.

May 28th, 1944: This is an even longer letter than May 22nd and very telling about how things will work out in the rest of his life. It starts out noting an argument with a guy from Missouri who storms out of the tent after calling Dad lazy. Then Dad talks about religion, evidently in answer to an inquiry from Mom. *"I received three V-Mail letters from you – one was only two weeks old – it was the best too. One written 3 days sooner got into religion – now I have to sort of answer it. – pause – It's getting dark so I'll go on by flashlight – I'd like to start out with Darling – but you'd think I was trying to love my way out of this and say "don't 'Darling' me!" so I'll just go on. I'm not very religious, Chips – but my folks had me baptized – I didn't know much about church till I was 10 years old – then my brother (the Lieutenant), my sister (Sandra) and I memorized quite a few common prayers – studied the 20 Commandments and a sister told us, as a class of about 25, all there is to know about the Catholic Church – Well it was sort of a swell feeling to go to my First Communion and to get confirmed – each time I entered our church – it was great in solemnity at times, happy in hymns and organ music at times and the priest was quite a swell character himself. By golly it made a Sunday complete to go to church – My mother was too busy or too sick to go, most of the time, but Dad took us or as soon as I was fifteen – I drove myself and my sister, usually cause Jim didn't care whether he'd go or not. I found that a good many of my schoolmates went to the same church and we looked forward to seeing each other on Sunday mornings – usually at the late mass about 9 a.m. but*

¹⁴ **V-mail**, short for **Victory Mail**, is a [hybrid mail](#) process used during the [Second World War](#) in America as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the logistics of transferring an original letter across the [military postal system](#), a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination. The V-mail process is based on the earlier British Airgraph^[1] process.

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/468th_Bombardment_Group

¹⁶ JAB WW20009.pdf

sometimes I'd get up early and go to the first one. I wouldn't give a million rupees for the wonderful atmosphere around the church I knew – it was more enjoyment and a welcome way of life to look forward to and back upon. Well, I'd have missed all that if my mother wasn't set on the idea – for we lived fairly far from our church and it took a set idea – the other churches around home didn't interest me even though I had been at parties and the story telling and other events. I know it would be different if I were in your position, but I'd like to have our boy or girl or children to have the same awe-inspiring feelings as I so fortunately did. However I'm not narrow minded Little One – you're right in saying we all believe in the same God and that you couldn't honestly swear to bring our children up as Catholics. Sure Chips, I'd give in if it meant even an uncertain feeling in your heart. I love you. There's no two ways about it, it's not religion but that personal satisfaction I had when I was a kid that I'll never forget – I'm not – we've a lifetime together to think about and I'd rather have you happy and satisfied than to be persistent about any point... ”¹⁷

Religion will be the main topic of a later chapter and a theme for the rest of this story. So this is just a foreshadowing.

5/29/1944: Sent necklaces and bracelets, raining, showers on other end of field

6/6/1944: Dad is glad to get some peanuts and other snacks after waiting hours but was not at the head to the line to get chocolates. The saying around there is "Father Son and Holy Ghost, who gets there fastest gets the most"¹⁸ Also he mentions how a fellow in the tent, Wang, is talking about how good the water is in Washington. When you are drinking chlorinated water every day, that might well be on your mind. It was also another foreshadowing of things to come. Perhaps also the fact that the whole 58th Bombardment Operational Training Wing was developed to use B-29 bombers built by Boeing in Seattle also had an influence.

In the same letter he writes. "I just was talking to a Major who rode me to camp in his jeep and he says the big push is on in Europe. Things are looking up around here also – that old one-two punch – so keep your fingers crossed Chips. I'll be back to you before I had anticipated."¹⁹ What he is referring to in a way that the censors won't object is that his unit had finally started fighting. "The [first B-29 bombing raid](#) took place (the day before) on 5 June 1944. Led by General Saunders himself, 98 B-29s took off from bases in eastern India to attack the Makasan railroad yards at [Bangkok, Thailand](#). This involved a 2261-mile round trip, the longest bombing mission yet attempted during the war."²⁰ That was the "one" part of the punch. The "Two" part was D-Day, the largest amphibious invasion in history and the beginning of the end for the Axis Powers, 160,000 US, British, and Canadian troops stormed the beaches of Normandy and secured a foothold for the Allies.

6/7/1944: The next letter, written on a rainy day and is in response to one Mom must have written on a similar day in Palm Beach. "Your description of what we'll do on rainy nights meets with my whole hearted approval – and how!"²¹ It goes on to note a "slight trace of a rainbow against a dark sky." He says that "the invasion of Europe is the topic of conversation." Then he compares it to "the same feeling as you get when you wait for the return of a crew and a

¹⁷ JAB WW20011.pdf

¹⁸ JAB WW20014.pdf

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/58th_Bombardment_Wing#Operations_in_India_and_Tinian

²¹ JAB WW20016.pdf

buddy gunner smiles from ear to ear and clasps his hand on his head as a job well done.” This note stands out as an expression of the ties these men had to each other in a series of letters that often sticks to lighter subjects, reveling in the music of Tommy Dorsey “I didn’t want to do it” and “The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B” or talking about the heat, food or movies. The war was close at hand and personal. They just couldn’t talk about it freely.²²

What he could talk about was that he was getting a pass for his birthday to visit “a large city”, which he couldn’t name here but does name in the next letter. The city was Calcutta, now spelled Kolkata, and it would turn out to be one of the most memorable, trips of his life. What he wrote about in his letter was the grandeur of Calcutta. It is worth transcribing because he paints such a picture:

“Here’s my chance to tell you about Calcutta – the largest city in Asia and the third largest city in the world. Boy! What a city – I don’t know where to begin. The main street through town is Chowringer. It runs pas the Grand Hotel, A. Fripo’s Ltd (the finest house for food in the city), past Dollhouse Square and the White House of Bengal. There’s many taxies and coolies with buggies that take you wherever you feel like going. The cabs are Chevrolet’s, Oldsmobiles and other common cars with the steering wheel on the wrong side of the front seat. The drivers are fat bearded men with turbines. They look funny and mumble under their beards but boy can they drive. In the city at night – the place is dark - and all those drivers have to go by is little parking lights – yet they speed through traffic – weaving in and out giving one of the most exciting rides you can get. After the first ride, however, you get used to it.

There’s a market place down there in the heart of town in which you can get anything – it takes a full half day just to walk through it (clothes, jewelry, china ware, cutlery, stationary, books, food, perfume, drugs, gadgets and du dahs – you can get anything. I just walked through it however.

A. Firpo Ltd. is where I ate most of my meals – the food is superb – Dinner is a five course affair – served in the most aristocratic manner. It starts about 7:45 PM and ends at 11. The waiters are sharp looking boys – dressed in a white uniform – a wide waist belt and a neat looking turbine. There’s one for each table. Its really something to see about 105 of those boys dash around – they’re quick and silent (barefoot) – you can’t find the service any better if you were a millionaire in the Brown Derby in New York. It’s the best – highest type house in all Calcutta and G.I’s or anyone with a couple hundred rupees is treated as a millionaire.

The place is air conditioned by 90 large fans – really a sight. The orchestra plays American rhythm in an American way – waltzes – new songs, favorite tunes and rumbas. The women are bee-u-tee-ful. They look and dress like American girls – don’t know why they’re here – but they are. The dance floor is a huge highly polished hardwood section in the center of the floor. They serve a high class five course meal. You can buy drinks just the way you want ‘em. A couple buddies and myself settled down to Tom Collins or Rum Collins – they say John Collins – well its the same thing. We had a great time – We didn’t get drunk, Chips – and the girls belonged to other, more fortunate boys – in some cases – their wives. Some of the fairer sex were English, Burmese and Anglo Indians.

In the Grand Hotel they have a reserve spot for officers only – yet in the Casanova – another top notch restaurant there are no officers allowed! (Winter Garden has both). In Winter Garden – there’s the jitter-bug type of band – and the small floor is a hub of motion.

I stayed at a small hotel owned by an American lady and her husband who have been here for seven years – the service was great – my two buddies (corporals) a Texan Master

²² JAB WW20017.pdf

Sergeant and myself had a large room – cooled by a large regulated fan in the center of the ceiling. The cool white sheets and soft mattresses were really enjoyable after sleeping for months on the cots here.

Names of other things here such as streets are Chowringer, Government Road, Lower Circular Road, Doll House Square, Lord Cinha road, Kalighal, Kaligunge street car lines – by the way – those street cars are fast and smooth riding – just like those in the large cities in the states. The conductors and motormen are Indian and they really know their business. You can ride one for miles and still be in the city.”²³

A remarkable thing about this letter about Calcutta is that it doesn't mention seeing a funeral pyre, a vivid memory that comes up in more than one of his later interviews but must have happened on a later trip:

After months of monotony and a hospital stay for dysentery and the monsoon season, some of us were given leave to go into Calcutta. We were advised not to drink or eat anything offered or sold by street people, except little bananas we could peel for ourselves. Naked children with pot bellies from malnutrition would always beg by saying "Bok Shies, Sahib" meaning give me some alms. If there was more time they would add, "no mama, no papa, no sista, no broda", just to emphasize their poor situation. An anna or partial rupee or even a stick of gum would make them happy.

Roaming the narrow streets of Calcutta one would see skinny sacred cows and lots of small brown women carrying large bundles on their heads, ox carts, vintage cars, bicycles, goats and markets of every kind. The drivers of military trucks would get into more trouble for hitting a sacred cow than a person. The only safe thing for a service man to do was to have a magnificent meal in one of the best Englishman managed restaurants where the water was purified by treatment and the food was freed from local contamination.

The most unforgettable event occurred when I came upon a large mud lot alongside the Ganges River where large piles of wood sticks and branches were set on fire to burn a corpse with the widow and others wailing and crying. As the fire grew hot the body would fry, sizzle, and pop and the smell was terrible. It was raining and my trench coat got wet and picked up the smell. The whole event was so repulsive that I threw the coat away. I was ready for R & R up in the Himalaya Mountain Range resort called Ranikhat.²⁴

His trip to Ranikhat was 5 months later but he had many chances to visit Kolkata before that.

A day or so after he was back from this 3 day leave, the bases in India completed enough missions over the “Hump” to supply bases in China so that an attack on Japan could be launched.

It was a nighttime raid to be carried out on the night of 14/15 June 1944 against the Imperial Iron and Steel Works at [Yawata](#) on [Kyūshū](#). Unfortunately, the Japanese had been warned of the approaching raid and the city of Yawata was blacked out and haze and/or smoke helped to obscure the target. Only 15 aircraft bombed visually while 32 bombed by radar. Only one bomb actually hit anywhere near the intended target, and the steel industry was essentially untouched. Although very little damage was actually done, the Yawata raid was hailed as a great victory in the American press, since it was the first time since the [Doolittle raid](#) of 1942 that American aircraft had hit the Japanese home islands.²⁵

²³ JAB WW20019.pdf

²⁴ Dad's Stories Page 3

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twentieth_Air_Force#World_War_II_operations

To get an idea of what the 58th Bombardment Group had to go through to pull this off, this is a quote from a book, 58th Bomb Wing: Wait Till the 58th Gets Here By Turner Publishing Company about what Joseph Hampton, an engineer with the 444th Bombardment Group had to say about what it took to be a good pilot. (From what I can discover and others say, the mission described here didn't happen but the problems were similar.)

“First you take an airplane that was originally built for 120,000 pounds gross weight and load it to 138,000 pounds. The plane is in the service test mode in a valley that you have to spiral out to above 20,000 feet in order to clear the mountains called the ‘Hump’. You are on instruments, as it is night and raining so hard you cannot see the outboards. The turbo control on the center isle stand is set on #8 and the four engine throttles are ‘firewalled’ so you have 2800 rpm and 47 inches of mercury at take-off power. The pilot will need all the rpm and every one of those inches to get off the ground. About the time he puts his wheels away, he hits ice and there are no de-icer boots as we had ripped them off early in the game to save weight! The pilot has a plan drawn out on his clipboard telling him how many seconds he can fly on a certain compass heading and then turn to another heading for so many seconds so he does not hit the rocks on the mountains. After almost an hour of the most hair-raising flying, he breaks out above the Hump and heads across China for the target in Japan. He flies across a part of occupied China we call “the corridor”, which is loaded with Japanese fighter bases, and then to the Yellow Sea. About seven hours after take-off he sees the IP, and then he encounters fighter attacks, and on to the bomb run where he flies through heavy flak. After ‘bombs away’ he heads back out to sea and for home and mother. He may have some fighter opposition when he crosses the corridor and later, after dark, he is back over the Hump. It is generally socked in again, and all the planes are low on fuel after flying 14 hours, and they have to take their turn spiraling in to the base. Once in awhile, you will hear a pilot break radio silence and say he is coming in as he is running out of fuel. You will not see him, but you may feel his prop wash as he passes you. It sort of gets you in the stomach. The pilot sits there with his feet in the stirrups, flying her in on the clocks and finally sets her down on the runway. He may bounce her a time or two, for he has nothing to prove; he is not a junior birdman. He is a good pilot!”



Dad particularly liked this cartoon. I think the center part about standing in line for food struck a chord. The last panel refers to the Marine attack on Tarawa, a tiny island 2,500 southwest of the Hawaiian Islands, the first landing in the Pacific. It was heavily fortified by the Japanese and manned with 4,700 of their best soldiers. The Japanese commander said it could not be captured. The Marines did capture it but with heavy losses totaling almost 3000 men

killed or wounded. Only 17 of the Japanese were captured alive. It's no wonder the Marine in the last panel would not talk about it. There is live footage in color on the Internet.²⁶

A little over a month after the Normandy Invasion, Mom was transferred to New York to attend her own version of Radio School. She had been the only girl carpenter at Palm Beach, now she was residing in the Embassy Hotel in New York with the Coast Guard and some other SPARs who were learning radio repair.²⁷ We don't have her letter, but there is mention that Mom was getting some attention from "Public Relations". Dad was not the only one who noticed that she was pretty. Along with radio studies, she became a poster girl for the SPARs.²⁸

On October 2nd, Dad had just gotten back to camp from R&R in Ranikhat, a British resort in the mountains. He doesn't talk about it much in the letter, he had 31 pieces of mail waiting for him including 9 letters from his sweetheart back home and they were at the top of his mind. Topics included a detailed description of what he noticed in two pictures Mom included; both St Louis teams (The St Louis Cardinals and the St Louis Browns) winning the pennants; the ballots for the fall elections were out and Dad was thinking of voting for Roosevelt and the slate of Democrats; Mom had thrown out some of her possessions that were made in Japan including a china horse with colt, (Dad called it a calf) and Mom was planning on giving a silver mirror to her first granddaughter on her 18th birthday.

Later in October of 1944, Dad got to fly in a B-29 over the Hump and into China. He included some Chinese money, worth practically nothing, in the letter written from there. He stayed there awhile and bought Evelyn some embroidered silk.²⁹

While Dad was on leave at Ranikhat the US Navy landed unopposed at Ulithi Atoll in the Carolina Islands; it is a small atoll that will later become an important naval base. The harbor was capable of holding over 700 ships. The Navy created a repair and refueling base there that also provided R&R for the sailors. It was relatively close to the Mariana Islands which include Tinian, where Dad would spend much of the war.

Meanwhile back in India. "Each B-29 mission consumed tremendous quantities of fuel and bombs, which had to be shuttled from India to the China bases over the Himalayas, the world's highest mountain range. For every Superfortress combat mission, the command flew an average of six B-29 round-trip cargo missions over [the Hump](#) . Even after the [Air Transport Command](#) took over the logistical supply of the B-29 bases in China at the end of 1944, enough fuel and bombs never seemed to reach Chengtu.^[2]

Range presented another problem. [Tokyo](#), in eastern [Honshū](#), lay more than 2,000 miles from the Chinese staging bases, out of reach of the B-29s. [Kyūshū](#), in southwestern Japan, was the only one of the major home islands within the 1,600-mile combat radius of the Superfortress.^[2]

The very heavy bomber still suffered mechanical problems that grounded some aircraft and forced others to turn back before dropping their bombs. Even those B-29s that reached the target area often had difficulty in hitting the objective, partly because of extensive cloud cover or high winds. Larger formations could have helped compensate for inaccurate bombing, but Saunders did not have enough B-29s to dispatch large formations. Also, the Twentieth Air Force periodically diverted the Superfortresses from strategic targets to support theater

²⁶ <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/tarawa.htm>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ce-hreP-w>

²⁷ JAB WW20026.pdf

²⁸ JAB WW20028.pdf

²⁹ JAB WW20032.pdf

commanders in Southeast Asia and the southwestern Pacific. For these reasons, the XX Bomber Command and the B-29s largely failed to fulfill their strategic promise.^[2]³⁰

So, while corporal Barreca enjoyed China, presumably in Chengtu, it turned out to be a misguided plan to attack Japan. But a much better plan was being worked on in the Mariana Islands. Plans were also being worked out between the young couple.

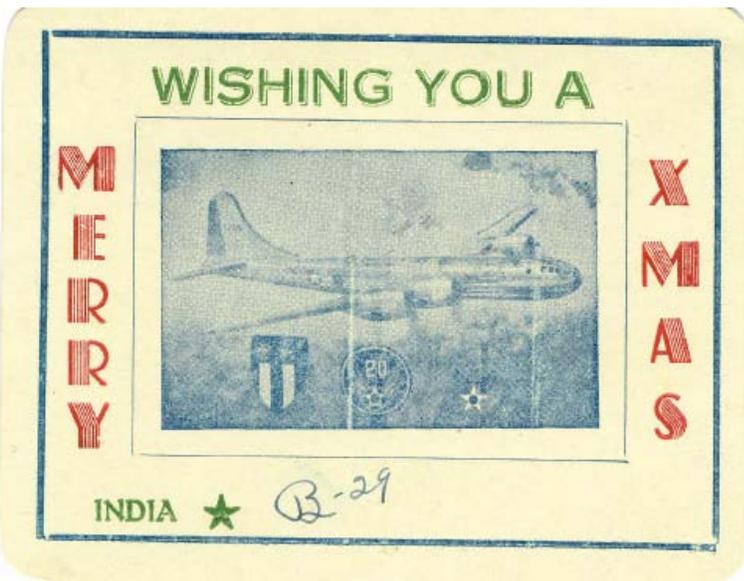
Later in November, Roosevelt has been re-elected as president. Mom is floating ideas about serving some time overseas. Dad is not too keen on that happening. He also mentions that another outfit has been the first to bomb Tokyo. He can't say in the letter, but it is the first raid from a new base on Tinian and is carried out by B-29s. A couple days later, the USS Intrepid was hit by kamikazes for the third time; other American ships are heavily damaged. Even though the tides of war have turned against them, both Japan and Germany are waging large-scale desperate attacks against Allied Forces.

A few days later, December 8th, 1944, Dad responds to an idea Mom has to move to the country and farm like pioneers. Both of them know a thing or two about farming and Dad says he would do it if that is what Mom wants. In the same letter he tries to quell Mom's concerns about why he loves here saying that although she is not Lana Turner and he is not Cary Grant but *"I just love you and if you ask "Why" – offhand – I'd say I didn't know. – Why do you love me? Is it because I love you or would you love me anyway? I couldn't even answer that, but after fifty years we'll know why."*³¹ Later in the same letter he mentions that he received a nice letter from Mom's mother, Matilda Jones who related that Evelyn had chances to go to Hawaii or Alaska. Reading between the lines, being in New York for Christmas was not Mom's cup of tea.

On December 16th, Germany launched what would become known as "The Battle of the Bulge". The **Battle of the Bulge** (16 December 1944 – 25 January 1945) was a major German offensive campaign launched through the densely forested [Ardennes](#) region of [Wallonia](#) in [Belgium](#), [France](#) and [Luxembourg](#) on the [Western Front](#) toward the end of [World War II](#) in Europe. The surprise attack caught the Allied forces completely off guard and became the

costliest battle in terms of casualties for the United States, whose forces bore the brunt of the attack, during all of World War II. It also severely depleted Germany's war-making resources.³²

It is getting close to Christmas. Mom sends Dad a gift package that includes a chess and checker set. He's been beating the chief officer regularly at checkers and is glad to get this present. He sends her a Christmas Postcard that doesn't look like an announcement of the birth of the "Prince of Peace". A close look reveals the insignia of the 20th Army Air Force.



³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XX_Bomber_Command

³¹ JAB WW02049.pdf

³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Bulge

In a letter written December 12th, Dad notes that from what she saw of it, (St Louis), Mom didn't like Missouri. He assures her that the countryside is better. The next week in his last letter for the year, he is thinking about his family decorating the Christmas tree but he is especially remembering the upcoming anniversary of their engagement on New Year's Day. This is the last letter we have from 1944. There are a couple letters in February and then no more letters until May 1945. From the count, we know that 10 more were sent, but not exactly when. What we do know is that even though he didn't expect any big changes for a long time, he had just gotten a new set of immunization shots and that the next letter we have is written from Tinian Island in the Marianas. The letter we have about that trip arrived quite a bit later. It is 20 pages long and more or less a journal from the trip.

It was a long trip from the first week of March 1st to April 6th. He got a meal ticket at the start with 40 days worth of meals to punch. These were large troop ships. He had the top bunk of a stack of four on the fourth level down. He spent most of the first part of the journey on his bunk which was next to the compartment's speaker. All the announcements started with loud piping and then announcements like "All hammocks up", "All hands to battle stations", "Call to breakfast", "Physical Drill", "Smoking lamp is out"... They spent a lot of time playing cards. He won big then gradually lost at poker, then switched to pinochle (which has always been his favorite card game). The news on the radio was encouraging. the Allies were crossing the Rhine. But outside the ship, they were still in dangerous waters and had destroyer escorts for the first four days. They didn't know exactly where they were going until the very last part of the trip.

The biggest event for those new to life at sea was the King Neptune Order of the Deep Celebration. In this ancient tradition, those who have never crossed the equator at sea, "pollywogs" or just plain "wogs", are initiated by those who have crossed before, "shellbacks". They are usually judged one by one before the court of King Neptune, a senior hand or officer dressed in green togs, long beard holding a trident and usually dripping wet. The wogs are dipped in sea water, have their heads shaved and often splattered with eggs, rotten fruit etc. This initiation included a paddle line that Dad avoided by covering himself with grease and flour to look like he had already been initiated. He did get his hair shaved, which he felt he needed. It was all good fun and probably the most memorable event of the trip, though certainly not the only one.

Another event was testing the ships anti-aircraft and 5" guns. They sent balloons up for the anti-aircraft practice. One was shot right off, but another on the opposite side of the ship got away. Finally they had a balloon target miles away, just a speck on the horizon that the 5" guns fore and aft had a crack at. Men covered their ears and flames shot out from the guns as they fired 20 or so rounds that finally brought the target down.

Dad didn't get seasick but did get sunburned. Guys spent as much time as possible on deck. After 18 days, they arrived in Melbourne Australia. Although they didn't know exactly where they were going, the trip went south from Calcutta across the equator and around the south side to Australia with a one day leave in Melbourne. The description of that stop is very exact and because some readers may someday get a chance to revisit the scene, a transcription is as follows:

"We finally got to Melbourne on March 18 – we happened to dock at Gillsbrant pier in Williamston about ½ hour from Melbourne. On March 20th our group got a pass. We had seen the sailors go on liberty the night before - all spruced up and boy! Did we envy 'em. We thought we wouldn't get to see town but we got out one day in town and we'll never forget Melbourne. The people were just like Americans – the buildings and streets are like those in the States – the

girls are plentiful and willing. The town swallowed up the relatively few G.I's we soon learned what a schilling and a six pence and a pound was worth. Luna Park was the spot where most G.I's went. Everyone had a girlfriend or two or three before the day was over. Australian beer was good. Department Stores were just like those in the U.A. Kitzman and I walked miles together, through a famous garden – down Bourke Street, and up to Exhibition and Collins Street, across the Princess Bridge on St Kildar etc. At the Red Cross right in town we ate and signed up for a house party. At 7:30 three girls showed up and gathered 14 of us – they had quite a time getting that many – we took a train to Canegie and met the rest of 14 girls and went to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peterson. A swell little home with thick rugs and small rooms – We met everyone (Marge Peterson was the hostess.) We played a few games and ate a specially prepared luncheon. We had to leave in a hurry because we were due back at the dock at midnight. The girls rode the train as far as Spencer St with us.

The girl I was with was really nice to look at – nicer to cuddle with – her name Phyllis Montgomery. Her sister was equally good – Mary – went arm in arm with Sultan – we planned a double date for Friday – but we never got off the ship again and Friday we took off. Australian hospitality is wonderful. All the boys talked of for the next three days was Australian women and how you had to beat 'em off with a club.”³³

A week later on March 28th the ship stopped in Townsville in northern Queensland and took on 400 RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) troops that they took to New Guinea on their way north. The New Guinea native boys swam out to the boat and one dove off the main deck perfectly. The island looked rugged as they passed by on their way to the next stop, the Admiralty Islands, which had been captured by McArthur's troops in heavy fighting the year before. They are only 2 degrees below the equator and the ship would soon cross that again.

By this time Dad has his shipboard routine down. He gets up early to secure a spot near the bow of the boat where he can watch the sunrise and see flying fish skipping over the water. He also likes the porpoises which try to keep up with the ship. He is daydreaming of either going back to work at Curtis-Wright or getting a farm in the country, and is thinking that he will need to be a lot less lazy if he does either one. Daydreaming came to an end on April 6th, 1945 when he landed on Tinian Island, an island that changed to course of history.

The next letter we have from that time is dated May 5th. In the gap between letters Franklin Roosevelt died on April 12th and Harry Truman became President. The Allies are capturing concentration camps in Germany every other day. Victory in Europe is declared three days later on May 8th. Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels and Heinrich Himmler all commit suicide on May 23rd.

The US commanders had been looking at Tinian and Saipan long before Joseph Barreca arrived. On July 24, 1944, 30,000 US Marines landed on the beaches of Tinian Eight days later, over 8,000 of the 8,800 Japanese soldiers on the island were dead (vs. 328 Marines), and four months later the Seabees had built the busiest airfield of WWII - dubbed North Field - enabling B-29 Super fortresses to launch air attacks on the Philippines, Okinawa, and mainland Japan.³⁴

Saipan is less than a mile north of Tinian The month before the Marines took Tinian, on June 15, 1944, 71,000 Marines landed on Saipan They faced 31,000 Japanese soldiers determined not to surrender.

³³ JAB WW20082.pdf

³⁴ Tinian Island, an Internet posting, Tinian Island.docx is a copy in our files.

Japan had colonized Saipan after World War I and turned the island into a giant sugar cane plantation. By the time of the Marine invasion, in addition to the 31,000 entrenched soldiers, some 25,000 Japanese settlers were living on Saipan, plus thousands more Okinawans, Koreans, and native islanders brutalized as slaves to cut the sugar cane.

There were also one or two thousand Korean "comfort women" (*kanji* in Japanese), abducted young women from Japan's colony of Korea to service the Japanese soldiers as sex slaves. (See *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*, by George Hicks.)

Within a week of their landing, the Marines set up a civilian prisoner encampment that quickly attracted a couple thousand Japanese and others wanting US food and protection. When word of this reached Emperor Hirohito - who contrary to the myth was in full charge of the war - he became alarmed that radio interviews of the well-treated prisoners broadcast to Japan would subvert his people's will to fight.

As meticulously documented by historian Herbert Bix in *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, the Emperor issued an order for all Japanese civilians on Saipan to commit suicide. The order included the promise that, although the civilians were of low caste, their suicide would grant them a status in heaven equal to those honored soldiers who died in combat for their Emperor.



And that is why the precipice in the picture above is known as Suicide Cliff, off which over 20,000 Japanese civilians jumped to their deaths to comply with their fascist emperor's desire - mothers flinging their babies off the cliff first or in their arms as they jumped.

Anyone reluctant or refused, such as the Okinawan or Korean slaves, were shoved off at gunpoint by the Jap soldiers. Then the soldiers themselves proceeded to hurl themselves into the ocean to drown off a sea cliff afterwards called Banzai Cliff. Of the 31,000 Japanese soldiers on Saipan, the Marines killed 25,000; 5,000 jumped off Banzai Cliff; and only the remaining thousand were taken prisoner.

The extent of this demented fanaticism is very hard for any civilized mind to fathom - especially when it is devoted not to anything noble but barbarian evil instead. The vast brutalities inflicted by the Japanese on their conquered and colonized peoples of China, Korea, the Philippines, and throughout their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" was a hideously depraved horror.³⁵

³⁵ Ibid

Tinian was fairly civilized when Barreca arrived. Being closer to the marine supply lines going back to the States, it had faster mail service, better food, real beaches and some of the best weather in the world. What it didn't have was Evelyn Jones. But he made do by imagining every movie star in every movie they watched was Chips. Stan Foreman was there, fixing up furniture out of whatever was available. Joe even made a desk lamp that used batteries so he could write at night when it was quiet. Stan and Joe would also go swimming when they had the time. At least they could write home about that. What they could not write about was the war as it raged on in the Pacific.

Al during this time the Marines and Army were fighting to capture Okinawa. The Battle of Okinawa, codenamed Operation Iceberg,^[3] was fought on the Ryukyu Islands of Okinawa and was the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific War of World War II.^{[4][5]} The 82-day-long battle lasted from early April until mid-June 1945. After a long campaign of island hopping, the Allies were approaching Japan, and planned to use Okinawa, a large island only 340 mi (550 km) away from mainland Japan, as a base for air operations on the planned invasion of Japanese mainland... The battle resulted in the highest number of casualties in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Japan lost over 100,000 soldiers, who were either killed, captured or committed suicide, and the Allies suffered more than 65,000 casualties of all kinds. Simultaneously, tens of thousands of local civilians were killed, wounded, or committed suicide.³⁶

Once captured, Okinawa also offered an air base that could be used for emergency landings when air strikes over Japan went awry. And air strikes over Japan seldom went as planned. XXI Bomber Command's initial attacks against Japan were focused on the country's aircraft industry. XXI Bomber Command attacked Tokyo three times between 27 November and 3 December; two of these raids were made against the Musashino aircraft plant while the other targeted an industrial area using M-69 Incendiary cluster bombs, specifically developed to damage Japanese urban areas.^[67] The aircraft plant attacked on 27 November and 3 December was only lightly damaged as high winds and clouds prevented accurate bombing.³⁷

The B-29 had been designed to bomb from high altitudes, 30,000, and at high speeds, 400 mph. While swarms of Japanese fighter planes would respond to a flight of bombers, the bombers suffered only light damage because they could outrun them and with their pressurized cabins, they could fly above them. The downside of this strategy was that fast jet-stream winds over Japan scattered the bombs making precision bombing nearly impossible. Allied command decided that they needed a new commander and a new strategy.

Brigadier General Haywood S. Hansell was replaced by Major General Curtis LeMay in January of 1945. In light of the poor results of the precision bombing campaign and the success of the 25 February raid on Tokyo, LeMay decided to begin firebombing attacks on Japan's main cities during early March. To maximize the effectiveness of the firebombing attacks, LeMay ordered the B-29s to fly at the low altitude of 5,000 feet (1,500 m) and bomb by night; this represented a significant change from the Command's standard tactics, which focused on high-altitude daylight bombing. As Japan's night fighter force was weak and the anti-aircraft batteries were less effective at night, LeMay also had most of the B-29s' defensive guns removed; by reducing the weight of the aircraft in this way they were able to carry more bombs.^[80] These changes were not popular with XXI Bomber Command's aircrew, as they believed that it was safer to fly heavily armed aircraft at high altitude.^[89]

³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Okinawa

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Raids_on_Japan#Initial_attacks_from_the_Mariana_Islands

The first firebombing attack in this campaign was carried out against Tokyo on the night of 9/10 March, and proved to be the single most destructive air raid of the war.^[90] XXI Bomber Command mounted a maximum effort, and on the afternoon of 9 March 346 B-29s left the Marianas bound for Tokyo. They began to arrive over the city at 2:00 am Guam time on 10 March, and 279 bombers dropped 1,665 tons of bombs.^[91] The raid caused a massive firestorm that overwhelmed Tokyo's civil defenses and destroyed 16 square miles (41 km²) of buildings, representing seven percent of the city's urban area.^[92] The Tokyo police force and fire department estimated that 83,793 people were killed during the air raid, another 40,918 were injured and just over a million lost their homes; postwar estimates of deaths in this attack have ranged from 80,000 to 100,000.^{[93][94]} Damage to Tokyo's war production was also substantial.^[93] Japanese opposition to this attack was relatively weak; 14 B-29s were destroyed as a result of combat or mechanical faults and a further 42 damaged by anti-aircraft fire.³⁸

This attack proved to be the most deadly attack on Japan of the entire war, worse in terms of casualties than either of the atomic bombs that were dropped later. It happened almost two months before Joseph Barreca arrived on Tinian. Troops were still fighting for Okinawa when he arrived. Some B-29s from Tinian bombed air fields that were sending kamikaze aircraft to attack naval forces during the battle for Okinawa.

Dad does mention that the Lucky Lady is his favorite airplane and even sent a picture of it on May 24th, 1945.³⁹ A couple days later he writes:

“Although the sight of America’s might – the rows of smooth looking loaded superforts with four powerful purring engines at take off – is awe-inspiring and it’s good to be able to say ‘I was there’ – there is something more dominating in wanting to be a civilian.”⁴⁰ He also told how he acquired what might be his only war-related injury, He hit his head on a raft while playing with a basketball swimming with Stan and other friends.⁴¹ The next couple of letters also mention Stanley who Dad expects to be arguing with much of the time over trivial topics such as ‘Why servicemen should get a \$1000 bonus,’ or the latest songs. Later in the same letter he signs off saying he is going to help Stan build a rack to hang their clothes on. In the next letter, June 5th, Stanley informs Joe that he will be much more well-liked and sociable when he gets back to St Louis because Stanley had ‘reformed’ him. Dad is writing because all the planes are out on a mission and there is little to do. On 5 June, 473 B-29s struck Kobe by day and destroyed 4.35 square miles (11.3 km²) of buildings for the loss of 11 bombers.⁴² It is nearing Joe’s second birthday while overseas. He got a birthday card from Mom and she also sent a Mother’s Day card to his mom.



³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ JAB WW20059.PDF

⁴⁰ JAB WW20060.PDF

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Raids_on_Japan#Initial_attacks_from_the_Mariana_Islands

Getting to know each other's families is a common topic during this period. On June 7th he writes that his brother Jim is engaged to a girl named Joan. Jim suggests that the prospective sisters and brothers-in-law exchange letters. Dad agrees, sends Jim Evelyn's address and tells her that Jim writes humorous letters. Joe has been up until 2 AM and now the planes are off on a mission.⁴³ A force of 409 B-29s attacked Osaka again on 7 June; during this attack 2.21 square miles (5.7 km²) of buildings were burnt out and the Americans did not suffer any losses.⁴⁴

6/8/1945: An old friend from Boca Raton, King, moves into the tent. Evelyn gives up on the idea of being stationed in Alaska. Joe is glad and comments on a house design from Mom.

6/9/1945: The Curtis-Wright plant in Pattonville is closing. Grandfather Tony is out of work but considering going into business for himself. Sister Sandra is out of work too, but planning to go to college. Dad has no job to return to, jokes about staying in the Service. He has time to write twice by staying up late after watching the movie, National Velvet. So it becomes his birthday by the time he is finished.⁴⁵ On 9 June, two groups of B-29s bombed an aircraft factory at _____ and another two groups raided a factory in Atsuta; both facilities were badly damaged. A single group of Superfortresses also attempted to bomb a Kawasaki Aircraft Industries factory at Akashi but accidentally struck a nearby village instead.⁴⁶

6/11/1945: Joe got a letter from Lenore Swan, a friend from Pattonville who writes him about once a month. She is going to college and thinks it would be good for Dad to take advantage of the G.I. Bill and attend college too. Joe is not too keen on that idea. He would rather be a 'working man' and have a family. (Stanley is reading by the light of a flickering light that he made which interferes with King's radio, but Stanly won't turn it off.)⁴⁷

6/12/1945: Joe can finally write that he is on Tinian Island by Saipan and it is beautiful.⁴⁸

6/13/1945: Stan is smoking a long "seegar". Dad is going to watch "Destination Tokyo" for the third time, hoping for a new cartoon to go with it and realizing that is childish.⁴⁹

6/14/1945: Stan is playing with the radio while Dad is trying to write, so he goes to the orderly room to get some quiet just as taps sounds for the night. It reminds him of hearing taps for the first time at the military funeral for his grandfather. (This part of letter JAB 20070 doesn't make any sense genealogically. His father's father died when Tony Barreca was 12 in Sicily. His mother's father died in 1954 after the war, unless our records have it wrong.)

6/15/1945: Planes are all gone on a mission. The G.I.s, celebrating the anniversary of the first strike on Japan, were entertained with a stage show, Ship Ahoy, featuring 5 real women. They pulled up 3 B-29s to watch from the wings, as well as from a lot of other equipment pulled in front of the planes. The planes came back as the show was ending. On June 14th, 510 B-29s escorted by 148 P-51s were sent against nine factories in southern Honshu and Shikoku. Heavy clouds over the region meant that many bombers attacked targets of opportunity individually or in small groups, and little damage was done to the raid's intended targets.^[136] Coincidentally, that was also the case in the raid they were celebrating from the year before.⁵⁰

⁴³ JAB WW20063.pdf

⁴⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Raids_on_Japan#Initial_attacks_from_the_Mariana_Islands

⁴⁵ JAB WW20066.pdf

⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Raids_on_Japan#Initial_attacks_from_the_Mariana_Islands

⁴⁷ JAB WW20067.pdf

⁴⁸ JAB WW20068.pdf

⁴⁹ JAB WW20069.pdf

⁵⁰ JAB WW20070.pdf, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Raids_on_Japan#Initial_attacks_from_the_Mariana_Islands

Dad is in a good mood, not just because of the stage show, but because he just got a letter from Mom's mother and the war is going well: *"The Chinese are cutting down the Jap stronghold in China – we now have Okinawa – the Australians are taking the East Indies and there's hardly anything to worry about except Manchuria – I'd like to see Russia do something about that."*⁵¹

6/21/1945: It's raining at night and the radio's playing soft music as Dad relates that a girl he knows joined the Navy in New York and likes it and a couple he knew all during school years is getting married. He would have been best man.⁵²

6/23/1945: Dad watches Greer Garson in the movie *Random Harvest* for the second time since Radio School and is reminded again how she seems so much like Mom. He says that previously he would immediately react if he didn't like someone, but now he is more reserved and often finds that they really are alright.⁵³

6/27/1945: Dad is listening to news on King's radio that the United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco. He hope they got it right and can end world wars. He also thinks Mom's brother, Aubrey, may be stationed in Saipan.⁵⁴

7/14/1945: Aubrey is stationed only a mile away! Dad had thought 242 was his APO number but it is his group number. For instance, Dad's in the 793rd squadron in group 468 of 58th Bombardment Wing of XXI command. Aubrey's group of fighter planes is on Tinian. Aubrey got a letter from Dad and drove right over to find Dad working on a B-29. He met him at the bomb bay doors, stuck out his hand and said "I'm lieutenant Jones." So that is how they met and the beginning of a better situation for corporal Barreca.⁵⁵



They go to drink a couple beers at the officer's club where Aubrey is well-liked by his fellow airmen. Aubrey relates that "Evelyn is a funny girl. She'll try anything once." A couple weeks later it looks like Aubrey will be sent to Iwo Jima. But that is delayed. Letters in this period are further apart. Both men are busy. But two weeks later, Joe finds time to write the 20 page letter about his boat trip from Calcutta to Tinian.

The air campaign against Japan had been unopposed for some time. They have started dropping leaflets telling the Japanese what cities they will hit next. The Japanese make it a capital offense to keep one of the leaflets. Some missions have placed mines in critical straits and harbors around the islands. The Japanese are almost out of fuel and are saving their last fighter planes for the inevitable battle for the mainland. The end is obviously near, the only question is "at what cost?"

Late in the afternoon of August 5, 1945, a B-29 was maneuvered over a bomb loading pit, then after lengthy preparations, taxied to the east end of North Field's main runway, Runway Able, and at 2:45 am in the early morning darkness of August 6, took off. Dad remembers that the troops were required to wear gas masks. They didn't know exactly why.

⁵¹ JAB WW0071.pdf

⁵² JAB WW0073.pdf

⁵³ JAB WW0074.pdf

⁵⁴ JAB WW0075.pdf

⁵⁵ JAB WW20077 Jul 14 1945 met Aubrey.pdf

The B-29 was piloted by Col. Paul Tibbets of the US Army Air Force, who had named the plane after his mother, *Enola Gay*. The crew named the bomb they were carrying *Little Boy*. 6- hours later at 8:15 am Japan time, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.⁵⁶ The resulting explosion killed tens of thousands of people and destroyed about 4.7 square miles (12 km²) of buildings. The six American aircraft involved in this attack returned safely to the Marianas.^[223] Postwar estimates of casualties from the attack on Hiroshima range from 66,000 to 80,000 fatalities and 69,000 to 151,000 injured.^[224] Tens of thousands more subsequently died as a result of radiation and other injuries from the attack; it has been estimated that 140,000 people had died as a result of the atomic bomb by the end of 1945. Estimates of the total number of fatalities range as high as 230,000.^{[225][226]} Of the survivors of the bombing, 171,000 were rendered homeless.^[227]

Because the Japanese were used to bombing raids by hundreds of bombers, they didn't even bother to scramble a fighter against the *Enola Gay* and the two observer planes that went with it or the three weather planes that preceded it. We can debate today about the ethics of this attack, but to the soldiers who had been fighting this war and the commanders calculating the cost in human life, both civilian and military of the planned, Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan, there was no debate. A study done for Secretary of War Henry Stimson's staff by William Shockley estimated that conquering Japan would cost 1.7–4 million American casualties, including 400,000–800,000 fatalities, and five to ten million Japanese fatalities. The key assumption was large-scale participation by civilians in the defense of Japan.^{[1]57}

Three days later, in the pre-dawn hours of August 9, a B-29 named *Bockscar* (a pun on "boxcar" after its flight commander Capt. Fred Bock), piloted by Major Charles Sweeney took off from Runway Able. Finding its primary target of Kokura obscured by clouds, Sweeney proceeded to the secondary target of Nagasaki, over which, at 11:01 am, bombardier Kermit Beahan released the atomic bomb dubbed *Fat Man*.⁵⁸

The resulting 20 kiloton explosion destroyed 1.45 square miles (3.8 km²) of buildings in the Urakami district.^{[230][231]} Official Japanese figures issued in the late 1990s state the total number of people killed as a result of this attack exceeded 100,000.^[232] The attack also crippled the city's industrial production; steel production was set back by one year, electrical power was severely reduced for two months and arms production was greatly reduced.^[233] All the American aircraft involved in the operation returned safely to Tinian.^[234] The Soviet invasion of Manchuria also began on 9 August, and the Red Army advanced rapidly.^[235] On this day, B-29s dropped three million leaflets on Japanese cities warning that atomic bombs would be used to destroy all the country's military resources unless the Emperor ended the war.^[236] At this time a third atomic bomb was expected to be ready by the end of August.^[237] Eight bombs were scheduled to have been completed by November.⁵⁹

16 hours after the bombing of Nagasaki, On August 15, Emperor Hirohito issues a radio broadcast announcing Japan's surrender.⁶⁰ This triggered huge celebrations in large cities all over the world. Mom had a wild night celebrating in New York. That she describes like this:

⁵⁶ Tinian Island.docx – circulated on the Internet.

⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Japan#Assumptions

⁵⁸ Tinian Island.docx

⁵⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Raids_on_Japan#Initial_attacks_from_the_Mariana_Islands

⁶⁰ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_World_War_II_\(1945\)#August_1945](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_World_War_II_(1945)#August_1945)

I was still in New York when VJ day came. I remember that I and my roommate and I think somebody else that we knew were all in a restaurant across the street from the hotel where we lived, from the Walcott. And one of the boys from the Coast Guard that lived fairly close around there I guess, came rushing into the restaurant and told us oh, you've got to get down to Time Square it's the end of the war! It being up on the reader board in Time Square - and so we pretty well shuffled out of that restaurant in a hurry and all rushed down to Time Square. (She might be in this picture.)



And it seemed like there was about a million people down there. And boys were turning cartwheels and yelling and dancing and hugging everybody in sight. It was quite an exciting experience watching all of the stuff come in over the reader board there in Time Square. People were throwing ticker tape stuff out of the windows and the streets were just covered with stuff.

And I don't know why we were so brave to do this but a couple came by in a car and wanted to know if we wanted to go driving around town to see what was going on and so we went with them. And they took us up through Harlem and all the different boroughs in Manhattan there to see what everybody else was doing. I remember a little young black girl came up and gave us both a big hug and thanked us for saving 'em and we thought that was kind of funny.

But it was quite an experience just to go through that. And then after that we were still doing pretty much what we'd done before. But instead of putting the radios back on ships and being used, well they were having us fix 'em and putting 'em in storage. And we felt like that was kind of a waste of time, 'cause we knew that the time another war came along they probably be very much out of date, which they would have been. But anyway it was a little while 'fore we were mustered out. We had to go through a process of turning in our uniforms and having all the things ripped off from 'em and going through quite a process.⁶¹

Surprisingly, the Japanese were celebrating too. Dad writes that the incoming Americans were greeted by signs saying "Three Cheers for the Americans".⁶² So we were not the only ones thinking the Japanese military were insane despots. That is especially heartening given the incredible devastation that we inflicted on their homeland.

Back on Tinian, Dad is totaling up his "battle points". The winning number is 80. At that number you get to go home. He has 76 and expects to get 5 more soon. After all, bombs sent from Tinian ended the war. (They get 1 point for every month, 5 points for every decoration and 18 points for every child back home.)⁶³ One version of VJ Day is August 15, when Hirohito surrendered, another is September 2nd, when the treaty was signed. Joseph Barreca was invited to ride in a B-29 over the scene. Here is his description:

V.J Day found me in a B-29 over Tokyo and over the U.S.S. Missouri, flagship on which McArthur and other Allied Leaders together with Jap "gears" signed surrender and peace

⁶¹ Evelyn grade school-Coast Guard.doc

⁶² JAB W00290.pdf

⁶³ JAB W00291.pdf

terms. We wagged our wings over that ship at about 10:30 AM in Japanese time – just about when the peak of the ceremony was going on. The pilots were permitted to take five passengers on this victory or power showing flight. Formations in waves of Superforts buzzed over Tokyo for hours. I saw the Imperial Palace – it looked like a yellow castle from the air – and we saw troops going ashore – we saw the ruins of blocks and blocks of the Nips capitol or what used to be the third largest city in the world. Japan, aside from the burned cities, is beautiful from the air – little roads and trees and landscapes are tops – we could distinguish people waving – and we saw trains still operating normally; automobiles and trucks on the main highway to Tokyo and people on bicycles crossing bridges etc. Our four engines never missed a beat in the 15 hour mission and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Werner and Aubrey planned to go with me and everything was all set for them but their C.O. returned from Guam and refused to give them permission – if you ever saw a couple of disappointed men, it was Aubrey and Werner. They gave me one of their parachutes and Mae West so I could go.⁶⁴

Time travels much too slowly after that. Everyone is anxious to get back home to their friends and family. On the island Dad is counting his points and listening as rumors pass that they will be flying B-29s in formation over major cities in the US. He is having a hard time getting a jeep to go over and visit Aubrey. Apparently the officers are using all the jeeps to escort nurses around the island.⁶⁵

Later in September Dad mentions the “Big Idea” that he had while swimming. It involves both he and Mom going to college, which may delay having a family a little. He won't say more than that because he wants to explain it in person so he can gauge Evelyn's reaction.⁶⁶ Finally in October 17th, he is sent to a staging area on Saipan to wait for a transport ship. He doesn't get any mail there. Men are separated into groups from each “Separation Center”, which in his case is the same as his “Induction Center”, Jefferson Barracks, St Louis. This puts him in the company of lots of boys from St Louis, but separates him from all the guys he worked with during the war. There is no mention of that in his letters though. It's all about getting on a ship, sailing to San Francisco and then on a train straight to St. Louis. He plans to telegraph Chips at the Wolcott as soon as he arrives stateside. He is on board a ship by November 4th.

Correspondence is missing for most of the next two months. He does get out of the army and manages to visit Evelyn for 5 days before returning to St Louis. Being home for Christmas loses its charm however because his folks are leaving to see relatives in California. He is home with Virginia and Mary. He is anxiously waiting to get into college with Mom.

So three years to the month after leaving Pattonville he is back home, but anxious to leave. He is no longer a laid-back boy from rural Missouri. Joseph Barreca has been around the world, met a lot of people, served his time and decided that the Army is not for him. He will go to college. He is devoted to his long-time fiancé, Evelyn Jones. He has been corresponding with her family and has invitations to visit Oregon and Washington. He has plans and they all center around a cute little girl from Eagle Valley Oregon.

⁶⁴ JAB W00291.pdf

⁶⁵ JAB W00292.pdf

⁶⁶ JAB W00292.pdf, JAB W00293.pdf