

When Duty Called,  
The Sacrifice of One Pennsylvania Family in World War II

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World War II Experience  
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## Dedication

To Paul, who lived the history this story attempts to explain.



To Annie, who knew the sorrow of losing a son to war. She had questions about Paul's military service, especially about his last two months. These pages try to answer those questions.



Annie at a meeting of Gold Star Mothers after the war.

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# When Duty Called, The Sacrifice of One Pennsylvania Family in World War II

## Introduction

Over the course of three months early in 1944, two telegrams and two letters arrived at the McCleaf family home in Rouzerville, Pennsylvania. All were from the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps' office in Washington, D.C. They carried news of Private First Class Paul F. McCleaf, United States Marine Corps Reserve. The first telegram, dated February 2<sup>nd</sup>, informed Annie McCleaf that her son was "missing in action." The Western Union cable contained little more than that simple but heart-wrenching statement. The very next day, a lieutenant colonel in the Commandant's office dictated a letter to Paul's mother. It contained details for which the family must have been grateful. While "serving in the Southwest Pacific," the letter explained, there had been "a collision with another plane." As a result of that accident, Paul had been classified as "missing in action since 14 January 1944." For the next two months, the McCleaf family held onto the hope that Paul would be found. But that hope disappeared with an April 8<sup>th</sup> telegram. As the cable from the Commandant of the Marine Corps announced, he deeply regretted to inform Annie that Paul "was killed in action instead of missing in action as previously reported." Two days later, the Commandant's office typed a formal letter to Annie reiterating this information. Understandably, not all the details she initially received were correct.

The following story on Paul McCleaf explains when and how he died. It encompasses more, however, than his death. The story begins with his family, his childhood, the prewar years, his enlistment, training, and deployment to the South Pacific. A midair plane collision and Paul's resulting capture by the Japanese led to his brief time as a prisoner of war (POW). Two months later, the enemy killed him. But Paul's story does not end with his execution. It continues with details on the effort to bring his remains home, his eventual burial at a national cemetery, the family's search for answers about Paul's last months, and community tributes to him. The latter can still be seen today in the small Pennsylvania community he called home. Like those tributes, this story strives to ensure that PFC Paul F. McCleaf, USMC, and others like him, are not forgotten.

## Chapter 1 Centuries Ago

Born on August 9, 1923, Paul Frederick McCleaf grew up in the small, Pennsylvania community of Rouzerville. It is in the south-central part of the state where his ancestors had immigrated during the colonial and revolutionary eras. They lived there and in the neighboring colony of Maryland. Matthias and Eve Lightner, Paul's paternal great-great-great-great-grandparents, helped to settle Pennsylvania in the colony's early years. The Lightners and their direct descendants made their home in what became Perry County. And once they came, they stayed. Matthias and Eve's grandson Henry spent his entire life in Perry County, farming acreage on top of Bower's Mountain. There, he and his wife Mary raised eleven children. Henry lived long enough to celebrate his ninety-seventh birthday. The number of children he left behind was not unusual. Families tended to be large in early American history when sons and daughters helped to work the farm. At the time of his death in 1907, Henry Lightner had forty-four grandchildren, fifty-nine great-grandchildren, and seven great-great-grandchildren. Because of the number of children born over the generations, Paul must have had some forefathers who served in American wars. Like Paul and his brothers in World War II, when duty called, their relatives had accepted the responsibilities that devolve upon citizens in time of war.<sup>1</sup>

### Oldest Man in County Is Dead.

Henry Lightner, supposed to be the oldest man in the county, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Jacob Nunemaker, in Kennedy's Valley, Tyrone township, Wednesday of last week aged 97 years, 5 months and 7 days. He was a strong and active man up until a few years ago, and owned a farm on the top of Bower's mountain, where he lived the most of his long life, and where he reared his large family.

Henry Lightner was a son of Jacob and Susanna (Sheibley) Lightner and was born in Madison township, March 1, 1810. His grandparents were Matthias and Eve Lightner, natives of Germany, who were among the first settlers in Perry county. The subject of this sketch was reared on his father's farm. When a young man he married Miss Mary Stewart, who has been dead for many years. They had eleven children, namely: Mrs. Mary McCleas, Cumberland county; Samuel A., dead; Bella, (Mrs. Jacob Nunemaker) Tyrone township; Susan, (Mrs. Samuel Barclay) Centre; Scott, West Virginia; Andrew, Benjamin and Emma, dead; Mrs. Julia Kutz; James, dead, and one child who died in infancy. There survive him 44 grandchildren, 59 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great-grandchildren. One brother, Samuel R. Lightner, of Tyrone township, also survives.

The funeral was on Saturday; interment in the Sheaffer's Valley churchyard.

*“Old-Stock Americans,”  
Paul’s Forebearers*

When Paul was growing up in Rouzerville during the 1920s and 1930s, he lived in a country and in a state that had recently undergone a dramatic demographic change. But those changes did not impact Pennsylvania’s small community of Rouzerville. The demographic change is best understood if put in a historical perspective. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, immigrants by the hundreds of thousands moved to the British North American colonies. They came from Northern and Central Europe, and they were typically Protestants. Some of Paul’s ancestors were part of this group. With the formation of a new nation after the American Revolution, more settlers came from Northern and Central Europe, and they were still overwhelmingly Protestant. In the one-hundred-year period from 1790-1890, over fifteen million immigrants entered the United States. More of Paul’s forebearers arrived in the early part of those years as the new nation took shape.

What has been dubbed “a tidal wave of immigration” followed these early centuries of migration. It occurred from around 1890 down to the 1914 outbreak of World War I in Europe. In that twenty-five-year period, some sixteen and a half million immigrants arrived. They were different in origin and in religion from earlier ones. The “new immigrants,” as they came to be called, were from Southeastern Europe; a large number were Catholic and Jewish. In 1930, when Paul was in elementary school, 12.8% of Pennsylvania’s population had been born in another country or had parents who had been born outside of the United States. They had emigrated from over thirty countries, with slightly more than half of them from Italy, Poland, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. But generally, these “new immigrants” did not settle in the area of Pennsylvania where Rouzerville is located. Jobs in industrial cities such as Pittsburgh in the southwest, with its steel mills, and Scranton in the northeast, with its coal mining areas, attracted them. After Paul’s 1942 enlistment in the Marine Corps, he undoubtedly served with some children of the new immigrants. Lazar Zimianski, a Jewish man from Lithuania, immigrated to New York in 1914. Americanized, his name became “Louis Zimman.” One of his sons, Sid, later served in World War II with Paul. Sid became, in his words, Paul’s “bunk mate” on a Pacific island.<sup>2</sup>

Because of his military service, Paul met and lived with men whose backgrounds differed dramatically from his own. He had grown up in a stable world unchanged by the arrival of the “new immigrants.” Paul’s ancestors are known in immigration history as “old-stock Americans,” meaning they were among the colonial settlers who came to Pennsylvania. They lived through the War for Independence and witnessed the formation of the new nation that emerged from the war. Paul did not have to wander far to be reminded regularly of how deeply rooted his area of Pennsylvania was in the country’s history. Early communities around Rouzerville bear names identified with leaders in the Revolutionary War and in the Early Republic. For generations, Paul’s family lived in Franklin County’s

community of Washington, Adams County 's Liberty Township, and Perry County's community of Madison.<sup>3</sup>

### *Paul's Paternal Line*

As noted earlier, Paul's ancestors were among the 18<sup>th</sup> century settlers to the colony of Pennsylvania. Revolutionary War Statesman Benjamin Franklin was one of its most prominent citizens. The first and middle names of Paul's paternal great-grandfather, Benjamin Franklin McCleaf, born around 1833, hints at the colonial roots of Paul's family. Today, Paul's brother Tom McCleaf recalls their mother mentioning more than once that the family lineage was Scotch-Irish. That group came over from Ireland in large numbers in the colonial era. Some of the McCleafs, therefore, could have fought in the War for Independence. The first colonists in Pennsylvania arrived in the 1640s; they emigrated primarily from the Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland. Some forty years later, English Quakers, Scotch-Irish, and Germans helped settle the colony. These groups dominated Pennsylvania's immigration pattern up to the 1780s. As one twentieth century author explained, in the late 1600s, "A tide of Scotch-Irish immigration, augmented by individuals and whole communities direct from Scotland, flowed into Pennsylvania and continued unbroken for years." Those who became known as the Scotch-Irish originally left Scotland for Ireland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Great Britain relocated them there to strengthen its hold on the Catholic island. This was the beginning of the Scotch-Irish. They settled in Ulster, the most northern province in Ireland. But in 1718, they lost rights to their property in Ulster. This coincided with William Penn's successful efforts to bring over settlers to the colony that bore his name. In the 1750s, about twenty-five percent of Pennsylvania's population was Scotch-Irish; ten years later, the percentage had grown to about thirty-three percent. In large numbers, the Scotch-Irish made their home in Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley. That is where members of Paul's family lived in the late 1700s, throughout the 1800s, the 1900s, and even today. Paul's sister Maryann lives in Greencastle, a community within the Cumberland Valley. Greencastle, Pennsylvania took its name from a small seaport in County Donegal, Ireland. When Paul and his six siblings were growing up, "the bulk of the population" in Greencastle was Scotch-Irish.<sup>4</sup>

With her 1858 marriage to Benjamin Franklin McCleaf (1832/1833-1914), Paul's paternal great-grandmother Mary Jane Lightner McCleaf (1837-1908) grafted onto the McCleaf family tree some colonial German roots. Through Mary Jane's lineage, Paul's great-great-great-great grandparents were the previously mentioned Johann Matthias (1735-1792) and Eva Maria Lightner (1745-1808). An obituary for their grandson Henry Lightner (Mary Jane's father who, as noted earlier, lived from 1810 until 1907) described Johann Matthias and Eva Maria as "natives of Germany, who were among the first settlers in Perry County."<sup>5</sup>

### *Paul's Maternal Line*

Paul's maternal line is as deeply rooted in the history of southern Pennsylvania as is his paternal ancestral line. The Hovises, the Martins, and the Littles settled there; some even journeyed over Pennsylvania's southern border to live in Frederick County, Maryland. (Today, Paul's only surviving brother, Tom, lives in Washington County, Maryland, about thirty miles from Frederick County.) Paul's mother Annie (1895-1981) was born a Hovis, his grandmother Etha Mae ("Mae") Hovis (1876-1945) was born a Martin, and his great-grandmother Mary Jane Martin (1843-1917) was born a Little.<sup>6</sup>

At various times in her life, Federal Census records place Annie in Franklin County's communities of Washington and Rouzerville. Washington Township is not quite a mile from Rouzerville. Annie's parents, Charles Edward (1874-1913) and Etha Mae Hovis, lived in Rouzerville for many years. Paul's maternal grandparents were farmers, and Paul's grandmother spent her whole life in Rouzerville. Paul's great-grandfather, John Henry Hovis (1851- 1926), lived in Washington Township as a child; he later resided in Rouzerville with his wife and children. Another great-grandfather, John Hollingsworth Martin (1843-1925), lived in Washington, too; he died in Rouzerville. Paul's great-great grandparents, John and Margaret Hovis (both born in Pennsylvania around 1811) also made their home in Washington Township. As noted earlier, when Paul's ancestors settled in the central part of southern Pennsylvania, they stayed for generations.<sup>7</sup>



Charles Edward Hovis,  
Paul's maternal grandfather

Frederick County in Maryland was home to Paul's maternal great-great grandparents, John Erastus Martin (c.1823-1902) and his wife Susanna. The county is just across the southern border of Pennsylvania. John's parents, Daniel and Elizabeth Martin (Paul's great-great-great-grandparents) lived in Maryland as well. Daniel was born in Frederick County in 1789, but he and his wife appear to have spent their life together in Washington County where Daniel died in 1885. Like her husband, Elizabeth began her life in Frederick County, having been born there in 1799; she lived until 1860. Elizabeth's parents, Paul's great-great-great-great-grandparents Henry and Elizabeth Livers, resided in Frederick County. Henry, born in 1769, only lived until 1801. Elizabeth had a much longer life. Born in 1775, she did not die until 1861, so her life spanned the American Revolution and the Civil War. Elizabeth witnessed dramatic moments in her many years--the peace with England that ended the War for Independence, the presidencies of the Founding Fathers George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison; the War of 1812; the White House years of Andrew Jackson; and the buildup to the Civil War whose first seven months she lived through. If only Elizabeth had left us a diary or memoir. On its pages, she could have shared thoughts about her everyday life and the momentous historical events that the young nation experienced. Unlike most women of her era, Elizabeth Livers did not give birth to many children. It appears she only had two. After her husband Henry's early death at age thirty-one, Elizabeth remarried. She does not seem to have had more children with her second husband.<sup>8</sup>



Paul's paternal grandparents, Andrew & Annie McCleaf, at their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary celebration in September 1940.

Large families were common in Paul's maternal line as well as the paternal one. His mother Anna ("Annie") was one of nine Hovises. Paul's maternal great-grandmother Mary Jane Little Martin (1843-1917) married in 1862. Over the course of the next decades, she gave birth to eleven children, but only six of them were alive when a census taker visited Mary early in 1900. Susanna Martin, Paul's great-great-grandmother, had ten children. Susanna's mother-in-law, Elizabeth Livers Martin (Paul's great-great-great-grandmother), had nine children. Families were just as large on Paul's paternal side. His grandparents Andrew and Annie McCleaf had eight children as did Paul's great-grandfather Benjamin Franklin and Mary Jane McCleaf. Paul's great-great-grandparents Henry and Mary A. Lightner, along with Paul's great-great-great grandparents Jacob and Susana Lightner, had ten children. To say that

Paul had countless cousins throughout Pennsylvania's Franklin County and Maryland's Frederick County is an understatement. Today, some of his cousins still reside there.<sup>9</sup>

*A History of Military Service,  
Part of Paul's Heritage*

As these large families lived out their lives in the central part of southern Pennsylvania, there were times when foreign powers threatened the colony or the new nation. Generations before Paul was born, men in his family responded when duty called. Paul's ancestors who came to Pennsylvania and Maryland in the colonial era probably supported the American Revolution as did most colonists, but we do not know specifically how they did so. In Paul's maternal line, there are two men named "Michael Little" who lived in Franklin County. One (Paul's great-great-great-grandfather) was born around 1796; his son (Paul's great-great-grandfather) was born in 1845. There exists in the historical record another "Michael Little," a Pennsylvanian who in 1821 applied for a Revolutionary War Pension. Could he be related to Paul's distant grandparents? Since the Michael Little who applied for the pension fought in the American Revolution, and since at least two generations of Littles in Paul's line named a son after the father, the "Michael Little" who fought in the Revolutionary War might have fathered Paul's great-great-great-grandfather.<sup>10</sup>

We know Paul's paternal great-great-great grandfather Jacob Lightner fought in the War of 1812 because of an 1861 document that originated in Perry County, Pennsylvania. It is a Veterans' Grave Registration form. The form ended up in the files of Pennsylvania's 19<sup>th</sup> century Department of Military Affairs sometime after Jacob died on February 18, 1861. As noted earlier, his parents, Johann Matthias and Eva Maria Lightner, emigrated from Germany before the American Revolution. Jacob was born in southern Pennsylvania in 1774. He was nine when the War for Independence ended. Twenty-nine years later, in the War of 1812, hostilities again broke out with England. Jacob did not, however, immediately serve in the war. But in 1814, when he was forty years old and had five young children, he marched off with other men from Cumberland County (the original name of Perry County).<sup>11</sup>

Form MAGO-41-2M-3-36 Commonwealth of Penna. Dept. of Military Affairs		RECORD OF BURIAL PLACE OF VETERAN		Perry County	
NAME LIGHTNER, Jacob			DATE OF BIRTH 1774	DATE OF DEATH 2/18/1861	
VETERAN OF War with Great Britain			SERVED IN Inf.		
DATES OF SERVICE 9/6/1814 2/17/1815			ORGANIZATION (S) Landisburg Inf.-Capt. John Creigh		RANK Pvt.
CEMETERY OR PLACE OF INTERMENT NAME Sheaffers Valley Cemetery, LOCATION Tyrone Twp.					
LOCATION OF GRAVE IN CEMETERY SECTION S1 LOT No. RANGE GRAVE No. 5			HEADSTONE Head & Footstone GOVERNMENT ( ) COUNTY ( ) FAMILY (X)		
INFORMATION GIVEN BY DATE 6/4/1936.			REMARKS Served 5 month.		
After being Recorded in the County Veterans' Grave Registration Record This card is to be sent to THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for final Record.					

Fighting in the War of 1812 was then close to home. While the English invaded the Chesapeake in February 1813, they inflicted little damage in the area for over a year. Late in August 1814, though, a large number of British troops landed in Maryland and proceeded to Washington, D.C. On August 24, 1814, those troops entered the nation's capital, burning parts of it. Less than two weeks later, an infantry unit was formed in Landisburg, a community in Pennsylvania's Cumberland County. Jacob joined it on September 6<sup>th</sup>, just days before the British entered Baltimore, Maryland, where the military installation of Fort McHenry stood guarding the harbor. The American troops within the fort held off a twenty-five-hour English bombardment. A large United States flag flying over the fort inspired Francis Scott Key to write what became the national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*. This was the context of Jacob's enlistment early in September 1814. He remained in the Landisburg Infantry, as a private, until he left the service on



February 17, 1815. That was the date when the War of 1812 formally ended with British and America officials exchanging ratifications of a negotiated treaty. Jacob had enlisted after the British attacked the nation's capital, and he left his infantry unit only with the formal conclusion of the war. Jacob's

life was, in a way, bookended by the beginning of two of the most consequential wars in U.S. history. He was born in 1774, the year when colonies first met as a Continental Congress to protest British legislation that negatively impacted them. Jacob thus spent his early childhood growing up during the American Revolution. Jacob died eighty-seven years later. In his last years, tensions between the North and the South over slavery's expansion threatened the survival of the nation. Two months after his death in 1861, the bombardment of another federal installation, Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, began the Civil War.<sup>12</sup>

After the War of 1812 but before the Civil War, the United States fought the Mexican American War. It began in 1846 as a border skirmish on the Rio Grande River in what was then the Texas Territory. By the time it ended two years later, United States troops had marched all the way to Mexico City to force a surrender. In the resulting peace treaty, Mexico ceded to the United States about one-third of its northern empire. The land eventually became the states of California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico. Fought on foreign soil, it was a significant war because of this large territorial acquisition. Paul's paternal great-grandfather Frederick McIntire enlisted in the United States Army on October 6, 1847. He was twenty-one years old. At the time, Frederick lived in the Adams County community of Liberty. There, Frederick undoubtedly helped out on the family farm where he lived with his father John McIntire, his mother Margaret, and four younger siblings. Based on the Army enlistment record, Frederick clearly served in the Army during the Mexican

American War. We do not know if he saw combat or if he went into Mexico. What we do know is that Frederick enlisted during a major American war. When the Civil War came in 1861, he was thirty-five years old, married, with four children. Frederick registered for the Union Army during the war, but he may not have worn the uniform a second time due to his age and family responsibilities.<sup>13</sup>

During the Civil War, more than one of Paul’s ancestors in his direct line was of age to have served in the conflict. On his paternal side, Paul’s great-grandfather Benjamin Franklin McCleaf registered with Pennsylvania officials for the national (Union) draft in June 1863. (The national government assigned quotas to the states.) At that time, Benjamin was thirty years old and lived in Adams County with his wife and three young children between the ages of one and five. No records are readily available to this author indicating Benjamin fought in the war. His family obligations may explain why he did not do so. A cursory check of those who served in Pennsylvania’s infantry regiments uncovered at least four McCleafs who enlisted in such units that drew their men from Franklin County and surrounding areas where the McCleafs lived. Franklin County by itself recruited “hundreds of soldiers” for the Union side. Chambersburg is the county seat. The town served as the staging area for the Union army as it amassed troops right before the Battle of Gettysburg. There may have been distant relatives of Paul’s, perhaps cousins given the large families of that era, who served in state units during the Civil War.<sup>14</sup>

Many of Paul’s male relatives would have registered for the national draft in

Form 1 **836** REGISTRATION CARD *9/15* No. *99*

1	Name in full <i>Frank Benjamin McCleaf</i>	Age, in yrs. <i>22</i>
2	Home address <i>Rouzeville Pa</i>	
3	Date of birth <i>Nov 26 1894</i>	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? <i>Natural Born</i>	
5	Where were you born? <i>Turkeytown Adams Co Pa</i>	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? <i>USA</i>	
7	What is your occupation or office? <i>Mechanic</i>	
8	Do you have any dependents? <i>Yes</i> Where employed? <i>Lundis Mill Coa Waysnesboro Pa</i>	
9	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? <i>Wife and child</i>	
10	Married or single (which)? <i>Married</i> Race (specify which)? <i>White</i>	
11	What military service have you had? Rank <i>None</i> Branch <i>None</i> years <i>None</i> Nation or State <i>None</i>	
12	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?	

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*Frank B. McCleaf*

If present in or near place of birth

World War I. The initial draft registration law directed men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one to sign up on June 5, 1917. Paul’s father Frank registered on that day. He was twenty-two years old, living in Rouzeville with his wife Annie. They had only one child at that time, Charles Andrew, born in May 1916. Charles had just turned a year old when his father registered for the draft. Perhaps Frank’s family responsibilities influenced the local draft board’s decision not to use him to fulfill its quota of recruits. Unlike World War II, however, the First World War was a short one and large troop mobilizations did not occur. That probably explained, more than his family obligations, the fact that Frank was not drafted.<sup>15</sup>

Going back centuries, some of Paul's male relatives served in the military and, when called upon to do so, registered for national drafts. This was true for Paul's great-great-great-grandfather Jacob Lightner, his great-grandfather Frederick McIntire, his great-grandfather Benjamin Franklin McCleaf, and his father Frank McCleaf. Some forefathers may have even been soldiers in the American Revolution given the 18<sup>th</sup> century immigration to Pennsylvania of Paul's earliest ancestors. With the size of families in Paul's paternal and maternal lines, cousins most surely lived throughout the central part of southern Pennsylvania in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The United States fought two major wars in those years, the War of 1812 and the Civil War, in which male citizens were called upon for service. In various ways, relatives in Paul's family before him probably supported those wars. By the 1940s, a new generation of McCleafs and Hovises came of age. They understood how deep their family roots ran in Pennsylvania. As such, Paul's generation was strongly vested in seeing to it that what the Founding Fathers called "an experiment in government" endured.

Few times in its history as a democratic nation has the United States been as imperiled as it was during World War II. The Allies (principally England and France) had been fighting the totalitarian Axis Powers (primarily Germany and Italy) since September 1939. Over the next two years, President Franklin D. Roosevelt supplied arms to the Allies, although officially the United States was not involved in the war. Roosevelt spoke to the American people on the topic of "national security" in a radio address on December 29, 1940. He focused on the dangers the Axis Powers posed to "our philosophy of government." The President argued that German Nazis "have made it clear that they intend not only to dominate all life and thought in their own country, but also to enslave the whole of Europe, and then use the resources of Europe to dominate the rest of the world." Not since the colonies had been established early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Roosevelt believed, "has our American civilization been in such danger as now." Three months earlier, in September 1940, Congress passed legislation to begin draft registration in case the war came to the United States. Once again, as he had in World War I, Frank McCleaf registered for national military service. His sons who were of age did so, too. When duty called, men in Paul's family before him fulfilled their obligations as citizens. Paul and his brothers would do the same in World War II.<sup>16</sup>

## Chapter 2 The Old and the New, Growing Up in Franklin County

"Ditty, do write as often as possible as I surely worry about you, especially now." Annie Hovis McCleaf penned that line in a January 14, 1943 letter she wrote her son Paul from the McCleaf home in Rouzerville, Pennsylvania. He had reported for service in the United States Marine Corps (USMC) two months earlier, which might explain why Annie was concerned about her son "especially now." The letter

provides evidence that Paul's family referred to him not by his given name, but by "Ditty." Even today, Paul's surviving sister, brother, and a first cousin speak of him that way. He is also "Ditty" to another cousin and a nephew, both of whom never met him. They do know of him, however, his story passed down from an older generation of McCleafs and Hovises to younger ones. Of Paul's seven siblings, only two are still with us. Unsurprisingly, they are the youngest, Maryann born in 1931 and Tom in 1934. Neither knows why or how Paul acquired his nickname.

### *Sources*

But Margaret "Beckie" Mae Naugle Blair, Paul's ninety-seven-year-old first cousin, offers her recollection on the origin of the name "Ditty." Beckie believes it grew out of the inability of one of Paul's siblings to pronounce "Paul." When Paul was born, he had two older brothers, Frank and Bob. Frank was almost five at the time of Paul's birth, so he should not have had any problem pronouncing Paul's name. The sibling who might have had difficulty, however, could have been Bob. He was two years and three months old when Paul was born. Perhaps Bob could not say "Paul." Or, at his young age, the toddler called his baby brother "ditty" or something that sounded like "ditty." Beckie's recollection shows the importance of drawing upon the memories of older family members when preserving family histories.

Memories and the written word allow us to know about those who came before us. *When Duty Called* draws upon both of these sources. Paul's two surviving siblings and the aforementioned first cousin, Beckie, shared their memories with this author. So did Paul "Irish" Smith, Paul's best friend. At the time of this writing, Irish is ninety-eight years old. The existence of Paul's nickname is one example of the recollections all four of them have. Once in the USMC, however, his nickname of "Ditty" appears not to have been a name that his fellow Marines knew him by. Sid Zimman, a gunner who was in Paul's squadron, never heard Paul called "Ditty." Sid is another source for this story. Like Irish Smith, Sid is ninety-eight years old, and he, too, shared his memories of Paul. What is so important for Paul's story is the fact that Sid witnessed the aftermath of the midair collision that resulted in Paul becoming a POW. Siblings Maryann and Tom readily admit that their memories of their older brother are limited. When nineteen-year-old Paul enlisted in November 1942, Maryann was only eleven years old, and Tom was just eight. That is why Maryann's confession, "I don't remember too much about him," echoes Tom's admission--"I don't remember that much about Ditty." Beckie Blair, however, holds stronger memories of Paul since they were classmates from elementary school through high school.

Paul's family shared more than memories with this writer. Family papers Maryann and Tom are in possession of shed additional light on their older brother's story. Tom, for example, saved a few of the letters Paul wrote him in 1943 from Cherry Point, a Marine Corps air station in North Carolina. Tom also came into possession of a letter his mother, Annie, wrote Paul in 1943. It is a treasured

documents for this story because it allows Annie to “speak” to us at one point in time. Another of Paul’s brothers, John, had many family documents that his son, John, inherited. These include the 1944 letters the Marine Corps sent to Annie informing her first that Paul was missing in action, and then, a few months later, that he had been killed in the war. John shared those, along with many other papers his father saved, with this author. Paul’s brother Tom has similar USMC telegrams and letters. Maryann has kept photographs and paperwork that relate to Paul’s 1952 military funeral at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Paul’s cousins Jacqueline Hovis Barlup, Ph.D. and LTC John E. N. Blair, J.D., U.S. Army (Ret.) shared with this writer their knowledge of family history as well as the history of Rouzerville and Franklin County.

### *Following, and Departing From, Family Traditions*

Family played a prominent role in Paul’s life, so it seems more than proper that its members today help to tell his story. In some ways, his first years reflected old themes seen in the history of Paul’s family going back generations. Like his ancestors, from birth to adulthood Paul lived in one area in the central part of southern Pennsylvania. And like preceding generations, Paul grew up surrounded by a large, immediate family. Yet Paul’s early years reflected something new, as well. He achieved more in the way of a formal education than had McCleafs and Hovises before him. Paul undoubtedly benefited from that education when he chose to pursue a job in manufacturing; such a livelihood had not been available to earlier generations of men in his family. Occupations in manufacturing grew out of a changing economy on the national and state levels as a movement from farming to industry occurred. Pennsylvania played a prominent role in the transformation.

Geographically, modern day Pennsylvania is divided into various regions--the Southeast, the Southwest, the Central part of the state, the Northeast, the North, and the South Central area (where Paul’s family lived). Farmland attracted settlers to all regions in the 18th century. Industrial jobs in Southwestern and Southeastern Pennsylvania brought people to those areas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as the coal, oil, and steel industries grew. In 1900, the Southwest became the fastest growing area population-wise. Pittsburgh’s steel mills, for example, attracted large numbers of immigrants. In that same year of 1900, the South Central area ranked last in its population among the regions. This was because, to a large degree, industrialization had not yet significantly penetrated the area where the McCleafs and the Hovises had made their home for generations.<sup>17</sup>

For Paul, that home specifically was Franklin County in South Central Pennsylvania. It is in the extreme southwestern part of the region. Looking at Franklin County’s location on a general map of Pennsylvania, it lies halfway between Pittsburgh in the west and Philadelphia in the east. The county’s southern border is the Mason-Dixon Line, the famous 18<sup>th</sup> century boundary set between Pennsylvania and Maryland. Franklin County itself dates from 1784. It had been established when Paul’s great-great-grandparents John and Margaret Hovis lived amidst its hills,

valleys, forests, and mountains. Other ancestors made their home in South Central's Adams County (east of Franklin County) and Perry County (northeast of Franklin County), both of which share a county border with Franklin. In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s--the decades that spanned Paul's life in Franklin County--the county population remained in the 60,000+ range. (In those same decades, Allegheny County, where Pittsburgh is located, had populations that ranged from 1.4 million to 1.5 million.) By spending his life in Franklin County, Paul grew up in an area of Pennsylvania where his world was always a familiar one. It remained fairly unchanged from what it had been in his childhood years to what it was by the time he entered high school.<sup>18</sup>



Franklin County is identified on this map, in the South Central area of the state. Chambersburg is the county seat.

The community in Franklin County where Paul spent most of his early years was Rouzerville. It was so small in Paul's time that the state did not classify it as a city, a borough, or a township (the names for Pennsylvania's most common municipalities). That is still true today. In recent times, the federal government identifies Rouzerville as "a census-designated place (CDP)" for the purpose of taking the census. (CDP is used for an unincorporated community.) Rouzerville's population in the 2010 federal census was only 917. The community would have been even smaller almost one hundred years ago when Paul was growing up there. His sister Maryann describes it then as "a small village." She recalls a school, a post office, a general store, and two churches.<sup>19</sup>

While Paul's parents came to live in Rouzerville, neither of them grew up there. Frank McCleaf, Paul's father, was born on November 26, 1894 in the community of Fairfield in Adams County (adjacent to Franklin County). Frank was the second of eight children his parents, Andrew and Annie, raised in Adams County's Liberty Township. Annie Hovis, Paul's mother, was born on September 26, 1895. Like Frank, Annie was her parents' second child (they had six children). She spent her childhood on the family farm in Franklin County's Washington Township. Paul's sister Maryann shares the story of how her parents met at what she thinks was the Washington Hotel in Waynesboro. "My mother was working as a waitress at a hotel. My father was working at the Frick Company in Waynesboro." (Frick manufactured refrigeration equipment.) Tom adds that his father initially had "an office job" at Frick, but he "liked working with his hands." Frank thus became a machinist. Apparently, Frank stopped by the hotel for a meal one day and met Annie. They married on May 26, 1915.<sup>20</sup>

Almost one year to the day after their wedding, Frank and Annie welcomed the first of their eight children. He was Charles "Buddy" Andrew, born on May 19, 1916. It could be that Frank's family responsibilities factored into his decision to leave the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries occupation of his ancestors--farming--for one more in line with the 20<sup>th</sup> century--manufacturing. Frank's decision is a prime example of the new opportunities available to Paul in his early years. Farming had been the common livelihood for prior generations of men in the McCleaf and Hovis families. When Paul's seventy-nine-year-old grandfather Andrew McCleaf died in 1948, his family identified him on the death certificate as a "retired farmer." Paul's other grandfather, Charles E. Hovis, had been a farmer, too. Unsurprisingly, Paul's paternal great-great-grandfather, Henry Lightner, born in 1810, was a farmer before and after the Civil War years. Another great-great-grandfather, William McCleaf, born around 1797, was still farming in Adams County at the age of sixty-three. While Paul's maternal great-grandfather, John Hollingsworth Martin, did not make his living as a farmer, he was a blacksmith. Like farming, it was an occupation identified with an earlier America.<sup>21</sup>

Great-grandfather Martin did not die until 1925, when Paul was two years old. By then, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization that had taken hold in the United States opened up a myriad of job opportunities outside of agriculture. Pittsburgh's

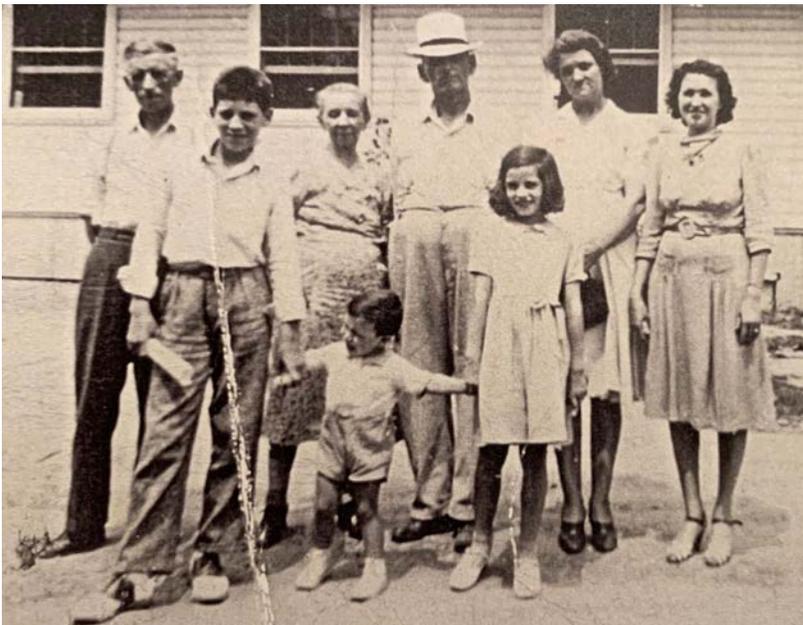
steel mills are examples of how this economic development changed the livelihood of workers. In Pennsylvania, between 1900 and 1935, almost 33,000 farms ceased operations. In those same years, industries grew throughout the state, even in the South Central area. In 1935, when Paul was twelve, metals and metal products was the number one manufacturing industry in the state. Unlike the generations of McCleaf men before him, Paul's father Frank McCleaf made his living as a machinist, an occupation identified with a modern America. (Frank was born in 1894, just as this modern America was emerging.) At age fifteen, when Frank was still living with his parents in Adams County, he worked as a farm laborer. But as he matured, Frank saw new job opportunities when farming declined. By the time Frank was twenty-two, married with one son, he worked at a tool company. Working with machine tools became his lifelong occupation.<sup>22</sup>

While we do not know when Frank first took a job in manufacturing, we know, based upon Maryann's story of how her parents met, that he worked for the Frick Company in 1915. Two years later, on a government form Frank filled out in June 1917, he listed his employer as a tool company. In April 1917, the United States entered World War I. Under the directive of a conscription law Congress passed, Frank registered for the draft in June, as did millions of other men. In so doing, he filled out a draft registration form that required his physical description. Frank identified himself as a man of medium height, slender, with blue eyes and dark hair. He also answered other questions asked by the registration document. His responses told the local draft board that he was married, with a child, and the family lived in Rouzerville, described then in a local newspaper as "a mere hamlet." Additionally, one line on the form asked for his employer. Frank entered the name of the Landis Tool Company in nearby Waynesboro. Around the turn of the century, it produced a universal grinder. Over the years, Landis Tool manufactured several types of grinders, some used in automobile production.<sup>23</sup>

Whatever contentment Frank and Annie may have felt as they began their life together came to a tragic end two years into their marriage. Their son Buddy did not live long past his first birthday. He died from diphtheria in October 1917. Still, more children followed. Beginning in 1918, over the next sixteen years Annie gave birth to seven children, all but one of them a boy--Frank Benjamin, Jr. in November 1918, Robert "Bob" Hovis in May 1921, Paul Frederick in August 1923, John Richard in November 1925, William "Bill" Carl in January 1928, Maryann Mae in November 1931, and Thomas Marvin in January 1934. According to Maryann, all the children were born at home with the assistance of a local midwife. Like earlier generations of McCleafs and Hovises, Paul's immediate family was a large one. Asked today what it was like growing up with six older siblings, Tom replied, "I had to carry myself straight," meaning, there would always be someone who would report Tom to his parents if he did something wrong. To support them all, Frank held several jobs as "a machinist," to use Maryann's phrase. Tom recalls that when he was young, his father, at various times, had three manufacturing jobs. One was at the Landis Tool Company in Waynesboro. Another was at a factory in York that made locks. York is located in the county of the same name, which is two counties east of Franklin

County. Since York is almost fifty-four miles from Rouzerville, Frank lived there during the workweek and came home on the weekends; Tom met him at the bus stop. The last position Tom knows his father held was one in Hagerstown, Maryland (just across the Pennsylvania-Maryland border). During World War II, the Fairchild Aircraft Company built an assembly plant there that produced military planes. Tom remembers that his father “worked a lot of overtime” wherever he was.<sup>24</sup>

The McCleafs lived in Franklin County, but the exact community varied over time. Frank and Annie’s first years were spent in Rouzerville; they lived there when Frank filled out his 1917 draft registration form and when their son Charles Andrew died four months after that. By the time of the 1920 United States Federal Census, the McCleafs, with one-year-old son Frank, had moved to Washington Township. That census identified Frank as the manager for a milk company; this is the one time we know of, after his marriage, when he did not work in manufacturing. Three years later, in 1923, Paul Frederick was born in York Springs. (Paul’s father had a brother named Frederick, and Paul’s paternal great-grandfather was Frederick McIntire.) Thus, ironically, while he would spend his life in Franklin County, Paul’s birthplace was in adjacent Adams County. The McCleafs did not stay in York Springs long, though. City directories place the family back in Franklin County, specifically in Waynesboro, in 1926 and 1928. In 1930, they had returned to Washington Township, but six years later, the family lived on a farm in Rouzerville. At the time of the 1940 Federal Census, the McCleafs had returned to Washington Township. Washington and Waynesboro are not far from Rouzerville, the former not quite a mile and the latter not even three miles away. Again, Paul’s world was a small one. No matter which community they lived in, Paul and his siblings were not far from three other members of their immediate family--grandparents.<sup>25</sup>



Fort Meade, MD, c. 1939-1940

The McCleaf family visiting Bob, Paul’s brother, who served in the National Guard.

left to right:  
back row- Frank Sr.,  
Grandmother Annie McCleaf,  
Grandfather Andrew McCleaf,  
Annie, Frank Jr.’s wife

in foreground- Bill (another of Paul’s brothers), Frank Jr.’s son,  
and Paul’s sister, Maryann

Paul knew three of his four grandparents. All had homes nearby. When Paul was growing up in Rouzerville, Grandma Hovis, a widow since 1913, “lived across the road,” as Maryann puts it. She, more than the McCleaf grandparents, influenced her daughter’s children. Maryann calls her “a good old soul,” and a “kind” woman with a sense of humor who “would keep the family going” by lifting their spirits. Grandma Hovis survived Paul by over a year, dying in July 1945. His paternal grandparents, Andrew and Annie McCleaf, had once made their home in the Adams County community of Liberty, about thirteen miles from Rouzerville. By the time Paul was growing up, however, they had moved across the Mason-Dixon Line to Emmitsburg, Maryland. Still, Emmitsburg, too, is about thirteen miles from Rouzerville. Tom and Maryann remember visiting their paternal grandparents, although Maryann explains that the family “did not go to visit too often.” Andrew and Annie McCleaf, like Grandma Hovis, survived Paul; they died just months apart from each other, Annie late in 1947 and Andrew early in 1948. Aside from the immediate family, extended family members lived in Rouzerville. Maryann remembers an uncle “lived across the road,” with another uncle “down the road and an aunt and cousin next door.” For Paul, the location of home and the support of family did not substantially change from that experienced by earlier generations of McCleafs and Hovises.<sup>26</sup>

May E. Hovis,  
Paul’s maternal grandmother



One change that did occur, however, was in the educational realm. Paul graduated from high school in the spring of 1941. In so doing, he went further in school than had any previous generation in his family. The 1940 United States Federal Census posed a question to every household member--What was the highest school grade completed? In 1940, the median number of school years completed for white men twenty-five years old and older was 8.7 and for white women 8.8. The "highest school grade completed" entries on the 1940 census for Paul's father and mother were the second year of high school and the first year of high school respectively. Since only a minority of Americans had graduated high school at that time, Frank and Annie were not unusual. But they were atypical in the fact that both went beyond the eighth grade. Paul's parents stayed in school longer than most of their peers. Formal schooling stopped in the family much earlier just one generation before Frank and Annie. Grandma Hovis completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Paul's paternal grandfather, Andrew McCleaf, did not go past the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary school; Andrew's wife Annie finished the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Andrew and Annie were born around 1869 and Grandma Hovis in 1876. The three grandparents Paul knew thus lived in a far different world when it came to schooling than the one Paul entered when he began first grade at the Rouzerville Elementary School. Since the school was built in 1892, earlier generations of McCleafs and Hovises would have attended the two-story, brick building.<sup>27</sup>

Today, Paul's cousin Beckie Blair, a resident of Waynesboro, recently shared her memories of him. " 'Ditty' and I were first-cousins and, since his family lived near my family and me, we attended the same schools." Beckie identifies the elementary school as the "Rouzerville Academy, which was also known as the Rouzerville Elementary School." There, students advanced from the first through the eighth grades. (Paul's brother Tom remembers that the school was located "across from the house.") Elementary school was followed by attendance at Washington Township High School, which Tom recalls was about a mile from the McCleaf home. Beckie describes Paul's personality and appearance--" 'Ditty' was always the 'quiet' type and was also nicely dressed as well as groomed." Beckie remembers Paul, too, as "well-behaved and industrious." Once the two cousins reached high school, their paths diverged. "We had few, if any, classes together," Beckie explains, "because he was an industrial arts (shop) major and I was an academic major." Beckie and Paul graduated together in the Class of 1941. Of Frank and Annie's children, only Paul and Maryann graduated from high school.<sup>28</sup>



Beckie Blair in a high school photograph. Today, she is the last surviving member of her Class of 1941.

Like Beckie, Maryann and Tom describe Paul as “quiet.” Reminiscing about her brother, Maryann remembers him this way--“As a boy, Paul was different from his brothers. He was calm, quiet and less inclined to get into trouble.” Tom recounts a moment when Paul could have been upset with him but was not. The older brother, graduated from high school by this time, planned an outing with a friend. Paul borrowed his father’s 1937 Chevy to drive to a nearby mountain where the two friends planned to swim. Tom wanted to go, but his brother said no. (Referring to his five older brothers, Tom remembers that because he was the youngest, “I wasn’t allowed to go with them” when they left the house for various activities.) Instead of accepting Paul’s decision that day, however, Tom mischievously hid in the back seat--“I crawled in and covered up.” Once Paul and his friend reached their destination, Tom revealed himself. But he adds, Paul “did not get mad at me. He was not upset.” Tom’s story reinforces Cousin Beckie’s description of Paul as “calm.” That character trait would have served him well a few years later when, as a Marine Corps gunner, he and his pilot were on a mission in the South Pacific. Their plane apparently collided with another Marine Corps aircraft. One imagines Paul’s calm demeanor prevailing that morning as it probably did, too, when the enemy captured him a short time later.

The vastness of the Pacific contrasted sharply with the limited world where Paul spent his first nineteen years, the familiar world of Franklin County. There, he was surrounded daily by an immediate and extended family of McCleafs and Hovises. Paul’s parents, six siblings, grandparents, and countless aunts, uncles, and cousins contributed to the stability that marked his childhood and his years as a young adult. During that time, Paul availed himself of two opportunities that had not been realistic ones for earlier generations of McCleafs and Hovises--a high school diploma and a manufacturing job. After he graduated Washington Township High School in June 1941, Paul applied for a job with Landis Tool Company. His high school classes in industrial arts and his degree must have made him an attractive job applicant. His father’s employment history with Landis Tool Company could have added another consideration when someone in the office evaluated Paul’s application. Landis hired him. Tom remembers his brother’s position was one of a machinist apprentice. At age eighteen, Paul thus began a new phase in his life with a skilled job that boded well for his future. But before Paul could move more into adulthood, a global war dramatically changed the direction of his life six months after his high school graduation.

### *War Comes to America*

Paul and his family would have known about the progress of the European war and of Japanese aggression in the Pacific as Japan expanded its empire. Maryann and Tom remember that their parents subscribed to a newspaper. More intimately, however, they listened to the radio in their home. Beginning in the 1920s with the first commercial broadcasts, the radio functioned as a source of entertainment and as a medium for the news. Stations broadcast music, sports, and theatrical programs. Tom recounts how his family tuned into music from Nashville, Tennessee.

“On Saturday nights, we sat in the living room with the lights off” to hear the broadcast. The McCleaf family radio was a Philco floor model. (Tom still has it today, stored in his basement.) Maryann recalls the *Amos and Andy* show as a popular one in their home. She also remembers that around 7:00 p.m. on Sunday nights, the news came on.



The McCleaf family radio that delivered, into their living room, news of World War II.

Americans learned of the December 7, 1941 Japanese aerial attack upon the United States Pacific Fleet, based at Pearl Harbor, from the radio. Enemy aircraft also bombed military installations on the island of Oahu, where Pearl Harbor is located, to prevent planes from pursuing them. Radio networks first received news of the assault in the form of an Associated Press (AP) Bulletin. At that moment in Hawaii, Japanese planes were still carrying out the raid. The major networks, such as the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and the National Broadcasting System (NBC), contacted Washington, D.C. to verify the AP report with government authorities. Officials in Roosevelt’s administration confirmed the news. The networks then interrupted their scheduled shows at 2:30 p.m. (EST) with an announcement of the attack, which remained in progress. Paul’s sister Maryann had just turned ten a month earlier. She remembers hearing the radio news of what happened at Pearl Harbor while visiting her oldest brother’s house. “Most of the family was there,” she adds. Within days, Congress passed Declarations of War against the Axis Powers--Japan, Germany, and Italy.<sup>29</sup>

One imagines Annie looking at the faces of her sons on December 7<sup>th</sup>, wondering what would happen to each of them as the United States mobilized. Americans knew that afternoon they would be fighting a two-front war in Europe and in the Pacific. At the time, twenty-three-year-old Frank was Annie’s only married son. With a wife and young child to support, he worked at Landis Tool Company. Frank registered for military service in October 1940, following the requirement of the September 1940 Selective Training and Service Act. The law called for the registration of men between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five. In

December 1941, however, Frank had not yet been drafted, perhaps because he was married with a young child. Another son, twenty-year-old Bob, had enlisted in the National Guard; his unit was federalized in February 1941, nine months before the attack at Pearl Harbor. As for Paul, he was eighteen in December 1941. He had not yet, therefore, reached the initial, minimum age of twenty-one for draft registration.

On that Sunday in December 1941, perhaps Annie did not, for the moment, worry as much about her younger sons as she might have about the older ones. John just turned sixteen, so he was too young to register for military service. That was true for Bill, too, who was only one month away from his fourteenth birthday. Maybe on that Sunday afternoon Annie envisioned the war being over before John and Bill were old enough to enter the military. Still, if John and Bill ended up in uniform, Annie might have taken some comfort in telling herself that Tom would not fight in the war. He was one month shy of his eighth birthday when the family heard about the attack at Pearl Harbor. Surely, Annie may have thought, the Allies could force the Axis Powers to surrender before her youngest son was old enough to serve. If Annie did wonder that December day how mobilization would affect each of her sons, she would not have been the only mother in America to do so.

Listening to the news on their Philco radio would have become more important to the McCleafs after December 7, 1941 than it ever had been before that date. Like millions of Americans, World War II was now very personal for them--the enemy raid at Pearl Harbor and the presumed departure of family members who would fight in the war made it so. In addition to reading the newspaper, Annie and her family followed the progress of the war by listening to radio broadcasts. Tom remembers that his mother especially liked the news commentator Gabriel Heatter. Early in 1942, reports from the Pacific were not encouraging ones for the Allies. Japanese forces seized one area after another. In January 1942 alone, they captured Manila in the Philippines, they invaded the Dutch East Indies, and they moved into Burma. And this is by no means a complete list of the territories they took that month. Before January ended, the Japanese also controlled Rabaul on the island of New Britain, an Australian territory. Rabaul would become central to Paul's fate two years later. His squadron was on a mission to bomb it on the day of the midair collision. Enemy troops held Paul as a POW at Rabaul before executing him.

After weeks of bad news, one evening, probably late in January or early in February, Heatter informed his listeners that a United States submarine had sunk a Japanese warship. (The sinking occurred on January 27<sup>th</sup>.) Heatter prefaced the announcement by saying, "There is good news tonight." From that evening on, the phrase became one the newsman used regularly; Americans identified it with his broadcasts. The words gave some solace to those who appreciated his upbeat opening. Perhaps Annie liked his program because of that. Heatter especially wanted to share, as he once put it, accounts "of people holding to their faith." He would have found such a story in Annie McCleaf, a deeply religious woman who, over the next three years, sent four sons off to war.<sup>30</sup>

### Chapter 3

## From Recruit to Marine, Enlistment and Boot Camp

*“The Marines are different from other branches of the service. Any ‘boot,’ or recruit in training, will tell you this. It doesn’t mean that individual marines are any braver than the members of any other body of fighting men; it means that the Corps has a reputation to live up to.”*

Keith Ayling, *Semper Fidelis, The U.S. Marines in Action* (1943), p.3

In more than one way, Paul’s early life was not that much different from those of his peers in Franklin County. They grew up surrounded by immediate and extended families whose roots went back to colonial and revolutionary times. The old farming skills that had sustained their ancestors were still passed down from one generation to the next if members of the younger generation wanted to work the land. By the time Paul and his contemporaries, however, reached their late teens, new fields in manufacturing offered other livelihoods if they were so inclined. And Paul was. By the age of eighteen, he followed his father and brothers to Landis Tool Company. With mechanical abilities that seemed to come naturally to men in the McCleaf family, Paul was on his way to become a skilled worker. The attack at Pearl Harbor, though, changed his life trajectory as it did for his entire generation. Military service took precedence over the personal plans of Paul and some other sixteen million young American men.

When the United States entered World War II in December 1941, the number of Americans in the armed forces was woefully inadequate for a nation now engaged in a global war. Broken down by branch of service, the country’s military strength at the time of the attack at Pearl Harbor was the following:

- Army – 683,360
- Navy – 342,295
- Marine Corps – 69,588
- National Guard – 264,289
- Coast Guard – 21,928

The above totaled 1,381,460. In December 1941, the military was also processing 914,626 draftees. If this group was counted, the United States military numbered almost three million men. By war’s end, it had brought within its ranks some sixteen million men and women. The armed forces reached that number through the implementation of the Selective Service System (i.e., the draft) and through enlistment. Sixty-one percent of those who served were drafted, while almost thirty-nine percent enlisted. Paul and his brothers entered military service through the latter route. Before they enlisted, though, the Selective Training and Service Act required the McCleafs to register in the Selective Service System.<sup>31</sup>

## *The Draft*

Once Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act in September 1940, all men of a certain age had to register for military service. The law initially required registration for those 21-45. Paul's brother Frank, born in November 1918, qualified for the First Registration, one month after the passage of the law. On October 16, 1940, Frank showed up in Waynesboro, probably at the location where the community cast ballots in political elections. Nationally, that day Frank was one of 16,816,822 men who registered. He filled out a draft registration card, answering some basic questions. At the time, Frank lived in Rouzerville with his wife and young son. Like others in the McCleaf family, he worked at the Landis Tool Company. This initial registration that began with 21-year-olds went further in January 1942, a month after the U.S. entered the war, when President Roosevelt ordered 20-year-olds to register. In the next months, more age groups were required to do the same.<sup>32</sup>

In March 1942, the government announced that 45 to 64-year-olds were required to register the next month. It had no intention of drafting them for military service. Rather, the government wanted to compile information on each man in case labor shortages arose in essential industries. Paul's father thus showed up for the Fourth Registration on April 27, 1942, four months after the attack at Pearl Harbor. Frank McCleaf was then forty-seven years old. He described himself on his draft registration card as a red-haired man with a ruddy complexion and gray eyes. He entered his weight as about 210 pounds and his height as 5 feet 10 inches. Frank, Sr. also wrote on the card the name and location of his employer, a tool and manufacturing company in the town of York. (This is the job Frank's then-young son Tom remembers his father commuting to from their Franklin County home.)<sup>33</sup>

The Selective Service System lowered the registration age to eighteen-year-olds in May 1942, with the Fifth Registration taking place on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Paul had turned eighteen in August of 1941. On that Tuesday in June 1942, therefore, Paul showed up at a local draft board office and filled out a Registration Card. He would have done this before or after his shift at the Landis Tool Company. On the card, he indicated he lived in Rouzerville and worked at the Landis Tool Company. Paul entered some identifying information--he was 5 feet, 10 inches in height, weighed 140 pounds, had a light complexion, blue eyes, and brown hair. So, by the summer of 1942, only six months after the United States had entered World War II, three McCleaf men--Frank, Sr., Frank, Jr., and Paul--had registered. Another, Bob, was already serving in the Army through his enlistment in the National Guard before the attack at Pearl Harbor. For Bob's father and brothers, however, registration did not automatically mean military service.<sup>34</sup>

**REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1924)**

SERIAL NUMBER N 362	1. NAME (Print) PAUL FREDERICK McCLEAF (First) (Middle) (Last)	ORDER NUMBER 11798
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) ROZZERVILLE WASH TWP. FRANKLIN PENNA. (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)		
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]		
3. MAILING ADDRESS SAME (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)		
4. TELEPHONE None	5. AGE IN YEARS 18	6. PLACE OF BIRTH York Springs Penna. (Town or county) (State or country)
DATE OF BIRTH 8 8 1923 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)		
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mr. Frank B. McCleef, Rozzerville Penna.		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Laddie Tral Co. Waynesches Franklin Penna. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Waynesches Franklin Penna. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 6-1-42)	(over)	016-21630-3 Paul Frederick McCleef (Registrant's signature)

The 1940 legislation created a Selective Service System “to furnish the men, necessary for the armed forces, with the least possible disturbance of our social and economic structures and activities.” This last phrase guided local draft boards, allowing them latitude in granting various exemptions or deferments from military service. For example, initially, fathers with young children could be deferred. And since labor would be needed on the Home Front to supply war material, men who worked in certain industries might be passed over as well. After men in a designated age group registered, they were classified to indicate their availability for military service. Boards categorized their registrants using the Selective Service Classification System. Someone like Paul, for example, could have been identified as “1-A,” which meant he was “available for general military service.” If a man worked in a war-related industry, the draft board would perhaps have classified him as “II-B,” which represented his labor as “necessary or essential to the war production program.” The board would probably have been inclined to give a man with dependents a “III-A” classification. Perhaps the most personally embarrassing category was “IV-F,” which meant the registrant was “mentally, morally, or physically unacceptable to the armed forces.” We do not know what classifications the McCleef men received. Their individual draft cards would have given that information.<sup>35</sup>

The law eventually registered 50 million men between the ages of 18-45, but registration did not necessarily translate into military service. In comparison to the number who registered, only 10 million were inducted into the armed forces (this does not count those who enlisted like the McCleef brothers). After December 5, 1942, for example, the Army and Navy stopped requesting men who were 38 to 45

years old; this removed about 7 million men who had registered under the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 from the possibility of service.<sup>36</sup>

Nationwide, draft boards numbered 6,442. Pennsylvania had 423 as of November 1, 1942. (Paul reported for duty that month.) The closest one for the McCleafs was Draft Board No. 3, located in Waynesboro. Respected people in the community sat on the draft boards. Understandably, the boards had to identify as eligible for military service young men who did not qualify for an exemption or for a deferment. That could make draft board members unpopular with some in the community. Paul's brother Tom remembers that a minister from the Lutheran Church in Rouzerville was a member of the local board. As Tom recalls, "Boys in Rouzerville" who were drafted "hated him with a passion." (Paul's cousin, John E.N. Blair, identifies the minister as the Reverend H. F. Coffelt.)<sup>37</sup>

Just months after his June 30, 1942 registration, Paul decided not to wait to be drafted; if he had been, he probably would have ended up in the Army. Instead, Paul enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in September 1942, according to a family statement given during the war to the local newspaper. He was called to active duty on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Historically, Pennsylvanian men signed up for colonial and later state militias as well as the federal army. Some of Paul's ancestors did so. But none of the McCleaf or Hovis men that we know of served in the USMC before World War II. Throughout 1942, the ranks of all branches of the armed forces dramatically increased. The size of the Marine Corps grew from 98,252 men on January 3, 1942 to 140,695 on June 30, 1942 and to 215,997 on November 30, 1942. Paul was not alone among young Pennsylvanian men in choosing the USMC. In fact, during World War II the state ranked second among all the states when it came to Marine Corp enlistments. Paul was one of the 55,518 Pennsylvanians who joined the USMC during the war years. Only New York State saw more of its male residents become Marines.<sup>38</sup>

### *Marines in the News*

Today, Paul's sister Maryann does not know why he chose the Corps over other branches of service. Neither does Paul's brother Tom--"I have no idea why he went into the Marine Corps." Certainly, the stands Marines took in the months after Pearl Harbor catapulted the Corps to the front pages of American newspapers and into the newsreels shown in theaters. In American homes, radios brought news of Marine heroics into the living rooms of families such as the McCleafs. Three stories in particular focused on Marines involved in Pacific actions. Against overwhelming odds, Marines defended United States territories against Japanese invaders at Wake Island in December 1941 and Corregidor in the early months of 1942. At Guadalcanal, beginning in August 1942, Marines fought to oust the Japanese from the foothold they had established. Paul would have heard about these three military actions in the months leading up to his draft registration in June 1942, his enlistment in the USMCR in September 1942, and his formal muster into the Marines in November 1942.

Wake Island is located between the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines. At the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, all three were American possessions with military installations on them. As such, Japan attacked all three on the same day. (Because Wake Island and the Philippines are west of the International Date Line, December 7<sup>th</sup> in Hawaii was December 8<sup>th</sup> on Wake Island and in the Philippines.) The Battle of Wake Island began on December 8, 1941, just hours after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. About five hundred Marines defended the island. That total was insufficient to operate even a minimum number of the anti-aircraft and seacoast guns while also manning the beach defenses. The enemy bombed Wake for two weeks. During that time, on December 11<sup>th</sup>, Marines repelled a Japanese attempt to land forces; Marines sank or greatly damaged six Japanese ships. Back in the States, newspapers ran front-page stories on the Wake Island Defenders, as they came to be known.<sup>39</sup>

A sampling of some Pennsylvania publications shows the type of stories Paul would have seen in his local newspaper, *The Record Herald*. A newspaper in Somerset, Pennsylvania ran a photo on its front page of a Wake Island platoon of Marines “who are heroically defending tiny Wake Island.” (The paper informed its readers that the picture was “taken some time ago.”) Another Pennsylvanian publication, this one in Franklin, also used the word “heroic” in describing the resistance the Wake Island Defenders showed against the enemy. Eight days into the battle, the article predicted that what was happening on Wake Island “will take its place in future history books along with other valiant last stands,” such as the Alamo. More than one newspaper likened the Wake Island Defenders to the men at the Alamo in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Texas. As one Pennsylvania publication explained, “Official reports indicate that probably no military force in American history, not even the defenders of the Alamo, ever fought against greater odds nor with greater effect in view of those odds.”<sup>40</sup>

Greatly outnumbered, the Marines could not hold out indefinitely. As Christmas approached, the Japanese landed some one thousand troops. Still, for about thirty hours, the Marines continued to fight. To stop further losses, however, Wake Island Defenders were surrendered by their commanding officer on December 23, 1941. A newspaper in York, Pennsylvania ran an AP story that perhaps Paul’s local paper also picked up. If not, Paul would have understood the sentiment conveyed in the article without ever reading it. As the AP reporter observed, “Wherever Americans gather in Christmas cheer, a salute to the defenders of Wake is in order. They have bravely pointed the way to victory for their countrymen, kept the covenant of their ‘always faithful’ motto to the death. What men could do, they did. They deserve the ‘well done’ that good and faithful servants of the flag merit of the nation, and neither that nor vengeance will be denied them.” After the surrender, the Marines became POWs, sent to camps in China and the Philippines.<sup>41</sup>



1942 cartoon by Ralph Lee

The stand taken by Wake Island Defenders was not the only time images of heroic Marines appeared in newspapers and newsreels or when their stories were heard on the radio. It occurred again in the spring of 1942 when Corregidor made the front pages. It is a small island off the coast of the much larger island of Luzon in the Philippines. United States military installations were located on Luzon. With its position at the entrance to Manila Bay, Corregidor was home to a fortress that guarded access to Manila and its surrounding American military posts. The island was known as The Rock. After December 1941 landings on Luzon by Japanese forces, the enemy pushed American and Filipino troops southward onto the Bataan Peninsula. There, they fought the Japanese, diseases, and malnutrition for over three months. With the United States forces outnumbered, weakened by various ailments, and running low on supplies, the Command accepted the inevitable. On April 9, 1942, at the southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula, the Americans and Filipinos were forced to surrender. Across from Bataan's southernmost coast stood Corregidor. The Japanese now turned their guns upon The Rock. Marines had been in the forefront of Corregidor's defense since late December 1941. Members of the Navy and Army joined them on The Rock over the next months. After Bataan's fall, approximately 11,000 American and Filipino troops on Corregidor faced enemy ground forces that fired artillery rounds and enemy planes that dropped bombs. The bombardments continued day and night.<sup>42</sup>

In the words of the Marine Corps' own history of this period, "During the 27 days between the fall of Bataan and the assault on Corregidor, life on The Rock became a living hell. The men in the open gun pits and exposed beach defenses were subjected to an increasing rain of shells and bombs." The constant shelling and bombing prepared the way for a Japanese landing on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Newspapers throughout the United States would have run headlines similar to that emblazoned across the top of a Hazelton, Pennsylvania newspaper--"Fortress of Corregidor Captured By Japs, Surrender Comes After 28 Days of Siege." An AP story out of Washington, D.C. reported that "increasing artillery fire and bombardment from the air" caused "severe damage to military installations." The enemy destroyed barbed wire entanglements and machine gun installations on the beaches meant to hold off invaders. Steel barges carried the Japanese from the southern tip of Bataan across the narrow stretch of water that separated the peninsula from Corregidor. The Command, fearing a slaughter of its troops by the Japanese, surrendered on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Like their fellow Marines at Wake Island, Marines from Corregidor became POWs. Just before Corregidor surrendered, President Roosevelt sent a message to the Marines, sailors, and soldiers defending The Rock--"You have given the world a shining example of patriotic fortitude and self-sacrifice." Roosevelt added, "The American people ask no finer example of tenacity, resourcefulness and steadfast courage..." In the mythology of the Marine Corps, Corregidor Marines joined Wake Island Marines as new heroes for recruits to model their behavior upon.<sup>43</sup>

Early in August 1942, just three months after the Fall of Corregidor, Marines were once again on the front pages of United States newspapers. This time, however, they were not fighting a defensive action. They led the first significant American ground offensive since the country's entry into World War II. The campaign took place in the South Pacific's Solomon Islands, specifically Guadalcanal. Japan had landed its forces there in the spring of 1942; by the summer, they were building an airstrip. Its completion would give the Japanese a base from which they could mount aerial attacks against American shipping lanes to Australia. If the Marines did not wrest control of Guadalcanal from the Japanese, communication lines with Australia would also be endangered. On August 7, the Marines landed on Guadalcanal. The next day, they took the airstrip. A USMC public relations officer embedded with the Marines at Guadalcanal wrote an account of the fighting that was published in stateside newspapers. In the opening paragraph, the lieutenant announced, "Marines avenged their comrades on Wake Island" by destroying enemy garrisons on two islands in the Solomons. The lieutenant continued his firsthand report by explaining that Marines drove "shattered Jap forces on Guadalcanal into the hills." Over the next weeks and months, the United States and Japan landed reinforcements as fighting escalated for control of Guadalcanal with its prized airstrip. At one point, the Marines were on their own, cut off from the United States Navy's attempts to bring in supplies and more men. Over time, a series of naval engagements between American and Japanese ships in the waters around Guadalcanal combined with the tenacious fighting of the Marines to result in an American victory. Japan evacuated its forces one evening early in February 1943.

The enemy had been evicted from Guadalcanal, and its advance southward had been stopped.<sup>44</sup>

As stories of Guadalcanal appeared on the front pages of newspapers, the second week of August 1942 saw a lesser story that related to Wake Island make the news. It had a connection to Franklin County. A local man from there fought in the skies over Japanese-controlled Wake Island early in August. Army Air Corps Assistant Engineer R.A. Fries served as part of a B-17 crew that flew out of the Hawaiian Islands. Fries was from Chambersburg, a borough less than eighteen miles from Rouzerville. On the first weekend in August 1942, the B-17 crew mounted a mission over the skies above Wake Island. Six Japanese planes from Wake skirmished with the B-17; the American plane downed four of them. The B-17 sustained minimal damage--“only three machinegun bullets” according to one of the plane’s officers. Newspapers across the country ran stories about the encounter, especially in the crew’s home states. A paper in Shippensburg (a borough in Franklin County) ran the story with the headline, “Chambersburg Man In Bomber At Wake Island.” One wonders if Paul’s local newspaper, *The Record Herald*, carried the story of this local connection to Wake. Late in August 1942, perhaps Paul was more likely to have seen another story on Wake Island--the movie, that is.<sup>45</sup>

In that critical first month on Guadalcanal, as Marines dug in, the heroic stand of Wake Island Marines once again came to the attention of the public. A Hollywood film appeared on theater screens throughout the United States. The movie was simply called *Wake Island*. It focused on the Marine defense of that small piece of land. The script was completed on December 22, 1941, a day before the Wake Island Defenders were surrendered by their commanding officer. One historian identified the resulting film as, “The first war picture rushed to completion.” The movie was a success at the box office and months later garnered four Oscar nominations.<sup>46</sup>

On August 22, 1942, a newspaper in Greenville, Pennsylvania reprinted a column by a New York City movie reviewer. Its opening line referred to the Guadalcanal Campaign--“What a break Hollywood got when the Marines invaded the Solomons. They were all set for a national release of their new picture, ‘Wake Island,’ which the U.S. Marines supervised, when the headlines broke. Locally, at least, Marine enlistment stations are overcrowded.” Corporal Gilbert F. Bailey, USMCR was one Marine who acknowledged the link between the movie *Wake Island* and his own enlistment. In August 1942 when the film came out, Bailey edited a weekly newspaper in Delphi, Indiana. In a book he later wrote about Marine Corps boot camp, Bailey credited *Wake Island* for his enlistment in the Corps at age twenty-eight. He also believed the movie explained why other men chose the Marine Corps for their branch of service. Bailey enlisted on October 13, 1942, four weeks before Paul reported for duty. Two years later, Bailey’s account of what a recruit went through in boot camp was published, *Boot: A Marine In The Making*. In it, the corporal identified the film *Wake Island* as “a picture which brought in a lot of us who can’t keep from dramatizing ourselves.” Another Marine, Hoyt Caldwell Johnson, Jr., credited the movie with his enlistment, too. Hoyt was still in high school

when he saw the film. “My urge to serve reached a fever pitch when at the age of seventeen I saw the movie ‘Wake Island.’ I couldn’t wait to join the Marines and help to get those ‘dirty Japs.’”<sup>47</sup>

Rouzerville was much too small to have a movie theater. According to Paul’s cousin, John E. N. Blair, there was one, the Arcade Theatre, in nearby Waynesboro. Paul’s brother Tom remembers going to see western movies in Waynesboro’s Strand Theatre, until a fire destroyed it in March 1941. When the McCleaf children were young, money would have been tighter than in 1942 when one older brother lived with his own family and two more of the McCleaf boys worked at the Landis Tool Company. Even if Paul gave his mother some of his earnings, a common practice at that time, he would have had some spending money. Perhaps in August or September of 1942, he used a small amount of it to see *Wake Island* at the Arcade.



If Paul did watch the movie, the last scene probably impacted him emotionally. The film does not end with the surrender. Instead, some of the main characters are in a foxhole when smoke from an explosion obscures them. This is followed by the final frame--a Japanese soldier, grinning, fires his machine gun into the foxhole. There must have been more than one young American who left the movie theater wanting to avenge the Wake Island Defenders. *The New York Times* used this headline for its September 2, 1942 review of the film--

“*Wake Island*, a Stirring Tribute to the United States Marines.” If Paul did not see the movie, he might have noticed the posters that advertised it outside of the Arcade Theatre. It appears Paul enlisted in the USMCR in September 1942, the very month Americans saw the film *Wake Island*.<sup>48</sup>

As noted earlier, we do not know why Paul chose the Marine Corps. Perhaps news reports of Wake Island in December 1941, Corregidor in May 1942, Guadalcanal in August 1942, and Hollywood’s release of the movie *Wake Island* in August 1942 factored into Paul’s choice of the USMC over the other branches of service. Young men would have seen in such stories the much-heralded esprit de corps identified with the Marine Corps. Still, Paul could have followed his brother Bob into the Army. Bob became the first McCleaf brother to ship out when his division left for the European Theater on September 27, 1942. (Bob’s unit, the 729<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Light Maintenance Company, was part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.) For the McCleaf family, the war thus became more personal in September. Similarly, we will never know why Paul chose to enlist when he did. In November 1942, the very month Paul was called to active duty, the Selective Service System registered some 450,000 men, bringing the total national registration to 29,029,125 men. Paul was one of those twenty-nine million. As noted earlier, he had registered on June 30, 1942. But as the months went by, Paul decided not to wait to hear from the Selective

Service System. He enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve three months after he registered.<sup>49</sup>

Paul's sister Maryann shares a memorable picture of Paul on his last day as a civilian. The day before Paul left for boot camp, someone in the family took a photograph of Paul, his oldest brother Frank, and his parents. Paul was not casually dressed as was his brother. Instead, Paul wore a suit that hung loosely on his slight frame. Maryann describes Paul as "not a big person." The picture supports that characterization. It also validates the physical description Paul had given of himself on his June 1942 draft registration card--5 feet, 10 inches, 140 pounds. Given his slight frame, Paul appears dwarfed by his brother Frank. Photographs are taken to capture a moment in time. The McCleafs understood that Paul's departure for Marine Corps boot camp marked a turning point in his life. Perhaps that is one reason why someone asked Frank, Jr., Paul, Annie, and Frank, Sr. to pose for a picture. The next day, Paul left for boot camp.



*Parris Island,  
A Transformation from Civilian to Marine*

All military recruits went through training at "recruit depots," or what the Navy and Marine Corps unofficially called "boot camps." Marines had only two such depots, one in San Diego, California and another on Parris Island off the coast of South Carolina. While the number of weeks could vary, usually Marine boot camp lasted for seven weeks--the first three weeks at the depot, the next three weeks at the rifle range, and the last week back at the depot. The Corps trained all recruits for the infantry. After boot camp graduation, however, some, like Paul, attended special schools. Skills acquired there could place them in non-infantry areas. While in boot

camp, recruits endured physical training through constant drilling to strengthen their bodies. At the same time, their days were filled with combat training to prepare them for the fighting ahead. Non-Commissioned Officers known in boot camp as Drill Instructors (DIs) taught Paul and other recruits how to dig foxholes, read a map, thrust a bayonet into an enemy, throw a grenade, and kill the enemy with their bare hands. In their weeks on the rifle range, DIs drilled recruits on how to clean, disassemble, and reassemble their rifle.<sup>50</sup>



Paul appears to have bought this album and filled it with photographs from his time at Parris Island and from before the Corps assigned him to its Air Arm.

The previously mentioned Gilbert Bailey enlisted in the Marine Corps a month before Paul reported for duty. And like Paul, he also ended up on Parris Island. Bailey's time there thus overlapped with Paul's. Born in Indiana in May 1914, Bailey spent his early life in that state. After high school, he attended Indianapolis University where he earned a bachelor's and a master's Degree in History. Bailey worked for various Indiana newspapers after college. Following boot camp, the Marine Corps apparently considered his education and employment background in journalism. Instead of an infantry assignment, he worked first in Public Relations before a stint in 1944 as a combat correspondent with the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division. His book, *Boot, A Marine In The Making*, was his personal account of boot camp. It serves as an invaluable source in describing what Paul must have gone through because both Paul and Bailey were at Parris Island in the late fall of 1942. Additionally, Bailey's descriptive writing skills make his book a captivating source. For example, Bailey explained to readers the overall purpose of the weeks recruits spent in San Diego or on Parris Island--"It is Marine Corps custom to send them all through a grim process called 'boot camp.' Each man loses most of his hair and much of his identity as he learns how to drill, how to shoot and, above all, how to subordinate himself to the over-all purpose of winning the war."<sup>51</sup>

A major way to achieve that purpose was to kill the enemy. One wonders what it was like for Paul, a gentle spirit according to his family, to reconcile himself to that aim. As his weeks at Parris Island went by, Paul moved closer to becoming part of the much-heralded United States Marine Corps. "Boot camp is no mere training ground where men are taught the fundamentals of combat," observed Gilbert Bailey. "It is the price of membership in a proud fighting fraternity." The transformation from civilian to Marine, for Paul and for other recruits, took place on Parris Island. It is a small piece of land, only four miles long and three miles wide. Most of the terrain stands just a few feet above sea level. Each month late in 1942, close to 12,000 recruits were in training on Parris Island.<sup>52</sup>

To get there, Paul would have taken a special train, filled with other Marine recruits, to the small South Carolina town of Yemassee. There, at the train depot, he met up with more enlistees from other states. Gilbert Bailey described how, at Yemassee, recruits boarded "a large, open cattle truck" that took them "across the marshes, over the causeway, through the gate that fastens the island to the mainland." Along the way, resident recruits already immersed in the boot camp experience chanted an unusual welcome--"You'll be sor-ree," slowly pronouncing the last word to give it emphasis. It was common practice for Parris Island recruits to repeat that greeting to new arrivals, still dressed in their civilian clothes. One wonders how many, if any, ever regretted their decision to enlist in the Marine Corps. Did Paul do so at any point? Probably not, given the pride that came with graduation, when the recruits joined what Bailey called a "proud fighting fraternity." The young Marines knew the reputation of the Corps, demonstrated early in World War II at Wake Island, Corregidor, and Guadalcanal. There were more campaigns ahead that would give additional examples of Marine Corps valor. No, neither Paul nor any of the other recruits were probably ever "sorree" for their decision. Still, dressed in Marine "greens," resident recruits taunted arriving enlistees by repeating what Bailey called the "strange welcome." Once at Parris Island, the recruit could be called by a new name, "boot."<sup>53</sup>

A key part in a recruit's transformation from civilian to Marine is his recognition that he no longer acts as an individual. Rather, he is a member of a unit that acts as one. Upon arrival at Parris Island, enlistees were divided into a platoon of sixty boots. They were the men with whom the recruit would sleep, eat, and train for the next seven weeks. For Paul, his assignment to a platoon was probably his first close association with young men who had backgrounds quite different than his own. Many of them were of ethnicities common to some areas of Pennsylvania, but not to South Central's Franklin County. Marine Gilbert Bailey recognized the "melting pot" that existed in the platoon--"If De Fuehrer can find any comfort in this fact, our ancestors are miscellaneous German, Scotch, French, Irish, Italian, Polish, English and Dutch. It is only because of a grandfather's whim or ambition that we mongrels find ourselves now in the United States, on Parris Island, in the same platoon."<sup>54</sup>

The platoon endured weeks of boot camp, with its physical and mental stresses. A recruit's identification with his unit replaced his own focus on himself. That transformation did not come easily. One book in particular tried to explain the rigors of boot camp to the general public. In 1943, Keith Ayling published *Marines In Action*. Ayling, British by birth, had been a Royal Air Force bomber pilot in World War I. After his 1941 arrival in the United States, Ayling wrote articles for a New York newspaper on various military subjects. He also authored several books on military topics. In Ayling's volume on Marines, he made the following observation about boot camp on Parris Island, "This period of training makes the strong stronger and weeds out the unfit..." The weeks were perhaps the hardest training endured by recruits in any branch of service. Ayling believed that to be the case--"Marine boot training is the most strenuous a man can get. It is rough, hard, and intensive. The only reward a recruit gets is that it makes him a marine, a member of a Corps with an ace-high reputation wherever the Stars and Stripes have been unfurled."<sup>55</sup>

One of the first stops for Paul's platoon was at the quartermaster's where each man received new clothing. World War II Marine Robert Leckie, who enlisted early in 1942, described that stop as a significant one in the recruit's loss of self. "In their [quartermasters'] presence, one strips down. With each divestment, a trait is lost; the discard of a garment marks the quiet death of an idiosyncrasy." The type of shirt, pants, and socks Paul wore, all examples of his individuality, were discarded. Paul would now dress like every other recruit. Bailey, in his book *Boot*, described the



From Paul's "Snap Shots"  
USMC album

process at the quartermaster's--recruits "marched by the shelves in single file. At each compartment we sounded off our size and someone threw it [an article of clothing] at us." Paul's outstretched arms held a pile of the following items--"six pairs of socks; three suits of underwear; two pairs of pants, one khaki and one wool; three khaki shirts; one belt; two garrison caps, winter and summer; one overcoat; one blouse [i.e., a coat]; one sun helmet; two field scarfs; one large emblem." The next stop was the barbers. A close-to-the-scalp haircut replaced the cut a recruit had when he arrived at Parris Island. World War II Marine Sid Zimman, who would serve in the same air squadron as Paul, described the haircut as "more like the shearing that sheep endured." Conformity, not individuality, was the key to the transformation from civilian to Marine.<sup>56</sup>

Robert Leckie, in his 1957 memoir, dwelled on this change in “the making of marines.” Leckie argued that at boot camp, “It is a process of surrender. At every turn, at every hour, it seemed, a habit or a preference had to be given up, an adjustment had to be made. Even in the mess hall we learned that nothing mattered so little as a man’s own likes or dislikes.” The loss of privacy pervaded boot camp life. It contributed to the boot seeing himself as part of a unit, not as an individual who deserved privacy. In his memoir, Leckie described the transformation well. “Worst in all this process of surrender was the ruthless refusal to permit a man the slightest privacy. Everything was done in the open. Rising, waking, writing letters, receiving mail, making beds, washing, shaving, combing one’s hair, emptying one’s bowels--all was done in public and shaped to the style and structure of the sergeant.”<sup>57</sup>

Like Leckie, the previously mentioned Marine Gilbert Bailey also viewed the weeks at boot camp as a place where the Corps educated a recruit. “Boot camp is a school,” Bailey explained to civilian readers in his 1944 book. “You start with simple fundamentals, learning step by step, blister by blister, reviewing what you learn, then adding something new.” One of the first things recruits learned was how to march. Wherever the platoon went, the men marched in formation. Leckie stressed how that exercise was a constant. “And always the marching. March to the mess hall, march to the sick bay, march to draw rifles slimy with cosmoline [a protective grease-like covering], march to the water racks to scrub them clean, march to the marching ground...It was a madness. But it was discipline.” Bailey echoed Leckie’s emphasis on how marching dominated the movements of the boots. “Everyday you march for miles, forward marching, back and forth, up and down, across the field and back again, going nowhere on the double. Forty inches back to breast, shoulders back, chin up, cover off. Countless times, by the numbers, by the hour.” The sand endemic to Parris Island made the marching harder than marching at the San Diego boot camp. As Ayling described it, at Parris Island “marching means plowing your feet through sand.”<sup>58</sup>

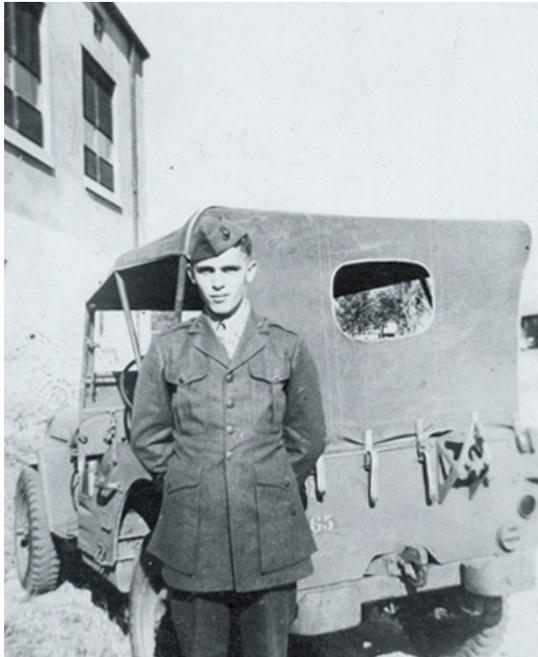


From Paul’s “Snap Shots” album. This may be Paul on the sands of Parris Island.

Marching was just one part of the daily regimen of a recruit. One World War II Marine, William Manchester, went through Parris Island about nine months after Paul did. Born in 1922, he was one year older than Paul. In the decades following the war, Manchester became an award-winning author. Thirty-five years after the Japanese surrendered, Manchester published a memoir that focused exclusively on his war experiences. In it, he detailed what a recruit's day consisted of in those first weeks at Parris Island. The morning began with an hour of calisthenics. Another hour of close-order drill followed. Boots spent the third hour "lunging, with fixed bayonets, at straw-stuffed dummies." Next, the recruits practiced throwing live grenades. Other instruction concentrated on how to properly use "the short-bladed Kabar knife in hand-to-hand combat." Always rip up, DIs told the boots, "into the gut" because "a downward thrust can be blocked more easily." According to Manchester, recruits also ran "a cruel hundred-yard sprint wearing gas masks." Lastly, Manchester recalled what he considered to be "the most idiotic drill of all, snapping in with simulated rifle fire at an imaginary warplane flying overhead." The phrase "snapping in" was part of a new language Paul learned at Parris Island. It meant "practicing firing without ammunition." As Manchester observed, "The Corps had its own language, and boots were required to learn it, just as the inhabitants of an occupied country must learn the conqueror's tongue."<sup>59</sup>

Manchester noted in his 1980 memoir that in the years after the war, some of the Marine Corps vocabulary had "crept into the [general English] language," but he argued that during the war itself, "no one outside the service knew them then." Some of the Marine Corps words that the civilian population adopted in the postwar years were "scuttlebutt" for "rumor," "snow job" for "deception," "shooting the breeze" for "gossiping," and "dope" for "information." Other Marine Corps words recruits learned did not carryover later to civilian life. For example, recruits in boot camp understood that the "floor/ground" was now the "deck," a "wall" was a "bulkhead," a "door" the "hatch," the "kitchen" a "galley," and the "bathroom" the "head." Recruits also came to use new verb phrases. Paul would have heard Marines "beat their gums," or "complain." And at Parris Island, "police up" an area meant to clean it up. Once the boots arrived at the rifle range, they heard a set of phrases unique to that stage of their training. Marines called the standing position when firing "offhand," the dead center of the bullseye was the "pinwheel," one shot was a "round," and when a boot practiced firing without ammunition, he was "snapping in." There were two words that civilians might think were synonymous, but to Marines they were not interchangeable. A "rifle" was never, ever to be called a "gun." One volume in the Marine Corps' own history of the war years judged that an "unpardonable sin."<sup>60</sup>

Paul at the back of a USMC jeep, a favorite photograph of his nephew John McCleaf.



In addition to the rifle, the DI introduced the platoon to other weapons basic to Marines. He stressed that the bowie knife worked well to cut off the weapon hand of the enemy during close-in fighting. Bayonets should be thrust between the enemy's ribs so that the blade did not stick when pulled out; if jabbed into another part of the body, the Marine should never let the blade go deeper than three inches. The DI shared lessons on how the hands could also be used as weapons, but not in the tradition of fist fighting. Instead of a fist, the boot was shown how to use the edge of his hand "in a chopping motion." Applied this way, a hand could "break bones almost at will." By keeping his fingers stiff, a DI showed a recruit how to aim them at the enemy's Adam's apple to break the windpipe. Eyes could be poked out in a similar fashion. Paul's first cousin Beckie Blair described her cousin as a "gentle" young man. Paul's sister Maryann and brother Tom agree with that characterization. Still, despite his inherent nature, Paul learned the art of killing at Parris Island.<sup>61</sup>

Since boot camp taught every recruit to be an infantryman, the first three weeks of general training was followed by three weeks of instruction at the rifle range. At their barracks, boots packed their belongings into their seabag (the Marine word for "duffle bag"). A truck carried those to the rifle range. The recruits marched there. The fact that the Corps allocated three of the seven weeks of boot camp to rifle training indicates the importance attached to that phase of training. As far as Paul's family remembers, he was not one who hunted animals in his youth. The rifle was, therefore, just as new of a weapon for him as was the bowie knife, the bayonet, and his hands.<sup>62</sup>

Once Paul and his platoon reached the rifle range area, they went first to the barracks. Marine Gilbert Bailey described it as "a pine shack with one row of 35

doubledecker bunks all around, and in the middle three hot-bellied stoves." Each morning when the bugler sounded reveille, the boots "hit the deck." They shaved, washed, dressed, made their bunk, and cleaned up the barracks. Breakfast followed. Lectures on the use of the rifle came next. (While these three weeks focused on the rifle, D.I.s also schooled recruits on smaller weapons such as automatic pistols.) Bailey described the M1 rifle as "the recruit's basic infantry weapon." Like all boots, Paul learned the M1's seventy-eight parts, the rifle's muzzle velocity and its effective range. According to Bailey, the lectures focused on "aiming, sighting, breathing, windage, elevation, squeezing the trigger, [and] lining up sights." On the firing range, they learned how to shoot the rifle in a standing position, a prone position, a sitting position, and a kneeling position. Recruits fired at the 20-inch bullseye target from 200 yards, 300 yards, and 500 yards.<sup>63</sup>

From Paul's "Snap Shots" album



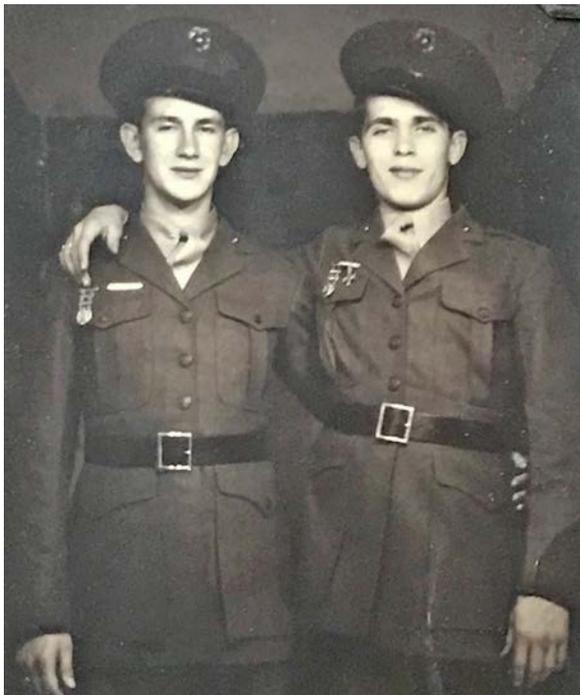
On the day of the test, what Manchester called Record Day, each recruit fired sixty-six shots, with fifty-six of them shot in rapid fire. The boots had to fire at the bullseye from all positions--standing, prone, sitting, and kneeling. Each shot, at a maximum, was worth five points (the points earned for a bullseye). When it was all over, recruits received one of three ratings based upon where the bullets landed on the target--expert (the highest rating), sharpshooter (second highest), and marksman (the most common rating). We do not know what Paul scored, but he passed. Not all recruits did; if they scored too low, more training on the rifle field awaited them.<sup>64</sup>

The recruits had made it through the hardest part of boot camp. Their civilian status was close to being a thing of the past. Marine Robert Leckie drew this conclusion about how far he and the other boots had come after their weeks on the rifle range. "Another week of training remained, but the desired change already had taken place. Most important in this transformation was not the hardening of the

flesh or the sharpening of my eyes, but the new attitude of mind. I was a marine. Automatically, this seemed to raise me above the plodding herd of servicemen. I would speak disparagingly of soldiers as 'dog-faces' and sailors as 'swab-jockeys.' "65

Before the recruits left for the Range Area, they underwent a series of what could be called "placement tests." Marine Gilbert Bailey described the process as one "where raw boots are tested for intelligence, skills and aptitudes." With the test results in hand, depot officers, as Bailey further explained, "classified [the recruit] according to military usefulness, then assigned [them] to jobs which fit them." Most boot camp graduates were destined for the infantry. Other Marines ended up with sea duty on U.S. Navy ships. Ranger or paratrooper training awaited some boot camp graduates. The Marine Corps also sent graduates to schools to be trained in specialties such as landing operations, communications, radio, and gunnery. Paul attended these last two schools since the Corps classified him for aviation duty. That meant he would, in all probability, see combat, just as if he had been assigned to the infantry. His combat would be from on high, though.<sup>66</sup>

Upon graduation from boot camp, Paul was no longer a civilian. He dressed like a Marine, he spoke like a Marine, he could shoot a rifle like a Marine, and he knew how to fight like a Marine. These were, however, outward signs of his transformation. According to his brother Tom, Paul came home twice on leave



From the "Snap Shots" album. Paul is on the right.

before he left for the Pacific Theater. They were short visits, just for the weekend, as Tom remembers them. The trips back to Rouzerville would have occurred after boot camp, when Paul was in training for his assignment to Marine Corps Aviation. During these visits, did his mother Annie, his father Frank, or any of his siblings detect an inward change in the type of person he was? Most of Paul's immediate family is no longer with us to answer that question. His two siblings who are still alive, Maryann and Tom, were only twelve and nine respectively in 1943 when Paul came home on leave. Any changes they saw in Paul probably concerned his outward appearance, such as his haircut, his uniform, and his bearing. William Manchester explained that at boot camp, "the Corps begins its job of building men by destroying the

identity they brought with them." Recall that Paul's first cousin Beckie Blair remembers to this day his "gentle, quiet ways." One wonders how much of that Paul had been submerged in his new identity as Private Paul F. McCleaf, USMC.<sup>67</sup>

## Chapter 4

### An Assignment to Marine Corps Aviation, Paul Becomes One of the 1%

Five days after Paul reported for active duty, the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved a change in the wording of the *Marines' Hymn*. The Corps added three words to the fourth line of the first verse. Before the change, the third and fourth lines read,

“We fight our country’s battles  
On the land as on the sea;”

After the November 21, 1942 change, the fourth line reflected a new battlefield upon which Marines now fought,

“We fight our country’s battles  
In the air, on land, and sea.”

The addition of “in the air” recognized that Marines would now be confronting the enemy in the sky. While the beginnings of Marine aviation can be traced back to the World War I era, it did not come of age until World War II. By the end of that war, Marine Corps Aviation was known simply as “Marine Aviation,” or “the Air Arm,” or “the Marine Air Arm.” During the war, Marine Corps Aviation counted among its frontline troops, so to speak, fighters and bombers, as well as torpedo and scout planes. Trainers, transports, utility aircraft, and observation planes played auxiliary roles in Marine Corps Aviation. Whatever the plane, however, all aircraft flew in support of Marine ground troops.<sup>68</sup>

With Paul’s decision to enlist in the Marine Corps, he joined a branch of service that was significantly smaller in number than the Army and the Navy. About 8 million Americans enlisted or were drafted into the Army by the end of World War II. Paul’s older brother Bob officially entered the Army in February 1941 when his National Guard unit was federalized. Paul’s brothers Frank and John both joined the Navy in 1944, serving alongside some 3.5 million other Americans in that branch of service. In comparison, only about 475,000 served in the Marine Corps. Most Marines were infantry. This was not true for Paul, however. His assigned area-- Marine Corps Aviation--put him in an even smaller group of men in uniform. Paul’s high school diploma and his mechanical skills probably resulted in high scores on the tests he took in boot camp. Marine Gilbert Bailey explained the exams as ones that evaluated the recruit’s “intelligence, skills and aptitudes.”<sup>69</sup>

Between 125,000-150,000 Marines served in Marine Corps Aviation. The Selective Service System reported that by the end of 1945, “as many as 15,000,000 men were in the armed forces or had seen service at one time during the 5 years since the beginning of the Selective Service in 1940.” Marine Corps Aviation, therefore, constituted a very small group within the overall armed forces. Put another way, only 1% of those in the United States military during World War II served in Marine Corps Aviation. Paul was one of that one percent. With respect to his military service, Paul thus distinguished himself from other servicemen in two

ways--by the branch in which he chose to enlist and by the area within the Corps in which he served.<sup>70</sup>

### *Sources*

Paul spent his first months in Marine Corps Aviation training for the position he would eventually assume, that of a radio-gunner. Few detailed accounts exist of what that type of training and service was like. While World War II memoirs by airmen are available, they tend to be accounts by officers, not enlisted men like Paul. Many Army pilots who led bombing raiders against Germany, for example, wrote memoirs of their time in the cockpit at the controls of a B-17 Flying Fortress or a B-24 Liberator. The planes had a crew of ten, with as many as five gunners. Like the pilots, some of those gunners who served in the European Theater left us their war memoirs. In the Pacific, Marine fighter pilots in planes dubbed the Hellcat and the Wildcat later penned accounts of their war years. They shared dramatic stories of one-on-one encounters with Japanese counterparts in the skies over the Pacific Ocean. But few memoirs by Marine Corps gunners like Paul exist. This author, however, is in possession of two of them. They will be used to explain the type of training Paul went through in the months leading up to his deployment to the Pacific.

One, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, is by Sid Zimman. He enlisted on May 18, 1942 and rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant before his discharge on May 21, 1946. After attending boot camp in San Diego, Sid was assigned to Marine Corps Aviation. His recollections are invaluable for Paul's story for several reasons, but two stand out. First, Sid detailed the stages of training he went through to become a radio-gunner, the same position Paul held. Sid's recollections thus give us insight into what Paul experienced in his training. Second, both Marines served in the same squadron of scout bombers. Sid witnessed the January 14, 1944 midair collision that resulted in Paul becoming a POW. His account of that day will be a critical part of Paul's story.<sup>71</sup>



Sid Zimman

Sid finished his memoir in 2008. He wrote it for his family and for anyone interested in the history of World War II Marines, particularly those who served in the air. Sid readily shares with audiences how few of those assigned to aviation were part of the aircrews. Only 10% of those in Marine Corps Aviation, according to Sid, were pilots and gunners. Without question, most were in ground support. For example, in January 1945 when Marine Corps Aviation numbered 125,162 men, 101,805 of those men were ground support. These statistics emphasize the rarity of memoirs such as Sid's. His is posted on a website dedicated to preserving World War II stories, making Sid's firsthand account available to a global audience.<sup>72</sup>

Hoyt Caldwell Johnson, Jr. authored the second memoir by a Marine Corps Aviation radio-gunner that will be used to tell Paul's story with respect to his

aviation training--*My Marine Memoirs of World War II*. Unlike Paul and Sid's scout bomber, Hoyt's plane was a torpedo bomber. Its crew consisted of three men--the pilot, the turret gunner, and the radio-gunner. Hoyt enlisted on July 2, 1943, two months after graduating high school in his hometown of Columbus, Mississippi. On his way to boot camp in San Diego, Hoyt wrote his first letter home after boarding a train in Jackson, Mississippi. The letter is dated July 16, 1943--"I hope you can read this scratching, but we are in our berths and the train is moving." The letters continued through December 19, 1945, three months after the Japanese formally signed surrender documents. On that December night, Hoyt penned a short note from Okinawa, an island not far from Japan that had been the site of the last major Pacific campaign fought by the United States. "We are going to board ship in the morning," Hoyt announced, "and will leave sometime Fri. for Frisco...See you next year." These letters and the ones he wrote in between them form the core of his 192-page memoir, finished in 1997. Like Sid, Hoyt also included some photographs and documents from his military service, such as his March 13, 1946 discharge as a sergeant.<sup>73</sup>

In the early pages of *My Marine Memoirs of World War II*, Hoyt thanked two women for making the book possible--his mother, who, as he observed, "faithfully saved all of the letters I wrote home," and his wife, Elizabeth ("Libba") Carroll Moore. Libba was the force behind the memoir. Hoyt dedicated it to her--she "encouraged, prodded and otherwise pushed me to do this book." Libba understood the importance to history of preserving her husband's letters. She earned a bachelor and a master's degree in history from Mississippi University for Women. It was Libba who typed Hoyt's letters for the memoir, no small undertaking. In urging her husband to write down his wartime experiences using the correspondence as his guide, Libba preserved her husband's story.<sup>74</sup>

Marine Corps Aviation issued Paul, Sid, and Hoyt a small volume whose title was embossed on its cover--*Aviator's Flight Log Book*. All crewmen received such a book while in training. In his memoir, Sid explained its basic purpose--"This is designed to keep track of all time spent in flight." Entries by an airman in the small book resulted in him receiving what Sid judged as a "small stipend called 'Flight Pay.'" As Sid explained further, "For each time we were airborne, we enter the date, type of aircraft, aircraft I.D., duration of flight, name of pilot, passenger and remarks." Because of such details, the *Log Book* is an indispensable source for following the stateside training and subsequent overseas tours of individual men assigned to various aircrews. Sid and Hoyt used their *Flight Log Book* to write their memoirs. Unfortunately, Paul's book has been lost. The Marine Corps did return it to Annie McCleaf after the war was over. The family still has the letter that accompanied the *Flight Log Book* when it was mailed to Paul's mother, but no one in the family has the book itself.<sup>75</sup>

Even without Paul's *Log Book*, we have Sid and Hoyt's memoirs to shed light on Paul's Marine Corps Aviation training. Sid's recollections and Hoyt's letters home contain passages that refer to stateside training for radio-gunners. Additionally,

Marine Corps Muster Rolls documented some of the Marine Aviation bases where Paul trained. A history of Paul and Sid's scout bomber squadron exists, as well. A key entry in it for Paul lists his stateside bases. These sources--Sid and Hoyt's memoirs, some Marine Corps documents, and the history of Paul's squadron--will be used to explain some of the training Paul went through before his squadron shipped out for the Pacific.

But before Paul was fully immersed in that training, he received two letters from home, both written on January 14, 1943. (Exactly one year later, Paul's plane went down.) Tom, Paul's brother, still has those letters, seventy-eight years after they were written. One was from Annie, Paul's mother, and the other one was from Tom. What the two McCleafs wrote about was probably not that different from what other families touched upon in their letters to relatives who served in the military. Some topics were mundane, others heartfelt. Annie's letter combined both. She shared, for example, the everyday subject of family health issues. Addressing Paul as "My Dear Boy," she began her letter with a standard query--"Well, how are you this morning?" Annie followed this question with news of her granddaughter Sissie. She had suffered from "neuralgia for three days," apparently caused by the fact that "her three teeth are bad." Frequent headaches, Annie informed Paul, plagued "Johnnie," a reference to her son John.

Like health, the weather was another routine topic seen in wartime letters to loved ones in uniform. Annie mentioned the "cold" they had experienced since Christmas. It was only "these [last] few days," she further shared, that rain came, and that resulted in icy conditions. Annie referred to Christmas throughout her four-page letter, and not only in respect to the weather it seemed to have ushered in. "We took a picture of [the] tree. I want to send it to you boys," probably a reference to not only Paul but also to son Bob who was over in Europe with his Army unit. Paul had sent money home, asking his mother to buy gifts for the children. Annie told him that she had done so. "I put the rest in [the] bank for you. I didn't spend much." She hoped Paul had received the Christmas package she mailed him.

News of family and friends who entered military service constituted another commonplace topic. Annie shared information on two Franklin County men who appear to have been drafted. "Bud Hovis [Annie's nephew and thus Paul's cousin] was examined and passed in the Navy. David Baker [a friend] also passed. They put them both in [the] Navy. No choice, I hear." Annie also shared the fact that she had received a long letter from Paul's brother Bob. "Bob, the poor kid must be homesick. He wrote a seven page letter home. Johnnie and Tommy [Paul's younger brothers] each got one yesterday. He says for them to take good care of Mom until he gets home."

Annie's letter contained some heartfelt topics aside from the mundane ones. Her concern for Paul is apparent in more than one passage. Annie linked news of the fighting in Europe to her unease over Paul's military service. She used the family nickname in addressing Paul. "Ditty, do write as often as possible as I surely worry

about you, especially now. They sure are fighting over in Germany. Well, I won't make you feel worse by telling you what you already know." Annie's concern is seen in another passage on the letter's last page. "Ditty, I dreamed you were home with a bunch of Marines the other night. You were on a secret mission and was not allowed to recognize us. I tried to call you but couldn't. My boy, how I wish that were true that you were home and this cruel war was over." Like any mother would have, Annie ended her letter with a common prayer--"May God Bless you and keep you well. Much love Mother."

Annie's letter is an example of the World War II correspondence of mothers and fathers that has been lost to history. Letters written by parents were usually sent overseas since most of the United States military forces served outside of the country. It would have been difficult, therefore, for sons and daughters in uniform to keep such correspondence. Sons moved from one campaign or station to another, daughters from one military base to another. If we had such letters, though, they would be invaluable sources for the Home Front history of mothers and fathers. The pages would have preserved their voices. But without such writings, we have lost the insights the letters could have given us. Many parents, however, saved letters their children in uniform mailed home, making the history of those who served easier to tell.

Similarly, after the war, some men and women in the armed forces wrote memoirs. Several have been cited in Paul's story, and more will be used in the next chapter. But mothers and fathers did not pick up the pen, so to speak. This is the primary reason, even more than the absence of their letters, as to why we have lost their stories. Newspapers that recount life on the Home Front give us some knowledge as to what mothers and fathers experienced. Nothing, however, is as powerful as their words. A great imbalance exists between the number of letters parents of World War II service members wrote to their sons and daughters and how many of those letters survived. An example of this can be seen in the McCleaf family's wartime letters. Only one of Annie's remains, even though we know she must have written Paul when he was in boot camp, aviation training, and after he left for the Pacific.

For Paul's story, this one letter from Annie is a rare source. We know from it that Paul entered her dreams, that Annie worried about her son, and that she prayed for his safe return home. No doubt other mothers experienced that, too. If Annie felt that way while Paul underwent training in the States, imagine what it was like for her when he left for the Pacific, when he became MIA, and when his status changed to that of a Marine killed-in-action (in one of the initial reports of the USMC). What she called "a cruel war" must have become even crueler in her mind, and rightly so.

The same envelope that carried Annie's letter from the McCleaf home in Pennsylvania to Paul's North Carolina Marine Corps base held a second piece of correspondence. It was a one-page letter from Tom. He wrote it on USMC stationery, no doubt a gift from Paul. Tom turned nine that month. The subjects in the letter

were typical ones for a child of Tom's age, as was the brevity of the letter. He began it with a standard opening--"How are you?" One-sentence subjects made up the body of the letter--a night spent at Grandma's house, homework done, and an unnamed book to read (probably a school assignment). Unsurprisingly, one topic, his puppy, warranted three sentences. "My little puppy is not very big. He is not a year old yet. He go's ice skating with me back ove [sic] the Dump." Tom signed the letter in a formal way--"Your brother Thomas." Paul must have received his mother and brother's letters as he began his aviation training.

In January 1943, the month when Annie and Tom wrote the preceding letters, Paul ended up at three USMC stations. Muster Rolls allow us to follow those moves. It was probably early in January that Paul spent time assigned to the Eighteenth



Separate Recruit Battalion at the New River Training Center at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. That might have been Paul's first station after boot camp, before he joined Marine Corps Aviation. A second Muster Roll for January puts him with AES-44 at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point; it was an aircraft engineering squadron (AES) that trained Marines assigned to aircraft maintenance and service. But Paul did not stay with that squadron. By the end of the month, he had been transferred to a headquarters squadron, "Hq Sq-3, Third Marine Aircraft Wing," also based at Cherry Point. Since recruits did not receive leaves during boot camp, Paul would have gone on his first leave after graduation. In her January 14<sup>th</sup> letter, Annie did not mention that she had seen Paul, leading one to

surmise that Paul had his first leave after his mother wrote that letter. Supporting the late January date, too, is a story surrounding the USMC enlistment of one of Paul's best friends.<sup>76</sup>

After boot camp, service members could be granted liberty. In his memoir, William Manchester defined the leave as one that usually lasted for forty-eight or seventy-two hours. Tom McCleaf remembers two visits by Paul. Even though Tom was young, it is understandable that he has a memory of his brother's trips home. Seeing Paul in uniform would have made an impression on a nine-year-old. According to Tom, "He [Paul] came home twice on weekend passes. One pass belonged to him, and one pass belonged to another Marine." As Tom explains, a Marine friend of Paul's wanted to borrow Paul's dress blues. (Marine Gilbert Bailey identified this uniform in his book simply as "Blues," not even using the article "the" before the word.) Paul's friend offered to trade a weekend pass he had for the opportunity to wear Paul's Blues for a special occasion that was coming up. (Hoyt Caldwell Johnson, Jr. wrote his family when he bought his dress blues; the uniform cost Hoyt \$18.75, a large amount for a Marine private who averaged a \$25 monthly

salary.) As far as we know, Paul never had the opportunity himself to wear the dress uniform. Tom still has the uniform among his brother's possessions.<sup>77</sup>

Paul's pride in being a Marine influenced one of his best friends to join the Corps. That friend is Paul Westley Smith. Today, Paul lives in the same town, Waynesboro, that was his home when World War II began. In fact, Paul has lived in Franklin County his entire life, except for his wartime years of military service. Paul Smith and Paul McCleaf share a first name and a childhood in Rouzerville. Tom McCleaf remembers that the Smith family "lived down the street from us." Born only three weeks apart, they attended school together. Just like Paul McCleaf acquired a nickname growing up, so did Paul Smith, who explains, "Back in those days, everyone had a nickname, and that is what you went by." Family and friends knew Paul Smith as "Irish." He shares the story of how he acquired the nickname. "When I was young, I rode with my father when he delivered groceries." An employee of Paul Smith's father was also in the pick-up truck. The man noticed that Paul sometimes wore green shorts, so the employee dubbed him "Irish." Tom McCleaf spoke of his brother and his brother's friend, using their nicknames, when he described their relationship--"Irish and Ditty were very, very close." They registered for the draft on the same day, June 30, 1942. At that time, Irish worked at the Wayne Tool Company in Waynesboro while the Landis Tool Company in the same town employed Paul McCleaf. Paul McCleaf entered the USMC in November 1942. Irish did so on February 9, 1943.<sup>78</sup>

Irish chose the Corps because his good friend had done so. Referring to Paul, Irish acknowledges, "He was the reason I went in." Irish remembers a visit home by Paul, after boot camp. It was apparent how highly Paul valued the Marine Corps. As Irish recalls, "I could tell he was proud of doing it," meaning of enlisting. That visit by his friend moved Irish to enlist, too. Aside from the fact that both Paul and Irish went through boot camp at Parris Island, other, more unlikely parallels occurred in their wartime service. The Corps assigned Irish to Marine Aviation, too. An October 1943 Muster Roll places him in an aviation company at U.S. Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville, Florida. Irish remembers his time at NAS. "I was in Jacksonville with torpedo bombers, but I did not fly in them; the squadron was abolished so I went to the B-25." Irish's reference is to the PBJ-IJ (B-25J) Mitchell, a medium bomber. The Corps assigned Irish to squadron VMB-413. Part of his training with it occurred at Cherry Point, where Paul trained as well. The two childhood friends both flew combat missions in the Pacific. Irish left the States in August 1944, five months after his friend had been killed by the Japanese. Irish's squadron flew bombing missions over the very enemy base above which Paul's plane had suffered the midair collision. Irish did not return to the States until August 1945, after the Japanese surrendered. He was discharged in December 1945 at Cherry Point, North Carolina, where his good friend Ditty had trained.<sup>79</sup>

Just two months after Irish Smith enlisted in the Marine Corps, Paul's uncle did the same. Charles Fred Hovis, Annie's brother, went by the name of "Fred." Born in October 1913, Fred was ten years older than his nephew Paul. He was twenty-nine

when he joined the Marine Corps. According to Beckie Blair, Paul's first cousin, Fred graduated from Washington Township High School in 1930. Recall that most young men of Paul's generation did not hold a high school diploma; that was even truer for those who were ten years older than Paul. Fred's degree made him stand out from other enlisted Marines, as did Paul's diploma. Uncle and nephew shared an employment background, as well. Still single when he filled out his draft registration form in October 1940, Fred lived at home with his mother while he worked at the Landis Tool Company. Paul and Fred shared a biological tie, a high school education from the same institution, and an employer. Like Paul, Fred went through boot camp at Parris Island, and he also was sent to Marine Corps Aviation. Fred's high school degree and employment record might explain that assignment. Fred left the States for the Pacific on January 22, 1944, eight days after Paul's midair collision. Three men from the small community of Rouzerville, Pennsylvania--Paul McCleaf, Paul "Irish" Smith, and Fred Hovis--became Marines. Unlike most Marines, however, the Command did not assign them to ground forces. Instead, all three served in Marine Corps Aviation. Paul, Irish, and Fred ended up in the Pacific Theater. Only two of them came home.<sup>80</sup>

### *Radio and Gunnery Training*

Since Irish and Fred served in Marine Corps Aviation, they would have attended Marine Corps specialty schools after boot camp to prepare them for their air assignments. Sid Zimman and Hoyt Caldwell Johnson, Jr. did so, too, and we have their memoirs that deal with that aspect of their training. The Corps sent Sid and Hoyt to schools for their position of radio-gunner. Sid identified them clearly in his memoir as radio school and gunnery school; both of his schools were at the NAS located on the Jacksonville Naval Base in Florida. Hoyt referred to the same schools in letters he wrote home. Hoyt ended up at Jacksonville, too, after first attending Navy schools in Oklahoma. Upon graduation, enlisted Marines received a diploma or certificate. (Sid and Hoyt inserted copies in their memoirs.) Following weeks at the radio and gunnery schools, Sid and Hoyt next went through operational training where their instruction continued, but this time in the air. As detailed by Sid, the last stage in training was flight time with the squadron. Paul would have gone through this same process--ground training at a radio school and gunnery school, followed by operational training in the air, and then assignment to a squadron and more aerial training.<sup>81</sup>

Two sources place Paul in North Carolina for his instruction. The first is the history of his squadron written in the 1970s by one of its officers, Major John M. Elliott, USMC (Ret.)--*History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341 (VMSB-341)*. Elliott used official squadron records as the basis of his book. Many pages display the stamp "unclassified" on them. Elliott's work is an example of a War Diary, a volume that preserves the history of a particular military unit. Sid drew upon the information in Elliott's book when he wrote his memoir. Hoyt did the same; he identified the postwar volume on his unit as *The War Diary of Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 232*. War Diaries do not focus on stories of individual unit

members; they detail the history of the unit itself. In his book, Elliott thus concentrated on the missions Paul's squadron flew. One section, however, of the *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron-341 (VMSB-341)* listed squadron members and where they trained. Paul appears to have gone through his initial training in North Carolina. Elliott identified Marine Air Corps Station (MCAS) Cherry Point in North Carolina as Paul's location from February to June 1943. Marine Corps Muster Rolls also place Paul in North Carolina for his aviation training.<sup>82</sup>



As a Marine Aviation officer explained, “Literally carved out of swamplands and forests, Cherry Point was primarily a training station.” Construction on the runways started two weeks before the attack at Pearl Harbor. Cherry Point eventually had eleven airfields as well as additional air bases. Paul became familiar with all of them given his months there. Members of aircrews trained in several areas, as an officer explained--tactical air training in maneuvers with infantry units, dive-bombing, high and low-level bombing, strafing, intruder tactics, air combat with gun cameras, and antisubmarine patrols.<sup>83</sup>

The War Diary for Paul's squadron has him at an unnamed “school” in Cherry Point on January 28, 1943. If Paul's training followed the same sequence as Sid's did, this first aviation training would have been in aerial radio. (Enlisted Marines could be assigned to “ground radio” or “aerial radio.” Sid explained in his memoir that the former meant assignment to infantry or ground forces, with the radioman carrying a radio on his back as Marines landed on enemy-held islands.) Sid attended an

Aviation Radioman School at NAS Jacksonville. MCAS Cherry Point no doubt had a similar school. Instructors did not teach about the science behind radio transmission, and students did not need to know how to fix a radio. The instruction, Sid explained, was in "Operational Aerial Radio." The curriculum, as Sid wrote in his memoir, was geared towards the job of an aerial radioman--"Our task was to learn communicative aspects of radio." Put another way, Sid, Hoyt, and Paul learned how to use the radio on a plane. This entailed, for example, mastering Morse code.<sup>84</sup>

But code seems to have been just one area of instruction when it came to communicating with other planes in the air or with ground forces. In a May 31, 1944 letter home to his family from NAS Jacksonville, Hoyt shared the subjects on his "final test" in what appeared to be radio school. Hoyt identified the test areas as "code [sound], semaphore [flags] and blinker [light]. I checked out at 8 words per minute in each." Sid was in radio school for just over three months. Paul's time at the radio school at MCAS Cherry Point would have been just as long. His squadron's War Diary, in the section where Major Elliott gave information on Paul's training, identified Paul, as a "radio-gunner" on April 31, 1943. If Paul did enter radio school at MCAS Cherry Point at the end of January 1943, he could have been done three months later.<sup>85</sup>

Naval Air Gunners School followed. The Marine Corps sent Sid to the one in Jacksonville and Hoyt to the one in Pursell, Oklahoma. Paul would have studied the same curriculum as they did, but at MCAS Cherry Point. In their memoirs, Hoyt and Sid explained details of their gunnery school training that gives us a window into what Paul learned at Cherry Point. In a February 29, 1944 letter, Hoyt shared with his family a typical daily schedule. It consisted of seven hours of instruction, one hour of exercise, and a three-six-mile run. A week later, according to other letters Hoyt mailed home, gunnery school students began firing a .30-caliber and a .50-caliber machine gun. "We stand still and fire at a Navy target. Later, we will move and fire at a stationary target and then both will move." At least in Pursell, gunnery school included firing at clay pigeons. (Sid has no recollection of such an exercise.) Hoyt mentioned this in a March 14, 1944 letter home. "Oh, yes, we were shooting a shotgun at clay pigeons, and I hit 63 out of 75 the first time and 68 out of 75 the second [time]. The chief said that was good shooting." Gunnery school also taught Marines to identify different types of planes and ships, a topic included in Hoyt's final exam.<sup>86</sup>

Training with machine guns was the first subject Sid dealt with in his memoir's section on gunnery school in Jacksonville. "Our first weaponry engagement was the twin .30 caliber Browning machine guns, which eventually became our closest ally." Sid explained, with some awe, what those lessons were like. "It was quite an event firing a weapon of that magnitude but our real thrill, or shock, was firing the .50 caliber machine guns. That is an experience! Such power is unfathomable short of howitzers and artillery pieces." Sid wrote that gunnery school trained Marines in the use of a much smaller weapon, as well. "We also had to fire and qualify with a .45 caliber Colt semi-automatic pistol." Hoyt did not refer to such

a gun in his letters home. Why he failed to mention it is understandable when one remembers that Hoyt was writing to his family. The pistol, as Sid stated in his memoir, would be used if their plane went down. Sid added, if the gunner was “unlucky enough to be shot down,” the Colt .45 “would be your only defense aside from a hunting knife we would always carry strapped to our leg.” From their memoirs, Hoyt and Sid appear to have been in gunnery school for about six weeks.<sup>87</sup>

### *Operational Training*

Graduates of radio and gunnery schools were called radioman-gunners, radio-gunners, rear-gunners, back-seat gunners, and rear-seaters. In its history of the USMC in World War II, the Corps used the designation “radioman-gunner.” After attending radio and gunnery schools, operational training followed. Sid used that phrase in his memoir to describe the instruction he went through after gunnery school. In operational training, aviation Marines like Paul, Sid, and Hoyt spent time in the air as part of a crew. Sid wrote about how he was trained in a dive bomber before he was permanently assigned to a squadron, where even more instruction occurred. Paul spent time with some air groups before he, too, was attached to his squadron. As radio-gunners began operational training, they received additional gear. Sid listed the items in his memoir--a helmet, goggles, flight suit, leather flight jacket, gloves, a life jacket, a Colt .45, and the *Aviators Flight Log Book*. Just being in possession of this gear must have buoyed Paul and every other enlisted member of an aircrew. The items meant they really would, after months of ground training, be flying.<sup>88</sup>



Paul's “wings,” which his brother Tom has today.

Three organizational units comprised Marine Corps Aviation or the Air Arm of the USMC. In descending order, they were wings, groups, and squadrons. The total number of each varied over time. At their peak during the war, the Marine Corps had five air wings, thirty-two aircraft groups, and one hundred and forty-five squadrons. Beginning in January 1943, the words “wing,” “group,” and “squadron” appeared on Paul's muster rolls. The squadrons to which Paul was assigned, both temporary and permanent, were part of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing; that is not surprising since it had been commissioned at Cherry Point in November 1942, just a few months before Paul's arrival there.<sup>89</sup>

Between January and July 1943, however, his particular groups and squadrons varied. The beginning point for Paul's assignment to Marine Corps Aviation is a January 1943 Muster Roll that put Paul at MCAS Cherry Point. As noted earlier, Paul

trained almost exclusively at that Marine Corps air base. Initially in January, he was placed in a training squadron, AES-44. It instructed Marines on aircraft maintenance and service personnel. AES squadrons were not headed for combat. Nor, probably, was Paul's next squadron, identified on another January 1943 muster roll entry for Paul--Headquarters Squadron (Hq Sq)-3 with the Third Marine Aircraft Wing. It provided administrative support for the wing. In early April, a muster roll placed Paul in a second "Hq Sq," specifically Headquarters Squadron 34, Marine Air Group 34, Third Air Wing. Both assignments to HQ Sqs were, in all likelihood, "place holders" until the Command assigned Paul to a permanent squadron where his training in radio and gunnery could be used. A second April muster roll indicated a significant change in Paul's station. He no longer was associated with a training squadron or a headquarters squadron. Paul was now identified with what we know would become his permanent assignment--his placement in a dive bomber squadron.<sup>90</sup>

Between April and July 1943, Paul was in at least two dive bomber squadrons before his final assignment to the one he shipped out with in September 1943. The second April muster roll put Paul in VMSB-331, a squadron that was part of Marine Aircraft Group-33. A notation on this muster roll stated that Paul was "Temporarily attached" to the unit. VMSB-331 was organized at Cherry Point on January 1, 1943. In June, the squadron moved to nearby Bogue Field for more training. In September, VMSB-331 left for San Diego and the Pacific Theater. There, it participated in the Gilbert Islands, Tarawa, and Marshall Islands campaigns. If Paul had remained with VMSB-331, the odds favored him surviving his squadron's missions. (Relatively few SBDs were lost in the war in comparison to other planes.) That is an even more valid assumption for the second dive bomber squadron to which Paul was assigned--VMSB-342. Like 331, Squadron 342 was also commissioned at Cherry Point. That happened on July 1, 1943. What is so telling for Paul's story is the fact that VMSB-342 never left the States; it was decommissioned in October 1944. If Paul had remained with one of these earlier squadrons, his fate would probably have been dramatically different.<sup>91</sup>

In these months when the Marine Corps moved Paul from one squadron to another, he wrote home. Instead of one letter to be shared by all, Paul sent individual letters to family members. His younger brother, Tom, received several. Tom saved one dated June 9, 1943. The correspondence is an example of an older brother taking the time to write a much younger sibling when he really did not have to do so. In that respect, the letter speaks to Paul's thoughtfulness. He was not yet twenty, Tom only nine. The ten years between the two brothers meant they would not have played together or "hung out." Still, Paul took the time to write Tom more than once. In doing so, Paul sent a message to his kid brother that he cared about him. In the June 9<sup>th</sup> letter, Paul made it clear he remembered a promise he made to get Tom a USMC pin. Tom explains today that the pin referred to was the one with the Marine Corps Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. When he wrote to Tom, Paul used stationary he must have bought at the PX. At the top of the page, drawings of the USMC emblem, two airplanes, and an aviator's pin are prominently displayed with

clouds behind them. The name of Paul's airbase is near the drawings. Like the dress blues he had bought, the fact that Paul purchased USMC stationary is another indication of the pride Paul must have felt being not only a Marine, but a Marine who served in Marine Corps Aviation.<sup>92</sup>

A July muster roll placed Paul with the Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) and squadron to which he became permanently attached--MAG-24 and VMSB-341. The alphabetical letters that preceded a squadron's number identified the type of plane flown by the aircrew. For Paul's squadron, those letters were "VMSB." Deciphered, the "V" stood for a heavier-than-air object rather than, for example, a dirigible such as a zeppelin. The "M" represented "Marine Corps." The letters "SB" designated the plane as a scout bomber. (It could thus perform two functions, reconnaissance and bombing.) The SB was also a dive bomber. It dropped a bomb "from a steeply diving aircraft," in the words of one military historian. Some SBs were carrier-based, others land-based. As we age, it is natural for many of our memories to recede, overshadowed by more recent ones. Yet Paul's best friend, Irish Smith, still remembers Paul's excitement when he talked about the dive bomber. It could be that it was the intensity of Paul's descriptions of dive bombing that allowed this memory to remain with Irish for close to eighty years. What Irish's recollection tells us is that Paul was enthusiastic when it came to his Marine Corps Aviation assignment. One might presume, too, that Paul was thrilled to fly in a SB, with its top speed of 252 mph. Remember, he was nineteen.<sup>93</sup>

### *The Dauntless Dive Bomber*

Paul's squadron flew a scout bomber made by the Douglas Aircraft Company. The plane was known as the SBD, with the first two letters identifying it as a scout bomber. The "D" in "SBD" represented the name of the manufacturer, Douglas. The single-engine plane was often called "the Douglas Dauntless" or simply "the Dauntless." Only two airmen made up its crew--the pilot who sat in the front seat,



SBD production line, 1943

facing forward, and the radio-gunner in the rear seat, facing backward. Douglas manufactured close to thirty thousand aircraft for the war effort. From 1940-1944, almost six thousand of those were SBDs. The Army received nearly one thousand of them. The rest went to the Navy and Marine Corps. Douglas produced six versions of the plane. In June 1940, Marine Air Group One was the first recipient of SBD-1. Three years later, Paul's squadron flew the SBD-5. (Out of the six versions of the plane, Douglas

produced more of "the dash five," almost three thousand, than any other version of the SBD.) Delivery began on the SBD-5 in May 1943. As a gunner, Paul would have immediately noticed the weaponry the plane carried. Sid Zimman explains that a

five-hundred-pound bomb was externally mounted on the belly, and each wing had a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound bomb attached to it. But it appears the exact weight of the bombs could vary. A book on the SBD and the recollections of another gunner (Robert Martin who flew with VMSB-234) state that a one-thousand-pound bomb hung under the fuselage and a one-hundred-pound bomb hung under each wing. The SBD was thus armed with one thousand to twelve hundred pounds of bombs. A 50-caliber machine gun was on top of each wing; the pilot could use those if need be. The gunner operated two .30-caliber machine guns.<sup>94</sup>

The letters in “SBD” came to hold another meaning--“Slow But Deadly.” A military historian who authored a book on the plane admitted that it was “inherently noisy and drafty” and that it was also “relatively slow.” The insignia for the squadron was a turtle carrying a bomb. Radio-gunner Sid Zimman freely uses the Slow But Deadly name for the plane. As Sid observed in his memoir, “Compared to other planes, the SBD was underpowered, lacking in range, and somewhat vulnerable to enemy fighters.” Still, both the historian and Sid agree that the SBD’s positive attributes far outweighed any negative ones. “The Dauntless was the most successful and the best dive bomber of the war,” the historian concluded. “Its inherent stability made it the steadiest possible sighting platform in a dive,” he continued “and its light control responses made corrections easy when lining up a target.” Sid judged it “the most important dive-bomber ever built.” He keeps a model of the plane in his study, a sign of his admiration for the SBD. The enemy shot down less than eighty of the Dauntlesses during the war. Sid pointed out in his memoir how the colors of the plane may have camouflaged it from Japanese pilots. The SBD, he explained, had “a blue upper half” in contrast to its “grey belly and [the] lower half of the wings.” Sid related the SBD’s colors to how they could have made it difficult for the Japanese to see the plane. “From above, over water the blue might camouflage the plane, and viewed from below, [the SBD] might blend in with the clouds.”<sup>95</sup>



## *Squadron VMSB-341*

Marine Corps Aviation commissioned Squadron VMSB-341 on February 1, 1943 at Cherry Point. Its War Diary identified it as “the senior squadron of Marine Aircraft Group 34 (MAG-34), a component of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing (3d MAW).” On March 1, the Command transferred the squadron to the recently opened Atlantic Field, formally known as Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Field Atlantic. Sid Zimman arrived at Cherry Point in April, having completed operational training at NAS,



Sanford, Florida. From May until July, he trained in the SBD-4 at Atlantic Field. For Sid and Paul, July proved to be a determining month. In Sid's memoir, he explained that he started flying with Squadron 341 in July. Muster rolls placed him and Paul in SBD-341 at Atlantic Field in July. Sid noted, too, that his new squadron flew what was then the most recent version of the SDB, “the dash five.” Also in July, the Command assigned Sid to the pilot with whom he would fly throughout the war, Lieutenant Albert Alfred Black. Sid's sequence of events may have been the same

sequence Paul went through--training in the SBD-4, then a permanent assignment to VMSB-341, followed by instruction from that point on in the new SBD-5, and assignment to a pilot.<sup>96</sup>

In Paul's case, that officer was Lieutenant Harold Rudolph Tuck. In some ways, the backgrounds of this pilot and his radio-gunner were similar. Born in December 1922, Tuck was only eight months older than Paul. In a United States that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean's East Coast to the Pacific Ocean's West Coast, Harold hailed from Lynchburg, Virginia, a state not that far from Pennsylvania. Lynchburg was only a little over two hundred miles from Rouzerville. Like Paul, Harold spent his life in the same community into which he had been born. Harold graduated from high school, specifically Glass High School in Lynchburg, so he and Paul shared that educational marker. Harold participated in a variety of activities outside of the classroom. Academically, he joined the Drama Club, Chemistry Club, Spanish Club, and the Civics Club. Harold also was involved in sports, specifically track and basketball. That probably contributed to his position as the assistant sports editor for the school's newspaper. Both families, the McCleafs and the Tucks, traced their ancestors back to the American Revolution. But there were differences, too, between the pilot and his radio-gunner. Harold did not come from a large family. His only sibling was a brother, Winfree, eight years younger than Harold. Their father, Dewey Tuck, worked for the United States government as a railway mail clerk. That would have meant a steady, comfortable income for the family of four. The family home on Pennsylvania Avenue in Lynchburg was owned, not rented.<sup>97</sup>



Harold in his junior year.

According to Harold's sister-in-law, Eva Tuck, Harold attended Lynchburg College after high school, but he did not graduate. Harold's time in college helps to explain the military's decision to train him as a pilot. The armed forces were inclined to give such slots to men with at least a high school degree and some education beyond that. Like so many of his generation, Tuck dropped out of college to fight in the war. He registered for the draft on the same day as Paul had, June 30, 1942. Out of college for the summer, Harold worked at Bibee's Grocery Store. Details of the registrant's physical description appear on the draft card. With a height of 6 feet 1 inch, Harold was three inches taller than Paul. At 163 pounds, Harold weighed twenty-three pounds more than Paul did when he filled out his draft card. They both had brown hair, although Harold had brown eyes and Paul blue ones. A handwritten notation on Harold's registration card read, "Enlisted in Air Corps of U.S. Army—waiting for call." A member of the local draft board probably wrote the sentence as the board went over the records of those who had registered. Somehow, Harold ended up in Marine Corps Aviation, not the Army Air Corps. One imagines, however, that he was not unhappy with that. We know Harold wanted to fly because of his initial enlistment in the Army Air Corps. Which branch he flew in was probably secondary to the assignment he coveted, that of "a flyboy."<sup>98</sup>

In his memoir, Sid Zimman detailed the specifics of the training he and his pilot went through. It would have been the same training Paul had with Harold Tuck. The instruction consisted of exercises such as solo flights as well as flying in formation, night-flying, learning how to dive bomb as well as glide bomb, and instrument flying. As radio-gunners, Sid and Paul were, of course, responsible for operating the radio and the twin .30-caliber machine guns. Yet as Sid explained, radio-gunners also had in their area of the SBD a throttle, stick, and rudder controls. This was in case they ever had to take control of the plane. Thus, while in training at Atlantic Field, Sid and Paul had what Sid called some "stick time" where they practiced flying the plane if their pilot was ever unable to do that. But if a radio-gunner did take over the SBD, Sid explained that without access to the pilot's instrument panel, he could not lower the landing gear. Additionally, he had no way to know the plane's elevation, speed, or direction. The radio-gunner also could not apply the brakes. As Sid admitted, "the best a gunner could have done in the direst emergency would be to belly-flop the plane." According to the squadron's War Diary, VMSB-341 remained at Atlantic Field until it left for overseas service.<sup>99</sup>

### *Shipping Out*

Paul's squadron trained through the month of August. It appears that Paul received a promotion to Private First Class (PFC) that same month. VMSB-341's War Diary, as well as Sid Zimman's memoir, identified September 1, 1943 as the date when the squadron left for the Pacific. It departed, however, in two separate groups and by two different means. What the War Diary called "the ground echelon with all squadron material" left Atlantic Field by train for San Diego, specifically for Marine Corps Air Depot (MCAD) Miramar. Even though Sid was not part of the ground

personnel, he, too, was on the train. A notation in the War Diary's record of Paul's history with VMSB-341 states that Paul also went to MCAD "via commercial rail." On September 1<sup>st</sup> a second contingent from the squadron left Atlantic Field. The War Diary identified it as "the flight echelon, consisting of pilots and radio gunners." But we know that was not true for Sid and Paul who traveled by train. The squadron's pilots flew the SBDs to San Diego's Navy Air Station (NAS) North Island. They arrived there on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Squadron members who rode the train debarked in San Diego on September 9<sup>th</sup>. From the 10<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, the squadron prepared for its overseas departure. To use the World War II phrase, it was "shipping out."<sup>100</sup>

Part of the squadron left for the Pacific Theater on September 25, 1943. Just as with the trip across the United States from Atlantic Field, the Command divided VMSB-341 into two groups. The War Diary recorded that "the air echelon" boarded the *USS Nassau*, an escort carrier docked at NAS San Diego. Paul was in this group according to the War Diary's record of his service. The Navy crewmen had secured the SBDs to the deck. Paul and other squadron members boarded at 8:30 a.m.; two and a half hours later, the *Nassau*, in the words of the War Diary, "got under way." A second group, probably composed largely of the ground echelon, left five days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Sid Zimman was in this contingent. An Army troop transport, the *USS Puebla*, carried this group west across the ocean.<sup>101</sup>



*USS Nassau*

It had been a year like no other for Paul McCleaf. He turned twenty in August 1943, the month before his departure for the Pacific war zone. In the twelve months from his last birthday to this most recent one, Paul had enlisted in the USMC and endured the rigors of boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. While most "boots" ended up in ground forces, Paul went elsewhere. The Command chose him for Marine Corps Aviation, an assignment that put him in a small group of select Marines. In the early months of 1943, Paul trained as a radio-gunner at Cherry Point, North Carolina. Assigned in July to a new squadron, VMSB-341, Paul's training continued at Atlantic Field. Until September 1943, Paul had not really gone that far

from home, only to the Carolinas for both boot camp and aviation training. Ten months after his enlistment, Paul and his squadron left for the Pacific.

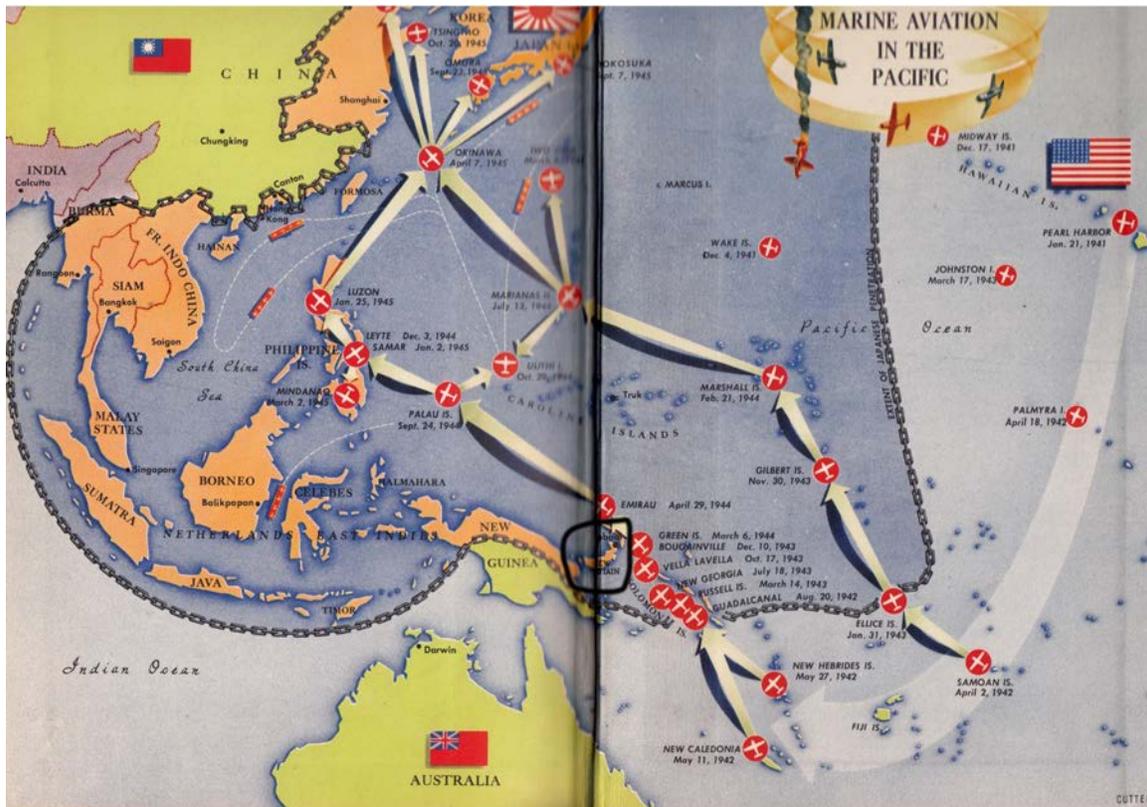
On board the *Nassau*, as it headed for the war front, one wonders if Paul ever thought about how dramatically his life had changed in less than a year. He was no longer in Pennsylvania where his family had lived for over one hundred and fifty years. Franklin County, with its hills and valleys, was far, far away from where Paul stood on the deck of the *Nassau* as it steamed toward the South Pacific. More personally, Paul was no longer among his immediate and extended family, or with childhood friends. Paul came from a line of McCleafs and Hovises who had lived in a circumscribed world. How big the Pacific Ocean must have looked to Paul that September day in 1943 when the *Nassau* shipped out.

## Chapter 5 “Somewhere in the Pacific”

We have more than one indication that Paul was proud of the uniform he wore. It bore the USMC insignia--the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. Before Paul shipped out, Tom had asked his older brother for a pin that displayed this emblem. Nine-year-old Tom probably understood that the insignia represented something important that related to his brother who now wore the uniform of a United States Marine. The eagle symbolizes the United States, the globe represents the understanding that Marines go anywhere in the world where American interests require their services, and the anchor signifies the close relationship between the Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy. How appropriate each of those symbols were when placed in the context of Paul's departure on the *USS Nassau*. Once on board, Paul was the embodiment of the USMC insignia as he left on a U.S. Navy ship for United States military service overseas in a global war.

The need to protect a vital supply line between the United States and Australia explains the first missions the Command assigned Paul's squadron to after its arrival in the South Pacific. There, the Air Marines joined the U.S. Army Air Corps' 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force, some U.S. naval units, and parts of the Royal New Zealand Air Force in constituting the tactical command in the South Pacific known as AirSoPac (Aircraft, South Pacific). Under it was ComAirSol (Commander, Aircraft, Solomons) that was responsible for aviation strikes in the Solomon Islands. Shipping between the United States and Australia passed by the Solomons. ComAirSol helped protect this critical supply route. ComAirSol included fourteen Marine squadrons, one of which was Paul's VMSB-341. The Command primarily drew upon fighters, dive bombers, torpedo planes, and search aircraft, as well as heavy and medium bombers, to fulfill its mission. Initially, Paul's squadron was thus one small part of a large enterprise in the South Pacific guarding the supply line between two major allies.<sup>102</sup>

Marine Corps Aviation's role in the Pacific Theater evolved over time. The Corps' own history of the part it played in World War II identified the first phase as one that lasted from the attack at Pearl Harbor to the invasion of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The second phase began with the Allied movement "up the Solomons chain," followed by "the complete reduction of enemy air power centered in Rabaul." Rabaul was a major Japanese base on the island of New Britain, to the west of the Solomons. From it, the enemy could attack Allied shipping. Paul's plane suffered its midair collision in the skies above Rabaul.<sup>103</sup>



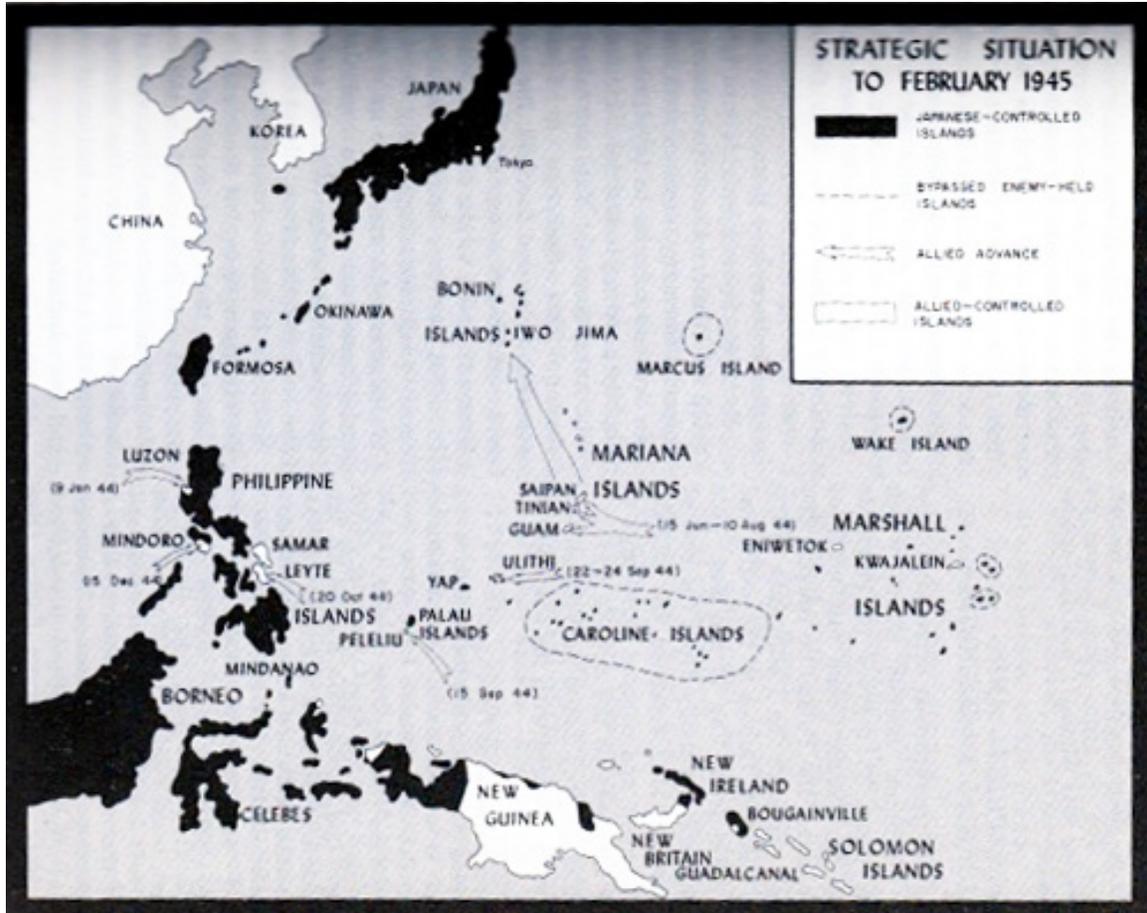
The black, circled area in the center, to the west of New Guinea, shows the location of Rabaul, on the island of New Britain, where Paul's squadron flew its early combat missions. From Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (1952), inside cover.

### *Arrival in the Samoan Islands*

Three weeks after Paul arrived in the South Pacific, he wrote his brother Tom. The letter was dated October 27, 1943. Censorship rules forbade United States service personnel overseas from disclosing their exact location. Accordingly, above where Paul wrote the letter's date, he also wrote the phrase, "Somewhere in the Pacific." For months, that was probably all the McCleaf family knew about Paul's exact whereabouts. The Marine Corps notified Annie that Paul's status had changed to MIA in a February 2, 1944 telegram. A letter to the family the next day, from the Marine Corps Commandant's Office, identified Paul as missing "in the Southwest Pacific area." It would not be until April 11, 1944 that another letter from the same office was more specific. Paul had been "in the New Britain area." One imagines the McCleafs using a map to find the island's location.<sup>104</sup>

Paul's letter to Tom gave no hint of where he was or what he was doing. The two pages spoke to only family issues. Paul referred to his habit of writing his siblings who were still at home. "Well, Tom, you tell Johnny and Maryann I'll write to them soon." He added, almost as an aside, "Tell Mother that I am alright." Paul knew his well-being would be on Annie's mind. The topic of school was the recurring subject. Early in the letter, Paul asked how Tom was doing. He had just received more than one letter from Tom, and perhaps something in them indicated to Paul that school was not Tom's favorite place to be. "I guess you really hate school," Paul concluded. Instead of lecturing his younger brother, though, Paul connected with him. "I don't blame you because I did when I went." As two boys might do, Paul reminded Tom that school had at least one redeeming quality. "How are you making out with those little girls in school now?" It appears Tom had written Paul about some problems he had with girls he liked. Paul returned to the topic of school at the very end of the letter--"You be a good boy and study in school and write to me."

If there had been no censorship regulations, perhaps Paul would have shared with Tom details of his ocean crossing. We know nothing of them aside from the fact that Paul sailed on the *USS Nassau*. (Sid Zimman traveled on a different ship, so for the conditions during the crossing, Sid's memoir and recollections cannot shed any light as to what the trip was like for Paul.) It took the *Nassau* ten days to arrive at its destination in the South Pacific. In the words of VMSB-341's War Diary, the ship was "at sea" from September 26 - October 5, 1943. On October 6<sup>th</sup>, the *Nassau* anchored in Pago Pago Harbor on Tutuila Island in the Samoan Islands. How strange the names of South Pacific locations must have seemed to Paul. Pago Pago, Tutuila, and Samoa were just the first proper names Paul would have been introduced to in the South Pacific. Over the next three months, names of other locations tied to his squadron would have first sounded strange, but then probably rolled off his tongue--Apia Harbor and Faleola Field on the island of Upolu in British Samoa, Bauer Field on the island of Efate in the New Hebrides chain, and finally, Munda, one of the New Georgia Islands.<sup>105</sup>



Note the location of the island of New Britain. The northern tip, where Rabaul is, was controlled by the Japanese for almost the entire war.

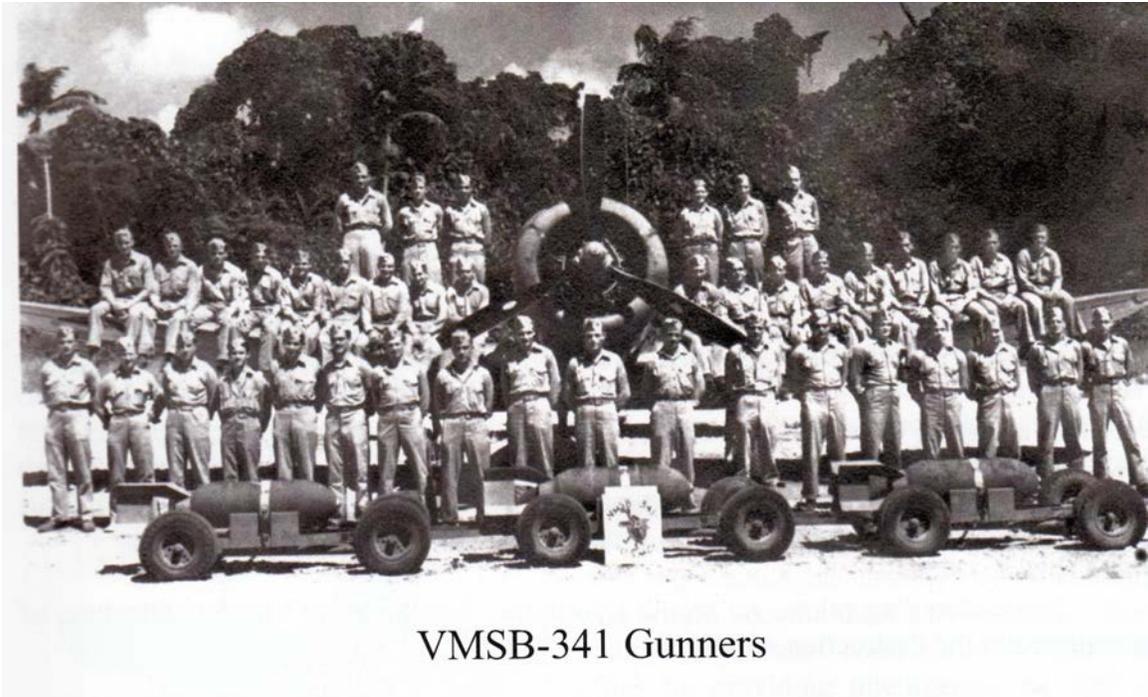
From *Western Pacific Operations, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, by George W. Garand and Truman R. Strobridge (1971), p. 53.

Paul's service in the South Pacific with Marine Corps Aviation spans only a three-and-a-half-month period. It begins with his October 6, 1943 arrival in the theater and ends with the January 14, 1944 midair collision that forced Paul and his pilot to parachute out of the aircraft. Paul's Aviation Log Book would have told us more about his daily activities for the months after the *Nassau* docked. That small book, however, has been lost to history. What we do have is VMSB-341's War Diary and the memoir of Sid Zimman, Paul's fellow gunner. We also have Sid's recollections that are not part of his written account of those months. In general ways, these sources tell us what Paul did after he arrived in the South Pacific.

#### *October's Limited Activities*

Even though Paul and others in the air echelon arrived early in the month (October 6<sup>th</sup>), the rest of the squadron did not come in until later in the month

(October 27<sup>th</sup>). Squadron activities were thus limited in October. There were even days when squadron members who had arrived did not fly at all. (The phrase “no flying” appeared in some of the War Diary’s daily entries for the first few weeks in October.) The War Diary, according to Sid, identified the squadron’s flight crews as consisting of forty-two pilots and forty-two gunners. Pilots and gunners who arrived on the *Nassau* on October 6<sup>th</sup> spent the month on the Samoan island of Upolu. The day after they disembarked, some in the squadron went on training flights. The War Diary identified the October 7<sup>th</sup> exercises as “navigation flights.” On these, pilots focused on flying using navigational equipment, relying on the plane’s instruments to fly. The War Diary identified other flights as “familiarization flights.” Basically, these allowed the Marines to become acquainted with the geographical area. Sid agrees that pilots on such flights tried to “get their bearings” in an area of the world with which they had no familiarity. Flying in the South Pacific bore little resemblance to the flights the squadron had taken in the skies above North Carolina. Sid believes VMSB-341 had about thirty-five SBDs. But, he explains, not all of them were deployed on missions. We do not know how many planes participated in October on the navigation and familiarization flights. An October 15<sup>th</sup> War Diary entry declared that seventeen SBDs went up. Without Paul’s Flight Log Book, we do not know if Paul and Harold Tuck, his pilot, were part of the October 15<sup>th</sup> flights. Nor do we know when the two first flew their SBD in the South Pacific. The War Diary also characterized more than one day in October with a one-word entry-- “Routine.”<sup>106</sup>



VMSB-341 Gunners

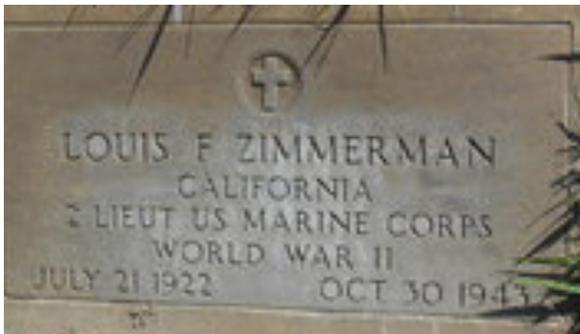
Unfortunately, we do not know where Paul is in this photograph. Courtesy of Sid Zimman.

Two flights in October must have been more interesting for Paul than were the navigation and familiarization ones. Twice that month, some of VMSB-341's planes flew an "intertype tactical flight" with members of a Marine fighter squadron. (Once Paul's squadron began combat missions, fighter squadrons flew cover for them.) There was a day when the squadron practiced dive bombing and another day when the SBDs patrolled the northern and southern areas of Upolu and Savii, one of the other Samoan islands. But again, without Paul's Log Book, we do not know if he and Harold Tuck participated in these flights. Just a few days later, a nondescript October 22<sup>nd</sup> entry in the War Diary read, "The flight schedule was about normal with nothing added but a few more instrument flights."<sup>107</sup>

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, members of Paul's squadron who had left San Diego on September 30<sup>th</sup> arrived at Upolu. Sid Zimman was in this group that made the crossing on an Army transport ship. It had taken them almost an entire month to reunite with the rest of the squadron. VMSB-341 must have felt closer to combat the day after Sid and the others arrived because of the War Diary's entry for October 28<sup>th</sup>. The record focused on a flight to another Samoan island--"Squadron made test flight to Swains Island and return [sic] carrying 1600 lb. armor piercing bombs." No War Diary entry up to this point mentioned such ordnance. "The purpose of this flight," the statement continued, "was to determine [the] range and fuel consumption of the SBD-5 when fully loaded."<sup>108</sup>

### *The First Casualties*

A flight two days later, on October 30<sup>th</sup>, again showed the Marines in Paul's unit how real this war was getting for them. The squadron suffered its first casualties. It happened on something so routine as "a familiarization flight." Lt. Louis F. Zimmerman and his gunner, PFC James P. Madden, were on their first such exercise in the area. Their SBD went down on the Samoan island of Savii, a place Sid Zimman today describes as "ringed with mountains." Sid wrote about the crash in his memoir. Savii, he explained, is "quite mountainous with a deep gorge or canyon." Asked today about the incident, Sid characterizes Zimmerman as "an



adventuresome pilot" who "ventured too low into that abyss and failed to generate enough speed to gain altitude." The SBD crashed into the side of one of the mountains. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, however, no other members of the squadron saw the crash. Zimmerman and Madden's plane simply failed to return to Upolu. The next day, the entire squadron, along with planes from other units, searched

for the missing SBD. One of the pilots spotted it from the air. A ground search party on Savii located the aircraft. The War Diary recorded the findings and subsequent actions of the search party--"Both occupants were dead and [the] plane was

demolished. All secret instruments were destroyed and [the] occupants of the plane were buried nearby.” (After the war, their remains were returned home. Louis Zimmerman is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Los Angeles, California. James Madden is interred in North Side Catholic Cemetery in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.) In his memoir, Sid concluded his written recollection of October 30<sup>th</sup> with two somber statements--the crash was “our first exposure to fatalities,” followed by the admission that it was “not to be our last.”<sup>109</sup>

Note that the War Diary failed to use Zimmerman and Madden’s names in the October 31<sup>st</sup> entry when it mentioned their burial. The two Marines appear merely as the “occupants.” An inquisitive reader might wonder about the men themselves. Born July 21, 1922, Louis Zimmerman was a year and one month older than Paul. He was an only child, a fact that must have made his death even harder on his mother. (His father died in January 1941.) Louis came from California; his wife lived in Inglewood when he shipped out. Coincidentally, Louis and his gunner, James Madden, both had a father who had been a Marine in World War I. One wonders if they knew that about each other. Pilots and gunners bunked in different quarters and ate separately. Even so, did Louis and James ever discuss their fathers and thus learn about this piece of family history they shared? We have no way of knowing the answer to that question. Their fathers’ World War I service may explain why both men chose the USMC over other branches of military service.<sup>110</sup>

Paul McCleaf shared many characteristics with James Madden. They were born just one month apart in 1923, Paul on August 9<sup>th</sup> and James on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The births both occurred in Pennsylvania, Paul’s in the South Central area, not far from Rouzerville, and James’ in the Southwest region, just outside of Pittsburgh. James stayed in the vicinity of Pittsburgh his entire life, just as Paul stayed in Rouzerville. The two gunners thus had lived in different parts of Pennsylvania, but they shared many similarities aside from the location of their birth. Both came from large



families. Paul and James each had seven siblings, although Paul’s brother Charles died six years before Paul was born. Paul had mostly brothers, James mostly sisters. (One of James’ two brothers was a pilot in Marine Corps Aviation; the other was still in high school when James was

killed.) Both Paul and James graduated from high school. Like Paul, whose employer was Landis Tool Company, James, too, worked in an industry when he registered for the draft in June 1942. In James’ case, it was a Carnegie steel mill in Homestead, outside of Pittsburgh. And lastly, their families were initially given no particulars as to where their loved one had died. The first word the McCleafs received identified Paul as missing in the Southwest Pacific. Similarly, the government informed the Maddens that James was killed “in a plane accident somewhere in the South Pacific.”<sup>111</sup>

### *Training Intensifies*

Following the October 30<sup>th</sup> deaths of Zimmerman and Madden, VMSB-341's training intensified. The arrival of the rest of the squadron three days earlier allowed the Command to schedule daily flights that directly related to future combat missions. A summary in the War Diary for the month of October characterized the new direction the squadron could now take--"Operations were limited until the ground echelon arrived with supplies, material and engineering equipment." Since that did not occur until October 27<sup>th</sup>, November was the first month in the Samoan Islands when the squadron's training intensified. Dive bombing and gunnery exercises replaced, for example, navigation and familiarization flights. December continued the same type of combat-related training. December also brought a move to another island, one in the New Georgia chain, that VMSB-341 would use as a base for its first combat missions.

In October, the squadron's War Diary had several two-word entries that read "No flying." For most of that same month, training was often limited to navigation and familiarization flights. Those flights became a thing of the past in November. With a full squadron now assembled, along with all its equipment, more planes went up, and they flew longer. On November 16, for example, the squadron was divided into "two flight sections." One began flying at 3:00 a.m. and continued flying until noon. The other section flew from 1:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. A November 30<sup>th</sup> War Diary entry touted how many hours the squadron flew that month--1,873.5. The phrases "operations secured," "normal operations," "heavy operations," and "extensive operations" appeared regularly in daily descriptions of VMSB-341's November activities. The November 9<sup>th</sup> entry was just one example of how training had changed--"Flying was heavy. Night flying." The next days had similar entries that documented a "heavy flight schedule." According to the War Diary's summary for the month, beginning mid-November, the squadron flew "between 800 to 1000 hours of flying per week."<sup>112</sup>

The "heavy operations" that described VMSB-341's November activities explain a sentence in a letter Paul wrote his brother Tom on the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. Written "Somewhere in the Pacific," the phrase Paul used in an earlier letter, he apologized to Tom. "I'm sorry I haven't written to you before, but I haven't had time, so you'll have to excuse me." Paul then proceeded to ask questions about school and "that little girl you said you liked down the road." As Paul had written in his October 27<sup>th</sup> letter to Tom, he asked his brother to "tell Mother I'm alright." Paul understood that concern for him was uppermost in Annie's mind, as it was for his other brothers, Bob and Johnny, who had also gone to war.

Recall Paul's animated description of dive bombing to his friend Irish Smith. Paul must have been particularly pleased when the squadron began those exercises in earnest. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, pilots and gunners practiced dive bombing and "free gunnery." Sid Zimman explains the last two words. There was, Sid tells us, "free gunnery and fixed gunnery." If a pilot and his gunner practiced "free gunnery," the

pilot selected a target upon which he would fire his .50-caliber machine guns. In contrast, “fixed gunnery” meant that the pilot aimed at a specific target and, as Sid adds, the pilot was not to “exceed this target” (i.e., the pilot was to fire only at the target). Some planes practiced firing their guns at “a towed sleeve,” as Sid describes the exercise. An SBD pulled a white, cloth tube that, when so towed, appeared to be inflated. Other planes in the squadron fired at the sleeve. Such practice must have reassured the squadron when, on November 11<sup>th</sup> the War Diary recorded “unidentified planes...in the area.” The Command immediately responded to the possibility of an attack--“all flyable craft was sent into the air while the others were scattered and placed in revetments throughout the woods and camouflaged.”<sup>113</sup>

### *Munda, Combat Missions Begin*

War Diary entries for December began with short statements. “Routine” was the word repeatedly written onto the pages. In the middle of the month, however, a major change took place. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the *USS Prince William* docked in Apia Harbor. It was there to transport VMSB-341’s ground echelon to the island of Efate in the New Hebrides chain. By that time, Sid Zimman recalled in his memoir that he and others “were weary of training and anxious to employ our skills.” On the 18<sup>th</sup>, the *Prince William* left for its voyage to Efate; the air echelon took off that same day from Upolu for Wallis Island, west of Western Samoa. Paul should have been in the air echelon group with Harold Tuck, flying to Wallis Island in their SBD. From there, the planes flew almost four hours to a base in the Fiji Islands where the men stayed overnight. After a four-hour flight the next morning, the air echelon arrived at Efate on December 21, 1943. The *Prince William*, with VMSB-341’s ground crew and equipment, pulled into a harbor in Efate on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Some of the squadron’s planes took to the air that afternoon. Familiarization flights occurred over the next two days. The dangers of the war zone were brought home again to the squadron on December 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> when it took part in a search for a missing cargo plane. But the SBDs made no sighting of the aircraft. While on Efate, the squadron was transferred from Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-31 to MAG-21, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing. Personnel changes occurred, too, as new pilots and gunners joined the squadron and a few pilots left it.<sup>114</sup>

The squadron’s time at Bauer Field on Efate was short. On December 31<sup>st</sup>, after the air echelon had been in Efate for only ten days, it left for Munda on the island of New Georgia in the Solomons. (Northwest of Guadalcanal, Munda is a large island where the Japanese had built an airfield that the Americans eventually used once its forces took Munda.) From today’s vantage point, the flight from Efate to Munda seemed like an appropriate way to end the year 1943 and begin the new year 1944. Training missions were over, and combat missions were to begin. After a stop at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, the air echelon arrived at Munda at 3:15 p.m., with hours to spare before its members observed the new year, if they did so at all.<sup>115</sup>



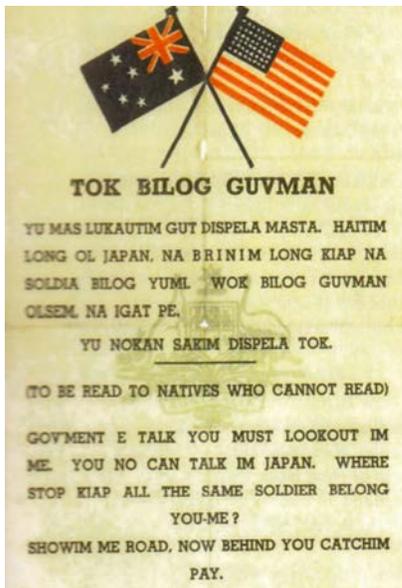
Courtesy of Bruce Gamble, from his book, *Target Rabaul, The Allied Siege of Japan's Most Infamous Stronghold, March 1943-August 1945* (2013), p. 22.

### "Strike"

VMSB-341's War Diary began its account of squadron activities for 1944 with a new word that had not appeared in earlier entries--"strike." On January 1, 1944, "six pilots and their gunners" participated in an attack on an area of Bougainville, an island in the Solomons where both the Americans and the Japanese had forces. Their target was a bridge on the Puriata River, which the SBDs apparently destroyed. Without Paul's Log Book, we do not know if he and Tuck were part of the strike force. Even if he was not, Paul probably still would have felt the rush of finally being "in the game." It was just a matter of time before he and Tuck were part of a strike force.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, more members of the squadron's air unit left Munda for another offensive action against the Japanese. The War Diary's entry for that day began with a declarative sentence that could not possibly convey the excitement some of the men must have felt to finally go after the enemy following months of training. "Fourteen pilots and their gunners were assigned to strike on gun and radar positions" on three islands in the Solomons. The Japanese returned fire. One SDB came back to Munda with its propeller "badly bent," six to eight inches having been "cut off each blade" from "a bomb" that hit the propeller. Another plane "returned with a .50 cal. hole" through its left wing. Even if Paul's SBD was not one of the twenty the Command sent out on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, he surely heard details from those gunners about the missions.

“Scuttlebutt” on the missions would have been heard in the quarters where the gunners bunked. In his memoir, Sid Zimman described them as “tents, on bare ground, resting on the side of a slightly inclining hill.” About six men were in each tent. Sid’s cot was next to Paul’s. They did not have to go far for bath and toilet facilities. Sid explained, “Saltwater showers and latrines were close at hand. We had a treat when it rained because we could gather rain-water by lifting the sides of our tents as a catch-basin and enjoy a fresh-water bath.” The squadron did not have to eat military “K” or “C” rations, Sid pointed out in his memoir. They ate in the mess hall. Once each Marine finished his meal, he washed his mess kit in three tanks. The first held what Sid described as “soapy water” and the second tank “clear hot water.” He thinks the third tank “contained a sanitizer.” Still, Sid added that “by rubbing your finger over the cleaned surface of the mess gear, your finger would turn black.”<sup>116</sup>



Sid still has today what he described in his memoir as “two sheets of an onion-skin type paper” given to the pilots and gunners. They were instructions on how the squadron members were to communicate with natives if their plane went down. Sid described the language as “Pidgin English.” After Paul parachuted out of his plane on January 14<sup>th</sup>, we presume he had these pieces of paper with him. Unfortunately for Paul, he was not picked up by islanders.<sup>117</sup>

Courtesy of Sid Zimman

The second week of January saw an increase in the number of strike missions. The War Diary identified two pilots who, on the 8<sup>th</sup>, “bombed and strafed a [Japanese] bivouac area” on Bougainville. Neither pilot was Harold Tuck, however, the officer with whom Paul flew. That day, the Command sent Tuck and two other lieutenants in the squadron to Guadalcanal where “they picked up three new SBDs.” One wonders if Tuck and Paul received one of those new dive bombers as their plane for future missions. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, VMSB-341 made some history. Twenty-one pilots and their gunners mounted a strike against Tobera Airfield at Rabaul. It was the first Marine Corps Aviation SBD strike on Rabaul, a Japanese air and naval base on the island of New Britain, northwest of the Solomons. Before World War II, two authors described Rabaul as “a small colonial town.” About 850 Europeans, some 2,000 Chinese, and perhaps 4,000 Melanesians lived in Rabaul. Australia kept a small, military garrison at Rabaul, one which the Japanese easily overwhelmed on January 23,

The definitive study of Rabaul's role in World War II is a three-volume work by a retired naval aviator turned historian, Bruce Gamble. He viewed the fight for control of Rabaul as the longest battle of World War II. Rabaul, in Gamble's words, was "the most heavily defended bastion outside the [Japanese] home islands." Its harbor is one of the finest ones in the South Pacific. Gamble further described Rabaul as "a virtually impregnable fortress." By the middle of 1943, Rabaul had become, in the words of the USMC's history of World War II, "the hub of the Japanese airbase system in Southeast Asia." The garrison at Rabaul housed almost one hundred thousand army and navy men. To protect against an amphibious invasion, at least fifty concrete pillboxes, with their heavy machine guns, guarded eight big guns. Hundreds of other defensive positions stood near the beaches. In an August 1943 meeting of the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff, the military leaders decided there would be no invasion of Rabaul. It would have been too costly. Instead, the Japanese base would be isolated. Allied air strikes would eventually make it difficult for Rabaul to bring in supplies and reinforcements. One can date the beginning of the air war from January 1942 when the Allies first struck Rabaul to August 1945 when the Japanese government surrendered to the Allies. It thus went on, Gamble pointed out, for "almost forty-four months." The USMC itself judged the air war in the skies over Rabaul to have been "one of the most bitterly fought campaigns of the Pacific War."<sup>118</sup>

Thirty-eight U.S. Army squadrons, twenty-seven Navy squadrons, and thirty-three Marine Corps squadrons mounted the attacks on Rabaul. The number of strikes varied, depending on the squadron. In respect to the three military branches, the USMC "stuck with the Rabaul job" longer than did the Army or the Navy. It was not until the second week of January 1944, however, that Americans could wage, as Gamble explained, "an ever-increasing tempo of operations." At that time, light, medium, and heavy bomber squadrons were able to reach Rabaul because of American airbases at Munda and Bougainville. On November 1, 1943, Marines had invaded Bougainville, the most well-protected Japanese base in the Solomons. The plan was not to take the entire island, just a six-by-eight-mile beachhead in Cape Torokina. Once secured, the strip of land would become an airbase from which Marine fighters and bombers could refuel for missions over Rabaul, only 255 air miles away. When weather conditions made it difficult to attack the airfields, the primary target for the Allied planes was often Japanese shipping inside of Simpson Harbor.<sup>119</sup>

Three times larger than Pearl Harbor, Simpson Harbor is expansive, six miles long and two-and-a-half miles wide. It would not have been unusual to find in the harbor, on any one day, ten Japanese cruisers, twenty destroyers, ten submarines, and twenty small craft. Allied planes could not mount a low-level attack on the harbor's seaward side because of five volcanic mountains that rise as high as 2,247 feet. On the opposite side, a 760-foot-high volcanic crater towers over the harbor. In addition to these natural features, the Japanese set up their own defenses. To protect Rabaul from aerial attacks, close to four hundred heavy anti-aircraft guns

surrounded the harbor. Additionally, dozens of 25mm automatic cannons and heavy machine guns stood in place, ready to defend the Japanese installations. Then there were the fighter planes. Four Japanese airfields sat adjacent to the port with more than three hundred and seventy aircraft. Enemy planes took off to meet Allied aircraft targeting Rabaul. Additionally, close to four hundred heavy anti-aircraft guns, as well as dozens of 25mm automatic cannons and heavy machine guns, defended Rabaul. The United States awarded six Medals of Honor to its airmen for their missions over Rabaul; five of them were conferred posthumously.<sup>120</sup>

Paul might have been one of thirty-six gunners who, with their pilots, were sent out by the Command on a January 11, 1944 mission. The War Diary entry for that day recorded the mission as “a strike to Lakunai Airfield, Rabaul.” Sid Zimman, who was sent on this mission, recalled in his memoir his reaction to the assignment. One can sense in his words a moment of exhilaration--“This is what all our training had prepared us for.” Sid’s recollection implied that the January 11<sup>th</sup> strike was the first major attack mission the Command assigned to VMSB-341. The emotions Sid’s simple statement conveyed could have been shared by other members of the squadron, such as Paul. However, the strike Sid’s statement referred to did not happen that day. The War Diary entry for January 11<sup>th</sup> explained why--the “target was closed in by weather.” Sid’s memoir detailed the conditions the squadron confronted over Rabaul. “A heavy cloud cover had prevented us from our primary target (the gun emplacements around the air strip).”<sup>121</sup>



Lakunai Airfield

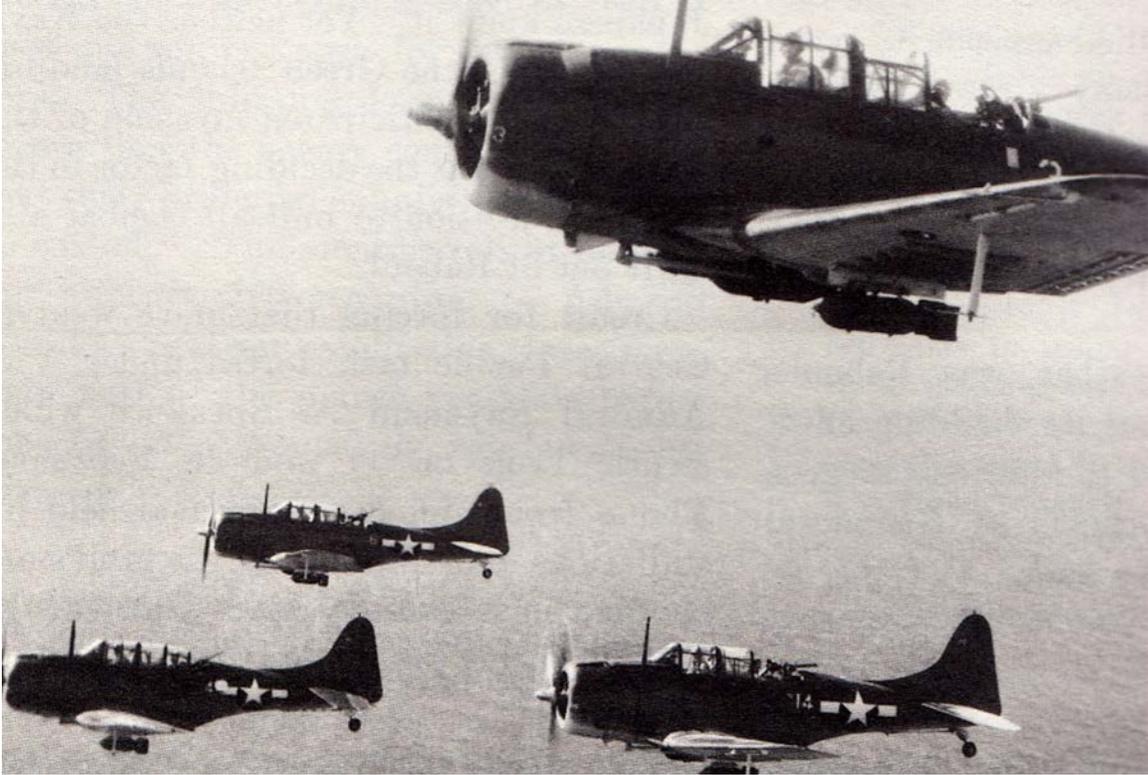
Instead of Rabaul's airfield, on January 11<sup>th</sup> the planes flew to their secondary target. It was a lighthouse on the southern tip of New Ireland, a Japanese-occupied island north of Rabaul. Sid wrote in his memoir that the lighthouse acted as "an early warning radar station" for the enemy. Sid also gave us a clear description of Paul's position in his plane when he and other gunners were in the air. "The gunners, from the time we took off until we landed, always faced aft to be the 'eyes' of the pilot in the 180 [degrees] or more that he could not see. (Only the temporary adjustment to the radio frequency or other radio anomaly would cause us to turn around.)"<sup>122</sup>

Paul definitely participated in a January 13, 1944 strike that again was to target Lakunai Airfield. We know that because of an entry in the War Diary. In one sentence, the Diary for that day both announced the mission and explained its cancellation--"Ten (10) pilots and their gunners were assigned to a strike at Lakunai Airfield, Rabaul but they were turned back by bad weather after leaving Torokina." (Torokina was the airfield on Bougainville, in the Solomons. After leaving Munda, VMSB-341 stopped at Torokina for refueling.) The War Diary named the pilots who participated in this cancelled mission; one of them was Lieutenant Tuck, Paul's pilot. That is why Paul was undoubtedly on the mission, too. The planes did not hit an alternative target after the initial one was cancelled because of weather conditions. Instead, the squadron "left their bombs at Torokina and returned to Munda." Sid Zimman recalled a poignant scene that aircrews saw when landing on Munda. "On the side of a hill were two large rectangular fields with semicircular arches at the top and a flagpole displaying 'Old Glory' at its epicenter." Sid continued by adding that "small rectangular mounds, neatly spaced" could also be seen. One can almost hear Sid pause and lower his voice when he explained what they represented--"The small mounds, of course, contained our fallen comrades."<sup>123</sup>

#### *January 14, 1944*

As noted earlier, January 1944 was VMSB-341's first month flying combat missions. Twice early in the month, weather thwarted the ability of Paul's squadron to strike at Rabaul. A third opportunity appeared on January 14<sup>th</sup>. On that day, Paul and his pilot were part of the attack force. They had flown on the 13<sup>th</sup> when weather caused the second attempt to bomb Rabaul's Lakunai Airfield to be cancelled. What were Paul's feelings on the 14<sup>th</sup> with respect to the mission? Did he feel frustrated at the squadron's inability to previously strike at Rabaul? If so, was that frustration lessened by the promise of this January 14<sup>th</sup> opportunity? How concerned was Paul about the heavy defenses at Rabaul? We do not, of course, know what was going through his mind that morning. But Paul certainly had time to think on the flight to Rabaul from Munda, a distance of 440 miles. Sid Zimman's Log Book documents the length of time for the first leg of the January 14<sup>th</sup> mission--2.3 hours from Munda to Bougainville's Torokina Airfield. That morning, the strike force left Munda at dawn. It consisted of thirty-six Marine Corps and Navy dive bombers, sixteen torpedo bombers, and seventy-three fighters. The aircraft thus totaled one hundred and twenty-five planes. Paul's SBD, of course, was in the first group of thirty-six dive

bombers. Altogether, thirteen SBDs from his squadron flew the mission. Once the formation left the skies over Torokina, about two more hours passed before it reached Rabaul.<sup>124</sup>



SBDs heading to Rabaul

Two of the dive bombers in the formation did not return to Munda. One of the SBDs was Paul's, part of VMSB-341. The other was from another squadron, VMSB-236. Lieutenant Billy Ray Ramsey was the pilot, and Sergeant Charles John Sciara was his gunner. Based on the War Diaries of these two squadrons, two separate, unrelated incidents occurred. Both planes lost their tail and went down. Enemy anti-aircraft fire hit the tail of Ramsey and Sciara's SBD. Without a tail, a pilot quickly loses control of an aircraft. Paul's plane, too, suffered tail damage, but from what is not clear. The War Diaries for VMSB-341 and VMSB-236 offer different explanations on what caused the tail of Paul's SBD to be sheared off.

*"A Mid-Air Collision" Between the Tail of a SBD and ?*

The War Diary for Paul's squadron stated that a "mid-air collision" caused damage to the tail of his plane. Remember that gunners in a SBD sat in the aft or rear of the plane. As Sid Zimman explains, "Gunnery were always looking up and looking around for [Japanese] fighters." On January 14, 1944, Sid was doing that. "I was looking around for enemy aircraft." As Sid did so, he continued, "It amazed me to see a tail hanging by the cable." He did not know at that moment which SBD was in

trouble or who the pilot and gunner were. Sid did not realize that the gunner was Paul, the man whose cot stood next to his in their tent back at Munda.<sup>125</sup>

Exactly what caused the damage to the tail of Paul's SBD is not clear. Entries in his squadron's War Diary explain part of the confusion--"Lt. H. R. Tuck was involved in a mid-air collision and went down about 2 ½ miles north of Tawui [sic Tavui] Pt., New Britain, in the St. George Channel. Another plane in formation was seen to cut his plane's tail off, but the other plane was never identified." The last sentence is puzzling because one would think another pilot would have admitted he accidentally struck Paul's plane, or another SBD would have seen the two planes collide and reported it. The sentence that followed this one it is even more perplexing--"One other plane did not return from the strike." Why didn't the War Diary identify the plane by naming its pilot and gunner, which was the standard practice? Sid Zimman agrees that these entries are not clear.<sup>126</sup>

A January 14, 1944 War Diary entry for Ramsey and Sciara's squadron offers another explanation of what caused the tail damage to Paul's SBD--"Shortly before Ramsey was shot down, Lt. Tuck (VMSB-341) lost his tail and spun in. At first it was believed that Tuck had been involved in a midair collision. However, no other plane in the flight was involved in any collision so far as it is possible to determine. It is believed that Tuck may have been hit by one of the belly tanks which the F6Fs dropped through the formation of SBDs." (The F6Fs were United States fighters that accompanied the bombers to protect them from the Japanese fighters.) Sid Zimman, however, questions the idea that discarded fuel tanks may have hit Paul's plane. "I saw nothing up above us. I didn't see or hear anything." Sid offers a third explanation as to what caused the damage to Paul's plane. Sid reasons it might have been a propeller from another SBD that hit the tail since the SBDs followed behind each other in the sky.<sup>127</sup>

Paul himself must have known the cause of the accident. Gunners, recall, faced aft, or toward the back of the plane. That meant Paul could see the tail. Sid reminds us that as a gunner, Paul's eyes would have been searching the sky for enemy fighters. He would have looked, as Sid phrases it, "up, to the left, and to the right." Perhaps Paul did not see the initial blow to the tail, Sid reasons, because of his moving gaze. But just a second or two later, Sid agrees that Paul would have been riveted to the sight he saw from his window--the plane's tail, dangling from a cable. One can only imagine how many times, in his months as a POW, Paul played and replayed in his mind that sight. He would have known immediately what it meant--the plane would quickly go down.<sup>128</sup>

Eighty-four Japanese fighters had taken off from Rabaul to intercept the incoming American aircraft over New Ireland. Most of the enemy fighters were "soon looping and slow-rolling above and behind the formation." Weather again forced Lakunai Airfield to be scrubbed as the primary target. The American planes continued toward their alternate target, shipping in Simpson Harbor. Anti-aircraft fire awaited them there. Soon after Paul's plane suffered tail damage and went

down, Ramsey and Sciara's SBD experienced the same fate. The War Diary for Ramsey and Sciara's squadron documented what happened to them--"Lt. Billy R. Ramsey of this squadron had his tail shot off by anti-aircraft fire while the flight was approaching the target area. When last seen, Ramsey was in a flat spin over St. George's Channel, N. E. of Rabaul..."<sup>129</sup>

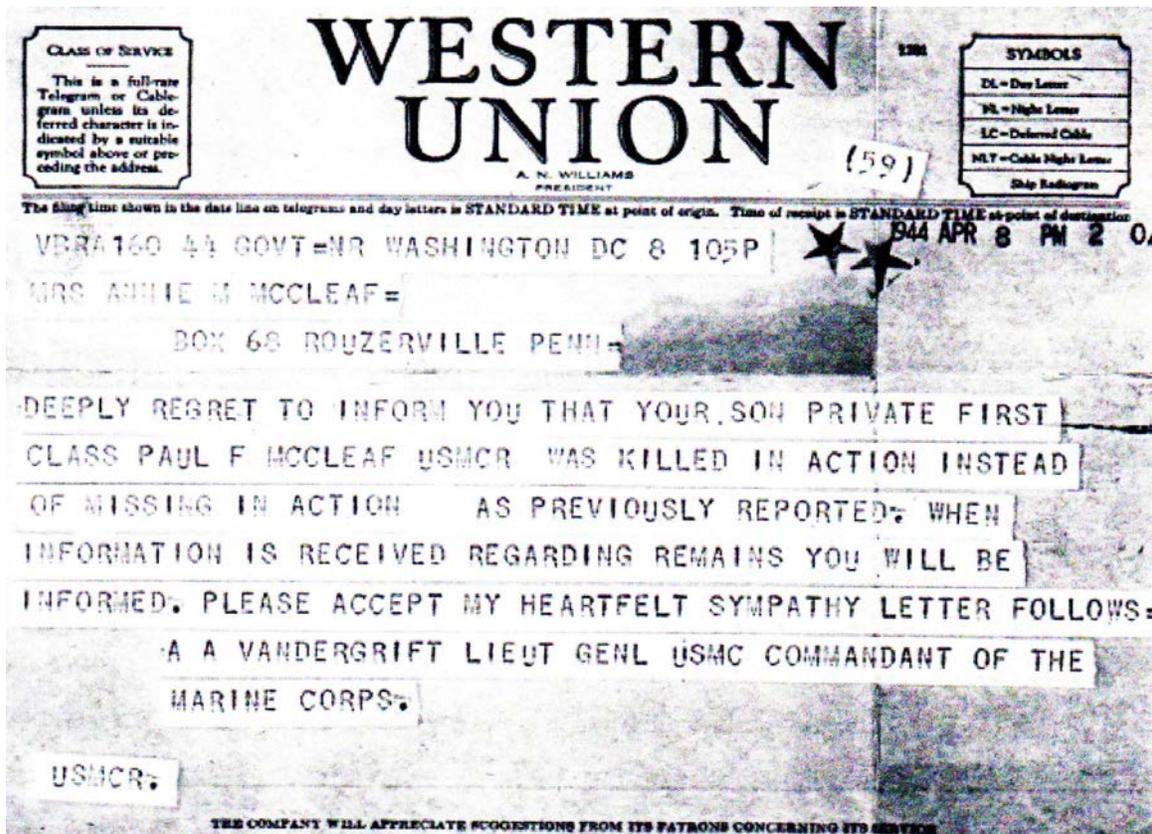
The strike formation also lost a torpedo bomber from squadron VMTB-232. Damaged by Japanese fighters, it landed in the channel waters off New Ireland. The crew drifted to New Britain's southern coast where they were eventually rescued. Search planes later went out to look for the missing SBD pilots and gunners--Tuck, Ramsey, Paul, and Sciara. They found nothing. Since the Japanese never reported Ramsey as one of their prisoners, he remained MIA for exactly one year. On January 15, 1945, the government declared Ramsey killed in action. It is believed Ramsey died when his SBD went down. Charles Sciara, Harold Tuck, and Paul McCleaf bailed out. The Japanese captured them. None of the three survived their imprisonment--Charles died in February, Paul in March, and Harold in November. Charles and Paul were only twenty years old, Harold twenty-one. And the birth dates of three gunners in this story give us a moment of pause, or perhaps a moment to gasp, at a most unlikely coincidence--Charles Sciara, August 8, 1923; Paul McCleaf, August 9, 1923; and Sid Zimman, August 10, 1923.<sup>130</sup>

For the SBD pilots and gunners whose planes went down on January 14, 1944, the morning had begun with a strike mission. Pilot Billy Ray Ramsey probably did not live out the day. Gunner Paul McCleaf, Pilot Harold Tuck, and Gunner Charles Sciara survived their bailouts. For them, however, the day ended with the beginning of a personal hell they each endured. Charles' lasted a month, Paul's two months, and Harold's ten months. Several days after Paul's plane experienced its midair collision, the Marine Corps contacted the McCleafs back home in Rouzerville, Pennsylvania, the Tucks in Lynchburg, Virginia, and the Sciaras in Brooklyn, New York. The core of the message was a short one--their son was missing in action. The same notification was sent to Billy Ray Ramsey's mother in Abilene, Texas. The families then began their own period of suffering that lasted much, much longer.

## Chapter 6 Captured

The initial telegrams and letters from Washington, D.C. arrived over the course of two months. They came from the office of the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. All were addressed to Annie McCleaf as the designated "next-of-kin." The first one was a telegram dated February 2, 1944. Its opening words foretold the sorrow that would haunt Annie for the rest of her life--the Commandant regretted to inform her "that your son Private First Class Paul F McCleaf USMCR is Missing In Action...details not now available." A formal letter from the Commandant's office followed the next day with more information. The lieutenant colonel who signed the

letter told Annie that Paul had been “missing in action since 14 January, 1944 following a collision with another plane, while serving in the Southwest Pacific Area.” An April 8, 1944 telegram from the Commandant’s office conveyed more information, but not all of it was accurate. The telegram explained that Paul had been “killed in action instead of missing in action.” Two days later, a letter told the McCleafs when and where Paul had lost his life--“on 14 January, 1944 in the New Britain area.” Again, not all of that was correct. Two years went by before Annie and the rest of the family knew Paul had died as a prisoner of war. By then, Americans had become aware, in graphic detail, of how the Japanese military treated POWs.<sup>131</sup>



*“Enraged as never before,”  
Americans Learn Details on the Treatment of POWs*

Three weeks passed between when Paul’s plane went down and when the United States government notified the McCleafs that Paul was missing in action. In that time, life must have gone on as usual in the household. One imagines that Annie, in particular, anticipated the mail every day, hoping to receive a letter from one of her sons in the service. The radio the family listened to and the newspaper they read carried reports of fighting in Europe and in the Pacific. In those three weeks, Allied

troops landed at Anzio, south of Rome, while half a world away, Americans invaded some of the Marshall Islands, held by the Japanese. A McCleaf son was in each of those war theaters. Exactly two weeks after the midair collision that damaged Paul's plane, a major story broke that must have caused the McCleafs to be grateful that Paul was not a prisoner of the Japanese. Of course, he was, but his family did not know that at the end of January.

On Friday, January 28, 1944, the United States Army and the Navy jointly issued a release that detailed the horrific conditions Allied POWs endured as prisoners of the Japanese military. Three officers who had escaped from a POW camp in April 1943 wrote the four-thousand-word account--Army Lieutenant Colonel William Dyess, Navy Commander Melvyn McCoy, and Army Lieutenant Colonel S.M. Mellnik. (Ten men altogether had escaped from the camp in the Philippines.) Mellnik was from Dunmore, Pennsylvania. The McCleafs and every other Pennsylvanian thus had reason to pay particular attention to the story since it involved one of their own. The three officers had been captured on the Bataan Peninsula and on the island of Corregidor in, respectively, April and May 1942. For those taken on the peninsula, the escaped servicemen told of prisoners bayoneted and beheaded when the Japanese forced thousands of captured Americans and Filipinos to walk out of the peninsula to a train station that took them to a POW camp. The seven-day journey became known as the Bataan Death March. Some, too weak to continue, laid "along a roadside" only to be "flattened by Japanese trucks." Others were buried alive, too ill to resist as dirt was piled upon them. In the prison camps, the lack of food made the men resemble "human skeletons." Dyess, McCoy, and Mellnik estimated that 5,200 American POWs died from torture and starvation.<sup>132</sup>

Newspapers throughout the country published stories, based on the officers' account, on their front pages. In Wisconsin, for example, *The Sheboygan Press* chose as its January 28, 1944 headline, "Jap Atrocities Arouse Nation." The paper ran a United Press (UP) story out of Washington, D.C. Early in the article, the UP concluded, "In any event, the army-navy report left no doubt that the Japanese government had brutally discarded all civilized rules in the treatment of prisoners captured in the Philippines." A discerning reader would have presumed such treatment occurred throughout Pacific areas controlled by the enemy, not only in the Philippines. The Congressional chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs in the House of Representatives concluded, "This shows the kind of barbarian enemy we are fighting." Another January 28<sup>th</sup> story on the Army-Navy press release used, in its headline, the words, "U. S. Reveals Story of Wanton Murder, Torture...Atrocities." The headline and story ran in *The Morning Call* newspaper published in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a community about 146 miles from Paul's hometown of Rouzerville.<sup>133</sup>

The American people reacted powerfully to what they read. A January 29, 1944 headline in *The Morning Call* quoted the usually restrained Secretary of State Cordell Hull. His words illustrated the depth of anger felt across the country--"Hull takes Lead in Vowing Retribution to Japanese 'Demons' for Atrocities; Story of Savagery

Shocks All America.” The AP story itself began with words that impressed upon readers how strongly the nation was reacting to the account by the three escaped officers--“Enraged as never before, America tonight vowed merciless vengeance...” In those last days of January 1944, there is no way the McCleaf family would not have heard about the story released by the Army and the Navy. The newspaper Paul’s family subscribed to probably carried the firsthand account of how the enemy treated its military prisoners. Radio shows would have mentioned it as well.<sup>134</sup>

Details of the inhumane treatment the Japanese inflicted upon American POWs remained a major story throughout February. Months before the Army-Navy release of the account by the three officers, Dyess himself wrote a lengthy article on what he had experienced. He sold it to *The Chicago Tribune*. That publication, in turn, sold publication rights to more than one hundred other newspapers. They all printed Dyess’ story beginning early in February 1944. One installment appeared every day for twenty-four days. Pennsylvania newspapers, such as *The Scranton Times* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, published the installments. Major magazines also reported on what Americans endured as prisoners of the Japanese.<sup>135</sup>

In its February 7, 1944 issue, *Life* published another firsthand account from the two senior officers, McCoy and Mellnik, who had escaped with Dyess. The article spanned fifteen pages. It took its title from a phrase McCoy and Mellnick used in their story--“Death Was Part Of Our Life.” *The Times-Tribune* newspaper in Scranton, Pennsylvania reprinted McCoy and Mellnik’s narrative over several days. (Mellnik’s hometown of Dunmore is outside of Scranton.) As had *Life* magazine, *Newsweek* magazine ran the Army-Navy release as the first story in its February 7<sup>th</sup> issue. *Newsweek* judged the public reaction “a fury such as had never before gripped the nation in this war.” With these revelations, we can only imagine what went through the minds of Paul’s family when they learned he was missing. One line in the *Newsweek* story must have been chilling for Americans who had a loved one serving in the Pacific Theater--Japan “still has potential new victims in reach.” Paul’s sister Maryann does not remember seeing issues of *Life* magazine in the McCleaf home when she was young. Asked if she recalled *Newsweek* magazine, she replied, “I remember that. I think it was in our house.” We do not know if Maryann’s parents read the February 7, 1944 issue of *Newsweek*. We do know, however, that they listened to news on the radio, and they read a newspaper. Because of these two facts alone, we can be certain they understood how the Japanese military treated American POWs.<sup>136</sup>

### *POWs Held by the Japanese*

Beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, representatives of major countries met in Geneva, Switzerland to seek agreement on the care of wounded soldiers and prisoners captured in wartime. In 1929, the Geneva Convention announced the latest details on humanitarian treatment of POWs. Prisoners were to be quickly taken away from the field of battle; if wounded, they were to receive medical attention; the belligerent nation that captured them was to feed and house the

prisoners in the same way it did for its own troops; POWs had to only disclose their name, rank and identification numbers to their captors; the men had a right to correspond with their families and friends; the International Red Cross could inspect POW camps, and punishment for escapees who were recaptured could not exceed a month of solitary confinement. Forty-seven countries signed this Geneva Convention. When World War II broke out in 1939, every nation that fought in the war had been a signatory of the Geneva agreement ten years earlier, with two exceptions--the Soviet Union and Japan.<sup>137</sup>

Following Japan's attack at Pearl Harbor, it went after territories in the Pacific claimed by European Powers. Japan seized, for example, the British colonies of Hong Kong and Singapore. It also took over colonies that belonged to the Netherlands, such as the Dutch East Indies. The Japanese military captured prisoners as it occupied these territories. This was in addition to the large number of Americans and Filipinos who surrendered on the Bataan Peninsula in April 1942. They alone numbered over 70,000 (Americans were about 10,000 of that number). Japan thus ended up with both military and civilian POWs. Altogether, Japan held some 140,000 Allied POWs. (The major Allied nations in the Pacific Theater were the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and the Netherlands.) To deal with the administrative task of incarcerating POWs, early in 1942 Japan set up offices in Tokyo, within the Ministry of War. The Japanese navy oversaw the imprisonment of some POWs, the army others.<sup>138</sup>

Some 25,000 Americans were held by the Japanese as POWs, with the majority captured in the Philippines four to five months after Pearl Harbor. Of that number, 2,267 were United States Marines. Estimates on the death rate for Americans interned by the Japanese range from 33% to as high as 45%. This contrasts dramatically with about 1% for the almost 94,000 Americans held as prisoners by the Germans in Europe. For Marines captured by the Japanese, 1,756 survived their internment. That equates to a USMC death rate of 23%. The death rate for Allied military POWs at Rabaul was much higher than that of POWs held by the Japanese in general. Estimates from the most trusted sources range from 94% to 97%. From the moment the enemy captured Paul, the odds did not favor him surviving his time as their prisoner.<sup>139</sup>

A major reason why so many POWs held by the Japanese military died related to how the captors viewed any prisoners taken in war. Their attitude derived from the ancient code of bushido, the samurai's code of conduct. Bushido taught that it was dishonorable to be taken as a prisoner in war. By World War II, this belief not only remained part of the warrior code, but all the military ranks embraced it. Bushido insisted that POWs deserved no sympathy or humane treatment. (To the Japanese, suicide was better than capture, which is why so few of the enemy were taken as POWs by the Allies.) The Marine Corps' own history of World War II explained that the Japanese army reminded captured Americans of "their disgrace, their dishonor, and their lowly status." Physically abused and poorly fed, American POWs suffered diseases associated with malnutrition (such as beriberi, pellagra, and

scurvy). They also endured tropical diseases endemic to the Pacific islands (malaria, dysentery, tropical ulcers, and cholera are examples of such illnesses). Paul's best friend, Irish Smith, remembers that it was, in his words, "common knowledge among servicemen" that the enemy dealt with American POWs inhumanely in the Pacific Theater. If captured, "We expected that type of treatment." But, Irish adds, "We did not talk about it much." Irish arrived in the South Pacific on August 1, 1944. That was about six months after the news broke of how the Japanese treated prisoners on the Bataan Death March and those taken later as POWs.<sup>140</sup>

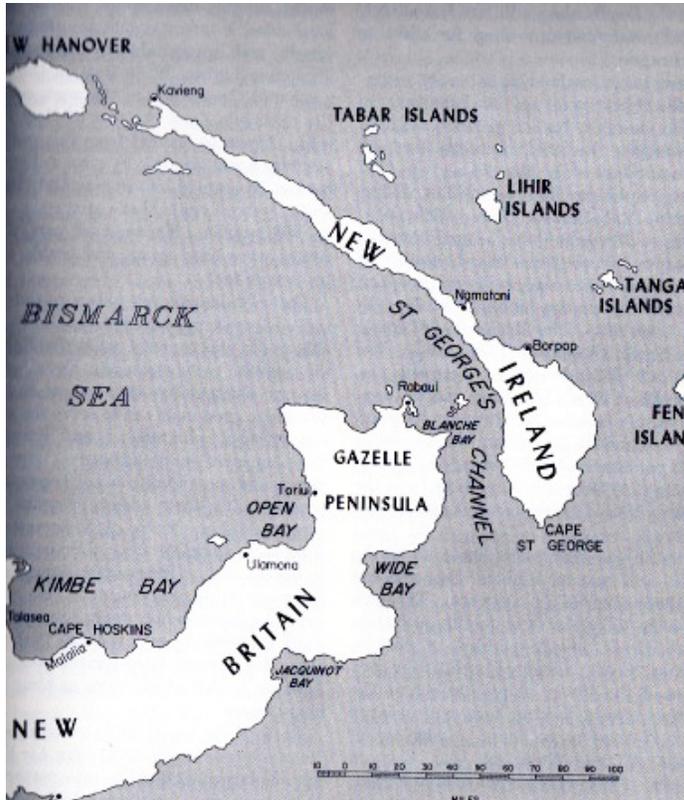
### *"Outstanding Achievements"*

Not everyone in the military assessed the January 14, 1944 strike mission over Rabaul in the same way. For superior officers in command positions, it was a successful day. Although Paul's aircraft, the SBD, did not make it to its target on January 14<sup>th</sup>, other dive bombers did. They struck seven enemy transports. Bombs dropped by SBDs also hit what might have been a light cruiser and a destroyer. Additionally, Japanese ships probably suffered damage from twenty "near misses." The War Diary for Paul's squadron proudly noted that the January 14<sup>th</sup> mission resulted in VMSB-341 receiving three commendations from three different Command centers. One, from ComAirSols (the Command responsible for aircraft in the Solomon Islands) read--"The outstanding achievements in yesterday's strike on Rabaul are most gratifying. It is with extreme pride that I extend you a highly merited well done. Mitchell." [Major General Ralph J. Mitchell, USMC] Another, from the Commander of the Third Fleet, applauded VMSB-341 for how "your hard riding boys...keep pouring it on...Best wishes for continued good hunting." Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, lauded the squadron for its successful bombing mission over Rabaul--"Hearty congratulations to all concerned on the damage inflicted on ships and aircraft in [the] Simpson Harbor Strike."<sup>141</sup>

For SBD gunner Sid Zimman, a member of Paul's squadron, January 14, 1944 was a sobering day. He does not remember many details of the mission itself. After all, Sid was only beginning his strike missions, and he had many more before him. What Sid recalls so vividly from January 14<sup>th</sup> are two images. The first is of the tail dangling from Paul's SBD--"I can still see it today in my mind's eye." But he admits, at that moment, "I wasn't sure who was inside of the SBD." The second image Sid cannot forget from that day relates to what happened after the squadron returned to its base at Munda. Sid went to the tent he shared with other gunners. Paul's cot stood next to his. "I can still see myself looking at an empty bunk." Seventy-seven years later, Sid remembers "an overwhelming moment" when officers came to pack up Paul's belongings. "That was a tremendously emotional moment."<sup>142</sup>

From the vantage point of Paul and his pilot Harold Tuck, January 14<sup>th</sup> would have been an even more sobering day for them than it was for Sid. They, of course, knew nothing of their squadron's success on its mission. With the tail damaged, Harold had no control over the plane. He could not have attempted to land it. The two Marines had no choice but to parachute out of their SBD. Sid Zimman explains

that their chute was a “seat pack.” In the confined space of an SBD, the pilot and gunner literally sat on their parachute since it was stored in their seat. On that day in January 1944, Paul and Harold landed in the water, according to one historian of Rabaul. Japanese naval ships patrolled the seas near Rabaul, often capturing airmen from downed Allied planes. This is apparently what happened to Paul and Harold. Japanese navy personnel took them into the town of Rabaul where the army had its jail cells for POWs. First, though, before his incarceration, Paul would be interrogated by the kempeitai, the Japanese military police.<sup>143</sup>



From *Isolation of Rabaul, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, Henry I. Shaw, Jr. and Major Douglas T. Kane, USMC (1963), p. 443.

*POWs Held at Rabaul,  
the Numbers*

Because Rabaul was such a key Japanese base in the Southwest Pacific, members of the Allied military captured in that area were taken there for interrogation. After the enemy questioned them, some were sent to POW camps in other parts of Japan’s empire while some remained at Rabaul. Two Japanese military organizations oversaw prisoners at Rabaul. At the beginning of World War II, the 81<sup>st</sup> Naval Garrison Unit, part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet, held that responsibility. Eventually, the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Kempeitai, a unit within the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, took over the incarcerations. That was the case when Paul arrived at Rabaul.<sup>144</sup>

The kempeitai headquarters at Rabaul was only about a mile from the harbor, so Paul did not travel far after he was pulled out of the water. One expert on Rabaul identified the kempeitai as an elite group within the Imperial Army. The same author likened it to the Gestapo in Nazi Germany and to the KGB in what was the Soviet Union. For those who know the history of the Gestapo and KGB, those are unsettling comparisons. No doubt Paul and Harold arrived at the kempeitai offices blindfolded, with their hands tied. (Memoirs by POWs who survived the war mentioned the blindfolds and bound hands immediately after their capture.) Following an initial interrogation, Paul would have been taken to a cell. In the two months he spent as a POW, the Japanese held Paul in two POW camps. This first one was formally identified as the Sixth Field Kempei Tai Headquarters Prisoner of War Camp. It was located on the western end of Rabaul, not far from a “red-light district” frequented by the Japanese soldiers. Paul remained in this camp until March 2<sup>nd</sup> when the Allied bombing campaign destroyed it, forcing a relocation of the POWs. The kempeitai moved Paul and the other prisoners to the Tunnel Hill Prisoner of War Camp Cave, outside the town of Rabaul.<sup>145</sup>

Overwhelmingly, military POWs held at Rabaul were Allied airmen. The very first ones, however, were Australian soldiers stationed at a garrison in Rabaul. When the Japanese seized control of the town from the Australian military garrison early in 1942, the kempeitai did not initially oversee POWs since its headquarters had not yet been established in the town. A navy prison in Rabaul held the prisoners. Once the Allied air war over Rabaul began in 1942, airmen dominated the ranks of the POWs. While a small number were sent to Japan that year, most died in mass executions where the Japanese used swords or bayonets to kill the men. Those prisoners not executed lived, as one authority on Rabaul described it, in “extremely harsh conditions.” The same author concluded that apparently “no captured airmen were alive at the end of 1942.” The year 1943 proved no better for POWs at Rabaul. Only a handful of the men captured that year remained at Rabaul for more than a month. As in 1942, some went to Japan. Others were executed by their navy captors, “usually by the sword,” the same fate that had befallen prisoners in 1942. The navy eventually turned over remaining POWs to the kempeitai. It does not appear that any Allied airmen were imprisoned in the navy compound after early 1944. By the time the war ended, over two hundred Allied military prisoners were at Rabaul for varying lengths of time. The Japanese transferred some to Japan, while others died of malnutrition and diseases. Many, like Paul, were executed in either the period when the navy oversaw the POWs or later when the kempeitai did so.<sup>146</sup>

When Japan surrendered in August 1945, seven--just seven--Allied military POWs were still alive at Rabaul. We know that from contemporary accounts and from the most recent academic research. Newspapers, for example, published stories of the homecomings in September 1945; these articles mentioned the number of POWs who made it out of Rabaul. The son of one of those men has written what could become the definite study of POWs held at Rabaul. It will be published in the fall of 2021. The book cites seven as the number of prisoners who

were still alive at the end of the war. One could call those seven POWs the Survivors of Rabaul.<sup>147</sup>

Six of the Survivors were Americans. (The seventh was an Australian officer.) Three of the six Americans published memoirs many years after the war. One of them stands out for its clarity and detail--U.S. Army Air Corps 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant James Austin McMurria's *Fight For Survival, An American Bomber Pilot's 1,000 Days as a P.O.W. of the Japanese*. (A first lieutenant at the time of his shootdown, he later rose to the rank of captain.) McMurria published his memoir in 1991, forty-eight years after his B-24 Liberator went down early in 1943. Two of his fellow Survivors who also shared their stories in print were Navy Aviation Radioman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class John B. Kepchia, *Missing in Action over Rabaul* (1986), and Navy Lieutenant (jg) Joseph G. Nason, *Horio You Next Die!* (1987). By far, McMurria's is the superior account. In their memoirs, Kepchia and Nason recreated conversations, quoting others and themselves throughout their books. Such an approach by itself makes their narratives suspect since it would have been impossible to recall the exact words individuals used some forty years earlier. All three men self-published their memoirs. Perhaps they wanted to put into writing the answers to questions family and friends had asked them over the years. Decades had passed, too, and the pain of dealing with their recollections may have lessened.<sup>148</sup>

A significant anniversary date, the fiftieth anniversary of America's 1941 entry into World War II, was also approaching by the time Kepchia and Nason came out with their books in 1986 and 1987, respectively. McMurria's memoir was first published in that very anniversary year, 1991. It could be these Survivors wanted to be sure that the story of those held at Rabaul would not be forgotten as the nation once again focused on World War II. Whatever reasons prompted these memoirs, within a span of five years, all three Survivors shared a brief time in their lives with those who read their books. From the moment of their capture, death was always a strong possibility. Just the fact that McMurria, Kepchia, and Nason survived their imprisonment was by itself a miracle given the death rate at Rabaul. In his memoir, Kepchia observed, "Out of seventy prisoners who were at Rabaul Prison Camp, only seven of us walked out alive on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September in 1945." Based on the POW numbers Kepchia used in this sentence, the death rate of POWs at Rabaul was ninety percent. When McMurria died in 2003, the obituary in his hometown newspaper contained a telling confession attributed to McMurria himself--he had lived with a sense of guilt that he had survived Rabaul while other prisoners had not.<sup>149</sup>

The number of military prisoners held at Rabaul varies depending upon the source used. Survivors relied upon their memories. Scholars drew upon those recollections and upon documents housed in government archives. Survivor McMurria, for example, wrote, "From August, 1943 through January, 1944, new prisoners came streaming into our compound. The thirteen of us [emphasis added] commiserated with the newcomers..." McMurria named some of the new arrivals, including "Lt. Harold Tuck" and "Sgt. McLeaf [sic]." Historian Bruce Gamble, in the third volume of his trilogy on the Japanese base, stated that thirteen POWs were

held there in August 1943; he probably took that number from McMurria's memoir. McMurria went on to note that "the number of prisoners gradually increased to 78 at one time or another." American researchers, at a minimum, used the United States National Archives and often records housed in Australian archives since so many of its citizens were POWs at Rabaul. Still, there is no consensus on the number of military prisoners held at Rabaul. Estimates from the most authoritative researchers range from a low of 108 to a high of 213, with the latter number probably the most accurate one. The transfer of Allied captives to other Japanese camps, the high death rate of POWs, and the absence of accessible, detailed records kept by the enemy complicate attempts to arrive at an accurate total number.<sup>150</sup>

Still, researchers have cited various figures. Japanese History Professor Yuki Tanaka wrote that the kempeitai held sixty-nine POWs. Ten of them were transferred to Japan, and of the remaining fifty-nine who stayed at Rabaul, only eight survived. If Tanaka's figures are used, that equates to a death rate of 86% for, again, those held by the kempeitai. His total does not include prisoners held by the Japanese navy in the early years of the war when executions were apparently rampant.<sup>151</sup>

Two other authors who studied Rabaul listed the names of Allied military POWs held there at the end of their books. One was Japanese American Henry Sakaida, an amateur historian. He devoted the last pages of his slender book on Rabaul to the names, 126 based upon his research. Sakaida entitled the pages "Rabaul's Military Prisoners." (Survivor James McMurria devoted a page towards the end of his memoir to the number of "known" military POWs held at Rabaul. He used Sakaida's numbers, breaking them down by nationality--"91 Americans, 28 Australians, 6 New Zealanders, and 1 British.") Paul's name appeared as one of the Americans, although Sakaida misidentified him as a corporal. Sakaida failed to include in his list of POWs SBD gunner Sgt. Charles Sciara. Sciara's plane went down within minutes of Paul's midair collision. Japanese records indicated that he survived one month as a prisoner. If Sakaida omitted Sciara, he may have failed to include others as well, calling into question his total number of military POWs held at Rabaul. After each prisoner's name, Sakaida explained what eventually happened to the POW--sent to Japan, executed, died of malnutrition and diseases (he identified the latter when he could). Sakaida gave a date for most of the deaths. In his book, Paul's execution occurred on March 5, 1944, followed by the unit that killed Paul and the location of his death, "6<sup>th</sup> Field Kempei Tai at Talili." For a handful of the 126 POWs, Sakaida simply concluded "fate unknown." According to Sakaida, eighteen were sent to Japan, leaving 108 at Rabaul. Sakaida identified only six of them as alive at war's end. That number is slightly off. Understanding that only seven were still alive when Japan surrendered, using Sakaida's number of 108 military prisoners held at Rabaul, the death rate was still horrific, 94%.<sup>152</sup>

Bruce Gamble, a retired naval aviator and former historian with the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation, wrote a trilogy on Rabaul. He published his last volume in 2013. Like Sakaida, Gamble listed the names of military POWs at the end

of the book. Gamble entitled the pages “The Prisoners of Rabaul.” He excluded certain groups from his list, such as Australian POWs captured early in 1942. Additionally, in Gamble’s words, “It does not include individuals who were reported missing and presumed to be POWs. The men listed here were seen at Rabaul by other parties.” (Perhaps that is why Gamble did not include Charles Sciara’s name.) Like Sakaida, Gamble indicated who was sent to Japan, who was executed, who died at Rabaul, and who survived the war (either at other Japanese POW camps or at Rabaul). It is emotionally powerful to read the 138 names listed, along with the repetition of the words “executed” and “died of neglect.” Gamble explained his use of the last phrase--“Whether they died of starvation, illness, tropical disease, or complications from untreated wounds, all were utterly neglected by their captors.” Gamble included Paul’s name in the list. One hundred and thirty-eight names appear in alphabetical order. “Survived at Rabaul” is after the names of eight of them. The POW death rate at Rabaul, based on Gamble’s numbers, would be 94%.<sup>153</sup>

The son of one of the Survivors, C. Kenneth Quinones, has written a forthcoming book, *Imperial Japan’s Prisoners in the South Pacific—Surviving Paradise*, that should add considerable knowledge to our understanding of POWs imprisoned at Rabaul. The author’s father was Alphonse D. Quinones, an Army lieutenant held at Rabaul after he bailed out of his damaged fighter during a mission in November 1943. With a handful of others, Alphonse lived through the horrors of imprisonment at Rabaul. Years later, Alphonse’s son, Kenneth, graduated from Harvard University with a Ph.D. in History and East Asian Languages. For many years, Dr. Quinones worked for the United States Foreign Service where he focused on Northeast Asia. But recently, Quinones used his academic training, his years in the United States State Department, and his family history to tell a story that holds personal meaning for him.<sup>154</sup>

Dr. Quinones researched Allied military POWs held by the Japanese in the South Pacific, particularly those at Rabaul. His book deals with the Survivors as well as with, in his words, “their comrades’ in arms contributions to victory in the Battle for Rabaul and their subsequent imprisonment.” Quinones generously shared with this author some of his conclusions that relate to Paul’s story. He estimated the total number imprisoned at Rabaul to have been 213 men. As to how many survived, Quinones’ accounting clarified why some sources gave that number as seven while other sources referred to eight Survivors. (Japanese History Professor Yuki Tanaka and historian Bruce Gamble used the number eight.) Quinones explained that aside from the six Americans and the one Australian, an eighth man, a New Zealand airman, became a prisoner at Rabaul in July 1945. “Given the brevity of his imprisonment,” Quinones added, “he has not been considered a survivor.” Regardless of whether seven or eight is used for the Survivors of Rabaul, the death rate using Quinones’ numbers is 96% - 97%.<sup>155</sup>

*“Kill Us,”  
Life as a POW at Rabaul*

Soon after they returned home, three Survivors of Rabaul shared their POW experiences with an International News Service (INS) staff correspondent. Jim McMurria, Al Quinones, and Jose Holquin spoke with Lee Van Atta. The resulting “as told to” story appeared in the September 27, 1945 edition of the *Daily Courier* published in Connellsville, Pennsylvania. (Since it was an INS story, it no doubt appeared in other papers as well.) Atta began the article with a striking quotation from McMurria, Quinones, and Holquin--“On three separate occasions during our imprisonment at Rabaul, we asked the Japs to kill us by sword or pistol, we didn’t care which.” The Americans told the Japanese they were not afraid to die “a soldier’s death, but we couldn’t go on dying slowly by starvation or, as we called it, murder without a breadline.”<sup>156</sup>

Their choice of the last word was generational. For those who lived through the 1930s, the word “breadline” evoked memories of the Great Depression that gripped the country throughout the decade. The 1930s were the formative years for individuals who were young adults in World War II, such as Paul and other prisoners at Rabaul. Americans, unemployed and destitute, had stood in line (“breadlines”) for free food. The starvation the POWs experienced at Rabaul was, in the words of McMurria, Quinones, and Holquin, “murder.” Despite how powerful the newspaper article was, the *Daily Courier* relegated it to page seven. Early in 1944, newspaper editors had put the story of the 10,000-man Bataan Death March in the Philippines on page one. But now, more than a year later, the war was over. The account of three POWs on an island unknown to most, imprisoned in a camp with just a handful of Americans, apparently did not attract the attention it should have.

Once home, McMurria, Quinones, and Holquin read about the treatment other American POWs received at the hands of the Japanese. Each must have weighed, in his own mind, what he had experienced at Rabaul with stories of other prison camps. As the three Survivors told the INS reporter, “If you lump together all the atrocities reported from Japan to Manchuria and Korea--and we’ve already been reading about them--you have Rabaul in a nutshell.” After World War II, POWs were eligible to join American Ex-Prisoners of War, a service organization that came out of the war. In 1980, it produced a map to indicate the locations of POW camps. Rabaul is not even on the map. Indonesia is the southernmost location shown.<sup>157</sup>

After Paul arrived at Rabaul’s 6<sup>th</sup> Field Kempai Tai Headquarters, he would have been interrogated. Survivors of Rabaul left us their firsthand accounts of life as a POW, as did those who stayed only temporarily before the Japanese transferred them elsewhere. The most famous POW who spent time at Rabaul was USMC Colonel Gregory “Pappy” Boyington. He was a POW there from January 3, 1944 until his captors sent him to Japan on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Boyington’s time thus coincided with Paul’s first month at Rabaul. A leading Marine Corps “ace” in the war, Boyington claimed that he brought down twenty-eight enemy planes, including three on January 3, 1944. As the commander of fighter squadron VMF-214, known as the Black Sheep Squadron, he led fighter sweeps over Rabaul. On its January 3<sup>rd</sup> mission, the enemy shot down Boyington’s plane. He parachuted out, landing in St. George’s

Channel. In his autobiography, Boyington described his location as “almost abreast of Cape St. George, New Ireland, about five miles from shore.” (Cape St. George is approximately fifty miles from the Japanese airfields at Rabaul on New Britain.) “Far to the south, as I drifted, I could see the distant shore of New Britain.” After spending eight hours on a raft, a Japanese submarine picked him up.<sup>158</sup>

Although Boyington held the rank of major when he was shot down, Paul’s initial treatment at the hands of his captors would not have been that much different from what Boyington experienced. A Japanese vessel of some type probably pulled Paul out of the water. Once he arrived at Rabaul Harbor, Paul would have been blindfolded, with his hands tied, as guards marched him “up the coral streets,” as Boyington described them, to the kempeitai headquarters. In his autobiography, Boyington recounted how common the use of blindfolds was by the Japanese. “I didn’t know it then [when he arrived at Rabaul], but I later learned that when the Nips so much as took a prisoner across the street, they always blindfolded him first.” The interrogation occurred as soon as the prisoners arrived at the kempeitai headquarters. After the war, Survivor James McMurria told investigators that for the time they were at the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Kempai Headquarters in Rabaul, “We were not mistreated or tortured during interrogations.” A Japanese officer asked for the new prisoner’s name, rank, and serial number, what the Geneva Accords had identified as acceptable questions. McMurria described the interrogations this way. The POW sat down with an interpreter and a Japanese officer. “We were asked,” McMurria continued, “to draw maps, sketches of areas, gun emplacements and areas of military importance, etc., which we were highly incapable of doing generally.” The interrogations appear to have happened regularly, not just upon the prisoner’s arrival at the POW camp. The Japanese questioned Boyington about the Marine Corps wings, groups, and squadrons, queries they may have posed to Paul, as well.<sup>159</sup>

From the kempeitai offices, guards took the newly captured prisoners to their cell. In September 1945, the INS reporter quoted Survivors McMurria, Quinones, and Holoquin on the location of the room--“Our cell was a little shack in the red-light district of Rabaul. In fact, we were located right across the street from ‘the house of heavenly rest,’ which did a boom-town business.” The cell measured about nine feet by eighteen feet. It held no furniture except for the *benjo*, or toilet. The *benjo* was a box with a hinged lid. In its center was a large hole. A bucket was placed under the lid. (POWs emptied it every day.) Survivor McMurria gave a more detailed description of the cell in his memoir. “The door and walls to the cell were made of heavy timber, the floor was rough unfinished lumber with half inch gaps between the boards.” It was a dark room. As McMurria explained, “The only light came through the upper portion of the front wall where eight two by fours, spaced six inches apart, support the corrugated tin roof.” Located three hundred miles from the equator, Rabaul’s daily temperatures would have been stifling, with the tin roof magnifying the heat. When it came to sleeping, the Japanese never gave the prisoners any cots. They simply slept on the ground. Boyington wrote of receiving only “a couple of gunny sacks” to use for bedding. Survivor John Kepchia recalled in

his memoir that the prisoners took the clothing they wore when they were captured, folded it, and then used it as a pillow.<sup>160</sup>

Kepchia added that wearing the uniforms proved impossible because, in the cells at Rabaul, they became full of lice. Once liberated and back in the United States, McMurria, Quinones, and Holquin shared with the INS reporter how they picked the lice off each other. "If anything came near to driving us insane, the lice were it." The Japanese never gave the prisoners any type of clothing except for the *fundushe* or *fundoshi*, a standard loincloth. Survivor McMurria explained it was the only piece of clothing the men had. He described it in detail in his memoir. The *fundushe* was a strip of cloth about twelve inches wide and thirty-six inches long. A string had been sewn at each of the two corners. The prisoner dropped the cloth behind his back and pulled the two strings around his waist, tying them in the front. The dangling cloth behind him was then brought up between his legs and tucked under the string, around the waist. Lice got into the seam. POWs picked them out, but the insects were ever-present, no matter what the prisoners did.<sup>161</sup>

In the two months that Paul was at Rabaul, the number of prisoners dramatically increased because the air war over the enemy base escalated, which resulted in more planes downed by the Japanese. Survivor McMurria tied the crowded living conditions to the illnesses that proliferated among the prisoners. "The three adjoining cells were grossly inadequate for everyone to stretch out at night without being entangled with his neighbor. Everyone quickly came down with a combination of malaria, beri-beri, yaws and/or scurvy." One author on Rabaul pointed out that the lack of proper sanitation facilities led to bacterial infections; when the prisoners scratched the insect bites, they made the infections worse.<sup>162</sup>

Mosquitoes plagued the prisoners, as well. Malaria could result from their bites. Boyington came down with the disease in his short time at Rabaul lying, as he wrote, in "this infested cell." The chills and fever that accompanies malaria eventually goes away, but the prisoners knew they would return, which is the nature of malaria attacks. Survivor McMurria mentioned edema as another disease from which POWs suffered. For those who lived long enough at Rabaul, McMurria wrote, "Month after month, year after year, edema haunted the prisoners." It "caused an unhealthy puffiness...and the ungodly appearance of so swollen [a] face, that the eyes were mere slits, was devastating." Ankles, thighs, and fingers all became bloated. In McMurria's postwar testimony for the war crimes prosecution of Japanese officials, an Army captain who questioned him asked about the medical doctor at Rabaul, Dr. (Captain) Shigeo Fushita. McMurria was emphatic that the POWs received no medical care. "However, Doctor Fushita did examine us rather periodically, [yet] such examinations resulting only in a smirk, and no administration of medical treatment."<sup>163</sup>

Boyington mentioned in his autobiography that the American airmen carried first-aid supplies, but "The Japanese always confiscated all of the prisoners' medical gear when they captured them. They had taken mine, too. And we were not allowed

so much as a drop of iodine to place on our wounds.” A captured coast watcher, Dr. Hugh Wheatley, treated Boyington. The Royal Australian Navy ran the coast watching network that collected intelligence information. Based on various islands, its members worked with some of the local population, both native and European. The coast watchers lived hidden in jungles, valleys, and mountain areas. They communicated with Australia using “very heavy wireless radios.” Not all were military personnel. Some were civilians, like Wheatley. New Guinea was their initial base of operations, but New Britain came to be included, as were other islands in the Southwestern Pacific. A coast watcher held at Rabaul, an Australian military officer, was one of the Survivors.<sup>164</sup>

Boyington identified Wheatley as “a half-caste who had been educated in the islands.” A 2017 academic study of indigenous Solomon Islanders in World War II supported Boyington’s description of Wheatley. The author of that publication, however, did not use the medical title “doctor” in describing Wheatley. She identified him as “a native medical practitioner (a British colonial government position) by profession.” It is not clear how much formal medical training Wheatley had. Boyington, who benefited from Wheatley’s care, stated in his memoir that the doctor “had been educated in the islands.” As a medical practitioner and as a coast watcher, Wheatley operated in the Solomons until March 1942. At that time, he left for the Shortland Islands in the western Solomons where a serious influenza outbreak had been reported. Wheatley went to help. One of the coast watcher commanders sent the doctor with a radio so Wheatley could expand the coast watching network at the same time he treated those who were ill. But one day after Wheatley’s arrival in the Shortlands, the Japanese landed in the islands. Wheatley was taken prisoner on April 6, 1942. He arrived at Rabaul in September of that year.<sup>165</sup>

Wheatley was, therefore, a POW at Rabaul when Boyington and Paul arrived in January 1944. Boyington concluded of Wheatley, “He knew his medicine, I am positive [of that], but he had little or nothing to work with as far as medical supplies.” Wheatley treated Boyington’s injuries by applying to them hot salt-water compresses made from rags. Boyington’s use of the phrase “half-caste” supports the fact that the doctor was probably, in appearance, very much a native of the Solomons. (His father may have been British and his mother indigenous.) Boyington and other POWs appear not to have held Wheatley in the same regard as they would have held one of the Allied military physicians. This, it could be argued, is seen in how they addressed Wheatley. They did not use the common title “Doc” that members of the military invoked when they spoke to physicians and often to medics. Instead, he was, according to Boyington, “Hughie.” Dr. Wheatley died at Rabaul in May 1944, having survived there for over a year and a half. Malnutrition or an illness probably took his life. We have no way of knowing what ailments Paul might have suffered from in his seven weeks at Rabaul. If Paul was ill, one wonders if Dr. Wheatley treated him. Unlike military prisoners at Rabaul, no orders prompted the doctor’s trip to the Shortland Islands. Wheatley went there because the native population was suffering. He wanted to offer what medical care he could. That

humanitarian decision led to his capture by the Japanese, his imprisonment at Rabaul, and his death there.<sup>166</sup>

The POWs at Rabaul existed on a starvation diet, which was largely the root of, and contributed to, their poor health. Over the four years when the Japanese held POWs at Rabaul, the amount of food given to the prisoners undoubtedly varied, but in two particulars it was the same--the food was never enough and it was low in protein. Rice was the basic staple. In his six-week imprisonment at Rabaul, Boyington described the food allotment--“We were fed the leftovers from their officers’ mess; soup, rice, and a multitude of things all mixed together. We called it chop suey.” Boyington and Paul’s arrivals coincided with an increase in the number of prisoners held at Rabaul. Three years after the war ended, Survivor Jose Holquin, a prisoner at Rabaul beginning in July 1943, testified as to how dire the situation had gotten early in 1944. “From January 1944 to February 1944, we were practically starving while intermittent air raids were going on.” The POWs’ food allotment, as described by Holquin, consisted of a plate of rice, with the dish being the size of a child’s toy plate. The Japanese turned the rice into “a thin soupy-like pudding.” Holquin testified that they received such an allotment three times a day.<sup>167</sup>

By mid-February 1944, Survivor Joseph Nason wrote in his memoir that “the cell-block of prisoners had swelled to 43 men...All the new arrivals were either pilots or crew of Allied aircraft which had been shot down over Rabaul.” That probably resulted in a further reduction of the food allotment, which, in turn, meant more illnesses and deaths. One casualty at this time was Staff Sergeant Charles Sciara. On January 14<sup>th</sup>, he was a gunner on a SBD that lost its tail from anti-aircraft fire. That happened minutes after Paul’s plane went down on. Unlike Paul and most of those captured early in 1944, Sciara was taken prisoner by the 81<sup>st</sup> Naval Garrison Unit. The navy captors executed their prisoners. However, a postwar Japanese list of POWs identified Sciara as having died on February 24, 1944 of malaria and beri-beri, five weeks after his capture.<sup>168</sup>



*"A bad, bad day"-- another Telegram and Letter*

Back at the McCleaf home in Rouzerville, it took weeks before Paul's family knew what had happened to him on January 14<sup>th</sup>. That month, his mother Annie may have imagined, from time to time, the smiles that would appear on Paul's face when he opened a package she had recently mailed him in care of the military post office in San Francisco. Among other things, it contained some Hershey chocolate bars, obviously a favorite of Paul's.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, though, life changed forever for Annie and the rest of the family. A telegram from the office of the Commandant of the USMC informed Annie, as the designated next-of-kin, that her son was missing in action. Paul's only two surviving siblings, Maryann and Tom, were both home when the telegram arrived. Maryann was twelve, and Tom had just turned ten. Their young age and the passage of seventy-seven years have not erased their memories of that February day. Maryann saw a black taxicab stop in front of their house--"I saw his taxi pull up." She recognized the man driving it as Claude Whittington of the Waynesboro Taxi Service. Maryann remembers that he was dressed in a taxi driver's uniform. "He brought bad news," Maryann added.<sup>169</sup>

Paul's brother Tom echoed that sentiment. Speaking independently from his sister, Tom used the same adjective Maryann had, but he repeated it for emphasis. Recalling February 2, 1944, Tom softly explained, "That was a bad, bad day." He remembered the moments just before the taxicab pulled up. "My mother was washing clothes, and I was helping." Tom shared something else about February 2<sup>nd</sup>. "We lived across the street from a church. On that day, the church had a service for a local navy boy who had been killed in the war. His funeral was going on when the taxicab drove up with the telegram."<sup>170</sup>

If the McCleafs had understood the coding on Western Union Telegrams, they would have known before they opened it that it was not good news. Annie's telegram had two red stars stamped on it. The stamps should have been visible through the cellophane rectangle on the front of the envelope where the recipient's name and address showed for the delivery person. The two red stars meant the subject of the telegram was a casualty, in this case MIA.<sup>171</sup>

The telegram, dated on the afternoon of February 2, 1944, began with the news that hit every family member hard, especially Annie. The Commandant of the USMC regretted to inform her that Paul was "missing in action." The Commandant's office explained that details were not available at the time. A letter would follow. How Annie and the rest of the family must have waited for its arrival.

The promised letter, dated February 3, 1944, probably arrived a few days later since the U.S. Post Office delivered it and not Western Union. The letter contained more information than the telegram. It reaffirmed the date Paul went missing, January 14, 1944, "while serving in the Southwest Pacific area." The McCleafs

learned that Paul's plane collided with another. The Commandant's office enclosed information it sent to all MIA families, probably details on the disposition of the serviceman's personal belongings and pay, as well as answers to other questions families usually asked. Attempts to empathize with what the family was going through are apparent in the letter. The second paragraph, for example, led with the sentence, "The anxiety this distressing report has caused you is fully appreciated." In the last paragraph, Annie's "anxiety" is referred to again--"The Commandant of the Marine Corps directs me," the lieutenant colonel wrote, "to convey to you his sincere sympathy in your anxiety."

It was undoubtedly a standard letter, adapted to suit the particular MIA report by changing the name of the next-of-kin, that family member's mailing address, and the name of the Marine himself. When and where he went missing would also have been made to fit the notification. It could be that Annie and the rest of the family did not see the letter as a form letter. They may have focused on the "regret" and "sincere sympathy" the USMC conveyed. The lieutenant colonel's assurance that the serviceman's fellow Marines would "exert their utmost efforts to learn the fate of their missing comrades" would have brought some hope that Paul could be located. Knowing he was alive, although captured by the enemy, was assuredly preferable to an MIA status.



3 February, 1944.

My dear Mrs. McCleaf:

It is with regret that I confirm the telegram sent you on 1 February, 1944, regarding your son, Private First Class Paul F. McCleaf, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve. The only available information shows that he has been missing in action since 14 January, 1944 following a collision with another plane, while serving in the Southwest Pacific area.

The anxiety this distressing report has caused you is fully realized. You may be sure that all officers and men in the active theater of operations exert their utmost efforts to learn the fate of their missing comrades.

The enclosure contains information of vital importance to you regarding the status of persons reported missing and it is urged that you read it carefully and preserve it for future reference.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps directs me to convey to you his sincere sympathy in your anxiety. Everything humanly possible is being done to learn the fate and whereabouts of your son. Please be assured that when additional information is received concerning him it will be sent to you promptly.

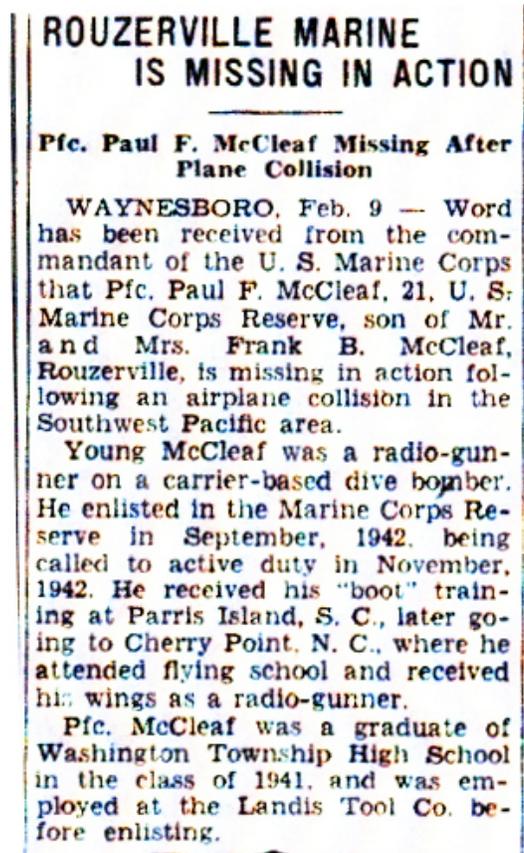
Sincerely yours,

Enc: (1)

*Douglas P. Wingo*  
DOUGLAS P. WINGO,  
Lieut. Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps.

Mrs. Annie M. McCleaf,  
Box 68,  
Rouzerville, Pennsylvania.

News of the Marine Corps telegram and letter circulated in Rouzerville and in the small, adjacent communities. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that back then, everyone knew the McCleafs. The family had lived in Franklin County for so long, and there were so many McCleafs in the area. A local newspaper, Chambersburg's *Public Opinion*, ran an article in its February 9, 1944 edition about Paul. It appeared on page one, testimony to the importance the paper knew its readers assigned to news of Franklin County's servicemembers. The three-paragraph story shared the key information the McCleaf family had based on the USMC telegram and letter received the previous week. (The story contained one major error--the article incorrectly placed Paul "on a carrier-based dive bomber.") Irish Smith, Paul's good friend, was also a gunner in Marine Corps aviation, but he had not yet left the States. Irish heard about what had happened to Paul from a newspaper story someone sent him.<sup>172</sup>



Eventually, postal authorities returned to Annie the package she had mailed Paul, the one in which she had included some Hershey bars. We do not know when she mailed it, but we do know it did not arrive at Paul's base on Munda before his plane went down on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Tom, Paul's brother, remembers that one day the local mailman delivered the package to the McCleaf home. His mother, in Tom's words, "would not let anyone touch it." Tom also recalls that Annie soon directed one of her sons, "to dig a hole and bury it."<sup>173</sup>

## Chapter 7 Seven Weeks

In the seven weeks between Paul's capture on January 14, 1944 and his death on March 5, 1944, the bombing campaign against Rabaul escalated. More Allied planes went down. As such, more pilots joined the prisoners already held at Rabaul. Their living conditions worsened as the cells became more crowded, food allotments decreased, and the mood of the Japanese guards darkened. The bombing campaign also, in a way, explains Paul's execution. A statement by Survivors McMurria, Quinones, and Holquin hinted at a linkage between the Allied bombings and the treatment the POWs received. The relationship is found in a quotation from their postwar interview with the INS reporter--"All the time our air forces were maintaining pressure against Rabaul, we were subjected to the most brutal type of treatment, ranging from beatings by each guard each day to complete denial of food and medical supplies." The "pressure against Rabaul" that the Survivors referred to did not begin in earnest until January 1944. Decades after this INS interview, an expert on Rabaul's World War II history made the same linkage between the Allied air campaign and the treatment of the prisoners by their guards--"Conditions became dire as the bombing intensified throughout January and into February, affecting prisoners most of all."<sup>174</sup>

In general, the Japanese had a history of executing POWs. This was true at Rabaul before the bombing campaign resulted in even more prisoners imprisoned there. One could argue that the decision by the kempeitai early in March 1944 to execute some of the POWs grew directly out of Japan's history of how it treated its prisoners. But more specifically, the executions solved a problem of overcrowding in a cave above the town of Rabaul that became the new "cell" for the POWs. It can also be argued that the anger the Japanese felt at the Allied air campaign influenced the decision to execute some prisoners. Members of the kempeitai could not vent their wrath at the Allied crews flying overhead. But executing some prisoners could have been an outlet for the guards' rage.

*"a rain of knockout blows, a triphammer of strikes"*

The last two weeks of January 1944 coincided with Paul's first weeks as a POW. In that time, light bombers such as the SBDs mounted as many as three missions a

day against Rabaul. As before, their targets were the airfields and the shipping in Simpson Harbor. One of the airfields, Lankani, was only a mile or two south of the POW camp located in the town of Rabaul. On January 17<sup>th</sup>, three days after Paul's plane went down, SBDs and torpedo bombers (TBFs) targeted eight cargo ships in Simpson Harbor. They scored direct hits on all of them. Such raids, even ones that may not have been as successful, elated the Allied POWs. Boyington recalled in his memoir, "In the daytime we could see our own aircraft dive-bombing, but during the night we were only able to listen and hope." One presumes Boyington's use of the word "hope" referred to the desire of the POWs to see or hear evidence of even more bombings. A sentence appeared in the Marine Corps' history of the campaign against Rabaul that spoke to the powerful force its Air Arm used against the enemy base--"By the end of January, Rabaul was set up for a rain of knockout blows, a triphammer of strikes that would batter it into impotence." Since Survivor McMurria had been a prisoner at Rabaul much longer than Boyington, he immediately grasped how the air war had accelerated in the new year. "If allied raids on Rabaul had been brisk during November and December, they were too numerous to count in January and February 1944." In those months, 4,229 tons of bombs were dropped on Rabaul. The POWs must have cheered, if only silently, as the bombs came down. Survivor Joe Nason recalled how "...the spirits of the prisoners improved with the increased fury of bombing." Conversely, the spirits of the Japanese must have declined.<sup>175</sup>

One World War II Marine who wrote a history of the Corps' Air Arm concluded that the war against Rabaul "reached its zenith during the first weeks of February [1944]" when more than 3,000 missions were flown over the base. It was in February, for the first time according to Survivor Jose Holquin, that POWs were sent to air raid shelters during some of the daytime bombing raids. Holquin pointed out that POWs had built "two or three such shelters in the fall of 1943." But those were not used by prisoners prior to mid-February 1944. After that date, Holquin explained, "...we were given shelter about six times during daylight raids." In February, the Allies took over more islands near Rabaul, such as the Green Islands, which are only 115 miles east of Rabaul, and the Admiralty Islands, 360 miles west of Rabaul. This gave the Allies even closer airfields from which their planes could take off. In the third week of February, the only aircraft left at Rabaul's bases were thirty damaged fighters, a few navy planes, and four army reconnaissance aircraft. Because of this scale of destruction, there would no longer be a fighter defense of Rabaul when Allied planes flew missions over the base.<sup>176</sup>

Under the cover of a smoke screen, on February 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, five American destroyers went into St. George's Channel. From there, they fired rounds at the town of Rabaul and at Japanese installations. A United States newspaper account a few days later dramatically described the destroyers as having "dueled with shore batteries and silenced them. They heavily damaged shipping. They blew up shore installations. Then they departed undamaged." By the end of February, the Japanese navy left Simpson Harbor for good. The Allied bombs had sunk almost 250 ships. The enemy's navy could not afford such continued losses.<sup>177</sup>

*The 6<sup>th</sup> Field Kempei Tai Headquarters POW Camp is Destroyed,  
March 2, 1944*

The month of March proved critical in respect to Paul's time at Rabaul. A fellow prisoner, Survivor James McMurria, described the very beginning of the month in his memoir. "On the first of March, all hell broke loose...The fireworks started at breakfast time. One humongous flight of heavies [heavy bombers] rained 1,000 pounders [1,000-pound bombs] all over the place. Our three cells rocked and rolled for over an hour. Then we heard shells coming in from out of sea. [These were undoubtedly from U.S. destroyers.] One series of shells walked up to within a hundred yards of the prison, with the final salvo exploding a hundred yards beyond us." According to Survivor Jose Holquin, it was on the night of March 1<sup>st</sup> that the POWs were removed from their cells. McMurria remembered that five Japanese soldiers unlocked the doors and entered the cells. The guards handcuffed and blindfolded the POWs, after which the Japanese marched them out of the building. The guards directed the prisoners to what McMurria described as "a huge bomb shelter" nearby, one of the shelters built by the POWs. Remember that what these Survivors experienced is what Paul went through.<sup>178</sup>

Once inside of the shelter, according to McMurria, the Allied prisoners saw that some Japanese soldiers had preceded them to what all hoped was a safer place. But smoke from the destruction the bombs caused above ground filled the shelter. McMurria remembered the noises that penetrated the shelter. "Whining aircraft motors, and [the] swooshing of falling bombs and the terrifying whistle of naval shells all homogenized into unearthly sounds." It continued for hours. McMurria described what he saw once the POWs left the shelter. "Nothing was standing upright, including twenty four-inch diameter coconut trees. A fire storm swept the town, and God knows what the...airfields and...the harbor looked like."<sup>179</sup>

In his postwar affidavit to the United States military, Holquin gave a time reference for when he, McMurria, and the other POWs left the air raid shelter. Holquin testified that the prisoners remained in the shelter until around 9:00 a.m. the next morning, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. At that time, the guards returned them to their cells. The men had not been fed since the day before. Once back in their cells, Japanese soldiers brought them just one item, what Holquin described as "a small bag containing 40 small biscuits." Two men were to share a bag. Holquin just finished eating his portion of the biscuits when the air raid siren went off. Once again, the POWs were taken to the shelter. But this time, as Holquin recollected, they were not blindfolded, no doubt a reflection of the speed at which the guards wanted to move. Fear of the bombs was well-deserved. Holquin recounted what happened once the men were in the shelter. "In about 20 minutes, bombers hit and bombs were dropped on one side of the shelter and other bombs hit on the other side of the shelter and on the buildings we had previously occupied." About an hour later, the guards ordered the POWs out of the shelter. As Holquin recalled, "...everything was on fire." Among the buildings destroyed was the one that housed the 6th Field Kempei Tai Headquarters POW Camp. For most of the men, including Paul, it had

been the first camp in which they had been imprisoned. McMurria placed its destruction “on or about March 2, 1944.”<sup>180</sup>

In those first days of March 1944, two factors converged that led to Paul’s death. First, during the concentrated January and February air campaign against Rabaul, the number of POWs increased when some Allied planes went down. Airmen who survived the crashes or bailouts ended up at Rabaul. Cells became more crowded, and the job of guarding the POWs would have become more burdensome for the kempeitai. Survivor Jose Holquin testified a few years after the war that six POW cells housed, on average, six to thirteen men in each cell. The higher number was probably reached in the early months of 1944. Second, during the weeks of the heightened air campaign, Japanese anger at the bombing contributed to the kempeitai’s dark mood and, one can argue, to Paul’s execution. Food provisions for both captives and captors declined since the bombing campaign impacted the arrival of ships in Simpson Harbor, some of which carried food supplies. The Japanese had an outlet for their anger, the prisoners. Survivor Holquin in his postwar testimony named one Japanese soldier who “was exceptionally brutal immediately after a bombing raid by American planes.” Survivor James McMurria described guards as “fuming like locomotives” on the day of an intensive bombing raid that destroyed the headquarters of the kempeitai.<sup>181</sup>

*A Move to the Tunnel Hill POW Camp,  
March 2, 1944*

Survivor Joe Nason remembered the POWs spending March 2<sup>nd</sup> in another air raid shelter. He stressed they were without food and water for the entire day. While in the shelter, according to Nason, the guards brought in “17 more white men from another prison in Rabaul.” (Nason’s use of the word “white” was meant to distinguish these POWs from Asian ones held at Rabaul.) With that addition of seventeen prisoners, Nason wrote that there were then sixty-two POWs in the shelter. If correct, the number is significant because it meant the number of POWs increased by almost 40%. While the POWs were in the shelter, Holquin recalled the guards were “busy evacuating themselves from the area that had been bombed.” Nason described himself and the other men as handcuffed in pairs, with a rope attached to each pair of handcuffs. “So tethered,” in the words of Nason, the POWs “shuffled out of the city.” According to Survivor Holquin, the guards marched them “a short distance from the shelter.” When the group was about a mile, in Nason’s estimation, outside of Rabaul, they reached an open meadow. The guards ordered them into “a drainage culvert under the road,” as Nason described it. They remained there for the rest of the day. It was not until later, around 6:30 p.m. according to Holquin, that the Japanese guards ordered the prisoners onto a truck.<sup>182</sup>

In his memoir, McMurria wrote of not one, but two “flatbed trucks.” He dramatically recreated what the prisoners’ departure from the Rabaul area was like for himself, Paul, and the others. “Two flatbed trucks with motors racing and drivers screaming stood by as guards literally threw us, handcuffed, up into the beds.” He

continued, "...the trucks raced wide open down dirt roads, rolling and twisting around bomb craters and fires, all but throwing us off the back of the truck." Fear probably spurred on the Japanese drivers since, as McMurria wrote, "A few planes were still in the area and more were returning." McMurria explained that as the trucks reached "the comparative safety of some heavy woods, the intensity of bombing and strafing began to pick up again. We were traveling to higher ground on a washed out, one lane road with a good overhang of trees and thank God for it." (McMurria described how the blindfolds had been "sloppily" tied, so the prisoners caught glimpses of their surroundings.) McMurria attested to the anger the guards exhibited. "Up the hill we went for twenty or thirty minutes, afraid to make any comment for fear of the strange guards riding with us and fuming like locomotives."<sup>183</sup>

About forty-five minutes after boarding the truck or trucks, the guards and the POWs disembarked. It was around 7:15 p.m., as Holquin remembered it. The prisoners' blindfolds were removed, but not their handcuffs. A Japanese guard called roll. As the POWs stood there, Paul included, listening for their names, they must have looked around at their surroundings. To a man, they would have surmised that they had arrived at a new POW camp. Its formal name was the Tunnel Hill Prisoner of War Camp Cave. McMurria estimated that they had traveled two miles from their old camp in Rabaul. In his postwar testimony, McMurria located the camp in a mountain pass that went by the name "Tanoura." He further placed the new camp on Tunnel Hill Road between Rabaul City and a location McMurria identified as "Filapila."<sup>184</sup>

In McMurria's affidavit, that he knew might be used in war crime trials, he described the camp. As it turned out, the cave would be where Paul spent his last few days. McMurria told investigators, "The Tunnel Hill Prison camp, in reality, was not a tunnel. It was a cave, approximately 5 feet wide and 25 feet long, dug back into the mountain." Holquin gave similar dimensions in his postwar testimony. He estimated the cave as about 5 ½ feet wide, 30 feet long, and 8 feet high. The men were very crowded, without enough room for them all to sit down at the same time. About half stood while the other half sat on the ground. Holquin characterized himself and others as "packed like sardines in a tin can." McMurria's postwar testimony on the living conditions did not use such a platitude, but it was still powerful. "So we stood and stood and stood, unable to sit down in the cramped quarters while the [air] raid continued for two more days without let up." The cave was perpetually damp and dark. Guards had stretched a large blanket across the cave's entrance, so no light could get in. The prisoners devised a plan to use the blanket to their advantage. After their arrival at the new camp, according to McMurria, the men had no water for over forty-eight hours. As McMurria explained, "We managed to cool our parched throats by gradually inching out one at a time to the front of the cave and chewing on the rain drenched blanket covering the entrance."<sup>185</sup>

The handcuffs always remained on the POWs. McMurria wrote in his memoir that to “conserve” the handcuffs, the Japanese cuffed two prisoners together as the airmen entered the cave on the evening of March 2<sup>nd</sup>. That made walking more difficult, McMurria added. But Holquin, as McMurria recalled, found a way to mitigate that. He saw a piece of wire on the floor of the cave, bent it, and used it as a “key” to unlock the cuffs. If the guards called the POWs outside for a roll call, the handcuffs “were snapped back into place.” McMurria testified after the war that they received no food or water for three days, while Holquin, in his postwar affidavit, stated that the prisoners were fed around 9:30 a.m. on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. In his words, “We were each provided with a ball of rice about the size of a tennis ball and a can of water which was to be shared by three men.” In the weeks the POWs spent in the cave, their diet consisted of rice and water. Nason referred to both in his memoir. He remembered water passed into the cave in a tin can. Each can was only half full, however, and as Nason noted, five men shared the six ounces of water.<sup>186</sup>

McMurria made a passing reference in his memoir to “a terrible sanitary mess” that plagued the prisoners. Nason explained it in detail. When darkness fell each day, the Japanese passed two small buckets into the cave. They served as toilets for the men. Nason shared how, “By the time the pails arrived at the rear, they were overflowing.” He added that the “stench” from the buckets combined with “the filthy bodies of the men,” all in a crowded area, to result in “hellish” nights.<sup>187</sup>

*March 3, 1944*

According to Survivor James McMurria, the prisoners were confined inside of the Tunnel Hill POW Camp Cave for two to three weeks. The Allied bombing campaign continued after the kempeitai evacuated the men from their Rabaul cells. Once at the Tunnel Hill cave, the Japanese would have recognized that a quick relocation to a more permanent camp would not immediately be possible. The kempeitai was thus faced with an untenable situation. They had more POWs than the cave could house. As McMurria remembered it, the initial group of POWs who arrived at the Tunnel Hill camp numbered around sixty prisoners. That figure corresponded to the number of POWs in the cave that Nason cited in his memoir, which was sixty-two. The sole non-American Survivor of Rabaul, Australian Captain V. J. Murphy, told a reporter right after the war that sixty-three POWs were initially housed at the Tunnel Hill Camp. All three survivors described the prisoners as jammed into the cave. After the POWs and their guards arrived at the Tunnel Hill Camp on the evening of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Japanese officers may have assessed the situation. They must have known that something had to be done about the overcrowding.<sup>188</sup>

But perhaps they confronted something else, too, namely their anger at the Allied bombers that continued to successfully mount strikes on Japan’s military installations at Rabaul. That fury had been on display earlier, before the POWs were relocated to the cave. Survivor Nason wrote about when the POWs left the air raid shelter in Rabaul, right before their transfer to the Tunnel Hill cave. Nason recalled

that some Japanese soldiers “glowered” at the POWs. The Japanese could not directly strike back at the enemy overhead. But right in their midst, in their charge, in fact, were members of the same squadrons who were responsible for the destruction throughout their base. McMurria indicated in his memoir that the Allied bombing of Rabaul continued in the first few days the POWs were in the Tunnel Hill POW Camp. While the guards and the prisoners in the cave area were relatively safe there, the ire of the Japanese would not have gone away. They knew their air bases had been rendered useless by the bombings, and that their navy had fled Simpson Harbor because of the Allied attacks. Even the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Kempei Tai Headquarters POW Camp, where Paul and the others had been imprisoned, had been destroyed. At one point in those days, the Japanese decided to execute some of the prisoners. That would alleviate the overcrowding and, one can argue, it would give the guards an outlet for their anger.<sup>189</sup>



B-25 Mitchell bombers from the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force striking Rabaul on the day Paul was executed, March 5, 1944.

*Executions,  
March 4 and March 5, 1944*

On October 16, 1946, James McMurria penned a letter to Annie McCleaf from his home in Columbus, Georgia. It must have been a difficult one to write, but perhaps McMurria had some practice at composing such a letter. He had been home from the war for a year. Newspaper accounts identified him as one of the very few survivors of Rabaul. Aside from the McCleafs, families of other Americans held at Rabaul may have contacted him. We know Harold Tuck's mother did so. Like the Tucks, the McCleaf family might have read about McMurria in one of those articles. Or perhaps the Tuck family shared information with Annie about McMurria. In any event, Annie wrote him, asking for any information he could share on her son, Paul. In his three-page reply, McMurria explained that he knew Paul "only slightly" since Paul did not arrive at Rabaul until January 1944, "and I was with him only until March 4<sup>th</sup>. On that day, there were 63 of us in a sort of cave in the mountains and we were very crowded." McMurria continued by telling Annie that on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Japanese "called off a list of around 20 names to be taken to another place. Your son was among the 20. They were moved and we never heard of them again."<sup>190</sup>

In 1948, two years after McMurria wrote the letter to Annie, he testified, before a representative of the U.S. military, to share information about his time as a POW. McMurria summarized in this 1948 affidavit the event that took Paul's life and the lives of other prisoners--"They were blindfolded, tied and handcuffed by members of the Japanese Kempai Tai. They were split into two groups. One group was marched away at approximately 1000 hours, 4 March 1944 and the second group was marched away at approximately 1000 hours, 5 March 1944." Note that here, in the 1948 affidavit, McMurria mentioned two POW groups separated from the other POWs on two different days. Survivor Jose Holquin, in his 1948 affidavit, also used two dates for when two groups of POWs were taken away from the main group of prisoners. But Holquin used the dates of March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, prefacing both with the phrase "on or about." This account will use McMurria's dates of March 4<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup> for when some POWs in the cave were separated from the main group of prisoners. Paul was in the second of two separated groups, the ones removed on March 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>191</sup>

McMurria's memoir added details to his 1948 testimony, but in one significant way, it differed from it. His memoir, like his letter to Annie, mentioned only one day when the separations occurred, March 4<sup>th</sup>. As McMurria began his memoir account of that day, the prisoners had been standing upright in the cave since their arrival, "without food and water." On the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>, according to McMurria, the Allied bombing of Rabaul "leveled off." Probably because of this fact, the Japanese ordered the sixty-some prisoners to move outside where they were allowed to sit down. That by itself must have been a welcome relief for Paul and the others. McMurria remembered that "two or three" Japanese officers conferred among themselves, after which roll call took place. Once each POW was accounted for, McMurria recounted how the prisoners were divided into two groups. His party of

thirty men returned to the cave. The Japanese ordered the other group into the back of a truck. Holquin, in his 1948 testimony, stated that the POWs taken away were blindfolded and handcuffed. He could not recall “any Japanese officers of commissioned rank” present when the separated group of POWs left the Tunnel Hill Cave Camp. Holquin remembered just a corporal and a private first class along with other low-ranking soldiers.<sup>192</sup>

There is no question that the kempeitai separated many POWs from the main body of prisoners early in March 1944, just a day or two after they all arrived at the Tunnel Hill Camp. More than one Survivor shared that story. The testimonies of Survivors, however, differ by one day as to exactly when the separations occurred and as to how many prisoners were taken away by the kempeitai. To repeat what was previously stated in their 1948 testimonies, Survivor Holquin named March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> as the separation dates, while McMurria gave March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Yet in McMurria’s memoir, he wrote of only removal date, March 4<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, the number of POWs separated from the main group differed, too. Survivors Holquin and Nason wrote of two separations of twenty men each, for a total of forty prisoners taken from the cave. McMurria in his 1948 testimony was adamant, though, in correcting the American who questioned him when the officer referred to “forty” POWs separated from the main group. McMurria insisted it was twenty men total. Survivors even gave different statements as to how the separated men were taken away. In his memoir, McMurria mentioned that the departing POWs were “placed on a truck and carried away,” but in his 1948 affidavit, McMurria testified that the men “were forced to march as far as we could see.” Holquin testified in 1948 that the men were “marched west.”<sup>193</sup>

Before the separated prisoners left the Tunnel Hill POW Camp, McMurria’s memoir explained how the prisoners who remained at the cave shared a brief moment with their departing comrades. “We had only a few minutes to say good-bye to some of the best friends I’d ever had, particularly the three members of my crew: Doyle, Sugden, and Farnell.” (The rest of McMurria’s aircrew had been sent to Japan.) McMurria named the prisoners taken away in the truck, although he admitted that his list was “incomplete.” Paul’s name was one that appeared in McMurria’s book. The remaining POWs asked the guards where they were taking the group. The prisoners did not, however, receive a clear answer aside from, “To a safer place.” McMurria and others did not let that answer stand. “We continued to ask about them for several months. Our question seemed to irritate the guards and we were told to shut up and forget about that group. They [the Japanese] wanted no more reference to it. We strongly suspected that they had been executed, judging from the attitude of the guards.”<sup>194</sup>

It was not “the attitude of the guards” that made one Survivor believe the separated group had been executed. In his 1948 affidavit, Holquin testified that the remaining POWs in the cave heard gunfire, “shortly after each group was removed from the Tunnel Hill Prisoner of War Cave.” Holquin himself “heard several shots” of what he thought was “rifle fire.” At one point, while still at the Tunnel Hill Camp,

Holquin asked a Japanese major what had happened to his fellow POWs. The major replied that they had been killed by American bombers on the beach of Talili Bay, not far from Rabaul. The men were in tents, the Japanese major told Holquin, clearly marked with a red cross. Still, the bombers dropped their load. The Americans and some of the kempeitai were killed. After Japan surrendered in 1945, the War Crimes section of the Australian military interrogated the kempeitai. The Japanese denied that any executions of Tunnel Hill POWs had taken place. They admitted to the Australians that thirty-one POWs were removed to alleviate the crowded conditions in the cave and that they later died. But the kempeitai insisted the Japanese were not the culprits. They planned to take the POWs to Watom Island, off the coast of New Ireland, in Talili Bay. While the Japanese guarded the POWs in a hut on the Tanoura coast, waiting for a boat to take them to Watom, the Americans bombed the area on March 5<sup>th</sup>. At least, that was the story the kempeitai told the Australians. The sound of an air raid siren supposedly prompted the Japanese guards to move the Americans into an air raid shelter. The shelter received two direct hits. The bombs killed all but five of the prisoners. Those five died within twenty-four hours. The kempeitai finished their "story" by telling the Australians that the men were cremated, with their ashes buried under a tree by the coast. After the war, the Australian military was given six boxes with ashes inside of them, the supposed remains of the POWs removed from the cave.<sup>195</sup>

In his 1946 letter to Annie McCleaf, McMurria repeated, in an abbreviated form, this kempeitai account of what happened to Paul and the other POWs removed from the cave. "When the war was over, I inquired about them and was told that in an attempt to evacuate these 20 boys to a nearby island, they were bombed by American planes, on the beach near Rabaul. That was all I could learn regardless of how I tried." He dared not mention to Paul's mother what probably happened--her son and the others had been executed. The number killed could have been as high as forty. McMurria insisted the total number of prisoners taken away was half of that, "approximately twenty-one prisoners" according to his 1948 affidavit. Looking collectively at these accounts, the total number of POWs removed from the cave thus numbered somewhere between twenty and forty. If sixty or so POWs arrived at the cave on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, that number was thus reduced to forty or twenty. Rabaul historian Bruce Gamble concluded, "After the removal and presumed execution of at least thirty-one prisoners on March 5, conditions in the cave improved considerably, with no more than two dozen captives remaining."<sup>196</sup>

The Australian military's War Crimes Section did not believe the kempeitai story of what happened to Paul and the others. The accounts sounded rehearsed. Additionally, the Australians questioned a Japanese officer on Watom Island about the supposed transfer of the separated group of POWs to the island. The officer insisted he had never received any orders about POWs being relocated to the island. Additionally, the officer told the Australians he never heard reports of POWs killed on the beach by Allied bombing.<sup>197</sup>

What that Japanese officer understood, what the POWs themselves knew, and what the historical record shows, is that the Japanese had a history of executing Allied prisoners. As Paul's brother Tom put it, sarcastically, "They were very good at doing that." Executions happened throughout the areas Japan controlled during World War II. Rabaul was no different. For the 213 military POWs held at Rabaul, Dr. C. Kenneth Quinones (son of Survivor Alphonse Quinones) calculated that 155 were executed. That equates to a 73% execution rate. As for the 1944 events of March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the Survivors of Rabaul knew what they had heard after fellow prisoners were separated and taken away--they heard shots fired. The overcrowding in the cave undoubtedly prompted the March 4<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup> executions. And as noted earlier, the anger the Japanese felt at the Allied bombings probably factored into the decision to execute some of the prisoners. In his 1948 affidavit, Survivor Jose Holquin shared with investigators a conversation he had with an interpreter who, Holquin believed, held the honorary rank of major in the Japanese army. Holquin asked him what had happened to the POWs taken away from the Tunnel Hill cave. The man did not directly reply, but he did tell Holquin that he had "assisted in the selection of the names of the forty prisoners of war who were removed from the cave as well as those who were detained at the cave."<sup>198</sup>

A selection process clearly took place, whether this interpreter participated in it or not. What was the criteria used? At least one consideration, if not the sole one, may have been a prisoner's health. Survivor Holquin referred to that in his 1948 affidavit. He testified that "...it is my belief that most of the men were weak, possibly sick, and were unable to make a march of any distance." Survivor McMurria described some of those who were in the separated group as "on the verge of death." We do not know what Paul's health was like seven weeks after his capture. If malnutrition and diseases had not significantly weakened him, his slight build may have made the Japanese see him as vulnerable to serious illnesses in the future. For whatever reason, someone in the kempeitai placed Paul's name on the list of those who were to be separated from the main body of POWS in the cave. That doomed him.<sup>199</sup>

### *Another Telegram and Letter*

In April 1944, one month after Paul's death, the office of the Commandant of the USMC again sent Annie McCleaf a telegram. The notification corrected the February news as to Paul's official status. The April 8, 1944 telegram succinctly summarized the change in its first sentence--"Deeply regret to inform you that your son Private First Class Paul McCleaf USMCR was killed in action instead of missing in action as previously reported."

Three days later, on April 11, 1944, a longer letter from the Commandant's office added a new detail as to where Paul had died. It was "in the New Britain area." Before this, all the McCleafs knew, based on a February 3, 1944 letter from the Commandant's office, was that Paul's plane had gone down in "the Southwest Pacific area." Another telling sentence in the April 11<sup>th</sup> letter repeated the message

contained in the April 8<sup>th</sup> telegram--Paul "lost his life in action against the enemies of his country." One long sentence formed the second paragraph of the two-paragraph letter. The sentence began with a truth understood by all families who lost someone in the war--"There is little I can say to lessen your grief, but it is my earnest hope that the knowledge of your son's splendid record in the service and the thought that he nobly gave his life in the performance of his duty may in some measure comfort you in this sad hour." The Commandant's office undoubtedly included this "hope" in every letter it sent out to a fallen Marine's next-of-kin. For the McCleafs, only they could have told us if Paul's record as a Marine, and the fact that he died carrying out his duty to the Corps and to the country, mitigated their grief. For Annie, those considerations may never have been enough to lessen her pain.

## Chapter 8

### The Last 18 Months, March 1944 – September 1945

The McCleafs of Rouzerville, Pennsylvania represented many families across the country in their history of military service during World War II. Among Annie and Frank's seven living children, six were boys. Not all, however, were eligible to serve during the war. Born in 1934, Tom was much too young. Bill, who made his appearance in the world in January 1928, was not quite of age for the wartime draft; he did not turn eighteen until five months after Japan announced its surrender in August 1945. Not long after that, on April 15, 1946, Bill enlisted in the Army. Technically, because of Presidential Proclamation 2714, signed by President Harry S. Truman, anyone who wore the uniform between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946 can be identified as a World War II veteran. Using those dates, one could theoretically classify Bill as another McCleaf son who served in World War II. After his active-duty time in the Army, Bill enlisted in the Maryland National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve, from which he retired as a colonel.<sup>200</sup>

Based upon the standard dates assigned to World War II, four McCleaf sons fought in that global conflict. Their service began in 1941, and it continued through 1945. Each of Annie and Frank's sons enlisted while most men were drafted, a fact the family today points to with pride. A McCleaf boy served in each of the major branches of the armed forces--the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps. Still, Annie, as their mother, was not pleased when her sons left for basic training or boot camp. Today, Tom remembers, "My mother tried to keep them out." Bob served the longest; he joined the Army on February 2, 1941 and was not discharged until August 22, 1945. Paul chose the USMCR in November 1942. John enlisted in the Navy on March 14, 1944. John's enlistment must have particularly worried Annie because of when he chose to sign up. By March 1944, the McCleafs knew that the USMC had declared Paul MIA (the "killed in action" telegram did not arrive until April). Unknown to anyone back in Rouzerville, Paul had been executed just nine

days before John enlisted. John was discharged in May 1946. Frank, Jr. also chose the Navy, enlisting on November 14, 1944; he was discharged in March 1946.<sup>201</sup>

The McCleaf home in Rouzerville displayed a Blue Star Banner in a window. Such service banners originated in World War I, and they reappeared in World War II. Families placed a small cloth banner with the colors red, white, and blue in a window. They could be manufactured or handmade. A wide, red border framed the banner on all four sides. A rectangular white block was sewn in the middle of the banner. Inside of that, a blue star stood to represent one member of the family who served in the military. If more than one person did so, multiple stars were sewn in the white center. If a son or daughter died in service, a gold star was placed over a blue star. Below is a picture of the McCleaf service banner, in possession of Tom McCleaf today. It is a visible representation of his brothers' wartime service as a soldier, a Marine, and two sailors. But most prominently, the gold star in the banner represents the family's ultimate sacrifice, their loss of Paul.



The McCleaf family's Blue Star Banner

American military deaths in World War II totaled over 400,000, of which approximately 20,000 were Marines. Their families understand that their loved one died in “the line of duty,” as more than one telegram would have reported. Paul’s family knows the basic reason behind his January 14, 1944 mission--his squadron helped to prosecute the air war over Rabaul. It was no minor campaign. Rabaul was the greatest “fortress” Japan held in the South Pacific. To safeguard shipping and communication lines, and to blunt Rabaul’s ability to strike at advancing Allied forces, the enemy base had to be “neutralized.” U.S. air missions began two months after America’s entry into the war, and they did not end until the day before Japan announced its willingness to surrender. The apex of the air war over Rabaul can be dated from January 1944 through March 1944, the exact months when Paul’s life dramatically changed.

### *The Air War Over Rabaul--Conclusions*

Eighteen months passed between Paul’s death and Japan’s signing on September 2, 1945 of a formal, unconditional surrender document. The bombing campaign over Rabaul continued throughout those eighteen months, as did the suffering of the POWs at Rabaul.

Allies mounted the bombing campaign early in 1942 when Japan invaded and seized Rabaul from the Australians. United States aircraft first dropped their bombs over Simpson Harbor on February 23, 1942. American planes continued to do so throughout the war, even after Rabaul was effectively cut off from the rest of Japan’s forces. The USMC mounted the last strike of the war on August 9, 1945. That date coincided with the dropping of the second atomic bomb on a city in mainland Japan. (The first one was dropped on August 6<sup>th</sup>; Japan announced it would accept Allied peace terms on August 10<sup>th</sup>.) As explained earlier, the major phase in the campaign to isolate Rabaul and make its bases inoperative began early in 1944. Immediately after Paul died, as one author described it, “The Allies kept the pressure on Rabaul, launching missions almost every day in the last three weeks of March, weather permitting. That month Japanese shipping nearly disappeared from the harbor, although heavy barge traffic kept the garrison supplied at something above starvation level.”<sup>202</sup>



B-25 Mitchell bombers over Simpson Harbor

One of the squadrons that bombed Rabaul in March 1944 was VMB-413. Paul's best friend, Irish Smith, joined that squadron five months later when he arrived in the Pacific Theater. It was the first Marine Corps medium-bomber squadron. By the middle of the summer in 1944, Allied commanders believed Rabaul was no longer a threat. Still, as one World War II Marine Corps officer observed, "For the rest of the war, however, it was subjected to a rigid aerial and naval blockade to continue its neutralization and weaken the will of its garrison." After his arrival in the Pacific, Irish Smith flew missions over Rabaul. His squadron continued to strike the Japanese base until the war was over in August 1945.<sup>203</sup>

It is not surprising that Paul and Irish's squadrons bombed Rabaul. Among the Allies, Australian, New Zealand, and Royal Indian Air Force units struck Rabaul. But the bombing campaign was the primary responsibility of the United States. And more than U.S. Army or Navy aircraft, Marine Corps planes bombed Rabaul. Marine Corps squadrons flew 14,718 missions. That was over half of the Allied missions against Rabaul. Eight dive-bomber squadrons (such as Paul's) participated, as did four medium-bomber units (such as Irish's squadron). After the war, the United States Strategic Bombing Survey calculated the effectiveness of the air campaign against Rabaul. Among its conclusions were the following. The air war had:

- eliminated Japanese air power with the destruction of over 800 planes which led to Japan's decision to withdraw its air defense from Rabaul
- destroyed 154 large cargo vessels, 70 small cargo ships, 517 barges, and 4 submarines in Rabaul's waters; the air war demolished so many port installations that 60% of Simpson Harbor could not be navigated because of sunken wreckage
- killed at least 4,700 members of the Japanese garrison
- eliminated 94 anti-aircraft weapons and coastal guns
- demolished ground installations
- destroyed 6 radar units and a central Army radio station
- wiped-out 888 vehicles
- laid waste to large quantities "of all types of stocks, including two-thirds of the Army's food supply"

The Allied air campaign was, therefore, extremely effective. And because of that fact, it continued to impact the treatment of POWs after Paul died, just as it had in the weeks leading up to his death. As difficult as it may be to believe, conditions, already horrific, worsened in the eighteen months after Paul's execution.<sup>204</sup>

*POWs at Rabaul,  
More Deaths Before Liberation*

After a few weeks at the Tunnel Hill POW Camp, the kempeitai moved the POWs to a new location. The prisoners called it "Death Valley." Survivor James McMurria explained they used that phrase "because of the growing number of guys succumbing to death by starvation, disease, and neglect." According to McMurria,

most slipped into a coma, lingering “for as long as a week.” Prisoners continued to die as the spring of 1944 gave way to the summer of 1944. Survivor McMurria tells us that the number of prisoners who died never really let up. “During that summer, we lost our friends at a rate of about one a week for several months and the number of survivors was down to around twenty.” That number decreased even more as the next months went by. McMurria noted in his memoir that late in 1944 and early 1945, “No prisoner weighed more than a hundred pounds and someone died every month.” Paul’s pilot, Harold Tuck, became one of those statistics in November 1944.<sup>205</sup>

Harold’s last weeks were especially agonizing ones. Survivor Jose Holquin believed he suffered more than any other prisoner. In his memoir, Survivor Joe Nason gave a detailed account of Harold’s last weeks. According to Nason, Harold’s condition declined early in November. He suffered from beri-beri, but even worse, in Nason’s opinion, was the dysentery that plagued him. Nason wrote of Harold, “His stomach reached the point where it could digest little food, and most of what he ate simply passed through his ravaged body without nurturing it.” When Harold’s dysentery affected the water and food allotments of the other POWs, resentment seemed to have replaced any pity they felt toward him. Harold reached a point where he could not make it to the *benjo*, or toilet. The other prisoners used their water, in Nason’s words, “to clean up after Tuck.” The kempeitai announced that food rations for every POW would be cut in half until the dysentery some of the prisoners were experiencing disappeared. In Nason’s recollection, the other prisoners helped Harold get to the *benjo* “on an hourly basis.” If Harold could not make it in time, the others used their limited water ration to wash away evidence of any “accident.” The POWs knew that if the kempeitai thought that the dysentery was continuing, the rationing would continue, too. After two days of covering up how ill Harold was, Nason reported that the prisoners’ subterfuge had been successful--the Japanese restored their rice ration. Still, as Nason explained, Harold “pleaded” with the other POWs for more food.<sup>206</sup>

For whatever reasons, Nason appeared to harbor resentment towards Tuck. “Many of the other prisoners had starved to death, but they had done so quietly,” Nason wrote. “As Tuck lingered on,” Nason explained, “he intensified his hungry crying and begging...for which there was no relief.” Nason admitted that as he and other POWs listened to Tuck, they saw in him a possible, future reflection of themselves. They understood they could become as ill as Harold was and suffer as he did. Rather than show empathy, however, Nason for one showed insensitivity. He described Harold as “the moaning and whining Tuck.” Harold cried out for his mother. He invoked the name of Jesus, too. But Harold’s very last words, on November 12, 1944, concerned his home state. He called out the title of a song. Nason recorded the following as the last words Harold spoke before he died--“Jesus, I’ve got to get out of this place. Carry me back to ole Virginny.” Realistically, Harold Tuck was such a long, long way from home.<sup>207</sup>

Survivor McMurria recalled just nine prisoners alive in the camp as the summer of 1945 neared. Actions on the part of the kempeitai, which the POWs believed signaled an approaching Allied victory, brought the prisoners hope. But two of their small group died on August 1<sup>st</sup>, just two weeks before Japan surrendered. Their deaths, in McMurria's recollection, "devastated our thin optimism." The few survivors feared they would be killed by the Japanese. "With only seven emaciated prisoners left out of seventy-six," McMurria asked, "what incentive would our captors have in delivering this motley group to the victorious Allies?" The POWs knew that if they were killed, "no evidence of the conditions under which we had lived would remain...Extreme anxiety gripped us for two weeks..." Then, on August 14<sup>th</sup>, the camp commander indicated, without saying it, that the war was over, and, again without saying it, Japan had lost. The Survivors left Rabaul on September 7, 1945. A launch took them out to an Australian destroyer in Simpson Harbor. James McMurria ended his memoir acknowledging that he and the other Survivors were leaving behind them "the rubble of Rabaul."<sup>208</sup>

It is a descriptive and dramatic phrase. The destruction caused by the Allied air war would have been visible. As McMurria observed, the Survivors were leaving behind such "rubble." They were leaving behind, too, the remains of fellow airmen who did not survive imprisonment. As McMurria had described their fate, POWs at Rabaul died of, "starvation, disease, and neglect." The Japanese executed others. Paul McCleaf appears to have been in this last group.

In 1948, three years after the Rabaul Survivors left New Britain, the USMC notified Paul's family that a box containing his ashes had been found. The ashes were buried, with military honors, at a national cemetery in the United States two years later. In a way, Paul finally came home, too.

## Epilogue

When World War II ended with the Japanese surrender in August 1945, the McCleaf family knew only a few facts as to why Paul was not coming home. The initial February 1944 telegram from the USMC to Annie notified the family that Paul was MIA after his plane was involved in a midair collision. Two months later, however, in April 1944, the Commandant's office sent another telegram to update Paul's status--the Corps now designated him as "killed in action." A letter that soon followed shared the location where Paul had died, "in the New Britain area." That was the extent of what the McCleafs knew about what had happened to Paul--the USMC declared him dead, and his death occurred somewhere around the island of New Britain. Those were the key facts, really the only facts, the McCleafs knew as Americans celebrated the end of World War II.<sup>209</sup>

*The First Month After War's End,  
Stories in the News*

Early in September 1945, when Survivors of Rabaul were beginning their long journey home, newspapers throughout the United States ran stories that mentioned the island of New Britain and the town of Rabaul. Such articles may have attracted the attention of Annie McCleaf. As Paul's mother, she, more than any other family member, would have been searching for answers as to what exactly had happened to her son. Both of her surviving children, Maryann and Tom, remember that the family subscribed to a newspaper published in Washington, D.C. They believe it may have been the *Washington Times-Herald* or *The Washington Post*. Such papers contained not only national but international news. The articles that one imagines her reading fell into two categories.<sup>210</sup>

The first were stories about the Japanese surrender in the Southwest Pacific, in the very area where the McCleaf family knew that Paul's plane had gone down and where, they had been told, he had died. Allentown, Pennsylvania's *The Morning Call* ran a brief announcement in its September 4, 1945 edition that mentioned both Rabaul and New Britain. Readers learned that Australian and Japanese envoys planned to meet "outside Rabaul" to plan for the surrender of "New Britain, New Ireland, and the Solomons." The formal surrender document would be signed on board a British aircraft carrier "off Rabaul harbor." The next day, an Associated Press (AP) story referred to New Britain in its title. A Lancaster, Pennsylvania newspaper ran the story. Written by a reporter out of Sydney, Australia, the article shared details on the surrender, to the Australian military, of 89,000 Japanese on New Britain.<sup>211</sup>

But it was an International News Service (INS) story that ran on September 8, 1945 that would have especially interested Annie. As a mother, she clung to the hope that Paul was still alive. Her son Tom and daughter Maryann attest to this fact. If Paul was not dead, could he have been held these last eighteen months as a POW? The INS article explained that Australian troops would, in a few days, reoccupy Rabaul. The same story contained this news, too--"The search for war prisoners continued throughout the already occupied regions of Japan and with the rescue parties were so-called 'atrocious officers' compiling first-hand reports of conditions in the Jap camps for future war criminal trials." The Survivors of Rabaul gave affidavits after the war for this purpose. While war crime trials took place, one prominent military scholar drew this conclusion about such proceedings in the Pacific--"To impose retribution on all those guilty of barbarous acts would have required tens of thousands of executions, for which the Allies lacked stomach [sic]. Very few Japanese were called to account for their deeds in China and South-East Asia."<sup>212</sup>

The second type of articles that might have drawn Annie's attention announced the return home of men who had been POWs. One who received ample coverage was the Marine ace, Pappy Boyington. A September 1, 1945 AP story carried the headline in the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania newspaper, "'Pappy' Boyington Is Found Alive." Until he was liberated, Americans believed the famous pilot had died when his plane went down over Rabaul on January 3, 1944. This story would have

interested Annie for more than one reason. Like all Americans who kept up on the news, she knew Boyington was in Marine Corps Air, as Paul had been. Articles on Boyington would have mentioned New Britain, where Boyington and Paul's planes went down. This September 1<sup>st</sup> story was the first of more than one article on Boyington that appeared in newspapers. A reporter who wrote a later one interviewed Boyington's mother, Mrs. Grace Hallenbeck of Okanogan, Washington. She never gave up hope that her son would come home. Annie would have read and re-read one line in this AP story--"She frequently expressed to newspapermen her belief that her son would come back, although she never heard from him directly or indirectly." Boyington's Marine Air status, his time on New Britain, and his mother's expectation that she would see her son again would have attracted Annie to this story.<sup>213</sup>



Boyington arrives in San Francisco, September 1945

But there were also other articles that would have caught her attention, especially ones on POWs who were now home in the States. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* announced that PFC James K. Cavanaugh, whose family lived on Market Street, had been liberated from a camp near Tokyo. Cavanaugh had been with the Army Air Forces at Clark Field in the Philippines on December 7, 1941. Annie could have also read stories of United States civilians held by the Japanese as POWs. The same *Philadelphia Inquirer* article shared news of the release from a prison camp of what was probably a missionary family--the Reverend Charles H. Reinbrecht, his wife, and their two children. The mother-in-law of the minister lived on E. Broad Street in Philadelphia. If only Annie had seen the Pittsburgh article on liberated "Aviation Radioman 2/c John Bezer Kepeochia of Greensburg," she could have contacted Kepeochia. He was one of the seven Rabaul Survivors, and his family lived outside of Pittsburgh. But the article was not one that targeted a national audience. The story consisted of just two short paragraphs, and it focused on Kepeochia, a local man. Probably, the newspaper the McCleafs subscribed to did not carry the article. The foregoing stories are representative of ones that appeared throughout September 1945, the first month after the war ended. If the newspaper the McCleaf

family read did not contain them, they carried others like them that shared news of the Japanese surrender at Rabaul on the island of New Britain and stories of American POWs coming home.<sup>214</sup>

Of all the September 1945 articles that appeared in newspapers, the one that Annie should have read was published at the end of the month, on the 27<sup>th</sup>. It was the INS article where reporter Lee Van Atta interviewed three Rabaul Survivors, Lieutenants James McMurria, Alphonse Quinones, and Jose Holquin. A headline similar to the one printed in the newspaper published in Connellsville, Pennsylvania would have gotten Annie's attention--"Prisoners At Rabaul Plead With Japs To Kill Them." The three airmen shared in detail their experiences as POWs at Rabaul. But again, all that Annie and the family knew at that time about Paul was that the military had declared Paul dead, having lost his life "in the New Britain area." We do not know if the newspaper the McCleaf family subscribed to published the INS interview. If it did, the article would have been painful for Annie to have read.<sup>215</sup>

September 1945 began with front page stories on Japan's formal surrender. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the ceremony took place in Tokyo Bay on the United States battleship *USS Missouri*. American naval ships and planes filled the bay and the sky above. Annie would have read about that historic moment, but the celebration others felt was undoubtedly subdued for her. Paul was not coming home, at least that is what the USMC had told her eighteen months earlier. Still, Annie probably thought, maybe she could one day receive the same news Pappy Boyington's mother recently received. Perhaps the Commandant's office was wrong, perhaps Paul was alive and would be coming home. Annie never gave up that hope for as long as she lived.

### *Searching For Answers*

In the postwar years, Annie searched for answers on the question of Paul's fate after the January 14, 1944 midair collision that forced him to parachute out of his plane. Her son Tom explains, "She tried everything in her power to find out what happened to him." Today, we do not know exactly when Annie began her search for answers. The McCleaf family papers contain evidence of one letter she wrote to the USMC and another to one of the Rabaul Survivors. Paul's brother Bill looked for answers, as well; he wrote at least two Survivors. We also have the memories of Annie's daughter Maryann and son Tom. They recall a mother who found solace in her religion, in an organization of other mothers who had lost sons in the war, and in one particular mother who identified more than others with Annie's quest for information. Annie even consulted a Ouija board.<sup>216</sup>

What follows are merely some of the ways in which Annie tried to piece together the story of what happened to Paul after his plane went down. It is by no means a comprehensive look at her actions. Rather, it is what we know from the documents that survive her and from the memories of two of her children who are still here to share their recollections. Annie lived until 1981. "Until she died," Tom explains, "she never believed he was dead." Maryann echoes that thought. "My

mother, she never believed it [that Paul had been killed]. Even when she died, she still thought he'd come back." For thirty-seven years, Anne thus lived with the hope that one day Paul would come home. It would have been difficult to "move on" for several reasons. One centered on a government check she received every thirty days as Paul's designated next-of-kin. It was in the amount of \$51.80, the monthly payout on the military life insurance policy Paul took out after he enlisted.<sup>217</sup>

### *Annie's Support System*

Annie did not want for emotional support in her loss. She had, of course, her family, immediate and extended. Most prominently, she had her children. They all remained in or near Franklin County after the war. We also know she found comfort in her faith. Her son Tom characterizes Annie as "very religious. She attended church regularly." Maryann remembers well their Methodist church in Rouzerville. Annie would have found strength in her faith. She also would have found support in an organization she joined whose membership was limited to a handful of women who sent children off to serve in the United States military--the Gold Star Mothers. Founded during World War I, its members were American mothers who lost their sons and daughters in the war. During the First World War, the group initially met to comfort each other. Their name derived from the Gold Star that replaced the Blue Star on service banners. The organization reappeared once the United States entered World War II. Annie had a service banner hanging in her window, one blue star on a red and white banner to represent each son in military service. After Paul's death, Annie put a gold star over one of the blue stars. Maryann and Tom remember that Annie attended meetings of the local Gold Star Mothers in Waynesboro. Tom recalls the group met in the American Legion Hall. For years, he drove her to the gatherings.<sup>218</sup>



Four of Annie's surviving sons--left to right, Bill, Tom, John, and Frank. Bob is not pictured.

Legion Auxiliary Has Annual Dinner Meeting



GOLD STAR MOTHERS ARE GUESTS AT ANNUAL DINNER

RH Photo By W. J. Davis

They are, left to right, front row: Mrs. Annie McCleaf, Mrs. Charles Buhrman, Mrs. Alma Butler, Mrs. Rebecca Cordell, Mrs. Boyd Burgan, auxiliary president, Mrs. Allison Little, Mrs. Lena Doyle, Mrs. William Christman; back row, Mrs. Ruth Engle, Mrs. J. E. Jones, Mrs. Ada Moore, Mrs. Goldie Rowe, Mrs. Elva Bumbaugh, Mrs. Jacob Monn, Mrs. Bertha Recard.

From Tom McCleaf's album. His mother, Annie, is in the bottom row, on the extreme left.



Gold Star Mothers honored

Shown above are the Gold Star Mothers who were present to be honored last evening when the annual dinner was held at the American Legion Home by the Auxiliary. Shown above left to right in front, Mrs. Ruth Engle, Mrs. Elizabeth Monn and Mrs. Marie Carson; rear, Mrs. Alson Little, Mrs. Lena Doyle, Mrs. William Christman, Mrs. John E. Jones, Mrs. Mary Buhrman and Mrs. Annie McCleaf. Approximately 50 persons attended the event. Dr. Ethel Brindle showed slides of her travels following the dinner.

Annie is on the extreme right.

Annie found support, too, in one particular member of the American Gold Star Mothers. She was Bertha Mae Tuck, Harold Tuck's mother. (Annie and Bertha shared the middle name "Mae.") We do not know when the two women first communicated with each other. Maryann believes Bertha contacted Annie first. Once the two mothers connected, in the words of Paul's brother Tom, "They corresponded all the time." Sometimes they visited, Annie traveling the 220-some miles south to Lynchburg, Virginia or Bertha coming north to Rouzerville. Annie was five years older than Bertha. Unlike Annie, though, Bertha had just two children, Harold and a younger son. Born in 1930, the latter was too young to serve in World War II, a fact that the Tucks must have been grateful for after losing Harold. Annie and Bertha's friendship, borne out of tragedy, lasted until their deaths, Annie in 1981 and Bertha in 1983. Tom remembers that his mother and Bertha went, together, to fortune tellers to find out more about what had happened to their sons. Maryann recalls that, too. When asked about the fortune tellers and her mother's visits to them, Maryann remarked, "I think she did most anything to get information."<sup>219</sup>



Annie's Gold Star Pin. Authorized by an Act of Congress in 1947, the pin was given to direct family members of servicemen and women who died in the war. Paul's parents and siblings each received one, according to Tom McCleaf. He continues to wear his to this day.

Maryann recalls Annie and Bertha using a Ouija board when Bertha visited, but she also did so when Bertha was not there. In fact, Annie played the boardgame often, sometimes with Maryann. Tom remembers his mother's attraction to the game, too. The Ouija board first appeared in 1891. The idea for it was rooted in the spiritualism popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when people tried to contact those who had died. Some believed a Ouija board possessed magical powers. The first advertisements for it announced that the board could answer a player's questions "about the past, present and future." The manufacturer touted the gameboard as one that could be a link "between the known and unknown." On the board itself, letters of the alphabet appeared, in order, over the numbers zero through nine. The word "yes" was painted on one top corner and the word "no" on the other corner. A person playing the game put her or his fingertips on a teardrop-shaped object called a "planchette" that supposedly moved on the board in response to a question the player posed. Did a spirit move the planchette, or did the player who asked the question gently do so? The planchette might land on the "yes," the "no," or letters of the alphabet to spell out the answer to a question. Due to the nature of the Ouija board, one author concluded that it became very popular in uncertain times.<sup>220</sup>

Many Americans played the boardgame in the years after World War I. The loss of American lives in the war, and the deaths of many in the influenza pandemic that seemed to accompany the war, created a broad audience for a game that offered a

way to contact those who had died. The famous artist Norman Rockwell featured a couple playing with the Ouija board in his illustration for the cover of the May 1920 *Saturday Evening Post*. Someone playing the boardgame was not necessarily trying to contact a person who had died, though. The board could, if one believed its advertisements, answer questions posed to it. These queries might focus on relationships, jobs, and choices a person was confronting or decisions that had to be made. The Ouija board became a popular game during the Great Depression of the 1930s as, in all probability, Americans asked it about their individual futures. World War II offered another opportunity for people to believe in its spiritual powers or its ability to answer questions. In a five-month period in 1944, one New York department store sold 50,000 Ouija boardgames. That was the year Paul went missing and died. Could Annie have purchased the board then? Paul's brother Tom believes his mother bought the board specifically to contact spirits to get information on Paul.<sup>221</sup>



### *More Letters from and to the USMC*

Two significant letters survive from 1946 that give us insight into what must have been going through Annie's mind in the country's first, full year of peace. One letter, from the office of the Marine Corps' Commandant, is dated March 20, 1946. It was written two years to the month after Paul's death. The letter contained three new pieces of information that related to Annie's search for answers. The Office of the Commandant informed Paul's parents that their son had been "captured by the Japanese military forces on 15 January, 1944. He died in a Japanese prisoner of war camp at Rabaul on 5 March, 1944 during an aerial bombing." First, the USMC believed Paul had been "captured" the day after his plane went down. If that information was correct, did Paul and Harold Tuck spend the day and night of January 14<sup>th</sup> in the water, or did they made it to an island where they were taken the next day, the 15<sup>th</sup>, by the Japanese? Or is the January 15<sup>th</sup> date a mistake? What we do know is that Paul's plane went down on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Second, the letter informed the McCleafs that Paul died as a POW; he was not “killed in action on 14 January, 1944” as previously reported. That made the earlier news accounts of POWs held by the Japanese even more relevant to the McCleafs. Those stories had been all over the newspapers six months before this letter arrived in Rouzerville. No one would have easily forgotten the details of what that imprisonment meant for Americans held by the Japanese. It could be that Annie and others in the family shuddered when they put the announcement that Paul had been a POW together with what they had read months before on how the enemy treated prisoners.

The third piece of new information the Commandant’s letter shared with the McCleafs was the manner of Paul’s death--he died in “an aerial bombing attack.” This statement could have been rooted in the Japanese story that Paul and other POWs died as the result of an Allied bombing strike on a beach where they awaited transfer to an island off the coast of New Britain. This probably was not true. The *kempeitai*, in all likelihood, executed Paul.<sup>222</sup>

A second letter from 1946 exists among the McCleaf family papers. It is dated December 26, 1946, the day after Christmas. Obviously, the Commandant’s office in Washington, D.C. did not take an extended holiday. The letter was a reply to one Annie had written to the office on December 6<sup>th</sup>. The holidays and family would have especially been on her mind. Annie missed Paul every day, and even more so at that time of year. We do not have Annie’s December 6<sup>th</sup> letter. But from the Marine Corps’ December 26<sup>th</sup> reply to it, we know that Annie had inquired about Paul’s remains. “I am sorry to inform you,” a captain wrote, “that your son’s remains have not been recovered.” The Marine officer promised, however, that “should your son’s remains be located at some future date, you will be promptly notified.” That happened two years later.<sup>223</sup>

#### *Letters to Rabaul Survivors*

A few months before Annie wrote to the Commandant’s office in Washington, D.C. to inquire about Paul’s remains, she sent a letter to Rabaul Survivor James McMurria. We do not know if she contacted others who were imprisoned at Rabaul, and we do not know how she obtained contact information for McMurria. Bertha Tuck may have shared his address with Annie. (When McMurria wrote Annie, he referred to a letter he had written to Bertha, so Harold’s mother would have had McMurria’s address.) Or perhaps Annie read and saved the INS interview a year earlier with McMurria and two other Survivors. She could have used it to contact the three ex-POWs.

While we do not have Annie’s letter to McMurria, the McCleaf family has his letter to Annie dated October 16, 1946. It did not contain as much information on Paul as Annie would have hoped for. McMurria empathized with Annie after he apologized for not answering her immediately. He felt bad that he had received her letter on a Monday and, although only two days had passed, he “had absolutely no

time since then to answer you although I know what your anxiety must be [like].” McMurria shared that he “was able to give Mrs. Tuck some consolation because I was with her son for a good long time while I knew your son only slightly.” McMurria explained to Annie that he was with Paul only from January to March 1944. “I wish I could be more of a comfort to you than I am, but unfortunately, I have but little to offer.” In his letter to Annie, McMurria told her about the crowded cave, the enemy’s list of POWs who were taken away from the main group of prisoners, and the subsequent disappearance of Paul and the others. McMurria added that he asked the guards about the missing airmen. The answer he received from the Japanese was that Paul and the others were killed in an American bombing raid while they awaited evacuation to a nearby island. In his last paragraph, McMurria attempted to put Paul’s death in perspective. Perhaps he also hoped that what he wrote would bring some comfort to Annie. “I’m sure you must be proud of your boy in spite of the sorrow this situation has brought you. He died performing his duty for his country.” There was that word again, Annie may have thought--“duty.” The USMC, too, had stressed that Paul died carrying out his “duty.”<sup>224</sup>

Annie was not the only member of the McCleaf family who looked for answers as to Paul’s fate. Her son Bill contacted at least two Rabaul Survivors. One was Pappy Boyington. The press covered his story extensively during and after the war--his feats as a USMC fighter pilot, his record as an ace, his MIA status, and Boyington’s presumed death on his last mission over Rabaul. But the ending of the war added new chapters to his story--his liberation from a POW camp in Japan and subsequent return home. Tom McCleaf remembers very clearly that his brother Bill wrote Boyington, asking about Paul. We do not know when Bill did that; it could have been soon after the war or some years later. Bill received a reply, but Boyington’s letter is not among the McCleaf family papers today.<sup>225</sup>

What the family still has today, though, are three other letters that relate to Bill’s attempt to find out what had happened to Paul. An exchange of letters between Bill, a magazine editor, and Rabaul Survivor Jose Holquin grew out of an April 1987

article in *Reader’s Digest*. Perhaps the magazine’s cover first attracted Bill’s attention. It had the drawing of an Army plane engulfed in flames heading downward. The phrase “Lt. Holquin’s Final Mission, p. 83” appeared next to the drawing. The article itself was not written by Holquin, but by another person who interviewed the second lieutenant. Holquin’s plane crashed in the jungles of New Britain in June 1943 on a mission to bomb one of the airfields at Rabaul. Out of a ten-man crew, five died in the crash. Holquin bailed out before the crash, and the Japanese captured him. Most of the article dealt with Holquin’s determination to return to the crash site so he could recover the remains of his crewmembers, which he did. Holquin made three trips to New Britain in the early 1980s.

That was the focus of the *Reader’s Digest* story. It mentioned Rabaul only in a few sentences. Readers undoubtedly admired Holquin’s dedication to his fellow



crewmembers, but what Bill McCleaf wanted was information on Rabaul. He specifically was interested in any recollections Holquin had of Paul. Bill knew from the story that Holquin had been imprisoned at Rabaul in the two months when Paul had been there. Bill thus contacted the magazine to ask for Holquin's address.<sup>226</sup>

In a letter to *Reader's Digest* dated May 30, 1987, Bill explained the reason behind his request. "I had a brother who was in Marine Aviation aboard an SBD Douglas Dive Bomber which was shot down by Japanese fire on 14 Jan 1944 while on a strike to Rabaul, New Britain and captured by the Japanese the following day, 15 January 1944." Bill followed this by sharing what little he knew about Paul's fate--that Paul had been a prisoner, that he had been killed on March 5, 1944, and that his body had been cremated. Bill ended the letter with a heartfelt plea. "I would ever be grateful if you could furnish Joe Holquin's address to enable me to write him and find out if he perhaps knew my brother and any other information he may be able to furnish." Once *Reader's Digest* received Bill's letter, a "correspondence editor" quickly sent him a short reply. She promised to forward his letter to Holquin.<sup>227</sup>

Jose Holquin wrote a detailed, two-page letter to Bill McCleaf on June 15, 1987. Yes, he had known Paul, but only "briefly." As McMurria had written to Annie, Paul's short time at Rabaul did not allow the Survivors to know him well. Still, Holquin's letter to Bill contained details on Paul that the McCleafs might not have been aware of even forty-three years after Paul had been captured and killed. Holquin began by first explaining the context of Paul's mission. He devoted a paragraph to the air war over Rabaul at the time Paul flew his mission and after he became a prisoner. "In January and February, 1944, Rabaul was under heavy attack by United States Air Forces: Army, Marine, Navy. By early February, the number of American airmen being shot down and captured was growing steadily due to the increased air activity. It was under these circumstances that your brother was shot down in the immediate vicinity of Rabaul where hundreds of gun emplacements and several important airfields and naval installations were located."<sup>228</sup>

The next paragraph gave Bill more details on Paul himself. "Your brother and another Marine Flyer by the name of Ronnie Mull were confined in prison cells located across the street from where I and about 25 'older' prisoners were being held. The dispensary was located on our side of the street and it was near there that I first saw your brother and other 'new' prisoners being treated for minor wounds, cuts, etc. I was on a work detail at the time and was able to ask them (there were four 'new' prisoners at the dispensary) their names which I memorized as McCleaf, Ronnie Mull, Boyington and Col. Unruh." Holquin then told Bill that the Japanese transferred Boyington and Unruh to Japan in February 1944. They survived the war, he added.

Holquin proceeded to explain the move from Rabaul to the Tunnel Hill Cave. (This was an expanded version of what Survivor James McMurria had written to Annie in October 1946.) "On the morning of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1944, Rabaul was bombed into ruins by American planes. All the prisoners, including your brother, survived

this attack by virtue of being placed in an air raid shelter by the Japs. That afternoon we were taken into the nearby mountains and placed in a large tunnel. Your brother and about 39 other POWs were removed from there the following night and the night after that—March 3 & 4. According to what our captors told us when the war ended in August 1945, your brother and the others were taken to Talili Bay on the north coast of Rabaul for removal to Watom Island which was located only 1 to 2 miles north of Rabaul. This was a relatively safe place as there were no important military targets located there.” Here, Holquin was repeating the story that the kempeitai told prisoners who asked about what happened to those separated from the main group of POWs.

Holquin followed this by a paragraph on Paul’s death. “According to what the Japanese told us, American planes bombed the tents in which the men were being held. All American and Allied prisoners as well as a large number of Japanese soldiers were killed. We were not told how they had disposed of the bodies, but we assumed they had been buried nearby. I gave all of this information to the Australian and American intelligence officers that questioned us immediately after our removal from Rabaul on September 7, 1945.”

Note that Holquin did not mention that the kempeitai may have executed the POWs taken from the cave. His omission is understandable. Holquin shared an account of how Paul died that was not as traumatic as the possibility that Paul had been executed. It is, perhaps, easier to hear details of an accidental death than of a purposeful murder. As noted earlier, Survivor McMurria and Holquin both believed the POWs had been executed. McMurria gave that explanation of the deaths in his memoir. In his 1948 affidavit before military officers, Holquin testified that the remaining POWs in the cave heard gunfire, “shortly after each group was removed from the Tunnel Hill Prisoner of War Cave.” Holquin himself, he told the officers in 1948, “heard several shots” of what he thought was “rifle fire.”

But in his letter to Bill McCleaf, Holquin chose to repeat the story he had been told by the Japanese rather than mention the possibility of death by execution. “I am quite certain that the Japanese account of how your brother died is very close to the truth.” Holquin followed that sentence with one that indirectly answered a question that the McCleafs no doubt had been thinking about--How had Paul been treated in his two months as a prisoner? The McCleafs must have been aware of the POW stories that circulated after the war. One statement in Holquin’s letter to Bill would have allayed their fears--“I never saw any prisoner systematically tortured, shot, beheaded or beaten to death.”

Holquin finished sharing details on the life of the POWs by explaining how most of them had died. “The deaths that I witnessed were due to lack of food, medicine, medical care, dysentery, berri-berri [sic], malaria and just plain neglect. Generally, our captors didn’t care whether we lived or died—especially in 1943 and 1944. By 1945, there were only a few survivors (around 10 out of 64 that were together in the cave in March of 1944). By that time, some of the Japanese tried to help us,

although the official policy was to neglect us and let us die." Maybe Holquin was trying to tell the McCleafs that Paul, in dying soon after his capture and in dying quickly in an air attack, did not have to experience the extended suffering most of the POWs endured.

Holquin explained to Bill that when the war ended, only seven "out of the original 64 prisoners [who had arrived at the Tunnel Hill Cave] were alive on August 16, 1945 when we were told the war had ended." Holquin continued, "From this small number, you can see that the odds for survival were practically nil. The odds were against your brother's survival once he was forced to bail out or ditch his airplane. The fact that I and 6 others made it is something approaching a miracle when considering the many ways by which we could have perished."

In another part of his letter, Holquin told Bill that three or four years earlier, he had come across some information on the remains of those prisoners supposedly killed on the beach. Holquin had heard that the Japanese cremated the bodies. They kept the ashes, identifying by name the prisoners to whom the ashes belonged. Holquin added, "I believe the ashes were interred near St. Louis, Missouri in the presence of their families." He was correct, and the McCleaf family, including Bill, attended the ceremony.

#### *A Burial at a National Cemetery*

In November 1948, the McCleaf family once again received a letter from the office of the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. It had been three years since the war had formally ended. A colonel informed the McCleafs that a box containing the ashes of twenty-eight servicemen had been found at Rabaul. They represented the remains of twenty-three Americans and five Australians. Japanese records, according to the letter, indicated the men died as the result of an aerial bombing attack. The Japanese had written down the names of the Americans and Australians whose ashes were supposedly in the box. Paul's name was on the list. The remains had been comingled, however, "making individual identification of the ashes impossible." The ashes were divided into two groups. The United States government received three-quarters of the ashes, and the Australian government received one-quarter of them. At a future date, the colonel explained, the remains would be interred at a national cemetery.<sup>229</sup>

Ten months after the letter from the Commandant's office, another letter arrived at the McCleaf home. This time, however, it was from the Department of the Army, specifically the Office of the Quartermaster General. That office contained the Army Graves Registration Service. It handled the remains of service personnel who died in the war regardless of their branch of service. A colonel in the Graves Registration Service informed Paul's family that individual identification of the remains was impossible. As such, the ashes would remain together for a group burial. The Graves Registration Service placed the ashes in several caskets. In September 1949, when the letter was written, the remains were interred at the

United States Armed Forces Cemetery in Manila. The Army colonel whose signature appeared on the letter repeated what the USMC had told the McCleafs a year before--final interment would take place in a national cemetery in the United States. The letter further informed the McCleafs that the Army chose the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. The Army explained its choice. "This particular National Cemetery was selected in order that no undue burden of travel might be placed on any one family wishing to attend the services." In other words, it was centrally located for all the families.<sup>230</sup>

Given his family's history, the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery is a fitting resting place for Paul's ashes. Like the McCleafs and the Hovises, the history of the cemetery dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The U.S. Army opened the Jefferson Barracks military post, that initially housed the cemetery, in 1826. At that time, it was the Army's first permanent base west of the Mississippi River. By the 1840s, Jefferson Barracks was the country's largest military establishment. In 1866, one year after the Civil War ended, the federal government established a national



cemetery on the grounds of the Jefferson Barracks military post. (The Civil War led to the creation of the national cemetery network.) While Paul was an adolescent in Rouzerville, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, one of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs paid for improvements to the cemetery, such as better interior roads, walkways, and concrete curbs. After

World War II, the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery became the primary, final resting place for group interments where individual remains could not be identified. One such burial was of 123 American POWs massacred by the Japanese in December 1944 on an island in the Philippines named Palawan. More than geography may have factored into the selection of the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery for the POW ashes from Rabaul.<sup>231</sup>

Early in 1950, in the San Francisco-area, the Army received the caskets containing the ashes of Paul and the other prisoners executed in March 1944. The American Graves Registration Service sent the McCleaf family a telegram--"We have been advised remains of the late Private First Class Paul F. McCleaf have arrived in the United States." A military escort accompanied the caskets from the West Coast to the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in Missouri. The superintendent there, the telegram read, would notify Paul's family as to the date and time of the service.<sup>232</sup>

The funeral service for Paul and other Americans killed on March 5, 1944 at Rabaul.

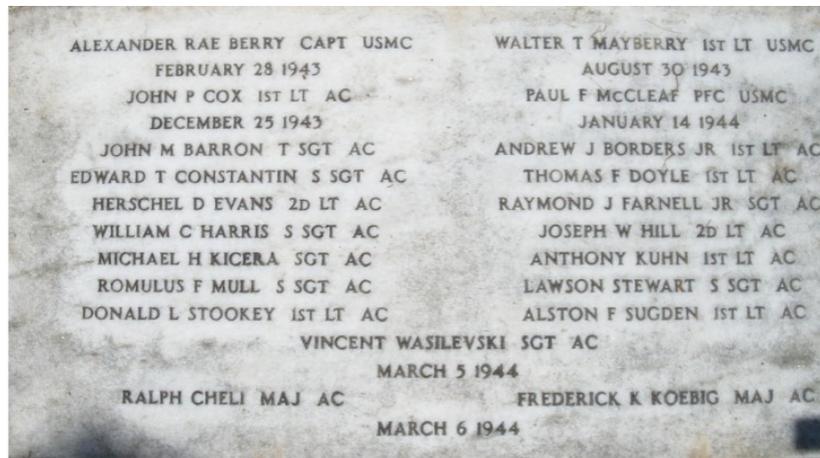


That telegram was sent on February 21, 1950. The superintendent's office at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery scheduled the funeral service for 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. Tom clearly remembers some details of the trip. Members of Paul's family traveled from Rouzerville to St. Louis--his mother Annie, brothers Bill, Frank, and Tom, and sister Maryann. The distance between Paul's hometown and the national cemetery is almost eight hundred miles. The family made the trip by car, with Bill driving them in his Oldsmobile. Once in St. Louis, they stayed overnight in a motel. Maryann recalls it had been raining. The heavy coats people wore testified to the cold, overcast day. The weather reflected the somberness of the ceremony. Photographs the McCleafs took show people milling around, probably before the service began.



Annie on extreme left, her head appearing to look toward the camera. She holds the flag that rested on one of the coffins, the one that represented Paul's remains returning home.

After the service, when family members of all the POWs had left, the caskets were buried. In Rabaul, the Japanese had written the names of twenty-eight POWs on the box that contained the ashes of prisoners killed the first week of March 1944. Most of those ashes were buried in St. Louis on that March day in 1950. Section 78 of the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery honors these servicemen as their remains rest in caskets buried in grave sites 930, 931, 932, 933, 934. A large, white stone on the ground lists the names of military service members interred there. One is identified as “Paul F. McCleaf PFC USMC.” Under his name, etched into the marker, is the date “January 14 1944.” It is the day Paul’s plane went down. From that time on, he was truly lost to his family. They never stopped wondering what had happened to Paul after the midair collision. For his mother Annie, even while she attended the burial ceremony in St. Louis, she kept hoping he was somehow still alive.<sup>233</sup>



### *Remembering and Honoring Paul McCleaf*

Names displayed in public places can help to ensure that individuals long gone are not forgotten by their communities. In Franklin County, Paul McCleaf’s name is visible to generations that never knew him or the war that took his life. Paul’s name can be seen today on the Chambersburg detachment of a national USMC service organization, on a Rouzerville memorial, and on a Waynesboro banner that honors “Hometown Heroes.” Two gravestones at the Rouzerville cemetery are the most personal tributes that exist to Paul in the community where he had been born and raised.

Chambersburg is the county seat of Franklin County. The borough is located about seventeen miles from Rouzerville. In the spring of 1947, Chambersburg residents who had ties to the USMC formed a “detachment” of a national organization named the Marine Corps League. The League itself dates to 1923 when it was founded by the legendary General John A. Lejeune. The League’s mission

statement explains that it exists “to promote the interest and to preserve traditions” of the USMC. More specifically, it serves anyone who wore “the Eagle, Globe and Anchor.” The League is also there to “strengthen the fraternity of Marines and their families.” (This purpose, in particular, was relevant to the McCleafs after losing Paul.) One of its other mission statements relates well to the culture of South Central Pennsylvania--to “foster the ideals of Americanism and patriotic volunteerism.” That describes the Franklin County where Paul grew up.<sup>234</sup>

At its founding in 1947, the Chambersburg detachment of the Marine Corps League needed a name for the local group. Organizers decided to honor Paul and one other Marine killed in the war. Private Ralph Ambrose Landis had lived in Chambersburg, where his widow and parents still resided in 1947. He enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in June 1944, three months after Paul died at Rabaul. Ralph served with the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division. He was killed in action during the Battle for Iwo Jima in March 1945. The Chambersburg group chose as its name “Landis-McCleaf Detachment, Marine Corps League.” In 1953, six years after its founding, the women’s auxiliary associated with the detachment received its charter. Annie McCleaf, Paul’s mother, became one of the trustees. Maryann, his sister, was chosen to be the senior vice-president.<sup>235</sup>



Paul’s name appears, too, on a Rouzerville memorial of those who served in World War II. It was dedicated in 1947. Approximately two hundred names are engraved on a bronze tablet mounted on a large piece of limestone. Ten names of those who died in the war are listed above the names of others who came home. Paul is one of those ten. The memorial originally stood, according to Paul’s cousin John E. N. Blair, “next to the ‘Township Building,’ where the residents of Rouzerville voted until sometime in the late-1970s.” John believes the people of Rouzerville paid for the memorial. In the words etched on the bronze plaque, the men served “For God And Country.” In June 2014, the memorial was moved to Red Run Park in Waynesboro.<sup>236</sup>

Another cousin of Paul's, Jacqueline Hovis Barlup, proved instrumental in the production of a Waynesboro Hometown Hero banner that features Paul's name and picture. The borough displays such banners in honor of residents in the area who died in service to their country. Jackie arranged for one to be printed to honor Paul, even though she never met her cousin. The banners hang for about a two-week period each year before and after Memorial Day.<sup>237</sup>

Paul's banner is the one on the left. Courtesy of *The Record Herald*.



The most endearing tributes to Paul are, fittingly, two created by his family. While they are publicly displayed, the tributes appear in a most private setting. They are the words that relate to Paul found on gravestones in Harbaugh Church Cemetery, also known simply as Harbaugh Cemetery. It is the final resting place for generations in the McCleaf and Hovis families. Not only are members of Paul's immediate family buried here, but so are some from earlier generations. Paul's maternal great-grandparents, John Hollingsworth Martin (1843-1925) and Mary Jane Martin (1843-1917), for example, are interred in the cemetery, as are his maternal grandparents, May E. Martin Hovis (1876-1945) and Charles E. Hovis (1874-1913).

Note the smaller headstone in memory of Paul, in the foreground, and the large, white MClleaf monument behind it, surrounded by flags.



The first stone is the smaller of the two. It is a replica of the white marble military headstones associated with the gravesites of servicemen and women interred in national cemeteries. Paul's brother Bill ordered it sometime before his mother's death in 1981. He wanted it to resemble, according to Tom McCleaf, one that would have identified Paul's grave at Arlington National Cemetery if Paul had been buried there. This first headstone in honor of Paul displays his name, his rank, his branch of service, the war in which he served, his birth and death dates, and the medal he received. All of those are standard entries on an upright military headstone or a flat marker. But either Bill or Annie, or perhaps both, wanted another word added. It makes this headstone more personal than a typical military one. The word is "Ditty." It is carved in smaller letters than the phrases above it that highlight Paul's military service. "Ditty" was, and remains today, the nickname by which Paul is known to his family and friends.<sup>238</sup>

IN MEMORY OF  
PAUL F. MCCLEAF  
PFC  
US MARINE CORPS  
WORLD WAR II  
AUG 9 1923  
MAR 5 1944  
PURPLE HEART  
DITTY



The second gravestone, also of white marble, is an imposing one, with a simple cross carved in its center. One could call it the family monument. The name "McCleaf" is displayed in large letters under the cross. It stands amidst other monuments with names probably known to generations of the McCleafs and Hovises. No one, in such a small community, was a stranger to others. Tom, Paul's brother, remembers that his mother arranged for this monument to be put in place. She chose the words that were carved upon it and where they would be placed. Understandably, she wanted the names of the two sons she lost, when they were much too young, carved next to her name. Paul's brother Bill, with his military background, undoubtedly helped her with the wording under Paul's name. Annie and Frank, Paul's parents, are buried in two cemetery plots over which this monument stands. Charles, who died decades before the family monument was erected, is interred in the Hovis family burial lot located elsewhere in the cemetery.<sup>239</sup>



At the bottom of the McCleaf family monument are four names--"CHARLES A." with the years "1916-1917" under his name; "ANNIE M." with "1895-1981" under her name; and "FRANK B." with "1894-1958" under his name.



The fourth name is Paul's. His name has more information carved under it than the others. With the words they chose, Annie and Bill ensured that any visitor to the cemetery knew that Paul had died as a member of the United States Marine Corps. Specifically, the family monument explains that he was part of the World War II air war fought in skies far away from Franklin County:

PFC PAUL F. USMC  
 MARINE AIR GROUP 21, V. M. S. B. 341  
 BORN AUG 9, 1923  
 KILLED IN ACTION, MARCH 5, 1944  
 RABAU, NEW BRITAIN  
 BURIED JEFFERSON BRKS., ST LOUIS, MO



Less than a year after the attack at Pearl Harbor, which brought America into World War II, Paul enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. When duty called, he answered. Unlike most who served in the war, this young man from a small Pennsylvania community did not come home. Paul Frederick McCleaf died in service to his country. Years after the war, his brother Bill arranged for a white marble, military-style headstone in Paul's honor at Harbaugh Cemetery. His mother, before her death, decided that Paul's name and information on his military service would be carved into the family gravestone next to her name. The symbolism is clear. With his name on these two monuments, Ditty had finally come home.

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Photographs of Paul and his family that appear throughout this story were provided by the McCleaf family--his sister Maryann McCleaf Potter, his brother Tom McCleaf, and his two nephews, Craig McCleaf and John McCleaf. This author is particularly indebted to Craig who took the pictures of the headstones at the Harbaugh Church Cemetery seen in the preceding, last pages of *When Duty Called*.

<sup>1</sup> Conversation between the author and members of Paul McCleaf's family for this story occurred over a one-year period, from September 2020 - September 2021. Obituary for Henry Lightner, "Oldest Man in County Is Dead," *The Perry County Democrat*, August 14, 1907, p. 3, ancestry.com (accessed September 20, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> United States immigration statistics are taken from Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York, 1994), p. 58. The statistics for Pennsylvania are from the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Pennsylvania, *Pennsylvania, A Guide to the Keystone State* (New York, 1940; 1950 edition), pp. 59, 76 (hereafter cited as WPA, *Pennsylvania*). Sid Zimman's memoir, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, is in the Pacific Theater section of the web site [wwiixperience.com](http://wwiixperience.com); pp. 91-92 are on the immigration of Sid's father.

<sup>3</sup> As examples, Paul's great-grandfather Benjamin Franklin McCleaf lived in Adams County (1870 U.S. Federal Census); Paul's father Frank McCleaf lived in Washington in Franklin County (1940 U.S. Federal Census) as well as in Liberty Township in Adams County (1900 U.S. Federal Census) as did Paul's grandfather Andrew McCleaf (1910 U.S. Federal Census). Paternal great-great grandmother Mary A Lightner and husband Henry lived in Madison (1850 U.S. Federal Census). Census records on ancestry.com; accessed September 2020.

<sup>4</sup> WPA, *Pennsylvania*, pp. 32, 59, 64, 485 (the writer quoted is one of the authors of this book); on the origin of the Scotch-Irish, see [sjsu.edu/faculty/Watkins/ScotIrish](http://sjsu.edu/faculty/Watkins/ScotIrish) (accessed September 25, 2020). For the percentage of Pennsylvania's population that was Scotch-Irish in the 1750s and 1760s, see [franklincountypa.gov/history](http://franklincountypa.gov/history) (accessed October 18, 2020). The quotation on "the bulk" of Greencastle's population is taken from WPA, *Pennsylvania*, p. 485.

<sup>5</sup> For "about" 1833 as Benjamin Franklin McCleaf's birth year, see his entry in the 1860 and 1870 United States Federal Censuses as well as his Civil War Draft Registration, (ancestry.com, accessed September 24, 2020). However, two other documents on ancestry.com identify his birth year as 1832 (the 1880 Federal Census ("about" 1832) and Find A Grave (July 8, 1832; both accessed on September 24, 2020). For Mary Jane McCleaf, see the 1900 United States Federal Census and Find A Grave; for Benjamin Franklin McCleaf, see his death certificate; the quotation is from the obituary for Henry Lightner in *The Perry County Democrat*, Aug. 14, 1907, p. 3. Henry's obituary gives his grandparents names as "Matthias and Eve Lightner" who had emigrated from Germany. However, Jacob Lightner's Find A Grave identifies them as "Johann Matthias and Eva Maria Lightner." All of these documents as well as the obituary are on ancestry.com (accessed September 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Annie's parents were Charles E. Hovis (1874-1918) and Ethna Maye Martin Hovis Benchoff (1877-1945); Ethna Maye's ("Mae's") parents were John Hollingsworth

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Martin (1843-1925) and Mary Jane Little Martin (1843-1917). See Find a Grave on ancestry.com for all of these individuals as well as an August 4, 1945 obituary for “Mrs. Ethna Maye Benchoff” on page 3 of the *Gettysburg Compiler*, also available on ancestry.com. All accessed September 2020.

<sup>7</sup> For Annie’s communities of residence, see the 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Federal Censuses for Annie Hovis. For Annie’s grandparents, see their entries on Federal Census records available on ancestry.com (all accessed September 2020). John Henry Hovis’ year of death furnished by Jacqueline Hovis Barlup, Paul’s cousin.

<sup>8</sup> See Find A Grave for John Erastus Martin, Daniel Martin, Elizabeth Martin, Henry Livers and Elizabeth Boyle (she married a “Peter Boyle” in 1809); all Find A Graves are on ancestry.com (all accessed September 2020).

<sup>9</sup> August 4, 1945 obituary for “Mrs. Ethna Maye Benchoff” on page 3 of the *Gettysburg Compiler*; U.S. Federal Census for Mary Jane Martin; Find a Grave for John Erastus Martin and Elizabeth Livers Martin; Find a Grave for Andrew Lightner McCleaf; 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Benjamin Franklin McCleaf; Find A Grave for Henry Lightner; Find A Grave for Jacob Lightner. All of these records are on ancestry.com (accessed September 2020).

<sup>10</sup> For the Michael Little born around 1796, see the 1850 United States Federal Census for Michael and his wife Mary Little. They had a son named “Michael,” born in 1845 (see the 1850 census for an entry on Michael when he was a child and see “Michael J. Little” in Find A Grave). For the Michael Little from the War for Independence, see “Michael Little” in the U.S., Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900.” All records are on ancestry.com; accessed September 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Details on Jacob Lightner’s life are taken from documents under his name on ancestry.com (accessed August 29, 2020)--the Pennsylvania Veterans Burial Cards, 1777-2012; U.S., War of 1812 Service Records, 1812-1815; and Find A Grave Memorial.

<sup>12</sup> Writers’ Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Maryland, *Maryland, A Guide to the Old Line State* (New York, 1940; 1946 edition), pp. 40-41. See above military service records, directly above, on ancestry.com for Jacob Lightner.

<sup>13</sup> For information on Frederick McIntire, see his entries on the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 United States Federal Censuses; his entry in the U.S. Army, register of Enlistments, 1798-1914; his entry in the U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865 (all on ancestry.com; accessed October 26, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> For Benjamin Franklin McCleaf’s family at the time of the Civil War, see the 1860 U.S. Federal Census for “Benjamin McCleaf” and see “Benjamin McCleaf” in the “U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865” (both on ancestry.com, accessed September 24, 2020). For units formed in PA, see [pacivilwar.com/county/franklinhistory.html](http://pacivilwar.com/county/franklinhistory.html) where more than one “McCleaf” is listed; for soldiers and their units by state; see also [nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm#sort=score+desc&q=McCleaf](http://nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm#sort=score+desc&q=McCleaf) (accessed September 2020). Information on Franklin County and Chamberburg is taken from the history section of Franklin County’s web site, [franklincountypa.gov](http://franklincountypa.gov) (accessed October 17, 2020).

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<sup>15</sup> For the dates and numbers of WW I draft registrations, see [archives.gov/research/military/ww1/draft-registration](https://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww1/draft-registration) (accessed October 8, 2020); Charles Andrew (1916-1917) Find a Grave and Frank McCleaf's WW I draft registration form (both on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), accessed September 2020).

<sup>16</sup> What Roosevelt said in the fireside chat became known as his Arsenal of Democracy speech. The entire speech can be read at [www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/WorldWar2/arsenal.htm](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/WorldWar2/arsenal.htm) (accessed September 27, 2020). More details will be shared on the WW II registration of Frank and his sons in the next chapter.

<sup>17</sup> Information on the geographical areas of Pennsylvania is taken from Penn State's *Historic Population Change in Pennsylvania: 1900 to 2010* at [pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/Data/Research-Briefs/Historic-Population-in-Pennsylvania](http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/Data/Research-Briefs/Historic-Population-in-Pennsylvania) (accessed October 16, 2020). For the growth of the coal, oil, and steel industries in the state, see *WPA, Pennsylvania*, pp. 74, 76, 77.

<sup>18</sup> The U.S. Federal Censuses for Paul's ancestors gave the county they resided in (those censuses are cited above). The populations of Franklin and Allegheny Counties are taken from Penn State's *Historic Population Change in Pennsylvania: 1900 to 2010* cited directly above.

<sup>19</sup> For the categories of Pennsylvania's incorporated municipalities, see the state's Department of Community and Economic Development web site, [dced.pa.gov/local-government/municipal-statistics/municipalities](http://dced.pa.gov/local-government/municipal-statistics/municipalities) (accessed November 2, 2020). Maryann Potter's recollections on Rouzerville are taken from an October 2020 letter from Maryann and her cousin Jacqueline Hovis Barlup to the author.

<sup>20</sup> A birth record for "Francis McCleaf" at [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) gives his birthplace as Liberty Township in Adams County. However, Frank McCleaf's WW I and WW II draft registration cards list Fairfield in Adams County as his birthplace. Since Frank entered the location of his birth on both of those documents, Fairfield is the location used here. For where Frank spent his childhood years, see his entry in the 1900 and 1910 U.S. Federal Censuses. For information on Annie's birth month and year, as well as the number of siblings she had and where they lived, see "Annie Hovis" in the 1900 and 1910 U.S. Federal Censuses. All documents cited from [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) (accessed September 2020). In an interesting coincidence, the Washington Hotel's manager in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was one Jacob Potter (1811-1885). Paul's sister Maryann married one Arnold Potter, but the two men do not appear to have been directly related. The author is indebted to LTC John E.N. Blair, J.D., U.S. Army (Ret.) for sharing information on Jacob Potter. The history section of the Frick Company's web site states that it manufactured agricultural machinery. Frank and Annie McCleaf's wedding date is taken from an April 2011 paper written by Angie McCleaf, *The McCleafs: A Patriotic Family*. Annie Hovis McCleaf's birthdate of the 26<sup>th</sup> (September 1895) is taken from "The McCleaf Family" genealogical sheet given to the author by Tom McCleaf.

<sup>21</sup> See Andrew Lightner McCleaf's death certificate on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) (accessed September 2020). Paul's grandfather, Charles E. Hovis, identified himself as a farmer in the 1910 United States Federal Census, the last one before his death in 1918 ([ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), accessed September 2020). Obituary for Henry Lightner, "Oldest Man

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in County Is Dead," *The Perry County Democrat*, August 14, 1907, p. 3, ancestry.com (accessed September 20, 2020). For William McCleaf, see the 1860 United States Federal Census (ancestry.com; accessed September 2020). The 1900 United States Federal Census identifies John Hollingsworth Martin (1843-1925) as a "retired blacksmith"; his birth and death years are from Find A Grave (ancestry.com; accessed September 2020).

<sup>22</sup> John Hollingsworth Martin's death year is from Find A Grave (ancestry.com; accessed September 2020). For Frank Benjamin McCleaf, see the 1910, 1930, and 1940 United States Federal Censuses as well as his 1917 WW I draft registration card (all are on ancestry.com; accessed September 2020). Paul's brother Tom has the toolbox Paul used at the Landis Tool Company where father and son worked in 1942 when Paul enlisted in the Marine Corps. The information on Pennsylvania's manufacturing industries and the loss of farms is taken from WPA, *Pennsylvania*, pp. 79, 101.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Benjamin McCleaf World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 on ancestry.com (accessed March 22, 2015); for the history of Landis Tool Company, see [vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=2611](http://vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=2611) (accessed November 1, 2020). Rouzerville was named in honor of Simon Peter Rouzer (1837-1915) who "plotted the town in 1868." Its population in 1915 was between seven and eight hundred people. Rouzerville's description as a "hamlet" and the preceding information is taken from a February 25, 1915 article in *The Record Herald* in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania ([www.therecordherald.com/article/20150225/NEWS/150229897](http://www.therecordherald.com/article/20150225/NEWS/150229897); accessed December 1, 2020).

<sup>24</sup> Death certificate for Charles Andrew McCleaf on ancestry.com (accessed October 5, 2020). Names and birth dates of Charles' siblings taken from U.S. Federal Censuses and from Frank, Bob, and John's Application for World War II Compensation from the State of Pennsylvania; for Paul, his headstone in Harbaugh Cemetery; for Bill, from his WW II Draft Registration Card; for Maryann and Tom, from conversations with author. On the Fairchild Aircraft Company, see the June 26, 2017 *Herald-Mail Media* story by Mike Lewis "Ex-Aircraft Facility at Hagerstown to be Sold at Auction Tuesday" (available online; accessed November 9, 2020).

<sup>25</sup> For where the McCleaf family lived, see Annie McCleaf on the 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Federal Censuses; the 1940 census had a question as to where the person lived in 1935, and Annie answered "Rouzerville," and the same census asked if the person lived on a farm in 1935, to which Annie replied "yes." For the McCleafs 1926 and 1928 residency in Waynesboro, see Annie McCleaf in the U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989. Documents on ancestry.com (accessed October 2020). Paul himself identified York Springs as his birthplace on his WW II draft registration card (ancestry.com, accessed November 2020); his sister Maryann Potter verified York Springs as her brother's birthplace in a November 18, 2020 phone conversation.

<sup>26</sup> Paul's maternal grandfather, Charles E. Hovis, died in 1918 (Charles Edward Hovis, Find A Grave, ancestry.com, accessed September 2020). Today, both Tom McCleaf (Paul's brother) and Maryann Potter (Paul's sister) remember Grandma Hovis as having lived "across the road" as Maryann phrased it (conversations with

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author). Paul's paternal grandparents, Andrew and Annie McCleaf, lived in Liberty in Adams County at the time of the 1910 Federal Census. The 1930 Census puts them in Emmitsburg, Maryland. (Both censuses on ancestry.com; accessed September 2020.) Maryann Potter's recollections on extended family members who lived near her family are taken from an October 2020 letter from Maryann and her cousin Jacqueline Hovis Barlup to the author.

<sup>27</sup> See the 1940 United States Federal Censuses for the individuals named; Grandma Hovis' name appeared as "May Bencheff" since she remarried and a spelling error led to Andrew's last name appearing as "McCloaf" (ancestry.com; accessed September, October 2020). The years of schooling for Americans in 1940 are taken from nces.ed.gov/pubs93/93442.pdf (accessed April 16, 2015). The opening date for the Rouzerville Elementary School is from John Blair in a November 13, 2020 phone conversation (John is Beckie Blair's son; she is Paul's first-cousin). According to John, the school was used to teach local children until the 1970s; it was torn down in 1987.

<sup>28</sup> John Blair for his mother Beckie Blair to Maryann Potter, October 12, 2020. The two Rouzerville schools Beckie named are gone now, replaced by four elementary schools, one middle school, and one senior high school, all in Waynesboro.

<sup>29</sup> washingtonpost.com/local/war-how-a-stunned-media-broke-the-pearl-harbor-news (accessed August 14, 2015); library.umkc.edu/spec-col/ww2/pearlharbor/radio (accessed August 14, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> "Gabriel Heatter, Radio Newsman, Dies," *The New York Times*, March 31, 1972, nytimes.com/1972/03/31/archives/gabriel-heatter-radio-newsman-dies (accessed October 22, 2020); Gabriel Heatter at imdb.com/name/nm0372789/bio (accessed November 13, 2020).

<sup>31</sup> Lewis B. Hershey, Director, *Selective Service in Wartime, Second Report of the Director of Selective Service 1941-42* (Washington, D.C., 1943), p. 64; nationalww2museum.org has a section entitled Research Starters: U.S. Military by the Numbers that gives the number who were drafted and the number who enlisted (accessed February 25, 2021).

<sup>32</sup> nationalww2museum.org; Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, xix, p. 97; Lewis B. Hershey, *Selective Service And Victory, The 4<sup>th</sup> Report Of The Director Of Selective Service 1944-1945 With A Supplement For 1946-1947* (Washington, D.C., 1948), p. 49; World War II Draft Registration card for Frank Benjamin McCleaf, Jr., ancestry.com (accessed June 14, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, pp. xix, 12, 97; World War II Draft Registration card for Frank Benjamin McCleaf, ancestry.com (accessed June 14, 2014).

<sup>34</sup> Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, pp. xx-xxi; Paul Frederick McCleaf, World War II Draft Cards for Young Men, 1940-1947, ancestry.com (accessed November 16, 2020); for a reference to Bob's enlistment in the National Guard, see Robert H. McCleaf, World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946, ancestry.com (accessed March 20, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, pp. xvi, 35.

<sup>36</sup> nationalww2museum.org; Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, p. 5.

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<sup>37</sup> Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, pp. 11, 500; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, World War II Veterans' Compensation Bureau, Application for World War II Compensation for Robert Hovis McCleaf, ancestry.com (accessed October 21, 2020). Bob McCleaf registered with the Waynesboro Board. Bob's father Frank, however, registered at the Gettysburg Draft Board. As noted earlier, Frank had to sign up on April 27, 1942, a Monday, a day when Frank worked in York, Pennsylvania. The Gettysburg board was therefore much closer for him than the one in Waynesboro.

<sup>38</sup> Paul's September 1942 enlistment in the USMCR, and the orders he received to report for active duty in November 1942, are mentioned in a February 9, 1944 newspaper article in *Public Opinion* (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania), "Rouzerville Marine Is Missing In Action," p. 1. In all probability, those two dates came from a member of Paul's immediate family interviewed for the story. Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, p. 65; Reserve Officers of Public Affairs Unit 4-1, *The Marine Corps Reserve, A History* (Washington, D.C., 1966), p. 71.

<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Frank O. Hough, USMC; Major Verle E. Ludwig, USMC; and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Volume I* (Washington, D.C., 1958), pp. 140, 141, 143; Donald L. Miller, *The Story of World War II* (New York, 2001), p. 112.

<sup>40</sup> "Some of U.S. Marines Who Defend Wake Island," *The Daily American* (Somerset, Pennsylvania), December 15, 1941, p. 1; "Heroic 'Last Stand' Being Made on Wake," *The News-Herald* (Franklin, Pennsylvania), December 15, 1941, p. 1; "Navy Releases Story of Defense of Wake Island," *Standard-Speaker* (Hazelton, Pennsylvania), December 29, 1941, p. 11; Miller, *The Story of World War II*, p. 112.

<sup>41</sup> "Salute To Wake Island Defenders," *The Gazette and Daily* (York, Pennsylvania), December 25, 1941, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, pp. 187, 189; J. Michael Miller, *From Shanghai to Corregidor: Marines in the Defense of the Philippines, "Reinforcements,"*

nps.gov/parkhistory/online\_books/npswapa/extContent/usmc/pcn-190-003140-00/sec14.htm (accessed January 30, 2021).

<sup>43</sup> Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, pp. 185, 199, 200, 202; "Fortress of Corregidor Captured By Japs," *The Plain Speaker* (Hazelton, Pennsylvania), May 6, 1942, p. 1; Roosevelt's message was quoted in "Japs Force Surrender of Corregidor," *The Record-Argus* (Greenville, Pennsylvania), May 6, 1942, p. 1 (accessed January 29, 2021 at newspapers.com).

<sup>44</sup> David M. Kennedy (editor), *The Library of Congress, World War II Companion* (New York, 2007), p. 522; Miller, *The Story of World War II*, pp. 129-130, 133; "US Marines' Own Eye Witness Tells of Capture of Solomons," Second Lieutenant H.L. Merillat, *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pennsylvania), August 30, 1942, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> "Six Japanese Planes Destroyed," *The Vernon Daily Record* (Vernon, Texas), August 7, 1942, p. 1; "Their Bomber Shot Down Four Japs," *El Paso Times* (El Paso, Texas), August 10, 1942, p. 10; "Chambersburg Man In Bomber At Wake Island," *The News-Chronicle* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania), p. 6. All newspapers accessed January 30, 2021 at newspapers.com.

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<sup>46</sup> Richard Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's A War On? The American Home Front 1941-1945* (New York, 1970; 2003 edition), pp. 196-198; [historyonfilm.com/wake-island](http://historyonfilm.com/wake-island) (accessed January 1, 2021).

<sup>47</sup> "Man About Manhattan" by George Tucker, *The Record-August* (Greenville, Pennsylvania), August 22, 1942, p. 4 (accessed January 30, 2021 at [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com)); Corporal Gilbert F. Bailey, U.S.M.C.R., *Boot: A Marine In The Making* (New York, 1944), p. 19; John Selby's review of *Boot* in *The Ithaca Journal* (Ithaca, New York), May 13, 1944, p. 6; Gilbert Preston Bailey, World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, gives Bailey's birth date (May 19, 1914), on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), accessed February 3, 2021. Hoyt Caldwell Johnson, Jr., *My Marine Memoirs of World War II* (unpublished memoir, n.d.), p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Bosley Crowther's September 2, 1942 review of *Wake Island*, "Wake Island, a Stirring Tribute to the United States Marines" ([nytimes.com/1942/09/02/archives/the-screen-wake-island...](http://nytimes.com/1942/09/02/archives/the-screen-wake-island...)) (accessed January 1, 2021). Paul's September 1942 enlistment in the USMCR, and the orders he received to report for active duty in November 1942, are mentioned in a February 9, 1944 newspaper article in *Public Opinion* (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania), "Rouzerville Marine Is Missing In Action," p. 1. In all probability, those two dates came from a member of Paul's immediate family interviewed for the story.

<sup>49</sup> Paul's enlistment date is taken from Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958, Paul F. McCleaf, Muster Date January 1943 (accessed on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) November 28, 2020); information on Robert "Bob" McCleaf's service is taken from Pennsylvania, Veterans Burial Cards, 1777-1999 for Robert H. McCleaf ([ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com); accessed March 20, 2015); Hershey, *Selective Service, Second Report*, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Reserve Officers of Public Affairs, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, p. 72; William Manchester, *Goodbye, Darkness, A Memoir Of The Pacific War* (Boston, 1980; 2002 edition), p. 123 recalls his DI as a corporal.

<sup>51</sup> For Bailey's educational background, birthdate and birthplace, see Gilbert Preston Bailey, Find A Grave on [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com) (accessed February 3, 2021); Bailey, *Boot*, p. 11; for Bailey's USMC career, see his entry on muster rolls from October 1942 (when he was at Parris Island) through January 1946 when Bailey was at the Marine Corps' Public Relations Office at the U.S. Naval Shipyard in Brooklyn (Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1789-1958 for Gilbert P. Bailey, October 1942; April 1943; July 1943; October 1943; January 1944; April 1945; October 1945; January 1946; on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), accessed December 5, 2020).

<sup>52</sup> Eugene Alvarez, *Images of America, Parris Island* (Charleston, South Carolina, 2002), p. 7; Reserve Officers of Public Affairs, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, p. 73 gives 11,966 as the number of recruits in training at Parris Island on October 1, 1942 and 11,759 on January 1, 1943.

<sup>53</sup> Bailey, *Boot*, pp. 11, 25, 27; Robert Leckie, *Helmet For My Pillow, From Parris Island to the Pacific* (New York, 1957; 2010 edition), pp. 7, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Leckie, *Helmet*, p. 7; Bailey, *Boot*, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Keith Ayling, *Semper Fidelis, The U.S. Marines In Action* (Boston, 1943), p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Leckie, *Helmet*, pp. 8-9; Bailey, *Boot*, p. 37; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine*, p. 13.

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- <sup>57</sup> Leckie, *Helmet*, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>58</sup> Bailey, *Boot*, pp. 42, 48, 55, 129; Leckie, *Helmet*, p. 10; Ayling, *Semper Fi*, p. 14.
- <sup>59</sup> Manchester, *Goodbye, Darkness*, pp. 121, 125; Bailey, *Boot*, p. 131.
- <sup>60</sup> Manchester, *Goodbye, Darkness*, pp. 121-122; Bailey, *Boot*, pp. 129-131; Reserve Officers of Public Affairs, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, p. 71.
- <sup>61</sup> Ayling, *Semper Fi*, pp. 21, 23, 26.
- <sup>62</sup> Bailey, *Boot*, pp. 88-89.
- <sup>63</sup> Bailey, *Boot*, pp. 40, 81, 89, 94, 109, 115; Leckie, *Helmet*, p. 4; Ayling, *Semper Fi*, pp. 19-20.
- <sup>64</sup> Manchester, *Goodbye, Darkness*, p. 128.
- <sup>65</sup> Leckie, *Helmet*, p. 21.
- <sup>66</sup> Bailey, *Boot*, p. 121; Reserve Officers of Public Affairs, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, p. 73; Ayling, *Semper Fi*, p. 28.
- <sup>67</sup> Manchester, *Goodbye, Darkness*, p. 120.
- <sup>68</sup> [marineband.marines.mil/about/library-and-archives/the-marines-hymn](http://marineband.marines.mil/about/library-and-archives/the-marines-hymn) (accessed February 24, 2021); Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (Washington, D.C., 1952), pp. xiii, 5; George W. Garand and Truman R. Strobridge, *Western Pacific Operations, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (Washington, D.C., 1971), p. 40. John A. De Chant, Captain, USMCR, *Devilbirds, The Story of United States Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (Washington, D.C., 1947) wrote the Introduction to his book on December 30, 1946; in *Devilbirds*, De Chant uses the phrases “the Air Arm” (p. xvii), “the Marine Air Arm” (pp. xv, xvi, xvii), and “Marine Aviation” (p. xvi).
- <sup>69</sup> Kennedy, *The Library of Congress World War II Companion*, pp. 303, 314, 318 respectively is the source of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps service personnel for the year 1945; [nationalww2museum.org](http://nationalww2museum.org) has a section on U.S. Military by the Numbers that breaks down “U.S. Military Personnel” by branch of service for the year 1945 that mirrors Kennedy’s numbers (accessed February 25, 2021). However, a much higher number for those who served in the USMC, “a total of 669,000 men and women” is given in John Whiteclay Chambers II, Editor In Chief, *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* (New York, 1999), p. 413. In one of the Marine Corps’ own volumes on its history in World War II, the Corps gives its January 1945 “strength figure” as 421,605, adding that before the war ended, “the number became larger,” although no final number is given, Benis M. Frank and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., *Victory and Occupation, History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Vol. V* (Washington, D.C., 1968) p. 23.
- <sup>70</sup> Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. vii uses the 150,000 number as does De Chant, *Devilbirds*, p. xi who wrote that “more than 150,000 officers and men” served in Marine Corps Air. However, Frank and Shaw, *Victory and Occupation*, p. 435 cite a “peak strength” of Marines in Marine Corps Aviation on January 31, 1945 as 125,162. Hershey, *Selective Service, Fourth Report*, p. 154 is the source of the 15 million number for those who served; Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. vii is the source of the 1% statement. The number of those in the United States armed forces during World War II can vary from approximately 12 million to 16 million depending upon the date used for that number and whether the number

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cited includes those who were rejected. Hershey's *Selective Service, Fourth Report*, p. 154 is an example of how the year becomes important for citing the number who served. The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard's "peak strength of 12,314,000" was for June 1, 1945, Hershey writes; however, Hershey added that by December 31, 1945, as many as 15 million "had seen service at one time during the 5 years since the beginning of Selective Service in 1940" (p. 154). For an example of how the number of those rejected by Selective Service affects the number cited for those who served, David M. Kennedy in his Pulitzer-Prize-winning volume *Freedom From Fear, The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York, 1999), p. 710 explains that out of eighteen million men who were drafted and then given a physical, six million men were rejected for military service. Chambers, *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, pp. 827 gives 16 million as the number of men and women who served and p. 181 cites 10 million men were drafted and 6 million men and women volunteered.

<sup>71</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 104 for his enlistment and discharge dates.

<sup>72</sup> Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 435; Sid's memoir, again, is in the Pacific Theater section of the website [wwiexperience.com](http://wwiexperience.com). Sid shared the 10% statistic with the author in a phone conversation (February 25, 2021).

<sup>73</sup> Hoyt Caldwell Johnson, Jr., *My Marine Memoirs of World War II* (1997), pp. 3, 4, 181; p. 185 refers to Christmas, 1997, and daughter Carroll John Uithoven dates the book to 1997 because of a dated inscription by her father in one copy; Hoyt's Honorable Discharge is on the last page (unnumbered) of the memoir.

<sup>74</sup> Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, Acknowledgement page (unnumbered), Dedication page (unnumbered), and February 19, 2021 conversation with daughter Carroll Johnson Uithoven and author.

<sup>75</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 32; Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, p. 131.

<sup>76</sup> Paul F. McCleaf in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1789-1958, January 1943 (three entries), [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed March 12, 2021). AES is defined in Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 436.

<sup>77</sup> Manchester, *Goodbye Darkness*, p. 121; Bailey, *Boot*, p. 22; Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, May 8, 1944 letter to his family, p. 69. The average monthly pay of a Marine private is listed as \$50 on [navycs.com/charts/1942-military-pay-chart](http://navycs.com/charts/1942-military-pay-chart) (accessed March 10, 2021). Sid Zimman, however, remembers it as \$25, a number that makes more sense to this author. Sid's recollection is used in this story.

<sup>78</sup> Paul Westley Smith, World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947; Paul W. Smith in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958, October 1943 gives his enlistment date as does Paul Westley Smith, Pennsylvania Application for World War II Compensation; all three documents on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed December 3, 2020). Conversation with Paul Smith, March 14, 2021.

<sup>79</sup> Paul W. Smith in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958, October 1943; Paul Westley Smith, Pennsylvania Application for World War II Compensation; both documents at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed December 3, 2020). Conversation between Paul Smith and author, March 14, 2021.

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<sup>80</sup> Charles Fred Hovis, World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947; Charles F. Hovis, Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958 for April 1943 and January 1945; Pennsylvania Application for World War II Compensation; all documents on ancestry.com (accessed November 30, 2020).

<sup>81</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 10-11; Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, pp. 23, 34, 60, 74.

<sup>82</sup> War Diaries are rare since they were not published for a general audience. They were written for and made available to unit members, with officers from the unit writing the history. The McCleaf family probably never received a copy when Major Elliott mimeographed his pages since Paul's midair collision occurred so soon after the squadron arrived in the Pacific. Sid Zimman generously loaned his copy to this author. For Hoyt Caldwell Johnson's reference to using his squadron's War Diary, see Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, p. 131.

<sup>83</sup> De Chant, *Devilbirds*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>84</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 20, 23-24.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24; Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, p. 74.

<sup>86</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 27 and Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, p. 60 for copies of their diplomas; Johnson, *My Marine Memoirs*, pp. 50, 51, 52, 55, 57.

<sup>87</sup> Sid began gunnery school on November 25, 1942, and his diploma reads January 2, 1943 for his completion (Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner* p. 27). In Johnson's, *My Marine Memoirs*, it appears he began gunnery school late in February 1944; his diploma has a March 31, 1944 graduation date (p. 60).

<sup>88</sup> Ian W. Toll, "Rear-Seat Gunners at Midway," *Naval History Magazine*, May 2013, volume 27, number 3 (available online); Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Major Douglas T. Kane, USMC, *Isolation of Rabaul, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Volume II* (Washington, D.C., 1963), p. 463; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 29, 32.

<sup>89</sup> Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, pp. 1, 434; De Chant, *Devilbirds*, pp. xvii, 53.

<sup>90</sup> Paul F. McCleaf in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1789-1958 for January 1943, April 1943, July 1943, ancestry.com (accessed November 28, 2020). For information on AES-44, see Gerald Rottman, *U.S. Marine Corps World War II Order of Battle: Ground and Air Units in the Pacific War, 1939-1945* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2001), p. 454.

<sup>91</sup> Paul F. McCleaf in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1789-1958 for April 1943. (The remarks section of the second April muster roll referenced Paul's assignment to "fr Hq Sq 34," so we know the order of the two April muster rolls.) Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, pp. 468, 469.

<sup>92</sup> Tom McCleaf clarified the type of pin he had wanted (the pin Paul referred to in his letter) during a telephone conversation with the author, April 1, 2021.

<sup>93</sup> Paul F. McCleaf in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, July 1943, ancestry.com (accessed November 28, 2020). For what "VMSB" referred to, see Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 32 and Garand and Strobridge, *Western Pacific Operations*, p. 41. The historian quoted is Barrett Tillman, *The Dauntless Dive Bomber of World War II* (Annapolis, 1976; 2006 edition), pp. 4, 15, 208, 217.

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<sup>94</sup> Tillman, *The Dauntless Dive Bomber*, pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 217; Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. xiii; Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Volume II*, p. 463; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 32. Tillman states that a one-thousand-pound bomb was mounted under the fuselage and a one-hundred-pound bomb hung from each of the two wings (p. 14). SBD gunner Robert Martin cites the same weights in his recollections that are on the website [donmooreswartales.com](http://donmooreswartales.com)>2012/01/16>robert-martin (accessed November 24, 2020). Sid Zimman, however, gives different numbers for the bombs' weights (500 pounds for the one under the belly and 250 pounds for each of the bombs under the wings). Sid's numbers are used in this story. Note that his total bomb weight of 1,000 pounds is not that different from Tillman's of 1,200 pounds. Sid Zimman described the .50-caliber machine guns to the author in a telephone conversation on March 23, 2021. He detailed the bombs and their placements in another telephone conversation on April 3, 2021.

<sup>95</sup> Tillman, *The Dauntless Dive Bomber*, pp. 12, 14, 209; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 34, 35.

<sup>96</sup> Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 469; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 30, 31, 33; Paul F. McCleaf and Sidney H. Zimman in Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1789-1958 for July 1943 (accessed November 28, 2020 and March 24, 202 respectively); Major John M. Elliott, USMC (Ret.), *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Information on Harold Rudolph Tuck is taken from documents on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed March 23, 2021)—Dewey I. Tuck in the 1940 United States Census; Harold Rudolph Tuck in the U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947; Harold Rudolph Tuck, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1999, Glass High School, 1940 Yearbook; Dewey Thomas Tuck, U.S., Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889-1970. Telephone call between author and Eva Tuck, March 26, 2021.

<sup>98</sup> Telephone call between author and Eva Tuck, March 26, 2021; Harold Rudolph Tuck in the U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947 ([ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), accessed March 23, 2021). The McCleaf family shared with this author an undated newspaper article on Lt. Tuck published when Harry S. Truman was president. The story focused on the details of Tuck's death. The article also contained some details on his history of service. It reported that Tuck "volunteered in Washington" in June 1942, and he "reported for duty at Anacostia, D.C." on August 13 [1942]. "After receiving his appointment as aviation cadet, he was sent to Pensacola Naval Air Station for training."

<sup>99</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 32, 36; Major John M. Elliott, USMC (Ret.), *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 1 and section on Paul McCleaf's history with the squadron (unnumbered page); Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 38. Paul's brief history in the War Diary identified him as a PFC in August 1943. An October 1943 Muster Roll, on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), also showed him as a PFC.

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<sup>101</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 1 and section on Paul McCleaf's history with the squadron (unnumbered page); Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 38.

<sup>102</sup> Frank and Shaw, Jr., *Victory and Occupation, History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, pp. 455, 717; Astor, *Semper Fi*, p. 211.

<sup>103</sup> Frank and Shaw, Jr., *Victory and Occupation, History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, p. 718.

<sup>104</sup> The communications the McCleaf family saved were all from the Office of the Commandant of the USMC in Washington, D.C. Since Paul had apparently designated Annie as his next-of-kin, the telegrams and letters were addressed to her. The ones cited here are dated February 2, 1944; February 3, 1944; April 11, 1944.

<sup>105</sup> The dates for Paul's trip from San Diego to Tutuila and his locations up to the time of the midair collision are taken from Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 1 and section on Paul McCleaf's history with the squadron (unnumbered page) as well as Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 469.

<sup>106</sup> For War Diary entries for "navigation flights," see Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, October 8, 11, and 13, 1943; "familiarization flights" took place on October 29, October 30, December 24, and December 25, 1943. Telephone conversation between Sid Zimman and author, April 13, 2021. The War Diary identified October 10, 12, 14, and 17, 1943 as "No flying" days. "Routine" appeared as the sole entry for October 20, October 23, November 22, November 23-27, November 29, November 30, December 1, December 4, December 5-8, December 12, 14, 15, December 26, 27, 1943 and January 4, 1944.

<sup>107</sup> The two "intertype tactical squadron flights" took place on October 18 and 21, 1943; the dive-bombing day was October 16, 1943; the squadron mounted patrols on October 19, 1943; Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 39; telephone conversation between Sid Zimman and author April 13, 2021; Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 2. Information on the return of Louis Zimmerman and James Madden's remains is taken from two documents on ancestry.com--Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1970 for Louis F. Zimmerman and James P. Madden (accessed April 11, 2021).

<sup>110</sup> Information on Louis Fred Zimmerman is taken from documents on ancestry.com (accessed April 11, 2021)--Marine Corps Casualty Indexes, 1940-1958, for Louis Fred Zimmerman; 1930 and 1940 U.S. Federal Census for Fred Tyson Zimmerman; Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1970 for Fred Tyson Zimmerman; bunking and eating statement from Sid Zimman in April 13, 2021 telephone conversation with author. James Madden's father lived until 1963.

<sup>111</sup> Documents on ancestry.com provided details on the life of James Patrick Madden (accessed April 11, 2021)--World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947; "Bellevue Marine Dies in Air Accident," *The Pittsburgh Press*, November 9, 1943, p. 2; World War II Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Casualties, 1941-1945;

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Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1970 (for both James and his father, Patrick Francis Madden).

<sup>112</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, pp. 1-3; see War Diary entries on “no flying” dated October 10, 12, 14, 17; on the phrases “operations secured,” “normal operations,” “heavy operations,” and “extensive operations,” see War Diary entries for November 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 28; on the “heavy flight schedule” entries, see November 9, 10, 12.

<sup>113</sup> Telephone conversation between Sid Zimman and author, April 17, 2021. In addition to the War Diary entry for November 18, 1943 that mentions dive-bombing and free gunnery, Sid’s copy of the War Diary has his handwritten notations (probably taken from his Log Book) on those two activities for November 17, 20, 22, 23 to 27, and 30. Sid Zimman explained the “towed sleeve” practice in a telephone conversation with author on April 17, 2021; Sid’s copy of the War Diary has more than one handwritten notation near November 1943 dates that reads “tow,” a word he no doubt wrote based on his Log Book entries (November 17, November 23 to 27). For the period from October 29-December 27, 1943, see Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 40.

<sup>114</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, pp. 5-6; War Diary entries for December 1, 4, 5, 12, 14, and 15 used the word “routine.” For the trip from Upolu to Munda, see the War Diary entries for December 16-23, 1943. For changes in personnel, see December 29, 1943 entry. Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 40.

<sup>115</sup> John M. Elliott, “Solomon Islands Campaign, The Isolation of Rabaul,” *Naval Aviation News* (November-December 1993), p. 27. Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, p. 6; War Diary entries for December 30, 31, 1943.

<sup>116</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 46.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>118</sup> Bruce Gamble, *Target Rabaul, The Allied Siege of Japan’s Most Infamous Stronghold, March 1943-August 1945* (Minneapolis, MN, 2013), pp. ix, 21; Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, pp. 193, 263; Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, pp. 441-442; Astor, *Semper Fi*, 210.

<sup>119</sup> Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 211; De Chant, *Devilbirds*, p. 177; Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, p. 478; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 297.

<sup>120</sup> De Chant, *Devilbirds*, p. 126; Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 193; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, pp. 21, 297; Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, p. 442; Astor, *Semper Fi*, pp. 241, 268-269.

<sup>121</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, War Diary entry for January 11, 1944; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>122</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>123</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, War Diary entry for January 13, 1944; Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, pp. 49-50.

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<sup>124</sup> Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, p. 442 for the distance from Rabaul to Munda; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 298 for the size of the January 14, 1944 strike force and [pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971](http://pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971); accessed March 23, 2021 (Gamble gives 16 for the number of torpedo bombers while Pacific Wrecks gives 18 and Gambles states close to 80 fighters, while Pacific Wrecks states the number was 73). Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, War Diary entry for January 14, 1944 states that “Thirteen (13) gunners and their pilots were assigned to a strike on Lakunai Airfield, Rabaul.”

<sup>125</sup> Telephone conversation with Sid Zimman and author, May 5, 2021.

<sup>126</sup> Elliott, *History of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 341(VMSB-341)*, War Diary entry for January 13, 1944.

<sup>127</sup> The website Pacific Wrecks draws upon the war diaries for various WW II squadrons to explain what happened to United States military aircraft that went down during the war. Website pages are based on the plane itself, not its crew. The plane number for Ramsey and Sciara’s SBD was 35971. For the war diary entry for Ramsey and Sciara’s SBD, see Pacific Wrecks, SBD-5 Dauntless Bureau Number 35971 ([pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971](http://pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971); accessed March 23, 2021).

Telephone conversation with Sid Zimman and author, May 5, 2021.

<sup>128</sup> Telephone conversation with Sid Zimman and author, May 5, 2021.

<sup>129</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, pp. 298, 299. For the war diary entry for Ramsey and Sciara’s SBD, see Pacific Wrecks, SBD-5 Dauntless Bureau Number 35971 ([pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971](http://pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971); accessed March 23, 2021). Telephone conversations with Sid Zimman and author, May 5 and May 7, 2021.

<sup>130</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 299; see USMC muster roll, January 1945, for Billy R. Ramsey on which he is “Declared dead by Secretary of Navy as of 15 Jan 45” ([ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com); accessed May 3, 2021).

<sup>131</sup> Copies of the following telegrams and letters to Annie McCleaf, from the office of the USMC Commandant, in possession of author--February 2, 1944; February 3, 1944; April 8, 1944; April 10, 1944; April 11, 1944; March 20, 1944.

<sup>132</sup> *Newsweek*, February 7, 1944, pp. 19-20. An Associated Press (AP) story on the “Army and Navy Release” mentioned the four-thousand-word length of the account; the AP story appeared in *The Morning Call*, an Allentown, Pennsylvania paper, on page 1 of its January 28, 1944 edition. The newspaper is available on [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com) (accessed May 15, 2021).

<sup>133</sup> John D. Lukacs, *Escape from Davao, The Forgotten Story of the Most Daring Prison Break of the Pacific War* (New York, 2010), pp. 319-336; this author devoted an entire chapter to the reporting, in the American press, of how the Japanese treated American POWs from Bataan and Corregidor. “U.S. Reveals Story of Wanton Murder, Torture of Gallant Defenders of Bataan; Deaths of 5,200 Laid to Jap Atrocities, *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pennsylvania), January 28, 1944, p. 1; the newspaper is available on [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com) (accessed May 15, 2021). *The Sheboygan Press* issue for January 28, 1944 is online at [Mansell.com/pow\\_resources/newspaper/newsfrompast](http://Mansell.com/pow_resources/newspaper/newsfrompast) (accessed May 16, 2021).

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<sup>134</sup> “Hull Takes Lead in Vowing Retribution To Japanese ‘Demons’ for Atrocities; Story of Savagery Shocks All Americans,” *The Morning Call*, January 29, 1944, p. 1 (newspapers.com, accessed May 15, 2012).

<sup>135</sup> Lukacs, *Escape from Davao*, p. 320; *Newsweek*, February 7, 1944, p. 19; for examples of Dyess’ story in Pennsylvanian papers, see February 7, 1944 issue of *The Scranton Times* and the February 21, 1944 edition of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, both of which are available at newspapers.com (accessed May 17, 2021). Scranton, Pennsylvania’s newspaper, *The Times-Tribune*, published Chapter 12 of Commander McCoy and Lieutenant Colonel Mellnik’s story, under the title “Ten Escaped from Tojo,” in its February 17, 1944 edition (newspapers.com, accessed May 17, 2021).

<sup>136</sup> Commander Melvyn McCoy, USN, and Lieut. Col. S. M. Mellnik, USA, as told to Lieut. Welbourn Kelley, USN, “Death Was Part Of Our Life, *Life*, February 7, 1944, pp. 26-31, 96-102, 105-106, 108, 111. *Newsweek*, February 7, 1944, p. 19-20. Telephone conversation between the author and Maryann McCleaf Potter, May 20, 2021.

<sup>137</sup> William L. O’Neill, *The Oxford Essential Guide to World War II* (New York, 2002), p. 299.

<sup>138</sup> Gavan Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese, POWs of World War II in the Pacific* (New York, 1994), pp. 17, 18, 98; Gregory F. Michno, *Death on the Hellships, Prisoners at Sea in the Pacific War* (Annapolis, Maryland, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>139</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, p. 813; Michael E. Haskew, *The World War II Desk Reference* (New York, 2004), p. 428; scholars have estimated the percentage of Allied (not only American) POWs who died in German POW camps at 4% (Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, p. 282); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers, The U.S. Army From the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany* (New York, 1997; 1998 edition), p. 361 for death rate comparisons for Americans held by the Germany and the Japanese; Frank and Shaw, Jr., *Victory and Occupation, History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, p. 731; John Whiteclay Chambers II, *The Oxford Companion To American Military History* (New York, 1999), pp. 560-561 (Chambers uses the 45% death rate figure); Michno, *Death on the Hellships*, p. 282 cites other scholars who used 40% as the death rate. For Rabaul, Henry Sakaida, *The Siege of Rabaul* (St. Paul, MN, 1996), pp. 93-96 cited 108 for the total number of military POWs at Rabaul, which translated into a death rate of 94% and C. Kenneth Quinones in an upcoming study of POWs in the South Pacific calculated 213 as the total number imprisoned at Rabaul, with 7 alive at war’s end, or a death rate of 97% (May 26, 2021 email to author).

<sup>140</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 257; Frank and Shaw, Jr., *Victory and Occupation, History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, p. 788; Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, p. 18; telephone conversation with the author and Paul “Irish” Smith, May 20, 2021; Irish’s August 1, 1944 arrival date in the Pacific is taken from his March 22, 1950 Pennsylvania Application for World War II Compensation (ancestry.com; accessed December 3, 2020) .

<sup>141</sup> SBD-5 Dauntless Bureau Number 35971 [Ramsey and Sciara’s plane] (pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/sbd/35971; accessed March 23, 2021).

Commendations in VMSB-341’s War Diary entry for January 14, 1944; DeChant, *Devilbirds*, p. 139.

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<sup>142</sup> Telephone conversations between author and Sid Zimman, August 8, 2020 and March 16, 2021.

<sup>143</sup> Zimman, *Memoirs of a WWII Marine Dive Bomber Gunner*, p. 33; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 298 has Paul and Harold Tuck “pulled” out of the water, apparently on January 14<sup>th</sup> which contrasts with letters to the McCleaf family after the war stating that Paul became a prisoner on January 15<sup>th</sup>; Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, p. 59.

<sup>144</sup> Yuri Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors, Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Boulder, CO, 1996), pp. 145-146.

<sup>145</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, pp. 51, 56 (Gamble is the scholar quoted); in his 1948 testimony for the Allied war crimes investigation, Rabaul Survivor USAFR Captain Jose Holquin, named two POW camps, the one near the red-light district and the Tunnel Hill camp (testimony appears on the website [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report.html](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report.html), accessed March 14, 2015); Gregory “Pappy” Boyington is just one POW, among others, who wrote that his hands were tied when taken to the Japanese headquarters, *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (New York, 1958; 1972 edition), p. 243; John B. Kepchia, *Missing in Action over Rabaul* (The Palace Printer, Greensburg, PA, 1986), p. 116.

<sup>146</sup> The quotation on the conditions is taken from Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 52; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, is also the source of the quotation on the lack of living POW airmen at Rabaul when 1942 closed and the fact that the navy executed most POWs “by the sword” (p. 253); Gamble (*Target Rabaul*, p. 52) contains the statement regarding the navy compound after early 1944; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, pp. 52, 122, 253;

<sup>147</sup> Two examples of contemporary newspaper articles that identify seven survivors of Rabaul are “Greenburg Vet Liberated,” *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, September 8, 1945, p. 4 and “7 Captive Yanks Freed,” New York City’s *Daily News*, September 10, 1945, p. 12; C. Kenneth Quinones’s study of Rabaul that agrees only seven POWs survived will be published late in 2021 (May 26, 2021 email from Quinones to author).

<sup>148</sup> James Austin McMurria’s *Fight For Survival, An American Bomber Pilot’s 1,000 Days as a P.O.W. of the Japanese* (Altman Printing Co., Inc., Spartanburg, SC, 1991; 2005 edition), p. 20; John B. Kepchia’s *Missing in Action over Rabaul* (The Palace Printer, Greensburg, PA, 1986); Joseph G. Nason’s *Horio You Next Die!* (Pacific Rim Press, Inc., Carlsbad, CA, 1987). McMurria published his memoir twice; the first printing for the second one cited above (*Fight For Survival*) was in April 1991. However, this author has in her possession an eight-and-a-half-by-eleven-inch copy of that memoir; it is undated and has a different title, *Trial and Triumph*.

<sup>149</sup> Kepchia, *M.I.A. Over Rabaul*, p. 140; McMurria’s obituary is reprinted on pages 187-188 in the 2005 edition of his memoir, *Fight For Survival*.

<sup>150</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 105, 189; the expert on Rabaul who probably used McMurria’s number of thirteen POWs at Rabaul in August 1943 is Bruce Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 122; among his sources, Gamble used the United States National Archives; Henry Sakaida, *The Seige of Rabaul* (St. Paul, MN, 1996), used, for military POWs at Rabaul, 108 as his total while Dr. C. Kenneth Quinones used 213 based upon his May 26, 2021 email to this author.

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<sup>151</sup> Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, pp. 148-14.

<sup>152</sup> Henry Sakaida, *The Seige of Rabaul* (St. Paul, MN, 1996), pp. 93-96; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 189 (McMurria would have added this page in editions of his 1991 memoir published after Sakaida's 1996 book came out); for Sciara's death as a POW, see entry for "Sgt. Charles J. Sciara, USMC" [sonsoflibertymuseum.org](http://sonsoflibertymuseum.org) (accessed July 5, 2021). Sciara time as a POW is also verified by C. Kenneth Quinones in a May 26, 2021 email to author. An interview with Sakaida appears on the website of Pacific Wrecks ([pacificwrecks.com/people/authors/sakaida/index](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/authors/sakaida/index); accessed July 5, 2021).

<sup>153</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, pp. 363-365. See his website, [brucegamble.com](http://brucegamble.com), for his background. On the list of POWs who died at Rabaul, the year of Paul's execution is incorrect. It appears as March 5, 1945 instead of March 5, 1944.

<sup>154</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, pp. 218, 340; [ckquinones.com](http://ckquinones.com) (accessed July 7, 2021).

<sup>155</sup> C. Kenneth Quinones emails to author, May 26, 2021 and September 25, 2021.

<sup>156</sup> "Prisoners at Rabaul Plead With Japs to Kill Them," *Daily Courier*, September 26, 1945, p. 7.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. Map of the POW camps in possession of author.

<sup>158</sup> For Boyington's February 16, 1944 departure from Rabaul, see Bruce Gamble, *Black Sheep One, The Life of Gregory "Pappy" Boyington* (Novato, CA, 2000), pp. 315-316; for the controversy surrounding Boyington's claim of 28 enemy planes, see Barrett Tillman, *US Marine Corps Fighter Squadrons of World War II* (New York, 2014), pp. 191-192 and p. 241 for Boyington's squadron number; WW II SBD gunner Robert Martin identified Boyington as flying cover for his Squadron 234 in an interview he gave to Don Moore, [donmoorewartales.com/2012/01/16/Robert-martin/](http://donmoorewartales.com/2012/01/16/Robert-martin/) (accessed July 16, 2021); Gamble, *Black Sheep One*, pp. 307, 308, 312 on Boyington going down (the quotation Gamble used to describe where, in the water, Boyington ended up is one Gamble took from a letter Boyington wrote to Henry Sakaida in 1983); "Pappy" Boyington (Col. Gregory Boyington, USMC, Ret.) *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (New York, 1972), p. 234.

<sup>159</sup> Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, pp. 243-244, 253; Boyington wrote of being questioned daily (p. 252) and Gamble quoted POW John Arbuckle on daily interrogations in Arbuckle's September 26, 1946 deposition for the war crimes trials (Gamble, *Black Sheep*, p. 314); 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria, [Mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://Mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021).

<sup>160</sup> "Yanks Tell About Lice While Held in Rabaul," *Daily Courier*, September 27, 1945, p. 7; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 51; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 97; "Prisoners at Rabaul Plead With Japs to Kill Them," *Daily Courier*, September 26, 1945, p. 7; Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 249; Gamble, *Black Sheep One*, p. 314; Kepchia, *Missing in Action over Rabaul*, p. 103.

<sup>161</sup> Kepchia, *Missing in Action over Rabaul*, p. 103; "Yanks Tell About Lice While Held in Rabaul," *Daily Courier*, September 27, 1945, p. 7; "Prisoners at Rabaul Plead With Japs to Kill Them," *Daily Courier*, September 26, 1945, p. 7; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 151; Gamble spells it as "fundoshi," *Black Sheep One*, p. 314.

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<sup>162</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 105-106; the author is Bruce Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 52.

<sup>163</sup> Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 253; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 152; McMurria gave his testimony in Columbus, Georgia on July 21, 1948, and it is available online at [Mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://Mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021).

<sup>164</sup> Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 252; [anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/resources/coastwatchers-1941-1945](http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/world-war-ii-1939-1945/resources/coastwatchers-1941-1945) (accessed July 4, 2021). For background to the coastwatchers from the Australian National University Press' 2017 publication by Anna Annie Kwai, *Solomon Islanders in World War II, An Indigenous Perspective* (it is the source of the quotation on the heavy radios and on the medical doctor, Hugh Wheatley, who treated POWs at Rabaul before he himself died there), see [press-files.anu.edu/downloads/press/n4039/html/ch02.xhtml](http://press-files.anu.edu/downloads/press/n4039/html/ch02.xhtml) (accessed July 18, 2021). Australian army officer John Murphy is the coast watcher who was one of the Survivors (C. Kenneth Quinones email to author, May 26, 2021).

<sup>165</sup> Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 252. An Australian naval commander who oversaw their activities chose the code name "Ferdinand" for the coast watchers operation. He borrowed it from a 1936 children's book, *The Story of Ferdinand*. As the commander explained in his memoir, "I chose Ferdinand...who did not fight but sat under a tree and just smelled the flowers. It was meant as a reminder to Coastwatchers [sic] that it was not their duty to fight and so draw attention to themselves, but to sit circumspectly and unobtrusively, gathering information. Of course, like their titular prototype, they could fight if they were stung."

Kwai, *Solomon Islanders in World War II*, [press-files.anu.edu/downloads/press/n4039/html/ch02.xhtml](http://press-files.anu.edu/downloads/press/n4039/html/ch02.xhtml) (accessed July 18, 2021).

<sup>166</sup> Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 252; Kwai, *Solomon Islanders in World War II*, [press-files.anu.edu/downloads/press/n4039/html/ch02.xhtml](http://press-files.anu.edu/downloads/press/n4039/html/ch02.xhtml) (accessed July 18, 2021).

<sup>167</sup> Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 254; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 106; 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015).

<sup>168</sup> Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, p. 108; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 298; Sakaida, *Siege of Rabaul*, p. 21; on Sciara's death, see [mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/rabaul-kempeitai](http://mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/rabaul-kempeitai) (accessed July 19, 2021).

<sup>169</sup> Conversations between the author and Maryann McCleaf Potter and Tom McCleaf, November 19, 2010 and July 20, 2021.

<sup>170</sup> Conversations between the author and Tom McCleaf, September 22, 2020 and April 12, 2021.

<sup>171</sup> For an explanation of the red stars, see [archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/ROOTS/2004-06/1086538997](http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/ROOTS/2004-06/1086538997) (accessed April 23, 2013).

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<sup>172</sup> Telephone conversation between author and Paul “Irish” Smith, March 26, 2021.

<sup>173</sup> Telephone conversation between author and Tom McCleaf, April 1, 2021.

<sup>174</sup> “Prisoners at Rabaul Plead With Japs to Kill Them,” *Daily Courier*, September 26, 1945, p. 7; Gamble, *Black Sheep One*, p. 315.

<sup>175</sup> DeChant, *Devilbirds*, pp. 126, 135, 139; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 173; Tillman, *The Dauntless Dive Bomber*, p. 179; Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, p. 252; Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, p. 498; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 119; Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, p. 200; Nason, *Horio You Next Die*, p. 108.

<sup>176</sup> DeChant, *Devilbirds*, pp. 135, 139; 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, pp. 202-203; Tillman, *US Marine Corps Fighter Squadrons*, p. 52; Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, pp. 499-502.

<sup>177</sup> Shaw and Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul*, pp. 499-501; Tilman, *The Dauntless Dive Bomber*, p. 178. The newspaper story on the destroyers appeared on February 20, 1944 in the *Chicago Tribune*, “Shore Batteries at New Britain Base Are Silenced,” p. 1 (accessed [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com), May 17, 2021).

<sup>178</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 120; 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015).

<sup>179</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 121.

<sup>180</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015). 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria, [Mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://Mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021), specifically on the Japanese relocating the POWs in the air raid shelter and on the destruction of the POW camp.

<sup>181</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 121.

<sup>182</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, pp. 110, 112.

<sup>183</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 121.

<sup>184</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria, [Mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://Mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021); a July 25, 2021 online search brought no results for “Filapila” on New Britain.

<sup>185</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria, [Mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://Mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021); Tanaka, in *Hidden Horrors*, used Holquin’s postwar

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testimony to describe the Tunnel Hill camp (p. 149); in his memoir, *Fight For Survival*, McMurria wrote that the cave was approximately 40 feet in length and about 4 feet wide (p. 122); McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 122.

<sup>186</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 122; 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, p. 115.

<sup>187</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 122; Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, p. 115.

<sup>188</sup> 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria, [mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021); Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p. 149 quotes from McMurria's postwar affidavit; Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, p. 113; Murphy was quoted in "First Story of POW's From Rabaul," *The Argus* (published in Melbourne, Australia), September 10, 1945, p. 3 (accessed July 3, 2014 at [trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticleJpg/977470/3?print=7](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticleJpg/977470/3?print=7)).

<sup>189</sup> Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, p. 112; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>190</sup> James McMurria to Mrs. Annie M. McCleaf, October 16, 1946; in his letter to Annie, McMurria mentioned a letter he wrote to Tuck's mother.

<sup>191</sup> 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria, [mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021); 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015). Bruce Gamble in *Target Rabaul* (p. 347) used March 5, 1944 as the date of Paul's execution.

<sup>192</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 122-123; 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015).

<sup>193</sup> Bruce Gamble, a historian of Rabaul, used a number for how many were executed that was midway between the totals Holquin and McMurria had cited. Gamble wrote that "at least thirty-one prisoners" had been executed (Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 339); Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, pp. 116-117 wrote of two groups composed of twenty POWs each, but he did not give dates for their removal from the cave; McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 123.

<sup>194</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>195</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p. 155.

<sup>196</sup> James McMurria to Mrs. Annie M. McCleaf, October 16, 1946; in his 1948 testimony, Jose Holquin stated that 20 POWs were taken away in each of two groups, for a total of 40 prisoners removed; Holquin used this same total of 40 in a June 15, 1987 letter to William McCleaf, Paul's brother; but McMurria gave the total number of POWs taken away from the main group as "approximately twenty-one" in his 1948 testimony; Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 339.

<sup>197</sup> Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*, p. 155.

<sup>198</sup> August 2, 2021 telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author; for references to Japan's history of executing prisoners during the war, see Daws,

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*Prisoners of the Japanese*, pp. 21, 48-49, 99, 131, 157, 253, 321-322, 336; May 26, 2021 email from C. Kenneth Quinones to author; 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015).

<sup>199</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, p. 108; 1948 Testimonial of James A. McMurria mentioned that, in McMurria's opinion, some were near death, [mansell.com/pow\\_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria\\_affidavit\\_rabaul](http://mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/other/rabaul/mcmurria_affidavit_rabaul) (accessed July 18, 2021).

<sup>200</sup> Information on William (Bill) McCleaf's military service is taken from U.S. Select Military Registers, 1862-1985 ([ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), accessed October 16, 2020) and a 2010 obituary posted on [findagrave.com/memorial/54433321/william-carl-mccleaf](http://findagrave.com/memorial/54433321/william-carl-mccleaf), accessed October 16, 2020).

<sup>201</sup> October 15, 2020 telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author; dates for Robert (Bob) McCleaf's service are taken from Pennsylvania Veterans Burial Cards, 1777-1999, [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed March 20, 2015; Paul's enlistment date is in "Rouzerville Marine Is Missing In Action," *Public Opinion* (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania), February 9, 1944, p. 1; dates for John McCleaf's service and branch of service are from Pennsylvania's Application for World War II Compensation at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed October 21, 2020); dates for Frank Benjamin McCleaf, Jr.'s service are taken from Pennsylvania's Application for World War II Compensation at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) (accessed October 21, 2020).

<sup>202</sup> Gamble, *Invasion Rabaul*, p. 219 for the date of the first American attack; John M. Elliott, "Naval Aviation in WW II, Solomon Islands Campaign, The Isolation of Rabaul," *Naval Aviation News*, November-December 1993, p. 29 for the last bombing strike; Tillman, *US Marine Corps Fighter Squadrons*, p. 53 (source of the quotation).

<sup>203</sup> DeChantis, *Devilbirds*, pp. 139, 140; Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation*, pp. 203, 470 .

<sup>204</sup> DeChantis, *Devilbirds*, pp. 140-141, 143.

<sup>205</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 123, 124, 135.

<sup>206</sup> Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, quotes Holquin on Tuck suffering more than other POWs, p. 347; Gamble is also the source for Tuck's death date (p. 347); Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, p. 195.

<sup>207</sup> Nason, *Horio You Next Die!*, pp. 196-197. Nason wrote, "Harold Tuck was the singer in the shed, and said little except when asked to sing." (p. 125) Gamble, *Target Rabaul*, p. 365, dates Tuck's death as November 12, 1944 as does Sakaida, *The Siege of Rabaul*, p. 96.

<sup>208</sup> McMurria, *Fight For Survival*, pp. 155-157, 166.

<sup>209</sup> An April 11, 1944 letter to the family stated that Paul died "in the New Britain area."

<sup>210</sup> Telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author on August 19, 2021 in which he mentioned the two newspapers, one of which he believes was the paper to which his parents subscribed. Maryann McCleaf Potter, in more than one telephone

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conversation, also mentioned the *Washington Post* as the possible newspaper to which her family subscribed.

<sup>211</sup> “Surrender” announcement, *The Morning Call*, October 7, 1944, p. 4; “To Handle Japs on New Britain,” *Intelligencer Journal*, September 5, 1945, p. 3.

<sup>212</sup> “American Flag Raised Over Tokyo; Yanks Go Ashore in Two Zones,” *The Daily Courier*, September 8, 1945, p. 1; Max Hastings, *Retribution, The Battle for Japan, 1944-45* (New York, 2008), p. 546.

<sup>213</sup> ‘Pappy’ Boyington Is Found Alive,” *Public Opinion*, September 1, 1945, p. 8; see also “Col. Boyington Returns, Warns Against Soft Peace,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 13, 1945, p. 4 and ‘Pappy’ Boyington Comes Back to Buy Black Sheep Drinks,” *The Morning Call*, September 13, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>214</sup> “2 Phila. Soldiers Killed in Action,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 13, 1945, p. 4; “Greensburg Vet Liberated,” *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, September 8, 1945, p. 4.

<sup>215</sup> “Prisoners At Rabaul Plead With Japs To Kill Them,” *The Daily Courier*, September 27, 1945, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> Telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author, April 2, 2021.

<sup>217</sup> Telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author, April 2, 2021; Maryann McCleaf Potter is quoted about her mother’s belief that Paul would still come home in “Family gets insight about Marine killed during WWII,” *The Record Herald*, May 22, 2015, A1; Tom remembers the monthly check as being for \$51; Maryann recalls it as \$51.80 (telephone conversation between Maryann McCleaf Potter and author, September 21, 2020).

<sup>218</sup> Telephone conversations between Tom McCleaf and author, October 22, 2020 and Maryann McCleaf and author, September 21, 2020; goldstarmoms.com/our-history (accessed August 23, 2021).

<sup>219</sup> Telephone conversations between Maryann McCleaf Potter and author, August 19 and September 1, 2021; telephone conversations between Tom McCleaf and author, April 1, 2021 and August 19, 2021; 1940 U.S. Federal Census for Bertha Mae Tuck and findagrave.com, both accessed on ancestry.com, August 24, 2021.

<sup>220</sup> “The Strange and Mysterious History of the Ouija Board,” Linda Rodriguez McRobbie, October 27, 2013, smithsonian.com (accessed August 26, 2021); telephone conversations between Tom McCleaf and author, April 1, 2021 and August 19, 2021; telephone conversation between Maryann McCleaf Potter and author, August 19, 2021.

<sup>221</sup> “The Strange and Mysterious History of the Ouija Board,” Linda Rodriguez McRobbie, October 27, 2013, smithsonian.com (accessed August 26, 2021); telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author, August 28, 2021.

<sup>222</sup> Captain Edwin C. Clarke, USMC, Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, March 20, 1944 to “Mr. and Mrs. McCleaf.”

<sup>223</sup> Captain G. E. Allison, USMC, Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, December 26, 1946 to “Mrs. McCleaf.”

<sup>224</sup> James McMurria, October 16, 1946 to Mrs. Annie M. McCleaf; in an April 8, 1944 letter to Annie, the Commandant’s office declared that Paul “nobly gave his life in the performance of his duty.”

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- <sup>225</sup> Telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author, August 19, 2021.
- <sup>226</sup> 1948 Testimonial of Jose Holquin, [pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report](http://pacificwrecks.com/people/veterans/holquin/holquin-pow-report) (accessed March 14, 2015); "Lieutenant Holquin's Final Mission," Joseph P. Blank, *Reader's Digest*, April 1987, pp. 83-88 (see especially pp. 83, 84, 86, 87, 88).
- <sup>227</sup> William C. McCleaf to *Reader's Digest*, May 30, 1987; Elinor Allcott Griffith to William C. McCleaf, June 5, 1987.
- <sup>228</sup> Jose L. Holquin to William C. McCleaf, June 15, 1987.
- <sup>229</sup> The author does not have a copy of the November 1948 letter. The *Public Opinion* newspaper, however, located in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, ran a story on page 2 in its November 12, 1948 edition. Entitled "Japs Cremated Body Of Marine," the article was based on a letter sent by Lt. Edwin C. Clarke to the McCleafs.
- <sup>230</sup> Colonel E. V. Freeman, Office of the Quartermaster General, September 2, 1949 to Mrs. Frank B. McCleaf.
- <sup>231</sup> [cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/jeffersonbarracks.asp](http://cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/jeffersonbarracks.asp) (accessed August 29, 2021).
- <sup>232</sup> American Graves Registration to Frank B. McCleaf. The date on the telegram is illegible; it may be a day in January 1950.
- <sup>233</sup> Louis B. Hellmeyer, Superintendent Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, November 21, 1950 to Frank B. McCleaf; telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author, August 27, 2021; Jas. F. Watt, Department of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, November 16, 1951 to Frank B. McCleaf names the grave numbers and section.
- <sup>234</sup> The League's history and mission statement are taken from its website, [mclnational.org/about.html](http://mclnational.org/about.html) (accessed August 30, 2021).
- <sup>235</sup> "Landis-M'Cleaf Detachment To Receive Charter," *Public Opinion*, April 4, 1947, p. 1; "Charter Issued Landis-M'Cleaf Auxiliary Group," *Public Opinion*, September 28, 1953, p. 1.
- <sup>236</sup> Email from John E. N. Blair to author, August 31, 2021; August 24, 2021 telephone conversation between Blair and author regarding the 1947 dedication date; "Rouzerville Memorial Re-Dedicated," *The Record Herald*, June 12, 2014 ([heraldmailmedia.com/news/tri\\_state/Pennsylvania/rouzerville-memorial-re-dedicated/article\\_1e7fd6ee-f2ab-11e3-a729-0017a43b2370](http://heraldmailmedia.com/news/tri_state/Pennsylvania/rouzerville-memorial-re-dedicated/article_1e7fd6ee-f2ab-11e3-a729-0017a43b2370) (accessed May 8, 2019)).
- <sup>237</sup> Telephone conversation between Maryann McCleaf Potter and author, August 19, 2021.
- <sup>238</sup> Maryann McCleaf Potter remembers that her brother Bill McCleaf ordered the military marker when their mother was still alive. (She died in 1981.)
- <sup>239</sup> Telephone conversation between Tom McCleaf and author, September 1, 2021.