

Keeper of the Legend Captain Fred Losch, USMCR (Ret.)

The Pre-War Life of a Pennsylvania Farm Boy

An old family photograph hangs on a wall in a ranch-style home in Fallbrook, California. Taken in the mid-1920s, its subject is a boy with what seems to be “his” lamb. It is clearly an outdoors picture, with trees in the background. The boy is on his knees with two arms draped around the standing animal; his left arm hugs the lamb under its neck while the right one rests on its back. The child appears dressed in his “Sunday best” or close to it, wearing a jacket, shorts, long socks, and buckled shoes. His round face is topped by a bowl-shaped haircut, not a barbershop one. The boy’s face hints at a smile. He appears both possessive and at the same time protective of the lamb. The picture is a harbinger of how important sheep will be one day in this young boy’s adult life, but not farm sheep. No, his “sheep” will be fifty-one men in their twenties and thirties who flew together during World War II. They formed the most famous fighter squadron in Marine Corps history, VMF 214, or as it is popularly known, the Black Sheep Squadron.



The boy is Frederick Samuel Losch. He called the lamb “Nobby” after a young man his sister knew whose last name was “Noblet.” A cousin took the photograph with a box camera when Fred was about five years old. Seventeen years later Fred became a member of VMF 214 on its second tour in the Solomon Islands under the leadership of Gregory “Pappy” Boyington. Squadron members credit Frank Walton, their intelligence officer, with the creation of the Black Sheep Squadron’s legendary status as he kept reporters aware of 214’s accomplishments. Decades after the war however, Black Sheep pilot and fighter ace John Bolt identified Fred as the “keeper of the legend.” Fred more than any of the other “Sheep” has worked to ensure that the stories of Boyington, Walton, Bolt and the other forty-eight Sheep are honored and not forgotten. But that is also true for Fred’s passionate belief that all who contributed to America’s victory in World War II should be revered and remembered by younger generations.

Fred’s background mirrored that of his generation. Family and community were the formative institutions in his early life. Born in 1921 on Sunday, July 24th, Fred’s parents named him after his paternal grandfather who had died in 1900 as a new century began. In 1921 Fred’s father, Edward Elmer Losch, was already thirty-six years old; his mother, Nelle (Seitzer) Losch, was thirty-seven. Fred would be their last child. In addition to him, the couple had three other children. Paul was eighteen years older than Fred. Martha was the Loschs’ second child, born eight years before Fred. Just three years separated Fred from Neil, the family’s third child. He would be Fred’s closest sibling in those childhood years.

The Losch children grew up in “small town America.” The family farm was located about three miles from Larryville in north central Pennsylvania. Larry’s Creek ran through the town. The Millville Mills Covered Bridge and Gristmill stood over the waterway. It served as one of Larryville’s prominent landmarks. Built in 1849, it stood five stories high. Fred recalls as a child lying under the bridge and fishing. Two nearby dams supplied the power to run the mill. Generations of local farmers drove their wagons to the Millville Gristmill where they waited in line to have their grain ground into flour and grist. Fred’s father was one of the mill’s customers. In 1942, however, it closed due to competition from some hammer mills. By itself, Larryville’s population could not sustain the mill. Just nine houses stood in the town. Two stores, one owned by a Republican and one by a Democrat, served those homes and the surrounding farms. In his war memoir Fred amusingly recalls that the town’s post office moved back and forth between the two stores depending on which political party held power. Two other buildings embodied the heart of the community, a one-room schoolhouse and the Methodist Church where Fred and all of the other children attended Sunday school classes while the adults were in church. Edward Losch’s membership in the Masons and Nelle’s in the Eastern Star bound them even more to their community.

As a sign of the trust people had in Edward, during the Great Depression of the 1930s the Mifflin Township appointed him as “Overseer of the Poor.” He distributed food and clothing to those in need from donations delivered to the Williamsport train station. But he also helped neighbors on an individual basis. Fred vividly remembers one winter day when his dad filled a sack from the Losch family’s flour bin. Edward also grabbed a bag of potatoes from their cellar. He then delivered these items to the Fox family that lived many miles away, trudging through the snow to do it. People defined charity back in the 1920s and 1930s as neighbor helping neighbor, which today sounds almost cliquish.

When he was much older, Fred tried to explain to his children and grandchildren how different his world as a child was from theirs. Fred grew up in a farmhouse without electricity, indoor plumbing, or running water. Coal oil lamps furnished light after dusk fell. An outhouse provided toilet accommodations, but as Fred notes, in cold weather, “You didn’t spend much time out there.” A spring below the house provided water. As a child, Fred brought buckets of it into the house, but he still laments that it was an uphill trip with the laden buckets. One of Fred’s earliest memories relates to that spring. He was



very young, still in diapers. Nelle put her baby close to her as she washed laundry near the water. As his mother occupied herself with that weekly task, Fred remembers how he “crawled out to look at my face in the spring which was about three feet deep and four feet square and surrounded in big rock and stone.” As Fred did this, “I fell in.” Nelle pulled him out. To this day, her son remembers how wet and cold he was at that moment. With his diapers soaked, Fred humorously argues that if such an incident occurred in our current time, “environmentalists and the government would say I was polluting [the spring].”

Fred points out to younger members of his family today that while his parents did not have much money, they always had food on the table. Farm life, with its crops and animals, as well as game hunted in the surrounding fields, insured that. The family did not keep food in a refrigerator, however. An “ice box” on the back porch maintained food at a cold temperature. Blocks of ice acted as the refrigeration unit. In winter, the Losch men cut them from the frozen river. They hauled the blocks back to the family’s icehouse for storage, each block covered with sawdust to keep it cold. The family drew on the blocks as refrigeration demanded. Someone washed the sawdust off of a block before bringing it onto the back porch. Although Fred’s did not do this, families in this era often gathered the sawdust for use again the next year. People believed in the adage, “Waste not, want not.” And that certainly applied to food in general. Fred identifies breakfast as a meal that was “unreal.” For him, its highlight was the buckwheat pancakes. His mother made them with buckwheat grown on the farm. Fred devoured them, covering the pancakes with liverwurst and apple butter, “and I’ll tell you [that] you worked it [the calories] off.”

Farm work provided Fred and his brother Neil with ways to burn off those calories. Understandably, their parents asked more and more of them as they grew older. Fred remembers helping with the wheat and corn in the fields and then hauling the crops into the barn with their father overseeing this task. But there was a joy to this work. As Fred fondly puts it, “How happy we were.” The reality of how lucky the Losch family was came home to Fred in his teen years when he and Neil hired themselves out to a neighboring farmer. They chopped weeds in the man’s sweet corn field. The farmer paid the Losch brothers one dollar a day, along with a noon meal. Fred points out that the farmer paid an older man the same amount of money, but he had five children to support.

Aside from the crops, Fred and the rest of the family labored together at other tasks. He identifies four memorable events that occurred each year, only one of which we observe today in our modern, urban world. The year began with what Fred calls “butchering day.” In January or February meat for the new year would be taken from a half dozen or so hogs. After the men killed the two-three hundred pound animals, they immersed the hogs in a large steel drum filled with hot water. Farmers scraped hair off of the hides after which they suspended the hogs, with the heads hanging downward. The men then proceeded to open the animals up, extracting meat the family drew on for its meals in the coming year. Fred also recalls the late summer days when a traveling threshing machine separated the grain from the stalks (such machines were much too expensive for most farm families to own); the arrival of such a mechanism would excite boys who are seen as mechanical by nature. Thanksgiving, though, proved to be Fred’s favorite special day. All of his relatives gathered at the Losch farm outside of Larryville. Men went off hunting early in the morning, returning by noon with whatever live game they could find for the Thanksgiving Day dinner. Fred estimates that a typical hunting trip could net a half-dozen rabbits, perhaps ten gray squirrels, and a pheasant or grouse. While the men were gone, the women made pumpkin pies, rolls and bread. Mothers and daughters carried canned jars filled months before with vegetables from cellar shelves. Christmas proved to be the last major event Fred identifies as especially noteworthy, although it is not the presents he remembers. Fred’s world was much less materialistic

than ours. His holiday memory is one of riding on the family sled into the woods to bring home a Christmas tree.

While those four special days stood out for Fred, he fondly recalls other events dictated by the rhythms of farm life. In May, with spring well underway, Fred and others in his family tapped the maple trees to make syrup. His father planted fields with wheat, oats, corn, and potatoes. Come the fall, Fred remembers how the family gathered apples to make cider. His father sent some to a local cider mill; the Losch cellar stored the resulting sweet cider in four large wooden barrels. One other barrel held the vinegar and a sixth one the hard cider, which had “a real kick” to it according to Fred. The family also used apples to make apple butter whose production began at “snitzing parties” from the German word *schnitzen*, to cut. The Loschs peeled and then cut the apples into quarters. Women boiled the pieces and some cider in a forty-gallon copper kettle suspended over an open fire until the mixture became thick. After adding spices, they put the resulting apple butter into jars stored in the cellar with hundreds of other jars filled with vegetables and fruit. From all of these farm tasks--the threshing and the butchering, the planting of crops, and the making of maple syrup as well as apple butter--Fred learned some important lessons he carried with him throughout his life, most prominently the inherent value of team work and self-sufficiency.

Fred learned at an early age that when he wanted something, he had to work for it. An illustrative childhood memory of this centers on a football Fred wanted when he was about six years old. Available through the Sears and Roebuck catalogue, it cost three dollars. For weeks Fred handpicked walnuts and sold them to a store in the nearby town of Jersey Shore. Eventually he earned enough money for the mail-order football. Ironically, though, after it arrived Fred did not use it that much. The closest boy he could play football with lived about two miles away.

Fred acquired another item when he was about six that left him with a sad but also humorous childhood memory. His older brother Paul visited the family one day. He brought with him two Daisy BB guns, one for Fred and one for Neil. Fred promptly used his. He shot a small sparrow sitting in a walnut tree near the house. Fred went over the dead bird and picked it up. He started to cry. Nelle, looking out the window, saw how devastated her youngest child was as he realized that he had killed the bird. She came outside and held her son on the porch swing until he stopped crying. Fred decided that in the future, “ I was going to go safari hunting and shoot only big stuff like elephants.” A bigger target appeared in his gun sight a few days later.

Fred spied Neil leaning on the back fence. As Fred admits, “I saw that big butt of his and I thought, ‘Boy, that’s not an elephant, but that’s a pretty big target [nevertheless]’ .” Fred fired his BB gun. The steel ball went through Neil’s belt into his buttocks. Paul, visiting the family again, heard the commotion. As Fred recounts, “He came whipping out [of the house] and grabbed my gun.” Paul took it into the kitchen, lifted the lid off of the wood-burning stove, and appeared to be ready to toss the BB gun inside. Apparently though, Paul took pity on his little brother who stood there crying, probably both at the realization he had shot Neil and at the fate that awaited his gun. Instead of burning it,

Paul put the gun on a high kitchen shelf. He told Fred that he would decide when his little brother could have the gift back. For the next two or three weeks, Fred looked longingly at the object on the shelf. "It was tearing me up that I could not have my BB gun." Eventually Paul felt Fred had learned his lesson and allowed him to have the gun back.

In Fred's childhood world, fathers taught their sons at an early age how to hunt with rifles and shotguns. And no one back then thought it dangerous to take those items to school. Fred points out that boys stacked their guns in a corner of the cloakroom, right near the jackets and coats. Adults did not question this habit because the boys used their guns or rifles while walking home, looking for squirrels, rabbits, or pheasants along the way.

Fred speaks fondly of his elementary education. He attended the Chestnut Grove School in Mifflin Township. The building stood in an open, rural area with chestnut trees near the school. Surrounding farms sent their children to the small schoolhouse. Fred walked two miles one-way to get there. The trek became more difficult in the winter months. The snow could easily be two to three feet deep, with only the tops of fence posts visible. To help his children navigate the distance from farm to school, Fred's father took a couple of horses and plowed a trail through the snow for the children. They used the path all winter long.

The one-room schoolhouse, which housed the first through the eighth grade, had a small student body population. According to Fred, fifteen could be the total number of children in attendance in some years. If it is true that we learn by repetition, then a high level of education took place in one-room schoolhouses. As Fred explains, the teacher stood on a platform in front of the students, with blackboards behind her. Individually, she directed a class to sit at the recitation bench. For example, Fred recalls the teacher saying in a loud voice, "Fifth grade class, stand and come forward." The students would proceed to follow the teacher's instruction to perhaps diagram sentences or work arithmetic problems at the chalkboard. While the fifth grade was doing this, the other children were supposed to concentrate on work specific to their grade level. But the students could not help but listen to the lessons taking place at the front of the room. As Fred puts it, "You're sitting back there, maybe in the third grade, and you are suppose to be doing *your* arithmetic, but you cannot help but watch [the fifth graders]." By eighth grade, Fred points out, "you've had reading, writing, and arithmetic over and over in every class." His generation exhibits not only a firm grasp of the basics, but also of other topics such as geography. On Fridays a special lesson in that subject took place. The teacher divided the class into two groups. One named a place and the other group located it on a map before switching roles.

Graduation from elementary school to high school did not occur automatically in Fred's time, regardless of how well a student did in the lower grades. In their eighth grade year, students took a series of tests to prove they had mastered the "three R's," reading, writing, and arithmetic. Larryville students traveled to the nearby town of Salladasburg. Three days of testing occurred there, with the superintendent of county schools in attendance. Fred calls the exams "unreal." He confesses that when he took

these tests he, “was so shook up I spelled my name wrong on three different papers.” Fred did pass, though. The fall of 1935 found him attending high school in Jersey Shore. When he started classes there, Fred felt he was “far ahead” academically of the other freshmen. The educational foundation he received in the one-room schoolhouse had ingrained the basics into him. Fred did not play on any high school teams. Larryville had a baseball team that Fred had been a part of, but the Jersey Shore high school did not. He did, however, sit on the student council for all four years. Membership in that body was small, about five students as Fred recalls.

When Fred was a junior, he wanted to study drafting. He and two friends attended adult night classes at a high school in Williamsport, about fifteen miles from the Losch farm. The three friends took turns driving. Larry’s Creek Service Station in Larryville



served as the pick-up point. After Fred’s high school graduation in 1939, he enrolled at the Williamsport Dickinson Junior College. That institution went through three name-changes in its history. Originally founded as the Williamsport Academy in 1812, the school began as a private institution. It educated children in the lumber port’s community, girls as well as boys. By the terms of a state grant, a small number of poor children also had to be enrolled. Over thirty years later, with an established public school system as a choice now for local families, the Academy was for sale. Methodists purchased the institution. They opened it in 1848 as the Williamsport Dickinson Seminary. (The church also ran Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and it intended the Williamsport school to serve as a preparatory institution for the college.) What had begun as a private academy and then

became a seminary, evolved even more in the twentieth century. In 1929 the institution, now offering lower division college courses, became the first accredited junior college in Pennsylvania. Its new name became Williamsport Dickinson Junior College, what it was known as when Fred enrolled there ten years later. Just after World War II ended, the school received its fourth name, becoming Lycoming College in 1947 from the name of the county where the college was located.

Fred remembers that the cost of attending the school was not that great. In his first semester there, he enrolled in a broad spectrum of freshman courses--English Composition, Chemistry, Trigonometry, a Drawing class, and a Physical Education course. In his second semester at Dickinson, Fred took another class in English Composition and in Chemistry, one in Public Speaking, an Algebra class and an Introduction to Religion and Biblical Literature. After just a year at Dickinson though, Fred moved on, in more than one way. The drafting classes he had taken in high school qualified him for a job with Paul’s employer, Armstrong Cork Company. While that business based itself in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Fred’s brother lived and worked in Beaver Falls, a town about thirty-five miles northwest of Pittsburgh. Paul held the

position of plant supervisor. He took seriously his role as the older brother and told Fred to come to Beaver Falls where a job and another college awaited him.

In the fall of 1940, Paul enrolled him at Geneva College, a small Christian educational institution in Beaver Falls. On registration day in September, Fred found himself standing in line to sign up for classes. He was somewhat at a loss, though, as to what his major should be. Another student in front of him identified himself as a chemical engineering major, primarily because it led to immediate employment after graduation. Fred registered for chemical engineering classes, too, although he admits, "I had no idea in the world what that entailed." Fred worked as a draftsman for Armstrong while he studied at Geneva College. Paul helped out with the tuition. In his two years at Geneva, Fred took courses indicative of his major---two in Physics, four in Mathematics, three in Chemistry, and two classes in Engineering. Additionally, Fred enrolled in courses outside his major to fulfill some General Education requirements--two semesters in Economics, Physical Education, and Political Science; four semesters studying German, and one course in the Bible as well as two in History.

GENEVA COLLEGE BEAVER FALLS, PA.		SCHOLASTIC RECORD OF		Name: <i>Loock, Fred Samuel, Larryville, Penna.</i>																																							
NAME AND ADDRESS OF PARENTS OR GUARDIAN: <i>Mr. Edward O. Loock</i>		NAME: <i>Loock, Fred Samuel</i>		CITY AND STATE: <i>Larryville, Penna.</i>																																							
DATE OF BIRTH: <i>July 24, 1921</i>		SUBJECT		FOREIGN LANGUAGE						HIST. ETC.						MATHEMATICS						SCIENCE						ELECTIVES															
PLACE OF BIRTH: <i>Larryville, Pa.</i>		UNITS OFFERED		Lat.		Gr.		Fr.		Sp.		Ger.		His.		Cit.		Hgr. Ar.		Alg.		Pl. Geol.		Sol. Geol.		Trig.		Biol.		Chem.		Phys.		Bot.		Zool.		Gen. Sci.		Phy. Geo.		TOTAL: <i>157 1/2</i>	
FATHER'S OCCUPATION: <i>Methodist</i>		CONDITIONS REMOVED		3		2																																					
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OR PREFERENCE: <i>Methodist</i>		Prepared by: <i>J. S. Moore</i>		Admitted upon certificate with conditions in: <i>W. Williamsport, Pa.</i>		Admitted with advanced standing from: <i>Geneva College</i>		Graduated: <i>1941</i>		of Class: <i>1st 5th</i>		Int. Test Score: _____		Matriculated: <i>Sept. 1940</i>		Major: _____		Date: _____		Degree of: _____		Date: _____		Degree of: _____		Date: _____		Degree of: _____		Date: _____		Degree of: _____		Date: _____		Degree of: _____		Date: _____					

If one tries to understand the man by looking at his roots, so to speak, Fred's small town background helped to shape his character. In Larryville, "neighbor helped neighbor." Additionally, the role models his mother and father offered to him influenced the man Fred became. Both were supportive parents and involved in their community through religious and civic organizations. And lastly, Fred's formal education helped to shape him. When he was young, his schooling consisted of a superior elementary education in a one-room schoolhouse. Fred still vividly recalls that curriculum over seventy-five years later. After high school, he moved on to a higher education, first at Dickinson and then at Geneva. At both institutions, moral principles served as the foundation for the curriculum. After three years, Fred was close to graduation. But then came December 7, 1941.

The Japanese attack on America's Pacific fleet based at Pearl Harbor pulled the United States into World War II. Like millions of other young men, Fred enlisted in the military. He left behind him the Pennsylvania farm family that had nurtured him for his first twenty years. A new family provided similar support, however. It was VMF 214, the men of the Black Sheep Squadron. The six-year old boy who had promised himself that he would "go safari hunting and shoot only big stuff like elephants" found himself in the South Pacific instead of Africa. And in place of a Daisy BB gun, Fred fired machine guns from the controls of the F4U Corsair fighter plane. "The big stuff" that became his targets

were the Japanese planes and installations in the Solomon Islands. Thus Nobby became replaced by a group of sheep that Fred would be as protective of as he had been of his little lamb.

“To Secure the Future,” Enlistment and Training

Fred likes to point out to young people today that his generation “understood the past.” One could argue that in the 1920s and 1930s, when Fred was in school, educators as well as parents valued the study of United States history more than they do today. By the time he enrolled at Geneva College, Fred understood the principles of American government and significant events in his country’s history. They had been an integral part of school curriculum at every level. A student did not move on to the next educational level without demonstrating a grasp of these fundamentals in American citizenry. Fred recalls one of the 8th grade exams, that all Chestnut Grove students had to take in order to go on to high school, had as its subject history and government. He also remembers that it was his Jersey Shore high school principal who taught the civics class. In their classrooms, schools throughout the country proudly and prominently displayed pictures of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. These two men led Americans through their country’s greatest crises. Fred still remembers such presidential paintings hanging in his Chestnut Grove School. From stories of the American Revolution and the Civil War, Fred understood that sometimes young men had to take up arms to defend their country. In addition to the fact that his generation knew its history, Fred also likes to remind younger people that his generation “did what was necessary to secure the future.”¹ One way it did that was through service in the armed forces after the attack at Pearl Harbor.

On, December 7, 1941 Fred decided to occupy himself in a pursuit typical of men who lived in his area of Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. He went hunting. The fall semester at Geneva College was nearing an end. With his nighttime drafting job at the Armstrong plant on top of his class work, his weekday schedule was a busy one. On that particular Sunday, Fred would have had no problem justifying to himself that he deserved some relaxation time. Even though he lived with his brother Paul, the plant manager for Armstrong, Fred ventured out alone that day. Instead of taking a rifle, he grabbed a bow and arrow, “just for the fun of it,” as Fred puts it. After hunting rabbits, Fred arrived home to a dramatic announcement from Paul--“Put away your bow and arrows and get your rifle. The Japs have just bombed Pearl Harbor.”²

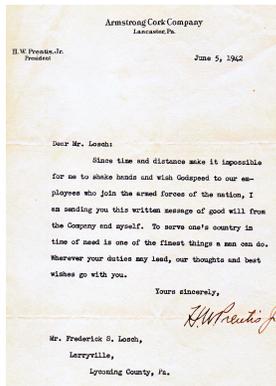
The next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke to Congress, asking for a declaration of war against Japan. Americans listened to him on the radio. Fred, however, was not in Beaver Falls that Monday to do so. He and a college friend, Frank Casey, drove to Pittsburgh’s military recruiting stations. They were not alone. In other major metropolitan areas, tens of thousands of young men did the same. Photographs taken throughout the country on December 8th show men standing in lines that wrapped around

buildings and measured the length of city blocks. Fred and Frank confronted this sight in Pittsburgh, especially for the Army Air Corps.³ Flying had an allure for their generation since it became more common in the 1920s and the 1930s for men and women to take to the air, apparently defying the Laws of Nature itself.

Those who flew airplanes captivated the imagination of young people with their exploits. Some pilots performed as barnstormers, exciting crowds with their daredevil maneuvers. A barnstormer might even sell rides in his or her airplane, and children probably proved to be their most eager customers. Maturity had not yet reigned in their imaginations. Some aviators became national heroes for setting new records, such as Charles A. Lindbergh with his nonstop flight from New York to Paris in 1927. Even residents in the small town of Larryville would have been abuzz with talk of “Lucky Lindy” and his plane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Fred, just six years old then, would have shared in the excitement. Other pilots flew crop dusting planes in farming areas, giving young people in rural communities the opportunity to watch airplanes for hours at a time. As they were growing up in their childhood and adolescent years, Fred and Frank, like others in their generation, would have heard their parents discuss transcontinental races and new aviation records that were being set. It is thus not surprising that the Geneva College students confronted long recruitment lines for the Army Air Corps. Anxious to enlist and frustrated at the line, Fred recalls Frank exclaiming, “The hell with this. Let’s join the Navy Air Corps.” Fred admitted to his friend that he did not know the Navy had such a branch of service. The two men from Beaver Falls, who had never even been in an airplane, located a Navy recruitment station. Its line was much shorter line than that for the Army. Fred and Frank left Pittsburgh that day having volunteered for service in the Navy Air Corps.⁴

The Navy advised both young men, however, to finish up their academic year at Geneva College before reporting for flight training. Fred took a full load, six classes, in the spring semester of 1942. His course schedule proved to be a heavy one with its concentration on chemistry, math, and engineering. The only classes outside of his major were ones in history, German, and political science.⁵ Fred must have been anxious for that semester to be over as he heard news from December into the new year of American territorial losses in the Pacific--Wake Island and Guam--to Japanese forces. In the Philippines, the surrender of Americans at Bataan and Corregidor in April and May respectively shocked those on the Home Front. Like other young men, Fred wanted to be “in the fight” and help reverse the setbacks United States forces suffered in the first six months of the Pacific war. News of the Allied victory at Midway in early June coincided with the end of Fred’s semester at Geneva College. American forces were on the rebound now, and Fred was anxious to join them.

As Fred prepared to leave his parents’ home in June for basic training, the president of the Armstrong Cork Company, H.W. Prentis, Jr., sent a letter from his Lancaster office to Fred at the Losch family home in Larryville. Prentis mailed a similar letter to all of his employees who left the company for military service. Prentis apologized, but because of “time and distance,” he could not personally meet with Fred to “shake hands and wish Godspeed.” The company executive recognized Fred’s willingness to serve in the



military as admirable. “Wherever your duties may lead, our thoughts and best wishes go with you.” Undoubtedly, everyone in the Losch family and their friends in the Larryville area echoed Prentis’ feelings.⁶

Fred left for military service at a time when the Navy was producing a record number of pilots. In 1935, less than one thousand pilots flew in the Navy and Marine Corps. While this number steadily increased throughout the end of that decade, by mid-1941 the total still numbered only about forty-six hundred pilots.⁷ But by the spring of 1942, the military lowered qualifications for Naval aviation cadets from two years of college to just a high school diploma. This change “plugged up the training system with enlistees.”⁸ The Navy recruiter in Pittsburgh had ordered Fred to finish up his academic year at Geneva by taking classes in the spring semester of 1942, with good reason. The Navy needed to prepare for Fred and thousands of other cadets by lining up the bases, training planes, and flight instructors for the onslaught of student cadets.⁹ If Fred had gone directly into basic training in December 1941, the Navy simply would not have had room for him and the thousands of others who enlisted in the wake of the attack at Pearl Harbor. Additionally, lowering the formal education requirement served to increase the pool of aviation cadets who all needed to be trained. By 1943, when Fred was still in the midst of his training, he was one of twenty thousand aviation pilots the Navy was producing.¹⁰ The Naval pilot training program consisted, basically, of three stages--Pre-Flight Training, Primary Training, and Intermediate Training.¹¹ It took eleven months for Fred to move through those stages until he received his wings in May 1943. Advanced training followed.

The initial stage of training took place at a “Pre-Flight School” that the military formally designated as a Naval Preparatory School. These were located at a handful of colleges and universities throughout the country. Fred’s orders directed him to report to the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill in the summer of 1942. (Future Presidents George H.W. Bush and Gerald R. Ford also were sent to UNC during the war, the former as a cadet like Fred and the latter as an instructor.) One of the purposes of the Naval Preparatory Schools was to formally indoctrinate the cadet into Navy life. They arrived as “seamen second class.”¹² Some of the Navy ways must have seemed mundane to the cadets. At Chapel Hill, Fred learned how to use a broom “the Navy way” when cadets swept the bunkroom each morning. Instructors taught Fred and the other recruits how to square the corners of their bedding for daily inspections. The farm boy from Larryville also changed his speech to reflect the Naval life he was now a part of. Walls became “bulkheads,” the floor a “deck,” and the stairs a “ladder.” Cadets practiced coming to “attention.” They followed the directives of “column right/left” and “present arms.” In addition to this formal introduction into the Navy, Fred took courses to prepare for Naval aviation ground school once he moved onto Primary Training. At UNC, Naval instructors introduced cadets to the basic fundamentals of physics, mathematics, power plants, aircraft and ship recognition, and navigation.¹³ Fred’s college background as a

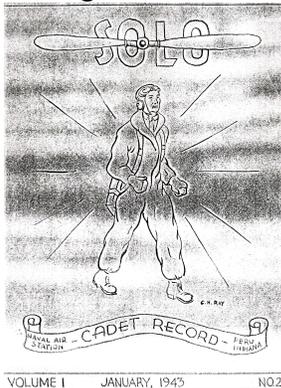
chemical engineering major served him well in the classrooms at Chapel Hill. In addition to academic courses, Fred's time at the university included physical training.

Recalling decades later his twelve weeks in Pre-Flight Training, Fred characterized those months this way--"Here [at UNC] we were taught a little about navy regulations, but mostly it was a body build-up course." The Navy proudly judged its three-month Pre-Flight program as one that "subjected [aviation cadets] to the most strenuous physical training program ever given American fighting men."¹⁴ The cadets ran obstacle courses, threw long, heavy poles, and dug ditches. They had to swim continuously for thirty minutes.¹⁵ A cartoon from the May 22, 1943 UNC Pre-Flight newsletter *Cloudbuster* pictured the comic book character Superman walking away in a huff from a place designated "Navy Area." Carrying a suitcase, Superman announced, "I quit! That course is too tough for me."¹⁶ The component of the physical training that Fred fondly remembers concerned a boxing team he joined. (Cadets could also join baseball, football, soccer, gymnastics, wrestling, swimming, track, volleyball, or basketball teams. Some of these sports trained cadets in self-defense and hand-to-hand combat; all of them were meant to increase the men's self-confidence and "aggressive spirit."¹⁷) Fred's choice of boxing over others was understandable given his childhood. Fred and his brother Neil had been boxing since they were "knee high." When Fred was young, Dr. Schuman from Jersey Shore, who delivered him, regularly visited the Losch family farm. The physician liked to watch the two brothers box. Dr. Schuman gave the boy who came out ahead in the match a quarter. The one who lost received fifty cents, probably to soothe his ego. Fred's abilities in this sport got another boost when, at UNC, he trained with a cadet whose father was a boxing trainer at the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁸ The Navy men had matches with Army recruits. The two contenders went three rounds of three minutes each. In his weight class, Fred won all of his twenty-eight matches. But after putting on some weight at UNC, he moved up to another class; in it, he fought only one match, which he lost. As Fred puts it, "my opponent almost killed me. End of my boxing career."¹⁹ While that might have been true, Fred's aviation career was just beginning. Once his three months ended at UNC, the Navy officially designated him as a "Flight Cadet." He received orders to report to Bunker Hill Naval Air Station (NAS) in Peru, Indiana, located in the north-central part of the state. It was a new NAS, and Fred's class would be the first group that underwent Primary Training there.²⁰

Using light aircraft, instructors at Peru put cadets through their first in-flight training. What proved so crucial about Primary Training is seen in the use of another word to designate this stage. It was also known as "elimination," or simply "E training." At Bunker Hill, much more than at UNC, cadets could be, in Fred's words "washed out if you didn't have it."²¹ The Navy detailed the process followed as it taught Flight Cadets how to fly at Peru and all of the Primary Training bases--instructors take the cadet and "wrings him out, knocks him down, picks him up, teaches him, scares him, breaks his heart, tightens his stomach, polishes him and turns him out with that indefinable 'seat-of-the-pants' faculty that makes him at least a flyer in a narrow sense, a man who has conquered an airplane and won a step up the ladder."²² The process, like Pre-Flight Training, took about three months. At first, Fred and other cadets shared the cockpit with an instructor. Once that Naval officer signed off on Fred's initial flight capabilities, the

cadet from Larryville moved on to “Stage ‘B’ check.” Fred learned how to maneuver in “wing-overs, flipper turns and spirals...and ‘S’ turns to circles.” He then moved up to Stage C. Like the other cadets, Fred must have smiled when he received approval for this next level because of its focus--stunt flying. The purpose of Stage C was to make the future aviator feel “at home in an airplane” regardless of the position it is in. As such, instructors taught Fred to execute “snap rolls, Immelmans, loops, falling leaves, split S’s and slips to circles.” Cadets also learned some precision flying with “pylon-8’s.”²³

During the three months of instruction at Bunker Hill NAS, Fred’s class must have been a sight for more than one reason. They began Primary Training in a “Stearman,” a Boeing N2S whose official name was, appropriately, *Kaydet*.²⁴ It was not the plane that



VOLUME 1 JANUARY, 1943 NO. 2

would have gotten a spectator’s attention. Rather, it was the facial appearance of the cadets. To protect themselves against the freezing temperature at high altitudes, Fred and others smeared Vaseline over their face and then put on blue facemasks. Charles H. Ray, a cadet in Fred’s class, characterized this procedure as “part of our misery” while in training.²⁵ Aside from how the cadets looked, anyone watching them train would have shaken their heads at the conditions under which they learned to fly. Because they were the first class to be trained at Peru, the air station was not yet fully established. Fred and his classmates took off from a cow pasture that functioned as their runway.

Additionally, the Navy had not yet built permanent buildings. A brick farmhouse served as the ready room where the cadets were briefed before flights. A chicken coup acted as the parachute loft. Cotton string tied to sticks in the ground marked the route of their obstacle course. The rough conditions even extended to the barracks where the men showered without hot water in the early part of their stay at the base.²⁶

Fred characterized Primary Training as one where “you did everything.” Part of that included night flying. Frank Casey, who had enlisted with Fred in Pittsburgh, came in too low one night and topped some eucalyptus trees, although he did safely land the plane.²⁷ (A newsletter put out by the cadets characterized Frank as possessing “guts,” a cadet who “would say, ‘tear a wing off, land it anyway.’ ”)²⁸ Primary Training also included an introduction to formation flying. The Navy taught the Flight Cadets “formation take offs, touch and go landings, echelons, and cross-overs.”²⁹ At Peru, however, only half a day was devoted to in-flight training. The other part of the day centered on ground school. With lectures in aerodynamics as background, Fred and the other cadets learned about “aircraft engines, engine construction, carburetion and ignition and engine operation.”³⁰ Instructors also taught the young men about weather conditions, especially cloud formation so, once they flew missions, they could strategize on how to fly in bad weather. Navigation was a crucial component of the ground school curriculum, as was communication.³¹ Morse Code proved more of a challenge for Fred, in contrast to celestial navigation that came easy for him. Similarly, Fred recalls the exercise “ready now” as fun. Instructors flashed pictures of United States planes and ships to the class. Cadets identified them on a sheet of paper.³²

While at Bunker Hill NAS, Fred trained as part of Class 10-A. Twenty cadets made up the group. Almost the entire class came from the East, with eight from New York, seven from Pennsylvania, three from New Jersey, and one from Connecticut. As it turned out, the twentieth cadet, Charles H. Ray, came from Terre Haute, Indiana. Ray described himself as “the sole foreigner” in Class 10-A. Except for one man, all of the cadets possessed a college or university education. Fred and Frank Casey, of course, had been at Geneva College. Four of their classmates attended Colgate University, two Syracuse University, and one came from Cornell.³³ Together, these men made up Peru’s Class 10-A, but while at Peru they also composed a “Primary Squadron.” In December 1942, Fred spent his first Christmas away from his family. Bob Collins, a classmate, took Fred home to Albany with him for the holidays. Fred remembers with fondness that generous act. The Collins family was a prominent one. Their large home impressed Fred, but even more, they impressed the Pennsylvania farm boy because of how they treated him. According to Fred, they acted like he was “one of their own.” When the family exchanged gifts on Christmas Day, Fred received some presents, memorably a carton of cigarettes. Once Bob and Fred returned to Peru, they knew they were one step closer to receiving their wings. After passing the instructor “check” for Stages D and E, Class 10-A graduated in January of 1943. Fred and others in his class/squadron proved themselves ready to move on to Intermediate Training. For Fred and others in his group, that meant the U.S.N. Air Training Center in Pensacola, Florida.

One of two major Naval training centers (the other was Corpus Christi, Texas), Pensacola introduced cadets to planes that had more weight and more horsepower than aircraft they had flown in Primary Training. This Intermediate Training lasted about four months, one month longer than Pre-Flight and Primary. Fred remembers that when he arrived at Pensacola, he was asked what his preference was in respect to the type of flight training to which he would be assigned. Fred responded that he wanted to be a fighter pilot.³⁴ He got his wish. To gain additional space for the influx of aviation cadets, in December 1942 the Navy leased a small, municipal airport across the Florida state border, at Foley, Alabama. The military also bought additional acreage adjacent to it. The new instructional site was named Barin Field in honor of Lt. Louis T. Barin, a Naval aviator who died in a 1920 crash. Recall that Fred had been in the first class at Bunker Hill NAS in Peru. Similarly, he became one of the early cadets to train at Barin Field. In its first two years of operation, almost six thousand cadets trained there, but forty died in various crashes. Barin held the dubious distinction of being the site for one of the greatest accident rates in either Navy or Army aviation training. Drew Pearson, a well-known newspaper columnist, had a nephew who underwent instruction at Barin. Because of its crash record, Pearson nicknamed the field “Bloody Barin.”³⁵



While flight training in North American Aviation’s SNJ, Fred mastered some of the skills necessary to be a fighter pilot--“the split-second timing required to hit a waving target while diving at the highest speeds; the perfect coordination necessary to keep the plane out of a slip or a skid at the moment of firing; and the control and sense of balance demanded by unusual positions.”³⁶ The Navy identified gunnery as the most important

phase of training a fighter pilot, likening a fighter plane to “a flying machine gun.” Cadets learned how to execute ground strafing and “the more difficult art of shooting the sleeve.” This exercise required cadets to fly above or alongside a long target made out of white material towed by another airplane. The target resembled a sleeve billowing in the wind. The cadets fired at the target, with each cadet using a different colored bullet. Once the tow plane landed, how well a cadet did could be assessed by counting how many of his colored bullets hit the sleeve. Gunnery practice must have been a humbling experience when a cadet like Fred learned that it was “possible, or rather, easy, to fire seventy-two rounds from a range of less than 200 feet and not get a single hit.”³⁷

Fred’s months at Pensacola also included additional time in Ground School. Instructors taught cadets various types of navigation subjects such as scouting and search, celestial navigation, and practical navigation. Fred and the other cadets spent time at a radio, practicing their ability to receive and send messages in Morse Code. Cadets had to master a required minimum rate, in sending messages, of at least ten words a minute.³⁸ And by Fred’s own admission, Morse Code had not been his strength at Bunker Hill NAS.



While the Navy kept Fred busy at Pensacola, the creation of a community memorial to recognize local sons who entered military service occupied his parents back in Larryville. The memorial took the form of an Honor Roll on a wall in the town’s Methodist Church. When the community first built the church back in 1872, Fred’s grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Losch, donated the hand-made, cedar shingles atop its roof. Now, seventy-one years later, Fred’s parents, Edward and Nelle Losch, donated the Honor Roll, or Roll of Honor as it was also called. They and other members of the congregation gathered at the church on March 14, 1943 to dedicate the Honor Roll.

Sixteen brass nameplates were affixed to a dark piece of wood, with a brass eagle mounted atop the plaque. The Honor Roll lists the names, in alphabetical order, of young men from the area who entered the Armed Forces “to fight for the preservation of the freedom which in America is our heritage, and to make that freedom available to all peoples everywhere.”³⁹ By the end of the war, the community added eight more names as more sons joined the military. The Honor Roll still hangs today on a wall in the Larryville Methodist Church. Twelve names are listed on the left-hand side of the plaque and twelve names on the right-hand side. What strikes the viewer of the Honor Roll is the duplication of surnames. Three sons from the Shemory family served in World War II as did two sons from the Gohl, Robinson, and Losch families. (Fred’s brother Neil enlisted in the Army.) Fred, with his strong sense of history, would have approved of the hymn sung by the congregation toward the end of the ceremony, Hymn No. 491, *America the Beautiful*.⁴⁰

On May 7, 1943, almost two months after the congregation dedicated the Honor Roll, Fred received his wings. Officially, he was one of fifty cadets in Flight Class 12E

42-P(C). Almost twelve months had passed since he left Geneva College and his parents' farm for military service. The Navy had put him through Pre-Flight Training at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Primary Training at Peru, Indiana, and Intermediate Training at Pensacola, Florida. Wearing his coveted wings, and his new rank as a second lieutenant, the Navy assigned Fred to two more Naval Air Stations--Jacksonville, Florida and Glenview, Illinois. He would train there not as a Naval aviator, however, but as a pilot in the Marine Corps Reserve.

At the end of Fred's time at Pensacola, his official military status changed. From each graduating class at Pensacola, Marine Corps Reserve Major R.H. Kerr, one of the administrative officers assigned to Jacksonville, selected a handful of newly commissioned second lieutenants. Only the top ten percent of graduates were chosen to be a Marine Corps pilot, which means that out of the fifty in Fred's Flight Class 12E, five cadets were chosen to be Marine pilots.⁴¹ Fred was one of those five. The Marine Corps Air Cadet Program began in April 1935 when Congress passed the Aviation Cadet Act. It created cadet programs for both the Naval and Marine Corps Reserves (MCR).⁴² The instruction of Marine Corps pilots "paralleled that of the Navy's own airmen through completion of intermediate training."⁴³ So once Fred was designated to the MCR, he parted company with the vast number of his Pensacola classmates as they continued advanced Naval training and Fred began MCR training. Fred's indoctrination into the MCR proved particularly noteworthy because of two things, the type of fighter plane he trained in and the man who would be his instructor.

After graduation at Pensacola, the Navy sent Fred to the NAS at Jacksonville for advanced training. With a pride that is well deserved, Fred points out that he was in the first group of Marine Corps pilots to train there in F4U Corsairs.⁴⁴ Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, who commanded the famous Black Sheep Squadron that Fred would eventually join, judged the Corsair to be "a sweet flying baby."⁴⁵ In 1938 the Navy sought designs for a fighter plane that could land on an aircraft carrier. The Chance Vought Corporation submitted a proposal for one that would be powered by a Pratt & Whitney engine (the final model's hp was 2,250). The design called for a lengthy propeller, over thirteen feet long, to utilize even more the engine's power. Because of the propeller's length, struts for the landing gear had to be longer than on other aircraft. This fact, in turn, required a different wing design. Vought came up with an inverted gull wing. Impressed with the fighter plane's proposal, the Navy gave Vought a contract in the summer of 1938. On a trial flight two years later, the Corsair's speed averaged 405 mph. It thus became the first Navy fighter to exceed 400 mph.⁴⁶

It was the speed that impressed Fred when the Navy introduced him to the Corsair at Jacksonville. The NAS received only six of the new fighters. As it turned out, the five MCR pilots fresh from their Pensacola graduation trained in them. Fred, of course, was one of them. Their instructor, Major John Dobbin, flew the sixth Corsair. Before the Navy assigned him to Jacksonville, Dobbin had flown Grumman F4F Wildcats in the battle for Guadalcanal. He chalked up eight "kills"/"victories" against Japanese planes in that campaign. The number of Japanese planes Dobbin shot down catapulted him to ace status, which required five "kills." The Marine aviator clearly had the combat experience

to train new pilots. Fred recalls Dobbins with great fondness, judging him to be “like a father to us.” This ace, however, had never flown the new Corsair. He and his five students studied all of the specifications on the fighter and “did numerous cockpit checks.” Fred must have been surprised when, one day, Dobbins ordered the new second lieutenant to “take her up!” Although Fred had intensely studied the Corsair, it had all been on paper, and his time in the plane had been limited to sitting in the cockpit. Now he would get to fly it.⁴⁷

As Fred likes to say about the war, “I was there.” And for a description of his first flight in a Corsair, no one could describe it better than him. Fred’s words, written some sixty years after that flight, still convey the excitement he felt that day in the spring of 1943:

I remember starting down the runway for take-off, thinking, ‘Here is 2000 horse-Power. You are twenty-one years old, and not too smart.’ The fastest and most powerful plane I’d flown up until then had 450 hp. As I pushed the throttle of the bent-wing beast forward, it almost crushed me into the back of the seat. Halfway down the runway, I cut the throttle and said, ‘Well, next time, maybe!’ Eventually, I did take off, and in my mind I was the hottest pilot in the Corps! Then, my next thought was, ‘Great, but I’ve got to get this mother back on the ground.’ So much for being the hottest pilot in the Corps.⁴⁸

By the time Fred left Jacksonville in July, he had over one hundred hours in the Corsair. Such familiarity with the F4U proved providential. Four months later, it undoubtedly factored into his selection as a replacement pilot in the Black Sheep Squadron. Before Fred left for the Pacific, however, he reported to one last NAS--Glenview, Illinois. He stayed there for only nine days, but it provided another historic moment for the young, second lieutenant.⁴⁹

Located outside of Chicago on the West North Shore, Glenview originally existed as a civilian airport. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, however, the Navy expanded facilities it shared there with commercial airlines. Glenview officially became “Naval Air Station Glenview” on January 1, 1943. Using Lake Michigan, the Navy began a Carrier Qualification Training Program for advanced pilots, such as Fred. With no real carriers to spare for such instruction, the Navy adapted two converted steamers for the “carrier” training. The Navy commissioned the side-wheelers *S.S. Seandbee* as the *U.S.S. Wolverine* in August of 1942 and the *S.S. Greater City of Buffalo* as the *U.S.S. Sable* in May of 1943. Sailors took out the decks of the steamers down to the water line. The new ones resembled the flight decks pilots would see below them on aircraft carriers. The Navy also trained deck crews on the *Wolverine* and the *Sable*.⁵⁰ Aside from his carrier training at Glenview, one vivid memory Fred has of the air station concerns its Mess Hall. Fred recalls that the man who ran the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, a luxury hotel near Grant Park, also managed the Navy Mess Hall at Glenview. That resulted in white linen tablecloths, crystal glasses, and “food out of the ordinary” for the officers when they dined.⁵¹

Like all of the advanced pilots sent to Glenview NAS, Fred had to make eight carrier landings. The *Sable's* deck became his target. A landing by a Corsair on the flight deck required about thirty knots of speed, but the converted steamer "could barely manage twelve knots." Without an accompanying wind of at least eighteen knots, a landing would be dangerous. (Since pilots landed and took off into the wind, the wind acted as a "brake" for the plane.) As Fred was checking out in the Corsair, so was a major in the Marine Corps. They took off together, each in their separate planes, determined to achieve carrier certification. Days went by with Fred and the major eyeing the *Sable's* deck from above, yet the order kept coming over the radio from the ship, "Corsair, go back. Not enough wind." With frustration mounting, the major and Fred resolved to attempt a landing in spite of the directive from the *Sable*. As Fred recalls, "We decided we'd report afterwards that our radios were out." As the major prepared for his landing, however, a member of the deck crew waved him off. Fred, following behind the major, did not receive such a signal. He successfully landed his 4FU. Fred, not the major, thus became the first Marine pilot to land a Corsair on an aircraft carrier. Fred characterized the experience as similar to "dropping off a three-story building." Fred chalked up the required seven additional landings, although in the process he blew three tires.⁵²

Aside from Fred making history with his carrier landing, another significant moment occurred for him during his time at Glenview. Fred ran into Navy pilot Bill Levering. The two trained together at Barin Field where they became close friends. Bill was at Glenview for his required eight landings in a F4F on the deck of the *Wolverine*. During their time at the NAS, Bill introduced Fred to his sister Jean, a chemical engineering student at Northwestern University. Two years after the war ended, Fred married Jean. His time at Glenview, therefore, proved to be historic for a professional and a personal reason.⁵³



When he was done with carrier training at Glenview NAS, Fred received orders to report to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego. He remained in transit there for almost a month as he awaited orders to leave for the Pacific. Fred and some of his fellow pilots spent evenings at Paul's Bar. They walked back singing to the Air Station in the early hours of the morning and tried to get some sleep before the 9:00 a.m. muster. September 19, 1943 turned out to be Fred's last day at Miramar.⁵⁴ He left San Diego for the South Pacific, a world away from the Pennsylvania farm where he had grown up. In the Losch family home, a wood stove stood in the kitchen. A hollow, aluminum rod was mounted on the front of the stove.

Fred's mother hung dishcloths on it. When he was about five years old, Fred liked to take the rod off of the stove. The straight bar had the same diameter as a twelve-gauge shotgun. Using one of his father's empty shells, Fred pretended it was one.⁵⁵ As the little boy played with the rod, he had no idea that one day he would fly a fighter plane, "a flying machine gun," in a war against America's enemy in the Pacific.

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- ¹ This quote is part of a statement Fred wrote. In its entirety, it reads, “In our youth, we understood the present and the past, and did what was necessary to secure the future. Each generation’s contribution becomes part of the American heritage. God speed in your quest for the American Dream! Semper Fi!” Fred gives the short paragraph, written on a small piece of paper, away to individuals.
- ² Frederick Samuel Losch. *Memories of a Black Sheep Squadron Fighter Pilot*. Privately printed (2007), p. 12.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Fred’s transcript from Geneva College. Copy in possession of author.
- ⁶ June 5, 1942 letter signed by H.W. Prentis, Jr. Original in the possession of Fred Losch.
- ⁷ Capt. Matt Portz, USNR (Ret.) “Aviation Training and Expansion, Part I,” *Naval Aviation News* (July-August 1990) 23.
- ⁸ Ibid. 26.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid. 25.
- ¹¹ Ibid. 26
- ¹² Losch. *Memories*, p. 12.
- ¹³ U.S.N. Air Training Center. *1943 Flight Jacket, Mark I Edition*. Pensacola, Florida, p. 108.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. 112.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ A Nursery of Patriotism: The University at War, 1861-1945,” <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/exhibits/patriotism/index.php?page=WorldWarII-Training&si...>
- ¹⁷ U.S.N. Air Training Center. *1943 Flight Jacket*, p.112.
- ¹⁸ Losch conversation with author, March 10, 2010.
- ¹⁹ Losch. *Memories*, p. 12.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Losch conversation with author, March 5, 2010.
- ²² U.S.N. Air Training Center. *1943 Flight Jacket*, p.120.
- ²³ Ibid. 121.
- ²⁴ Portz, *Naval Aviation News* (Sept.-Oct. 1990) 24.
- ²⁵ Letter from Charles H. Ray to Fred Losch, November 15, 1996. Copy in possession of author.
- ²⁶ Conditions at Peru are taken from Losch, *Memories*, p.12, from two letters written by Ray to Losch, dated August 28, 1987 and November 15, 1996 (copies in possession of author), and a telephone conversation between the author and Ray on March 27, 2010.
- ²⁷ Losch conversation with author, March 5, 2010.
- ²⁸ *Solo: Cadet Record*, January, 1943, vol. 1, No.2, p.16. Copies of three pages in possession of author.
- ²⁹ U.S.N. Air Training Center. *1943 Flight Jacket*, p. 121.
- ³⁰ Ibid. 125.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Losch conversation with author, March 5, 2010.
- ³³ *Solo*, January 1943, p. 16-17. Copies in possession of author.
- ³⁴ Losch conversation with author, March 5, 2010.
- ³⁵ Information on Barin Field from “Navy Outlying Field (NOLF) Barin Field,” <http://www.pafw.com/barin.htm>
- ³⁶ U.S.N. Air Training Center. *1943 Flight Jacket*, p. 142.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ U.S.N. Air Training Center. *1943 Flight Jacket*, p. 170; Losch, *Memories*, p. 13.
- ³⁹ Larryville Methodist Church, *Dedication of Honor Roll*, March 14, 1943. Copy of dedication program in possession of author.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Losch conversation with author, March 5, 2010.
- ⁴² Portz, *Naval Aviation News* (July-August 1990), 23.
- ⁴³ Division of Reserve, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve, A History* (Washington, D.C., 1966) p. 69.
- ⁴⁴ Losch, *Memories*, p. 13.

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- ⁴⁵ Gregory “Pappy” Boyington, *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (1958; Bantam Books, 1987 edition), p.115.
- ⁴⁶ Information on the history and design of the Corsair from Kennedy Hickman’s “World War II:F4U Corsair,” <http://militaryhistory.about.com/od/worldwariiiaircraft/p/f4ucorsair.htm>.
- ⁴⁷ Losch, *Memories*, pp. 5, 13.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 13.
- ⁴⁹ The length of Fred’s time at Glenview NAS is taken from the United States Marine Corps (USMC), Frederick S. Losch’s “Fitness Report” at Glenview NAS for July 14, 1943-July 23, 1943; copy in possession of author. Fred had left Jacksonville on July 13, 1943, as indicated on his fitness report at Jacksonville NAS that covered the period May 6, 1943 to July 13, 1943 (copy in possession of author).
- ⁵⁰ <http://www.hangarone.org/History5.asp>; Portz, *Naval Aviation News* (September-October 1990), 26.
- ⁵¹ Losch conversation with author, April 10, 2010.
- ⁵² Losch, *Memories*, p. 13; Losch conversation with author, April 17, 2010.
- ⁵³ Losch conversation with author, April 17, 2010.
- ⁵⁴ Losch conversation with author, April 17, 2010; USMC, Frederick S. Losch’s “Fitness Report” for the period August 12, 1943 to September 19, 1943.
- ⁵⁵ Losch conversation with author, April 10, 2010 and April 17, 2010.