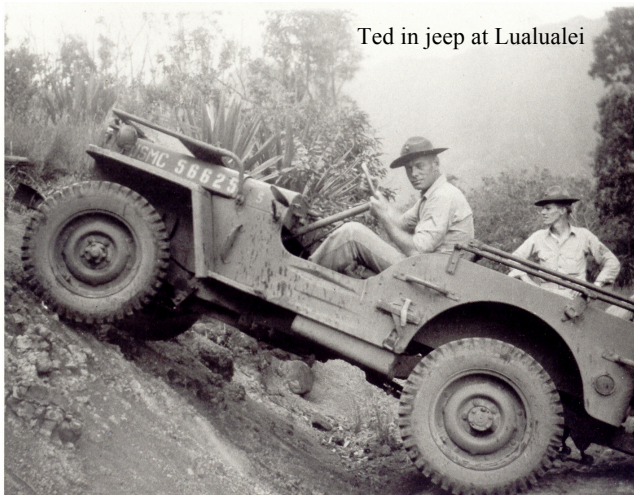


## Ted Roosvall, Jr., USMC

While Ted was born in Evanston, Illinois, both of his parents immigrated to the United States in 1905 from Sweden. Ted entered this world on May 17, 1920 as the second child in the family (he had one sister born nine years earlier). His father, Theodore Sr., worked as a custom tailor in two local hotels. The family relocated to Chicago's north side when Ted was a child. After the move, Ted Senior continued his work as a custom tailor. When Ted graduated from high school in the spring of 1938, he was at a point where he had to decide what occupation to pursue. Ted's graduation day should have been a joyful one in the Roosvall home, but it was not. His mother Jennie died around that time from pleurisy; she was only thirty-eight. Ted did not even attend the graduation ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

Once his only son had completed his formal education, Ted characterizes his father as wondering, "what to do with Junior." He thinks his dad even consulted with his customers on that question. Ted worked for a short time with International Harvester and considered employment with the Greyhound Corporation, a predecessor of the Greyhound Bus Company. Before immigrating to America, Ted's father served in the Swedish army, specifically the 14<sup>th</sup> Norrlands Dragoner. Ted knows it was a cavalry unit because his father often recalled how fellow dragoons complained that their backside hurt from riding in the saddle. Although his father's tenure may have been conscripted, the Roosvall family thus had a history of military service. Whether it was his father's experience in Sweden or, as Ted thinks, his dad's desire to "to make a man" out of him, "Junior" was sworn into the United States Marine Corps on January 5, 1939. The original commitment was for four years. After the United States entered World War II, however, Ted's time in the Corps became what his generation called "COG," for the convenience of the government. As it turned out, Ted stayed in the USMC for twenty-two years.

Boot camp in San Diego introduced Ted to military life. He summarized those three months as ones "of very hard work, drilling, drilling, drilling, calisthenics, classroom work, inspections, saying 'yes, sir' a hundred times a day and suffering indignities of unmeasured quantity." Ted and the other recruits endured all of this for a monthly wage of \$20.80. After graduation, Ted stood guard duty at different posts. Eventually he ended up in the Quartermaster (Supply) Department.



In April 1941 Ted arrived at the Marine Barracks at Lualualei, site of Pearl Harbor's U. S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Oahu, Hawaii. Some thirty years later, a Navy publication claimed it as the oldest such installation in the world. Originally, the depot dated back to 1916 when it was located on Kuahua Island within Pearl Harbor. In 1934, that site was decommissioned, and

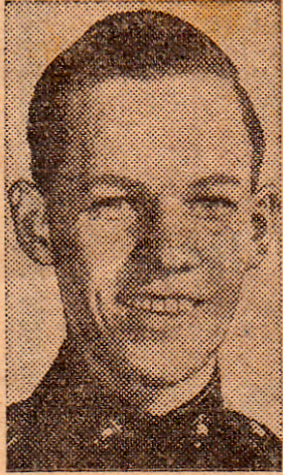
the ammunition depot relocated to Lualualei, twenty-seven miles in the hills above Pearl Harbor. The new depot took its name from the valleys of Lualualei and Waianae, formed after a volcanic eruption literally blew off the top of a mountain. Another part of the ammunition depot was at West Loch. A railroad connected them.<sup>2</sup> After Ted arrived at Lualualei, he was once again assigned to guard duty. Ted and others patrolled the area, which he pointed out covered fifty square miles. As it turned out, though, no enemy invaders were ever found, with the exception of bedbugs and mosquitoes that they battled on a regular basis. By the fall, Ted was transferred to Lualualei's Quartermaster Department. His thirty months at Pearl Harbor included December 1941.

On the morning of December 7<sup>th</sup>, Ted recalled that the sound of an explosion got him out of bed at about five minutes before 8:00. What he characterized as "a huge siren, a diaphone, sounded an alert." Fifty-seven years after the Japanese attack, Ted wrote down a brief summary of his recollections:

"Awoke to loud explosions in the distance. After the alert was sounded, issued various items of equipment and defensive positions were quickly established. I became the radio monitor, briefing the commanding officer on the many reports coming in, most without foundation. I later took up a position near the main gate with my '03 rifle. I witnessed a single pass on a railroad train by a Japanese pilot."

At one point soon after December 7, 1941, the Command allowed military personnel on Oahu to write their families. Ted sent his father in Illinois a letter. While it was lost to History decades ago, one sentence from the letter was reprinted in a Chicago-area newspaper. Ted's father kept the article, giving it eventually to his son.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Corp. Theodore B. Roosvall Jr., who has been on duty in Hawaii for 14 months with the marine corps, wrote to his father in Evanston: "We had a little scare, a while ago, but we're ready for them now."



Corp. Roosvall, who enlisted a year after he was graduated from Von Steuben High school in 1938, is attached to the quartermaster's corps.

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<sup>1</sup> Information on Ted's personal life and military service is taken from conversations between the author and Ted over the course of many years, from approximately 2001-2011. During that time, Ted also shared his writings and personal belongings with the author.

<sup>2</sup> The statement on Lualualei status as "the oldest ammunition depot in the world" is from a newsletter published by the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Oahu, Hawaii--*Oahu Detonator*, Vol. 1, No. 5, May 1954, p. 2. It is online at [www.minemen.org/NAD%20Oahu%20Detonator.pdf](http://www.minemen.org/NAD%20Oahu%20Detonator.pdf) (accessed July 18, 2016). See also [www.pacificng.com/print.php?page=roads/hi/usnpearl/index.htm](http://www.pacificng.com/print.php?page=roads/hi/usnpearl/index.htm) (accessed July 18, 2016). Lualualei's location at twenty-seven miles in the hills above Pearl Harbor is taken from 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* (Washington, D.C., 1958) p. 73.