

## F.A.H.P. News, September 9, 2013

**After the War was Over (Part I):** If ever a part of my life was wasted, it was from September, 1945, when General MacArthur accepted the Japanese surrender, until August 1946, when I finally got home and was separated from the service. Except when on Iwo Jima for several days at the time of the surrender, and about a month later on Okinawa for three weeks, most of the time was spent on Guam, where our 55<sup>th</sup> Weather Reconnaissance Squadron was based. The problem in getting men home was logistical: there were not enough ships and airplanes to bring nearly three million men home in a rapid fashion. First, there was the “points” system, based on length of service and the number of battle ribbons a candidate had. I had 48 points; in September 1945, many had over 100. As men came home, the number of required points dropped, and by mid-winter it was down to about 50. I thought I was next in line, and then the points system was abandoned.

In the final months of our Weather Squadron (October '45 to January '46), jobs were invented to keep us weather observers occupied. I was grounded, anyway, due to an asthma condition that surfaced on Okinawa in October. For a while I was an assistant mess officer. For a while I was sent to North Field on Guam to establish a new headquarters for our squadron (a pipe dream of Colonel Chevasse). I had to close out a PX at this remote North Field location, fast being taken over by the jungle. Finally, when the squadron was a thing of the past, I was assigned, along with several other former “55th” officers, to 20<sup>th</sup> Air Force Headquarters on Harmon Field, the center of all Air Force operations in the Marianas. I was a weather forecaster on Harmon Field for a while, something I hadn't done since leaving New Mexico a year earlier. Since there were too many forecasters, that job didn't last long, but I happened to be on duty the day General Eisenhower, then Chief of Staff of the Army, arrived in a C-54 to spend a brief time with the island commander.

There was ample time to play basketball and pool at the Officers' Club, and sometimes my friends and I could obtain a jeep to explore the native sections of Guam, for which we could get a special daytime pass. Guam was about 22 miles long (north to south) and from 4 to 8 miles wide, and the military, including the Navy, had occupied the northern 2/3 of the island. The native towns on the south third were little disturbed by the War, and the highest point of 1,300 feet was in this south portion. The road was dusty but good, and the speed limit on the island was 20 m.p.h. We made the trip several times and got to know some of the natives. Mrs. Lojan ran a village store in the town of Inarajan, which also had a large Catholic Church. She sold mostly canned goods and sodas.

It was easier to acquire a 6 x 6 truck than it was a jeep, so this often provided transportation around the island with free gasoline. All during this time, however, I was angling for a reason to be sent home. I wrote to both of Delaware's U.S. Senators explaining the situation. Senator James M. Tunnell of Georgetown replied that he would see what he could do. Senator C. Douglass Buck was not so encouraging.

Finally, in early June, an officer named Major Hales, the top weather man on Guam, found a way to get rid of Dick Estabrook, Jim Lombard, and myself, who had been thorns in his side for some time. We got orders to report to the Base Commander on Kwajalein for “temporary” duty. The “temporary” was to replace the weather forecasters there, so the regulars, more familiar with Kwajalein weather, could participate in the upcoming Bikini Atoll Atomic Bomb tests. None of us wanted to go, as “Kwaj” was a terrible place to be stationed – just a coral atoll not much larger than its landing strip, and I feared duty here would delay my return to the States. Lying awake thinking how I could get out of going, I had a brainstorm. When I was sent back to Guam from Okinawa with asthma eight months before, my orders read “reassigned to duty on Guam.” The next morning I went to the Base Physician, with whom I had played pool at the officers’ club. He fixed me up, and the order was rescinded. Hales was furious, but he couldn’t do anything about it. *To be continued next week.*

**Work Report:** On Tuesday, September 3, 14 volunteers were on hand as follows: Jerry Novak (in charge), Bob Jordan, Tom Marshall, Dave Leon, Ted Kamen, Jeff Pollock, Robert Hopkins, Greg Landrey, Dennis Dragon, Mark Russell, Steve Bryce, Lou Mandich, Emil Christofano, and Tim Ward.

On the Model 76, the steam automatic was adjusted and the water by-pass valve repacked. The bonnet was secured on the Model 725, after servicing the steam gauge. The battery was charged on the Model 740, and all the lights are now working properly on the ’37 Packard. On the Model 750, the last of the items from the rear of the car when it arrived were removed, cleaned and catalogued. On the 607 project, the acetylene tank was painted, the wooden strips on top of the doors were attached, and the horn was mounted. The drip valve stem was painted, and leather straps were located for holding the rear of the top. The flues were rodded out on Locomotive 401, following its Sunday runs.

On Thursday, September 5, there were 12 volunteers on hand, viz: Bill Schwoebel (in charge), Steve Bryce, Tom Marshall, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Jerry Koss, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Dave Leon, Tim Ward, Jim Personti, and Geoff Fallows.

About four cars were further prepared for their trips to Chadds Ford Days on September 7 and 8. A mixture of rock wool and wallpaper paste was used to plaster needed places on the burner of the Model 76, and the track gauge on #1 track inside the engine house was adjusted. The engine case was removed from the Model K, preparative to checking the moving parts and oiling thoroughly for its trip to Hagley on September 15 as one of the feature race cars this year. After spending most of the evening, as well as a lot of time previously, on the pilot of the Model EX, the vaporizer was removed again to weld or braze a new nozzle thereon. On the Model 607, the rear straps were dyed black, the lower-half cylinder case was fastened in place and well packed with fiberglass, and the drip valve and its stem attached. Effort is being put forth to have this car ready to drive to the Hagley Show on 9/15.