

F.A.H.P. News, September 16, 2013

After the War Was Over (continued from Sept. 9): Finally, on June 24, 1946, I left Guam to begin the long journey home, first flying in a C-46 to Saipan to await a ship to take a bunch of us across the Pacific. The base at Saipan was not nearly as nice as our many quarters on Guam, the weather was very hot with no shade, and the food was poor. About 30 junior officers were in the group with me, most of whom I had not known before. We played softball when it was not too hot, raced snails, and enjoyed annoying the new West Point second lieutenants, whom we outranked. Finally, on July 13, we were loaded on the old Army Transport “President Buchanan,” and we started our voyage eastward across the Pacific. An old “tub,” probably on her last voyage, she broke down twice in the middle of nowhere, but after 24 hours or so, the operators got her running again at a top speed of 10 to 11 knots. I remember the food was good, and we had Filipino waiters. The movies at night, shown on an open deck, were not necessarily good, but the sensation was very unusual. As the viewer’s eyes passed off the screen, the clouds, always present over the Pacific, were moving up and down—it was not obvious that this motion was the movement of the ship and not the sky.

We docked at Honolulu for 48 hours but were allowed off the ship for only 5 or 6 in the middle of the second day. Starved for milk products, several of us were served ice cream milkshakes at a Waikiki drug store counter and had lunch at the best hotel in downtown Honolulu. As we drifted away from the dock, a band played “California, Here I Come.” The “Buchanan” broke down the second time halfway to San Francisco, but finally, on August 6, 24 days after leaving Saipan, we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge and docked at Fort Mason. The Army ferry that sped us across San Francisco Bay to the Oakland Army Base ran considerably faster than did the “President Buchanan.”

We had 40 hours to enjoy San Francisco before our troop train left from the Oakland Pier. A friend and I found a room in a cheap hotel, where we spent the first night; the second was spent in the barracks at Oakland. In between, we rented a car (described in the “News” of 6/11/12) and had a delicious lunch in the ornate dining room of the Palace Hotel on Market Street (Chef’s Salad Bowl with ham and cheese, 85 cents). The train finally pulled out in early afternoon on August 8, and it was pulled by steam locomotives all the way to Baltimore, where we arrived about 5 A.M. on the 13th (described in the “News” of 4/17/06). A fast GG-1 electric whisked us to Odenton, the Pennsylvania Railroad’s station for Fort Meade. The end was fast approaching.

Much of August 13 was spent turning in papers and getting cleared for an honorable discharge. There was time for a shower and a haircut. About 4 P.M., we were released and told to report back the next morning for our final discharge. Several of us piled in a taxi for Baltimore that took us to Union Station. I took the first PRR train for Wilmington and had dinner in the diner. The Short Line Bus for Kennett Square via Hockessin and Yorklyn was waiting near the Wilmington station, and I boarded it for the final 10 miles. Lawrence Lincoln Hazzard Jr., a young black man who had worked around Auburn Heights before the war, was also on the bus, and we had a good chat. I got off the bus in front of Auburn Heights and walked up the driveway. My father was sitting under the shed at the carriage house enjoying his evening cigar, and my mother soon realized something was different, and she appeared at the side door of the house. A special moment.

The next day, I borrowed my mother's 1941 Packard One-Twenty and drove to Fort Meade. My separation papers showed that I had 61 days terminal leave (accumulated but never used), so I was officially on terminal leave from August 14 to October 14, 1946, and got paid for doing nothing. A fellow named Parker from Salisbury, Maryland, who had been in our group from Saipan to Fort Meade, rode with me to Wilmington, where I put him on a Delaware Road train for Salisbury. Then I drove home and began wasting the rest of my life.

On Tuesday, September 10, 19 volunteers, plus two more who attended the Events Committee meeting, were on hand, as follows: Steve Bryce (in charge), Dave Leon, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, John Roberts, Dan Citron, Jerry Novak, Robert Hopkins, Mark Hopkins, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Jerry Lucas, Bill Schwoebel, Brent McDougall, Gary Green, Jay Williams, Mac Taylor, Tim Nolan, Tom Marshall, Rose Ann Hoover (Events), and Art Sybell (Events).

On the new "Diesel" locomotive, the oil was changed, and new oil and air filters were installed. The pilot vaporizer and nozzle was worked over again on the Model EX, and this time we believe it is fixed to last a while (a new vaporizer will be in order this winter). The Models K, 76, and 725 were prepped for the trip to the Hagley Show on Sunday 9/15. On the Model 607, the top brackets were properly adjusted, new straps were dyed and attached to the rear of the top, the wood strips on top of the doors were completely installed, and small fuel leaks were repaired. Work continued on improving the electric train layout. The Model 750 was vacuumed as a start to the clean-up process on this very original car. Locomotive #401 was serviced after its runs on September 1.

Work Report: A complete report of the Session on September 12 is not available, but the following 11 volunteers were known to be on hand: Tim Ward (in charge), Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Dan Citron, Bill Rule, Steve Bryce, Bill Schwoebel, Bob Stransky, Richard Bernard, Dave Leon, and Tom Marshall. Five steamers, all Hagley-bound, received special attention. The Model K was fired up and run up the road and back, the Model EX burner was tested, the 76 was thoroughly cleaned, the 735 was given the once-over and made ready, and the 607 was seriously tested for its first "official" run following its in-house restoration. Our locomotive boilers were inspected by John Esch, the State Boiler Inspector, and approved for another year.

Friday and Saturday resulted in additional work on the Model EX and especially the 607. After correcting a fuel leak on the EX, it was road-tested and approved for the Sunday trip to Hagley. On the Model 607, numerous adjustments to the engine and pump drive were made before the engine case was installed and filled with oil, the gauge glass for the three-tube indicator was finally sealed, and a fuel leak under the pressure retaining valve was repaired.

On Sunday, the 725 didn't make the Hagley trip, as there was a substantial steam leak atop the steam automatic when the car was fired up, and time did not permit a repair. The other five Stanleys made the 18-mile round trip in good fashion and were joined at the show by Bob Wilhelm's 735 and Steve Jensen's Model 62. The K was one of the featured "Muscle" cars, and Bill Schwoebel drove it through one of the parades. Dave Leon, with his beautiful 1910 Reo, accompanied us from Auburn Heights to Hagley and return, Rose Ann Hoover displayed her '40 Packard, Jerry Novak his '31 Chevrolet, John McCoy his '27 Cadillac, and Greg Landrey Winterthur's '27 Rolls-Royce.