

CALIFORNIA MILITARY DEPARTMENT HISTORY PROGRAM
3900 Roseville Road
North Highlands, California 95660

**Unpublished Memoir: John J. Iantorno, *The
Dog Days of Summer*, 28 December 1921 –
18 August 1996**

Includes history of his service with the 251st Coast Artillery Regiment

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2020.27.58

California Military Department Historical Collection Number

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August 18, 1996

“The Dog Days of Summer”
by John J. Iantorno
Born December 25, 1921
typed and edited by Christopher P. Carney

I will try to write about my life, the best I can remember, as I approach my 75th birthday.

My earliest remembrance, 12/25/1921 to the time we left Cleveland and I know we went to California in early 1927.

1. I was very impressed with going to work where my father was employed; however, how I got there I don't remember. He worked for the New York Central Railroad. I was told that's how we traveled to California. I remember him lying down between the huge wheels on a track oiling different parts underneath this steam engine. I was afraid that if it started moving, he would be cut in half as the steam was on. I guess it was getting ready to leave some time soon. It never happened much to my relief as a 5 year-old kid. I loved my dad and didn't want to see him get hurt.
2. Where we were living at this time, seemed like a good area-Where, I don't know. The house I don't remember either. What I remember was an Italian Festival of some kind and a lot of people- A 20' greased pole was there and up on top was several salami cheeses and etc. for whoever could climb to the top and get them would get to take them home. Many young men tried and finally someone succeeded. It was fun watching and I still remember it after close to 70 years.
3. All other memories have faded away from my earliest days in Cleveland. Because my brother Tony was having a bad time with brachial asthma in the cold winters, the doctor told us to either go back to Italy or California where it was warmer. I guess California was chosen as my father's brothers "Uncle Patsy" and family was living in Long Beach, California. I don't remember the train ride, but I was told we were picked up in Los Angeles and then taken by car to Long Beach.

Early Long Beach 5 years to 8 years old

1. Low and behold after we get to Long Beach I found out I had 10 first cousins, 6 females and 4 males. There was Mary, Angie, Carmela, Rose, Yolanda, & Anita, Tom, Sam, Ross & Eugene. They were all Iantorno's like us. We had a lot of nice family get-togethers at Uncle Patsy's and Aunt Rose's house.
2. Next I have 2 second cousins-Joe and Laura Pizzata-Tony Pizzata married Mary the oldest of my first cousins. Rosemary and Frank Pizzata showed up later. Joe was born in our house in Cleveland like we were. Maybe that's why he has also been my best friend. In the coming years we saw a lot of each other. In our younger days *OUR* family was very close.
3. Once at Mary and Tony Pizzata's house in North Long Beach, at a family get together I remember Joe and I trying to follow Cousin Ross and Brother Tony. Joe decided to go around the corner and I cut across the field to catch them. I tripped and fell on the jagged edge of a broken milk bottle bottom. As luck would have it, I only cut the fleshy part of my left wrist open. When I got back to the house, bleeding, all hell broke loose. Screaming and hollering, as we piled into the car for Seaside Hospital in

downtown Long Beach. My mother put compresses on the cut to slow the bleeding. In the good old days clamps were used instead of stitches, till it healed.

Return to Cleveland

1. After 3 years in Long Beach my mother wanted to go back to Cleveland, to be with her family. The family included the Monteleone's grandpa John, grandma Ida, Uncle Joe, Uncle Benny, and Aunt Bessie. It was now 1930-1933, and the depression was in full swing. After loading up our Jewitt car with all our belongings (we looked like "The Grapes of Wrath), only going East instead of West stopping in North Long Beach to say Good-bye to the Pizzata's. Joe cried to go with us thinking we're gone only a short time, but his parents talked him out of it saying he had to take his violin lessons.
2. We worked our way up towards route 66 and was on our way east, a two-lane road, one going each way. San Bernadino first and then winding our way up to Cajon Pass, back and forth on a gravel or dirt road surfaces. We stooped in Victorville at a campsite near the Mojave River the first of many nights (10 in total).
3. Heading across the desert (time of year?) with our canvas water bag outside the car, keeping it cold, we were on gravel or dirt surface road. We stopped somewhere one night near some roadside cabins, but we camped out again as usual. That amazed me because there were firefly's flying around, lighting up every second or two. At 8 years old I thought it was really neat. My mother made a make shift bed in the rear seat area for us to lie down at times.
4. Traveling across Nebraska and Kansas the wind would blow the wheat fields and make it have a rippling effect and beautiful to look at. Of coarse I'm still only 8 years old. Route 66 ended in Chicago but I don't recall anything about it.

We had a total of 10 flat tires. We bought 1 brand new tire and it blew out beyond repair after 100 miles or so. It didn't seem worth going back for because we were running low on money.

5. We finally got to Cleveland tired and broke. Driving on St. Claire Avenue to our grandparents building at the corner of 108th street. As we drove by the small Monteleone Store, My grandmother saw us and I swear she jumped straight up from a sitting down position. I can't remember much there but we ended up living on 25th street: my grandparents other home. I will always love them for that.

Living in Cleveland #2 (1930-1933)

1. We lived on 25th street between Scovil and Woodland Avenue. The address was 2508 E. 25th Street. It was mostly in an Italian neighborhood with a few Polish families and one Black family. He was in our gang also as every street had to have a gang to protect ourselves. We didn't do anything unlawful, only protection. Our street also had a Bootlegger as many other streets did. Police officers visited it at times and when the FEDS were coming to raid the house, they always knew it was coming and found nothing. The son's name was Joe. I can't remember his sister's name, but we played a lot with Joe.
2. The streets were never swept and always looked dirty (it was the middle of the depression). After the clean streets of Long Beach, I couldn't stand it. So I would sweep the street in front of our house, as well as our sidewalk. It didn't help the neighborhood much, but made me feel better. The empty lots were also filled with trash and junk. The only time things looked clean were right after a snowfall.
3. The corner of Woodland and 25th was known as the "Bloody Corner". Before we moved there, there was a Butcher shop on the corner and I guess the mob came in and killed several of the people working and/or shopping in the store. My being only 9 years old that's all I remember. I would always run around the corner when going to church or somewhere.
4. We went to Saint Joseph Church and school. The church was on the corner of Woodland and 23rd street. A beautiful alter and interior as well as the outside. Once in awhile they would sandblast the rock on the outside and it would look clean again. All the winter coal burning would dirty it up with soot. I became an altar boy and leaned to say the mass. In Latin in response to the Priest (Father Allen), under the church we called it the dungeon. It was poorly lit and looked spooky, but we still had to go down and help make the host before it was blessed. On Sunday morning I would go early and ring the bells in the Belfrey, before serving mass. I was proud to be the one to let others know that church was getting ready to start. It was fun to hang onto the bell ropes and ride up and down on them. We went somewhere once to pick dandelions to make wine for the church, Tony and I both took the name Joseph as our middle name in Honor of Saint Joseph Church. It was years later that I was surprised to find out that all of the people were not Roman Catholics.
5. Saint Joseph School was a nice school and was run by the Nuns (God bless them all). It was a German Parish at one time, but they moved out and the Italian's moved in. The Nuns always wished the Germans would come back. The young girls were nice to them, but the boys would screw up every now and then. I remember getting hit across the knuckles with the edge of a ruler a few times. One time, Sister excused the girls after school and locked the doors on the boys. She started whipping us with a whip as we ran around the room. Some boys on the bottom of the pile would holler louder than the ones getting hit on top by the whip,

but we deserved what we got. They were strict, but really fair and I say today, "God bless them all". IT was a real sacrifice on their part. I'll always remember one lesson on Geography. Which mountain range in the United States was higher, the Appalachians (East) or the Rockies in the West. I was the only one in class that said the Rockies. The rest of the class laughed me at until Sister said I was the only one right. The trip from California was the reason I knew the answer. Travel pays off.

6. The Summers were hot and the only time we cooled off was when a rainy storm came through with lightening and thunder. We would lie on the sheets in bed, without any covers to keep as cool as possible. I never knew of such things as fans or air conditioners. We always chased the "Ice Man" for a piece of Ice to suck and cool off with. We had an icebox and bought 50 pounds of ice for milk and etc to keep them cold. We weren't allowed to chip a piece of ice off. Ever so often you had to empty a pan that was catching the water as the ice melted or it would overflow.
7. We did have sliding type window screens for the windows to let as much air as possible, without the fly's coming in. On Sundays we would ride to Brookside Park with some jugs and fill them up with pure cool natural spring water. A big treat! We got some free passes to go to the ballpark to see the Cleveland Indians play the New York Yankees. It was a long walk both ways, but we were young. I can still see in my mind, Babe Ruth hitting a Homerun and one time getting caught in "a pickle". He just stopped and let them tag him out. Cleveland won 3-2 as Earl Averall hit a Homerun also.
8. Our neighborhood had Italian and Catholic parades with the Priest and people carrying banners and Holy Statues. It was impressive to me. A favorite treat was frozen lemon ice, but a lot of drinks and food we couldn't afford.
9. I always felt sorry for the Junkman's horse as he came by. It was so swaybacked that I could also feel the pain for the poor animal. It didn't seem to bother the junkman as he kept loading on more stuff. In the summer, it was my job to break and cut up all the wooden *BOXES* my grandfather brought home from his fruits and vegetable business. I would put the wood in barrels down in the basement for winter fires. We would also get a ton or two of coal to make it through the winter.
10. Winters were cold with the wind coming off the frozen Lake Erie. We would always try to play on the leeward side of the house. We had some beautiful snowfalls and it was great to sled or play in without the wind blowing. I remember one night the snowflakes were about an inch in size and just floating down, piling up deeper and deeper. Cleveland never looked more beautiful to me than that night.
11. Every once in a while, I would go to work with my dad and ride on the back of the truck. We got up about 2:00 AM and went into the huge wholesale market place. It was busy and impressive. After loading, we went into the different stores who had placed orders with my grandfather the night before. He would sleep upright, waiting

for calls. It was impressive to go into a hot house in the middle of winter with snow on the ground and see vegetables growing.

12. My dad wanted to go back to California, but my mother wanted to stay in Cleveland with the folks, I guess he cashed in a life insurance policy and drove to California, After living in "clean Long Beach", Cleveland was too dirty for me and after the 1933 Earthquake, I was happy to find out that that we were going back to Long Beach also. We packed up our belongings (no furniture) and food to eat on the bus and away we went. I remember Chicago, the "Windy City" as the wind was blowing and I started walking into the bus station, to go to the bathroom. I remember seeing the Rocky Mountains when we arrived in Denver, Colorado. As we got close to the California border, the driver warned us to eat up all the fruits, as they would take them away according to California state law. We couldn't eat it all so my mother passed it around to people in the bus. Finally, we were back in Long Beach. Hooray!!!

Long Beach, California (1933)

It is 1/10/97, Debbie's Birthday

I have now joined the Famous 75 Club

1. At the ripe old age of 11, going on 12, and not any notes to go by, I may wander around on events as they pop into my head. I remember living on Hellman Street, 7th street, 411 and 341 Lime Avenue. All of the oldest houses in Long Beach because we were poor. It didn't matter we were still happy in the family and I didn't miss things that we never had before. We got some clothes and food from relief as it was called in those days. It was the first time I had ever eaten corn beef and it wasn't too bad. I think it was left over cans from World War I. I also remember eating olives out of a crock jar under the sink in salt water that we had picked off trees earlier on. It was all we had until more relief food came to us or we got some more money to buy some.
2. We went from St. Joseph School in Cleveland to St. Anthony School in Long Beach. I remember our playground was on the roof of the school. Coming down the stairs we were suppose to be quite as other classes were in session. We were standing in a line on the stairs when one boy, in front of me, said something. Sister wanted to know who it was and the monitor in back said that it was I. I denied it, but I was sent home for lying. My mother got mad because I had to cross several busy streets without any crossing guards, in order to make it home. She went back and told them so. It was after that when we started public school. Atlantic School was located between 5th and 6th street on Atlantic Avenue, near downtown Long Beach. It was in the middle of a semester and the class was studying English. I felt lost because I never had any^{C.U.S.} of what was being taught. I finally passed with a "D-" into Junior High School and never really got better than a "C" in English. Math and everything else, I did real well in. Franklin Jr. High School was my next school and the only thing I didn't like there was Shakespeare and etc. I couldn't see any need for it in my lifetime. I met Scottie Deeds, Robert Lewis, Clyde Coons and several other nice guys in Franklin that went to Wilson High School while I went to Poly High. We played a

lot of speedball and I loved the competition in it. We, the 7-B class, almost beat the 7-A class and I was very disappointed. The score was 4-0. Malcolm Smith, Fred and I were good pals for a while at Franklin where I met Betty Corchum and was the first girl I ever kissed and just visited once in a while. At the ripe old age of 12, I started selling newspapers on a corner downtown as we could sure use the money to live on. Benny Cortese got Tony and I into selling papers. I sold papers until I was 18 years old and out of high school. Work was hard to find during the depression for kids.

3. My grandfather John in Cleveland wanted me to sell lemons on a corner, but I wouldn't do it. I was afraid of different gang members, who would steal my money. Cleveland wasn't the safest place to live in.
4. When we came back to Long Beach, after the 1933 Earthquake is when Tony and I started selling newspapers. We would make 20 – 30 cents a morning and rush home to mom with the money so we could buy another meal or two. On Saturday and Sunday, we worked longer hours and made more money, which helped the family a lot. The corners were usually on American or Pine Avenue, Ocean Blvd, Broadway, 3rd street by the post office or 4th street. It was close to home. We lived on 341 411 Elm Avenue. As I got older, mom, Tony and Joe were in Cleveland and I got the Navy landing to sell newspapers. I made as much as \$2.00 at a time and I thought that I was rich. The sailors always gave me more money or let me resell them when they were threw reading it. Before the Navy launch showed up to take them out to the carrier, battleships and cruisers, Pop was working and so were Marie and I. We felt we had enough money so we bought our first radio. We could listen to comedy, music, football and etc. I guess we thought we were flying high. Joe Pizzata sold papers also and was selling them at the Pacific Electric Station when I was at the Navy Landing. Long Beach was a safe place for kids back then.

1937- September

Poly High and Long Beach

1. After graduating from Franklin Jr. High and summer vacation I attended Poly High School as a sophomore and had some of the best years of my life. I wanted to play football as that was the manly thing to do. In those days I had to do a lot of talking and pleading with my mother to sign a paper to let me do so. She had a cousin in Chicago who broke his neck and died playing the game. I was never big enough to play Varsity so I was on the "B" team. I was 5'2" and 120 pounds.
2. Coach. Wally Dietrich kicked me off the team as a sophomore for blocking the wrong man (so he says-I told him that I had blocked the right man). I was broken-hearted, but next year as a junior, I went out for the team again. When he saw me he said, "You again" and I said, "Yes Sir. I want to play football." So he let me stay. I think we were both happy that I came back as we respected each other and learned too love and enjoy our relationship. He was tough on us and during the work and heat, during "Hell Week", you wondered why you where doing this, but it made us more of a man

than anything else did. I loved playing the game and couldn't stand losing any of them. Show me a good loser and I'll show you a Failure. I earned two letters and got my Letterman Sweater with two stripes on the sleeve. I was a very proud kid!

3. My best friends were on the football team. Tough times together makes for a strong relationship as it later on shows. Poly was more than football. In order to play, you had to carry at least a "C" average.
4. We lived at 4th and Lime, when I started Poly and it was about a mile or more walk to school and back. Later we lived at 15th and Alamitos, about a half a mile away. It was a nice walk, except in the rain and during the wintertime. I remember one rainy period a couple days in 1938. It was pouring down cats and dogs (so the saying goes) and my mother said, "John, don't go to school", but I insisted. I didn't want to miss any school, so I had to go. I was soaking wet when I got there, only to find out that school was closed due to the rain. We didn't have a radio to let us know that it was closed. Mom was right. I walked back home in the rain and got wet all over again. We had class in buildings, Bungalows and tents (due to the 1933 Earthquake). Study hall was in tents. It was hot in the summer and dripping wet during the rainy seasons.
5. We were poor and I knew that I would never get to go to college so I took courses for working metal shop, wood shop, type setting and etc. I really enjoyed History, Geography, bookkeeping, Algebra, Social Science and others. My downfall was English and related courses because when we moved to California, from Cleveland (when I was in the 6th grade) I was way behind the class and I could never really catch up. I got a "D-" and was passed onto the 7th grade. When I graduated from Poly High, I was caring a C+ average in English. My last semester, in the 12th grade, I took up a cooking class for the fun of it. We had 32 girls and 4 boys in it and we *boys* made the best upside down pineapple cake. There were four kids per cooking area. High school was a fun time for me as all my friends were there. Football, plays, court yard dancing and etc. I knew that after graduation that I would be going to work full-time to help out the family.
6. In the 10th grade some of my buddies talked me into going to the YMCA one night to take up dancing lessons. We were all bashful about it, but we came back until we learned how to dance the "Balboa Shuffle" which was big in Southern California. All through the 11th and 12th grades, we would go dancing three times a week. One night, on Saturday, we went to the Long Beach Civic Auditorium and danced to all the big bands (Glenn Miller/Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey/ Harry James/ Kay Kyser and etc). As they rotated each week all over the country—Friday and Tuesday nights. It was the "Barn" in Belmont Shores, Huntington Beach "Pavilion" or Sorority Club Dances. It was good clean fun as we were all trying hard to be grown ups.—No smoking, drinking or fights. We never even heard of such a thing as "Drugs". Finally came Graduation Day—June 11, 1940 and we were all sad, but happy at the same time. We graduated 1250 strong and were proud of our class of 1940. We had the 3rd highest score (scholastically) in the United States. All my family was there and Pop patted me on the back and said, "Nice Boy. Now you can go to work". I

said, "Not until my date and I go to the Casa De Manana and dance and hear the Andrew Sisters sing.

My newspaper boy days were over and I started to work at the Safeway stores, but it didn't last long as my country was calling for me.

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1. My cousin Sam Iantorno was a Sergeant in the California National Guards, in Long Beach, California. The 251 CA (AA) battery "H" 2nd battalion. They had a recruitment drive on and he talked my brother Tony, and Cousin Joe (Pizatta) and myself into joining. It was during the depression and for \$1.00 a meeting (3-4 hours) once a week at night we couldn't pass up this big time money. Learning how to soldier wasn't all that bad. Marching, drilling with a rifle, taking rifles and machine guns apart and putting them back together again. Besides playing some basketball, it was a new experience and we got a uniform and shoes and a cap, etc... What a great deal, kids stuff as I went through hell playing football at Poly in the heat of September. I joined when I was 17 years-old, right before my 18th birthday (12/25/39). My mother was not too happy about it. We camped out a couple of nights at the mini Long Beach airport as it was out of town in those days. Sleeping in pup tents for the 1st time ever. We camped out at Orange County Park once and it seemed like we were in another country. It was really country time but we were in another county (Orange).
 2. Bigger was yet too come. So soon, in my early army life. I guess with the war in Europe going on full blast, we were ordered to participate in the West Coast maneuvers, with the regular Army and Navy. We were honored to be 1 of 2 National Guard units called up to do so. It was from January 14th (18 years, 3 weeks old) to the 24th 1940. We were in convoy on maneuvers all the way to San Francisco airport and back.
 3. We set up our guns around the runways and waited for the attack, I was a #1 machine gunner as usual, why not, I was an ex-football player and Gung-ho. All of a sudden, out of the clouds, came the Navy 2-wing dive-bombers. They were simulating bombing and strafing the airfield. Of coarse, I shot down 5 planes BY myself. So I thought I was an "ace".
 4. After another day, we packed up and headed for Long Beach and home. It was extremely cold during the trip. We couldn't roll up our pup tents from the frost on them, so we just folded them up like cardboard and the next night we unfolded them again. It was a good experience for what was to come in the future. We were a bunch of young guys and sung some army songs from back of the trucks.
 5. Tony went along with me but Sam and Joe for some reason didn't make the trip. Some time later I couldn't believe when I got the great some of a \$10.00 check from the government. Because of this trip, I got a B+ in algebra, instead of an A as my teacher at Poly said I missed a few assignments, anything for my country.

August 3rd-24th, 1940

18 years, 7 months and 1 week old

1. Summer maneuvers on the west coast, largest one of it's kind ever in the United States, 80,000 to 100,000 men I think. This time we loaded up our equipment on the train along with ourselves for a long train ride to Chehalis, Washington. It was a troop train type, it was a nice trip through some beautiful West Coast type scenery. I can still remember seeing the front and rear end of the train around the curve at the same time among the pine trees in some mountains of Oregon (I think). We got in Washington, set-up camp and travel all over the state on maneuvers. I can still see the apple trees but we couldn't dare pick them. This was between the blue and red armies and only the officers knew what we were doing and when this is the first time I heard the word Latrine, (toilet). We had to dig holes in the ground, put some wood around it to go potty. I don't remember getting any leave or time off while up there but some of the men said we did, maybe I was on guard duty.
2. Again, we loaded up the train and head for Long Beach and home. We stopped in Santa Barbara for a short while and we saw news boys with "Extra" headlines telling about or outfit 251 St. CA (AA) being called up for active duty for 1 year in the regular army. We had about 3 weeks before we had to report for our 1-year tour of duty. I got a sum of money from the government a total of \$21.00 for a total of 21 days. Sam, Tony, and Joe P. went with me on this trip. We met a lot of new guys who were joining up for the \$21.00, not knowing that they were going to be in the army for 1 year. During the recruitment drive in San Diego Lieutenants, Tony and John Long would go to different bars and talk these guys to join up. Also in San Diego and Long Beach, the judge in courts would encourage men to joint the service or to go to jail. Considering everything, we had a damn good outfit. We had the highest I.Q. of any outfit in Hawaii Army, Navy or Marines. Unlike most regular service men, we had more education than they *DID*. Our unit had lawyers construction workers and some college & high school graduates.

September 16, 1940

I was 18 years, 8 months and 3 weeks old

1. Finally, September 16, 1940 came and we had been^{CALLLED} in the service for 1 year. We reported to the National Guard Armory on 7th Street in Long Beach and after all the preliminary stuff got done (physical) we again, loaded up our trucks and went to the fairgrounds in Ventura. Only the guys that were "1 A" were accepted.

Being the first service men called up there wasn't any camps or posts to go too. We set up camp and started machine gun and rifle firing. One of our tracer's must have gotten into the dry brush and started a brush fire. Now along with the forestry service we were givens shovels and became Fire Fighters. After a day or two, we got it under

control. The next time we did any firing, it was at targets and off shore, on the ocean. Smart thinking!

One night Sargent Shunk came and put me on M.P. duty in town (Ventura) with him. All we had was an M.P. band around our arm and a billy-club. We'd go in and out of bars keeping the peace. Lucky for us we had no troubles.

2. It started raining in October and to this day (1998), it was the wettest year in Southern California. History ----Winter 1940-41. Our campground was flooded along with all our equipment, but the most important thing that was in our lives now was that we were ordered to Hawaii. It stopped raining at times and we were able to pack up and get our equipment to the dock in the Los Angeles Harbor. The luxuryliner, "the SS Washington" was there, waiting for us to load up and take us to Hawaii. It was **October 31, 1940** and with our families down below on the dock waving good-bye we set sail for another experience in our young lives. As we cleared the Harbor, on the radio we could hear the dance music coming from the Palladium's opening night. I think that it was the Glen Miller Band, but I could be wrong. I still remember dancing to all the big name bands, ~~AFTER~~ four and a half days, we sailed around Diamond Head and could hear Hawaiian music on the radio. Not bad for a bunch of "GI's". I got chilled standing by the railing and the next day I was in Tripler General Hospital (service) with the flu. Cold California rains and the warm Hawaiian breeze did the trick. A couple of day's later it was off to camp Malakole by Barbers Point. Miles away from everybody else on the island.
3. The 64th AAA (regular Army) was helping to build the camp until we got there. We took over and after a couple of weeks they went back to Fort Shafter and we were on our own. Six months of construction and we finally had finished the job. We immediately started training. Rifle range, AA firing, gas attacks, marching and etc. Once in a while we'd get a weekend pass and get to go to Honolulu and Waikiki Beach. I'd stay over night at the Army and Navy YMCA, sleeping in a dorm on cots for 25 cents a night. We were only getting \$21 a month. It was relaxing to get away from Army life and wander around with civilians, look the island over and take in a movie.
4. After hearing the older guys talking about sex at the whore houses, I couldn't resist any more and went with Jimmy Wakeland for the 1st and 2nd time and went 4 times all together. I took Cousin Joe for the 1st time and after 5 or 6 houses and 50 different ladies, I finally put his hand in Booth's hands and said, "take him away" and she did. I'm glad I went before the Pearl Harbor attack, as I could have been killed in the war and never have know what it was like to be with a woman.

December 7th, 1941

1. Our year went by and Congress extended, by one vote, to extend our tour of Duty by 18 more months. On **December 7th, 1941** the Japs attacked Hawaii and Pearl Harbor so it didn't matter anymore as we were in until the end of the war.

Sunday mornings we got to sleep in a little longer and it was a day of rest unless you were on duty somewhere. I got up and just went through the Chow line and sat down to eat. We heard gun-fire in the distance and wondered who was on maneuvers as we came back to camp Saturday from our fixed positions in Pearl Harbor and put our guns away (50 Caliber, 40 and 90 M.M.) I saw the C.Q. run out and then back into the mess hall to tell us, "The Japs were Bombing Pearl Harbor."

2. I dropped my chow without eating a thing and ran into my barracks and got my rifle and some ammo (30 Caliber) and started firing at the Jap Planes who started bombing and strafing us as they knew who we were and trying to keep us away from Pearl Harbor. I had to run out to the block-house where our ammo was stored and carry a box of 50 caliber ammo back where we were linking them together so we could fire our 50 Caliber Machine guns. A new B17 Bomber flew overhead and we wondered how the Japs could get a Bomber over us and from where. We were lucky that we didn't fire on it because it was one of our B-17s.

Our Convoy finally got underway to Pearl Harbor going around some bomb craters in the road to our camp. On the main road to Pearl Harbor, near Waipahu, we passed a convoy of the 25th Infantry from Schofield Barracks and Nanakule. They were heading for the beaches near Barbers Point. I still remember this infantry man on one of the trucks holler at me "Go get them AA" I wonder to this day if he ever survived the war (as I was a #1 machine gunner).

Right after that, the convoy stopped, as some Jap plane was circling way over us and acted like he was going to dive and strafe us. Everybody in the bed of the truck jumped out but me and I had to holler at Corporal Mel Viney to get my assistant loader, Studer, back on the truck. The Jap plane circling over head was the leader of the attack and was checking us out. As it turned out, they didn't make a return trip. It was now about 10:00 AM.

3. We got into our gun positions, set up and waited for the next wave of planes, but none came. Our position was on the coal loading thresle (W.W. I ships) and we could see all the smoke and fire from the damage created. Also, a PT Boat in the channel was listening for the mini-subbs that the Japs had in Pearl Harbor and were racing back and forth several times, dropping depth charges. That night 6 SBD's came in from one of our carriers and a gun crew from the USS Nevada (5") opened up and the whole island started firing (planes must have given a wrong code signal). Corporal Viney ordered me to fire and I told him that they were our planes. So he pushed me aside and started firing. He gave me hell for not obeying orders, but the next day he didn't say anything more about it. The saddest thing to me the next day, finally when we

got something to eat, was walking by Hospital Point and seeing all these body bags being stacked up by a wall of the Hospital, like cordwood. We were always ready, but more attacks never came.

4. Except for 2 Destroyer transports going to Midway Island, full of Marines, we were ordered to load up and go forward to where we didn't know. We were a proud outfit to think we were the first outfit (except for the Destroyers) to leave Hawaii and go forward to meet the Japanese with all our guns (90 MM-40 MM-50 Caliber) on deck. We slowly left Pearl Harbor, kidding the regular Army 64th AAA, while watching us leave. We're going to engage the enemy while they kept an eye on Hawaii. This was **May 1941** and it took our country some time to get things moving forward.
5. We were a four ship Convoy, two Destroyers and two transports—(the USS Mormac Star and the USS Normac Star) and we had to zigzag all the way with lights out at night. When we crossed the equator, we had a Neptune Celebration for the first timers, which was almost all of us. I remember going through rain squalls, flying fish, dolphins and the sea as smooth as glass. We had bunks three high and at night it got pretty stuffy. All we could do is play cards, talk and listen to the ships music system, #1 on the Hit Parade was a Harry James Trumpet record (I forget the name). We saw nothing but ocean for days, zigzagging, finally we started seeing some small islands. We pulled into a port one night and it was Suva Fiji. We could hear native drums in the background. A British officer came aboard and the next morning we sailed around to Latouka and started to unload as this was our new home for awhile. They had about 10,000 New Zealand troops and some Fijian battalions, but no large AAA guns and were happy we came. We were the first American troops in the South Pacific. It was vital to protect this air base. Later some P40's, in crates, were brought in and were assembled on the base and then some pilots came in.
6. I guess when you go island hopping, more of the following has to be done: loading and unloading of ships. After unloading we had to go to the main island air base and set up our gun positions. One of the first days, we were hit by a typhoon and it seemed like it was never going to stop raining. It rained all day and night long with winds. I didn't sleep much that night as we were on the side of a hill and the water kept gushing through the dirt floor of our tent. We were ready, but the Japs never got as far as Fiji. The Naval battle of the Coral Sea and then the counter invasion of Guadal Canal stopped them. Fiji was used as a base for the offensive, for these two important battles. The aircraft carrier, USS Lexington, was sunk at the Coral Sea battle and the rescue crew was brought to Fiji. They were awaiting reassignment and were not to let the Japs know for sure that it sank. While the rest of the fleet was off shore, the USS Saratoga carrier planes were based at our airfield. The planes were still practicing from the base and I was able to talk to the flight Chief into going up in a TBF (Torpedo Plane-same as the plane that President George Bush was shot down in). It was a thrill ride going up to 11,000 feet and practicing a torpedo run down to about 50 feet above the ocean. The Gunners (AAA) on board our ships were practicing against us all the way in our dive.

Things got to be a routine after awhile as the war zone moved farther West from us. We were able to go on leave after awhile to Suva and Latouka. I met a lovely lady in Latouka and was able to meet her family and stay over night at their house a few times, especially one night when it was pouring rain. I would bring them things from the PX that they were not able to get. She was ½ German (her father was a MM Captain) ¼ English (her mother was ½ Fijian and ½ English). One of her brothers was in a Fijian Battalion and helped us fight the Japs on Bouganville. Her name was Lorna and we wrote to each other while we were in the Salomon Islands.

November 1943

1. The day came again when we were replaced by another regiment and had to go forward to the war zone. We were bored and ready to move on again. We loaded the ships with our equipment. In Lautoka, we pulled up anchor and away we went. This time we knew where we were going: the hot spot was the Salomon Islands. I was a Corporal, promoted by our 1st Lt. Pugh. While in Fiji I was in charge of an automatic weapons gun crew (there were 14 of us all together), consisting of a 40MM and 50 Caliber machine guns. I had to leave my dog, "Boots" at my old gun position. We had the Fijian natives build us "Bula Shacks" out of natural material so the Japs wouldn't know we were there if they flew over and took pictures.
2. We left Fiji in a convoy and on the way we stopped in New Hebrides (now Port Vila -Vanuatu) to pick up more ships for the final leg to Gaudal Canal. Between New-Hebrides and Gaudal Canal, the ship that we were on started having engines troubles and our ship stopped. We were dead in the water. As the rest of the convoy sailed on we were left behind, bobbing and weaving there in the ocean. It was a lonely and helpless feeling sitting there with only one Destroyer circling around us. We would have been an easy target for a Jap submarine if one had been around. Finally after several hours we were able to start moving again.

Nov. 1943- Dec. 1943

1. The next day we reached Guadal Canal and started unloading again. Once on the beach we moved our stuff away from Henderson Field up the coast to a coconut grove near Tassafaronga Point to keep hidden from any Jap planes. Most of the Japanese soldiers had been taken off the island when we arrived, but many were still wandering around in the jungles. So you always had to be on the alert. One day the ammo dump nearer Henderson Field started blowing up and it took all day and night before it stopped. I still to this day do not know why. Believe it or not, I finally learned how to swim while taking a bath in a stream near our camp.
2. Between land crabs and masquitos at night, we always kept busy. Malaria and etc. were a big problem. We had turkey for Thanksgiving (very unusual) dinner and couldn't believe it. I think the sea bees or Navy was behind this because it gave us

the GI shits. All night long we had stomach pains and looking for a clean spot on the ground somewhere to crap as we all had it. We were kept busy getting our gun, trucks and etc. in top shape. We also were busy loading up the LST full of 55 gallon drums of aviation gasoline that was needed up forward. It was a backbreaking job. Finally it was our turn to load up a couple of LST's with gasoline drums all around the sides, as our stuff was in the middle. If a shell or a bomb were to have hit us, we would have gone up sky high.

Nov. 1943- Dec. 1944

1. We pushed off and got in another convoy on the way to Bouganville Island at Empress Augustus Bay, near the Torokina River. We had a beach^{HEAD} there and were going to build two fighter strips and one small bomber strip. The LST has AAA guns on it, but we also had a lot of our own in position, ready to fire just in case. The Navy and Air Force did a good job keeping any Jap Planes away from us. After the LST (Landing Ship Tanks) beached itself on the sand. We were able to drive off with our guns, trucks, tents and etc. Fighter Strip #1 was ready so we were taken into the jungle close by. We were told that this was our new position and to start cutting down the trees and vines to have an open field of fire. It took us a couple of weeks of hard work to get the job completed. Trees cleared away, the 40MM and 50 Caliber guns dug in, sand bagged, tents pitched, ammo underground, slit trenches dug and the most important of all, the latrines dug. We were handicapped by rain, snakes, centipedes, scorpions and Malaria type mosquitoes. We were close to the XIV Corp. Headquarters (Major General C.W. Griswold) so my gun position was allowed to eat with them as our battery was having a tough time getting enough chow for us. One night a bomb sounded like it was going to come right in our gun position, but fortunately for us, missed. You don't hear anything if its going to hit you. It killed the 3 cooks who didn't get in a slit trench that cooked for the general. So we didn't eat the next day except for K. rations.
2. We got to see a few movies and Randolph Scott there several times. He was going to do something when the air raid siren went off and he took off in a hurry and never came back. It usually takes 10 minutes before they get overhead to drop their bombs. A lot of pilots came to the movies as well. We were able to see a couple of the aces, Joe Foss and Pappy Boyington. One night a Jap plane came down real low and we were able to get a few rounds (40MM) off as he disappeared behind the jungle growth. He (the Jap) never came backup as we had a night fighter overhead. After the 2nd fighter strip was finished we had to pack up everything and move to the end of the strip on one side. We didn't have to cut any trees down as the Sea Bees did it. When clearing the jungle for the runway again, we had to do all the things that I mentioned before. This time we were away from everything and were always the last crew to get chow, mail etc. It was exciting to watch the fighters take off, heading for Rabaul to escort the Bombers from Guadal Canal. It was great to watch them swoop over the fighter strip and do the victory roll when they came back. Twice, we had to help the pilots get out of their planes when taking off, due to engine failure. Luckily

they turned off the engine and the planes didn't catch on fire. My brother, Tony and Cousin Joe, who were on different sides of the runway, had about the same experiences.

3. The Japs finally brought up enough men and artillery from the south of Bouganville, Kieta, Kahili and Kara areas. It took them several months to get through the jungles and set up for an offensive. They were The Infamous Army Sixth Division, Nanking Rappers in China. They started an artillery barrage on the airfield and all the fighters and small bombers had to take off and go somewhere else farther south. Things got pretty hot and serious on the front lines (perimeter), so we were ordered (some of us) to stay behind the infantry and were told that it was to be held at all costs. There was no retreat, even if we had to die there. A month or so later, we were moved to another hill that was to be held. Finally, we were put on the front lines at the Torokina River with our 40MM and 50 Caliber guns. The infantry was happy to see us with our firepower and it seemed to help them out a lot.
4. Some of the Jap guns were dug in caves on the hills and the field artillery couldn't knock them out, as they have to lob the shells. Our first Battalion (90MM) sent one gun up to the hill, zero in on the Jap guns and in one day (209 rounds) destroyed them. AAA guns have a high velocity and were able to shoot straight into the caves. Finally the Japanese High Command knew they could never break through and gave up. One report later said that they lost thousands in battle, many thousands starved to death and about 20,000 surrendered at the end of the war. The estimated amount was around 80,000 in all.

December 1944

1. The war moved north of the equator and things calmed way down. We heard where men were being rotated home who had about 75-80 points from different outfits and started hollering to go home. We, as the National Guards, had about twice as many points as the other men and finally heard that we were going home on leave. We got the whole quoted for the Island of Bouganville. My cousin Joe was lucky enough to be called off the fox-hole at the front area with me and left for home a couple of months before the rest of us. Tony, my brother was with me when we came back.

This time we only had to pack up our own things and leave everything else behind with the outfit. I'm sure that they got some replacements to take over our place.

2. We loaded into an LCI (landing craft infantry) and returned to Guadal Canal, about 400 miles away. After a few days and a physical we were cleared to leave for home. We waited all day at the beach to board the transport (just like the army) on Ducks (trucks that can travel on land and on the water). When the afternoon came, (Deluge) it began to rain. We were wandering all over the bay trying to find the ship as you couldn't see very far ahead. Finally, we made contact with it and came aboard soaking wet, but happy. We hadn't had anything to eat all day, so they served us

sauerkraut and wieners, as the meals for the Navy crew was already over. We took the long way back to San Francisco, heading straight towards South America and up the Pacific Coast to make sure no Jap subs were that far east. It took us 10 days and no zigzagging, just relaxing and no duties to perform.

3. We went under the San Francisco Bridge into the harbor and couldn't believe our eyes that this was the U.S.A. and with city lights on full blast. We had been in the combat zone for so long and without lights at night that we thought this was abnormal. We disembarked the next morning and was struck by something we weren't used to—Women and colors (clothes were red, blue and pink etc.) As olive drab was all we knew for a long time. We finally saw some females in uniform, Army, Navy, Marines and Civilian gals. We gave them all a big holler and said hello. It had been a few years since we had seen the opposite sex. We went to a camp on Angel Island, in San Francisco Bay, and got cleaned up with new uniforms etc. and papers to go on leave for 21 days. We got our pay and caught the train to LA. Tony was still with me. Mom and the family will be happy to see us both at the same time. We must have caught a milk train because it would stop at different places all the way to LA, picking up 10-15 gallons of milk, after all we were in a war. After a full day or so, we made it to LA and caught the red car to Long Beach, then a city bus to 6065 Gundry Avenue to see the folks. We had called and they were expecting us. We saw everyone we wanted to, but my class (boys) at Poly High School was spread all over the world in the service. After three weeks with family and friends, it was time to go to the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara for reassignment. (A large group of us from the 251 AAA)
4. We were assigned to a new regiment that was just forming at Camp Irwin, near Barstow, California. We resumed training, firing etc. At this stage of the war, the infantry was more important (Germany and the Japanese's Air Force were being eliminated) so this regiment was sent to Camp Livingston, Louisiana for intensive infantry training.
5. Joe made contact with us again and all three of us were together again. While at Camp Livingston, we realized we were in with some raw recruits, who just had got called up for service and had never been overseas before. We knew that according to regulations, we were supposed to stay in the states for at least six months. Some of us went to the Inspecting General to complain and got reassigned state wise. Tony was sent to a camp in Texas, Joe to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and I stayed at Camp Livingston. After the 5 Sullivan Brothers were all lost on the cruiser USS Juneao, during the Solomon Fighting, all families were broken up. Each brother would serve in different units. Five days a week I guarded German prisoners. I'd march out a 100 Germans every morning to work in the camp and then back in at night. (Captured in North Africa) The Germans really know how to march. I'm sure that they had been marching ever since they were kids. I had one shotgun and six shells. They were happy to be out of the war and alive.

6. In **June 1945**, Germany had surrendered and I was told I was up for discharge from the Army. I left Alexandria, La on a troop train, riding all the way to Marysville, California Camp Beale and was **Honorably Discharged** on **June 23rd 1945**. Total time of service was 4 years, 9 months and 1 week, with 45 ½ months outside of the United States. I was so happy to get out of the service that I didn't bother to put much stuff on my qualifications and discharge papers. When they said, "GO", I was gone. Counting my National Guard time, I served 5 years, 6 months and 11 days for my country and freedom and have certainly been proud of it all my life. Mustering out pay was \$300—travel pay was \$26.45----total amount given at time of discharge was \$143. 83.

7. As I start my civilian life I have to return to Alexandria, Louisiana to get married to my beautiful future wife, Eugenia M. Sullivan, whom I had met at the U.S.O. dance held at the club on Bolton Avenue, **June 30, 1945**.

This is my life.