

The Battle of Okinawa: My Experience The Last Battle of World War II



**By CHARLES W. SWEET
2006**

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This account is primarily written for my grandsons, Daniel and Trevor Sweet, 60 years after these events took place.

April 1, 1945: Aboard Navy Ship in the China Sea

At 0300 hours (3:00 am) we were awakened in our quarters below deck by Captain Haddo who announced we were disembarking at 0600 hours into enemy territory, specifically, the island of Okinawa. We had been briefed by our officers only the day before as to our destination. For weeks we thought it was going to be the southern beaches of Japan.



Okinawa (Iceberg, the code name for Okinawa)

The island lies about 400 miles southwest of Japan proper and northeast of Formosa (now Taiwan) and the Philippines. Okinawa: 60 miles long (generally running north to south), from 2 to 18 miles wide and covering 485 square miles. In 1945 Okinawa had a population of



four hundred thousand of whom the vast majority lived in the southern third of the island originally. Okinawans resembled Japanese, but an influx of Mongol, Chinese and other races left them smaller. There were also among the most docile people in the world. They had no

history of war, or making arms (weapons).

After breakfast we waited below deck for departure. Besides Captain Haddo, our unit, attached to XXIV Corps Headquarters, had Lt. Trump, a concert pianist in civilian life who always wore heavy gloves no matter what. There was Lt. Seeburger, a recent Purdue



Upper Picture—Okinawan children in their school yard.....must be recess

Left Picture—The largest of the Shuri Bells. height.....8 ft.

graduate and all-around nice guy; and Bob Bentley, Master Sergeant, later killed while he was standing in the chow line by our Navy ships firing over the island in celebration of the end of the war in Europe. Also, a PFC (Private First Class) the guy we called "The German" last name Volkner. Sigurd Swenson was a PFC from Round Up, Montana, according to him, the only place in the world. There was another PFC from Kenosha, Wisconsin whose name I cannot recall.

I was the Tech Sergeant. I did not know the official duties of a Tech Sergeant. I was a "jack of all trades." Since we did not have a Master Sergeant, I assumed his duties, in charge of guard duty and radio control along with being a runner for the general. Major General John R. Hodge always called me "college boy", never sergeant. Even though it wasn't part of my official duties, I also wrote and read letters for the few soldiers who could neither read nor write. They were mostly from Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma, mostly from farms. Because the US Army was still segregated at that time, they were all white.



Tech Sargent
Stripes

We had been confined below deck while at sea for the previous 10 days, having left Leyte Island in the Philippines. The reason: we were working on maps and photos of the southern beaches of Japan for an

anticipated invasion. Our quarters were cramped because we worked,



slept, and ate in the same area. The air was always stale. At 0600 we were on deck. We were to be the third wave. The sight was almost unbelievable with ships and air cover. We learned later that 1600 ships carrying over 500,000 troops were on board.

Minutes later we started climbing down the

cargo nets into amphibious tractors. I carried a carbine (rifle), backpack (including c-rations), 80 rounds of ammo and a short shovel.

Chaos is a mild descriptive word for the scene. While on deck, we were told, the first and second wave had no opposition on the beaches. We experienced none. The ride to shore took about 15 minutes. We rode upon the coral reef and jumped off, perhaps 25 to 30 of us. All

sounds seemed to blend into one. Because there was no opposition from the beach it did not mean it was quiet. There was continuous missile, rifle, and machine gun fire. Marine Corsairs gave air cover and above were air battles called "dog fights" between Japanese "Zeros" and the U.S. Corsairs.

Another type of action that took place a distance of several miles on the sea near our landing area was very brisk Kamikaze action that we could see but not hear. The Japanese Kamikaze pilots were trained to make a



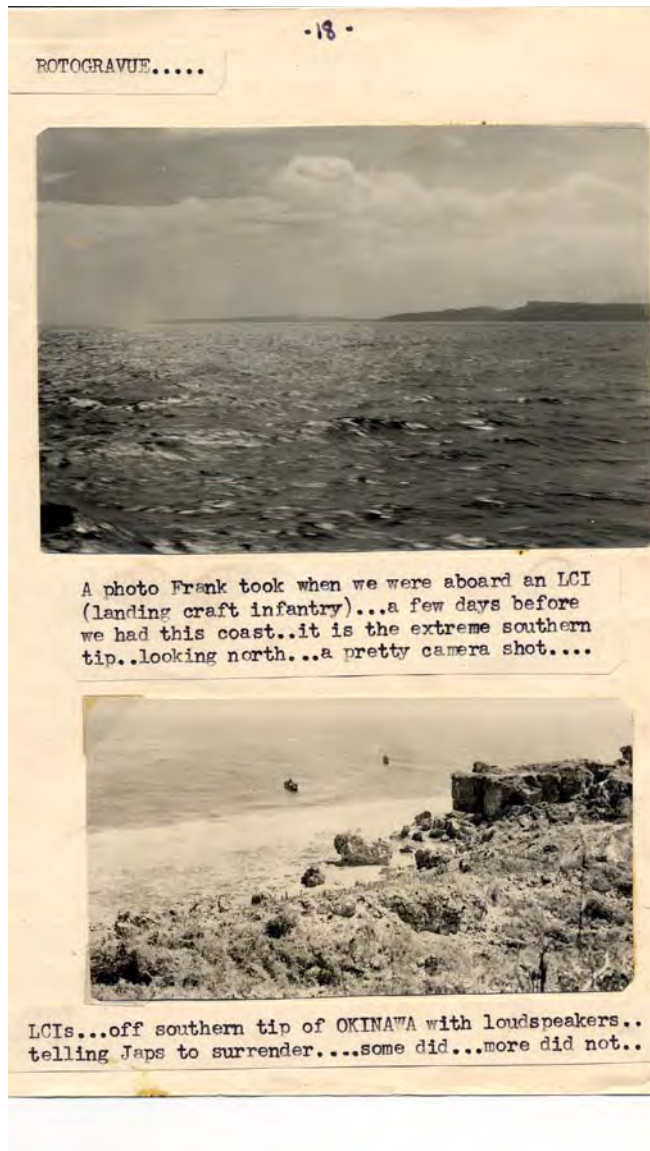
Japanese Zero Aircraft

suicidal crash attack on our Navy ships. They would come in at water level and ram their target, damaging some ships and sinking others.

We made it to the edge of the jungle about 300 yards and were told to stay put for that day. So we dug in and stayed the night in our "fox" holes. My foxhole was about 4 feet deep, and 3 feet wide. It took me about 2 hours to dig. The soil was a combination of coral and small stones. No sleep as such, but I felt exhaustion, and fear of the unknown. I took on a numbness I had never experienced before. It was a feeling

like I was performing like a robot without any human emotions. An army psychiatrist told me later that it was a defense mechanism that kicked in.

Note: Later research revealed the percentage rate of combat losses due



to battle stress, compared with combat wounds was 48%. In the Battle of Okinawa the number of 26,000 non-battle casualties were twice the percentage of any other battle in American history.

The first day is called Landing Day (LD) but we called it April Fools Day. But who was fooled?

LD+1

Daybreak: There we were.

What to do with us? We were not trained as infantrymen. We had

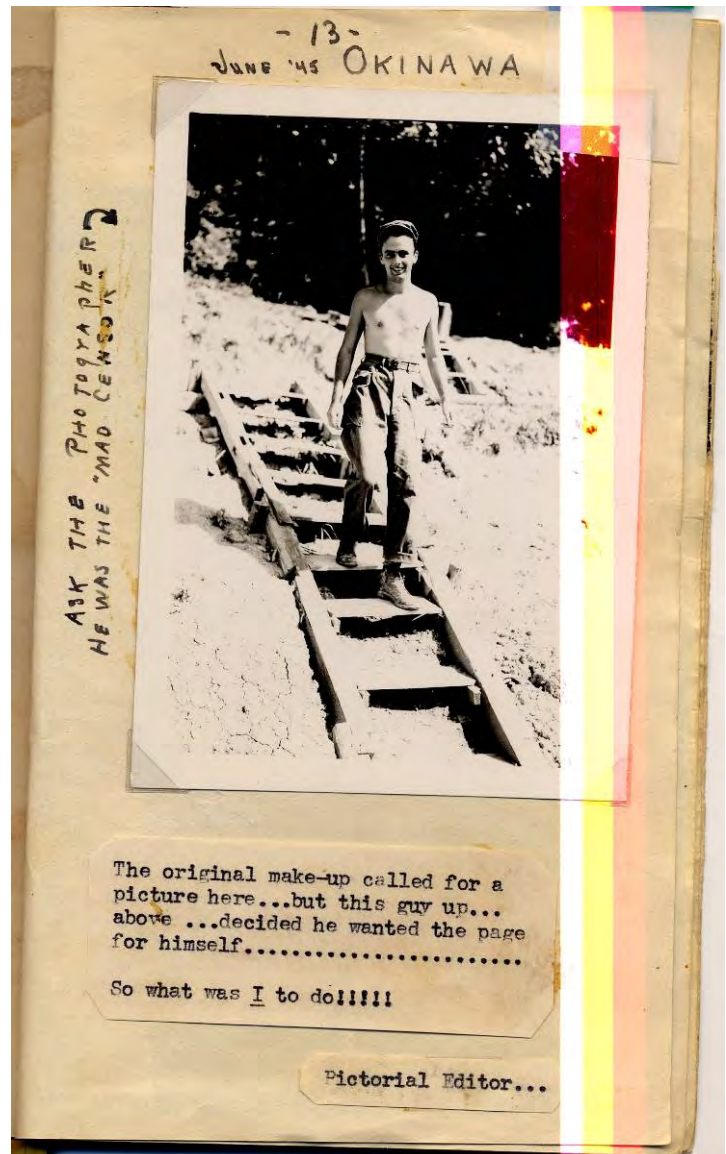
been assigned to the 24th Corps Headquarters Company as map-makers and photo interpreters. Captain Haddo explained we were to become artillery spotters for our ground batteries. "Any questions?" We asked, "What is an artillery spotter?" "You will be assigned to an airplane with a

pilot and go over enemy territory and tell the ground crew by radio the location (map coordinates) of enemy fire. Questions?" "Any training?"

Captain Haddo: "Only on the job." Thinking back, I thought, "why me? How did I get here?"

Indeed looking back after my army basic training in 1943, I was picked with many others to go to Madison, Wisconsin in September, 1943 to attend the language school at the University of Wisconsin. I was put in the German section. These were regimented classes, 8 hours a day, where only

German was spoken. Too many lapses and you were shipped to an infantry camp. I kept quiet if I felt the urge to speak English. So now with "Army Logic" having graduated from the German program I found myself in the war in the Pacific and invading Okinawa.



Later that morning, Navy Seabees and Army engineers started making a temporary landing field near the beach for our aircraft to fly in. They came in late afternoon. After some orientation, like reading map coordinates, we were assigned. No logic, you go here with Warrant Officer Adams, etc. The vast majority of the pilots had been Alaska bush pilots. They did not meet any standards of Army grooming. Our unit called them all "Orville" after one of the Wright brothers who were given credit for the first flight.

Fortunately, the weather turned foggy and rainy and we could not take off as there was no navigation equipment in place. However, our pilots said they didn't need any! These planes were Stinson L-5, 2-seaters. Close examination revealed a fair amount of plywood, especially the bottom part of the fuselage. That sure didn't impress me, as small arms fire could have easily penetrated.

We now had pup tents, two to a tent, but still dug foxholes protection. I was beginning to smell. Ate some rations and tried to sleep. Tomorrow would be a big day. Fly.

LD+2

There really was no sleep. Artillery action all night, from both sides, Japanese and Americans. At 0600 we congregated at the landing strip,

only about 200 feet away. We were briefed as to radio use and map instruction.

| Regular Time | Military Time | Regular Time | Military Time |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Midnight | 0000 | Noon | 1200 |
| 1:00 am | 0100 | 1:00 pm | 1300 |
| 2:00 am | 0200 | 2:00 pm | 1400 |
| 3:00 am | 0300 | 3:00 pm | 1500 |
| 4:00 am | 0400 | 4:00 pm | 1600 |
| 5:00 am | 0500 | 5:00 pm | 1700 |
| 6:00 am | 0600 | 6:00 pm | 1800 |
| 7:00 am | 0700 | 7:00 pm | 1900 |
| 8:00 am | 0800 | 8:00 pm | 2000 |
| 9:00 am | 0900 | 9:00 pm | 2100 |
| 10:00 am | 1000 | 10:00 pm | 2200 |
| 11:00 am | 1100 | 11:00 pm | 2300 |

Soon my "Orville" said, "Let's get going". I thought to myself, "Why the hurry?" We were only a tiny part of this whole operation. Above Japanese Zero's and Marine Corsairs were at it continually. Once we all cheered when a "Zero" went down with a big splash in the ocean.



We took off. Our target area was south, and about 2 miles wide and 3 miles long. The area was

called Tsuwa, full of high ridges and caves. After a few minutes, I could tell the pilot had no fear. Great—an enemy with no fear, and a pilot with no fear. Where did that leave me?

We knew that the Japanese put their artillery on the hillsides opposite the sea. They backed their equipment out of the ridge on the mountain on tracks and fired over the hill. My “Orville” loved this. He would go in so close you could see the grins on the enemy faces. I tried to remind him that they were using rifles to shoot at us. Remember the plywood bottoms? He was fired up. I radioed several coordinates, but did not know how we did because he was already going to the next ridge. Also, our artillery was firing back.

We covered our assigned territory without incident and landed at the base at approximately 0730. The first thing, I asked him was, did he have a family back home? He said he wasn’t old enough to be married. He also said that he started flying ‘the bush’ at 13. I didn’t have the guts to ask his age! Actually, I really didn’t want to know.

At 0930, we were told that the plane, carrying the PFC from Kenosha was down. Search helicopters were out. By noon the crashed plane was sighted, but no way to confirm either occupant as a survivor. My next thoughts were on our 1600 departure, that we had been advised

is when the "Japs" really got busy. "Japs": the first time I have used this word. It is the slang for Japanese. Most soldiers used it. I never did and never will. They also used the word "Gooks".

About 1500 hours, Captain Haddo called us together. He told us our duties as spotters were over, because the regular-trained artillery crews had arrived. WE all tried hard not to be relieved. We had no idea that we were only substitutes. Sgt. Bentley asked about our downed comrade. Captain Haddo replied that until the area was under our control, nothing could be done. He now told us that our new assignment was to provide guard duty for the perimeter. "Sgt. Sweet, you will be on the first shift from 2000 to 2400. Your areas will be posted immediately". I checked the board. My area was the south end of the air strip from water on the east to the large escarpment on the west.

My first thoughts: Nobody is supposed to move at night in the perimeter. It is pitch black. The password was "Amos and Andy". Suppose I challenged a sound, will I fire? At 2000, I was at my post, for 4 long hours. I strained to hear any movement. I could actually hear artillery fire to the south, so I felt our troops were moving in the right direction. That was a plus.

After the first 2 hours my trigger finger relaxed. It seemed bent in place. I made it through my shift without challenge, until my relief Sgt. Bentley came at 2400 hours. As I looked back, this kind of warfare has no front lines as such, where you could feel some security if behind those lines. Infiltration in this campaign is possible and probable.

LD+3

I awakened at 0500, ate the last of my c-rations.

| |
|---|
| From the World Book about C-Rations (1945) |
|---|

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|------------------------------------|
| There are three cans of food like: |
|------------------------------------|

| |
|---|
| Eggs and ham, Pork and beans, Beef and beans. |
|---|

| |
|------------------------|
| There is one can with: |
|------------------------|

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Gum drop candy and Two cookies. |
|------------------------------------|

| |
|-----------|
| There is: |
|-----------|

| |
|--|
| Dried Coffee, Tiny can of jam, A bar of cocoa, and Some dried cream |
|--|

Took my helmet full of water. Drank first, brushed teeth, washed part of body, and washed my socks in the rest. Hung them on the tent to dry. No water for showers yet. I checked the board to find I had guard duty 0800 to 1200 at the same location as the previous "night". When

1200 came, there was no relief. You do not ask "Why?" I stayed until 1600 hours and "The German" showed up.

On guard duty, the thought occurred to me: whatever happened to Lt. Trump and Lt. Seeburger? I hadn't seen them since Landing Day. I assumed they were assigned to other duties at Corps Headquarters. A week later, our group would be back as a unit.

Being next to the landing strip had its own unique problem. The civilian population of Okinawa was always on the move, searching for food, water, and trying to keep away from any battle. They would come and squat on the landing area waiting for the Americans to help. Mostly the Japanese military was their enemy. We had to get them off the field as planes were always taking off or landing. Persuasion helped, not language, but pointing or motioning with carbine to move back to the hills. For me, it was best not to speak, only to nudge.

This is the time and place when I became a pacifist. Some of my fellow soldiers shot the helpless Okinawan civilians as they sat on the ground because either they couldn't understand English or did not move fast enough. The Okinawans were in between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The invasion had devastated their lives. No food, water or shelter and looking for a place to exist.

I later learned that of 400,000 Okinawans before the invasion, more than 105,000 were killed in the conflict. Looking back the armed forces of America had no appreciation or respect for the civilian population of Okinawa. They were known to be peace-loving people. They did not have a police force. Actually you are trained only to kill the enemy. No fancy stuff or negotiations with anyone.

We now had a temporary kitchen, with canned food. Mashed potatoes in tin cans turn black. My hatred for mashed potatoes has lasted these 60 years.

The next week or so, we settled into the same routine, except we had the civilians loaded on to amphibian tractors and we were told they were placed in resettlement camps in the northern part of the island until the battle was over. During this period the Japanese were causing a great number of problems, almost in desperation.

The Japanese soldiers melted into the Okinawan population dressed as civilians, usually with concealed weapons. Their purpose was not to desert from their army, but to confuse and destroy the Americans. It was most difficult to tell the difference between Okinawans and Japanese soldiers dressed as Okinawans. The official procedure—trust no one!

April 12, 1945

News of the death of our commander-in-chief, President Franklin Roosevelt had a somber affect on all in our unit.

Best news, PFC (Kenosha) showed up in our Headquarters group. He had been rescued by Okinawans along with the "bush" pilot and hid in caves until the land area was in our control. Also I now recall his last name: Drinkard.

We moved into our new Headquarters, Nakagusuku Castle. It had been an ancient fortress since the 15th century. It was a castle like no other, located on steep slopes and jagged cliffs and had a panoramic view of Nakagusuku Bay (Pacific Ocean) to the east and the East China Sea to the west.



Essentially it was made of rockstone and limestone. Miles of roads and paths lined with walls of both materials. An example of its hugeness, we later used the top between two towers for a softball field. The castle was a major supply depot for all armed forces, which also created constant activity.

April 13-June 21

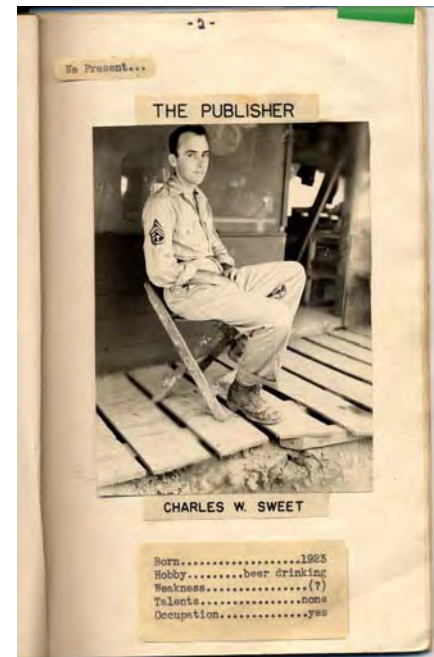
Major General John R. Hodge commanded the XXIV Corps, 3 divisions. June 21 is stated because that is the official date that organized resistance ended.

On May 8, news that Germany had surrendered was very good news.



By the end of May, the monsoon rains turned every road and hillside into seas of mud. We had some protection from the mud at the castle; supplies were slowed to a trickle.

We were lucky in this respect. We slept in tents on higher ground. We had army cots with mosquito netting. Even though I had all the medical shots and water control, I did not escape Malaria. It has worn off over the years, but I suspect some remnants will always remain in my system. At my discharge from the army, I weighed 118 pounds.



During the period that Charles Sweet, my fiance, and I were separated and particularly while he was on active duty in the Pacific, we wrote each other every day. I would write him my news from the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison and family and national news. His letters were heavily censored and there was much he was not allowed to write but I learned to read between the lines. Before and during the Battle of Okinawa he apparently had access to typewriter, paper, and other supplies as he was attached to headquarters.

He had hoped to major in journalism in college to become a sports writer, so he put his creative talents to good use composing a magazine "Sweet Scenes--The Magazine For Jean". Periodically I would receive a handmade thick envelope with a new dated issue, usually with postage due. It seemed the postal system didn't appreciate the importance of this Airmail. It was such fun to receive his movie reviews from Sleepy Hollow, cartoons from whatever publication he could find, photos of him and Okinawa, his notes and comments.

The following was included May 28, 1945: Charlie wrote that Lt. Robert F. Seeburger wrote for a periodical "Nansii Shots" his "Okinawa Debris" which contained a Personality of The Week.....

"a man from the Michigan State University ...just a kid...who wishes he'd married his Sweetheart before crossing the Pacific...he's not an impressive looking bird...small and slight of stature...with dark brown hair....he wears his fatigue cap like a confederate soldier...his staff sergeant stripes gleam from his green twill jacket.

He likes to think of himself as a man with a violent temper...yet several months with him have proven him to be mild mannered...but hardly a Casper Milquetoast...for he is a man of definite ideology...likes to argue for his convictions...but can admit he is wrong.

He's a clean cut kid...has not been buffed about on the platter of living...plans eloquently for the future...with full cognizance of the hazards of such eloquence.....He likes to talk...but he is interesting....and even more...he's a good listener..... above all...he's sincere....not afraid to work or to assume responsibility.

He laughs and says his boss is a "character" but refuses to qualify his statement....this only do I hold against him."

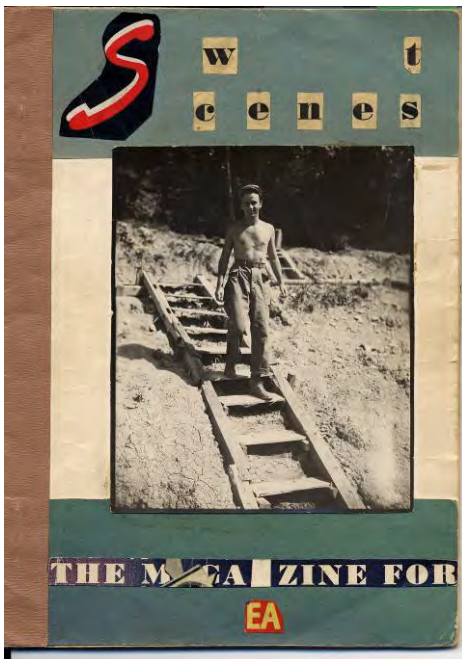
S/Sgt. Charles W. Sweet
Michigan-Mich. State

Lt. Robert Seeburger
Indiana-Purdue"

June 22---Sept. 19, 1945

It was a period of caution. Even though the organized battle was over, casualties still happened. I recall our soldiers, including some in our company, would go souvenir hunting, especially for Japanese rifles. They would go in small groups and enter caves, concrete storage shelters and tombs. Horrible results, many locations were booby-trapped, some still contained Japanese soldiers with hand grenades and other weapons. I would never go with them. Losing a hand, eye or my life just for a souvenir was stupid!

Frank Fusco was an embedded media person in Corps Headquarters as a



photographer and writer for LIFE magazine.

LIFE magazine in the 1940's was THE magazine. He actually had his cot next to me.

He seemed like a good guy. I often asked

him why he did not go along on some of the

souvenir escapades. He always said, "Do you

want to get me killed?" I would also ask, "Why

don't you go to some of the Division Field Hospitals to visit the wounded

and mentally destroyed? Why don't you go to Kadena Airfield and watch the bodies being loaded?" He would say, "Are you crazy? I would lose my job in a minute! I can only report the positive for the USA." It brings to my mind even today in Iraq—how can we trust the media?

This was a period for serious preparation; map making, photo interpretation of the southern beaches of Japan. We had done this before on Leyte, but it all needed to be updated.

We still drew guard duty. To the western side of the castle was an open meadow. It was trapped with "light" wires. If they were touched, flares went up to light the area. I had drawn the 2200 to 0200 shift. We had a machine gun set up, high up the castle side. About 0100 the flares went up. I sprayed the area back and forth with the 30-caliber machine gun. We had to wait until daybreak for any results. It was a restless night for all two hundred plus at Headquarters. In the morning two dead water buffalo were found in the meadow!

On a more practical note, many supply ships came from Australia. Some carried cargo of Southern Comfort, a whiskey for the officer clubs. Enlisted men usually went to pick up supplies from the ships. Several times, not all the whiskey made it back to the supply depot. After that,

THIS is AMERICA....

HARRY SHEER (The Chicago Daily News) — Once on a crisp autumn day in October, 1942, mighty Ohio State—on the first play of the game—ran four yards around big Dave Schreiner's end.

They tried again six more times, then quit. Ohio State didn't gain another inch around Dave's end all afternoon. Wisconsin won, 17-7.

Nobody ran around Dave's end very much and along about the end of the season he started to worry about it. "Really," he said, "I wish they would run—otherwise it looks like I am not doing anything." But Dave



did many things for the '42 Badgers—winding up a unanimous All American. Just a few days ago, as days go in these times, Dave refused to let some Japs run around his end.

So he died on a little island called Okinawa, thousands of miles from Badger field. No more will his buddy, Mark Hoskins, who, with Dave formed one of Wisconsin's finest high school backfields, holler as he charged around Schreiner's end leading Pat Harder and Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch and scream, "Get the Hell out of the way. Here comes the 3-H club." The saga has ended. "Marine Lieutenant David Nathan Schreiner, 24, died June 21st of wounds received in action."

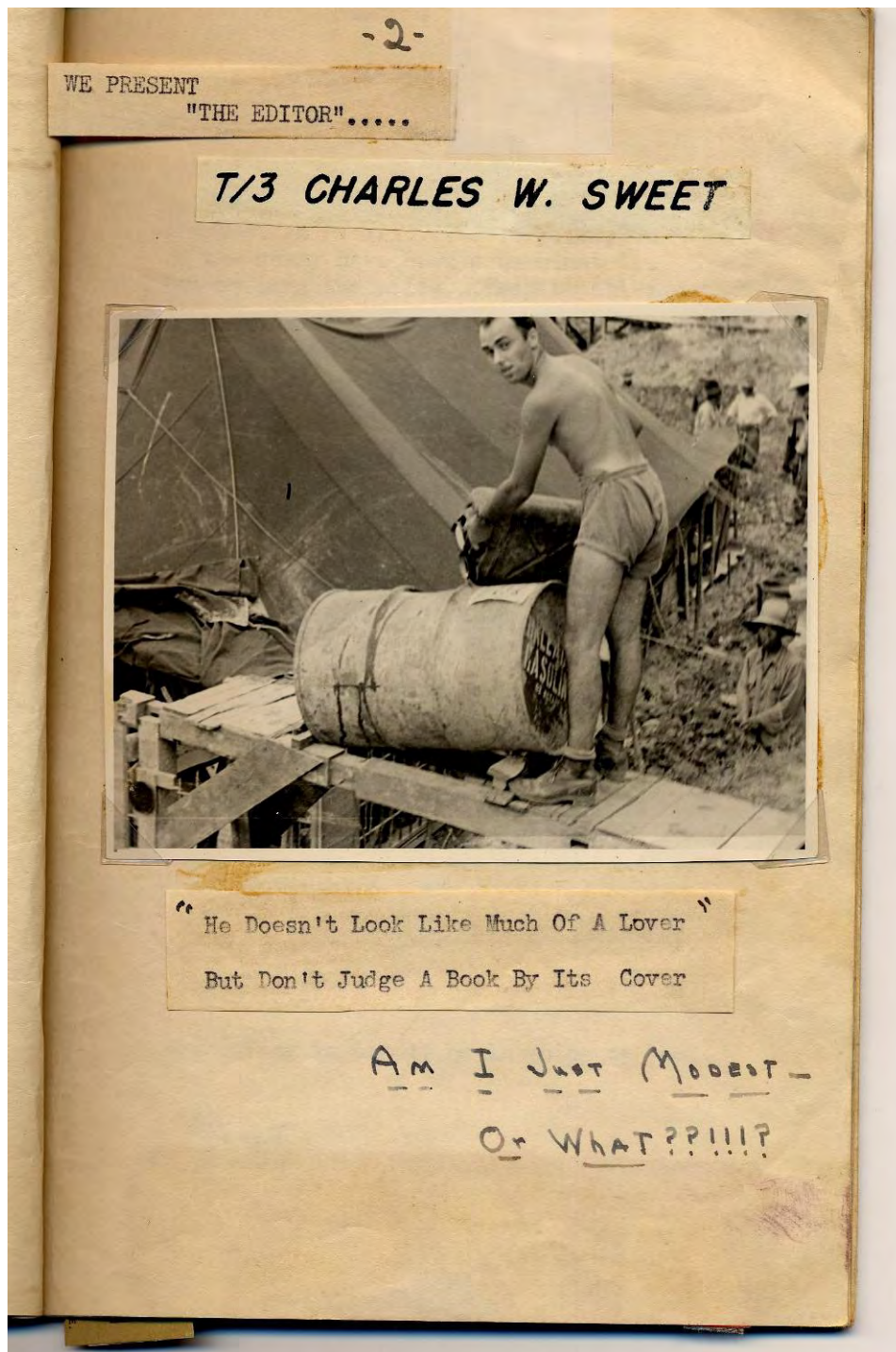
Major General
Hodge always
made sure
several officers
went along when
supplies were
picked up.

During the
warm days of
August we often
went swimming
in Nakagasuku
Bay. From the
castle it was
about a four-mile
ride. Several
would pile into a

truck and head out. One time going, a Japanese came out of low brush beside the road and threw a hand grenade into the back of the truck. It did not explode! Several shots ended his life as we all carried carbines.

A soldier we called Rooster because of a very protruding Adam's Apple, HAD TOSSED THE GRENADE OUT. It was a dud! How lucky can you get?

We continued on and had our swim. The beach was interesting.



The Navy had put buoys in a line from water's edge about 50 yards out and netting from the shoreline to the escarpment. It separated our forces from the civilians for security reasons we were told.

Charlie filling shower drum with water from a 5 gallon can. 1945

Special Event, August 2, 1945

A day to remember, a day to forget! My shift for Radio Corps Control that day was 2400 to 0800. About 0500, I heard a small weapon's fire to the west of the west tower. There lies a deep valley. No radio reports came in, which was contrary to procedure. I waited about 10 minutes. I then called Division Headquarters of the 7th, 77th, 96th divisions—no answers. Then to the Battalion Headquarters-- no answers.

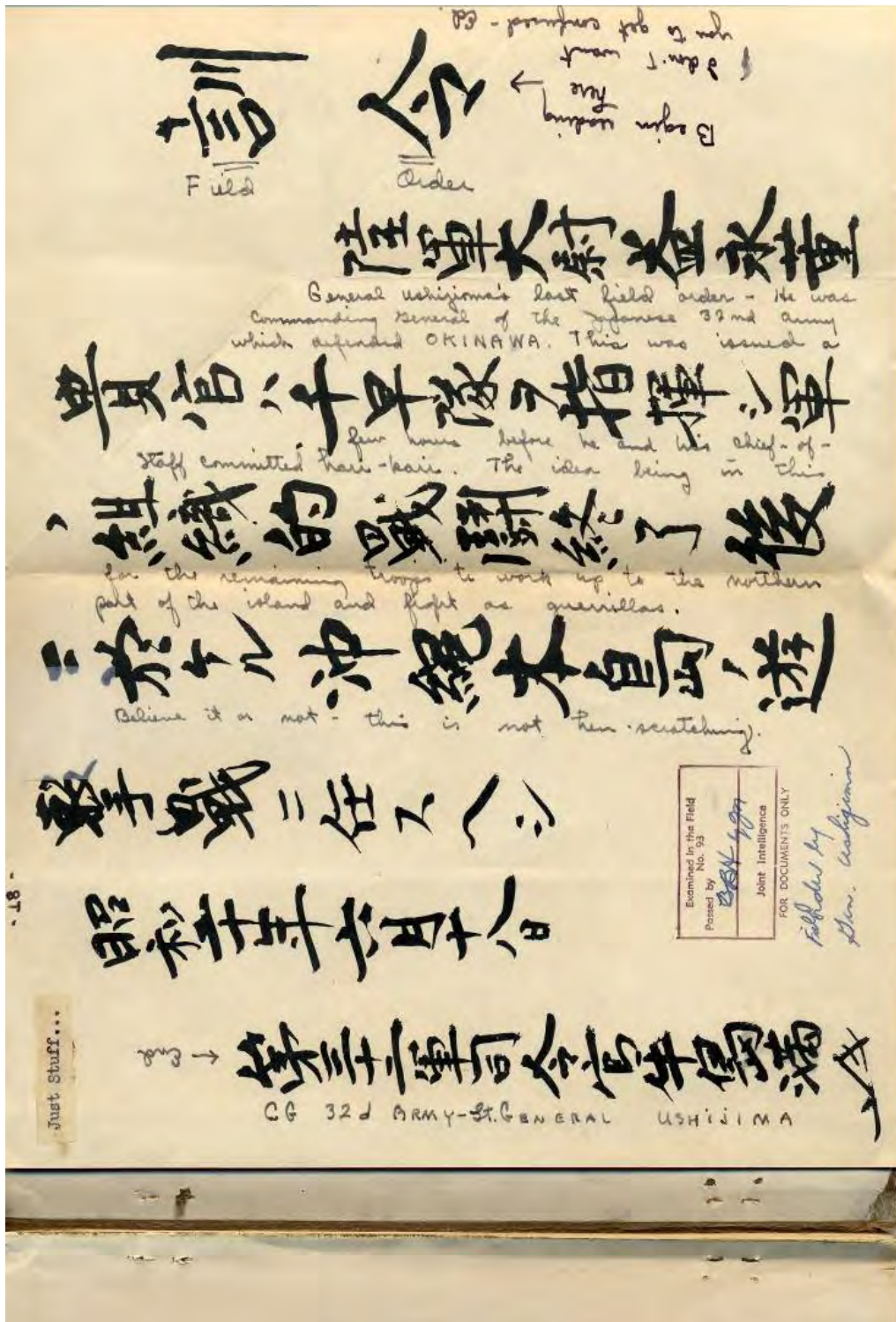
Radio Control was housed in a tent set up near the top of the castle next to our softball field. I went outside several times to see if I could spot the trouble. I would go in and out, so I left the tent flaps open. I went back to my chair in front of Radio Control. Approximately 0600 hours, I heard an odd sound. I looked out and in the tent entrance stood a Japanese naval officer holding a hand grenade to his stomach area. I could see the pin. It was American made—Japanese grenades had 2 stage igniters. He had been wounded as blood flowed down both arms. We looked at each other, he was about ten feet from me. I had no fear. I was frozen in place. I glanced toward my carbine leaning up against the table behind me. He also saw the weapon. My first thought, "I'm a goner." I didn't move. The radio crackled with a message. I ignored it. He looked in a state of confusion and exhaustion. He turned away and

took three or four steps with the grenade still next to his stomach and apparently pulled the pin. It was self-slaughter. It blew him off the ground. Some body parts were embedded in the tent siding. Luckily for me he had moved away from the tent opening. Two trees, which were next to the tent opening, absorbed much of the blast. After thought—why did he turn away? I still don't really have an answer.

The radio message: "Be on alert, Japanese infiltration in the castle area". My reply to the 96th Division, "Too late with info."

Captain Haddo had checked security stations. It appeared the Japanese officer had just walked in on the main road. Capt. Haddo had also sent for a body bag, mask & rubber gloves from supply. About 200 soldiers were standing around discussing the event. Consensus was that since I had caused all the trouble, I should be the one cleaning up the body parts. I





did, but I could find no means of identification to put on the bag. All I could write was "Unknown Japanese Naval Officer," so he was buried in the enemy graveyard. Actually it was a dump!

Today in 2006 as I look back, this war has many similarities with Iraq. Politicians can declare a victory, but that doesn't make it so. Killing still continues, only in a different form.

Special Events, August 6, 1945

An atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 9.

Another atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, a couple days later. The Japanese actually surrendered on September 2, 1945.

Officially, V-J Day is August 15, 1945 and this is the day that victory over Japan was celebrated by the Allies.

August 16—September 18, 1945

Most of this time period was assisting in the preparation of the following publication. In 1944, after leaving Madison, I was sent to Camp Ritchie, Maryland, where I was trained in Photo Interpretation. This is the only specialized training I received in the army that I later was able to use in preparing:

XXIV CORP Photographic Study

OKINAWA CAMPAIGN 1 April 1945 to 21 June 1945



All photographs are in black and white. Also processing was not what it is today in 2006. A typical day was for four of us going by Jeep, north to south to get the pictures, identify locations and write down related information. The crew included the army photographer, 2 soldiers from the division whose territory we were in and myself. Some aerial photographs are also integrated into the publication.

After so many months overseas and battles, I realized troops were going home with 50 points. I had 65 points! I went to see Capt. Haddo. He said my MOS number was frozen. "What is an MOS number," I asked. "Your Military Occupation Specialty number," he replied. He



looked up my number. "What is it?" I asked. "German Prisoner of War Interrogator" "What goes on here? I don't know of any German Prisoners of war, here or in So. Korea. In the States there are plenty!" I was emphatic. "Can

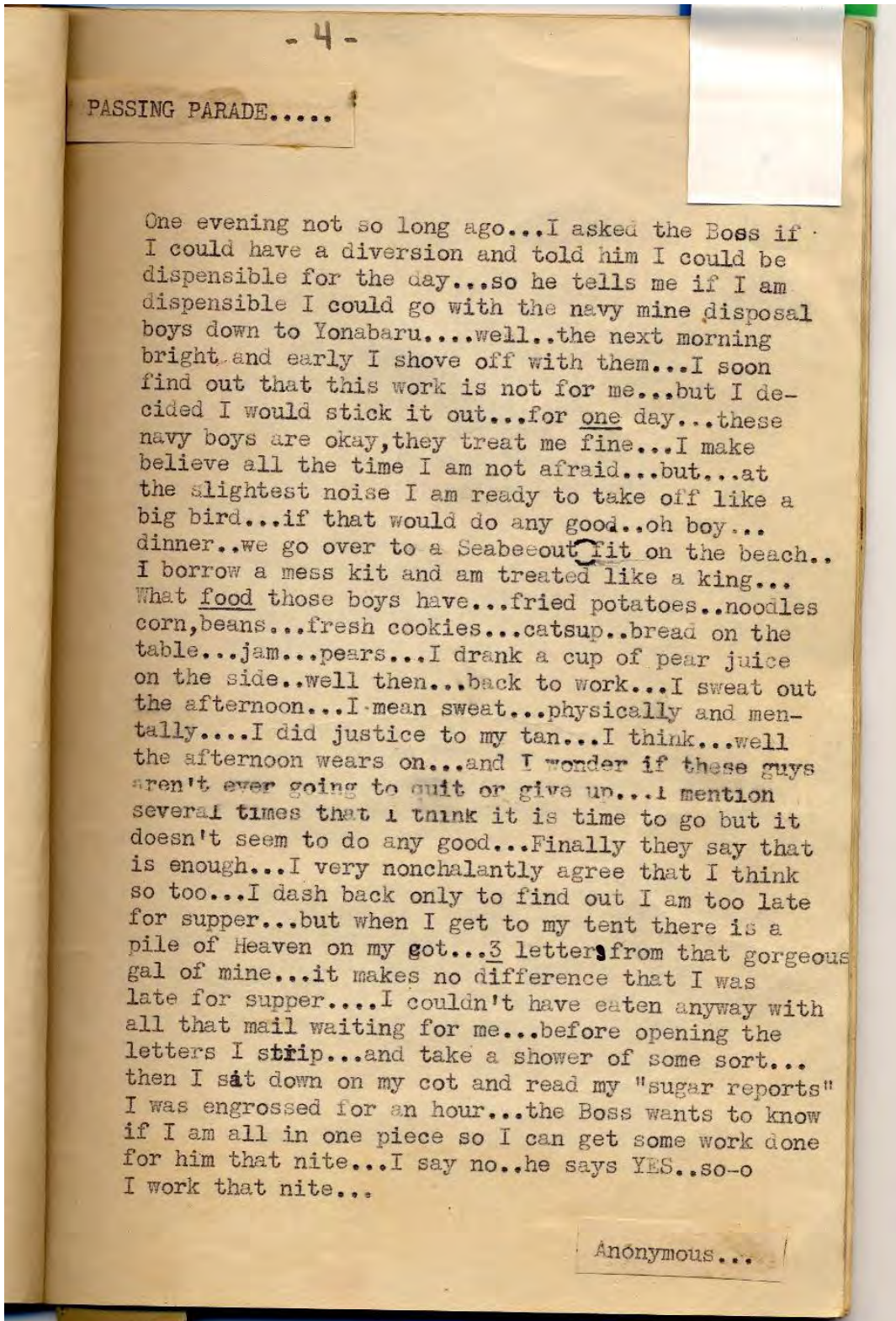
I see General Hodge about this?" His tent was only one tent away. I got to see his adjutant who said, "Orders were from General Marshall's Headquarters in Washington. TOO BAD, SOLDIER!"

September 19, 1945

On this day I left our unit, boarded a troop ship for Korea. I was the only one from our unit assigned to Military Government. I have never

seen or heard of any of my fellow soldiers since that date. I went to the Korean seaport Inchon and then to the Korean capital, Seoul, in the Army of Occupation.

But that is another chapter.



PASSING PARADE.....

- 4 -

One evening not so long ago...I asked the Boss if I could have a diversion and told him I could be dispensible for the day...so he tells me if I am dispensible I could go with the navy mine disposal boys down to Yonabaru....well..the next morning bright and early I shove off with them...I soon find out that this work is not for me...but I decided I would stick it out...for one day...these navy boys are okay, they treat me fine...I make believe all the time I am not afraid...but...at the slightest noise I am ready to take off like a big bird...if that would do any good..oh boy... dinner..we go over to a Seabeeoutfit on the beach.. I borrow a mess kit and am treated like a king... What food those boys have...fried potatoes..noodles corn,beans...fresh cookies...catsup..bread on the table...jam...pears...I drank a cup of pear juice on the side..well then...back to work...I sweat out the afternoon...I-mean sweat...physically and mentally....I did justice to my tan...I think...well the afternoon wears on...and I wonder if these guys aren't ever going to quit or give up...i mention several times that i think it is time to go but it doesn't seem to do any good...Finally they say that is enough...I very nonchalantly agree that I think so too...I dash back only to find out I am too late for supper...but when I get to my tent there is a pile of Heaven on my got...3 letters from that gorgeous gal of mine...it makes no difference that I was late for supper....I couldn't have eaten anyway with all that mail waiting for me...before opening the letters I strip...and take a shower of some sort... then I sat down on my cot and read my "sugar reports" I was engrossed for an hour...the Boss wants to know if I am all in one piece so I can get some work done for him that nite...I say no..he says YES..so-o I work that nite...

Anonymous...

Postscript (September 1945):

A Forgotten Story from The Battle of Okinawa

During duty at Radio Control, I often took binoculars to view activity around the main gate to the castle. One morning, I saw a soldier sitting on the grass next to the gate. When I left duty at 1400, he was still there, so I decided to walk down the road and see what was the situation. He was lost and no one would help. He was black (African American).

I asked his name and unit and then explained to him how to get there. He said he couldn't read! I told him to wait right there and I would get a jeep to take him to his unit. I had access to a jeep on demand because of doing errands for the General. It only took a few minutes. The reason I gave for the jeep was to give a lost soldier a ride back to his unit.

When I returned the jeep to the motor pool, Captain Wysocki (not his real name, but close) said to me. "I saw you give that nigger a ride!" I said, "His name is Pfc. Andrew Brown, 27th Division Quartermaster."

"Don't you know the Army is segregated?" the captain replied. If it's segregated, why did the unit have white officers?" "I can see you are a troublemaker. Three days in the brig!" he roared. He called for two MP's (military police) to escort me to the brig.

The "brig" was not bad. My supper, the same food as usual, was served to me on a tray, and my cot was new with a new mosquito frame and mosquito netting with no holes in it. The next morning a MP came in and said he was taking me back to my headquarters. I did not ask why.

When I got to the road, I met Captain Wysocki, escorted by another officer MP. I asked him, "What's up?" He said, "I apparently exceeded my authority and I have to serve the rest of your sentence."

Later I found out that General Hodge needed me and, told I was unavailable, asked, why? I thought probably, Captain Wysocki was from the South, but he was from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

When I shipped to Korea, I had access to my records. I found that my time in the Brig was not on my record (good news). Also I learned the degree of segregation in the Army depended on your Commander In Chief.