AMERICA 250

ST. LUCAS CEMETERY TOUR

MAY 2026

America 250 St. Lucas Cemetery Tour

To celebrate America 250, the St. Lucas Heritage Committee is featuring a few of the many people who served our country and have their final resting place in our cemetery. Of the over 300 U.S. veterans buried in the St. Lucas Cemetery, we have selected two who served during the Civil War and another five who served during World War II and have created a self-guided tour of their graves.

In 2003 the Sappington-Concord Historical Society published a book of stories written by local men about their experiences in the U.S. Armed Forces. With the permission of the Historical Society, we are providing the stories found in that book, Hometown Heroes, for each of the World War II veterans that we are featuring. We, unfortunately, have limited information about the service of our Civil War veterans and have included the few details that we know about their service. Both of the Civil War veterans were also founders of St. Lucas.

Some of the featured servicemen played significant roles in the Sappington-Concord Historical Society. Leonard "Bud" Borneman initiated and led the Hometown Heroes project. Carl Spinner was chairman and MC of the SCHS Memorial Day ceremony for many years. Sylvester Steinnerd was the father of Ray Steinnerd, who served on the board of the Historical Society for 25 years. Walter Maag and Pete Winter were both members of the Historical Society as well.

Numbered signs, starting near the large east parking lot, will be posted near each featured gravesite for a week after Memorial Day. You can also reference the map included in this booklet.

Interested in reading more stories of the experiences of local U.S. servicemen during their time of service? You can buy a copy of Hometown Heroes from the Sappington-Concord Historical Society.

1. **Sylvester Steinnerd -** Block 3, Lot 9

2. **George Karl Scheidt -** Block 1, Lot 5

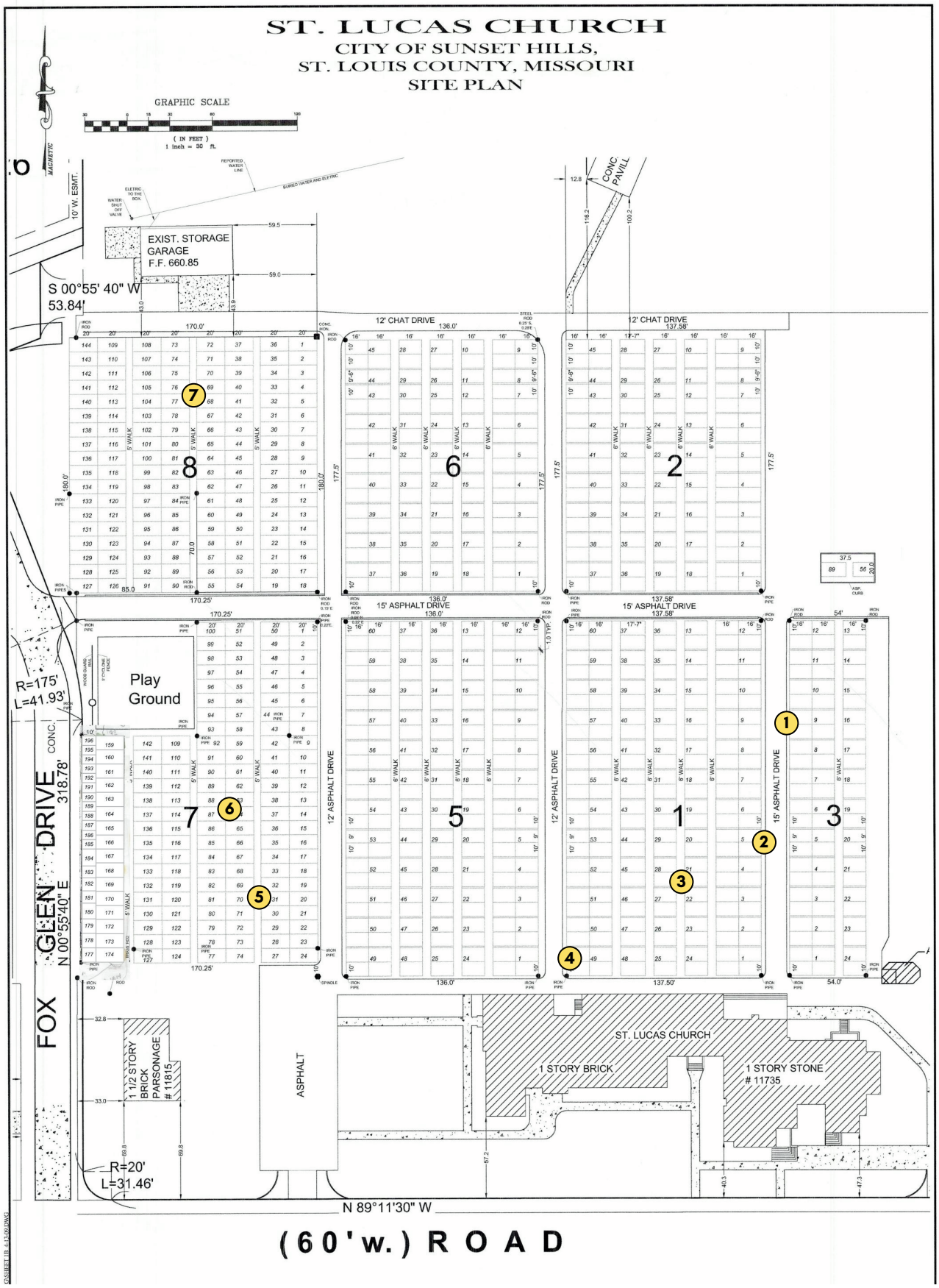
3. **Walter Charles Maag -** Block 1, Lot 21

4. **Philip Werner -** Block 1, Lot 49

5. **Leonard “Bud” Borneman -** Block 7, Lot 70

6. **George “Pete” Winter -** Block 7, Lot 87

7. **Carl William Spinner -** Block 8, Lot 77


ST. LUCAS CHURCH
CITY OF SUNSET HILLS,
ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI
SITE PLAN
GRAPHIC SCALE
(IN FEET)
1 inch = 30 ft.
MAGNETIC
10' W. ESMT.
EXIST. STORAGE
GARAGE
F.F. 660.85
S 00°55' 40" W
53.84'
12' CHAT DRIVE
15' ASPHALT DRIVE
12' ASPHALT DRIVE
15' ASPHALT DRIVE
CONC. PAVILL
Play
Ground
R=175'
L=41.93'
GLEN
FOX
DRIVE
318.78'
N 00°55'40" E
CONC.
1 1/2 STORY
BRICK
PARSONAGE
11815
ASPHALT
ST. LUCAS CHURCH
1 STORY BRICK
1 STORY STONE
# 11735
R=20'
L=31.46'
N 89°11'30" W
(60'w.) ROAD

Sylvester Steinnerd

What began as a top secret Naval and Army operation to prepare U.S. forces for the June 6 invasion of Europe ended up as one of the largest losses suffered by the Army and Navy in World War II. It took place on English soil in an area called Slapton Sands. Here is the story of a man who was there.

Exercise Tiger Tragedy

(The Prelude to D-Day)

Much has been written about the dramatic, massive landings of Allied troops on the Normandy beaches of Omaha and Utah in France on June 6, 1944. The famous D-Day invasion eventually led to the defeat of Germany during World War II some 11 months later. What isn't well-known is a major blunder that occurred in the practice invasion, (code name Exercise Tiger), some five weeks before D-Day, that nearly jeopardized that famous assault. I was involved in both of those fateful days.

My story began about one year earlier when I was induced into the United States Army at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, on April 30, 1943. Following basic training at Camp Harahan, Louisiana, I spent the subsequent months near Charleston, South Carolina, and the Isle of Palms with the First Engineer Special Brigade. Here I became a part of the 462nd Amphibian Truck Company, which had just been activated by by year-end I received my orders for overseas duty and on December 28, 1943, I shipped off to Europe on the HMS *Duchess of Richmond*. On January 8, 1944, I arrived at Liverpool, England, and was stationed at Exeter and later Peighton, small towns on the English Channel.

My job in the 462nd was in supply. Since I had been an order filler in civil life, I was assigned the duty of parts man for the truck company. I issued tools, kept inventory records, and made certain that parts were available when needed. At the time I didn't realize it, but that job probably kept me alive.

Sylvester L. Steinnnerd

During the spring of 1944, our unit was aware that something "big" was being planned, because we had undergone weeks of practice landings and training exercises. No one knew what was in store, nor could we have anticipated what happened next. In the pre-dawn hours of April 28, 1944, the horror began.

Our company was participating in a large-scale practice maneuver with a code name of "Exercise Tiger" that involved some 30,000 American soldiers. (We didn't know that this was the final preparation for what would eventually become D-Day.) Eight LST landing craft, loaded with troops and equipment, had entered Lime

Bay for a target landing on Slapton Sands Beach. Later I learned that this area was chosen because it closely resembled Utah Beach. Many of my buddies were on those LSTS, but my job of support kept me on shore.

Undetected by the English and U. S. forces, two flotillas of German E-boats (torpedo boats) spotted the LSTS and fired, hitting three of them before escaping. Two LSTS sank immediately and one managed to reach port. Fortunately for me, I was on shore completely unaware of what was happening. Everyone in the LST fleet was taken completely by surprise. Some Americans shot and killed their own troops because in the confusion they were thought to be Germans. Some troops who weren't killed instantly by the gunfire and explosions drowned under the weight of their equipment or were burned to death by flaming gasoline. The morning light revealed a sea filled with debris and hundreds of floating dead U.S. soldiers. It was then I learned what had occurred when our men didn't return.

Our company lost 28 enlisted men and one officer and in total about 950 men were killed. More than 200 of the dead were from Missouri. In fact, these units lost more men in Exercise Tiger than in the actual landing on Utah Beach on D-Day. The men engaged in Exercise Tiger had been inadequately protected because an escort destroyer had collided with an assault ship just hours before and had to return to port. Only one escort ship was left to protect all the LSTS.

Because of the need for secrecyy, not to mention the embarrassment and confusion, this disaster was not acknowledged. There were few civilian witnesses to the deadly debacle because the coastal residents had been relocate during the exercise. It was reported that dead soldiers were hurriedly buried in mass graves to cover up what had happened. Many bodies were never found. In fact, details of the disaster were withheld from the public until after the war. The Germans never knew what damage they had inflict. We were not allowed to write home after the Exercise Tiger tragedy until several weeks after D-Day. The only correspondence I had was a message from the Red Cross that my son was born on May 6.

By mid-May we all knew that we were preparing for an invasion of France. When D-Day arrived on June 6, 1944, everyone's nerves were really on edge. We had already suffered the horrors of a battle that was only supposed to be practice. To build our moral, each soldier in the Allied Expeditionary Force was given a written message signed by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. He wished us good luck and indicated that "your task would not be easy," but that "the hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you."

It was a frantic and terrifying ordeal with the Navy firing their big guns to protect us as we traversed the English Channel toward Utah Beach. The Germans were still attacking. The shells hit with a loud concussion and bullets whistled overhead. The ship anchored offshore at Utah Beach, and I boarded an amphibious DJWKW to reach shore. Since we were an ambitious truck company, our D-Day responsibility was to get ammunition and supplies from ship to shore. The infantry had already established a beachhead as the Germans had been pushed back. Once on shore, I observed American

Sylvester Steinnerd continued

troops marching German prisoners to containment areas. By nightfall, the antiaircraft guns lit up the sky like the Fourth of July.

As unlucky as our company was in Exercise Tiger, our luck changed on D-Day. We did not lose a single man in the assault. Luck stayed with me, for on June 12, 1944, a six-foot bomb fell just 30 feet away from me but failed to explode. The next day the Navy detonated the bomb and it blew a crater 30 feet deep and 50 feet wide.

I remained in France throughout the rest of 1944 and was shipped back to the States during the first part of 1945. New orders now sent me to the Pacific. With a few stops along the way, the ultimate destination was the island of Okinawa where I landed on July 5, 1945. Fortunately our stay was short as the Japanese surrendered the following month. On December 28, 1945, I was discharged at Jefferson Barracks, where my Army life had begun.

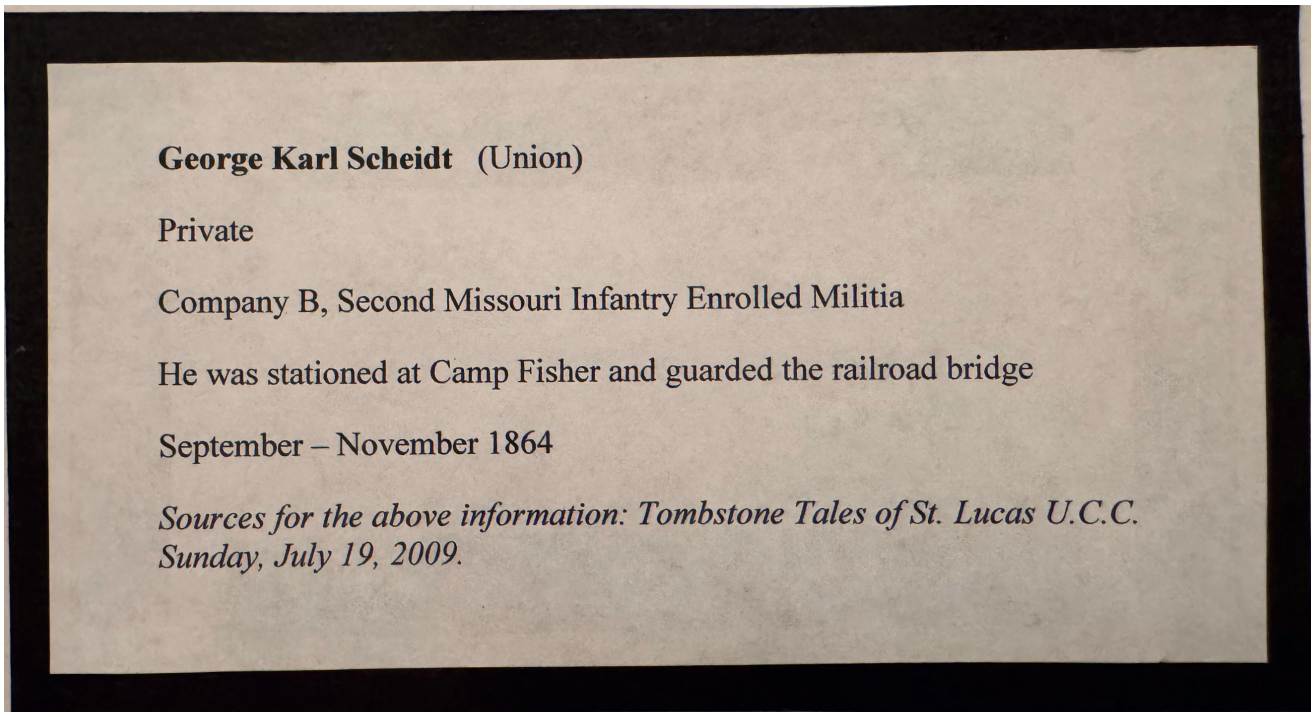
Over the years, I didn't think much about the tragedy of Exercise Tiger nor did I ever see anything published about it. The annual anniversaries of the D-Day invasion were always popular and seemed to grab all the headlines. Then in 1984 on the 40th anniversary of D-Day, information was finally released due to the persistent research from several individuals, especially an Englishman named Ken Small. He had discovered a sunken Sherman tank near Slapton Sands 16 years earlier, but red tape and bureaucracy prevented him from raising it as a memorial. Eventually in 1984, the government permitted him to recover it at his expense and place it on Slapton Sands as a monument to the men killed there in the D-Day rehearsal. Also that year a documentary, *Sands of Silence*, aired on Britain's Independent Television Network that called Exercise Tiger an "astounding catalog of incompetence and misunderstandings." In November 1987, the United States and England unveiled a plaque placed near the tank that officially recognized the soldiers killed during Exercise Tiger.

About this time, I attended a military reunion in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and as a tribute to the soldiers who had participated in Exercise Tiger, I received a nametag that read "Exercise Tiger Survivor." As a final footnote, in 1999 a sign was placed on Highway 54 between Kingdom City and Mexico, Missouri, just north of Intestate 70. This section of Highway 54 was designated "Exercise Tiger Expressway." The naming of this section of the highway resulted from the efforts of U. S. Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond, the Callaway and Audrain county commissions, and the Exercise Tiger Association. It took 40-plus years for the men who were involved in one of the deadliest battles of World War II to receive their rightful place in history. May they rest in peace.

Sylvester L. Steinnerd

Steinnerd served from April 1943 to December 1945 and earned two Battle Stars, an Invasion Bar, a European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, an American Campaign Medal, an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, a World War II Victory Medal, a Veteran of Foreign Wars pin and a Presidential Unit Citation.

George Karl Scheidt



George Karl Scheidt (Union)

Private

Company B, Second Missouri Infantry Enrolled Militia

He was stationed at Camp Fisher and guarded the railroad bridge

September - November 1864

Sources for the above information: Tombstone Tales of St. Lucas UCC
Sunday, July 19, 2009.

George Karl Scheidt was a founder of St. Lucas UCC.

Walter Charles Maag

The B-29 was the most advanced World War II bomber. It was the ultimate bomber of its time. Unlike other bombers, the B-29 was pressurized, which allowed the plane to fly high enough to avoid enemy flak. It also added to passenger comfort. It was designed for long-range flying, and its features gave birth to the long-range passenger planes after the war. It was the most expensive and complicated weapon of World War II and was used to drop the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima.

Nearly 4,000 of the bombers were built for the war in the Pacific.

The Largest Bird of the War

Walter C. Maag

In the summer of 1942, an Air Corps pilot from the Pacific War gave an emotional plea for engineers to enlist. I was one of five from Washington University who answered the plea after a promise to let us complete our education and get our engineering degrees before being called for active duty. Upon graduation, the Air Corps wasted no time by promptly sending us to Boca Raton Club, Florida, for basic and officer training. This was followed by five months technical training at Yale University to receive our commissions as second lieutenants in September 1943.

My first assignment was Supply School at Brookley Field, Mobile, Alabama. This was not my first choice, as it was considered to be a "kiss of death" for engineers. Ultimately the experience served me well because one of the most important duties of an engineering officer was to obtain needed supplies to keep his airplanes flying and knowing the "ins and outs" of supply was crucial. While at Brookley 1 was sent to Independent Engineering Company in O'Fallon, Illinois, for training in the maintenance and operation of portable oxygen generators. They were trailer-mounted units designed to produce oxygen for aircrews in remote locations. This was followed by a short stint as assistant officer in charge of accessories at the Brookley Field Depot. In the course of my service I was also trained in other aspects of aircraft maintenance but was never assigned for service in those areas.

From service at the Mobile Depot, I was reassigned in February 1944 to join a B-29 squadron in the 20th Bomber Command at Smoky Hill Army Air Field in Salina, Kansas. Lack of enough experience on the maintenance of the B-29 Bomb Group prevented me from being sent overseas to China in the first deployment of the plane. Nevertheless, being at the cutting edge of technology working with B-29s got me an engineering job for which I was trained and it was exciting.

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In March 1944, I transferred to Walker Army Air Field (WAAF) in Victoria, Kansas, one of the four satellite bases for B-29 training. Here I was assigned to a Tow-Target Squadron. These planes, stripped down B-25 bombers, were used to tow targets for training guns on the B-29s. In a short time the assignment grew to maintaining all base airplanes in a unit called "Base Flight." I had 15 to 20 airplanes under my maintenance command from B-17s down to lowly Piper Cubs. Most of my personnel were transferred in from overseas having experience with frontline maintenance. The same level of experience was true of the pilots who were used to train B-29 pilots in the B-17s because sufficient B-29s were not available. Training squadrons on the base had the same problem along with dealing with "bugs" common in the new and technically advanced airplane. Eventually, enough planes were available to send the first units to China.

When it was necessary to bomb Japan from the Marianas Islands, the Air Corps realized that training over the western plains was not ideal training. Consequently, a separate "Gypsy Task Force" was formed. Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico had plenty of water surrounding them so they were selected as satellite bases for over-the-water training. Planes were flown back to the States for major maintenance, however, I was transferred to the Task Group in Cuba for a short time in April 1945.

Upon returning to WAAF from Cuba I was assigned to be production control officer at the base. Personnel were mostly civilians. The object was to control the manpower to minimize nonproductive labor. This was especially difficult at the close of activities at the base as most employees were not interested in improving production as to preserve their jobs, which were being phased out rapidly near the end of the war. Efforts to improve the situation were a waste of time as the outcome over the next few months was quite obvious.

During this time my fiancé, Edna Tjemann, and I was able to get married on June 19, 1945. Edna joined me at Hays, Kansas, near the base and we found a home in a tourist court of the type used by

transient oil workers before the war.

After the Japanese surrender, changes came rapidly in the B-29 bases, which by that time had grown in number. Most were in the Plains states. The story was that we did not trust the Russis and did not want to completely disarm by destroying the B-29s, but to store them so they could be activated in short order. Strangely, my base was chosen to store about 300 planes. Most of these were war-weary planes from the Pacific war. It was interesting to study the creative "Nose Art" along with the many missions flown by the planes. We also received brand new planes from the factory. Some had less than 10 hours of flying. Interestingly, we found that the old planes were in better shape than the new ones. We were in the process of "picking" the planes (preparing them for storage) and had done about 30 when it was decided that Kansas did not have an ideal climate for storage. Davis-Monthan field in Tucson was a better choice. That location is still used for that purpose today, although practically all of the older planes have long been dismantled and replaced by newer jet aircraft.

As the planes were removed we also had the responsibility to close the base. At that time the base was transferred to the Air Technical and Service Command from the Second Air Force. Compared to how surplus equipment was handled overseas, the process at our base seemed minor although it was disheartening to see the waste.

A big problem was closing out all of the hand tools used by hundreds of mechanical, along with machine shop tools, flight gear, aircraft parts, etc. Hours were spent trying to trace down these items. Some were large, like drill presses and other mechanical equipment used for heavy maintenance of airplanes. The problem was complicated by the removal of guards at the gates and the constant changing of help. Hundreds of civilians and servicemen leaving to go home for discharge traveled through these gates and removal of government property was easy. By the time of final accounting many items were gone. I'm not sure how I ever got clearance to leave the place but I did. Most of the base was taken over by rats as there were fewer than a couple of dozen Army personnel left. It was not uncommon to see rats a foot long running over girders in the hangars. Being in wheat country, they seemed well-fed and one wondered why they had to take over our base.

Three of my brothers were also in service at that time. The fourth, Otto, tried to enlist but was deferred for medical reasons. It was just as well as my mother would have been alone in the old homestead a quarter of a mile from nearest neighbors. Mother Maag was sort of a clearinghouse for all news about servicemen in the area. She clipped all notices about servicemen from the St. Louis daily newspapers as well as members of St. Lucas Evangelical & Reformed Church in the Sappington area. Most correspondence with her and between my brothers included news about our acquaintances and friends—good and bad. Fortunately, she was able to obtain a telephone just before the hostilities began, something almost impossible during the war. It allowed her some communications with the outside world. The phone, however, did not help when she fell outside and had multiple fractures of her leg. Only by yelling loud enough to get attention from cemetery workers nearby did she survive

Walter Charles Maag continued

that accident. The discharge of my oldest brother, Philip, in the fall of 1943 did give her some help during the trying times of those years.

My service ended in May 1946 and Edna and I returned to the area to start a different life and have remained here since. My three brothers also returned safely.

Philip Maag

Philip Maag was drafted into the Army in the fall of 1942. With his experience as a railway mail clerk he was assigned to the Army Post Office in New York after basic training at Camp Robinson at Little Rock, Arkansas. Ultimately he was sent to England and served in the Army Post Office there. He received a Medical Discharge in November 1943 and returned to the family home in Sappington, Missouri, thereafter. He died in 1997.

John Maag

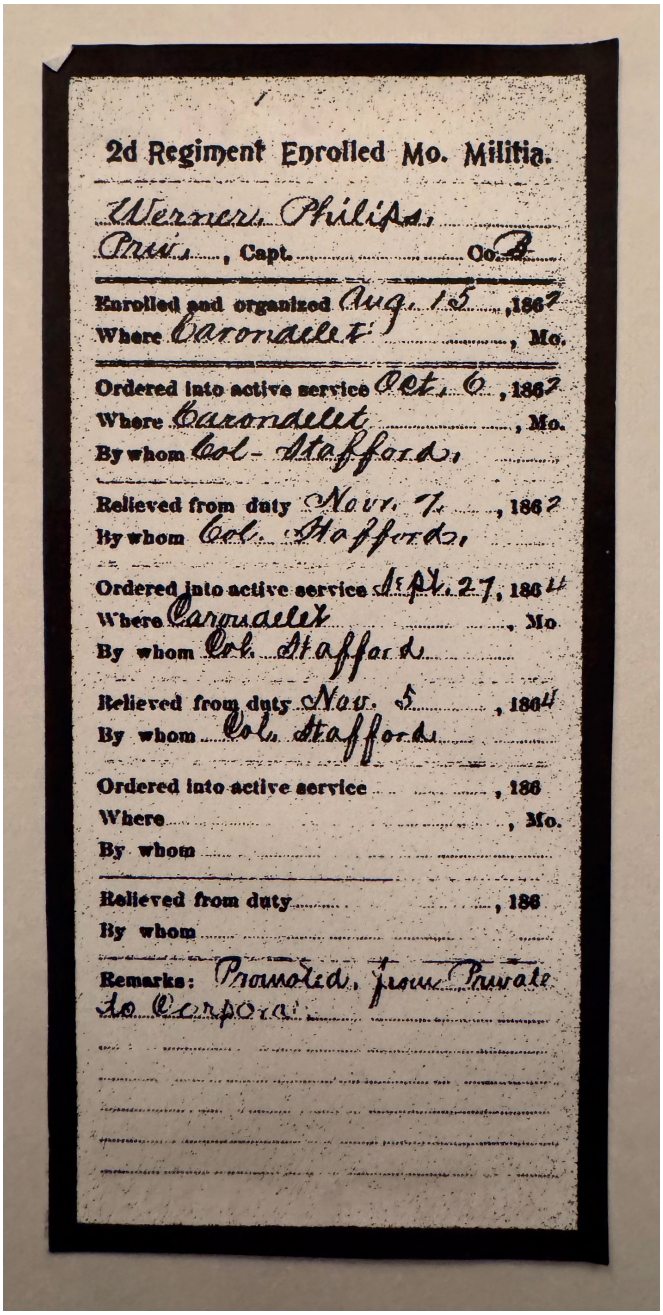
John Maag was drafted into the Army Air Corps in August 1941. Most of his service was in the United States at various bases in the west. His service was principally as a clerk, and he eventually reached the rank of staff sergeant. Shortly after the end of the war, John was deployed to the island base of Tinian and served a short time there until discharge in December 1945. He returned to his Sappington home, then moved to California. At the outbreak of the Korean War be was recalled to duty and spent most of that period at Spokane AAF, Washington, until discharged again in 1952. John, his wife, and infant son died June 30, 1956, in the Grand Canyon Air Disaster when two commercial airliners collided and crashed in the canyon killing 128. He and his family were buried with 60 others in the TWA common grave in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Henry Maag

Henry Maag enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942. He trained as a pilot at various bases in Wisconsin and California until he received his commission. His service was principally in the South Pacific arena flying cargo planes out of the island of Biak. His experiences included flying "litter" patients following the return of our forces to the Philippine Islands. Many of his missions were quite hazardous, as the Japanese were still active in the area. Henry returned safely to his home in Sappington and eventually moved to California where he married and raised a family of six children. Henry died in 1995.

Walter Charles Maag

Philip Werner



2d Regiment Enrolled Mo. Militia.

Werner, Philip, Capt. Co. B

Enrolled and organized Aug. 15, 1862
Where Carondelet, Mo.

Ordered into active service Oct. 6, 1862
Where Carondelet, Mo.
By whom Col. Stafford

Relieved from duty Nov. 7, 1862
By whom Col. Stafford

Ordered into active service Sept. 27, 1864
Where Carondelet, Mo
By whom Col. Stafford

Relieved from duty Nov. 5, 1864
By whom Col. Stafford

Ordered into active service ..., 186
Where ..., Mo.
By whom ...

Relieved from duty ..., 186
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Philip Werner was a founder of St. Lucas UCC.

Leonard "Bud" Borneman

"After the invasion of Germany on June 6, 1944, Allied forces raced across France toward the German border. Gen. George Patton's Third Army came in on Omaha Beach about August 1 with six divisions, with more to be added as his Army followed the St. Lo breakthrough. Leonard H. "Bud" Borenemann tells his story of when his platoon was about 35 miles from the German border."

For You, the War is Over

L.H. "Bud" Borenemann

When I went into combat in World War II, I was a member of the 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company A, First Platoon. I was the driver of a 1–1 ton Dodge truck that carried the platoon's security section of 12 men. I also toowed a trailer loaded with spare ammunition for the Tank Destoriers (TDs). Security was supposed to protect the TDs from ground attack. We carried two 30-caliber machine guns and set them up whenever our TDs were in position and at night when everyone else was at rest.

Everything seemed calm on that fateful day of September 26, 1944. There was a slight chill in the air, and we were already wearing our long underwear—something I would be thankful for in the months that followed.

Our TDs were in position at the small town of Bures, France. We had been spearheading in front of the infantry, but for some reason were given the order to hold where we were. The infantry was about four miles behind us. The town of Bures, located on a dirt road, was no more than a couple of stone houses, an old rock well with its bucket hanging down, and a big barn. We were working with the Second Cavalry Group at the time.

The first indication that something was wrong was the sight of a jeep coming down the road in a cloud of dust and at full blast. At first I thought it was Lieutenant Altergott, but later I found out it was Ray Young. He had been up ahead of us to look around. What he saw made him get out and get out fast. Shortly after Ray's departure, the silence of the afternoon was broken by German artillery fire. Our TDs made a rapid exit to get out of the barrage area. In fact, they got out so fast, Gumienny, one of the TD drivers, was unable to get into his driver's seat and was hanging onto the back of the TD as they sped down the road. Then I saw him fall off and land in a ditch along side of the road.

A Second Cavalry group M-20 light armored car attempted to leave the area cross-country and had been

knocked out by enemy tank fire. Two of the crew escaped and made their way to a small depression at the top of the hill.

A lieutenant from the Second Cavalry group gathered a few men that were on foot and with his pistol drawn, he led our men and his out along a tree line. I can still remember Paul Porthowitz calling to me, "Come on Bud, let's go." But my mistake was I thought I could get my 1–ton truck out as I had done several times before when we came under fire.

I was about a hundred yards from the truck. I had taken cover from the artillery fire alongside one of the stone houses. As I started down towards the truck, I came under fire from one or two German machine guns. I hit the dirt and remembered some of the infiltration training we had received in the States, and I started to crawl. Every time I moved, the guns would fire. When I lay still, they were quiet. A tank had also come up under the artillery fire and popped off a couple of rounds at me. But then I guess he thought, "Why waste big shells on one man? The machine guns will get him."

I continued to crawl between machine gun bursts. I found a tank track about 2 inches deep that was going up the hill in my direction, so I followed it. I figured every little protection I could get would help. Tracers were coming across my back. One short round, ricochet, or an accurate shot and I would have it. The good Lord was with me. So far, I hadn't been hit.

As I neared the top of the hill, I could hear the two men who had survived the knocked out M-20 yelling, "Come on Bud, come on, Bud, you can make it." (At that point, they didn't know I went by the name of Bud.) Well, make it did. With their encouragement and the grace of God I made it and fell into the ditch with them.

Why the Germans didn't come up to get us, we will never know. We lay there until darkness fell and then decided to go. We crawled a short way and then began to walk. Shortly after after, we heard footsteps coming our way and lay low. Now who should stumble in on us—the tank driver, Stanley Gumpenny. Now there were four of us.

Later on, after the war, I asked Gumpenny about falling off the TD. He said, "Hell, I didn't fall off. I jumped off. Those machine gun bullets were hitting all around me."

We continued to walk until dawn. We knew where our lines were because we could hear our tanks moving around on the other side of a large, open valley. This would be the last bit of terrain we would have to cross.

Traversing the top of the hill where we were standing was a ditch about 4 feet deep. It appeared that it might have been a trench left over from World War I. The sides had collapsed over the years, and it was overgrown with grasses. There was a large clump of bushes at one end. The place where we were standing

Leonard "Bud" Borneman continued

overlooked a large, open valley. We could see why a trench would have been there. It offered an ideal field of fire.

We reasoned that if we began walking across about a mile and a half of open ground in broad daylight, we would be a target for either side. So we decided to lay low in this convenient clump of bushes until nightfall came again.

The bushes offered us good cover, so we sat there all day. At dusk, when we were preparing to start hiking again, we heard a commotion around us. On peeking out, what do we see but a column of Germans coming up to occupy the World War I trenches. In addition, they set up a machine gun right next to our bushes. In a way, the Germans had us pinned down, only they didn't know it.

As we lay there through the night with the machine gun on one side of us and the troops on the other, we began to make some decisions. Our artillery was firing all night, but everything was going over. We decided that if it started to come in on us, we would get up and go. We knew the Germans would be keeping their heads down, and there was a good chance they wouldn't see us.

Over on the other side of the valley, there was a large glow in the sky. The Germans must have hit one of our gasoline or ammunition dumps. If our artillery came in on us, and we did go, we would now be silhouetted against the glow in the background, but we were willing to take that chance.

I still had my carbine with me and we could have probably picked off a few Germans, but that would have been pure suicide for the four of us with the Germans being all around us.

As dawn broke, the Germans changed reliefs on their machine gun. As the soldier coming off the gun passed our bushes, he happened to look in and see us. He started to go on, but then stopped and did a double take. He was more surprised than we were, He pointed his rifle at us and motioned us to come out.

He took us to his officer who was with his men in the World War I trench. He looked at us and said, "Yah, for you, der var is offer." (Yes, for you, the war is over.)

He asked me for my carbine, and I handed it to him. As he started to examine it, I jerked it out of his hands and removed the full double clip and the shell that was in the chamber. Now I think what a foolish move was with four or five rifles pointed at us. The reason I did this was I knew he was unfamiliar with the rifle, and I didn't want him accidentally killing someone, especially us.

Leonard "Bud" Borneman continued

This is how I became a prisoner of war. Many more experiences followed. Some day, the good Lord willing, I hope to write about all of them. Until then, this will have to do.

Leonard "Bud" Bornemann

Bornemann earned the European-Middle Eastern Campaign Ribbon with two Battle Stars, the World War II Victory Medal, a Prisoner of War Medal, a Good Conduct Medal, the American Defense Medal, and the Liberation of Normandy Unit Citation from the French Secretary of Defense. His story is continued in Chapter Seven, The End in Germany.

George “Pete” Winter

The Leyte invasion of the Philippines caught the Japanese off-guard and forced them to completely change their defense strategy. The success of the landing of U.S. forces was in large part due to the defeat of the Japanese navy in the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which gave the United States control of the seas around the Philippines. Having advance knowledge of the position of the Japanese fleet gave the American Navy a huge advantage in the ensuing battle and victory. Pete Winter tells of discovering the Japanese fleet on one of his routine patrols in the skies of the Pacific.

My Part in the Battle of Leyte Gulf

I had the privilege to serve as a naval aviator in the Great War in the Pacific against the enemy, the Japanese. I commanded a PB4Y-1 Liberator (B-24 Bomber) on 77 combat missions deep into enemy territory during the tragic conflict.

The mission that made the most significant contribution to final victory occurred on October 24, 1944, near the end of my search sector in the Palawan Straits of the Sulu Sea. My crew and I made the first sighting of Japanese Naval Task Force “C” consisting of two Fuso Class Battleships, the Fuso and the Yamashiro; one heavy cruiser, the Mogami; and the destroyers Michishio, Yamagumo, Asagumo, and Shigure.

My radiomfan contacted base with the information of the sighting: composition of the fleet, time, speed, direction of travel, and location. There was no air cover and I was able to penetrate close to the Japanese task force.

The Japanese Southern Force, commanded by Vice Admiral Nishimura, had departed Brunei Bay in Borneo with the objective of joining the Second Striking Force leaving Manila Bay, commanded by Vice Admiral Shima, somewhere in the San Bernardino Straits, and attacking the Allied beachhead at Leyte.

This sighting was the first report to the Allied commanders of the Jap’s intentions to launch a major attack. This advance knowledge enabled Adm. Jesse Oldendorf, who commanded the Allied fleet defending the western approaches to the Leyte beachhead, to reposition his fleet in an ambush for Nishimura’s Southern Force. Nishimura sailed into the ambush in darkness, unaware of Oldendorf’s presence. The Jap force was

U.S. Navy PB4Y-1 Crew, Liberator Bomber, VPB 101, at Kaneoke Bay Naval Air Station, Hawaii, a few days before departure for combat at Manus, Southeast Pacific, June 1944. Pete Winter, back row, fourth from left.

U.S. Navy PB4Y-1 Liberator Bomber over Morotai, 1944.

inflictiated a decisive defeat and forced to withdraw from the area.

President Roosevelt, early in the war, had commissioned Samuel Eliot Morison to write the history of the Naval Battles of the Great War. Morison's work was in 14 epic volumes. In his volume 12, entitled "Leyte—June 1944-Jan. 1945.", author Morison on page 191 refers to a lone Navy PB4Y-1 search Liberator operating out of Morotai that had made the first sighting of this Southern Force, enabling the Allied fleet to engage in decisive battle. I commanded that Navy PB4Y-1 search Liberator that important day!

This event was of immense importance to the security of the Allied beachhead at Leyte and contributed significantly to the success of that invasion and the war.

I am proud to have been a Naval aviator. I am proud to have served in the greatest Navy the world has ever known.

Forty-five years and nine months later, Pete writes of honors recieved for his part in the war in the Pacific.

Honor

On June 4, 2000, the 58th anniversary of the incredible victory at the Battle of Midway, the U.S. Navy invited my wife, Gloria, and I to Washington, D.C., for an unprecedented honor at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Three strategic U.S. Navy Squadrons from the early conflicts of the Great Pacific War were honored with a special tribute to the 97 killed and missing shipmates who did not return home from that conflict. I had the distinct privilege and honor of being the only surviving aviator attending the ceremony who had served in two of the three squadrons honored that Sunday afternoon—VIP 101 (Guadalcanal) and VP 101 (Manus-Biak-Morotai).

The three squadrons honored by the U.S. Navy had distinguished themselves with their valor, accomplishments, and their tragic losses against the Japanese in that tragic conflict. The Navy awarded my squadron, VPB 101, the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon for

George "Pete" Winter continued

teamwork, accomplishment, and valor. Our record was impressive: We destroyed 60 planes and damaged 46; we sunk or destroyed 54 ships, a total of 68,360 tons; and damaged 67 ships, a total of 55,100 tons.

In Washington, D.C., we were permitted to observe the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A wreath honoring the 97 killed and missing shipmates was placed before the tomb as a Navy bugler played "Taps," and a Navy color guard stood at attention.

Following the ceremony, the assembled survivors and their families retreated to the rotunda behind the tomb, where a U.S. Navy chaplain conducted a benediction for the killed and missing shipmates. A special plaque honoring the squadrons was placed in a conspicuous place in the rotunda. Each survivor attending was permitted to recite his experiences and impressions that remained from those grim and tragic years lived so long ago.

The group crossed the Potomac to visit the memorials to the great wars: The Vietnam War Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the Marine Corps Ivo Jima Memorial, and the Memorial to the dedicated nurses of the great wars. We visited the site at the end of the reflection pool where the World War II Memorial will soon be erected.

The U.S. Navy conducted an impressive ceremony that meant so much to those of us who had the privilege to serve and survive and to our families.

In the fall of 2002, Pete and Gloria took a three-week cruise aboard the Regal Princesses for veterans in the South Pacific. He was able to revisit many of the islands where World War II fighting took place. He wrote the following piece at sea.

Farewell, My Shipmates

It has been wisely said that war, for those who have battled, will always be an emotion. As I visited these battlefields of the Great Pacific War, I captured in this vignette the emotions that overwhelmed me.

We saw the islands from which I flew as a naval aviator. Gone from the seas are the oil slicks where 45 of my shipmates went down with their planes and never returned home. We cruised over their unmarked, watery graves and cast a red rose upon the peaceful sea. Amid the rhythm of the waves, I could see again their images and hear again their laughter. May they rest in peace!

We few survivors who served here, like the relies on the beaches, will soon be gone. Our grandchildren will remember only the words we have spoken of those grim and tragic years lived so long ago.

George "Pete" Winter continued

Gloria and I stood quietly on the deck of our ship as we departed the battlefields. The seas and skies are now peaceful and calm. We watched the islands fade dimly into the horizon, as tears welled in our eyes.
I knew that I would never return.

I asked myself, as I have so often before, "Why did it all happen? Why am I alive?"

Pete Winter

Gloria and Pete Winter at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C., June 2000.

George "Pete" Winter served from 1941 until 1945. He is the recipient of four Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Carl William Spinner

It has been said that it took four men behind the lines to keep one man fighting on the front lines. Carl Spinner tells his story as one of the men that kept the front line fighting.

My Life in the Army

I received a letter from the President that said "Greetings." He gave me instructions to report to Jefferson Barracks for a physical examination. I thought that was nice of him, but I didn't even feel sick.

Well, I reported to J.B. as I was told. They instructed me to take off all my clothes and have a seat on a marble bench with some others that were as naked as jaybirds. That bench was so cold, our teeth chattered like we were applauding. After the doctors finished looking at everything I had, they gave me a haircut. They cut it and I wore it. Huh!

They gave me a couple of barracks bags and I went through a line where they gave me my uniforms and two pair of shoes that were large enough that I could walk on water. A couple of days later, I found myself on a train for Florida for my basic training. This Army was great. I was living in a hotel for five weeks, we had a nice sand beach, and they let us play with guns. They even took us down to the beach and tried to teach us how to kill each other with our bare hands. So much for that.

A few weeks later, I was on a train headed for New Mexico. Here they would sort us out to see where we would fit in the Army. I thought I would be assigned to be a truck driver since I had been driving since I was 14. But I found out this isn't the way the Army works. I was given a job building stone steps going into the theater. How about that? Then one day a major passed by and asked me where the sergeant was. I told him I hadn't seen him for a week. "Well then," he said, "Who is running this job?" I replied, "I guess I am." About two weeks later I had corporal stripes. Not bad for a guy just out of basic training.

Well, we finished that job. Then someone got the idea to build a monument for one of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. After about a month, we finished the job. This was in 1943. (Last year, 2001, we were in the area and we stopped by, and it was still there in the middle of the University of New Mexico grounds with flowers and lights all around it.)

Next, it was off to California where we boarded a ship headed for New Guinea. What a nice place. The Japs gave us a reception by bombing the harbor. Fortunately, they missed us and we got ashore. I asked someone where I could wash some clothes and take a shower. A fellow told me there was a waterfall up the path. So off I went with my trench knife for protection. I

reached the waterfall and had a nice shower. On the way back, a snake crossed my path that was about four inches around and about 12 feet in length. Well, I didn't need any Exlax that day. That same night, we heard a noise in our tent and found a spider about 10 inches in diameter.

We were only in New Guinea for a week. We were loaded up on another boat and headed out for Australia. I stayed there for about 18 months. They didn't know to do with a stone mason (this was the classification I was given back in New Mexico when I built the steps in front of the theater). So they gave me a job of driving a colonel around. This lasted for about three weeks. Then I received a job as cargo crew chief. I had a crew of about 10 men. We loaded and unloaded aircraft. Weight and balance had to be just right, and the lead had to be tied down to prevent shifting. I had a good crew.

One day a 90-day wonder came out while we were loading some aircraft engines on a C-47 plane. The lieutenant watched what we were doing and said, "Sergeant, you can't load like that." I said, "Maybe the lieutenant would like to show me," and I and my crew walked off. Pretty soon the lieutenant came back with the captain who wanted to know what was going on. I told him what had happened and the captain turned to the lieutenant and said, "Leave Car alone, he knows what he is doing."

That afternoon, things settled down a bit, and here comes the captain with the lieutenant again. He asked me if I'll teach the lieutenant to drive. I said, "Sure." I put him in the driver's seat and said, "That pedal is the clutch, the other is the brake, the one on the right is the gas. Push the clutch down, turn on the key and it will start." I showed him the gear shift lever and put it in first gear, and I told him to push on the gas, and let up on the clutch. When the car started moving, I stepped out. He was now on his own.

Carl Spencer for Rough Rider monument on the University of New Mexico campus.

In our spare time, one of our cooks and some other fellows would pick up some children from an orphan home and entertain them at an island across from our base. The first time we took them over, the captain of the ferry charged us for all the children. But after he found out what we were doing, he didn't charge us anymore. We had steaks and eggs and any good things we could get out of the officers' mess. A couple of years after the war, I received a letter from the Commonwealth of Australia thanking us for what we had done. I wish I would have kept in touch with those kids.

I sure didn't have it bad. We received orders to leave Townsville, Australia, but before we left we had one

Carl Spinner continued

t one off the train, and who should I see but Bud Bornemann. He was with my family and my little more thing to do. We had a woman in town that took care of our washing. She had a 1939 Ford. She said if we could get it to run we could use it. So I got the thing running. My buddy and I found a place to buy some wine real cheap. We bought about 50 bottles and hauled them into camp and stored them under the floor of our tent. About a week later, we got our orders to move to Morotai, an island off the coast of New Guinea. Well, we sure had one hell of a sale on wine before we left. When I think of what some of the other fellows went through, I think I had it pretty good in the Army. I guess it was the luck of the draw.

The best part of this story is when I got home. When I arrived in Union Station in St. Louis, I was the first one off the train, and who should I see but Bud Bornemann. He was with my family and my little daughter that I had never seen before and she was now two years old. She looked up and said, "Hi Pop."

Carl Spinner

Spider served from January 1943 to September 1945 for the 1558 Base Unit Air Force, Air Transport Command.