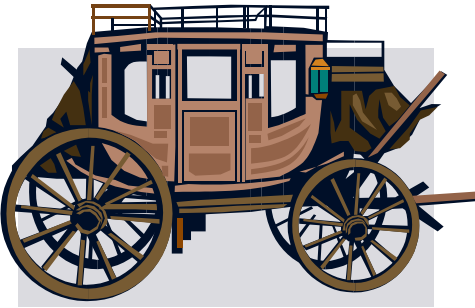


RECOLLECTIONS



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From his unpublished hand-typed chapters
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Composited, Illustrated, and Edited By Harry Briley

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Preface

When I married Anne in 1975, I became aware that my father-in-law Jack Rittenhouse spent time at Fort Point under Golden Gate Bridge with the California State Guard. I was not yet interested in history, but I recalled this fact when we toured that Civil War fort.

I only learned the full story in 2011 from his hand-typed memoirs. He may have taken a turn guarding Fort Point according to family lore, but that facility did not appear in his memoir notes. Instead, his brief duty station in the Bay Area was at the Benicia Armory.

After his retirement, Jack sent us one chapter of his memoirs every Christmas. A new chapter each year went into storage with the intention to eventually to read them. Jack distributed his typed draft for this chapter in June 1988. He rolled in a sheet of paper into the typewriter and did a single-pass brain-dump of random California Guard memories.

After he died, I wanted to transcribe his memoirs into a computer format. My wife then declined in health for five years, and the chapters remained unread. When Anne died in 2010, I began editing Jack's memoirs. It was a cathartic memorial to both he and Anne.

When my mother-in-law died on Christmas 2012, I became the vested link for bringing Jack's memories to an edited form for his grandchildren. It has waited 25 years too long.

My earlier Pacific War knowledge came from library books. Even so, Jack referred to events known only to those of his generation. In particular, he typed a brief remark about the Japanese submarine attacks on the California coast, assuming that everyone would know about these events without further elaboration.

I became a history detective researching the California State Guard and the Japanese invasion that never was. The California State Military Museum in Old Town Sacramento offered what little they had, but sadly commented that an arson fire destroyed all Guard archives in the turbulent anti-war 1960s.

In 2012, I found Jack's State Guard items that my mother-in-law had retained. I photographed these from her estate, reordered and re-edited his typed notes for this chapter into topical subjects, and expanded the text with supporting historical data.

In 2014, I incorporated his 1942 Christmas Newsletter written within a few months of the events in this chapter.

- Harry Briley, Editor

CHAPTER 7 - A Year in the California State Guard

Early Influences about War

Boy Scout Patriotism

In the 1920s, while in the Boy Scouts, we paid much attention to patriotism. As a nine-year-old in the small town of Constantine, Michigan, I decorated the local graves of soldiers with flags.

Our Fort Wayne, Indiana home had a front yard flagpole, a piece of pipe about fifteen feet long with a pulley at the top. On all patriotic holidays, I sounded “To the Colors” on my Scout bugle as a family member raised the flag

I marched with the Scouts in two Memorial Day parades. In one parade, I was in the bugle and drum corps. In another, we marched with Civil War veterans, by then about eighty years old, who marched with a Scout beside each one for support.

At about fifteen, I played the bugle on Armistice Day (celebrated then on November 11). I stood on the Fort Wayne courthouse steps alone and sounded” Taps” exactly at eleven a.m. as part of that civic observance.

When I went to the International Scout Jamboree in England in 1929, I wrote articles for the home newspapers. I wrote that with 50,000 Scouts from all nations there, there would be less chance of another world war.

Embers of World War I

I thus considered myself patriotic, but with very mixed attitudes about war

When the Scout Jamboree ended, our American scouts toured the continent on bus trips to carefully preserved battlefields near Paris. In a rifle pit at Belleau Wood, I saw the bones of a foot protruding from a shoe with the body still buried in a semicircle around the base of a hill. I saw the ruined remains of French towns.

We saw the WWI cemetery of about 2000 graves of United States soldiers. There were other cemeteries of 40,000 each or more for the other Allied nations. Thus, war became more real to me than it did for many scouts back home. It was terrible.



I walked through the original military train cars at Compiègne forest, where [Germany and the Allies] signed the armistice in 1918.

[The photo here shows that historic railcar. Second from right is Marshal Ferdinand Foch, supreme commander of the Allied armies.

During World War II, Hitler would later pull that same railcar from its museum back to this same 1918 forest in which to force the French to surrender.]

A Decade of War Premonitions

Two years later, in 1931, I saw the movie “All Quiet on the Western Front”, which portrayed the life of one German soldier. It surprised me that the audience applauded the Germans. As I left the movie house, I heard one small boy say, “Gee, wouldn’t it be great to fight in a war like that?” I felt like calling him a fool. Japan had invaded Manchuria and China [by 1932]. It seemed to me that war would come to many nations.

I clerked in a second-hand magazine store in New York City in the summer of 1934. One day a man came in with two canes and his legs at grotesque twisted angles. He told me that Hitler’s thugs did it to him in Germany, for this man was a Jew. Hitler later invaded Austria and Czechoslovakia [in 1938].

I briefly visited my parents’ in Fort Wayne in 1939. There was no television and few kept a radio on in the neighborhood. Lying in bed upstairs, I heard the newsboys on the street below crying out the news that Hitler had just invaded Poland.

Several days later, while working late at my office, I heard of Mussolini’s support of Hitler. I knew something about fascism [as a youth]. I wrote a favorable paper in high school about Mussolini who made the trains run on time. [However, in ten years’ time, I] became fully anti-fascist [and pro-war].

National Draft in 1940

With the war on in Europe, President Roosevelt called out the National Guard in 1940 to active duty and sent many of these units to the Philippines.

His executive order 8530 dated August 31, 1940, stated hopefully:

BY VIRTUE of the authority conferred upon me by [three means]:

- *the Public Resolution No. 96, 76th Congress, approved August 27, 1940*
- *the National Defense Act of June 3, 1916, as amended (39 Stat. 166)*
- *and as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States)*

I hereby order into the active military service of the United States, effective September 16, 1940, the following units and members of the National Guard of the United States to serve in the active military service of the United States for a period of twelve consecutive months, unless sooner relieved.

American Presidency Project: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>

Thus, under federal control, the Buckeye Division, Company C, 192nd Tank Battalion, from Camp Perry, Ohio, joined a provisional unit in the Philippines in October. After Pearl Harbor, these Ohio tankers came under attack within days by Japanese forces. As the remnant defenders withdrew to Bataan, the 192nd disintegrated with members eventually captured in 1942. These guardsmen fought from the very beginning of the war and remained as prisoners for the entire duration [, somewhat longer than the anticipated twelve months].

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohio_Army_National_Guard (edited)

Congress soon passed a universal service act, or draft, requiring all males over eighteen to register. I signed up at the appointed fire station. My draft number was 2617 with the Fort Wayne draft board No. 2.

The Selective Training and Service Act passed on September 17, 1940, becoming the first peacetime conscription. This Act initially required men aged between 21 and 35 to register. After Pearl Harbor, men aged 18 to 45 were eligible, and all men to age 65 had to register! [The country was desperate for manpower.]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selective_Training_and_Service_Act_of_1940 (edited)

A man always carried his draft card, no matter where he moved. Officials drew numbers by lottery in Washington DC and called up men with the number 2617 across the country.

After a local draft board review, unmarried men became Class I-A. They re-classified the physically unable as Class IV-F. Married with a son, they classified me as Class III in July 1941, but the Draft Board constantly re-evaluated classifications. Thus, they shifted me from Class III to I-A, to II-A, and to IV-A, and back and forth between I-A and II-A. [Despite being married and 28, I never fully understood why my status changed so frequently.] That summer, I received eleven different draft cards.

When reclassified 1-A, I took my Army Physical at the draft board office in Los Angeles. Only one other applicant reported that day, Gary Moore, who appeared on the Jimmy Durante radio show weekly and later became a noted television comedian. I passed the physical, although they made me take the heart condition test twice, and told me about a heart murmur, but not a serious one. They reclassified me [yet again].

The myth persists that when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the attack took everyone by complete surprise. [In truth,] the newspapers often reported that trouble was brewing weeks beforehand. In October, the tension with Japan was growing. I was quite certain we would get into a war and many men rapidly enlisted.

The California State Guard

With the National Guard on active duty overseas, the states lost their local forces for riots or emergencies. [The 76th Congress enacted Public Law 874, on October 21, 1940,] allowing each state to set up a temporary equivalent. California [created two organizations,] calling one the California State Guard (the CSG, or the “Guard”) [from 1940 to 1946, and named the other as the California State Militia from 1940 to 1943.]



Figure 1 - Billboard promoting the Guard (Calif. State Military Museum)

The “Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of The State Guards (October 1940 to October 1941)” known hereafter as “The 1941 Report”):

... reported that California was in the Ninth Corps Area with an annual appropriation of \$250,000.

- The Sixth Regiment of 14 companies in the Orange County area had locations in Compton (HQ), Huntington Park (Companies A and B), and seven other towns.*
- The San Francisco Bay area hosted the First Regiment of about 15 companies.*

<http://www.militarymuseum.org/SG1941.pdf> (edited)

Joining the Guard

Although once nearly drafted, I [actively] devoted my efforts aiding the fight. I was ready to defend the area from invasion and joined the CSG on my twenty-ninth birthday, November 15, 1941. [Even so,] men in the CSG had no protection from the draft.

[In less than one year, I had enlisted in Huntington Park, became the Mess Sergeant, made Regimental Sergeant Major in the Compton headquarters, spent some weeks at the Benicia Armory, drove to the Pomona Armory, and resigned as a Second Lieutenant.]

With my young family nearby, and my one-man advertising office in Huntington Park, I joined the Huntington Park unit of Company B, Sixth Regiment as a volunteer private.



No one urged or suggested this. It was wholly my own idea. There was no physical examination. One simply walked in and signed up for the duration of any hostilities.

For about three months, I was not paid. I considered it a citizen's duty. The Guard provided none of the benefits of the regular Army: loans on homes, college tuition, medical treatment, etc. I never inquired. We were entitled only to the Defense Medal campaign ribbon, for those in the armed forces prior to Pearl Harbor.

[I will discuss the Guard Facilities, the Officers and enlisted men, the Equipment, the credible threats, and wrap up about my actual duties.]

Facilities

Initially, for our facilities, we slept in a few tents in the main city park of Huntington Park. There was a large old wooden frame recreation building which could accommodate the sixty to eighty men of our company. The main problem was food. The old building contained a stove and one sink. The officers' wives visited and prepared meals for us.

After two months, camp set up in a vacant park near the center of Compton, and our two Huntington Park Companies moved there. There were many tents including a mess hall.

During my time in Benicia, there were various buildings at the Benicia Armory for barracks (no tents) and a mess hall. We used it as a base of operations. Detachments guarding various Bay Area sites ate and slept near those sites.



Figure 2 – 1859 Benicia Arsenal Storehouse (H. Briley 2010)

The Benicia Arsenal was [built in 1859] and was not in full active use.

In the 24 hours after Pearl Harbor, the Arsenal loaded and dispatched 125 truck convoys; exhausting its stock of ammunition, small arms and high explosives.

Throughout the war, the Arsenal supplied ports with weapons, artillery, parts, supplies and tools. It overhauled over 14,000 binoculars, manufactured 180,000 small items for weapons, and repaired 70,000 watches.

The Arsenal is most famous for arming Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle for the first bombing of Tokyo on April 18, 1942, as launched from the USS Hornet [which is now an aircraft carrier museum in Oakland].

Prior to 1940, the Arsenal had 85 civilian employees. By October 1942, the payroll reached 4,500. It served the Korean War and finally closed in 1964.

<http://www.militarymuseum.org/Benicia.html> (edited)

The Pomona Arsenal had stood empty for many months before we arrived. The facility was excellent with ample room for drills, inside and out. The kitchen was well equipped. There was a room enough for a separate dormitory of officers' cots.

Officers

Initial Officers

I remember some of the early officers. [According to the 1941 Report, the average age among Guard officers was 42 with 50% having military experience.]

Lt. Swenson was a Marine with the contingent sent into the Nicaragua [“Banana Wars” of] the 1920s to defeat the rebel forces under General Sandino. Swenson was an expert rifleman and once listed among the “President’s Hundred”. These sharpshooters competed each year at Camp Perry in Ohio, [the very home of the prisoners-of-war from the 192nd Battalion noted earlier]. Lt. Swenson displayed a wide frame of many medals above his [fireplace] mantel. He was our gunnery instructor.

Lt. Swope, in his fifties, was in the National Guard in Colorado during the coalmine strike in 1913-1914 at Ludlow, near present-day Walsenburg. Called the Ludlow Massacre, National Guardsmen fired into a camp of families, killing several women and children. Some older men in our unit were staunch trade unionists and they would not speak with Lt. Swope ... civilly or otherwise.

In fairness, nearly all officers and a large number of the enlisted men made a sacrifice. They voluntarily quit civilian jobs to enter a cause that carried a great risk.

Regimental Commander

At the Compton headquarters, Col. Clifton Stanhope Smith relished military honors. He owned a large supermarket in Compton and wanted to be an aviator during World War I. Smith had no capacities as an infantry commander. His sole qualification was being a "gentleman flyer" with a Lieutenant's commission. He earned his wings at a training school but the war ended before [his assignment]. Yet, he still wore his WWI wings.

One quiet old grizzled fellow asked the colonel if enlisted men could wear decorations earned earlier. The colonel said loftily, “Yes, my man. Wear any decorations to which you are entitled.” The next day, the veteran wore a chest full of medals, including the [French] Croix de Guerre. The colonel became less pompous after that.

The Croix de Guerre went to individuals who distinguished themselves by acts of heroism in combat, or to those "mentioned in dispatches" (meaning a heroic deed meriting a citation).

www.piecesofhistory.com (edited)



As commander of the regiment, the colonel was a notorious reactionary in his home town of Compton. It was through local pressure that the army ordered the Sixth Regiment to Benicia lest it become too involved in [Compton] politics.

He had no respect from either his own men or officers for the most part, and had scarcely any better respect or reputation with the state HQ of the Guard. He was foul-mouthed, hot-tempered, and unjust. He became increasingly strict in his discipline

He aimed always at appearances by striving to have the biggest regiment (regardless of quality of men), the lowest mess cost (regardless of morale and nutrition), and the best-looking regiment on parade (which accounted for his over-emphasis on foot-drill).

Benicia Arsenal Officers

Most of the original officers in our unit before Pearl Harbor, such as Lt. Swope and Lt. Swenson, did not continue on with full-time duty.

In Benicia, I met full-time officers from other Guard units. Several were World War I veterans drawn to Hollywood to serve as expert advisors and these officers saw the emergency more clearly. Several had served in various allied armies.

One officer with a very French name, served in the French Foreign Legion. Another officer served with the Australian Anzacs at the battle of Gallipoli.

Major Sergei Arabeloff, a White Russian, served under the Czar. Arabeloff was a stern drillmaster on the parade ground but became very pleasant when off duty.

Pomona Armory Officer

In Pomona, I befriended Lt. Davidson who once was in the British Army. We often talked about books. I told him of reading Robert Briffault's [scathing 1935] novel called "Europa" [which described European society prior to WWI]. He drolly replied, "That is all true you know. He modeled most of his characters around real people and events."

This specific fictional novel: "Europa: Days of Ignorance" is now unknown 75 years later, but the book made a huge splash in 1935 for a \$2.75 price. Robert Briffault (bree'-foh, 1876 –1948) trained as a surgeon, but became an anthropologist and novelist.

The Saturday Review, 9/7/1935, page 11 wrote (redacted):

This first novel by the author is on the grand scale presenting a panorama of European society, with its pleasures, extravagances, and vices, as it existed during the decades preceding the World War. [That would be World War I.]

His five hundred pages ... brilliantly describes the suicide of a class. His presentation should endear him to the warriors who are fighting on the side of class struggle; but the historically minded reader knows that every class, system, and civilization carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. The extravagance and vicious corruption of the Russian nobility flinging away its wealth abroad dominates the book

<http://www.unz.org/Pub/SaturdayRev-1935sep07-00011> (edited)

Enlisted Men

Initial Men

The first months [as an enlisted man] introduced me to military life. [According to the 1941 Report, the average age among Guard enlisted men was 35 with 50% having military experience. The Guard recruited 12,000 soldiers (of the authorized 16,000).]

We drilled one evening a week in the city park at Huntington Park. We did much close order drill. This came easily to me as it was barely eleven years since my last Scout summer camp in Indiana. I remembered all the many close order drills of camp.

The Guard did not initially pay a salary. For several weeks, my young family lived on a collection taken up in my office building. Most of that money came from one man. It would be three months before we got Guard pay. In late June 1942, the men once again received pay for several months [in arrears]. A private got \$25 or \$30 a month.

Changes occurred within Company B after Pearl Harbor. Many officers with jobs and families could not go full time. This forced out even some enlisted men. However, many volunteers showed up and our ranks were always full. Our unit became more orderly by being together all day, every day, and no longer one evening a week.

We married enlisted men could return to our homes most nights while on-call. I went back to my small Huntington Park office, simply locked the door, and had the telephone disconnected. I later moved out my papers.

After some time as a Mess Sergeant, I got a fine promotion to Regimental Sergeant Major. I replaced an older man who could not stay on full time. In the showers one day, I noticed that deep scars covered his body. I tentatively asked if he went through a threshing machine. Instead, he was with Sergeant York in World War I. Sergeant York and four men captured more than a hundred German soldiers in one foray. I noticed that veterans with such experience rarely talked about it until they were [literally] exposed.

Benicia Men

The enlisted men in Benicia continued to be of three types. A small group representing less than 20% was between thirty and forty years old who genuinely felt a civic duty.

About 40% were young privates, classified as I-A, who wanted advance training. They believed as often verified, that anyone from the Guard advanced [quicker] in the regular Army. These men steadily came and went as their draft number came up. Many came from Oklahoma families who migrated to Southern California during the Great Depression. [The book: “Grapes of Wrath”, by John Steinbeck, portrayed that 1930’s migration.] They were physically fine but held prejudices against blacks and Hispanics.

Speaking of which, there were several young Hispanic men with high school ROTC training. They were fine soldiers, alert, sharp, and disciplined. I recall Ricardo Varella among them and often wondered what became of him.

The last 40% were men aged from forty to fifty. Many were addicted to wine. Some were mentally sodden and plodded through the drills. Others had erratic behavior alternating between brilliance and suddenly of near insanity.

We dealt with these volatile men circumspectly, for they were capable of any [bizarre] thing when irrational. A prior hospital orderly handled our dispensary. Late one night after hours, he methodically emptied into the sink every bottle of liquid medicine or other fluid in the dispensary. He was sober both that evening and the next morning.

This type of man was generally unemployable and found a haven in the Guard with steady food, clothing, regular discipline, and a sense of doing something worthwhile. They were not bad soldiers, but needed careful watching.

Pomona Men

The Pomona post did not physically work the men and boredom soon set in. The food critically thus became a matter of deep interest. The colonel liked rice and insisted that we serve it at least three times a week. Three or four non-commissioned officers came to see me, saying the men were not enchanted with the dishes, preferring pancakes.

Some fellow officers criticized me saying, “Tell them you are the Mess Officer and that they better eat what you serve and like it!” I could not agree entirely, but I should have conducted my own survey.

Equipment

[For our equipment, I will discuss our uniforms, the rifles, and vehicles.]

Uniforms

We bought our own uniforms of pants and shirts of tan “Chino” cloth [cotton twill], of the sort still sold as work clothes. We bought a webbed cloth belt with a plain military-style buckle, and the only distinctive part of our tan uniform was an “overseas” cap with some blue braid around the edge, carrying a circular brass badge.

[The 1941 Report said that the official uniform was cotton of Khaki color composed of an overseas cap, shirt, slacks, and jacket with collar ornaments and a California shoulder patch. The Report failed to mention the blue braid on the cap, blue braid on the cuffs, and the “CAL.” collar insignia. “CAL.” followed by a period specified the Guard and “CAL” without a period marked the student cadet corp. Uniforms carried various brass uniform insignias, including the brass eagle for an Officer’s cover.]

In the regular Army, officers received an allowance for clothing, but this [benefit] did not apply to the Guard. I procured a blouse (a jacket), a pair of “pink” trousers [described next], and a Sam Browne belt, and a cap. Most of the items were second-hand.



Figure 3 - Varied Officer Uniforms of CSG (Calif. State Military Museum)

[This photo shows the varied Officer Uniforms with none matching!]

The Army Green Uniform by Stephen Kennedy and Alice Park, March 1968 (Technical Report 68-41-CM edited) describe early latitude for officer uniforms:

Between the World Wars, the Army's lack of uniform tradition and policy became apparent. Officers began wearing a semi-dress winter uniform, referred to as their "pinks and greens" - a combination of a dark yellow-green coat over "pink" (light taupe [or tan]) trousers. Military tailors and uniform houses catered to local commanders and each officer for a slightly different uniform, and the green coat became progressively darker. By World War II, officers appeared in unpleasing shades and combinations of "pinks" and greens.

Six months after Pearl Harbor, the enlisted men received adequate Army uniforms of wool, including leggings and Army shoes. Our helmets were of the pre-1941 style, shaped like a shallow basin. [These helmets first came from WW I and later from Civil Defense sources.] Each man carried a 1917 style pack with a mess kit and other gear.



Figure 4 – CSG Soldiers with WW I Helmets (Calif. State Military Museum)

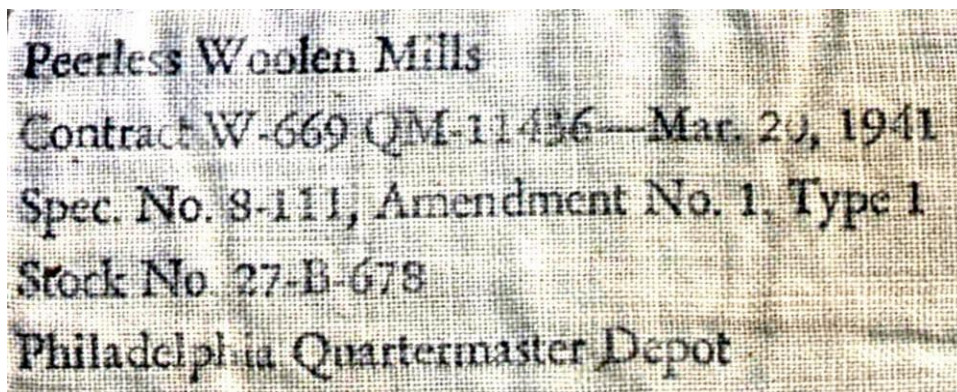


Figure 5 –Label on my 1941 Army-Green Wool Blanket (H. Briley 2014)

Rifles

[Our 1917 rifles were equally ancient and few. The 1941 Report stated that the Guard had 7,600 (of the authorized 9,000) Enfield Rifles. That is, we had rifles for half the soldiers. Dan Sebby, curator of the California State Military Museum said these WW I rifles, revolvers, and machine guns were a long time in storage.



Figure 6 - M1917 Enfield rifle (American Rifleman 5/2012)

Photo from National Firearms Museum (www.nramuseum.org)

American Rifleman (May 2012, p.57) wrote that by the time of the Armistice, 322,000 of the Enfield's "floated in bulk" (that is, unissued and in reserve), and during WW II were called back into service as training and supplemental service rifles. The regular Army distributed these older rifles to the Guard. Yet, it seems that the earliest Guard Regiment companies received back in 1940 something altogether older.]



Figure 7 - M1896 Krag-Jorgensen Rifle (Rich Strauss, Smithsonian Institution)

We received Krag Jorgensen rifles used forty years earlier in the Philippines. [The Army widely adopted this Danish-made small-caliber, smokeless, repeating rifle from 1892 to 1899. Such was our modern equipment.] We never fired these rifles. No bullets.



Figure 8 – Posing with my Revolver and Rifle - 1942

We practiced such things as advancing in a skirmish line directed only by an officers hand signals, certain elementary positions of bayonet drill, and training in crowd control. In Benicia, the posted guards received limited ammunition, and each man finally got a little rifle range experience.

Those of us with side arms got our own revolvers or pistols on the open market and purchased our own ammunition. After I rose in rank, I purchased a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson revolver on a “.45 caliber frame”. I fired it a few times in random target practice but never became a good shot. It was a fine, handsome weapon, not an antique. Later, I sold it to a security guard at a defense plant.

Vehicles

Company B lacked motor vehicles. Some local auto dealers jointly gave us a used light panel truck. From elsewhere, we got a one-ton truck for supplies. [Dan Seby said that by 1943 when federal forces upgraded from GMC to Dodge trucks, the Army transferred the older GMC trucks to the Guard. Prior to that, the Guard re-purposed some California State vehicles. Towards the end of the war, armored vehicles became available.]

However, back in 1941, we all used our own cars and furnished our own gasoline. I was still driving my mini-midget American Bantam coupe, which I re-painted olive green.

Once, as Mess Sergeant at Huntington Park, several exuberant young men lifted my Bantam atop a concrete picnic table. It weighed only 1400 pounds. They called me out to see it. I told them that supper would be served when it was lifted down. Supper was promptly served on time.

When we moved by troop train to Benicia, none of the rail cars could carry our trucks. We took only my little Bantam because the men could manhandle it into a baggage car.



Figure 9 - 1933 American Bantam Coupe (Source Unknown)

I drove it into San Francisco a couple of times on leave. More often, I drove [locally] to Vallejo or into Benicia itself for an evening’s leave. As my Bantam was the only

available car (other than the Colonel's or the Benicia camp truck), officers paid my expenses to accompany me on my excursions.

Later, the Guard ordered us all south to Pomona. As Master Sergeant, I could drive back alone in my Bantam. I started through San Francisco and down through Salinas.

As I neared Paso Robles, the Bantam was not running right. Something was wrong with the timing or the carburetion. I made it into town, where an Army tank recovery unit was stationed in a large garage building. I talked to their First Sergeant who accepted me as an equal and put his mechanics to work. We ate together that night and I slept there. The next day, he set me on my way with a jerry can of spare gasoline and a full tank. At the next major town, Santa Maria, the Bantam just simply quit. I left it and went on by civilian bus to Pomona. The colonel sent the regimental truck back to bring in my car.

I later made a wooden footlocker while at the Pomona Armory. After I left the Guard, I mounted it on the back of my old Bantam mini-car as a [makeshift] trunk.

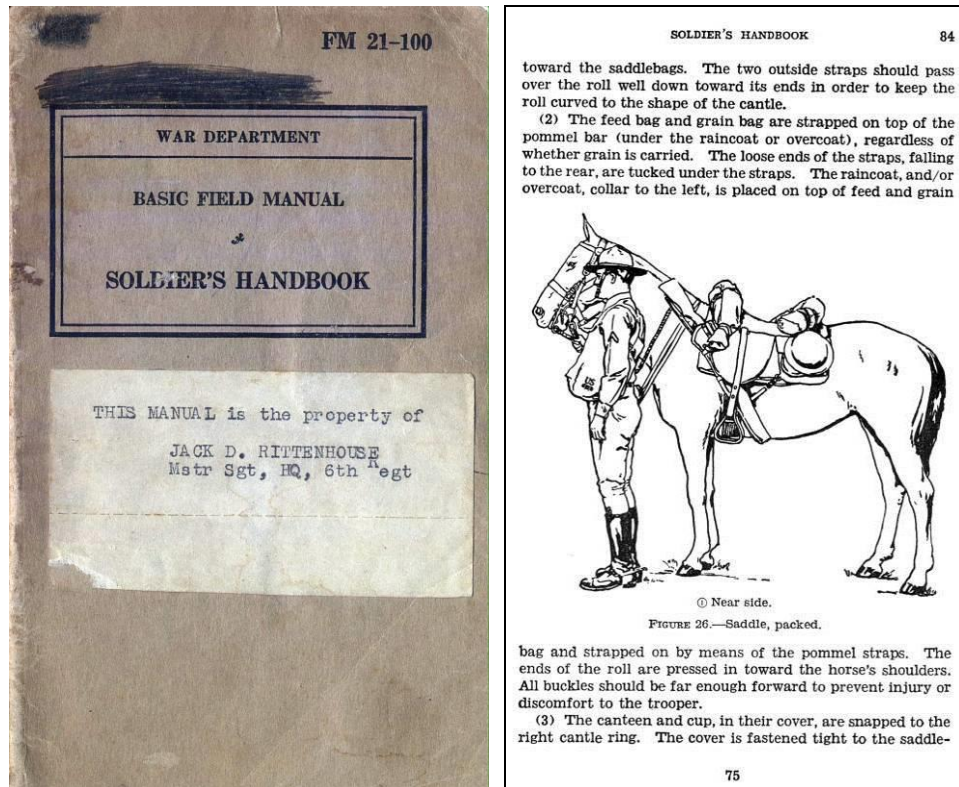


Figure 10 – My 1941 Soldiers Handbook (H. Briley 2014)

The Credible Threat

Pearl Harbor

[There was a credible and soon expected threat from Japan.] A newspaper columnist wrote after December 1 that Japan might attack at any time. I was in the Guard only a few weeks before Pearl Harbor. On the Friday before, I mentioned to co-workers over lunch that Japan might attack that very weekend.

On Sunday afternoon, December 7, I was at our 1030 West 60th Street, Los Angeles home in our breakfast nook, rigging my [hand-made] model of a sailing clipper ship. I heard the news over the radio that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor.

Being [already] in the CSG, as a private first class, HQ, 1st Battalion, Sixth Regiment, I immediately put on my uniform. I drove my family, Beulah and David, to the battalion headquarters in Cox Hall in Huntington Park. Members of this battalion went on guard at the water works of Huntington Park.

As the men arrived, there was no panic but there was a great deal of apprehension. For all we knew, Japanese troopships might be only a few miles off the California coast ready to land invaders. There might be bombers from a Japanese carrier. Nearly everyone expected sabotage all along the West Coast. None of these things happened, at least not that first week. I never finished rigging my model ship.

Japanese Submarine Attack –1942

No Japanese landed. There were no riots and no bombers. But in February 1942, a Japanese submarine surfaced near the little oil field town of Summerland and fired a few shells into the oil installations [near the beach]. There were a few blackouts but it was not a major thing. [However, it triggered an invasion scare within the entire region.] Whenever a blackout occurred, we reported to Camp Wilson which grew to 455 men.

Contemporary newspapers described the attack on February 23, 1942 by a Japanese submarine off the Ellwood oil fields 12 miles north of Santa Barbara.

Following Pearl Harbor, seven Japanese Navy submarines patrolled our coast. They attacked merchant vessels and skirmished twice with Navy forces. By December, the submarines steamed to Kwajalein Island to resupply and Imperial Navy I-17 returned. At 365 feet, she carried six torpedo tubes with 17 spares and a 5.5-inch deck gun. She carried 101 crewmembers under Commander Nishino.

Before the war, Nishino skippered a merchant ship to the Ellwood Oil Field where they filled his ship. Reportedly, he felt personally humiliated while coming ashore. The most damage from his attack was located within 980 feet of his original visit. [The war thus provided a handy way to settle the loss of face.]



Figure 11 – Japanese Make Direct Hit (Los Angeles Times 2/24/1942)

The 11th Naval District reported that the I-17 surfaced at 7:10pm, shortly after President Roosevelt's weekly fireside "chat" began. The gunner crew aimed the deck gun at a huge Richfield aviation fuel tank just beyond the beach.

At about 7:15 pm, the first rounds hit close to one of the storage facilities. Mrs. George Heaney of San Marcos Pass observed the submarine about a mile offshore through binoculars and called in the first police report.

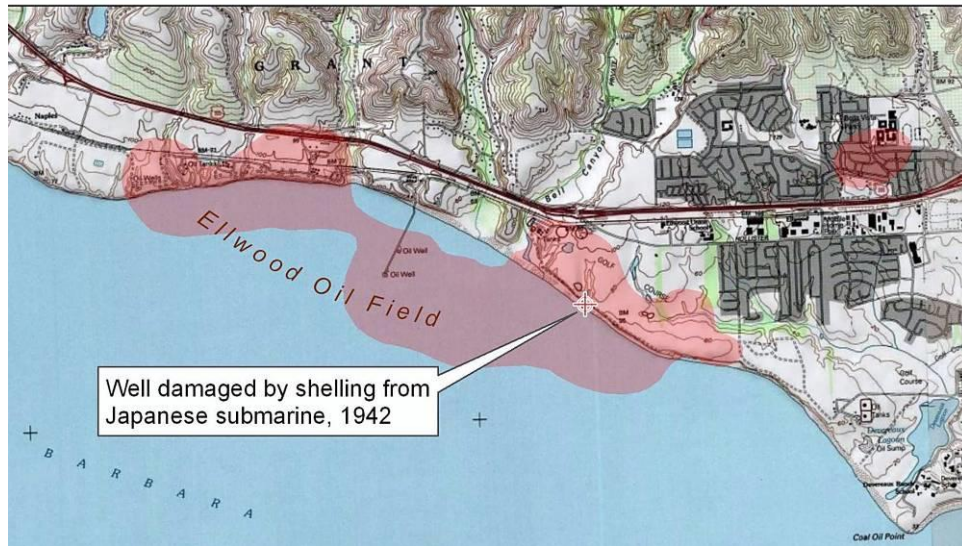


Figure 12 - Japanese Submarine Oil Field Target (Wikipedia)

Three shells struck near the Bankline oil refinery, the apparent target. Its superintendent, F.W. Borden, described the destroyed rigging and pumping equipment about 1,000 yards inland. Most of the oilers had gone home, but a few remained, and heard the first rounds slam into their workplace.

They suspected an internal explosion, but a worker spotted I-17 in the dark. One oiler described the large submarine as a cruiser until realizing that only one gun fired. They lost a derrick, a pump house, and a catwalk.

Unhappy, Nishino next targeted the second storage tank. The crew fired several random shots. One overshot by three miles and landed on the Tecolote ranch, where it exploded. Another landed on nearby Staniff ranch, dug a hole five feet deep, but did not explode. One flew over Wheeler's Inn and owner Laurence Wheeler called the Sheriff, who said warplanes would arrive but none did.

After 20 minutes of firing about twenty-five rounds (where eleven fell into the sea), Reverend Arthur Basham saw the submarine head south, flashing signal lights to shore. Still surfaced, it escaped at 8:30pm at the south of the Channel.

Several people in Santa Barbara witnessed the signal lights, so officials ordered a blackout until midnight the next day. News agencies immediately reported the attack. Hundreds fled. Even though no known enemy collaboration existed, this event, and the hysteria, partly justified the internment of Japanese-Americans, starting just one week later on March 2, 1942.

These sections condensed and merged from:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardment_of_Ellwood and the California State
Military Museum at www.militarymuseum.org/Ellwood.html

in the first attack upon United States soil since this war began, an enemy submarine rose out of the sea off the rich oil fields at Ellwood, 12 miles north of Santa Barbara, shortly after 7 p.m. yesterday and pumped 16 shells into the tidewater fields, but caused only superficial damage.

A single oil well derrick was reported by eyewitnesses to have been hit, but there were no casualties in human life.

Choosing the dramatic instant of the halfway mark in President Roosevelt's fireside chat, the commander of the presumably Japanese submarine opened fire from his deck guns at 7:15 p.m.

Shelling of Oil Field Described by Eyewitness

Restaurant Man First Believed Explosions Caused by Army Conducting Target Practice

"Their marksmanship was rotten!"

Thus did Lawrence Wheeler, proprietor of a roadside inn situated in the heart of the Ellwood oil fields, describe the shelling of the fields by enemy submarine deck guns last night.

"It started about 7:15 p.m.," he said. "I know it was about that time because we were serving dinners to customers and listening to the President's speech, and he was about halfway through."

HEARD LOUD REPORT

"Suddenly we heard a loud report, followed in a few moments by another. Some soldiers who were in my place said it was probably just target practice."

"We heard a bit later that the oil fields were being shelled. I went outside and ran over to a point whence I could see the ocean. It looked like a submarine, about a mile offshore, cruising slowly down the coast and firing at regular intervals. "I could see the flashes as the gun went off."

AIMED AT PLANT

"The submarine seemed to be aiming at the Barnsdall Oil Co.'s main absorption plant, located almost on the beach."

"They missed with all their shots at this plant, though some of the shells landed fairly close, throwing up geysers of dirt and sand near the building."

"One shell hit a well and blew the pumping plant and derrick to bits."

"That was the only real damage they did."

"There must have been 20 or 25 men working in the field at the time. Nobody was injured."

NOTIFIED SHERIFF

"One of their shots whistled over my inn, which is a good mile from the shore line, and burst up the canyon on the Hollister estate across the highway."

"We notified the Sheriff's office and they said planes would be here in 10 minutes."

"It seemed to me as if the enemy vessel was firing a 5 or 6-inch gun. Their shooting wasn't very good, because that absorption plant was a beautiful target and they didn't hit it."

CUSTOMERS CALM

Mrs. Wheeler added this account:

"I saw the explosions. At first they were very faint. I thought it was the Army practicing but then I heard a shell fly overhead and strike in a canyon inshore from our place."

Wheeler said there was no panic among his customers.

"We immediately blacked out the place," he said. "One shell landed about a quarter of a mile from here and the concussion shook the building but nobody was scared much."

Three of the shells dug up the sands off the Bankline Oil Co. refinery. The only damage in the raid was the destruction of rigging and pumping equipment of a well about a quarter of a mile from the beach. Loss was estimated at several thousand dollars.

NAVY BEGINS HUNT FOR SUB

One of the shells whistled three miles inland to the Teolote ranch where it exploded. Another missile gouged out a five-foot-wide crater on the Staniff ranch near by. The other salvos fell short of their marks, it was asserted, and dropped into the sea.

Navy planes roared over the channel a short time later and counteroperations were begun.

Four Japanese and one Italian were taken into custody.

Illustrated on Page B

by Ventura County Sheriff's authorities last night shortly after the attack. Two Japs were said to have been riding around the city during the blackout in a station wagon armed with guns. For more than two hours after the raid, brilliant yellow flares burst over darkened Ventura. Authorities said it was clearly an effort to signal the enemy.

RAIDER LAST SEEN HEADED SOUTH

When last reported, about 8:30 p.m. by a minister at Montecito, the submarine was slipping out of the Santa Barbara Channel in the direction of Los Angeles. The clergyman, Rev. Arthur Basham of Pomona, who was visiting there, said he observed the "pigboat" flashing signal lights, apparently to someone on shore.

The Ventura County Sheriff's office received reports that flares had been sighted lighting the skies at several points along the coast in Ventura County near Hueneme.

At 7:58 p.m. upon orders of the Fourth Interceptor Command all radio stations in Southern California abruptly left the air. A few minutes later the coast line was completely blacked out from Carpinteria to Goleta. The blackout area covered a distance of about 25 miles. The yellow alert flashed simultaneously in police headquarters in Los Angeles.

The "all-clear" signal light was flashed in Los Angeles at 12:11 a.m., four hours and 13 minutes later.

SANTA BARBARA BLACKED OUT

Air-raid sirens screamed in Santa Barbara and within a few moments the entire city was dark.

At 12:20 a.m. today the all clear was sounded.

First report of the submarine reached the Sheriff's office from Mrs. George Heaney on San Marcos Pass, northwest of Santa Barbara. She informed authorities that she heard the first gun report shortly after 7 p.m. With field glasses, she said she sighted the submarine. It was lying about a mile offshore.

The next report came from Bob Miller of the Bankline Oil Co., who gave a similar report. By this time, the guns of the submarine were speaking repeatedly and shells shrieking overhead.

F. W. Borden, superintendent of the Bankline plant, gave this eyewitness account of the raid to the 11th Naval District. "At 7:10 P.W.T., one large submarine came to the surface

Turn to Page A, Column 1

Suspicious Lights Flashed Here After Submarine Attack

Flashlights in the hands of suspicious persons, possibly signalers, were reported to police last night shortly after a Japanese submarine dropped shells near Santa Barbara.

Six calls were received by the police complaint board, telling of the blinking flashlights in various parts of the city. One witness said he saw one or two persons at the end of the Venice pier with flashlights.

Policemen were dispatched to the locations given, but in all instances the suspicious persons were gone.

During the radio blackout coincident with the shelling, hundreds of phone calls were received by the board inquiring whether residence lights should be doused. Callers were reminded that one of the rules during an alert was not to use the telephone.

Figure 13 – Front Page News (Los Angeles Times 2/24/1942)

Duties and Ranks

[Our duties in the Guard consisted of being watchful sentries.] After Pearl Harbor, the Huntington Park city officials asked for protection around their water tower. Since not all men could or would go onto full-time duty, I rapidly advanced from private, to private first class, to corporal, and to staff sergeant.

Mess Sergeant



I was promoted to Mess and Supply Sergeant at the Huntington Park Camp under Capt. Sam Kennedy. My promotion came only due to my rudimentary kitchen experience at Scout summer camp, and my experience working in restaurants during college.

Huntington Park provided fifty dollars to purchase cooking utensils at a Los Angeles restaurant supply store. The city then gave us a sum of money each week to buy foodstuffs.

Among the new recruits, we found two very good restaurant men. One black man was a good cook. Another older man was a baker. Our team delivered good meals with fine hot rolls.

Compton Mess Hall

The Sixth Regiment then pulled our two companies into the headquarters area of Compton. It was not a large regiment, between 100 and 200 men. For several weeks, life was routine. I spent my days at the headquarters office and lived at home.

My work was chiefly clerical of handling the mess accounts for the regiment under the direction of Lt. Edward Ham. As a Mess Sergeant, I planned meals, bought foodstuffs, and supervised cooking and serving.

At fifty cents per man per day, I always managed to do all right. We bought our supplies as any restaurant would. There was no central military supply. We drove our regimental truck to the Los Angeles market early in the morning to buy fresh vegetables. Ordinary Irish potatoes were about \$3 for a hundred-pound sack. We could buy almost everything at so-called “wholesale” prices from wholesale grocers.

We bought a common meat from the packinghouses, locally called “clod”. They put this up in cheesecloth sacks containing about twenty-pounds. It was lean beef in irregular pieces cut away during the butchering. We could cut it into smaller pieces for stews or ground for hamburger or meatloaf. We sliced larger chunks that looked something like steak and tasted almost as good. We tied very large chunks together to make roasts.

Regimental Sergeant Major

My promotion to Regimental Sergeant Major became enviable, for there was only one such man, the highest among the non-commissioned officers. I still had some

responsibility for the mess operations and carried a permanent pass to leave at any time, for any reason, to go anywhere, but woe to me if I ever misused it!

The Guard was under the direction of the Army when needed with orders from the San Francisco Presidio. In the early months, urgent things consumed the Army more than to fuss with us. There was little to do. Our men served as sentries at water towers and a few factories, and patrolled some railroad yards. One night, a passing auto fired upon two sentries, but the shots missed.

Benicia Arsenal

On about July 10, the Army ordered our regiment by troop train north to Camp Benicia, a former WPA camp which had housed workers at the Benicia Arsenal, about 45 miles northeast of San Francisco.

After two weeks, the regiment was distributed for regional sentry duty to various posts. Some companies guarded the [docks and wharves] of the San Francisco Embarcadero, the Oakland Bay Bridge, and at the reservoirs and dams back in the hills.

We guarded the storehouses of the old arsenal where munitions were stored. My duties at Benicia kept me busy but without strain. I never visited the detached sentry units.

A War Game

In late [July], the Colonel proposed a sort of war game. The area hosted the gently rolling hills of coastal California. He posed a problem that a small party of paratroopers had landed on top of a nearby hill. How would we attack and defeat them?



Figure 14 – CSG Gas Mask Exercise (Calif. State Military Museum)

He limited us to rifles and side arms. I scouted the area and mimeographed a map showing the terrain and objectives. The high grass was tinder dry and the wind was blowing away from us to the top of the hill. The colonel then held a council of war.

I suggested that we set fire to the grass (although not in reality). This would cause dense smoke to roll up the hill, and we could advance behind it. I had [previously] tried my gas mask in the smoke of fired grass (as we all carried gas masks), and it filtered out the smoke well, but that the air lacked enough oxygen that made breathing somewhat more difficult. They waved my suggestion aside as unorthodox. Instead, they sent patrols around both sides to creep upwards. This lasted all day and was not successful.

I did not partake [in the maneuvers]. Yet, the colonel told me to “put in my papers” for promotion to Second Lieutenant. I never asked for this, but filed the papers [for July 23].

Pomona Armory

Before any action occurred on my papers, three companies of the Sixth Regiment returned to Southern California, about 55 miles from Willowbrook, to occupy the empty National Guard Armory in Pomona. They needed us for sentry duty at several reservoirs and establishments in the area. With these latter companies went the regimental staff.

Second Lieutenant

They signed my papers on August 6, 1942 [with the effective date of July 23].

My pay became about \$60 to \$80 a month. As part of the regimental headquarters staff, my new duty, as you might have guessed, was regimental mess officer and Post Exchange (canteen) officer. I was back in the kitchen.

I got a few books to guide me: the manual of mess management, an “Officer’s Guide”, and a few government manuals about soldier duty, scouting, patrolling, and the revolver.

The National Guard left a few old military pamphlets around the armory. I enjoyed reading one about logistics. This is the science of moving men, materials, and supplies around so they all come together at the right place and time. Thus, units can store exactly as needed without shortages, delays, and surpluses. This [logistics need] does not happen only in the military. It was something I later applied in my business.

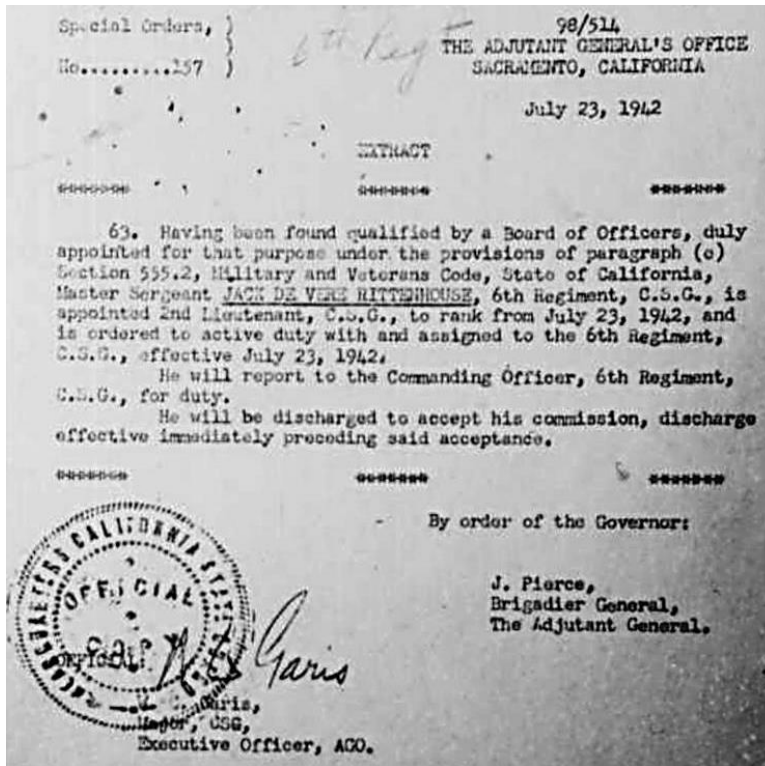


Figure 15 - Promotion from Master Sergeant – 7/1942

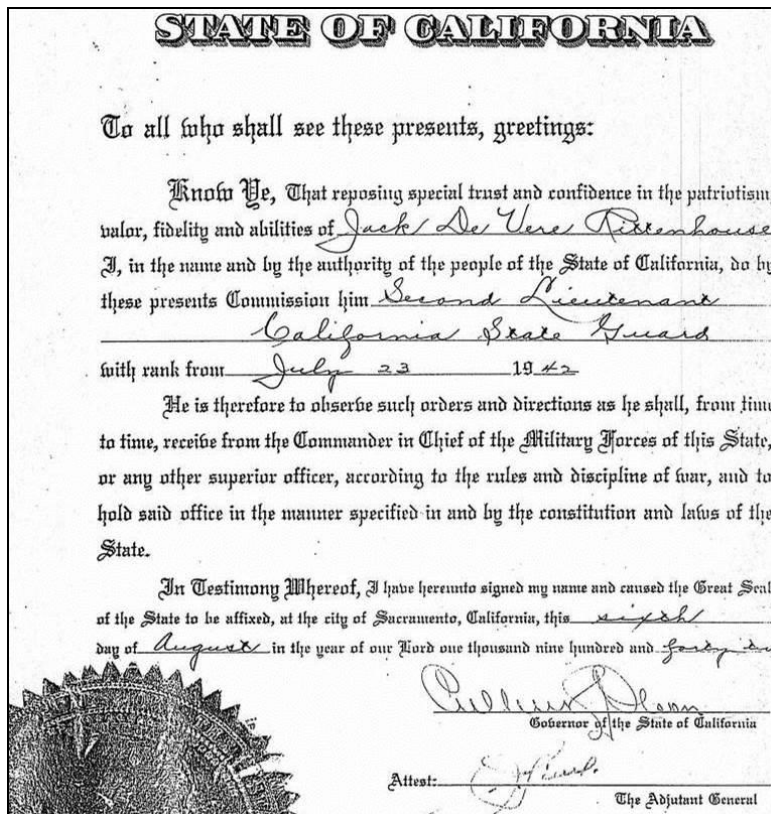


Figure 16 - Second Lieutenant by Governor Culbert Olson - 1942

Boredom

I envied the line officers, who kept the men busy with drill, and when it rained, they could move inside. If one exercise did not go well, they could [flexibly] switch to something else. However, the mess officer made three well-cooked meals every day at exact hours. As the weeks went by, the same old boredom began to set in.

By early September 1942, it was obvious that there would be no Japanese troop landing on the California coast. We did sentry duty and prevented sabotage, and each man enabled a true fighting man overseas. We were doing useful work, but it was not work that I could do best.

The GSG was becoming hopelessly bogged down in inefficiency. Training programs were a plodding round of "foot-drill" which killed the enthusiasm of many men. The officers and men slowly degenerated into heavy drinking as their only relief. Many good men quit and an increasing percentage of 'winos' and mental misfits were recruited.

I did not enjoy being away from my family. The new pay was still inadequate for a married man. I had no desire to be with just a group of watchmen. I became so discouraged that I finally requested transfer to the Inactive Reserve of the Guard.

An enlisted man was presumably in for the duration, but an officer could resign at any time. I requested an indefinite leave. The Colonel tried to get me to stay by suggesting a possible promotion, but gave in. I packed my gear, went home technically only on leave,

Timm Aircraft Company

I left the CSG [to look] for work more directly beneficial to the war effort, that provided an income on which to live, and gave me more time at home. I landed a job in a few days at the Timm Aircraft factory in Van Nuys. I wanted to be a systems control man because I prepared written standard practices and flow charts. They did not need such people.

Instead, they hired me as a woodworker! The firm built light plywood training planes for the Navy in which new pilots made their first flights. My experience building ship models enabled me to work wood within a tolerance of 1/100th of an inch. However, by late October, I realized that my skills could not keep up with the [skilled] cabinetmakers.

Even so, I felt that my draft number would soon come up, and I did not want to leave my family stranded in California. Therefore, we soon moved back to Chicago by early November when I turned 30. I sent in my formal State Guard resignation from Chicago.

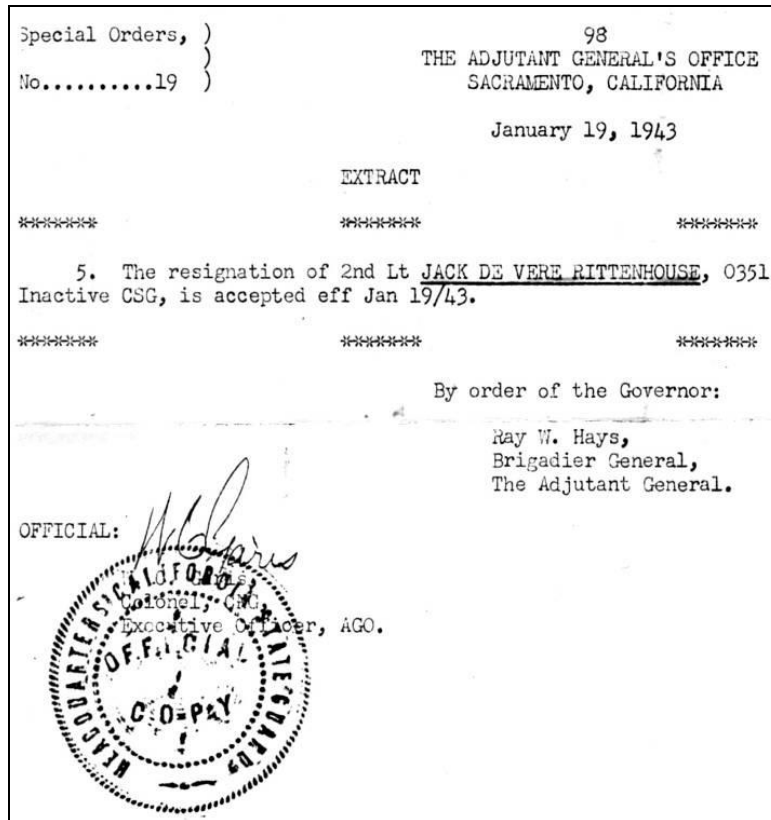


Figure 17 - Resignation Accepted – 1/1943

The State Guard never contacted me again and [I went back to building ship models, including several of the destroyer USS Warrington, one of which I kept.]



Figure 18 – My 1943 Model of USS Warrington (H. Briley 2011)

The descriptive label reads:

This handmade ship model by Jack D. Rittenhouse is an authentic reproduction of the USS Warrington, a destroyer flotilla leader. One inch on the model equals 32 feet on the real ship, which is 371 feet long at the water line, with a draft of 10 feet 4 inches. The USS Warrington carries more than 240 officers and men, and is armed with eight five-inch guns, torpedoes, anti-aircraft guns, and depth bombs. Its speed is over 35 knots (40 mph). Built at a cost of over four million dollars, it was commissioned on February 19, 1938. The model's case is Honduras mahogany. - J.D.Rittenhouse, 7228 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

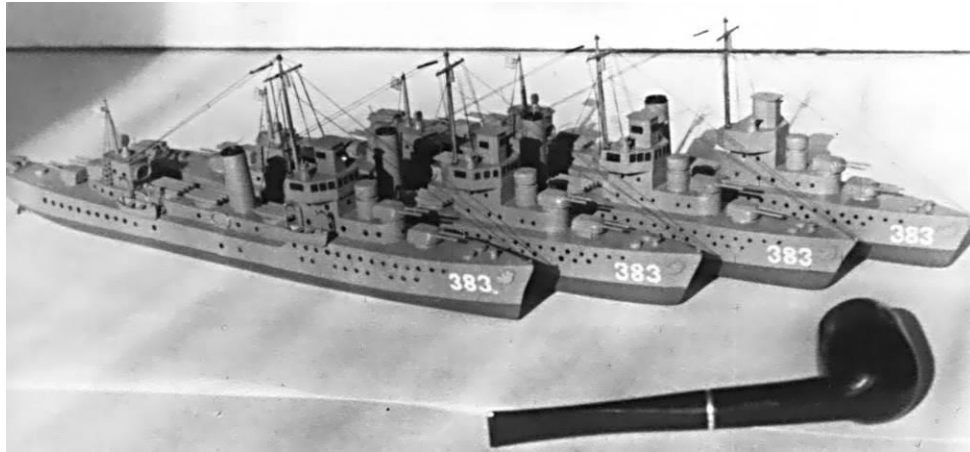


Figure 19 - Flotilla of Destroyers with my Trademark Pipe - 1943

Footnote: Military Service by Family Members

After World War I, my Dad termed single men who evaded the draft as “slackers”. Married with children, he did not serve. If he were unmarried, he would have gone.

My cousin Robert Hassinger became a professional soldier. In 1934, he joined the ROTC in high school and liked it. He went into the Army, fought in North Africa and the Italian campaign. He remained in the Army until the 1970s, fought in Vietnam, and rose steadily in rank to a Lieutenant Colonel. He later became a military advisor in Bangkok, Thailand, married a Thai woman, and raised two charming daughters. They lived (in 1988) in Port Angeles, [across from Vancouver Island in Washington State].

My sister, Marie, married Lyle Youells. He served with the Air Force in the South Pacific in World War II. He re-enlisted and rose in rank to Warrant Officer, a category between a Regimental Sergeant Major and a First Lieutenant. Shortly before 1950, he left the Air Force while stationed at Carswell Air Force base in Texas.

Both men did far more than their “bit”. I did not overly admire those with desk jobs in the United States, even though many did essential work. The only medal to me worth recognizing remains the Combat Infantryman’s badge. Such men deserve everything.

History Lecture: Second Edition

[Reading this chapter before a live audience required peer review, restructuring the material, tighter editing, and minimally adjusting the text for a spoken presentation in first person. The second edition reflected editorial guidance from Jeff Kaskey, President of the Livermore Heritage Guild. An edited 55-minute video recorded the 2013 lecture.]

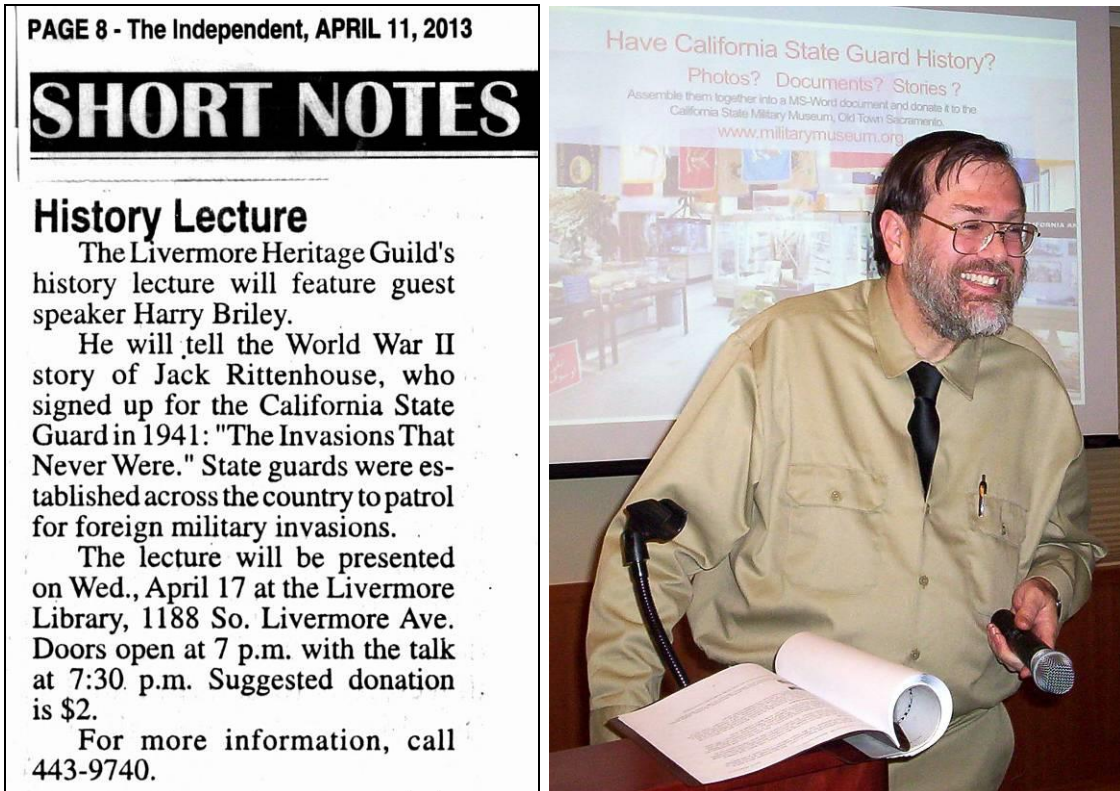


Figure 20 - Livermore Heritage Guild Lecture (in CSG Uniform) – 4/2013