



Don Mann showed off a Japanese saber that he brought home.

Don Mann

Don Mann was 19 when he volunteered for the service in December of 1944.

Up until then he hadn't thought much about the war.

"I wasn't worried about it," he said. "We were too busy trying to go to school and help on the farm."

He volunteered because his friend Bob Chase was fighting the Germans.

"If he could take it, I could too," he said.

He was called for active duty in Jan. 1945, and took his basic training at Fort Hood, Texas. He was stationed at 15 Army bases over the next few years.

He was sent to Leyte in the Philippines.

He said that every night, about 2 a.m., someone (he assumed a Japanese) would scream. This was a psychological game intended to rattle the recruits. Shortly after he arrived, he and four



Don Mann

other guys were loaded onto a PT boat and taken to the island of Sebu.

From there he, along with hundreds of other young men, were loaded on ships for, the rumors said, the invasion of mainland Japan. He was on the ship when the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. It has been said that if the Allies would have invaded Japan, they would have suffered 90 percent casualties.

Mr. Mann said he was seasick and when they docked at Honshu, Japan, he was put in the hospital. He later learned that Emperor Hirohito was in the same hospital at the same time.

After his release from the hospital, Don was assigned to the 132nd Regiment, 23rd Infantry Division, "G" Company. One of his assignments was to guard munitions or coal that was piled in the street.

He remembers seeing Japanese women and children lined up so the soldiers could scrape leftovers into their hands.

"They were starving," he said.

Don said he was known as the "volunteer man". When his company needed a baker's helper, he volunteered and ended up working all night. Then he volunteered to transfer to headquarters of Fourth Corps and he went to Sindai, Japan, as a jeep driver. Another volunteer op-

portunity presented itself and he joined a landing craft company and was sent to Morrow Bay, Calif. Later he went to diesel mechanic school and then back to Morrow Bay.

The heavy fighting was mostly over by the time he was old enough to get into the action.

His wife Elaine, said, "Because of the timing and his missing the hostilities, Don has played down his involvement."

On the way home his ship was hit by the tail end of a typhoon.

The ship was "locked down" and sealed up tight, he said.

But one of the sailors had to go from one compartment to another and while he was outside, he was swept overboard. The ship turned around to pick him up and in so doing, rolled to a 43 degree angle and almost capsized. The sailor was lost at sea.

Stepping foot back on American soil held no fanfare. He said his family was glad to see him, but there was no fuss, otherwise.

"The Army didn't hurt me any," he said. "I might have stayed in and made a career of it, except my dad wasn't well, and he needed help on the farm."

He credits the Army for letting him see a piece of the world and helping him find a career. Don was a city mail carrier for 33 years. A job he said he never would have gotten if it hadn't been for his military service.

The war had a big impact on his life.

"That's why I'm a Democrat," he said. "Truman dropped the bomb to end the war and Roosevelt saved the farmers."

Sam Manning

Sam Manning was drafted on Dec. 4, 1941, three days before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

Sam said he remembered the day very well. "It was on a Sunday and I was in my barracks," he said. "I heard over the radio that we had been attacked."

He had originally been told that he would serve 18 months. But, after that Sunday he realized things would be different.

He went to officer candidate school, was commissioned as a second lieutenant, assigned as a quartermaster and stationed in Los Angeles. Later, he was switched to transportation.

Segregation in the military was still in effect in 1941, and he found himself in command of black soldiers.

"Everyone was involved with the war effort



Sam Manning

in one way or another," he said. "The special thing about it was the country was united. I can't say that we were any better or worse than anyone else."

During the war, he remained stateside and said that his time in the military was just a separate phase of his life. There wasn't much fanfare when he returned to his hometown of Chula, Mo.

"When I arrived in Jefferson City, Mo., it was just like any other day," he said.

Mr. Manning and his wife of 62 years Bonnie have two children, Sammie Klee, Baltimore, Md., and Bill Manning, Norton.



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Bob McClelland

Bob McClelland served as a staff sergeant in the infantry during World War II.

When he heard about Pearl Harbor, he thought they should fight.



Bob McClelland

"I thought if we were attacked, we should fight," he said. "Those guys had to be stopped."

And fight he did. He was drafted on Aug. 4, 1944. Just after basic training, he was sent to the Pacific, where he saw combat on Okinawa.

"The country needed me," he said.

"Combat time is something I want to forget, but can't. Okinawa was horrible. It made me grow up in a hurry. I was only 19 years old when I was in the battle.

"After Okinawa, I was sent to Japan for 11 months and I enjoyed most of that. The best part was the day I got my discharge."

He was discharged on Aug. 29, 1946. When he got to Denver, he missed his train, the Rocket, and so was late getting into Norton. He said his parents, sister-in-law and brother were all waiting for him when he got there.

Mr. McClelland said he fiddled around for awhile after he was discharged, and then decided to farm. He married his wife Donna and they had two children. They now have four grandchildren, four step-grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, one step-great-grandchild, and one grandchild on the way.

He and his wife live outside of Norton. He is semi-retired as he still farms on occasion.

Joe McFarland

Joe McFarland enlisted in the Navy May 1, 1944, was inducted June 29, 1944, and served 19 months and seven days.

He said all those days away from home were hard, but, like a lot of veterans, he was just doing what he had to do.

Doing what he had to do included some undesirable aquatic feats during training. Mr. McFarland, a specialist second class, remembers swimming lessons two hours every morning in the winter.

"It was cold enough your hair would freeze under your cap," he said.

He also had to learn to swim under water from one end of the pool to the other and back and jump off a 30-foot tower into the water.

"If you didn't jump, there was someone there to help you with a push," he said.

Since then, he hasn't done much swimming. "I had been swimming so darn much, that was enough," he said.

In addition to training, he was a marching instructor.

Mr. McFarland started his service in Farragut, Idaho, and from there went to Bainbridge, Md., and then to San Bruno, Calif. From there, he thought he was going to be sent overseas, but was sent to Oakland Naval Hospital instead, where he worked in the welfare and recreation department.

Some of his duties included providing transportation for show troops coming to entertain the patients and driving the bus for the naval baseball team at the hospital.

Baseball and service are two things he continued after college. He spent 12 years as a Little League baseball coach and 19 years working for the Boy Scouts.

Oran Milner

Oran Milner's father was against the idea of him joining the Army. He already had one son Byron in the service and stationed in England with the 8th Air Force.

"I joined the Army based on the idea I knew more than Dad did," Mr. Milner said. "That wasn't to be the case."

He went to boot camp at Camp Roberts, Calif., where he trained to be a tank driver. He soon found himself heading overseas on a troop ship called the Admiral Simms.

He mistakenly thought that, if he was on the lowest deck of the ship when it hit bad weather, he wouldn't have so far to fall to the deck floor. He was partly right. The land lubber boy from Kansas became horribly sea sick, as did the soldiers bunked above him.

"What a way to go after having trained as a M-18 tank driver," he said. "But, 17 days and



Joe McFarland

many pounds lighter, I began my tour of duty in the Philippines."

Later he was a message carrier and part-time company clerk.

"I went where I was assigned as were the others," he said. "I am glad I had the privilege of serving our nation."

Bernard Mindrup

It's not that the Merchant Marines weren't selective, it's just that they were the only service that would take a 17-year-old like Bernard Mindrup in 1944.

He had enrolled in high school, but before the semester started he went to Colorado to pick peaches and somewhere between western Kansas and Colorado, with his parents permission, he enlisted in the Merchant Marines.

Training was by the Coast Guard on Santa Catalina Island, Avalon, Calif. He remembers it was short training. Not much more than a month.

Mr. Mindrup served on tankers taking oil from Standard of California to the naval base at Norfolk, Va., for submarines.

He made several trips to Australia, where his ship would take octane gas to Brisbane and Sydney. They delivered drums of oil and fighter planes also.

During the crossings, Mr. Mindrup said there were several enemy submarine alerts.

"We were never fired upon - not that I know of," he said.

He remembers there were no cameras on board for security reasons. His ships were protected by a Navy gun crew of about 20 in addition to its regular crew of 35 men.

He said it was relatively safe on board ship until you got outside the three-mile-limit off the coast, where enemy submarines waited.

Men had fun on board where they could, he said. Some spent off-duty hours playing cards, listening to the radio or reading.

Sailing from San Francisco to Australia would take 18 days unless they were part of a convoy. Then, they could only go as fast as the slowest ship. His ship would put into port once a month for three days, then go to sea again.

He wouldn't say it was a close call, but in



B. Mindrup

1945, he was on board a ship just outside of Australia, when it was hit by a hurricane. The storm was so fierce it pushed them back out to sea for three days.

When word was received about the surrender of Japan, Mr. Mindrup was on a ship a day out of Seattle. When they landed, Seattle was wild with celebration, he said.

Mr. Mindrup served his tour of duty on three ships — the SS D.G. Scofield, the SS K.R. Kingsbury and the SS R.C. Stoner. His jobs included being a wiper, who cleans up oil and grease, and a fireman/water tender, who maintains the boilers.

"I considered making the military a career," he said. "But I wanted to come home, too."

He didn't consider what he and others did to be extraordinary.

"We were too young to know any better," he said. "The military did grow me up."

Mr. Mindrup settled down in Lenora with his wife, Betty. They were married 43 years before her death in 2001. They had three children; Joan, Lenora; Bernie, Norton; and Steve, California.

Rex Montgomery

Rex Montgomery served in 1942 and 1943, with the Army Signal Corp.

Paul Montoia

By December of 1943, the war effort was in full swing and the Army was drafting younger and younger men, many of them still in high school.

Paul Montoia was a senior in high school in Cuba, N.M., when he was drafted into the Army Air Force.

His older brother was in Germany, his younger brother in Korea, He made the third son to serve.

He spent 17 weeks at Camp Blanding, Fla., taking basic training to be a clerk/typist. Shortly after that, in 1944, he was on a troop ship to Okinawa. The crossing took 30 days and, like lots of other recruits, he got seasick. But he still pulled his share of kp (kitchen duty) while on board.



Paul Montoia

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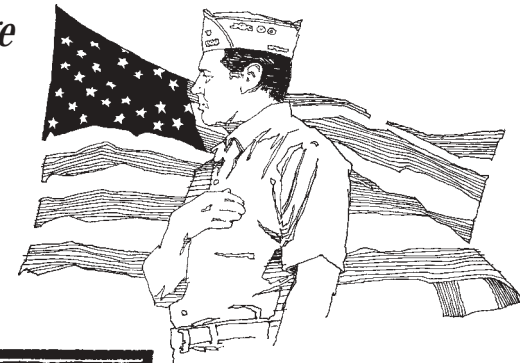
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