



Ray C. Marchetta

**World War II
U.S. Army
Pacific**

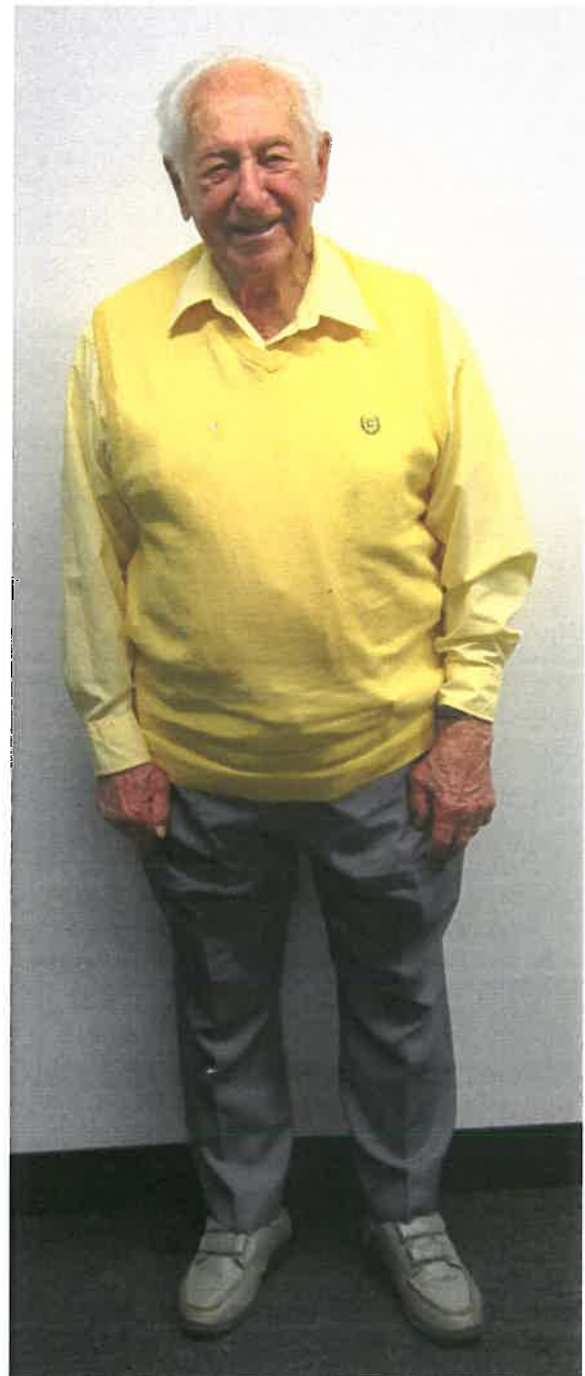
**222nd Hospital Unit
Staff Sergeant (Tec-3)**

Ray C. Marchetta

**Veterans
History
Project
Transcript**

**Interview conducted
December 3, 2015**

**Niles Public Library
Niles Public Library District
Niles, Illinois**



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Veterans History Project Transcript

Veteran: **Ray C. Marchetta** Rank: **Staff Sergeant (Tec -3)**

Branch of Service: **U.S. Army** Theater: **World War II - Pacific**

Unit: **222nd Hospital Unit**

Interview Date: December 3, 2015

Place: Niles Public Library
Library Lower Level Meeting Room

Equipment: Philips Digital Pocket Memo Recorder
Sony camera

Interviewer: Neil O'Shea
Videographer: Srdjan Vasilic

This Veterans History Project interview is being conducted on Thursday, December 3rd, in the year 2015, here at the Niles Public Library. My name is Neil O'Shea. I am a reference librarian and I am privileged to work as the Veterans History Project Coordinator here at the library. I have the great honor today of speaking with Mr. Ray Marchetta. Mr. Marchetta was born on the 22nd of May, 1922, in Chicago and he now lives in nearby Glenview. Mr. Marchetta learned of the Veterans History Project through his daughter Laura who does great volunteer work for the Honor Flights to Washington, D.C. (Ray: I went on it and she joined me). Ray here has his hat from the Honor Flight from Chicago. Laura obviously must have been inspired by her family's history and her father's achievements during the war. Ray has kindly consented to be interviewed for the project here today, and this is his story.

Ray, you were born in Chicago and I wonder what year you entered the service? (Interviewer's words)

I entered in 1942. As a matter of fact, it was December the 10th, coming up to my anniversary. (Veteran's words)

Were you drafted?

I tried to enlist. I wanted to go into the Air Corps and I was a half an inch too short. They flunked me out so I figured to heck with that noise. I'll wait to let them draft me which was what they did.

How tall did you have to be?

You had to be 5' 4" and I was 5' 3 1/2'.

Was there a particular reason why you thought the Air Corps might be ...

It was the glory and the glamor. So many of the fellows I went to school with became members. They volunteered and went to fight for England prior to us getting into the war - some of our fellows did, from Roosevelt High School. Then when we got into the war, why it was a different story. Everybody was going to be drafted, made \$21 a month, \$21 a day, once a month.

I think you mentioned high school. What high school did you attend?

Roosevelt High School. It was on Kimball and Wilson in Chicago.

The Rough Riders?

The Rough Riders, Go Rough Riders, Go!

Down the street from Von Steuben?

Yes.

So you graduated from high school in

1941

So you had a year then before you went in

Little less than a year

When you graduated from high school were you working?

I was working for Stewart Warner Alemite in that time frame and, as a matter of fact, we were building parts for torpedoes and that's one of the things I often think back about. We were really preparing in some manner, shape or form because the parts of the torpedo we made we were making prior to us going to war with Japan.

Interesting. Would any of the people working at that company have gotten a deferment because they were making ..?

Yes. I did get a deferment for six months.

It wouldn't go beyond that.

No, that was it; then I had to go into the service.

So having been turned down for the Army Air Corps then you were drafted into

I waited until they drafted me.

You were drafted into the U.S. Army. Do know where you were inducted?

I was inducted right in the Chicago Loop and then up to Fort Sheridan.

Did you go up on the train?

Exactly. It was a kind of an "L" train that ran up to Ft. Sheridan.

What were first days like in the Army? Did you enjoy it?

Having been inducted into the Army, when I finally did go in, we were given a 10-day leave after being inducted in – that was on the 21st. So I had a pass to go home for Christmas. And I was on the last shipping orders to go down to Little Rock, Arkansas, so I did not go home for Christmas which was rather disappointing. And the General in charge, this was at Camp Joseph D. Robinson in Little Rock, Arkansas, and he allowed us to go to town on liberty even though we didn't know our military orders and what have you. He said, "Salute all officers and do the best you can but you guys can go to town tonight."

So was your Basic Training was that at Fort Sheridan or down at Little Rock?

No, that was down in Little Rock, Arkansas at Camp Joseph D. Robinson.

Was that your first time away from home for any length of time?

Yes, sir.

That must have been kind of interesting.

Yes, it was. It was a big change.

And the Army is accepting people from all over the country, from all different walks of life. You are all meeting new people, learning how to work together. It must have been quite an experience.

It was totally different from anything we had done in the past. A couple of my buddies were already in the Navy and one also went into the Marine Corps by the time I was drafted.

So you complete the Basic Training in Arkansas and then they assign you to a company?

No, then they were trying to do an outfit like MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital). It was a 222nd Station Hospital and that's the organization I went to and I was attached to the Pharmacy. I was one of three men who were attached. We had a Pharmacist from civilian life and he passed the bar. We were learning as we went along so then we were mixing prescriptions and doing everything we should do once we got to Fort Jackson in South Carolina. After Basic Training we went to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina.

Do you think there was a particular reason why they put you in Pharmacy? Did you take a test or you did really well in high school biology?

No, they were looking for an outfit, the organization I was with, they always had female nurses and this organization they put together with male nurses in place of female nurses and they took guys with the top IQs as they came along so we were a very intelligent group.

So the test you took, an IQ

I scored pretty well and that's why I was put in and at that time we were told if we didn't make the status they wanted us to achieve, we would be "bedpan commandos," in other words, we would be orderlies. SO we studied and learned everything we had to do, quickly I assure you.

And you didn't find it hard to master the material?

No, it came easy. When you're young, you can do anything.

Were there any drill instructors who were difficult to work with, mean-spirited or maladjusted?

No, we all went in and we served our time, Basic Training, and from there as I say we went into the 222nd, as I stated, the 22nd Station Hospital Unit they were putting together and that's the organization I was with all through my Army career.

When you're in the 222nd and then you're in South Carolina, you must be thinking, "Are we going overseas? And which way are going?"

We went from Ft. Jackson, South Carolina to A. P. Hill, Virginia, which was a staging area so we knew we were going overseas. We didn't know where we were going, which way. We were given a one-week furlough at that time frame. We were able to go home on the train, and airplanes weren't that available at that time frame so we all took our trains to various spots and all we had to be back there. And after our staging at A.P. Hill, we made a trip out to California and we shipped over on New Year's Eve of '43.

Our first stop was the Marquesas Islands at the first stop we saw a British ship that had a hole blown in it, the size of that pane of glass there, from a Japanese submarine. We were traveling without an escort. We were an Army troop transport.

Did you sail from San Francisco?

We sailed from San Francisco.

Do you think your group had a preference of going to Europe or going to the Pacific?

No. We just went where they told us. We weren't certain where we were going. We had no idea.

So I imagine you were traveling on the ocean longer than if you had been going to Europe.

Oh yes, we went to the Marquesas Islands, our first stop. There were Jap subs going out every morning trying to pick up the submarine that was giving them a lot of grief. Men from the Merchant Marine manned the ship. We had Navy men of war who manned the guns, hauling Army transportation troops. And I was a member of the band. I had my accordion with me. I was part of ship's band then.

Were you able to keep your accordion with you all the time and the Army didn't mind?

Yes. I took it with me. There were times we didn't have our things with us. Our stuff was put in storage and it would catch up to us.

That must have been a great morale-booster.

I sent my accordion home; I didn't want it to get ruined. And I had a Colonel by the name of Colonel Curry and he said, "Marchetta, you are the biggest morale-booster we've got. Why don't you send home for your accordion? And if it gets ruined or something like that, we will replace it." But no one knew how long we were going to be or where we were going to be. Eventually, Colonel Curry was killed. He went with another group and he was looking to make full colonel and he was a silver leaf colonel. He was killed and we parted ways, but I never did get an accordion. But my accordion did go to Hades because it was so damp over there. Your leather shoes would get mildew.

What make was the accordion? Do you recall?

It was a DelPrincipe, made here in Chicago made by the DelPrincipe Company, I paid \$318 for that accordion.

That must have been a beautiful instrument.

It was great! But it took a lot of abuse. We had a great time with it. And then being with a hospital group I used to go to ward to ward to ward and play sing-a-longs every night of the week.

So your playing the accordion probably did as much as good as some of the pills you passed out as a pharmacist.

I have articles in here about everybody enjoying my playing.

I look forward to scanning them for the interview booklet. Was there a tradition of music in your family, musicians?

I wanted to play the accordion extremely bad and at that time it was Depression days and I couldn't afford an accordion. I started working in a grocery store when I was 13 years old. When I finally got enough, I

bought a guitar prior to getting the accordion. I played the Hawaiian guitar for a while and I was a boy soprano so a lady by the name of Sophie Alback and they owned a bakery in Chicago and being a boy soprano if I sang with her choral group, she would give me free piano lessons so that's how I learned how to play. It is quite an interesting story.

Yes, it is. So you must have musical aptitude.

I did. Yes, I played by ear. I don't read music but I can play with anybody. You name anything, hum a few bars and I'll play along. So it was a lot of fun. And you'd learn all the songs that everyone knew, "The Man on the Flying Trapeze," "Pistol Packin' Momma." We did parodies to almost everything and when we were in Fredericksburg, Virginia, which was close to A.P. Hill, I produced a show at the USO. There's some mention of that in some of these notes that I've got back here.

A different age or time you might have gone into musical theater

I could have probably but I did all these different things.

So the 222nd Station Hospital then – you're moving around the Pacific from island to island

We went from Banika in the Russells to Pavuvu. And the First Marine Division was over at Pavuvu. And that's when Bob Hope came over and we backed up Bob Hope's show. Bob left Banika and he flew over because the First Marine Division was at Pavuvu and their next invasion was Peleliu and they lost 70% killed in action, in that skirmish. So these were not happy days. But Bob Hope went over there and did the show but we did not go with him.

So was the 222nd Hospital on a ship or did you

No, we built our own hospital on the land. It's like putting a tinker toy, there were all panels and we put them all together. And my job at that time frame during the day was climbing coconut trees and pulling them down and making space for the wards and the barracks and things of this nature.

Pulling down the coconut trees ...?

Yes, I had a five-ton dump truck which I had a winch on the front of and I used to take a cable and a chain and I had climbers and I've got pictures of that in here. Where I would climb the tree, fasten it and go back to the truck and the winch would pull them right over. If you had it too high, it would snap the tree off about six foot too high. If it was too low, you would break a pin in the winch. That would snap so you watched what you did. I got to a point where I could take them right off almost level with the ground. I took all those main parts of the coconut tree and we built a theater called the "The 222nd - the Three Deuces Theater." And I've got pictures of that here.

And that would have been on

That was on Banika, in the Russell Islands and the Russells are part of the Solomon Islands.

So how was the food? Not so bad?

We had K-rations. We had C-rations, which included cigarettes. And if you didn't ... I never smoked until I went in the service. When I was 20 years old, I started to smoke and I smoked from 20 until I was 31 and I quit it after that.

Did you have kind some of ceremony when you went across the equator?

Yes, we did. I've got a copy of that here. We became shellbacks and I also became, there's another name for it when you fly over it. I've done both because when we left Guadalcanal, they wanted to get us up to Kwajalein in hurry so they flew us up there. So we actually flew across the Equator the second time. The first time we went by ship with the ceremony and everything.

Was it difficult to stay in touch with your family back in Chicago? Were they worried about you?

Oh yes. We received mail a lot of times, you know, and sometimes we didn't get mail. But it was nice whenever my mom could she would send me a little box of goodies. I loved peanut brittle and that usually got there in pretty good shape and you would share with all your buddies, you know?

So you mentioned that you didn't really smoke until you were in the Army then. Did you get beer rations, too?

Yes, beer was rationed. Once in a while if there would be a Liberty (ship) that came in, you'd be able to get your ration of beer. I didn't like beer so I usually gave it to my buddies. I was never a beer-drinker.

Did you play in Officers Clubs, too?

Oh, sure. Yes.

Were some of the guys able to get a drink?

I was a manager of the Officers Club on Banika in the Russells which was a completely sealed off area so any time I wanted booze I could get booze from the officer. And every now and then I get enough to share with some of my buddies.

But when were we stationed in AP Hill, Virginia, the people who were old enough, I was only 20 years old at that time frame so I couldn't get a ration book, but we used to take an ambulance and pretend that we took people who were wounded or something or hurt and take them to Walter Reade Hospital and we'd go up there and we'd buy liquor and we'd bring it back with an ambulance with the sirens going and the whole nine yards. We were, so, you see the stunts that they pulled on the MASH tv show, we made them look very silly. We did the same thing long before they did. We had a lot of fun doing it.

Was there any time when you thought your unit was under severe attack or in danger?

No. We had some sniper action air raids but we were never in hand-to-hand combat.

The air raid sirens must be kind of scary.

When we were on Kwajalein, we had two-story barracks. If you were up on the 2nd floor, you'd dive out because you had a fox hole right alongside of it.

Did your unit ever have to care for any prisoners of war?

I think we had some of them but we kept them separate.

Or any of the natives on the island?

Yes, we took care of the natives. I have pictures of some of the natives we took care of.

The pictures you have did you take them?

Yes, or one of the fellas in my outfit. Film was very tough to come by.

And they didn't mind you taking pictures; they wouldn't censor your photos.

Oh no, I couldn't send any of these home. We were totally under censorship. We had a party one night where all the officers filled the shoes of the enlisted men and the enlisted men had a party that night so the captains and 1st Lieutenants, 2nd Lieutenants, they all took our places for that night so we got one night where we were off.

This picture here (pointing to picture in photograph album) shows me up a tree when I was taking down trees where I was climbing up it. I have so many of these. That's a hospital that we built.

Was that on Banika?

Yes on Banika in the Russell Islands.

This picture here is "Ray, Terry and a native?"

Terry was one of the fellows that was in our outfit. That was one of the natives. They used them as office orderlies some time.

Well, all these different places written out on the Biographical Data Form: Banika in the Russell Islands, Guadalcanal in the Solomons, Kwajalein in the Marshalls ...

And here is a picture of the 222nd Station Hospital Theater and all those logs are trees that I pulled down.

So that would be coconut wood.

Coconut wood, yes, sir.

And that was on Banika

So you were on Banika for the longest

About my longest stint was Banika

About a year?

Yes, close to a year.

I had malaria while I was on Guadalcanal. On my 21st birthday I was in the hospital with malaria. What a memory that is.

Did you catch that from a mosquito?

Yes, a mosquito. And I was feeling fine the day before, and I worked in the lab and in the pharmacy both. And this one guy, I thought he was kidding me – his name was Mathew Bohn, and he said, "Marchetta, you got malaria!" And I said, "You're full of condensed garbage." He said, "Come on in and do your own slide" because I had enough knowledge to do this. All you do is prick our finger, get a drop of blood, put on a slide then we had to process a slide. And sure as heck I had malaria! But I didn't believe him. But that next day my temperature was running very high. I was lying on a wooden cot and I think the cot was bouncing on the dirt ground.

So in those days did they have vaccination for malaria?

No, you took quinine and atabrine. But the thing was I never thought I had it. I would have sworn I didn't have it. I was feeling fine.

So that knocked you out of commission for a week or two weeks?

Light duty with an engineering outfit. Light duty was running a 30 lb. jackhammer!

I think one of the veterans said you could get a relapse with malaria.

I had it six times. I had it 4 times overseas and twice after I came home. I had it once after I was married, which was two years later.

All those pictures came from different spots.

And this would have been a hospital that you built.

Yes. We were pretty capable guys. We built a boat. There was a freshwater lake on Banika.

And here's a pretty girl on a farm.

That was one of the girls back home, Marge Sullivan. And we used to write. That was my buddy's girlfriend, not my girlfriend. She wrote to us all, all the time, religiously. She wrote some of the nicest letters of all. She's gone too. It's amazing, all these people. I've got pictures of the cemeteries on Guadalcanal and on Banika both.

Ray, let me ask, there was never any doubt among the men you served with, that the United States was going to win the war?

We were going to win. Our outfit was slated to go to Okinawa for staging. We were slated to go in on the invasion of Japan. We would have lost manpower. The Japanese were well-fortified.

Operation Coronet, they reckon there would have been a million casualties. So when you heard the news that ...

When we heard that the war was over, we praised President Truman to the highest level, believe me. It's amazing how all the different things you think back about, just jotting through this book myself. And I saw Ed Clark sitting here. This is at our pharmacy and this is Carole Landis.

So she was coming out for a USO show.

She was killed in an airplane crash. She and Glenn Miller were both casualties of the war.

Glenn Miller, he died in Europe, right?

Yes, in the European theater.

That's what I say, as I glance at these things, all the different guys.

Yes, they all suggest

Now this was a quarters that we had built for any of the entertainers that came over. That's all screened in and everything

And that would have been on...

Yes, that's also on Banika

So you must have had some famous entertainers who came through there.

There's a fellow by the name of Larry Adler who played the harmonica. This guy could play Bach, Beethoven or boogie; I mean he was just unreal. We backed up his show too. He was really a tremendous entertainer.

You know I had the best of two worlds because I got to play along with these people and we had a lot of fun with that. I was so thankful that I did take my accordion with because I was good for morale not only for the manpower but mine also.

Because you enjoyed playing music and having it appreciated. So Colonel Curry was kind of a hero then.

Oh yes He was high on my list. Unfortunately he got killed. He left our organization after a while. But, you know, the accordion gave me different advantages.

I'm glancing through some of these pictures.

You know, Ray, I asked if you were ever worried or felt threatened but you did take some shrapnel.

I did take a little shrapnel – a real tiny amount. That's been in there all my life from Army days on. That was during an air raid on Kwajalein. We used to call the air raids "washing machines" or "piss-call charlies," you know, wake you up in the middle of the night.

But you know I even went up in a VMB 214 which was a Marine bomber squadron while we were on Kwaj and we didn't have anything to do at night so I'd take a ride with them. They had islands that the Japanese were still holding and we'd leave them build so much of a runway up and then when they got so much up and then we'd go in and bomb it. They only had 25-caliber machine guns at that time frame.

One time there was a Jap sub that undoubtedly left them off, with an ack-ack gun. There were two guys; Blackie was one and his brother. One of the brothers was killed because we didn't know they had the stronger, higher caliber gun. One of them was shot down and killed.

So sometimes at night just to, for a change of pace, you would go up on these Marine

I'd go on these fights. It was safe. We'd go in there.

Your commanding officer wouldn't have minded?

No. Well, maybe he would have but I never asked and I proceeded to do so.

Even though you were in the Army hospital Unit, you looked after Maines, too.

Oh sure

And other armed forces.

Yes. We very fortunate.

As a matter of fact one day, this is a story off what happened, there was a commanding officer from Knob Pier – he's the guy when the ships come in and my one buddy Ernie, I knew that he was on the US Prince William which was a jeep carrier, a small carrier, and they were coming into Kwajalein. The war was now over. And we had enough points to go home. I had gone out to Knob Pier and I asked the commander of Knob Pier if he could fix him in with the ship. And he said, "Sure come out this afternoon when they get in and we'll take you out there. When I got back to my outfit with a jeep, I found out that we were going out on the USS Prince William. I played the accordion on the Prince William coming home. But we went from Kwajalein to Pearl Harbor.

And guess who was on that ship? My buddy, my buddy was on the ship! And if we tried to work that out, we never could have.

Was your buddy from Chicago?

Yes, we both went to high school together.

Ernie Ott we could have arranged that. I was just very lucky.

He was Army also?

No, he was Navy on board the Prince William.

But you all came home

Yes, all five of us came home with all of our pieces and I mean that is amazing.

And that would have been

from 1942-46. I was only in the Army three years, just over two years of it was overseas

Would you have considered making a career in the Army?

No, I wanted out. As a matter of fact, I thought I was going to become a pharmacist outside so I went down to the Illinois college of pharmacy in downtown Chicago, and the Dean was going to waive two years of my college education. I'd only have to go two years rather than four and then take my bar. And prior to my coming in, he passed away. The new dean would not give me credit for the two years. So I was really down about that and that was right after I got home. So consequently, I went back into, I was a construction worker, I was a carpenter for 65 years with Local 58.

With your high IQ you wouldn't have considered using the GI Bill?

I did for a while, I went back to school at Chicago Tech for two years and got an Associate Degree. I did do that. I was a superintendent for 38 years with the same company – short-term employment!

So you didn't have a hard time finding a job after the war.

No, I went back to Stewart Warner for a while but I was making as much as my boss was and I couldn't get a raise then. Well, then my argument was they should give him a raise along with me but they wouldn't do that. So I decided I was going to go in then and leave.

Did you live at home when you came home?

Yes, until I got married.

How long was that after you got out?

I got married when I was 24 years old, going to be 25.

Did you and your wife have any difficulty finding housing after the war?

Yes, we did. As a matter of fact, I had to clean the stairway on a three-story building to get the apartment in there. And I agreed to do so, and that's how I got my apartment.

Had you known your wife before you went into the Army?

No, just a .., we both worked together at Stewart Warner but she was part of the Lawndales in Chicago, excellent dancer. She was a dancing instructor at an outfit like Arthur Murray. Arthur Murray taught me dancing in a hurry. She worked at another studio which was in competition to them. She was an excellent dancer.

Did she ever see you in your uniform?

Oh, sure, yes. As a matter of fact, I used to skate five nights a week. I was a guard at Riverview Roller Rink before going into service. And I taught waltz and fox trot so I wasn't a lame guy.

You can play the music and dance it!

I do well dancing. I was an outstanding skater, outstanding water skier, and snowmobiler, you name it. I've had my fun in life. I am a very fortunate man.

You are physically and intellectually coordinated.

I have a good outlook on life. I hesitate at times because I can't remember but I'm better than the average bear at 93.

Did your family enjoy good health; you inherited good genes?

No, my mother had a bad heart. Mom died when she was 72. My father died when he was 94. My father was a paper-cutter. He ran the bindery for the Franklin Company downtown.

So your last name, Marchetta, is Italian

Yes, my mother was German. That's a great combination, (chuckling.)

And your parents then were both born here?

Yes, my dad was born here but my mother came over when she was three months old. But my dad was born at Taylor and Racine in Chicago

That's like the old neighborhood.

Exactly. My dad's father brought over bonded paper. Know what bonded paper is? In years gone by all your legal stationery was bonded paper. My dad's dad brought that process over here. They were very wealthy at one time. With the Italians though they had a way, it didn't go to the next of kin or the family. It all goes back to the partner. That's the way it went. We got nothing.

And then you moved from the west side.

No, we were always in Albany Park on the northwest side of Chicago I spent all of my life, I was born in the house -my dad bought a home prior to marrying to my mother. He was pretty wealthy. He was able to do so. 4307 N. St. Louis Avenue for a long, long time.

Ray, you came out as a Staff Sergeant

Yes, sir.

Do you recall when you got your promotions?

I was a Corporal for a long, long time.

We had a Major with our outfit by the name of Major Gresk and he wouldn't pass out our promotions; he was tight with them, you know. And so finally when he left our organization, I jumped two grades within two months' time – because everybody knew me and they knew I was worth the stripes.

You were good at getting along with people, but you must have been a good supervisor, too.

I got along well. Yes.

And a good manager as your success in later life attests to.

Yes, no matter what I did.

And then you received a good conduct medal and a Battle Star for Guadalcanal.

Yes.

After the war were you able to stay in contact with your wartime buddies?

A couple of them, Bill Brust and Vinny Guerino, I went out to New York and they came here and then we just drifted apart. Bill was working for Tiffany's in New York. And he married his wife and we even had a reunion in New York so we flew out for the reunion. We had a great time.

Did you join any veteran's organizations?

I'm a member of the VFW, the Skokie Post.

Did the good old 3-Deuces ever have a reunion?

Yes, they had the one we had the one up in New York. That was right after we were married. My wife and I, we both went to it.

I sense that we are coming to the end of the interview. There are always two questions that we ask. Number one is: How do you think your service in the military and those experiences affected your life?

I think they were beneficial if I consider it realistically. I didn't like some of it. But you know we were fed a certain amount of propaganda and the propaganda we received was that "This war to end all wars." And that's what we thought we were fighting the war to end all wars. It didn't turn out that way. There have more conflicts since then.

But it was amazing performance to fight a war on two fronts.

But you figure we lost more people in the Civil War than we did in World War II.

Flying out, it was a great time for me to go on Honor Flight Chicago. When we were first going to go to Washington, DC, and I told my wife and the VW said "Hey, you guys are able to do this." My wife said I want to go also." You were a loner if you took Honor Flight Chicago. So I did take her. She was in a wheel chair at that time frame. And I took her to Washington and we toured all the memorials. And I brought her back. And then when she was in a nursing home over here, close at hand, just down Waukegan Road, at Bethany for three years.

Yes, we had a Veterans History Project Veteran at Bethany.

So consequently, her roommate was one of the fellows that had gone on the Honor Flight. He said, "Ray, it is totally different; go and do it." And I did and I thoroughly enjoyed it. That was the first time, I never talked about my days in service prior to that.

What year did you go?

in October, 2012.

You just mentioned that when you went on the Honor Flight you talked more about

I was telling my kids what when went on. I never talked to anybody about what went on in the service.

The Library of Congress would like its cooperating partners to get interviews with Viet Nam veterans but the Viet Nam veterans

they don't want to talk about it.

But your daughter, Laura, says that she thinks that once they make their Honor Flights and they come home, they may talk.

Yes, it'll be different. It makes you proud of what you did. And we came home just a flock of guys coming home and that was it. We all came home and we were happy to be home. The day of getting my discharge from the Army. My one buddy came to Camp Grant to pick me up right close to Rockford. It's not there any longer, but Camp Grant is where I was discharged from. And Lenny borrowed his dad's car and came down to pick me up and drove me home. My family did not; Lenny did, my buddy. It's remarkable.

And then the second question is "Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?"

Yes, I resent some of the things. I shouldn't get on my soap box now. We were always very proud of what we did even though we didn't talk about it. I think that some of things that our president has done some time was belittling to our country and I'm kind of a die-hard on that. Our country is the greatest country in the world and I'll run the flag up for it as high as I can. This is life and it goes on. But we become disillusioned by some of the things that our current president has done. And I rest my case there. I don't want to get on that too much.

In the Pledge of Allegiance that we say at the Veterans Breakfast and that the last line, "with liberty and justice for all." That's

big! And now they say this, "We can't pray in schools." And we can't do this and can't do that. And that's not right. That's not what our country was founded on. I've become very bitter about that, but that's just my outlook. I won't say what I really think, (chuckling) and let's just leave it that.

No, I appreciate your candor and sharing it.

Ray, is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't covered in the interview? Some memories that are prompted by a picture or two?

Like I say, this is a cemetery at Guadalcanal. The natives built this chapel. I don't know if you have heard of any of that. And you look both ways down there and you see all these white crosses. Every one of them is one of our guys. This the right side of the chapel and the left side of the chapel and these crosses stretch out as far as you can see. We lost a lot of men there.

This is my buddy Vinnie Guerino right out in front. The natives wove all the fronts of these building and everything.

Out of palm fronds

Yes, fronds. That what this is.

They really make the most of their environment.

Oh, yes, these guys, it's uncanny. And then this is looking each way. The pictures are not that great. Here's some more of the pictures there and I had pictures of the cemetery at Banika also – looks very similar.

I see a Father Letcher

Fr. Letcher was a Catholic chaplain

And the chaplains were important, I think.

Oh, you had better believe it. I almost transferred. I was Lutheran. I almost went Catholic at the time of that. I used to play cards with him. We used to play cards a lot. I don't play cards at all now.

That's kind of a staged picture there, right – "No mail, today."

Yes.

Everybody looks sad. Why was there no mail on that day? The plane didn't come or the ship?

We just didn't get mail. There were a lot of days like that.

And there's another, Father Duley.

And Major Gresk

Yes, he's the guy who didn't want to pass out,

He was kind of tight-fisted with ..

Yes, with the promotions.

These must be some of the buddies that went to Europe, there's pictures in here from Belgium.

That's my buddy John. He repaired locomotive engines over there.

You remember Jack Carson; he's current. We did Jack's shows. We did one of his shows, little Martha Tilton. This gal here is June Brunner; she played the accordion. That's her right there. So I had a lot of fun.

As a matter of fact, this page right here. You asked if I ever became a shellback. There's a shellback and then the other item is the ship's band those two passes on there. This has been through the war. There are pictures in therefrom all over.

There's another pretty girl, marked "glamour."

Those early shots, some of them were of civilian gals. That was me becoming a shellback.

"You were a trusty shellback, having crossed the equator aboard the SS President ..

Johnson attested to by the transport commander." James Lynch, 6th of January, 1944, the Special Duty Pass."

But there's pictures in there of pillboxes, you know. This is where we added on to Kwajalein. Kwajalien was not long enough. Kwajalein was an atoll not an island so we had to add onto the island. We put another half mile on the island so that we could land B-29s there.

Where did you get the dirt for that?

We scooped out the coral and built it up

And then there's a picture of the theater.

Yes, the Three Deuces Theater is in there.

This would have been at Kwajalein.

No, these are at Kwaj. The others are Banika.

Boy, look at all those potions and liquids.

Yes, we mixed everything from scratch. We didn't have the pre-mixed medications.

There's a big plane.

That's a B-29.

That's when the 29 first came in. As a matter of fact, the Enola Gay was going to land at Kwajalein and then they decided no and it took off from somewhere close to Okinawa.

Mr. Bendrick

Yes.

The navy takes over

Yes, they relieved us from duty.

It was a Navy Hospital then.

We were Army but they took ours over. There was a Navy and an Army hospital on Banika; we had both of them. But this is my buddy's ship, the USS Prince William.

Prince William sounds like it could have been named for

There's a landing in Alaska called Prince William Sound. That's what the ship is named for

That's Ernie Ott that you see sticking his head out here there but he didn't know I was on this island. He didn't know where I was, but I knew he was aboard that ship because my mom had, he had come in on leave, and she says "Ernie is on the USS Prince William." So I always watched for it any time. So when they came into port why that was really going to be special for me.

And this ship here with the guns,

Yes, that's the USS Prince William.

On the way back to the States

We went to Hawaii on that, from Kwajalein to Hawaii, and then from Hawaii to the States we were on the Marquis Island which was a Kaiser, an aluminum carrier, the small carrier

At this point there wasn't much chance that you would use those guns?

No way, the war was over. That's why we were all there.

Did you gain any weight or grow while you were in the army?

No, I came out a 135 pounds.

This picture here would be Suzy. Here are different events. My sister getting married; I was still in service at that time frame.

But the picture album gives you an idea. I brought it along so sometimes a picture is worth a few words.

Anything else? OK.

This picture is when we got out. We had a party in Hawaii on King Street; that was half-way between Waikiki and Pearl Harbor in Honolulu.

And these gentlemen are

All guys from our outfit

You want to see what a pill box looks like? See all the reinforcing in there.

That's like iron

All steel-reinforcing rods. All over the place.

Our Navy did a real job on Kwajalein because they laid off shore with warships that just lobbed shells in and blew the hell out of these things There wasn't a tree any taller than that anywhere on the island when the Navy got done with that. So then we went in, an easy campaign. I didn't get a star from that because we got there two days after they declared it a safe area.

So this is a destroyed Japanese pill-box?

Yes

I'd like to scan these also.

I worked at island-command after everything got sorted out and we got notice that we were going to have to, put up a contingent of marines around-the-clock on the Enola Gay. Nobody knew it was the Enola Gay. No one knew anything about what was going on, but I was working. I got the message on the teletype that night.

And this was when you were on Guadalcanal?

No, that was on Kwajalein

So you got the message when you were on duty and then you told

I told the commanding officer immediately that we had to make ready for these guys.

This is when the officers took over and they were able to send us home. You cut off on Banika. That was in the Russell's. But the officers took over for all the enlisted men.

So "Beers, Song..." and you were providing the music?

Yes, I was part of the music, all of the time.

I would like to copy this also if I could

I got all these little notes ... "R. Marchetta played his famous accordion!" right up in there.

"Private Roberts had a golden baritone voice."

He sang beautifully.

You said that one gentleman had a voice that rivalled Sinatra...

That was the guy in another picture.

So this weekly (musical) series with the patients, was this was on Kwajalein ... or Banika?

It could have been or both because I did it there too. But this was little Martha Tilton with Jean Brunner there.

Was it your idea to do this?

No we had a little paper. He put that out

"This was the Three Deuces Newsletter Volume I Number 3. Lt Colonel D.S. Curry."

He was our Commanding Officer. He was a good guy.

That was at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Could you read the second paragraph?

It says: "Well, well, we always T-5 (I was a Corporal then) Ray Marchetta was a good entertainer, but now he has turned professional stage director and formed a stage company giving those popular USO shows on Wednesday evenings. Other members of the company are T/5 Ray Arden, T/5 Will L Brust and T/5 Vincent P Guarino." Bill Brust danced with Bojangles!

Wow

How do you like that? When he was a kid, like Shirley Temple danced with Bojangles when she was a kid. So did Bill. So that's tells you something when I was director of the show.

These are all the different guys. And here's another picture of Jack Benny all alone. This where if you were a T/3 or better you could get a pass like that. So that's when I was in Hawaii. With that pass I could go off the base anytime. You were trusted.

This is "the 29th of November, 1945."

That's when we were coming home. I went horseback riding up at Diamond Head. And, oh boy I had a problem with hemorrhoids. Moustaches, mine looked "like an old toothbrush," ha-ha, they said.

This our farewell supper at Donna's Diner in Hawaii. That's before they split our outfit up, we all went our special ways then.

Yes, that was over on King's Street, that's about halfway in between Honolulu and Waikiki Beach.

This was when I made T-3, a letter of appreciation, the good Captain gave me some nice words.

"1st of November 1945."

Well, Mr. Marchetta, I want to thank you for an enlightening and generous interview and you've documented it with photographs and memorabilia

I brought them because I forgot so much.

You remembered so much

Well I'm better than your average bear. My pleasure there's so many times you go thorough life and you'd like to talk about this and you never do.

This is more than I've opened to anyone

Do you remember the gentleman who survived Torpedo Squadron 8 when they went into Midway? Ensign George Gay. He was one guy out of the entire squadron who lived. I met him. When I was president of Navy League, we had him as our guest speaker. We drank until 2 o'clock in the morning, b-s-ing one another. We had a great time together. I've got the book autographed at home.

Ray, you didn't mention President of the Navy League

Yes, I was President of the Navy League. I started out. I did the rodeo three years in a row, and they wanted me to be the president. Most of the time the presidents of Navy League were bank presidents, attorneys, and Ray Marchetta snuck in there! I was a construction superintendent and I was the president. And I've got plaques and some things at home I didn't bring along. That's civilian life, afterward but I've got all of that at home too. I had one wall, my ego wall, so to speak – I have all these things when John Eski was the commanding officer over there.

My wife's nephew is a fellow by the name of Curt Ames, a full colonel, Colonel Ames was the Commanding Officer of MAG 48 (Marine Air Control Group) maybe eight or nine years ago. But that takes in 13 states, Commanding Officer of MAG 48. He lived up at Great Lakes at that time frame. He had billeted up there. He owns a brewery now, one of these mini-breweries, where they make these craft beers, up in McHenry. Now it's called Chain' o' Lakes Brewery, but that belongs to him. He's got entertainment up there. They're not open every day of the week but they are open quite a bit. They had a big shindig for veterans. The Marines do the big birthday ball. You name it.

Ray, I have to ask you, do you still play the accordion?

No, my hands. I played the organ. I went from the accordion to the organ. I still have the big Hammond at home. I enjoy it. I sit there with one note. I can't play it like I did. I sit there and cry. I don't have the ability anymore. Because I could play anything, if I knew the song, I could play it. I knew the melody. I never realized what an advantage that was until people started telling me, "How in the hell do you that?" It's just the way. I was blessed with a good ear instead of a tin one. And I really enjoyed it all.

Like I say, I've had a wonderful life. I don't have many regrets.

Thank you very much for coming in today and for giving us this generous interview and I look forward to preparing it for your consideration and approval. Thanks, Ray.

My pleasure. Thank you so much for having me.

Reader's Note:

The Appendix of eight pages follows and amplifies Ray's remarks with scans from his extensive album of photographs and original clippings. The last page is a copy of his "Enlisted Record and Report of Separation/Honorable Discharge."

three deuces

VOL 1 NO. 8

222nd STATION HOSPITAL

14 AUGUST 1943

DEUCES SWIM AT FIRST A.P. HILL
COLONIAL BEACH PARTY PLEASES MEN

SINGERS' OPEN WEEKLY SERIES

More than thirty-five patients and members of the detachment joined in the opening program of weekly singing Tuesday night.

Everyone enjoyed the evening in a large measure due to the help of Pfc. R. Marchetta who played his famous accordion, keeping tune to the singing of T/3 Edward J. Clark, Jr. Also "on deck" were Pfc. James R. Roberts with his golden baritone voice; Private J. J. Gresko whose voice is so popular with all of us; T/4 Clarence Anderson - a surprise performance and T/4 Al Hirsch - no surprise.

Private Nick Lombardi got the big kick of the night out of the singing of the new song about the soldier who

was made a barber. This was one of the songs in the Army Hit Kit which was distributed to each participant as were the army song books by Lieut. Samuel Sheinfeld, Special Services Officer and Chaplain A.R. Henry who helped organize the evening's entertainment.

Clippings from the 222nd Station Hospital Newsletter, "The Three Deuces," attesting to Ray Marchetta's abilities as an accordionist and stage director, enlivening Army life at A.P. Hill Military Reservation, Virginia.

This newsletter, reported that at the Friday night "gala" event, "Pfc. Ray Marchetta did that accordion proud."

HOSPITAL A.P. HILL MILITARY RESERVATION, VIRGINIA

Cartoon from QNS Stencil

HOSPITAL IDLE CHATTER

"Tommy Tucker" in the person of our friend Nicoli took top honors in the USO dance the other night. How those feet did move around.....T/5 Casimir Plato is becoming so popular with the Virginia Belles, he no longer has to take long trips to meet them. They come to Bowling Green now to meet him. What a lucky guy!

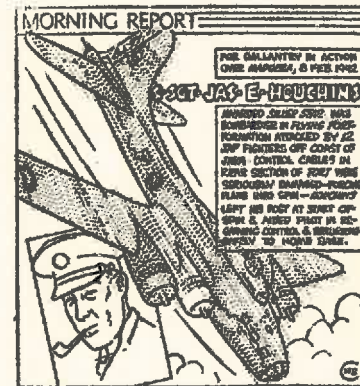
Well, well! We always knew T/5 Ray Marchetta was a good entertainer but now he has turned professional stage director and formed a stage company giving those popular USO shows on Wednesday evenings. Other members of the company are T/5 Ray Ardente, T/5 Will L. Brust and T/5 Vincent P. Guarino. Do they call that a "T-5" company???

T/5 Eugene Tatu is beating his gums over the lack of understanding of our postal clerks at Bowling Green. To them 222 and 230 are often all the same hence amusing mail mixups continually take place. This may account for the fact that Corporal Hurley (Howard) finds his mail delayed these days. Poor Pvt. Carl Scaramuzza, finds the going even tougher because once upon a time he was a 230th man.

Now that T/5 Antoni Lesniak finds it useless to try to hold onto all the electric fans, is he going to search in definitely for candles for the tent or that latrine lamp that is still a big question to Sgt. Greely as he searches for the Diogenes who made off with the latrine lantern recently????

Lt. MAX HOFFMAN is understood to have sent his warm congratulations to Lt. HENRY HERN on learning from the MYOM that S/Sgt. Barcheski is no longer a patient in E-4.

Anyone wanting to see real skill at dodging falling trees, join the wood chopping committee and watch Private Wynn's ability and PFC L. Wilson's adroit placement of the fallen timber.



Lt. HENDRICKS shows real ability at chipping the tall timber, while T/4 Wolverton uses a "Jitterbug" swing.

You fellows who missed out on the last group of passes, smile, for you all will get the first set to be given out when the unit returns.

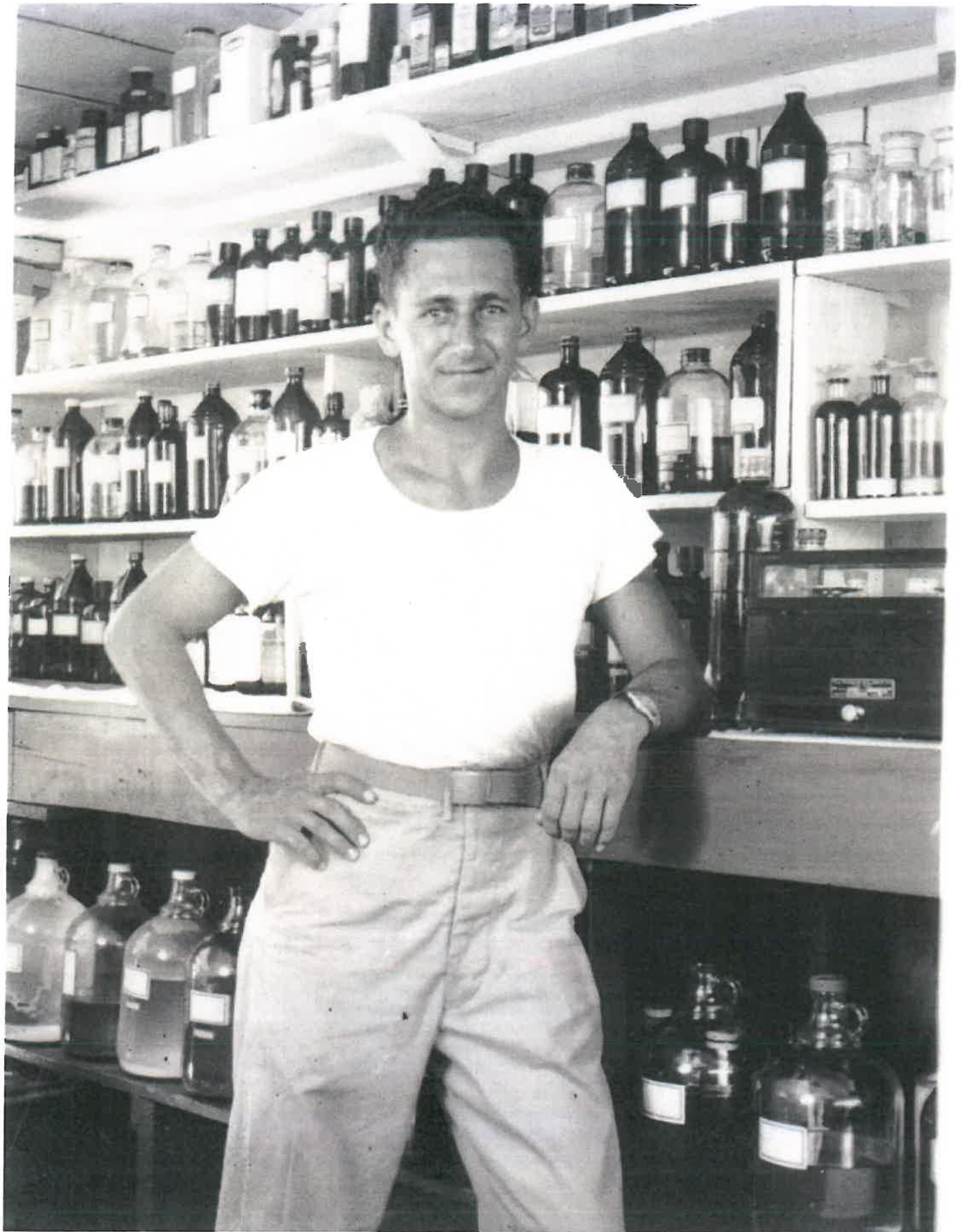
The 230th is reported to be hoping for the departure of the 222nd so that the D.G. field will be a little easier. Reminds us of the way the Three Deuces prayed for the departure of the 76th Division some time ago.

Staff Sergeant Dreyfuss and T/4 Hirsch; T/4 Anderson and Corporal Baron are going around watching each other like cats and dogs. Seems as if the question of the poor C.O.'s eating is at stake. We're praying for the C.O.'s side. Get that Sergeant Dreyfuss!!!! By the way, Dreyfuss hasn't shown Sergeant Harley how to make a fire yet. Neither has he finished the explaining of the last ten lessons on how to become a Duck Private.

Too, too, too truly yours,

St. Deuce

**Ray Marchetta in pharmacy setting as member of the
222nd Station Hospital Unit on Banika, Russell Islands**



Flyer for enlisted men's party on Banika when officers filled in for two hours
so all the soldiers could attend the event



HOW TO BE HAPPY THROUGH ON

Attend The ENLISTED MEN'S

PART 2

FOOD

ENTERTAINMENT

SONG

BEER

MUSIC

MORE BEER

MAN: Are you worried about your job? Then check below to see which Joe will cover your job from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M.

SWITCHBOARD: "Pvt" Flora

GUARDS, NURSES AREA: "Cpl" Dorland and "Pvt" Hendrick

CQ (RECEIVING OFF.) "Tec 5" Holland.

MOTOR POOL: "Pfc" Hoffman.

CQ (DETACHMENT) "1st Sgt" Byrne.

WARDMASTERS:

1 & 3: "T-5" Wunderlich.

5 & 6: "Cpl" Friedman.

8 & 9: "Pfc" Bannha.

12 & 13: "T-5" Paquin.

14, 15, 16: "T-4" McRae.

PATIENTS DAYROOM: "T-5" Henry

GENERATORS: "Acting Pfc" Currie.

CQ (Hqs): "M/Bgt" Whitmire.

* * *



TONIGHT

Patients' Mess Hall - 6 P.M.



Kwajelein Island after pre-invasion bombardment, rebars visible as Ray stands along side the pill box.



Ray and self-described "toothbrush" moustache.



Left to right: (entertainers) June Brunner and Martha Tilton. "This is a poor picture as these girls are really nice looking." Ray gave June the music to "Tico-Tico."



Ray on the left and "on the air" from Kwajalein with guitarist, Joe, who "had a voice as good as Sinatra's. " John T. Owens pictured on the violin was a talented instrumentalist. Invited to play one time only for 15 minutes , the Army Station soon gave them a weekly two-hour slot.



Ray stands to the right of visiting entertainer, Jack Benny, on Kwajalein and on his left is the excellent dancer and soldier, Bill Brust, who had performed with Bojangles and Shirley Temple.

HEADQUARTERS
222D STATION HOSPITAL
APO 241, c/o POSTMASTER
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

1 November 1945

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation.

TO : Tec 3 Ray G. Marchetta, this Command.

1. I extend the appreciation of this entire command to you on the admirable manner in which you have performed your duties in this organization.

2. I extend also my own personal thanks for your loyalty and devotion which have contributed greatly to the record set by this organization.

J. A. Wunderlich, Jr.
J. A. WUNDERLICH, JR.
Captain, Medical Corps
Commanding

Ray's Letter of Appreciation from the Medical Corps Commander, Captain J. A. Wunderlich, JR.



Ray and Ernie Ott in Chicago outside 4307 N. St. Louis Ave leaning on the 1941 Buick belonging to pal Johnny Muehlfelder, one of the 5 guys from the neighborhood who all returned safely and in one piece from the serving in the war.

ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION

BOOK 187 PAGE 398 HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL MARCHETTA RAY C		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 36 629 068	3. GRADE TEC 3	4. ARM OR SERVICE MD	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION 222ND STA HOSP		7. DATE OF SEPARATION 13 JAN 46	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION CAMP GRANT ILL SEPARATION CENTER		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 4307 N ST LOUIS AVE CHICAGO 18 ILL		10. DATE OF BIRTH 22 MAY 22	11. PLACE OF BIRTH CHICAGO ILL		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT SEE 9		13. COLOR EYES HAZEL	14. COLOR HAIR BROWN	15. HEIGHT 5'3"	16. WEIGHT 131 lbs
17. NO. SEX NONI		18. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. INSPECTOR 4-78.671			
19. RACE WHITE	20. MARITAL STATUS SINGLE	21. U.S. CITIZEN YES	22. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND RATE (I.e., Infantry, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.) NONE		

MILITARY HISTORY

23. DATE OF INDUCTION 11 DEC 42		24. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 21 DEC 42		25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE FT. SHERIDAN ILL	
26. SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA YES		27. LOCAL S.S. BOARD NO. 139		28. COUNTY AND STATE COOK CO ILL	
29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE SEE 9		30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. PHARMACY TECH 859			
31. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS GUADALCANAL					
32. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS 4 OVERSEAS SERVICE BARS 1 SERVICE STRIPE AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL ASIATIC-PACIFIC THEATER RIBBON W/1 BRONZE BATTLE STAR GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL MERITORIOUS UNIT AWARD					
33. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION NONE					
34. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES SMALLPOX IM DEC 43 TYPHOID ST JAN 43 TETANUS ST FEB 43			35. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN DATE OF DEPARTURE 31 DEC 43 DATE OF RETURN 30 DEC 45 GRADE TEC 3		
36. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE CONTINENTAL SERVICE YEARS MONTHS DAYS 1 0 17 FOREIGN SERVICE YEARS MONTHS DAYS 2 0 6			37. HIGHEST GRADE HELD TEC 3		
38. PRIOR SERVICE NONE					
39. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION CONV OF GOVT RR 1-1 (DEMOBILIZATION) AR 615-165 DTD 15 DEC 44					
40. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED NONE					
41. EDUCATION (Year) Grade 4					

PAY DATA YOU 20418

42. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURPOSES YEARS MONTHS DAYS 3 1 3			43. MUSTERING OUT PAY TOTAL \$ 300 THIS PAYMENT \$ 100		44. SOLDIER DEPOSITS 563.51	45. TRAVEL PAY 4.40	46. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER 800.83 G F DOLBEAR CAPT	
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INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN THIRTY-ONE DAYS THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAY TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.											
47. KIND OF INSURANCE Nat. Serv. U.S. Govt. None		48. HOW PAID Allotment Direct to V. A.		49. Effective Date of Assignment Discontinuance 31 JAN 46		50. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50) 20 FEB 46		51. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH 6.50		52. INTENTION OF VETERAN Continue Continue Only Discontinue	

53.



RIGHT THUMB PRINT

54. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)

LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED ASR SCORE (2 SEP 45) 53
INACTIVE STATUS ERC FROM 11 DEC 42 TO 20 DEC 42

READY FOR SERVICE
FEDERAL LAW #303
MADE THROUGH