



The NEW BERN MIRROR

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Copy

VOLUME 2

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1959

NUMBER 9

On a recent sleepless night we got to thinking about some of the Marines and their wives who had New Bern as their temporary home during World War II.

Forgetting the bad eggs (and there weren't as many as complaining folks would have you believe) we recalled a host of wonderful friends. They are scattered, in some instances, to points unknown now, but in that unknown somewhere we hope they have found the happiness they deserve.

None was finer in those dark days, 15 years ago and more, than Sgt. John Teppe. You probably passed him on the street dozens of times, never knowing that here was heroism at its best.

Just 21, he didn't look the part of a hero. Mild-mannered—almost effeminate in his neatness, the blonde, smooth-faced serviceman wasn't exactly what movies and TV programs picture as the typical leatherneck of that era.

John was with the first raiders who landed on Guadalcanal, and the figures he gave us later speak for themselves. Of the one thousand Marines—950 enlisted men and 50 officers—in the first force, only 40 came off the island alive. Twenty of these 40 were critically wounded, and one of the worst was Teppe.

Jap machinegunners had drilled his right leg full of holes from his knee to his hip. Three bayonet stabs in his back bearly missed the heart. A scalp wound from another bayonet thrust caused him to lose an awful lot of blood.

Somehow, he managed to survive it all. His condition, and that of one of his comrades, was so bad that he couldn't be moved back from the front lines for some time. Eventually, he was flown to Melbourne, Australia. Later he was transferred to a hospital in California, and then, at long last, to Cherry Point.

For bravery at Grassy Knoll, where the Japanese had to be literally blasted from caves, he was awarded the Silver Star. After Bloody Ridge he was given the Oak Leaf Cluster.

When John entered action in the Pacific, he weighed 167 pounds. When he came out of it, he weighed 118. For 36 days and nights, he and his fellow Marines were subjected to constant bombardment from the sea, from the air, and from the hills.

Incidentally, Capt. Jimmy Roosevelt (the President's son) was with the first raiders. Teppe told us he was a great soldier—asking no special favors and taking more than his share of chances.

Another Marine we will never forget was Pfc Raymond Smith, who hailed from Bedford, Mass. He and his wife, Ida, spent their first months of marriage in New Bern.

A raider with the Fourth Marines, he saw action on Guadalcanal, Guam, Pelu, Munda and the Marianas. He received campaign ribbons for four major battles, and a Presidential citation.

Through all this bloody fighting, Raymond carried a battered yet tuneful accordion, boosting the morale of other boys with songs of the day and the familiar favorites that Grandma used to sing.

Perhaps no other accordion in all the world ever had an existence half so colorful. Reinforced with adhesive tape, Smith's sturdy little squeeze-box kept bringing home-sick kids a little bit of home—a little hunk of America—through the medium of song.

When he got back to Cherry Point, he still had the accordion with him. On nights that he could get leave, he would come to New Bern and head for the USO club on



CULTURE FOR THE KIDS—Every mother wants her children to have the right environment. Maybe this is what the killdeer shown here had in mind when she built her nest and filled it with eggs on the New Bern High school

campus. We can almost hear some teen-age wag commenting that he knew all along school is strictly for the birds. —Photo by Billy Benners.

To Town's Colorful Figures Add Walter Brinson's Name

Announcement that the Craven Foundry and Machine Co., is observing its 50th anniversary brings to mind one of its founders—the late Walter T. Brinson.

Our town has had enough colorful characters to give community life a perpetual rainbow hue. Yet, few individuals—past or present—have been as fascinating as this man who divided his time between business and the great out-of-doors, and excelled in both endeavors.

When it came to business, Brinson was as reliable as they come. Customers and employees alike knew he wanted no part of a shoddy piece of work. And, we might add, the pattern he set for complete dependability was so deeply entrenched in the firm's operation that it is still the company's most outstanding characteristic today.

As for his love of the out-of-doors, "Uncle Walter" was so famous and popular as a hunter that celebrities from all over sought him out. He came along in the local era that produced sportsmen like George Nicoll and George Fuller. The three of them provided delightful companionship for Babe

East Front street. There, the talented but unassuming musician played for hours on end.

Most sleepless nights are unpleasant, but wakefulness in the wee small hours has its compensation when you're remembering boys like John Teppe and Raymond Smith.

Ruth, Bud Fisher, Irvin S. Cobb, Christy Matthewson and Frank Stevens when these outstanding visitors headed south for the woodlands of Carolina's coast country.

Brinson was always enthusiastic about hunting deer and birds. Fishing had no appeal for him, but it was typical of the man that he carried friends down the Neuse on countless occasions on his boat—"The Weona"—so that they could angle for the finny tribe. As for "Uncle Walter", he never so much as wet a line.

That name he picked for his boat—"Weona"—gave birth to a ludicrous incident during World War Two. Coming back from a moonlight sail with a party, he tooted for the Trent river draw-bridge.

In keeping with security instructions, the draw-keeper called out for the name of the boat. When Brinson replied "Weona" the draw-keeper said he wasn't inquiring about the ownership, he wanted to know the name of the boat. After an exchange of choice language, the thing got straightened out.

One of New Bern's earliest automobile owners, he purchased a White steamer, a Cadillac, a Studebaker and other vehicles through the years. One of his hobbies was second-hand cars, and he actually filled a warehouse full.

When Craven Foundry and Machine Co., had its origin in 1909, Brinson's partners in the venture were T. G. Hyman and Herbert

Willis. He bought their interests 40 years ago.

Later the firm was incorporated, with Brinson as president, Clyde Mason as vice-president, and W. J. Ipock as secretary-treasurer. Incidentally, Mason, who started out as an apprentice machinist with the firm in 1917, is now president.

Other officers now serving with him are Eugene D. McSorley, vice-president; Jim Ipock, 2nd vice-president; Virginia McSorley, secretary; and Jim Oglesby, treasurer. Reminiscent of the days when Brinson was alive, the relationship between employers and employees in the firm is excellent.

Once located down the alley from Armstrong Grocery Co., on the block of South Front between Middle and Hancock, the company later moved up South Front to the vicinity of the old Trent river bridge. It is presently located at the corner of South Front and Craven.

The foundry has been discontinued in keeping with the times, and now the firm concentrates on an automotive service that supplies customers throughout the eastern North Carolina area.

In the old days, as Mason easily recalls, the company handled some mighty big jobs in the foundry. For example, it furnished all of the castings for nine concrete vessels constructed here by the Newport Shipbuilding Company during the first World War.

On another occasion it had a

\$50,000 contract for a fish drier and supplementary equipment. The purchaser was Schwartz Engineering Co., of Denver, Colo. It took two flat cars to transport the order to Wildwood, N. J.

Frequently, the company has the task of cutting and welding railroad axles for log trains. This was no trivial undertaking, but as in the case of all jobs large and small, the work was well done.

Among the machinists who were happy to be members of the Craven Foundry family were Bill Watson, George Stratton, Garret Cook, Will Braddy, William J. Smith, Ab Waters and Albert Crabtree.

All swore by "Uncle Walter" with the same intensity that he could swear around the shop when things went wrong. A foundry is a hot place, under normal circumstances, but Craven Foundry as a rule was as cool as a refrigerator, compared with the inferno that Brinson stirred up when he blew his stack.

His fury was as harmless as it was shortlived. His friends were legend, and they loved him for the generous, kind-hearted man that he was.

One of the pioneers among New Bern's volunteer firemen, he was in his glory in the golden days of horse-drawn steamers and hose wagons. But first and last, he was happiest with gun in hand, in the woods of the coast country.

Yes, Walter T. Brinson was a
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