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Blindness Is No Handicap For George

(Continued From Page 36)

"On New Year's Eve, we danced to Guy Lombardo's orchestra at the Waldorf Astoria," Marie recalled, "and Guy Lombardo introduced us as newlyweds and asked us to lead the next dance. This is one of my best memories!" George, by the way, is a terrific dancer, according to his wife.

Back home in Albemarle, N.C., the couple bought a farm and George built their house. "I was always interested in architectural engineering," he explained, "and I had had an athletic scholarship to Lenoir Rhyne College."

Without benefit of a college degree or eyesight, he hired workers and began a construction business, Marie at his side. "We figured jobs together," he explained. "She'd tell me the size of rooms and I ordered the materials." He also took an active role in the building, climbing onto roofs with never a mishap.

"Well, once he did get a concussion when he fell through a house, from the second story to the basement," Marie said, "because someone left a door open."

This was dismissed as a minor setback in a successful career. "We built homes, businesses, churches, all kinds of buildings, and never had to go out and hustle business," Marie said. "People came to us, because George had the reputation for being the best."

Then the same cruel fate operating on that Okinawan battlefield stepped in again with another blow to George's health. He contracted meningitis in 1977 and had to retire from the active life he loved so much.

"His doctor recommended that we move to the coast," Marie said. "He suggested that a visit to the beach would make George feel better."

After a visit, they looked up and down the coast, examining Myrtle Beach, Garden City, Holden Beach and Southport. Finally, the Littles found the right house in Ocean Isle Estates subdivision, between Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach. They made the move in 1979.

In his attitude toward retirement, George comes closest to a complaint. "Sometimes I'm bored to death," he admitted. He does some gardening and, still practicing his favorite skill, built a tool house and greenhouse behind their home.

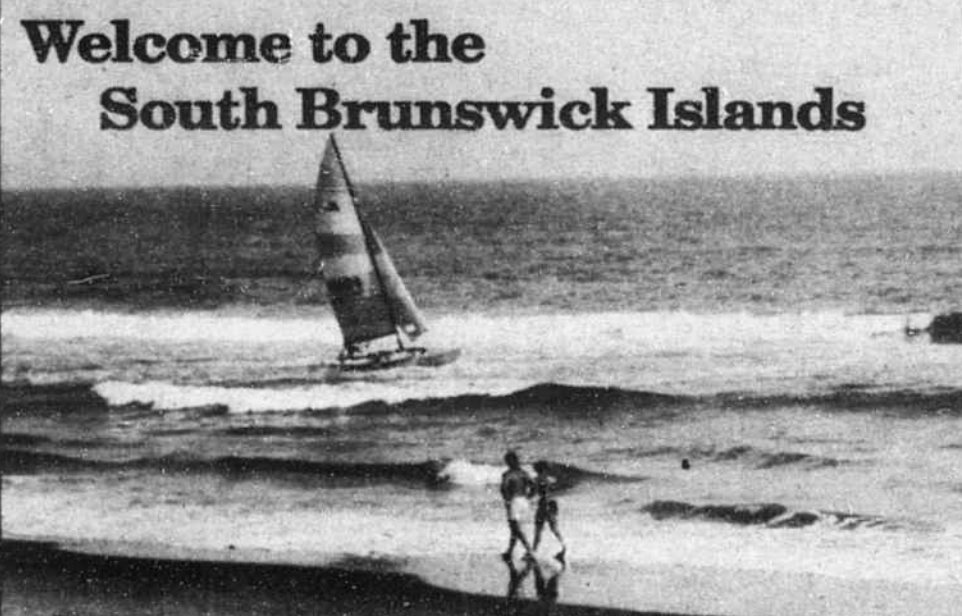
Recovered from the meningitis, he is still subject to problems of dust inhalation, due to his bullet-ridden sinuses. There are other reminders of that day in Okinawa... Marie said she frequently picks pieces of metal out of his cheek.

Nevertheless, the two enjoy their family, two children and three grandchildren, who live nearby. "When our first child was ready to start school," Marie recalled, "I

worried about other children teasing her about her father. But she recently told me that her friends who met him had never even realized he was blind."

George conceded, without a hint of self-pity, "I wish I could see my children and grandchildren, but," and he paused and smiled, "that's not going to happen."

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