

A war story and, ultimately, a love story

(Continued from page 2)

aged, and only 43 were left fit for service. Only six U.S. planes got into the air to repel the attackers of this first assault. In total, more than 180 aircraft were destroyed.

At the same time a massive action was directed against Kimmel's fleet. The ships anchored in the harbor made perfect targets for the Japanese bombers, and, because it was Sunday morning (a time chosen by the Japanese for maximum surprise), they were not fully manned. Most of the damage to the battleships was inflicted in the first 30 minutes of the assault.

The attack killed 2,403 U.S. personnel, including 68 civilians, and destroyed or damaged 19 U.S. Navy ships, including eight battleships. The three aircraft carriers of the U.S. Pacific Fleet were out to sea on maneuvers and fortunately the Japanese were unable to locate them.

But the battleship USS Arizona remains sunken in Pearl Harbor with its crew on board. Half of the dead at Pearl Harbor were on the Arizona.

Most Americans had never even heard of Pearl Harbor, but this attack incited a massive level of patriotism that sent the United States into World War II.

Elfrieda does not remember where she was when word of the attack spread across the land. She does remember how it rocked her world.

"Herbert wanted to get married, but I wanted to wait," she says, almost 77 years after the fact.

He was inducted at Ft. Harrison on November 7, 1942, headed for six weeks of basic training on November 14 at Camp Roberts, California and by December 29, was ready.

His assignment?

On January 1, 1943, Herbert Hedinger was

assigned to the 622nd Ordnance Ammunition Co. with nine other enlistees, departing with a cadre of 19 men from the 52nd via truck to the 622nd at Camp Young. From there the company moved around to different sites for training and maneuvers.

On August 13, Herbert and his company set sail from San Francisco, en route to foreign service.

What must this young man from Southern Indiana, who had probably never seen the ocean until called to service, have thought as he crossed the International Dateline on August 28? Four days later they arrived at Townsville, Australia where it was winter. Who knows what he thought of that?

Each and every day, Herbert made it a point to write to his beautiful girlfriend back home. His letters began, "My dear loving sweetheart, how are you today?"

On September 6, 1943, the company disembarked and marched six miles to Armstrong Paddock for a rest, although starting a break with a six mile hike does not sound very restful.

Six days later, the company set sail for Milne Bay, New Guinea. After disembarking on September 17, they began building warehouses and furnishing the labor details, but moved on to Waga Waga on September 29. There they operated the Dingo Ammunition Depot where they also took care of chemical warfare ammunition.

In late November they struck camp at Waga Waga and prepared to set sail for Ora Bay. There they assisted the 579th with operating the Hannau Ordnance Depot, handling surveillance, segregation and preparing for the Backhander Task Force. With three officers and 66 men, Herbert set sail on Christmas Eve on LST 475. Christmas was

(Continued on page 4)



Another group in front of the factory, workers and the names of the men they married, from left: Elfrieda Mehling (Herbert Hedinger), Ardella Klem (Edward Humbert), Meritas Baker (John Ziegler), Agnes Renner (Linus Eckert), Loretta Klem (Victor Humbert) and Leona Mehringer (Roman Seng).



FLEIG'S CAFE

Home Of Fine Food

Serving Thurs.-Fri.-Sat.

**Fried Chicken,
Steaks, Seafood
Beer - Liquor - Wine**

812-367-1310



Dine-In • Carry Out

Thanks, Veterans!



Englert's
Auto Service
Collision Center

812-367-2774

10% OFF for VETERANS EVERY DAY





Fischer Electric

6673 E. Schnellville Road, Schnellville — 812-389-2418