

Elfrieda and Herbert Hedinger

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spent on board the ship and all disembarked on December 26 at Cape Gloucester, where they assisted the First Marine Division with handling and issuing ammunition.

Through his service, Herbert suffered through air raids but luckily there were no casualties and he remained unharmed.

Next stop? Finschhafen, New Guinea where they assisted with operations at the MAPE Ammunition Depot.

While it can't be confirmed, one would suppose Herbert Hedinger had never heard of most of these places he was visiting firsthand. By this point, most of the company

was working 24/7, dealing with incoming and outgoing shipments of munitions. They left Finschhafen on June 22, 1944, arriving at Hollandia on another LST. On June 27, Herbert was part of the D-Day assault at Arawa, Dutch, New Guinea.

His service continued beyond war's end. One highlight was a trek to Dig Dig Luzon Philippines (he was in the Philippines by this point) on June 28, 1945 to meet his old friend, and future brother-in-law Roman Becher.

He noted, in August, "The morale of the men was greatly boosted with the acceptance of surrender terms by Japan."

The war in the Pacific ended officially on September 2, 1945, but Herbert was not finished with his

service to the United States and Allied war effort. In October he boarded the USS Hendry bound for Japan and, after some time spent there he sailed for home, arriving four days after Thanksgiving in 1945 at Camp Anza (November 26) and then on to Camp Atterbury, landing there on December 2.

Herbert Hedinger was honorably discharged on December 4, 1945, arriving home on December 5.

So what was Elfrieda doing all this time (besides pining for her sweetheart and reading his daily missives, which sometimes arrived in batches)?

She left the



At a luncheon hosted by the factory at either the Calumet or Rustic in November of 1945, after some of the men came home. Herbert would not arrive until December.

Seated at left: Peter Wehr and Lucille (Steinhart) Wehr (although they were not yet married). To the left of the Wehrs, barely showing, Clarence Denning. Seated around the table next to Lucille: Maria Gerner, Esther (Werne) Stenftenagel, Lucas Stenftenagel (again, not yet married) and Elfrieda.

Gramelspachers to go to work at Jasper Wood Products. "We were all single girls working at Wood Products during WW II."

While the name sounds innocuous, Jasper Wood became a defense plant. Elfrieda ran a veneer splicer. "One of the girls' boyfriends was in the Air Force [then known as the United States Army Air Forces] and parts on his plane were stamped Jasper Wood Products." Some of the parts were for P-47s.

Depending on what department you worked in, the employees had to wear special buttons to access the plant, which was fenced with armed Army guards stationed around it and the Jasper Fire Department standing at the ready.

Elfrieda made good friends with her co-workers, most of whom were also pining for their sweethearts fighting overseas.

Which was what precipitated this article to begin with when Elfrieda, now 96, was looking through photographs with her daughter, Doris Holtzman, and she could not remember the name of one of her friends from war time. Readers, please check out that photo carefully and if you recognize the woman in question,

contact the News office at 812-367-2041 or 800-463-9720.

But back to our story.

Herbert made it home to his "dear loving sweetheart," and the couple planned their wedding. After all those adventures in far flung places, Herbert Hedinger was ready to settle down. He returned to the factory for a time and the Hedingers briefly resided in Jasper, but soon after the couple bought a farm.

They were wed on Thursday, May 9, 1946 (and yes, everyone came for the free dance later in the day. Weddings were typically held on a weekday during that era— see the wedding announcement from the Ferdinand News in a sidebar).

By the way, on that same day, television's very first hour long entertainment TV show, NBC's *Hour Glass*, premiered. It's a safe bet there were not many, if any TVs in Southern Indiana at the time.

Elfrieda did what every woman of the day did, she quit working to truly keep the home fires burning. They started a family and had, in succession, six girls, Carol (Keusch),

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Herbert and Elfrieda on their wedding day.