

EP

131 Garden Street

The story of Arthur Joseph Goddard and his family

as told by his son Douglas
dougsgoddard@earthlink.net

August, 2015

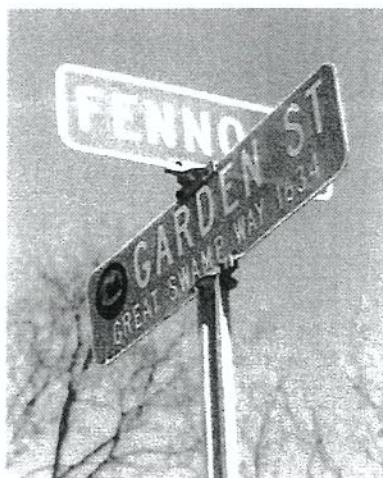
Special thanks to Warren's daughter, and my cousin, Ruth Hadley.

Ruth, you made this possible.

My father was a good man. He served bravely and with honor in the Navy during World War II. His ship advanced with the front line across the Pacific, and he saw combat. After the war he became a teacher. Dad loved Art, as in painting, ceramics, sculpture and woodworking, and he made a career of teaching Art to young people. It guided his life and I'm grateful. He met my mother in a Boston University art class.

Dad's soul was woven inextricably into the living pulse of Cambridge, Massachusetts. It's the only place I ever saw him fully embrace as his own, a location to which he fully belonged. The city of Cambridge is famous world-wide, yet it covers a mere five square miles and has a relatively small population of 100,000. To understand my father it helps to understand this special place, a town with a complex history which literally begins with the founding of our nation.

Life in Old England was never merry. When the Pilgrims



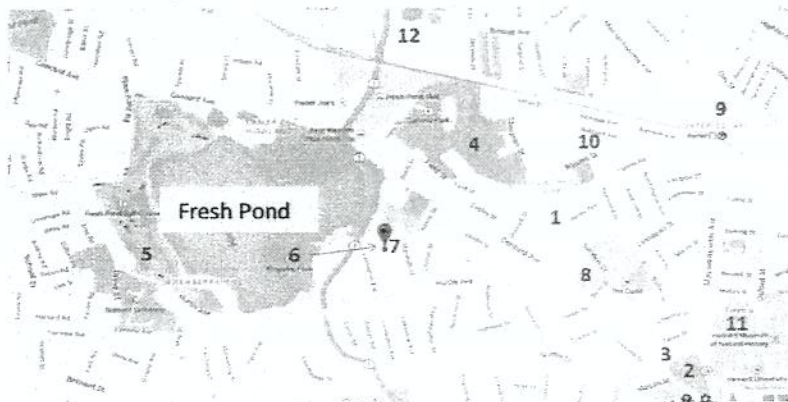
demonstrated it was possible to colonize this part of the New World in 1620, people back home noticed and made plans. In 1630 the Winthrop Fleet, consisting of eleven vessels and nearly one thousand people, arrived in Boston Harbor. "New Towne" Cambridge was established right away, and occupied the heart of today's Harvard Square. However, the Charles River estuary was a complex landscape and not all of the ground within it was desirable. Less than one mile to the northwest the land turned mushy. In 1634 the trail which led to it was called the *Great Swamp Way*, a name which said it all. The area was deemed useless for pretty much everything except dumping trash and burying Catholics, who at that time were too stigmatized to be granted a downtown cemetery. When new acreage was needed it was more easily found elsewhere. At some early point the *Great Swamp Way* was ironically renamed *Garden Street*. In spite of this attempt at improving its image, the land surrounding The Great Swamp remained largely uninhabited for the next 270 years. It was fully developed only during the first decade of the twentieth century. This is when the Flynn family purchased a recently built house at 131 Garden Street.



ART IN ACTION: Parents attending "Open School Night" at the High School watched a demonstration of "Art in Action" in the student commons area presented by students enrolled in the High School's painting, fashion, architectural drawing, ceramics and sculpture classes. Arthur Goddard, Industrial and Fine Arts teacher, watches Nancy Barry and Patty Hynes at work.



At the center of the Great Swamp is the aptly named Fresh Pond. A long time ago mile-deep glaciers completely transformed the Cambridge landscape, burying the original valley with sand, gravel and clay. In the process these ice sheets created numerous depressions in the ground and an aquifer so complex that it has never been fully mapped, even to this day. When the glaciers disappeared water flowed through this natural filtration system and filled these holes, including Fresh Pond, with exceptionally pure water. It is still Cambridge's water source, and the "works" through which the city's water is distributed is an



important part of our family history.

Fresh Pond was where the city's first industry, Fredrick Tudor's ice cutting business, began in the early 1800s. During winter the frozen surface was carved into blocks and packed in the sawdust which, until that point, had been a worthless by-product of the thriving timber industry. Sailing ships then carried the slowly melting ice to hot climates around the world, even as far away as South America and India. It was a very lucrative business. So lucrative it attracted many other men to the shores for the same purpose. The city eventually divided the pond into ice-rights, triangular zones cut from the center, like a pizza.

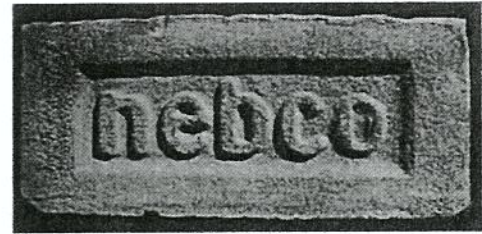
- 1 Location of 131 Garden Street: Nana and Bubba's home for their entire adult lives, and the home where my father was born.
- 2 Cambridge Common where George Washington took command after the battles of Lexington, Concord and Menotomy. It's considered the birthplace of the United States Army.
- 3 Home which introduced the idea of Christmas trees to America.
- 4 Former clay pits, now a city park. When one of the pits collapsed it buried a steam shovel, which is still there.
- 5 The Tip O'Neill Municipal Golf Course, named after Nana's cousin, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives for ten years.
- 6 Original location of Wyeth's Fresh Pond Hotel, built in 1796. It's now the location of the Cambridge City Water Department.
- 7 Current location of the Fresh Pond Hotel. The building was moved to 234 Lakeview Street in 1892.
- 8 Harvard College Observatory, built in 1847, on what was then the far edge of town.
- 9 Porter Square, location of the Porterhouse Inn, owned by Zachariah B. Porter, famous for popularizing the Porterhouse Steak.
- 10 Locations of Tip O'Neill's childhood homes.
- 11 Harvard Law School.
- 12 Jerry's Pit, a former clay pit and a dangerous swimming hole.

Not marked: Watson's Corner in the upper right, scene of the last skirmish of retreating British troops on April 19, 1775.

As competition increased Tudor hired Nathaniel J. Wyeth, the owner

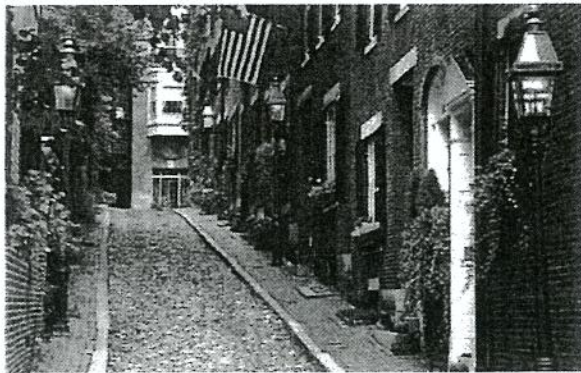
of the Fresh Pond Hotel, as his on-site manager. Wyeth made many technical improvements to the tools, animal harnesses and shore-side buildings used ice-harvesting process. He patented his inventions with the help of a local attorney named Joel Giles. It turns out that Mr. Giles was also a land speculator. At one point he owned the land upon which 131 Garden Street would be built.

The most difficult part of shipping ice worldwide was the first few miles; hauling the heavy blocks from Cambridge to the wharfs in Charlestown. Wyeth helped fund the first railroad extension out to the pond around 1840 for the purpose of transporting Tudor's ice. The venture was successful. Soon Wyeth realized that a two-industry railroad would make more money than a one-industry railroad. Everyone knew the Great Swamp contained vast amounts of clay, and that clay could be made into bricks. The new railroad made it possible to ship such bricks economically, so Wyeth set about creating the first of what would become Cambridge's many brickyards.



Individual brickyards eventually merged into the New England Brick Company. The logo was hidden when the brick was installed.

The result of this constructive fervor was that, mainly in the period from 1850-1900, there was a "Brick-Rush." Irish and French Canadian immigrants were drawn to the area to work for brick makers. New England's entry into the industrial revolution created demand for the ubiquitous red bricks that were used to build textile mills, shoe factories and the newer halls of Harvard. (The older halls were built with bricks shipped from England, which had also served as ship's ballast during the voyage.) No fewer than 14 pits were dug in the area that had been the Great Swamp. These brickyards were surrounded by what one historian called "fringe activities," such as the poorhouse, the tuberculosis hospital, the cemetery, the stables, and the slaughterhouses that surrounded Porter's Hotel (home of the Porterhouse steak) at what is now called Porter Square.



Boston was built from bricks made in Cambridge and other nearby suburbs. Note the granite curbs, a distinctive feature of classic Boston streetscapes.

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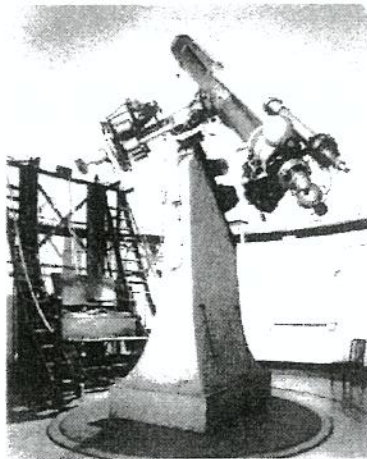
The Dickensian contrast of this activity versus that at Harvard only one mile away could not have been more extreme. One group of people earned marginal livings prying clay from the ground while elite students and faculty pursued their activities nearby, often by fireplaces within buildings the first group had built. With kilns firing clay into brick around the clock and frozen water being carved out of Fresh Pond as fast as it formed, Cambridge was in every sense born of fire and ice. Moreover, during the 1800s, and even into the early 20th century, ice harvesting and brick making were by far the largest economic activity in the area. Both industries quarry material from the earth and are considered forms of mining. This means



Cambridge based New England Glass Company advanced the art of glassmaking. For years they produced world-class products which competitors could not duplicate.

Cambridge Massachusetts, home of Harvard University and MIT, was technically a mining town for much of its history.

Before concluding that everyone in nineteenth century Cambridge was either a college professor or a brick maker, it's helpful to know that the city also had a very healthy middle class pursuing a variety of industries. One of the largest of these was the New England Glass Company. In the mid-1800s it



was the largest and most modern glassworks in the world. It was a very innovative company, and its products are collector's items today.

The legendary telescope manufacturing firm of Alvin Clark and Sons was also active during this time. They built what are still the largest refracting (pirate style) telescopes in the world, and these instruments are regarded by astronomers the same way Stradivarius Violins are by musicians. Interestingly, Alvin Clark

obtained his optical glass from specialty manufacturers in France, not from the huge New England Glass Works right up the street. In 1847 the Great Refracting Telescope was installed in what would become the Harvard College Observatory. This telescope would be the largest in the world for the next twenty years. It's about 1,000 feet from where 131 Garden Street would be built fifty years later. Interestingly, this telescope was ordered from a company in Germany, not Alvin Clark and Sons just up the street.



Other Cambridge businesses of this era included the original Fig Newton factory, the F. A. Kennedy Steam Bakery at 129 Franklin Street (Alongside MIT), a still-active Tootsie Roll factory, and factories which made steam pumps and boilers.

Cambridge has always had a talented and creative population. Examples include Edward Bernays, the inventor of Public Relations. He's the reason we consider bacon and eggs breakfast food. He also came up with the phrase "four out of five doctors recommend..." Baking powder was invented by Eben Norton Horsford. Instant coffee and frozen orange juice was made possible



Scanned at the American Institute of Physics.
Goofing around for the camera in this photo, the observatory's female staff members were called "computers." They were responsible for many of the scientific discoveries made at the facility.

Historical population

Year	Pop.	±%
1790	2,115	—
1800	2,453	+16.0%
1810	2,323	-5.3%
1820	3,295	+41.8%
1830	6,072	+84.3%
1840	8,409	+38.5%
1850	15,215	+80.9%
1860	26,060	+71.3%
1870	39,634	+52.1%
1880	52,669	+32.9%
1890	70,028	+33.0%
1900	91,886	+31.2%
1910	104,839	+14.1%
1920	109,694	+4.6%
1930	113,643	+3.6%
1940	110,879	-2.4%
1950	120,740	+8.9%
1960	107,716	-10.8%
1970	100,361	-6.8%
1980	95,322	-5.0%
1990	95,802	+0.5%
2000	101,355	+5.8%
2010	105,162	+3.8%
2013	107,289	+2.0%

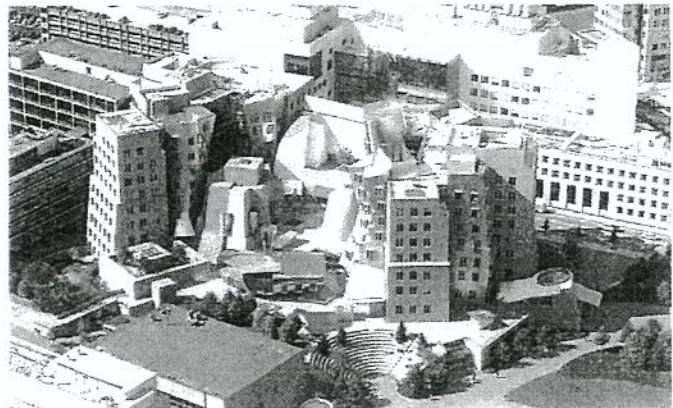
by Richard S. Morse. Cambridge residents also created treatments for the deaf and blind (Helen Keller) modern cemeteries as parks (Mount Auburn Cemetery) Polaroid instant photography (Edwin Land), and cooking as entertainment (Julia Child.)

Other notables include Frederick H. Rindge, who owned Malibu, California, from 1891 until WWII.¹ Richard Buckminster Fuller, and Korczak Ziolkowski the guy who carved the Crazy Horse Memorial out of a mountain in South Dakota are Cantagrigians, as are Margret and H.A. Rey, the husband and wife team behind "'Curious George" series of children's books.

Cambridge is also well represented in Hollywood: Walter Brennan, the only person so far to win three Oscars for Best Supporting Actor is from Cambridge, as is Paul Michael Glaser, who played Detective David Starsky in the TV series Starsky & Hutch. Actors Matt Damon and Ben Affleck are childhood friends who grew up together in Cambridge. Jane Curtin, part of the original cast of Saturday Night Live, was also born in Cambridge.

Eddie Waitkus, born in 1919 in Cambridge, was a baseball player who was named the Rookie Player of the Year in 1946. A female fan became so obsessed with him she invited him into her hotel room and shot him. Waitkus survived and inspired Bernard Malamud's novel, "The Natural," which later became a movie starring Robert Redford. This real-life story and movie were also spoofed in the "Once Bitten" episode of the Archer adult cartoon series.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, is far more than a support system for the local universities. It's where the first stakes were pounded into the ground to build the United States. It's also where the first printing press in the New World was assembled and put to work right in Harvard Square. For as long as it has existed, the city has always served as a worldly crossroads for new ideas in all realms of human activity. It's an extraordinary place to be born and raised. My father absorbed all he could. He earned a Bachelor's then Master's degrees, and was genuinely interested in History, Biography, Art and much more for his entire life. He banished coloring books from our household, insisting (correctly) that it was far more important that



Cambridge is still full of creative people, as evidenced by the famous Ray and Maria Stata Center at MIT, built in 2004.

we create our own original works. He and my mother were both emphatic in their insistence that their children use English correctly. They made it clear from the start that our grammar should be impeccable. They also insisted we also develop a large vocabulary and wield it with precision. These are great gifts. So great that it was only when I became a parent myself that I truly understood the magnitude of this and all the other caring, generous things my parents have done for me.

¹ That's right, he owned the whole thing. In 1887 Rindge also gave the City of Cambridge land and buildings for the Cambridge Public Library, and Cambridge City Hall.

It's a lot to describe, so let's begin where my father's story starts: the house at 131 Garden Street. It was owned by Dad's parents for basically all of the twentieth century. Though no longer in the Goddard family, it's still a focal point of our family history.



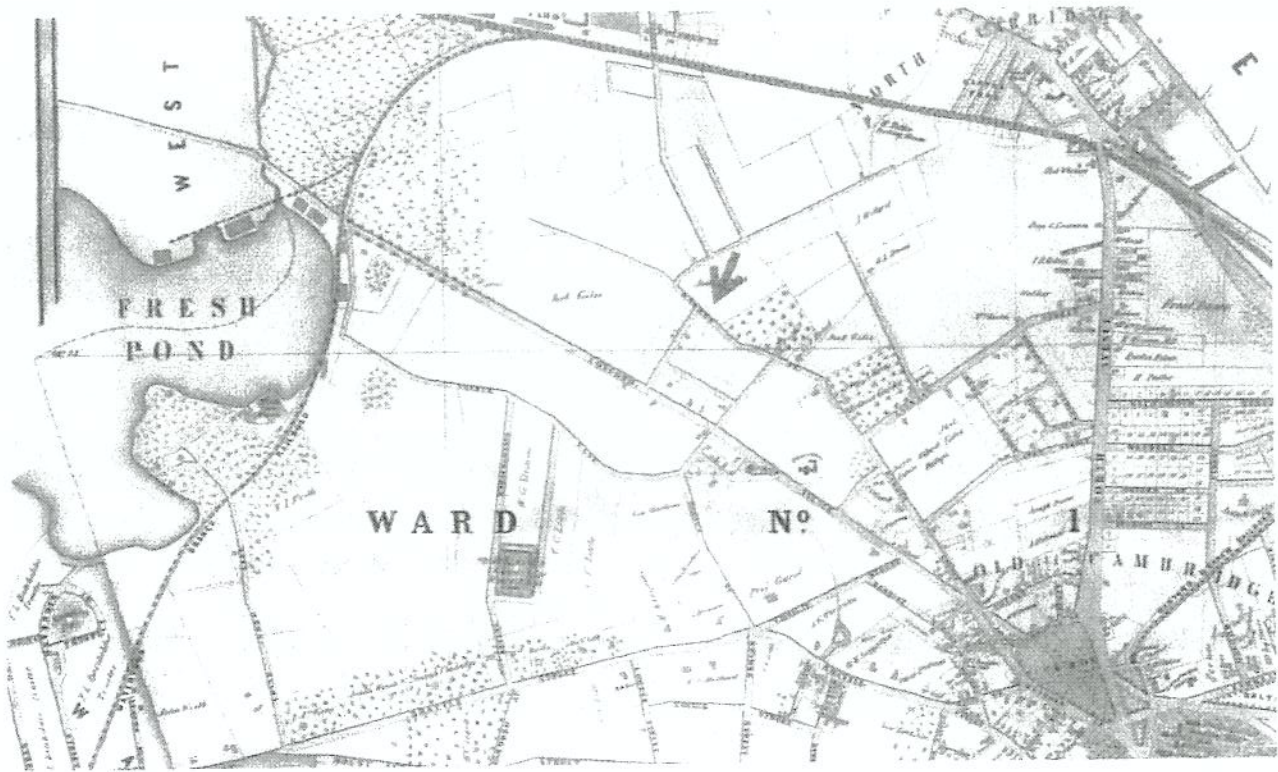
Nana and Bubba pose for a group photo with their son Warren, daughter Marion, and some of their grandchildren. This photo was taken in the early 1970s.

Top Row: Warren, Nana, Ruth behind Tim, Marion behind Ruth, Yvonne behind Marion, Bubba.

Next Row Down: Valerie Bourque, Tom, Tim, Kathy Ernest is holding the baby. Marion Joy Ernest Donovan is behind Margaret. Linda Ernest Daly is behind Marion Joy.

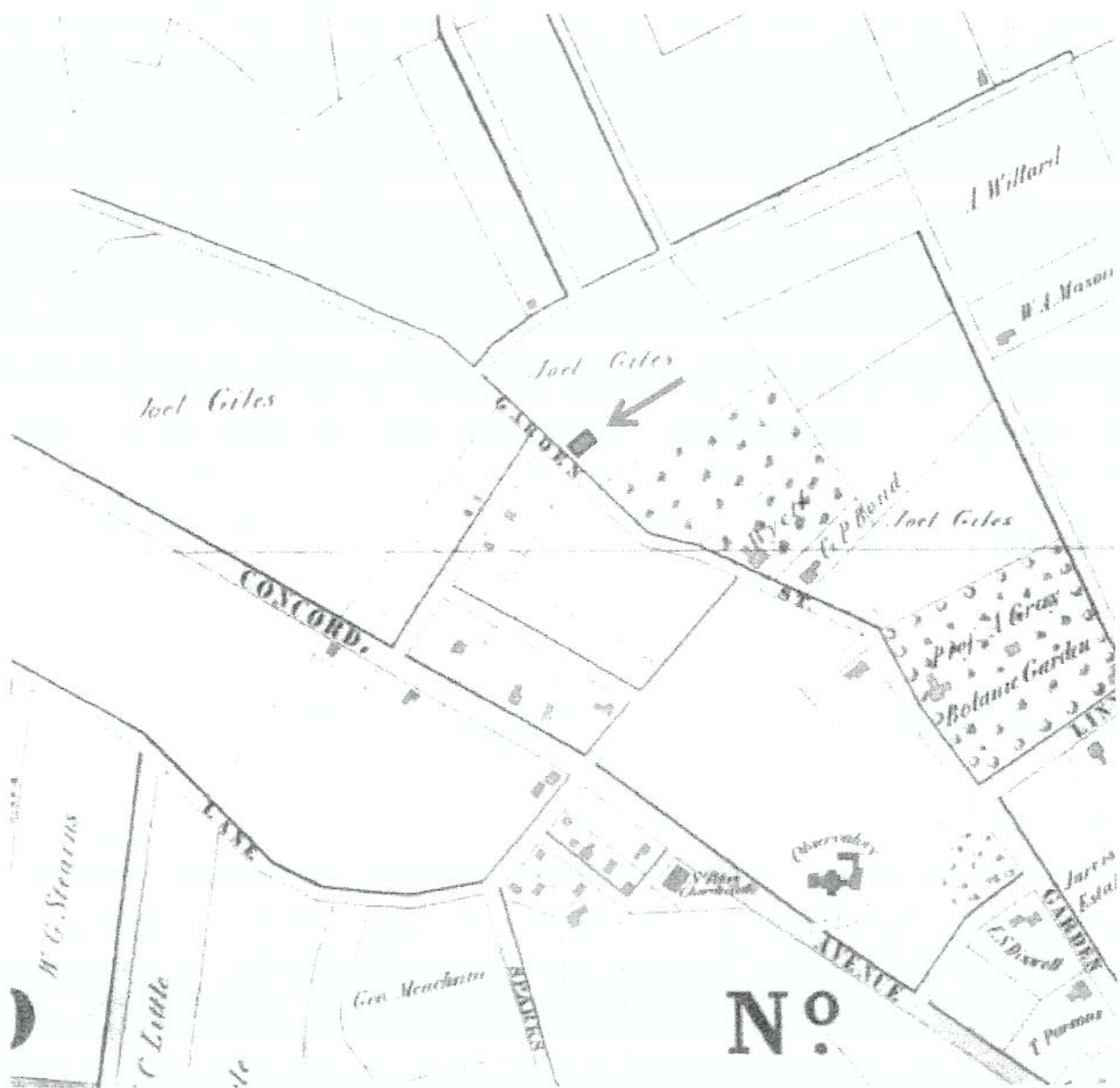
Sunglasses Row: Richie Ernest, John in green behind Richie, Jim Bourque, Tom Bourque, Mary is in the flowered dress.

Bottom Row: Sara, Matt, Allison Bourque Lahey, and Phil.

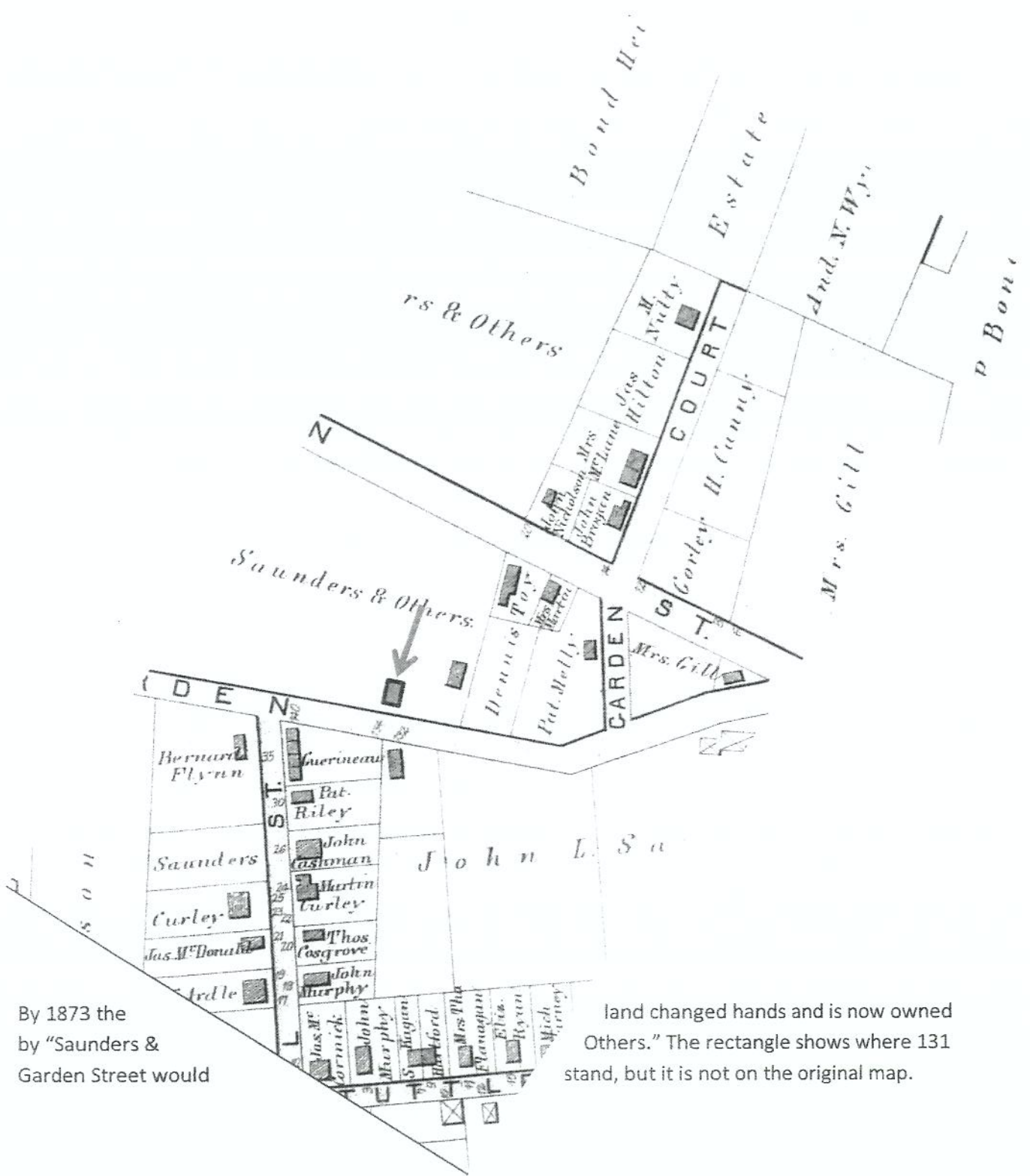


This is a map of North Cambridge in 1854. Garden Street starts at Harvard, the intersection furthest to the right at the bottom of this image. Garden Street then runs along the southwest side of Cambridge Common (the triangle.) This is where George Washington took command of his troops for the first time, and it is considered the birthplace of the United States Army. On April 19, 1775, the first day of the American Revolution, British reinforcements marched past the right-hand side of the Common, up North Avenue (Today's Massachusetts Avenue) following the road's curve to the left and off this chart.

The arrow points to the future site of 131 Garden Street. Still open land, it's owned by Joel Giles, a local patent attorney. Note how Garden Street simply stops at the edge of the swamp.



Detail of the 1854 map showing the future site of 131 Garden Street. (The rectangle is not on the original map.) Two lots towards the lower right, the name "Wyeth" is hidden in the trees. This was likely an investment property owned by Nathaniel Wyeth, who was instrumental in developing the tools of the ice trade. The impact of Wyeth's contributions is astounding. During his lifetime, he held fourteen patents relating to the cutting and transportation of ice. Joel Giles was his patent attorney and owner of several surrounding lots. Also noted on this map is the Harvard College Observatory (lower right). When this map was drawn, photography pioneer John Adams Whipple had recently taken the first-ever photographs of the moon using the observatory's telescope. Called "The Great Refractor," it was the largest telescope in the world at the time.



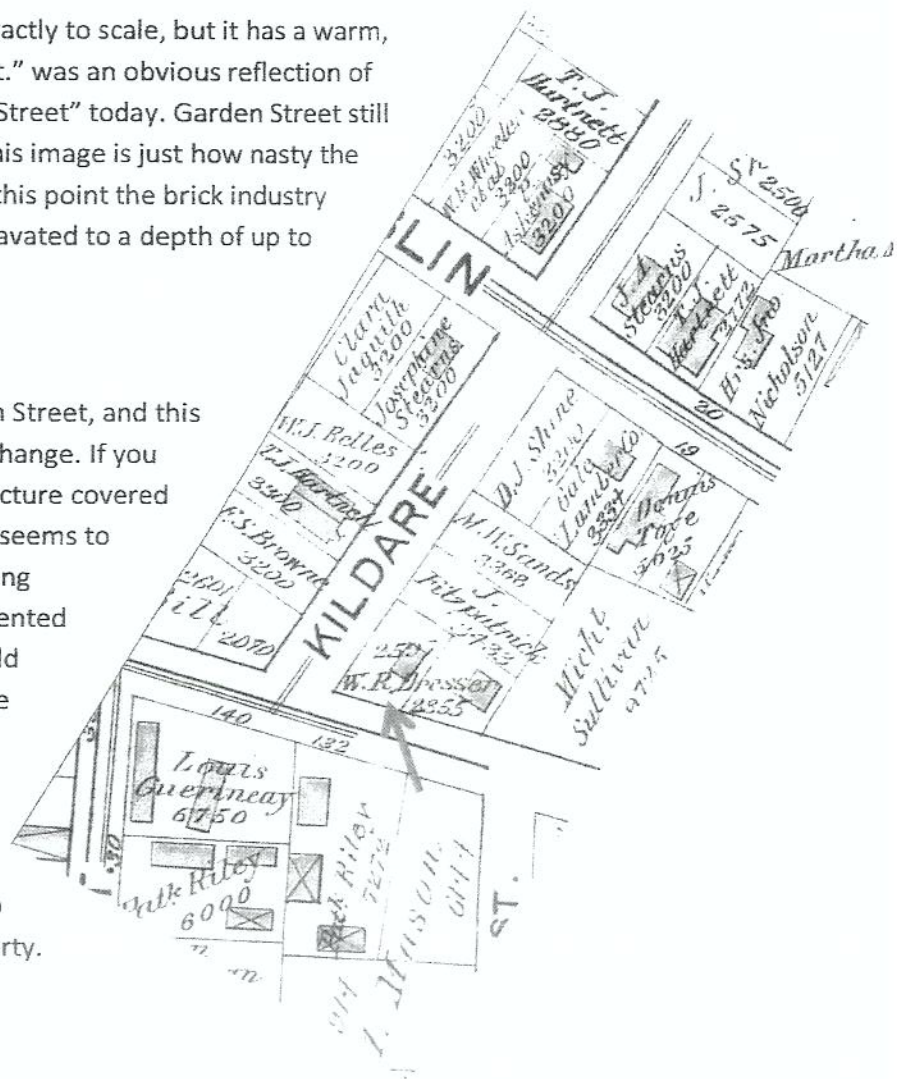
By 1873 the
 by "Saunders &
 Garden Street would

land changed hands and is now owned
 Others." The rectangle shows where 131
 stand, but it is not on the original map.



This drawing was made in 1877. It's not exactly to scale, but it has a warm, intuitive feel about it. The name "Dublin St." was an obvious reflection of the Irish population. It is called "Sherman Street" today. Garden Street still ends at the brick yards. Not conveyed in this image is just how nasty the land west of Walden Street really was. At this point the brick industry was going full-tilt. Dozens of pits were excavated to a depth of up to 80 feet, until they hit bedrock.

In 1890 something was built at 131 Garden Street, and this map from 1894 is the first to capture the change. If you look very closely, you can see that the structure covered only a relatively small portion of the lot. It seems to have been a cabin about the size of the living room in today's house. It was most likely rented to immigrant brick workers. "Kildare" would eventually be renamed "Fenno Street." The initials "W.R.D." stand for "William R. Dresser" who in 1897 paid a city tax of \$40.73, equivalent to \$1,163.71 in 2014. This included an amount assessed for street watering, which at the time was two cents per foot of street touching the property.

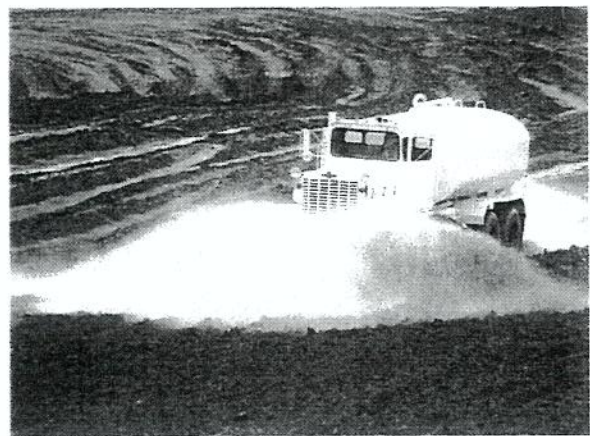


This street watering assessment is actually an interesting bit of history. In 1897 Garden and Kildare streets were, at most, only covered with gravel. In fact, it's very likely Kildare was still a simple dirt road. In dry hot weather the surface of such roads would turn to dust. Traffic and wind would lift this dust into the air and it would soon cover everything nearby. In that pre air-conditioning era huge amounts entered houses through open windows. It was a genuine health problem, particularly since horses did their "business" right on the street.

The cure was to send water wagons down every street, soaking the surface to prevent dust from forming in the first place. In especially hot and dry weather streets would be watered twice a day. These wagons were an ordinary part of summer life. Little kids chased them for fun and a cooling splash of water. Adults moved back as the wagon passed, and then stepped carefully through the muddy aftermath.



Today's paved streets don't need watering, but watering wagons are still seen at construction sites and where new roads are being built, constantly sprinkling the ground to keep dust from rising. Many people think they were recently invented to satisfy the demands of the late-1960s environmental movement. In reality the history of this activity goes back much further. Meanwhile, the original urban watering wagons morphed into today's fire trucks and street sweepers.

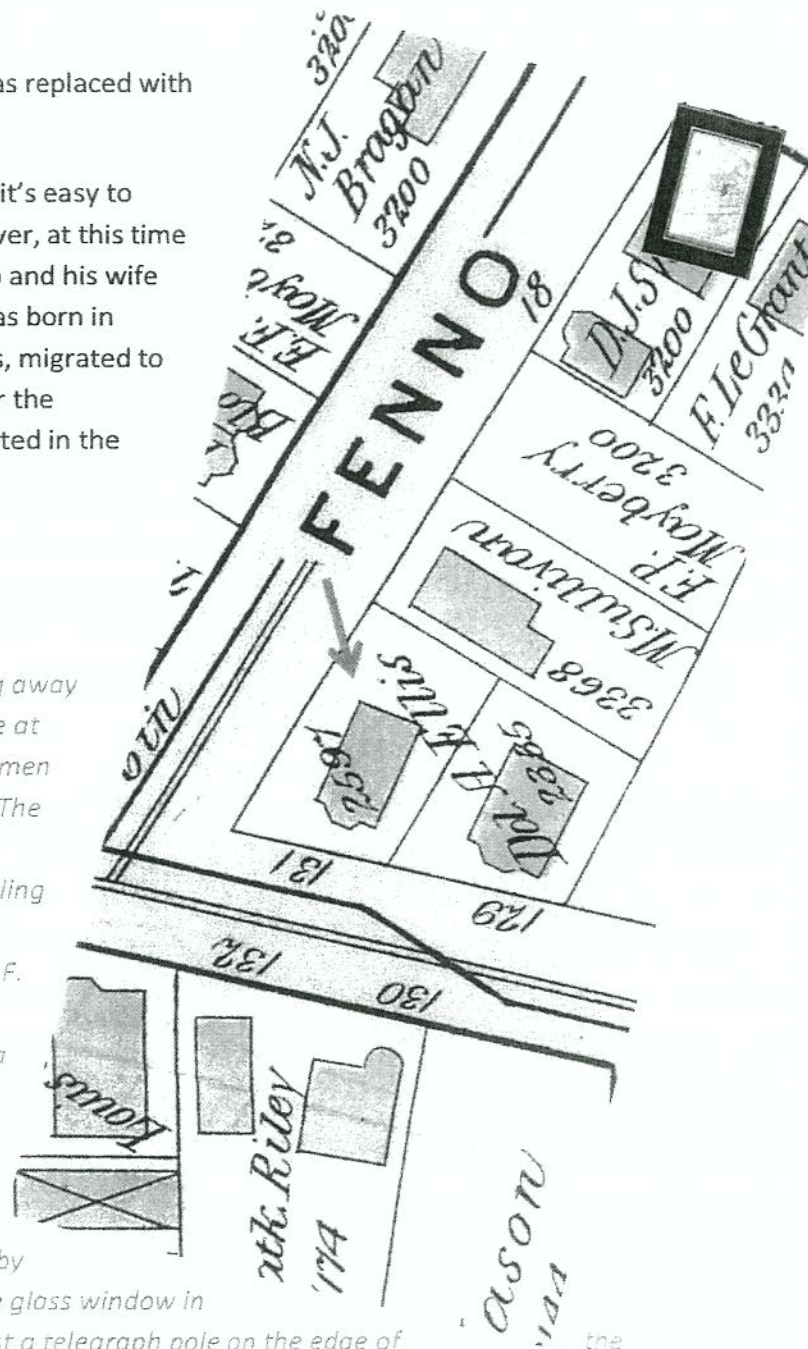


Between 1900 and 1903 the original structure was replaced with today's house minus the wrap-around porch.

Kildare has also been renamed Fenno Street and it's easy to recognize Nana and Bubba's future home. However, at this time was occupied by another family: John A. McAdoo and his wife Mary T. McAdoo (maiden name Harney). John was born in Ireland in 1872 and, like so many of his neighbors, migrated to this country. The year 1903 was a difficult one for the McAdoos. This is a transcript of an incident reported in the Cambridge Chronicle:

RUNAWAY ACCIDENT 1 August 1903

As a result of a badly frightened horse running away on Massachusetts Avenue near Central Square at about 4:30 o'clock Monday afternoon two women and a baby are suffering from severe bruises. The injured are Mrs. C. H. Bartlett of 17 Glenwood Street and her little child whom she was wheeling in a baby carriage, and Mrs. McAdoo of 131 Garden Street. The horse was the property of F. E. Berry, a sewing machine agent at 735 Massachusetts Avenue, and was attached to a light wagon in front of the store. Frightened by an automobile which passed it, the animal galloped down the northerly side of the avenue toward Central Square, knocking down the two women and overturning the baby carriage on the way. Heading for the big plate glass window in Hunt's drug store the horse brought up against a telegraph pole on the edge of the sidewalk. His head struck an iron express box attached to the pole, with the result that the box was shattered but the horse was so stunned that he was brought to a standstill before he could do further damage. The injured persons were cared for in Dr. Lockhart's office and were then taken to their homes.



A few months later, just before Christmas, the McAdoos lost a child.

12 December 1903

John McAdoo, the Infant son of Mr. and Mrs. John McAdoo of 131 Garden Street, died Sunday, after a short illness. The funeral took place Monday afternoon and burial was in St. Paul's cemetery, Arlington.

Slightly more than a year later ownership of the house changed.

REAL ESTATE AND BUILDING. 25 February 1905

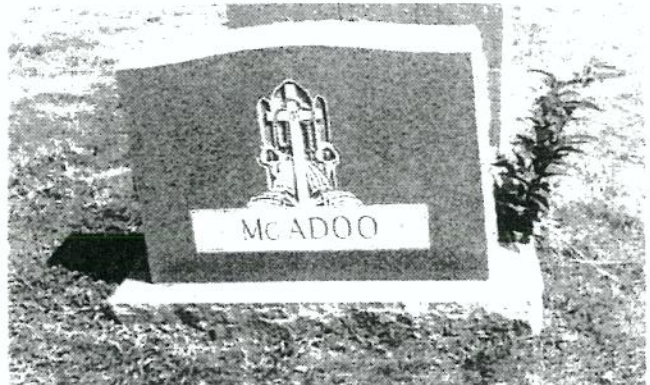
David A. Ellis has conveyed to Samuel J. Strauss the property numbered 129 to 131 Garden Street, corner of Fenno street, which comprises two frame houses and 4952 [square] feet of land. The assessors' valuation is 34300, of which sum 1700 is on the land.

However, the McAdoos still lived there. We know this because, sadly, they lost another child.

10 June 1905

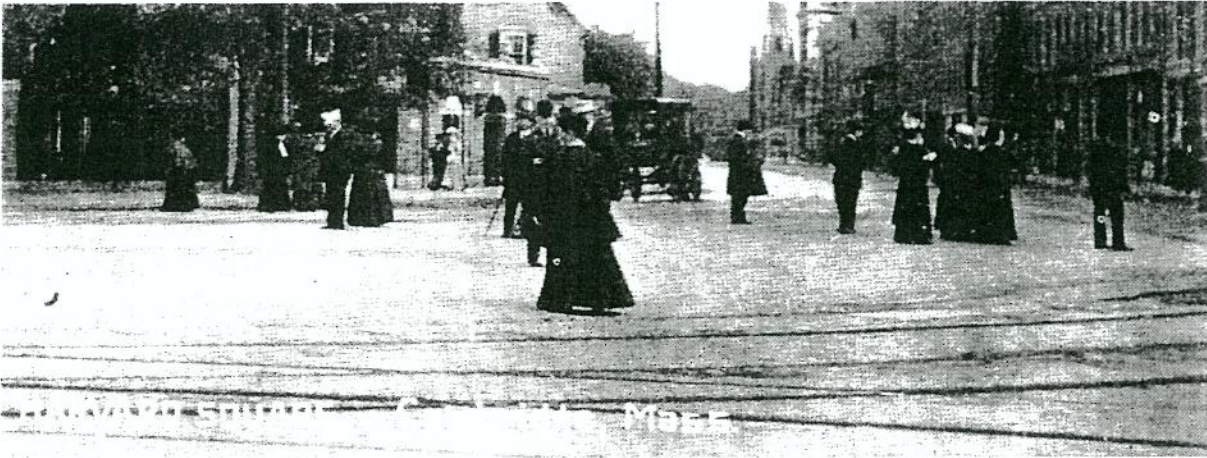
McADOO--In this city, June 5, Annie, beloved daughter of John A, and Annie T. McAdoo, (nee Harney), 8 years, 11 months. The funeral was from parents' residence, 131 Garden Street.

Tragically, in the short span of 18 months John and Annie each lost a child they named after themselves. Perhaps in an effort to escape these memories the McAdoos soon moved out of 131 Garden Street. They didn't go far. Their new home became 31 Stearns Street, only one block up and one block over. John worked for the Public Works Department and passed away in 1960 at age 83, nine years after Annie.



By 1907 a different family occupied the house. The Cambridge Chronicle ran an advertisement to organize a teenage boy's baseball team.

Games are desired with strong 15-year-old teams and can be arranged for by addressing Joseph Wallace, 131 Garden Street, Cambridge.



This is Cambridge in 1907, one mile from 131 Garden Street.

The first reference to a family member and the house appears in the Cambridge Chronicle in 1911.

15 April 1911

[Permit #] 13,745--Francis X. Flynn, owner, William Riley, architect and builder, 131 Garden Street, ward 10, alterations.

Pithy yet informative, it documents the fact that Francis X. Flynn owns the property. It also notes that "alterations" are being made. Since an "architect and builder" is involved it hints that the work is rather substantial. It's likely this is when the house took on its current appearance. In any event, the Flynn family moved in. Life went on, but not always in ways parents might hope...



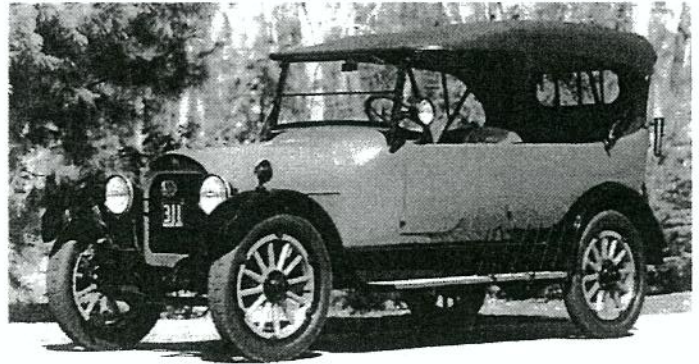
Nana's father, Francis X. Flynn

15 June 1918 - BOYS STOLE AUTO

The automobile of Herbert F. Drew, of 200 Fairmont Street, Belmont, was stolen from in front of the Shepard Memorial church, Sunday

morning. When Mr. Drew came out from the services he found the machine gone and it was not recovered until early evening, after it had been run into a tree in and badly damaged. The Lexington police apprehended five Cambridge youths and turned them over to the local authorities who lodged against them a charge of unlawfully appropriating an automobile. The boys took the car from in front of the church, and after taking a short joy ride in the forenoon hid the machine somewhere in Belmont, and then went out for another ride in the afternoon.

They were having a whale of a time until they collided with the tree in Lexington. A passing autoist saw their predicament and informed the Lexington police. The latter gave chase to the boys in an automobile and caught the whole five. The boys placed under arrest are: Harold J. Houlihan, 18, of 19 Copley street;



A typical late model car circa 1918.

Charles McDonald, 16, of 3 Dale street;

Edward E. Shine, 15, of 23 Sherman street; Walter J. Donovan, 18, of 41 Fenno street, and Chester J. Flynn, 19, 131 Garden Street. In court Monday the cases were continued until today.

There is no other mention of this incident in the paper, but we can be sure Chester was in the doghouse for a long time afterwards. Ironically, exactly a year later the following notice was published:

June 1919 - Reserve Policemen

Chief of Police McBride on Tuesday made the following appointment of men to the reserve police force: Joseph H. McCaffrey, 171 River street; Charles P. Donlan, L-1M Columbia street; Joseph R. Flynn, 131 Garden street; William G. Normley, 18 Hunting street; Mark J. Kelley, 111 Klinalrd street; Philip T. Purke, 83 Fifth street; Jeremiah F. Mahoney, 288 Columbia street. The first five are veterans of the late war.

Apparently while Chester Flynn was flirting with a life of crime, his brother Joseph became a police officer. During this time, conversations at the Flynn household must have been very lively indeed.

To be clear, Chester did not become a criminal. In fact he became a solid citizen. He was close to his family, and his son became a doctor. Like Dad he served in the Navy, fighting in the Pacific War during WWII. Ironically, around the time Chester had his little scrape with the law, the man who would plan the attack on Pearl Harbor was living less than a mile away. Isoroku Yamamoto attended Harvard from 1919

to 1921 to study English. He only got a C+, but managed to also hitchhike to Texas where he gathered information on America's oil industry.¹

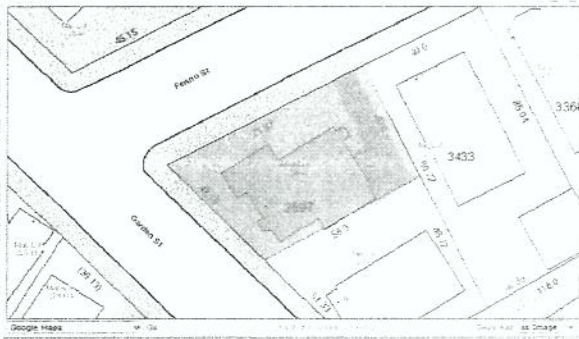
Obviously the Cambridge Chronicle is a wonderful record of the important events in the city. Interestingly there are two separate announcements about Dad's parents. Perhaps one is the engagement and the other the wedding.

24 May 1919

The engagement is announced of Miss Catharine Flynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Flynn, of 131 Garden street, and Simon Gaudet, of Newton.

18 September 1920

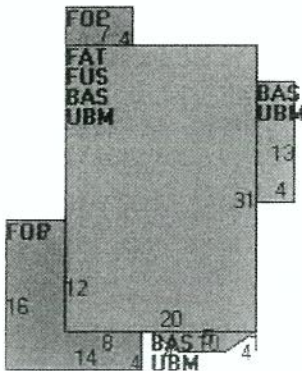
Simon L. Gaudet, 22, manager, 24, Washburn Street, Newton, and Katherine V. Flynn, 23, telephone operator, 131 Garden Street.



Above: Plot of 131 Garden Street in 2015, as recorded by the City of Cambridge.



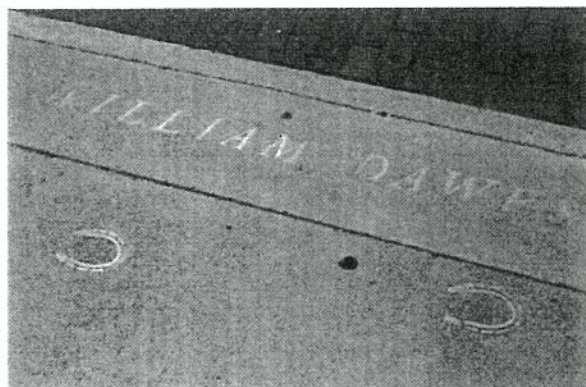
Nana and Bubba in the yard at 131 Garden Street circa 1960. Fenno Street is in the background. Notice how Nana tilts her head for this photograph, just like her father did for his picture on page 14.



Left: Detail of the house itself.

¹ My mother's father, Gayle Walcott Forbush, attended Harvard during these same years. He was Class of '22, which consisted of 1,017 students. This was slightly larger than usual because of the displacements caused by World War One. My grandfather and Yamamoto undoubtedly crossed paths many times on the Harvard campus.

My father [Arthur Joseph Goddard] was born in Cambridge Massachusetts on March 3, 1925. Calvin Coolidge was president. There was no vice president because that had been Coolidge's job when President Warren G. Harding died in office in 1923. Coolidge then won the 1924 election, and in the process a replacement vice president was selected and elected: Brigadier General Charles G. Dawes¹. Both Coolidge and Dawes were sworn in on March 4, 1925, when Dad was one day old. Newborn Dad and the new vice president are connected by history.



Detail of the in-pavement memorial to William Dawes. Along with Paul Revere, he spread word the "British" were coming. It's less than a mile from Dad's childhood home.

Dawes was the great-great-grandson of William Dawes who, along with Paul Revere, rode into the Massachusetts country side on the night of April 18/19, 1775, to warn everyone the King's Men were coming. Dawes' route took him through Harvard Square and past the future site of Dad's home. Today a monument in Cambridge commemorates his ride and also the fact that he completed his mission more successfully than Paul Revere completed his. Dad and the United States were born in the same place.

Dad's birth date is historic in another interesting way. On March 3, 1925, Congress commissioned the Mount Rushmore National Monument. As Dad grew up, images of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt were carved into a mountainside to celebrate our country's founding and guiding principles. The job was completed in 1941, just as he enlisted in the United States Navy to fight a terrible threat to our liberties and way of life.

We are all the result of many family names merging together. In Dad's case these family names include Flynn, Gaudet, Randall, Pickering, O'Neil and others. Our Randall ancestry goes back the furthest, to England in 1086. It's found in the famous Domesday Book, the first comprehensive census of England. The name "Randall" appears as: "Randall, Rev. W" and "Randall, Elizabeth." Thomas Randall (d. 1587) is the earliest Randall ancestor we have traced ourselves to so far.



Joanna O'Neil



Jim RANDALL

Nana's grandparents.

As noted before, in 1620 the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth and demonstrated it was possible to colonize the New World. In 1630, one thousand Puritans sailed on the Winthrop Fleet from the Isle of Wight to do so in earnest. Their success triggered an

¹ Dawes is still the only Vice President or Nobel Peace Prize winner to have written a number one hit song. In 1912 he wrote "Melody in A Major" which became Dawes' political theme song. It was re-recorded as "It's All in the Game" in 1958, becoming a number one hit for six weeks. It is in the score of several modern Hollywood movies.

exodus from England historians call The Great Migration. Our family was part of it; "Richard Randall" appears in New England records in the early 1640s. Nana's mother's maiden name was Randall.

Our Pickering ancestry is also interesting, particularly because of one individual: Timothy Pickering. He literally helped our founding fathers create the United States of America.

1745 Timothy Pickering is born in Salem, MA.

1775 Resisted the British in the Salem Incident, a precursor to the Battle of Lexington.

1776 Served as one of General Washington's key officers. He was in charge of logistics.

1791 Served as the second Postmaster General for President Washington.

(A man named William Goddard worked closely with Benjamin Franklin to create the original US postal system under the Continental Congress. His sister, Mary Katherine Goddard, was a postmaster too, and also a publisher.

In January, 1777, the Continental Congress commissioned her to print what is now called the Goddard Broadside. It's the second published copy of the Declaration of Independence, and the first which includes the names of those who signed it. Only nine copies still exist.)

1795 The second Secretary of War.

1795 The third Secretary of State for five years, for Presidents Washington and Adams.

His term ended in 1800 when he got into a disagreement with President Jefferson.

1802 Tried to get New England to secede from the United States. (That must have been a really heated argument with Jefferson!)

1803 Elected Senator from Massachusetts.

1811 Elected Congressman from Massachusetts.

1815 Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Headquarters in Cambridge)

1829 Passed away in Salem, MA. He is interred across the street from his home, which is known as the Pickering House. Built in the mid-1600s, this house is believed to be the oldest house in the United States continuously occupied by one family. However, it was sold to another family in 1998. Nearby Pickering Wharf in Salem is named after him.



Timothy Pickering



Dad's parents, Nana and Bubba, around the time they were married in 1920.

We are also related to the famous Speaker of the

House Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, since we have a common great-great-great grandfather. Tip won John Kennedy's seat in Congress when Kennedy was elected to the senate in 1952. Tip went on to become the Speaker of the House, serving the longest uninterrupted term in that role to date. But on the day Dad was born, Tip O'Neill was only twelve years old. The future Speaker of the House was just another kid running through the streets of Cambridge near Garden Street when Nana and Bubba brought their new-born son home.

Dad's mother Katherine Victoria Flynn / Gaudet / Goddard was called "Kitty" by adults; and later "Nana" by her grandchildren. Nana was born on Stern Street in Cambridge. She worked as an operator for the phone company before becoming a full time homemaker for her six children. Nana's father was Francis Xavier Flynn, born 20 March 1855, in Cambridge to Barney and Catherine, residents of Cambridge. Her husband Simon Gaudet / Goddard, also called "Bubba" by his grandchildren, was a rare combination of intelligence, humility and common sense. He was also a warm, friendly and thoroughly wonderful man.

The first Gaudette to immigrate to Canada was Jean, who hailed from a town near Rouen, France. Bubba's family is part of the story of the Acadian Deportation which Longfellow wrote about in his epic poem, "Evangeline." Bubba had a brother named Walter who died at age 9. He died before Bubba was born.

Simon L. Gaudet was born in Newton, and the family lived for many years in a comfortable house at 24 Washburn Street, Newton, MA. Bubba served in the Merchant marines in the First World War because he was too young to join the Navy. Nana and Bubba announced their engagement in the Cambridge Chronicle, and they married on September 18, 1920. When they returned from their honeymoon Bubba learned he was out

Simon's
childhood
Home
Newton
Mass.



This is 24 Washburn Street in Newton, photographed when it was Bubba's childhood home in the early 1900s, and today. It has hardly changed in 100 years.



Simon Louise Rita Mary Elena John
Lucy Paul Malvina Margaret

Bubba's parents and siblings. Three of his sisters were nuns.

of work. According to his daughter Jan, Bubba was ever-resourceful. He quickly found himself a job at Allis-Chambers, a major manufacturer of industrial machinery and farm equipment, which they have always carefully painted a distinctive orange color. When the depression hit, Allis-Chambers consolidated its operations in the mid-west. Rather than leave Cambridge, Bubba considered becoming a Cambridge police officer, and was even accepted on the force, but Nana wouldn't permit it. Instead, he found a job at the Cambridge Water Works. This is the plant which pumps water from historic Fresh Pond and distributes it to the city of Cambridge. His daughter Yvonne remembers that he worked as a meter reader, not at the main plant itself. This job allowed the family to survive the depression.

When the economy improved Bubba moved on to teaching mechanical drawing at Hyde Park Technical School, then to MIT where he taught drafting and lathe operation during the war. (Among his many talents Bubba was an extremely skilled machinist.) After the war the United States Government thanked Bubba for the contributions he made in advanced RADAR technology. His daughter Jan describes it nicely. "It has been said [that] RADAR won the war. The bomb only ended it." She added, "Those working on the project were required to sign an oath of silence, it was that HUSH HUSH." Jan still has a document given to S.L. Goddard "on behalf of the Government of the United States of America for his participation in work ... contributing to the successful prosecution of The Second World War." The certificate is signed by James Conant, President of M.I.T, and Vannevar Bush. Bush was a graduate of Tufts University and head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development. He was the top guy. Bush's department had an unlimited budget and he reported only to the President of the United States.

After the war Bubba worked at Arthur D. Little, a company founded by two MIT graduates. He aided their Research & Development department until he retired. Even after he retired, the company would call him in for help making special cuts on the lathe. Bubba contributed a lot. Jan's daughter Pam and her husband are both patent attorneys. Even now (mid 2010s) they still often come across patents from Arthur D. Little with Bubba's name on them.



Bubba resembled Abraham Lincoln...



Bubba did well. He purchased a house on the corner of Walden and Garden Street as an investment. It was also helpful when his children grew up. His daughter Marion lived in it for a time. When Donald got married, he lived upstairs for a while as well.

I remember Nana and Bubba fondly. In my mind Bubba always resembled Abraham Lincoln, and I'm sure the people who knew him best would say he possessed much of Lincoln's wisdom, intelligence and drive.

At a personal level, Bubba was a cheerful man. He was always quick to give someone a ride, repair anything he could when visiting neighbor's house, and to put a few dollars in the hand of a friend. He was even more generous with family. Bubba dug really deep many times to help my parents with substantial cash gifts when I was a baby. He smiled often, made silly jokes and just seemed to enjoy life. There's a celebrity from the golden age of television named Dean Martin, famous for being unflappable and making little jokes and comments to make others smile, but who was never mean about it. If you are so inclined, take a moment to watch any of his movie or TV performances. That's very much what being around Bubba was like.

His wife Kitty was a very different person. She was more reserved and judgmental. She also had an interesting speaking style. As she warmed up to her topic, especially when it was about family, she would speak with increasing candor until suddenly inhaling sharply. It was as if one part of her



...with Dean Martin's personality.

mind was telling the other part it was time to stop talking, and that was how the order was communicated. She was also very concerned with appearances and proper behavior. As far as she was concerned, life was definitely *not* a “come as you are” affair.

Nana and Bubba complimented each other. Both were born in the final years of the 1800s and grew up in very challenging times. They started their family on the eve of the Great Depression and weathered the resulting economic storm, only to watch their sons enlist to fight in World War II and later Korea.

Relationships within Nana and Bubba’s families were complex and challenging. There is speculation that Nana’s relationships with her siblings were impacted because she ended up with the house her father built at 131 Garden Street. Nana didn’t discuss such things, and at this point the details aren’t important. All families have similar drama.

Nana’s siblings were: Arthur, Joseph, Chester, Frank, Bernard and Emeline. In an echo of Timothy Pickering and William Goddard, Arthur was the postmaster in Belmont, MA. In later years he got reacquainted with Nana and her children. Nana’s brother Joseph would walk by the house on Garden Street every day for years and would say hello, but that was it. Her brother Chester wasn’t involved in the rift. He lived in Somerville and was an articulate man: well-mannered and well-spoken. He had been in the Navy and was stationed in the Aleutian Islands. He would give tremendous talks about them. His son became a doctor. Uncle Frank was Nana’s step-brother. [Her father had been married once before.] Frank was closest to Nana. Bubba would drive over to his house in East Cambridge and fetch him for Thanksgiving dinner every year. Nana’s sister Emeline was a nurse at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge. She lived with Nana and Bubba for a time. She married an ENT doctor, Robert Welch. Nana’s son Warren was his patient for his lazy eye. They rented a cottage on Cape Cod at Buzzard’s Bay with Nana and Bubba before the war.

Bubba’s family had fault-lines as well. His son Warren remembers that he rarely visited his grandparents, Paul and Malvina, and they never visited as a family. He went a few times as a child with Bubba. Warren thought his grandparents were wonderful people. One night he and Bubba visited Paul Gaudet and some neighborhood kids came to the door to get their skates sharpened. As a carpenter, he had a rig set up in the basement that had a concave blade, and he sharpened all the kid’s skates. The children had asked, “Oh, Mr. G., would you please sharpen my skates?” It seemed as though the neighborhood kids knew Warren’s grandfather better than he did.

All three of Bubba’s sisters visited Cambridge at least once. Warren said that Bubba’s brother John Gaudet was “a heck of a nice guy” and is pretty sure he had a number of children. John ended up in a nursing home on Tripolo Road, possibly in Chelmsford, but he’s not sure which town. He had a son in the Air Force.

Such challenging family relations affected the next generation. Warren didn’t even know he had an Uncle Arthur or Uncle Bernard until he was a teenager. One day Nana’s daughter Janice made a friend at St. Peter’s elementary school on Tuttle Street and went over to her house to play after school. She met the girl’s mother, and after she answered a few questions they discovered that her new friend was her cousin. They lived two streets away from one another. Yet, in spite of this, Nana named her second son

"Arthur Joseph," after her brothers. There's no doubt that Dad's parents loved their children, and were devoted to them. Dad would be greatly influenced by his parents, especially his father.

Dad was born in the middle of the Roaring Twenties, also called the Jazz Age, and it's interesting to ponder the events swirling around him when he was a baby.

For the first time, more Americans lived in cities than on farms. Radios began appearing in living rooms. The nation's total wealth more than doubled between 1920 and 1929. Children's toys such as Lincoln Logs and YoYos made their appearance. Wonder bread, Wheaties, Kool-Aid, Milk Duds, Welch's Grape Jelly, Velveeta cheese and Popsicles came into being, as did the idea of a forty hour work week. Scientists figured out vitamins and human blood types. They also discovered insulin and penicillin.

Prohibition was in full force. Boston, because of its proximity to Canada where alcohol was still legal, quickly became a major bootlegging center.² This was also an era when many people began brewing and distilling their own adult beverages. In New England the sales of ginger ale soared, since it effectively masked the taste of bathtub gin. Ginger ale remains a favorite regional soft drink to this day.

Nellie Tayloe Ross became the first female governor (Wyoming) in the United States. Twelve days later, Ma Ferguson became first female governor of Texas. F. Scott Fitzgerald published *The Great Gatsby*. The famous Scopes "Monkey Trial" was held. The Chrysler Corporation was founded by Walter Percy Chrysler. TV was invented. Adolf Hitler published *Mein Kampf*, and for \$175 you could buy a Thompson submachine gun from the Sears mail order catalog.

A few days after Dad celebrated his first birthday, Dr. Robert Goddard launched the first liquid-fuel rocket in Auburn, Massachusetts, only 45 miles away. Today the site is a National Historic Landmark. It's also the Pakachoag Golf Course at 20 Upland Street. Goddard's rocket was launched to the right of the club house as you enter the course. It landed at the 9th hole "near the pond."

Just after Dad turned two years old, on May 20-21, 1927, Charles Lindbergh made the first solo, nonstop transatlantic airplane flight in his single-engined aircraft, the Spirit of St. Louis. He took off from the Roosevelt Field Airport on Long Island, New York (It's now the Roosevelt Field Mall, the second largest full price mall in New York) and landed in Paris, France. His achievement heralded a new era in transportation technology, and made him an instant international hero. It also grabbed the world's attention in a way which wouldn't be seen again until July, 16, 1969, when the Apollo 11 mission lifted off to land men on the moon. Charles Lindbergh used his fame to help Dr.



Dad and his brother Donald, probably around 1928. Airplane themed toys were very popular after Lindbergh's famous solo flight over the Atlantic.

² Many of the better homes from this era have secret entrances, passageways and storage spaces. Their current owners say they were built as part of the underground railway. Perhaps this is true. But such features are equally useful for keeping one's residence safely and discreetly stocked with booze, should the need to do so have ever been felt.

Robert Goddard obtain major funding for his work. Most people don't know that Lindbergh, quietly ushered to a private vantage point, watched the Apollo 11 launch in person.

When Dad was a toddler Mickey Mouse appeared on screen for the first time. The first Academy Awards ceremony was held. Scotch Tape was invented. Pluto was discovered. The first coin operated jukeboxes appeared. Hollywood converted entirely to talking pictures. The first frozen foods from Clarence Birdseye appeared in local food markets. The chocolate chip cookie was invented by Ruth Wakefield at the Toll House Inn in Whitman, Massachusetts.

Literally the day Dad turned six years old, March 3, 1931, the Star-Spangled Banner was adopted as the United States' National anthem. Two weeks later American television actor Leonard Nimoy was born in the West End of Boston, Massachusetts, six miles from Garden Street. Later that year, on December 1, 1931, his future wife Virginia Grace Forbush is born in Natick MA.

I wish we had a more detailed account of Dad's childhood, and a better idea of what he was like as a child in particular. Was he talkative, shy, or even rebellious? In any case, he was obviously a typical kid. Fortunately, some of his major events from his boyhood are known and we can infer from others.

The pivotal event of Dad's childhood occurred when he was around eight to ten years old. Nana and Bubba and their six children were living in the 1,400 square foot house at 131 Garden Street.³ The Great Depression was in full force. There was little money to be earned anywhere, and many people thought it was literally the end of the United States of America. In spite of this, Nana and Bubba, as thoughtful and loving parents, scraped some money together to send their son to a special art school independent of the public school he attended. It was a very difficult thing for them to do at the time, but the effect it had on Dad cannot be overstated. It inspired him to his very soul. From that moment forward he was an artist! He went on to teach art, and he crafted, drew, sculpted and painted for the rest of his life.⁴

He also imparted his love of art to his children, along with his sophisticated tastes. As just one example, in early 1962, when I was age seven, Dad took us to see a Van Gough exhibition that simply isn't possible any more. Many of his most famous works were in a single gallery with no barriers at all. I remember how the swirling colors, especially the purples and yellows, hypnotized me. They were so beautiful I was certain they'd feel alive under my fingertips. I managed to touch the surface of one or two of them before my parents explained museum etiquette in no uncertain terms. I'll always remember how happy Dad was to be there and how happy Mom was to be with him.

Dad learned other things around this time too. Cambridge, especially then, was a no nonsense working-class neighborhood. The brickyards were still in operation and the tough, simple men who worked them had settled nearby. They and their offspring set the tone for that end of Cambridge. (The Harvard types generally lived at the other end of town, close to the Charles River and Boston.) Dad, the art student, also learned to fight. One day he and another kid got into it. They were having a fist fight on the

³ In 2015 a similar house at 99 Garden Street, only 500 feet away, sold for \$1.91 dollars. Oddly, due to the vagaries of real estate markets, Dad's childhood home is worth nearly two million dollars. Not bad for a modest structure built at the brickyard end of a street originally called The Great Swamp Road.

⁴ Ironically, Dad was color-blind. But it literally did not affect his works, all of which are beautiful.

sidewalk when Bubba walked around the corner towards them. Just then Dad hit his opponent under the jaw and sent him spinning alongside a car. Bubba saw this. As he passed the scene he said to Dad, "Don't let your mother see you." Then he just kept walking. (Dad loved telling that story!)

Boston weather can be extreme. Winters can be very cold, yet summers hot and humid. (In Boston they almost always say "muggy" not "humid.") Dad, his brothers and their friends would escape the heat by swimming in the Charles, or in the water-filled pits surrounding the brickyards. Dad's younger brother Warren "definitely remembers swimming in Jerry's Pit. The swimming hole was so deep because of the brickyard looking for clay. The water was "milky dirty." It wasn't easy to climb down the pit and there was a huge crane down there. On the top of the hill, the guards on duty would shoot at them. He doesn't know what they shot the kids with, but they were certainly shot at."

Clearly it was a very different era. By the way, the guards were NOT shooting directly at the kids. They were using the sound of gunfire to drive the kids off the property because it was a dangerous place to swim. Every year, without fail, several kids would drown. In they winter it was a popular place to ice skate. Even then, kids fell through the ice. Warren lost a boyhood friend that way and still has difficulty talking about it seven decades later.

Warren also remembers they were poor, but that everyone was poor. They were better off than most, because they had a car. While Dad was growing up Nana did gave every child a teaspoon of cod liver oil every day during the winter. At the time it was a new practice, since the role of vitamins and their effect on one's health was cutting-edge research at the time. It tasted horrible, but the Vitamin A & D it provided made up for the absence of fresh produce during the winter months. The children stayed healthy. It was one of many excellent decisions Nana and Bubba made during their lives.

On a tastier note, Dad told me how Nana made what he described as the best bacon sandwiches ever. Nana had a magnificent turn-of-the-century stove in her tiny kitchen. He told me in detail how she'd use it to cook bacon, which she had to slice herself. While it sizzled she'd slice, then butter and toast fresh bread.⁵ When everything was ready she'd assemble and serve the whole thing to him all warm and toasty.

⁵ "The greatest thing since sliced bread" didn't happen until after 1928, when bread slicing machinery was invented. Pre-sliced bread wasn't universally available while Dad was growing up.

Bubba was six feet tall. I know that because I really noticed it the last time I visited him. My dad and Donald did quite not grow to his height, but Warren definitely did. I've always suspected it had to do with putting food on the table in the 1930s. Bubba certainly did his best and the result was probably long on potatoes and short on dairy and meats. Dad and Donald entered their adolescent growth spurt at the height of the depression, and I sincerely believe that with a proper diet they would have been at least as tall as Bubba. I have no proof that's what happened. However, Dad was almost fanatical about serving us roast beef, swordfish, chicken, steak (all kinds), pork chops and so on. Vegetables were a secondary consideration and very basic: baked potatoes, corn and green beans. Mom specialized in cookies, cakes and pies, all of which she made from scratch. Dad always handled the big Sunday meal. After church we'd sit down to a real feast. I remember he used to slice red onions and put them in a bowl of water and ice cubes to take the edge off them. He served radishes the same way. The Sunday meal was very important to him.

CAMBRIDGE PROBATE COURT.

IN SENATE
 TO THE HONORABLE THE JUDGES OF THE PROBATE COURT IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX:

RESPECTFULLY presented *James G. Gaudet*
 of *Cambridge* in said County, *Middlesex*
 that he do give in *Newton*
 in the County of *Middlesex* in the State of *Mass.* on the
 13th day of *August* 1974 that he do
 petition for said in the following cases:

Newton
Cambridge

that he do petition for said in the following cases:

and that he do petition for said in the following cases:

for the reason that *there is great confusion in
 communicating and letters to various
 those children in school were called
 by these different names*

wherefore he do petition for said to be changed, and that he may take
 the same effect as if he were in person.

Done on June 3, 1974 at
James G. Gaudet

A copy of the document Bubba filed to change the family name from Gaudet to Goddard. It was a difficult thing to do back then.

When Dad was eleven years old Nana and Bubba made a major decision. The Gaudet family name was changed to Goddard at Nana's insistence. Katherine Flynn's family was from Ireland, and became firmly established in the new world at a relatively early point, around the 1850s. However, this didn't prevent them from feeling the lingering impact of anti-Irish sentiment in the first decades of the twentieth century. Even so, by the 1930s being Irish no longer put you at the bottom of the social pecking order. That unfortunate role was taken over by French-Canadians who migrated to Cambridge in considerable numbers during the brick making boom of the latter 1800s. For a very long time they were viewed as uncouth people who were only good for pulling muck out of swamps. Nana felt a name change which disassociated her family from this stereotype would help her children advance in the world. Perhaps that's even why they chose "Goddard." Dr. Robert Goddard's stated desire to reach the moon with his rockets was public knowledge. Though teased in the press, ordinary Americans were inspired by his big ideas, perhaps thinking "This is America, why not?" It probably also helped that, when said with a Boston accent, "Gaudet" and "Goddard" sound nearly alike.

Whatever the particulars, Bubba filed the name-change paperwork in 1936. People generally do things for two reasons: One that sounds good and the real one. Officially Bubba made the name change because *"There is great confusion in pronouncing and spelling of name. Three children in school are called by three different names."* Ironically, even though his birth certificate says "Warren Edward Gaudet," Warren doesn't remember changing his name. The first time he remembers anything about a name change was when he was in high school. One afternoon he went to a coffee shop to study (instead of the library) and he met up with a gang of kids including Billy Dougherty and a boy named Striker. Billy yelled out, "Hey Gaudet." (Pronounced with the "t") and my Warren said, "What?" He told me, "I was a teenager and I didn't know what he was talking about." However, he does remember when Bubba was upset about a prior name change request the judge didn't approve. This judge even went so far as to declare that Gaudet is a fine name. Warren said Bubba simply wrote what he had to in order to get the name change. He told me in April, 2014, the real reason was to Anglicize our French-Canadian ancestry.

Once a *fait accompli*, family discussion of the name change was taboo for the rest of the twentieth century. Given this, it's not surprising that my generation, the first to be born with the Goddard name, was always rebuffed in its attempts to learn our genealogy. When we asked if we were related to Dr. Robert Goddard, the famous rocket scientist, we were told "possibly" but that nobody in the family was

sure. Ironically, by marrying my mother, Dad connected with the Goddard family tree via a Forbush-Goddard marriage in Boston in 1836. In the end Dad supplied the name; Mom supplied the family that went with it.



The Hindenburg, with swastikas on its tail fins, passes Boston's Custom House during its last flight. The Germans wanted to fill it with helium, but the only supplier was the United States. Concerned about Hitler's ambitions, Congress passed the Helium Control Act of 1927 to prevent them from getting it. The Germans, with great reluctance, were forced to use explosive hydrogen instead.

Also in 1936, our cousin Tip O'Neill is elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives at the young age of twenty-four.

Just after Dad turned twelve in May, 1937, the German airship Hindenburg flew over Boston on its way to a disastrous landing in New Jersey. Even now it's the biggest *anything* that has ever flown. My mother saw it pass over Natick. Dad probably saw it from Cambridge since it really was quite a sight. (I'm sure people pulled others, especially youngsters, outdoors so they wouldn't miss it.) The Hindenburg Disaster was big news because literally millions of people had seen the airship with their own eyes just hours before it burned and crashed to the ground.

A little over a year later, when Dad was thirteen, almost 2,000 veterans of the Civil War met at Gettysburg for the last such reunion ever held. Fifteen years earlier there had been 50,000 attendees. The last verified Civil War veteran, Albert Woolson, died in 1956 at age 109. The last

Civil War widow, Gertrude Janeway, died in 2003 at age 93. The United States government was still paying Civil War pensions to two children of Civil War veterans as of February, 2012.⁶



A Confederate and a Union soldier pose for a photograph at the Gettysburg Civil War Reunion of 1938. Dad was 13 years old when this picture was taken.

Dad attended what is now Latin and Rindge High School, adjacent to Harvard University. Originally established in 1648, both schools literally have grown up alongside each other since colonial times. Graduates include many famous and notable people; including an actor who earned two academy awards from his first and nearly only film appearance. (Harold Russell, *Best Years of Our Lives*.)

When Dad attended Latin and Rindge they were actually two different schools which wouldn't unite until 1977. Latin was the scholarly side, while Rindge was more of a vocational school. A decision was made to enroll Dad in Rindge. This upset him greatly, especially since his older brother Donald was already enrolled in Latin. The most direct route to high school from

Garden Street would have been across Harvard. But they typically went around the university via Harvard Square.

When not attending school, all three of Nana's Boys would seek adventure. One way to get around town at that time was to hop a street car, which ran on electricity supplied by an overhead grid of electrified wire. Two flexible poles ran from the roof of the trolley to make contact. They were swept back and held in place by cables attached to the back panel of the car. Sometimes when Dad and his brothers "hopped" a trolley, they literally jumped on the back bumper. When they arrived at their destination they used the cable to pull the flexible pole from the overhead wire, stopping the street car. They saved money and got their thrills running away before the driver could react.



A Boston electric street car viewed from the back.

Looking at photos of the back ends of electric trolley cars from this period it doesn't seem possible. They're literally designed to prevent this from happening. However, Warren provides a compelling corroborative detail to this story. Responsible adults disapproved of this activity, especially truck drivers. They would pull up close behind any boys they saw hanging off the backs of trolleys – while both vehicles were in motion! – to harass them. Again, this was clearly a different era.

⁶ I remember playing dominoes with my mother's great aunt Dosie [Dorothy Rogers] in nearby Arlington during early 1960s. Dosie was born in 1880. To put that in perspective, she was 34 years old when the Titanic sank. History isn't always as ancient as it seems.

Electric trolley service of this type continued into the 1960s. I remember one time when Dad was driving us into Harvard Square. Traffic was backed up where Garden Street and Massachusetts Avenue come together; not an unusual occurrence. This time an electric trolley was blocking a lane. The driver was behind the vehicle, pulling down on the cable at the back of his stalled bus, wrestling the pole back onto the overhead wire. I remember commenting that it wasn't a very good design if it could just pop off the wire like that. Dad was silent. He didn't want to give me ideas.

Dad was still in high school when the United States entered World War II. His first paying job was delivering telegrams, which he did on bicycle. Telegrams were the internet communication of their day, much faster than mailing letters. They were also more expensive and most people didn't deal with them. Sadly, at the time they were how the federal government informed parents their son had been killed in the war. Dad remembers delivering telegrams and how his heart would break when the door closed and he heard crying from inside the home. He also remembered trying to deliver telegrams on



"WAVES [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service] Officers march to school on Garden Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, circa 1943."

bicycle in a snowstorm; especially when the snow piled up to the point he couldn't even push his bicycle through it, and how it made him cry with frustration.

Also, while Dad was in high school, John F. Kennedy was attending Harvard. It's fun to consider how often they must have crossed paths as they crisscrossed the same few blocks of central Cambridge. Around this same time Harvard Medical School began its famous Grant Study, a lifelong research project into life's success factors. Based on bi-annual surveys of 268 Harvard undergraduates, its goal was to identify predictors of healthy aging. One of the subjects was, in fact, John F. Kennedy, who obviously became a statistical outlier.

The study is unique partly because of the long time span of the cohort, and also partly because of the high social status of some of the study participants. The results are very interesting. Fundamentally, they document the fact alcoholism is a disorder of great destructive power. Alcoholism was the single main cause of divorce between the Grant Study men and their wives. Also, that neurosis and depression tended to follow alcohol abuse rather than precede it. The study also revealed that, above a certain level, financial success depends on warmth of relationships and not on intelligence. Overall, the study's main conclusion is that warm personal relationships throughout life have the greatest positive impact on life satisfaction and longevity. Or, as the head researcher has said, "Happiness is love. Full stop."

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor every American was outraged, Dad included. For the rest of his life he would refer to the Japanese as *"Dirty Jap Bastards."* He said it as a single word¹. With patriotic furor thousands immediately enlisted. *Everybody* got involved. More than 16 million men and women served in the armed forces during WWII, twelve percent of the total U.S. population at the time. Dad left high school to enlist in the United States Navy in February, 1942.² He exaggerated his age so he'd be accepted. He was sixteen years old.

"When this war is over, the Japanese language will be spoken only in hell." Admiral Bill Halsey (December 7, 1941)

His older brother Donald also joined the Navy. Both brothers were influenced by their father's earlier attraction to the Navy and Merchant Marine. Their youngest brother Warren was only 10 years old at the time, but he remembers accompanying Bubba and Dad to the Navy recruiting station. On the way they attended Mass at their church. When they were leaving Warren found a coin on the floor. He picked it up and was going to pocket it, but Dad told him to put it in the poor box instead.

There was a Navy boot camp in Boston back then. Dad's brother Donald was stationed there, so after boot camp he was able to come home. The Navy had other plans for Dad. He was sent to boot camp at the Naval Station Great Lakes (NAVSTA Great Lakes), located near North Chicago, in Lake County, Illinois. They didn't see Dad again until the war was over. When Dad and Donald returned they invited Warren to go with them to the Oxford Grille for a beer. They were surprised when the waitress greeted their baby brother with a cheerful *"Hi, Warren!"*



Main Gate
U.S. NAVAL TRAINING STATION, GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS
Front gate of the Navy's boot camp near Chicago in 1945.

During the war, Warren and his friends were the oldest boys in town. Warren worked in Harvard's kitchens as a baker, putting loaves of bread in the ovens and then placing them on long tables to cool. He burned his arm pretty badly one time. The head baker just slathered some butter on it and they continued working. Warren also baked pies the same way. If any of the pies were defective they were

¹ Nearly two decades later he was showing my brother and me the Boston waterfront. We turned down a pier where a Japanese cargo ship was unloading. Dad pointed to the bow and explained that all Japanese ship names end in "Maru." Then he choked up and began to sob. The ship was flying a Japanese flag. The war was long over, but the sight of that flag flying in Boston Harbor was more than he could bear.

² He already had enough credits to graduate and received his diploma at the end of the semester.

thrown out. Of course the staff the staff could take them home if they wanted to; and they did. Warren took so many pies back to 131 Garden Street he "got sick of pies." To this day he doesn't eat them.

Dad was a tough, street-smart sixteen year old kid when he arrived at the Navy's boot camp. He was able to assert himself in the rough and tumble social exchanges of his new environment, but the Navy didn't care about any of that. Along with everybody else, they gave him shots and a buzz haircut. Then he boxed up his shirt, underwear, pants and shoes and shipped everything home. He and hundreds of other naked shivering men formed a line. It slowly snaked past Navy Supply Clerks who casually tossed out the uniforms and other gear he would use during his period of enlistment.

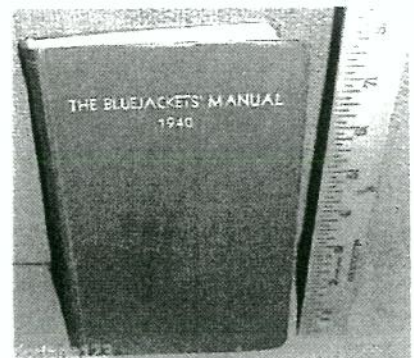
This gear consisted of his sleeping kit: a hammock with a mattress, two mattress covers (sailors called them fart sacks), one pillow, two pillow covers, and two blankets. To store these items he was also issued his Sea Bag - a cylindrical canvas sack with grommets on top. Sailors wove a draw string through the grommets to close the bag, and also to hang it from a rack. He stenciled his name on the side making it the only personal space he'd have for the duration. Its contents were off limits to everyone else.



Mess hall at the Navy's boot camp, date unknown.

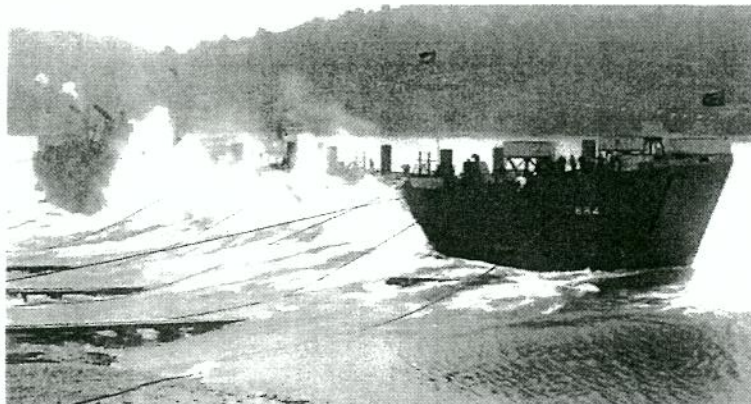
When traveling, a sailor didn't just stuff things into his sea bag. He laid out his clothing and bedding items on the flattened mattress in a specific order according to regulations. The order was not arbitrary. It came from much experience and resulted in a compact package. This procedure insured first that the clothing would take up a minimum of space so it would all fit in the sea bag. Secondly by rolling items and tying them they tended to have fewer wrinkles when unrolled.

Finally the Navy gave every man his bible; The Bluejackets' Manual. This book contained all he needed to know either ashore or afloat. It had illustrations showing flags, badges, guns, uniforms, rope tying, photographs of ships, insignia, and more. For example, Chapter 26 describes the "Aim and Objects of All General Drills" including "Water-tight integrity; Details of drills; Fire drill; Collision drill; Abandon ship drill; Fire and rescue drill; Plane crash and salvage; Battle drill; Battle bill; General quarters; Fueling ship."



Now properly outfitted, his physical training began. Chief Petty Officers screamed commands punctuated with endless verbal abuse. Along with hundreds of other men, Dad marched, exercised, washed clothes, ran, fired weapons and climbed obstacles. After a few hours of sleep he did it again. The obvious reason for harassing the men was to get them accustomed to discipline, to respond to disagreeable orders, and to function with little sleep. It's a process which has created competent armed forces since antiquity. Dad seems to have

As the United States prepared for war our family did its part. Bubba helped create advanced RADAR equipment; Donald joined the crew of a seaplane tender, while Dad settled in to his duties in Richmond, Virginia. Like Bubba, he became expert at using machine tools. Dad often told me what his job was like during this period, especially how he went about rebuilding diesel engines. First, he'd take it apart, clean and measure everything, and then he'd machine or replace any worn parts. Finally, he'd put the whole thing back together. *"There'd always be a few parts left over,"* he said with a chuckle, *"but the damn thing worked just fine."*



A new LST slides sideways into the Ohio River at Evansville, Indiana.

Dad was impressed with the engineering involved. He told me about installing the diesel injectors themselves. These are short, thin steel pipes which squirt fuel into each cylinder, and are screwed into precisely machined holes in the engine. Dad told me *"They had to be perfectly clean. If you removed one and got your fingerprints on it, it wouldn't go back in the hole. It was just amazing."* Like boot camp, this was a relatively happy time for him. He made many friends, including an heir to the company which made Chris-Craft boats.⁴

Dad was stationed in Richmond for roughly twenty-four months. He couldn't know it at the time, but in January, 1944, a steel hull was laid down in a "cornfield shipyard" at Evansville, Indiana, where the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company was building deep-water Navy vessels for the Navy as fast as it could. Eleven days after Dad's nineteenth birthday, on March 14, 1944, his future ship was launched. Dubbed LST 552, it slid sideways into the Ohio River with a huge splash. It rolled back and forth for a while, and was then towed to a nearby wharf to be fitted out. The Navy accepted the ship on April 19, 1944, when Lieutenant R. E. Sandvigen assumed command.



R. E. Sandvigen
R. E. SANDVIGEN

Lieutenant R. E. Sandvigen at the helm of LST 552.

Sandvigen's first task was to move his new ship from brown water (as the Navy refers to inland waterways) to its proper home in blue water. With the help of river guides, he steamed down the Ohio River to Cairo, Illinois, then onto the Mississippi River for another 1,000 miles. LST 552 passed Kentucky /

⁴ This is a bit surprising because during this period the Chris-Craft company had its hands full building patrol boats, rescue vessels, and utility launches for the United States Army and Navy. It seems an heir to the company might have been useful running it just then.

Missouri, Tennessee⁵, Arkansas, and Louisiana / Mississippi before reaching her destination of New Orleans.

Her shakedown cruise took place off the sugar white beaches of Panama City, Florida between May 1, 1944 and May 12, 1944. Afterwards she returned to New Orleans for a final check-up of her hull and machinery. On May 24, 1944, she set sail for the Canal Zone by way of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. LST 552 arrived at the Canal Zone on the June 7, 1944, on her way to San Diego and then Pearl Harbor.

At some point during this period Dad received orders in Richmond, Virginia, to report aboard LST 552. It's not clear if he actually did so when the ship was in San Diego, or later when it was in Pearl Harbor. In any case, he packed his sea bag, slung it over his shoulder and took a train to San Diego where he had to wait for a few days before moving on. San Diego is still a major Navy base, and its businesses depend on the endless river of sailors flowing through it. By sheer coincidence Dad's brother Donald was in San Diego at the same time. Dad, his brother and their buddies explored the city with enthusiasm. Caught up in the excitement, Dad impulsively had a small anchor tattooed on his upper arm, but regretted it almost instantly. His Navy pride did not extend to body art. The rest his life he picked at it and wished he hadn't done it.



Arthur Joseph Goddard circa 1943

Caught up in the excitement, Dad impulsively had a small anchor tattooed on his upper arm, but regretted it almost instantly. His Navy pride did not extend to body art. The rest his life he picked at it and wished he hadn't done it.

"The destinies of two great empires ... seemed to be tied by some god-damned things called LST's." Winston Churchill

LST stands for "Landing Ship, Tank." Though armed, their primary purpose was to deliver vehicles into a war zone. They did this by running the ship onto a suitable beach, opening the bow doors and lowering a ramp. The vehicles, tanks for example, then drove off the LST and directly into combat. Just over one thousand LSTs were built so quickly they went into the war unnamed. These are the largest Navy vessels ever to be known only by their hull numbers.⁶ Each had a crew of approximately ten officers and one hundred men. They were indispensable during the island hopping campaign of the Pacific War. These were interesting ships. Most sea vessels strive to keep plenty of water under their hulls at all times. Obviously this didn't apply to LSTs. One challenge to putting them into service was the Articles for the Government of the United States Navy. Written in the 1700s, it states "*He who doth suffer his ships to founder on rocks and shoals shall be punished...*" LST captains were not held to a strict interpretation of this statute for obvious reasons.

⁵ Dad's ship steamed past Memphis around the time 13 year-old Elvis Presley and his family moved there from Tupelo, Mississippi.

⁶ In case you were wondering: Yes, there was an LST 13. It was a British ship and it survived the war. There was also an LST 666, nicknamed "The Devil Ship." It too survived the war, after earning six battle stars in the Pacific.

LST crews received special training in the operation these unique ships. The first thing they learned was how to use the unusual anchor in the back. It was dropped in deep water on the way in, and used to winch the ship off the beach on the way out. Tides were a factor too. Countless period photos show LSTs sitting entirely on dry ground during low tide with no water in sight. Special guards protected their propellers and rudders.

When currents ran along the beach LSTs kept their diesel motors running, using their propellers and rudders to keep from being pushed sideways. Of course this put great stress on the hull. Officially, LSTs



This is a photo of Dad's ship in action. Because of its usefulness, a bulldozer was the last thing loaded and the first thing off an LST. It filled holes and carved a road for the rest of the vehicles. It also towed or any tanks, trucks or jeeps which broke down or got stuck.

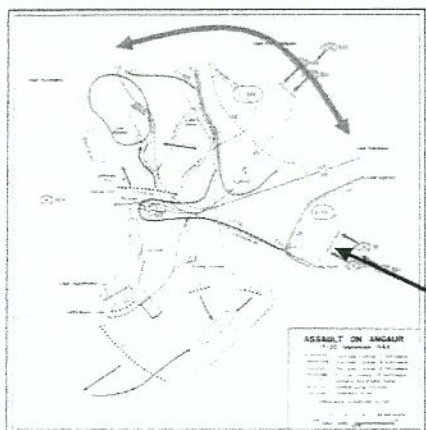
were designed to make only ten such landings. More than that and they were supposedly no longer seaworthy. When I told Dad about this, he simply said "What?" In reality, LSTs were very strong and easily surpassed this ten-landing limit. Sailors had their own name for LSTs. They called them "Large, Slow Targets," which they clearly were. In perfect conditions a new LST's top speed was only ten knots. During the war they cruised at roughly eight knots. That's slow, but they did it for thousands of miles while carrying up to thirty-three light tanks in their hold, dozens of other vehicles on their deck, and massive landing pontoons lashed to their sides. LSTs also have a very impressive safety record. Though equipped with deck guns, they actually fought the war by delivering vehicles, weapons, ammunition, food, medical supplies, officers, troops and doctors. The Navy needed this precious cargo so was careful to protect them. They also were very useful for treating and evacuating wounded soldiers. In fact, when LST 552 arrived in Pearl Harbor on July 11, 1944, the second deck on the port side was immediately converted into a hospital. Two Navy doctors and twelve Pharmacist's Mates reported aboard for duty. Obviously the ship was headed into combat. Pontoons were lashed to each side of the ship⁷ and on July 28, 1944, the 726th Amphibian Tractor Battalion was embarked. Only after the ship got underway was the crew informed of their first mission. They were going to invade the Palau Islands as part of Operation Forager. As the news settled in, Dad and LST 552 steamed past the remains of USS Arizona and into the war.

⁷ Pontoons are floating bridges. LSTs used them to discharge or load cargo and troops while remaining anchored in shallow water just off shore.

Invasion Number One of Six – Anguar Island in Palau

The big picture: Palau had been captured by the Japanese early in the war. We had to take them back to clear the path to the big prize, the Philippines.

Because the ship and crew were brand new, LST 552 spent the next two weeks practicing amphibious landings in the Hawaiian Islands. On August 8, 1944, they headed to the Solomon Islands to participate in final rehearsals for the invasion. She arrived at Florida Island, Solomon Islands



On 9/17/44 LST 552 delivered its cargo on the east side of Anguar. Then it moved back and forth as needed along the island's north shore. At 18:20 it moved out to sea to avoid enemy mortars fired from the beach. The red circles denote Japanese strongholds.

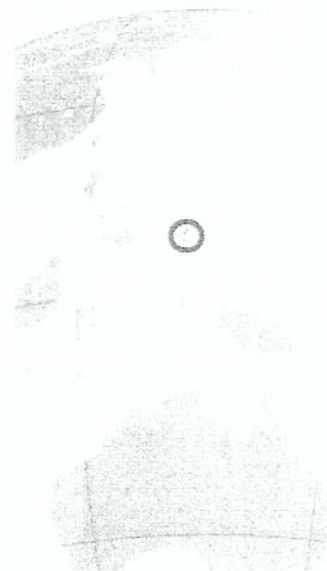
the U.S. flag was raised on Anguar Island, but fighting continued. At this point the Japanese had retreated to caves. Rather than risk lives to get them out, marines simply used bulldozers to seal the entrances. The American forces suffered 260 killed, 1354 wounded, and 940 incapacitated through accident or sickness. (The Japanese had 1338 killed and 59 captured.)

Invasion Number Two of Six – Ulithi Atoll

The big picture: The Navy needed a strategically located safe anchorage for its fleets until Japan was defeated. The Japanese decided they had bigger fish to fry, so they abandoned Ulithi to the Americans.

on the August 26th for yet one more week of intensive training. Then she joined the convoy headed for the enemy-held Palau Islands.

The 552 arrived off Anguar Island, Palau Islands, on the 17th of September as the Battle of Anguar began. US battleships began firing their big guns,



The green circle shows the location of Palau.

reducing much of the island to smoking rubble. Though the expected air attacks did not materialize, the land-based fighting was intense. Since it was LST 552's first engagement, she was sent in as part of the 5th wave of landings. The ship delivered the 726th Amphibian Tractor Battalion as ordered. After three days



An LST in action at Anguar Island, Palau, on 9/17/1944. Amphibious craft could enter and exit LSTs while both craft were at sea.

On the 20th of September LST 552's landing craft were reloaded and she joined a convoy proceeding to the western part of the Caroline Islands to occupy Ulithi Atoll. They arrived three days later. This was 552's second invasion and they were fortunate. The Japanese had already departed. They took Ulithi Atoll without firing a shot. Why was the Navy interested in Ulithi Atoll? It's because Ulithi was the only protected deep water port within 800 miles. Capturing it was a big deal; capturing it easily was a blessing.

As soon as LST 552 helped secure the atoll, ships and men began pouring in. It soon had a population larger than Dallas, Texas, and was temporarily the largest naval base in the world. On September 25, 1944, the 552 left Ulithi on a four day voyage to Humboldt Bay, New Guinea. Once there, she spent two weeks being repaired and made ready for her next mission.



For a few months Ulithi Atoll was the largest naval base in the world.

Dad was the ship's paymaster which gave him an officer-like authority most of the time. However, in reality he was just another sailor. When anchored, the crew was assigned various duties onshore.



Sailors received a ration of beer, and cigarettes were five cents a pack. Many men became very fond of both while in the Navy.

Around this time Dad, the aspiring artist, was put on a Navy burial detail. He found it very difficult.

The Navy doesn't advertise this, but when sailors are buried at sea they sometimes wash ashore, or are found floating on the water. Obviously this is distressing to everyone. Such remains are gathered and then re-interred on land whenever possible. One day this duty fell to the sailors on LST 552. Dad's crew was led to a truck at a local cemetery. They were given shovels and told to get to work. A priest administered last rights as each grave was dug and then filled. It was hot, humid and

very unpleasant work. They turned to beer in order to cope; tobacco too. Cigarettes were a nickel a pack and, like beer, there was an abundant supply. Almost every soldier and sailor began smoking and drinking if they didn't already do so, including Dad.

Invasion Number Three of Six – Leyte Island in the Philippines

The big picture: Capturing the Philippines would cut off the last trickle of oil to Japan. The US put everything they had into achieving this goal. The Japanese put everything they had into stopping them. In fact, their plan was to annihilate the American fleet with special emphasis on targeting the landing forces. This meant destroying the LSTs in particular. The result was the largest naval battle ever.

About to embark on her third invasion in as many months, LST 552 took on some interesting passengers in New Guinea. She carried the officers and staff of the *6th Army Headquarters*. She also had the distinction of bringing the first unit of Philippine soldiers back to their homeland. On October 18, 1944, she weighed anchor and headed for Leyte, Philippine Islands. This landing would be very different than her previous two.



The Philippine Islands

Though designed to carry tanks, it's interesting to note that LSTs had rows of bunks just inside their hulls which extended the length of the ship. They could carry at least one hundred passengers in addition to the ship's officers and crew. This made perfect sense since tanks, for example, need tank crews to run them when they are delivered onto a beach. Surprisingly, LST crews and their passengers generally didn't get to know each other even though they shared the mess hall, showers and heads. In fact, they barely spoke to each other except when they were loading and unloading the ship.

Back home Nana, like millions of others, did her part to support the war effort. She took care of her family as best she could while almost everything she needed to run her household was rationed: Sugar, butter, meat, shoes and much more. New car production was banned beginning January 1, 1942. During the war you could buy only four gallons of gasoline per week; eight if your activities were considered essential to the war effort.



USS LST-552 beached at White Beach Leyte after landing on October 24, 1944.

LST 552 arrived at San Pedro Bay, Leyte Island, on October 24, 1944. From that day until she left Philippine Islands, she was under constant air attack. This battle marked the first appearance of Japanese Kamikazes. Americans were appalled by these pilots who deliberately flew their

planes into enemy ships. In reality, relatively few kamikaze attempts succeeded. But when they did, they caused more destruction than if they had dropped bombs.

The Japanese planned to sink the landing fleet as it converged on the shore, and their attacks caused great confusion. As LST 552 headed into the beach it dropped its rear anchor too soon. The cable played out and the whole thing sank out of sight. Meanwhile, every ship which could do so put up a smokescreen. On 552 the smoke making equipment caught on fire as the ship rammed onto the beach at its top speed. They dropped the ramp on Beach Red, literally on the spot General Douglas MacArthur waded ashore four days earlier. The ship unloaded its special cargo: The first group of Philippine soldiers to return to their country, and also the officers of the 6th Army Headquarters. LST 552 then recovered its anchor, and returned to sea.

At 8:45 AM the next morning LST 552 attempted to return to its previous spot on Red Beach to receive casualties, but things were even more chaotic:

"Heavy smoke obscured the beach from view... Approached beach from south side of Palo Reef on course approximately 300 degrees true, at flank speed ... Upon breaking through smoke screen, discovered assigned causeway at bearing 285 (relative). Speed of vessel and close proximity to beach necessitated rapid maneuvering to approach at correct angle. 0846 While executing this emergency maneuver, three (3) enemy bombers were seen approaching, bearing 260 degrees true, elevation 60 degrees. 0846 Commanded firing all guns at three (3) "Betty" bombers. Extreme difficulty was experienced in relaying commands to the quartermaster while firing was going on. Immediately previous to beaching, one (1) enemy bomber was hit by our guns and fell in flames, crashing into the water on the starboard side. A second bomber was hit by our guns and fell on our port side. The third bomber was hit by our guns, and previous to falling in area of Taclotan Point, released three (3) bombs, one (1) bomb, a near miss on the port bow, one (1), a direct hit at frame 20, port side, and the third bomb a near miss on the starboard side abeam with the conning station. Immediately after being hit by the bomb, all engines were stopped, stern anchor dropped, all engines back full, because it was seen to be impossible to beach at assigned causeway. At this time ship grounded."



This is what LST 552 looked like right after the bomb struck. However, this is a different ship - the LST 158. It was built by the same shipyard and was hit in the same place as the 552.

Three minutes later:

"A fourth enemy bomber passed over head. Entire after batteries fired at bomber. Plane was not seen to be hit, but released string of bombs which fell off our starboard quarter. No damage."

The resulting fires were immediately brought under control with the help of a fire fighting boat, but five sailors and twenty troops were killed. An additional twenty crew members and sixty marines were wounded. They were treated by the Naval Surgical team on board.

The LST 552 crew members who died were:

Bacile, Marion Anthony, SCB3c, 843 19 60
Bessonette, Charles Thurman, S2c, 896 60 71
Higginbotham, Albert Leo, Bkr2c, 803 47 77
Mazzaroppi, Arthur Clement, S1c, 800 39 92

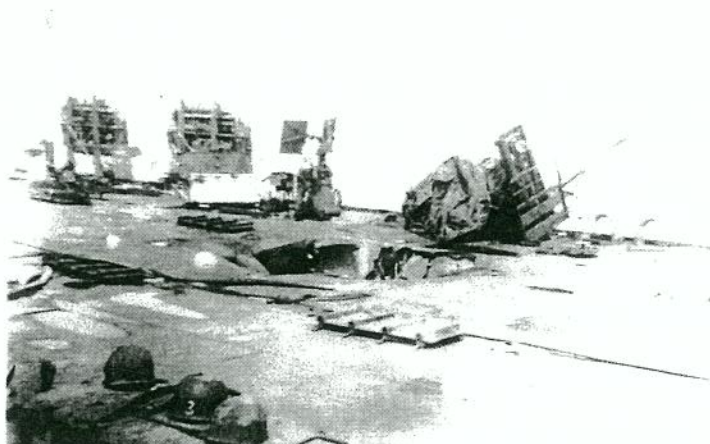
Murawski, Richard Theodore, GM3c, 805 69 86

By coincidence, four of five were part of the original crew which sailed a brand new LST 552 down the Mississippi to Cuba, the Panama Canal, San Diego, and then into the Pacific War.

Before moving on, we might consider these men for a moment, even though they died long ago.

Charles Bessonette served on LST 552 as a general-duty sailor. He was born only four days before Dad, on February 27, 1925. When it got the news, his local paper wrote an article about him and also published his picture. "He was somewhere in the South Pacific in the Navy," was all they could say. It's possible that his family never learned exactly how he died just a few months before his twentieth birthday.

Marion Anthony Bacile, was born in 1913. At age 31, he was a relatively old man on the ship. His rank of "SCB3c" means he was a "Ship's Cook – Butcher." He had a modest job - handling meat in the galley. His wife's name was Mary, and she received the news of her husband's death at their home at 219 N. Hagerman St in Houston, Texas. It must have been incomprehensible. How can a ship's cook die in action?¹ She eventually remarried and passed away in Houston in 2002.



USS LST 552 main deck showing bomb damage from the enemy air attack at Leyte Gulf on 24 October 1944. This view looks towards the port side of the ship.

Killed in Southwest Pacific Area

2-c Seaman Charles Thurman Bessonette paid the supreme sacrifice for his country. His father Mr. Leon Bessonette, received the telegram on Nov. 3rd., 1944, bearing the sad news. He was somewhere in the South Pacific in the Navy.

Charles was born the 27th of Feb., 1925. He was the third son of Mr. Bessonette and the late Mrs. Edna Bessonette and lived with his parents near Jordan's store. He attended Fair Oak Springs school. He had been in the Navy one year and two months when he lost his life in the service of his country. Charles received his boot training at San Diego, Calif. He leaves many friends saddened.

Those left to mourn his untimely going are his father and step-mother, brothers—Pvt. Malcolm Bessonette, at Camp Shelby, Rudolph, Wesley, Freddie, Roy, Tommie and a sister, Evelyn. All live in the home except Roy, who is married and lives nearby.

Rudolph leaves for Camp Shelby this week, having already passed his examination and had his 21-day leave. Besides his immediate family, Charles leaves his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Fred Bessonette, several uncles, aunts and other relatives and friends. Sympathy is extended the loved ones. Only God can give comfort and strength. Without faith and trust in a loving heavenly Father sorrow cannot be understood. May His love and Peace surround you always.

11/17/1944

—A Friend.

¹ The crew was at battle stations when the bomb hit. Everybody was wearing a helmet and fighting the war. We know this because the galley was in the stern of the ship, far from where the bomb struck.

Albert Higginbotham was from New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he lived with his wife Gladys at 30 Concord Street. His rank was "BKR2c" meaning "Baker – Operates ovens in the galley." His family must also have thought he had a relatively safe job. Albert had enlisted in the navy three days before Christmas, 1944. When he completed his basic training he was immediately assigned to LST 552. He was just 24 years old.

Arthur Clement Mazaroppi was a general-duty sailor from Syracuse, New York.

Richard Murawski was a gunner's mate, also born the same year as Dad. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Murawski who resided in Buffalo, New York. An internet search done in 2015 found "Richard died during the war, cause currently unknown." Again, the Murawski family may never have learned the circumstances of their son's death.



Charles Bessonette, LST 552

The following men from LST 552 received Purple Hearts for wounds received in this action:

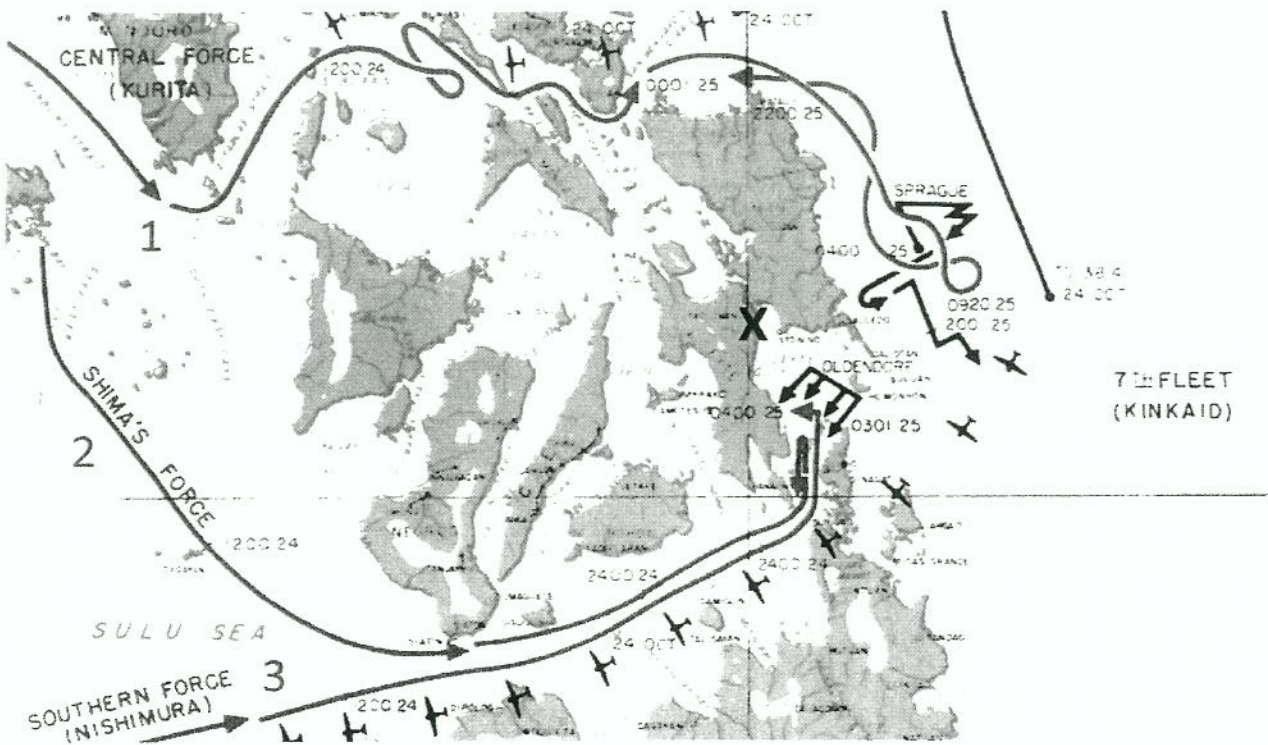
CHECK TYPE REQUIRED (See Instructions on back)		WW II APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER		FLAT GRANITE	
<input type="checkbox"/> UPRIGHT MARBLE HEADSTONE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FLAT GRANITE MARKER	ENLISTMENT DATE Jan 1943	SERVICE NO. 0084771	ENLISTED CLASS <input type="checkbox"/> CHRISTIAN <input type="checkbox"/> METHODIST <input type="checkbox"/> BAPTIST <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	
<input type="checkbox"/> FLAT GRANITE MARKER	<input type="checkbox"/> BRONZE MARKER QUOTE INSTRUCTIONS	DEATH DATE Oct 25 1944	POSTAL NO.	GRADE BKR 2	
NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)		NAME		A. B. RESIDENCE, STATE ORGANIZATION, AND ZIP CODE	
HIGGINBOTHAM ALBERT L.		Mason		USNR	
DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year)	DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year)	LOCATION (City and State)		MARRIAGE (City and State)	
2/22/20	10/25/44	New Bedford Mass		Same	
NAME OF FUNERAL HOME		FUNERAL HOME (City and State)		FIRST OFFICE ADDRESS OF CORONER	
Rural Cemetery 814		New Bedford Mass		129 Colby St New Bedford Mass	
Signature of Applicant Norman F. Bessette		Signature of Coroner Rural F. Higginbotham		DATE OF APPLICATION 9/20/48	
DO NOT WRITE HERE		I certify this application is submitted for a stone for the unmarked grave and solemnly agree to assume all responsibility for the removal of the stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the decedent's grave at my expense.			
FOR VERIFICATION V. L. L. M. 06AFC 1948		SIGNED [Signature]			

HAYMAKER, Charles E., Ensign, USNR - ARENDASH, John A., F1c, USNR - AUSTIN, Lawrence A., GM3c, USNR - BARRETT, Donald Elton, BM2c, USNR - BASINAIT, George Louis, S1c, USNR - BURKLEY, William I. Jr., S2c, USNR - BURROWS, Marvin C., S2c, USNR - CAMPBELL, William J., S2c, USNR - CLARK, William P., MoMM2c, USNR - HANNON, John J., S1c, USNR - JAHRLING, Warren J., SF2c, USNR - KOMORNIK, Joseph C., GM3c, USNR - LEWIS, Alan L., S1c, USNR - LOGUE, Herman C., S2c, USNR - MAYER, Victor W., MoMM2c, USN - MESSINA, Stephen, MoMM3c, USNR - MILLER, Kenneth D., SM3c, USNR - SCAMMERHORN, William N., F1c, USNR - SMITH, Harry L., Cox., USNR - WILLEY, Walter E., S1c, USNR

In 1948 the Higginbotham family requested a headstone for their son. The obscured line at the bottom reads "Cannot determine he was a marine."

These casualties happened because the Japanese threw every ship and plane they could muster against the American landing at Leyte. Japan knew it simply HAD to destroy this invading enemy force or it would lose the war. Battleships were sent, not to engage their American counterparts, but to fire their monstrous shells at the landing forces. Their armada included two of the largest battleships ever built, sister ships *Musashi* and *Yamato*. The Japanese sent so many ships they divided them into three fleets. Each fleet was to converge on Dad's position from a different direction.

At midnight on October 24/25, 1944, two of these Japanese fleets were stopped cold by the American Navy, which was waiting for them in Surigao Strait. The fact it was pitch dark didn't matter. American gunfire was controlled by state of the art targeting radar and was deadly accurate. This was the last time battleships fought each other. Unfortunately, the third Japanese armada approached from a different direction almost succeeded in its objective to destroy the American landing force.



The Japanese attacked our landing at Leyte with literally everything they had. They sent three armadas [numbered "1", "2" and "3"] to destroy the landing forces, including Dad's LST 552, marked "X". Japanese fleet #1 almost succeeded.

The Japanese did this by luring the big ships protecting Dad's beach away from their position. It was the one mistake American commanders made during the entire Battle of Leyte, and it was a bad one. Only a pathetically small token force stayed behind. On the morning of October 25, 1944, a fleet of Japan's largest ships stood poised to brush aside this handful of small American vessels. Then they could annihilate the landing forces without interference.

But it didn't work out that way.

Written words can't even begin to convey the jaw-dropping improbability of what happened next. With indescribable courage an American destroyer, the USS *Johnston*, and a destroyer escort, the USS *Samuel B. Roberts*, fought off a determined enemy force more than twenty times their size. The Battle of Samar is now legend. To fully understand what happened, watch "Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors [2006]," or "Battle 360 - Episode 9: The Battle of Leyte Gulf [42:16]," or "War: Death of the Imperial Japanese Navy" or look up "Taffy 3," or "The Battle off Samar."



USS Half Moon (AVP-26) Dad's brother Donald served on this ship, which was also at Leyte.

In the end, the *Johnston* and *Roberts* were destroyed. But they attacked the enemy so viciously that they drove off the Japanese fleet and saved Dad's life².

When the Japanese started the war they thought Americans were soft, self-indulgent and completely lacking the warrior spirit Japan possessed. They were wrong. As Captain Ernest E. Evans of the USS *Johnston* demonstrated, Americans are ferocious fighters. The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the last time Japan launched an attack from its aircraft carriers, and was the first time they resorted to Kamikaze strikes.

Back on Leyte, Dad's ship successfully fought off numerous air attacks for the rest of the day. It departed on the evening of the October 25th. On its way out the 552 helped shoot down one more attacking plane.

There is an interesting Goddard family twist to this story. Dad's older brother Donald (Donald Lawrence Goddard, 761 56 80) was also at Leyte on this day. Donald's ship, the USS Half Moon (AVP-26), was a Barnegat-class seaplane tender. As its name suggests, it carried fuel and parts for seaplanes, and also provided a place where the crews lived when not flying. The ship and seaplanes served scouts for the US Navy.³ Of course one side's scouts are the other side's spies. On October 24, 1944, the Half Moon was operating just south of the Leyte landing beaches. Coincidentally, it was the same spot at which Japanese aircraft rendezvoused before attacking allied forces on the beach. Ships like the Half Moon were a prime target and Half Moon was attacked repeatedly, but she survived with the help of fighter aircraft from the US Navy. Around midnight the ship's radar detected the Japanese fleets converging on Leyte. Ordered to escape, Half Moon ducked behind various islands before standing out to sea east of Leyte. A few days later it was caught in a major typhoon and survived that too.

October, shifted anchorages in HINOHANGAN BAY, and at 0821, anchored again and commenced making preparations to tend seaplanes. 1530, five planes of VPB-33 landed, and the crews were based aboard this ship.

7. 1448, 24 October, two enemy planes, identified as "Sallys", made a surprise, low-altitude attack, over the hills and out of the gun, on the ship and plane mooring area, strafing amidships and dropping one dud bomb which hit the water and skipped over the stern. On the second run, one plane strafed the plane mooring area, and the other passed directly over the ship, hits being scored in its port nacelle. After the second run, two fighters of the combat air patrol intercepted and drove off the first plane; the damaged Sally disappeared into the hills to the West trying to recover altitude. During the attack, 53 rounds of 5"/38, 445 rounds of 40mm, 640 rounds of 20mm, and 151 rounds of .50 cal. ammunition were expended. One 20mm gun jammed, and one man was wounded by strafing.

8. 2206, 24 October, got underway from anchorage, and at 2254 anchored off western shore of COMHUNGAN GRANDE ISLAND to avoid impending night battle in SURIGAO STRAIT between Allied and enemy forces. 0309, 25 October, observed firing between surface forces to the East and Southeast, and as we were betw een our own forces and the enemy battle line, got underway at 0325 and stood North along eastern coast of LEYTE ISLAND to clear the area. 0400, anchored one mile south of TAITAY POINT.

Excerpt from War Diary of Donald's ship describing its actions on 10/24/45. After being attacked by Japanese planes, the ship almost got caught in the shooting between American and Japanese battleships.

² It helped that nearly all American ships had radar controlled guns, while the Japanese still used optical sights. In this fight our guns, though smaller, were vastly more accurate. The *Johnston* and *Roberts* used them to kill officers on the bridges of the enemy ships. Bubba's work on radar at MIT helped save his son's life.

³ Seaplanes could even attack Japanese cargo ships. They did so at night in "Black Cat" operations.

Seaman Robert Corbett of LST 552 describes what the Battle of Leyte was like in a letter home:

Our skipper was awarded the Silver Star at Leyte for unloading our cargo while under constant air attack. We really worked hard to get the supplies off that day. We are credited with shooting down three Jap planes, two twin engine bombers and a zero. We also got credit for assists on a fourth plane at Okinawa. This plane came out of the clouds almost directly overhead and began diving directly at our ship. Our guns opened up at him and about halfway down he made a slight turn and landed about one hundred yards to our starboard, alongside another LST and crashed into the sea. We couldn't tell why the plane turned. The pilot might have been hit and lost control or he might have turned towards the other LST because her main deck was loaded with supplies. Whatever the reason, we felt lucky that he missed us and the other LST.

LST 552 returned to Humboldt Bay, New Guinea on November 1, 1944, where the bomb damage was assessed. Four days later the ship was ordered to Milne Bay, New Guinea, for repairs. They arrived on the 10th.

Safely back in New Guinea, Dad and his buddies enjoyed three weeks of rest and recreation while their ship was repaired. As far as they were concerned, the time passed far too quickly.

Meanwhile, back home in Cambridge, Bubba continued to work on top-secret RADAR technology which was rushed into production as soon as it was ready. Bubba also helped support the Manhattan Project, which was developing the world's first atomic weapons.



LST 552 at anchor in the Philippines.



USS LST-552 sailors gather on the conning tower following the Leyte campaign to show off the three Rising Sun flags representing the three enemy aircraft downed by the ship's gunners.

On December 1st Dad got back on board the 552 for a one day hop over to Oro Bay, New Guinea, where LST 552 picked up the following units: *Headquarters, 473; Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile; Headquarters, Philippine Civil Affairs Unit No. 19; and 775th Tank Battalion.* With everyone and their equipment on board the 552 arrived back in New Guinea on December 25, 1944. To the crew's delight, three months of delayed mail was waiting for them. It was a perfect Christmas present. The stacks of packages and letters went a long ways towards making Christmas of '44 a merry one for the crew of LST 552.



The crew of the LST 552 assembled on deck. This photo was probably taken between 10:00 and 11:00 AM on February 5, 1945 at berth 33, San Pedro Bay, Philippine Islands, during a ceremony to award Purple Hearts earned in the Battle of Leyte on October 25, 1944.

Invasion Number Four of Six: Luzon Island, the Philippines

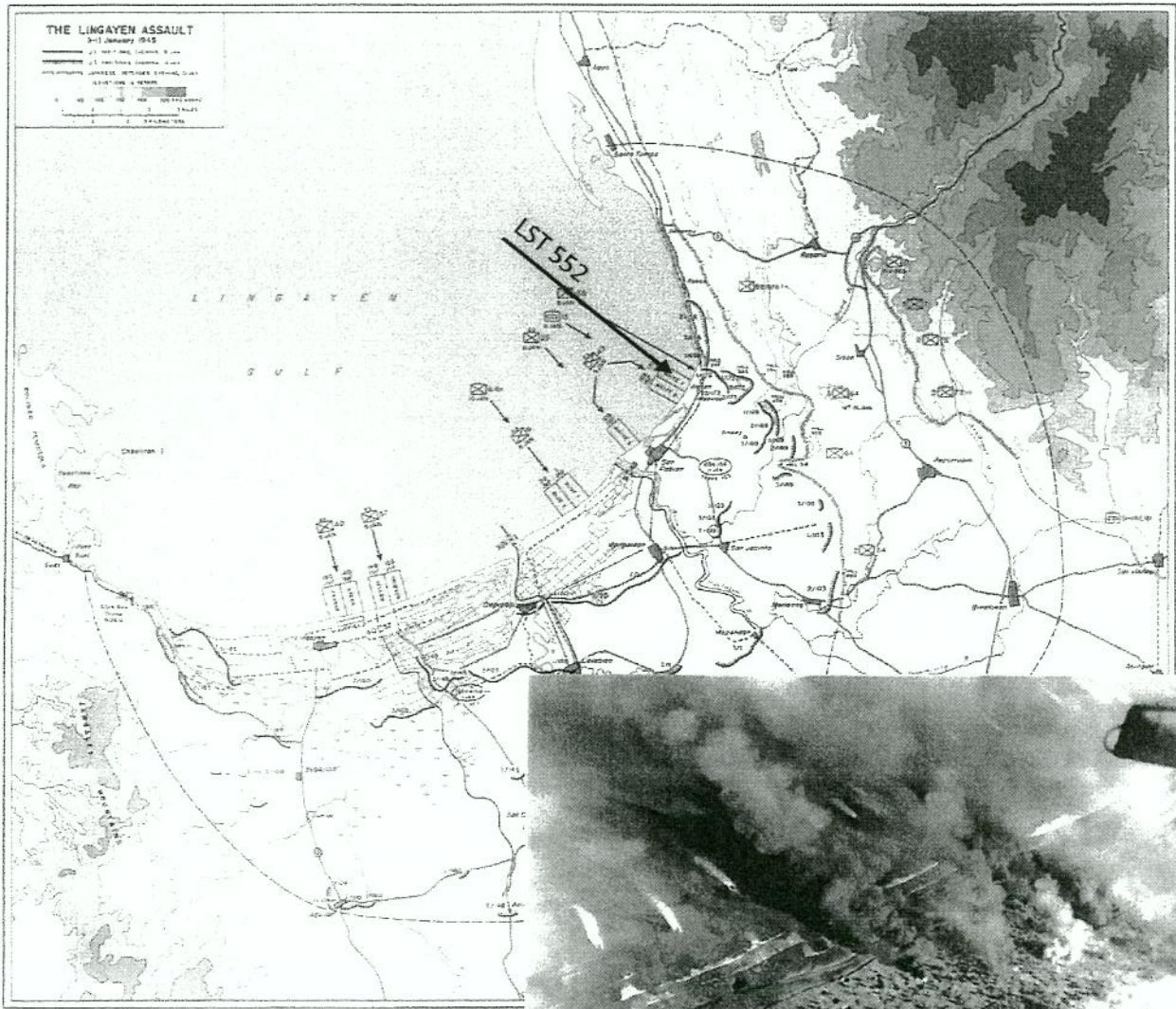
The big picture: There are several big islands in the Philippines, so more than one invasion was necessary to remove all the Japanese from the area.

On December 30th the fully laden LST 552 joined a convoy headed for Luzon Island. This would be Dad's fourth invasion. Having already been bombed, and now fully aware of the kamikaze threat, the ship's crew was on hair-trigger alert for enemy planes. Headquarters even predicted an aerial attack, but it did not materialize. They arrived at Lingayon Gulf, Luzon Island, on January 11, 1945. Now a battle-hardened ship, the navy ordered her ashore right after the first wave. LST 552 drove onto the beach at nine knots, which was also her top cruising speed. Four thousand tons of ship, cargo and men crunched onto the sand, pushing an impressive wall of water up and across the beach. The bow doors opened and her ramp lowered. Vehicles and soldiers poured out and disappeared into the island. The Battle of Luzon was underway¹.



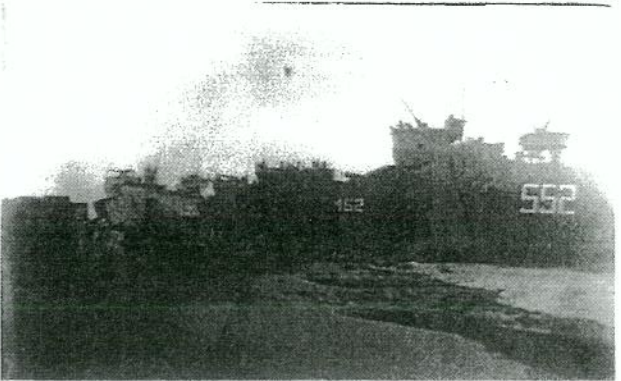
Medium tanks splash off USS LST-552, while beached on White Beach, Luzon, Philippine Islands, 21 January 1945.

¹ The navy made a great effort to trick the Japanese on Luzon into thinking the landings would happen at the other end of the island. They bombed it, dropped dummies in parachutes, and made obvious attempts to clear mines around it. Unfortunately, the Japanese weren't fooled. They correctly focused their efforts on Lingayon Gulf.



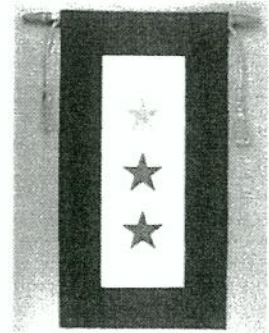
Military map of the Lingayen Landing, Luzon [above], an aerial photo taken at the same time [right] showing what it looked like in real life, and Dad's ship on the beach [bottom right].

LSTs land during at high tide, or when the tide is receding, and they can easily rest on smooth ground until the sea returns. Unfortunately, this also makes them very vulnerable to enemy action. That night, while the 552 and thirty other LSTs were beached, a Japanese eight inch gun in the hills began dropping shells on them. None could retreat because of low tide. The shelling continued all night, but fortunately darkness impeded the



gun crew's aim and no ships were hit. The next day everything was unloaded and Dad's ship returned to New Guinea to pick up a second cargo for Luzon. This consisted of *Headquarters and Service Company, 339th Engineer Construction Battalion and the Headquarters 112th Engineer's Group*.

Returning to the other side of the Luzon, the invasion force was stunned to discover that section of Luzon² was void of the enemy. They unloaded their cargo and departed. They were very fortunate. Behind them the fighting raged on for months. Most people have never heard of the Battle of Luzon, yet 353,845 people died in it: 205,535 Japanese, 140,000 civilians, and 8,310 Americans.



This was also a stressful time back in the states. During the war families displayed Service Flags in the windows of their homes. These flags had a blue star for each family member in the armed services. Sadly, a gold star represented someone who had died while serving. As time passed Nana and Bubba saw many blue stars turn gold. They worried about their sons.

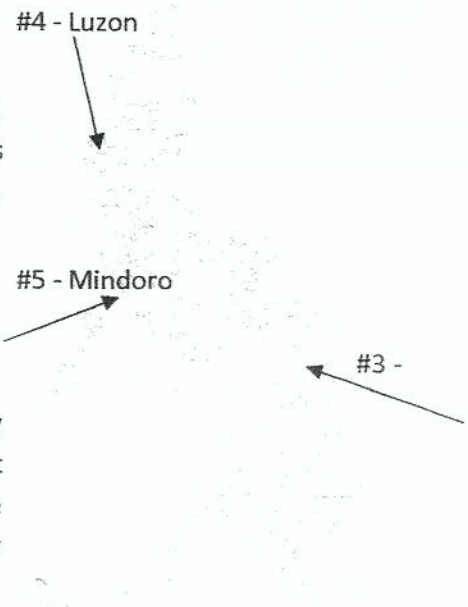
"We have been strafed, bombed, had mortars land all around us, fired at by snipers, and we also passed directly through a minefield. The mines were so close you could see them from the rail only about twenty feet from the ship."

Corbett, Robert P., EN-1, U.S.S. LST 552

Landing Number Five of Six: Mindoro Island, Philippines

The big picture: This was the third time LST 552 invaded a Philippine Island. By now the Japanese were in retreat, but were still dangerous. This mission was to deliver reinforcements to a battle which was winding down after two weeks of fighting.

Dad's ship arrived back at Leyte on February 3rd. They loaded up again, taking on the following units: *Casual Detachment, 24th Infantry Division; 832nd Signal Photo Interp. Group; 24th Quartermaster Co.; and 24th Division MP Platoon*. They arrived at Mindoro on February 11th and unloaded in only four hours. The only issue they had was with the motor which raised the bow anchor. It burned out, so they were unable to hoist anchor and leave with the main force. It took a full day to get it working. Dad's ship and a few other stragglers returned to Leyte on February 14th.



LST 552 made six combat landings during the war. Three of them were in the Philippine Islands.

² They called it Zambales. It's also known as Subic Bay, a huge US Navy port for decades afterwards. In 1991, a volcano twenty miles away [Mount Pinatubo] exploded and buried everything in ash, effectively closing the base.

In Leyte the ship took a few weeks for routine repairs and maintenance before embarking the following Army units: 145th Field Artillery Battalion (Headquarters Battery, Service Battery, Medical Detachment, 419 Group Headquarters, A, B, and C Batteries). Soon after loading up, rehearsals began for the invasion of Okinawa. On March 25th the 552 weighed anchor for "D" Day landings at Okinawa, her sixth and final invasion.

By now the war was going very badly for Japan. Its leaders knew the end was at hand but denied it. In its two-thousand year history Japan had never been defeated or conquered. They relentlessly propagandized their civilian population with this fact. Absurdly, every battle with American forces was declared an "Enormous victory for Japan." Ordinary Japanese noticed that each such "victory" was always closer to the Japanese home islands than the previous one. Meanwhile, Curtis "Iron Ass" LeMay and his fleet of B-29s were methodically firebombing the Japanese mainland. Expert navigators in pathfinder planes dropped incendiaries to mark targets with a flaming "X" which the main force used to aim its bombs. American planes flew unchallenged everywhere over Japan. Now the American navy was about to land on Okinawa, actual Japanese soil.



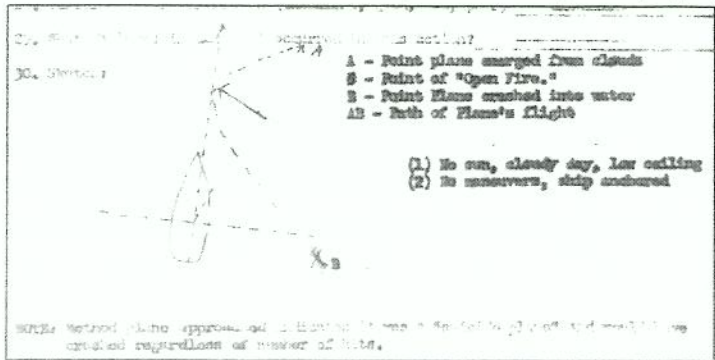
The US Navy declassified this invasion photograph of Okinawa at my request. LSTs and LSMs on an Okinawa beach with a crowd of other amphibious shipping offshore, 3 April 1945. USS LST-552 is at left. In center are LCT-1270 and LSM-31. LST-776 is second from right. Photographed from a USS TULAGI (CVE-72) plane.

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Landing Number Six of Six: Okinawa, Japan

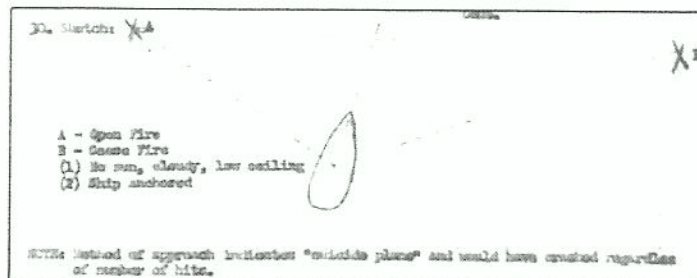
The big picture: This was the largest amphibious landing of the Pacific War. Okinawa is considered one of the home islands of Japan. Attacking it was seen as a rehearsal for the invasion of the Japanese mainland. However, the resulting battle was so intense it altered the American war strategy. Plans were made to bring the armies from Europe to help fight Japan.

Dad's ship arrived at Okinawa on April 1st. Because the 552 was now an experienced ship carrying high priority cargo, she was one of the first LSTs to beach. She unloaded all the vehicles she was carrying then pulled back from shore. Beaching again the following morning, she remained ashore for the next three days. Smoke was used to conceal the ship at dusk and dawn. During this time she unloaded 200 of the 300 tons of ammunition she carried. Once again they were fortunate. Enemy planes did not appear over the



First Kamikaze attack on LST 552 at Okinawa 4/6/45 16:06 as described by Commander Savdigen in his official report.

beachhead until April 6, 1945. When they did show up, LST 552 was ready and opened fire immediately. The ship received an assist for a Japanese plane shot down in the harbor. For the remainder of their nine day stay at Okinawa, LST 552's gunners fought off enemy aircraft. Because so many ships were firing weapons during these attacks, no claims were made for the planes they shot down. Who really cared anyway? Everybody just wanted to win the war and go home. The ship was completely unloaded on the 9th of April and departed from Okinawa on that date.



Second Kamikaze attack on LST 552 at Okinawa 4/6/45 17:12 as described by Commander Savdigen in his official report.

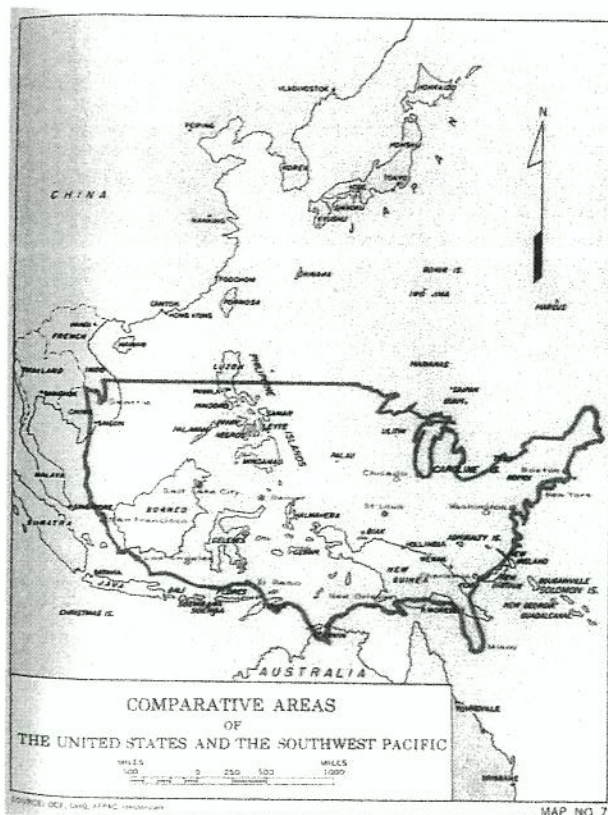
The 552 would not participate in any more invasions.

LST552 was ordered to return to Ulithi Atoll, the group of islands she helped conquer on her second invasion. It was now a huge naval base. She arrived on April 17, 1945. While the base serviced and re-provisioned their ship, the crew rested.

Their new orders arrived about a week later – a relatively easy taxi run. On April 29th they headed to the Admiralty Islands (Specifically, Manus Island) in support of Operation Brewster, which at that point was well underway. Then they were to pick up *Company B of the 539th Amphibious Tractor Battalion* from Noumea, New Caledonia, and return to Leyte once more.

Dad was at sea on May 8, 1944, when a radio message told them Germany had surrendered.

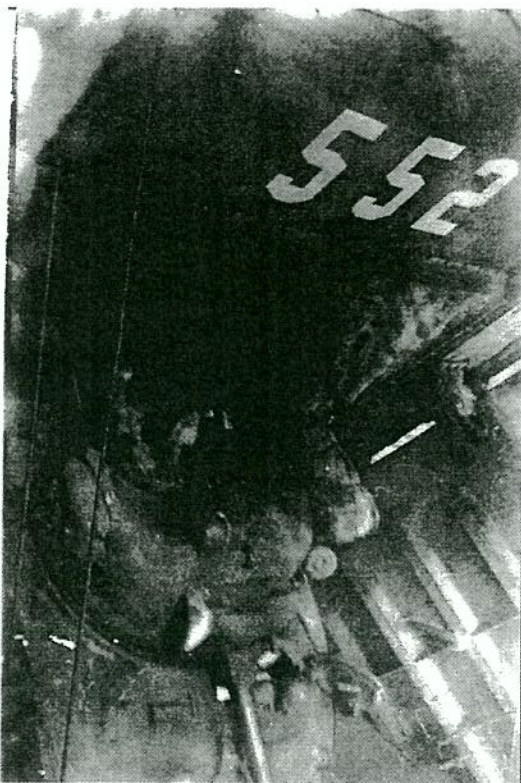
The ship arrived at Leyte on June 22nd and disembarked all Army vehicles and personnel. The hospital unit and surgical team, which had been aboard her since Pearl Harbor, were transferred to a more active duty station. By now Leyte was secure and had become a functioning navy base. Dad's ship went into dry dock for twelve hours to clean out her sea chests.³ The usual period for



³ Sea chests allow a ship to pump ocean water on board. They clog if not cleaned regularly. LSTs used sea water as ballast, which was critically important for them operate safely.

maintenance was taken and on July 12, 1945, the ship left Leyte for Espiritu Santo to participate in another "roll up" operation.

By now the tide of war had turned. There was no doubt the Allies were going to win. The only question was when, and at what cost⁴. Dad's ship arrived in Tulagi Harbor, Florida Island, Solomon Islands, on July 25, 1945. She left the next day and, after bucking heavy seas the entire trip, arrived in Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, on July 31st. The 539th C. B. M. U. was embarked and the 552 weighed anchor for the Russell Islands on August 5th.



LST 552 unloads a tank. Date and location unknown.



Some of LST 552's crew topside.



LST 552 [center] at anchor in 1945.

⁴ During the island hopping campaign across the Pacific, U.S. forces would always arrive with more airplanes, bombs and bullets than the Japanese had to defend their land-based positions. In retrospect this isn't surprising. A standard Japanese soldier was supported by 245 pounds of war supplies a year. In contrast a US soldier was supported by 5,670 pounds of war material per year. The Empire of Japan picked a poor fight.

The atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. A second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days later.¹ Even so, Curtis LeMay's forces continued to bomb Japan, flying more than 1,000 missions *after* the atom bombs were dropped. One of these missions unknowingly foiled an attempt to kidnap the Japanese emperor to prevent him from ending the war.

LST 552 departed the Russell Islands on August 13th and headed to Eniwetok Atoll. Navy ships need constant upkeep. She was due to undergo some necessary repairs.

Dad was at sea when the war with Japan ended on August 15, 1945. An appropriate celebration was held by firing all of the ships guns. They arrived at Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, on August 19th. When the repairs were completed the 552 departed Eniwetok on September 3rd and returned to Ulithi Atoll. During this visit one of her sailors, Robert Corbett, wrote home:

Sept 11, 1945

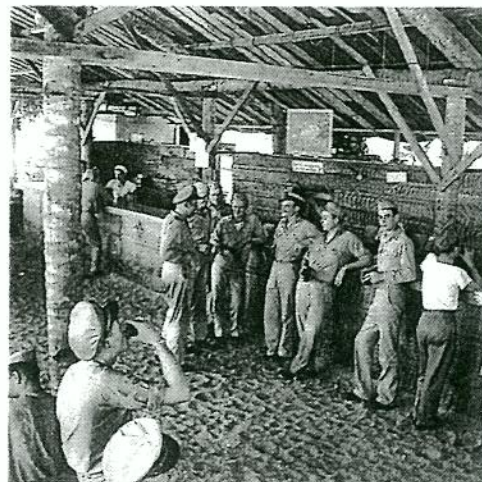
Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, now that censorship regulations have stopped, I should be able to find plenty to write about. At the present, we are at Ulithi Islands in the Western Carolines. Incidentally, we landed here on "D" Day with the 81st Army Division.

As you have probably read, it has become one of the important Pacific bases. The islands and the reefs that connect the islands form almost a complete circle and make a wonderful anchorage. Most of the atolls are very small and very bare except for palm trees. The water near the beaches is very clear. You can see the bottom in sixty feet of water.

Ulithi Islands are called the playground of the Pacific. It is considered as the long lost paradise Isles, the kind you see in the movies.

There is a small tribe of natives. They are comparatively light complexioned and the women are fairly good looking. I have never seen any of them myself. The navy moved them from the Island of Mog Mog to another smaller island and then restricted it from servicemen. They left a doctor and a pharmacist's mate with the natives. The chief of the tribe is crippled from infantile paralysis. The disease was believed to have been brought by the Japs. The Japs also took all of the young girls away with them when they left.



There wasn't much to do when off duty. The men wrote letters, played cards, swam and drank beer.

¹ 160 people are known to have survived both bombings.

We go to the Isle of Mog Mog on liberty. After drinking your ration of two cans of beer you can go swimming or play ball. It's usually a little too warm for the later though. There is a lot of coral and pretty colored shells on the beaches which the fellows send home for souvenirs. Well, I guess that's enough about Ulithi.

We have just been informed that we rate five battle stars and the Philippine Liberation campaign bar. We also rate a couple more campaign bars but I don't know which ones. We have been on six invasions: Anguar in the Palau's, Ulithi in the Carolines, Leyte, Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, La Paz, Luzon, just a few miles north of Corregidor, and Okinawa.

We would have been in the Invasion of Mindoro but we were at Milne Bay, New Guinea at the time having the ship repaired from the bomb hit we got at Leyte. It was at Milne Bay that I met Jimmy (his brother, James D Corbett).

[Signed, Corbett, Robert P]

While at Ulithi, Lieutenant Robert Jack Mc Kenna, USNR, assumed command of the 552 relieving Lieutenant Sandvigen, USNR on September 16, 1945. LST 552 left Ulithi and proceeded to Okinawa, arriving there on September 23rd.

Dad had survived being a target during the largest naval battle in the history of mankind. Now the war was over and he should have been completely safe, but he wasn't. Nature herself wanted to take a swipe at him.

In 1274, Japan was saved from a Mongol invasion fleet when it was destroyed by a timely typhoon. A second Mongol invasion fleet suffered the same fate in 1281. The Japanese call such storms "Divine Wind" – combining their words Kami and Kaze. As the American fleets approached, the Japanese must have hoped for yet another Divine Wind to save them. They almost got their wish.



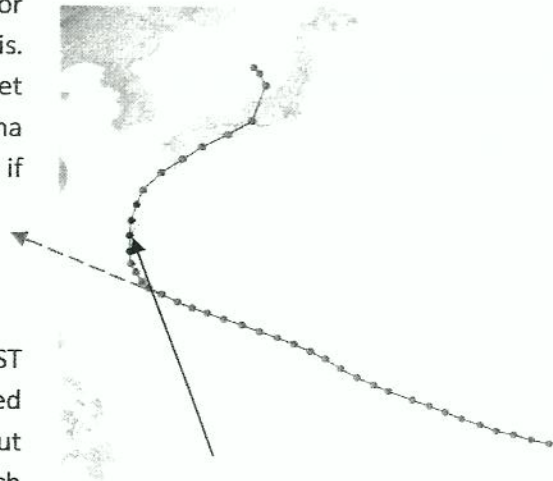
In 1945 Halsey's Typhoon ripped more than one hundred feet off the bow of the brand new heavy cruiser USS Pittsburgh (CA-72)

On December 17, 1944, Admiral Halsey sailed the Third Fleet into an intense Typhoon named Cobra, known afterwards as Halsey's Typhoon. American warships, including aircraft carriers, were tipped nearly sideways by 150 mile-per-hour winds. Some sank. Even the USS Iowa, an 887 foot long, 45,000 ton *battleship* was damaged when a propeller shaft bent. Take a moment to consider the force needed to do this. The propeller shaft of an Iowa class battleship is attached to a propeller which is nineteen feet in diameter weighing many tons, and is twisted by a turbine engine generating 55,000 horsepower.

To say it's strong doesn't even begin to describe it. Yet Typhoon Cobra generated enough force to bend it. Dad and LST 552 were safely in port in New Guinea during this first storm, but now it was their turn.

In Ulithi all cargo, vehicles and their personnel were disembarked from the 552 by October 6th, when a storm warning was received. On October 8th LST 552 put to sea in an attempt to dash around the bad weather. Unfortunately, the storm unexpectedly changed course towards the 552 and became a full-fledged typhoon. They caught the worst of it.

Riding out this storm scared Dad more than any other experience he had during the war. The ship endured 35 foot waves and winds up to 85 knots for endless hours. LSTs were simply not built for this. Worried that his crew might go out on the deck to get a better look at the storm Commander McKenna ordered them to stay below. He emphasized that if anyone was swept overboard *NO* rescue attempt would be made. It simply wasn't possible in such conditions.



LST 552 tried to scoot past Tropical Storm Louise (black arrow), but got caught when the storm turned north and gained strength becoming Typhoon Louise.

Dad and his fellow sailors braced themselves as LST 552 was slammed around by the storm, which peaked around midnight. The propellers repeatedly came out of the water. They heard the engines speed up each time it happened, followed by shuddering vibrations when the spinning props re-submerged. The blunt nose of an LST didn't cut through water. Oncoming

waves smash against it, and it must have felt like driving a city bus through endless brick buildings. It was violent and it was *loud*. LSTs were largely riveted together, not welded. The twisting forces on the hull caused the metal to scream and sent rivets flying through the air. They'd survived the war. It wasn't at all clear they were going to survive this.

LST 794 was nearby and caught in the same terrifying storm. A crewman, Carl Carlson, described it:

The distinction between sea and air became imperceptible. Everything was white foam, on the sea, in the air, and on the deck. The waves which broke over the bow and rolled aft to the wardroom bulkhead were like the head on a mug of beer. The rippling deck we expected, but it was a new experience to see and hear the mast vibrate like a tuning fork.

The high bow of an LST acts just like a sail. Flooding a pair of forward compartments adds a little stability. Even though our best helmsman did his damndest, it was impossible for him now and then not to slide a few degrees off the wind. When this happened another interesting LST ship handling characteristic was revealed: unplanned 90 degree turns.

Even full contrary rudder could not bring the bow back to course. The only thing to do was to steer with the engines, one ahead full, the other back full. Slowly, slowly, slowly, the bow

grudgingly inched its way back into the wind. But watch out! If you were not careful, the bow swung 90 degrees the other way and you had to bring her back with the engines all over again from the other side.

The flotilla commander decided LST's were a menace and ordered the space between ships to be increased. Not necessary. The ships astern had already increased space in self-defense.

The engine-room telegraph procedure was too slow for all the engine orders. The telephone talker and engineer of the watch had to be in constant phone communication. This gave the engineer the opportunity to bitch about the screws coming out of the ocean, and why the hell can't you bastards on the bridge make up your minds.

After four hours, I was delighted to turn the watch over to my relief. Over the roar of the typhoon I shouted the course, speed, radar positions of other ships, and, for the first time, added a new bit of information: "Steering by engines." That shook him up.

The next day, when the wind abated and the visibility improved, it was possible to see some of the damage. I saw one LST with the bow doors ripped off. Anybody who was on that one must have a story to tell. I hope he does.



A cargo ship resembling LST 552 caught in a Typhoon.

Another crewmember on LST 794, Wendell Armstrong, shared the experience in his letter home:

Last night about midnight it was at its worst, and I never knew an LST could take such a beating. I understand many weren't so fortunate. It's still rough as all hell out right now, but compared to yesterday evening, and all last night, it's like a millpond. We had all kinds of trouble but we managed to keep her headed into the wind. Our gyro compass went out, everything was really snafu, but here we are! The ship bent so much, it chipped all the rust and nearly all the paint right off her, tore away all canvas, washed her down clean as a whistle.

This typhoon was a force 17, which is as high as they go. Force 12 or over is of hurricane force. You know I have quite a bit of confidence in these old LSTs now. Last night I quite jokingly said, "Well, I'm not the least bit curious, but it looks like we'll soon see just how much these LSTs will take." And I can say that they can take it. Why she was up and down, rolling, tossing. It was all you could do to hang on and climb from one compartment to the next. In a typhoon, the sea becomes mountainous and the crests of the waves are breaking and blown into froth, the spray

fills the air, and other ships nearby are completely lost from view. We would dive into a wave and the shock would make the whole ship quiver like a diving board, knock you out of your bunk or off your feet. Wow!

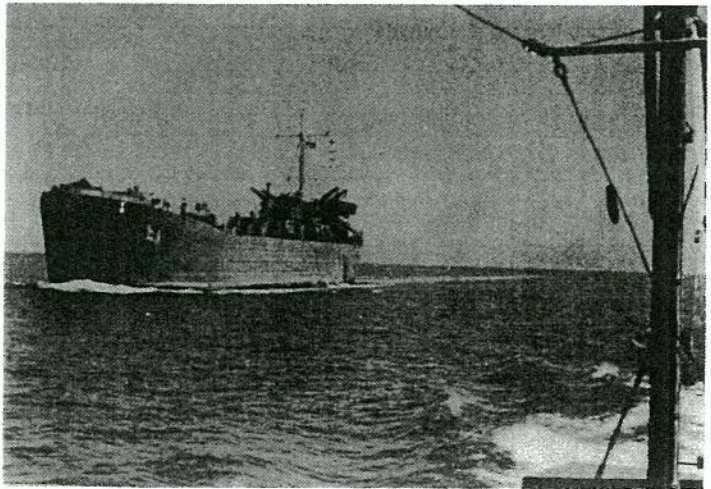
The typhoon did a great deal of damage to the U.S. Fleet in the vicinity of Okinawa, and resulted in 83 men killed or missing, but the LST 552 survived. Returning to Okinawa for the third and last time on October 11th, the ship loaded up with mail from the American occupying force.

Another memory Dad shared must have been from this final visit. While on shore Dad noticed a sailor with a second sea bag and asked him why he was carrying it. The sailor looked around. Seeing no officers, he quietly replied *"We just robbed a Jap bank."* The local Japanese population had been ordered to cooperate with the American forces. So when this sailor and his friends walked into the local bank, put their hands on their side arms and told the staff to

"hand it over," they did. It was a prank. This sailor admitted to Dad that he had no use for the currency and didn't know what he was going to do with it, especially since the currencies of conquered nations tend to be worthless. Perhaps he kept it as a souvenir.

Dad also remembers going ashore to poke around a little. He even explored a captured enemy tunnel with his buddies – up until they found an unexploded bomb sticking through the roof. They got out of there fast! Dad was also somewhat impressed by how the Japanese would erect a simple bamboo barricade to protect the entrance to these tunnels. When we bombed them, the flying dirt would just pile up against the bamboo and make their position even more secure.

But Dad didn't care for most of the Pacific islands his ship visited. When they weren't arid and barren, they were full of decomposing vegetation which smelled horrible. The Navy even invented a new word, "fecaloid" to describe the stench. Surprisingly though, he thought Okinawa was "beautiful."



This is an LST like Dad's ship, shown at sea during a typical voyage.



This is the helmsman's view of a fully loaded LST. The top deck could carry plenty of cargo. When the deck was clear and the weather warm, crewmen often slept on it. LSTs always travelled in convoys.

LST 552 departed Okinawa on October 16th, and arrived back at Leyte on the 21st. After unloading the mail, LST 552 received orders to return stateside for further disposition. She was no longer needed. Her captain penned these words:

“At this writing on the 25th of October 1945, the 552 looks back on an impressive record: participation in 6 invasions, during which she received credit for shooting down 3 Jap bombers and for two assists; a total distance of 49000 miles traveled; transportation of over 3000 troops and 10 crossings of the equator. The 552 made a large contribution to the Pacific war and now with orders to return to the United States of America, no more appropriate award could have been given her and her crew for their accomplishments.”

Dad rode LST 552 home to San Diego, arriving just before Thanksgiving 1945. He took a train from the west coast back to South Station in Boston, then to the last subway stop on Boston’s Red Line: Harvard Square. When he stepped onto the quiet streets of Cambridge it must have felt very strange. He had been on a battlefield and lived through a terrible typhoon only a few weeks before.

While in Harvard Square, Dad got a haircut. The barber said *“Welcome Home!”* and didn’t charge him. Then Dad changed into a fresh uniform. Refreshed, he walked up Garden Street, past the Common where George Washington took command of the first American army, and back home.

Nana was never big on displays of affection. But this time she was so thrilled to see him she kept hugging him and crying. Dad said it was the only time he remembered such an emphatic expression of love from his mother.

Four months later he turned twenty-one.



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