

Don L. Jardine, Ph.D.



COMBAT MARINE at Seventeen

104 TRUE STORIES
BEFORE, DURING & AFTER WORLD WAR II

"If every life were a book,
Dr. Jardine's life would be a library."

CombatMarineAt17.com

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No copyright claimed on the contemporary photographs of the war. These were photographs taken by the Marine Corps and distributed in packets to the author and other combat Marines serving in the same campaigns, when returning home after the War.

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To all Combat Marines

Acknowledgments



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Stephen Widmer generously loaned his expensive, professional scanning equipment, letting us keep it for the better part of a year, to scan all the photographs and illustrations.

I extend apologies to any whose names are unmentioned, but thank them—and humbly dedicate this book to all Combat Marines. *Semper Fidelis.*

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

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If you enjoy true adventure short stories, I promise you will love this book.

You will read experiences I lived during World War II, and also interesting true stories from before and after the war.

- ◆ Have you ever been strafed by an enemy plane?
- ◆ Have you ever been blinded? By an enemy hand grenade?
- ◆ Have you seen, heard and smelled a human being on fire?
- ◆ Have you ever killed anyone?
- ◆ Have you ever had someone beg you to end their life?
- ◆ Have you swum with sharks? A great white shark?

- ◆ Have you walked through the site of an atomic bomb blast?
- ◆ Have you seen adults with babies and children in their arms leap to their death to avoid capture?
- ◆ Have you been aboard a ship in the middle of a deadly mine field?
- ◆ Have you witnessed an attacking kamikaze plane diving directly at you and your ship? Then lifting over your ship's deck to sink the ship beyond you?
- ◆ Have you stood guard duty, alone, for 28 hours in an isolated place surrounded by a dark jungle, strange sounds (and perhaps enemy soldiers)?
- ◆ Have you drunk from a stream, and filled your canteens, then found bleeding bodies upstream?
- ◆ Have you ever been absolutely alone many thousands of miles from home?
- ◆ Have you had gangrene from a shrapnel wound and faced amputation?
- ◆ Have you been aboard an airplane—loaded with injured Marines—that came within inches of crashing on takeoff after hitting an enemy bomb hole in the runway?
- ◆ Have you ever had a fever that robbed you of your memory, and disoriented you alone in enemy jungles for days?
- ◆ Have you cried when you saw good friends killed or badly injured?
- ◆ Have you been on a ship during a storm so severe that the captain sent out S.O.S. signals?

- ◆ Have you hidden under damp vegetation surrounded by enemies speaking in their foreign tongue?
- ◆ Have you ever been in a military field hospital “ward” (tent) on a folding cot that sank several inches into the mud, tended by an army truck driver and an army cook? For 28 days?
- ◆ Have you ever been so tired, so exhausted, you felt you had no control over yourself?
- ◆ Have you ever tried to sleep, curled around the base of a tree, when mosquitoes were sucking your blood?
- ◆ Do you know the odor of rotting human flesh? Was it nearby? Were you eating at the time? Can you still smell it?
- ◆ Have you ever watched as an enemy hand grenade flew through the air toward you? Did it explode between you and a friend, less than six feet away?
- ◆ Have you ever piloted a small airplane in a blizzard? After dark? With no radio?
- ◆ Have you ever flown into a box canyon, unable to climb over the mountain ahead, unable to land or to turn left or right? (and there is no reverse on an airplane!)
- ◆ Have you ever been attacked, repeatedly, by a huge golden eagle? (And you were 12 years old!)
- ◆ Has a wild ram ever tried to gore you with his huge curved horns?
- ◆ Have you walked on snow drifts over telephone wires?

- ◆ Have you ever, as a child, hidden behind your mother's skirts as migrating Indians, unable to speak English, begged for food?
- ◆ Have you ever held your breath under water so long you thought your lungs would burst before you could reach the surface?
- ◆ Have you ever, as a ballroom bouncer, had to fight four people at a time? Was the city mayor watching? Did he then hire you to be the city marshal?
- ◆ Has a teenage driver of a stolen car tried to run you over? Were you shooting at the car?

These stories, and other true adventures, are described in this book.

Where were you and what were you doing at age 17? and 18? and 19? Playing football, baseball, basketball? Cruising in your car? Dating? Watching television?

I was learning to use a variety of hand grenades (concussion, thermite, fragmentation); to hit distant targets with an M1 rifle, a .45 caliber pistol, a .30 caliber machine gun; how to fire a bazooka and use a flame thrower, etc. All of which would better enable me to kill people.

I have two Purple Hearts, and qualified for more. I served more than two years in the Marine Corps, was 17 years old when I first experienced combat, and was honorably discharged after the war, while still in my teens. That was not unique. Many of my fellow Marines were younger than I, but I had full confidence in their abilities to do what was necessary while we were under fire from enemy Japanese.

Yet at that same age, on leave from advanced training at Camp Pendleton and wearing my Marine uniform, I was denied

admittance to a movie because it was too violent! And many years later, on a cruise ship with my wife, I saw a sign that said, “Passengers must be 21 to play Bingo!” It still bothers me to hear anyone 17 years old referred to as “a child.” In combat, I soon learned that an enemy killed by a seventeen-year-old Marine is just as dead as one killed by someone older.

This is not exclusively a blood and guts book. Although it includes several of my most memorable combat experiences as a Marine during World War II, I’ve shared stories about a fascinating boyhood in Idaho (hunting, fishing, Indians, rattlesnakes, trapping) and stories about adventures while piloting airplanes after World War II.

Frankly, I’ve tried, as best I am able, to forget the sights, sounds, smells, and fears experienced in combat—ships firing big guns, airplanes (theirs and ours) dropping bombs, enemy fighter planes strafing with all their machine guns firing as we clawed into the earth beneath us, small arms and machine guns firing from concealed positions, and the screams of dying Japanese and of friends who were the unlucky ones.

As a plus, the primitive conditions under which we often lived overseas have helped me to really appreciate a clean, cold drink, a fresh water shower, a comfortable bed with clean, cool sheets, the variety of good foods available in my refrigerator, the peace and quiet of my home (without mosquitoes) etc. We have many wonderful things too often unappreciated, taken for granted without thought.

It is still a joy for me to make my own decisions, having the freedom to do what I want to do, go where I want to go when I want to, even to be what I want to be. Those things are not the military way.

To those of you who have never been in combat, I truly and sincerely wish I had the words to describe for you how fortunate you are to be able to enjoy your life without the mental baggage carried by all combat veterans. Some—more than others—still live with vivid experiences that relate closely to the imaginations of writers for television and movies. We lived it!

World War II hasn't ended. And it won't as long as a combat veteran remains among the living.

No words can let you know what it is like to await your turn to go down the side of a ship rolling in heavy seas, hanging onto a cargo net while descending as rapidly as possible to the small, heaving landing boats that will carry you onto a beach crisscrossed with fire from friendly and enemy guns, exploding mortar shells and bombs. You know that adventure and perhaps injury or even death is awaiting.

Even at my advanced age (I am completing this book at age 87) I still have nightmares that awaken me in a cold sweat. I clearly recall the terrible sounds and smells, explosions that feel like blows to the ears and the body, the whole world shaking as guns and bombs blast men and machines, smoke and cordite filling the air, burning the eyes and filling the lungs with each tortured breath.

Yes, there was excitement—but with a fear you'll never experience at any amusement park or in any movie or television show.

Mix these things with the knowledge that home is thousands of miles away, that you know only a few dozen of the thousands of young men with whom you are sharing these feelings, with the terror of projectiles whistling past you (hopefully) and exploding near you (inevitably).

Close your eyes and try to get a small taste, a visual image, of how different all of these things are compared to your life at age 17. Can you feel those bullets whistling past you? Do those huge naval guns impact your eardrums? How about the omnipresent fear of injury—or death? Can you taste it? Smell it? And is there any appreciation for the senselessness of what surrounds you? Hundreds of ships and boats carrying young men whose main purpose in life is taking the lives of other young men wearing a different uniform, speaking another language, crouching behind concealment or cover in an attempt to remain alive or uninjured, and probably just as frightened as you are. They too are far from home. They too have the same feelings and concerns.

But you don't worry about them, or even much about those around you. It's your world. Your danger. Your excitement and anticipation. Yes, anticipation. You don't know what to expect as you wade through the warm, blood-colored surf. What will be your fate? How will you perform? Which friends will you lose? What will tomorrow bring? Or—will there even be a tomorrow?

I was no hero, but I knew many who were. I am proud to have served with them. We were like brothers, and I am still saddened for the families of those who did not survive. I wish I could tell all of them so—but most have now passed on, and we're told that more than a thousand World War II veterans die in the United States *every day*. Soon, we will all be history. The fears and sacrifices of so many, in all branches of the service and all theaters of war will only be located in libraries, mostly in books that will be covered with dust because how many of our fellow Americans have any interest in history? Do they care that we fought for them as well as for ourselves?

I pray that the old axiom—history repeats itself—will not prove true regarding World War II. It hasn't yet. The Korean War and Vietnam War came closest. By far. But warfare is changing. Battlefields won't always be on the other side of the world. The loss of the Twin Towers in New York City proves that. And the horrors of war or terrorism will be experienced by countless people in the future—not all will be young men.

It is important for my readers to know one thing about the Marines in World War II. We were all under orders to refrain from keeping journals or diaries or any written records. And unlike the other branches of the military, in the Marines the possession of a camera was a general-court-martial offense. So, as you read accounts by other military personnel, full of details concerning where they were, their means of transportation, conversations, experiences, names of men with whom they served, dates, and photos they took with their own cameras, remember that they were not under the restrictions imposed upon Marines.

I have relied on my 87-year-old memory and on notes jotted down since my service, to provide that which is in this book. I trust and believe it is accurate, though frustratingly incomplete.

And, it is all true. I lived it—and still do!

BEFORE WORLD
WAR II

Pages omitted from the preview.

Aerial Balloonist



The residents of Rigby, Idaho were excited about a coming event scheduled to open the annual three-day rodeo. Bareback and saddle bronc riding, racing, steer wrestling, calf roping, and wild bull riding were always exciting and fun to watch, especially when several young men in town were participating. However, this year something unique had been added.

There was a colorful, dramatic poster on every telephone pole and many trees throughout the town. And people were talking about them.

Just prior to the first rodeo event, a hot air balloon was going to take its owner and his dog to a height of at least five hundred feet. Then the dog would leave the balloon and descend by parachute!

My brother Max and I were among the dozens of onlookers that fateful day.

A 50 gallon steel drum was rolled into the basket beneath the huge, tethered, multi-colored balloon and filled with an inflammable. Then the balloonist called for spectators to hold the balloon while he lit the drum afire. The balloon would thereby be filled with the hot air necessary to ascend, carrying the balloonist and his dog to the widely advertised five hundred feet or so.

All the volunteers surrounding the balloon rushed forward, grabbed a section of the huge balloon and gripped tightly per

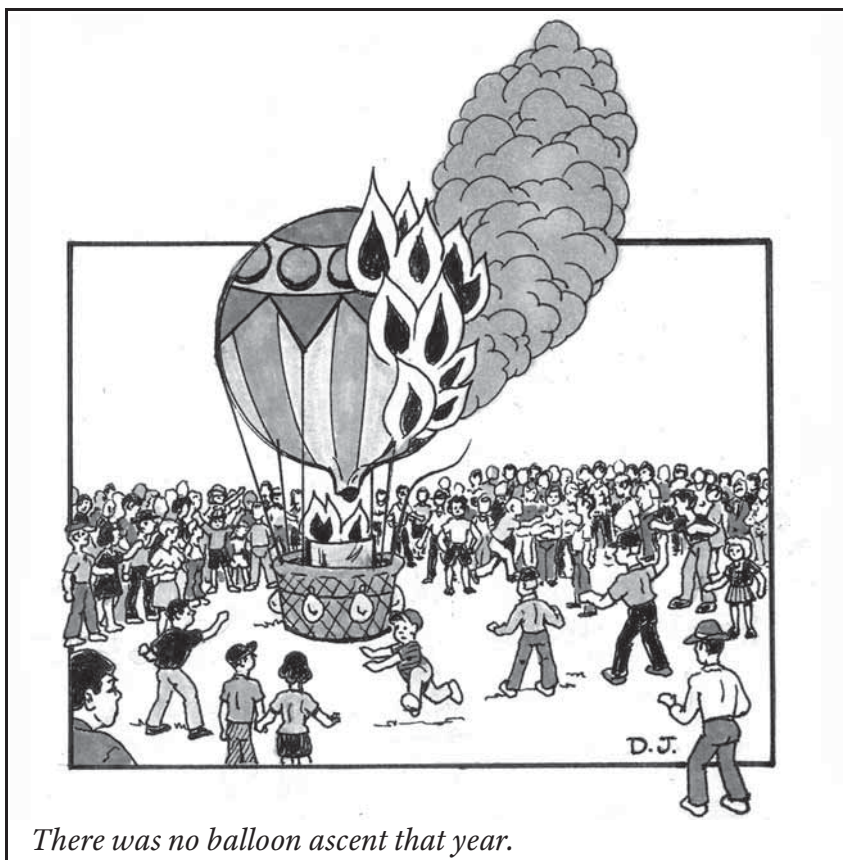
instructions. We were all looking forward to seeing the dog descend safely from such a high place.

Unfortunately, there was a strong wind blowing. Everyone struggled to keep that beautiful silk balloon from getting dangerously close to flames which were now leaping up four to six feet above the steel drum. We weren't successful.

Even with men holding desperately onto every available inch of the balloon's circumference, it was impossible to keep it from the flames. It had only begun to inflate when it caught fire and was quickly reduced to ashes.

There was no balloon ascent or parachute jump that year.

The balloonist sat on the ground near the smoldering remains of his source of livelihood—and cried.



There was no balloon ascent that year.

Pages omitted from the preview.

Shot during a Pheasant Hunt

My younger brother Max and I were walking slowly through a field of sagebrush near our home in Rigby. I had my .22 rifle; Max was an observer.

.22 cartridges at that time cost about 18 cents for a box of 50 longs. They were far less expensive than shotgun shells, but also less productive.

I have never shot a pheasant on the ground and using a rifle bullet to hit a pheasant in flight suggests I was an expert shot. I did alright, but only because five or six birds were often flushed together. Hitting one of them was part marksmanship but mostly luck. I was quite lucky.

Suddenly I had a sharp pain in my left ear. I thought I'd been stung by a bee or hornet, but as I touched that ear my hand came away covered with blood. An unseen hunter in the vicinity was using a .22 rifle also, and he had put a bullet through the outer edge of my ear. Only inches away from my eye!


As Max and I headed for home, I told him not to say anything. I didn't want to be restricted from hunting due to someone else's carelessness.

Walking up to our house, bleeding profusely, I was hurrying to staunch the flow of blood and clean up before our mother saw me. No such luck! Max, ignoring my admonition, ran ahead shouting, "Mom, Don's been shot!"

It would not be the last time I was shot at.

DURING WORLD
WAR II

December 7, 1941—Pearl Harbor Bombed



Dad and I were in our family car, listening to the radio, when we heard the shocking news that Japanese aircraft were attacking Pearl Harbor! Few people in our town of Rigby, Idaho had even heard of Pearl Harbor or had any idea where it was located. But its proximity to Honolulu pinpointed it for us.

The entire United States was in shock. And angry!

According to media reports the following day, men intent upon enlisting in our Armed Forces lined up at every recruiting office in the nation.

We were all incensed at the audacity and deceit of the Japanese for conducting such a sneaky, dastardly aggression.

I was fifteen years old at the time, too young to be accepted by the military. Had I been older, I would have been among the first in line at an air force recruiting office. I had always aspired to be a pilot.

Within a few months it seemed all the eligible men in Rigby, including all members of the National Guard, were gone. The latter, including several of my uncles, were sent overseas quite rapidly. Men without military experience were in accelerated training programs and would soon be in war zones.

Pages omitted from the preview.

The Royal Canadian Air Force



High school graduation, mid-school-year, was imminent. World War II was being waged over most of the globe. Friends were receiving their draft notices and would soon be leaving for basic training, most of them in the army or navy.

My friend Cappy and I had other plans. We wanted to fly.

The recruiting office for the U.S. Air Corps was crowded with young men as we entered.

Most of those ahead of us left very soon after short conversations with recruiters. We were no exception. We quickly learned that enlistments in the U.S. Air Corps (later Air Force) were not open to anyone under eighteen years of age. Cappy and I were seventeen.

I was not deterred. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) was accepting enlistees at age seventeen. My mother was born in Canada and I had relatives there. My problem was solved!

Not quite.

After applying for enlistment in the RCAF, I was informed that the U.S. Congress had just passed a law prohibiting the enlistment of U.S. citizens in the armed forces of a foreign country while the U.S. itself is at war. That is why American pilots in Canada's RCAF, in Britain's Royal Air Force (the Eagle Squadron), and in China's AVG (American Volunteer Group—Chenault's Flying Tigers) were required to transfer into the United States Air Force.

Canada gave me the option of enlistment but with the proviso of losing American citizenship.

That was why I enlisted, at seventeen, in the United States Marine Corps. Citizenship in the United States of America was even more important to me than flying.

Pages omitted from the preview.

Apprehension



Prior to going into combat, many Marines attended their respective religious services or sought a personal interview with the military chaplain for comfort.

Some Marines wore a cross on their dog tag chain, carried a talisman or charm of some kind to ensure their safety, or resorted to unaccustomed praying.

Many clung to the belief that “What is destined to happen will happen. Hopefully, not to me.”

And there were always fatalists that “knew” they wouldn’t survive *this* campaign. How could anyone know?

The preceding poem has special meaning for me. Not only because it was composed by a fellow Marine concerning the island of Saipan (where I served—and fought—for more than a year) but because the author put into expressive words the feelings most Marines had at one time or another. I felt that same way about Formosa (now Taiwan), a formidable island we had once been destined to assault. I “knew” I wouldn’t leave Formosa alive. Fortunately, that campaign was not necessary.

I well remember occasions when fellow Marines, apprehensive about imminent combat, earnestly requested their closest buddies to convey messages to their survivors after the war, or when they left a watch, ring, locket, or some other memento with non-combatants to be given to their loved ones “If I don’t make it.”

There are civilian vocations which sometimes require partisans to face life-or-death situations: law-enforcement officers and firemen top the list. They can probably better relate to the combat Marine that rushes ashore amid deadly weapons fire and explosions. But I submit, their experiences are always comparatively of brief duration.

After the Marine emerges from the surf and crosses the deadly beach, he faces death every hour of every day—for weeks or months. And after his many experiences—the moments live on realistically and vividly in his memory *every day* for the rest of his life.

Incidentally, many Japanese soldiers wore “a belt of a thousand stitches” around their waist to ensure safety in combat. Each stitch on his belt was added by a relative, friend or patriotic countryman.

I own such a belt. It hadn't helped the enemy soldier from whom I removed it.



Japanese soldier's belt of a thousand stitches

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Blinded by Enemy Hand Grenade— Second Purple Heart



We continued our patrol from the scene of that massacre, and we were in a hurry. We had to reach a rendezvous point where trucks would take us back to our base camp.

Still “on point,” I came across a large “room” in the jungle. The vegetation had been hacked away, creating an open area of about thirty feet in diameter, completely hidden from the air and difficult for anyone passing by to see.

On the far side of that jungle “room” was a large Banyan tree, the kind of tree with a trunk that begins about eight feet above the ground, supported by several huge roots with sufficient room between them to easily and effectively conceal several men.

On the ground in front of that tree were three bulky Japanese army packs!

I waited for Henry (Harry James Henry, Jr.) to come up. When he asked why I had stopped the patrol, I pointed to the Jap packs.

He immediately understood, as I had, that whatever those packs contained, Japanese holdouts would not leave them unattended.

The owners were watching us!

Henry said, “Let’s go get ‘em.”

I said “Go to hell.”

He offered to go first so I asked him what he was waiting for. Time went on and we were both in the same position, sitting on our heels, rifles across our knees, waiting and listening. I turned to ask Henry what he wanted to do. He was raising his rifle. I turned to see where it was pointing as he fired. A Jap fell prone to reveal two companions behind him. They were hiding between the large tree roots. Henry got them too.



Then all hell broke loose. Bullets were whining past us, chopping vines down above us and to the sides. We heard the plunger of a Jap grenade pop and saw it trail from the base of a tree. It hit the foliage overhead, and fell between Henry and me. We knew there was not time to throw it back, so we dived prone to the ground. The grenade exploded. We were less than six feet apart.

Rifle fire was clipping leaves around us as we both sat up and looked to see if we'd been hit by grenade fragments (you can't always feel it due to adrenalin). We looked each other over. No blood, so we returned fire. All of this happened in seconds.

The platoon behind us rushed forward to give assistance. Corporal Cipullo was shouting, "I'm hit!" He had a half-dollar-size hole through the palm of his left hand from grenade shrapnel.

Five Jap soldiers no longer needed the contents of their packs.

Henry and I had flung ourselves to the ground when we heard or saw the Jap grenade coming. Very fortunately, we fell into a depression which probably saved our lives. We felt very lucky to have escaped without injury.

As we resumed our trek toward the truck we prayed would still be waiting for us, my vision began to blur. Henry said his was too and he kept complaining, "My back hurts like hell!" He asked me if he was bleeding. "Negative," I replied.

By the time we reached and boarded the truck, we both were alarmed, unable to see objects even close by. And we couldn't attribute it to the falling darkness. Henry insisted he had been hit in his back by shrapnel. Removing his shirt disclosed no wounds from shrapnel, but a 10- or 12-inch long burn! He had fired his weapon so rapidly that it burned him when he slung it over his shoulder, the red hot barrel on his back! Adrenalin had kept him temporarily unaware of the injury and the pain.

Upon reaching camp, fellow Marines helped Henry and me off the truck and led us to the Navy corpsman's tent. He called for a doctor, who treated Henry's large and painful burn, washed out our eyes, inserted a medication, and bandaged us. Then we

were placed in a double tent—a small tent inside a larger one—to prevent any exposure to light.

The prognosis was discouraging.

Three long, terrifying days passed before the bandages were removed. We were still unable to see, so the procedure was repeated. Another three days dragged by before the bandages were again removed. This time, both Henry and I could see a small penlight the doctor passed to the side of our face. We were delighted when the bandages were not replaced and we were assured our vision was returning.

Doctors checked us daily in our dark tent for the next several days. Eventually, and very thankfully, our eyesight was restored.

Doctors explained the reason for our frightening experience. They said our vision wasn't affected immediately following the grenade explosion due to abundant adrenalin which provides protection from severe trauma. Then as the danger passed and the adrenalin wasn't so active, shock from the exploding grenade, concussion trauma to our optic nerves, became apparent.

We didn't suffer flesh wounds from the exploding grenade because we had so quickly dropped to the ground, fortunately in a low spot, and the shrapnel flew over and beyond us. That is why Corporal Cipullo was wounded. He was in the open, twenty feet or so behind us, when the explosion occurred.

If you want to experience a never-before appreciation for your vision, have your eyes bandaged. I recommend for 72 hours but I don't believe you will wait that long. If it's only for 24 hours, when you remove the bandage you will experience a vastly greater appreciation for your eyesight and will have far more empathy for those without it. You also will have a better understanding of how frightened Henry and I were.

Because neither Henry nor I shed blood from the blinding effects of that exploding Jap grenade, our platoon leader, believing that bleeding was necessary for anyone to qualify for a Purple Heart, didn't request it for us. He was mistaken. It was a combat injury and I was awarded the Purple Heart, my second, many years later.


I hope Henry was awarded one too. He deserved it.

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AFTER WORLD
WAR II

Pages omitted from the preview.

A Hike through the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Area



We had been in Nagasaki less than 72 hours when I was summoned to the Commanding Officer's quarters. He asked if it was true that I could speak Japanese.

I replied, "No sir."

Then he said, "Several Marines have told me otherwise. Did you attend Japanese language school?"

"No sir."

"Then why do so many people tell me you are conversant in the Japanese language?"

I said, "Well sir, while my friends were playing poker, shooting craps and such, I spent that time studying the Japanese phrase books issued by the Corps. And on patrols, I was usually the one who tried to talk with Jap soldiers in caves, and talked with Japanese prisoners."

"Good! You're what we need. There are a couple more Marines that did the same thing—and I want the three of you beside me on a hike through the atomic bomb area, today!"

I was among those in the lead of our battalion as we hiked through the rubble of what had been the major Japanese city of Nagasaki.

We were reportedly the first Caucasians to walk through the rubble of that devastated city. It was quite a hike.

At every rest break, while others lay on the ground or sat on metal items that survived the atomic bomb's explosion, I took the opportunity to talk with Japanese civilians searching through the rubble of what had been their home, business, church, or school. One woman (*oksahn*) seemed impressed that I could converse, though slowly and with limited vocabulary, in her language. Before I had to leave she located a small decorated dish. It was the only thing I saw from the A-bomb area in one piece. She smiled as she offered it to me, saying, "*Dozo, tomodachi.*" (Here, friend.) It was a touching and memorable experience.

My habit of trying to talk to the Japanese probably saved me from the exposure to radiation which caused several Marines to



At a break during our hike through the atomic bomb area, some Marines sat on heavy machinery, suffering severe radiation burns.

suffer horrible, painful radiation burns and huge blisters. During a rest stop, while I interacted with Japanese, these men sat on drill presses and other metal objects that were extremely radioactive.

Three men from my company suffered severe radiation burns during that march. Their burns—large, ugly blisters and bright red skin—extended from the inside of one ankle through to the inside of their other ankle, as if they had sat on a red hot saddle.

Anything that touched them caused excruciating pain and there was the likelihood of their blisters bursting and skin peeling. Nothing had been applied to help alleviate their pain, nor would it be. Mother Nature would have to heal them. Medications of any kind were painfully intolerable.

They couldn't stand anything to touch the painful area and had to lay on their back nude, knees bent and legs wide apart, for nearly two weeks before they could be moved. They were then transported to a military hospital in the States. Their main concern was, would they ever be able to father children?

I contacted one of those Marines, Richard Oman of Chisolm, Minnesota, years later. He told me he and the other injured Marines were rated 100% disabled for the rest of their lives. He passed away not long after we talked. We had planned to get together, but never had the opportunity so I still have many unanswered questions.

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Thoughts on the Atomic Bombs



I have frequently been asked to express my opinion concerning our nation's use of two atomic bombs. In fact, I wrote a magazine article about that subject soon after I returned home from Japan. Upon publication, readers of the magazine responded with opinions, positive and negative, in awesome numbers. They were quite evenly divided, fifty percent agreeing, fifty percent dissenting. My opinion is still in full agreement with dropping the bombs.

Consider this:

On Saipan, months before the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, our Marine company was ordered to gather around a large (approximately 4 feet by 10 feet) topographic map of Kyushu, Japan. We were told exactly where and how we would land as one spearhead for the invasion of Japan.

Even earlier, we had been briefed on a proposed invasion of Formosa (now called Taiwan). I was inexplicably fearful of participating in that operation, so it pleased me when the military leaders decided to bypass that island and invade the Japanese homeland instead.

Had we invaded Japan, the estimated casualties, Japanese and American, were astronomical—far more than those actually caused by our bombs. Knowing that, I firmly believe the development and use of atomic bombs saved countless lives,

Japanese as well as American. If we hadn't dropped those two bombs, the war would have lasted much longer. Many thousands of American military personnel would have died. In fact, some military leaders estimated there would have been 500,000 American casualties from an invasion of the Japanese homeland! Japanese casualties may have even exceeded that number.



Marines honor their fallen



There but for the grace of God go I

Back to School



When I enlisted in the Marine Corps I said, “I’ll never go through the door of another school.” I was tired of studying. In the U.S. Marine Corps Boot Camp in San Diego, there were two illiterate hillbillies in my platoon. They were friendly, likeable fellows and we became close friends. When they offered to do my laundry if I’d read their letters from home and reply to them, I agreed. Both of them were being taught by the Marine Corps to read and write, so they remained in Boot Camp while the rest of us graduated and continued on to Camp Pendleton for further accelerated training.

Those two men helped me to realize the importance of education, so when I regained civilian status, I resumed going through school doors. Countless doors!

I graduated twice from Weber College in Ogden. That great junior college (now a four-year university) had conferred on me an associate of science degree *and* a certificate of completion in commercial art—both with honors.

My long-time desire to fly had been fulfilled when I learned that the G.I. Bill (which was paying my tuition at Weber College) allowed me to enroll in an aviation class. The class time earned physical science credits, and I also received ten hours of flight instruction. Great! That allowed me to train sufficiently to qualify for solo flight. Subsequently, Ogden Air Park rewarded

me with ten hours free flight time for every flight student I referred to them.

To encourage Weber students to take flying lessons, I designed and had printed on bright yellow paper a hundred handbills. I posted them all over the campus and soon had a list of aspiring pilots eager to fly. This earned enough free flight hours for me to complete my private pilot license.

With my private license in hand, I was authorized to fly any single-engine aircraft, solo or with passengers. The passengers could share expenses, but I was not permitted to charge them for my services. That would have required a commercial pilot license and I was not prepared to make that career investment (competing with discharged Air Force pilots who had many hundreds of hours of flying experience).



Proud new pilot with Aeronca

I later enrolled at the University of Utah, majoring in secondary art education. Again, I graduated with honors. While there, I illustrated the university's literary magazine (*The Pen*),



the university's yearbook (*The Utonian*), and was awarded a Gold Key for ink drawings of eighteen fraternity and sorority houses.

Many years later, while married and raising three children, working full-time at Art Instruction Schools, and teaching at the University of Minnesota, I went back to school to get a Ph.D. After years of studying in my "spare time," I earned my doctorate at age 49. That prompted my wife's aunt to state, "Carol's husband sure must be dumb if he can't get out of school at his age!"

I advise you, my reader, to do whatever you can to improve your education. Education is available everywhere in our great nation, even by Internet. Try it. You will like it.

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Who's Flying a Jet T-33? Me!



I have occasionally read articles about public elementary and middle school teachers experiencing flight in U.S. Air Force jets. Ostensibly, those experiences were to assist educators as they encouraged students to set good study goals.

Reasoning that I was an educator, that I had founded and instructed a senior high school aviation club with a new Cessna 180 aircraft, and was a taxpayer in good standing with the I.R.S., I decided to contact a few influential friends in Washington, D.C. I requested their help arranging for me to take a ride in a jet.

With good results.

It was a pleasant surprise to receive a letter from the commanding officer of an Air National Guard unit stationed at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah. Upon request from Air Force headquarters in the nation's capitol, he set a date and time for my "orientation flight" in a T-33 jet (a two-place trainer with dual controls). Great!

On the appointed day, I was on time for the treasured flight.

However, the procedure was a bit more complicated than I had anticipated. I filled out required official forms which relieved the Air Force of any and all responsibility. I supplied answers and information for many questions. Upon completing those forms, I was interviewed by a flight officer interested in my flying background, my health, flying club purposes, etc.

Completing an hour or so of the above, I was then given a lengthy lecture on what to do if there was an emergency, including a flame-out, use of a parachute, ejection procedures, and how to use the controls should the pilot experience a sudden health problem precluding his ability to land the aircraft.

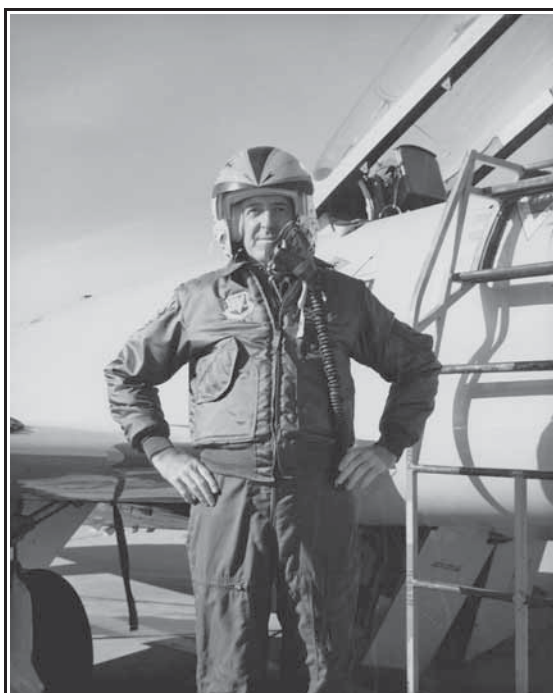
Finally, I was fitted with a flight suit and helmet, accompanied to the plane, given “hands-on” instructions and a parachute.

I was introduced to my pilot, helped into the rear seat, strapped firmly in place, and was given a “thumbs up” as he started the powerful engine.

After a brief warm up, we began to roll toward the taxi strip that led to the assigned runway for takeoff.

Every procedure, from starting the engine, checking instruments, the warm up, and taxiing was

coordinated with the control tower by radio.



Ready to board the Air Force T-33 trainer jet for a flight over the Great Salt Lake Desert

Standing on the brakes, my pilot pushed the throttle forward, read his instruments, then, with a “go” from the tower, he released the brakes and we began the takeoff run.

Personnel and buildings alongside the runway seemed to move by faster and faster as we accelerated. Then we lifted into the air and the ride became wonderfully smooth, more so than the light aircraft I was accustomed to piloting.

Flying just above the end of the runway, the plane’s flight path very suddenly and unexpectedly changed from horizontal to vertical! A light plane (Piper Cub, Taylorcraft, Mooney, Ercoupe, Cessna, Stinson, Aeronca, etc.) would have quickly stalled with that action. But the jet just accelerated! I felt its great power throughout my body as I followed the pilot’s movements on my set of controls.

Upon leaving Hill Air Force Base, we headed west, over the Great Salt Lake, at an altitude above 10,000 feet. The pilot then asked if I would like to take the controls and fly the jet.

Would I? Wow!

I asked the pilot about restrictions. “What can I do?”

He replied, “Anything. You’re the pilot.”

Well, I had always wanted to *dive* an airplane. Only shallow dives were possible in the “puddle jumpers” I was accustomed to flying. So I nosed the jet earthward, planning to go straight down for several thousand feet, then pull out of the vertical dive, relieved of the usual fear of losing the wings.

My pilot grabbed his controls and put us back into horizontal flight.

“Sorry,” he said. “That was my fault. I should have let you know that pushing this plane rapidly into a dive deflects air from the air intake and often causes a flame-out. If you want to dive the plane it’s OK, but push it slowly into the dive.”

I did.

Surprisingly, the rest of the one-hour flight was completed with me at the controls with only one exception: The pilot asked, “Would you like to experience a ‘gray-out’? Regulations won’t permit me to let you ‘black out,’ but I can pull enough G’s (force against gravity) for you to ‘gray out.’” (In a gray out, one does not lose consciousness, but loses brain function to the extent he cannot properly read instruments or control the airplane.)

I agreed. The nose of the jet was pushed toward the ground below from an altitude of 20,000 feet.

As instructed, I read the whirling altimeter to my pilot over the radio as we descended like a rocket.

As we pulled out of the vertical dive, exerting several G’s, I was still reading the altimeter accurately.

The pilot said, “Hell, Jardine, you can take as much as I can. I’m afraid you won’t experience a ‘gray-out’ today.”

The rest of that initial jet flight was uneventful. However, it wasn’t my only T-33 ride. I later had two more, both from Hill Air Force Base.

My second jet flight required three hours preparation, most of which was repetitive of flight number one, due to new, stricter regulations.

The third flight, due to additional regulations, required almost four hours of review—instruction and preparation. However it was a fantastic flight. A real ball.

After I related my attempted “gray-out” experience to my new pilot, he suggested another try.

With him at the controls, we quickly reached 20,000 feet. Asking if I was ready, he pushed the jet’s nose earthward and we had a very fast ride down nearly to the surface of Great Salt

Lake. In fact, we were near Promontory Point, famous as the location where two trains met, many years ago, completing the first rail span across the nation. And as we pulled out of that dive, the pilot had to lift the plane up to cross over the railroad tracks. We were low! But I didn't "gray-out."

I had my 35 mm twin lens reflex camera with me and, when I wasn't flying the jet, I took many photos. Then the pilot had a good idea. He used the jet's radio to ask, "Are there any birds approaching Utah?"

An immediate reply stated, "A flight of three F-101's are nearing Hill Air Force Base from Nellis A.F.B. Base in Nevada. We're at 16,000 feet on a N.N.E. Heading."

We were S.S.W. of Hill Air Force Base, in their flight path.

My pilot said, "I have a civilian pilot aboard my T-33 and he would appreciate a fly-by so he can take your picture."

The F-101 pilot said they would watch for us and suggested we climb to 18,000 feet. Their fighters were camouflaged and an interesting photo would be possible with the Utah desert for a background.

My pilot said, "Keep your eyes open for the three fighters, Jardine. Let's see which one of us can spot them first."

I'm not sure he didn't "let me win," but I reported the three F-101's first.

In formation, the three fighters passed below us. Our T-33 was in a dive, pushing 400 m.p.h., when I photographed them flying at more than 300 m.p.h. I clicked the camera's shutter. I didn't have time for a second exposure. Fortunately, all three F-101's were captured in a corner of that negative, which was easily enlarged. It proved to be a most unusual photograph, and proves the efficacy of properly applied camouflage.



Photo I took from T-33 trainer jet of three F-101 Air Force Jets over the Great Salt Lake Desert

My three jet flights amazed me with the lack of speed awareness. Except when near a cloud, the ground, or another aircraft, there was no sensation of speed, no more so than in smaller, slower planes I had piloted. But the controls were easier to handle and it took far less time to go from point A to point B.

The jet pilots with whom I flew were generous in allowing me to fly each of those three T-33's, over 40 minutes each time. They and the ground personnel were very pleasant, considerate, and able people.

I loved every minute!

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Girl's Second-Choice Date



On an evening just prior to Halloween, my doorbell rang. I hoisted my 85-year-old body out of a comfortable recliner and made my way to the front door. There, to my surprise, was a nine-year-old neighbor girl with tears in her eyes.

I had seen this little girl several times in church and had spoken to her occasionally, but she was essentially a stranger.

After I greeted her, she said, "Mr. Jardine, tomorrow night is a Daddy Daughter Date Night. There's going to be a Halloween party. All my friends will be there...but my Daddy is out of town on a business trip." Then she began sobbing. Between spasms of heartfelt grief, she asked, "Will you take me?"

What would you have done?

I surprised myself by saying, "Sure, I'll take you." I just couldn't refuse.

The party was being held in the recreation room of a neighboring home, so transportation wouldn't be a problem. However, everyone was expected to attend in a Halloween costume.

The next day I went to Walmart and purchased the items necessary to transform myself from the neighborhood's ugly, old, fat, bald man into a Caribbean pirate: mask, hat, vest, sash, toupee, false mustache, and plastic sword! I even purchased a black, tar-like substance to visually eliminate a couple of front

teeth, which, I might add, was nearly impossible to remove after my “date.”



Pirate and Princess

I escorted nine-year-old Courtney Lee, dressed as the princess she is, to the party, which was attended entirely by eight-, nine-, and ten-year-old girls with their dads. All were in costume and a great time was had by all.

Well, almost all.

Every daddy there was young enough to be my grandson. I certainly felt out of place with dads one-third my age.

However, I still own the memory of Courtney Lee, a nine-year-old girl who had changed from a tearful child into one of the happiest, most cheerful princesses at the Daddy Daughter Halloween party, accompanied by the 85-year-old Pirate.

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