



AUGUST 2021

Pensacola Park Post

A Monthly Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association Distribution
Find us also on the web @ www.PensacolaPark.org

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**AUGUST 13th-14th
(FRI & SAT)**

PENSACOLA PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD YARD SALE

"Hey!!! Pensacola Park Residents,

It's your friendly neighbor Greg Scarboro again hitting you with a reminder that our neighborhood yard sale is THIS MONTH on August 13th and 14th. You can participate one day or both. Each individual resident is responsible for their own advertising like what day, what time, address, items for sale, etc. I recommend Craigslist, Marketplace, Facebook, Nextdoor, and word of mouth. I also recommend placing a sign at the end of your street on the day of the sale! And don't forget to mention that you are part of a larger neighborhood sale in Pensacola Park. PPNA will place signs a few days before at all our intersections. So Happy Selling!!"

TALES FROM A HERO: REFLECTIONS ON THE WAR

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES FROM ROY BIRMINGHAM AS TOLD TO HIS GRANDAUGHTER ALEXANDRA BIRMINGHAM

My Grandfather was 18 years old when he was drafted, an ex high school football star fresh off the press. You see, to truly understand how the war influenced our country it is important to first understand how the war reshaped an entire generation. My grandfather was part of that generation and below are Journal Entries based on real events, which happened to him while he served in World War II. Each event is either a significant lesson or memory he has shared with me over the years of our relationship, and they are words I will never forget:

Roy Birmingham 45th Division, 157th Infantry, Company A

Summer 1943:

"When I found out I was in the draft I wasn't scared like some folks. No, I wasn't scared I was just proud to serve my country. It is an unbelievable honor and I will fulfill my duties to the fullest, at 18 I'm old enough to be a man and fight beside the real soldiers. Been training in Fort McClellan, Alabama now for six months; replacement and anti tanks' training to be specific. Too bad though, there's been reports that our tactics are no good and our ammunition can't penetrate the German tank's shield. I suppose that makes this place futile, will probably have to finish basic training at another camp.

Found out today that my prediction came true. Our time in Alabama has come to an end and now the units are being shipped around to different facilities, mine to Fort Meade, Maryland. On the sunny side, I get to visit the family in Menominee for a few weeks before I report to Maryland, will be a relief to see those suns of guns!"

Winter 1943 Fort Meade, Maryland

"A fella shouldn't have to live like this. I miss my family, my life, my gals. Sure I'm a tough guy, I can hold my own but it gets awful lonesome. I think the other men feel it too, we get shipped around so much you hardly know who you are going to see day to day. Maintaining a relationship with anyone is hard, but starting one and losing it is even harder. It takes a lot to make a man cry, but boy did I let out a good one today. Lonely is all, just plain lonely. Getting shipped out overseas today on the largest convoy sent out by America so far in the war. 150 Liberty Ships carrying ammunition and soldiers will make its way toward the coast of Africa. There is much speculation about the venture, German U-Boats are still attacking and loose mines are thought to be still dispersed throughout the ocean. I wasn't afraid to be drafted, but actual combat! Apprehension fills my body at the thought! The war is real, I always knew that. But to be a part of the intervention is a whole other scene. I, well I think I'm scared..."

Spent my 19th birthday party picking apricots on an orchard farm owned by Mussolini's cousin in Italy. What am I doing here?

After landing on the coast of Africa the division pushed its way up towards Italy and here we have been training as replacements in a center just outside of Naples. Eventually we will be dispersed to different troops, but for now we're living pretty comfortably. Training turns one into a serious man, but we troops have yet to lose our sense of humor. Why, just the other day we played a prank on Old Wilber! There are routine drills every night when the Germans fly over our barricades after they drop one bomb. It is a common occurrence and rarely anyone is injured, but nonetheless our entire camp must evacuate to the trenches. You can honestly hear that plane coming from a mile away it chugs along so loud, Washing Machine Charlie we call it. Well, Old Wilber Allen is a bit of a paranoid if you know what I mean. While the other men and I are groggily trying to make it out of our bunks, Wilber will have already run half way to the trenches, arms flailing like a mad man. He sleeps in his uniform so as not to be caught off guard, boots laced and all. His swiftness has become quite a jab around the tent, and one night we decided to humor ourselves a little. The tent flaps are always left loose in case of an emergency, but the boys and I thought it would be a good idea to tie them shut, to spite Wilber and all once he tried to get out. Well I decided to tie those damp straps shut and that night when the alarm sounded, there went Wilber! AS ever fast as could be he SLAMMED into the enclosed tent flaps, bouncing back like a rubber ball, but that didn't stop Old Wilber! He got right back up, not quite knowing what to make of the situation and BOOM with all his force ran straight through the tent flaps! Needless to say the little straps were no match for Wilber's determination. The guys and I had a good ball with that one, even as we could hear the Germans drop bombs upon our camp of happiness. This is something I will never forget about the war, the night our humor overruled our intuition to reach safety."

Late 1943 / Early 1944:

"I finally saw the light of battle when my 45th Infantry Replacement Division was shipped out to Anzio to make up for fallen soldiers. As the boys and I trotted up to our new division, bags in hand, I could hear the burst of firearms all around me. I was apprehensive but ready to fight with this new group of men before I even realized that I had just pranced right onto the front line. There would be nothing save a few hundred feet and steel separating us from the Germans this time, here we met face to face. I was afraid of course but I was mostly concerned with the loss of life, which inevitably comes when serving on the front line. First come, First serve. I took a quick glance around me and saw the men, my men, shouting and screaming and firing with all their intensity. Time seemed to lag and I realized that these..."

“...people and even possibly myself, were in real danger now. THIS was the war, these men battling for their life, their country, their people; and here I was with them fighting in the same battle. I began to fire.

There were 290 young men shipped out with me that day, and only 30 survived. Less than 1 out of 10. 1 out of 10....Most of the survivors in that effort eventually came down with trench foot, but not me. I guess you could say I was lucky, but I like to say I was spared.

After this battle we pushed toward Rome and eventually invaded a beach in France. On this trek across Europe there were many hot, sticky days of pure misery. Our water rations were barely enough to keep us satisfied, but we realized we had nothing to complain about after our capture of 30 to 40 German soldiers. As I looked out on our prisoners a thought hit me square across the face, any one of them could be me. I could tell they were thirsty by the way they so quietly stared at our water, their eyes following its every location. I couldn't do it, I knew they were the “enemy” but I couldn't sit here and watch them suffer so deliberately. We had confiscated their weapons and they no longer posed any threat, just a group of lost men trying to ignore their natural instinct of hunger and thirst. I bent down to a man next to me and offered him my water. A look of confused happiness and desperation crossed his face, but he refused my offer. Knowing he thought it was contaminated, I took a big swig myself and then offered my water to him again, I wanted to show him that I understood his situation and could provide him with some relief. He took my water gratefully, and the rest of my division began to offer theirs too. It was an act shared out of humanity.

Just then a man in my division asked a question of the German soldiers, the most asked question towards any soldier. ‘Why are you fighting?’ One man who spoke out in comprehensive English, ‘What would you do? Hitler threatens our families, our lives. He says that if we don't fight we will be punished, our loved ones will be punished. We fight to protect the things we love.’ This day will forever be engraved in my memory, those things you don't forget.”

Mid/Late 1944:

“Learning to think for myself has been one of the main lessons I will never forget from serving in the army. Every day is a constant battle for independence and this past week has been no different. Our current beach invasion in France laid out a lot of risks for my division. Hidden beach mines were a prevalent danger to our unsuspecting footsteps and I was determined not to be included as one of their victims. The chaos and confusion of unloading the cargo ships as fast as possible left us soldiers little time to worry about our own well being. However, as I made my way frantically across the beach I realized that I was following not too far behind someone else's indented footsteps.

‘If I can just follow these footsteps across the beach I will know how to get to the other side. If the footsteps run out I will know there is a mine nearby, that it was too late for them but not for me.’ Following this method with all my determination I mosied my way through the danger zone into safety unharmed. By God I just might make it through this war alive! After our beach entrance into France the 45th Infantry Division began to push its way toward Bourg, and I'll be darned if the French aren't just the merriest group of people you have ever met. Our advancement toward Bourg caused the Germans to waver in their certainty. Bourg had been ruled by the Germans for years now, but now it was time to give the people back their dignity. There was little resistance from the German offensive, they know their numbers could not withstand our strength and within days the town was liberated. The townspeople were very excited about our arrival and their jovial smiles brought even more determination to our mission. Even their hospitality was unbeatable. One day the division was marching through town a little man carrying a plump, freshly plucked goose came running up to our ranks. Eagerly he pushed the large bird into my hands and flashed a large grateful smile towards my men and me. That night we had roasted goose for dinner and darned if the thing didn't taste like tire tracks, however this detail was overlooked and we were all glad to have a nice, warm meal. Another brave Frenchman rushed up to our trenches right in the middle of open combat with the Germans. ‘Sir, get down you're going to get hit!’ I had shouted, but he just gave us an enthusiastic grin and slipped bottles of crisp wine into our quarters. Man did we appreciate THAT fella!”

The liberation of Bourg, France came towards the end of World War II. My Grandfather always tells me to think for myself, to learn and to enjoy life. This is what the war has done for my Grandfather, this is what the war has done for me, and this is what the war has done for our country. It has influenced the way people live their lives, and it will forever have an impact on our society. Stories trickle down through generations, often changing here and there but the overall meanings will remain the same. This is how I view the war, a thing to be examined through time. Remnants, like my Grandfather, still remain and it is your and my generation who must grasp this wisdom the wise try to show us. The soldiers of World War II have a message; despite the hardships it brought to the world, life continued. My Grandfather always tells me that life is what you make it and (if you will) “When life throws you lemons, make lemonade.”



SUPPORT LOCAL PENSACOLA PARK BUSINESSES (PLEASE CONTACT US TO PLACE AN AD. IT IS \$5 A MONTH AND YOU MUST RESIDE IN PENSACOLA PARK):



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HOW TO ORDER A PENSACOLA PARK EMBLEM

Please visit our website www.pensacolapark.org to order any emblems, or write us at pensacolapark@gmail.com. Payment is via venmo, paypal, check, or cash. There are three types of emblems you can order:

- Flag. Comes in three colors: 2'x3' Black, Green, Red (\$85)
- Metal Plaque. Comes in two sizes: 8x8 (\$165) and 5x5 (\$80)
- Stickers. Comes in eight different colors (\$2 each)



PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO PENSACOLA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

As an organization we do not currently collect any neighborhood association dues, instead we function off of grants, fundraisers, and donations from the neighborhood. Donations allow us to go after matching grants, buy trees to increase our canopy, improve street conditions, throw community events, and be able to print this newsletter. If you would like to donate, you can either: (1) Drop off Cash or Check to our GREEN PPNA mailbox at 107 Lackawanna Rd / (2) Use Paypal @ pensacolapark@gmail.com / (3) Use Venmo @ Pensacola-Park

ABOUT PENSACOLA PARK PRESERVATION SOCIETY AND PENSACOLA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Pensacola Park Preservation Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 formed by Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association in order to bring together residents and businesses located in the Pensacola Park Nationally Registered Historic Boundary, for the common good of (1) preserving the historic integrity and resources of the area; (2) creating an environment that promotes sustainable and appropriate growth for the neighborhood; (3) providing historic education and assistance to those in the Pensacola Park Neighborhood for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic homes, structures, and landscapes; and (4) Unifying and being representative of all the original streets in the Pensacola Park Historic boundary. Also check us out online at www.pensacolapark.org, and follow us on Facebook @ Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association.

If you have any questions or would like to submit topics or op-eds to Pensacola Park Post, please feel free to write us at pensacolapark@gmail.com. If you would like to stop receiving the free monthly post, please write us and put “stop post” in the heading, along with your physical address. Thank you.