

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society is a group of individuals dedicated to the preservation of the history of the area just north of Spokane, Washington. The Society collects oral, literary, and pictorial history to publish and otherwise make accessible to the public.

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society meets on the second Saturday of each month at 9 AM. We gather at the Clayton Drive-In, located just off Highway 395 on Railroad Ave.

THE

CLAYTON/DEER PARK  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Mortarboard

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## BECOMING A MARINE

By: Art Stelting

(Continued from Issue 40 August 2011)

### Chapter 8 —Guam

I had been previously promoted to PFC and then Corporal. I had my own Amtrac and a crew of three. It was hit several times by small arms fire. When I got it in the water, it still floated, although with a slight tilt on the side, but I couldn't steer to starboard. Consequently, I drifted around Asan Point, which was still held by the Japs. Someone in our outfit saw our predicament and towed us back to our beach. While going over the reef, I hit a coral snag which I couldn't see because it was under the water. It tore a big hole in the bottom of the Trac. There was no more going back to sea. We had to ferry men and supplies over the reef. It was not a good place to be! When we got our Tracs on Tulagi, they had sand bags with a bunch of tapered sticks to pound into the bullet holes to keep the water out of the pontoons. Who did they think would be stupid enough to get out while under fire and start pounding wooden pegs into the sides? NOT ME OR THE CREW!

The rest of the initial landing was almost over. We set up camp about a mile north of Agana, which was the capital city of Guam. The Navy gunfire had reduced most of the town to rubble. We went on a

Art Stelting in dress greens *Photo from Art Stelting Collection*



Free — Take One

*(Continued from page 505)*

few patrols with Lieutenant “G’s” Raiders again!

Nothing of it amounted to much. There were some smoking embers left of a Jap fire, but they had eventually moved out.

At some point, I was assigned to working with the Seabees to blast a ditch across the reef in Tumon Bay. Originally, fuel for the B-29s had to be trucked in from Apra Harbor. They decided to place a pipeline from the ocean directly to the airfield. A good idea for a change! The idea was to blast a trench across the reef and then bulldozers would trench

on up to the field. At the edge of the reef, a flexible hose would be attached to the rigid pipe and towed out to a depth in the ocean where the tankers could attach their hoses to an anchored buoy and begin pumping.

The first day, we unpacked the dynamite from its original boxes and stuffed the sticks into sandbags. We went out to the edge of the reef. I headed back to the assigned spot on the beach and the Seabees threw the charges overboard while I drove along. The first time it was tried, there wasn’t enough water to keep the pressure down and the explosives ended up hardly scratching the coral. The next time, we decided to wait for a higher tide. We had much better results.

After three to four days of this, we had a trench two to three feet deep across the reef so we could lower the rigid pipe. The reason for the trench was to

keep the pipe from moving around due to the tide and currents from the breakers. That was good



**A Water Buffalo, loaded with marines, churns through the sea, bound for beaches of Tinian Island near Guam July 1944. *Courtesy OliveDrab.com***

thinking on our part. As we neared the beach with the last load, I shut the engine off. It backfired. We still had some powder left, and it was laying on top of the grillwork over the engine compartment. Guess what? Yep, it set the dynamite afire and it was every man for himself. There was a berm about ten feet high and fifty feet ahead of us. We all bailed out over the berm and waited for the inferno to come. The “boss” got a big grin on his face and held up all the dynamite caps that he’d grabbed and taken with him. I didn’t realize it then, but did think of it afterwards that it would have been better to be blown to pieces than to be burned alive. The Trac had completely melted to ground level.

I need to digress a little. After about the third day after landing Lieutenant “G” smeared some kind of white ointment on his face and the dirt really piled up. Captain Goodpasture took a look at him and

*(Continued on page 507)*

*(Continued from page 506)*

told him to wash up. Lieutenant “G” said that we didn’t have any fresh water. Captain pointed seaward and said, “There’s a whole ocean out there, so get out there and wash up.” Guess what Lieutenant “G” did?

The first Trac broke down and the second one melted down. We walked back to camp that evening. Captain G. saw me and asked me if I needed another one and to see if I could find another one that would run. It was kind of a joke with him so I kind of had the “pick of the litter.” I was soon on my way with another one. We got all new ones shortly after that. Some of the new ones had a ramp on the rear so the Infantry didn’t have to climb up and out over the sides.

I was lucky to get that job as I got to eat with the SEABEES. They had refrigerators so their drinks were cold, etc. What a change!

Good deals don't last forever!

### **Chapter 9—More Landings**

Shortly, around January 10, 1945, we prepared for the next landing. We loaded up our LSTs again and

headed north for Saipan. The second night out, we got into another one of those bad storms. Paint was actually peeling off the overhead in our quarters. We were really concerned because LSTs have been known to break up in certain conditions. The next morning, our officers told us that they had been playing cards with the Navy officers up on the bridge and they weren’t too concerned so they didn’t think too much about it. We soon found out from the crew that it was the skipper’s first ship. So it goes!

The day after that we pulled into Saipan and began loading up the Infantry. They were in the newly formed 5th Division from the States. Some of the NCOs were veterans of the Solomon Islands, Tarawa, and other campaigns. Most of them were new to the game and not too concerned about where we were headed. The next stop was Iwo Jima. We were assigned to the 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division, but I don’t recall which Company or Battalion. One of them raised the flag on Suribachi.

With all troops aboard, the next day we made a practice landing at Tinian. It was only 1 or 2 miles, so we drove across, did our thing, and then returned to the LSTs in Saipan. The next day, it was off to Iwo. The trip was uneventful. It didn’t take long, only 2 to 3 days. On January 19th, while still dark, we saw the flashes of gunfire from naval guns in the distance. We had breakfast of steak and eggs. That was standard fare prior to landings. Have a nice day Marines!

Our Battalion was assigned to Green Beach on the extreme left flank, which was at the foot of Suribachi. To our right was  
*(Continued on page 508)*



**Amtracs approach Iwo Jima loaded with 4th Marine Division troops.**  
*Department of Defense Photo.*

*(Continued from page 507)*

Red Beach, and to its right, Yellow Beach. All in all, I believe it stretched out between 1/2 to 3/4 miles along the beach. (From left to right: It was 5th Marine Division, 4th Marine Division, and then 3rd Marine Division). That was 2 to 3 days later. On our way in, in order to get lined up with the first wave, I had to cut back in between a battleship and the beach. I pulled in a little too close just as they fired one of their 16 inch guns. We were nearly blown out of the water from concussion. Show a little respect, Art! We were covered with smoke, but otherwise unscathed. We were supposed to take the troops across to the other side of the island (guess about 500 yards to seal off Suribachi from the rest of the island). From the water's edge, the terraces of the volcanic black sand were about 100 to 200 feet high. No matter how much we tried, we just bogged down and couldn't get any traction. We had to unload the troops there---so much for getting them to the other side of the island. The area was well fortified and the Infantry had to literally claw their way across. I don't think they made it until the next day! Later that day, we finally got on top of the terraces.

The Japs had held their fire until the first wave landed and then they unloaded with everything they had. When we were on our way back to the ships for more troops, Corporal H. Stoddard and crew kept crowding me over. When he was abreast of me, about twenty-five feet, there was a huge explosion. We were covered with smoke, oil, and other debris. I looked back and saw that they had taken a direct hit from artillery. The Lieutenant at our rear waved us on. We found all aboard dead. They recovered the dead and then the Trac sunk. Stoddard, Gorenson, Alexander, Logan and another Marine whose name I can't recall, all had been tent mates of mine at Guam. Some were buried at sea. It was a very tough day. That time still haunts me. We were such close friends.

We were under constant shell fire, day after day.

Due to congestion everywhere in such a small area, some of us were sent back to Guam. There were bulldozers, trucks, and all sorts of equipment as

they began repairing Motoyama Airfield---Field #1, finishing #2 and #3, which the Japs hadn't finished.

## **Chapter 10--Going Back**

We arrived back at Guam. When the rest of the Company got back, we boarded LSTs again and headed east for a change. Our destination was Maui, Hawaii. A few days out, one of the engines gave out and we went to a crawl. The rest of the convoy left us to fend for ourselves, so we had the Pacific all to ourselves again. After 18 days, we arrived in Maui. We set up camp and then were told we were going to Honolulu for five days. We were supposed to stay at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. We were told to take just one set of clothes because the hotel staff would wash and iron our clothes and have them ready for us in the morning. What a deal! When we got to Pearl Harbor and off the ship we were told that our reservations had been canceled and that we would be set up in a tent camp not far away.

We could go on liberty and if we found lodging in town, we could stay there. We looked all over and found nothing. We went to the YMCA and a lady there said she might find a place for us. She did locate a place at a motel/cabin so we went there. We got a room with two beds and a daveno, so we five doubled up and made that work out. What did we do with the only clothes on our backs? We put our clothes in a bathtub, got some laundry soap, and swished them around. We hung them up to dry on anything available. The next morning, we rented an iron and board and got down to business. Then we were ready to see the sights. The town wasn't much of anything at the time, just a main drag full of sailors, bars, and a few "white" women who were either married or going steady. So the picking wasn't exactly what we were looking for. An area had been fixed up for service men near Diamond Head. They had a PX and a huge "beer garden." We spent most of our liberty there. What a let-down!

On our second day, Harry had an attack of malaria. We took him to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, where an aid station was located. We were told that they

*(Continued on page 509)*

would have to put him in the hospital. Harry (now I remember) Kazan said he'd rather die, so we took him back to our quarters so he could spend the rest of his time there. We took him food for the day and left him to his misery.

When our time was up, it was back to Maui and tents again. One day, one of our new lieutenants had us out for drill and he gave us a command that we'd never heard of before. In the melee that followed, some of us went in different directions and seeing the mess, P1Sgt Switzer, now a recently promoted field commission officer called us to a halt. He said that in no uncertain terms we were out fighting a war and that he hadn't heard so much B.S. The new lieutenant got the message and dismissed us.

We weren't there long and those of us who were had done our time out there, boarded the ship and headed to San Francisco. We got there on June 5th. (I was gone from January 24, 1943, to June 5, 1945.) We unloaded at Treasure Island and got one of those hero's welcomes that you always hear about by a Naval officer screaming at us to board busses to Oakland. In Oakland, we caught a train to San Diego. We were given a choice of west or east coast duty. I wished later that I had chosen east so I would have gotten to see the country. It was too late now!

I was given thirty days furlough. I spent most of that time going back and forth to Spokane and taking it easy. We were allowed 1 gallon of gas per day, but Joe McGrorty, who owned a gas station saw to it that I always had gas. He had to account for all of his gas due to rationing, but he seemed to find some way around that. Thanks Joe!

Time went by too quickly. Then I reported to the Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, where there was a Marine Guard Detachment whose duty was to be at all the gates for workers and servicemen to identify themselves coming in and out. Besides working the



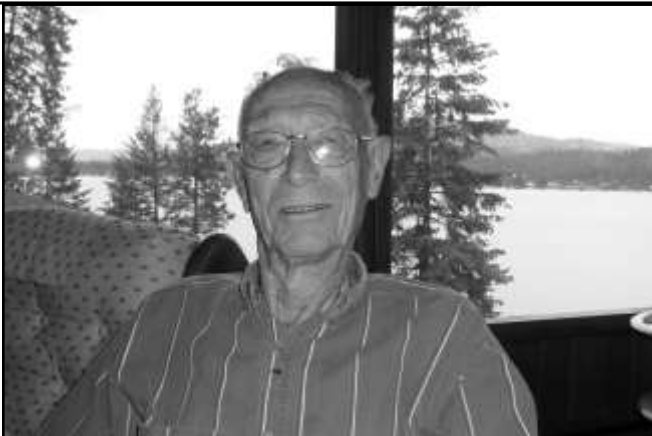
**Art and Chevrolet back in Clayton. Photo from Art Stelling Collection**



**Home Alive in Forty Five Photo from Art Stelling Collection**

*(Continued from  
page 509)*

gates, I was a prisoner chaser. I was in charge of prisoners out on work details. They maintained the lawn and shrubs and did various small painting jobs around the barracks. For a time, I was the Brig Warden in charge of all activities associated with the



**Art in his home on Loon Lake June 2009. Photo from Art Stelting**

prisoners, including checking people going out or coming in from liberty. That was a good job! I then spent quite a lot of time working the gates again.

On one night duty at the main gate, I got fed up with the sailors when they came in the yard from liberty--- mostly drunks trying to get passed us with booze under their uniforms. They had other tricks they used to get by us. We knew them all. We'd take their booze away and break the bottles in a manhole nearby. If the bottles hadn't been opened, we confiscated them and took them to the naval base hospital to be used for medical purposes. Of course, it went into "our" lockers in the barracks instead. Where else? If the sailors gave us a bad time at the gate, we still let them in. They'd get a ways into the darkened yard and call us a variety of names. One night, I got fed up with it and chased some sailors down toward their ships. That was a real NO NO! I was reported to the Officer on Deck on their ship. It wasn't long before the Sergeant of the Guard came in a jeep and took me to the Brig for "leaving my post."

The next day, I had Deck Court and was reduced to PFC again! Further punishment, I was posted at the colored folks' gate, the only gate they were allowed to use to come and go. Was that discrimination or not? Not in those days! I only had to be there by

myself in the darkness, but it turned out to be great punishment for me because when the war was over---the gate was closed on the weekends. As for the punishment, I had weekends off. Liberty!

As the war was over, the reservists were discharged at a fast rate. I, a PFC was "Sergeant of the Guard" on the main gate because there

was a shortage of NCOs. My four years were up on June 9, 1945, a Sunday so I was held up until the Monday, the 10th. Three of us reported to Colonel W. W. Wensinger for discharge. He asked all of us to consider re-enlisting. I told him I thought I could do better in the Army. His hair went straight up. He said, "Think what you would give up in the Marine Corps." I said, "That's not good enough Colonel."

I went down the hall later and met the Captain. He said, "That may not be such a bad idea." They were reducing officers' ranks also. The Captain was going to be cut back to enlisted rank so he was going to get out of the USMC.

We got back home the next day and were required to report to our Draft Boards for reclassification. So I went to Colville to the Draft Board. They said, "Where have you been for the last four years? We've been looking for you all this time!"

"TOUGH! I'd enlisted on my 18th birthday so I didn't think it was necessary to report to you." I showed them my discharge papers and then I was reclassified immediately. "No further questions SIR! Free at last!"

## AUGUST EVENTS

### Clayton Brickyard Day



Above: Warren Nord and Art Stelting, Grand Marshalls and Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society members, are chauffeured by Pete Coffin, in the August 6, 2011 Clayton Brickyard Day Parade. *Photo by Bill Sebright*



Left: Art and Ann Stelting relaxing at the Clayton Drive-In reading a Mortarboard and waiting for the parade to begin. *Photo by Sharon Clark*

**August 13, 2011 Society Meeting**



1912 Ogle Spokane County Atlas owned by Don and Mary Jo Reiter loaned to the Society accepted by Bill Sebright. *Photo by Pete Coffin.*



Sharon Clark is thrilled to win the raffle of the Eagle Quillow at our August 13, meeting. Lorraine Nord presents it on behalf the Society and her late mother, Violet Zimmerer who made and donated the set. *Photo by Pete Coffin*



## Clayton Fair, August 27, 28, and 29th

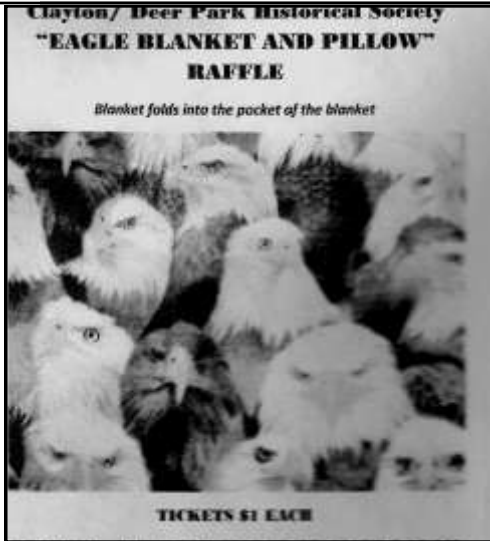


Pete Coffin, arm resting of the Eagle Quillow, Mark Wagner and Sharon Clark await guests to our history display at the 2011 Clayton Fair. *Photo by Bill Sebright*



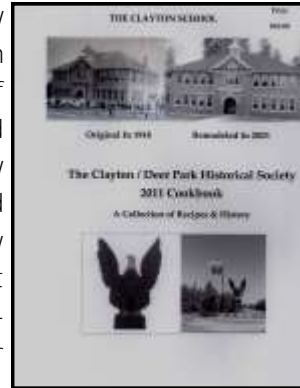
Bill Sebright observes and is ready to assist two guests in our Clayton Fair booth. *Photo by Sharon Clark*

**Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society**  
**Newsletter — Issue # 41 (September) — 2011**



Our member, Violet Marie Zimmerer, made and donated the three Eagle Blanket and Pillows sets, (Quillow,) for our raffles. She passed away May 31, 2011. The third raffle winner will be drawn at our September 10th meeting.

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society would like to thank the Clayton Drive-In, the Pizza Shoppe, the Salty Dog Eatery, the Gardenspot Floral Shoppe, and Odynski's Accounting for all their hard work and support in selling the 2011 Cookbook. You can pick up a copy in our booth at Settler's Day, at the Clayton Brickyard Day and the Clayton Fair in August. If you are interested in purchasing any of our Collected Newsletters, they are available at Odynski's Accounting in Deer Park, at \$4 each.



## Calendar of Events

Event	Date & Time	Location
<b>Clayton Fair</b> Display of Memorabilia	August 26, 27, 28, 2011	Clayton Fairgrounds
<b>C/DPHS meeting</b> Quillow Raffle Drawing	September 10, 2011 9:00am	Clayton Drive-In
<b>C/DPHS meeting</b>	October 8, 2011 9:00am	Clayton Drive-In

**Clayton/ Deer Park Historical Society Minutes — August 13, 2011**

In attendance: Marilyn Reilly, Don Reiter, Mary Jo Reiter, Duane Costa, Mike Reiter, Roberta Reiter, Penny Hutten, Kay Parkin, Betty Burdette, Warren Nord, Lorraine Nord, Sue Rehms, Ella Jenkins, Lonnie Jenkins, Roxanne Camp, Mark Wagner, Sharon Clark, Pete Coffin, Bill Sebright.

Society president, Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. Bill talked about and showed: 1. Leno Prestini items donated by John and Pat Colliver, including hats, pictures, a 48 star flag, tapestries, horse blankets, and school promotion papers. 2. Christmas letters from 1938 addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Gus Olson donated by Dan Sevey of Deer Park. One was from Luella Milner Dow to her 1st grade teacher. 3. A boxing scrapbook put together by Walt King Jr. donated by Ed and Mari Kingrey. 4. Terra cotta modeling tools and squares once owned by Einer Berg donated by Cliff and Karen Meyer. 5. CDs and DVDs of Leno talking about his paintings, Battista's painting tour from the Prestini Museum, Battista discussing Leno's paintings and a 2002 Northwest Profiles program about Leno. Wally Parker made these disks from tapes Wally and Bill got from Tom Bristol of the Chewelah Arts Guild.

Treasurer, Mark Wagner reported that there is \$3,041.18 in the main checking account. Checking account activity: Sharon Clark \$136.95 supplies, Deer Park Chamber of Commerce \$50.00 dues, Pete Coffin \$144.00 supplies. Deposits for the month were \$247.00.

Secretary, Grace Hubal sent a report that said 3 Society cookbooks were sold this month. She wrote 3 thank you letters to John and Pat Colliver, Dan Sevey and Eddie and Mari Kingrey. (She wasn't at the meeting. She had spent part of the night in the Holy Family emergency room with what turned out to be chest pains from stress.)

Print Editor, Sharon Clark handed Mortarboard #40. It has part two of Art Stelting's "Becoming a Marine." She also has pictures of Art and Warren Nord in uniform.

Vice President, Pete Coffin reported that he had met with Mike Reiter and looked at the 1912 Ogle Spokane County Atlas owned by Don and Mary Jo Reiter. It is a priceless addition to our archives. Pete gave 2 copies of the digitized DP papers to Bill. These are for Society members to check out to view for themselves.

Webmaster, Penny Hutten reported on the new website. Jake White is waiting for a part for his computer so he can set up two monitors and work faster on the new site. She has offered to help if he needs anything.

Don and Mary Jo Reiter loaned the Society a 1912 Ogle Spokane County Atlas. They also loaned us a picture of Herb Reiter's (Don's Dad) milk delivery wagon and team. In addition they also gave the CDPHS a picture of the Arcadia high line flume. It shows some of the wire that Don Ball gave to the Society. The heavy wire held the flume together. Lastly, they gave the CDPHS two (2) reels 35mm film possibly from the Arcadia Orchard Company. All priceless items! With the exception of the Atlas, which is very rare, all are new to us.

The last two years the Deer Park float has gone to Penticton on Clayton Brickyard Day. The breakfast was excellent, attendance was down however. Deer Park had a city wide yard sale that weekend and other activities could have drawn people away from Clayton Brickyard Day. We were complimented several times on our displays at the Clayton school.

*(Continued on page 516)*

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**Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society**  
**Newsletter — Issue # 41 (September) — 2011**

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*(Continued from page 515)*

Penny Hutten drew the winning number for Quillow Raffle. It's a quilt and pillow made by Violet Zimmerer. Sharon Clark is the big winner!

A Clayton Fair signup sheet was passed around. We will be selling Quillow raffle tickets for a drawing at our September meeting.

Next meeting is September 10, 2011, at 9 AM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Mark Wagner, acting Secretary.

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### **Editorial Policy Regarding Correcting Errors and/or Omissions**

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Information published here is compiled from many sources, including personal memories. It is often difficult or impossible to verify such recollections through outside documentation. Our editorial policy toward the veracity of personal recollections tends toward the casual – since little harm is normally done by such errors. But our editorial process also invites public review and input regarding the accuracy of the information we publish, and when such review either suggests or reveals errors or items open to dispute our “Letters” department will act as a forum allowing the airing of such disagreements in an effort to ascertain the truth and correct any probable or demonstrated errors. We also believe it’s important that such disagreements be recorded, even if they can’t be settled to the satisfaction of all parties.

We encourage everyone to submit any arguments as to fact to the editor in writing — since the written form reduces the chance of further misunderstandings. As is standard policy, all letters will be edited for spelling, word usage, clarity, and — if necessary — contents. If advisable, the editor will confer directly with the letter writers to insure that everyone’s comments and corrections are submitted in a literate, polite, and compelling manner — as best suits the editorial image of this Society’s publications.

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### **Society Want Ads**

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**WANTED:** Information and photos regarding the history of Trysil/Zion Lutheran Church

**WANTED:** Any stories and photos of your family’s history in connection with their occupations and settlement in the Clayton/Deer Park

Area

**WANTED:** Any stories and photos from Williams Valley #452 and Gardenspot #278 Granges

**WANTED:** Any information on the Williams Valley Grange Orchestra  
Contact: Ann Fackenthal, WVG

(Rollosdotter@gmail.com) 466-3564.

**FOR SALE:** The 2011 Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society Cookbook, “A Collection of Recipes and Stories” (see our ad on page 514 for details)

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#### **Society Contacts**

C/DPHS, Box 293, Clayton, WA 99110

Bill Sebright, president — (sebrightba@wildblue.net)

Peter Coffin, vice president — (pcffn@q.com)

Sharon Clark, editor — (sharonclark@centurytel.net)

Grace Hubal, secretary — (hubals@msn.com)