



CARTOON CORRESPONDENCE

GEORGE POWERS' WORLD WAR II LETTERS

By Tom Powers

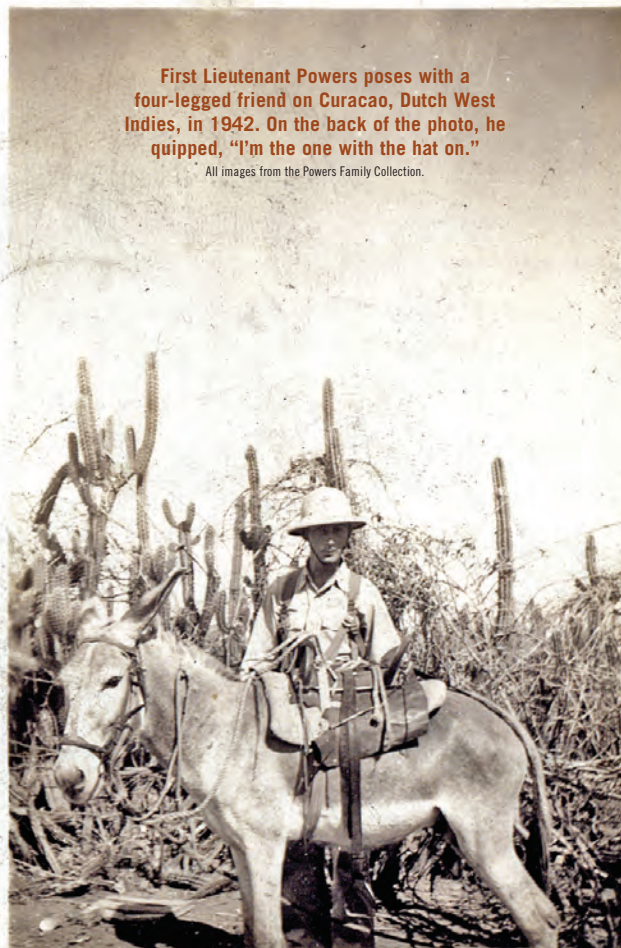




MY FATHER WAS a man of few words. But that doesn't mean he hadn't anything to say. As was the case with many World War II veterans, he didn't talk much about his wartime experiences. However, a collection of his illustrated letters sent home during the war still speak volumes to the family. His cartoons of army life are a glimpse into one soldier's experience traveling through a world in turmoil, illustrated with optimism and humor.

First Lieutenant Powers poses with a four-legged friend on Curacao, Dutch West Indies, in 1942. On the back of the photo, he quipped, "I'm the one with the hat on."

All images from the Powers Family Collection.





What is interesting about these illustrated letters is that my father didn't produce the elaborate drawings until the later stage of his service during the war. There are no illustrated letters from him until he starts a training assignment at Camp Maxey, Texas, in the spring of 1944. The letters, treasured in a family album, portray my father's experiences, from training, to service as a combat engineer rebuilding Europe, to time spent in the Philippines after Japan's surrender, to his discharge in 1945. Upon his discharge, the drawings end. After the war, my father sometimes dabbled in illustration and painting, but did not produce the kind of effort we see in these letters. Perhaps, being away from his Pittsburgh home, his illustrative efforts bloomed

in the hot house of war along with the anxiety of separation. There was also possibly a very personal reason my father put so much effort into his family correspondence.

Morale during wartime is a delicate commodity. It rises or falls with each day's news. Not only did his illustrated letters reassure the Powers family that George was in good spirits during the conflict, they also may have helped alleviate the family's sadness caused by the death of a beloved older brother on November 28, 1942. My uncle, Tom Powers (who I was named after), was a passenger in a car traveling on the Pennsylvania Turnpike that overturned after a tire blew. Tom, a corporal in the army, was returning to Aberdeen Proving Ground, and was the only one of the car's six passengers to suffer a fatal injury.¹ As happened with many young lives during the war, my uncle, an elementary school principal, had a promising career cut short when he passed away at 33 years of age. His death goes unmentioned in my father's letters, and is only referenced in a cryptic note in his war diary. However, after re-examining the illustrated letters, which start about a year and a half after the tragedy, it seems that the extra effort he took to lighten his own sense of loss was also probably meant to help lift a pall that hung over the thoughts of his older sister and mother, patiently waiting at home.

Uncle Tom's death was not only tragic for a promising career lost, but also for a family that had lost its second male head three years after their father, George Sr., passed away. George Jr., and his younger brother Harold, a trained auto mechanic, were both serving in the army and could not attend their brother's funeral. Now George had added responsibilities in addition to those of being an officer: he was the male head of the family. But, if he felt any pressure, it is not evident in

any of the letters that survive. Perhaps the year and a half period between my uncle's death and my father's first illustrated letter was a case of having enough "down time" to produce these drawings, or the desire to entertain the folks at home took a while to manifest itself.

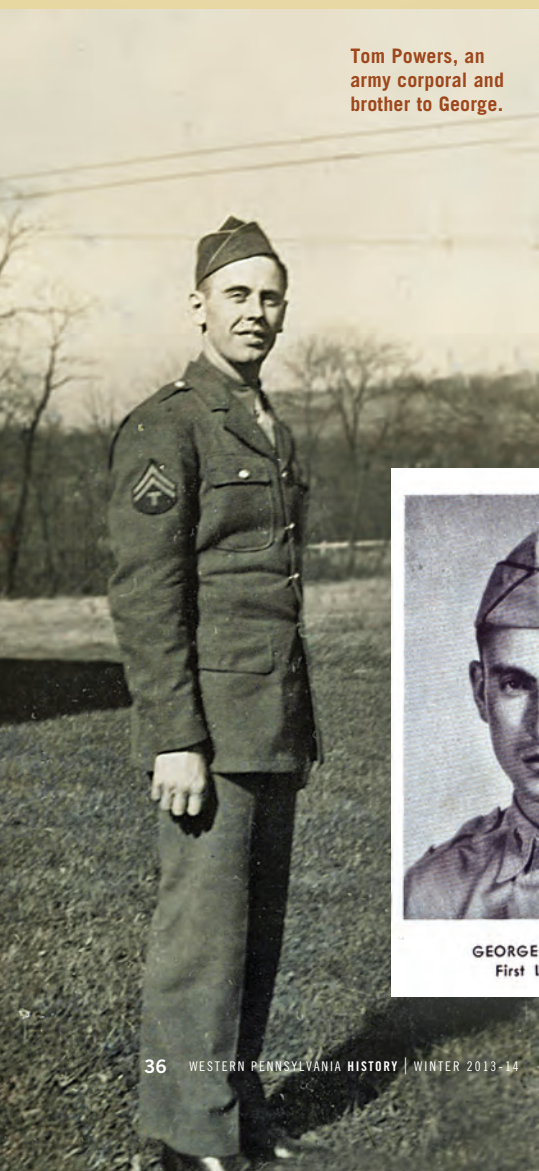
Of the myriad collections of World War II correspondence that exist today, there are many examples of G.I.s' artwork.² Most collections are from professional illustrators or those who turned professional after the war. The army even had a special unit, the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, a.k.a. "The Ghost Army," staffed with professional artists and filmmakers whose purpose was to impersonate other U.S. Army units by creating fake weaponry and storage bases to deceive the enemy.³

In my father's case, his art was solely for family and friends. His surviving letters home often show his enthusiasm for the profession he was trained for, civil engineering. They all have an air of bemusement and a wonder of foreign landscapes that an ex-farm boy would have otherwise never had a chance to see.

George Powers grew up on a Pennsylvania family farm along Powers Run Road in Allegheny County's O'Hara Township. The very name of the road reflects the long association of the Powers family with the area, first settled by my father's great-great-granduncle, James Powers, in the 1780s.⁴ My father's parents both worked the farm that produced corn, tomatoes, and cabbage.⁵ Fields were also devoted to making hay and oats, used to feed eight dairy cows. George treasured memories of delivering milk by wagon to stores in nearby Sharpsburg.

In addition to running the farm, George Sr., and wife Elizabeth Black Powers had teaching experience in the local schools and, at one time, George Sr.'s father was on the local school board. With education of utmost importance to this poor farming family, it was a foregone conclusion that my father would aspire to something more than keeping a small, family farm running in competition with large, industrialized farming methods.

Tom Powers, an army corporal and brother to George.



GEORGE B. POWERS
First Lieutenant

First Lieutenant
George Powers
in his battery's
yearbook page.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers castle pin, worn by George Powers during his years in service.



From May 28, 1944, and June 11, 1944. Powers surveyed and directed the construction of a Bailey Bridge.

DEVELOPED BY THE BRITISH

during World War II, the Bailey Bridge was a pre-fabricated truss bridge that required no special tools or heavy equipment to construct. The "no heavy equipment" rule did not necessarily apply to the contraption my father shows in this cartoon.

Inspired by the land surveyors who were part of the construction team that built Rodgers Field (Pittsburgh's first municipal airport located along Powers Run Road), my father dreamed of a career in engineering.⁶ With excellent grades and a head for mathematics, he was accepted to the University of Pittsburgh's engineering school for 1931.

George Powers entered the army years before the outbreak of World War II as a member of the U.S. Army Reserves. He had

joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) as an engineering student at college.⁷ Upon graduation from Pitt in 1934 in the midst of the Great Depression, the army afforded him employment when engineering jobs were in short supply. His first assignment as a second lieutenant was at a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp at Scottsburg, Virginia.

On February 1, 1941, First Lieutenant Powers was assigned to the 213th Coast Artillery unit and, upon the outbreak of hostilities,

was sent to the Caribbean island of Curaçao, located just off the coast of Venezuela. The island and its sister islands, Aruba and Bonaire (known collectively as the Dutch Antilles), were possessions of the Netherlands and crucial for their crude oil refineries. When the Netherlands was conquered by Germany in 1940, American troops were tasked with making sure the Nazis did not take possession of or destroy the two important island refineries that processed crude from Venezuela's Maracaibo Basin.⁸

My father and his unit were there to provide anti-aircraft protection for the third largest oil refinery in the world at that time: the Curaçaosche Petroleum Industrie Maatschappij refinery, a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell.⁹ With the largest refinery in the world on neighboring Aruba, these oil facilities of the Dutch Antilles were prime targets for fire from the gun decks of Germany's Kriegsmarine (war navy). Surface ships and oil tankers visiting the islands risked torpedoes from marauding Nazi submarines.¹⁰

While serving on Curaçao, Lieutenant Powers and his company did not see much action, but were kept busy training on the semi-arid island. It was while on Curaçao that my father's request to transfer to an engineering unit came through. He felt the transfer would be a better use of his civil engineering skills, which specialized in water and sewage treatment systems.¹¹

In his war diary, George writes on October 17, 1942, "Received orders to report for duty with the 135th Combat Engineers at Trinidad, British West Indies." Later on the same page he noted with pride that he was "now wearing the engineer castle."¹² The tradition of wearing the castle symbol can be traced back to West Point cadets circa 1840, but it was not officially adopted as the symbol for the Corps of Engineers until 1902.¹³

My father served in that theater between October 1942 and August 1943. Following that, he was promoted to captain and sent to Field Officers School for eight months at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. At the conclusion of that course, the

THIS UNDATED DRAWING is illustrative of just how strict company commanders were in enforcing uniform and grooming regulations. As the 1267th was soon to be a part of General George Patton's Third Army in France, a spit and polish appearance was a must for old "Blood and Guts."

A painful portrayal of a "G.I. haircut," c. 1944.



1267th Combat Engineer Battalion was formed and sent to Camp Maxey, located just north of Paris, Texas, for more training.¹⁴

Captain Powers was given the command of Company C in the 1267th. The number of personnel in a World War II-era engineer battalion varied widely depending on the purpose of the unit and the availability of men in a combat zone. The 1942 *Officer's Guide* lists battalion strength as being anywhere from 128 men to 1,250, and a company within that battalion could have from 12 to 700 men in it.¹⁵ My father's letters give no indication of the size of Company C as such information would have been restricted by the censors. However, a post-war issue of the *Officer's Guide* indicates that his company might have contained about 160 enlisted men.¹⁶

It was during the training period at Camp Maxey that Captain Powers' letters home became more elaborate. In essence, my father mailed home his own, original comic section.

As a company officer, one of George Powers' jobs was to censor enlisted soldiers' mail to make sure no military information was revealed, such as location and unit numbers. The officer himself was usually self-censored, although higher-level staff could randomly check his letters.¹⁷ Subsequently, to get around any censorship concerns and because he was a man of few words to begin with, Captain Powers started illustrating his letters with cartoons of army life.

These illustrated letters saved him from detailing his activities but still conveyed to his family the general activities of his military experience. Any of the higher-ups concerned about his mail would be more amused than worried about the captain passing on useful information to the enemy.

After college and before the war, my father had tutored himself in cartooning art by a mail-order correspondence course, Modern Illustrating, published in 1935 by the Federal Schools, Incorporated, from Minneapolis. Ostensibly, the course was a way for him to



A June 4, 1944, letter depicts Powers' wishful thinking about his duties serving on a General Court Martial.

THE MUNDANE ASPECTS for life within the campgrounds allowed for a wealth of comic situations for Captain Powers' letters. As many officers are called upon to judge disciplinary charges, my father had to serve on a few trials while in the army.

His army court cartoon featured the kind of witness that actually never appeared before a military court. But such a witness might well have been one any soldier deserted for. Case dismissed.

develop drawing techniques for illustrating field surveying notes that would be of assistance in detailing engineering drawings. Combining my father's natural talent with Modern Illustrating drawing techniques gave his images an almost professional level of finish. His drawings are not comparable to the preeminent World War II cartoonist/correspondent Bill Mauldin but as an officer in the field, George Powers did quite well for himself.¹⁸

One of his early drawings from May 21, 1944, features the theme that would be highlighted in most of his letters to home: army life. Whenever possible, a pretty girl showed up in some manner in his drawings (not an uncommon theme for most young men). In this particular letter, he explains, "The reason for drawing these pictures is that it helps to fill space, thus requiring less writing."¹⁹ As in most of his saved wartime illustrations, the rest of the text has been removed and only the drawing has been preserved. (A few intact illustrated letters were recently discovered in his late cousin Virginia Black's house.) Also of note is his use of Camp Maxey stationery on this and other letters. He continued to use this letterhead even after he was sent overseas. The army logo never got in the way of a good drawing.

The following week, my father sent a less provocative illustration in "This week is bridge week." Here, he shows himself at a surveying transit, directing the construction of a portable Bailey Bridge. Developed by the British during World War II, the Bailey Bridge was a prefabricated truss bridge that required no special tools or heavy equipment to construct.²⁰ The "no

heavy equipment" rule did not necessarily apply to the contraption my father shows in his cartoon.

Camp Maxey was near the Red River, which separates Texas from Oklahoma. The Red was quite a challenge for the engineers to practice their bridge-building skills. In his August 20, 1944, letter, my father calls the river, "a treacherous one with numerous sand bars and undercurrents. Several men (not of our unit) have been drowned in its various deep holes. One of our men while crossing the river with his equipment floating beside him, wrapped in canvas, got excited and lost all his equipment including two rifles."²¹

The most common type of portable water crossing is a ponton bridge, and one with which every combat engineer unit had to be familiar.²² In a September 3 letter, my father comments that, "the boys slapped the 10 (ton) ponton bridge across Red River about 12 times this week, both day and night."²³ In the army, practice made perfect.

On a personal level, the combat engineer still needed plenty of practice with basic weaponry. Grenade practice was called for at all ranks. As my father explained, "every man must throw two (hand grenades) before he can go overseas and that meant me too." In one cartoon, he chose an appropriate target.²⁴

Another skill required by an engineer company was the placement and the removal of landmines. My father's company had to practice laying a minefield to be better aware of how they are removed. In his letter to home, he mentions that he was commanding an "H & S" (headquarters and service) company at

the time. Normally, this kind of administrative unit pushed paper and did not dig holes for landmines. However, members of such companies still had to be prepared to do so in a pinch. In his letter he mentions that his company had "quite a time of it."²⁵

The mundane aspects for life within the campgrounds allowed for a wealth of comic situations for Captain Powers' letters. As many officers are called upon to judge disciplinary charges, my father had to serve on a few trials while in the army. According to his memoirs, during World War II the army had three types of courts: the Summary Court handled discipline problems at the company level; the Special Court passed sentences of confinement for up to a year; and the General Court Martial, the highest court, had the power to pass sentences from over a year in confinement to the death penalty.²⁶

My father served on one General Court Martial involving two cases. The first case dealt with two sergeants charged with desertion and the second involved a soldier who swore at his commanding officer. Captain Powers was the trial judge advocate (similar to a prosecuting attorney in a civilian court) and as such was required to read the charges to the court, even all the swear words exchanged between the G.I. and his commander. George's fellow officers on the bench knew that he was a regular churchgoer who never swore. It was all they could do to keep from laughing at the captain's embarrassing situation.²⁷

His army court cartoon featured the kind of witness that actually never appeared before a military court. But such a witness might well have been one the two sergeants deserted for. Case dismissed.

Nothing in combat training at Camp Maxey could prepare a soldier for the unbridled violence of a "G.I. haircut." One undated drawing is illustrative of just how strict company commanders were in enforcing uniform and grooming regulations. As the 1267th was soon to be a part of General George Patton's Third

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10 Sept. 44

Powers learned to be proficient with all sorts of weaponry, but hoped in this September 1944 cartoon to use his skills with a grenade on one man in particular.



UNITED STATES ARMY
CAMP MAXEY, TEXAS

GRENAD PRACTICE WAS

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THE RED RIVER

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Army engineers practiced their trade over the Red River, near Camp Maxey, where Powers trained.

THE 1267TH COMBAT ENGINEERS

was stationed in Trier, Germany, a small industrial town situated along the Saar River, and was assigned the task of restoring the water system of the town. This was a job my father no doubt relished, as his pre-war engineering career was in municipal sewage and water systems.



In April 1945, Powers and his unit helped rebuild Europe in the wake of war, including fixing a water line and supervising construction in Trier, Germany. He also chronicled the work in cartooned letters home.



Army in France, a spit and polish appearance was a must for old "Blood and Guts."

After eight months of training at Camp Maxey, the 1267th Combat Engineers finally made it to the European theater of operations in December 1944. The men were stationed in England for the next three months before they were sent to the continent. This was approximately two months after the end of the Battle of the Bulge and one month before the end of the war in Europe. At this late stage in the conflict, instead of aiding the army's assault, these combat engineers were tasked with repairing the infrastructures of France and Germany.

George's trip across France was one of distinct contrasts. In France, as Captain Powers' convoy passed through towns and villages, people stood along the streets, waving and cheering the Americans on. When the unit crossed into Germany, it was instead met with silent stares from the German people. White bed sheets hung out of windows indicating surrender.²⁸

The 1267th Combat Engineers was stationed in Trier, Germany, a small industrial town situated along the Saar River, and was assigned the task of restoring the water system of the town. This was a job my father no doubt relished, as his pre-war engineering career was in municipal sewage and water systems. The photo of my father inspecting a repaired water line shows that, though the war in Trier was over, no one was taking any chances. He still had to go around outdoors armed with a rifle.²⁹

On a hill outside of Trier was a camp containing German prisoners and another camp with displaced personnel from the U.S.S.R. and Italy. A displaced persons camp was mainly comprised of refugees from Eastern Europe and former inmates of Nazi concentration camps. By September 1945, there were 1.8 million displaced persons piled up in Europe.³⁰

The refugee camp supplied my father's unit with a labor force to help dig water line

trenches. He first tried the Russian workers and, “they seemed happy to get out of camp. However, they were not much help to me. Their heart wasn’t in the work.” Next, he tried the Italians, “and they weren’t any better. I ended up using German civilians and they did a good job which is understandable since it was their water line.”³¹

It was in Germany that his drawing skills proved to be valuable in more than illustrating correspondence to his family. In a letter to his cousin Virginia Black, George mentions that, “I transact business with the Germans quite frequently and without an interpreter I have to draw pictures and talk with my hands.”³²

After their work was finished in Germany, my father’s unit was sent to southern France, where the battalion was moved to a staging area just outside Marseille. There, the men boarded ships to be sent halfway across the world to the Philippines.³³ Before they left France, there was still time to enjoy the Mediterranean scenery. In a drawing titled “Riviera,” the female models were obviously based on some popular pin-up photos of the time. The source material for the girl on the left is easy to place. It was based on the iconic 1943 Betty Grable publicity photo, probably the most popular pin-up photo for G.I.s.

The 1267th Combat Engineer Battalion sailed ahead of my father. He was tasked with supervising the loading of the battalion’s equipment and accompanying that equipment to the Philippines. He was the only army man on the ship. Subsequently, the members of the 1267th who arrived on the islands two months before Captain Powers did were involved in some military action with the Japanese. As my father noted, his battalion was “awarded a battle star. Since I was a member of that battalion, I received a battle star too, even though at the time I was lounging on a deck getting a sun tan.”³⁴

While on the ship headed to the Philippines, my father’s reputation for illustration circulated among the crew. “The sailors would give me snapshots of their wives or sweethearts and I would sketch portraits for



THIS PHOTO OF my father inspecting a repaired water line shows that, though the war in Trier was over, no one was taking any chances. He still had to go around outdoors armed with a rifle.

them. I even did one of the captain’s wife.”³⁵ A stop at the Panama Canal allowed George to restock his artist’s supplies. Evidently, the sailors kept him pretty busy on the ship.

My father only spent two months in the Philippines, but still had time to illustrate exotic scenery that made Western Pennsylvania seem very far away. For one drawing he wrote this description about the Philippine-style laundry service:

The natives take your laundry, dip it in the stream, soap it, and then beat the living daylights out of it with a wooden paddle. The girls in their teens like the one in red wear American style dresses and have permanent waves. The older women wear bags and comb their hair straight back. The grass and bamboo hut is a typical Philippine dwelling. It sets at least five feet off the ground on six-inch poles to get away from the dampness and ground varmints. The vegetation to the left are two banana trees. And there is a water buffalo downstream enjoying his leisure time.³⁶

With the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945, just about every U.S. serviceman had one thing on his mind—getting home. My father was no exception. As the 1267th was dispersed, Captain Powers was transferred to the 148th Infantry of the 37th Division, where he commanded Cannon Company F. The 37th Division had been in the Pacific Theater for over three years, preparing for the assault on the Philippines. For my father, the 37th was the way station to his return home. The men of the 37th impressed him and in an October 25, 1945, letter he wrote, “Practically every man has a battle scar of some sort and it makes me feel like a rookie having gone through the war without even hearing a hostile shot.”³⁷

In that same letter he added, that while on the Philippines he had “a continuous demand for portraits (at present I’m averaging one a day).”³⁸ As his time with the 37th Division was chiefly spent waiting for his orders home, Captain Powers spent many hours sketching



ABOVE
Philippine-style laundry service, from a letter dated November 8, 1945.

RIGHT
July 8, 1945, on leave in the south of France.



to pass the time. Illustrating his homesickness, one of his last drawings depicts his idea to make use of his command of a cannon company to get himself stateside in case the Navy ran out of boats.

As with many American servicemen who survived the war, World War II was a life-altering experience. For my father and his family, the most cherished souvenirs of that experience are the drawings of his unique adventure. What arouses my curiosity is how many of his commissioned portraits are out there in some other soldier's scrapbook. *

Tom Powers is the editor of the Lawrenceville Historical Society's newsletter and he is the principal author of the book, *Portrait of an American Community: O'Hara Township, PA* (Township of O'Hara, 2008). Tom holds an M.F.A. from Penn State University. This is his fourth article for *Western Pennsylvania History*.

¹ Obituary of Corporal Thomas N. Powers, *Pittsburgh Press*, November 30, 1942, 29.

² Robert Kenner, *War Letters* [videorecording], a Robert Kenner Films production for American Experience (Boston: WGBH). There are many books and videos on this subject, but this hour-long film is an excellent compilation.

³ Rick Beyer and Elizabeth Sayles, *Artists of Deception: The Ghost Army of World War II* (Plate of Peas Productions, 2011). This is the companion book to Rick Beyer's *The Ghost Army* film documentary broadcast on PBS in 2013.

⁴ Tom Powers, *Portrait of an American Community: O'Hara Township, PA* (Allegheny County, PA: Township of O'Hara, 2008), 35.

⁵ Frances C. Hardie, *Fox Chapel: A History of an Area and Its People* (Pittsburgh: Financial Press Corporation), 50.

⁶ *Portrait of an American Community*, 154.

⁷ John J. Grove, ed., *The 1934 Owl* (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh, 1934), 68.

⁸ W. Robert Moore, "Curacao and Aruba on Guard," *National Geographic Magazine* (February 1943), 169. My father's outpost was pictured on page 188 of this article. He was not present when the author/photographer arrived to do the article.

⁹ Brian Ellsworth, "Curaçao Wants PDVSA to Invest \$1.5 Billion in Isla Refinery,"

Reuters.com, October 24, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/24/us-curaçao-refinery-idUSBRE89N1GZ20121024>. Today, a Curaçao government consortium leases the aging Isla refinery to Petroleum of Venezuela (PDVSA), the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company. The economy has become less dependent on refining in the last decade and wants to expand its banking, shipping, and tourism sectors. But Isla remains a vital asset for PDVSA. It represents more than 10 percent of the company's global refining capacity, while a tank depot next to the facility can store up to 16 million barrels of crude and has become an important staging point for Venezuelan oil shipments to China.

¹⁰ Moore, 169.

¹¹ George B. Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection.

¹² George B. Powers, war diary, Powers Family Collection.

¹³ "The Corps Castle Can Be Found in Unusual Places," *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, <http://www.usace.army.mil/About/History/HistoricalVignettes/GeneralHistory/090CorpsCastle.aspx>, accessed June 2013.

¹⁴ George B. Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection.

¹⁵ *The Officer's Guide – 9th Edition* (Harrisburg: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1942), 33.

¹⁶ *The Officer's Guide – March 1951 Edition* (Harrisburg: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1951), 17.

¹⁷ Myron Fox, "Censorship," *War Letters: The American Experience*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/warletters-censorship/>.

¹⁸ Bill Mauldin, *Upfront* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1945). This is the definitive collection of Bill Mauldin's (1921-2003) wartime cartoons and experiences.

¹⁹ George B. Powers, letter to his mother, Elizabeth Black Powers, May 21, 1944, Powers Family Collection.

²⁰ John Hammerton, ed., "How the Army's Amazing Bailey Bridge is Built," *The War Illustrated* (London) 8, no. 198 (January 19, 1945): 564.

²¹ George B. Powers, letter to his mother, August 20, 1944, Powers Family Collection.

²² Joseph Needham, "Science and Civilization in China," in *Physics and Physical Technology, Part 2, Mechanical Engineering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 4:30. At least since the Chinese recorded the use of "floating bridges" across the Yellow River in the third century B.C., this river-fording technique has been an important part of many armies' arsenals.

²³ George B. Powers, letter to his mother, September 3, 1944, Powers Family Collection. During World War II, the U.S. Army preferred to use the French spelling of the word, "pontoon," which means "ramp" in that language. In his cartoon from September 3, 1944, Captain Powers used that spelling in his caption.

²⁴ George B. Powers, letter to his mother, September 10, 1944, Powers Family Collection.

²⁵ George B. Powers, letter to his mother, November 5, 1944, Powers Family Collection.

²⁶ Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 37.

³¹ Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection.

³² George B. Powers, letter to his cousin Virginia Black, May 28, 1945, Powers Family Collection.

³³ Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection.

³⁴ Powers, unpublished memoirs, Powers Family Collection. A battle star is a small medal, usually affixed to service ribbons that are placed above the left breast pocket of a U.S. soldier's dress uniform. It denotes meritorious participation in combat.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ George B. Powers, letter to his mother, November 8, 1945, Powers Family Collection.

³⁷ George B. Powers, letter to his cousin Virginia Black, October 25, 1945, Powers Family Collection.

³⁸ Ibid.



WITH THE SURRENDER

of Japan on September 2, 1945, just about every U.S. serviceman had one thing on his mind—getting home. My father was no exception.

By the end of the war, Powers considered just about any type of transportation, as long as it would get him home.