

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, May 12, 2008

**San Francisco:** In my several visits to San Francisco from 1941 to 1994, I always enjoyed it. Since the Phillies played there this past weekend (and lost two out of three), it seems a good time to relate some experiences. In July 1941, my parents, my cousin Meta Shallcross, and I were there about three days in our '37 Packard Twelve. We stayed at a boarding house at 2961 Pacific Avenue, owned and operated by Rosa Glenn Aston, a sister of Mary E. Glenn, who graduated with my mother from nursing school at Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore in 1918. The latter, who had many good nursing jobs around Baltimore, decided to move to California a few months after we were there, and she bought the house next to Rosa on Pacific Avenue. The two of them had an expanded operation for several years thereafter, and this location was to play a part in my military experience a few years later.

In September 1944, I hitchhiked aboard a B-17 from Roswell, New Mexico, where I was forecasting weather, for a two-day training mission that allowed Saturday night in San Francisco. This was my second flight ever, and as we flew over the Grand Canyon, we opened the bomb bay doors and looked straight down into the canyon. The Sir Francis Drake Hotel on Powell Street just above Union Square had a B.O.Q. [Bachelor Officer Quarters] on the top floor that consisted of about six or seven bedrooms, an equal number of baths, and a huge sitting room. I think they charged \$1 per night. As a travel agent many years later, I recommended the hotel to many clients, and they were never disappointed. Today, it is a deluxe but still small hotel and very pricey.

In June 1945, our 10-man Weather Reconnaissance crew was headed for Guam with a new B-24 weather plane. Five of us were left behind on the West Coast to cut down on weight for the longest over-water leg from Mather Field, Sacramento, to Hickam Field, Honolulu. The plan was for us to join up again at an Overseas Replacement Center somewhere in Hawaii. As one of the five left behind, I was transported over the road to Hamilton Field, across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. We lived day-to-day, not knowing when we would be ordered to go. Each afternoon we were given an eight-hour pass, always hitchhiked into San Francisco, and had to return by midnight. The first day I took the cable car and visited Mary Glenn and Rosa in the evening. We had a plan that when the day came that I didn't visit or call, they would phone my parents to let them know I had gone. It would likely be more than a week before they would hear otherwise. About the fourth day, we were on our way. In the middle of the night, they transported us in a personnel carrier from Hamilton Field to Fairfield-Suisun Air Base, where we boarded a C-87 (the transport version of a B-24) for the 13-hour flight to Hawaii. A day later, we caught up with our crew at Barking Sands Airfield, a terrible place, on the island of Kauai. From there, 2½ eight-hour days of flying with overnight stops at Johnson Island and Kwajalein, took us to Guam.

Returning from the Pacific in August of 1946, the Army Transport *President Buchanan* docked at Fort Mason just after sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge. It had been a 26-day trip from Saipan (the old ship broke down twice), and friends and I enjoyed two days in San Francisco awaiting our eastbound troop train from Oakland Army Base. We stayed on the base, but one day we splurged and had lunch at the beautiful old Palace Hotel on Market Street, where 85 cents bought us a deLuxe salad bowl with lots of ham, turkey, and cheese. Two of us had rented a car (a 1938 Dodge, I think), and when we went to turn it in on our last night, the rental place was closed. We had not paid for the car rental, so we left our names and addresses and asked the proprietor to send us a bill. My companion lived in Cleveland, so I told him I would pay and let him know his half share. Within 10 days or so, everything was straightened out.

My post-war visits to San Francisco have been highlights. I was there two or three days in February 1957 (related in the Weekly News a few weeks ago) and in 1982 with Lindsay Greenplate as we started the Pebble Beach-to-Jekyll Island "Trans-Con" tour in our 1912 Stanley. In 1993, Ruth and I, attending her "Stuttgart Reunion" in Marin County, visited San Francisco across the Golden Gate Bridge. Finally, in March 1994, returning from a tour of Hawaii, we stayed at the prestigious Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill. Maybe we'll get back some day when we retire.