

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, August 20, 2018

**The Dates I Remember:** All of us have times (if not the exact date) that we'll never forget. When I was younger, everyone remembered where they were when the U.S. Fleet was attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor; later it was where they were when they received news that President Kennedy had been assassinated. Here are some of my important ones, some of them very personal.

**February 20, 1940:** This day took about 5 years to arrive; I was 16 and could get my driver's license. I thought I could drive when I was eight years old. Others knew better. From the last days of 1939, I had been counting the days. I had studied up on the questions, such as when you could pass a standing trolley car, and I was confident that I could parallel park, shift gears, and all those things. The only inspection location of DMV in New Castle County in those days was on Concord Avenue in Wilmington, about two blocks from Market Street. February 20 was a rainy day. When school was out, my father picked me up and drove me to the DMV office. Quite unusual was the fact that he was in the BIG car, the '37 Packard Twelve still in the FAHP collection. This car was very seldom used, except on trips. I still don't know why he did this, but I had complete confidence that I could park it as well as a smaller car. My dad parked on the street, and we went into the office. He knew the man in charge, as they had had contact through the Packard dealership. I was asked a few questions, including, "Do you know how to drive?" He did a minimum of paperwork and returned with my license. I never had a driver's test, and I was somewhat disappointed. The big Packard was still parked along the street. It was still raining, and my father drove to the edge of the city on Pennsylvania Avenue and then let me take over. The next day, I drove to school in my mother's 1938 Packard Six.

**September 4, 1941:** This was the summer of our 12,000-mile trip all over the west in the big '37 Packard, and since we did not get home until late August, my father had scheduled his annual Yorklyn Trapshooting Tournament a month later than normal. The 500-target "Marathon" took place on Wednesday, September 3; the 200-target "Brandywine" and the Yorklyn Doubles Championship were on Thursday, September 4. Having broken 485 in the Marathon (up from 476 the year before), I was poised for the "Brandywine" but had never broken 100 straight. I started with 25 on the first event, and when the first 100 was completed, I had broken them all. I was one of seven shooters with the first 100 straight. To my surprise, another 25 was recorded on Event 5, and I squeaked through with 25 on Event Six, as two targets in the last five were split in half, instead of being "smoked" with the full load. Gathering composure, I had little trouble with another 25 in Event 7, and the last 25 was coming up. Concentration is the name of the game in these situations, and I broke the first 24 in good order. It was my turn to shoot at my 200th target, but I was afraid to! As I waited, someone in the squad said "it's your turn." I KNEW it was my turn, but I was petrified. Finally, I put the gun to my shoulder and called "pull." Fortunately, it was a straight-away target (instead of a sharp angle), and I smoked it. The other seven 100-straight shots from the first 100 had missed, including the best shot in the country at that time, Joe Hiestand, who finished with 199. I WON the Brandywine with 200 straight! Never again did I break more than 197 in a 200-target event.

**December 7, 1941:** During 1941, some, but not all, Americans believed we could stay out of World War II. Sunday, December 7 changed all that. I was on a weekend trip with the history department at Mercersburg Academy. Three cars, each one owned by a teacher, transported us with the car's owner and four boys in each car. David F. Chapman, head of the history department, was in charge of the trip, and his car was one of the three. On Saturday, December 6, we left Mercersburg in the morning and made several stops in Washington, including the Library of Congress, the Lincoln Memorial, and the new National Airport. In Richmond, we visited the Capitol and the church where Patrick Henry delivered his "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech. We arrived in Williamsburg by bedtime and were housed in a guest house owned by Colonial Williamsburg near the College of William and Mary. Sunday morning, we visited most of the places then open, including the Governor's Palace, the House of Burgesses, the Raleigh Tavern, the George Wythe house, and the Wren Building (1693) on the William & Mary Campus. The cars stopped for refueling on the edge of Williamsburg as we left in early afternoon. The radio was on in the filling station and news was starting to come

through about the early morning attack on our Pacific Fleet. As we moved through Washington at dusk, troops were guarding the government buildings. We had a prearranged dinner and drove past the Japanese Embassy as we left the city. It was bedtime when we arrived at Mercersburg, but the next morning, we learned much more. On December 8 with his report to a joint session of Congress, FDR delivered his “Day of Infamy” speech, and war was declared on Germany and Japan. Many of us had our lives changed forever.

**June 6, 1944:** At Brown University during the summer of 1943, those of us in the pre-meteorology program had a friendly guessing raffle on where Hitler’s “Fortress Europe” would be attacked. Some thought the assault would come from the Mediterranean, either from Italy where the Allies were already fighting, from the south of France, or through Greece and the Balkans. Others thought through Scandinavia. Still others through the Low Countries or at Calais, only 20 miles from England, which was becoming a major staging area. From that time until June 1944, it was a well-kept secret. I was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Force at M.I.T. on Monday, June 5, and had taken the night train, with all my gear, for Wilmington, where my father planned to meet me at 6:06 A.M. Right on time, everything was loaded in his car and we came to Auburn Heights, where my mother was cooking breakfast. She turned on the radio to get the morning news, and we learned of the early-morning landings on the coast of Normandy. A new phase of World War II was beginning. With the Soviets starting to push the Nazis westward from Stalingrad, and the Americans, British, and French gradually gaining ground in the west, it took 11 months and the loss of many lives, including that of my cousin Alan Mancill, before the War in Europe was over and V-E Day was proclaimed.

**September 3, 1945:** General MacArthur accepted the Japanese surrender on the deck of the Battleship Missouri, anchored in Tokyo Bay, on September 2, less than one month after the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The signing ceremony officially ended World War II. Extensive planning had taken place for this signing, and security was tight. With my B-24 Weather Reconnaissance crew, I was waiting on Iwo Jima, 4 hours south of Tokyo Bay, for orders to fly a weather mission over mainland Japan. As early as August 29, we were scheduled to go, but the mission was postponed to the next day. This happened for so many days we thought it was never going to happen, but finally on Sept. 2, the signing day, our orders seemed definite that we were to go on Sept. 3. Our normal flight pattern would have taken 4 hours to Japan, 4 hours collecting weather data over the main islands, and 4 hours returning to Iwo. The flight to Japan was routine, but as we approached Honshu (the main island) a layer of stratus clouds at about 1500 feet blocked out everything below. Projecting above this cloud cover, as on a post card, was the peak of snow-covered Mount Fuji- beautiful! Lt. Newton, our pilot, decided this day was more important for us to sight-see than to take hourly weather observations, so he defied regulations, and flew down through the overcast, which we cleared at about 1,000 feet. The city of Tokyo, or what was left of it, was below us. Incendiary bombs had completely burned out the downtown section of the city, but the streets were still there and some street cars were running. The Emperor’s Palace was on a higher piece of ground to the west overlooking the city, so we flew toward the front door before veering away. Suburban electric trains were running, and their station platforms were full of local riders awaiting the next train. When they saw an American plane overhead, most ran for cover; they could not believe the bombing was really over. We were curious, and wanted to see Hiroshima, several hundred miles to the west. It was cloudy for our trip across Japan, but we had a chance to observe many tiny farming communities, some of which supported at least 10,000 people. In each, there would be a tiny village surrounded by neatly tilled and manicured fields, with no mechanized equipment. Rice was the main crop, but other vegetables were grown as well. When we finally reached Hiroshima, there was so much cloud cover that we really didn’t see much. After making several passes we gave up and headed back to Iwo Jima, about 6 hours away, where we landed in the dark at 7:40 P.M. I didn’t have a camera, so I wrote down our experiences with a pencil as we saw them, and mailed this account back to my mother. I think this pencil-written account is still at Auburn Heights. Later in September, our crew moved to Okinawa, but I never flew over Japan again.

**November 22, 1963:** On November 14, 1963, President Kennedy’s helicopter landed in a field with half the plane in Delaware and half in Maryland. A young-looking 46-year-old president, wearing a white shirt, dark tie, business suit, and overcoat, stepped off and shook hands with Governor Tawes of Maryland and Governor

Carvel of Delaware. The location was about 3 miles southwest of Newark, and the occasion was the dedication of the newly completed Maryland and Delaware Turnpikes, which were opened the next day for vehicular traffic and soon became a part of I-95.. I stood with one foot in Delaware and one in Maryland about 50 feet from the President. I would guess about 200 people were in attendance, most having to walk from Delaware Route 896. The remarks were brief, which was good as the P.A. system failed to work. Kennedy's flight took him to New Castle Air Base where he transferred to Air Force One, and then spent two or three days in New York City. On November 19, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Ex-President Eisenhower was the featured speaker at the centennial ceremony in the National Cemetery. Joe Mitchell and the late Lindsay Greenplate accompanied me as we drove to Gettysburg to attend. It was a very nice service, but was poorly-attended. Kennedy sent word he could not come, as he was going to Texas. Three days later, the late Walter Anderson and I were returning from the construction site of our new Holiday Inn near Ogletown, and we stopped for lunch at Howard Johnson's (now Crossroads) at Midway. A radio in the restaurant's kitchen brought the news that Kennedy had been shot. He died shortly after we left the restaurant. Somehow we had thought that Presidential assassinations were a thing of the past, as the most recent was President McKinley's in 1901, but we were rudely awakened.