

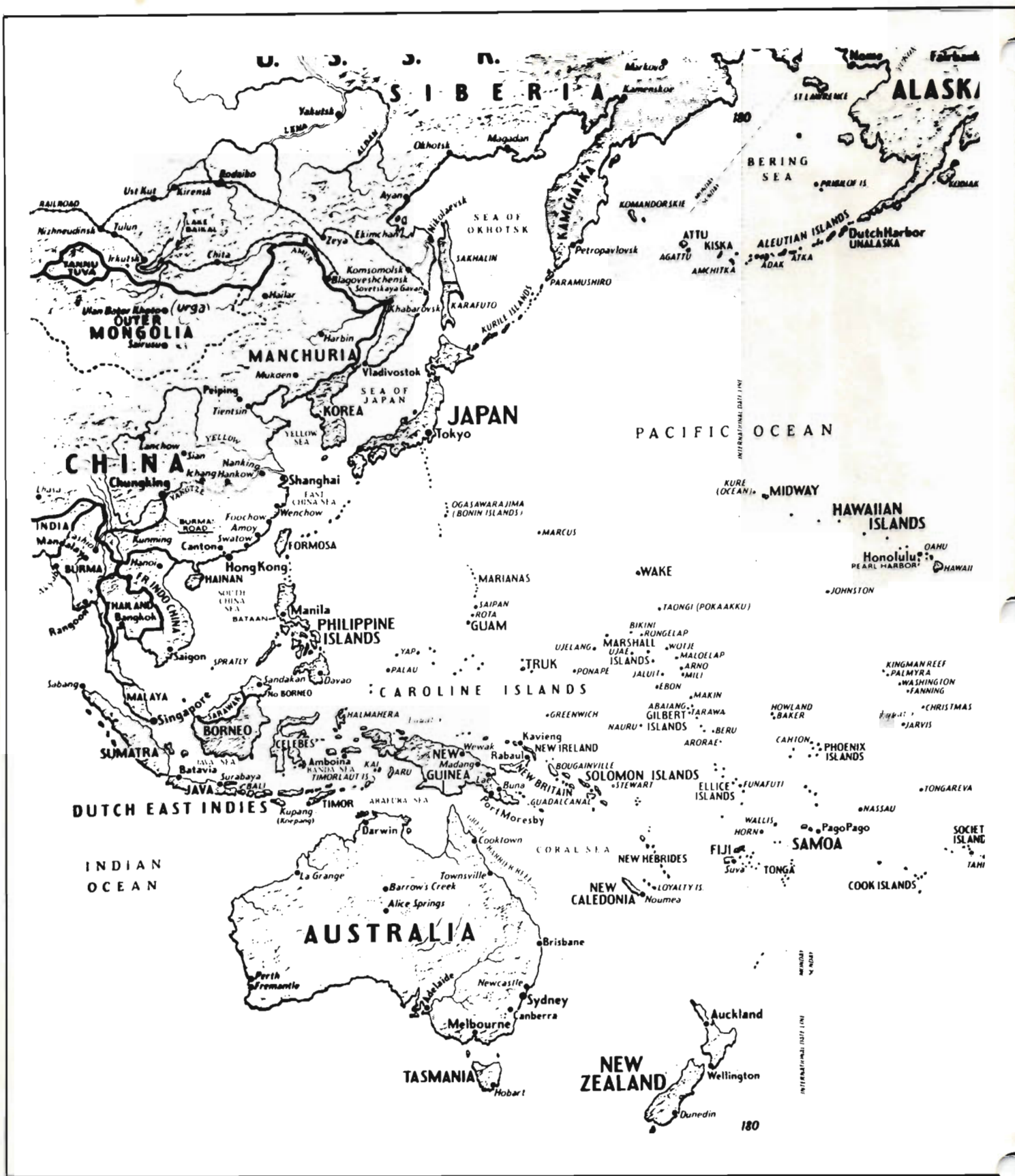
**AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF A  
DIVISION**

**A HISTORY  
OF THE  
24TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES ARMY**



## **DEDICATION . . .**

To the memory of the brave fighting men of the Division, who moved in to the kill and who gave their lives.



**A**

n autobiography -- An autobiography of a Division?

Yes, precisely.

But a Division is an inanimate thing, you contend.

A Division is men -- real men who live and breathe -- men who have passions and convictions -- men who have families -- men who have lived together in a strange, violent world -- a world made up of some of the most wretched land known to man -- a world in which these men fought and sometimes died.

But.....an autobiography?

Why yes, of course.

This is a book about these men, written by these men. It's about their world of battles and the periods therebetween. It's about how these men lived, how they thought, what they felt, what they saw, what they said. It is designed to fill the yawning gap in the war tapestry between the "Big Picture Boys", (Eisenhower, Bradley, Eichelberger, Kreuger and the others) and the "doggie" at the squad level (Hargrove, Mailer, Wouk, Jones, et al).

This book goes down to the roots, down to the man himself -- the true operating level of military organization. It explains the traditions of hard, dirty, military service, traditions so strong, so deeply rooted, that they have touched every man who ever served this gallant Division.

More, it touches fondly upon the less martial, "softer", side of military days for it would be grossly unfair and unjust to imply that life was "one continuous Hell". The mixture of good and bad, right and wrong, is blended here in a personal drama of men at war -- and at peace between the wars.

Edmund F. Henry (DIV. HQ.)

Attleboro, Massachusetts



**J**an Valtin (Richard Krebs), the adventurous author of "Out of the Night", that brutal, nightmarish, romanticized story of his youth in the communist movement, was drafted as a private in 1943.

In due time, as Corporal Richard Krebs, he found assignment in the Division. Also in due time, he wrote another book, "Children of Yesterday", a story of the operations of the 24th Division in the Philippines.

Of his second book, Krebs wrote: "No soldier in combat is able to follow the course of battle beyond the ken of his own squad, section, or platoon, particularly in tropical terrain where a man often can see no farther than the front sight of his rifle."

Were Krebs alive today, his reportorial hands would have been very much in this "pie".

Alas, he has gone the way of all flesh, but his spirit lives on with us and we have sought to catch the real meaning of his words in this effort, spurred on as we are by memories of Diamond Head and other points, - better and worse - west.

Joseph I. Peyton (19INF)  
Baltimore, Md.



**T**he characters of this book are all part of an uprooted generation driven to an excessive and fruitless quest for happiness on the margins of war. We have tried to catch the essence of the tragedy with honesty and compassion. We have attempted to create a narrative of the courage and grimness, the ordeal and loyalty, of first class fighting men, told through a continuity of pictures which in themselves tell a story, and of moving passages as written by the men themselves -- all members of a great fighting team, one of America's greatest fighting units.

Interspersed with the courage and grimness of war, we trust that we give evidence of our better selves -- evidence that as we "came", we more than "conquered," we "saw" -- for this is not only an account of war -- it is an account of the lands and people -- friend and foe -- who were involved in these busy times -- side by side, or face to face -- with us.

There may be parts that you will not understand, sections you do not like. But the Army is frequently incomprehensible, and there is nothing likeable about war. The writers have made little attempt to do anything but portray honestly and effectively the strange, uncertain world in which they lived. While their graphic realistic detail may outrage some, soothe others, may it at least be read. You could do worse. These men are not only the Army; they are a sizable hunk of America.

We have set out with one aim --- to tell it the way it was using neither guilt, nor whitewash, nor tar.

Result -- a story told in terms of the human beings who made it, rather than in the abstract technical language of military strategy. No, this is not an official history -- for which no apologies are offered. We, and perhaps you, associate the word "official" with such words as "dull" and worse, "slanted". Without an atom of lip service or hypocrisy of any kind, we've called them as we saw them -- the good with the bad.

Unmistakable is the stamp, "We were there; this is how war really was."

Victor Backer (34th INF)  
New York, New York



**T**hese garish, and sad, and funny, and tragic, and picturesque, and muddled, and tender, and sordid, and noble, times are recorded here.

What Bill Mauldin caught in his cartoons and Ernie Pyle depicted in his prose -- the eternal infantryman -- we have tried to capture in picture and the written word here. That "professional combat man with dirty face and clean weapons" is the hero of this report.

We have not succumbed to the literary dodge that has nudged other war stories into a field of popularity that soldiers hold in doubt. This one is without sadism; without any soul shattering conflict between the Reserves and the Ring Bearers. It's even without lust for as the words of that happy tune were subsequently to describe it, "What aint't we got? We ain't got dames!"

Maj. Chris J. Berlo (19th INF)  
Ft. Shafter, Oahu, T.H.

**W**e have tried to inject into this account more than the cold facts and statistics of war -- we have injected into it as well, some of the joys, the woes, and the lessons of travel in other lands.

And travel in other lands it certainly involves -- for here is a Division that has never been home.

The joys? -- In war? -- Assuredly. There were many. Here were leaping into our lives some of the faces and places we had dreamed about in books and pictures in earlier days. Here were the yellowed pages of the National Geographic come to life -- and at government expense, too.

The woes? -- Unfortunately, yes. You soon will see.

The lessons? Easy. Here we were, discovering under the nuances of architecture and food and clothes and customs, not so much the differences in life as the comforting similarities. A Sunday afternoon in the streets of Honolulu is much the same as in Sydney, Manila, or Yokohama, or Seoul. Monday morning can be nearly the same the world over as well. Crying babies, tired old women, laboring men, young couples in the fragrant dusk of spring. In a small way, who could be homesick? -- All the world is home.

Most of the minor harassments and embarrassments -- lost baggage, bumptious brass hats, leaky mosquito nets, linguistic blunders, and cockeyed strangers -- see in retrospect, as bright as the travel posters of more peaceful days, proclaiming the drolleries of "life in a barracks bag with the 24th Division."

Ah Kee Leong (3rd ENG)  
Honolulu, Oahu, T. H.



**T**

he 24th Infantry Division?

The first to fight back at the enemy on the Day of Infamy at Pearl Harbor. The last to let loose of him on V-J day on Mindanao. The first to meet him face to face again in that dreadful retreat down the harrowing Korean Perimeter. And at the signing of the Korean truce, in there swinging.

Call the roll of the decisive battles of the Pacific -- Hollandia, Biak, Leyte, Mindoro, Bataan, Subic Bay and Zig Zag Pass, The battle of Manila, The redemption of Corregidor, Mindanao -- add to them the pitifully weak, but valiant, defense at Osan, Taejon, and along the Pusan Perimeter, the return to Taejon, the march to the Yalu, "the Exodus" "the Withdrawal", and "the Stalemate". Units of the Division were there, answered "Present", and shed their blood.

When the history of the twentieth century comes to be written, the name of the 24th Division will be set in bold-face type.

William H. Muldoon (19th INF)  
West Newton, Massachusetts





# W

alter Cunningham (DIV.HQ.) of New York, New York speaking:

Actually, it didn't all begin in Hawaii -- still our story starts there. Several of the units that were brought together to compose the 24th Infantry Division had had long, glorious histories of many decades prior to that natal day in October, 1941, at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, T. H.

In a sense, the Division was grownup before it began; it was old -- old before its time. Here there was none of the helplessness of childhood, the misadventures of youth, the respectability of middle age. The Division appeared one day as a ripely aged man.

Yet the individuals in it were not themselves old.

Leon Howard, a banker from Pasadena, California was one who sensed that youthfulness. Howard was Division Finance Officer during much of the Division's combat years. A banker by profession, he was an artist by natural talent -- and wavered through the months away from his family in trying to make the grave decision as to "what I'll be when this little mess is all over -- a poor banker or an even poorer artist."

Howard captured the sense of that youthfulness when he inscribed at the bottom of this drawing, the simple words:

"Doughboy -- one of the many who in his early twenties was an old man."

It would have been a fatal oversight not to try to preserve through this struggle some of the cultural and artistic values of our fighting men, because upon those values depends, to a great extent, the material and spiritual life of tomorrow.

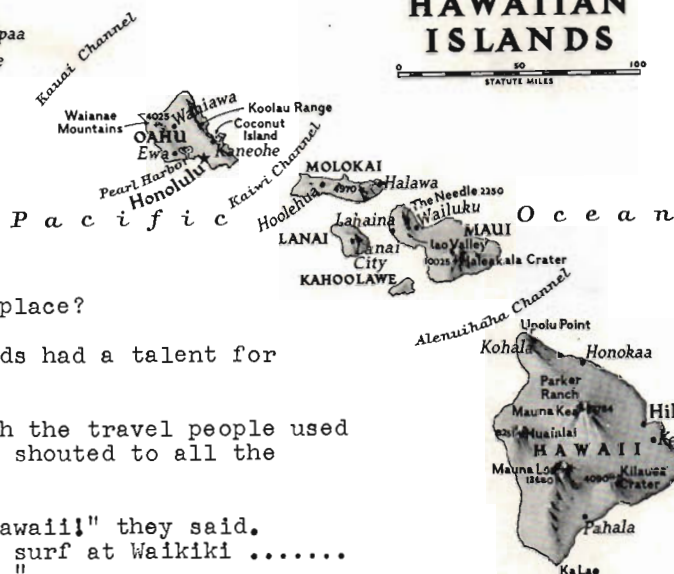
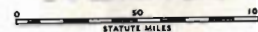
The creative artist played a decisive role in these chaotic times as he has in all transitional periods. Words are limited by barriers of nationalism; pictures speak the language of all men everywhere.

We are grateful for such as Leon Howard who did so much to reflect, in his work, some of the conditions that were born of the "Turbulent Times".





## HAWAIIAN ISLANDS



**A**nd what of Hawaii -- this birthplace?

The physical charm of the islands had a talent for subtle hypnosis.

It was that siren stuff to which the travel people used to expose prospective vacationers when they shouted to all the world the flawless glories of Hawaii.

Said the ocean trails to fair Hawaii!" they said.  
"Forget the world's cares in the sun-kissed surf at Waikiki .....  
Dance under the stars at the Royal Hawaiian."

Blandishments like these lured visitors to Hawaii.

Here were the graceful palm trees fringing the shores and waving in the balmy breezes, the azure surf breaking against the white sands, the verdant mountains rising out of an indigo sea, the suntanned beauties in the grass-skirts -- and all on the American plan.

Here was escape. Here was beachcombing only a phone call away from civilization, an American Garden of Eden. Here was Bali H'ai -- with busses.

Here was just about the nearest one could get to paradise on earth -- providing you were not in the service.

Here's where it all began.

James M. O'Donnell (21st INF)  
Chicago, Illinois



**I**slands have enchantment for many people -- and for most island enthusiasts, the most cherished islands in the most romantic sea are these eight dots known as the Hawaiian Islands. Mark Twain called them "the loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean." That reputation lingers and rightly so.

For ages, Hawaii was hidden, populated by brown people. It was "discovered late". At about the time America was breaking away from Britain, the Englishman, Captain, Cook, was setting foot on her primitive shores, inhabited by a Polynesian race whose origin is still a matter of dispute.

For years these people lived and fought under the rules of their kings until, in 1891, they decided it was "time for a change" and "went republic".

In some strange manner, never quite understood by soldiers, Hawaii was annexed to the United States and by 1900, it was organized as a territory.

Charles E. Allen, III (21st INF)  
Gallion, Alabama



# M

ay we dwell for a moment on the background of this archipelago? The islands lie languorously horizontal, spread out across 400 miles of the vast, pitiless Pacific;

Geographically, here was an exciting phenomena despite the fact that the Hawaii Visitors Bureau pushes another even more exciting phenomena.

Two or three million years ago, the floor of the Pacific experienced a titanic convulsion that split it open in a rift some two thousand miles long and spouted boiling lava up into the sea. The lava built up a huge mountain chain which pushed above the sea in the form of islands and islets along a one thousand mile course. The four hundred miles at the southeasterly end of the visible chain made up the Hawaiian Islands.....

Suppose we start covering these islands in some sort of order. Each is different from the others. Withdrawn from the metropolitan forces of travel sophistication, each is a polynesian and polyglot personality.

Eight islands - reading from left to right - or west to east - there's Niihau, Kauai, Oahu, Molakai, Lanai, Maui, Kahoolawe and Hawaii.

Here are the Hawaiian Islands -- of New Jersey size and New Hampshire population.

We can skip Niihau. It was a private island owned by a family by the name of Robinson who, we were told, came down to greet uninvited guests and suggest that they get the hell out. The travel folders used to say "The merely curious are not invited" -- what an understatement. Unfortunate this, because we heard that the Hawaiians there -- some 200 or so -- were the purest Hawaiians in the islands racially, culturally and otherwise. The aloofness may have been the key to their staying pure. It's an idea.

As to Kauai, it was an island that was easy to look at. Of all of them, it was first in beauty -- a round garden lying in green splendor on a cobalt sea.

William A. Savell (19th INF)  
Blountstown, Florida





f Oahu, more shortly.

Of Molokai, the existence of the leprosarium there kept us away so we never got to see the celebrated Kaunakakai in the much sung ballad of the Cockeyed Mayor.

Of Lanai, of little interest unless you were especially interested in pineapples -- which we weren't. Owned entirely by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company, it was just one large pineapple plantation.

Maui is rather pallidly labeled "the Valley Isle" with most of its population living in a broad level stretch of land located between two volcanoes. It was the island of variety, one finding a tropical climate at sea level and the frosty opposite on the mountain tops, 10,000 feet above.

Kahoolawe was "the crimson wreck". No one chased us away. There was no one there. It never amounted to much. More recently, it has amounted to even less since the Navy used it for target practice -- possibly accounting for the lack of population.

Hawaii was the "Big Island" with its two active volcanoes, Mauna Loa and Kilauea, in a state of perpetual fuming, violently erupting every few years. It was also the home of "Five Islands" Gin, a beverage which produced markedly similar results.

There you have it - lovely islands lying languorously horizontal almost sensuously - complete with soft pelagic clouds, weighted with moisture, scratching their bellies on the green hilltops -- and long ocean breakers lying as flat as sunbathers gently enclosing them on all sides.

Oahu, with its 604 square miles, was the capital island -- the center of everything -- the crossroads of the Pacific -- the gathering place, to translate its name literally -- the home of Schofield Barracks.

To get to Oahu in 1940 or '41, one usually went by boat -- "Pleasurable deck days and moonstruck evenings in tropical seas" as the Matson people advised, unless you travelled as did we, by courtesy of "UndeSugar" where the style was something short of first class.

But traveling for pleasure or for the Army, the overwater trip from the States was enough to remind all of Conrad's definition of a ship -- "a fragment detached from the earth."

It usually happened early in the morning -- one would go out on deck to see a great high mass of island, shrouded in misty moonglow. Soon the first rays of dawn would disperse the haze over the stern and Oahu would lie before you, a bright chartreuse cutout on a staging of royal blue. Presently you would see cloud masses encircling mighty peaks as deep-creasing shadows appeared where valleys dropped to the sea.

And in "rounding the bend", the first sight was Diamond Head.

Diamond Head, beyond Waikiki, was Hawaii's tourist trade mark. Fringed by wealthy homes, this aging cinder cone was pocked with strong points, vestiges of a military age when shellfire won wars.

Diamond Head - Honolulu's volcanic beacon - truly, one of the arresting skylines of travel.

Roscoe Claxon (724 ORD)  
Stamping Ground, Ky.





Round Diamond Head -- glide past the turquoise and jade and lapis lazuli waters of Waikiki -- with the moth blue rim of mountains in the background -- and in a matter of minutes, you were at the legendary capitol of the Pacific, Honolulu.

The arrival was always an event to witness -- no matter how many times you had seen it before.

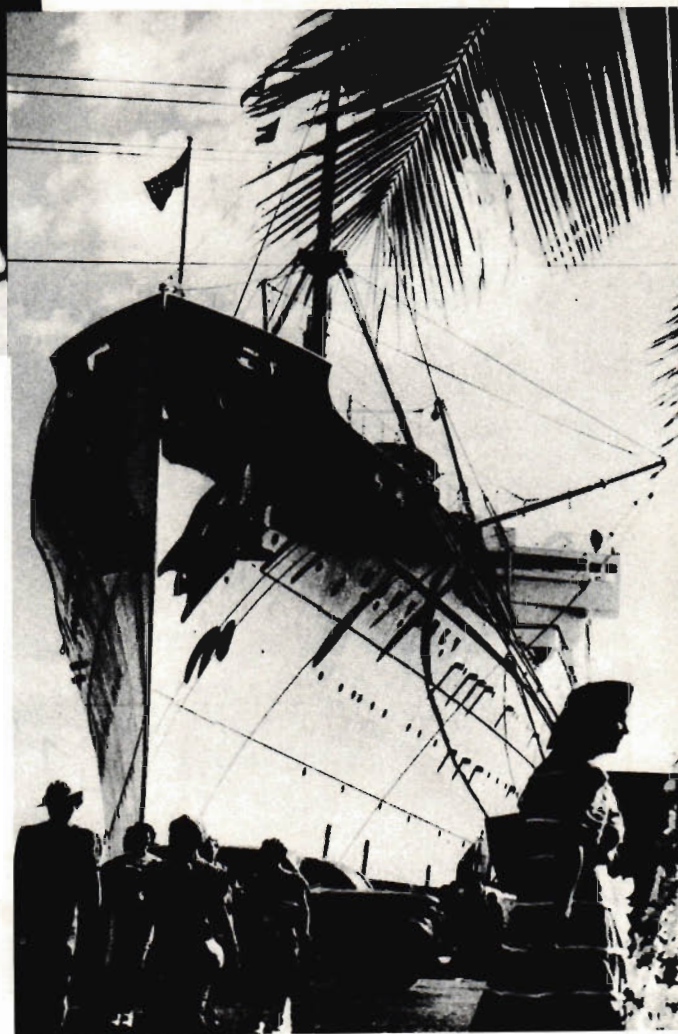
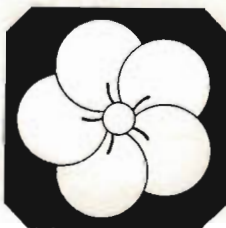
Milling crowds on the wharf, as the ship would inch inward -- the band playing, the people singing and dancing.

In the churning waters surrounding the ship, chocolate colored bodies of Hawaiian boys would bob about while beady eyes watched for coins to be tossed. A penny or a nickel -- it was still a time of low priced entertainment -- would strike the water and flip-flop down through the murky bubbles. Instantly the divers were on the trail and moments later would re-appear, the coins stowed in some dark cheek.

It was a good show in any tropical harbor -- and nowhere better than in the harbor of Honolulu.

The ship would tie up -- leis and kisses for all - more songs -- more dances -- more music -- and at long last, you were on "The Rock".

Robert E. Gerry (21st INF)  
Dorchester, Massachusetts







-- Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Portuguese, a remnant of vanishing Hawaiians, and mixtures of all of these and many more.

Here was a multi-racial democracy. The people had intermarried with a wonderful abandon which rapidly built a new and strong conglomerate. It was an ethnologist's dream.

Mathematics were needed to determine the number of racial hues and facial graduations here -- and the soldiers and sailors who had found love here over the years hadn't simplified the problem.

And so the white troops found most of their female companionship among the brown and ivory girls. And very decorative some of them were, in their bright tropical dresses, with the ever present hibiscus in their permanent-waved black hair.

What powerful stories there were to be heard, what fears and heartbreaks and romances and disillusionments and tragedies, from these men who came ashore for a few weeks to bridge the threatening chasm of death behind and before.

The casual visitor's interests would probably be centered on the island of Oahu -- pronounced "Wahoo" -- and generally referred to by men in uniform as the "God Damn Rock." He would see downtown Honolulu, Waikiki, Diamond Head and the heights of Nuuanu Pali, over which the conquering King Kamehameha drove to their deaths thousands of his enemies when he was unifying the islands under his rule back around the end of the 18th century.

He would spend hours sunning himself on the most famous hundred yards of sand in the world, in front of the Royal Hawaiian, "The Pink Palace," that mecca of tourists and nucleus of island life.

Surrounded by hibiscus hedges, coconut palms, banyan trees and purple bougainvillea, here was luxury on a holiday.

To approach sober truth in describing it called for the whiz ban writing of the advertising man.

Peter P. Crescenzo (724 ORD)  
Southbridge, Massachusetts



And there were hula-hula girls, too.

Charles A. Seibert (19th INF)  
New York, New York







And if the Royal Hawaiian was a little too rich for the blood -- and in the case of soldiers, it was -- there was the big plain sister, the Moana, next door, always to be remembered for its enormous banyan tree quite filling and dominating the courtyard.

No, this wasn't the way we saw Hawaii in the Pineapple Army -- let's face it. We started this story with a pledge of honesty -- we'll keep it that way.

No, the Hawaii that the soldier knew was the Hawaii best painted by a Hawaiian Division man himself.

Of the story of Army men in garrison life in the months before Pearl Harbor, we are convinced that no one has ever told, or ever will tell, the story quite so well as James Jones in his "From Here to Eternity" -- a slovenly, ferocious book.

Here with merciless clarity, was the story of we men of Schofield in '40 and '41 -- of our loneliness and the women we sought; of our unbroken comradeships and the savage feuds of men living close together; of our sardonic humor; of our wild nights on the town; of the poignancy of Taps played in the melting Hawaiian darkness.

Its elements were the elements of life itself; courage, brutality, love, and above all, the loneliness and separateness of the human being, the impossibility of ever touching, except momentarily the soul of another.

Here was the story of men at peace with the world and at war with themselves.

Author Jones gave us the essence of the life of a soldier, showed us the human features of a few characters within the subhuman anonymity of the military machine.

Jones' book was written with contempt for the faces that waste human life and out of compassion for men who found love and honor and courage in the lower depths, when they are less apparent but sometimes more enduring. Author Jones spoke across an ocean of unshared experiences but from a world of common values. He made his readers care about his soldiers, and caring about them, they were made to care about humanity.

Here was the story of our early days.

Garnett S. Dick. (11th FIELD)  
Louisville, Kentucky



**T**he United States Army first garrisoned troops in Hawaii in 1898 when an infantry regiment and an engineer battalion established Camp McKinley. The garrison grew, and in 1910, the different posts on the Islands were consolidated into the District Of Hawaii under the Military Department of California.

Here was the military life edging its way slowly and imperceptibly into these heavenly islands.

The Hawaiian Department was the next imposing title given to the collection of island military units. This was in 1913 and it meant only one thing -- on the organization charts, a chain of command from the Army Chief of Staff in Washington directly to the Hawaiian Department. Here was an "empire" unto itself. It represented the supreme authority of all army activities in the islands.

And that entity they called the Hawaiian Division. What was it?

Why, it was the "Pineapple Army" -- activated at Schofield Barracks on February 25, 1921 -- Schofield -- the largest army garrison in the U. S. Army.

That Pineapple Division was in due time to become the parent of bouncing twins -- the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions.

Schofield -- under the blows of the steady Hawaiian sun -- the quadrangles -- the screaming whiteness of the barracks -- and behind the barracks, rising slowly, the red and green striping that was the mathematical fields of pineapples with the always present bent figures toiling over them -- then the foothills, rolling higher, in that juicy green that has never starved for water -- and then, fulfilling the rising promise, the black peaks of the Waianae Range broken only by the deep V of Kolekole Pass.

William V. Davidson, (DIV. HQ.)  
Swedesboro, New Jersey

