

## Narrative of Edward O. Degner in World War II

The following documents all pertain to the approximate chronology of Infantryman Edward O. Degner, as he served in the second world war and shortly after his return. There are lists and maps, showing where he was throughout his service, and pictures taken while he was there. There are letters he wrote home to his mother and to his "Pop" and there are also letters that his parents wrote to him. All of the letters are included in a separate folder.

Most of the records you will see can be found and verified via Ancestry.com. Some also come from personal recollections or various sources on the internet. The pictures are of the highest resolution possible, for better printing.

### This is the ship that Edward Degner was on during WW2

Photo # NH 96878 USS Dunn County (LST-742)



### The History of the 160<sup>th</sup> Infantry in World War Two

As part of the United States mobilization during World War II, the 160th Infantry was federalized at Los Angeles, California, on 3 March 1941 and moved to Camp San Luis Obispo, California, within two weeks. The regiment trained there for over a year as part of the 40th Division before relocating to Fort Lewis, Washington, on 29 April 1942. From there, the regiment went to San Francisco, on 1 September 1942, and was shipped to **Hawaii** (see pictures) the following month.

Oahu 1943



The regiment trained in jungle warfare in Hawaii for over a year before being moved forward during January 1944 to the Solomon Islands. From April through December the regiment fought on New Britain Island during the New Britain campaign. The regiment redeployed through New Guinea and they invaded the Japanese-held Philippines on 9 January 1945. The regiment participated in various actions in the Philippines' Campaign (1944 to 1945) during the rest of the war. It returned to San Francisco on 5 April 1946 and was inactivated the next day, though Ed had been released earlier.

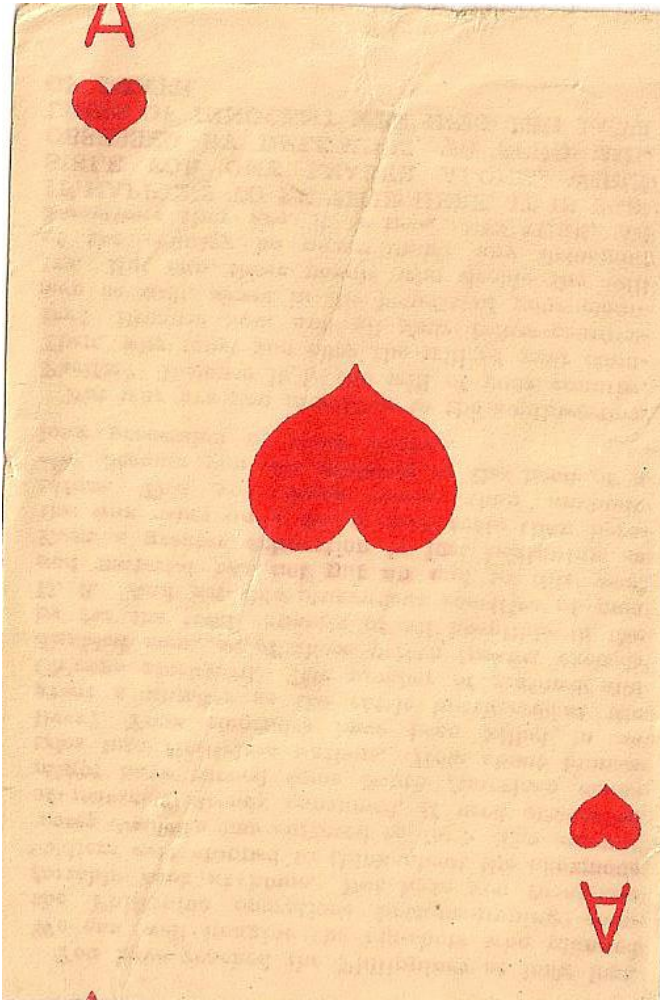
South Pacific Destinations in WW2 as written by PFC Edward Degner  
Oahu....Guadacanal....New Britain (New Guinea) ....Luzon....Negros and Leyte



Philippines, 1944, On jungle patrol

## Japanese Propaganda, 1945

These propaganda playing cards were the size of a normal card and were made by the Japanese for the U.S. servicemen serving in the Philippines



You have reached the Philippines at long last. We can well imagine the big-shots who planned the Philippine operations bottoms-upping comfortably back at home. But have you front-line soldiers ever stopped to think about the enormous losses America has suffered so far? The amount of material already consumed, if used otherwise, might have turned some South American countries into first-class nations. How about human lives? Your comrades have been killed in as great a number as the cattle butchered at the Chicago stockyard. The number of maimed and disabled men, or of those driven insane, exceeds by far the total capacity of all hospitals in the U. S. And yet this stupendous sacrifice of men and material has not put an end to this war. Even a greater exhaustion is just beginning as the war rages on a far greater scale than heretofore. This you know better than anybody else, because you are standing at the head of a long procession of final victims.

But why are you marching to the southwestern Pacific? Because it is the will of your country. Then, why must you obey the will of your country? Because you, and all your fellow-countrymen as well, share in the benefit of your country. But can those people who decide the will of the country be never under any delusion? Sometimes they are, it is true. BECAUSE, AS IT HAPPENS TO BE TRUE HERE, IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ONE LEADER ALONE, WHEN OBSESSED BY DELUSIONS, TO SEND MILLIONS OF INNOCENT MEN INTO THE JAWS OF DEATH.

## United States Propaganda, 1945

These leaflets were dropped by U.S. aircraft over the Japanese troops defending the Philippines against the Allied Assault

Each leaflet was slightly larger than a page from a paperback book.



Here is what is written on the back side of this leaflet

“Where has the Japanese Navy and Air Force gone to? The Supreme Commander of the South Pacific Allied Army, Douglas MacArthur, has commended the bravery of the Japanese soldier, but also sympathizes with their plight. The Air Force, which you have placed so much hope in, has all but disappeared from the sky. The Japanese Navy has retired to its home waters and the American forces will soon attack the Japanese Navy at its base. As a consequence, your supply line has been cut and you have no hope of retreat. You may want to fight the final battle, but you are doomed. Your comrades in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea died hoping for aid from your navy and air force. Must you die with the same hope in your mind?”

# Medals and Commendations

ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
 Headquarters, Personnel Ctr  
 Sixth Service Command  
 Fort Sheridan, Illinois

DEGNER EDWARD O      36 703 373      PFC      Records Processing Sec  
 46      AGF TD K-1150      W INF      Reception Sta #7      C 25 JUL 45  
 1ST IND P HNRV 22 JUL 45      1612th SCU

I certify \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Rank)      (NAME)      (SERIAL NO.)

is authorized to wear the following ribbons, decorations and citations:

<input type="checkbox"/> American Defense Service Ribbon, W/Star	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Medal _____ (OLC's)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Conduct Medal	<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Heart _____ (OLC's)
<input type="checkbox"/> European, African, Middle East Ribbon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Bronze Battle Stars
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asiatic-Pacific Theatre Ribbon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overseas Service Bars
<input type="checkbox"/> American Theatre Ribbon	<input type="checkbox"/> Service Stripes (Hash Marks)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combat Infantry Badge	<i>Expert Prof Badge</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Presidential or Unit Citation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished Flying Cross _____ (OLC's)	<i>Frank W. Vargo</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Philippine Liberation Ribbon <i>a star</i>	FRANK W. VARGO, Major, F.A., Asst. Adj.

FSFC # 1152



Overseas Service Bars



Good Conduct Medal and Pin

**Infantryman Edward O. Degner was released from the army on Sept 16, 1945 and returned home to the farm he shared in Mundelein, reuniting with his dad, Stanley, and two brothers, Stan and Len.**



Shortly after his return, Ed met Oscar Meyer at the packaging plant where he once worked



OSCAR



MAYER



Published Monthly for OUR MEN in the Armed Forces

A Merry Christmas to All

Vol.2 No.7

Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

December, 1945

THE HOME SIDE OF THE WAR



OR VICTORY ON THE PRODUCTION LINE!



OM features in this edition the part played by the people you worked with and is dedicated to the Chicago plant employees. It is a story of how a peaceful, domestic business changed overnight to full speed ahead on urgent calls for FOOD - FOOD - MORE FOOD for the marching, fighting hundreds of thousands. Along with miracles wrought on land, sea and in the air, can be added the miracle of food production. Gigantic canning machines operated by tireless crews working day and night turned out endless rows of canned pork, canned bacon, canned sausage, canned pork & gravy, canned beef & gravy until, thanks to the packing industry of America, her armies and the armies of her allies had the best fighting food of any armies in history.

In our own plant we modestly admit we played an important part. Returning service men tell us that the meats we supplied were the finest. They are profuse in their praise of the flavor and high quality of our products.

But now this machinery, like the war fleets, artillery and air squadrons, is strangely silent. Echoes ring through canning floors that a few short months ago rang to the grinding roar of war production. Visit one of our plant floors at about the time Hitler was bombasting over the air waves and the Jap was seemingly headed for Alaska. You stop before a tremendous iron monster that is checking out a double row of delicious Beef & Gravy at 120 cans per minute. The machine has hundreds of gadgets, and along two aprons of steel, raw red beef feeds toward the machine. A crew of 40 operate it and in 8 hour relay teams turn out 57,000 two pound cans in a day. The Chicago plant at times reached a peak of 800,000 pounds of canned meats per week. This production was exclusive of other related meat products turned out in great volume for camps and government agencies in this country, while we also continued to supply the civilian population.

OM feels, therefore, it can speak for you servicemen in carrying your thanks and appreciation to the loyal, faithful workers who made the Oscar Mayer "Victory on the Production Line" possible. Workers who had sons and brothers marching onward with you to THE GREAT VICTORY.



"I'LL BE HOME  
FOR CHRISTMAS!"

In thousands of homes the above will express more this Christmas than any words ever associated with the DAY. In thousands of lucky homes the expression "A Merry Christmas" will be almost hollow compared to "I'll be home for Christmas" coming from a telephone booth in distant New York or San Francisco. And in thousands and thousands of homes it will be the brightest Christmas of a lifetime. True, in foreign lands there will be a scarcity of warm clothing and food, but still it will be a Christmas with the cruel red shadow of war lifted from all hearts.

So, therefore, into those homes that comes the greeting "I'll be home for Christmas" it would be mockery to add more, but to the hundreds and hundreds of boys still "over there" please remember you are not forgotten and the folks at home are thinking of you this day. OM sends to all a most sincere and heartfelt  
MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND  
A HAPPY AND JOYFUL  
NEW YEAR



"Our Men"- Published By  
 OSCAR MAYER & CO.  
 Editor Asso. Editor  
 Jim Walsh Paul Johnson  
 Delivered Free All Over World.



Greetings SOLDIER, Greetings  
 MARINE, Greetings SAILOR,  
 Greetings AIRMAN - it is  
 mighty nice to have you  
 back. Up to press time  
 the following 48 servicemen  
 have rejoined our ranks:

- Martin R. Bergman
- Harold A. Becker
- Wm. Hinnen
- Arthur M. Linke
- F. W. Malone
- Wm. G. Olson
- Andrew J. Ragusa
- Paul E. Roche
- Edgar S. Schreiber
- Walter L. Topolski
- John Dyma
- Vick Verina
- Frank Ficht
- Peter Fleming
- Fred Giola
- Raymond Hentschel
- Andrew Hettig
- William Kerbs
- John Rambeck
- William Rasbid
- Wallace Redker
- David Ros
- Arthur Woolverton
- Mario Kelly
- John Musch
- Edward Degner
- Geo. Schuman
- John P. Morgan
- Rudolph Bloom
- Clarence Johnson
- Edward Malis
- Theodore Oboza
- Paul Gardner
- John Suttinen
- Sam Dambra
- Louis Rafa
- Bernard W. Helm
- Wardell Stevenson
- Robert Turner
- Robert Bold
- Leo Fulara
- Jack McCord
- Al Stutt
- Wm. Miller
- Frank Sirianni
- Byron Clausen
- Robert Nelson
- Sam Divarco



L. to R. - Oscar G. Mayer Jr., Colonel Samuel W. Smithers, Oscar G. Mayer, Frank Noak, Pfc. Edward Degner, W. A. Stolte. Pfc. Degner has just presented Mr. Noak and Mr. Mayer with the "A" Award pin, and in behalf of the U.S. Army is thanking them for the outstanding part played by employees of the Chicago plant.

\* \* \* \*

W I N A C H I E V E M E N T " A " A W A R D

P L A N T D O E S O U T S T A N D I N G J O B



The employees of the Chicago plant had conferred upon them by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture the highest of war honors - the ACHIEVEMENT "A" AWARD. The award was made at a plant banquet in the Webster Hotel Nov. 6, 1945. Representing the government were Col. Samuel W. Smithers, Director of Procurement, Chicago Quartermaster Depot; Mr. W. A. Stolte, Asst. Ill. State Director, Production & Marketing Adm., U. S. Dept. of Agriculture; Mr. W. J. Carmichael, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture; Mr. D. J. Murphy, Meat Inspection Div.; Capt. E. S. White, U. S. Army Veterinary Corps. In a colorful ceremony presided over by Oscar G. Mayer Jr. the flag, a great green field with a big "A" in the center, was duly awarded to Mr. Oscar G. Mayer by Col. Smithers. The great Green "A" flag now flies along side the stars and stripes from the highest pinnacle of the Chicago plant. Below is a letter by our President, Mr. Oscar G. Mayer, notifying the plant of the honor conferred upon them by the U. S. government -

"Dear Friends:  
 The Achievement "A" Award recently conferred upon the employees of Oscar Mayer & Co. by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture signifies the importance of the part all of us have played in helping "Food Fight For Freedom". The conferment of this Award entitles all of us throughout the Chicago and Madison Plants to wear the "A" Award Pin for one year. It also gives each plant  
 (cont. on back page)

Years later, he reflected on this picture which was found on the body of a Japanese soldier



One or two of these Japanese  
who are shown in pic. were  
met in rather close quarters  
(almost face to face) during W. W  
2. (Philippine operation). Have  
always felt bad, realizing that  
these were some little kiddies  
Dad, that had gone to a  
war, to fight for their  
Country & beliefs, as I did  
mine.

E. D.

In 1946 he married the former Ruth Beck and their happy union produced “baby boomers” Jeffrey, Kenneth, Janice, Mark, Karen, Mary and John.