



THE GUIDEPOST

Publication of the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild

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March 2008



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What Do We Remember of World War II?

By Renate Coombs

The Guidepost wants to express its sincere gratitude to Mary Johnson whose brainchild this project is and would like to thank her for forbearance with our editing.

During the Guild's November 2007 visit to Rosie the Riveter and Port Chicago, two National Historic Park sites honoring the World War II Home Front, some of us reflected upon our war memories. Such reflections are specifically encouraged by the Park Rangers at Rosie the Riveter who are charged with the arduous task of preserving as much of the oral history as they possibly can.

The actual interviews of Bay Area residents about their wartime experiences during WWII are conducted by the Regional Oral History Office (ROHO). This research program of the University of California, Berkeley, working within The Bancroft Library, is trying to reach as many of the surviving witnesses as possible. Simple math shows that time is running out – to have been 20 years of age in 1942 would mean you are 86 now, alive and well enough to tap into your memories from 60 years ago. Thus far, the stories of some 70 plus participating narrators have been recorded and are available on-line.

Needless to say, nobody in our group fits into this age category; but some of us are old enough to have lived through WWII and hold distinct recollections, even though we were children at the time. When, after the tour, Mary received a couple of e-mails sharing the writers' wartime experiences, she had the idea of inviting all of us to do the same. The result is a small but diverse array of letters, told from the perspective of growing up in very different settings.

Only one letter tells the story of somebody who actually spent his childhood in the Bay Area during WWII. **Romano Marchetti** recalls his parents' concern about the effect the war in Europe might have on their lives in the U.S. as Italian immigrants. After all, Italy was one of the enemies, at least as long as Mussolini was in power. Even though Italy switched alliance to the Allied Forces after Mussolini was deposed in 1943, the U.S. did not release Italian soldiers taken prisoner before then until the end of the war.

Of the Italian POWs detained in the U.S., several hundred were sent to Angel Island. Romano remembers going with his family from Antioch to Fisherman's Wharf (then a three-hour drive) and taking the ferry to Angel Island to visit a number of these prisoners. These men were very grateful for visits from Americans, especially from those who could speak Italian like Romano's parents. In general, the prisoners were treated very well, wore plain American uniforms, had regular meals and earned a few cents performing simple jobs around camp.

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The GUIDEPOST (ISSN 1097-2285) is published quarterly by the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild, a non-profit association established in 1984 to safeguard employment opportunities, promote the integrity of the profession through certification testing and continuing education, and foster a standard of quality, ethics, and professionalism among guides and operators in the San Francisco Bay Area. SFTGG is a member of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau and NFTGA.

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**Deadline for Next Issue:
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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Board members and other volunteers have begun working on a number of projects that we hope will benefit the organization this year and beyond. Madelon van Lier and John Kalivas are putting together a terrific slate of training tours for this year.

Something that we hope will add a lot of value is strategic planning. Many questions and ideas have surfaced in recent years as members think about what they want the organization to be, with topics such as continuing education requirements and membership categories. We hope to use vehicles such as focus groups and surveys so that every member can express their opinion and help chart our future. We want to make sure to include constituencies whose opinions may have been less well represented in the past, e.g. driver-guides and over-the-road guides. Eventually, the process may result in proposed changes to the by-laws, and these will be given to all members to review and discuss well in advance of a vote. When we call on you to complete a survey or join a focus group, please take the time! We need everyone's involvement, and these are forums that will not require much of a commitment.

Some of you have already been asked to volunteer on the committee that is preparing a new draft of the 2008 Rate Sheet in preparation for the DMC meeting. Once a draft is ready, we will make sure that all members have plenty of opportunity to review it and express their opinions. If you would like to work on this committee, please contact Marilee Traynor at mdltraynor@sbcglobal.net or 415-776-0490.

Regarding 2008 membership renewals, congratulations to the Certified guides, who have achieved a 90% renewal rate as of mid-February! Associate renewals are lagging, at only 60%. We always expect there to be more turnover in the Associate category, since many people join the organization as part of "testing the waters" when they're new to tour guiding, but we definitely want much more than 60% renewals! So, Associates, please send in those checks. As an added incentive, remember that the renewal rate increases from \$55 to \$60 after February 29! Please contact Michele McCurry at mush72576@aol.com or 925-228-7261 if you have any questions.

If you think you might be ready to take the certification exam within the next two years, please contact the certification committee. This way we can keep track of your progress and offer assistance.

Finally, Public Relations Chair Joe Ries and Jason Cohen attended the 2008 Northern California Visitor Industry Outlook Conference sponsored by the SF Convention and Visitors Bureau. We will report back to the membership with insights from the conference.

The next Board meetings are Tuesday, March 4 and Tuesday, April 1,
from 6-8 pm at St. Mary's Cathedral.
As is true every month, all members are welcome to attend.

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However, a real treat for them was leaving the camp for a few hours as guests of American citizens who vouched for their return. Romano remembers a few occasions when his parents sponsored some of the men and took them for visits around San Francisco and to local restaurants. His parents stayed in touch with several of them for many years after they had returned to Italy.

Foreign enemy ancestry – German, Italian or Japanese – carried ominous implications after FDR signed Executive Order 9066, particularly for anybody residing near the West Coast. While the Marchettis may not have been specifically aware of the possibility of becoming “excluded” from their Antioch home once a sixty-mile-wide coastal strip had been designated a “military area,” elsewhere 3,200 resident aliens of Italian background were arrested and more than 300 of them were interned. Similarly, 11,000 German residents were arrested and more than 5,000 were interned.

However, nobody suffered the effects of war hysteria more than Japanese Americans, citizens and resident aliens alike. Some 120,000 ethnic Japanese people were held in internment camps for most of the war. Although not born until long after WWII, **Jane Utsumi** is keenly aware of the hardship each of her parents endured as a result of the infamous exclusion order. Her father, then still a bachelor, owned a confectionary business in Stockton when all persons of Japanese ancestry were ordered to evacuate the West Coast by April 1, 1942. He had one month to sell his business before being interned with his parents and three sisters in the Rohwer Relocation Center in eastern Arkansas’ Mississippi River Delta country. They could take only what they could carry. Jane’s mother, together with her parents and siblings, were first sent to Santa Anita Racetrack Assembly Center and then to the Topaz internment camp where they spent three years in the extreme climate of central Utah. In 1950, both parents returned to California where they met and married five years later.

Even in the middle of Nebraska, ancestry in an enemy nation was a serious concern. **Fredricka Fleming** grew up in Lincoln, raised by her mother and her mother’s unmarried sister. Although both women held advanced degrees and taught German at the university, they did not teach Freddie for fear it would draw unwanted attention. As there was a large Army Air Force base in town, both women were pressed into service teaching German to ROTC officers and other military personnel. Often there were study groups at the house; their political conversations became quite familiar to the child.

Open political discussions were certainly not advisable during much of **Eleonore Gerstenkorn’s** childhood. Born in that part of Germany that later reverted to Poland, she lost her mother to diphtheria at a very young age while her father was fighting in Russia. After recovering from his war injuries, he set out to find his family. The children were by then living with relatives in war-torn Berlin. After her father remarried, Eleonore came to live with him, while a childless aunt adopted her younger brother. It wasn’t until he reached the age of 14 when he accidentally learned that he had been adopted and that Eleonore was his sister.

Eleonore’s father had been very active in the unsuccessful June 17, 1953 uprising against the East German communist regime, forcing the family to flee to the West and seek political asylum at the American compound. After spending time in refugee camps and in the home of a relative, the family finally managed to immigrate to the U.S. in September 1956. President Eisenhower had just signed a special order allowing 45,000 political refugees to enter the States.

Also living in Europe during WWII, **Terry Hope** (born Turid Elster-Jordan) reports a less traumatic childhood spent in the company of an older sister in Oslo. Even after the Germans invaded Norway on April 9, 1940, the family stayed together because, due to his age, her father was not drafted. In anticipation of the attack, he had sent his wife and two little girls to the mountains. Living for three months at a friend’s ski cabin, they never even saw the damage to their house caused by the Germans during their only bombing of Oslo.

Terry mainly remembers the German occupation that lasted five long years for the things that weren’t available, but many of these deprivations were taken in stride by a ten-year old. More annoying to her was the constant move from school to school, as the German soldiers took over one building after the other. On the other hand, hot soup was served in school three days a week, a generous gift from a country that had remained neutral, neighboring Sweden. Not so pleasant were the constant air raids in the middle of the night. Having to get out of a warm bed and go into a cold basement wasn’t made any easier by wrapping yourself into your blanket.

Fortunately, the British and American bombers were very careful to avoid residential areas, aiming only at military targets like the harbor, the railroads and ammunition depots.

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Just when it appeared that none of us had known a real-life "Rosie," **Jay Archibald** shared his mother's story with us. Born and raised in northern Minnesota, Gertrude grew up with the meager amenities of 19th century country life. Her father was an immigrant from Norway who, after his wife's death, had to rely on his oldest daughter to bring up the other five children. At age 30, Gertrude finally escaped to a job at Yellowstone Lodge where she met her future husband. Dreams of mining gold soon gave way to the need for supporting a growing family. The couple went to Detroit where jobs were rumored to exist. Just then WWII broke out. Jay's father was eager to enlist, but was rejected due to his age. Finally in 1944, the Navy was willing to take him and sent him off to the South Pacific.



Once more, a young family became dependent on Gertrude. Putting her two kids into a nursery, she took a job as a riveter in an aircraft assembly plant for B-24s. All her coworkers were like her, women totally inexperienced in factory life. The job was very hard, placing fifty or so rivets into a wing before moving on to the next one. The work was very noisy and bone wracking and had to be performed standing up. Gertrude never complained, but years later confided that standing in one spot all day made her legs ache for the rest of her life and gave her varicose veins. Until her death at age 93, she remained proud of her service although she rarely mentioned it.

Another story that has remained almost untold in our correspondence is the role of African Americans at the home front. Only **Fredricka Fleming** mentions becoming aware of the full racial implications of the Port Chicago disaster and its aftermath through her marriage to a Black American man in 1956.

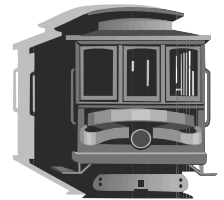
Recently, I heard Betty Reid Soskin, now at age 86 in her second year as a Park Ranger at Rosie the Riveter, talk about her work. Herself a woman of color, she explained how the true nature of the subtle segregation during peacetime was suddenly exposed by the hard-core segregation in the military. When on leave, African American servicemen preferred to visit the private homes of other African Americans rather than go to the segregated USO centers. Wearing a uniform also did not open any doors in civilian life.

A favorite thesis is that the home front effort laid the foundation for the emancipation of women in this country, particularly where the workplace and ideas about sexuality are concerned. That these changes did

not occur overnight is nicely demonstrated by the only anonymous submission we received: "My Mom wanted to join the Corps of women ferrying aircraft within the United States – positioning flights. Dad said one pilot in the family was sufficient. She persisted. He handled the situation by getting her pregnant and thus grounded her war effort."

Cable Cars, San Francisco's Own National Historic Landmark

By Ulla Kaprielian



The next time you pay \$5 to ride a cable car, you might ask yourself: just how much does it cost to build a new cable car?

The answer is approximately \$1 million. It takes two years or more of construction. Each car has to be built from the ground up. The men at Muni's Woods Division carpentry shop, located at 1040 Minnesota, have built eleven new cable cars since 1986. There is no place for computers in this shop; it is all handwork, adhering to the designs of more than one hundred years ago.

Andrew Hallidie tested the first cable car at 4 o'clock in the morning on August 2, 1873 on Clay Street. The Clay Street Hill Railroad was in business and the sole cable car line for the next four years. By 1889 though, there were seven different railroad companies and 53 miles of track stretching from the Ferry Building to the Presidio, to Golden Gate Park and to the Castro and the Mission.

By the time of the 1906 earthquake and fire, electric streetcars had become more economical, requiring half the investment to build and maintain. They were also faster and could reach more areas. However, cable cars could still better master the really steep hills, so some lines were rebuilt.

In 1947 Mayor Lapham declared that buses were considerably less costly to the city and thus "the city should get rid of all cable car lines as soon as possible."

An outraged Friedel Klussmann founded the Citizens' Committee to Save the Cable Cars.



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The committee members began a public campaign to prove that to San Francisco the value of cable cars is greater than the operational cost. They succeeded in placing Measure 10, an initiative to amend the City Charter, on the November ballot. With the help of the media, more and more people rallied for the cable cars. Business owners came to the realization that tourists don't come to San Francisco to ride a bus. The measure passed in a landslide victory.

On January 29, 1964, the cable cars were designated a National Historic Landmark. The official ceremony took place on October 1, 1964 at Hyde & Beach Streets, presided over by Chief Justice, and former California Governor, Earl Warren.

By the 1970s it became apparent that maintenance efforts could only go so far. The engineering evaluation showed that the entire system needed to be rehabilitated. In September 1982 service was suspended for two years and work began. Sixty-nine city blocks were involved, old tracks and cable channels were replaced, new turntables were built. The Washington-Mason car barn



and powerhouse were almost completely rebuilt and equipped with new motors, gearboxes, and alarm systems. The Muni craftspeople repaired 11 California Street cars and 26 Powell Street cars.

The cars were repainted, reinforced, trucks and axles were rebuilt, and the braking systems were modified. The job was completed in June 1984, in time for the Democratic Party's national convention. Four days of festivities celebrated the return of the cable cars!

The average lifespan of a cable car is 100 years, but many of them are even older than that. Of course, they only get to be that old with tender loving care. This means they need to be thoroughly overhauled about every 40 years, sometimes more often than that. It appears that San Francisco hills, fog and rain as well as the riders are pretty hard on these old timers. In other words, when the men in the carpentry shop are not building new cars, they restore and repair existing ones.

A surprising number of cable cars were originally built by Carter Bros. of Newark, CA in the 1890s for the Market Street Railway cable car line and transferred to the Powell Street line after 1906. Muni did extensive rebuilding, often using original roofs and seats. One of these cable cars, No.12,



was exhibited in Japan in 1987. The new No. 13 cable car was built by Muni's Woods Division carpentry shop in 1992. It is painted green with red trim, similar to the colors of the United Railroads, former operator of the Powell Street cable cars.

No. 20, built in the 1890s, rebuilt 1968, was ridden by Humphrey Bogart in the 1947 movie *Dark Passage*. No. 1, completed in 1973, became known as the "Centennial Car", celebrating 100 years of San Francisco cable cars. A plaque honored Friedel Klussmann. The car was later rebuilt and put back into service in 1997.



At present San Francisco has a fleet of 40 cable cars, 28 for the Powell Street lines and 12 for the California Street line. The larger, maroon-colored, California Street cable cars



have open seating on both ends with the closed section in the middle. They can be operated from either end and turned around by a simple switch. The two Powell Street lines use smaller cars, operable from only one end, thus requiring a turntable on both ends of the line. The cables move at a constant 9.5 miles per hour. If a cable car goes faster than that, you can be sure that it is going downhill. I was happy to find out that each car has three kinds of brakes, a wheel brake, foot-pedal activated by the gripman, track brakes, operated by gripman and conductor, as well as an emergency brake.



Thank you **Eleonore Gerstenkorn** for steering our attention to the Muni carpentry shop, for letting us know that there is a place where craftsmen, artists really, build our beloved cable cars.

Eleonore wrote that these men have devised a secret time capsule.

Before they send a car, new or rebuilt, into service they put a current newspaper and the names of the men who worked on the cable car behind the front panel. It will be a connection to the next generation of craftsmen who will restore or rebuild the car 40 years from now.

There is more information about the Municipal Railway carpentry shop in the Chronicle article of December 3, 2007 by Rachel Gordon. (sfgate.com)

More details at www.cablecarmuseum.org.

Just the Facts!

By Jason Cohen

In this column we publish questions on subjects that have potential for confusion or misinformation. Here are the questions from the last Guidepost, and the answers we have found (with sources cited). Please send questions for future columns to Jason at jcohen1@pacbell.net (don't forget the "1" in the address).

1. Is it true that prisoners on Alcatraz were not allowed to take cold showers so they could not get used to the temperature of the Bay?



Some park rangers have said this story is true and others that it's not, so we went to one of the best sources for Alcatraz information, former guard Frank Heaney. Many Guild members know Frank from his years on the island signing his book *Inside the Walls of Alcatraz* and leading DMC programs. He still goes to the island once each month, though age and health have slowed him down. He was a guard at Alcatraz from 1948-1951.

Frank told me that in his time working there he never heard any authorities say the hot showers were to help prevent escapes. He believes that the showers were hot simply because there was no logical reason to have them be otherwise. Frank feels that the prison wouldn't have given cold showers since it would be inhumane (there was no heat in the shower room) and there would also be no reason to treat the prisoners badly when so many were already "on the edge." Also, since water was always in short supply, prisoners were restricted to only 5-10 minutes of shower twice each week, and it's unlikely that such a short exposure to cold water would help someone prepare for a bay swim. Thus, it appears that this legend is false.

2. Was Marinship in Sausalito really a major producer of Liberty ships, or was that Richmond?

A National Park Service website called "World War II in the San Francisco Bay Area" (see link below) makes the interesting point that Sausalito's Marinship "was built specifically to supply fuel-oil tankers for the Merchant Marine. Because the tankers were still being designed when the yard was ready to begin production, a dozen Liberty ships became the first products of the new yard. When the yard shifted to tanker production, some of the tankers, with modified specifications, were built for the navy. Near the end of the war, Marinship built invasion barges for the army."

According to the website of the Bay Model Visitors Center (which houses an exhibit about Marinship), "Less than three months after the initial ground breaking, the keel was laid for the first Liberty ship, the WILLIAM A.

RICHARDSON, while the rest of the shipyard was being built. During the next three and one-half years, 75,000 Americans poured into southern Marin County from all over the United States. They built 93 ships -- 15 Liberty cargo ships and 78 tankers and oilers -- in record time. Marinship workers produced a completed vessel an average of every 13 days. One tanker, the S.S. HUNTINGTON HILLS, was built in just 33 days -- nearly twice as fast as any comparable tanker of the day."

So Marinship made a big contribution to the war effort, but if Liberty ships are your topic of interest you should look to the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, which produced 747 ships including 519 Liberty ships during the war! Another website states that "Over 30 shipyards, large and small, ... joined together to create the world's largest combined shipbuilding complex. ... Bay Area shipbuilding consisted of components sprawled across hundreds of square miles, from Napa in the north, Sacramento and Stockton in the east, to San Jose in the south. ... San Francisco Bay Area shipbuilders produced almost 45 percent of all the cargo shipping tonnage and 20 percent of warship tonnage built in the entire country during World War II. The war lasted 1,365 days. In that span of time Bay Area shipyards built 1,400 vessels--a ship a day, on average."

Besides Marinship and Kaiser, other important locations included Mare Island Naval Shipyard,



Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation (Potrero Point in San Francisco), Moore Dry Dock Company (Oakland), and the Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco.

See:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nR/travel/wwIIbayarea/text.htm#shipbuilding>

http://www.spn.usace.army.mil/bmvc/bmjourney/visit_model/exhibits/marinship.html

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/index.html>

http://www.sftgg.org/programs_archive_2007.php (Details about the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond are found in Renate Coombs' description of the Guild's November 2007 training tour to Rosie the Riveter and Port Chicago National Historic Parks.)

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3. Where were the chase scenes from Bullitt filmed?

Rick Spear and Stephen Kent Ehat both submitted a great website that details many of the locations in the movie, with a scene-by-scene breakdown of the chase (see <http://www.rjsmith.com/bullitt-locations.html>). Judith Pearson also had good information. Using the magic of Hollywood, the classic chase scene was created by editing together segments filmed in several parts of the city in May 1968, including Bernal Heights, Potrero Hill, Russian Hill, North Beach, the Marina, and Daly City. However, when a tour guest asks where the scene was filmed they're probably mostly thinking of segments where the cars become airborne heading down steep sections of Taylor between Vallejo and Filbert heading north toward Fisherman's Wharf. Two of the fun details that can be seen on close viewing are that the same green VW Beetle incongruously appears over and over again, and one of the cars loses the same hubcap several times!

Here are three new questions:



1. Are the mission bells along Highway 101 the originals from the early twentieth century?

2. Driving back from the Wine Country on I-80, as you approach Richmond, there's a building off to the left up on a hillside, with golden onion domes. I've heard it's a Muslim mosque. Is that true?

3. Is it true that international orange was chosen for the Golden Gate Bridge because that was the color of the primer and they realized it looked good?

Did You know?

By Ulla Kaprielian

President Lincoln dedicated the first national cemetery in Gettysburg with the Gettysburg address.

The San Francisco National Cemetery is the oldest national cemetery on the west coast. Originally 9.5 acres, it was established in 1884 and later extended to 28 acres. There are now 28,000 graves.

There are 35 graves of Medal of Honor recipients; William Thompkins was the Buffalo Soldier to be so honored.

During his visit in 1903, Teddy Roosevelt asked for Buffalo Soldiers to be the honor guards.

The Buffalo Soldiers spent the summers in Yosemite to guard the park before the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916.

There are two women buried in their own right – Pauline Cushman Fryer, an actress and union spy and Dr. Sarah Bowman. All other women were family members.

There is no more space for burials, unless a person has a spot reserved or a reservation has been cancelled.

The black flag in the center of the cemetery represents soldiers missing in action.

Major Dana Crissy's grave is here as well. He died in a plane crash near Salt Lake City. At the end of the Pan Pacific Expo the race track was used as an airfield. It was dedicated Crissy Field in 1922. Between the wind, the fog and then the Golden Gate Bridge, it was a poor choice for an airport.

The Park Service offers walking tours of the cemetery. Make sure that you wear sturdy shoes and a warm jacket when you go.

Get to Know Your Board Members

We will publish pictures as they become available



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SFTGG PROGRAMS

March 3, 2008 **MOVIE TOUR WITH CRAIG SMITH**
9:45 - 3:30 Meet at the St. Francis Hotel, Post Street entrance
\$39.00 (includes lunch)
checks, payable to SFTGG, to be sent to
Madelon van Lier, 247 Playa Del Rey, San Rafael, CA 94901

April 25, 2008 **“THE HAIGHT IS MORE THAN HIPPIES”**
10 – noon Meet Mary McCloy at 1831 Page Street (Public Library)
for this walking tour.
\$15 (lunch not included)
checks, payable to SFTGG, to be sent to
Madelon van Lier, 247 Playa Del Rey, San Rafael, CA 94901

For detailed information, check our website at www.sftgg.org/programs.

If you do not have access to a computer, call:
Madelon van Lier at 415-485-1355 (madelonvanlier@aol.com)
or John Kalivas at 415-601-0696 (johnkalivas@hotmail.com)

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