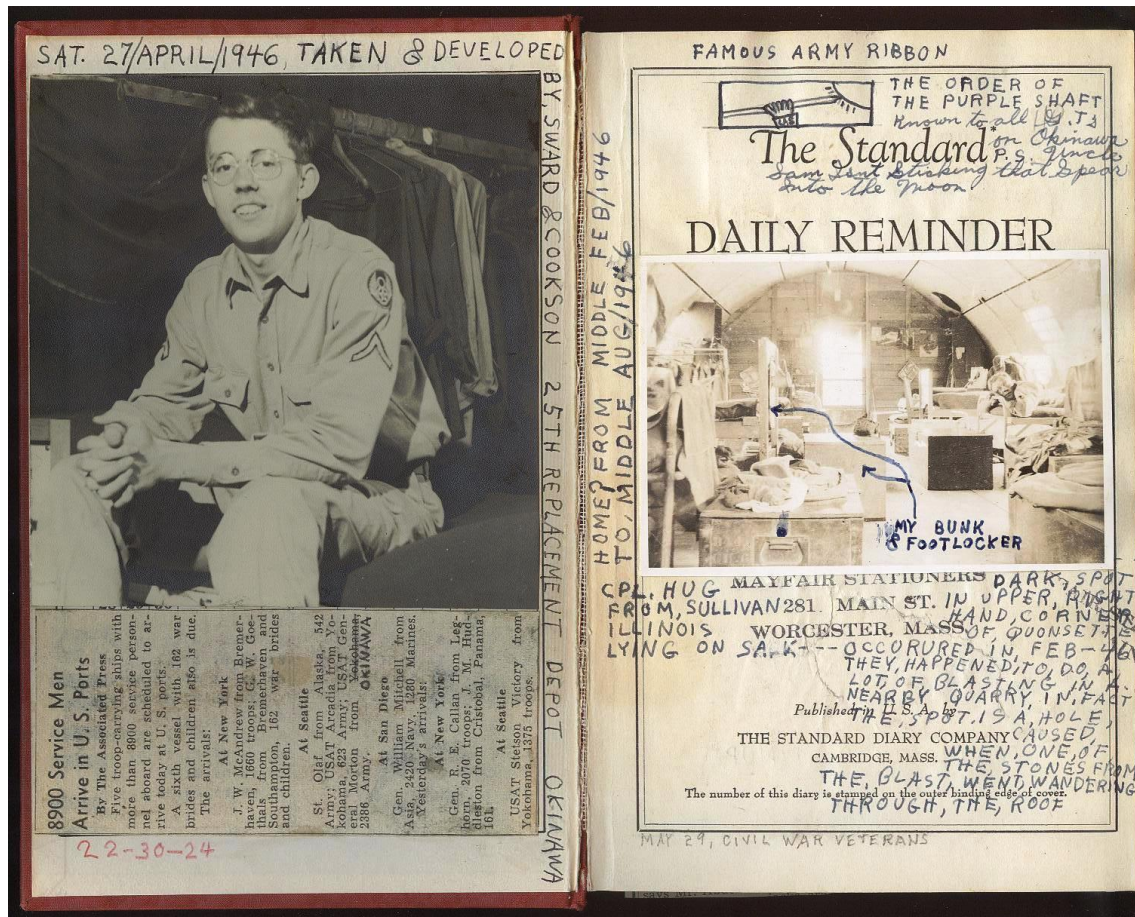


1946 Handwritten WWII Diary: Edwin G. Sward – Okinawa, Worcester Mass, Atomic Bomb (Adapted from a description by diary collector and scholar Sally MacNamara, [on eBay])



This 1946 handwritten diary is full of photos and ephemera and most of them have to do with Edwin G. Sward of Worcester Massachusetts. Edwin is stationed in Okinawa during the end of WWII and his father, Anton, is keeping this diary for him until he returns. Ed has been in the army for 18 months now and stationed on Okinawa for a year. There are many photos of Ed while in Okinawa in this diary because Ed sends some of his photos back home with his letters along with boxes and boxes of WWII souvenirs such as helmets, weapons, handmade items, etc. The only reason I know that is because each time his parents receive a box they mention the contents. The diary only has 14 blank pages and other than that his father wrote full pages and almost everything is about his and his son's military duty on the island of Okinawa. Then at the end of October Ed returns home and he takes over writing in the diary. It's absolutely a fascinating read. You also get entries having to do with their life

while living in Worcester. So many things stood out in this journal. One thing was the food rationing. Anton is constantly mentioning how bare the store shelves are, especially when it comes to meat. Others entries like the testing of the Atomic Bombs, Ed writing home about the Japanese prisoners of war, prison riot at Alcatraz in San Francisco, Railroad strike, the new Airport opening up in Worcester and seeing the first plane fly out from there and so much more. He even writes this on a very hot day in July where there is a smudge mark from the ink in his pen..... "P.S. The blot on this page was made from my perspiration while writing on next page and it sure was hot."

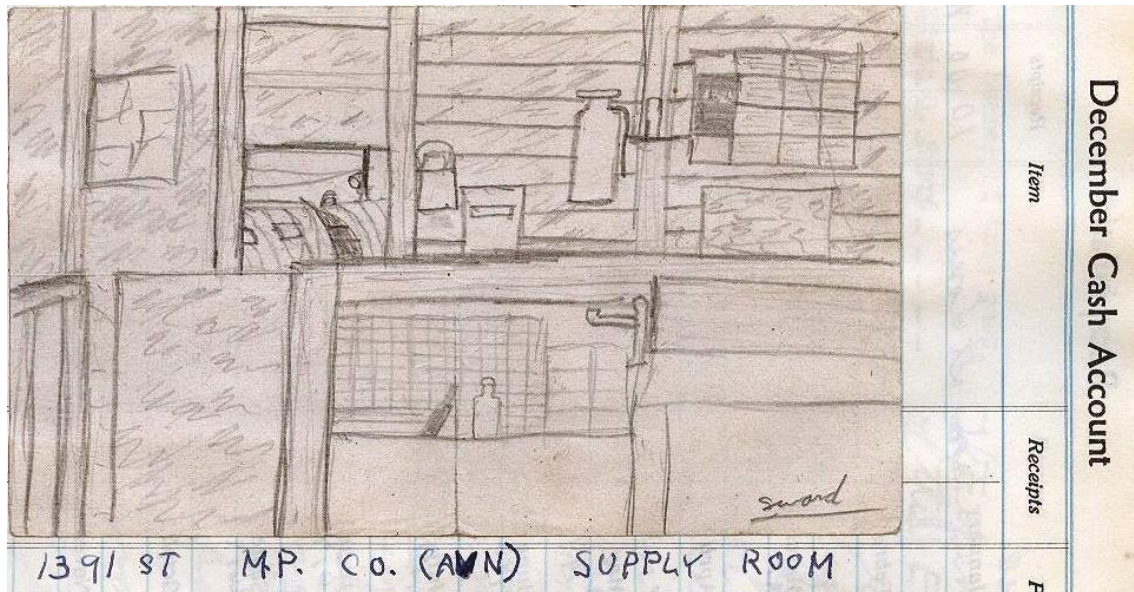


1946

"January 2nd, We received a package from Ed today mailed from Okinawa. It contained some Japanese bills also a Korean bill and an empty cigarette pack containing a little Japanese coin. There was some interesting writing on the empty cigarette pack done by a J-p prisoner who evidently was making a present of it to Ed as he had written on the outside, "Pleasant" meaning present. There was also a silk souvenir with Mt. Fujiyama and a little sewing on it, also done by two J-p prisoners of war. All very interesting. Mother visited her mother in Auburn today. It has been a cold crisp dry day."

"January 3rd, Mother visited an old friend of hers by the name of May Barber today. I had dinner by myself. After work tonight I went to the parcel post office to get a package mailed to us from Ed. It contained a couple of J-p tin cans found on Okinawa and probably were thrown around when the battle was raging for the island of Okinawa. Also a piece of mysterious looking statuary which Ed will have to tell us about when he arrives home. Today has been a cold

winders day.”

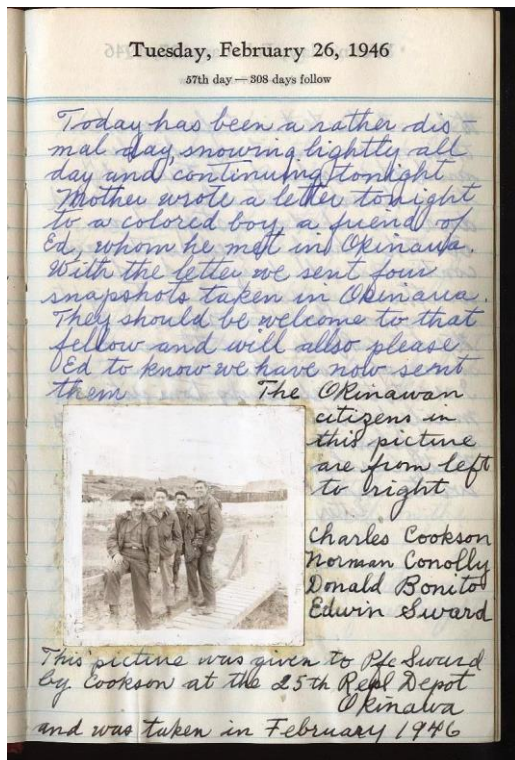


“February 13th, The weather has turned bad today and we are having rain tonight which looks as if it may continue. We are well satisfied being home. Mother wrapped the letter neatly which we received yesterday from Douglas Clark and it is now ready to be mailed to Okinawa. We listed to the radio as we usually do. We heard the old Rhode Island Historian tell about the old days of steamboat travel down Narragansett Bay and we enjoyed it very much. We gain many things and also lose many good things as time marches on. That’s the price we pay for progress.”

“March 6th, Today also has been a mild comfortable day. Mother went to church this morning, it being Ash Wednesday. At noontime we heard a talk on the radio by our President, Mr. Truman. This afternoon we received a package from Ed sent from Okinawa. It contained a Japanese hospital thermometer, a J-p coin, a piece of linen with a red ball sewed in the center of it, also some J-p insignia with gold stars sewed on them. Mother said our old friend Landry was in for a visit this afternoon for a chat and was here when the parcel arrived from Okinawa. Mother invited him up for supper next Monday.”



"April 19th, Today was bright, cool and windy. It is a double holiday being Good Friday and also Patriots Day. It is also our 22nd wedding anniversary. I worked all day today. We had some cards from the O'Neil's and also George and Ellen. Mother went to church tonight. Ed also went to church in Okinawa. The

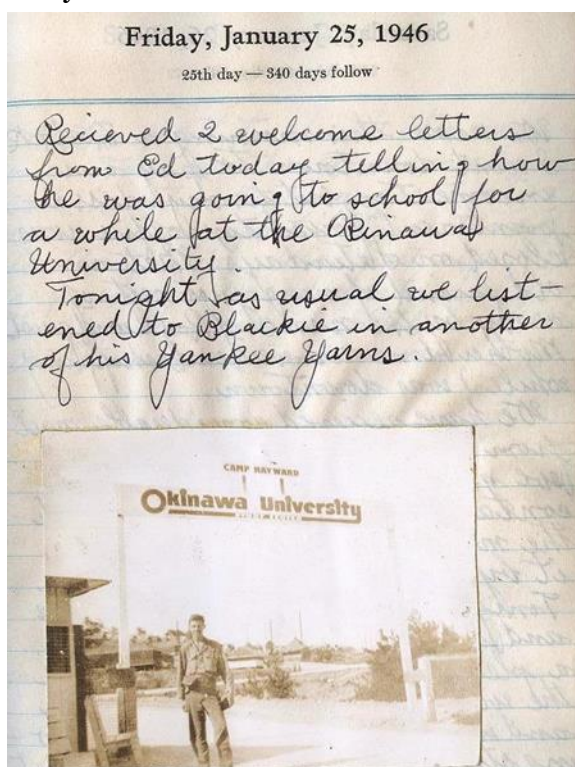


marathon was not run today because it was Good Friday but will be run tomorrow instead. One of the news items of today was a fire in Dexter building which is opposite the Post Office on Main St. causing a loss of \$1500.00. There were 15 firemen hurt when a floor collapsed throwing the men into the cellar of the building."

"May 1st, Today has been a perfect May Day and as we looked out of the window tonight we remarked about the beauty and color of the spring landscape. Mrs. Cadorette came in this afternoon for a visit with ma bringing a letter along that

she received from our Ed in Okinawa. One of the news items today is the purchase of old Crompton estate called Mariemont, one of Worcester's landmarks that was once a center of social life and a showplace for many years. St. Vincent Hospital plans immediate construction of a new and modern 400 bed hospital on the site. I wrote letter tonight to Ed."

"May 3rd, Temperature this morning 34 degrees. We have had nice warm day's lately but very cool and cold mornings. The cold weather stayed with us all day. The sun shone brightly and it was a beautiful day. The big news today is about the prison riots at Alcatraz in which several guards were killed and the marines were called in to stop the rioting. They used equipment which was used during World War II such as bazooka shells, grenades and so called shake charges which break down concrete walls. Mother wrote a letter to Ed tonight. We enjoyed ourselves listening to the radio and Alton Hull Blackington spin his Yankee Yarn which tonight was about several bags full of cats which were let loose in Kingston R.I. I guess Ed would have had a good laugh if he heard this story."

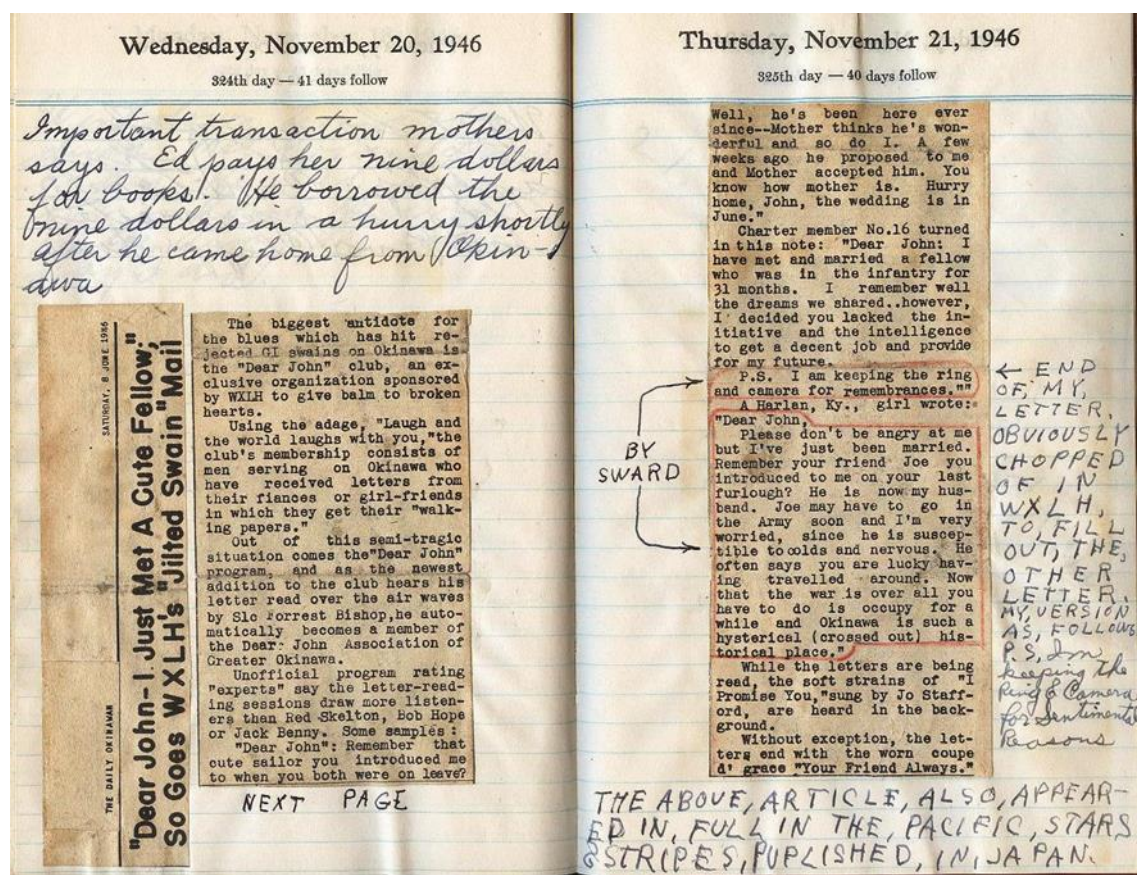


"May 10th, Today marked the opening of a new era for Worcester when Northeast airliner arrived at 9:22 A.M. to take passengers and airmail out of Worcester. I waited by a window in the shop where I could see the plane land at the airport. I was interested as we had a letter for Ed which was supposed to go out with that first flight. The morning was cold and the sky was flecked with cumulus clouds making a pretty picture as the silver bird approached the airport. The first flight was to Newark N.J. The flying time is supposed to be one

hour which is good time. Mother also seen the first plane. As I came home from work this noon I again seen the plane back again from the first trip to Newark. There were ceremonies at the airport. Speeches by Mayor Sullivan and another

[illegible]

"June 16th, Mother went to church this morning. It was a glorious morning. Ed's rose bush is very bright with color and it is a pleasure to look at it. The father's day card Ed sent me is having its place of honor on the shelf today. In the afternoon mother and I spent a pleasant afternoon at the lake. We were at the White City and also sat on the little peninsular near the bridge where we watched the speed boats churn the water into ocean like swells. This afternoon we were also fortunate in getting 6 rolls of films which Ed has asked for and we will mail them tomorrow."



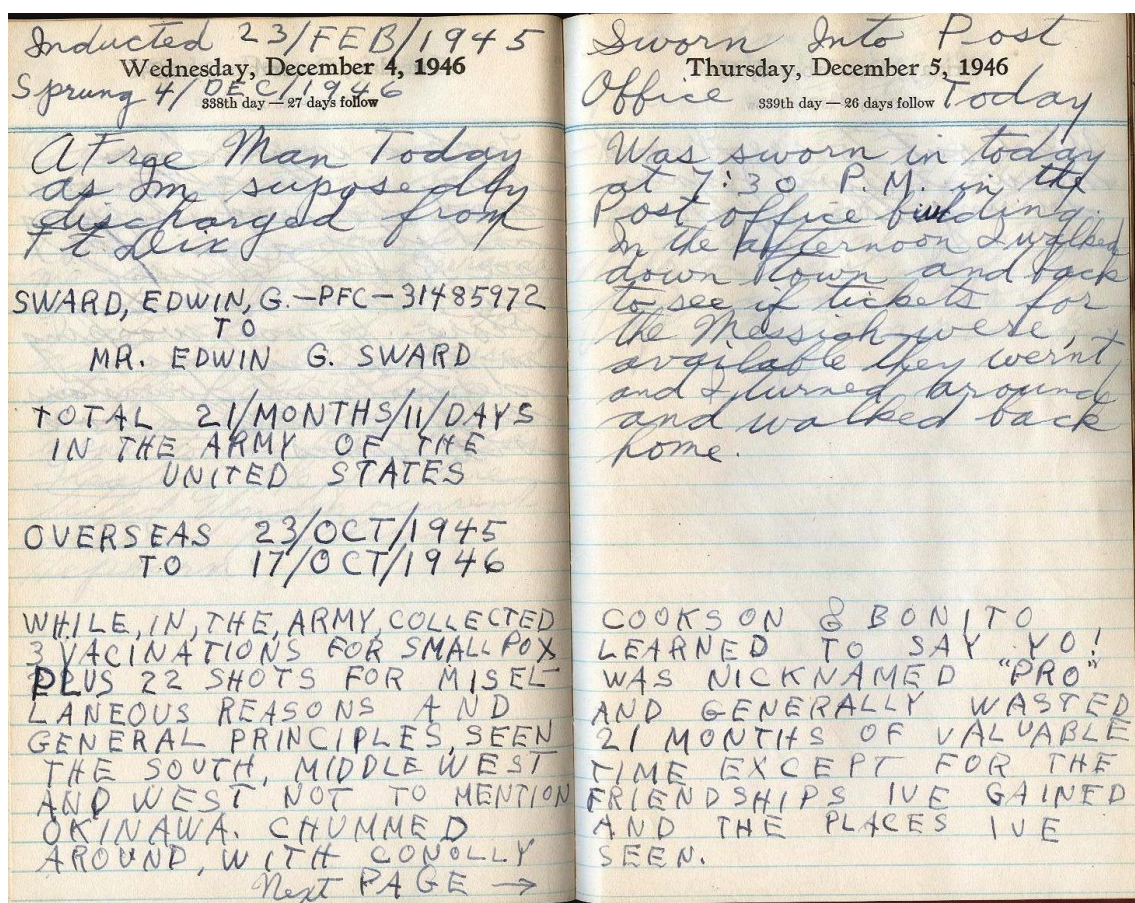
"June 30th, Mother did not go to church this morning which is unusual for her but as her mother was with us she had much work to do so was unable to go. Today is the last day of the "YD" convention in Worcester and will be celebrated with a parade. We did not go down to see it but heard that it was not as good a parade as always. Today news was about the atom bomb test on a phantom fleet at Bikini Island in the Marshall Islands. The draft is now again law and will be in effect at least till March 1947. Hope this will help many of our boys home more quickly. We did not go out anywhere. The weather was very muggy. I tried myself at sketching this afternoon, drawing a view from our back which we mail

to Ed to pass his judgment on as to its artistic value.”

“July 8th,Not much news in the paper tonight. However things are good for us as we can get many things to please ourselves which means a lot when we stop to consider Ed and many more like him in faraway lonesome islands. Fair weather is still with us but looks like a change will come anytime now. We are now waiting for the months to pass so that Ed will be home.”

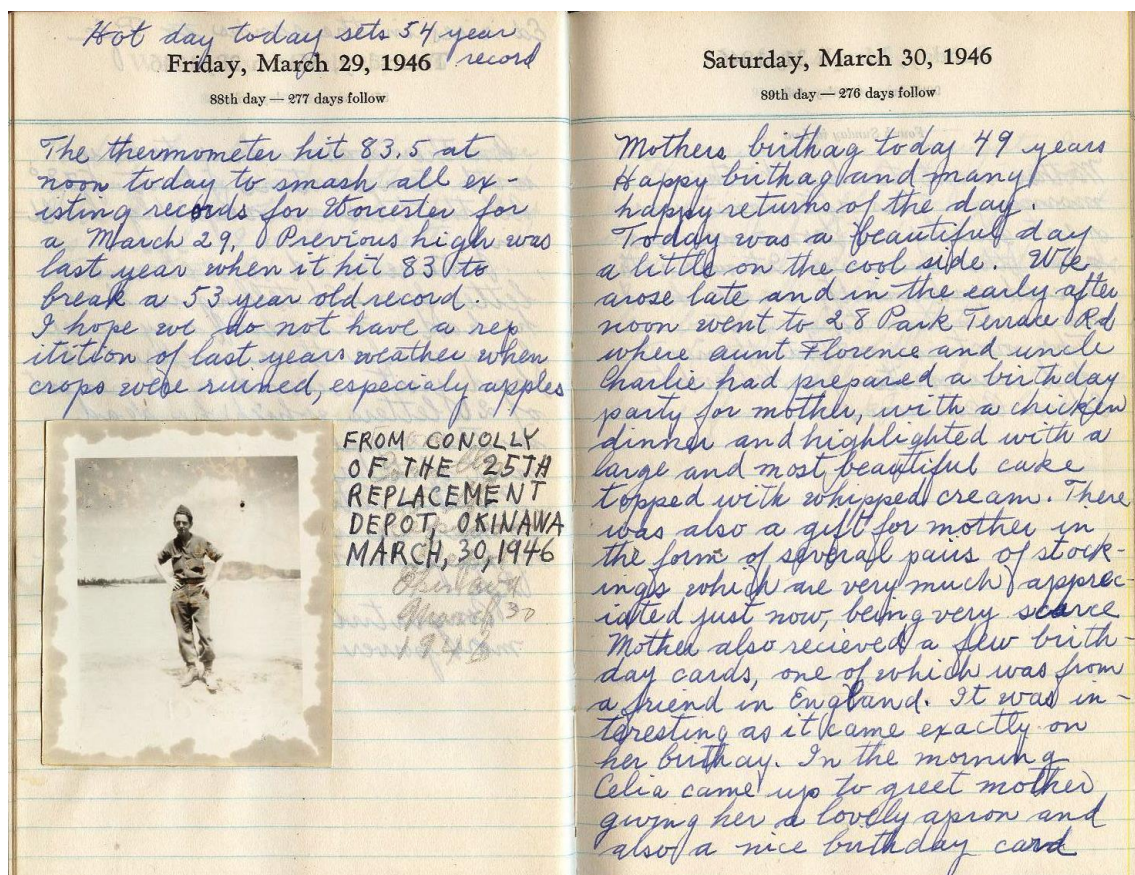
“July 9th & 10th, We have not had much rain lately and lawns are somewhat seared. The sky was overcast all day today but no rain despite the threatening appearance. We received 3 pieces of mail from Ed today also a copy of the Pacific Stripes for Saturday June 22nd, 1946 which means that he has attained the highest pinnacle possible as a news writer in the Pacific. He says: Quote, “About 22 June a big honor was best owed on me. My Dear John letter hit the Japan Korea Stars and Stripes and that is the height of fame, I guess, to have it appear there” end of quote. These Dear John letters are letters which are supposed to have been written to men in the service who have been jilted by their sweethearts back home. Ed made up his himself. It was read over radio....I worked all day as did mother also with grandma being with us. I wrote a letter to Ed tonight. There was sad news tonight when an army plane crashed into Mt. Tom killing about 22 men, most of whom were returning home from service in the army.”

“July 24th, We had a circus in town today, the first since 1944. I guess Ed remembers that circus as he was working on the railroad at the time. The northeast storm broke up today and it has been very sticky again. We have been waiting for mail from Ed but we have not received any. Seems as some should be due about this time. We listened to description of atomic bomb under water explosion from Bikini. We listened at 5:30 E.D.S.T in Worcester and it was about 8:35 A.M. Thursday in Bikini. The explosion could be plainly heard over the radio and it sounded like a terrific explosion. The sound was a hissing sound as though the water was heated to very high temperatures very much like spilling a few drops of water on a hot stove and they jump around making a sizzling sound. The circus mentioned at top of page was Sparks Bros. Circus.”



"July 29th,.....In a letter written today from Okinawa but received August 9th 1946 Ed writes there is so little to write from there that he despises writing for which I fully agree. After being a year on a forsaken island like Okinawa any man has taken a real punishment."

"August 5th, Holy Name of Jesus Church. First one held since the end of World War II. Today was a special Monday enough excitement to take away that blue Monday feeling. The day itself was somewhat hot but comfortable to work in. This noontime I brought a letter up with an Okinawa News in it. On it Ed wrote, "Should be home by Halloween" and an article stating the facts encircled with a red pencil. We hope so Ed! And tonight we received a parcel containing enough papers and reading matter to last us a long time. In same parcel were a Japanese helmet and a pair of Japanese protective film pants. Mother went to a 50th wedding anniversary tonight in the Day Building. The honored couple are Mrs. Bell Sunderlund's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Conger. I was in the bathtub tonight when I heard the measure beat of a drum corps. This heralded in the Lawn Party at the top" (of this entry)



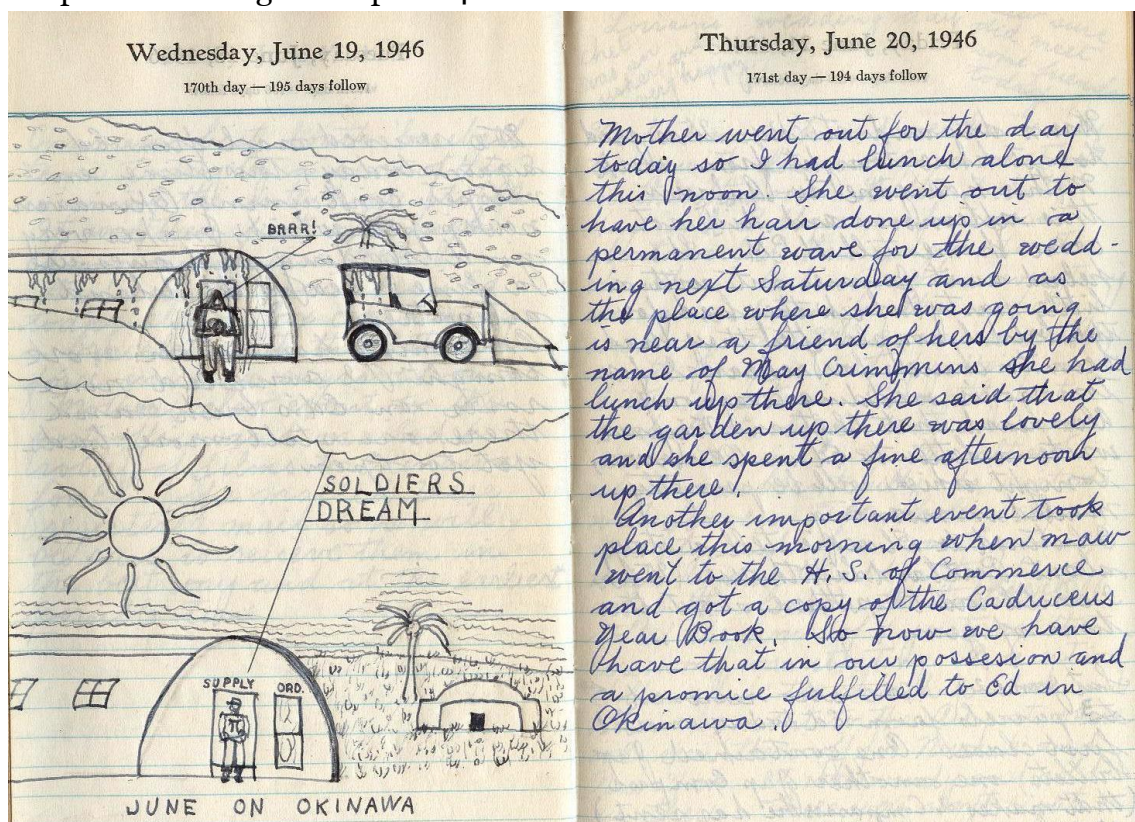
"August 18th,.....At 2:02 o'clock fifteen Lancaster bombers, comprising Britain's, famous Pathfinder Group of World War II were going to fly over Worcester on the final leg of a goodwill tour of the United States. They flew over on the second we might say and made a very beautiful sight in the cumulus specked sky. These I think are very large planes. We are concerned tonight about a typhoon that is raging near Okinawa but according to reports it has not hit Okinawa very hard. Mother is now writing a letter to Ed after which we will call it a day."

"August 29th,.....Now how the pages ahead in this diary are becoming fewer and when we finally call it finished I doubt if we will write anymore diaries. Am I right or not?"

"September 5th, (This one was written by Ed after he returned home in October. His father must have left this day blank and then Ed filled it in)

"On Okinawa at about this time Okinawa girls took over the Okinawa telephone exchanges. There was the Rycom Exchange, 1st Air Division Exchange,

to name a couple. Here's a sample of a call that I'd make from 1st Air Div. Exchange to get Cookson at Rycom. I'd lift the receiver and an accented voice would say "Number Plees." I'd say "Okinawa" this was for the Rycom Exchange. "Sankoo" said the voice. Next after a few minutes wait I heard an American voice say, "Hello". "Is this Okinawa?" I said back "Hell no" sez the other voice. "I'm trying for a number in the 1st Air Div." Finally I said to the operator after reopening line, "Okinawa 145th or whatever Cookson's number was." A masculine voice booms "Hello" "Cookie" sez I. "No, General Lindsey" "Lord" sez I and hung up. This General incident isn't true but it gives a general idea of the telephone exchange in Dept. of 46."



"September 18th, No mail at noon today and the letter I wrote last night was mailed this noon. Maybe the maritime strike which as shipping on both coasts has something to do with us not receiving any mail. I went to Webster Sq. tonight after work to buy two 40 watt bulbs for light in Ed's bedroom. Mother asked me to buy 1 lb of hamburg while down there but the counters were bare of meat and were only a few pieces of meat which under ordinary time's people would not feed a dog. So when I came home we had a vegetable supper. What the cause is of this shortage of meat is no one knows but someone has things

pretty well bungled up in Washington.”

“October 1st,.....Today 12 Nazi war criminals got their verdicts. 12 to die, 3 get life and 4 prison terms. Those to die are Goering, Von Ribbontrop, Keitel, Kaltenbrunner, Rosenberg and Frank, Frick, Streicher, Sauckel, Jodl, Seyso, Inquart, Bormann. Prison: Hess for life, Funk for life, Raeder for life, Doenitz 10 years, Speer 20 years, von Sherach 20 years, Von Neurath 15 years. Acquitted: Von Papen, Sshacht, Fritsche. Much dissatisfaction has been expressed about the acquittals of these men.”

“October 15th, (Both father and son write on this day). FATHER: “The St. Louis Cardinals beat the Boston Red Sox this afternoon and won the World Series and tonight Boston must be a sad place and also many baseball fans in Worcester. We wonder if Ed and his buddies listened in out on the Pacific. President Truman has now taken off price controls from meat so now we may be able to buy some meat soon even though the price will be higher.” SON: “A member of shipboard life on an Army transport occurred about two days away from Seattle. A Major blared out over the loud speaker. All troops on the starboard side police the decks and say as soon as this order was given, troops sprawled all over the decks galvanized into action and dove through the hatches to get below. Say when they wanted to get men below it was impossible unless they used M.P.’s. Connolly and Bonito walk around ship with gloomy faces after Red Sox lose. I told them Worcester is 44 miles from Boston.”

“October 16th,.....Herman Goering committed suicide and thereby cheating the gallows. Ten other Nazi war criminals went to their death last night by hanging.”

“October 17th (ED). At 6:00 or 7:00 we were all on the deck of the Morton looking at the shore lights in Puget Sound. A cold crisp hazy and exhilarating morning. Off the port beam or left hand side of the ship there arose a high skyline cloaked in mystic haze and suddenly the meaning of these lines of poetry came to me, “Breaths there a man with soul so dead who never to himself hath said this is my own native land.” It sure was. It was home sweet home and above all stateside.”

“October 25th,..... “Home at Last” Pfc Ed Sward. We give a prayer of thanks for

Ed's safe return home and wish him the best of luck in civilian life. Tonight I watched out of the window for the train from New York which passes by our house at 8:45 P.M. I seen it go by and at 09:12 mother and I looked out of window and there was our traveler from Okinawa slighting from a taxi cab with all his baggage. We stayed up to well past 1:00 A.M. talking and looking over souvenirs."

"November 5th, (ED). This year's birthday (20th) is much better than last as at 4:00 the time of this writing last year I was observing Okinawa off the deck of Admiral E. W. Eberle. I wondered then where I'd be on my next birthday and conditions this year are much better than last. Ma's preparing supper and Aunt Florence is here."

"December 4th, (ED) A free man today as I'm supposedly discharged from Ft. Dix."