

The war had ended, but in the many Phillipine islands, thousands of Japanese soldiers hidden in remote places without radio contact didn't know it. For several weeks, my men and I had been doing the tough, dangerous work of "weeding out" those Japanese who were still fighting in the jungles. In the dank heat, it was physically and emotionally exhausting to cut our way through the dense undergrowth with every step forward, while trying to move stealthily so as not to let the enemy hear or see us. We carried heavy loads of armor plate, guns, mortars, radio equipment, batteries, everything we would need if we were suddenly attacked. Perspiration running into our eyes, over our bodies was bad enough, but at every few steps swarms of mosquitos and bugs assaulted us, leaving welts on any uncovered skin. Desperately needing rest, we plowed on because there was no place *get* rest. Screeching birds and jungle animals made wild and weird noises that kept us tense. Was it a bird, or Japanese soldiers about to attack us? During those weeks, I learned what "raw fear" is.

Now we had fulfilled that mission, and though the hostilities had ended, I was still not eligible to be sent home. My men and I needed a rest—if not that, at least a change. It was time, I decided, for me to be assigned to something less frightening and less physically taxing. I had to find a way to make the best of the next few months. Early in my army career I had learned that it's much easier to get things done by non-commissioned soldiers in good positions than by going through channels with superior officers.

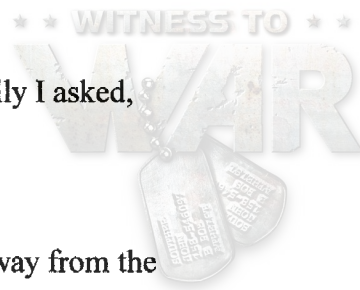
It was early in November of 1945, a month before our baby was due. Having been attached to General MacArthur's command, I was occasionally in contact with a bright guy named Joe Moses, who was a sergeant working in General MacArthur's headquarters. We didn't know each other well, but he had seen me do some hypnosis demonstrations, and we had spoken to each other often when I had reason to go to MacArthur's headquarters.

One day I went to General MacArthur's headquarters with some routine papers, but more importantly to see Joe Moses, and we started to talk. "I never asked you where you were from, sergeant," I remarked.

"Detroit," he replied. "Can't wait to get back."

"We're neighbors! I'm from Toledo!"

"Toledo? I've been there dozens of times!"



We talked a while about mutual experiences in Detroit and Toledo, and finally I asked, "Do you have enough points to go home now?"

"I will have in a few weeks. How 'bout you?"

"No. I've got another six months. "I need a new assignment. Something away from the jungle."

"Maybe I can find something for you. Let me look." Joe took a file out of a nearby cabinet and leafed through it.

"Yeah! Here's something. Lieutenant Vernon Curnow needs an assistant."

"Assistant in what?"

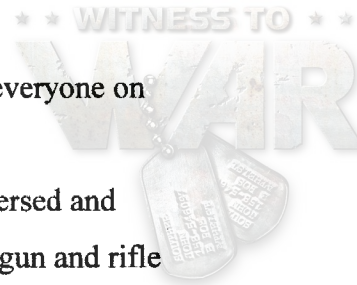
"He's in charge of entertainment for all of the South Pacific. That's right in your line! If you want the job, you can have it."

That's all it took. Joe Moses filled out a few forms, had his superior sign them, and in no time I met one of the nicest guys I've ever known. Vern, a devout Mormon, was short, stocky, and in great physical shape. He had won medals in gymnastics and in swimming and diving competitions. He was efficient, sincere, honest, and dependable. I liked and respected him, and I believe he felt the same toward me. We still keep in touch.

Vern and I worked together like a practiced team sending entertainers by plane or by ship to far-off locations like Corregidor, Bataan, Okinawa, Japan, Tinian, Hawaii, Iwo Jima and many more. Certain rules were strictly enforced. Women's costumes must not be too revealing. There must not be any foul language or dirty jokes, and dating performers, male or female was prohibited.

At times we had as many as five hundred girls and seven hundred-fifty men ready to be sent to these places. A musical production called "Rosalinda" had a cast of over thirty people, along with technicians who took care of lighting, scenery, etc.. There were at least that many in Joy Caylor's all-girl band with Joe DeRita, a comedian who later became one of the Three Stooges on TV. Joy's band played all the romantic music of the thirties and forties, some jazz, and lots of "swing." It reminded us of home and we could have listened to that music forever.

I have a special reason to remember Joe DeRita. One night I went along with him and Joy Caylor's band when they were performing for some troops. All of a sudden, in the middle of a number, the Japanese started firing at us. I only had a pistol, which wasn't much use in that situation, but I was responsible for the safety of all the entertainers. Almost without thinking I



did what had to be done: turned the light switch off and, at the same time yelled to everyone on stage, “Get down on the floor! Flat! Lay down flat and keep quiet!”

With the lights out, it was pitch dark. By then, the soldiers had already dispersed and were shooting back at the Japs. We couldn’t see a thing, but we heard the machine gun and rifle fire coming from the enemy, and it was close, at times whizzing across the stage. If we had been standing, some of us would certainly have been hit. Meanwhile, I’m sure I wasn’t the only one praying as we lay, flat and tense on the stage floor. Toward dawn the gunfire became more and more erratic, and by the time it was light, it had stopped completely.

Count Berni Vici and his all-girl band were another hit. After the war, he, too, became quite famous. These bands, with their attractive female musicians, were big hits with the G.I.’s. After months surrounded by jungle, the men had come to hate its smell, the unconquerable fear, the snakes, the bugs—everything about it. To them, every girl they saw was beautiful, and talented. Though they were only allowed to shake their hands, the soldiers remarked about how soft the girls were, and how wonderfully sweet they smelled.

Some of the other entertainers who came to cheer up our troops were completely unknown until much later. Among many others were Tony Martin and Syd Cherise, Danny Kaye, and Jerry Lewis, who did a lip sync act.

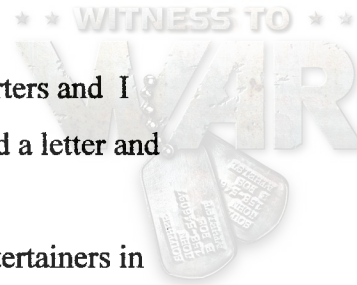
Because many Japanese soldiers in isolated areas still didn’t know the war had ended, Vern and I suffered a lot sorrow and anguish when we lost one or two units (shows) who were flying to their destination.

When I first started working with Vern, all the entertainers slept in tents like the soldiers did. It was not an easy life for them, but most were very good-natured about the discomfort. There was no fence around their area then, but these youngsters, like ourselves, were daredevils, sure that they wouldn’t be harmed.

One night, I was going toward Vern’s tent when I heard a girl screaming. I ran toward the sound, and saw a Japanese soldier about to rape one of our show girls.

I pulled out my gun as I ran and shouted, “Hey! Get away from her!”

The Jap looked up, and in a flash, with excellent precision, he flung a long knife at my head. I shielded my face with my hand and got a good-size gash in my right wrist. Luckily, I’m left-handed. I shot at the guy a few times, but I’ll never know whether I hit him or not. By then, even with his pants down, he had made it into the jungle and there was no way I was going in



there to search for him. The girl wasn't hurt, thank God. She went back to her quarters and I left to get my wrist bandaged. After I had been discharged from the army, I received a letter and an autographed picture from that young lady, thanking me for saving her life.

Not long after that happened, more permanent quarters were built for the entertainers in Parinyaki, not far from Manila. It was surrounded by a strong fence and guarded by two hundred-fifty Philippine soldiers.

Some entertainers spent more time with us than others, so it was inevitable that Vern and I made long lasting friendships with many of them. One fellow in particular was Harry "Lifty" Lewis, a comedian with a special talent to make people laugh. A true comedian's comedian who, though he died in the early sixties is still remembered for his natural comedic ability.

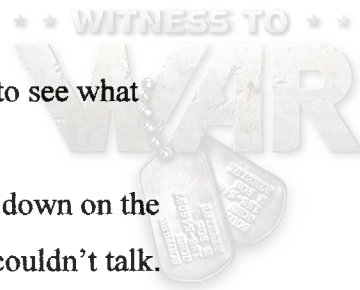
"Double talk" was one of his specialties. People in the U.S. at the time, were aware of double talk. It was "in" like zoot suits and juke boxes. I learned some of his funny words and phrases like "finis on the defig," "liquid twelge," "trom," "vanilla bitrans," "kranaf Franz," and "kralton." He would throw these meaningless words and phrases into a monologue once in a while.

This could be one of his stories: A tall guy goes to a lumber camp looking for a job. The boss took one look at him and said, "You're too scrawny to handle an axe! You got no finis on the defig!" The skinny guy says, "I'm a good woodsman! Had lots of experience. Let me show you my trom." So the boss takes him over to a little tree, hands him an axe and says, "Okay, show me what you can do." With one kralton he whacks down the tree. So the boss takes him to a bigger tree, and with one more kralton he whacks down the second tree. Finally the boss takes him to the biggest tree in the woods, and says, "Let's see what you can do with *this*." The guy cuts the tree down with three whacks of the axe!" "That's amazing!" the boss says. "Where did you learn to cut trees like that?" "In the Sahara forest," says the guy. "You mean the Sahara Desert." says the boss. And the guy says, "Well, *now*!"

Harry and I spent a lot of time together because I often went with him to entertain troops in some of the Philippine Islands, and also in areas surrounding Manila.

One evening he and I were scheduled to entertain at the Red Cross a few miles from our compound. We had hitched a ride on the back of an army truck going in our direction and were bouncing along the rugged trails when suddenly we were caught in enemy crossfire.

"Duck!" I shouted to Harry.



Harry must have thought the noise was firecrackers. He just looked around to see what was happening. I kept shouting for Harry to get down, but he didn't move.

He was right in the line of fire. I grabbed his legs and forced him to lie face down on the truck bed until the firing stopped. When we got up, Harry couldn't talk. He really couldn't talk. Not for two or three days did he utter a word.

That night, I ended up doing a hypnosis demonstration for the Red Cross instead of Harry doing his act. Hypnosis is a sleep induced by suggestion. Usually I hypnotize at least twenty-four people at a time. I never have trouble getting volunteers to be hypnotized. It takes me about three minutes of talking to the "subjects" until they are deeply asleep. I don't use gimmicks or lights, or anything else. Once they are asleep, I demonstrate how a hypnotist can make people feel no pain, remember something they have seen briefly, show strength they couldn't possibly have without hypnosis, be retrogressed to childhood, and much more. Before I waken the "subjects," I reinforce the fact that they are able to learn more, retain more, and accomplish everything they desire. Then, when I waken them, to make sure they are truly awake, I tell them they are wide awake, feeling as though they have slept for several hours, and that I have absolutely no power over them whatsoever. As usual, my program was entertaining and educational. Not long afterward, I received a letter from the Red Cross saying mine was one of the best shows they had ever seen. It lifted my spirits at a time when I longed so desperately to be home again.

Seven months later, when the time finally came, I was happier than I'd ever been. My wife and our six-month-old son were waiting for me. Yet, I had mixed emotions about leaving the friends I had made. Nevertheless, the trip back home was another adventure.