

War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Dorothy Jones
Current home town: Hamilton, Ohio
Age:93

Fred and I met on a blind date in May 1939. I was still in high school and Fred had already graduated in 1937. We both graduated from Middletown High School in Middletown, Ohio. I was 16 years old when I met Fred, so we didn't date too often because of my age. Fred thought I was a little young for him, but he enjoyed my company. When I was a senior in high school, Fred gave me his fraternity pin. Shortly after I graduated in June of 1941 Fred was drafted into the Army. On each furlough, most of his time was spent with me.

On a furlough in 1942 Fred told me at the end of the furlough he no longer loved me and this was the end of our relationship. Truthfully, he wanted me to have a life. He was worried that he would be gone for a long time. He wanted me to have a good life and not spend it worrying about him. On his next furlough six months later, Fred and I were married. We couldn't stop being in love just because there was a war. Love can survive anything.

In 1942, after Fred went into the U.S. Army, Sixth Division, I started working at Patterson Field, Dayton, Ohio. I worked in the Supply Department. Since Patterson Field was an Air Force base, we had pilots and men in the Air Force flying in from all over the United States. They were picking up parts for planes. My job was to write the orders for the parts and have messengers go out into the depot and pick up the parts, and of course all records had to be kept and filed as to what air base requested these parts. I was in contact with different soldiers every day and enjoyed hearing about their families, loved ones and some of their experiences, and they would ask me about Fred and where he was at the time. I was an Army wife and shared some of my thoughts and feelings with them. It was good to talk to people that were close enough to the war to understand how families and wives felt.

My darling Fred, aka Fritzie, died in May of 2011. He was 93 years old. I miss him every day. He was a good and kind man to all he met.

Here are some letters from Fred:

December 13, 1943

My darling wife,

Good morning sweetheart. I thought I'd drop you a line before going to work. I just had my breakfast, and at the present I'm listening to Christmas Carols over the radio. You know honey, listening to these hymns gives a fellow the Christmas spirit in spite of everything. Now if I had a sniff of a good cedar tree my spirit would be a little more complete. Then too, if I could be home with my honey and the family,

feel the crunch of snow under my feet, watching the smoke whirl from the house chimneys, see the many beautiful displays of Christmas trees and other ornaments out in front of the homes...well, I think that would be Christmas in heaven. Your loving husband, Fritz

February 9, 1944

My darling wife,

We took another boat ride, honey, and believe me, a really long one. I am in New Guinea and in perfect health. The boat ride was somewhat thrilling! We had a couple days of rough weather, but, all in all, the trip was fairly mild.

I must say that this country is different from any land I have ever expected to see. The weather here in New Guinea is very warm of course, and practically nothing but jungle, coconut trees, berries of all types and natives, and oh yes! Rain, rain, rain____! The natives seem to be very friendly, and they do much of the heavy labor; in fact they are invaluable to the Army on such an island.

We bathe and launder our clothing in small streams, and on the way to these streams we pass the natives at work. There is usually one or two in the group that speak a little English. It's quite an experience to try and carry on a conversation with the little fellows. As we were passing them yesterday morning, one of the boys in our group took a cigarette from his pack to smoke and several of the natives called to us to give them a cigarette; we knew by their motions more than by their sounds, so we passed them out and they all were pleased. One of the natives kept mumbling something to us but we all looked at each other in wonder. As we were trying to figure out what the little fellow wanted one of the natives in the background yelled out – 'matches' and then politely spelled it out M-A-T-C-H-E-S they want to light the things – Gad, did we feel foolish_____! I love you darling and really miss you. Your loving husband, Fritz

July 11, 1944

My darling wife,

I just returned from being out with a company operating a radio. I have had my first experience with front line troops. Believe me, honey, these boys have no mercy when dealing with the Japanese. It isn't only fighting the Japanese, but equally as rough are the living conditions. I don't believe I ever saw so much mud in all my life. I am certainly glad to be back with my own outfit. Love Fritz

August 20, 1944 (Note: At this time Fred had Scrub Typhus and ended up spending 3 months in hospital.)

My darling wife,

I am having the ward master write this letter for me. I have been in the hospital about a week. I still feel rather weak. but will be okay in due time. Please inform Mom and don't you two start imagining all sorts of things. I will have the boys write again soon. I love you. Love, Fritz

March 31, 1945

Hello sweetheart,

I'm back with the company again. I have had my fill of hospitals. I hope I never see the inside of one ever again. I thought perhaps we would be relieved by the time I returned, but then I suppose from what I hear we will spend at least another month here in the mountains. The ole 6th broke the record in the Southwest Pacific, with 78 straight days of combat and still going strong of course. Yours forever, Fritz

April 2, 1945

Hello darling,

At the present, I'm sitting in my little hole trying to keep dry. It's raining pretty hard now, but it doesn't last long, thank the Dear Lord. These mountains are terrible when it rains. I have sand bags around my hole and it helps keep the water out. Gad honey, I won't know how to act when I'm able to relax in a decent home. I like to think about us in a home together. I'm so lonely for you sweetheart. Damn, I'd give anything to be able to snuggle up to you at this moment. Oh well! I'll continue to think about it – memories help a great deal. You have the cutest figure "Freck" and I love to be with you. We did have fun, didn't we honey? I like to look at all the pictures I have of you. I don't have many now since my barracks bag was lost during the landing, in fact I don't have any of my personal belongings except what I have managed to gather from time to time from the Red Cross and etc. Your loving husband, Fritz

July 18, 1945

Hello darling,

No doubt you are wondering what's happened to me. Well! I'm back in the hospital again. Nothing too serious, I guess. I'm wounded in the left arm. It will probably take some time to heal. I'm being evacuated possibly tomorrow to a General Hospital. I certainly have had my share of luck. It's a treat to be out of the hills in spite of the fact I'm wounded.

I sure miss receiving your letters honey. Gosh, it will be weeks until I hear from you. Keep writing to the same address and I'll let you know as soon as possible if any changes are made. Now please don't worry – I'm sure every thing's going to be okay. I love you sweets. Love and kisses, Fritz

October 10, 1945

Hello darling,

I thought sure I'd leave today. It won't be long though, I should be right on top of the list. I'll probably leave between this date and the 15th. McCarthy and a few other fellows from our company are leaving today. Rumors are that another ship will leave Thursday. I'll surely be on that one.

This waiting is terrible honey. It seems as though I've been at this camp for ages. Time drags so. Some of the fellows have been going to Manila. One of them missed his ship. He really regrets it now. They put you at the bottom of the list when that happens. We never know when we might be on a shipping list so it's best to endure the boredom. I can stand most anything now.

You know sweetheart I have dreamt about you nearly every night this week. Yesterday afternoon I fell asleep while reading, and in that dream I could see you very clearly. When I awoke, I actually expected to see you, then was disappointed, of course when I tried to continue the dream. It never works – damn it!

Gosh honey it's hard to realize that I'll be home soon. I'll simply burst with joy. I've been in this Army so long. I'll need to see my Honey to believe I'm actually home. I hope I'll be relaxed when I see you. I want to be able to speak at least.

It won't take me long to adjust myself, I think. I think of you so much that sometimes it seems we were never apart. You have been with me always darling. Take good care of yourself baby. See you soon. With lots of love, Fritz

*Note from Linda M. Schmidt, who submitted this story on Mrs. Jones' behalf:

Frederick J. Jones, Hamilton, Ohio, was a World War II Radio Man with the 6th Division, U.S. Army. He served in New Guinea and Luzon, Philippines. He served from 1941 to the end of WWII in November 1945. Fred earned a Bronze Star for volunteering to go out on an Intelligence mission in the Philippines. He also won a Purple Heart for being wounded by a Japanese hand grenade on that same mission. Fred Jones died in May of 2011 at the age of 93. Fred and Dorothy were from Middletown, Ohio and later raised their children in Hamilton, Ohio.