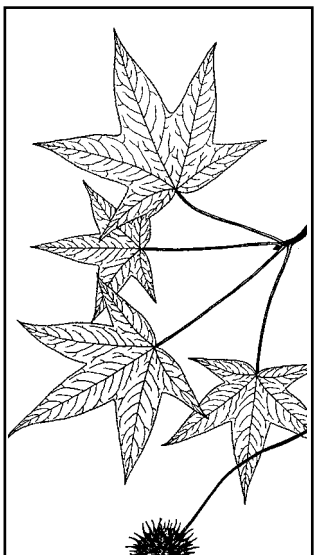


Waiting at home for young Jabo Turner



SWEET GUM
By Sammy Wright

as governor. The islands were officially made a territory of the United States.

A few words about Taft are probably appropriate, because he became president of the country a few years later. He was probably the most intelligent president, for he was an honor graduate of Yale. He was certainly our biggest president at 337 pounds. After leaving the presidency, he served as a professor of law at Yale. He later served as Solicitor General, Secretary of War, and as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Taft was the only American to head both the Executive and Judicial Branches of our government. He hated politics, but his wife love it and all the social benefits that came with being First Lady. She quickly established cordial relationships with the Japanese rulers, and they rewarded her with a gift of one thousand cherry trees. Those trees still bloom every spring in Washington, D.C.

There is some more irony here, because thirty-one years later, the Japanese invaded the Philippine Islands and forced General Douglas MacArthur and his soldiers to flee to Bataan. The Japanese then invaded Bataan, and President Roosevelt sent a Navy submarine to Bataan to get the general and take him to Australia. The General's parting words to the officials on Bataan were: "I shall return." Preparing for his return was the reason why Jabo and thousands of soldiers and Marines were sent to the islands.

When going to the islands, Jabo could find some solace in believing that the weather there would not be as hot and damp as that in Brightwater, and that constituted another irony. The hottest and most humid day in Brightwater could not compare to a normal day in the islands. They are in the tropical zone and most of them are covered by rain forests that stretch on forever.

There is even some irony in calling the group islands, for in reality they



Jabo Turner in the U.S. Navy

are over 7200 islands are unnamed. Jabo's ship docked at Little Sabuu Island, and the Japanese were waiting for them. Many of the soldiers did not even make it to the island before falling under the enemy fire. But those who did make it offered resistance even while digging foxholes on the beach. Sleeping in foxholes would be their methods of getting a little rest for the next year. The price of liberty has never been cheap, but there have always been men like Jabo who are willing to pay that price.

Communications with Dorothy was limited, usually on Jabo's part, only a few letters could be sent out each month, but Dorothy wrote every day. Her letters were a welcomed relief from the intensity of war, and from the constant gunfire and the millions of chattering monkeys on the islands. Food often consisted of only coconuts and bananas from the trees that grew wild in the jungle.

While Jabo continues with the fighting, let us devote some time to Dorothy, because wives who were left at home had their own constant worries. Every letter was

cherished, but the day that it was written was viewed with anxiety. Perhaps the letter was only a month old, but every wife knew that a lot could happen in a month. Even more, every stranger that came by or even drove down the road was viewed with extreme caution. Was the driver really looking for someone, or was he a messenger with bad news from the War Department? It is true that a soldier dies only once, but a wife of mother dies a thousands times.

Dorothy split her time between the Jackson's at Jackson Spur and the Turner's at Needham. Fortunately, there was a method of transportation from the Spur to Needham that never failed, and that was the "Doodle Bug," the passenger train on the AT&N that ran every day of the year. If she could make it to Needham, she could catch a ride to the Turners with Miss Lois Manley, the contract mail carrier on the Needham route.

Dorothy worked some at the store in Land, but the days were still long and the waiting was painful. The only thing longer than the days were the sleepless nights, for the darkness seemed to

hasten the dreadful anxiety. She was seventeen when they married, and it seemed as if he had been away forever.

MacArthur did return with an invasion force in October, 1944. He had devised an island hopping strategy that went around or completely by-passed many heavily fortified islands. Those maneuvers saved thousands of American lives and helped lead to Japan's defeat. Of course, the ultimate reason for Japan's surrender was Truman's use of the Atomic Bomb, but MacArthur's tactics did greatly weaken the Japanese fighting forces.

Many of the former soldiers who served under General MacArthur still view him as America's greatest general. He did what he could to defeat the Japanese and save the lives of his soldiers, and history will always testify to that fact, for a man does what he has to do, and the general did it well.

After the fighting in the Philippines stopped and Japan surrendered, Jabo was sent to Tokyo. He served in the Occupation forces because he did not have enough points for discharge. While there, his records were evaluated and he received two citations for bravery under fire while fighting in the jungles.

During one fierce battle, he climbed down into a crater to remove a wounded man and had scarcely made it back to the top of the crater when another bomb entered the hole and exploded. At another time, he dragged a wounded man to safety and then carried him to first aid where his life was saved.

As a member of the occupation forces, Jabo was assigned to a job in the Post Office where he drew the job as a driver who delivered mail from Yokohama to Tokyo and on out into the fields where various units were serving. He drove a jeep, and it seemed rather strange for a few weeks that no enemy was shooting at him.

Jabo always wanted to fly, and one of the units to which he delivered mail was an Army Air Corps

unit. A pilot in the corps was always trying to get Jabo to go up with him, but Jabo was always a little apprehensive. One day he agreed to let the pilot take him up in a Piper Cub. Jabo enjoyed the first few feet of flight, until they left the ground and the pilot decided to do a roll over. He then went up near the clouds and flew over the ocean until sending the plane toward the water in a steep dive. He leveled the plane out a few feet above the water and returned to the landing strip. Jabo lost his ambition to fly that day.

The time in Japan was easy when compared to that in the jungles, but Jabo was often overcome with homesickness. He was only nineteen when he married, and he missed Dorothy very much, and he missed his parents, and all the people in Needham. Finally, one day he was called to the orderly room of his unit and told that he had enough points to go back to the states.

And then, the last irony developed. In a year of jungle fighting, Jabo never felt sick at any time. That night, his side ached so badly that he went to see the medics. After a quick examination, the medics rushed him to an emergency room where a doctor removed his appendix. The operation delayed his departure for three weeks.

When this column takes up again, we will follow Jabo and Dorothy as they pursue the American Dream, which includes building a house and starting a family. On behalf of all of us, we offer our thanks to Jabo for serving us well.

Now, let's bring him home. When he reached Needham, Dorothy was waiting at the home of his parents. She had recently turned nineteen. Stunned and speechless, Jabo could only stare at her in disbelief for a minute, then he managed to say "My, you look beautiful."

"Perhaps," Dorothy responded. "But you should have seen me when I was
--- Eighteen."



Easter bags for hospice

BUTLER — Lavon Bonner and Claudette Gibson, Volunteers for SouthernCare Hospice, present Easter bags to Charie Tillman, Volunteer Coordinator. SouthernCare is a "Special kind of caring", a medical ministry for terminal-ill patients and families. Volunteers at SouthernCare provide joy and support to these patients and families. Bonner, Gibson and Jo Smith (not pictured) volunteered their time to make these bags. They were filled with many goodies for both men and women. SouthernCare is located in Grove Hill, and serves Clarke, Choctaw, Washington, Monroe, Wilcox and Marengo counties. If you would like to be a Volunteer or know someone who might benefit from our service you can contact Tillman at 1-888-641-6126.

GRADS Galore!

Don't miss them in next week's Sun!

FOR SALE BY OWNER
Three Parcels of Property



Sale Date: Friday, May 11, 2007, 10:00 a.m.

<p>Terms of Offering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sealed Bids (Lump Sum) May Bid on Individual Parcels or any Combination of Parcels 5% Earnest Money Required 	<p>Terms of Sale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing on or before 30 days from sale Conveyance by General Warranty Deed furnished by the seller Landowner reserves the right to reject any and all bids
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For Bid Package and Information, Contact —
Graham Forestry & Appraisal Services
John L. Graham, Jr.
Registered Forester: MS#1264, AL#1436
Certified General Real Property Appraiser: MS#GA-300, AL# 000275
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Way to GO
HALEY ADAMS
Lady Indian!
3rd Place Area Softball Tournament

- Pitcher • 3rd Baseman
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Hang in there,
it can only get better!

Love,
Moma, Daddy,
Caleb, Kensley & Cason

