

Jimmy Courchane remembered:

“In 1944, I worked for Eickmeyer moving houses and driving truck. Eickmeyer moved houses all over Washington State. I kept this job until I joined the United States Army Air Force at Fort Lewis, Washington, on March 6, 1946. My basic training was at Sack Field, near San Antonio, Texas. Then I had more training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas and at Chanute, Illinois, where there was a sheet metal and airplane mechanic school. Before I went overseas I had still more training at Hamilton Field, California, this was in 1946. On our way over to Japan we took the northern route, where we hit a mine, the ship was damaged by the explosion, and fearing that it would sink they evacuated us to Pier 91 in Seattle by airlift. We had to wait for a month to get another ship.

Going across the Pacific the ship unloaded troops at most of the small islands that we sailed past by. It took us 47 days to cross the Pacific because of the zigzag maneuvers of the fleet. Our landing place was Yokohama, Japan. We were among the first occupation of Japan troops under General Douglas MacArthur. I was stationed first at Johnson Field, then at Yokota Air Base, being assigned to the A-26 bombers in the 318th Bomber Squadron, 5th Air Force. The A-26 were similar to the B-24 and B-26 bombers. While in Japan I got the chance to see most of the Japanese Islands. Once I was sent TDY to Clark Field in the Philippine Islands on Topographical missions.

I had never given up my interest in boxing, and I continued to box in the army. I fought some good fighters and Vince Martinez was one of my opponents. In Illinois I was able to see Barney Ross and Ralph "Tiger" Jones. I fought in the welterweight class. If I hadn't started drinking alcohol I think I could have made a career at boxing.

I left Yokota Air Base for home in September or October of 1947. I sailed on The General Leroy S. El Tinge O.A. Jones was on the same ship at the same time, but neither of us knew it or that we would be future a brother-in-law, nor did we even meet each other at that time.

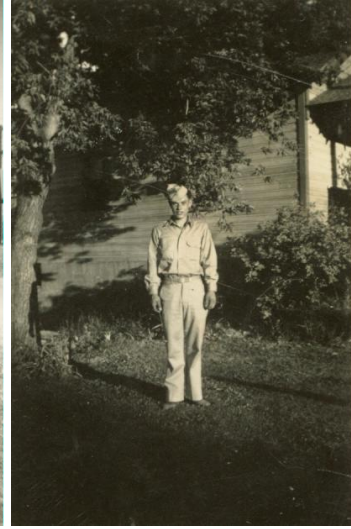
Following are a collection of photographs taking during Jimmy's time in the United States Army Air Force. Most were taken when he was in Japan as part of the Occupation of Japan Forces. Although Momma had a few pictures, Jimmy had a photo album that I had never seen before. This album was left with Melba, when she and Jimmy divorced, and forgotten about. After Jimmy died his son, Dick, came over to East Wenatchee and gave the album to me. Jimmy is in almost all of the pictures that follow, but some are of A-26 bombers and other types of aircraft of World War II. And some are of guys whose names are now forgotten. He only mentioned the name of Jack Lewis as one of his buddies in the photographs. Steve and Joe Courchane have added a few more to this collection. These photos are jewels and I am glad to have them.



Jimmy Courchane  
(This was Momma's)



"Gasca and friends" Jimmy on right



Jimmy



Jimmy wearing a steel pot (or helmet liner)



They are wearing shiny jackets with a logo on the back. Jimmy on left



Jimmy on left



"Jimmy and friend" 1947



Jack Lewis & Jimmy with bombs  
Notice the aircraft in the background?



Jimmy standing by the sign, A-26's were a type of bomber.



Jimmy in the center.



As Jimmy's outfit was at Yokota Air Field, this must be the city of Yokota, Japan. A neat post-war photo of Jimmy standing in the middle of its street.



Jimmy and Jack Lewis in cockpit of Dippermouth



Jimmy on the wing above the propeller, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right.



Jimmy in back (center)  
have been taken either at Sack Field, near San Antonio, Texas or Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as he was stationed at both places.



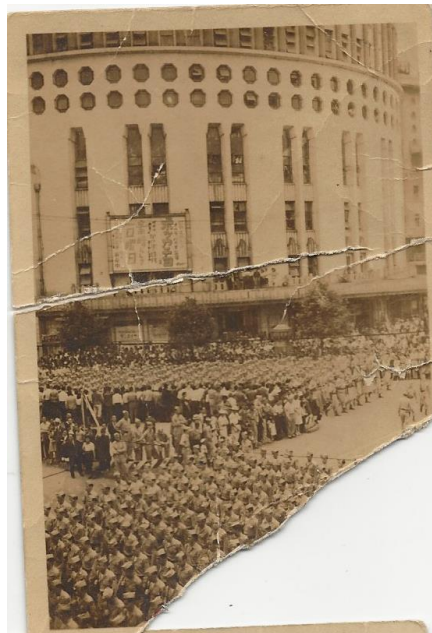
Jimmy on a Texas longhorn, this must  
have been taken either at Sack Field, near San Antonio, Texas or Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as he was stationed at both places.



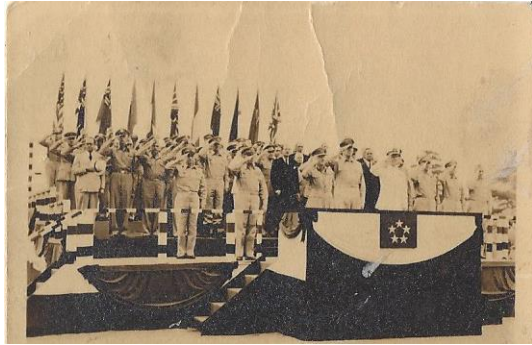
Jack Lewis and Jimmy on an A-26 Bomber, in 1947.



Jimmy?







General Douglas MacArthur



American Independence Day in Tokyo July 4, 1947





Jack Lewis & Jimmy Courchane



Jack Lewis



Jimmy Courchane on a tail of an A-26 Bomber



Jimmy holding a 45. caliber automatic pistol.  
Probably taken by Jack Lewis.



Jimmy on the right (This photo developed from wrong side of negative, as the ribbons should be above their right pockets). Notice that they are wearing Eisenhower jackets. I wonder what the triangle on Jimmy's sleeve meant?



Jimmy & friends with a .30 caliber water-cooled machine-gun



? & Jimmy





tugboat



“Gasca and friends” Jimmy on right.

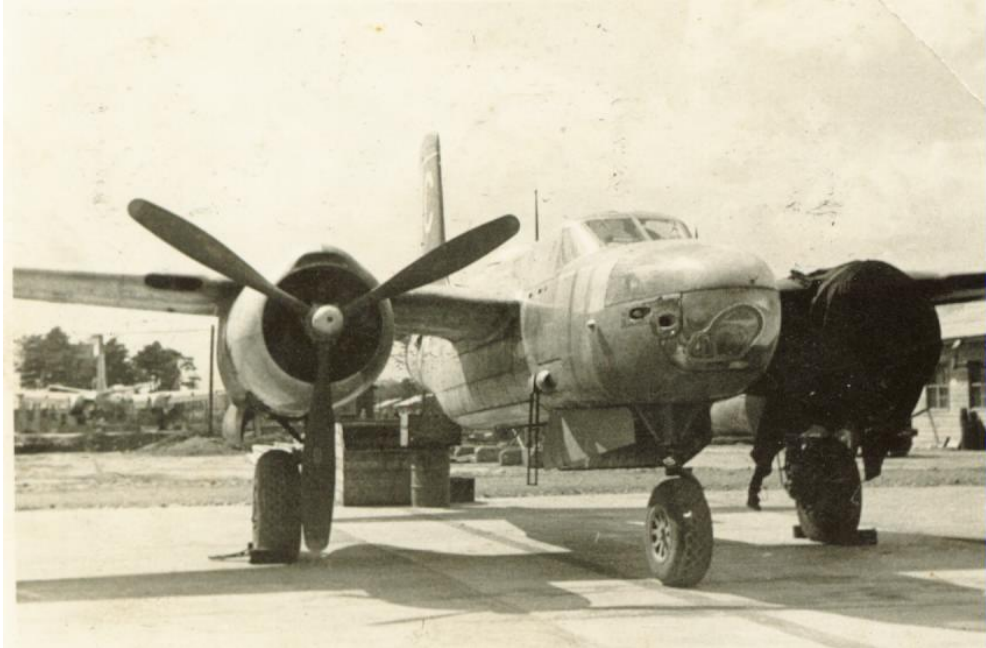




Jimmy



Jimmy standing by some type of aircraft.



A-26 Bomber minus a propeller

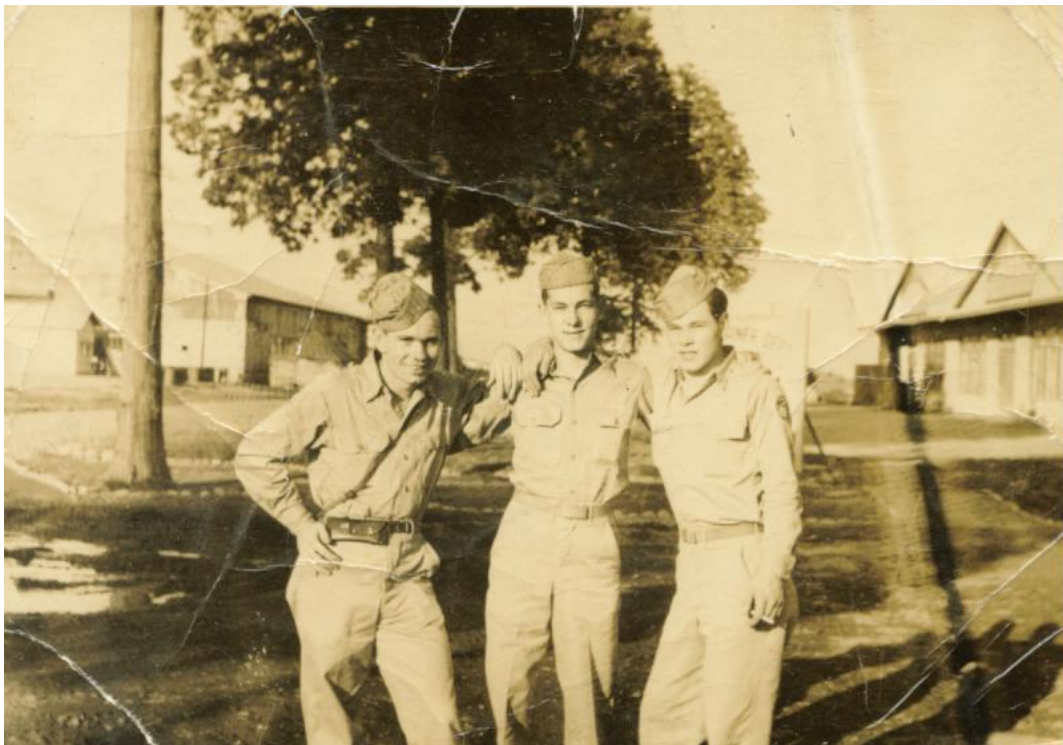




Jimmy sitting on a cannon







Jimmy



Jimmy



Jimmy on left

The Martin B-26 Marauder, a twin-engine light bomber, entered U.S. Army Air Forces service in 1941. Over 5,000 were built, and the aircraft were used in all theaters of operations. All Martin B-26s were declared obsolete by the United States Air Force in 1948, but few had survived even until that date as airworthy aircraft. The B-26 designation was transferred to the Douglas A-26 in June 1948 after the Martin bomber was withdrawn from service.

The Douglas A-26 Invader, a twin-engine attack aircraft, was used operationally for the first time in 1944. The A-26 was operational in the Pacific in the later stages of the campaign against Japan. It remained in frontline service after the end of World War II, particularly as the principal offensive weapon of Tactical Air Command (TAC), when it was created in 1946 from the wartime Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces.

In June 1948, the attack category for aircraft mission designation was officially abandoned by the U.S. Air Force. The designation of the Douglas A-26 was changed to B-26. Concurrent with this change, the Martin B-26 Marauder was withdrawn from service. The Douglas B-26s were used extensively for night interdiction missions flown by the 3rd Bombardment Group from Iwakuni, Japan, during the Korean War.

<http://www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil/PopTopics/B26.htm>

The Douglas A/B-26 bomber was the only American bomber to fly missions in three wars. After World War II, it served as a first-line bomber during the Korean War and during the Vietnam War. Douglas built 2,503 A/B-26 Invaders. During production a number of modifications were progressively introduced so that by 1948, the A-26 was one of the few wartime aircraft types still in service with the post-war U.S. Air Force. When the famous Martin B-26 Marauder retired and the Air Force deleted the designation "A" (for attack category), the Douglas Invader took on the B-26 designation. Invader versions included the A-26D and A-26E light bombers, GA-26C ground training aircraft, and the KA-26A tanker. Some A/B-26s were equipped for photo reconnaissance, and during the 1960s, some surplus A/B-26s were used in the target-towing role. The last U.S. military Invader was retired in 1972 and donated to the National Air and Space

Museum. <http://www.boeing.com/history/mdc/invader.htm>

First Flight: July 10, 1942

Wingspan: 70 feet

Length: 50 feet

Height: 18 feet 6 inches

Ceiling: 22,100 ft

Range: 1,400 miles

Weight: 35,000 pounds

Power plant: Two 2,000-horsepower P&W R-2800-27 engines

Speed: 355 mph

Range: 1,800 miles

Accommodation: Three crew

Armament: Eight .50-inch machine guns, 14 5-inch rockets, and 5,000-pound bomb



Jimmy straight up from here in ink pen circle, 4 rows back. /!\ he wearing a service cap.

Jimmy's Certification of Military Service United States of America shows:  
This certifies that James J. Courchane 19 196 941 was a member of the Regular Army from March 6, 1946 to September 8, 1947. Service was terminated by Honorable Discharge Last Grade, Rank or Rating was Private"

"Once back home Eickmeyer hired me again for a while. On May 1, 1948 I married Betty Jean Merriman at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Later I got into trouble for assault, this was in 1949, and was sent to the Monroe Reformatory, after spending time in the Chelan County jail. A man named Eisenhart who owned a furniture store in Wenatchee was instrumental in getting my release in 1950." By Jimmy Courchane as told to Chalk Courchane.



The 3 photographs above are of Jimmy boxing in a welter-weight class bout. It seems to be aboard a ship, as water can be seen in the background. Jimmy is on the left in the first picture, on the right in the second & on the left again in the last one. Notice the women on board? Must be docked at some port, Puget Sound?



Jimmy and Betty Merriman Courchane