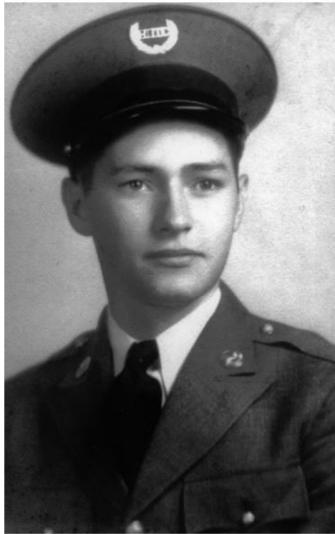


A Son Honors His Dad's Wartime Experiences in the South Pacific

Neal Bertrand often imagined what it was like for his dad to be in the South Pacific during World War II. A few days before his father passed away, he asked Neal to take care of the Japanese rifle and bayonet he found in Manila in 1945. It was then Neal decided to place in high honor the hundreds of photos his dad took during his tour of duty.



Dad's Army ROTC photo at Louisiana State University, circa 1938.

Curtis Bertrand was just a country boy with a camera when he entered the U.S. Army in World War II. He returned home from the Southwest Pacific Theater with 600 pictures to share with family and friends, never realizing the importance these unique views of the war would provide.

"I wrote *Dad's War Photos* to honor my father, that's true," says Neal, "but I hope it will give younger generations, especially those whose forefathers served in the Pacific, some insight into how far-reaching the war really was." The book covers many aspects of Curtis's experiences in the war: leaving the farm in Opelousas, Louisiana, going to boot camp, being sent overseas, and eventually coming back home, all through the photos he took and his battalion's military records, which Neal sought out during his research.

Readers of *Dad's War Photos* will view pictures never seen before. They will feel the excitement and fear of sailing through enemy waters, they will come to know the loving bond of brotherhood and friendship amongst soldiers, and they will encounter the grief and mourning when a buddy dies while on a mission.

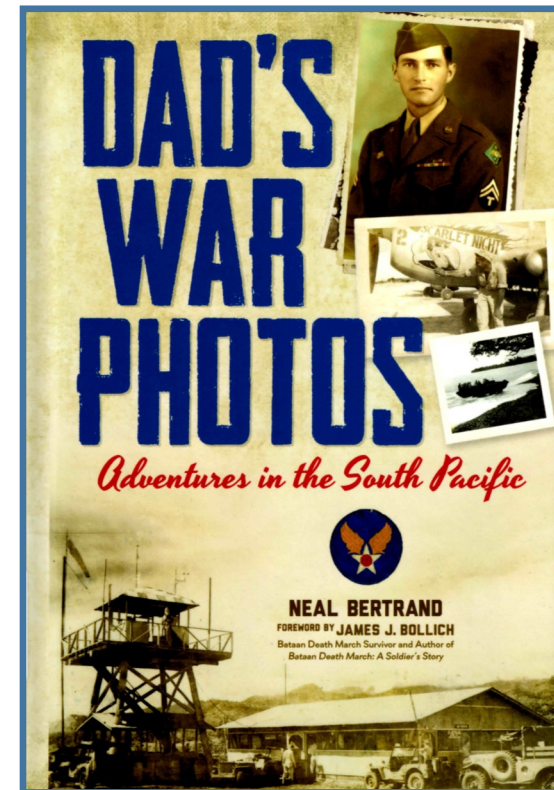
Through Curtis's eyes and camera lens, readers will be virtual eyewitness to the New Guinea battle campaigns in Dobodura and Saidor; the little-known battle for Biak Island and capture of Mokmer Airdrome; the Philippine Islands campaign, and the Battle of Manila and its reconstruction, and much more.

Neal Bertrand is a publisher, full-time author, and an avid genealogist and family historian. In 2009, he began scanning his dad's World War II photos. Neal had never seen what was written on the backs of the photos because they had been attached to the pages of three photo albums kept in a cedar chest in the hallway of Neal's childhood home. The photos were put in the albums in no particular order. But once he figured out the timeline, Neal was able to organize them by country, month, and year. After six months of culling the photos and researching diary entries of his dad's outfit, the 863rd Engineer Aviation Battalion, Neal was able to trace his father's steps from boot camp to war and back home.

Neal Bertrand,

author of

Dad's War Photos



Vernon Parish Library

Monday, April 18, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Bertrand will have autographed copies of his available after the program for sale.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neal Bertrand was born and raised in Opelousas, Louisiana, in the heart of Cajun Country. Cajun and Cooking are synonymous to those familiar with the culture, so it's no coincidence that Neal started his company, Cypress Cove Publishing, putting out cook-books. It's also no coincidence that his moniker since 2005 has been The Cookbook Dude. He is quick to recall that family holidays always revolved around food, no matter where he was. Whether it was barbecued steak from the cattle his family raised, or gumbo, Neal grew up with food and fun.



This is the camera my dad used to document his journey across the Pacific.

The cookbooks he has written and published have sold over 100,000 copies, and they are available both as print and e-book on Amazon, BN.com and through his website at www.CypressCovePublishing.com.

In 2009, Neal and his son Jeremy began scanning and photo-editing the war pictures of Neal's dad. Neither had ever seen the backs of the photos until then because they had been attached to the pages of three photo albums kept in a cedar chest in the hallway of Neal's childhood home. The photos were put in the albums in no particular order. But once he figured out the timeline, Neal was able to organize them by country, month, and year. After six months of researching battalion diary entries and culling the photos, Neal was able to trace his father's steps from boot camp to war and back home and he began compiling his findings into Dad's War Photos.

Prior to starting the war book, Neal was involved in charting his genealogy. He joined two genealogy societies and charted his ancestry back ten generations. Genealogy is one of Neal's favorite pastimes, as is starting a major creative project and watching it come to life, which he has done admirably with Dad's War Photos. Visit our website at www.DadsWarPhotos.com.



My dad with full pack is ready to get on the ship and move out to New Guinea. Photo taken in Townsville, Australia. Dad wrote on back of photo: "Gas mask on side; blankets, toilet articles, underwear and camera in my back pack. July 31, 1943."



Curtis on board SS Howard Stansbury on the way to Oro Bay, New Guinea.



A soldier sitting on a bullet-riddled truck.



Loading up and leaving Biak Island on LST 470.