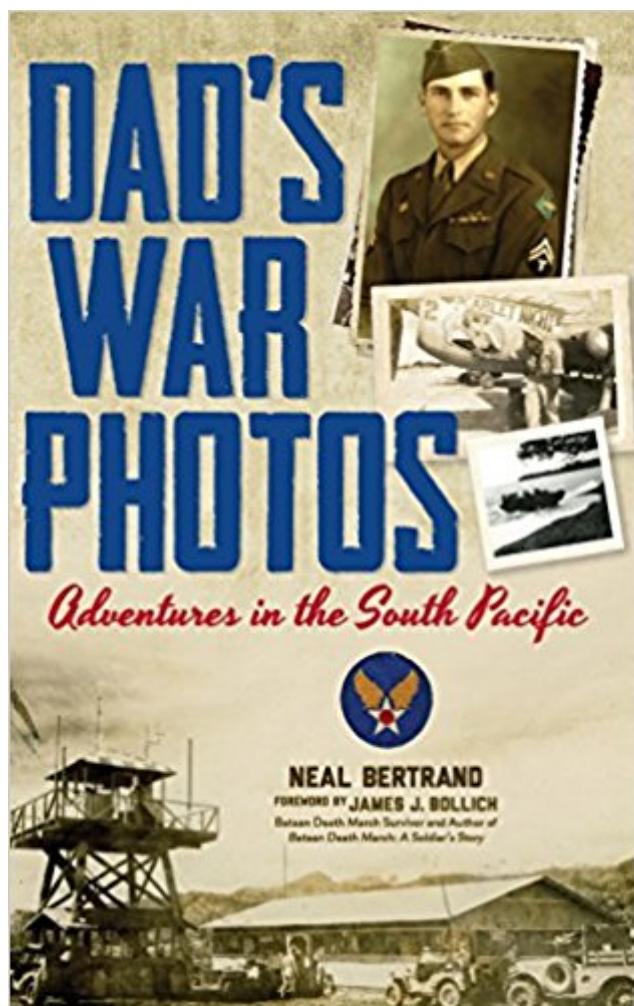


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# Dad's War Photos: Adventures In The South Pacific (Hardcover)



## Synopsis

Curtis Bertrand, a country boy with a camera, returned home from WWII in the South Pacific with over 600 photos. These never-before-seen pictures from his private stash, along with official battalion journal entries, and near-death experiences add drama, adventure, and expose the reality of war. Readers of Dad's War Photos will follow his photographic "breadcrumb trail" from home to war and back again with the help of 420 photos and 21 maps. Dozens of WWII aircraft with nose art, and photos of South Pacific natives in daily life are included. 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. 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. Thus far, the World War II photo memories and story of Curtis Bertrand have remained private. Now these pictures, along with official battalion diary entries, are being made available to the public, bringing to life his battalion's camaraderie and their heartbreak and harrowing experiences. The 863rd Engineer Aviation Battalion was stationed in three Australian cities during the summer of 1943: Sidney, Brisbane, and Townsville. Brisbane became the Pacific headquarters of U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander, after the Japanese forced him out of the Philippines in December 1941. Each stop was necessary for the complex task of getting the numerous battalions organized, fully equipped, and putting the finishing touches on the engineering and battle planning strategy. After that, it was on to the New Guinea Campaign, including Dobodura and Saidor. New Guinea was key in defeating the Japanese bases as laid down by General MacArthur's strategy called Operation Cartwheel. There are 81 photos depicting men building airstrips, camp life, native scenery, and more. In a chapter on the Battle of Biak, the near death experiences of Curtis and his war buddies as their boat approached the island are graphically displayed. A photo taken of Curtis's good friend Clifford G. Wynne, Jr. is included, just weeks before he died on Biak. Another 60 historical images are contained within this section. Finally, on December 21, 1944, the battalion arrived in the Philippines. 80 photos cover the destruction of the Battle of Manila and its reconstruction. Curtis's medals and souvenirs are depicted, along with the Japanese rifle and bayonet he brought home with him. The homecoming

and post war life chapters give an intimate view of what many returning soldiers faced. For Curtis it was getting back to work on the farm, meeting his lovely wife, and trying to put bad memories aside. Two appendices include extensive photo coverage of WWII aircraft nose art and the daily lives of natives in the South Pacific. **PRAISE FOR DAD'S WAR PHOTOS** I've never seen a book that covers so much of the war in a pictorial form. This book presents a month-by-month account in pictorial form of what it was like to serve in an engineering battalion in support of the fighting troops in the South Pacific. The author has also included official accounts of the activities directly from the battalion history records. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in seeing WWII from a different view. Hughes Glantzberg

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Praise For Dad's War Photos: Author and Publisher, Neal Bertrand brings the battles and the people to life in his book. He uses Official Military Records and his father's photographs to tell the story of World War II in the South Pacific. Descriptions of the battles and numerous photographs of planes and natives, involve the reader in the war. A monthly column titled "Elsewhere In The War" describes locations of battles throughout the world, and gives the reader a chance to experience the immense size, destruction and loss of life. Connie Gremillion, whose father was a Major in the South PacificLafayette, LAAuthor of A House for Eliza and Never Say Goodbye "I am sure the book will bring back many memories for those veterans who are still with us, but perhaps more importantly it will allow the younger generations,especially those

whose forefathers served in the Pacific, to see and understand more about the war that encompassed the world."-Ray Bowden, [usaaf-noseart.co.uk](http://usaaf-noseart.co.uk); Dorset, England "I've never seen a book that covers so much of the war in a pictorial form. It presents a month-by-month account of what it was like to serve in an engineering battalion in support of the fighting troops in the South Pacific."-Hughes Glantzberg, President of the 461st BombardmentGroup (H)

Association "This is a fascinating first person view of an enlisted man's perspective. You witness his part of the war through his eyes and camera lens. This is a part of the war few have documented so thoroughly from such a unique perspective."-Fred Leger, a life-long student of WWII history; Baton Rouge, LA "I thoroughly enjoyed this book! Neal has done a great job of organizing the book so any reader can get a real taste of where his dad went and what he saw. I especially enjoyed the World War II nose art photos."-Sheila Fredrickson, Fort Worth, TX I enjoyed reading the book. The photographs interspersed with notes from the official history help to describe the story of your father's unit.Peter DunnBrisbane, Australia -A Webmaster, "Australia @ War"ozatwar.com A Many war veterans do not talk about their war experiences. Curtis Bertrand did justA the opposite. Bertrand's war story recounts his journey from Mallet, Louisiana, to theA exotic South Pacific in images of life that he saw as part of the 863rd Engineering AviationA Battalion from 1943 to 1945. Bertrand's story is still being told, but this time it is told in aA pictorial history book compiled by his son.The photographs, documented by his unit's Official Military Record, provide aA compelling story of a young man seeing strange people, exotic lands, death, weapons ofA war, and the camaraderie of American soldiers. The photographs of New Guinea nativesA evoke images in National Geographic; pictures of Bilibid POW camp and natives plowingA rice in the Philippine Islands are reminiscent of Life magazine.This book is a testimony to a soldier who will not be forgotten, for his wartimeA pictures are remembered in this book.Alma Brunson ReedEunice, LAAuthor ofA Images of America: EuniceA This is not just a book containing unique, never seen before photos, it's much moreA than that. It is a journey of a generation as seen through the eyes of a young AmericanA during the Pacific War. They say a picture speaks a thousand words, and in this book itA does more than that. Become immersed in the journey as you travel through time, seeingA glimpses of what it must have been like to be a raw recruit thrown into remote jungles ofA New Guinea. Witness from a photographer's eye the living conditions, the humor, andA tragedy of war.See photos of Manila and the devastation caused by its liberation from Japanese forcesA and you can understand why we all owe so much to that generation.This is a story passed from father to son and well worth the read.Capt. Matthew Laird Acred, ATPL Pilot &

Aviation Historian Manila, Philippines and Brisbane, Australia -> [asisbiz.com](http://asisbiz.com)"Dad's War Photos" combines my favorite things: history and photography. Soldiers were building/rebuilding bridges, roads, theaters, and hospitals. The 'Military Record' entries and 'Elsewhere in the War' sections added more to the story. Reading what was recorded, then seeing it confirmed in the pictures made the history buff in me jump for joy. There are surprising pictures such as the coal-burning car. If you like history, planes, or just WWII, don't miss out on this. These pictures are a rare piece of history! Angel Estep, Blogger and WWII History Buff, Rainy Day Reads Author and publisher Neal Bertrand brings the battles and the people to life in his book. He uses official military records and his father's photographs to tell the story of World War II in the South Pacific. Descriptions of the battles and numerous photographs of planes and natives involve the reader in the war. A monthly column titled 'Elsewhere In The War' describes locations of battles throughout the world and gives the reader a chance to experience the immense size, destruction, and loss of life. Connie Gremillion, author and photojournalist [Curtis's son] originally thought [Dad's War Photos] would simply be a picture book . . . As he worked on the project, he said another veteran informed him the battalion had an official diary . . . That diary is now the backbone of the book, richly illustrated with the photos. Daily World

PRAISE FOR DAD'S WAR PHOTOS: "I've never seen a book that covers so much of the war in a pictorial form. This book presents a month-by-month account of what it was like to serve in an engineering battalion in support of the fighting troops in the South Pacific. The author has also included official accounts of the activities directly from the battalion history records. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in seeing WWII from a different view." Hughes Glantzberg  
As a young boy, I often imagined what it was like for my dad to be in the South Pacific during World War II. I had so many questions. What did he do? Where did he go? What was it like being away from home for so long? I grew up looking at his war pictures - there were hundreds of them. Some of them were shocking to me since I was so young. But whenever I asked my dad if I could look at his war pictures he willingly walked to the cedar chest in the hallway of our home and grabbed his three large photo albums. And as a devoted father, he always answered every question I had about them. I loved my dad and we had great times together. But I also have some regrets in regards to the book I would eventually write, like not videotaping his war stories or removing those photos from the album pages they were attached to and reading the captions on the back. Ultimately, those helped me a great deal in producing this title. I appreciate your reading my story, and I encourage you to buy this book for yourself and for your loved ones whose ancestors were in the war. I trust that it will further inform you about this fascinating piece of history. Neal

Like FAMILY!

What a fantastic book! It is real first hand primary source history. This is a wonderful tribute of a son for his father, but more than that it is a fitting recognition of the heroes of the greatest generation. This book combines personal photos and stories of Charles Bertrand with the official military record of his unit the 863rd Engineer Aviation Battalion in the Pacific theater. It is well researched and documented, a treasure for any military history buff. What is different about this particular book is that it is not about any specific action against the enemy or singular heroic feats. It follows this unit as it supports the war effort. It shows the aggregate heroic spirit in the actions of all those who served proudly and honorably. Those who are students of the military art will appreciate the contribution made by this man and his unit in bringing about the victory our nation earned in the Pacific. His son has done him proud. Thank you Neal Bertrand for sharing these priceless photographs and this story with us. .

I am so glad that Neal Bertrand took his father's pictures and journals and put together this book. This is a fabulous primary source. As a teacher I am please to have it as a resource, although I am sure I will be accosted by upper grade teachers who teach history for my copy. I believe in sharing. I loved not only the pictures which gave you a first hand look at what was taking place in the Pacific, but also the military journal entries. This gave you a first hand look at what else was going on with him and the other's in his battalion during the month. Another added bonus was the section titled "Elsewhere in the War". This section allowed me to see not only what was happening where he was but also in Japan, Germany and other important places. Every book I've ever read similar to this deals only with what was going on in that particular area. This book give the reader a wider picture of the war. I find this beneficial for students who may use this as one of their primary sources when researching. I would however caution if you are using this as a resource for middle school. Not all middle schoolers are mature enough for some of the pictures. Yes I know that shocks you. There is a picture I found hilarious of a group of men on an outside latrine, naked butts to the camera. Then there are the pics of the half naked women on the planes, or the Philippine women who are naked from the waste up. This is life, but not all middle schoolers are mature enough. I must also caution that some of the pictures are quite graphic of corpses. All in all this is a book that is not just a photo journal, but a wealth of written information as well. I am so happy I had the honor of reading and

reviewing this book.

This book is a wonderful tribute to everyone who fought in the South Pacific during WWII. It's a tribute for a father by a son who painstakingly collected the many pictures his father took during his time in the army. The pictures really help the reader to understand life as it was during wartime and includes photos of soldiers at work and play, natives of the islands where they traveled, equipment, wildlife (including a boa constrictor who made himself at home in their camp one day and a pet Wallaby) and variety of things that comprised the day to day life of one soldier. It includes pictures of his father's return home and the life he made with the author's mother after the war until his death in the year 2000. Bertrand also gives updates on what is happening elsewhere in the war to help give the reader an idea of how things were progressing in Europe and hits the high lights of every major event that happened during the war. It's a thoughtful, well laid out representation of war from one man's perspective and it made for interesting reading and could serve as a great source for anyone researching WWII in the South Pacific. I have no reservations in recommending this book to anyone interested in the subject matter.\* Well done Mr. Bertrand.\*I was given this book to read and review in exchange for an honest and unbiased opinion which I have given. I do not know this author and no other form of compensation has taken place.

What an interesting piece of history! I was intrigued from the first time I opened this book. Mr. Neal Bertrand has done a great job giving honor and tribute to his father, Charles Bertrand and his service in the 863rd Engineer Aviation Battalion. It is a well researched and documented piece of work that not only highlights his father's service, but demonstrates the cooperative efforts of the Battalion and its contribution to the war effort as a whole in the Pacific Theatre. The title of the book is especially fitting. The firsthand photos give an amazing glimpse into a time that truly forged the Greatest Generation of our country. Highly recommended.

I was ten years old and an internee in Old Bilibid Prison in Manila when the battle of Manila took place. The photos and narrative in this book took me back many years when the American Forces liberated our prison and took care of us. The photos and narrative illustrate the massive job both the front line and support troops do in advancing the military against the enemy. The photos also include shots of a "sight -seeing" soldier. This book gives a different take on the war. I especially liked the notes on what was happening elsewhere in the war when the picture was taken.

My dad was also stationed on Biak Island during WWII. He was in a different outfit so was not in any pictures in the book, but the pictures and narratives that were in the book gave me a very clear picture what it was like to be on Biak at the time. For anyone who had a family member in the South Pacific during WWII, this book gives you a very good idea of the conditions. I would highly recommend this book.

The book is a very detailed journey of the lesser known Pacific front during World War II. The book is primarily a photolog of the mechanics of war. If you ever wondered how an army can cross oceans and set up bases far from home, this book is for you.

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