

## Lionel Duane Jacobsen

Born Dec 22, 1923

Died:

Service # 46004694

Period of Service: WW II

Sources: *B10 F2, Monument  
J Gay interview, The  
Observer Aug 31, 2000*

Joined American Legion Post 402 in 1946, and was Commander of the Post in 1952, 1972, and 1988.

Drafted May 16, 1945 in Milwaukee. Discharged 12/8/1946 Ft Bragg, NC.

Trained at Shepherd Field, TX

Camps include Ft Sheridan, Truax Field, Boca Raton, FL, Greensboro, NC

Served as duty non commissioned officer in charge of groups of men being processed for overseas replacements.

Released honorably discharged Dec 12, 1945, then reenlisted in Regular Army 12/13 1945 in Boca Raton, FL SGO 3501<sup>st</sup> AAF base unit. Put in 106 AAF Base Unit, Greensboro, NC.

Medals include WW II Victory medal .

Has a home on Jackson Harbor Road where he farmed for many years.

His parents were William Volney Jacobsen and Emilie Eugenia Koyen (married May 13, 1920).

Married Elizabeth Mueller Holmes on June 20, 1970, divorced 1986. Married Mildred Goodman in 1990.

Dewey served on the Washington Island Town Board for 8 years, and also was Town Assessor for 16 years.

See John Gay interview for Library of Congress and *Observer* article

## Lionel Duane Jacobsen



**VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT**  
Preserving Stories of Service for Future Generations

Interview with

**Dewey Jacobsen**

Conducted by Mr. John Gay

October 5, 2011

This project sponsored by the Indian Prairie Public Library  
in partnership with the Library of Congress

**This is John Gay on the morning of October 5, 2011, talking with Dewey Jacobsen about his military experiences. We're in our house on Green Bay Road on Washington Island, Wisconsin. Dewey, tell us when you went in the service, what you were doing at that time.**

I got drafted on May 15, 1945.

**Were you up here on the Island?**

Yes. I was here on the Island when I was drafted. I went in the service at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. And they sent me from there to Sheppard Field, Texas.

**Where is that?**

It's in the northern part of Texas, pretty close to the northern border of Texas. It's a training camp. That's where I took my basic. Then they came around after 30 days of basic and I got sent to radio mechanics school at Truax Field in Madison, Wisconsin.

**So you had four weeks of training? They were on a kind of 'hurry-up' mode, then!**

Well, I thought they did everything with us and that kind of deal.

**So you did marching and close-order drill?**

Yes. All of that. And it was in June when it was so hot. In Texas you couldn't sit down on the pavement.

**Good old Texas.**

And after that I was in Truax Field pretty much all summer. I was there quite a while before they ever got around to having us go to any classes. That didn't amount to nothing either. Then they were closing that part of it down, so they sent us to Boca Raton Army Air Base.

**You were in Wisconsin for how long?**

During the summer.

**The whole summer up there. That was working on what – mechanical things?**

I don't remember doing much of anything! We went to some classes, but we never got into the radio mechanics stuff.

**Well, the War in Europe was over about that time.**

Yes.

**And in August, 1945 they dropped the bomb and that was over then.**

Yes. Then they were closing that part up in Madison.

**How many people were there?**

I don't have much of an idea.

**Was it a big training camp there?**

It was supposed to be a school. I went there to go to school, but I don't remember going to any classes.

**Of course, at that time they were thinking about letting people go so they were probably trying to get rid of ...**

Then I went to Boca Raton Army Air Base in Florida. And that was a big old, spread out thing.

**That was in the Fall of 1945?**

Yes. I probably went down there in November. And by the middle of December they came around and said, "Well, if you sign up for one year in the regular Army you can get out after one year." So that's what I did. And I was glad I did that.

You got thirty days' leave to begin with, so I was home that Christmas.

**That was nice. Then you went back down to Florida?**

No. After that I was to report to Greensboro, North Carolina. And that was an overseas replacement depot. When I went there I thought I was going to go to Germany in the army of occupation.

This was the start of the overseas replacement depot and they needed a permanent party, so about 100 of us got held back. No one was going to complain about it! The next day ten guys went here, ten guys went there – they spread us out where they needed help. I got to be what I called a barracks chief. About every week I got a new bunch of guys. I took them to movies that they wanted to have, training places to teach them to march – as if they didn't know. They did close-order drill and were pretty good at that.

**So these guys were coming through all the time, and you were the permanent party for the replacement depot down in Greensboro. What was the name of the camp?**

Greensboro Army Air Base.

**That was the name of the thing. And you were actually assigned to the Army Air Corps.**

Yes.

**When you were drafted you were in the Army. But at that time they had an air force of their own, so you were actually assigned to the Army Air Corps.**

Yes.

**Then you were there in Greensboro from January, 1946 until you got out?**

Yes, until December of 1946.

**So you trained these guys. You were in charge of the barracks and you took them to ...**

You took them to wherever they had to go on base. They got some training for where they were going. I was supposed to get them there – the movie theater so they could watch movies.

**Training movies.**

Yes. And march them to the PX where they got their meals. And you'd take them back to the barracks.

**So they had a lot of free time, or did they keep them busy?**

They kept them fairly busy.

**So a barracks was about ...**

100 guys.

**Were they all draftees at the time, just going out for the army of occupation?**

Not really. We had two first sergeants who were going over.

**To Germany?**

Yes.

**Any particular event that took place that you remember that was kind of unusual?**

No, nothing I can think of.

**Greensboro got pretty hot, too, in the summer?**

Yes. By the middle of the summer, after about six months, we had about three or four guys going too. So we did all kinds of things. As a matter of fact, I got put into cook's school. I got put in the kitchen – the mess hall. The first thing I knew I was cooking on a troop train from North Carolina to Camp Stoneman, California.

**You were on a troop train? You had to cook on a troop train going out to California? What part of California?**

I went to Camp Stoneman.

**Where is that?**

No. You can see the San Francisco Bay in the distance. It's kind of high and you can see San Francisco Bay from there.

**And then did you stay out there?**

No, I just came back. I got five days to get out there, so I had three days home.

**You got home into Wisconsin?**

Yes. I went the northern route through Chicago, got off there and came home. I had three or four days – I don't remember which it was – and went back to finish my ...

**So you came back and took the ferry from Griffin back over to the Island.**

And after I did that and went back to North Carolina there wasn't much to do because we were closing up the base by that time. By the time I got there they had moved us out close to the gate, because I always had a permanent party pass.

I remember I never picked up the orders, so I didn't have them on me. When the MP came through on the train checking for my records, I wouldn't show him my permanent party pass so he reported me as AWOL.

**Because you didn't have your papers on you.**

And I wouldn't show him my pass. Actually I was too far away – I wasn't supposed to be that far away on my pass.

**A permanent party pass only allowed you to go so far?**

150 miles from camp. I knew better than to try to get away with that.

So after I was back there a few days I got called to headquarters and questioned. I told them to check their records that I was supposed to be there. But I'd never picked up my papers.

**Well, that was okay. So, at the end of 1946 they were cleaning out the camp and it was just being drawn down?**

Yes. By the time I got there I don't think there were 100 people there. A lot of bases were being closed. They moved us out by the gate in what were supposed to be the women's quarters.

**So, by the end of December they were ready to let you go. You had signed up for the extra year and out you came. That was pretty good. So then you were discharged down there in North Carolina?**

They didn't discharge us there.

**Did you come back to Fort Sheridan?**

No. I got discharged in North Carolina, but not in Greensboro.

**Anyway, you were discharged in North Carolina. You took the train back to Chicago and back up north. And when you got back home you were 23 years old. Did you start farming then?**

My dad was farming and I went back to farming.

**Up on where you are now?**

Yes.

**And you've been farming ever since. So from 1946, so you've been farming for 56 years since you got out of the Army.**

I've been an American Legion member for 66 years.

**66 years in the American Legion. That's pretty good. That's a long time. Were you ever Post Commander?**

Four times!

**Four times! They said, "We need a Post Commander; let's make Dewey Post Commander!"**

I guess maybe I volunteered. I know one time somebody else wanted to be commander. That time I only had it one year. Every time it seemed to be one year and somebody else wanted it. I was going to do it two years, but somebody else wanted to do it.

**So you had four terms as Post Commander.**

The first one was in 1952 or 1954. So I was one of the first; one of the early ones.

**Now we're talking about the Gislason-Richter Post 402. When did that begin? Was that after World War I or World War II?**

After World War I. Dad was doing. When they first met, they met upstairs at Tom Nelson's.

**On the top of Tom Nelson's bar?**

Yes. He had a big room up there. As a matter of fact, that's where I joined the Post. I went with my dad to a meeting when I was home on leave, so I joined the Post. That's why I'm 66 years, because I wasn't even out of the service yet when I joined.

So I was a member of the Post when they bought the Legion Hall. It had been a Baptist church.

**I thought it was an old church.**

And it had a roof with no beams in it, so that's what held it together; that's the way it was built. So we took the top deck off and put the beams in it, and an upstairs in it. I did a lot of work on that Post.

**And Vic Cornell, was he working on it, too?**

Back then Vic wasn't here.

**He was off-Island.**

He was down in Texas some place. He worked down in Texas.

**So your dad was in the service in World War I.**

He went away, but he really didn't see any service. After about three weeks they decided he had a heart problem, so they discharged him. It never bothered him, but they decided he had a heart problem.

**But he farmed then?**

Yes.

**So he was in the American Legion even before World War II.**

Yes. As a matter of fact, when he got drafted he was a helper on Poverty Island in Upper Michigan.

**What do you mean by helper?**

Keeper of the lighthouse. He was a helper. It was in 1917 that he got drafted.

**So he was actually in Michigan, theoretically, because that's in Michigan waters.**

Yes, but he was a resident here.

**That's interesting.**

As a matter of fact I remember him telling me he was here once on leave and was supposed to go back to Poverty Island. But it got real cold and there was 2" of ice all the way to St. Martin's. So another guy said he'd walk with him half way. I think they wore skis!

**Because it was so thin and you had to spread the weight.**

They wore skis and the guy walked with him about half way to St. Martin's. Another guy came back and he went to St. Martin's, Poverty Island. And by the next day the ice was gone again.

**That was scary. How far is Poverty from St. Martin's – about three or four miles?**

Yes.

**And then St. Martin's over to Rock Island is about 6 or 8 miles?**

Eleven miles, I think.

**And a mile from Rock Island to Washington Island. Now, is Summer Island the other side of Poverty?**

Yes.

**Well, that was a kind of scary walk, then. The skis spread the weight so they could walk.**

The scary part was after the ice was gone in a couple of hours! I suppose there was a swell on the Lake and it just broke it up.

**Well, Dewey, thanks for talking with us.**