

# Nicest Thing Anyone Has Done for Me

## Recalling San Francisco's Holiday Greetings

SEVERAL MONTHS after the end of WWII, I was among the 1,500 Army troops returning from the Philippines on the Navy transport USS Dickens.

We would be docking in San Francisco on December 24, 1945, but before I could view the Golden Gate Bridge, the ship's loudspeaker summoned me to an office for a lengthy typing assignment.

I later learned that I missed the scene on the pier, which was packed with nearly a thousand people and hundreds of cars. This was a typical welcoming committee at the time, and somehow, the mighty throng had whisked away all 1,500 soldiers in record time to local homes or departing trains.

When I finally gathered my gear, the deck and pier were empty—except for one couple standing next to their car. They had arrived late and were ready to turn back until they spotted me, the last soldier to leave the ship, walking down the gangway.

They proceeded to give me the most memorable Christmas holiday of my life. I was driven to their home and given a Christmas dinner and a soft bed to sleep the night away, luxuries unknown to me for a long time. They had made me, just a stranger, part of their family for the day.

The following day, I was taken down to the railroad station to board a train for Chicago and home.

Sadly, I lost the name of the folks who took me in that night, but I will never forget their kindness and generosity or all of the other special people of San Francisco.

I'm hoping that this couple or members of their family will read this and accept my belated but most sincere thanks.

— Richard S., Jenison, Michigan