



SERGEANT HAROLD WOLFE

## Where's Wolfe and Ward?

ATOS MEMBER RECALLS HAPPY MEMORIES  
OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

by Carroll F. Harris

The coming convention in Washington, D.C. brings back memories of days long gone by. With those memories comes the wondering of what happened to some of the people I knew when I was Yeoman, U.S. Naval Reserve assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Many an enjoyable hour was spent watching the stage shows at the Earle Theatre and listening to the organ. I think the organist was Johnny Slab — maybe I don't have that name correct and if it isn't there are many who will be able to correct me. Many hours were spent at the Capitol Theatre listening to Sam Jack Kauffman and his orchestra with Art Brown and later Milt Slosser at the organ. I was there when Gene Ford was manager and they introduced his lovely tune "Rain." There were more hours of fun doing other things in Washington and they are vivid in my memory, but the picture printed above is the reason for this story.

I was on my way home from a matinee at the Capitol when I passed by a restaurant/cocktail lounge and heard some interesting sounds emitted by an early model Hammond organ in the hands of one Larry Hendricks. The organ had two Hammond Solovox units incorporated into it like a third

manual. They could be played straight or through the Leslie speakers. Present were two U.S. Army Air Force Sergeants: Staff Sergeant M.E. Ward and Sgt. Harold E. Wolfe. The three of us became close friends while we were in Washington. Wolfe and I corresponded for a while and when I last heard from him he was in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Then I lost track of him.

After I left Washington, D.C. this picture was received. On the back was the inscription: "Taken March 30th, 1945, Tivoli Theatre, Washington, D.C. To my friend, Carroll Harris whose love for organ music indirectly made the picture possible. I am sincerely, Wolfe."

The first and last time I heard the Washington, D.C. TIVOLI organ really played was on Christmas Day 1944 when Wolfe invited a group of us who had to spend our holiday away from our families to come to the theatre early in the morning. He had worked on the instrument and to my young and inexperienced ears it was in excellent condition. Then I left Washington for the west coast. We corresponded intermittently. He told me he played the instrument for intermissions and then the war was over. The last I heard from him was from 416 Hamilton Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

In 1965 I read an article in THEATRE ORGAN about George Merriken and his Silver Springs Music Hall, and the TIVOLI Wurlitzer. I wrote to George and received a very nice reply, along with pictures of his installation. I was careless and lost the pictures and then started looking for the above photograph and tried to do some backtracking to find Ward and Wolfe without success. The death of Sierra Chapter organist George A. Seaver rekindled the musings of what happened to Wolfe and Ward.

This sounds like a "sob sister story." It isn't. It is a partial story of a theatre organ which had fallen into disuse, and then enjoyed a brief revival during World War II only to fall into silence once more. In 1958 it was purchased by George Merriken and installed in his Music Hall to be enjoyed by many. It is my wish to hear it again one of these days soon — I'd like to hear it and all the other fine instruments you will be enjoying next month. I can't though, but I know many of you will and I just wonder if Sgts. Ward and Wolfe will be among the group. □

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