

Ted Fortner

Autobiography

June 17, 2014

This autobiography (or whatever) is a record of what I can remember or have told of my life beginning at Valley, WA, Oct./Nov. 1929. The Trip began at Waits Lake near Valley I think my brother Ike ran off the dock into the lake. I remember him sitting on my lap wringing wet. There is a picture of the family standing beside our car, a 1918 Mitchell 6 cylinder, four door touring sedan (or a four door convertible with removable side curtains). In the pictures our parents, Joyce 8-19-1921, Dorothy 8-16-22, Theodore (Ted) 10-24-24, The Twins Doris and Issac 6-23-26, Ellen 12-15-27, Judy 5-11-29, Dad holding Ellen and mom holding Judy.

I've been told we stayed the first night at Aunt Verna's Farm in Wilson Creek (N. Central WA) on our way west from Valley (Spokane). I don't know if we stopped another night. I have a recollection of stopping somewhere west of Leavenworth (Hwy. 2) where Dad was bringing water up from a stream that seemed to be a long distance-water for the car radiator, I think. Somehow we arrived at Grandma and Grandpa Forster's house in west Seattle where mom and kids stayed. Dad went onto Camp Ebey/Jim Creek to finish preparing the house above Ebey Camp.

So, I've been told, Grandpa Forster said it's time to move, ready or not. He drove the Mitchell to Camp Ebey where we had permission to cross the Solberg place, winding between stumps, open and close two gates, continue across Bunton's place, open and close another gate and there we were. However, I think on the Solberg Farm the car quit moving, evidently differential failure. I think a neighbor, Sherm Thompson, came with his Fordson tractor and towed the car to our house, where it was parked and never moved again. It became a play place for me and others, where I got my beginning knowledge of cars. Dad had a model T Ford, kind of a pickup-utility vehicle. Shortly after, he traded for a 1926 Essex 2

door and shortly thereafter, he traded up to a 1929 Essex 4 door. This was our family car until about 1941 when he traded up to a 1932 Terraplane four door. Dad also traded around in exchange for labor, I think a Pontiac sedan, a Dodge coupe and also an Oldsmobile coupe. While we are on the subject of vehicles, somewhere in there he acquired a Model T-Ford (nicknamed Snake-hips) almost a truck but rather short wheelbase and too long to be called a tractor. It served many uses, snaking logs for the sawmill, hauling water, etc. This vehicle had Warford three speed auxiliary transmission so it was a very versatile tool. Also somewhere, I think late 1941, Dad acquired a 1929 Essex rumble seat coupe, which became my first car in 1942.

I should backup here and mention our 40 acres was about 11 miles N. East of Arlington, and most of us kids started first grade at seven years, at the Trafton school, about half way to Arlington. I remember we had fun growing up- chores of course in the garden etc. but exploring, hiking Mount Ebey and other mountains as well. Joyce and I were the first, I think, milking our goat herds, Dorothy, also. Dad organized his Belsaw Sawmill some time in mid to late 1930's purchased, I think, with his WWI bonus money. I remember working in and around the sawmill until I joined the Army in 1943.

Our house, more like a cabin, I think, about sixteen feet by twenty-four feet; kitchen, living-dining room, parent's bedroom, and a loft above for the children's bedroom. Sometime in there, Ike and I fixed the loft over the garage for our bedroom. I remember putting a window in one end using a model T-Ford windshield. It worked!

To back up a bit, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1931, a new brother arrived. George Alfred, born at home, mother and son doing well as I recall.

More about the sawmill; Dad bought just the metal parts and built the base of two cedar timbers. I think about 6-8 x16x16 or such. Hand hewed and made perfectly flat and fastened the steel tract for the carriage. No power feed, he pushed the carriage through by manpower only.

The youngest brother David James, born April 14<sup>th</sup> 1936, at the Thompson home with mid-wife Fanny, attending, mother and son doing well.

About then, Dad moved the mill to a neighbor's property on the Lake Riley Rd. just past Carl Schmidt's farm. Meanwhile, he made a deal for five acres on the Jim Creek Rd. about a mile past the forty here. He moved the mill again to this property and we started lumber to build a new house just behind the mill. I'm guessing the house was about 16-18x30, two-story with a barn like Mansard roof. Parent's bedroom, kitchen and dining-living room on the first floor; stairway down to the basement, a stairway up to four small bedrooms and a porch added at the kitchen entrance (photo enclosed). Dad sawed all the lumber, including Alder flooring upstairs. Four Dormer windows were upstairs, also. Dad and I built the house and they tell me that I applied all the shakes on the roof. Strange I don't actually remember doing it, but dad said he couldn't/wouldn't have done it. We moved in, I think in 1941.

Growing up, I don't recall a lot of heavy discipline but there were a couple worth telling. Dad had a small structure at the edge of a group of Vine Maple trees with a shake roof. Ike and I found it to be great fun to climb these trees and then swing out and bounce on the roof of this structure. We had been told to stop but we were enjoying this sport again-uh oh- here comes dad carrying a switch. With the aid of this switch he convinced us to do no more.

Another involved Joyce, Dorothy and I gorging ourselves on Loganberries from family vines. Mom convinced us that these berries were to be harvested for all of us later.

Moving on, 1942 was a busy year for me. I joined a Forest service crew (25 people) at summer recess in June. We were stationed at a former CCC Camp in Sultan, WA, on Hwy. 2 east of Monroe. We worked on clearing brush along fire roads until called on a forest fire. We were divided into three groups- Ho-Dag (heavy hoes), bucking (sawing logs) and Axe group. I was made lead man of the Axe crew. As I recall, we worked on four different fires, including on in Rainier National Park. We traveled to these fires in a 1939 Dodge truck, one of our crew driving. On one fire, a little feather in my cap- we had been trained, if a fire is

coming up a slope, it is better to build a trail over the ridge and down a short distance. We replaced a tired crew who said they had lost six trails on this up-slope, we were put in the same situation. I looked things over and moved the crew over the ridge. Shortly after our foreman came by with a State Ranger. The foreman asked why we were there instead of where we had been placed. I explained as to how we had been trained, the state ranger turned to our foreman with the comment you have some pretty savvy people in your crew. Puffed him up quite a bit.

I was the only one in the crew that had a car, but it was only for to and from home with gas rationed.

On another fire, the foreman asked if any of us could use spring boards. I said yes, because dad had sawed these in the sawmill. These are a tapered board with a cup of steel on the thick end to hook into a notch or a tree snag. Then you climb up on this board if it is needed to get where you can use a cross cut saw. Another man, Ted Trager said yes also, and then I asked him "I hope you have used these." He said "I was hoping you had". We managed. Quite a pair, I stood at 5'9" and he was 6'2". I forget, but we were paid something and it was a great experience, because older men were in the military, I think.

I was also chosen to drive one of the school buses beginning in Sept. 1942. You were supposed to be at least 18 years old, and I wasn't until Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. However, I was almost at the end of the bus route so they made an exception. I wanted to run a "tighter ship" than the previous driver. Everyone cooperated and we had a good year. At the end of the school year, we bus drivers, celebrated with a picnic and dance at a lake park near Smoky Point, WA. It was enjoyed by all of us, including our dates.

I think it had to be Thanksgiving break, Mom and I decided to drive east to Spokane and vicinity. We took my 1929 Essex and traveled Hwy. 2 over Stevens Pass. There was snow on the road as we approached the summit and the car quit moving. I was quite sure what the problem was but first I had to get to a place where I could work on it. Traffic was very light but a man finally pulled up behind me. I told him what I thought the problem was and he said I can push you to the

summit and you can coast possibly all the way to Leavenworth. He was driving a pickup hauling calves and was steaming from overheating. As he had told me we coasted for miles, at times we almost reached 70 mph. Mom sat quietly and never said a word. Several times I got out and walked the car over a slight rise, and then coasted again. Finally I had to admit we needed help and I must have somehow contacted a tow truck. I don't recall phoning. The tow driver said yes you will need help from here to Leavenworth. He pushed me onto a big truck yard and where I asked if I could work on the car there. They said of course and we'll help if you need it. I removed the transmission and found the problem was what I thought it was. I guessed right because dad had the same problem on his sedan. The spline in the clutch plate had stripped. The truckers told me there was a wrecking yard in Wenatchee that did nothing but Essex, Terraplane, and Hudson parts. I hitch hiked to Wenatchee, and found a used clutch plate and returned on a bus. Meanwhile, mom had said she would find a motel room. I put things back together, one of the truck men came over with a 12" length of broom stick, he said "you'll need this to align the plate with the throwout bearing". He was very right of course.

Mom was very competent and could adjust to any situation. She said we can't afford two rooms, and one bed will do. We'll bundle one under the sheet and the other on top of the sheet on the other side. Problem solved!

Next day uneventful on to Spokane, we visited Granddad Fortner in a nursing home, Aunt Myrtle and family and Aunt Mabel. On our return I think we visited Aunt Verna and met Frank Mordhorst who managed Aunt Verna's farm. One night in Leavenworth, and I foolishly was wearing dress clothes and shoes. Snow on the road again and just as we started uphill west of town, there is a car crossways in the road. It took me a few minutes to put on my boots. I went up and got him straightened out and moving. No more problems that I can remember. Looking back now this was quite an undertaking, thirteen year old car, old tires, and not much traffic. It was a fun trip.

Back to school routine. I had forgotten I had to register for military draft on my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. When I was called for an interview, they allowed me a deferment to graduate from high school. As best I can remember, graduation was June 13<sup>th</sup>,

and June 23<sup>rd</sup> I was in the Army. Oh yes, during my initial interview they asked if you had a preference for branch of service, and I said I guess not, and his response was automatically...Army. I don't recall much about the day of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, but I'm sure I drove to town in my Essex. Mom came with me and someone told me she intended to drive home (she did not drive). Dad was working away so she adapted as usual. Turned out Henry Schmoker was in town and took her home in my car. Again, foggy memory that day, I know we went by bus to Fort Lewis from Arlington. Don't know if the bus was full of draftees or what. All I recall was Harold Hafner, Sid Olsen and Harold Johnson. I think I was pretty pumped up and excited that day!

This was called the Induction at Ft. Lewis. For a few days there we received shots, exams, uniforms-very preliminary instruction on military courtesy. One thing, everyone said was don't volunteer for anything. Well, somehow I did and the detail was at the NCO club. They told me to put my dog tags inside my shirt (previously worn outside) indicating a rookie- salute any "brass" and you'll do fine. Well, initially I was just pushing up beer in the coolers, but ended up waiting on the NCO's and came back to the barracks with a pocket of tip money. Volunteering worked out OK!

We had just a few days at Fort Lewis and then boarded a train headed for Fort Knox, Kentucky. The only thing I remember, we had been told that the troops always traveled in Pullman rail-cars. Probably true, but I think our car was one of the first ones built. As I walked into the next car carrying civilians it was a radical change. We had a lot of soot drifting in. One other thing, I remember a stop in Green River, Wyoming, one step outside and I had never experienced such cold. Back inside for me and the other guys went for hamburgers and what they brought back wasn't very good. The rest of the trip to Fort Knox is a blank. When we arrived and assigned beds in barracks, it was late at night and we were told we could sleep in the next morning. I awoke to a LOUD martial music and asked one of the regular troops to turn down the radio. He laughed and said that is not a radio, you'll get used to it. It turned out to be martial music and bugle calls on loud speakers all over the post. Nice initiation! A few minutes later we were all called out for a formation and began our thirteen weeks of basic training.

Calisthenics, breakfast, close order drill wherever we went, classes on military courtesy, etc. After our interview, written, and oral tests, we received additional assignments. Sid Olsen, Harold Hafner and Harold Johnson all assigned to mechanic school as part of their training. On AGCT (Army General Classification Test) 110 or better would qualify for OCS (Officer Training) 115 or better would get ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program). I think I scored a 13 , so I was offered this choice. I opted for ASTP and went on with more combat training while waiting for a call which was slow in coming. Another interview with a LT. Col., he told me they are only calling those in the genius class, so I stayed with line combat training. Shortly, I became a Lance Corporal with a 10 man squad. I was responsible for assigning men to various details. All went quite well with no problems. I received some experience with several vehicles, Jeeps (Armored units called those Peeps), 9 Ton Half-tracks, 6x6 Trucks, M-5 light tanks, M-4 Sherman medium tanks, etc. The M-5 had twin Cadillac engines and mounted a 37 mm rifle. The Sherman had a 9 cylinder aircraft radial engine. One feature of the radial, if it wasn't running for a number of hours, we had to crank it by hand to be sure of no hydrostatic lock (where oil could leak down into the bottom cylinders). I think some later models had inline diesel engines. Sherman's mounted a 75 mm rifle, a 30 or 50 cal. machine gun in the turret and a 30 cal. machine gun at the assistant driver position.

Most of our half-tracks had a White truck engine, a 50 cal. turret machine gun and two 30 cal. machine guns at the rear corners. Driver, vehicle commander in the turret and ten men carried in back. These vehicles had ½" thick armor in front of the radiator and in the front of the windshield, ¼" armor around the rest of the vehicle. Small arms protection only! We did a lot of marching, even a 10 mile against time carrying full equipment. This put us in great physical condition.

I remember qualifying well with small arms pistol, carbine, M-1 Garand rifle, and expert with all as I recall. Also, some work with 30 cal. and 50 cal. machine guns, as well as grenades and bazookas (shoulder carried anti-tank weapons). One scary incident on the grenade course, one man threw his grenade short and it was rolling back towards our trench. Instinctively I threw it back for an

air burst. They were all live grenades by the way. A Lt. said “who the hell threw that round!” I told him and nothing more said.

Another challenge was crawling across an obstacle course with various obstacles to avoid. The whole time live machine gun fire was overhead. Keep your tail down! Of course all of this is to prepare you for what might happen in actual combat with the enemy. Of course, we also had bayonet training and hand to hand close combat. Anyway, I made it through all of this and at completion of basic training we were given a pass to Louisville, KY. There I enjoyed my first Mint Julep.

In late Oct. 1943, we had orders to move to a new post, which turned out to be Camp Chaffee, Ark. which is near Fort Smith, Ark. We arrived there on a Friday, mild weather, played softball the next day in our Army BVD's and the next day it turned cold as winter.

(See addendum about 16<sup>th</sup> armored division) My memory has faded on particulars about my time at Camp Chaffee. I can only recall some interesting humorous instances and they probably won't be in chronological order. We were housed in temporary tar paper barracks, very livable but unattractive. I found myself in an infantry company part of the 18<sup>th</sup> armored infantry battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> armored division. I was assigned to the I & R platoon (Intelligence and Reconnaissance). Also I was the assigned driver of one of the “peeps”.

Our training here was more tactical because we had been through basic training, work on coordination with other div. units, tanks, artillery, machine gun co., etc., practice on motorized columns, maintaining proper intervals between vehicles and so forth. Plenty of marching, close order drill always, and Field and bivouac exercises also.

I had plenty of time at the motor pool maintaining my vehicle. That brings up one instance where I put in extra effort in cleaning my vehicle, as well as dressing up under-hood area. At this one Sat. inspection, my vehicle and I won commendation for excellence. It also brought assignment as the Colonel's Orderly

for one day at Battalion Headquarters. I also had to put up with ribbing from the other drivers.

In this I & R platoon we thought we were a bit special, frequently training recruits, particularly night work, maintaining as much quiet movement as possible. Also we turned or legging down two inches and then bloused our pant legs down over the legging (Esprit de Corp).

I was more outspoken than some and was called on the carpet once by the Battalion Sgt. Because I had been giving advice to two of our Corporal NCO's. The Battalion Sgt. Took a dim view of that and did his best to convince me that was not my responsibility!

Not too long after this we were on a field exercise, wet muddy road. I was the fifth man in a Peep, seated on the left rear fender (not my vehicle). A corporal, not an assigned driver, wanted to drive (follow orders). I was just about to say we should be in 4 wheel drive, but bit my tongue and kept quiet because of my recent dressing down. Shortly, we went into a skid, and I was thrown out of the vehicle which ended up on a sloping bank facing the road. I found myself sprawled on the ground with my head and shoulder under the right rear wheel. With a little pull I got free and surveyed the situation. No apparent damage other than a bent steering wheel. The assigned driver was spitting blood- turned out he had bitten his tongue or something. The Corporal asked everyone to say the assigned driver had been driving. I told him I thought that was (CS). I assured an Officer that I could drive the vehicle to the Motor Pool and word somehow preceded me. As I drove in I was greeted with the words- Fortner wrecked a Peep! Not!!

The Captain called me in later and asked if I was aware of the rule, no more than 4 men in a Peep? Yes Sir- why were you the fifth man? Not sure, Sir- do you need to see a Doctor? I think not Sir. Dismissed.

In the I & R Platoon, we had intensive training in night work, to determine enemy troop strength or to pick up prisoners. Also the use of silent weapons if needed such as a length of piano wire (for garroting), trench knife and so forth- none of which I had to use in actual combat.

One of these field night exercises, we were supposed to be as quiet as possible and our two Corporals, I thought, were making more noise than everyone else combined. I tried to point this out to them and was called up to Battalion Headquarters and given a strong reprimand. You don't give orders, you follow. Seems I had trouble at times keeping advice to myself.

Another exercise I was called on a few times to carry some upper rank Non-Com's, in my Peep, off Post and drive to the Arkansas River (near Fort Smith) where the NCO's enjoyed the sport of shooting turtles. Probably not OK, but I was following orders. Military rule says if you think you receive an improper order, you do it and complain later- which I did not attempt in these cases. Not my idea of proper NCP conduct- I thought you should tread the straight and narrow as an example to your men.

In a similar instance, we were bivouac'd in the field and a scheduled night problem was canceled, so our Lt. Said we will have our own night problem. We left two men on guard in our camp area and loaded the rest of us in 4 Peeps and left camp under black-out driving. At the border of the Post, headlights on and we headed for the nearby town of Boonville. We were all dressed in combat gear, trench knives at our belts, helmet liner, head gear, etc. Beer available in the tavern and we enjoyed the evening dancing with some sailor's girlfriends. We took a case of beer back to camp for the two guards. One of our most enjoyable night problems.

One more I have to mention- one night, of duty in the barracks, this Tech Sgt. (also our Judo instructor) called me to go down to the Motor Pool for something. I answered OK, as soon as I finish whatever I was doing. In 2 seconds he was facing me like a Banty Rooster and roared "I SAID NOW!". I gave him one of my famous long looks and said Yes Sir. This is the same Sgt. That reprimanded me in my other encounter. In spite of this, he and I got along OK.

Most of my time at Camp Chaffee was so routine I can't remember any other particulars. Oh yes, one other interesting thing- to get a pass to visit off Post we had to accept a 3 pack of condoms- decline and No Pass! The idea I think was to prevent venereal disease.

Speaking of Passes, our bus transfer to Fort Smith was made by using a Ford semi-trailer using a fifth wheel flatbed trailer, adding sides and roof, install seats, and there was our bus. It served it's purpose very well. Not fancy, but it did the job OK, only we were rather isolated from the driver.

I am approaching the time for my 2 week leave in Feb. 1944. I have no recollection of how I traveled- probably Greyhound or maybe a train from Camp Chaffee to Pendleton, Ore. I know from there I walked out with a plan to hitch-hike to Hanford, WA. Dad was living and working at the Atomic Energy Plant (probably wasn't called that then). Seems I waited forever for a ride- finally after almost 2 hours, a semi-truck stopped and asked "where are you going soldier?". I said Hanford, WA, and he said you're in luck, that's where I'm going. Approaching a guarded gate he stopped, said you can't going with me, you're on your own. I told the guard my dad worked there and I wanted to visit. He directed me to Dad's room and I found no one there. After waiting for some time, the door opened and Dad walked in with head hanging down. Big surprise- he expected me to show up at the Bus Depot. We had a good visit, meals in their Mess Hall, and the next day I continued on to Seattle. No memory of how- probably Greyhound. I know I visited Aunt Irene and Uncle Howard and then on to Arlington. Again, no memory of how I got to Jim Creek- maybe I walked the 11 miles.

My car was there and I remember going to Arlington to visit a classmate, Vernon Bjerkaker. I saw several other friends, including Armin Nordby- we cruised across some of his farmland in his Fluid Drive Dodge which was all new to me. Vernon and Armin were both exempt from military service as they were in essential industry- Farming. Vernon and I drove to a nearby town of Granite Falls, went to a tavern and ordered 2 beers. The waiter put both in front of me, can't serve him, he's under age. I, being in uniform, was an exception. I gave Vernon his glass of beer. I know I went on to visit sister Joyce & Leo for a couple of days. Also called a young lady in Sultan, WA. And asked for a date and she accepted. Her brother was one of the Forest Service crew in 1942. We had never dated before but I knew her name and lucked out- dinner and a movie. Back to Jim Creek again and somehow to Arlington and Greyhound to Seattle. (maybe Ellen, Judy or

George can fill in some of the gaps). I know I took the train back to Camp from Seattle.

I don't remember anything about my return to Camp Chaffee except it started off on a pleasant note. A musical group boarded the train and their lady singer asked if she could sit next to me. I said, why of course, I'd be delighted. Very pleasant trip- I don't remember how long or far.

At one point I asked her, are you supposed to be attached to your Band Leader? He seems to be giving me the Evil Eye at times. She assured me he would like to think so, but no, nothing there. I knew I didn't want to get involved in a triangle... back to Camp Chaffee somehow and the Army routine.

I can't recall anything else to write about until early May, I think. We were told, all Privates and PFC 's were to ship out to Fort Meade, MD. For oversea replacement troops. This decimated the 16<sup>th</sup> Armored Division as a unit and they would start over with Cadre only (Officers and NCO's).

There was a foot Infantry Unit on the main Post and that was where Infantry Pvt's and PFC's were to be shipped out, rather than every Pvt. And PFC in Camp Chaffee. Unconfirmed, we heard that the General giving the order was reduced in rank. We were told, don't talk to civilians about this move but when we went to Fort Smith on a pass citizens kept approaching us with- I hear you guys are shipping out! So much for secrecy. Frequent cheers as we passed through towns, en route to Danville, VA. That was the home to one of my buddy's so we really received a greeting there. How did they know?- Bill Weymouth said he hadn't told anyone. Again, so much for secrecy.

The stay at Fort Meade was rather short- very soon we boarded a troop ship which would take us to England. The ship was a former Italian Luxury passenger ship- converted to a troop transport bunk stacked 3 high and long tables across the ship where you stood to eat the meals served twice daily. I got seasick the second day at sea, but it lasted for only 1 day. I think we were over two weeks, zigzagging across the Atlantic.

No particular memory of our Camp in England- of course some marching and exercise. They took our weapons and uniforms and issued new ones. The rifles had to be cleaned of cosmoline (a protective gunk, quite sticky). Then we had to go on the rifle range and zero in the sights so you can expect to hit what you aimed at. Some guys never got their piece thoroughly clean or zeroed in, but so much for that. You were going with the more prepared anyway...We boarded a smaller Canadian troop transport for our trip across the English Channel. I remember being served a lot of mutton.

Some distance off the Normandy Coast and Omaha Beach- disembark down a rope ladder carrying full equipment into Landing Craft. Unloaded onto Omaha Beach and I had a good look at what the invasion troops faced on June 6, 1944. No enemy shooting at us!

Atop the bluff, the first village we passed thru- Isigny and also Carentan. I think we were trucked to the Replacement Depot- known as a Repple Depple. We pitched pup tents, we were roused with possible poison gas attack. A German plane came over almost every night (referred to as bed check Charlie). I always thought this was trumped up to make us aware of what could happen. Anyhow, don gas masks and get in your foxhole. I laid there for awhile, nothing happening, so I went back into my tent. My tent-mate, a man 35 years old and scared stiff stayed in his foxhole and shivered all night.

Next night, Bed Check Charlie dropped a single bomb. Some of us were playing cards and when we hit the foxholes, one guy tried to arouse his tent-mate and found him dead. A large chunk of mud from the bomb explosion had destroyed his face.

After just a few days in ReppleDepple I was assigned to a combat unit. This meeting struck me as somewhat typical of events seen since on TV shows. At dusk, informal, in a French apple orchard. The Captain said, Fortner, you are assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Squad, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Co A, 51<sup>st</sup> AIB, 4<sup>th</sup> AD. Not bashful, I said Captain, Sir, I have been trained extensively in the I & R Platoon of an AIB. I would like to be assigned to the I & R unit here. He said, Fortner, that would be considered but we have no casualties in that unit. A 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Stepped up, saluted

smartly, Lt. French reporting for duty Sir. The Captain said, we don't stand on much formality here, we just call you Frenchie. You will be in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. Let's call it a night. What an initiation, next day I went with the unit on a Company Patrol on the Brest Peninsula. I think this was somewhat NW of the Normandy area.

Uneventful, until toward evening, an order came, fix bayonets, we find ourselves behind a German Unit and we are going to charge through. Lt. French says, follow me men. Even though I had been trained in such, I thought I would lay back a little and follow the other men's lead. As I lay back, so did the other men. The Lt. Is calling, CHARGE, yell, fire your weapon rapid fire, so I said come on let's go! All others followed. We didn't bayonet anyone but we scared hell out of some young German soldiers. We did take 2 prisoners. Back in our position, I told the other men about my feelings on holding back a bit. They told me, Hey, this is our first such experience! Never involved in such a charge again in the rest of my combat time.

Right after the breakout at St. Lo, the Division started a major move, chasing German units. Lots of riding in our Half-track and frequent time on foot. One time, the column stopped, we dismounted, took defensive positions, and one man said, there's a German soldier approaching and calling out, what should we do. I jokingly said, shoot the SOB, so he did. The Lt. Rushed up and said what's going on? I said that's been drilled into me, we are here to kill Germans. He said try to hold your fire until given an order.

One pleasant move thru a French village- a Frenchman came up with a bottle of clear liquid which I supposed was a white wine- wrong! My first taste of Calvados, a distilled drink which warmed you right down to your toes. After that, we kept a supply of Calvados in our Half-track- one guy liked it for the effect and I liked the taste.

Quite a few of our miles were uneventful. We once heard it said the Germans have us surrounded- the poor Bastards! The Germans were pretty much on the run from our Armored columns. Back to that first day of action, the only thing I heard from those prisoners, you guys are crazy! I heard that some German

Units referred to the 4<sup>th</sup> AID (Breakthrough nickname) as Patton's butchers. A helpful reputation!

I can't recall many names of towns or villages. A lot of time we were crossing fields instead of roads. I remember wading at a few streams, bridges available but possibly booby trapped and also it kept us from crossing in a group. Luckily, no more than chest deep water, I could not swim.

I am writing things down as I remember and not necessarily in chronological order...one day we found we were spending a night outside this small town. Without a map I have no idea where in France. Some of us were able to visit with the local people. I got to chatting with this beautiful young lady named Lea. I was coaxing her to give me one or both of her dangling earrings as a souvenir She would not part with them but suddenly put her hands together and tilted her head indicating sleep. She said *vous et moi* (you and me) an American baby *pour moi* (for me) and a *Dimanche* (Sunday souvenir) *pour vous*- WOW! I asked why would you ask me? We just met. She said *Je vous aime* (I love you) which was probably more literally, I like you. She said this is something I want to do for France. (this paragraph can be deleted from the final version)

Next day we were back on the move again with another somewhat humorous happening- we were digging in for the night outside another village, in the wooded area. We heard voices and sounds of digging and they were not speaking English! Our guys backed off and we dug in across this field and closer to the village. Of course this was after dark so we hadn't seen anyone. Next morning a German unit was advancing toward our position. Some artillery shells were dropping to the town behind us as well. A Sgt. With a 57 mm Howitzer (3 pieces) was hopping mad because his gun crew had deserted him. He kept calling for our guys to fire some tracers, give him a range and reload, aim and fire. He was one busy Sgt!! After a good bit of activity the enemy backed off- waiting for more men or more artillery I guess. During a lull, one of our Half-track drivers came up, said he wanted to try firing his Grease Gun. This was a 45 cal. Replacement for the Tommy Gun. Cheaply made but with a very heavy bolt and rapid fire, it was a bit hard to handle. He squatted on his haunches. I told him that was a poor position

but he went ahead anyway. The recoil rolled him on his back spraying bullets wildly. No one was hit but he learned a lesson.

One of our squad had jumped up twice, saying I can't stand this. I told him none of us like this but you have to stay with us. Next thing he jumped up again and took off running toward the town. I heard later that he sprained an ankle jumping off a hay wagon when 88 mm shells started dropping in. Also, he thought he should get a Purple Heart Medal for his injury- which I'm sure he never received. Anyway, after the town was secured and we mounted our Half-track, he was the last man to show up. Lots of words like something stinks, what is that awful smell! Still he climbed in and slouched in one corner. First chance I had, I told Lt. French I thought he should be shot for deserting his post, that he's no good to us, we don't want him. He was transferred to the Headquarter Platoon and we were rid of him.

Our tanks usually led the column, so by the time we reached many of these small towns we would dismount and patrol through on foot with an eye out for stragglers. In one village we found a U.S. Army Half-track with no apparent damage. One of our guys started toward it, said let's see if it will run. I said I don't think we should touch it, it may be booby-trapped. We also found a 1938 Chevrolet Coupe in perfect condition, so our Platoon Sgt. Took it as his personal vehicle, for awhile anyway.

Another day with a bit more action- we were entering a somewhat larger town, approaching downhill through a cemetery- on foot of course. Along with my rifle I was loaded down with a bag of Bazooka ammunition. Dirt was kicking up in front of me and I suddenly realized, these are bullets kicking up the dirt! I first took cover behind a 3" dia. tree, then decided it wasn't much protection and hustled on in a zigzag course. Further on. Amongst buildings, our guys spotted a German Half-track loaded with men, so we decided to help them leave with some rifle fire. Quite long range but it was worth a try. Lt. French says what's going on, they are leaving. I said yes but we wanted them to hurry! The Germans had left in a hurry as we found equipment and clothing left behind in some of the buildings. We were also told that Americans had occupied this town twice and lost it twice.

This time we are here to keep it! Bunking for the night, 50% guard, I took the first 2 hours, close to Lt. French and the Platoon Sgt. Penndexter. 2 hours, squad leader took over and 2 hours later he woke me. I said what's going on? I will stand watch for the Lt. But I don't think I came over here to stand watch for the Platoon Sgt. Why can't he take a turn, the same as you and I? I never knew what happened but I wasn't called on again. Next day, on the move again.

Some time later, our Battalion was pulled back in reserve along with some garrison like duty- full proper uniform, formations with some close order drill as well. We did get to visit the nearby big city of Nancy. Myself and 2 buddies had a good time strolling the streets, chatting with the young ladies. Each of us had a large loop of dark bread slung over our rifle barrels and munching on one more. We received a lot of envious comments and found that the French citizens were rationed to one loaf to a family! Well, we had fun, dinner in a sit down restaurant, all in all a very pleasant day.

Another time we were billeted in a town for 3 days and nights. We found one interesting thing in nearby fields. We could still see the outlines of trenches from World War I. I was bunking in a cellar and across the road, a French woman with 2 children, visiting there. I helped her with some chores and donated some of our coffee rations which she enjoyed. She then said I must give you some of our drink. I think it was some kind of roasted grain, didn't look or taste bad unless you added milk- turned sort of a greenish gray color.

A bit of trivia- when we offered a cigarette from our K or C rations, Fleetwood or some other off-brand, it wasn't long until a Frenchman would look and ask, do you have a Lucky Strike or Camel? Occasionally we had Lucky Strike or Camel's from the PX and we didn't offer those much. They learned fast!

Some time after our R & R (Rest & Recuperation) and in the Nancy area, our Battalion was put back on line. I think it was some time in October. The column moved along for awhile, then came to a halt. Our squad dismounted as usual, nothing happening for some time. The squad leader Sgt. Tuttle said I'm going to go forward to see what is the holdup. Fortner, I'll leave you in command of the squad and Half-track. (our assistant squad leader had not caught up with us from the

start of our move yet). I told the men that Sgt. Tuttle had put me in charge, do any of you have a problem with that? No objection- next thing, Captain Plumly asked who is in command here, I said Fortner, Sir. He said get on that 50 cal. Machine gun and rake that wooded area on the left. I gave it a couple of short bursts and he called out again saying let it roll!! Next thing, the Captain said, Fortner, take your squad and follow that tank and secure that wooded area. We started moving and shortly the order changed. Infantry lead and the tank will support you. Before moving very far, orders came again- back in your vehicle, the column is moving. Sgt. Tuttle did not return, we found out he had been killed.

We were moving along pretty well, it seemed with very little resistance. Moving up this road on a slight slope, up, a right turn it seemed and almost at the top of the rise- probably 150 yards or so, then a left turn and Whoa!! Steeper down slope and the Column is stopped. Several vehicles ahead burning, we promptly dismounted and within seconds our Half-track was hit and burning. All Hell breaks loose, men rushing at us, saying the Jerries are coming. Almost a rout it seemed. I joined in for a bit and said wait a minute, this is all wrong. I started getting organized and told them to start digging. I said if the German Infantry is coming we'll be ready for them. Things quieted down, no attack coming. One light Tank was having fun firing his 37 mm towards some buildings way down the slope. Too far away and he wasn't doing much damage. Shortly, we are ordered- follow that Sherman Tank toward the ridge to our left. As the Tank crested the rise, shells coming in- the usual order comes in, Infantry first, the Tank will support you. Shortly orders changed again, pull back and dig in for the night. A foot Infantry Battalion is joining us in support. We heard that our mission for the day had been secure and occupy this town. With the foot Infantry support, it was 3 days before we succeeded. Needless to say, up to this point this had been my busiest time in combat.

Later that evening our Platoon Sgt. Called me up, along with 2 other NCO's. He said we have decided to put Pvt. Rosalie in the position of Asst. Squad leader. I said, you know Sgt. Tuttle put me in charge when he left- no one had any objection- he said yes, but he, Rosalie, has been with us longer and he tells us he had done well helping wounded. I said yes, I saw one of those wounded men with

his thigh sliced open to the bone from knee to hip. He wasn't bleeding severely and I told him, hang on, the medics are coming. I think Rosalie should be shot for disobeying orders, leaving his post and trying to be a self-made hero. No comment! Sgt. Then said there is some chatter about a Bronze Star, considering your and Roslie's action. I said, well, I'm not in competition with Rosalie for any award. Strangely, after Sgt. Hernandez rejoined us as Squad leader (former Assistant), I don't remember any further contact with Rosalie. He evidently just stayed away from me. Resistance seemed stiffer from here on and our advance slowed.

One more incident stands out in my memory. Somehow we were on foot and walking most of the night, rain and mud, sloppy going. One of our squad kept trailing his rifle barrel toward the ground instead of slinging over shoulder. I kept telling him if you stumble, that muzzle will be full of mud and it will jam- sure enough it did. Anyway we finally halted, dug in (no more rain) across a field. Next morning we were all digging deeper and more secure in case of attack. I finally told my buddy Dewey, I'm so worn out I've got to get a little sleep. Will you be sure to stay awake for awhile. I think he collapsed almost as soon as I dropped off. When I woke up I had to wake him and we started looking around- no one in sight but some equipment scattered around, raincoats, etc. We called out to other foxholes, no answer, and we finally turned and looked to our rear. The road way behind us, about 50 yards away, was lined with troops it seemed almost shoulder to shoulder. As we approached someone said, where the Hell did you guys come from? Well, we said we are 51<sup>st</sup> and where is our unit? They said you 2 slept through a terrific Artillery barrage and everyone pulled back expecting a counter-attack soon. Well, we said, I guess ignorance is bliss, we slept right through it...We found our unit and all turned out well. No one ever explained why no one woke us- they must have left in a panic!

I get to thinking that these events I was involved in seem rather unimportant, but I was not involved in the "bigger picture", so I can only relate to those actions that directly involved me. I did realize the Army was making progress toward Germany and the end of the war.

I didn't give much thought to when we lost someone (WIA or KIA), especially someone I knew personally, I just welcomed the replacement and "moved on". Shortly after we met a new replacement in our squad, as we rolled thru this village, we passed the body of a German soldier (which I had already seen on a foot patrol), the back of his head missing- comments like he won't bother us again, there's a good German, etc. This new man started talking about how he didn't think he could kill a person unless he was attacked first. I said I don't know how you have been trained but here we accept the idea that the enemy wants to kill us, so it is better to be the first to shoot.

A few days later my squad was on a night patrol near the main Company. A truck came down this road (again I don't recall why I was the one in charge). I wanted to try tossing a grenade in the back of the truck as it passed. The guys said maybe we miss and the grenade hits us. Shortly a bicycle group came along- I said they don't pass. Rifle fire cut them down. I told our guys, don't cross that road in a group or we'll be fired on by our own Company. Go one at a time and be recognized. I thought I was the last man and our Captain said, Fortner, is that your Squad? What the Hell was going on? I explained and right behind me was this new man, talking a mile a minute. He said a wounded German was crawling toward him so he said I remembered what you had told me, so I finished him with my Trench knife. I thought I would never get him to stop babbling. From then on he was OK. It seems I have trouble writing about these events- I have to get into detail for it to make any sense.

Some where further on, and another happening- our Platoon was setting up a defensive position on the outskirts of another town. My squad was setting a machine gun position at a road intersection. 3 civilians showed up with motions which appeared to be about field of fire, etc. of our machine gun. I asked Lt. French and he said take them to the CP (Command Post) for interrogation. They shouldn't even be near us. Fortner, take 2 men and escort them down that rail line to the CP. Almost dark now and these civies talking away. One of our guys understood German, and I said what are they jabbering about? They don't like being herded down this rail line- I said we don't like it either, tell them to shut up

and keep moving! Finally reached the CP- turned over our detainees and headed back to our Camp.

We hadn't eaten all day, found some C rations and stopped on the way back, opened a can and eased our hunger. When we got back Lt. says, Fortner, are you wounded? Your face is all bloody. Seems I had cut my hand opening a can and then smeared blood on my face (no Purple Heart for that).

Sometime in November and somewhere in Alsace Lorraine, this next episode had a more pleasant interlude. In routine patrol in and near this town, a young lady came up and said her father would like to meet and talk to an American soldier. Would we, myself and 2 other men come meet her father and share a drink. Either the other 2 men didn't want to or I suggested they not accept- I said I'll accept and remember telling them if I don't come back soon then come and get me...at the girl's house she introduced her father, who spoke pretty good English with a German accent. He said he was very much an American friend and would I share a couple glasses of Schnapps? I said sure and we visited for 15-20 minutes before I rejoined my command. In retrospect, perhaps I was foolish but I did enjoy the visit.

I think we were treated to a good Thanksgiving dinner, Nov. 23 and then on Nov. 25, back to work. We were advancing again on foot, across a wide field and approaching a wooded area where we expected to meet resistance. Sure enough, mortar shells started dropping in, I in my usual position- and well away from the rest of the squad and was ducking a bit lower after a shell exploded. We had always been told that you won't hear mortar shells coming in as opposed to Artillery shells. True I'm sure and I had just begun to stand straighter and thought, well, we made it through this one. Lt. French had been urging us to keep moving – we'll be inside their target area. When the shell comes in with your name on it, you can hear it..."Pfft-Boom", that quick, no time to duck! 5 feet in front a big hole in the ground. When I became aware (must have been out for a few seconds?), I found I wasn't flat on the ground, half-way down on my left shoulder and holding my rifle to the ground on my right side. **Terrible** pain in my left leg and I found a hole in my left cheek. I remembered being told somewhere if you have a broken

bone and can pull the bones apart, the pain eases. I'm in rubber overshoes- I put down pressure on my left foot with my right foot and the pain eased. My foot slipped, Yipes, increased pain! After the third try I gave that up and decided to suffer. About then, the trail man from the squad behind me came up- said you are not bleeding much and the Medics are coming- hang in there and you'll be okay! Medics arrived and made me a bit more comfortable and called up a Peep and a litter. Random mortar shells still coming which was a worry for the Medics and myself. I said one of those could hit all 3 of us- they said we are used to it!

Back at the Aid Station, I'm lying on the litter and Lt. Col. asked if I would like a cigarette? I said yes, Sir, he lit one for me, handed it to me and the smoke came out the side of my face. I said well, this isn't much good and gave the cigarette back. Next thing I felt a tug on m rifle which I held beside me- a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Says, I'll just take this Pvt. I said NO ONE takes the RIFLE FROM ME!! At a nod from the Col., nothing happened. Next, back to a Station Hospital in Nancy, I think, but I don't remember getting there- doped up I'm sure, Morphine worked wonders!

When I woke up in the Hospital I was lying in a bed with my left arm, shoulder and left leg in plaster cast. Left arm bent 90 degrees at the elbow and held straight up from my chest. Left leg encased in a plaster cast from ankle to hip. I don't recall how many days there- I don't think very long. There were some civilian workers on the ward as well as a few Army nurses. Oh, I forgot one thing- my teeth had wires and rubber bands holding my jaw closed. Obviously I was on a liquid diet. No privacy here either- if I need a bed-pan, they just perch you on it in front of the world. It didn't bother me. After a short stay there they told me you are going to a General Hospital in England for further treatment.

Oh yes, while I was still at the Field Aid I asked someone there to tell the guys in my squad, I'll be back in a few weeks. How little did I know!

I have no recollection of how long I was in this Station Hospital nor of arriving in a C-47 airplane for the flight to England. I found I was in a bunk in the plane with an Army nurse seated beside me. She assured me that I would be kept comfortable for the trip. If I should get airsick she would clip the rubber bands holding my jaws together. Also she assured me that she would not leave my side

for the entire flight. She kept her word as I heard from other patient's call for help at times. She would answer, I'm sorry, I can't leave this patient. Needless to say, I selfishly enjoyed all this personal attention! Other than this I don't remember anything else about the flight or being removed from the plane until they were putting me into an ambulance.

I had been told previously to avoid a British ambulance. I asked for an American Dodge ambulance but ended up in the British one anyway. The thing rode rougher than a buckboard and I was in pain (dope must have worn off). I asked them to take the bumps easier- they said we're doing the best we can. I don't remember being removed from the vehicle or anything else, until I found myself in a bed in a U.S. Army Hospital somewhere in England.

They removed the cast from my leg and had the leg elevated on a support, a pin through my ankle, and a cable from the pin and over a roller with weight attached (called traction) too keep my leg at a proper length. I was in this traction setup for approx 3 ½ months.

This was the first time I had seen the wound in my leg. Quite a large cup about 3-4 inches below the knee and an open wound. Dressings were changed often and soon the doctors said were are going to do a Pinch Graft on the wound to make it heal faster. By the way, about 3 inches of my leg bone was missing at the wound site.

This Pinch Graft was a neat procedure. I think they used local anesthetic on my right thigh. They would stick some pointed tool into a spot on my right thigh, lift up a bit and with a scalpel, cut a piece of tissue approx. 3/16-1/4" (+-) and then place this bit of skin tissue in the opening in my left leg. I can still find 10 or more scars on my right thigh. These grafts were placed in the left leg in a random pattern, separated from one another. The Doctor said when these tissues start to grow the spaces between will come together and heal the entire area. (an aside- these Grafts when cut turned gray-white and looked rather like large grubs) It worked!, leaving a group of bumps but all joined together. Nothing else happening- my left arm stayed in the cast, jaws wired. Bed pan, of course and urinal- liquid diet- nurse giving a bath every morning, etc.

At this point I want to refer back to an area early on known as the Hedgerow area of Normandy. These Hedgerows lined farmer's fields and consisted of shrubbery and rocks thrown to the edge of fields. Over time these rows had become almost trees and a root system plus rocks- a formidable barrier that tanks could not break through. An American soldier suggested welding a heavy piece of flat steel with the front edge cut in a saw-tooth pattern. Mounted low on the front of a tank, he said a tank could ram the Hedgerow and open a path for more vehicles. Overnight they equipped a tank this way, and next day it worked, so more tanks were equipped the same way. I think both American and British tanks were involved. This allowed the so-called Breakthrough at St. Lo and the 4<sup>th</sup> AD was able to advance rapidly East across Normandy and toward Germany.

Now, back to the Hospital. The man in the bed next to me, Sgt. Curlin, was the designer of the tank modification. A group of officers came to the Ward one day and commended him for the suggestion. I think he received an award and some Medal from the British Forces. He also received a Purple Heart, Having lost one leg which was also infected and had to be scraped each day. So, I was shoulder to shoulder with someone famous.

As I said before, after about 3 ½ months the bottom of the cup wound in my leg had healed, traction removed, arm cast removed, jaw wires removed. They even put me on a regular diet! Here is another instance that was supposed to be a joke. A guy I knew came by and asked if I liked chocolate, I said sure, and he gave me a piece- about ¾ of a dark bar which I thought was chocolate. I ate the whole thing and next day he came by asking if I had a BM? Turned out he had given me a bar of Cascara- a powerful laxative. Because I had overdosed nothing happened. I told him it really wasn't that funny as I was still bed-ridden. It was a Big Laugh!

One day my Doctor came in and told me we are getting ready to send you back to the States. My left leg was still in a trough-like rest and I said, Lt., I can raise my leg up off the support so the bones must have joined. He said NO, you don't have any union there, but show me what you mean. I applied muscle and raised the entire leg about 2 inches and he said WHOA!, that's enough, and that's "just great" because we didn't expect the bones to knit- Good News! The Doctor

also said you have made a remarkable recovery from when you first came here. He said at one time you were in the worst condition of any patient we had. I said I didn't think I was in that bad shape- he responded, you didn't even talk for about 3 days. I said you people stood at the foot of my bed asking questions with me lying flat (couldn't see you very well) and my jaw wired shut. I just didn't feel like communicating.

I don't remember how much more time passed before they got me ready to ship out. I do remember being on a litter in the hallway and resting on the floor. One of my favorite nurses came and knelt beside me and I want to tell you Good Bye, we will miss you. She then gave me a long Soul Kiss. I said WOW! After that kiss, I don't know if I want to leave!

I don't remember being put in an airplane or the takeoff. I found it was a 4 engine plane- the Military version of a Douglas DC-4. I remember landing in the Azores for fuel and again in Bermuda, a beautiful place! I'm not sure where we landed in the U.S. New York or maybe Baltimore at Fort Meade again. I must have been in a hospital bed for some time. I was interviewed and given an option on where I travel next. They asked what hospital would I prefer for further treatment? I said probably Madigan General at Fort Lewis, WA- that being the nearest to my hometown. They told me you are going to need Plastic Surgery- Madigan doesn't do that. The nearest hospital for Plastic Surgery was Dibble General in Menlo Park, CA. I don't recall how I got there, but I tend to think by air, but I'm not sure. I don't even recall arriving at the hospital.

I should have mentioned on arrival in the U.S. I had Red Cross visitors- Grey Ladies, etc., a chance to visit some and enjoy treats. I think I phoned Mom from the hospital in New York and we got re-acquainted again. Letters had not been received from either end. My best estimate of time here was probably the middle of May and there for I arrived at Dibble General about then.

Shortly after I arrived at Dibble, Mom, Dad and Ike came down from Washington for a short visit. Dad and Ike went on South to Long Beach and located work at the Naval Yard. Mom returned to Everett, WA. until school vacation, probably the first week of June. By then Dad had found a house, so Mom

packed up and moved down with the family and worldly goods. I think they stopped again in Menlo Park to see me.

Some where here, the Medics started repair work on me. I know I was measured and fitted with a steel and leather brace for my left leg, from hip to ankle (no knee bend). This enabled me to walk using crutches. I still have that pair of wooden crutches.

By the way, this is where I met the woman who became my wife in 1947. Mary Anne (known as Smitty) was a member of the WAAC and was one of the Ward attendants. While we met often as well in group gatherings, we never dated at that time. I asked several times, when are we going out together, and she always laughed it off thinking I wasn't serious. Most of what I remember at Dibble seems to be fun times with some treatment mixed in. I and 2 other patients became good friends with one of the Red Cross ladies, Eunice Crooke. They weren't supposed to socialize with the patients but we did anyway. We would frequently go to bars and restaurants off the beaten path. Eunice played piano and was a good singer, so we found ourselves entertaining while the other 2 guys brought us drinks offered from other customers. We had some good times! Over time, Eunice and I and John Woltzen made 2 or 3 trips to Los Angeles in her 1941 Chevrolet (can't remember if I visited Long Beach those times or not). Eunice also remained a close friend after Mary Anne and I were married. We later attended her wedding and later on her untimely funeral.

#### Sidebar-

When Mom and the family moved South from Everett to Long Beach, Bekins was the carrier. Ended on a sour note. There wasn't much stuff but it wasn't in the trailer but tied down on the tailgate. A mishap somewhere and our stuff was damaged or not found. Mom finally got her sewing machine cabinet in a box of broken pieces of wood. I had 3 items in that load- a full size Goatskin tanned with the hair on as a rug, my Pony-skin leather jacket and my Logger Boots. All 3 of these disappeared!?

One outing for a group of patients- a Country Club- a large pool and young ladies to entertain us. Suddenly a patient in the pool came saying I lost my glass eye! Everyone got busy diving to the bottom of the pool looking for his eye. It was found after awhile and we all had a good laugh.

Another outing we entered a contest for dancing the Old Fashioned Waltz. My partner and I won a high second place. First went to a blind man- he wasn't that good at dancing but deserved the win for having the courage to get on the floor. People asked me where did you learn Waltzes so well? I said I learned mostly from watching my parents and neighbors at the Community Club in Ebey Camp, WA. My parents were good dancers- Waltz, Fox Trot, Two Step, Schottische and Polka.

I was called in for a dental check and the Dentist asked what kind of diet was I on. I said regular and he told me I shouldn't be, you don't have a good union yet in your left lower jaw. We will also schedule some surgery to remove a foreign body in the base of your tongue. I said I'm going on leave next week. He said you aren't going anywhere until we fix some things. After this surgery he said that was a bit tricky because that object was not shrapnel but a piece of a tooth, and it lodged right next to the Lingual nerve and artery and he had to work entirely by feel. Lt. Miner also removed all four wisdom teeth- absolutely no pain or after effects. A very excellent surgeon!

Sometime after I recovered from this I found myself traveling to Seattle and other towns. I met up with Ike and we prepared to drive his '29 Essex to Long Beach. Tires were in poor shape, old and worn. We juggled around and put the best we could use and also carried 2 spares. We had one tube patched with a glue-on patch on the side of the rubber valve stem.

I was still wearing my leg brace so on my turn at driving I tied my left leg up in a sling of some sort, had to use the clutch with my right foot and use the hand throttle at the center of the steering wheel (a common feature in those years). I don't remember if we stopped overnight, but mostly kept driving while one of us slept, then switch sides. All went well until Bakersfield for a gas stop. We decided we had to switch tires. After the change we were pumping the tire using the

Service Station line gauge. The attendant came by and said, hey guys don't use that gauge, it's not accurate. With a different gauge we already had it to 85 pounds and we wanted 35! Lucked out again!

One more small problem on the Essex, the fuel tank was in the rear and fuel was brought up above the carburetor using a vacuum tank from the induction system. Over time with heavy throttle and reduced vacuum, we would run out of fuel. We had to stop 3 times going up the Grapevine Grade and manually fill the vacuum tank with fuel. No real problem since we knew what to do.

Another happening- I had a severe infection in my left big toe. Lt. Peters examined and gave me medication. I started to ask- he said no, you cannot use crutches. Stay in the wheel chair and keep that left foot elevated. After awhile my buddies and I got our crutches- as we turned left from our Ward- here we are facing Lt. Peters! Nothing said. Later in bed, playing cards, we had a couple shots of whiskey from a bottle I had stashed. Shortly one of the guys said, Ted, are you OK? I said of course, why? He said your face and chest are all blotchy! Drug reaction! Such things happen, such is life. Enough of this idle chatter- time to get on with my Plastic Surgery work. I think this began in 1946.

My first surgery was preparing a Pedicle on the right side of my chest. This involved two semi-vertical incisions approx. 4" apart- undermine thru the skin and underlying tissue, fold under and join as a tube. This also involved a split skin Graft to cover the open wound under the tube. A split-skin Graft was taken from my right thigh. I'll try to describe this process, quite a sophisticated procedure. I think they would cut very lightly, the size and shape of the Graft needed. I never saw the tool but the way it was described, it was some sort of a cylindrical thing with adhesive surface. This would be placed on the donor site and with very intricate cutter they would split the skin at a precise thickness with some sort of a knife splitting the skin as this cylinder was rolled back. I sure wish I could have seen this happen but no chance while under General Anesthesia. They were using Sodium Pentathol (the one called truth gas where under mild application you would tell everything and then have no memory of it). Bandaged up after all this, I was told it would be at least 6 weeks before the next procedure, healing had to be complete.

I'm guessing my next procedure was about the end of March, 1946. This was called a Primary Delay, by tying off some blood vessels in the lower part of the Pedicle. Cutting an approximate half circle at the lower end, lift the skin and tissue, similar to the way they formed the Pedicle, tie off some vessels and sew back in place. About the end of May, lift the bottom end of the Pedicle, same as the Primary Delay. This is called a secondary Delay and more vessels get tied making the blood supply come from the upper part of the Pedicle. This is sewed back in place again and time allowed to heal. Let's allow another 2 months to the end of July. The next step is to free the lower (tummy end of the Pedicle), do another split-skin Graft from my thigh to cover the donor site. Also, at this same time, a matching half circle was cut on the back of my left hand, the skin peeled back and attached to the heel of the Pedicle while the Pedicle is attached to the half circle donor site on the back of my hand. So there I have my left hand attached to my chest via the Pedicle. My arm was supported in a sling while healing took place.

Some of Dibble Hospital had already moved to McCornack General Hospital in Pasadena. Probably some time after I had healed up from the last surgery, the rest of Dibble General moved to McCornack General. It took awhile to get settled in there. I was placed in a four bed room on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. Can't remember anything happening there for awhile.

Next in the process was a Primary and Secondary Delays on the upper end of my Pedicle, along with tying off the blood vessels to reverse the blood circulation, encouraging blood flow to the Pedicle from my left arm and hand.

When the Doctor said we are ready for the next step, this involved putting me in a body cast from waist to hips with my left leg bent at the knee. Then cut the Pedicle free at the upper end and transfer to my left leg. Also another split-skin Graft from my thigh to cover where the Pedicle was removed. Thus, I was confined to a bed until the attachment healed. I'd had Sodium Pentathol Anesthesia (the so-called truth serum). My roommates said they had been ragging me about the cast- how will you use a bed pan, and urinals, etc? Among other

comments, they said I told them I won't worry, I'll pee in the cast if I have to. After I was fully awake I didn't have any recollection of this!

At some point while healing, my surgeon Major Lamp wanted extensive photos of this set-up and during the photo session under intense lighting, I developed a large blister on the Pedicle itself. One more thing to heal, although no real problem.

My next surgery was to cut the Pedicle free at the leg wound site and stitch that end of the Pedicle to my leg, completely covering the wound. Also, then remove the Pedicle from my hand and return the flap of skin from my hand back to it's original position. Major Lamp said they could not stretch the hand skin back all the way, so he cut about a ½" half-moon piece of tissue from the end of the Pedicle and filled the remaining space. So, I actually have a piece of skin from my abdomen on the back of my left hand. More fat under that tummy skin than the hand skin. They may have done some de-fat surgery later but over time the raised area of fat has disappeared. Major Lamp suggested de-fat surgery on the leg graft but I declined and it seems that was the right choice because over the years the Graft has flattened out and looks almost normal.

I have been told that the hookup to my leg was in September, 1946. I can't remember where my bone graft was done before or after the Pedicle hookup. Anyhow, this bone Graft operation involved cutting off the top of the hip and scooping out some soft bone and packing that into the wound in my leg. The Doctor said this soft bone would stimulate bone growth and also become dense and hard as the rest of the leg bone. After this surgery I may still have been wearing a leg brace but I know I then had knee bend and could use a clutch in driving.

Somewhere here I bought a used car from a private party, a 1935 Hudson Super Six four door sedan for \$400.00. The seller assured me the car was in good condition, didn't use a drop of oil. He was right it used more like by the quart! I drove about 400 miles, the red warning light came on and I found the dipstick didn't even touch the oil in the pan- overhaul indicated! About 65,000 miles on the engine and the parts people said I should put in oversize rings and pistons, so I

did. Tightened up the rod bearings by adjusting shims, put it back together and found the main bearings were thumping because everything else had been tightened up. I was naive enough to not check the mains at the same time. So I drop the pan again and do it right. Engine smooth and quiet now and no more burning oil. I know I had this car in later 1946 because I drove to an all night New Years Eve Party and attended the 1947 Rose Parade. Our Parade seats were only 2 blocks from the Hospital.

No memory from here until sometime in late May, 1947. My Paratroop buddy, Bill Galbraith, took me up North of Pasadena to Devil's Gate Dam where I picked up Hwy. 99 and took off hitch-hiking to Seattle, WA. I must have been traveling light, using a cane and in Uniform, so it wasn't difficult to get rides. The one I remember clearly was near Roseburg, OR. The man said, where are you going? I said Seattle and he said you're in luck, I'm going as far as Olympia, WA.

As we carried on conversationally, at one point he asked if when I was wounded, did I pray to God that I be allowed to live? My response was, Hell No, I was just cussing those Damn Germans. He said I'm very interested in your response because I am a Minister, and I like to get the different responses from returning soldiers, etc., particularly those that have been wounded. The trip continued with more interesting conversation.

In Seattle I visited Grandpa and Grandma Forster, also Uncle Howard and Aunt Irene and cousins. I also was visiting sister Joyce and Leo when their twin boys were born in June 1947. Sister Ellen was also there to help our sister Joyce. I don't remember the trip back to McCornack Hospital, but I did return.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> on and outing with a group of soldiers to Baldwin Park, CA., we were to judge a Beauty Contest and enjoy visiting and a picnic lunch. My buddy, George Ethier said guess who I just saw over there, Smitty, the former WAAC at the Hospital. We found her again, I received a warm welcome, was invited to a Party with her at a friend's house and from then on we were an Item.

Smitty of course was Elizabeth Mary Anne Smith- the woman who became my wife on December 6, 1947. She had been discharged from the Service

sometime in late 1946 and we had not seen or heard from each other until July 4, 1947. She was working for Ros-Lous Medical Group and I went there often or she came to see me at the Hospital. We were almost inseparable. Looking back, it seems it was a fast courtship, but it sure turned out well. Very soon I asked Mary Anne to meet my Parents and they and she were pleased with each other. Parental approval accepted!

I should back up some here and mention a member of the Grey Ladies Association (aiding and counseling returning wounded Vets). Edith Gully of Palo Alto more or less adopted me, I soon met her husband Buck and their children Neil and Bunny. We became fast friends and remained so after Mary Anne and I were married. They visited us several times in later years in Downey, once I treated them to a Dodger/Giant game at the Los Angeles Coliseum, and Buck once treated me to a Heavyweight Boxing Match at Wrigley Field (Floyd Patterson vs. Roy Harris) in Los Angeles. Maybe more later...

One weekend in summer, 1947, Mary Anne and I drove to Palo Alto- Hwy. 101 and I remember staying overnight in King City. This trip was where Mary Anne first met the Gully family. This summer was a busy time as we began thinking of our future.

I was discharged from McCornack General Hospital and the Army of the U.S. on October 29, 1947, with papers of Certificate of Disability (CDD). Discharged Veterans were allowed \$20.00 per week for 52 weeks to aid in getting back into civilian living (nicknamed of course the 52-20 Club). Jim wanted an addendum on Rank, Ribbons, Awards, etc. Rank at discharge- Corporal- Combat Infantry Badge (always worn above all other ribbons), American Theater Ribbon, European Theater Ribbon, American Defense Ribbon, Good Conduct- medal and ribbon, and Purple Heart- medal and ribbon.

In early November 1947, Mary Anne took me to meet her Father at his Furniture Shop (Bellview Furniture). During our visit Mr. Smith and I got to talking about delivery dates for his school contracts and his need for more help. I told him I could give him a hand and he said you are hired, can you start Monday next? This on a Friday or Saturday, I said I have to pick up my 52-20 check Monday. Can we

make it Tuesday? There I remained for 31 years. I had a week off in December for our Honeymoon. Mr. Smith's partner, Orville Moran, gave us the use of his Ocean Beach Cottage as a wedding present, Hermosa Beach I think.

I'm going to throw in some car talk. On the night of our wedding we were heading toward Alhambra, CA. My Best Man, Chuck Rowley, driving my car, Mary Anne and I in the back seat. Suddenly the car lurched back and forth- I came to and said Chuck, what's happening? He said a driver, for no reason, suddenly stopped dead in the traffic lane. To avoid a rear end crash he whipped left past the car and immediately back to the right to get out of the other lane. Chuck said afterward he thought if that had been his 1946 Olds, he probably would have flipped. Thanks to good Hudson handling no problem. I don't think the Bride ever knew what nearly happened. The other story when Mary Anne and I went to Palo Alto- somewhere along the way we are traveling 50-55 mph and a car full of youngsters in a Ford Sedan kept waving at us, trying to get me to attempt a pass. I finally obliged, kicking down to direct drive and shot by them so fast all they could do was gawk! They didn't want anymore of that. That car was fast for it's day!

I had always said I would never rent, rather than buy a house. Mary Anne agreed so we started looking for a house. When I started working at Bellview, I was boarding at Mary Anne's Grandparent's house in Los Angeles. We stayed on there until we found a house. I'll throw in here, we were married by a minister (her Great Uncle) and his church was just down the street from the Grandparents. By the way, my Best Man was a fellow wounded Veteran from the South Pacific, facial damage and right hand.

We found and bought a house in early 1948. 2 bedroom, 820 sq. ft. on a corner lot. Single detached garage. I could have had a double garage but I wasn't smart enough. We paid \$8200.00 I think and I even remember the address- 14633 Cairn Ave. in Compton, CA, a few blocks west of downtown and fronting on Rosecrans on the North. This house had been the Model for the Tract so we also bought the Demo furniture. I still have some of the original pieces. I started some improvements, pouring a good sized slab between the back porch and garage. Also, a fairly extensive Lattice work about 5 feet high at the edge of the concrete.

Egg crate type with approx. 1 x 1 ½ slats of Port Orford Yellow Cedar and half-lapped together at the crossings. I used the equipment at Bellview for the mill-work.

Another project- I was trying to lay a 2 course border of red brick bordering the sidewalk from back door to front door. I found something I didn't know- my mortar would not stick to the bricks. My Dad happened to show up then, took one look and said, Son, you don't have enough lime in your mortar. I said Lime? I didn't know that...how much Lime? Enough where the mortar will just hang on when you turn the brick vertical. I still have the formula I worked out, written down and filed somewhere. Of course today, per-mixed mortar is as good or better.

Veterans were allowed a substantial exemption on property value for Tax purpose and since Mary Anne and I were both vets, we received a double exemption. Mary Anne made the mistake of telling the next door neighbor about this and she said well I don't think that is fair. Mary Anne said, I didn't pass that law but I would be a fool to not accept it. Enough said...

We enjoyed almost 3 ½ years in the Compton house, became close friends of the Genterts, Beulah, LaVerne and their 2 children, LafernRae and Donny. Lafern later became one of Jim's first baby sitters.

We were at the Stock Car Race in Gardena, CA. on July 10, 1949 and had to leave the Race early as Jim was born very early on July 11. Mary Anne even got a refund on our Race Tickets. Brother George was with us- we dropped him off at our house, then had to drive North to Queen of Angel's Hospital in Los Angeles. No Freeway in those days. Son, Edward was born on October 19, 1950 at Las Campanis Hospital in Compton, CA.

While out driving one day we found this new Tract of houses in Downey and liked them so well that we decided to trade up. 1250 sq. ft., 2 car garage, 3 bedroom, 1 ¾ bath and backed up to the Rio Hondo River overflow area. No one to build behind us and a great play field for the boys. My drive to work was 3 ½ miles.

We sold the house in Compton for a modest increase over what we had paid. The Realtor said at your price, probably a slow sale- Ha! The first guy to look at it bought- So much for the Realtor's advice. The man asked if there were any Black families in that Tract. I said not that I know of, but I know there were shortly after. We have visited that house many times since. I think the last time about 2010. I was always pleased to see it was well kept.

I said never rent- the Compton house was clearing Escrow and the Downey house not quite finished, so we did rent a small apartment in Maywood, I think, for a few weeks. Move in Downey was some time later 1951.

Back to cars again- seems I haven't mentioned when I acquired the 1941 Commodore Eight Hudson. One day in 1947 I was looking at the new 1947 Hudsons in Pasadena. Of course not even thinking of a new car, a salesman showed me this car just traded in on a new 1947. It looked so good- radio, heater, overdrive, all the goodies they had then. 94,000 miles but I went ahead and paid cash- \$1000.00. About 2 weeks later I happened into the Dealer again and he said the original owner of your car is here if you would like to talk to him. I said, you bet, and he bragged about the car. He said during the War he was back and forth frequently to Oregon (the reason for the high mileage). He bought it new and broke it in as a road car- lots of Overdrive miles. Probably as good a car as I ever owned- put 20,000 miles on it and all I spent during that time was a minor tune-up.

About this tune-up- in Everett, WA. The car became hard to start when the engine was hot. I found a small independent shop and I guess he wasn't that busy. He wanted to tell me about his special technique. Put new points in as everyone does, they look to be aligned, gap and you're set. He went farther and cranked the engine- Distributor open and tweaked the points so they broke with the fire in absolute center. Reset the gap- he said she'll run perfect and be a lot longer before you need another tune-up. Sure was right because the engine never whimpered again for as long as I drove afterward. A very talented Tech.

8643 Guatemala Ave.- 8<sup>th</sup> house South of what became the Santa Ana Fwy. (I-5). We settled in to our new home, became acquainted with several neighbor's-

Joe and Adele Gore next North, Harold and June Wagner (late Schiffmakers), Clarence and Bernice Capps next South, Molnars across the street, Hank and Ann Blaising, Ken and Marge Lamberty, and others- some names I can't recall. Pat and Delores across from our house, etc.

Over time I made some improvements- Rain Bird Sprinklers in the front lawn, tunneled under the sidewalk and put sprinklers in the parking strip. Mary Anne was busy fixing and decorating inside the house. Original square footage of 1250 sq. ft.- later expanded to about 1500 sq. ft. with the enlarged service porch, living room, Southwest boy's bedroom and Master Bedroom. The original service area, Laundry, water heater were part of the the kitchen and our dinette was at the back of the fireplace wall and just inside the front door. Thinking again, the water heater was in the kitchen. I moved it to outside in a metal enclosure. The Service Porch had water softener, Laundry sink, space for Washer and Dryer and later a Chest Freezer. Actually, the Service Porch was our first addition and was an entire new room approx 8 x 10 feet. The living room expansion added approx. 5 feet West across the entire wall and the boy's bedroom 50% larger West.

Our contractor was new (a former Building Inspector). I think we may have been his first customer. I had to lead him by the hand to get some things done right. I rented an Air Compressor and a 90# Jack hammer to remove the old porch deck and foundation. I also cut through the house foundation for crawlspace access under the new addition. Turned out to be a nice addition.

One change on the property lines- I gave Clarence Capps about 3 ½ feet South from my garage. In exchange he gave us about 1 foot of added driveway from house to sidewalk. Never recorded as such but it served both of us well. Concrete block wall North from Capps house to the new property line, West to Fortner garage and North to garage.

I am going to drift back- car nut that I am. I was totally fascinated with the new design 1948 Hudsons, Mary Anne also. She teased me about it, on our Honeymoon, I had a Hudson brochure propped at one end of our couch. Just dreaming about buying one of these cars. Early 1949, we made a deal- trade in both the 1941 Commodore and the 1935 Sedan. I asked my Dad to come up and

drive one car to the Dealer in downtown Los Angeles. We bought a 1949 Super Eight Coupe, with a heater and overdrive. I assumed we would have a full tank of gas- not so!- heading South on Figueroa toward Downey, I looked at the gas gauge- solid E.- 21 gallon tank and we put in 19.7 gallons. We enjoyed this car for about 19,000 miles but it became a hassle with Baby Jim's trappings in a 2 door car, so sometime in 1950, we traded in on a 1950 Commodore Eight sedan. A Demo car but a very low mileage, and also all the extras- heater, radio, Overdrive with Semi-Auto shift- leather trimmed upholstery, etc.

#### Side note-

On a trip to Palo Alto to visit the Gullys, I was busy fixing Jimmy's bottle-bottle warmer on top of the dash, in the Radio Speaker space. Whoops, Red light and siren, I lucked out as it was the Police Chief in Morgan Hill, CA. He said you were doing 65 past a school. We talked and he reduced it to 50 in a 25 and no mention of a school.

Baby Edward arrived October 29, 1950, so we really enjoyed the four door sedan. This served us well until somewhere in 1953, I think, I had to have the new Hudson Hornet. We found a 1951 model- low mileage at Cal Worthington's first Dealership. Hudson in Huntington Park, CA. This turned out to be quite an adventure. I had lowering blocks on my '50 Sedan and I wanted to take those and the sport muffler and put them on the Hornet. The Salesman said OK, we'll do that for you. I said OK. I took a trial drive in the Hornet, came back and said I don't get 4<sup>th</sup> gear in the Hydramatic. He tried it and said, well that's just a matter of adjustment. I sad OK, call me when it's ready. The Dealer had a Radio show offering 100 gallons of gas if you purchased a car. He was balking at that- I said bring your Sales Mgr. He then asked the Salesman, did the customer mention the Radio Program. About 15 seconds went by- he said Yes- then he get's 100 gallons of gas- problem solved! Next visit in for delivery- this Salesman said Boy, this deal is going sour by the moment. The work switching parts on your 1950 and the Trans. work. Then, the man that bought your 1950 traded in a beat up dog of a 1941 Pontiac and we can't call this deal complete until we get rid of that Pontiac. I said not my problem, I did my part. Maybe more on cars later. I needed a work car

as Mary Anne had been taking me to and from work, but that was too much with 2 children. I had sometime before, a 1939 Ford pickup but I didn't think it was too dependable. Shortly, I sold the pickup to Pat St. Amour, just across our street and he was using it for his Swim Pool Service. I then bought a 1950 Hudson Super Six Coupe which suited me better.

As I stated earlier, I started working at Bellview Furniture in early November 1947. The shop was in an old wooden Airport hangar, just West of Eastern Ave. in the path of the upcoming Santa Ana fwy. The word was, no Fwy construction for a year or more. Early 1948 Orville Moran sold his interest in Bellview to J.D. Brown. Just a few weeks later he was notified- construction would begin almost immediately on the Freeway. Bellview owned the Shop Building so we would have to demolish and clear the property. J.D. Traveled North and South from Long Beach on Eastern Ave. In Bell Gardens he saw this new Building for sale or lease and it looked suitable for Bellview. He made a deal for the Building- 5619 Watcher St., Bell Gardens, CA.

So the Shop moved production and very soon started demolishing the old Hangar. We salvaged some of the material and I was hauling this to the new building a short distance- 2 ½ to 3 miles, in a beat up 1935 Chevy truck- no windshield- that was fun...Bellview was doing good- mostly School Equipment for L.A. City. J. D. bought the one additional lot for lumber storage, etc. Later about mid 60's he bought the two adjacent Lots and eventually put up more steel Buildings. Also we went 2 stories across the front of all, plus an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor at the center over our delivery/storage driveway. This was equipped with kitchen, bath and bedrooms, which later was used mostly as Sales Offices.

I may have said earlier, when I started at Bellview, there was one Journeyman cabinetmaker and one flunky. Within a few weeks I was considered Lead man or Foreman. Bill Wenglar outranked me as a cabinetmaker but he didn't want the responsibility.

Time to back track to Family events. Mary Anne and I were expecting our 3<sup>rd</sup> child in early April 1954 (hopefully a girl). The time came and we went to St. Francis Hospital in Southgate, CA. We waited and waited- nothing seemed to be

happening. The Hospital finally told me to go home and get some rest. As I drove in the driveway, Bernice Capps (next door neighbor) said the Hospital just called and said for me to get right back. Obviously I should never have left. The Doctor told us later the situation had changed drastically to the point they had to do a C-section, and did not expect a live birth.

As I came down the corridor to Mary Anne's room a nurse came by on the run holding a screaming infant. Turned out that was Dan and they were rushing him to the Nursery. It all turned out well as Mary Anne was OK too. One more crisis resolved positively. However, more crisis as her incision ripped open and had to heal slowly with changed dressings several times daily. We moved her to her Mother's house in Baldwin Park, CA. for care and I was able to spend most days at work. Some time after this incision healed, another crisis- her abdominal wall ruptured and she put up with this Hernia for quite some time. She finally had surgical repair and that got infected and we had the wet saline dressings deal to go through again.

A bit more about Bellview- J.D. Brown was a long time friend of Roy Smith but I thought also an opportunist- always looking out for Number One first. Roy Smith suffered from Rheumatic Heart Disease, became seriously ill in late 1952 and died sometime in 1953 at the age of 52. I never knew any details, but it seemed his widow didn't receive much of a share after Roy's death. Anyway Life and Bellview continued- expanded and concentrated on Library Equipment. I think sometime back in the 1960's, Bellview was nearing Bankruptcy and J.D. Brown sold the business to a 3 Party Group- 1 silent partner and 2 Italian investors from New York City. J.D. Retained ownership of the property and buildings. We had plenty of work but but not doing well financially, so this Group sold to Cimmaron, Inc. (an Oklahoma conglomerate) with a General Manager from Oklahoma City. Thru all this I had remained as Foreman, then Superintendent and eventually Vice President of Engineering (pretty much name only).

Business slowed, financial problems increase. Cimmaron, Inc. sent in a new Manager, Joe Hogrefe, with instruction to save the firm if possible or liquidate.

Things came to a head in October 1978 and Bankruptcy and Auction of Equipment, except buildings. Thus was the end of Bellview Furniture.

After Bellview I worked for 4 different firms and terminated shortly at each. First was Custom Mill in Industry, CA. Medical Insurance paid after 90 days. About 5 days after Insurance was in force I suffered a TIA and found I had a brain Tumor- surgically removed February 1979. Back to Custom Mill after recovery and several months later terminated due to nepotism. Next to Roy Thomas Furniture- sample maker and production assistant- terminated economics. Next sample maker at Calwood/Concepts= terminated, no longer needed. Finally Hotel/Motel Furniture Mfg. Big Boss owner going on 6 week vacation, and was hired as Assistant Foreman and sample maker- assisting Boss's son. Big Boss returned and I shortly was fired as incompetent!

I had to go on 100% Disability in early 1985 due to my right shoulder. On my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1987 I rolled over to Social Security. By this time the house in Anza was completed. We sold the Downey house and moved to Anza December 31, 1987.

I hope I'm not repeating here, but I want to add a few lines about my last improvement projects on the Downey Property. After the living room addition I formed an "S" curve from the back porch to the garage and my good friend Bill Galbraith came with his Mixer truck and enough leftover concrete to pour a slab for patio use. The mix was pretty hot and we had to work fast before it set up. I poured another concrete slab North from the garage- about 10 x 20 feet. Also piers for 3 posts and extended the roof from the garage. This became the parking place for our travel trailers. The last project was extending the west end of the garage to the property line- about 5 feet, enclosed and extended the garage roof with a side door entrance. Room for more "stuff".

Now a few paragraphs about the Anza property. In March 1970, 4 couples, Bob and Freda Lowry, Roy and Barbara Herron, Lou and Beverly Lowry and Mary Anne and I drove to Anza to look at property near a friend of Roy Herron, who had property in Anza. We liked this 5 acre parcel and made a deal for \$4500.00. It

looked great for weekends and a country place for all our kids to enjoy as well. From then on we were out to Anza it seemed almost every weekend.

First job- dig a pit for an outhouse and build an outhouse. I arranged a back to back for girls and boys. Next, drill a well for water- 300 feet deep. Next it was sign up for electric and run lines to different sites as each family kind of settled on 1 section of the acreage. We had some great times there over several years. Lou and Bev sold their interest and bought another parcel nearby. More years went by and Bob and Freda sold their interest and took up property in Sun City, CA. More time went by and I think about the late 70's, Roy and Barb and Mary Anne and I bought an adjacent 5 acre for expansion. I was really developing our section by then- first with a 25 ft. Travel Trailer (Prairie Schooner), then roofed it over, started foundations for a house around the trailer and eventually built the house around the trailer and removed it later, piece by piece. Sometime in there Roy and Barb sold their share and Mary Anne and I bought another adjoining 5 acre parcel that had a single wide mobile with an added expansion living room. We rented that parcel.

In 2002 I divided the first 2- 5 acre parcels into 4- 2 ½ acre parcels. We drilled a well on 2 of those, graded a home site and installed a new 3 bedroom, 2 bath manufactured house on fixed foundations on each. These became 2 more rental. In 1986 I had a 2 story barn built= 24 x 40, bottom floor for garage and workshop and a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor- ? Mostly storage and a place for "stuff". I have Roy and Barb's expanded mobile as a guest house and also our 25 foot Terry Travel Trailer as a guest house. That is rather a thumb nail sketch of the Anza property.

This has been more of a project than I thought when I started writing about my life. I think I have another paragraph or 2 about cars and trailers after Dan was born. We traded the Hornet sedan to Dave Fortner for his 1952 Hudson Coupe in probably 1956, then bought a new 1957 Rambler V-8 Station Wagon. I had always said I would never tow a trailer, but we couldn't travel well with 3 boys in the station wagon alone. We bought a homemade tear drop camp trailer- eat and sleep inside, cook out back under a lift up back end. It worked pretty well and bought a new 1960 Shasta 16 foot travel trailer. This worked out well- lot's of fun

traveling. Shortly, another trade to a new 1959 Rambler 4 door Hardtop. I think in 1962 we move up to a 1960 Rambler Ambassador Station Wagon. This our first car with air conditioning. This served us well, even a trip to Louisiana to visit our Gully friends among others.

By now Jim had started College, and Ed a year later. We bought a 1969 Ford Pickup and had a special camper shell installed which also had sleeping space in the shell. Summer vacation Dan brought his motorcycle, which we carried in the Camper. Every time we stopped in a campground, Dan said, Dad, can we get the bike out? Usually, yes. Time went by, Jim and Ed had their own choice of cars. Somewhere in there we moved up to a 1964 Lincoln Sedan, and 2 years later a 1966 Lincoln. Mary Anne loved these. I bought a 1965 Rambler Ambassador Coupe, then for awhile I had a 1970 Sport car- AMX. Mary Anne had a 1982 Lincoln Mark III. We finally went to a smaller car, a Lincoln Versaille- not a very good car! By then I had a Rambler V-8 4 wheel drive Sedan, 1969 I think- very good car! Finally I bought a new 1985 Ford Pickup equipped with a Camper the same as the 1969- 460 CID engine- great for towing our next travel trailer, a 1982 Terry 25 foot. Very nice way to travel- air conditioning, forced air, etc. I still have these 2 vehicles. Our last trip was in 1996 to Washington state, touring the Olympic Nat. Park, etc.

I'll stop here with Dan's death in 1999 and Mary Anne died in 2001. I have reached the point of just rambling so it seems a good place to put this to an end.

Jim wanted me to add enough to come up to a more current date- In March 2012 I got a wild notion and bought my 2004 Chrysler Crossfire- a sporty 2 [person Coupe. In June I did a 3800 mile round trip- Anza to Spokane- visiting my 6 remaining siblings and others. In June 2013 I did the same trip, again by myself and I thought I managed quite well. Then in August 2013 I took a train trip to Seattle and on to Kingston, WA. For George Richerts 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Visited again with more relatives.

For a year or so, friends and relatives had been asking/suggesting maybe I should be thinking about a move closer in with less work and responsibility. I did begin thinking and even started inquiring about retirement communities near

Temecula and Murrietta. Before visiting any, Jim told me about this beautiful community in Quincy, IL. They required a minimum 3 month stay, so before long I had signed up. Jim flew out from Quincy and we packed everything we could crammed into the Pacifica and we drove to Quincy, visiting Mary, Dave, Mark and Mick Smith on our trip to Quincy. I checked in to Curtis Creek on October 29, 2013.

Late November I had a fainting spell, diagnosed as a Urinary Tract Infection-off to the ER, antibiotics for a few days, then Rehab for 10 days. My enlarged Prostate had 98% closed the urinary passage and surgery was advised. I had what the Medics called a Laser Evaporation Surgery. It was very successful and my water works are now like 40-50 years ago.

Just 4 days after release from the Hospital, Jim and I flew to Hawaii to visit Ed, Loy and grandsons, Justin and Kyle. Great trip but it was tiring. I was almost in a state of collapse when we returned. I'm still here after 7 months in Curtis Creek with no thought yet of any change. Next trip to California/Washington June 20. E.O.P. So that's it for now...