

THE HISTORY OF PAUL FITZPATRICK

It is my intention to create a written history of my recollections, those of my immediate family, those of more distant relatives and friends. Please understand that I will never make the claim of being an author. However, I must admit to two handicaps that could cause this project to become more difficult. The first is the fact that I employ my own method of “hunt and peck” typing causing a significantly longer time to enter the material into my computer. The second is my apparent memory loss. The girls and I agreed to my doctor's suggestion of a head X-ray. After reviewing the picture, he reported “nothing unusual for a person of my age.” I am presently 89 years old and I have a personal theory of memory loss. I will agree that I am somewhat bald, but my theory is that my hair is not falling out, my hair is falling in.

This story will be primarily based on the Albert and Clara Fitzpatrick family. Those outside the initial family will be introduced and named as they enter the story.

NOW A BIT OF EARLIER HISTORY

Olaf Olsen was born in 1867, in Wanosh, Sweden. With his wife Gusta, the former Gusta Anderson, he migrated to the United States. Arriving in the late 1880's, they settled on a small farm near Daggett, a small town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. They later became American naturalized citizens in 1900 in Menominee, Michigan.

Olaf and Gusta had three daughters. The first and oldest of the three girls was named Augusta. We have very little evidence of her early life. Most of our knowledge of her early life is from my fading

memory. The Olsen family was a closely knit group and all would follow parental suggestions. I am sure that all farm girl duties would be performed as needed. It seems that Augusta, being the oldest, had had enough. Just living in a typical Daggett farm house at that time would expose the residents to the following: little or no inside plumbing, a hand pump at the kitchen sink would suffice, candles or kerosene lamps, wood burning or kerosene stoves, a wood burning furnace or fireplace for heat and for hot water, anything you could safely set a pan or a bucket on.

To get to your barn you would just have to shovel, and on heavy snow days you had to tunnel. The animals in the barn had to be fed, milked or whatever. Farm work hardly ever ends. I am sure some of the businesses or more profitable individuals would be able to afford electricity and full indoor plumbing. Personal transportation was mainly by horse and saddle or horse and buggy. I am sure there were probably some Ford Model T's around and for longer trips buses and trains.

Augusta, the first born, was the first to leave the security of the family home. I have no idea of the date, but she had somehow found a position at a railroad company. The company name and location at this time are forever forgotten. I do know that she communicated with and visited the family as often as possible, but probably not too often.

I am unable to find any date or location, but she had gotten married. I am unable to determine if any of the family attended the wedding or if she was solo. His name was George Meyers. He was a government food inspector and a widower, with a divorced daughter living alone. She appeared about middle age. He lived in Kenton, Ohio. They lived there before Bill and I were teenagers. Then they were transferred to Milton, Pennsylvania. They lived there quite a while. The only plant he had to check was CHEF BOYARDEE. I

question my spelling, so just sound it out and you will know.

Theresa O was the second born and I am sure that the farm girl practice was still in effect, but she also became a milliner. I have no record of her failure or success. However, we did learn that she had left Daggett and married John Norden. Sadly, quite early in the marriage it was discovered that John had a severe case of cancer. Naturally, Theresa stayed until John had passed. She then had him interred in the Daggett cemetery. She then returned to the Olsen home and family.

Now is the time to introduce the last person to join the Olsen family. The family that owned the farm adjacent to the Olsen's was owned by John and Theresa Eckman, also Swedish and their best friends. They had a little girl named Nancy Cecilia. She was about four years old having been born on April 6, 1903 in Daggett, Michigan. Sadly, both of the parents knew that both of them were terminally ill. They both asked Olaf and Gusta to adopt Nancy. Knowing the situation, the Olsen's agreed and Nancy Eckman became Nancy Eckman Olsen. A while later she became Aunt Nancy, just as Theresa O. Norden had become Aunt Theresa. The love and assistance given to the Albert and Clara Fitzpatrick family can never be calculated. My own feeling is that everyone should have an Aunt Theresa and an Aunt Nancy sometime in their life.

Clara Otilia Olsen was the third daughter of the Olsen family, born on June 30, 1890. She also went through the same farm girl experiences as her other sisters only she had a different plan. She also became a milliner, but with other plans.

She, with the help of her sister, Theresa, opened her own successful millinery store in Gladstone, a larger city, a fair distance from Daggett. Sometime later, unlike other young single ladies, she again, with Theresa opened a millinery store in Chicago.

I will now temporarily move Clara back to Daggett or

Gladstone.

WELCOME THE FITZPATRICK'S

Edward Albert Fitzpatrick and his wife Christie Ann James arrived in the United States from Cornwall, Ontario, no date or place of arrival. They had several children. In order of birth they are, Albert Simon, Lloyd, Leonard, Harriett Mildred and Dorothy. This is a list of their respective marriages: Albert Simon with Clara Olsen, Lloyd with Florence, Leonard with Betty and Harriett Mildred with Robert McCombe.

I do not know the exact location of where the Fitzpatrick clan settled, but I do know that it was in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I do know that Edward was the manager of an I. Stevanson lumbering camp and that Albert Simon was one of their lumberjacks. The lifestyle of a common lumberjack was not easy. The requirement was the carrying of an axe or a saw and to be standing by a tree at daylight and to be standing by another tree when the sun goes down. For this he was paid four dollars a week plus room and board. They were cutting spruce trees to make the frames for World War One canvas covered airplanes. World War One had started in 1914 and lasted until 1918. Albert and most of the lumberjacks had been drafted. Albert had risen to rank of sergeant and was discharged in 1916.

Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any record of his activities from his discharge until he appeared in the Daggett/Gladstone area. He must have presented himself well enough and long enough to influence one Clara Otilia Olsen. For on the 24th eve of December 1919, Albert S. Fitzpatrick and Clara O. Olsen took their vows and were married in Escanaba, Michigan. I finally decided that Albert had spent his missing time becoming the

excellent automotive mechanic that he was.

Unfortunately, they later lost baby Bobby during the flu epidemic of that time. He was laid to rest in the Daggett cemetery. Olaf Olsen had also passed and had also been laid to rest in the Daggett cemetery.

Now, the great Exodus: The decision was made to move, lock, stock and barrel, really only people, clothes and necessities to Detroit. The real reason was to find more attractive employment, better living conditions and warmer weather. The movers would be Albert, Clara, Theresa, Nancy and the soon to be Grand Mother, Gusta.

I am not sure if they arrived by automobile or train or both. Some arrived by automobile and some by train with their heavier possessions. I do think that the later plan would have been the best. I do not know how much time elapsed between the arrival at Detroit and their arrival at their brand new home at 11343 Belleterre Avenue in the Livernois and Collingwood area, mortgaged at \$3,500 dollars. This home was wood sided with a full width roofed front porch, a full basement with a laundry area with tubs, a large round hand fed coal furnace, a coal bin and still enough room for two little boys and their friends to play on bad weather days. The first floor had a full width living room minus a front closet and an equal width stairway to the second floor and a large dining and a large kitchen. The second floor had three bedrooms and one bath. The master bedroom closet also contained the stairway to an insulated non heated full attic. You will understand the extensive floor plan description when you count the sometimes overload of welcome inhabitants.

Rapid employment was probably at the top of the "to do" list after the basic move in had been completed. Albert applied and was accepted at a new Rickenbacker automobile manufacturing plant built in 1921. Aunt Theresa applied and was then hired at a millinery

store named, “Sam the Hatter.” She could get to and from work by streetcar with only two transfers. The Belleterre house was only six blocks from Grand River where the streetcars ran. From there you could reach almost any place in Detroit by streetcars.

Nancy had acquired secretarial knowledge from somewhere and was hired as a secretary in the treasurer’s office of the Grand Trunk and Western Railroad. She could also travel on streetcars. Now Clara assumes the most important position; that of Wife and Homemaker and head chef. Now at least they have a tangible income.

Now I would like to introduce: William Albert Fitzpatrick, born on 08/26/1922 and his younger brother Paul (NMI) Fitzpatrick – ME, born on 06/26/1924. By the way, (NMI) stands for no middle initial.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: On this date Mom and Dad purchased some lots on Long Lake at Bunny Run Country Club in Lake Orion. They, with relatives and friends will soon start a cottage that we all enjoy for many, many years.

SECOND NOTICE: I want to introduce Leonard and Anne Chesterfield, who had come here a while back from England. Leonard now works for Ford Motor Company. They are also building a cottage just up the road from our cottage on Indian Lake Road. They have three children, Josie, Gary and Shirley. Gary and Josie will appear later.

Remember Dad's first job at the Rickenbacker Car Plant, well, I am only sure that his employment lasted through 1924. Remember the life span of the early auto companies? I am not sure if he was there longer. I know that Eddie Rickenbacker became his good friend. Several times later, into the “30's” he took Dad, Bill and me out to Selfridge Field to see the then new Army planes perform.

One time, they even marked out a temporary race track and we

saw a race between a P-26 low wing fighter and a race car driven by Barney Olfield, a then famous race car driver. The track was round and fairly large, but the plane could not fly as tight a circle as the track, so they simply counted the number of individual circles. The plane won because of its much higher speed. I know he had a job with Hutto Cylinder Honing Company. This company will reappear. The honing tools improved the geometry and finish of automobile engine cylinders. This operation following the boring operation virtually eliminated oil burning in new and used automobile and truck engines.

Dad and a few other men demonstrated and sold the tools. Mr. Hutto became a millionaire. In 1930 he sold the company to Micromatic Hone Company in Detroit. This company will appear again. It was 1929 and the Stock Market CRASHED. The Great Depression was here.

Then, sadly, Grand Mother Gusta passed away. We like many other families in this situation could afford the funeral preparation, but not the service, the showing and the burial by the funeral home. We, like those other families, had the showing in the living room of their own homes. I still have vague memories of seeing the open casket in the living room of the Belleterre house. I was only about five or six years old. Dad had just finished making a new trailer. It was what we would take the closed well wrapped casket tied on the trailer to Daggett. We did, with another car, both full of relatives. So Grand Mother Gusta was interred beside Grand Father Olaf at the Daggett Cemetery.

It seemed that a large part of full time employment vanished and many of those who had kept full time jobs went part time.

Enter the "Attic Boys." For this you must remember or refer to the unheated attic and the master bedroom closet stairway. If it was cold outside and the closet door was closed, the remainder of the

upstairs would be warm. But, if the closet door was opened the cold air from the attic would overpower the warm air attempting to rise and the closet, the whole second floor and possibly the whole house could chill. Therefore, the door could only be opened long enough to let one or two persons enter or leave the attic.

Dad had made a friend at the Rickenbacker plant with a fellow worker, named George Dudden that turned into a long family friendship. He was only working part time and his living expenses were fairly high. Dad explained the room and board practice at our house. Offer accepted and in moved Attic Boy #1. Attic Boy #2 will take a little longer.

Two brothers from the far north of Ontario, William and Robert McCombe migrated to Detroit for the same reasons as our family. Robert met Dad's sister, Harriett and in time, married her. Robert worked at the Chrysler plant. When they visited our house or the cottage, Bill McCombe would tag along. Bill was very personable and intelligent and had musical talents. Pretty soon, he and Nancy were a little more than friends. Bill was working as a uniformed, armed guard for some company. He had also earned a private pilot license.

One day he took Dad, Bill and me to Detroit City Airport. He then put Dad, Bill and me in the large front cockpit while he got into the rear cockpit of a large TRAVELAIRE biplane. He then took off and flew around Detroit and over the Belleterre neighborhood so we could see our house from the air. What a thrill - our first airplane ride.

Meet ATTIC BOY #2.

Now, with Albert, Clara, Theresa, Nancy, two Attic Boys and Little Bill and Little Paul there were eight people living in a three - bedroom, one attic, and one bathroom friendly, cooperative, happy home. A miracle.

The largest part of the miracle was the unique room and board system conceived by Albert and Clara and to my knowledge it was accepted by all occupants and never challenged by any occupant. There may have been a successful re-negotiation but everything must have been settled. No one moved for that reason. Albert and Clara had conceived a rather unique room and board plan. On payday, everyone working and all of the occupants would bring the total amount of their work payment in cash and place it on the table in the dining room and each would withdraw the amount required for their own needs for the coming period. The remaining amount plus Dad's pay would then be spent on the mortgage, taxes, utilities and food and room charge. Any surplus would be put in a fund for any individuals personal unexpected expenses. There were hardly ever any objections. If any arose, they were negotiated. Breakfasts were prepared by the individuals or groups. Clara's dinners were always exceptional.

Aunt Nancy's group secretarial job was changed. She was promoted to Secretary to the Treasurer of the Grand Trunk and Western Railroad. I am sure her salary increased somewhat. Nancy and William McCombe then married.

The railroad had a regulation that a woman in that position could not be married. However, the Treasurer was a very good friend and covered for her. He was divorced with two children. She would buy and wrap all his Christmas and other required presents. Then Nancy had Bill enroll at the University of Michigan and she paid his four year tuition and he graduated with an Aeronautical Engineering Degree. He had continued at his nighttime job as a guard for the full four years. He took a job at Packard Motor Car Company in the Engineering Department. They bought a nice brick bungalow at Fenkell and Strathmoor a block from the front doors of Cooley High School. That was about three blocks from where her

boss lived. He took her to and from her home every day. She then moved from the Belleterre home with Bill.

Now I think that it is about time to put Brother Bill and myself into school. Bill is exactly twenty two months older than me. That causes him to remain exactly two grades ahead me. The school district had recently opened a new sixth grade elementary school named McKerrow. For a grade school the building had to be exceptional for the time. It had a gymnasium, a conservatory and an unusual auditorium. As you entered the room from the hall, to the left was a raised stage with curtains, a rising floor with fixed chairs. To the right was a mini balcony about five feet high with a railing and three rows of fixed chairs. The building was on the left side of Collingwood four blocks from Belleterre. Across Collingwood on the right was an older and larger elementary school named Ravenswood that went to the eighth grade and would only remain open until a new intermediate school, named Tappan, under construction, could be completed. I started at McKerrow and graduated from the sixth grade. Bill had finished seventh and eighth grades at Ravenswood. At the start of the next school year he would enter High School.

HERE COMES A MOVE. Mom and Dad had purchased a nice yellow brick two story duplex home; one unit up and one unit down at 21624 and 21626 Karl in Redford Township, still in Detroit, mortgage paid off in 1952. Now at the start of the next school year Bill will enter the ninth grade at Redford High School. I will take the seventh and eighth grade at Holcomb Elementary school, on Bentler, about one block from our new house, the nearest cross street to Karl. Bentler runs north and if you turn right on Bentler you head south, in one block you pass Holcom and in less than half a mile you will reach the intersection of Grand River and Six Mile Road and the front door of Redford High School.

The last Attic Boy, Georg Dudden, had left the Belleterre house a while back and married. They moved to the East Side and we still kept in touch with each other occasionally. The Belleterre House is rented.

Dad has a new job with U.S. Electric Tool Company located in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is a salesman for their products with a territory of Upper and Lower Michigan.

Our family has really, really reduced in size, made-up of Mom, Dad, Aunt Theresa, Bill and me. We only need one of the apartments.

Bill was everything an older brother should be, prosecutor, only when he tattled, my protector and my best friend. When it came to who wins it was Bill mostly, but not all the time. We shared everything fairly equal. Sometimes Mom or Dad had to mediate. I can honestly say that we differed on many things, but neither of us ever struck a blow in anger. He has been missed from the minute he passed away.

As usual the very close local boys are automatically drawn into a closely knit group, NOT GANG. I think the worst tricks ever played on the locals were the soaping of windows at Halloween. Eddie Waltser, Jerry Pitser, Stuart Harding and Dick and Forest Bricker, Brother Bill and I made up our whole group.

We went to the movies on Saturdays, two features, mostly cowboys, four to six cartoons, a news reel and two serials for ten cents. One Saturday, I have no idea of the date, The Lone Ranger was the last movie of the show. When the lights came on and when we looked at the stage we saw The Lone Ranger with Silver and Tonto with Scout alive on the stage. What a surprise. At that time he was advertising Silver Cup Bread. When we went into the lobby on the way out, we saw several young ladies in several lines handing out miniature loaves of Silver Cup Bread. Our seven boys went

through enough lines enough times to acquire enough loaves to give every member of all of our families their own loaf.

Then we played baseball or football on vacant lots and roller skate hockey on low traffic streets. All that and cut lawns and raked leaves, but quite a bit less on school days. In summer we would usually be at Bunny Run. Dad would commute to work, but stay in town a couple of days a week to keep an eye on the town house. Then on weekends Theresa and Nancy would ride up to the cottage for the weekend. In about mid 1939 Dad opened the Rochester Auto Parts Store at the Corner of 5th Street and Rochester Road in Rochester. During the past few summers we had significantly improved the cottage itself. Brother Bill and I drove a flowing well, poured a concrete well box, installed a pump and we had indoor plumbing in the kitchen and a shower in the bath. Dad, Mom, Aunt Theresa, Bill and I moved into the cottage. We had left our flat on Karl still furnished in case the Parts Store failed. We did very well in the store for quite some time. Finally a very large company, Automobile Parts Incorporated, had a very much larger and varied inventory, delivery service and the ability to undercut our prices. It spelled failure for our store. In 1941 Dad and Mom sold the Belleterre house to offset the losses of the parts store.

Dad was fifty two at that time. They were both planning ahead. They both agreed that his territory was too large and he resigned his job as an electric tool salesman. He knew that he had learned a great deal about the properties, characteristics and applications of abrasives on machining operations. He applied for a sales position with Norton Abrasive Company in Buffalo, New York and was accepted and was given Lower Michigan as his territory. He did very well in sales. His best customer was Micromatic Hone Corporation. Remember? Dad was fifty two years old and it's possible that he and Mom might be thinking of or planning an early

retirement down the road or maybe up the road. He had already talked of buying some of the available property across and up the road toward Indian Lake Road and building a retirement home. Not yet but in the future. They figured that with the sale of the cottage, the rent of the two units in the Karl house, his pension and Social Security it could be possible.

On June 26, 1942, I graduated from Redford High School in Detroit. After a short period, I enrolled at Lawrence Institute of Technology and completed one semester of Mechanical Engineering. I then took a job at a small machine shop operating a grinder finishing vanes for aircraft fuel pumps. The hours were long but the pay was a little better than fair. Brother Bill had already graduated in 1940 and was working in the Blue Print Room at Packard Motor Car Company.

In 1938, Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. England and France declared war on Germany. As expected, Italy joined forces with Germany. The Allies would give them the name AXIS for this merger. These actions actually marked the start of WORLD WAR TWO.

Then the very worst thing that could happen actually did happen. On the morning of Sunday, December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor and the Hawaiian Islands were attacked by a massive Japanese air and naval force. The United States declared war on Japan. From that moment on we would be totally involved with WORLD WAR TWO in Europe until May 8, 1945 and September 2, 1945 in Japan and the islands and jungles.

With the United States at war on two fronts, the Military was running at full speed and the Draft Boards were working overtime. Bill and I had each taken a three year course of Junior R.O.T.C. High School. I earned the rank of Captain over the three Platoons that the School had. Bill and I both assumed that we would both be prime

targets for the local Draft Boards.

Both of our parents had endured the experiences of World War One and still recalled them. Bill and I both decided that we owed them a calm, quiet and serious discussion on the merits of enlisting versus the draft. They had already agreed among themselves that enlisting would at least give us the ability to pick a unit of our choice. It was still a very difficult time for each of them knowing they could lose one or both of their boys. We were both happy and proud of them. One Problem removed. **BYE-BYE INFANTRY!!!**

Bill and his friend (name unknown) enlisted in the **UNITED STATES COAST GUARD** and were assigned to the base at Manistee, Michigan (date unknown). Bill's friend played the accordion and joined the band on the base. Sometime later, (date unknown), Bill was transferred to a base on the coast of Maine in the far North East. The Government was very concerned by the sighting of German submarines on the coastal area. They were a danger to ships carrying war supplies to England. Also the submarines were known to have dropped German operatives ashore in that area. To counteract this, many of the wealthy had temporarily donated their large pleasure boats to the Coast Guard. Bill and about seven or eight Coast Guard men were assigned to one of these mini yachts. The cooking assignment started out being rotated among the crew. It was so bad that Bill offered to become cook if the others would shop to his orders and do all the necessary clean up. They did not know he was already a good cook. I have no idea of the length of this assignment.

I never heard any more of his friend from Packard. For all I know, he may still be playing his accordion at Manistee.

I am not sure how long Brother Bill stayed with this assignment, but I do know that he was sent to the Pacific Theater (date unknown) and I do know that The Coast Guard drove the

landing craft for most of the Island Invasions. I do know he experienced very dangerous situations. I do know it was NO PICNIC. I do not know his discharge date.

One Saturday morning Dad wanted to go up to the cottage. From the Karl house our route would be Lahser to Square Lake Road to Telegraph Road. Dad had one of the new Chevrolet two door coupes with a full rear seat. Why we ever picked the seating plan that we did, I will never know. Dad was in the driver's seat, Mom in the middle and Theresa by the door with me in the rear seat alone behind Aunt Theresa. We had to cross Northwestern Highway. When we were right in the middle, we got broadsided by a car doing what the police estimated at between sixty and seventy miles per hour. The only casualty was Mom. She had a fractured hip. We were hit so hard that the side of the body was folded in so far that the lower edge of my overcoat was stapled to the floor of the car. Bill was already gone and I would soon be. Aunt Nancy and Aunt Theresa would tell us how Mom would walk sideways around the dining room table supporting herself with her arms stiff saying, "I am going to be walking right when my boys come home."

Bill McComb was still with Packard, but his job had changed significantly. Packard had obtained a license from England to manufacture the Rolls Royce Merlin V12 engine and he was responsible for the installation of that engine in the Naval PT Boats being manufactured by the Higgins Boat Company in New Orleans, Louisiana. To keep things coordinated between Detroit and New Orleans he was flying in DC-3's between the two cities every few days. A little later he was transferred to England to examine both the engines and the boats and determine if either were alright, needed repair or should be scrapped. He did this until the war ended and then returned to the Packard Motor Car Company to manage the Packard Taxi Cab Line.

On a Friday (I forget the date) I went to the U.S. NAVAL RECRUITING STATION in Downtown Detroit. When asked what I would like, I replied I would be interested in enlisting in the U.S. Navy pilot training program. The answer was that the program was temporarily closed, but that it would open shortly and that I should finish the enlisting paperwork and that I would be enlisted as soon as they opened. Then, they would contact my draft board and I would not be drafted. This was Friday, on Monday I received my draft notice from my draft board. From that minute on, I was known as Pvt. Paul (NMI) Fitzpatrick in the U.S Army Air Force.

Induction – Fort Custer – Battle Creek, MI

Arrival 03/05/43 Departure 03/11/43

Introduction to Military lifestyle and regulations, received identification, dog tags, uniforms and toiletries

Basic Training - St. Petersburg, FL

Arrival 03/14/43 Departure 07/26/43

Not the usual Army Basic Training. It was a stopover caused by a backup by training ahead. We were placed in the best and largest stripped down hotel in town. Almost all of the hotels in town had been taken over. Duties: K.P., Guard Duty in our hotel and others in town, very non-Army. Some Close Order Drill.

University of Florida – Gainesville, FL

Arrival 07/27/43 Departure 09/28/43

Another stopover. Beautiful campus and dorms. Morse code and weather and ten hours of dual time in an Aeronca Champion airplane. Visit by Dad, Mom and Donna Kennedy. Now a true story. The Physical Director was the football coach for the University of Florida. His name was Gus Lieb. He was one of the

seven mules, linemen for Knute Rockne's Four Horsemen. Under the football stadium was a large storage room for maintenance equipment. There he had sand bags about the size of a five pound bag. It was damp under there so I am not sure how much they weighed. For sit-ups you had one on your chest, for push-ups you had one on the back of your neck, and for cross country you had one on each shoulder. Someone posted a message on a board from the Air Force saying, "We want these men to fly the airplanes, not to carry them."

Classification - Kelly Field, San Antonio TX

Arrival 10/01/43 Departure 11/02/43

Not a stopover. Classification is just like it sounds. Here you make your selection that will determine your future. I selected single engine planes and was given this choice which totally rearranged my status. I was promoted from Private to Aviation CADET and my monthly pay went from \$50.00 to \$75.00 per month. PRE-FLIGHT HERE I COME!!

Pre-Flight – Kelly Field, San Antonio TX

Arrival 11/02/43 Departure 01/02/44

Pre-Flight in the Cadet program is somewhat similar to that of civilian pilots in that they are both their GROUND SCHOOLS. The average civilian will usually be in a smaller plane and solo in about eight hours. The average Cadet student will solo in about the same time, usually in a somewhat larger and sometimes more complex plane. Also, many of the civilians will only have minimum exposure to Ground School unless they intend to fly out of the local area or graduate to a plane. We know we are going to do both. Our GROUND SCHOOL will cover unlimited subjects and Military projects and will take at least two months to complete. FINALLY

WE WILL BE IN REAL AIRPLANES. WELCOME TO PRIMARY FLIGHT TRAINING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Primary Flight Training – 303rd USAAF Flying Training Command - Brayton Flying Service, Cuero, TX

Arrival 01/03/43 Departure 03/03/44

This was a rather unusual unit. The company was civilian owned, controlled by the U.S. Air Force, with civilian pilot instructors and Aviation Cadets as students. The town of Cuero was a really small town located about halfway between San Antonio and Houston. It prided itself as the Turkey Capital of Texas (or the World). We flew a Fairchild PT-19 single engine tandem cockpit fixed wheel trainer with the student in the front and the instructor in the rear. The engine was started with a hand crank on the left side of the engine compartment. Each instructor had three or four students for six or more hours a day, six days a week. We also had Ground School sandwiched in between. Our instructor had four students. He was about my age and had washed out at the end of the U.S. Naval pilot program (no explanation). He had then earned a commercial pilot's instructor license. He was better than excellent. He became a real friend. His name was Calven C. Conly, the "C" for Coolidge and we called him Ted. (A VERY UNUSUAL STORY) I graduated from Primary Flight School on 03/03/44 and I was discharged from the Air Force at Fort Sheridan Separation Center in Chicago on 07/07/46. I was a 1st LT. walking toward the exit gate next to an Air Force 2nd LT. named Ted Conly. We both were more than somewhat surprised. He had joined the Air Force and became an instructor at an Air Force Advanced Single Engine Flight Training School. He had the Karl house address and phone number and he promised to visit or call, but he never did. Sadly, I never heard from him again. NOW, ONTO BASIC FLIGHT

TRAINING

Basic Flight Training – Waco USAAF Base, Waco, TX

Arrival 03/03/44 Departure 05/18/44

***SPECIAL NOTICE:** Brother Bill and Josie Chesterfield married on 04/15/44*

I think that the only reason for the “BASIC's” name is that we would be performing some basic maneuvers, that we can already perform, but to perform them in an underpowered airplane. An underpowered airplane is what we will be flying. It was INTENTIONAL. This airplane was The Vaultee Valiant, nicknamed, The Vaultee Vibrator or as two thousand rivets in loose formation. This was a riveted fairly large low wing single engine plane. It had a nine cylinder, 450 horse power radial canopy. Each cockpit cover could be opened or closed individually. It also had a fixed landing gear. Most of the maneuvers that we had been doing are being repeated. The only real difference was that we are in a new airplane. Now we are introduced to the new additions to the program. Add Aerobatics, Cross Country Navigation, Hooded Instrument flying and more practice on emergency landings. These happen at a reasonable altitude. The instructor will cut the ignition killing the engine. The gliding speed will keep the propeller turning. When the instructor turns the ignition back on, the engine will restart and you had better been alert enough to have a suitable landing spot in sight and within gliding distance. If not, he will restart the engine, pull up and then restart with you. Congratulations.

ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINING IS HERE.

Advanced Flight Training – Mission, TX

Arrival 05/18/44 Departure 08/04/44

We are about to enter into the last two or three remaining programs in this apparently endless effort. It is The Advanced Flight Training, P-40, P-47 and the P-51 Transition. The plane we will fly in this section is the North American AT-6 Texan. Virtually every country friendly to the United States with a military Air Force has flown it in their Advanced Flight Training Program. It is usually made to resemble the Japanese Zero in American War Movies. It is a low wing single 650 horse power 9-cylinder radial engine, with retractable landing gear. It also is exceptionally aerobatic and can be fitted with one right wing mounted 30 caliber machine gun for ground targets or targets towed by another plane. The bullets of each individual shooting plane is covered with a different color paint that would tell how many hits each and which plane had made them. The only difference between the two planes was that the shooter's plane was being flown by a Cadet, while the towing plane was being flown by a member of the WASPS, the Women's Air Force Service Pilots of WWII. Previous subjects, plus the following new ones are covered every day. Here are a few new ones. Night cross country flights, hooded instrument flights, regular altitude chamber visits, link trainer sessions, aircraft identification classes, Skeet shooting classes with a 12 gauge shotgun to practice leading a target, physical training, and getting a Link trainer fitted with a BB machine gun and airplane gun sight shooting at targets mounted on and above a moving model electric train, and Morse Code practice. I am sure I overlooked some others. I AM SORRY TO SAY THAT WE HAVE JUST HAD OUR FIRST FATAL CASUALTY BUT I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT THIS WAS THE LAST FATAL CASUALTY IN THE CLASS OF 44-G.

Our squadron had been assigned a night Cross Country Flight.

Unfortunately, Cadet William Marum miss set his compass and went almost due south into Mexico instead of a little northwest toward San Antonio. Then after about 90 minutes he would make a 90 degree right turn to Victoria and then another 90 degree right turn south. He would have arrived at his home base at Mission. But probably within 45 minutes he was completely lost over dark rural Mexico. But then he came upon the lights of a small town which he continued to circle for a while. The residents of the village must have had a similar experience with some other pilot, for they knew how to help. There were only a few automobiles in this town so they parked them with their headlights on, facing each other spaced about what they thought might be the width of a runway and spaced in the opposite direction to represent the length of a runway. However, they did not have enough cars for the real length. Then a small distance from the first cars, at the start of their runway they burned a small barn to produce more light. I am sure the surface would be somewhat rough, but if it looked too rough, you could make a-wheels up belly landing. Apparently he decided to leave the plane and use his parachute. So he started to climb and when he obtained parachuting altitude, he jumped. Again his luck went bad. The ground was rising as a hill about the same rate as his climb. His body hit the ground before his chute was fully opened. All the residents' efforts had been futile.

Another trip for Dad, Mom and Donna Kennedy. They all wanted to see the Graduation and the Commission's that would be awarded. Ever since the first Flight Training Classes, the Cadets were designated as Upper and Lower Class Men. The Upper Class Men are graduating. The Under Class Men will all fly a low level formation over the ceremony. At that time I became 2nd LT Paul (NMI) Fitzpatrick 02067479. Then we all walked over to see our assignments. That is when the bottom fell out of my jelly bean bag.

No P-40 assignment. I was to report to the Central Instructors School at Randolph Field in San Antonio, TX and when finished there I was to report back to Waco USAAF Basic Flight Training Base in Waco, TX to instruct students in VULTEE Vibrator planes. There could not be any negotiation on this subject. I did not have any intention of spending the remainder of my AIR FORCE service time doing this. I had just been given a fourteen day leave, the first leave in seventeen months. We all decided to return home. The next day I asked another new 2nd LT named George Fetzer if he would like to share a ride to Detroit. He lived at 1415 Downey Street in Flint, MI and he jumped at the chance. Early the next morning we left with Dad, George and me rotating driving and Mom and Donna riding. Without expressways and minimum rest stops and quick gas and food stops, we made it to 21466 Karl in just under two days. George's family picked him up the next day.

Central Instructors School – Randolph Field – San Antonio, TX

Arrival 08/15/44 Departure 09/22/44

I arrived at Randolph Field, signed in and was assigned to my new quarters. I was then introduced to my new instructor and my five new students. They were all 2nd Lt.'s also. Fortunately they all had only five-weeks left before they would graduate. I trained them for the five weeks and had my instructor approve their abilities. I was then on my way to instruct at the WACO USAAF BASE in Waco, TX.

Instructing Basic Flight Training - Waco USAAF Base, Waco, TX

Arrival 09/23/44 Departure 11/08/44

I was instructed to report to USAAF BASIC FLIGHT TRAINING BASE at Waco, TX. Only this time it was to be as an

Instructor. If you remember the last time I was here I said that I had no intention of spending the remainder of my AIR FORCE service time flying VULTEE VIBRATORS and I meant it. However, I signed in again and was assigned my quarters and was introduced to my four new Cadet students. Fortunately again these students only required about two and one half months of additional training. One day when I was going to the Officers Club for dinner I saw a sign on a bulletin board wanting pilots interested in going to a MARTIN MAURAUDE B-26 transition program. I signed on and in a week I was at Barksdale Field in Shreveport, LA.

Martin B-26 Marauder Transition – Barksdale Field, Shreveport, LA

Arrival 11/10/44 Departure 01/17/45

Once again I signed in and received quarters. The next day we met with our six man crew. 1st Lt. L.T. (Dude) Hayden, Pilot, 2nd Lt. Paul Fitzpatrick, Co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Brussels, Bombagator, (a combination of Bombardier and Navigator) a pretty good Bombardier and a fair Navigator), CPL. Robert Ahern as Flight Engineer and top turret gunner, CPL. Robert Cassaday as Radio man and waist gunner and CPL. James Smith as Armorer and tail gunner. You should notice that all three of the enlisted men in our crew are ranked as Corporals. Before we leave on our next transfer they will all be promoted to Staff Sergeants. This rank will hopefully prevent the German's "by rules of engagement" from putting them to cruel and unusual work in case they are taken as prisoners of War.

The B-26 had received an unwarranted reputation as far as I am concerned. I can think of only one serious fault that could have been easily corrected, but never was. That was to replace the Curtis Electric Propellers with Hamilton Standard Hydraulic Propellers as they did on the replacement A-26. The pitch controls was located on

the hub of the propeller. If not cleaned regularly this could sometimes cause a runaway propeller. The Curtis people would rather we call it an over speeding engine. On the console between the Pilot and Co-Pilot were two little toggle switches, one to feather the propellers on each engine. Maximum engine R.P.M. for takeoff was 3200. If either engine exceeded that the feather switch would reduce the R.P.M. speed at 100 per second. If it did not stop the rise, and the air speed is less than 135 miles per hour, your only choice is to shut everything off and land straight ahead. If not, the runaway prop will almost act like a 9 foot diameter disk and stall that wing and cause a slow roll and crash at that altitude. Good maintenance can prevent this. It did not happen too often, but one time is too many. I feel that Pilot error or poor mission planning caused some part of many of the accidents. This airplane did not deserve the names of WIDOW MAKER or BALTIMORE PROSTITUTE (no visible means of support.)

With 9 Groups (36 squadrons) the B-26 groups maintained the lowest airplane percentage loss of any other combat group in EUROPE.

We entered into the familiar process of TRANSITION, meaning something new for me, were to learn to steer with a wheel instead of a stick and how to feather a propeller. Those two I mastered at once. Learning all I needed to know about B-26 will take a bit longer. T. Hayden turned out to be a surprise. He had been a multi-engine instructor for some time. I had my own private instructor, making the rest of the crew and myself quite happy. We practiced almost every day with a full crew in almost any weather, day or night. Our field had three parallel runways - two 5,000 foot long, one on either side of a 10,000 foot long runway. I will list some of the things that we had to master. Single Engine Flight – Short Runway Take Off and Landing – Formation Flying – Establishing and Making Bomb

Runs and Drops – To Abandon or to Safely Bring Down A Damaged Plane and you can estimate how many more may exist. We were very proud of our three gunners for passing all tests well above average.

If my memory is correct, thirty-six B-26 crews had graduated from B-26 Transition. I feel that we were fortunate to be among the twelve crews picked to fly one of the brand new B-26 bombers that had been built in the Martin plant in Baltimore, MD. The new planes had already landed at Overseas Preparation, Hunter Field, Savannah, GA. The twelve crews immediately boarded a train for Savannah, GA.

Overseas Preparation – Hunter Field, Savannah, GA

Arrival 01/19/45 Departure 01/24/45

From letters received from a previous class, we had learned that our final destination would be England. The route to be taken was the largest part of the information. We were to fly to South America, up the coast to Africa, across Africa to England. Quite a trip! We also learned that our Bombardier, 2nd Lt. Brussee and our armorer, the new Staff Sergeant Smith will not be going with us. They will be flying through Greenland as passengers on a Boeing B-17 and meet us in England.

We took possession of our new B-26 and began a thorough inspection. With that complete we checked our fuel supply and gave it our first test flight. The plane flew a little differently than the one it had replaced. They had increased the wing span by seven feet and raised the axis of the engines four degrees higher at the front. We were not sure we liked the change when compared to the older models. The increase of the wing area allowed for a heavier load capability. That decreased the maximum speed by seven miles per hour. The change in engine axis required a change in trim for every

change in power. We got used to it but it was still one more correction. It did reduce the B-26 normal nose high attitude slightly, but it was not significant.

Port of Embarkation - Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, FL

Arrival 01/24/45 Departure 01/26/45

This was a rather short stop. We picked up a temporary crew member - a Navigation Instructor from the Navigation School in Houston. He made the trip a lot easier. We picked up warm weather gear and weapons, changed spark plugs, boxed the compass, had physicals, checked fuel tanks and left.

USAAF Barenquen Field, Puerto Rico

Arrival 01/26/45 Departure 01/27/45

The facility at Barenquen Field was almost unbelievable. So much so that they had a Congress investigate the price of the one hundred foot long bar in the Officer's Club. The Transient Living Quarters were about the same only they were on a hill over-looking the Ocean. The most interesting thing about them was the windows. They had Venetian blinds on the outside of the window opening with about four inch wide slats with no screens, no glass and no mosquitoes. Also, the meals were excellent. One more comment: A good number of the "about-to-retire" Air Force Officers had expressed their desire to retire here.

Now, a little information about the method of these flights: A few are like ours. Most are slower cargo planes ferrying other necessary light material or personnel. The bulk of this is being carried in slower cargo planes like the 180 mile per hour C-47, compared to our 270 mile per hour cruising speed. Therefore, the slower planes take off much earlier than we do. They often take off well before dawn so it will still be daylight when they land. We take

off so we would start to pass at the midway point. There is almost a continuous line of planes in either direction. We left early the next morning after we had refueled and checked the engines.

USAAF Atkinson Field, British Guyana

Arrival 01/27/45 Departure 01/28/45

Atkinson Field was our first exposure to a total jungle Airfield. It was almost like a double exposure. A clearing had been made in the jungle about five or thirty miles inland from the ocean. The clearing was large enough to hold a runway width about 80 feet and a length of about 5,000 feet, a fairly large air plane parking and maintenance area, five typical two story barracks and enough clearance around everything to maintain sanity among occupants. With all the two way airplane traffic there was a plan in place to allow an occasional rotation between Belem, Brazil or Puerto Rico.

One of the barracks was designated for the Transients. Since we would be here for only one night, we packed only one night's worth of necessities and headed for the Transient's Barracks. We were one of the first crews to reach the Barracks. It seems that some of the troops stationed here wanted to play a trick on our group. The Barracks had a small porch with a double door entry towards the end of one of the long sides of the building. It seems that a few of them had killed an Anaconda; a very large local constrictor snake. They had placed it against the foundation, facing the porch, with its mouth opened wide. It made all of us dive through the doors and almost to the other side. Good trick!!

Most jungle bases have some similarity. Arrive, eat, sleep, awake, shower, dress, eat, check and refuel the airplane, pick up box lunches and leave. This one differed a little. We were given advice. Do not turn to your desired heading immediately after take-off. Fly directly to the ocean and then pick up your heading and stay within

gliding distance of the shore, but do not drift back over the jungle. There are head hunters around. We were still climbing out when we passed over a small village of straw huts when I saw a running native waving a spear at us.

USAAF Base, Belem, Brazil

Arrival 01/28/45 Departure 02/01/45

Belem is located in the very farthest northwestern corner of Brazil. We are all very happy to be back in civilization, but I forgot to mention one little restriction. We will not be allowed to leave any of the other bases until we arrive at the one in England. Only six more Bases to go. At least this is a regular U.S. Army Base. We will get two nights to sleep with almost one full day to relax before we have to check our plane and refuel. They even have a P.X. to let us replace some of our necessities. The next morning we are off again with our box lunches.

USAAF Base, Natal Brazil

Arrival 02/01/45 Departure 02/03/45

Natal is located in the farthest northwest corner of Brazil and is probably one of the largest USAAF Transient Bases in this area comparable to some of those in Greenland and the United Kingdom. This facility has just about all and maybe a little more, than we require. The B-26 has two Pratt and Whitney R2800 2,000 horse power engines. Takeoff power is defined as 52 inches of mercury and 3200 RPM. When taxiing on the ground we try to keep the RPM at 1000 RPM. Below this the spark plugs tend to foul up and require replacement. At 1000 RPM the B-26 is moving at about 60 MP. This is a little too fast for crowded taxi strips. Steady, even light pressure on the multiple disc brakes would cause the discs to weld together and also require replacement. The only safe way to

not require these replacements is to apply minimal pressure and frequency to the brakes and to the throttles. We have the same length of stay as the previous stop. Because our next move is mainly over water, we had all of the spark plugs changed and refueled. All we have to do is pick up our lunch box and leave.

USAAF Base, Ascension Island

Arrival 02/03/45 Departure 02/04/45

Just before we boarded our plane, we found out that two other crews had ignored the suggestions to beware of the intense tropical sun. They had just played a few hours of badminton outside wearing nothing but shorts and were severally burned to the point of blistering. However, we all had been warned about the danger of sunburn so they still had to leave as scheduled. It was too painful to put the parachute straps over their shoulders so they just carried them aboard and didn't wear them.

We had a very high, dark, overcast sky for most of this trip and a lower deck of clouds beneath us. We really appreciated our visiting Navigator. He could not get a single sun shot and only a few wave shots for almost the whole trip. When he told us to begin a decent and we broke through the lower cloud deck, we had Ascension Island directly in front of us. I felt it would have been almost impossible to come anywhere this close with just compass readings. Ascension Island was a tall, steep sided, rounded top, inactive volcanic rock with a runway cut through its upper third. I would guess that the start of the runway was fifty to seventy-five feet above the ocean.

We called the tower for landing instructions. They responded to make a steep approach because there is a strong down draft just before the start of the runway. We did as instructed and made a good landing, but the runway looked pretty short. Then, we realized we

were running slightly up hill. About the time we reached the top of the hill we saw the remaining half of the runway slightly downhill before us. We were then directed to a large parking and maintenance area. We were picked up by jeeps and taken to nice quarters. We later found out that the civilian population of the island amounted to about 80 people, the rest were military. The Island is a British Protectorate and presently has a civilian population of about 800 people. I do not know what supports that many individuals.

Again we went through the same refueling and lunch box routine. We entered the runway at our point of landing and used take off power to start up the slight hill again and at the top when we started down the hill we easily attained take off speed.

I remembered an old Ohio slogan, "Low on the ends and high in the Middle." Also, I remember when Polish jokes were popular. Like the one about the pilot and co-pilot of a large passenger jet approaching a landing. Both thought the runway was very short. They made a heavy brake tire screeching touchdown landing almost standing the plane on its nose. The co-pilot said, "That was a really short runway," but the pilot agreed and said, "But look how wide it is!"

USAAF Base, Monrovia, Liberia

Arrival 02/04/45 Departure 02/05/45

The trip to Liberia was rather easy and the history of the country is rather interesting. Just a brief summary: Liberia was established by citizens of the United States as a Colony for freed American Slaves in about 1822 through 1847. The Government Offices were very similar to America's. The Monetary system was all American in dollars and cents. Those are still the same. The primary language is still English but there are 30 other Indigenous languages. The quarters were pretty nice, but we did learn one

simple lesson. We had only taken our necessities to the quarters and in the morning found that the civilian help would enter the plane and take things for themselves. Nothing significant - primarily candy bars. They were pretty clever. They would never open a new package and would only take one bar out of an open package, and never the last one in any package. This was pretty minor, but there were some objects that were really important aboard the plane. We decided that a pair of one Officer and one Enlisted Man be selected to stay in the plane overnight as guards - each pair to serve one night. Naturally, no one showed up either night. We were back to our usual routine of refueling and box lunches. We were ready to depart.

USSAF Base, Dakar, Senegal - French West Africa

Arrival 02/05/45 Departure 02/06/45

Dakar is the largest city in Senegal and like all previous stops we were still restricted to the base. Our only sight-seeing here was when we flew over the city on our approach to the airport for landing. In talking to some of the civilian workers on the base we found that they did not look favorably on the French Foreign Legionnaires who often assisted the local police force more heavily than required against the civilian population. In fact, we got the impression that they did not like most of the French. Our quarters were nice, but we still policed our plane at night. Again, we failed to have any nighttime visitors at the plane.

We were all expecting to be rather interested in seeing what a flight over most of the Sahara Desert would be like. We went to bed rather early and got up rather early and showered and dressed. We then had a good breakfast. Then, we went through our usual refueling and box lunch exercise. We then inspected the plane a little better than usual and loaded a good supply of drinking water in

case we had to make an emergency landing in the Desert. And we said goodbye to Dakar, Senegal.

USAAF Base, Marrakech, Morocco

Arrival 02/06/45 Departure 02/11/45

This was the first time any one of us had ever seen a desert as large as the Sahara and it was pretty interesting. It was basically light yellow sand with quite a few large rock formations showing through the sand, but mostly it was just level sand, with no noticeable dunes. From our altitude, everything looked relatively flat. We would sometimes pass over roads of only two tire tracks, no idea where they were going. They stayed visible for quite a distance in both directions. We never did see any stationary or moving vehicles.

I recalled the name of a book that I had read and that had later become a movie that I had later seen. The book had been written by P.C. Wren in the early 1930's. It was a story of French Foreign Legionnaires and their Fort named Lindmeuf in French West Africa. It seems that one day it was discovered that all of the Legionnaires were dead and the fort was abandoned. Just about halfway through the Sahara Desert we flew over what looked like a French Foreign Legionnaire's abandoned fort with two tire track roads running in each direction as far as the eye could see.

We were now about in position to start climbing to reach at least 12,000 feet in altitude from the 5,000 foot altitude at which we had been flying. To reach the city of Marrakech, we have to fly through a narrow pass through the mountains. I would guess that the pass was a couple of miles wide and about fifteen miles long. The most amazing thing was that there were little houses and people with little gardens living at that altitude. They would wave as we passed by over them. Then, just a few miles ahead, we saw the large city of

Marrakech, Morocco. We landed at the Base and were bused to our quarters. When we signed in we were told that due to weather conditions in England we may be delayed for a while. The delay turned out to be a little longer than expected. We were there for six days, with nothing to do but wait. We checked the plane every day and prepared for a trip around the coasts of Spain and Portugal to reach the USAAF Base in Land's End in Cornwall, England. Finally we did our usual routine of inspection, refueling, box lunch and departed.

USAAF Base, Land's End, Cornwall, England

Arrival 02/11/45 Departure 02/12/45

This turned out to be the easiest of all previous legs of the trip to date. This was because once we reached the coast line we knew the direction and all we really had to do was maintain our altitude and our distance from the shoreline. However, we still were very aware of the warning that the German fighters had been previously seen along this route. We set up our regular air observation procedures and the coast was clear all the way. The weather had been exceptional all the way. When our Navigator told us to turn inland, it was just a short time until a very large airport appeared before us.

England had always been described to me by the "Brits" as one large airport. I had begun to believe them. What was not air fields tended to be Military or Naval installations. This seemed to make the English rather proud. The one statement that seemed to bother them was if anyone joked about all the Barrage Balloons to minimize the bomb damage. I agree with them. That was to say, "If you cut them all free, England would sink."

The Airport we were to land on was on a very large square with a very large hanger and a runway across the front of each hanger.

The roof and in front of each hanger was painted a different color; blue, red, green and yellow.

We contacted the tower and received landing instructions. “You are to use the runway in front of the RED hanger and gave us a compass heading for direction. When we touched down we heard the sweet voice of a young lady with an English accent telling us to follow the Jeep with the big red sign. We were led to our “KITES” parking spot. Her voice came on again and told us to take all of our personal possessions out of the plane and say goodbye to it because we would not see it again. We did and we didn’t.

We were picked up by a bus with our possessions and taken to the little old town of Nuquay in Land’s End, where we found the most lovely, very old English Inn. The very friendly Inn Keeper asked if we would like to visit a nice English Pub. Six of us said, “YES.” He led us through the double blanket blackout door to the sidewalk. Nothing is darker than an English Black-out. We had just about given up when we heard a voice say, “Need some help Yanks?” We were to form a line behind him with a hand on each shoulder in the line. He was on the street and we could hear his cane tapping on the curb. We made it to and inside the Pub. That was when we found that our guide was totally blind. He promised to lead us back. We quickly made friends with the people already in the Pub. Early the next morning we took the bus back to the Base. It had been a good day.

Introducing: Leonard and Ann Chesterfield. They had lived in Cornwall and knew the area around Land’s End and Nuquay well, before moving to the States.

USAAF Replacement Depot, Stoke On Trent, England

Arrival 02/12/45 Departure 02/27/45

Between Birmingham and Manchester

This Replacement Depot is one of the largest in England. All U.S. Air Force Personnel and equipment coming into England or returning to the States must pass through such a unit as this for the directional approval and assignment. The whole facility was loaded to capacity with fresh newcomers like ourselves, as well as, the tired and worn out units and individuals being sent home. The first surprise was the return of our bombardier and our armorer to our crew. They had arrived almost ten days before us after their B-17 flight from Greenland. It also meant the return of our borrowed friend and Navigator back to Houston. We thought that this would be a rather short stay but the time quickly seemed to be dragging. The Officers and Enlisted men separated.

To keep some of the Officers busy, we were assigned to censoring outgoing Enlisted men's mail for a short time. I only remember one letter that was amusing, but had to be cut up a little. His letter started with, "I am now in England but I can't tell you exactly where I am. I am between Birmingham and Manchester." He had a few more cutouts. The only other outlet was a very profitable Black Jack game. The card room was large enough for eleven players. There were several large signs describing the rather unusual house rules for the games to be played and they were strictly enforced. They were #1 – Dealers took all pushes, #2 – Dealers could hit anything up to twenty, #3 – The eleventh chair allowed the Dealer to have a partner acting as a banker to pick up winnings and pay off losses. This allowed for a maximum of ten players. There was always a waiting line for players, but never too long to pick up a turn. When a Dealer lost to a Blackjack winner, the winner would usually have his bank amount challenged and he would have to play

the individuals until all were satisfied, then normal play would resume. Dude Haden and I would play as partners and play with lower bets until one of us hit a Black Jack and that one would become the dealer and the other would be the Banker. With the rules favoring the dealer it was easy to win. We played that way for a couple of hours for a few days and stopped and split a little over \$3,000.00 and retired from the game. A few days later we were summoned to a meeting for the crew to receive our assignment. We were on our way again.

USAAF Base A-59, Cormeilles-en-Vixen/Pontoise, France

Arrival 02/27/45 Departure 04/15/45

(Located on a busy highway about 12 miles north of Paris)

We packed up our belongings and boarded another C-47 for our trip to our new home.

We discovered that we were members of:

The 9th US Army Air Force

The 399th Bomb Group which consists of

The 344th Bomb Squadron

The 345th Bomb Squadron

The 346th Bomb Squadron and

The 347th Bomb Squadron . . . **THAT IS US!!**

The Group Commander was Colonel Lucius D. Clay, Jr. Our new Base turned out to be a former German Fighter Base that had been built sometime during the early German occupation of France. When England declared war on Germany, this Base must have received frequent English Bomber and Fighter attacks due to its proximity to the British Island. That probably explains the rather unusual construction of the barracks and many of the other structures.

The Barracks were approximately 36 feet long by 24 feet wide

with a slightly sloping roof and about an 8-foot high ceiling and the long walls had several windows about 3 feet by 5 feet for light and ventilation. One of the long walls had an entry door near one end. These buildings were built in a hole with reinforced walls about 4 feet from the building walls and with the roof about one and one half feet below the ground surface, with 50 watt electricity and a traditional little Army furnace half full of sand, a piece of aluminum tubing and a valve connected to a salvage Fighter fuel tank and some 80 to 100 octane gasoline. We have a fairly livable abode for seven or eight men with tables, chairs, cots, and wash stands. We are again back to helmet baths, except when a Shower truck comes by occasionally. We have a water barrel at ground level that is periodically filled, but that is only good for washing, not drinking. Young ladies and older women come by to pick up, wash and return laundry. We supply the laundry soap. They are really honest and dependable. Several of the younger ones would rather be paid with perfumed mild bathing soap than money. They know that we can get that at our little PX.

We then are given a couple of days to settle into our new lodgings and get familiar with our new surroundings. We were then introduced to the methods and operations of the 399th Bomb Group to perform successful bomb runs.

Admittedly, I would agree that the B-26 Marauder's early performance recorded an unusually high accident rate, but it was also found that many of the early crashes were caused by pilot error somehow attributed to early pilot training methods and early combat assignments.

At War's End there were nine B-26 Groups in Europe. It was proven that these nine Groups had the lowest percentage rate of Combat losses than any other USAAF units in the European Theater. The rather unique formation employed was given most of the credit

for this. The typical three or more plan “V” plane formation had been replaced by a “Six Plane Box.” This is a somewhat difficult object to describe so I will try a word painting instead.

Picture a single leader B-26 with one B-26 on either side in normal formation positions. Then, place another B-26 directly below and about halfway under the single leader with one B-26 on either side in normal formation position. This is my best effort in describing a “Six Plane Box.” All four Squadrons are as equal as possible in personnel, planes and equipment on hand. Each Squadron maintains 36 mission ready planes plus 6 ready on standby. All Squadrons “Stand Down” in rotation once every four weeks to service the airframes, engines and repair all combat damages.

The average mission consists of 108 planes. Sometimes, but not too often, two missions a day are flown. One mission in the morning after breakfast, and one after lunch while the refueling and rearming have been performed.

The only other situation is when the “MAXIMUM EFFORT” is called for. This happens only in very rare situations. Then, the Group will put up 144 B-26’s. I only saw it once.

When we are lined up for take-off, one plane leaves every 24 seconds and when landing, a plane touches down every 18 seconds with one plane about in the center of the runway and one plane just turning off.

When lined up for take-off the planes are about 15 feet apart with the first plane revved up holding his brakes. When he gets the signal, the second plane assumes the vacated spot.

The only semi-disconcerting thing is when the pilot and co-pilot look to their right momentarily seeing the Chaplain standing on the hood of a Jeep giving his blessing and sprinkling holy water in their direction as they get the signal to start their take-off roll. I am sure

this is appreciated by all concerned.

A successful bombing mission requires an excellent briefing meeting of the major participants. Therefore, all of the officers of the flight crews taking part in the mission assemble about an hour before take-off in a large room with a white ceiling. Affixed to the ceiling is a black ribbon. Then an overhead projector is turned on showing a map with the ribbon showing the approach and return route to and from the target. Then the altitude of the flight, the anticipated anti-aircraft fire location and intensity and cloud cover is projected. To insure the security of this information, the building is totally surrounded by military police within arms length of each other. After a question and answer period it's off to the airplanes.

This will be the first through the seventh consecutive daily missions that we will have experienced. Apparently this is not really unusual. Dude Hayden and I were each put in different planes with each of us seated in the pilot's seat and a veteran pilot in the co-pilots seat, as the instructor. Apparently we both passed the test but the result was rather unusual. Dude was to replace the veteran pilot of another crew who was being rotated back to the States after the 65 required missions. Fortunately, I was promoted to a 1st Lt. and from co-pilot to pilot of our crew. Another young 2nd Lt. named Charles Clark was assigned to our crew as my co-pilot and was warmly greeted by all crew members. And then another move!

USAAF Base Y-78 Florrenes/Juzains, Belgium

Arrival 04/15/45 Departure 09/15/45

This was quite a surprise move and quite a disappointment from our previous move. We suddenly found ourselves in the middle of a very muddy harvested corn field full of 12 inch high stalks. The Officer and Enlisted Men's areas are the same mess and separated by about 1 half mile but in the same condition.

The “barracks” were tents about 24 feet-square, pitched on plywood reinforced with 2x4’s. There were walkways between the other tents, the mess hall, the latrine and bus and truck stops for various transportation requirements.

The next project is to make all necessary improvements to the tents. First, we folded back the entry flaps and hung a door. Then, we again prepared another small army furnace and filled it half full of sand and connected a valve and some aluminum tubing to a fighter’s belly tank. This again allowed us to control the temperature of our living quarters. Then, with an elevated barrel of water for shaving and helmet baths and some salvaged Plexiglas for windows, we were all set for six officers, cots and foot lockers. The enlisted men had done a similar re-construction on their tent cities. The only real problem remaining was that the tents were the only places to gather on inclement days. This was simply solved by a young 2nd Lt. Pilot who became the person who could request and receive the most unbelievable and unusual items imaginable. About a week after we had a brief discussion we saw two large trucks appear, each with a large English Quonset aboard. These are large half round galvanized corrugated steel buildings that the English used for barracks. The Officers and Enlisted men each had to assemble them in their own area. Our Squadron was the only one to have an Officers and Enlisted Man’s Club to relax in and enjoy among all of the four Squadrons and the Group Personnel. We set up card tables, a bar and someone brought in a piano. They were the envy of the Group. Everyone had a place to go. It seems hard to believe but this had been completed while flying a daily schedule of missions.

Now I have to tell you about the most unbelievable scam that I have ever heard. It is so unusual that I will probably never hear of it being beaten. I will have to call the same young 2nd Lt. Pilot of our Squadron, who pulled the buildings for the Officers and Enlisted

Men's Clubs out of his hat. We will have to go back a few years for the start of our tale. The War had already started. A Belgium man had become a Nazi under Hitler. He somehow designed and supervised the construction of the so-called Atlantic Wall that was the fortifications on the French beaches to prevent the invasion of the Allied Army. This was not very successful but it did slow them some and were the cause of very many killed and wounded soldiers. We don't know his name but we do know that he became very wealthy. We did learn that he had purchased some property in the very small Belgian town of ByWah and had built a very large and expensive home on that land. The War had begun to soften some in Belgium and the Belgium government had begun to round up Belgians that had collaborated with the Nazi's.

Somehow or other the same young Lt. discovered that the very same Belgium man had been convicted as a war criminal and that some of his properties, including those in ByWah were available. He made his request and he was awarded control of everything that the Belgium man had in the area of ByWah. This included the very large and beautifully furnished house built on a large rock outcropping overlooking the highway and the Meuse River. The most unusual feature is that a Gardner, a Handyman, a Housekeeper, a Cook and a Launderer were included. Beyond that was a tennis court with rackets and balls and a tall fence to prevent wild shots from going down to the highway. If you walk down the driveway at the bottom you will find a tunnel that goes under the highway that takes you to the River where you will find a boat house with a Chris Craft speed boat and twelve little gas powered bicycles and gas pumps for all of them. This would be perfect for four six-man Flight crews for three days a week each, freeing the house help on Sundays.

This plan was approved by everyone involved. Each Flight

Crew going would be allowed to pick enough uncooked food for three days from the Mess Hall to be prepared by the new house cook. That pleased all of the guests.

We had been receiving false Armistice rumors every few days. Finally, on May 8, 1945, the real end of World War Two in Europe was a fact.

This was almost unbelievable news. Passes were being given to Namur, Charleroi and Brussels. We also had quite a few "A.W.O.L.'s." Many of them were rounded up fairly quickly. Quite a few were just shooting hand guns into the air. A few others climbed into the top turrets of B-26's and shot 50 caliber machine guns straight up into the sky in short bursts straight up. Others just retired to their Clubs and opened their Bars.

Things cooled down fairly soon and most of us still realized that we were still very seriously involved with a war as large, or larger than the one we had just gotten out of. The Japanese in the Pacific area were just as large or larger and more remote than Germany.

We remained where we were in Belgium. Our very excellent Military planners had decided which Units, with what Personnel, with what Equipment, at what Location would best satisfy all areas that were in the very large United States Occupational Zone.

We had made daily raids through the day before the official Armistice Day. The total official tally for the number of bomb runs made by our six-man Flight Team was fifty seven. The number required to be sent home had just risen from fifty to sixty five. I'm just going to have to find another route.

Schleissheim USAAF Base, Schleissheim, Germany

(About halfway from Munich to Dachau on that highway)

Arrival 09/15/45 Departure 04/08/46

This was Nazi Field Marshal Herman Goering's pride and joy. He was the Father of virtually all of Hitler's Air Forces, good or bad. The overall first impression of the facility was that everything was exceptional. The first meeting with the commanding Officers was a little disconcerting because the 399th Bomb Group introduced himself as General Louis D. Clay, as commander of the American Occupation Zone. Then he told us that he was also bringing the 394th and the 397th Squadrons of the 399th Bomb group. Then we found out that our Group Commander was his son and both were going together on a state-side thirty day leave. Nice for them but we were all now in what will be an eight month extension to our stay in Germany.

As we began to investigate our new home, some things were more than surprising. The Officer's barracks buildings were yellow, three story buildings all filled with individual apartments, each having a bedroom, a sitting area and a full bath. There were three of these in a row. One had a dry cleaner/laundry and a tailor shop. All had elevators. A little less than a block away there was a 24-hour free snack shop, a fairly large Card Room and a 24-hour mid-sized bar. I don't think they missed anything.

Our Enlisted Flight crews had Barracks quite a distance away from us, closer to the planes and the maintenance crews. And as the Germans always think, lower rank deserves lesser conditions. Theirs was very much less than ours, but still much better than what they experienced before now. No real serious complaints from anyone.

Now to our immediate new duties: We are close enough to Bavaria to be able to see the Alps. Just beyond Bavaria is the Russian Occupational Zone. They fly patrols every day just on their

side of that zone and we do on our side. Neither is supposed to cross into the others territory. We fly our side of this border daily just to prove that we are still around. We don't even have one 50 caliber bullet aboard. It's all just for show, but we are flying under the Russian threat of being forced down if we drift over the Russian Zone Line. That could cause anything up to Russian Internment which is quite serious. We watch flight position very carefully and that occasion never came up.

Other than those patrols, we were sent to Motor Pools of captured motor vehicles to provide transportation around our new Station. We went to several different Motor Pools and we found that we could get any number of any type of vehicles that we had on our official list and some fun items only on our personnel list.

The official list was filled quite easily and consisted of different types of trucks: Dump, Flatbed, Pickup, and any other model available. Then we concentrated on buses to start new Bus lines to cover all necessary and interesting points. Then we came upon the ever favorite Volkswagen Bug or beetle. We arranged for a good number of these for on and off the Base necessities. Every selection was naturally painted in a Desert Camouflage pattern and color. Next was the hunt for the really fun toys. We found two of the best in the last Motor Pool that we visited. They were both Mercedes Benz military motorcycle products. Both models had two cylinder four cycle engines. Both had a four speed transmission with a high-low range. This means that you have the choice of eight speeds forward or in reverse. This means that you can use the front or sidecar wheel or both. Nice choice.

This pretty well describes the drive train of both models. Now to describe the actual appearance and the utilization of each model: The first is a typical looking large motorcycle with the drivers and a passengers and a jump seat. Then add a very large sidecar with a

trunk and a spare tire on top of the trunk door. Then on the sidecar hood place an empty machine gun mount. This would be the German motorcycle seen in every World War Two movie with a driver and a passenger and a mounted machine gun. The second machine was quite different in appearance. This machine is really quite unusual. It has the same motorcycle front end from the front wheel past the handle bars and the drivers and passengers seat. Then the big change happens - a box similar in size to the whole rear body of a Jeep with a tailgate and side benches. Then on the outside of each box were Caterpillar or Tank treads for driving like a small Tank. We had these two prizes loaded on a large truck and when we returned to the Base we parked both of them in an inconspicuous corner of a smaller and older hanger. We took them out slowly until enough other people had the impression that they had been assigned to us. After a while we could drive them anywhere on the Base without question.

Then another pleasant activity turned up. I discovered a nice AT-6 Texan. This is the same plane that I flew in Advanced Cadet Flight Training. I could not find anyone else who was qualified to fly that model anywhere in our Squadron. After a bit of serious persuasion our Squadron leader agreed to make me the official Flight messenger in that plane when distant messages needed quick delivery. That was a very pleasurable assignment. I milked that as long as I could, but even good things come to an end.

One very interesting thing about The Dining Room was that when dinner ended on Saturday evening, all furniture and clutter was removed to reveal a Dance Floor and a Band Stand. Our 1st Lt. "shopper" had obtained a band whose young German leader transcribed most of Stan Kenton's music. He and his band were outstanding. On Saturdays we sent one or two of our recently acquired buses into the 98th General Hospital in Munich to give

round trip transportation for Doctors, Nurses and Aides to attend our Saturday Night Dance. We have the reputation of being the best Service Night Club in the whole Munich area.

We are still occupied with the Russian Occupation Zone problem but that will go on for a really long time. Right now we are receiving a large number of what will be the replacement of the present Martin B-26. This is the much newer and better North American A-26. We were suddenly surprised when 120 A-26-s arrived unannounced from the China Burma and India Theater. This completely over loaded all available space and forced an emergency plan to destroy most of our older B-26's. Fortunately there were several obsolete air plane grave yards fairly close to fly to and still only about an hour truck ride back to our Base. We began to fly the designated planes almost at once and as they arrived jeeps led them to the demolition areas. The first operation was to remove the propellers and place them on the ground and run over them with half track tractors to destroy them. Then put primer cord, a very explosive rope a little larger than a clothes line, around the wing root between the engine nacelle and the fuselage and in the nose wheel well causing wings and nose to fall down and tail section to raise up. Removing all explosives was necessary plus removal of all machine guns and all turrets. This took quite a while and we all were happy when we saved enough of the best B-26's to put up a small formation on special occasions. We all felt that we all still owed something to that "WIDOW MAKER."

The 399th Bomb Group had really become an A-26 INVADER Unit in every manner from equipment to staffing. They had the former Russian /American Zone problem almost settled and almost friendly. The only present problem is that there is a rumor that the government may be planning to send one hundred and twenty of our A-24 Invaders back to the States. We know that they can but it's just

the proposed route. They finally decided that the planes would fly in groups of twenty with only one pilot as the complete crew. Each plane would fly at six minute intervals. The route would be a mirror of the one that we had all previously flown to England except that we will leave from the USAAF Replacement Depot in Stoke on Trent, England with all the same stops except the last one which will now be Kellogg Field in Benton Harbor, Michigan. That is a very nice choice. It will be closer than Puerto Rico.

Kitzengen USAAF Base - Kitzengen, Germany

Arrival 04/08/46 Departure 05/31/46

We all found the airplane that we were to fly for the first leg of our trip home. We each were able to take a few hour flights to get a little familiar with the one plane that we were going spend more than quite a few interesting hours alone with on this upcoming trip. Then without any warning we learned that the program had been canceled and that only the first group of twenty would be allowed to finish. The rest of us were to be transferred.

366th Fighter Group – Fritzlar, Germany

Arrival 05/31/46 Departure 06/12/45

We were all really starting to wonder what was going on and what was going to happen next. We found out pretty soon as we were then told to pack our personal effect and our footlockers for a long move.

Port of Embarkation – La Harve, France

Arrival 06/15/46 Departure 06/19/46

La Harve is one of France's largest ports and is now as busy as if the war was still going on. In addition to that, they were almost as busy handling a large percentage of the troops returning to the

States. Our little group was part of the whole mess. In the last eighteen months all military personal had been issued a card that had recorded all of the individual's government payments. No one would be allowed to take anymore than that home. This was to identify people that had played on the black market and if so, to arrest them. It worked pretty well. The only problem was that the marketers would find anyone with a low balance on his card and pay close to the limit on his card and keep the other half. That worked. The rest of us were just concentrating on getting back home. We packed everything we could into our foot lockers and arranged to have them shipped home to the States and arranged carryon clothing and toiletries for a boat ride and a long trip home. We all knew that the English had already converted the Queen Mary into a troop carrier. That was very surely out of our league for our ocean trip, so we will have to wait and see what little plum Uncle Sam has prepared for us.

Well, we were right. No Queen Mary was waiting at the simple little boarding dock where we were lined up. Our future means of transportation was more than a little bit disappointing when we considered the upcoming ocean crossing. It worsened considerably more when we boarded for our initial inspection.

What we found was a Henry Kaiser Liberty Ship. This is a relatively small mass produced freighter. The whole forward hold was completely filled with four berth high pipe berths secured to the floor with barely enough clearance to pass between them. Knowing what often happens to people in rough waters we managed to put our entire small group of passengers close together on top berths. That worked out pretty well, for when you looked around many of the other top berths held a very seasick individual flat on his back holding a bucket on one arm. It seemed that several of the ill travelers remained in that condition for the whole eight plus days

with the help of good friends.

We are located in the very forward bow section of the ship. If I look forward, I see the bow sprit. The only thing on the other side is salt water. We had been running through a medium storm a day after we left La Harve and it didn't stop for five days. The waves would cause the bow to slam down and almost knock you off your feet and kept you off the deck most of the time. Not much fun. It cleared just in time for everyone to recover enough to collect their belongings and to look a bit presentable for our American landing.

Port of Debarkation – New York, New York

Arrival 06/26/46 Departure 06/26/46

We landed in New York and were checked into a nice small hotel. (I don't even remember the name). We were allowed to go out on the town, but ordered to be ready to move by eight o'clock the next day. It was my 22nd birthday!

Fort Dix – New Jersey

Arrival 06/27/46 Departure 06/28/46

The next day we were transferred to Fort Dix in New Jersey. This is where our military history was brought forward and confirmed. Our next stop will be our last in active duty.

Fort Sheridan Separation Center – Chicago, Illinois

Arrival 06/30/46 Departure 07/07/46

Almost all of Midwestern Army personnel operate through this base. We all are included in that group.

I was personally separated on 07/07/46 on Terminal Leave until 08/9/46 when I was Discharged and enlisted in the USAAF Reserve until 08/09/55 (9 years).

With several serious good wishes, good lucks, keep in touches,

and firm handshakes, a lot of friendships were promised by many. I still keep in touch with about three, but our group is swiftly disappearing.

My next effort is to pack all my goods and firm up my plans with an old friend from Detroit that had been in the Redford High School R.O.T.C. when I was the Captain. He had been placed in the 344th Squadron of the 399th Bomb Group at the same time that I had been placed in the 347th Squadron of the same Bomb Group. As luck would have it our squadrons were always placed about three miles apart when the Group had been relocated, but we still were able to maintain close contact with each other. We each agreed to travel home together. He had lived in North Rosedale and I lived on Karl in Redford.

By the way, his name was John Russlander. The plan was that his family would pick us up at the Detroit Train Station and drive to his home, and then after we had gotten to know each other a little bit, John would drive me to the house on Karl. Everything went like clockwork except I did not know that the Bunny Run cottage (in Lake Orion) had been sold and a new one had already been started up the road from the old cottage toward Indian Lake Road.

I had already phoned the lady that had rented the lower flat on Karl for years. (Her name is forgotten). When we arrived at Karl she was already sitting in her car and she started the engine as soon as she saw us. She was not going to miss seeing Mom and Dad at our homecoming. I was surprised to see how much Dad and Brother Bill with the help of Bud Trowbridge and Mr. Chesterfield had completed. The garage and a bathroom had been completed and Mom was sitting on the roof of the breezeway putting on shingles. She really did more than walk by the time both of her boys came home. She had kept the promise that she had made after that much earlier car accident. Her personal fix was to walk around the dining

room table with arms straight and hands on the table top supporting most of her weight and go around the table by the hour.

We had covered a good part of the most interesting subjects by mid-afternoon and then I went to see Donna. She seemed in good spirits and she wanted to take a little ride. We had only gone a short distance when she said that she had something to tell me and when I asked what it was she calmly answered that “I am engaged” and said that I did not know the future groom or any of the wedding party. It was Thursday and the wedding was to take place on Saturday. I said that a Dear John letter would have been better. She said that that kind of letter was not patriotic enough. I could see that any more conversation could only be useless. I drove her back to her driveway and said “good luck, and get out of the car” and drove away. I have never seen or even heard anything from or about her since then.

I think I better go back a few years. Mom and Dad had bought the house on Belleterre when dad was working at Rickenbacker. The company only lasted between 1921 and 1924. When it folded, he went to work doing anything he could, even walking door to door trying to sell wave set to beauty shops, until he found a good job at Hutto Hone Company. That lasted until sometime around 1937 when an automotive paint salesman bought Hutto Hone Company and developed what had been Hutto Hone Company into Micromatic Hone Company. During Dad’s time at Hutto Hone Company he became an abrasive expert. He then applied for a position as an abrasive salesman at Norton Abrasive Company in Buffalo and was awarded territory in southern Michigan. Fortunately, most of the former engineers from the Hutto Hone Company had transferred to Micromatic with the purchase and Micromatic became his best customer. He was even asked to join an engineer’s card club called “The Dizzy Dozen” that played every lunchtime and every member would his in his house one month a year. I would be the bartender

on Dad's night. I got to know all of them very well. Norton Abrasive gave Dad a good monetary percentage, a new car every year, a good monthly expense account and a very generous insurance policy. This lasted until he passed away.

I quickly found that my hold up by the unexpected, unusual eight month German occupation assignment had delayed my discharge just enough to put me about eight months behind earlier discharged military personal that were applying at colleges like the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Lawrence Institute of Technology, or the University of Detroit. I tried everything that I could think of to get accepted. Finally, an old Redford High friend said to try Highland Park Junior College. The University of Michigan accepted full credit for Highland Park Junior College grades. Guess what? I am in school. I entered immediately and signed up for all of the Mechanical Engineering classes that they would let me sign up for. I decided on the classes that I could handle and still be able to study and still help finish the new house with Dad and anyone that would help. The school was only about 25 minutes from the new house so I wanted to add to the classes that I had taken after I had graduated from High School. It proved to be a little difficult but still possible to handle.

Dad had really made it possible. New cars were like hens teeth but I had asked him to see if he might be able to get me a new car. I knew that he got a new leased car from Emmert Chevrolet at Greenfield and Grand River. I had saved a lot more than enough to pay cash for it. In a few days he had a beautiful new maroon Chevrolet convertible sitting near the garage. This had really made improving my education and assisting with the house building much more possible. This went on until early fall when Brother Bill and his wife Josie planned a hayride starting at the unfinished new house. Josie's younger brother Gary lived on Ashton and one of his

friends, named Mac Farrell who lived on the adjacent street named Rosemont, offered me a blind date.

I had had no dates since Donna and I had had our very unpleasant separation. They described her as a very nice and beautiful young lady. Their descriptions of her made anything but a loud yes answer impossible. Her name was June Evon Parker and she was actually very much more than those boys had described. We both seemed to hit it off a lot more than either of us had really expected. This was really the start of a very long, very fine engagement that started in late September of 1946. June had worked for quite some time at the counter of the Sanders store at Grand River and Southfield when she was in high school. By the time we had met she was working as a comptometer operator in the financial offices of the Pure Pack Division of the Ex-Cell-O Corporation. This was the unit that manufactured the machines that made the cardboard milk cartons. Their office was on Hamilton in Highland Park. One thing that I must say for June was that she was not afraid of work.

Brother Bill had been working for a precision jig boring machine company in Oak Park and Josie was in charge of the ladies clothing department at Montgomery Wards. Bill had one other sales job (employer unknown). After an unknown time he entered the University of Michigan (for another unknown time). Fortunately, Josie was able to transfer with the same position as she had had in the Detroit store into the Ann Arbor store. They were able to maintain that arrangement until they both agreed that Bill had absorbed all the education that would be required for the sales job that he had been offered and that he had accepted. They both returned to the old neighborhood until they could decide where to settle down.

We all felt that Dad had been working on the house for quite

some time but mostly part-time doing only light jobs or with assistance if the project was heavy. Mom watched him pretty carefully and made him wait if she thought the work was too heavy. He had an appointment and the Doctor convinced him that he would really feel much better if his gallbladder was removed. The Doctor must have been very convincing, for Dad and Mom finally agreed. Dad was to enter the hospital in the evening to be fully prepared for the operation at 10:00 a.m. the next morning. Mom, Bill, Theresa, and I spent the night in the upper apartment of the Karl house. Theresa did not want to go to the hospital so she just waited in the Karl apartment. Brother Bill, Mom, and I left for the hospital early enough to see Dad before the operation started. We were about ten minutes away from the hospital when Mom screamed, "Oh no" and started to cry and she said, "We have just lost Dad." We got to the operating room as fast as we could and sadly found that Dad had passed away on the operating table at the exact time Mom had called out. Dad passed at only two months beyond 59 years old. This was really hard for all of us to take. Almost all of the former Hutto and the present Micromatic engineering group, including the Dizzy Dozen visited the funeral home. That alone showed their respect and friendship for him.

I have already briefly introduced June but I have one more unique feature to describe. She insisted that she was 4 feet 10 ½ inches tall. I would sometimes agree with her on the extra ½ inch especially when you consider that I was 5 feet 9 inches tall but we both had the same 27 inch inseam. When I look at June I only see a loving, loveable intelligent, beautiful, relatively young, somewhat long-legged lady that I will love forever.

(By the way, today is my 90th Birthday. That is roughly 32 thousand, 950 days. WOW!!)

By this time I had decided that I had obtained enough education that I could find employment somewhere in the engineering department of some company. The first one that came to mind was Micromatic Hone, so I called their Chief Engineer. He remembered that I had been an engineering student and the bartender at the Dizzy Dozen card games that Dad had at the Karl house. He hired me without hesitation as a detailer of honing tools. I started the next day.

I had been living at the house on Karl all the time that I had attended Highland Park Junior College. Micromatic was located at 1800 Schoolcraft. Schoolcraft was not too far from the Karl house. The Parker house where June lived was on Fox Boulevard off Five Mile Road. That was only about a mile and a half from the Karl house. This allowed enough time for me to pick up June in the morning and take her to her job at EX-Cell-O and allowed me to get to school or my new job at Micromatic, and then reverse the process in the afternoon. This worked perfectly.

The head man of the honing tool design department was Everett Randlett who rapidly became my best friend and advisor. My starting salary was \$1,400.00 per month and June's monthly income was \$1,420.00. We were both thinking marriage, but we both decided to wait a while. I was seemingly getting promoted rather quickly, first to fixture detailing and design. In the meantime Everett, who had a nickname of "Sam", had started a card club similar to the Dizzy Dozen that Dad had joined at Micromatic. They asked me to join, and I did. It was a very profitable experience, almost \$25 to \$50 per month. That was a nice addition that continued almost regularly for a few years.

Now I think it is almost past the time to introduce June's rather extensive family. This will force us to go back in time for quite a

few years for a while.

First we must travel to Pottertown, Kentucky, a somewhat small farm town fairly close to Murray, a larger college city. A gentleman named John Roberts was basically the family patriarch. He owned a very large farm and a very successful country store that carried goods, food stuffs, and most of the equipment and tools that local farmer's use. Both of these were apparently quite profitable. That area suffered like all others; however, he apparently extended credit to most that needed it. At this late date, it seemed that there were still some people on his books from the depression. He apparently was very well liked and totally respected. His wife's name had been Lela Boatwright before they had married and it is rather hard to believe that she was even smaller than our own tiny June. This couple's personal family had grown to what could easily be called a good sized group. They had the following children: Rhonda, Niva (June's mother), Carlton, Clifton, Wade, Guthrie, Eva, J.D., and Gray.

June's father's parents were also from the Murray area. Thomas Craig Parker and Laura Olivia Hutchens produced five boys that now are responsible young men named, Buell, Prentiss, Clifton, Rudie, Robus, and three girls named Rubie, Elizabeth, and Nedra. The young girl developed into ladies the same as the boys to men.

From now on I will concentrate only on the family of Buell and Niva Parker. Pottertown was a relatively small town with almost all of the residents relying on farming as their livelihood. Buell Parker fell into the farming category. That almost assured a backbreaking occupation and a variable income. Buell and Niva had three children at this time, Johnnie, Marjorie, and Jean. As some point, date unknown, they decided that neither of them wanted the Pottertown lifestyle for their children or for themselves. This was a well thought out decision that would affect not only their lives but

the future lives of their children. I am sure that many family meetings were held before the final decision was actually made.

For never having been actually involved with the new location or of how the new real estate was acquired, it seems that everything happened without much of a problem. Just to plan the method of transporting the five members of the family for that long of a trip and all their personal needs, like clothes and other necessities would be difficult to say the least. Now add the minimum of necessary furniture and I would suspect that they would require a car with a large trailer, a truck, or have the majority of the load shipped. I have no idea how it was done, but it actually happened. I am sure that additional fill-in items were required, but I learned that this home in Dearborn, Michigan suited their needs for as long as they lived in it.

It seemed that Buell had a reasonably well paying job with the John Mansville Insulation Company. Unfortunately, at that time very few people realized the severe dangers of inhaling asbestos dust. It was quite a long time before the results became apparent. Niva was also satisfied with the neighborhood and the fact that the school was directly across the street from their front door. That made going to school safe. Things were going along very good and then improved immensely on September 24, 1927. This was the birthday of June Evon Parker in Dearborn, Michigan.

Just a few years later that area experienced a sort of depression. Unfortunately, Buell lost his job. He searched tirelessly for any type of replacement but to no avail. Finally, almost in desperation and before they lost everything, they saved everything they could and returned to Pottertown. You could bet everything that they would work like any truly dedicated hard working family with the desire to return to the lifestyle that they had experienced. I can assure they would return in just a few years and **THEY DID**.

Evidently, Buell accepted a better job offer again, but from a

different office of the same J. M. Mansville Asbestos Insulation Company. They purchased, furnished, and occupied the Fox Boulevard home mentioned earlier. This was the last move made by the Parker parents.

Now I will start to describe the Buell and Niva Parker children by declining ages, personal activities, and then my personal reaction to each of their own personalities.

#1 - Johnnie: Born in 1921. I would have to guess that he was in mid grade or even high school when he was determined that he would become a pilot. To achieve the goal that he had set, he hitchhiked to a small airport on the far east side of Detroit every afternoon after school and then back home. The same procedure occurred every weekend and holiday. In fact it happened every free day. He started out just cleaning the grounds, the hangers, the airplanes and any other job the owner thought of. He refused any monetary reward, preferring flying lessons instead. He quickly soloed and in a short time won his instructors license. Not too much later World War Two arrived on the scene. He quickly enlisted in the Naval Air Force and was stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Air Station in Chicago as a Primary Flight Instructor teaching young pilots in fairly small fabric covered biplanes with two tandem cockpits. They were all painted a brilliant yellow and nicknamed the "Yellow Peril" to alert all other pilots that the yellow planes were being flown by learning student pilots. Johnnie maintained that status until sometime after the war was officially declared over. He had a pretty safe and easy lifestyle in the Navy when you realize that he was allowed to fly a "Yellow Peril" home to Detroit and back to the Navy Base any weekend to see his family, his girlfriend, have his laundry done, and have home cooked meals. Nice way to fight a war.

When Johnnie finally arrived at home to stay, his first trip was

back to the airport where he had started his flying life. The first thing that he did upon arriving was to make an offer to purchase the flying school, the airplanes, and all accessory equipment excluding the property. The owner was overjoyed at his offer because he had wanted to retire for some time. They closed the deal and Johnnie returned to an existing rental airport property behind the commercial stores on the west side of Orchard Lake Road and 13 Mile Road, all complete with hangers and an office. He picked up about five new flight instructors and a part-time mechanic and had his own flying school that he operated very efficiently. He later took on a partner, but that is another story.

Johnnie married his girlfriend, Joyce Dobbs. Together they had five daughters, Sandy, Susie, Sally, Sharisse, and Shevon. That is one good group of girls.

#2 – Marjorie: Born in 1923. She was a very pretty, happy, and friendly young woman. Good fun. She was a beautiful brunette and as sweet as she could be. A boy at school saw her walking up the stairs and saw her beautiful legs. He said at the time, “I’m going to marry that girl one day!” She and Jack Love started dating. They both wanted to get married but Buell objected quite strongly because Jack was already a 2nd Lieutenant in an army antiaircraft unit and the war had already started. Buell was afraid that Jack might be lost. That was his only reason. Unknown to him, Niva and the couple had planned an elopement that went off like clockwork. All was quickly forgiven and Jack and the bride finished the rest of his leave in peace. The couple went back to his unit until he went overseas and then Marjorie returned home. After the war was over they purchased a home in Clawson, Michigan. Bud Avery, Mac Farrell, Jack, and I decided to help put in a lawn. We finished the front and then started in the back. We had already dug down 5 feet when we saw the corner of a large piece of cement. It turned out to be the

foundation for a railroad bridge. That was enough for Jack! He said the heck with it, sold the house, and went back into the army and back to Texas. Jack and Marjorie had two children, Jill and Jack.

#3 – Jean: Born in 1925. She was as pretty or prettier than any of the other Parker girls. She really resembled Marilyn Monroe. She was very sweet and very easy to love. Mac Farrell found her coming out of her dentist's office on Grand River, across from his uncle's musical instrument store. It just happened that his uncle also played guitar at a jazz club and Mac often played base fiddle at the same club. Mac and Jean chose to get married quickly. Fortunately, Mac's parents provided enough money to make the down payment on a nice little two bedroom ranch house overlooking Western Golf Course. They quickly moved in and started searching for furniture. Mac and Jean had two daughters, Claudia and Jeanne.

#4 – June: Born September 24, 1927. She was the sweetest, smartest, friendliest, and the most forgiving lady ever to be found. She was the banker, the doctor, the nurse, the seamstress, the chef, the lover, the advisor, the peacemaker, and the friend who created a family like only we all have experienced.

This will start back at the time when June and I were still getting better acquainted and even a little more seriously involved.

We had been dating for quite a long time and June had received some increases in her salary. I had also received several promotional increases. Then because our engineering department went from 40 hours to 58 hours a week my income rose significantly due to the overtime hours. That overtime schedule ran almost constantly due to the requirements of our products that were required during World War Two. We were now trying to fill the requirements of the new peacetime market.

This added income confirmed some serious thoughts that convinced me to propose to June. I did and she accepted.

Apparently, she must have had the same idea that I had been having because she asked me what had taken so long. The next thing that happened was a trip to 15498 Fox and to 12464 Karl Street to receive the combined Parker and Fitzpatrick families. All were very happy and June's sisters immediately started planning the wedding ceremony. June immediately put a stop to that by reminding everyone that it is still "HER WEDDING - END OF DISCUSSION."

After that, with both June and I, our parents, relatives, and other good friends helping us, we decided on the Church, the minister, and the location of the reception. We chose the Bushnell Congregational Church on Southfield Road as it was one of the nicest ones around for the wedding service on August 27, 1949. With that little bit of information, I think that it is about time to introduce all of the actual participants in the wedding ceremony.

To be joined in Holy Matrimony Paul Fitzpatrick & June Parker:

Minister: Dr. Treet

Bride: June E. Parker

Groom: Paul Fitzpatrick

Matron of Honor: Marjorie Love

Best Man: William Fitzpatrick

Bridesmaids: Jean Farrell and Betty Nott

Ushers: Johnnie Parker, Gary Chesterfield, Arthur Trowbridge, Leo Martin, and Mac Farrell

All of the above, plus family members and invited guests were there. After the wedding ceremony all of those interested attended the reception at Shores restaurant in Dearborn. It must have been a large success for it was still going fairly well when June and I left at a little after midnight. We had made reservations at an almost new

lovely motel. Fortunately, big brother Bill had hidden our car and brought it to us. This had dodged a trick played on a few couples in our group. When they were ready to leave after their wedding they found their car stuffed completely full of torn up newspapers, side to side, front to back, and top to bottom that they had to empty before they could get into the car and leave. The pranksters had to clean up the mess the victims had left. We missed out on that hold up and just left and went on to the motel that we had chosen for just one night and started on our honeymoon casually the next morning toward Copper Harbor. We planned to spend one night in the Lower Peninsula and then continue with more of our trip. I had remembered one trip that I had taken with Bill and Dad where we had stayed in a nice hotel and thought that it might be good for a one night stopover. June agreed so I took our nighttime luggage in. The lobby and restaurant looked very exceptional so we signed in for one night and took the elevator to our room. To our surprise the bedroom furniture and the accessories were all oversized and obsolete. All was neat and clean. The only problem was that it was a little hard to find each other with her relatively small size. It did prove that she had a sense of humor. Then we got ready to leave, had a wonderful breakfast, checked out and were on our way. **NEXT STOP – COPPER HARBOR.**

The distance was not very long so we quickly arrived at the entrance of the club house. We were motioned toward a parking place and we were brought into a grand rustic office where we registered. We were assigned to a slightly less, grand rustic comfortable log cabin with an adjoining parking place. We took our luggage inside and admired our place. We planned to spend the next three days exploring the most interesting areas around there and then we would start our trip home, spending two days on the way to our first somewhat unusual rental apartment. I do mean unusual.

Our first apartment was created from what had been a regular two story, two bedroom home, with a finished attic containing one bath, one finished bedroom, and a one person kitchen. It had an inside stairway and outside doors to front and rear outside porches and a driveway from the street to a parking place in the backyard.

Admittedly, our new living quarters lacked some niceties, but getting June and me to and from our respective work places turned out to be a snap. Out of our driveway, one block to Grand River and another block to Ewald Circle, then a couple of more blocks to Hamilton and we could drop June off at her office at Ex-Cell-O. Then a couple more blocks to 1800 Schoolcraft and we turn into my office at Micromatic. Reverse those directions and I could pick up June. I would always leave early enough to be waiting when June came out and this always worked.

We went to both the Parker house on Fox and the Fitzpatrick house on Karl to prove that we were both in good shape after our honeymoon trip and had to explain everything that we had done. Then back to our new rental apartment to rest some and get ready to get back to work. Only we had to stop at our favorite neighborhood tea room so each of us could eat one of their delicious small steaks before we got back to our home and then fall right back into our usual routines. Everything went very well for quite a while as far as our incomes and then we began to notice a few unpleasant things. We began to notice our landlord's cigar smoke coming up the heat registers making things a little unpleasant. Also, our landlady's empty wine bottles were filling all of the trash cans so we had to improvise on pick-up days. Other inconveniences also seemed to appear. Our increasing income seemed to indicate that we should possibly investigate the real estate market. Guess what? We decided that we could afford a new, relatively moderately priced home. Suddenly, we were very busy looking at new houses. We both agreed

on one special requirement, the house had to be a similar distance to both the Parker and the Fitzpatrick houses, one being in Redford and the other in Redford Township. At least that reduced the hunting area a bit. The closeness of both of our places of employment also made it easier. When we felt that we had seen most of the models that we liked and could safely afford one, we finally settled on the one that we and all of our parents had agreed on. At last a final decision had been made.

The house was a red brick two story bungalow with an unfinished attic and a concrete floored basement. The first floor had two bedrooms, one bath with a tub with a shower, a kitchen with an eating space, a dining room, and a living room. That was pretty complete for the floor space and the type of rooms.

We quickly filled out and signed all of the important papers to make the sale complete and went directly to our rental apartment and quickly closed our lease and picked up all of our belongings and returned to our new home and a very large shock. We could not move in until another month due to the final completion. Fortunately, the senior Parker family had one extra bedroom upstairs. June's mother, Niva, insisted on giving the master bedroom to June and me while her parents slept in that other room with just a double bed. This went on for a little more than a month and included a great breakfast and dinner. I was sure her father was as glad to see us move into our own little new house as we were.



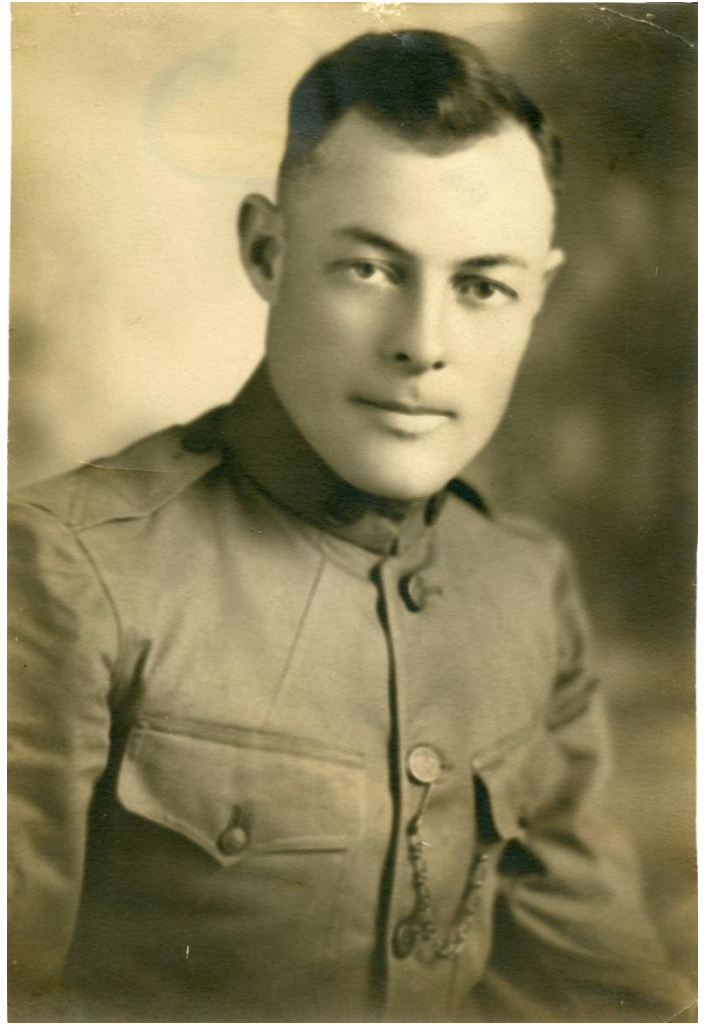
William and Paul Fitzpatrick (circa 1926)



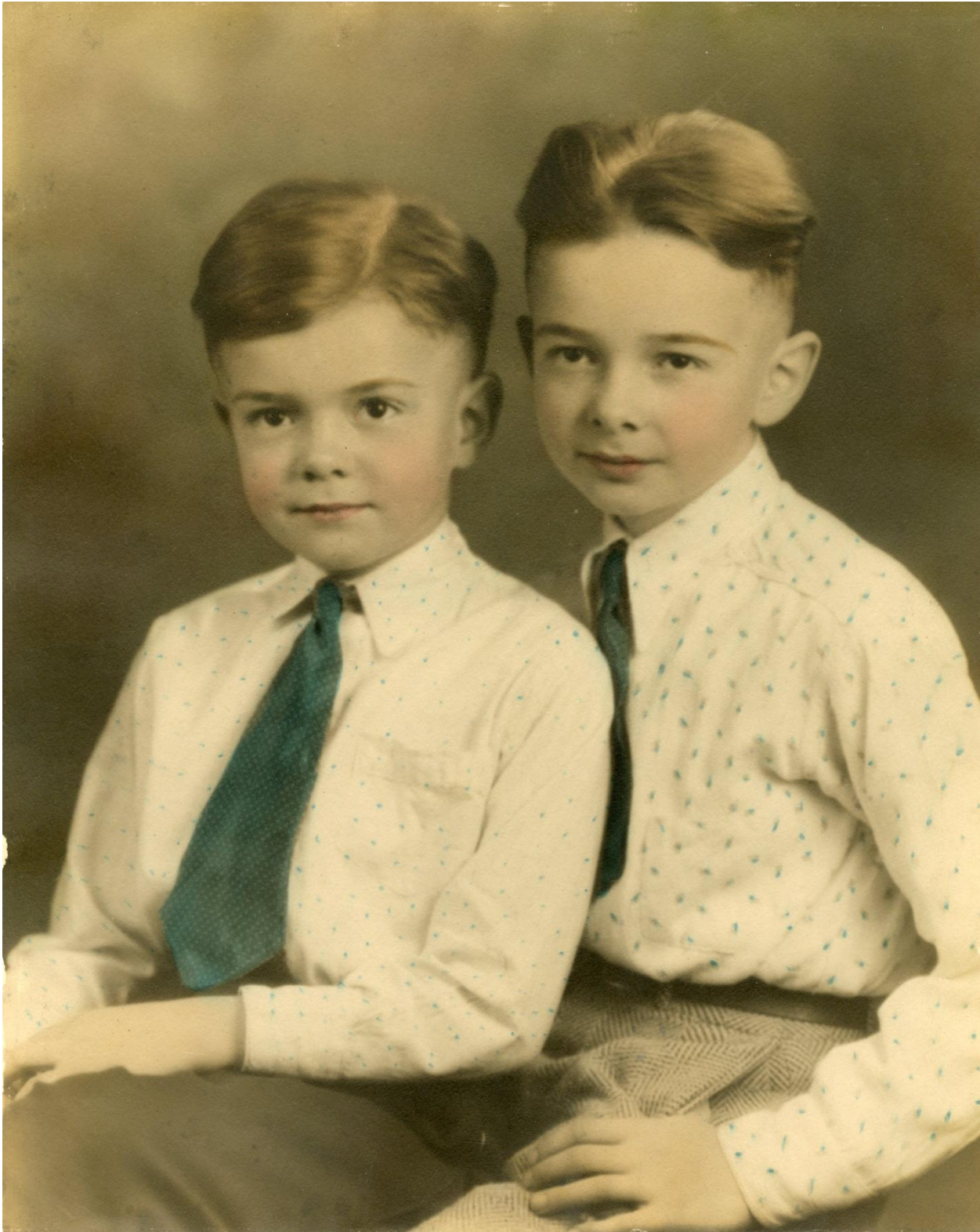
Paul Fitzpatrick (circa 1929)



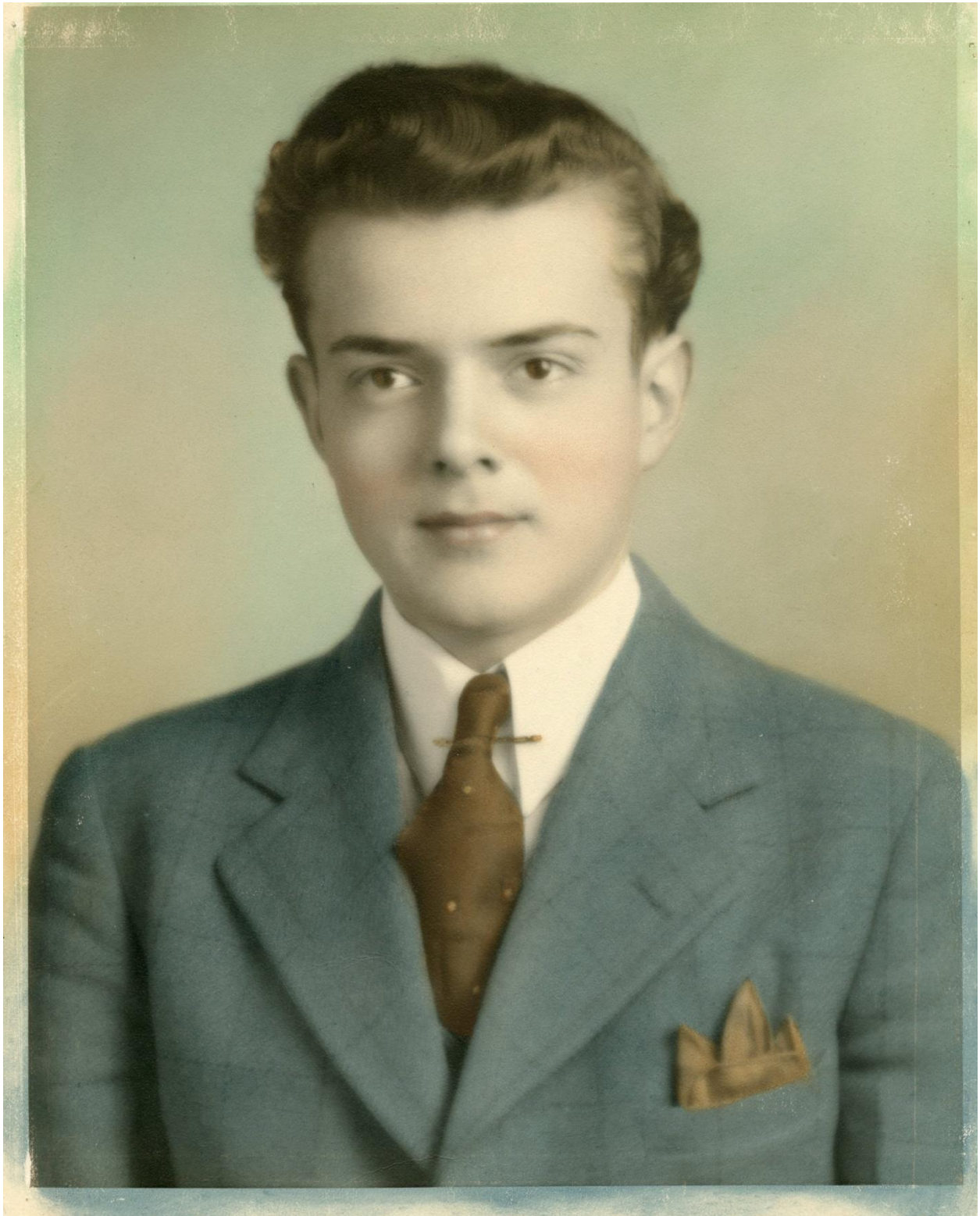
Clara Otilia Anderson Olsen
(Circa 1915)
Paul's Mother



Albert Simon Fitzpatrick
(Circa 1915)
Paul's Father



Paul and William Fitzpatrick (Circa 1929)



Paul Fitzpatrick – Redford High School Graduation 1942



Paul Fitzpatrick – U. S. Army Air Force Pilot (Circa 1943-1944)



Paul and William Fitzpatrick (Circa 1943-1944)



Paul Fitzpatrick and June Evon Parker
November 24, 1946



Paul and June Fitzpatrick – August 27, 1949



Holiday Boat Company
Paul Fitzpatrick (middle) – Mac Farrell (right)
(Circa 1955-1956)



Paul Fitzpatrick (Circa 1970)



Paul and June Fitzpatrick
September 27, 1990
41st Anniversary



Paul and June Fitzpatrick
September 1997



Paul and June Fitzpatrick – September 24, 2007